



**2024** CREATING  
VIBRANT  
COMMUNITIES

# CITY OF MOREHEAD

**MARCH 2025**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Matt Hamilton | City of Morehead

Susan Thomas | Coffee Tree Books

Blake Jones | KYTC District 9

Jeremy Lewis | MUPB

Jay Morgan | Morehead State University

Stephanie Ockerman | Frontier Housing

Tony Pence | Downtown Morehead, Inc.

Michael Rowe | Rowan County Schools

Edna Schack | Morehead City Council

Jason Slone | Morehead Chamber of  
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Brent Sweger | KYTC Central Office

Russ Ward | Morehead-Rowan County  
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Rick Whelan | Citizen and Stockyards Bank

Laura White-Brown | City of Morehead

## SPECIAL THANKS



Larry Albert

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Morehead Kentucky Tenants

Craig Percy and RCSHS Viking Ambassadors

Itzá Zavala and Spanish Student Translators

## CONSULTING TEAM



“ With growth, comes challenges. Morehead is on the cusp of growth, and the challenges and ideas revealed by all who participated in the CVC process are appreciated. Thanks to the steering committee, focus groups, survey respondents, and open house participants. Your thorough and thoughtful responses strengthen this study. Our community spoke and the consultants, KYTC, WSP, Taylor Siefker Williams, and HDR, listened, developing a detailed proactive plan for Morehead to address challenges and prepare for growth in the coming years. Now is the time to study the priorities, seek funding, and bring our community’s needs and desires to fruition.

- Edna Schack, Morehead City Council

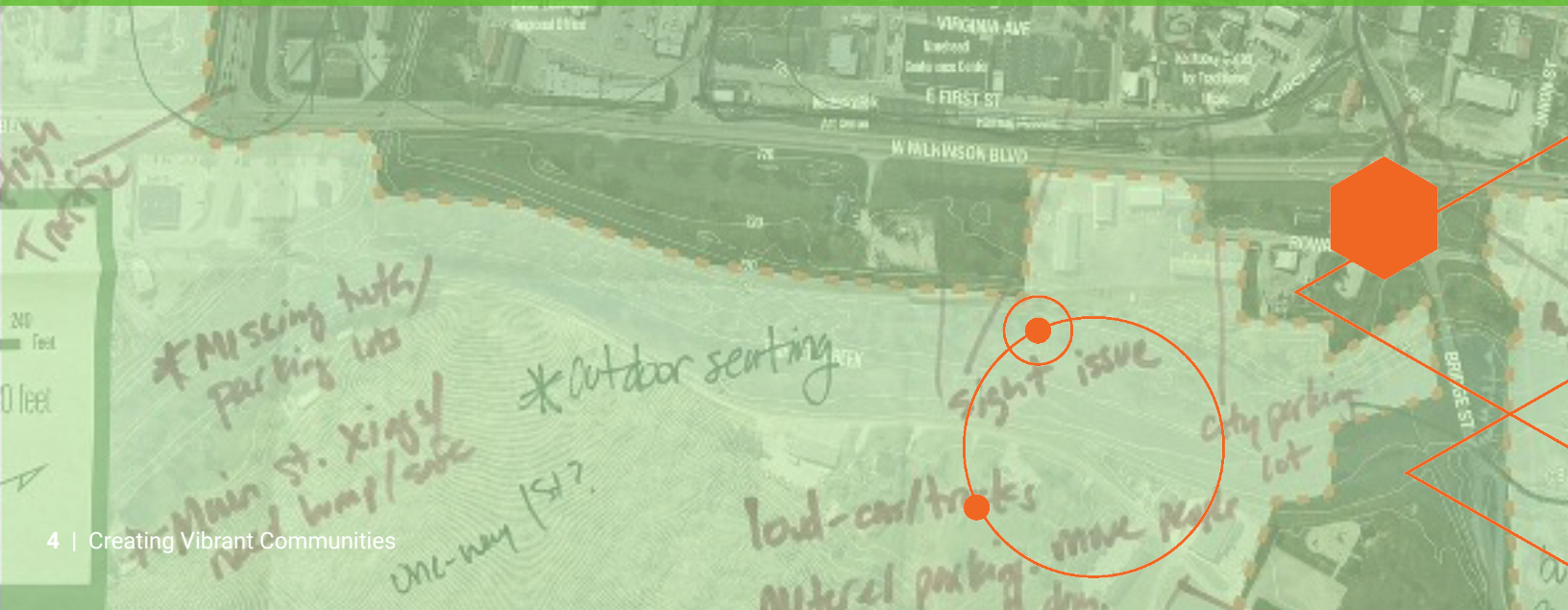
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# INTRODUCTION

## PART ONE



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) began a technical assistance program called Creating Vibrant Communities (CVC). The program aims to proactively help communities plan for land use, transportation, and future development options for a targeted area containing one or multiple properties. This program is intended to leverage and coordinate transportation with land use and economic development initiatives in a way that builds better and more vibrant communities.

Through the program, a plan was created for the City of Morehead that outlines the vision, conceptual development plans, and actionable next steps necessary to create a transformative and unique destination for the community.

This plan will serve as a roadmap to actively attract and convey the city's vision to potential development partners.

Overall CVC program goals for each community's plan are:

- **Goal 1:** Create a place that serves as a destination for the community.
- **Goal 2:** Safely connect the community.
- **Goal 3:** Spur economic development.

Although KYTC is producing the CVC program, it is expected that any future action to implement strategies in this plan will be the responsibility of the city and/or private developers.

## PROGRAM TIMELINE

Similar to other planning initiatives, the program was organized into six tasks over the course of an eight-month planning process. Major production and project development activities were focused during Tasks Three: Defining the Project Area and Four: Vision & Goals. The LPA Committee held three meetings to review materials and provide feedback to the project team.

### PHASE 1

#### Existing Conditions & Visioning

Understanding the city's current challenges and opportunities, while also seeking community insights to guide the plan.

### PHASE 2

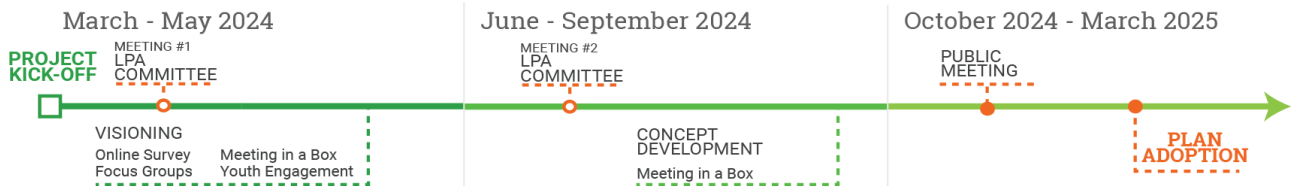
#### Strategic Planning

Establishing the community's vision for the future and identifying goals and objectives.

### PHASE 3

#### Implementation Strategies

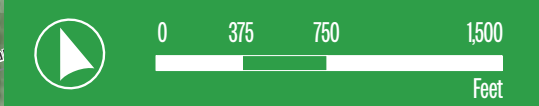
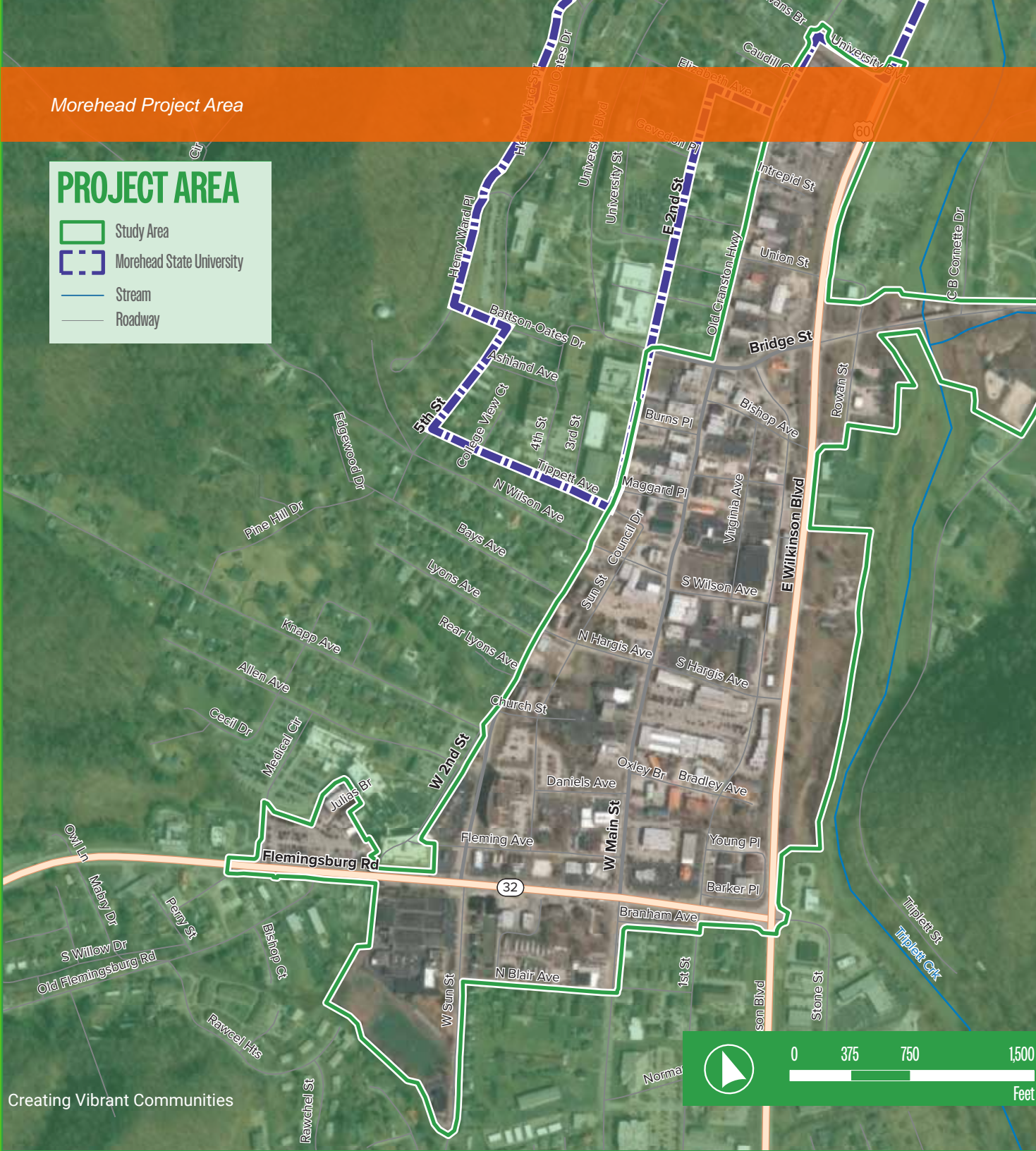
Tailoring the plan to reflect community guidance and developing the clear, concise, and easy steps for the City of Morehead to achieve its vision.



Morehead Project Area

# PROJECT AREA

-  Study Area
-  Morehead State University
-  Stream
-  Roadway



# PROJECT AREA & CURRENT SETTING

## PROJECT AREA

The project area encompasses downtown Morehead, generally between Flemingsburg Road/ KY 32, Main Street, 2nd Street, University Boulevard, and Triplett Creek. For the study, additional areas beyond downtown were considered, such as the city park system on the east side of Triplett Creek, the former county school site south of the hospital, and East Wilkinson Boulevard (or US 60, the bypass to Main Street).

Morehead, located along I-64, is a regional destination in eastern Kentucky for shopping, healthcare, dining, higher education, and employment. Two major highways (KY 32 and US 60) also intersect in downtown, which provides additional direct access to the area.

Major employers within the project area include Morehead State University, UK St. Claire, and a large concentration of public employment uses (such as Rowan County Government, Rowan County Courts, and USPS) located just south of the project area.

## PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

**Downtown 5-Year Action Plan (2024)** - This plan was led by the Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce and focused on identifying strategies that are implementable, practical, asset-based, and market-driven that could be completed within five years. The four focus areas included policy and administration, design, tourism and promotion, and economic vitality.

**KY 32 Corridor Study (2024)** - This study was led by KYTC District 9. The objective of the study was to identify and evaluate the need for and scope of potential options to improve safety, mobility, and capacity along KY 32 in Morehead, Kentucky. The recommendations within the CVC study area mainly address congestion and safety concerns at the intersection of KY 32 and US 60 by adding another left turn lane from KY 32 to US 60 northbound and restriping US 60 to include a northbound through lane to Bridge Street.

**Rowan County Housing Needs Assessment (2022)** - The Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce led this plan to conduct a county-wide housing needs assessment. It identified the demand for rental and for-sale housing.

**Downtown Morehead Historic District Strategic Plan (2021)** - Led by Downtown Morehead, Inc, the purpose of this plan was to provide a roadmap for attracting private and public investment; strategies for encouraging property and business development; and a path for educating the community about the significance of the historic district.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2019)** - This plan strives to connect people to great places through a multi-modal network of walking and bicycling. The plan includes recommendations for East Main Street, University Boulevard, and Triplett Valley Trail, as well as other corridors outside of the study area.

**Morehead Comprehensive Plan (2013)** - This plan outlined desired growth and development trends for the city and related overarching goals and strategies. Downtown was a focus area within the plan with land use/redevelopment and circulation recommendations.

## CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC/ ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS

Morehead, Kentucky, is approximately 65 miles east of Lexington and is the county seat of Rowan County. The city is nestled within the Triplett Creek Valley in the Eastern Kentucky foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The primary business street is Main Street, two blocks north and west of the creek. The city ends a few blocks west of Main Street as the hills rise again. Main Street is a long, linear corridor, from which many narrow streets extend. Morehead State University anchors the north end of Main Street. The hospital, UK St. Claire, is a major landmark where Downtown meets a perpendicular auto-oriented commercial corridor, Flemingsburg Road/KY 32. Civic uses for the city and the county are scattered along the length of Main Street and around the perimeter of Downtown.

An entertainment district is being developed around Battson-Oates Drive where the University interfaces with the city. The Sheltoewe Trace Trail intersects the district on Main Street. Morehead is one of the trail towns on the 343-mile trail through the Daniel Boone National Forest.

Large format retailers have clustered around the interchange of I-64. Local businesses, government, cultural assets such as the Morehead Railroad and Historical Museum, The Kentucky Folk Art Center, Rowan County Arts, Center, and the Kentucky Center for Traditional Music remain in downtown.

Morehead is home to 7,001 residents.<sup>1</sup> The presence of the university contributes to a young population with a median age of 22 years.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, more than two-thirds (67%) of occupied housing units are occupied by renters, while just one third (33%) are owner-occupied.<sup>3</sup> In total, 91.2% of residents are white alone, 3.8% are Black or African American alone, 1.5% are Asian alone, 0.1% are American Indian or Alaska Native alone, 0.5% are of another race, and 2.9% are of two or more races.<sup>4</sup> Approximately 91% of residents have a minimum of a high school diploma, and 29.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>5</sup> The median household income is \$32,020, and workers commute an average of 15 miles.

Morehead is also within a one hour drive of 249,800 people, which is important for both being a regional point for employment and shopping, as well as a tourist destination.<sup>6</sup>

1 US Census Bureau. n.d. S0101: Age and Sex. ACS 5-year estimates, 2017-2022. [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

2 US Census Bureau. n.d. S0101: Age and Sex. ACS 5-year estimates, 2017-2022. [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

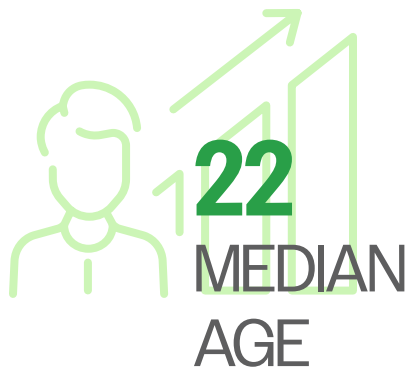
3 US Census Bureau. n.d. S1101: Households and Families. ACS 5-year estimates, 2017-2022. [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

4 US Census Bureau. n.d. DP05: ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates. ACS 5-year estimates, 2017-2022. [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

5 US Census Bureau. n.d. S1501: Educational Attainment. ACS 5-year estimates, 2017-2022. [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

6 Main & Wilson, LLC - Morehead Hotel KTDA Application Review, provided by City of Morehead

# MOREHEAD HIGHLIGHTS



# LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Like many downtowns across Kentucky, downtown Morehead is made up of a mix of historic commercial and residential uses, historic buildings and redeveloped parcels, and public and semi-public spaces. UK St. Claire, and Morehead State University are significant regional destinations in the study area, as well as many entertainment, retail, and dining businesses.

Flemingsburg Road, Main Street, and Wilkinson Boulevard act as primary commercial corridors, each with their own character. The uses along Main Street transition from suburban development patterns near Flemingsburg Road to a traditional downtown pattern with increased density near Morehead State University. The development patterns along Flemingsburg Road, Wilkinson Boulevard, First Street, and Second Street are also more suburban in character with numerous surface parking lots and larger setbacks. Much of the study area is zoned B-3: Central Business with other areas zoned as R-2: Medium Density Residential, P-1: Public and Semipublic, and B-1: General Business.

**A** Lack of diverse housing options

**B** Publicly owned parking lot could be redeveloped into an engaging use

**C** Update regulations to accommodate residential above ground-floor retail and enable live-work studios














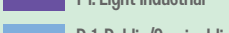
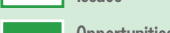

**D** UK St. Claire Hospital expansion project is underway

**E** Some key infill sites are owned by the City

**F** Lack of connected destinations throughout downtown

**G** Portions of downtown lie within the flood hazard zone

### ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: LAND USE

 Study Area	 B-1: General Business	 R-1: Low Density Residential
 Morehead State University	 B-2: Highway Business	 R-2: Medium Density Residential
 Historic District	 B-3: Central Business	 R-3: High Density Residential
 Stream	 I-1: Light Industrial	 Issues
 Roadway	 P-1: Public/Semipublic	 Opportunities
 Flood Hazard Zone		



# MOBILITY

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The transportation infrastructure in downtown Morehead features the intersection of Flemingsburg Road/KY 32 (35 mph speed limit) and E. Wilkinson Boulevard/US 60 (45 mph speed limit). Both are major arterials with approximately 25,000 and 15,000 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT), respectively. E. Main Street (20 mph speed limit/minor collector) is the primary local road through the study area, carrying 7,300 AADT. W. 2nd Street is the western boundary of the study area and is a minor collector road carrying 4,500 AADT.

The sidewalk network is well-connected within the Main Street downtown area and near the university. Several uncontrolled crossings are located along Main Street at the IGA Crossroads, S. Wilson Avenue, N. Wilson Avenue, Maggard Place, Burns Place, Bishop Avenue, Normal Avenue, and Eagle Chevrolet. In addition, signalized crossings are located on Main Street at Bridge Street and Main Street at Flemingsburg Road/KY 32. There are streetlights along Main Street.

Pedestrian crossings along KY 32 and US 60 provide important access to and from the downtown area to nearby residential, institutional, employment, and recreational uses. Pedestrian crossings on KY 32 are at Main Street and Sister Jeanette Drive (UK St. Claire Regional Medical Center main entrance). There is no crossing at W. 2nd Street/Sun Street, W. 1st Street, or US 60. There is a pedestrian bridge, owned by the city, between W. 2nd Street and Old Flemingsburg Road, but it is not currently in operation, as the elevators are frequently out of order.

At the Main Street intersection, pedestrians must navigate multiple lanes of high vehicular traffic and multiple vehicular access points around a gas station and other sites. The crosswalks have recently been restriped, transverse style. The crosswalk across the south leg of W Main Street also has a bend in it, making a longer crossing for pedestrians. There is inadequate lighting at night.

On US 60, there is a crossing at Bridge Street. The crosswalks are slightly faded and the transverse style. There are ADA-accessible ramps and tactile strips at the concrete sidewalks at each corner, but the sidewalks do not extend past the intersection on the southeast and southwest corners. There is some lighting, but inadequate for the full intersection.

One of the prominent features of Morehead is its location within the Daniel Boone National Forest (DBNF) and proximity to major recreational destinations in eastern Kentucky. The Sheltowee Trace, which means “Big Turtle,” is a 354-mile national recreation trail spanning from Kentucky to Tennessee. The trail is marked with white diamond signs with an image of a turtle and travels through downtown Morehead. Dedicated bicycle lanes are not present in downtown, but the slower, local roads in the downtown road grid network are used by residents and tourists for bicycling. Mountain biking is also popular in the area due to the mountain biking trails. A watershed management project to mitigate flooding in the Licking River Basin region plans to include multi-use trails along Triplett and Christy Creek.

MorTrans transit exists within Morehead and operates four routes that connect to the many destinations in the downtown area.

Issues and opportunities related to mobility are detailed in the following map.

**F** Implement shared use trail options along Triplett Creek to connect the town to the park

**A** Mid-block/uncontrolled crossings on Main Street have had safety issues

**B** Mobility and economic benefits around Sheltowee Trace Trail

**C** Create mobility connections from Morehead State University and surrounding parks

**D** Lack of mobility connections from residential zones to commercial zones north of the study area











**E** Establish wayfinding within the study area






**F** Connection with proposed shared-use path on KY 32 from I-64 to Mabry Drive.

**G** Traffic, speeds, and numerous access points deter pedestrians from using crossing.

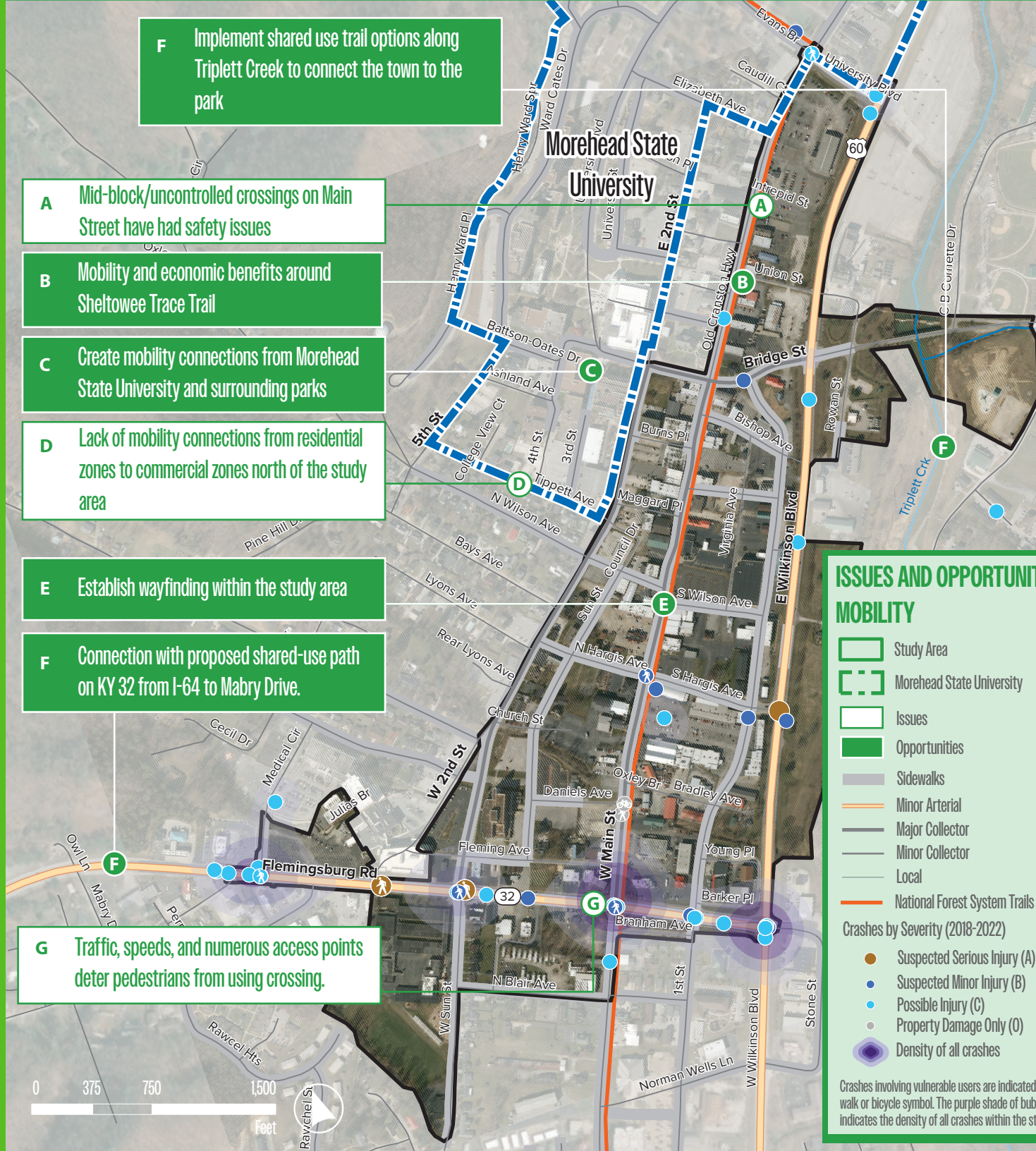
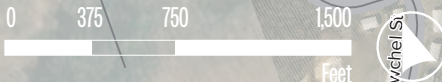
Morehead State University

**ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: MOBILITY**

-  Study Area
-  Morehead State University
-  Issues
-  Opportunities
-  Sidewalks
-  Minor Arterial
-  Major Collector
-  Minor Collector
-  Local
-  National Forest System Trails

- Crashes by Severity (2018-2022)
-  Suspected Serious Injury (A)
  -  Suspected Minor Injury (B)
  -  Possible Injury (C)
  -  Property Damage Only (O)
  -  Density of all crashes

Crashes involving vulnerable users are indicated with a walk or bicycle symbol. The purple shade of bubbles indicates the density of all crashes within the study area.



# CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING

## EXISTING CONDITIONS









Morehead is nestled within the Eastern Kentucky foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Main Street is the heart of downtown, which is between Triplett Creek to the southeast and the rising hills to the northwest. Main Street is a long, linear corridor from which many narrow streets extend or connect. Morehead State University anchors the north end of Main Street and UK St. Claire is the major landmark on the south end. An entertainment district is being developed around Battson-Oates Drive, where the university, downtown, and Bridge Street converge. The massing, scale, and architectural style of Morehead State University transitions to narrower, two-story nineteenth and twentieth-century commercial and civic buildings. The “street wall” is mostly intact at this intersection, which provides a traditional downtown character and atmosphere.

As redevelopment has occurred because of fire and flood, structures were rebuilt in a twentieth century style with low relief, horizontal emphasis, and long bricks. Many historical structures have been converted to commercial or other uses, including the former Rowan County Courthouse, former Morehead Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Freight Depot between First Street and Wilkinson Boulevard, and numerous residential structures. These historic structures as well as the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century buildings contribute to the Morehead Historic District.

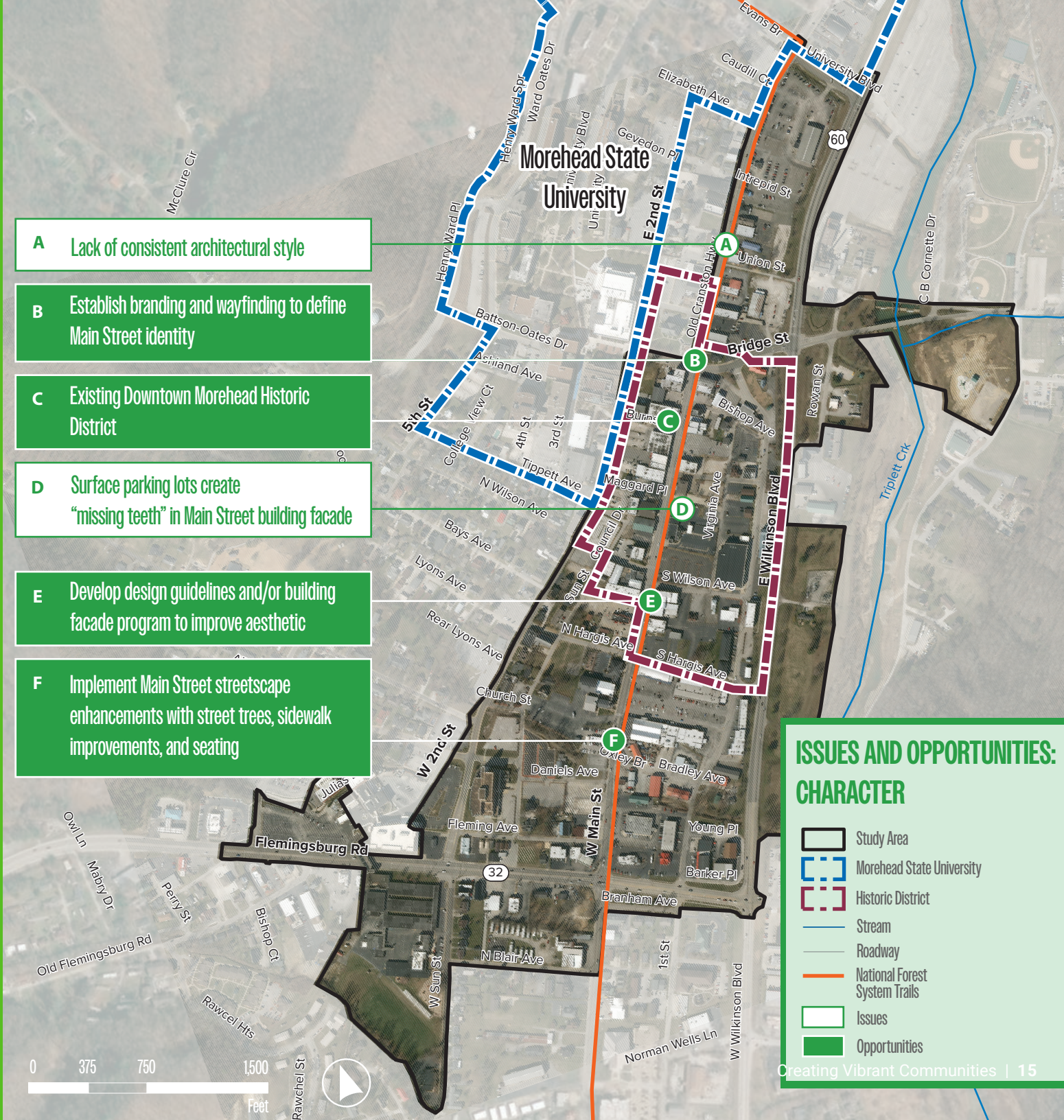
# Morehead State University

- A** Lack of consistent architectural style
- B** Establish branding and wayfinding to define Main Street identity
- C** Existing Downtown Morehead Historic District
- D** Surface parking lots create "missing teeth" in Main Street building facade
- E** Develop design guidelines and/or building facade program to improve aesthetic
- F** Implement Main Street streetscape enhancements with street trees, sidewalk improvements, and seating

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: CHARACTER

-  Study Area
-  Morehead State University
-  Historic District
-  Stream
-  Roadway
-  National Forest System Trails
-  Issues
-  Opportunities

Creating Vibrant Communities | 15



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

Morehead is an energetic city with an active downtown area that is anchored by higher education and healthcare institutions. These uses create “built-in” foot and vehicular traffic that bring additional opportunities for continued downtown development. However, this traffic can also limit walkability and cause congestion, which can impact the experience for visitors and businesses. Balancing accessibility for people and cars while also creating more pedestrian-oriented spaces could add value and economic stability for downtown and the larger community.

In contrast to development near the I-64 interchange, the downtown area has a more defined identity and atmosphere. The city’s connections to Appalachian history, the Sheltopee Trace, and other local and regional cultural amenities also make it attractive on many levels for tourism, artists, and quality of life opportunities. As many communities in central and eastern Kentucky realize the benefits of eco-tourism, Morehead is also well situated to capitalize on this economic growth area.

**A** Seasonal student population

**B** Small local market with limited spending potential

**C** Attract art and music festivals, anchored by cultural assets

**D** Existing entertainment district with relaxed open container regulations

**E** Existing Opportunity Zone designation to encourage investment

**F** Proximity to Sheltoewe Trace National Recreation Trail and other natural attractions

**G** Underutilized infill sites available for redevelopment along Main Street

**H** Major institutions are disconnected from downtown

**I** Presence of major institutions including the university, hospital, and County offices

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES: ECONOMIC

-  Study Area
-  Morehead State University
-  Entertainment District
-  Opportunity Zone
-  Issues
-  Opportunities
-  Stream
-  Roadway
-  National Forest System Trails



Morehead State  
University



# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The community recognizes downtown as the heart of the community. Multiple groups and organizations have efforts underway to continue to improve downtown through events, business development, and capital projects. This plan builds on these efforts and dedicated stakeholders by furthering these implementation strategies and public input. Committee meetings, focus groups, online surveys, and public meetings were conducted to gain feedback on the issues and ideas for the future of downtown. A summary of the committee and outreach events is provided below.

## MOREHEAD COMMITTEE

A committee was formed to provide more detailed guidance and input during the plan's development. This committee consisted of the following people:

- Travis Bailey | UK St. Claire
- Yvonne Baldwin | Morehead City Council
- Derrick Blevins | Morehead Police
- Joy Brown | Morehead Rowan County Tourism
- Brandy Carver | Rowan County Schools
- Lincoln Caudill | City of Morehead
- Harry Clark | Rowan County Fiscal Court
- Rodney Fouch | City of Morehead
- Matt Hamilton | City of Morehead
- Susan Thomas | Coffee Tree Books
- Blake Jones | KYTC District 9
- Jeremy Lewis | MUPB
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- Stephanie Ockerman | Frontier Housing
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- Edna Schack | Morehead City Council
- Jason Slone | Morehead Chamber of Commerce
- Brent Sweger | KYTC Central Office
- Russ Ward | Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council
- Rick Whelan | Citizen and Stockyards Bank
- Laura White-Brown | City of Morehead



## **OUTREACH #1: FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS – MARCH/APRIL 2024**

The city held four focus group meetings to gain a wide range of input on ideas and issues for downtown. These focus groups included three high school student groups and the Downtown Merchant Group. The major ideas and issues discussed included existing and missing activities and programming, policy and administration, economic vitality, mobility, and design.

## **OUTREACH #2: COMMITTEE MEETING #1 – APRIL 19, 2024**

A committee meeting was held to discuss previous plans or projects within downtown, ideas for downtown, and issues that need to be addressed. The discussion included defining the downtown character areas, highly traveled roadways, the UK St. Claire expansion, pedestrian and bicyclists' issues and opportunities, parking, and overall vehicular movements.

## **OUTREACH #3: COMMITTEE MEETING #2 – JULY 1, 2024**

A second committee meeting was held to discuss proposed goals and strategies based on the previous input. The committee also discussed ideas for the downtown streetscape in terms of uses, visual improvements, and connections. The major topics for discussion included adding mobility options like dedicated bike lanes, expanding branding and programming of the entertainment district, and redesign of major vehicular and pedestrian corridors.



## **OUTREACH #4: ONLINE SURVEY #1 – SEPTEMBER 2024**

The city conducted an online survey to gain input on the proposed goals and strategies from various organizations and boards. The community feedback reflected a strong desire for a revitalized downtown area characterized by safety, aesthetic appeal, and active engagement among residents, as well as support for affordable housing and local businesses. An emphasis on better communication, infrastructure improvements, and more options for youth and families to enhance community life were also noted in the comments.

