

Town of Tellico Plains, Tennessee

Downtown Improvement Plan



Prepared by:
The Tellico Plains Municipal Planning Commission and
State of Tennessee Local Planning Assistance Office
East Tennessee Region

May 2007

DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN
TELLICO PLAINS, TENNESSEE

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Section I: Introduction

Purpose

The Tellico Plains Downtown Improvement Plan is intended to provide a vision for the development of the Town's Central Business District (CBD) as provided by Tellico Plains' leadership, planning commission and staff, business community, and residents alike. This Plan will take a look at the current state of the CBD and surrounding areas, goals of the local business community, and challenges that they face. It will contain proposed land uses for the focus areas, concepts for design, and strategies for parking demand fulfillment.

In the situation that local land use controls (such as subdivision regulations and/or zoning) are established at some point, this Plan with other comprehensive planning documents will serve as a base for drafting such regulations. Anticipated growth and development pressures upon the Town may create a situation where Tellico Plains needs to help guide this activity to meet the needs of the residents and business community. The proper way to facilitate growth management and implement it through land use controls is through effective planning.

Changing Land Uses of the Town

The Town of Tellico Plains has evolved slowly throughout the last few centuries along with the changing face of the United States. In the mid-1700's, it was recognized as a central meeting place for the bands of Cherokee Indians in the region. As white settlement followed in the 1800's, the Town centered around an iron works and a developing timber industry.

Construction of the Athens and Tellico Railroad marked a movement into the Industrial Age of the early 20th century. At this time, the timber industry flourished and the Stokely Foods cannery brought a large impact to the Town. However, both of these economic forces in the area gradually left mimicking the general trend that has faced the United States over the last several decades.

The change of Tellico Plains from an industrial-based community is evident. Besides the obvious economic difference that this has made, land use demands have varied greatly as well. In 1996, the Cherohala Skyway opened and created a parkway between Tellico Plains and Robbinsville, North Carolina. This, in itself, has produced a tourism draw on a regional perspective. In addition, recent improvements and a growing merchant presence in the Central Business District have added to the economic viability of the Town as a great place to live and do business.

As noted above, the purpose of this Plan is to help guide local decision-makers in the process of creating a vision for the business core of the Town of Tellico Plains. This vision will take into account where the community has come from, what demands may be

placed upon the CBD, and how the Town will facilitate the recommended courses of action.

Focus Area of the Plan

Throughout this document, current information such as current land use, parking availability, vacant land, and unused structures are identified. From community scoping sessions, a set of goals, issues, and challenges have been developed. The Plan then proposes CBD-specific land use strategies, mixed-use strategies (where applicable), and opportunities for centralized/shared parking arrangements. In the concluding sections, these strategies will be applied through specific objectives, policies, and alternative courses of action.

For the scope of this Plan, the study area includes Tellico Plains' traditional CBD area and a triangular-shaped region bounded by the Cherohala Skyway and Main Street. Illustration 1 in the next chapter defines the study area. The CBD is a rectangular area surrounding Main, Loomis, Harrison, and Scott Streets. There are some parcels "outside" of these roadway boundaries that have also been included in this Plan because of their proximity to the Town's commercial core.

Land Use Policies

The *Tellico Plains Land Use and Transportation Policy Plan, 2004-2014* was developed to serve as a basis for future land use and transportation decisions in the Town. Designed as a companion document to that study, this Plan meets the intent of the following policies adopted therein:

- The Town should encourage preservation of the tax base through sound land use decisions.
- Land use, site planning, and urban design criteria should be utilized to promote pleasant, functional, and understandable relationships between land uses.
- Land use controls should be used to foster a variety of housing types compatible with the natural landscape.
- Higher density residential uses should locate in planned developments or in close proximity to existing higher density developments.
- The Town should encourage and support the expansion of existing commercial areas and those that will result in the consolidation of commercial activities at central locations.

- The Town should encourage the adaptive reuse of existing structures in the Central Business District.
- The Town should expand and/or improve parking within the Central Business District.
- The Town should take measures to draw through traffic from the 165 Bypass into the Central Business District.
- Strip commercial developments should be discouraged in favor of cluster developments with limited entrance and access points.

Section II: Background Information

Before the visioning process is begun, background information is needed to best understand the land use, transportation, and economic trends of the Town's CBD. In this section, traffic volumes, current land use, parking availability, and a vacant land inventory will be presented.

