Connectivity and Getting Around

DRAFT Goal: Establish an integrated concept and vision for Broadway Street that unifies the adjacent land uses, maintains adequate access for light industrial uses, invites pedestrians to walk and bike to destinations and landmarks along the corridor while establishing an aesthetic quality and character that make the Broadway District a unique and engaging location.

Observations



- **Street measurements.** The Broadway Street Right-of-Way is variable but generally stays between 60-65'. Pavement width is variable and fluctuates between 24' and 36.' The posted speed is 25 miles per hour.
- **Green features.** The presence of existing street trees contributes to opportunities for the street experience. These trees should be preserved and protected. The roadside ditch along portions of Broadway Street could be leveraged for green infrastructure.
- **Block network.** The cadence of buildings establishes a blocking structure to the corridor even though there are no formal "blocks". Future grassroots pedestrian networks could further develop a grid/block structure.
- **VDOT ownership**. The roadway is owned and maintained by VDOT; however the roadway does not have a VDOT roadway classification (based on VDOT's Roadway Functional Classification web map).
- **Corridor users.** The corridor largely serves the industrial uses along the corridor but there is evidence and context that suggests the corridor also serves a growing grassroots community of technology companies, makers, and artists (including breweries).
- **Large vehicles.** The industrial uses have specific vehicle access requirements, namely large vehicles. However, the broad and uninhibited asphalt tarmac can visually suggest to drivers that the roadway can handle speeds in excess of the posted 25 MPH speed limit. Stakeholders have shared that speeding is a common occurrence.

Near-Term Improvements

Paved Shoulders, On-Street Parking and Traffic Calming



- In Q3/Q4 of 2024, the Albemarle County Service Authority will complete their watermain upgrade project and at that time will mill and resurface the Broadway Street asphalt pavement surface. At that time, the roadway could be striped to the configuration shown above which provides 12' vehicular lanes, paved shoulders, on-street parking and traffic calming.
- Such a configuration would provide a visual cue to drivers to slow travel speeds to a rate more consistent with the posted speed limit.
- Such a configuration would not have an adverse effect on the large vehicles that utilize the corridor for the light-industrial land uses along the corridor.
- VDOT would need to be in agreement for this configuration. Initial conversations suggest that they are considerate and open to such a configuration.
- This phase is not intended to provide pedestrian improvements. However, the paved shoulder would be a natural place for pedestrians to walk along the corridor should they choose.
- This recommendation requires additional considerations in the areas where the roadway width narrows. It may be necessary to have a paved shoulder on only one side where the roadway width is at its narrowest. Some areas of the road will need to be widened to accommodate a paved shoulder.

Mid-Term Improvements

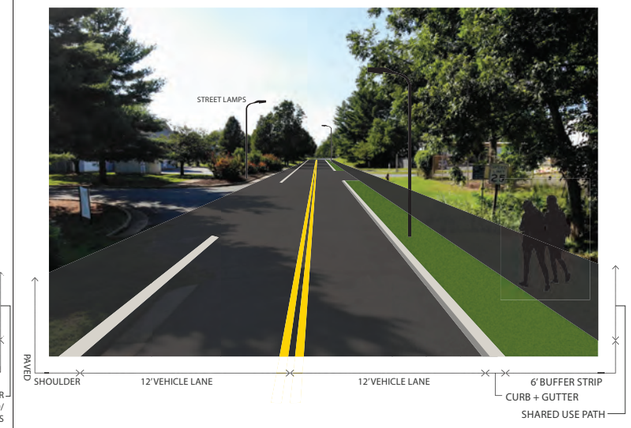
Incremental Pedestrian Improvements and Place Making



- Pending the near-term improvements, it is possible that the paved shoulder could be formally denoted as a walking lane, or, technically a pedestrian facility. Doing so would include signage and intentional accommodations defining this as a pedestrian facility. It may also require the County to be the owner/operator of the road instead of VDOT.
- This configuration reflects the community comments that would like to see a grassroots type corridor that is informal, creative and defined. IX Art Park was used as a precedent example of an area that is intentional yet creative.
- Currently we are not aware of any Public Right-of-way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG) definitions that would prohibit this, as long as all provisions of PROWAG can be met, with specific attention to slopes and grades.
- This improvements would include detectable features at vehicular crossings as well as along the length of the roadway.
- Prior to initiating this configuration should be further discussed with the County Engineer, VDOT, County Executives and/or Legal Counsel.

