

DCP Post-Charrette Public Workshop: December 1, 2003
Comments on the Drawings

Section 1: Academy Street to South Street

- Better lighting, incentives for business/home owners to keep their businesses or homes looking nice.
- It's nice to see a grocery store. Also, it's nice to see the post office gone. Farmer's market is good.
- Looks all good.
- Obtain and tear down former Brown's property at S. River St./Ross. Construct two upscale townhouses in tune with the Ross St. brick townhouse that was recently refurbished.
- The dike is a necessary evil. Landscape to hide it - it looks like that's your idea on the drawing.
- The quadrangle, green area, and alternative use of the Murray Complex is good.
- Tree-lined streets!
- Increase housing. Use dense buildings - fill voids. Construct parkades that are pleasant and agreeable to users.
- Wonderful treatment of important corners. I like the infill housing. Is there enough parking?
- The relocation of the post office is an interesting vision. The supermarket might be better there because it is closer to the residential development planned in the other sections.
- Where is the parking? The urban grocery store is a must. Consider the technology services that could be brought to this area. A technology project or technology development that expands current use would be great - here, college students could explore and develop and just dream.
- Consider using the call center as a tech center for area business. If several companies, such as Verizon, were to relocate to a shared tech center and share hardware and software maintenance personnel and software consultants, could they be given some incentive so that a concentration of tech downtown would form the critical mass to attract other tech industry?
- Before you build a new Wilkes-Barre, you must address the following: the city wage tax is higher than the state tax.
- Excellent, provocative ideas. Parking will be an issue - solution may not be enough and is costly.
- Riverfront Development is great. Development of South River and Ross Street corner essential.
- I like the row of restaurants on South Main near Hottle's and the walkway from there into new Wilkes Quad. Idea of using the Murray Complex for theatre is great! I don't like the farmers market so far away. Skate park along Pennsylvania Avenue is interesting.
- Replacing Wilkes mid-block parking between Ross and South with a quadrangle is a great idea. I would like to see someone responsible to acquire 247 South Franklin and the building south of it.

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- South River and Academy Street- excellent idea for restaurants. Like the rehabilitation of buildings on corner of South River and Ross Streets.
- Good idea for the proposed restaurant pictured at the corner of South River and Academy Streets. Also good idea for suggested coffee house at corner of Ross and South River Streets.
- Preserve and enhance the old architecture; build similar types of buildings. Make it a walking city.
- Like the treescapes.
- I love the idea of the arts center and walkways.
- Like the idea of an additional dorm to fill in vacant lot by Wilkes' Fortinsky Hall. Enrollments are up- so this will serve two purposes.
- Not so sure about the area around Murray's- Love the urban market idea.
- Love the parking and the Wilkes Campus ideas.
- I think they need a grocery store and more shops to connect South Main Street, almost like a strip mall. Clean up the drug dealers and prostitutes. I think that would be a first priority. Make the streets safe so people won't be afraid.
- Would like to see more restaurants and river access. South Wilkes-Barre needs a quality grocery store. Please: NO CHAIN RESTAURANTS!! We have enough.
- Wilkes-Barre should have something to draw people- Williamsport has the Little League World Series, Scranton has the coal mine tours. Hazleton has Eckley Miner's Village. Wilkes-Barre has nothing and it's right in the middle of all these other cities.
- Parking garages are OK. People will have to change! We need the parking! Love skate park.
- Wow! Thank you for taking back (in plan) the building on corner of Ross and South River (coffeehouse/apts.). What about slowing/regulating flow of traffic there?
- Corner of Academy and S. River looks fantastic. Great to see rundown market and homes brought back. You may need to address safety issue on W. River/Academy corner (where Sunoco is now).
- The new Quad idea behind Wilkes student center is exciting. Do you envision grass? Parking is a problem at Wilkes. How will the new Quad address problem of more lost spaces? Multistory structure? Can we get it to look architecturally appealing?
- Yes - renovate Wilkes-Barre Fire Department Headquarters!
- Skate park! Cool!
- Lighted, safe, visually appealing walkways/alleys from Wilkes to Main Street are key.
- Urban grocery - yes. What will be done with soon to be vacant Bi-Lo space? Park? Grass?

