



INTERNAL WORKING DRAFT CONCEPT (TEXT ONLY)

FALL 2022



Prepared in cooperation with:
Environmental Planning & Design, LLC

Acknowledgements

To be written

DRAFT

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Introduction

Purpose of this Comprehensive Plan

The comprehensive plan acts as a guidebook to inform key decisions related to land use planning for the community. The vision and actions of this plan are based upon the unique values and aspirations of the Clarksburg community. An up-to-date comprehensive plan is necessary to comply with West Virginia State Code and adequately inform and guide associated planning tools, such as the planning and zoning code.

Approach of this Plan

Conventional comprehensive planning is general and broad reaching in nature, with much attention given to evaluating existing conditions. This plan sets a new trajectory for planning by targeting the highest priority areas of focus, most immediate to the current needs and opportunities of the community. This plan focuses more on the practical “how-to” of implementing selected actions. By biting off small digestible chunks, this approach sets a precedent for progress tracking and more seamless and consistent planning.

Summary of Community Engagement

To be drafted following final public workshops

Summary Responses from Round #1 Public Workshops

Responses received from roughly 30 community members in attendance. To be updated as more input is gathered online.



Topics:

Culture and Green Space Character Housing Business Streets and Mobility Communication

How this Word Cloud works:

Larger Text = More Popular Responses

Public Workshop #2 Exhibits

Downtown Business Revitalization

What should Clarksburg focus on to revitalize downtown? (Place dots on your Top 2 Choices Only)



A. Inventory of the interior conditions of building systems (i.e. electric, HVAC, elevators, ADA accessibility, etc.); Prioritize older/historic buildings for rehab



B. Pop-Up Public Spaces with fun activities to attract customers downtown and spark vitality



C. Join the West Virginia "Main Street" or "ON TRAC" program to create a downtown strategy, access funding, and learn from other cities in WV



D. Expand capacity for community development type-entitles focusing on redevelopment of key sites/buildings



E. Pursue updates to the Zoning & Land Development codes to encourage more contextual development and a more convenient process for developers



Comment on your choices or share other ideas that Clarksburg should consider.



Attract local & national business

Join the TRAC program

Focus on historic preservation

Improve the TRAC program

Improve the TRAC program

-Do more to attract business to downtown
-city challenges



Public Workshop #2 Exhibits

Active Mobility

What should Clarksburg focus on to enhance mobility within your neighborhood? (Place dots on your **Top 2 Choices Only**)



A. Sidewalk maintenance financial assistance for property owners (i.e. enhance/expand Neighborhood Sidewalk Program)



B. Regional trail expansion/connections (i.e. North Bend Trail, Southern/Northern Harrison County Trail to meet in downtown)



C. Bicycle routes along streets connecting across the city



D. Intersection/street-specific roadway redesigns to improve pedestrian safety



E. Enforcement of vehicular speeding and other violations



Comment on your **top choices** or share other ideas that Clarksburg should consider.



Handwritten comment: I would like to see more sidewalks in downtown...

Handwritten comment: I don't believe in... I don't believe in...

Handwritten comment: We need better sidewalks... better sidewalks & more parking...

Handwritten comment: More bike lanes...

Handwritten comment: I don't know about... I don't know about...

Handwritten comment: I don't know about... I don't know about...



Public Workshop #2 Exhibits

Property Maintenance

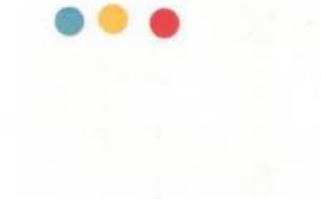
What should Clarksburg focus on to reduce blight within your neighborhood? (Place dots on your **Top 2 Choices Only**)



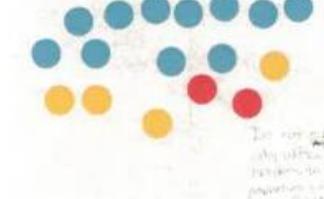
A. "Adopt-a-lot" programs to transform vacant lots into community green spaces (e.g. gardens)



B. Continue community-organized clean-ups (e.g. in partnership with Clarksburg Community Action)



C. Increase code enforcement with additional/expanded technical and legal tools, such as "on-site" citations



D. Raise awareness of property owner assistance loans and grants geared to maintenance and rehabilitation



Comment on your choices or share other ideas that Clarksburg should consider

Blighted property along roads
 Demolition of unsafe/obsolete
 Rehabilitation
 Landlord education
 Tax abatements
 Property Maintenance
 Code enforcement
 On-site citations
 Property owner assistance
 Loans and grants
 Technical and legal tools
 "Adopt-a-lot" programs
 Community-organized clean-ups
 Partnership with Clarksburg Community Action



Public Comments (Sticky Notes) from Round #2 Workshops July 2022

Active Mobility

- Need more curb cuts and consideration for mobility/ADA. Lots of sidewalks with utility poles in the middle, crumbling concrete. This does not just benefit wheelchair users but also side walkers etc.
- Rt 50 and Exits from I79 to Adamston needs reworked and modernized for today's commute. We have the worst exist design in the state.
- Mountain bike trail at Lowndes Hill.
- We need better way-finding signage, better directionals to parking, Highway signs that identify Robinson Grand, parks, and splash pad park.
- What happened to I70 and Rt. 50 new interchange, roads to prosperity.
- Roundabouts; one was proposed in west end at the old fish and chips years ago.

Downtown Business Revitalization

- Use Home Rule to create zoning that make city easier to develop, City should own property
- Would love to see a main street organization for Clarksburg
- Becoming a Hub for certain types of Businesses Biking/Hiking or Antiques or The Arts
- Forget Main and Pike Street 2-ways; No-No
- Attract local and national Business
- Join The WV Community Development HUB

Open Spaces & Natural Resources

- D+E will bring people to the area Tourism. This is untapped area
- Would love to see a park/playground on/near Dale Ave/ Washington Ave. No parks to walk to despite being right downtown
- Kelly Miller Community Center Activities + Community
- Youth Recreation programing needed. Kids go to Bridgeport for indoor athletics. Kelly Miller Community Center gym needs renovation
- Overgrowth + Invasive species problem along Elk Creek + Lowndes park, figure out if Creek is maintenance responsibility of the State

Comprehensive Plan
City of Clarksburg

EPD LLC
8/19/2022

Property Maintenance

- Respond and do something about the complaints + reports on vacant + dilapidated buildings
- More programs to help poor people care for 100-year old homes
- Help convert dilapidated homes to useful before they get so bad, they need torn down.
- Do not allow City Office holders to have properties with code enforcement issues especially issues with vacant, trash riddled, properties
- 3 historical overlays and no historical commission. We need a group responsible for reviewing conformance to historical ordinances
- We need to create an architectural review committee to be able to enforce architecture and design ordinances.
- Planning commission should review building projects to ensure it conforms to comprehensive plan. Council should bare decisions on planning recommendations
- URA – should be fully functioning group with a land bank, a real budget and the power to get abandoned properties back and empty land productive again.
- Property Maintenance is hard on poor, old property owners, people who need help pay less property taxes till problems are taking care of
- Tear down Walton Hotel
- Beautification for Empty storefronts; use art to brighten up the area
- Demolition of unsafe/eyesore/undeveloped public buildings (Walton Hotel)
- Blighted property along creek unknown who is responsible (City, State?)

Communications & Community Identity

- Arts + Cultural Robinson Grande, Park Amphitheater; Very unique assets to set Clarksburg apart
- Provide templates or guides for neighborhood block parties
- Don't just use the newspaper to advertise events-many people don't subscribe
- Tap the resources of retired citizens to help school children with tutoring in subjects the citizen is competent and the student needs help. Provide a location and facilities to facilitate teaching and learning during off-school days and hours
- Council leadership – staff – public, coordination + accessibility
- Gateway's first impressions
- Reach out to Community organizations who have promotional abilities in place, ask them to help promote community meetings

Comprehensive Plan
City of Clarksburg

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8/19/2022

Summary Responses from Round #1 Public Workshops (Notes added in Round #2)

What works:

- Backpacker issues improving in North View

What Needs Work

- Community police
- Community Policing
- Enforce Street Parking Meters – Tim Miley abuses it front of his office
- Lowly Rental Apartments + houses
- Bridgeport – New schools, Rec center, Clarksburg old schools and gym; no rec center
- Activities for preteens + teenage (Not Sports)
- Feral Cats/animals
- Diversity training for Law Enforcement and Community leaders
- Vet city office members or board members from holding office if they have dilapidated, trash hidden vacant buildings
- Creek Maintenance in town
- Closed Kroger grocery
- Roadways configuration
- Code enforcement
- Local downtown grocery store
- Do code enforcement on invasive vegetation so it doesn't cause a problem for home owners (gardening etc.)

Influences

Key Advantages & Opportunities

- **Cultural attractions and amenities** - Events/venues, such as the Robinson Grande, state-wide cultural heritage festivals, and Clarksburg Amphitheater, are major attractions that make Clarksburg unique. Clarksburg also contains several significant historic landmarks, a result of many prominent historical figures making their mark here. For more information on Clarksburg's history, see appendix for excerpts from past comprehensive planning.
- **Historic urban character** - Clarksburg is set apart from many other West Virginia communities due to the presence of its urban downtown with many notable historic buildings and landmarks.
- **Scenic and natural setting** - The City's natural waterways and wooded hillsides provide pleasant scenery as well as direct access to nature even within an urban environment.
- **Well-connected regionally** - Clarksburg is well connected to the broader region due to convenient highway access (i.e. I79, US 50, US 19). There is opportunity for Clarksburg to be a destination of tourism.
- **Hub for social services** - As a county seat, Clarksburg hosts a variety of social services and community-oriented programming. (See list of organizations within the Appendix).

Key Challenges

- **Population and economic decline** - Similar to many peer communities across the region, Clarksburg has experienced decades of economic and population decline resulting from loss of the area's historic manufacturing and natural resource extraction industries. The city housed 16,061 residents in 2020, which is roughly half the city's historic highwater mark of 32,014 residents in 1950. The widespread impacts of such decline effect all aspects of the community's fabric, including the city government's challenge to support public infrastructure systems designed for double the current population, with greatly diminished tax revenues.
- **Property blight** - As a well-established city, Clarksburg contains an aging stock of buildings. In fact, 82 percent of housing units are over 50 years in age. Property maintenance of an aging housing stock is challenging for property owners, especially when many within the community lack the economic resources needed for property upkeep.
- **Impacts of unhoused people and drug abuse** - Clarksburg contains a significant presence of unhoused people (also referred to as backpackers), in part due to its many support services. Camp sites for unhoused people tend to congregate along creek banks or underpasses and may lead to littering/dumping, which degrade the natural environment. In addition, the presence of drug abuse may impact public safety and perception of certain areas.

- **Legacy of limited community outreach and engagement** – Throughout the public outreach portion of this plan, participants shared that in the past the City’s planning efforts were conducted with limited public outreach and engagement.

