
Preliminary Report and Recommendations

City of Radford, Virginia

City of Radford Community Stakeholder
Engagement Sessions



**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**
Partners for Better Communities
www.dhcd.virginia.gov

Table of Contents

1. Overview	Page 2
2. Goals	Page 2
3. Virginia Main Street	Page 3
4. Engagement	Page 4
5. Priorities	Page 5
6. Next Steps	Page 7
7. Conclusion	Page 7

Appendix A: List of Identified Themes

Appendix B: All Responses

Appendix C: DHCD Community Development Programs

OVERVIEW

On September 18 - 19, 2018, Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Program Manager, Rebecca Rowe, and Program Administrator, Joy Rumley, facilitated stakeholder engagement sessions in Radford, Virginia. This service came at the request of the City of Radford as an opportunity to provide education on the Main Street Approach® and to gather input and develop support around the need for commercial district revitalization. These sessions were hosted in partnership with the City. Stakeholder groups were identified as follows:

- City Council;
- Chamber, Tourism, Recreation, and Industry;
- City Staff;
- Developers, Relators, Property Owners, Property Management;
- Education, Student Groups, University, Library;
- General Citizen/Public Input;
- Merchants;
- Nonprofit, civic associations; and
- Banks, Attorneys, Accountants, Financial Planning, and Anchor Services.

Note: Stakeholder sessions are the beginning of Phase I. Subsequent phases for additional community and stakeholder engagement and work planning will be included under “Recommendations.”

GOALS

The purpose of these sessions was to determine what local stakeholders identify as assets, challenges, and opportunities in Radford, along with available resources and individual interest in participating in community revitalization. In the short term, this will:

- inform City and State staff what the stakeholder priorities are for the community; and
- identify people and organizations that are willing to be active participants in addressing these priorities.

In the long term, this process could:

- lead to impactful projects that provide visibility and momentum for revitalization efforts in Radford;
- lead to the establishment of an organization focused on the revitalization of downtown Radford; and
- lead to selection of Radford as a Virginia Downtowns community in the Virginia Main Street program.

Note: While the conversations were not intended to be Main Street specific, the role of a local Main Street program in community revitalization is an important one and so establishment of an organization was discussed. Also, note that DHCD and the Community Revitalization Office utilize the Main Street Approach in all communities seeking community revitalization technical assistance.

VIRGINIA MAIN STREET

Virginia Main Street is the state coordinating program of Main Street America and utilizes the Main Street Approach® to community revitalization. This Approach will be the basis for continued facilitation and planning between DHCD and the City of Radford.

Transformation Strategies – generated through meaningful community engagement and informed by an analysis of the district’s market position — help to guide a revitalization program’s work. An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates a differentiated destination.

Transformation Strategies are implemented through comprehensive work in four broad areas, known as the **Four Points**.

ECONOMIC VITALITY focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

DESIGN supports a community’s transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

PROMOTION positions the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community’s unique characteristics.

ORGANIZATION involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.



ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholders were asked to respond to four (4) questions on flip charts around the room.

- *What are the best things/what do you love about downtown Radford?*
- *What are some of the current challenges that can be addressed in downtown Radford?*
- *What are some current and future opportunities as it relates to downtown?*
- *What investments or resources are needed to make downtown Radford a destination?*

DHCD staff captured and collated the responses to determine recurring themes and prioritization of those themes. (See Appendix A for a list of identified themes and Appendix B for the total raw data captured.) DHCD staff has developed recommendations for activities that can be accomplished in the next 3 – 12 months, and are based on those identified priorities.

Priority 1 – Build a Local Team

Long term, sustainable community revitalization happens when it comes from the community and from stakeholders, in a grassroots approach as opposed to a bureaucratic, government “top-down” approach. As was stated in the engagement sessions, this work will not happen at the state or city level, but rather at the community level. Identifying and engaging those that will carry this program forward is the first step towards developing and implementing any projects. Second to that is developing good communication between stakeholders and the community.

