DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221
Telephone: (804) 367-2323 Fax: (804) 367-2391

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

HISTORIC DISTRICT

An historic district is defined as a significant concentration of buildings, structures, or sites that are united historically and aesthetically by plan or physical development. The following constitutes an application for preliminary consideration of eligibility for the nomination potential of a historic district to the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This does **not** mean that the district is being nominated to the registers at this time. Rather, it is being evaluated to determine if it qualifies for such listings. Applicants will be notified of the staff's and the State Review Board's recommendations.

Contact the Virginia Department of Historic Resources Archivist to determine if previous survey material for this proposed district is on file, and if the district has been previously evaluated by DHR. Obtaining previously recorded information could save a significant amount of time in preparing this Preliminary Information Form (PIF). The archivist may be reached by phone at (804) 367-2323, ext. 124, or by email at Quatro.Hubbard@dhr.virginia.gov. The archivist will also give you the address of the regional office to which you should send your completed PIF materials.

Please type this form and, if additional space is needed, use 8½" x 11" paper. If an electronic version of this PIF is available, it would be helpful if it could be submitted on a disc, or via email to the archivist. Note: All submitted materials become the property of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and will not be returned.

Photographs: Please provide at least four (4) black and white (B&W) photographs of general streetscapes and four (4) B&W photographs showing a sample of individual buildings within the proposed district. The inclusion of photographs is essential to the completion of this application. **Without photographs, the application cannot be evaluated.** Photographs should be labeled on the reverse side in soft pencil or china marker (not with adhesive labels), and are not to be mounted or affixed in any way.

Digital Images: We cannot accept digital photographs in lieu of 35 mm B&W prints, however we welcome them as supplements.

Maps: Please include two (2) maps showing the location of the proposed district:

- A copy of a USGS Quad map with name of county/city printed on the map and with the name of the proposed district indicating its location (USGS Quadrangle maps can be printed free of charge from www.topozone.com or can be bought from many surveying or engineering supply stores), and
- A map showing a closer picture of the proposed boundaries with street names and/or routes and possible building footprints would also be helpful. Please include a "North" arrow on this map.

Before submitting this form, please make sure that you have included the following:

- Labeled USGS Quadrangle map
- Proposed district boundary map
- 4 labeled B&W general photos
- 4 labeled B&W individual building photos
- Completed Resource Information Sheet, including
    - Applicant contact information and signature
    - City or county official's contact information

Thank you for taking the time to submit this Preliminary Information Form. Your interest in Virginia's historic resources is helping to provide better stewardship of our cultural past.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources
PIF Resource Information Sheet

This information sheet is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the necessary data to be able to evaluate the significance of the district for possible listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. This is not a formal nomination, but a necessary step in determining whether or not the district could be considered eligible for listing. Please take the time to fill in as many fields as possible. A greater number of completed fields will result in a more timely and accurate assessment. Staff assistance is available to answer any questions you have in regards to this form.

General Property Information

For Staff Use Only
DHR ID #:

District Name(s): Christiansburg Downtown Historic District

District or Selected Building Date(s): 1853 – 1962 ☒ Circa ☐ Pre ☐ Post

Open to the Public? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Main District Streets and/or Routes: E. & W. Main Street / N. & S. Franklin Streets

City: Christiansburg

Zip: 24073

County or Ind. City: Montgomery

USGS Quad(s): Blacksburg, Va.

Physical Character of General Surroundings

Acreage: 19.844

Setting (choose one): ☐ City ☐ Urban ☒ Town ☐ Suburban ☐ Rural ☐ Transportation Corridor

Site Description Notes/Notable Landscape Features/Streetscapes: The properties within the proposed district lie along East and West Main Streets and North and South Franklin with attached and detached buildings in the town's historic commercial core. The courthouse square landscape and monuments at the center of the district remain as an important feature of the original town plan.

Ownership Categories: ☒ Private ☒ Public-Local ☐ Public-State ☐ Public-Federal

General District Information

What were the historical uses of the resources within the proposed district? Examples include: Dwelling, Store, Barn, etc…

Store, Bank, Church, Dwelling, Office, and Government buildings

What are the current uses? (if other than the historical use): Store, Bank, Church, Dwelling, Office, and Government buildings

Architectural styles or elements of buildings within the proposed district: Greek Revival, Commercial Style, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne (massing), and Colonial Revival

Architects, builders, or original owners of buildings within the proposed district: Morris Miller (builder of several of the buildings)

Are there any known threats to this district? No

General Description of District: (Please describe building patterns, types, features, and the general architectural quality of the proposed district. Include prominent materials and noteworthy building details within the district and a general setting and/or streetscape description.)

