



# VCU

Virginia Commonwealth University  
**VCU Scholars Compass**

---

Master of Urban and Regional Planning  
Capstone Projects

Urban and Regional Studies and Planning

---

2024

## Growth in Appalachia: Downtown Revitalization Strategies for Covington, Virginia

Tucker L. Keener  
*Virginia Commonwealth University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/murp\\_capstone](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/murp_capstone)



Part of the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

© The Author

---

Downloaded from

[https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/murp\\_capstone/82](https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/murp_capstone/82)

This Professional Plan Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by the Urban and Regional Studies and Planning at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Urban and Regional Planning Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact [libcompass@vcu.edu](mailto:libcompass@vcu.edu).



# Downtown Revitalization Strategies for Covington, Virginia

Prepared by Tucker Keener  
For the City of Covington, Virginia



Photo Courtesy of the Covington Cork & Pork Festival

# **Downtown Revitalization Strategies for Downtown Covington, Virginia**

---

Prepared by Tucker Keener for the City of Covington,  
Virginia in partial fulfillment of the requirement for  
the Master of Urban and Regional Planning in the VCU  
Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Panel:

*Dr. Niraj Verma*, Capstone Coordinator  
Urban and Regional Studies and Planning  
Virginia Commonwealth University

*Dr. John Accordino*, Capstone Advisor  
Urban and Regional Studies and Planning  
Virginia Commonwealth University

*Mr. Allen Dressler*, City Manager  
City of Covington, Virginia

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like thank to the people of the City of Covington and Alleghany County for their participation and help with this plan. This plan aims to help with the revitalization efforts for the historic downtown core of Covington that fits into the rural and small-town atmosphere of the area. I have had much help from Covington City Officials and many others in the city that I had the pleasure of conversing with while creating this project. I would also like to give a special thanks to Mr. Allen Dressler, as he has been a great individual to work with in the development of this plan. I admire how passionate he is about transforming the City of Covington and wants to see his home be a better place for all its residents. I am grateful that I had the opportunity to work on this plan for the City of Covington and Mr. Dressler. I was born and raised in Alleghany County and spent much time in Covington growing up, and it is such an honor to work on a plan for an area that will always be my home. I truly love my hometown and will always try to help make it better in any way I can.

Additionally, I would like to thank all the faculty and fellow students in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) program at Virginia Commonwealth University for their encouragement and assistance during my time in the program. I am honored to have had the opportunity to work with everyone in the MURP program. I particularly want to thank Dr. John Accordino and Dr. Niraj Verma for their assistance and support while creating this plan.

Lastly, I would like to thank my loving family and friends, who encouraged me every step of the way throughout my academic journey. They have been there to help every step of the way and have only provided love and support. I would not have been able to complete this plan without them, and I will always remember the support they gave me during my years at VCU.





Photo Courtesy of the City of Covington

## Purpose

This plan aims to identify the goals and desires of local community members and business owners that prioritize economic growth in the downtown core. The City of Covington has many great assets, and the goal of this plan is to leverage these assets to assist with downtown revitalization.

## Objective

This plan is intended to determine actionable items that the City of Covington can implement for downtown revitalization. Using data from community and business surveys, ESRI market analysis, and other information resources, the town can strengthen its downtown core. All data and background information were used to create actionable items.

Table of Contents

List of Images..... II

List of Maps ..... III

List of Charts ..... III

List of Tables ..... III

Introduction..... 1

Background ..... 2

Literature Review..... 4

Existing Conditions ..... 8

Methodology ..... 17

Research Findings ..... 19

Recommendations..... 31

    Recommendation 1 ..... 31

    Recommendation 2 ..... 38

    Recommendation 3 ..... 41

Implementation Guide ..... 44

Conclusion ..... 52

References..... 53

Appendices..... 54

## List of Images

Image A: The Main Street Approach .....	4
Image B: Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities .....	6
Image C: West Virginia Pulp & Paper Company .....	8
Image D: Covington’s Main Street Present Day .....	13
Image E: Covington’s Main Street in 1960s to 1970s .....	13
Image F: C&O Heritage Center in Clifton Forge, Virginia .....	14
Image G: Lake Moomaw in Alleghany Region .....	14
Image H: Jackson River. ....	14
Image I: Exit 16 off Interstate 64 .....	14
Image J: Exit 14 off Interstate 64 .....	14
Image K: Word Cloud of Positive Words Respondents Liked about Downtown .....	21
Image L: Word Cloud of Negative Words Respondents Disliked about Downtown .....	21
Image M: Ashland Train Day .....	32
Image N: Poster for Ashland Train Day .....	32
Image O: Mural in Downtown .....	33
Image P: Maple Avenue Streetscaping Project .....	33
Image Q: Senior Citizen Parking Sign .....	34
Image R: Parking Sign with Time Limits .....	34
Image S: Site of Former Collins Hotel .....	36
Image T: Large Wayfinding Signs for Vinton, Virginia .....	36
Image U: Medium Wayfinding Signs for Vinton, Virginia .....	36
Image V: Small Wayfinding Signs for Vinton, Virginia .....	36
Image W: Vacant Building Used for Art Exhibit in New York .....	37
Image X: Hugo Kohl’s Museum of American History Jewelry Design and Manufacturing Company .....	38
Image Y: Hugo Kohl’s Museum of American History Jewelry Design and Manufacturing Company .....	38
Image Z: Floyd Fest Site Map 2024 .....	39
Image AA: Aerial View of Floyd Fest Concert Venue .....	39
Image AB: Jackson River Scenic Trail .....	40
Image AC: Interactive Exhibit in Discovery Center .....	40
Image AD: Facade of Railroad Hotel in Clifton Forge, Virginia .....	41
Image AE: Rooftop Terrace of Railroad Hotel in Clifton Forge, Virginia .....	41

## List of Maps

Map A: Downtown Covington Study Area .....	9
Map B: City of Covington Zoning Map .....	10
Map C: Building Uses in Downtown Covington .....	11
Map D: Building Status in Downtown Covington .....	12
Map E: Covington ESRI Market Analysis Trade Area .....	26
Map F: Average Daily Traffic Volume for Downtown .....	27
Map G: Example Map of Future Business Layout for Downtown .....	35

## List of Charts

Chart A: Population Trend of Covington, Virginia from 1970 to 2050 .....	3
Chart B: Where Respondents Live .....	19
Chart C: What is Respondents Age .....	19
Chart D: How Long Respondents Have Been a Member of the Community .....	20
Chart E: How Frequently Respondents Visit Downtown Covington .....	20
Chart F: Issues that Respondents Reported about Downtown .....	21
Chart G: Three Businesses that Respondents Would Like to See More of in Downtown .....	22
Chart H: Day of the Week Respondents Preferred to Shop in Downtown .....	22
Chart I: Time of Day Respondents Preferred to Shop in Downtown .....	23
Chart J: Respondents Businesses they are Interested in Generally Open When they Want to Shop .....	23

## List of Tables

Table 1: Research Questions .....	17
Table 2: Qualitative Responses from Community Survey .....	24
Table 3: Characteristics of Businesses from Business Survey .....	25
Table 4: Projected Spending Growth 2023 - 2028 .....	28
Table 5: Market Segments in Downtown Convenience Trade Area .....	28



## Introduction

Covington, Virginia, is a small city in the Blue Ridge Mountains section of the Appalachian Mountains in Alleghany County, located in the western part of the state. The city, located near Interstate 64, is about an hour North of Roanoke City, and as of 2019, it houses a population of about 5,500 and a median age of 44.<sup>1</sup> Covington was incorporated as an independent city in the state of Virginia in 1952 and has a strong history of manufacturing, agriculture, and train services, as those were the primary industries of the city and region since its conception in the early 1800s.<sup>2</sup>

While the city saw steady growth until the mid to late 1900s, it has declined in population and economic activities in recent years. Much of this is due to the decreased operations of extensive manufacturing and train services in the city, which reduced opportunities for residents in the area. This led to an outmigration of individuals employment, which has hurt the city in recent decades. While many industries were once in Covington, the primary industry still located in the city is the WestRock Paper Mill, a significant employer and economic driver for the city and the county. The decline in population and economic opportunities has led to underutilization and vacancies in the city's downtown core.

While the downtown core and the overall City of Covington have declined in recent years, the city has many things it can leverage to reactivate and increase traffic to the area. The city is in a scenic part of the country next to the Jackson River. This allows the area to host many outdoor activities like hiking, water sports, and mountain biking. Additionally, The Omni Homestead and Greenbriar, both world-class resorts, are about a 30-minute drive from downtown. Due to the downtown being built in the 1800s and early 1900s, much of the core is made in a style corresponding to that period, giving the downtown character and a nostalgic feel to many residents and tourists. Lastly, the residents of Covington want to see their downtown become as solid and bustling as it once was in the past. The revitalization of downtown would give residents a place to work, shop, and play while also allowing the area to attract tourists to experience the city and all that the area has to offer. Overall, the city and residents would benefit significantly from a revitalization of downtown while also being able to attract non-residents.

---

<sup>1</sup> Benchmark Planning, "Covington Comprehensive Plan" (Benchmark Planning, 2019), <http://alleghanyjournal.com/2019/CovcompPlan.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Horton Beirne and Byron E Faidley, *Images of America: Covington, Images of America* (Arcadia Publishing, 2013).

## Background

Before an in-depth analysis of strategies that could help revitalize Covington's downtown core, background and a literature review are needed to understand how the city fits into the larger context of rural decline and creating place-making. The literature review analyzes ways the downtown can be reignited to foster business, community, and enjoyment for residents and non-residents. For a proper revitalization plan to be created for Covington, a review of the literature on revitalizing small cities is needed.

### *Rural Decline*

Covington, being in a primarily rural area, is a microcosm of the rural decline that has been happening in the United States in recent decades. Rural areas in recent decades have seen much decline due to many of these areas relying on manufacturing and goods-producing services. The processes of manufacturing automation, globalization, and the shifting of the United States from a goods-producing to a service-providing economy have been the main reasons that rural America has seen a decline in population and economic opportunity.<sup>3</sup> The trend of declining manufacturing employment did not happen solely in rural America; urban America has also experienced this trend. However, this problem affects rural America much more extensively due to the lack of stable employment and employment that occurs when once well-paying manufacturing jobs leave these areas.<sup>4</sup> Since many of these jobs that departed did not require high levels of education, many workers found it difficult to find employment in other sectors. This led many to either retire early, go on disability, or live off of government programs. Additionally, with the loss of these jobs came the loss of service sector jobs due to these jobs being dependent on larger populations and size, which were once provided with manufacturing jobs.<sup>5</sup>

While manufacturing has seen a decline in rural America, it has created many problems for these areas. Many issues that face these areas are lack of services, underemployment, outmigration, social isolation, poverty, and economic struggles.<sup>6</sup> With the decreased opportunities, much of rural America has seen issues of retaining residents and economic opportunity. This is seen in much of rural America, which is characterized by older residents, with the median age of rural America being 43.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, rural Americans have found it difficult to enter the new age of the American economy due to a lack of internet services.<sup>8</sup> These factors, coupled with decreasing economic opportunity, have led to a rural America struggling to keep up with the current economy and, at times, working to stay afloat.

---

<sup>3</sup> Review of Sociology 16 (1990): 67–86; David L Carlton and Peter A Coclanic, "The Roots of Southern De-industrialization," Challenge 61, no. 5–6 (2018): 418–26; Gary Paul Green, "De-industrialization of Rural America: Economic Restructuring and the Rural Ghetto," Local Development and Society 1, no. 1 (2020): 15–25

<sup>4</sup> Tickamyer and Duncan, "Poverty and Opportunity Structure in Rural America"; Carlton and Coclanic, "The Roots of Southern De-industrialization"; Teresa C Fort, Justin R Pierce, and Schott, "New Perspectives on the Decline of US Manufacturing Employment," The Journal of Economic Perspectives 32, no. 2 (2018): 47–72.

<sup>5</sup> Green, "De-industrialization of Rural America: Economic Restructuring and the Rural Ghetto."

<sup>6</sup> Tickamyer and Duncan, "Poverty and Opportunity Structure in Rural America"; Green, "De-industrialization of Rural America: Economic Restructuring and the Rural Ghetto."

<sup>7</sup> Eduardo Porter, "The Hard Truth of Trying to 'Save' the Rural Economy," New York Times, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/12/14/opinion/rural-america-trump-decline.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Rachel L Harris and Lisa Tarchak, "Small-Town America Is Dying. Can We Save It?," New York Times, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/22/opinion/rural-america-economy-revive.html>.

## History of Downtown

Covington is nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains in Alleghany County and in the Western part of Virginia. The city was settled in 1746 and was a trading post on the Jackson River.<sup>9</sup> The population grew steadily, and was incorporated as a town in 1819. As the city grew, the city began to host more manufacturing capacity, which included industries of paper, yarn, fiber and film, flour, iron foundries, and some operations of the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) railroad. Population and economic activity increased, and in 1952, Covington was incorporated as a city. The city kept seeing a population increase, with a peak population in the 1970s of 10,060.<sup>10</sup> Since the 1970s, the area has seen a population loss; in 2019, the population fell to 5,518. Figure 2 represents the population trends from the 1970's. Much of the city's manufacturing industry has left, with the main remaining economic driver being the WestRock Paper Mill.

### *Covington's Past and Current Conditions*

Covington fits into the trend that has been happening in rural America. The city once hosted many manufacturing industries that supported the local economy and brought prosperity to the city and overall county. It was once host to an iron foundry, yarn-producing plant, scrap metal foundry, fiber and film (protective overwrap for commercial goods) producing plant, flour mill, and some operations of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (C&O).<sup>11</sup> The primary industry that still resides in the area is the WestRock Paper Mill, which is crucial to the city's economy. The leaving of industry has meant a decrease in population for the area. For about the past 40 years, Covington has seen a population decrease by almost half.<sup>12</sup> In 1970, the city had a population of about 10,060, and as of 2019, the city has a population of about 5,518. This is followed by one in four people experiencing poverty, having a median age of 44, and a median household income of \$34,703. The city has an older population and more people with lower incomes than the state of Virginia.

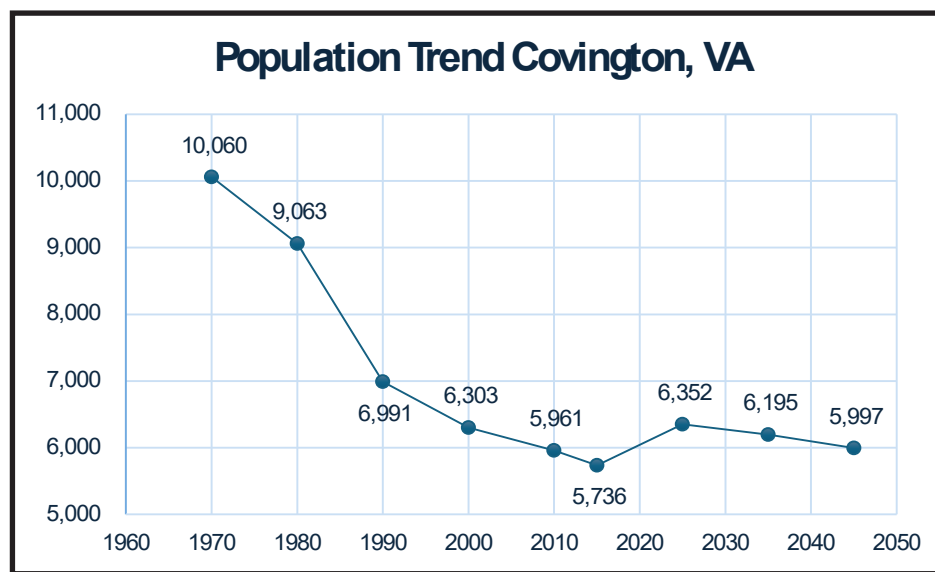


Chart A. Population trend of Covington, VA from 1970s to 2050s. Data courtesy of Covington Comprehensive Plan prepared by Benchmark Planning.

<sup>9</sup> Beirne and Faidley, *Images of America: Covington*.

<sup>10</sup> Benchmark Planning, "Covington Comprehensive Plan."

<sup>11</sup> Beirne and Faidley, *Images of America: Covington*.

<sup>12</sup> Benchmark Planning, "Covington Comprehensive Plan."

## Literature Review

Revitalization involves nurturing a town's most cherished aspects, as identified by its residents, by formulating a forward-looking development plan.<sup>13</sup> It typically entails harnessing an area's existing assets and implementing economic development strategies alongside enhancing the facades of deteriorated buildings. The ultimate objective is to encourage development to create a thriving community.

### *Approaches to Downtown Revitalization*

Downtowns have grown in recent decades as more and more people desire to be in environments that convey a sense of place, history, and community.<sup>14</sup> Some approaches can help breathe new life into downtown cores, especially for the City of Covington. One approach used for small-city downtown revitalization has been the Main Street American Approach. Other approaches for downtown revitalization are place-making, partnership, and community engagement.

Main Street America has been a prominent tool for downtown revitalization in recent decades. Main Street America was created in the 1980s by the National Trust to help facilitate the economic development of the commercial districts of historic towns and small cities.<sup>15</sup> The approach has four main points that help revitalize downtowns and Main Streets. These points are economic vitality, design, organization, and promotion.<sup>16</sup> Figure 1 represents the four points and provides more details on what each point represents. Each point is meant to work within the context and resources present within the city and community. This ensures that the area's character is kept intact while ensuring growth fits into the values of the community.

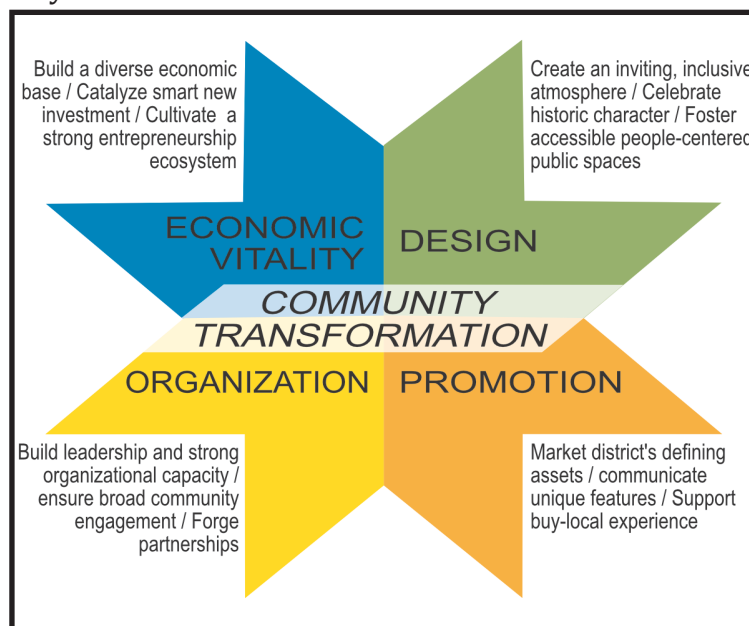


Image A. The Main Street Approach Transformation Strategies.  
Image courtesy of Main Street America.

<sup>13</sup> Michael A Burayidi, "DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IN SMALL AND MIDSIZED CITIES" (American Planning Association, 2018), [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download\\_pdf/PAS-Report-590.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/PAS-Report-590.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> John Accordino and Kyle Meyer, "Chapter 10: Creating Vibrant Main Streets throughout Virginia" (Virginia Tech Publishing, 2022); Burayidi, "DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IN SMALL AND MIDSIZED CITIES."

<sup>15</sup> Accordino and Meyer, "Chapter 10: Creating Vibrant Main Streets throughout Virginia."

<sup>16</sup> Main Street America, "The Main Street Approach" (Main Street America, 2023), <https://www.mainstreet.org/ourwork/theapproach>.



Economic vitality is focused on community and business surveys, an ESRI market analysis, and town comparisons. Surveys were used to understand residents' and business owners' needs and wants. This included asking questions about shopping habits, visits, and feelings towards downtown. After surveys were completed, an ESRI market analysis was performed to see the capability of certain business establishments in the area. ESRI market analysis creates a market tapestry of the area to determine what type of foods, services, and activities consumers use and demand. After the study, similar towns were compared to see how they implemented effective revitalization strategies.

Design was a crucial part of this plan as it is needed to structure the downtown to retain individuals and create a cohesive and robust area. The first part of the design analyzed the existing land uses and businesses in the downtown core. After existing structures were analyzed, the introduction and placement of new businesses were mapped. Additionally, the WestRock paper mill has a consequential presence near the downtown. Therefore, understanding how the mill and downtown complement and contrast was crucial. The last part of the design was ensuring that the downtown maintained its rural character while being a place people wanted to visit.

Organization was another component used by Main Street to help guide the city with a revitalization plan. Ensuring that Covington could perform revitalization was crucial. This meant hiring staff, collaborating with other organizations within the city, county, and region, and engaging its community, which was crucial. This gives the city the capacity to achieve its goals efficiently.

Promotion is the last but crucial part of this plan. Ensuring the city had the necessary means to promote events, local businesses, and unique features was essential to bringing people downtown. This meant analyzing how the downtown promotes individuals about events around the city, especially in the downtown core. This ensures that the city can effectively market itself.

