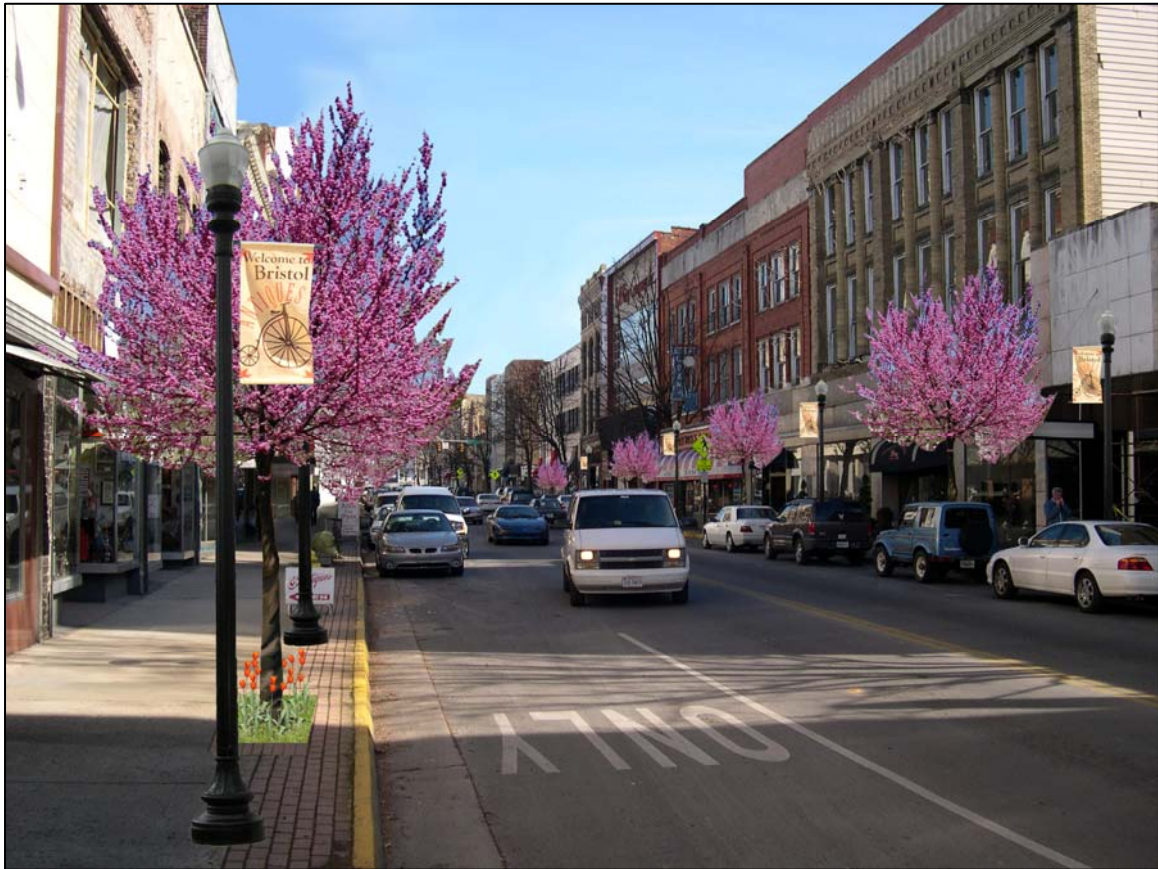


The City of Bristol Tennessee

Downtown Improvement Concept Plan



March 2006

Introduction

There have been numerous downtown plan elements prepared over the years by the City of Bristol and its consultants. The development of the various plans has included a visioning process and countless public discussions on the downtown and its potential, a privately funded study for the creation of a Beaver Creek Walk and, most recently, the *Bristol – A City United* plan funded by both Bristol, Tennessee and Virginia and downtown business and property owners. Common themes of these various forums include the need for additional public parking, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment through lighting and landscaping, enhancing Beaver Creek as a downtown amenity, and the need for a common streetscape theme throughout the downtown. Additionally, the staff and consultants have identified the need for reviewing the downtown zoning provisions to allow for a mix of compatible uses, the use of destination signage, compatible sign regulations, and the need for code revisions to help encourage second story residential development.

The intent of this downtown plan is to present concepts to many of the downtown issues related to services and infrastructure under the jurisdiction of the City. This plan proposes a significant increase in public parking, the concept of shared - specific time - parking with private entities, the addition of green space, the enhancement of Beaver Creek in the downtown area, and the creation of a definitive streetscape for the enhancement of the downtown as a pedestrian friendly environment. A state line symbol is proposed for the State Street and Volunteer Parkway intersection and destination and historic signage is envisioned for the downtown.