Lying along East and West Main Streets and North and South Franklin Streets, the proposed Christiansburg Downtown Historic District consists of approximately fifty buildings in the town's historic commercial core and the courthouse square landscape site, which remains as an important feature of the original town plan. The buildings are primarily brick (both veneer and masonry construction); there are also stone veneer and frame buildings. With the exception of the churches, all of the buildings are set on small urban lots and most are situated immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. Many buildings occupy most of their lot and have common party walls, although there are several detached buildings as well, particularly at the edges of the district. On the large church lots, there are mature trees and plantings. Elsewhere, there are few plantings except the street trees set in the wide brick-trimmed sidewalks and concrete planter boxes on the sidewalks. The courthouse square is of particular note. There are several mature plantings, including the Constitution Oak, planted in 1902, and small expanses of grass with a several monuments such as the 1883 Confederate Memorial and the 1953 War Memorial.

The earliest buildings within the proposed district are institutional and governmental. The earliest of these is the well-preserved 1853 Christiansburg Presbyterian Church (107 W. Main St., VDHR# 154-0003). Another mid-nineteenth century building is the old Methodist Church at 17 N. Franklin Street dating to 1855 with c.1986 brick exterior. The Curan-Gill House at 117 N. Franklin Street dates to 1853 according to the county's GIS records, but presents a c.1913 brick-veneer exterior with segmental arch window heads. It is one of several historic houses within the proposed district reflecting the mixed-use character of Christiansburg's historic development. Other examples are the two-story frame Dr. George Anderson House at 16 East Main Street (early 1800s and c.1905, VDHR# 154-0028) and the two-story frame Bullard-Davis-Clark House dating to 1860/1881/c.1900 at 26 W. Main St. (incorrectly referred to as Figgat House in DHR-DSS #154-0020). Both the Anderson and Clark houses have modest architectural details and front polygonal ells representing Queen Anne-style massing. The Presbyterian Manse at 111 W. Main St. (VDHR# 154-0015), which dates to 1876, is a late Greek Revival style building with Ionic columns, broad three-bay facade, and hip roof.

There are several buildings that date to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century. These include the Phlegar Building at 4 S. Franklin St. (NR, VDHR# 154-0007), which includes the original 1812 Clerk's Office building, but dates primarily to a c.1898 remodeling. The original 1909 brick Gothic Revival building of the Main Street Baptist Church is situated at 100 W. Main Street; new sanctuaries were added to it on the west in 1963 and 1972.

Framing the northeast quadrant of the courthouse square, is the 1937 Colonial Revival Post Office building. Inside this well-preserved one-story brick building is a mural entitled “The Great Road” by WPA artist John DeGroot.

Though government, residential and institutional buildings are well represented, the majority of the buildings within the historic district are commercial or office buildings. Most are brick with Commercial Style architectural features. Among the oldest and best preserved of these is the two-story painted-brick Rice's Pharmacy/ Shelton & Walters Building at 41 W. Main St. (VDHR# 154-0016) dating to 1915. The Barnes-Surface Motor Co. Building at 4 W. Main St. (VDHR#154-0025, 1911& c.1920) and the c. 1916 & c. 1920 Virginia Inn (VDHR# 154-0024) at 6 W. Main St. are well-preserved three-story brick examples. The First National Bank (VDHR# 154-0021, 20-22 W. Main St.) dates to 1905, but presents a 1937 limestone Art Deco style facade. The ABC Store at 100 North Franklin Street was built in 1954 and has an Art Moderne facade featuring green granite bulkheads. Other mid-twentieth century buildings, like the unadorned c. 1945 brick building at 111 North Franklin Street, are far more simple in design. The 1958 Leggett's Department Store building at 30 W. Main St. features simple white brick vertical panels on its upper facade and a gleaming aluminum canopy over the wide plate glass and aluminum storefront. Among the few non-contributing buildings within the district buildings that have

been significantly altered from their historic appearance and a handful of post-1962 buildings. Examples are the large First National Bank at the northwest corner of the courthouse square, which dates to 1937, but was completely remodeled in 1968, and the yellow-brick 1976 Montgomery County Courthouse, which will soon be superceded by a new building under construction at the southeast edge of the district.