### *Smart Growth*

Another strategy that could be implemented to help assist the City of Covington is using the idea of Smart Growth. Smart Growth is making communities more livable, economically efficient, and meeting the community's needs.<sup>17</sup> While the list presented above is specific ways cities can help revitalize, Smart Growth considers the future of areas supporting the community's needs, nature, and assets. The main goals of Smart Growth in Rural Areas are to support the landscape that creates a strong economic climate and protects the natural landscape, help existing places thrive by taking care of the assets of the overall community, and make great new places that create vibrant and enduring communities and neighborhoods that retain and attracts residents.<sup>18</sup> These strategies help create rural and small towns that can adapt to changing economies while protecting and preserving their neighborhoods. They give a sense of community to a place and the people that inhabit that space.

---

<sup>17</sup> NOAA, "What Is Smart Growth?" (National Oceanic Service, 2023), <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/smartgrowth.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Nadejda Mishkovsky et al., "Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities" (ICMA, 2012), [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-01/documents/10-180\\_smart\\_growth\\_rural\\_com.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-01/documents/10-180_smart_growth_rural_com.pdf).

Covington can benefit from the ideas of Smart Growth to ensure that the area grows and meets the community's needs while preserving the assets of its history, rural character, and natural landscape. The economics of Covington have changed over its history, and currently, the area relies on the WestRock Paper Mill as a primary driver of economic activity. The mill employs about 1,000 people and pays more than \$10 million in taxes yearly to the City of Covington.<sup>19</sup> While it is a significant driver for the area, the city must diversify its economy to ensure that if the mill were to experience an economic downturn, the city would not falter as well. This means a diversification of the economy that supports businesses that support the local economy that reflects the nearby rural systems while bringing in innovative approaches that can benefit the area.<sup>20</sup> However, economic development should respect the rural landscape and the rural characteristics of the area. While economic growth and preserving rural character are crucial to Covington, taking care of existing assets is just as important. The buildings and street networks of the city were built in the early 1800s to late 1900s, giving the area a historic character and feel. Ensuring these assets are invested in and protected is crucial to keeping that same small-town feel to the city. The city can protect its current assets by re-fabricating buildings, creating attractions with existing infrastructure, and helping local businesses. While the existing rural landscape and historic assets are crucial, creating significant new places is essential for rural areas. New growth must not be random and should be considered and analyzed to ensure that the community and landscape support these systems. Additionally, growth must not happen in a sprawl fashion to provide compact and walkable areas while limiting the effects of natural landscapes. Lastly, developers and small businesses should be rewarded for creating great places to ensure that incentive policies are explored and implemented. Covington can reward its small businesses that are helping promote and increase traffic to the downtown core, which can create more involvement and incentive to keep doing great work for the city.

Smart growth was used in Covington to support the rural landscape, help existing places thrive, and create significant new places. This meant analyzing Covington's resources and protecting them, supporting existing businesses and assets, and designing and attracting new businesses. Strategies were created using this analysis tool to make Covington a desirable and attractive place for non-residents and current residents.

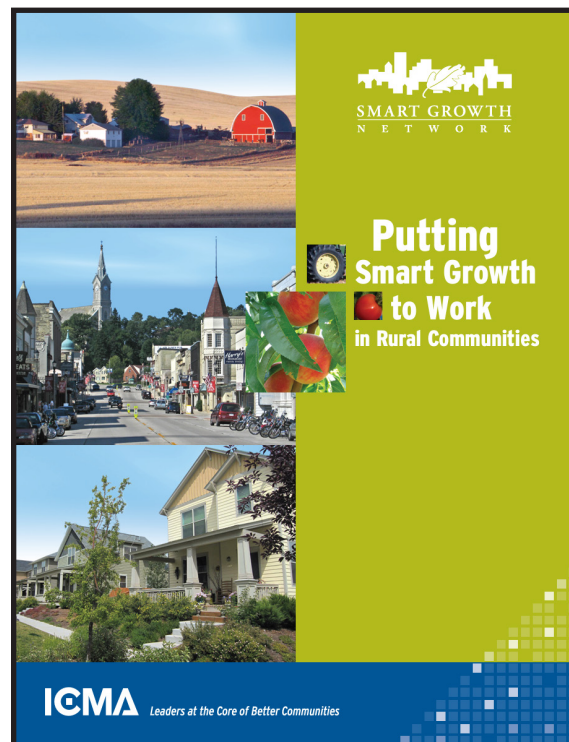


Image B. Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities. Image courtesy of Environmental Protection Agency.

<sup>19</sup> Jeff Williamson and Tommy Lopez, "WestRock to Invest Nearly a Quarter Billion Dollars in Covington Mill," WSLs, 2018, <https://www.wsls.com/news/2018/09/25/westrock-to-invest-nearly-a-quarter-billion-dollars-in-covington-mill/>.

<sup>20</sup> Mishkovsky et al., "Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities."

## *Placemaking and Partnership*

Placemaking is crucial to revitalizing an area, especially a downtown core. It is the art of transforming public spaces into quality places.<sup>21</sup> This process transforms an area's physical spaces to make the area livable, functional, and desirable for individuals. Suitable spaces can create a sense of pride and belonging to a community, supporting strong bonds between a community and a downtown core can be achieved. In that case, it can help foster economic development by attracting various businesses, different skilled labor, and a variety of other benefits.

Partnership is crucial to the creation of a strong downtown revitalization plan. The public and private realms must work together to achieve progress.<sup>22</sup> The city must help support the introduction of the private sector downtown. A city can help by investing in public improvements, providing incentives for new and already settled businesses, and changing zoning to support more uses downtown. Downtowns needing more organization showed more difficulty with partnerships with the private sector.<sup>23</sup> Overall, downtown revitalization needs to have strong public/private partnerships.



<sup>21</sup> Burayidi, "DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IN SMALL AND MIDSIZED CITIES"; Jennifer S Vey, "Why We Need to Invest in Transformative Placemaking" (Brookings Institute, 2018), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-we-need-to-invest-in-transformative-placemaking/>.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Hampton, "Rural Downtown Development: Guiding Principles for Small Cities" (Lets Talk Business, 2006), <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/downtowneconomics/files/2012/07/rural-downtown-development.pdf>.

<sup>23</sup> Kent A Robertson, "Can Small-City Downtowns Remain Viable?: A National Study of Development Issues and Strategies," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65, no. 3 (1999): 270–83.



## Existing Conditions

### *Economics of Covington*

Covington's economics are mainly driven by the WestRock paper mill, which raises about 10 million dollars in taxes yearly while employing nearly 1,000 people.<sup>24</sup> The largest industries as of 2019 are retail, government, and construction. The largest projected industries in the future will be retail and construction. Unemployment rates in the city as of 2016 were about 6% and higher than in the county and the state. 37% of residents work within the city and 56% work outside of the city.

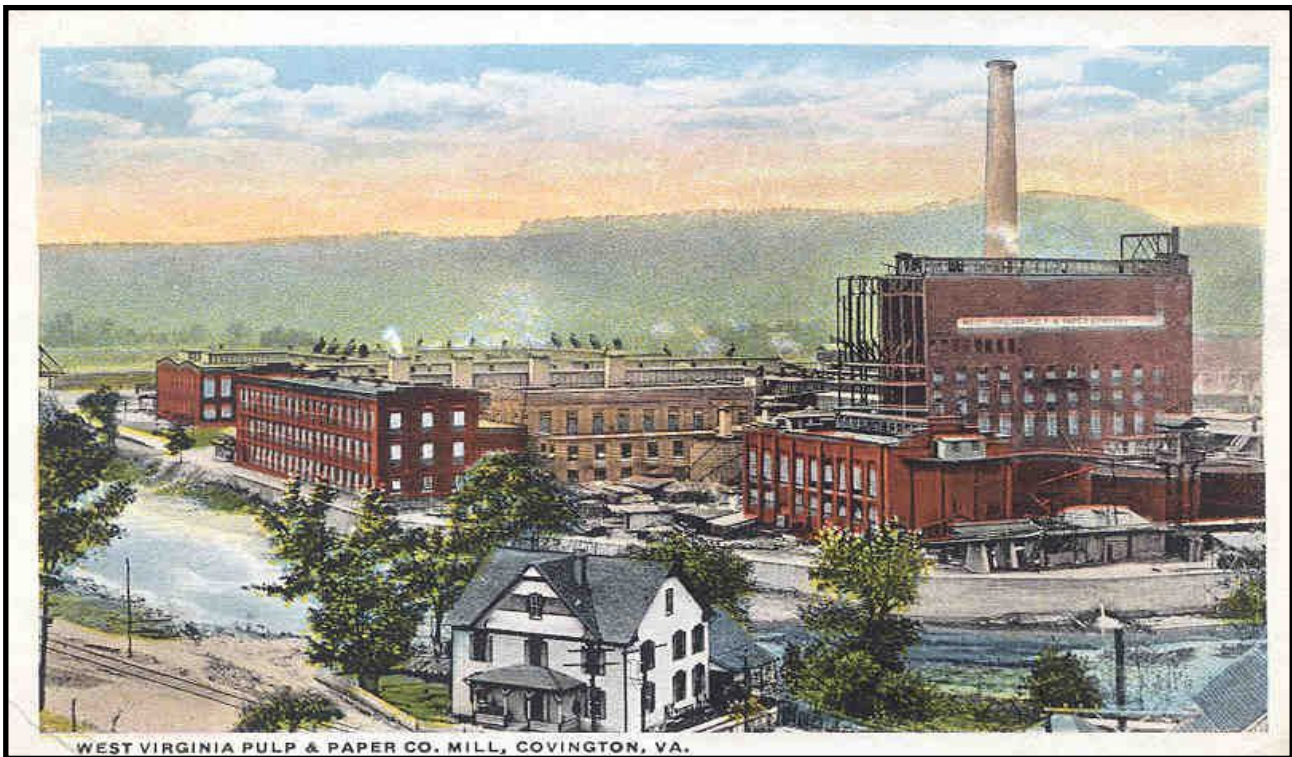


Image C. West Virginia Pulp & Paper Company. Image courtesy of Ancestry.com

### *Demographics*

As of 2019, the City of Covington had a population of about 5,518 residents. Of those residents, Census Quickfacts notes that the city's racial makeup is 81.8% White, 12.1% African American, 2.6% Hispanic, and 1.2% Asian. The population's median age is 44, which is older than the state median age of 38.<sup>25</sup> The city's median household income is \$34,703, with the city having 3,035 housing units, of which 82% are occupied. The population is also 52.3% Female and 47.3% Male. This demographic analysis shows that the city's population is older, more likely to be White and Female, and have less disposable income.

---

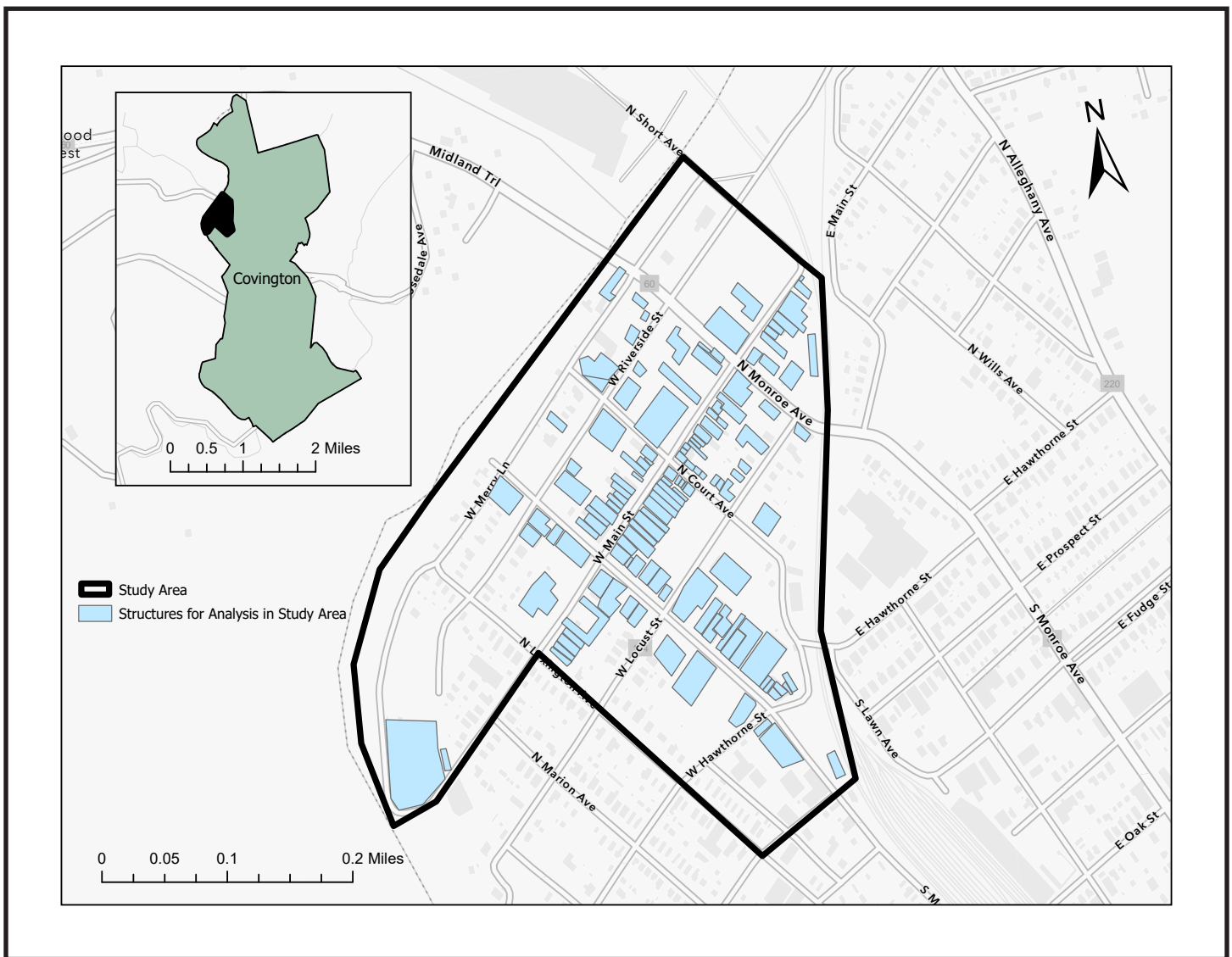
<sup>24</sup> Williamson and Lopez, "WestRock to Invest Nearly a Quarter Billion Dollars in Covington Mill."

<sup>25</sup> Benchmark Planning, "Covington Comprehensive Plan."



## Covington Study Area

The core of downtown Covington was primarily built in the late 1800s to early 1900s, which gives it a historic and denser feel. This is due to much transportation during that period, from trains and walking, which called for a denser downtown with walkable access to the train depot.<sup>26</sup> Within the study area, the main streets concentrated in this project are West Main Street, North Maple Avenue, Lexington Avenue, and West Riverside Street. The study area mainly consists of the downtown, but some residential areas are also there. Other notable features of the study area are that it encompasses the Jackson River, a historical train that transported people to the Omni Homestead, and various buildings built during the late 1800s to early 1900s.

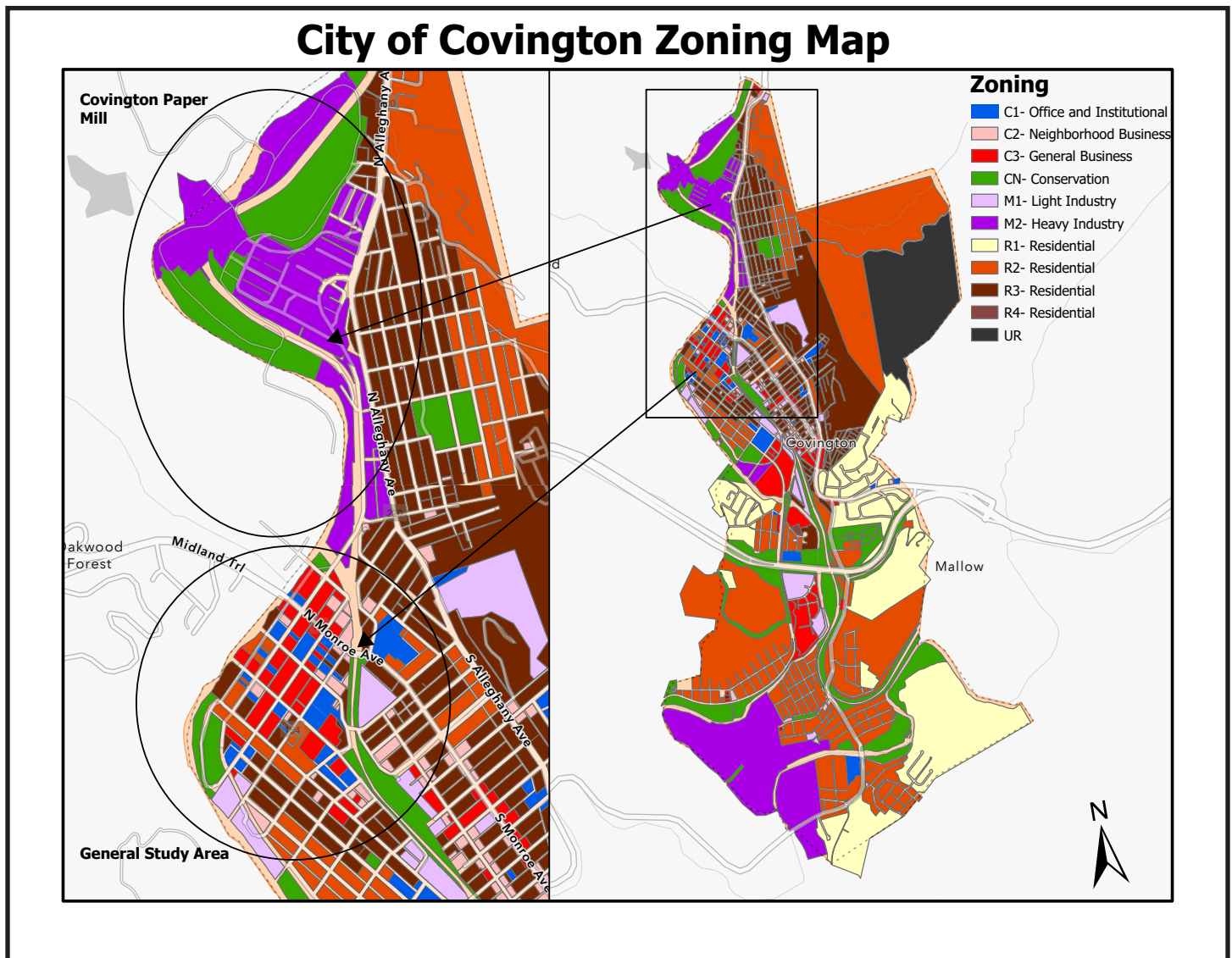


Map A. Study area for Downtown Covington

<sup>26</sup> Beirne and Faidley, Images of America: Covington.  
Revitalization Strategies for Downtown Covington

## Zoning

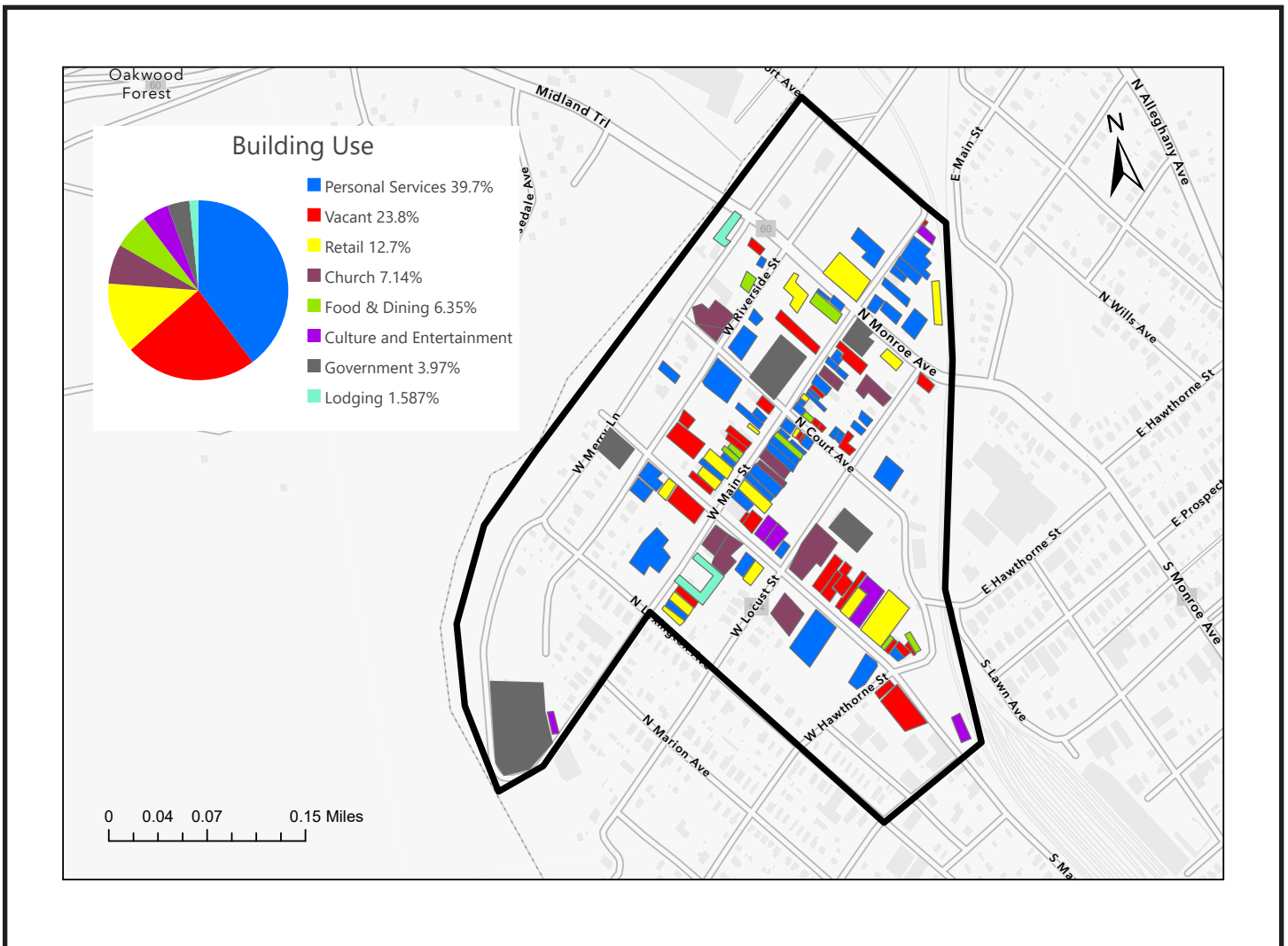
Covington has a variety of zoning codes for the city, which is from the Covington Geohub page. Covington is mainly filled with zoning that relates to residential, conservation, and mixed-use. The map below shows that much of the downtown core is filled with higher-density residential with a mix of commercial, neighborhood, office, and institutional. This is good for downtown revitalization as these codes allow a mix of uses, which means that housing, retail, and other beneficial structures could be introduced downtown. The purple North of downtown, which is heavy industry, is the location of the WestRock Paper Mill. This shows that the downtown is denser with a mixture of uses that creates a more walkable, closer, and connected downtown. Appendix A describes the entire zoning code for the City of Covington.

