

Kingsport

IX. Planning Recommendations

Prepared by:



With:

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September, 2005

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This project is based largely upon the Visual Image Survey (VIS) that was researched, created and implemented by Project Oversight Team Chair Kathleen Beine. Additionally, prior community visioning efforts, led principally by Kingsport Tomorrow, have been incorporated in these recommendations. Portions of this report related to the project methodology and results were written by Kathleen Beine and have been adapted for this report.

Contents

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Implementation	1
Background	3
Basis for Recommendations	3
Organization of the Recommendation	3
Public Sector Actions	4
Regulatory Actions	4
Direct Actions	27
Private Sector Actions	44

Implementation

The chart below provides the following information:

Number: Recommendation numbers are sequential within each of the three recommendation categories.

Recommendation: Summary of the recommendation heading.

Page #: Page(s) of the report in which the recommendation is explained.

Who: Most logical entity/entities to implement the recommendation based upon the entity’s mission.

Cost: “Low,” “Moderate,” and “High” are relative terms and not quantified as part of this report. In cases where a range is indicated (“Moderate/High”), the cost will depend upon the extent to which the particular recommendation is implemented, such as the number of street trees that might be planted.

Priority: This consideration is based upon a variety of factors, such as the cost, urgency, feasibility of implementation, and feedback obtained from the VIS and focus groups. Priorities should ultimately be determined by a consensus of the community.

Timing: This consideration is based upon the following three phases: Near Term: Years 1-3; Mid Term: Years 4-6; Long Term: Years 7-10

<u>No.</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Page #</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Timing</u>
Public Sector Actions - Regulatory Actions						
1	Update City’s Land Use Plan to reverse sprawl	5	City	Low / Moderate	High	Near Term
2	Road classifications in “Kpt. Major Street and Road Plan”	6	City	Low	Low	Near Term
3	Reconsider projects in Redevelopment Corridors Study	7	City	Low	High	Near Term
4	Create Pedestrian Mobility Plan for city’s sidewalks	8	City	Low	High	Near Term
5	Revise or rewrite Zoning Ordinance	9-12	City	Low / Moderate	High	Near Term
6	Revise or rewrite Subdivision Regulations	13-14	City	Low / Moderate	High	Near Term
7	Adopt regulations preserving hilltops and vistas	15	City	Low	High	Near Term
8	Adopt regulations for tree preservation	16	City	Low	High	Near Term
9	Adopt regulations for utility poles, overhead wiring	17	City	Low	High	Near Term
10	Adopt regulations for outdoor lighting	18	City	Low	Moderate	Near Term
11	Amortize billboards and large signs	19	City	Low / Moderate	Moderate	Near Term
12	Enhance Kingsport through design standards / form zoning	20	City	Low	Moderate	Near Term
13	Adopt design guidelines for historic districts	21	City	Low	High	Near Term
14	Adopt provisions for transfer of development densities	22	City	Low	High	Near Term

Implementation (continued)

<u>No.</u>	<u>Recommendation</u>	<u>Page #</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Timing</u>
15	Create more mixed-use zones	23	City	Low	High	Near Term
16	Permit B&Bs in Kingsport's older areas	24	City	Low	Moderate	Near Term
17	Permit accessory residential units	25	City	Low	Moderate	Near Term
18	Adopt riverfront development standards	26	City	Low	High	Near Term
Public Sector Actions - Direct Actions						
1	Develop gateway entrances	28	City & Chamber	Moderate	Moderate	Near Term
2	Enlarge and enhance Church Circle	29	City & Churches	Moderate	Moderate	Near Term
3	Enhance Cement Hill behind train station	30	City & Chamber	Moderate	High	Near Term
4	Redevelop key commercial sites	31	City	High	High	Near Term
5	"Redevelopment Area" for downtown	32	City	Low	Moderate	Near Term
6	Introduce traffic calming measures	33	City	Moderate / High	Moderate	Near Term
7	Pursue uniform codes for City and County	34	City & County	Low / Moderate	High	Mid Term
8	Redesign and expand park network	35	City	High	High	Mid Term
9	Add sidewalks and bicycle lanes	36-37	City	High	High	Mid Term
10	Add street trees throughout community	38	City	Moderate / High	High	Mid Term
11	Remove utility poles and overhead wiring at key areas	39-40	City/AEP/Utilities	High	Low	Long Term
12	Bury water and utility boxes below ground	41	City/Utilities	High	Low	Long Term
13	Redevelop streetscapes of key streets	42-43	City	High	Low	Long Term
Private Sector Actions						
1	Business community's property improvement	45	DKA & Chamber	Low	High	Near Term
2	Re-energize Kingsport Adopt-a-Spot	46	DKA & Chamber	Low	Moderate	Near Term
3	Establish property improvement awards	47	Chamber	Low	Moderate	Near Term
4	Establish a public art program	48	Local arts group	Low	Low	Near Term

Background

Basis for the Recommendations

These planning recommendations for the City of Kingsport represent an important chapter of the community visioning process that has occurred over the past several years. While there have been numerous players involved with the visioning process, the efforts of Kingsport Tomorrow have been vital, as was the Visual Image Study (VIS) conducted by Kathleen Beine, M.D. Based upon an analysis of the community’s consensus on visually-based preferences, prior visioning studies, a review of numerous planning studies and development regulations, a field survey of existing conditions, and several meetings with City officials, this report provides key planning recommendations. A subsequent report will provide more detailed recommendations pertaining specifically to the City’s existing zoning ordinance and development regulations.

It is important to note that some of these recommendations are not derived directly from the results of the community visioning processes, but are instead based simply upon sound and proven planning methods. While reaping substantive benefits from the visioning processes is an important objective, the broader goal for this project is to enhance Kingsport’s overall well-being, including its planning policies.

Similarly, none of the recommendations that are rooted in the visioning processes are based solely upon the visioning results. The most labor-intensive and substantive component of the entire visioning processes - the Visual Image Survey (VIS), was employed as a means for determining visually-based preferences related to community planning. However, such preferences do not take into account other important planning considerations, such as environmental, economic, fiscal and political factors. Therefore, even the recommendations that are derived from the VIS and prior visioning efforts have been tempered by other relevant considerations.

Organization of the Recommendations

These recommendations have been grouped into two general categories: public sector actions and private sector actions. The public sector actions have been further split into regulatory actions and indirect actions. Regulatory actions are amendments to plans and development-related

regulations. Direct actions are considered to be those in which public entities can proactively cause change to occur, such as implementing streetscape improvements, installing landscaping and removing utility poles and overhead wiring. It is noteworthy that many of this report’s recommendations are relatively affordable, such as zoning and development regulation revisions. Others, such as the redevelopment of road corridors, are much more costly. The final section of this report, entitled “Implementation,” acknowledges these differences and prioritizes the various recommendations based upon their importance, relative costs, and other factors. Also, the phasing of all recommendations has been defined as follows: *Near Term* (Years 1-3), *Mid Term* (Years 4-6) and *Long Term* (Years 7-10). Although the list of public policy documents reviewed is much lengthier, below is a list of those that are specifically addressed within these recommendations, as well as recommended new codes:

Plans

- Land Use Plan (City of Kingsport - 1988)
- Economic Analysis of Redevelopment Areas (Kingsport Housing and Redevelopment Authority - 2001)
- Kingsport Major Streets & Road Plan (Kingsport Regional Planning Commission - 2001)
- Redevelopment Corridors Transportation Study (Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization - 2002)
- Subdivision Regulation Options for Sidewalks in Business-Commercial-Industrial Parks (Kingsport City Planning Department - 2001)
- 2001-2003 Strategic Initiatives and Plan (City Kingsport - 2001)
- 2004 Strategic Initiatives and Plan (City Kingsport - 2004)

Regulatory Actions

New Codes

- Hilltop Development
- Utility Poles and Overhead Lines
- Billboards and Large Signage

Code Revisions

- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Regulations

The VIS found that 87% of those surveyed believed that improving the visual and functional aspects of Kingsport would project a positive image for the community. The five words that best summarize preferences are: GREEN, CLEAN, SIDEWALKS, NEIGHBORHOODS, PARKS.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions



Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

PLAN REVISIONS

Recommendation #1: (Near Term)

Update the City's Land Use Plan, particularly revising recommendations so as to encourage mixed land uses and enhanced commercial development. The plan should also reverse sprawl.

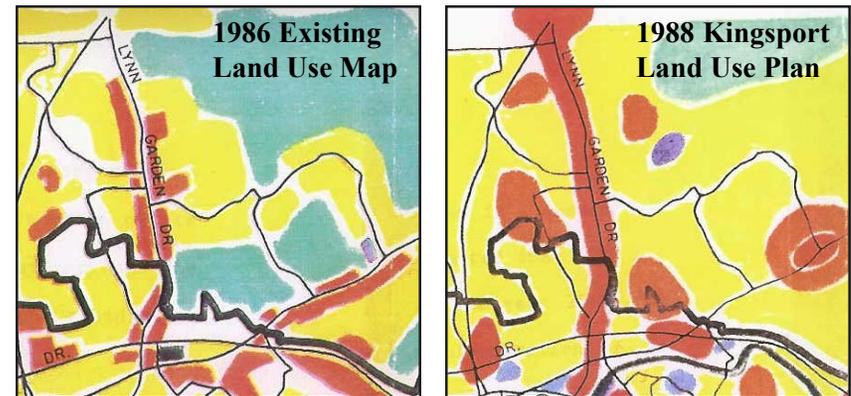
Kingsport's Land Use Plan is a thorough 90-page document prepared by the City's Planning Department in 1988. Because of the many planning issues it addresses, the background portion of the plan describing existing conditions is in some ways more like a comprehensive plan than merely a land use plan. At the time of its preparation, Kingsport's Land Use Plan served as a current and useful planning tool. However, the passage of time has now rendered it somewhat obsolete because the facts that the plan is based upon have changed with time, and widely-accepted planning philosophies have also changed.

