

DANVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PRE-PLANNING INVESTIGATION

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OVERVIEW

On behalf of the project consultant team, we are pleased to share initial findings from our preliminary planning efforts for the Danville Comprehensive Plan. In November 2021, the team traveled to Danville, Virginia to better contextualize our research and gather more localized information about the communities of Danville. During this initial visit, and in the weeks after, a series of listening sessions and focused interviews were conducted with community leaders, government officials, and other key stakeholders to discuss several major themes that included economic development, engagement, equity, health, housing, mobility, and resiliency. Accompanied by research and analysis, these initial findings inform the team's engagement methodology and planning approach outlined below.

BACKGROUND

A comprehensive plan is a document with a 20-year horizon that is typically reviewed by public officials every five years. The City of Danville is at the beginning of a new review cycle that examines previous comprehensive planning initiatives and launches new planning efforts to outline the city's future growth potential. With a much-anticipated influx of new investment scheduled to come down the pipeline and an eagerness to create a more future-forward city, Danville hopes to invest in a new long-term vision that can transition the city into a regional destination with small-town charm. The city aims to create an exemplary comprehensive plan based on a process that empowers the community to engage holistically with city government, policymaking, and decision-making processes- and to think bigger about how Danville could evolve to serve the needs of current and future residents equitably.

PURPOSE

The following memo serves as a summary of the preliminary findings gathered during the initial pre-planning phase of this multi-year comprehensive planning effort. It outlines our team's overall approach and plan framework, highlights key findings, formulates an inclusive public participation and engagement strategy, and creates the basis for the project's Scope of Work.

APPROACH, GUIDING PRINCIPLES, AND OUTCOMES

From our preliminary investigation, it is evident that stakeholders are excited by Danville's future potential and are ready to see growth that reflects the community's values and needs. Our planning approach will be inclusive and take the necessary steps to Engage, Inform, and Empower all stakeholders throughout the process and into implementation. This approach places Danville's citizens at the center of an 18-month planning process.

- As we **ENGAGE** - we will develop connections throughout the city by listening, acknowledging local expertise, and working collectively with civic and community leaders to build trust between the community and our project team members. We will take the initiative to connect with groups that have been historically overlooked and disenfranchised during past processes.
- As we **INFORM** - we will foster authentic connections with the community and stakeholders through - clear and transparent channels of communication to reflect the ideas and opinions of residents by providing a consistent feedback loop between project team members and stakeholders.
- As we **EMPOWER** - we will identify opportunities to increase community and civic capacity to help ensure plan implementation.

This approach underscores a project framework that focuses on 3 Foundational Guiding Principles: Equity, Resiliency, and Health - that will serve as the basis for the comprehensive plan. These principles are viewed as crosscutting elements that should influence all key topic areas and outcomes in the plan and are critical to Danville's future success. This framework helps to ensure that policy recommendations for the comprehensive plan are rooted in equity, resilience, and health. The approach and framework outlined here are supported by 4 Major Planning Outcomes that emerged consistently throughout all our preliminary conversations and research. The outcomes are as follows:

- Enhanced Education – for increased access to resources and information, neighborhood school hubs that provide opportunities for community building and educational advancement, as well as workforce and trade skill development that can attract and retain residents,
- Healthy Environments – for complete neighborhoods, connectivity and mobility, environmental resiliency, land use, community character, and blue/green infrastructure improvements.
- Thriving Economy – for local retail, industry, housing, entrepreneurship opportunities, and employment.
- Community Empowerment – for long-term civic engagement, capacity building, and elevating Danville’s identity and sense of pride.

These major planning outcomes will help to guide plan actions by ensuring that all policy recommendations, strategies, and action items align with the values of the community.

MEMO STRUCTURE

The memo is organized into four sections: Key Findings, Public Participation and Engagement, Preliminary Project Branding, Project Schedule, and Summary of Scope. The Key Findings sections, which were derived from our initial stakeholder conversations, have been organized into six major topic areas:

- Housing,
- Economic Growth,
- Connectivity and Mobility,
- Community Health,
- Neighborhoods, Parks, and Land Use,
- Sustainability & Resiliency.

These topic areas may evolve or be refined as we gather additional information from community members during the public participation and engagement phase of the project. For each topic area, a series of major trends, opportunities, and gaps have been identified to better understand existing conditions, future possibilities, and potential barriers to success for the city of Danville. This methodology is bolstered by a robust public participation process that uplifts Danville’s residents as citizen experts and supports equitable engagement practices that value community members’ time and effort. Our team is invested in crafting a plan that is not only forward-looking but feasible, functional, and achievable.

FINDINGS

The findings section of this document contains a detailed overview for each of the major topic areas that our team has covered during our pre-planning efforts. Each section highlights major trends, opportunities, gaps, and next steps for each of the key topic areas previously noted in the memo structure section of this document. Listed below is a brief overview of each topic area section.

Housing. Danville has the potential for an influx of new residents as surrounding markets grow. Strategic diversification of housing typologies is essential to accommodating various people at varying phases of life. Housing strategies should account for new and legacy residents, homeowners, and renters, and provide quality housing options at all income levels.

Economic Growth. Danville's market remained relatively stable from 2017-2021, even throughout the pandemic. There are opportunities to leverage blue-green economies, adapt vacant and underutilized sites, and promote other local economies. Mobility, land use, and housing planning will need to intersect more with economic nodes to provide enhanced connectivity to retail and job opportunities.

Connectivity and Mobility. Due to its topography, most of Danville is accessible mainly by vehicle, and walking and biking are challenging. However, many households still do not have access to a private vehicle. Disjointed public transit and massive infrastructure dedicated to cars exacerbate connectivity challenges. Mobility will intersect with neighborhood planning to create walkable nodes with larger transit connections in a manner that serves the community and meets city capacity.

Community Health. Resident health should be made a priority. There are environmental, resource, and access challenges to attaining adequate healthcare. Community health must be addressed through both physical planning and overall policy recommendations. Community engagement is essential to determining strategies for providing accessible healthcare options. Using metrics such as life expectancy, poverty rates, and access to opportunities, the team will measure the success of policy recommendations as they contribute to the enhancement of community health.

Neighborhoods, Parks, and Land Use. Current topography and historically traditional planning practices have led to a separation of uses in Danville. Fragmented land-use patterns create access issues to essential resources. To better meet the needs of residents, the future land use plan will provide actionable steps to gradually create complete neighborhoods with a variety of needed amenities in a walkable radius of residents.

Sustainability & Resiliency. Sustainability will be woven into the comprehensive plan recommendations as a standard for policies to meet. It will also be a forward-thinking lens for Danville to prepare for massive shifts in economy with the loss of the Mill, preparation for a shift in energy supply once the current supply contract ends in 2035 and maximized leverage of the Dan River as a community asset.