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Areas of Focus

A. *Build from Within*: **Revitalization & Redevelopment**

Goal: Reclaim the vitality of Clarksburg's downtown core by taking advantage of the city's unique cultural and historical assets/amenities and supporting redevelopment in alignment with established character.

B. *Look to the Rivers & Hills*: **Recreation & Natural Resources**

Goal: Embrace the city's natural waterways, wooded hills, and recreation trails through restoration/management of natural features and expanded access for outdoor recreation opportunities to promote public health and attract economic development.

C. *Keep it Clean & Proud*: **Property Maintenance**

Goal: Nurture clean and well-kept neighborhoods through a comprehensive blight mitigation strategy, including community-supportive code enforcement, property owner assistance, and beautification/clean-ups.

D. *Work Together*: **Community Engagement & Communications**

Goal: Strengthen communications and public relations between community members and city official/leadership to ensure planning is community-driven and residents are connected to the various resources and services offered by the city and its partners.



A PLAN for Clarksburg's Future

4 Focus Areas

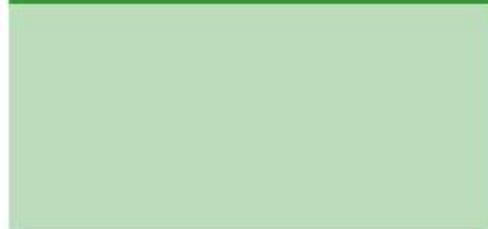
BUILD FROM WITHIN Revitalization & Redevelopment



GOAL: Reclaim the vitality of Clarksburg's downtown core by taking advantage of the city's unique cultural and historical assets/amenities and supporting redevelopment in alignment with established character.



LOOK TO THE RIVERS/HILLS Recreation & Natural Resources



GOAL: Embrace the city's natural waterways, wooded hills, and recreation trails through restoration/management of natural features and expanded access for outdoor recreation opportunities to promote public health and attract economic growth.



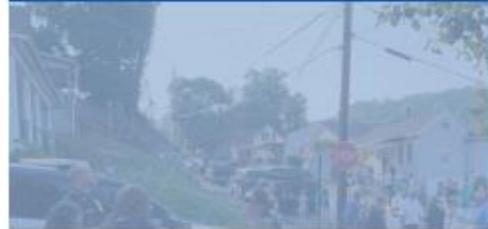
KEEP IT CLEAN & PROUD Property Maintenance



GOAL: Nurture clean and well-kept neighborhoods through a comprehensive blight mitigation strategy, including community-supportive code enforcement, property owner assistance, and beautification/clean-ups.



WORK TOGETHER Community Engagement



GOAL: Strengthen communications and relationships between community members and city official/leadership to ensure planning is community-driven and residents are connected to the various resources and services offered by the city and its partners.

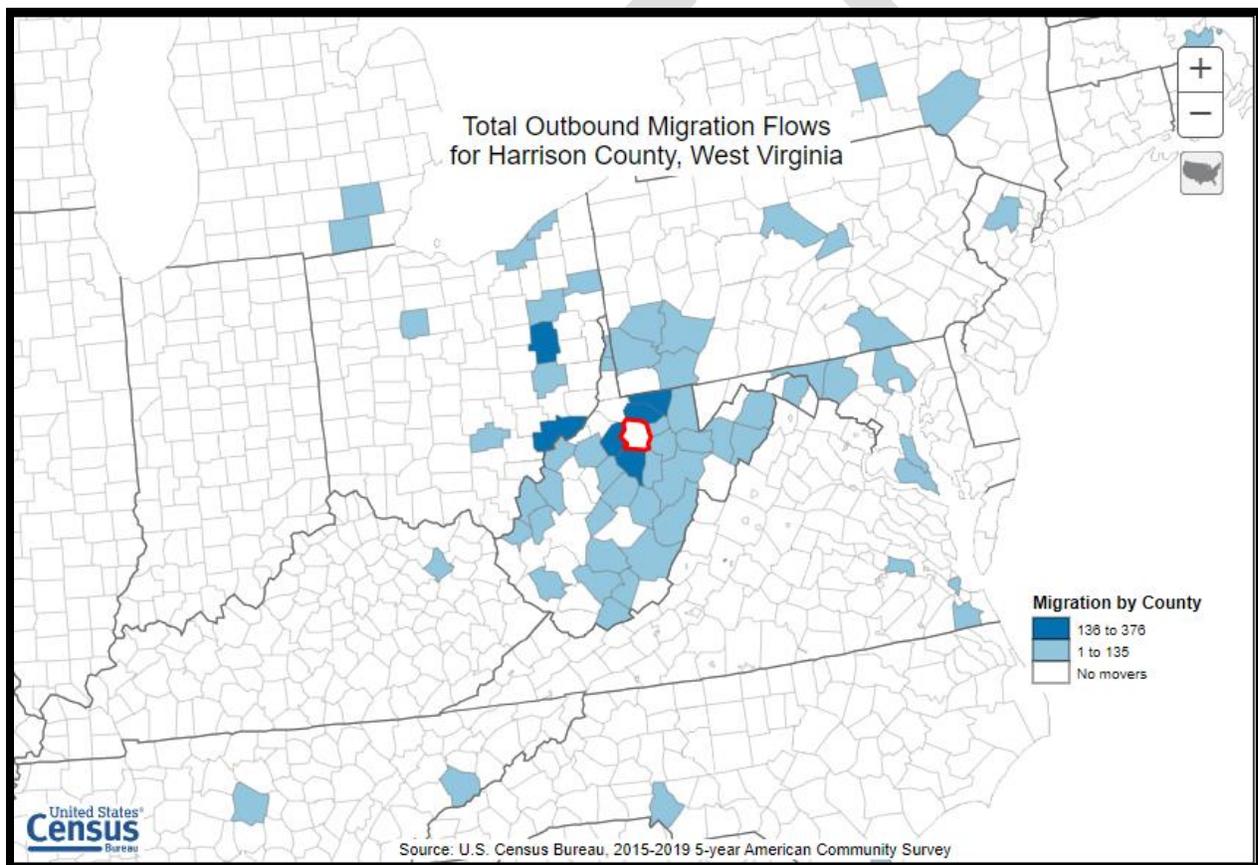


Clarksburg Demographics & Housing Information

U.S. Census Data

Population

The 2020 Census identified 16,039 individuals residing in the City of Clarksburg. This was a decrease of 539 individuals from 2010 (16,578 population) and 704 individuals from 2000 (16,743). The City of Clarksburg's population has declined significantly from the 1950 census (32,014 population). Harrison County, WV has also experienced a population decline since 1950, from 85,911 individuals to 65,921 in 2020, a decrease of 20,038. Migration out of Harrison County appears to be limited to locations near West Virginia, with most migrating to Doddridge, Lewis, Marion, Monongalia Counties in West Virginia, and Tuscarawas and Washington Counties in Ohio.



The population of Clarksburg, WV is overwhelmingly between the ages of 18 and 64 based on the 2021 5-year American Community Survey data. Those under 18 account for 22.3% of the population, with school aged children (aged 5 to 18) making up 17% of the total population. The proportion for those over 65 was 16.7% of the city's population. Of unique aspect of Clarksburg's population is the number of veterans, with approximately 5% of the total population of Clarksburg having been in the military. This is a lower proportion than in West Virginia and United States. Given the proximity of veteran resources in Clarksburg, it was anticipated that there would be higher numbers of veterans living in the City.

Housing Data

The 2021 5-year American Community Survey estimated a total of 7,710 housing units in the City of Clarksburg. Most housing within the city was built prior to 1940, at approximately 38% of the total housing stock. Data provided in the table below shows the decline in new housing construction that has been occurring since the 1950s. Since 1990, only 451 housing units have been built or approximately 6% of homes in Clarksburg.

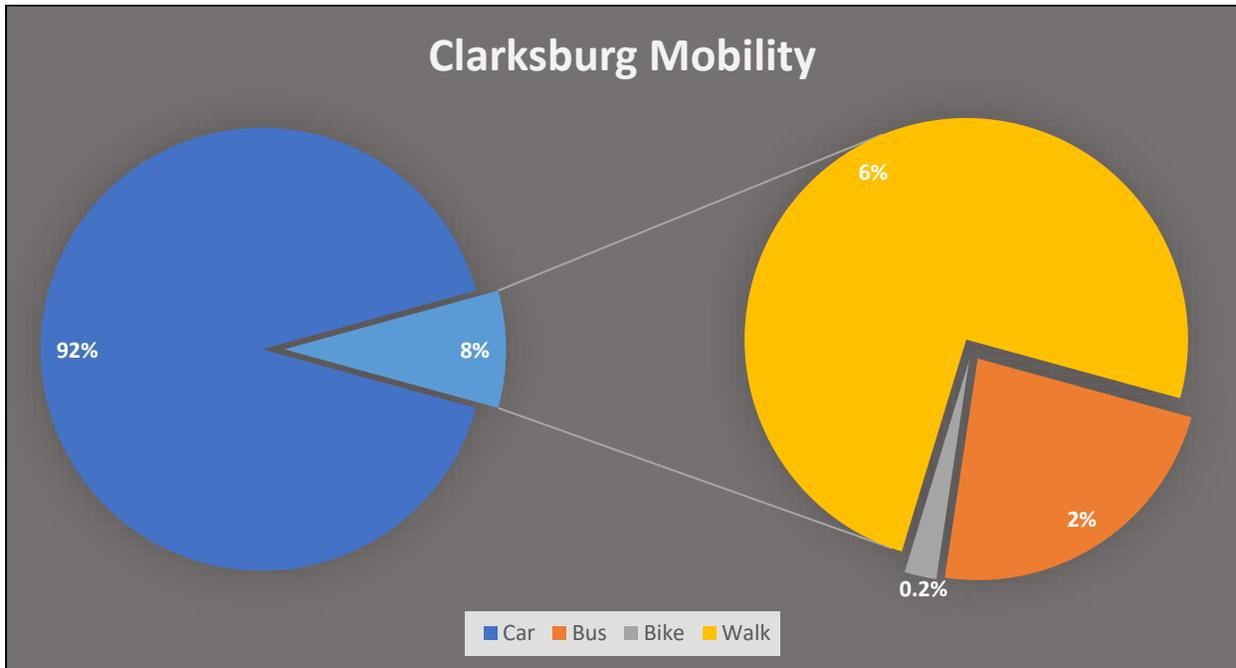
Year	Pre-1930s	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-Present
Number of Units	2,916	1,054	1,534	815	523	417	275	115	61
10-year Change		-1,862	480	-719	-292	-106	-142	-160	-54
10-year Percent Change		-63.9%	45.5%	-46.9%	-35.8%	-20.3%	-34%	-58.2%	-47%

Household Economic Data

Households in Clarksburg have an average of two (2) persons, but data appears to be skew left given the number of Households without children and non-family households. There are approximately 3,487 family households living in the city and 2,986 non-family households. Most households do not have children, as there are 4,704 households without children present. While unconfirmed, there does appear to be an association between the higher number of rental units and lower per person household and should be examined with future housing studies to determine if Clarksburg's housing stock will work for future residents.