One of the most notable shortcomings is the strict separation of land uses. Even the existing and proposed land use maps for the central business district (CBD) lack any mixed-use land classifications. Without question, the most vibrant and desirable downtowns feature land use patterns dominated by ground floor retail and restaurants and upper floor offices and residences.

Another aspect of the current Land Use Plan that is inconsistent with today's planning philosophies relates to commercial development

Link to VIS Results:

A new land use and comprehensive plan will address every issue category of the VIS with the goal of enhancing all facets of Kingsport. The plan would undoubtedly attempt to reverse suburban sprawl development trends, which is a goal consistent with the overall results of the VIS and prior visioning efforts.



The 1988 Kingsport Land Use Plan at right proposes a linear strip commercial sprawl pattern of development (depicted in red) for Lynn Garden when compared to the 1986 existing land uses map at left.

patterns. There are many negative characteristics associated with linear commercial patterns flanking highways (“strip commercial development”). However, a comparison of the 1986 existing land use map with the 1988 conceptual land use plan reveals the proposed expansion of strip commercial development patterns along several corridors. Based upon the community visioning that has occurred over the past several years, including the Visual Image Survey (VIS) that feature of the Land Use Plan is at odds with the community's vision for the future.

In addition to being concerned with the physical form of Kingsport's future commercial and mixed-use development, a new land use plan should consider capping or even decreasing the amount of land zoned for such uses in order to redirect economic growth to areas such as the existing vacant or underperforming commercial centers.

It is recommended that the City prepare a new land use plan either by a request for proposal (RFP) process to hire a consultant or consultant team or utilizing City staff. The plan should actually be a comprehensive plan addressing all of the city's key planning issues, including land uses. A great deal of public input should be included in the process, and the results of the VIS and other past visioning efforts should be integrated.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

PLAN REVISIONS

Recommendation #2: (Near Term)

Revisit some of the road classifications contained in the “Kingsport Major Street and Road Plan,” especially classifications for Center and Sullivan Streets.

This document was originally prepared in 1994 by the Kingsport Planning Department for the Kingsport Regional Planning Commission, and updated in and adopted in 2001. The plan inventories all key roads and streets in the study area and cites their right-of-way (ROW) width, paved width, and number of driving lanes. The 2001 update features a map designating the various road and street classifications, and the plan prescribes corresponding design standards for each classification.

At least two of the street designations for streets that traverse the historic downtown deserve reconsideration. Center Street is classified as a Major Arterial. The existing segment of Center Street within the downtown features only an 80 ft. ROW, a 52-60 ft. street width, four driving lanes, two parking lanes and no central median. However, among the four design options for such streets, even the most minimal option calls for a minimum ROW of 100 ft., a minimum street width of 84 ft., four driving lanes, two parking lanes, and a 16 ft. wide median lane. Any future attempts to expand this existing street to meet the plan’s standards would clearly have a negative impact on downtown, and likely be in conflict with the community’s vision for this important corridor.

Similarly, West Sullivan Street is classified in the plan as a Minor Arterial. The street’s existing ROW is 60 ft. and its paved width ranges between



Widening Center Street per the City’s current standards would result in the demolition of numerous downtown buildings. Fortunately, the City clearly has no such intentions, so the plan should be revised.

24 ft. and 34 ft. The 24 ft. segment located west of Church Circle features only two driving lanes, no parking lanes, and an occasional turn lane at intersections. The plan’s minimal standards among the five design options for Minor Arterials feature a minimum 80 ft. ROW, a 44 ft. street width, two driving lanes, and two parking lanes. While redeveloping West Sullivan Street to such standards without negatively impacting the adjacent areas and the street’s character is conceivable, it would take a great deal of attention to detail. More appropriate standards for such an urban street segment would entail 10 ft. to 11 ft. driving lanes and 8 ft. parking lanes. Those dimensions would result in a total paved width of 36 ft. to 38 ft., compared to the recommended 44 ft. width. Also, the plan fails to address aesthetic issues for streets, such as the provision of street trees and attractive lighting. It is noteworthy that the “Radial Streets Report” prepared by the City’s Planning Division in 2003 includes an addendum reporting the outcome of a community meeting held on January 12, 2004. That meeting resulted in a strong public consensus to keep West Sullivan Street’s current two-lane design, as well as to provide aesthetic improvements to the corridor.

It is recommended that the current plan be re-evaluated and updated. An emphasis should be placed on the reconsideration of the classification of streets such as those cited above. It is likely that entire street classifications will not need to be changed. Instead, specific segments of streets, such as the examples described here, might be reclassified.

Link to VIS Results:

Within the Roadways category of the VIS, wider streets generally rated lower than narrower streets.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

PLAN REVISIONS

Recommendation #3: (Near Term)

Reconsider some of the projects proposed in the “Kingsport Redevelopment Corridors Transportation Study.”

This plan, prepared in 2002 for the Kingsport Metropolitan Planning Organization, evaluates Kingsport’s key roadways and proposes a series of “short-term” and “long-term” improvements. There are 14 short-term improvements, of which 7 are for intersections and 9 improvements involve Sevier Avenue. The plan’s 8 long-term improvements are more substantial and are each estimated as seven-figure costs, ranging from \$1,304,000 for Gibson Mill Road realignments to \$4,125,000 for one of the Union Road Connector alternatives. Some of the short-term and long-term improvements include multiple alternatives for the same general project.

This award winning plan has many positive attributes. However, it should be noted that many of the designs found within this document are inconsistent with the community’s vision for a more attractive Kingsport based upon the Visual Image Study (VIS). Although, it is important to note that the recommendations found within the “Kingsport Redevelopment Corridors Transportation Study” were developed in conjunction with a citizen-based team, with representatives from each community that would be potentially affected by a corridor being reconstructed. Furthermore, as projects from this study are implemented, City staff should pay particular attention to the civic design aspect since that was not part of the

Link to VIS Results:

Within the Roadways category of the VIS, wider streets generally rated lower than narrower streets. Also, larger signs rated lower than smaller signs in the VIS’s Signs / Lines / Towers category.

overall scope for this study. A good example of this can be found when comparing the size of the downtown directional signs recommended in the “Kingsport Redevelopment Corridors Transportation Study” with those that were installed by the City. The study recommended oversized directional signs which go against the VIS results. However, City staff elected to go with smaller signs which, in turn, have been well received by the community. This same process should be carried out as further projects from this study are implemented.

The “Kingsport Redevelopment Corridors Transportation Study” provides multiple options for many of its recommendations. A good example of this can be found with the recommendations for Netherland Inn Road. Two options for Netherland Inn Road were explored during this study, with Alternative B receiving the highest score from the committee. However, after this document was received by the Kingsport Board of Mayor and Alderman, a third option was later developed during a visioning session for King’s Port on the Holston, led by the Mayor of Kingsport. This option called for the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Netherland Inn Road and Industry Drive. While this option was not part of the study, the initial ideas generated from the study provided this team with ideas to generate a design that would further enhance the proposed redevelopment area along the Holston River. Additionally, the roundabout concept fits into the community’s vision for a more attractive Kingsport.

Using the “Kingsport Corridor Redevelopment Study” as a guide in developing alternatives should be considered in future transportation planning studies, though there may not be exact adherence to specific study recommendations, as illustrated above. Furthermore, in future transportation projects, context-sensitive designs should be considered during planning and design phases in order to address the impacted community’s concerns and provide an improved, safer, more attractive corridor.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW PLAN

Recommendation #4: (Near Term)

It is recommended that a Pedestrian Mobility Plan be prepared so that Kingsport's sidewalk system can be expanded throughout the community.

At present, there are many areas of Kingsport, particularly highway corridors and residential roads, lacking sidewalks for safe pedestrian access. It is recommended that a plan be prepared to identify and prioritize road segments needing sidewalks, and to provide an implementation strategy for their development. Such a strategy might include a combination of regulatory requirements as part of future private-sector development approvals, as well as initiatives by the City for areas already developed.

It might be reasonable to consider policies waiving sidewalks in exclusively industrial areas, either altogether or for one side of the street. In cases where the City might choose to waive sidewalk requirements, such as industrial areas, a payment in lieu of sidewalks might be made by the developer to go toward a fund to provide sidewalks where needed elsewhere in Kingsport. All of these issues should be explored and addressed in detail in the recommended Pedestrian Mobility Plan. Additionally, Kingsport's Sidewalk Board, which has been inactive due to a lack of funding, should be re-activated and be instrumental in addressing issues of pedestrian safety.



This pedestrian on West Stone Drive is clearly in need of a sidewalk. A Pedestrian Mobility Plan could help to rectify this deficiency..

Link to VIS Results:

Within the Pedestrian Realm category of the VIS, streets lacking sidewalks generally rated lower than those with sidewalks. Sidewalks were rated by survey participants as the number 3 top feature for a desirable community. Furthermore, the VIS's supplemental focus group sessions confirmed the strong public support for more sidewalks.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

CODE REVISIONS

Recommendation #5: (Near Term)

Revise the existing Zoning Ordinance or prepare a new one based upon a new updated Land Use Plan, depending upon available funding.

Kingsport’s zoning ordinance was prepared in 1981 and last updated in 1994. Constituting Chapter 114 of the City’s codes, it is organized into seven articles. A distinct and separate task within this overall project is to review the zoning ordinance and offer specific recommendations for revisions. Below are broad key recommendations for the most significant issues that will be subsequently more detailed in the separate codes recommendations report. As noted at the beginning of this report, many of the recommendations of this report are not tied directly to Kingsport’s visioning process, but are instead based upon other planning issues that did not lend themselves to testing through community visioning.

Article I – In General

- Section 114-1. Definitions – Update one or more key definitions.
- Section 114-7. Amendments – Consider revisions to strengthen ordinance amendment procedures and public notification for Planning Commission meetings.

