



CULPEPER VIRGINIA

SMALL AREA PLAN

October 2025

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INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction and Background

The Culpeper Small Area Plan was initiated through Virginia Main Street's SmArP (Small Area Plan) program, a competitive grant opportunity offered to select Main Street communities across the commonwealth. Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. (CRI) secured this grant to focus planning efforts on a targeted portion of the downtown district.

From the outset, the state authorized CRI to extend the study area beyond the traditional Main Street boundaries to include Heritage Park and its connection to the historic core through the new pedestrian bridge. This adjustment reflected the importance of considering the Farmers' Market relocation, the emerging role of Heritage Park as a public amenity, and the integration of surrounding areas such as Wausau Place, Commerce Street, and the Fishtown district along Culpeper Street. The Parks & Greenways Master Plan underscores this direction, noting "Heritage Park should evolve as a downtown gateway and civic destination, with trail and park linkages that enhance connectivity to surrounding districts."

The planning team was led by Arnett Muldrow & Associates in partnership with Mahan Rykiel Associates along with Community Design Solutions. A steering committee has guided the effort comprised of CRI, town officials, and a cross-section of stakeholders. Since March 2024, the process has advanced through an iterative cycle of site tours, roundtable discussions, and feedback sessions. Each step has refined the direction of the plan, positioning Culpeper to move from vision to implementation as the project reaches its conclusion in September 2025. This approach is consistent with the Strategic Vision Plan, which calls for "a downtown planning framework that blends community input with phased implementation strategies, reinforcing Culpeper's identity as a vibrant Main Street community."



Summary of Input

A key component of the planning process was a site reconnaissance visit, and a series of roundtable meetings held in March 2024, which brought together farmers' market representatives, property and business owners, town officials, CRI board members, and community stakeholders. These sessions, coupled with the site tour, yielded a clear set of observations that shaped the framework of the plan. The Strategic Vision Plan emphasizes the same approach, stating that "community-led planning is the foundation of Culpeper's success, and sustained stakeholder engagement ensures that implementation reflects local priorities."

- **Connectivity and Public Realm.** Stakeholders emphasized closing sidewalk gaps, improving crossings, and enhancing lighting to strengthen links between the station area and downtown. Commerce and Wausau Streets were repeatedly identified as key connectors. The SS4A Plan highlights this priority: "critical pedestrian corridors between downtown and adjacent districts must be redesigned with safe crossings, ADA compliance, and consistent lighting."
- **Private Investment and Building Readiness.** Concerns emerged over rising rents, vacant upper floors, and deferred maintenance. Stakeholders underscored the need for building readiness programs, façade improvements, and support for small-scale rehabilitation. This echoes the Strategic Vision Plan call to "support adaptive reuse, upper-story activation, and programs that expand the readiness of downtown's building stock for investment."
- **Heritage Park and the Farmers' Market.** Participants affirmed the Farmers' Market as a beloved institution that should retain its open and flexible character. Heritage Park was seen as an amenity that could be the future home of the Farmers' Market. While plans were already underway for the park, this plan sought to address phased improvements beyond the initial plan, ranging from shaded paths to performance or

gathering spaces, along with exploration of the position and design of a future Farmers' Market. The Parks & Greenways Master Plan reinforces this vision: "Heritage Park should host flexible spaces for markets, festivals, and civic gatherings, adaptable to both weekly use and regional events."

- **Wausau Place.** Wausau Place was identified as a portion of downtown in transition, where traditional agricultural uses are yielding to the potential expansion of downtown's commercial, dining, and residential footprint.
- **Creative Placemaking.** East Street and Culpeper Street were highlighted as a natural hub for arts and entertainment. Stakeholders envisioned murals, lighting, branding, and alley activations that build on the historic "Fishtown" identity of the area. This aligns with the Historic District Handbook, which encourages "the creative adaptation of secondary streets and alleys for public art, cultural activation, and entertainment uses that reinforce the historic downtown core."
- **Quick Wins.** There was a strong call for visible early actions, such as temporary lighting, alley activations, and an East Street event, to sustain momentum and build public confidence.
- **Long-Term Vision.** While quick wins are key to success, the plan also contemplates short-, medium-, and long-term improvements and investments that could impact the future growth and success of downtown Culpeper. The Strategic Vision Plan reinforces this principle: "short-term tactical projects should be matched with long-term capital planning, ensuring that today's energy is translated into enduring investments."

These early conversations not only shaped the direction of the Small Area Plan but also reinforced the community's commitment to balancing immediate, tactical improvements with long-term strategic investments.

Opportunities & Challenges - Existing Conditions

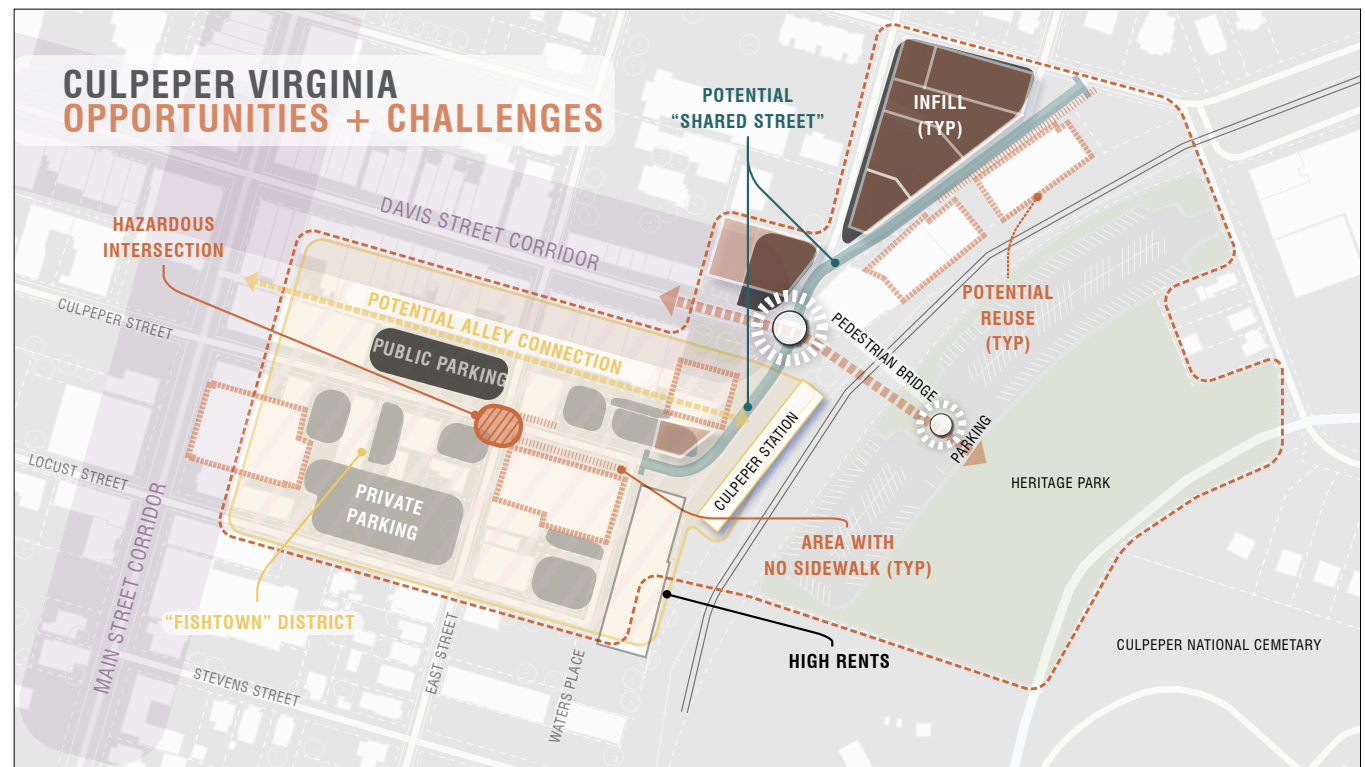
The Opportunities and Challenges map highlights the layered conditions shaping the eastern edge of downtown Culpeper. The area contains a patchwork of public and private parking lots, which serve downtown but create fragmented circulation patterns. Several parcels are identified as candidates for infill or adaptive reuse, reflecting underutilized properties with potential to contribute more fully to the district. The Strategic Vision Plan frames this issue directly: “redevelopment of underutilized properties should be encouraged in a manner that strengthens the core and provides opportunities for small businesses.”

