



The Center City - West Greenville Revitalization Plan

Redevelopment Commission
City of Greenville - North Carolina

I. THE CONCEPT

This Revitalization Plan faces the challenge of bridging the urban renewal era of downtown planning and redevelopment with the more recent downtown development and planning principles. This Plan, shown on Maps 3.1 and 3.2, also sets forth the direction for public / private partnerships which will complete and protect the investments which are now in place.

The Conceptual Plan, Map 3.1, focuses primarily on the physical development issues in the center city. Specific areas of emphasis include: traffic patterns and parking, land use, zoning, public improvements, and design guidelines.

In order to protect, enhance, and promote those elements that are unique to downtown Greenville, the following objectives should be met:

1. Maximize vehicular and pedestrian access and circulation.
2. Continue present land use with emphasis on mixed-use developments including urban residential, specialty retail, entertainment, cultural, educational, (ECU), and municipal uses.
3. Expand and define the boundaries of downtown to connect to the residential neighborhoods both east and west of the center city.

4. Improve the visual and functional image of the center city and West Greenville by elimination or relocation of non-conforming uses.
5. Promote joint opportunities for quality development which enhance the growth, image, and identity of downtown Greenville and East Carolina University.
6. Balance the small town character with the big city intensity generated by the new residential, entertainment, educational, or hotel uses. Limit large scale development to major activity nodes or key predetermined sites.
7. Increase the amount of open space in the downtown with emphasis on public access to the Town Common.
8. Increase the scope of uses and activities in the downtown to create night and weekend activity.

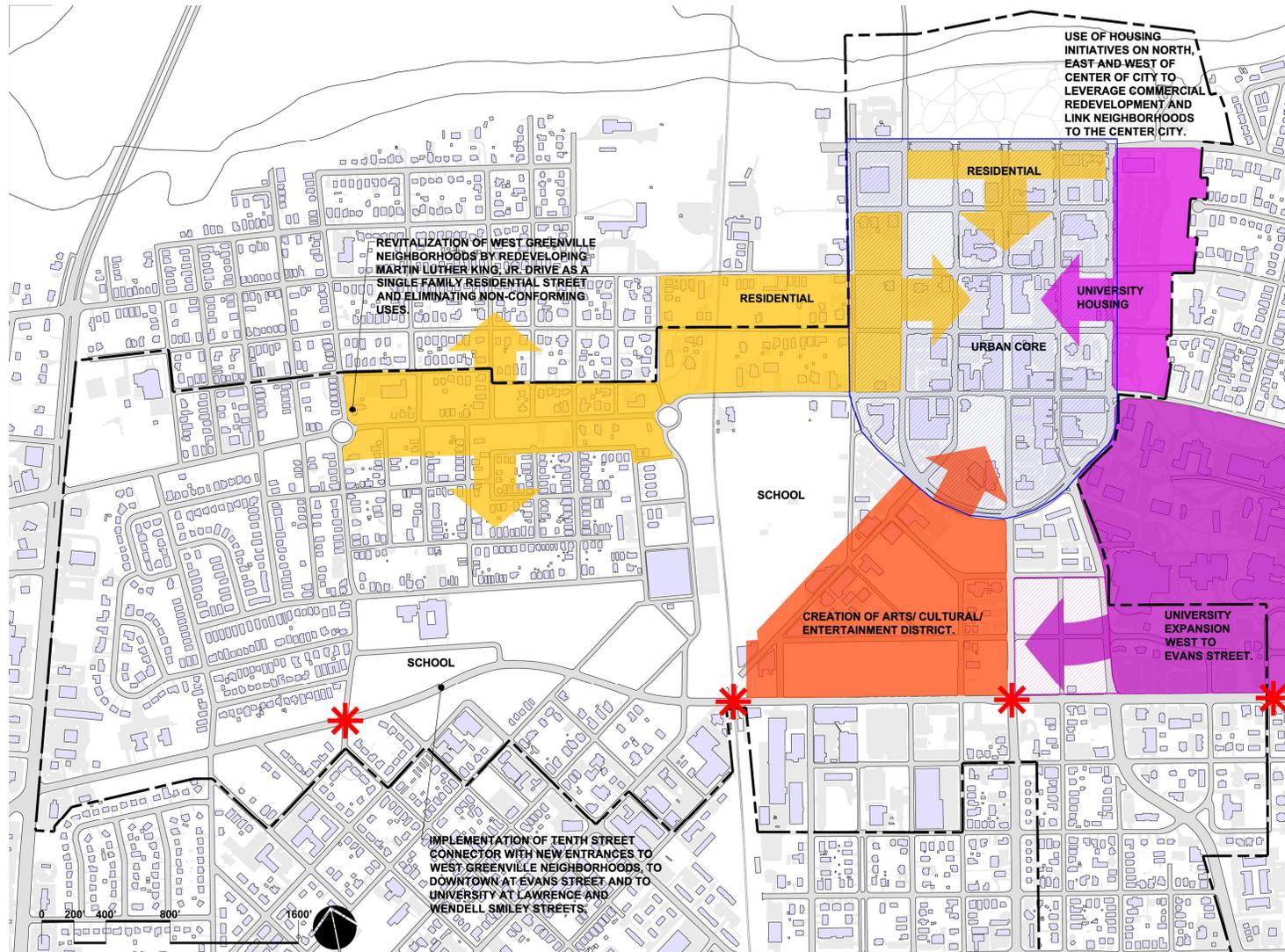
As automotive access to the center city is improved by construction of the Tenth Street Connector as a major thoroughfare and as traffic volumes increase, attention must be given to maintain the quality of the pedestrian circulation and pedestrian / automotive intersections.

The Tenth Street Corridor will have the following important intersections along its route through the center city of Greenville:



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Map 3.1: Conceptual Plan



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- Tyson Street as the new gateway entrance to the West Greenville neighborhoods.
- Chestnut Street as the location of a new shopping node for the West Greenville neighborhoods. See Figure 3.1.
- Underpass at the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad recommended as the new gateway entrance to the center city. An alternate design maintaining Dickinson Avenue as a through street is also shown. See Figure 3. 2.
- Evans Street as the main entrance to the downtown core from the south. See Figures 3.3 and 3.4.
- Lawrence Street as the new entrance to the East Carolina University campus. See Figure 3.5.

