



'Old Main Corridor' 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 meetings with local business owners, property owners, residents, Marshall University and the City of Huntington. These ideas were developed as a plan to connect Marshall University's campus to Huntington's Downtown while creating a livable, attractive destination point along Fourth Avenue.

❖ Development

- The theme for development in the area is creating a vibrant urban street with a 24-7 live/work/play environment. Providing affordable housing and commercial space will encourage students, young professionals, small businesses, artists and empty nesters to relocate to the area.
- Residential lofts and studio spaces can be developed in the upper levels of existing structures. Ideally these would have a secure entry vestibule, balconies and dedicated parking. Roof gardens or decks could be offered as an amenity as well.
- The availability of affordable, well designed office space would foster entrepreneurship by allowing access to quality space at a reasonable price.
- Varied retail development on the ground level will enliven the streetscape.
- Vacant spaces should be easily identified in order to encourage development. Butcher paper in the windows can be used to achieve this. The paper could be printed with the text "This space is not empty – it is filled with opportunity!" Also, business signs should be removed once the business has closed.
- Pedestrian friendly, universally accessible design is desired.
- It was determined that many sites and buildings within the area are vacant, abandoned, or currently underutilized. There is a great potential for development in the area.
- Many of the existing buildings are historic structures. This character should be maintained during development. New structures should be responsive to the historic structures in character, materials and scale in order to create a sense of identity for the community.
- By locating more of their ancillary programs in buildings along the Corridor, Marshall could invest in the area. For example, studio space for art students could be located in a renovated space.
- A neighborhood/business owners association could use dues to jointly fund projects such as a neighborhood watch, cleanup, security, landscape maintenance, etc.
- The idea of a visitor's center was suggested. This could serve as a joint venture between Marshall and the City. The center could offer maps and tourist information, serve as a base for walking tours and could also serve as a historical museum and gallery for local and student art.

❖ Parking

- By converting the large right of ways on existing side streets into angled parking, a large number of parking spaces can be added into the area.
- By taking advantage of the idea of 'shared parking', spaces could be short term metered spaces available for businesses during the day, and then serve parking as for residents, shops, restaurants, etc. in the evening.
- Buildings should be located at the front of a site with parking should be located at the rear. This encourages pedestrian access while still accommodating vehicles.
- Current parking lots should be brought up to date with the City Zoning Ordinance.
- A parking garage is needed in the area.



**“Old Main Corridor Project”
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❖ **Transportation**

- The bus depot serves as a significant historical structure as well as the key element of a transportation hub. Not only does it serve as a base for TTA buses, but also for longer distance travel through the Greyhound Station.
- A trolley running up and down Fourth Avenue would provide a transportation option for students, residents and visitors, as well as providing a tourism draw for the area. This feature would serve to provide an important sense of identity for the area in addition to its functional aspect.
- The bike lane offers a form of transportation which uses no gas and offers the opportunity for exercise. TTA is investigating installing bike racks on the front of their buses to allow bikers to also utilize the bus system.

❖ **Security**

- One of the major concerns expressed by stakeholders is the issue of security. Several suggestions were made to improve safety in the area.
- Consistent lighting levels are needed at the street, sidewalks, parking areas, side streets and in the alleys.
- Security cameras monitored over an open access site on the internet would allow private citizens to monitor areas as well as law enforcement.
- An increased police presence in the area either in cars, on foot, through the use of a police kiosk or through other means would address the sense of safety, particularly after dark.
- Emergency call stations tied into the University’s system would provide an additional layer of security for Marshall students.

❖ **Streetscape**

- Utilizing the built environment to create a sense of identity for the community can be accomplished through gateway structures that indicate entry. 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 bound by Marshall and the Downtown.
- Open air dining, cafes and sidewalk sales should be encouraged in order to enliven the street and encourage pedestrians.
- Archways at regular intervals along the street will serve to bring the scale of the street down to the human scale, offer opportunities for banners, serve as supplementary lighting and unify the area.
- Bike racks are needed at regular intervals to allow secure bike storage.
- Tree grates and manhole covers offer an excellent opportunity for design. These can be customized to contribute to the community identity.
- The consistent use of awnings on building fronts will provide shade and an escape from rain for pedestrians on the sidewalks, reduce heat gain through storefronts, and help to bring the scale of the street down to the human scale. These also provide an opportunity for signage for businesses.
- Street lighting should be energy efficient. Pole fixtures should be a cutoff type which will not disturb the upper level residential development. Accent lighting such as up lights in the ground plane and lighting on building facades helps to illuminate architectural features.
- The City Zoning Ordinance could be revised to include maximum setbacks and minimum building heights within the Central Business District. This would ensure that the architectural integrity of the District is maintained and property values are protected. Design guidelines could be included to indicate appropriate building forms, signage, building materials, etc.
- A brick and iron screen wall between parking lots, empty lots and the sidewalk will help to define the street edge, screen off unsightly views and contribute to a sense of security for pedestrians. Carrying this design throughout the district would also contribute to the sense of identity for the area and help to tie the area in with Marshall’s campus.