

Amherst Town Development Area Study

- Community Meeting
- February 3, 2016



RENAISSANCE
PLANNING

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1 STUDY OVERVIEW

2 WHAT'S GOING ON IN AMHERST

3 UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL

4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMHERST

5 WAYFINDING STUDY UPDATE

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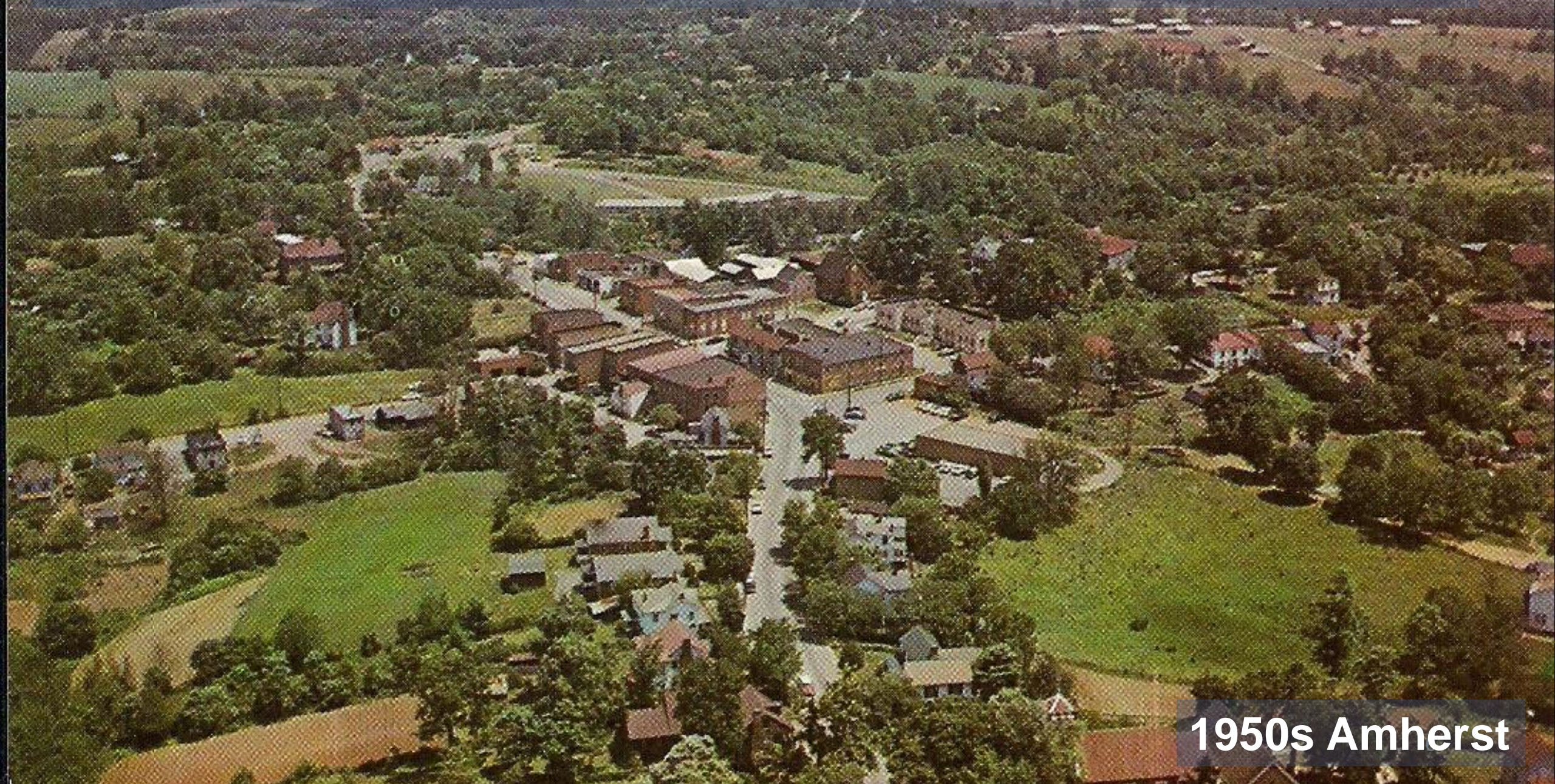
STUDY OVERVIEW

What's this study all about?

Identify opportunities for development



Articulate a vision for what the town could look like in the future



1950s Amherst

2010s Amherst





Imagine the possibilities



Ensure Town policies and codes support your vision

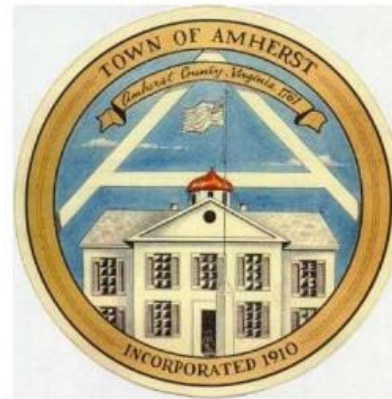
Town of Amherst 2009 Comprehensive Plan



Approved on November 10, 2009

Prepared by the Town of Amherst Planning Commission with assistance from Virginia's Region 2000 Local Government Council and WVF Associates.

Town of Amherst



Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan



Prepared by Virginia's Region 2000 Local Government Council
June 2009

Downtown Economic Restructuring Plan & Physical Improvement Strategy



For



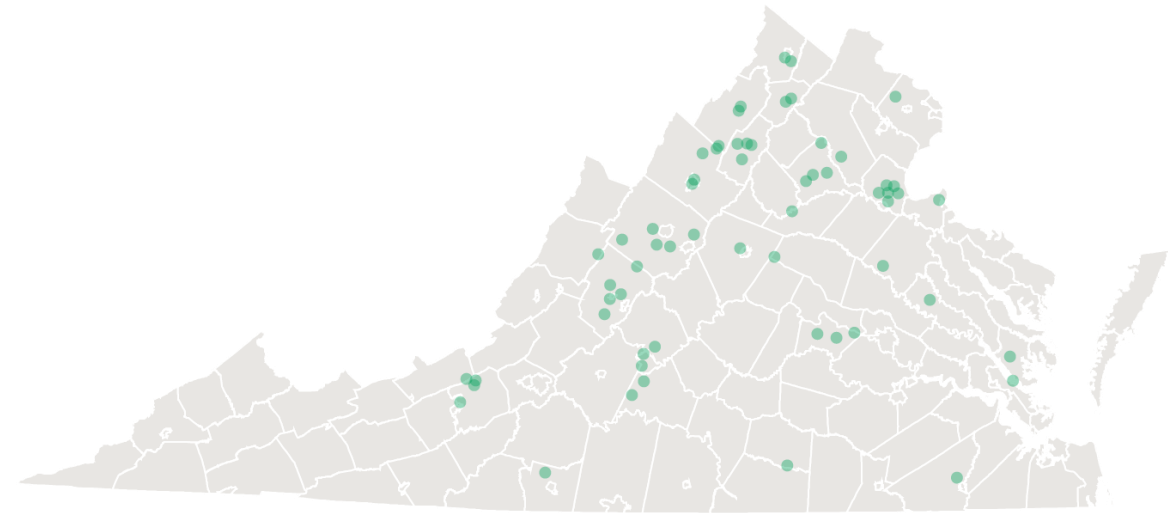
Town of Amherst, Virginia

- **Guiding Goals:**

- Encourage infill development throughout the town where appropriate to take advantage of existing road, water, and sewer infrastructure
- Revitalize downtown and improve walkability
- Ensure new development reflects the character of Amherst
- Beautify community gateways
- Provide a mix of housing units to keep pace with demographic changes

FUNDING FOR THIS STUDY

- 100% funded through a Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning & Investment Urban Development Area grant
- Technical (consultant) Assistance for adopting Town Development Area
- Town Development Area will be designated in the comprehensive plan for higher density development with traditional small town design
- Idea is to encourage growth where there is existing or planning infrastructure capacity
- Amherst using this opportunity to develop a vision for future growth
- Transportation funding benefit



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WHAT'S GOING ON IN AMHERST?