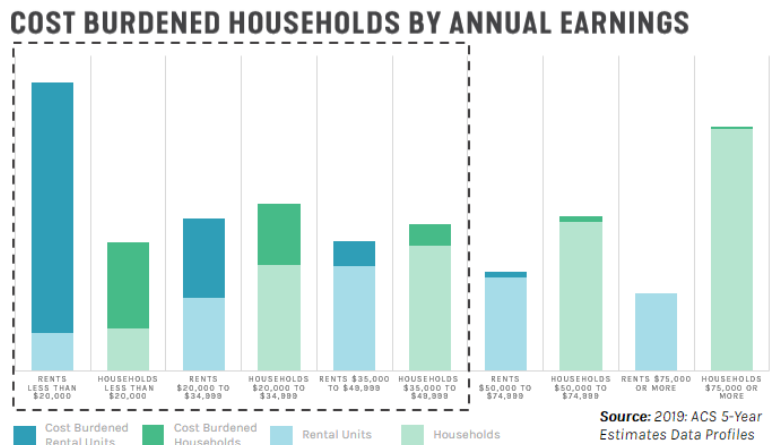
HOUSING

Danville is projecting an influx in its residential and workforce populations, due to new large-scale development taking place at the Berry Hill mega-site and at the site of the future Caesar’s Palace Casino, set to open in 2023. With a rapidly approaching deadline, Danville must develop a clear plan for current and future residents to maximize the benefits of these sweeping changes. These advancements offer Danville an opportunity to take advantage of its historic communities and infrastructure, proximity to the scenic Dan River, and adjacency to other regional economic hubs. Ultimately, this will provide current and future residents the chance to merge lower costs of living with growth opportunities, unique historic elements, and recreational amenities that will enhance overall quality of life and capitalize on the city’s small-town charm and potential big city amenities. In preparation for much of this new development, Danville is conducting a more extensive housing study. However, our preliminary findings, gathered prior to the completion of these additional studies or plans, will help to underscore continued housing research and provide high-level policy recommendations.

TRENDS

After meeting with some key community stakeholders and conducting our preliminary analysis, our team identified several housing trends. These trends will guide proposed future development and housing recommendations in the comprehensive plan. These include:

- Aging housing stock impacting overall housing quality. Seventeen percent of Danville’s housing stock was built before 1940, with 45.9% of homes built between 1960 and 1970. Older homes are gaining some traction in the age of fixer-uppers. However, they can also result in high investment, construction, and maintenance costs. Overall, the aging housing stock contributes to rising infrastructure needs and decreasing home values that can impact general quality of life.
- Low property values. The median home value in Danville is \$90,500 with 13% of homes valued at \$200,000 and above, indicating a small margin of property investment growth. While low property values can be an advantage in terms of affordability, it can also detract from developer interest due to narrower profit margins. Priorities should include bringing affordable properties up to a certain quality standard and having new construction focus on missing housing typologies.
- Predominant housing typology. Over 70% of households in Danville are single-family units.
- Large renter population. Forty-eight percent of residents in Danville are renters. Many renters (85.3%) are spending less than \$1000 a month on rent. However, 47% of renters are spending above the recommended 30% of their annual income on rent. This gap indicates that a larger portion of renters in Danville fall into the category of low-income or cost-burdened households.
- Gap in affordability. Rental unit and mortgage costs, comparative to income rates, illustrate that approximately 47% of renters and 27% of homeowners are spending above the recommended 30% of their annual income on rent or mortgage payments. Disparities in access to modern amenities further indicate wealth gaps. In Danville, there are currently 570 households without phone service, 3,548 households without access to a computer, and 5,062 households without internet service. Indicating a significant digital divide that exacerbates existing disparities.
- Affordability disproportionately affects residents. Wage gaps based on gender and race show that housing affordability for women and minority led households are at a disadvantage when it comes to home ownership. The average woman in Pittsylvania County makes approximately \$20,000 less



than the average male counterpart. The median household income for Black households is about \$10,000 less than that of White households.

- Barriers to development. Below average property values, higher construction costs, and pandemic related supply chain issues could deter developers. Alternative housing types could also impact development incentives. For example, there are several modular home communities in Danville that could receive HUD (Housing and Urban Development) funding. However, this could decrease surrounding home values, and impede some socio-economic groups from cultivating generational wealth.

Resident concerns. Residents are expressing concerns over the potential for gentrification and displacement, often exacerbated by these types of planning efforts. Specifically, with the onset of a new major amenity like the Caesar's Palace Casino. This is particularly true in the case of housing. Engagement efforts will focus on creating an inclusive planning process that begins with building community trust to ensure the plan prioritizes existing residents.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Potential strategies to be employed during the Comprehensive Plan process includes but are not limited to: Diversifying housing types. With such a large renter population and cost-burdened households, there is a market for alternate forms of housing including: “missing middle” housing, accessory dwelling units, workforce housing related to economic centers, and retrofits of exiting industrial, commercial, and vacant sites into multi-family mixed use centers. There are also advantages to include ideas such as:
 - A side lot program that allows homeowners living adjacent to vacant properties to purchase and consolidate lots to transform properties through the addition of yard space, driveways, gardens, or home expansions to create smaller affordable housing units and generate alternate income revenues for residents.
 - A scattered-site redevelopment that allows for smaller-scale (15 units or fewer) public housing development, using vacant lots, for greater variety and scale to encourage the development of more affordable units for lower-income residents. This strategy should be underscored by a good management, tenant screening, design, and public relations strategy that would minimize push back for fear of declining property values. While, simultaneously incentivizing multi-scaled development within communities.
 - Amending single family residential zoning to make attached residential and multifamily housing easier to implement and address the missing middle housing sector.
 - Address alternate ways to tackle short-term rentals in the zoning code.
- Expand home ownership literacy to increase wealth building opportunities for Danville residents, with a specific emphasis on historically- disenfranchised populations, to incentivize equitable reinvestment in Danville neighborhoods. This would include, but is not limited to, education on down payment assistance programs, home buyer education, etc.
- Consider opportunities for short term rentals to accommodate workforce and temporary housing during the construction of the casino, while also addressing long-term renter needs.
- Several methods could be used to encourage neighborhood-based reinvestment including capitalizing on regional resources to invest in Danville. There is strong interest from Pittsylvania County to strengthen the capacity of the Danville Land Bank and the Danville Neighborhood Development Corporation (DNDC). Other ideas include establishing a local housing trust fund, which could be managed by existing housing stakeholder groups; ensuring a portion of contracts go to local carpenters and developers to circulate local dollars; and allowing payment in lieu of taxes.

GAPS

The goal is to meet gaps in the market while building on existing community aesthetics and neighborhood character. However, there is often public misconception about placing alternative housing types in existing neighborhoods. This can be addressed through focused engagement that will:

- Identify Danville’s housing needs at the neighborhood level through resident conversations, workshops, and surveys.

- Highlight potential barriers to development through developer and city staff focus groups.
- Educate residents about the advantages and disadvantages of a more diversified housing stock.
- Enhanced housing literacy will be paramount to creating lasting change from the resident's level.

NEXT STEPS

The next phase will be multi-pronged. The housing team must clarify what development is most advantageous for Danville's future while simultaneously meeting the current needs of residents.

