



2.0 Analysis : Previous Planning Studies

Downtown Strategic Plan

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2.1 Inventory of Previous Studies

Since 1994, several planning initiatives and policy and regulatory directives, both long-range and short-term, have influenced development and land use in downtown Morgantown. The following inventory identifies these documents and summarizes their key findings.

1. Downtown Revitalization Plan and Implementation Strategy, 1994

Prepared for.....Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee

Prepared by.....Jacobson Wallace Associates, in association with Mary Means and Associates, Inc. and AmeriComm, Inc.

Key Findings: The following functional elements were identified as crucial for the successful revitalization of the downtown.

- See downtown as an interlocking system rather than as a series of projects or separate activities. In a healthy downtown, every event has a relationship to all the others. They either add to the vitality and image or detract from it. Building and taking care of linkages, whether physical, programmatic or activity-based, is the key to a downtown system that works.
- Continue to improve the overall image of downtown Morgantown. Build upon the present beautification efforts through a series of inter-related physical planning/design initiatives.
- Encourage quality new development through better land use controls and urban design guidelines. Provide increased incentives and enforcement to address the condition of existing structures and land holdings in the downtown.
- Take advantage of the riverfront as a tremendous amenity for the city, particularly the downtown. Take charge of its future rather than lose the opportunity through inaction. Carefully plan the riverfront to provide a greenway, recreational amenity and wise development.
- Encourage new development that will replace under-utilized or blighted land and increase the number of people working and living in the downtown.
- Expand the range of cultural offerings to heighten downtown's regional appeal and overall activity level.
- Give much greater attention to the overall coordination, management and marketing of the downtown as a vital entity that cannot take care of its complex needs by itself. Continue to invest in planned management through an enhanced and better funded Main Street program.
- Forge more effective partnerships between public, private and civic sectors and between the City, the County, WVU and the downtown.
- Celebrate achievements and milestones. The vision will not happen overnight. It will take the actions, commitments and patience of many people over time. When progress is made, and there are ribbons to cut, celebrate the completion of part of the whole and pat everyone on the back for the role they had in making it happen. Wake up the next morning to work on the next piece.



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2. City of Morgantown Comprehensive Plan, 1999

Prepared for.....City of Morgantown, Monongalia County Commission, and the West Virginia
Department of Transportation (WVDOT)

Prepared by.....LDR International, Inc.

Key Findings:

Land Use Goals

- Zoning and Land Use Plans that are consistent with the vision, goals, and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Effective and accountable enforcement of ordinances, neighborhood level issues and residents' concerns about implementing the Comprehensive Plan and site development plans.
- Community infrastructure systems that meet projected development demands.
- City Council that is well informed about neighborhood level issues and residents' concerns about implementing the Comprehensive Plan and site development plans.

Transportation Goals

- Area-wide transportation agencies to plan, finance, and implement the transportation system plan in support of the area's growth and redevelopment.
- An integrated transportation system that includes WVU's Campus System, the County-wide bus system, Air Services, river traffic, and pedestrian and bicycle pathways, to alleviate congestion.
- Capitalize on the economic development potential of the Morgantown Municipal Airport and its potential to promote positive economic activity on adjacent lands.

Economic Development Goals

- A broad based economy that provides a variety of job opportunities suited to the labor pool resources of the local and regional labor markets.



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- Locational opportunities to meet the needs of the wide range of businesses seeking to locate in the area.
- Business owners working together to expand and enhance their individual interests while seeking the overall betterment of the community's economic status.
- Businesses and properties that are maintained in sound and aesthetically pleasing condition in accordance with building codes/property maintenance codes, and other adopted guidelines.
- A well-maintained business district that remains vital and pleasing to employees, residents and visitors who do business there, enhances ties to the riverfront district, which passes through the Central Business District.

Environment, Open Space, and Recreation Goals

- A diversity of parks and recreational opportunities for community residents.
- Joint involvement of public entities in planning of open space, recreation and environmental protection county-wide.
- Open space/greenway plan emphasizing pedestrian linkages.
- An integrated network of ecologically valuable land and surface waters for present and future residents to enjoy, use, and protect.

3. Main Street Morgantown Urban Design Guidelines and Main Street Morgantown Design Guidelines for Public Projects

Prepared for.....Main Street Morgantown

Prepared by.....Main Street Morgantown Design Committee

Key Findings:

- Morgantown must preserve and maintain the historic physical character of downtown as the first step in re-establishing the economic vitality of the downtown urban environment
- In order to achieve this goal Morgantown must create an attractive and meaningful physical design of the inner city



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- The offerings of downtown businesses and services must be promoted actively
- There must be an active restructuring of all facets of downtown interests to pursue, retain, and recruit goods, services and culture

4. **City of Morgantown Planning and Zoning Code (2008 Replacement)**

Morgantown City Code – Part Thirteen

Observations:

- The zoning classification for the entire Strategic Plan update study area is B-4 General Business District. With the exception of one overlay district, all of the downtown area has the same planning and zoning regulations leaving little opportunity to plan for compatible design, building heights, density, or scale within the several unique areas that encompass the downtown.
- The B-4 Zoning District extends south across Deckers Creek and includes portions of the Chancery Hill, South Park, and Greenmont neighborhoods and the Wharf District areas; all of which have very different land use and development patterns from the central business district.
- The provision of requiring minimum off-street parking within the B-4 Zoning District has been revised a number of times. Prior to the 2006 major Zoning Ordinance amendment, the B-4 District was divided into two areas: B-4 Pedestrian, where off-street parking was not required and B-4 Vehicular, where minimum parking was required. The 2006 Zoning Ordinance amendment removed all minimum parking requirements within the B-4 Zoning District. This appears to have been done, as in many urban central business districts across the country, to remove barriers that limit downtown redevelopment and increase the cost of providing affordable housing while better utilizing the surplus of public parking owned or managed by the Morgantown Parking Authority. In 2007, City Council, following public objection over a very large-scaled but later withdrawn housing development, reinstated minimum parking requirements for all projects within the B-4 Zoning Districts considered “Developments of Significant Impact”. Although a fee-in-lieu of parking program is contemplated in the Planning and Zoning Code, it has not been developed and enacted.



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5. Greater Morgantown 2030 Regional Transportation Plan, 2007

Prepared for.....Greater Morgantown Metropolitan Planning Organization

Prepared by.....URS Corporation

Key Findings:

- Develop an interconnected, intermodal transportation network that provides reliability, equity, efficiency, choice, safety, and opportunity for all potential users.
- Implement and promote transportation system improvements that support the effective movement of people and goods.
- Provide a transportation system that supports regional economic development and that balances transportation service with potential impacts to the surrounding physical and social environment.
- Promote efficiency in land use and development patterns.
- Support economic vitality through focusing on reducing congestion in corridors that provide access to the primary commercial, education and residential activity areas in the county.
- Reduce congestion in the region which can provide a positive impact on the cumulative level of vehicle emissions, which will reduce the burden that the transportation system has on the environment.
- Provide improved connectivity of the non-motorized system to current and future development areas the result of which will providing greater opportunities to bike and walk between activity centers thus reducing the dependence on auto travel.



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6. A Review of Parking Management Downtown, 1999

Prepared for.....Main Street Morgantown and the Morgantown Parking Authority

Prepared by.....John D. Edwards, PE Transportation Consultant

Key Findings:

- Because of the high demand for parking spaces, both day and night, it can be difficult to provide parking for second story residential units located in the downtown area above retail outlets. Morgantown will increasingly feel this problem because of the proximity of the WVU downtown campus. It may be necessary to require off-site parking for downtown WVU students. To fully assess this problem, a future parking occupancy survey should be conducted during the evening to determine usage.
- In regards to the existing Wharf District and the entire Waterfront District as a whole, several parking issues need to be addressed. Parking needs for these areas need to be analyzed. This should include a summary of proposed uses, the application of parking generation rates and an estimate of parking spaces.

7. Morgantown Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update, 2008

Prepared for.....Morgantown Board of Parks and Recreation (BOPARC)

Prepared by.....Floyd Brown Group

Key Findings:

- Over all, the community wants an indoor community center which should be accomplished by the Salvation Army's proposed Kroc Center. [NOTE: Salvation Army has since withdrawn the project]
- Overall, the main community assessment needs were a greater emphasis on connecting parks via a trail system (where practical) and to expand hiking and biking opportunities while preserving green space.
- In the downtown Hazel Ruby McQuain Riverfront Park district, the highest priorities were to complete the amphitheater's technological updates and the construction of an accessible fishing pier/dock at the confluence of Decker's Creek.



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- In the downtown portion of the Caperton Trails, the highest priority is to identify a location along Broadway Avenue or on an adjoining street to place a pedestrian bridge across Decker's Creek which will give the South Park neighborhood easier access to the trails.
- In the downtown Wharf District Marina, the highest priorities are to manage the river more effectively for boaters and fishermen, to continue to develop fishing access opportunities along the river from the locks to Star City, and to build a new bocce courts, fitness stations, and playground near the former Boathouse Restaurant.

8. Managing an Emerging Night-time Economy Report, 2008

Prepared for.....Main Street Morgantown

Prepared by.....Responsible Hospitality Institute

Key Findings:

- The 60/40 food/beverages ratio requirement enacted by the City for restaurants in downtown Morgantown has been effective in limiting development of student-oriented bars but has also limited development of entertainment venues that might appeal to the larger community.
- Expanding downtown Morgantown's role as a 5-10 pm entertainment district will require better physical access and improved public perceptions of safety.



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2.2 Common themes of the Previous Studies

Several consistent themes appear in each of the major planning initiatives and policy and Regulatory directives identified above:

- Downtown Morgantown needs more residential development and retail goods and services that can support the needs of downtown residents.
- The downtown and the Morgantown community need more entertainment and cultural activities.
- The Riverfront is an underutilized asset for the City, and particularly for downtown Morgantown.
- Although it is adjacent to the downtown and represents a substantial percentage of downtown Morgantown's existing commerce, WVU is a largely untapped resource and a potential source of new business.
- The City's many greenways, trails, and parks provide numerous recreational opportunities for community residents, but their connections to downtown Morgantown could be stronger.
- New development – infrastructure, streetscapes, urban design, landscaping, and architecture - needs to be of high quality.
- The City needs to better integrate the downtown transportation system that includes alternative modes and methods of transportation.
- Downtown Morgantown's businesses cannot compete with big-box retailers, and the district's business composition should complement, rather than compete with, big-box retailers.
- The partnerships between the entities responsible for downtown Morgantown's future need to be stronger and more collaborative.

