

YORKTOWN  
WATER STREET  
PLANNING DESIGN STUDY

YORKTOWN, VIRGINIA

June 30, 2023



HILL  
STUDIO

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The consulting team would like to thank the many county administration, staff, public participants, and stakeholders for their guidance, leadership and thoughtful direction through this process.

## **Board of Supervisors**

Chair - Thomas G. Shepperd, Jr., District 5 Supervisor  
Vice Chair - G. Stephen Roane, Jr., District 4 Supervisor  
Walter C. Zaremba, District 1 Supervisor  
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## **County Administration**

Neil Morgan, County Administrator  
Mark Bellamy, Deputy County Administrator

Earl Anderson, Senior Planner  
Matt Johnson, Deputy Director of Economic & Tourism Development  
Darren Williams, Waterfront Operations and Event Manager



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## Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

- Executive Summary



View down Water Street looking North. Yorktown Beach Hotel on left



View down Water Street looking South. Larry's Lemonade on right.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

York County tasked Hill Studio, a multidisciplinary firm out of Roanoke, Virginia to consult and provide design recommendations for improvements to Water Street from its intersection with Ballard Street, toward the parking lot at the intersection of Water Street and Read Street, on the opposite side of the beach area, as well as look at improving the central stairway from Church Street down to Water Street.

Adjacent to the York River, historic Yorktown's mile-long pedestrian Riverwalk is the perfect place for strolling, sightseeing, shopping, and dining.

There is a need to integrate ongoing and planned private investments in this area of Yorktown and relate it to public infrastructure that is contiguous. Proposed upgrades at two existing eateries and renovations at a hotel create opportunities to improve pedestrian access and safety, parking, landscaping, trash removal and minimize associated impacts on other property owners. The County engaged Hill Studio's Landscape Architecture studio to develop a plan that can incrementally improve this area in coordination with three existing businesses and with input from nearby property owners. The County would also like to integrate this work with an effort to get the two eateries within the area to upgrade their outdoor eating areas. The hotel has other phases of work that this could also tie in to. The County's Economic Development Authority may provide small grants to leverage some of this work if it ends up on private property.

Hill Studio engaged the community leaders, business owners, property owners, and stakeholders in several focus group meetings, one-on-one visits, public input at a Market on Main Event, and web conferences, to garner input, reactions, and commentary to assist and direct the design process. Hill Studio also worked with WPL engineering out of Virginia Beach to assist with transportation and infrastructure evaluation.

Upon completing the public engagement component, those comments received were collected and evaluated along with the opportunities and constraints within the area. Three approaches were studied and presented back to the county, public, and stakeholders for comment and further reaction and direction. Opportunities, benefits, and disadvantages of each were discussed with minor revisions made as needed. The three approaches were then presented to the Board of Supervisors to elicit any comment prior to selecting a single approach to push forward.

This report outlines the public engagement process, the studies, the final plan, the magnitude of cost, potential phasing, and funding opportunities for the selected approach.



Existing Water Street Project Area looking South. Yorktown Beach Hotel on right

## Chapter 2: EXISTING CONDITIONS

- Project Area
- History

# PROJECT AREA

The project focus area is the portion of roadway between Read Street and Ballard Street and the central stairway corridor up to Church Street. Because this study looks at developing several design improvement approaches, the greater context surrounding the project area was studied as well. It is important to understand the Riverwalk Landing area, the residential properties adjacent to the project area, the Yorktown Pub, Larry's Lemonade, the Yorktown Beach Hotel, and the existing beach walk. It is equally important to understand the residential village area uphill to the south, as well as the greater Yorktown area as contributing and influential factors to the proposed design.



Existing project area with topographic contours

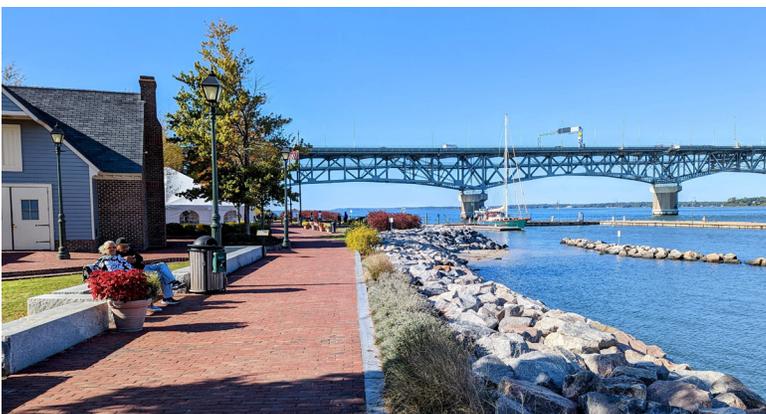




Focus area



Riverwalk Landing with Freight Shed on left looking South



Beach Walk at Riverwalk Landing

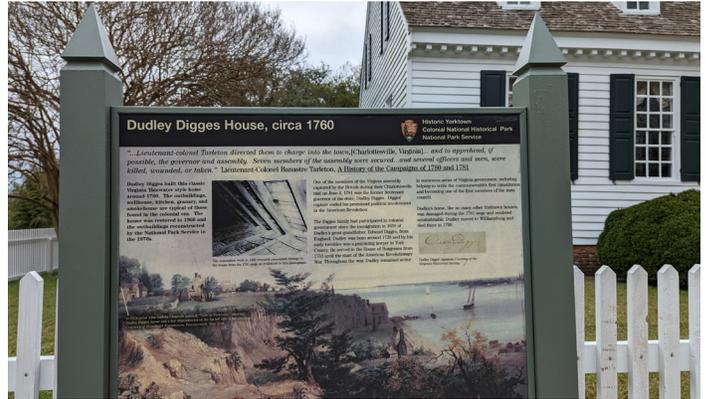
# HISTORY

Yorktown is rich in history, a story that dates back to Indigenous Native Americans, Colonial America, The Revolutionary War, The Civil War, Water Trade, and Tourism.

Though the purpose of this project was not to highlight and focus on any of these historic periods in time, it is very important to understand the relevance, contribution, and impacts they served in this area and the sensitivity of those stories.



Depiction of the Battle of Yorktown



Existing historical markers in town



View of Yorktown from Cornwallis Cave, showing Confederate water batteries, with McClellan's No. 1 Battery in the distance 1862

By Mathew B. Brady  
New York Historical Society



Yorktown, Virginia Federal Artillery Park  
Photographed between 1860-1865  
Library of Congress Photographs and Prints Division



Yorktown Beach with Parking, circa 1990  
Photographer unknown



Yorktown Beach, 1941  
Photographer unknown

# Chapter 3: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

- Process
- Public Input

# PROCESS

The design team initiated the project with a kickoff meeting with the Town to identify key stakeholders, community members, and business owners and develop strategies to engage with each individual or group.

After identifying key groups, the design team facilitated these meetings to illicit comments regarding desired improvements and undesirable conditions, challenges, constraints, insight into the community, assets, and other background information about the project area.

