



HERTFORD COMMUNITY & RIVERFRONT PLAN

THE TOWN OF HERTFORD, NC

prepared by

RIVERS & ASSOCIATES, INC. ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP, LLC
LAND MANAGEMENT GROUP MOFFATT & NICHOL

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HERTFORD COMMUNITY & RIVERFRONT PLAN

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Prepared for

**The Town of Herford
Hertford, NC**

114 W. Grubb Street
Hertford, NC 27944
252-426-1969

Project Managers

**Allison Platt, PLA
Rivers & Associates, Inc.**

107 E. Second Street
Greenville, NC 27858
252-752-4135

Subconsultants:

**Greg Finch
Land Management Group**
3805 Wrightsville Avenue, Suite 15
Wilmington, NC 28403
910-432-0001

**Nancy Lehr, PE, APMP
Moffatt & Nichol**

1100 Boulder Parkway, Suite 500
Richmond, VA 23225
804-320-1996 x21132

**Greg Payne
Economic Leadership, LLC**
3461 Lake Shore Drive SW
Shallotte, NC 28470
(919) 451-2606

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i	
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1	
1.1 Project Need.....	1	
1.2 Approach	3	
1.3 Project Definition	4	
1.4 Project Benefits.....	4	
1.5 Challenges & Opportunities (Economic Overview)	5	
2.0 ANALYSIS.....	8	
 2A COMMUNITY ANALYSIS.....	8	
2.1 Study Area	8	
2.2 Land Use.....	8	
2.3 Architectural Quality.....	10	
2.4 Building Condition.....	11	
2.5 Property Condition.....	12	
2.6 Infrastructure	12	
 2B RIVERFRONT ANALYSIS	13	
2.7 Background	13	
2.8 Wetlands Delineation	14	
2.9 Realignment of the Wall / Walkway.....	15	
3.0 CONCEPTS	17	
 3A COMMUNITY PLAN CONCEPTS	17	
3.1 Introduction	17	
3.2 Downtown Commercial.....	17	
3.3 Riverfront Development Concepts	19	
3.4 Housing Concepts.....	19	
3.5 Entry Corridors	21	
 3A RIVERFRONT CONCEPTS	22	
4.0 COMMUNITY & RIVERFRONT PLANS	27	
 4A COMMUNITY PLANS	27	
4.1 Introduction	27	
4.2 Housing.....	27	
4.3 Public & Community Uses	29	
4.4 The Downtown	30	
4.5 Northern Riverfront Development	33	
4.6 Entry Corridors	37	
 4B RIVERFRONT PLANS.....	38	
4.7 Riverfront Plan vs. Master Plan.....	38	
4.8 Site Elements.....	38	
 4C ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY	41	
4.9 Obtaining the Needed Resources	41	
4.10 Housing Opportunities.....	42	
4.11 Downtown	42	
4.12 The Northern Riverfront.....	43	
5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY	46	
5.1 Introduction	46	
5.2 The Town, the County and Citizens.....	46	
 5A COMMUNITY PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	46	
5.3 Community Plan Fundamentals.....	46	
5.4 Longer-Term Goals & Actions.....	47	
5.5 Entry Corridors	48	
 5B RIVERFRONT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.....	49	
5.6 Riverfront Plan Timelines.....	49	
 5C FUNDING	50	
5.8 Grants & Loans for the Community Plan	50	
5.9 Grants & Loans for the Riverfront Plan	52	
5.10 Incentives Available for Investors / Property Owners	53	
5.10 Implementation Chart	54	
APPENDIX A (Opinion of Costs)	A-1	
APPENDIX B (CAMA Submission)	B-1	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The origin of this plan was in 2019 when the Town of Hertford received a small USDA grant for planning. Rivers & Associates, with Allison Platt as Project Manager, was chosen to prepare this study. The original plan that resulted from this study is shown at right. The waterfront was the focus of this study because the objective was to generate increased visitation and jobs in order to improve the economy for the community. The Perquimans River in this location is an important largely untouched natural resource for the community, and the land adjacent to this portion of the river is largely undeveloped, or underdeveloped. The plan showed new, largely commercial tourist related development on the site. However, the site floods frequently, so to allow this area to be redeveloped, the plan showed an inland retaining wall (bulkhead) to protect the inland portions of the site from frequent flooding, even during heavy rain events. This would allow future development on the waterfront, since without it any development was doubtful.

There was an awareness that the limited scope of waterfront development, though important for financial stability and growth over time, needed to be expanded to include study of housing and community development issues to ensure all citizens would benefit from an improved local economy.

To accomplish this, a USDA Rural Planning grant application was prepared to expand the study area and scope that included: 1) an overall look at the historic downtown and residential neighborhoods with an emphasis on housing (**The Community Plan**) and 2) a more technical study of the waterfront to prepare concepts for the inland retaining wall sufficient to prepare an opinion of costs and obtain CAMA permits (**The Riverfront Plan**). The grant was awarded to the Town and contracts with the Rivers Team were signed on October 1, 2020. Because of the different nature of the two contracts, they were

signed as two related contracts: one for the Community Plan, with Rivers and Economic Leadership on the team, and one with Rivers, Moffatt & Nichol (marine engineers) and LMG Group (ecologists and CAMA permit specialists) for the more technical work on riverfront improvements and amenities.

Throughout this report, each section is divided into two main subsections, one for the Community Plan and one for the Riverfront Plan.

Project Need

The current economic condition of the Town demonstrates the need for revitalization. These include:

- There is very little industry in or near Hertford;
- The community is designated as Tier One (the County was recently upgraded to Tier Two);
- The population of the Town declined 14% between 1990 -2010 (while the County has grown 40% during the same period);
- Per capita and household incomes fall below the regional and state averages;
- Because the area currently lacks a full range of commercial and entertainment offerings, retail leakage for the area is estimated to be over \$90 million per year (see Appendix G or the separate Creative Economics report).



The Original Waterfront Plan was the starting point for the work presented in this report.

Opportunities & Approach

While there are trends of concern in Hertford and the northeast part of the state, there are opportunities that this work will address. These include:

- The Opportunity Zone designation for Hertford represents a significant opportunity for the Town to attract investment, create jobs, and increase economic opportunities.
- Relatively modest investments by the public sector can leverage a much larger investment by the private sector.
- During the last recession overall population in the area flattened out, but it is now growing again and this growth is expected to continue.
- Between 2000-2010, 13 new residential communities were built in Perquimans

County. When all 2,850 proposed sites in these communities are built out, the income in those communities alone will amount to more than \$470 million, considerably more than the \$90 million that is estimated to be lost in the region due to annual leakage. If Hertford is revitalized, a significant portion of that more than \$90 million can be re-captured.

- Studies have been done that show two new permanent jobs will be created for every new home in a community. This gives the County and the Town tax dollars to spend on infrastructure and services.
- Initial work on assessing the problems faced by the community has been partially addressed in the Economic Development Strategic Plan and the initial Concept Plan funded through a separate USDA grant to the County. There are links to these documents and plans in Appendix G of the Creative Economics report--a separate document.
- The planned conversion/upgrade of US17 to I-87 will improve access and reduce driving times from surrounding metropolitan areas. The redesign of this major connector provides the opportunity to revitalize existing businesses and attract new businesses while improving the appearance of this important gateway into Hertford.

The plans proposed in this study look at the wider context of the community in order to create a meaningful strategy for improving housing while still testing and refining the riverfront, downtown and entry corridor plans to ensure their viability and help ensure an improved economy with job opportunities and increased municipal income over time.

Project Benefits

The benefits of this work will be:

- an elevated community profile,
- improved infrastructure,
- improved quality and quantity of new and rehabilitated housing,
- increased home ownership,
- increased tourism,
- increased investment, and
- increased jobs.

There will be an emphasis on looking at existing housing and commercial building conditions in order to define ways to improve the community for all Hertford residents over time.

Economic Overview

Population Growth Trends

The Town of Hertford has a population of approximately 2,270, (2020 estimate). Hertford is a small town competing with larger markets nearby such as Elizabeth City, which has a population of about 18,000. This is a very common issue for small towns outside of

Right: Although the Waterfront Park in Charleston (above) is more elaborate than the concept for Hertford, the goals are the same: wetlands restoration, improved storm-water management, and an inland retaining wall to protect current and future development. Without such protection recreational improvements and development along the northern riverfront would be difficult.

metro areas across the nation. Still, there is a need to strengthen trends of population growth and investment in Hertford, so that it functions as the true activity center for Perquimans County, and residents do not feel the need to go elsewhere for shopping, services, dining, and entertainment.

Strategic Location

A key opportunity for Hertford is its desirable location near a major population center and major visitor attractions. The nearby Virginia Beach – Norfolk Combined Statistical Area (CSA) is the nation's 34th-largest CSA, with a 2020 population estimated at 1,870,000. This proximity presents opportunities for day trip and weekend visitors, second home purchasers, and even commuters wanting to live in a beautiful, affordable, exurban location.

Being situated on the path to the well-known and heavily-visited Outer Banks is another opportunity. The level of visitor travel to the Outer Banks is indicated by annual totals at Cape Hatteras National



Seashore (approximately 2,600,000 visitors) and Jockey's Ridge State Park (1,750,000 visitors).

Income.

Hertford's average household income is significantly lower than the state average, which indicates less disposable income for residents to spend. However, the county-wide average income, which is 27 percent higher than the town average, offers a good opportunity for Hertford to capture that disposable income by providing the attractions and events that will draw more county residents. (See chart previous page)

Housing

A significant positive for Hertford and Perquimans County is the affordability of its housing stock. This relative affordability can be appealing to existing and potential retirees, young families, and others currently in Hertford, or interested in relocating to the community.

A current challenge but future opportunity is the high percentage of vacant housing in Hertford. An estimated 17.9 percent of housing units in Hertford are vacant – compared with a statewide average in North Carolina of 13.6 percent. Increased efforts to renovate and re-occupy existing homes (or remove and replace housing that is beyond repair) will add to Hertford's population and property tax base and improve neighborhood stability.

Retail Sales

A major challenge for Hertford and Perquimans is the large volume of retail sales activity that "leaks" outside the county to other cities and counties. According to estimates from ESRI's Business Analyst, there is a gap of more than \$90 million annually between county-wide retail sales demand and the level of sales that actually occurs locally. Efforts to increase amenities and attractions (such

as the waterfront) can lead to the increased population and visitor levels needed to support more retail activity.

2.0 ANALYSIS

2A. COMMUNITY PLAN

Study Area

The study area is shown on the drawing at right outlined in red. The area is about 23 acres, and contains a substantial group of attractive historic buildings including historic homes and an attractive and historic small downtown commercial area.

Land Use

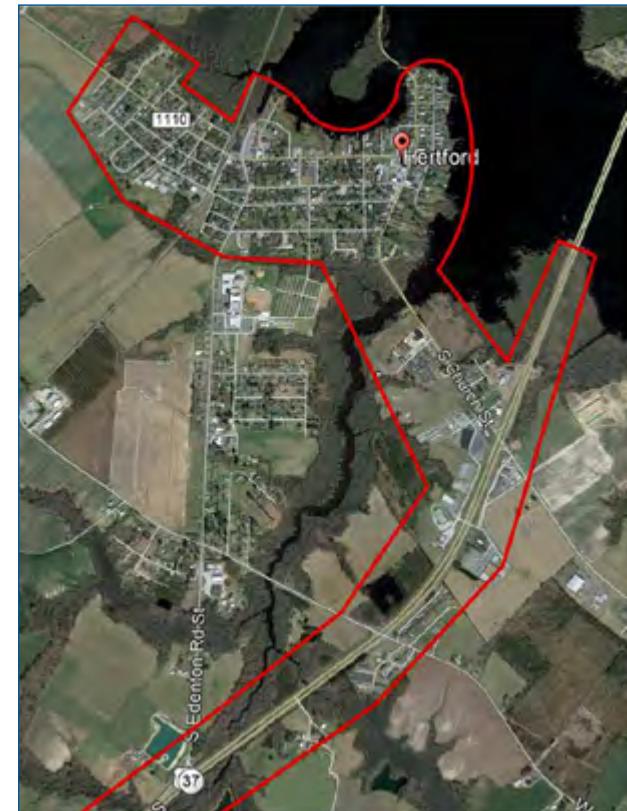
See Land Use Plan on page 9 of this report.

The buildings along US17 are the "front door" to Hertford. These are primarily highway commercial uses, and are not particularly attractive, especially when compared to the entries off US17 to Edenton. Church Street is the main entry into the downtown from US17. With a couple of exceptions (mostly near US17) this road has attractive uses on either side. Better road maintenance, landscaping improvements and screening of parking would help to improve this important entry road.

The downtown of Hertford is small but includes attractive architecture. It is often the image of Hertford seen in tourism guides.

Many of the oldest and largest residences in Hertford are located in the eastern part of the study area near the eastern riverfront of Front Street and the northern section of Church Street, and along portions of Grubb Street and Market Street. Most of these structures are in good conditions, having been maintained or more recently renovated. This area is in an historic district. *The boundaries of the first historic district are shown on the next page.*

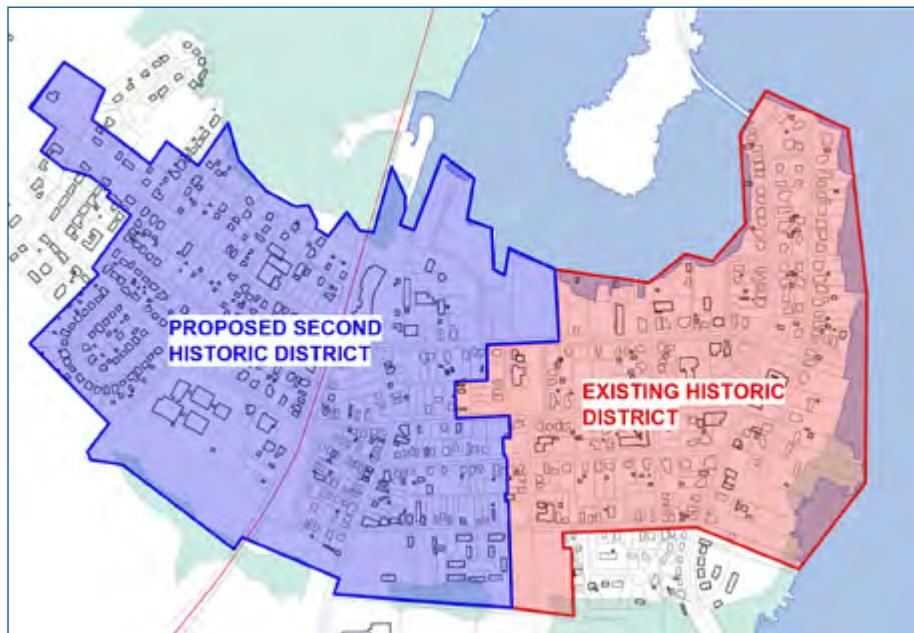
There was an attempt some years ago to create a second historic district to complement



Study Area. This map illustrates the study area as a red boundary line.

the one that covers the Front Street-Church Street area. *The proposed boundaries for the proposed second historic district are also shown on the next page.*

To the west of the railroad tracks there is a newer section of the downtown, although the houses in this area is still at least 50-70 years old. These houses are generally in good condition and are included in the proposed second Historic District.



The above map shows the existing historic district in red and the proposed second historic district in blue.

Architectural Quality

See page 10 of this report for the **Architectural Quality drawing**. Architectural Quality is an important indicator of the success of a downtown area. People appreciate the authenticity and character of historic buildings, and increasingly seek these out as places to work, shop, and visit, and when making decisions about where to live.

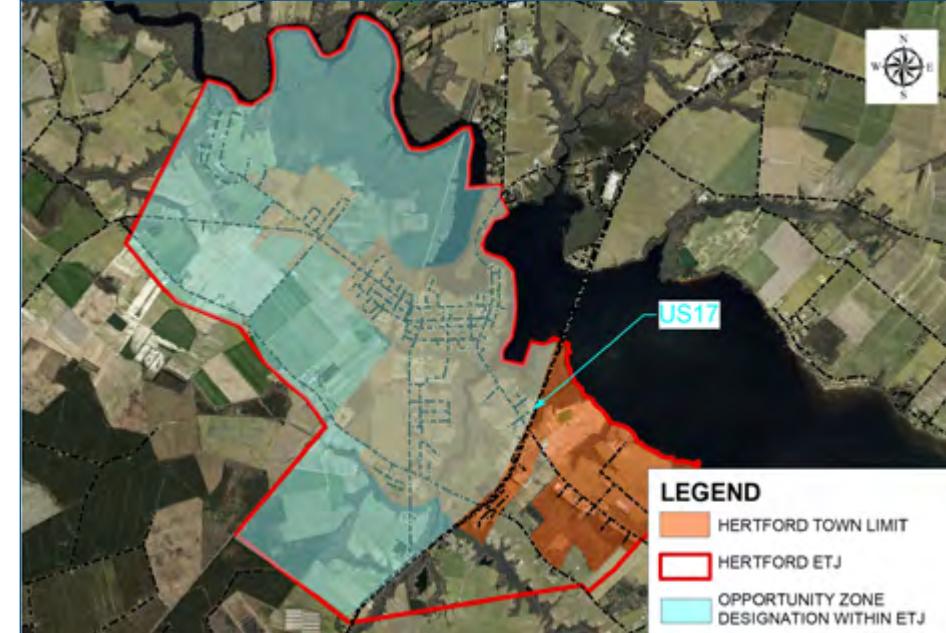
The central core of the historic neighborhoods extending to the eastern riverfront include commercial (downtown) and residential building of excellent quality in most cases. The houses from Hyde Park Street west to just past the railroad tracks are more diverse, but also historic for the most part, but intermixed with non-contributing buildings to a greater degree. Houses west of the railroad tracks are newer but of quality construction and contributing to the historic context.

Properties along US 17 and the lower part of Church Street near US17 are mostly strip commercial uses with little or no historic or architectural value.

Building Condition

See **Building Condition drawing on page 11**.

The condition of buildings mirrors to a great extent the architectural quality assessments. Structures near Church and Front Streets are generally in good condition. Buildings Between Hyde Park Street to just west of the railroad tracks have a greater percentage of buildings in fair-to-poor condition and buildings that are vacant. The buildings to the west of the railroad tracks are generally in fair-to-good condition. Building conditions near US17 and the lower part of Church Street are mixed, with conditions improving as Church moves north into the downtown.



The above map shows the Opportunity Zone within the Town and the ETJ (Extra Territorial Jurisdiction- the area over which the Town has land use and zoning control). The actual OZ limits include the rest of the County north of US17.

Vacant buildings and buildings in very poor condition should be evaluated for rehabilitation or demolition and replacement. Programs for homeowners who wish to remain in their homes but need financial assistance with repairs are in place and should be expanded if funds are available.

Property (Site) Conditions

See **Property Condition drawing on page 12**.

It is to be expected that in locations where there are more buildings in poor condition and vacant buildings, that the properties (sites) will also often be poorly maintained or neglected. Therefore this drawing simply reinforces the other two analysis drawings. Owners of properties in poor condition or that are poorly maintained should be given notice and a time period allowed for cleanup,

after which there should be fines imposed. Codes should be checked to ensure these types of requirements are included.

Infrastructure. Although infrastructure conditions were not a part of our study, infrastructure improvements will be essential to growth and revitalization. See Section 5 for recommendations and possible funding sources.

2B. RIVERFRONT PLAN

Elements of the original Riverfront Plan are also included and expanded in this study. These include:

- An inland retaining wall (bulkhead) to help mitigate flooding on the site;
- Reallocation and expansion of Missing Mill Park amenities with a continuous waterfront walkway, relocated picnic shelters, piers and wetland walkways, a relocated “S” bridge, improved Town docks and boater services, playgrounds, and a water play area;
- An amphitheater seating over 1,000 people;
- An Inn and catering/restaurant facility to attract visitors and provide a destination on the water;
- Room for many additional uses along the riverfront, including a relocated Post Office.

The goal of the riverfront portion of the plan is to develop concept that will allow CAMA to permit the environmental improvements and public amenities so funding the design and implementation of these elements can move forward. Once these elements are in place, development of the riverfront can proceed and this will substantially support the Town and its long-term growth and financial security.

During the Riverfront Analysis Phase, the shoreline of the northern riverfront was surveyed so that the team could delineate the wetlands on the site. This was required in order to understand what areas can be built on and what areas must remain wetlands in order to protect water quality.

Once this was complete, the team re-aligned the waterfront walkway to conform to these requirements, and suggested locations for new wetland walkways and piers. A location for the relocated “S” bridge was also shown.

See pages 15 and 16 for the Analysis maps.

3.0 CONCEPTS

3A COMMUNITY PLAN

Introduction

Analysis within the study area identifies properties that should be considered for revitalization efforts within the framework of the plan for a variety of reasons, including:

- Residential buildings in the upper part of the plan that are in fair-poor condition and would benefit from review for best next steps, including loans and grant for repairs to individual home owners; acquisition and rehab of a group of houses by a single entity such as an Opportunity Zone investment group or private investment;
- The same categories apply to commercial/retail buildings in the historic downtown;
- Acquisition of vacant lots for new compatible uses;
- The need to save as many historic buildings as possible to maintain the integrity of the neighborhoods and benefit from the Historic Tax Credits in addition to the OZ designation.

Downtown Commercial

Downtown commercial buildings are in need of attention to varying degrees, but most can be rehabbed. Nearly all of these buildings are two stories, and very few if any have occupied upper floors. Because these buildings can often be rehabbed for commercial on the ground floor and residential above, the possibility that these building

will be income-producing is strong. As long as the Town is encouraging improvements in other parts of the community and especially the riverfront, these buildings will be attractive to investors. In fact there is already interest in several of these buildings.

What the Town must address is the public and utility infrastructure of this small but attractive downtown area. The original plan for the area showed improvements to sidewalks and parking, and in addition, not shown but equally important are upgrading of utilities to keep up with increased occupancy in these buildings.

Riverfront Development

Here are some of the issues and opportunities that shaped the riverfront development plan:

- The riverfront was seen as an opportunity to create a destination within the Town that would bring tourists to the community and eventually add to the economic base and increase capacity for creating more jobs and a more prosperous community for all citizens. The key location near the downtown and its spectacular natural setting are two primary reasons for this;
- Missing Mill Park, in the center of the riverfront, is not well used because the area is often inundated, even during rain events and when there are strong winds;
- The focus remains to first protect the area from flooding (as much as possible) and to make it viable for redevelopment;
- Once the area is protected, the goals are to create a mix of public and private uses that will benefit residents and visitors alike.

Housing Concepts

Because of large number of vacant lots, deteriorating historic housing and non-contributing uses in the historic neighborhoods, it will be important to

have a strategy for infilling housing in order to meet the following goals:

- Of primary importance is saving as many historic structures as possible to maintain Hertford's history;
- Saving historic houses also allows them to qualify for both historic tax credits (if in an historic district) and OZ benefits;
- An important goal of the community is to prevent gentrification in the historically African-American neighborhoods;
- For those houses that are too deteriorated to save, and for vacant lots and incompatible uses that will be replaced, new housing should harmonize with the historic context as much as possible. See *Section 3, starting on page 19, for more on this including examples of appropriate housing to fit the historic context.*
- There are many advantages to infilling vacant lots and rehabilitating deteriorated housing, including 1) utilities already serve these properties, so there are no extraordinary costs for the Town; 2) vacant lots and abandoned houses are “missing teeth” in a neighborhood. Infilling, replacing or rehabbing these properties will knit the neighborhoods back together, lower crime rates, and increase feelings of safety and civic pride;
- Simultaneously with housing rehabilitation and new housing construction there should be educational and informational programs to help existing low-income residents who need help preparing to purchase a home and letting them know about the various programs available to assist with that process. If no local programs are available, outside resources should be identified and invited to assist;
- Housing improvements should be accompanied by public infrastructure improvements.

Continuous, adequate sidewalks, burying or relocation of overhead lines, and the planting of trees on streets wherever space allows will create a more attractive and functional Hertford.

Entry Corridors

See *Corridor Concept drawing on page 22.* Buildings that will fall within the expanded right of way of the new I-87 will need to be removed and the used relocated. The Town should begin talks with NCDOT to work cooperatively to arrive at the best solutions for the Town, property owners, and NCDOT. It will be important to try to get commitments from NCDOT to ensure the exit ramps interiors and the service roads and adjacent uses are screened in a manner similar to that in Edenton. The Town will also need to help with these solutions by tightening standards for parking, screening landscaping, signage, and building materials.

Related to the entry Corridors on US17 and along the lower part of Church Street, the elements and goals include the following:

- Work with property owners early in the process to notify them that changes may occur that will affect their ability to remain in their current locations. This should take place once NCDOT sets a firm date for construction, but well before construction begins;
- Work with NCDOT to understand and take advantage of this opportunity to improve the appearance of the gateway into the Town. This will be very important in establishing better first impressions of Hertford and attracting tourists to visit;
- Understand NCDOT's policies regarding relocation of properties due to expansion of the Right of Way;
- Work with property owners adjacent to existing businesses to subdivide or otherwise reconfigure their properties to provide ap-

- propriate sites for business redevelopment;
- Consider an attractive historic-style visitor center near the exit ramp on Church Street heading north into the downtown;

The Redevelopment Concept Plan (next page) suggests the areas in need to revitalization by evaluating the condition of properties and buildings. Observation of the areas of greatest concentration of houses that are either vacant or in poor condition suggests that the neighborhoods on the west end of King and Dobbs Streets before the railroad tracks are areas of concern, and should have priority in revitalization.

3B. RIVERFRONT PLANS

Several issues must be addressed before the retaining wall and walkway can be designed and installed:

- CAMA permits and conceptual cost estimates to build the wall and perform the wetlands restoration will be the final phase of this study, and it may result in some (hopefully minor) changes to the alignment of the wall and wetland walkways;
- Once permits are obtained, funding must be put in place to prepare the construction drawings for the wall and amenities to complete construction;
- Property owners must agree to the placement of the inland retaining wall through their properties, or the properties must be sold to another entity that is in agreement with the goals of the plan and the planned uses (such as an OZ investment group).

Please Note: *Permission must be obtained from agencies that funded Missing Mill Park in the first place, in order for them to release the Town from the requirement to maintain the park in its current configuration for 25 years (or the remainder of whatever time period agencies required).*

Other considerations and items to be accomplished regarding the riverfront include:

- Disposition of the Reed Oil property re: site contamination;
- Decision on the height of the retaining wall;
- Obtaining CAMA permits (part of this study);
- Grades along Grubb Street as they relate to flooding.

4.0 REVITALIZATION PLANS

4A. COMMUNITY PLAN

The Hertford Community Plan is shown at right. See also page 28 for a larger version of this plan with a key.

Housing

Before discussing housing it is worth repeating that revitalization of historic housing would be greatly assisted by implementing both the second historic district and the funding mechanism for the Opportunity Zone.

Three categories of buildings (especially housing) are shown in the plan on the next page: 1) white for buildings that do not need immediate attention; 2) yellow for housing that should be evaluated to see if it should be rehabilitated or demolished and replaced; and 3) vacant lots or buildings designated as unable to be saved. These buildings are shown as new tan-colored buildings with the site highlighted in green.

Most of the buildings shown as replaced will be on scattered lots, but there are a few locations where there is a whole block that could be redeveloped. Refer to Section 4, page 29 for examples.

Townhomes are shown on the west side of Clark Street, and might be appropriate in other locations. The key to this form of housing in Hertford



The Community Revitalization Plan for Hertford includes redevelopment opportunities in the historic neighborhoods, the downtown, and along the main entry corridor. Larger version shown on page 28.

will be a design that fits with the historic context. See example at right and discussion on page 29.

Public And Community Uses

Public uses in existing and proposed buildings in the plan include the reuse of the Police building near the Town Docks, and any future uses of the community buildings between East and West Academy Streets south of Grubb Street (including a new park on the south end of the block), and the possible reuse of the building on the northeast corner of Hyde Park Street and Dobbs Street.



The former Police Headquarters could be used for boater services. The buildings south of Grubb Street are currently used as a Community Building and the Carolina Moon theater. The building at the northeast corner of Hyde Park and Dobbs could be used for a variety of services such as day care, job training, a business incubator, or job training.

Another aspect of community and public uses is public infrastructure other than utilities, which are discussed elsewhere. Safe sidewalks, handicap ramps, and bike lanes or “sharrows” (signage to alert vehicles to a road shared with bikes). When utilities are upgraded it will require (in many cases) excavation of the road and new service installations to individual buildings. This would be an excellent time to improve sidewalks.

The Downtown

Buildings. The condition of historic downtown buildings requires some upgrading, but it appears that most of the buildings can be saved and improved. Renovation of these buildings will probably not require incentives above the existing OZ and historic tax credits.

Public Spaces & Parking. Where the Town needs to step up is in the area of the public spaces and parking needs for the downtown. Some of these improvements as presented in pages 30-33 include:

- A design for the main block-and-a half of Church Street to improve the pedestrian amenities by widening the sidewalks and upgrading the pavement to allow sidewalk dining if possible;
- Enough space on the sidewalks for landscaping such a trees and planters to make the street more appealing;
- Conversion of some unattractive parking

areas adjacent to Church and Grubb Streets to multi-purpose spaces with screened trash enclosures and upgraded paving, seating walls, and narrowed driveways. This will screen parking during normal business hours and allow use of these spaces for pedestrians during special events;

- The most pressing need is to provide additional public parking that will be needed as the downtown grows and residents are in the upper stories of buildings. The best location for this is shown on the plan to the west of Church Street behind the buildings on Church. This can be accomplished by agreement among the property owners or by purchase of the property by the Town.
- Improvements to the corner of Grubb and Church Streets are needed to screen the parking/service station uses on these corners, and to provide wayfinding signage to direct people to the (future) riverfront, Fast Ferry, and train destinations.