- Engagement will be resident focused to cultivate a community-lead vision for Danville's neighborhoods. A key aspect of this engagement will be to expand housing literacy among residents of Danville, with a specific focus on marginalized populations and underserved communities
- Data analysis will determine which locations are best for alternative housing development models needed to accommodate new and legacy residents. It will consider current trends related to economic hubs, amenities, physical access, and housing conditions to determine which housing types are needed in each area. While "missing middle" housing might not be a perfect fit for retrofits near the Danville Mall, existing neighborhoods could be better served through this strategy with additional funding for improvements to existing structures. An analysis of the potential for the Danville Mall to be transformed into a new form of development that emphasizes mixed use or town center development formulas should be investigated.
- An implementation toolkit will include alternative funding sources and a plan for actionable steps to implementation of housing policy.

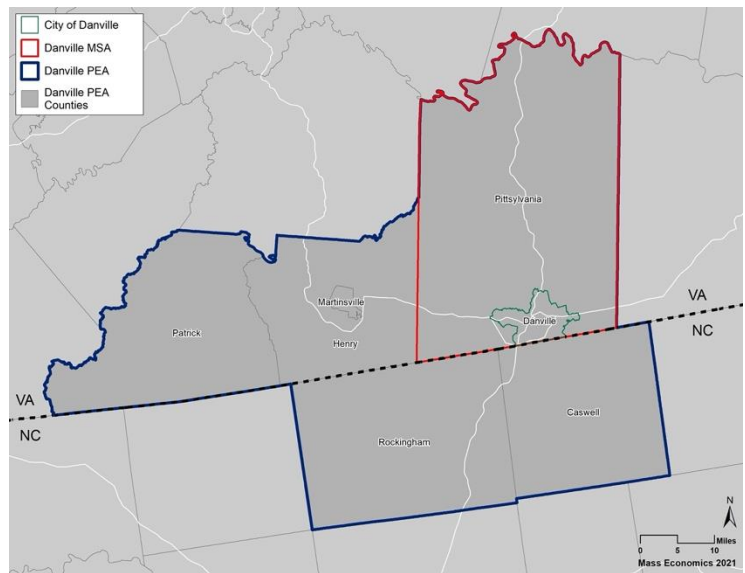
The goal is to create complete neighborhoods, not isolated pockets of housing.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

While Danville's micropolitan statistical area (mSA), and partial economic area (PEA) were less severely impacted by the pandemic, compared to the rest of the United States between March and April 2020, growth in these areas through June 2021 has notably lagged the national recovery average. This continued an overall decline that began in 2016. Additionally, significant income and resource disparities between various demographic groups and limited financial literacy have created barriers to attaining wealth and economic stability for many residents. However, there is opportunity for growth and development in Danville that can enhance economic opportunities for current and future residents if the right strategies are employed. Below you will note several economic trends contributing to Danville's current economic state, as well as several opportunities for growth.

TRENDS

- Job growth in Danville lags the rest of the mSA and PEA - both pre-COVID and during COVID.
 - The Danville economy is highly concentrated by a limited set of industries.
 - The top 3 3-digit industries (Food and Drinking Services, Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing) (e.g., top 3 3-Digit industries make up 32% of all jobs in 2019 as compared to just 13% in Pittsylvania County and 16% in the U.S.
- Fourteen of the City's 20 largest industries declined between March 2020 and June 2021, and they all declined more than the U.S average.
- There is diversity among work force job holders, meaning there are a higher shares of job holders who are women and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). However, there are significant wage disparities that exist. For example, women earn approximately 63% of what their male counterparts make, and Black (men and women) workers earn about 70% compared to their white counterparts.
- There are lower levels of minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs), but relatively high levels of women-owned business enterprises (WBEs). While MBEs and WBEs have lower average jobs, revenues, and payroll per firm, compared to their male-owned and White-owned counterparts, respectively, MBEs in the city of Danville provide higher average wages than White-owned businesses. This is contrary to the rest of the U.S.
- Job access challenges persist, specifically for those without access to a private vehicle (physical, commuter flows).
- From 2017-2021, retail remained stable in establishment count, employment, and wages, except for:
 - Food Services (NAICS code 722) and Personal & Laundry Services (NAICS code 812) lost the greatest employment and wages between Q1 and Q2 of 2020 during the initial closure period of COVID.
 - Comparing Q1 2020 to Q1 2021, total quarterly wages in Personal & Laundry Services has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Year-over-year (2016-2020), annual household expenditures grew in Danville at a greater rate than the national consumer price index (CPI), as calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Over the period 2016 to 2020, the CPI increased by 10% while expenditures increased over 21%.



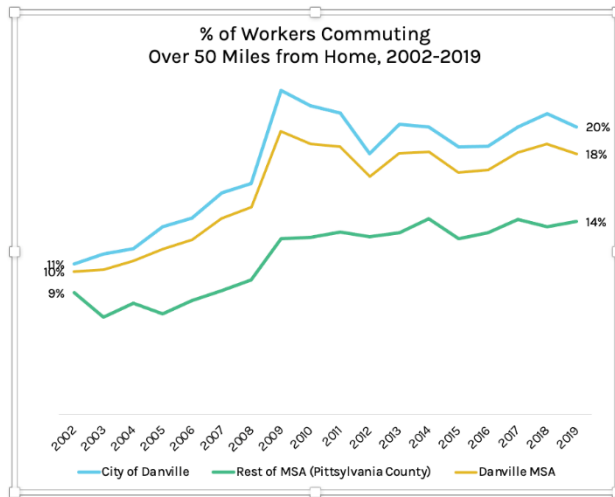
OPPORTUNITIES

- Leverage publicly owned vacant and underutilized land and buildings. In addition to the mega-site, identify potential adaptive reuse and infill opportunities for both work force housing and commercial uses, along with a site assembly strategy.
- As a border city, assess opportunities to rationalize workforce housing and commercial development strategies. These can be developed in partnership with surrounding counties, including those in North Carolina and the existing rapport that exist with Pittsylvania County.
- Almost two-fifths of the mSA's acreage consists of farms. This is more than Virginia and North Carolina overall. This presents an opportunity to develop and enhance local agriculture and food economies. The food manufacturing industry grew by 24% in Danville between March 2020 to June 2021 and grew in the mSA and PEA overall.
- Like the U.S., retail and consumer-facing industries in Danville and the broader region were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The food services, personal services (including laundry), hotels, and other travel/tourism-related industries all declined dramatically through June 2021 - but, as more current data are released, the planning team will evaluate and track the on-going (and uneven) economic recovery in these important industries.
- E-commerce is strong in the PEA overall. Although not a current strength in the city, being only one-fifth of the expected jobs, the sector has grown dramatically nationally during the pandemic.
- Driven by pandemic-accelerated growth of e-commerce and hybrid digital-physical models (e.g., online ordering and supply chain management) there is potential for Danville to lead by helping retailers, restaurants, and business-to-business firms make necessary transitions.
- Conduct retail market analysis to identify submarkets for increased retail/entrepreneurial growth. Beginning by expanding upon the River District's success, as the only branded experiential retail district and home to an opportunity zone, to target for additional development, retail, and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Employee inflow exceeds outflow. Providing an ability to capture demand for retail goods and services and residential development could be supported by an employee- friendly market.
- Sales tax in Danville and Pittsylvania County is lower than in surrounding municipalities in North Carolina and Virginia. Danville has a competitive advantage for retailers seeking real estate and an opportunity to instate a special tax to bolster the City's municipal budget.
- Leverage Danville's location in a region. Proximity to several academic institutions (i.e., colleges and universities in Chapel Hill, Durham, Greensboro, Blacksburg, and Lynchburg) places Danville in a potentially advantageous position to explore satellite campuses, partnerships, and other educational and economic drivers.