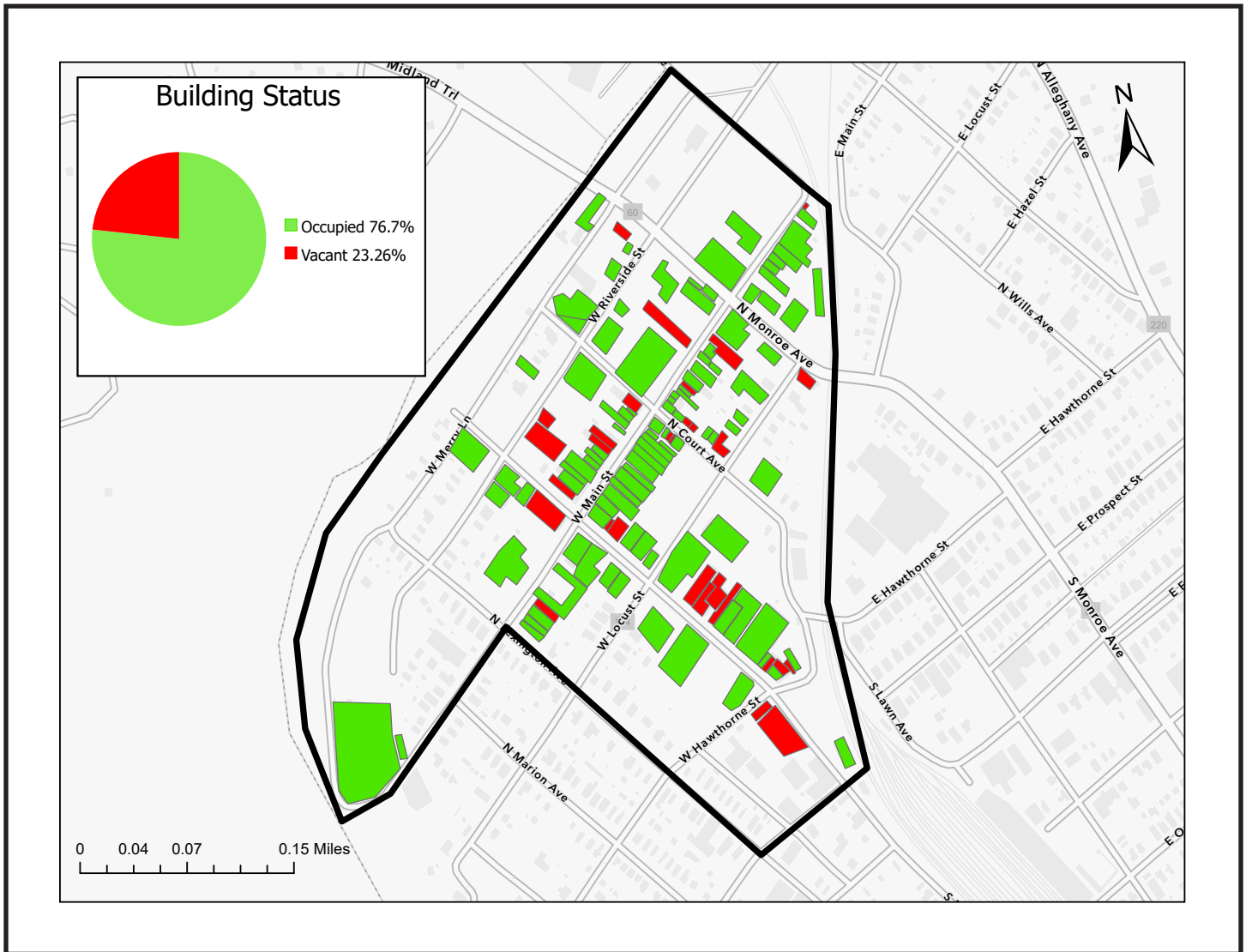


Map B. City of Covington, WestRock Paper mill, and Downtown Zoning Map

## Land Use

One of the crucial parts of this plan is determining the land uses through the downtown core of Covington. Seeing the existing land use for the downtown core is crucial as it gives a sense of what types of uses are already within the city. Once existing land uses are mapped, strategies can be implemented to determine where new businesses would be best placed in the downtown core. The map below shows the building uses of the downtown core. Almost 40% of the downtown is occupied by personal services, while another 23% is occupied by vacant properties. This can be problematic for a downtown area as it limits goods-producing establishments that can attract outside individuals and provide goods that city residents need and desire. Only 12% is occupied by retail and 6% by food and dining. A crucial part of this plan was determining what businesses would work well in the area and where these businesses should be positioned within the downtown area to give them maximum exposure while retaining individuals in the downtown area. This plan showed ways downtown could encourage the reuse of vacant properties.





### Main Street

The Main Street of Covington is vital to revitalizing the downtown core. While most stores on this street have left, the historic charm and character have remained the same. Figure 6 shows the present day of this street, while Figure 7 shows the streets back in the 1960's to 1970's. These pictures show the dense street, with roomy sidewalks and buildings created in the late 1800s to early 1900s.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Beirne and Faidley.



Additionally, to the historic infrastructure, natural features are very present from downtown, with easy access to the Jackson River and views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. While much of the infrastructure has remained the same, the economic makeup of the street has changed over the years. The street was once home to a Masonic Hall, Covington Department Store, Leggett's Department Store, M.H. Fisher Company, and more. However, now there are more vacancies with fewer businesses in the downtown core.<sup>28</sup>



Image D (left) shows Main Street Covington as it is shaped today. Image E (right) shows Main Street Covington from the 1960s to 1970s. Both images courtesy of the City of Covington. These photos show that Main Street has retained much of the same structures and character that is beneficial to a strong downtown core.

### *Surrounding Influences*

Covington is located in a part of the state that hosts natural, historic, and attractive items that bring people to this area. Two landmark resorts, the Omni Homestead and The Greenbrier, attract tourists to the area to relax and explore a part of the Appalachian region. This brings people that could be brought into the downtown area to enjoy and spend time. This could benefit the area's economy, which is another additional economic driver. The City of Roanoke, one of the larger metro areas in the Western part of the state, is about an hour's drive away, which shows another area of people Covington could attract. People from Roanoke could travel to the area for a weekend getaway or just for a day trip to enjoy the beauty of the area. Other attractive parts of the region are the Falling Springs Waterfalls, Humpback Bridge, C&O Heritage Center, the Alleghany Arts Center, Lake Moomaw, and Douthat State Park. Another critical influence on Covington and the County is the town of Clifton Forge. Clifton Forge is located about 13 miles from Covington and hosts a population of about 3,500 residents.

---

<sup>28</sup> Beirne and Faidley.

While there are surrounding influences that are beneficial to downtown Covington, other influences can hinder the growth of the downtown core. One of the main hindrances is the roads that feed to Interstate 64 at Exits 14 and 16. Exit 14 feeds onto South Durant Road, which then becomes South Craig Avenue while heading towards downtown, and exit 16 feeds into East Madison Street. Both areas host land uses cater to cars traveling on I-64, filling the area with wider roads, more asphalt, gas stations, and fast-food options. This can hurt the attraction of individuals towards the downtown core as this kind of land use will more likely repel than attract potential non-residents.



Image F (top left) shows the C&O Heritage Center in Clifton Forge, Virginia. Image G (top center) shows Lake Moomaw in Alleghany Region. Image H (top right) shows the Jackson River. All photos in top row courtesy of Alleghany Highlands of Virginia. Image I (bottom left) shows exit 16 off of Interstate 64. Image J shows exit (bottom right) shows exit 14 off of Interstate 64. All photos in bottom row are courtesy of Google Maps.



## *Covington's Past and Current Conditions*

Covington fits into the trend that has been happening in rural America. The city once hosted many manufacturing industries that supported the local economy and brought prosperity to the city and the overall county. It was once host to an iron foundry, yarn-producing plant, scrap metal foundry, fiber and film (protective overwrap for commercial goods) producing plant, flour mill, and some operations of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad (C&O).<sup>29</sup> The primary industry that still resides in the area is the WestRock Paper Mill, which is crucial to the city's economy. The leaving of industries has meant a decrease in population for the area. For about the past 40 years, Covington has seen a population decrease by almost half.<sup>30</sup> In 1970, the city had a population of about 10,060, and as of 2019, the city has a population of about 5,528. This is followed by one in four people experiencing poverty, having a median age of 44, and a median household income of \$34,703. The city has an older population and more people with lower incomes than the state of Virginia.

The area's decrease in population, industry, and economic opportunity has led to the underutilization and vacancies of its downtown core. Covington was once the host of many different commercial stores in the city, such as the Collins Hotel, multiple eatery establishments, a music store, retail and appliance stores, a Masonic theatre, numerous department stores, grocery stores, banks, and much more.<sup>31</sup> Many of those stores are not currently in the city, but the downtown core still hosts some eateries, service-based stores, and banks, but nothing to the extent of what was once in the city. However, Covington does not have to follow the trends that much of rural America has faced in recent years. With much determination, compassion, and effort, the city can enact plans and policies that can turn around the downward decline of the city to become an attractive place for residents, potential residents, and non-residents.



---

<sup>29</sup> Beirne and Faidley.

<sup>30</sup> Benchmark Planning, "Covington Comprehensive Plan."

<sup>31</sup> Beirne and Faidley.





Photo Courtesy of Virginia is for Lovers



## Methodology

### *Research Question*

A successful plan for revitalizing downtown Covington must ensure that stakeholders in the community are engaged to understand the needs and desires of the local community. Stakeholders in this study are residents of the City of Covington, individuals who shop in the downtown core, and local business owners who operate in the downtown area. To fully understand the needs and desires of these stakeholders, community engagement is crucial to determine the feelings of locals invested in the downtown core.

The overall community is the first part engaged in scoping their feelings about downtown, shopping preferences, and future desires for the area. Stakeholders that are the main focus of this study are locals who participate in the downtown core. Due to proximity, these residents are more likely to spend money and time in the downtown area.

After the community was engaged, discussions with local businesses occurred to understand their operations and feelings about doing business downtown. Their answers are valuable as they are actively engaged with the downtown core and will express different concerns due to being physically and economically invested in the area. Businesses in the area range from food services to furniture re-fabrication.

Once data from the city's overall community and business owners are collected, the results will help inform a market analysis. The goal of the market analysis is to determine the market demand for specific businesses and whether there is enough demand to support the desires of the overall community. After a market analysis is created, towns of similar sizes that have been successfully revitalized are analyzed. In addition, the Four Points of the Main Street America program was used to guide recommendations. Table 1 shows the research questions, the source of information for those questions, and the tools to gain the information.

Research Question	Source of Information	Tools
What are the community goals for downtown Covington?	Local community members, members in surrounding communities, downtown business owners	In-person surveys, online Google forms, attending local events, interviewing local business owners
What are Covington's environmental and economic abilities to support community goals?	Market data using ESRI business analysis coupled with Census data, local business owners	Market Analysis, Census Data, Interviewing local business owners
How can Covington maintain its rural and small-town character while supporting new development?	Similar small towns that have similar downtown revitalization plans and small-town strategies, input from locals	Comparable towns, Main Street America Guidelines

Table 1. Research Questions

## *Data Collection and Analysis*

Data collection for these questions was completed using the tools mentioned in the table above. The survey for the overall community was completed through intercept surveys during a Halloween/Oktoberfest Festival in mid-October, as well as from a Main Street America Survey that was conducted in the Fall of 2023.

Local business owners were engaged through phone call interviews with a series of questions. The goal of this interview was to gain more of an understanding of the experiences and feelings of local business owners. These interviews help give more personal connections and flexibility to ask questions specific to their businesses. Their answers are then recorded into a Word document to understand their feelings better and code their answers.

Once the community members and business owners were contacted, a market analysis was performed to see if the community's desires could happen successfully. The community's desires will be translated into goals that can be studied through a market analysis. Trade areas are created through a market analysis to determine the potential consumers in the area and their shopping habits. Sales gaps are analyzed to see which businesses could do well.

Once a market analysis and community engagement were completed, the Virginia Main Street program and similar-sized towns with successful revitalization was analyzed. These things helped determine successful approaches that can be applied to the City of Covington.



Photo Courtesy of the Alleghany Highlands of Virginia

## Research Findings

### *Community Survey Response*

The following results are from two surveys, one a community survey conducted by the researcher between October 2023 and January 2024 and the other being from a community survey conducted by Main Street America in the fall of 2023. Both surveys relay data relevant to the residents' ideas and thoughts about downtown Covington. With the combination of these two surveys, there were 304 responses. The community survey by the researcher was conducted at a Halloween Festival on October 21, 2023, with intercept surveys and answers recorded using Google Forms, and the community survey was conducted with Main Street America over the Fall 2023 season. Appendix B shows the community survey.

### *Respondent Characteristics*

Respondents for the survey were mainly from Allegheny County (45.8%) and the City of Covington (41.7%). A small percentage of respondents were from the town of Clifton Forge (12.5%). Allegheny County encompasses the City of Covington, while Clifton Forge is a 15-minute drive Northwest of the city.

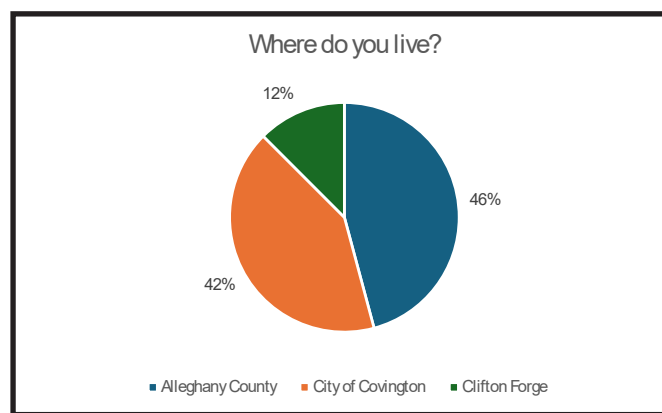


Chart B. Where Respondents Live

Respondents' ages varied, but the largest age group was 55 – 64 (37.5%), with other ages varied evenly. The smallest age ranges were 35 – 44 (4.2%) and 75 or over (4.2%). This was expected as the age of Covington's residents is older compared to the overall state of Virginia.

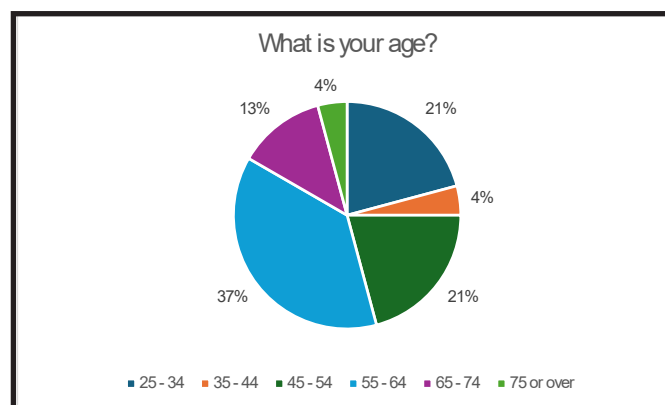


Chart C. What is Respondents Age

Most respondents have been a part of the community for more than ten years (83%). This is important as it shows that many respondents have been a part of the community for many years, which can potentially boost the desire for a revitalized downtown core of Covington. Other respondents have been in the community for 1 – 5 years (10%), 5 – 10 years (3%), and less than one year (3%).

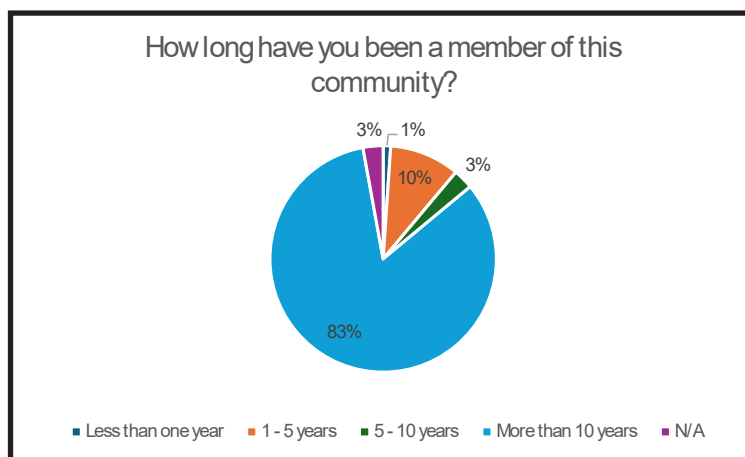


Chart D. How long respondents have been a member of the community

### *Frequency of Visit*

Many respondents visit downtown Covington quite frequently. When asked how frequently respondents visited downtown, many said they visited weekly (48%) and daily (33%); a small percentage said they visited monthly (15%) and less than once a month (4%). This data shows that respondents visit downtown often; therefore, implementing goods and services for these respondents can help revitalize the downtown core.

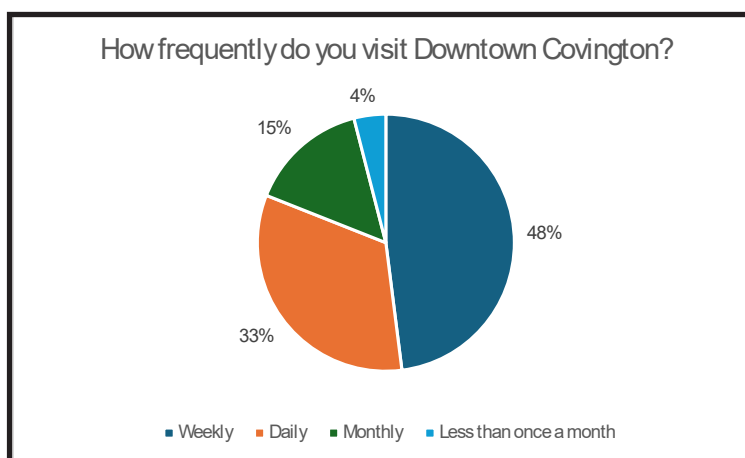


Chart E. How frequently respondents visit Downtown Covington

### *Respondents' Attitudes towards Downtown*

Respondents had different words to express their likes and dislikes about downtown. Different words were more frequent than others when it came to these categories.



When asked one word that came to mind as you think about things you liked about downtown Covington, the words friendly, quaint, community, beautiful, and historic came to mind frequently, most likely coming from the downtown historic small town rural characteristics.

When asked about words that came to mind as they thought of things they disliked about downtown Covington, the most frequent words were empty, parking, small, vacancy, and lack. These words relate to the lack of different shops and activities in the downtown core, as well as land uses that relate to parking lots and the smell that comes from the Paper mill.



Consumer Preferences

Respondents were asked about issues they thought were the most pressing downtown. The top three issues were that there were too many vacant storefronts or vacant lots (18%), a lack of businesses/ destinations suited to them (15%), and buildings neglected or in need of repair (15%). These issues can hinder revitalization and prevent individuals from visiting downtown due to negative perceptions. Other notable issues were not enough businesses consistently open at desired hours (11%), lack of public restrooms (10%), and not enough human activity (8%).