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- Perhaps more life/activity on grassy area opposite Kirby Hall and Dart Center?

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Section 2: South Street to Northampton Street

- Small, clean "mom & pop" specialty shops. Renovate old, decrepit buildings to make more attractive to new businesses.
- I like getting rid of the strip mall across from Bishop Hoban.
- It's all good.
- I like how you keep the train tracks. Efficient mass transit is the way of the future, not automobiles.
- The fine art, folk and wellness center is great. Use of the Medical Society Library is great.
- The parking area for St. Mary's that may be converted into small shops - idea must be looked at very hard. The Percy Brown's parking lot converted into a green area - this takes away the present parking.
- Riverfront development. Save facades for downtown architectural integrity. Trolley from intermodal transport center through town
- Increase housing. Mixed uses in buildings.
- Like new arts center. I think Wilkes should have a presence on South Main Street. Need to build on South Street to hide garage for call center.
- The community fine arts center concept and the wellness center is appropriate, but maybe not in this section. The Medical Society Library building is an unsung hero and needs to be celebrated as drawn.
- Keeping historic buildings is so valuable--and I like the focus on it and the focus on nice housing and walks. But the call center building and the other IT wired spaces should remain a technology area. Verizon is nearby and a tech focus in this area is important. What kind of tech/manufacturing could occur downtown?
- I like the idea of walking paths through the area or a
- The property taxes are very high for the small property owners. All of the above are high because city services are overused by too many non-taxpaying citizens. I believe it will be difficult to attract entrepreneurs to the city with high taxes.
- Need to address portal at Northampton and River Streets. Excellent otherwise.
- The Medical Library is an outstanding building. Walking areas are needed. Art Museum; Library.
- I like everything proposed. Especially the green area across from the new theatre - this is currently a hangout for teens who go to the "Cafe Metro" - and I think the change to a park would be a good place for the teens to hang. (They need a place.) They solved the parking situation nicely. Also I love the idea of the new arts and wellness centers at the bottom of the map.

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- Development of Pennsylvania Avenue under and near South Street Bridge.
- Like the pedestrian mall rider to Washington Streets. Like the "New Arts Center" on South Washington. Wilkes-Barre Boulevard- the hands on idea of townhouses very good here.
- Very good idea to develop the "pedestrian malls" as indicated in the proposed plans. A market on Northampton Street is a very definite "plus." Townhouses and condos are needed in this geographical area.
- I like the idea of having a wellness center and art center. This area needs a warmer architecture than the present structures.
- Like the pedestrian courts.
- A great entrance to this part of the city.
- The Fine Arts Center is a fabulous idea - what a key component to celebrating the talents of our residents and a way for them to share and teach others - this would add a whole new element to our culture- making the annual Fine Arts Fiesta become a year-round celebration! Now! I am impressed.
- I think the ideas shown in the plan are wonderful. I think that the more remodeling we do, and the more shops, small and large businesses we open, the more people we will attract - but we have to clean up the streets first.
- Needs: major Riverfront Park, fitness trail, dog park, and bike trails.
- Funky unique shops, record stores, music stores, clubs with music, like Philadelphia's South Street, Penn's Landing. Wilkes-Barre needs to be marketed more. If you go to the visitor's center off of the major Interstates, they have about thirty pamphlets of Scranton, the Poconos, Endless Mountains, but nothing about Wilkes-Barre or the Wyoming Valley.
- Love it! Love the train ideas and the folk center. Love the theaters and wellness center. Love how everything is in walking distance with lit paths. Might need more parking.
- Art center is brilliant!
- Walkway/pedestrian concepts are vital and encouraging. The walk through Wilkes-Barre has so much potential and these added modal crossways enhance nicely and add intimacy and charm/warmth. Keep small visual details in mind: lighting and wrought iron fencing and bushes, trees, etc. ALSO the walkway (proposed) along current call center is key to a very important pedestrian connection: Wilkes University to Main Street. We need students and faculty walking to Main Street and people from Main Street having access to campus spaces. Welcome the flow both ways. Draw the university across Franklin St. to Main St. Beauty of Franklin St. now is highly achievable on Main St. and along side alleys. People can take visual "stops" as they walk - looking at facades and absorbing charm of alleys/alleyways.

