Volunteer Parkway Development Strategy
Presented December 17, 2019
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Introduction

For some time, City Council has expressed interest in addressing the needs of Volunteer Parkway. Volunteer Parkway is one of three major corridors leading into the City of Bristol (the others being Highway 11W/West State Street and Highway 421/Virginia Avenue). With the growth of the Pinnacle, the West State Street corridor has attracted businesses and commercial development. While heavily traveled, Highway 421/Virginia Avenue is primarily a residential corridor rather than a commercial corridor. Thus, Volunteer Parkway presents a prime opportunity for development within the City.

At its October 2019 work session, City Council asked Staff to look carefully at Volunteer Parkway between West State Street and Century Boulevard, and to answer two questions. First, should the City consider creating a new Redevelopment District along the length of Volunteer Parkway? Such a district would allow the use of tax increment financing (TIF) and eminent domain under the authority of Tennessee’s Housing Authority Law. Second, for areas of Volunteer Parkway that do not qualify as Redevelopment Districts within the meaning of the Housing Authority Act, what strategies would we suggest for revitalizing Volunteer Parkway?

Study Area & History

At this time, Staff has limited its review of Volunteer Parkway to the area running south from West State Street to Century Boulevard, approximately 4.9 miles. Initially, as Staff looked at whether the Volunteer Parkway corridor is appropriate for being designated as a Redevelopment District, Staff examined only property that fronted or touched on Volunteer Parkway itself. As Staff explored further revitalization strategies, Staff expanded the scope of the study beyond Volunteer Parkway itself into areas that could support further development on Volunteer Parkway.

The Tennessee Department of Transportation constructed Volunteer Parkway in the mid-1960s. At the time of its construction, the southern corporate limit of the City of Bristol, Tennessee was approximately 175 feet north of the intersection with Deer Run. In 1972, as part of the Avoca annexation, the corporate limits of the City of Bristol were moved south to the intersection with Exide Drive.

Existing Condition of Volunteer Parkway

Zoning

The majority of lots that touch Volunteer Parkway are currently zoned B-3 (General Business). There are pockets of residential zoning, generally of properties that front on side streets, such as 6th Street Extension and 7th Avenue, with backyards extending to Volunteer Parkway. Most residentially zoned properties are currently used for residential purposes, though there are a few exceptions.

B-3 zoning is the most liberal commercial zone, designed for uses that do not require a central location, and which are not “neighborhood” uses suitable for the B-1A (Limited Business/Institutional) and B-1B (Neighborhood Shopping/Office) districts. In general, B-3 zoning allows retail and service businesses, restaurants, and office space by right. Certain other
establishments, such as hospitals, clubs, schools, and assisted living facilities, are allowed with a special use permit. Single and two-family residences are permitted by right, while multifamily residences are permitted by special use permit only. Appendix A contains a list of all the uses allowed in B-3.

B-3 zoning, since it is intended for arterial corridors rather than downtown or neighborhood areas, requires substantial setbacks when compared to a B-2 or B-2E zone, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Structure</th>
<th>Front Setback</th>
<th>Rear Setback</th>
<th>Side Setback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commercial (including multifamily)</td>
<td>15 ft.</td>
<td>20 ft.</td>
<td>10 ft. (when adjoining residential lot or district)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>25 ft.</td>
<td>30 ft.</td>
<td>6 ft., 20 ft. total or 30% of lot width; for structures 30 ft. or greater in height, 3:1 height to side yard ratio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The setbacks are measured from the respective property line. Buildings must be located behind the setback lines. Parking areas, fences, and landscaping can be constructed in the setback areas, though not in the right of way.

B-3 Zoning does not impose a minimum lot area for commercial lots, nor does it require commercial buildings to cover a certain portion of the lot. Both commercial and residential buildings can be up to 85 feet tall, though that maximum is subject to reduction based on the availability of adequate fire suppression equipment.

Single and two family developments must follow R-2 lot space requirements. Lots used for multifamily development must be at least 6,000 square feet in area, with a minimum of 2,904 square feet per dwelling unit. Lots used for multifamily development must also be at least 50 feet wide. Residential and multifamily construction must adhere to maximum lot coverage requirements. A true mixed use building that incorporates commercial and retail on the first floor, with multifamily development on upper floors would require a special use permit.

Physical Characteristics

Certain physical characteristics of Volunteer Parkway have affected the development of the corridor. The terrain and waterways, while adding to the natural beauty visible from the Parkway, present challenges to both residential and commercial development.

First, Volunteer Parkway runs through hilly terrain that may present topographical challenges to development. Development in hilly areas may incur unusually high site preparation costs.

Second, between West State Street and Holston Drive, Volunteer Parkway runs parallel, and in close proximity, to Beaver Creek. As shown in Figure 1, many properties along this section of Volunteer Parkway are in the 100-year floodplain, and portions of some properties are actually in the floodway.
Figure 1. Floodway and 100 Year Floodplain (West State to Holston Drive).
Lots in the 100-year floodplain are subject to greater insurance requirements. The finished floor of structures must be elevated 1 foot above the 100-year flood elevation, or flood proofed if in the flood fringe. No filling can take place in the open floodway without a no-rise permit, issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Structures are not permitted at all in the floodway. Particularly between West State and Holston Drive, there are lots where it is apparent that the placement of buildings was influenced by the need to place the building outside the floodplain or floodway. For example, Figure 2 shows the area near AutoZone, where improvements appear to have been located so as to avoid being in the floodway.

![Figure 2 Close Up of Flood Zones.](image)

Some properties that appear to be vacant or underutilized at first glance, because they are wooded and undeveloped, conceal the creek immediately to the east or west of Volunteer Parkway. Such wooded properties, often residential backyards that extend from a parallel street to Volunteer Parkway, are usually not truly buildable because of flood concerns. Leaving those areas wooded and undeveloped prevents stream-bank erosion and undercutting of the nearby roadway, enhances the health of Beaver Creek and provides habitats for urban wildlife.

Existing development layouts also presents challenges for the future development of Volunteer Parkway. Along much of Volunteer Parkway, the B-3 commercial zone is one lot deep before transitioning to existing established residential neighborhoods. The shallowest buildable commercial lots on Volunteer Parkway are roughly 125 feet deep, and there are currently improved lots that may only be 50 feet deep. Even if such lots could be aggregated, it would be difficult to identify a project that could take advantage of long, narrow lots that front directly on Volunteer Parkway.
One further constraint is the existence of restrictive covenants in neighborhoods that have developed one block from Volunteer Parkway, particularly between the Bluff City Highway split and Century Boulevard. Typically, neighborhood restrictive covenants restrict the use of land within the neighborhood to residential purposes only. In some cases, those restrictive covenants may apply to properties that front on Volunteer Parkway, preventing those properties from being used for commercial purposes. The City is not a party to those restrictive covenants, and does not have unilateral authority to amend restrictive covenants, even if they arguably hinder development along Volunteer Parkway. A full exploration of which properties are subject to restrictive covenants would require extensive title research and is beyond the scope of this study, but Staff is aware of examples of restrictive covenants being enforced to prevent commercial development near the entrances of neighborhoods such as Sunnybrook.

Current Development on the Parkway

Between West State Street and Weaver Pike, development along Volunteer Parkway tends to be closer together, with less parking available. There is limited on-street parking available to some businesses in the 500 block. Lots are smaller, with buildings being correspondingly smaller. Most businesses are in standalone buildings, with fewer multi-tenant buildings. This section of Volunteer Parkway, which is the closest to downtown Bristol, has more resemblance to downtown Bristol than other sections. Overall, buildings in this section tend to be older. The area around Melrose is currently in a redevelopment district. Volunteer Parkway is physically narrower in this section, without a grassy median, likely due in part to the proximity of Beaver Creek. Much of Volunteer Parkway between West State Street and Weaver Pike is already developed, to the extent that it can be. There are only three vacant buildable lots in this section. Other lots that appear to be vacant are unusable because of their size or proximity to Beaver Creek.

Between Weaver Pike and the Bluff City Highway split, there is more multi-tenant or strip development, much of it aging. Development has incorporated large parking lots between the business and Volunteer Parkway. In this section, Volunteer Parkway itself has the look of a boulevard, with a wide median dividing northbound and southbound traffic. The City has invested in landscaping in this median. There are nine vacant, buildable lots in this section. This section of Volunteer Parkway has a higher percentage of vacant improvements than other sections of the Parkway.