## **OUTREACH #5: PUBLIC MEETING – DECEMBER 4, 2024**

In place of a final committee meeting, an open house was hosted to allow the public to review and provide comments on the draft strategies and action steps. Presentation boards with the strategies listed were arranged around the hall and people were invited to place dots on the boards to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with a strategy. People were also invited to leave comments on the strategies or on the plan in general.



## FUNDING

- ThinkMorehead
- Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet
- Kentucky Tourism Development Act (KTOA) – If connected with tourism project
- U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)
- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) – Along collectors and arterials
- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) – Along collectors and arterials
- Local
  - General Fund
  - Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Tax Abatement

## INSTALL PARKING WAYFINDING SIGNS

The city should install wayfinding signs downtown that direct people to public parking. These signs should reflect the brand and character of downtown (see Strategy 10 for details).

7.3

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THIS STRATEGY? WRITE DOWN ANY COMMENTS

# STRATEGIES & DESIRED OUTCOMES

## PART TWO



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Property Owner
- ThinkMorehead

## FUNDING

- U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)
- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)
- Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) – Along collectors and arterials
- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) – Along collectors and arterials
- Local
  - General Fund
  - Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Tax Abatement
  - Tourist Development Tax

## DEFINE THE SHELTOWEE TRACE TRAIL ALONG MAIN STREET

This section of the trail will not have a rugged and natural character, rather it will reflect an urban trail in character as it moves through downtown. The trail is currently planned along Main Street and should incorporate distinctive pavers, branding, and wayfinding that blends both the overall trail identity with the identity of downtown Morehead. This should be coordinated with the streetscape design guide in Strategy 11.

8.1

## CONSTRUCT THE PROPOSED TRIPLETT VALLEY TRAIL ALONG TRIPLETT CREEK

This trail is an important local link within the trail network as to downtown.

8.2

## WHO'S DONE THIS? DAMASCUS, VIRGINIA

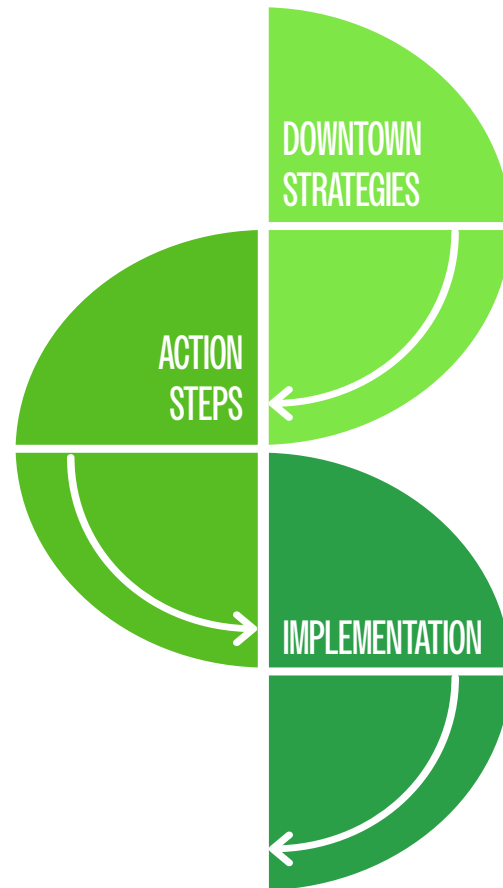
Damascus is planning seven long-distance trails, and the city is focusing their downtown revitalization strategy on incorporating the trails and access to natural resources into wayfinding and streetscape enhancements.



# PLAN ORGANIZATION & FRAMEWORK FOR DOWNTOWN

This plan builds upon the previous planning efforts by the city and the various partners with the goal of creating a clear path forward to unite these efforts in a cohesive way. Specifically, the Downtown 5-Year Action Plan was recently adopted and identifies numerous sound strategies that are folded into this plan at a high level. The vision, four goals, 16 strategies, and corresponding action steps in this plan should be used as the framework for all policies, public projects, and private investment as downtown develops and public projects are completed.

This section outlines the details for each strategy, which includes a description, implementation timeline, partners, potential funding, and action steps. Concepts are also included within specific strategies to demonstrate how that strategy could be implemented on a site in downtown Morehead. Part Three: Implementation further outlines the prioritization and timing of each strategy.



# MAKE DOWNTOWN A DESTINATION

within the region by creating a place where:

Residents and visitors **shop, dine, play & live**

**STRATEGY 1:**

Build Local Capacity

**STRATEGY 2:**

Infill Development

**STRATEGY 3:**

Anchor Institutions  
Upgrades & Expansion

People, bikes, and cars can **easily & safely travel**

**STRATEGY 4:**

Pedestrian-Focused  
Streets

**STRATEGY 5:**

Pedestrian & Bicyclist  
Connections

**STRATEGY 6:**

Public Parking

**STRATEGY 7:**

Trail & Park  
Connections

**STRATEGY 8:**

Transit Connectivity

Our story is **told** through the buildings and public spaces

**STRATEGY 9:**

Downtown Branding

**STRATEGY 10:**

Streetscape Design  
Guide

**STRATEGY 11:**

Development Pattern  
Book

**STRATEGY 12:**

Public Art

The **economy thrives** with local businesses and tourism

**STRATEGY 13:**

Expand the  
Destination District at  
Battson Oates

**STRATEGY 14:**

Economic Opportunity  
Zone Promotion

**STRATEGY 15:**

Access to Capital  
Program

# DESIRED OUTCOMES

This plan strives to increase activity within downtown through shopping, dining, events, and housing. Increasing walkability between large anchor uses, such as UK St. Claire and Morehead State University, will also play a key role in increasing activity to support the local businesses and destinations. Mixed-use development is critical to create places for these businesses and offer housing opportunities that can extend the hours that people are downtown on a daily basis.

Entertainment District Local Business Housing  
Walkable Streets Landmarks Enhanced Streetscapes  
Destination **DOWNTOWN** Shopping  
Sense of Place Safety Pedestrian Crossings  
Economic Development Sense of Place  
Dining Wayfinding Signage Interactive Sidewalks

# BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY

## STRATEGY 1

### GENERAL



#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

This is likely the most critical strategy for the city in order to create a significant and cohesive impact. Without the staffing and financial capacity, projects can still be completed but will likely be piecemealed together in a scattered approach. Morehead has been taking strides in recent years to improve the city, specifically downtown, and create a vision for the future. Multiple plans have been completed to aid in downtown's development and economic vitality, and these plans require resources, both financially and staff, to move forward.

In order to successfully complete the recommended strategies and actions in this plan (and the city's other plans), the local capacity of the city must be first analyzed – both financial capacity for local matches and other funding as well as city staff that can support and guide implementation. Staffing does not always have to be full-time city employees; many small to mid-size communities build their local staff capacity through full-time employees, contract employees, and consultants.

The city will need to ensure they have the staff capacity that includes community planners, urban designers, landscape architects, transportation engineers, architects, financial advisors, and strategists.

When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNER

- City of Morehead

## FUNDING

- N/A (completed by City staff)

## ACTION STEPS

1.1

### EVALUATE AND BUILD LOCAL CAPACITY

The city should review their staff and financial capacity as it relates to implementing this plan and other plans. This should include looking at capital expenditures, grants, incentives, and other financial options as well as staffing levels and expertise.

# Infill Development

## STRATEGY 2

## LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT



### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The design of the buildings, density, sidewalks, and streets can visually define a downtown's character and sense of place. It can make people feel comfortable walking around and even encourage more activity and visitors. However, empty lots, underutilized areas, and vacant buildings can detract from this character and even discourage people from walking.

Infill development focuses on redeveloping buildings on the vacant or underutilized parcels within an area. Filling in the “missing teeth” along a primary downtown street can enhance people's perception of the area and encourage more businesses and activity.

Downtown Morehead has a solid foundation and many successful businesses. Focusing on infill can strengthen the area's character by continuing the downtown development pattern and creating more attractions for residents and visitors. Specific areas or sites should be prioritized and targeted land uses should be incentivized by the city. Phasing efforts by targeting one block or specific parcels can make a larger impact by not spreading efforts across downtown.

Each area targeted for infill should also carefully identify the best land uses, including entertainment, dining, boutique hotel, specific retail, housing, and public uses. Increasing the density of development along Main Street between KY 32 and Hargis Avenue should be prioritized for infill with two- to three-story buildings that reflect a downtown character. Housing options for a variety of age ranges should be considered, including upper-floor apartments, multi-family options, and small-lot single-family houses on the outskirts. New downtown housing can provide more options, and these residents can also support the businesses in the area and increase activity in the evening hours. All new development and infill should follow the design guidelines outlined in Strategy 12.

The feasibility of relocating city hall to E. Main Street should also be further studied. While this use would not likely have retail or housing in the same building, it can provide additional “foot traffic” in downtown and could also provide public parking that could be used by people coming downtown.

### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Morehead Rowan County Tourism
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Property Owners/Developers
- Small Business Development Center
- UK St. Claire
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## FUNDING

- General Fund or Completed by City Staff

## ACTION STEPS

# 2.1

### INVENTORY AND PRIORITIZE KEY INFILL SITES OR TARGETED INFILL AREAS

Conduct an inventory of unused and underutilized parcels in the project area and prioritize each site and key area to focus efforts. Infill sites should also include parcels with excess parking or parking lots adjacent to Main Street. Buildings or parcels currently vacant or not being maintained should also be considered prioritized.

# 2.2

### DEFINE THE INTENDED LAND USES FOR EACH INFILL SITE OR AREA

Identify the targeted land uses for each key area and/or site and review zoning to ensure it complies with the permitted uses and development standards (such as building scale, height, setback, design, etc.). This should be coordinated the design guidelines in Strategy 12.

# 2.3

### CREATE AN INFILL INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Identify support or incentives that can be provided by the city to encourage infill and establish a program to implement these incentives. This could include zoning incentives, tax incentives, small business revolving loans, or even a matching program for specific sidewalk activities or facade improvements. This program should focus on one key area at a time based on the established prioritization.

# APPLYING STRATEGY 2

## INFILL DEVELOPMENT

The following concept is intended to demonstrate how infill can occur on parcels that are underused without losing necessary site functions (such as parking).

*Activating the alley and outdoor dining*

Plantings, lighting, public art, and pavers create a sense of place that draws people in.



Create a parklet with amenities like wide sidewalks, plantings & seating options

Enhance and reinforce Morehead's branding with public art



*Converting on-street parking to outdoor dining*

# Anchor Institutions Upgrades & Expansion

## STRATEGY 3

## LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT



### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Downtown Morehead is home to two major anchor institutions, UK St. Claire and Morehead State University (MSU), that bring people from the large region into Morehead and also shape the built environment of downtown. These institutions create an economic base that is critical to the success of downtown's local businesses, activity, and image.

St. Claire HealthCare and UK HealthCare, the clinical healthcare system of the University of Kentucky, announced plans in the spring of 2024 to expand the campus in Morehead, becoming UK St. Claire. UK St. Claire is an established training and residency site for UK's Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy and Health Sciences, as well as the host site for UK's Rural Physician Leadership Program.

According to initial plans, the official partnership will bring significant benefits, including major investments in a new medical center, enhanced clinical infrastructure, increased access to primary and specialty care for local patients, expansion of current health education programs, and development of new educational opportunities.

This facility plays an important role as a downtown gateway and an anchor institution that draws thousands of people from the larger region. This land use and the improvements and expansion of this campus should be well coordinated with other downtown initiatives. Connecting this campus to the dining, retail, and entertainment uses in the heart of downtown with safe crosswalks and sidewalks is important to the long-term success of downtown.

MSU is a longstanding and historic use in downtown. A portion of MSU's 700-acre campus is within the historic district and the campus has numerous contributing buildings. With over 8,000 students, the university also provides a customer base for downtown businesses with students living on campus and in nearby areas.

