



# Winchester Downtown Master Plan

Winchester Downtown Program

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Winchester Downtown Program

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In the summer of 2008, Looney Ricks Kiss Architects (LRK) of Memphis, TN was commissioned by the Winchester Downtown Program, Winchester, TN to study the potential revitalization of the Downtown.

In August 2008 LRK met with stakeholders and the public in Winchester for a three-day work session to brainstorm ideas for the improvement of the area. Following a review of the site analysis and a slide show of the elements of a great downtown, a preliminary master plan along with a list of initiatives for public and private improvements were identified that could become short-term goals. These initiatives, along with the master plan showing potential infill and streetscape improvements, were shared with the public during a community presentation. The improvements at the Court Square, opportunities for infill development, streetscape improvements and the suggestion for a new greenway linking downtown with the Tims Ford Lake were met with the greatest enthusiasm.

Following the design workshop, the LRK design team refined the Master Plan based on input given by the community and worked to define the major initiatives in greater detail while in discussion with the client group regarding the timing and steps required to kick off the major initiatives.

Downtown Winchester has a tremendous collection of traditional buildings, an attractive Courthouse and Square, and has the potential to become even more special through the efforts of the community. This Book documents the outcome of the design workshop and Master Plan, and recommends action items that can be undertaken to make the initiatives a reality.

By using this Master Plan as the road map for the first steps along the way, we are confident that Winchester will become a city that is unique, attractive, safe, vibrant and a desirable place to live, work and play. It is our sincere hope that the enthusiasm coming out of this Master Planning process be converted into momentum going into the next phases of development.



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**The Master Planning Process &  
What Makes a Great Downtown**



**INTRODUCTION**

In the summer of 2008, Winchester Downtown Program in Winchester, TN engaged the firm of Looney Ricks Kiss Architects (LRK) to conduct a Master Planning process for the improvement of downtown Winchester through the grant awarded from Courthouse Revitalization Pilot Project Act. The Master Planning process was designed to help clarify the goals of the group, and to identify critical projects that would have an immediate impact on the quality of the core of the city.

**GENERAL HISTORY**

Winchester is located in Middle Tennessee, about 90 miles south of Nashville and 70 miles west of Chattanooga, TN and 45 miles northeast of Huntsville, Alabama with an estimated population of 7,329 (2000 Census). Winchester was established as the county seat of Franklin County in 1809. The city was named in honor of General James Winchester, a soldier in American Revolution, first Speaker of Tennessee Legislature, and a Brigadier General in the War of 1812.

Winchester, which became known as the “only town of any importance” along the stagecoach road extending from Nashville to settlements in East Tennessee, was incorporated as a town on August 20, 1822. Through this act of incorporation, the municipal council was given the power to enact those ordinances necessary to govern the town. In 1835 the General Assembly authorized the mayor and alderman “to lay out the town into four wards and to provide for the election of a constable and two aldermen in each ward”.

By 1833 the town of Winchester had grown to a population of seven hundred people and offered a diversity of opportunity for its citizens. As early as 1830, there were known to be three hotels, as well as a diverse business, professional, and religious base in the town of Winchester. An early study of the period revealed seven lawyers, four doctors, one Methodist church,

one Baptist church, one Presbyterian church, one academy for boys, and one for girls. There were eleven stores, four taverns, six carpenters, four cabinetmakers, four bricklayers, two hatters, twelve tailors, four shoemakers, fourteen blacksmiths, one silversmith, three carriage and wagon makers’ shops, one coppersmith, two painters, two tanning yards, two saddlers’ shops, and three groceries.

**Commerce**

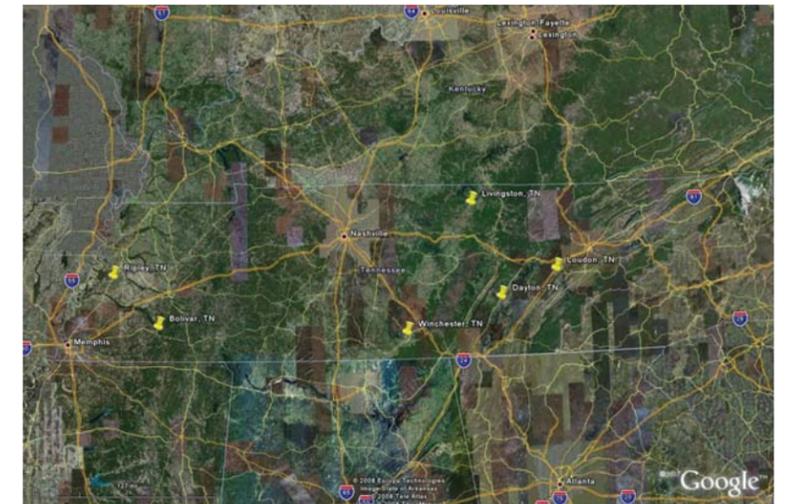
Since it was first settled, Winchester has had a business and professional community that is highly diversified. The first merchant was Thomas Wiggins, who sold a variety of goods out of a log cabin. Daniel Eanes and his son opened the first saloon in 1810 and by 1820, Winchester had three doctors. Winchester’s first buildings were located on the bluff overlooking Boiling Fork River. In 1811 there were several buildings constructed on the south side of the present square, and by 1830 the Ballard House opened its doors as a hotel. Between 1810 and 1840, commerce and the mercantile community grew steadily; however, it was the 1850’s that proved to be a time of prosperity in Winchester. In part, the prosperity that Winchester enjoyed was due to the area’s status as a leading cotton producer, the presence of Carrick Academy, Mary Sharp College, and the Winchester and Alabama Railroad, which ran through Winchester.

The Civil War halted the commercial growth of Winchester until the early 1890’s, at which time the town began to regain its commercial strength. It was during this period that Winchester began to flourish again, largely in part due to the introduction of the nursery industry. One early newspaper account written as early as 1925 observes that more trees, shrubs, and roses have gone out of Winchester to make the South more beautiful than any other town below the Ohio River. By 1890 Winchester had a population of twenty-five hundred, two banks, two factories, two sawmills, one large commercial flouring mill, marble works, and “many industrial establishments of lessor note”. It should be noted that during this period Franklin County had the oldest commercial club

in Middle Tennessee, outside of Nashville. Similar to today’s Chamber of Commerce, the commercial club’s purpose was to induce businesses and people to settle in the community.

Winchester’s commercial pinnacle was reached in the years between 1890 and 1930. This era revealed the opening, closing, and re-opening of many businesses on the square, the construction of new commercial buildings, causing the eventual saturation of the local market. It was during this period that the merchants began to use the local newspaper, The Franklin Truth, to advertise their goods. Winchester, like many other American cities, has had its periods of prosperity and recession. Winchester was able to rebound from periods of recession, in large part, due to the town’s active and imaginative citizens who had a vision and were willing to take necessary risks to see their town prosper once again. It was around the turn of the century when Winchester was introduced to the Tourism Industry. It was then that Winchester promoted the healing powers of the “cure all” mineral water springs that were abundant in the area. Visitors from throughout the world vacationed at these well-publicized healing mineral springs. Today, Winchester’s citizens still realize the potential benefit from tourism, as they host many special events throughout each year and readily welcome all to their little town with a big heart, “WINCHESTER the HEART of it ALL!”

Winchester idealizes the Old South with its beauty and southern hospitality. It also embraces today’s south that emphasizes leadership with a vision for the future. If it had not been for the vision of its citizens, the “Town of Winchester” would not have achieved such significance as the site of an early co-educational school and as the site of the first female college in the nation to require Latin and Greek for its graduates. Winchester further became known as a center of the southern nursery industry, as well as, having four of its citizens elected as governors of the State of Tennessee. Winchester can again have a flourishing business and economic community, if its citizens are willing to recapture the vision of those early settlers and entrepreneurs in the late 19th century.



Map showing location of the six cities that received the Grant.



Hundred Oaks Castle

Excerpts from: “Winchester at a Glance”

Credits:  
Middle Tennessee State University: May 1981 Historic Preservation, Historic Zoning Report  
Here and Growing: A Collection of Debern’s past.  
Historic Winchester Walking Tour: Middle Tennessee State University



First County Courthouse



Public Presentations

### CHANGE IS COMING

The future of Franklin County is bright and set to change in the coming years as a result of several factors. The community of existing historic buildings and small businesses in the downtown area provides a strong foundation for renovations and recruitment. The current TDOT Courthouse Square infrastructure improvement project is revitalizing the appearance of streetscapes in the most critical downtown area. These road and streetscape improvements along with the ongoing recreation development potential of Tims Ford Lake promise great commercial and tourism oriented development opportunities for the entire region, and Winchester is poised to take advantage of them because of its location.

Despite all the potential, there is also the danger of automobile oriented development along highly congested roads. Growing evidence between Winchester and Decherd is indicating that a such pattern is unsustainable over the long term and results in lower quality of life and decreased economic competitiveness for the community. With thoughtful planning and firm commitments from civic and business leaders, the mistakes of the past can be avoided.

### COMPETITIVENESS

The challenges the design team heard from the business leaders and Steering Committee included the need to attract new businesses to bolster the destination appeal of downtown. Downtown merchants expressed a desire to grow and thrive by leveraging their unique location to create an experience different than the commercial corridor between Winchester and Decherd on US Hwy 41. Issues such as wayfinding, parking, traffic, vacant storefronts, and safety were all expressed in meetings with stakeholder groups. Implementation costs were raised as a concern among stakeholders. Small business owners expressed the need to keep private costs and interruptions to daily business at a minimum.

### THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The process the design team embarked upon with the participation and support of the community leaders was to review the existing conditions

of the study area, analyze the patterns of land use, study the history of the town and come to understand the underlying reasons why Winchester is what it is today.

The team then came to Winchester to conduct a public design workshop, sometimes called a ‘charrette,’ to imagine the possibilities for revitalization of the study area. A presentation was made to key community leaders about the essential qualities which make a great downtown, as an introduction to the workshop topics to be examined.

A series of meetings were conducted with key stakeholders to solicit input for the designs. At the conclusion of the two-day workshop, the team presented its recommendations at a public meeting attended by community leaders, elected officials and members of the public.

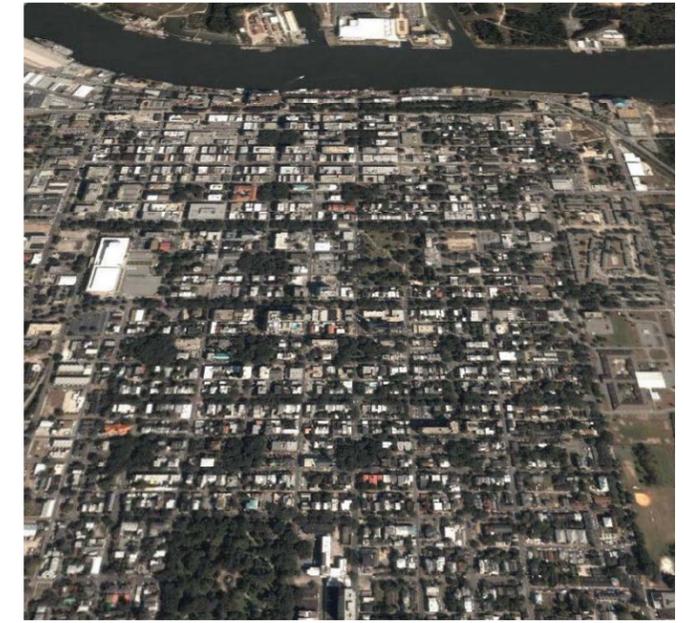
Following the workshop, the team prepared this report documenting the workshop and worked with the group to draft the beginnings of an implementation plan which would act upon the recommendations that were made. A final presentation of the master planning process will be made shortly, and this document will be presented.

### NEXT STEPS

The next steps that need to be taken by the group is to identify and embark on individual action items that came out of the master planning process. It is at this time that the first steps are being taken to identify the scope of the items, the timing and resources required, and to assemble the teams that will enable the projects to move forward. First, however, it pays to understand the essential characteristics of great downtowns, so as to understand the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

### WHAT MAKES A GREAT DOWNTOWN

It has been our experience that nearly every successful community that was settled prior to World War II included a downtown area that, if it hasn't been damaged, shares the same essential qualities. Across the country, the most vibrant and sustaining communities have a center that exhibit the elements described in more detail on the following pages.



**CONCENTRATED VARIETY OF USES**

The essence of a downtown or neighborhood center is that within a short distance, a wide variety of uses and activities predominate. The proximity of offices, retail shops, services, government, entertainment, dining and living is what makes a business district valuable and desirable. The concentration of different activities, all within walking distance, is essential to any downtown area and is opposite to single-use office parks that are typically suburban in location.

**DENSITY - MIXED USE BUILDINGS**

In parallel to concentrating varied uses into a single area is that in downtowns most buildings have a variety of uses within the one structure. A building that is primarily offices will have a restaurant on the ground floor. A set of retail shops will have residences above. In major developments retail, residential, office and parking may all be found in one structure. The land in downtown is too valuable to devote to single uses.

**CLEAR ORGANIZATION OF STREETS**

The settlers who laid the original plans for new American towns often did so by laying out a sensible and clear pattern of streets. Savannah, GA and countless other communities were planned around a simple grid of blocks, with streets that often lead directly to the waterway or railroad lines where commerce was centered. A well organized pattern of streets and blocks permit flexible development and activities to occur.



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**WELL PLACED PARKING**

Parking is an essential element of every community that is required to bring people to an active place. The critical component, however, is the placement and arrangement of parking that will not detract from activity and the visual qualities of the place, because the objective is to design places which make people, not cars, the primary focus.