Article II – Administration and Enforcement

- Section 114-39. Penalties and Remedies – Increase the minimum penalty for violating the zoning ordinance.
- Section 114-67. Meetings; Rules of Procedure – Clarify the required number of BZA members for a quorum and the number of votes required to pass a motion.
- Section 114-69. Appeals to Board – Specify time limits for hearing appeals.
- Section 114-71. Applicability and Transferability of Dimensional Variance – This section, clarifying that all “dimensional variances” are property-specific, should be expanded to all types of variances.

- Section 114-103. Required - This section, giving the Planning Commission the discretion to require the approval of a zoning development plan (site plan) for any proposed zoning map amendments, should be eliminated for legal reasons (“contract zoning”).
- Section 114-104. Contents of Preliminary Plan – Expand the list of required plan information, and consider referencing the list as a supplement to the ordinance instead of being part of the ordinance.
- Section 114-105. Contents of Final Development Plan – Consider eliminating land surveyors from the list of professionals that can seal and sign final plans.
- Section 114-106. Procedures – Consider revising the final development plan approval process so that work cannot begin until the final plan is approved.
- Section 114-108. Zoning Development Plan Requirements for Off-Premises Signs - Relocate this section to Article IV of the zoning ordinance, which exclusively addresses signs.

Article III – Districts

- Section 114-144. Yards – Revise to allow adjacent lots with different zoning to utilize buffer approaches rather than requiring the lot width and depth of the less restrictive zone apply to both lots. Also, treat corner lots as having two front yards rather than only one.
- Section 114-145. Walls and Fences – Revise this section regarding walls and fences in front yards in residential, business and professional districts so they must be lower than the permitted 6 feet.
- Section 114-146. Projections – Revise so that townhouse stoops are not required to have a 10 foot setback from any front lot line.
- Section 114-181. Intent of Division; Categories – A district tailored to the unique characteristics and needs of Downtown Kingsport should be created.
- Section 114-190. A-1 Agricultural District – This district, which permits a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet for single-family development, should be revised more in keeping with agricultural uses and densities.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

CODE REVISIONS

Recommendation #5: (continued)

Revise the existing Zoning Ordinance or prepare a new one based upon a new updated Land Use Plan, depending upon available funding.

- Section 114-196. R-4 Medium Density Apartment District – Provide a maximum building height limit beyond the existing maximum 2:1 height-to-yard ratio for rear and side yards.
- Section 114-197. R-5 High Density Apartment District – Consider allowing higher levels of lot coverage in the R-4 and R-5 zones to encourage more land-efficient design, and rename the “apartment” districts to “multi-family” districts for greater accuracy of their intent.
- Section 114-200. P-1 Professional Offices District - As with medium and high-density apartment zoning, consider increasing the maximum permitted lot coverage above 35% for more land-efficient development patterns.
- Section 114-202. B-1 Neighborhood Business District – Revise this district, or create a new neighborhood business district, to prohibit relatively intensive commercial uses such as large-scaled stores. Incorporate elements of form-based zoning so that new development blends into the character of existing neighborhoods. On the other hand, the maximum permitted building height of only 25 feet should be reconsidered for an increase given that Kingsport’s residential districts permit buildings up to 35 feet in height.
- Section 114-203. B-2 Central Business District – Either gasoline stations should be eliminated from the B-2 district, which is intended for historic Downtown Kingsport, or special design standards for gasoline stations should be adopted to insure compatibility.
- Section 114-252. Design Standards – Consider a maximum building height requirement for the Planned Business District (B-4P), which has no maximum height limits other than a 2:1 height-to-yard ratio for front, rear and side yards when the building exceeds 60 feet in height. Provide requirements for peripheral screening of parking

lots in the B-4P district. Also, reconsider the method used to determine the percentage of reduction allowed for shared parking sites so that it is more accurate.

- Section 114-357. Development Standards – Reconsider the Planned Development District requirement of one acre of commercial use for every 200 residential units when all access to the commercial use must be from internal streets, as at least some level of through traffic is needed for the survival of most commercial uses.
- Section 114-432. Design Standards - The design standards for the Mixed Use District are very low-density and suburban, precluding the potential for a more dense, vibrant and land-efficient urban mixed-use area. The standards should be revised to permit more urban options.

Article III - Historic District

In general, the City should consider offering conservation zoning as an alternative to the more stringent historic zoning for some areas, and provisions addressing issues such as “economic hardship” and “demolition by neglect” should be added.

- Section 114-282. Districts Permitted – Since historic zoning is an overlay zoning that relates only to design issues, the statement that “dimensional and other requirements” of the underlying base zoning shall apply should be rewritten to eliminate the word “dimensional.”
- Section 114-283. Historic Zoning Commission – The section describing the types of people qualified to be appointed to the Commission should be greatly expanded to include additional relevant professions and disciplines. Likewise, the list of “Powers and duties” of the HZC should be expanded to clarify their design review authority.
- Section 114-284. Procedures for Establishing - This section needs to require that a historic sites survey be conducted to determine the viability of historic district designation, and criteria for designation should be included.
- Section 114-285. Building Permits – This section should reference the Secretary of the Interior’s standards and guidelines for rehabilitation, as well as supplemental design guidelines for the relevant district. It should also state that review is not required for

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

CODE REVISIONS

Recommendation #5: (continued)

Revise the existing Zoning Ordinance or prepare a new one based upon a new updated Land Use Plan, depending upon available funding.

ordinary maintenance or work not visible from a public right-of-way.

Article III - Gateway District

- Section 114-508. General Design Guidelines Applicable to All Developments – Revisions should be considered to allow fences in front yards to be as high as 3.5 feet, rather than the 2.5 foot limit as currently written. Rather than requiring outdoor lighting to be 12 to 15 feet in height in only “pedestrian areas,” this standard should be considered for all areas, including parking lots.

Article IV – Signs

- Section 114-568. Off-Premises Signs - This section limits off-premise signs (billboards) to the B-3, M-1, M-1R and M-2 zones, but their elimination in all zones should be considered. Requirements such as landscaping and the use of monument-style billboards should be considered. Also, requirements for electronic billboards should be revisited with respect to their size, placement, lighting intensity, and frequency of flashing and text changes.

Link to VIS Results: Within the Signs / Lines / Towers category of the VIS, the two lowest rated images were of billboards. These results were further supported by focus group comments.

- Section 114-569. On-Premises Signs - Revisit permitted sign sizes for various districts, including business zones that allow freestanding signs as large as 200 square feet in area and 35 feet in height, and wall-mounted signs up to 300 square feet in area. Also, reconsider allowing “commercial center signs” in Tourist Accommodation (T-A) zones being as large as 700 square feet per side.

Link to VIS Results: Within the Signs / Lines / Towers category of the VIS, the largest signs were the lowest rated. These results were also supported by focus group sessions.

Article V – Parking and Loading

- Section 114-602. General Standards for Parking – Revise to prohibit parking in single-family residential front yards (other than in permitted driveways); Shift the basis for calculating non-residential parking standards away from the projected number of employees and more towards the building’s square footage; and change the standards under the heading “Uncertainty” so that more parking than is needed does not occur. Maximum parking standards should be adopted (based upon a percentage of the minimum required spaces per the ordinance), and overflow parking areas should utilize a pervious paving surface, such as “grass pavers.”
- Section 114-603. Minimum Required Parking Spaces – Standards for multi-family dwellings should distinguish between residential unit sizes (number of bedrooms) and their differing parking demands, and commercial use requirements tend to be on the high size and should be revisited based upon more recent national statistics.

Link to VIS Results: Images of excessively large parking lots rated lower than images featuring smaller parking lots, including in the VISs Parking category. Images of landscaped parking areas rated higher.

- Section 114-604. General Standards for Off-Street Loading - Although loading areas are prohibited in front yards, location and screening requirements are needed.

Article VI – Landscaping and Land Use Buffers

- Section 114-648. Landscape Requirements – Rather than allowing a landscape plan to be submitted within ten working days after the issuance of a building permit, the landscaping plan should be approved prior to the issuance of a permit as part of the overall development review process. Plans should also be required to identify all existing significant vegetation, and the requirement of a licensed landscape architect’s seal and signature should be considered. Standards should require peripheral screening for parking areas, while the required minimum 2.5 foot wide “building perimeter plantings

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

CODE REVISIONS

Recommendation #5: (continued)

Revise the existing Zoning Ordinance or prepare a new one based upon a new updated Land Use Plan, depending upon available funding.

for any building side fronting an access street” should be waived for retail buildings. Also, buffering standards for adjoining differing land uses should be dropped for mixed-use areas attempting to physically integrate multiple uses. The redevelopment of sites having existing parking lots should require that the new landscaping standards be met.

Link to VIS: Within all issue categories, images of landscaped areas rated consistently higher than images without landscaping.

- Section 114-649. Landscaping Materials – The requirement that fences be “opaque and constructed of natural materials such as stone, wood or brick” should be revised to allow a low board fence, picket fence or ornate metal fence when the fencing is not intended for buffering (or when combined with landscaping when buffering is intended).

Article VII – Soil Erosion Control

- Section 114-689. Grading Permit Exceptions – Exemptions for grading activities such as grading for basements and footings of single-family houses and duplexes should be eliminated.



Because of the potential for soil erosion and sedimentation, the City's existing grading standards should be revisited as part of a comprehensive overhaul.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

CODE REVISIONS

Recommendation #6: (Near Term)

Revise the existing Subdivision Regulations or prepare a new one based upon a new updated Land Use Plan, depending upon available funding.

Officially entitled “Minimum Regulations for Subdivision Development within the Kingsport, Tennessee Planning Region,” these regulations were adopted in 1994 and revised in 1996. More detailed discussions is provided in the separate code recommendations report. Below are key recommendations:

Article I – Purpose, Authority and Jurisdiction

- 1-3: Jurisdiction - This section needs to reference a map of the city boundaries and planning region.