MSU is currently constructing a \$100 million science building and planning for a new dormitory. As the campus continues to expand or upgrade facilities, the city should ensure these improvements are coordinated with other downtown initiatives and development patterns. The city should also work with MSU to develop a long-term strategy to relocate portions of large parking lots that are currently located along Main Street in order to reinforce downtown's character and the eastern gateway into downtown.

#### When should this strategy start?



### PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- UK St. Claire
- Morehead State University

### SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- KYTC
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

### FUNDING

- N/A (Completed by City Staff)

### ACTION STEPS

3.1

#### COORDINATE INITIATIVES WITH MOREHEAD STATE UNIVERSITY

Establish communication, coordination, and joint planning initiatives between the city and MSU staff that focuses on downtown attractions and spaces that reinforce Morehead's character and generate activity for students and residents (similar to Battson Oates) and parking strategies.

# Pedestrian-Focused Streets

## STRATEGY 4

### MOBILITY



#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Along with safety benefits, a walkable street design creates the kind of people-centered environment that the city desires, attracting mixed-use developments and people who come to Morehead to shop, work, live, and visit.

Pedestrian movement within the core downtown area should be prioritized, with a specific focus along Main Street from KY 32 to Bridge Street. Despite the slow speed limit and numerous crosswalks, many people do not feel safe walking downtown. Abundant curb cuts, wide lane widths, on-street parking near crosswalks, and elevation changes reduce the visibility of pedestrians, particularly when crossing the street.

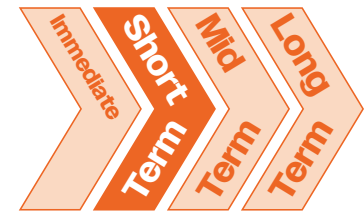
Retrofitting Main Street to focus on pedestrians will enhance safety, comfort, attractiveness, and accessibility for people while also maintaining necessary travel for cars. Improvements to the existing crossings on Main Street should be considered to improve pedestrian safety, which could include one or more of the following strategies:

- **Narrow travel lanes** as a traffic calming measure. The lane width on Main Street is 12-feet and the recommendation for dense areas is 10-feet to slow traffic and reduce crashes without affecting traffic operations.<sup>1</sup> In the short-term, this can be accomplished by restriping Main Street, adding a buffer area between the parking lanes and the drive lanes, as shown in the Frankfort Avenue example in Louisville, Kentucky. In the long-term, the sidewalk could be built out to around 12-feet total to reduce the overall pavement width of the travel and parking lanes, encouraging drivers to slow down and providing more active street space for pedestrians.
- **Install curb extensions** to extend the sidewalk into the road, reducing the crossing distance for pedestrians (see page 35). The narrowed road width also calms traffic and creates better visibility for pedestrians, particularly near on-street parking. Some parking spaces may need to be removed to improve sight distance. Low plantings can also be added to these areas to provide visual appeal and serve as protective barriers between pedestrians and cars.

<sup>1</sup> National Association of City Transportation Officials (2013) Urban Street Design Guide, "Street Design Elements: Lane Width". Retrieved from <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/street-design-elements/lane-width/>

- **Crosswalk visibility enhancements** would replace the existing transverse-style crosswalks as continental (i.e. ladder) style patterns. Thermoplastic tape instead of paint or brick should also be considered for highly reflective crosswalk markings. Crosswalks could also be painted with artistic renderings that reflect unique aspects of Morehead.
- **Construct raised intersections or mini roundabouts** to reinforce slow driving speeds. Raised intersections are speed tables that span the whole intersection, allowing the crossing area for pedestrians to be at the same grade as the sidewalk.<sup>2</sup> The intersection on Main Street at Wilson Avenue is a candidate for this treatment. The offset Wilson Avenue intersection requires drivers to focus on possible maneuvers and less attention to pedestrians in the two crosswalks. A raised intersection or mini roundabout are also options for the Main Street at Bridge Street intersection. This intersection is a “gateway” and slowing vehicles entering Main Street at this location would be beneficial for pedestrian access to the Battson-Oates pedestrian area.
- **Enhance the signs and markings at crosswalks.** Yield “shark’s teeth” markings can be installed with the correlating “Yield Here to Pedestrians” signage to help improve the visibility of the crosswalk.<sup>3</sup> At the uncontrolled crossings at Burns Place and the IGA, an engineering study could be conducted to determine the need for a Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacon (RRFB).
- **Install consistent lighting** along the street. Lighting makes pedestrians more visible at night and provides safety and comfort for people walking. Lighting should be oriented to give pedestrians visibility, especially at uncontrolled crossings, and also comply with dark sky lighting principles (see DarkSky.org).
- **Snow and ice removal** after bad weather events can also limit downtown activity. The Chamber should coordinate with local businesses and owners to make them aware of their responsibility to clear the sidewalks of snow and ice.

When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNER

- City of Morehead

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- KYTC
- Morehead State University
- Think Morehead

## FUNDING

### U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)

- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant Program
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) – *Along collectors and arterials*
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – *Along collectors and arterials*

### Local

- General Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

## ACTION STEPS

4.1

### RESTRIPE MAIN STREET

Add a buffer between the parking lane and drive lane to narrow the lane width closer to 10-feet, in the short-term.

4.2

### UPGRADE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS ALONG MAIN STREET

Conduct a walk audit to document pedestrian issues along Main Street. Evaluate which improvements will be most beneficial at each crossing and phase the construction of these improvements if necessary.

<sup>2</sup> FHWA, Traffic Calming, “29. Raised Intersection, 30. Raised Pedestrian Crossing.” Retrieved from <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferjourney1/library/countermeasures/29-30.htm>

<sup>3</sup> *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)* p. 82, R1-5 and R1-5a.

# APPLYING STRATEGY 4

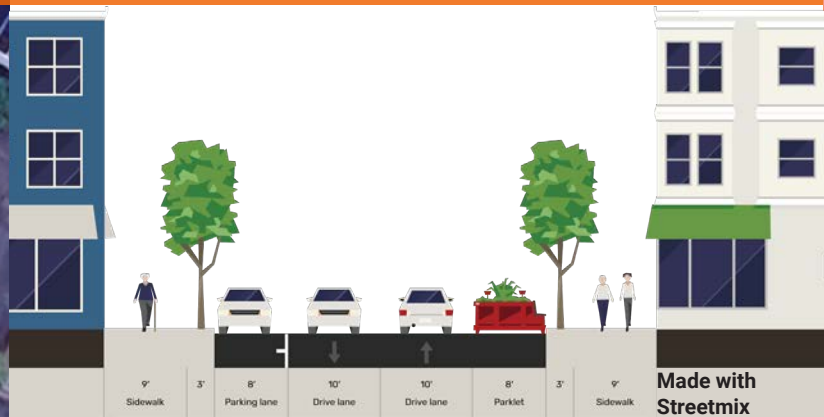
## PEDESTRIAN-FOCUSED STREETS

A combination of pedestrian-focused improvements can calm traffic and provide pedestrians more visibility along Main Street.

*Examples of raised crosswalks*



*Concept of a raised intersection at Main Street at Wilson Avenue and a long-term concept to reallocate space on Main Street with reduced lane width and wider sidewalks*





Pavers, plantings, and lighting can align with the streetscape guidelines

Curb extensions next to on-street parking increases the visibility of pedestrians around parked cars

*Example of a midblock crosswalk with curb extensions in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky*

# Pedestrian & Bicyclist Connections

## STRATEGY 5

### MOBILITY



#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The heart of downtown Morehead is bordered by two arterial roads: KY 32/Flemingsburg Road and US 60/Wilkinson Boulevard. KY 32 is a five-lane road that connects I-64 to the center of Morehead. Government and public uses, including the Rowan Circuit Court, County Clerk, and the main post office, are located south of KY 32, while many of the restaurants and shops frequented by employees are on the north side of KY 32. Additionally, there are several multi-family housing buildings, recovery facilities and housing, and rent-assisted housing for older adults and people living with disabilities. Many residents living south of KY 32 are likely to be low-income and/or students, frequently walking.

US 60 is a three-lane road and runs between downtown and Triplett Creek. Across US 60 is a mix of uses including a park and splash pad, city hall, and apartments, including a new 40-unit building. Residents in this area tend to walk or bike across US 60, and some use mobility devices.

Despite existing crosswalks and signals, pedestrians find it uncomfortable to cross these roads. Several factors influence pedestrian safety when crossing main roads. These include

higher traffic volume and vehicle speeds, especially from vehicles traveling downhill from I-64. Numerous access points increase the potential conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles and require more driver awareness. Pedestrians may be less visible due to the various vehicle maneuvers at intersections. Additionally, long crossing distances and insufficient lighting can discourage pedestrian crossings. While maintaining vehicular mobility on these two main corridors is important, improvements can be made to existing pedestrian crossings to create a Complete Street for all users.

Enhancements at existing pedestrian crossings at KY 32 at Main Street and US 60 at Bridge Street should be prioritized. The crossing at UK St. Claire's main entrance (Sister Jeannette Drive) could also benefit from improvements noted in Strategy 5.1. A new crossing on KY 32 at W. Sun Street/W. 2nd Street should also be considered, especially with potential redevelopment of the school property on W. Sun Street. This would provide a more accessible connection to the hospital campus or downtown than the current pedestrian bridge.

### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- KYTC
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## FUNDING

### U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)

- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) - *As part of a larger trail network*
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant Program
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) – *Along collectors and arterials*
- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) – *Along collectors and arterials*

### Local

- General Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Tourist Development Tax

## ACTION STEPS

### 5.1

### ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS AT DOWNTOWN GATEWAYS

Prioritize pedestrian crossings at KY 32/Main Street and US 60/Bridge Street for downtown access. Improvements could include high visibility crosswalks, additional lighting, and reduced curb radii to slow down vehicles. Appropriate curb radius depends on truck volumes and requires further study. A new curb radii area can be striped for a low-cost, interim action, or the curb can be reconstructed.

A pedestrian refuge island could also be considered on US 60 at Bridge Street. Refuge islands are raised medians in the middle of a street. They benefit pedestrians by protecting them in the middle of the road and allowing them to focus on crossing one direction of traffic and fewer lanes at a time.

Finally, a new crossing should be considered on KY 32 at W Sun Street/W 2nd Street. The city should coordinate with KYTC District 9, as these are state-maintained roads. However, the city can pursue funding in coordination with KYTC.