Long-Term Improvements

Formal Shared Use Path



- Pending the success of near-term and/or mid-term strategies the County may be considerate of a permanent long-term strategy such as a shared-use-path.
- Such a configuration would deviate from the initial feedback from light-industrial users along the corridor who are hesitant to impact the vehicle turning maneuvers required to access the parcels with large vehicles. However, this could be mitigated by further analysis of what the turning radii may require.
- The intent of a long-term strategy is mindful that in the years and decades ahead many considerations may change. The land use along Broadway may change, the habits and patterns of travel may change and reflect different needs of the community.
- If the near-term or mid-term strategies are highly successful that would be a good indicator of the receptivity of such a configuration. It would be possible to consider this strategy in lieu of the Mid-Term Strategy if the corridor experiences significant pedestrian and bicycle activity in the years ahead.
- This configuration would be substantially more costly as it will also require significant upgrades to the stormwater conveyance network along Broadway and may also require several retaining walls as the facility approaches Franklin Street.
- This would be considered a wait-and-see concept in response to near/mid-term improvements.

Land Use & Development Patterns

DRAFT Goal In the near term, retain the primacy of creative industries and light industrial land uses within Broadway while also supporting complimentary uses that bring vibrancy and activity to the area, especially during evenings and weekends. Encourage more urban and pedestrian oriented building forms and promote infill development to make more efficient use of land.

Observations

» **Zoning & Comp Plan mismatch.** There is a mismatch between the Zoning Map and Comprehensive Plan recommended land use on parcels along Pireus Row and Marchant St (circled at right).

» **Parks and Green Systems.** This designation on the Comprehensive Plan map (green color) appears to be too expansive and covers portions of developable land.

» **Activity Center.** The Comprehensive Plan designates Broadway as an Activity Center (C), which implies higher intensity, mixed-use development.

» **Existing uses**. Most of the businesses in Broadway could be categorized as light industrial uses. There is a heavy presence of beverage production activity (beer, cider, wine, coffee, etc.) as well as arts and maker spaces. Most of the sites offering public "amenities" such as tasting rooms and art galleries are on the north-side of Broadway Street.

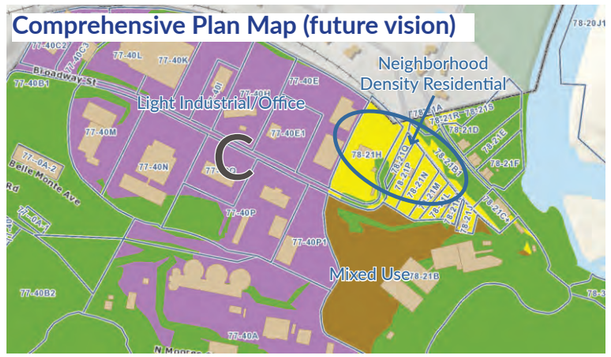
» **Future industrial.** The general consensus among stakeholders we spoke with was that Broadway should remain primarily an area for light industrial oriented businesses.

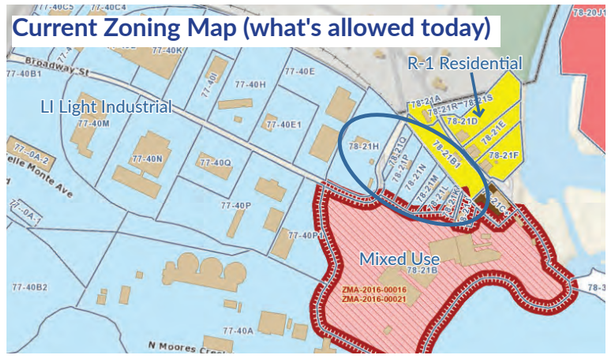
» **Mixed support for future residential.** Some wanted to see additional residential and mixed use opportunities. Others did not want to see residential at all, for fear of being displaced or potential conflict between industrial and residential land uses.

» **Low intensity building patterns.** Broadway street is characterized by mostly single-story metal frame industrial buildings. Several lots have large areas dedicated to outdoor storage and surface parking.

» **Building placement.** Buildings tend to sit within the middle of rectangle shaped lots that vary in size from .5 to 4 acres. Buildings are set back approximately 70-100 feet from the street edge.

