



City of Princeton

Comprehensive Plan Update



Prepared by Elke Doom

City of Princeton Comprehensive Plan Update 2014



What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A vision of the future based upon the desires of the citizens
- A document that is geographically comprehensive and covers a wide range of physical, social and economic issues acclimated with the city's development
- The foundation upon which all land use decisions are to be made

OBJECTIVES

- To guide the type of future development
- To guide the location of future development
- To guide the future character of the City
- A comprehensive plan is **not**:
- Zoning
- A solution for all of the city's issues



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There were many individuals who devoted considerable time and effort toward the creation of the original plan. The contributions of the Planning Commission, City officials and residents were invaluable in helping formulate and revise this plan. The City of Princeton is thankful to all the people who contributed to the process of this plan.

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CHAPTER 1: ELEMENTS OF A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Principles of Planning

Land use planning at the local level can have serious implications on the fiscal health of both the municipal and county governments, and on the ability of municipalities and other entities to provide utilities and services. Studies (Northern Illinois University and the American Farmland Trust (1999) *Living on the Edge: the Costs and Risks of Scattered Development*) have shown that scattered patterns of low density development can result in an inefficient delivery of such services as education and roads, higher costs for delivering public services and inequitable patterns of costing out infrastructure.

More compact development patterns also have benefits for residents, in lower transportation costs, faster response times for emergency services (police, fire and medical) and more convenience to shopping and employment areas. Some public services (i.e., sanitary sewer and water treatment) result in environmental preservation.

These findings are intuitive—having a population spread out over a larger area results in more roadways, pipes and vehicle miles traveled, than having that same population within a smaller area. Also, with a lower supply of developable land, the cost of land may rise under a Compact development scenario, which if controls were put in place, could result in a higher quality of development. The final development plan that resulted from this planning process represents a trade-off between these interests. Thus, the development plan is a compromise that addresses the most fundamental concern voiced by the public and the City, as described in Chapter 3.

Elements of a Healthy Community

Before a community can succeed and be healthy, the foundation for success must be in place. This foundation can be described as the "Elements of a Healthy Community" encompassing Leadership, Economic Development and Physical Conditions. These Elements support the operational functions of a community while implementing recommendations found herein. The "Elements" are fundamental to any community and can be utilized as key benchmarks in comprehensive planning to determine the existing health of a community. Currently, Princeton has some of these elements existing in its community. However, there are improvements that can be made that would help Princeton achieve a higher level of health and success. The evaluation of Princeton's current status is entirely subjective based on community analysis, demographic research, interview discussions, public input and comparisons to other communities similar to Princeton. The "Elements of a Healthy Community" is a measuring tool used to establish a baseline of fundamentals needed to ensure an economically sound and

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socially viable community. It should be noted though that not every community has every component under each element, however, the majority of these elements are present within successful and healthy communities. This chapter will focus on defining the elements of a healthy community, detailing each of the components that compromise an element and providing an assessment of components that currently exist and those that are still needed in Princeton.

Economic Vitality

Economic Vitality refers to the economic health of a community over the next twenty years. There are several components that relate to the economic health of a community including market potential, opportunities for growth and development, business core, public/private agenda, entrepreneurialism and an active business recruitment and retention program. These components are essential to the health and success of a community and are linked to the physical conditions and leadership elements of a community. No matter how much flat land is available adjacent to an interstate with public water and sewer service extensions, high tax rates and other state-related issues generally demonstrate that West Virginia is not as business-friendly as neighboring states, and, border cities and counties in West Virginia will continue to be at the greatest disadvantage of all.

The vision for Princeton in 2024 is a community with a stable and varied economic base with dependable revenue sources and ample higher-end employment opportunities. To achieve this vision, the city will have to face such issues as examining its boundary growth to achieve critical mass to draw employers. The expansion of the city's boundaries and attraction of employers are tied intricately to one another. Without addressing this issue, residents could potentially leave Princeton to earn a higher living.

Market Potential

Some communities are content with being bedroom communities of a larger metropolitan area. If a community such as Princeton does not have close proximity to a larger metropolitan area from which to provide employment areas and retail opportunities, these have to be provided within the City or larger region. It is important, especially during the current economically unstable times that the City's economic base is diversified and not reliant on one type of sector. Examining current and past economic trends will provide and understanding of the potential market area of which Princeton should focus.

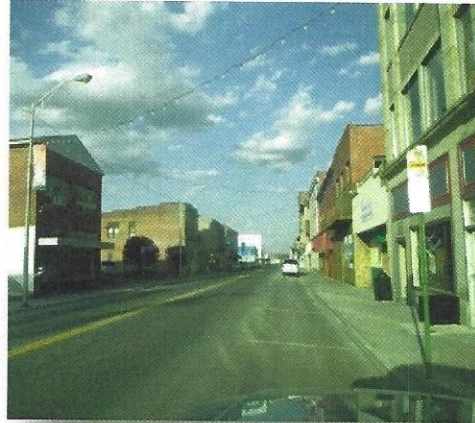
CHAPTER 1: ELEMENTS OF A HEALTHY COMMUNITY

In 2010, discussions with the public and community leaders identified strengths that Princeton can utilize to expand its market potential, including its location within the southern area of the state. Princeton is located at a major north south interstate and serves as a half way point for people to stop off on their way to Florida. In fact, many comments have been made regarding an effort to pull in tourists of the NASCAR circuit, as this is a frequent stopping point between racing venues. Additionally, the public identified the farmers market, hospital, existing infrastructure and the existing sports and recreational opportunities as existing strengths that the community can use to market to potential businesses.

Fountain at Thorn and Rogers Streets



Downtown Mercer Street



Mercer County Courthouse, Courthouse Road

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The overall area around the city boasts 30,000+ in population. With the City of Princeton having a population of just over 6,400 people, it does not immediately show up on the radar of corporations and business looking to relocate their businesses elsewhere. As the surrounding population has grown, its corporate boundaries have not kept pace with this growth and therefore Princeton has not lived up to its market potential. Needs that have been improved include marketing the city, better public image/positive press coverage and a sharing of information by all sources.

Population

The population of Princeton was 6,432 at the 2010 census. In 2011, WVU-College conducted a study of population projections for Mercer County. The results are shown in **Table 2.1**

Population Projections for Mercer County Table 2.1

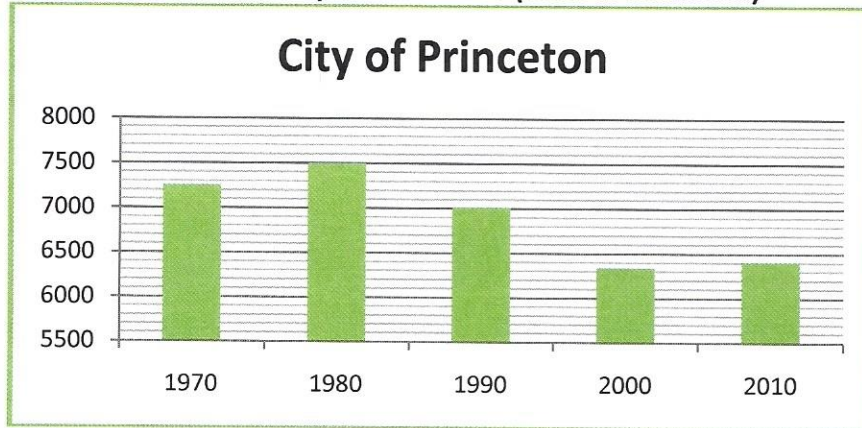
4/1/2000	4/1/2010	7/1/2015	7/1/2020	7/1/2025	7/1/2030
62,980	62,264	61,665	61,117	60,431	59,454

Population Trends for Princeton

The projections for Mercer County show a decrease in population yet the City of Princeton has seen a, a 1.8% increase in population from the 2000 census as shown in **Table 2.2** Princeton continues to grow slowly. The U.S. Census shows a population increase in the City of Princeton of 114 people since 2000. Therefore a conservative estimate for population could see 2024 population of 6,665. With continued annexation efforts to bring residents into city limits population increase of an additional 3,334 residents would bring Princeton to the 10,000 population level it needs to be considered for additional funding from the state.

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Table 2.2 Princeton Population Trends (show in thousands)



Median Age

The median age for Princeton is 38.5, lower than the state of average of 41.3.

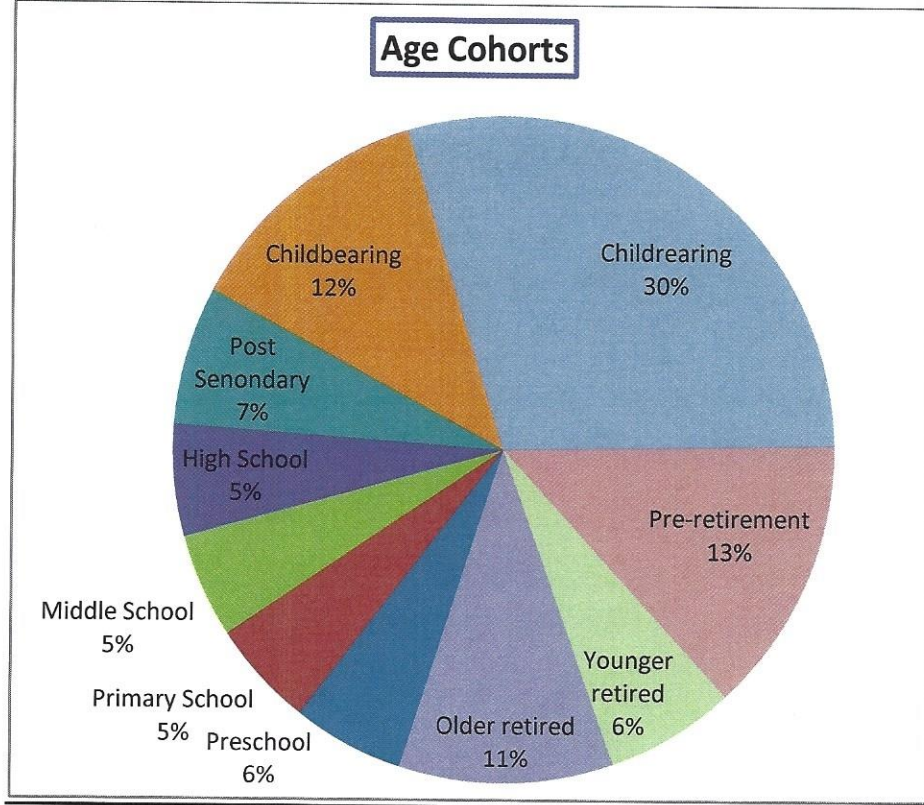
State wide the population continues to get older amid an exodus of younger residents, prompting state officials to contemplate how to meet the needs of a growing senior population as shown in **Tables 2.3 and 2.4**. U.S. Census figures show residents ages 65 and older increased 7.4 percent from 2000 to 2010. There are now 297,404 residents in that group, comprising 16 percent of the population. West Virginia’s median age of 41.3 years is up from 39.8 in 2000. West Virginia is just behind Maine (42.7) in that category and ahead of Florida (40.7), while the percentage of residents 65 and older in Florida (17.3 percent) remains ahead of West Virginia.

Table 2.3 Age Cohorts (per U.S. Census)

Preschool	Under the age of 5
Primary School	5 to 7 age group
Middle School	10 to 14 age group
High School	15 to 19 age group
Post Secondary	20 to 24 age group
Childbearing	25 to 34 age group
Childrearing	30 to 54 age group
Pre-retirement	55 to 65 age group
Younger retired	65 to 74 age group
Older retired	75- up age group

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Table 2.4 Age Cohorts based on U.S. Census



Race

White alone, percent, 2010	90.7%
Black or African American alone, percent, 2010	6.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent, 2010	0.3%
Asian alone, percent, 2010	0.8%
Two or More Races, percent, 2010	1.8%
Hispanic or Latino, percent, 2010	1.1%

Economic Characteristics

Home Facts.com provides unemployment rates for Princeton which indicate unemployment as of February 2014 is down from a high of September 2008 of 9.1%. Since 2005 the unemployment rate in Princeton, West Virginia has ranged from 3.3% in September 2008 to 9.1% in February 2010. The current unemployment rate for Princeton is 7.7% in February 2014.

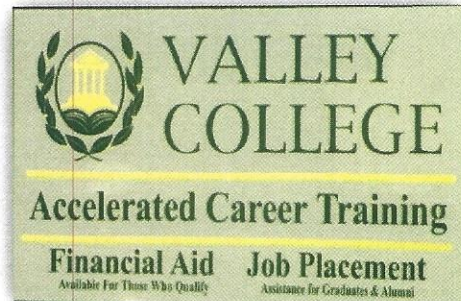
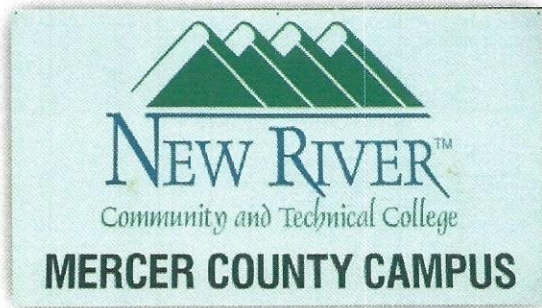
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Income & Employment Trends

Income and employment demographics for a city such as Princeton are reflective of a variety of factors. Many of these factors are determined by individual achievement, such as education and employment. Some factors such as corporate tax rates, workers' compensation, right-to-work laws and local governance, among other things, are controlled by policies and laws enacted at the state government level.