Between the Bluff City Highway split and Century Boulevard, the grassy median continues. Most development is stand-alone, with the development near Wal-Mart being a notable exception. This section of Volunteer Parkway contains nine vacant, buildable lots, though there may be recorded restrictions on what kind of building can be placed on these vacant lots. With the relocation of Friendship’s dealerships, there are several vacant or underused car sales facilities.

Sales Tax Generation

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, Volunteer Parkway and Century Boulevard were home to 139 entities that generated state and local option sales tax. The total local option sales tax collected
(including the county’s portion and trustee fees) was $3.8 million, making the City’s portion roughly $1.9 million. The City’s entire local option sales tax collection for FY 2019 was $6.9 million. Thus, businesses with a Volunteer Parkway or Century Boulevard footprint generated over 25% of the City’s local option sales tax collections.

The following chart summarizes the most common commercial sales-tax generating uses located on Volunteer Parkway in the study area, or on Century Boulevard, based on sales tax collections during FY 2019. The last column in the chart is an estimate of the total local option sales tax (both county and city) generated per square foot of space for businesses in each sector.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number of Businesses</th>
<th>FY 2019 Sector LOST/square foot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auto Parts Stores</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Sales (New &amp; Used)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>$0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto Service</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Stations/Convenience Stores</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$6.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Retail</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Retail</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>$1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food Restaurants</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$12.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sit-Down Dining</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>$4.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takeout Dining</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$3.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Appendix B – Volunteer Parkway Retail Sectors – LOST Collections for additional information on the calculations supporting the chart above.

Other common establishments include medical offices (including urgent care facilities), banks and credit unions, financial services companies, insurance offices, personal care services (such as hair and nail salons and weight loss) and office space. These may generate some sales tax collections, but they are not significant. There are some warehouses and light industrial uses located near Executive Park.

While the sales tax piece is important, there are businesses that may generate significant revenue that are not generating significant (or any) local option sales tax. Those non-sales tax generating businesses are vital to Volunteer Parkway, as they provide employment and vital services. Attracting additional businesses of this type may be as essential to the development of Volunteer Parkway as attracting additional sales tax generation, because their employees and customers increase the customer base for the rest of the businesses on Volunteer Parkway. Sales tax generation is an important consideration in determining a development strategy, but it is not the only consideration.
Building Age

Based on property tax assessor’s records, the oldest building on Volunteer Parkway was built in 1938. The most recently constructed building was completed in 2017. Average age varies significantly by block of Volunteer Parkway, as shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block of VP</th>
<th>Representative Establishments</th>
<th>Oldest Building</th>
<th>Newest Building</th>
<th>Average year built</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 Block and below</td>
<td>Chamber of Commerce, Cootie Brown's</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300 Block</td>
<td>Wallace Imports</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400 Block</td>
<td>Roadrunner Market</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 Block</td>
<td>Days Inn, O'Reilly Automotive, CBD Plus</td>
<td>1960</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 Block</td>
<td>The Rage Room, Keen Promotions, Jones Animal Hospital</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 Block</td>
<td>Kars R Us, Bristol BBQ, Advance Auto</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800 Block</td>
<td>Citizens Bank</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 Block</td>
<td>Southern Classic Car Wash, Pal's, AutoZone</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000 Block</td>
<td>Quick Lane, Casa Mexicana, Bojangles’, Bachman Valve</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100 Block</td>
<td>McDonald's, Taco Bell, Jiffy Lube, Fatz, Parkway Wine &amp; Liquor</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200 Block</td>
<td>Urgent Care, Burke Powers &amp; Harty, TitleMax, VisionWorks</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1300 Block</td>
<td>Hardee's, Walgreens, Lowe's, Exxon</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1400 Block</td>
<td>Aspen Dental, Food City, Regions Bank</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 Block</td>
<td>Wendy's</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1600 Block</td>
<td>Sam Snead Tire &amp; Auto Service</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700 Block</td>
<td>Performance Automotive, Volunteer Gun Shop, Residential, Roadrunner Market &amp; Gas Station</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1800 Block</td>
<td>RPM Off-Road, Goodwill, Car Dealerships</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900 Block</td>
<td>Car Dealership, Beaver Creek Mobile Homes, Astro Granite &amp; Marble</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000 Block</td>
<td>Parkway Auto Sales</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1963</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 The assessor’s records indicate that one building in the 1100 block was built in 1900, but that is typically a placeholder used when the true date of construction is unknown.
The table above does not take into account significant renovations that have been done to many buildings in the last five years. Examples of renovations that may have dramatically changed the effective age of the renovated structure include renovations to Taco Bell, Bojangles’, and the Summit Building.

**Vacancy Rates**

Staff examined vacancy rates along Volunteer Parkway by visual confirmation performed during November and December 2019. On the properties that adjoin Volunteer Parkway between West State Street and Century Boulevard, Staff counted a total of 92 commercial buildings. 49 of the buildings appear to be designed for use by a single business occupant (for example, Lowe’s occupies an entire building on Volunteer Parkway), which we have designated as standalone buildings. 43 buildings are designed for two or more commercial tenants. We refer to these as multitenant buildings. The 43 multitenant buildings currently have a total of 213 distinct spaces (based on exterior visual inspections). Thus, there are currently 308 separate commercial spaces available on Volunteer Parkway.

Between West State Street and Weaver Pike, there are six buildings that can be considered multi-tenant buildings, comprised of a total of 14 tenant spaces. Twelve of these tenant spaces are occupied, and two are vacant. There is 1 standalone building that is vacant, out of 16 total standalone buildings. Between Weaver Pike and the Bluff City Hwy Split, there are 30 multi-tenant buildings, with a total of 168 tenant spaces. Of these, 104 tenant spaces are occupied, leaving 64 vacancies. There are six unoccupied standalone buildings, out of a total of 52 standalone buildings. Between the Bluff City Hwy Split and Century Boulevard, there are seven multi-tenant buildings, incorporating 31 total spaces. 18 of those spaces are occupied, leaving 13 vacancies. There are three vacant standalone buildings, out of 27 total standalone buildings.

Taking into consideration both standalone and multi-tenant buildings, Staff would estimate the commercial vacancy rate to be 29%, with 11% of standalone buildings being vacant, and 37% of multi-tenant buildings being vacant. The table below presents this data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multi-tenant Vacancy Rate</th>
<th>Occupied Units</th>
<th>Vacant Units</th>
<th>Total Units</th>
<th>Vacancy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West State to Weaver Pike</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver Pike to Bluff City Hwy</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff City Hwy to Century Blvd</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Multitenant</strong></td>
<td><strong>134</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
<td><strong>213</strong></td>
<td><strong>37%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standalone Vacancy Rate</th>
<th>Occupied Units</th>
<th>Vacant Units</th>
<th>Total Units</th>
<th>Vacancy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West State to Weaver Pike</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weaver Pike to Bluff City Hwy</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluff City Hwy to Century Blvd</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Standalone</strong></td>
<td><strong>85</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
<td><strong>11%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Total Units**                  | **219**        | **89**       | **308**     | **29%**      |
Existing Redevelopment Areas

The City has already established Redevelopment Districts that encompass some properties along Volunteer Parkway. These include:

- The Downtown/Central Business District Redevelopment District (established in 2006), which includes the property currently occupied by Regions Bank and Bristol Tennessee Essential Services’ substation on Shelby Street.
- The Green Property Redevelopment District (established in 2006), which includes the west side of the 100 block of Volunteer Parkway, currently occupied by several property owners including Cootie Brown’s.
- The Melrose Street/Volunteer Parkway Redevelopment District (established in 2010), which includes the properties near the intersection of Volunteer Parkway, Melrose and English Street, currently occupied by several property owners.
- The Southgate Plaza Redevelopment District (established in 2004), which includes properties located west of Volunteer Parkway in the 1300 and 1400 blocks, currently occupied by Lowe’s, Food City, and other retailers.
- The Volunteer Parkway-Cheers Redevelopment District (established in 2006), which includes properties located on the west side of Volunteer Parkway in the 900 block, currently occupied by Southern Classic Car Wash.
- The Volunteer Plaza Redevelopment District (established in 2010), which includes properties located on the east side of Volunteer Parkway in the 1300 and 1400 blocks, currently occupied by a number of businesses.