- **Pedestrian Infrastructure.** Sidewalks are inconsistent, with multiple blocks lacking continuous pedestrian connections. Crossings near the station include a hazardous intersection that impedes safe access. These gaps limit connectivity between the historic core, Culpeper Station, and the planned pedestrian bridge. The SS4A Plan identifies this corridor as a priority, noting that “eliminating gaps in the pedestrian system, especially between transit facilities and downtown destinations, is critical to safety and accessibility.”
- **Market Conditions.** Certain blocks face high rents, which put pressure on small businesses and contribute to vacancies in otherwise strong locations. At the same time, the Fishtown district along Culpeper Street is recognized as a place with distinctive identity, yet challenged by auto orientation and incomplete pedestrian facilities. The Historic District Handbook reinforces this, stating

that “secondary commercial corridors within the district should be enhanced with pedestrian improvements and façade upgrades to ensure their long-term vitality.”

- **Heritage Park Edge.** Finally, several opportunity sites are clustered near Heritage Park, positioning the park as an important edge condition for the downtown fabric. The Parks & Greenways Master Plan emphasizes this potential: “park edges adjacent to downtown should be designed as transition zones that knit together recreation and commerce.”

Taken together, these existing conditions illustrate the dual nature of the study area: a district with authentic assets and a clear sense of place, but also with visible barriers to access, affordability, and reuse that must be addressed in future planning.



Opportunities and Challenges in the Study Area

2

DOWNTOWN CULPEPER CHARACTER AREAS



2. DOWNTOWN CULPEPER CHARACTER AREAS

This diagram establishes the framework of distinct yet interconnected character areas within the study boundary. Davis Street functions as the community's front door and image corridor, shaping the first impression for visitors and reinforcing Culpeper's identity as a vibrant Main Street town. The Strategic Vision Plan emphasizes this role, calling Davis Street "the showcase of downtown's vitality and the benchmark for design quality."

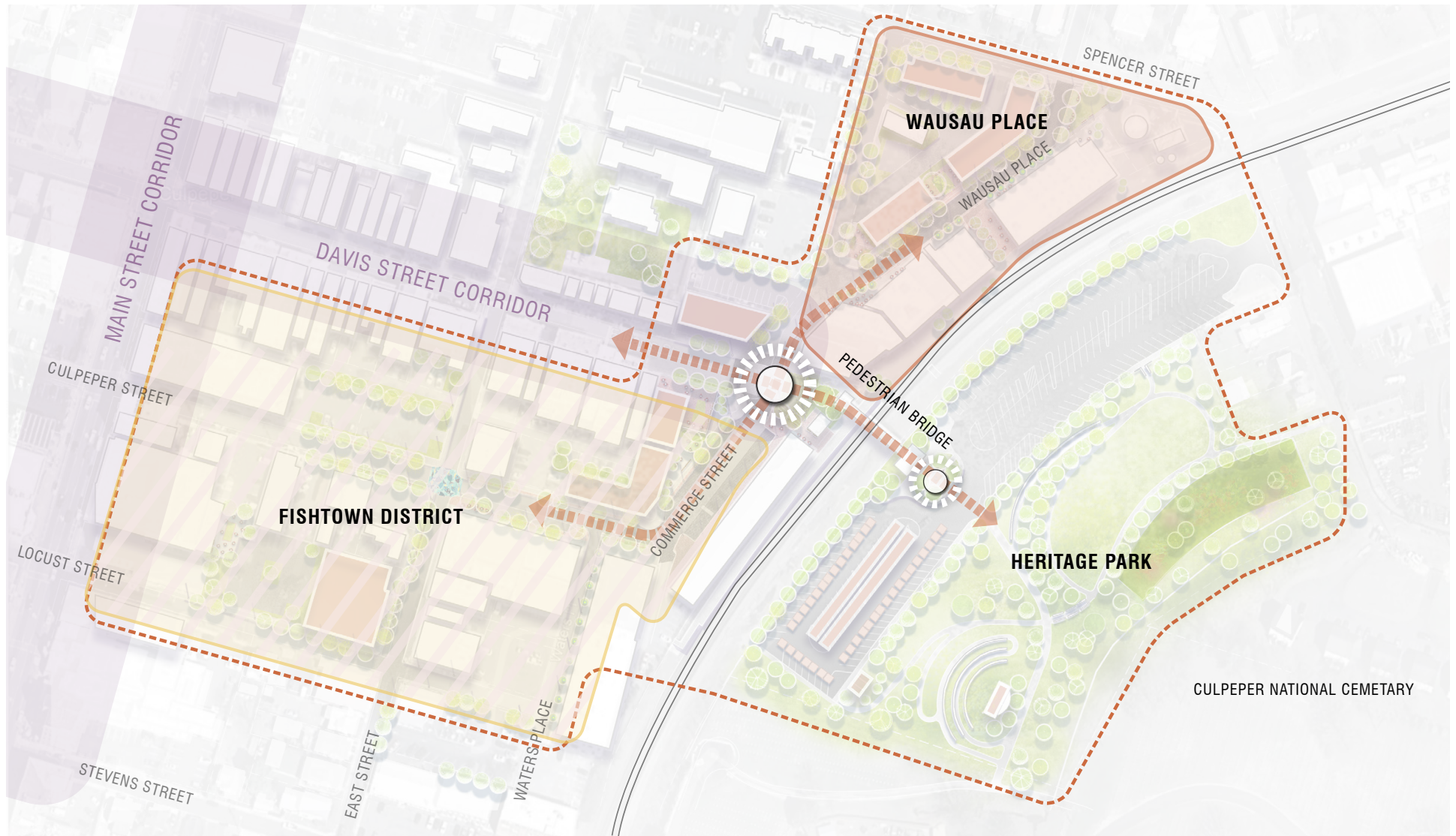
Beyond Davis, the plan identifies three complementary districts:

- **Fishtown District.** Centered on Culpeper Street, this area retains a strong sense of place rooted in its working-class history. Today it is poised for reinvestment as a walkable corridor with opportunities for small business growth and creative placemaking. The Historic District Handbook supports this direction, noting "historic secondary corridors provide unique opportunities for adaptive reuse and cultural programming that complement Main Street rather than replicate it."
- **Wausau Place.** A cluster of warehouse and light industrial buildings north of the station. These structures provide both challenges and opportunities, with potential to adaptively

reuse them into a mixed-use edge district that better connects Spencer Street to the core. The Strategic Vision Plan identifies this approach as essential: "underutilized industrial parcels should be repositioned as mixed-use districts that extend downtown's footprint and provide new economic space."

- **Heritage Park.** An emerging civic green that frames views to the National Cemetery and will anchor the eastern approach to downtown. The park's planned integration with the pedestrian bridge and the Farmers' Market positions it as both a neighborhood amenity and a regional draw. The Parks & Greenways Master Plan reinforces this, stating "Heritage Park should become a central node in the greenway network and a civic anchor for downtown."

Together, these districts show that Culpeper's downtown is not monolithic but a mosaic of character zones. Each contributes differently whether through commerce, culture, or civic identity. Each will require tailored strategies to maximize its role within the larger Small Area Plan.