Riverfront Development & Public Amenities

Public Amenities. The plan greatly increases the amount and extent of public improvements on the northern riverfront. Included are:

- A public walkway on top of the inland retaining wall (see Section 4B);
- Walkways on piers with educational signage about the role of wetlands, etc.;
- Fishing piers and viewing platforms;
- A relocated “S” bridge;
- A public amphitheater with tiered seating for over 1,000 people, nearby (permeable surface) parking and locations for food trucks;
- Public restrooms near the amphitheater;
- Picnic pavilions with grills and seating;

- Children’s play equipment near the pavilions and central to the park;
- A water play area (preferred location near the amphitheater with views to the water, but location still to be determined);
- Redesign on the Town docks and boat launch piers as floating piers rather than fixed height (because of flooding problems);
- Paths accessible by bike, pedestrians, and handicapped individuals;
- Public open grassed areas adjacent to the retaining wall;
- Upgraded sidewalks along Grubb Street.
- The possibility of cooperating with Edenton and Elizabeth City to lobby for a tourist train on the existing railroad tracks that connect the three towns.

Private and Municipal Development. Moving from west to east along the riverfront, the following is a condensed list of possible new or reconfigured-private and Town uses along the riverfront:

- A relocated Post Office;
- Town “back office” uses, or new flexible commercial uses in keeping with quality development;
- Longer-term reuse of the Ice Plant building and the one next to it for a micro-brewery, restaurant, etc.;
- Townhouses or live/work units to the west of Clark Street that harmonize with the historic context, such as are shown at right;
- An Inn/restaurant/catering facility that will form the centerpiece, along with the downtown, of improved tourism and visitation for Hertford (see page 33);
- Additional structures to the east of the Inn that could be AirB&Bs or commercial/restaurant on the ground floor and residential above;

- The rehabilitated Feed & Seed building to be used as an outdoor sports center with kayak, canoe and small fishing boat rentals and tours.
- The possibilities for re-use of the Police Building for boater services.

See pages 33-37 for keyed maps and more detailed descriptions of these uses.

Entry Corridors

The upgrading of US17 to I-87 provides the opportunity to re-think the layout and appearance of this important gateway into Hertford near Church Street. At present this area does not provide a physical appearance that is likely to improve the prospects for growth in the Town. Changes to the road are shown in the plan at right. These improvements are probably at least 6 or 7 years away, but in the interim the Town should plan for these changes to help ensure a smooth transition to an improved image for the Town. Elements included in the recommendations for this area include:

- Enhanced standards for construction, setbacks, landscaping and screening, and signage;
- Planning for the fact that many buildings now at the intersection of US17 and Church Street will probably have to relocate because of the enlarged NCDOT right of way required for the added service roads and exit ramps;
- Discussions with NCDOT to assist with landscaping and screening within the DOT right of way to create an effect more similar to Edenton;
- Discussion with businesses and homeowners in the small residential area regarding relocation (see discussion on page 37);
- Planning for better use of the property adjacent to the future I-87 to create access roads to the interior and additional space for com-



The sketch above shows what the riverfront might look like when the inland retaining wall and public walkway is built, the wetlands are restored, and development can be built behind the wall. The Inn is shown in the middle distance, and new public amenities are shown along the entire riverfront. Sketch by Eric Hyne, Encore Arts.

mercial and industrial uses that could add to Hertford's new business and job opportunities;

See pages 37-38 for more on these issues.

4B. RIVERFRONT PLANS

PLEASE NOTE: All the development proposals, including for the riverfront, are included in Section 4A. This section includes the more technical requirements of the CAMA plan in order to get CAMA permits and then obtain funding for the waterfront environmental improvements and public amenities. Note that proposed development on the riverfront is not shown because if shown CAMA would require stormwater plans. These are not feasible with master-planned uses, as they are

likely to change when actually built.

Riverfront improvements should be designed to offer not only an improved living shoreline, flood mitigation, and development opportunities, they should also strive to set an example of responsible development and ecologically sound site design. Walkways and parking surfaces should be permeable and rainwater should be captured on site as much as possible rather than draining directly into the wetlands or into a stormwater system.

The emerging design for the inland retaining wall and wetlands restoration is sound planning, but is also increasingly appreciated by residents who will use it often or by those who will visit. There is



a tremendous potential educational opportunity for the local schools and state agencies to work together to document the current degraded conditions of this former industrial site, and then to monitor and document the positive changes over time.

The CAMA plan for riverfront flood mitigation and water quality improvements, plus associated public amenities, are shown on the next page and in more detail on page 39. Elements of the plan include:

- An inland retaining wall of approximately 6' in height, with a recommendation that new buildings behind the wall be raised another 4';
- A permeable public walkway behind the wall of 10-12';
- Wetlands mitigation and restoration on the river side of the retaining wall;
- A relocated "S" bridge;
- Piers and wetlands walkways on pilings as shown in the plan;
- Educational signage about the history of the site, wildlife, and the purpose and function of the flood mitigation and wetland restoration efforts;
- A recommendation that the local schools participate in a program to assess the environmental conditions of the site before improvements are made and an ongoing effort to track changes (in water quality and wildlife) over time;
- Replacement of the fixed height Town Docks and launch pads to avoid flooding and accommodate Fast Ferries in the future;
- Planting of Live Oaks or another similar species on the land side of the retaining wall and

CAMA Plan. This plan includes all the environmental and public amenity improvements except the amphitheater, which the property owner would not allow to be permitted at this time. See page 39 for a larger image.

walkway to add shade, improve soil retention, and add character to the walkway;

- Public improvements to the small park behind the Town Docks.

The amphitheater remains a part of the plan, but the current property owner would not allow this to be part of the permitting process, so this element will need to be addressed at a future time.

4C. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

This section examines the viability of the redevelopment opportunities presented in the Community & Riverfront Plans in Section 4.0 – the resources needed to make them happen, and the market demand for various uses. It also looks at the potential economic impact of redevelopment and community improvements, particularly in terms of tax revenue impacts for the Town of Hertford and Perquimans County.

Possible Resources:

- The Town and County need to collaborate to identify and pursue funding resources;
- The Albemarle Commission is also a valuable partner in this effort;
- The Opportunity Zone designation needs to be pursued;
- Grant and loan opportunities need to be identified and pursued for the various parts of the plan (see Section 5);
- New Market Tax Credits and Community Development Financial Institutions should be identified and pursued
- LLCs formed by individuals wishing to invest in Hertford without the OZ designation are also possibilities.

Refer to the plan pages 42-45 for other recommendations. The specific economic benefits mentioned in this section include:

- Housing efforts that reduce blight and stabilize and eventually increase the town's population are important complements to downtown and northern riverfront redevelopment initiatives.
- The waterfront inn as shown in the plan (36,000 square feet, which would provide space for a restaurant and the ability to host weddings and other events) would have an assessed value of \$4.0 to \$4.75 million. Using current town and county tax rates, this would bring in between \$22,200 and \$26,360 to Hertford in annual property tax revenues. Perquimans County would receive between \$23,600 and \$28,025 in additional revenues annually. Over a five-year period, those totals would be \$111,000 to \$131,810 for the Town of Hertford, and \$118,000 to \$140,125 for Perquimans County.
- Other new commercial and residential uses in the northern riverfront area could total nearly 110,000 square feet of redeveloped and newly-developed space. At a modestly-estimated value, this would result in additional tax base for the town and county of \$11,500,000. At current tax rates, the Town of Hertford would enjoy increased property tax revenues of \$63,825 annually and \$319,125 over a five-year period. The county would see added tax revenues of \$67,850 per year or \$339,250 over five years.
- Scenic rail routes such as the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad (GSMR) in western NC and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in southwest Colorado host about 200,000 passengers per year. One study estimated the GSMR's annual economic impact at \$62 million, while the Durango & Silverton

line employs between 120 and 250 people.

- A study from UNC-Chapel Hill on the proposed Inner Banks high-speed ferry system estimated first-year ridership of 107,000, with added tourism spending of \$14 million and creation of about 100 jobs.
- The properties around US17 and the exit onto Church Street do not necessarily need a higher volume of commercial uses, but rather an upgraded level of quality and site planning. Zoning and other development codes should ensure that redevelopment and new development here includes robust landscaping and buildings that complement the historic character of Hertford's downtown.
- Several stakeholders believe that a larger, more upscale grocery store would do very well in attracting shoppers from the town and county. Data on local consumer behavior supports this, indicating above-average market potential for grocery shopping.
- A visitor center would be an important addition, offering a convenient introduction to Hertford and Perquimans amenities and attractions.
- Light industrial uses could also be accommodated here, and real estate brokers indicated some demand for warehouse and "flex" spaces popular with contractors and other service-oriented small businesses. These buildings should be located behind retail, restaurant, and other commercial buildings that have frequent customer traffic.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

Implementation is the most important part of any plan, because no matter how good the plan may be, if the community doesn't adopt it and remain committed to it over a period of years, there is little chance that it will succeed. The Hertford Community & Riverfront Plan has many moving parts, so the best way to make it a reality is for the Town to embrace citizen participation (such as the Advisory Committee) and to reach out to local and regional partners for support (County, Albemarle Commission, NCDOT, State Department of Commerce, and so on). There are many actions that can be undertaken that do not require expenditures, but rather require a commitment of time and personnel to begin making progress.

Who should be responsible for implementing this plan? This is a very important question and one that might not have been discussed or taken seriously on previous plans. The Town and the County both have a strong interest in the success of this plan. Hertford is the County Seat and the largest town in the County, so anything that benefits the Town will also benefit the County, both directly through taxes and indirectly through increased investment, population, visitation, visibility, and attractions. The County will also benefit from those who decide to locate in the County because of the improved services and amenities that Hertford will be able to offer.

5A COMMUNITY PLAN

Any community that intends to organize for revitalization must support the effort at the level of Town and County government and take definite and sustained actions to help transform plans into reality.

Short-Term Actions

The following are “organizing for revitalization” actions that should begin immediately. See pages 46-47 for responsibilities for these tasks. *All of these actions should be initiated and substantially achieved within 12 months from adoption of the plan:*

- Both **Town and County Councils** should approve and **adopt the plan**;
- **Review zoning** to ensure that it supports the goals of the plan, or make changes to accomplish this.
- The **second historic district** application should be updated and submitted as soon as possible. **Responsibility: Town and interested groups or individuals.**
- Set up responsibility within the Town to **enforce minimum housing codes and property maintenance** to ensure that landlords and homeowners maintain their homes and properties to help ensure safe and well-maintained neighborhoods.
- Set up a yearly or twice-yearly schedule of **meetings with State and Federal elected officials.**
- Hire a qualified consultant to conduct a **survey of utility conditions** with cost estimates within the Town, both to address problems with current levels of service and to anticipate growth as presented in the plan.
- Conduct a **survey of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure** to see where there are gaps in sidewalks and where bike paths could be easily installed as bike paths or “sharrows,” which are shared bike/auto routes prominently signed with “Share the Road” signage. Install or retrofit handicap ramps where needed.
- Set up or adapt one or more LLCs or partnerships to receive investments for **OZ (Opportu-**

Community Zone) tax credits and to buy and develop properties.

- Make information available to prospective, new, and existing property owners about how to take advantage of **Historic Tax Credits** for rehab of historic buildings in Hertford, both residential and commercial.
- Continue to expand the **loan and grant programs for homeowners** who qualify to help keep them in their homes by providing funds for repairs and improvements.
- Explore whether and where **New Market Tax Credits** might be utilized.
- Explore funding and venues for possible **building trade training programs** or other courses and programs the community is interested in.

Intermediate and Longer-Term Actions

See pages 47-48 for more information on these goals and actions, approximate timelines, and responsibilities for implementation.

- Assembly and marketing of properties in and around the developed portion of Hertford for **new housing**, as mentioned in Section 4, page 29.
- Plans for a **Visitor Center and for increasing Town/County marketing** should be timed to have this facility in place as soon as redevelopment is progressing sufficiently to welcome visitors into Hertford.
- Updates or redesign of the **wayfinding sign system** to direct people between US17/I-87, the downtown, the riverfront, the train, and the fast ferry, and destinations in the County.
- **Downtown commercial redevelopment** is already underway. Public utility and complete streets infrastructure will need to be timed to support this growth. First priority will be util-

ity infrastructure to support new uses within these buildings. Second should be parking and streetscape improvements, and work with downtown property owners to ensure that private open space is compatible with public improvements.

- **Utility improvements and complete streets improvements in the neighborhoods** and on the riverfront will also need to be considered, but timing will depend on the pace and location of redevelopment. The areas on either side of Edenton Street in the study area are most in need of improvements to existing buildings and construction of new housing, so this might be a logical place to start.
- **Utilities on the riverfront** include planning for the utility infrastructure improvements needed to support new riverfront development shown in these plans.
- Discussions with leadership in Hertford, Elizabeth City and Edenton should be initiated regarding their possible interest in a joint effort to implement **rail connections between the three communities.**

Entry Corridor Actions

There is no need for immediate action on the areas along US17 as the schedule for upgrades to the road and exit ramps is uncertain. When more is known about the schedule, it would be advisable for the Town to have completed any needed zoning changes or ordinance updates including parking, screening, and building requirements to ensure that the entry areas to Hertford are significantly upgraded from the current conditions.

At the same time, discussions with NCDOT should be undertaken to better understand the arrangements available for displaced businesses and the part they are willing to play to screen the roadway from nearby commercial uses and provide

landscaping in the interior of the exit/entry ramps at Church Street/Harvey Point Road.

A coordinated plan for changes to the road system serving new or relocated businesses near the entry corridor will also be needed. For the land north and west of the current uses along US17, the plan shows suggested locations for roads to access these properties (see Section 4, page 37) to be built by the landowners and, if desired, dedicated to the Town for long-term maintenance.

5B. RIVERFRONT PLAN

Actions that are needed to accomplish the goals for the riverfront are a little different both in funding agencies and in intent. To create a destination of the riverfront, there are a series of intermediate steps that are necessary and that may take as long as 2-3 years to achieve. Shorter- and longer-term actions are listed together below.

Timelines

Here are the organizing efforts needed to move this part of the plan forward:

- Signed **letters from private landowners** affected by the plan have been received. These allow CAMA to enter the properties for the purpose of reviewing the plans. Once permits are obtained for the wall and wetlands restoration, further negotiations will be needed to either get conservations easements (which include substantial tax advantages to property owners) or if absolutely necessary, purchase of the portion of the land required for construction of the wall.
- As with the Community Plan, or as a part of it, **zoning** should be examined and revised as needed to ensure the plans for the riverfront are not derailed by inappropriate uses.
- Enter negotiations with the **Reed Oil** owners regarding the future of their facility on the riv-

erfront. See discussion about this in Section 4.0, page 36. If the Town or County receives the property, they can apply for **Brownfield grant funds** to investigate and remediate the site if this is needed.

- Once the plan portion of the work is completed, LMG will take the lead in working with CAMA for review of the plan. The team will make any needed changes until **CAMA permits** are issued.
- Once permits are being pursued it will be important to begin identifying and pursuing grants and loans to pay for preparation of **construction documents for the riverfront wall and related improvements** (work to date is master-plan-level concepts). Preparation of these drawings will take up to a year.
- During preparation of construction drawings, possible funding sources will need to be identified and pursued for **construction of all or separate parts of the flood mitigation and public amenities on the riverfront**, and for property acquisition if this is needed.

If the redevelopment of the riverfront is successful, the Town should consider several options regarding the disposition of their utility-related properties on the riverfront. The Town might consider commissioning a study regarding the cost of relocating versus the potential increase in taxes and local spending that might be generated by reuse of the Ice Plant buildings for uses such as a restaurant and/or brewery.

5C. FUNDING

Revitalization is often a “bootstrap” process. Small and affordable changes are made that produce more immediate results, boost confidence in the process, and raise municipal income modestly. This increased confidence, along with the OZ designation and Historic Tax Credits, will begin to

attract an increasing amount of investment and result in an accelerated rate of revitalization, visibility and income for the Town and County. While this is proceeding, definition and pursuit of the funding needed for the larger and more expensive portions of the plan (such as the public improvements, flood mitigation along the norther riverfront and also possibly the train connections) should be in process. See the implementation chart on page 55.

There is much to be done, but it would be wise to avoid taking a scattershot approach to acquiring loans and applying for grants. Careful research and discussions with the granting agencies and foundations will ensure the grants sought will be the most useful for the purpose and will not duplicate efforts needlessly. Granting agencies and foundations wish to take on projects with the best chance of success, and projects for which they can claim a significant part of that success. Success, credit and thanks, and media attention should be a conscious part of the process.

A committee appointed by Council (such as the Advisory Committee, which has already done research on this) should have at least partial responsibility for identifying the best grants and loans and recommending them to Council, keeping in mind that there should be a logical progression for grant application to help ensure an orderly progression of tasks needed to further the plan. It will also be important to coordinate what agencies and programs are chosen; for instance, if USDA has a small grant program to help homeowners make repairs on their buildings and they also have a much larger program for streetscape upgrades for the downtown, it may be best to find another source of funds for housing repairs rather than approaching one agency too many times.

Once grants and loans are received, someone will need to keep track of spending/schedule/repayment/required filings. This should probably be

a staff person or elected official with the skill necessary and a committee for oversight, or it could be assigned to an outside professional (lawyer, CPA, planner) by contract. Careful accounting of all resources will be essential.

Information on specific funding sources by category (housing, environmental, infrastructure, etc) and agency are not included in the Executive Summary since it hard to condense the information further. However, this information including categories of grants and links can be found on pages 51-54.

The implementation chart/timeline for the plan can be found on page 55.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The origin of this plan was in 2019 when the Town of Hertford received a small USDA grant for planning. The Town wanted to use it to plan strategic improvements to improve the economy and general outlook for the community. Given the limited budget, it was decided that the most productive first study should concentrate on the historic downtown and the northern riverfront, an former industrial area now mostly vacant and underutilized, and including Missing Mill Park, an earlier effort to use a portion of this land for recreation.

Rivers & Associates with Allison Platt as project manager was chosen to prepare this plan. The original plan is shown at right. This plan was completed without economic data because there was an Elecricities-funded economic overview completed at around the same time. No surveys were completed because this was a master-plan level study and because there was no budget for it.

Still, the concept for redevelopment of the riverfront in particular was of great interest not only to the local community, but to people at the County and State level. One recommendation of the plan was to build an inland retaining wall (bulkhead) to protect the inland portions of the site from frequent flooding, even during heavy rain events. This would allow future development on the riverfront, since without it any development was doubtful. There was an awareness that the limited scope of riverfront development, though important for financial stability and growth over time, needed to be expanded to include a look at housing and community development issues to ensure all citizens would benefit from the an improved local economy.

To accomplish this, a USDA Rural Planning grant application was prepared to expand the study area and scope. Allison Platt of Rivers suggested that the proposal include two parts: 1) an overall look at the historic downtown with an emphasis on housing



The Original Waterfront Plan was the starting point for the work presented in this report.

(The Community Plan) and 2) a more technical study of the riverfront to prepare concepts for the inland retaining wall sufficient to prepare an opinion of costs and obtain CAMA permits (The Riverfront Plan). The permits are needed in order to pursue funding for construction documents and construction of the wall and associated amenities such as a continuous public walkway on top of the wall. The grant was awarded to the Town and contracts with the Rivers Team were signed on October 1, 2020. Because of the different nature of the two contracts, they were signed as two related contracts: one for the Community Plan, with Rivers and Economic Leadership on the team, and one with Rivers, Moffatt & Nichol (marine engineers) and LMG Group (ecologists and CAMA permit specialists) for the more technical work on riverfront improvements and amenities.

Throughout this report, each section following this one is divided into two subsections, one for the Community Plan and one for the Riverfront Plan.

The following Sections 1.1-1.4 paraphrase the Introduction to the USDA grant proposal. It provides a good background and overview of the project as funded.

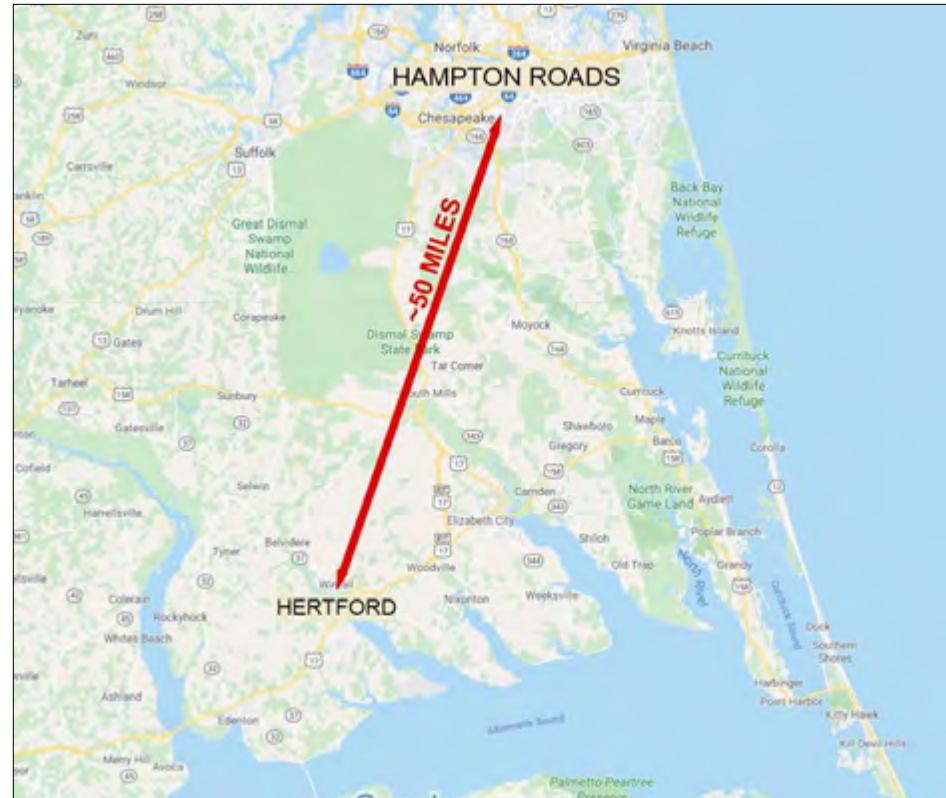
1.1 Project Need

The current economic condition of the Town demonstrates the need for revitalization. Although the Town overall has seen some positive trends (e.g. trends for slightly younger population, growing regional population and labor force, declining unemployment rates, slightly higher retail sales and use taxes), there are trends that indicate there are weaknesses that economic development can address. These include:

- There is very little industry in or near Hertford;
- The community is designated as Tier One (the County was recently upgraded to Tier Two);
- The population of the Town declined 14% between 1990 -2010 (while the County has grown 40% during the same period);
- Per capita and household incomes fall below the regional and state averages;
- Because the area currently lacks a full range of commercial and entertainment offerings, retail leakage for the area is estimated to be over \$90 million per year (see Appendix G in the separate Creative Economics report).

1.2 Opportunities & Approach

While there are trends of concern in Hertford and the northeast part of the state, there are opportunities that this work will address. These include:



Vicinity Map. Hertford is within a hour's drive of the Hampton Roads Area. Tourism, retail sales, and increased local resident capture is anticipated through expansion of goods and services available, physical improvements to Hertford infrastructure, and new attractions.

- The Opportunity Zone designation for Hertford represents a significant opportunity for the Town to attract investment, create jobs, and increase economic opportunities.
- Redeveloping the northern riverfront and addressing the challenges facing the entire community will allow relatively modest investments to leverage a much larger investment by the private sector.
- Although the population in Hertford declined by 14% since 2010, population in the region increased from approximately 100,000 to 150,000 between 1990 and 2010. During the last recession overall population in the area flattened out, but it is now growing again and this growth is expected to continue.

- Between 2000-2010, 13 new residential communities were built in Perquimans County. Before the Recession, 500 homes were built in Albemarle Plantation, and 250 were built in the other 12 communities. Albemarle Plantation now has 1100 home sites, and the other 12 communities have a total of 1100. Albemarle is about to begin another 650 homes as Phase II opens. When all 2,850 sites are built out, the income in those communities alone will amount to more than \$470 million, considerably more than the \$93 million that is estimated to be lost in the region due to annual leakage. If Hertford is revitalized, a significant portion of that more than \$90 million can be re-captured.
- Studies have been done that show two new permanent jobs will be created for every new home in the community. The residents bring high income, pay higher taxes, and generally require no new schools or school capacity. This gives the County and the Town tax dollars to spend on infrastructure and services for younger families.
- Initial work on assessing the problems faced by the community has been partially addressed in the Economic Development Strategic Plan and the initial Concept Plan funded through a USDA grant to the County. There are links to these documents and plans in Appendix G of the Creative Economics report--a separate document).
- The planned conversion/upgrade of US17 to I-87 will improve access and reduce driving times from surrounding metropolitan areas. The redesign of this major connector provides the opportunity to revitalize existing businesses and attract new businesses while improving the appearance of this important gateway into Hertford. The

Inner Banks is now 30-60 minutes from Hampton Roads (1.7m people), 4-5 hours from Baltimore-Washington (9.3m people), 2-3 hours, from Richmond (1.6m people), and 2 hours from Raleigh-Durham (1.3m people), and 1 hour from the Outer Banks.

The Goal of the original Concept Plan (shown on page 1) was to identify the areas which, if developed/revitalized, would yield the best economic outcomes for the Town and the County. The plans proposed here look at the wider context of the community to create a meaningful strategy for improving housing while still testing and refining the riverfront plan to ensure its viability and help ensure an improved economy with job opportunities and increased municipal income over time.

1.4 Project Benefits

The Town pursued the USDA grant to accomplish both of these goals. The benefits of this work will be

- an elevated community profile,
- improved infrastructure,
- improved quality and quantity of new and rehabilitated housing,
- increased home ownership,
- increased tourism,
- increased investment, and
- increased jobs.

There will be an emphasis on looking at existing housing and commercial building conditions



Above: Although the Waterfront Park in Charleston (above) is more elaborate than the concept for Hertford, the goals are the same: wetlands restoration, improved stormwater management, and an inland retaining wall to protect current and future development. Without such protection recreational improvements and development along the northern riverfront would be difficult.

in order to define ways to improve the community for all Hertford residents over time. These will be defined in greater detail as the study proceeds and the results, recommendations and strategies will be presented in the later sections of this report.

There are many successful and well-known historic NC coastal communities that attract tourism to help support the tax base; Edenton immediately to the southwest and Beaufort are two examples. Even though Hertford is only a few miles from Edenton, Edenton's gateways, signage, and downtown attractions far exceed Hertford's, yet Hertford has a rich history, beautiful historic buildings, and a stunning natural setting (and potentially, a more

accessible and energized riverfront). Part of this is due to conditions that can be addressed by the master plan and corrected over time, including the lack of sufficient wayfinding signage, the unplanned character and occasionally unattractive portions of the commercial corridor on US17 and the entry to the community at US17 and Church Street. The planned expansion and improvements to US17 and its re-designation as I-87 presents the opportunity for new, reconfigured and/or revitalized businesses in a more attractive and appropriate setting.

There is already interest in upgrades to some important commercial developments along US17, including renovation of the Food Lion and discussions regarding new or upgraded commercial development along the edges of US17. Work on a master plan for this area will help to ensure that the future character of this area enhances the historic downtown and the gateway to the community. This effort will be aided by the need for road re-alignment of US17 as the road is improved.

The properties between Grubb Street and the river, and between Punch Alley on the east and the railroad tracks to the west comprise the largest area of underutilized land within walking distance of the downtown. The concept plan includes the following highlights, which will be further delineated and tested during the master plan process:

- Protection from flooding for new riverfront development, restored wetlands, an inland retaining wall, a public waterfront promenade along the entire riverfront, walkways on pilings to explore the wetlands, picnic pavilions, public restrooms, a stage for events and performances; improvements to Grubb Street, and additional stormwater BMPs [Best Management Practices] within the site;
- A public amphitheater that can accommodate over 1,000 people;

- A new Inn, restaurant, and catering/event venue;
- New retail and commercial uses along the riverfront;
- A water sports center including kayak tours and rentals;
- Improved dock space for a possible future Fast Ferry with an adjacent small park space, visitor information center and snack bar.

Further work on the historic downtown will prepare this area for greater economic activity. Improvements to the downtown recommended in the Concept Plan include:

- An enhanced streetscape;
- Improved public spaces (e.g. more neighborhood parks and enhanced open space around the County Courthouse);
- Improvements to two small parking areas for shared use as flexible activity spaces (Farmer's Markets, art exhibitions, festivals and so on);
- Expansion and improvements to the main downtown parking area immediately west of Church Street between Market and Grubb Streets.

These recommendations will be discussed and refined later in this report. Such improvements have proven to attract businesses and residents to the downtown, as seen in revitalized downtowns such as New Bern and Goldsboro.

Other benefits of the plan include:

- Extensive public meetings during the master plan process. These will help ensure an outcome that can be supported by the community. The process helps to gather insights into the goals and objectives of the community and informs them about the benefits (and pitfalls) of revitalization through examples from other communities. Without

community buy-in and ownership of the plan, chances for success in revitalization efforts are greatly diminished.

- Our economic consultants will test the options for new or rehabilitated housing and commercial development throughout the study area;
- We will explore community services that will help create more local jobs, including ideas such as a business incubator and a building trades school;
- This report includes timelines, responsibilities, and implementation priorities and strategies.

1.5 ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

[The following material was prepared by Greg Payne of Economic Leadership.]

POPULATION AND GROWTH TRENDS

The Town of Hertford has a population of approximately 2,270, as estimated by national data provider ESRI's Business Analyst (2020 estimate). Perquimans County's population is approximately 13,860. These numbers illustrate the first challenge – even though a county seat, Hertford is a small town competing with larger markets nearby such as Elizabeth City, which has a population of about 18,000. This source projects the town and county to have relatively slow population growth over the next few years (as shown on the adjacent chart), though some residential building trends in the county support stronger growth projections.

This is a very common issue for small towns outside of metro areas across the nation. Still, there is a need to strengthen trends of population growth and investment in Hertford, so that it functions as the true activity center for Perquimans County, and residents do not feel the need to go elsewhere for shopping, services, dining, and entertainment.