City Council has approved TIF arrangements for the Green Property Redevelopment District and the Southgate Plaza Redevelopment District. These TIF arrangements relate to the development of Lowe’s and the in-progress Holiday Inn.

Codes, Police, and Tax Collection Activity

Codes Enforcement

Volunteer Parkway is not home to significant codes enforcement activity. In the last five years, there have been sixteen total Codes Enforcement cases open against properties within the study area. Fifteen of these cases have been resolved. The issued codes violations included repairs without a permit, illegal inflatable, illegal signs, junk and debris, vegetation overgrowth, and a waterline break. Only one open violation for overgrowth remains.

Police Activity

Criminal activity occurs on Volunteer Parkway, as might be expected on a major commercial corridor that connects Bristol to Johnson City and points beyond. During the period from October 31, 2017 to October 31, 2019, the police department generated 1,257 reports related to Volunteer Parkway (from West State Street to Century Boulevard). A report was generated each time the police observed activity or were called to a location through the dispatch system, except for routine traffic and moving violations stops, which would result in a citation. Of these 1,257 reports, 710 were memo reports, indicating that the officer who prepared the
The report did not observe evidence sufficient to press charges. The remaining 547 reports were incident reports, which are typically generated when the officer is documenting something that may be a crime. Incident reports are often, but not always, associated with an arrest. While a citation would be issued for a traffic violation (such as speeding, failure to yield, or a registration violation), the same traffic stop might result in a charge based on evidence discovered during the traffic stop (most commonly, a drug or drug paraphernalia violation), which would be documented with an incident report. An incident report that is generated from a traffic stop may be associated with a particular address on Volunteer Parkway, even though the business or residence located at that address had no involvement in the incident.

During the two-year period for which data was pulled, fewer than one incident report was generated per day on Volunteer Parkway between West State Street and Century Boulevard. The most common offense appearing on the gathered incident reports was drug and narcotic violations. The Police Department CID believes that many, if not most, of the drug, narcotic, and drug paraphernalia offenses that arise from Volunteer Parkway are linked to traffic stops. Drug offenses were followed in order of frequency by shoplifting, larceny, other societal offenses (a catch-all category that includes driving with a suspended license and other state driving charges), drunkenness (also a charge that often stems from traffic stops), drug equipment violations, theft from buildings (including burglary and employee thefts), credit card or ATM fraud, simple assault, and forgery/counterfeiting. See Appendix C - Summary of Police Activity (Volunteer Parkway), for more detailed information on these incident reports.

The incident reports show that, aside from drug and narcotic offenses, the criminal activity that shows up most frequently along Volunteer Parkway is directly related to the business and commercial establishments that are present on Volunteer Parkway. For example, shoplifting and larceny are unfortunate side effects of retail businesses. Banks and credit unions are most likely to report credit card fraud, ATM fraud, and forgery/counterfeiting offenses.

**Delinquent Tax Collections**

Most businesses and property owners on Volunteer Parkway are current on their real and personal property taxes. At the time of collecting data for this report in November 2019, one property owner in the study area was late on real property taxes, and six businesses in the study area were not current on their personal property taxes. The City’s recently expanded efforts to collect delinquent property taxes may have encouraged property owners throughout the city to pay their property taxes in a timely fashion. Staff’s observation has been that in past delinquent tax sales, properties located on Volunteer Parkway generally were purchased in the tax sale, and were often redeemed by the property owner or another interest holder. This indicates that property on Volunteer Parkway, particularly commercial property, was seen as a good opportunity.

**What does the Future Hold for Bristol and Volunteer Parkway?**

Planning would be easy if we knew what was around the corner. That is not the case for Volunteer Parkway or the City as a whole. While we cannot know the future, there are events
that we expect to happen, and trends that we expect to continue. Any revitalization plans for Volunteer Parkway should be made with these events and trends in mind.

**Changing Demographics**

Bristol’s population is an aging one. According to the American FactFinder, a web site that provides Internet access to data collected by the United States Census Bureau and the 2017 American Community Survey, the population of Bristol, Tennessee, was 26,668 in 2017. The median age is 43 years old, which is older than the median age in the United States of 37.8 years, and the state at 38.6 years. 26.8% of the population is 60 years or older.

Given that aging population, the City needs to ensure an adequate supply of housing that is senior-friendly. Volunteer Parkway and its environs present several opportunities for the kind of development that is attractive to retirees.

In order to slow the aging of the population, Bristol needs to attract and retain recent high school and college graduates. To do this, Bristol needs to attract the kinds of jobs that those recent graduates want. An increasing population of recent graduates needs appropriate housing, usually rental, and access to fitness and entertainment options.

**Plans Already in the Works**

As the City develops a strategy to revitalize Volunteer Parkway, it needs to take into account the plans it has already made for the area. Chief among these is the trails and greenways plan. Council has already directed Staff to plan the extension of the Wes Davis Greenway from downtown toward the Speedway. This greenway would parallel Volunteer Parkway for long stretches, in many places taking advantage of land that has been difficult to develop because of the physical barriers discussed above. The greenway provides opportunities for future development along Volunteer Parkway to be tied to downtown Bristol and beyond, allowing people to access downtown on foot or by bike.

The City is also currently conducting a Senior Study to assess the needs of seniors with respect to housing, transportation, health and wellness, and community engagement. The study will also assess recreational opportunities and infrastructure improvements that will make it easier for residents to age in place. Any strategy for Volunteer Parkway should consider these findings.

**The Bristol Resort & Casino**

The Bristol Resort and Casino (the “Casino”) is proposed to be constructed in and around the currently vacant Bristol Mall. If the Casino receives final approval from the legislature and local voters, the Casino’s footprint would be entirely in Bristol, Virginia, but its impacts would be felt far beyond Bristol, Virginia’s borders. Some of the benefits that Bristol, Tennessee may see include:

- Increased visitors to Bristol, Virginia. There is potential for those visitors to dine, stay, and shop in both Bristols.
• Additional jobs, some of which will pay more than the median income for Bristol, Tennessee. It is likely that Bristol, Tennessee residents will be able to fill many of those jobs.
• More jobs should increase the demand for housing, leading to more residential development.

Volunteer Parkway is a corridor leading visitors from upper East Tennessee and Western North Carolina to the site of the proposed Casino. If the number of visitors to Bristol increases substantially, we should also see increased traffic along Volunteer Parkway, with a corresponding increase in spending at restaurants, stores, and gas stations along the way. We may see increased demand for residential development along Volunteer Parkway, given its easy access to the old Bristol Mall site. If the Casino is a success, some of the City’s plans for Volunteer Parkway may happen organically, without incentives, particularly in the northern sections of Volunteer Parkway that are closest to downtown and the future Casino.

**Should the City Create Additional Redevelopment Districts?**

One of the questions that triggered this study was Council’s request for Staff to evaluate whether additional areas along Volunteer Parkway should be included in Redevelopment Districts. In Tennessee, Redevelopment Districts are authorized under the Housing and Redevelopment Authority Act TCA 13-20-201 et seq. (the “Act”), which allows local governments to create housing authorities and delegate certain powers to them. Creating a Redevelopment Plan requires the involvement of City Council and the Housing Authority. **Appendix D - Creation of Redevelopment Plan** summarizes the steps for creating a Redevelopment Plan.

Once a redevelopment plan is created, incremental property tax revenues attributable to properties in the plan district can be assigned to the Housing Authority, which can then use those revenues to fund private development projects, among other powers. Each local taxing authority must approve any redevelopment plan before its incremental tax revenues are diverted to the Housing Authority under the redevelopment plan. Under the Act, in addition to being able to use TIF, housing authorities can also exercise eminent domain powers and other powers. While Bristol has successfully used TIF to finance several developments, it has never directed its Housing Authority to exercise eminent domain in connection with the existing Redevelopment Districts.

Housing Authorities are granted broad redevelopment powers only as to blighted areas. State law defines “blighted areas” as follows:

“Blighted areas” are areas, including slum areas, with buildings or improvements that, by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, lack of ventilation, light and sanitary facilities, deleterious land use, or any combination of these or other factors, are detrimental to the safety, health, morals, or welfare of the community. “Welfare of the community” does not include solely a loss of property value to surrounding properties, nor does it include
the need for increased tax revenues. Under no circumstance shall land used predominantly in the production of agriculture, as defined by §1-3-105, be considered a blighted area.