Article III – Procedure for Approval

- 3-10: Notifications – Instead of merely requiring notification of the applicant for public meetings of the Planning Commission at which preliminary and final plats will be considered for approval, notification should include a legal notice in the primary local newspaper, posting signs on the property, and/or mailings to property owners within a few hundred feet of the subject site.
- 3-11: Approval or Disapproval - Rather than giving the Planning Commission only the options of approval or disapproval for a subdivision plat, the third alternative of “approved with conditions” should be included.

Article IV – General Requirements and Minimum Standards of Design

- 4-1: Streets – In order to recognize the many negative aspects of streets that are too wide, this section should either list specific maximum street widths or note that maximum widths can be required by the Planning Commission. This section should also encourage the use of alleys rather than discouraging them in order to enhance the appearance and function of streets and streetscapes. In order to

promote an integrated street network that allows for efficient, safe and walkable streets, cul de sac streets should be discouraged.

Link to VIS Results: Within the Pedestrian Realm and Roadway categories, images that included features that can be avoided through the use of alleys, such as utility poles, overhead wiring, parking lots and driveways, tended to rate lower than images without such features.

- 4-2: Blocks – Maximum block lengths should be provided in order to promote pedestrian-friendly environments with efficient traffic circulation.
- 4-3: Lots – In order to accommodate townhouses and pedestrian-friendly mixed-use development, the prohibition of any lots with a street frontage less than 50 feet should be eliminated. This section should also be revised to prohibit or discourage reverse-frontage lots (a building’s rear fronting a street), which it explicitly permits.
Link to VIS Results: Some of the highest rated images within the Downtown / Commercial / Retail category feature buildings less than 50 feet in width. The development of such buildings will be discouraged by the existing minimum lot width requirement.

Article V – Required Improvements

- 5-1: Street and Road Construction – This section’s requirement that “Concrete curbs shall be installed on both sides of all new streets” may need relaxing in rural and low-density settings where a pavement edge and drainage swales are viable. Sidewalk requirements warranting further consideration include: the 5 foot width requirement on all streets, with a few exceptions, since urban and mixed-use areas typically need wider sidewalks; the waiver of sidewalks for minor subdivisions; and the requirement that residential streets with 40 foot rights-of-way are only required to have sidewalks on one side of the street.

Link to VIS Results: Within the Pedestrian Realm category, most images lacking sidewalks (or having poorly maintained sidewalks) received negative ratings.

- 5-5: Other Utilities - Consideration should be given to requiring that all electrical service be underground, as is currently required in the new Gateway District. Typically, going underground is initially more expensive, but the higher cost is offset by increased reliability

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

CODE REVISIONS

Recommendation #6: (continued)

Revise the existing Subdivision Regulations or prepare a new one based upon a new updated Land Use Plan, depending upon available funding.

and decreased maintenance costs, such as tree trimming. See page 17 for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

Link to VIS Results: The results of the Roadways and Signs / Lines / Towers categories of the VIS clearly demonstrate a preference for streets without utility poles and overhead lines.

Article VII – Difficult Terrain Regulations

- 7.4: Development Standards - There are inconsistencies between the text of the street regulations and the Table 1 chart of street regulations. These need to be revised. Also, the use of the City's existing Planned Development District, once strengthened to better address environmentally sensitive lands, is another alternative for encouraging the preservation of steep terrain.



Unlike most images of streets without sidewalks, this street rated highly in the VIS. Part of the reason, as revealed in the follow-up focus group sessions, was the lack of utility poles and overhead wiring.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #7: (Near Term)

Adopt regulations to preserve the natural beauty of the City's highest hilltops and vistas.

The difference between the aesthetic quality of landscapes with hilltop development and those without can be dramatic. In addition to the visual impacts, there are negative environmental consequences with hilltop development, including erosion, sedimentation and flooding. Although the City's code has special steep slope regulations, that issue is related to, but different, from hilltop development. That is because many hilltops are relatively flat, despite the steep slopes that they may crown. While a complete prohibition of development on hilltops may not completely occur in Kingsport, a limitation on the amount of development is reasonable and realistic.

It is recommended that a specific elevation level be selected as the threshold for less intensive and less dense development. One elevation level that might be considered is 1,400 feet above sea level, as that is the point at which it is difficult to get water beyond. This issue is best addressed as part of a broader land use plan and/or comprehensive plan update, as was previously recommended in this plan for addressing similar issues. This concept can also work very well with transfer of development right (TDR) programs, which is addressed on page 22. It is also very compatible with clustered development intended to preserve the integrity of ridge lines.

Link to VIS Results:

Within the Vistas category of the VIS, the images that featured hilltops with little to no hilltop development rated dramatically higher than those with substantial hilltop development.



Meetings held for the VIS project revealed a strong community-wide fondness for Bays Mountain and other such natural landmarks that are part of Kingsport's identity.



While this photograph may not depict one of Kingsport's highest hilltops, it clearly conveys the impact of dense development on hilltops.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #8: (Near Term)

Adopt regulations to encourage tree preservation and to avoid clear cutting.

The many benefits of tree preservation are well-known and well-documented. Some of the benefits include:

- Enhancement of air quality
- Provision of wildlife habitat
- Aesthetic qualities
- Temperature cooling benefits
- Soil stabilization
- Enhancement of property values

Despite the compelling benefits of trees, clear-cutting of trees still occurs on many development sites because of the cost-savings in not having to take the time and care to work around trees that might have otherwise been saved. It is recommended that regulations be adopted that encourage more tree preservation and less clear cutting. One approach to consider would be some minimal tree preservation requirements that are mandatory, coupled with incentives. For example, some communities require that for every existing tree of a minimum caliper size that is removed, an equal or greater volume of new trees be provided to the site as replacements.

Link to VIS Results:

Within all relevant categories of the Visual Image Study , images that included trees consistently rated higher than those images that did not. Being Green was cited as the second most desirable positive community characteristic.



The complete grading of residential sites is extremely inconsistent with the community's visioning efforts calling for a Green Kingsport.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #9: (Near Term)

Adopt regulations prohibiting or limiting the use of utility poles and overhead wiring.

Using the experience of Chattanooga as an example, the initial costs for installing utility lines underground in that community have been approximately 30% more than overhead installation involving utility poles. However, those initial cost savings for overhead lines have been typically offset over time by maintenance costs for tree trimming, repairs prompted by storms, replacement of poles, and a general lack of dependability compared to underground installation.

There are three options for regulating this issue. One approach followed by many communities is to simply prohibit overhead wiring for all new development. At present, this requirement is only in place in Kingsport for the Gateway District. Based upon the experience of most communities in the Southeast, this cost in a new subdivision typically adds a couple of thousands dollars per lot to the project costs. Another option is to allow overhead wiring to occur only in alleys, which would thereby require alleys that might not otherwise be provided. In that scenario, developers would still have the option of putting utilities underground if alleys are unwanted. A third option is to require them to be located along rear lot lines and feature an access easement for maintenance where alleys do not exist. Any of these approaches would greatly enhance the visual appearance of Kingsport's streets. The ultimate solution to address utility poles and overhead lines will be for a summit to occur between

Link to VIS Results:

Images without utility poles and overhead lines consistently ranked higher than those with utility poles and lines, especially in the Roadways and Signs / Lines / Towers issue categories of the VIS.

key representatives of the City and the utility companies to explore options for enhancing Kingsport's appearance.



This image received a negative rating in the VIS s Signs / Lines / Towers issue caterogy.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #10: (Near Term)

Adopt regulations for outdoor lighting to address its location, height, and other qualities.

Outdoor lighting within developed areas is important for many reasons, including driving safety, pedestrian safety, and its impact on the character of an area. Although lighting is addressed within the City’s Gateway District zoning, the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations are otherwise silent on the subject. It is recommended that outdoor lighting be addressed by Kingsport’s zoning ordinance, and that the standards be grouped into two categories: street lighting and site lighting. Site lighting would include parking and pedestrian areas. The following variables of outdoor lighting should be addressed:

- Location
- Height
- Fixture type
- Lamp type and wattage
- Shielding
- Pole type

In the case of street lighting, it is recommended that a more attractive fixture and pole type be considered. While the height may need to remain relatively tall for arterial and major collector streets in order to provide sufficient light for evening driving, lower lights should be considered

Link to VIS Results:

Although images with cobra head street lights typically accompanied utility poles and overhead lines, such images consistently ranked low, particularly within the Roadways and Signs / Lines / Towers issue categories of the VIS.



These two images illustrate the daytime differences in appearance between the standard cobra head street lights (left) and more decorative human-scaled street lights (right).

for other streets, particularly in more urbanized and pedestrian-oriented areas. Street lights with a height ranging between 10 feet and 16 feet can greatly enhance the night-time appearance of an area. The same principal applies to parking lots. It is acknowledged that lower light heights will require a greater number of lights in order to achieve a sufficient level of lighting, but the results for an area’s character can be dramatic.

Additionally, shielding to direct light downward is recommended for all outdoor lighting to prevent glare to neighboring properties and to preserve views of the night sky. Light levels and shielding should especially be tightly regulated for service stations and similar uses known for unusually high lighting levels.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #11: (Near Term)

Amortize billboards and other extremely large signage out of existence over time.

Although revisions to the City’s existing sign regulations are included in the “Code Revisions” section on the previous pages, this new regulation would be more proactive than merely requiring smaller and better designed signs in the future. This regulation would pick a specific date, perhaps five or ten years from now, at which time certain types of signs would have to be removed. State laws will need to be researched thoroughly, as they will dictate the minimum amount of time to amortize signs. In fact, it is questionable whether State laws will currently permit amortization at all, so new legislation may be required. A minimalist approach would be to target only billboards (off-premise signs) along specific high-priority corridors. A more aggressive approach would be to target all billboards, and perhaps even the largest of on-site signs.

