

6.0 Downtown Strategies

6.3.1.10 Character Area C10 – Downtown Core

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong, cohesive core of historic commercial buildings. • Sizeable “captive market” of workers. • Convenient access from WVU campus. • Economically diverse mix of uses. • Mix of locally owned businesses and national retail chains. • Venues for live performances and film exhibition. 	<p>CHALLENGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some insensitive storefront renovations and building demolitions have eroded streetscape rhythm and continuity. • Late-night and weekend bar scene leaves streets and sidewalks dirty and deters other visitors. • Sidewalk tree curbing creates hazards for pedestrians and limit space for outdoor dining and sales.
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More intensive ground floor retail uses along High Street below the Wall Street crosswalk • Intensify ground-floor uses on several side streets to improve retail "porousness" and make the district's retail core more visible from peripheral streets. • Create a node of community serving businesses on the lower end of High Street to support and encourage residential development. • Build on the district's proximity to the WVU campus to cultivate small industries related to or growing from areas of academic expertise and knowledge transfer. • Engage a broader range of Morgantown and regional residents in downtown activities and commerce. • Increase the downtown's internet presence. 	

VISION / DEVELOPMENT THEME

A physically distinctive historic commercial center with a broad and eclectic range of businesses that provides innovative entertainment and retail experiences to Morgantown residents and attracts visitors from throughout the region.

ACTIONS

- 6.3.1.10.a Intensify development of upper-floor market-rate housing, offices, and small “creative” industries.
- 6.3.1.10.b Intensify ground floor retail and restaurant development on High Street below the Wall Street crosswalk
- 6.3.1.10.c Create a small concentration of community serving retail shops and restaurants near the lower end of High Street to support existing and new residential development in this area.



6.0 Downtown Strategies

- 6.3.1.10.d Create new concentrations of specialty retail on key side streets.
- 6.3.1.10.e Collaborate with WVU and regional industrial development entities to develop small “creative” industries downtown.
- 6.3.1.10.f Develop a dynamic, customer focused website promoting downtown Morgantown and its businesses.
- 6.3.1.10.g Create a subsidiary organization for Main Street Morgantown to stimulate and assist historic rehabilitation and infill construction.
- 8.3.1.10.h Adopt and enforce Main Street Morgantown Urban Design Guidelines and Design Guidelines for Public Projects.

DESIGN GUIDELINES CONSIDERATIONS

Planning Requirements

- Protect downtown Morgantown’s historic buildings while also encouraging sensitive, high-value new infill development.
- Continue to enhance and beautify the various alleyways that run throughout the downtown to better serve as modes for pedestrian travel.
- Create visually attractive gateways throughout the downtown.
 - Gateway elements help set the stage for a visitor’s expectations of a place and can also enhance the identity of downtown and strengthen the sense of place.
 - Gateways may be created by larger landmark buildings, striking landscaping, monuments, public art, or special streetlights. In general, gateways should be visually creative and include an element of sufficient height and mass so as to be visible by motorists, lighted so as to be visible at night, and constructed of high quality materials that are in keeping with the historic architecture of downtown.
- Continue to encourage installation of public art, landscaping, furniture, lighting, and other street features that will create interest and delight within streets and public spaces.
 - Develop a comprehensive public art program for downtown to reinforce its role as the cultural heart of the city. The art program should also encompass street elements such as manhole covers, paving design, custom bases for light fixtures, bus shelters, and bike racks.
- Reevaluate the use of curbed street tree boxes and thoroughly access the benefits of flush tree grates, especially on sidewalks with widths less than 12 to 14 feet.
- Expand the downtown’s wayfinding system.
 - Continue to refine the downtown’s sign program, providing visitors with clear information and direction through the use of signs with consistent design characteristics unique to downtown Morgantown. The wayfinding system should encompass welcome, directional, identification, information, and regulation signs, with attention to the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Signs should be integrated with landscaping and architecture whenever possible, and sign color should be readable during all seasons.



6.0 Downtown Strategies

- Some of downtown Morgantown’s existing signage is obscured or placed with too many other signs to be easily readable. This is a particular problem along University Avenue, as this is the main route along which people unfamiliar with downtown Morgantown are likely to enter the downtown.
- Areas characterized as “New Mixed-Use Development” in Figure 22 will offer retail/commercial on the ground floor and either office or residential on the upper floors.

Building Height

Minimum building height of two (2) stories and maximum of six (6) stories.

Setbacks Considerations:

As described in the B-4 zoning district.

Parking and Access

As described in the B-4 zoning district with the addition of the City offering an option for reduced required parking amounts for downtown residential developers as described under Transportation Section 6.4.2.

Building Placement

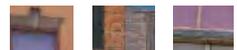
- Buildings should be oriented toward streets and open spaces along an established “build to line” so that an urban edge is created with the buildings.
- Buildings should also exhibit continuity in the design of their facades and consistency in building style and materials.
- Buildings that front streets and open spaces should have a well designed and scaled first floor with human scaled elements, doors, windows, and stoops.
- Buildings should consider pedestrian scaled rhythms along the street and open space network and provide architectural breaks or interest every 30 - 50 feet of horizontal distance.

Materials

Materials should conform to the existing B-4 standards and be consistent with the materials chosen for the existing historic buildings within the “Downtown Core Character Area”. Materials, methods, treatment, and type for private projects should adhere to the Design Guidelines found under Section N of the Main Street Morgantown Urban Design Document. Materials, methods, treatments, and types for public projects should adhere to Main Street Morgantown’s Design Guidelines for Public Projects found in Sections II to V. Select materials and finishes for proposed new buildings that are compatible with historic materials and finishes found in the surrounding buildings that contribute to the special character of the historic district in terms of composition, scale, module, pattern, detail, texture, finish, color, and sheen.

Colors Palette

Warm and earth-toned colors will be encouraged predominantly. Brighter colors will be allowed but in limited accent areas.



6.0 Downtown Strategies

Architectural Style

Encourage an architectural reference for the “Downtown Core Character Area” that draws its inspiration from the historical architecture that is part of this “Character Area” as described within the Main Street Morgantown Urban and Public Projects Design Guidelines. Existing building renovations, rehabilitations, and adaptive reuses should follow the Main Street Morgantown Urban and Public Projects Design Guidelines.



Inspirational imagery depicting an alleyway with soft lighting and numerous window boxes and planters.



Inspirational imagery depicting a space saving option for an urban tree grate.