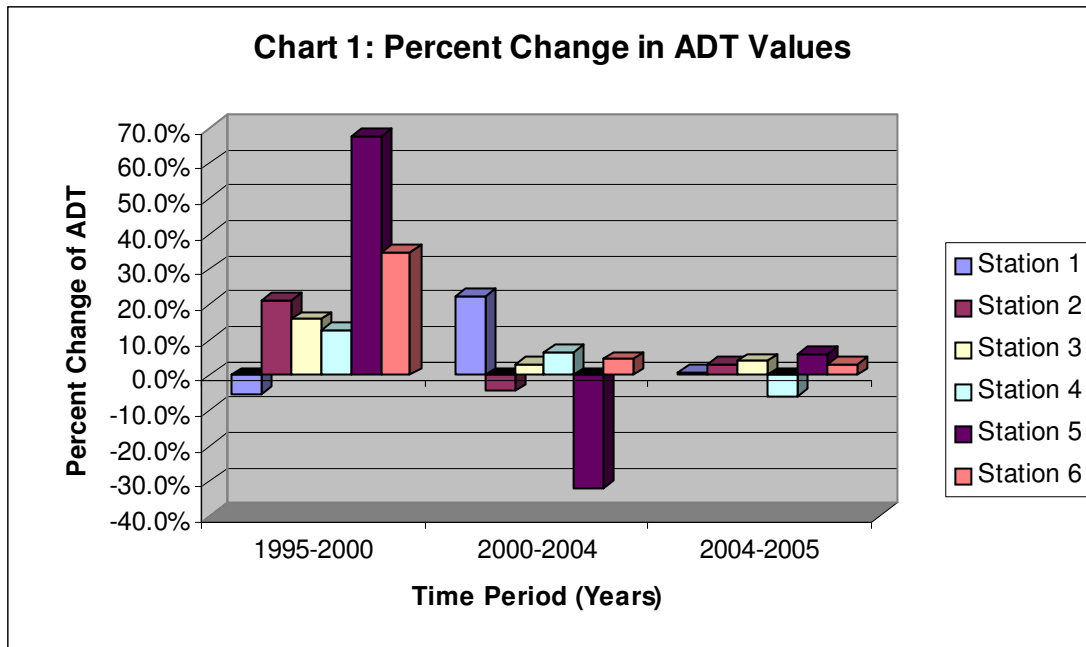
Traffic Volumes

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) samples six locations for traffic counts in the Tellico Plains area. This data is important in understanding what volumes of traffic are present in the Town as well as how the amount of traffic at these locations has changed since 1995 and throughout the 2000's. Table 1 below lists the Average Daily Trip (ADT) values for the six stations, whereas Chart 1 compares the changes over time as a percentage. It should be noted that the information for Ballplay Road in 2000 seems inaccurate despite the figure reported by TDOT. This is an outlying value that does not seem to fit the context of all the data, creating extreme change from that year.

Table 1: Average Daily Trip (ADT) Values

<i>Station</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1995</i>
1 - Cherohala Skyway (S.R. 165)	4010	3980	3670	3920	3520	3250	3430
2 - Highway 68 North	5880	5710	6760	6790	5460	5980	4930
3 - Highway 68 South	3130	3010	3310	3410	3130	2920	2520
4 - Mecca Pike (S.R. 39)	2380	2530	2390	2620	2230	2380	2110
5 - Ballplay Road (S.R. 360)	1720	1620	1570	1640	1880	2380	1420
6 - Rafter Road	710	690	670	640	620	660	490

Source: Tennessee Department of Transportation



Looking at the data, it is evident that the increase in traffic during the years 2000-2004 had been at a lower rate than from 1995-2000. However, an exception to this general observation can be found with the Cherohala Skyway station (#1), which experienced a traffic count increase of 22.5% during 2000-2004. An explanation for the decline in traffic on that route from 1995-2000 could be related to construction of the Skyway that took place around this time.

Highway 68 north of Town (station #2) conducts the most traffic to, from, and through Tellico Plains. But this data also shows that Tellico Plains is a key pole along the Highway 68 axis in southern Monroe County. Travelers on 68 looking to continue south towards Coker Creek, east along the Cherohala Skyway, and west out Mecca Pike all must venture into the Tellico Plains area. This is evidence that the Town has the potential to be a hub of transportation and activity in southern Monroe County. Therefore, it is important that development be focused in areas near these major routes and their intersections, or at least “advertised” with signage or vistas directing to these nodes.