AMHERST IS A CLASSIC VIRGINIA TOWN



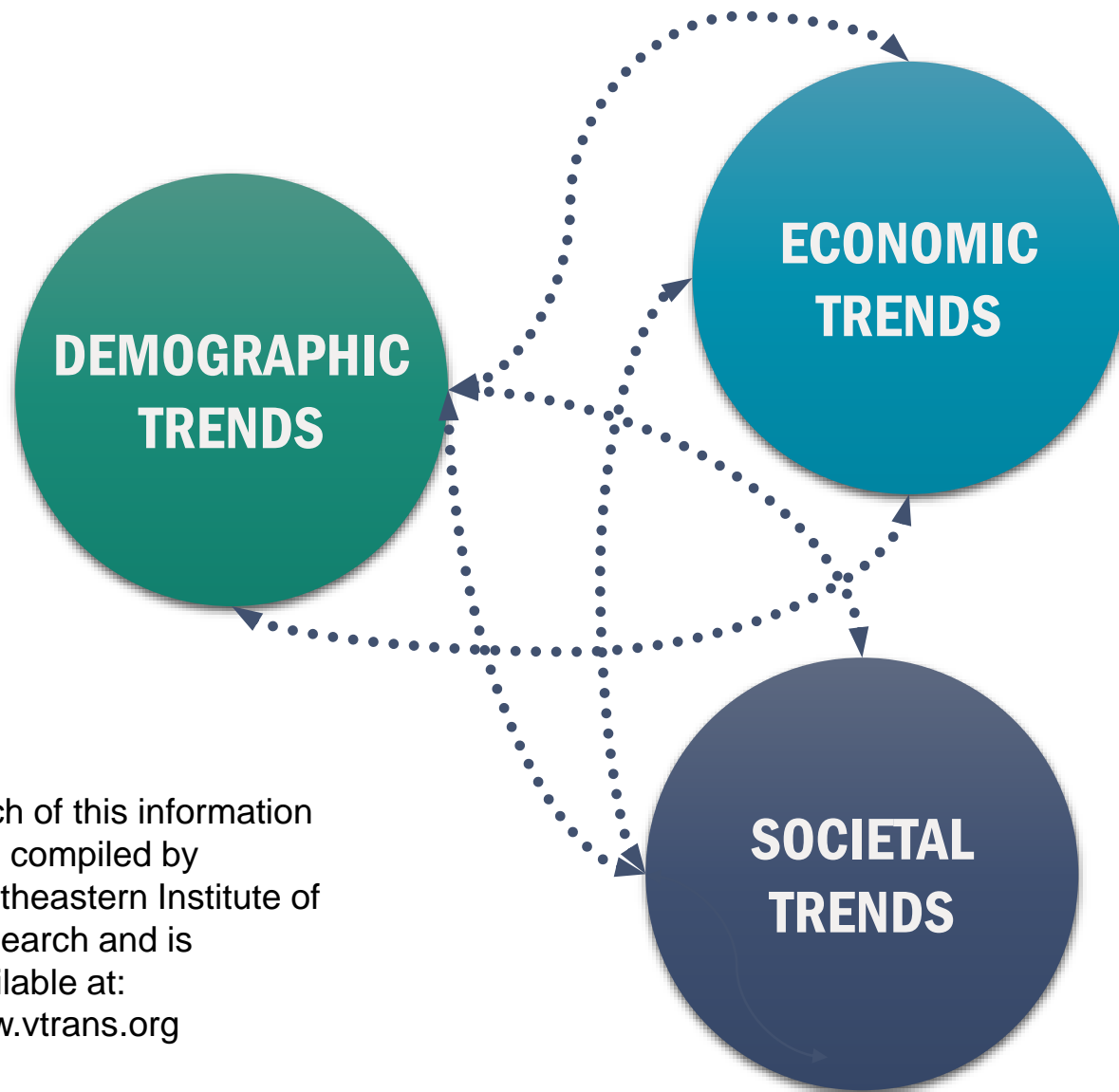
WITH DIVERSE ECONOMIC DRIVERS THAT INCLUDE...



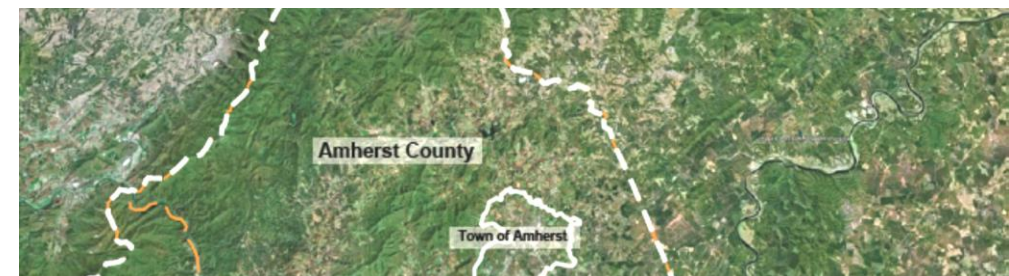
- Ed/Med
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Services (retail and government)
- Bedroom community