Of the 7,710 existing housing units, 6,449 were considered occupied for census data purposes. Of those units occupied, 3,842 units are owner occupied, with 2,608 being rental units. Of the owner-occupied units, 1,865 units were mortgaged, while 977 were not. The amount of rental units approximately 40% of occupied housing is higher than the West Virginia's total rental housing percentage 26.7% and the United States' 35.6%. Of those units with an underlying mortgage the median value of the property was \$104,700. Of those units that were not mortgaged, the value of the property was \$80,00. Clarksburg housing values are depressed when compared to the West Virginia state median value of \$123,200 and the United States median housing value of \$229,800. Rental rates are not as depressed with a median Clarksburg rent of \$679, and the West Virginia median rent being \$732, and the United States median rent of \$1,096.

Most households in the City of Clarksburg, approximately 92%, utilize personal automobiles for travel. Bicycle only households constituted the lowest percentage of household mobility options at approximately 0.2% of all Clarksburg households. Bus transit was second lowest mobility preference for Clarksburg households, with approximately 2% of households using bus services as their mobility option. Walking was second to car travel, with approximately 6% of households only using walking for mobility. Roughly 8% of the population does not use a personal vehicle for travel.



The average Clarksburg resident's household income was estimated to be \$53,788 with a median income of \$41,226. Based on a 40-hour work week, this data indicates that the average full-time earnings for Clarksburg households is predicated on a \$25.86 an hour wage, while the median earning for Clarksburg households is predicated on a \$19.82 an hour wage. Approximately 3,582 residents or roughly 22% of all residents, are living below the federal poverty level.

Land-Use & Community Design

Development in the City of Clarksburg has remained relatively static since 2000, with most new development occurring along the U.S. Interstate 79 corridor. Development within the City proper has been low, but not unusual given the external demand occurring in Bridgeport associated with green-field development. As provided in the Housing Data, most residential housing within the City's municipal limits has been in existence for over eighty-years. Downtown development has occurred with larger projects associated with Local, State, and Federal agency office and service needs.

New land-use controls in conjunction with subdivision and land development guidelines are becoming necessary as traditional zoning has not provided satisfactory land development patterns. Currently, the City of Clarksburg administers a traditional Euclidean Zoning Ordinance and noncompliant Subdivision Ordinance. Given West Virginia's extreme topography, historic development patterns, and property ownership laws, inactive or low activity properties are scattered throughout the city. These include a wide range or suboptimal designs including abandoned housing, vacant lots, exurban commercial land-uses comingled with high-density housing, and brown and grey fields.

Zoning alone does not actively change land-development patterns. In preparing this plan and conducting public outreach, a civic infrastructure asset priority became apparent. Instead of traditional zoning code recommended changes, this plan finds that by targeting recreational amenities provided throughout out the City of Clarksburg and leveraging those places and

spaces with public investment and form based structural code requirements to ensure properties are maintained and integrate into the built environment. The future land use map provided on Page XX, identifies the following needs:

Downtown Revitalization and Redevelopment Plan

Analysis of the Central Business District and Glen Elk neighborhoods considering a variety of factors including market analysis, land-use regulations, parking, internal building conditions, and general marketing of the area.

Neighborhood Centers

Updates to the Zoning ordinance to better enable development in our neighborhoods. These updates should include identifying barriers to development and reducing challenges that may no longer be practical as they relate to traffic congestion and land overcrowding.

Open Space and Parks Development

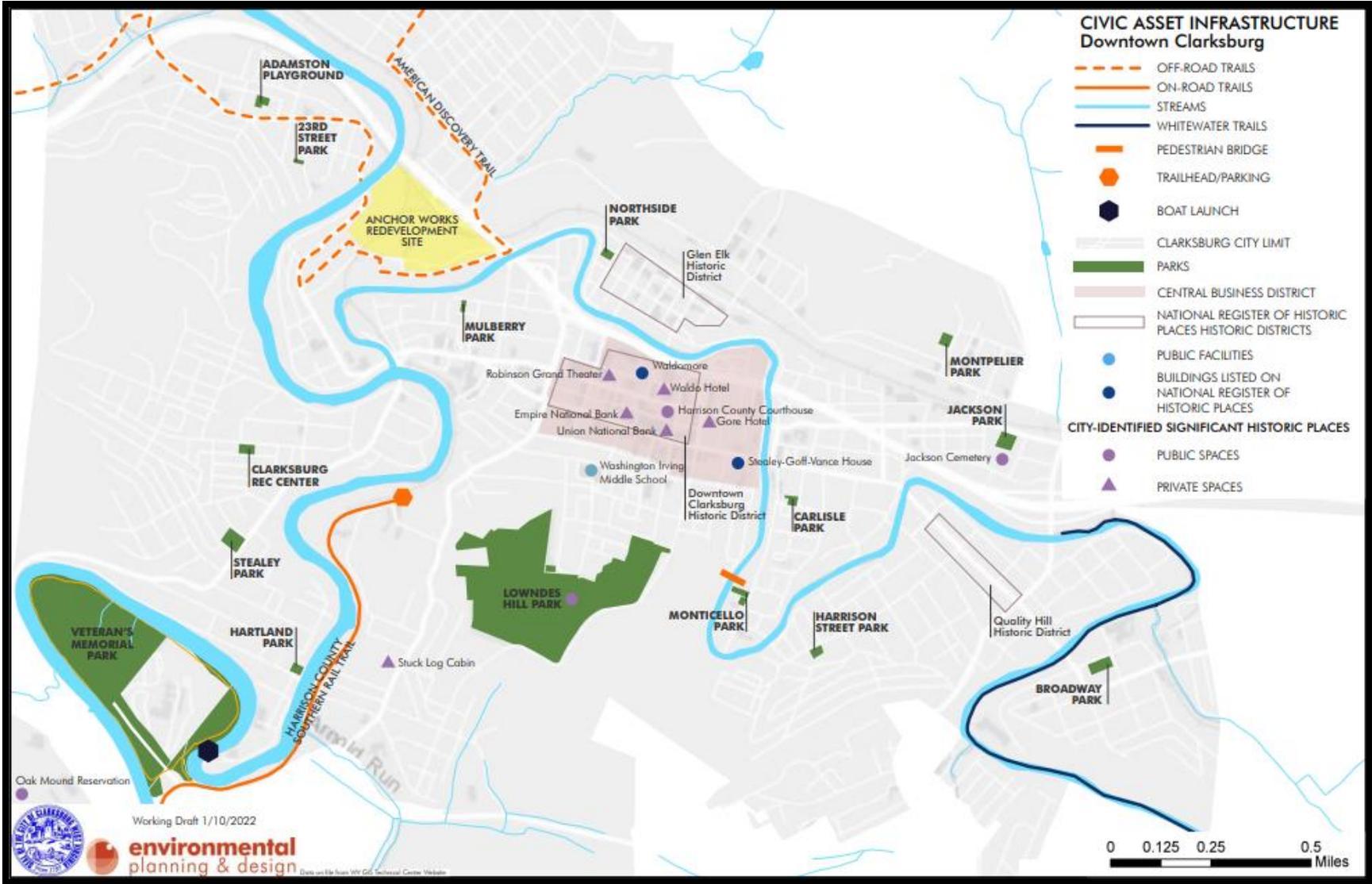
Invest in natural resource restoration near bicycle trail and Elk Creek. Support efforts to extend regional trail corridors to connect all parts of the City to the wider region. Investigate blight and slum removal strategies for river and trail access.

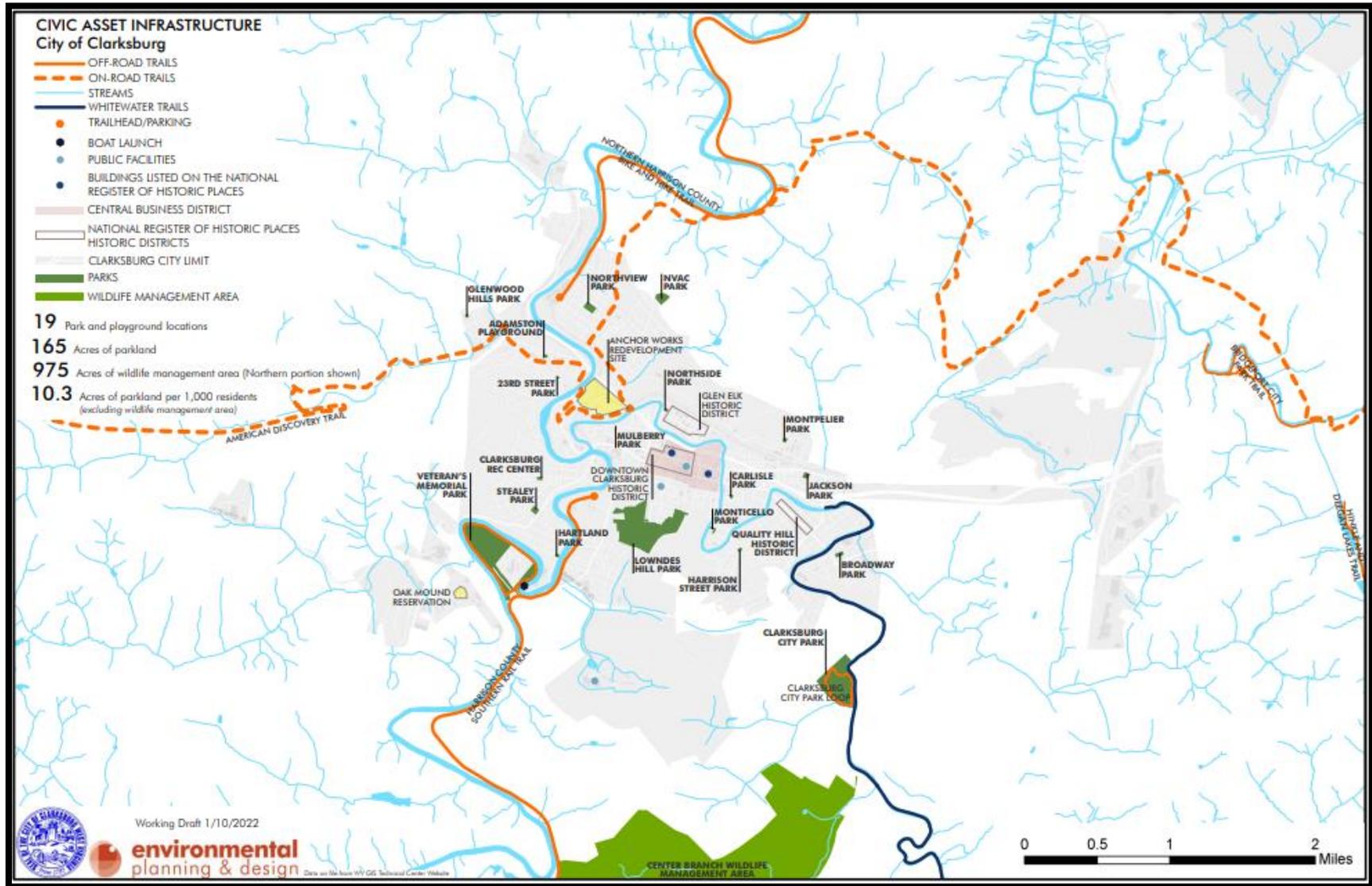
Lowndes Hill

Opportunity for natural resource restoration, nature trail expansion and access enhancements, and scenic overlooks. In addition to active park land use and the YMCA, the existing Civil War trenches on site should be reexamined to determine the status of the antiquity and if there are possible programs to provide education opportunities to the public about the Civil War and associated Economic Development activities associated with the Historic site.