Current Land Use

In the *Land Use and Transportation Policy Plan for Tellico Plains, Tennessee, 2004-2014*, a land use analysis was performed. In addition, a current land use map was produced and included as well. The following page details current land use in the Town Center as well as at the three key intersections along Highway 68. The 2004 analysis had pointed out the following key observations that relate well to this specialized Plan:

- Commercial uses are concentrated primarily in two areas, the CBD around the Town Square and in the Bank Street/Highway 68 area.
- The opening of the Highway 165 bypass has significantly altered traffic patterns around the CBD.
- Development potential is evident along the Tellico River and on Highway 68 towards Madisonville.
- Although approximately 380 acres of the Town had been classified as vacant, environmental factors such as steep slopes and floodplains constrain a majority of this land.
- Annexation was reported to be a method for growth in Tellico Plains.

The findings of the 2004 Plan are important to the further growth and development of the Town, but this Downtown Improvement Plan will focus primarily on maximizing the potential for the current land and building stock and providing creative methods for shaping its future. Where prime land exists adjacent to the corporate limits, it is just as

ILLUSTRATION 1
LAND USE (2006)

important to plan for its future development in conjunction with these redevelopment efforts. Growth does not always have to mean municipal expansion or high-rise development, but it does imply that improvements are to be made to infrastructure, buildings, and the land itself.

In Illustration 1, the land use classifications used in this Plan have been focused more than in the 2004 Plan. Because the study area is defined to a smaller and more specialized area, the classifications are as follows:

Residential

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential

Commercial

- Artisan Commercial
- General Retail/Service
- Office/Professional/Bank
- Lodging
- Restaurant/Bakery

Public/Cultural

- Public Building
- Recreation/Open Space
- Church/Funeral Home
- Utilities

Warehousing/Manufacturing

- Warehousing/Manufacturing

Unused Building

- Unused Building

Since Tellico Plains' CBD is primarily comprised of commercial uses, the grouping of business-related land uses is notably specialized. It is important in the development of this Plan that the classifications of "Artisan Commercial" and "Restaurant/Bakery" be designated separately. In fact, an examination of Illustration 2 reveals that these uses, along with general retail, comprise the foundation for the CBD's activity. However, public areas such as civic buildings and churches occupy areas surrounding the compact core. On the following page, Table 2 and Chart 2 help to quantify the land use allocations in the study area. It should be noted that for these purposes, the classifications on Illustration 1 "SFR <2 Acres", "Single Mobile Home", and "2 or More Mobile Homes" are quantified in Table 2 and Chart 2 as "Single-Family Residential".

Table 2: Land Use Analysis of CBD

<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Number of Establishments</i>	<i>Percentage of Establishments</i>	<i>Number of Parcels</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Parcels</i>
Commercial	35	100.0%	35	25.7%
Artisan Commercial	10	28.6%	10	7.4%
General Retail/Service	8	22.9%	8	5.9%
Office/Professional/Bank	10	28.6%	11	8.1%
Lodging	2	5.7%	1	0.7%
Restaurant/Bakery	5	14.3%	5	3.7%
Residential			54	39.7%
Single-Family Residential			51	37.5%
Multi-Family Residential			3	2.2%
Public/Cultural			11	8.1%
Public Building			2	1.5%
Recreation/Open Space			3	2.2%
Church/Funeral Home			3	2.2%
Utilities			3	2.2%
Warehousing/Manufacturing			5	3.7%
Vacant			31	22.8%
Unused Building			12	8.8%
Vacant Land			19	14.0%
CBD TOTAL			136	100.0%