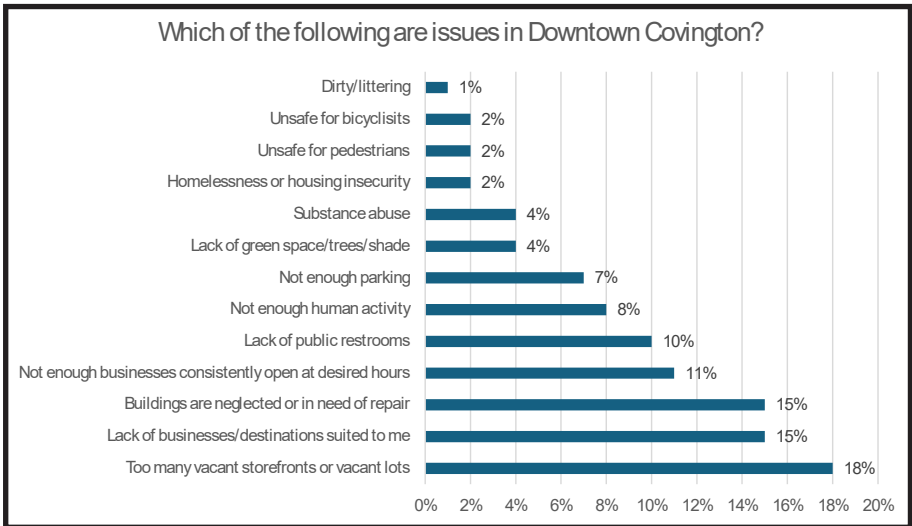


Chart F. Issues that respondents reported about Downtown

Additional questions were asked to gauge consumer preferences for what types of businesses they would like to see downtown. The top three businesses that they would want in the core were casual or family restaurants (13%), women’s clothing (12%), and family entertainment (9%). These businesses would help complement many personal services that dominate the downtown landscape. Other notable desired businesses were fine dining restaurants (5%), men’s clothing (5%), children’s clothing (5%), and hardware stores (4%).

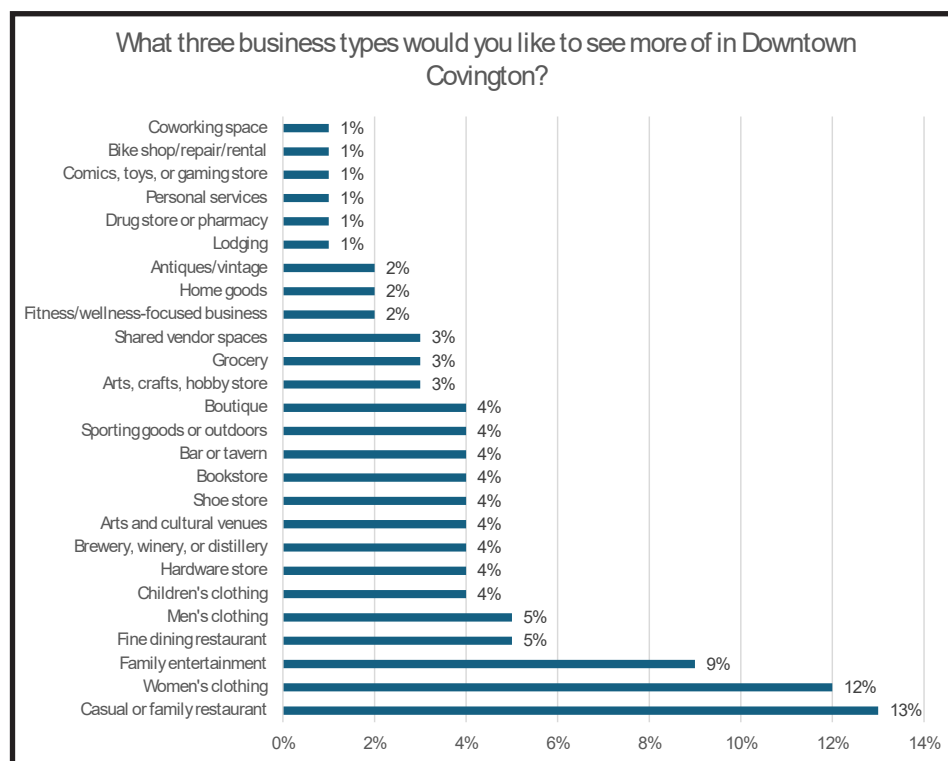


Chart G. Three businesses that respondents would like to see more of in Downtown

Respondents were also asked about their shopping habits, what days of the week they prefer to shop, what time of day they like to shop, and if businesses they would like to shop at are open at desirable times. Over half of the respondents preferred shopping downtown on Saturday (54%). Additionally, days towards the end of the week had higher percentages, with Friday (17%) and Sunday (7%) being other popular days to shop downtown.

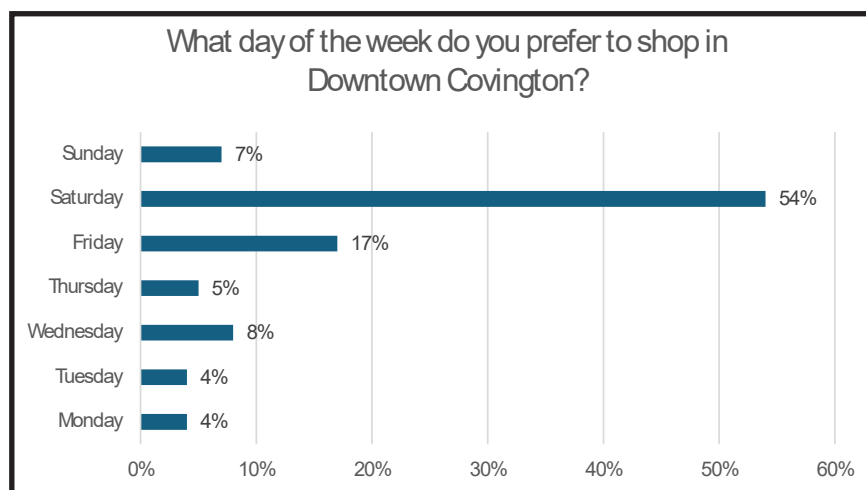


Chart H. Day of the week that respondents preferred to shop in Downtown

Respondents stated times that they prefer to shop downtown. After 5 pm (32%) was the highest percentage of time that respondents preferred to shop in the downtown core. This shows that residents desire to shop downtown after 5 pm, incentivizing shops to stay open later. 1 pm – 3 pm (22%) and 11 am – 1 pm (22%) were the other largest time frames that respondents desired to shop downtown.

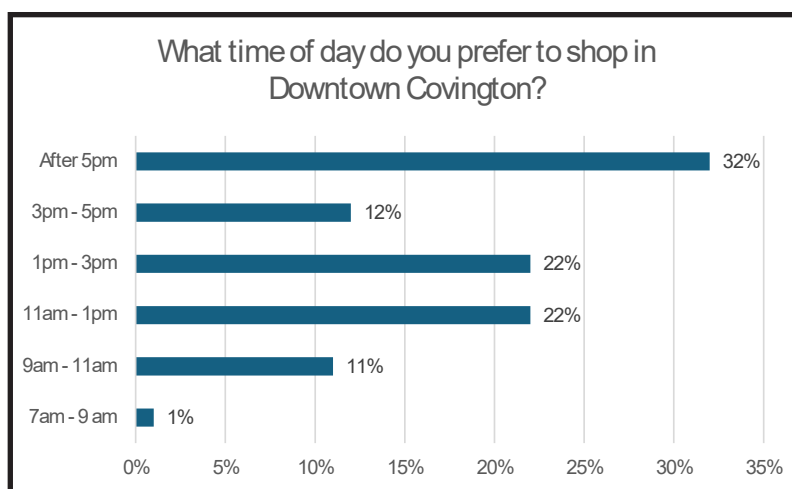


Chart I. Time of day that respondents preferred to shop in Downtown

Respondents asked if businesses they were interested in were generally open when they wanted to shop. Respondents said Yes (57%) and No (43%) to the stores they are interested in being open when they want to shop. While the most significant share of respondents said Yes, a sizable number said No, meaning that shops are not open when they want them to be open.

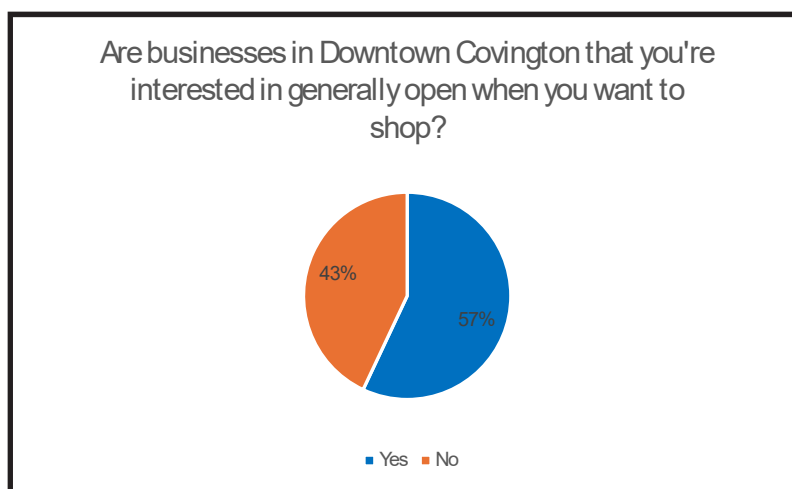


Chart J. Respondents businesses they are interested in generally open when they want to shop

### *Qualitative Responses*

In addition to the responses above, respondents were also asked to provide comments and opinions on downtown Covington that may not have been able to be encapsulated by the survey. Many respondents were pleased to live in Covington and glad to see the actions taken by the city manager to help bring life back downtown.

Many believe that the city is heading in the right direction but must adapt to change to thrive. With this, many respondents want the city to be busier, with many relating to the old-time boom that the city once saw in the 1900s. While respondents want to see growth, they also want to keep the old-time and small-town feel that downtown Covington possesses.

Respondents were also asked what they thought could attract residents and non-residents to downtown Covington. Many respondents said retail businesses and jobs were the way to attract people downtown. With this, people mentioned different activities that could be catered to different people, such as family entertainment, outdoor activities, and festivals. Additionally, respondents mentioned that more lodging needs to be located downtown for non-residents to visit the area and experience downtown Covington.

<b>What do you think would attract more residents and non-residents towards downtown Covington?</b>	<b>How would you like downtown Covington to look in the future?</b>	<b>Any Other Comments?</b>
Outdoor activities and stores	Busy, stores open, and people here	Allen is trying to move the city forward; people need to back up the stores
More storefronts and businesses	Totally revitalized, and people want to visit	Things are going in the right direction, and like the improvements the city has done
More jobs	Something for everyone, clean, well kept	The city needs to adapt to change
Updated hotels or local Air B&B	Busier after dark and more things for young people	The city is going forward compared to the backwards

Table 2. Qualitative Responses from Community Survey



## Business Surveys

Six businesses participated in the business survey that the researcher administered. These businesses ranged from personal services to restaurants and retail shops. The six businesses are in the table below. Appendix C shows the business survey.

Business Name	Years in Business	Goods or Services Offered
Li Richmond Photography	Longer than 10 years	Studio photography
Barnwood Blessings	3 – 5 years	Re-purposed furniture, home decor, and women's clothing
Casa de Leones Mexican Grill	1 – 3 years	Mexican Food
Alleghany Printing	Longer than 10 years	Paper printing
Paul's Sports Cards and Collectibles	Longer than 10 years	Sports cards and sports-related items
Ray's Sweet Shoppe and Pouterie, LLC	Less than 1 year	Diner with a full menu and variety of retail options

Table 3. Characteristics of Businesses from Business Survey

The businesses that participated in the survey ranged from when they were opened in downtown Covington. Some businesses have just recently opened, and others that have been around for 10-plus years. Many of the business owners chose to be downtown for a variety of reasons. Some needed larger spaces for their operations, while others thought the location was desirable because it was located to other businesses. Others saw an opportunity to start a business with established commercial fronts.

There were a few challenges to working in downtown that business owners expressed. The main concern was parking. Many owners said there was not enough parking for their clientele, preventing people from coming to their business. Many expressed that it was harder for the elderly to park near their businesses. They said that more parking was needed for their business to have more clientele. The other biggest challenge was the lack of exposure businesses received. Most businesses said they needed more exposure so that people would know they were downtown. Businesses desired that the city involve them with different events, fundraisers, and/or programs to promote their business and products.

The end of the week was the busiest time for most businesses, with Thursday, Friday, and Saturday being the busiest days. The busiest time of day was mainly around lunchtime, with other businesses saying the evening and late afternoon. The target market for many of the businesses was a range of people, but especially families.

Overall, businesses want to see downtown Covington add more businesses, especially in the realm of retail. They also want vacant buildings to be occupied and chances for façade improvements of older buildings. Additionally, one owner wants the apartments above businesses in downtown to be re-fabricated to have more people living in downtown. Many businesses want to see the downtown busier and see investment occurring in the area.

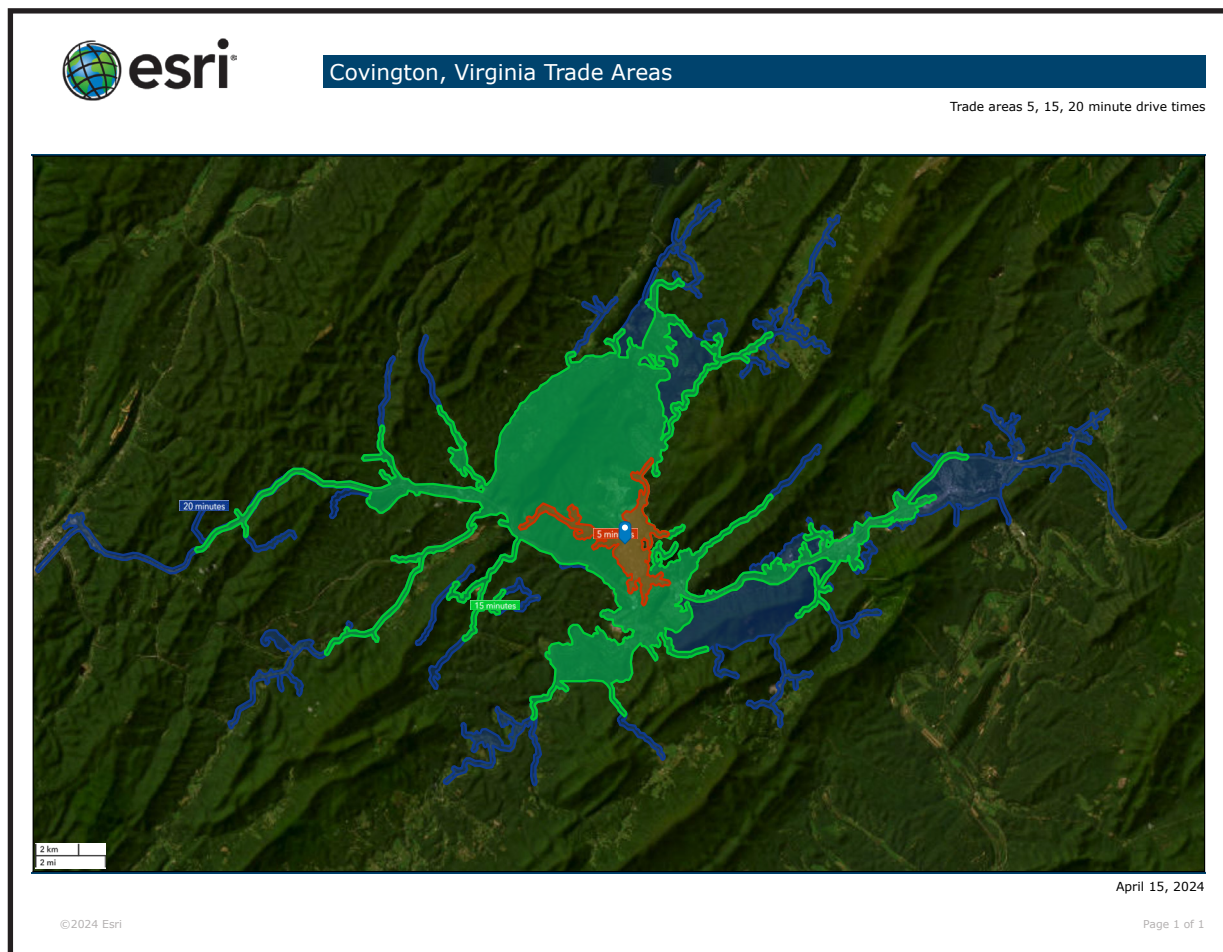
## Market Analysis

The trade area defines where a market draws most of its customers, which is typically where 75% of customers for local businesses reside. For the purpose of this study, the trade area will be determined by driving times from the study area in 5-minute, 15-minute, and 20-minute areas. This means a zone will be determined by all the areas inside a zone that takes 5- minutes, 15-minutes, or 20-minutes to drive.

The area within the 5-minute drive time will be referred to as the downtown convenience area. This area provides goods and services to people who live close to the downtown core, which is the selected study area. Within this area in 2020, there were 3,273 people and 1,436 households. The median disposable income was \$36,728, which is below the Virginia average, and per capita income was \$25,237.

The area within the 15-minute drive time will be referred to as the city-wide convenience area. This area provides goods and services to people who live in or around the City of Covington's borders. In 2020, there were 9,514 people and 4,232 households in this area. The median disposable income was \$38,258, which is below the Virginia average, and per capita income was \$28,985.

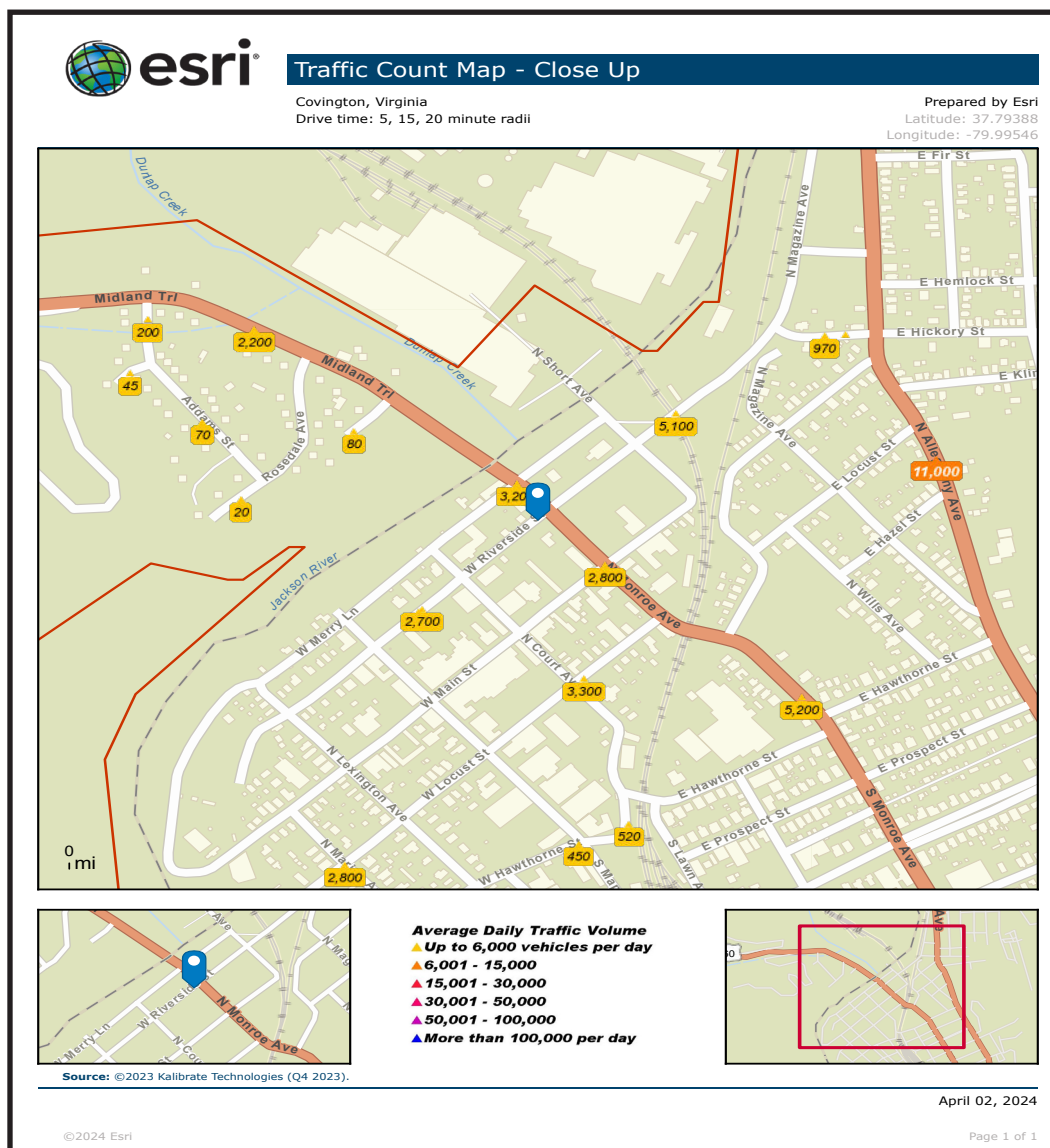
The area within the 20-minute drive time will be referred to as the county-wide convenience area. This area provides goods and services to many areas throughout Alleghany County, the town of Clifton Forge, and some parts of West Virginia. In 2020, there were 13,844 people and 6,124 households. The median disposable income was \$36,850, which is below the Virginia average, and per capita income was \$28,200.