**CIVIC OPEN SPACES**

At the centers of communities are public spaces set aside for the common civic good. In earliest settlements, this was intended for common grazing lands, later taking the form of Courthouse Squares and common public parks. Charleston, S.C. is a prime example of a city designed with a set of public squares set aside for common use, within the grid of the city streets.

**CONNECTIONS TO NATURAL PLACES**

Nearly every city has been founded at a location that has some natural feature or significance, the banks of a Lake or lake, a safe port, a defensible bluff, crossing of two prominent paths, etc. The most dynamic cities have a direct and powerful relationship between the urban environment and the natural environment. Many successful cities are situated where one can be just minutes from one extreme to the other.



**STREET LEVEL ACTIVITY**

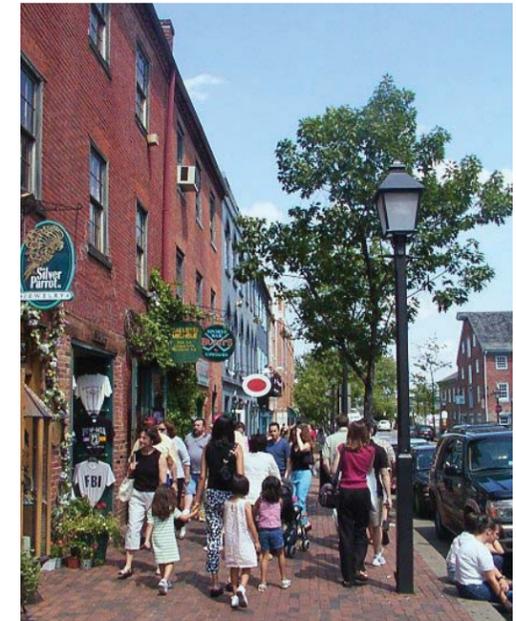
Downtowns experience activity on an everyday basis, and although much takes place within the private confines of the office, cities are most vibrant at the street level. It is here that people meet, shop, dine, enter and leave. The safest and most sustainable downtown areas have significant amounts of activity on the ground floor of buildings, facing streets that are filled with people at all times throughout the day.

**DOWNTOWN LIVING**

The aspect that many people find surprising about downtown areas is that they can be very attractive places to live. Proximity to work, cultural activities, transportation and nightlife make them desirable to young singles and couples, empty nester couples and others. Many cities are finding that having a large residential population downtown provides a built-in level of activity, safety and security that single-use office or retail areas simply cannot provide.

**RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

Part of the varied activities that downtowns have include recreation and entertainment. Particularly when coupled with civic or natural open spaces, recreation can become an important factor in making downtowns livable for both workers and residents.



### RECOGNITION OF HISTORY

At the center of our communities lie a constant reminder of the people who came before and the places and historic structures they left behind. The thoughtful preservation and celebration of our history is appropriate through historic sites, museums, festivals, and the continued use of historic structures.

### PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED

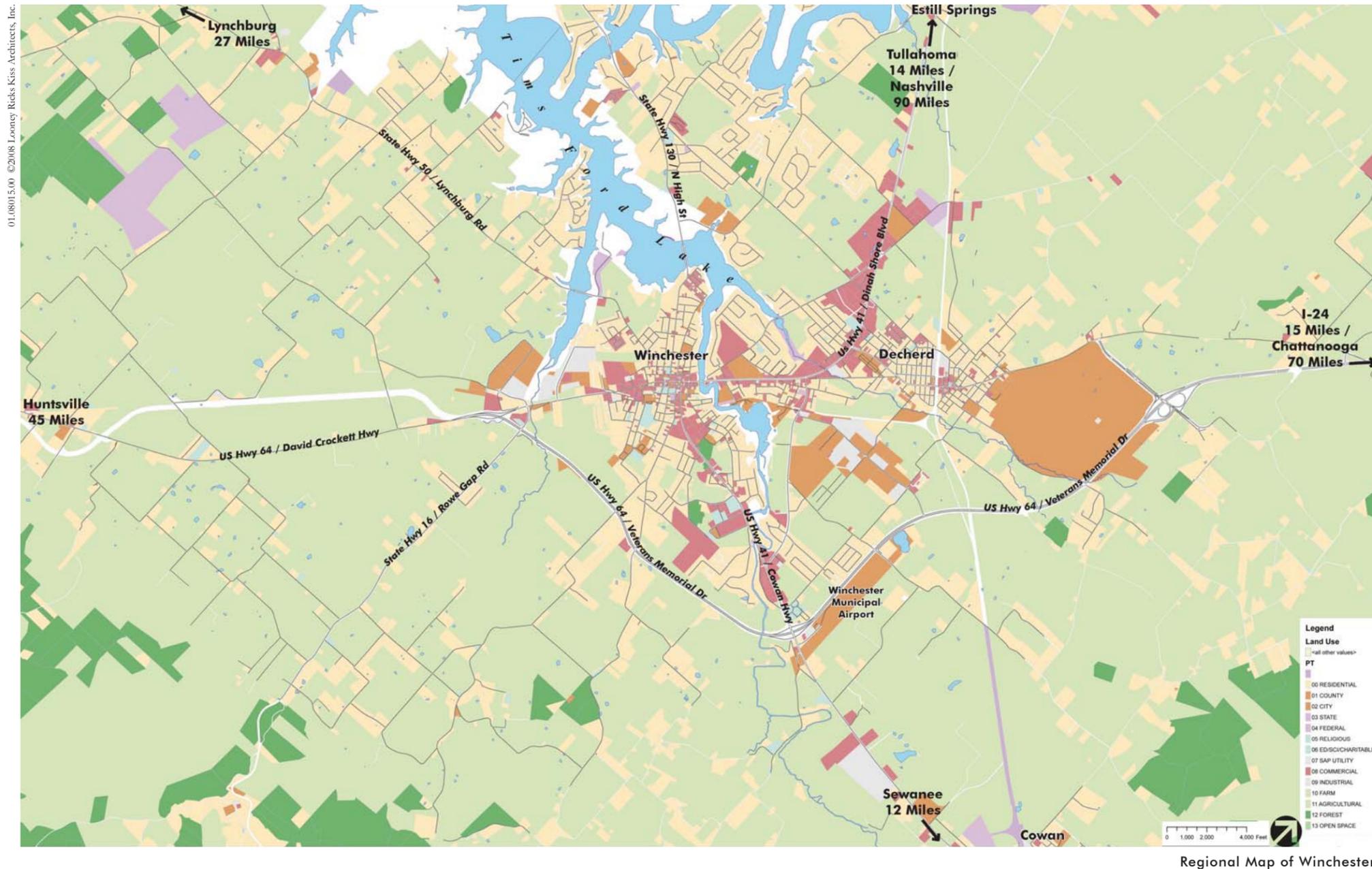
It is important that the design of downtown areas be oriented primarily to the pedestrian, while accommodating the car with the proper placement of parking. It is people, not automobiles, who have feelings and choose where to go, shop, dine or walk and consequently the qualities of materials, details, the streetscape and other elements should be designed for the comfort and delight of people.

### SENSE OF ARRIVAL

The first impressions of visitors upon reaching a town are often the most lasting. It is imperative that the environment at the points of entry be of the highest quality. Sign boards, public art, streetscape elements and buildings should be carefully designed to create a grand sense of arrival.

## Site Analysis





Regional Map of Winchester

### THE DISCOVERY PROCESS

The first step towards developing a Master Plan for any community is to try to understand the place as well as people who have lived there all their lives. By uncovering the underlying physical patterns that have developed over history, we can hopefully create informed plans for the future.

The site analysis portion began with the assembly of base maps, photographs, and other information to document the conditions and uses of land and buildings. From these maps it was possible to begin analyzing the street and block patterns, seeing where they led, and uncovering the history or reasons why they are where they exist today.

### SITE ANALYSIS

The design team started the process of site analysis by traveling to Winchester and documenting the use of the buildings and lands, and compiling them into a color coded base map. A large set of photographs was taken to document the setting for further study.

From these base maps, the design team discovered evidence of the town's beginning, not the least of which is that the city was originally settled on the bluff overlooking the Boiling Fork Creek. The team also realized an understanding of Winchester's original city block pattern. Much like the cross-sectional growth rings on a tree's trunk, the growth of downtown can be measured by changing grid pattern rings around the Court Square.

The Franklin County Courthouse is located in the middle of Court Square at the southern corner of 1st Ave NE and South College Streets. A significant civic structure, the Courthouse is still used today for County functions. Much of the daily activity in downtown is related to what is happening at the Courthouse on that day. Some of the other government related buildings (like Post Office and City hall) are also located nearby.

On all four sides of the Court Square is an almost completely intact collection of late 19th century and early 20th century buildings. Although modified from their original form with replacement storefronts and

several boarded-up windows on upper levels, the grouping around the Court Square clearly evokes the feeling that Winchester has always focused around the Courthouse. These buildings also continue along 1st Avenue NE and other Streets for one or two blocks beyond the Square.

The Oldham Theater is a notable example of the Art Deco style and continues to be used as a movie theater. This theater supports the style of the Franklin County Courthouse, the most notable example of Art Deco architecture in Winchester. A collection like this is an asset that many communities are trying to replicate but never will be able to; Winchester is fortunate to have this collection.

The size and arrangement of the streets and blocks are very regular in the core of the downtown area, from 3rd Ave NE to 3rd Ave SW, between North Porter Street and South High Street. In this area, each block is of the same size, except the Court Square and the blocks parallel to it. Court Square is smaller and centrally located, while the blocks parallel to it are narrower in one side. This core consisting of 15 blocks also represents the most historic part of the town. As Winchester grew, the street network was extended, with the block sizes varying slightly, north of 3rd Avenue NE than the historic core. More recent developments “required” large block sizes and as a result the street network and block sizes became more discontinuous and irregular especially at schools and residential areas.

The small block size in the downtown makes the area walkable. Most of the downtown fits within a 1/4 mile radius around the Court Square. In five minutes a pedestrian can walk across the entire nine block study area. In ten minutes a pedestrian can walk from N Cedar Street to the bank of Boiling Fork Creek and from 4th Avenue SW to 4th Ave NW. This walking radius covers most of the downtown commercial area around the square leading into the surrounding residential neighborhoods. Similarly, one can walk to several churches, the Public Library, the Federal Building, the Board of Education and City Hall all within five minutes of the County Courthouse.



Aerial Map of Downtown Winchester



**LEGEND**

- █ Historic Grid
- █ First Expansion

As Winchester grew, the historic pattern of streets and blocks was expanded, thus major central streets are interconnected and connect to other places.

As we go further out, the patterns of streets and blocks become less regular but still are interconnected. It is not insignificant that many of the major streets of downtown continue beyond the core and connect various parts of the city to the center. This is a critical aspect of keeping a downtown center active.



Tims Ford Lake



Original buildings around the Square.

## LAND USE PATTERNS

The next step in the site analysis process is to look at the patterns of land uses, in particular the residential neighborhoods, retail/commercial areas, parks and institutions, industry and natural areas.

### RESIDENTIAL

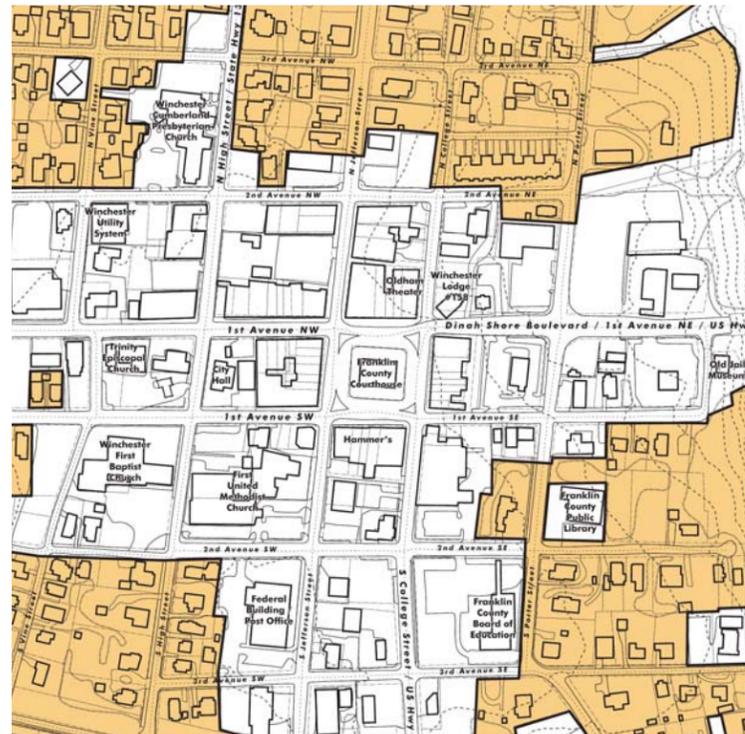
Around the fringe of the downtown area, established neighborhoods are located in all directions of the core. These areas are often comprised of one- to two-story single family residences, and appear to be generally in good repair. Lawns are mowed, trees and flowers are planted, and the streets seem safe.

Interestingly, there exists little or no residential within the downtown commercial area. It has been our experience that one way of energizing a downtown area is by reintroducing residential into the core, in the form of townhouses, apartments above shops, or even loft-style dwellings in former warehouses. Accommodating a built-in population downtown helps keep the area active 7 days a week, not simply between 9 am and 5 PM.

### COMMERCIAL

Downtown Winchester is typical of other downtowns, it is where commercial and retail uses predominate, and that is evidenced by the Commercial land use map. Commercial uses surround the County Courthouse, and extend east-west along 1st Avenue NW.