As used in the definition of Blighted Areas, “dilapidation” means “extreme deterioration and decay due to lack of repairs to and care of the area.”

While there are few Tennessee court decisions interpreting these definitions of “blighted area” and “dilapidation”, one court’s statement on the actions of the Nashville Housing Authority is instructive.

The defendant Nashville Housing Authority as a redevelopment agency must approach the problem of the blighted parts of the community on an area, rather than on a structure by structure, basis, and it is immaterial that some particular structure within such area may be safe, sound, and well kept. *Starr v. Nashville Hous. Auth.*, 145 F. Supp. 498, 503 (M.D. Tenn. 1956).

The implication of this holding is that the opposite is also true. Bristol must approach the problem of redevelopment on an area, rather than a structure by structure, basis, and it is immaterial that a few structures within such area may be dilapidated, obsolete, or used for deleterious purposes, if the majority of the structures in the area do not meet that criteria.

A finding of blight must be supported by substantial evidence, or the finding that an area is blighted will be subject to the argument that the finding was arbitrary and capricious. While Tennessee state law does not provide much guidance as to how much evidence is sufficient, council would probably need to find that at least fifty percent of an area exhibits at least one characteristic of blight in order to defensibly identify a blighted area.

The definition of “blighted areas” indicates that the blighted areas are detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community, because of buildings or other improvements that meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Dilapidation
- Obsolescence
- Overcrowding
- Lack of Ventilation
- Lack of Light
- Lack of Sanitary Facilities
- Deleterious Land Use

Again, the statute does not provide much guidance in defining the factors that contribute to a finding of a blighted area, aside from defining dilapidation as “extreme deterioration and decay due to lack of repairs to and care of the area.” Evidence of dilapidation could take the form of codes enforcement cases against the property, complaints from adjoining property owners about the condition of the property, or physical evidence such as broken windows or collapsing buildings and roofs.

Finding the other factors could be based on a variety of different kinds of evidence, as set out below:
• **Obsolete** buildings would likely be vacant or underutilized. Staff would expect to see complaints of vagrancy and vandalism associated with those buildings.

• **Overcrowded** areas would have too many structures or residents for the area, perhaps in violation of zoning codes or building codes.

• Evidence of a lack of **Ventilation, Light or Sanitary Facilities** might take the form of Codes Enforcement violations, or evidence from Public Works that areas are not served by basic utilities such as electricity, water or sanitary sewer.

• **A Deleterious Land Use** might be evidenced by police calls or complaints from neighbors to the City’s zoning or codes enforcement Staff.

In Staff’s view, there are few individual buildings on Volunteer Parkway that meet the definition of dilapidation. As noted above, the City’s codes enforcement division has opened cases on 16 properties along Volunteer Parkway over the last five years. None of these cases involved a dilapidated structure. While this does not mean that there are no dilapidated structures, it does mean that our Codes Enforcement Division has not identified property as being dilapidated (a finding that would usually occur based on complaints from neighboring property owners or concerned citizens).

As shown above, most of Volunteer Parkway does not have a high rate of vacancy in improved properties. Some of this vacancy is in newer strip centers, which makes it difficult to find that the buildings are obsolete based solely on vacancy. Staff would not consider vacant buildings that are in good condition to contribute to a finding of blight, without more evidence. These buildings are ready to be used.

Staff did not find any evidence of overcrowding on Volunteer Parkway. Staff is also not aware of areas where the majority of buildings lack ventilation, light, or sanitary facilities. In fact, Volunteer Parkway is home to robust infrastructure ready to support the provision of electricity, water and sanitary sewer services to new development.

As discussed above in the overview of police activity on Volunteer Parkway, much of the criminal activity on Volunteer Parkway is attributable to traffic stops (which may give rise to secondary violations such as charges for drunkenness, drugs, or weapons violations), or it is activity that is directly attributable to the businesses on Volunteer Parkway (such as shoplifting, forgery, fraud, and identity theft). The police department is aware of only one business that has relatively frequent criminal activity that is unrelated to the purpose of the business. Possibly this business could be considered to be a deleterious land use, given that it has attracted some criminal activity that would likely not otherwise be seen on Volunteer Parkway if the business did not exist.

Staff did not feel that buildable vacant properties contribute to a finding of blight. These properties are primed for development with minimal input from the City, perhaps in the form of infrastructure improvements. Similarly, the residential backyards that border Volunteer Parkway appear to be vacant, unimproved properties, but they would not support a finding of blight if the houses they are attached to are not blighted.
There are cases where Staff may feel that the current use of the property is not the “highest & best use” of the property. Without further evidence, this would not be enough to meet the definition of blighted areas. Staff also did not consider that merely unattractive buildings are blighted.

Based on this evidence, Staff has concluded that on Volunteer Parkway, there are occasional instances of individual properties that could be considered blighted. However, Staff does not believe that there are blighted areas, where the majority of properties exhibit one or more of the factors listed above. Volunteer Parkway as a whole does not exhibit characteristics that are detrimental to the safety, health, morals or welfare of the community.

Aside from the lack of blighted areas, Staff believes that even if the Housing Authority and City Council approved a redevelopment district for the entire Volunteer Parkway corridor (in addition to the areas that are already in an existing redevelopment district), it would be ineffective to spur development along much of the Volunteer Parkway corridor. As described above, much of the commercial property along Volunteer Parkway is one lot deep. Given the small lots involved, it would be difficult to acquire enough property to produce a meaningful incentive, without disturbing the established residential neighborhoods that are one block away from Volunteer Parkway.

**Proposed Solution: Strategic Development Areas**

A survey of Volunteer Parkway reveals areas that are problematic, even if they do not meet the definition of blighted areas for purposes of the Housing Authority’s Redevelopment Districts. Staff observed several areas of Volunteer Parkway that exhibited issues that could be addressed to improve the opportunities in such areas. In addition to possibly being in the floodplain and struggling with topography, these areas contain:

- Poorly organized lots, where access to lots and buildings is inadequate.
- Aging, un-renovated buildings.
- “Planning issues” such as parking lot size and location not being what we would encourage today.
- Lots where incompatible uses may exist.
- Lack of walkable, connected areas.
- Construction that is functional for vehicle traffic, but is largely without architectural character.

While Staff would not recommend creating a redevelopment district that encompasses all or most of Volunteer Parkway, Staff has identified four areas of focus, or Strategic Development Areas (“SDA”), along Volunteer Parkway. Staff feels that actions that the City takes in these SDA would have a beneficial impact on the Parkway as a whole, without requiring the creation of a Redevelopment Plan, and the approval of TIF arrangements for each Redevelopment Project that is proposed. In some cases, the proposed actions involve the City alone. Other potential participants may include the Planning Commission and the Industrial Development Board.
SDA 1: North Holston Avenue Strategic Development Area

This SDA is located near the existing Days Inn located in the 500 block of Volunteer Parkway. It consists of eight parcels. The tax assessor has appraised the properties at just over $3,000,000, resulting in current annual city and county property taxes of $25,990.36.

This SDA is close to, but across Volunteer Parkway from, an existing Redevelopment District, the Melrose/Volunteer Parkway Redevelopment District.

All of the properties in this SDA are developed. The buildings are older, but all are occupied and in good repair. Existing development has accommodated the narrowness of the lots, filling the little space there is between Volunteer Parkway and nearby residential areas. Future development would need to accommodate these physical constraints.

Staff views this SDA as being a target of revitalization because of its nearness to downtown Bristol. It also has proximity to the Wes Davis Greenway, making it a potential addition to Bristol’s walkable areas. It is close to an established residential neighborhood that would benefit from development that supports surrounding residential uses. The existing uses could be joined by other commercial properties, such as a small grocery store, coffee shop, or...
office space, which would draw customers from the nearby neighborhood. The existing hotel may benefit from increased tourism, particularly if it undergoes interior renovations.