Educational Achievement

In 1990, 5 % of Princeton residents 25 years of age and older had their high school diplomas; by 2000, this figure rose to 67%. The trend has reversed dramatically and today 43.3% of students have a high school diploma. In 2000, 12% had a college degree and by 2010 that percentage had risen to 17.6%. Educational achievement is one major factor considered by business and industry when siting a new location. A higher education level in geographic area indicates a greater capacity for learning high-skill jobs.



Economic Development

Cities like Princeton can only be changed at the state level. Furthermore, when places such as Princeton and Mercer County compete against economically attractive locations in counties just over the state line, these West Virginia border communities are at a particular disadvantage once one recognizes how "business-friendly" neighboring states like Virginia can be.

Adding to the woes, The Census Bureau reports that West Virginia was ranked as having the 19th highest state-local tax burden as a share of state income in the country in 2011. The study reports that 9.7% of the collective incomes of West Virginia taxpayers went toward state and local taxes. The average for the United States as a whole was slightly higher, at 9.8%. West Virginia is among the states clumped in the middle of the rankings that are very close together in percentage. Any change in percentages in that middle group can cause states to shift drastically in how they are ranked.

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In 2009 and 2010, West Virginia's tax burden remained at 9.9%, but its ranking jumped from 25th to 21st over that period of a year.

The U.S. Chamber's Institute for Legal Reform (ILR) today released its survey ranking the states with the best and worst legal climates in the country. According to the survey, the states with the worst legal climates are California (46th), Alabama (47th), Mississippi (48th), Louisiana (49th), and West Virginia (50th). The states with the best legal climates are Delaware (1st), North Dakota (2nd), Nebraska (3rd), Indiana (4th), and Iowa (5th).

Overall W.V. State Income Tax Rates

Tax Bracket (\$)	Marginal Corporate Income Tax Rate
\$0 to \$50,000	15%
\$50,000 to \$75,000	\$7,500 + 25% Of the amount over 50,000
\$75,000 to \$100,000	\$13,750 + 34% Of the amount over 75,000
\$100,000 to \$335,000	\$22,250 + 39% Of the amount over 100,000
\$335,000 to \$10,000,000	\$113,900 + 34% Of the amount over 335,000
\$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000	\$3,400,000 + 35% Of the amount over 10,000,000
\$15,000,000 to \$18,333,333	\$5,150,000 + 38% Of the amount over \$15,000,000

Employment by Industry

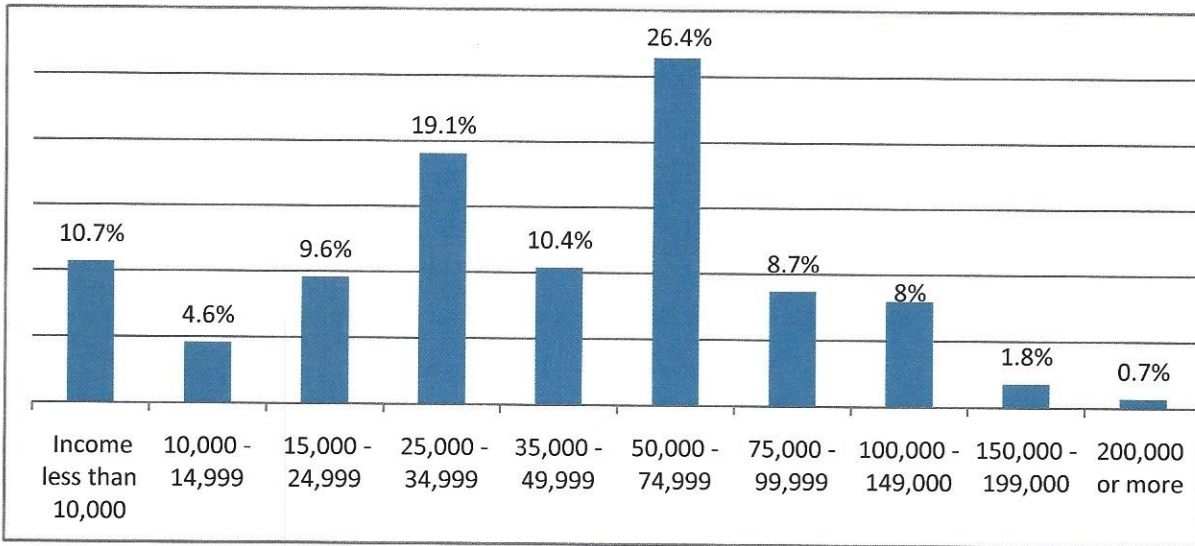
The education, health and social services industry employs more Princeton residents than any other industry. In the retail sector, Chain stores like Wal-Mart, Lowes, the hotel and restaurants are a part of Princeton's economy.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting and mining	2.7%
Construction	8.2%
Manufacturing	7.3%
Wholesale Trade	2.8%
Retail Trade	13.4%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	5.1%
Information	2.2%
Finance, insurance and real estate and rental leasing	7.2%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services	3.3%
Educational services, health care and social assistance	25.6%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	10.8%
Other services, except public administration	7.2%

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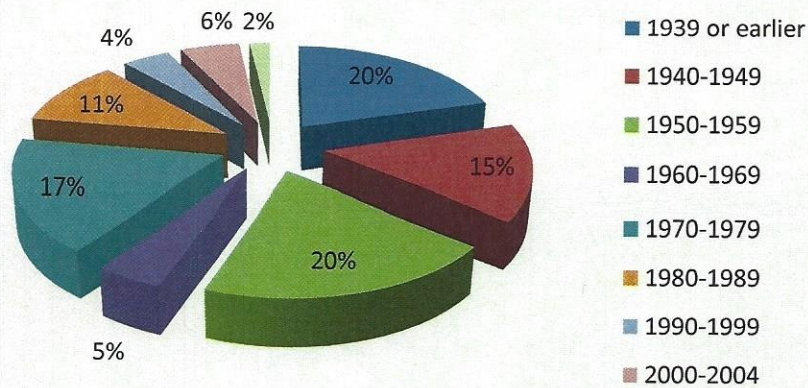
Average Income

The average median household income is \$40,452. Below is a graph in thousands of the percentages of income levels in Princeton. The poverty remains high for families. Statistically the level of poverty for all families is 16%, with children under 18 it is 20.5% and families with related children under the age of 5 is 31.4%.



Housing Characteristics

Age of Housing Stock in Princeton

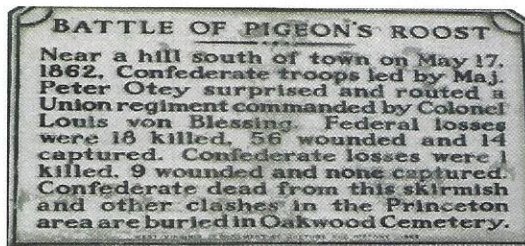


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Home Ownership

It is estimated that the City of Princeton has 3,602 total housing units with 647 vacant housing units. The City of Princeton has an estimated 1,962 or 66.4% of its housing units owner occupied, and 993 or 33.6%, renter occupied. The housing stock is older and requires more maintenance and renovation making it difficult for many to keep up their homes. 61% of all homes in Princeton were built prior to the 1960's.

History of Princeton



Princeton is the county seat of Mercer County. At an elevation of 2,449 feet, it is the highest county seat east of Denver, CO. Princeton's history began in 1837 when Mercer County was formed from Giles and Tazewell counties. Mercer County is named after the Revolutionary War general Huger Mercer. Princeton got its name when he was mortally wounded in the battle of Princeton, NJ. The courthouse was constructed during this time period. In 1840 the McNutt House was built. The foundation consists of 15 inch hickory sill logs. During the Civil War, around 1862, Confederate general Walter Jenifer ordered the town burned to prevent from falling into the Union Army's hands. The only buildings that survived were David Hall's home, Aspenwald, the McNutt house and George Pearis' home on Main Street. Today, the McNutt house is the administrative offices of the Princeton Mercer County Chamber of Commerce. This home marks the first site on the West Virginia Civil War Trail. It is the only Civil War Era structure standing in Princeton. The most famous battle during the Civil War was the 1860 Battle of Pigeon Roost where 23 Union Army soldiers died and 3 Confederate soldiers were killed in action.

At the turn of the century, Princeton's population was 500 people. In 1905, the building of the railroad began. It was completed in 1909 and Princeton's population grew to 1,000. Hospitals were built in 1912 and again in 1918. The latter, the Memorial Hospital remained open until Princeton Community Hospital opened in 1970.

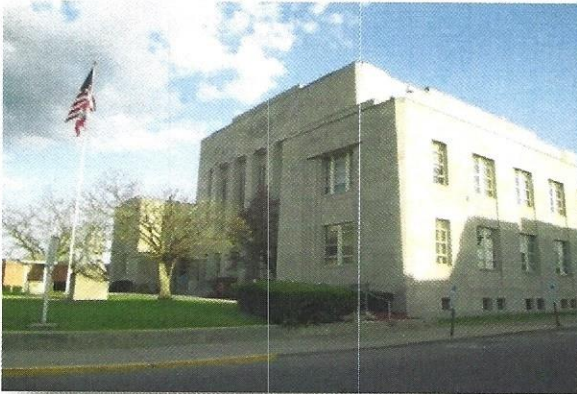
By 1927 Princeton was a bustling community with sixty stores, three banks, four hotels and other businesses. The Chamber of Commerce was formed in 1927. Princeton continued to grow until the late 1970's when the coal mining automation began causing

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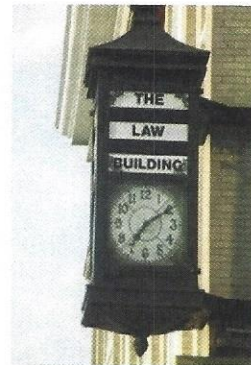
massive layoffs in this supporting industry. Many stores closed and unemployed miners left to find work elsewhere.

Today Princeton is seeing a resurgence of entrepreneurship, revitalization and reinvestment into the historic downtown and throughout the entire community. The future is bright for Princeton.

Mercer County Court House



Law Building, Courthouse Road



Princeton Form of Government

Princeton is located in the southern most region of West Virginia and is the county seat of Mercer County. Princeton is an incorporated class III city with a population of 6,432. The unincorporated area of Princeton boosts the population to an estimated 30,000.

Princeton has adopted a council/manager form of government. The seven members of City Council are the governing body elected by the citizens of Princeton. In turn, the City Council appoints a professional manager to manage the day to day activities of the city. The City Council also elects two of its members at the start of each year to serve as the Mayor and Vice Mayor for the City.

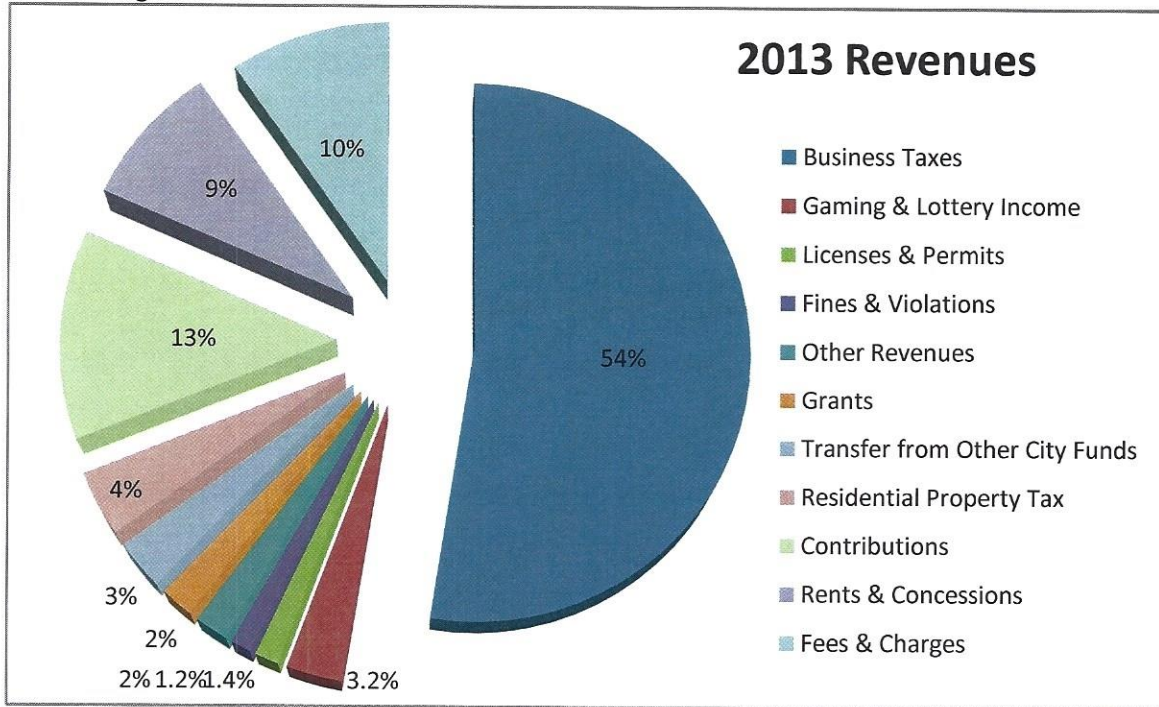
All powers of the City are vested in the elective Council which enacts local legislation, adopts budgets and determines policy. The City Manager is responsible for implementing the laws and administering the government of the City.

