



**City Manager's Office**

**P. O. Box 3300 ♦ Danville, Virginia 24543 ♦ Telephone (434) 799-5100 ♦ Fax (434) 799-6549**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Date: Wednesday, September 14, 2011***

**City outlines next steps following final River District presentation**

Following Wednesday night's presentation on the River District Plan by consultants, the city of Danville will spend the next month and a half determining what steps it will take to implement the plan. A meeting will be held at 7 p.m. on Nov. 10 at the Pepsi Building at the Crossing at the Dan to announce actions that will be taken right away, as well as those that will be included in the city's next fiscal year budget.

The city will encourage public participation in the process.

In determining what to do next, City Manager Joe King noted the importance of following the planning team's advice to avoid doing harm to existing businesses in the River District or to its unique historic and architectural features as revitalization projects are undertaken.

King cited the building at 231 Main St. that houses Lou's Antiques Mall as a case in point.

"Lou's Antiques is exactly the kind of business we want in our River District," King said. "It's charming, interesting and brings customers to the district. It's part of what makes the River District cool. We want the business to prosper and, if anything, to outgrow its building and need a bigger space downtown."

The consultants are recommending that the building eventually be removed due to its large size, its character and its obstruction of views to the Dan River. However, King believes that the owners of Lou's Antiques Mall, not the city, should decide if and when the business will move from the building.

As a second case in point, King said two blocks away from Lou's Antiques Mall, the city's Industrial Development Authority has signed a purchase contract on the Davis Warehouse building located at 321 Craghead St. The IDA is considering demolishing the building to make way for development of parking needed for nearby economic development projects.

“Urban designer Allison Platt has noted that one of the most important characteristics of Danville’s Tobacco Warehouse District, in addition to the fine quality of the building, is that the urban design fabric is almost entirely intact, without many ‘missing teeth,” King said. “Many, including owners of businesses on Craghead, are concerned about negative aesthetic impacts of removing the warehouse.”

Again, the city manager suggests heeding the planning team’s advice to leave the building facades in place.

“We wouldn’t want to create a gap between buildings and fill it with a conventional surface parking lot,” King said. “If this site is used for parking, it will be important to maintain the building’s wall along Craghead Street, as well as decorative walls on Loyal, Wilson and Bridge streets in order to maintain the character of that area and shield the parking from view.

“We want this and every other project undertaken in the River District to contribute to the ambiance of area.”

River District consultants BBP & Associates and Allison Platt will make their final presentation regarding the future direction for the River District at 7 p.m. at the Community Market on Craghead Street.

It will be the fourth public forum on the River District, which will encompass the traditional central business district, the historic tobacco district and contiguous business areas – extending east to west from the Carrington Pavilion to the White Mill Property and north to south from the Dan River to Ridge Street.

At previous presentations, the consultants have outlined public sector and private sector projects that they believe could bring new life to the district. The public sector projects involve possible changes in vehicular traffic patterns and use of space that would allow for a more pedestrian-friendly area and include wider sidewalks, green spaces and a large “gateway” river park with a waterfall.

The first phase of private sector projects targets four projects on Bridge and Lynn streets – a hotel, an apartment building, an office complex, and a mixed-use building.

A second phase of private sector projects include the White Mill, River City Towers (former Masonic Temple), the Bridge Street fire station, the Bridge Street power station, the former Richmond Cedar Works building on Craghead Street, the first block of Main Street, and the former Belk-Leggett building on Main Street.

The previous presentations and maps are available by visiting the city of Danville website – [www.danville-va.gov](http://www.danville-va.gov) – and clicking on the River District Development tab on the left rail. Comments may be submitted by way of the website.

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