Initial engagement sessions were held in the beginning stages of the project with the following:

County Planners  
County Economic and Tourism Development  
County Public Works  
County Administration

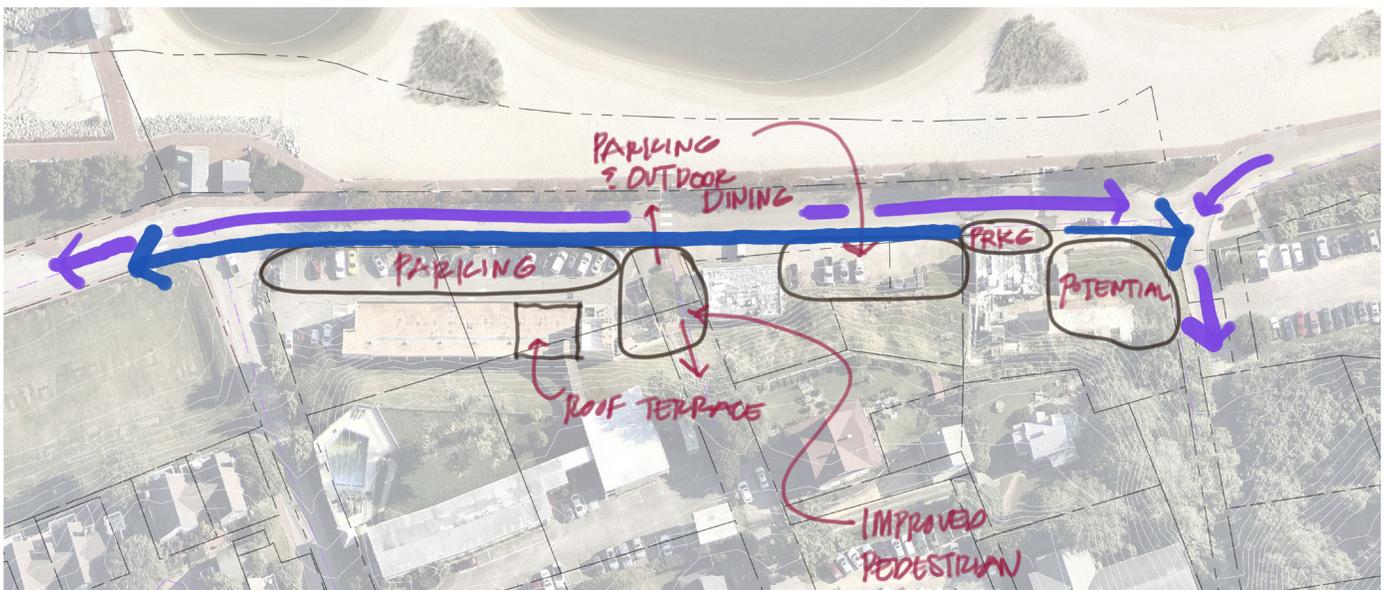
VDOT

Yorktown Beach Hotel  
Yorktown Pub  
Larry's Lemonade  
Grace Episcopal Church  
Greg Granger - G-Square Property Owner



Public Input tent at Market on Main

During the winter holiday season in 2022, the County and Hill Studio prepared a pop-up tent at the Market on Main event in December. At the tent, several graphics were on display for the public to see and inquire about the project, ask questions, and provide comments regarding what they would like to see, have improved, or not interested to see. The event brought in approximately 60-80 people willing share comments on the project.



Graphic used to convey the general intent of the project to the public

# PUBLIC INPUT

From the engagement process the following comments were identified. This list does not include all comments, only ones that tended to resonate.

- Parking is limited and needed
- Want convenient parking near restaurants
- Complement architectural improvements to the historic character of Yorktown
- Slow traffic down
- Like the central stair corridor to Church St.
- Like outdoor dining
- Need more ADA accessibility across Water St.
- Is there ability to add another parking garage
- Do not want paid parking
- Like parking between the Pub and Larry's Lemonade
- Keep the views to the water
- Make Water St. pedestrian only
- Include more restaurants in the area
- Manage street parking at end of Church St.
- Improve service loading and unloading for the restaurants
- Improve wayfinding
- Add commercial/retail space between the Pub and Larry's Lemonade
- Improve outdoor dining options instead of temporary tents
- Add evergreen hedge between hotel parking and Water St.
- Buffer sound from Water St. to the bluff residents
- Buffer light from Water St. to the bluff residents
- Keep views open from the bluff residents to the water
- Visually improve rooftops of restaurants
- Include banners on light poles
- Build on cohesiveness and continuity from the Riverwalk Landing



Service Access



Views with rooftops



Views with utilities



Parking at restaurants



Temporary outdoor dining



Views to water



## Chapter 4: EVALUATION AND STUDIES

- SWOT Analysis
- Diagram Studies
- Concept Studies

# SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This is a common analysis tool designers use to evaluate projects to help formulate the design and meet the goals, needs, and intent of the project scope.

The following key terms were derived from the design team's site analysis, community, and stakeholder input.

## Strengths

- Centuries of History
- Historic Town and Charm
- Attractions
- Yorktown Pub
- Yorktown River and Waterfront
- Beach and Beach Walk
- Strong community network
- Views to York River
- Small town village feel