The fiscal year 2014 budget for the City of Princeton is \$7.3 million. A large portion of the revenue to operate the city comes from the Business and Occupation Tax – estimated in the fiscal year 2014 budget at \$2.8 million, **Figure 2.5**. The Business and Occupation tax is a gross sales tax on all business conducted within the city boundaries. With good

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management, Princeton has been able to thrive without imposing excessive additional taxes on its citizens and businesses as compared to similar cities within the region.

Figure 2.5



Princeton Police Department



The Princeton Police Department, est. 1909, is honored to "SERVE AND PROTECT". Our mission, to provide the highest quality of life possible to residents, business owners and visitors of the City of Princeton, by safeguarding property and protecting lives, is one we execute with great conviction.

With the influx of people and the residents of the City of Princeton, we serve over 20,000 people every day.

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Assuring superiority in performance of duties; officers must pass our stringent testing and standards, are required to achieve certification from the WV State Police Academy, and continuing law enforcement education throughout their careers is mandatory. With 20 sworn officers, we provide 24 hour police protection in three rotating eight hours shifts; each supervised by a Commanding Officer and Sergeant. Our Detective Bureau and K-9 Unit are readily available resources to all three shifts. Three office personnel provide service to the public, officer support; perform records management, and process submissions required by state and federal agencies. Networking with other law enforcement agencies facilitates in making our city safer.

We are active participants in Child Protect, Mercer County's Special Response Team, the Southern Regional Drug & Violent Crime Task Force, and the WV Coalfields Highway Safety Program. Interaction with those agencies allows the pooling of additional resources and expands awareness of suspicious and illegal activity.

Striving to foster positive interaction with police officers, we get involved with the community. We actively participate in educational sessions at Mercer County Public Schools and are participants of Mercer County Public School's Job Shadow Program. This year we presented an educational "Halloween Safety" campaign in the fall and started our "Police Your Friends For Life" campaign this spring. We welcome tours of local youth and community groups to the Police Department. We also greatly appreciate organizations supporting the Princeton Police Department. All of these activities promote community awareness and contribute to a brighter future for tomorrow.



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Fire Department



The Princeton Fire Department provides Fire, Rescue, Hazardous Materials Response and EMS First Responder to the citizens and visitors to the City of Princeton. In 2013, the department answered 1260 calls for emergency and non-emergency assistance. The Department also has automatic aid agreements with the surrounding community.

The department has a full time staff of twelve Firefighters and one Chief with a minimum staffing of four personnel daily. We are supplemented with eight Volunteer Firefighters that assist during emergency situations.

The department is always dedicated to fire safety and prevention. We conducted 22 fire inspections 50 re-inspections and 50 consultations along with the preplanning of almost every business, mercantile, and assembly structures within the city.

During this time our Community Safety and Health program spent 546 hours teaching in areas of fire safety talks, fire prevention presentations, firefighting classes, CPR, First Aid and EMT training reaching 1,783 people, As well as spending 4500 hours of classroom time training of our members. We are proud to maintain a Class 3 ISO rating and always strive to improve ourselves and community.



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Ambulance Services



Princeton Rescue Squad was founded in 1961 by a hand full of volunteers who saw a need for an ambulance service in Mercer County. Today Princeton Rescue Squad employees over 70 skilled professionals including dispatchers, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, billing staff, and management and support staff. Princeton is considered the oldest private ambulance service in Mercer County today. From those first few years where equipment and training were humble at best, Princeton now utilizes state of the art equipment and techniques to provide a wide range of services to our citizens.

In addition to basic ambulance transports, Princeton is also a specialized rescue agency. Princeton Rescue has a swift water rescue team, one of only a few certified Critical Care Ambulance transport services, high angle rescue, motor vehicle extrication, and recently they have added a new mass casualty unit and team to the services we provide.

Princeton Rescue Squad is based in the heart of Princeton on Stafford Drive. The facility houses the billing department, administrative offices, dispatch center, training facilities, crew quarters, as well as a spacious garage bay capable of housing all our trucks and equipment. In addition to the base station, we also have three sub-stations located in Lake Bottom, Glenwood, and our Athens station which is located on the campus of Concord University.

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Public Works Department

The Princeton Public Works Department strives to provide the highest quality of services for residents of, and visitors to, the City of Princeton and to seek new and innovative ways to provide the most efficient and cost-effective services.

The Public Works Department consists of several City functions: street repair and maintenance, garbage collection, buildings and grounds maintenance, and a garage facility to maintain all motor equipment in the Department. Other services provided include storm sewer maintenance and construction, street sweeping, street painting, street sign installation and maintenance, mowing, snow plowing, asphaltting, leaf collection, alley maintenance, vehicle and equipment repair, maintenance, and fabrication, special order pickups, and raw water system maintenance.

Services are also provided for special projects that present opportunities for aesthetic and functional improvement, and the maintenance of public spaces and site amenities located within our City.

The City fleet of public works vehicles consists of 27 well-maintained vehicles including various pieces of heavy equipment. The Department strives to provide quality fleet management, equipment repair, and safe vehicles so that the City of Princeton is thoroughly equipped to serve its citizens.

The Department is managed by a Director and an Assistant Director with a workforce of 15 employees. Four employees have been certified through West Virginia University's Transportation Technology Transfer Program. A total of 13 employees have acquired their Commercial Drivers License. A number of our personnel possess various skills in construction, carpentry, plumbing, masonry, pipe installation, sign fabrication, and welding.

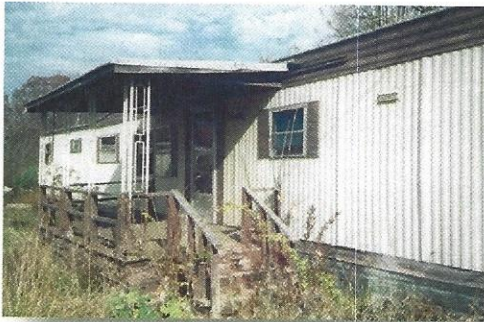
Code Enforcement

THE MISSION of the City of Princeton's Code Enforcement Department is to provide the citizens of Princeton, property owners, tenants, business operators, and any visitors with effective and efficient application of the City Codes of Princeton. In the interest of public safety, health, and aesthetics, the Princeton Code Enforcement Department shall provide Code Enforcement services in a fair and beneficial manner to help improve the City's overall image and well being.

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The Princeton Code Enforcement Department shall accept the challenge and responsibility to work with people to seek their cooperation within the spirit of the law, and to strive to be a catalyst in order to reduce neighborhood negatives such as crime, fire hazards, eye sores, and nuisances.

Before



After



THE MISSION of Code Enforcement is shared by many participants, including City Management, City Council, City Department Heads, City employees, and in general the citizens of Princeton. The CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT, through its members, shall provide services in:

BUILDING INSPECTION & PERMIT ISSUANCE

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE INSPECTION

NUISANCE INSPECTION

FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT

ZONING

ANIMAL CONTROL

DEMOLITION & ASBESTOS INSPECTION

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Parks and Recreation

The Princeton Park and Recreation Department is governed by the Princeton Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners. The board has 5 voting members, 2 of which are City Council representatives. Also, the Mayor and City Manager sit on the board as ex-officio members. The department's annual budget is approximately, \$400,000, with the City being its largest contributor at \$133,000. The department has 3 full time employees, 15 part time employees, and 25 seasonal employees. The department offers a variety of recreational activities, programs, classes, leagues, and special events.

City Park Nature Area



City Park Pool



All daily operations of the Park and Recreation Department take place through its main facility, the Princeton Recreation Center. The Princeton Recreation Center is composed of meeting rooms, a gymnasium, karate dojo, bounce house party room, skate park, softball field, large picnic shelter, and playground. The facility is open 7 days a week. The Recreation Department also maintains Princeton City Park, located on Emory Avenue. The City Park contains an outdoor swimming facility with 2 diving boards, a 23 foot waterslide, and baby pool. The City Park is approximately 40 acres and is comprised of 3 picnic shelters, an all purpose stage, 2 open fields, sand volleyball court, and a playground. The 1 mile paved loop through the park is utilized by many walkers, runners, and pet walkers. There are also a few short segments of existing trails. Currently, only about half of the park's acreage is being utilized. The Park Board's next capitol project is to develop a beginner friendly, natural surface walking trail system in the City Park. Phase I (planning) has been completed. The total trail distance is anticipated to be 2 miles.

Other facilities within the department include 5 community parks and Valley Street Outdoor Basketball Court. The parks feature picnic shelters, basketball courts, open green spaces, and playground equipment. They are located on Knob St., Washington Ave., Lower Pine St., McKinley Ave., and Oliver Ave.

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Education

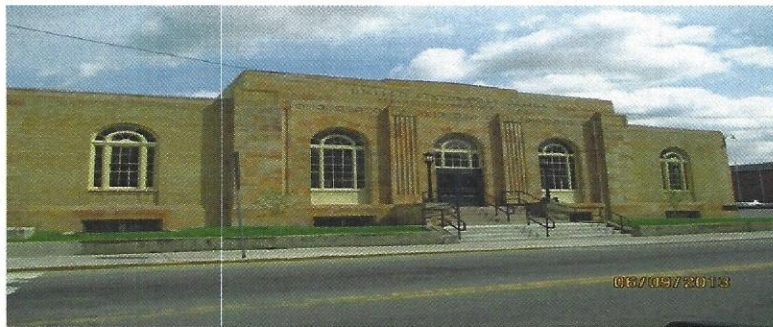
Princeton children attend the Mercer County School System. The high school is located on Stafford Drive and the middle school is on North Walker Street. Our elementary schools are located on Straley Avenue and Mercer Street.

Mercer County Schools have a total of 9,505 students in the 2013-2014 school year. There are total of 19 elementary schools, four middle schools and three high schools as well as the technical center adjacent to Princeton Senior High School.

A total of 4,704 students attend the elementary school and 4,801 attend the middle and high schools.

The school district offers several sports such as football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, softball, baseball, cheerleading, track and golf.

City of Princeton Public Library



Princeton Public Library has one (1) full-time degreed Librarian and eight (8) part-time staff members. Funding sources for the library include the Mercer County Commission, Board of Education, state funds, and the City of Princeton general fund.

The Princeton Public Library is an independent municipal library. It is located on Mercer Street. The library is open six days a week. Library cards and services are free to all West Virginia residents. In addition to a large collection of more than 60,000 physical items, patrons also have access to a vast collection of electronic books and audio titles through the library's participation in the WV-READS consortium.

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Additional services offered by the library include online access to newspapers, test preparation materials, inter-library loan coordination, resume building assistance, genealogy resources, tax preparation information, and materials for the blind. The library provides free computer and Wi-Fi access and regularly offers free computer assistance. Furthermore, the library features an excellent youth services department and hosts a diverse selection of programs for children, including the annual Summer Reading Program.

Transportation

Princeton is located in an extremely accessible area in what is typically a rural Appalachian Mountain setting.

To the east, just outside of the corporate boundary is Interstate 77 - a north/south artery stretching from Columbus, SC to Cleveland, OH. Princeton sees many out of state visitors as a popular half-way stopping point for northern folks traveling to and from southern beaches.

Running east/west along the southern border of Princeton is US Route 460 – a four lane highway that traverses from Norfolk, VA to Frankfort, KY.

US 19 enters West Virginia in Bluefield, passes through Princeton's Historic Mercer Street then it narrows to a two-lane as it winds northward. It later parallels Interstate 77 and 64.

Due to easy accessibility and location, Princeton is routinely selected to provide overflow accommodations for various regional events such as NASCAR's Bristol Motor Speedway, Winterplace Ski Resort, Virginia Tech football games, and various horse shows.

Public Transportation

Bluefield Area Transit (BAT) provides public bus transportation to Mercer and McDowell counties. Within the Princeton area alone, BAT conducts hourly stops at 20 locations from early morning to early evening. A deviated fixed route service, up to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in each direction of the main route, is available by calling a day in advance.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY OVERVIEW



Princeton area Bus Stops

Springhaven Drive	Princeton Shopping Center	Thorn Street
Princeton Community Hospital	Kroger	The Towers
Stafford Drive	Mercer Street	Locust Street
North Walker Street	460 East	Wal-Mart
Sleep Inn/Oakvale Road	WV DHHR	County Courthouse/Main Street
Lovell Avenue	Grants/Athens Crossroads	State Route 20/West Main Street
Beckley Road	High Street	

Major Roadways

Route 19 which runs through the original business district experiences heavy traffic flows as it runs parallel to Interstate 77 then turns off toward Athens and Beckley. This area of town includes many small businesses including art, books, crafts, groceries, restaurants and a bakery. Stafford Drive is the main shopping district for Princeton. Small shopping centers, food stores, gas and repair stations, pharmacies and fast food restaurants are some of the many businesses operating on Stafford Drive which turns into Rogers Street as it exits the city.

The largest growth lies just outside of city limits at the junction of Interstate 77 and 460 with Wal-Mart, Lowe’s, large chain restaurants and hotels.

Existing Land Use

Within the city limits, 58% of land is used for single family residential use. Commercial uses are the next most common land use in the city comprising 17% of all land. unincorporated portion of the planning areas, the primary land use in natural/vacant, about 46% with residential areas comprising 43% and 7% commercial.