Recommendations:

- Develop a Steering Committee to guide the local efforts from those that self-identified during the community engagement process.
- Begin holding regular meetings of the steering team and determine project groups
- Within project groups, brainstorm activities around the identified priorities:
 - Condition and Appearance of Downtown;
 - Outdoor Recreation;
 - Radford University; and
 - Small Business Recruitment and Retention.
- Utilize a “lighter, quicker, cheaper” approach to select projects and promotions from the brainstorming sessions from Phase I above. See Project for Public Spaces article: <https://www.pps.org/article/lighter-quicker-cheaper> .
- Create space for stakeholder groups to network, discuss, and brainstorm among and between each other. For example: Merchants, Building Owners, Restaurants, Artisans, etc.
- Develop a communications strategy to engage stakeholders and the community on local initiatives.
- Explore the creation of an online community calendar of events.

Priority 2 - Condition and Appearance of Downtown

The historic character and small town charm of Radford was a recurring positive, while absentee landlords, empty storefronts, lack of property maintenance, lack of appropriate investment in properties to make them marketable, and a general cleanliness were all listed as challenges along Main Street. Some of these issues may be resolved through appropriate Code Enforcement, while others were identified as property owners who are asking too much in rent for the condition of the property.

A City staff member specifically stated that a business that had been looking to open in downtown Radford was unable to find the appropriate space to locate. Additionally, a major employer stated that they do not use the Main Street area as a recruitment tool for prospective employees because of the run down appearance and lack of vibrancy within the district. Rather, they point to other communities nearby as a selling point for recruitment purposes.

It was also frequently mentioned as a perceived challenge in almost every stakeholder group meeting about the lack of parking, primarily in the “East End” of Main Street.

Recommendations:

City of Radford

- Identify ways to address and improve code enforcement.
- Research adoption of the Virginia Maintenance Code (part of the 2015 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code).
- Work with New River Valley Regional Commission to implement a parking study to determine if parking is really an issue along Main Street or just a perceived issue.

Local Team

- Complete a Building Inventory.
- Complete a Physical Conditions Assessment of the District.
- Research Façade/Paint/Sign Grants and Develop Local Guidelines.
- Implement a project or promotion from brainstorming activity in Priority 1 with a Condition and Appearance of Downtown focus.

Note: These issues are not exclusive to Radford. Many communities within the nation-wide Main Street network report similar issues with property owners and building conditions.

Priority 3 – Outdoor Recreation

In each session the New River, Bisset Park, and Wildwood Park were listed as assets that are not currently being utilized to their fullest potential either for residents or as a tourism attraction. Local outfitters rent canoes, kayaks and bicycles in the summer, however, the park wayfinding infrastructure is underutilized or in disrepair and the river is not clearly visible due to overgrowth of trees and brush. Radford University has an Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Department, but it was not mentioned during the community engagement sessions that the faculty or the students are actively engaged in projects involving the New River or the parks.

Recommendations:

- Establish a working group with a New River focus.
- Research the “Hometowns on the New” program developing in the region.
- Engage with the Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Department at Radford University to develop a course, program, or projects around the New River in Bisset Park.
- Develop a promotional event at Bisset Park with a focus on the river.

Priority 4 – Radford University

While the University is viewed as an asset in the community, there was strong agreement from stakeholders that the relationship between the University and the community is sometimes strained or nonexistent. With changes to the mandated University meal plans and housing, students are leaving campus less often. Conversations during the community engagement sessions were primarily around the student body as potential customers for local merchants and the impacts of students on the rental housing market.

There are multiple missed opportunities between the community, University, students, and City. While the students’ spending power is definitely a consideration, their biggest potential impact on the community may be through school classes, assignments, projects, and internships. Additionally, the faculty is an untapped resource that could bring a wealth of professional experience to the needs of the local merchants and the Main Street corridor.

Recommendations:

- Include a Radford University faculty member or administrator on the Steering Committee.
- Review the programs offered at the University and consider which will compliment Radford’s community revitalization efforts. Prioritize the programs, and establish a dialogue with those departments. (Outdoor Recreation and Tourism and Entrepreneurship are specifically mentioned elsewhere in the recommendations.)
- Establish a method for effective communication with the student body.
- Develop a promotion with a University focus. This can include alumni, parents, students, or a combination.

Priority 5 – Small Business Recruitment and Retention

The “West End” of Main Street has seen a resurgence of successful building renovations and small business creation. However, on the “East End” of the corridor, it is not unusual to see businesses open and close within a year. This pattern is believed to be the result of a lack of small business training and a local supportive culture for entrepreneurs. Currently the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) serving the Radford region is based out of Roanoke, which may make it more difficult for Radford businesses to fully utilize these services. Based on conversations with the New River Valley Regional Commission, a position will be filled soon to support an SBDC staff person for the New River Valley.

