



Roanoke, Virginia

Community Hub Concept Plan

31 May 2022

Market Assessment 31 August 2022

Implementation Opportunities 16 September 2022

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Prepared for:

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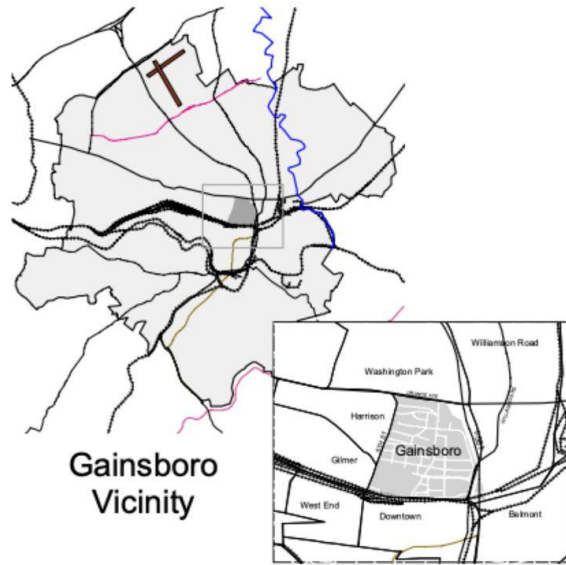
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GAINSBORO



GAINSBORO: The Project

Project Overview & Objective

Downtown Economics LLC was commissioned to explore ideas for a community hub in the Gainsboro area that could include a business incubator and other service opportunities to support area residents and workforce development, catalyze the reclamation and restoration of black enterprise and entertainment, and reinvigorate the neighborhood as well as the surrounding local economy.

Discovery & Community Engagement

The Downtown Economics Project Team conducted a series of formal and informal meetings and methods to engage the Community and City of Roanoke in a discovery process to assess the needs of the Gainsboro neighborhood. Activities included area walkabouts, door-to-door “porch” conversations with a sampling of residents (covid protocols in play) and questionnaire surveys, meetings with select City staff and area business owners and organizations, as well as research and document reviews of previous plans and associated materials were among the efforts.

- Document Research / Reviews
- Community Tours / Walkabouts
- Residential “Porch” Visits
- 1:1 Interviews
- Community Meeting
- Community Survey

Community Participation, Feedback & Survey Results

Based on meetings and conversations with area leaders and advocates, a neighborhood survey was developed and circulated to area residents to garner input on the types of businesses and amenities they would like to see in the Gainsboro area as part of a community enhancement effort. Print and digital survey formats were advertised and made available mid-April to mid-May 2022. Opinions about area conditions and concerns as well as City Administration contributions and performance were also solicited. See <https://www.gainsborovoice.com/> for the invitation and details.

Additional opportunity for public comment was requested at the monthly neighborhood association meeting on 5 May 2022. Brief news coverage and comments of this meeting can be found at <https://www.wsls.com/news/local/2022/05/06/gainsboro-residents-voice-ideas-concerns-over-latest-revitalization-plan/>

Community Participation, Feedback & Survey Results, continued

Below is a summary of the key issues shared by the Community.

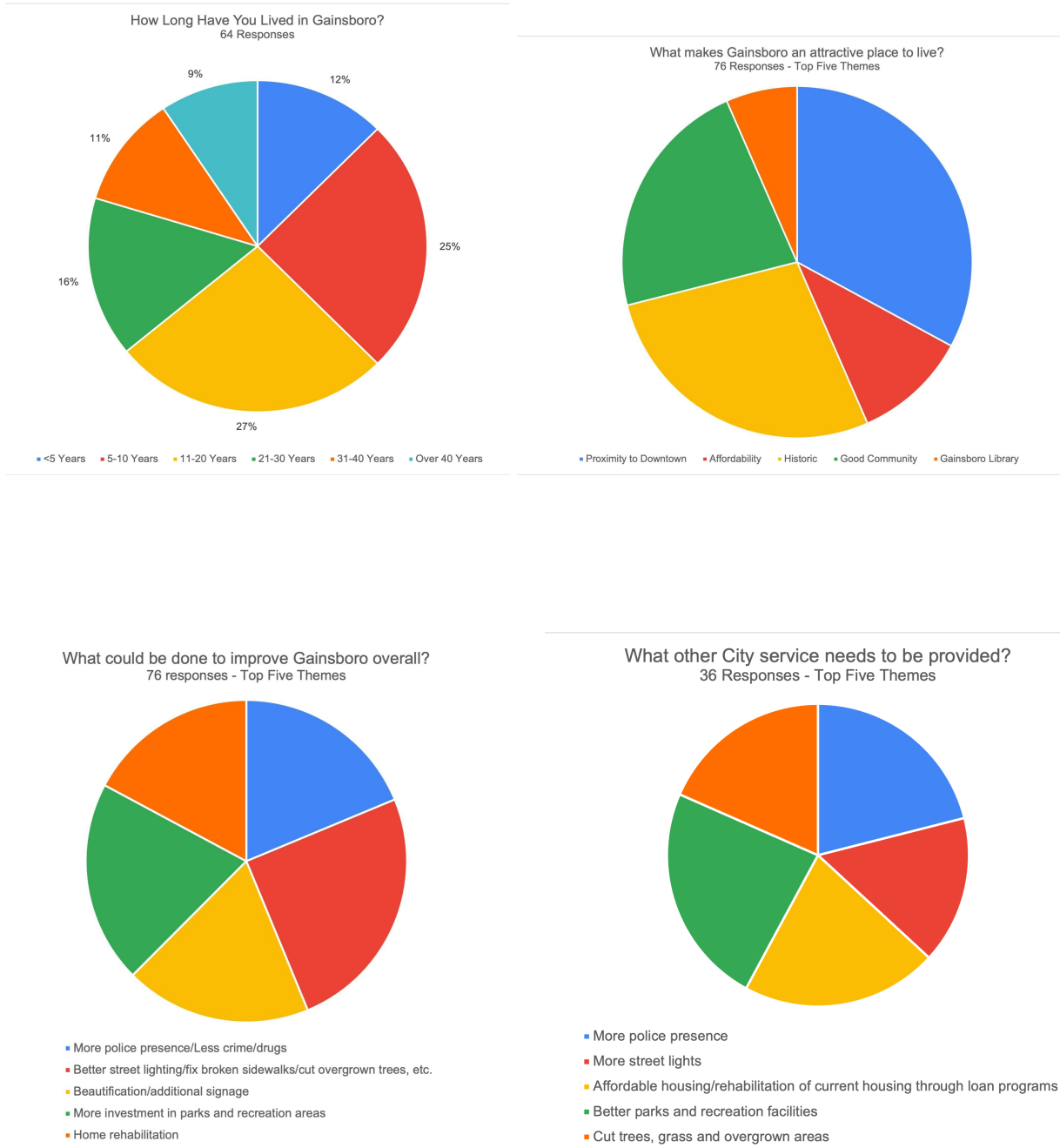
- 77 citizens responded to the survey [28 participated on line and 49 via hard copy]
- 64% have lived in the community 20 years or less, while 36% of the participants have lived in the community for 21-70 years.

Primary concerns and requests from the various community engagements include:

- Entrepreneur business incubator
- Workforce opportunities for area residents
- Community Center with provisions for social events, recreation, and supervised care (varied ages)
- Community Kitchen and Food Trucks
- Local businesses including grocery store and fresh produce, personal services shops and entertainment; NO chain entities
- Police presence and law enforcement regarding drugs, vandalism and graffiti
- Traffic control, reduced speeds and crack down on speeding
- Road repair and maintenance
- Road and sidewalk improvements including lighting enhancements
- Park maintenance
- Landscape improvements for road medians, public spaces and vacant lots
- Absentee Landlord accountability for unkempt houses and yards
- Removal of inoperable vehicles
- Bike Lanes
- Increase Public Service (Education, Recreation, etc)

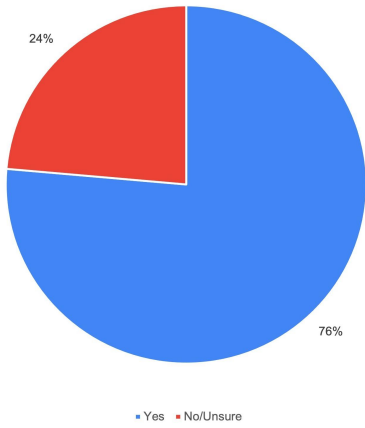
Community Participation, Feedback & Survey Results, continued

Summary to specific survey questions include:

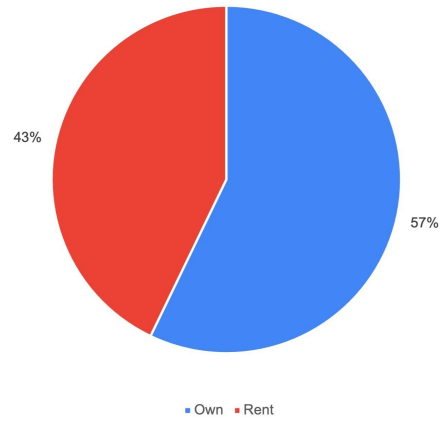


HISTORIC GAINSBORO | Community Hub Concept Plan

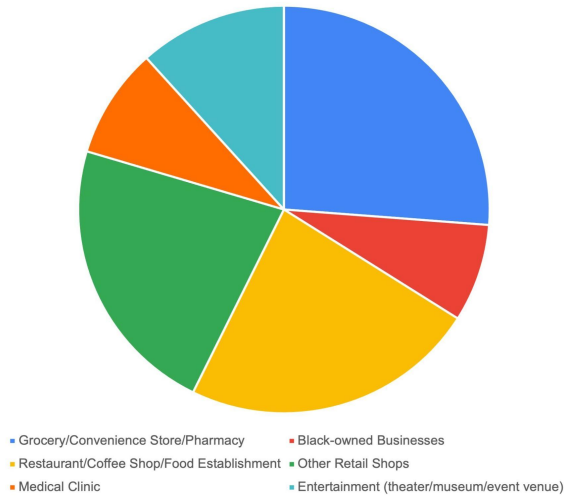
Are you familiar with the history of the Gainsboro neighborhood?
72 Responses



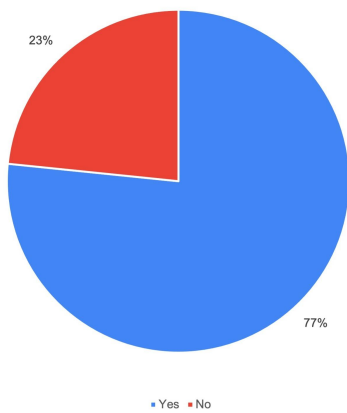
Do you own or rent?
77 responses



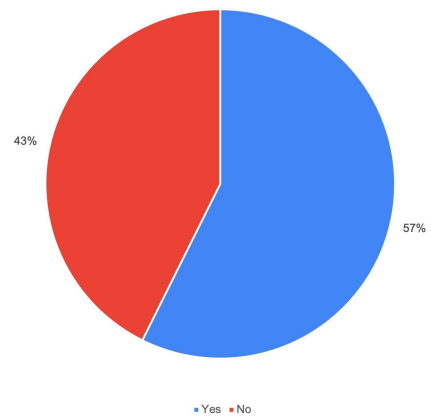
What types of businesses would you like to see in Gainsboro that are not here now?
71 responses - Top Six Themes



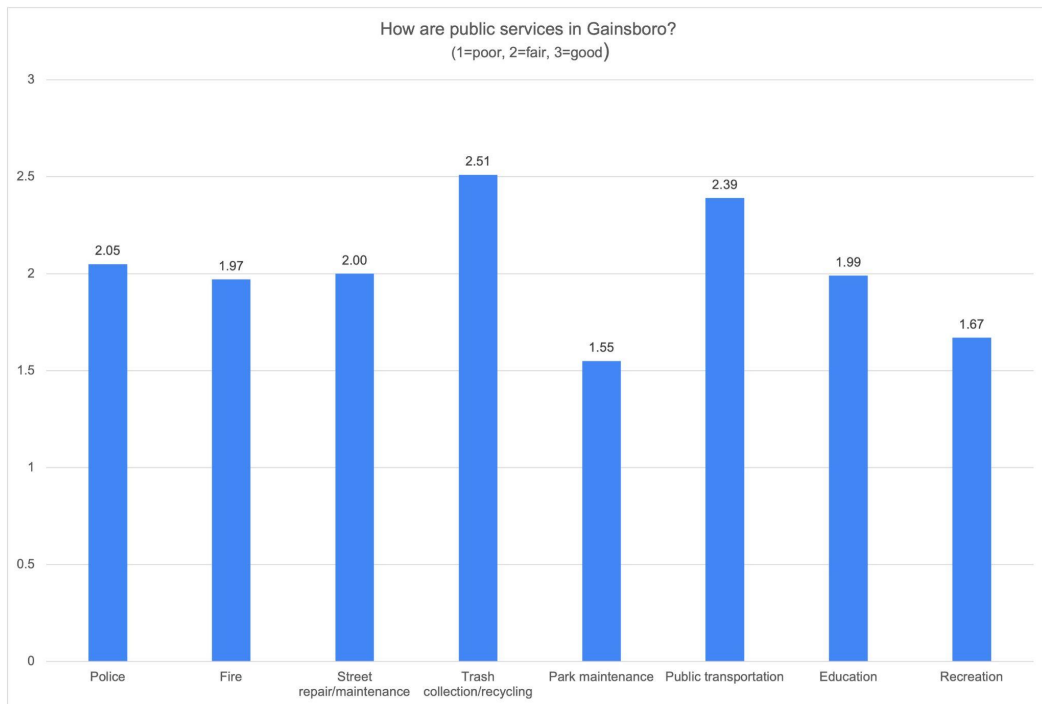
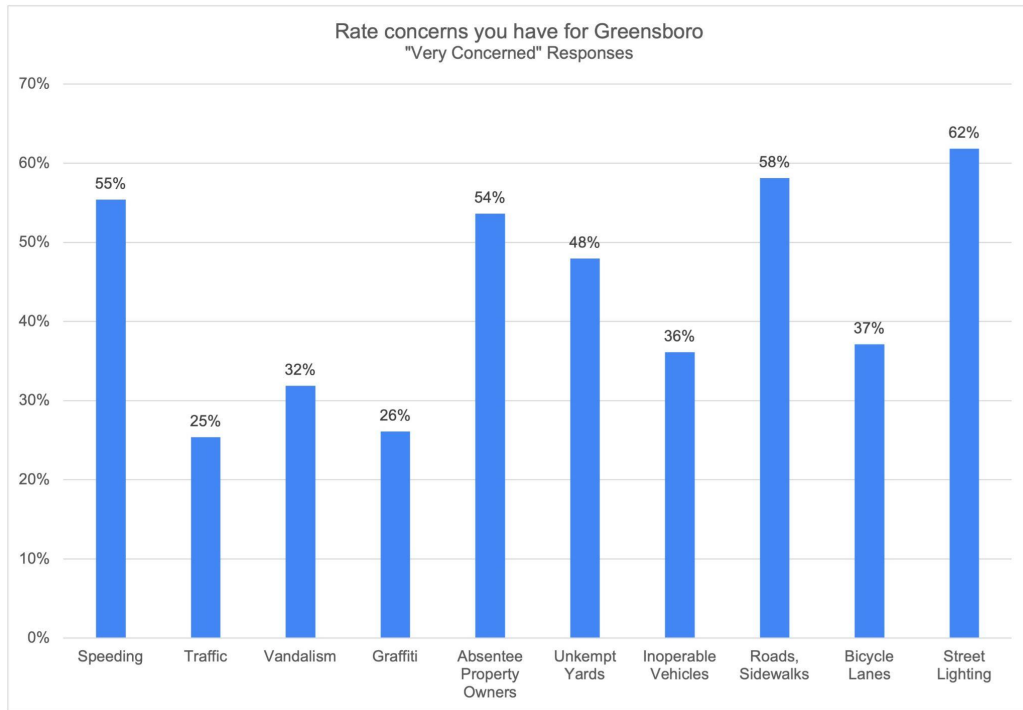
Do you feel like part of a neighborhood?
77 responses



Are there City services that are not being provided?
68 responses



HISTORIC GAINSBORO | Community Hub Concept Plan



ROANOKE: City Context

Economic Vision

INTENTIONS & STRATEGIES

As noted in the City Manager’s Blog Post of 01.03.22, Roanoke City received \$64.5 million dollars through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to respond to the impacts of COVID-19. After much input and involvement from a Citizen-base Advisory Panel, recommendations to build resiliency and transform the community were made to City Council in the fall of 2021 for implementation throughout 2022. See the entire blog post here: <https://www.roanokeva.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=262>

Of those monies, an estimated \$8 million will be invested in the Historic Gainsboro / Northwest area of the city with the intention to build a community hub with co-working space for minority small business owners and a recreation center. It is reported that funds are to be spent in their entirety by 2024. See the news coverage here: <https://www.wdbj7.com/2021/09/22/american-rescue-plan-act-projects-approved-by-roanoke-city-council/>

In the City’s *Strategic Plan 2020-2021*, City Council identified seven priority areas to focus attention and resources for these community investment funds:

- Education
- Community Safety
- Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Good Government

And of particular note:

- Livability ... *“Through use of ARPA funds we will progress on two neighborhood hubs in the Northwest—one in Gainsboro, and the other on Melrose, focusing on job creation and access to health care and fresh food.”*
- Economy ... *“Through use of ARPA funds, the City will also invest heavily in new job training programs, seeking to connect those in our community with job opportunities in growing strong sectors, through targeted access to specific skills.”*

Elaboration on all of these priority points is summarized in the City Manager’s post noted above and at length in the City’s *Strategic Plan 2020-2021* linked here:

<https://www.roanokeva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14907/Roanoke-City-Council-Strategic-Plan-2020-2021pdf>

Economics, Enterprise & Entrepreneurship

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR GAINSBORO

Our analysis has identified several opportunities for revitalization throughout the Gainsboro neighborhood. It is essential that each opportunity be viewed through the lens of entrepreneurship. The Small Business Development Center and the Advancement Foundation should be engaged and presented with information about the targeted commercial district.