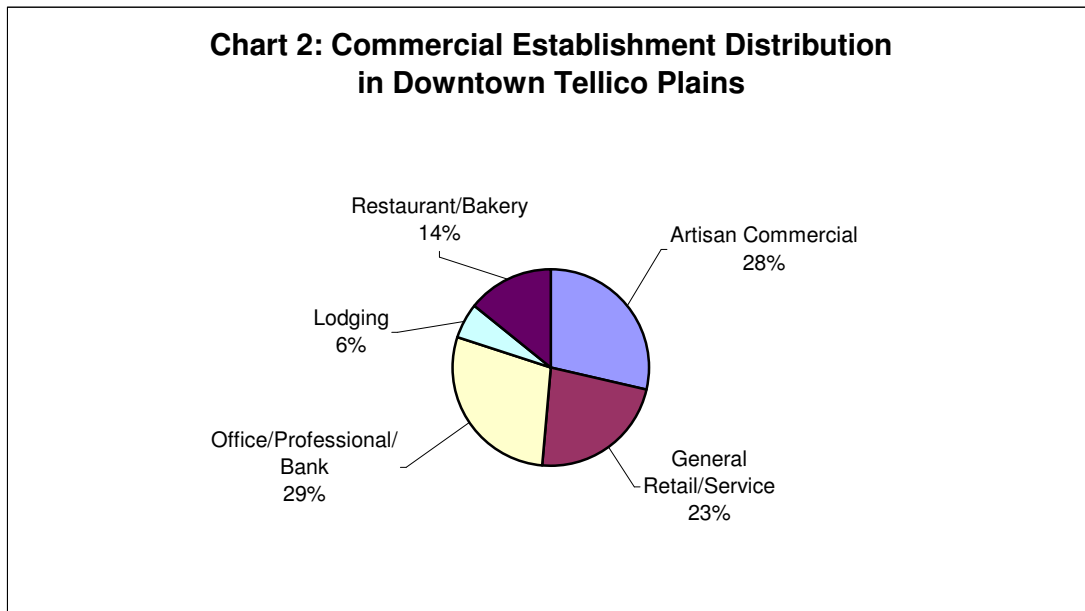


Table 2 shows that downtown Tellico Plains as defined in this Plan contains 35 commercial establishments, utilizing over one-quarter of the area’s parcels. The focus of this Plan being commercial growth, this area definitely contains a larger concentration of business activity than the entire town. Within that broad category of land use, Chart 2 breaks downtown commerce into those five classifications discussed earlier. Nearly equally split, Artisan Commercial, General Retail/Service, and Office/Professional/Bank make up 80% of the CBD’s establishments.

ILLUSTRATION 2

PARKING, VACANT LAND, AND UNUSED STRUCTURES

This proportion of activity around the historic Town Center shows that there is a mix of commerce for local residents and visitors as well as office space and professional services. Without land use controls to guide downtown development, the commercial climate of Tellico Plains' CBD relies heavily on market forces. However, the improvement projects at the conclusion of this Plan will be focused on creating a better environment for a commercial center to achieve the vision drafted by the planning commission, local leadership, and business community.

As will be discussed further in subsequent chapters of this Plan, opportunities for growth and improvement in such an area with a fixed land supply are reduced. Therefore, more creative and innovative methods are needed. That being said, vacant buildings and vacant parcels provide space for clearing, reuse, etc. Likewise, existing structures can be converted to alternative land uses where the market and other conditions allow. These are the types of strategies that will likely come about from public visioning and the planning process used within this document.

Parking

One of a municipality's most important features for commercial vitality is automobile parking. Since the dawn of the automobile, human dependence on it has increased steadily. In response, urban design principles and development activity have reflected this demand in the form of parking lots, parking structures, and on-street parking. If not effectively planned for, parking could be either too scarce, take up too much of the prime commercial land, or a dangerous combination of the two.

The Town of Tellico Plains has a somewhat-common situation in which the land stock in concentrated commercial areas is very limited, so providing ample parking for a thriving business district may become a challenge. Illustration 2 shows Tellico Plains' current parking inventory in the form of parking lots and on-street provisions. Parking within the entire Town is not shown on this map, just in areas of concentrated commercial activity.

Table 3: Parking Locations in the CBD and Surrounding Locations

<i>Location</i>	<i>Number of Spaces</i>	<i>Owner</i>
1 - Town Square	24	public
2 - Scott Street on-street	6	public
3 - Depot Street Lot	23	Citizens National Bank
4 - Harrison Street Church Lot	101	Myers, Frank & Icie

An inspection of this map shows that there are four main areas in the study area where parking is available. That being said, not all of these locations are "public" parking spaces. Table 3 lists the four locations shown on the illustration, notes ownership of the lots, and details the number of spaces at the location. In addition to the importance of quantity of parking, location is an even better judge of practicality. Historically, studies have determined that the "walkability" of a system (i.e. for elementary schools, pedestrian-oriented shopping centers, and bus stops) is limited to a ¼ mile or ½ mile

radius area. In this instance, convenience is a necessary element of growing a successful, compact shopping district.

Unused Structures & Vacant Land

Illustration 2 also highlights those structures that are unused or abandoned and parcels of land that are vacant or could facilitate additional use. Along with the consideration of parking and existing land uses, the identification of opportunities such as vacant land and unused buildings is just as critical. When considering a development plan for a compact commercial core, as in this circumstance, developable (or redevelopable) land is typically at a premium.

In late 2005, renovation efforts took place at some of the Scott Street retail space. This work helped to upgrade an older structure and improve several store locations in the immediate downtown area. Although several sites of similar nature are found within the core of downtown, there are a few along the south side of Main Street. This area is arguably just as important from a commercial point of view because it is a “gateway” from the Cherohala Skyway to the heart of Tellico Plains.