GAPS

- There is a significant small business lending capital gap from traditional banks in Danville. However, there are high levels of lending capital in Pittsylvania County overall. Gaps may be partially addressed by foundation, small business administrations, and state/local government lending, which should be investigated fully in next phase of work.
- There are low levels of MBE entrepreneurship in the City of Danville - but relatively high WBE rates - and both WBEs and MBEs are smaller scale employers compared to their male-owned and white-owned counterparts, respectively.
- Lower levels of educational attainment, disparities by race/ethnicity, and workforce education gaps persist within Danville's and the broader region.
- Available capital to realize real estate development is limited.

NEXT



- Access to and the presence of major interstate roads create a barrier to economic development.
- Larger retail centers (grocery-anchored strip centers or larger) do not exist within 13-33 miles in each direction from the city's center and the city's southern and western neighborhoods have limited retail development.
- An arts district does not exist in Danville.
- Defining strategies and policies to relocate retail currently located in annexed portions of the city to designated commercial districts.

STEPS

- Update economic data through end of 2021, as new data is released (6-month lag), to understand ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a

focus on the impacts on BIPOC workers, MBEs, and WBEs.

- Assess land assembly opportunities among vacant and underutilized land and buildings.
- Identify inclusive industry-cluster opportunities through scoring/weighting methodology.
- Develop better understanding of future housing market and demands (inclusive of the potential impact of the casino project) which, in turn, will influence retail and other neighborhood cluster demand (i.e., integrate findings from the ongoing housing study).
- Bolster residential demand with strategies to strengthen and improve commercial corridors over the next 10 years, including exploring the viability of retail and a diversity of non-retail uses.
- Remedy any misaligned municipal codes as it relates to commercial and residential growth opportunities such as outdated parking requirements.
- Understand assistance programs offered to businesses in greater detail and specifically define where opportunities are not meeting the needs of developers, property owners, corporations, and retailers. More at: <https://www.discoverdanville.com/business-support/incentives-overview/river-district-businesses-and-developers/>
- Continue developing cross-cutting strategies across the project.

CONNECTIVITY & MOBILITY

Mobility is an essential part of Danville's future growth and success. Future large-scale development has the potential to rapidly expand Danville's population and therefore its infrastructure needs. However, current transit systems in Danville are considerably disjointed. With the arrival of new development, it will be necessary to assess how the existing transit system could be more integrated. Transportation in Danville is highly dependent on the use of personal vehicles due in large part to large road infrastructure, disconnected pedestrian infrastructure, and local topography. The city of Danville offers several services, including:

- Inner-city busing with 6 fixed routes
- Inter-city busing with 2 fixed routes from Danville to Washington, D.C. and Martinsville to Richmond
- Handy-Van Services
- Reserve-a-Ride services
- Biking services at the Danville Riverwalk Trail and Anglers Ridge Mountain Biking Trail
- Danville Regional Airport

The area also has several projects underway in partnership with the Virginia Department of Transportation and West Piedmont, including:

- Kentucky Road and Piney Forest Road right-of-way improvements
- Ringgold Depot trail connection to the Riverwalk trail
- Bikeable infrastructure improvements on Piedmont Drive

TRENDS

- Mobility has been drastically impacted as an industry nationwide during the pandemic. In Danville specifically, COVID-19 has accelerated trends of reduced ridership on fixed transit routes and increased demand for on-demand shared-use mobility. While transit ridership is down over 20%, the demand for rideshare services such as the Reserve-a-Ride service is up 40% in the past year. Senior ridership on public transit has shifted to on-demand rideshare services. However, this service is mostly used for work trips with peak user times covering 4:00 to 7:00 in the morning. This shift in trends is due in part to the pandemic. A rise in rurally located medium-sized businesses over the past decade and the unreliable nature of local taxi services has also played a part in the rise of on-demand services. At approximately \$4 a ride, on-demand services are affordable for residents. However, the city does not have a cost-effective way to provide the early morning and late evening on-demand transit services most requested by employees working odd-hour shifts.
- Bus transit is competing against this increase in on-demand service popularity, safety concerns, and perception issues with mass transit. The largest of these barriers is high bus driver turnover rates. Drivers have difficult working conditions, safety concerns, and see opportunities for higher pay with the school bus system. The city has waived several licensing requirements to open the hiring pool but have not seen as much interest as anticipated. The city has also seen challenges receiving public and political backing to raise bus fares, which could help increase driver wages.
- Certain areas are well-served by sidewalks, while others are not. In general, areas with strong sidewalk networks are insular, lack crosswalks, and tend to be disconnected from the larger transportation framework. A similar trend is seen in bike infrastructure, where strong paths are created in park and economic centers but could benefit from connections to surrounding residential areas. There is a strong incentive for regional investment in multi-modal transportation, but the design could be pushed further to include buffers, materials, and signage which would enhance safety and encourage different mobility behaviors.

OPPORTUNITIES

The primary goal is to create a comprehensive vision for the city, weaving together bicycle planning, riverwalk planning, safety and sidewalk improvements, and complete streets policy. This plan should fill existing connectivity gaps, encourage regular use of non-motorized transit, and align with overall goals of health and resiliency. Initial ideas include:

- Leverage the Dan River - Build from the Riverwalk as a recreational anchor or spine

- Identify funding opportunities - Position Danville to take advantage of upcoming state and federal funding opportunities. Look ways existing assets can generate more revenue. For example, explore revenue potential of airport as drone hub with ties to manufacturing, shipping, or industrial services.
- Establish nodes - Use the land use plan to identify nodes at universities, downtown retail districts, the Riverwalk, and casino, then create actionable steps for development into interconnected non-motorized zones.
- Connect housing - Create walkable neighborhoods with basic services available within a 20-minute walk/bike distance, which are connected to downtown and the river, providing attractive missing middle housing to serve a range of income levels and increase growth and density. Expand mobility access in these areas to facilitate access to resources, jobs, exercise. Plan for industrial redevelopment that incorporates workforce housing and connectivity.
- Explore resiliency opportunities - Identify methods of fleet conversion to electric or hydrogen.

GAPS

The objective of the engagement process from a transportation perspective will be to understand communities' real and perceived barriers to mobility and access. The comprehensive plan will then look to address gaps in:

- Pedestrian infrastructure - walkable neighborhoods with housing close to amenities and sidewalk or bike infrastructure to accommodate needed connections. Focus on proximity for low-income and missing middle housing.
- Bus infrastructure - address the driver workforce supply and demand imbalance
- Civic infrastructure - align goals and needs of regional transportation planning, city transportation planning, and other city departments to gain local backing and ensure integration of services.
- Physical barriers - understand how the river and topography separate neighborhoods in ways which can be addressed through transportation improvements.