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Section 3

- Bring the old Station (Banana Joe's) up to code. If you think I'm joking, go in there when it's raining--unlock the fire doors.
- I don't see space for a second department store, and I would like to see this promoted. I like the addition of townhouses.
- It's all good.
- I believe that the theater and upscale grocery store with shared open adjacent parking (in addition to parkade) should be the sole occupants from the "hole in the ground" to Northampton and S. Main. The "S. Main and Northampton" properties should be spared for business/loft living development. Downtown residents need to be able to walk to the store; easy parking would encourage drive-in customers to grocery store; pharmacy in store would benefit downtown residents.
- Theater with S. Main St. entrance.
- Grocery market downtown.
- Remove canopy in front of lower South Main St. Refurbish building facades. Increase townhouses in downtown.
- I love new theater location. Love new parking area. Like townhouse expansion.
- The theater has interesting placement; nobody had this idea yet. I just love opening the walkways from Franklin to River. The properties are beautiful there.
- I don't like the parking arrangement. Getting to riverfront activities would be difficult to get in and out of park from Washington Street. Would Washington Street be one-way or two-way? The housing expansion is great and really needed.
- You are talking about new buildings. There are already first floor spaces for rent at \$6 - 10 a square foot in Center City, so the space is available but the general public is scared of the downtown.
- You didn't take advantage of the Northampton Street portal through the levee.
- Intermodal Facility would be great here "IF" trains return. Otherwise, there's no need. I like the placement of the theatre. Walkways are #1 need.
- Looks like a good plan. I worry about the five story parking garage near Katana- would it be safe? I love the idea of turning "The Station" into a visitors' center with the Intermodal facility behind it. The layout of that looks neat, orderly and logical.
- Area near Katana is a very nice pedestrian space - I would love to see it continue to Franklin Street (next to E.D. Pons office). Replace/Repair Wooden Street Building (sic) - Paint/maintain canopy- may replace the glazing or wash it.

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- It would be nice to get rid of the steel, tube-like awnings all over the place. It was "UGLY!!" when it was first put up, and it really is now!
- I like the 20 new townhouses. Like the new theatre. Like the visitor center.
- Keep this plan for housing!
- Again- a great concept and well thought out, building on the good that we have in that area.
- Wonderful ideas!! I love the retail, housing, and restaurant ideas!!!
- The fountain could use improvement. There are very good ideas on the gateway to the Susquehanna River landing. Very good ideas for café courtyard. I think it would attract a lot of good people. The more businesses we have, the more people will come visit.
- Indoor shopping mall similar to the Steamtown Mall, floral gardens, and more fountains, etc. If Scranton can have a Steamtown, why can't we have an aquarium and museum about the history of the river and the marine life it supports?
- Visitor center great! I love surface parking and office additions are great. I love revealing original configuration of old train station!
- Parking: can we invest in architecturally/visually appealing facades? Details? Brick?
- What about a mural project for the river (levee) wall by the artist community? With the median and street parking on River Street, will you need to cut into the River Common? I love the idea of more parking, but visual appeal and historic responsibility to facades is key.
- The theater is great. But we need strict covenants on what it will look like. Maybe a historic marquee? Tie the theater in visually/architecturally - at least on some level with the F.M. Kirby Center - marquee, historic-looking façade. Hide the parking. Restore and preserve the facades along South Main Street. The Stetz building; the Engel building that is now covered with the Hollywood sign - these are beautiful and unique.
- Rebuilding the Old Fell Tavern should definitely be pursued. In general, I'm impressed with all the proposed plans to develop our downtown and historic areas. Good luck! This was a well-prepared concept.