## Weaknesses

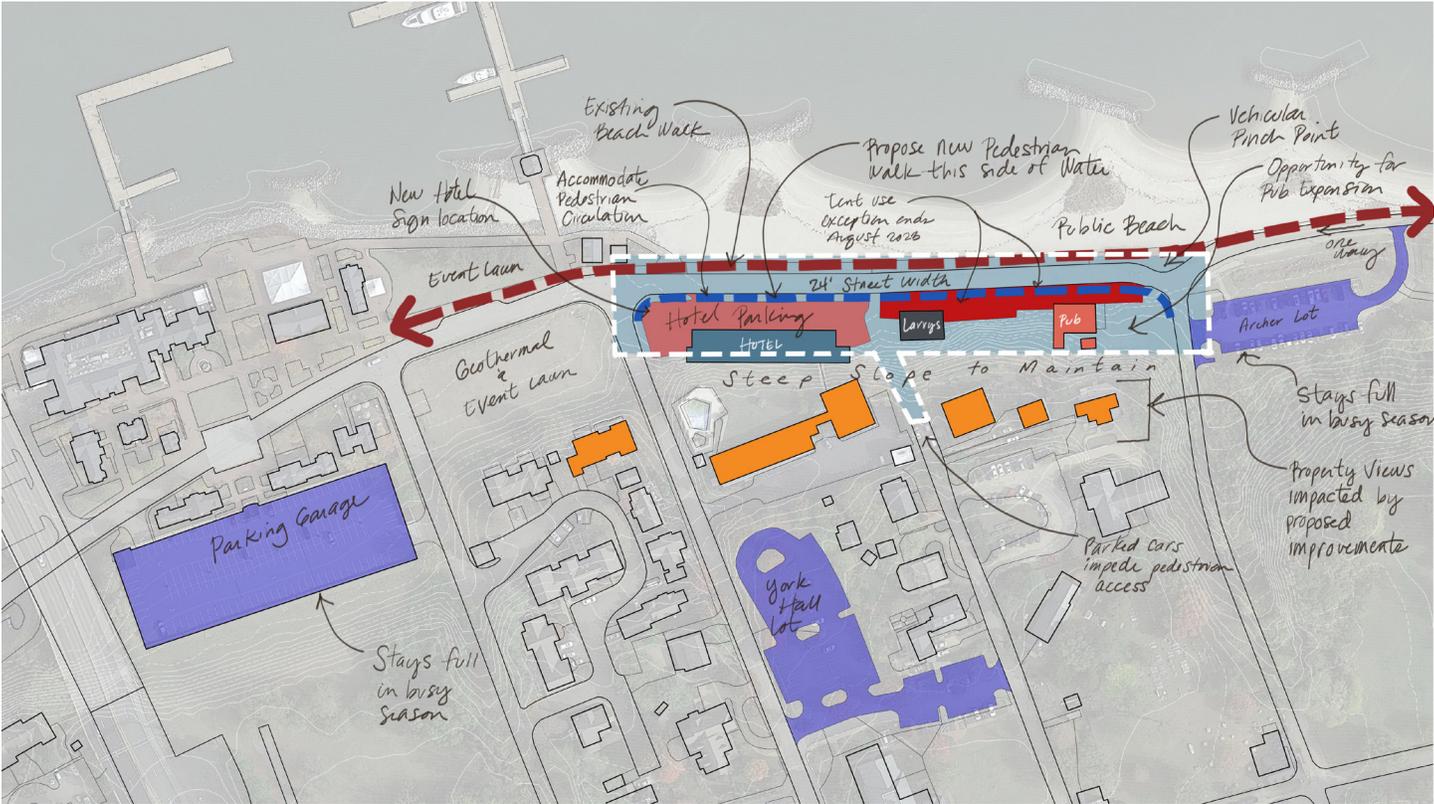
- Lack of convenient parking
- Lack of walkable streets
- Topography change
- Limited area bound by topography, water, and property
- Street Width
- Congestion in busy season
- View of business rooftops from residences
- Service to restaurants impact vehicular and pedestrian circulation
- Undesirable utilities, trash bins in plain sight

## Opportunities

- Capitalize on waterfront views
- Safer pedestrian circulation
- Better pedestrian connections
- Permanent outdoor dining
- Vacant areas for relocation of back-of-house functions
- Yorktown Pub area for expansion

## Threats

- More visitors = more vehicles
- Flood waters



Site evaluation study diagram



Existing parking at restaurants



View from inside The Yorktown Pub

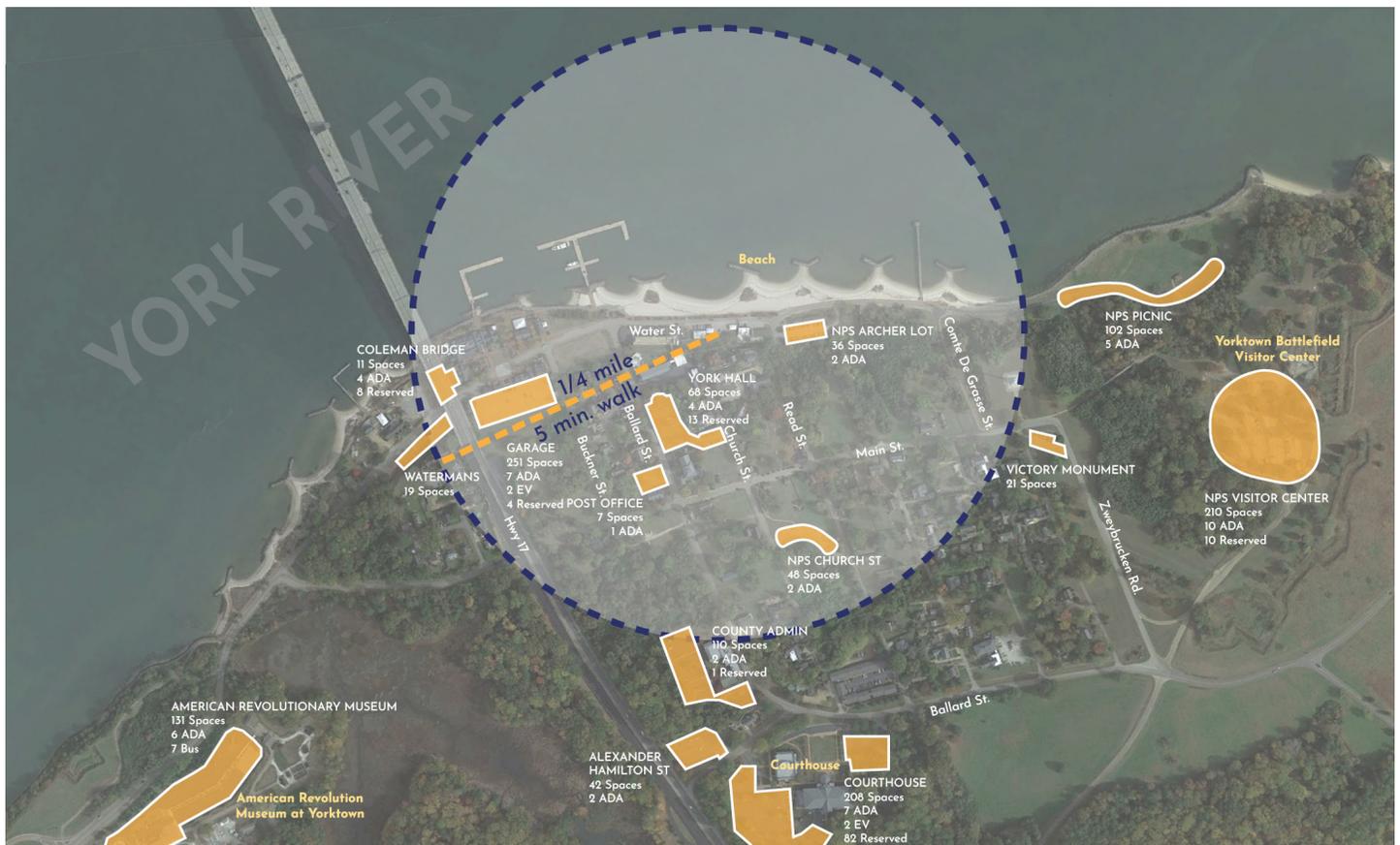
Existing documents were also evaluated such as the 1993 Master Plan, and the 2004 Yorktown Historical District and Design Guidelines.