The new public parking lot at the site of the Atmos Gas building is included in the projects outlined in this plan. This project is completed for the addition of parking spaces, but additional landscaping and streetscape are planned for this project to enhance the buffering of the electric substation and the small pedestrian park. Additionally, the public space created by the modifications of the transit space, addition of the State Street Farmers Market, and the Downtown Center are included in this plan because of additional projects planned for these areas.

Appended hereto is an overall downtown plan map. In addition, a map illustrating existing and proposed parking changes has been prepared.

I. Parking

Parking is the single most prominent issue identified by consultants, downtown merchants and property owners. A detailed parking map provides considerable information and graphics for each of the items discussed below:

1. Establishment of City parking lot at the old gas building site. This renovation created an additional 43 parking spaces and includes landscaping and an element to add pedestrian space and enhance Beaver Creek. The sidewalk and park are intended to continue the Wes Davis Pedestrian Way.



New Parking Lot



Pedestrian Space

2. Creation of additional on-street parking. Staff has completed a study of the downtown area identifying locations where on-street parking may be added and has identified locations on Shelby Street, Broad Street and 6th Street where designated parking may be added to the current street layout without other modifications. These changes would create an additional 14 spaces. In addition, six underutilized on-street loading zone spaces have the potential to be redesignated as regular parking spaces.

3. Creation of additional on street parking – one-way streets. Staff reviewed the possibility of creating additional on-street parking on the north/south downtown streets. 5th and 7th Streets were studied, with 5th Street becoming one-way south and 7th Street becoming one-way south and creating parallel parking in the opposite lane in each instance. These changes reflect the current bias of traffic reflected in traffic counts conducted by the staff. This change would create 10 parking spaces on 5th Street and 12 spaces on 7th Street.



Corner of 5th & State Street

The staff recommendation on this proposal is to create a southbound one-way flow of traffic on 5th Street, but to leave 7th Street as a two-way street. Leaving 7th Street two-way compliments the functional status of Piedmont Avenue on the

Virginia side of State Street. This change would create 10 spaces on the westernmost lane on 5th Street only.

4. Enhancement of the Shelby Street public parking lot (between 6th and 5th Streets). This public parking lot is currently heavily utilized. There is a pay kiosk on-site and limited landscaping. The plan proposes the lot be landscaped and lit with period lighting following a theme being established for the downtown and the lot to remain designated as two-hour parking but no longer remain a “pay” lot.

In addition the staff recommendation is that a two-hour parking zone be established resulting in all public parking north of Shelby Street, east of 7th Street, including Shelby Street, be two-hour parking, and most other become unrestricted. Additionally, the staff recommends the establishment of a “Scatter” ordinance oriented toward regulating downtown employee usage of time-restricted parking spaces in the event usage grows warranting such regulation.



Shelby Street Parking Lot

5. Creation of a new parking lot at the corner of 8th and State Street.

The *Bristol - A City United* plan proposed the creation of a boutique hotel and associated parking structure in the area of the Sears Building. This proposal is dependent on the demolition of the Sears Building and the aggregation of adjacent properties. As an interim step, the City would develop a parking lot and green space adjacent to Beaver Creek while providing a new pedestrian way to State Street and a small pedestrian area at the western corner of the intersection of State Street and Seventh Street. This is illustrated on the main downtown map and in the accompanying illustration. Thirty parking spaces could be developed if the design includes a parking area associated with the existing buildings.



Proposed Parking and Park Concept

Additionally, the area remaining “across the creek” resulting from the removal of the Sears Building—southeast of the Beaver Creek and north of Shelby Street – could be established as a small parking lot, with landscaping and pedestrian space, or as a small pedestrian park. A maximum of eight (8) parking spaces could be created with this addition.



Proposed Lot

Together, these projects could result in an additional 103 public parking spaces in the downtown area. Additionally, the plan proposes three projects for consideration under the concept of “shared or joint use parking”

The proposal for the joint use of privately owned parking lots is to make clearly marked public use parking available in the downtown area for evening use, weekends, and special events. To accomplish this, the city would establish a partnership with downtown companies for the use of their parking facilities; and, in return the city would assume maintenance responsibilities for said lots. Collectively, leased and privately owned spaces could provide 343-shared spaces.