The vast majority of land use and development regulations do not require property owners or businesses to take actions, but instead they only regulate actions that such parties elect on their own to take (i.e., development is not required, only regulated when it occurs). However, this less common concept of requiring that actions be taken has withstood legal challenges in some states if, in the case of signage, the regulation is linked to a public good and it provides a reasonable length of time for the economic life of the sign to be enjoyed. However, the legal capabilities of the outdoor advertising industry cannot be underestimated.

Link to VIS Results:

Within the Signs / Lines / Towers category of the VIS, the two lowest rated images were of billboards, and large on-site signs also rated much lower than smaller signs. These results were further supported by focus group comments.



The billboards illustrated in this image received the lowest rating in the Signs / Lines / Towers issue category of the VIS.

In order to be successful in this objective, the City and other local stakeholders will need to aggressively lobby state and federal legislators.

As a starting point for exploring this issue, it is recommended that efforts to eliminate or minimize specific types of signs and locations be pursued initially. Targeted sign types might include: 1) billboards (off-premise signs) of all types; 2) on-premise signs over 300 sq. ft. in area; 3) electronic message boards; and 4) animated signs. Should the City elect to start by focusing on specific areas and corridors, it is recommended that downtown, Wilcox Drive, Fort Henry Drive, and John B. Dennis Highway be targeted first. Downtown should be a high priority area as an important destination with tremendous potential for revitalization if, among other improvements, aesthetic enhancements can occur. The proposed corridors should be prioritized because they receive high levels of traffic. However, compared to areas such as Stone Drive, they tend to have fewer billboards and large signs, making enhancements more feasible.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #12: (Near Term)

Enhance the appearance of Kingsport through the introduction of more design standards and/or “form zoning” into the development codes.

Design standards should address development issues such as building scale, massing, facade design and materials, as well as landscaping, signage and similar issues. Many communities use design standards as a way to control the dominance of “front loaded” garages on single-family homes from turning residential streets into “garagescapes.” There are multiple options for getting such standards into the City codes. One approach is to integrate the standards throughout the zoning and development codes as either an update of the existing codes or a complete code rewrite. Another option is to target specific areas for a higher level of development quality through the adoption of special districts with tailored design standards. The emphasis of design over land uses in zoning codes is sometimes referred to as “form zoning.”

A good model to follow might be the recently designated Gateway District. Regardless, the entity that conducts design review and makes decisions on individual development applications should serve that function city-wide rather than having a separate review body for each district. Also, the design review districts can function as overlay districts impacting only design issues, as opposed to the base zoning that controls land uses and densities. Design standards are particularly important for targeted redevelopment areas where the results will be more pronounced.

Link to VIS Results:

Design standards would relate to nearly every aspect of the VIS. The VIS addressed all key facets of planning and urban design, and the results served as a referendum for better design in Kingsport to enhance its overall function and appearance.



This segment of Lynn Garden Drive still retains a fair degree of good design with human-scaled architecture that relates strongly to the street. Over time, design standards could help to greatly improve the function and appearance of this commercial corridor as redevelopment occurs.



Design standards can be used to avoid garagescape in higher-density single-family neighborhoods.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #13: (Near Term)

To better protect the historic integrity of locally-designated historic districts, adopt design guidelines tailored to each.

Kingsport presently has multiple locally-designated historic districts that have been created through the City’s historic preservation ordinance. There is also a Historic Zoning Commission that reviews applications for any work that would require a building permit within those districts. However, an important missing element is a set of specific design guidelines for each historic district that the commission can use to evaluate applications. Such guidelines are typically based upon the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for rehabilitation, but they should also be prepared in concert with input from stakeholders. They should address issues, for both existing and proposed new buildings, such as: roof forms, facade design, massing, building height, materials, architectural detailing, secondary structures, and key landscaping features. Certified Local Governments (CLGs) can often receive grants from the Tennessee Historical Commission to fund projects such as the drafting of design guidelines for historic districts.



Although the development to the immediate east of the Netherland Inn has been there for several years, design standards for this area’s designated historic district would help prevent future incompatible development from negatively impacting this historic site’s context.

Link to VIS Results:

Within the Visual Image Study’s Civic & Heritage Buildings category, the highest rated images were those of Kingsport historic sites that were well-preserved.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #14: (Near Term)

Adopt zoning provisions, referred to as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), that allow for the transfer of densities from one location to another in order to preserve open space and important natural resources.

The concept behind density transfers is to permit the same amount of development to occur that would normally be permitted by zoning, but physically allocating it in a manner that trades off higher densities where development occurs for undeveloped open spaces elsewhere. There are two different alternatives that can be used for density transfers.

The most simple approach is to transfer densities within the same site. The regulations typically include a minimum percentage of the site that must be kept open through a permanent conservation easement, and such figures commonly range between 50% and 80%. For example, rather than developing a 100-acre site with 100 one-acre lots, a density transfer option could permit 25 quarter-acre lots on the same site, keeping 75 acres preserved as open space. Because density transfer regulations are often an unmandated option for developers, there are often density bonuses provided as an incentive.

The more complex system for density transfers, but one achieving more significant community-wide benefits, is one that permits the transfer of density from one site to another. Areas targeted for open space are

Link to VIS Results:

Within the Vistas category of the VIS, the images that featured undeveloped open space rated significantly higher than those with sprawling development. Focus group sessions also revealed strong public support for open space preservation measures.

designated as “sending zones,” while area targeted for more density area designated as “receiving zones.” Land owners in sending zones can then sell density credits to owners in receiving zones.



Bays Mountain Park, seen here as a backdrop for the MeadowView Conference Center, could especially benefit from viewshed protections that could potentially occur through transfer of density zoning provisions.



This image of a clustered housing development illustrates how density transfers can work.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #15: (Near Term)

Create more mixed-use zones to channel future growth in Kingsport, especially for vacant or underperforming retail centers.

One of the most problematic growth trends in Kingsport over the past half century has been the strict separation of land uses and low-density sprawling development that utilizes land inefficiently. A more recent trend has been the failure of several older retail centers. It is recommended that more mixed-use centers be designated, particularly where vacant or underperforming retail centers now exist. Land uses should include housing, retail, office and institutional uses. Housing targeted to seniors is especially appropriate for such areas so that goods and services will be conveniently located within walking distance on sidewalks. Relatively dense mixed use centers can achieve many planning objectives, including the preservation of open space and reduced automobile trips.

The creation of new mixed-use zones would be best accomplished through a city-wide comprehensive planning process. However, a special project limited in scope to the creation and application of new mixed-use zoning is another option for implementing this type of new zoning. It is important that the new zoning not simply allow multiple uses within the same area. Instead, mixed-use zoning should insure that different land uses are physically integrated as truly “mixed-use” areas.

Link to VIS Results:

The Visual Image Study was not designed to test out preferences for mixed-use areas. However, there was a strong preference for areas that are vibrant and well-maintained, which mixed-use areas typically enjoy because of the dynamics created by mutually supporting land uses.



At present, the section of West Sullivan Street just beyond Church Circle includes an expansive parking lot fronting the south side of the street.



This visual simulation shows how West Sullivan Street could be completely transformed with new mixed-use development.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #16: (Near Term)

Explore the potential for permitting Bed-and-Breakfasts in Kingsport's older neighborhoods surrounding the downtown.

This new regulation is consistent with the goal of maximizing existing development infrastructure and making Kingsport's older urban areas more economically healthy. Bed-and-Breakfast regulations should allow B&Bs to exist in appropriate areas, but in a manner that does not negatively impact neighborhoods, especially with respect to on-street parking in locations where it is limited and in demand. Typical standards regulate the following aspects of B&Bs: the number of B&Bs within any given area (i.e., no more than one per block or block face); the number of rooms; the length and frequency of stays per visitor; amount/size of signage; and the adequacy of parking. The B&B industry has specific guidelines that can be referenced in preparing these regulations, and there are many good model ordinances that can be obtained from tourism-oriented communities.



Many of the pre-WWII houses near Downtown Kingsport could make good B&Bs if properly regulated.

Link to VIS Results:

The Visual Image Study was not designed to test out preferences for B&Bs. However, an interest in B&Bs was expressed in public meetings related to this planning project.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #17: (Near Term)

Explore the potential for permitting accessory residential units in Kingsport's older neighborhoods surrounding the downtown.

This new regulation is consistent with the goal of maximizing existing development infrastructure and making Kingsport's older urban areas more economically healthy. Accessory residential units are fiscally beneficial because they accommodate more residents while utilizing existing infrastructure. They also benefit downtowns economically by increasing the market size provided by adjacent neighborhoods. However, clear standards are required to make accessory units work. For example, there should be no more than one accessory unit per single-family lot, and sizes should be limited to approximately 600 sq. ft. in area to insure that they are occupied by no more than one or two people. Some communities require that accessory units only be allowed for owner-occupied properties, and some even require a family relationship between the occupants. However, such requirements are extremely difficult to enforce once approvals are granted.



Accessory residential units are often located above garages located behind the primary dwelling of a lot.

Link to VIS Results:

The Visual Image Study was not designed to test out preferences for accessory residential units. However, an interest in accessory residential units was expressed in public meetings related to this planning project.

Public Sector Actions: Regulatory Actions

NEW CODES

Recommendation #18: (Near Term)

Adopt riverfront development standards to encourage more leveraging of the river's benefits, while protecting its character and environmental qualities.

As the City proceeds with enhancements and development through King's Port on the Holston, riverfront standards should emphasize two key objectives: protecting its environmental quality and character, while providing visual and physical access to the river. Common requirements for protecting rivers include: 1) minimum buffering requirements, as measured from the river's edge, in which no disturbance may occur; and 2) vegetation intended to help filter out pollutants in stormwater run-off before reaching the river.

At a minimum, standards for maintaining visual access to a river include requirements that viewsheds from the nearest public right-of-way be maintained for at least an occasional glimpse of the river. More aggressive standards mandate that improved public access be provided along the water's edge, even though it may traverse private property. In order to encourage uses that will take advantage of the river, land uses such as dining should be permitted. On the other hand, riverfront zoning does not necessarily need to address land uses, as it can sometimes be more advantageous to apply it as overlay zoning that only regulates design and environmental issues.