Located on the fringe of downtown Tellico Plains, the old elementary school site is a prime location for redevelopment efforts. Although the structure has been destroyed by fire, its scenic views from the hilltop and expanse of land on the east side makes it an important piece in any downtown improvement effort. Later in this Plan, goals and objectives concerning the development and reuse of these sites will be addressed.

Section III: Community Vision

Community input is a critical ingredient in the preparation of a successful plan. In this situation, the visioning process took place in a two-fold process. First, a survey was submitted and the results compiled. Finally, a community meeting was held in which the survey results were revealed and a goal development session undertaken.

Downtown Improvement Survey

In October 2005, a paper survey (which can be found in Appendix A) was distributed to the merchants in downtown Tellico Plains. These surveys were available for completion by the merchants, employees, and patrons of these establishments. Two months later, the surveys results were compiled and the following information was produced:

Five most effective issues in the success of Tellico Plains' downtown business district:

- Attractiveness of Downtown (4.1)
- Proximity to the Cherokee Skyway (3.9)
- Concentration of Local Artisans (3.9)
- Cooperation of Local Merchants (3.9)
- Proximity to Cherokee National Forest (3.5)

Issues identified as now having or having the potential to constrain business growth in downtown Tellico Plains:

- Very poor civic support
- Leaders who don't embrace change & accommodate other points of view
- Very poor cooperation & support from other county leaders
- Regulations or lack of regulations that cause value to increase for investors
- Need zoning
- Need tougher law enforcement
- Need more support from locals
- High rent
- Lack of actively seeking new business
- Uneven mix of business (antique shops, etc.)
- Roads in poor condition
- Those going on Skyway are unaware there is a downtown
- Signage
- Advertising/publicity
- Tax rates
- Parking
- No crosswalks
- More merchants
- Restaurants open longer hours

Types of improvement projects were suggested in the downtown area:

- Crosswalks
- Continue to support beautification efforts of the Cherokee Women's Club
- Continue sidewalk improvements
- Create place for kids to ride bicycles and skateboards
- Extend sewer to outlying areas
- Bring cable TV and DSL (out of towners expect this)
- Provide more parking
- Expand the walking trail system
- Public sponsorship and promotion of civic events
- Resurface roads
- Create more curb appeal with vacant buildings
- Bring in more lodging
- Bring in a multi-purpose conference center/performing arts center

Suggested regulations, review, or other controls:

- Zoning
- Health ordinances
- Restrictions on single-wide mobile homes
- Phasing out of existing mobile homes
- Enforce current laws and enact new laws for abandoned and run-down structures
- Use tax incentives to attract more businesses
- Turn Southard Street into a pair of one-way avenues and landscape the grass strip

The survey responses have produced a wide range of suggestions, concerns, and viewpoints on the current and future status of downtown Tellico Plains. Not all responses are necessarily feasible or politically approachable, but are needed to create a general community feeling for this topic. In fact, some comments contradict each other, so it is vital that consensus is reached in determining the path of development efforts.

Community Vision and Goal Development

A goal-setting and visioning session was held in January 2006 by the Tellico Plains Municipal Planning Commission with interested community members. The first step in this process was reviewing those results of the survey shown above. This information spurred discussion, which included generating core values, identifying issues, creating goals, and naming general strategies for implementation. Listed below is the vision statement by which this Plan is guided as well as a set of goals and objectives established to reach it.

Tellico Plains Downtown Vision: A rejuvenated downtown that contains a blend of commercial activities in a walkable atmosphere unified by thematic streetscaping that emphasizes the natural assets of the area.

Goals

- Coordinate and pool community resources to achieve the Downtown Vision.
Objectives:
 - Use this Plan and available grant moneys as foundations for improvement projects, such as sidewalks, streetscaping, and acquiring land for parking.
 - Bring community groups together to achieve common goals.
 - Create a sense of unity within Tellico Plains towards improving historic downtown.
 - Use word-of-mouth to advertise downtown's activities.

- Promote a blend of commercial activity in the downtown area.
Objectives:
 - Promote a mixture of locally-based service establishments and tourist-based shops are needed to create year-round action downtown (i.e. Sweetwater).
 - Focus on creating an artisan community while promoting commercial diversity.
 - Anchor commerce with a significant draw or attraction.

- Coordinate public improvements at little or no cost to the Town.
Objectives:
 - Seek grant money for sidewalk improvements (cross reference with goals set forth in the *Tellico Plains Recreation and Culture Plan*).
 - Develop a holistic parking plan that will look at sites to accommodate a parking facility within walking distance of commercial activity.
 - Design a unified streetscape to create a more attractive business district that will attract and retain commerce and customers.
 - Maintain a lowly-lit commercial district so as not to distract from the "natural" feeling of Tellico Plains and the view of the night sky.