# DIAGRAM STUDIES

## Existing Public Parking

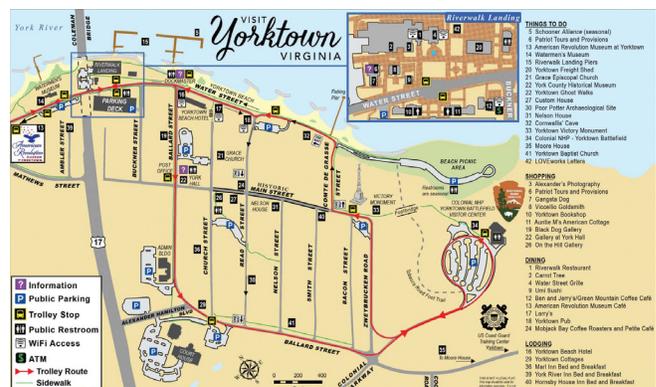
Because limited parking on Water Street is a big part of the design study, the design team looked at existing public parking areas and where these lots were relative to a 5 minute walk from the project area. There is a topographic change to overcome, but generally speaking, there are approximately 600 parking spaces within a reasonable walking distance and time to the project area.

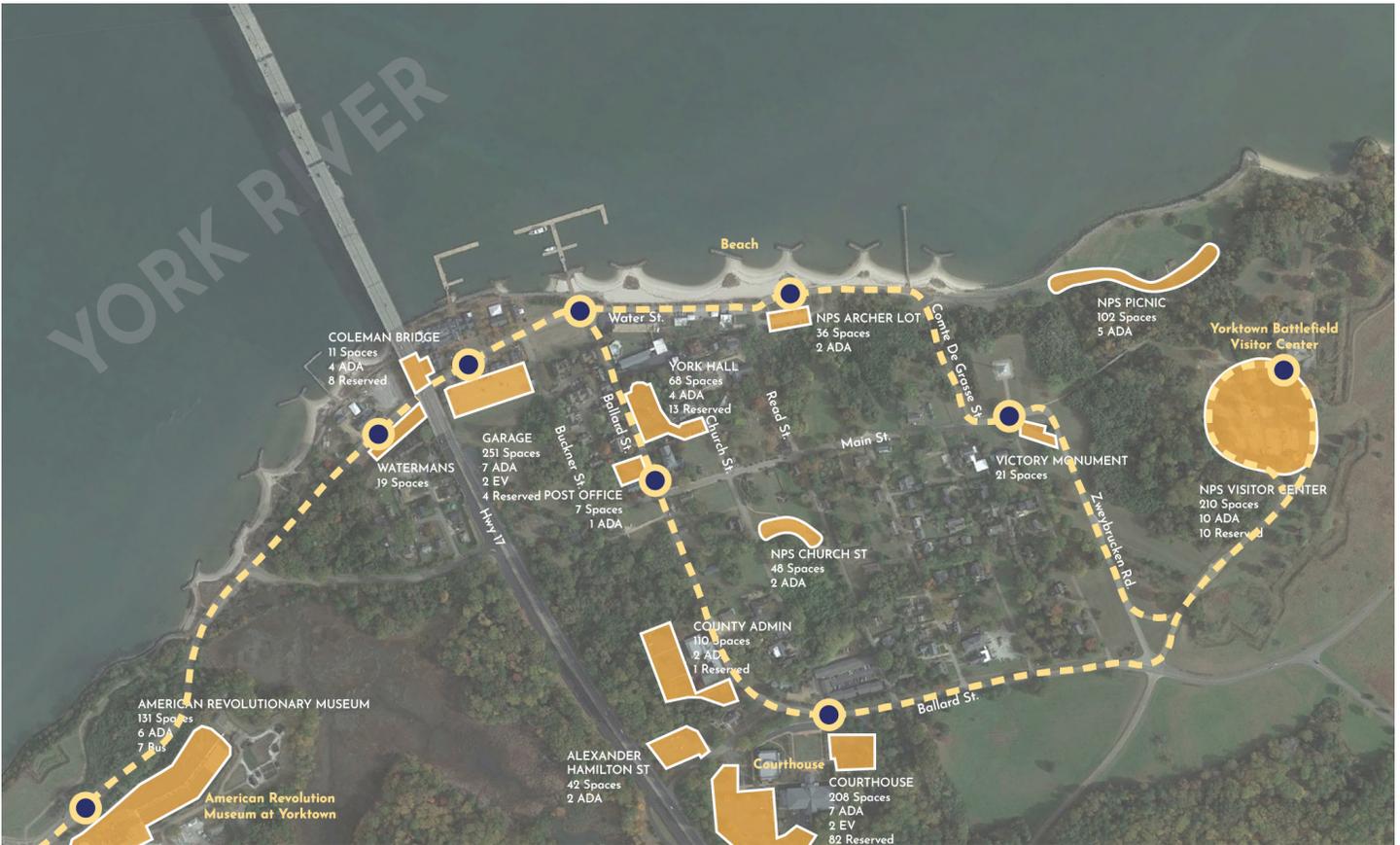


1/4 mile, approximate 5 minute walk and public parking locations

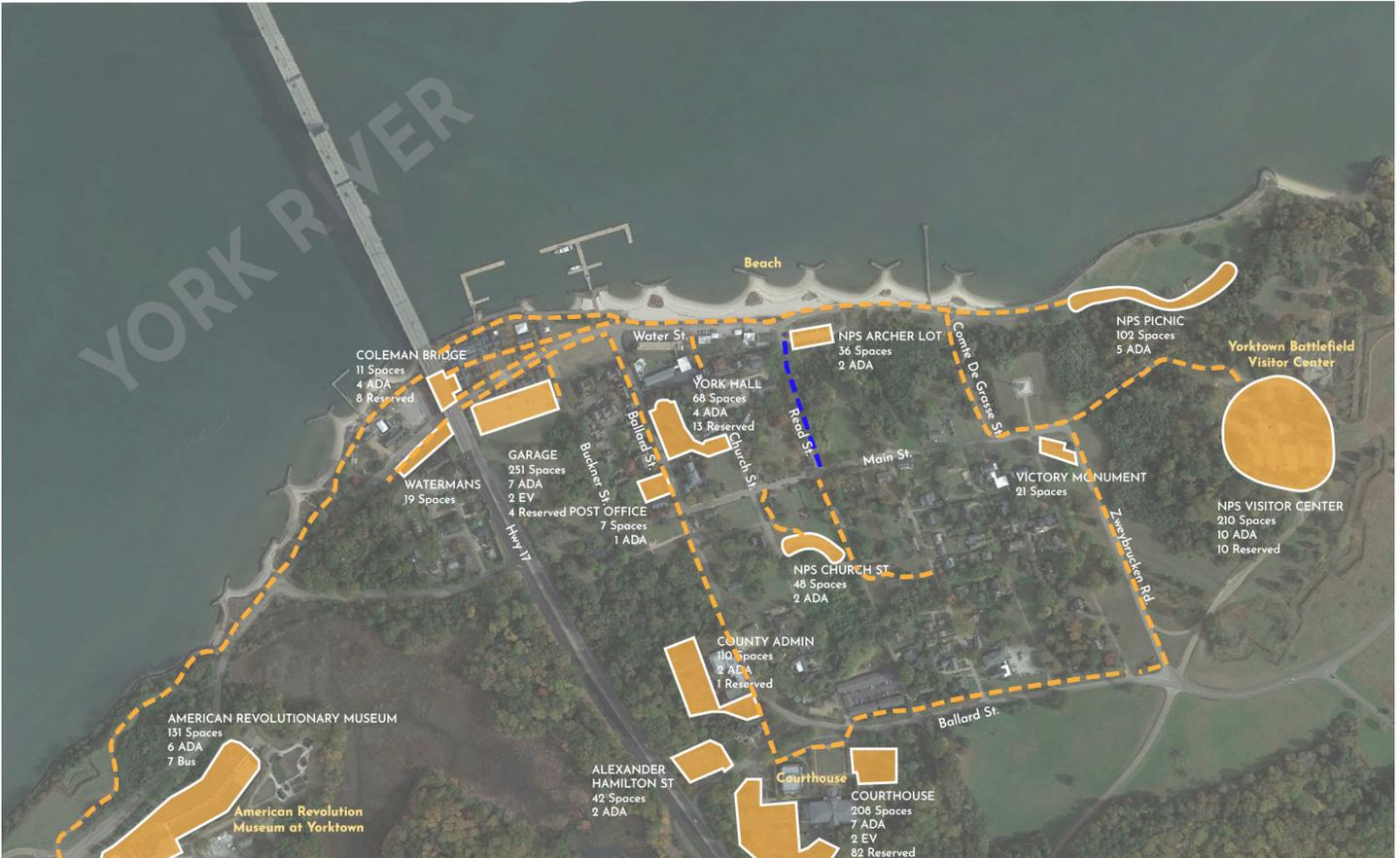
## Existing Trolley Route

The Yorktown Trolley is a free service that generally caters to tourists, however, can be utilized more effectively for commuting to and from parking lots and the restaurants along Water Street.





Trolley route and stops and public parking locations



Public sidewalks and public parking locations





## Chesapeake Bay and Utility Evaluation

As the entire project area might encompass as much as 1.5 to 2 acres, stormwater protections to satisfy Chesapeake Bay regulations (for quality) and State standards of Channel Protection and Flood Protection (for quantity) would be a component of the project. For a disturbed area greater than one acre, the pollutant loading would have to be reduced by 20%, accomplished by either structural Stormwater Management Facilities or a reduction of the existing impervious area. The proposed two-way street would be in approximately the same location as the existing pavement, and other existing impervious areas could be reconfigured to better delineate the angled parking, beach drop-off points, and pedestrian paths. Stormwater management systems like permeable pavement and raingardens could potentially accomplish stormwater quality goals.

As the footprint of the existing two-way road would essentially be the same as the footprint of the proposed two-way road, it is reasonable to expect that minimal elevation or horizontal changes would be included in much of the project, and thus minimal effects to existing utility services would result. Sewer and water mains, and even individual utility service lines, would likely be unaffected by the proposed project. The geometry of beach drop-offs and angled parking could be manipulated to leave existing stormwater infrastructure in place, or specific stormwater inlets and pipes could be reconfigured to achieve quality and quantity management requirements.