Downtown Culpeper Character Areas

3

DOWNTOWN CULPEPER ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN



3. ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

The illustrative master plan organizes the small area as a connected district linking Culpeper Station, the planned pedestrian bridge, and Heritage Park with the traditional downtown blocks. It diagrams how the rail edge and cemetery frontage relate to Davis, Main, Culpeper, Commerce, Wausau, East, Locust, Spencer, and Waters Place, creating a coherent pedestrian network that ties the station landing and park back into the core.

Framework and Sub-Areas

Within this structure, distinct sub-areas take shape. Fishtown along Culpeper Street is reinforced as a character corridor. Wausau Place is envisioned as a warehouse-edge district that can evolve toward mixed-use activity. Heritage Park anchors the eastern side of downtown, paired with a future Farmers' Market to create a civic green at the bridge landing. A gateway point marks the transition from station to downtown, while the cemetery edge is treated as a defining landscape that frames views and orientation.

Infill and Redevelopment Opportunities

The plan identifies several opportunity sites for new development, highlighted in red. These include near-term infill along Davis and Commerce Streets, as well as longer-term possibilities such as the post office property, which may be repositioned as postal facilities consolidate nationally. The Strategic Vision Plan notes that “strategic infill and adaptive reuse should occur incrementally, completing block faces and reinforcing existing street patterns.”

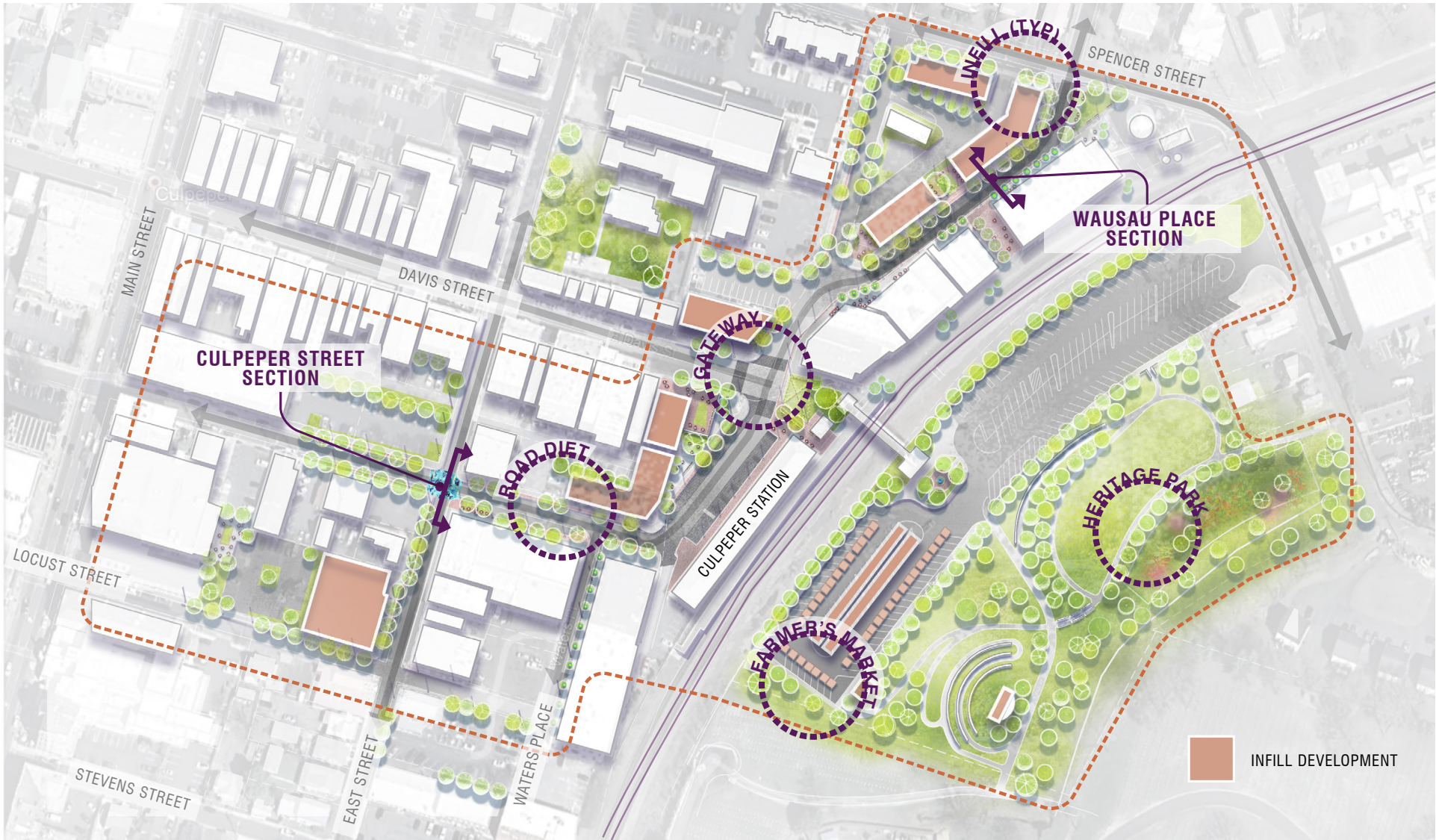
Public Realm Improvements

A set of public realm upgrades supports this framework. A targeted road diet calms traffic and reallocates space for pedestrians, while new cross-sections for Culpeper Street and Wausau Place demonstrate how walkability, shade, and frontage quality can be improved. The SS4A Master Plan reinforces this strategy, highlighting the need for “street reconfigurations that balance traffic movement with pedestrian safety and downtown vibrancy.”

Flexibility and Market Responsiveness

The plan introduces ideas such as a potential boutique hotel site without prescribing fixed locations. This reflects the need to remain responsive to market conditions, while ensuring that future projects address the street, preserve key views, and incorporate structured or shared parking where feasible. The Parks & Greenways Master Plan frames this broader philosophy: “downtown public spaces should be designed for flexibility, accommodating evolving uses while maintaining their civic function.”

Together, these elements describe a district that grows by completing its streets and edges, layering new activity onto existing assets, and knitting the station, bridge, and Heritage Park into everyday downtown life.



Downtown Culpeper Illustrative Master Plan

4

HERITAGE PARK



4. HERITAGE PARK

Heritage Park Overview

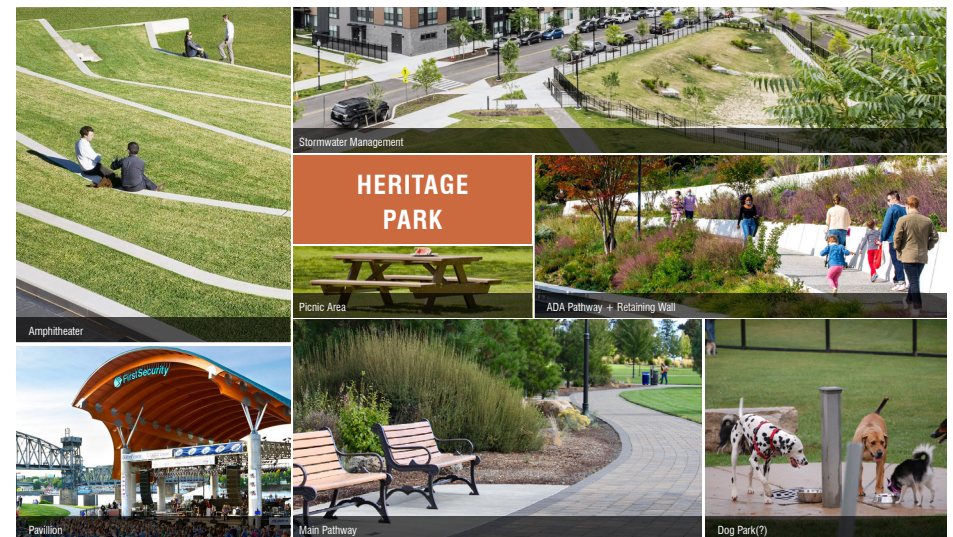
Heritage Park represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to expand downtown’s civic space and tie it directly to Culpeper Station and the new pedestrian bridge. The plan builds on the amphitheater grading already in place, layering in a pathway network that improves access and creates a fully integrated park.