1. Transforming publicly owned leased parking to shared public parking lots. Currently the city owns properties on Shelby Street, 5th Street, and State Street where private leases are held. These areas provide parking for private groups as follows:

- State Street: - leased to Shields Electronics – 9 spaces
- Shelby Street – leased to Shelby Square building – 34 spaces
- 5th Street – leased to Shelby Square building – 66 spaces



Locations of Proposed Shared Parking (Public Owned Leased Lots)

To realize the full potential and impact of the transformation of the 5th Street parking area leased to the Shelby Square to a fully functioning lot, two properties that lie in the middle of this property should be bought and incorporated into the lot's design. This would add eight (8) spaces and allow the creation of a well-designed, landscaped public parking lot. The current appraisals for the two properties are approximately \$49,000. The purchase price could be significantly different. Collectively, these sites would offer 117 shared parking spaces.

2. Transforming privately owned parking to shared public parking lots. The downtown area has significant private parking that is “worker parking” associated with industrial uses in the downtown. These parking lots are heavily utilized during the normal business hours but are hardly used in the evenings and on weekends and holidays and could offer a total of 226 shared parking spaces. These areas provide parking at the following locations:

- Seventh Street: Parking lot owned by Nash & Powers containing 44 spaces.
- Shelby Street and Seventh Street: This lot is owned by the L. C. King Manufacturing facility with 55 spaces.
- Seventh Street and Broad: Coyne Industries, Bristol Products and Joe Gregory own three parking lots with 40, 39 and 18 spaces respectively.
- State Street: Two parking lots associated with Starwood Properties containing 30 parking spaces.



Locations of Proposed Shared Parking (Privately Owned Lots)

3. The creation of staff and business parking at the corner of Edgemont Avenue and Beecham Street. Currently there is an existing parking area on Beecham Street. This property will be isolated due to the construction of the Anderson Street bridge and offers a parking area that, while somewhat distant from the downtown (two blocks), is easily accessible to downtown and a pedestrian cross walk on Edgemont already exists. The site would accommodate approximately 80 parking spaces and could be utilized as leased parking for downtown residents and employees. The current appraisal of this property is approximately \$48,200.



Proposed Beecham Street Lot

In this section, including the new municipal lot on Shelby Street, 103 new public parking spaces have been identified, thirty (30) of which require only street marking modifications to become a reality. Additionally, 343 potential shared spaces are identified with the possibility of an additional 80 spaces for special events and/or employee parking, for a total of 526 spaces.

Finally, the staff is in the process of identifying properties that may be acquirable for the purpose of establishing additional public parking, or may offer opportunities for partnerships with downtown businesses for the development of shared parking. The concept of the development of a public-private parking garage has been studied and could be realized, but the cost of \$12,000 to \$15,000 per parking space makes such a project dependent on a catalyst, such as a substantial commercial or business project, to justify such an investment.

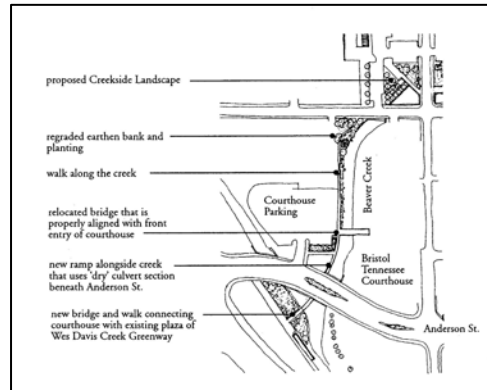
II. Creation of Aesthetically Pleasing Public Spaces

The City will add landscaping to downtown city-owned parking areas as the initial component of beautifying the downtown area. Additionally, several proposed projects address this objective. These include:

1. Pedestrian park – public parking lot (gas building) site. This parking project was completed. A public seating area for the small green space adjacent to Beaver Creek and additional buffering adjacent to the electric substation is planned.