STRATEGIC LOCATION

On the other hand, a key opportunity for Hertford is its desirable location near a major population center and major visitor attractions. The nearby Virginia Beach – Norfolk Combined Statistical Area (CSA) is the nation's 34th-largest CSA, with a 2020 population estimated at 1,870,000. Within that metro region, Chesapeake is just 50 miles from Hertford and Norfolk is 57 miles away. This proximity presents opportunities for day trip and weekend visitors, second home purchasers, and even commuters wanting to live in a beautiful, affordable, exurban location.

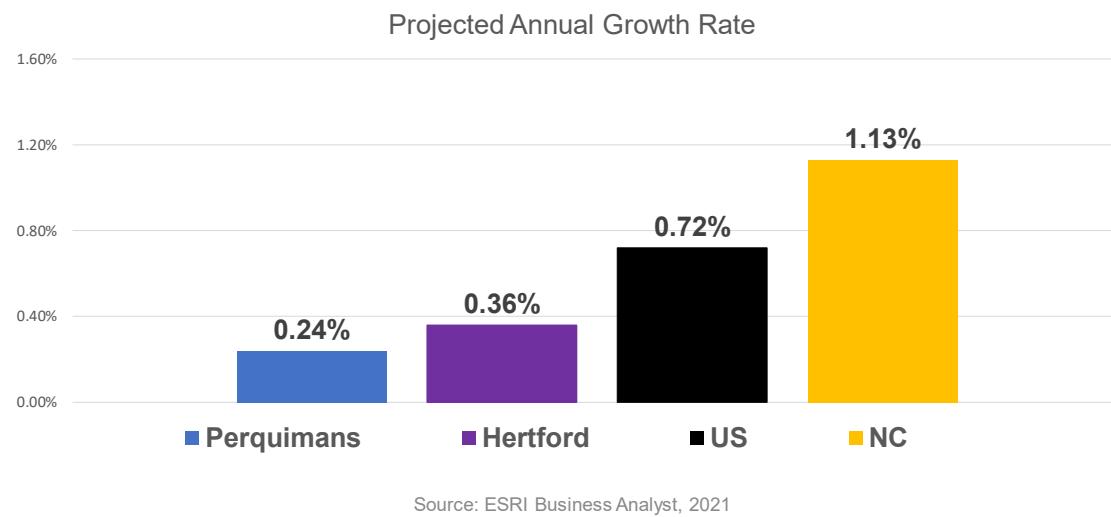
Being situated on the path to the well-known and heavily-visited Outer Banks is another opportunity. The level of visitor travel to the Outer Banks is indicated by annual totals at Cape Hatteras National Seashore (approximately 2,600,000 visitors) and Jockey's Ridge State Park (1,750,000 visitors). Hertford's location on the highway and future interstate corridor serving the Outer Banks increases the chances of visitors stopping for dining, shopping, and other activities.

INCOME

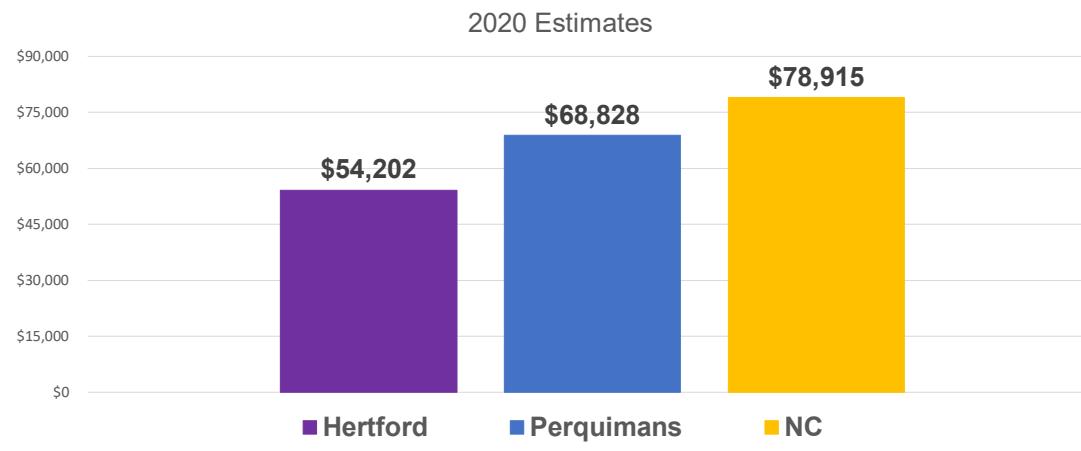
Hertford's average household income is significantly lower than the state average, which indicates less disposable income for residents to spend. However, the county-wide average income, which is 27 percent higher than the town average, offers a good opportunity for Hertford to capture that disposable income by providing the attractions and events that will draw more county residents. Taking advantage of the town's historic downtown and beautiful waterfront are good ways to achieve that.

(See chart at right.)

Population Growth, 2020-2025



Average Household Income



HOUSING

A significant positive for Hertford and Perquimans County is the affordability of its housing stock. As shown in the chart (*previous page lower right*), with a national average affordability index of 100 and higher numbers indicating greater affordability, the county has an index of 153 and Hertford an index of 165. This index compares area incomes to median home values. This relative affordability can be appealing to existing and potential retirees, young families, and others currently in Hertford, or interested in relocating to the community.

The Town and County's estimated median home values are shown in the next chart (*at right*), with home values in the county being essentially at the same level as the statewide median.

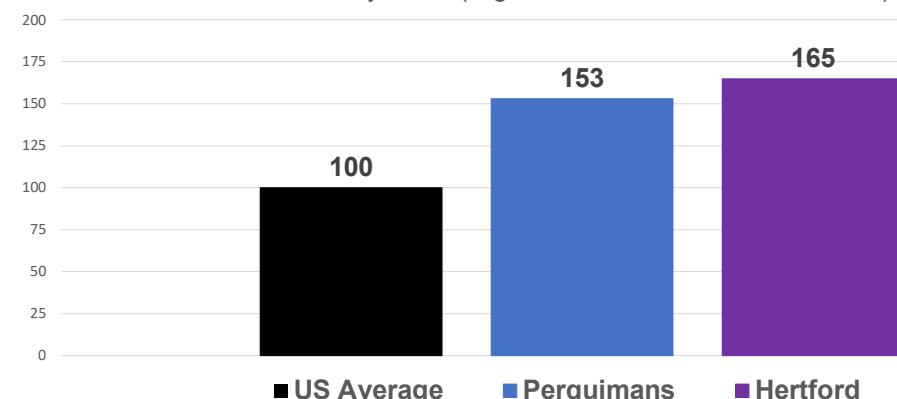
A current challenge but future opportunity is the high percentage of vacant housing in Hertford. An estimated 17.9 percent of housing units in Hertford are vacant – compared with a statewide average in North Carolina of 13.6 percent. Vacant housing can be a community blight and a drag on neighborhood vitality, or it can represent an opportunity. Increased efforts to renovate and re-occupy existing homes (or remove and replace housing that is beyond repair) will add to Hertford's population and property tax base and improve neighborhood stability.

RETAIL SALES

A major challenge for Hertford and Perquimans is the large volume of retail sales activity that “leaks” outside the county to other cities and counties. According to estimates from ESRI's Business Analyst, there is a gap of \$98.6 million annually between county-wide retail sales demand and the level of sales that actually occurs locally. This has negative implications for the town and county's tax revenues and thus their ability to provide high-quality services.

Housing Affordability

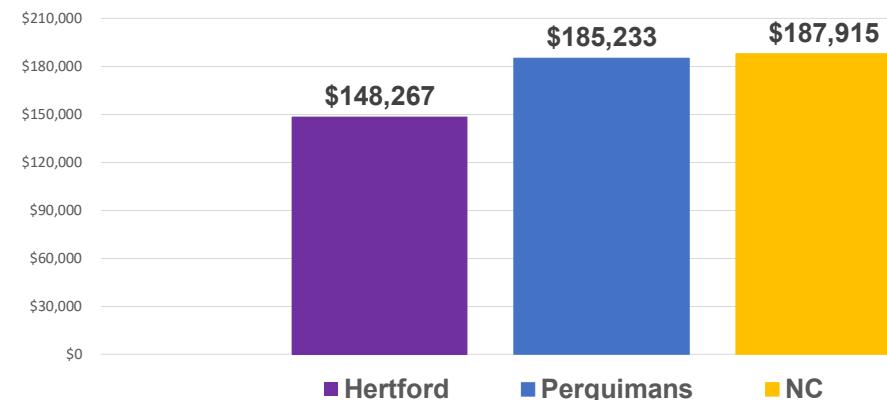
Affordability Index (Higher Numbers = More Affordable)



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2021

Median Home Value

Owner-Occupied Homes, 2020 Estimates



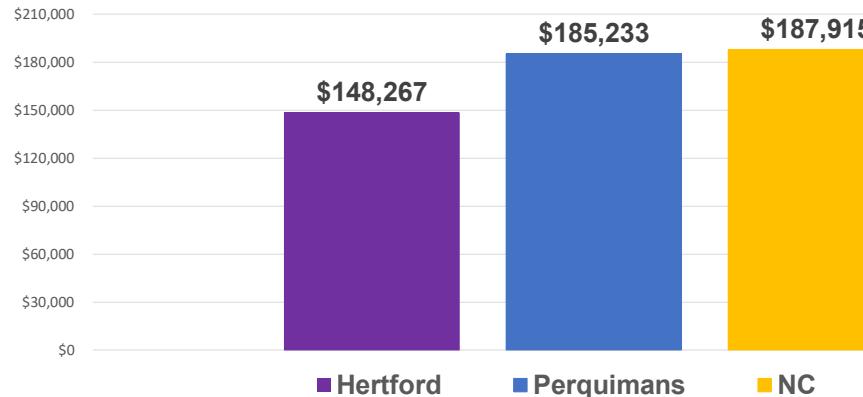
Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2021

The great opportunity, of course, is for Hertford to develop the critical mass of population and shopping opportunities needed to make it a center of activity for the entire county. Currently, Hertford has an estimated “daytime population” of residents plus workers of 2,650, which is too small to attract many retailers. Efforts to increase amenities and attractions (such as the waterfront) can lead to the increased population and visitor levels needed to support more retail activity. Market data indicates that county and town residents have above-average buying potential in some segments, including mid-level restaurants, groceries, and pet supplies.

[An Economic View of Redevelopment Opportunities in Hertford by Economic Leadership can be found at the conclusion of Section 4: Plans, starting on page 42.]

Median Home Value

Owner-Occupied Homes, 2020 Estimates



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, 2021

2.0 ANALYSIS



Study Area. This map illustrates the study area as a red boundary line. It includes the entry corridor along US17 and Church Street, and the historic downtown and neighborhood areas..

In this section we present analysis for the Community Plan and the Northern Riverfront in separate subsections. In Section 2A we present strengths and weaknesses of the study area and analyze existing conditions as they relate to improvements within the area.

The next subsection, the analysis for the Northern Riverfront Plan (2B) is more technical in nature and includes wetlands delineation and the proposed location of the inland retaining wall.

2A: COMMUNITY PLAN ANALYSIS

It is important to note that the surveys on which the evaluations in this section were based were conducted by citizen-volunteers from Hertford and Perquimans County. There was an initial session to walk one block and evaluate the condition of buildings and properties so there would be general agreement on the categories and ranking. The data from these evaluations is now with the Town, so it can be used as the basis for ongoing monitoring of conditions over time.

2.1 Study Area

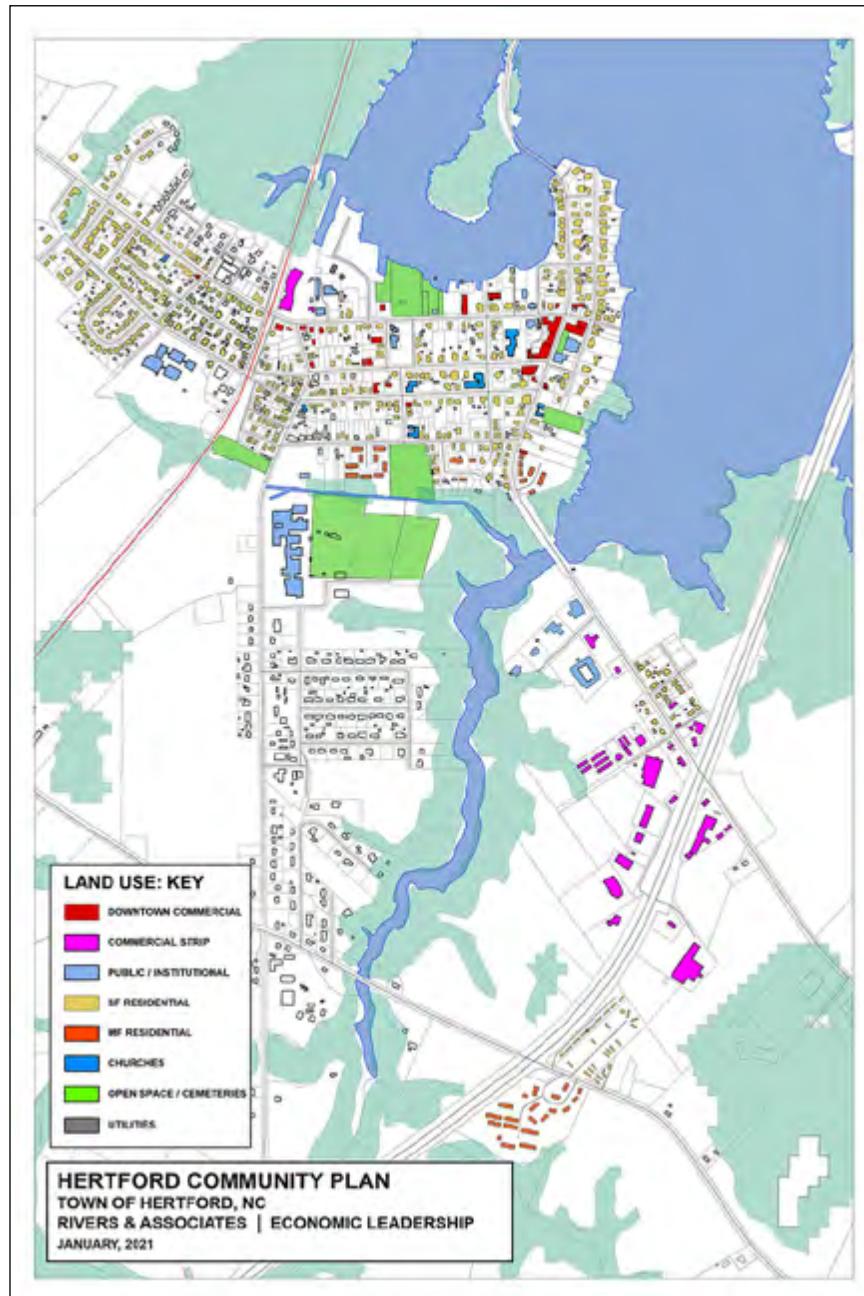
The Study area is shown on the drawing at left outlined in red. The area is about 23 acres, and contains a substantial group of attractive historic buildings including historic homes and an attractive and historic small downtown commercial area.

The following sections outline the uses within the study area and their condition and architectural quality. These evaluations are used to help define next steps in the plan.

2.2 Land Use

The Land Use map for the study area is shown on the next page. Land Use includes the following categories shown on the map: single-family residential (yellow), multi-family residential (orange), municipal and institutional (blue), historic downtown commercial (red), strip commercial (magenta), and open space including cemeteries (green). *Please note that in the digital version of this report you can click on the type under the caption or on the image itself for a larger view of maps in this report. If you click the magnifying icon once the larger drawing opens, you can enlarge further. This feature will only work if the files are saved as interactive PDFs.*

The buildings along US17 are the “front door” to Hertford. These are primarily highway commercial uses, and are not particularly attractive, especially when compared to the entries off US17 to Edenton. Edenton has done an excellent job



Existing Land Use. [Click here for larger copy of Land Use drawing.](#)

of promoting and signaling through signage and landscaping that it is an historic community. If one were driving by it would appear to be a good place to stop overnight or for a meal, or just to explore. Signage alerting motorists to Edenton start many miles before the community itself, allowing time to consider a visit. The first sign for Hertford, on the other hand, occurs near Edenton. Just a few miles later the entry to Hertford consists primarily of fast food restaurants, commercial strip uses in generally poor condition, and a trailer park in very poor condition. It is hard to imagine that a beautiful historic community is only a mile down the road.

However, the NCDOT is planning on upgrading US17 to become I-87 within a decade, and this represents a great opportunity to improve the appearance of the entry into the community and highlight it's historic past and attractions.

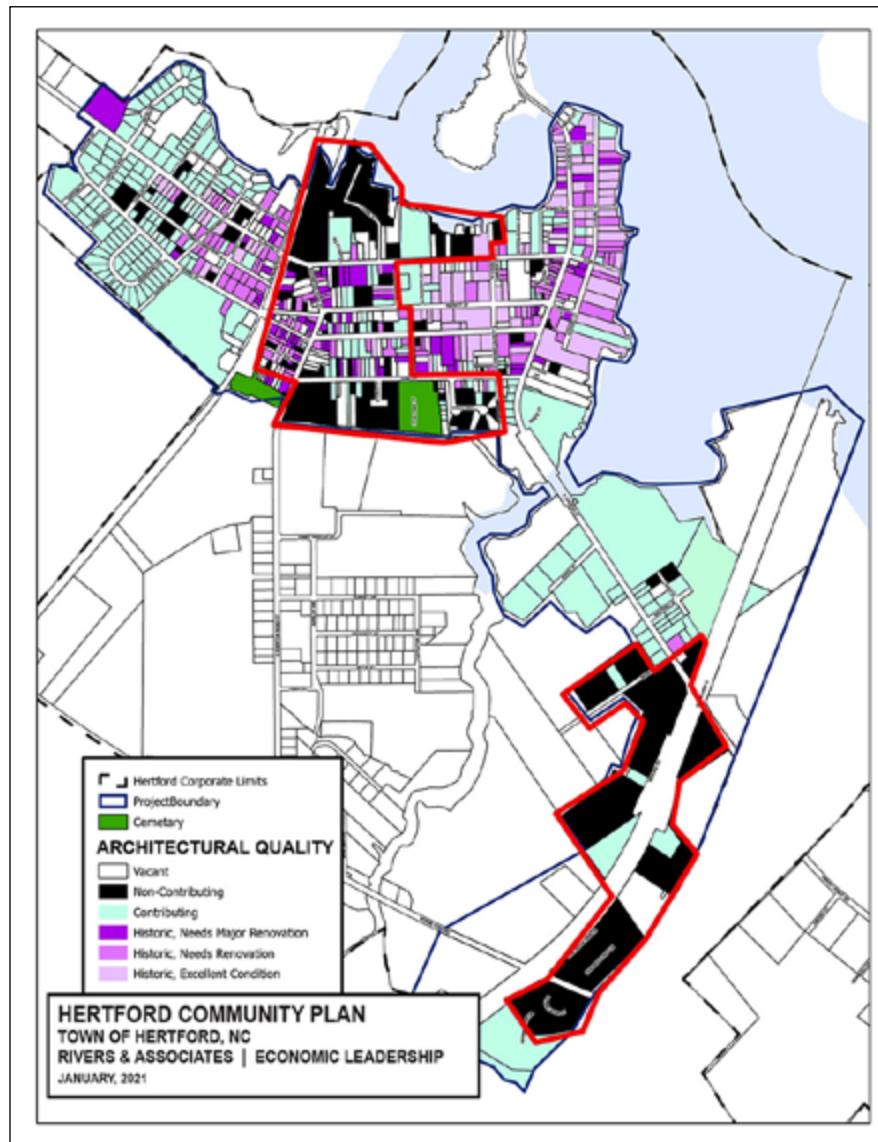
Church Street is the main entry into the downtown from US17. With a couple of exceptions (mostly near US17) this road has attractive uses on either side. Better road maintenance, landscaping improvements and screening of parking would help to improve this important entry road.

The downtown of Hertford is small but includes attractive architecture. It is often the image of Hertford seen in tourism guides. At the present time many of the buildings are in only fair, and sometimes poor condition, but nearly all of them have survived and could be rehabilitated.

Many of the oldest and largest residences in Hertford are located in the eastern part of the study area near the eastern riverfront of Front Street and the northern section of Church Street, and along portions of Grubb Street and Market Street. Most of these structures are in good conditions, having been maintained or more recently renovated.

From these areas moving west toward the railroad tracks there is a large area of smaller houses that date from a similar period to the houses on Front Street. Intermixed with these structures are scattered newer houses and a few commercial buildings and homes converted to commercial use. Many of the homes in this area are in need of attention. There was an attempt some years ago to create a new historic district to complement the one that covers the Front Street-Church Street area. This designation should be pursued as it will help save many of the historic houses within this area. See map of the proposed second Historic District in the Executive Summary. This will also be discussed later in the report.

To the west of the railroad tracks there is a newer section of the downtown, although this area is still at least 50-70 years old, and a few of the houses near the railroad tracks are of similar age to those to the east. The houses in this area are generally in good condition and are included in the proposed second Historic District.



Architectural Quality.

[Click here for larger copy of Architectural Quality drawing.](#)

2.3 Architectural Quality

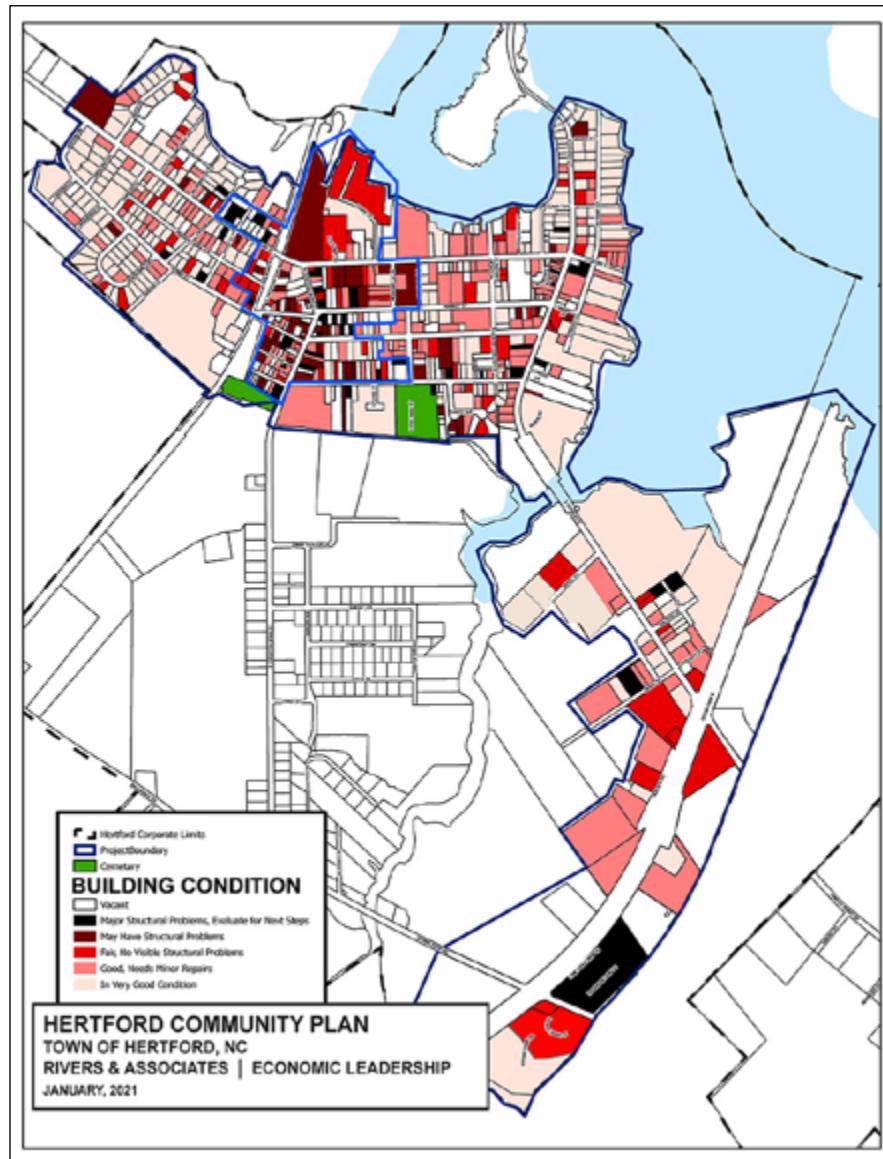
Architectural Quality is an important indicator of the success of a downtown area. People appreciate the authenticity and character of historic buildings, and increasingly seek these out as places to work, shop, and visit, and when making decisions about where to live.

The *Architectural Quality* drawing displays which buildings are historic and their condition. The purple colors indicate historic structures, with lighter colors indicating better condition and darker colors worse condition. The light blue areas indicate buildings that are contributing (e.g. fit well with historic buildings but are not historic). Black areas indicate non-contributing buildings, and properties shown in white are vacant (no structures). Dark green indicated cemeteries.

The red outlined area to the north indicates the greatest concentration of historic buildings in poor condition and vacant land. These are areas that require immediate attention to ensure as many historic buildings are saved as possible, and that deteriorated non-contributing buildings be considered for removal. The combination of non-contributing buildings, vacant land, and historic housing in this area should make it a high priority for further action. Opportunity Zone designation and historic tax credits can assist in improving this area, as can loan programs to help homeowners stay in their homes and make needed repairs.



These are typical small and medium-size historic houses in the central part of the historic neighborhoods. These are in need of varying degrees of rehabilitation, but appear structurally sound (lower photo) or at least salvageable (upper photo). Historic Tax credits and OZ incentives will help to improve the neighborhoods. With current new construction costs, it will be more cost effective to save these houses rather than replace them, and will reinforce the character of the community.



Building Condition (above).

[Click here for larger copy of Building Condition drawing.](#)

Building Condition examples (right). clockwise from upper left; Excellent Condition, Fair Condition (needs work but no structural problems); Evaluate for Structural Problems; and Major Structural Problems.

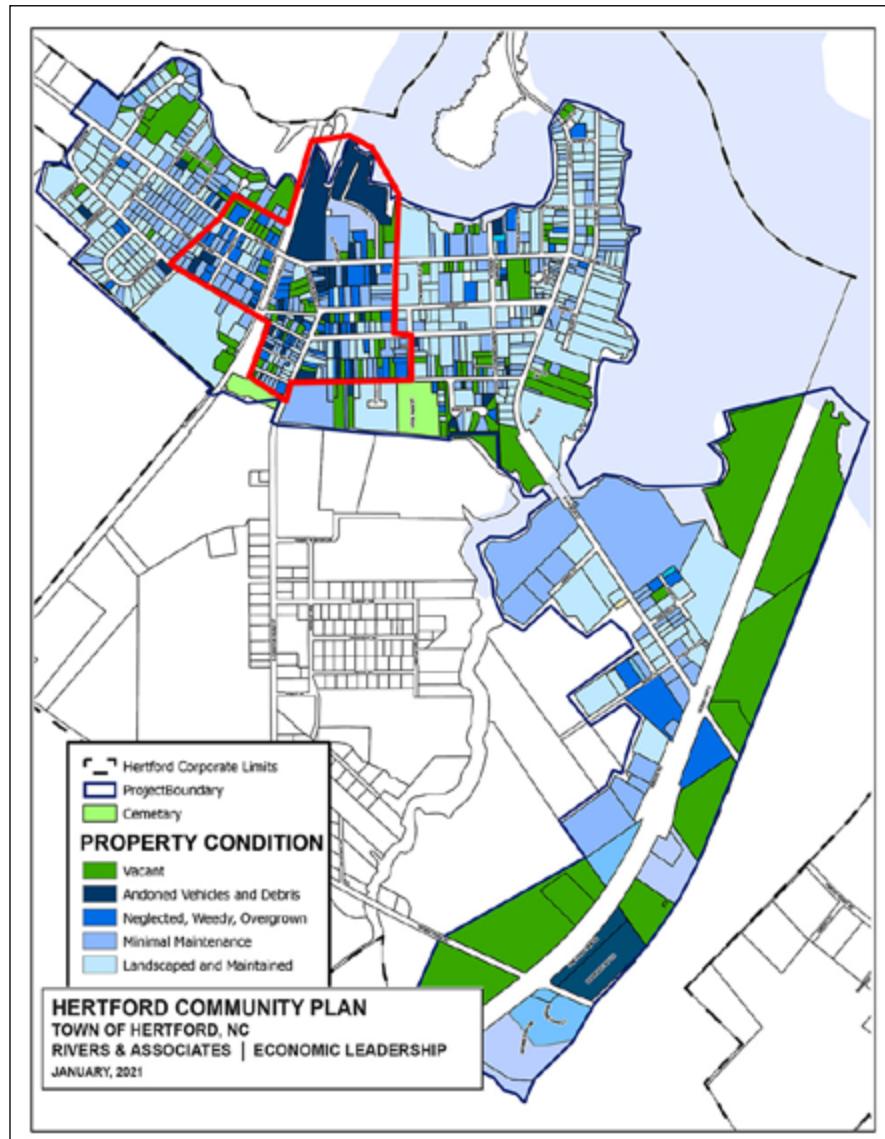
The properties near US17 are nearly all non-contributing. Because of the planned US17 upgrade to interstate standards including exist ramps and expanded right of way (for service roads), many of these uses will need to be relocated. This provides the opportunity for better planning to create a more attractive gateway. Even if there is no need to relocate or replace buildings in different locations, it will still be important to develop standards for parking, screening, and building materials for new development. In addition, discussions should be pursued with NCDOT regarding landscaping within and at the edges of the ROW, and regarding financial arrangements for buildings/businesses that must be relocated.

2.4 Building Condition

Examination of the **Building Condition** drawing at left shows that the majority of buildings in the study area are occupied. The lighter pink categories include buildings in excellent condition. As the colors get darker the categories move from excellent to “Needs Minor Repairs” (salmon), to “Fair” (red), “May Have Structural Problems” (brown) and finally to “Major Structural Problems, Evaluate for Next Steps” (black). Vacant buildings are shown in white.