» **Utilities.** Properties on the western end of Broadway are downhill from the County's sewer main along Broadway and rely on private sewage pump stations. This limits redevelopment potential of these areas.









Opportunities

» **Industrial uses.** Retaining light industrial zoning and land uses along Broadway will ensure existing uses can continue to legally operate. An "Employment District" designation in the Comp Plan, instead of Activity Center, would better reflect the industrial nature of Broadway. If mixed use development is desired in the future, the County should identify other viable areas for industrial businesses to locate within the County.

» **Commercial/retail uses.** Expanding opportunities through zoning for commercial and retail uses associated with Light Industrial businesses could bring more customers to support local businesses.

» **Arts uses.** Broadway could be more formally recognized as an arts and cultural hub for the community through an Arts and Cultural District designation and through zoning use changes.

» **Live/work.** The low intensity development patterns along Broadway offer opportunities for infill residential live/work arrangements that would retain the primacy of industrial uses.

» **Mixed Use.** Correcting the mismatch in the zoning and comp plan maps should be a priority. Pireus Row may offer an opportunity for mixed-use infill development, so long as historic resources are protected.

» **Environmental Features Analysis**. Evaluating the extents of existing environmental features and re-evaluating slope designations within Broadway could identify additional buildable land.

» **Expanding Buildable Land.** Updating zoning requirements for setback/stepback, and building height can encourage more infill development.

» **Parking & Driving.** Relaxing individual parking maximums and supporting a shared parking environment can create more efficient use of land and supporting multi-modal transportation can reduce the need for driving and parking.

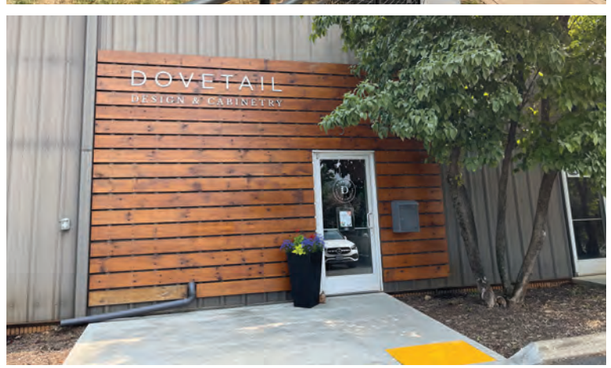
» **Urban Design.** Simple urban design guidelines that are congruent with light industrial uses along Broadway, such as build-to, building materials, and transparency guidelines can encourage more cohesiveness in design along the corridor. Lighting standards can help reduce impacts to residential neighbors.











Placemaking

DRAFT Goal: Incorporate creative design elements and public spaces within Broadway that highlight the unique and creative character of Broadway to elevate the area as a compelling destination for both businesses and people.

Observations

- **Access and awareness.** Many people don't know about Broadway, how to get to and from Broadway, or how to access amenities within Broadway and along the Rivanna River.
- **Outdoor amenities.** There are quality outdoor recreational opportunities within the Study Area such as Rivanna River and Trail, but pedestrian access to these could be improved.
- **Tree canopy.** The existing tree canopy in portions of the Study Area and street trees along Broadway are an asset.
- **Wide street right-of-way.** The width of Broadway offers an opportunity to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities with the right-of-way.
- **Local businesses and organizations.** These are at the heart of what makes Broadway an interesting and vibrant place. Some have initiated grassroots efforts to uplift the arts and local artists, to provide affordable maker spaces for the community, and to showcase artists and their work.
- **Public spaces.** The Study Area lacks a public venue for community gatherings, though private organizations, such as Visible Records, Decipher, and the Wool Factory frequently offer opportunities for people to gather.
- **Historic resources.** Broadway is home to historic resources including portions of Woolen Mills Historic District, the old water tower, rock wall along Franklin Street, the former railroad siding abutments and trace.
- **Environmental features.** The Study Area is bordered by large swaths of undeveloped floodplain and slopes that offer opportunities for access to nature and improved trail connectivity.
- **Crime and enforcement.** Business owners have shared that petty crime is an increasing issue and there is no police patrol.