The City could use the following tools to revitalize this SDA:

- Improve the Hill Street/Holston Avenue intersection, which is a non-standard intersection design. Improvements would provide more room to stack traffic leading up to Volunteer Parkway.
- Install pedestrian crossings in this area, to encourage and enable people to cross Hill Street and Volunteer Parkway to take advantage of the Greenway connection to downtown.
- Explore the use of Façade Improvement Grants to give this area more architectural character. A goal would be to encourage improvements that mimic the feel of Bristol’s downtown Central Business District. (Façade Improvement Grants are discussed in further detail on page 27 of this Plan.)
- If redevelopment occurs in this SDA, use zoning to encourage parking off street, behind buildings, so that this SDA has more of a downtown feel.
SDA 2: Cox Street Strategic Development Area

This SDA is located near the intersection of Cox Street and Volunteer Parkway, and includes the existing Big Lots and Stowaway Storage in the 1100 Block of Volunteer Parkway. It consists of 27 properties, and extends from Volunteer Parkway to Bluff City Highway. Total acreage is roughly 26 acres. It has been appraised by the Property Tax Assessor at $11,161,500, with annual collective city and county property tax collections of $88,092.45.

This SDA adjoins the Southside Redevelopment District, which was established in 2006 and is now home to the Village at Lavinder Lane, a multifamily residential development.

![Figure 4. Cox Street Strategic Development Area.](image)

There are 6 vacant lots in this SDA. Most buildings were constructed in the 1970s and 1980s, but several have been recently constructed or renovated, including Taco Bell and
Stowaway Storage. There is vacancy in properties located directly on Volunteer Parkway, such as the former Family Dollar building and the bank building located at 1145 Volunteer Parkway. While there is a slope up from Volunteer Parkway to Bluff City Highway, the topography does not hinder development of the SDA. Existing infrastructure (roads and sewers) is adequate to support additional commercial development without additional investment from the City.

In addition to having undeveloped land available for further development, this SDA is in walking distance of several residential neighborhoods and the Lavinder Lane multifamily development. Thus, Staff views this as an ideal location for mixed-use retail and office development, perhaps with more multifamily residential. Improvements that encourage walkability will lead residents of nearby neighborhoods to shop, and even work, in this SDA.

The City could use the following tools to revitalize this SDA:

- In cooperation with the Bristol, Tennessee Industrial Development Board, provide targeted Payment in Lieu of Tax ("PILOT") arrangements for businesses that will add to the character of this SDA. (Targeted Incentives are discussed on page 25 of this Plan.)
- Consider zoning changes to allow higher density residential in B-3 and Planned Business District zones, so that if a developer wishes to add multifamily residential, it would be a use by right rather than a rezoning request.
- Audit other existing zoning ordinances to identify and remove obstacles to developing mixed-use commercial and residential projects.
- As developments are proposed, review the need for infrastructure modifications that could benefit the project.
SDA 3: Glenwood Road Strategic Development Area

This SDA is located on the east side of the 1200 Block of Volunteer Parkway. It consists of 10 parcels, comprising approximately 27.5 acres, located around Executive Plaza. The Property Tax Assessor’s appraisal of the combined properties is $12,379,200.00, resulting in annual city and county property tax collections of $96,058.08.

There are 2 vacant lots in this SDA. Most buildings were constructed in the late 1970s. There have been notable renovations in this SDA, including the Summit Property, that demonstrate that aging buildings do not have to be unattractive or obsolete. Topography poses a challenge in this SDA, because the land rises sharply from Volunteer Parkway toward Bluff City Highway. Existing development has taken on a tiered effect in places, but interior lots of Executive Plaza are largely invisible from Volunteer Parkway. This SDA primarily consists of office space, with some retail uses. This SDA represents an opportunity for more headquarters and central offices to locate on or near Volunteer Parkway.

This SDA would benefit from the following:

- Façade Improvement Grants.
- In cooperation with the Bristol, Tennessee Industrial Development Board, provide targeted PILOT arrangements for businesses that will add to the character of this SDA.
• Consider zoning changes to allow higher density residential in B-3 and Planned Business District zones, so that if a developer wishes to add multifamily residential, it would be a use by right rather than a rezoning request.
• As developments are proposed, review the need for infrastructure modifications that could benefit the project.
SDA 4: Phillipswood Drive/Avoca Road/Beaver Creek Strategic Development Area

This SDA is located on both sides of Volunteer Parkway near the crossing of Avoca Road. The east side of Volunteer Parkway consists of 14 parcels, currently appraised at $4,779,600.00, with annual city and county property tax collections of $39,130.82. On the west side, the SDA contains 14 parcels, appraised at $5,087,000.00, with annual city and county property tax collections of $39,669.46. Some properties in this SDA are assessed as agricultural properties and would be subject to rollback taxes if the use were changed.

Figure 6. Phillipswood Drive/Avoca Road/Beaver Creek Strategic Development Area

This SDA has 4 undeveloped properties and several large underdeveloped lots. Thus, this SDA includes more undeveloped or underdeveloped property than other areas of Volunteer
Parkway, and is notable for including a large undeveloped tract of land with access to Volunteer Parkway. Current uses in this SDA include car sales, a mobile home park and Goodwill.

Staff sees this SDA as an opportunity because it has open, undeveloped land that could be suitable for one or two large mixed-use commercial and residential development. This would meet the existing need for more residential development, which is likely to grow in the coming years. Consideration should be given to allowing higher-density residential in this area, taking advantage of the rising topography to provide attractive, mountain chalet style developments. Development that incorporates both multifamily residential and commercial uses such as restaurants, personal service businesses, and grocery stores will attract both seniors and recent graduates, both of whom we expect to need housing in Bristol in the coming years. Staff’s vision is for these areas to become largely self-contained neighborhoods where residents could live, shop, and even work.

This SDA also takes into account the likely presence of the Greenway, which may cross Volunteer Parkway near this point. Property in this SDA may be suitable for a trailhead and parking area for the Greenway, and this should be taken into consideration if development occurs in this SDA.

Appendix E - Examples of Mixed Use Commercial/Residential Developments contains examples from other areas of the kinds of mixed-use development that Staff would encourage in this SDA. Staff would also encourage considering the following strategies to revitalize this SDA:

- In cooperation with the Bristol, Tennessee Industrial Development Board, provide targeted PILOT arrangements for businesses that will add to the character of this SDA.
- Consider zoning changes to allow higher density residential in B-3 and Planned Business District zones, so that if a developer wishes to add multifamily residential, it would be a use by right rather than a rezoning request.
- Audit existing zoning ordinances to identify and remove obstacles to development in this Area.
- As developments are proposed, review the need for infrastructure modifications that could benefit the project.

Next Steps for Volunteer Parkway Strategy

Staff would suggest the following next steps for implementing a strategy for Volunteer Parkway in a way that benefits all of Bristol.

Targeted Incentives

Incentives are likely to be a part of any plan for revitalizing all or part of Volunteer Parkway. These incentives may take the form of tax increment financing, PILOT arrangements, infrastructure improvements associated with new developments, or other mechanisms yet to be discovered. Regardless of the form the incentive takes, the City should consider how to use those incentives before implementing any revitalization plan.
The threshold question is whether projects should meet certain criteria in order to qualify for an incentive. If the answer to that question is no, then the City may find itself in a position where it grants incentives to every project, regardless of its desirability or impact on the City. Without pre-set criteria, refusing to grant an incentive can give rise to charges of favoritism, while granting every incentive can rapidly deplete the City’s tax revenues.

Staff would encourage the use of targeted incentives; that is, incentives that meet criteria designed by the City to encourage certain kinds of development in certain areas of the City.

Incentives provided from City tax revenues should meet the following thresholds:

- Incentives should be used to attract development that is not already on Volunteer Parkway, which will complement existing development on Volunteer Parkway.
- Incentives should be used to attract businesses and industry that are new to Bristol. Incentives should not be available to businesses and industries that are relocating within City limits, unless the business or industry is expanding beyond its current footprint and needs more room.

Beyond those threshold criteria, Staff would recommend that the City consider using incentives to encourage prospective developers to “upgrade” proposed developments. The City could use incentives to encourage developers to go the extra mile by including amenities that will enhance quality of life for tenants and users. For example, developers could use incentives to increase walkability in and around proposed developments, by connecting to existing or proposed trails and greenways. Developers could also use such incentives to cover the costs of including common areas for socializing and exercising.

Cash incentives to developers typically take the form of TIF and PILOT arrangements. There are advantages and disadvantages to each form of incentive.