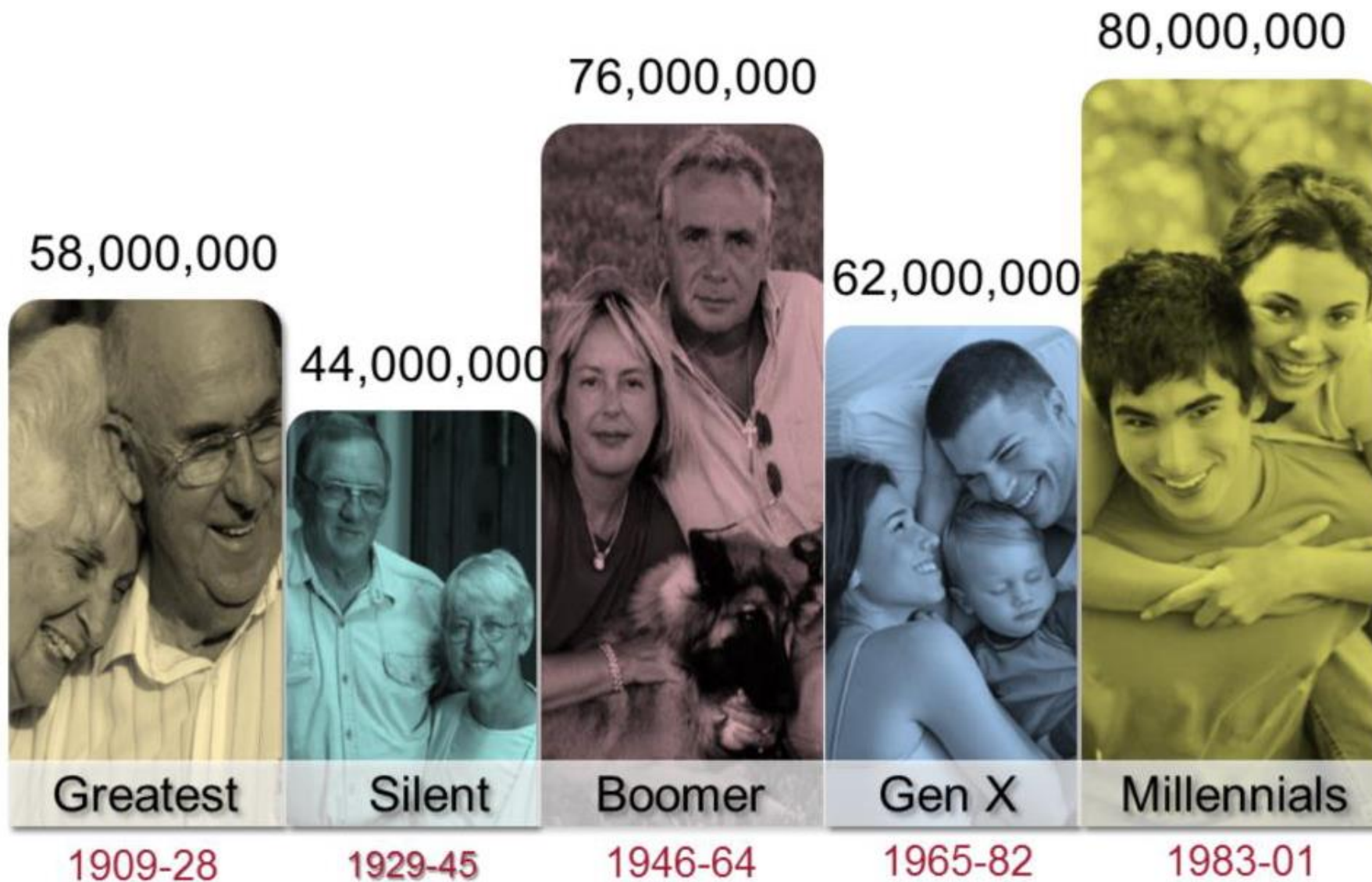
CONNECTING THE DOTS



Much of this information was compiled by Southeastern Institute of Research and is available at: www.vtrans.org



CURRENT POPULATION BY GENERATION



source: www.vtrans.org

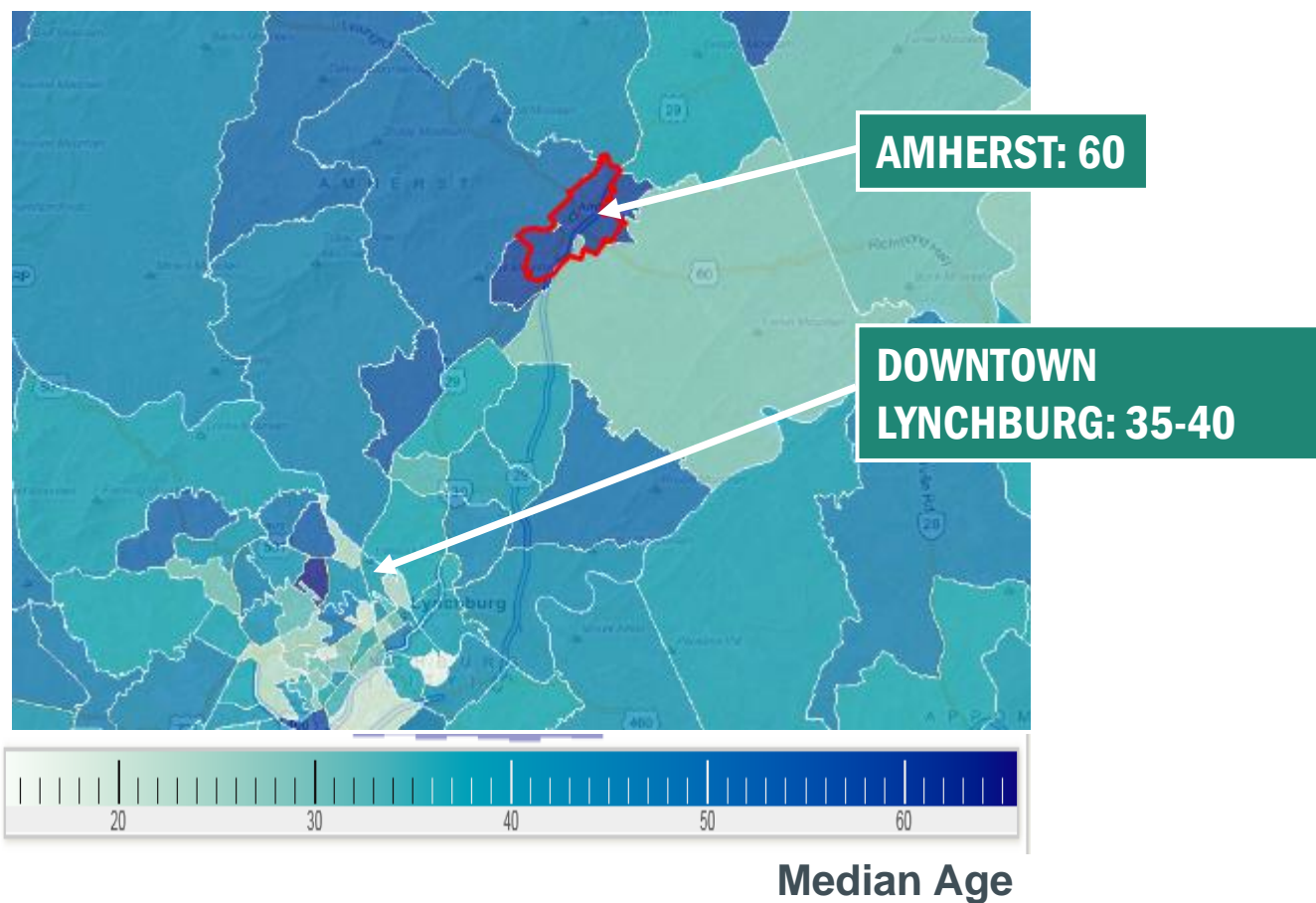
WHAT IS THE FUTURE POPULATION?