- **Accessibility and Circulation.** The design anticipates ADA-compliant movement throughout the site. Switchbacks are proposed on steeper slopes to provide access between the amphitheater and the open lawn, while steps connect directly to the seating bowl. An accessible path links the trolley stop to the lawn, and a future ADA connection from Spencer Street is identified for longer-term improvement. The SS4A Master Plan emphasizes this need for universal access, calling for “complete accessibility across all park and civic facilities, ensuring every resident can participate fully in downtown life.”
- **Edges and Connections.** The plan acknowledges that future redevelopment along Spencer Street could one day frame the park with housing, such as townhouses or stacked flats, similar to other peer communities. Such a shift would require new sidewalks and frontage improvements, reinforcing the principle that downtown parks should be integrated into the surrounding street grid. The Parks & Greenways Master Plan points to this outcome, stating that “greenways and parks should be treated as catalysts for adjacent redevelopment, shaping the character of surrounding blocks.”
- **Comfort and Amenities.** The fountain at the pedestrian bridge landing has become a valued feature but sits in an exposed location. Adding shade trees in the planter beds would create a more comfortable gathering place. Within the park, improvements such as stormwater features, benches, dog facilities, and a flexible pavilion are envisioned. If constructed, any pavilion should be multipurpose—serving concerts, markets, and civic events—rather than single-use.

The Strategic Vision Plan calls for exactly this, noting “public investments should prioritize flexibility, allowing civic spaces to host daily use, festivals, and unforeseen future needs.”

- **Regional Examples.** Communities such as Mooresville, North Carolina, demonstrate how downtown-adjacent amphitheaters can serve as catalysts for activity, paired with meeting facilities and civic gathering spaces. Heritage Park is positioned to achieve a similar outcome for Culpeper.
- **Farmers’ Market Integration.** The Farmers’ Market already plays a vital role as a community gathering point. During opening weekends, visitors filled picnic tables, enjoyed music, and created an atmosphere that reinforced the market’s role as both a social and economic engine. As the Market transitions into Heritage Park, shade and comfort will be critical to sustaining its popularity during the heat of summer.

In short, Heritage Park is not just another green space. It is a civic anchor linking recreation, culture, commerce, and community identity, designed to adapt across generations while reinforcing Culpeper’s role as a regional destination.





Heritage Park Overview

Farmers' Market Options

A major component of the Heritage Park framework is the relocation and enhancement of the Culpeper Farmers' Market. The Market is both a beloved tradition and a civic anchor, and its future design must provide flexibility for vendors, comfort for visitors, and adaptability for community events. Multiple layout options were studied, with one preferred direction emerging.



CULPEPER DOWNTOWN
FARMER'S MARKET



Farmers' Market Preferred Option A : Central Shed

The recommended configuration places a permanent shed structure over the center parking bays, aligned with existing stalls. Posts are located between parking spaces to minimize conflicts, while vendors along the perimeter maintain truck access. Stalls under the central shed provide a pedestrian-only experience, allowing shoppers to circulate freely without vehicle conflicts. Picnic tables take advantage of existing shade trees in the southwest corner, and a new restroom/storage building is strategically located between the Market, amphitheater, and play

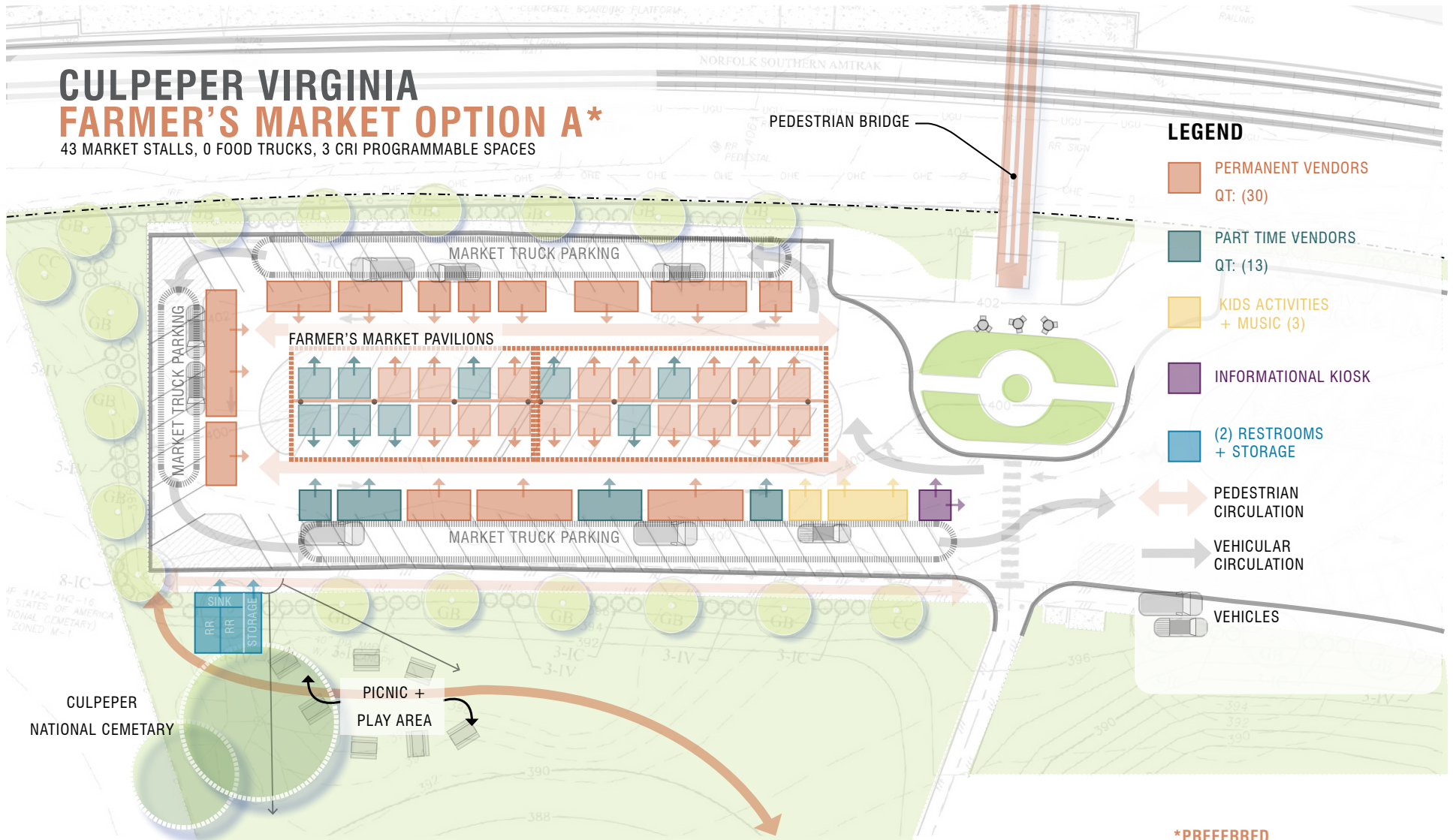
area. This multipurpose facility is envisioned to include restrooms, sinks, and storage, supporting both weekly Market operations and larger downtown events. The design of the shed draws inspiration from historic rail-side structures, consistent with the town's context, while also accommodating solar panels on roof planes less visible from the historic district. The Parks & Greenways Master Plan reinforces this direction, calling for "market facilities that are permanent, flexible, and integrated into the civic green network."