CHAPTER 3: GROWTH STRATEGY

Princeton's future development plan provided for four future development classifications: existing development, redevelopment areas, future growth corridor and future development areas to assist in the prioritization of development. The future growth corridors and future development areas are not anticipated to fully develop with the immediate adoption of this plan. Because these areas are located outside of the City boundaries, an annexation strategy is necessary. Annexation is not just a land use decision but a financial one for a community. If a city's boundary is not growing, then the city itself is not growing and therefore will eventually die because the necessary resources are not in place to support it.

As indicated in other areas of the plan, in order for the City to survive and remain competitive, the extension of city boundaries is a must. New development on property that is annexed increases the tax base of the community. For communities that have little area for development or who have reached their maximum tax levy, annexation provides additional properties upon which to distribute the tax. Annexation also increases the local assessed value, which is a criterion in establishing some community bonding limits and eligibility for the distribution of state and federal funds. Annexation not only brings opportunities for additional community funds, but these properties annexed also demand services from the City, raising required expenditures.

Annexation results in many possible revenues and expenditures. Generally, the following expenditures may result from annexation:

- Parks and recreation program and facilities
- Community planning and code enforcement
- General administration including staffing, file clerk, office space for departments
- Fire and police protection, facilities, equipment vehicles and personnel
- Street and utility maintenance equipment vehicles, supplies, personnel and capital improvements.

Costs for other government and quasi-government entities could also increase as a result of additions to the community through annexation. The city's revenues that generally result from annexation could include the following:

- Tax revenues
- Income tax funds
- General state distributed funds
- Planning petition and building permit fees
- Municipal user fees.

The purpose of providing this strategy for annexation is to provide some direction for the City in its future discussions regarding the extension of its boundary. While the development plan has identified appropriate locations for new growth, the annexation

CHAPTER 3: GROWTH STRATEGY

strategy begins to provide the timing in which certain areas would be annexed into the City. Sound land use management practices are those that ensure appropriate transitions of land use and an adequate supply of services as the City evolves.

Annexations should not be evaluated on budget concerns alone. When deciding to undertake an annexation petition, City leaders should consider the impact to the community as a whole. Will then annexation result in a better balanced land use mixture? Will new residential annexations increase budget demands in the short-term but increase revenues in the long-term when they fuel commercial and employment development? Potential annexation areas are listed below in an order which would most likely have the greatest benefit to the City.

In 2001, the West Virginia Legislature made significant revisions to the State's annexation law (Chapter 8, Article 6, Sections 1-5 of the WV Code) The most important revisions include:

- Removal of the urban density requirement in the annexation without election method
- Permitting county commissions discretion when reviewing requests for annexations by minor boundary adjustment
- Prohibiting retroactive taxation of businesses being annexed
- Modifying eligibility to participate in an annexation vote
- Allowing corporations to sign annexation petitions
- Revising eligibility of areas to be annexed by minor boundary adjustment
- Expanding the requirements for filing annexation requests by minor boundary adjustment
- Recommendation:
- Create a comprehensive annexation strategy to implement over the next 20 years to grow the city's boundary. The land outside the City's boundaries has been organized into areas that would be potential areas for annexation into the City.

RESIDENTIAL AREA ONE

Residential area one is located just north of the City, bounded on the east by Brush Creek and to the west of the City. The eastern portion of this area is built out with contemporary residential growth. The western portion can be characterized by natural and vacant land, which would be suitable for future growth. This area is served by utilities. The annexation of this area into the City provides an additional population base and creates a potential for future population growth which will be a key component in marketing the City to a larger employment industry.

CHAPTER 3: GROWTH STRATEGY

RESIDENTIAL AREA TWO

Residential area two is north of the City, located between SF 19 to its west and the City to its east. It predominately built out with contemporary residential uses. As indicated on the future development map, this area should continue to develop with a contemporary residential character. This area is served by utilities. Because of the areas existing residential population, the annexation of the area into the City provides for an additional population increase which will be a key component in marketing the City to a larger employment industry.

EMPLOYMENT AREA ONE

Employment area one is located on either side of 104 from the City limits to the west to I-77 to the east, as well as the area south of US 460 between I-77 and SR 20. This corridor is already established with both commercial and industrial growth and therefore should have a higher priority for annexation than other employment corridors. There are some vacant and underutilized parcels that provide opportunities for future employment development uses. This area has utility services to support existing and future growth. This should be the first employment area to be annexed into the City.

EMPLOYMENT AREA TWO

Employment area two is located along SR 19 from the City limits to the intersection of US 460 and SR 19. This corridor has already been built out with commercial and office type uses, especially close to the corridor. However with a higher amount of land to be developed for employment uses, this area should be the second employment area for annexation. This area has full utility services to support existing and future growth. This area should continue to develop out with office uses, automotive uses and community retail uses.

EMPLOYMENT AREA THREE

This employment area is located to the east of I-77, north and south of US 460. This corridor has begun to develop south of US 460 with regional commercial uses. This area has limited utility services including sewer services to the south and some areas north of US 460 with full utilities that support this existing growth. This area is expected to continue to develop with regional retail uses. Development and annexation of this area should be contingent on the expansion of water services into this area, and it should not be annexed until services can be expanded. This area is a higher priority for annexation because of the existing utility services and the ability to provide future utility services.

EMPLOYMENT AREA FOUR

Employment area four is located south of US 460, west of I-77, and east of the railroad. This side of the corridor is relatively undeveloped. There are a few office, warehouse and residential uses which have developed along this corridor. However, even with

CHAPTER 3: GROWTH STRATEGY

development, this area does not have utilities. Existing development is utilizing septic systems and wells. Additionally, development along this corridor has been limited by the high cost of preparing sites along steep slopes. Therefore, it is anticipated that this area will grow at a much slower rate than other employment areas and therefore is not a priority for annexation into the City. It is expected, as shown on the development map, that this area should continue to develop with office type uses and industrial uses.

EMPLOYMENT AREA FIVE

This employment area is located south of US 460, east of the railroad tracks and west of the intersection of SR 19 and US 460. This side of the corridor is relatively undeveloped. Some office and retail automotive uses have developed along this corridor. However, even with development, this area does not have utilities. The existing uses are utilizing septic systems and wells. It is anticipated that this area will grow at a much slower rate than other employment areas and therefore is not a priority for annexation into the City. It is expected, as shown on the development map, that this area should continue to develop out with community retail, retail automotive and industrial uses.

EMPLOYMENT AREA SIX

This employment area is located south of US 460 west of I-77. This side of the corridor has begun to develop with existing large scale regional development such as Wal-mart that draws people from longer distances. The development in this area does not have utilities and utilizes septic systems and wells. Future recommendations call for the expansion of water and sewer to continue to foster development. Because this development is located at a key interchange, and a fair amount of development has already occurred, it is expected that development will continue here in this area as a priority over employment area 7. However, because it is located at the eastern most edge, annexation of this area before other areas will be difficult. It is expected that this area will continue to develop with large scale regional commercial, support commercial and office type uses.

EMPLOYMENT AREA SEVEN

This employment area is located north of US 460 east of I-77. This side of the corridor is undeveloped. This is in part due to the changes in grades as well as gaining site access. If the area around the intersection of I-77 and US 460 does develop at the end of that twenty year time frame it could offer the City of Princeton the opportunity for another commercial and office area for development. This area should not be considered a priority for annexation unless utilities and site preparation issues can be resolved. It is anticipated that this area will contain regional commercial and office type uses.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Activities of a community are reflected in the patterns of its land use. The type, location and intensity of different land uses also affect how a community's future goals are met and represented in the Future Land Use Map. One additional element beyond type, location and intensity should be addressed. There is more to creating great places than simply providing the structure for the community's land uses. In order to be a community with an identity and strong sense of place, the city needs to have community character that reflects the values of its residents through quality development. This chapter seeks to define and translate into visually perceivable physical forms those components of the community that contribute to the quality and character of the City of Princeton.

Four different areas of physical design are examined in this chapter: gateways, commercial uses, residential uses and civic/institutional uses. While focusing on these particular areas, many of the design principles can be applied across the City. These design guidelines have been developed to provide guidance relating to the design of the community. The intent of the guidelines is to encourage the creation of useful and lasting community improvements that will be enjoyed for years to come.

These design guidelines offer specific recommendations for the design and placement of City design elements, including buildings, streetscape elements, open space, signs, etc. The main principles illustrated in these guidelines include a focus on pedestrian comfort and human-scale, accessibility, visual interest, and architectural and historic compatibility.

The design guidelines are based on three goals. First, they provide developers a tool for understanding the comprehensive design intent and character desired by the City of Princeton. Second, they provide standards by which proposed developments will be evaluated for their compliance with the design intent. Furthermore, they suggest and encourage design approaches that facilitate the design intent of The Plan.

These guidelines do not dictate design decisions, but rather, they provide standards or guidelines to be followed. These guidelines work to prevent incompatible new construction or rehabilitation by acting as a base for objective decision making. Each guideline describes and illustrates ways existing places and new developments may be designed, altered and improved to achieve the most desirable solution. Each guideline also provides criteria to evaluate the appropriateness of specific design decisions involved in a project. Attention to these guidelines will help to contribute to a unique and attractive City, especially along the entrance corridors to the City.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

The frame work and design of the City will always need to be adaptable to change as the City continues to evolve and develop. Continued improvements and an increased vitality Princeton will depend on the City's commitment to these guidelines. Successfully applied, these guidelines will contribute to an improved quality of life, economic vitality, and a positive visual image for the City of Princeton.

EMPLOYMENT AREAS

Character of Princeton's Employment Areas

Princeton has a strong manufacturing and industrial economy. There are several locations for employment land-uses within the City as illustrated on the Future Development Plan Map. They can be divided into two basic use areas. Redevelopment areas focus on small-scale manufacturing and assembly are extremely diverse in site size, building type and scale. Future growth corridors are located close to major arterial roadways. While these areas are predominately undeveloped, there are some more recently developed buildings. These areas should include large-scale warehouse and distribution facilities, often supported by a limited amount office and light industrial uses.

Employment Area Design Guidelines

The characteristics of the Employment Areas are described below. The guidelines should be thought about when reviewing and approving development plans for renovation and new developments in-filled within the existing developed land use pattern and along the future growth corridors including I-77 and US 460.

UNIVERSAL GUIDELINES

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are important for access from employment areas to adjacent employment areas, but will vary in width depending upon local conditions.

- Sidewalks, a minimum of five feet in width, should be provided at all public roadways. Consideration should be taken into account of the location of these employment areas to future greenway/trail path and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Sidewalk design should facilitate access to public bus transit and existing and future greenways and trails.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Streetscape and Public Area Amenities

- Streetscape treatments will vary by employment area depending on location.

However, the following basic guidelines will apply:

Streetscape design should be coordinated with boulevard improvements as discussed in the residential design guidelines.

- Connections should be created to adjacent recreations areas and trails.
- Where feasible, off-street bike paths should be provided within employment areas.
- If connections to trails are provided, bicycle parking for employees should be conveniently located near building entrances.

Landscaping

Landscaping and site amenities should be considered as an integral part of overall design. Landscaping should complement the building and other site improvements.

- A cluster of trees or street trees should be provided at entrances into developments. If street trees are utilized, then one should be placed at least every 40 feet.
- Off-street parking areas, building foundations, and signs should all be landscaped.
- Fences and barriers should be constructed of consistent and compatible high quality materials to create a coordinated appearance.
- The perimeter of parking lots and loading areas adjoining residential land-uses and less intense commercial uses should be screened with continuous landscaping berms and/or low walls or other appropriate features, such as the example shown below.
- Retention ponds, where required, should be designed as landscape features.

Lighting and Utilities

Lighting should be designed as an integral feature of the building and site.

- Lighting at parking and loading areas should be mounted on walls or posts at a height of 25 feet or less.
- Free-standing and wall mounted fixtures should incorporate cutoffs to screen the view of light sources from neighboring residential use.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Fixtures and posts should be consistent throughout the development.
- Lighting should be used to highlight building entrances.
- Where practical, utility lines along arterial rights-of-way should be located underground.
- Ground-mounted utility boxes should be concealed with landscaping.

Signage should be in scale with building and site elements, and should complement, rather than compete with, the overall design.

- Wherever possible, signs should be located low to the ground, in the driver's line of vision. A Roof-mounted and pole signs are strongly discouraged.
- Building sign sizes should primarily reflect viewing distances for drivers.
- Building signs oriented to adjacent highways can be larger in scale.
- At multi-tenant developments, shared monument signage should be encouraged.
- Monument and wall signage should be designed appropriate for the scale of the building.
- Sign support structures should be minimal or architecturally integrated with the overall development.
- Parking lots may include directional signage. However, signage should be used sparingly and be of a consistent character and designed in conjunction with all other site signage.

REDEVELOPMENT AREA GUIDELINES

Off-street Parking and Circulation

Key objectives of the redevelopment area design guidelines are to minimize the length of a walk between parking areas and buildings, and to safely separate auto and truck traffic.

- Visitor parking may be located in front of a building. However, employee parking and truck loading areas should be located beside or behind the building.
- Provide adequate on-site area for truck loading and maneuvering, where feasible as dictated by site constraints.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Building Scale and Massing

The scale and massing of buildings in the redevelopments area have typically been more oriented to drivers than pedestrians.

- Street-facing facades of office buildings should vary in height to create visual variety.
- Warehouses should avoid blank elevations on street frontages through the use of building indentation and architectural details, such as "faux window treatments", related to the "structure" of the building.