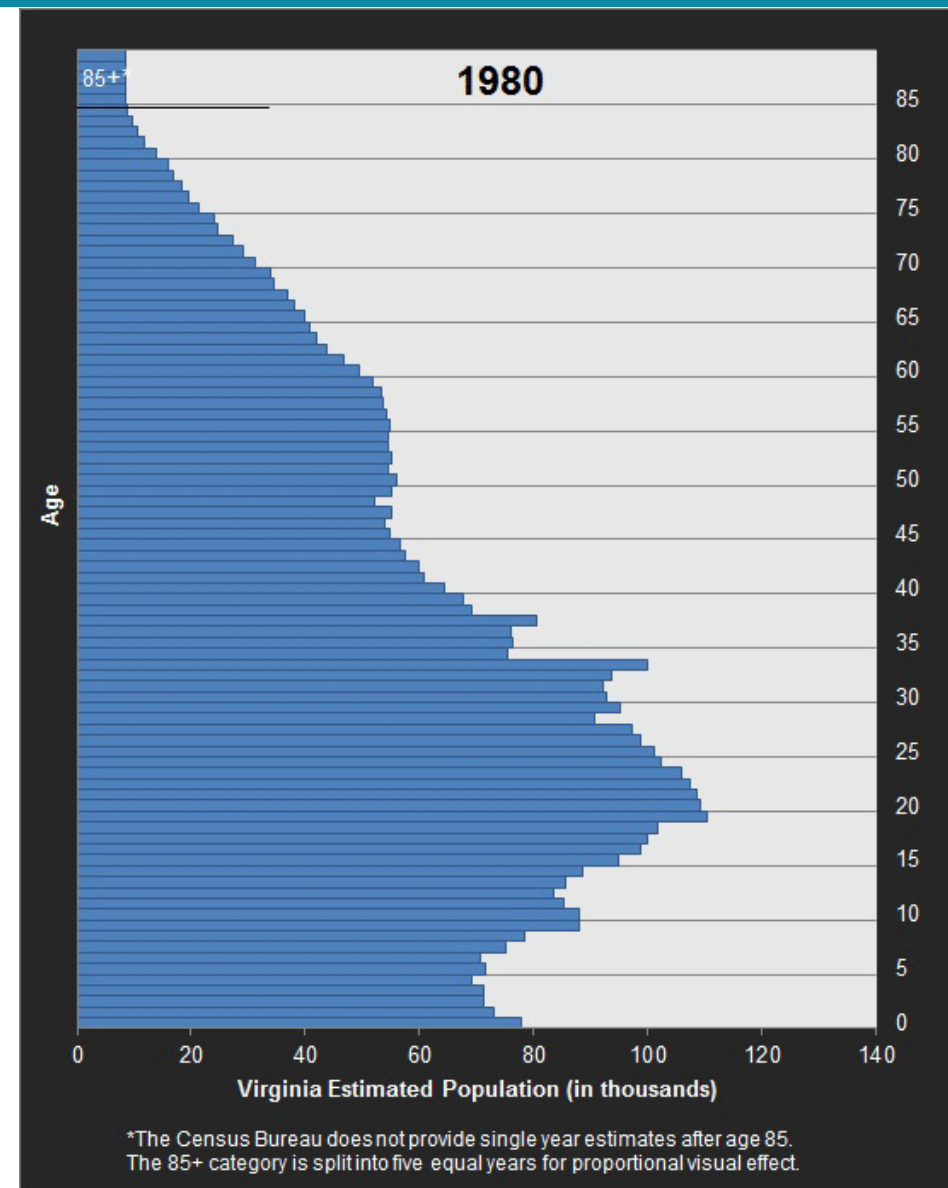
Two groups will
dominate the
population
pyramid:

**MILLENNIALS &
BOOMERS**

VIRGINIA IS AGING

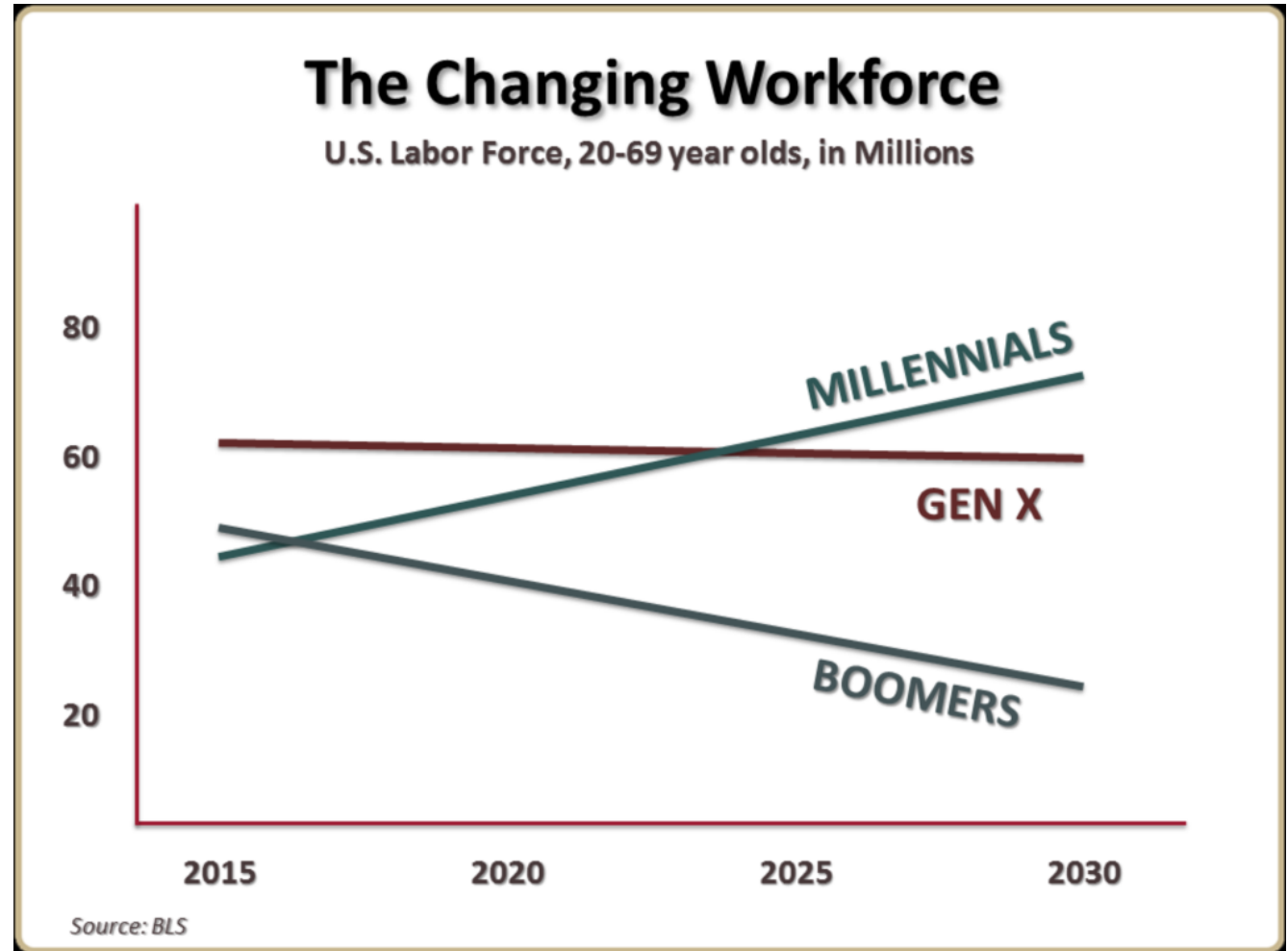


Source: City-Data.com



Source: University of Virginia Demographics Research Group

THE GROWTH OF MILLENNIALS



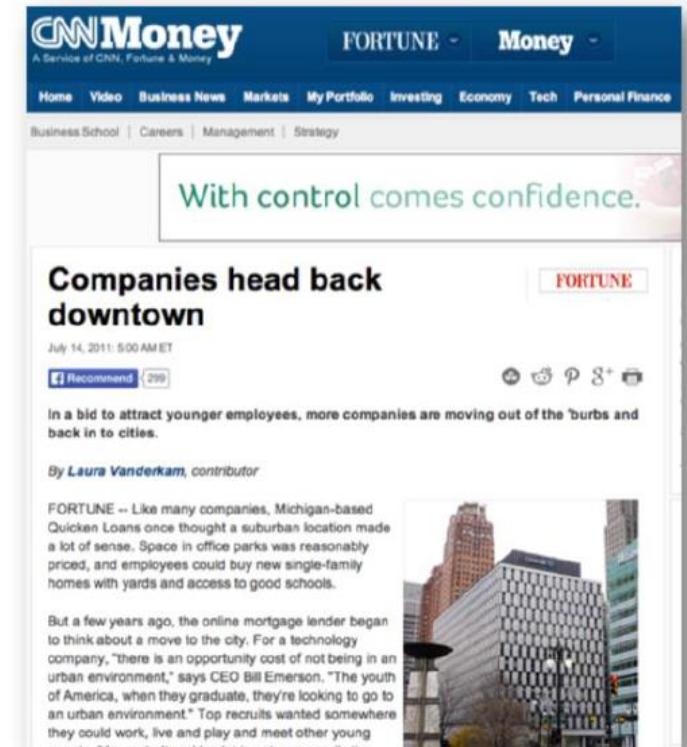
NEW MODEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