Map E. Covington ESRI Market Analysis Trade Areas

## Downtown Traffic Count

Understanding the traffic patterns of downtown is crucial to understand if the core is able to support more business. A traffic count report for the core is created through ESRI Market Analysis and shows the Average Daily Traffic Volume for roads with a defined area. When looking at the close-up area map of the downtown core, a sizable amount of traffic runs on roads located in or around the downtown core. The highest volume count in the downtown core comes on Monroe Ave with about 5,200 to 3,200 average daily traffic volume. Other roads with high traffic counts are West Locust Street with 3,300 and West Riverside with 2,700. The intersection of Main Street and Monroe Avenue has about 2,800 average daily traffic volume. When analyzing this map, it shows that there is a sizable amount of traffic volume to support businesses in the downtown core.



Map F. Average Daily Traffic Volume for Downtown

## Retail Data

Understanding retail trends and demands in the trade areas helps create a clearer picture of potential businesses that would succeed in Covington's downtown core. This helps determine how individuals in each trade area will likely spend on certain goods and services. This retail data, paired with the community surveys, can help determine businesses that consumers desire that will also be able to survive and thrive downtown. This additionally can help create unique markets for areas as they provide services that may be harder to acquire. Therefore, this can attract consumers to the areas to buy more exclusive goods and services.

While analyzing the community survey and retail data within the trade areas for downtown, three areas that consumers desired and saw projected spending growth from 2023 – 2028 were apparel and services, food, and entertainment and recreation. These areas saw large projected spending growths through the trade areas. Additionally, downtown Covington is mainly dominated by professional services, meaning there is an untapped market for these retail areas. The largest areas of projected spending growth were in food services, followed by entertainment and recreation, and then apparel and services. Appendix D shows a breakdown of all business categories in the Covington trade areas.

Business Category	5 Mile	15 Mile	20 Mile
Apparel and Services	\$197,292.00	\$631,846.00	\$933,710.00
Food	\$1,033,306.00	\$3,245,022.00	\$4,814,094.00
Entertainment and Recreation	\$410,327.00	\$1,246,173.00	\$1,840,546.00

Table 4. Projected Spending Growth 2023 - 2028

## Market Segments

While the market information listed above provides important information on economic trends for the study area, it does not account for the cultural characteristics of the study area. Using ESRI's tapestry segments, insights can be gained on the type of cultural characteristics that reside in the study area. These are helpful in understanding what type of businesses may thrive in the downtown core that will resonate with the local population. While this data provides insights into the cultural characteristics of the population in the main study area, it is not an all-encompassing guide of the population in the area, but an insight into the surrounding population.

Rank	Market Segment	Percent of Trade Area Households	Percent of Total U.S. Households
1	Heartland Communities	69.2%	12.06%
2	Rural Bypass	20.8%	8.3%
3	Midlife Constants	7.4%	11.26%

Table 5. Market Segments in Downtown Convenience Trade Area



Heartland Communities residents are semirural and semiretired, with many of them being embraced with a slower pace of life but participating in outdoor and community events. The median age is 43, and the median income is \$49,800. This market segment provides employment in the manufacturing, construction, utilities, healthcare, and agricultural industries. Additionally, more are white-collar than blue-collar workers. They are focused on buying brands they grew up with, knowing the price of the goods they purchased, and finding importance in buying American-made products.

Rural bypass residents live in small towns along country back roads and enjoy open neighborhood space. The median age is 40 and the median income is \$33,000. This market segment relies on wages, which are supplemented with government assistance. They are focused on outdoor activities and like to spend their money on food, entertainment and recreation, and transportation.

Midlife constants are seniors approaching retirement and living in smaller communities outside of cities. Their lifestyle is more country than urban, and they are more generous when spending. The median age is 47, and the median income is \$53,200. This market segment prefers convenience and comfort and is attentive to pricing but will pay more for quality products. They prefer to buy American-made or natural products.

### *Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities*

After analyzing the research data paired with existing conditions for downtown Covington, conclusions regarding strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities arise. The conclusions presented in this section are from the researcher, whose viewpoints were derived from data from the surveying, existing conditions, and ESRI business analyst.

#### *Strengths*

The main strengths that downtown Covington possesses are a walkable grid, historic building designs, significant surrounding influences, continual improvement of the downtown, and a strong community. The Paper Mill is a large economic driver in the city and continues to be a large revenue producer. The community and city manager's office are invested in downtown and would like to see the area grow into a lively place that keeps its small-town feel and historic charm. The local government ensures there are many events that draw people downtown. Many community members have been in Covington for 10-plus years and are invested in their town. Additionally, there are many things for people to do and see around downtown, such as stay at the Omni Homestead Resort, see scenic views, and explore the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Community members are supportive of initiatives taken by the local government to improve the downtown core. They believe that improvements are beneficial for the city and the community to help it grow into a thriving area.

## *Weaknesses*

Despite the many strengths that downtown Covington possesses, there are weaknesses that it must overcome. The largest weakness that the downtown experiences is vacancies. In the study area, almost 25% of the buildings in downtown are vacant. That large number can deter potential consumers into the downtown sphere. Additionally, vacancies reduce the amount of revenue that the downtown can generate. Community surveys also relayed this response as many community members felt that the downtown felt empty and vacant, as well as there wasn't much to do downtown.

In addition to vacancies, another problem that deters downtown is the saturation of personal services at the core. Almost 50% of the buildings used downtown are personal services or organizations that are weekly one-time uses. This is detrimental as occasional uses do not attract consumers to downtown daily. This can decrease foot traffic and consumer spending. Many of the facades of the buildings need work, as many buildings show signs of wear and tear. While the downtown is walkable, street improvements need to be made to help make crossing streets safer and make walking through downtown more pleasant.

## *Opportunities*

While downtown Covington has challenges it must overcome, it also has opportunities to create great potential for the city and the region. Improvements that have already occurred downtown show that the city is trying to achieve growth, which can benefit someone trying to develop a business in the area. While there are many vacancies downtown, this can be an opportunity as it gives more opportunities for the city to shape the downtown in a way that attracts and retains consumers. Many residents expressed the desire for business in the realm of apparel and services, food, and entertainment and recreation. The market analysis shows that there is projected spending growth for these businesses in the area. Businesses in these realms could survive and thrive in the downtown core.

The downtown has a strong manufacturing history, which can be leveraged to attract individuals to the core. The Discovery Center downtown is a great resource that shows the history and process of manufacturing in Covington. This can be promoted to attract individuals downtown.

## Recommendations

After analyzing the survey results, qualitative data, and ESRI market data, recommendations for downtown Covington have been made below. These recommendations are guided by using the Main Street America and Smart Growth strategies to help facilitate the creation of a thriving downtown Covington.

### Recommendation 1: Enhance Downtown

#### *Goal 1: Encourage the creation of new businesses in downtown*

The community surveys of residents in Covington suggest that they want businesses related to clothing, food, and entertainment. Additionally, the market data presented suggests that these business areas are expecting to grow in terms of spending, meaning that the downtown could support these businesses.

##### *Objective A: Inventory the current businesses in the downtown core*

Action 1: Create a comprehensive inventory of all the businesses that are occupied in the downtown core, including information such as building uses, contact information, maps of the downtown layout of the business, and an understanding of the business makeup of downtown. This helps understand the surpluses and deficits of businesses that are in the downtown core and can help with future decisions for business attraction. This inventory should constantly be updated with the most current information.

##### *Objective B: Encourage the creation of more retail businesses in the downtown core*

Action 1: Create incentives that encourage the creation and recruitment of retail businesses in the downtown core. These incentives could range from property tax breaks to micro-loans to discounted fees and permits. This could be done by creating a guideline that grants these incentives to desired businesses, such as a hardware store, clothing and apparel, and entertainment options. Help with funding these incentives could come from the Alleghany Chamber of Commerce or the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission.

Action 2: Encourage the relocation of new/existing personal services and occasional uses to the periphery of the downtown core. The downtown core is saturated with organizations that are occasional uses that overpower the restaurants and retail businesses on Main and Maple. Incentivizing professional services to be located at the periphery of downtown can open space for other business options in the downtown core. This could be done by giving property tax breaks, micro-loans, or discounted fees and permits. A set of guidelines should be created to help facilitate this action.

Action 3: With a lease from the property owner, create opportunities for “pop-up” shops in vacant buildings downtown. This can give new businesses a trial period for their goods and services while filling vacancies.

### *Objective C: Support new restaurants downtown*

Action 1: Encourage the creation of new restaurants in the downtown area. Restaurants are good to increase foot traffic and bring individuals into the core at later hours. Creating incentives for new restaurants could be done by discounting food and alcohol permits, property tax breaks, micro-loans, or look at larger projects such as a food hall for multiple restaurants to occupy the same building. Restaurants can also be used for retail space as well to attract more customers to the building.

### **Goal 2: Increase foot traffic downtown**

For businesses in the downtown area to be successful, there needs to be increased foot traffic to the downtown core. Foot traffic is present on many days throughout the week in downtown, but there is still a lack of sustainable foot traffic for many businesses to thrive in the core.

### *Objective A: Create opportunities for more people to visit downtown*

Action 1: Continue with events throughout the year but have more located in the downtown area when possible. Think about having more events in the downtown area as they encourage individuals downtown to shop and eat in the area. These events could include a restaurant week, parades, street festivals, etc.

Action 2: Have a special event every year that is uniquely attributed to aspects of the history of Covington. This could be related to the realms of manufacturing. For example, the town of Ashland has a Train Day once a year where they park a train in the middle of downtown to celebrate their heritage as a railroad town. Having an event related to manufacturing in the town could give the town a unique event that attracts more people to the area and downtown. This could involve the participation of the Paper Mill and the town.

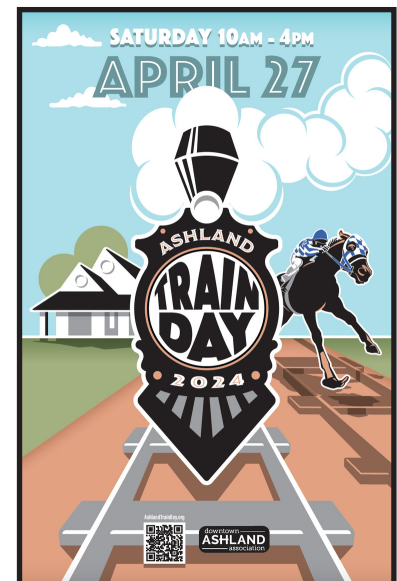


Image M (left) shows a train going through Ashland on Train Day. Image N (right) shows a poster of 2024 Train Day. Both images courtesy of Downtown Ashland Association.



Action 3: Provide different events that cater to younger generations. Many residents worried that there are not enough events for younger generations.

Action 4: Create a weekly newsletter that showcases events that are happening in downtown Covington each week. This can be posted on social media, the government website, or mailed/ emailed to residents in the area.

Action 5: Identify and/or create groups, businesses, or activities that could be catered to young people in downtown Covington. This would help younger residents be more involved with their downtown.

*Objective B: Promote already existing businesses downtown*

Action 1: Create a monthly or bimonthly business spotlight highlighting a specific business in the downtown area. This can be done by taking a page in the paper, posting on social media, or showcasing businesses at events. This will increase awareness of businesses downtown.

Action 2: Purchase advertisements in regional publications that promote the different businesses in the City of Covington.

*Objective C: Beautify downtown Covington and other parts of the city that can impact downtown*

Action 1: Develop a streetscaping plan for the Main Street focusing on more benches and wider sidewalks. A streetscaping plan has already been completed for Maple Street, and this could be done for Main Street.

Action 2: Add greenery to streets using flowers, grass, trees, and other similar items. This helps add green areas to streets that can provide shade and other comfort while also improving the aesthetics of the street.

Action 3: Implement public art around downtown. Public art can be beneficial as it attracts residents and non-residents. For example, there is already a mural depicting the natural scenery in the region. Other murals could be installed downtown.



Image O (left) shows a mural in downtown by Cheyenne Marcus. Image courtesy of WSLs 10. Image P (right) shows the recently completed Maple Ave Streetscaping Project. Image courtesy of the City of Covington.

Action 4: Analyze ways that Exits 14 and 16 can be beautified to entice people to stay in Covington and travel towards downtown. These exits are large roads with little greenery or markers towards the core.

*Objective D: Institute parking management practices in downtown*

Action 1: Encourage business owners to have their employees park in areas away from the core. These parking areas could be the Mid-city Mall, the Allegheny Highlands Regional Library, or Covington Farmers Market parking lots. This can create more open spots on Main Street for businesses and restaurants.

Action 2: Institute additional parking time limits around the downtown core to prevent individuals from taking up spots on key streets for long periods of time. Time limits could be 2 to 3 hours at certain times of the week and day.

Action 3: Institute parking spots in front of businesses reserved for senior citizens. Many businesses discussed that they had trouble with parking for their elderly clientele. These spots could be handicapped spots or designated as senior citizen parking.



Image Q (left) shows parking sign for senior citizen parking. Image R (right) shows parking sign with time limits. Both images courtesy of MyParkingSigns.

Action 4: Hire a parking enforcement director or have the local police department enforce parking in the down.

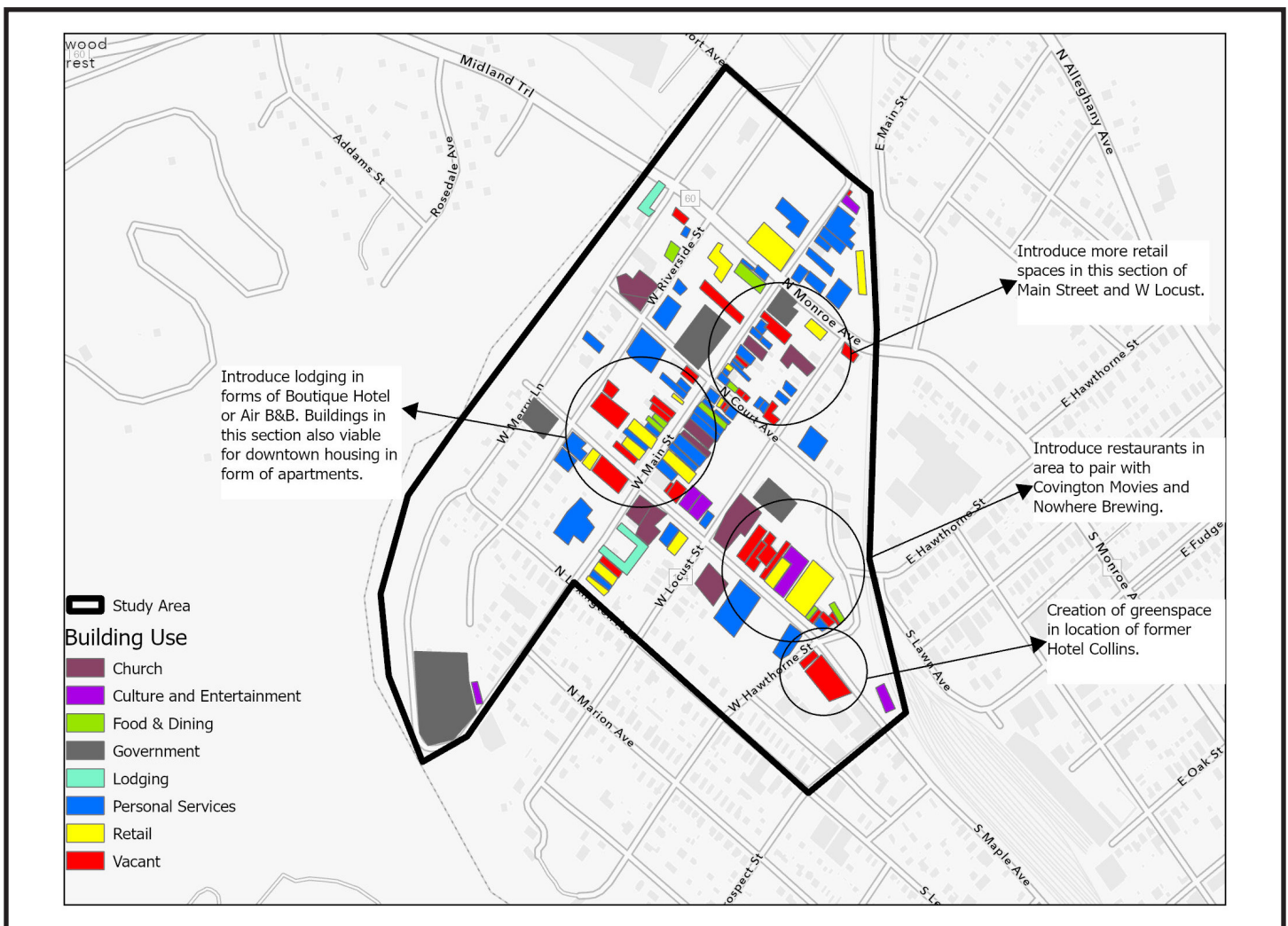
### Goal 3: Improve the Design of the downtown core

The downtown core has the benefit of being created on a historic grid that makes it a walkable area. However, there are design issues downtown that decrease the walkability and enjoyability for individuals.

*Objective A: Position new businesses that create a cohesive and enticing layout for downtown.*

Action 1: Create a comprehensive map of the desired layout of new businesses in the downtown core. This can help create efforts to coordinate where businesses should be in the downtown core.

Action 2: Encourage new businesses to occupy vacant buildings to create fewer vacancies in the downtown core.



*Objective B: Create an inviting and safe downtown for residents to navigate.*

Action 1: Analyze areas in downtown that could introduce safer intersection crossing measures. These measures could be repainting crosswalks, adding cross signals, or bump outs.

Action 2: Add a green space in the lot of the old Collins Hotel. Extend the Jackson River Scenic Trail downtown and the Jackson River Sports Complex to create more access to green spaces and outdoor activities.



Image S (left) shows site of former Collins Hotel

Action 3: Add a wayfinding system downtown at the Midcity Mall Parking lot, Main and Maple, Main and Monroe, and Maple and Hawthorne.



Image T (left) shows large wayfinding signs for Vinton, Virginia. Image U (center) shows medium wayfinding signs for Vinton, Virginia. Image V (right) shows small wayfinding signs for Vinton, Virginia. Images courtesy of the Roanoke Valley Area Metropolitan Organization and the Town of Vinton, Virginia.



#### ***Goal 4: Mitigate vacancies and improve the aesthetics of buildings***

One of the main issues plaguing the downtown is the number of vacant properties occupying the core. Almost 25% of buildings in the study area are vacant, which can severely deter consumers from going downtown. In addition to vacancies, many buildings' facades need work as they have worn out over time. This can also prevent consumers from the core.

##### ***Objective A: Use stringent measures of enforcement to address vacant properties throughout downtown***

Action 1: Create a code that fines buildings for perpetual vacant properties that can pose public health and safety risks.

Action 2: Create a vacant buildings registration that forces neglected vacant properties to pay a fee per quarter.

Action 3: Have a staff member coordinate with property owners of vacant buildings to help them either rehabilitate or sell their property.

Action 4: With a lease from the property owner, the city can make vacant buildings attractive by sprucing them up with artwork, window displays, or other ways that make a building look occupied.



Image W shows a once-vacant building in New York being used for an art exhibit. Image courtesy of TimeOut America.

Action 5: Create a “Red Tagged” system that marks vacant buildings that are deemed unsafe and potentially uninhabitable under the City of Covington Code. Buildings that obtain this tag could be punished.

Action 6: Institute a timely development code on vacant buildings. If someone buys a vacant building in the core rules should require them to start development on the building within a certain time frame. If they fail to do so, a penalty can be imposed. There should be opt-outs in this enforcement if there are extenuating circumstances.

##### ***Objective B: Use grants and public funds to help with façade lifts for buildings downtown***

Action 1: Pursue grants from public or private sources for façade repair throughout downtown.

Action 2: Use the funds from vacancy taxes/fees to pay for façade repairs.

## Recommendation 2: Create and Strengthen Anchor Institutions for the City of Covington

The City of Covington has many institutions that are positive economics, recreation, and businesses. The main anchors in the city are the WestRock Paper Mill, Jackson River Sports Complex, and Discovery Center. These anchors could be leveraged to make the downtown core a unique area.

### *Goal 5: Incorporate the Paper Mill with revitalization plans downtown*

*Objective A: Have the Paper Mill more involved with events and projects through the downtown core.*

Action 1: Provide projects that could be completed with funds from the Paper Mill in exchange for the Paper Mill being able to showcase that it sponsored a certain project with a plaque, sign, logo, etc.

Action 2: Have Paper Mill sponsor events hosted in the downtown core. Additionally, collaborate with Paper Mill to create a manufacturing event that is unique to downtown Covington.