Blight Mitigation

Mitigating the effects of deteriorated structures continues to be necessary. The City should work to continue redevelopment where feasible and continue to explore methods to ensure properties are maintained.





Future Development Areas

Infill Redevelopment

The City of Clarksburg, having existed for approximately 250 years, has tremendous infill redevelopment potential. Inside the traditional core and throughout Clarksburg's residential neighborhoods, there are vacant and underutilized parcels of land that can be consolidated into buildable lots.

Residential Infill Development

For residential neighborhoods such as Adamston and Broadway, the reconfiguring of structures into apartment dwellings has created noticeable issues with the structural and aesthetic condition of housing. Those structures which are converted from single-family detached dwellings to duplexes, triplexes, or other multi-family dwellings increase slum due to the investment of the community being commodified to individual investors as opposed to residents. In these areas, de-densification of the area could provide more opportunities for individual homeownership, while decreasing congestion on roadways, increasing structural investment, and maintaining the surrounding neighborhood's-built environment rhythm and harmony. Many times, these structures were designed and constructed before automobiles and simply do not fit into a higher density use, eventually becoming vacant as they are no longer functional. By enabling block level redevelopment plans with cooperation of the property owners, new development patterns can be achieved to promote single-family detached dwelling development, or new construction of townhomes with amenities that promote the community and allow for functional use.

In areas where demolitions have occurred, the City of Clarksburg can assist in property consolidation, by acquiring vacant parcels in a land bank. The establishment of a land bank with active engagement would be a positive step in assisting with development, given title issues present with most demolished structures. The land bank, using provisions in West Virginia state code, would be the best method to consolidate these structures, and avoid tax sale issues that hamper redevelopment.

Commercial Infill Development

Throughout the Glen Elk and Central Business District neighborhoods, there are vacant, condemned, and underutilized structures that could be repurposed. This redevelopment is helped with state and federal historic preservation grants and other lines of capital that are available to developers. The problem is the lack of market for redevelopment in West Virginia, property ownership issues, and the overall cost. For these properties, the city has limited options, as the cost of redevelopment of one individual structure easily exceeds yearly revenue collection. A developer could theoretically acquire property and complete the redevelopment process but given the capital requirements for these projects and general acquisition costs, the city is not realizing private investment driven redevelopment.

There are programs such as the New Markets Tax Credit and Opportunity Zone designations which encompass portions of Clarksburg. These programs require investment into more than just housing, with the establishment of non-poverty wage employment. The City should investigate opportunities to work with mixed-use developers to increase funding opportunities for preservation and re-use. This would be a pivot from traditional Low Income Housing Tax

Credit based housing, with more market rates units available and associated commercial activities.

Annexation

The State of West Virginia generally requires that property owners outside of municipal jurisdictions agree or solicit the local government for annexation. While Minor Boundary Adjustments pursued by municipal governments were at one time permitted, this practice was ended by changes to West Virginia state code in 2019. Given the limitations placed on municipalities, the only services that Clarksburg can provide to areas outside of the City are, police, fire, roadway maintenance, building code compliance, and sanitary sewer services. In evaluating any annexation, the city should evaluate the cost of services to the area versus the revenues possible from development. It may be feasible for individual residential parcels or small groups of residential parcels to seek annexation, but post-1970 style single-family developments may prove problematic given resources required to service these developments.

In prioritizing annexation areas, this plan finds that the municipal boundary should be corrected where possible, to accommodate the entirety of the parcel and ending the current spit lots along areas of unincorporated Harrison County. For areas adjacent to Anmoore and Nutter Fort, coordination with those jurisdictions should be made to ensure that services required for development will be funded by the development and are not washed through annexation agreements that limit funds to the City of Clarksburg, especially as they relate to sanitary sewer. As the City of Clarksburg is the sewer provider for these jurisdictions, it is imperative that the City be involved with future development around Clarksburg.

In working with current property owners for unincorporated portions of Harrison County between these jurisdictions as shown in the image below, the City of Clarksburg should coordinate to provide incentives for development. These incentives may include provisions to establish a fire station to the eastern portion of the City, permanent Business and Occupation tax deferral agreements for selected areas, and establishment of special taxing districts to assist with infrastructure development.

It cannot be stressed enough that cooperation for development between the cities, towns, and Harrison County is required. As Harrison County's urban center, the City of Clarksburg should not compete for exurban sprawl as town center development is not Clarksburg and actively diminishes the downtown. All potential annexation areas near U.S. Interstate I-79 should be evaluated against services that can be provided by the City of Bridgeport. Historic disagreements on annexation of land between Bridgeport and Clarksburg must end for the benefit of both jurisdictions. In coordinating future development, this plan recommends county level future land-use planning in cooperation with all jurisdictions. Additionally, the City of Clarksburg should actively work with Lost Creek, Lumberport, Shinnston, Salem, West Milford to establish future residential growth opportunities in the County's smaller jurisdictions. These locations already being built may provide additional opportunities for residents to live in Harrison County, and work in the City of Clarksburg.