### 5.2

### FILL IN SIDEWALK GAPS

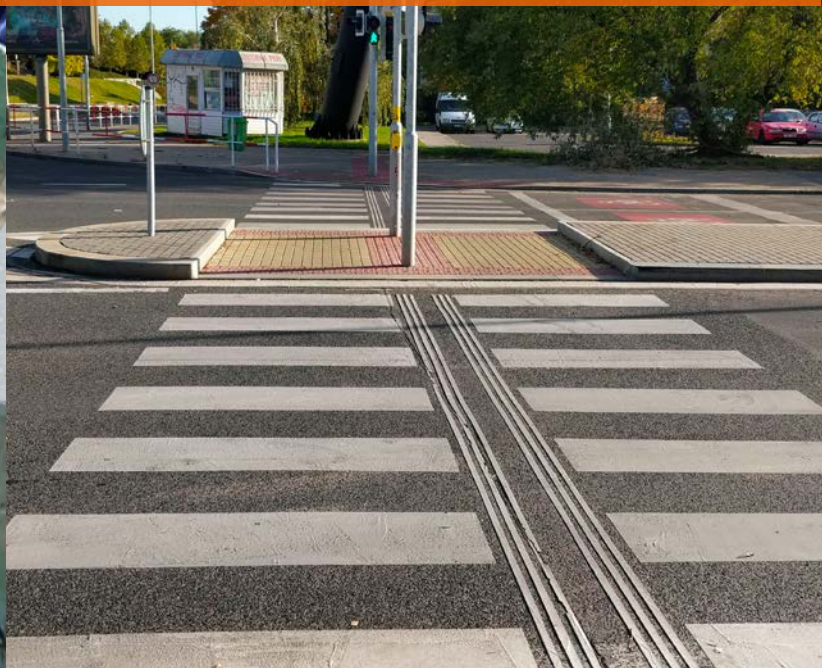
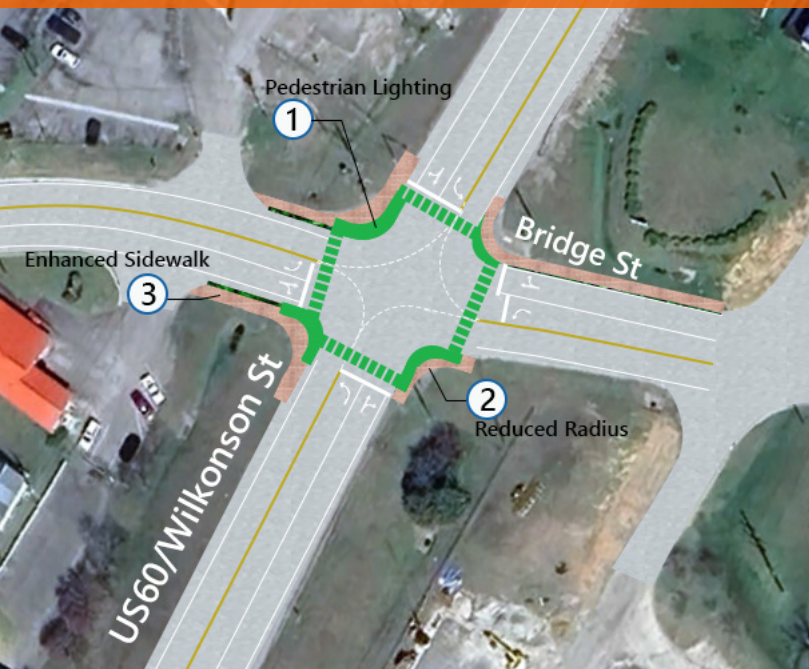
The city should inventory and prioritize adding or improving sidewalks on appropriate downtown streets. Priority should also be given to sidewalk connections and crosswalks around bus stops (see Strategy 9). These gaps should be addressed through city-led projects or required during adjacent parcel redevelopment.

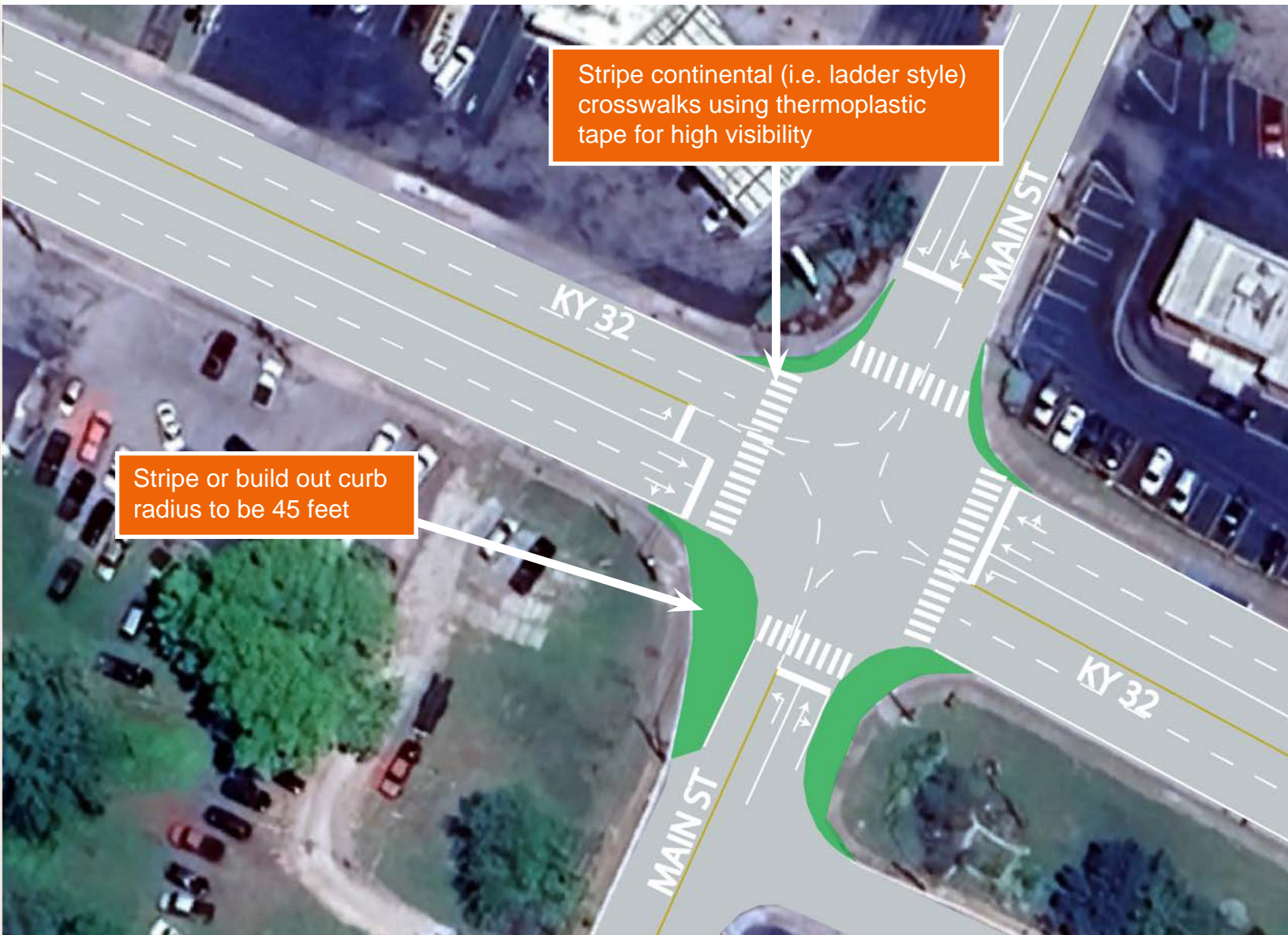
# APPLYING STRATEGY 5

## PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLIST CONNECTIONS

Making the experience of walking, biking, or rolling to downtown, or from downtown to other activity areas, improves not only the safety and comfort of pedestrians and cyclists, but also provides a sense of connection between downtown and other areas of Morehead.

*Concept of pedestrian crossing enhancements at Bridge Street and US 60 and an example image of a pedestrian refuge island*





Stripe continental (i.e. ladder style) crosswalks using thermoplastic tape for high visibility

Stripe or build out curb radius to be 45 feet

Concept of crossing enhancements at KY 32 and Main Street

# Public Parking

## STRATEGY 6

### MOBILITY



#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The envisioned redevelopment with higher density mixed-uses will increase the number of people visiting and living in downtown. Existing surface lots may be opportunities for infill development, but parking is still needed for visitors, residents, and workers. There is also often a perception of a parking shortage. Downtown parking areas are not always as visible compared to a suburban development. A short walk of a block downtown can also seem “further” than walking across a large parking lot to a big box store. A parking strategy centered around efficient use of space, wayfinding, and well-designed aesthetics can provide the necessary parking spaces while fitting in with the overall vision for downtown Morehead.

Parking should primarily be a mix of surface lots and on-street parking that balances parking demands. On-street parking allows customers to park close to destinations and reinforces slower vehicle speeds by giving drivers a sense of a narrowed street. Parking spaces can also be used for temporary programming, as in parklets and temporary outdoor dining (Strategy 10). Since downtown

parking is not always visible from the street, signs and wayfinding should be used to direct visitors to all public parking areas.

The city recently evaluated the amount of parking in Downtown Morehead and adopted the Downtown Parking Overlay District to allow a 30% reduction in parking within the downtown area. This is a necessary first step, but additional regulations should also be considered.

- **Eliminate or further reduce the parking minimums** in the “core” of downtown along E. Main Street.
- **Create in-lieu fee options** that would allow businesses to pay a pre-determined fee per space that could then be used for public parking.
- **Create parking maximums or caps** within downtown that would restrict the total number of parking spaces that could be provided as part of a development.

- **Require parking to be located to the rear** of structures in downtown to limit parking that abuts the major roads (especially Main Street).

A potential public parking structure could also be constructed on Bishop Street to consolidate parking in one dense area and allow for more infill development on surface lots. This could be a standalone project or incorporated into a city project if city hall is relocated downtown (see Strategy 1). A parking structure would also help serve event parking needs and overflow parking for dining and retail uses throughout downtown. The design of the parking structure should complement downtown's character by incorporating facade improvements or other techniques to soften the visual impact.

Currently, there is no paid parking downtown. Paid parking in this potential structure and other public parking areas (such as on-street parking) can also be evaluated. This should consider the investment needed in technology and staffing versus the revenue it would generate.

## PRIMARY PARTNER

- City of Morehead

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Morehead-Rowan County Tourism
- Property Owners/Developers
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## FUNDING

### Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

- Kentucky Tourism Development Act (KTDA) – *if connected with tourism project*

### U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)

- *Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) – if part of a road project along collectors and arterials*

### Local

- *General Fund*
- *Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Tax Abatement*

### When should this strategy start?



## ACTION STEPS

# 6.1

### INCLUDE ON-STREET PARALLEL PARKING ALONG MAIN STREET

Identify areas along Main Street where additional on-street parking can be added and construct these spaces based on priority.

# 6.2

### COMPLETE A DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY

Parking studies quantify parking supply and demand, forecast the need based on development scenarios, and provide the community with data-supported recommendations. This study should identify how much parking is needed, the feasibility of a public parking structure, and whether it should be paid or free.

# 6.3

### INSTALL PARKING WAYFINDING SIGNS

The city should install wayfinding signs downtown that direct people to public parking. These signs should reflect the brand and character of downtown (see Strategies 10 and 11).

# 6.4

### REVIEW PARKING NEEDS AND REVISE THE ZONING ORDINANCE

Consider policies and regulations, such as those outlined in this strategy, that can be implemented to better align parking needs with parking demands.

# Trail & Park Connections

## STRATEGY 7

### MOBILITY



*Kentucky*  
TRAIL TOWNS

Where the Outdoors and Amenities Meet



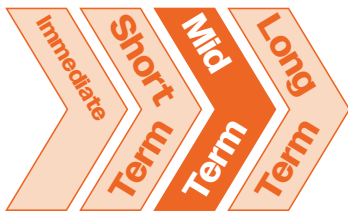
### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Regional and local trail networks can be incorporated into site redevelopment projects to improve connections to recreation destinations and tourism attractions and spur further economic development opportunities.

Morehead is a certified Kentucky Trail Town – a designation awarded by Kentucky’s Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet to 24 communities throughout the state that offer hotels, restaurants, attractions, entertainment, and other conveniences near significant outdoor opportunities. With access to many trails and parks within walking and biking distance, Morehead can capitalize on outdoor recreational tourism in their downtown redevelopment efforts by constructing better connections across Triplett Creek to local parks, trails, and amenities.

Morehead is one location along the Sheltoewe Trace Trail, a 343-mile National Recreation Trail that spans from Tennessee to northern Rowan County in Kentucky. Additionally, the Triplett Valley Trail is a locally supported trail and one of the projects recommended in the Morehead Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This trail would provide additional recreational opportunities for tourists traveling the Sheltoewe Trace Trail or regional attractions like Cave Run Lake, Red River Gorge, or Carter Caves. This trail, as proposed, will also strengthen the connection between downtown and Rodburn Hollow Park along US 60 to the north, as well as the retail areas south of downtown.

### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Property Owner
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## FUNDING

### U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)

- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant Program
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) – *Along collectors and arterials*
- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) – *Along collectors and arterials*

### Local

- General Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Tourist Development Tax

## ACTION STEPS

# 7.1

### DEFINE THE SHELTOWEE TRACE TRAIL ALONG MAIN STREET

This section of the trail will not have a rugged and natural character; rather it will reflect an urban trail in character as it moves through downtown. The trail is currently planned along Main Street and should incorporate distinctive pavers, branding, and wayfinding that blends both the overall trail identity with the identity of downtown Morehead. This should be coordinated with the streetscape design guide in Strategy 11.