Pedestrian Space

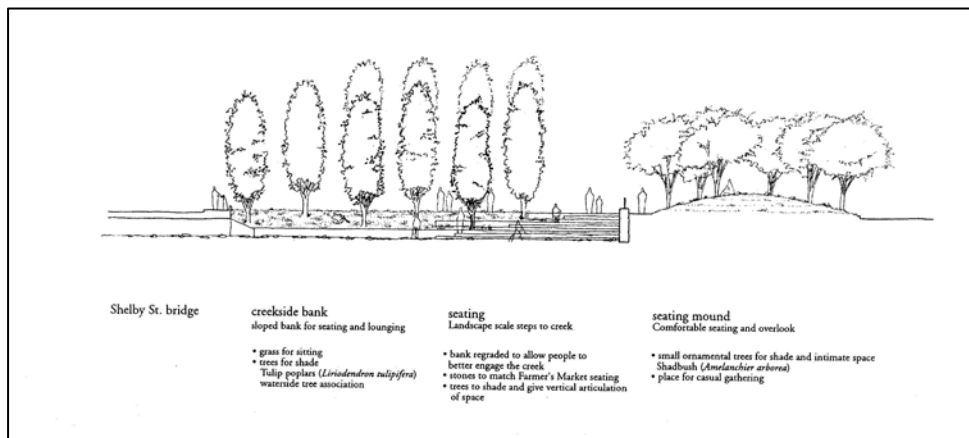


Sketch of Landscaping

2. Completion of the pedestrian park at the Downtown Center. This site is partially completed with the grass area, mound, and sidewalk already in place. Lighting and additional landscaping is planned to add to the public activities of this area.



Downtown Center



“Building the City” Sketch of Landscaping for Downtown Center

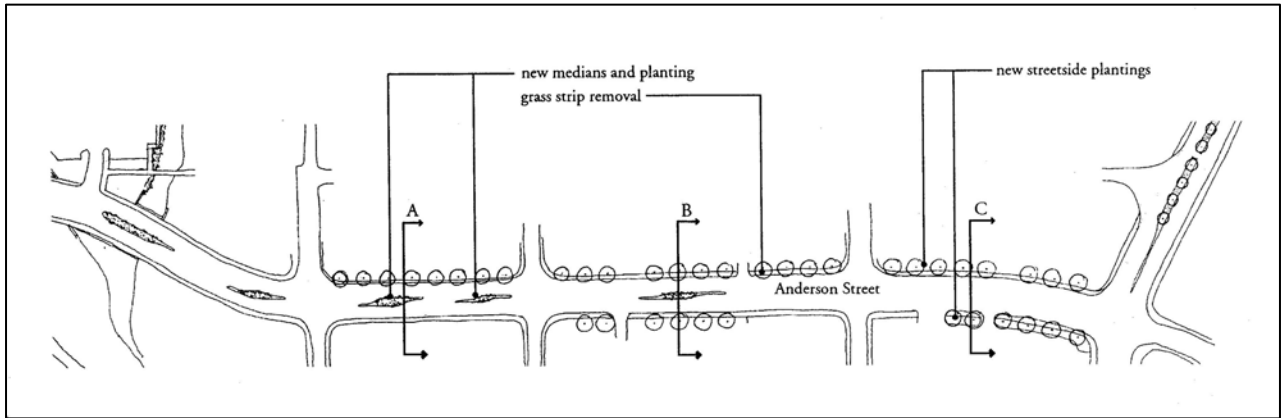
3. Landscaping and pedestrian amenities along Anderson Street and Edgemont Avenue. Tree planting, the removal of some grass areas between the street and sidewalk, and the addition of islands in the turning lane on Anderson Street are

planned. These plan aspects are part of the *Building the City* plan prepared by Kathy Poole and the University of Virginia. The plan proposes the planting of linden trees on both Anderson Street and Edgemont Avenue with complementary bushes being planted. Some private land easements may be required. Estimated cost of this component is:

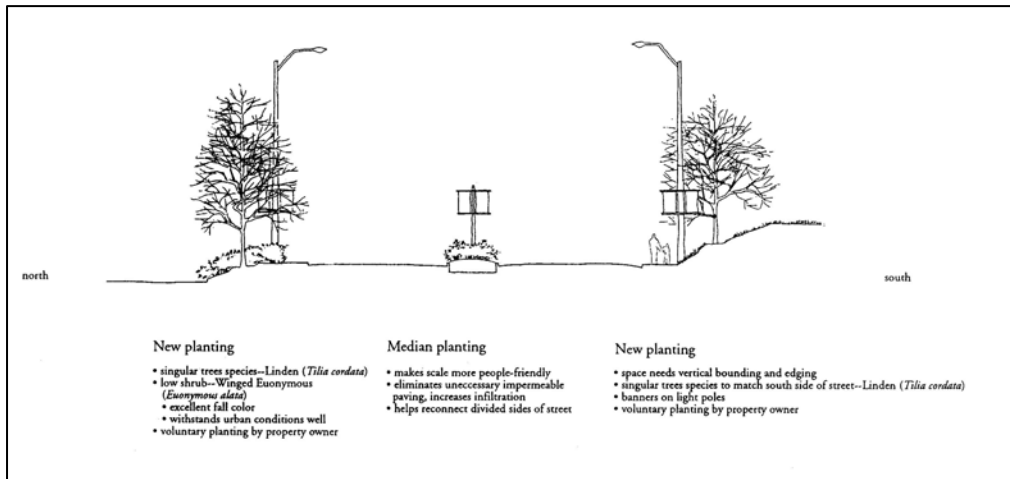
Anderson Street

\$ 10,000 for landscaping

\$ 14,000 for the creation of midblock islands

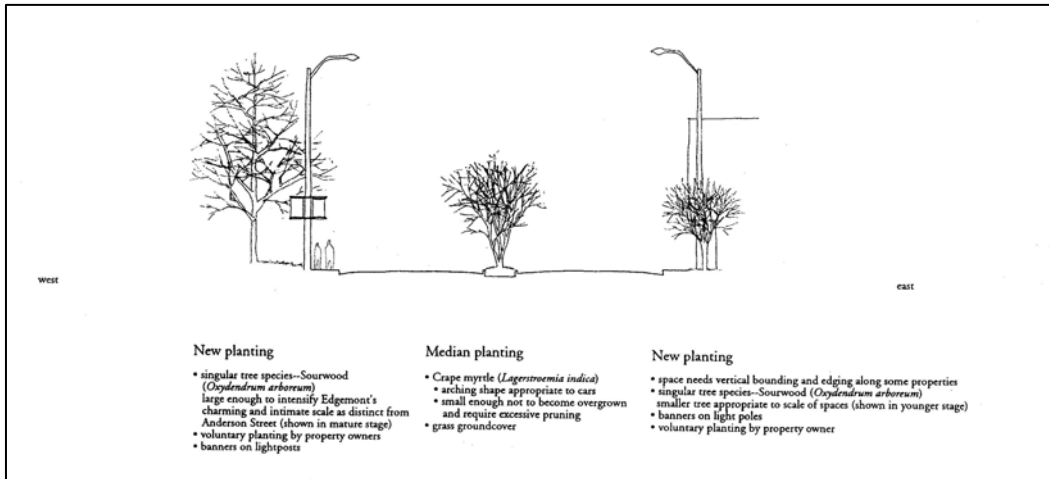


“Building the City” Sketch of Landscaping for Anderson Street



“Building the City” Sketch of Landscaping for Anderson Street

Edgemont Avenue
 \$ 8,000 for landscaping

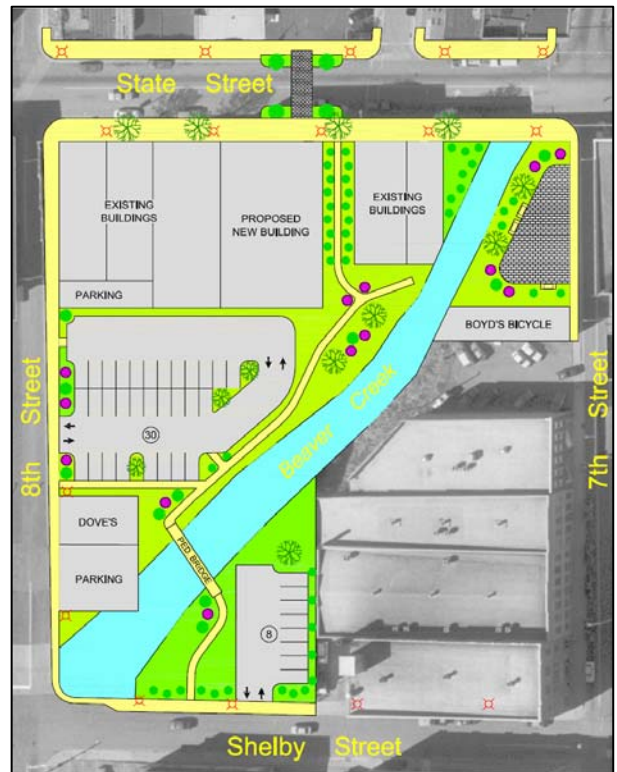


“Building the City” Sketch of Landscaping for Edgemont Avenue

Additionally, a banner system discussed below will be established as part of the defining of downtown Bristol.

