DOWNTOWN’S SIX DISTRICTS
CHARACTER & IDENTITY
ECONOMY
POLICY
MARKET
PLACE
STRATEGIC PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN BLACKSBURG, VA

**DOWNTOWN NORTHEAST**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**
Recent streetscape improvements to the public right of way and the roundabout at Prices Fork have greatly improved the appearance and functionality of the public realm. However, the land uses make Downtown Northeast read less as a part of Downtown and more as an assemblage of unrelated uses—a gas station, an auto repair shop, and a drive-through restaurant signal to pedestrians that Downtown has effectively ended.

Today, the uses along Main Street give Downtown Northeast the character of a commercial strip than an integrated part of Downtown. There exist great opportunities to re-knit this district back into Downtown Blacksburg by extending the active retail environment north along Main, creating new housing options for young professionals, and adding new streets or pedestrian linkages that break up the superblocks.

**DOWNTOWN NORTHEAST TODAY**

**20-YEAR ILLUSTRATIVE VISION**

**CAVITY DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY**

**VISION**
The vision for Downtown Northeast is to create a link to the walkable Downtown environment to the south. Buildings will be mixed-use, with residential targeting young professionals and other non-students, and ground-floor retail with local, eclectic, and creative/craft operators. Buildings will be of a high architectural quality, with storefront windows and outdoor seating. Buildings will transition from up to four or five stories on Main Street to three-story residential on the west side of Progress Street. Across Progress Street, quality townhome infill will be permitted. A new street or pedestrian walkway will break up a superblock and make this part of Downtown more walkable.

**CHARACTER & IDENTITY**
- Expansion of Downtown
- Quality architecture
- Non-student housing
- Leverage density
- Young workforce attraction and retention
- Walkability/bikeability
- Mix of uses
- Access to jobs, restaurants, art and entertainment

**CAVITY**
The opportunity for a catalyst project in Downtown Northeast is immense; a new, quality project could truly transform a whole part of Downtown from a commercial strip to a vibrant, walkable place. Challenges for a quality developer are equally great. Gas stations and fast food restaurants are very costly to acquire, requiring density to create economic viability.

**ECONOMY**
- Higher densities needed to make mixed-use development feasible
- Land costs too high for single family housing
- Strong demand for non-student housing
- Opportunity to extend Main Street retail
- Opportunity to increase full-time non-student residency

**MARKET**
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**PLACE**
- Street-level retail uses are equally great. Gas stations and fast food restaurants are very costly to acquire, requiring density to create economic viability.

**POLICY**
- Few contributing structures
- Opportunity to extend Main Street retail
- Opportunity to increase full-time non-student residency

<table>
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<tr>
<th>High Architectural Standards</th>
<th>Walkability</th>
<th>New Green Space</th>
<th>General Merchandise Store</th>
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**PLACE**
- Streetscape
- Open space & streetscape
- New construction & redevelopment
- Assets & preservation

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The density, in turn, requires costly structured parking. New development should provide thoughtful transitions to single family and historic structures on Progress Street, and an enhanced alleyway. The potential upside is great; a catalyst project would meet multiple town objectives, creating the strategic rationale for a public-private partnership.