The Advancement Foundation has been actively engaged in Roanoke, and its Gauntlet business plan competition is well known regionally. We would recommend working closely with the Advancement Foundation to continue that effort with an eye toward Gainsboro.

We further recommend that local/regional banks be approached about conducting a quarterly business plan competition, with the winner located in the commercial corridor. Local banks need to maintain a robust Community Reinvestment Act portfolio and a business plan competition is one way to accomplish that end.

The Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center should be provided information on the Gainsboro district and encouraged to keep hours in the districts, if feasible. Small business owners completing training at the Small Business Development Center have already conducted market research, sought out funding, and have a business plan in place. These should be targeted for location in the commercial district.

The Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Business Launch Program can play a key role in commercial district revitalization. We recommend that DHCD be made aware of the targeted commercial areas.

SCORE Roanoke is an organization actively engaged in the development of entrepreneurs. We recommend establishing a district tour, as well as a list of incentives to SCORE staff. Again, those who have completed training have conducted market research, developed a business plan, and sought financing options.

Virginia is for Entrepreneurs / Abaca aligns entrepreneurs with investors and other support organizations (accelerators, bootcamps, and more) on where their startup stands and a roadmap for where to go next.

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of neighborhood community revitalization. As noted, there are organizations such as the Advancement Foundation, SCORE and the Small Business Development Center, all of which can be helpful in crafting an entrepreneurship development program. It should be noted, however, that the Higher Education Center has partnered with a long-time community activist to house an entrepreneurship development program in the Center. The Center would be an ideal place to house a small business incubator that would be focused on training Gainsboro residents with a goal of launching new small businesses. We have noted that there are several ways to finance small businesses. It would be helpful to develop a small business development guide unique to Gainsboro.

Economic Incentives

INCENTIVES, IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR REVITALIZATION OF ALL PRIORITY AREAS of OPPORTUNITY

- **HUD Section 108 Program** — select programs such as a grocery store on Jefferson Street and land acquisition throughout the designated area for use of the HUD 108 program. This is a loan guarantee program that was used for the Hotel Roanoke.
- **Loan Pool** — establish programs with local banks for working capital for businesses/developers who cannot obtain conventional financing. Local banks have a vested interest in the community and need to ensure their **Community Reinvestment Act** portfolios are sound. Larger national banks tend to be less inclined to participate in loan pools.
- **Historic Tax Credits (HTC)** — refer to National Park Service U.S. Department of Interior for details. Link: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>
- **Main Street Program** — establish an organization on Loudon Avenue and Henry Street.
- **Tax Exemption** — expand program to buildings constructed before 1990.
- **Virginia Economic Development Partnership** — ensure that all vacant land is listed with the VEDP
- **New Market Tax Credits (NMTC)** — market to Regional Developers.
- **Enterprise Zones** — examine the benefit of expanding select areas and projects
- **Opportunity Zones** — investigate the viability and procedures to expand the boundaries of existing zones. Explore conversations with the Federal Reserve.
- **Small Business Development Center** — tips and resources for operations, marketing, expansion and real estate. Excellent mentorship and networking opportunities as well.
- **DHCD Community Business Launch Program** — continue participation and work with DHCD on entrepreneurship ecosystem development with each corridor targeted.
- **Virginia Community Capital** (and, if desired, another Community Development Finance Agency) — formalize an agreement to target the neighborhood commercial corridors. Continue establishment of relationship with the CDFI Coalition.
- **Federal EDA** — actively apply for grants with matching funds for property acquisition in the targeted neighborhood corridors.
- **ARPA Funds** — designate use for a grocery store and land acquisition.

- **Bridging Virginia** — a source of financing for small businesses in commercial corridors.
- **Leaseholder Improvement Program** — create a new incentive program for renters that provides grants up to \$25,000 and 50% reimbursement on any work thereafter.
- **Sidewalk Café Grants** — to promote and expand businesses
- **Neighborhood Development Grant Program** — through CDBG
- **Deed Funding** — funding opportunities that can be matched with other resources mentioned herein.
- **Smart Growth Grants** — ideas and resources that promote and incent smart development and community health and wellbeing.
- **Placemaking Grants** — ideas and resources for individuals, organizations and governments to collaboratively create places that support and reflect the community.
- **Environmental Equity Grants** — funding for improving environments in marginalized communities
- **Community Benefit Grants** — funding and/or tax abatement for the relocation of an intense commercial-industrial use (like scrap yard) elsewhere to allow the vacated property to be developed for community benefit (i.e., grocery, community garden, mixed use building, etc).
- **Community Improvement Districts (CID)** — a defined area of non-residential properties, whose owners choose to pay an additional tax or fee for services (like street cleaning, security, marketing the area) and improvements (i.e, constructing pedestrian and streetscape enhancements). Benefits include leveraging available resources (city grants / incentives for tax abatement, etc) that individual property owners cannot on their own, among others.
- **Historic Tax Credits (HTC)** — refer to National Park Service U.S. Department of Interior for details. Link: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>
- **Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)** — tax credits for the acquisition, rehabilitation, or new construction of rental housing targeted to lower-income households.
- **Tax Abatement** — a decrease in the assessed valuation of a property resulting in a reduction in the yearly real estate taxes for a specified period of time.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** — allows local governments to invest in public infrastructure and other improvements up-front. Local governments can then pay later for those investments.
- **Transportation Development Districts (TDD)** — a special-purpose district created for the purpose of coordinating and financing transportation infrastructure improvement programs, particularly road construction projects in specific areas.

Local, State and National Programs & Resources

HUD Grants

CITY OF ROANOKE HUD ENTITLEMENT GRANTS RECOMMENDED 2022-2023 ANNUAL PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the fiscal year beginning July, 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 (FY 22-23) The City of Roanoke anticipates receiving approximately \$ 2.7 million in new entitlement funds annually from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in three grants: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships (HOME) and Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG).

According to reports:

“For the 2022 Annual Plan, HUD did not announce the entitlement allocations to states and local governments until May 13, 2022 due to a delay in Congress in passing an omnibus spending bill that funded US Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is why the Annual plan process could not run concurrently with the City’s budget approval process. This year’s HUD Annual Plan is set for a 30 day comment period beginning May 23, 2022 and concluding June 22, 2022. City Council will hold a public hearing on June 6, 2022 and adopt a plan on June 20, 2022, with the plan submitted to HUD once the 30 day comment period is complete.”

Read more here: <https://www.roanokeva.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17508/2022-2023-City-HUD-Plan-Summary?bidid=>

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

During the pandemic period, the Roanoke Region Small Business Development Center (SBDC) reported its 2020 economic impact regional reach in the following ways:

- SBDC’s clients generated \$7b in local small business sales
- Helped access \$15m in new capital to help client businesses recover and grow
- Create 145 new jobs
- 22 SBDC clients started businesses during the pandemic
- Demographics of SBDC advising clients:
 - 51% women
 - 18% minorities
 - 6% vets
 - 1722 total clients served in 2020

Although the SBDC does not have the funding for a separate Gainsboro Office at this time, they are committed to the neighborhood and supportive of the efforts of local leaders and entrepreneurs who are doing a tremendous job organizing black-owned businesses. The SBDC has a minority business specialist; and they are open to holding meetings again in the Gainsboro neighborhood as well as provide support services to the community leadership to further support community vitality efforts. In addition to providing entrepreneurship development support, they are offering to provide record keeping and other administrative support services as needs arise. The SBDC is also connected to the Advancement Foundation and is willing to make a special Gainsboro push on the Gauntlet Program run by the Foundation.

Read about SBDC services and resources here: <https://www.roanokesmallbusiness.org>

Total Action for Progress (TAP)

TAP helps people achieve economic and personal independence through education (all ages), employment training, financial services, affordable housing, domestic violence prevention, family services, and healthy environments.

According to reports, over the last 57 years TAP has:

- reached out annually to more than 5,000 low-income people to help them toward self-sufficiency through education and employment, housing, financial services, domestic violence prevention and assistance, and family services?
- provided a Head Start experience for more than 32,565 children
- helped 10,308 youth and adults to secure jobs
- provided remedial education opportunities for 7,505 youth and adults who had dropped out of school
- filed more than 3,500 tax returns free for low-income Virginians, helping them claim over \$2.6 million in Earned-Income Tax Credit
- kept over 8,000 families warm through weatherization services?
- providing close to 200 entrepreneurs with loans to start new local businesses. provide guidance, business start-up assistance, and loans through our Business Seed Capital, Inc. (BSCI) program
- started Legal Aid, the League of Older Americans (now the Local Office on Aging), RADAR, Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank (now Feeding Southwest Virginia), Project Discovery, Virginia CARES, and CHIP
- worked with the Northwest Neighborhood Improvement Council to start the Harrison Museum of African American Culture
- partnered with the Health Department and local neighborhood organizations to host local vaccination clinics, providing first-dose and booster shots to Roanoke citizens right in their neighborhoods
- partnered with state and local governments to provide more than 1,400 individuals in 450 households with rent relief services when the pandemic affected their income

Find more here: <https://tapintohope.org/2022/01/20/op-ed-imagine-the-valley-without-tap-by-craig-balzer/>

DIVERSITY, CULTURAL ARTS & INCLUSIVE PLACEMAKING

Cultural Arts and Placemaking can transform communities and powerfully influence economies beyond what bricks and mortar can achieve. Here are a few sources to incent community investment and improvements.

PPS | Project for Public Spaces

PPS has developed *The Power of 10+* to evaluate and facilitate Placemaking to show how paying attention to the human experience when building a city's destinations and districts can have immediate and widespread impacts.

“The idea behind this concept is that places thrive when users have a range of reasons (10+) to be there. These might include a place to sit, playgrounds to enjoy, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience, and people to meet. Ideally, some of these activities will be unique to that particular place, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community. Local residents who use this space most regularly will be the best source of ideas for which uses will work best.”

Place design, or the lack thereof, has a powerful impact on a community and its economy. For more ideas, resources and grant opportunities, Link: <https://www.pps.org/community-placemaking-grants>

LISC | Creative Placemaking

LISC (Local Initiative Support Corporation) works with area residents and partners to create resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity. In partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), LISC has implemented **Creative Placemaking** - - where “the arts, culture, and design can be leveraged to spark dialogue, promote economic development, and catalyze the systemic changes social change our communities need to prosper. “ Creative Placemaking is an iterative process of “design thinking” that involves: GATHER, IMAGINE, DISCOVER, DESIGN & REFINE, ACTION, RESULTS, and RENEW.

For funding support, fellowships, grants and other resources, Link:

<https://www.lisc.org/our-initiatives/creative-placemaking/main/creative-placemaking-toolkit/funding/>

NAR | National Association of Realtors

Outreach Placemaking Grants fund state and local REALTOR® association projects that create new, outdoor public spaces and destinations in a community on unused or underused sites. Examples of funded projects include: Parklets, Pocket Parks, Ally Activities, Trails & Pedestrian Paths, Community Gardens, Playgrounds & Fitness Areas, and Dog Parks. For more information,

For more information, Link: <https://www.nar.realtor/grants/placemaking-grant> AND

<https://realtorparty.realtor/community-outreach/placemaking#:~:text=Placemaking%20Grants%20fund%20state%20and,on%20unused%20or%20underused%20sites.>

NEA | National Endowment for the Arts

OUR TOWN is NEA’s creative placemaking project-based funding program that requires a partnership between a local government entity and nonprofit organization, one of which must be a cultural organization; and should engage in partnership with other sectors (e.g., agriculture and food, economic development, education and youth, environment and energy, health, housing, public safety, transportation, workforce development). Projects must demonstrate a specific role for arts, culture, and design as a part of strategies that strengthen communities by advancing local economic, physical, and/or social outcomes with evidence of change.

Grants range from \$25,000 to \$150,000, with a minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount. For more information, Link: <https://www.arts.gov/grants/our-town/program-description>

AARP | Community Challenge

“Livable Communities” are Age-Friendly

Approximately 45 million Americans are age 65 or older. By 2030, that number will reach 73 million Americans. At that point, fully one in five Americans will be older than 65. By 2034, the United States will — for the first time ever — be a country comprised of more older adults than of children. AARP Livable Communities supports the efforts of neighborhoods, towns, cities and rural areas to be great places for people of all ages. We believe that communities should provide safe, walkable streets; age-friendly housing and transportation options; access to needed services; and opportunities for residents of all ages to participate in community life.

For additional information and funding requirements, Link:

<https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/about/info-2017/aarp-community-challenge.html>

IOBY | In Our Backyard

A crowd-resourcing platform for community projects.

IOBY connects leaders with funding and support to make neighborhoods safer, greener, more livable and more fun. Ioby believes that it should be easy to make meaningful change “in our backyards” – the positive opposite of NIMBY. This gives everyone the ability to organize all kinds of capital—cash, social networks, in-kind donations, volunteer time, advocacy—from within the neighborhood to make the neighborhood a better place to live.

For additional information and funding requirements, Link: <https://ioby.org/>

AMP | Levitt Pavilions

The Levitt Foundation exists to strengthen the social fabric of America, believing thriving public spaces are key to healthy communities. Building community with performing arts.

Levitt is passionate about reinvigorating America’s public spaces through creative placemaking and creating opportunities for everyone to experience the performing arts. They believe the world needs more “third places”, guiding their community-driven efforts.

Levitt Pavilions invests in community-driven efforts that harness the power of partnership and leverage community support for creative placemaking that reimagines challenged public spaces—neglected parks, vacant downtown lots, former brownfields—into vibrant, music-filled community hubs. Primary funding areas include Levitt venues and the Levitt AMP [Your City] Grant Awards. Both of these programs embody our funding philosophy and exemplify Levitt core values to support projects that are catalytic and dynamic and promote joy, inclusivity and connectedness.

For additional information and funding requirements, Link: <https://levitt.org/what-we-fund/>

KRESGE FOUNDATION | ARTS AND CULTURE PROGRAM

The Kresge Foundation is a private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America’s cities through grantmaking and social investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development. In collaboration with partners, they help create pathways for people with low incomes to improve their life circumstances and join the economic mainstream.

Kresge’s **American Cities Program** supports the transformation of cities with on-the-ground community development practices advancing opportunity for access to quality, affordable housing; vibrant, connected neighborhoods; meaningful workforce preparation and employment opportunities; and reliable public transit. For more information, Link: <https://kresge.org/our-work/american-cities/>

Kresge’s **Environment Program** helps cities combat and adapt to climate change while advancing racial and economic equity. For more information, Link: <https://kresge.org/our-work/environment/> and <https://kresge.org/our-work/environment/#funding>

Kresge’s Equitable Creative Placemaking

The Kresge Foundation sees art and culture as no less than “drivers of more just communities.”

Kresge has multiple funding opportunities for placemakers using the arts as a tool for more equitable communities: a grant focused on creative placemaking for healthy and inclusive communities; as well as a grant to strengthen the narrative around equity as part of the practice of creative placemaking. By inviting applicants who combine art-forward approaches with the recognition of complex community histories and structural inequality, Kresge’s funding opportunities support a truly transformative approach to creative placemaking. For more information, Link: <https://kresge.org/our-work/arts-culture/>

LOVE YOUR BLOCK, CITIES OF SERVICE

Helping City Leaders engage their citizens to build stronger communities.

