Existing Conditions / Streetscape Environment

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Existing Conditions Evaluation Framework

The study team employed a systems approach to the evaluation of the street segments under review. For analysis purposes this approach organizes the broad streetscape environment, which is quite often a complicated mix of activities, physical conditions and elements, into four key environmental systems:

- Vehicular Environment
- Pedestrian Environment
- Visual Environment
- Activity Environment

Since these environments overlap, interrelate and at times complement and/or conflict with each other, the systems approach allows a clarity of focus by evaluating the key conditions of each of the environmental systems separately, but within an overarching study area framework. The unifying framework is represented in the following map graphic, (Figure X-1) Existing Conditions / Key Framework Elements. It acts as an overall guide to the primary physical elements under study for the Downtown Enhancement Plan. Here we identify the key roadway network, traffic patterns, parking opportunities (on- and off-street), vehicular and pedestrian alleys, bicycle opportunities, key intersections, and public use areas. This map is the reference document for a series of photography-based evaluation summaries for the study area, organized by the four key environmental systems described above. For each of these environmental summaries, we identify and illustrate important conditions, assets, issues and opportunities relevant to the study by annotating selected photographs of the actual streetscape elements.

Vehicular Environment: This environment includes the domain of motorized vehicles, bicycles and parking elements. Here we identify relevant functional, connectivity, and safety aspects of the public rights-or-way, as well as off-street linkages and parking. (See Figure X-2)

Pedestrian Environment: Here we focus on the multi-function zones between the curb and building frontages, where both pedestrians and wheelchair-users should be comfortably accommodated. Key areas of focus include the function, mobility and safety aspects of the environment, particularly dealing with improved pedestrian crossings and the removal of obstacles within the pedestrian domain. The vehicular and pedestrian environments are in close proximity, and overlap at intersections and other street crossings. (See Figure X-3)

Visual Environment: Important aspects of the visual environment include strong visual assets such as beautiful historic architecture, attractive storefronts, flower baskets and brick sidewalks. Another focus is the identification of needed enhancements in the visual environment, such as improved wayfinding systems, more street trees, and a reduction of signs within the downtown visual domain. (See Figure X-4)

Activity Environment: Here we focus on elements that make the City an attractive visitor environment, including existing assets such as historic buildings, museums, walking tours, carriage rides, outdoor dining, and green space. However, key areas for improvement include the need for more event space, more shaded seating areas, and better visitor conveniences. (See Figure X-5)