- Emphasize the area's natural and recreational assets to aid downtown commerce.
Objectives:
 - Coordinate these goals with that of the *Tellico Plains Recreation and Culture Plan* to economize efforts and resources.
 - Continue to pursue creation of the Tellico Blueway to attract recreational tourists to the Town.
 - Attract bicyclists to downtown while maintaining a high level of safety.

Section IV: Downtown Improvement Projects

In previous sections of the *Tellico Plains Downtown Improvement Plan*, there has been an evolution of the concept of downtown Tellico Plains. In the central business district and surrounding areas, it is evident that there is a core mix of commercial and office activity. As discussed in Section III, the community vision is to see this vital mix of local and tourist-based commerce rejuvenated while capitalizing on the natural features of the area. The following section outlines an approach needed to reach this desired outcome.

Overview

The improvement of Tellico Plains' downtown business district through the guidance of this Plan should be considered comprehensively. Each improvement project, whether small or large in scale, needs to play a role in the comprehensive vision for this historic area of town. Implementation of the goals and objectives presented earlier will not take place all at one time, but will likely take years in the way of individual projects or programs.

Because of the limited budget of the town, it is critical that all of the projects discussed in this Plan have related funding strategies. Funding sources such as grants, low-interest loans, and special taxes are matched with the associated projects to provide financially feasible options for implementation with minimal affect on Tellico Plains' budget. Additionally, continuous programs that involve a self-sustaining funding system are desirable and fiscally healthy.

Coordination With Other Planning Elements

Just as the Town should consider these downtown improvement projects from a comprehensive perspective, they should also be coordinated with the efforts of other plans. The *Tellico Plains Land Use and Transportation Policy Plan* has been consulted to help derive this Plan's preliminary goals. Specifically, that document encouraged the reuse of existing structures downtown, promotion of higher density residential development nearby, improvement of parking in this area, and clustering of commercial areas. The projects and programs to be discussed concerning downtown grew from these basic policies of that wide-ranged plan.

The planning commission also adopted the *Town of Tellico Plains, Tennessee Recreation and Culture Plan* in 2005. This explored ways to improve the town's recreational offerings and promote its cultural features. A specific plan similar to the mission of this one, the proposed implementation methods can be associated with this Plan's. Below are a list of the Recreation Plan proposals that cross over into the focus here:

- Create a public river access park which could have the potential to become Tellico Plains' recreation anchor and regional attraction.

- Promote non-vehicular transportation in town by expanding and upgrading the sidewalk system, especially in the downtown business district.
- Use lighting, banners, or other similar accessories to create a sense of place within the business district.

Simply stated, the town should maximize efforts and resources to help make these beneficial projects come to fruition. The pursuit of a public river access park can be part of helping to create a notable draw to the area, which can filter into more visitors patronizing local businesses. Improving the sidewalk system goes without saying; if the business community wants to create a safe, walkable shopping district, then pedestrians need to be accommodated. Finally, lighting, banners, and other accessories are part of a coordinated streetscaping plan that can entice visitors and locals to shop, eat, and conduct business here. Therefore, when funding is being sought for those and this Plan's proposed projects, grants and loans from recreational and economic sources become more likely to be available.

Improvement Project Proposals

Streetscaping

At the time that this planning effort was underway, the Town of Tellico Plains and the Tellico Plains Chamber of Commerce had begun pursuit of working with the Tennessee Valley Authority and Fort Loudon Electric to draft a streetscaping plan. Although this effort is proposed, the aspects described below could be part of a successful streetscape area recommended for the central business district. A unified plan for improving the physical appearance of this area is part of creating more attractive place for customers to shop as well as establishments to do business.

- Bury power and other utility lines underground in the downtown area and along Babcock Street. Underground utilities can reduce the clutter often found in a business district like Tellico Plains'. Placing them underground will also free up more space for other elements like lighting, banners, etc.
- Install aesthetically-pleasing gas lanterns or other similar lighting structures that would fit a period theme and coordinate with other streetscaping elements. However, it is very important that the lighting selected creates as little conflict with the night sky and natural feel of the town as possible. The *Recreation and Culture Plan* has recommended that lighting be provided where sidewalks are located or proposed to be installed.
- Use light poles as banner fixtures in the business district and along the Cherohala Skyway. These can be used to post seasonal messages and/or advertisements for special civic events. The *Recreation and Culture Plan*

recognizes this as an opportunity to conduct passers-by into the shopping area from the Skyway and a way to unify the district.