NEXT STEPS

Stakeholder engagement will be key, especially dedicated conversations with non-government task groups, activists, regional players, key employers, and transit users. Coordination with the Schoolfield transportation study will also be an important step to ensure the two plans complement each other and contribute to a unified vision for city staff to build on. Other objectives include:

- Define roadway typologies and assign mode hierarchies
- Map and index current and planned mobility projects
- Create a matrix of upcoming funding sources and timelines
- Develop walkable neighborhood plans
- Investigate zoning code changes for missing middle housing in coordination with housing study
- Assess supportive housing mobility needs
- Explore sustainable fleet options and funding
- Develop a Riverfront connectivity plan
- Research airport opportunities
- Develop a universal fare card strategy

COMMUNITY HEALTH

While there are challenges to improving the health of the Danville community, there are multiple opportunities to address it within the context of this Comprehensive Plan. Many of the top causes of death in the community can be reduced with shared approaches. Healthy diet, regular exercise, stopping smoking and regular health screenings have been found to reduce acute disease dramatically. Creative strategies to educate the public on the importance of healthy living can be repeated throughout the community and in several of the overall Comprehensive Plan concepts. A comprehensive focus on community education and a shared passion to improve health will go far to raise awareness, which is often the greatest obstacle to improving health.

TRENDS

- Lower life expectancy rates are prevalent in the city. Danville’s average life expectancy range falls in the lower fiftieth percent of the United States overall. This has contributed to the prevalence of Cancer, Coronary Heart Disease and is compounded by obesity. In addition, the potential for Opioid-related overdoses ranks as the third greatest contributor to poor health in this area. Other chronic diseases associated with respiratory and neurological systems have a great impact on the health of the community.
- Economic and access barriers to healthcare. Economic pressures within the community contribute to both a reluctance and even the inability to access healthcare. Access to insurance and Medicaid is limited to less than thirty percent of the population in Danville proper. Many residents

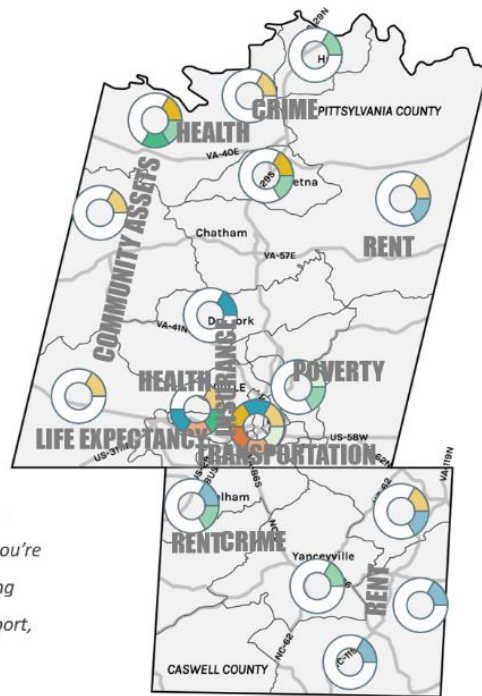
Low Access to Insurance and Medicaid
education for options, tap community institutions for education and support, telehealth for clinical and mental treatment

Prevalence of Cancer
healthy diet, stop smoking, exercise, screening, limit alcohol

Prevalence of Coronary Disease
30-60 minutes of daily activity, brisk walking, running, swimming, cycling, interval/circuit training, healthy diet, health weight, stop smoking

High Poverty
education is the avenue out of poverty, communication strategies for sharing opportunities

“If you don’t have access to fresh fruits and vegetables and those types of things, then you’re just compounding your health problems going forward. If they’re not actively engaged in sport, then the kids are overweight.”



“A person who’s living in poverty will think ‘I only need to go when I have to, because if I go now, it’s going to cost me money that I don’t have.’ So as long as you’re not hurting and in pain, then we’re OK.”

NO VEHICLES
options and collaboration, technology solutions, community forums

Cost Burdened Renters
policy for healthy homes, align housing with populations, culturally driven

High Violent Crime Rate
regional community groups, root cause assessment

Low Community Assets
align investment with regional needs, design to maintain wellness, collaborate with healthcare institutions

Low Life Expectancy
celebrate screening, health education and literacy, educate early

are forced to prioritize healthcare lowest on their monthly expenditures following housing and food.

- Culture does play an increasing role in healthcare access. This is not just a challenge for Danville, it is a pattern nationally. Some segments of the population access care only when symptoms force action, while others seek alternative forms of treatment outside of an acute care setting. The diversity of cultures in the Danville community creates a diversity in healthcare perception and behavior which is resulting in a less healthy community than seen in other areas of the country.

OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the strategies for improving community health are interlocked with several strategies highlighted in other sections.

- Economic strategies will contribute to a growth in insured citizens

- Housing strategies will ensure citizens are living in safe/mold-free environments
- Mobility strategies will improve access to healthcare institutions and support exercise
- Neighborhood strategies will focus neighbors on health and wellness beyond the individual
- Resilience strategies will focus on personal resilience and personal sustainability
- The key opportunity to share the desire for improved health at a community level, providing individual support with a community approach.

GAPS

Data will inform the opportunities for health and wellness improvement within the Danville community. A deep dive into both the macro and micro level drivers surrounding individual health outcomes will provide a more holistic assessment/measure of which interventions could create the greatest improvements.

NEXT STEPS

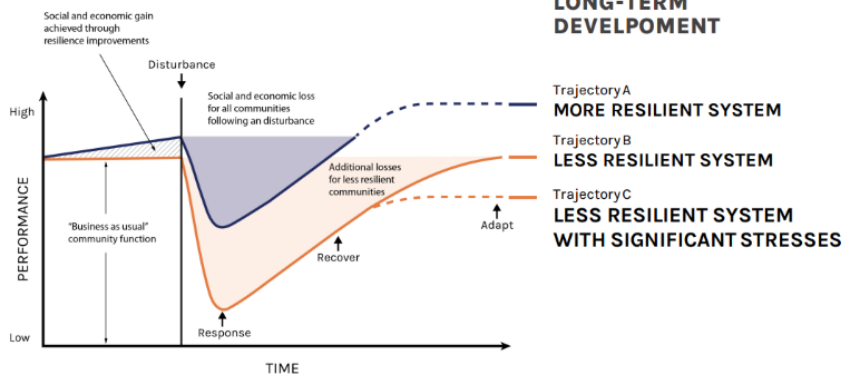
Our next steps must be to engage with the authors of the Dan River Health Equity Assessment to share data and community engagement perspective. This information will provide a platform for a deeper dive into key contributors of negative outcomes. Data collection will then focus on the key areas of concern, international strategies for improving health, and an assessment of which strategies have the greatest impact on health outcomes.

SUSTAINABILITY & RESILIENCE

Today, community resilience is referred to “as the ability to prepare for unanticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions” (NIST, 2021). Resilience is incredibly important to invest in ahead of any sort of unplanned disaster happening. The more a system is prepared, the less impact an unanticipated event will have in terms of disruption. The graphic to the right highlights a path for long-term development in terms of

performance. Ideally, uninterrupted growth is the goal of any given area. Considering that unanticipated weather, economic, and public health events will likely occur, then the goal should be to minimize any potential dip in performance to build up additional capacity for preparedness as possible.