Winchester had a thriving downtown commercial center throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These buildings were typically two-part commercial structures with large storefronts of plate glass and details such as brick piers or cast iron pilasters. Masonry upper facades were often embellished with brick corbelling at the roof line and had arched or rectangular one-over-one sash windows. Majority of storefronts in the downtown area have been extensively remodeled and few buildings retain original elements.



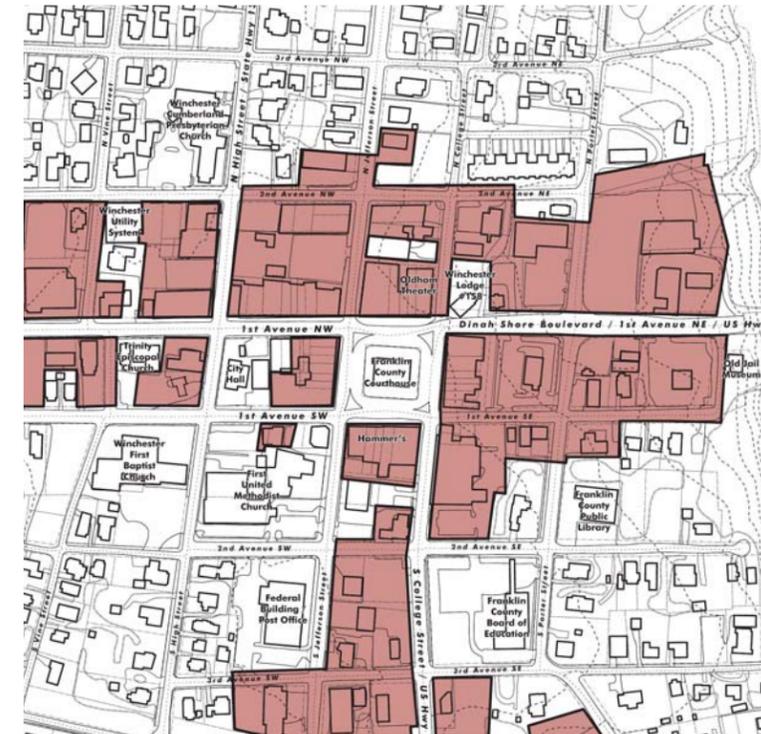
Residential



Craftsman Bungalows



Italianate Farmhouse



Commercial



San Miguel Coffee Company



Oldham Theater



Parks and Institutions



Tree Cover

Buildings along 1st Ave NE east of downtown are typical strip development consisting mostly of chain restaurants, banks and gas stations, that are set back about 40-60 feet, with drive-thrus and parking lots. These buildings exhibit no relationship to the historic commercial buildings and surrounding context.

**PARKS AND INSTITUTIONS**

The downtown area is home to several institutional buildings. These include churches, civic, and government buildings such as the City Hall, Public Library and Old Jail Museum. The most dominant public building is the Franklin County Courthouse constructed in the 1920s in Art Deco style to replace an earlier courthouse that was demolished in 1839.

Downtown Winchester lacks much needed public parks and common open spaces for recreation and gatherings. Currently, the city closes selected streets to accommodate large events such as the Dogwood Festival. Opportunity for a city park exists along the undeveloped bank of Boiling Fork Creek.

**TREE COVER**

The viability and health of an active downtown is greatly influenced by the amount of landscaping and vegetative cover. Trees that provide shade from the hot summer sun promote pedestrian activity and window shopping. Aesthetically, trees in a downtown environment provide beauty and celebrate the changing seasons.

Over the history of expansion and growth, downtown Winchester has unfortunately lost much of its' vegetative cover. Specifically, the commercial core within the nine block study area is devoid of any significant tree cover. Most significant trees in the downtown area remain in small clusters around church yards and institutional buildings at City Hall and the County Courthouse. Larger stands of tree cover encroach downtown from the surrounding residential neighborhoods and along the banks of Boiling Fork Creek.



Franklin County Courthouse built in the 1920s



City Hall



First United Methodist Church



Public Library

**FIGURE/GROUND**

A Figure/Ground study is a graphic tool used by planners to very quickly understand the relationship of buildings to open spaces. Buildings are shaded in black and surface parking areas are shaded in gray. The remaining white space, or ground, indicates areas devoid of built form such as public rights-of-way, streets, parks, private lawns, etc.

The Figure/Ground study of downtown Winchester illustrates a well defined center with intact building mass around all four sides of the Court Square. This study also illustrates how building density is gravitated toward the commercial center and gradually fragments to a less dense pattern at the residential neighborhood edges. This pattern is typical of small towns across America.

Contrary to the common opinion of a lack of available parking, the Figure/Ground study illustrates the vast, yet fragmented amount of land utilized for parking lots in the downtown area. An opportunity exists to provide better signage and definition of public parking areas.

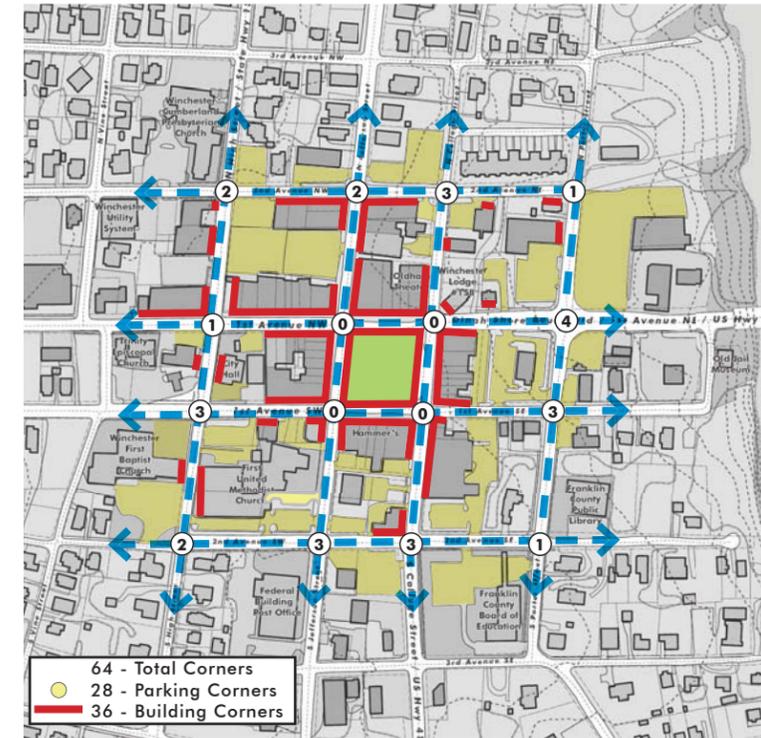
**PARKING**

With the exception of the Court Square, all intersecting streets in the study area have corner lots currently used to park automobiles. These corner lots are the most valuable real estate assets for commercial store frontage in the downtown area and therefore should be redeveloped for commercial or mixed-use buildings. Commercial activity will flourish at these highly visible street corners. Parking lots should be placed to the rear of buildings facing primary public streets, (east-west streets) in downtown Winchester.

On-street parking is available on many of the streets in the study area. Convenient on-street parking, either angled or parallel, is crucial to the viability of commercial activity and success in a downtown area. On-street parking also provides a safety buffer between moving traffic on the street and pedestrians on the sidewalk.



Figure Ground



Street Corner Parking Lot Analysis



There is no distinction between the street and parking lot



Corners are for shops, not for parking



Parking lots need to be screened from street views



Vacant Corners provide opportunity for commercial infill

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Land Use Map

### LAND USE PLAN

As a result of the process to discover the underlying patterns of development that have led to Winchester's being what it is today, the team prepared a Land Use map which codes the various land uses with different colors. This map enables the team to prepare designs based upon the strengths and weaknesses of the area.



Aerial photo of Courthouse Square

**SITE ANALYSIS - COURTHOUSE SQUARE**

The four sides of the Courthouse Square form what one could call the four walls of the Winchester living room. Within this space is the heart and soul of the community, the Franklin County Courthouse, surrounded on four sides by the walls of the room formed by the facades of the historic brick buildings on 1st Ave NE, South College St., 1st Ave SE, and South Jefferson St.

The design team toured the area as critical observers, noting where the environment was healthy, and where there was a need for improvement. The following pages depict the existing conditions that we found. In all, what we found was exquisite historical architecture that is very valuable and difficult to replicate.

The northwest side of the Square, along 1st Avenue NE, is lined by a continuous row of brick buildings facing the street. All buildings are two-story in height, although many upper stories are unused or boarded-up. The restored Oldham Theater at the corner of 1st Avenue NE and N College Street serves as a welcoming gateway building to the Courthouse Square. A large, three bay building at the corner of 1st Avenue NE and N Jefferson Street is currently vacant with murals painted on the storefront windows and boarded-up second story windows. A few storefronts along this facade have been replaced with punched window openings and residential entrances uncharacteristic of a vibrant commercial downtown.

The northeast side of the Square, along South College Street is lined by a continuous row of brick buildings facing the street. These buildings are a mix of one and two story in height. Some storefronts and signage/transom window areas have been changed from the original design. Some upper story window patterns have been changed to be uncharacteristic of the historic facade.

The Southeast side of the square, along 1st Avenue SE is occupied by Hammer's. Although the business attracts many visitors and creates much needed commercial activity, the building is not in keeping with the character of the Square. A challenge presents itself for this facade to support the vision of the Courthouse Square while maintaining a unique identity as an established regional icon.



Facade Condition - North of 1st Avenue NE at Courthouse Square.



Facade Condition - East of South College Street/US Hwy 41 at Courthouse Square.



Facade Condition - South of 1st Avenue SE at Courthouse Square.



Facade Condition - West of South Jefferson Street at Courthouse Square.

The southwest side of the Square, along South Jefferson Street, is lined by a continuous row of brick buildings. All buildings are two-story in height, except for Sam Miguel Coffee Company which is three-story in height. Most of the buildings have an active storefront with office above, while some others have boarded-up windows and unused upper floors. A few storefronts along this facade have been replaced with punched window openings and residential entrances uncharacteristic of a vibrant commercial downtown. The building next to Sam Miguel's is a modern replacement to the original building/facade destroyed in a fire and is not in keeping with the character of the other buildings. One of the buildings has added a red metal roof that is historically inappropriate. Due to the lack of a rear service alley in this block, several utility meters are located on the front facade.

**SITE ANALYSIS - 1ST AVE NW**

Both sides of 1st Avenue NW between N High Street and N Jefferson Street have similar elements as those surrounding the Square.

The south side of 1st Avenue NW is lined by a continuous row of brick buildings facing the street. All buildings are two-story in height with the exception of a narrow one-story, alley infill building currently occupied by an art gallery.

The side-wall of the building at the corner of N Jefferson Street and 1st Avenue NW lacks street level windows and presents an uncomfortable blank wall along the streetscape that separates the west end of this block from the Courthouse Square. A large portion of this street wall lacks appropriately scaled windows and entries along the street level.

The north side of 1st Avenue NW is lined by a continuous row of brick buildings facing the street with a prominent stone building, once occupied by a bank, located at the east corner. Most buildings are two-story in height with the exception of two, one-story buildings at the center of the block.

Most of these buildings retain some elements of their original facade detailing. Some of the upper floor windows have been boarded-up and don't appear to be occupied. Metal canopies have been added that are uncharacteristic to the historical character of the buildings.



Facade Condition - South of 1st Avenue NW between S Jefferson St and S High St.



Facade Condition - North of 1st Avenue NW between N Jefferson St and N High St/State Hwy 130.

### SITE ANALYSIS - NORTH JEFFERSON ST

The west side of N Jefferson Street is anchored at the south end by a prominent, two-story stone building currently occupied by a restaurant and upper floor offices. The north end of this block is anchored by a one-story brick commercial building.

The middle portion of this block is open to a parking lot that serves this block and others in the downtown area. A shallow infill building opportunity exists in this gap to screen the parking and service areas from street views and connect 2nd Ave NW to the Courthouse Square.

The east side of N Jefferson Street is dominated by the side facade of a building facing the Square which has unique windows along the side, but not at eye level and acts more as a blank facade. The rest of the buildings are one-story and many have metal canopies that are not in keeping with the rest of the area. This is a transition area between the strong two-story character of the Square and commercial uses on 2nd Avenue NW.



Facade Condition - West of North Jefferson Street between 1st Avenue NW and 2nd Avenue NW.

### SITE ANALYSIS - 2ND AVE NE

The north side of 2nd Avenue NE is lined by a continuous one-story brick building facing the street that is currently occupied by a fitness gym/Karate studio. This building transitions in grade one full story with a basement level appearing at the east end of the block. A private outdoor plaza fronts the street corner at N College Street. This facade has an industrial character to it with boarded-up windows and a heavy basement wall along the streetscape.



Facade Condition - East of North Jefferson Street between 1st Avenue NW and 2nd Avenue NW.



Facade Condition - South of 2nd Avenue NE between N College St and N Jefferson St.

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Facade Condition - South of 2nd Avenue NW between N Jefferson St and N High St/State Hwy 130.

**SITE ANALYSIS - 2ND AVE NW**

The north side of 2nd Avenue NW is lined by a continuous one-story brick building facing the street. The facade of this building suggests a rhythm of separate buildings defined by different paint schemes and architectural elements. Most of these storefronts are appropriate for a retail street. A couple of the storefronts have inappropriate detailing, but might be improved without replacement.

The west end of this block is a surface parking lot that does little to define the street corner at N High Street. An opportunity exists for a much needed infill building at this corner.