Section View of Farmers' Market Option A

CULPEPER VIRGINIA FARMER'S MARKET OPTION A*

43 MARKET STALLS, 0 FOOD TRUCKS, 3 CRI PROGRAMMABLE SPACES



***PREFERRED**

Plan View of Farmers' Market Option A

Farmers' Market Option A.1 Variation

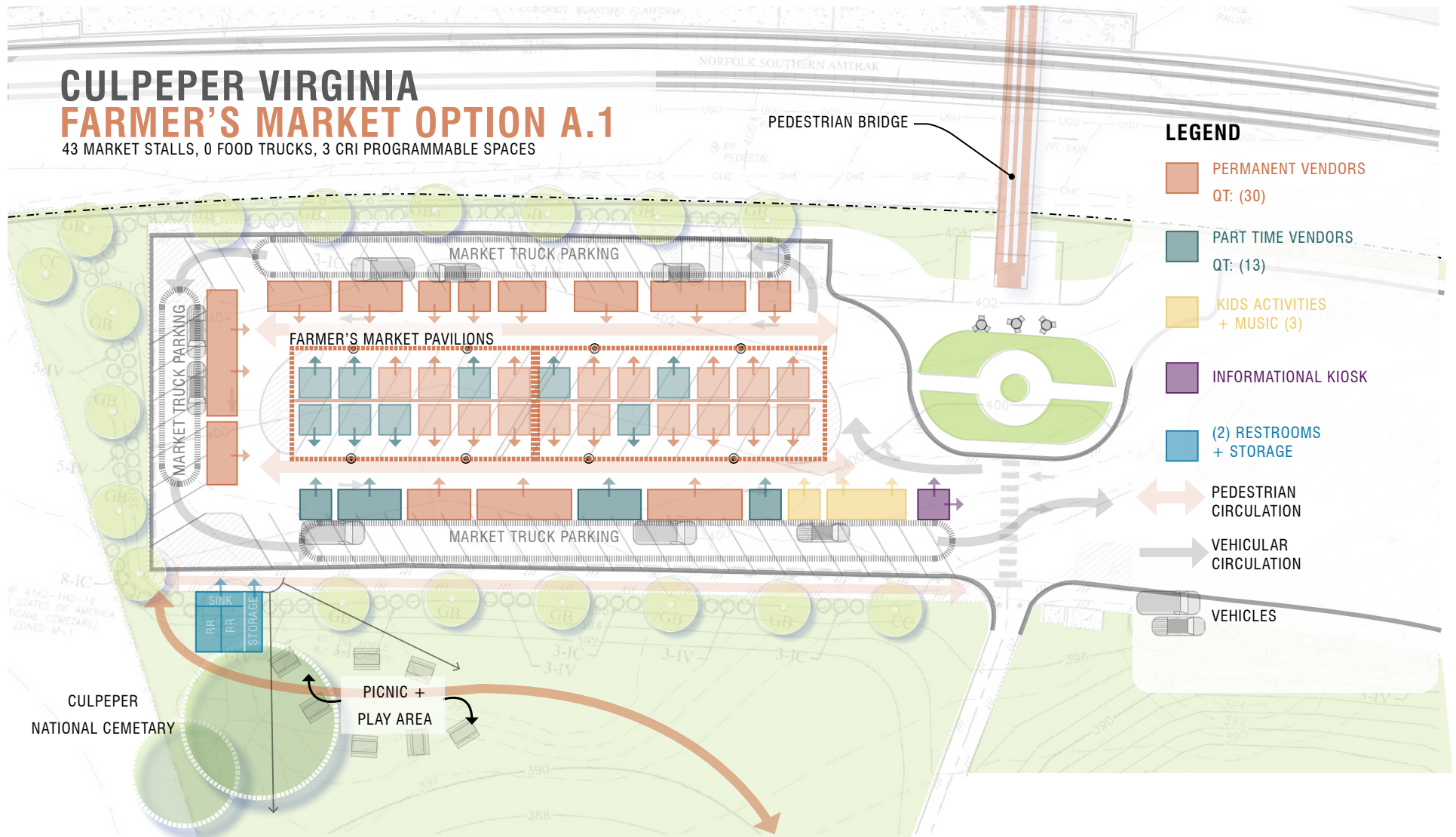
A minor variation of the preferred layout shifts circulation slightly but maintains the central shed concept. This option provides similar benefits and may offer flexibility during detailed design.



Section View of Farmers' Market Option A.1 Variation

CULPEPER VIRGINIA FARMER'S MARKET OPTION A.1

43 MARKET STALLS, 0 FOOD TRUCKS, 3 CRI PROGRAMMABLE SPACES



LEGEND

- PERMANENT VENDORS
QT: (30)
- PART TIME VENDORS
QT: (13)
- KIDS ACTIVITIES
+ MUSIC (3)
- INFORMATIONAL KIOSK
- (2) RESTROOMS
+ STORAGE
- PEDESTRIAN
CIRCULATION
- VEHICULAR
CIRCULATION
- VEHICLES

Plan View of Farmers' Market Option A.1 Variation

Farmers' Market Alternative Option B - Inward-Facing Layout

Option B experiments with reversing truck and stall locations, placing vendor trucks in the center and facing stalls inward under the shed. Perimeter stalls would face outward to the sidewalks. While feasible, this layout was found less dynamic because vendors

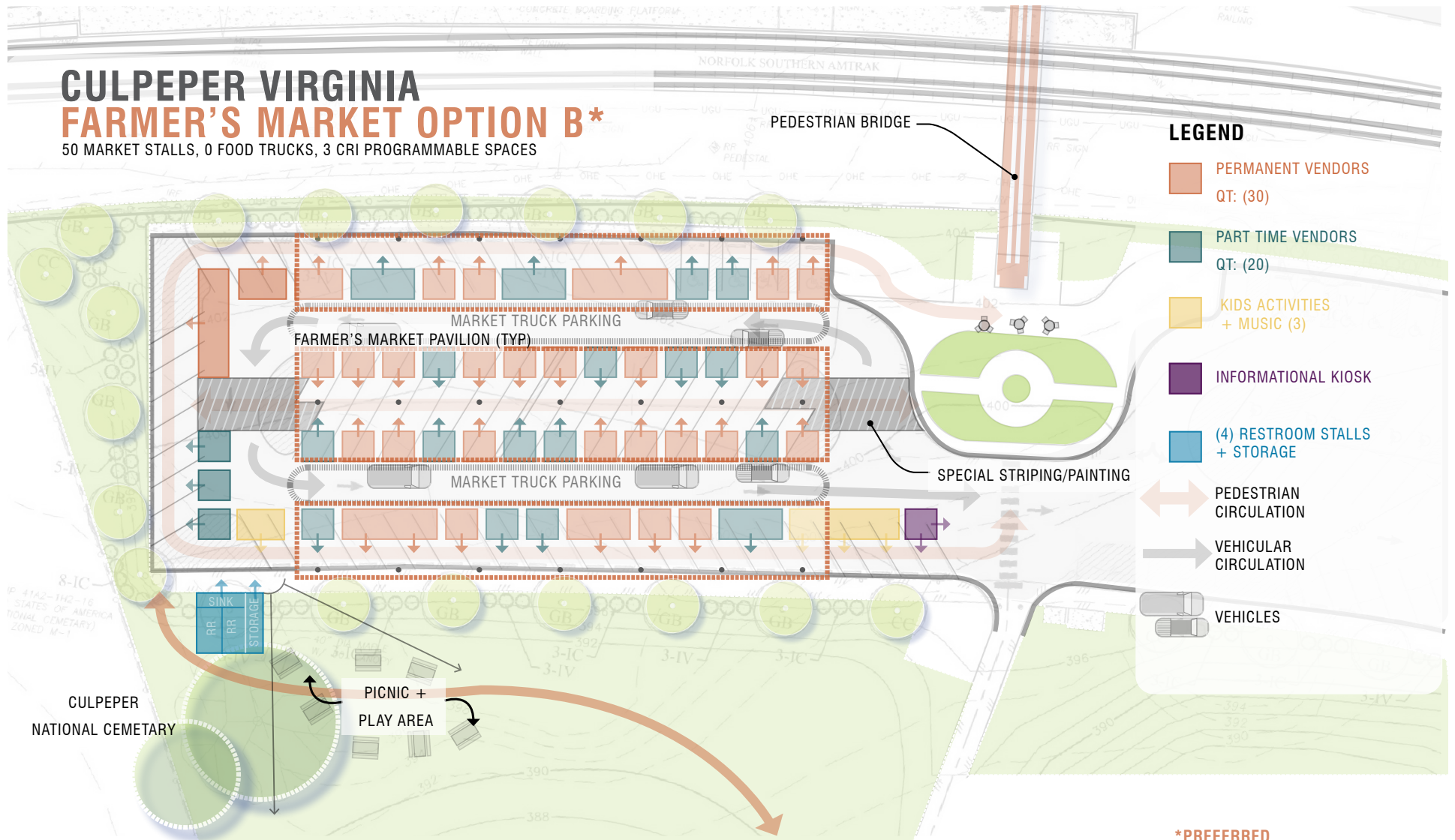
do not face each other, and the central truck loop complicates circulation. Still, the configuration demonstrates flexibility and could be piloted in special event layouts.