RESILIENCE IS IMPORTANT FOR LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT



Adapted from model developed by M.E. Hynes, B. Ross, and CARRI (2008), presented at the DHS University Summit, Washington, DC

TRENDS

Danville’s current baseline review shows an area with complex, yet exciting, opportunities ahead of it when considering sustainable development. From a social and economic perspective, the area has a lingering legacy of inequity of income and socioeconomic status between specific groups that can disproportionately impact some demographics more than others. From an environmental perspective, the area has fluctuating weather patterns that point to significant changes in trends. The following elements will need to be mitigated Danville:

- Weather changes including heatwaves, storm surges, severe flooding, and ecosystem loss.
 - Heat Hazard: Average daily temperatures are expected to increase by 9.5 degrees from an average of 69.5 degrees (1961-1990) to around 79 degrees by 2020 exacerbating emission rates. The number of cooling degree days increased 2.4x from 1,330 days (1961-1990) to 3,183 days by 2020. These rates will continue to increase if climate focused interventions are not employed. Source: Climate Explorer NEMAC
 - Drought: In 2021, lower precipitation rates were recorded compared to normal year-to-date (YTD) metrics. In October 2020, Danville received a total of 43 inches of precipitation, ~5 inches more than normal YTD. While October 2021, the city received only 25 inches of precipitation. Indicating a dramatic shift in precipitation rates. Source: Climate Explorer NEMAC
 - Precipitation Patterns: More sporadic intense rain events, accompanied by less snowfall, increased winter rainfall, more inland flooding, and decreased summer rainfall reflect more severe seasonal changes, that can impact agriculture and farming cycles. This can place a great deal of strain on existing infrastructure.
 - Growing Degree Days: Historically Danville’s economy centered around agriculture. Specifically, the growth and production of tobacco products accounting for 4.78% of Danville’s domestic production. While tobacco is no longer the leading product of Danville, local agriculture has the potential to continue to be a major economic driver for Danville. This is only possible if Danville can address the climate related issues such as the number of growing degree days. Source: DataUSA.IO
 - Infrastructure Changes: Aging or unused infrastructure along the Dan River, in Danville and adjacent cities, can cause public health, ecological, and financial challenges. However, there are political misgivings around the removal of the existing Dan River dams. Many residents want to keep the dams for the views they provide along the Riverwalk Trail. However, the dams are problematic and with their removal, the Dan River flow could increase and help

mitigate major flooding and stormwater challenges the city faces. Improvements to the river could also provide much needed resiliency funding if the dams were to be removed. At the same time, trends in recent transportation data also show that investments in more regional systems could go a long way towards uplifting both environmental and socioeconomic goals.

- **Equity Changes:** Systemic resiliency can truly be achieved by carefully connecting the aspects of the comprehensive plan towards intentions across both social and environmental vulnerabilities. We can see how broader socioeconomic resilience can be created by intentionally identifying how local jobs and income-levels can be improved by removing the disproportionate cost-burden from daily activities on historically disadvantaged demographics. Reducing the available portion of income that goes to things like transportation, utility payments, and even food payments can play a huge role in pushing forward the capability of Danville residents to have more disposable income, and therefore, greater money to put towards wealth accumulation that can offset any unexpected expenses caused by unanticipated events.

OPPORTUNITIES

Each of the previously mentioned trends are also areas of opportunity. The following areas present the greatest areas of potential intentional opportunity creation that a broader comprehensive planning process can help to push forward in Danville. These include:

- **Food- energy- water nexus:** taking advantage of the local climate to create a center of environmental excellence in the region. Growing degree days still have a big impact on agriculture and food accessibility. However, due to drought and irregular weather patterns this does not directly equate to increased food production unless these three areas are managed and coordinated intentionally in planning. From the city’s comments on sustainable energy, it seems important to further understand the relationship between local and centralized utilities and identify what incremental changes can happen from an energy perspective.
- **Affordable energy:** energy is a huge part of the utility-income burden in certain parts of Danville. Evaluating new builds to enhance the use or renewable energy will help reduce the cost of utilities for residents and landowners.
- **Connecting to the Commonwealth and federal-level opportunities for local climate leadership:** Infrastructure investments and capacity investments are both show huge areas of possible collaboration and overlap. Already, recent solar investments and contracts by the City of Danville have been used as a strategy to build economy, reuse underutilized farmland, and attract companies. Solar energy could also play a role in times of emergency to provide power to critical places and uses, but also provide a way to build jobs.

GAPS

Data is the most important tool to support intentional decision-making. The comprehensive planning process can be supported by intentionally diving deeply into a few key data areas. Otherwise, it can be difficult to judge exactly where in the city these broad macro-level shifts can help to create the most strategic change. These key data areas can include the following the methodology:



NEXT STEPS

Stakeholder coordination through resilience is oftentimes tricky because certain information can be somewhat confidential. In particular, the maps and vulnerabilities that are related to utility-level infrastructure. It is imperative that the city develop strong relationships with utility companies to create comprehensive maps that can highlight areas of vulnerability and strength to develop a comprehensive approach to resiliency.

NEIGHBORHOODS, PARKS, AND LAND USE

The topography and historic development trends of the south have led to the distinct separation of uses throughout the city of Danville. The result is a pattern of corridors and districts separated from each other and pockets of exclusive uses that lack a clear identity.

TRENDS

- Residential Uses
 - There is a lack of housing supply to meet future potential demand and a lack of diverse housing options to accommodate diverse resident needs.
 - The largest gaps in housing remain in missing middle housing and good quality starter housing. Some of these gaps are offset by an increase in housing development in surrounding Piedmont County, but future trends should identify key residential opportunities in the city itself.
- Retail and Manufacturing Uses
 - Retail and manufacturing uses are better thought of as employment opportunities and amenities. Danville is losing retail, which decreases the distribution of employment opportunities and amenities in the city.
 - Commercial uses are mostly along major transit corridors but are not walkable or connected to residential neighborhoods without a car.
- Natural Features and Open Space
 - The Dan River is an amenity, but also serves as a divide between North and South Danville.
 - There is a desire to expand the existing 4-acre riverfront park to connect with other parks and open spaces.
 - Danville's existing parks system is old and primarily located in the heart of the city. There are limited neighborhood parks. North and West Danville are most in need of better-quality parks.
 - Primary concerns around park spaces include connectivity and quality. Most neighborhood parks are primarily unwanted vacant lands that transitioned into informal open space.
 - The few parks that provide quality outdoor space for residents are programmed by the Parks and Recreation Department. These efforts are greatly appreciated and valued within the community.
 - School open spaces are also used as community parks and open spaces but there is no formal agreement between the schools and the parks department.
- Neighborhoods
 - Neighborhood identities are more colloquial than political.
 - Neighborhoods are almost entirely residential in use, although there are mixes of residential typologies.
 - Amenities such as parks and retail centers are within a 15-minute walk of residents, but topography generally makes these areas more drivable than walkable.