Action 3: Establish a paper museum downtown that the Paper Mill sponsors. This gives the city a unique business that shows the mill's history in Covington. Give incentives for the Paper Mill to open a museum storefront downtown.



Image X (left) and Image Y (right) show photos of Hugo Kohl's Museum of American History Jewelry Design and Manufacturing Company located in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The museum shows how jewelry is made and allows individuals to buy its products. Image courtesy of Virginia is For Lovers.

Action 4: Analyze the potential for a factory tour of the Paper Mill for individuals to enjoy. This could be a yearly event that could be coupled with a manufacturing event.

## Goal 6: Establish a link between Jackson River Sports Complex and Downtown

The Jackson River Sports Complex is a great asset for the City of Covington as it brings many consumers into the city boundaries on most weekends from March to November. However, many individuals who come there do not visit the downtown core for food, shops, entertainment, etc. Establishing a linkage between the complex and downtown is crucial to increasing activity downtown.

### Objective A: Maintain and expand the operations of the Jackson River Sports Complex

Action 1: Maintain and expand the tournaments, events, and concerts that occur at the Sports Complex.

Action 2: Create a music festival once a year at the Sports Complex with a mix of music genres. For example, it could be based on the annual Floyd Fest that occurs in Floyd County.

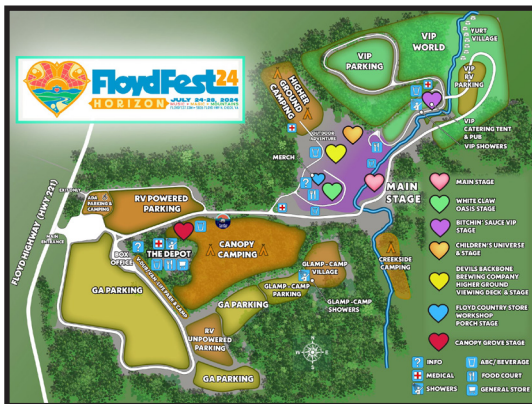


Image Z (left) and Image AA (right) show photos of Floyd Fest located in Floyd County, Virginia. This concert festival is very popular and draws thousands of individuals for a few days in the county. Images courtesy of Floyd Fest Horizon.

Action 3: Create uses for the Sports Complex during down times of the year. This could be expanding the drive-through Christmas Lights to hold more events in the area during winter.



Photo Courtesy of Covington Parks and Recreation



*Object B: Create easier ways to link the downtown core and the Sports Complex*

Action 1: Add a wayfinding system from the Sports Complex to downtown that shows businesses and food to attract consumers to go downtown during downtimes of tournaments or events.

Action 2: Expand the Jackson River Scenic Trail to connect downtown and the Complex. Make the trail accessible to both bikers and walkers.

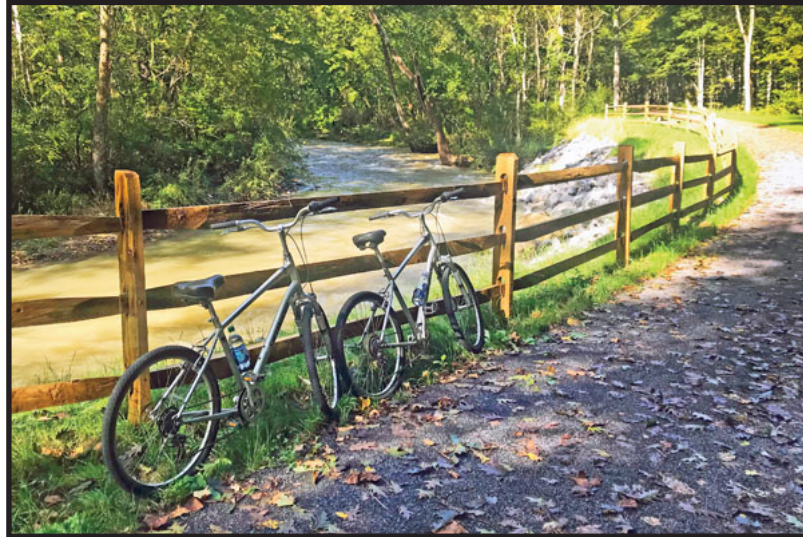


Image AB shows two bikes on the Jackson River Scenic Trail. Image courtesy of Alleghany Highlands of Virginia

***Goal 7: Leverage the Discovery Center to attract residents and non-residents downtown***

The Discovery Center is a unique attraction to the downtown area, providing a rich manufacturing history for Covington. In addition, it has many interactive components that make it work well with younger populations. Using the discovery center as a selling point for the downtown could attract residents and non-residents.

*Objective A: Promote the Discovery Center to attract more individuals*

Action 1: Purchase promotional material to promotes the Discovery Center. This could include placing fliers in local businesses, in areas where people stop off Interstate 64, promoting the institution at different city events or purchasing ad space in publications like Cardinal News.

Action 2: Increase the Discovery Center's operating hours. It currently only operates Tuesdays through Fridays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Adding weekends can attract more individuals, as they will be free to explore the center on their days off. This can create more foot traffic for businesses and restaurants in the area.

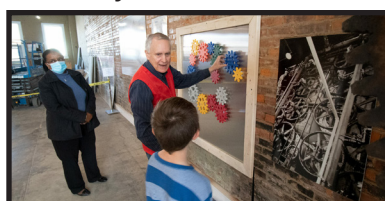


Image AC shows an interactive exhibit at the Discovery Center. Image courtesy of Discovery Center



### Recommendation 3: Create Downtown Covington into a Tourist Destination

The City of Covington is in a prime part of the country because of its location in the Blue Ridge Mountains, with many scenic views, natural wonders, historic landmarks, and outdoor activities. Promoting Covington as a place to stay in the mountains for a getaway can attract a larger consumer base.

*Goal 8: Create Covington as a desirable place for tourists to stay while visiting the area*

Making Covington a desirable place for tourists to visit is important as it brings more individuals to the area, especially downtown. This brings individuals downtown to shop, eat, and play while bringing potential revenue to the city and local businesses.

*Objective A: Create more lodging opportunities for tourists.*

Action 1: Negotiate with hotel chains in the area to add more beds to existing lodging, as well as encourage the creation of new and affordable lodging options.

Action 2: Incentivize property owners to convert some upstairs apartments into Air B&Bs.

Action 3: Look at the feasibility of a boutique hotel downtown. This hotel could be themed around the city's unique characteristics. For example, a boutique hotel in Clifton Forge is about to opened that is themed around the railroad.



Image AD (left) shows the front facade of the Railroader Hotel in Clifton Forge, Virginia. Image AE (right) shows a rooftop terrace that will be at the Railroader Hotel. Image courtesy of The Railroader Hotel.

*Objective B: Design a downtown that is inviting and informational for tourists.*

Action 1: Create a self-guided walking tour of downtown Covington that displays the city's history. Adding plaques, informational signs, and maps can create a unique experience.

Action 2: Provide maps of the surrounding area so tourists can show the number of sights and experiences they can enjoy. Highland County provides maps to local businesses to show what attractions tourists can visit in the county. This could be done for companies in Covington.

### ***Goal 9: Promote the tourism of Covington throughout the region and state.***

Promoting the City of Covington as a tourist destination is crucial. It can attract people from around the region and state and allow them to see and experience the Blue Ridge Mountains.

#### ***Objective A: Promote the City of Covington in the region***

Action 1: Provide information pamphlets to be displayed at the Omni Homestead and Greenbrier restaurants, highlighting the attractions, food, and experiences in downtown Covington.

Action 2: Provide information in the surrounding region to promote downtown. Information could be provided to counties adjacent to Alleghany.

Action 3: Partner with other small towns in the region to promote tourism in the area. Those towns could include Clifton Forge, Monterey, and White Sulphur Springs, and Lewisburg.

Action 4: Look at different tourism groups that the city could join to increase individuals visits' to the city and downtown. For example, look at groups like The Crooked Road that Covington could join. This could also involve creating a heritage tour in the region with other small towns in the area.

#### ***Objective B: Create opportunities for tourists to visit downtown***

Action 1: Create shuttle services between Omni Homestead and Greenbrier that bring individuals downtown. This would allow tourists to visit downtown easily and promote foot traffic, as tourists would not be able to get their cars to the area and would have to walk to navigate it.

Action 2: Look at the feasibility of bus/shuttle tours in the area that start and end in downtown Covington. These tours could take residents to view the scenic parts of the region. The tour buses beginning and ending downtown would increase foot traffic in the area.

Action 3: Consider the feasibility of factory tours for the Paper Mill. These tours could give insight into the mill's operations and show people how their products are made, providing the city with a unique experience that relates to the city. For example, Route 11 Potato Chips Factory in Mount Jackson, Virginia, has a factory tour showing its product-making process

#### ***Objective C: Promote the City of Covington in the state.***

Action 1: Work with state agencies, such as the Virginia Tourism Corporation, to promote the City of Covington statewide. This helps the city with marketing strategies with an established tourism agency. This can help attract tourists from around the state to enjoy the city and region.

Action 2: Create informational ads that could be placed in public buildings around the state to promote travel to Covington. These can be pamphlets, posters, or other advertisements.

Action 3: Establish connections between Visit Virginia and Covington. This connection could promote interesting and unique experiences in the city.





Photo Courtesy of Virginia is for Lovers

## Implementation Guide

This section provides an implementation guide for each of the goals that were provided in the recommendation section. Each action is attached with a timeline for when it should be completed. The items associated with a ‘Short’ timeline are the most critical to the future development of downtown Covington, and implementation should start in one to two years. Action items associated with a ‘Medium’ timeline should begin in the next three to five years, and those associated with a ‘Long’ timeline are long-term goals for the next five to ten years.

Recommendation 1: Enhance Downtown			
Goals	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Goal 1: Encourage the creation of new businesses in downtown	Objective A: Inventory the current businesses in the downtown core	Action 1: Create a comprehensive inventory of all the businesses that are occupied in the downtown core, including information such as building uses, contact information, maps of the downtown layout of the business, and an understanding of the business makeup in downtown.	Short
	Objective B: Encourage the creation of more retail businesses in the downtown core	Action 1: Create incentives that encourage the creation and recruitment of retail businesses in the downtown core.	Short
		Action 2: Encourage the relocation of new/ existing personal services and occasional uses to the periphery of the downtown core	Long
		Action 3: Create opportunities for “pop-up” shops in vacant buildings downtown. This can give new businesses a trial period for their goods and services while filling vacancies	Medium
	Objective C: Support new restaurants downtown	Action 1: Encourage the creation of new restaurants in the downtown area	Short



Goal 2: Increase foot traffic downtown	Objective A: Create opportunities for more people to visit downtown	Action 1: Continue with events throughout the year but have more located in the downtown area when possible	Short
		Action 2: Have a special event every year that is uniquely attributed to aspects or history of Covington	Medium
		Action 3: Provide different events that cater to younger generations. Many residents worried that there are not enough events for younger generations.	Short
		Action 4: Create a weekly newsletter that showcases things that are happening in downtown Covington each week	Short
		Action 5: Identify and/or create groups, businesses, or activities that could be catered to young people in downtown Covington	Short
	Objective B: Promote already existing businesses downtown	Action 1: Create a monthly or bimonthly business spotlight that highlights a specific business in the downtown area	Short
		Action 2: Purchase advertisements in regional publications that promote the different businesses in the City of Covington	Short
	Objective C: Beautify downtown Covington and other parts of the city that can impact downtown	Action 1: Develop a streetscaping plan for the main street that focuses on more benches and wider sidewalks	Medium

		Action 2: Add greenery to streets with the use of flowers, grass, trees, and other similar items	Short
		Action 3: Implement public art around downtown	Short
		Action 4: Analyze ways to beautify Exits 14 and 16	Long
	Objective D: Institute parking management practices in downtown	Action 1: Encourage business owners to have their employees park in areas away from the core	Short
		Action 2: Institute parking time limits around the downtown core to prevent individuals from taking up spots on key streets for long periods of time	Medium
		Action 3: Institute parking spots in front of businesses reserved for senior citizens	Short
		Action 4: Hire a parking enforcement director or have the local police department enforce parking in the down	Medium

Goal 3: Improve the design of the downtown core	Objective A: Position new businesses that create a cohesive and enticing layout for downtown	Action 1: Create a comprehensive map of the desired layout of new businesses in the downtown core	Short
		Action 2: Encourage new businesses to occupy vacant buildings to create fewer vacancies in the downtown core	Short
	Objective B: Create an inviting downtown and safe downtown for residents to navigate	Action 1: Analyze areas downtown that could introduce safer intersection crossing measures. Measures could be repainting crosswalks, adding cross signals, and bump outs.	Medium
		Action 2: Add a green space in the lot of the old Collins Hotel. Additionally, extend the Jackson River Scenic Trail to downtown and the Jackson River Sports Complex to create more access to green spaces and outdoor activities	Medium
		Action 3: Add a wayfinding system downtown at the Midcity Mall Parking lot, Main and Maple, Main and Monroe, Maple and Hawthorne	Short
Goal 4: Mitigate vacancies and improve the aesthetics of buildings	Objective A: Use stringent measures of enforcement to address vacant properties throughout downtown	Action 1: Create a code that fines buildings for perpetual vacant properties that can pose public health and safety risks	Short

		Action 2: Create a vacant buildings registration that forces neglected vacant properties to pay a fee per quarter	Short
		Action 3: Have a staff member coordinate with property owners of vacant buildings to help them either rehabilitate or sell their property	Short
		Action 4: Make vacant buildings attractive by sprucing them up with artwork, window displays, or other ways that make a building look occupied.	Short
		Action 5: Create a “Red Tagged” system that marks vacant buildings that are deemed unsafe and potentially uninhabitable	Medium
		Action 6: Institute a timely development code on vacant buildings	Medium
	Objective B: Use grants and public funds to help with façade lifts for buildings downtown	Action 1: Pursue grants that can be used for façade repair throughout downtown. This can be from public or private avenues	Short
		Action 2: Use the funds from the vacancy tax to pay for façade repairs	Medium



## Recommendation 2: Create and Strengthen Anchor Institutions for the City of Covington

Goals	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Goal 5: Incorporate the Paper Mill with revitalization plans downtown.	Objective A: Have the Paper Mill more involved with revitalization plans downtown	Action 1: Provide projects that could be completed with funds from the Paper Mill in exchange for the Paper Mill to be able to showcase that it sponsored a certain project with a plaque, sign, logo, etc.	Medium
		Action 2: Have Paper Mill sponsor events hosted in the downtown core	Short
		Action 3: Establish a paper museum downtown that the Paper Mill sponsors	Long
		Action 4: Analyze the potential for a factory tour of the Paper Mill for individuals to enjoy	Medium
Goal 6: Establish a link between Jackson River Sports Complex and Downtown	Objective A: Maintain and expand the operations of the Jackson River Sports Complex	Action 1: Maintain and expand the tournaments, events, and concerts that occur at the Sports Complex	Short
		Action 2: Create a music festival once a year at the Sports Complex that has a mix of music genres	Medium
		Action 3: Create uses for the Sports Complex during down times of the year	Short

	Objective B: Create easier ways to link the downtown core and the Sports Complex	Action 1: Add a wayfinding system from the Sports Complex to downtown that shows businesses and food to attract consumers to go downtown during downtimes of tournaments or events	Short
		Action 2: Expand the Jackson River Scenic Trail to connect downtown and the Complex. Make the trail accessible to both bikers and walkers	Long
Goal 7: Leverage the Discovery Center to attract residents and non-residents downtown	Objective A: Promote the Discovery Center to attract more individuals	Action 1: Purchase promotional material that promotes the Discovery Center	Short
		Action 2: Increase the Discovery Center’s operating hours	Short
Recommendation 3: Create Downtown Covington into a Tourist Destination			
Goals	Objectives	Actions	Timeline
Goal 8: Create Covington as a desirable place for tourists to stay while visiting the area.	Objective A: Create more lodging opportunities for tourists	Action 1: Negotiate with hotel chains in the area to add more beds to existing lodging, as well as encourage the creation of new and affordable lodging options	Long
		Action 2: Incentivize property owners to convert some upstairs apartments into Air B&Bs	Medium
		Action 3: Look at the feasibility of a boutique hotel in downtown	Long

	Objective B: Design a downtown that is inviting and informational for tourists	Action 1: Create a self-guided walking tour of downtown Covington that displays the city's history.	Long
		Action 2: Provide maps of the surrounding area so tourists can show the number of sights and experiences they can enjoy	Short
Goal 9: Promote the tourism of Covington throughout the region and state	Objective A: Promote the City of Covington in the region	Action 1: Provide information pamphlets to be displayed at the Omni Homestead and Greenbrier restaurants, highlighting the attractions, food, and experiences in downtown Covington	Short
		Action 2: Provide information in the surrounding region to promote downtown	Medium
		Action 3: Partner with other small towns in the region to promote tourism in the area	Long
		Action 4: Look at different tourism groups that the city could join to increase individuals coming to the city and downtown	Long
	Objective B: Create opportunities for tourists to visit downtown	Action 1: Create shuttle services between Omni Homestead and Greenbrier that bring individuals downtown	Long
		Action 2: Look at the feasibility of bus tours in the area that start and end in downtown Covington	Long

		Action 3: Consider the feasibility of factory tours for the Paper Mill	Long
	Objective C: Promote the City of Covington in the state	Action 1: Work with state agencies, such as the Virginia Tourism Corporation, to promote the City of Covington statewide	Medium
		Action 2: Create informational ads that could be placed in public buildings around the state to promote travel to Covington	Long
		Action 3: Establish connections between Visit Virginia and Covington	Short



## Conclusion

The City of Covington has many attributes that make it a unique place in the Blue Ridge Mountains. There are different avenues the city can take for revitalization efforts for the downtown core. These avenues include enhancing downtown, creating and strengthening anchor institutions, and attracting tourism.

This plan focused on the next steps that the city can take in its process of downtown revitalization plans. Existing conditions, community engagement, and data analysis were completed to create recommendations detailed in this plan. These recommendations can help the city with some different strategies to tackle revitalization from existing literature, programs, and strategies. Recommendations used market analysis, Main Street America and Smart Growth, and other comparable towns for recommendations.

The biggest issues that face the downtown core are the vacancy rate and personal services. Almost 25% of the structures that were analyzed in this study were vacant. Additionally, almost 50% of the building uses downtown are for personal services and occasional uses. Both of these issues deter residents from entering downtown regularly and preventing new retail and restaurant businesses from opening in the downtown core.

While the city has problems it must overcome, the Covington, Clifton Forge, and Alleghany County residents think the city is moving in the right direction. They believe that city hall is pushing downtown towards growth and new opportunity. This is important as it gives officials the trust of residents to try and achieve revitalization in the downtown. Officials in city hall, especially the city manager, are always trying to implement new amenities, projects, businesses, etc., to help grow the downtown and the city. Therefore, it is very promising that the residents of the region and the officials of Covington are invested in this issue.

While the City of Covington has seen a decrease in economic activity and population in recent decades, it is moving in the right direction and many aspects that benefit the city. It is a historic city that is nestled beautifully in the Blue Ridge Mountains, surrounded by scenic, historic, and cultural landmarks. This, coupled with residents and a city ready to revitalize its downtown, can make Covington into a growing small city in Appalachia.

## References

- Accordino, John, and Kyle Meyer. "Chapter 10: Creating Vibrant Main Streets throughout Virginia." Virginia Tech Publishing, 2022.
- Beirne, Horton, and Byron E Faidley. *Images of America: Covington*. Images of America. Arcadia Publishing, 2013.
- Benchmark Planning. "Covington Comprehensive Plan." Benchmark Planning, 2019. <http://alleghanyjournal.com/2019/CovcompPlan.pdf>.
- Burayidi, Michael A. "DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION IN SMALL AND MIDSIZED CITIES." American Planning Association, 2018. [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download\\_pdf/PAS-Report-590.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/PAS-Report-590.pdf).
- Carlton, David L, and Peter A Coclanic. "The Roots of Southern Deindustrialization." *Challenge* 61, no. 5–6 (2018): 418–26.
- Fort, Teresa C, Justin R Pierce, and Schott. "New Perspectives on the Decline of US Manufacturing Employment." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 32, no. 2 (2018): 47–72.
- Green, Gary Paul. "Deindustrialization of Rural America: Economic Restructuring and the Rural Ghetto." *Local Development and Society* 1, no. 1 (2020): 15–25.
- Hampton, Paul. "Rural Downtown Development: Guiding Principles for Small Cities." *Lets Talk Business*, 2006. <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/downtowneconomics/files/2012/07/rural-downtown-development.pdf>.
- Harris, Rachel L, and Lisa Tarchak. "Small-Town America Is Dying. Can We Save It?" *New York Times*, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/22/opinion/rural-america-economy-revive.html>.
- Main Street America. "The Main Street Approach." Main Street America, 2023. <https://www.mainstreet.org/ourwork/theapproach>.
- Mishkovsky, Nadejda, Matthew Dalbey, Stephanie Bertaina, Anna Read, Tad McGalliard, Will Kemp, and Kathryn Lindemuth. "Putting Smart Growth to Work in Rural Communities." ICMA, 2012. [https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-01/documents/10-180\\_smart\\_growth\\_rural\\_com.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-01/documents/10-180_smart_growth_rural_com.pdf).
- NOAA. "What Is Smart Growth?" National Oceanic Service, 2023. <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/smartgrowth.html>.
- Porter, Eduardo. "The Hard Truth of Trying to 'Save' the Rural Economy." *New York Times*, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/12/14/opinion/rural-america-trump-decline.html>.
- Robertson, Kent A. "Can Small-City Downtowns Remain Viable?: A National Study of Development Issues and Strategies." *Journal of the American Planning Association* 65, no. 3 (1999): 270–83.
- Tickamyer, Ann R, and Cynthia M Duncan. "Poverty and Opportunity Structure in Rural America." *Annual Review of Sociology* 16 (1990): 67–86.
- Vey, Jennifer S. "Why We Need to Invest in Transformative Placemaking." Brookings Institute, 2018. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-we-need-to-invest-in-transformative-placemaking/>.
- Williamson, Jeff, and Tommy Lopez. "WestRock to Invest Nearly a Quarter Billion Dollars in Covington Mill." *WSLS*, 2018. <https://www.wsls.com/news/2018/09/25/westrock-to-invest-nearly-a-quarter-billion-dollars-in-covington-mill/>.