TIF requires the creation of either a Housing Authority redevelopment plan that designates the properties subject to the TIF (as discussed above) or an Economic Impact Plan created and administered by the Industrial Development Board. There are differences between the two types of TIF arrangements. Establishing a Housing Authority Redevelopment Plan requires a finding of blight, but TIF funds can be used for a wide range of purposes within the Redevelopment Plan Area. IDB TIFs do not depend on a finding of blight, but IDB TIFs can only be used for projects that meet the definition of “project” under the IDB Act (see Appendix F for the portions of the TCA that define “project”). The use of TIF, whether through a Redevelopment Plan or an Economic Impact Plan, requires the approval of the legislative body that will be giving up its property taxes. Thus, in order for a development to receive the full amount of incentive, both City Council and the County Commission would have to approve the TIF.

PILOT arrangements are available to incentivize any project that qualifies as a project under the IDB Act. A PILOT requires all or part of the project to be transferred to the IDB, which owns the project for a period of time (usually no more than 5 years). During the time that the IDB owns the project, the project is not subject to tax because the IDB is a tax-free entity.
The developer or business leases the project back from the IDB and continues to use it in its business as usual. As a condition of the lease, the developer or business generally pays some amount of rent to the City and the County. A PILOT can thus be structured so that “base” taxes continue to be paid to the City and the County, but the developer or business is not liable for the incremental property taxes attributed to the improvements constructed on the property. A PILOT requires authority to be delegated from the City to the IDB, but does not otherwise require approval from the City or County. Some businesses do not take advantage of PILOT arrangements because they object to the transfer of ownership of the property to the IDB, but PILOTs have been used to successfully incentive many industrial and commercial projects.

One major advantage to PILOT arrangements over TIF financing is that PILOT arrangements do not impact the calculation of the City’s certified rate. Because the property is simply off the tax rolls, the value of the property is not considered in the certified tax rate calculation.

**Façade Improvement Grants**

Façade Improvement Grants have been used in other Tennessee cities to encourage owners of existing buildings to make repairs that will beautify targeted areas of the City. Knoxville, for example, uses CDBG funds to provide Façade Improvement Grants that are available in selected areas of Knoxville. Kingsport operates a façade improvement grant program through its Economic Development Board, allowing for reimbursement of 50% of the total cost of eligible improvements, up to $15,000 or $5,000 for single 25’ wide storefronts. East Ridge directly administers a fifty-fifty matching grant for façade improvements, with grants available up to $10,000. Appendix G - Façade Improvement Grant Resources contains additional information on Façade Improvement Grants.

The experience of other cities indicates that such grants can have an impact not only on the grant recipient, but also on neighboring property owners. East Ridge reports that while its program, adopted in 2017, has been slow to take off, the property owners who have taken advantage of the program consider it a great incentive. The grants are available to any commercial property owner in the City. Individual grants are relatively small, but would motivate property owners to take steps toward exterior renovation that they may have already been considering.

Staff’s recommendation would be that the City explore offering Façade Improvement Grants to commercial properties in the Strategic Development Areas identified above, either directly from the City or with the assistance of the Bristol, Tennessee Industrial Development Board, depending on which program best fits the City’s needs and legal constraints. Creating a Façade Improvement Grant program would require an ongoing budget commitment by the City.

**Regulatory Changes**

Zoning should be used to encourage the kinds of development that the City wants along Volunteer Parkway. Zones should be adapted or created if necessary to permit flexibility in designing developments holistically. Staff should be directed to audit the existing zoning
ordinances that apply to Volunteer Parkway before developers approach the City, so that updates can be made in anticipation of the development the City is hoping to attract.

**Infrastructure Commitments**

Adequate infrastructure is available along the Volunteer Parkway corridor to support existing and future development. Volunteer Parkway has adequate vehicular capacity but intersections and median openings may require modifications depending on the proposed development. Based on the proposed development, the City could evaluate necessary infrastructure modifications to determine the possibility of financial commitments for the modifications.

**Changes to Existing Redevelopment Districts**

Staff would recommend that the City’s existing Redevelopment Districts be reviewed periodically to determine whether any changes need to be made to those Districts. As part of this study of Volunteer Parkway, Staff has reviewed the Redevelopment Districts that touch on Volunteer Parkway. As a result of that review, Staff has the following recommendations:

- The Volunteer Parkway/Cheers District should be removed from the Redevelopment Plan. This property has redeveloped without the use of TIF.
- The Redevelopment Plan should be amended to specify that the Southgate District will be removed from the Redevelopment Plan at the expiration of the existing TIF arrangement for the Lowe’s property. The TIF financing has successfully redeveloped the Southgate District.
- The City should amend the Redevelopment Plan to exclude property at the north end of the Volunteer Plaza District that has already redeveloped.
- The City should explore amending the Volunteer Plaza District to include properties on the east side of Bluff City Highway, across the street from the existing district. There are properties on the east side of Bluff City Highway that may constitute blighted areas. Adding these areas to the Volunteer Plaza District would provide a greater footprint for potential development in that area, and might provide a vehicle for addressing land use and other issues in that area.

The City needs to make a greater effort to publicize its existing redevelopment districts, so that developers are aware of the availability of TIF in those districts. Staff should explore including maps of the redevelopment districts on the City’s website and housing authority website.

**Conclusion**

Volunteer Parkway presents unusual problems, but it also presents opportunities for the growth and development of the City of Bristol. Given the limits on annexation imposed on cities by the State, development of areas inside the city’s boundaries represents the best opportunity for the city to provide necessities and amenities for its citizens and increase its tax base. Staff views the wise development of Volunteer Parkway as a key strategy for Bristol’s future.
The following Staff members contributed to this report and to the accompanying presentation to City Council:

- Tom Anderson, Director of Economic Development
- Tim Beavers, Director of Development Services
- Jake Chandler, City Engineer
- Karl Cooler, Codes Administrator
- Terry Johnson, Police Captain, CID
- Casey Lambert, Civil Engineer
- Steven Mott, Planner
- Cari Seaton, Staff Attorney
- Danielle Smith, City Attorney
- Jeff Tester, Engineering & GIS
- Cherith Young, Senior Planner
Appendix A - B-3 Zoning Uses
(Current as of December 9, 2019.)

1. Permitted Uses
   a. 54194 - Animal clinics or animal hospitals with no outside kennels
   b. 481, 8111 - Auto sales and repair
   c. 3118 – Bakeries
   d. 52 – Banks
   e. 8121 - Barber shops
   f. 8121 - Beauty shops
   g. 3125 - Bottling works
   h. 485 - Bus terminals
   i. 54, 55, 561 - Businesses and professional offices
   j. 3222 - Cardboard box manufacturing
   k. 811192 - Car washes
   l. 813110, 236220 - Churches
   m. 6215 - Clinical laboratories
   n. 44512 - Convenience stores
   o. 624 - Day care centers
   p. 512132 - Drive-in theaters
   q. 8123 - Dry cleaning and laundry establishments
   r. 4247 - Flammable liquid storage above ground not exceeding one-
       thousand (1,000) gallons
   s. 8122 - Funeral homes
   t. 72 - Hotels and motels
   u. 5121 - Indoor theaters
   v. 8111 - Machines shops; where related to auto, auto parts, or electrical
       repair businesses.
   w. 31, 32, 33, 42, 44, 45 - Manufacture of articles to be sold at retail on
       premises, provided such manufacturing is incidental to the retail business
       and employs not more than five operators
   x. 4444 – Milk distribution stations
   y. 447 - Motor fuel stations
   z. 62, Offices for certified, registered or licensed health care professionals
       623110 – Nursing Home, limited to 88 beds per acre
   aa. 327, 333 - Optical goods manufacture
   bb. 237310 - Parking lots
   cc. 236220 - Parking garages
   dd. 71 - Places of amusement and entertainment
   ee. 323 - Printing and engraving establishments
   ff. 92 - Public buildings
   gg. 236220, 452910, 45113, 481219, 488119, 523910, 561599, 711211,
       71394, 71399, 72131, 81341 - Public or private clubs
hh. Residential purposes as specified below:
   1. 236115 - Single and two-family residences – construction or expansion must be approved by the Building inspector, cannot exceed R-2 space requirements.
   2. 236116 - Multifamily residences by Special Use Permit only

ii. 44-45 - Retail businesses
jj. N/A - Signs - see Chapter 2, Section 216
kk. 4853 - Taxi stands
ll. 454390 - Temporary long term sales as defined in Chapter 2, Section 219
mm. 4884 - Truck terminals
nn. 45113 - Upholstery shops
oo. 44112 - Used car lots
pp. 42 - Wholesale businesses, not to include warehouses that are separate from the offices of that business
qq. 4884 - Wrecker service - The storage lot for wrecked vehicles is limited to 5,000 square feet and must be enclosed with fencing
rr. Other uses of the same general character which are compatible with the district such as those listed above deemed appropriate by the Planning Commission by Special Use Permit.