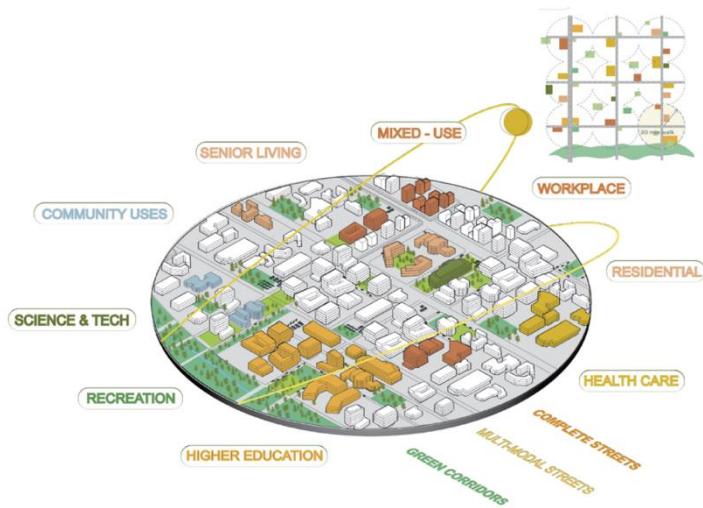
OPPORTUNITIES

The Danville Comprehensive Plan can use land use as a tool for creating complete neighborhoods in Danville. Complete neighborhoods enable residents to access basic needs within a twenty-minute walking radius. Complete neighborhoods look to combat segregation by race, economic standing, and use to better serve the city. In doing so, complete neighborhoods look to:

- Create accessible, walkable communities with manageable motorized connections
- Combat climate change using sustainable land use patterns
- Incentivize local investment by enhancing neighborhood pride
- Encourage best uses of the land to support a diverse set of residents
- Support healthy living
- Raise local economies

- Schools will soon be receiving additional funding for school improvements which provides an opportunity to couple community spaces with schools
- Increase community interaction

This will be done through a special analysis of neighborhoods using metrics such as access to employment opportunities and open space.



GAPS

Throughout this pre-planning process, several gaps in understanding as it relates to Danville’s land uses and neighborhood identity have been identified which will be further explored in the comprehensive planning process.

- Identify how the Schoolfield Plan and other parallel studies will work into the Master Plan and ensure compatibility.
- Identify how annexed areas of the city have been worked into the community fabric.
- Identify existing deserts (food, physical activity, disconnected from transit) to address the hierarchy of need city-wide and lead to actionable short-term goals as well as a long-term vision.

NEXT STEPS

The engagement strategy for neighborhood analysis will largely focus on understanding how residents currently identify their existing neighborhoods to create a community-based complete neighborhood framework. The housing, mobility, economy, health, and resiliency components will coordinate stakeholder interviews and focus groups which will provide further insights on existing nodes to be enhanced, city interest in specific policies, and equitable resident representation.

SAMPLE GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS WORKFLOW

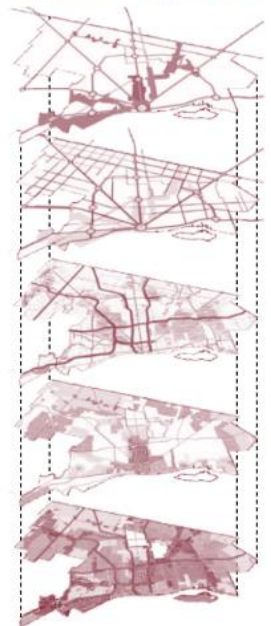
CREATE MULTIPLE EMPLOYMENT DISTRICTS ALONG EXISTING CORRIDORS

CONNECT PEOPLE TO OPPORTUNITY USING MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT

RE-FRAME VACCANT LAND AS GREEN SPACES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO HEALTH

DEVELOP DISTINCT, ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

20 YEAR VISION



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

“Plan Danville” will be a community-centered public participation and engagement process to develop a new comprehensive plan for the City of Danville. The process intentionally realizes Danville's future dreams, ideas, and priorities from a diverse array of viewpoints. An essential premise is that the more people are engaged in shaping the plan, the more likely they will participate in actively implementing the shared vision. This year-long journey with several phases highly integrates community members into the conversation about what those native to Danville would like to see for their community.

PROPOSED PROCESS

According to the American Planning Association, a comprehensive plan encompasses "a process that seeks to engage all members of the community to create a more prosperous, convenient, equitable, healthy, and attractive place for present and future generations." The future of planning in Danville is envisioned as a standard interface with community members to guide change and to improve quality of life and access to opportunities. It influences the various factors affecting social determinants of health, such as transportation and housing. This contrasts the current plan, which only serves as a planning resource rather than a guiding document. This planning effort is forward-facing, with messaging and engagement efforts that reflect and resonate with the City of Danville while also evoking feelings of excitement and optimism for the future.

A vital goal of the public participation process is to make the Comprehensive Plan process accessible and appealing to, and inclusive of, everyone in Danville (residents, business owners, property owners, employees, etc.). The methodology also seeks to build community capacity, so that individuals can effect positive change by conversing *alongside* city government, healthcare and educational institutions, philanthropy, and other stakeholders to understand community systems. Additional grant funding for this process will assist in shaping the future of Danville by:

- Increasing awareness of the planning process
- Assuring that engagement efforts are broad and deep throughout the community using a variety of participation tools and techniques
- Employing Danville residents who are passionate about engaging their community
- Carrying the voices of the community in a way where people can see how their ideas generate a new vision through the planning process
- Encouraging action and implementation in a way that leverages the community's resources most efficiently and effectively

The *Plan Danville* public participation and engagement process will be a 12-month community conversation about our backyards, our neighborhoods, our city, and Danville's place within the region. It will be conducted in the five phases described below with the following proposed engagement tools:

- A fixed storefront location
- A mobile planning van
- A giant vinyl billboard to advertise engagement activities
- The creation of a "meeting in a box" game that groups can use for team building and those who might not attend a master plan meeting
- Hiring community organizers for door-to-door engagement, to encourage attendance at pre-planned events, and helping tailor engagement opportunities for underrepresented groups
- Promotional pieces in the media, refreshments, and comprehensive plan-branded items for advertising

This aligns with the total project planning period that will take a total of 18-months. The additional 6-months allow for the creation of final document and the development of an action plan. Key process design components include:

- The overall approach is iterative- with each step building on the one before it so that the community can see their input will be used and ensure it is correctly understood, which informs how the development of the next phase.
- Large city-wide meetings will be used at critical points in the process so that all city areas can learn from one another.
- In each project phase, pre-programmed community events meet people where they are, in addition to providing for online/virtual input opportunities and special project-related events.
- Engagement methods will accommodate differences in learning and communication styles (verbal, drawing, writing).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCOPE

Phases	Deliverable	Timeline	Engagement
Phase 1 Define It!	Let's build on the best of who and what has come before us.	March - June 2022	Small Conversations

The planning team wants to hear from everyone who calls Danville home. As a first step, we'll begin conversations with community members who are often the least engaged—older adults, young people, people who rely on public transit, and unhoused individuals. Early on, we will also connect with community members who want to take an active, ongoing role throughout the process. To begin, community trailblazers and innovators serve as inspirational members of the community. We'll also understand the strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities that community members see. How do individuals define their "home"—the neighborhood they live in and its key features? We also want to learn about that and create maps for people to begin conversations.