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Section 4

- Sterling Annex: make top priority
- Bike trails make WB livable. Convert the Sterling into apartments. Don't demolish the younger building.
- Trees bring life to a dead town. Open access; open up alleyways.
- Create open gateway to Ramada courtyard.
- Fabulous
- I love the way the section between River, Union, Main and Market has become open to pedestrians. I never knew about the old canal from River St. to WB Blvd. Creating a bike trail is great.
- Keeping Coughlin High School and providing a sports field is nice. The intermodal facility off of Coal St. seems it will create a big congested area. Yes to rail service.
- Interesting Square and Pedestrian Mall?
- Irem Temple is the key. Slow down the traffic at the Square. Riverfront will be destination.
- Great ideas for different types of residences. I like extending the River Common back to the Irem Temple. Also, opening up a new drop-off/access area for the Sterling is a good way to solve traffic problems and to make that rear area safer.
- Canal path is great idea. Really like idea of landscaped footpath bisecting the River/Franklin/Market/Union block and the Franklin/Main/Market/Union block (behind Ramada). How to restore and use Perry Block (Market Street.) while not destroying the historic nature of some of the buildings. I like the idea of making property owners responsible for ALL four sides of the property.
- Plans look good for the area around the Sterling and development of riverfront area.
- I think it would be wonderful to develop out natural resources! The river can be our power. Do something wonderful with the Sterling Hotel and other great buildings.
- Conservatory and opening on River- create more trees on North River Street. I like park next to Coughlin High School.
- Like the park by Coughlin High School.
- Landscaping Coal Street entrance is wonderful way to enter city.
- Love it! I love cities with little nooks and crannies like Nashville's Painter's Alley.
- Great ideas.
- I love the café ideas as well as the upscale shops. It was something much needed in the area. Connect Wilkes and King's!

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- I also think it would be a very good idea to get an aquarium and a zoo like Philadelphia and Baltimore have. The bigger the attraction, the bigger the crowd. The nicer the town, the nicer the people.
- Great tree lined street leading into downtown. Wonderful Riverfront project- Sterling hotel is key.
- Coffee shops for college kids, college oriented shops, nightclubs, etc. Wake this sleepy town up and have winter festivals, and more conventions. The Riverfront Project should be tied in with Kirby Park and Nesbitt Park to make one massive Park. This should be used to host festivals and events. (Ferry rides from Wilkes-Barre side to Kingston side.)
- Need more arts and community centers, like parking cafes, and walkways. The only residential buildings by King's should inhabit students- people may not want to live with the "noise."
- Union Street entry is key: think of the draw from Kingston. Conservatory is great. Will footpath connect to North Street Bridge? Some connection should be present.
- Will residential units along North River Street be brick rowhouse facades? Brownstones?
- Trees and median along North River Street? Great idea, but what are implications for waterfront and flow from Kingston, Plains, etc.? Make "point of focus" at end of River Street in some way; tie in with the North Street Bridge. Think of key entry into city from Kingstons who want to enjoy the city of Wilkes-Barre and help it grow - Wilkes-Barre as a draw to young families in Kingston - picnics and shopping, eating, etc.