Infrastructure, Community Facilities, & Parks

Clarksburg Library

Robinson Grand

Jackson Square

Municipal Building

Clarksburg Parking Building

Clarksburg Public Works Facility

Clarksburg Fire Stations

Clarksburg Landfill

Clarksburg Sanitary Board

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Utility Providers

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Bridgeport Parks

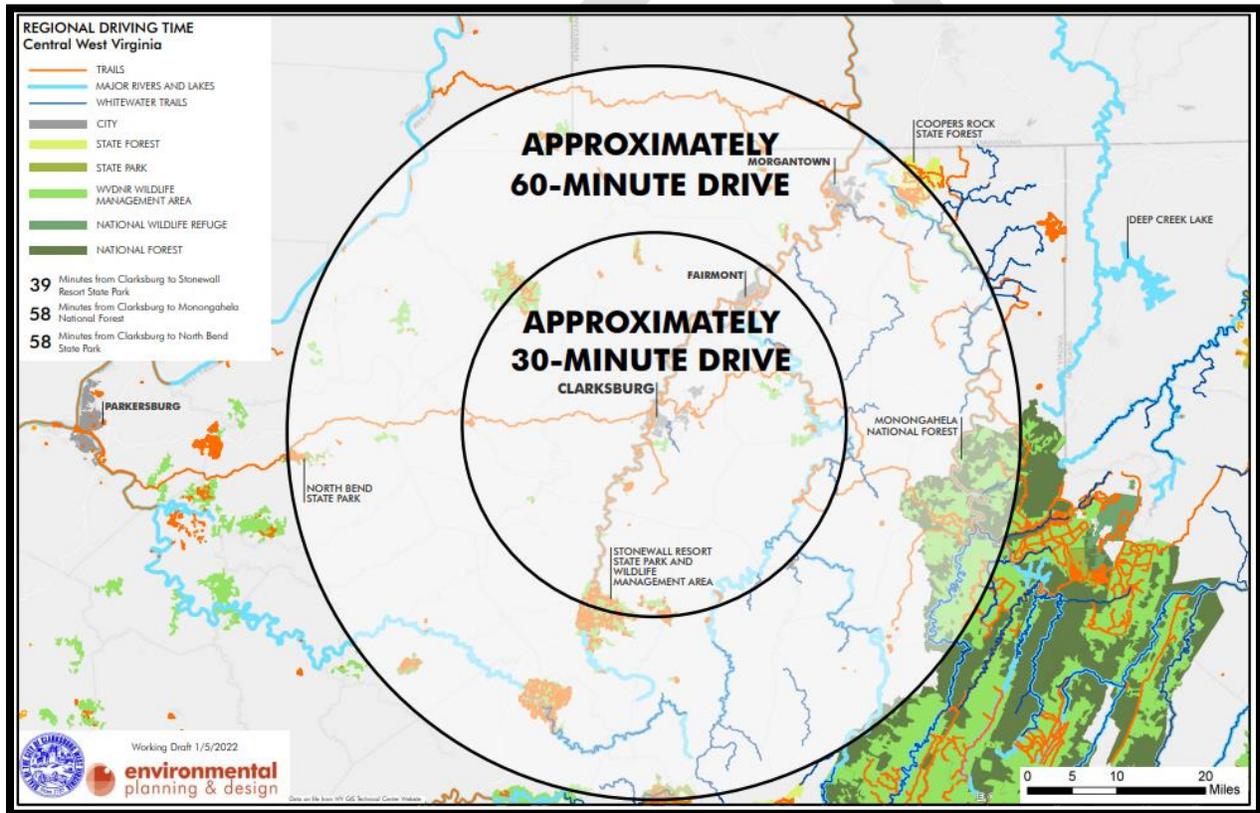
Harrison County Parks

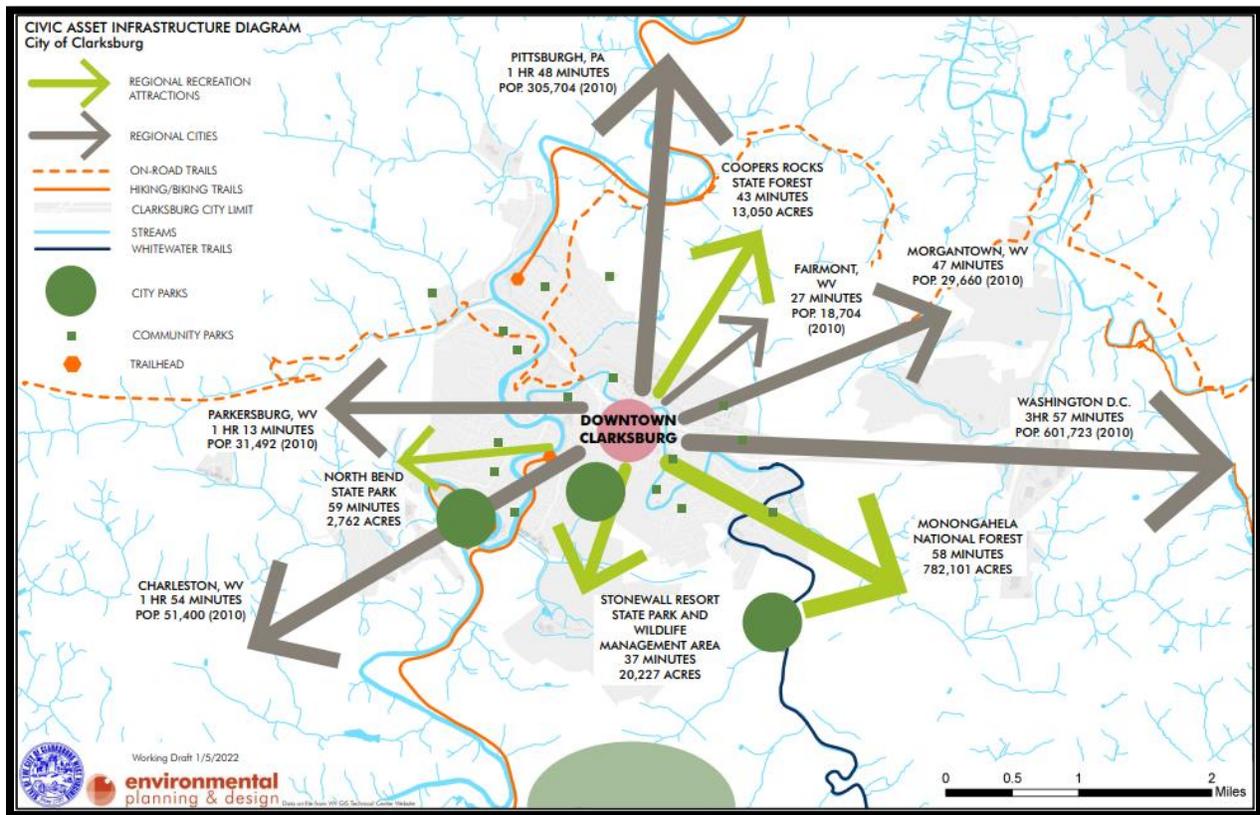
Transportation

Roads

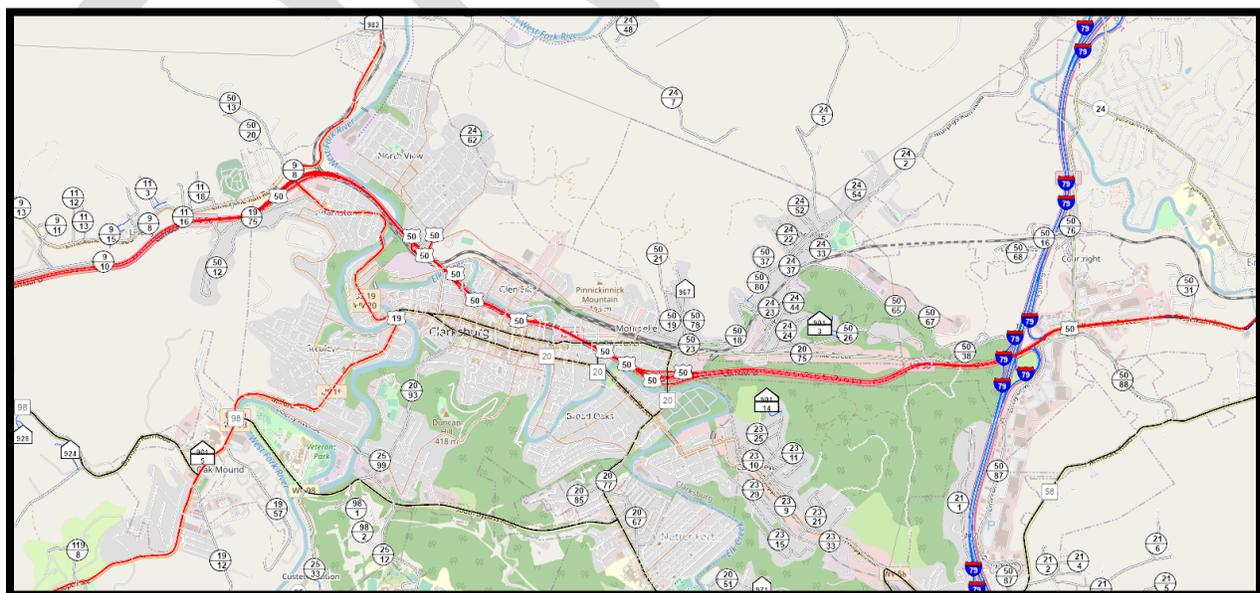
The City of Clarksburg’s economy has historically been driven by the intersection of U.S. Route 50 and U.S. Interstate 79. These corridors have provided an all directions path for motorists, linking to the entire continental United States. All sections of I-79 located near the City of Clarksburg are in the High-Tech Corridor emphasizing the cluster of private, federal, and higher education facilities and investment occurring. Formal construction of I-79 as it is known today, began on December 21, 1967. The contemporary U.S. Route 50 was established as part of the Appalachian Development Highway System as Corridor D. Contemporary development patterns were severely affected by Corridor D development, with changes occurring in the late 70’s resulting in the current freeway design.

The expansion of higher speed motorways throughout West Virginia has provided increased mobility and range allowing for sub two-hour travel times to most locations in West Virginia and the Pittsburgh, PA metropolitan region as shown in the imaging on Page XX.





In addition to the major highways, a number of roadways within the city are maintained by the West Virginia Division of Highways. This includes the former U.S. Route 50 route which includes the main portion of Downtown along West Main and Pike Streets. Additionally, Emily Drive, the only access point for Eastpointe and Newpointe shopping centers is also a state maintained road. West Virginia State Road Listings:



The municipal network of roadways includes multiple bridges, collector roads, residential streets, improved alleys, and plated and unimproved roadways. Road maintenance is completed on a seventeen-year schedule with the Public Works Department facilities the paving on a yearly basis. Funding for road repairs is provided by the City's general fund budget.

Non-Car Based Mobility

Mass Transit

Bus transit is provided in the City of Clarksburg by the Central West Virginia Transit Authority (CENTRA). CENTRA offers Fixed Route Service and ADA Complementary Paratransit (curb-to-curb) Transportation Service for eligible disabled passengers (based upon criteria established by the American with Disabilities Act). CENTRA fixed route service runs on a regular schedule and there are no deviations aside from those areas where there are "request only" locations. Examples of "request only" are WV Works, WV Jr. College, Cambridge Place and Bridgeport Manor. Other than these locations, CENTRA buses stay on a regular fixed route during operating hours of 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 pm on Saturdays. Other regional bus transit companies providing services in the Clarksburg market include Baron's Bus, Fairmont-Marion County Transit Authority, Mountain Line (Grey Line), and Greyhound.

Biking in Clarksburg

Biking within the city of Clarksburg is limited to on-road use or use on the Harrison North Rail-Trail. Future planned facilities include finalizing the connection of the Harrison North Rail-Trail in Northview to the North Bend Rail Trail and connections from the Harrison North Rail-Trail to the Harrison South Rail-Trail. Generally, bike routes should be explored using existing right-of-way. Preference should be made for multi-use trailways, followed by segmented bike lanes, followed by stripped bike lanes, followed by sharrows/share the road signage. All future development should envision a complete street process that allows for multi-modal travel in the public right-of-way. In addition, recreational areas for bicycle use (track, pump track, mountain biking, BMX, etc.) should be examined to encourage bicycling in the community as a means of exercise in addition to travel.

Pedestrians and Walkers

Pedestrians make up the second highest grouping of transit use in the City of Clarksburg. Investment in sidewalks, crosswalks, and ADA infrastructure (hemispherical bumped pavement, audible crosswalk signals) should be occurring throughout the City. All new development should provide sidewalks, with limited exception for topography. The neighborhoods of Glen Elk and the Central Business District should have active city investment in sidewalk facilities to ensure they are paved and can be traversed. For areas of the community that do not have sidewalks in a proper paved condition, the City should investigate using alternative revenue funds for paving projects related to sidewalks.

Rail

Private rail services are provided by CSX, with other West Virginia terminals and rail yards provided in Fairmont, Parkersburg, Huntington, Charleston, Pecks Mill, and Logan. Clarksburg's yard is a TRANSFLO Terminal allowing for truck to rail transloading and bulk services for chemicals, plastics, ethanol, food-grade products, dry bulk, and waste.

Air

Air Services are provided by the North Central West Virginia Airport (CKB) located in Bridgeport. This regional airport facility provides flights to Charlotte, NC; Sanford, FL; Tampa, FL; Destin, FL; Myrtle Beach, SC;. Flights to Chicago, IL, and Washington D.C through United are scheduled to end later in 2022. Airlines include Future airlines include Contour and Allegiant. The airport is supported by the growing aerospace industrial cluster which includes Pratt & Whitney, Mitsubishi Heavy Industry, and Lockheed Martin.

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Clarksburg Capital Improvement Planning

The 1997 City of Clarksburg Comprehensive Plan included Section 13 Capital Improvements Plan highlighting a 5-year capital improvements planning function for Fiscal Years 1995-1996 to 2000-2001. Since the 1997 plan, the use of 5-year Capital Improvement Planning has not consistently occurred with city budgeting processes. As provided in the 1997 plan, the functions of a 5-year Capital Improvements Plan is to:

- Assemble a listing of public improvement projects and activities with their financing requirements to enable the City of Clarksburg to analyze its needs and budget funds to undertake these improvements.
- Aid in the coordination of projects and activities by maintaining and updating a list of planned improvements to be undertaken by the City of Clarksburg.
- Present the citizens of the community with an opportunity to review public improvement projects and activities based on the needs of the City of Clarksburg.
- Provide a method to ensure the capital improvements conform to and implement the long-range comprehensive needs of the City of Clarksburg as identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

The 1995-1996 5-Year CIP document provided in the 1997 Comprehensive Plan establishes narrative of the improvements requiring long-term maintenance. This included the Municipal Complex (current Municipal Building), Existing City Hall (since razed), City Garage, Fire Stations, Parks & Playgrounds, Streets, Water, Sewer, Code Enforcement, Housing, and Economic Development. Project budgets are provided for specific and in some instance generalized needs.