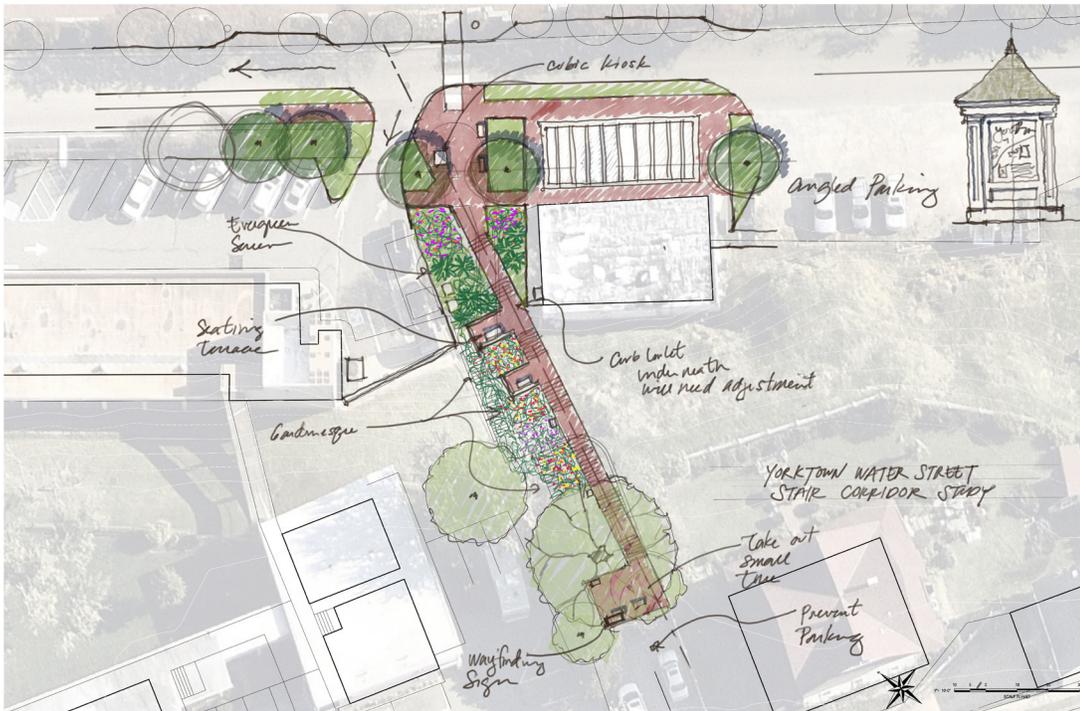


Vignette character study

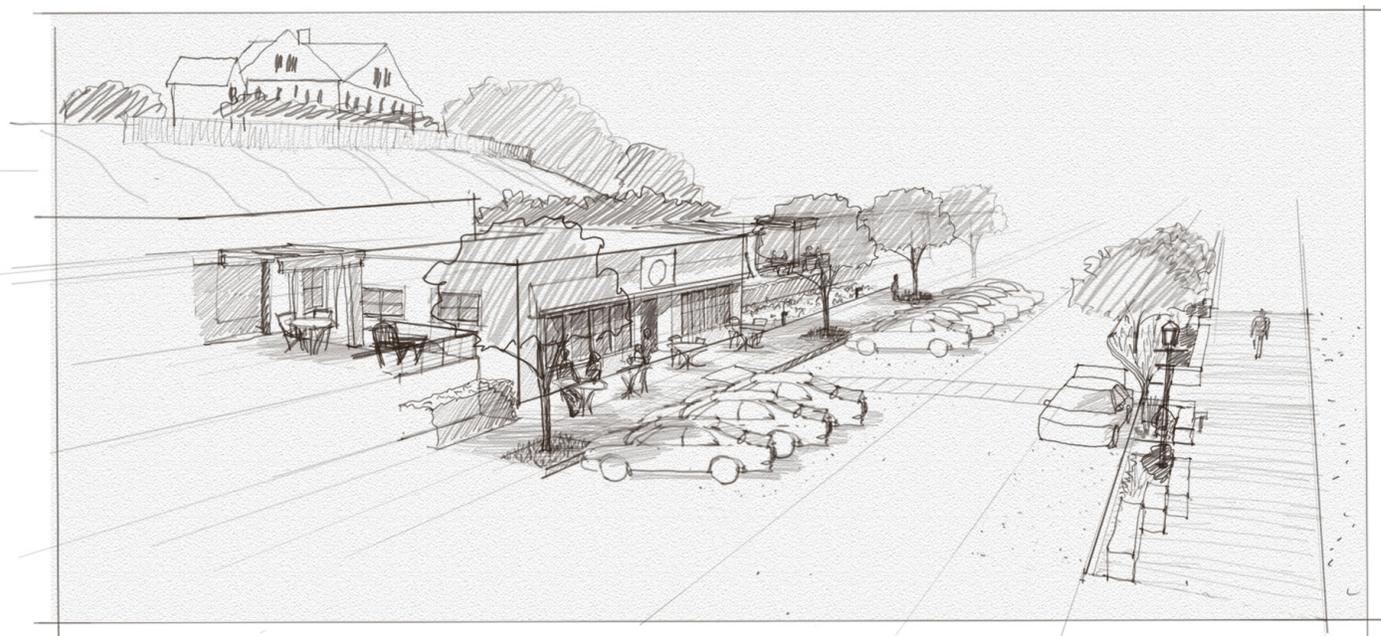
# INITIAL CONCEPT STUDIES

## Stair Corridor

The central stair corridor was studied in an effort to improve pedestrian circulation between Water Street and Church Street. Initial studies show potential improvements to the stair alignment, seating opportunities, wayfinding, lighting, and planting improvements and how this corridor can more effectively blend into the proposed Water Street improvements. A final design proposal is illustrated on page 35.



Central stair corridor initial study



Vignette character study



## Chapter 5: FINAL PLAN

- Site Plan
- Sections
- Character Illustration
- Stair Corridor

# SITE PLAN

The site plan is illustrated in the following spread. The brick walk corridor on the west side of Water Street is the main feature of the plan, providing pedestrian safety, as well as reinforcing and continuing the Riverwalk Landing sense-of-place along this portion of Water Street. The following features are part of the proposed improvements:

## **Additional Crosswalks**

Several additional crosswalks are proposed to connect pedestrians from Riverfront Landing to Read Street and to the beach front:

- One across Ballard Street, one from hotel parking across Water Street to existing curb ramp
- Revitalizing an existing crosswalk across from central stair corridor across Water Street
- Revitalizing an existing crosswalk at the Pub across Water Street
- A new one across Read Street to connect to Archer parking lot

## **Main Brick Walk from Ballard Street to Read Street**

A main brick walk corridor from Ballard St. to Read St. provides connectivity along the west side of Water St. The brick, granite curbing, curb ramps, and lighting complement the continuity in Yorktown's Riverfront fabric and visually ties this part of Water St. to the north end. Other amenities along this walk also complement the eastern side of the street such as a 4' evergreen hedge at the hotel for buffering the parking and continuing portions of hedge along the walk for visual continuity and define the space. New lighting spaced opposite but staggered from the west side provides safety and security along this route. Banners, and hanging baskets can also enhance the overall streetscape appeal.

## **Short Term Beach-Goer Drop Offs**

Three pull-ins are proposed to provide 1-2 vehicle space for short-term loading and unloading for beach activities. The pull-ins allow for the travel-way to be unobstructed and provide a safe opportunity for loading and unloading. The larger pull-in is designed to accommodate a tractor trailer for food service loading and unloading without obstructing traffic flow. These pull-ins can be designed with a different paving material to distinguish from the general travel-way. The existing granite curb in these areas can be reused in these same areas to define the boundary as well as a flush granite curb between pull-in and travel-way.

## **Central Stair Corridor Improvements**

The existing brick stair from Church St. is generally in good condition and should remain. The lower portion of corridor is proposed to be improved by widening for better public use, and integration into the new improvements along Water St. Additional details are provided on page 35.

## **Restaurant Outdoor Dining Entry Patios**

The streetscape design proposes eliminating parking in front of the two restaurants and replacing with outdoor dining patios. Patios are brick tying into the overall fabric, and provide areas for tables chairs, lights, and planting. The hedge helps define the space as main walk or dining patio. The patios allow for more open views to the river not only from diners on the patio but from those inside the restaurants.

### **Elevated Dining Deck between Restaurants**

An elevated dining deck between Larry's Lemonade and The Yorktown Pub provide an additional opportunity for outdoor dining. This deck is proposed to be slightly elevated enough to allow for views to the river over parked cars in front. A deck structure can provide minimal impact to the existing bluff. Pergolas with canvas awnings and provide shade during hot days and the canvas can be retracted back for outdoor dining in the sun when the weather is cooler. String lights under the canvas provide a bistro ambiance and the light is shielded by the canvas at night from light glare to the neighbors above the bluff.

### **Striped Parking**

Paved, organized parking is proposed only between the two restaurants and to the south side of the Pub. Although some convenient parking is lost from the existing capacity, the trade off is providing safer, and more enriching public space at these establishments. Other ways of connectivity to this part of Water St. can be studied such as increased Trolley service stops and times, valet service, and increased capacity in other existing lots nearby. Additionally, 2 ADA parking spaces with access aisles are proposed near each restaurant.

### **Plant Bluff Buffer**

Along with these improvements it is proposed to provide evergreen shrub vegetation on the down slope portion of the bluff. Shrubs approximately 6-12 feet in height can effectively buffer sound, light, buildings, and activity from the village residents who live atop the bluff, and without impeding their views to the river.

### **Read Street Parking**

Additional parking and a 5' sidewalk along the north side of Read St. is proposed. An additional 8-10 vehicles could be accommodated along here depending on VDOT's approval and further study.