**SITE ANALYSIS - NORTH HIGH ST AND 1ST AVE NW**

The west side of N High Street is anchored at the corner of 1st Avenue NW by a prominent two-story brick building. The brick detailing and storefront of this building is appropriate for a downtown commercial facade. The corner of 2nd Avenue NW is fronted by a one-story service station building with a canopy that is currently occupied by a home interiors store. This adaptive reuse works well for the downtown edge transition to surrounding residential neighborhoods. A one-story brick building in the block interior has maintained appropriate storefronts and is fully occupied.

A mid-block opening offers an opportunity for a shallow infill building or landscape treatment to visually screen the parking from street views.

The north side of 1st Avenue NW between N Vine Street and N High Street is anchored at the east corner by a prominent two-story brick building. The brick detailing and storefront of this building is appropriate for a downtown commercial facade. The roll-up garage doors and large industrial windows on this facade offer an opportunity to create a unique indoor/outdoor restaurant dining experience.

The remainder of this block to the west includes a one-story service station building currently used by the neighboring funeral home for a vehicle service facility. A 2-story, mid-block building is uncharacteristic for the downtown area.



Facade Condition - West of North High St/State Hwy 130 between 1st Avenue NW and 2nd Avenue NW.



Facade Condition - North of 1st Avenue NW between N High St/State Hwy 130 and N Vine St.

**SITE ANALYSIS - GATEWAY ENTRY**

The Winchester Downtown Plan carefully considers and responds to the context of the surrounding community outside of the official nine block study area. Major thoroughfares connecting the downtown to surrounding cities and neighborhoods are of paramount importance to creating a welcoming experience that encourages tourism and draws repeat visitors.

The existing US Hwy 41 approach to downtown Winchester from Decherd does little to define a sense of arrival. Although the bridge crossing Boiling Fork Creek defines a physical threshold, the strip-commercial corridor development pattern continues along the highway across the bridge up to the rear of buildings facing the Courthouse Square. The rise in grade approaching the Courthouse Square also conceals building fronts that tell motorists they are approaching a densely populated area. First time visitors are unaware they are approaching a pedestrian friendly historic downtown core due to a lack of visual and tactile clues along the roadway.

Wide street sections along Hwy 41 from the bridge to N College Street do little to slow approaching traffic speeds. The lack of a traffic signal at N College allows incoming traffic to enter the Courthouse Square at highway speeds. A lack of on-street parking, well designed sidewalks, and a building wall close to the street promotes the suburban expectation that pedestrians will not be encountered along the street.

An opportunity presents itself to create a more welcoming gateway by leveraging the city's unique natural and built assets along US Hwy 41. These assets include the US 41 bridge, Boiling Fork Creek and waterfront, the Old Jail Museum, and several commercial/mixed-use infill opportunities fronting US Hwy 41 from the bridge to the Court Square. These elements should be knit together in a walkable, urban fabric that expands the character of the Court Square to the east bank of Boiling Fork Creek.



Existing gateway to Winchester from Decherd along US Hwy 41



Suburban commercial development pattern offers infill and redevelopment opportunities to create a welcoming "gateway" along US Hwy 41



Pedestrian Arrival from Decherd



US Highway 41 Bridge



Old Jail Museum built in 1897



Infill / redevelopment opportunities



Connection to the lake

**Master Plan Initiatives &  
Development Opportunities**





### HISTORICAL CHALLENGES TO SMALL TOWNS

The Downtown Winchester Master Plan presents the community with the opportunity to look back into the rich history of the region and the things that made its towns and rural villages attractive, sustainable and successful over time. In some communities however, uncontrolled growth, suburban sprawl, planning and architectural trends - practiced from the mid to late 20th century - shattered many components of small towns that gave them both character and quality of life. Sadly, many downtown areas were neglected and buildings abandoned, leading to the substantial decline of their physical and economic viability. Priority was given to automobile-oriented uses, transportation corridors and new architecture forms that often ignored or destroyed traces of architectural heritage by adopting proportions and forms which ruined street frontages, pedestrian routes and spatial relationships.

Winchester did not escape this transformation, however the town was able to preserve fragments of both architecture and urbanism that, although is in a less than perfect condition, will serve as the foundation for the revitalization of Winchester that is described by this Downtown Master Plan.

From August 12 to 14, 2008, the design team came to Winchester for a three-day design workshop to brainstorm ideas for the future of Downtown through a series of meetings with various community leaders, business owners and other stakeholders.

The Master Plan design process took into account both the historical patterns and the spatial characteristics of the core of Winchester. It also afforded the opportunity to discover the essence of the place by understanding its existing building densities, building disposition and architectural character. The study area was analyzed to find the underlying elements that composed the Downtown fabric and the main characteristics of the place.

### THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

The Downtown Winchester Master Plan uses proven place making strategies that will enable the downtown area, including the Courthouse Square, to become the vibrant, attractive and safe core of the community that it can be by instituting the following basic principles:

- Create a clearly defined urban network comprised of compact walkable streets, a regional trail system, and street improvements that connect the existing Courthouse Square with businesses along 1st Ave NW.
- Create a public/civic space network composed of new public squares, plazas and trails, recreational areas, and natural interconnected corridors.
- Permit a variety of building types and uses, including mixed use, commercial and residential buildings, to be built around the Courthouse Square and 1st Ave NW. Higher intensity development and density will be focused around well-defined public/civic spaces.
- Connect the downtown public spaces to the surrounding lake and other natural areas by trails and improved streets.

The Courthouse Square and its surrounding buildings are at the heart of the downtown area, which could be called the Downtown Core. Given the history and the civic/public uses of the space, it has value inherent in its architecture and urban form. Its pattern might be similar to that of other Mid-South towns, however what is unique to Winchester is its scale and spatial definition based upon the urban layout and architectural quality of its buildings.

This Master Plan suggests maintaining and celebrating the civic function of the Square, while simultaneously completing the surrounding architecture and uses on the blocks around the square. The blocks should be reconstituted by combining existing structures with new buildings, improved parking areas, and new uses that will bring vitality to the immediate area. There could be commercial uses (convenience stores, specialty local shops, hardware stores, hotel or inn, grocery stores etc.), service commercial (small service oriented business, cafes, pubs and restaurants, etc.), museums and possible office uses either located above ground-floor commercial space or as small independent store fronts. The breadth of this transformation could extend one or more blocks in all directions from the Square and especially along 1st Ave NW, the main commercial spine that links the Courthouse Square with the rest of Winchester.

1st Ave NE, designated as US Highway 41, has been the main artery for the city and so the Master Plan proposes to make it more complimentary to the rest of the existing urban fabric by reinstating more urbane building forms along both 1st Ave NE and South College St. This will provide a



Pedestrian friendly streetscape at Courthouse Square



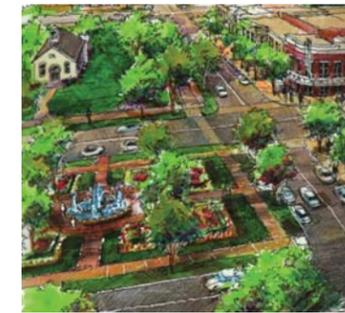
Entering Downtown Winchester from US Hwy 41 / Dinah Shore Boulevard



New Infill buildings



Farmers Market



Small Public Squares



Screened parking



Small Commercial



Perspective

clear building block structure with buildings facing the street and parking areas located to the center of the block to serve the local parking demand. On-street parking is encouraged around the block perimeter in order to provide convenient parking and to help slow traffic speeds through the middle of town.

Two buildings on either side across the bridge will provide for new street frontages and will serve as a new gateway to Downtown area from the east. On-street parking is encouraged to be combined with center block parking for the new uses.

Streetscape improvements for both 1st Ave NW and all four sides of the Courthouse Square are designed to bring back pedestrians and create a safe environment where vehicles will travel at slower speeds in this new urban environment. A boulevard-type street with a central landscaped median is proposed on 2nd Ave SW from the intersection of South Porter St to South High Street, redefining the institutional district corridor. Within the core area of downtown, around the Courthouse Square, the existing on-street diagonal parking is retained to serve the activities around the Square.

## THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE

The revitalization of the Winchester Courthouse Square is incumbent on both public and private interests in order to create the kind of attractive, vibrant and sustainable center that the community desires. This is accomplished through the improvements of the public streets, and by private investment in the buildings and vacant properties around the area.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is currently executing a plan for the right-of-way surrounding the court house. This plan will serve to improve vehicular traffic patterns and pedestrian connectivity around the square. Plans for the square illustrated in this document are intended to serve as recommendations for consideration in the TDOT plan.

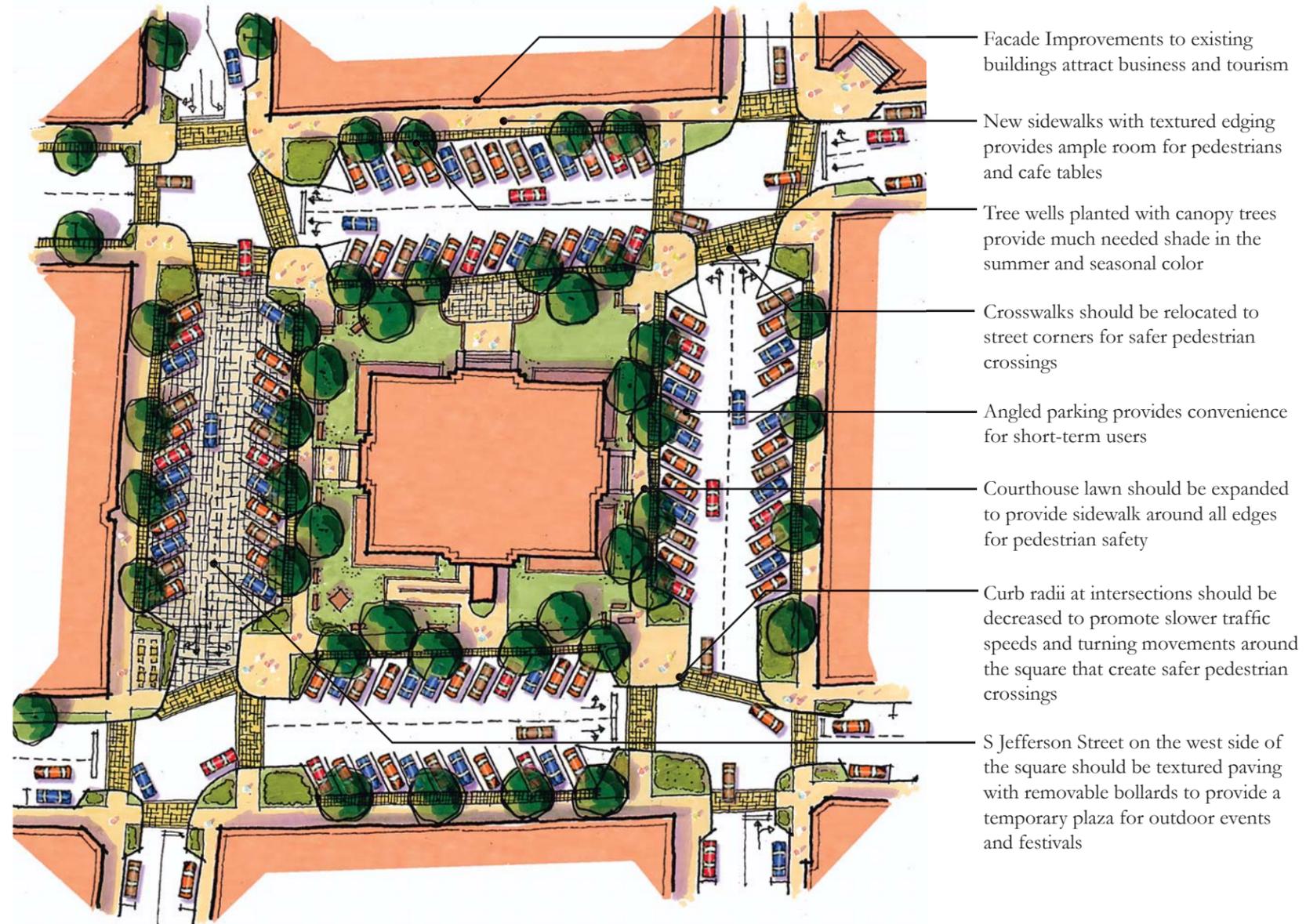
### PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AREAS — PEDESTRIAN RELATED

**Sidewalks:** Sidewalk crossings at the street corners should be ramped to allow easy crossing of the street by the disabled or families with strollers. Broken sidewalks should be repaired. Textured paving in certain locations can be introduced where space allows. Where transitions from the street are large, steps at regular intervals should be introduced. Consideration should be given to adding sidewalks around the Courthouse lawn at street level to provide visitors a safer path.