Section View of Farmers' Market Alternative Option B - Inward-Facing Layout

CULPEPER VIRGINIA FARMER'S MARKET OPTION B*

50 MARKET STALLS, 0 FOOD TRUCKS, 3 CRI PROGRAMMABLE SPACES



Plan View of Farmers' Market Alternative Option B - Inward-Facing Layout

Options Set Aside

Additional layouts, including variations with food truck integration (Options B.1 and C), were determined less practical. These are documented in the appendix for reference but are not recommended for further consideration in the core plan.

Architectural Precedents

Several shed types were examined to illustrate the range of possibilities, from simple post-and-beam structures to more elaborate pavilion forms. Ultimately, the design intent is a shed that is compatible with downtown's character, functional for market operations, and adaptable for year-round use. The Historic District Handbook notes that "new structures within the district should be compatible in scale and materials, yet distinguishable as contemporary additions." This principle guides the eventual design of the Farmers' Market shelter.

Supporting Infrastructure

Stakeholders consistently emphasized the importance of shade, comfort, and amenities. An aggressive tree planting program is recommended, both to frame spaces and to provide long-term canopy cover. Restrooms should be designed as multi-use facilities with sinks and storage, serving not only the Market but



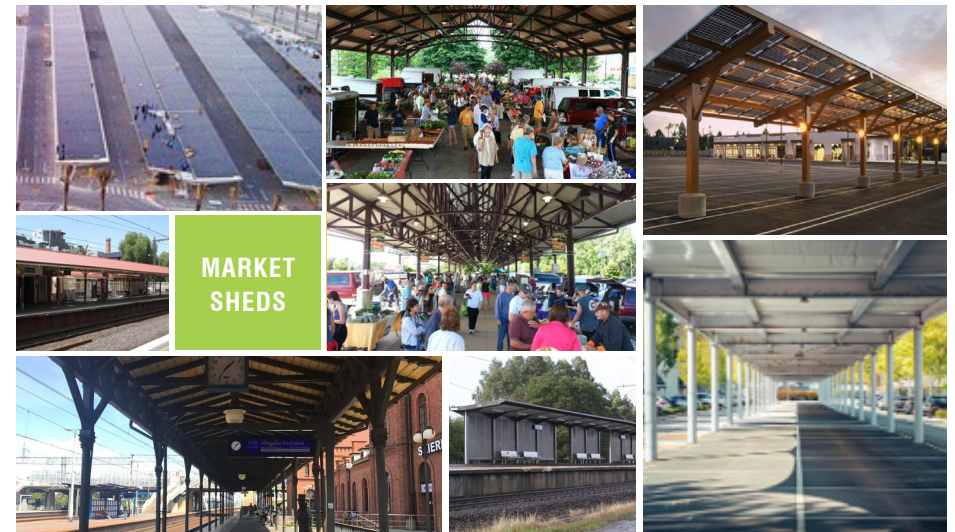
also amphitheater events, July 4th celebrations, and other civic gatherings. The SS4A Plan reinforces this perspective, highlighting the need for "amenities that make civic spaces safe and attractive in all conditions, including lighting, shade, and accessible facilities."

Funding Opportunities

Several funding sources could support the Market relocation and enhancements, including utility or renewable energy grants for solar-equipped sheds and urban forestry funding for large-scale tree planting. These strategies would reinforce the Market's role as both a local institution and a forward-looking civic investment.

Shade and Comfort

Finally, the importance of comfort cannot be overstated. The Market's success depends not only on vendor participation but on visitor experience. As one stakeholder noted, summer events at the current location are often unbearable due to lack of shade. A permanent shed, expanded canopy trees, and shaded seating will ensure that the Market remains a lively gathering place even during the hottest days of the year. The Strategic Vision Plan captures this priority, stating that "public space investments must create comfortable environments that encourage people to linger, connect, and return."



5

WAUSAU PLACE



5. WAUSAU PLACE

Wausau Place Overview

Wausau Place is a warehouse-edge corridor that today functions primarily as an auto-oriented service street. Its location adjacent to Culpeper Station and Commerce Street positions it as a prime candidate for adaptive reuse and incremental infill. The illustrative cross-section shows how modest but strategic interventions can transform the corridor into a more walkable and economically vibrant environment.

Street Design

The existing condition features wide lanes and minimal pedestrian space, creating a hazardous edge despite its proximity to downtown. The proposed cross-section narrows travel lanes from 12 to 11 feet, introduces street trees, and reallocates space to provide sidewalks along the warehouse frontage. This “road diet” approach both calms traffic and creates a safer, more attractive setting for new uses. The SS4A Plan calls for this exact approach, stating that “lane narrowing, intersection redesign, and pedestrian improvements should be prioritized in corridors connecting downtown to adjacent districts.”

Adaptive Reuse

The long warehouse buildings that line Wausau Place offer an opportunity for roll-up doors, outdoor patios, and casual dining or retail space—uses that benefit from the character of industrial structures while bringing new energy to the corridor. Renderings illustrate how these buildings could be rehabilitated with outdoor seating, decorative lighting, and murals, consistent with national trends of transforming rail-side and warehouse districts. The Historic District Handbook reinforces this direction, noting “industrial-era buildings should be adaptively reused in ways that highlight their character while ensuring compatibility with downtown’s historic core.”

Infill Development

On the opposite side of Wausau Place, new infill can be introduced to frame the street, without eliminating all existing parking. Structured or tuck-under parking solutions could preserve capacity while supporting development. The Strategic Vision Plan encourages this type of incremental growth: “downtown’s edge districts should evolve with infill that completes the street fabric, while preserving necessary access and parking for businesses.”

Street Functionality

Stakeholders debated whether Wausau Place should eventually be closed to traffic. The consensus reflected in this plan is to retain it as a two-way street while making it pedestrian-friendly. This approach ensures that businesses benefit from convenience and “eyes on the street,” while allowing the street to be closed temporarily during special events. The plan explicitly rejects converting Wausau Place to a permanent one-way pair, as one-way systems often increase traffic speeds and reduce visibility for retail. This reflects best practice research summarized in the SS4A Plan: “two-way streets provide greater safety for pedestrians and better economic visibility for businesses than one-way configurations.”