Recommendations:

- Establish as Small Business working group as a part of the larger effort.

- Work with faculty and students at Radford University and potentially Virginia Tech to put together a curriculum of small business development classes for entrepreneurs.
- Offer classes as well as one-on-one “consultant” services through the program.
- Find a local sponsor to offset the costs of hosting the classes – perhaps the local Chamber of Commerce.
- With assistance from the City and Economic Development Authority, research types of incentives that would be meaningful for a start-up or expansion business.

Next Steps

As the community begins working on the recommendations outlined above, DHCD will also be willing to assist with “next steps”. DHCD plans to have a continued partnership with Radford to continue community engagement to develop specific “Transformation Strategies” for the community. DHCD proposes the following services:

- Use national databases to pull market data and demographic information to support the information gathered in person and observed during the September visit.
- Assist the community with facilitating brainstorming sessions, steering team meetings, project teams or further engagement with community stakeholder groups that were not adequately represented during the September visit.
- Assist in developing and encouraging the City, as a DHCD Commercial District Affiliate to apply for a Commercial District Affiliate grant in Spring 2019 for a project or activity that has been identified by the steering team or a project team.

Conclusion

During the September visit, DHCD staff observed strong community energy, passion and enthusiasm for revitalization. Stakeholder and public input sessions were well attended and there is a lot of consensus around the core assets, challenges and opportunities arose out of each session. The discussions around making some positive, critical changes in the community seem timely.

Radford has many assets and opportunities that can be incorporated into a revitalization strategy. By having a focused, local effort to bring all of the resources and assets together into a unified approach, the community can begin to see revitalization. City Council and staff are supportive of such an effort and willing to put financial resources behind local programming. As noted in the next steps, DHCD is also willing to be in Radford on a regular basis to facilitate these efforts.

A couple large themes came up during the sessions around housing needs and underutilized large vacant industrial buildings (primarily the old foundry). DHCD acknowledges these are very important community development issues for the City. However, there is currently underway a region-wide housing assessment being coordinated by the New River Valley Regional Commission, funded in part by Virginia Housing Development Authority. Additionally, the scope of this effort will not be able to address major construction investments of larger industrial properties, which may qualify on their own for other planning and remediation programs, through DHCD or other state and local sources.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF IDENTIFIED THEMES

What are the best things/what do you love about Radford?

- The New River
- Parks
 - Wildwood Park
 - Bisset Park
- Radford University
- Public School System
 - Innovation Center
- The Community/Our People
- Historic Character/Small Town Feel

What are some current challenges that need to be addressed on Main Street?

- Parking
- Appearance of Buildings in the District/Properties being appropriately maintained and invested in
 - Unrealistic Building Owners
 - Lack of property maintenance
 - Absentee Landlords
 - Cleanliness
- Empty Store Fronts
- Lack of Code Enforcement/Inspections
- Need higher quality, and more diversity, in retail
 - More regulation of types of businesses in district
 - Service v. Retail
 - Businesses that open without an appropriate business plan and close quickly
 - No small business education/resources
 - Convincing People What is Possible
 - We v. They
 - East v. West
 - School v. Townie
 - Poor Communication
 - University to Anyone
 - City to Merchants
 - City to Residents
 - Merchants to Merchants
 - Property Owner to Property Owner

What are some current and future opportunities as it relates to Main Street?

- Radford University
 - Keeping Radford University Grads
 - Internships
 - Events – Homecoming, Parent’s Weekend
 - Students as customers

- Amenities for Radford Residents – non-students
- Foundry
- Façade Improvements
- Business Recruitment/Expansion/Development
- Increase River Use
 - Trails
 - Bikes
 - Recreation Businesses
- Amphitheatre and Performing Arts/Entertainment Space
- Brewery
- Events that bring residents to Main Street
- Housing
- Proximity to I81
- Branding
- Volunteerism
- *What resources/investments are needed to really make Radford a destination?*
- River
 - Boardwalk/Trails/Connectivity with Downtown
 - Wayfinding
 - Events
 - Improved Use of Outdoor Spaces – Bisset Park
- Investment in Façade Improvements/Existing Buildings
- Outdoor Dining
- Improved Bike Lanes
- High Speed Internet
- Branding/Community Identity/Storytelling
- Incubator/Maker Space/Coworking/Flex Space
- Business Recruitment
- New Visitor’s Center
- Rehabilitation of Existing Housing/Build New Housing
- Parking Garage
- Year Round Farmer’s Market Facility

