6.0 WHAT CHANGES COULD BE MADE & WHEN?

Implementation Phasing

Building on the positive wave of good will and public momentum, it’s vital to identify phased opportunities and strategies to start making this Vision a reality. Strategic initial private investment projects are identified and accompanying public improvement projects are described.
When considering phased implementation of such a wide-reaching vision, there are a couple approaches. In one, the full weight, influence, and impact of public interest and funding are focused on a single site or area. With this strategy, significant funds are put at the disposal of making the test project a success. However, in effect you’ve put all your eggs in a single basket. Alternately, one can take the tack of a multi-pronged strategy. Just as the South Waterfront isn’t a single place with a singular character, experience, quality, or capacity, we believe that a phased implementation strategy for the district must have multiple dimensions and address multiple issues at multiple sites. By dispersing implementation seeds into three different areas, the Vision Plan is able to maximize its initial impact and establish a framework of projects which can expand and infill in subsequent phases.

Additionally, a multi-site approach avoids favoring any one neighborhood or landowner over another, emphasizing the democratic philosophy that underpins the Vision Plan efforts and bringing investment and improvements to all.

Improvements are discussed in 0-5, 0-10, and 0-20 time periods to emphasize that this Vision Plan invites development at any time in almost any order. If projects come on line faster than this implementation plan predicts or suggests - all the better!

A realistic and appropriate phasing strategy recognizes that the acquisition of certain industrial properties - especially large and active ones - may take time to occur. In addition, some initial public investment will be necessary first before private investments will take hold. Areas down river, mid-river and up river are all poised for some new investment, and therefore the first phase of the vision (years 0-5) creates pockets of redevelopment strategically dispersed along the waterfront.

Streetscape and transportation enhancements lay the foundation for a new framework as well as the creation of numerous open spaces or “windows” to the water. The second phase of development (Years 5-10) builds on these initial public investments by creating or assembling appropriately scaled development parcels that are related to the open spaces they engage. To ensure that new developments are part of a cohesive network in which uses relate to one another and key sites are developed to their best potential, three east-west networks tie the developments together in the final phase (years 10-20): a continuous, pedestrian promenade runs parallel to the shoreline, a new riverfront boulevard spans from James White Parkway to the Gay Street Bridge, and reinvestment on Sevier and Blount tie these corridors together inland – essentially creating a transportation loop. Reuse of the under utilized rail line could be capitalized on for a light-rail component as the market grows.

Finally, it is important to embrace the in-built modularity of this Vision Plan and phasing approach as a tool for flexibility in response to changing market values. Because projects are tied into an improved street grid framework, there is inherent opportunity to take on development projects in almost any order if the market demands a change in emphasis or capacity. Thus, a block of new housing along the river is equally valid as a new office tower at a project edge for a first move, as long as the site owners are behind the project and feel supported by market needs and trends. Public improvements will be tied to specific private investment moves, so the infrastructural improvements necessary to make different projects happen can be accommodated on demand.
6.1 [A] IMPLEMENTATION: YEARS 0 - 5

The 0-5 year period will see several key projects get off the ground. At each stage and at each site, private development will be complemented by public infrastructural investment in road improvements, purchases of public access rights of way, and development of riverfront or greenway open spaces.

**Down River** at Scottish Pike, there is continued development of residential projects underway including the first phase of CityView condominiums and the completion of the RiverTowne units. New cultural amenities such as the Knoxville Rowers Boathouse have already broken ground and one can expect the beginnings of neighborhood piecemeal infill projects. These projects will be complemented by a new underpass connection at Cherokee Trail and road and streetscape improvements along an initial section of Blount Avenue. The green wildlife corridor along Goose Creek will be enhanced and the first open spaces at Boat House Row can be created with an initial kayak ramp access point.

**Mid River**, the first private development block of medical offices is already underway, and adjacent pieces of the Henley Gateway Park can be developed. Here, the major opportunity is to connect onto the public right-of-way established at CityView and wrap around the Baptist Hospital bluffs connecting to the Belvedere amphitheater and creating a pedestrian path along the water between downtown and the Henley and Gay Street bridges. A new roundabout at the base of Gay Street and the reopening of the eastern end of Sevier will complete the initial public improvements in this area.

**Up River**, initial development will likely focus on the first blocks of River Road housing or a commercial tenant and new marina for the Quay Village area. To support the increased use and density here, the realignment of the Sevier Avenue on-ramp to the James White Parkway will greatly enhance accessibility.

A second small roundabout at Island Home Avenue and some road extensions will complete a framework for future development. Alternately, a portion of the new River Road could be designed and implemented to support riverfront housing.
6.1 [B] IMPLEMENTATION: YEARS 0 - 10

The second wave of private investment and public improvements will necessarily build on the initial palette of projects and sites. This phase of implementation should be, in many ways, “automatic”.

Down River the CityView and Campus Cove projects take off with much development along the river, including a major new marina. An outdoor center develops at the Quarry with potential for outfitters, a conference center and even lodges. A new connection to UT across the river helps fuel this development. Improvement to the length of Blount and Scottish Pike including some form of new streamlined connection from Blount onto the east end of Scottish Pike completes this framework transformation.

Within this timeframe it’s reasonably expected that Baptist Hospital will begin to renovate and expand its facilities with a new medical block framing Chapman and Sevier, and additional structured parking needs. Also MidRiver a hotel enterprise could flourish with the refurbishment of the adjacent rail bridge for pedestrian use, and a green roof over its parking structure will complete Henley Gateway Park’s sweep to the river. Improvements to this short stretch of West Sevier will increase walkability of the hospital complex.

Building around the open space at the Belvedere, intense development is possible in the Piers, Belvedere and BellTower Walk districts, with single or multiple developers taking on high-density retail and mixed-use projects. A public plaza atop a cultural institution at the top of the street, the BellTower Walk urban allee, a cut-in marina, and fixed piers and plaza at the waterfront will complement this intensive development effort. Also UpRiver, expansion of housing and a new segment of the new River Road will accompany expanded development in the Quay Village Area. And infill development at all scales is expected to filter along Island Home Avenue around those enhanced wildlife corridors.
Finally, in the last 10 years, the infill of growth in all areas is envisioned - at all sites and in all types, coalescing in a tightly knit series of communities and development districts - served by parallel layers of circulatory infrastructure and connected to the river by improved street grid systems and an extensive network of open space windows.

Housing and entertainment and boating facilities grow along the BoatHouse Row area, and complete the RiverWalk Promenade throughout the Down River district. A new Vestal Connector creates a pressure value taking increasing traffic off of the neighborhood scale streets and onto a devoted 2-lane parkway.

In the Mid River area, the Henley Gateway sites continue to infill with medical and other office building sites.

Up River, the new River Road is completed and an appropriately scaled tapestry of housing, and potentially mixed-uses on the ground-level, proliferates along the new open spaces of the South Waterfront. A festival lawn and an expanded arboretum complete the riverplain’s sweep and connect the RiverWalk Promenade through this district.

Along Sevier, infill retail with office and housing above develops, and a redesigned Sevier Avenue mainstreet supports this renewed town center feel. The remaining blocks of mixed housing and office and retail uses fill in at Quay Village, creating a dense urban node anchoring this end of the South Waterfront.