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Section 5

- Train station piques my interest.
- Looks good
- Ah! Greenways! Now this is the vision that we've been lacking all these years.
- No fence around the fountain.
- I liked the way the college is being blended into the downtown.
- The rail service is a must. Bringing college to the city and the city to the campus is great.
- 1. The train and passengers is essential. 2. Is it possible to form a planning group. Wilkes-Barre Township and Wilkes-Barre City would plan the character of the building/ construction adjacent to the corridor. A planning group would be mutually beneficial for both municipalities.
- Looks good.
- Bike, Running, and Skating Trails are very important along the river. Mary MacIntosh and Corcoran Printing Inc. building must be developed. Walking path from Wilkes-Barre Boulevard to River Essentials.
- The connecting bike-trail is a great idea. Also the focal point on the river next to the Courthouse. Interesting to think about King's moving their buildings into the city to increase student/pedestrian traffic.
- Wooded canal path is fantastic. King's College new cul-de-sac should be removed. Replace it with pavement change in street (i.e., brick.) Would like to see either Franklin St. or Washington St. with 2-way traffic, but is it really possible?
- Important to rebuild the Old Fell Tavern, everyone misses it. As a Wilkes-Barre resident, I'm impressed with the entire project and the concept of more townhouses to get people into center city.
- It would be wonderful to have a N.Y./ Harrisburg Train. How about Philadelphia too? They say you have to hit bottom before you can come back. Well, we have hit bottom!
- Good idea- combining college and city buildings on same block- train station/train to NYC great. Coal Street linked with Union to River is very good.
- Like the train station!!! Like the historic canal path.
- Great ideas. We have two colleges as bookends for downtown. We need to connect. If only something happens we are headed in some other direction. Good luck!!!
- Transportation is a great idea and linking schools while giving activities for both young and old people. Allowing a "gateway" to the city as well as access to non-bus transportation.
- Tear down all unnecessary buildings and replace them with new ones. King's College was done very beautifully. The

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architecture of this town could once again be golden! It would also be nice to have museums and dining areas.

- Great work- the train station is key to a lot of success! Great location and proximity to downtown.
- Live music, college housing, floral gardens. Wilkes-Barre should host a national event to draw more people downtown, how about a Winterfest, ice sculpturing contest, ice skating, etc. If there is a reason for people to be downtown, they they'll come, then everything else will follow (hotels, shops, cafes, etc.) Set up a Wilkes-Barre fund campaign. Put donation bins in convenience stores, then every year use the money for a downtown improvement.
- New parking facility is good. Two-way traffic is good. Train to Philadelphia? More parking? New arts facility? On whole please clean-up buildings that will continue to exist. Don't worry about the noise pollution.
- Both bridges and their connectedness to Kingston are keys that should be enhanced. Utilize North Street Bridge - it's less impressive than Market Street Bridge, yes. But it provides a fuller panorama of the City and the river valley.
- Canal path is great; will that be open straight to North River Street? Love the idea of parking behind the buildings and the "build-to" lines. Will new buildings have brick and historically appropriate facades?
- What are the plans for the multi-story building/structure opposite the Courthouse? How will its design blend with or affect the architectural presence of the Courthouse?
- Waterfront and marina areas are very encouraging; will there be park/recreational/open picnic-type space there? Will the marina area behind the Courthouse on the waterfront be connected (via pedestrian access) to the North Street Bridge? Will one be able to walk over the bridge from Kingston into marina/waterfront area and into other extended downtown nodal points?
- As a resident in Kingston who lives on an older block of town and who commutes into Wilkes-Barre every day, crossing the bridge is one of my favorite moments of each day (the river, the mountains, the buildings of Wilkes-Barre). I enjoy the trip in both directions. I think that the redevelopment needs to invest in the connections that the Market Street and North Street Bridges literalize and represent between Wilkes-Barre and Kingston. See the Kingston suburb as connected to, and as vital and historically significant entryway into Wilkes-Barre, rather than a place apart.
- Trains to Philly?

Additional Comments

- I thought that Joe Nardone's letter to the editor made sense, though I still believe that the hole is a good

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location for the movie theatre. Percy Brown's is next best or just as good. Placing the theater at the Thomas complex makes no sense. People will not stop before or after the movies to shop or dine if they have to drive to a second location and they won't walk the distance. People must have a daytime and nighttime reason to come to downtown and the theatre is the reason.

- In general, the plans are great starting points. The idea of flowing people east-west is good, but I didn't see much north-south flow. The common desire to bring out the good points that are already here is great. Still, I'm not sure that the plans transform the area into an overall destination for people.
- Greenways good! Union St.: change traffic patterns now.