
An effort of the Community Design Assistance Center, Virginia Tech
*Streetscapes of Virginia* is a work of the Community Design Assistance Center, an outreach center in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech.
Blacksburg, Virginia
May 2013
Acknowledgements

*Streetscape of Virginia* would not have been possible without the support of the Community Design Assistance Center and its Director Elizabeth Gilboy as well as staff Kim Steika, Terri Fisher, and Maxine Lyons. Through their diligence this project has been sustained over a decade.

Many thanks to our initial team that helped research and reduce the selected communities; Elizabeth Gilboy, *Director of CDAC*; Jill Schlehr Kosack, *CDAC Landscape Architecture Intern*; Claudia Phillips, *former Landscape Architecture Professor at Virginia Tech*; Paul Revell, *Virginia Department of Forestry*; Kirsten Sparenborg, *CDAC Architecture Intern*; Amber Vallenga, *former CDAC Landscape Architecture Intern*; and Amy Yarcich, former Director of the *Virginia Main Street Program*.

Special appreciation to the Virginia Tech Masters of Urban and Regional Planning graduates Dustin Akers and Kathryn Shackelford for their contributions updating the document and refining the data.

Community leaders and dedicated citizens were an invaluable asset to providing information on each community, not only sharing with us their progress, but committing their time and effort to invest in their respective main street programs: Jay Harrison III, *Former Director of Orange Downtown Alliance*.; Ciara Williams, *Virginia Department of Transportation*; Dan P. Howe, *Executive Director Downtown Franklin Association*; Amanda C. Jarratt, *Manager of Marketing South Hampton Economic Development Inc.*.; Karen Hedeit, *Director of Economic Development and Tourism Fredericksburg*; Erik F. Nelson, *Senior Planner Fredericksburg*; Harry Gleason, *Downtown Revitalization Project Manager Buchanan*; Jeremy Camp, *Town Planner Front Royal*; Tom Bonadeo, *Director of Planning and Community Development Cape Charles*; Patrick Mulhern, *Director of Planning and Community Development Culpeper*; Beth Burris, *Director of Tourism Culpeper*.

Images in the book have been provided by members of CDAC team: Dustin Akers, Terri Fisher, Elizabeth Gilboy, Jill Schlehr Kosack, Kim Steika, Kathryn Shackelford, and Amber Vallenga. Additionally, some supporting images were provided by the Virginia Main Street Program and local communities. Supplemental graphics were produced by Michelle Dawson (downtown cross-sections) and Kathryn Shackelford (community base maps).

Partial funding for the project has been provided by the Virginia Tech Office of Outreach and International Affairs, the Virginia Department of Forestry, the Virginia Main Street Program, and the Office of Economic Development at Virginia Tech.
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**Cape Charles - population 1,009**

![Image of Cape Charles]

Buchanan - population 1,178

Franklin - population 8,582

Culpeper - population 16,379

Front Royal - population 14,440

Fredericksburg - population 24,286

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Preface

The vision for Streetscape of Virginia began in the late 1990s through a ReachOut grant provided to the Design Center from the Office of Outreach at Virginia Tech. The purpose was to document revitalization steps and success stories as case studies that could be used by other small communities throughout Virginia, or even the nation, that wanted to improve their downtown but were at a loss for where to start the process, what kinds of improvements would be helpful for their downtowns, or where to obtain funding.

To initiate this process, suggestions for examples of successful steps toward downtown improvements were sought from a variety of sources including, in part, the Virginia Main Street Program, Virginia Cooperative Extension offices, the Virginia Urban Forest Council, faculty in Virginia Tech’s College of Architecture & Urban Studies, and through a request for suggestions in the Design Center’s newsletter. Over 120 Virginia communities were suggested as possible candidates along with over 20 other communities from across the nation. As the purpose of Streetscapes of Virginia was to provide guidance to communities with populations of 40,000 or less, suggestions of communities with higher populations were removed from the list. The suggested communities were then categorized by population size in 5,000 increments (i.e.: up to 5,000, 5,001 – 10,000, etc). A team from the Design Center visited each of the communities still on the list to take a few pictures and make a basic evaluation of the downtown based on the Virginia Main Street’s guidelines for streetscape improvements. These included aspects such as streetscape elements, façade characteristics, trees, paving, signage, etc.

A panel of professionals was then established to help select two communities per population category. This panel was comprised of a representative from the Virginia Main Street Program, faculty at Virginia Tech, and other professionals whose work relates to downtown streetscapes.

Fifteen final communities were selected to be included in Streetscapes of Virginia. These communities represent a cross-section of Virginia geographically and range in population from 80 homes to 42,616. Each community was visited and documented photographically in the early 2000s. Information was obtained from local planners, downtown development officers, and main street executive directors. Cross-sections and base maps of Main Street were crafted.
Streetscapes of Virginia: Abridged offers an abbreviated version of the document, highlighting six of the fifteen communities. Included are the stories of each community’s downtown improvement process in text and graphic form (maps, cross sections, and photographs), a timeline of the improvement process, sources of funding, and key physical elements of each downtown streetscape. Additional resources related to urban forestry, developing design guidelines, and other downtown improvements are also included. The additional nine community chapters will be updated as funding becomes available to complete the full version of Streetscapes of Virginia.
Purpose

*Streetscapes of Virginia* is a document geared toward anyone involved with physical improvements of downtown areas in Virginia, particularly communities that cannot afford to hire a full-time Main Street revitalization manager. It provides readers with framework for developing general design guidelines for downtown improvements and supplies case study examples of successful Main Street revitalization projects (including funding sources, strategies, and a timeline of improvements) throughout the Commonwealth. Descriptive text, images, plan drawings, and streetscape cross-sections accompany each community chapter.
Contents

The document begins with general guidelines and provides examples of specific and successful spatial and physical conditions on main streets throughout the United States as well as a broad manual for implementing a successful urban forestry program. The guidelines are followed by a collection of resources that communities can utilize to undertake their own main street program. The document provides strategies for designation, funding sources, and opportunities available to assist an implementing downtown revitalization. Proceeding those chapters is a urban forestry chapter focused on downtown street trees. The pages provide helpful facts and resources to develop a successful tree program and maintain it in an urban setting.

The ensuing chapters are composed of community profiles: case studies of six respective Virginia towns and cities with populations of no more than 40,000 strong. The case studies highlight experiential qualities about the communities’ main streets and tell the story of how improvements were achieved.

Each community chapter gives a brief overview of the town or city. All data collected is current as of the 2010 Census unless otherwise noted. Community chapters also feature an “at-a-glance” timeline of the downtown improvement process, a more detailed explanation of the means by which improvements were made and the people who made them happen, a photographic representation of both sides of main street, cross-section and plan drawings showing the spatial relationships of physical elements on main street, and a photographic display of key downtown elements. Each community’s chapter concludes with a word of advice to communities wanting to begin the improvement process from communities leaders who have already undergone it.