# SITE PLAN

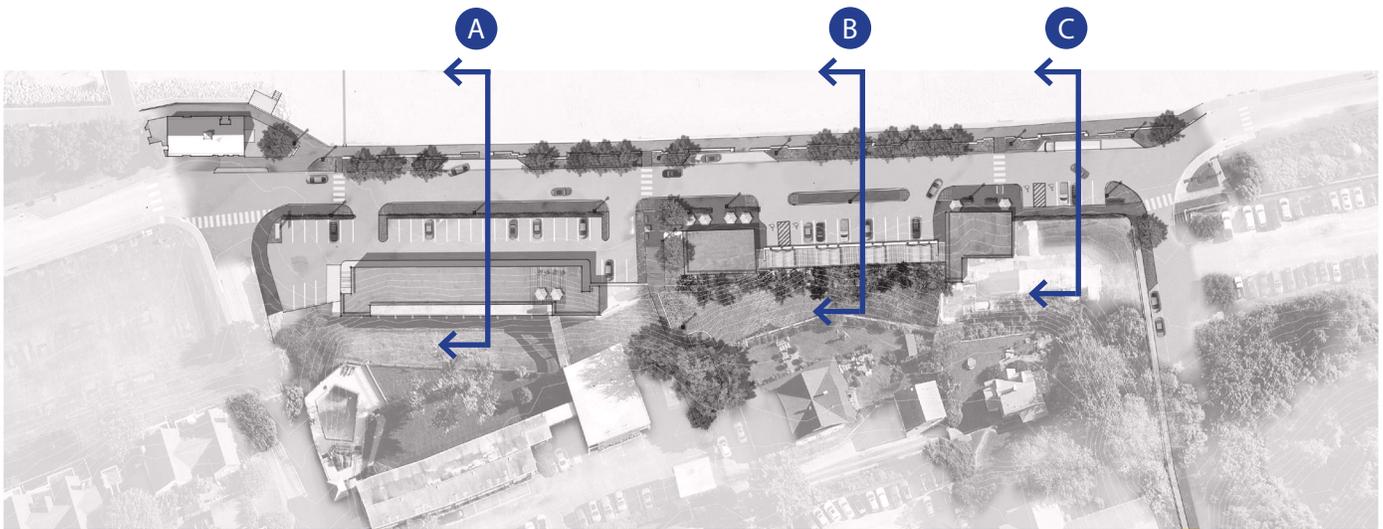


- A** Designated crosswalk and ADA curb ramp
- B** New Brick Wall, 4' Hedge, Lighting Perpendicular Hotel Parking
- C** 10 Minute Beach Drop Off
- D** Stair Corridor Improvements
- E** New Brick Walk and Outdoor Dining Patio
- F** New Brick Walk, ADA Curb Ramps, Lighting
- G** New Elevated Outdoor Dining Deck Feature and Parking
- H** New Parking and Brick Walk
- I** New Sidewalk and Parallel Parking
- J** New Shrub Screening Along Bluff
- K** Future Restaurant Space

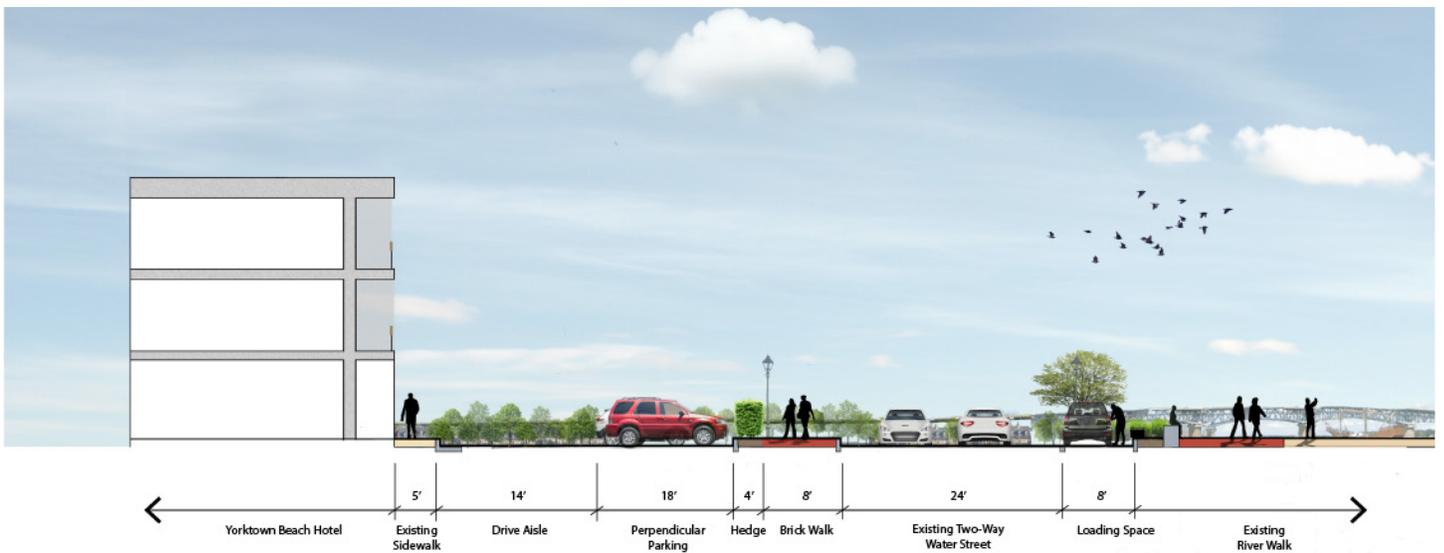


# SECTIONS

The following Water Street sections illustrate improvements at 3 locations. Each section represents dimensional and proportional relationships in those locations such as parking, new walks, outdoor dining, vehicular travel ways, planting, lighting, and other site amenities. This is important when considering safety, views, materials, and continuity in the urban fabric.



Section locations



## SECTION A

Improvements include adjusting the hotel parking from angled to perpendicular, a 4' hedge, a brick walk, lighting, and short term beach drop off parking.



**SECTION B**

Improvements include a new elevated outdoor dining deck with shade cover and lighting, parking, brick outdoor dining patio in front of Larry’s Lemonade, a brick walk, and shrub screening on the bluff.



**SECTION C**

Improvements include a brick walk, parking, brick outdoor dining patio at Yorktown Pub entry, and short term loading pull-in and beach drop off.

# CHARACTER ILLUSTRATION



Character illustration of two way improvements

Images below illustrate similar character of proposed design



Pergola with shade canopy, by Wapole Outdoors



Streetscape in Blacksburg, Virginia



Streetscape in Salem, Virginia



Streetscape in Wytheville, Virginia

# STAIR CORRIDOR



## Stair Corridor

The central stair corridor is a critical pedestrian connector to historical sites, and village residents above the bluff to destinations along Water Street. The existing stairway is in fairly good shape. Proposed improvements include keeping the existing stairs, but replacing the handrail system with a more updated, slender style of rail. Widening the lower portion of the corridor and aligning with a crosswalk at Water Street, and most importantly tying into the proposed design, continuity, and materials for the Water Street improvements. By widening this portion of the corridor, it gives room to add a 4 sided information kiosk in the Riverwalk Landing and Yorktown style, as well as provide several areas of seating creating a more vibrant central public space here.

The corridor can be further enhanced by plantings. Shrubs in areas where screening is desired, and perennial beds, for a more gardenesque feel. Existing lighting is adequate, but can be adjusted to work with the widened portion. A streetlight near the kiosk not only lights the kiosk, but can host a Trolley stop sign for that new stop at this location.