Phase 2 Dream It!	Let's envision new solutions to existing issues.	June - July 2022	Community Event #1
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Now we're ready for the first-ever event this century that will bring all the neighborhoods of Danville together. You'll be able to see and respond to community members' shared reflections and perspectives on what community means to them. Building on this milestone, together, we'll factor in all the current issues and opportunities to arrive at a shared vision and set of values. During this phase, the planning team will also open a storefront home-base to welcome individuals and groups who want to learn more and connect further, which helps ensure everyone can take who wants to. A mobile engagement vehicle will visit different sites and events where community members come together.

Phase 3 Design It!	Let's set specific goals and outcomes—and look to how they might shape the Danville landscape.	August - October 2022	Community Event #2
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With the beginning of a new school year, let's look at other communities' successes for inspiration we can apply to Danville. In addition to gaining real-world insights, this effort will test the vision and values we have developed. It will allow us to identify the tasks we must accomplish to realize our vision. It will also help us see how we should track progress and measure success. Together we'll review and refine and maps or plans we have drawn up to date.

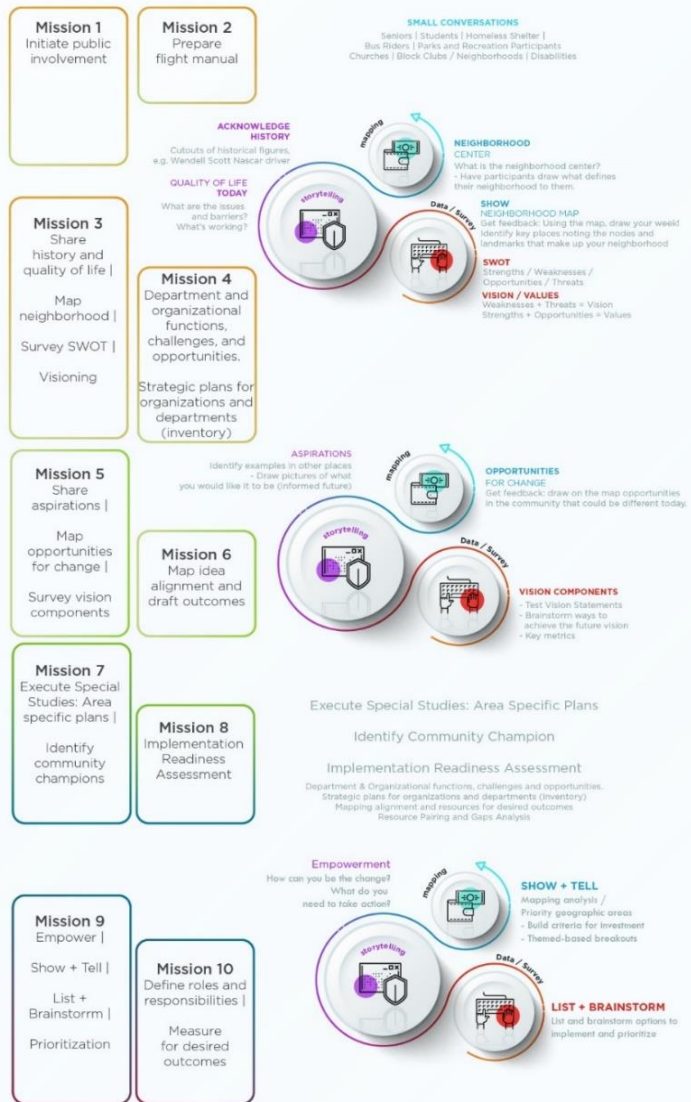
Phase 4 Detail It!	Together let's decide who in the community will lead what.	November 2022 - January 2023	Community Event #3
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We're now ready to think about how everyone in the community is interconnected and how different individuals and groups can help bring the community's values and priorities to life. In doing so, we'll study the local map, prioritize areas for future investment, and brainstorm ways to act. We will identify potential "owners" to assume responsibility for critical aspects of the implementation effort. This phase will include up to four special studies to develop our shared understanding of what policy, program, or practice steps might be needed to get an early start on advancing key ideas and projects.

Phase 5 Do It!	Let's draw up an action plan to achieve our aspirations.	February - June 2023	Community Event #4
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During this final phase of the master plan process, the planning team will bring together all the findings, studies, and analyses from the effort to date to draft the 20-year master plan for Danville. As a companion to the project, we will also develop a five-year strategy to help stakeholders, foundations, champions, and community members to get the implementation off to a great start. Once we're all set, let's share the plan and celebrate our effort together with a lively, final community event!

PROJECT SCHEDULE



DANVILLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN STRATEGY

PlanIt Danville is a community-centered engagement process to develop a new comprehensive plan for the City of Danville. The process intends to capture Danville's future dreams, ideas, and priorities from a diverse array of viewpoints. An essential premise is that the more people that are engaged in shaping the plan, the more likely they will take an active role in implementing the shared vision. Thus, strength and resiliency will be created through activity. Through this year-long journey, this iterative approach will build the community's confidence in their role in shaping their environment while also creating a culture of growth and learning for a successful trajectory for the next two decades.

STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

During the pre-planning process, the consultant team actively engaged a variety of stakeholders to gain a better understanding of Danville from the community perspective. We are incredibly grateful for the open and in-depth conversations shared with us and look forward to continuing these lines of communication. Pre-planning engagement consisted of:

Two site visits

- November 2021
- January 2022

Attendance at community events, including:

- 2021 Health Collaborative Summit
- Georgia Tech student presentation on Danville Parks

Focus groups with several organizations, including:

- City of Danville Departments
 - Transportation
 - Utilities
 - Economic Development
 - Community Development
 - Parks and Recreation
 - Planning or whatever Doug's dept is called
- West Piedmont Planning District Commission
- Pittsylvania County Planning
- Danville Public Schools
- Sova Health
- Health Collaborative
- Danville Police Department
- Danville Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Discover Danville
- River District Association
- SRI Packaging
- Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond

Over fifty stakeholders were engaged in over a dozen meetings, including:

- Rick Barker
- Kelvin Perry
- Linda Green
- Barbara Ferry
- Kristina Eberly
- Paul Farrar
- Joseph Mengedoth
- Leslie Studivant
- Christine Markowitz
- Tonya Gooch-Hawkins
- Danielle Montra
- Stephanie Lovely
- Marsha Mendenhall
- Angela Hairston
- Kathleen McEvoy
- Vincentt Sutton
- Chris
- Mike Mondul
- Sheila Williamson-Brach
- Earl B. Reynolds
- Michael Armbrister
- Katherine W. Milam
- Tommy R. Bennett
- Christopher Clark
- Lisa Jones
- Joe Bonanno
- Brian Dunevant
- Mark Adelman
- Sean Campbell
- Ken Gillie
- Barabara Fiedor
- Janet Davis
- Joy Wood
- Ken Danter
- Larissa Deedrich
- Earl B. Reynolds
- Brandy Dudley
- Annette Osso
- Tracy Garland
- Mike Huggins
- Angela Davis
- Brandy Boofard
- Tommy Bennett
- Michael Armbrister
- Todd Pinekenstein
- Annie Martinie
- Ashtyn Foddrell
- Larz Kegerreis
- Christian Ryan
- Eric Murr