This plan, combined with the Architectural Quality drawing, can be used to further evaluate individual buildings or groups of buildings in order to determine the best way forward. Ways to address the problems with housing will be discussed later in the report, but it is worth noting that it may be possible through the various programs available (Opportunity Zone, New Market Tax Credits, Historic





Property Condition (above).

[Click here for larger copy of Building Condition drawing.](#)

Tax Credits) to rehab historic homes or build new housing that fits with the existing context.

Along US17 many of the buildings are not in bad condition; here it is more a question of appearance and location. If the buildings are too close to or within the expanded right of way for I-87, they will have to be demolished or (preferably, especially for residences) relocated. With the current cost of new construction, relocation is a viable option. The commercial uses themselves are not necessarily inappropriate; the problem is that they are not quality construction and/or are not screened from the road. Possible solutions to this will be presented in the Plan, Section (4.0).

2.5 Property (Site) Condition

It is to be expected that in locations where there are more buildings in poor condition and vacant buildings, that the property (site) is also often poorly maintained or neglected. Therefore this drawing simply reinforces the other two analysis drawings.

The drawing at left is an evaluation of study area residential and commercial property conditions. Over the years, lack of funds have caused property and building inspections to fall behind. This has allowed many buildings and sites to deteriorate. Problem site conditions (lack of maintenance, stored or junked cars, etc.) identified in this drawing should be evaluated for further action. In some cases, assistance with cleanup may allow buildings *and* sites to meet Town standards. Notice should also be given for poor property maintenance and a time period allowed for cleanup, after which fines will be levied. If there are no clear standards in the existing code that will assist this process, then they should be put in place as soon as possible.

2.6 Infrastructure

Although the condition of infrastructure was not part of this plan, it is important to emphasize that Hertford's infrastructure is in poor condition and must be improved, updated, and expanded both for existing homes and commercial uses and expanded development in the future. Any new development or redevelopment in neighborhoods, the downtown, and the gateway should include an assessment of all the infrastructure including underground and overhead utilities, roads, and sidewalks. There is funding available for improvements to infrastructure and this should be a high priority going forward.

After the severe flooding from Hurricane Isabel, state agencies recommended that the water utility buildings be relocated from the northern riverfront to an area near the SE corner of S. Edenton Street and King Street. Because there is much to be done to fund and build the projects shown in the community plan and

to implement the riverfront plan, moving the water facilities is not an immediate implementation recommendation, unless funding becomes available and does not hinder the higher priority implementation projects. Once the plans are further along this riverfront land will rise in value, and the highest and best reuse of this land will evolve. This will be discussed further in the Implementation Strategies Section (5.0).

B. RIVERFRONT PLAN

2.7 Background

Before this study began in October of 2020, there was small amount of funding available for development of a concept plan for the northern riverfront, a largely vacant and/or underutilized riverfront area on the beautiful Perquimans River to the west of the "S" Bridge. That plan began in January 2019 and was completed in November, 2019.

Elements of that original plan included an Inn/restaurant/catering facility to take advantage of the beautiful natural setting and attract visitors to Hertford. Other elements include:

- Reallocation and expansion of the Missing Mill Park facilities to include an inland retaining wall to prevent flooding, including a continuous public walkway along the top of the wall;
- Relocation and enhancement of other Missing Mill features such as playgrounds, docks, and wetlands walkways on pilings;
- Additional commercial/mixed use buildings;
- A small residential component;
- Potential future reuse of the historic Town Water building for a micro-brewery/restaurant;
- Relocation of the Post Office to a location right off Grubb Street near the railroad tracks;
- An improved boat launch area and Town Docks to prevent flooding as shown at right, and to accommodate a future Fast Ferry;
- Room for additional Town buildings near the relocated Post Office if needed, or for future commercial;
- Reuse of the vacant Feed & Seed building for a water sports center with canoe and kayak rentals for visitors and residents;
- Relocation and reuse of the current Police Station as a riverfront info



Northern Riverfront. The riverfront is a great natural and recreational resource for the community (top), although during even minor storm events inundation of the riverfront is common.

center, boating services location, and small lunch/convenience store.

These uses have been modified and in some cases changed entirely in the current phase of work. See section 4.0 for more information on this. Some of the changes are due to the fact that the original plan for the inland walkway was not based on surveys or wetland delineation at the concept stage, so this stage of work started with that work.

The team for design development of the inland retaining wall and wetlands restoration includes Rivers for surface features design, Moffatt & Nichol, marine engineers for design of the retaining wall

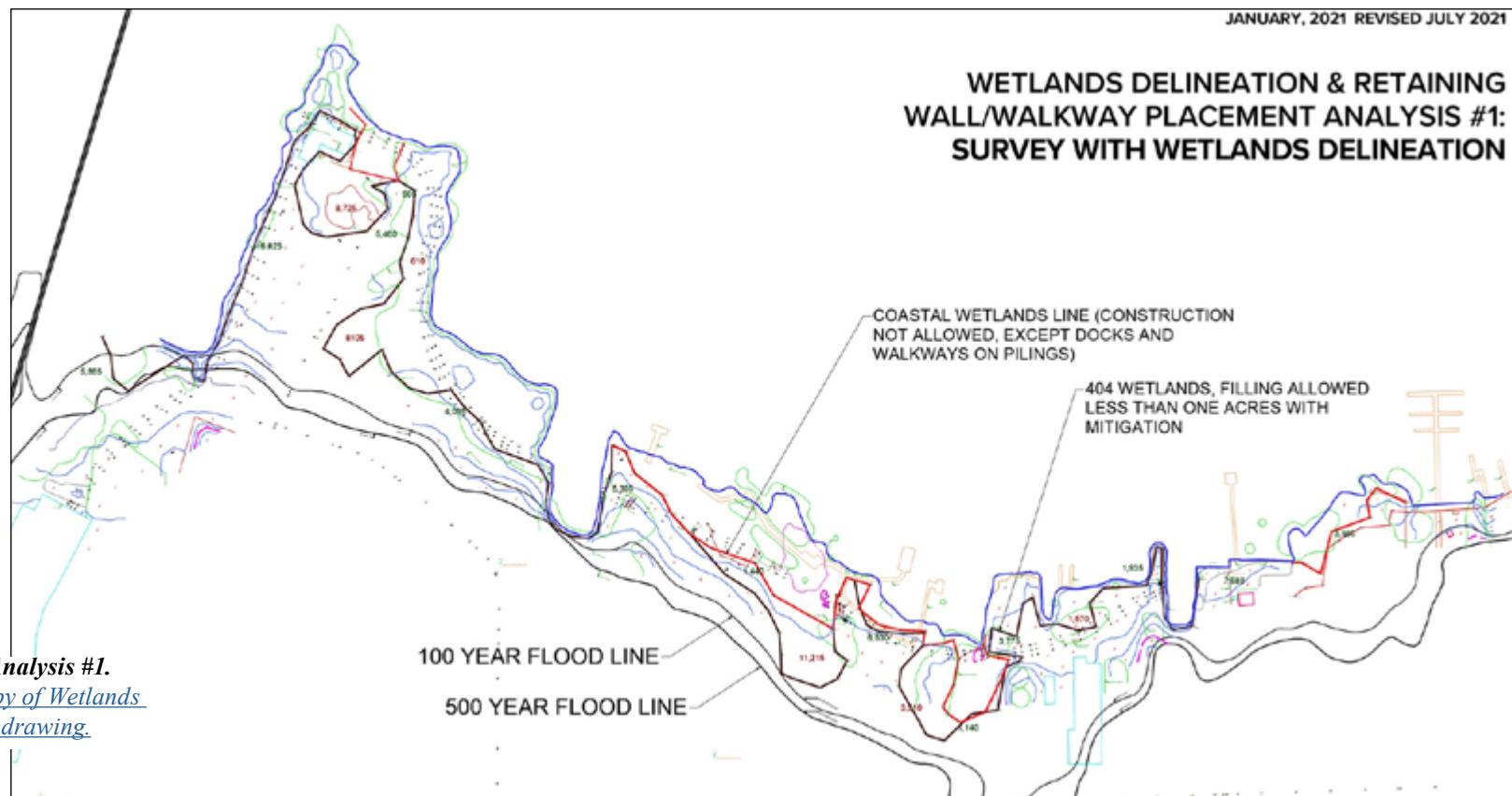
and wetlands walkways, piers, and bridges, and LMG, environmental and CAMA permit specialists for the wetlands delineation and work with CAMA to obtain permits. The goal of this work was to delineate the wetlands and then redesign the waterfront retaining wall/walkway to fall within CAMA guidelines and thus obtain permits to allow full design and construction of the wall and wetlands restoration. Once this is accomplished it will be possible to market the inland properties for uses that will benefit the entire community.

2.8 Wetlands Delineation

LMG conducted a wetlands delineation on the site. This was followed by a survey of the site

by Rivers. The plan showing this delineation and survey is shown below.

There are two types of wetlands shown on the plan. The one shown in red represents the Coastal Wetlands line. Coastal Wetlands are defined as “an area of land that is permanently or seasonally inundated with fresh, brackish, or saline water and contains a range of plant species that are uniquely adapted to the degree of inundation, the type of water that is present, as well as the soil conditions.” To protect water quality, no permanent structures can be located outboard from this line, although piers, docks, and bridges on pilings are allowed.



The line shown in brown represents 401 wetlands. Requests for changes to this line requires a 404 permit for the discharge of any fill materials into wetland and open waters. Under certain circumstances, a permit may be issued for limited fill in these areas, but only with mitigation on- or off-site. The US Army Corps of Engineers is the federal agency responsible for issuing permits.

An examination of the map on the previous page shows that the 404 wetlands line is quite irregular, meaning that if an inland retaining wall and walkway followed this line, it would change direction frequently. If, on the other hand, it was moved entirely behind the 404 line, it would not

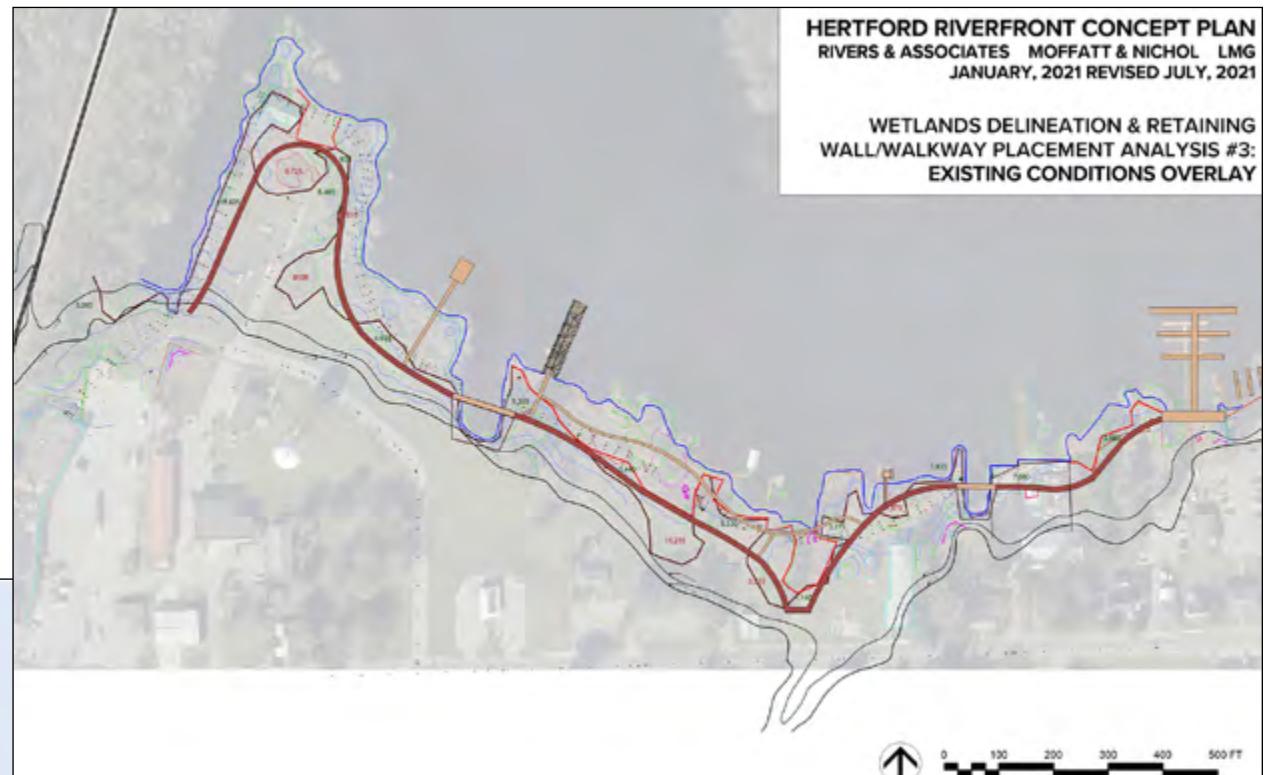
leave sufficient land for development behind the wall to justify the cost of building it. Given that this site was originally filled and altered for industrial uses in the early part of the last century, and the current degradation of the site, the proposed changes will result in both enhanced water quality and enhanced protection against future flooding. Land behind the wall can then be used for future development with the goal of attracting tourists and new residents and improving the quality of life for residents through improved recreational and economic opportunities.

2.9 Alignment of the Retaining Wall/Walkway

Wetlands Delineation Analysis #2 is shown below. Based on the survey data and the project goals, the original location of the wall was moved to achieve a balance between 404 fill areas and mitigation of these areas with defining non-wetlands areas that could become wetlands. The 404 wetlands to be added total about 45,900 sf, and the total proposed 404 wetlands to be filled include about 38,250 sf. For context, see Analysis drawings #3 and #4, showing the same plan as Analysis #2, but overlaid on an aerial photo of the site (#3) and the original plan (#4). Analysis #4 shows the



difference in the alignment of the inland retaining wall between the first riverfront concept plan and the current location. This alignment must still be approved by CAMA before construction documents can be prepared.



3.0 CONCEPTS

This section presents the concepts on which the plans are based. Section A covers the concepts for the Community Plan, and Section B covers the concepts for the Northern Riverfront. These sections cover what goals are important; Section 5.0, Implementation Strategies, discusses how these goals can be achieved.

3A: Community Plan

3.1 Introduction

Elements and goals that shaped the concepts for the Community Plan in the neighborhoods and the downtown are included in this section. Examination of properties within the study area identifies properties that should be considered within the framework of the plan for a variety of reasons, including:

- Residential buildings in the upper part of the plan that are in fair-poor condition and would benefit from review for best next steps, including loans and grant for repairs to individual home owners; acquisition and rehab of a group of houses by a single entity such as an Opportunity Zone investment group or private investment;
- The same categories apply to commercial/retail buildings in the historic downtown;
- Acquisition of vacant lots for new compatible uses;
- The need to save as many historic buildings as possible to maintain the integrity of the neighborhoods and benefit from the Historic Tax Credits in addition to the OZ designation.

Related to the entry Corridors on US17 and along the lower part of Church Street, the elements and goals include the following:

- Work with property owners early in the process to notify them that changes may occur when US17 is converted to I-87, and that these changes may affect their ability to remain in their current locations. This should take place once NCDOT sets a firm date for construction, but well before construction begins;
- Work with NCDOT to understand and take advantage of this opportunity to improve the appearance of the gateway into the Town by screening uses adjacent to the road in a way that is similar to the look of the road near Edenton with trees forming a continuous edge/screen along the highway. This will be very important in establishing better first impressions of Hertford and attracting tourists to visit;
- Understand NCDOT's policies regarding relocation of properties due to expansion of the Right of Way;
- Work with property owners adjacent to existing businesses to subdivide or otherwise reconfigure their properties to provide appropriate sites for business redevelopment;
- Consider updated zoning on Church Street, on the west side of Harvey Point Road, and on the service roads that will be on both sides of I-87. Standards should include requirements for screening of parking, landscaping and a landscaped buffer, and minimum standards for building materials and signage;
- There is not much room for redevelopment on Church Street, so most new commercial uses should be placed south of I-87 and along the service roads.;
- Consider an attractive historic-style visitor

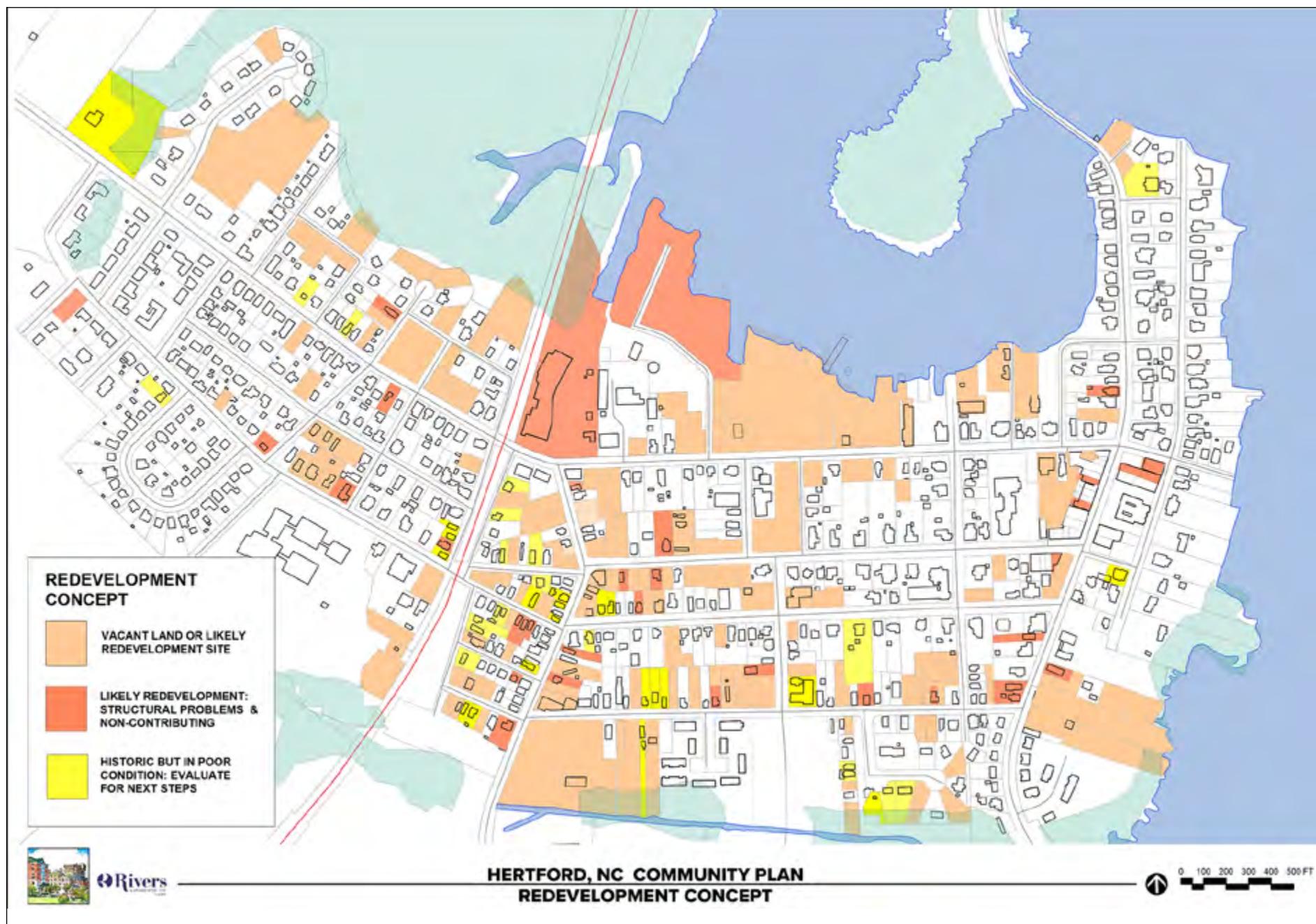
center near the exit ramp on Church Street heading north into the downtown;

The Redevelopment Concept Plan (next page) suggests the areas in need to revitalization by evaluating the condition of properties and buildings. Observation of the areas of greatest concentration of houses that are either vacant or in poor condition suggests that the neighborhoods on the west end of King and Dobbs Streets before the railroad tracks are areas of concern, and should have priority in revitalization.

3.2 Downtown Commercial

Downtown commercial buildings are in need of attention to varying degrees, but most can be rehabbed. Nearly all of these buildings are two stories, and very few if any have occupied upper floors. Many of the roofs on these buildings are in poor repair, and this is a possible indicator of more serious damage to the interior if not addressed soon. Further, many of the first floors of buildings are either vacant or underutilized. There is already interest in acquiring and renovating some of these buildings, and this trend will hopefully remain strong over time. Because these buildings can often be rehabbed for commercial on the ground floor and residential above, the possibility that these building will be income-producing is strong. Because of this, as long as the Town is encouraging improvements in other parts of the community and especially the riverfront, these buildings will be attractive to investors.

What the Town needs to address is the public and utility infrastructure of this small but attractive downtown area. The original plan for the area showed improvements to sidewalks and parking, and in addition, not shown but equally important are upgrading of utilities to keep up with increased occupancy in these buildings.



Concept Plan for the Downtown and the Historic Neighborhoods. [Click image for larger view.](#)

3.3 Riverfront Development Concepts

The design of the northern riverfront retaining wall and wetlands restoration will be discussed in Section 3B. In this section the issues and opportunities that guided development on the riverfront are presented. Proposed uses have evolved since the original riverfront plan based on citizen and Town feedback, economic development review, ecological constraints, and a greater base of information on which to base the design.

Here are some of the issues and opportunities that shaped the development plan:

- Because of existing issues of poverty and declining population, the designation of Hertford as an Opportunity Zone (OZ), was seen as a chance to create a destination within the Town that would bring tourists to the community and eventually add to the economic base and increase capacity for creating more jobs and a more prosperous community for all citizens. The northern riverfront was chosen as a great place to create this destination because of its key location near the downtown and its spectacular natural setting;
- Missing Mill Park, in the center of the riverfront, is not well used because the area is often inundated, even during rain events and when there are strong winds;
- The focus of the original plan was to first protect the area from flooding (as much as possible) and to make it viable for redevelopment;
- Once the area is protected, the goals were to create a mix of public and private uses that would benefit residents and visitors alike. The entire sweep of the riverfront

would include a public walkway on top of the retaining wall, and enhanced amenities from Missing Mill park including children's play areas, fishing piers, walkways on pilings, and picnic pavilions with seating and grills.

- New facilities recommended in the plan include an amphitheater, a children's water play area, and educational signage related to the wetlands and the inland retaining wall. *In the aggregate, there are many more public amenities in this plan that now exist in Missing Mill Park.*

Concepts for the retaining wall itself are included in Section 3B.

3.4 Housing Concepts

There have been some positive trends in housing in the historic neighborhoods of Hertford. Many of the waterfront houses on Front Street are being restored, and this trend is extending west on Market and Grubb Street and along Church Street from the south extending north to the bridge. Because these areas are in the historic District and are assisted by Historic Tax Credits, these renovations are taking place fairly quickly.

We recommend implementation of the previous incomplete effort to establishment of a second historic district from the western edge of the existing district west to the extent of the study area (see Executive Summary for maps). This process was started, and there was State Agency preliminary review and documentation about it, but completion and designation of the second area will encourage investment and assist with the cost of renovation for those wishing to upgrade their historic homes.

To the west of the railroad tracks there are newer, mostly one-story houses dating from the 1950's, and these are generally in good condition. In these

areas it will be important to maintain houses and properties through neighborhood vigilance and housing inspections.

Because of large number of vacant lots, deteriorating historic housing and non-contributing uses in the historic neighborhoods, it will be important to have a strategy for infilling housing in order to meet the following goals:

- Of primary importance is saving as many historic structures as possible to maintain Hertford's history;
- Saving historic houses also allows them to qualify for both historic tax credits (if in an historic district) and OZ benefits;
- An important goal of the community is to prevent gentrification in the historically African-American neighborhoods focused primarily on the west end of King and Dobbs street (see Section 4.2);
- For those houses that are too deteriorated to save, and for vacant lots and incompatible uses that will be replaced, new housing should harmonize with the historic context as much as possible. We have selected a series of designs from Tightlines Designs, a company in NC that offers pattern houses based on regional architecture. We used six designs presented on the following pages, but there are others that might fit as well or better than these. All these designs are "pattern houses" which means the plans are available for a small cost, although customization is possible. All are small-to-medium size houses (950-1200 sf) with two-three bedrooms. Most of the existing houses in this neighborhood are larger than this, but using smaller footprints helps to keep the costs down and helps prevent a tendency towards gentrification. There are programs that can help with

**Florence I**

square footage.....	1167 sq ft
bedrooms.....	3
bathrooms.....	2.5
stories.....	2
width.....	23' 4"
depth.....	35' 4"
1st floor ceiling height.....	9' 0"
2nd floor ceiling height.....	8' 0"
roof pitch.....	8/12

**Norwood I**

square footage.....	1154 sq ft
bedrooms.....	3
bathrooms.....	2
stories.....	2
width.....	16' 0"
depth.....	51' 0"
1st floor ceiling height.....	9' 0"
2nd floor ceiling height.....	8' 0"
roof pitch.....	8/12

**Warren 2BR**

square footage.....	956 sq ft
bedrooms.....	2
bathrooms.....	1
stories.....	1
width.....	32' 0"
depth.....	38' 0"
1st floor ceiling height.....	9' 0"
roof pitch.....	8/12

**Madison I**

square footage.....	1197 sq ft
bedrooms.....	3
bathrooms.....	2.5
stories.....	2
width.....	21' 0"
depth.....	34' 0"
1st floor ceiling height.....	9' 0"
2nd floor ceiling height.....	8' 0"
roof pitch.....	8/12

Possible Pattern Houses for Hertford 's Historic Neighborhoods. These are a few of the options available for infill and new housing in Hertford. The ones chosen on this page and the next are meant to harmonize with the existing housing, but there are others that may also be suitable. Although there are many companies that offer pre-designed plans, this company specializes in houses that fit into the historic context. [Tightlines Designs website can be found here.](#) Their website describes the company as a "socially responsible architecture firm whose mission is to provide eco-friendly, quality affordable housing design solutions."

Click on each of the images on this page and the next page to see a more complete description of each of these housing designs.



Hamlet

square footage.....	994 sq ft
bedrooms.....	2
bathrooms.....	1
stories.....	1
width.....	20'0"
depth.....	53'0"
1st floor ceiling height.....	9'-0"
roof pitch.....	7/12



Four Square I

square footage.....	1167 sq ft
bedrooms.....	3
bathrooms.....	2
stories.....	2
width.....	23' 4"
depth.....	34' 4"
1st floor ceiling height.....	9' 0"
2nd floor ceiling height.....	8' 0"
roof pitch.....	8/12

Click on the images above for more information on these designs. Also see description of the company on previous page.

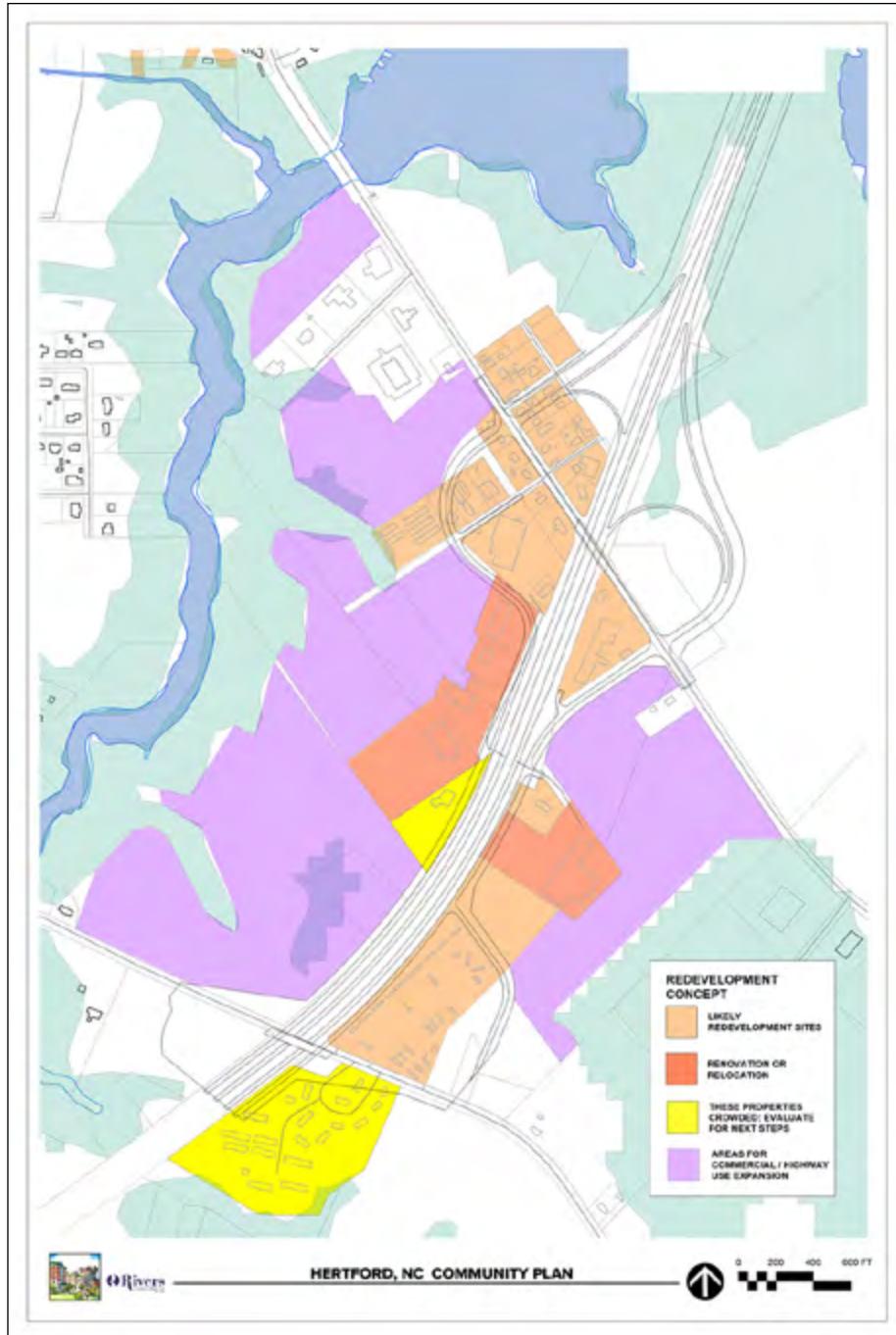
repairs on existing homes and down payments on new homes, which will be discussed in the implementation section 5.0.