Visual Identity

The proposed renderings show continuity with Davis and Commerce Streets by extending decorative paving, lighting, and branding elements into Wausau Place. Murals on warehouse towers could serve as signature gateways, reinforcing the “Fishtown” identity of the broader district.

In short, Wausau Place is envisioned as a flexible edge district that balances adaptive reuse with targeted infill, transforming an auto-dominated corridor into a walkable, mixed-use extension of downtown.

WAUSAU PLACE DISTRICT EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED CONDITIONS



Wausau Place Existing Conditions and Proposed Conditions



Wausau Place Existing Conditions (Top Left) and Phased Implementation of Proposed Conditions (Top Right to Bottom Left to Bottom Right)

6

CULPEPER STREET & EAST STREET FACADES



6. CULPEPER STREET & EAST STREET FACADES

Culpeper Place Overview

Culpeper Street forms the heart of the historic Fishtown district, but today it reads as a gap in the street fabric. Missing sidewalks, wide auto-dominated lanes, and awkward parking arrangements make it a difficult and sometimes hazardous connection between East Street and Commerce Street. The Small Area Plan applies the same principle here as in Wausau Place: shift the balance toward pedestrians while respecting the corridor's historic and artistic identity.

Street Design and Safety

The proposed cross-section narrows lanes to 11 feet, introduces bump-outs for street trees and outdoor dining, and extends sidewalks into areas that currently lack safe passage. A four-way stop is recommended to address blind corners and eliminate speeding through intersections. The SS4A Plan identifies this corridor as a priority, urging "safety upgrades at high-conflict intersections, including four-way stops, crosswalk enhancements, and lane reallocation."

Partnerships and Easements

Much of the parking zone along Culpeper Street falls on private property. The plan outlines a potential public-private partnership in which the town could secure easements to improve sidewalks and facades, in exchange for providing façade assistance and long-term maintenance. This approach mirrors successful precedents in other Virginia Main Street communities. The Strategic Vision Plan underscores this model, calling for "collaborative partnerships with private owners to achieve improvements in façades, sidewalks, and public amenities."

Façade Improvements

The East Street corridor, in particular, contains modest commercial buildings that could be transformed with simple yet effective design upgrades. Before-and-after renderings illustrate the potential impact of improved windows, enhanced storefront detailing, and strengthened mid-century elements. The Historic District Handbook provides the guiding principle: "façade improvements should respect the original architectural style, enhance pedestrian scale, and use durable materials that complement the district."

Cultural Identity and Placemaking

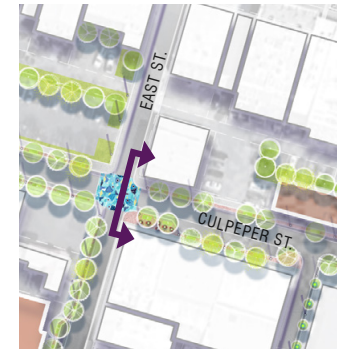
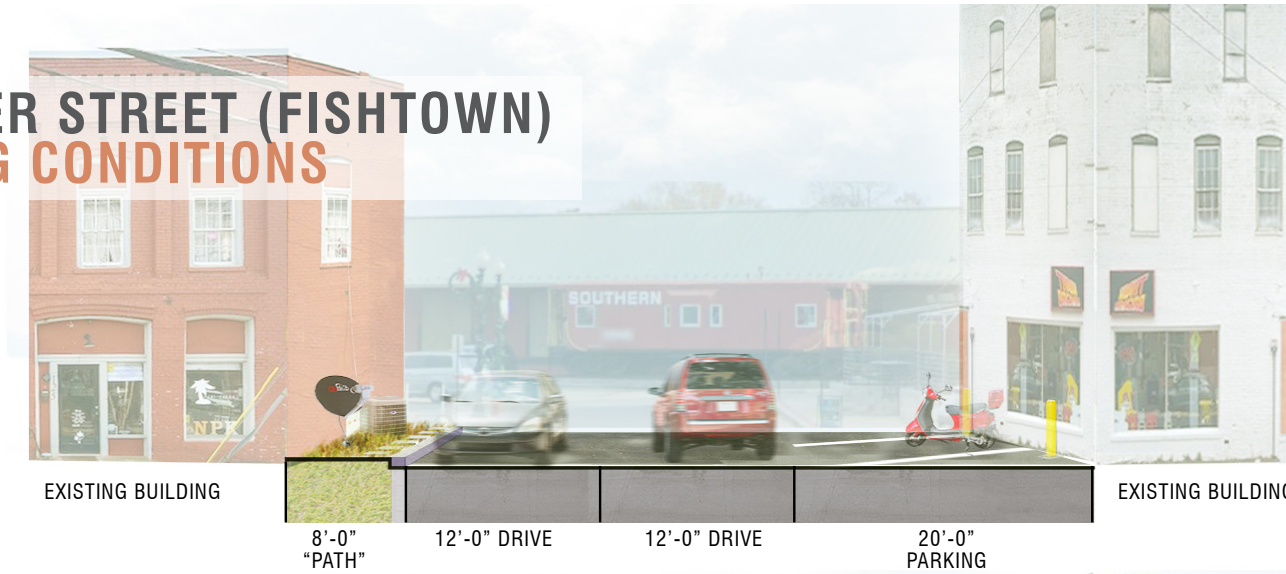
Culpeper Street and East Street also present opportunities to embrace Fishtown's arts and culture identity. Concepts include branded crosswalks, murals, and creative lighting, echoing successful models like Fishbone Alley in Gulfport, Mississippi. The Strategic Vision Plan speaks to this directly: "secondary corridors should serve as creative districts, where public art and placemaking distinguish them from Main Street while reinforcing downtown's identity."

Utilities and Visual Environment

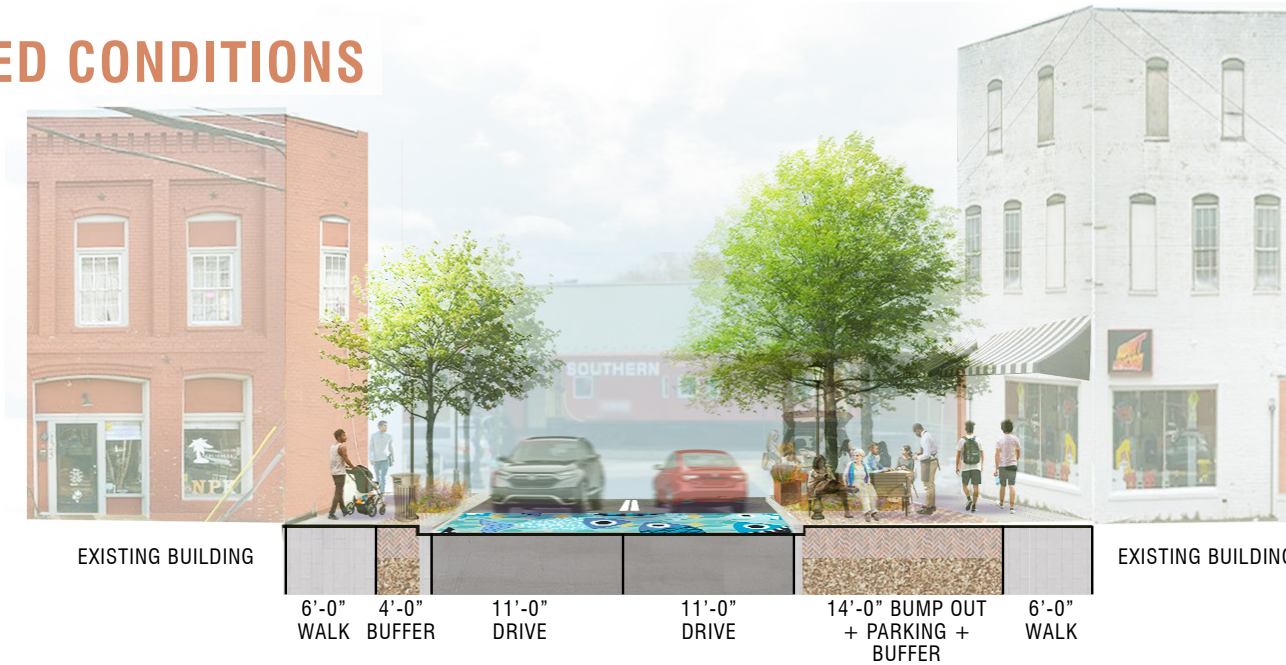
One long-term challenge is the presence of overhead utility lines. While complete burial may not be feasible in the near term, strategies such as monopoles or selective relocation could reduce visual clutter. The plan acknowledges that these improvements will require coordination with utility providers, similar to the efforts already undertaken on Davis Street.