Tenth Street must be carefully designed to minimize conflicts between pedestrian traffic moving to the downtown core and the University, and automotive traffic moving east and west through the downtown. At these and other key intersections, special pavement at pedestrian crossings, landscaping, traffic signals, and signage must be used to improve the quality of pedestrian circulation. At present , conditions along Farmville Boulevard including incompatible land uses, overhead power lines, and poor landscaping.

This intersection of Tenth Street with Dickinson Avenue and the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad will be studied by

the engineering firm hired by the City to develop the design for the Tenth Street Connector. The design for Tenth Street may require this road to be an overpass at this location. However, the overpass will negatively impact the City's ability to develop a much greater area on each side of the Connector in this area and therefore, is not recommended. As the design is developed, it will be important to try to maintain Dickinson Avenue as a through street without negatively impacting the design of this gateway by forcing Tenth Street to be an overpass.

The completion of the Tenth Street Connector should be used as the opportunity to change Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive from a major thoroughfare to a neighborhood collector street. The right of way should be reduced to increase the width of the streetscape along each side of the street and provide opportunities to improve the image of this residential area. Traffic circles are proposed at the intersections with Fourteenth Avenue and Albemarle Streets to calm traffic and eliminate transient vehicles from the area.

Access to the downtown core from Dickinson Avenue and Charles Boulevard must be de-emphasized by traffic control devices. The historical character of Dickinson Avenue and its proposed use as an arts district should be geared to pedestrian traffic as indicated in Figure 3.2. Access to the downtown core and its concentration of retail uses via Farmville Boulevard and Evans Street should be encouraged by traffic control devices and streetscape improvements. Figure 3.4 shows the character of the retail core on Evans Street in the center city.



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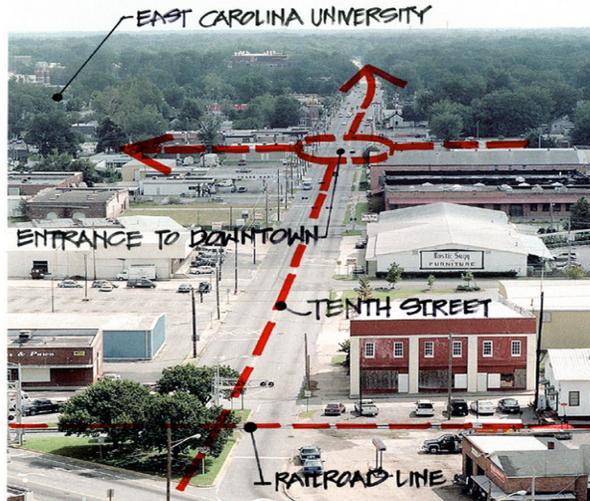


Figure 3.1: West Tenth Street Commercial Node



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Before



Alternate Tenth Street Bridge Design



After

Figure 3.2 West Tenth Street Bridge Designs



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Figure 3.3: Intersection at Evans and Tenth Streets



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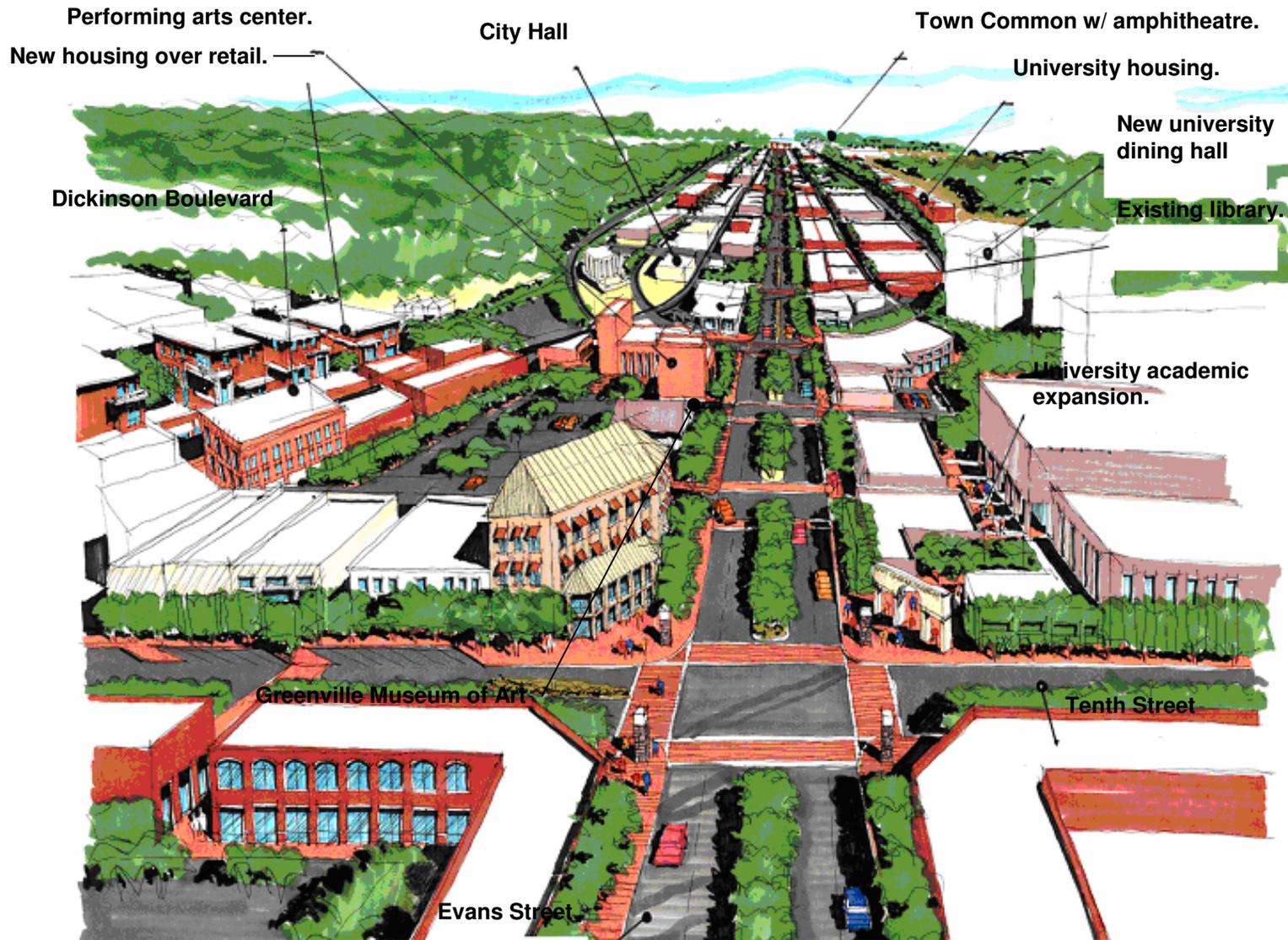