Riverfront standards should emphasize two key objectives: protecting its environmental quality and character, while providing visual and physical access to the river.

Link to VIS Results:

One of the highest rated images in the Visual Image Study was of the Greenbelt along the river across from the Netherland Inn. An interest in leveraging and protecting it was expressed in public meetings related to this planning project.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions



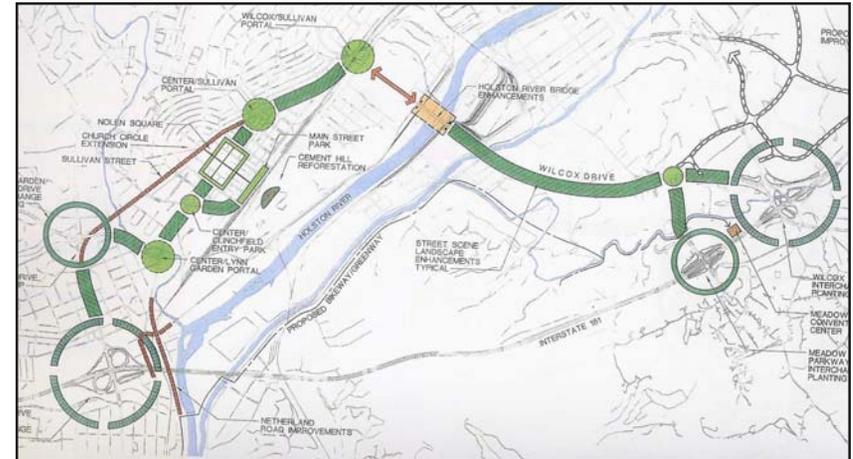
Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #1: (Near Term)

Develop gateway entrances at key entryways into Kingsport.

There are approximately six to eight key entry points into Kingsport based upon major transportation corridors, and each should be considered for enhancements that would provide a stronger sense of arrival when entering the community. The selection of the specific locations should consider existing conditions, future development, and natural features that might be leveraged as entry points. The Model City Coalition recently commissioned a plan entitled “Kingsport Gateways / City Development Plan,” and that document goes into great detail on recommendations for just such gateway treatments. The map at top right is from that plan.

It is recommended that the conceptual ideas of the Model City Coalition plan be seriously considered. The plan includes concept plans for landscaping improvements at targeted locations. Based upon the results of the VIS, it is recommended that other additional treatments beyond landscaping be considered, such as public art, special signage, banners, and night time lighting. Themes related to Kingsport’s history or other unique characteristics should be considered. While each gateway might have a different theme, the consistent use of materials and certain design elements could help to unify all of the gateway treatments. Funding might include a combination of City and private sources.



This map from the Model City Coalition’s Kingsport Gateways / City Development Plan illustrates proposed gateway locations.

McCarty Holsapple McCarty & Ross Fowler



These three design elements from Kingsport’s MeadowView Conference Center are examples of approaches that might be applied to gateway entrances throughout the community.

Link to VIS Results:

The VIS and subsequent focus groups revealed strong interest in public art, similar decoration, and landscaping to enhance gateways.



The City’s current logo should be incorporated into the design of the proposed gateway treatments.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #2: (Near Term)

Enlarge the Church Circle area and enhance it with additional landscaping.

Church Circle is already “the” consensus postcard location for Kingsport, and it has been a major component in the city’s design since its planning during the early-twentieth century. While the current Church Circle is certainly attractive, it has the potential to be even more impressive through the introduction of lush flowering plants. Although the small traffic circle is already heavily landscaped, plantings could be introduced to the areas lying between the curbing along the perimeter of the circle and the surrounding sidewalk. Perhaps the neighboring property owners could combine efforts to see this concept come to fruition.

Another recommended improvement is the enlargement of the circle, thus reducing the asphalt pavement width to a single driving lane. It should be done in a manner that accommodates growth for the community tree, while still maintaining the same general amount of flower beds. A paved walkway or mountable edging material should also be added to the perimeter. In the past, there have been several instances in which automobiles have driven over the circle. Enlarging the circle should increase its traffic-calming abilities by providing more direction to drivers by narrowing the driving lane.

Additional potential improvements to this area include removal of directional signage and uplighting of the community tree, which will not only enhance its aesthetics, but possibly improve driving safety at night.



Example of areas suggested for additional landscaping are outlined above in red. The enlarged circle is outlined in blue.

Link to VIS Results:

Church Circle was the highest rated image in the VIS. Images that included colorful flowers and landscaping consistently rated higher than similar images without flowers and landscaping.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #3: (Near Term)

Enhance Cement Hill, the hillside behind the downtown train station, with landscaping and an eye-catching artistic statement.

With the exception of Church Circle, the downtown train station is perhaps the most recognizable image of Kingsport. Behind the train station is Cement Hill, a privately-owned property that currently lacks much in the way of vegetation.

It is recommended that the City work with the owner to create an artistic and dignified backdrop for this historically-significant and symbolically-important site. A carefully thought out design should be commissioned, and this design might be implemented through a variety of landscaping and visual art techniques, as well as night-time lighting. Landscaping treatments that might be considered include colorful wildflowers, shrubs and ornamental trees that provide colorful foliage.



The hill serving as a backdrop for one of Kingsport's most significant landmarks, the historic train station, should be enhanced through creative landscaping.

Link to VIS Results:

The train station was the third highest rated image in the Civic & Heritage Buildings category of the VIS. Images that included public art, decoration and lush landscaping consistently rated higher than images without such features.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #4: (Near Term)

Expand upon recent efforts to redevelop the key sites identified in the 2001 “Economic Analysis of Redevelopment Areas.”

This analysis was prepared for the Kingsport Housing & Redevelopment Agency to “assess the overall retail market capacity in Kingsport and, more specifically, to examine the redevelopment potential of commercial districts throughout the city.” The study assessed the relative strengths and weaknesses of specific areas, and it estimated the future prospects for commercial development in each. The areas considered included: Downtown Kingsport, Green Acres / Crown Point, Fort Henry Mall / Southland Center, Kingsport Mall and Stone / Eastman Area, Stone East of John B. Dennis, Stonegate, and Parkway Plaza. Based upon the existing 2.05 million square feet of retail space comprised by these commercial areas, the study determined that there is potential for approximately 150,000 square feet of new space within those areas. Key categories for strong future demand include restaurants, home furnishings, and leisure and entertainment.

The study found that four of the commercial areas meet the State’s definition of “blighted”: Green Acres / Crown Point, Kingsport Mall / Stone-Eastman, Stonegate, and Parkway Plaza. Of those four sites, three have been designated as redevelopment districts by the City. The Kingsport Mall / Stone-Eastman site has been extended tax increment financing (TIF) benefits, and it is currently being transformed into the East Stone Commons retail development. Two other blighted sites, the Green Acres / Crown Point site and the Stonegate site, have not yet been given TIF benefits, but they can become available because of their

Link to VIS Results:

Some of the lowest rated images in the VISs Downtown / Commercial / Retail category were large strip centers such as the ones described above.



Parkway Plaza is one of four commercial centers in Kingsport meeting the State’s blighted definition.

redevelopment district designation. Redevelopment designation also provides the City with land assemblage powers.

It is recommended that efforts to redevelop these sites into mixed use centers be increased by the City if and when willing owners are willing to partner, as follows:

- Initiate a request for proposals (RFP) process to solicit developer proposals.
- Create a package of incentives to lure developer interest, such as underwriting public infrastructure and/or offering property tax abatements (or their legal equivalent).
- Be prepared to exercise land assemblage powers if necessary.

Additionally, Downtown should be reassessed for designation as a redevelopment area so that it might also benefit from tax increment financing (TIF), as recommended in more detail on the following page.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #5: (Near Term)

Follow up on previous efforts to get Downtown Kingsport, or portions of it, designated as a redevelopment area.

Designation of an area as a “redevelopment district” brings many benefits for revitalization efforts. Such benefits include:

- Tax increment financing (TIF)
- Federal and State grants / financing
- Condemnation powers for land assemblage

In order to be designated a redevelopment district, an area must first meet the State’s definition of “blighted.” The City recently consulted with an economic development expert regarding this issue, and the preliminary conclusion was that the entire downtown would likely not meet the definition of “blighted.” However, certain areas of downtown’s periphery might qualify on their own. It is recommended that the City conduct a study, using either a consultant or in-house staff, to designate portions or all of downtown as blighted.



Certain sections of the downtown area, such as the eastern industrial edge, have a strong potential for redevelopment district designation.

Link to VIS Results:

Some of the lowest rated images in the VIS s Downtown / Commercial / Retail category and the Industry category featured blighted looking areas very similar to some of the peripheral areas of Downtown Kingsport.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #6: (Near Term)

Introduce traffic calming measures where needed in Kingsport's street network.

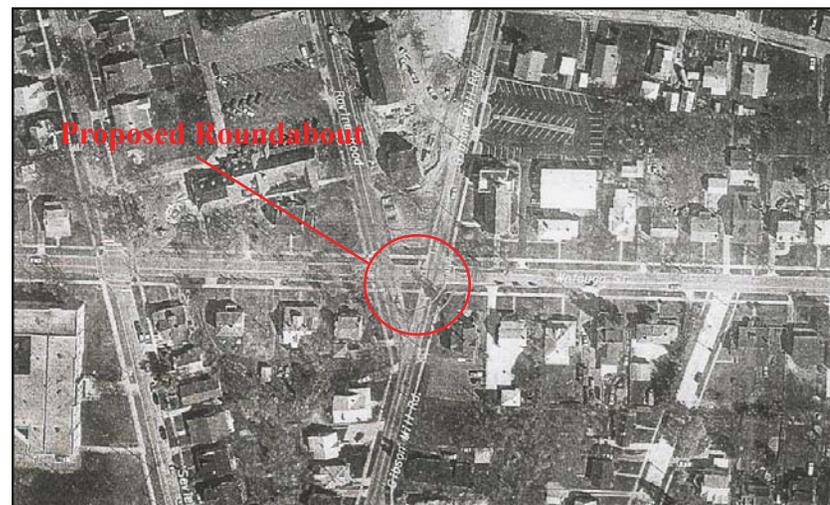
The City's 2002 study entitled "Kingsport Redevelopment Corridors Transportation Study" proposed the introduction of two traffic circles to enhance and calm traffic flows. Those proposed circles are for Sevier Avenue and Watauga Street, both of which are located very near each other.

