



'Central City Antiques District' Project
Huntington, West Virginia

The following ideas relative to development, parking transportation, security and streetscape were developed by AIA West Virginia's Livable Communities Committee, through a series of stakeholder meeting with local business owners, property owners, residents, and the City of Huntington. These ideas were developed as a plan to improve the 14th Street West Corridor as a part of the City's River to Rail initiative.

❖ **Development**

- The theme for development in the area is creating a vibrant corridor with a 24-7 live/work/play environment. Providing affordable, quality housing and commercial space will encourage university students, young professionals, small businesses, artists and empty nesters to relocate to the area.
- The historic character is strong in the central three blocks along the 14th Street West corridor (between Madison and Adams Avenues) There is a distinct change of character in the remaining sections of the corridor, changing to industrial use toward the flood levee and a large scale shopping center with expansive parking lots toward the railroad tracks.
- Many existing parcels in the historic core are underutilized, with vacant lots, single-story structures, or ground-level spaces that aren't open to the public through retail, restaurants, etc. These structures could potentially be removed and replaced with multi-story, multi-use development, in keeping with the historic character and quality of the district in order to maintain a sense of identity.
- Mid-block and corner parking lots that front 14th Street West should be discouraged and existing lots should be brought into compliance with the City's parking ordinance. New development should place structures at the street.
- The vacant fire station should be converted into a visitor's center and local history museum.
- The vacant West Middle School building has been purchased by the Huntington Housing Authority and is being redeveloped as affordable housing.

❖ **Transportation, Recreation & Tourism**

- The Paul Ambrose Trail for Health (PATH) runs along the flood levee to the north of the corridor, as well as along the creek to the south of the corridor. There is a great opportunity to connect these two segments of the Trail along 14th Street West through a new trailhead at the levee and incorporation of bicycle facilities in the streetscape design for the corridor.
- Wayfinding, transit routes, streetscape improvements, public art and other features to encourage traffic from Downtown and the Interstate would allow the area to continue to thrive as a tourist destination, as well as encourage traffic between the District and the University. These features should be incorporated into Washington, Adams and Madison Avenues.
- The last block of Virginia Avenue before it meets 14th Street West needs to be paved, with stormwater features incorporated. This is a widely used commuter route between the West End and Downtown.
- A commuter bike route should be signed along 5th Avenue West.
- A natural playground would provide much-needed green space for children to play, including those at the Boy's and Girl's Club.
- Incorporation of public art will contribute to a sense of identity for the area. Painted murals, quilt blocks, sculpture, even brightly painted homes will create the sense of an arts district.



❖ **Streetscape**

- Utilizing the built environment to create a sense of identity for the community can be accomplished through gateway structures that indicate entry into the District. Works of art within the area and consistent use of materials, signage, awnings, benches, tree grates, etc. can contribute to the identity of a creative, progressive District.
- Existing parking capacity and demand should be inventoried in order to determine if gaps exist.
- Investment in the public realm will result in reflected value on the private property around it. The gazebo area should be upgraded to create a desirable location for public events. Pop up food trucks, dog parks and other types of semi-temporary developments can entice traffic to the area and build “buzz”.
- Widening sidewalks and adding bicycle facilities will enliven the street, creating opportunities for outdoor dining, sidewalk sales, bike parking, and stormwater features such as rain gardens.
- Lighting and street landscaping should be improved throughout the corridor.

❖ **Zoning & Code Enforcement**

- An Overlay District should be identified for the 14th Street West corridor and crossing streets. This can provide guidelines for property use, building form and materiality, architectural features, as well as encourage incorporation of desirable design features.
- Enforcement of the IBC Property Maintenance Code can address problems with existing dilapidated structures and non-compliant rental property.
- New development will be regulated through current building and energy codes, as well as by party wall requirements that may be described in property deeds.