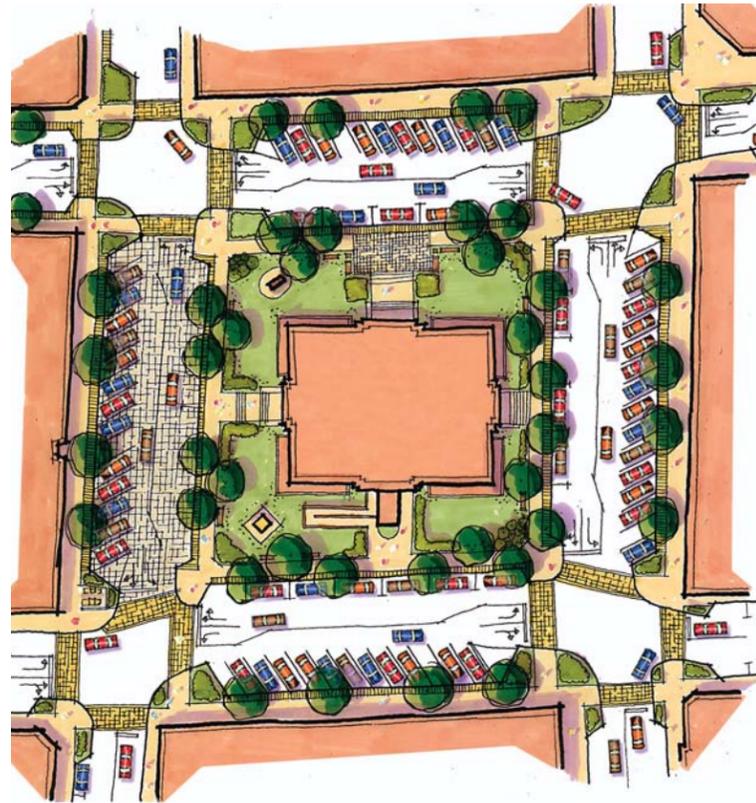
**Landscaping:** Planting beds should be maintained to permit pedestrian access where needed, and new street trees, planters or other landscaping should be introduced where possible without negatively impacting storefronts.

**Lighting:** Replacement of street lighting should be done with historically accurate fixtures that are appropriate to the era of most of the buildings. Building lighting should be done with traditional fixtures, including gooseneck, pendant and gaslight inspired fixtures. Bare bulbs, wall-pack fixtures, and neon lighting should not be permitted in any exterior location.

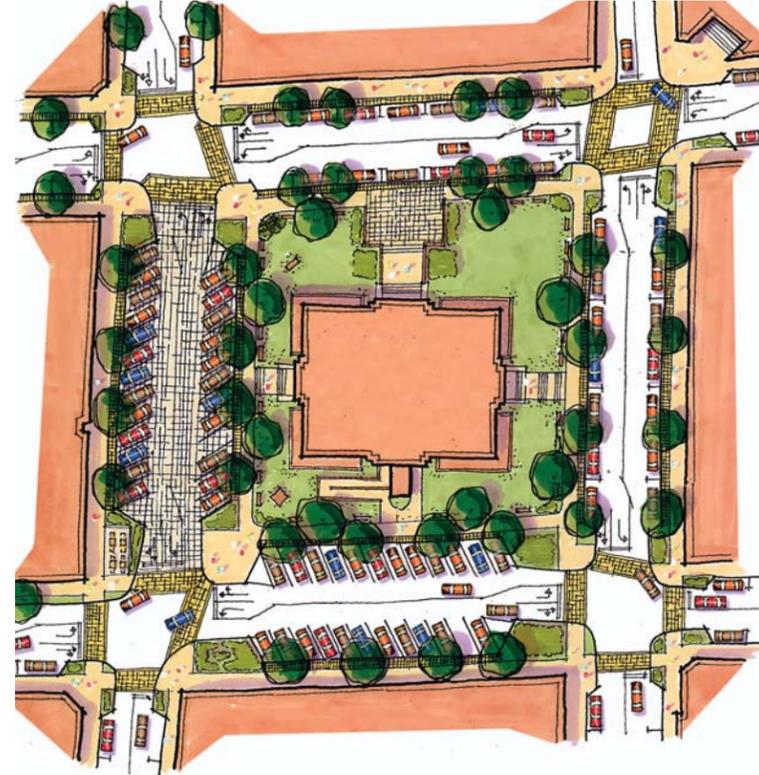
**Furniture:** Benches or other furniture should be located at vantage points around the Square where one can sit and watch people walk by. Benches should be wood and wrought iron in appearance. Trash receptacles should be strategically placed at points where they will be most used along pedestrian paths of movement.



Detailed Plan of recommended Courthouse Square improvements.



Alternate 1



Alternate 2



Improved Streetscapes



Street trees



Clearly delineated pedestrian zones



Signage

**Newspaper & Shipping Boxes:** Newspaper boxes, and shipping/ mail drop-boxes should be located where they do not detract from the pedestrian pathways, and don't dominate the view. Enclosures could be made to help hide these boxes.

**Crosswalks:** Crosswalks at street corners, or in the middle of the block, should be clearly marked, possibly with textured paving or contrasts in color. Signage and lighting appropriate for pedestrians should be incorporated.

**On-Street Parking:** Parking on-street should remain wherever possible either in angled or parallel spaces. Parking meters could be installed to promote short-term usage and help generate income for other improvements.

**PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY AREAS — VEHICULAR RELATED**

**Street width:** Existing streets are excessively wide in places and inefficient in terms of travel lane widths (widths of 80 feet from face of curb to face of curb exist in some areas around the Courthouse). This enables motorists to drive considerably over the speed limit and the wide streets do not enhance the pedestrian environment, especially around the Square. By using standard travel lanes of 11 feet, effective street widths are narrowed and help provide traffic calming.

**Bump outs:** The use of bump outs will help calm traffic by forcing turning vehicles to slow down in the narrowed section provided, in addition to reducing crossing distances and providing access for wheelchair users crossing the street outside the clear travel zone of sidewalks. These bump outs should be provided in heavy pedestrian zones particularly around the Courthouse.

**Traffic calming:** Additional traffic calming can be achieved by introducing raised mid-block crossings. These crossings should be marked to clearly delineate pedestrian zones.

**Drain inlets:** Existing drain inlets are located in the path of pedestrian crossings and potential cyclist traffic. Inlets should be standardized in type and placed within the length of the block and not at the corners. Where possible, inlets can be concealed by placement within the height of the face of curb.

**On-street parking:** Angled on-street parking should be striped at 60 degrees.

**Temporary Street Closings:** S Jefferson Street on the west side of the Square should be textured paving with removable bollards to create a temporary pedestrian plaza for special events and festivals.



Farmers Market



Street Festivals

These Initiatives are intended to give direction to groups like the Winchester Downtown Program, the City of Winchester and others as to which activities to pursue in order to improve the downtown area.

### MASTER PLAN INITIATIVES - DOWNTOWN WINCHESTER

The initiatives for the Downtown core range from restoration and improvement of existing architecture to development opportunities (streetscape improvements, infill development, farmers market, inn or hotel, connectivity to the Tims Ford Lake), incentives for private property owners (building improvements, new uses), establishing development regulations (design guidelines, new zoning/land use controls), and activities (festivals, study traffic, pursue funding).

#### Improve What You Have

- Enhance the pedestrian realm to encourage pedestrian activity by improving the streetscape. Expand streetscape improvements to surrounding blocks in later phases.
- Restore the exterior of the Franklin County Courthouse (fix the clock) and landscape its grounds.
- Enforce all existing building and property codes.
- Screen existing corner parking lots with well-maintained evergreen hedges until infill or redevelopment occurs.
- Make facade improvements to buildings that have removed, covered, painted over or obscured original details, windows, storefronts or doors.
- Maintain/establish connectivity between downtown and surrounding neighborhoods.

#### Attract More People Downtown

- Work with groups like the Chamber of Commerce to actively recruit development such as destination restaurants, micro-brewery, hotel, arts and entertainment venues, and new specialized retail to create activity on the street after office business hours.
- Promote Extended Downtown Business hours into the evening and on weekends.
- Collaborate with Institutes of Higher Learning (Sewanee, Motlow, Columbia State, University of Tennessee) to create extension facilities in or near Downtown.

- Develop a Business Incubator to help with local start-up business ventures.
- Address perceptions of public safety in Downtown – foot/bike patrols during select hours; crime prevention programs for downtown merchants; Neighborhood Watch for Downtown; Youth Activities Center/programs oriented toward teenagers.
- Keep remaining City/County government functions Downtown.
- Promote and market downtown redevelopment and provide a calendar of events of activities in downtown Winchester. Introduce seasonal /holiday block parties and street festivals to encourage more activity Downtown.
- Create a Visitor/Tourist Center to promote Downtown, the City of Winchester, and Franklin County.
- Establish a Farmers Market to connect residents with locally-grown produce in a fun atmosphere.
- Create financial incentives for mixed-use ground-floor retail and upper-level residential uses in existing and future development.

#### Invest In the Public Realm

- Revise/update existing development regulations (expand to include mixed use opportunities around fringe areas of Downtown); Unified development standards between City and County
- Create a Downtown Overlay District to address land use and design standards specific to study area – streetscape, green infrastructure, architecture, land use, screening, and plan review process.
- Develop design guidelines for promoting the proper redevelopment of Downtown.
- Create/update anti-neglect regulations; enforcement.
- Create a Business Improvement District (BID) – nearly 15,000 BIDs are in place across the U.S.
- Embellish the Gateway arrival on both sides of the Hwy 41 bridge leading into Downtown.
- Install Wi-Fi Internet Service for use throughout Downtown Square.
- Look for opportunities to convert 3 and 4 lane arterial streets to boulevards.
- Introduce bicycle routes and trolley service to encourage alternative transportation and recreational activity.
- Construct and repair sidewalks and add street trees, benches, and waste receptacles, to encourage pedestrian activity.

- Relocate utility lines to enhance the visual realm.
- Add historically appropriate pedestrian scale lighting to enhance safety and security.
- Maintain and add on-street parallel and/or angled parking as a critical element for business prosperity.

**Compel Private Stakeholders to Match Improvements**

- Create financial or development incentives such as tax breaks or grants to encourage property owners to improve their properties.
- Encourage property owners to renovate upper floors of existing buildings and locate retail on the first floors and residential space or offices on second floors.
- Energize Downtown Merchants Association as “champion for change” in Downtown .
- Organize Shared Parking – public/private partnership with Places of Worship, civic/institutional uses, and businesses

**Connect to Tims Ford Lake**

- Improve streetscapes and pedestrian access from the Square to the Lake.
- Reconnect with the Lake along a new linear greenway. Locate parks, performance venues, pedestrian and bicycle trails, picnic areas, camping, and boat launching and docking opportunities along this greenway. Connect to the City Park, Swimplex and proposed marina.
- Create a “Rails to Trails” greenway along the abandoned rail line south of Downtown that crosses Boiling Fork Creek and connects to Franklin County High School, Decherd, and other regional points of interest.
- Water Taxi – shuttle between Bear Trace and Downtown and other points of interest on Tims Ford Lake.
- Look for business development opportunities along the Lake edge on both sides of Boiling Fork Creek such as restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and outdoor equipment outfitters.

**Plan for Development Opportunities**

- Establish residential housing and offices downtown that encourages “eyes on the street” surveillance, activity on the street, and provides a stronger market for retail activity.

- Look for opportunities to redevelop corner parking lots with mixed-use buildings that match the urban fabric of Downtown Winchester.
- Encourage/require all new development to locate buildings adjacent to the street while placing off-street parking in the rear of the buildings.
- Require new construction to adhere to design guidelines that promote attractive architectural facades and storefronts, entrances that face the street to encourage pedestrian activity along all streets.
- Use infill or redevelopment opportunities to extend the Downtown urban development pattern east along US Hwy 41 to the bridge.

**Create a Managing Entity**

- Hire an experienced individual and/or a committee to review redevelopment plans and ensure that development adheres to development guidelines.
- Enlist a Special Events Coordinator to fill the calendar with events (Ex: Barber Shop Haircut Day).
- Create a Joint City-County Economic Development Authority.
- Create a Vacant Properties Coordinator to address vacant properties and under-utilized properties and fill the voids.

**MASTER PLAN INITIATIVES - FRANKLIN COUNTY**

From the discussions that occurred during/at the design workshop, it became clearly evident that the future of Downtown rests not only on what happens immediately around the Franklin County Courthouse Square, but also that initiatives far from the core have a significant impact on what happens in Winchester. The following should be addressed as part of the overall coordination of what happens in the County Seat so that advances made can be generated into forward momentum in the rest of the County.

- Create ecologically sensitive opportunities for recreation on the Tims Ford Lake that generate revenue for the County.
- Promote regionalism with other cities in the County, working together as a united County for growth and development.
- Consider building a corporate retreat or convention center.
- Create a new county-wide development code that focuses on “rural stewardship” as a means to preserve the best of Franklin County while allowing for growth.



Dining along the Waterfront



Waterfront park and Amphitheater

### COURTHOUSE SQUARE IMPROVEMENTS

Based upon our observations of the condition around the Square, improvements could be made to enhance the appearance, and functionality, of the buildings, sidewalks and other elements which would make the area more attractive.

Improvements are required to bring the existing buildings in the area up to a level of quality and usability that will help them become attractive places to work, shop or conduct other business. The building and property owners should make improvements such as improving upper-story areas, cleaning facades, restoring covered windows, signage, lighting and making other exterior or interior improvements. Particular recommendations follow on subsequent pages.

Possibilities exist for infill development in the blocks surrounding the square, where vacant or under-utilized land could be used for new commercial or residential uses. The master plan diagram, shows possible locations for new development in a manner that permits buildings to face the streets with parking areas located towards the center of the block.

### BUILDINGS

**Brickwork:** Brickwork should be brushed clean and repointed with matching mortar (color and composition), not cut with tools or using modern mortar. Paint should be removed by non-abrasive or chemical means. Fake stone, stucco, concrete, wood paneling, siding or shingles are not appropriate and should be replaced with brick or wood trim.

**Storefront Windows:** The traditional pattern of storefront window design should be restored, including large windows on either side of a mostly-glass door. Transom windows above should be restored (in many cases they are simply covered by signage or blocked by internal drop ceilings that can be set back).

**Doors:** 8 ft. tall wood or metal doors with large window areas should be used, sometimes recessed into the storefront to create more window display area and provide weather protection.