Figure X-1: Existing Conditions / Key Framework Elements

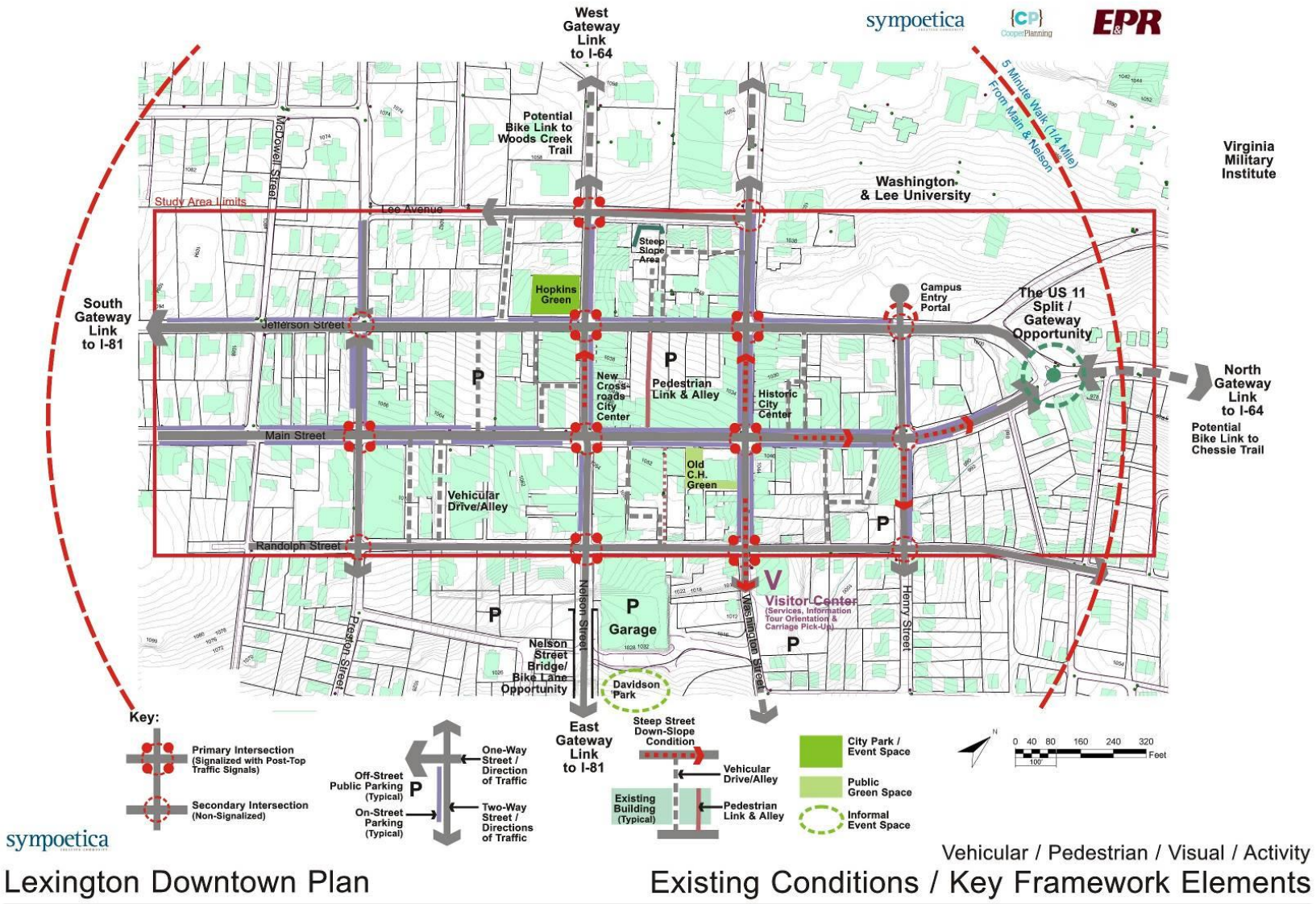


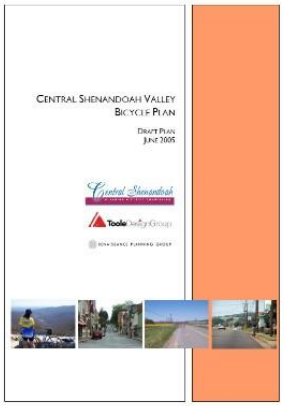
Figure X-2: Existing Conditions / Vehicular Environment