Architectural Design

- New industrial area buildings infilled into the existing fabric should consider incorporating the following features:
- New facades should be well composed, and articulated with a variety of materials and planes and should be compatible with surrounding, existing buildings.
- Building entrances should be highlighted with accent elements, lighting or other features that aid in orientation.
- Visitor entrances should be prominent, preferably through the use of a portico or awning that will provide weather protection.
- Stairways, fences, trash enclosures and other accessory elements should be designed as integral parts of the facility design.
- Service areas should be shielded from view of public rights-of-way to the extent possible (i.e. refuse containers, outdoor storage, transformers, loading docks, etc.).

Building Materials

In general, the selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concept of the building and be compatible with surrounding, existing buildings.

- High quality materials should be used on exterior surfaces including masonry, metal, concrete panel systems or tile.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Consistent finish materials should be used on all facades that are visible from public streets and/or auto parking areas.
- Reflective or "mirror" glass is inappropriate.

FUTURE GROWTH CORRIDOR GUIDELINES

Site Design Considerations

The following principals should apply:

- In general, landscaping, site features and finished surfaces of private buildings should be given particular attention around the perimeter of the development.
- If the site is "double-fronted", with visibility from an adjacent highway, the site layout should seek to minimize unfavorable views from the highway.
- Cul-de-sacs within new planned business or industrial parks are strongly discouraged.

Off-Street Parking and Circulation

A key objective of the future growth corridor design guidelines is to safely separate auto and truck traffic.

- Truck and auto entrances should be separated, and auto parking areas should be isolated from truck movement and loading areas.
- Adequate on-site area should be provided for truck loading and maneuvering.
- Sidewalks along adjoining public streets should connect to pedestrian walkways within the development that provide safe connections to building entrances.

Building Scale and Massing

The scale and massing of buildings in the future growth corridors is generally large, being more oriented to motorists than pedestrians.

- Street-facing facades of office buildings should vary in vertical plane to create visual variety.
- Warehouses should avoid blank elevations on street frontages through the application of architectural details, such as "faux windows", related to the "structure" of the building.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Architectural Design

New planned employment area buildings should consider incorporating the following features:

- New facades should be well composed and articulated with a variety of heights and setbacks.
- In developments with multiple structures, a similar forms and materials should be used to tie the development together.
- Building entrances should be highlighted with accent elements, lighting or other features that aid in orientation.
- Stairways, fences, trash enclosures and other accessory elements should be designed as integral parts of the facility design.
- Service areas should be shielded from view of public rights of way to the extent possible (i.e. refuse containers, outdoor storage, transformers, loading docks, etc).

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COMMERCIAL USES

CHARACTER OF PRINCETON'S COMMERCIAL AREAS

Princeton has diverse commercial areas. Within the city, commercial areas provide distinct functions to serve community needs. There is a wide range in the type and scale of commercial building clusters. Yet, there is a basic pattern to the City's commercial areas which should be supported and reinforced by the City's design guidelines. Existing commercial areas have been identified according to both their function and level of pedestrian accessibility.

Provide adequate on-site area for truck loading and maneuvering, where feasible as dictated by site constraints.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

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CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

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NEIGHBORHOOD NODE

Reinforce the "Street Wall"

New and existing neighborhood nodes should encourage in-line storefronts along the right-of-way line. Placing structures up to the street facilitates pedestrian activity, and encourages shared parking solutions and more compact development.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- The front facades of new buildings and structures should be located at the street line. In existing "in-line" street district areas, expanded buildings should occupy at least sixty percent of the site frontage, as illustrated below.
- At least sixty percent of the building front should be devoted to windows and door openings.

Off-Street Parking and Loading

A key objective of the neighborhood node is to ensure that buildings, not parking areas and curb cuts, dominate the street frontage.

- Parking in a front yard is inappropriate.
- While access and parking located between in-line buildings is not preferred, conditions often require an allowance for this purpose. Parking and access should not consume more than one third of the parcel width.
- Parking should not extend beyond the front façade plane of the building.
- Loading and service areas should not be visible from public areas (i.e. refuse containers, transformers, loading docks, etc.).
- Service area access should be provided from an alley, when an alley is present.

On-Street Parking

In some neighborhood nodes, on-street parking is not allowed. Often this is due to the presence a major arterial or state highway with design standards that discourage on-street parking for the safety of motorists. Yet the policy has the effect of further limiting already constrained parking and making these areas unpleasant for pedestrians. On-street parking has a traffic calming benefit that is important in pedestrian-oriented areas.

- The City should reevaluate its off-street parking policy in neighborhood nodes sustaining in-line buildings to determine if on-street parking is feasible.

Building Scale and Massing

The overall massing and scale of new development should be consistent with surrounding structures. New structures and additions should be delineated horizontally and vertically and should convey a pedestrian scale.

- New buildings should respect the traditional height of surrounding buildings. While one story buildings are acceptable, two or three story buildings should be encouraged.
- New buildings or additions in in-line storefront locations should be designed with simple rectangular volumes.
- A clear visual division between street level and upper floors should be incorporated through a change of materials, colors, and/or canopies and awnings.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Architectural Design

New commercial buildings should consider incorporating the following features:

- Building façade designs and levels of detail should reflect a pedestrian scale and convey a sense of detail from close viewing distances by people on foot and in slowly moving cars.
- Long, unbroken volumes and large unarticulated wall and roof planes should not be permitted.
- Long front facades on new "in-line" buildings should demonstrate a rhythm and articulation of "storefront" modules that correspond in scale and proportion with surrounding traditional buildings.
- In many cases, a parapet wall that conceals a flat roof behind will be the most contextual design solution for an "in-line" storefront building.
- Roof forms, where visible, should cover the entire width and depth of the buildings. Superficial roof forms, such as "mansards" affixed to the facades of a building, should not be allowed.

Building Materials

In general, building materials and color should help establish visual continuity for the area, reflecting the materials used on adjacent traditional buildings.

- Use the highest quality materials on exterior surfaces including brick, metal, stucco, wood, stone, terra cotta and tile.
- Matte finishes are preferred.
- Reflective or "mirror" glass is inappropriate.
- Buildings designed with obvious reference to a style or period should be consistent with that style or period.

Lighting and Utilities

Lighting should be designed as an integral feature of the site.

- Lighting should be mounted on architecturally designed posts at a height of 16 feet or less in height, providing frequently spaced lighting at sidewalks.
- Free-standing and wall mounted fixtures should incorporate cutoffs to screen the view of light sources to neighboring residential uses.
- Fixtures and posts should be consistent throughout the project.
- Lighting should be used to highlight building features.
- Where practical, utility lines along arterial rights-of-way should be located underground.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Signage

Appropriately scaled signage is an important element in the neighborhood node.

- In “in-line’ storefront settings the use of wall and projecting signage is encouraged.
- Free-standing signs are discouraged.
- Building-mounted signage should be integral with the façade design, should be centered within structural bays, and should not obscure architectural details.
- Signs and sign locations should be an integral part of the overall design, not a later addition.

The market function of a commercial area is an important consideration in its physical design. Land uses that serve sub-regional or regional markets require large buildings and a substantial amount of off-street parking, for example Wal-mart. Conversely, neighborhood uses such as a small restaurant require much less space for parking. The guidelines establish three basic commercial character areas in Princeton. They include: 1) the Neighborhood Node; 2) the Mixed Character Area; and 3) the Auto Oriented Area.

PRINCETON COMMERCIAL CHARACTER AREAS

NEIGHBORHOOD Node – Mercer St.

Within the Traditional Community Residential Area, Neighborhood Nodes represent the smaller, traditional commercial concentrations that primarily serve local convenience shopping needs and contain commercial buildings built up to the street. Buildings are generally small in scale and may be mixed use including commercial on the first floor and residential on the second floor, with a heavy reliance on shared and on-street parking.

Mixed character Area-Stafford Drive

Within both the Traditional and contemporary Community Residential Areas, Mixed Character commercial areas represent a combination of both traditional and newer commercial buildings of varying sizes and types. Many have dedicated off-street parking lots, but some may still have some on-street parking on side streets. Lots are often combined allowing access internally from shop to shop without having to exit onto Stafford Drive.

Auto Oriented Area-I-77 and US 460

Within the Contemporary Community Residential Area, Auto Oriented commercial areas represent newer, commercial areas that contain large “big box” retailers and multi-tenant shopping centers that rely on large off-street parking lots. Lots tend to be larger and deeper, having been originally platted for commercial use.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Commercial Area Design Guidelines

UNIVERSAL GUIDELINES

Crosswalks

The ability for pedestrians to safely cross at intersections along collector and arterial streets is important.

- All neighborhood street intersections with arterial and collector streets should have marked crosswalks.
- At signalized intersections, pedestrian activated crosswalks should be installed
- On wider streets (four travel lanes) the creation of a pedestrian median between lanes is desirable for pedestrian safety, as reducing the psychological perception of street width.
- A side benefit of this is the aesthetic enhancement of the streetscape.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are important for access to commercial businesses, but will vary in width depending upon local conditions.

- Sidewalks, a minimum of three feet in width, should be provided. In areas where traditional "in-line" storefronts are positioned at the property line such as along Mercer Street, sidewalks should be a minimum of five to eight feet in width to accommodate landscaping, signage and utilities, while maintaining an adequate clear width for pedestrian travel.
- Public and private sidewalks should be coordinated to visually emphasize and provide safe access to building entrances, especially where off-street parking separates buildings from the street.

Streetscape and Commercial Area Amenities

All Commercial streets should be provided with enhanced parkways and streetscape areas. Streetscapes will vary by commercial area depending on location. The City has begun to detail streetscape designs for lower Mercer Street which can apply to the rest of Mercer Street. However, the following basic guidelines should apply:

A variety of open spaces, plazas, courts and related features are encouraged. Exterior plazas or courts that are well defined, yet allow for clear views in and out, should be considered.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Streetscape designs should be coordinated with boulevard improvements as discussed in the residential design guidelines.
- Appropriate pedestrian amenities such as pedestrian scale lighting, seating and trash receptacles should be provided along the streetscape where streets connect to park and recreation facilities, public facilities and institutional uses.
- Building and site design should consider the provision of adequate weather protection at building entrances and transit stops.

Landscaping

Landscaping and site amenities should be considered an integral part of the overall design of commercial developments. Landscaping should complement the building and other site improvements.

- If street trees are desired, they should be provided with at least one every 40 feet. Additionally, street tree planting should compliment and continue the planting scheme designed for the site as a whole.
- Off-street parking areas, building foundations, and signage bases should all be adequately landscaped.
- Parking lot landscaping should include over story shade trees distributed evenly throughout the lot.

The perimeter of parking lots adjoining a public street and adjacent properties should be screened with continuous, low-height hedges and/or low walls or other appropriate features.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Evergreens should be incorporated into lots to break up the visual expanse of parking lots during all seasons.
- Retention ponds, where required, should be designed as landscape features.
- Landscaping should be used to conceal sign supports and highlight signage.

Bicycle Parking

New development in commercial areas should provide for adequate bicycle parking.

- Bicycle parking for commercial uses should be conveniently located along the sidewalk or in front of courtyards or plazas where space permits.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Placement of bike racks should be carefully considered to minimize pedestrian conflicts.

MIXED CHARACTER AREA

- Create a Consistent Streetscape Environment
- Where "in-line" buildings exist within mixed character areas, new buildings should be encouraged to reflect the same minimal setback. Placing structures up to the street facilitates pedestrian activity, and encourages shared parking solutions and more compact development.
- In general, setbacks at new buildings should reflect the setback of neighboring buildings, in order to facilitate a consistent appearance and coordinated parking and access solutions.

Off-Street Parking and Loading

A key objective in mixed character areas is to coordinate and consolidate access to off-street parking areas.

- Where possible, connections should be made to adjoining parking areas and access to lots should be consolidated through the use of shared curb cuts.
- Loading and service areas should not be visible from public areas (i.e. refuse containers, transformers, loading docks, etc.).
- Service area access should be provided from an alley, when an alley is present. Parking areas should be screened by buildings or landscaping. Long, unbroken rows of parking should not be allowed. Large fields of parking should be adequately landscaped.

Building Scale and Massing

- The scale and massing of buildings in the Mixed Character is highly diverse. Additions should be complementary to the original structure, and new structures should be delineated horizontally and vertically and convey a pedestrian scale.
- False fronts, facades, and parapets applied to generic buildings should not be allowed. Façade treatments should be applied to all faces of a structure and integral to the massing of the building.
- Where buildings will be in close proximity to one another, they should relate to one another with regard to height, proportion and massing.
- Building facades interspersed among unrelated developments should seek to establish a compatible scale and rhythm as viewed from the public right-of-way.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Architectural Design

New commercial buildings should consider incorporating the following features:

- New facades should be well composed and articulated with a variety of materials and planes.
- Building forms should be articulated by varying roof heights and wall planes. Long unbroken volumes and large, unarticulated wall and roof planes shall not be permitted.
- Windowless expanses of wall are not appropriate on street-facing facades.
- Roof forms, where visible, to the massing of, and cover the entire width and depth of, the building. Superficial roof forms, such as "mansards" affixed to the building façade, will not be allowed.

Building Materials

In general, the selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concept to the buildings.

- Use the highest quality materials on exterior surfaces including brick, metal, stucco, wood, stone and tile.
- Consistent and high quality finish materials should be used on all facades that are visible from public streets and/or parking areas.
- Glass curtain wall and synthetic cladding and trim materials should be used sparingly, rather than for large exterior areas.
- Matte finishes are preferred.
- Certain materials have an inherently insubstantial or garish quality. These materials should not be used in new construction.