APPENDIX B

LIST OF ALL RESPONSES

- City council:
 - Finding the champions
 - Engaging at a level to be successful
 - Get the private sector to “take over” program/imitative
 - How to move beyond student-based housing downtown?
 - Structure of collaborator ownership/admin
 - Better/more downtown lighting
 - Traffic calming – “bump outs”
 - Need reasonable rent/absentee
 - Interior building renovations
 - Design partnership with RU
 - Empty storefront décor
 - Home-based business incubation
- Radford/ City:
 - How to balance student vs. residents (East vs. West)
 - RT. 11-232 → Traffic
 - How to deal with linear nature of Main
 - Infrastructure – water/sewer
 - Lexington – parking/zoning ?
 - Farmers’ Market – good move to West Main
 - Coffee Shop – need second one?
 - Sal’s Restaurant
 - Parking - *not convenient/not marked
 - Outdoor dining *
 - Bissett Park
 - Students have amenities on campus
 - Lots of business turnover – mostly on East End
 - Leonard Street – potential development
 - Radford needs an identity *
 - Public/Gathering Spaces
 - Streetlights
 - Need Restaurant Diversity
 - Public/Private partnership
 - Blacksburg is so close/ competition
 - Zoning?
 - Better quality businesses
 - Student of town → East End → 9 months out of the year
 - Radford residents → West End → 12 months out of the year
 - Building Owners

- Don't invest
 - Bad decisions
 - Bad businesses
- Tie downtown to Bissett Park - railroad
- Clean Up
- Recruit Industry
- River City
- Lexington as a model for Economic Vitality
- Destination Retail and Dining
- Hotel
- Connection between East and West
- Quality office space
- Business incubator? Flex space?
- Lack of inventory for appropriate space
- Agora Downtown Market/ Lynchburg
 - Farmers' Market as a model
- Linear District is a negative
 - Single Family Homes

Best/Love

- Character of buildings
- The River
- Small-town feel
- Campus events
- Quick "meet up" spots – Radford coffee, new ice cream shop
- Friendly community/Sense of Community
- Pride
- Good child care center
- Scenic – parks, natural beauty/landscape, wildlife, fishing
- Carson's Courtyard
- Historic buildings
- Safe community
- Low rent/mortgage
- City trails
- Good schools
- Good water
- West End Wednesdays
- Farmers' Market
- West End close to Residential
- Parks – Bissett, Wildwood
- History – Native American, Civil War, Ingles, Pioneers
- University – Students and Opportunities, Arts, Etc.
- Historic sense of downtown

- Location off interstate
- Parking
- Fresh, creative, new attitudes
- Longevity of businesses show we have a stable environment and can grow
- It's home
- The People
- Part of the NRV Pathway
- Trick-or-treating/Bunny Trail
 - Family friendly with merchants
- Access in and around town/ bus and bike
- Wachovia Cup
- Governor's School/ Farmers' Market
- Bus System/ Partnership with Community and School
- Go Bobcats! Go Highlanders!
- Kid-centric events
- Student Government Day
- Internships thorough University and School System
- Public Library
- High Graduation rates, lots of extracurricular activities
- Elementary Schools Makers' Space
- Riverview Park
- Historic Radford Theater
- Community support of non-profit organizations
- Schools → innovation center
- Familiarity
- Reaching out to adults with educational needs
- Glencoe
- Radford University/NRCC
- Hospital proximity
- Rec Center for sports/exercise
- Community love and support for local children
- Small and good school system
- Local people support most local events
- Stays busy during school - also disadvantage
- Aesthetics
- NRV regional identity
- Natural resources/ locality
- Diversity of community
- We are nice!