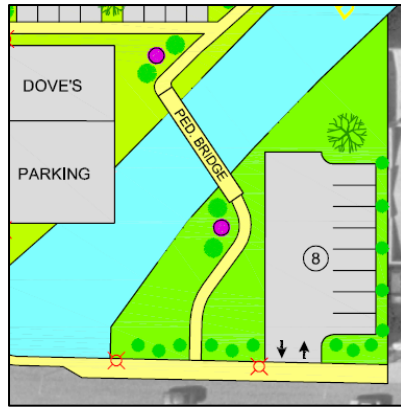
4. Green Space along Beaver Creek and a Park/Public Pavilion – Southwestern corner of State Street and 7th Street. A public area is proposed for construction in the area east of Beaver Creek between the creek and 7th Street. This area would

be created with the demolition of the Sears Building and the structure adjacent to 7th Street that spans the Beaver Creek. The public area would anchor a linear park adjacent to Beaver Creek and would be designed as a small park with a pavilion of either a brick or concrete surface with street furniture. The pavilion would compliment the various public/music events of the downtown area and bring the State Street pedestrian traffic together with the Beaver Creek. The creation of a parking area with the removal of the Sears building, and the planned parking lot design will create a linear green space between the parking lot and the Beaver Creek and should include a sidewalk, benches, and landscaping. The parking lot would be landscaped internally also.



Proposed Park Concept

5. The area “across the creek” left from the removal of the Sears Building– east of Beaver Creek and north of Shelby Street – could be established as a small vest pocket park, including landscaping and benches or could be designed incorporating a small parking lot.



Proposed Green Space



Example of Pedestrian Bridge in Park Setting

III. Streetscape in the Downtown, including State Street, adjacent side streets, and Shelby Street.

The Streetscape in the downtown is important to the visual distinction of the Bristol Downtown area, and should be consistent on both sides of the State Street. Several concepts are proposed for consideration.

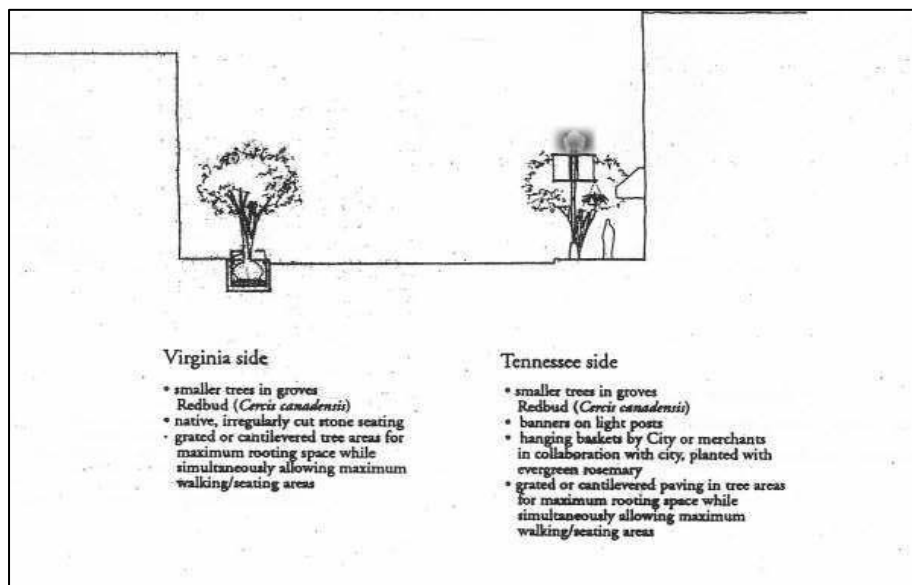
1. Creation of a consistent “historic” lighting scheme for the downtown. This feature would be added to State Street from Volunteer Parkway to the railroad junction, on the adjacent blocks from State Street to Shelby Street, on Shelby Street from Volunteer Parkway and Edgemont Avenue and the north side of Anderson Street. Additionally, the same lighting would be added to public parking areas and landscaped pedestrian ways where appropriate. Pictures for lighting after the early 1900’s suggest a traditional decorative cast iron lamppost topped by a single opaque tulip shaped glass light. Located at 75 to 100-foot intervals, the section along State Street from Volunteer Parkway to the railroad crossing would require approximately 30 fixtures, 55 lights on Shelby Street, 23 lights on Broad Street, 80 fixtures on the intersecting streets, and 27 lights on the north side of Anderson Street. This would result in a project estimate of \$750,000, based on an estimated \$3,500 per fixture, and would be



Proposed Lighting on State Street

accomplished in a multi-year construction schedule. Final spacing would be determined by the illumination afforded by the light as well as the aesthetics of the fixture. The addition of such lighting on the side streets, Shelby Street and Broad Street will be accompanied by the addition of brick pavers over the conduit trench as is currently found on State Street. This will aid in maintenance of the lights and will add an esthetic texture to the sidewalk system.