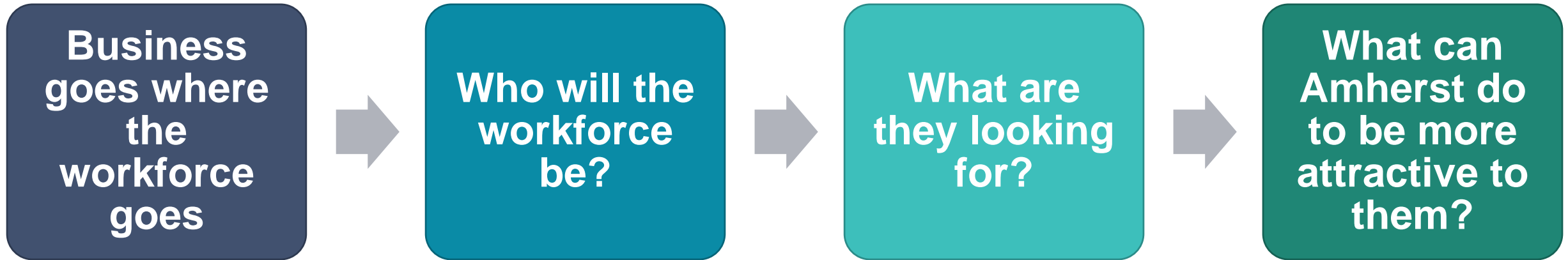
workforce makeup will be based on the “relative desirability of a place”

Bill Emerson, CEO, Quicken Loans

“Our recruits want somewhere they can live, work and play.”



THE BASIC EQUATION - workforce

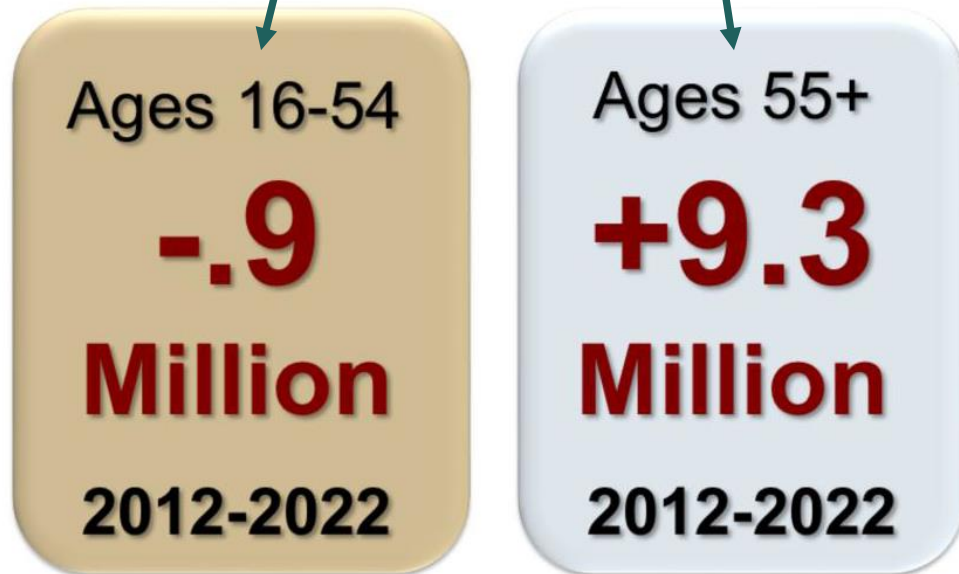


**For Virginia
To Attract The **Right
Workforce**, We Will
Have To Be A **More
Attractive Place** Than
Many Other States**

THE BATTLE FOR WORKERS

SHORTAGE OF PRIME AGE WORKERS

BOOMERS WILL KEEP WORKING
(& STARTING NEW BUSINESSES)



Keys to prosperity:

BECOME A HUB FOR:

YOUNGER WORKERS

ACTIVE BOOMERS

WHAT DO THESE GROUPS WANT?



BOOMERS:
Want to Age in Place
Want to Age in Community



WHAT DO THESE GROUPS WANT?



**15-Minute
Walkable
Community**

MILLENNIALS:

Want “Hyper Community”

Want more urban walkable places



75%

Believe they will live in
a place that does not
require a car

Source: Rockefeller Foundation

source: www.vtrans.org

WHO IS LOOKING FOR A SENSE OF PLACE?



bikers



& bikers!

81%
OF MILLENNIALS

77%
ACTIVE BOOMERS

say affordable and convenient transportation alternatives to the car are at least somewhat important when deciding where to live and work.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE FUTURE?

proactively:

“Create the kind of walkable attractive place that will attract & support the emerging population and emerging economy”



More Bike Paths



**More
Walking
Paths**

More Place!