It is recommended that the City follow up on those two ideas with further traffic calming initiatives. Other approaches to traffic calming that could be applied throughout the city include: narrowing lanes; adding sidewalks, street trees and on-street parking; constructing "pedestrian bulb-outs" and crosswalks at commercial intersections; introducing landscaped medians; and providing speed humps in residential areas. Traffic calming measures should be carefully targeted to locations currently experiencing the most significant traffic problems.

One idea that has surfaced in the past and should be further pursued is traffic calming measures for Center Street. Center Street is an extremely significant street for Downtown Kingsport, and it presently features two driving lanes in each direction, as well as an outside parking lane on each side. Based upon current traffic data, its capacity substantially exceeds traffic demands. Therefore, the idea of eliminating one driving lane in each direction and introducing a landscaped central median has been suggested. That idea, which would visually enhance the street as well, should be further explored.

Link to VIS Results:

The Visual Image Study was not designed to test out preferences related to traffic calming measures. However, a desire for the implementation of traffic calming improvements was expressed in public meetings related to this planning project.



This graphic from the Kingsport Redevelopment Corridors Transportation Study illustrates a proposed new roundabout for the intersection of Watauga Street, Gibson Mill Road, and Ravine Road.



The conversion of one driving lane in each direction into on-street parking, coupled with the provision of a landscaped median, would enhance the appearance of Center Street while calming its traffic.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #7: (Mid Term)

Pursue uniform codes for the City and County.

The County's development standards and those of Kingsport are currently different. There are multiple benefits to be derived by the City and County having consistent standards. For the local planners, engineers, architects, developers, and other development professionals who work in both the City and County, it will be less confusing. Consistent development standards will also insure that, when portions of the County are developed and subsequently annexed by the City, a consistent level of development quality will continue in Kingsport.



Many areas of the county just beyond the City of Kingsport's boundaries will eventually develop and be annexed by the City. It is important that development in the City and County be consistent in quality.

Link to VIS Results:

The Visual Image Study did not specifically address issues related to development outside of the City of Kingsport.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #8: (Mid-Term)

Redesign existing parks and create new parks.

Not surprisingly, the majority of parks and green spaces included as images in the VIS were rated high, as they are considered by most people to be an inherently good thing. The focus group sessions further supported this conclusion. In addition to people wanting more parks, especially Kingsport's young people, they wanted them better designed.

It is recommended that the city's existing parks be evaluated, redesigned as needed, and enhanced to be more consistent with the preferences identified in the VIS. Many participants in the focus group sessions that followed the VIS felt that Bays Mountain, Warrior's Path and the Greenbelt were wonderful large parks, but there is a need for many more smaller neighborhood parks that are easily accessible. These parks will enhance the quality of life for residents by providing opportunities for social interaction and physical activity. Also, the renovation and expansion of Glen Bruce Park will provide an excellent focal point in the downtown for community events. A park master plan should recommend the location and general design of new parks. The evaluation and improvement of existing parks and the planning of new parks, including integrating parks into existing neighborhoods and commercial areas, should occur in a single coordinated effort.

A park master plan should also consider connections to major destinations and include streetscape improvements as part of an interconnected public space network. Streets are our most important public spaces.



This image of a public park rated the highest within the Parks / Green Spaces / Play Areas category of the VIS.

Link to VIS Results:

The results of the Parks / Green Spaces / Play Areas category of the VIS illustrate a preference for well-maintained parks that include attractive lawn areas, shade trees, high-quality streetscape furnishings and water features.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #9: (Mid Term)

Provide sidewalks and bicycle lanes for roadways.

Given the costs of adding sidewalks where they currently do not exist, the most critical corridors linking various areas of town should be prioritized, and improvements should occur as funding becomes available. Bicycle lanes can often be added without tremendous costs by simply restriping roads to more efficiently utilize the space (narrower driving lanes, using shoulders for part of the needed width, etc.). Other costs include painting periodic symbols onto the bike lanes and installing signage to designate the lanes.

In addition to general capital improvements funding, the creation of a special improvement district might be considered in which properties in the designated corridor pay an additional amount of property taxes in order to fund sidewalks. Typically, the creation of such a district entails a referendum of affected property owners, so support from the majority of property owners would be necessary to implement this concept. Another approach is to adopt impact fees for development in the corridor, with the revenues going toward a fund for sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and perhaps other streetscape enhancements. Federal transportation enhancement funds, which are distributed through the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), can also be obtained.

Examples of key corridors that should be targeted for improvements are John B. Dennis Highway, Stone Drive, Lynn Garden Drive, Fort Henry Drive, Center Street, Sullivan Street and Wilcox Drive. Examples of additional enhancements for these targeted corridors might include narrowed driving surface widths where feasible, and landscaped medians where appropriate.

Link to VIS Results:

Images of streets with sidewalks and bicycle lanes consistently ranked higher than those without. Sidewalks were cited by survey participants as the most desirable feature for a community.



These images of a street needing sidewalks (top) and a street needing bicycle lanes (bottom) rated among the lowest in their respective issue categories in the Visual Image Study.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #9: (continued)

Add sidewalks and bicycle lanes to roadways.

Essex Drive: Existing Condition



Essex Drive: Sidewalks / Overhead Wiring



Essex Drive: Bicycle Lanes / No Sidewalks



Essex Drive: Sidewalks / No Overhead Wiring



These visual simulations of Essex Drive illustrate the options of adding sidewalks or bicycle lanes while maintaining the same right-of-way width. These alterations show how different street standards might provide different results.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #10: (Mid Term)

Add street trees throughout the community to enhance the streetscapes, both aesthetically and functionally.

One of the quickest and most cost-effective ways to physically enhance traffic corridors is the planting of street trees. Aesthetically, they help to soften a street's hard appearance and visually screen utility poles, overhead wiring, and unattractive buildings. Functionally, they provide shade for pedestrians, habitat for wildlife, and oxygen for the environment. The concept of adopting development impact fees to fund sidewalk installation was previously described, but the same approach could be used for street trees. Tree planting might also be a good project for the private sector to participate in Kingsport's enhancement. Kingsport Tomorrow has been a leader in this area with their Tomorrow Tree project. As in the case of sidewalk installations, examples of key corridors that should be targeted for trees are John B. Dennis Highway, Stone Drive, Lynn Garden Drive, Fort Henry Drive, Center Street, Sullivan Street and Wilcox Drive.

Selecting the appropriate tree species is important. Some species do well in urban environments; others do not. The roots of some species have a tendency to break up sidewalks and the canopies of some trees grow too large for urban commercial settings, blocking the buildings and signage.

Link to VIS Results:

Images of streets lined with trees consistently ranked higher than those without trees, especially in the VIS's Roadways and Pedestrian Realm categories. Additionally, being Green was the number one desirable feature cited by survey participants regarding positive attributes of a community.

Wilcox Drive: Existing Condition



Wilcox Drive: Alternative Condition



The addition of street trees represent only one of the many improvements illustrated above in these visual simulations for Wilcox Drive. The addition of a landscaped median clearly helps accommodate more trees.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #11: (Long Term)

Remove utility poles and overhead wiring from targeted high-profile corridors as funding is available.

The initial costs for installing utility lines underground in some East Tennessee communities, such as Chattanooga, are approximately 30% more than overhead installation involving utility poles. However, those initial cost savings for overhead lines are typically offset over time by maintenance costs for tree trimming, repairs prompted by storms, replacement of poles, and a general lack of dependability compared to underground installation. One option that can reduce the visual impact of overhead wiring and poles, while incurring lower initial costs, is to place overhead lines and poles along rear lot lines, especially where alleys exist or through the use of easements. Another approach is to target the highest-traveled corridors as an initial priority, and enhance corridors as funding allows over time prioritized by their visibility. Even if relocating poles and wiring must wait until sufficient funding is available, development regulations can be revised in the meantime to stop the spread of additional new utility poles and overhead lines.

The electric utilities in many communities across the country have a policy that all new development must go underground. Such a policy is already in place for Kingsport's Gateway District. There is typically some level of cost sharing between the utility and the developer. For existing overhead lines, utilities typically look for other partners (the local government or the private sector) because this retrofitting is more expensive - it depends upon the cost of the specific project and funding availability. Some lines are easier to place underground than others. When moving existing overhead lines to underground, the individual property owner usually incurs some cost also to reconnect to the new

Link to VIS Results:

Images without utility poles and overhead lines consistently ranked higher than those with utility poles and lines, especially in the Roadways issue category of the VIS.

lines. This amount can vary from \$1,500 to \$2,000 in East Tennessee for the typical small single-family lot.

The recent practice in Kingsport has been for utilities to be buried underground, although that practice is not mandated through local regulations anywhere other than the Gateway District. With respect to relocating existing lines, such action was recently considered in conjunction with new development along Wilcox Drive. The utility company's cost estimate to relocate lines along the rear of property lines was reportedly approximately \$1.5 million, so the relocation was never pursued. The ultimate solution to address utility poles and overhead lines will be for a summit to occur between key representatives of the City and the utility companies, particularly American Electric Power (AEP), to explore options designed to enhance the appearance of Kingsport.



Wilcox Drive is one of many corridors in Kingsport plagued with utility poles and overhead wiring.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #11: (continued)

Remove utility poles and overhead wiring from targeted high-profile corridors as funding is available.