Lighting Utilities

- Lighting should be designed as an integral feature of the site.
- Lighting should be mounted on architecturally designed posts at a height of 16 feet or less, providing frequently spaced lighting at sidewalks.
- Free-standing and wall mounted fixtures should incorporate cutoffs to screen the view of light sources to neighboring residential uses.
- Fixtures and posts should be consistent throughout the development.
- Lighting should be used to highlight building features.
- Where practical, utility lines along arterial right-of-way should be located underground.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Signage

- Signage should be in scale with building and site elements, and should complement, rather than compete with, the overall design.
- Most forms of signage allowed by the City are appropriate. However, similar to the neighborhood node, it is preferred that signage in these locations be building-mounted and, if freestanding, consolidated as much as possible.
- Pole-mounted and roof-mounted signs are strongly discouraged.
- Building-mounted signage should be integral with the façade design, should be centered within structural bays, and should not obscure architectural details.
- Wherever possible, signs should be an integral part of the overall design, not a later addition.
- Building sign sized should reflect viewing distances for both drivers and pedestrians.
- Signs should coordinate, rather than compete, with landscaping elements.
- Sign support structures should be minimal or architecturally integrated with the overall development.
- Parking lots may include directional signage. However, signage should be used sparingly and be of a consistent character and design with all other site signage.

Identification signs should not compete with traffic safety and regulatory signs for attention, especially near intersections.

Auto Oriented Area

Lot Depth

The auto oriented area primarily consists of large scale planned commercial developments along high traffic arterials, often occupied by "big box" retailers and/or large multi-tenant shopping centers.

To ensure adequate site area for buildings, circulation and parking functions, a minimum lot depth of five to six hundred feet is typically desirable.

Block Length

In auto oriented developments, the width of development sites are typically one thousand to several thousand feet. Often, this has the effect of creating "super blocks," cutting off vehicle and pedestrian access from adjoining neighborhoods to the arterial street(s) that the commercial development fronts onto. This approach also tends to create large building expanses that are out of scale with adjoining residential neighborhoods.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Auto oriented areas, while controlled under a unified development plan, should establish block lengths along primary street(s) that are no longer than nine hundred to one thousand feet in length (depending on the locations of adjoining minor residential streets).

Public streets with sidewalks should separate these commercial blocks, thereby providing connections between residential areas and the major commercial street frontage. Where feasible, mid-block pedestrian connections should also be incorporated to connect adjacent residential areas to commercial developments.

Site Design Considerations

In the planning, design, or re-use of larger shopping centers, the following principles should apply:

- The preference in any new or redeveloped shopping center is to create a double loaded "shopping street" along a main parking aisle, within the center of the development. In this form of development, finished facades for all public views are important.

For more typical "rear set" centers, the use of out lots along the main commercial frontage is desirable to "hold" the corners of the development and minimize the visual impact of large fields of parking.

- The street system should include a special streetscape design complimentary to the overall design of the development, utilized on both public rights-of-way and private roadways.
- The main "shopping street" within a shopping center should be designed with a traditional streetscape treatment to create a unique shopping district atmosphere, similar to that of an "in-line" neighborhood node.

Off-Street Parking and Circulation

Key objectives of the auto oriented area design guidelines are to minimize the length of a walk between parking areas and buildings, and to create a pedestrian-friendly environment.

To facilitate pedestrian circulation, rows of parking should be aligned perpendicular to the building face, and landscaped islands should be established at end rows for safer pedestrian crossings along the main aisle.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Circulation within the site should be provided with an internal roadway system, separated from parking fields by landscaped medians.
- Entrances to developments from high volume arterials should include a median to separate incoming from outgoing traffic.
- Sidewalks along adjoining public streets should connect to pedestrian walkways within the development that provides safe connections to store entrances.
- Loading and service areas should not be visible from public areas (i.e. refuse containers, transformers, loading docks, etc.)
- Parking areas should be screened by buildings or landscaping. Long, unbroken rows of parking should not be allowed. Large fields of parking should be adequately landscaped.

Building Scale and Massing

The scale and massing of buildings in the Auto Oriented area is generally large, being more oriented to drivers than pedestrians.

Long front facades on new buildings should demonstrate a rhythm and articulation of "storefront" modules that correspond in scale and proportion with traditional commercial buildings, to lend a pedestrian scale to the development.

Typical Shopping Center

The facades of larger buildings should vary in vertical plane at least every two hundred feet to create a "storefront" rhythm on larger buildings. The offset in plane should be at least two feet in depth.

Improved Shopping Center

False fronts, facades, and parapets applied to generic buildings are not allowed. Façade treatments should be applied to all faces of a structure and integral to the massing of the building.

- Where buildings will be in close proximity to one another, they should relate to one another with regard to height, proportion and massing.
- Building facades interspersed among unrelated developments should seek to establish a compatible scale and rhythm as viewed from the public right-of-way.

Architectural Design

New commercial buildings should consider incorporating the following features:

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- New facades should be well composed, and contain a variety of material and planes. In developments with multiple structures, similar forms and materials should be used to tie the development together.
- Facades should not appear false, tacked-on or garish in design.
- Building forms should be articulated by varying roof heights and wall planes. Long, unbroken volumes and large, unarticulated wall and roof planes shall not be permitted.
- Windowless expanses of wall are not appropriate on street-facing facades.
- Building entrances should be highlighted with tower elements or other features that break up the building's mass and aid in orientation.

Building Materials

In general, the selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concept of the building.

Use the highest quality materials on exterior surfaces including brick, metal, stucco, stone and tile.

- Consistent and high quality finish materials should be used on all facades that are visible from public streets and/or parking areas.
- Glass curtain wall and synthetic cladding and trim materials should be used sparingly, rather than for larger exterior areas.
- Matte finishes are preferred.
- Reflective or "mirror" glass is inappropriate.

Certain materials have an inherently insubstantial or garish quality. These materials should not be used in new construction.

Lighting and Utilities

- Lighting should be designed as an integral feature of the site.
- Lighting should be mounted on architecturally designed posts at a height of 16 feet or less, providing frequently spaced lighting at sidewalks.
- Free-standing and wall mounted fixtures should incorporate cutoffs to screen the view of light sources to neighboring residential uses.
- Fixtures and posts should be consistent throughout the development.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Lighting should be used to highlight building features.
- Where practical, utility lines along arterial rights-of-way should be located underground.
- Ground-mounted utility boxes should be concealed with landscaping Signage.
- Signage should be in scale with building and site elements, and should complement, rather than compete with, the overall design.
- Wherever possible, signs should be located low to the ground, in the driver's line of vision.
- Signs and sign locations should be an integral part of the overall design, not a later addition.
- Pole-mounted and roof-mounted signs are strongly discouraged.
- Building-mounted signage should be integral with the façade design, should be centered within structural bays, and should not obscure architectural details.
- Building sign sizes should reflect viewing distances for both drivers and pedestrians.
- Signs should coordinate, rather than compete, with landscaping elements.
- Sign support structures should be minimal or architecturally integrated with the overall development.
- Parking lots may include directional signage. However, signage should be used sparingly and be of a consistent character and design with all other site signage.
- Identification signs should not compete with traffic safety and regulatory signs for attention, especially near intersections.

Residential Uses

Character of Princeton's Residential Areas

Traditional Community Area

Within the Traditional Community Area, a continuous grid pattern of streets is common, with a mix of single family and multiple family housing and ready access to commercial corridors.

Contemporary Community Area

Within the Contemporary Community Area, street patterns are more curvilinear and circuitous, with multiple family areas developed as discrete developments and limited access to arterials and commercial areas.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Residential Design Guidelines

Residential Streets and Alleys Universal Guidelines

Crosswalks

The ability for residents to safely cross at intersections with collector and arterial streets is important.

- All neighborhood street intersections with arterial and collector streets should utilize marked crosswalks.
- At signalized intersections, pedestrian activated crosswalks should be installed.
- On wider streets (four or more travel lanes) the creation of a pedestrian median between lanes is desirable for pedestrian safety, and for reducing the psychological perception of street width.

Sidewalks

Sidewalks are largely present, but vary in width throughout the area.

- A minimum of three foot wide sidewalks should be provided.
- Multipurpose paths should be a minimum of six to eight feet in width.

Streetscape

All residential neighborhood streets should be provided with planted parkways.

- A minimum parkway depth of three feet is desirable, especially where on-street parking is allowed.
- Parkway should be sodded. Taller decorative plantings are discouraged for visibility and safety reasons.
- Parkway trees should be provided, at least one every 40 feet.
- Appropriate pedestrian amenities should be provided where streets connect to park and recreation facilities, public facilities and institutional uses. Pedestrian scale lighting, seating, and other conveniences such as trash receptacles would be appropriate.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Boulevards

Boulevards will provide vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian continuity between the existing developed portions of Princeton, providing ready access to commercial and civic areas from residential neighborhoods. In the existing developed portions of the community, the design of boulevards should consider the following:

- Boulevard medians should be appropriately landscaped.
- If possible the system should incorporate wide, multi-use pathways adjacent to boulevards, to be shared by both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Boulevard design may vary depending on right-of-way conditions. In some locations, due to right-of-way width constraints, special parkway, lighting, and signage enhancements may be more practical.

Residential Streets and Alleys Traditional Community Area

Streets

The basic rectangular, uninterrupted grid system within the traditional community area should be maintained.

- In general, the length of new blocks should be consistent with those surrounding blocks.
- The use of cul-de-sacs is strongly discouraged, except in limited locations where local streets connect directly to busy arterials.

Street design should consider access to public transit.

Alleys

- Alleys should be at least 16 feet in improved, paved width.
- To maintain visibility for social oversight, fences adjacent to alleys should be no higher than six feet.
- Parking garages should be set back at least three feet from the edge of an alley.
- Refuse should be stored in buildings or enclosures on concrete pads out of the alley right-of-way.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Residential Streets and Alleys Contemporary Community Area

Streets

New streets should be designed to connect to adjoining street systems in adjacent neighborhoods, and should reflect a grid pattern wherever feasible.

Cul-de-sacs should be used sparingly, only when parcel configuration or other site constraints dictate.

Street design should consider access to public transit.

Alleys

Alleys are not encouraged in the Contemporary Community Area but should they be used, the alley standards for Traditional Community Areas should be followed.

Single Family Residential Design

Universal Guidelines

Site Planning

Princeton's neighborhoods vary widely with respect to single family residential lot sizes, subdivision patterns, and building scales. New development or infill development should follow these basic guidelines:

Primary dwelling entrances should be clearly defined and face the street. The use of porches, stoops and other entryway features is encouraged.

- Garages should be located to the rear, or at least be placed in a subordinate position to the main building façade.
- A consistent front yard should be provided, maintaining the setback established by adjoining existing buildings.
- The width of the "building face" of an infill project should not exceed the width of a typical residential structure on adjacent lots.
- New development should have finished heights within the range typically seen in adjacent neighborhood areas.
- Use building roof forms similar to those present in the neighborhood.

Especially in neighborhood areas consisting of one story structures, the perceived scale of new, taller infill buildings should be mitigated through the use of upper story setbacks and multiple façade planes.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Sidewalks in poor condition should be reconstructed or replaced to maintain a continuous sidewalk system for the neighborhood.

Architectural Design

Infill and new development should comply with the following guidelines in all new residential areas:

- New facades should be well composed and articulated with a variety of materials and planes.
- The "style" of the new homes in new neighborhoods should draw upon "authentic" historic styles found in Princeton for design inspiration.
- Larger wall and roof plans should include three-dimensional design features such as chimneys, balconies, bay windows or dormers.
- All facades of a home, including side and rear elevations, should have the same vocabulary of forms, details and materials.
- Additions should be treated as subordinate to main structure.
- Structures should meet the ground with a strong base, preferably with the main floor several feet above grade.
- Front doors should be prominent, preferably through the use of a front porch or portico, as appropriate.
- Roof Forms should be consistent on all parts of the house and garage (whether attached or detached).
- Stairways, fences, trash enclosures and other accessory elements should be designed as integral parts of the home's architecture.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY AREA

Historic Styles

Several historic styles of architecture are present in Princeton. The concept of maintaining architectural "authenticity" in maintenance of the existing housing stock is important. New homes should maintain a consistent vocabulary of materials and detailing throughout the structure, drawing from an authentic style found elsewhere in the Traditional Community Area.

Guidelines written specifically for Princeton's historic areas or established districts should be adhered to.

Building Materials

- In general, the selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concept of the building.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- "Traditional" building materials are encouraged to be used in new construction, including wood, stone and brick. These materials should be the primary materials used in residential design.
- Synthetic cladding and trim materials should be used sparingly for accent elements, rather than for large exterior areas.
- All facades should employ the same materials, including window and door types that are appropriate to the vintage character and style of the home.
- On corner lots, architectural materials should be consistent on both exposed elevations.

Parking Preferences

Off-street parking has been provided primarily by detached garages located to the rear or mid-lot depth. New infill homes should reflect this condition (see below).

- Parking in the front yard is inappropriate.
- Ideally, garages should be substantially set back from the front building line. In new construction, garages should be set back at least five feet from the front building lines.
- Shared driveways are encouraged to reduce the amount of paving and the number of curb cuts.
- Entrances and window, not garages, should be the dominant elements of front facades.
- The width of an attached or detached garage should be no more than 60% of the lot width.

CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY AREA

Building Materials

In general, the selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concept of the building.