Main Street

Nelson Street

Washington Street

Randolph to Main



Regional Bicycle Plan

Washington Street

Main Street

Jefferson Street

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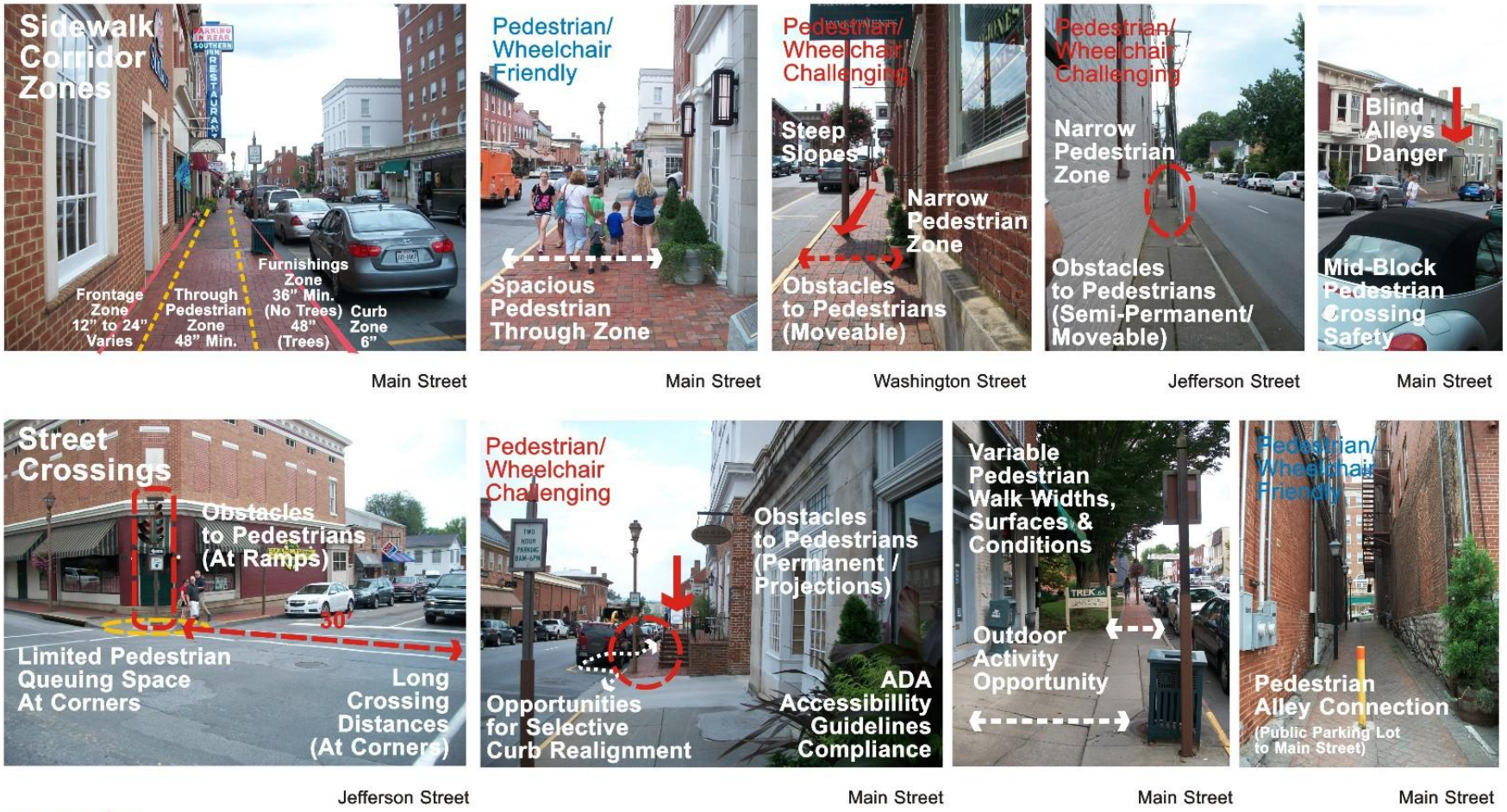
Vehicular / Bicycle / Parking Elements
Existing Conditions / Vehicular Environment