Chapter 6:  
MAGNITUDE OF COST



Phase Areas

# MAGNITUDE OF COST

## PHASE 1

Mobilization and Control of Work	\$25,000
Demolition	\$8,000
Paving	\$36,000
Design	\$8,000
Contingency	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$87,000</b>

## PHASE 2

Mobilization and Control of Work	\$25,000
Demolition	\$2,000
Earthwork	\$2,000
Utilities	\$25,000
Paving	\$100,000
Planting	\$19,000
Signage	\$300
Design	\$15,000
Contingency	\$21,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$209,300</b>

## PHASE 3

Mobilization and Control of Work	\$25,000
Utilities	\$5,000
Earthwork	\$3,000
Paving	\$44,000
Planting	\$17,000
Signage	\$10,000
Misc. Site Amenities	\$15,000
Design	\$15,000
Contingency	\$18,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$152,000</b>

## PHASE 4

Mobilization and Control of Work	\$25,000
Demolition	\$10,000
E&S and Grading	\$11,000
Utilities	\$23,000
Paving	\$200,000
Planting	\$36,000
Signage	\$3,000
Misc. Site Amenities	\$32,000
Design	\$50,000
Contingency	\$50,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$440,000</b>



## Chapter 7: APPENDICES

- Funding Sources

# FUNDING SOURCES

## VDOT

### **Federal Lands Access Program grant (FLAP)**

The Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) was established in 23 U.S.C. 204 to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. FLAP in Virginia is administered by Eastern Federal Lands (EFL).

Projects are selected by the Virginia Programming Decision Committee (PDC), which is comprised of a representative of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a representative of the Virginia Department of Transportation, and a representative for local government. The PDC requests project applications through a call for projects. The frequency of the calls is established by the EFL & PDC.

The federal share for the Access Program in this call-for-projects has been changed to 100 percent based on amended program requirements established by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Although comparatively heavy on paperwork and relatively lengthy to implement, this 100% funding program can be a highly-valued primary source.

### **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP21)**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), was signed into law November 15, 2021. It is the largest long-term investment in infrastructure in our nation's history and provides federal funding for Fiscal Year 2022 through 2026. The new bill emphasizes transportation safety, equity, and data-driven decisions.

This federal reimbursement program is intended to help local sponsors fund community-based projects that expand non-motorized travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historical, and environmental aspects of the transportation infrastructure. The program focuses on providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities and community improvements. The Transportation Alternatives Program continues prior legislation of this kind by expanding travel choices, strengthening local economy, improving quality of life, and protecting the environment. Popular projects include bicycle and pedestrian trails, historic transportation structure preservation, and roadway pull-offs and overlooks.

Like FLAP, this program is comparatively heavy on paperwork and relatively lengthy to implement, but can supply substantial funding, as Yorktown shows improvements to universal access, ways to relieve highway pollution through this program.

### **Smart Scale Program**

Smart Scale is a process that helps Virginia meet its most critical transportation needs using limited tax dollars. It evaluates potential transportation projects based on key factors like how they improve safety, reduce congestion, increase accessibility, contribute to economic development, promote efficient land use, and affect the environment. The anticipated benefits are calculated and the projects are scored and ranked. This information is used by the Commonwealth Transportation Board to help guide and inform their project selection decisions.

This program can supply substantial funding, but to win the funding the project would need to demonstrate more need than others across the county. Projects that succeed in this category are those where accidents happen a lot. Although a case can be made for pedestrian and visitor safety with this project, it may not compete with projects which remedy more dangerous traffic hazards.

## **Virginia DHCD**

### **Community Development Block Grants**

CDBG Community Improvement Grants are competitive grants, which aid eligible localities in implementing projects that will most directly impact the greatest needs of the community. There are five primary project types under this funding source: comprehensive community development, business district revitalization, housing, community facility (infrastructure) and community service facility.

Localities with potential projects that have activities applicable to more than one of these project types should contact DHCD for technical assistance. DHCD will assign a case manager to the community, and work through pre-application, planning, and then implementation.

York County ranks as "competitive" in the DHCD tables. More distressed communities will have a greater chance for this money, but a compelling case can be made for the business district revitalization category, which offers assistance with both businesses (facades, loans) and the public works components.

The CDBG process, although lengthy, is a good match for the improvements. It is a competitive program, this project must compete with projects across the state.

## **Department of Conservation Resources**

### **Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The LWCF is a 50-50 percent matching reimbursement program. The grant recipient must be able to fund 100 percent of the project while seeking periodic reimbursements. In 2022, there are only 18 cities and towns that qualify for this opportunity based on population, but NPS may change this eligibility criterion for future grant rounds. Virginia has received more than \$80 million in assistance since the LWCF began. It has made more than 400 projects possible.

### **VA Recreational Trails Program**

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a federal 80-20 matching reimbursement program for building and rehabilitating trails and trail-related facilities. Federal Highway Administration and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds make the program possible and mandate allocations to non-motorized, diversified and motorized trail categories.

# FUNDING SOURCES

## **Trails Access Grants**

The Trail Access Grants program is a 100% reimbursement program for trail projects that increase access to trail opportunities for people with disabilities. Funding for the program comes from Virginia taxpayer donations of all or portions of their income tax returns to the Open Space Conservation and Recreation Fund.

## **Special Purpose Funding**

Sometimes Virginia DCR has special purpose funding (like trails for motorized bicycles, or ATV Trails). Contact [RecreationGrants@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:RecreationGrants@dcr.virginia.gov) or call Recreation Grants Manager Kristal McKelvey at 804-508-8896.

## **Land Conservation Loan Program**

### **Clean Water Financing and Assistance**

The Virginia Water Facilities Revolving Fund allows the State Water Control Board to authorize low interest loans from the fund for acquisition of title or other rights to real property, provided that the State Water Control Board is satisfied that the acquisition would protect or improve water quality and prevent pollution of state waters. According to the enabling legislation, the fund's financing for land acquisition can only be available in fiscal years when there is a balance remaining after the fund has satisfied all eligible loan requests from local governments.

### **VA Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund**

Eligible VCWRLF project types now include Publicly owned stormwater best management practices. Interest rates vary but are at about 2%.

## **VA Outdoors Foundation grants**

Provides grants for projects that increase equitable access to safe open space in Virginia's communities. Some examples of costs that can be covered include infrastructure, planning and capacity building. Contact: Emily White, Grant Program Manager, Virginia Outdoors Foundation, [ewhite@vof.org](mailto:ewhite@vof.org), 434-282-7054.

**Thank you.**

Hill Studio Consultant Team:

David Hill, ASLA

Project Manager - Greg Webster, RLA

Landscape Designer - Kathy Packer

WPL

Jarrod Katzer, PLA

Civil Engineer - Brad Martin

- End of Document