2. Building the City plan by Kathy Poole. This plan proposed the removal of the existing Bradford pear trees and replacement of small “under story” trees such as redbuds. Additionally, the creation of landscaped areas adjacent to these trees is proposed with small, slow growing shrubs with a planting and mulching plan to minimize maintenance.



“Building the City” Sketch of Landscaping for State Street

3. Baskets and Banners. It is recommended that the City maintain and increase the existing hanging baskets with new lighting and create banner standards that would allow seasonal or holiday banners to be placed without the need for special equipment.

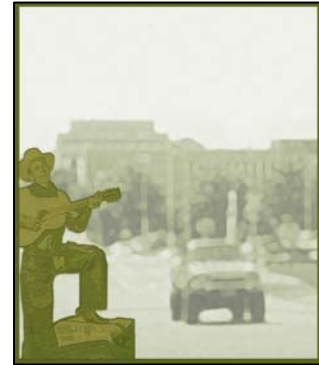
4. Art in Public Places. In conjunction with the Arts Council, the City is establishing three display areas on the Tennessee Side of State Street. These locations are indicated on the downtown map and are located with one on each of the three dominant blocks.



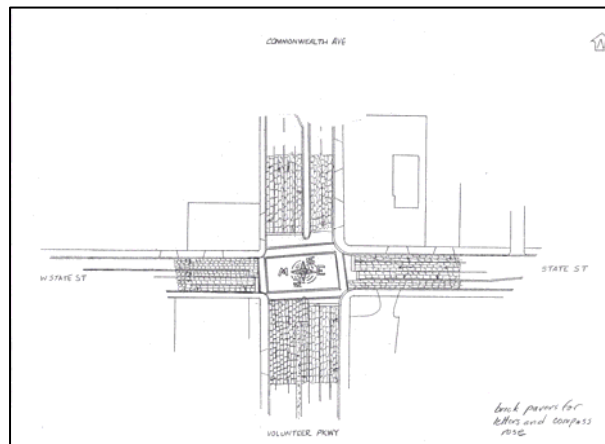
Examples of Bronze Art Sculptures

IV. Establish a Landmark for the intersection of Volunteer Parkway and State Street.

The *Bristol – A City United* plan proposal identified the need for a defining symbol for the State Street and Volunteer Parkway intersection as a method to demark the most visible entrance to the Bristol downtown area. Two concepts were proposed, the first being a road surface treatment that would highlight the crossing of the State Line and establish a “presence.” The second concept is the establishment of statues or art consistent with the theme of the Birthplace of County Music designation and/or NASCAR. Area could be made available by the adjacent properties to establish suitable settings for these features.



Example of Landmark Statue



Example of Landmark in Intersection of State Street and Volunteer Parkway

V. Enhance the Beaver Creek through the Downtown

The presence of the Beaver Creek in the downtown area can be made a substantial amenity. Several projects listed above help in the process of creating an interface between the creek and pedestrian areas.

1. These include:

- Pedestrian park – public parking lot (gas building) site
- Completion of the pedestrian park at the Downtown Center
- Green Space/Public pavilion – southwest corner of State Street and 7th Street
- The area “across the creek”

2. Create a pedestrian/bike route under the westernmost barrel of the Anderson Street Bridge over Little Creek adjacent to Volunteer Parkway. A ramp from the current terminus of the Wes Davis Greenway walking trail, the creation of a concrete floor to the bridge barrel, and the establishment of a ramp up to the

grassed northeastern corner of Volunteer Parkway and Anderson Street would allow the continuation of the walking trail to the existing sidewalk system on the Volunteer Parkway, through the public parking lot and sidewalk system and ultimately to State Street. Such a modification would require a hydraulic study and approval of both the Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Department of Transportation.



Anderson Street Bridge over Little Creek

3. The closure of the 8th Street Bridge over Beaver Creek south of Anderson Street as part of the Corps of Engineers Beaver Creek Flood Mitigation project will alternatively offer an approach to extend the Wes Davis walking trail to the downtown. A pedestrian bridge is proposed and would provide an alternative to the water route discussed above. The crossing of Anderson Street at this location will be significantly easier and safer upon the closing of 8th Street.