Challenges

- More art

- Need an outdoor performance space/amphitheater
- No swimming pool
- Older housing stock
- Lack of rental inspection
- No code/ARB/ guidelines
- PARKING
- Need to tear down dilapidated structures
- Rail road/ topography – can't spread out
- Not tied to Interstate – 109 exit
- Generational property owners investing in their real estate
- We had a study done while in business and were told Radford government is anti-growth and anti-business and seemed proud of it. Whole time we were in business, had to fight city and spent thousands in legal fees (100 year old business)
- Absentee property owners with little real investment in Radford
- Convincing people what is possible
- Challenge knowing what improvements to make based on prospective tenants
- Students live ON Radford and not IN Radford
- Burnout → 80/20 rule
- Main Street is a state highway
- Walkability/bike-ability
- Not enough for the students to do
 - K-12
 - University
 - Seasonal downtown economy
- Online education competition
- Radford faculty don't live or shop in Radford
- Poverty levels for local families – 50% of children have free or reduced lunch
- Need living-wage jobs
- Small business education for entrepreneurs
- “We vs. They”
- Areas not walkable. Retail/restaurants so far apart. No outdoor gathering or sitting or trashcans.
- Maintenance by city
- Communications with business owners by city
- East/West Divide
 - Needs to be 1 unified city
- Decaying buildings – how do you tell a business owner to fix his building?
- Can Radford buy Triangle Station?
- Can we move the statue?
- CODE ENFORCEMENT
- Move Dump!
 - Near school board
 - Looks bad
 - On baseball field

- Absentee owners → more engaged
- Property owners – not working together for the greater good
- Empty storefronts
- Maintenance needs of older buildings/ infrastructures
- Parking can be a challenge
- Rental property options
- Spots/opportunities for young professors to meet
- Lack of outdoor dining
- Not symbiotic (retail)
- Business traffic
- Route 11 street closures
- Stubborn, unrealistic building owners
- Foot traffic
- Communication between businesses and RU
- More students living on campus
- More RU Students downtown
- Parking lots not enforced or maintained
- No regulations on service vs. retail
- No landlord commitment and business owners commitment in cleaning up
- Keeping businesses alive and growing
- Connect business with community
- “college tour” challenges – making businesses stay profitable over summers, etc.
- Aging local population
- Strip parking along Main Street (business owners park elsewhere)
- Lack of population density
- Housing availability/ lack of amenities
- Health concern – access to vaping
- Cleanliness - (downtown trash, debris on sidewalks)
- Encouraging building owners to keep a standard of building appearance/condition
- Attracting middle to upper income folks to live and invest in the community
- Lower rent for downtown spaces
- Bussing – more busses, benches, covered
- Quality Lube and IRV’s Car Wash
- Not enough “handicap” parking spaces in downtown and parks
- Volunteerism
- Community buy-in
- Employment for those with mental health and substance abuse issues

Opportunities

- Hostels/bikers (Route 76)
- Boutique hotels
- Brewery

- Highlander Pub (British) Look
- Outdoor recreation businesses
- Festivals – great locations available in parks
- Year-round activities to engage students and community
- History – railroad/ Mary Draper Ingles, etc.
- River and trails/biking/walking
- Windows on Main Street for Radford University
- More RU Student involvement
- Retaining residents on weekends
- Streetcar line
- Bus routes that penetrate the neighborhoods
- Tie together all arts organizations in the region
- “Nicer” hotels downtown
- RU – help increase
- Amenities focused on needs of greater Radford community (families, seniors, non-student population)
- Fresh influx of RU grads each year (as residents, business owners, employees, etc.)
- Funky, sophisticated city of the New River Valley
- 3rd Avenue parking lot
- River events
- Students/grad students/seniors
- Repurpose the Foundry Space
- Room/space to increase density and growth
- ART HOP
- Matchmaking → investors, business owners, property owners
- Had a children’s museum/summer camps
- High School – industrial arts program
- Summerfest
- Get the Radford students involved in the community
- Greek life → service opportunity
- ACCE Program
 - 80 hours
 - Free community college
 - 2.5 GPA
- Extracurricular activities
- Trans-America Bike Trail
- Free? Enrichment/movie theater
- Beautification commission
- Arbor city
- Glencoe Museum
- High School Interns
- University Fashion Design Program
- Cooperative extension – Master Gardener program