Using a uniquely municipality-led approach to placemaking partnerships, the Cities of Service Love Your Block program drives collective problem-solving and civic engagement at the local scale. In this program, Cities of Service equips city officials with the tools they need to engage with placemakers and create “mini-grant” opportunities that lead to sustained, “volunteer-fueled” impact. By supporting city leaders through an inclusive placemaking process, the program supports local stewardship and offers city officials new opportunities for the type of deep listening needed to enhance social equity through public spaces. For more information: <https://citiesofservice.jhu.edu/>

NATIONAL MAIN STREET CENTER

Aimed at transforming Main Streets to “revive local economies, bring communities together, and forge the future for cities and towns across the country.” National Main Street Center is also a funding partner, backing cross-cutting projects through grants like the *Future of Shopping Small Grant Program*. For more information, Link: <https://www.mainstreet.org/home>

PARTNERS FOR PLACES, FUNDERS’ NETWORK

Partners for Places is a matching grant program administered by the Funders’ Network, aimed at forging new partnerships through community projects that promote environmental sustainability, health, and a strong local economy. The network’s curated lists of past projects highlight sustainability-focused initiatives that often intersect with public space projects, among other focus areas. By building partnerships between local government sustainability leaders and place-based foundations, the matching grant program creates vital links at the community level, strengthening collaboration between national funders and local stakeholders and organizations. For more information, Link: <https://www.fundersnetwork.org/partners-for-places/>

Cities for People is an initiative with the core proposition that cities can be made more resilient and livable through innovation networks. By linking local efforts across the country with those taking place in other parts of the world, a culture of continuous social innovation and deeper collaboration can be fostered. For more information, Link: <https://mcconnellfoundation.ca/initiative/cities-for-people/>

KNIGHT FOUNDATION

Knight Cities Challenge: “Idea” grants at all levels, block, neighborhood, and city

CALGARY FOUNDATION

Neighborhood Grants: Grassroots grants up to \$5,000 supporting resident-led projects

Neighbour Grants is the Calgary Foundation’s original grassroots granting program, offering grants since 1999 with five cycles each year. The program has helped people do many different things, such as build a community garden at their local park, gather to celebrate the artistic talents of local youth, create a traffic-calming pavement painting in front of their school, engage their cultural community in creative ways to address community priorities, and develop a community plan to guide neighborhood redevelopment. For more information, Link:

<https://calgaryfoundation.org/grantsawards-loans/types-of-grants/community-grants/>

ROANOKE: Planning Foundation

Key Components

CITY PLAN 2040

Roanoke's comprehensive plan serves as a vision and guide for area growth and the foundation for City policy decisions and informs the direction of other component plans that support the comprehensive plan such as the plans for specific neighborhood and special topics (i.e., greenways, bikeways, libraries, arts and culture, and public art.)

VISION

According to the plan, in 2040 Roanoke will be:

- *A city that considers equity in each of its policies and provides opportunity for all, regardless of background.*
- *A city that ensures the health and safety of every community member.*
- *A city that understands its natural assets and prioritizes sustainable innovation.*
- *A city that interweaves design, services, and amenities to provide high livability.*
- *A city that collaborates with its neighbors to improve regional quality of life.*
- *A city that promotes sustainable growth through targeted development of industry, business, and workforce.*

See the complete City Plan 2030 here: <https://planroanoke.org/city-plan-2040/>

Themes

City Plan 2040 is grounded in six planning principles and priorities the City believes are necessary to ensure a sustainable community that addresses environmental, social, and economic well-being.

- Interwoven Equity
 - Trust
 - Break the Cycle of Poverty
 - Neighborhood Choice
 - Inclusive Culture
 - Service Delivery
- Healthy Community
 - Wellness
 - Safety
 - Access to Health and Supportive Services
 - Access to Affordable Healthy Food

City Plan 2040 planning principles and priorities, continued ...

- Harmony with Nature
 - Sustainable Land Development
 - Tree Stewardship
 - Water Resource Management
 - Clean Energy and Transportation
 - Outdoor Recreation
 - Clean and Beautiful City
 - Green Convenience

- Livable Built Environment
 - Growth Through Preservation and Context Sensitive Design
 - Complete Neighborhoods
 - Interactive Spaces
 - Housing
 - Arts and Culture
 - Interconnected Transportation System
 - Complete Streets
 - Improve Infrastructure

- Responsible Regionalism
 - Regional Collaboration
 - Plan and Think Regionally

- Resilient Economy
 - Promote Broad Diversity in Economy Roanoke
 - Establish Stronger Economic Ties to our Regional Partners
 - Conversion of Underperforming Commercial and Industrial Areas
 - Local Business Development
 - Align Economic Development with Workforce Development Systems
 - Support Local Community Development

Supplement to the comprehensive plan, additional criteria for community development can be found in the street design guidelines, urban design manual, architectural guidelines, neighborhood architectural standards, and the residential pattern book.

Link here: <https://www.roanokeva.gov/2020/Plans>

Highlights of Prior Plans that informed *City Plan 2040*

Like *City Plan 2040*, Roanoke's previous comprehensive plan *Vision 2001-2020* also contained the *Gainsboro Neighborhood Plan 2003*. Of particular note and impact:

“Like many inner-city neighborhoods in America, the Gainsboro community continues to deal with the consequences of the urban renewal programs of the 1960s and 70s that displaced many families and businesses. The general sentiment today in America, and in Gainsboro, is that urban renewal was something done to the community instead of with the community. One of the main purposes of this plan is to ensure that the community is involved in determining its own future and that the community's goals and interests are reflected in future development, ultimately leading to a better and more vibrant Gainsboro.”

Link here for full 2003 report: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Gainsboro-.pdf>

The *Gainsboro Neighborhood Plan 2003* outlines several critical factors for the community and highlights from the plan are excerpt below:

COMMUNITY VALUES: Through the workshops and input from residents, the following general values were agreed upon:

- Encourage increased homeownership levels in the neighborhood.
- Protect the architectural character of the neighborhood. New buildings should respect the existing neighborhood character with respect to scale and design. Existing residential areas should be protected from encroachment by commercial uses.
- Encourage continuing personal development through educational, cultural and historical resources.
- Ensure that all residents and owners responsibly maintain their properties.
- Promote a safe, crime-free environment for those who live, work, and play in the neighborhood.
- Welcome diverse nationalities, races, ages, and income levels.

PLANNING CRITERIA: Discussion was organized around six key neighborhood planning elements:

- Community Design - looks at physical design features and land use patterns.
- Residential Development - addresses existing and new housing opportunities.
- Economic Development - deals with commercial and industrial development in the neighborhood.
- Infrastructure - evaluates transportation systems and utility systems such as water, sewer, and storm drainage.
- Public Services - assesses fire/EMS, police and other city services.
- Quality of Life - addresses recreational opportunities, environmental issues, education, and community development.

Gainsboro Neighborhood Plan 2003, continued ...

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES approved by Council for implementation shall focus on:

- Housing Development - Comprehensive, community-endorsed housing strategy promoting rehabilitation, maintenance, infill development, and increased home ownership.
- Conservation - Zoning changes needed to establish future land use patterns and architectural design standards that will protect the character of the neighborhood. Obtain historic designations for promotion of rehab and infill development.
- Capacity Building - Collaboration among the various neighborhood-based organizations to ensure open communication and awareness of development projects.
- Infrastructure - Traffic management and street design (traffic calming, sidewalks, curbing, open space, etc.)

LAND USE & ZONING

According to the 2003 report, the land use in Gainsboro is diverse and the zoning patterns generally reflect the existing land uses. At that time, it was (and likely still is) mostly single-family residential, though the neighborhood has pockets of high-density residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

East of Gainsboro Road, the subject focus of this concept plan, is predominantly zoned Light Manufacturing (LM) with some commercial uses to the north and southern boundaries with Central Business District (C-3) in the center.

The major uses in this northern area were, and still are, Holiday Inn Express, YMCA, contractor supply warehouses, and Roanoke Catholic School among others. The southeast portion of the neighborhood is mainly zoned Central Business District (C-3) and Residential Multifamily (RM-2) with Light Manufacturing (LM) along Centre Ave. This southern portion of Gainsboro still east of Gainsboro Rd and just north of central downtown contains major institutional uses including Gainsboro Library, Hotel Roanoke, the Higher Education Center, First Baptist Church, and the Dumas Center mixed among the single detached homes of the Historic Gainsboro District and Our Lady of the Valley retirement community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Henry Street Village Center

Village Centers were recommended in the *Vision 2001-2020* Comprehensive Plan as an economic development strategy to create area specific resources for walkable communities and strengthen neighborhoods from within. ***“Henry Street was once Gainsboro's village center and, in its prime, was a major economic hub for the region's African Americans. During the days of racial segregation, it was one of the few places where African Americans had access to essential goods and services as well as entertainment.”***

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - Henry Street Village Center, continued ...

It was the intention of The Outlook Roanoke downtown plan to build upon the success of the Higher Education Center and other area efforts with Roanoke Neighborhood Development Corporation to create the Henry Street Initiative. Some investment and restoration has since evolved from this earlier vision, and much has not. The renovation of Lincoln Theater / Ebony Club has been incorporated into an adaptive reuse and new expansion that now houses the The Al Pollard Culinary Arts Program.

Claytor Property

The vacant Claytor properties between Patton and Gilmer Avenues were once the sites of the family owned medical clinic and the residential mansion and were proposed for multiple uses such as multifamily residential, live-work, or lower-intensity commercial uses. The current zoning is Central Business District (C-3), and new zoning could support uses and building scales appropriate for yet another village center. Unfortunately, the lands have remained undeveloped and unoccupied except for an encampment of homeless individuals in the heavily wooded segment in the center of the block of the Claytor parcel.

Link here for full 2003 report: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Gainsboro-.pdf>

CONSERVATION ZONE

The City of Roanoke established Conservation and Rehabilitation Zones to encourage the preservation and improvement of properties within these districts.

Of the two designations, the conservation districts are comprised of older properties and contain all of the local historic districts and most of the national register districts within the City. Partial tax exemption is one of the incentives that is allowed in these districts that are in need of investment, revitalization and stability.

For more information, Link: <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title58.1/chapter32/section58.1-3219.4/>

Land Use Types

- **Neighborhood Commercial** - Low impact services to serve the local neighborhood that are consistent with the Community Plan design guidelines.
- **Neighborhood Institutional Centers** - Uses that serve the neighborhood residents including parks, schools, religious assembly facilities, recreational and park facilities, community meeting areas and clubs. These facilities should be linked to the residential areas by greenways, bike trails and pedestrian paths.
- **Single-Family Residential** - Attached and detached housing at a reasonable density that is not significantly higher than the existing neighborhood. Infill lots or community redevelopment should be designed to be sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood but can be at reasonably higher density. New single-family residential developments should incorporate greenways and bike and pedestrian trails. Cluster developments are encouraged.

Source: website <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/1949/Neighborhood-Conservation>

GAINSBORO DISTRICT: Economic Context & Market Assessment

ENTERPRISE ZONES: - Gainsboro

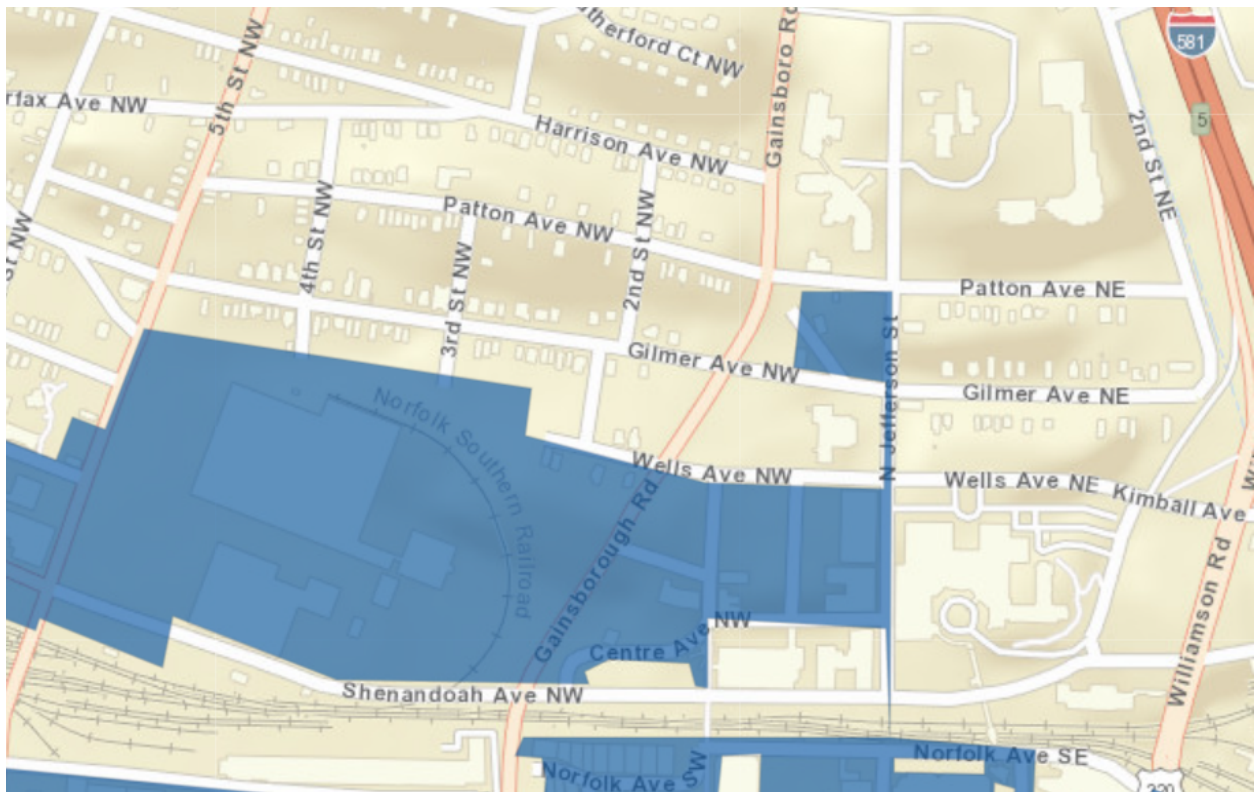
An **urban enterprise zone** is an area where policies are implemented to encourage economic growth and development; and generally offer tax concessions, infrastructure incentives, and reduced regulations to attract investments and private companies in the zones.

There are enterprise zones in the Roanoke Region offering incentives for business locations, expansions, and development. Qualified businesses and/or property owners in a zone are eligible for state and local grants based on job creation and/or investment in real property. Refer to Roanoke Regional Partnership for requirements and incentives.

Link here:

<https://roanoke.org/advantages/incentives/enterprise-zones/#:~:text=The%20Roanoke%20Region%20includes%20two,or%20investment%20in%20real%20property>

A portion of Gainsboro - - lands between N Jefferson and 5th St NW, Wells Ave NW and Shenandoah Ave NW, plus the Claytor land in the 400 block - - falls within such a designated zone.



Overview from Roanoke Regional Partnership site:

State Incentives

Two grant-based incentives are available from the Commonwealth of Virginia: job creation grants and real property investment grants.

Job Creation Grants are based on:

- Permanent full-time job creation over a four job threshold, exceeding wage thresholds and making health benefits available.
- The amount of the grant will be based on the wages paid for grant-eligible positions in eligible industries.

Link: <https://roanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/JCG-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Real Property Investment Grants are based on:

- Investments made to a commercial, industrial, or mixed-use building or facility;
- An investment greater than \$100,000 for rehabilitation projects. Grants issued for up to 20 percent of anything spent in excess of \$100,000.
- An investment of greater than \$500,000 for new construction. Grants issued for up to 20 percent of anything spent in excess of \$500,000.
- Grants capped at \$100,000 per building or facility for investments less than \$5 million, and \$200,000 for investments of \$5 million or more.

Link: <https://roanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/RPIG-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Local Incentives

City of Roanoke Enterprise Zone

- Job Grants: Businesses taking advantage of job training assistance from the Virginia Department of Business Assistance also may be eligible for job training grants from the City of Roanoke.
- Partial Real Estate Tax Exemption of Rehabilitated Buildings: Available when rehabilitation increases the assessed value of an existing commercial, industrial or commercial mixed-use property.
- Facade Grant Program: Rebates one-third of the cost of façade renovations up to \$25,000.
- Development Fees Rebates: Available in proportion to the amount of investment.
- Water, Fire, Sewer Hookup Fees Rebates: Based on the amount of overall investment.
- Business Security Grant: By participating in the Roanoke Police Department Star City Business Watch program, businesses may receive up to \$500 to incorporate police-recommended security measures.
- Neighborhood and Parks Grant: Available to neighborhood organizations for improving gateway features, signage, or overall beautification efforts.

Link: <https://www.bizroanoke.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Enterprise-Zone-One-A-Application-Packet-2019.pdf>

OPPORTUNITY ZONES

An **Opportunity Zone** is a designation and investment program created by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 allowing for certain investments in lower income areas to have tax advantages.

According to the Roanoke Regional Partnership:

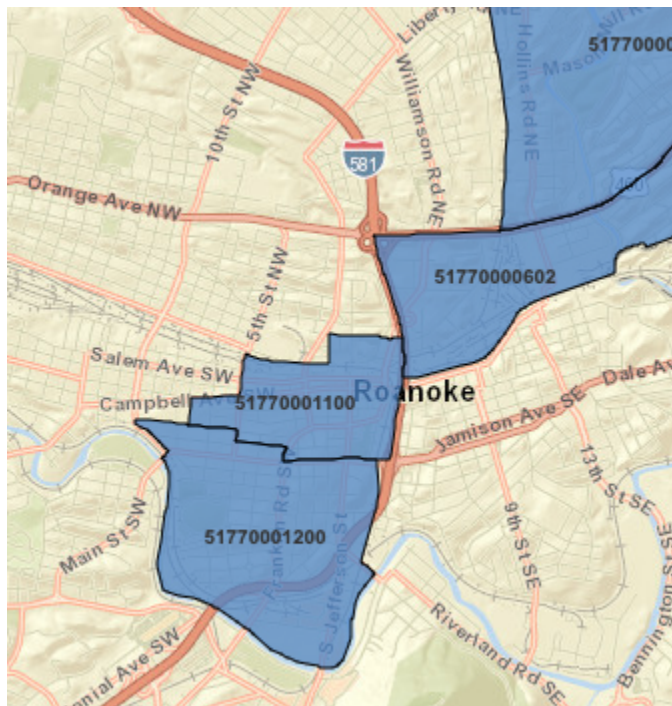
Through the federal Opportunity Zone program, banks, communities, investors, companies, and others may create Opportunity Funds to direct tax-advantaged investments to one of several opportunity zones in the Roanoke Region of Virginia.