Improvements - North of 1st Avenue NW at Courthouse Square.



Improvements - East of South College Street/US Hwy 41 at Courthouse Square.



Storefronts



Store - recessed entrance/  
Facade composition



Awnings/Canopies



Doors



Improvements - West of South Jefferson Street at Courthouse Square.



Improvements - South of 1st Avenue SE at Courthouse Square



Signage



Lighting



Upper Floor Windows



Trash Receptacles

**Upper Floors:** Upper floor spaces should be restored to use, and boarded up windows replaced with operable and historically accurate replacements. Original windows should be restored, and if new replacements are needed then the shape and pattern of divided lites need to be replicated from historic sources.

**Awnings:** Metal, wood or vinyl awnings, canopies and porches should be replaced with fixed or operable canvas awnings, or simply removed. No backlit signage awnings should be permitted. Signage areas on the awning is encouraged to be limited to the skirt area only.

**Signage:** New signs should be placed in the area between the top of the storefront transom windows and the underside of the upper-story windows (the so-called signage band). Lettering should be lit by gooseneck fixtures, not internally lit. Perpendicular and sandwich board signs are permissible if appropriately sized and located.

**Trash & Utilities:** Trash receptacles and signal boxes should be screened or properly located and maintained.

#### MAINTENANCE & SERVICES

**Storefronts:** Storefronts on the ground floor should be filled with active uses, such as retail, restaurants or other public offices with frequent visitors, and not with private offices that are infrequently occupied. Vacant storefronts should be leased. Until leased, they should be filled with displays of local history or merchandise of nearby shops.

**Regular Cleaning:** A regimen of regular cleaning should be enacted, including picking up trash, emptying dumpsters and receptacles, window washing and periodic maintenance of trim, painting, etc.

**Screen Services:** Utility meters and trash dumpsters should be hidden from view, screened by mature landscaping or fencing materials compatible with the surrounding buildings.

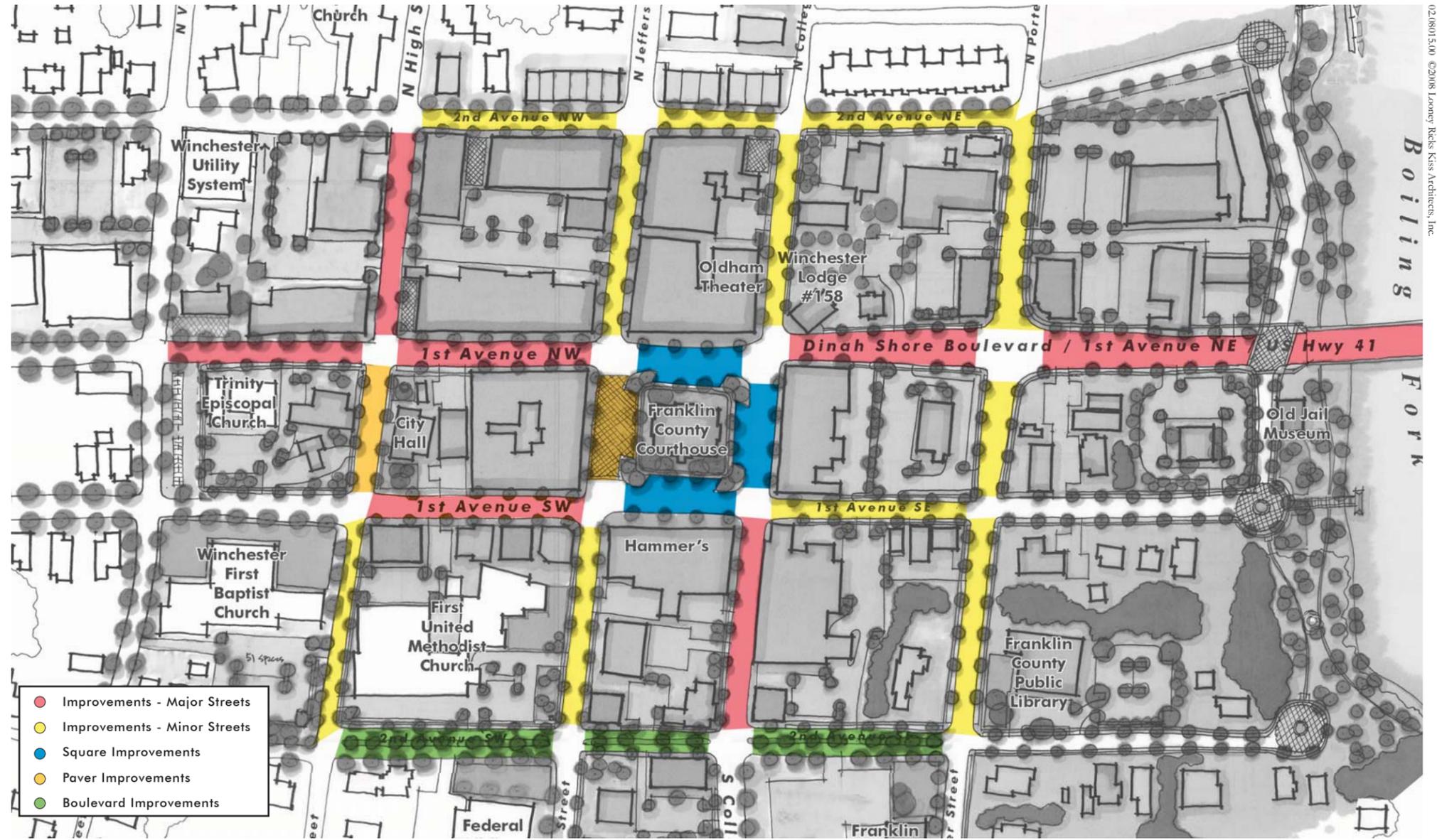
**Utility Poles:** Wherever possible, relocate power, data and other wired services to the alley side of the buildings or underground, removing unnecessary wires and poles from in front of buildings.

**STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS**

Important to a pedestrian experience is the attraction and retention of ground floor retail shops, art galleries, visitors centers, museums, restaurants and entertainment venues. Improvements to the streetscape can be a catalyst for redevelopment of a downtown. At the Courthouse Square and along 1st Avenue NW: street trees, pedestrian scale lighting, appropriate way-finding signage, banners, and street furniture such as benches, litter receptacles, newspaper kiosks, mailboxes, bicycle racks, as well as the design of the hardscape itself are specific elements targeted, for a unified sidewalk design including an attractive surface finish and scoring pattern. Crosswalks will be distinctly marked, and lanes narrowed at pedestrian crossings, to slow traffic. Regularly spaced street trees will provide refuge from the southern summer sun without obstructing pedestrian flow. Utility structures will be relocated from visible locations to hidden or underground locations. Lastly, but equally as important is to create attractively designed storefront displays that activate the streetscape and arouse curiosity. Each element, when incorporated into the improvement of the overall streetscape, plays a vital role in creating an inviting and memorable pedestrian experience.

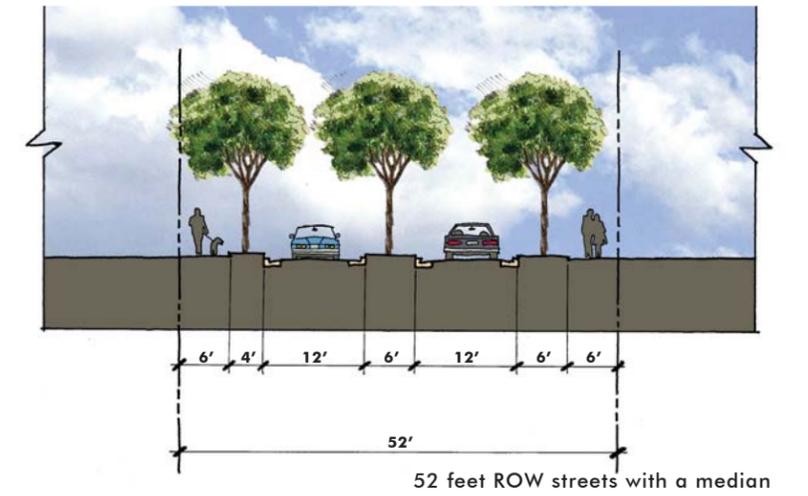
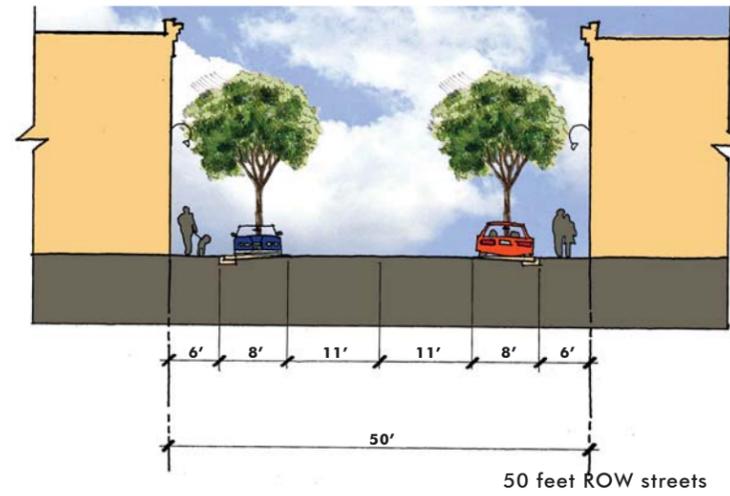
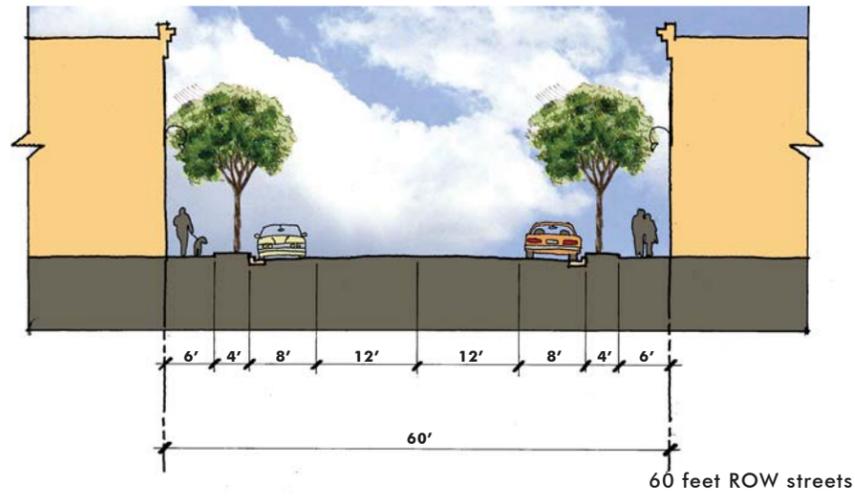
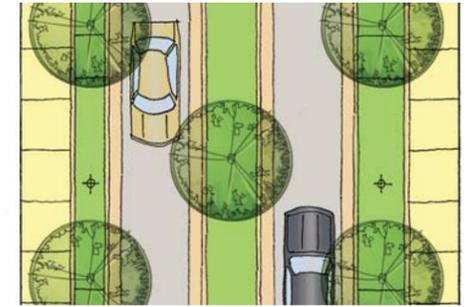
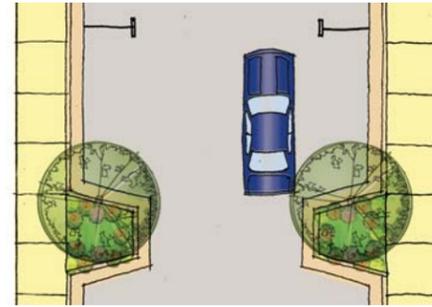
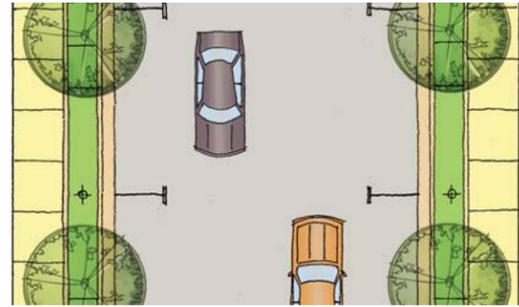
Second Avenue SW and SE presents an opportunity to create a landscaped boulevard to connect religious and civic institutions in a pedestrian friendly, campus-like corridor.

First Avenue NE from the Square to the bridge should be improved with wider sidewalks, street trees, textured crosswalks, and pedestrian scaled lighting with banners. Infill and redevelopment opportunities should complement the development standards around the Square. The City and County should work with the State to reduce the width of inbound and outbound traffic lanes along this corridor to calm traffic speeds prior to entering the Square. These improvements will create a welcoming gateway to the Square and inform visitors that pedestrians are present in this Downtown.



Streetscape Improvements

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Character Image



Character Image



Character Image

Plans, Sections and Character Images

**OTHER OPPORTUNITIES**

Several other opportunities were presented during the design workshop that occur outside of the official nine-block study area. These opportunities include:

**Riverfront Development Project**

Parcels located along Boiling Fork Creek could be assembled to create an urban waterfront park within two blocks of the Courthouse Square. This waterfront park could provide such amenities as transient boat docking, walking trails and boardwalks, an amphitheater, and retail kiosks. Parcels on the south side of the bridge could be assembled to extend the riverfront park south around the bend in the creek and support existing neighborhood assets such as the County Public Library and the Old Jail Museum. Opportunities could include a new bed and breakfast, destination restaurant, and a visual arts gallery. The waterfront park and development would be a highly visible gateway greeting for those entering downtown across the Hwy 41 bridge.