By reframing Culpeper and East Streets as pedestrian-friendly, arts-oriented corridors with revitalized facades, the Small Area Plan ensures that downtown's edges complement Davis Street's formality while offering their own distinct identity.

CULPEPER STREET (FISHTOWN) EXISTING CONDITIONS



PROPOSED CONDITIONS



Culpeper Street (Fishtown) Existing Conditions and Proposed Conditions



Culpeper Street (Fishtown) Existing Conditions



Variations on Culpeper Street (Fishtown) Proposed Conditions



East Street Existing Conditions



East Street Proposed Conditions



IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING



7. IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

Implementation & Funding

The Culpeper Small Area Plan has been designed not only to articulate a vision but also to provide a roadmap for moving from concept to action. Implementation will require a blend of public leadership, private partnership, and external funding. This chapter organizes the plan's recommendations into thematic categories, identifies potential funding sources, and outlines phasing considerations to ensure that Culpeper Renaissance, Inc. (CRI), the Town of Culpeper, and community stakeholders can proceed strategically.

Farmers' Market and Heritage Park Improvements

The relocation and enhancement of the Culpeper Farmers' Market within Heritage Park represents the single largest investment contemplated in this plan. The Farmers' Market should be established on publicly owned land, with CRI or a designated nonprofit continuing to serve as operator. This framework is essential to unlock outside funding. As the Parks and Greenways Master Plan emphasized, "public ownership ensures long-term stewardship and eligibility for state and federal programs."

Key elements include:

- Construction of a central market shed designed to complement the railroad context.
- Installation of restrooms with integrated storage and wash facilities to serve both vendors and amphitheater events.
- Aggressive shade tree planting and stormwater features that qualify for urban forestry and green infrastructure funding.

Funding pathways:

- USDA Community Facilities grants/loans (for public restrooms, sheds, and utilities).
- USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Farmers' Market Promotion Program for vendor and market enhancements.

- Virginia DHCD Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for multipurpose public structures.
- Urban and Community Forestry grants (Virginia Department of Forestry).
- Potential utility incentives or federal energy grants to support solar panels on sheds.

Wausau Place Corridor

Wausau Place is envisioned as a transitional warehouse-edge district that balances vehicular circulation with pedestrian priority. Recommended interventions include narrowing existing lanes from 12 feet to 11 feet, introducing tree planters, and enhancing pedestrian space along reactivated warehouse frontages.

Renderings prepared for this plan illustrate how limited interventions such as street trees, decorative lighting, and modest infill can reframe the district's character. As the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Plan notes, "lane narrowing and pedestrian scale amenities can reduce speeds while creating safer access for all users."

Funding pathways:

- Transportation Alternatives (TA) set-aside for pedestrian improvements.
- Revenue Sharing Program (VDOT) for cost-sharing roadway modifications.
- DHCD Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) for adaptive reuse of warehouse structures.
- Potential Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits (state and federal) for contributing buildings.

East and Culpeper Street Intersection

The intersection of East and Culpeper Streets is a critical node where pedestrian safety and placemaking converge. Stakeholders consistently described this area as hazardous due to missing crosswalks, poor sight lines, and angled parking. Recommendations include designating the intersection as a four-way stop, narrowing lanes, introducing tree planters, and installing new sidewalks in partnership with private property owners.

The corridor is positioned as a complementary district to Davis Street to be more eclectic, arts-oriented, and suited for creative placemaking. Simple façade improvements, murals, and branding elements can reinforce the “Fishtown” identity without replicating the formal character of Davis.

Funding pathways:

- Virginia Main Street Commercial District Affiliate Grant for façade work.
- DHCD CDBG (for façade improvements under public-private easements).
- National Endowment for the Arts “Our Town” or Virginia Commission for the Arts for creative placemaking and alley activation.
- SS4A implementation funds for crosswalks, four-way stop designation, and pedestrian safety.

Infill Development Opportunities

The illustrative master plan identifies key infill opportunities along Davis Street, Commerce Street, and in long-term scenarios such as the Post Office site. While these sites are market-dependent, the Town should use zoning, design guidelines, and site readiness programs to ensure future development addresses the street and balances density with parking needs.

As the Architectural Design Guidelines state, “new construction should be compatible in scale, massing, and rhythm with existing historic structures, while avoiding direct imitation.”

Funding pathways:

- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits for contributing sites.
- Public-private partnerships leveraging Town-owned parcels.
- DHCD IRF for catalytic sites where adaptive reuse aligns with market demand.



Phasing and Sequencing

Implementation should be pursued in phases, balancing quick wins with longer-term catalytic projects:

- Immediate (1-2 years): Farmers' Market shed design and funding applications; designation of East/Culpeper as a four-way stop; pilot creative placemaking projects (murals, alley activations).
- Mid-Term (3-5 years): Wausau Place lane narrowing and tree planters; façade easements and improvement program; permanent restroom/storage building at Heritage Park.
- Long-Term (5-10 years): Infill development along Davis and Commerce Streets; exploration of Post Office redevelopment or boutique hotel opportunities; structured parking integration.

Driving Toward Implementation

This Small Area Plan deliberately builds upon prior Town and CRI efforts. The Strategic Plan underscored that “implementation is the true measure of success for community planning.” The recommendations outlined here do not duplicate earlier plans but instead provide a pathway to act on them. By blending state, federal, and local tools, Culpeper can position itself to achieve visible results turning ideas into funded, built projects.

8

CONCLUSION



8. CONCLUSION

The Culpeper Small Area Plan builds directly upon the Town's adopted strategies, taking the aspirations of past plans and moving them into a framework for implementation. The Strategic Vision Plan called for "a downtown planning framework that blends community input with phased implementation strategies." This Small Area Plan responds by translating that guidance into site-specific design concepts, phased improvements, and actionable recommendations.

The Parks & Greenways Master Plan envisioned Heritage Park as "a downtown gateway and civic destination." This document advances that vision by detailing pathways, shade structures, and the relocation of the Farmers' Market, ensuring that the park functions not only as open space but as a civic anchor. Similarly, the SS4A Plan urged "street reconfigurations that balance traffic movement with pedestrian safety." Those principles are now carried into the cross-sections, road diets, and intersection redesigns outlined here.

By aligning with the Historic District Handbook, this plan also ensures that façade improvements and adaptive reuse respect the integrity of Culpeper's historic architecture, while creative placemaking strategies bring energy to secondary corridors like Culpeper and East Streets. And by referencing the East Spencer Street Parking Plan, this work confirms that parking and circulation strategies are not being reinvented but coordinated with prior investments.

What distinguishes this Small Area Plan is not only its grounding in adopted policy but its clear roadmap to execution. Each element from infill development and adaptive reuse to civic space and safety upgrades has been positioned as an implementable step that builds momentum and leverages existing funding opportunities. In this way, the plan shifts Culpeper from vision to action, ensuring that the community's heritage, culture, and economic vitality are secured for the next generation.

