

Notes from 11/15/03 DCP Design Workshop
Section 5 - Union Street to North Street

The team's work session began with the assumption that the Coal Street Extension Project would be a primary artery leading to this section of Downtown; as a result, the creation of a clear sense of direction and destination, beginning at Interstate 81, would be very important. The rest seemed to fall into place from this.

Our interventions included the identification of a potential location for a primary intermodal transit center – rail, auto, bus, bike, and pedestrian – close to the Coal Street Extension and within walking distance to the center city; sufficient parking in numerous locations, but concealed behind street-side buildings; a focal/destination point where Union Street ends at River Street and connects with the future riverfront development. The basic concepts are listed below:

1. Create clear traffic patterns into Downtown Wilkes-Barre.
 - a. Good signage into and within the city
 - b. Make proposed Coal Street Extension attractive, as well as the clear entry to vehicular traffic from the east
 - c. Two-way traffic on the streets of Downtown
 - d. Provide bike lanes where appropriate
 - e. Provide many parking options in various locations
2. Construct buildings that front on the street, particularly to screen parking lots and provide a better streetfront image.
3. Encourage mixed-use development throughout Downtown.
 - a. Encourage King's College to integrate their facilities into the fabric of Downtown, dissolving the border between the college and the city.
4. Provide for the train connecting Wilkes-Barre to both New York City and Philadelphia in the zone between North Pennsylvania Avenue and Wilkes-Barre Boulevard. The train station should have adequate parking and retail development, and should be integrated with auto, pedestrian, and bicycle travel.
5. Create a greenway where the former North Branch Canal right-of-way exists.
6. Encourage building development on the eastern corners of North River and West North Street to strengthen the sense of place at that intersection.
7. Create a sense of arrival (using built form) and a sense of the river at the intersection of West Union and North River Streets.
8. Connect Downtown to the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor trail system, and to the trails along the levee, and the trails to Pittston, Scranton, Shickshinny, and the Back Mountain.
9. Encourage a variety of retail development, including development of visitor attractions.