Figure 3.4: New Gateway Entrance to Downtown on Evans Street



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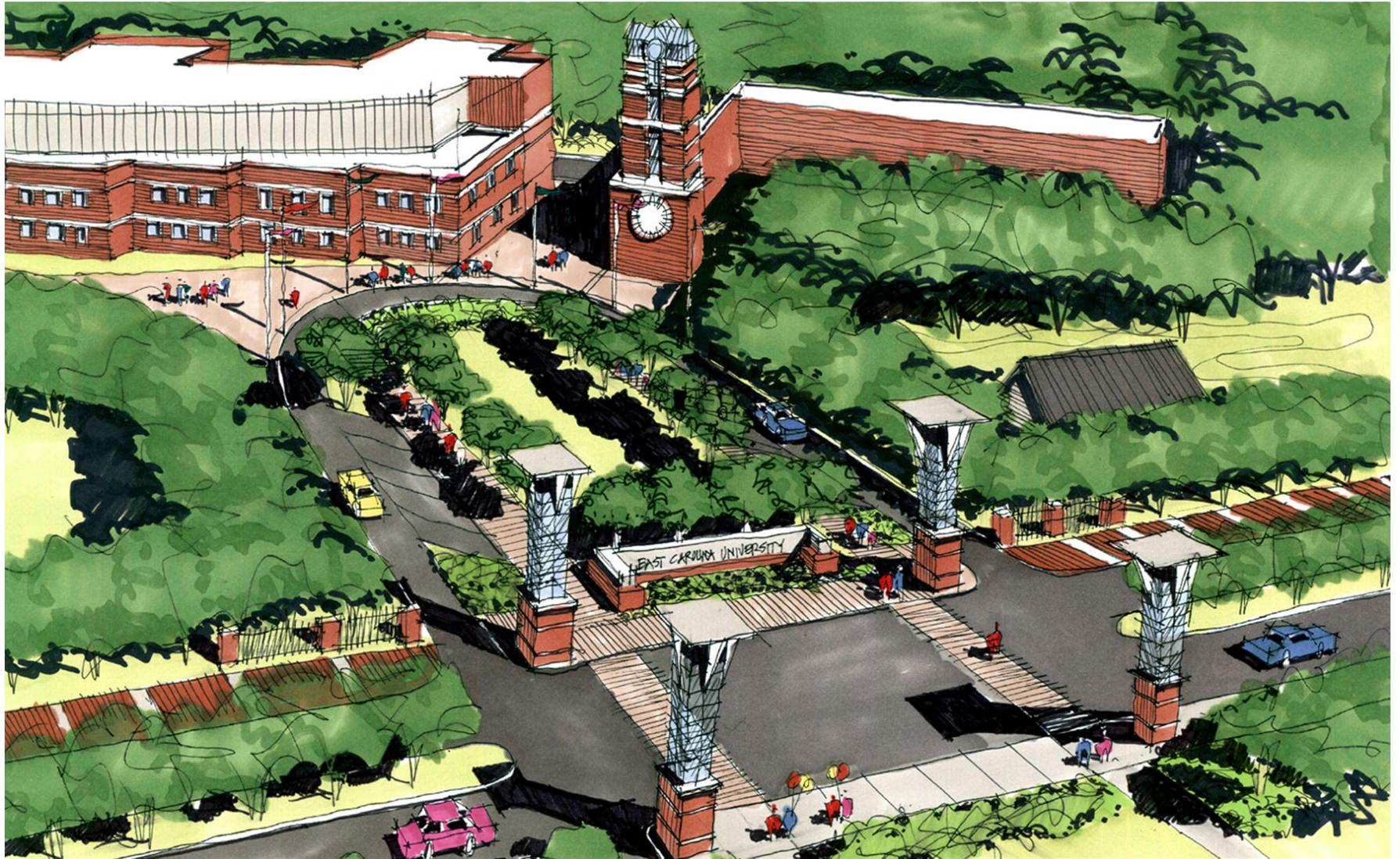


Figure 3.5: Proposed Tenth Street Entrance to East Carolina University



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Figure 3.6: View north on Evans Street



Figure 3.7: View west on First Street



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Due to the low traffic volumes on First Street, this street should be reduced from 4 lanes to 2 lanes and angle parking added on both sides of the street. These 175 additional spaces should be used to support public activities in the Town Common and provide overflow parking the County and Federal Courthouses. Refer to Map 3.2 and Figure 3.7 for the changes recommended in this area.

Current alternatives to improve parking in the center city include working with downtown land owners to better utilize parking resources, including relocation of employee parking to provide more visitor parking in key commercial areas and create additional on-street and surface lots for visitor and employee parking such as along First Street or on the two blocks bounded by Third, Greene, Fifth, and Pitt Streets.

The present costs and parking demands do not currently justify the construction of new parking garages. However, future garages should be planned primarily for locations that will leverage proposed new developments. Several potential sites have been indicated on Map 3.2, including the east side of the block bounded by Third, Evans, Fourth, and Cotanche Streets. This site will help leverage the Self-Help Office Building, other retail/entertainment uses on Evans Street, and future development by the University of its property to the east of this block. A second site should be selected to help leverage development of a mixed-use office/hotel complex on the site of the Humber House. These decks should be designed to house future ground

floor retail along the street frontage, if practical.

An intermodal transportation center has been discussed for the center city. This facility will provide a central hub location from which all forms of public transportation will operate and create opportunities for connection to other modes of transportation including regional systems. Potential users may include Greenville Area Transit (GREAT), Pitt Area Transit (PATS), East Carolina University Student Transit Authority (ECUSTA), Greyhound/Carolina Trailways, taxis, hotel and airport courtesy vans, and in the future, passenger rail service. In addition, it will serve as a primary transfer point for public transportation service and provide bicycle and pedestrian connections. Intermodal transportation centers have also been built in downtowns around the country as catalysts for economic development.