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Covington Zoning Code

Zoning	Attribute	Types of Uses
R1 - Residential	Single Family	Single-family dwellings, Public and semi-public uses, home occupations, home gardening, accessory buildings, and public utilities
R2 – Residential	Single Family - Attached	Any use permitted in R1 zoning, two-family dwellings, accessory buildings, and professional offices conducted within a dwelling of the occupant
R3 – Residential	Single Family Higher Density and Multi-Family	Any uses permitted in R1 and R2 zoning, multifamily uses, garage apartments, accessory buildings, and mobile homes
R4 – Residential	Duplex, Multi-Family, Town Houses, and Garden Apartment United	Duplex dwellings, townhouses, apartments and multifamily dwellings, accessory buildings, and public utilities
C1 – Office and Institutional	Employment Activity and Businesses	Offices of businesses, professional or financial organizations, medical and dental offices, administrative, executive, and editorial offices, public schools and libraries, churches and related activities, nursery schools and child care centers, offices of labor unions, civic social and fraternal and other nonprofit organizations, office of local, state, and federal government, funeral homes, public utilities, and single-family residential
C2 – Neighborhood Business	Day-to-day convenience shopping and service needs of persons residing in adjacent residential areas	Any use permitted in C1, a retail business that supplies commodities for a person resident in an adjacent residential area, personal service establishments, dry cleaning establishments, business establishments, medical establishments, and public utilities

C3 – General Business	Provide sites for more diversified types of businesses adjacent to major streets and highways.	Any use permitted in C1 and C2, automobile service stations, automobile washing operations, bus passenger stations, automobile, mobile homes, recreation vehicle sales lots, motels and hotels, rooming and boarding houses, tourist lodges, apartments operates as an accessory use, drive-in restaurant, veterinary hospitals or clinics, auto and truck repair shop, indoor theatres, newspaper printing shops.
M1 – Light Industry	Establish an area for wholesale activities, warehouses, and industrial operations of a light nature that will not hinder the compatibility of other land users.	Assembly of electrical appliances, electronic instruments and devices, radios, and phonographs; manufacturing of small parts, laboratories, pharmaceuticals, and medical; manufacture and sale of pottery and figurines; manufacture of musical instruments, toys, novelties, and rubber and metal stamps, plumbing and building supplies, sales and storage, coal and wood yards, cabinet, furniture and upholstery shops, boat building, monumental stone works, wholesale business and storage warehouses, public utilities generating, booster, or relay station, storage of petroleum or other inflammable liquids, garment, clothing and knitting mills and apparel manufacturing, machine and sheet metal shops, building contractor yards, trucking terminals, radio transmitter stations, and auto and truck repair shops



M2 – Heavy Industry	Establishment of areas for industrial uses that need to be isolated from other incompatible land uses	Acid manufacturing, mineral extraction activities, mineral processing operations, fertilizer manufacture, petroleum manufacture, petroleum storage, pulp, paper, and chemical manufacture, boiler shops, polypropylene fibers, and film manufacture, steel fabricating plants, public utility generating, booster or relay station, all uses permitted in M1 zoning.
CN - Conservation	Construction of areas to prevent construction or alteration of environments that have natural conditions susceptible to flooding or erosion, unsuitable for urban development, and protect areas that would lead to health, pollution, and environmental deterioration	Agriculture, public or private parks or recreation areas, public or private cemeteries, conservation uses, golf courses, and driving ranges, plant nurseries, public utility right-of-way, railroad right-of-way, and bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails

## Appendix B: Community Survey

- What is your age?
  - Under 18
  - 18 - 24
  - 25 - 34
  - 35 - 44
  - 45 - 54
  - 55 - 54
  - 65 - 74
  - 75 or over
  - Prefer not to say
- Where do you live?
  - City of Covington
  - Alleghany County
  - Clifton Forge
  - Other
- What is your relationship with Downtown Covington?
  - I visit Downtown Covington regularly
  - I work in Downtown Covington
  - I own a business in Downtown Covington
  - I live in Downtown Covington
  - I own property (other than a single-unit house) in Downtown Covington
  - I am a tourist/It is my first time in Downtown Covington

- How long have you been a member of this community?
  - Less than 1 year
  - 1 - 5 years
  - 5 - 10 years
  - More than 10 years
  - N/A - I am not a member of this community
- How frequently do you visit Downtown Covington?
  - Weekly
  - Daily
  - Monthly
  - Less than once a month
- What is one word that comes to mind as you think about things you like in Downtown Covington?
- What is one word that comes to mind as you think about things you dislike about Downtown Covington?
- Which of the following are issues in Downtown Covington? (Please select all that apply.)
  - Too many vacant storefronts or vacant lots
  - Lack of businesses suited to me
  - Buildings are neglected or in need of repair
  - Not enough businesses consistently open
  - Lack of public restrooms
  - Not enough human activity
  - Not enough parking
  - Lack of green space/trees/shade
  - Substance abuse
  - Homelessness or housing insecurity
  - Inaccessible or unsafe for pedestrians
  - Difficult or unsafe for bicyclists
  - Dirty/littering
  - Feels unsafe/too much crime
  - Too much noise
  - Panhandling
- Of the issues in Downtown Covington that you selected, which one detracts from your experience the most?
  - Too many vacant storefronts or vacant lots
  - Lack of businesses suited to me
  - Buildings are neglected or in need of repair
  - Not enough businesses consistently open
  - Lack of public restrooms
  - Not enough human activity
  - Not enough parking
  - Lack of green space/trees/shade
  - Substance abuse
  - Homelessness or housing insecurity
  - Inaccessible or unsafe for pedestrians
  - Difficult or unsafe for bicyclists

- Dirty/littering
- Feels unsafe/too much crime
- Too much noise
- Panhandling
- What three business types would you like to see more of in Donwtown Covington? (Please select up to three)
  - Casual or family restaurant
  - Women's clothing
  - Family entertainment
  - Fine dining restaurant
  - Men's clothing
  - Children's clothing
  - Hardware store
  - Brewery, winery, or distillery
  - Arts and cultural venues
  - Shoe store
  - Bookstore
  - Bar or tavern
  - Sporting goods or outdoors
  - Boutique
  - Arts, crafts, hobby store
  - Grocery
  - Shared food vendor spaces
  - Fitness/wellness-focused business
  - Home goods
  - Antique/Vintage
  - Lodging
  - Drug store or pharmacy
  - Personal services
  - Comics, toys, or gaming store
  - Bike shop/repair/rental
  - Co-working space
  - Electronics
  - Fast food restaurant
  - Coffee shop or bakery
- What day of the week do you prefer to shop Downtown Covington?
  - Sunday
  - Monday
  - Tuesday
  - Wednesday
  - Thursday
  - Friday
  - Saturday

- What time of day do you prefer to shop in Downtown Covington?
  - After 5 pm
  - 1 - 3 pm
  - 11 am - 1 pm
  - 3 - 5 pm
  - 9 - 11 am
  - 7 - 9 am
- Are the businesses in Downtown Covington that you're interested in generally open when you want to shop?
  - Yes
  - No
- What would make living in Downtown Covington more desirable (to you or others in your community)? (Please select all that apply)
  - More things to do and places to shop/eat
  - Livelier, more activity
  - Businesses being open more often
  - Fewer vacant spaces
  - More housing choices
  - Housing that's more affordable
  - More basic amenities such as grocery store
  - More parking
  - More dog parks and pet amenities
  - More parks and nature
  - Cleaner
  - A greater sense of safety and/or less crime
  - Quieter, less busy and/or less traffic
  - Other (please specify)

### **Appendix C: Business Survey**

- Business Name
- Owner Name
- How long have you been in business?
  - Less than 1 year
  - 1 - 3 years
  - 3 - 5 years
  - 5 - 10 years
  - Longer than 10 years
  - Other
- What goods or services do you offer?
- Why did you choose to operate in downtown Covington?
- What are some challenges associated with downtown Covington?
- How many people do you employ?



- What is your busiest day of the week?
  - Monday
  - Tuesday
  - Wednesday
  - Thursday
  - Friday
  - Saturday
  - Sunday
- What is the busiest time of the week?
- Who is your target market
- Is there anyway the City of Covington could help your business?
- How has your business changed over the last year?
- Do you have plans to expand or reduce your business? If yes, explain.
- What would you like to see happen in downtown Covington?
- Do you feel connected to other businesses in downtown?
- Any other comments or concerns?

## Appendix D: Business Survey



### Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 5 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

Top Tapestry Segments	Percent	Demographic Summary	2023	2028
Heartland Communities (6F)	69.2%	Population	3,323	3,296
Rural Bypasses (10E)	20.8%	Households	1,448	1,448
Midlife Constants (5E)	7.4%	Families	804	795
Salt of the Earth (6B)	2.3%	Median Age	43.7	44.6
Comfortable Empty Nesters (5A)	0.3%	Median Household Income	\$42,600	\$46,124
		2023	2028	Projected
		Consumer Spending	Forecasted Demand	Spending Growth
<b>Apparel and Services</b>		\$1,658,330	\$1,855,622	\$197,292
Men's		\$298,729	\$334,308	\$35,579
Women's		\$561,499	\$628,295	\$66,796
Children's		\$274,397	\$306,968	\$32,571
Footwear		\$370,363	\$414,495	\$44,132
Watches & Jewelry		\$119,891	\$134,116	\$14,225
Apparel Products and Services (1)		\$33,451	\$37,441	\$3,990
<b>Computer</b>				
Computers and Hardware for Home Use		\$182,029	\$203,738	\$21,709
Portable Memory		\$3,646	\$4,081	\$435
Computer Software		\$10,189	\$11,413	\$1,224
Computer Accessories		\$19,515	\$21,850	\$2,335
<b>Entertainment &amp; Recreation</b>		\$3,445,372	\$3,855,699	\$410,327
Fees and Admissions		\$452,223	\$506,271	\$54,048
Membership Fees for Clubs (2)		\$185,642	\$207,795	\$22,153
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips		\$75,548	\$84,588	\$9,040
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts		\$36,504	\$40,857	\$4,353
Tickets to Movies		\$16,103	\$18,022	\$1,919
Tickets to Parks or Museums		\$19,782	\$22,134	\$2,352
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips		\$43,445	\$48,657	\$5,212
Fees for Recreational Lessons		\$74,613	\$83,561	\$8,948
Dating Services		\$587	\$657	\$70
TV/Video/Audio		\$1,275,936	\$1,427,146	\$151,210
Cable and Satellite Television Services		\$872,820	\$976,081	\$103,261
Televisions		\$127,423	\$142,565	\$15,142
Satellite Dishes		\$1,480	\$1,652	\$172
VCRs, Video Cameras, and DVD Players		\$3,700	\$4,140	\$440
Miscellaneous Video Equipment		\$7,939	\$8,880	\$941
Video Cassettes and DVDs		\$4,974	\$5,565	\$591
Video Game Hardware/Accessories		\$34,276	\$38,366	\$4,090
Video Game Software		\$15,924	\$17,820	\$1,896
Rental/Streaming/Downloaded Video		\$97,403	\$109,009	\$11,606
Installation of Televisions		\$1,111	\$1,246	\$135
Audio (3)		\$105,098	\$117,599	\$12,501
Rental and Repair of TV/Radio/Sound Equipment		\$3,788	\$4,224	\$436
Pets		\$1,054,225	\$1,180,263	\$126,038
Toys/Games/Crafts/Hobbies (4)		\$139,630	\$156,279	\$16,649
Recreational Vehicles and Fees (5)		\$158,730	\$177,713	\$18,983
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment (6)		\$212,806	\$238,092	\$25,286
Photo Equipment and Supplies (7)		\$33,975	\$38,034	\$4,059
Reading (8)		\$100,139	\$112,079	\$11,940
Catered Affairs (9)		\$17,708	\$19,822	\$2,114
<b>Food</b>		\$8,715,658	\$9,748,964	\$1,033,306
Food at Home		\$5,842,896	\$6,535,358	\$692,462
Bakery and Cereal Products		\$771,676	\$863,112	\$91,436
Meats, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs		\$1,262,648	\$1,412,223	\$149,575
Dairy Products		\$574,564	\$642,794	\$68,230
Fruits and Vegetables		\$1,092,912	\$1,222,499	\$129,587
Snacks and Other Food at Home (10)		\$2,141,096	\$2,394,731	\$253,635
Food Away from Home		\$2,872,762	\$3,213,606	\$340,844
Alcoholic Beverages		\$488,720	\$547,011	\$58,291

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.

**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024



## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 5 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

	2023 Consumer Spending	2028 Forecasted Demand	Projected Spending Growth
<b>Financial</b>			
Value of Stocks/Bonds/Mutual Funds	\$26,729,842	\$29,909,057	\$3,179,215
Value of Retirement Plans	\$108,073,581	\$120,946,605	\$12,873,024
Value of Other Financial Assets	\$6,469,972	\$7,246,393	\$776,421
Vehicle Loan Amount excluding Interest	\$3,352,914	\$3,750,120	\$397,206
Value of Credit Card Debt	\$2,628,110	\$2,940,417	\$312,307
<b>Health</b>			
Nonprescription Drugs	\$179,622	\$200,889	\$21,267
Prescription Drugs	\$420,400	\$470,132	\$49,732
Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses	\$109,234	\$122,205	\$12,971
<b>Home</b>			
Mortgage Payment and Basics (11)	\$9,635,577	\$10,784,412	\$1,148,835
Maintenance and Remodeling Services	\$3,051,378	\$3,415,226	\$363,848
Maintenance and Remodeling Materials (12)	\$868,194	\$970,646	\$102,452
Utilities, Fuel, and Public Services	\$5,464,280	\$6,110,917	\$646,637
<b>Household Furnishings and Equipment</b>			
Household Textiles (13)	\$95,912	\$107,268	\$11,356
Furniture	\$703,323	\$786,679	\$83,356
Rugs	\$34,791	\$38,932	\$4,141
Major Appliances (14)	\$477,693	\$534,251	\$56,558
Housewares (15)	\$82,148	\$91,955	\$9,807
Small Appliances	\$57,451	\$64,275	\$6,824
Luggage	\$10,015	\$11,202	\$1,187
Telephones and Accessories	\$94,611	\$105,664	\$11,053
<b>Household Operations</b>			
Child Care	\$350,436	\$392,294	\$41,858
Lawn and Garden (16)	\$686,165	\$767,928	\$81,763
Moving/Storage/Freight Express	\$62,420	\$69,807	\$7,387
Housekeeping Supplies (17)	\$835,218	\$934,271	\$99,053
<b>Insurance</b>			
Owners and Renters Insurance	\$779,295	\$871,695	\$92,400
Vehicle Insurance	\$1,954,192	\$2,184,996	\$230,804
Life/Other Insurance	\$630,244	\$704,909	\$74,665
Health Insurance	\$4,813,077	\$5,384,126	\$571,049
Personal Care Products (18)	\$433,119	\$484,550	\$51,431
School Books and Supplies (19)	\$106,606	\$119,233	\$12,627
Smoking Products	\$547,333	\$611,401	\$64,068
<b>Transportation</b>			
Payments on Vehicles excluding Leases	\$2,870,654	\$3,210,562	\$339,908
Gasoline and Motor Oil	\$2,464,621	\$2,755,762	\$291,141
Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs	\$1,186,697	\$1,327,578	\$140,881
<b>Travel</b>			
Airline Fares	\$303,739	\$340,030	\$36,291
Lodging on Trips	\$579,306	\$648,037	\$68,731
Auto/Truck Rental on Trips	\$52,354	\$58,597	\$6,243
Food and Drink on Trips	\$441,201	\$493,721	\$52,520

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.

**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024



## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 5 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

- (1) **Apparel Products and Services** includes shoe repair and other shoe services, apparel laundry and dry cleaning, alteration, repair and tailoring of apparel, clothing rental and storage, and watch and jewelry repair.
- (2) **Membership Fees for Clubs** includes membership fees for social, recreational, and health clubs.
- (3) **Audio** includes satellite radio service, radios, stereos, sound components, equipment and accessories, digital audio players, records, CDs, audio tapes, streaming/downloaded audio, musical instruments and accessories, and rental and repair of musical instruments.
- (4) **Toys and Games** includes toys, games, arts and crafts, tricycles, playground equipment, arcade games, online entertainment and games, and stamp and coin collecting.
- (5) **Recreational Vehicles & Fees** includes docking and landing fees for boats and planes, payments on boats, trailers, campers and RVs, rental of boats, trailers, campers and RVs, and camp fees.
- (6) **Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment** includes exercise equipment and gear, game tables, bicycles, camping equipment, hunting and fishing equipment, winter sports equipment, water sports equipment, other sports equipment, and rental/repair of sports/recreation/exercise equipment.
- (7) **Photo Equipment and Supplies** includes film, film processing, photographic equipment, rental and repair of photo equipment, and photographer fees.
- (8) **Reading** includes digital book readers, books, magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and single copies of magazines and newspapers.
- (9) **Catered Affairs** includes expenses associated with live entertainment and rental of party supplies.
- (10) **Snacks and Other Food at Home** includes candy, chewing gum, sugar, artificial sweeteners, jam, jelly, preserves, margarine, fats and oils, salad dressing, nondairy cream and milk, peanut butter, frozen prepared food, potato chips and other snacks, nuts, salt, spices, seasonings, olives, pickles, relishes, sauces, gravy, other condiments, soup, prepared salad, prepared dessert, baby food, miscellaneous prepared food, and nonalcoholic beverages.
- (11) **Mortgage Payment and Basics** includes mortgage interest, mortgage principal, property taxes, homeowners insurance, and ground rent on owned dwellings.
- (12) **Maintenance and Remodeling Materials** includes supplies/tools/equipment for painting and wallpapering, plumbing supplies and equipment, electrical/heating/AC supplies, materials for roofing/gutters, materials for plaster/panel/siding, materials for patio/fence/brick work, landscaping materials, and insulation materials for owned homes.
- (13) **Household Textiles** includes bathroom linens, bedroom linens, kitchen linens, dining room linens, other linens, curtains, draperies, slipcovers and decorative pillows.
- (14) **Major Appliances** includes dishwashers, disposals, refrigerators, freezers, washers, dryers, stoves, ovens, microwaves, window air conditioners, electric floor cleaning equipment, sewing machines, and miscellaneous appliances.
- (15) **Housewares** includes flatware, dishes, cups glasses, serving pieces, nonelectric cookware, and tableware.
- (16) **Lawn and Garden** includes lawn and garden supplies, equipment and care service, indoor plants, fresh flowers, and repair/rental of lawn and garden equipment.
- (17) **Housekeeping Supplies** includes soaps and laundry detergents, cleaning products, toilet tissue, paper towels, napkins, paper/plastic/foil products, stationery, giftwrap supplies, postage, and delivery services.
- (18) **Personal Care Products** includes hair care products, nonelectric articles for hair, wigs, hairpieces, oral hygiene products, shaving needs, perfume, cosmetics, skincare, bath products, nail products, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, adult diapers, other miscellaneous care products and personal care appliances.
- (19) **School Books and Supplies** includes school books and supplies for college, elementary school, high school, vocational/technical school, preschool and other schools.

