

June 26, 2020

Emily Muzzarelli
Interim City Manager
389 Spruce St.
Morgantown, WV 26505

Ms. Muzzarelli:

As you know, the purpose of the Morgantown Riverfront Revitalization Task Force is to coordinate various plans and interests surrounding the City of Morgantown's Riverfront. The Task Force was created to advise Morgantown City Management of its vision and goals for the revitalization of the City's Riverfront.

After much collaborative work and discussion, we present to you the following vision and goals for the Morgantown Riverfront, as well as a set of initial recommendations for improvement.

We would appreciate your feedback on these recommendations by July 13, 2020. We are willing to present to and/or work with City Council and other Boards or Commissions to obtain the necessary buy-in and permission needed to proceed with improvements to the Riverfront.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued participation in the Task Force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jessica McDonald", is written over a faint, light blue background that resembles a watermark or a very light stamp.

Jessica McDonald
Task Force Chair

**Morgantown Riverfront Revitalization Task Force
Vision, Goals, and Recommendations
June 2020**

Vision:

A vibrant, multi-use riverfront that offers a variety of amenities, is accessible to visitors, and is frequently used by a wide cross-section of the community

Goals:

- 1) Make sure people know about the Riverfront and can easily access it.
- 2) Provide maps and visitor info so people can find and use other amenities.
- 3) Provide a variety of reasons to visit the Riverfront.
- 4) Make a space that people enjoy once they're there.

Initial Recommendations:

1) Remove private property signs from Deckers Creek confluence.

We recommend removing all the private property signs in the floodplain area where Deckers Creek flows into the Mon to create a friendlier atmosphere at this already-used spot.

2) Improve landscaping on City-controlled property all along Riverfront.

The following gardens are all poorly maintained or unplanted: next to Table 9 and the dock access ramp behind it, between the Caperton Trail archway and the rail trail, in South University Avenue Park, and at the gateways to Hazel Ruby McQuain (HRM) Park. We recommend that the trees be pruned, the garden beds be weeded and mulched, and additional sustainable perennials be planted in under-cultivated locations. We also recommend that the Urban Landscape Commission consider adding planters throughout the Riverfront similar to those it maintains downtown.

3) Maintain and/or improve fishing access spots.

There are multiple access points for fishing along the Riverfront that are consistently being used by the public. We recommend that the City investigate these spots and address any infrastructure maintenance issues (such as the stairs at the access point behind the power plant and the concrete access ramp next to the dam), cut back weeds, and erect consistent, friendly signage. Currently some spots have five different signs, and some have none at all. Our goal is to let the community know about these access points and to denote them with friendly signs that also communicate all required information (such as that related to NPDES permits).

4) Improve viewshed.

We recommend the City selectively cut and remove invasive brush and small trees along certain areas of the riverbank to improve the view of the water while maintaining the integrity of the bank. Our vision includes leaving large, beautiful trees and other plants that keep the bank stable.

Possible locations where this would be beneficial include:

- Straight across from the Marriott's Conference Center courtyard
- Opposite the Caperton Trail archway near mile marker 10
- Across from Flour & Feed
- Across from Mountain State Brewing and Oliverios

5) Work with Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) and Mon River Trails Conservancy (MRTC) to find a place for maps & visitor info.

We want trail users and visitors to be able to get trail maps, water maps, and visitor information. The CVB has offered to stock maps at a Riverfront location. We recommend you work with both the CVB and MRTC to find the most sensible locations to make this information available.

6) Address wayfinding signage needs, in conjunction with MRTC.

We'd like the City to erect signage for the following:

- All trail parking areas along the Riverfront;
- Signs along the Riverfront that point to downtown and other amenities;
- Signs from the main roads that point to HRM Park and the Wharf District;
- Consistent signs for fishing access points; and
- Consistent signs for kayak launches and lockers, public dock access, and boat access.

MRTC already has plans and funding for several of the signs recommended above, and therefore these efforts should be coordinated with them.

7) Work with the Bike Board and MRTC to thoughtfully replace, relocate, and install bike racks.

We recommend that the City engage the Bike Board and MRTC to comprehensively assess all the bike racks along the Riverfront and remove those that aren't working, relocate those that are to better locations where needed, and install new ones. Our goal is to maximize the ability of cyclists to use Riverfront amenities while minimizing damage to trees and other infrastructure that might come from unplanned bike parking.

8) Make trail connections.

We recommend that the City connect the south end of the paved trail that runs through South University Avenue Park to the Rail Trail so that there is no break in pavement between the two.

We also recommend that the City take any steps necessary to improve access to the existing Meadow Lane right-of-way that runs between the First Ward neighborhood through the woods down to Don Knotts Boulevard, directly across from the free trail parking at South University Avenue Park. This section has been identified by multiple community groups, including the Greenspace Coalition and MRTC, as an important neighborhood-to-trail connection, and some funding has been obtained to formalize that connection.

9) Create a weekly food truck event at HRM Park.

We recommend the City create a weekly food truck event as part of its programming at HRM Park, separate and apart from formal, ticketed events. We see this as an opportunity to support local businesses, encourage safe, outdoor activity, and bring more users to the Park.

10) Add information on City website about how to hold events at the Riverfront.

We recommend that the City add a section to the City website that contains all the information someone would need to hold an event at the Riverfront, including a list of available spaces, permit requirements, fees, forms, etc. We believe making this process as transparent and easy as possible will encourage more activity and contribute to the overall vibrance of the area.

11) Work with Task Force members (and other community members as necessary) to locate public art along the Riverfront.

In the immediate future, we would like to coordinate efforts to find a place to relocate the Debbie Palmer "About Town" mural that was removed from HRM Park and obtain permission to place a new Debbie Palmer mural called "Shine" on the low brick wall from which plaques have been removed in South University (Memorial) Park. We plan to investigate and pursue other public art opportunities in conjunction with the City's Director of Arts & Cultural Development.

12) Work with Morgantown Area Paddlers (MAP) to effectively manage riverfront kayak lockers.

We ask that the City engage MAP in discussions of how to effectively sign and manage the use of the new kayak lockers and communicate their availability and potential to the public and to riverfront businesses.

13) Consider and implement enhancements to the existing public transportation plan to incorporate the Riverfront.

We recommend the City look for opportunities to include the Riverfront in public transportation routes to make sure it is accessible to all segments of the community.