Typically, these facilities are located in downtown areas serving as a primary point of destination from which pedestrians will walk to their final destination or transfer to an alternative mode of transportation to continue their travels. Currently, GREAT's primary transfer point is located in the downtown area a few blocks from one of ECUSTA's primary transfer points at Mendenhall. Most taxi services and the Greyhound/Carolina Trailways Depot are located in or very near the downtown area. A single facility centrally located in Greenville would offer citizens and visitors an opportunity to access any form of public transportation as they travel throughout Greenville and the region. It also would serve as a means of connecting the East Carolina University campus and the medical school campus at the hospital. With the hope of



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regaining the passenger rail transportation that once served Greenville, locating the facility adjacent to an existing rail line such as the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad would be preferable. The City will be seeking the services of a consultant to study the feasibility to determine the need and possible location for an Intermodal Transportation Center.

II. TRAFFIC AND PARKING RECOMMENDATIONS

The existing traffic patterns are delineated on Map 1.3. Based on these patterns, the conceptual plan was developed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. Complete the Tenth Street Connector. Figure 3.8 shows the existing conditions which will need significant work to create proper image for this major entrance to the downtown.
2. Change Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to a neighborhood collector and consider traffic circles at each end.
3. Improve the key Tenth Street corridor intersections to leverage development on this major east-west thoroughfare.
4. Reestablish Evans Street as the major route into the center city from the south.
5. De-emphasize Dickinson Avenue as a major entrance into the downtown due to its size and image.

6. Establish potential locations for surface and on-street parking to support currently proposed downtown development.
7. Reduce the width of First Street and provide on street parking.
8. Provide on-street parking on Reade Circle adjacent to the University.
9. Land bank property for two future recommended parking garage sites.
10. Improve pedestrian circulation systems in the downtown core including linkages between the center city and the University. A prime example is the creation of pedestrian alleyways to provide access from parking lots to the shopping streets as shown in Figure 3.9.

III. LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The future land use for the center city, delineated on Map 3.3, was developed to address the following objectives:

- Emphasis on joint use projects driven by the University's growth and leveraging other related private development for the City.
- Expansion of the boundaries of the downtown core to connect to the residential neighborhoods east and west



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of the center city.

- Creation of commercial development along the major road corridors such as Tenth Street and Evans Street.
- Improvement of the open space in the Town Common to leverage other adjacent residential and commercial projects.
- Increase of the density and the scope of land use in the downtown core to create night and weekend activity.
- Removal of incompatible uses from the area to encourage future investment.

The proposed future land use and zoning change recommendations to support these objectives are shown on Maps 3.3 and 3.4. The future land use plan has the following features:

- Encouragement of infill retail and entertainment uses along Evans Street and the key parcels on the Tenth Street corridor to provide critical mass and choices for the patrons of the center city. The existing bars in the area must be upgraded in both quality and image to support additional commercial development. One of the projects proposed for this use is a mixed use project consisting of an inn, University alumni center, and office building.

- Provision of space for University academic expansion into the four block area bounded by Eighth, Cotanche, Tenth, and Evans Streets.
- Development of an active recreational use for the Town Common to bring visitors to the downtown. It should be located at the north end of Evans Street as a focal point for the retail corridor. The edges of the Common must be defined to create a greater sense of security for this open space. See Figure 3.16 for a proposed active use of the Common.
- Development of medium to high density residential units south of First Street leveraged by the investment in the Common. See Map 3.2. The existing conditions at this intersection are shown on Figure 3.7
- Development of University student housing on University property on either side of Reade Street from First Street to Fifth Street. Although this use has not been approved by the University, we believe it will provide a critical link from the downtown core to the neighborhood to the east. It will also provide a great deal of “body heat” for the commercial uses in the center city and reduce the automobile trips in the area. This development will be supported by the new University dining hall being constructed in the southeast corner of the intersection of Fifth and Reade Streets.
- Development of a City governmental center on the



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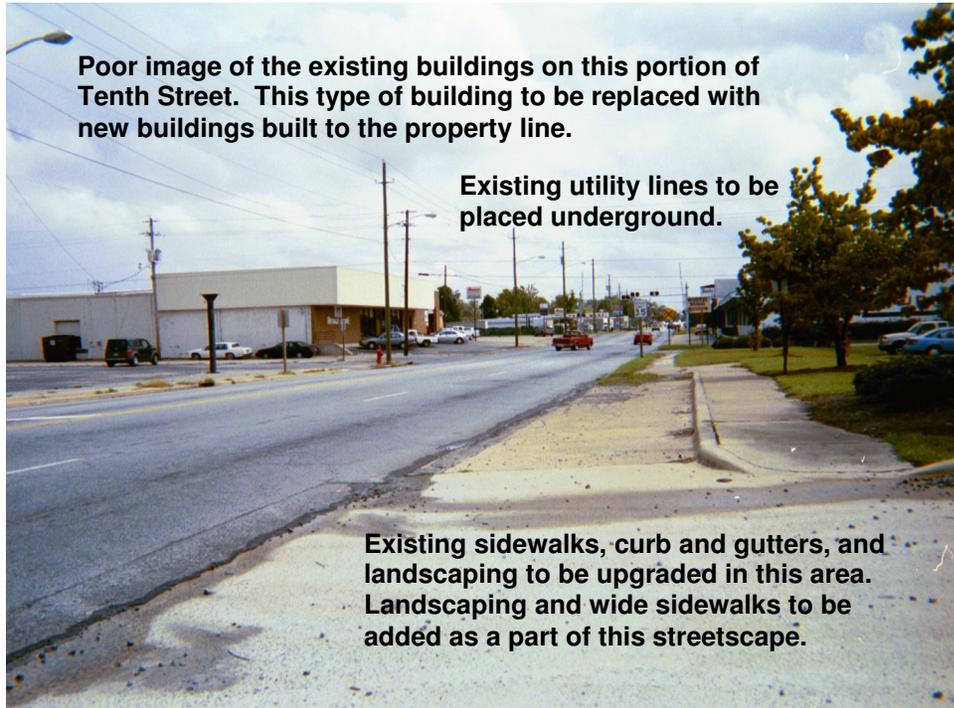