- The primary benefit of investing in an Opportunity Fund is a temporary deferral of capital gains taxes until December 31, 2026, as long as the Opportunity Zone investment is maintained until that date.
- Secondly, there is a step-up in basis for capital gains reinvested in an Opportunity Fund. The basis is increased by 10 percent if investment in the Opportunity Fund is held by the taxpayer for at least five years and an additional 5 percent if held for at least seven years.
- Lastly, a permanent exclusion of capital gains from the sale or exchange of an investment in an Opportunity Fund applies if the investment is held for at least 10 years.

Link: <https://roanoke.org/real-estate/opportunity-zones-in-the-roanoke-region-of-virginia/>

A portion of Gainsboro falls within the Census Tract 11 OZ ##51770001100

Link: <https://opportunitydb.com/zones/51770001100/>



Census Tract 11, Roanoke, Virginia

Overview:

Census Tract 11 is a **Non-LIC Contiguous** Opportunity Zone located in **Roanoke, Virginia**. This **0.4 square mile** census tract has a population of approximately **1,400** and is one of 4 Opportunity Zones in **Roanoke city**.

Description of boundaries AND those within Gainsboro. Of the are within Gainsboro, the following exists:

- North Edge: From Interstate 581 west on Kimball Ave / Wells Ave NE south to Henry Street NW / 1st Street turning west along Norfolk Southern railroad tracks to 5th Street
- West Edge: 5th Street @ NSRR south to Campbell Ave SW turning west to 7th St SW south to Marshall Ave SW
- South Edge: Marshall Ave SW east to 5th St Sw south to Day Ave SW east to Franklin Rd SW, Franklin Rd SW south to Elm Ave SW east to Interstate 581
- East Edge: Interstate 581

Demographics:

- **Median Income:** This Opportunity Zone has a **median household income** of approximately **\$51,000**, which is slightly above the City median income, and **33% lower** than the median household income for the state of Virginia of **\$76,000**.
- **Poverty Rate:** The percentage of households below the poverty line in this Opportunity Zone is **21%**, which is **11% higher** than the rate for the state of Virginia of **9.9%** and on average for the City of Roanoke overall.
- **Median Home Value:** This Opportunity Zone has a **median home value** of approximately **\$850,000**, which is **193% higher** than the median home value for the state of Virginia of **\$290,000**; and over 6 times that of the City of Roanoke.
- **Education:** This Opportunity Zone has a **percentage of population with a high school diploma** of approximately **89%**, which is on par (82/88) for the City of Roanoke AND **1% lower** than the rate for the state of Virginia of **90%**.
- **Median Age:** This Opportunity Zone has a **median age** of approximately **32**, which is **18% lower** than the median age for the state of Virginia of **39** and Roanoke City of **38**.

Link: <https://roanoke.org/roanoke-region-opportunity-zones-investment-prospectus/city-of-roanoke-opportunity-zones/>

BROADER NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

- Census Tract: BG-1 001100, BG-2 002500
- Conservation & Rehab: Conservation
- Enterprise Zone: Zone 1A
- Opportunity Zone: east of Henry Street and south of Wells Avenue
- Zoning: Downtown (D), Commercial-Neighborhood (CN), and Residential Mixed Density (RM-1)
- Historic District: H-2 Gainsboro
- National Register: Gainsboro District
- Design Overlay: Neighborhood Design District (NDD)
- Neighborhood Planning: Gainsboro
- Neighborhood Organizations: Downtown and Gainsboro Southwest
- Public Facilities: Gainsboro Court Library

CENSUS TRACTS



NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING



NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

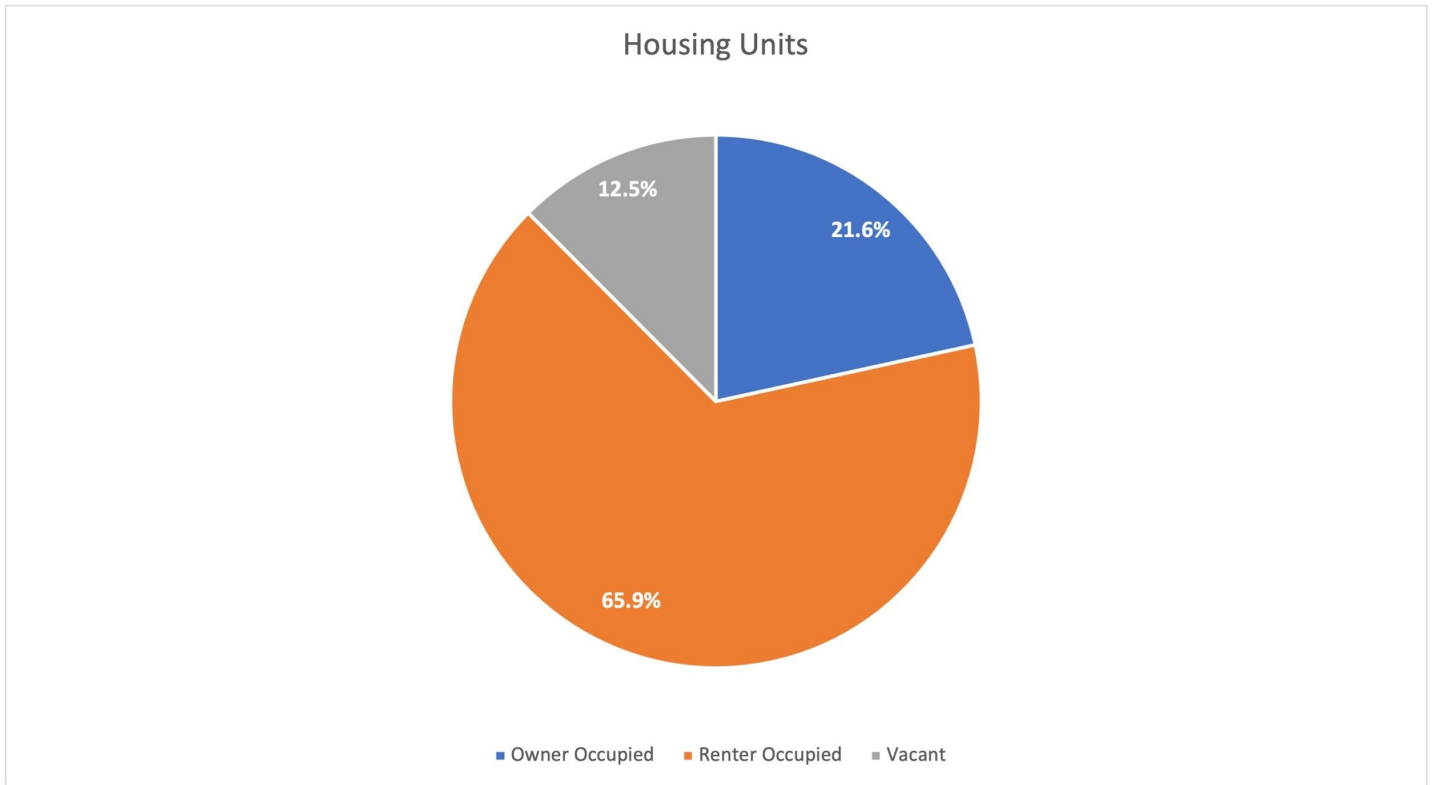


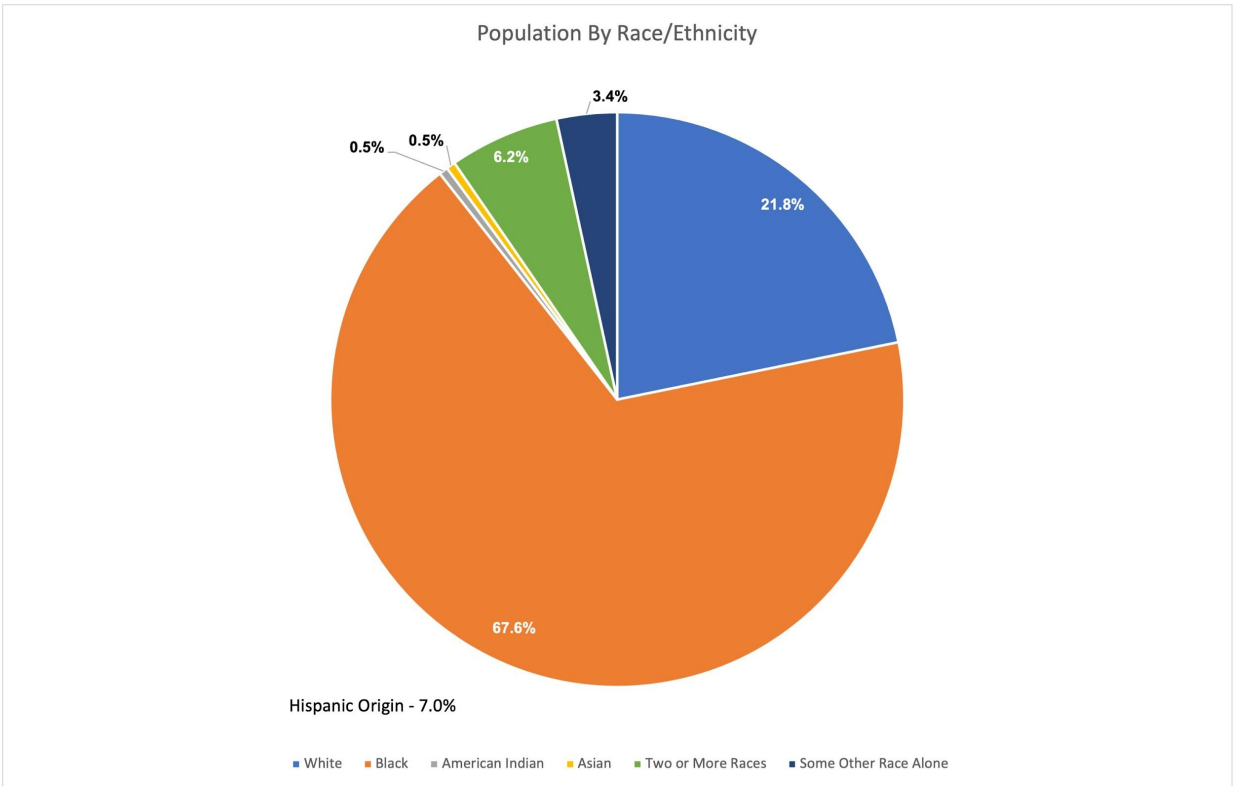
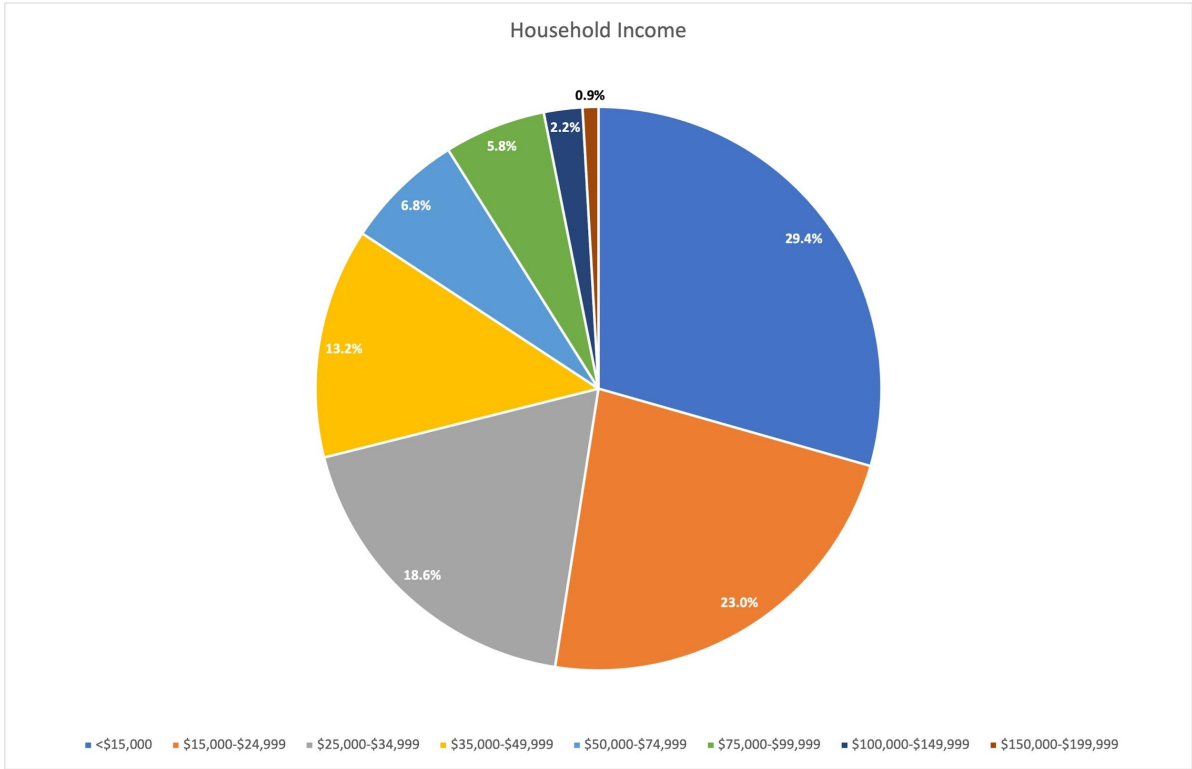
BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE BROADER NEIGHBORHOOD