- There are many advantages to infilling vacant lots and rehabilitating deteriorated housing, including 1) utilities already serve these properties, so there are no extraordinary costs for the Town; 2) vacant lots and abandoned houses are “missing teeth” in a neighborhood. Infilling, replacing or rehabbing these properties will knit the neighborhoods back together, lower crime rates, and increase feelings of safety and civic pride;
- Simultaneously with housing rehabilitation and new housing construction there should be educational and informational programs to help existing low-income residents who need help preparing to purchase a home and letting them know about the various programs available to assist with that process. If no local programs are available, outside resources should be identified and invited to assist;
- Housing improvements should be accompanied by public infrastructure improvements. Continuous, adequate sidewalks, burying or relocation of overhead lines, and the planting of trees on streets wherever space allows will create a more attractive and functional Hertford. Installation of bike lanes or “sharrows” (“share the road” signage) will increase mobility for those without access to vehicles. All intersections should also be improved over time to include handicap ramps.

3.5 The Entry Corridors

The concept drawings for the Entry corridors are shown on the next page. The entry corridors of US17 and lower Church Street will need to be reconfigured if the NCDOT goes forward with its plans to widen the road to interstate standards and add a service road on either side of the highway between Church Street and Wynne Fork Road. The buildings shown in light salmon will likely need to be relocated. Those in darker orange could either be renovated to adapt to the road alignment or relocated. Those shown in yellow will be crowded by the expanded NCDOT ROW, so decisions will need to be made regarding possible relocation. Lastly, those properties shown in purple may be well suited, with or without the remaining property currently occupied, to serve as relocation sites for current and new uses. Areas shown in blue-green represent wetlands.

US17 should be landscaped to screen uses adjacent to the road. The center of the exit ramps should be cleared of buildings to improve the appearance of the entry. As mentioned above, a visitor center should be located on the north (preferred) or south side of US17 along Church Street close to the I-87 entry/exit ramp, or on Harvey Point Road, also close to the I-87 ramps.



Development in these areas should be commercial, restaurant, institutional and industrial uses, keeping in mind that these uses need to be screened from US17. Also to be negotiated with NCDOT would be continuous sidewalks and bike lanes along Church Street and a portion of Harvey Point Road to encourage pedestrian traffic. NCDOT would be responsible for the area between the outer edges of the two circular exit ramps.

The north-side exit ramps from the planned improvements to I-87 cut through a small residential neighborhood on the east side of Church Street. A few of these homes have been converted to commercial uses, and these could remain if location allows. Rather than demolish half the neighborhood, it might be possible to move all the houses in this area to another location or locations. This would be much more cost effective than demolition and rebuilding, and could allow for additional job-producing commercial development.

3B. Riverfront Plans

Riverfront Development Concepts are discussed in the Section 3A. This section presents the emerging concepts for construction of the inland retaining wall and wetlands restoration.

Several issues must be addressed before the retaining wall and walkway can be designed and installed:

- CAMA permits and conceptual cost estimates to build the wall and perform the wetlands restoration will be the final phase of this study, and it may result in some (hopefully minor) changes to the alignment of the wall and wetland walkways;
- Once permits are obtained, funding must be put in place to prepare the construction drawings for the wall and to complete construction;
- Property owners must agree to the placement of the inland retaining wall through their properties, or the properties must be sold to another entity that is in agreement with the goals of the plan and the planned uses (such as an OZ investment group).

Please Note: *Permission must be obtained from agencies that funded Missing Mill Park in the first place, in order for them to release the Town from the requirement to maintain the park in its current configuration for 25 years (or whatever the agencies required). Agencies include the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), Clean Water Trust Fund, and CAMA (and there may be others).*

Entry Corridor Concept.

[Click image for larger drawing.](#)

There should also be an analysis of the Reed Oil site to see if there are any environmental concerns. It is our understanding that the owners are willing to sell this property to the Town or the County and move their operations to another site further to the south. If there is contamination on the site, this will need to be mitigated through a Brownfields study, formulation of a mitigation plan, and implementation of the plan.

The sketch/sections on pages 24 and 25 are representations of what the inland retaining wall, walkway on top of the wall, wetlands walkways and piers on pilings, and bridges over the inlets would look like. The height of the wall has yet to be determined, and there will be a railing on top of the wall, so these sketches are concepts, not plans.

Part of this study includes a preliminary opinion of costs for constructing the retaining wall, wetlands restoration, and construction of piers, walkways on



Views to the water from Missing Mill Park have been obscured by Phragmites, an invasive non-native grass. This can be removed during wetlands restoration to open up views and encourage native grasses...



Views from the Northern Riverfront. These two views, taken from the same spot, show historic architecture on the top photo (looking NE), and a serene natural setting on the lower photo (looking NW). The inland retaining wall will enhance these views and improve storm protection and water quality

pilings and bridges over the inlets. CAMA permits are also included in this work, and that process will extend beyond the completion of plans and this report because of the time required for the permit process. As stated above, some changes to the plan may emerge from the permit process, and these will be made as needed.

See Section 4B for recommendations on the height of the inland retaining wall. There are projections available on probable water level rise into the future for the Outer Banks, but there are none for the Inner Banks communities. Historical information suggests that the highest level of flooding in memory in Hertford was 10 feet above the average water level during Hurricane Isabel in September, 2003.



Living Shoreline Section (above) and perspective View (below). Although the height of the wall has not been set, these drawings illustrate the concept for the retaining wall and the waterfront walkways on pilings. There will be a railing on the retaining wall as it is likely to be at least 5' high. [Click on images for larger views.](#)





Pedestrian Bridge Along Waterfront Walkway, section (above) and perspective view (below). Where the waterfront walkway crosses the two inlets along the water, a bridge on pilings will be built to keep the pathway straight (rather than moving around the end of the inlet). In these areas, the retaining wall, but not the walk, will extend around the edge of the inlets to prevent rising water or wind-driven water from entering the site. The bridge will be at least 6' above the water as required to allow small watercraft to get underneath the bridge. [Click on images for larger view.](#)



The team will be working with CAMA and other agencies to explore the optimum height of the wall, but there is a “push-and-pull” between planning for the worst and building a wall that is not so tall that it becomes too expensive to build. It is probable that new buildings behind the wall should also be elevated.

The existing grades along Grubb Street will also effect the possible height of the wall. On Grubb Street near the western end of the riverfront the centerline grades are about 11.5' above mean sea level (MSL), but in the area between Academy Street East and N. Covent Garden Street the road dips to less than 5' above MSL. It is in this area that the 100-year and 500-year floodplain lines cross Grubb Street into the block to the south. There is also a pump station right near this area immediately south of Grubb Street.

One approach to this might be to elevate this section of Grubb Street and create a drainage area to the south of Grubb Street in the area where there are two vacant properties. Large stormwater pipes could carry this water under the road and under the entry plaza to the riverfront to discharge into the wetlands.

It is important to recognize that while the street may be elevated above the 100 and/or 500 year floodplain(s), this arrangement would still allow flood water to flow south of Grubb Street, but would provide a means to drain this water more quickly. This will require further research, including a hydrologic study and engineering to confirm a No-Rise Certification to confirm no negative impact to the floodway..

This approach would mean that the buildings on either side of the drainage area south of Grubb Street and the Feed & Seed on the north side would likely be below the street level. More research is needed to investigate whether this solution will work.



Drainage Issues. The above closeup of the riverfront plan near the Feed & Seed Building shows a concept for dealing with the low point along Grubb Street where the 100 and 500-year flood plain crosses the road. The concept includes raising the elevation of Grubb Street with a retaining wall and collecting stormwater into underground pipes draining to the river. This concept will have to be tested and developed in detail at a later time.

4.0 COMMUNITY & RIVERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLANS

PLEASE NOTE: This section explains in detail the revitalization plans for Hertford for the next 5-10 years including development plans, public amenities, and physical improvements needed. The Community Plan (Section 4A) includes all redevelopment plans including housing, the downtown, the main entry corridor, public amenities and proposed development on the riverfront. The Riverfront Plan (Section 4B) includes only those environmental improvements needed to protect the riverfront from flooding and obtain CAMA permits. This is followed by Section 4C that outlines the economic benefits of the plan. Implementation plans and strategies are detailed in Section 5.0.

4A. COMMUNITY PLAN

4.1 Introduction

The concepts shown in the previous section reflect a prioritization of tasks based on community goals, objectives and the most pressing needs. Elements and goals that shaped the recommendations for the Community Plan include the following, listed roughly in order of priority:

- Setting up an Opportunity Zone investment vehicle for the entire study area. Special areas of interest (e.g. neighborhood revitalization, downtown revitalization, riverfront development and some of the entry corridor improvements) can fall under the umbrella of this organization;
- Examining and obtaining funding for improvements and expansion of public utilities to address current challenges and handle future growth (this will be discussed in Section 5.0). This includes not only upgrades to utilities but also to streets and pedestrian and bike infrastructure to make the entire

community and any future expansions pedestrian and bike friendly;

- Revitalizing housing in the study area and ensuring new buildings are harmonious with the existing historic context;
- Obtaining funding for designing and building the retaining wall and walkway and restoring the wetlands (this will be presented in Section 4C and 5.0);
- Ensuring that zoning and inspections reinforce the goals of the plan;
- Revitalizing the appearance/functionality of the historic commercial downtown, including upgraded sidewalks, pocket parks, and parking to the west of Church Street between Grubb Street and Market Street as shown on the plan. Redevelopment of buildings in the downtown will probably not require much assistance from the Town; it has started already;
- Planning for relocation/redesign of highway commercial district buildings.

4.2 Housing

The Plan for housing, downtown commercial, and riverfront development is shown on the next page. The process by which housing and commercial buildings were evaluated is outlined in Section 2.0.

As mentioned in Section 3.0, housing redevelopment must be accompanied by infrastructure improvements and a review of zoning ordinances to ensure that new structures fit with the context. ***It would also be highly desirable to implement the second historic district to create the maximum incentive for investment.***

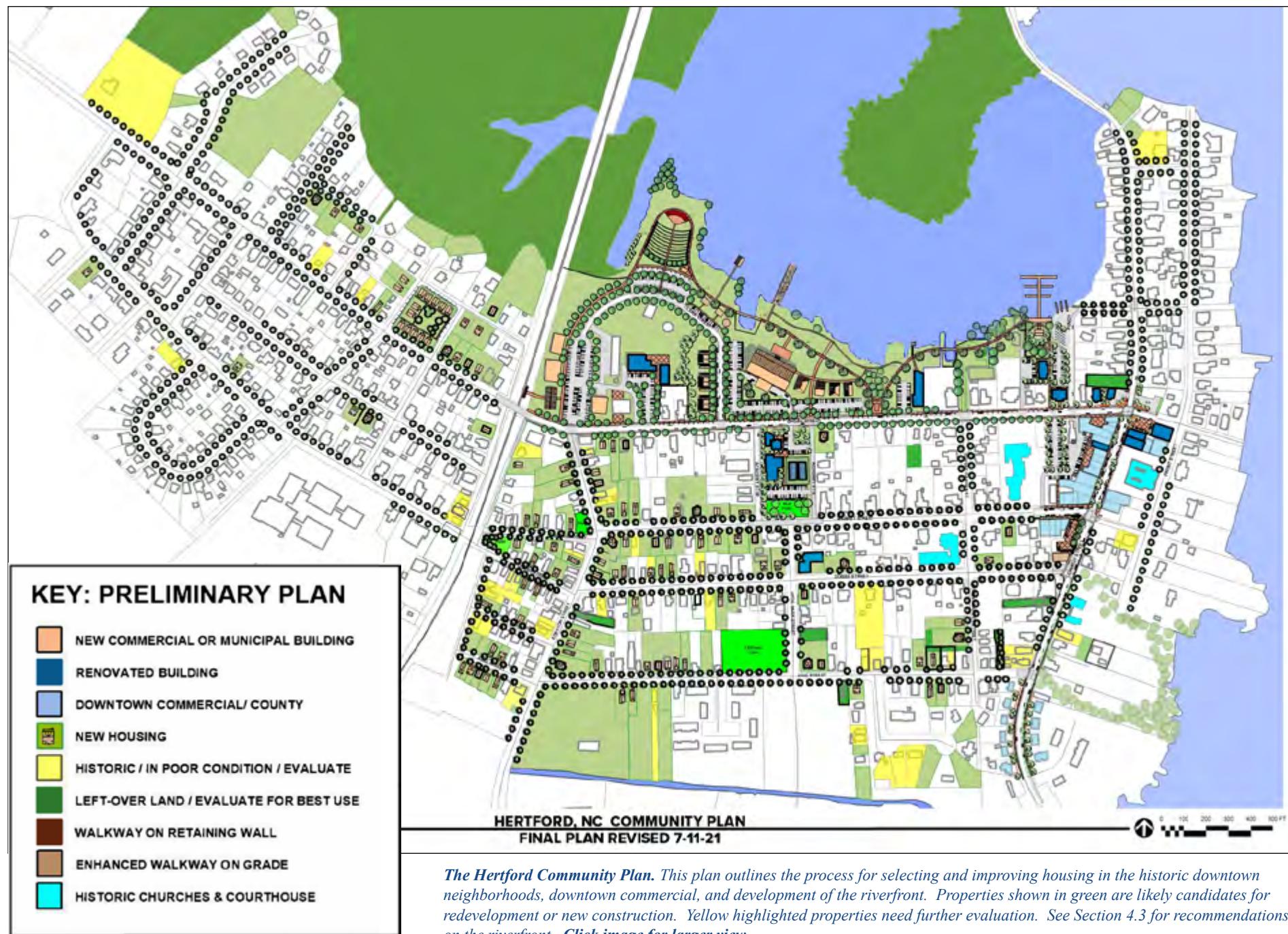
ment. See map of proposed second Historic District in the Executive Summary.

Three possible categories for buildings are shown on the plan. Properties that have no color applied were ranked as in good through excellent condition and do not need any actions to be taken at this time. The second category is shown in yellow. These properties were ranked as endangered or in need of further investigation. The third category shows the site in green (to highlight it) with a symbol for a new building placed on it. These properties are either vacant, or the existing buildings on them were rated by the community volunteers as in such bad condition that they probably cannot be saved.

The first category will not require any immediate action, although monitoring by the Town to ensure properties are stable is recommended. The second category should be evaluated in more detail to determine if existing property owners need assistance for improvements/repairs or if the house is or becomes vacant and is deteriorating to the

Possible Block Redevelopment Plan. See photo on page 29 for the type of house that might be appropriate for the development shown. Houses across Perry Street could be similar in style and aligned to face the open space.







Block Redevelopment. *This type of small, energy efficient homes on small lots and with a shared common space might be ideal for seniors.*

point where acquisition and either rehab or demolition and new construction are advisable. The third category (new housing) can make the most significant difference in the neighborhoods in the shortest amount of time.

In most cases housing within the historic neighborhoods will be in the form of new housing on scattered lots. There are a few properties, however, where a larger and a more unified development opportunity may be appropriate within the historic neighborhoods on these sites.

One such area is the block bounded by Woodland Street, Willow Street, Perry Street and Grubb Street (image on page 27). This block has one remaining industrial building in very poor condition and is otherwise vacant. If this property can be purchased, a redevelopment such as the one shown in plan on page 27 and illustrated above could be a great addition to the neighborhood.

Another location where a more unified set of homes could be constructed is in the southeast

corner of Edenton Road and King Street. This large mostly vacant lot has also been mentioned as a possible location for a relocated water tower and water distribution facility. It might also be possible to put small-lot houses on the street edge and still leave sufficient room for the water works.

The means to purchase these properties is discussed in the next section, but it seems logical that the most

expedient place to start would be by purchasing vacant lots. Although individuals can certainly purchase properties on their own, the framework of the OZ (and potentially the Historic Tax Credits) would be a major incentive for investment, and as long as the organization is committed to developing these properties in a manner that strengthens the historic character of the neighborhoods and avoids displacement of current residents, this type of redevelopment has a great chance of success.

Townhomes are shown on Clark Street. Because developable land is at a premium on the riverfront, townhomes or condos may be the most productive use of this small piece of land. Because of the historic context, selection of an appropriate style of attached housing will be very important. It is also possible that some type of commercial or mixed use buildings could be placed here, but the correct

balance of retail/restaurant will need to be reached to prevent over-saturation of the Hertford market or the danger of preventing the historic downtown from reaching its full potential. See image below.

The plan also shows four individual residential style buildings to the east of the proposed Inn. This would seem to be the best use of this space because it fits with the residential buildings along Grubb Street and allows views through from Grubb Street to the water. However, townhomes might work. The photo below shows a "Charleston" style Live-Work or mixed use arrangement with a style that seems to fit better into the historic context.

Although outside the study area, there are several significant opportunities for new market-rate planned-unit housing outside the historic downtown area. These include farm fields to the west of Edenton Road, some larger tracts of land to the



Attached Live-Work or Mixed Use Buildings such as these might work on the west side of Clark Street or possibly to the east of the proposed Inn, although attached units to the east of the Inn would block views through to the river.



west of the historic neighborhoods, and in particular the tract of land to the east of Harvey Point Road immediately below US17, including river frontage (but note that this property is not in the OZ).

With any of these developments, it will be important to consider pedestrian and bike connections between these areas and the downtown. At the present time there are no sidewalks or bike lanes along these roads. Pedestrian and bike connections are becoming very desirable amenities, and the entire community will benefit greatly from such improvements.

4.3 Public and Community Uses

Over time, it will be important to look at “complete streets” conditions in the Town. Continuous sidewalks and bike lanes (where space allows) or shared road signage create a more attractive and welcoming community, and do not assume that everyone has access to a vehicle, or necessarily wants to use it for short trips. Most of the historic

Parks (left). The plan at right shows an existing park on King and suggestions for other locations.

Downtown Hertford (right). There is already interest in purchasing downtown buildings, so the public sector should ensure that utilities are up to date and then address parking and the appearance of public sidewalks. Some suggestions are shown in the plan at right. Encouraging or requiring screening of off-street parking and the creation of outdoor seating areas should be encouraged to welcome visitors and help the business owners.



downtown and neighborhoods have sidewalks, but some of them could benefit from patching, handicap ramps at corners, and in some cases new, perhaps wider sidewalks. There are also very few small parks in the neighborhoods, so in some cases where the lots are small or the configuration doesn't work for construction of a new house on these properties, then a small community park may be perfect. See examples above left. Small parks are shown in the middle left and the upper right. These are only possible locations and there are more possible locations for such uses.

Note the buildings shown in blue at left on the south side of Grubb Street on the drawing at top left. The uses of the three top buildings have varied over the years. The top two buildings are Community Buildings where Town Council meetings are held, and the building below it is currently used for the Carolina Moon Theater. The building shown at the corner of Dobbs and Hyde Park Street was a church building and has been an auto service business. This building is in good condition and could be used for community uses such as meet-

ing space, child care, or classes related to building trade and other training facilities. College of the Albemarle and Youth Build in Elizabeth City are possible partners for job training work.

Another important task will be to update Wayfinding signage to direct people to the destinations within the community, and eventually to the river-front, train (see discussion of train service in Section 5), US17, downtown and the fast ferry.

4.4 The Downtown

The downtown area of Hertford, though small, is already a very attractive historic area. Although some of the conditions of less visible elements such as interior condition and roof and wall conditions may need to be addressed, but most if not all of these buildings can probably be saved and

restored. At the present time almost none of the buildings have uses in the upper stories, but upper floor residential is much in demand for young people and “empty-nesters.” Renovation of these buildings will probably not require incentives above the existing OZ and historic tax credits.

There are a couple of public space improvements that are needed to complement private investment in the downtown. The most pressing need is for additional parking, and this is shown in the plan as shared parking behind the buildings on the west side of Church Street. This will become more important as more shops open and more upper floors are developed for residential. The ground surfaces shown in a textured brick color suggest that improvements to the sidewalks and creation of off-street seating areas would help to expand the usable public spaces in the downtown. Two areas now used as parking lots (SW and NE corners) could be paved with patterned asphalt or

pavers that would allow these spaces to be converted to public space for special events such as festivals while still serving as parking lots for the majority of the time.

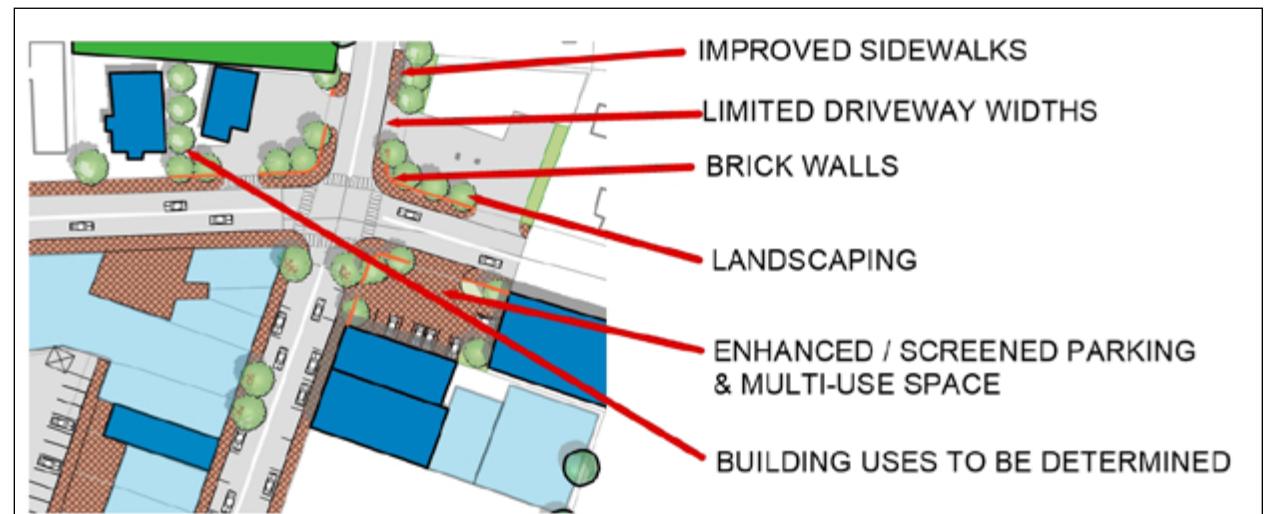
At the SW corner of the drawing on the west side of Church Street a new building is shown to replace the existing converted gas station building (see page 28). This would partially screen the parking area (a hedge and trees would screen the rest) and create a much more attractive entry into the downtown. At the southeast corner of Grubb and Church Streets there is another area that is in need of improvement. The addition of trees and hedges or perhaps a seat wall and a similar improvement to area paving would greatly improve the appearance of this corner and also could be used for public space during festivals or special events while primarily being used for parking. The plan below shows brick sidewalks on Church Street between Market and Grubb Streets at a minimum. In order to introduce more trees for shade and

space for benches, bumpouts are shown for trees between Market and Grubb Streets with parking on both sides. Another possible layout would be to remove parking on one side of the street and widen the sidewalks on both sides at least from Market to Grubb Street, providing a more welcoming public realm with room for limited outdoor seating for restaurants or other uses.

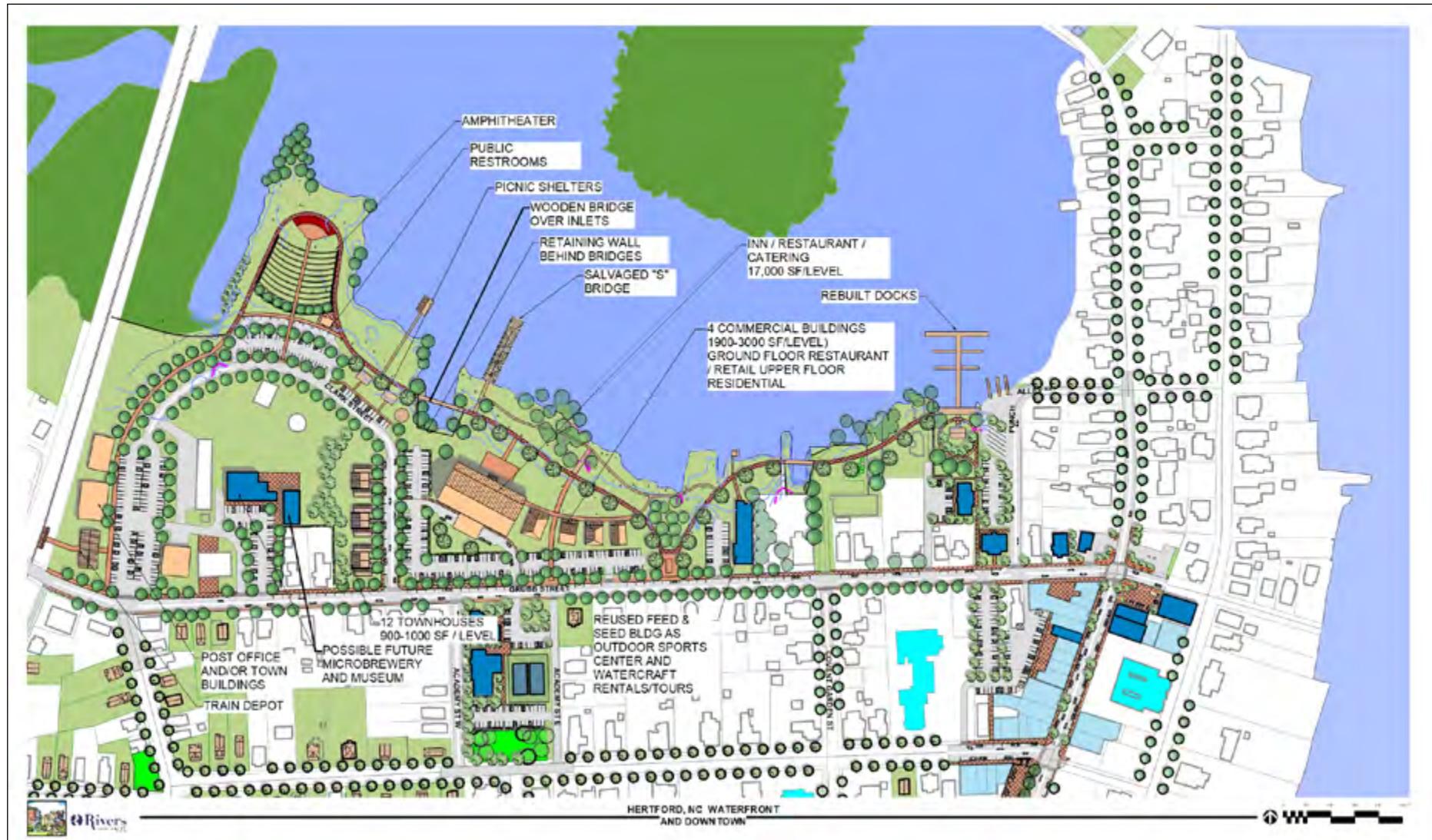
The intersection of Grubb and Church Streets is very important to create a link between the downtown and the northern riverfront because it is the “knuckle” between the two areas. At the current time there are gas station buildings on both the NE and NW corners of this intersection, and because the turn going west on Grubb is acute, it would not necessarily be clear to visitors that (in the future) there was a major attraction on the riverfront. Wayfinding signage and screening of the active gas station / convenience store (if it remains) will be important to creating an attractive intersection. See the close-up of this corner shown below and a ph-



Walls and Landscaping. The use of walls and landscaping on the NW and NE corners of Grubb and Church Streets will enhance this key intersection.



Grubb-Church Street intersection. This close-up of the Plan shows recommendations for improvements to the intersection of Grubb Street and Church Street. For those visiting coming into Hertford for the first time, an attractive historic character, screening, and wayfinding signage to direct people between the northern riverfront (when complete) and the downtown will be important since there is no visual connection.



The Northern Riverfront Plan. For a larger version of the plan, click on the image. The closeups with numbers on the following pages refer to public and private development. The entire shoreline of the riverfront becomes a public amenity, with a promenade (walkway) on top of the inland retaining wall, an outdoor amphitheater, picnic pavilions, a relocated "S" bridge to be used as an event space and fishing pier, walkways on

pilings through the restored wetlands, playgrounds, a water play area, public restrooms, and improved boat launch areas and Town docks. Private development includes an Inn/restaurant/catering facility, additional buildings to the east that can be used for retail/restaurants on the ground floor and residential above, and condos or townhouses off Clark Road. A railroad Depot is shown near the rail lines in the hopes that a

passenger/tourism related train can run on the existing tracks between Edenton and Elizabeth City through Hertford. Some additional buildings near the railroad track could be relocated/expanded Town uses and perhaps a relocated post office. The Feed & Seed near the middle of the drawings is envisioned as an outdoor sports center with canoe/kayak rentals and tours. Click on the image for a larger view.



tograph of some possible treatments at lower left.

In general, it will be very important for Hertford to set a high standard for the quality of public spaces, and to encourage private property owners to do the same. The parking lots discussed above are good examples of private property adjoining the public ROW that would greatly benefit from shared parking, screening, landscaping, and enhanced paving.

4.5 Riverfront Development & Public Amenities

This section will present an explanation of the development recommendations and enhanced public amenities proposed for the northern riverfront. The plans for development on the site (as opposed to the flood prevention and environmental improvements) are part of the Community Plan and

so are discussed here. A more thorough discussion of the environmental considerations that went into the design of the site will be provided in section 4B starting on page 38.

The northern riverfront development plan has evolved since the original plan was completed in early 2020. The changes have arisen from public comments and from the space restrictions imposed by the wetlands delineation. The plan for this area can be seen on the previous page. See also the sketch above.