Figure 3.8: View east on Tenth Street

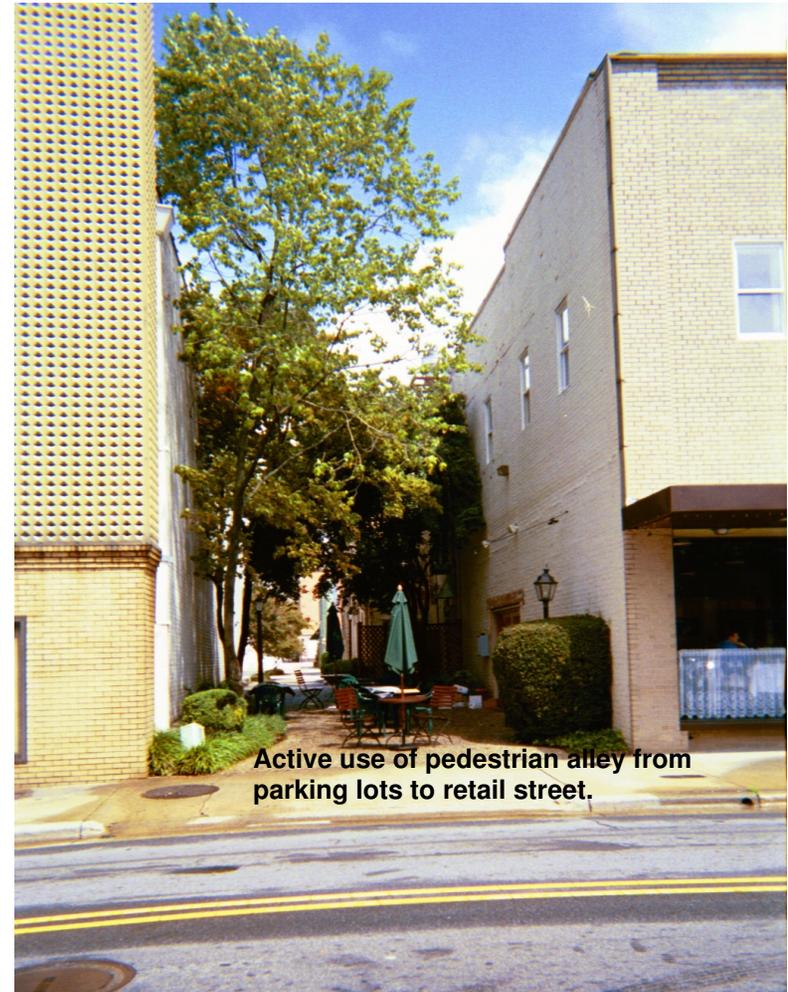
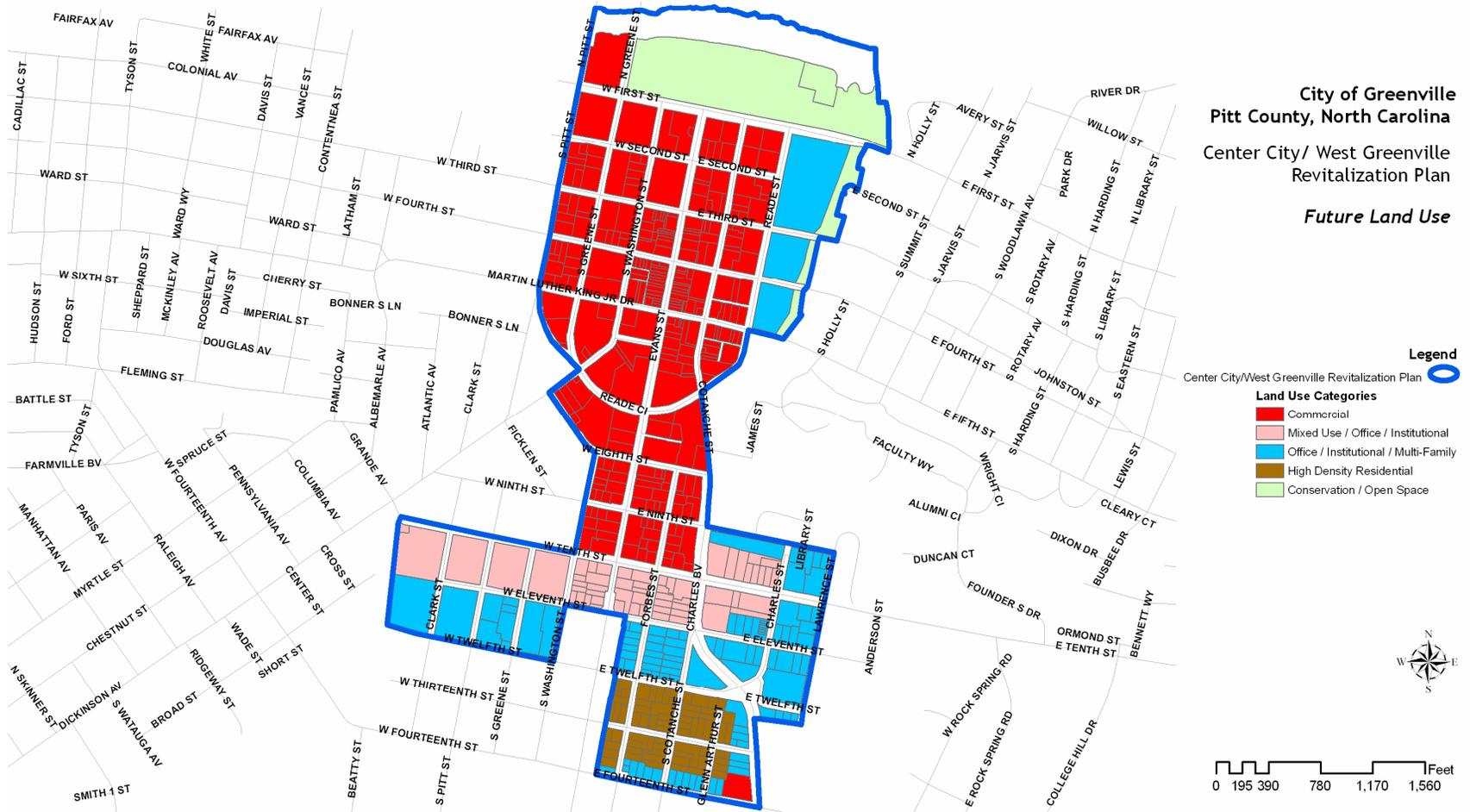


Figure 3.9: Alley next to Starlight Cafe



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Map 3.3: Future Center City Land Use



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block bounded by Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, Greene Street, Fourth Street, and Washington Street. The City is currently planning an expansion of the Greenville Utilities Commission (GUC) building as a new City Hall. See Figures 3.16 GUC is moving into the adjacent Wachovia Bank Building, Figure 3.17

- Development of a new county governmental building on the block immediately west of the Pitt County Courthouse to leverage additional related office space and “body heat” in the downtown core. The existing courthouse is shown on Figure 3.14 Although this proposed office building has not been approved by the County, it is a logical move since the County has recently renovated and expanded its Courthouse and since City government has made its commitment to the vitality of the downtown core.
- Development of additional medium density residential uses on the west side of the commercial core on the blocks bounded by Third, Greene, Fifth, and Pitt Streets. This development could be part of a high density mixed income project similar to those currently being developed in many other medium sized cities. This use will provide a critical link from the downtown core to the neighborhoods to the west. It will also leverage a great deal of “body heat” for the commercial uses in the center city and reduce the automobile trips in the area.