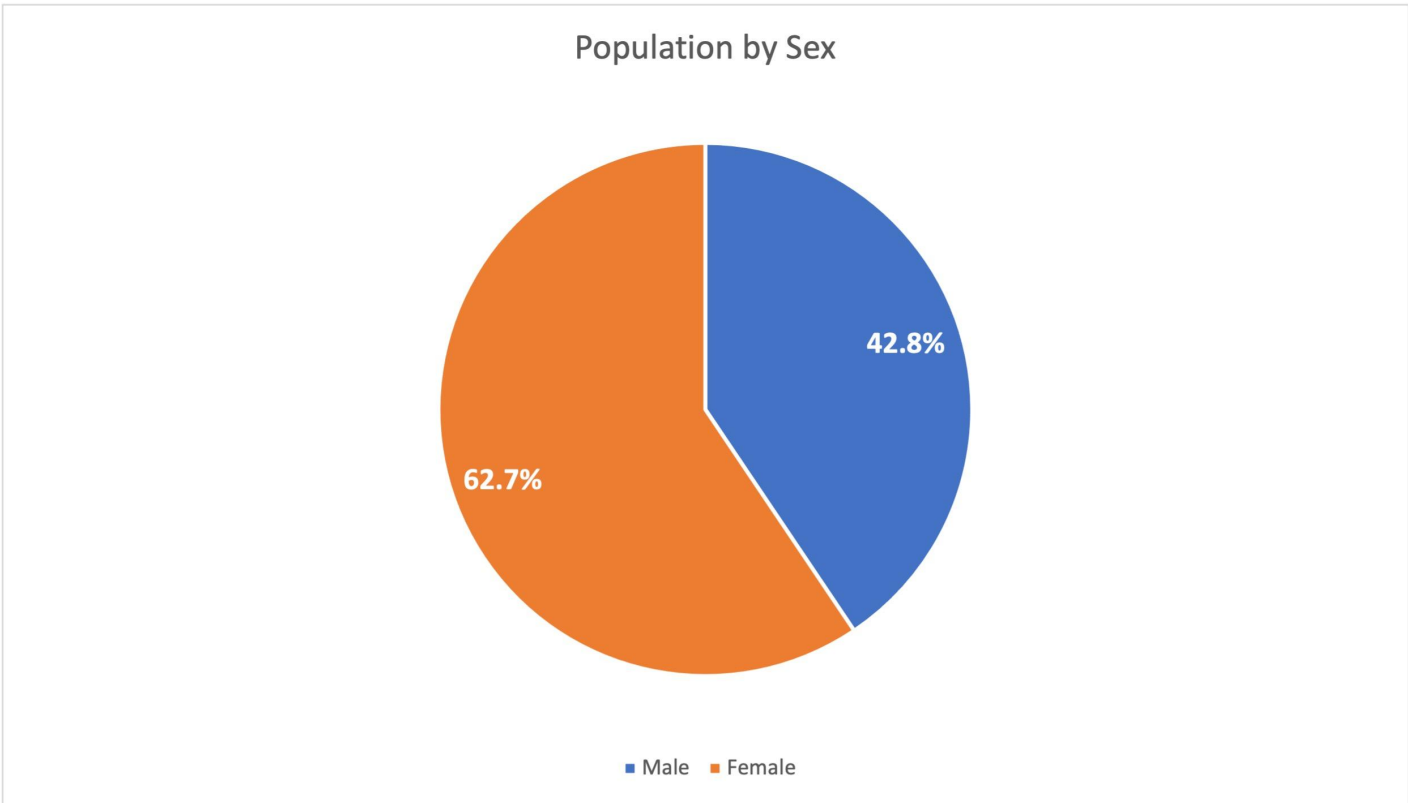
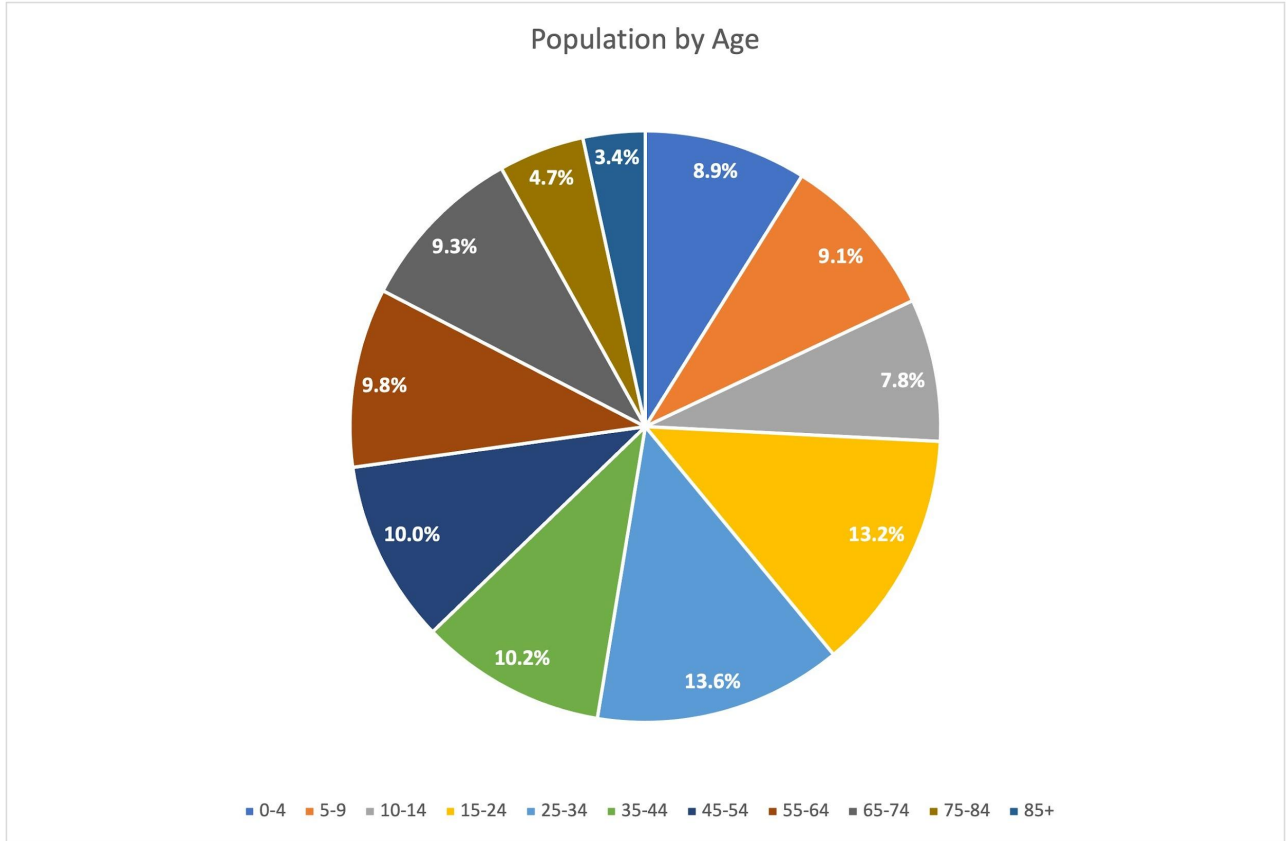
As reported in the US Census (2020) and ESRI (2022), the Gainsboro area has a population of over 2800 persons with a median age of 33 years; and nearly 1200 households with a median income of approximately \$23,500. Demographic reports indicate residents are predominantly black (68%) and female (63%); though it is unknown how these statistics are represented among the age groups or household composition. One two-thirds of the houses are renter-occupied (65.9%) and the remaining third are owner-occupied (21.6%) and vacant (12.5%).

DEMOGRAPHICS

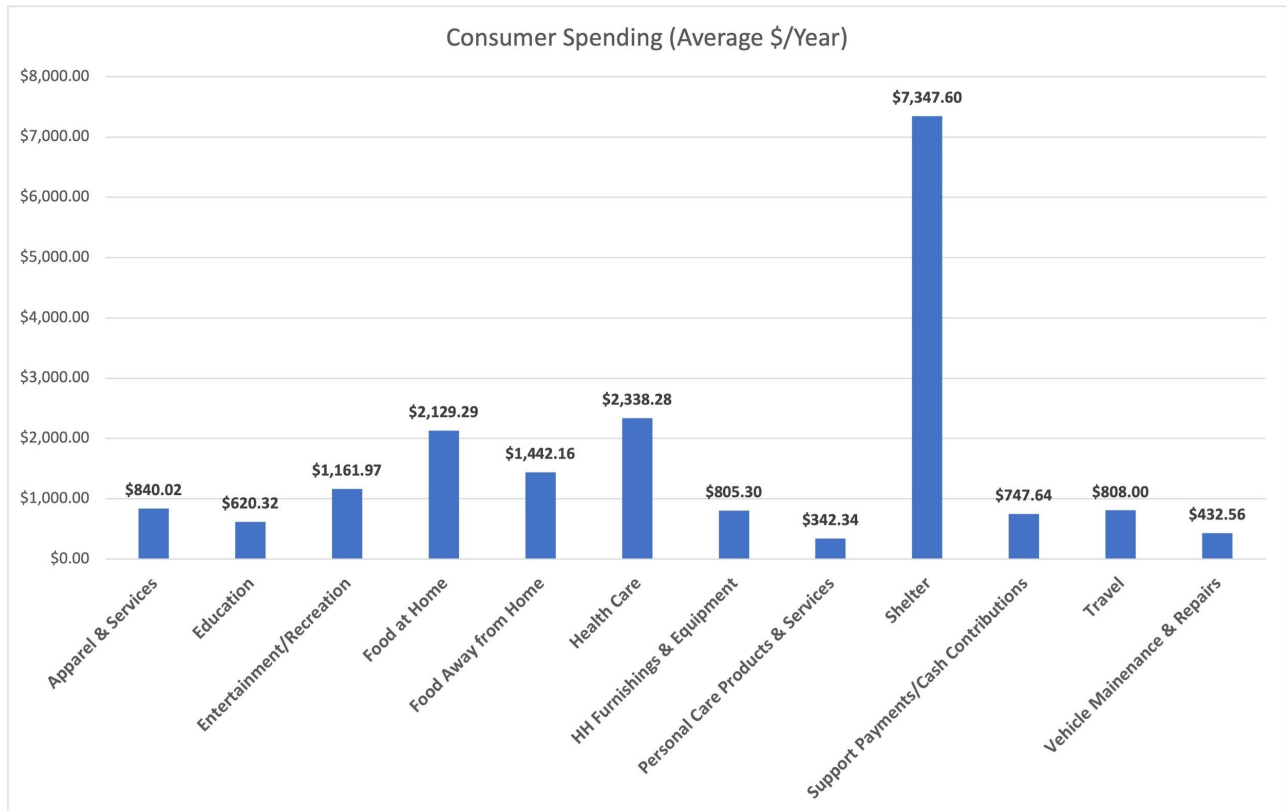
Total Population	2,834
Total Households	1,159
Average Household Size	2.34
Median Age	32.8
Median Household Income	\$23,470
Median Home Value	\$93,307







Aside from the typical household and family expenses such as shelter, food and healthcare, consumer spending statistics indicate that area residents are moderate purchasers of food away from home and entertainment/recreation. Apparel, home furnishings and travel are the next largest expenditures.



CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS OVERVIEW

Total Businesses in District	51
Total Employees in District	842
Service Businesses (32)	62.7%
Retail Trade Businesses (6)	11.8%
Construction Businesses (3)	5.9%
Wholesale Trade Businesses (1)	2.0%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Businesses (2)	3.9%
Manufacturing Businesses (0)	0.0%

LIFESTYLE ANALYSIS

The ESRI’s Tapestry Lifestyle Analysis provides an overview of the residents of the neighborhood, what they enjoy doing and how they live their lives. With this information, we can ascertain what types of businesses have the best chance of success and what the potential customer base looks like for the neighborhood.

Below are the two lifestyle segments for the Gainsboro U.S. census tract. These two segments account for 100% of the population of the Gainsboro census tract population:

Tapestry Segmentation	% of Census Tract Population	Percent of U.S. Household Population
City Commons	67.6%	0.9%
Modest Income Homes	32.4%	1.2%

** More detailed information regarding the Lifestyle segments are included at the end of this report.

Lifestyle Impressions Relevant to the Gainsboro Neighborhood:

City Commons (67.6%):

- Although some have college degrees, nearly a quarter have not graduated from high school
- Labor force participation is low at 53%
- Most households receive income from wages or salaries, with nearly one in four that receive contributions from Social Security (Index 287) and public assistance
- Consumers endeavor to keep up with the latest fashion trends
- Many families prefer the convenience of fast-food restaurants to cooking at home

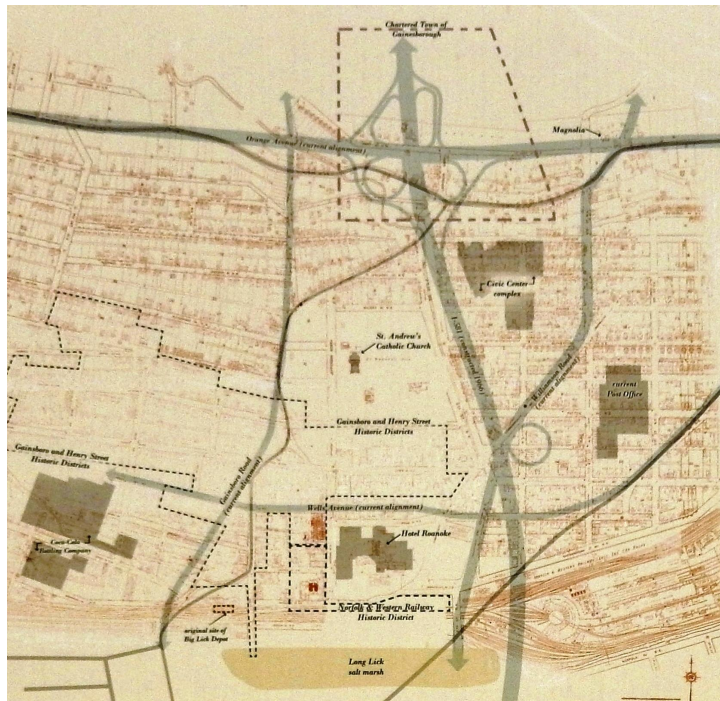
Modest Income Homes (32.4%):

- Almost a quarter of adults aged 25 or more have no high school diploma
- Labor force participation is 50%
- Income is less than half of the US median income
- Consumers in this market consider traditional gender roles and religious faith very important
- This market lives for today, choosing to save only for a specific purpose
- Consumers favor TV as their media of choice and will purchase a product with a celebrity endorsement

GAINSBORO DISTRICT: Community Context

HISTORY / Time Continuum

Much has been written about the past of this community so we will highlight a few points here, and make reference to other documents that can better serve.



[Image Source: db.org/Photos5/503/Photo503781o.jpg]

Gainsboro's history and character make it one of the city's strongest and most distinctive neighborhoods. The name Gainesborough (later shortened to Gainsboro) formerly referred to an area that was centered on the present intersection of Orange Avenue and Williamson Road. Developer William Rowland laid out the area and it was named after its founder and financier, Major Kemp Gaines. The Town of Gainesborough was incorporated in 1835. When the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad arrived in 1852, it passed to the south of Gainesborough. Commerce and population began to move south toward the railroad in the area of downtown and the present-day Gainsboro neighborhood. This new settlement was called Big Lick and the older areas were referred to as Old Lick. Old Lick became a predominantly African American community. Old Lick and Big Lick eventually became Roanoke in 1882. Most of the development in what is now the Gainsboro neighborhood occurred between 1890 and 1940. Beginning in the 1920s, the Gainsboro neighborhood transformed from a predominantly white residential neighborhood to a predominantly African American community, with its own institutions, businesses, and leaders. Gainsboro is noted for its development between 1900 and 1920, when Henry Street became the cultural and commercial center of the African American community. Gainsboro in the 1930s was the center for Roanoke's minority businesses, public facilities, housing and services. More here: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Gainsboro-.pdf>

Gainsboro, Roanoke's oldest village, is part of the overall neighborhood fabric of Roanoke. Located just north of the City Market, Gainsboro is bounded on the north by Orange Avenue, on the west by 5th Street, on the east by I-581 Williamson Road, and on the south by the Norfolk Southern Railway tracks.

Histories tell that:

“Residents included teachers, doctors, ministers, nurses, small business operators, and artisans. The area is notable as one of the few places in the South where the African American community developed self-sufficient institutions and services such as a library, hospital, school, newspaper, and hotel . The area of Wells, Gilmer, and Patton Avenues and Henry Street played a key role in the growth and development of Roanoke. The area was home to one of the major railway systems in the United States and was selected as the site for the Hotel Roanoke. In the late 1800s, several major religious denominations built their first churches in the area.”

In addition to important landmark buildings, the neighborhood was home to several African Americans whose life achievements had an impact on our nation. Among them, Dr. J.H. Roberts, Dr. J.B. Claytor, Dr. S.F. Williman and Dr. L.C. Downing, all were residents of the Gainsboro community and all were founders of the Burrell Memorial Hospital. Originally located at 311 Henry Street, the hospital was chartered in 1915, and was one of the first to serve the African American community of the Roanoke Valley.

More here: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Gainsboro-.pdf>



Image Source: <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=142994>

A Gainsboro Timeline

- through early 1700s: Native hunters track game near area salt licks
- 1740s: first permanent settlers
- 1798: "Big Lick" postal station established
- 1835: Town of Gainesborough chartered
- 1852: Virginia and Tennessee railroad built through Roanoke Valley
- 1867: First Baptist Church (Colored) established
- 1874: Town of Big Lick chartered
- 1881: Shenandoah Valley Railroad arrives
- 1882: Big Lick becomes Roanoke
- 1882: Hotel Roanoke built
- 1902: existing St. Andrew's Church dedicated
- 1915: Burrell Memorial Hospital opens in house on Henry Street; first to serve blacks
- 1916: Roanoke NAACP founded
- 1917: Harrison School opens
- 1920s: heyday of Henry Street
- 1921: Gainsboro Library opens in Odd Fellows Hall
- 1921: Burrell Hospital moves to McDowell Avenue
- 1923: Strand Theater built
- 1928: Lucy Addison High School built
- 1941: current Gainsboro Library opens
- 1948: Claytor Memorial Clinic opens
- 1950s: Roanoke begins urban renewal efforts in Northeast
- 1958: Viscose Plant closes; mass layoffs at N&W Railway
- 1966: I-581 completed through Gainsboro
- 1968: Roanoke Civic Center construction
- 1971: Gainsboro Redevelopment Plan calls for redevelopment in Northwest area
- 1995: Gainsboro Road/Wells Avenue realignment
- 1996: Gainsboro Library on National Register
- 2004: Henry Street Historic District
- 2005: Gainsboro Historic District

.....
Read More History:

- https://assets.simpleviewinc.com/simpleview/image/upload/v1/clients/roanoke/AFAM-History-Tour95_8202c657-fc2d-4424-bccd-7b643a55bce3.pdf
- <https://roanokepreservation.org/historic-gainsboro-history-walk/>
- <https://www.visitroanokeva.com/things-to-do/history-and-heritage/black-history/historic-gainsboro-downtown-roanoke-tour/>
- <https://roanokepreservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AllSigns.pdf>
- <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=142993>
- <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=142994>

HISTORIC CONTEXT

That Was Then, This is Now

Once the catalytic and economic epicenter of black business and culture, the non-residential sections of Gainsboro are significantly void of community bustle, and much of the blocks surrounding the Henry Street and Claytor properties have become the home of large institutions and enterprises such as:

- Hotel Roanoke
- Center for Higher Education
- Claude Moore Education Complex
- Pollard Culinary Arts Program
- Total Action for Progress (TAP)

Other uses include:

- Gainsboro Public Library
- Large Churches and Lots
- Private Parochial School facilities
- Head Start School facility and playground
- Lawson Building (multi-tenant)
- Vacant Parcels belonging to churches, museums and miscellaneous property owners including city and redevelopment authorities

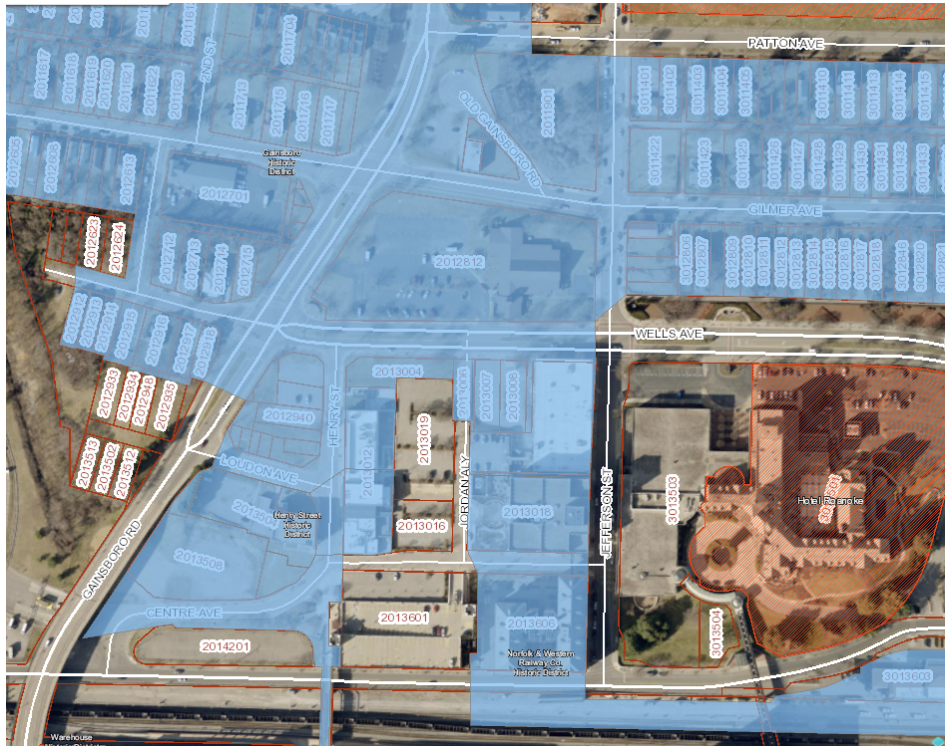
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION - efforts of the last several decades seek to restore the vitality once present; however, attempts and promises have fallen short of intentions and desired outcomes. Yet, there is hope.