- A range of materials may be appropriate in this community area, including vinyl or aluminum siding. Other materials may have an insubstantial or garish quality, and these materials should not be used in new construction (i.e. metal or sheet materials, composition roll roofing, etc).
- All facades should employ the same materials, including window and door types that are appropriate to the vintage character and style of the home.
- On corner lots, architectural materials should be consistent on both exposed elevations.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Multiple Family Residential Design

Universal Guidelines

Site Planning – Single Purpose Structures

Single purpose multiple family residential structures should conform to the following guidelines:

- Ground floor units should have direct access from streets or common outdoor spaces.
- Unit entrances and windows should be oriented to streets and common outdoor areas to foster oversight and security.
- Services for multiple family developments should not be visible from public areas (i.e. refuse containers, transformers, etc.)
- Parking areas should be screened by buildings or landscaping. Long, unbroken rows of parking or detached garages should not be allowed. Parking should be broken down throughout a large site into more discrete paved areas.

Site Planning – Mixed Use Structures

Mixed-use structures containing multiple family units could occur within or near Mercer Street or along the community's existing.

- Mixed-use residential buildings should be oriented to take advantage of foot traffic and visibility from the street.
- Mixed-use residential buildings should provide residential unit entrances along residential streets where feasible.
- Principles for storefront design can be found within the commercial section of these Guidelines.
- Off-street parking need not be within the building, but should be provided within at least 300 feet from the building.
- Parking may be placed to the side or rear of a building, but should never occur between the front of the building and the property line.

Building Scale and Massing

The overall massing and scale of new multiple family developments should be consistent with surrounding land uses.

- Single buildings and smaller multiple family complexes should maintain a height consistent with adjoining land uses.
- In larger developments, buildings internal to the project site may reflect a greater building height, provided the buildings that adjoin neighboring areas are similar in scale and height.
- In general, large multiple family developments are discouraged. Projects

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

- should be integrated into neighborhoods rather than isolated as stand-alone "complexes."

Architectural Design

The design of new multiple family residential buildings should consider the following:

- Building forms should be articulated by varying roof heights and wall planes. Long, unbroken volumes and large, unarticulated wall and roof planes shall not be permitted.
- Roof forms should be integral to the massing of buildings and cover the entire width and depth of the buildings. Superficial roof forms, such as "mansards" affixed to the building façade, will not be allowed.
- False fronts, facades, and parapets applied to generic buildings are not allowed. Façade treatments should be applied to all faces of a structure and integral to the massing of the building.
- Flat roofs are not allowed, except where parapet wall facades are a contextual element for mixed use buildings in Traditional Community Areas.

Lighting

Lighting should be designed as an integral feature to the building and/or site and follow the following guidelines:

- Lighting should be mounted on architecturally designed posts at a height of 16 feet or less.
- Free-standing and wall-mounted fixtures should incorporate cutoffs to screen the view of light sources from neighboring residential uses.
- Fixtures and posts should be consistent throughout the project.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY AREA

Historic Sites

Several historic styles of architecture are present in Princeton. The concept of maintaining architectural "authenticity" during rehabilitation of the existing housing stock is important.

- If guidelines are written specifically for Princeton's historic districts, then they should be adhered to.
- Several historic styles are present throughout the traditional community area, including brick flats and courtyard buildings. The City should encourage maintenance and rehabilitation of these structures generally in accord with the historic district design guidelines.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN GUIDELINES

Building Materials

In general, the selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concepts for the building.

- "Traditional" building materials in new construction, including wood, stone and brick should be encouraged. These materials should be the primary materials used in multiple family residential designs.
- Buildings originally designed with obvious reference to a style or period should remain consistent with that style or period during rehabilitation.
- Facades should employ the same materials, including window and door types that are appropriate to the vintage character and style of the structure.
- On corner lots, architectural materials should be consistent on both exposed elevations.

CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY AREA

Building Materials

In general, the selection of materials and colors should provide an enduring quality and enhance the architectural and massing concepts for the building.

- A range of materials may be appropriate in this community area including vinyl or aluminum siding. Certain materials have an inherently insubstantial or garish quality. These materials should not be used in new construction (i.e. metal or sheet materials, composition roll roofing, etc.).
- Facades should employ the same vocabulary of materials, including window and door types that are appropriate to the vintage character and style of the structure.
- On corner lots, architectural materials should be consistent on both exposed elevations.

CHAPTER 5: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs Assessment

In order for this comprehensive plan update to be successful the needs of the City of Princeton have to be discussed and addressed. Without input from our residents the recommendations could be unrealistic and unachievable. The goals, objectives issues and concerns will be documented so a vision can be established for Princeton.

The comprehensive plan should not sit on a shelf, but should be a catalyst for change within the City. Therefore a public strategy will be developed to gain input from a variety of citizens, including visitors and business owners who may not live within the municipal limits.

Public Involvement

Public involvement is essential in the planning process. How is a community to know the direction to go in the future, if relying only the input of a selected few and not the public at large?

The West Virginia legislature has recognized the need for public involvement during the planning process and therefore requires the planning commission to give notice and hold a public hearing before recommending a comprehensive plan to the governing body. After the public hearing and approval, the planning commission must submit the recommended plan to the city council. City Council is then required to hold a public hearing prior to adoption of the plan.

The planning commission is also required to adopt procedures for public participation.

The Planning Commission held a public meeting on August 11, 7:00 p.m., 2014 for the purpose of gathering the input from the community on shaping Princeton over the next 10 years. One resident was in attendance and 23 surveys were completed and provided to the Planning Commission members for review and discussion.

The meeting date and time were published in a legal notice placed in the Bluefield Daily and a press release was sent to the Princeton Times with a link to Survey Monkey for those who wanted to give direction and input online. The link to the survey was also listed on the City of Princeton website, Community Development and Princeton Renaissance

CHAPTER 5: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Vision

The vision for Princeton's Leadership future is to have a strong, clear plan that provides the City with the ability to give its residents and businesses access to a diverse selection of services and amenities without compromising quality and level of service by ensuring the fiscal health of the community.

Goals and Objectives

- Increase the land area and boundary of the City to give it more of a competitive advantage.
- Provide for high quality community facilities and services in a cost effective manner.
- Increase public service efficiency through coordinated service provision strategies.
- Maintain adequate funding to provide for the operations, maintenance, capital needs and expansion of community facilities and services while minimizing the tax impacts on local residents and businesses.

Critical Issues

Strengths

Princeton has a strong sense of community pride. Generations of families choose to live in Princeton because of sense of place, family and friends and the comfort of small town living.

Weaknesses

Because Princeton is small, and industry limited, many residents have to leave to seek employment or career advancement.

Objectives

To have a small but vibrant community that provides the services that the residents and businesses need to excel.

CHAPTER 5: NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Community Survey Results:

Over 65% of the people surveyed stated that family and/or a combination of work and family are why they live in Princeton. 21% were born here and 14% cite convenient, small town feel and affordability as reasons to live in Princeton.

When polled about what they like about Princeton 96% was positive about living in the city. Hometown, safety, convenient, low traffic, people, neighborhood, community are some of the positive attributes that describe Princeton.

The concerns are the rundown areas in the City, street people, drugs, and street walkers. The community is pleased with the continued efforts of city and community coming together to beautify Historic Mercer Street which had been in decline. As new businesses move in, revitalize their buildings, bring interest back to downtown, the community is supportive and eager for the return of prosperity. Over 50% feel Princeton is well maintained and clean but cite the need to continue clean up improvements throughout the city as nearly an equal number polled feel it continues to have a run-down appearance.

Many polled would like to see more economic development in the community but recognize that annexation would have to take place to expand the boundaries of the city to accommodate more area for commercial and business development. More tourism was brought forth as a way to bring in people to expand our local economy.

Quality of life improvements recommended were for the city to host more events, provide expanded recreational opportunities for the children and more local events for families. Walkability, better infrastructure, more business, shopping were also areas to address for the viability of Princeton.

65% said that government services were moderately to quite effective with several recommendations that we increase our police force to combat the local and statewide drug problem.

Discussion of the need to grow the boundaries of Princeton is high on the list for many with annexation listed as the way to grow the economy, keep services high, and provide for expanded commercial and business development. Recreational opportunities were cited as a need for individuals and families. With growth come more jobs, as 65% polled cite lack of work as a reason why residents leave the city.

CHAPTER 6: ACTION PLAN

Administering the Action Plan

This Plan is a conceptual policy and physical document that must be flexible to adapt to the ever-changing conditions of the City. This chapter recommends strategies for implementation of the plans recommendations. It is expected that these recommendations will be considered adjustments to existing activities or opportunities for new ones. When and how this action plan is implemented will be a function of the circumstances and conditions in Princeton, available staff time on the part of the City and its departments, boards and commissions and the City budget. For this reason, the periodic review and evaluation of the plan is recommended.

One of the main goals of a Comprehensive Plan is to help a community plan for the future. Therefore a detailed action plan with specific recommendations is essential in helping Princeton achieve its vision for the future. The Future Development Plan does not provide exact snapshots of how Princeton and the Greater Princeton area will look in 2024. The uncertainty associated with the timing and location of future development requires the community to remain flexible towards future possibilities.

Capital Improvement Projects

The City does not have a comprehensive capital improvement program (CIP) upon which to prioritize budgetary concerns. A long range CIP is an important planning tool to ensure that the City's facilities are cost-effective and to ensure that the City will be able to fund needed public facilities and infrastructure programs and anticipated costs of improvements to serve anticipated growth for the next 15-20 years.

Land use and Zoning Amendments

The plan is a statement of policy. However, it is not a regulatory document. The most common regulatory tools for implementing a comprehensive plan include local zoning and subdivision ordinances. By updating these ordinances and bringing them into conformity with the Plan, the City has two powerful tools making its vision become a reality.

Regional Planning

The City must be proactive and coordinate with the County and PDS's, particularly in the areas of land use planning efforts. The Region 1 Planning Council is a regional planning agency. Princeton has a good relationship with Region 1 and needs to continue to build this relationship.

CHAPTER 6: ACTION PLAN

Sub-Areas

Sub-area planning, which is planning at the neighborhood level, the road corridor level or for a downtown area, is an important step after completing the comprehensive plan. In addition, sub-area planning is known for leading to an overall increase in citizen involvement, leadership development and neighborhood commitment. The City should continue its policy of leadership in the redevelopment of Mercer Street, Thorn and Rogers Streets improvements and to assist in maintaining Stafford Drive as the main shopping corridor.

Transportation

As new developments are proposed before the Planning Commission, the Planning Commission should evaluate the impact the proposed development will have on the transportation network. Consideration should be given to the impact of any improvements such as turning lane, widening of streets, and sidewalks.

Redevelopment and Revitalization Activities

Mercer Street, Thorn, Stafford and Rogers Streets should continue to be a focus of redevelopment and revitalization efforts. Proactive measures will be required to address the loss of historic buildings and forces of destabilization that have existed here. Vacant properties, public facilities deterioration and private property decline have been common threats to these areas. Revitalization programs should continue to be implemented, including, but not limited to business retention, commercial building rehabilitation, sidewalk installation/replacement and park trail projects.

Leadership

The City of Princeton will continue to grow and change, and so should the Comprehensive Plan. The City should review the plan annually in order to determine whether or not its recommendations are still relevant.

Community Aesthetics

Appearance has much to do with a strong sense of community. Design standards, which can be contained in a zoning ordinance, are one way to make areas more attractive, while enhancing or protecting a certain character of the City. "Streetscape" standards for such things as landscaping and signage can have a noticeable effect on the entire community, and can be very effective along a roadway corridor. Efforts such as continued maintenance of public property and sidewalks enhance and impact community aesthetics.

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Community Survey 2014

Below is a list of the different types of needs that were identified through the public hearing and from written and electronic input.

1. *Lack of Jobs*
2. *Annexation, grow the community for business opportunities to provide jobs*
3. *Concern about drugs and street people*
4. *Community improvement*
5. *Recreational opportunities*
6. *Walkability*
7. *Hire more police*
8. *Continue improving the appearance of the City*
9. *Empty Store Fronts*

Community Improvement Initiatives

The original Comprehensive Plan, drafted in 2004 addresses many of the needs listed above. The City continues to strive toward expanded development, revitalization and economic strength as it moves forward to the next ten years of growth.

Addressing Community Concerns

1.) Lack of Jobs

The State of WV continues to lag in job creation other than the coal industry which has seen a slight increase with the Marcellus Shale industry. Princeton has been less affected than many communities are not as reliant on the coal industry for job creation and employment. Well paying jobs are limited and a major reason that residents leave. Small business growth is actively pursued to provide jobs for our residents.

2.) Annexation

The City is ready to provide services to properties outside of the city limits but continues to be hindered by the State Legislature which allows very limited powers of annexation. The City has applied for the second phase of the Home Rule Pilot Program in anticipation of the easing of annexation laws in place but language was removed from pilot program. We will continue to work with the State, County and local property owners to expand Princeton's boundaries but will need changes in the state laws on the books to allow more far reaching powers to provide services to those properties located outside of the city boundaries.

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3.) Concern about drugs and street people

One of the challenges faced by the city is low rent apartments and houses which are often rented by people who have an undesirable life style. As the City continues to work with developers who are buying and revitalizing aging buildings to renovate and improve the living space to accommodate a higher income renter, the city will see a gentrification of the older areas. An additional Police officer will be hired in 2014 and a Mini Station is planned for Mercer Street, the historical district had fallen into decline and has begun to see an active urban renewal.