**Hwy 41 Bridge Improvement Project**

The Hwy 41 bridge across Boiling Fork Creek is such an important entry element into Winchester that it may warrant an improvement project. This project could improve pedestrian walkways, lighting, railings, and may even improve the appearance of the structure from beneath the bridge.



Waterfront Development Opportunities



Perspective



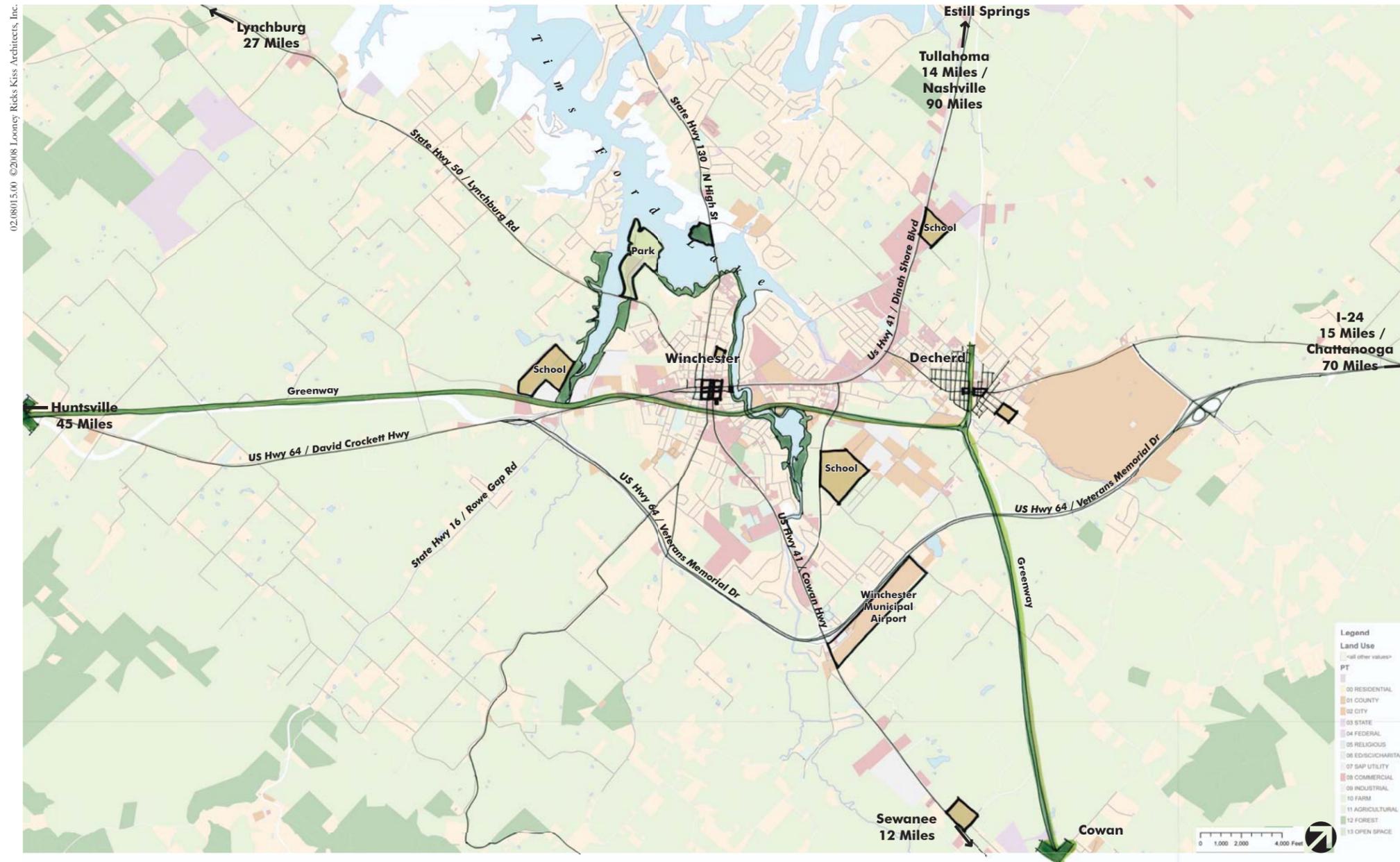
Public Art



Play Areas



Waterfront



Regional Framework Plan

Several other ideas have arisen over the course of the Master Planning process, which are worth mentioning here as other potential catalysts to contribute to the improvement of the Downtown Winchester area, or Franklin County as a whole. They include:

- Utilizing abandoned rail lines and bridge piers for a “Rails-to-Trails” program serving as the catalyst for a regional greenway system
- Linking downtown Winchester with trails along the banks of Boiling Fork Creek to Tims Ford Lake and the City Park, Swimplex, and proposed marina
- Improvements to the Franklin County Airport
- A corporate Retreat and Conference Center
- Incorporating improvements to the areas surrounding US Highway 64 Bypass including signage advertising the downtown area
- County-wide development controls based upon the ideas of Rural Stewardship such as developing an Urban Growth Boundary defined by Tims Ford Lake on the north, the Hwy 64 Bypass on the south and west, and Decherd on the east
- Creating a Corridor Overlay for Hwy 64 between Decherd and Winchester to address access control, signage standards, streetscape improvements, and development standards

## Action Items



## PROPOSED ACTION ITEMS

Now that the Master Plan has outlined what makes a great downtown, examined the study area, identified development opportunities, and proposed initiatives to be undertaken, what remains is to embark upon the action items to make the opportunities and initiatives real.

To undertake any single opportunity will undoubtedly require more resources than any one person or group can provide. By dividing the various tasks into smaller pieces, the massive task of making substantive changes becomes more manageable.

The following list identifies a number of the key action items by category, suitable for delegation to committees or professional service providers.

### DESIGN PROCESS

- LRK to complete and present the Downtown Master Plan.
- Design and implement catalytic improvements: Courthouse Square improvements; coordinate with TDOT streetscape improvements around the Square and along 1st Avenue NW; create trail links to Tims Ford Lake; identify sites for infill buildings (retail, mixed-use and residential).
- Study future traffic and parking demands; work with transportation consultant and TDOT to narrow street section and improve streetscape from Courthouse Square to bridge on US Hwy 41.
- Establish a Shared Parking Plan for Downtown that involves Civic and Religious Institutions with Business Owners.
- Identify locations for potential future parking garages and lot locations.
- Design and implement a Facade Improvements Program for buildings in the nine-block Downtown core.
- Re-visit and update master plan every few years.

### STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

- Identify and secure funding for further streetscape improvements.
- Survey remaining downtown sidewalks, curbs, lighting and utilities.
- Create streetscape design standards for future phases and select specified materials: hardscape elements (sidewalks, ramps, crosswalks); light fixtures; street trees and planters; street furniture (benches, trash

receptacles, bicycle racks, water fountains); parking meters; stop lights; wayfinding and street signage.

- Hire consultants to complete construction drawings.
- Relocate utilities where possible to the rear of properties or bury overhead utility lines.
- Implement the streetscape plans in phases, possibly in order of: current TDOT plan for the four sides of the Square; 1st Avenue NW from N Jefferson to N Vine St; 1st Avenue SW from S Vine St to S Jefferson St; US Hwy 41(1st Avenue NE) from S College St to the bridge; 1st Avenue SE and 2nd Avenue SE links to the waterfront; S College St from the Square to the old railroad bridge; and the remainder of the downtown core.

### DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Provide regular updates on the progress of downtown redevelopment through various media channels (newspaper, radio, TV, Internet).
- Reestablish retail and restaurants in the ground floor of buildings around the Square.
- Incentivize property owners to renovate upper floors of existing buildings into residential or office space.
- Establish a marketing campaign to lure new establishments to Downtown such as restaurants, retail shops, arts and music venues, antique stores, museums, book stores, coffee shops, news and video stores.
- Incentivize urban infill redevelopment of corner parking lots.
- Locate spaces for use as small business incubators and Institutions of Higher Learning, possibly tied to University of Tennessee or University of the South.
- Create a new Winchester Farmers Market downtown.
- Attract a signature destination restaurant, paired with other complementary restaurants.
- Encourage the County to maintain some civic services in the existing historic courthouse.
- Investigate the possibility of building a new Bed & Breakfast or boutique Hotel near the Square or on the waterfront.
- Develop a detailed Waterfront Master Plan and implement in phases as funding is secured and properties become available. Actively market the waterfront asset to potential restaurant and hotel business owners.





Town Festival



Tims Ford Lake

### ESTABLISH REGULATIONS

- Create a special overlay district for Downtown and the waterfront to ensure proper land use until design guidelines are adopted.
- Develop and adopt a set of design guidelines to guide appropriate development. Topics include: Building Siting; Massing; Facade Composition, Colors and Materials; Service, etc.
- Update signage regulations for the Downtown core area to be in keeping with the character of Downtown.
- Enable the Winchester Downtown Program to oversee and review redevelopment plans.
- Institute land use regulations to control sprawl along the US Hwy 64 Bypass corridor and intersections.

### ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

- Keep the Dogwood Festival Downtown and introduce additional block parties and street festivals to encourage more activity downtown, seasonal concerts, monthly events, merchant fairs, arts festivals, History Days, and major holiday celebrations.
- Introduce housing/residential use to activate downtown after business hours.
- Introduce active recreation activities along the Lake, such as boating/fishing competitions, horseback riding, hiking/biking/walking trails, and equipment rentals.
- Connect downtown to surrounding neighborhoods, parks, and schools with a greenway trail using the abandoned rail line south of Downtown (Rails to Trails).
- Encourage the use of alternate transportation to serve downtown especially during peak events.
- Create and regularly update a calendar of events of activities in downtown Winchester (monthly newsletter or web site).
- Instate a Special Event Coordinator

### FUND-RAISING

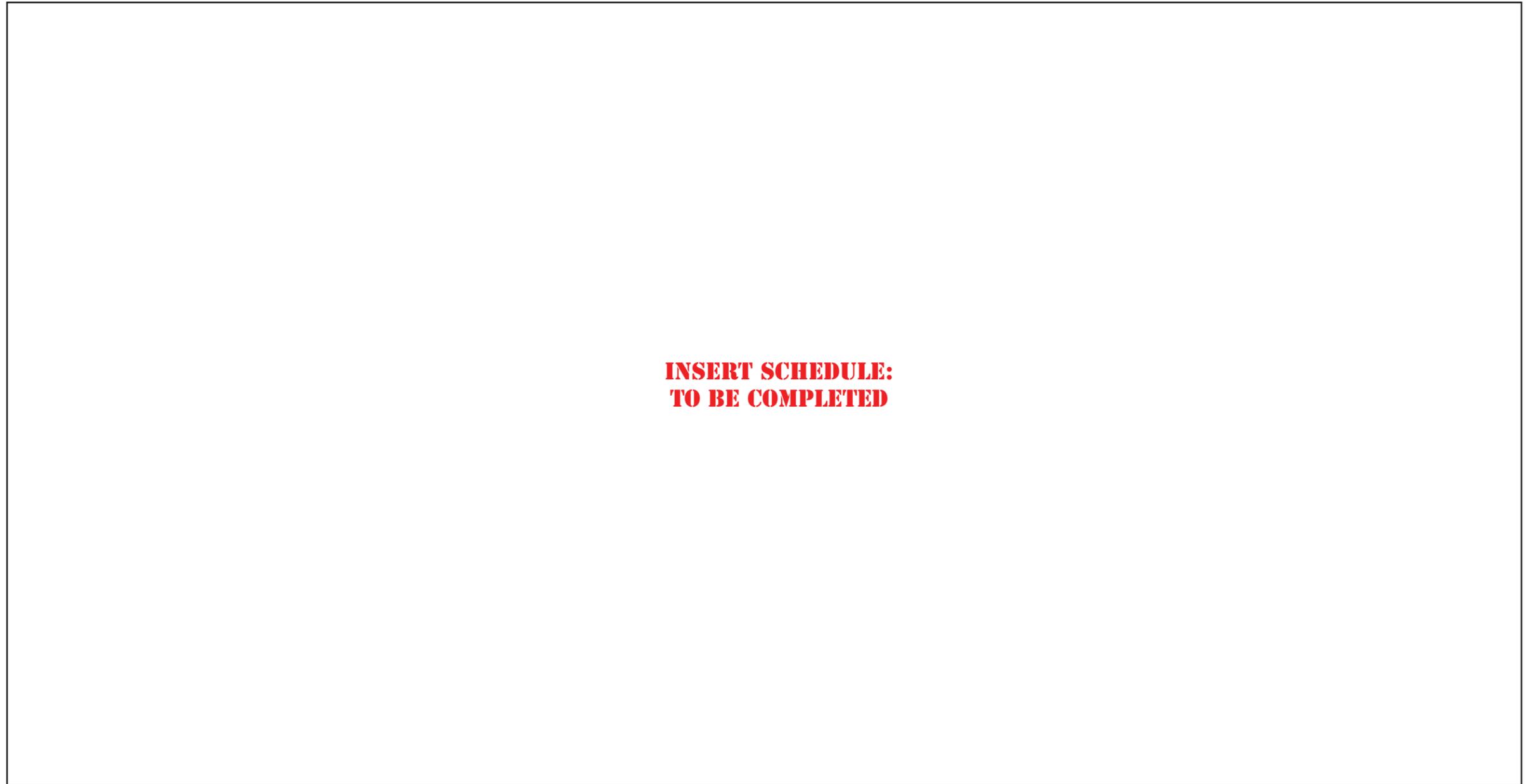
- Maximize the benefit of the Courthouse Square Pilot Grant Program from the State of Tennessee by focusing on projects that optimize return on investment such as filling vacancies with new business.
- Explore methods for obtaining funding for catalytic projects, including: Hire a full-time grant writer and solicit existing grant funding sources

(state and federal government, US RDA, foundations); create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district; consider Business Improvement District taxes; metered parking; corporate donations; generate income from downtown festivals.