- Development of an arts and science / cultural / entertainment district in the area bounded by Dickinson Avenue, Reade Circle, Evans Street, and Tenth Street. This will require relocation of the UNX Chemical facility to a more compatible site. In addition, several other automotive related uses along Tenth Street and Dickinson Avenue should, over time, be relocated. The suggested uses for this area to provide critical mass to provide critical mass to the existing Museum of Art and the County Library include a Performing Arts Center and the Eastern North Carolina Regional Science Center or a theatre complex. See Figure 3.18. Selective demolition of non-historic sections of the existing UNX facility could provide a large surface parking area to support the high intensity uses around the perimeter of this area. The traffic generated by these facilities will further support the commercial uses in the downtown core.

The Dickinson Avenue corridor should be developed as a specialty retail or arts district. The pedestrian scale of the street and the quality of the historic buildings provide an excellent infrastructure for this proposed development. The intent of the Plan is renovate or restore the historic buildings in accordance with the guidelines from the Department of the Interiors and the State of North Carolina. The incentive to renovate these historic buildings is the 20% tax credit that can be achieved. See Figure 3.19 for an overall view of the corridor and Figure 3.20 for typical recommended façade improvements for buildings in the center city. Figures 3.21 – 3.23 provide examples of excellent and poor



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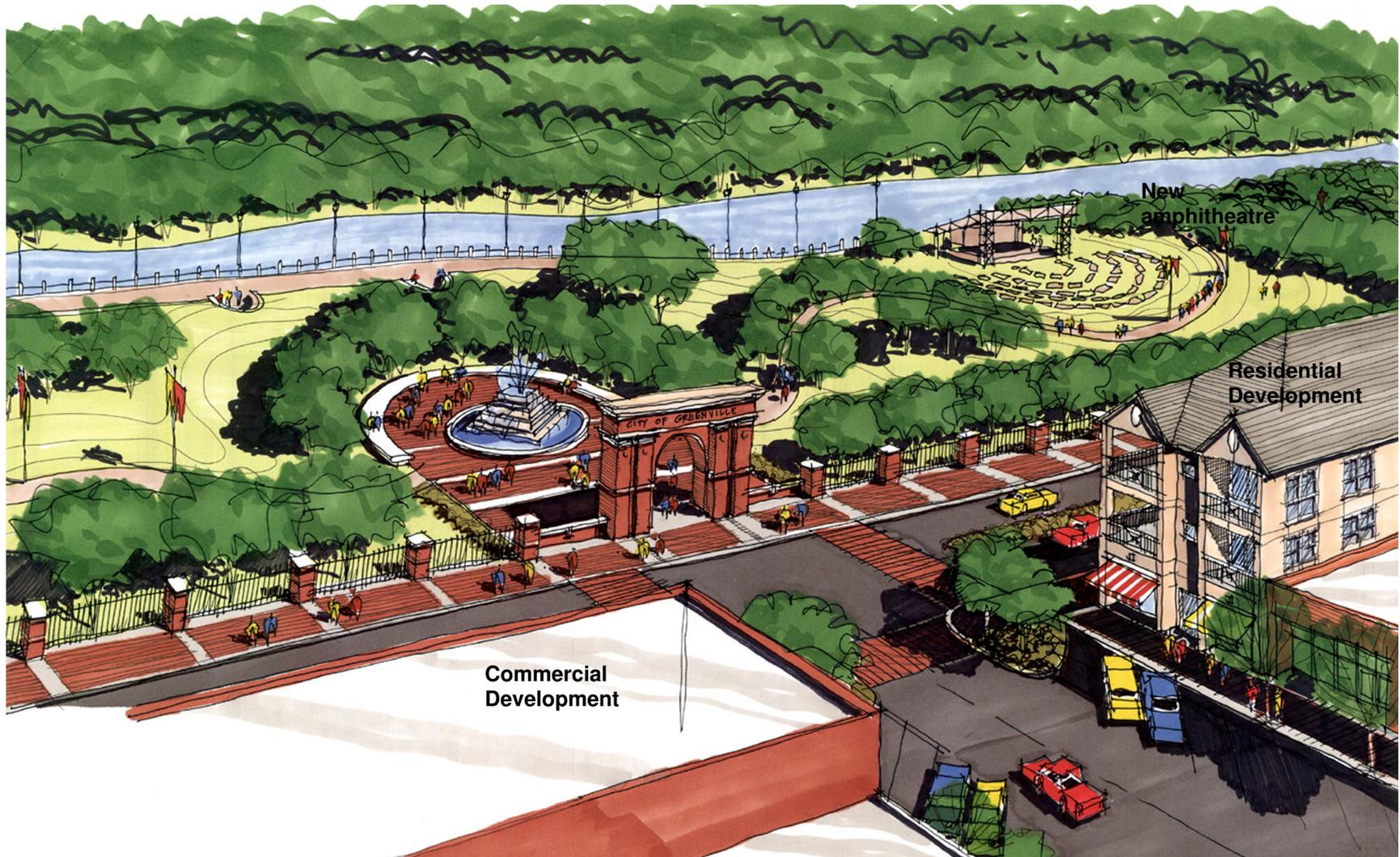