- Renovate the area around the War Memorial and gazebo that is currently a public space surrounded by asphalt and inseparable from the two streets that pass by it. This would be a prime location for a beautification project such as a community garden that could be maintained by local community groups.
- Create a landscaped area where the grass strip is in the middle of Southard Street. This is an opportune location for a low-maintenance park and/or cultural area. An urban park with a dry stream and native plantings can be accompanied by plaques or other memorials commemorating important events, buildings, or activities important to Tellico Plains and the surrounding area. The *Recreation and Culture Plan* has identified this strip as a buffer between the commercial district and the nearby residential area as well as an extension of the War Memorial/City Hall civic area.

Public Works Projects

There are other improvement projects that can increase the attractiveness of Tellico Plains' downtown while bolstering its functionality. The following ideas are centered around accessibility, safety, and aesthetics:

- Reconstruct poor and construct new sidewalks in and to the downtown area. The *Town of Tellico Plains, Tennessee Recreation and Culture Plan* should be referred to for suggested improvements. That plan had studied the existing system and proposed important upgrades and additions to it. Sidewalk improvements can help pedestrians navigate the town while increasing safety by decreasing motorist/pedestrian conflicts.
- Designate crossing areas for pedestrians at critical intersections in the business district. This project is important now for shoppers' safety, but will become even more so if commercial activity increases and remote parking is needed. First on this list would be at the Town Square, because there is a convergence of Scott, Main, Southard, and Depot Streets. Traffic can become congested in this area in peak hours and pedestrians should be given guidance as to where the best places to cross the roadways are.
- Construct a pedestrian bridge across Highway 165 to link the cultural area to the downtown area. Widening of this major road has effectively divided the town's business district from the library, Charles Hall Museum, and visitor's center. Additionally, such a structure could act as a visual connection and entryway to Tellico Plains. Banners could be hung from the bridge or some sort of artwork could represent the natural and cultural heritage of the area. As a less-desirable alternative, simple crosswalk(s) could be added at one or

more of those places. There are three ideal crossings where this could be located:

1. At the museum/visitor's center cultural area.
2. At the walking trail.
3. At the Babcock Street crossing.

Parking

Because of increasing dependence on the automobile, parking in business districts has become a critical element in accommodating both patrons and employees. If the vision statement of creating a tourist-based commercial area with services for locals is to be achieved, the issue of off-street automobile parking needs to be addressed. In Section II, nearby parking areas were listed and it was determined that only 30 public parking spaces are available near the town center. The following options are focused on providing increased overflow parking in nearby areas without occupying critical commercial or public spaces:

- *Old Railroad Yard Area* - This large abandoned area is located in between Main Street and the Cherohala Skyway near the Town Square. In fact, this site would only be about 300 feet from the center of the business district and could accommodate a large parking lot. Despite the complex ownership legacy of this area, it is a good option because of the proximity.
- *Tellico River Floodplain* - Between the Cherohala Skyway and the Tellico River and located west of the Ballplay Road bridge, this site provides a prime location for a joint-use public park/parking area. The *Recreation and Culture Plan* has proposed the siting of a public river access park in several locations around town, but this area may be the best location to become a hub for three reasons; visibility from the Skyway, proximity to the business district (less than ½ mile), and utility as a hub for shoppers, travelers on the Tellico Blueway, and appropriate low-intensity use of land in the floodplain. Appropriate signage or banners could be used to conduct people from this parking area/park to the central business district. This option should be considered as the best overall because of the multitude of factors involved.
- *Harrison Street Church Lot* - Discussed in Section II, this private parking lot contains approximately 100 spaces and is used by the church. Although it is located only about 1250 feet from the Town Square, there are two key limitations. First, it is a private lot for which an agreement would be needed for its public use. Second, it is actively used by the church and would likely not be used by the downtown patrons when church is in session. These factors make it a less attractive option.

- *Community Center Parking Lot* - Adjacent to the Tellico Plains Community Center, this lot contains a large amount of parking spaces that are rarely used except in instances of community events. Since it is near the walking trail, patrons from this remote parking area could use this path to travel to and from the business district. The largest drawback to this option is its distance, which is nearly one mile away, and may not make it very practical.

Funding

As emphasized in the visioning and goal-setting process, any of the proposed improvement projects should be undertaken with as little cost to the town as possible. With this in mind, seeking grants to fund the projects would appear to be the best option to jump-start the goals of this plan and continue improvements to downtown Tellico Plains. In addition to the following funding sources listed below, the East Tennessee Development District can help the town seek out grants and apply for them. It should be noted that this list has been derived with limited research, and that more sources likely exist and could be found with more help from grantwriters and/or ETDD. Because these grants are competitive, it is important that a proper plan of action be drafted and the applications for them refer to this and other plans for a holistic approach to the improvement of Tellico Plains.