Figure X-3: Existing Conditions / Pedestrian Environment



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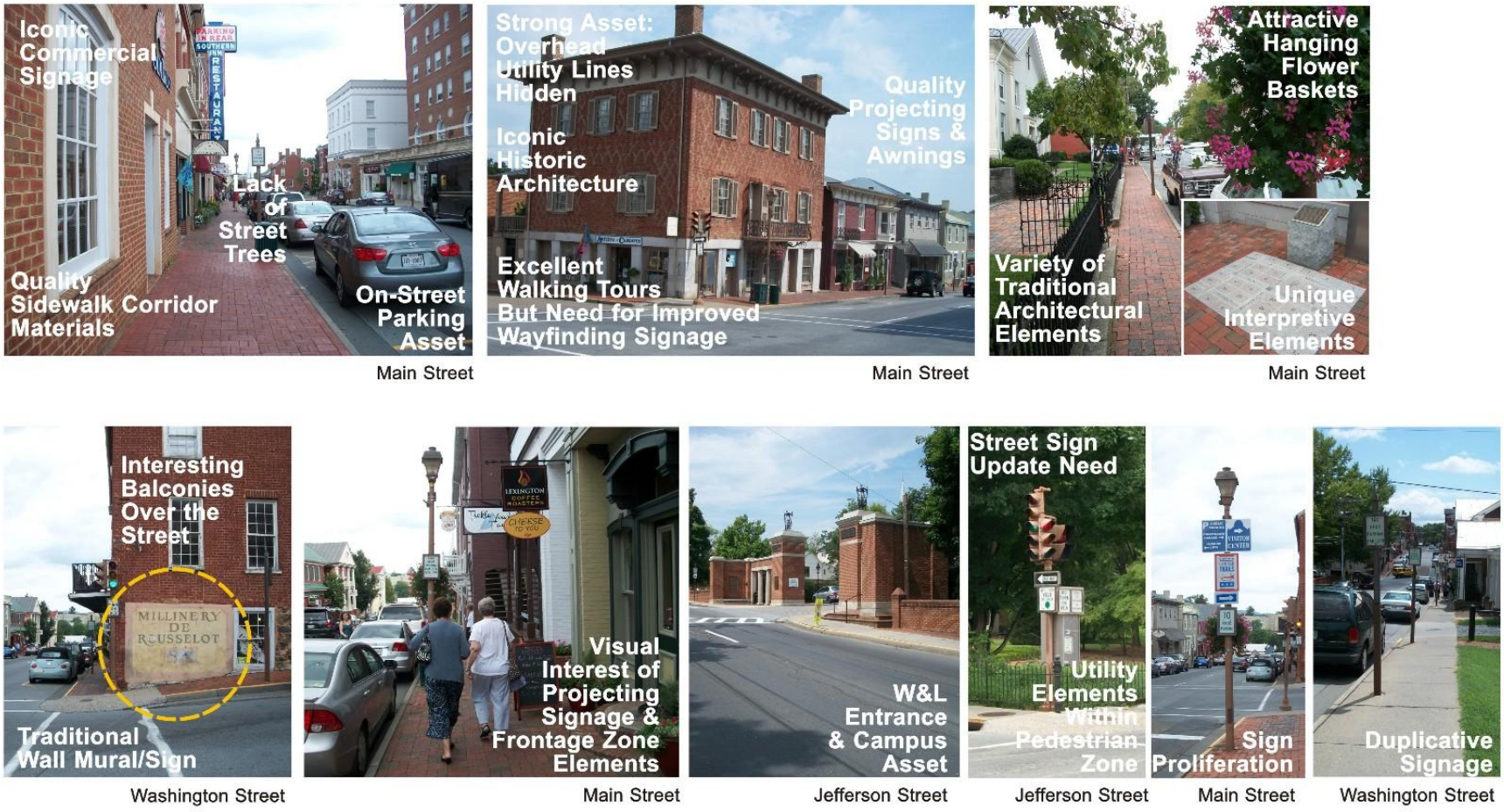
Function / Mobility / Safety
Existing Conditions / Pedestrian Environment