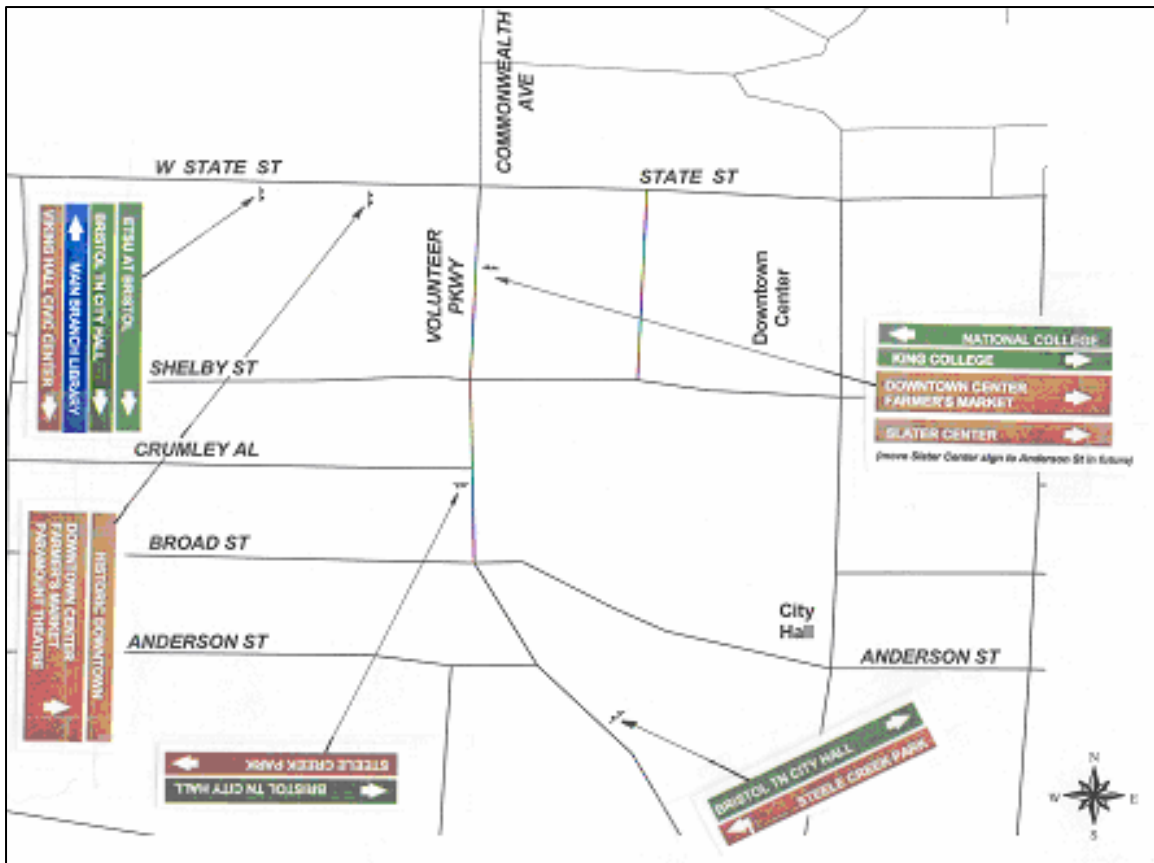
4. The City should investigate a project with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation and/or Environmental Protection Agency to create a weir system to aerate the creek while creating a pool effect between stream levels created by the weirs. Such a system would create small level pool areas from State Street to the removed 8th Street bridge.

VI. Signage and other Issues

Signage is an important component to the enhancement of the downtown area and to guide visitors to this important hub. The City has established a Destination Signage program and will include color-distinguished signage to the Bristol Public Library, the Historic Downtown, Paramount Theatre, Downtown Center, Farmers Market and Historic Train Station. In addition, standards should be established to create a uniform and historic signage for the downtown street signs and a more uniform signage for downtown businesses.

Zoning and other regulatory issues will be addressed to help the downtown fulfill its potential for redevelopment. The Zoning requirements for the downtown will acknowledge the current mixture of commercial, industrial, and residential uses while developing the future “mixture” that facilitates redevelopment while preserving the existing uses. Historic Zoning should be considered. These regulations, if adopted, could help preserve the visual impact of the downtown area while accommodating new construction.

Building Code changes with the adoption of the existing International Building Code will help accommodate innovative solutions not currently available to the City in resolving redevelopment and reuse challenges.



Proposed Signage near Downtown Area