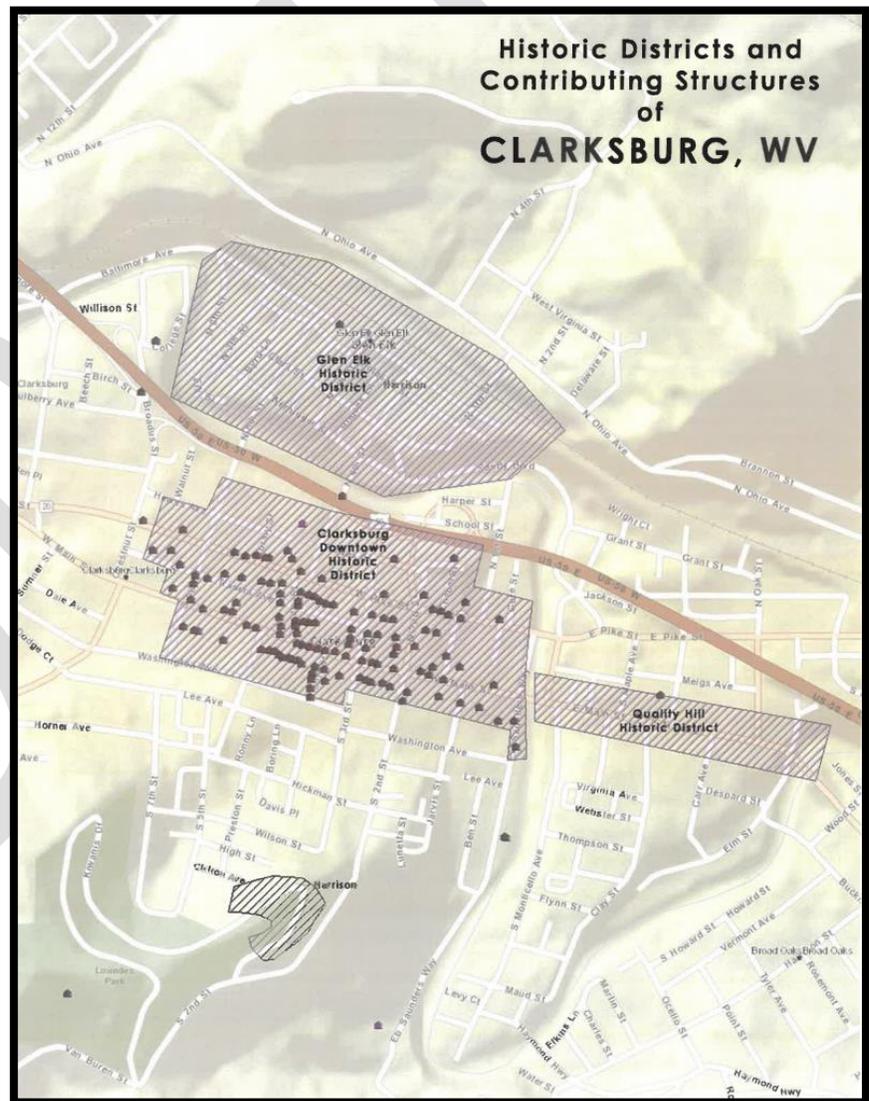
This budgeting process is highly recommended as a matter of good governance and contemporary best practices in municipal administration. Current known deficits with municipal infrastructure, including streets, the City Garage, the sewer system, and departmental equipment needs can established in this process, and with planned expenses established, provide for additional funding opportunities including grants and lower interest bond/lease rates.

Historic Preservation, Urban Renewal, & Economic Development

Historic Preservation

Historic Preservation in the State of West Virginia is administered primarily through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) a Division of the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture, and History in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the United States’ historic places. The National Register of Historic Places includes buildings, districts, structures, objects and sites recognized by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior for their importance to local, state, or national history.

Locally, the City of Clarksburg, WV does not actively regulate Historic Preservation as current design standards provided in Section 1344 Historic District Overlay Regulations of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Clarksburg, WV, are almost exclusively recommendations (Example: Parking should be located at the rear and side of buildings.) and not formal requirements (Example: Parking shall be located at the rear and side of buildings). Instead, for projects involving the use of grant funding or for federal government projects, a legally required review of historic properties in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Historically, the City of Clarksburg will actively work with developers to facilitate infill and redevelopment of our historic properties given the varies degrees of blight present.



In 2015, the City of Clarksburg contracted WYK Architects to complete the Historic Districts and Contributing Structures of Clarksburg, WV. This comprehensive analysis of the Clarksburg Downtown Historic District, Glen Elk Historic District, and Quality Hill Historic District provides complete National Property inventory nomination forms, registration forms, and West Virginia historic places property forms for all pivotal and contributing historic structures in the City of Clarksburg.

Clarksburg Downtown Historic District

The Clarksburg Downtown Historic District captures the historic central business district for the City of Clarksburg. Per the National Register of Historic Places Inventory form completed in 1982, Clarksburg was established by white settlers in the mid-1770's. Andrew and Samuel Cottrell were the first known permanent settlers of Clarksburg in 1772. With the establishment of the County of Harrison by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1784, Clarksburg was formally established as the Harrison County location for public buildings and chartered in 1785. The first Harrison County courthouse was erected in 1781 at the corner of Main and Second Streets. Growth of commerce expanded after the Civil War, with extreme growth occurring between 1900 and 1920 related to the city's proximity to oil and gas development in West Virginia.

Forty-Five structures were identified as being Pivotal Structures for the establishment of the Clarksburg Downtown Historic District. This is in addition to seventy-seven contributing structures. Many have been demolished since being added National Register of Historic Places, including the former Municipal Building located at 227 West Pike Street. Many of the remaining structures are in states of extreme decay with properties in condemnation due to property maintenance code violations. The most notable example of blight in this district affects a listed pivotal structure, the Waldo Hotel.

Glen Elk Historic District

The Glen Elk Historic District is the most recently established historic district in the City of Clarksburg, being included on the National Historic Registry in 1993. This district is approximately sixty-two acres in area that has historically comprised of a zone of transition with development heavily affected by the active B&O, now CSX rail-line and U.S. Route 50 located directly to the south of the historic district and a boundary with the Clarksburg Downtown Historic District. This district was historically wholesale and warehouse-based land-uses with contemporary residential development beginning in the 1930s.

Changes in transportation and shipping contributed to this area's decline, with numerous large structures being used as passive storage. Many of the businesses in this neighborhood have changed with most recent development associated with the Clarksburg Mission and redevelopment of former warehouses into residential housing, and specialty event centers. Many pivotal and contributing structures have been demolished since incorporation of this district with many remaining structures condemned.

Quality Hill Historic District

The Quality Hill Historic District is the City of Clarksburg's only residential land-use based historic district. The district is designed to target buildings to the north and south of East Main Street from the eastern boundary of the Clarksburg Downtown Historic District to the eastern edge of the Goff Plaza neighborhood. Due to the unique terrain of Clarksburg, and to a larger extent Appalachia in general, this district can be seen as an inner-ring residential commuter development pattern given the distance to the Central Business District.

The Quality Hill Historic District was established in 1985 with five pivotal structures and twenty-eight contributing structures. As of October 2022, all five pivotal structures are still actively in use and do not have known property maintenance code violations.

Urban Renewal

The City of Clarksburg has actively worked to remove slum and blight. The city's most active role is in the demolition of condemned and unsalvageable structures. In assisting with this redevelopment need, the city actively demolishes dangerous properties while attempting to recoup costs through liens and other judgements. This activity is in addition to routine Code Enforcement activities requiring remediation such as grass and lawn maintenance fees. Current liens against individual property owners related to demolition and other associated Code Enforcement fees are over \$4,000,000 and have historically grown year over year.

To facilitate development, the City of Clarksburg has actively established and assisted local groups to either directly or indirectly remediate areas of blight and slum. Efforts to establish redevelopment plans for individual properties or areas is coordinated by the Clarksburg Urban Renewal Authority and City Council. An ancillary component of urban renewal is beautification, with the City of Clarksburg Beautification Committee actively working on place making within public right-of-way and on public properties. For private property development, the City of Clarksburg actively works with Clarksburg Uptown, the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation, WVU Bad Buildings Program, and other local and regional partners. In working with partners there are also opportunities for further expansion of the City's efforts to provide the best solutions for current market failures, including land bank legislation provided in West Virginia State Code.

Urban Renewal Authority

Urban Renewal Authorities (URAs) have been used in West Virginia to redevelop a particular property for a particular purpose or used to target entire blocks and neighborhoods that have vacant and dilapidated properties. Per West Virginia State Code, URAs can only be active after both a comprehensive plan and a redevelopment plan are created and adopted. As a result, URAs have methods for inventorying and prioritizing redevelopment activities. In theory, URAs have potential to gain enough resources and expertise to redevelop all slum or blighted areas within any geographic area.

The Clarksburg Urban Renewal Authority was initially established in 1969, with updates occurring in 1996 and 2001, with the authority provided in Section 155 of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Clarksburg, WV. The current Urban Renewal Authority is made up of five commissioners, one of which is the City Manager, an ex-officio non-voting City Councilperson, and is provided Executive Director staff through the Economic Development Department. The Clarksburg Urban Renewal Authority administers a façade improvement grant of up to \$10,000 available to most properties in the City of Clarksburg, a side lot program designed to transfer vacant property to neighbors, and actively assists with redevelopment of condemned structures when available.

Beautification Committee

Clarksburg City Council actively works through the Beautification Committee to direct spending on right-of-way improvements that enhance the sense of place in the community. Since 2020, efforts have been made to increase funding to this committee for downtown planters, local greenspaces, and art installations including murals.

Partner Organizations

The City's administrative departments assist with infill redevelopment through public and private groups. These organizations include Clarksburg Uptown, the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation, Clarksburg Community Action, WVU Bad Buildings Program, Vandalia Heritage Foundation, Mon Power, Your Community Foundation, Wesbanco's New Markets Tax Credit Loan Program, Clarksburg Mission, Pierpont Technical and Community College, Harrison County Board of Education, the Harrison County Commission, The Clarksburg-Harrison County Housing Authority, The West Virginia State Auditor's Office, The West Virginia Secretary of State's Office, The West Virginia Development Office, and the West Virginia Housing Development Fund.

These organizations either provide guidance, funding opportunities, volunteer labor for events, or pretty much anything imaginable. Without these community groups, stakeholders, and our regional and state partners, Clarksburg the place would not be able to maintain its current historic property inventory and established residential, commercial, and industrial areas.

Land Bank Opportunities

West Virginia State Code was recently amended to allow for the establishment of Land Reuse Agencies (LRA) and allow for preference in purchasing tax sale properties below \$50,000. Land Reuse Agencies are very similar to Urban Renewal Authorities but are not permitted to exercise the power of eminent domain and may collect a portion of the property taxes on property it holds if authorized by the county taxing authority. The West Virginia University Land-Use Law Clinic provides the following comparison of URAs and LRAs.

Urban Renewal Authority and Land Reuse Agency Key Similarities Chart

URA	LRA
To purchase, lease, acquire property by gift & devise	To acquire property by any means the LRA considers proper
To hold, improve, clear, or prepare for redevelopment	To design, develop, construct, demolish, reconstruct, deconstruct, rehabilitate, renovate, relocate
To sell, lease, assign, mortgage	To convey, exchange, sell, transfer, lease, grant, or mortgage
To enter into contracts	To enter into contracts
To borrow money and issue bonds	To borrow money and issue bonds
To sue & be sued	To sue & be sued

Urban Renewal Authority and Land Reuse Agency Key Differences Chart

URA	LRA
Power of Eminent Domain	No Power of Eminent Domain
Must have a Comprehensive Plan and Redevelopment Plan	Must take into account land use plans if they exist

May only work in areas designated as slum or blighted and pursuant to a redevelopment plan	Flexibility to work throughout the LRA's jurisdiction
May compete with other potential buyers at a tax lien sale	Right-of-first refusal for tax sale properties located in the jurisdiction with certain restrictions.
The Board must have between 5 & 7 members. Note there are special requirements when a regional authority is created.	The Board must have an odd number of members, between 5 & 11. At least one member must be a resident of the LRA jurisdiction, not a public official or municipal employee, and must maintain membership with a recognized civic organization.