Below is a list of all public amenities to be included in the plan. Other items can be added as the plans evolve.

- A public walkway on top of the inland retaining wall (see Section 4B);
- Walkways on piers with educational signage

The sketch at left shows what the riverfront might look like when the inland retaining wall and public walkway is built, the wetlands are restored, and development can be built behind the wall. Sketch by Eric Hyne, Encore Arts.

about the role of wetlands, etc.;

- Fishing piers and viewing platforms;
- A relocated “S” bridge;
- A public amphitheater with tiered seating, nearby (permeable surface) parking and locations for food trucks;
- Public restrooms near the amphitheater;
- Picnic pavilions with grills and seating;
- Children’s play equipment near the pavilions and central to the park;
- A water play area (location to be determined);
- Redesign on the Town docks and boat launch piers as floating piers rather than fixed height (because of flooding problems);
- Possible future depot and passenger train between Edenton, Hertford, and Elizabeth City;
- Paths accessible by bike, pedestrians, and handicapped individuals;
- Public open grassed areas adjacent to the retaining wall;
- Upgraded sidewalks along Grubb Street.

The rest of this section will describe sections of the plan moving from west to east. Please note that buildings shown with blue roofs are existing building with potential new uses. Gold roofs are new buildings. Buildings and sites that are white with black outlines are existing and remain. In addition, numbers on the plan shown in red represent new or reused buildings, and numbers shown in blue signify new or reconfigured public/open space uses.



RAILROAD TO CLARK STREET

One of the concepts that emerged during the public input process was the idea to work out an arrangement with Norfolk Southern or the lessee of this section of rail to allow intermittent passenger rail between Edenton and Elizabeth City through Hertford (eventually it could run to the terminus of the tracks in Chesapeake, but probably not initially).

Note on the plan on page 32 that Clark Street has been continued to the west to form a loop starting and ending on Grubb Street. This will enhance circulation within the site. To accomplish this it will be necessary to move the fence on the northwest corner of the Town facilities to keep the road out of the wetlands.



Top left: The Ice Plant building shown as #3 on the plan at left.

Middle left: the new stage in Goldsboro, NC. A stage with a roof but otherwise open to view from all sides would be ideal for the Hertford amphitheater stage.

Bottom left: The site plan for the Goldsboro stage and seating area is about half the size of the one planned for Hertford.

The building shown above as #1 represents a possible recreated railroad depot that could serve as a station for Tourist and perhaps eventually commuter rail between the three towns. This would be particularly advantageous for amphitheater events or dinner theater events in Hertford.

The buildings shown as #2 at left are meant to show relocated or expanded Town “back office”, new commercial or office uses. The building closest to the fire station might be a good location for a relocated Post Office. Parking is difficult near the current downtown location on Grubb Street, and this location is quite central to the community. Comments from citizens suggested these might be uses such as residential or retail, but the location between the railroad tracks and Town uses such as the fire station, shop, and electrical substation do not make it a highly desirable location for such uses. These adjacent uses may change over time, so flexibility is advised. The only requirement should be that any new buildings be of high quality to ensure compatibility with future uses on the waterfront.

The two buildings shown at #3 are historic brick buildings of considerable character. One is vacant and the other (the former ice plant building) houses the water department. The plan recommends that the Town uses in the ice plant building be relocated to allow this interesting building to become a commercial use such as a brewery, distillery, restaurant, or similar. The Town has expressed some reservations about moving, and this does not need to happen for some years, but State agencies have

suggested that moving the water tower and equipment to higher ground would be highly desirable. When and if that happens, it would create more valuable riverfront land available to help create a critical mass of visitor attractions (retail, restaurant) plus possibly additional residential.

The smaller brick building is currently vacant, but the Albemarle Railroad Club (a non-profit), would like to locate it's model trains in this facility. If a depot building is built, that might be another good location for this organization and it's displays.

Location #4 is located next to townhouses or similar medium-density residential uses. This possibility is discussed in Section 4.2, Housing, page 29.

Location #5 represents the proposed amphitheater. In the original plan this area was shown as a larger boat launch area with a walkway around the edge and parking for vehicles with trailers. A citizen comment made more sense and led to the use change for this portion of the site. The plan shows a stage at the northern edge of the peninsula with the walk and wall wrapping around it. The slightly tiered seating area is about 23,000 square feet, including a paved hard surface near the stage. This would allow a capacity of around 1,400, more or less. See the middle photo on the previous page for a comparable size stage recently built in Goldsboro, NC. Rather than a brick foundation, however, the stage would be built on piers and would be slightly elevated to improve views from the seating area and from boats anchored in the water. By comparison, the site plan for the Goldsboro park shown at the bottom of page 34 including the circular lawn area and path around it is 10,000 ft.

Though difficult to see at this scale, the plan indicates a second retaining wall inside the inland retaining wall and walkway that allows the seating area to be tiered slightly to improve views to the stage. The plan indicates that each tier is defined by a curved seat wall that would be about 24" wide.

If the stage is adequately raised on pilings the slope might be around 6%. This will need to be approved by CAMA at a later date.

Parking is shown between the amphitheater and Clark Street. This will not be adequate for a full house at amphitheater events, but since these events will likely be on the weekends, the parking area shown near buildings #1 and #2 can also be used, and at some time in the future people might arrive by train or fast ferry.

The area behind (south of) the amphitheater retaining wall might be one possible location for a water play area for children, since there will be water service to the restrooms close by, and also because it would be near the more traditional play equipment described in area #7, previous page. The restrooms could be moved to the west (left) and the water play area located near the walkway to allow views to the river.

The #6 area shows public restrooms. These will be needed for large events, and are a great convenience for visitors to the site, as well.

CLARK STREET TO MAIN RIVERFRONT ENTRY

Area # 7, above, shows two covered picnic pavilions and a traditional children's playground. Play equipment has changed in the past decade and there are many options for more "organic" colors



This central section of the riverfront shows the principal portion of riverfront development as well as the central portion of the riverfront walkway with wetlands walkways, a relocated "S" bridge, and a fishing pier.

and inclusive equipment layouts, and also innovative features such as musical play stations. Picnic table seating and outdoor grills would be included, and there is adequate nearby parking.

Also shown in this area is a pier with a covered viewing platform / fishing spot similar to the existing one at the east end of the shoreline in Missing Mill Park, and a pedestrian bridge over the inlet (shown between number 7 and 8).

Site #8 shows the proposed Inn / restaurant / catering facility. This is the architectural centerpiece of the northern riverfront. The sketch on page 33 shows a concept for the appearance of this building, which should fit with Hertford's historic context. Photos of the Inn that used to stand on the north-east corner of Grubb and Church provides some possible guidance for this building. The floor plan for this building is about 17,000 sf, and it would be two stories, with the possibility of additional rooms in the eaves of the roof. A wide front porch and additional plaza seating space to the north provide seating areas, event space, and covered and open dining.

The bulk of site parking occurs on either end of (the expanded) Clark Street near Grubb Street. Visitors to the riverfront, tourists staying at the Inn or other destinations, concert- and festival-attendees, and special events at the Inn will require considerable parking. What is shown is at the limit that the site can accommodate in this central location. Parking should be permeable: see Section 4B for more on this.

The buildings shown near #10 are envisioned as four buildings in the style of Hertford architecture, but with the first floors devoted to commercial or restaurant use. Wide front porches face the riverfront and adjoin a walkway tying the entry retaining wall/public walkway to the Inn via a secondary walk. The upper floor of these buildings could be owner-occupied, short-term rentals, or apartments.

Area #9 shows shows the probable location for the relocated "S" bridge extending into the river from the waterfront walkway. Funding has been secured to move and rehab this bridge near the existing Missing Mill Park. One can envision this lit with LED lights at night, and used for special events such as weddings, festivals, and other special events. When not in use for these purposes, it will serve as a fishing pier and provide great 360-degree views

along the shoreline and riverfront.

Meeting the bridge from the east in the middle of the wetlands is a walkway on piers. The walking surface on these wetland walkways will be closer to the wetlands vegetation (~3 feet), allowing views to wetland features and more direct views to wetlands birds, vegetation and other wildlife. Educational signage will help to inform visitors about the importance of wetlands, weather considerations in waterfront communities, and information about the river, the Town, and local history.

FEED & SEED TO TOWN DOCKS (PUNCH ALLEY)

Although there are numerous ways to access the riverfront from Grubb Street, area #11 (previous page) will be the main entry. Because the 100- and 500-year flood plain crosses Grubb Street at this point, the Coastal Wetlands designation has a corresponding dip towards Grubb Street in this location. The entry plaza shown here can serve as a small urban plaza for those walking along Grubb Street, and also as an entry plaza for the riverfront. This is another possible location for a children's water park, although it does not have direct views to the river. This would also be the best location to describe the industrial history of the site, flooding issues, and the transformation of the site to its current (i.e. soon-to-be) improvements, including those agencies, individuals and elected officials who contributed.

To the left of #12 (above right) is the former Feed & Seed building. In the original riverfront plan this was conceived as an outdoor sports center with a kayak, canoe and small fishing boat rental and touring component. There are beautiful wetlands just across the river as well as further up the Perquimans River under the railroad bridge. The plan shows a pier extending from the back of the Feed & Seed building to a platform on the river with a kayak launching chute.



Area #13 is a challenge for the riverfront plan. This is the location of Reed Oil. Formerly this site provided fuel for marine vessels, but now only provides fuel oil for domestic use. The owners have expressed willingness to move to another site they own further to the south, and the Town or County could acquire ownership and deal with any potential site contamination issues more efficiently than private owners, thereby removing potential liability for cleanup by the owners. There are funds available for evaluation and cleanup of contaminated sites if this is an issue, and these funds are easier to obtain for a public entity than a private landowner.

Another pedestrian bridge is shown over the inlet above the #12. Much of the land from the area on the riverfront side of the Feed & Seed to the Town docks is privately owned. However, very little of this land can ever be developed because it lies within the Coastal Wetlands. Nevertheless, the owners of this property will need to sell it to the Town or County or consider other options such as a conservation easement in order to allow construc-

tion of the inland retaining wall and walkway. See Section 5.0: Implementation for more on this.

Area #14 encompasses the former Police Department Building, the Town offices, the Town boat launch ramp and docks, and a small park adjacent to the docks. The public amenities will be discussed below under Area #15. There is no pressing need to reuse the former police headquarters, but if the Fast Ferries are implemented and the docks are more heavily used once they are updated, then the Police Department building could be reused for boater services (showers, supplies), a lunch and snack shop, and so on.

Area #15 includes the Town docks, boat launch ramps, a parking area, and a small park. At present these docks and launching areas consist of fixed height docks, and rising water levels have caused the docks to be frequently inundated and unusable. Replacing these docks with a similar layout of floating docks will address this problem. At the same time, an assessment can be done of the current configuration to assess whether a different layout is needed. In particular, it is our understanding that the docks are not configured correctly to deal with the size of a fast ferry watercraft and embarkation / disembarkation of a large number of passengers onto the docks.

4.6 Entry Corridors

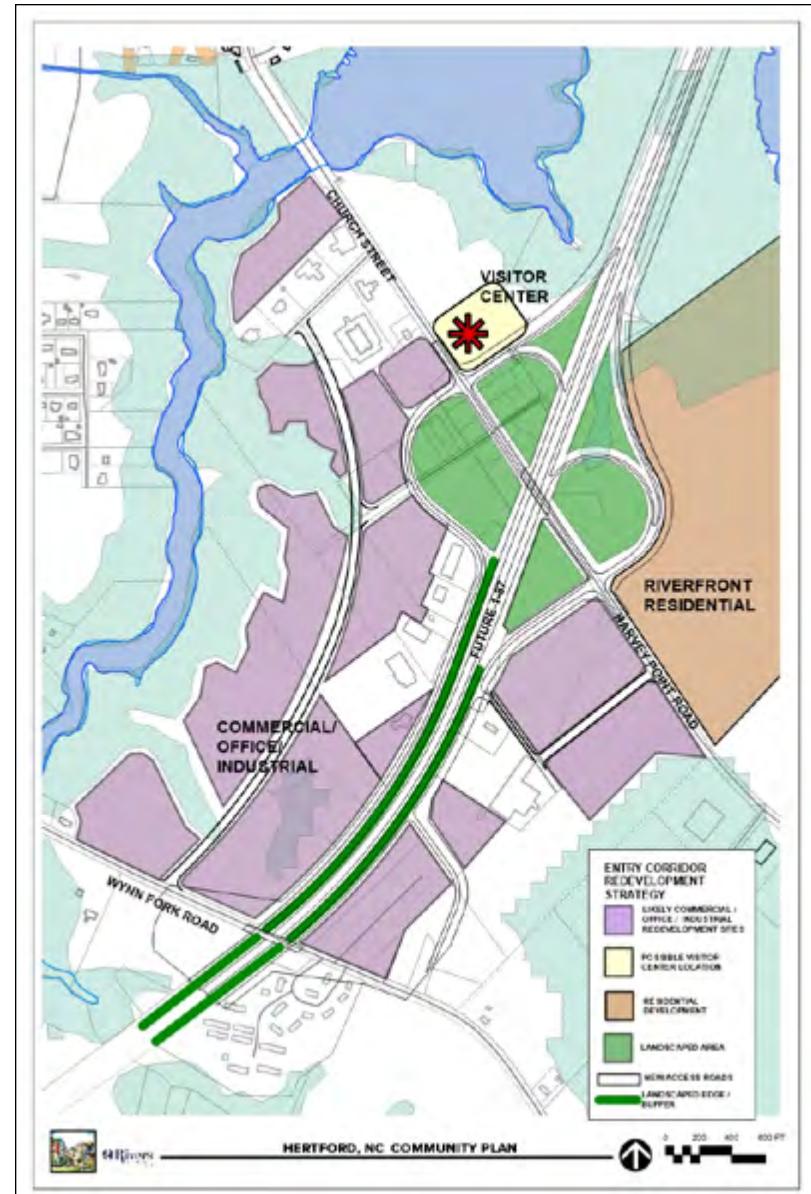
The schedule for upgrading US17 to I-87 is at least 6 or 7 years away. In the interim, it will be essential for the Town to look carefully at existing zoning codes, ordinances and enforcement to ensure that the entry corridor creates an appropriate gateway to the historic downtown. This examination should include Church Street in addition to US17/I-87. At the same time, enhanced standards should be pursued for landscaping the edges of I-87 and the service road along with requirements for the screening of parking and storage yards and

minimum standards for building materials, setbacks, screening and parking requirements. Along with this effort there should be enhanced inspection and enforcement for existing properties.

As mentioned at the end of Section 3.5 (Concepts), the exit ramps from I-87 will go right through the existing small residential neighborhood on the east side of Church Street. The plan recommends that these houses be relocated rather than demolished, since moving them would be less expensive than demolishing them and building new houses elsewhere. This will also provide room for more highway related and commercial uses.

The plan strongly recommends a visitor center on the east side of Church Street immediately to the north of the exit ramps off I-87 headed north into the historic downtown. This center should have adequate parking for cars and RVs, present an appropriate historic character, and provide information on County and Town attractions.

Since land can be subdivided in many ways for future uses, we have developed the “redevelopment strategy drawing” shown at right. This plan shows some access roads added and possible development “pods” rather than suggestions of site boundaries and master-plan level buildings because the upgrade to the new I-87 is not confirmed so plans and feasible uses may change. The plan also shows a possible riverfront residential development on the northeast side of



Entry Corridor Redevelopment Strategy. This plan shows how currently unused or underutilized land can be utilized for new commercial/office and industrial uses while creating a more attractive entry for the Town.

The plan suggests landscaping and wayfinding signage for the cloverleaf areas rather than development in order to create a more attractive entry to the town. The dark green lines along I-87 suggest screening between the highway and the service roads. This could be accomplished through some combination of grading, trees, and shrubs.

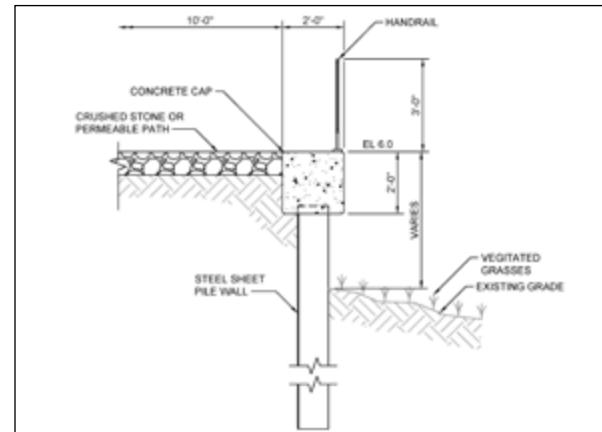
4B. Riverfront Plans

4.7 Riverfront Development vs. CAMA Plan

See Appendix 1 for an opinion of costs for the riverfront retaining wall, walkways, piers, docks, wetlands restoration and other amenities and necessary elements required for CAMA permits.

IMPORTANT: The *development* on the Riverfront is part of the Community Plan and is described in Section 4.4 Northern Riverfront Development. That plan is not the same as the CAMA plan to be submitted for permits. The CAMA Plan details the wetlands delineation, concepts for improvements to the environment that will support flood mitigation such as the inland retaining wall and wetlands restoration / creation, water quality improvements. CAMA will review, may suggest changes, and will hopefully issue permits for these environmental / resiliency improvements.

If the proposed development were shown on the CAMA plan, it would need to include a stormwater and erosion control plan for any development behind the inland retaining wall, but because the development shown in Section 4.5 is at the master plan level, it is impossible to know what the actual development will look like. Therefore we have removed all proposed development from the plan except environmental and some associated public improvements (e.g. the walkway) and this will be what is submitted to CAMA for approval.



The Inland Retaining Wall will be taller than shown at right (~6' above mean high water), and will have a railing on the concrete cap. The section at left shows the cross-section of the wall. Click on image at right for larger view.

At some point in the (hopefully near) future when development takes place, CAMA permits including stormwater and erosion control plans will be required for each parcel of land to be developed. See the CAMA plan on the next page. Whether the associated public space improvements to the small park near the Town Docks are included will depend on CAMA's assessment. We included them because all these future public improvements might qualify to be funded by a single source.

4.8 Site Elements

Riverfront improvements should be designed to offer not only an improved living shoreline, flood mitigation, and development opportunities, it should also strive to set an example of responsible development and ecologically sound site design. Walkways and parking surfaces should be permeable and rainwater should be captured on site as much as possible rather than draining directly into the wetlands or into a stormwater system.

The emerging design for the inland retaining wall and wetlands restoration is sound planning, but is also increasingly appreciated by residents who

will use it often or by those who will visit. There is a tremendous potential educational opportunity for the local schools and state agencies to work together to document the current degraded conditions of this former industrial site, and then to monitor and document the changes over time.

Resiliency has a broad range of meanings, and one important aspect of resiliency is infrastructure. There is considerable low-interest loan and grant money available from USDA in particular to address issues of failing stormwater, sewer and water systems, with an emphasis on smaller communities such as Hertford. This will be discussed in greater detail in Section 5.0: Implementation.

INLAND RETAINING WALL & WALKWAY

The height of the wall has been a frequent topic of conversation within the team. We understand that in hurricanes the storm surge has been as much as 10', but this is not a practical height as it would visually and physically separate the land side from the riverfront and would be very expensive to build. As a compromise, it is recommended that the wall be 6' above the shoreline water level.



***The CAMA Plan.** This is the plan that will be submitted to CAMA for permits. Once permits are obtained then funds can be sought for construction documents and implementation for the retaining wall, wetlands restoration, walkway and other water-side public amenities. [Click on the plan for a larger view.](#)*

This will mean that the wall will usually be about 4.5-5' above the ground level where it is shown on the plan. Behind the wall, we recommend that the buildings that are eventually built be raised by about an additional 4'. With careful grading this should not seem too abrupt. An example of a cross section of the wall is shown above, and concept drawings from Moffatt & Nichol are shown throughout this section. Because of the height of the wall, a railing will be required on top of the wall.

Immediately behind and adjacent to the top of the wall will be a public walkway 10-12 feet wide. The surface could either be crushed stone (less expensive but higher maintenance) or permeable brick or concrete pavers (higher cost, lower maintenance). See typical cross section of the walkway on page 38, but note that the wall will be taller than shown.

In some locations where there are inlets, the solution recommended is to build a wooden bridge across the inlet and to continue the retaining wall around the inlet, but without the walk (see below). By doing this the walk remains continuous rather than detouring around the inlet. The bridge would be required to have a 6' clearance in the center to allow small craft to enter the area beyond the bridge. Note the wall without a walkway behind it around the back portion of the inlet.



Bridge across inlets and inland retaining Wall. Click on image for larger view.

WETLAND WALKWAYS & PIERS

In order to allow visitors to the riverfront to interact more closely with the wetlands and the riverfront, a series of piers, viewing platforms and wetland walkways are included in the plan.

The walkways are 6' wide, include railings, and are on wooden or concrete piers. Piers are shown near the picnic shelters on the western end of the site (this one includes a covered viewing platform), near the Inn in the center of the site (a fishing pier) and near the Feed & Seed to accommodate a kayak launch ramp and tie-up for other small fishing craft.

Educational signage about the wetlands restoration and information about wildlife on the river and in the wetlands can easily be added in appropriate locations.

Access to the ramps is intended to be as handicap accessible as possible given the difference in



***Town Docks.** This shows a view of the boat launch area looking toward the docks. This was taken after a rain event, not a storm, so it's clear from this picture that the docks and piers need to be replaced with floating docks.*

grades between the retaining wall and the walkways and piers, which is about 3'. Installing ramps at 5% would require a minimum 60' of ramps plus intermediate level areas, so it appears that ramps will fit on some but not all of the connections from the wall/walkway to the walkways on piers. Since the walkways on pilings are fixed, the ramps will be easier to manage. This will be researched more thoroughly during CAMA permitting and preparation of construction drawings.

THE "S" BRIDGE

There has been considerable citizen advocacy to save the "S" bridge. Funding is now in place to accomplish this before the contractors (McLean) are finished with the work on the replacement bridge; otherwise bringing in the equipment to move the bridge would be prohibitively expensive. The plans

on page 39 show the preferred location where the water is deep enough for the equipment to access the area to place the bridge on new supports, which must also be approved by CAMA.

In July of 2021, Representative Ed Goodwin was able to obtain funding to move the bridge. As of that date NCDOT supplied two barges and the bridge was moved to a location right off Missing Mill Park. Through the efforts of two citizens, Rep. Goodwin, the NCDOT, and the Town and County, it appears the bridge will be saved.

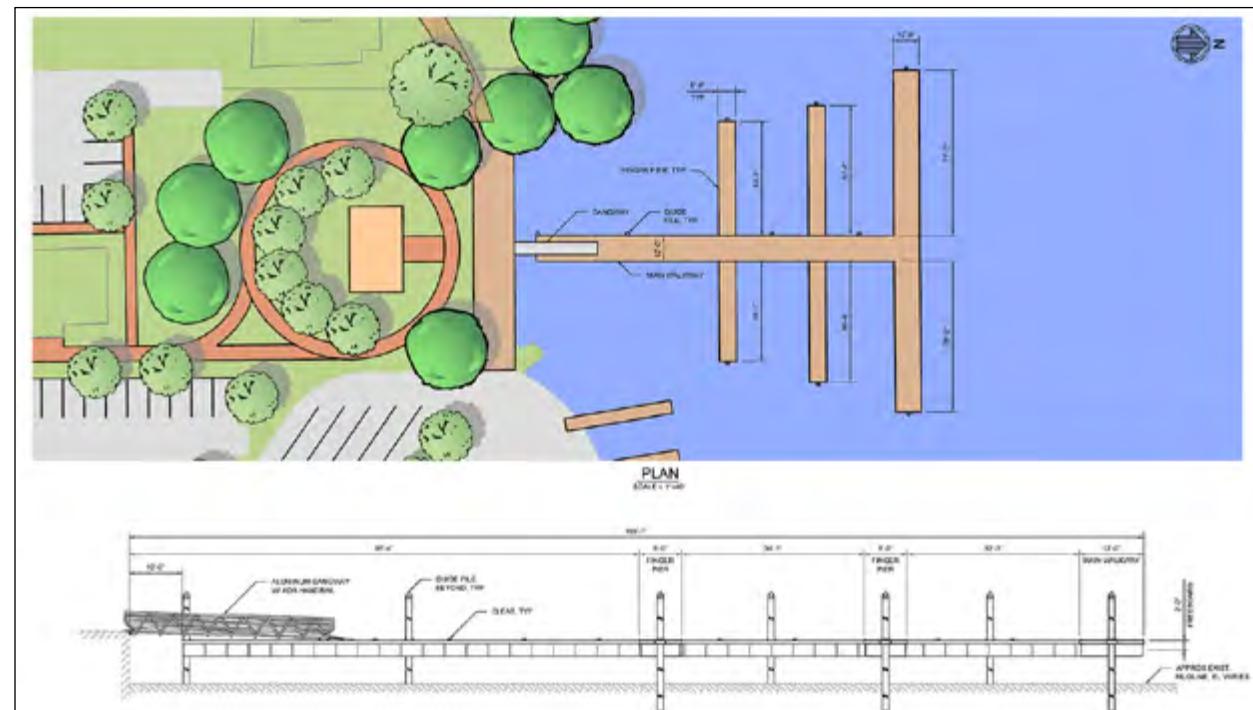
When in place the bridge can be used for a variety of purposes such as a passive overlook, a fishing pier, an event venue, and a reminder of Hertford's long history.

TOWN DOCKS

The Town docks and boat launch area are not in bad condition, but the fact that they were built as fixed level rather than floating needs to be addressed. As the photo on the previous page illustrates, these piers and docks need to be replaced to deal with rising water levels. At the same time, research should be done to understand what might be needed for fast ferries or larger craft in general to land at the Town dock so that any needed changes can be incorporated into the plan. A plan and section for replacing the docks is shown at top right.

LANDSCAPING

The trees shown on the wetlands side of the wall are a representation of existing trees. Some existing trees, such as the pines that have volunteered along the shoreline near Clark Street should if possible be removed or thinned (along with the Phragmites) to open up views to the water. Healthy mature trees will be preserved if possible. A fairly regular planting of large trees is shown along the back side of the wall/walkway, which would provide shade and add character to the walk. This area will probably be slightly depressed from the grade of



the walkway to prevent water from draining over the walk and into the wetlands.

The Wetlands Restoration Plan will more thoroughly discuss the actions recommended for the area between the wall and the shoreline and is attached as Appendix B.

PARK ADJACENT TO TOWN DOCKS

In an effort to avoid having to go through multiple CAMA permit applications, one other public area is shown on the plan. The park improvements associated with improvements to the Town dock and boat launching area are included in case funds are identified to upgrade this park area in a near-term.

Town Dock Replacement. As shown above in the plan and section prepared by Moffatt & Nichol, the configuration of the Town docks would remain, but the docks and boat launch area would be updated to be floating docks instead of fixed height docks, thereby alleviating the problem with flooding.

4C. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS: Redevelopment Opportunities In Hertford

[The following material was prepared by Greg Payne of Economic Leadership based on the plans developed by Rivers & Associates.]

This section examines the viability of the redevelopment opportunities presented in the Community & Riverfront Plans in Section 4.0 – the resources needed to make them happen, and the market demand for various uses. This includes input gleaned from interviews with numerous community stakeholders. It also looks at the potential economic impact of redevelopment and community improvements, particularly in terms of tax revenue impacts for the Town of Hertford and Perquimans County.

4.9 Obtaining the Needed Resources

For small communities, securing the resources needed to spur revitalization and economic development is often difficult. Hertford is a small town that has experienced flat or declining population and tax base. Both the town and county have limited staff and financial resources. In order to make the investments that will create positive momentum in Hertford, the town and county will need to work together closely and involve the Albemarle Commission. This collaboration can be particularly helpful in obtaining grants. The Commission has experience with grant writing, though in some cases the localities might want to hire a grant writer on an as-needed basis.

Grant and loan sources that have helped smaller communities across North Carolina make progress on economic and community development goals include the US Economic Development

Administration (EDA) and USDA Rural Development programs. The NC Department of Commerce has programs to facilitate building renovation or demolition in rural areas. Also, the Golden LEAF Foundation is a major source of grant funds for community improvement projects in eastern North Carolina.

The national Opportunity Zones program is a significant incentive for the private sector to invest in relatively distressed areas. All of Hertford on the downtown side of Highway 17 is eligible. A criticism of Opportunity Zones thus far is that much investment has occurred in large metro areas rather than in rural America. It is true that small towns and rural areas are often perceived as higher-risk. Hertford's proximity to the Hampton Roads metro area can be a positive for attracting private sector investment.

Opportunity Zones provide a way to defer, lessen, or eliminate capital gains when funds are invested in eligible communities through Qualified Opportunity Funds (QOF). All kinds of real estate investments are eligible as long as "substantial improvements" are made to properties. Certain tax advantages of the program will be missed if QOF investments are not made soon. However, one of the most attractive incentives – complete exclusion from capital gains for investments held at least 10 years – allows funds to invest until June 2027.

Another incentive for private investment is the New Market Tax Credit (NMTC) program. This nationwide program was recently extended by Congress through the end of 2025. All types of real estate are eligible for investment. A major participant in NMTC projects are community banks called Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). There are a number of CDFIs in North Carolina, including Self-Help Credit Union, which is based in Durham but has branches across the state including in Windsor and Rocky Mount.

Finally, a group of private investors could simply join forces in an LLC or similar entity. To tap deeper

pockets, local residents might want to contact individuals from the Hampton Roads region with experience in real estate and development, and who are aware of the potential in Hertford and Perquimans. Our stakeholder interviews indicated that there are regional real estate investors anticipating positive momentum in Hertford.

4.10 Housing Opportunities

Renovating or replacing vacant, blighted housing in the neighborhoods near downtown and the Hertford riverfront will produce multiple benefits:

1. Providing economical, energy-efficient residences for existing and future residents of Hertford;
2. Stabilizing and improving neighborhoods, with reduced vandalism and other crime;
3. Increasing the town's population to better utilize infrastructure, lower utility bills and increase the tax base;
4. Creating a critical mass of residents to support local businesses.