- RU focus on Economic Development
- Christmas Parade held on Saturday during the day
- Business conducted block parties to bring community engagement with our organizations
- Utilize housing above businesses for locals and not students --- better for all; will help keep buildings cleaner and in better shape
- Work with library
- Creating a logo for Radford
- Annexing land
- Building a sports complex → \$\$\$\$
 - Brings millions to a city
- Live music facilities → amphitheater-type structures
- Internet Mecca / Web-based businesses
- Promoting local business on campus, especially during family weekend and/or homecoming
- Make your business a destination
- Closed Main Street/ alternative routes
- Vacant property tax assessment
- Higher quality businesses
- Incentives for retail-quality businesses
- River use
- Historic Buildings – beautify them
- University/Programs
- NRCC
- Railway
- Public transportation
- Convenient access to I-81
- Entrepreneurship (college students)
- Farmers’ market
- West End room for growth
- Better attend and promote monthly/yearly events
 - West End Wednesday; craft and draft; Farmers’ Market
 - Highlander Festival; food truck rodeo
- Remodel old houses and make new for our aging and young families
- Former pipe shop property
- Foundry property development
- Façade improvements
- Business development/economic development
 - Filling open spaces with businesses
- Volunteer (business/church/civic/school) day to tackle projects
- Proximity to rail/highway/river
- Millennials/younger gens @ R.V.
- Size
- Business recruitment/expansion of successful businesses already in the region or outside

Resources/Investments

- Wayfinding
- Branding/Identity/Storytelling
- Incentives for keeping the lights on
- Institute “Radford Bucks”
- Bonus Card Program
- Horticulture Program in High School → Downtown Hanging Baskets
- Industrial Kitchen in High School
- Incubator space for new businesses to get started
- Radford University
- Kollmorgen
- Use local art/talent
- General/country store of Radford
- Bike trails/lanes
- Business Incubator/maker space
- Outdoor space for eating
- Parking garage (no parking on street, brick sidewalks, eating areas, etc.)
- Boutique hotel/clean hotels
- River events – by the river and on the river → camping
- Varied: Retail, Shoe, clothing, children’s clothing
- “storytelling”/ wayfinding/signage
- Nice storefronts/clean
- Restaurants
- Visibility from I-81
- Large separate visitor’s center – with local art/crafts/food
- Safety – polish streets, cross walks
- Build a sidewalk behind the high school
 - Just crush and run, safety!!
- Can we contact the person who owns the old foundry? → “Let’s make a deal”
 - Can we buy a parcel at a time?
- Make a 10 year plan
- River → Boardwalk
 - Potential Foundation
 - Inheritance Gifts?
- Free-standing Farmers’ Market with cover/awning/seating/ EX : Roanoke
- RU Foundation investment
- Students input/ interns
- More highway signs coming into Radford
- Rec center & city working together on lawn care for city and parks
 - Coordinate games so grass looks cut and nice
 - This way visitors can say “wow, nice fields”
 - Makes town look nice

- Radford needs to actively seek businesses to relocate in our city. Recruit businesses to fill empty buildings.
- Long-term/successful existing businesses
- RU/High School – Resources
- Investment in existing building
- Accessible programs/ease of information
- Community organizations
- High-speed internet
- Brewery & playground
- Horticulture – hanging baskets, parks, plantings
- Community gardens
- Extend river way and connection to downtown
- Use empty windows to highlight Radford University and High School
- Innovation Center – High school – downtown
- Greenhouse grant at middle school
- Aesthetics
 - Shelter/bench at bus stops
- Create an “opportunities” path for current or potential businesses
- Bike lanes/ trails
- Zip line across New River
- Mirror red brick accent look on sidewalk, paint light poles green, add hanging flower baskets
- Leverage natural beauty of area
- Get a developer to build new homes to keep professionals here who will spend money here
- Makerspace/ co-working space to encourage college student retention

What will YOU do?

- Communication!
- Using social media for promotion
- Central community calendar
- Consolidated list of volunteer opportunities
- Positive image building campaign
- Build bridges to University
- Show up!
- Shop Locally!
- Promote community during events

What is YOUR role?

- First NRV will be at the table
- Business and financial education
- Recommendations, 3 – 12 minutes
- NRVRC parking study
- Merchant meeting

- Engage RU programs
- Look at river – how to clean it up, connect it to downtown, day float?