- Establish a 501(c)3 Community Development Corporation to receive and direct funding.
- Create incentives for luring destination developments with grants, reduced rents or taxes.

### COUNTY-WIDE INITIATIVES

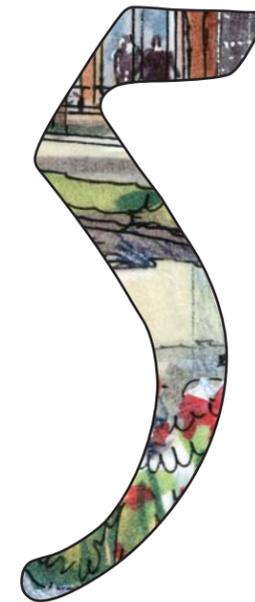
- Establish a county-wide development code and urban growth boundaries based upon concepts of Rural Stewardship for guiding future development of the County.
- Create consistent “Welcome” signs upon entry to each municipality in the County.
- Create “Grants” for each downtown besides Winchester to permit study and improvements.
- Restore the exterior of the Franklin County Courthouse and “Fix the Clock”.
- Continue to explore additional opportunities in other outlying communities that would contribute to a more desirable and financially healthy Franklin County.
- Work with TDOT to properly design and implement corridor improvements along US Hwy 41 from Decherd to the Courthouse Square.
- Work with TDOT and the County to implement an enforceable truck route around Downtown Winchester.
- Work with TDOT, the Tennessee Department of Tourism, and Jack Daniels Distillery to erect wayfinding signage to Lynchburg through downtown Winchester.
- Submit to Governor Bredesen the idea of creating a Test Case for economic development through combined efforts to establish Franklin County as a destination for tourism, recreation, history, leisure, and business.
- Form a Tims Ford Lake Conservancy to initiate projects to best utilize and protect the Lake.
- Create boat launch points into the Tims Ford Lake basin that are paired with appropriate development.
- Make improvements to the Franklin County Airport
- Create a corporate retreat and conference center



**INSERT SCHEDULE:  
TO BE COMPLETED**



## Appendix



**PUBLIC MEETING - 8/12/08 - 6.30PM**

What are Best Elements of Downtown?

- Waterfront
- Street configuration
- Nice people
- University
- Civic buildings – library
- Strong architecture – preserve and protect architectural character as an asset
- Tourist traffic – need to capture business from tourists traveling through community
- Create a reason for people to stop
- Good building stock
- Building community support and momentum for change
- Opportunity for community to grow/diversify its economic base

What are the Elements we need to Improve?

- Find opportunities to improve pedestrian experiences w/o impacting vehicular traffic patterns
- Too much traffic – free flow needs to be calmed
- Reduce sign clutter
- Reconfigure parking – angled versus parallel alignment needs to be analyzed; convenience for customers and employees; improve perception of availability
- Leverage proximity to waterfront – create community amenity on waterfront (public dock)
- Capitalize on upper story residential – many buildings downtown have unused second stories
- Create financial incentives to promote redevelopment
- Need to understand the full impact of moving judicial functions out of downtown (traffic patterns, parking demand, loss in revenue from those no longer coming downtown for court system)

What is your vision/dream for Downtown?

- Vibrant downtown on weekends
- Desirable destination – Grocery and Theater are major points of attraction
- Unique shops – uniqueness to region – showcase what makes Winchester different

- Expand pedestrian realm around the Courthouse Square
- Create places for people – outdoor pavilion, plazas, parks
- Expand green space around Courthouse for people
- Look at alternatives and trade-offs – assess peoples willingness to compromise so that most residents are satisfied with the outcome of Downtown initiative
- City/County partnership – look for common ground (economic development) to work collaboratively and to consolidate resources to leverage investments for the benefit of cities and Franklin County
- Waterfront – public dock (need to work with local/state agencies to secure permits)
- Relocate overhead utilities underground where practical – remove obstructions to solid waste collection points
- Residents are comfortable and accepting of “Change” – community needs to create a “capacity” for change and provide people an opportunity to shape their future

**CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETING**

**8/13/08 - 9.00AM**

What are the strengths of Downtown Winchester?

- Quaintness
- Convenience/Walkability
- Mix of uses
- Safe
- Downtown “feel”
- Ideal Footprint
- Waterfront opportunity
- Free Parking
- Art Guild – needs a home in Downtown
- Customer service – friendliness and personal service
- Central location to community

What are the challenges facing Downtown Winchester?

- Parking – Perception there are a limited number of spaces
- Property maintenance
- Sidewalk conditions – replacement, repair, filling in missing gaps
- Façades need enhancement
- Appearance

- Need to create “visible” momentum
- Enforcement
- Places of Worship – understand impact on types of uses found in downtown including restaurants selling alcoholic beverages
- Economic development incentives for small businesses to reduce potential for failure
- Noise impact from Racetrack

Opportunities

- Wireless “hotspot” needed throughout Downtown Square
- Create “lifestyle environment – Live, Work, Play, Learn all in one place!
- Improve gateway experience entering downtown area
- More diverse mix of businesses
- Attractive appearance/authenticity
- Historic Preservation – consider creating a Historic District designation
- Reintroduce green space to Downtown – parks, open spaces, streetscapes
- Waterfront Connection
- Pedestrian Connectivity – Connect points of interest throughout Downtown (Library, Courthouse, Board of Education, shops/businesses, and neighborhoods)
- Art Galleries (not Craft stores)
- Specialty foods – grocery, organic foods, gourmet foods
- Wine shop
- Boutiques and specialty retail shops
- Restaurants/Cafés – more choice and longer hours of operation
- Bookstore/Music Shop
- Venues for entertainment – Music (Example: Pucketts Grocery in Franklin, TN)
- Ice Cream Shop
- Bike Shop/Outfitters Shop (Woody’s left downtown)
- Special Events Calendar – activity each month – Advertise special events in all forms of public relations media
- Hotel – Boutique hotel and/or B&B
- Library – Expansion of facilities being planned
- Wayfinding signage needed – make Downtown experience more “user-friendly”

**CITY AND COUNTY OFFICIALS STAKEHOLDER MEETING  
8/13/08 12.00PM**

- Judicial functions will relocate from Courthouse to new building in Industrial Park
- County administrative functions will remain in place
- City functions will remain Downtown with the exception of the Fire Hall which may eventually relocate to a nearby parcel that will still provide timely emergency response
- Interest expressed by City and County officials to explore opportunities for the creation of a Joint Economic Development Authority
- Interest in exploring various forms of taxation authority to create additional revenue streams serving Downtown (Business Improvement District, TIF, Land Acquisition Fund/Trust)
- Programming and planning for public improvements (parks, open spaces, amenities including waterfront) need to be sensitive to limited City manpower
- Limited sharing of resources between City and County – explore opportunities to share resources to minimize expenses
- Unified development standards – create consistency between City and County (land use standards, building codes, signage, etc.)
- Parking – need to address perception of existing parking areas not being safe
- Parking – need to provide adequate parking for handicap
- Traffic flow around the Courthouse – need traffic calming to create “friction” and slow down vehicles to enhance safety for pedestrians
- Wayfinding signage needed to direct visitors and residents to points of interest
- Explore alternative truck routes to further reduce truck traffic through Downtown
- Create a “point of interest” – waterfront; Example includes Maryville TN
- Need to plan for pedestrian walkway along waterfront

**CITY STAFF STAKEHOLDER MEETING - 8/13/08 2.30PM**

City Departments Represented: Utilities (Power, Water & Sewer), Street Department, Fire Department and Fire Inspection, Parks and Recreation, Building Codes, Finance & Administration, and Police

Most Common Complaints

- Parking – not enough parking
- Emergency access obstructed at times
- Pedestrian safety
- Traffic congestion
- Truck traffic
- Appearance of buildings
- Building Safety and condition
- Loitering – most often youth that have nothing else better to do
- Utilities – insufficient space/clearance for transformers and underground placement (most utilities competing for limited space available)

What needs to be addressed/corrected in Downtown?

- Change the flow of traffic (speed, traffic direction to reduce congestion; crosswalks)
- Trolley for downtown employees – give employees an alternative to parking in front of a store
- Refuse collection needs to be more centralized in location – convenient access for multiple customers
- Need to provide youth (young teen) activity center and variety of activities geared to preventing youth from loitering in and around Downtown
- Need to improve signage – simplify; reduce amount; simplify wording; placement
- Sidewalks in inside edge of Courthouse square adjoining courthouse
- Consistent enforcement of City codes and development standards
- Provide clear accessibility along street driving lanes for emergency access; avoid parking in front of fire hydrants

Key Elements for Waterfront Project

- Lighted pathways and sidewalks
- Fishing Pier
- Special Event Venue
- Skateboard Park
- Consistent Water Level
- Restaurants (high quality)
- Play ground – visible to parents
- Young teens facilities
- Connect both sides of Highway 41 along waterfront with pathways
- Provide more specialty retail that is unique to Winchester and surrounding region
- Fitness Center

What is your Vision for Downtown Winchester?

- Preserved/protected architectural character
- More retail/less office
- Aesthetics/Appearance
- One of a kind retail shops and services – “make it unique and they will come”
- Specialty retail
- Abundance of gathering places – parks, open spaces, plazas
- Pedestrian friendly – returned streetscape to the pedestrian
- Explore alternatives managing demand for parking – considering the creation of a parking authority; structured parking
- High quality restaurants
- Outdoor shop

**BUSINESS STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING 8/14/08 8.30AM**

Elements of Downtown that should be addressed:

- Fix the Clock
- Special Events – create a calendar of monthly events  
Barber Shop Day (each month)  
Barber Shop Quartet- leverage Hall of Fame proximity to Nashville
- Visitor/Tourist Center – determine most suitable location
- Create an Ambassadors Program for store owners to promote Winchester
- Main Street Program – help downtown business community get organized and stay focused
- Waterfront – need a public restroom
- Open Hours – explore opportunities for extended business hours
- Look for opportunities for the community to support the success of Downtown – give people an opportunity to do business on occasion in Downtown to do their part
- “Perception is reality”
- Change the mind set of people
- Create predictable/consistent experiences
- Create traditions and memories
- Angled parking versus Parallel – keep as much parking along street as practical
- Street trees and attractive streetscape
- Loading Zones – must provide loading zones in select locations to service businesses including restaurants

**MEETING WITH DEMPSEY, DILLING & ASSOCIATES AND CITY STAFF 8/14/08 1.30PM**

Attendees-

Chuck Downham, LRK

Beth Rhoton, City Administrator

Steve Goodwin, Public Works Director

Jerome Dempsey, PE, Dempsey, Dilling & Associates

Frank Ricks, AIA, LRK

Goodwin summarized the status of the project. The project was bid and subsequently awarded to Sain Construction from Manchester TN. Rogers Group may be a subcontractor to this project. Anticipate beginning construction in the next 4 to 6 weeks once TDOT approves contract documents

Goodwin indicated that only minimum change orders would be considered in order to manage cost which is already at around \$1.3 million as bid. The construction must begin on this project as scheduled to avoid delays and cost overruns.

Dempsey indicated that in previous versions of the streetscape plans that many of the changes recommended by LRK were introduced and later not allowed by TDOT including the planting of street trees and the use of alternative traffic calming measures.

Goodwin and Rhoton noted that in the past the Franklin County Commission did not favor expanding the grounds surrounding the Courthouse and was not willing to consider sharing in the expenses for such expansion. However, they indicated with the recent change in leadership with the County that there may be an opportunity to reintroduce the concept to explore the possible city-county partnership in such an expansion.

Downham identified several “minor” improvements/enhancements for the City to consider relative to the limitation to only minor modifications:

1. Landscaping – reintroduce the planting of trees within each landscape island/planting bed (previously denied by TDOT)
2. Textured Pavement on Jefferson Street – introduction of stamped asphalt treatment during asphalt installation to provide texture – street is not within jurisdiction of TDOT (City street).
3. Bollards on Jefferson Street – provide sleeves for placement of bollards in the pavement during special events (confirm inclusion of this feature in current bid specifications/construction details)
4. Crosswalk Ramping on Outer Perimeter Sidewalks – the design should be modified to not have any sort of ramping within the sidewalk surface. The ramp should be located in front of the curb to provide transition from the pavement surface to the finish elevation of the sidewalk between landscape islands where sufficient distance

exists. This will minimize changes in elevations/surface conditions for the narrow sidewalk conditions remaining.

5. Delete the decorative banding treatment in the middle of blocks on the sidewalks and instead reposition this treatment to the intersections to provide more visible impact to entryways into the Courthouse square. These can be textured pavers or a stamped concrete treatment or a colored concrete treatment for visual interest.
6. Regulatory/Directional Signage – need to reduce the size of the directional signage grouping of signs (2 separate instances) where multiple highway and interstate signs are grouped together and installed on a large sign structure that is obstructing the view of the buildings.

LRK will follow up on Item #'s 1 and 6 with TDOT representatives including Ed Cole to see if there is relief from the design conditions imposed by TDOT.

Dempsey will review the items enumerated by Downham to determine how plans can be modified to address the refinements enumerated by LRK.

A copy of the initial markup prepared by LRK is attached for reference in the refinement of plans by Dempsey, Dilling & Associates.