This plan's recommendation for repairing existing housing and pairing that with compatible, new housing on scattered lots is a great complement to riverfront redevelopment. To encourage this, the implementation of a second historic district (see maps in Executive Summary) is an important step. Our stakeholder interviews indicated that the prep work has been completed, and the designation just needs to be finalized. The greater availability of historic district tax credits will be an important incentive to upgrade Hertford's neighborhoods.

Next, other sources for housing loans and grants should be explored. In addition to the public sector and private sector resources described above, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency works with local governments and non-profits to build and renovate housing for residents with low

and modest incomes. As mentioned in part A, the town should partner with the county and Albemarle Commission to obtain the resources needed to make progress toward an improved housing stock.

4.11 Downtown

Hertford's historic downtown is very attractive, and has the potential to be a viable center of activity for town and county residents as well as visitors. There is no need to try to re-create downtown shops and services on the northern riverfront, but rather to provide complimentary amenities and attractions. Local government officials, property owners, and business owners should keep in mind that the primary function of most downtowns is no longer to be the center of retail shopping. Instead, people value downtown for experiences, and for a mix of uses including entertainment, dining, events, shopping, and some residential. Hertford can increase the downtown's vitality and make it more economically viable through these strategies:

1. Whether or not Hertford is an actual Main Street community, it should incorporate the four Main Street program themes of Economic Vitality, Organization, Design, and Promotion. Hertford can borrow successful practices from nearby Belhaven and Plymouth, which are NC Small Town Main Street Communities.
2. Hertford should provide a signage and façade grant program for downtown businesses and property owners. Even a modest building improvement program can affect downtown's attractiveness. It is understood that Hertford will likely need to find grant funds to implement this. Sign and façade grants frequently match the owner's contribution fifty-fifty.
3. Upstairs residential is likely to appeal to younger people and empty-nesters. Area real estate experts indicate moderate demand for rental units. Building and fire code requirements in buildings with both commercial and

residential uses can be costly to overcome. Town and county staff should reach out to downtown building owners, helping to educate them on issues related to upstairs apartments and working with owners to make it happen.

4. Hertford officials should view items such as adequate parking and sidewalks as infrastructure necessary for success downtown.
5. Improving pedestrian and driver connections between the downtown and northern riverfront will increase the chances of success in both areas. Connections can be strengthened through signage, sidewalks and crosswalks, and lighting.
6. Outdoor gathering and event spaces – even small ones – can help transform downtown into a destination. As suggested in the plan section, having parking lots that can be converted into event spaces is a cost-effective way to provide this.

4.12 The Northern Riverfront PUBLIC AMENITIES:

The plan for the northern riverfront calls for the development of a number of public amenities, primarily outdoor features. The first and most prominent is a walkway along the Perquimans riverfront. The most ambitious is an amphitheater with capacity for 500 attendees. Along with these are smaller improvements (such as a playground and picnic areas, improved dock and boat launch facilities including possibly boater services such as supplies and showers in the former police station), and visitor/user infrastructure such as restrooms and parking.

Because publicly-owned amenities will not boost the property tax base, some will suggest that investments like these are unwise or unnecessary. Are such public investments needed in order to spur private sector investments? In a word, yes.

These public amenities will serve two critical roles: a) as attractions that will draw more town residents, county residents, and visitors to spend time in Hertford; and b) as a sign of local government commitment to improve Hertford, which gives the private sector confidence to make new investments as well. In cities across North Carolina, public sector investments have been the catalyst for the private sector development that added tax revenues and jobs.

It is highly unlikely (and not necessary) that all public amenity additions will be made at one time. A new riverfront walkway in conjunction with a playground, picnic areas, parking, and preferably restrooms is sufficient to demonstrate renewed vitality of the riverfront area.

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT:

The most significant commercial improvement included in the plan is for a large waterfront inn. The proposed inn is a two-story structure of nearly 36,000 square feet, which would provide space for a restaurant and the ability to host weddings and other events. A relocated S bridge would offer a unique outside venue for celebrations. Some stakeholders expressed concern that such a large inn would be a risky development in a small town, but others – including an experienced inn operator – are confident that this scale is needed to be economically viable. Large inns that have been successful in small North Carolina towns include the 40-room Beaufort Inn in Beaufort, and the 28-room Colonial Inn in Hillsborough.

Based on the value of comparable properties, it is reasonable to estimate that the waterfront inn would have an assessed value of \$4.0 to \$4.75 million. Using current town and county tax rates, this would bring in between \$22,200 and \$26,360 to Hertford in annual property tax revenues. Perquimans County would receive between \$23,600 and \$28,025 in additional revenues annually. Over a five-year period, those totals would be \$111,000



Impacts of Scenic & Tourism-Based Transportation. Scenic rail routes such as the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad (GSMR) in western NC (above) and the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in southwest Colorado host about 200,000 passengers per year. One study estimated the GSMR's annual economic impact at \$62 million, while the Durango & Silverton line employs between 120 and 250 people.

A study from UNC-Chapel Hill on the proposed Inner Banks high-speed ferry system estimated first-year ridership of 107,000, with added tourism spending of \$14 million and creation of about 100 jobs.

to \$131,810 for the Town of Hertford, and \$118,000 to \$140,125 for Perquimans County.

Other potential riverfront new development and redevelopment:

- Stakeholders were enthusiastic in suggesting the need for a facility to offer canoe and kayak rentals, fishing supplies, and water tours. The 6,650 square foot Feed & Seed Building is well-located for this, and large enough to possibly host a casual food service establishment.
- Near the inn, four small buildings totaling 11,000 square feet would offer ground-floor commercial or restaurant space and upper-floor living. These would meet a market need for small-scale business space, and residences for those desiring a mixed-use environment.

- A small townhome site near the inn and riverfront could provide 12 units likely appealing to young workers and empty-nesters. These could be all residential, or offer a live-work concept with office or commercial space downstairs.
- The current town offices and/or police department could be relocated, possibly near the town's public works uses. This would make available a desirable waterfront location (the police headquarters) for a new use such as a sit-down restaurant. The current police building is approximately 3,100 square feet. It has been demonstrated in towns across North Carolina that even one notable restaurant can turn a town into a destination.
- Over time, commercial uses in the northern riverfront area could include a brewery and restaurant in the historic ice plant building (if government uses here are one day relocated). The popularity of brewpubs in many small North Carolina markets suggests that this could be economically viable. Facilities to accommodate visitors arriving via an Inner Banks fast ferry or an Edenton-Hertford-Elizabeth City tourist train could be accommodated in additional commercial redevelopment and new development. These transportation services would bring more visitors to support Hertford businesses and attractions.

Overall, new commercial and residential uses in the northern riverfront area could total nearly 110,000 square feet of redeveloped and newly-developed space. At a modestly-estimated value, this would result in additional tax base for the town and county of \$11,500,000. At current tax rates, the Town of Hertford would enjoy increased property tax revenues of \$63,825 annually and \$319,125 over a five-year period. The county would see added tax revenues of \$67,850 per year or \$339,250 over five years.

HERTFORD'S ENTRYWAY

As noted in the plan section, the future conversion of Highway 17 to Interstate 87 offers an important opportunity to redevelop the entry into Hertford and the downtown. This area serves as the town's "front porch," and first impressions are important.

The properties around the Highway 17 exit onto Church Street do not necessarily need a higher volume of commercial uses, but rather an upgraded level of quality and attractiveness. Zoning and other development codes should ensure that redevelopment and new development here includes robust landscaping and buildings that complement the historic character of Hertford's downtown.

Several stakeholders believe that a larger, more upscale grocery store would do very well in attracting shoppers from the town and county. Data on

local consumer behavior supports this, indicating above-average market potential for grocery shopping.

A visitor center would be an important addition, offering a convenient introduction to Hertford and Perquimans amenities and attractions.

Light industrial uses could also be accommodated here, and real estate brokers indicated some demand for warehouse and “flex” spaces popular with contractors and other service-oriented small businesses. These buildings should be located behind retail, restaurant, and other commercial buildings that have frequent customer traffic.

result in additional tax base for the town and county valued at approximately \$11.5 million. At current tax rates, this would provide the two local governments with more than \$130,000 in added revenues annually.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Town of Hertford should work closely with Perquimans County and the Albemarle Commission to gather the resources needed to improve public amenities in Hertford.
- Housing efforts that reduce blight and stabilize and eventually increase the town’s population are important complements to downtown and northern riverfront redevelopment initiatives.
- Both downtown and along the northern riverfront, a broad range of amenities, attractions, and uses will address the “experiential” nature of market demand by visitors and residents today. The goal should be to develop a critical mass of outdoor amenities and gathering places, combined with restaurants, entertainment, retail, accommodations, and living options, with the downtown and northern riverfront complementing one another. Public sector investments (such as a riverfront walkway) should spur greater private sector investment.
- Though it will happen over time and in stages, the northern riverfront plans presented in Section 4.0 call for nearly 110,000 square feet of commercial and residential space in new or significantly renovated buildings. This would

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

5.1 Introduction

Implementation is the most important part of any plan, because no matter how good the plan may be, if the community doesn't adopt it and remain committed to it over a period of years, there is little chance that it will succeed. The Hertford Community & Riverfront Plan has many moving parts, so the best way to make it a reality is for the Town to embrace citizen participation (such as the Advisory Committee) and to reach out to local and regional partners for support (County, Albemarle Commission, NCDOT, State Department of Commerce, and so on). There are many actions that can be undertaken that do not require expenditures, but rather require a commitment of time and personnel to begin making progress.

5.2 The Town, the County, and Citizens

Who should be responsible for implementing this plan? This is a very important question and one that might not have been discussed or taken seriously on previous plans. The Town and the County both have a strong interest in the success of this plan. Hertford is the County Seat and the largest town in the County, so anything that benefits the Town will also benefit the County, both directly through taxes and indirectly through increased investment, population, visitation, visibility, and attractions. The County will also benefit from those who decide to locate in the County because of the improved services and amenities that Hertford will be able to offer.

The Town and its residents will also benefit greatly from the same set of positive outcomes, and in addition, the Town will acquire an enhanced set of public amenities along the northern riverfront

along with mitigation of flooding and improved utility infrastructure. In addition, residents will have improved infrastructure, increased access to housing assistance, vocational training, a better selection of goods and services, increased jobs and entrepreneurial activity, and a more beautiful and well-maintained community.

Citizens and local organizations can help ensure the success of the plan by demanding that their elected representatives adopt the plan and actively work to see it implemented. Many state agencies and elected representatives at the regional and state level (Commerce, NCDOT, USDA, Albemarle Commission) have been actively involved in assisting with the funding of this plan and with projects such as saving the "S" bridge. It will be important both now and into the future that local elected representatives support the plan over the long-term in order to maintain and build on the support already in place. Many Town and County residents have already committed to this plan through interest in investing and through volunteering to help create the plan (e.g. the Advisory Committee and Historic Hertford).

This plan will not be implemented in a matter of months, a year, or a couple of years. It will require a long view and an ongoing commitment to demonstrating progress toward community goals. If The Town wins a grant or a loan and spends the money but has little to show for it, this will have a negative ripple effect on all the other goals the Town may have. If, on the other hand, the Town uses its resources wisely, publicizes successes, thanks those who helped fund it or volunteered to help, the Town can implement the plan vision and completely transform the community.

It should be repeated here that a master plan is not construction drawings. Hertford will not look

exactly like these drawings or include new development exactly as shown. It is the overall vision of the plan that can become a reality, a vision that includes making Hertford a great place to live for all its citizens and creating a series of new destinations and revitalized buildings that will attract new residents, visitors, and businesses to Herford and allow the community to prosper.

5A. COMMUNITY PLAN

5.3 Community Plan Fundamentals

Implementation of the Community Plan will be easier than implementation of the Riverfront improvements because of the up front cost of the retaining wall and other improvements. The incentives of the Opportunity Zone designation combined with Historic Tax Credits and possibly New Market Tax Credits (see funding options, Section 5C) will mean that most of the goals can be achieved without grant funds.

Any community that intends to organize for revitalization must support the effort at the level of Town and County government and take definite and sustained actions to help transform plans into reality. The following are "organizing for revitalization" actions that should begin immediately. *All of these actions should be initiated and substantially achieved within 12 months from adoption of the plan:*

- Both *Town and County Councils* should approve and **adopt the plan**;
- **Review zoning** to ensure that it supports the goals of the plan, or make changes to accomplish this. Within this framework, ensure that the historic context of the community is

respected and that new buildings and renovations fit with that context. Historic communities and beautiful natural settings such as Hertford have seen great success in marketing their history, which requires protecting it. This review and rezoning should also include the entry corridor of US17 / I-87 and Church Street. **Responsibility:** Town

- The **second historic district** application should be updated and submitted as soon as possible. **Responsibility:** Town and interested groups or individuals.
- Set up responsibility within the Town to **enforce minimum housing codes and property maintenance** to ensure that landlords and homeowners maintain their homes and properties to help ensure safe and well-maintained neighborhoods. If necessary and not already in place or enforced, set up a system of assistance for those who need it, and a system of notifications, deadlines for improvements, and fines for non-compliance. **Responsibility:** Town.
- Set up a yearly or twice-yearly schedule of **meetings with State and Federal elected officials**. Let them know that you have prepared and approved a plan for the community and intend to implement it, and that you request their help in accomplishing community goals. **Responsibility:** Town, County, and relevant agencies.
- Hire a qualified consultant to conduct a **survey of utility conditions** with cost estimates within the Town, both to address problems with current levels of service and to anticipate growth as presented in the plan. The survey should include utility infrastructure such as water, wastewater, electrical and broadband. There is recognition at the State and Federal level that failing utility infrastructure is a seri-

ous problem, especially in waterfront communities, and funds are available to address both the survey and the implementation. **Responsibility:** Town.

- Conduct a **survey of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure** to see where there are gaps in sidewalks and where bike paths could be easily installed as bike paths or “sharrows,” which are shared bike/auto routes prominently signed with “Share the Road” signage. Install or retrofit handicap ramps where needed. Often when utility infrastructure is improved it involves digging up the streets, so this is an appropriate time to improve streets and sidewalks. Develop a plan and apply for funds to implement. **Responsibility:** Town.
- Set up or adapt one or more LLCs or partnerships to receive investments for **OZ (Opportunity Zone) tax credits and to buy and develop properties**. There might possibly be a separate entity for the housing portion of redevelopment, but it could also be handled from one organization. **Responsibility:** Interested investors and organizations with assistance from the Town and County.
- Make information available to prospective, new, and existing property owners about how to take advantage of **Historic Tax Credits** for rehab of historic buildings in Hertford, both residential and commercial. These credits, in combination with OZ investments, can be a powerful incentive for investment. **Responsibility:** Town and interested agencies or individuals.
- Continue to expand the **loan and grant programs for homeowners** who qualify to help keep them in their homes by providing funds for repairs and improvements. **Responsibility:** Town.

- Explore whether and where **New Market Tax Credits** might be utilized. **Responsibility:** Town and interested agencies or individuals.
- Explore funding and venues for possible **building trade training programs** or other courses and programs the community is interested in. In Section 4.0, page 29, a few possible location for such uses is discussed (there are no doubt other possible locations as well). **Responsibility:** Albemarle Commission, Town, interested community groups.

5.4 Longer-Term Community Plan Goals & Actions

As mentioned earlier, the OZ designation, Historic Tax Credits, and other incentives available will allow the private side to invest in improvements to the neighborhoods and downtown without much need for grant funds or loans to assist, except as related to infrastructure, including both utilities and public space improvements. Grants and loans are available to assist with this. The investment in infrastructure will pay for itself many times over as revitalization proceeds.

Here are some other intermediate- and long-term actions that the Town and County should undertake:

- Assembly and marketing (if needed) of properties in and around the developed portion of Hertford for **new housing**, as mentioned in Section 4, page 29. This will provide room for growth and will help control gentrification in the historic neighborhoods. **Timeline:** This will be market-driven and will depend to some degree on progress in the historic neighborhoods and downtown. **Responsibility:** The Town and County should discuss ways to zone these properties to achieve the desired high-quality and appropriate development.

- Plans for a **Visitor Center and for increasing Town/County marketing** should be timed to have this facility in place as soon as redevelopment is progressing sufficiently to welcome visitors into Hertford. The downtown will probably be ready for increased visitation sooner than the riverfront because of the need to design and build the environmental infrastructure. The STORY of this transformation of the riverfront, however, will be interesting both during and after the project is complete. Marketing should begin with the adoption of the plan and build over time. Social media presence will be an important factor in attracting not only visitors, but also investment. *Timeline: begin by mid-late 2021 and continue. Responsibility: Town and County.*
- Updates or redesign of the **wayfinding sign system** to direct people between US17/I-87, the downtown, the riverfront, the train, and the fast ferry, and destinations in the County. *Timing: intermediate to long term depending on progress. Responsibility: Town and County.*
- **Downtown commercial redevelopment** is already underway. Public utility and complete streets infrastructure will need to be timed to support this growth. First priority will be utility infrastructure to support new uses within these buildings. Second should be parking and streetscape improvements, and work with downtown property owners to ensure that private open space is compatible with public improvements. *Timeline: intermediate. Responsibility: Town. Main Street programs can be extremely useful in this process.*
- **Utility improvements and complete streets improvements in the neighborhoods** and on

the riverfront will also need to be considered, but timing will depend on the pace and location of redevelopment. The areas on either side of Edenton Street in the study area are most in need of improvements to existing buildings and construction of new housing, so this might be a logical place to start. See funding Section 5C for possible sources of grants and loans. *Timeline: Utility infrastructure funding should be pursued to address all the necessary repairs and upgrades identified in the Utility Survey. In the longer term this might include utility relocations away from the riverfront. Complete Streets infrastructure can be installed in sections as utility improvements and new construction dictate. Responsibility: Town.*

- **Utilities on the riverfront** include planning for the utility infrastructure improvements needed to support new riverfront development shown in this plan. When capacity is engineered for utilities along Grubb Street, this would be the time to assess future needs on the riverfront. Service can be run to the areas needed and then capped for future use as timing and funds dictate.
- Discussions with leadership in Hertford, Elizabeth City and Edenton should be initiated regarding their possible interest in a joint effort to implement **rail connections between the three communities**. Because the current Federal administration has a stated interest in rail, this might be a good time to advance this idea. More research is needed on agreements with the railroad, configurations, rolling stock costs, schedules, and intent (occasional tourist trains only, possible eventual commuter rail, possible extension to the end of the line at Chesapeake). This is a project that could potentially be funded by the RAISE

grants (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity, formerly titled TIGER and BUILD) from the US Department of Transportation. Significant grants "may" waive local contributions for rural communities (although the chances are better with some contribution). These grants typically are not awarded on the first or even the second try, but persistence for worthy projects is worth it because the grants are substantial (multiple millions). *Timeline: Begin discussions with the railroad (Chesapeake and Albemarle-lessee, and Norfolk Southern-lessee) and when an agreement is (hopefully) reached, begin applying for the grant, and repeat until successful. Responsibility: Town, County, interested citizens, leadership in Edenton and Elizabeth City, and support of NC agencies and elected officials.*

5.5 Entry Corridor

There is no need for immediate action on the areas along US17 as the schedule for upgrades to the road and exit ramps is uncertain. When more is known about the schedule, it would be advisable for the Town to have completed any needed zoning changes or ordinance updates including parking, screening, and building requirements to ensure that the entry areas to Hertford are significantly upgraded from the current conditions.

At the same time, discussions with NCDOT should begin to better understand the arrangements available for displaced businesses and the part they are willing to play to screen the roadway from nearby commercial uses and provide landscaping in the interior of the exit/entry ramps at Church Street/Harvey Point Road.

A coordinated plan for changes to the road system serving new or relocated businesses will also be needed. For the land north and west of the

current uses along US17, the plan shows suggested locations for roads to access these properties (see Section 4, page 37) to be built by the landowners and, if desired, dedicated to the Town for long-term maintenance.

5B. RIVERFRONT PLAN

5.6 Riverfront Plan Timelines

Actions that are needed to accomplish the goals for the riverfront are a little different both in funding agencies and in intent. To create a destination of the riverfront, there are a series of intermediate steps that are necessary and that may take as long as 2-3 years to achieve. Shorter- and longer-term actions are listed together below.

The "S" bridge relocation is now underway. Interested citizens and Representative Ed Goodwin have been key to identifying and obtaining funding on short notice to get this done. The bridge has been moved to a place near Missing Mill Park thanks to the efforts of private citizens, NCDOT, Rep. Goodwin, McLean (the contractors building the new bridge and causeway), the Town and the County. CAMA permits for the proposed new location must still be obtained, but this will be included in the CAMA review process included in this study.

Here are the organizing efforts needed to move this part of the plan forward:

- Signed **letters from private landowners** affected by the plan that allow CAMA to enter the properties for the purpose of reviewing the plans have been obtained, but once permits are obtained for the wall and wetlands restoration, further negotiations will be needed to either get conservations easements (which include substantial tax advantages to property owners) or if absolutely necessary, purchase. **Timeline: immediate. Responsibility: Town, riverfront property owners.**

The photo at right shows the "S" Bridge just after it was lifted on two barges and relocated to a spot right off Missing Mill Park. Funding has been obtained to design and build new supports, recondition the bridge, and place it in the location shown in the drawings (pending CAMA approvals).



- As with the Community Plan, or as a part of it, **zoning** should be examined and revised as needed to ensure the plans for the riverfront are not derailed by inappropriate uses. **Timeline: begin immediately, complete by the end of 2021. Responsibility: Town.**
- Enter negotiations with the **Reed Oil** owners regarding the future of their facility on the riverfront. See discussion about this in Section 4.0, page 36. If the Town or County receives the property, they can apply for **Brownfield grant funds** to investigate and remediate the site if this is needed. Removing this use from the riverfront will be very important to the overall success of the plan. **Timeline: begin immediately, with a goal of an agreement and work towards mitigation (if needed) by the time the wall is ready for construction (near the end of 2022). Responsibility: Town or County.**
- Once the plan portion of the work is completed, LMG will take the lead in working with CAMA for review of the plan. The team will make any needed changes until **CAMA permits** are issued. That work is part of the current USDA contract and allowed time extends that work until the end of September, 2021. **Timeline: through 9/2021. Responsibility: LMG.**
- Once permits are being pursued it will be important to begin identifying and pursuing grants and loans to pay for preparation of **construction documents for the riverfront wall and related improvements** (work to date is master-plan-level concepts). Preparation of these drawings will take up to a year. **Timeline: begin in the fourth quarter of 2021 with a goal of funding by the beginning of 2022. Responsibility: Town, County, Albemarle Foundation, elected officials and others as appropriate.**
- During preparation of construction drawings, possible funding sources will need to be identified and pursued for **construction of all or separate parts of the flood mitigation**

tion and public amenities on the riverfront, and for property acquisition if this is needed. Improvements involving flood mitigation and wetlands restoration/creation will probably be from a different source than some of the public amenities such as the amphitheater, rest rooms, or picnic shelters. See Funding, Section 5C, and Opinion of Costs in Appendix A. *Timeline: begin in late 2021, ongoing. Responsibility: Town, County, Albemarle Foundation, elected officials and others as appropriate.*

Once the retaining wall infrastructure is in place, or even during construction, there will no doubt be investors interested in implementing the private development ideas for the riverfront. This process should not require any actions by the Town or County except to ensure the plans are in keeping with the spirit of the plan and meet the (hopefully already updated) zoning codes. The Town, once they have obtained releases from the agencies that funded Missing Mill Park, will have control over this central portion of the riverfront, and it would be our recommendation that the Town also obtain control of the Little Mint property. By doing this, the core of new development will be under the control of the Town, giving it more say regarding the size, character, and site planning for this essential part of the plan.

Likewise, the Harris properties are a significant portion of the land available on the riverfront for redevelopment. The plan shows the area for relocation of Town “back office” uses including possibly a new location for the Post Office and a train depot location if the rail part of the plan is implemented. Higher-end uses were not shown in this location because of the proximity of the Town garage, the Fire Station, an electrical sub-station, the water tower, the railroad, and other such uses. In order to justify redevelopment, it is possible that the uses shown other than the depot and the post

office could be light industrial or office uses in the intermediate future, and commercial uses in the longer term.

If the redevelopment of the riverfront is successful, the Town should consider several options regarding the disposition of their utility-related properties on the riverfront.

After Hurricane Isabel, state agencies recommended that the water department be relocated to land at a higher elevation (see discussion on page 24, Section 3B). One site under consideration for relocation is on the southeast corner of King and Edenton Streets, just north of the High School. This is definitely a longer-term possibility, because first the lands on the riverfront that are already planned should be built or in the process of being built. At that time the potential market for additional development and the type of development will be more clear.

It is recommended that the Water Department move out of the Ice Plant building at some point in the future, so this could be either an intermediate or long-term goal depending on whether there is an alternative location for this public utility. The Town might consider commissioning a study regarding the cost of relocating versus the potential increase in taxes and local spending that might be generated by uses such as a restaurant and/or brewery in these buildings.

5C. Funding

Revitalization is often a “bootstrap” process. Small and affordable changes are made that produce more immediate results, boost confidence in the process, and raise municipal income modestly. This increased confidence, along with the OZ designation and Historic Tax Credits, will begin to attract an increasing amount of investment and result in an accelerated rate of revitalization, visibility and income for the Town and County. While this is

proceeding, definition and pursuit of the funding needed for the larger and more expensive portions of the plan (such as the public improvements, flood mitigation along the northern riverfront and also possibly the train connections) should be in process. See the implementation chart on page 55.

There is much to be done, but it would be wise to avoid taking a scattershot approach to acquiring loans and applying for grants. Careful research and discussions with the granting agencies and foundations will ensure the grants sought will be the most useful for the purpose and will not duplicate efforts needlessly. Granting agencies and foundations wish to take on projects with the best chance of success, and projects for which they can claim a significant part of that success. Success, credit and thanks, and media attention should be a conscious part of the process.

A committee appointed by Council (such as the Advisory Committee, which has already done research on this) should have at least partial responsibility for identifying the best grants and loans and recommending them to Council, keeping in mind that there should be a logical progression for grant application to help ensure an orderly progression of tasks needed to further the plan. It will also be important to coordinate what agencies and programs are chosen; for instance, if USDA has a small grant program to help homeowners make repairs on their buildings and they also have a much larger program for streetscape upgrades for the downtown, it may be best to find another source of funds for housing repairs rather than approaching one agency too many times.

Once grants and loans are received, someone will need to keep track of spending/schedule/repayment/required filings. This should probably be a staff person or elected official with the skill necessary and a committee for oversight, or it could be assigned to an outside professional (lawyer,

CPA, planner) by contract. Careful accounting of all resources will be essential.

The following is a sample of possible funding sources for the various activities and projects within the plan. Funding opportunities change from year to year, so this is a starting point, not a comprehensive list. Initially it will probably be necessary to consider grants that require a smaller match from the community, but this should be evaluated in light of the potential size of the grant and how crucial it is to a particular goal. Since the County receives slightly more than half of the taxes paid by the Town, discussions with the County on possible contributions should be initiated.

5.7 Grants and Loans for the Community Plan

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS & LOANS

SEARCH-Special Evaluation Assistance for Rural Communities and Households. This program helps very small, financially distressed rural communities with predevelopment feasibility studies, design and technical assistance on proposed water and waste disposal projects. Most state and local governmental entities can apply if they have population below 2,500 and a median household income below the poverty line. The predevelopment planning costs must be related to a proposed project that meets the following criteria:

- Construct, enlarge, extend or improve rural water, sanitary sewage, solid waste disposal and storm wastewater disposal facilities;
- Construct or relocate public buildings, roads, bridges, fences or utilities, and to make other public improvements necessary for the successful operation or protection of facilities;

- Relocate private buildings, roads, bridges, fences, or utilities, and other private improvements necessary for the successful operation or protection of facilities.

FMI: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/search-special-evaluation-assistance-rural-communities-and-households>

USDA Rural Development Rural Utilities Service - Community Connect Program. For installation of Broadband. Min Grant \$100,000; match at least 15%

Southeast Rural Community Assistance

Project Loan Fund. Loans may be used for new wastewater Treatment facilities, installing wastewater/water laterals for neighborhoods, repairing or replacing water storage tanks and other community development projects. Up to \$250,000 with interest rates between 3 and 7% on a sliding scale.

USDA Assistance to High Energy Cost Rural

Communities RD-RUS-HECG21. Up to \$10 million in competitive grants to assist communities with extremely high energy costs. The grant funds may be used to acquire, construct, or improve energy generation, transmission, or distribution facilities serving communities where the average annual residential expenditure for home energy exceeds 275% of the national average. Eligible projects also include on-grid and off-grid renewable energy projects and the implementation of energy efficiency and energy conservation projects for eligible communities. \$100,000 to \$3 million. Closes July 2021.

USDA Water & Wastewater Disposal Loan & Grant Program. This program provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. State and local governmental agencies are eligible. Rural areas and

towns with less than 10,000 people. Grants may be combined with a loan to keep costs reasonable.

FMI: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>

HOUSING

Rural Rental Housing Loans. Loans may be used for economically designed and constructed rental and cooperative housing and related facilities suited for rural residents. Loans up to 30 years at 1%. Open to individuals, cooperatives, non-profits, public agencies, profit corporations, trusts, etc.

USDA Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants. Provides grants to sponsoring organizations for the repair or rehabilitation of housing occupied by low – and very low income people. Rental property owners may also receive assistance if they agree to make units available to low- and very low-income families.

