

Overall, the character of the public environment in downtown is very positive. Brick paving, trees, and plantings under trees are very attractive.

The one area of exception would be Sophia Street where the rears of buildings are very visible and many have not been maintained as well as the front elevations along Caroline Street.

One key recommendation is that the EDA form a task group to conduct their own visual assessment of downtown to determine priorities for improvements. What follows are recommendations made after a visual assessment by the consultant in March of 2011.



View showing Caroline Street with colorful awnings and attractive signs.



View of Sophia Street parking lots (top) and rears of buildings (bottom) where improvements are needed.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strengthen entrances to district using banners, paving, and better paint schemes on buildings. Consider cleaning the concrete on the railroad bridge.
2. Consider paving materials for crosswalks at key intersections such as William and Caroline to enhance the pedestrian experience. (6)



422 William Street located at the corner of William and Prince Edward streets showing opportunity for enhancing one gateway to downtown.



The railroad bridge is the southern gateway to downtown. CSX is currently making repairs to the bridge.



Crosswalks at key downtown intersections are defined only by pedestrian crosswalks painted on asphalt.



Facade Improvements to 422 William Street would strengthen the western entrance to downtown.



Downtown Fredericksburg would benefit from paved crosswalks like this one shown in Culpeper, Virginia.

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS
(cont'd)

3. Strengthen empty corners or parking lots with better design treatments such as landscaping.
4. Investigate, with traffic engineer, two-way traffic on Caroline. Two-way traffic would slow vehicular movement and make this main street seem less like a throughway. Likewise, investigate with a traffic engineer, two-way traffic on William from Sophia to Caroline. (Visit Old Town Alexandria.) The current entrance is confusing and not inviting to the downtown.



Empty lots and parking lots like this one on Caroline Street would benefit from a landscape treatment along the sidewalk.



The edge of this parking lot in Richmond is a good example of enhanced edges to parking lots.



William Street (top) and Caroline Street (bottom) are both one-way in the downtown.



King Street in Old Town Alexandria has a very similar road cross-section to Fredericksburg. Note two-way traffic, parking on both sides and similar sidewalks to Fredericksburg.

ABOVE-GROUND
INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

PAVING AND SIDEWALKS

1. Crosswalks - Maintain crosswalk painting in the downtown and investigate adding pavers at key entrances and intersections in the downtown.
2. Brick Sidewalks/Tree Pits - Repair brick around tree pits and fill in tree pits if not replanting. Consider different treatments at base of trees that meet ADA while continuing the current charming individuality.
3. Alley - Pave alley leading to museum. If pavers are not affordable, investigate stamping and staining the asphalt to look like brick and stone paving.

LIGHTS

4. Period Lights - Clean glass; consider white and not orange lights sources. Repaint poles. Consider all elements attached to the poles including signs, banners, etc. Remove stickers and graffiti.
5. Non-historic Light Poles - Paint black to match period lights. Consider all elements attached to the poles including signs, banners, etc.



A typical downtown crosswalk is shown on the left and a sample of a stamped and stained asphalt crosswalk on the right. Ideally, real pavers should be used given the high traffic volume in the downtown.



Examples of existing tree pits needing to be replanted or filled with brick pavers (left and center). Sample tree pit needing edging and planting (right).



The asphalt alley leading to the City Market is currently plain asphalt (left). Consider paving with real brick to match another downtown alley (center) or stamping and staining the asphalt as in the example on the right.



Examine all light poles in the downtown including historic (left) and non-historic for maintenance and uniform finishes.



Part of the charm of downtown Fredericksburg is the variety of landscape treatments in the tree pits. Edging will need to be adjusted to meet ADA requirements such as the tree pits shown below.



ABOVE-GROUND
INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS
(cont'd)

STREET APPURTENANCES

- 6. Trash Cans - The barrels have been a long standing tradition in downtown. Either refurbish and paint metal black or move barrels to Sophia Street and choose new trash cans for Caroline Street. Provide guidance for screening trash cans on private sites.
- 7. Newspaper Vending Machines - Ensure that they are being used and that any graffiti is removed immediately.

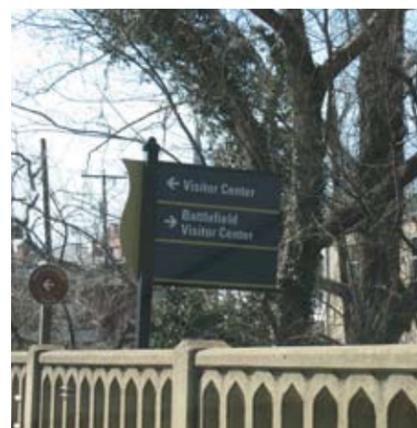
SIGNS

- 8. Custom Sign Faces - Change out existing brown sign faces with blue to match new wayfinding signs.
- 9. Historic Markers - Repaint.
- 10. Sign poles - Paint all poles black.
- 11. Parking Regulatory Signs - Consider parking regulatory signs that match custom wayfinding signs. Coordination with and approval by law enforcement and the judicial system will be required.



Sample newspaper racks showing graffiti.

The existing barrel trashcans are shown on the left and an example of metal trashcan is on the right. If metal trashcans are purchased, they should be painted black to match the light poles. The photo on the right is an example of where trash enclosures would be beneficial.



There are two sign systems in downtown Fredericksburg. The older system (top left) has black frames and brown sign faces. The new signs are blue faces with gold accents (bottom left). Based on the recommendations of this report the Visitor Center sign was repainted. See before sign (above) and after sign (right).



Sample historical marker.



Sample sign pole in need of paint.



Sample regulatory signs.