2. Uses Allowed Under Special Use Permit
   a. 811211 - Electronic assembly operations
   b. 622, except 622210 – Hospitals
   c. 7139 - Private golf, swimming and tennis clubs
   d. 61 – Schools
   e. 531130 – Warehouses
   f. 71399 - Adult Entertainment Establishments
   g. 6233 – Assisted Living Facilities, limited to the R-3 density
   h. 81291 - Animal Day Care Facilities under the following conditions:
      1. A Site Plan for Construction or a Site Plan for Change of Use must be reviewed by Community Development Staff and approved by the Bristol Tennessee Regional Planning Commission.
      2. A ten-foot landscape buffer must be maintained around the perimeter of the site when adjacent to commercial uses and 25 feet when adjacent to residential zones or uses.
      3. Outdoor exercise/recreation shall not be visible from the street.
      4. The setback for all accessory structures associated with Animal Day Care Facilities shall be a minimum of ten feet in addition to the setback required by the zone of adjacent parcels. In no instance shall the setback be less than 25 feet.
      5. The granting of a special use permit for an Animal Day Care Facility shall not exempt the permit holder from compliance with all applicable provisions of Chapter 10 of the Code of Ordinances.
   i. 71 - Recreational Developments
### Appendix B – Volunteer Parkway Retail Sectors – LOST Collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Average Store Profit</th>
<th>Sector Total Profit</th>
<th>Sector Total Loss</th>
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<th>Store Count</th>
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<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>-500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothing</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$22,500</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>-250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$2,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronics</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$37,500</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Appliances</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>-200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>$3,500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>-250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>-300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**
- Average store profit and loss are provided because of single article sales. These calculations are based on the average profit and loss per store.
- Store counts are provided to give an understanding of the distribution of stores within each sector.
- The average loss/gain is calculated for each sector to provide a comparison of profit and loss across different sectors.

---

**Table:**
- **Total Profit:** The total profit calculated for each sector.
- **Total Loss:** The total loss calculated for each sector.
- **Avg Loss/Gain:** The average loss or gain per store within each sector.
### Appendix C - Summary of Police Activity (Volunteer Parkway)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period of Data Pull</th>
<th>10/31/2017 to 10/31/2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Police Calls</td>
<td>1257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Memo Calls (non-serious)</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Incident Reports Generated</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Offense Listed on Report:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assaults</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Larceny</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Offenses</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Other Offenses (Society)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary/Breaking &amp; Entering</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destructive Damage/Vandalism of Property</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Equipment Violations</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug/Narcotic Violations</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunkenness</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embezzlement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False Pretense/Swindle/Confidence Game</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forcible Fondling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery/Counterfeiting</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud Credit Card/Automated Teller Machines</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Theft</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidnapping/Abduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquor Law Violations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicle Theft</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoplifting</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Assault</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stalking</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stolen Property Offenses (receiving, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft From Buildings</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft From Motor Vehicle</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft Of Motor Vehicle Parts or Accessories</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trespass Of Real Property</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapon Law Violations</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthless Checks</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D - Creation of Redevelopment Plans

By law, creation of a Redevelopment Plan requires certain steps. A public hearing must be held by City Council or the Housing Authority, as designated by City Council, to determine the necessity for adopting the plan (or, if the plan is being amended to include a TIF provision, to determine the necessity for using TIF). Notice of the public hearing must be published once a week for three consecutive weeks immediately preceding the public hearing, in a newspaper of general circulation. The notice must contain the time, place and purpose of the public hearing, and must identify at least two locations, one of which shall be the offices of the Housing Authority, where a map of the area to be included in the plan, with the streets or other lines marking the boundaries of the area clearly indicated, may be reviewed by interested persons.

Notice must also be mailed, postage prepaid, or delivered to at least one owner or at least one occupant of each parcel of property within the area to be included in the Redevelopment Plan. This notice must contain the time, place and purpose of the public hearing. This notice must be mailed or delivered no more than 30 days, and no less than 10 days, before the date of the hearing.

If the plan, or an amendment to a plan, will include a TIF provision, both the published notice and the mailed notice must also set forth in “clear and plain language” the contemplated use of tax increment financing in connection with the redevelopment project. The City must deliver a separate notice to each taxing agency that would be affected by the TIF provision (here, the County) no less than 21 days prior to the date of the hearing. This notice must contain a copy of the notice of public hearing, together with a statement that if the redevelopment plan containing a TIF provision is approved, certain property taxes resulting from increases in assessed valuation of property above the current assessed value of such property may be allocated to the Housing Authority for redevelopment purposes, rather than being paid to the County.

Following the Public Hearing, the Housing Authority and City Council must approve the redevelopment plan. A redevelopment plan must provide an outline for the redevelopment of the project area. The redevelopment plan must also contain the following:

- Indicate its relationship to definite local objectives as to appropriate land uses and improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities, recreational and community facilities and other public improvements;
- Indicate proposed land uses and building requirements in the area; and
- Indicate the method of the temporary relocation of persons living in such areas, and the method of providing, unless already available, decent, safe and sanitary dwellings substantially equal in number to the number of substandard dwellings to be cleared from the area, at rents within the financial reach of the income groups displaced from such substandard dwellings.

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2 See Tennessee Code Annotated Sections 13-20-201, et seq.
If a redevelopment plan provides for tax increment financing, the plan must be approved by the County Commission. If the plan is not approved by the County Commission, the City can proceed if it agrees to exempt the county property tax levy from the tax increment financing provisions. A redevelopment plan (whether new or amended) that provides for TIF must also include:

- An estimate of the cost of the redevelopment project;
- The sources of revenue to finance the cost of the project, including the estimated tax increment;
- An estimate of the amount and final maturity of bonded or other indebtedness to be incurred; and
- An estimate of the impact of the tax increment financing provision upon all taxing agencies in which the redevelopment project is to be located.

The foregoing information about TIF must be made available to the public no later than 5 days prior to the date set for the public hearing.

If the Redevelopment Plan containing TIF provisions is approved, the City must send notice to the County Property Tax Assessor along with a copy of the Plan.

Once a Redevelopment Plan is approved, the Housing Authority has the power to:

- Acquire blighted areas and other real property for the purpose of preventing blight;
- Acquire real property where the title, varied ownership, streets or lot layouts, prevents proper development of the property and acquisition by the authority is necessary for the redevelopment plan;
- Clear areas that it has acquired;
- Install infrastructure, parks, open spaces, sidewalks, and other structures necessary for the redevelopment plan;
- Pay expenses related to the redevelopment plan;
- Sell or lease land acquired by the authority in accordance with the redevelopment plan; and
- Borrow money by issuing bonds, notes or other indebtedness secured by the authority’s income and revenues, including tax increment revenues.
Appendix E - Examples of Mixed Use Commercial/Residential Developments

These developments are scalable depending on available property.

Figure 7. Nelson’s Grant, Historic Yorktown, Virginia.
Figure 8. Site Plan, Courthouse Landing, Chesterfield, Virginia.
Figure 9. Site Plan, Village of Providence Landing, Huntsville, Alabama
Figure 10. Site Plan, Woodland Park East, Fairfax County, Virginia. Will feature 1.6 million square feet of homes and offices on a 31.5 acre site.