What is YOUR role? cont.

- City – explore incentives and property maintenance enforcement (parking and zoning)
- Community calendar
- Additional input – RU, residents, churches, etc.
- CDA grant – Branding
- Let the city know what businesses you need/want
- How can we help finance this?
- Student email for merchants to get monthly events/activities advertised and promoted

What is YOUR role? Cont.

- Coty → branding, identity, storytelling
- Advocate for Main Street programs
- Chamber → communication, incentives for building and business owners, improved appearance
- Dave (New Wheel) → cooperative marketing
- Koll Morgan → 700+ employees locally, employee volunteer days can be focused on downtown
- Advocate for the arts
 - Outdoor recreation

What role will YOU play?

- Keep investing in my own property
- Help envision what can be done in the space? (architects)
- Offer up vacant storefront for RU or other businesses to “decorate”
- Flexible rents, seasonal rents

Public Input Session

Rose (Pink) = positive

- New River/Fishing/Outdoor Opportunities associated with the River = **16 respondents**
- Radford University/Student Base/Student Community = **12 respondents**
- Parks (Bisset/Wildwood/etc.) = **10 respondents**
- Positive Radford Recreation/Recreation Center/Exercise Opportunities = **9 respondents**
- Community Spirit/ The People = **8 respondents**
- Public Schools/School System = **4 respondents**
- Service/Charitable Organizations/Volunteer Opportunities = **4 respondents**
- Public Library = **3 respondents**
- Longstanding cornerstone businesses = **2 respondents**

- Bus System/Public Transportation **3 respondents**
- Area Design/Residential Design **2 respondents**
- Landscape/Location = **2 respondents**
- RU Arts is open to the public
- New Traffic Circle on Park Road and 2nd Street Exit
- Strong Traffic Counts at Bridge Intersection
- Enterprise Zone
- Me Harg & Belle Heth are awesome
- Good restaurants (just need more)
- Central Radford is coming back to life – Exciting
- Few Restriction on New Development
- Community Eager to See New Businesses
- Safety
- Development of Smith Property Park on Across River
- Historic Character of Bolt (?) Environment
- Weather
- History
- Glencoe Museum
- Radford Clothing Bank
- Affordable Housing
- “City” Status Designation
- West End Shops
- Food Truck Rodeo
- Farmers’ Market

Thorn (Yellow) = Negative

- Parking/Downtown parking/parking near or on Radford University/lack of parking on East side/lack of handicap parking = **10 respondents**
- Vacancy/ Small Business Turnover/ Lack of Prosperous Businesses = **7 respondents**
- Lack of promotion for Radford’s assets or downtown activities = **6 respondents**
- Lack of West End Development/ Grocery Store = **5 respondents**
- Visibility of River/Downtown River Access and Visibility = **5 respondents**
- Resistance to change = **4 respondents**
- Lack of restaurant diversity / downtown business diversity/downtown shopping and activities = **6 respondents**
- Physical and communicative disconnect between East and West sides of Radford = **3 respondents**
- Downtown cleanliness/appearance = **3 respondents**
- Lack of design thinking and investment opportunities = **3 respondents**
- Disconnect between City of Radford and Radford University = **3 respondents**
- Taxes are too low for city’s needs/small tax base = **3 respondents**
- Building owners absent/disengaged/unwilling to develop or improve = **3 respondents**

- No senior housing/senior quality of life = **2 respondents**
- Lack of focus on recycling/sustainability/ green energy practices = **2 respondents**
- Poor Internet connectivity/lack of true high-speed Internet = **2 respondents**
- Too many tattoo/vape shops in downtown = **2 respondents**
- Lack of quality housing rentals/ residential housing = **2 respondents**
- Section 8 housing overdeveloped = **2 respondents**
- Uninviting sidewalk space
- Long wait times at restaurants
- Business hours
- People of Radford don't support activities in the city
- Radford Theater needs new seats
- More technology in school system
- Bad mix of businesses downtown (social services with retail for example)
- More attention needs to be brought to community garden and parks
- Businesses geared towards Radford University students and no businesses geared towards City of Radford residents
- Too many restaurants on Radford University's campus
- I ***NEVER*** see RU students downtown
- Lack of bike lanes on main roads
- Rising poverty level
- Not enough local history
- Local citizens do not support restaurants
- Foundry property contamination
- More cultural businesses
- Lack of community involvement
- Lacks identity
- No activities for pre-teens/teens