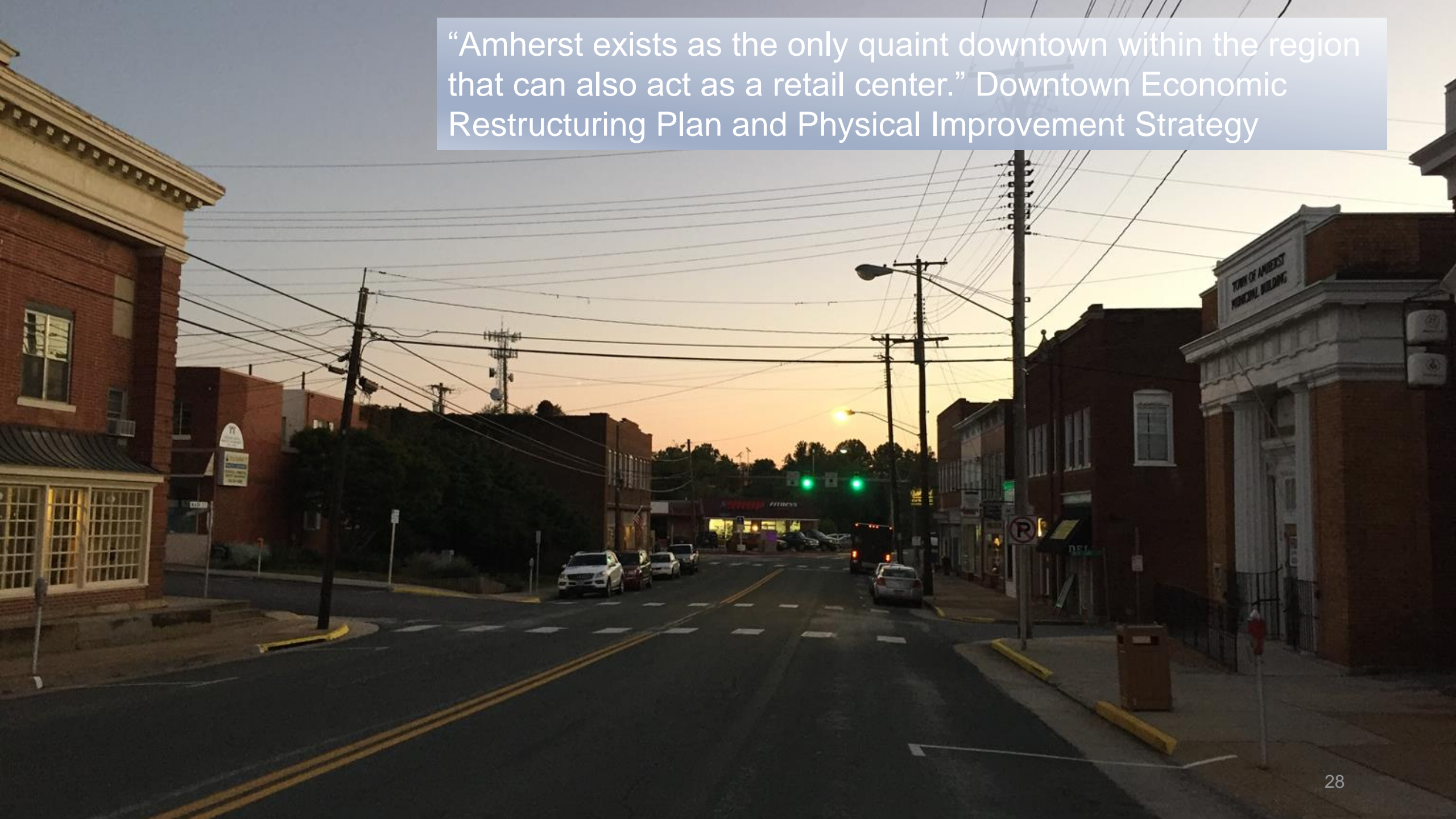


**Time
Is Now**

AMHERST HAS A LOT GOING FOR IT...

- Public safety
- Schools
- Affordability
- Major employers
- College
- Natural beauty
- Retail options
- Compact and interesting downtown

“Amherst exists as the only quaint downtown within the region that can also act as a retail center.” Downtown Economic Restructuring Plan and Physical Improvement Strategy



BUT SOME CONCERNS TOO...

- Stagnation
- Aging population
- Walkability
- Downtown revitalization

BIG TAKEAWAY...

- Amherst has tremendous potential, but how do you unlock it?

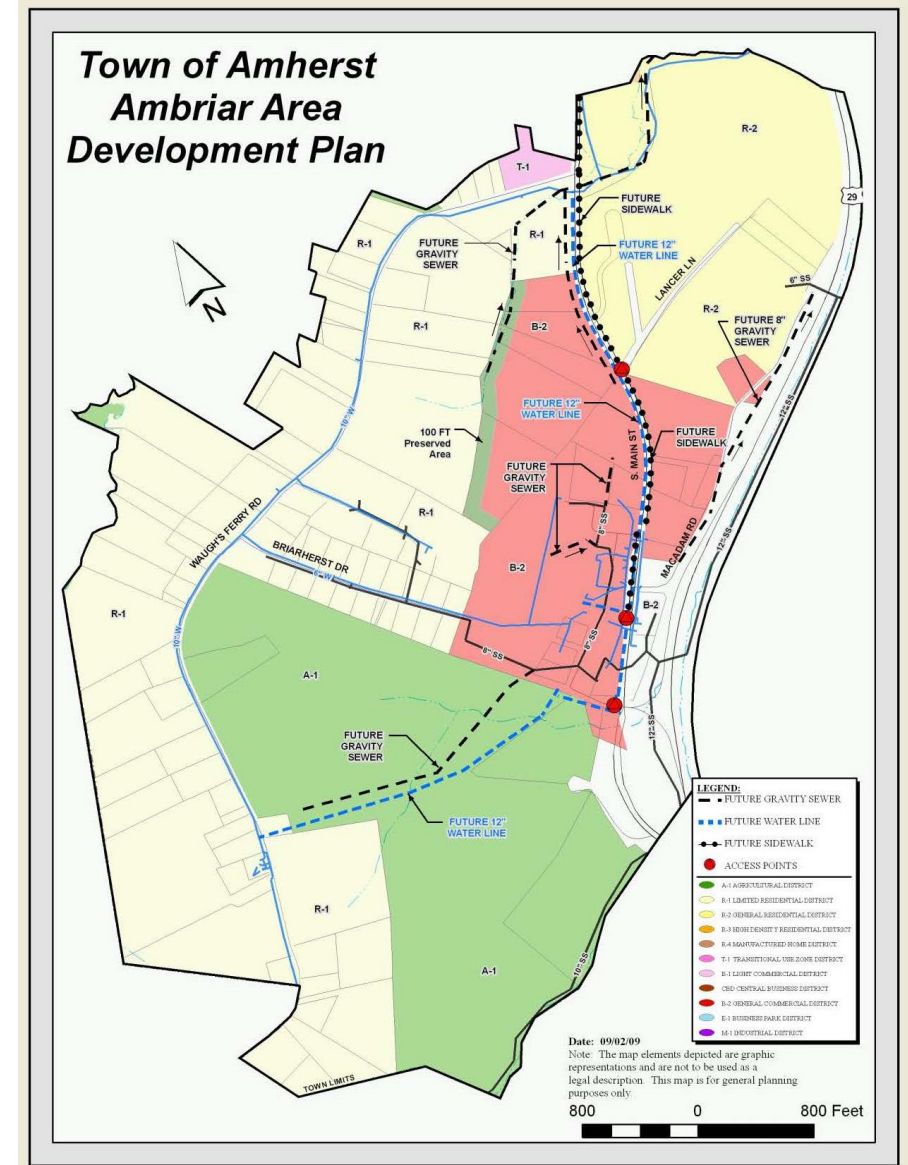


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UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL

3 IDEAS

1. Establish a clear vision for growth and development



3 IDEAS

2. Invest in downtown, which distinguishes Amherst



3 IDEAS

3. Promote yourself and your vision



THIS STUDY ADVANCES THESE 3 IDEAS BY PROVIDING...

1. A positive statement that Amherst embraces good development
2. Clearly stating where growth is likely and appropriate
3. A vision for what is possible

LET'S DISCUSS

1. What possibilities for Amherst excite you the most?
2. How would you like to see the Town change over the next 10 years?

4

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMHERST

BUILDING ON YOUR TOWN IDENTITY AND ASSETS IS A WINNING STRATEGY



MANY SUCCESSFUL TOWNS IN VIRGINIA HAVE TAKEN THIS APPROACH



Floyd, VA



ABINGDON, VA



Sources (clockwise from top left): j. Hendron, Eli Christman, and Janet Cowen, Flickr

SOUTH BOSTON – CARTER GREEN POCKET PARK



Between 2004-2014:

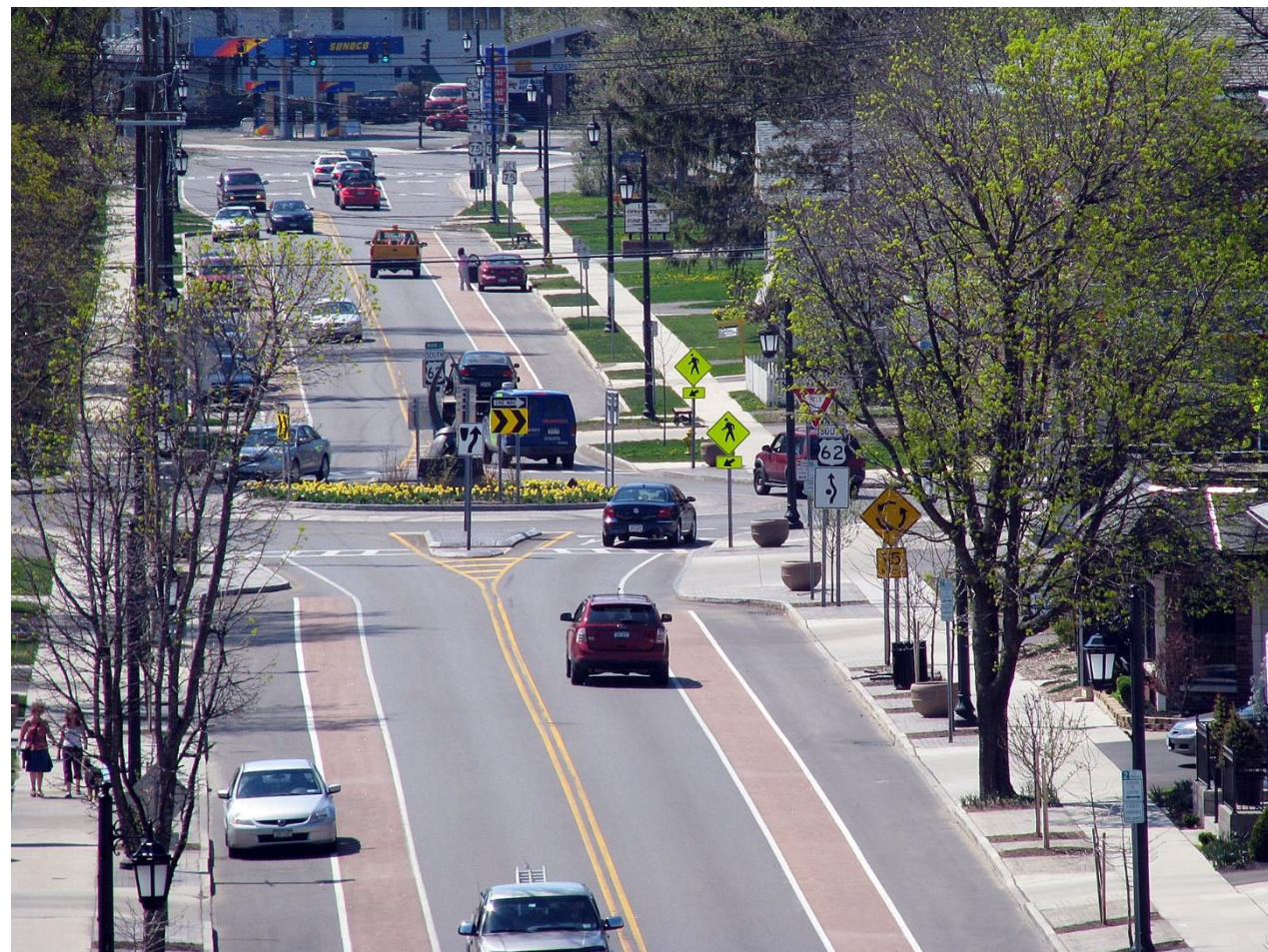
- \$1.73 million in public capital investment downtown
- \$35 million in private investment
- 88 new businesses (net) in a region losing jobs
 - Source: Preservation Virginia, 30 Years of Impact



WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON? - TRADITIONAL TOWN DESIGN

- Traditional design principles include:
 - Pedestrian-friendly road design
 - Reduced building setbacks, street widths, and turning radii
 - Mixed-use neighborhoods & housing types
 - Natural area preservation

PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ROAD DESIGN – HAMBURG, NY



Helped inspire 33 building projects, \$7 million of investment

PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ROAD DESIGN



Photo Credit: WALC Institute &
EPA Building Blocks

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PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ROAD DESIGN



Photo Credit: WALC Institute & EPA Building Blocks

PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ROAD DESIGN – PIKEVILLE, TN



- Town of 1,600
- Bypass around downtown
- Loss of business
- Streetscape plan
 - Ornamental streetlights
 - Textured brick crosswalks
 - New sidewalk
- New businesses
- Destination from Chattanooga

REDUCED BUILDING SETBACKS



Photo Credit: WALC Institute & EPA Building Blocks

REDUCED SUBDIVISION STREET WIDTH/TURNING RADII



Photo Credit Left: Renaissance Planning (Lewes, DE)

MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING TYPES



Photo Credits: Renaissance Planning (Amherst, VA on left, Steamboat Springs, CO on right)

MIXED USE NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING TYPES



BACK TO AMHERST...

- So where are the opportunities that could provide a spark in Amherst?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMHERST

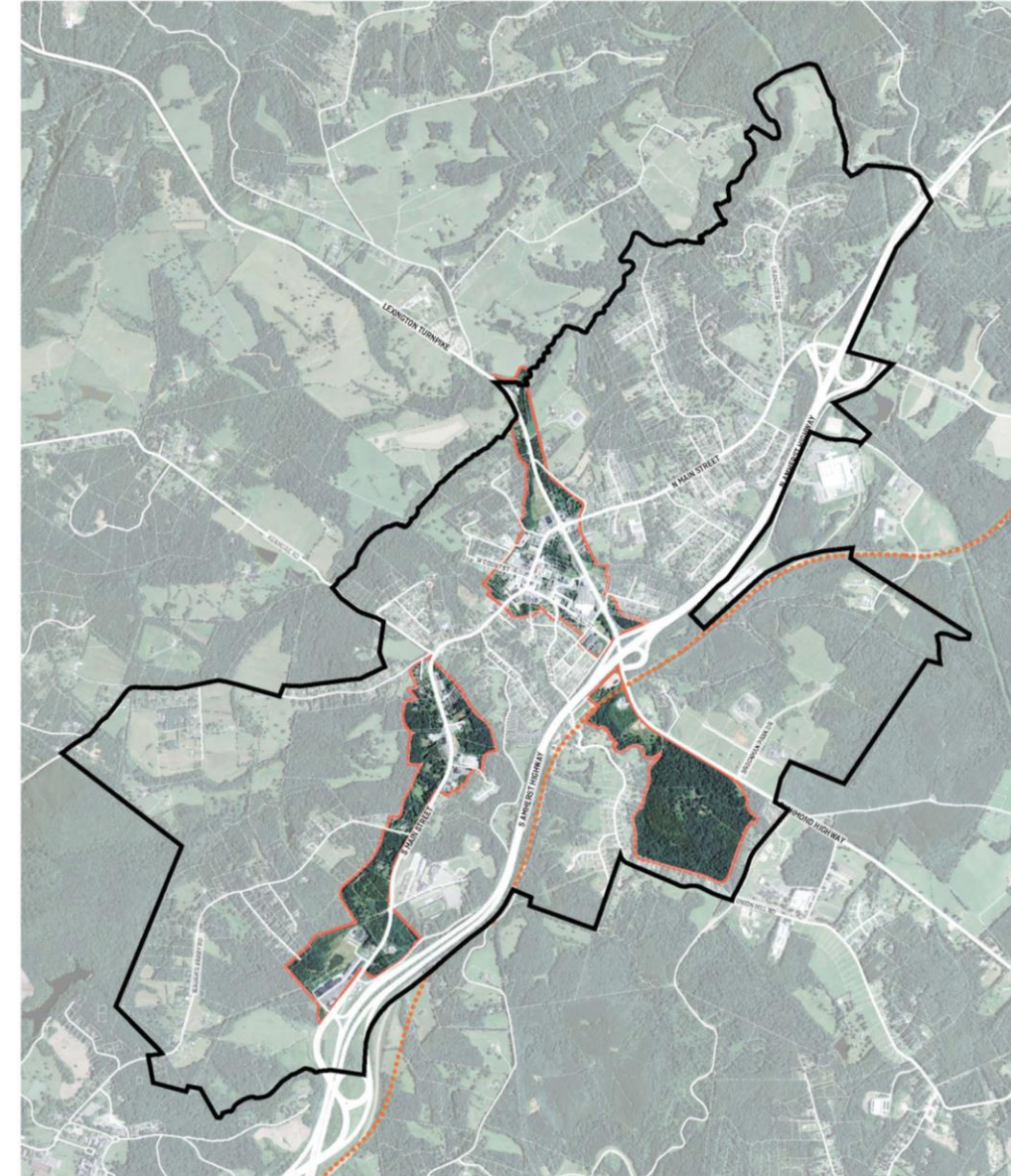
- First, identified a proposed **Town Development Area**
 - Will be an area where traditional town development is possible
- Looked at several factors:
 - Town plans and code
 - Discussions with Town officials
 - Capacity for development (infrastructure & topography)