Figure 11. Guiding Principles.
Appendix F - Industrial Development Board Act – Definitions of Project

TCA 7-53-101 (Current as of December 9, 2019)

(15) “Project” means all or any part of, or any interest in:

(A) Any land and building, including office building, any facility or other improvement on the land, and all real and personal properties deemed necessary in connection therewith, whether or not now in existence, that shall be suitable for the following or by any combination of two (2) or more thereof:

(i) Any industry for the manufacturing, processing or assembling of any agricultural, mining, or manufactured products;

(ii) Any commercial enterprise in selling, providing, or handling any financial service or in storing, warehousing, distributing or selling any products of agriculture, mining or industry;

(iii) Any undertaking involving the use of ship canals, ports or port facilities, off-street parking facilities, docks or dock facilities, or harbor facilities, or of railroads, monorail or tramway, railway terminals, or railway belt lines and switches;

(iv) All or any part of any office building or buildings for the use of such tenant or tenants as may be determined or authorized by the board of directors of the corporation, including, without limitation, any industrial, commercial, financial or service enterprise, any nonprofit domestic corporation or enterprise now or hereafter organized, whose purpose is the promotion, support and encouragement of either agriculture or commerce in this state or whose purpose is the promoting of the health, welfare and safety of the citizens of the state;

(v) Any office or other public building for any city, county or metropolitan government of the state of Tennessee or any board of public utilities, or any public authority, agency, or instrumentality of the state of Tennessee or of the United States;

(vi) Any buildings, structures and facilities, including the site of the buildings, structure and facilities, machinery, equipment and furnishings, suitable for use by any city, county or metropolitan government of the state of Tennessee or any for profit corporation operating buildings, structures and facilities, including the site of the buildings, structures and facilities, machinery, equipment and furnishings, under contract with any city, county or metropolitan government of the state of Tennessee as health care or related facilities, including, without limitation, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, research facilities, extended or long-term care facilities, and all buildings, structures and facilities deemed necessary or useful in connection therewith;

(vii) Any nonprofit educational institution in any manner related to or in furtherance of the educational purposes of such institution, including, but not limited to, classroom, laboratory, housing, administrative, physical education, and medical research and treatment facilities;

(viii) Any planetarium or museum;
(ix) Any facilities for any recreation or amusement park, public park or theme park suitable for use by any private corporation or any governmental unit of the state of Tennessee, including the state of Tennessee;

(x) Any multifamily housing facilities to be occupied by persons of low or moderate income, elderly, or handicapped persons as may be determined by the board of directors, which determination shall be conclusive;

(xi) Any undertaking involving the operation or management of the Job Training Partnership Act program pursuant to 29 U.S.C. § 1501 et seq. [repealed]. It is the legislative intent to include such project in order to increase employment opportunities pursuant to § 7-53-102;

(b) Subdivision (15)(A)(xi)(a) shall not apply in any county having a population, according to the 1980 federal census or any subsequent federal census of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>not less than</th>
<th>nor more than</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14,940</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49,400</td>
<td>49,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56,000</td>
<td>56,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74,500</td>
<td>74,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85,725</td>
<td>85,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>477,000</td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(xii) Any land, buildings, structures and facilities, including the site of the building, structure and facilities, machinery, equipment and furnishings that constitute “recovery zone property” as in § 1400U-3(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. § 1400U-3(c)); and

(xiii) Facilities or expenditures paid or incurred for “qualified conservation purposes” as defined in § 54D of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. § 54D), in connection with the issuance of “qualified energy conservation bonds”, as defined in § 54D of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (26 U.S.C. § 54D);

(B)

(i) In any municipality in which there has been created a central business improvement district pursuant to chapter 84 of this title, “project” also means any hotel, motel or apartment building located within an area designated by appropriate resolution or ordinance by the municipality as the center-city area; and, in any municipality, “project” also means any hotel, including any conference or convention center facilities related to the hotel, or motel within an area that could provide substantial sources of tax revenues or economic activity to the municipality;

(ii) In counties with a metropolitan form of government, “project” also means any hotel, motel or apartment building located on property owned by or leased from an airport authority created pursuant to title 42, chapter 3 or 4, but this subdivision (15)(B)(ii) shall not apply in any county having a population of not less than one hundred twenty thousand (120,000) nor more than one hundred thirty thousand (130,000), according to the 1970 federal census or any subsequent federal census;

(iii) In the county seat of any county having a population of not less than nineteen thousand six hundred fifty (19,650) or more than nineteen thousand seven
hundred fifty (19,750), according to the 1980 federal census or any subsequent federal census, “project” also means the purchase, acquisition, leasing, construction and equipping of hotels, motels, and apartments in any area within the county seat of such county;

(iv) In any municipality in which there is a closed or substantially downsized facility, including, but not limited to, a facility formerly operated by the United States department of defense or department of energy, “project” also means the purchase, acquisition, leasing, construction and equipping of hotels, motels, conference centers and apartments, on or adjacent to the site of the closed or substantially downsized federal facility;

(v) In any municipality with a population of at least fifteen thousand (15,000) or more, according to the 2010 federal census or any subsequent federal census, located partly within a county having a metropolitan form of government and partly within an adjacent county, “project” also means the purchase, acquisition, leasing, construction, and equipping of hotels and motels within any such municipality’s corporate boundaries;

(C) Pollution control facilities, coal gasification facilities, and energy production facilities, as defined in § 7-54-101, and any buildings, structures and facilities, including the site of any buildings, structures and facilities, machinery, equipment and furnishings, for the production of electricity, that shall be suitable for use by any person including any public utility whether publicly or privately owned, board of public utilities, public authority, municipality, or agency or instrumentality of the state of Tennessee or the United States, or by any combination of two (2) or more. The board of directors of the corporation shall find, with respect to any office building or any hotel, motel or apartment building financed under this chapter that the acquisition and leasing or sale of such building, or the financing of the building by loan agreement, as the case may be, will develop trade and commerce in and adjacent to the municipality, will contribute to the general welfare and will alleviate conditions of unemployment, and with regard to any apartment building that the construction of an apartment building will increase the quantity of housing available in the municipality, and such finding by the board of directors shall be conclusive;

(D) Land or buildings or other improvements to land or buildings, or any combination thereof, and any breeding stock and machinery or equipment necessary or suitable for use in farming, ranching, the production of agricultural commodities, including the products of agriculture and silviculture, or necessary and suitable for treating, processing, storing or transporting raw agricultural commodities;

(E) A tourism attraction involving an aggregate investment of public and private funds in excess of seventy-five million dollars ($75,000,000) that is designed to attract tourists to the state, including a cultural or historical site, a museum or visitors center, a recreation or entertainment facility, and all related hotel or hotels, convention center facilities, administrative facilities and offices, mixed use facilities, restaurants and other tourism amenities constructed or acquired as a part of the attraction;

(F) In any municipality in which there has been created a central business improvement district pursuant to chapter 84 of this title, “project” also means any public infrastructure, public improvement, public facilities, or combination thereof, located within an area designated by appropriate resolution or ordinance by the municipality as the center city
area, including without limitation, any alleys, auditoriums, bridges, culverts, curbs, drainage systems, including storm water sewers and drains, garages, parks, parking facilities, parkways, playgrounds, plazas, public art, roads, sewers, sidewalks, stadiums, streets, street equipment, tunnels, and viaducts;

(G) Any economic development project as defined in § 7-40-103 [The Border Region Retail Tourism Development District Act];

(H) Land or buildings or other improvements to land or buildings, or any combination thereof, and any machinery or equipment necessary or suitable for use in the production of biofuels, biopower, biochemicals, biomaterials, synthetic fuels and/or petroleum products, or necessary and suitable for treating, processing, storing or transporting raw materials used in such production or in storing and transporting the finished product, intermediate products or co-products; and

(I) Any economic development project as defined in the Regional Retail Tourism Development District Act, compiled in chapter 41 of this title;
Appendix G - Façade Improvement Grant Resources


- Johnson City Development Authority, Downtown Johnson City Façade Improvement Grant Program. Provides incentives to improve facades of buildings in an area within downtown Johnson City’s redevelopment district. Grants are available to reimburse up to 50% of the eligible costs of renovation of the primary façade and 25% of the costs of renovation of one additional side, up to a maximum of $5,000 ($7,500 for buildings with multiple faces). Larger grants may be available on a case by case basis. Available at https://downtownjc.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2016-JC-Facade-Application.pdf (last accessed on December 10, 2019).

- City of Morristown, Façade Improvement Grant Program Guidelines. Available to business owners and tenants located on the “main entrance corridors” to the City, as shown on map. Funded through CDBG program, covers a maximum of 50% of the cost of a renovation project, up to $10,000. Available at http://cms.revize.com/revize/morristown/Dev&Planning/2019%20Facade%20Program%20App-2nd%20Round.pdf (last accessed on December 10, 2019).