Economic Development

The City of Clarksburg promotes economic development through the Economic Development Department, coordination with the Harrison County Economic Development Corporation, and the Harrison County Economic Development Authority. Opportunities for increased partnership include coordination with private developers and property brokerage firms and the West Virginia Region VI Planning and Development Council.

From a community-level, most City of Clarksburg initiatives are based on providing structural improvements or individual business assistance with to revolving loan fund or direct giving programs. Larger County-basis projects have recently been located near the North Central West Virginia Airport (CKB) located in Bridgeport. The agglomeration occurring with aero-space technology continues up the I-79 corridor with further related developments in Marion and Monongalia Counties and extending into Pennsylvania's Greene County. The North Central West Virginia region's economic strength compared to other areas of Appalachia, has been cultivated through dynamic Educational, Industrial, and Health Care based growth. Locally, Workforce West Virginia establishes Harrison County's top 10 employers in 2021 to be the following:

Name	Rank
U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation	1 st
WVU Medicine	2 nd
Harrison County Board of Education	3 rd
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs	4 th
Walmart	5 th
Penney Opco, LLC	6 th
Pratt & Whitney Engine Services, Inc.	7 th
Monongalia Power Company (First Energy)	8 th
Eastern Gas Transmission and Storage	9 th (tied)
West Virginia Division of Highways	9 th (tied)

Implementation Action Plan

A. Build from Within: Revitalization & Redevelopment

Action A.1: Build upon observations and goals of this plan to develop a downtown revitalization/economic development strategy to serve as a guidebook and vision for the future transformation of downtown Clarksburg.

Based on community input and technical planning discussions, “Building from Within” begins with pursuing the revitalization of downtown Clarksburg, the city’s centerpiece, and home to a concentration of unique and valued assets. While this plan’s assessment and analysis of downtown has revealed and highlighted district advantages, it has also revealed many questions and unknowns needing addressed if the city’s downtown revitalization strategy is to be well informed. The following outlines a number of key components of such a downtown strategy, each of which should be thoroughly reviewed in conjunction with public participation.

- **Market demand** – It is important to understand market demand for new retail, food & drink establishments, offices, and/or housing units to set realistic expectations and plan to accommodate the potential scale of growth.
- **Desired land uses** – Most desirable downtowns today contain a mix of uses, including commercial, housing, office, and recreation/entertainment. Outlining which land uses are desired and what general proportion is an important step in planning. Note: Public input did mention an interest in seeing more housing in downtown.
- **Condition of Old/Historic buildings** – Unknown internal conditions (e.g. electric, HVAC, elevators, accessibility) are major barriers to rehabilitation/renovation of older buildings. They represent uncertainty for private developers, which delays or inhibits redevelopment. Enhanced code enforcement as part of property maintenance actions may assist in account for internal conditions of such buildings.
- **Parking** – All aspects of parking, including supply/availability, price/payment methods, enforcement, walkable proximity to destinations, all play an influential role in effective downtowns.
- **Streets and Mobility** – Pedestrian friendly streets and sidewalks help support a safe and enjoyable environment for downtown visitors and residents. Such a strategy may outline the location of potential traffic circulation and streetscape enhancements.
- **Public Open Spaces** – The vibrancy of downtown districts may be greatly enhanced by quality public open spaces, such as plazas, where people can gather, hang out, and enjoy various activities. Open spaces may include seating, greenery, water features, space for pop-up activities, shops, and entertainment. Targeted investment in such an asset may become a catalyst for drawing more people downtown.
- **Branding and promotion.** Branding is helpful in telling the unique story of Clarksburg and crafting a community identity which is marketable to the outside world.

A portion of the strategy should identify community development partners, which may assist with the redevelopment of key sites (e.g. older buildings in need of complex/significant upgrades) which require additional assistance beyond the private market. The City should support the existing Urban Renewal Authority (URA) take on additional roles and capabilities, including real estate development.

To support the downtown revitalization planning efforts outlined above, the City should consider participating in the West Virginia “Main Street” program. Over a dozen communities across the State have participated, including the peer city of Fairmont. The program assists communities with developing a tailored downtown strategy, access funding and learn from the Main Street network of communities.

Action A.2: Pursue a complete makeover of the planning & zoning code to encourage more contextual development and a more convenient development process.

The planning & zoning code is the city’s primary tool for guiding the development of the community. The code determines the location of various land uses, the scale and placement of buildings, as well as many other supplemental regulations (i.e. parking, landscaping, vehicular access, utilities, etc.) to ensure that development fits properly within the local context. It is common best practice to continually update the planning & zoning code to reflect the evolving values and aspirations of the community. The content of this Comprehensive Plan shall inform and guide the updates to the planning & zoning code.

As part of existing conditions analysis, an initial high-level review of the City’s zoning code was conducted. The following issues were identified as areas in need of focused attention, but are not an exhaustive list of all updates needed.

1. *Land Use* – Revisions to land use permission are necessary to better align with the character of districts; contextual/desired uses may be added, and incompatible uses removed
2. *Lot Dimensions & Building Placement* – Adjustments to lot size, lot area, building setbacks, location of parking, and/or orientation of buildings are necessary to ensure development fits within the established local context
3. *Building Scale* – Standards necessary to ensure building floor area and height matches context of the district
4. *Parking* - Parking minimums should be crafted to better align with specific land use types, especially within downtown. For example, standards that require more parking than is necessary may inhibit development.
5. *Buffering* – Standards for landscaping/open space between uses and/or district of distinct and incompatible character.

Regarding design standards, the City’s code contains a set of Historic District Overlay regulations to ensure building design fits with the established architecture of the district. These regulations apply to the three designated national historic districts for Downtown, Glen Elk, and Quality Hill. As part of zoning code updates, the City should evaluate the

effectiveness of these standards and whether additional focus should be given to the review process.

The City should enhance the process for zoning permitting in order to support a more seamless and concise development process. Developers are more likely to work with a community which has clear and easily navigable regulatory processes. The following items should be considered as a starting point for enhancements.

- Better organize the city’s website to create a single platform/web page dedicated to zoning/land development permit process
- Craft a few simple informational graphics which clearly and concisely summarizes the development process and application procedures
- Include all necessary applications/forms and have explanatory information accessible on the web page
- Designate a single point of contact for applicants which can answer questions and seamlessly connect applicant with the appropriate secondary contact or resource
- Offer the ability for permits to be completed and submitted online, including online payment
- Reduce the number of developments requiring action by the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council
- Pursue organizational and formatting revisions to the Planning & Zoning code to ensure the document is easily navigable and comprehensible for developers
 - For example, based on a review of Clarksburg’ zoning code, the list of defined terms and land uses are outdated and require revisions and additions. Also, land use and dimensional tables are unclear and not user friendly
- Through the implementation of all the above items, make it a goal for city staff and commissions to establish the City as a development-friendly community

Action A.3: Pursue the establishment of a Land Reuse Agency or Home Rule enabled combined LRA-URA to enable the consolidation of properties into developable tracts of land.

Step 1: Form LRA Exploratory Committee

Establish a Team comprised of local and regional stakeholders and development and design professionals to establish capacity and financial backing to begin land assembly.

Step 2: Create Land Development Plan

Members of the exploratory committee and Urban Renewal Authority coordinate to establish and prioritize specific areas within the City that should have consolidated ownership under the City of Clarksburg.

Step 3: Establish the LRA

The LRA Exploratory Committee with the established Land Development plan, funding for activities established in the plan, and political and administrative capacity, will establish a new ordinance to formally recognize the Land Reuse Agency.

Step 4: Initial LRA meeting with establishment of bylaws and the Land Development Plan as the guiding document for the Agency.

Step 5: *Implement the Land Development Plan*

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B. Look to the Rivers & Hills: Recreation & Natural Resources

Action B.1: Support and facilitate natural restoration projects along streams and hillsides, including invasive species and erosion remediation, litter clean-up, native plantings etc.

Community members emphasized the need to address issues related to the deterioration of natural features, including creek banks, wooded hillsides and vacant land, resulting from invasive vegetation overgrowth and littering/dumping in part related to vagrant camping. As a starting point to address these issues, the City should assess the extent and impact of invasive species vegetation overgrowth through the use of an Invasive Species Management Plan. Such a plan will help by identifying the following items:

- Inventory and Assessment (i.e. A list of invasive species present, particularly those poisonous/harmful to humans or pets; degree of infestation)
- Management Plan (i.e. guidelines for infestation prevention; routine monitoring practices, education of municipal staff)
- Implementation Plan (i.e. list of funding source, professionals offering technical assistance, estimated costs per phase)

Such a plan will ensure that mitigation efforts are guided by sound research and expertise. A plan for ongoing maintenance will ensure that invasives do not quickly re-emerge and undo the initial progress. As part of this planning effort, the City should review its landscaping and planting codes to ensure that no invasive species are listed.

Once an understanding of the issues and extent of impacts are appropriately documented, the City should pursue projects to remediate invasive species in coordination with clean-ups as well as new plantings of native vegetation. Community volunteers in partnership with Clarksburg Community Action may be engaged to assist with clean-up projects. Clean-up of camp sites should be conducted in coordination with local agencies supporting unhoused people to ensure individuals are directed to appropriate dwelling areas.

Based on public input and discussion with city officials, the following areas should be targeted for such restoration projects:

- Areas within and adjacent to public parks and open space (e.g. Lowndes Park along footpaths/trails)
- Waterway banks (i.e. West Fork River; Elk Creek) including existing and/or future planned access points
- Areas along established and/or future planned trail corridors
- Steep slope hillsides in coordination with stabilization projects along roadways

Regarding implementation of such natural restoration projects, the City should coordinate with all applicable State and Federal agencies to determine access to target locations as well as laws and responsibilities related to invasive species mitigation and land conservation planning. Funding and technical assistance may be accessed via the following partners:

- National Invasive Species Information Center – a resource for technical resources and potential grant funding opportunities
- West Virginia Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program – support local governments with technical expertise related to invasive species
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the USDA offers technical assistance for conservation planning for municipalities
- West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WV DNR)

Action B.2 Encourage the use of open space for various outdoor recreation activities (e.g. hiking, off-road sports, kayaking/canoeing, fishing, etc.) by enhancing access to waterways and wooded lands.

This action recognizes the quality of life and economic value of outdoor recreation opportunities within Clarksburg. While there are a variety of ways the City can support outdoor recreation, an important first step is enhancing access to open spaces. In particular, access to Clarksburg's waterways has been a long-term goal of the city, as highlighted by the 1997 and 2010 versions of the Comprehensive Plan. This plan affirms that such planning efforts continue to remain a desired area of focus for the community.

Planning should begin with consideration for a Waterway Access Master Plan or an in-house prioritization of water access-oriented projects. Public input should be an integral part of such planning efforts to ensure access is provided at convenient and usable points for the public. It is also important for access to rivers and creeks to be visible through wayfinding signage. Access points should also consider the safe movement of pedestrians and bicyclists as well as vehicular parking. Priority should be given to locations in close proximity to Clarksburg's downtown core in order to encourage outdoor recreation users to visit downtown businesses and attractions.