Streetscaping and Other Public Works Projects

The nature of the projects proposed under the streetscaping and the public works subsections above are closely related to each other when it comes to grant funding sources. Because items such as utilities and sidewalks are typically considered as infrastructure, they can be approached similarly when searching for funding opportunities.

- *Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) Program* - A flexible federally funded program aimed at achieving four goals, one of them being “build and improve Appalachia’s infrastructure to make the region economically competitive. The non-highway funding from the ARC could be justified for infrastructure projects since they are based on improving Tellico Plains by way of the non-vehicular circulation pattern and access to its economic, recreational, and cultural assets. These applications are typically due by the end of June.
- *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program* - Every grant or loan through this program must either 1) benefit low and moderate income persons, 2) eliminate or prevent slums and blight, or 3) address imminent health and safety problems. The program offers “grants for community livability” and these proposed infrastructure projects are part of the Town’s mission of fulfilling that goal. Applications for these grants are typically required to be submitted by February.

- *Economic Development Administration (EDA) Grants* - The Public Works Program within the EDA framework is designed to empower distressed communities to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure. Although there are stipulations regarding what the infrastructure is for, these projects could conform because they are intended to “diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment.”
- *Tennessee Valley Authority* - Through its corporate contributions program, monetary or volunteer contributions can be obtained for the purposes of economic development in the communities it serves. These moneys can be petitioned for by non-profit organizations such as the Tellico Plains Chamber of Commerce or Tellico Plains Foundation to conduct activities that will aim toward economic development efforts in the community. The contribution request process is conducted through their website www.tva.gov.
- *Tennessee Department of Transportation* – The local programs division of TDOT maintains a list of programs for which funding is available. This list contains items such as sidewalks, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and beautification of transportation facilities. This information can be accessed through TDOT’s website <http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/local/>.

Parking/Recreation

If the options for parking that include acquisition of land are pursued, costs will likely be higher for that reason alone. Funding for parking lot construction may be found in the previous set of grants, but may be less justifiable. However, that is why the parking option that is combined with the public park concept is the best option. By combining the need for parking with the need for the park, the town can search for recreation-based funding and tackle several issues at once. Therefore the emphasis on these sources is recreation with a parking facility as part of the future design plan.

- *Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF)* - Provides grants to local government entities for the purchase of land for parks, natural areas, greenways, and recreation facilities. In addition, funds may be used for trail development and capital improvements to such parks.
- *Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF)* - Established to assist in preserving and assuring accessibility to citizens of all future generations to quality outdoor recreation resources. These grants are available for acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities.
- *Recreation Trails Program* - Made available through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), these funds are allocated for recreation trail projects. Although various groups are eligible for these grants, government agencies are given priority.

Appendix A: Improvement Plan Public Survey

**TELLICO PLAINS DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PLAN
GENERAL INFORMATION SURVEY**

Please check your interest in participating in this survey:

_____ *Business Owner* _____ *Citizen* _____ *Public Official*

To what degree do the following issues act as opportunities to the success of Tellico Plains' downtown business district success? Please circle the appropriate number and use the blank slots for additional answers.

(0 = no effect 5 = profound effect)

<i>Proximity to the Cherochala Skyway</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Proximity to:</i>						
<i>Chattanooga</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Knoxville</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Madisonville/Sweetwater/Vonore</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Athens/Cleveland</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Proximity to Cherokee National Forest</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Availability of Retail Space</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Concentration of Local Artisans</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Cooperation of Local Merchants</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Attractiveness of Downtown</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Efforts of Monroe County Tourism</i>	0	1	2	3	4	5
_____	0	1	2	3	4	5
_____	0	1	2	3	4	5
_____	0	1	2	3	4	5

What issues currently have or have the potential to constrain business growth in downtown Tellico Plains? Please list these limitations on the blanks below and circle the appropriate number.

(1 = minimal limitation 5 = profound limitation)

_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5

More on other side...

In the area provided below, please list the types of improvement projects that you or your organization would like to see undertaken in OR for the downtown Tellico Plains area (i.e. sidewalk improvements).

Please identify in the area below what types (if any) of public review or control that the Town, the Planning Commission, or any other public board shall have over downtown and/or the surrounding areas (i.e. architectural standards, historic zoning, site plan review, landscaping requirements). Also, please note why such control or review is needed.

Any other comments or questions are always welcome. Please list below.

Thank you for your time and effort.