# 7.2

### CONSTRUCT THE PROPOSED TRIPLETT VALLEY TRAIL ALONG TRIPLETT CREEK

This trail is an important local link within the trail network as well as to downtown.

## WHO'S DONE THIS? DAMASCUS, VIRGINIA

Damascus is planning seven long-distance trails, and the city is focusing their downtown revitalization strategy on incorporating the trails and access to natural resources into wayfinding and streetscape enhancements.



# Transit Connectivity

STRATEGY 8

MOBILITY



## ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Transit is an important mode of getting around the city. MorTrans operates four bus routes with about 14 bus stops within the downtown area. These routes serve destinations including the Morehead State University campus, the Triplett View Apartments, and the Cave Run Clinic.

Noticeable, attractive, and comfortable bus stops, as well as wayfinding, can increase transit ridership through visibility and ease of use. Working with MorTrans to define major stop locations and make people aware of the transit options will encourage residents and visitors to consider transit and boost multi-modal travel in Morehead.

When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- MorTrans

## FUNDING

- Federal Transit Administration Grants
- General Fund

## ACTION STEPS

# 8.1

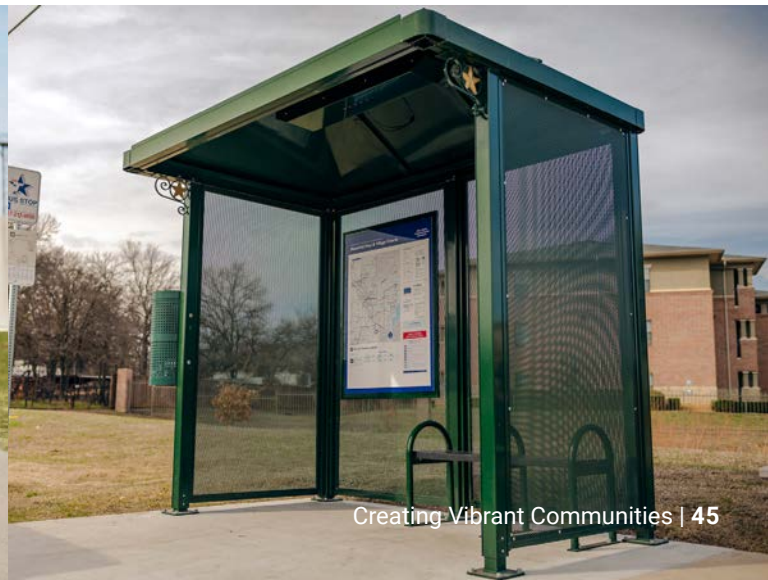
### IDENTIFY THE MAIN BUS STOP LOCATION IN DOWNTOWN MOREHEAD

It is recommended to provide a main bus stop at Wilson Avenue, and construct a shelter and boarding pad that is separate from the sidewalk. The materials and design should be approved by MorTrans for maintenance reasons but also aligned with Morehead's streetscape design (see Strategy 10).

# 8.2

### INSTALL WAYFINDING SIGNS AT TRANSIT STOPS

Signs that clearly identify each bus stop should be installed and also reflect the character and brand of downtown (see Strategies 9, 10, and 11).



# Downtown Branding

## STRATEGY 9

### CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING



#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Morehead is nestled within the Triplett Creek Valley in the Eastern Kentucky foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. The primary business street is Main Street, two blocks north and west of Triplett Creek. The city ends a few blocks west of Main Street as the hills rise again. Main Street is a long, linear corridor, from which many narrow streets extend. Morehead State University anchors the north end of Main Street. The hospital, UK St. Claire, is a major landmark where Downtown meets Flemingsburg Road, an auto-oriented commercial corridor. Civic uses for the city and county are scattered along Main Street and around Downtown's perimeter.

An entertainment district is being developed around Battson-Oates Drive where the University interfaces with the city. The massing, scale, and academic architectural style of the University mixes with relatively narrow, two-story Nineteenth and Twentieth Century commercial and civic buildings. The street wall is mostly intact at this intersection.

Natural events and automobile storage shaped the built environment which survives. After a succession of fire and flood, structures were rebuilt in a style typical of commercial structures in the middle of the Twentieth Century: low relief, horizontal emphasis, composed of long bricks. This architectural style is unique to Morehead and is a potential branding opportunity for the town.

Landmarks, cultural resources, attractions, and recreational opportunities make each community unique, and Morehead is no exception to this. The entry points into downtown should be branded with signs, murals, or similar treatments that invite people into the district.

### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Morehead Rowan County Tourism

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Gateway Area Development District (GADD)
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Morehead State University
- Residents/Business Owners
- UK St. Claire
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## FUNDING

### Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

- Appalachian regional Initiative for Stronger Economies
- Area Development Program

### Local

- General Fund
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Morehead Rowan County Tourism
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## ACTION STEPS

### DEVELOP A BRAND FOR DOWNTOWN MOREHEAD

9.1

Develop a brand for the downtown in terms of design and economic opportunities; align design standards with historic factors, natural conditions, and economic development strategies to clearly communicate and identify for the city. This brand should be communicated and marketed to create an image of Morehead.

### IDENTIFY LOCATIONS TO VISUALLY REINFORCE THE BRAND DOWNTOWN

9.2

This should include various methods, such as signs at the gateways into downtown.



# Streetscape Design Guide

## STRATEGY 10

### CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING



#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Streets, sidewalks, and parking areas should be designed to emphasize how people move around the site over how cars move. Sidewalks and public spaces should be thought of as “outdoor rooms” where people are encouraged to mingle and engage with the various uses and businesses. The elements included in a streetscape design can also enhance the character of a place and create a safe and comfortable place to shop and dine. However, the maintenance of these areas and life-cycle costs of the materials should be considered.

The scale of the building height and overall street width should be comfortable for a person walking through the development. Roads should be appropriately scaled for the intended traffic volumes and speeds and create that sense of place to encourage visitors to shop, dine, and linger. A street that is too narrow may make it difficult to add dining opportunities or street trees.

Like the design guide for buildings in Strategy 11, the design elements for the streetscapes and public spaces within the site should also be outlined and defined within a design guide. The design guide for streetscapes and public spaces should be coordinated with Strategies 9, 11, and 12 and define the following elements:

- Sidewalk Material, including colors, in-street markings, or patterns. Branding the Sheltoewe Trace with the Turtle Walk theme, for example, would create a unique enhancement to Main Street and improve wayfinding and awareness of the recreational asset.
- Design techniques for the narrow, curbside side streets that encourage shopping and exploration on foot while balancing access to parking and loading requirements of businesses.
- Sidewalk Amenities, such as benches, seating, tables, trash cans, and bike racks.
- Street Plantings, including street trees, planting areas, planters, and plant species.
- Decorative Lighting and Banners, including for cars and people, string lights, or other decorative lighting.
- Traffic Signals and Signs, such as stop signs, mast arms, and directional signs.
- Permitted Street Activities & Location, such as outdoor dining, sidewalk sales, food trucks, and games/entertainment. (Must maintain a minimum five-foot ADA accessible path for pedestrians).

- Parklet Standards, such as permitted temporary uses of public parking spaces for activities such as outdoor dining.
- Public Art, including dedicated spaces for permanent art or landmarks as well as temporary displays (see Strategy 12).
- Social Areas, such as places that encourage people to sit where they are sheltered by trees or awnings, where they can view unique landmarks, public art, and architectural elements of Morehead.
- Gateways, including a common identity that reflects the overall downtown brand.
- Long-Term Maintenance, including the responsibilities and funding sources for all streetscape elements.

## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Morehead-Rowan County Tourism

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Gateway Area Development District (GADD)
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Morehead State University
- Property Owners, Business Owners
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council
- Rowan County Public Schools

## FUNDING

### Preservation Kentucky

- Kentucky Preservation Fund

### U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)

- Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant Program
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP) – *Along collectors and arterials*
- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) – *Along collectors and arterials*

### U.S. National Parks Service

- Certified Local Government (CLG) Program Grant

### Local

- General Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

When should this strategy start?



## ACTION STEPS

### 10.1

#### CREATE AND ADOPT A DESIGN GUIDE FOR STREETScape DESIGN

This should define all between the buildings along Main Street, including paving materials, amenities, plantings, decorative lighting (including string lights, etc.), traffic signals/signs, activities, art, and gateways. This should also be coordinated with Strategies 10, 12, and 13.

### 10.2

#### ADOPT GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR DINING

The city should address programming for activities that occur in this area, such as outdoor dining. This could occur along a specific area of the sidewalk or within a parking space or vacant area between buildings. The guidelines should specify the permitted locations, maintenance of passing zones that are ADA-compliant, separation from traffic, and local permitting requirements.

### 10.3

#### DEVELOP A STREET ACTIVATION PROGRAM

This program would develop guidelines on how local property and business owners can activate the street by increasing activity and interaction between the private parcel and sidewalk. Similar to a façade improvement program, this should be a small matching grant to the local businesses and property owners who participate (such as \$5,000) to spur development of initial projects. Examples could include alley activations, outdoor dining (see Action 11.2), food trucks, murals, and similar spaces and activities.

# Development Pattern Book

## STRATEGY 11

### CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING



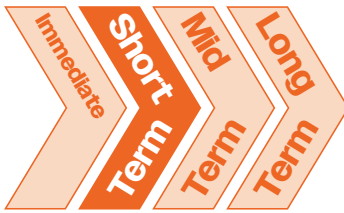
#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Branding downtown does not only include creating an image for this area, but it also continues through with design standards for new construction and renovations of existing buildings. In a traditional downtown, the development patterns include a mix of uses with civic, retail, dining, maker spaces, and housing that are typically arranged in narrow buildings that extend to the sidewalk.

Individual buildings typically share a common wall and are 20 to 60 feet in width, and larger buildings are typically visually divided into smaller sections. Each building facade has design elements and colors that create interest, visually define the scale of the building, and delineate stories and adjacent buildings. Storefronts are open with generously sized windows that encourage interaction from the street to the sidewalk and through the sidewalk to the interior store.

These building elements should be defined to require new development and redevelopment to reflect the desired historical character and development pattern of downtown.

### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Downtown Morehead Incorporated

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Gateway Area Development District (GADD)
- Kentucky Heritage Council
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Morehead-Rowan County Tourism
- Property Owners/Business Owners
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## FUNDING

### Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

- Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies
- Area Development Program

### Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development

- Government Resources Accelerating Needed Transformation (GRANT) Program

### Kentucky Heritage Council

- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits

### Preservation Kentucky

- Kentucky Preservation Fund

### U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- Rural Business Development Grant
- Rural Community Development Initiative
- Rural Cooperative Development Grant
- Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
- Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge

### U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)

- Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants

### U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Community Development Block Grant
- Hope VI Main Street Grant Program (HUD)

### U.S. National Parks Service

- Certified Local Government (CLG) Program Grant Local

### Local

- General Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

## ACTION STEPS

### CREATE DESIGN STANDARDS FOR THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

11.1

Develop a pattern book of colors, materials, architectural styles, relationship to the surroundings, landscaping, street furnishings, signs, building massing, mechanical equipment screening, and facade design. This could be in the form of design standards within the zoning ordinance or a design guide that would be suggested but not required by ordinance

### DEVELOP A FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

11.2

This should be a small grant matching program for local building owners to assist in facade improvements that comply with the established design standards. Grants can be as little as providing \$5,000 in a grant that must be matched. It can also include the street activation program and outdoor dining identified in Strategy 10.



# Public Art

## STRATEGY 12

### CHARACTER & PLACEMAKING



### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Public art is an opportunity to activate the street, draw people downtown, encourage an artist community, bring year-round color into downtown, and communicate Morehead's brand and identity. The type and style of art may vary from installation to installation, but it should all reflect an overall theme. This could include murals on building walls, in-pavement art within the public streets/ crosswalks, sculptures, or even interactive art. For example, a sidewalk could incorporate the foot positions to learn the waltz, or it could involve water play. Public art may also be an opportunity to encourage exploration of Morehead and open new areas to development or reuse.



### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Kentucky Folk Art Center
- Rowan County Arts Center

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Gateway Area Development District (GADD)
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Morehead-Rowan County Tourism
- Morehead State University
- Property Owners/Business Owners
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## FUNDING

### Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

- Appalachian regional Initiative for Stronger Economies
- Area Development Program

### Kentucky Arts Council

- Kentucky Arts Partnership

### National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

- Our Town

### Local

- General Fund
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

## ACTION STEPS

# 12.1

### CREATE A PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

This plan should identify the preferred types of art installations, how it can be integrated into the historic district, potential locations, and process for engaging artists. It should also identify the entity or group that will implement the master plan, which could include a citizen art council to ensure art installations represent the larger community. For locations on private property (such as a mural on the side of a building), it should outline the process to engage those property owners for permission. The plan should also identify any conflicts with local zoning or other regulations and any permits that would be required.



# Destination Districts

## STRATEGY 13

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



#### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Building upon the entertainment district that is established in downtown at the corner of E Main Street and Battson Oates Drive, the city should explore additional tools and design improvements to draw additional residents, families, and visitors downtown. This could include creating a museum and cultural district, events, seasonal attractions, and programming (such as the farmers market), and completing additional design improvements at the Battson Oates Commons. The feasibility and need for an indoor sports facility in the downtown area should also be studied.

Morehead has a strong group of museums and cultural destinations in the downtown area as well as affiliations with Appalachian history and natural/outdoor activity connections. These amenities attract tourists and visitors that may be inclined to stay in the community to see other attractions or economic generators. These uses can also be very compatible with artist and craft attractions and businesses. Artisans and craft entrepreneurs often congregate in artist-based communities that attract additional economic development.

The city can also work with partners to further promote the city's established Entertainment Destination Center (EDC) in this area. An EDC is a tool enabled through state statute that allows a person to leave a participating restaurant or bar with an alcoholic

beverage within a specific geographic area. These areas are centered around a tourism attraction or convention center with the intent that the EDC will aid in economic growth and attract more residents and visitors to this area after 5 p.m.

Family-friendly events, festivals, and programming are another way to bring more people downtown throughout the year. Ideas include seasonal attractions, such as a temporary ice skating rink in the winter, a sweet stroll on Main Street in the summer, or recurring events, such as an expanded farmers market, training or fitness activities, a mobile book library, or temporary pop-up shops or art exhibits in vacant storefronts. Battson Oates Commons should also be explored as a site for these events and programming to maximize use of the facility.

Finally, additional design improvements could be completed in the block of Battson-Oates Drive and Battson-Oates Commons to enhance the function and character of the area. This could include enhanced pavers along Battson-Oates Drive, removable bollards or similar features to close the block to traffic (but allow EMS and service), a permanent stage or performance area, improvements for food trucks, and other similar streetscape elements.

## When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Morehead Rowan County Tourism

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Gateway Area Development District (GADD)
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Morehead State University
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council
- County Extension Agency and Agricultural Partners
- Local Businesses

## FUNDING

### America's Best Communities Program

#### Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

- Appalachian Regional Initiative for Stronger Economies
- Area Development Program

#### Hometown Grant Program (T-Mobile)

#### U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Community Development Block Grant
- Hope VI Main Street Grant Program (HUD)

#### U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- Rural Business Development Grant
- Rural Community Development Initiative
- Rural Cooperative Development Grant
- Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
- Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge

#### U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) / Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC)

- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant Program
- Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) – *Along collectors and arterials*

## ACTION STEPS

### 13.1

### LOCALLY DESIGNATE DOWNTOWN AS A MUSEUM AND CULTURAL DISTRICT

The intent of this locally-designated district is to bring attention or awareness to the local attractions. The city can also review opportunities for grants to assist in developing art and craft study-live-work spaces for local artisans. It could even include seeking grants or local funding to purchase property or improve infrastructure for use as museums, cultural spaces, or live-work spaces for artisan communities.

### 13.2

### EXPAND EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING DOWNTOWN

The city and/or Downtown Morehead Incorporated should identify new events or festivals that could be hosted downtown (such as an expanded Farmers Market or pop-up shops in vacant storefronts) and a focus should be placed on additional programming at Battson Oates Commons. The need and feasibility of a new indoor sports facility should also be considered in this review.

### 13.3

### EXPAND PROMOTION OF THE ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION CENTER (EDC)

The city and their partners should expand awareness of this district to further attract people into downtown.

### 13.4

### COMPLETE DESIGN IMPROVEMENTS TO BATTSON-OATES DRIVE AND BATTSON-OATES COMMONS

This block was recently closed to cars with more temporary measures. Completing additional, more permanent design elements of this area should be considered in order to better use the space and elevate the visual appearance to reflect Morehead's character. These improvements could include integrating downtown branding, distinctive pavers or stamped pavement, sidewalk improvements, landscaping, permanent stage, vendor areas, enhanced fencing or bollards to close the road to traffic, and similar treatments.

# Economic Opportunity Zone Promotion

STRATEGY 14

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Significant federal tax advantages are available for investments in specific geographic areas in opportunity zones. This economic development tool allows people to invest in distressed areas to spur economic growth and job creation through tax incentives, such as deferral of capital gains taxes.

Morehead has an Opportunity Zone that includes a substantial portion of the city, including the parcels north and east of Main Street within downtown. The city should promote and encourage developments to utilize the benefits of the opportunity zone designation.

### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce

## FUNDING

- N/A (Completed by City Staff)

## ACTION STEPS

14.1

### IDENTIFY WAYS TO PROMOTE THE OPPORTUNITY ZONE

This could include simple steps such as reviewing existing economic development resource materials to ensure they include information about the local opportunity zone designation. It could also include convening local investors to target initiatives or creating a flyer that highlights the benefits of locating in this zone and promoting this to existing and new businesses and developers.

# Access to Capital Program

## STRATEGY 15

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



### ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

Having access to funding and resources is important for both business owners as well as the city. Encouraging unique and viable local entrepreneurs to locate and build a downtown business may be assisted by the community through small business credit and loan programs and similar business assistance programs. Development of locally owned and operated businesses reinforces investment in the community and the downtown area.

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) supports a business capital program that can help small businesses and local entrepreneurs open or expand businesses. This program can help communities reduce obstacles to economic revitalization and expand opportunities for local growth. Additional programs and organizations also provide assistance, such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Small Business Investment Company (SBIC).

The city should also identify national programs that fund improvements that would support small business development and Main Street programs in downtown.

### When should this strategy start?



## PRIMARY PARTNERS

- City of Morehead
- Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council

## SECONDARY PARTNERS

- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
- Gateway Area Development District (GADD)
- Economic Development Administration (EDA)
- Downtown Morehead Incorporated
- Morehead State University Small Business Development Center (MSUSBDC)
- Morehead-Rowan County Chamber of Commerce
- Morehead-Rowan County Tourism

## FUNDING

### Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)

- Access to Capital Program

### U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

- Community Development Block Grant
- Hope VI Main Street Grant Program (HUD)

### U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

- Rural Business Development Grant
- Rural Community Development Initiative
- Rural Cooperative Development Grant
- Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program
- Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge

## ACTION STEPS

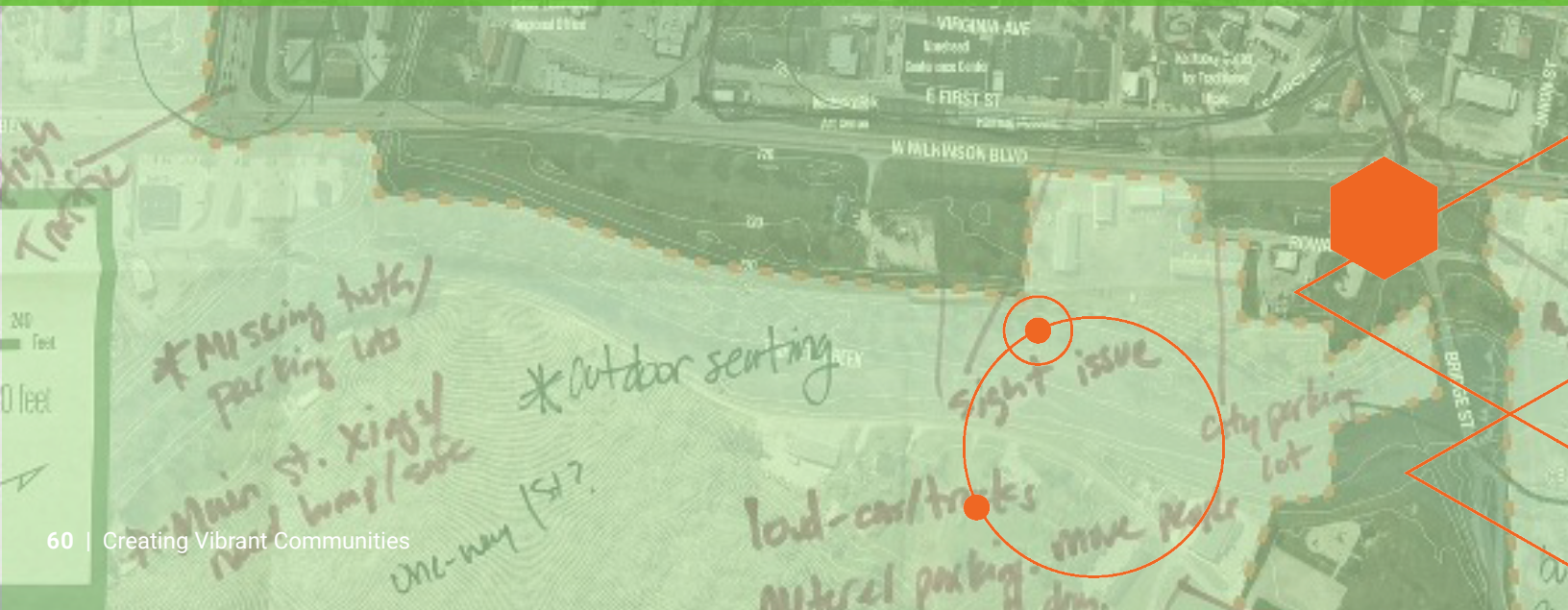
# 15.1

### CREATE A “ONE STOP SHOP” FOR SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

This could initially focus on identifying and providing assistance for existing revolving loan programs and SBA programs and later expand to locally-funded assistance programs. It should identify a local community organization (such as Downtown Morehead Incorporated or Morehead-Rowan County Economic Development Council) to work with the local or regional programs (such as the Area Development District or ARC) to review existing and/or new funding opportunities for development of a community venture fund or small lending program. This should also consider building a community development financial institutions (CDFI) relationship to foster small business growth.



# IMPLEMENTATION PART THREE



## IMPLEMENTING THE VISION

This plan builds upon a big vision that has been developed over dozens of years and numerous planning efforts, and a large undertaking like this will require just as many partners, resources, and coordination to be successful. This section of the plan is intended to outline the path for implementation by identifying the entity leading the overall direction and the partners that should be leading each strategy and/or action step.

### ENTITY LEADING IMPLEMENTATION

This plan identifies primary partners and secondary partners for each strategy, but implementation also requires an overall champion or leader to help coordinate partners and monitor progress.

The city should be the lead entity for the implementation of this plan because it requires the broad support of the elected officials and city departments. The city should review progress on the various action steps at least quarterly with the committee established for this plan, and tasks that are completed and the obstacles that have been encountered should be reported to the Morehead City Council and key partners at least once a year. As the lead entity, the city should also evaluate how potential development proposals meet the vision and strategies of this plan and ensure the necessary partners are involved.



# STRATEGY TIMELINE



CITY OF MOREHEAD  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

**MOREHEAD**  
CREATING VIBRANT COMMUNITIES