Figure 3.10: Proposed Development of the Town Common



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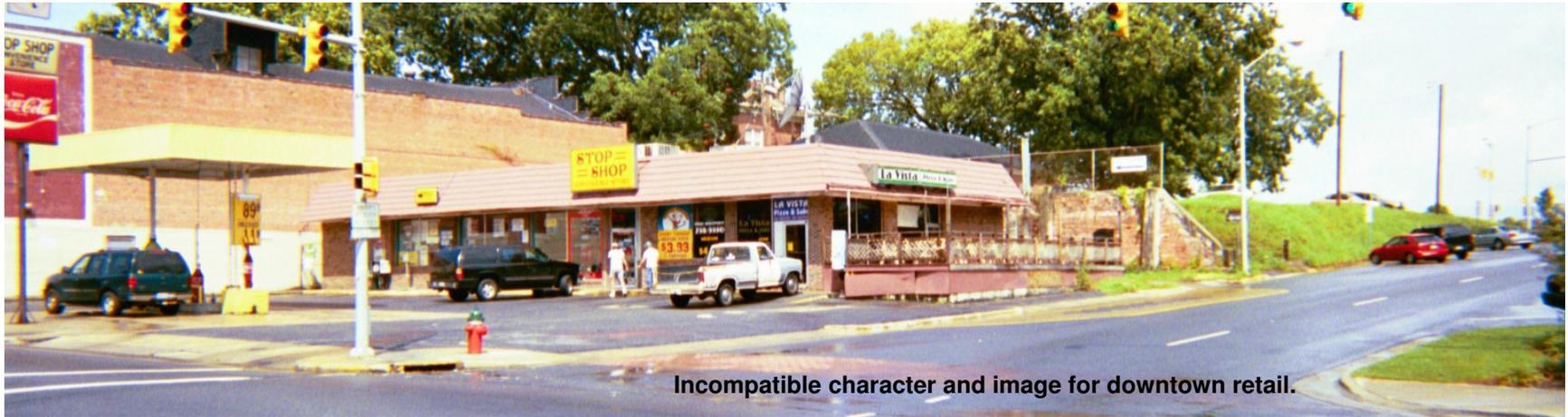


Figure 3.11: Northwest corner of the intersection of Reade and Fifth Streets

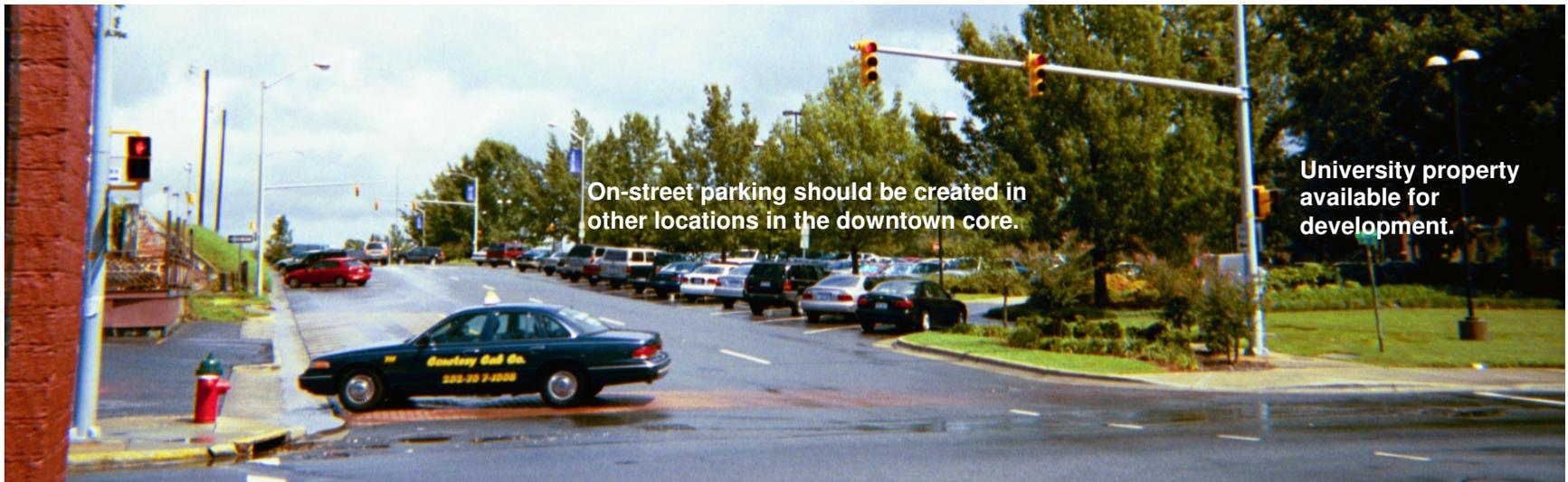


Figure 3.12: View north on Reade Street



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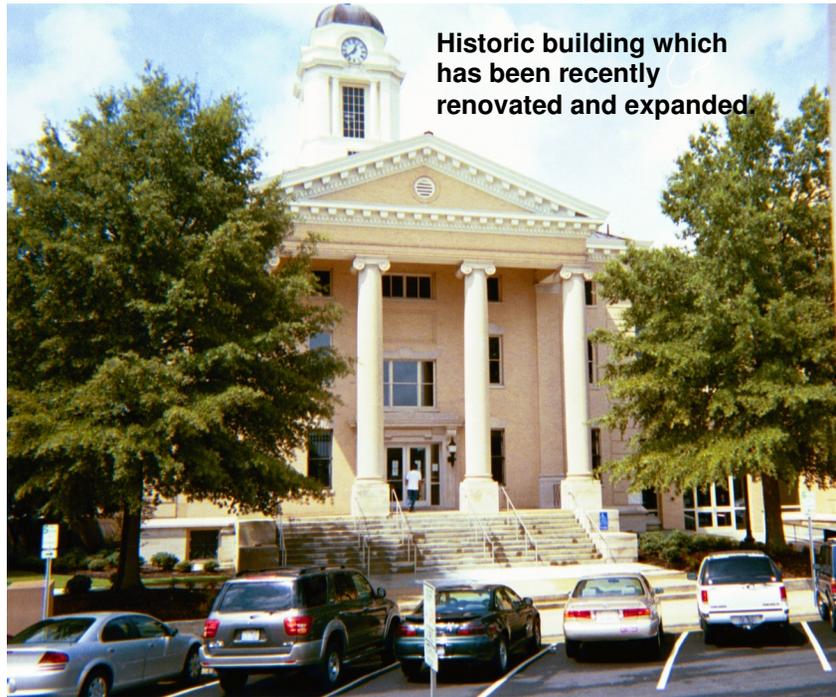


Figure 3.13: Proposed University housing along Reade Street



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Historic building which has been recently renovated and expanded.