BUSINESS * CUISINE * COMMUNITY * ENTERTAINMENT

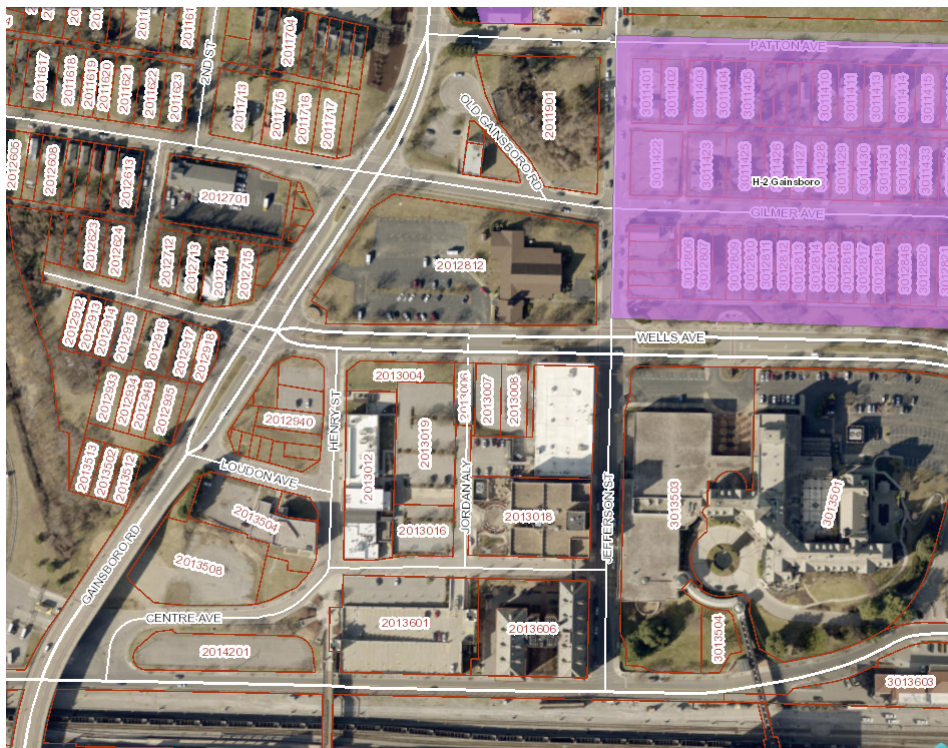


HISTORIC DESIGNATIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER



HISTORIC DISTRICT



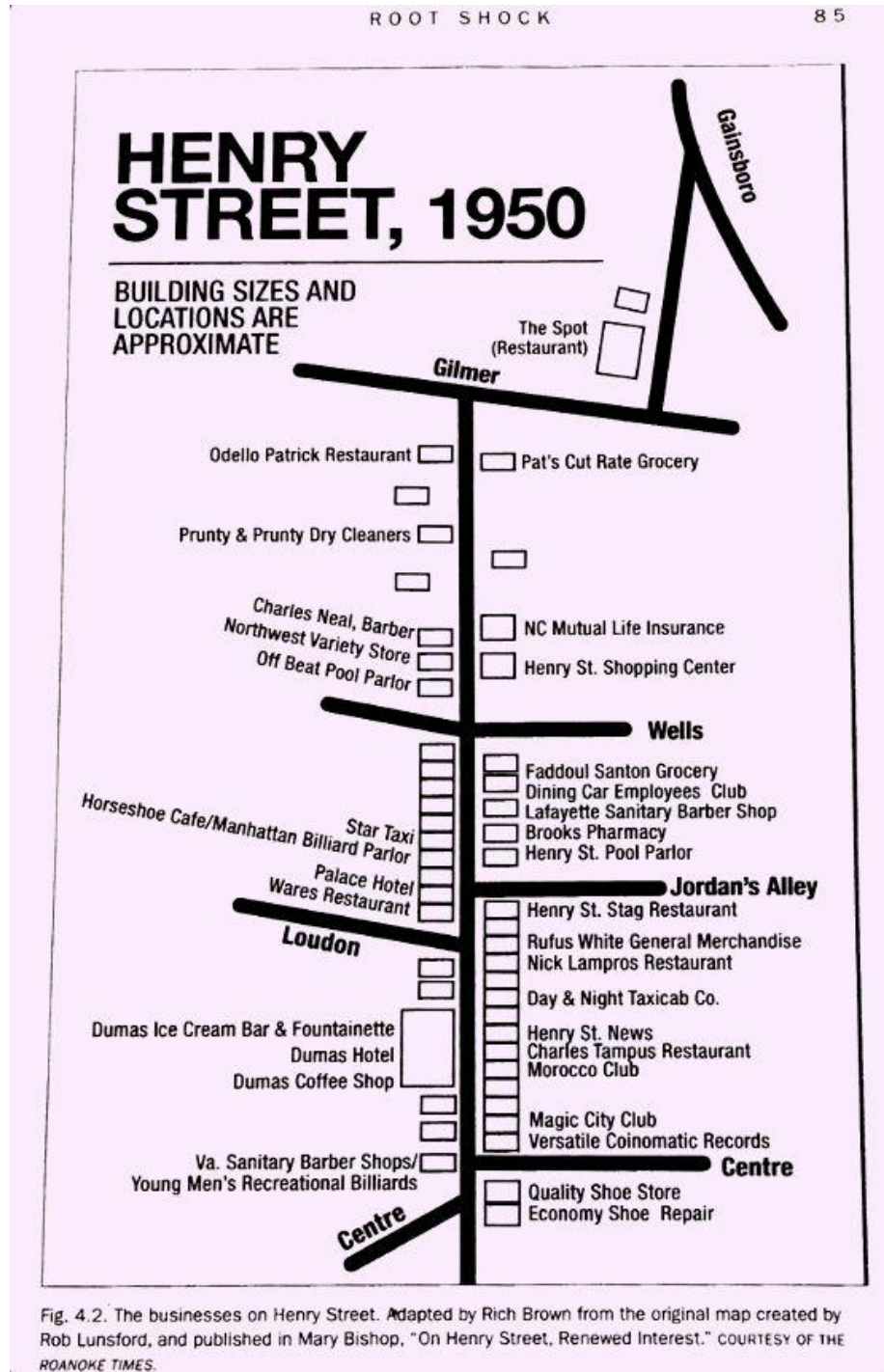
GAINSBORO DISTRICT: Community Assessment & Opportunities

Area Assessment @ quick glance, here are a few highlights and lowlights.

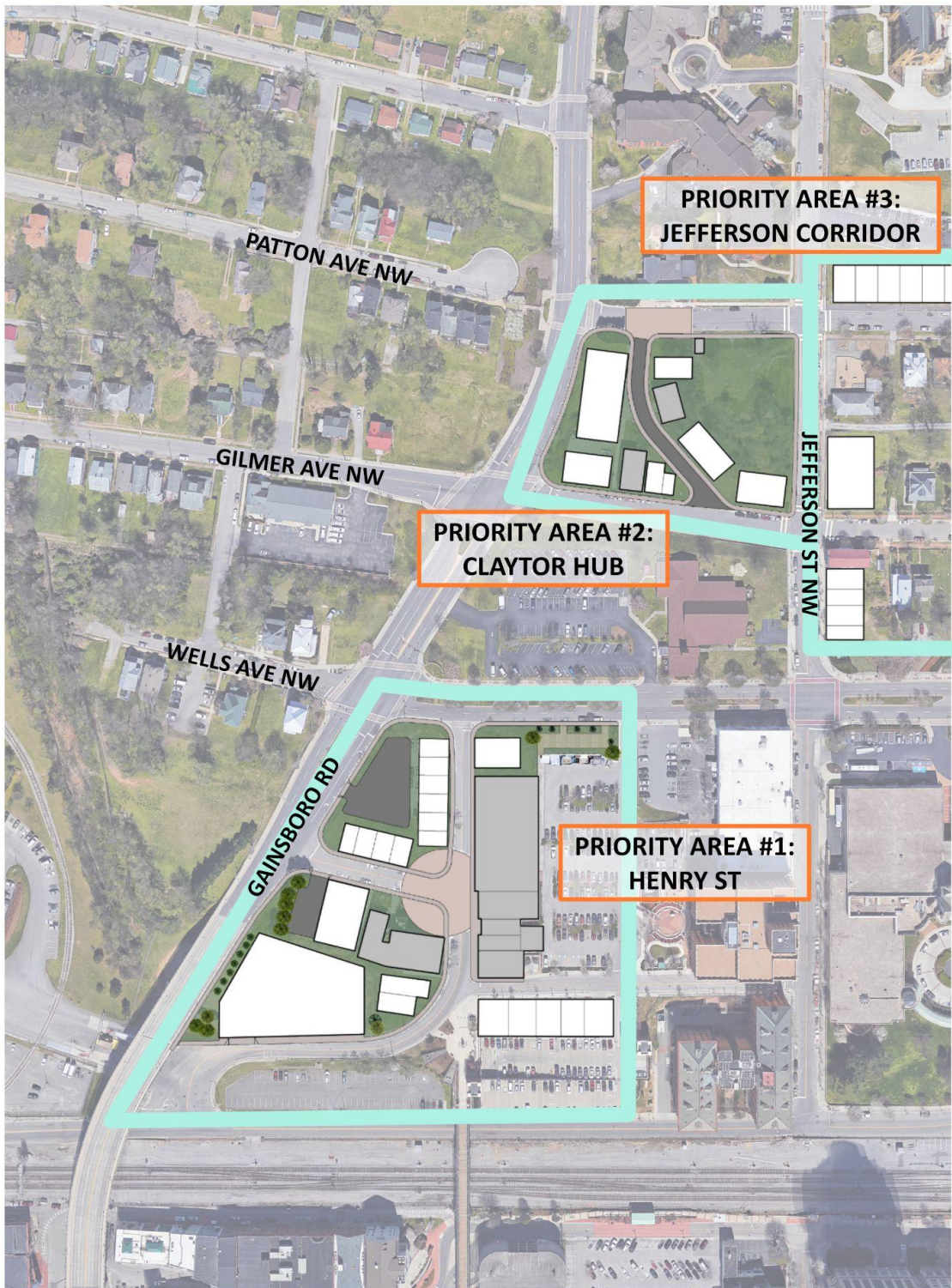
STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rich History & Area Tours ● Resident & Community Leadership’s Commitment to Community ● Institutional Strongholds (Community Churches, Hotel Roanoke, Center for Higher Education, Culinary School, etc) ● Area Entrepreneur base ● Proximity to Downtown and RR station ● Gainsboro Library and relationship with YMCA Express ● Economic Incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food Desert ● Vacant, Abandoned and Decaying structures ● Homeless Encampments ● Disjointed development and interrupted pedestrian pathways ● Silo Development ● Lack of destination attraction ● Significant blacktop vs greenspace ● Barren Street / No Streetscape Design ● No Area Public Schools or Public Playgrounds ● Low public investment in black owned and operated business, and community entrepreneurs
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rich History ● Community Commitment to Growth ● Developable Lands ● Economic Development Incentives ● Area Entrepreneurship and restoration of Village Center ● Expansion and Collaboration with Existing Enterprises ● Embrace and Celebrate African-American heritage ● Destination Tourism ● Community Gardens & Markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vacant, Abandoned and Decaying structures ● Low public investment in black owned and operated business, and community entrepreneurs ● Bottlenecking of resources

So ... WHAT'S POSSIBLE?

This Was Then:

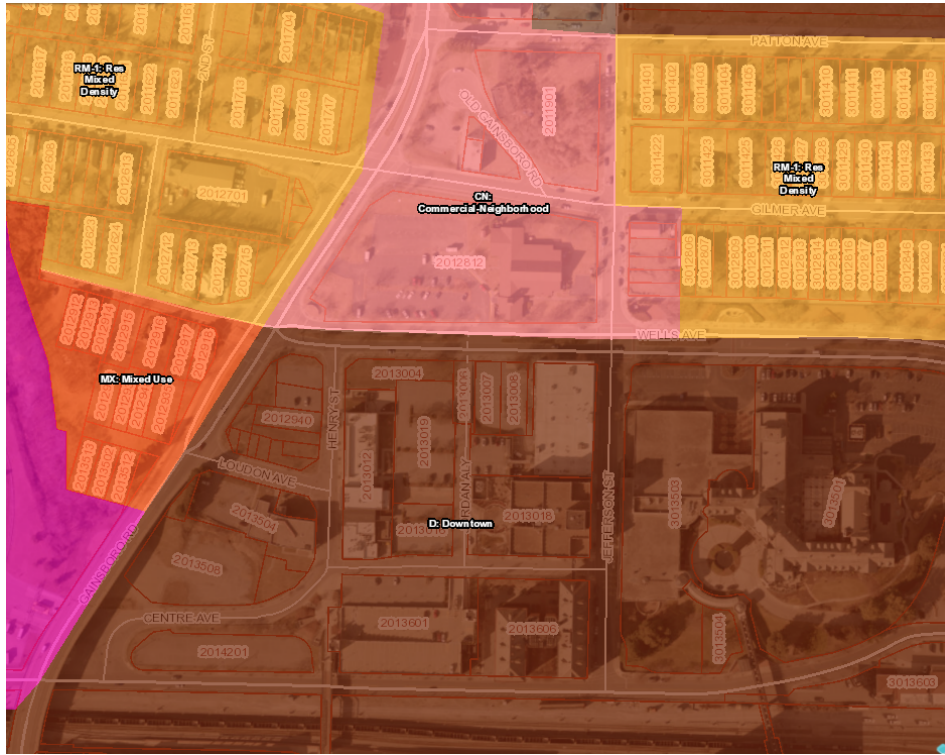


This is Next!