West Sullivan Street: Existing Condition

West Sullivan Street: Alternative Condition



These before and after simulations of Sullivan Street, just west of Church Circle, illustrate not only what could occur through redevelopment, but what different development standards might also have reaped. The removal of utility poles and overhead wiring are only some of the many changes

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #12: (Long Term)

Bury water and utility boxes below ground.

This recommendation is in tandem with Recommendation #11 to remove utility poles and overhead wiring. At present, there are numerous above ground utility boxes along many of Kingsport's roads that detract from their visual quality. It is recommended that, as part of a program to remove overhead wires, utility boxes also be buried.

A good model to follow is Fort Collins, Colorado. They began burying their overhead lines and utility boxes approximately fifteen years ago and estimate that all electrical lines will be underground by 2006. They achieved their success by starting with lines that were in need of replacement anyway, as well as by targeting areas in which street construction and sidewalks were already occurring. Fort Collins' electric utility patented their own underground utility box, and they often share the costs of installing trenches with local cable and telephone companies. In addition to the community's improved aesthetics, they have eliminated their tree trimming budget and storm-related power outages are a virtual non-occurrence. In fact, their 99.997% reliability rate has allowed the community to attract specific businesses that rely on the reliability of their power.

It is recognized that discussions with utilities in Kingsport have occurred in the past, and the companies have cited high costs as a reason to not pursue the concept. However, it is an idea that should be kept alive and pursued further in the future.

Link to VIS Results:

Images tested out in the Visual Image Study that were without utility-related equipment consistently ranked higher than those with such equipment.



Wilcox Drive is one of many corridors in Kingsport plagued with utility boxes that negatively impact their visual quality.



Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #13: (Long Term)

Redevelop the streetscapes of some targeted street segments where most likely to leverage private sector redevelopment.

Given the costs for redeveloping streets, areas having the greatest potential for private sector development should be prioritized. Examples of enhancements for targeted areas include narrowed driving surface widths where feasible, sidewalks, bicycle lanes, street trees, pedestrian-scaled street lights, and landscaped medians where appropriate. Key corridors that might be targeted for redevelopment are John B. Dennis Highway, Stone Drive, Lynn Garden Drive, Fort Henry Drive, Center Street, Sullivan Street and Wilcox Drive. Also, key collectors such as Ridgefields Road, Orebank Road and Stratford Drive should be considered.

In addition to general capital improvements funding, the creation of a special taxing district (discussed previously in Recommendation 9 of this section) might be considered. Federal transportation enhancement funds, which are distributed through TDOT, are another potential funding source. Yet another approach previously addressed is to adopt development taxes or impact fees for development in the corridor, with the revenues going toward a streetscape enhancement fund. Although development taxes and impact fees are both allowed in Tennessee and have the same general effect, they are two distinct funding tools.

Link to VIS Results:

Images of streetscapes with features such sidewalks, bicycle lanes, street trees, pedestrian-scaled street lights, and landscaped medians consistently ranked higher than those without such features. These findings were particularly evident in the VIS's Pedestrian Realm and Downtown / Commercial / Retail categories.



This image of traffic congestion and no sidewalks in the foreground and a background of utility poles, overhead wiring and large signs, rated among the very lowest in the Roadways category of Kingsport's Visual Image Study (VIS).

Development taxes, also known as adequate facilities taxes and construction taxes, are a form of “privilege tax” for which the proceeds go into the municipalities general fund. Impact fees, on the other hand, are a one time “user fee” on development. Fees are required in order to off-set the fiscal impacts of new development. Rather than going into the general fund, the fee revenues are allocated towards very specific public purposes, such as streets, sewers, water, schools and police, based upon detailed projections of the costs of the impact.

Public Sector Actions: Direct Actions

Recommendation #13: (continued)

Redevelop the streetscapes of some targeted streets...

East Stone Drive: Existing Condition



East Stone Drive: Streetscape / Access Lane



East Stone Drive: Streetscape & Development / Access Lane



East Stone Drive: Streetscape & Development / No Access Lane



The simulations above illustrate a variety of alternative conditions for East Stone Drive, including: public infrastructure improvements only; infrastructure improvements, plus private redevelopment; and public infrastructure and private redevelopment, but without a new access lane. While these improvements would be costly and require TDOT approval, they also show the potential results of different street standards.

Private Sector Actions



Private Sector Actions

Recommendation #1: (Near Term)

Kingsport's business community should expand their property improvement campaign through public and private efforts.

There are numerous improvements that can be made to building exteriors that cost little relative to the positive visual impact that can result. Primary examples of such improvements include exterior painting and the addition of colorful awnings. New roofs can also greatly enhance the appearance of buildings, but that is more of a maintenance issue and is much more costly than painting and awnings. Another improvement that can enhance the night-time appearance of Kingsport is lighting that highlights attractive architecture.

As with the building improvements, there are numerous improvements that can be made to a site's landscaping that cost little relative to the positive visual impact that can result. Examples of potential landscaping improvements include foundation plantings for the perimeter of buildings, street trees, screening of parking areas and other unattractive site elements, and landscaping around the base of ground-mounted signage. Up-lighting can also be used to show off landscaping at night.

The most likely candidates for spearheading such a campaign are the Downtown Kingsport Association (DKA) and Kingsport Chamber of Commerce, both of whom have been very instrumental in these efforts in the past.

Link to VIS Results:

Images of buildings and landscaping that were well maintained and attractive rated higher than those that needed improvements. This finding was especially evident in the Downtown / Commercial / Retail, Office Buildings, and Multi-Family Housing categories of the VIS. Focus groups revealed that colorful awnings and flowering plants are particularly well-liked.



The VIS and focus groups identified a strong public preference for colorful awnings such as these.



The landscaping around this office's identification sign makes a strong statement about the tenant.

Private Sector Actions

Recommendation #2: (Near Term)

Re-energize the Kingsport Adopt-a-Spot program in which the private sector adopts public spaces for their physical enhancement and maintenance.

This program should be re-energized in an effort that expands participation, covers more areas, and becomes more formalized in its operations. Areas to target for adoption include the highest visibility locations, such as road medians and key traffic intersections. A full understanding of the City's current landscaping and maintenance program should first be secured, and this program should then be coordinated with the City's program in order to not duplicate efforts and to maximize the potential benefits. Potential areas for adoption should be mapped out and prioritized so they can be assigned to participating groups as they become involved.

Groups to target for participation include local garden clubs, civic clubs, scouting organizations, little league sports teams, schools and businesses. Even families and individuals might be encouraged to get involved. Keep Kingsport Beautiful (KKB) should be recognized for its leadership in this effort. It is recommended that participating organizations be required to commit to a minimum period of time to sponsor an area, such as one or two years, and minimum standards should be adopted to insure sufficient maintenance levels. Participating organizations should be able to place a small sign to indicate their sponsorship, and these standardized signs would be provided by the entity that operates the program. They should also have their names run on the local cable access channel.

Link to VIS Results:

Images of properties that were heavily landscaped and well maintained consistently rated higher than those that were not. This result of the VIS was evident in a variety of issue categories.



This image rated the highest within the VIS's Downtown / Commercial / Retail category. The focus group sessions revealed a very high premium being placed on the maintenance of public spaces.



The small sign in the bottom right corner of this image illustrates the current markers used to indicate sponsorship. The size should be increased slightly to be more easily readable for motorists.

Private Sector Actions

Recommendation #3: (Near Term)

Establish an improvement awards program to honor groups and individuals for improving properties in Kingsport.

The purpose of this program would be to encourage businesses and property owners to improve and enhance their properties (see Recommendation #1 on page 45), as well as to reward the most outstanding sponsors of the Adopt-a-Spot program (see Recommendation #2 on page 46). A similar awards program is currently run by Keep Kingsport Beautiful, but it is geared more toward residential properties.

This new awards program, emphasizing property improvements, could be modeled after KKB's program. The awards program should be implemented by an appointed committee utilizing objective criteria for selection of the award recipients. The awards ceremony should also be a part of a prominent and heavily promoted event. Winners should receive good coverage by the local media, including having their names, locations and photographs run on the local cable access channel.



Although the landscaping treatment of this property would clearly be quite affordable for most businesses and property owners, it was among the highest rated images in the Visual Image Study.

Link to VIS Results:

This recommendation is consistent with the very general findings of the VIS and supplemental focus group sessions that the public prefers properties that are well-landscaped and well-maintained.

Private Sector Actions

Recommendation #4: (Near Term)

Establish a public art program.

Many of the country's largest communities have developed proactive programs to introduce more art into the everyday lives of their citizens. An important component of such art is public outdoor art, which includes sculptures, murals, decorative pavement schemes, and other forms of art. Based upon the results of the Visual Image Study and focus groups, it is recommended that Kingsport do the same thing. There are two primary methods commonly used to achieve the provision of more public art: regulatory programs and voluntary programs. Regulatory programs often require that a certain percentage of the budget for new development go towards public art. There is typically a minimum scale of development so that only the largest developments are subject to the requirement, and in many communities only public sector development is subject to the requirement. The local arts commission usually has the task of creating guidelines for art and reviewing the proposed art in accordance with those guidelines. Another regulatory approach is to provide incentives for the provision of public art, such as increased permitted density. Voluntary art programs, on the other hand, rely on peer pressure and encouragement among various members of the local business and philanthropic community. Voluntary programs can be formalized and administered in a manner similar to those described in Recommendations 1, 2 and 3 of this section.

It is recommended that Kingsport establish a voluntary program in the near term, but explore options such as mandating public art for public sector developments and providing incentives for the private sector.

Link to VIS Results:

The concept of art in the community was well received by those surveyed. Focus group sessions revealed a strong public interest in integrating more art into Kingsport's built environment.



The issue category of the Visual Image Study relating to public art also included decorative landscaping treatments. However, this image rated the highest among the images of more traditional art.



Despite the satellite dish and the parking in the foreground, this image of a mural and interesting paint scheme received a positive rating in the VIS.