Project Team

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CDAC Team Members: (Left to Right) Gray Pieri, Jen Jessup, Harley Walker, and Lara Browning
Elkhorn City Trail Town Master Plan

Project Description

Elkhorn City is a community of approximately 1,000 people located in Pike County on the Kentucky-Virginia border. It is nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains and has many geographic wonders that could make it a major tourist destination in Kentucky. First and foremost of these natural wonders is the Russell Fork River, a tributary of the Big Sandy River, which flows through the center of the city. It is well known for its whitewater rafting, featuring Class II-VI rapids. Elkhorn City is also geographically located in proximity to the Pine Mountain Trail and Breaks Interstate Park. Elkhorn City recognizes the value of its natural assets and hopes to utilize them to promote tourism and stimulate economic growth.

The Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC) was tasked with developing conceptual designs for greenspaces, streetscapes, and wayfinding that would strengthen Elkhorn City as a Trail Town. Areas that were designed included the existing caboose site, a community garden site, a park along the river, and the downtown streetscape. In addition, the team developed designs for wayfinding signage throughout downtown and at gateways to the city. The CDAC team also explored creating an overall master plan or potential tourist pamphlet for the community to market themselves as a Trail Town. CDAC worked closely with the community and stakeholder groups to develop these concepts which are discussed in further detail in the following report.

FINAL DESIGNS: Wayfinding Signage Final Concepts
Potential Sign Locations
FINAL DESIGNS: Gateway Signage Final Concepts
Gateways A Perspective
Elkhorn City Trail Town Master Plan

FINAL DESIGNS: Gateway Signage Final Concepts
Gateway B Perspective
Elkhorn City Trail Town Master Plan

FINAL DESIGNS: Gateway Signage Final Concepts

Gateway C Perspective
A pedestrian friendly street achieves a balance between cars, bikes, trucks, and pedestrians. Slowing traffic can be very important when designing a pedestrian friendly streetscape. Traffic calming strategies consist of adding more crosswalks, trees, buffer strips, and at times, narrowing streets. Sidewalks should be wide enough to allow people to walk side by side as well as to allow ease of circulation between people and landscape elements, such as trees and benches. Creating a sense of place can also be important. Public spaces, trees, benches, and artwork can add to a street’s character. Storefronts and restaurants along streetscapes are welcoming and bring activity to the street. When looking at improvements to Elkhorn City’s streets, the design team considered how to balance the needs of the car, bike, and pedestrian. The streetscape conceptual designs are described in the following pages.

**Elkhorn Street - Patty Loveless Drive A - Downtown (Main Street)**

Elkhorn Street, Patty Loveless Drive A, and Main Street were designed to make this section of Elkhorn City more pedestrian friendly. The shoulders on Elkhorn Street and Patty Loveless Drive A were reduced from eight to three feet. This additional space, along with a minor realignment of the lanes, allows for a six foot buffer to be planted between the street and sidewalk. A six foot planting strip provides room for larger street trees and creates a more pleasant environment for pedestrians. In addition, the sidewalks are expanded to six feet and are changed from simple concrete paving to stamped brick, giving it a much more aesthetically pleasing feel.

After listening to feedback from residents of Elkhorn City regarding the preliminary concepts for Elkhorn Street and Patty Loveless Drive, no major design changes were made.

**Center Street - Charles Cantrell Bridge**

After Patty Loveless Drive crosses Main Street it narrows and becomes Center Street. Although the existing width does not leave enough room for a full street tree buffer as it does on Patty Loveless, there is still an opportunity for the addition of a narrower buffer containing medium sized bushes or shrubs. This is done by narrowing the shoulder from eight to three feet. Similar to Patty Loveless Drive, the sidewalks were proposed to be changed from simple concrete paving to stamped brick.

Unlike the rest of Elkhorn City’s streets, the Charles Cantrell Bridge,
which connects the two “centers” of downtown, features a standard shoulder width. This makes it much more difficult to achieve the goal of designing a buffer that pulls the sidewalk away from the road. Rather than change the width of the street, we chose to create a buffer in the form of a simple iron fence that would run along the length of the bridge, between the street and the sidewalk. Although the fence would not be strong enough to actually stop cars and trucks from veering onto the sidewalk, it would act as a visual barrier, giving pedestrians a sense of separation from vehicles. In addition, we proposed that either hanging flower baskets or boxes be added to the bridge to bring color and interest to the space.