Opportunities

- **Wayfinding.** Wayfinding signage within Broadway and adjacent neighborhoods can help people navigate to and from Broadway and to local amenities. This has the potential to serve adjacent residential areas by designating appropriate routes for vehicular access, especially trucks.
- **Pocket park.** A small pocket park can serve as a community gathering space, as well as an opportunity to access and connect to nearby trails and nature.
- **Railroad greenway.** Land adjacent to the railroad provides an opportunity for a greenway connection between businesses on the north side of Broadway. A trail could be formalized over time and eventually provide a complete trail circumnavigating Broadway.
- **Trail hub.** Designating a trail hub with public parking, bicycle and pedestrian access, and signage within Broadway could serve as an access point to local and regional trail systems.
- **Block parties.** Allowances could be made for temporary road closures and neighborhood "block parties".
- **Public art.** The County could partner with local artists and arts organizations within Broadway such as Visible Records to spearhead efforts to establish public art along Broadway.
- **Native landscaping.** Native plantings, rain gardens, and pollinator gardens along Broadway Street and within underutilized turf grass areas could bolster the existing tree canopy and support County Climate Action goals.
- **Crime prevention.** Working with willing property owners to apply design principles that reduce crime and partnership between City and County law enforcement, when needed, could improve safety and reduce petty theft.
- **County as facilitator.** When it comes to improvements along Broadway Street, the County should play a more active role as facilitator of future public realm improvements.
- **County as supporter.** Other implementation measures may be more community-driven, with the County playing a supporting role, such as the County being a conduit for grant applications or formalizing trail networks that are begun through grassroots efforts.









Business Retention & Affordability

DRAFT Goal: Maintain Broadway as an affordable place for local startups, artisans, and existing businesses while continuing to encourage new creative industries within Broadway.

Observations

» **Affordability.** Historically, Broadway has provided a relatively affordable space for startups, local artisans, local manufacturing companies, and service sector employers to own and operate their businesses.

» **Rising costs.** Broadway has seen a recent market driven rise in land costs due to its prime location adjacent to the Rivanna River and proximity and walkability to downtown Charlottesville. Some Broadway businesses may determine that other locations in the County provide a better long-term value to their operations.

» **Low industrial inventory.** Local businesses have shared concerns about the lack of inventory for land that can accommodate industrial users within the County. Current industrial vacancy in Albemarle is 2.3%, but that is up from .3% the previous quarter.

» **Essential businesses and organizations.** Broadway businesses, organizations, and artisans are a valued part of the community providing goods and services to the region. Displacement of these businesses and organizations would leave a void in the local economy and within community services and program offerings.

» **Local jobs.** Many of the jobs within Broadway offer living wages and career-ladder opportunities that don't require advance degrees, which are supportive of the County's equity and affordability goals.

» **Displacement concerns.** Long time property owners are concerned about displacement as land cost and tax assessments continue to rise. From 2022 to 2023 properties saw an average 7% increase in tax assessments. Some saw upwards of a 10% increase.

» **Nowhere to go.** Local industries are forced to locate outside of the County where costs are cheaper and industrial space is more readily available. Stakeholders shared anecdotes about peers locating in adjacent localities due to these factors.

» **Utilities.** Properties on the western end of Broadway are downhill from the County's sewer main along Broadway and rely on private sewage pump stations. This limits redevelopment potential of these areas.











Opportunities

» **Business incubator space.** The County and/or its EDA could explore opportunities for site control or land ownership to support an incubator space for local startups, artisans, or other community-driven goals.

» **Arts & Cultural District Designation.** Designating Broadway as an Arts & Cultural District could increase awareness and provide support for arts-related businesses and organizations located there. This designation offers opportunities for regulatory flexibility, including the reduction of taxes and fees for arts-related businesses and organizations that meet certain criteria.

» **Local business incentives.** Developing specialized incentives for property owners and developers to retain space for existing business through the redevelopment process could slow the displacement of Broadway businesses.

» **Public-private partnerships.** The County should continue to explore opportunities for public-private partnerships within Broadway that support career-ladder employment opportunities, spaces for startups, and support other business retention goals.

» **Industrial Land Inventory.** Through the AC44 Comprehensive Plan update process or a future planning process, the County should explore ways to increase the supply of industrially designated land within Albemarle County to provide alternative opportunities for new businesses looking for space and for existing businesses that would be better served by space outside of Broadway.

» **County-wide business retention.** When new industrial lands are identified within Albemarle County, the County or its EDA could reduce costs and barriers for businesses needing to relocate.

» **Utilities and Infrastructure.** The County can be proactive in ensuring that this area has sufficient utilities to serve present day and future users. Opportunities to cooperate with the city could be a solution to expand capacity.