Another key location of emphasis is Lowndes Park, a large heavily-wooded park located along a hillside ridge south of Downtown. The City should consider planning to expand/enhance access within the park's wooded hillsides with footpaths and/or off-road bicycle paths. Such trail paths could better connect adjacent neighborhoods to the park via walking or bicycling. Another potential un-tapped opportunity are scenic overlooks from the top of the hill to the downtown and broader city below. All such outdoor recreation opportunities present benefits for local community wellness/quality of life as well as draws for visitors.

To learn more from other peer cities (Narrows, VA; Johnstown PA; John Day, OR) pursuing a recreation-based economy, see appendix. An excellent funding resource for outdoor recreation related planning is a program from the EPA, called Recreation Economy for Rural Communities.

Action B.3 Partner to support regional trail expansion projects which connect trail users to the central core of Clarksburg, establishing the City as a prominent trail crossroads hub.

Clarksburg is uniquely situated at the intersection of many established and actively expanding trail corridors, designed for walking, hiking, and bicycling. Clarksburg lies directly along the route of the East/West running American Discovery Trail, a national trail spanning from coast (Delaware) to coast (California). While many portions of the route fall along vehicular roadways (as is the case through Clarksburg), there are plans for the American Discovery Trail to be developed as 'off-road' wherever feasible. This is the case in which the American Discovery Trail shares an off-road route with the North Bend Rail-Trail, which runs from just outside Parkersburg WV to Wolf Summit, only 7 miles west of Clarksburg. In addition, The Parkersburg to Pittsburgh (P2P) trail corridor is nearly 80 percent complete and plans to connect Parkersburg and Pittsburgh via a series of off-road trails, including the Harrison North Rail-Trial which terminates within the city limits in Northview.

Due to the multi-layered nature of such projects, there are many stakeholder organizations which are invested in filling in the gaps and connecting these trail corridors. The City's role is primarily support and assistance of ongoing planning efforts, as well as advocating for the local desires of the Clarksburg community to ensure that trail expansion projects fit within the local context and are well used and enjoyed by local residents.

One area of emphasis identified by the plan is the desire for trail corridors to connect with the core of Clarksburg and its downtown, in order to support revitalization efforts also outlined within this plan. The full impacts of trail connections are only enjoyed if users are able to easily travel from trailheads to the local businesses and attractions of downtown Clarksburg. This objective should influence trail planning related to location of routes, parking, landscaping, wayfinding signage, and pedestrian/bike access between the trail and existing city street network.

List of potential stakeholder partners:

- American Discovery Trail
- Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
- Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition
- West Virginia Rails-to-Trails Council
- Harrison County Commission/Planning Department
- (Friends Of) Harrison Rail-Trails, Inc.

C. Keep It Clean & Proud: Property Maintenance

Action C.1: Pursue a comprehensive blight mitigation strategy focusing on both preventative (i.e., property owner assistance; community-supportive code enforcement) and restorative methods (i.e., rehabilitation/redevelopment), guided by the technical and financial support of the state-endorsed BAD (brownfields; abandoned; dilapidated) Building Program.

Blight refers to the deteriorated or dilapidated condition of buildings and/or lots without buildings which pose threats to public health and safety as well as the general appearance of an area. In part spurred by economic decline and depopulation, it is a common issue in many communities across West Virginia and the broader rust belt region. There are many forms and degrees of blight which makes the issue complex and multi-dimensional. Some properties may contain abandoned buildings that are severely dilapidated, and demolition is the best option to ensure safety. In other cases, an occupied building is generally functional but in need of upkeep, such as a new façade, upgraded internal mechanic system, or better yard care to bring it back to looking its best. In this case, property owner assistance is the first option. Past efforts within the City of Clarksburg have focused largely on demolitions, while ignoring other valuable remedies. Such a blight mitigation strategy should begin with pursuing preventative (i.e., property owner assistance; community-supportive code enforcement) and restorative methods (i.e., rehabilitation/redevelopment) before demolition is pursued as an option.

Blight is a complex challenge that requires a multi-dimensional strategy.

In order to support blight mitigation efforts, the City should take advantage of the BAD Buildings Program. The program is facilitated by Northern WV Brownfields Assistance Center (NBAC) at WVU in collaboration with the WV Community Development Hub (Hub). Over a dozen communities across the State have completed the program, including nearby Fairmont and Shinnston. The program offers both funding and technical assistance to support communities in a 5-step process. Collecting data to inventory blight at a city-wide scale is a helpful tool in guiding further action. It ensures that actions are soundly based on evidence rather than opinions. Analysis of the inventoried can help guide assistance to certain geographic areas in most need.

Step 1: Form BAD Buildings Team

BAD Buildings Team comprised of local stakeholders, volunteers, elected officials, civic organizations, and local business owners.

Step 2: Train BAD Buildings Team

Members of the Program train the community Team on how to identify, survey, and research local BAD Buildings.

Step 3: Develop BAD Building Inventory

The Team creates an inventory which includes compiled site information and a ranked list based on community-defined priorities and feasibility.

Step 4: Create BAD Buildings Redevelopment Plan

The BAD Buildings Redevelopment Plan defines next steps to efficiently use local and leveraged resources to address high priority sites. The plan includes:

- A prioritized BAD Buildings Inventory
- Identified high priority properties with significant economic redevelopment potential
- Next step recommendations for property owners, local revitalization groups, businesses, and the municipal government to address BAD Buildings
- Redevelopment options for high priority sites including demolition, deconstruction, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse

Step 5: Implement the Redevelopment Plan

As Clarksburg completes this process, it is recommended that priority areas for redevelopment align with Comprehensive Plan Map.

Note: While the BAD Buildings program focuses on brownfields, abandoned, and dilapidated, the City should customize its blight mitigation strategy to also include all types of blight. This should include ongoing maintenance of occupied buildings, as well as the clean-up of vacant land which are sites for dumping and/or vegetation overgrowth. Action C.2 and C.3 stem from this focus.

Action C.2: Raise awareness and support the channeling of property owner assistance (i.e., loans, grants, and volunteer labor) geared toward maintenance and renovations, as well as citizen-driven beautification and clean-up efforts. (Integrate as part of the blight strategy formed by Action C.1)

In some cases, property owners may desire to resolve property maintenance issues, yet they lack the resources or ability to complete the necessary improvements. Assistance with property maintenance may take the form of grants and loans from State and Federal agencies or local community organizations and grassroots volunteerism. In both cases, the City can play an important coordination role connecting residents with the many support services and programs that may exist.

Loan/grant programs:

- Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants in West Virginia (USDA)
- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (WV)

Examples of local community support from other model communities:

- Local contractors and landscapers that may volunteer to offered discounts for certain vulnerable homeowners (i.e. due to age, income, or disabilities).
- Faith-based and social service organizations may offer financial and volunteer labor assistance for property owners.

The city can support these efforts by assembling a network of resources and publicizing them, especially on any documents (i.e., tickets, citations, publications/newsletters) related to code enforcement. Finally, the city should continue to raise awareness for and support community beautification projects and clean-ups in partnership with Clarksburg Community Action.

Action C.3 Bolster code enforcement with additional/enhanced technical and legal tools. (Integrate as part of the blight strategy formed by Action C.1)

There are many tools that can be utilized to support code enforcement and ensure positive outcomes regarding property maintenance issues. *From Liability to Viability: A Legal Toolkit to Address Neglected Properties in West Virginia* is an excellent resource from the WVU Law Land Use & Sustainable Development Law Clinic. Of the more than a dozen tools outlined by the plan, Clarksburg has already implemented several fundamental elements, including a vacant property registration and rental registration. While the City should consider any and all applicable tools within the toolkit, this plan seeks to highlight one particularly innovative tool: On-site Citations.

On-site citations are tickets given to landowners for external sanitation and nuisance violations, such as accumulation of garbage, high weeds or grass, open storage, graffiti, and drainage issues.

With such a system in place, property maintenance code violations are treated like parking tickets, rather than being handled by local courts, which require hearings and are often time and resource draining for both residents and municipal governments. How it works: code or police officers place tickets (typically starting at \$25) on doors of properties where external maintenance issues are observed. The ticketing system can be accompanied with proactive warnings and educational opportunities when officers inspect select city blocks (called a “sweep” described more below).

Block sweeps provide a proactive and non-threatening way for code enforcement officers to meet with property owners face to face to discuss the issue and work toward resolutions before a fine is warranted. Often times, property owners may not be aware of the code requirements for maintaining their yards and building exteriors. Block sweeps help educate the public by providing information of common violations (e.g., high grass/overgrowth) and offering a grace period to resolve the issue. The location of Block Sweeps could be prioritized and targeted based on the data collected by a blight inventory as part of the BAD Buildings Program.

D. Work Together: Community Engagement & Communications

Action D.1: Establish community liaisons or ambassadors within local neighborhoods to represent the voice of citizens and maintain regular dialogue and channels of communication.

Throughout the public engagement portion of this project, it was revealed that digital, print, and social media channels were not effective enough on their own to engage a large portion of the community. As a result, it is recommended that the City pursues interpersonal or 'word-of-mouth' forms of communications to more effectively engage a broader range of community members. One strategy is to designate enthusiastic and socially well-connected community members as neighborhood ambassadors. The main role of such an ambassador is to transmit information between the City staff and local citizens, such as notifications of public workshops or surveys gauging the opinions of the public. Such an action is an excellent foundational step for establishing strong and sustainable community engagement for years to come.

Action D.2: Assemble and connect a dedicated network of community partners to better connect local residents to various services/resources within Clarksburg. Strategically identify areas in which the city and community partners can collaborate to enhance services.

As the capital and largest city in Harrison County, Clarksburg hosts many community service organizations. Many within Clarksburg take advantage of these services and resources, which span a variety of subject areas, such as education, recreation, arts, youth and senior programming, housing support, workforce assistance, etc. In many ways, these organizations supplement the role of the city government by providing public services to the community. The City already partners with many of these organizations by providing various forms of assistance. It is a recommendation of this plan to bolster such community partnerships for the benefit of all Clarksburg community members.

The City should aim to play a coordination and facilitation role among community partners as the central hub within a connected network. The hope is that through more intention dialogue among partners, creative ideas for future opportunities will be unlocked and grow. As the City pursues planning for various public services, collaboration with community partners within the network should be a key first step. This method will help fill in the gaps in instances where local public funding or internal staff capacity is limited on its own.

One key aspect involves the promotion and publicity of the wealth of resources and services to ensure all community members are aware and connected to such resources. Specifically, the City can use its website and social media presence to publicize a complete and active list of community partners, making them more accessible to the broader public.

Potential community partners within the network may include the following:

- Central WV Community Action
- Clarksburg Community Action
- Clarksburg Mission

- Cultural Foundation of Harrison County
- Harrison County Public Library
- Harrison County School District/Board of Education
- Harrison County Senior Center
- Harrison County YMCA
- Kelly Miller Community Center
- United Way of Harrison and Doddridge Counties
- Urban Renewal Authority
- Various grassroot neighborhood citizen advocacy groups

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