In the initial concept, the street along the bridge was narrowed to allow for larger sidewalks. While listening to feedback from residents of Elkhorn City on the initial proposal, we heard some concern about the new width of the street along the bridge. People were concerned whether the addition of the fence and flower boxes would impede the movement of trucks on the bridge and cause an accident. After hearing this, we decided to maintain the current street width, move the flower boxes to the outside railings of the bridge, and to include an inner railing to the bridge for additional safety. An alternative to the flower boxes could be light posts with hanging baskets.

**Patty Loveless Drive B**

The southern portion of Patty Loveless Drive is the widest road in downtown. This added width made it much easier to transform the street into a proper “greenway”. The street features ten foot shoulders, three foot tree buffers, five foot sidewalks, and a fairly wide drainage swale on either side. In total, the street is over twenty feet wider than Russell Street.

Along this portion of Patty Loveless Drive, the shoulders are reduced to one foot, which allows a four foot wide bicycle lane to be added to the street. In addition, the five foot sidewalks are extended to six feet and changed from concrete paving to stamped brick. Trees are moved from the buffer strip to the larger planting areas away from the road where larger trees will have more room to grow and require less maintenance with tree pruning. The shrub buffer, now located in what was the shoulder, provides additional safety to pedestrians and bicyclists without taking up much space.

The southern portion of Patty Loveless Drive received the most changes after our initial proposal. Initially, the three foot tree buffer was expanded to six feet, and the trees remained in between the
traffic and the pedestrians. In an effort to allow space for trees with broader crowns that wouldn’t interfere with vehicles, the street trees were placed as far from the road as possible, and were replaced with a shrub border to provide a buffer between pedestrians and traffic.

**Russell Street**

Next to the Charles Cantrell Bridge, Russell Street is the second narrowest street in Elkhorn City where we proposed improvements. At its most narrow point it only spans forty feet across. The condition along the side of Russell Street is also variable. Every store and parking area has a different relationship to the street than the next making it difficult to propose one “traditional” plan for the entire length of the street. It was important to create a safe route for cars, pedestrians, and bikes while working with a narrow and variable street width and condition.

After looking at how other communities dealt with similar situations, it was decided to implement a series of “roll curbs” that would run along the edge of Russell Street between the street, the sidewalk, and the bike path. The roll curb would be about four inches high and eight inches wide. The curb is designed to be low enough to allow a car or truck to drive over it, but high enough to reduce traffic speed. This curb system would allow for cars to freely enter and exit the varying parking conditions, yet at the same time it would act as a protective measure for the pedestrians and cyclists traveling along Russell Street.

The only change made to the design of Russell Street in the final proposal was to change the color of the roll curbs from red to yellow. This was done in an effort to ensure that they stand out against the stamped brick sidewalk.

The following pages illustrate in more detail the final streetscape concepts.
Looking down Patty Loveless Drive from the intersection of Elkhorn Street.
View of Welcome Center from the high point of Main Street.

View of Welcome Center from Main Street.
Elkhorn City Trail Town Master Plan

Center Street
Charles Cantrell Bridge

FINAL DESIGNS: Streetscape Final Concepts

Downtown/Elkhorn Street

Center Street

Charles Cantrell Bridge

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Flower Boxes
Buffer
Buffer

Hanging Baskets

34

Russell Street

0° 3° 6'

6'

6'

38'

FINAL DESIGNS: Streetscape Final Concepts

Center Street

Charles Cantrell Bridge
Looking toward the intersection of Russell Street on Charles Cantrell Bridge.
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FINAL DESIGNS: Streetscape Final Concepts
Patty Loveless Drive
Russell Street Intersection

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FINAL DESIGNS: Streetscape Final Concepts

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December 16th, 2013

Patty Loveless Drive

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Buffer & Bike Lane

Buffer and Crosswalk

Patty Loveless Drive B3
Looking down Patty Loveless Drive from the intersection of Russell Street.
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**FINAL DESIGNS: Streetscape Final Concepts**

Russell Street

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Stamped Brick Crosswalk

Roll Curb
Looking toward the intersection of Patty Loveless Drive from Russell Street. Image shows roll curb in yellow.