PLANNING: INFLUENTIAL FACTORS

CURRENT ZONING

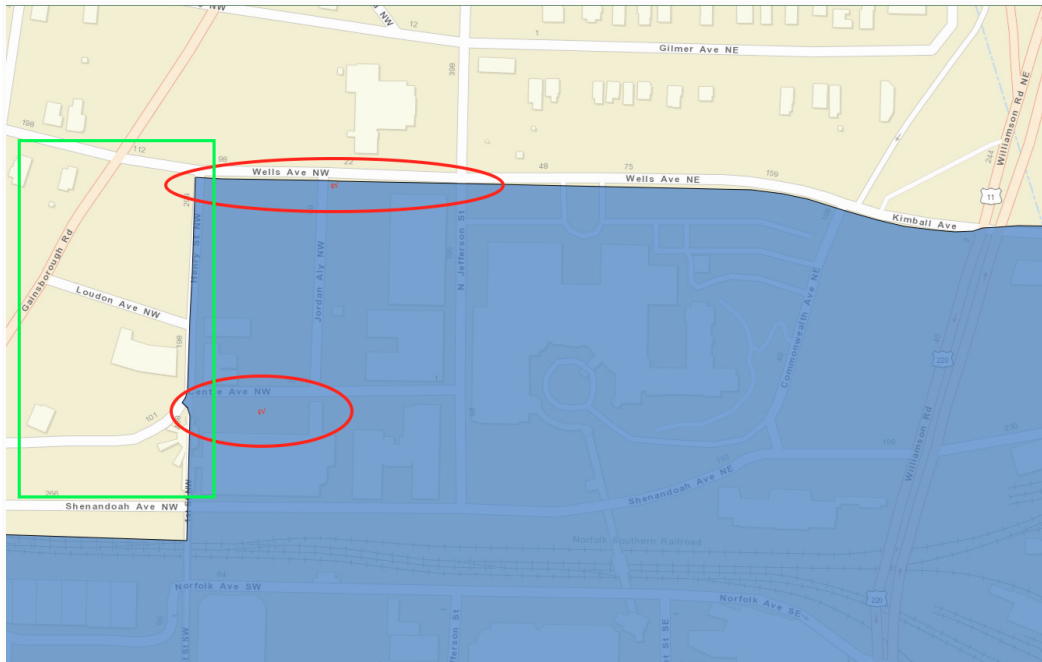


CONSERVATION ZONE



OPPORTUNITY ZONE

<https://opportunitydb.com/zones/51770001100/>

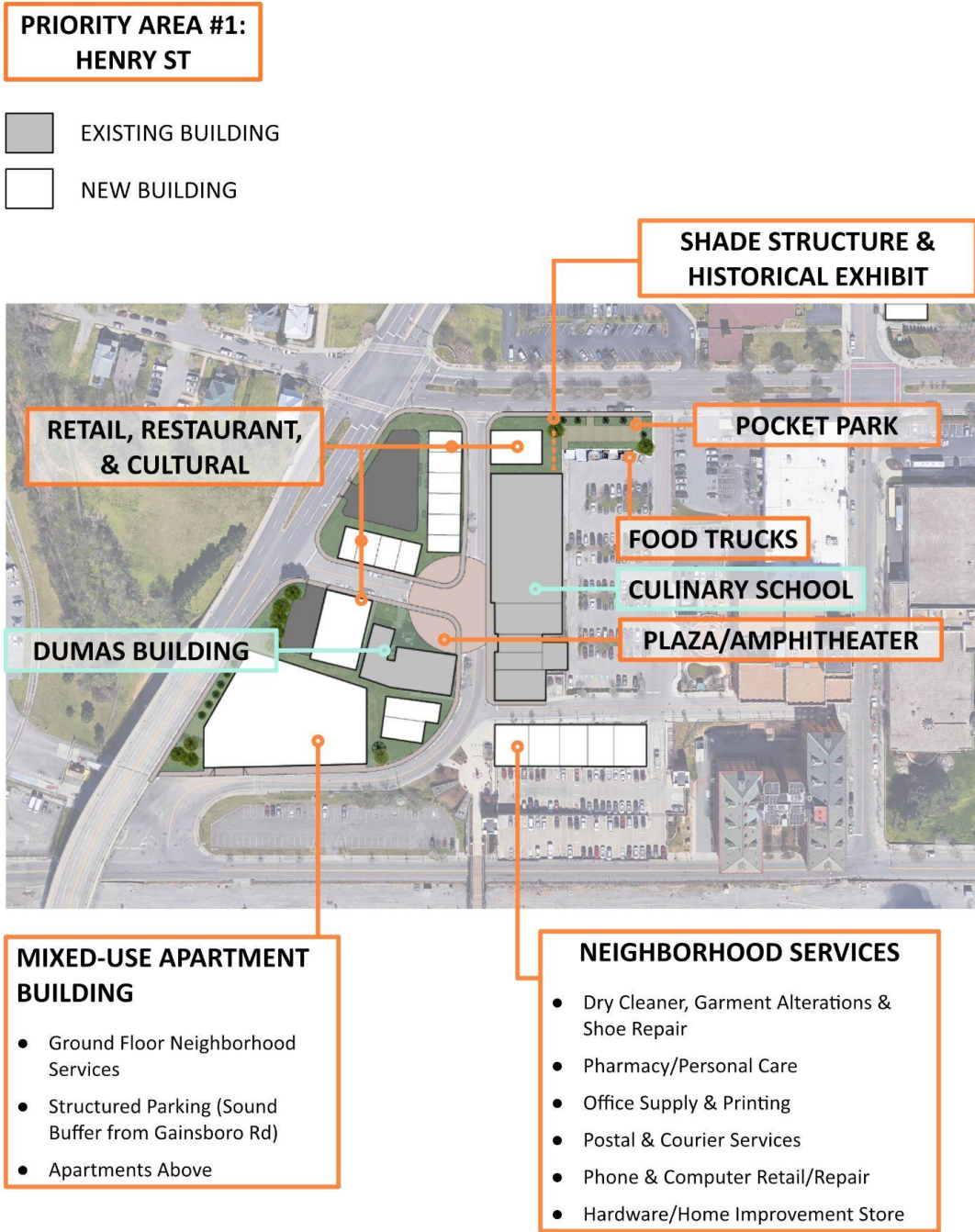


ENTERPRISE ZONE



PRIORITY AREA #1

CULTURAL ARTS | Henry St NW @ Loudon Ave NW



Location / Description:

City Gateway: 1st & Henry Streets

Henry Street parcels are generally bound on the north by Wells Rd and on the south by Centre Street, extending west to Gainsboro Rd.

Vision:

Priority Area #1 - Leverage the legacy, history, passion and promise of this node and re-curate an entrepreneurial and cultural epicenter at this location. Build back the spaces that once housed businesses, restaurants and social hot spots. In the 1950s, structures and storefronts were predominantly fronting Henry Street, which at the time ran from Centre Street to Gilmer Avenue.

With decades of urban renewal and redevelopment, Henry Street has been truncated and now spans between Centre Street and Wells Avenue. With the construction of the Claude Moore facility, Jordan's Alley has been eliminated as a perpendicular access off Henry Street; and the road has since been redirected to be parallel to Henry and Jefferson Streets east behind the education complex near the facility parking lots .

Current access to Henry Street from the south arcs northward around on Centre Street, and secondarily from Gainsboro Road unto Wells Avenue then right onto Henry Street from the north. A third location offering more of a ceremonial access is Gainsboro Road onto Loudon Street which "T"s or ties into the mid-block of Henry Street at the Lincoln Theatre. This T-intersection is an opportunity to metaphorically celebrate the nucleus of what remains the physical location of the one time prominent Black Wall Street. How better to amplify this than with an amphitheater type public pocket park at the "T" intersection.

~ EPICENTER IDEAS ~

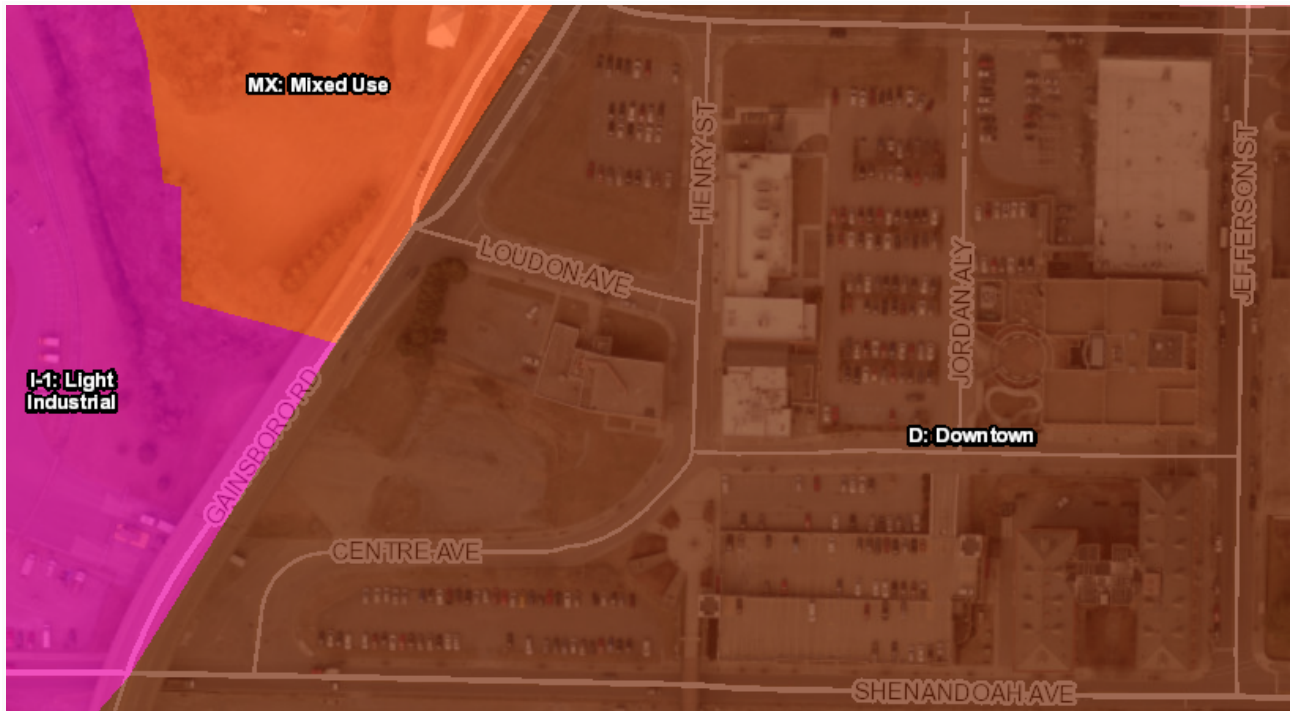
COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL & RETAIL (LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED) : Coffee & Ice Cream Shop, Book Store, Flower Shop, Boutique Stores (Clothing, Jewelry, Furnishings, Specialty Items) & Artisan Pop-Ups, Hair Salon & Barber, Spa, Gift Shop, Boutique Hotel / Bed & Breakfast, Community Kitchen, Catering, Bakery, Music Store, Multi-purpose Performance Venue, and Restaurant & Lounge with rooftop and sidewalk/plaza dining; and ATM banking.

BUSINESSES & BUSINESS INCUBATOR: Real Estate Agency, Financial Services & Home Buying Education, Accounting & Tax Services, Home & Office Cleaning Services, Music & Recording Studio, Photography Studio, B2B Consultants and Contractors.

NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES (LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED and/or CHAIN): Dry Cleaner, Garment Alterations & Shoe Repair, Pharmacy/Personal Care Convenience Store, Office Supply & Printing, Postal & Courier Services (UPSP, UPS, FedX, Mailbox Services), Phone & Computer Store/Repair Shop, Hardware Shop, and Home Improvement Store.

No gas stations or car repair/wash.

Current Zoning: Downtown (D)



Existing Conditions

The lots along and around Henry Street are either yet to be developed or have been redeveloped serving uses exclusive to the neighborhood-at-large ... meaning, there are no publicly accessible spaces for consumer consumption like shops and food places, or experiences other than the bridge parklet. At present, surrounding properties accommodate the needs of the Higher Education Authority, TAP, First Baptist Church and the City of Roanoke parking.

Priority Area #1 is underutilized commercially zoned land encompassing parking lots and undeveloped parcels.

New Development & Infill Priority Opportunities

Phase new and infill mixed-use development:

1. Along the north edge of Loudon Avenue, leaving surface lots along the west edge of Henry Street as needed. [Parcels: 2012939, 2012941-2012947 and 2012949]
2. Along the west edge of Henry Street thus removing the surface parking lots and accommodating surface or structured parking behind street facing structures adjacent to Gainsboro Road. [Parcels: 2012920-2012923 and 2012940]
3. Along the south edge of Loudon Avenue, eliminating the surface lot adjacent to Gainsboro Road. {Parcels: 2013504 and 2013506}
4. Expansion development along Centre Avenue. [Parcels 2013514, 2013508 and 2013004]

Neighborhood Center Gateway

Gainsboro Road is an arterial passageway from Orange Avenue into the heart of downtown Roanoke that vitally connects a variety of neighborhoods and diverse consumers of goods, services and experiences. Its proximity to Henry Street, via multiple entry points (Centre, Loudon and Wells Avenues), creates a unique opportunity and accessibility for a magnetic Neighborhood Center at this location. Aesthetic improvements to existing structures, lots and streetscapes surrounding the multiple entry avenues will significantly enhance this area and create a “gateway” for the Gainsboro Neighborhood Center.

To catalyze interest and impact, create a neighborhood node marketing group to organize offerings for weekend Farmers Market, Food Truck Vending and Pods, and Cultural Street Fairs featuring local foodies and musicians at “T-intersection” and hosted on surrounding lots (paved or grassed). As events generate sales and providers curate a client following, mobile commerce can transition to brick- and-mortar commerce. AND, as the area gains appeal, parcels along Centre and Wells Avenues and locations along the Jefferson corridor will become attractive opportunities for future development.

Suggestions of where to begin, include:

- Public Realm & Placemaking
 - Enhance crosswalks for greater connectivity and pedestrian safety between Henry Street and the Avenues of Centre, Loudon and Wells. Add corner bump outs along Henry Street at Wells and Centre Avenues to reduce the crossing opening as well as create on-street parking and parklets.
 - Street Art (painted road) on Henry Street and Loudon Avenue in celebration of this cultural epicenter and visually reclaim this footprint as the “center” of the neighborhood that is nestled among larger institutional (church, higher edu, hotel, and parking decks) uses and intensities.
 - Unified sidewalk landscape design along the southern edge of Wells Avenue southward to, and along, Centre Avenue including Loudon Avenue and Henry Street. Landscaping to be compatible with designs in the Wells Avenue median as well as that on the MLK footbridge.
 - Sidewalk decorative lamp posts with options for banners and planters.
 - Streetscape furnishings (artfully crafted and finished) including benches, trash receptacles, and creative bus stop booths where appropriate.
 - Artwork including wall murals, street lamp area identity banners, and creatively painted traffic light control boxes as well as gutter and sewer covers as has been done in other mature neighborhood center locations.
 - Parklets and Greenways:
 - Amphitheater at the “T-intersection” of Loudon Avenue and Henry Street
 - The undeveloped site south of the TAP / Dumas Center [Parcels: 2013514 & 2013508]
 - The undeveloped lots on the south edge of Wells Avenue north of the Claude Moore building where bollards, curb cuts and sidewalk designs pay homage to structures once, but no longer, present. [Parcel: 2013004]
 - Green roofs on Claude Moore buildings and/or green walls on this and the Dumas Center

- Community Building
 - Road art / painted crosswalks and intersections can be a community-created project
 - Special city/neighborhood node marketing group to catalyze a mobile commerce movement
 - Green roof / green wall gardens (fruit/vegetable and flower) Especially in collaboration with the Culinary School or Community Kitchen
 - Music, Storytelling and History Exhibits and Performances

- Design & Development
 - Facade enhancements including bold colors of paint and features such as murals, signage, graphics and awnings on exposed surfaces of existing structures.
 - Pocket Parks or infill development opportunities on underutilized and/or vacant parcel(s)
 - New Development in locations noted above and following design principles and guidelines identified in City 2040 as well as those that have been implemented in other mature Neighborhood Centers.

Implementation Strategies:

- The suggested improvements for Priority Area #1 can be implemented in stages, by the city or land/business owners, as resources are available.
- To incent revitalization of this stretch of the corridor, implement public realm and placemaking aesthetic concepts as soon as possible to attract both investors and providers and ultimately consumers.
- Release a REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) for the “AVAILABLE SITE PROPERTY OPPORTUNITY”, noted herein, for a private developer who desires to participate in a PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP for the envisioned mixed use development that would include, at minimum, a center of suites and services for entrepreneurs to conduct business as well as a Community Kitchen. Additional incentives and considerations:
 - Offerings of tax abatement and/or gifts of land
 - Priority selection given to entities PLEDGING SHARED PROSPERITY Collaborating with local minority businesses and/or neighborhood business participation such as contracts with financial/legal services, marketing services and media programs/providers, project management, contractor/construction services/suppliers, personal services, food services, etc.
- Opportunity Zone monies are available for investments made to property and businesses
- Enterprise Zone 1A monies are available throughout the Loudon Avenue and Henry Street area for qualifying businesses to activate and expand their operations and facilities. There are funding opportunities for facade and other improvements as well.
- Economic Incentives & Programs
 - Refer to the Economics Section of this report for funding sources for:
 - Placemaking concepts
 - Facade enhancements
 - Enterprise Zone incentives
 - Conservation Zone incentives

AVAILABLE SITE PROPERTY OPPORTUNITY

Property Ownership:

200-298 Henry St NW Parking

As Advertised:

- This site consists of fourteen parcels, combined for approximately 0.72 acres.
- Located across the street from the Claude Moore Education Complex and just blocks away from the Historic Hotel Roanoke Conference Center, Historic Farmers' Market, and the Taubman Museum of Art, this site is highly visible from Gainsboro Rd., N.W. and Wells Ave., N.W.
- For complete property details, refer to City of Roanoke's GIS system link: <http://gisre.roanokeva.gov/>
- This property, located in Enterprise Zone One A, may be eligible for the following Incentives: Fire, Water and Sewer Hookup Grants Building Permit and Comprehensive Development Review Fee Rebates Job Creation Grant Real Property Investment Grants

As Requested:

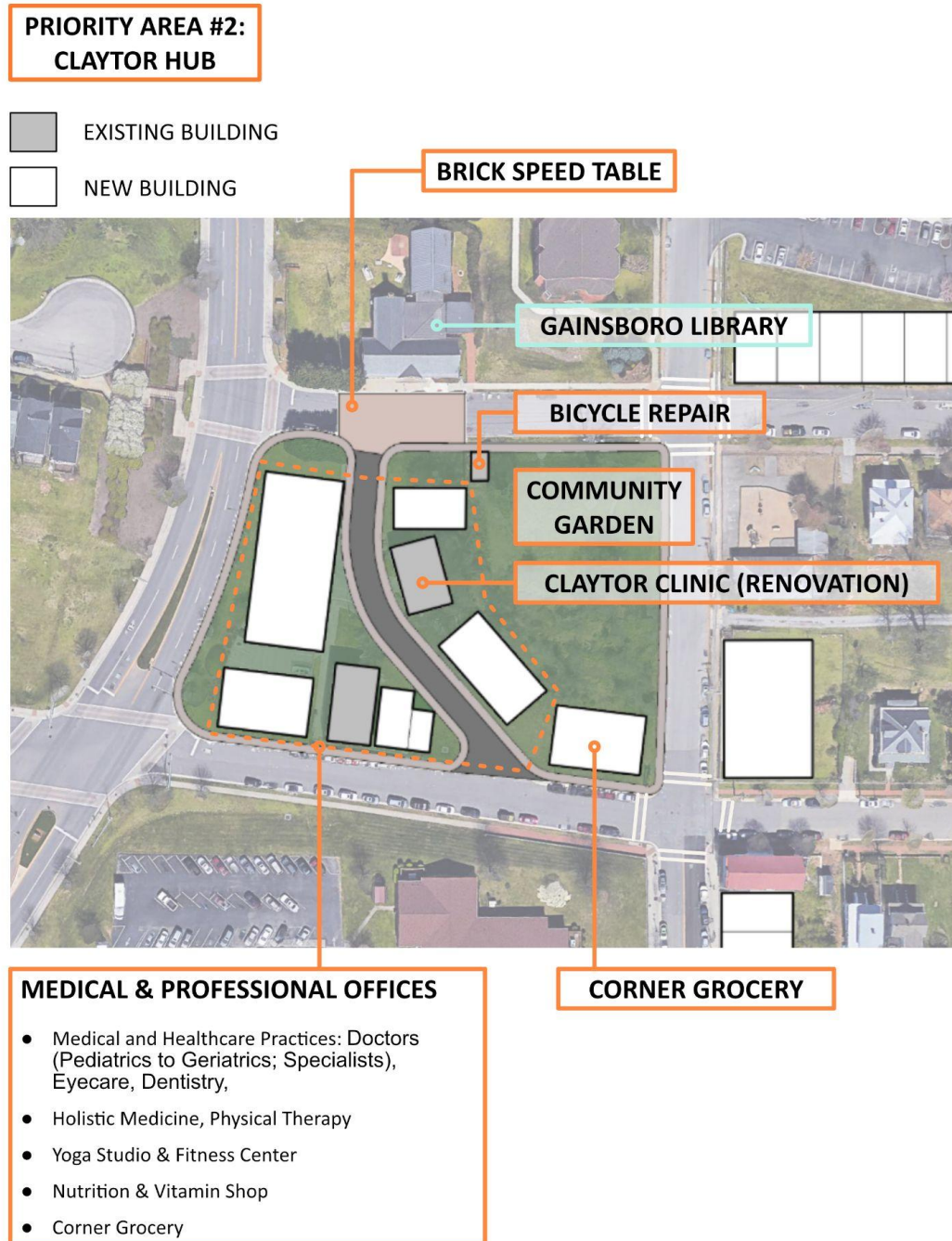
"Concept Proposals for the property must contain the following elements: Identification of the property, and any adjacent properties, involved in your development. Concept plan outlining the intended development use, including: location and size of any buildings, number of units, and a timeline for the completion of the project. Description of the qualifications and experience of the proposer/developer. Business Plan and Financial Plan for the project. Proposed offer amount for the property. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated for compatibility to the City of Roanoke's Comprehensive Plan and Neighborhood Plan."

Link: <https://www.bizroanoke.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Henry-Street-Properties-Fact-Sheet.pdf>



PRIORITY AREA #2

HEALTH & WELLNESS | 1st St NW (Old Gainsboro Rd)



Location / Description:

Block bounded by Gilmore Ave Nw to the north, N Jefferson St to the east, Wells Ave to the south, and Gainsboro Rd to the west. The current site of the occupied Lawson Building (“building 1”) and the unoccupied Claytor Memorial Clinic Building (“building 2”).

Vision:

Priority Area #2 - Leverage the history and legacy of what once occurred on this block ... and of those who made it all possible. The medical, health and wellness activities and individuals that operated in this space were trailblazers and history-makers for both what they risked and for what they created. Given the history, proximity to public facilities (like the Library and Head Start) and centrality to residential (homes / senior living facility), this block is the ideal location for neighborhood scale redevelopment and infill development to create a health and wellness neighborhood center across a spectrum of interests, initiatives and entities including:

Medical and Healthcare Practices: Doctors (Pediatrics to Geriatrics; Specialists), Eyecare, Dentistry, Holistic Medicine, Physical Therapy, Fitness Center, Yoga & Mindfulness, Early Childhood Development, Nutrition & Vitamin Shop, Corner Grocery & Fresh Food Bins, Community Garden & Greenhouse, Farmer’s Market, Bike Sales & Repair

A community garden on the site of the once Claytor residence could be a learning moment and/or therapeutic activity for the neighboring Head Start students or Senior Living Center residence ... or a generational mix. Another possibility for this property is a residential facility for educators and healthcare providers serving the schools and operations that radiate out from the intersection of Patton Avenue and Jefferson Street.

PARCEL REFERENCES:

Claytor Inc 2011901

Impact Housing Corporation 2011801-2011803

Lands between Old Gainsboro Rd & Gainsboro Rd AND Patton & Gilmer not held by others

ALTERNATE: The concepts envisioned around the Claytor/Lawson Buildings could also be implemented west of Gainsboro Road between Wells and Patton Avenues.

Priority Area #3 - Offers additional opportunities for further expansion of several of these ideas. And, as the neighborhood is developed in Areas #1 and #2, there will be more demand for affordable workforce housing as well as public gathering spaces and services. These elements are compatible uses for the adjacent single-family detached dwellings and create a transitional buffer.

PARCEL REFERENCES:

Workforce Housing in collaboration with the church 3023001

Community Center 3011422

Museum and Housing 3012802-3012805

PRIORITY AREA #3

COMMUNITY ROOTS | N Jefferson St @ Patton Ave NE & Wells Ave NW

**PRIORITY AREA #3:
JEFFERSON CORRIDOR**

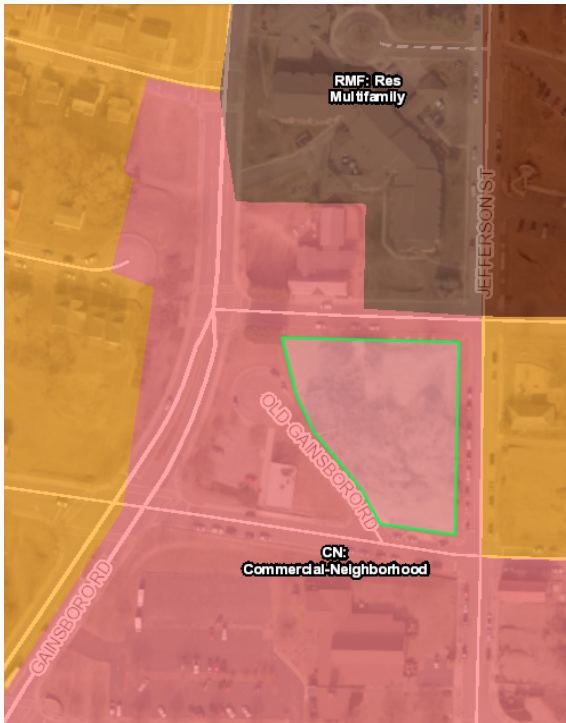
- EXISTING BUILDING
- NEW BUILDING



Existing Conditions:

The block of Priority Area #2 and the adjacent lands in Priority Area #3 are significantly underutilized, especially for its prominence in location and in history. Vacant lands and boarded up buildings have given way to barren, unattractive, and nearly deserted streets which has allowed homeless encampments to surface ... all of which is eroding the community fabric and connection.

Current Zoning: Commercial-Neighborhood (CN)



Opportunity Zone: N/A

Enterprise Zone: YES



NEIGHBORHOOD INVIGORATION & COLLABORATION

Enterprise Zone monies are available in this area for individuals and organizations to influence and create impact for this community with these cutting edge ideas. The City and/or private developers can create strategic alliances or partnerships with area medical centers, college outreach services and/or entities with community reinvestment dollars.

To catalyze interest and impact, create a neighborhood node marketing group to organize offerings for weekend Farmers Market, Food Truck Vending and Pods, as well as Education and Health Fairs featuring local foodies and area practitioners and educators. Events can be hosted on surrounding lots (paved or grassed) or in sections of the streets. As events generate sales and providers curate a client following, mobile commerce can transition to brick- and-mortar commerce. AND, as the area gains appeal, parcels along Jefferson Street will become attractive opportunities for future development.

Suggestions of where to begin, include:

- **Public Realm & Placemaking**
 - Enhanced crosswalks for greater connectivity and pedestrian safety at the intersections of Jefferson Street and Patton and Gilmer Avenues. Add corner bump outs along Jefferson Street at these intersections to reduce the crossing opening as well as create on-street parking and parklets. This is especially important given the proximity of children and associated activities (i.e., play, walkabouts, pick up / drop off, etc).
 - Speed table in front of the library across Patton Avenue to create a safer crossing experience and connectivity to the Claytor block. Street Art (painted road) optional.
 - Unified sidewalk landscape designs along Jefferson Street and walks around and through the Claytor block.
 - Streetscape furnishings (artfully crafted and finished), especially along Jefferson Street, including benches, trash receptacles, and creative bus stop booths where appropriate.
 - Sidewalk decorative lamp posts with options for banners and planters.
 - Artwork including wall murals, street lamp area identity banners, and creatively painted traffic light control boxes as well as gutter and sewer covers as has been done in other mature neighborhood center locations. Paint vacant/abandoned buildings.
 - Vacant Lot Parklets and Community Gardens.

- **Community Building**
 - Road art / painted crosswalks and intersections can be a community-created project
 - Special city/neighborhood node marketing group to catalyze a mobile commerce movement
 - Community Garden (fruit/vegetable and flower) Especially in collaboration with the Culinary School, Community Kitchen, Corner Grocer as well as Health/Nutrition and School Education
 - School Check Up days

- **Design & Development**

- Facade enhancements include bold colors of paint and features such as murals, signage, graphics and awnings for 2 structures on Claytor block, building at the corner of Gilmer and Jefferson Street, and the Head Start building.
- Pocket Parks or infill development opportunities on underutilized and/or vacant parcel(s)
- New Development in locations noted above and following design principles and guidelines identified in City 2040 as well as those that have been implemented in other mature Neighborhood Centers.

Implementation Strategies:

- The suggested improvements for Priority Area #2 and #3 can be implemented in stages, by the city or land/business owners, as resources are available.
- To incent revitalization of these blocks, implement public realm and placemaking aesthetic concepts as soon as possible to attract both investors and providers and ultimately consumers.
- Rework the cul de sac (Old Gainsboro Road) into a through road creating better access and connectivity with surrounding facilities and organization such as the library.
- Release a REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) for a private developer who desires to participate in a PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP for the envisioned mixed use development in Priority Area #2 on the western portion of the block adjacent to Gainsboro Road that would include, at minimum, a center of suites and services for health and wellness professionals to conduct business. Additional incentives and considerations:
 - Offerings of tax abatement and/or gifts of land
 - Priority selection given to entities PLEDGING SHARED PROSPERITY Collaborating with local minority businesses and/or neighborhood business participation such as contracts with financial/legal services, marketing services and media programs/providers, project management, contractor/construction services/suppliers, personal services, food services, etc.
- Enterprise Zone 1A monies are available throughout the Claytor block area and along Jefferson Street for qualifying businesses to activate and expand their operations and facilities. There are funding opportunities for facade and other improvements as well.
- Economic Incentives & Programs
 - Refer to the Economics Section of this report for funding sources for:
 - Placemaking concepts
 - Facade enhancements
 - Enterprise Zone incentives
 - Conservation Zone incentives

Community Collaboration

Community Event

To kick off the revitalization efforts for the Gainsboro neighborhood center, we recommend that the City staff elicit the support of one or two major developers in the community to host a community night to discuss development opportunities. Community stakeholders, as well as representatives of the Incremental Development Alliance, the American Planning Association, the Urban Land Institute and DHCD/Main Street, should be invited to provide input during the event. The City staff should use its contacts with the Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, Shriners, Masons, and other social and fraternal organizations to help establish the meetings in the community.

Neighborhood Center Branding

Branding is essential to the overall character and appeal of Gainsboro. We recommend a small-scale branding initiative that incorporates street banners and wayfinding signage. This approach establishes and identifies boundaries for Gainsboro. Banners have been implemented to some extent in the West End, and establishing a unique sense of place in the neighborhood could be accomplished easily without great expense.

Additional placemaking efforts can be utilized in the neighborhood. We recommend the creation of painted crosswalks painted by local area artists, along with public refuse cans that align with the brand of the neighborhood. Where possible, the creation of artwork in alleyways can transform forgotten areas into gathering spaces. Pop-up signs can be created and displayed every few weeks that highlight the history or character of Gainsboro. Public sculpture created by local artisans could be placed in prominent locations within the community. All of these elements will create a unique experiential narrative for the neighborhood.

Additionally, as revitalization efforts commence, the City could install an interactive touch screen exhibit that would allow residents to create their own unique vision for the neighborhood. They could save their creations and submit them to the City from the interactive terminal. This is another way in which the residents will feel as if their opinions about their neighborhoods are being heard by the City. We are not naïve in our recommendations regarding technological resources – any interactive exhibits would require high quality materials, as well as damage and theft-resistant safeguards.

Other Arts and Community Events

Gainsboro is uniquely positioned to extend its commitment to the arts, history, community and culture.

- A well-developed artist in residence program under the leadership of long-time community activists such as Polly Branch can provide an ongoing arts development program for the community.
- A public art program for additional sculptures should be developed specifically for Gainsboro and could easily be a committee of the neighborhood civic association. The City's ongoing commitment to public art bodes well for such an effort.

- A youth arts development program at the Gainsboro library under the leadership of city artists can not only provide much-needed arts education, but also a way to connect the community to its history through art.
- A cultural plan would provide a road map to long-term cultural development in Gainsboro. The City can serve as the initial catalyst for a plan, but the City's robust arts community should take the lead on developing what is in essence a cultural master plan for the neighborhood.
- A small-scale Farmers' market in Gainsboro has been successful, and that should be expanded to include a series of pop-up events. These events can include: maker's markets, art shows, musical events, a speaker series on Gainsboro history, and culinary expositions. It is essential these pop-up events need to be Gainsboro-centric and ideally will reflect the unique history of the neighborhood, including the long-term ramifications of urban renewal.
- We believe a far-reaching community festival funded through city and foundation grants could serve as a launch pad for community engagement and inclusivity.
- There is a pressing need for an external and internal communications plan for Gainsboro. Internally, we recommend the development of a neighborhood newsletter. Initially this newsletter can be launched online, however, a print newsletter delivered door-to-door by neighborhood volunteers is a superb way to engage both long term and new residents.
- Earlier in this report we recommended a real estate developer attraction program and we believe that can be expanded to include a limited small business attraction program to attract small businesses that complement the unique character of the neighborhood.
- There are community anchors that can serve as catalysts for community development. For example, the VWCC Culinary Program can partner with the Hotel Roanoke on an apprenticeship program. In our conversations with hotel management, they are amenable to hiring neighborhood residents. We recommend formalizing a neighborhood hiring program and the creation of a partnership between the hotel and the culinary school.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION & TOOLKIT

A local **Communication Plan** is the initial step to implementing the recommendations in this Report. The City staff, in conjunction with the City's communications team, can produce a press packet relative to the recommendations and liaise with the local media regarding the City's desire to revitalize the neighborhood. Following this initial press interaction, the City can produce vision renderings of what vacant sites in Gainsboro could look like as part of the revitalization efforts.

Next, the City can embark on hosting **Community Events** as discussed above to bring together local developers, community planning and development organizations and neighborhood stakeholders to partner in the process with the City. The Economic Development staff can reach out to assist in the formation of a business association in the community. This can be done by using CDBG analysis funds to conduct research into the formation of the organizations. Existing civic associations can provide the names of business owners to serve as the foundational members of the newly-formed business association. The City should stay in close contact with the civic and business association throughout the revitalization process.

Visualization is the key to buy-in by the community. The City should create signage that provides a vision rendering of the prospective revitalized property or area, along with the list of incentives to be utilized for the redevelopment. The Economic Development staff can determine which incentives to place on each sign based on their experience with the various incentive programs. If property owners are willing, the signage should be placed on private property. If not, the signs can be placed on City property adjacent to the affected properties or areas.

With respect to land acquisition, we recommend starting with the HUD Section 108 program, coupled with programs from Virginia Community Capital, DHCD and existing local incentives. The Economic Development staff should prepare materials based on the incentives outlined in this Report that can be provided to prospective developers.

APPENDIX
of RELATED MATERIALS

ESRI's Tapestry Lifestyle Segments

CITY COMMONS
MODEST INCOME HOMES