Bud (Green) = opportunity

- Outdoor recreation/ Trail System Expansion = **7 respondents**
- Available real estate/ area for development/storefronts = **7 respondents**
- Concert opportunities/music venues (Foundry Event Center/Bisset Park) = **7 respondents**
- Development of a variety quality restaurants (coffee shops and brunch restaurants) = **5 respondents**
- Parks (Bisset, Wildwood, and Riverview) = **5 respondents**
- City/University Cooperation = **5 respondents**
- New River = **4 respondents**
- Radford University students/ Students as Future Residents = **3 respondents**
- Indoor pool = **2 respondents**
- Grede Foundry repurposing/redevelopment = **2 respondents**
- Pop-Up Business Program/ Business Incubator = **2 respondents**
- Art (Studio, Gallery, Co-Working, and Maker Spaces) = **2 respondents**

- Farmers' Market/ Nutrition Education = **2 respondents**
- Success of surrounding areas in recruitment (bedroom community)
- Boutiques
- Technological/Vocational Programs in the school system
- Industrial development
- Tourism development
- Boutique hotel
- Position to reinvent our city through community cooperation/ownership
- Active business recruitment
- Business/store-front improvement program
- Utilizing the Rec Center for community programming
- Variety of target demographics: residents, people with young children, students
- Historical opportunity
- Development in West End
- More events/activities during holidays
- Land of opportunity
- Wealth of knowledge from long-time residents
- Co-op grocery
- Grocery store
- N & W Railroad and Amtrak
- Food Trucks
- Demolition of dilapidated buildings and factories
- Transit to Bisset
- Better crosswalks at Belle Heth
- Traffic control during school hours
- Funky, sophisticated city of the New River Valley
- Dog-Friendly Outdoor Activities/Shops/Restaurants
- Brewery
- Summer Festivals
- Property at corner of Main and Tyler (formerly a gas station) could have something cool to get students walking in direction of downtown
- An engaged citizen base
- New faces in city government
- Rejoining Main Street
- Refugee-friendly
- Low-income housing
- Environmental sustainability

APPENDIX C

DHCD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Appalachian Regional Commission - ARC funding is directed to projects that include water and sewer service to communities, workforce training for skilled trades and professionals, regional economic restructuring efforts and heritage and cultural tourism. Other funds seek to build a strong and sustainable asset-based economy, bringing jobs and prosperity to Appalachian communities while preserving their character.

Community Development Block Grant - The CDBG program provides funding to eligible units of local government for planning and implementing projects that address critical community development needs, including housing, infrastructure and economic development. The goal of the CDBG Program is to improve the economic and physical environment in Virginia's communities through activities which primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevent or eliminate slums and blighting conditions or meet urgent needs which threaten the welfare of citizens.

Community Business Launch - The Community Business Launch (CBL) is designed to assist communities in taking a systems approach to defining and pursuing an asset-based small business development strategy. The program starts with a community's unique vision for its future and then uses a local business competition to find and foster the entrepreneurs that connect with that vision. CBL will provide the tools to effectively prepare multiple entrepreneurs to operate successful businesses in a downtown or neighborhood commercial district and allow them to compete for funding to start up their new endeavor.

Industrial Revitalization Fund - The program is targeted toward vacant industrial structures whose poor condition creates physical and economic blight to the surrounding area in which the structure is located. Eligible properties shall include those formerly used for manufacturing, warehousing, mining, transportation and power production, as well as large-scale "white elephant" structures, such as department stores, theatres, hotels and shopping centers.

Virginia Enterprise Zones – The VEZ program is a partnership between state and local government that encourages job creation and private investment. VEZ accomplishes this by designating Enterprise Zones throughout the state and providing two grant-based incentives, the Job Creation Grant (JCG) and the Real Property Investment Grant (RPIG), to qualified investors and job creators within those zones, while the locality provides local incentives.

Virginia Main Street - The Virginia Main Street Program is a preservation-based economic and community development program that follows the Main Street Approach™ developed by the National Main Street Center. Virginia Main Street offers a range of services and assistance to communities interested in revitalizing their historic commercial districts.