Figure 3.14: Pitt County Courthouse on Evans Street



Excellent example of historic building to be maintained.

Figure 3.15: City Hall



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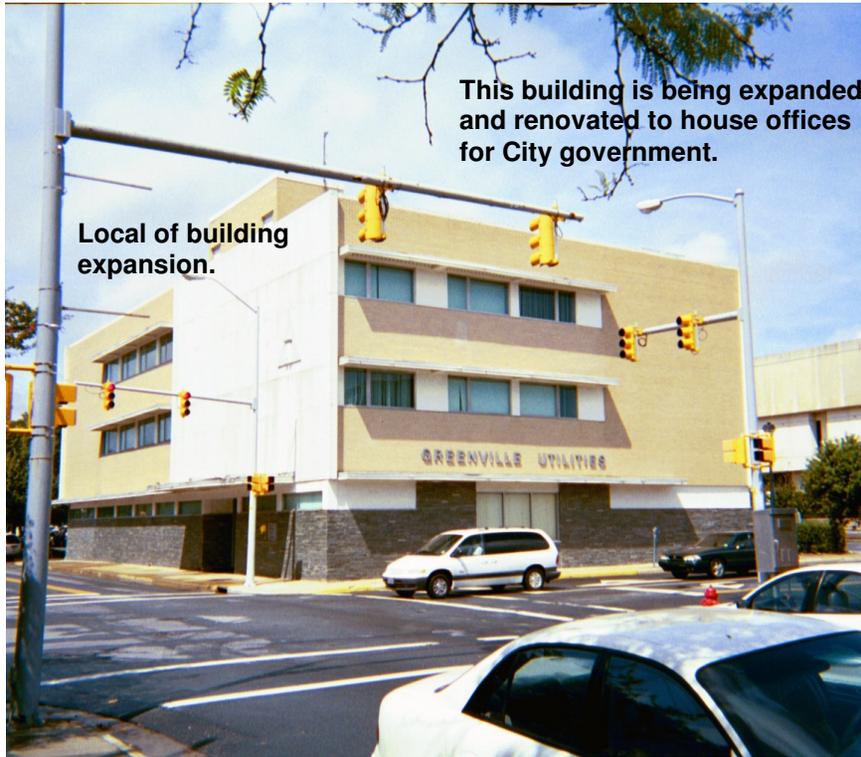


Figure 3.16: Greenville Utilities Building



Figure 3.17: Wachovia Bank Building



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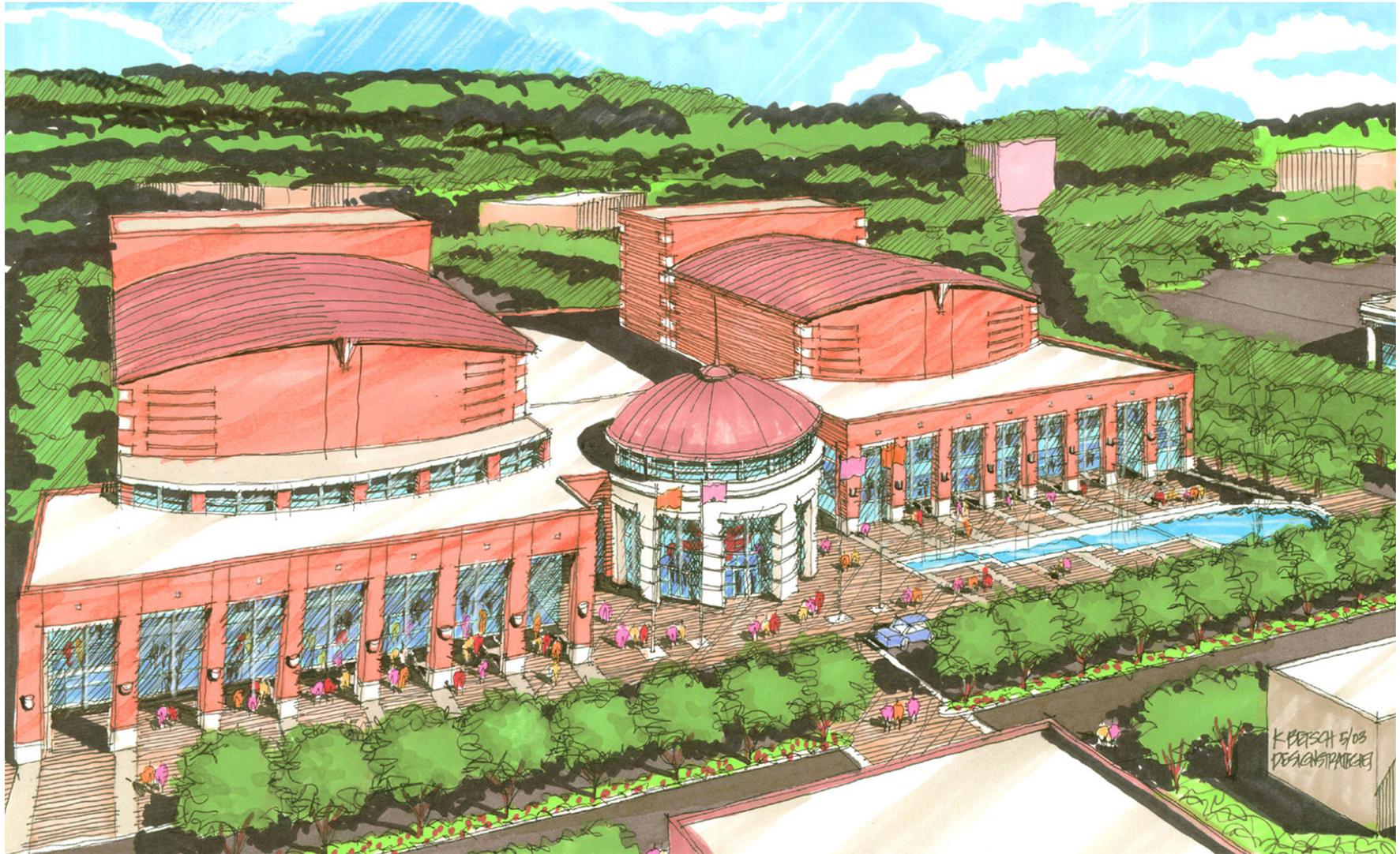


Figure 3.18: Proposed Performing Arts Center



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BEFORE



AFTER

Figure 3.19: Redevelopment of Dickinson Avenue

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