Figure X-4: Existing Conditions / Visual Environment



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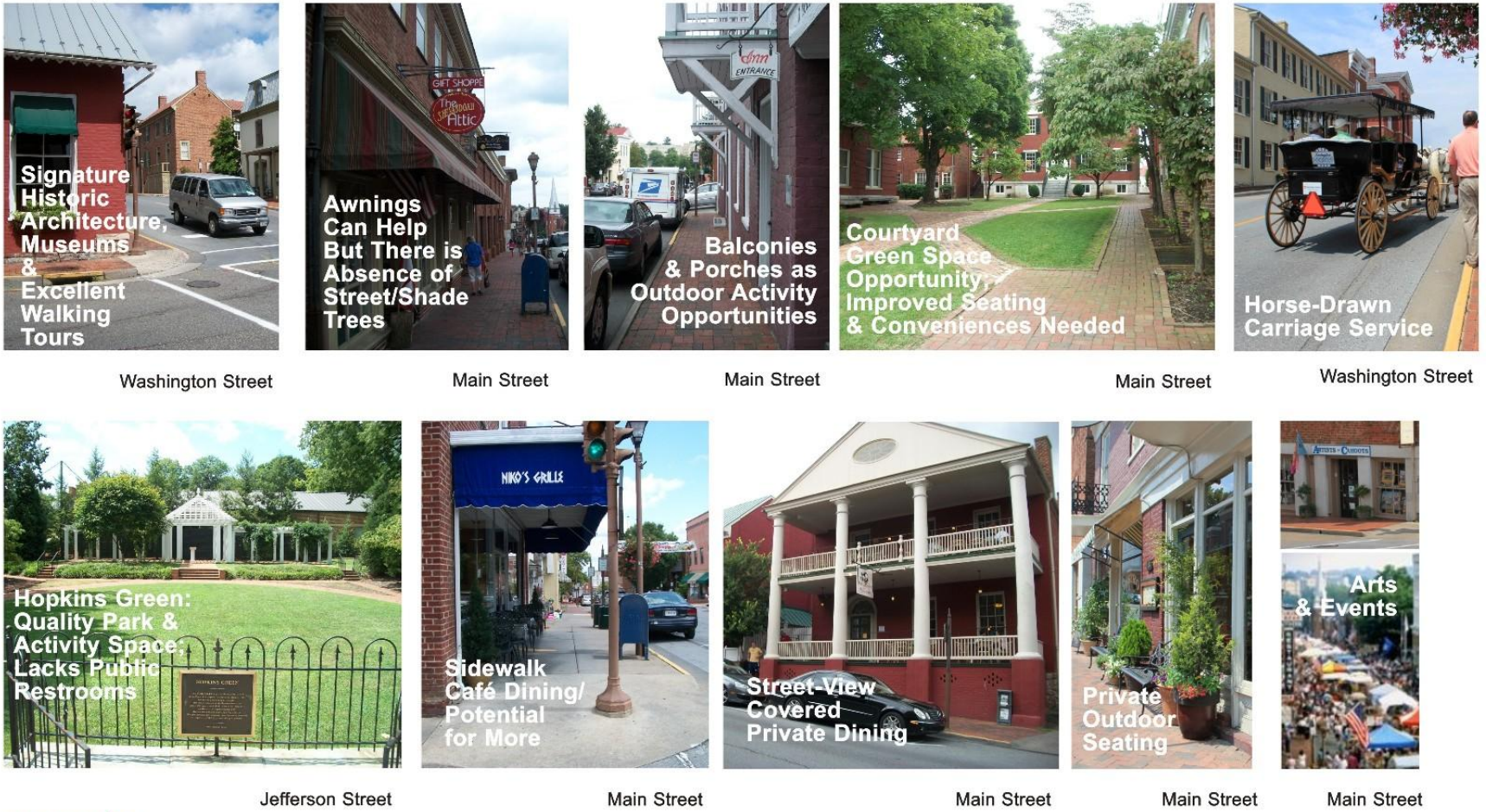
Visual Assets / Aesthetics / Wayfinding
Existing Conditions / Visual Environment

Figure X-5: Existing Conditions / Activity Environment



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City Comforts / Outdoor Activity / Attractions
Existing Conditions / Activity Environment