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.  
**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024





## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 15 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

Top Tapestry Segments	Percent	Demographic Summary	2023	2028
Heartland Communities (6F)	30.1%	Population	9,570	9,437
Midlife Constants (5E)	25.0%	Households	4,228	4,214
Rural Bypasses (10E)	12.7%	Families	2,554	2,521
Comfortable Empty Nesters (5A)	10.3%	Median Age	47.2	48.1
Salt of the Earth (6B)	9.4%	Median Household Income	\$44,773	\$49,164
			2023 Consumer Spending	2028 Forecasted Demand Projected Spending Growth
<b>Apparel and Services</b>			\$5,386,702	\$6,018,548
Men's			\$977,870	\$1,092,734
Women's			\$1,841,325	\$2,057,339
Children's			\$853,724	\$953,582
Footwear			\$1,193,138	\$1,333,254
Watches & Jewelry			\$410,836	\$458,922
Apparel Products and Services (1)			\$109,807	\$122,717
<b>Computer</b>				
Computers and Hardware for Home Use			\$588,316	\$657,466
Portable Memory			\$11,662	\$13,031
Computer Software			\$32,392	\$36,218
Computer Accessories			\$62,052	\$69,356
<b>Entertainment &amp; Recreation</b>			\$10,646,214	\$11,892,387
Fees and Admissions			\$1,573,462	\$1,759,018
Membership Fees for Clubs (2)			\$642,379	\$718,037
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips			\$264,332	\$295,547
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts			\$127,471	\$142,489
Tickets to Movies			\$55,118	\$61,612
Tickets to Parks or Museums			\$66,773	\$74,603
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips			\$147,359	\$164,745
Fees for Recreational Lessons			\$267,996	\$299,711
Dating Services			\$2,034	\$2,274
TV/Video/Audio			\$3,955,452	\$4,417,253
Cable and Satellite Television Services			\$2,691,078	\$3,004,711
Televisions			\$393,123	\$439,141
Satellite Dishes			\$4,709	\$5,254
VCRs, Video Cameras, and DVD Players			\$11,684	\$13,054
Miscellaneous Video Equipment			\$27,543	\$30,778
Video Cassettes and DVDs			\$15,895	\$17,759
Video Game Hardware/Accessories			\$104,135	\$116,350
Video Game Software			\$48,375	\$54,048
Rental/Streaming/Downloaded Video			\$306,240	\$342,164
Installation of Televisions			\$3,430	\$3,836
Audio (3)			\$338,105	\$377,751
Rental and Repair of TV/Radio/Sound Equipment			\$11,135	\$12,407
Pets			\$3,018,553	\$3,371,476
Toys/Games/Crafts/Hobbies (4)			\$429,214	\$479,508
Recreational Vehicles and Fees (5)			\$482,010	\$538,355
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment (6)			\$691,837	\$772,830
Photo Equipment and Supplies (7)			\$110,567	\$123,569
Reading (8)			\$324,408	\$362,518
Catered Affairs (9)			\$60,711	\$67,860
<b>Food</b>			\$27,757,042	\$31,002,064
Food at Home			\$18,460,483	\$20,617,406
Bakery and Cereal Products			\$2,432,737	\$2,716,879
Meats, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs			\$3,991,754	\$4,458,007
Dairy Products			\$1,800,200	\$2,010,697
Fruits and Vegetables			\$3,499,247	\$3,908,544
Snacks and Other Food at Home (10)			\$6,736,544	\$7,523,280
Food Away from Home			\$9,296,559	\$10,384,657
Alcoholic Beverages			\$1,627,230	\$1,818,585

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.

**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024



## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 15 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

	2023 Consumer Spending	2028 Forecasted Demand	Projected Spending Growth
<b>Financial</b>			
Value of Stocks/Bonds/Mutual Funds	\$95,305,220	\$106,516,981	\$11,211,761
Value of Retirement Plans	\$370,386,736	\$413,889,187	\$43,502,451
Value of Other Financial Assets	\$21,271,824	\$23,777,324	\$2,505,500
Vehicle Loan Amount excluding Interest	\$10,382,470	\$11,593,068	\$1,210,598
Value of Credit Card Debt	\$8,431,251	\$9,418,377	\$987,126
<b>Health</b>			
Nonprescription Drugs	\$550,787	\$614,920	\$64,133
Prescription Drugs	\$1,279,175	\$1,428,017	\$148,842
Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses	\$335,743	\$374,954	\$39,211
<b>Home</b>			
Mortgage Payment and Basics (11)	\$32,535,215	\$36,356,934	\$3,821,719
Maintenance and Remodeling Services	\$10,101,438	\$11,287,044	\$1,185,606
Maintenance and Remodeling Materials (12)	\$2,685,212	\$2,996,622	\$311,410
Utilities, Fuel, and Public Services	\$16,997,467	\$18,979,664	\$1,982,197
<b>Household Furnishings and Equipment</b>			
Household Textiles (13)	\$309,794	\$346,032	\$36,238
Furniture	\$2,214,502	\$2,473,345	\$258,843
Rugs	\$112,636	\$125,828	\$13,192
Major Appliances (14)	\$1,516,769	\$1,693,800	\$177,031
Housewares (15)	\$265,370	\$296,555	\$31,185
Small Appliances	\$181,222	\$202,446	\$21,224
Luggage	\$33,476	\$37,398	\$3,922
Telephones and Accessories	\$298,991	\$333,663	\$34,672
<b>Household Operations</b>			
Child Care	\$1,152,253	\$1,287,829	\$135,576
Lawn and Garden (16)	\$2,096,276	\$2,341,339	\$245,063
Moving/Storage/Freight Express	\$207,346	\$231,639	\$24,293
Housekeeping Supplies (17)	\$2,631,911	\$2,939,387	\$307,476
<b>Insurance</b>			
Owners and Renters Insurance	\$2,454,156	\$2,740,438	\$286,282
Vehicle Insurance	\$6,098,269	\$6,808,958	\$710,689
Life/Other Insurance	\$2,025,905	\$2,262,430	\$236,525
Health Insurance	\$14,974,301	\$16,722,849	\$1,748,548
Personal Care Products (18)	\$1,398,043	\$1,561,813	\$163,770
School Books and Supplies (19)	\$340,013	\$379,739	\$39,726
Smoking Products	\$1,599,913	\$1,784,541	\$184,628
<b>Transportation</b>			
Payments on Vehicles excluding Leases	\$8,879,667	\$9,914,672	\$1,035,005
Gasoline and Motor Oil	\$7,497,415	\$8,369,844	\$872,429
Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs	\$3,681,741	\$4,112,050	\$430,309
<b>Travel</b>			
Airline Fares	\$1,026,602	\$1,147,523	\$120,921
Lodging on Trips	\$1,894,760	\$2,116,401	\$221,641
Auto/Truck Rental on Trips	\$180,676	\$201,949	\$21,273
Food and Drink on Trips	\$1,424,666	\$1,591,690	\$167,024

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.  
**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024



## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 15 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

**(1) Apparel Products and Services** includes shoe repair and other shoe services, apparel laundry and dry cleaning, alteration, repair and tailoring of apparel, clothing rental and storage, and watch and jewelry repair.

**(2) Membership Fees for Clubs** includes membership fees for social, recreational, and health clubs.

**(3) Audio** includes satellite radio service, radios, stereos, sound components, equipment and accessories, digital audio players, records, CDs, audio tapes, streaming/downloaded audio, musical instruments and accessories, and rental and repair of musical instruments.

**(4) Toys and Games** includes toys, games, arts and crafts, tricycles, playground equipment, arcade games, online entertainment and games, and stamp and coin collecting.

**(5) Recreational Vehicles & Fees** includes docking and landing fees for boats and planes, payments on boats, trailers, campers and RVs, rental of boats, trailers, campers and RVs, and camp fees.

**(6) Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment** includes exercise equipment and gear, game tables, bicycles, camping equipment, hunting and fishing equipment, winter sports equipment, water sports equipment, other sports equipment, and rental/repair of sports/recreation/exercise equipment.

**(7) Photo Equipment and Supplies** includes film, film processing, photographic equipment, rental and repair of photo equipment, and photographer fees.

**(8) Reading** includes digital book readers, books, magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and single copies of magazines and newspapers.

**(9) Catered Affairs** includes expenses associated with live entertainment and rental of party supplies.

**(10) Snacks and Other Food at Home** includes candy, chewing gum, sugar, artificial sweeteners, jam, jelly, preserves, margarine, fats and oils, salad dressing, nondairy cream and milk, peanut butter, frozen prepared food, potato chips and other snacks, nuts, salt, spices, seasonings, olives, pickles, relishes, sauces, gravy, other condiments, soup, prepared salad, prepared dessert, baby food, miscellaneous prepared food, and nonalcoholic beverages.

**(11) Mortgage Payment and Basics** includes mortgage interest, mortgage principal, property taxes, homeowners insurance, and ground rent on owned dwellings.

**(12) Maintenance and Remodeling Materials** includes supplies/tools/equipment for painting and wallpapering, plumbing supplies and equipment, electrical/heating/AC supplies, materials for roofing/gutters, materials for plaster/panel/siding, materials for patio/fence/brick work, landscaping materials, and insulation materials for owned homes.

**(13) Household Textiles** includes bathroom linens, bedroom linens, kitchen linens, dining room linens, other linens, curtains, draperies, slipcovers and decorative pillows.

**(14) Major Appliances** includes dishwashers, disposals, refrigerators, freezers, washers, dryers, stoves, ovens, microwaves, window air conditioners, electric floor cleaning equipment, sewing machines, and miscellaneous appliances.

**(15) Housewares** includes flatware, dishes, cups glasses, serving pieces, nonelectric cookware, and tableware.

**(16) Lawn and Garden** includes lawn and garden supplies, equipment and care service, indoor plants, fresh flowers, and repair/rental of lawn and garden equipment.

**(17) Housekeeping Supplies** includes soaps and laundry detergents, cleaning products, toilet tissue, paper towels, napkins, paper/plastic/foil products, stationery, giftwrap supplies, postage, and delivery services.

**(18) Personal Care Products** includes hair care products, nonelectric articles for hair, wigs, hairpieces, oral hygiene products, shaving needs, perfume, cosmetics, skincare, bath products, nail products, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, adult diapers, other miscellaneous care products and personal care appliances.

**(19) School Books and Supplies** includes school books and supplies for college, elementary school, high school, vocational/technical school, preschool and other schools.

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.

**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024



## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 20 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

Top Tapestry Segments	Percent	Demographic Summary	2023	2028
Heartland Communities (6F)	27.4%	Population	13,711	13,460
Small Town Sincerity (12C)	21.1%	Households	6,100	6,057
Midlife Constants (5E)	17.4%	Families	3,638	3,578
Rooted Rural (10B)	9.2%	Median Age	47.9	48.9
Rural Bypasses (10E)	8.8%	Median Household Income	\$42,946	\$48,091
		2023	2028	Projected
		Consumer Spending	Forecasted Demand	Spending Growth
<b>Apparel and Services</b>		\$7,582,485	\$8,516,195	\$933,710
Men's		\$1,374,891	\$1,544,367	\$169,476
Women's		\$2,589,595	\$2,908,563	\$318,968
Children's		\$1,205,844	\$1,353,972	\$148,128
Footwear		\$1,681,378	\$1,888,518	\$207,140
Watches & Jewelry		\$576,826	\$647,831	\$71,005
Apparel Products and Services (1)		\$153,952	\$172,943	\$18,991
<b>Computer</b>				
Computers and Hardware for Home Use		\$828,938	\$931,125	\$102,187
Portable Memory		\$16,536	\$18,572	\$2,036
Computer Software		\$45,923	\$51,595	\$5,672
Computer Accessories		\$87,542	\$98,340	\$10,798
<b>Entertainment &amp; Recreation</b>		\$14,971,444	\$16,811,990	\$1,840,546
Fees and Admissions		\$2,158,526	\$2,425,989	\$267,463
Membership Fees for Clubs (2)		\$880,503	\$989,520	\$109,017
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips		\$361,276	\$406,096	\$44,820
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts		\$175,489	\$197,214	\$21,725
Tickets to Movies		\$76,795	\$86,292	\$9,497
Tickets to Parks or Museums		\$92,583	\$104,001	\$11,418
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips		\$202,829	\$227,954	\$25,125
Fees for Recreational Lessons		\$366,141	\$411,644	\$45,503
Dating Services		\$2,909	\$3,269	\$360
TV/Video/Audio		\$5,596,172	\$6,282,769	\$686,597
Cable and Satellite Television Services		\$3,802,935	\$4,269,057	\$466,122
Televisions		\$558,618	\$627,231	\$68,613
Satellite Dishes		\$6,658	\$7,470	\$812
VCRs, Video Cameras, and DVD Players		\$16,779	\$18,841	\$2,062
Miscellaneous Video Equipment		\$38,104	\$42,811	\$4,707
Video Cassettes and DVDs		\$22,635	\$25,419	\$2,784
Video Game Hardware/Accessories		\$150,550	\$169,034	\$18,484
Video Game Software		\$70,127	\$78,734	\$8,607
Rental/Streaming/Downloaded Video		\$435,284	\$488,826	\$53,542
Installation of Televisions		\$4,773	\$5,364	\$591
Audio (3)		\$473,555	\$531,877	\$58,322
Rental and Repair of TV/Radio/Sound Equipment		\$16,153	\$18,105	\$1,952
Pets		\$4,267,251	\$4,790,802	\$523,551
Toys/Games/Crafts/Hobbies (4)		\$607,028	\$681,655	\$74,627
Recreational Vehicles and Fees (5)		\$675,602	\$758,603	\$83,001
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment (6)		\$971,973	\$1,091,569	\$119,596
Photo Equipment and Supplies (7)		\$154,746	\$173,840	\$19,094
Reading (8)		\$455,212	\$511,332	\$56,120
Catered Affairs (9)		\$84,934	\$95,431	\$10,497
<b>Food</b>		\$39,187,510	\$44,001,604	\$4,814,094
Food at Home		\$26,114,186	\$29,320,352	\$3,206,166
Bakery and Cereal Products		\$3,439,423	\$3,861,619	\$422,196
Meats, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs		\$5,647,321	\$6,340,541	\$693,220
Dairy Products		\$2,550,451	\$2,863,660	\$313,209
Fruits and Vegetables		\$4,939,344	\$5,546,346	\$607,002
Snacks and Other Food at Home (10)		\$9,537,647	\$10,708,186	\$1,170,539
Food Away from Home		\$13,073,325	\$14,681,252	\$1,607,927
Alcoholic Beverages		\$2,267,116	\$2,547,025	\$279,909

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.

**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024





## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 20 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

	2023 Consumer Spending	2028 Forecasted Demand	Projected Spending Growth
<b>Financial</b>			
Value of Stocks/Bonds/Mutual Funds	\$129,253,267	\$145,265,808	\$16,012,541
Value of Retirement Plans	\$505,606,741	\$568,123,248	\$62,516,507
Value of Other Financial Assets	\$29,559,171	\$33,212,847	\$3,653,676
Vehicle Loan Amount excluding Interest	\$14,691,532	\$16,492,703	\$1,801,171
Value of Credit Card Debt	\$11,787,875	\$13,238,461	\$1,450,586
<b>Health</b>			
Nonprescription Drugs	\$779,165	\$874,605	\$95,440
Prescription Drugs	\$1,808,647	\$2,030,081	\$221,434
Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses	\$472,346	\$530,332	\$57,986
<b>Home</b>			
Mortgage Payment and Basics (11)	\$44,597,855	\$50,109,564	\$5,511,709
Maintenance and Remodeling Services	\$13,909,572	\$15,626,783	\$1,717,211
Maintenance and Remodeling Materials (12)	\$3,756,085	\$4,215,605	\$459,520
Utilities, Fuel, and Public Services	\$24,065,244	\$27,015,885	\$2,950,641
<b>Household Furnishings and Equipment</b>			
Household Textiles (13)	\$435,154	\$488,659	\$53,505
Furniture	\$3,107,865	\$3,489,745	\$381,880
Rugs	\$157,269	\$176,631	\$19,362
Major Appliances (14)	\$2,129,113	\$2,390,541	\$261,428
Housewares (15)	\$372,430	\$418,351	\$45,921
Small Appliances	\$257,635	\$289,295	\$31,660
Luggage	\$46,868	\$52,639	\$5,771
Telephones and Accessories	\$422,826	\$474,519	\$51,693
<b>Household Operations</b>			
Child Care	\$1,592,699	\$1,789,512	\$196,813
Lawn and Garden (16)	\$2,919,130	\$3,277,994	\$358,864
Moving/Storage/Freight Express	\$297,174	\$333,699	\$36,525
Housekeeping Supplies (17)	\$3,715,004	\$4,171,158	\$456,154
<b>Insurance</b>			
Owners and Renters Insurance	\$3,426,837	\$3,847,621	\$420,784
Vehicle Insurance	\$8,649,175	\$9,709,134	\$1,059,959
Life/Other Insurance	\$2,819,489	\$3,166,046	\$346,557
Health Insurance	\$21,073,874	\$23,660,962	\$2,587,088
Personal Care Products (18)	\$1,968,394	\$2,210,578	\$242,184
School Books and Supplies (19)	\$479,214	\$538,071	\$58,857
Smoking Products	\$2,315,273	\$2,596,769	\$281,496
<b>Transportation</b>			
Payments on Vehicles excluding Leases	\$12,560,271	\$14,099,875	\$1,539,604
Gasoline and Motor Oil	\$10,651,365	\$11,955,007	\$1,303,642
Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs	\$5,213,021	\$5,853,003	\$639,982
<b>Travel</b>			
Airline Fares	\$1,426,017	\$1,602,340	\$176,323
Lodging on Trips	\$2,628,257	\$2,951,829	\$323,572
Auto/Truck Rental on Trips	\$251,265	\$282,326	\$31,061
Food and Drink on Trips	\$1,989,184	\$2,234,225	\$245,041

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.

**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024



## Retail Demand Outlook

Downtown Covington New  
Covington, Virginia  
Drive time: 20 minute radius

Prepared by Esri  
Latitude: 37.79388  
Longitude: -79.99546

- (1) **Apparel Products and Services** includes shoe repair and other shoe services, apparel laundry and dry cleaning, alteration, repair and tailoring of apparel, clothing rental and storage, and watch and jewelry repair.
- (2) **Membership Fees for Clubs** includes membership fees for social, recreational, and health clubs.
- (3) **Audio** includes satellite radio service, radios, stereos, sound components, equipment and accessories, digital audio players, records, CDs, audio tapes, streaming/downloaded audio, musical instruments and accessories, and rental and repair of musical instruments.
- (4) **Toys and Games** includes toys, games, arts and crafts, tricycles, playground equipment, arcade games, online entertainment and games, and stamp and coin collecting.
- (5) **Recreational Vehicles & Fees** includes docking and landing fees for boats and planes, payments on boats, trailers, campers and RVs, rental of boats, trailers, campers and RVs, and camp fees.
- (6) **Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment** includes exercise equipment and gear, game tables, bicycles, camping equipment, hunting and fishing equipment, winter sports equipment, water sports equipment, other sports equipment, and rental/repair of sports/recreation/exercise equipment.
- (7) **Photo Equipment and Supplies** includes film, film processing, photographic equipment, rental and repair of photo equipment, and photographer fees.
- (8) **Reading** includes digital book readers, books, magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and single copies of magazines and newspapers.
- (9) **Catered Affairs** includes expenses associated with live entertainment and rental of party supplies.
- (10) **Snacks and Other Food at Home** includes candy, chewing gum, sugar, artificial sweeteners, jam, jelly, preserves, margarine, fats and oils, salad dressing, nondairy cream and milk, peanut butter, frozen prepared food, potato chips and other snacks, nuts, salt, spices, seasonings, olives, pickles, relishes, sauces, gravy, other condiments, soup, prepared salad, prepared dessert, baby food, miscellaneous prepared food, and nonalcoholic beverages.
- (11) **Mortgage Payment and Basics** includes mortgage interest, mortgage principal, property taxes, homeowners insurance, and ground rent on owned dwellings.
- (12) **Maintenance and Remodeling Materials** includes supplies/tools/equipment for painting and wallpapering, plumbing supplies and equipment, electrical/heating/AC supplies, materials for roofing/gutters, materials for plaster/panel/siding, materials for patio/fence/brick work, landscaping materials, and insulation materials for owned homes.
- (13) **Household Textiles** includes bathroom linens, bedroom linens, kitchen linens, dining room linens, other linens, curtains, draperies, slipcovers and decorative pillows.
- (14) **Major Appliances** includes dishwashers, disposals, refrigerators, freezers, washers, dryers, stoves, ovens, microwaves, window air conditioners, electric floor cleaning equipment, sewing machines, and miscellaneous appliances.
- (15) **Housewares** includes flatware, dishes, cups glasses, serving pieces, nonelectric cookware, and tableware.
- (16) **Lawn and Garden** includes lawn and garden supplies, equipment and care service, indoor plants, fresh flowers, and repair/rental of lawn and garden equipment.
- (17) **Housekeeping Supplies** includes soaps and laundry detergents, cleaning products, toilet tissue, paper towels, napkins, paper/plastic/foil products, stationery, giftwrap supplies, postage, and delivery services.
- (18) **Personal Care Products** includes hair care products, nonelectric articles for hair, wigs, hairpieces, oral hygiene products, shaving needs, perfume, cosmetics, skincare, bath products, nail products, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, adult diapers, other miscellaneous care products and personal care appliances.
- (19) **School Books and Supplies** includes school books and supplies for college, elementary school, high school, vocational/technical school, preschool and other schools.

**Data Note:** The Consumer Spending data is household-based and represents the amount spent for a product or service by all households in an area. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding. This report is not a comprehensive list of all consumer spending variables therefore the variables in each section may not sum to totals.  
**Source:** Esri forecasts for 2023 and 2028; Consumer Spending data are derived from the 2019 and 2020 Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

April 17, 2024