ARRIVED AT.... (PROPOSED) TOWN DEVELOPMENT AREA

- South Main Street & Route 60
 - Has water/sewer
 - Has zoning that supports traditional town design
 - Has some (relatively) flat and open parcels

THE TOWN OF AMHERST Town Development Area

DRAFT TDA OPTION: S MAIN STREET & ROUTE 60



HOW MIGHT THIS AREA DEVELOP?

- Illustrated possibilities in two areas
 - Ambler Property (for sale)
 - Downtown (infill & public improvements)

AMBLER CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



Visual of a mixed use development including offices, townhomes, walking trails, and a roundabout to improve traffic flow and calm traffic along South Main Street



DOWNTOWN CONCEPTUAL DESIGN



Visual of walkability improvements, beautification, additional parking, and long-term redevelopment potential in the downtown area, centered on 2nd and Main.



WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS!



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WAYFINDING STUDY UPDATE

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WHAT IS WAYFINDING?



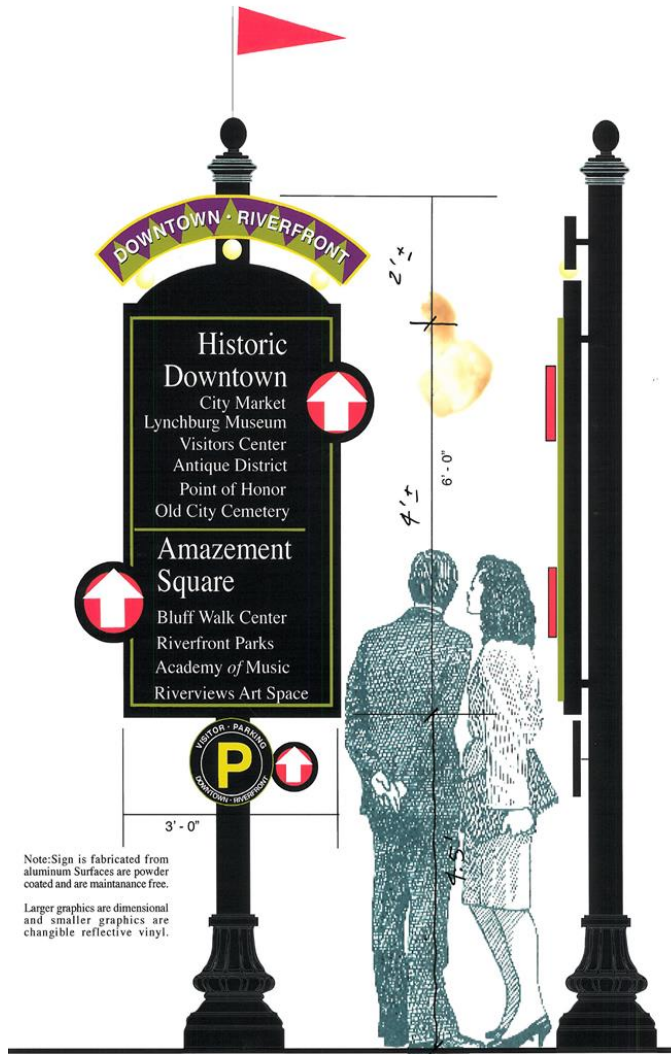
WINCHESTER, VA



CULPEPER, VA



LYNCHBURG, VA



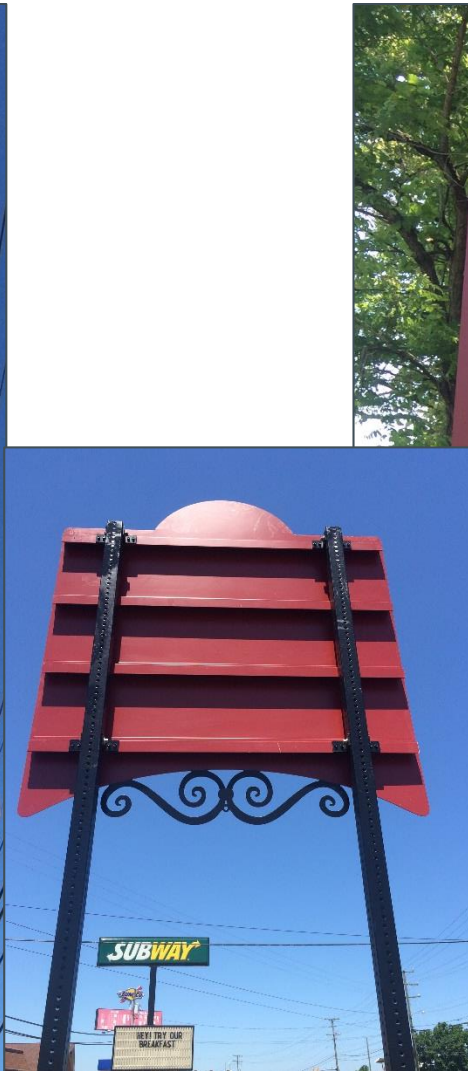
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA



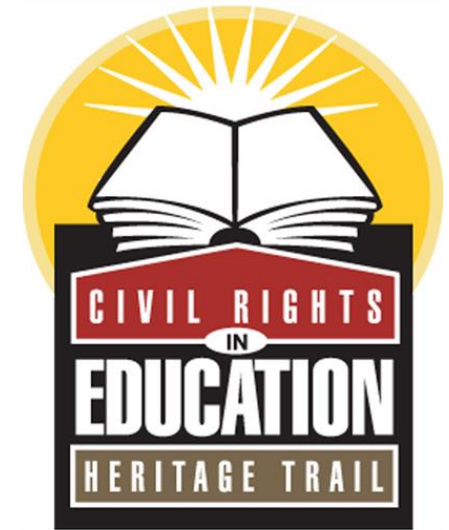
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA



APPOMATTOX, VA



STATEWIDE & REGIONAL



VIRGINIA INTEGRATED DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE PROGRAM



Specific Service (Logo)

Tourist Oriented Directional Signs

Supplemental Guide Signs

General Motorist Service Signs

- Identify and map key visitor gateways or entry points
- Establish criteria for inclusion on signs
- Apply criteria to develop list of destinations included in program
- Determine key routes of visitor circulation within town
- Study visitor circulation routes and determine key “decision nodes” (intersections) where wayfinding signs should be present.

- Create itemized list of individual signs by location with text and appropriate arrows for each sign.
- Create specifications for sign material, typefaces, etc.

Project Contact:

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