USDA Single Family Housing Direct Home

Loan Progam. Also known as the Section 502 Direct Loan Program, this program assists low- and very-low-income applicants obtain decent, safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas by providing payment assistance to increase an applicant's repayment ability. Payment assistance is a type of subsidy that reduces the mortgage payment for a short time. The amount of assistance is determined by the adjusted family income. For more information: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-direct-home-loans/>

Single Family Housing Repair Loans and

Grants. Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, this provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their homes or grants to elderly very-low-income homeowners to remove health and safety hazards. To qualify for a loan, must be a homeowner and occupant of building, unable to obtain affordable

credit elsewhere, have a family income below 50% of area median income. For those over 62, they can get grants if they can't afford to repay a repair loan. Maximum loan is \$20,000, maximum grant is \$7500, loans and grants can be combined up to \$27,500. FMI: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/single-family-housing-repair-loans-grants>

For other housing-related USDA programs: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/page/all-programs>

TRANSPORTATION

RAISE grants (DTOS59-21-RA-RAISE). This program is the successor to TIGER and BUILD grants. Hertford may not be ready to apply this year but suggest work with Edenton and Elizabeth City on a proposal for rail transit between the three communities. Grants are very competitive and awards are up to \$25 million but usually less than \$10 million for rural communities, which have a special category for applications. *“The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided \$1 billion for National Infrastructure Investments. As with previous rounds, funds for the FY 2021 RAISE Transportation program are to be awarded on a competitive basis for projects that will have a significant local or regional impact.”* The deadline for applications is July 12, 2021 for this year, and probably a similar date in subsequent years. Hertford and adjoining communities will probably not be ready to apply this year.

USDA Community Facilities Guaranteed Loan Program. This program provides loan guarantees to eligible lenders to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a public improvement, operated on a non-profit basis, needed for the orderly development of a rural community where the rural community is a city or town, or its equivalent county or multi-county area. The term “facility” refers to both the physical structure financed, and the resulting service provided to rural residents or

rural businesses. The loan guarantees are for lenders, and public bodies with populations less than 50,000, with funds reserved for communities less than 20,000 (among others such as non-profits and Tribes) may qualify. Two relevant categories for the funds are transportation and community parks. These funds might be a good choice for downtown street improvements and could also be used for small parks. FMI: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-guaranteed-loan-program>

BIKE & PEDESTRAIN FACILITIES

A quick scan of available funding suggest that entities that fund road infrastructure improvements (NCDOT, RAISE, USDA) will expect bicycle and pedestrian improvements at the same time, so any proposal of this type should include these elements rather than applying for funds separately. The exception would be for bike paths that are off-road, but these are not anticipated at this stage of work.

5.8 Grants and Loans for the Riverfront Plan

DESIGN+CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS FOR THE RIVERFRONT

North Carolina Land and Water Fund. This agency has grants for the following:

- Planning for projects that protect unpolluted waters;
- Facilitate innovative efforts to improve storm-water treatment;
- Contribute toward a network of riparian buffers and greenways for environmental, educational, and recreational benefits;
- Land Acquisition if needed;
- Protection of surface water quality.

Each of the above may be a separate grant, so a review of other funding opportunities and a dialog with the administrators is recommended to define the preferred application category. The application is issued in December and due in February. Grant amounts vary from \$43,000 to \$1.2 million.

Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). *(Please note that the disposition of Missing Mill Park must be resolved before applying for any additional funds from PARTF. There is a strong argument for releasing the current configuration and reapportioning public park lands along the river, since all the current riverfront amenities are often flooded.)*

Grants amounts in 2020 varied from \$72,500 for a Boone Skate Park to \$500,000 for the Crabtree Creek Nature Park in Raleigh. These grants require a 100% local match.

NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program.

Hertford has already received a grant from the NC Division of Coastal Management for this program. The question has been how this would fit into the work summarized in this report. A read-through of the program manual suggests that there are some pieces of the requirements for this program missing. If the current grant can fill those requirements it would place Hertford at the conclusion of Phase 2 (Planning, Project Identification & Prioritization) and make the Town eligible for Phase 3, which is Engineering & Design. The program asks for a 50% match but suggests there are exceptions. There are not many programs that would cover construction drawings, so this might be a likely candidate since Hertford is already in the program. Grants up to \$250,000 are available for this work.

NC Division of Coastal Management Public Access Grants.

Grant funding is available for Waterfront Access projects. The deadline for 21-22 has passed, but this would be a good resource for

2022-23 applications, since it applies to construction as well as planning. The deadline this year was April 16 for pre-applications and August 16 for final applications if selected. Past grants have ranged from \$34,000 to \$192,000. This might be an appropriate grant for the changeover in the Town docks and boat launch ramps from fixed height to floating.

National Fish & Wildlife Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant. The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program seeks to develop nation-wide community stewardship of local natural resources, preserving these resources for future generations and enhancing habitat for local wildlife. Grants seek to address water quality issues in priority watersheds, such as erosion due to unstable streambanks, pollution from stormwater runoff, and degraded shorelines caused by development. Funding priorities include:

- On-the-ground wetland, riparian, in-stream and/or coastal habitat restoration.
- Meaningful education and training activities, either through community outreach, participation and/or integration with K-12 environmental curriculum.
- Measurable ecological, educational and community benefits.
- Partnerships: Five Star projects should engage a diverse group of community partners to achieve ecological and educational outcomes.

Given the industrial past of the riverfront and the desire to include educational and ecological monitoring, this one would seem to be a good choice, although this is a national program so will be highly competitive. Grants in 2020 varied from \$72,000 to \$1.46 million in Navassa, NC for the Cape Fear Bottomlands Conservation effort. Most of these grants are given to non-profits, though

there were a few Counties and Cities listed.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act.

Probably their Small Grants program might be of interest to Hertford. Their mission is to preserve wetlands for long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats for the benefit of all wetlands-associated migratory birds. The small grants program awards are capped at \$100,000, and a minimum 1:1 match is required. All eligible costs must be directly linked to eligible acquired, restored, or established acres that are completed DURING the project period. This means that each grant and match dollar, except for indirect costs, must be linked to an acre acquired, restored, and/or enhanced. Proposals are due in October. Link: <https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/grants/nawca-us-small.pdf>

EPA Brownfield program. This program may be helpful in reuse of the Reed Oil Company site if they are willing to transfer it to the Town or the County. The program website states that "A brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant... The program is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. Grants and loans are available for purchase, assessment and cleanup of affected sites. Grants are available up to \$500,000 depending on the site. Cleanup grants are due in October for the following year. Link: <https://www.epa.gov/brownfields/types-epa-brownfield-grant-funding>

Other possible sources of funding. If the Town is ready to endorse the plan and seek funding for it, there may be other sources of income. Hertford will be receiving American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds that the Town may designate for uses as needed or desired. A top priority should be funding to study

infrastructure conditions and recommendations for improvements.

5.9 Incentives Available to Investors and Property Owners

OPPORTUNITY ZONE (OZ) ORGANIZATION

An Opportunity Zone Fund can be set up as a corporation, LLC or a partnership. At least 50% of the gross income and employee hours of the company must come from OZ activities. Tangible property owned or leased must be in the OZ. The organization is funded when investors roll over both short- and long-term capital gains into a qualified fund. The funds can then be invested in housing, commercial businesses, startups, existing businesses, and even infrastructure and alternative energy projects. The benefits for these investments are:

- Deferral of taxes on the initial capital gains until the end of 2026, or until the investment is sold. (There are some time limits on how long an investor can wait from the time the gains are realized until they are invested in an OZ);
- A 15% discount off the investor's initial taxes as long as the investment in the OZ is made before the end of the same tax year;
- If the OZ investment is held for 10 years, there would be no capital gains due on any appreciation;
- If the investment is made in NC, there is the same treatment in regard to NC taxes.

There is one OZ company set up for Hertford that intends to focus on the commercial downtown. Another is probably needed that would cover the entire Hertford OZ boundaries.

HISTORIC TAX CREDITS

For those who are interested in rehabilitating an income-producing historic building or buildings, Historic Tax Credits can be an attractive incentive. As long as the rehab meets the requirements for historic structures, there is a 20% tax credit on all the rehab costs. There is also a 15% tax credit for owner occupied residential properties.

In addition to state tax credits of 15 or 20%, there are also federal tax credits of 30% through 2024. After 2024 the percentage will be reduced a few percentages each year until 2027 when the percentage will return to 20%.

State and Federal tax credits are cumulative, so tax credits on an income-producing commercial property would be 50% of the costs.

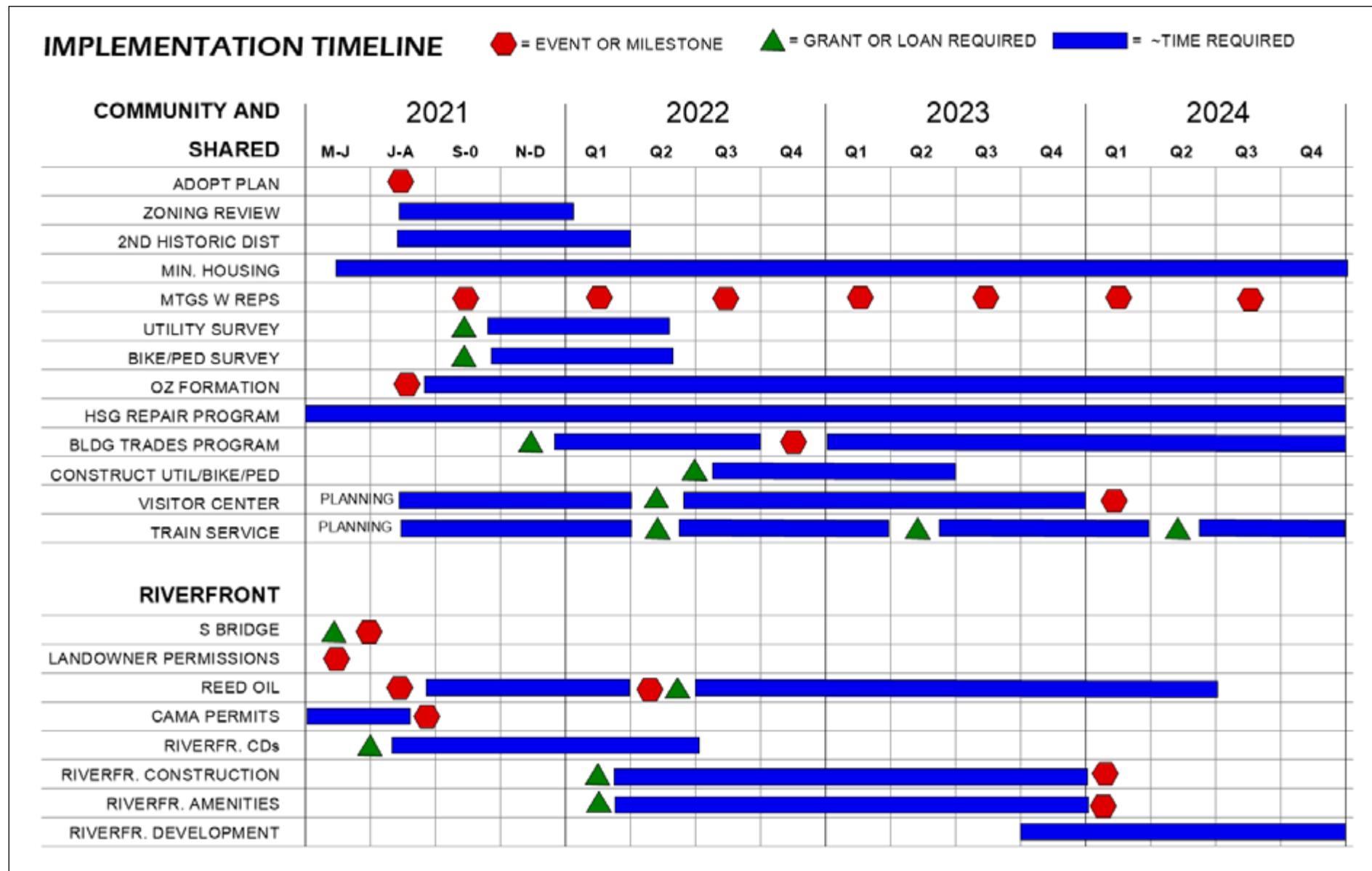
To qualify, the buildings must be either individually registered or within an historic district. This is the reason we have recommended that the second historic district be put in place as quickly as possible, since the Historic Tax Credits can be combined with OZ tax advantages.

NEW MARKETS TAX CREDITS

New Markets Tax Credits (NMTCs) were established in 2000 with the goal of creating an incentive for investing in low-income communities. Congress authorizes a specific amount of credit which is distributed to intermediaries (Community Development Entities-CDEs) through the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs). CDEs sell these tax credits to investors, who supply the CDE with cash and in return receive tax credits over a 7-year period. The CDE then uses these funds to make debt or equity investments in entities located in qualified low-income communities. Banks, developers, and local governments can qualify to become CDEs. Qualified low-income community businesses or profit or non-profit enterprises can use it as a part of the financing needed for new or expanded retail, manufacturing, community facilities (e.g. health care or schools), or housing.

5.10 Implementation Chart

A chart of implementation tasks and timelines is shown on the following page.



Implementation Timeline. Refer to Sections 5A and 5B for more information.

APPENDIX A: OPINION OF COSTS

The following tables show an opinion of costs which can be used to pursue additional funds to move all aspects of the public riverfront development project(s) forward as outlined in Section 4.0 and 5.0. These prices will change over time and with more definite plans, but they are a good starting point.

Section 5.0 shows that improvements related to housing, commercial, and retail revitalization are already showing some traction in Hertford, and costs for building rehab and redevelopment are more known quantities than the riverfront improvements. If the riverfront shoreline improvements and public amenities are in place, the Town is ready for a major step towards making Hertford a destination and improving the economy for all citizens. One important intermediate step for housing and commercial redevelopment will be evaluation, cost estimating, and funding of utility infrastructure elsewhere in the project area. We understand the evaluation work is now underway.

The riverfront wall, walkway, and water-side \ public amenities (piers, wetland walkways, docks) are included as one set of numbers (to the right), followed by the Wetlands Restoration/Enhancement numbers on the next page. These are separated from the wall and walkways because they will probably be constructed by a different contractor, and because funding sources for environmental improvements are likely to be different than those for public amenities. Other public amenities such as picnic shelters, the amphitheater, and other public improvements inland from the wall (except the walkway) are broken out separately as well, but any of these elements could be recombined as needed and as the requirements of the various grant/loan agencies dictate.

Hertford Community Riverfront Plans
Date: August 24, 2021
Concept Level Opinion of Costs

Item No.	Description	Units	Estimated Quality	Price	Estimated Cost
Riverfront Improvements					
Administration					
1	Mobilization (5%)				\$211,369.38
2	Staking				\$89,387.50
3	Testing Allowance				\$50,000.00
Demolition					
4	Structures on Riverfront (Excluding Town Docks)	LS	1	\$45,000.00	\$45,000.00
5	Remove Wood Bulkheads	LS	1	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
6	Remove Concrete Bulkheads at Reed Oil	LS	1	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
Site Utilities					
7	8" Water Line	LF	2500	\$70.00	\$175,000.00
8	8" Gravity Sewer	LF	2150	\$200.00	\$430,000.00
9	Manholes	EA	9	\$7,500.00	\$67,500.00
10	Flood Proofed Pump Station	EA	1	\$600,000.00	\$600,000.00
11	8-10" Force Main	LF	1250	\$100.00	\$125,000.00
12	Electrical Service (Specialty)	LS	1	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
13	Lighting (Specialty)	LS	1	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
14	Electrical Service - Conduit, Meters, Conductors & Handholds	LS	1	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
Surface & Landscape Improvements					
15	Walkway on Wall - Bulkhead	LF	2400	\$450.00	\$1,080,000.00
16	Walkway on Wall - Railing	LF	2400	\$80.00	\$192,000.00
17	Walkway on Wall - Permanent Pavers (10' Under)	LF	2400	\$120.00	\$288,000.00
18	Wall & Cap Only	LF	750	\$450.00	\$337,500.00
19	Wood Bridges 10' Wide x 185'	SF	1850	\$60.00	\$111,000.00
20	Wetlands Walkways on Pilings 6' Wide x 500	SF	3000	\$60.00	\$180,000.00
21	Platform at End of Pier (1200 SF)	SF	1200	\$80.00	\$96,000.00
22	Kayak Launch Ramp (1)	LS	1	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00
23	Replace Town Docks (Floating)	LS	1	\$520,000.00	\$520,000.00
24	Replace Boat Launch Ramps (3)	LS	1	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
25	Pedestrian Light Poles (50)	EA	50	\$2,500.00	\$125,000.00
26	Pedestrian Light Bases (50)	EA	20	\$2,250.00	\$45,000.00
27	Rough & Fine Grading Behind Wall (Erosion Control) (20' x 3000')	LS	1	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
28	Trees (Live Oaks) Installed - 3-4" cal.	EA	20	\$500.00	\$10,000.00
29	Seeding 20' x 3000'	SF	60000	\$0.25	\$15,000.00
30	Benches	EA	40	\$1,800.00	\$72,000.00
31	Trash Cans	EA	30	\$1,900.00	\$57,000.00
32	Bike Racks	EA	10	\$1,600.00	\$16,000.00

Total Without Mobilization \$4,227,387.50
Total Including With Mobilization \$4,438,756.88
 Construction Contingency - 15% \$665,813.53
 Design Fees - 10% \$443,875.69

Total Estimate for Riverfront Improvements \$5,548,446.09

Regarding the Picnic Areas and Amphitheater and areas of private land on which the wetlands enhancement, retaining wall, and public amenities will be built, there is an important question as to whether some of this land will need to be purchased from the owners rather than obtaining a conservation easement (which would provide tax advantages for the owners). In addition, there are potential cleanup costs for any environmental hazards on the entire site, which at present are unknown. Until the extent of land requiring purchase and/or remediation is known, this number is hard to predict, but especially including Reed Oil and the Harris properties, may range into the millions.

Finally, we obtained, in addition to the figures for utility infrastructure and physical improvements shown in this appendix, another cost estimate that included all the improvements that would be needed to service the new development on the riverfront. That estimate will be supplied to the Town, but is not included here because the exact configuration and time schedule for this development is unknown, and more importantly, the goal of this cost estimate is to obtain grant and/or loan funding for the riverfront environmental and public amenity portion of the improvements that will make the private improvements feasible. It is unlikely that funding at the level required for the entire site would be included with grant funding for riverfront improvements, nor is there a reason for the Town to make that large outlay of funds absent land acquisition and a commitment from a developer to build some version of the possible development shown in this report.

Hertford Community Riverfront Plans
Date: August 24, 2021
Concept Level Opinion of Costs

Item No.	Description	Units	Estimated Quality	Price	Estimated Cost
Wetlands Restoration/Enhancement					
33	Mobilization (5%)				\$104,618.75
34	Construction Surveying	LS	1	\$16,500.00	\$16,500.00
35	As-Built Survey	LS	1	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00
36	Clearing and Grubbing ²	AC	1	\$3,400.00	\$4,760.00
37	Impervious Select Material	LS	0	\$1,850.00	\$0.00
38	Grading - Excavate & Fill or Stockpile	LS	1	\$19,400.00	\$19,400.00
39	Temporary Construction Entrance	EA	1	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
40	Coco Fiber Matting	SY	530	\$5.50	\$2,915.00
41	Temporary Silt Fence	LF	2325	\$3.00	\$6,975.00
42	Temporary Rock Silt Check	EA	3	\$700.00	\$2,100.00
43	Temporary Seeding	AC	1	\$600.00	\$840.00
44	Permanent Seeding	AC	1	\$1,850.00	\$2,590.00
45	Tubelings (purchase and install)	EA	300	\$2.80	\$840.00
46	Containerized Trees (1-gallon) (purchase and install)	EA	370	\$7.00	\$2,590.00
47	Live Stakes (purchase and install)	EA	665	\$2.00	\$1,330.00
48	Emergent Vegetation Plugs (purchase and install)	EA	7700	\$2.50	\$19,250.00
49	Invasive Vegetation Management (per event)	EA	1	\$6,250.00	\$6,250.00
Picnic Area					
50	Pavilions (2 @ 900 SF/ea)	SF	1800	\$30.00	\$54,000.00
51	Grills	EA	4	\$800.00	\$3,200.00
52	Traditional Playground	LS	1	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00
53	Water Play Area (Sm)	LS	1	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00
54	Walks & Parking	LS	1	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00
Amphitheater					
55	Retaining Wall (Avg. Ht. 4')	LF	600	\$400.00	\$240,000.00
56	Stage on Pilings	LS	1	\$600,000.00	\$600,000.00
57	Utility hookups, Restrooms - water, sewer, electric	LS	1	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
58	Utility hookups for stage - Water, stormwater, electric	LS	1	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00
59	Utility hookups, Water Play Area - water and stormwater	LS	1	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
60	Seating Walls 2' Wide x 10" High x 1800 LF	LS	1	\$450,000.00	\$450,000.00
61	Sod	SF	35000	\$2.00	\$70,000.00
62	Restroom	SF	600	\$250.00	\$150,000.00
63	Permeable Paver Walks	SF	8350	\$12.50	\$104,375.00
64	Permeable Asphalt Parking	SF	26200	\$5.00	\$131,000.00
65	Landscape Allowance	LS	1	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
66	Grading	LS	1	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00

¹Opinions of probable costs herein are based on the information known to the Consultant at this initial stage of project development (Concept Plan) and represent only the best professional judgment as a design professional familiar with the ecological restoration industry. The Consultant cannot and does not guarantee that proposals, bids, or actual construction costs will not vary from the opinion of probable construction costs.

²Assumes demolition of structures completed prior to restoration site work being initiated. Costs do not include any site demolition and debris removal costs.

Total Without Mobilization	\$2,092,375.00
Total Including With Mobilization	\$2,196,993.75
Construction Contingency - 15%	\$329,549.06
Design Fees - 10%	\$219,699.38

Total Estimate for Wetlands Restoration/Enhancement	\$2,746,242.19
Total Estimate for Riverfront Improvements (Sheet 1)	\$5,548,446.09

Total	\$8,294,688.28
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APPENDIX B: NORTHERN RIVERFRONT PRELIMINARY RESTORATION PLAN

[NOTE: this is the document that will be submitted to CAMA through Land Management Group (LMG) for the purpose of getting permits. LMG are the team environmental scientists.]

B.1 Introduction

The following Preliminary Restoration Plan provides a summary of baseline conditions and restoration methods that would provide for functional uplift to degraded riparian areas along the shoreline of the Hertford Northern Waterfront Project. This plan is based upon preliminary site evaluations with the intent of advancing to a more comprehensive Restoration Plan prior to the construction of the proposed riverfront walkway and retaining wall. The restoration effort is intended to offset proposed wetland impacts associated with the construction of the retaining wall (i.e. provide compensatory mitigation) via the replacement of wetland functions on-site. In addition, the proposed retaining wall and restoration efforts are intended to provide for increased resiliency and protection of the Town's infrastructure along the riverfront. This is deemed particularly beneficial in light of the increase in frequency and amplitudes of tidal high-water events and storm surge in the area.

B.2 Site Description

The Northern Riverfront project site is situated along an approximate 2,600-ft section of shoreline abutting the Perquimans River in Perquimans County, North Carolina. It is located within the "Albemarle" 8-digit Hydrologic Unit Code 03010205. The drainage area of the river at this location is approximately 94 square miles. Based upon the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Water Quality Classification Map, surface waters of this section of the river are classified as SC (tidal salt waters protected for secondary recreation such as

fishing, boating, and other activities involving minimal skin contact; fish and noncommercial shellfish consumption; aquatic life propagation and survival; and wildlife). The shoreline in this area is subject to both semi-diurnal and wind-driven tidal influence. Surface waters are considered oligohaline with salinities generally ranging between 0.5 and 5 ppt.

Much of the shoreline along the Hertford riverfront has been historically impacted by dredge and fill operations and urbanized land uses. As a result, wetland areas have either been significantly degraded or removed entirely over the years. Remaining non-wetland riparian buffer areas are similarly degraded as evidenced by sparse canopy coverage and the prevalence of the invasive common reed (*Phragmites australis*). The proposed wetland restoration and enhancement areas are located within low-lying landscapes associated with the riverine floodplain. Elevations generally range between 0 ft and 2 ft Mean Sea Level (MSL). Soils of the site are mapped as Dorovan muck and "urban land complex" (indicative of historical non-native fill and modifications of the natural soil profile). The Dorovan series consists of deep organic and very poorly drained soils that are generally situated within densely forested floodplains, hardwood swamps, and depressions of the outer Coastal Plain (NRCS 2013). As indicated above, the project area is subject to flooding from lunar tides, wind-driven tides, and episodic storm events. Based upon preliminary site evaluations, groundwater levels likely remain within 12 inches of the soil surface for extended periods during the growing season (within relatively unaltered wetlands). For those areas that have been historically filled, groundwater levels may vary depending upon the depth and extent of historic fill.

The project area consists of diverse vegetative assemblages corresponding to elevation, site use

and management, and degree of prior alteration. In more wooded areas with relatively unaltered hydrology, bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) are prevalent. Areas subject to more frequent tidal inundation consist of emergent vegetation characteristic of oligohaline coastal marsh. These include narrow-leaf cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) and saw-grass (*Cladium jamaicense*). Freshwater (non-tidal) herbaceous species include false nettle (*Boehmeria cylindrica*), bristlegrass (*Setaria parviflora*), and broomsedge (*Andropogon virginicus*). Note that the site also consists of areas of more dense invasive species including common reed, alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*), and Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*).

B.3 Proposed Restoration Methods

The goal of the restoration plan for this project is to provide for the replacement of degraded riparian buffer and wetland functions via the restoration, enhancement, and preservation of on-site riparian (riverine) wetlands, coastal wetlands, and riparian buffer. In doing so, the project will contribute to increased flood protection and buffering capacity (i.e. resiliency), hydrologic storage, increased nutrient retention and transformation, and habitat for terrestrial, semi-aquatic, and aquatic species. Increased nutrient uptake and storage is considered particularly beneficial in light of recent occurrences of summer algal (cyanobacteria) blooms along this section of the river.

The location and extent of targeted preservation, enhancement, and restoration methods is depicted in Figure 1. This figure also illustrates the proposed area for riparian buffer restoration and the optional *Phragmites* treatment area (discussed further below).

As indicated above, existing wetlands that have remained relatively unaltered are targeted for preservation. These include approximately 1.10 acres of tidal (i.e. coastal) wetlands and 0.33 acres of non-tidal wetlands. Existing wetlands that have been altered through removal of characteristic vegetation, modification to hydrology through historic fill, or through both vegetative and hydrologic manipulation, will be enhanced. Identified enhancement measures will include the planting of characteristic vegetation and/or minor grading and disking to achieve the desired substrate elevations and conditions. Target species composition for vegetative enhancement will be premised upon corresponding elevations and hydroperiods. Areas anticipated to be influenced by tides will be planted with plugs of characteristic emergent marsh species on 2-ft spacings. Species identified for planting include: saw-grass, narrow-leaf cattail, black needle rush (*Juncus roemerianus*) and big cord grass (*Spartina cynosuroides*). Non-tidal areas subject to more frequent inundation will be planted with characteristic tree and shrub species on 10-ft centers. Identified trees include bald cypress and water tupelo (*Nyssa aquatica*). Non-tidal wetland enhancement areas that are seasonally saturated, or only occasionally inundated, will be planted with ironwood, bald cypress, willow oak (*Quercus phellos*), elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) and wax myrtle (*Morella cerifera*). Sourced plant material will consist of plugs for emergent vegetation, tublings for shrubs, and one-gallon containers for trees. Based upon the current layout, approximately 0.74 acres of wetlands are targeted for enhancement.

Areas that have been historically removed from wetland status (primarily through fill) will be restored through the re-establishment of target elevations and planting of characteristic vegetation in a manner consistent with the enhancement vegetative plantings described above. Restoration grades will correspond to reference wetlands on-site (i.e. unaltered wetlands located within the preservation

areas) for both tidal emergent and non-tidal forested community types (i.e riverine swamp forest). Non-native fill or debris encountered during grading will be removed and stockpiled outside of the proposed mitigation area. Areas will be disked to reduce compaction, and organic soil amendments will be applied as needed. Target species and densities will be similar to those described above. During planting, slow-release fertilizer (i.e. Osmocote pellets) will be applied to emergent marsh plugs. Based upon site evaluations, 0.62 acres is targeted for wetland restoration (refer to Figure 1).

Along the western section of shoreline, approximately 0.50 acres of upland riparian buffer is targeted for restoration in areas currently lacking forested buffer. Restoration will include the planting of native, characteristic tree species. Plantings will consist of bald cypress, willow oak, American elm (*Ulmus americana*), and American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) on approximate 10-ft centers.

Invasive vegetation management (IVM) is proposed as an optional treatment within areas currently dominated by Phragmites. Phragmites is identified as an invasive species that can form large areas of monotypic stands, thus reducing species diversity and resulting in habitat degradation. However, given the prolific rhizomal growth of this species, it has been demonstrated to keep pace with sea level rise, promote substrate stabilization, and increase nutrient retention. In consult with the applicant and regulatory agencies, IVM may be implemented within the identified treatment area. Treatment would consist of repeated application of a broad-spectrum herbicide approved for aquatic use (glyphosate and/or imazapir). The approved herbicide mix will be applied via back-pack spray or targeted aerial drone. The identified Phragmites treatment area is approximately 0.87 acres (refer to Figure 1). Note that IVM will also be performed in other areas of the site on an as-needed basis to limit the occurrence of any other identified invasive species (e.g. Chinese privet).

Note that all areas identified for restoration, enhancement, and preservation will be protected in perpetuity through recorded deed restrictions as part of the implementation of the restoration plan. Deed restrictions will list specific terms and conditions that will ensure the long-term conservation value of the site while prohibiting actions that could compromise the ecological integrity of the project. The deed restrictions will be consistent with the Corps of Engineer's Model Conservation Easement. Examples of prohibited activities include:

- mowing or cutting of vegetation (with the exception of allowances for removal of dead or diseased trees/shrubs);
- disturbance to ground or soils unless done so to promote wetland functions and;
- construction activities.

Passive recreational uses will be allowed provided that such uses do not compromise the ecological integrity of the project and are not in conflict with the intent of the conservation value of the site. The final deed restrictions will be submitted to the Corps of Engineers and to NC DEQ for review and concurrence prior to recordation.