4.) Community improvement

Princeton will continue to work to improve the city through a number of initiatives that have been put into place. The City will continue to provide façade improvement grants to assist businesses through the city in keeping their buildings attractive and well maintained. The City will move all of its operations to one central location, freeing the existing city properties for increased commercial development. Annexation efforts will continue to expand the city's boundaries. The City is acquiring a 34 acre site for the future home of a city complex, ability to lease commercial space and provide additional recreational opportunities to the community.

5.) Recreational opportunities

Underway is the development of a walking trail in City Park as well as future recreational areas in what is to become the site of the new City Municipal Building. Future plans include baseball and soccer fields, walking trail, tennis courts and a new Recreation building with indoor pool. Although the recreational complex will take time to build, the goal is to provide recreational opportunities for all ages.

6.) Walkability

The ability to have a fully walkable community is limited by the growth patterns of the city during the early 1900's with sidewalks not required in residential areas and alleys were the norm for egress. The sidewalks that have been installed are often in poor condition and the sidewalk replacement program continues but not at the pace that is needed to make the City "walkable". In the plan for future recreational opportunities is to have a challenging walking trail in City Park and a

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flat walking path around the open area off of Bee Street next to the New City Hall Complex.

7.) Hire more police officers

The City has recognized the need for more police presence and will hire an additional officer for 2014. A Mini Station on Mercer Street is in the works and expected to be renovated and manned by early 2015.

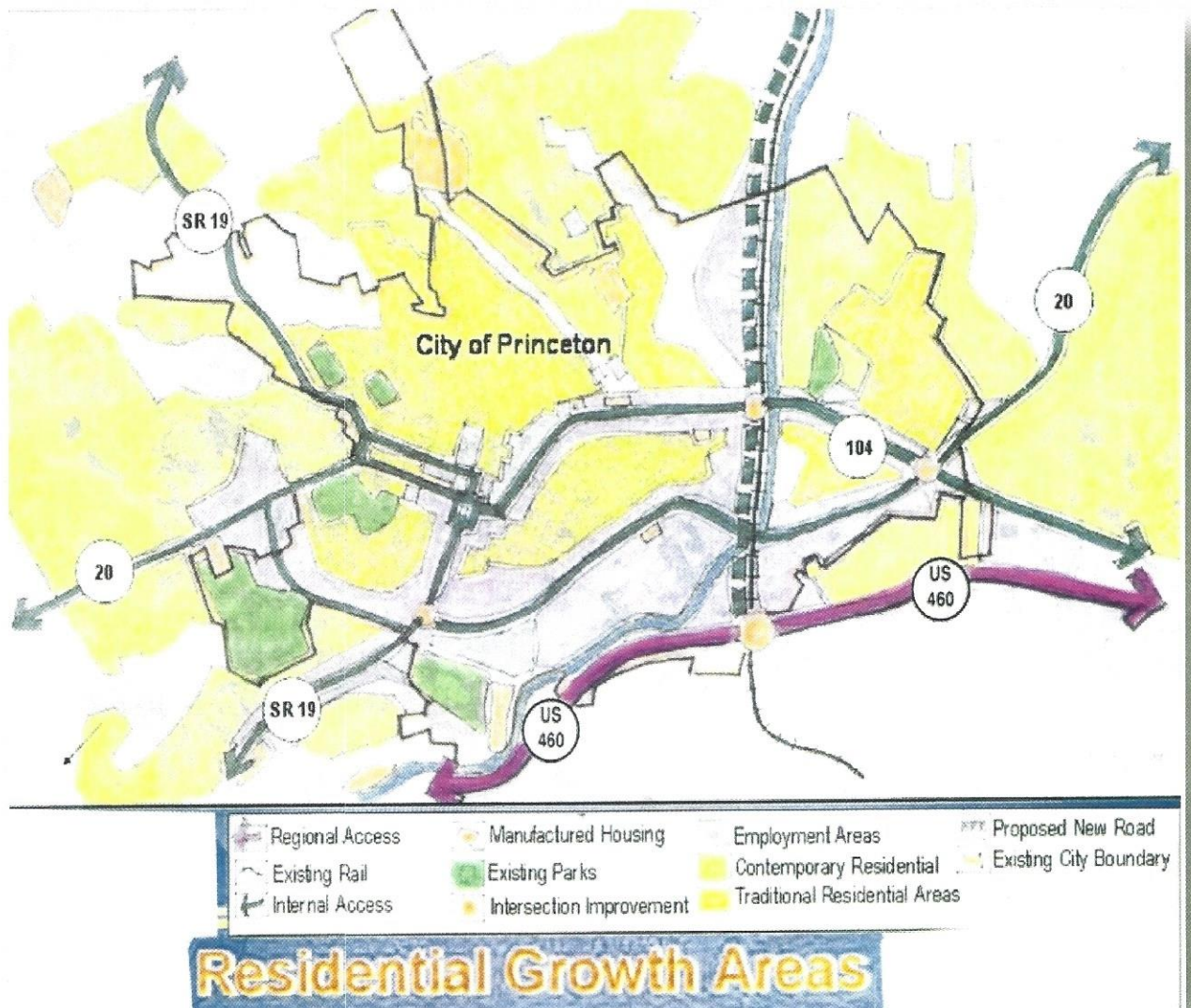
8.) Continue improving the appearance of the City

The City has doubled its Community Improvement Commission budget to continue providing Façade Improvement Grants to businesses improving the appearance of their buildings. Planters, trash receptacles, murals, fountain restoration, art work, and additional seating are currently underway and will be expanded each year.

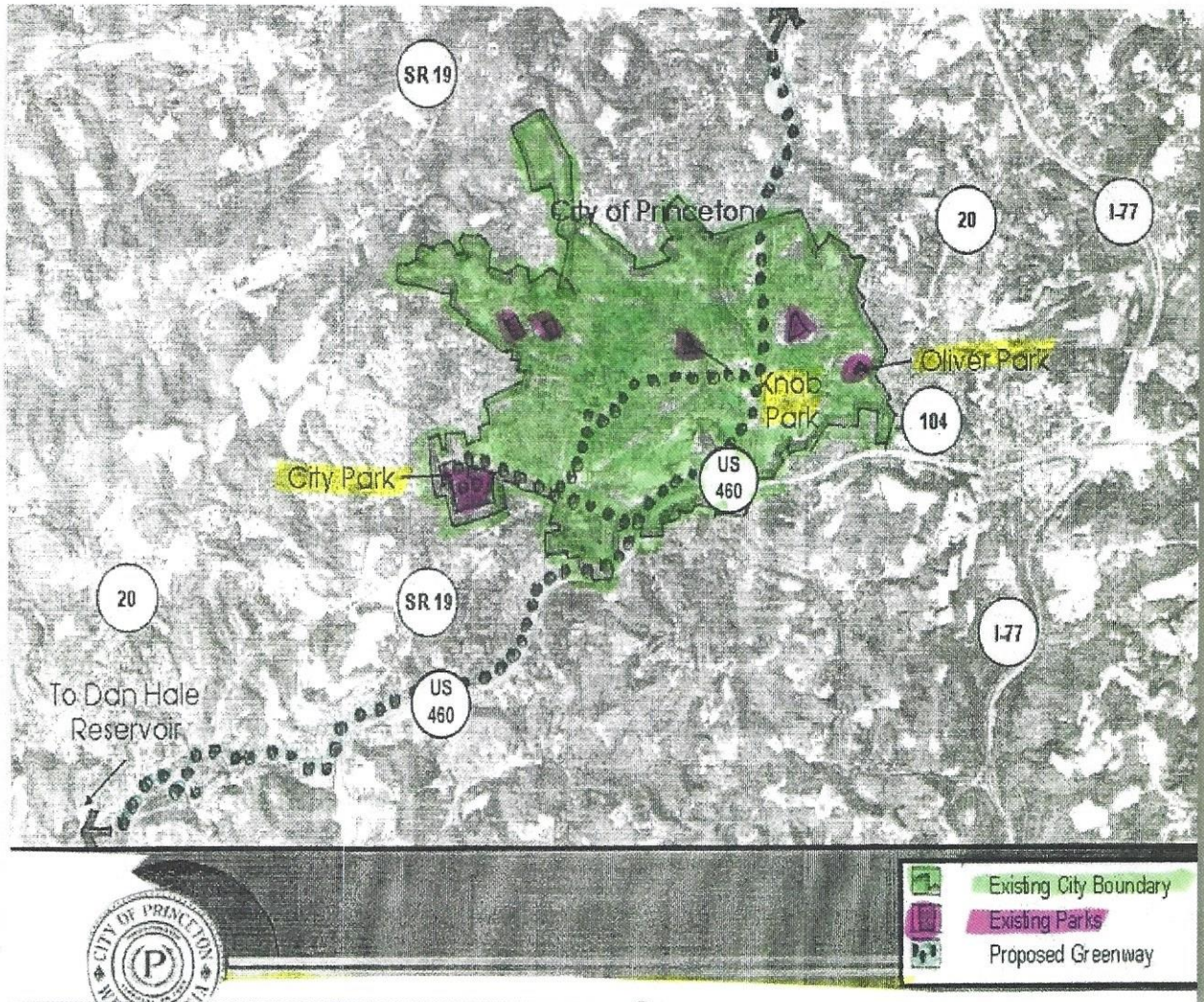
9.) Empty Store Fronts

The City continues its program of Business and Occupation Tax reductions for the first three years of business operation to encourage new business growth. The Community Improvement Commission works with building owners and potential tenants by providing grants for façade improvements.

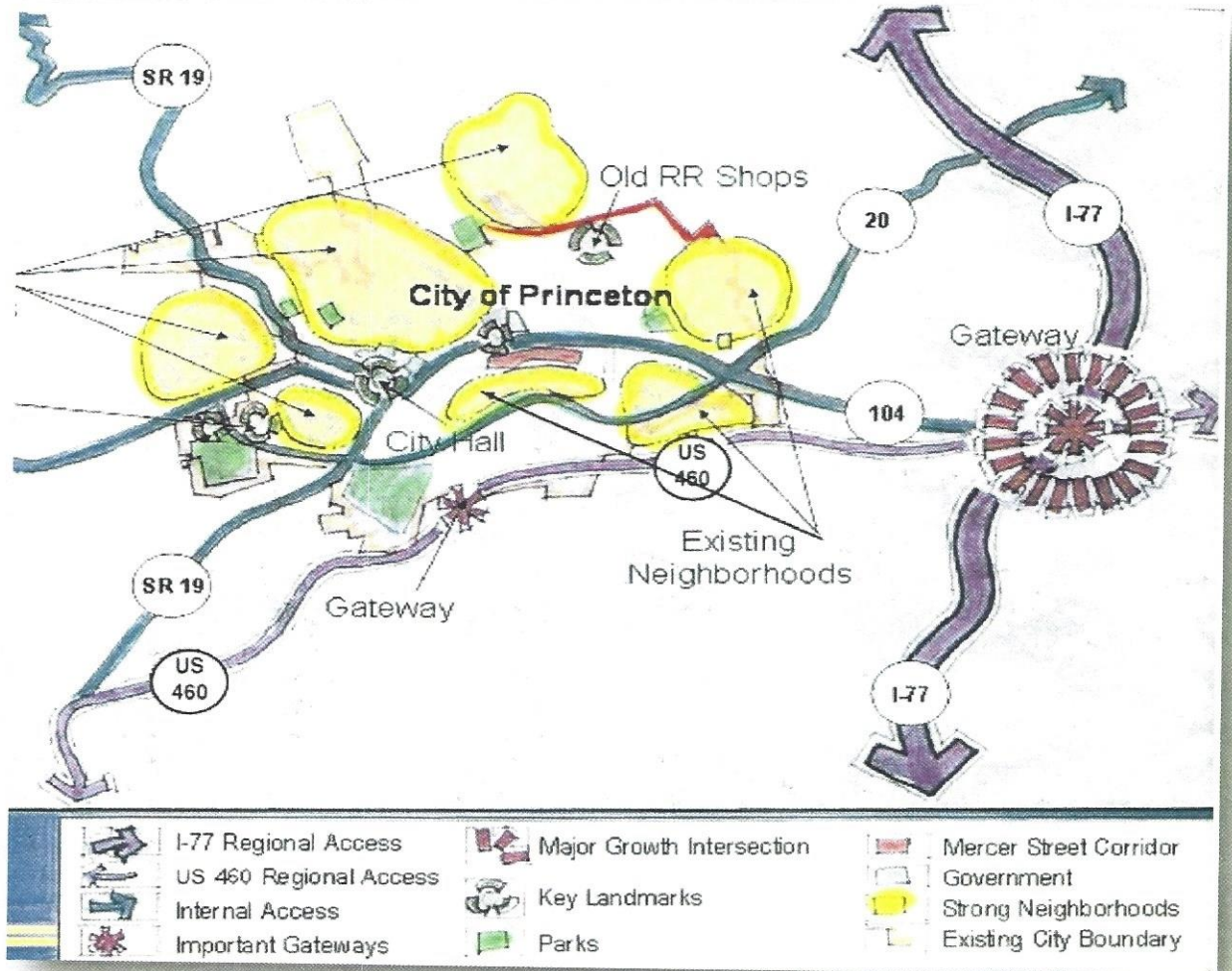
Anticipated Residential Growth Areas



Public Open Space



Physical Conditions, Has/Needs



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