Significance Statement: Briefly note any significant events, personages, and/or families associated with the proposed district. It is not necessary to attach lengthy articles or genealogies to this form. Please list all sources of information. Normally, only information contained on this form is forwarded to the State Review Board.

After the formation of Wythe County from the western portion of Montgomery County in 1790, court was first moved to James Craig's house and tavern at Hans Meadow near modern-day downtown Christiansburg. Court minutes record that Craig gave title for 130 acres of land as "a place for erecting the public buildings for the County of Montgomery." Additional land may have been acquired from Samuel Kirby and Christina Crewey. A survey of the new town was made on May 21, 1790 and the name of Christiansburg first appears in records of the Virginia General Assembly on November 10, 1792. Most historians believe that the town was named for Colonel William Christian (1743-1786), an early settler in the New River Valley who became a Justice of Montgomery County in 1779 and was killed in Indiana in 1786.

Christiansburg is laid out in a Lancaster Plan with Main Street running roughly east to west and Cross Street (now Franklin Street) running roughly north to south. The two streets intersect at a public courthouse square. After several years of temporary quarters, it is thought that the Davis brothers built a new brick courthouse in the center of the public square in 1808, thus completing the town's Lancaster plan. This building was subsequently replaced in c.1815 and moved to a site at the southeast quadrant of the square in 1836 with new buildings in 1909 and 1976.

By 1835, the population of Christiansburg was 335 (230 white, 105 African American) and the town had forty-five houses, two common schools, five stores, three benevolent societies, two tan yards, two saddlers, three boot and shoe factories, four tailors, four hatters, one cabinetmaker, four tin workers, five attorneys, and three physicians. By 1860, the population had grown to 739 (454 white, 40 free black, 245 slave). Edward Beyer's 1855 painting and Lewis Miller's sketches of the town from the 1850s indicate that residential growth was confined to Main Street and Franklin Street and included a number of two-story frame and log houses. Most of the houses and stores were detached frame or log buildings.

Gray's map of 1877 shows that most of the buildings in the town were still clustered along Main Street and Franklin Street. Large homes and institutional buildings occupied elevated sites around the town center. The substantial growth in Christiansburg between 1900 and 1910 followed national and regional trends as commerce and industry were aided by the expanding railroads. The Virginia and Tenneesee Railroad (later the Norfolk and Western) reached nearby Cambria in 1854. A 1900 fire destroyed many buildings along West Main Street and set the stage for the construction of many extant buildings during the early and mid-twentieth centuries.

A 1928 business directory shows that Christiansburg had eight grocers, six general stores, five dry goods stores, two drugstores, two hardware/lumber companies, two feed and seed stores, two jewelers, a furniture store, the Virginia Inn (built at 6 W. Main St. c.1916), the Busy Bee restaurant, and many other businesses. Among these was The First National Bank VDHR# 154-0016), which had superceded Rice's Pharmacy at this location in 1919. S. G. Wimmer & Son's feed, seed, and hardware store opened in the former Bingham's Wagon Shop building at 107 North Franklin Street in 1934; Sanborn maps seem to indicate that the building was rebuilt around 1925.

The presence in 1928 of twelve filling stations, auto service businesses, and car dealerships in Christiansburg are indicative of both the rise of the automobile during the 1920s as well as the completion of the important Lee Highway (U.S. 11) through town in 1926. Barnes-Surface Motor Company built their building at 4 W. Main St. (VDHR# 154-0025), in 1911 and added a third floor about 1920.

Growth in Christiansburg was steady during the last half of the twentieth century with 2,291 citizens in 1940; 2,967 by 1950; and 3,653 by 1960. Construction during this period is consistent with national trends. Large department stores and office/commercial buildings were built downtown including Leggett's at 30 W. Main Street from 1958 and the 1948 S. G. Wimmer Building at 10 East Main Street, which housed three retail stores and twenty-eight offices. Tenants included Perdue Hardware (opened 1949), Ralph Wohlford Co. shoes (1949), and Epperly's Dress & Beauty Shop (1948). More modest in scale is the one-story brick building constructed at 45 W. Main Street after a 1957 fire; Cato's opened here

in 1958. In 1964, the towns of Cambria and Christiansburg merged adding a significant number of people. The population reached 7,857 in 1970.

Sources:
Virginia's Montgomery County, Mary Elizabeth Lindon, ed.
Christiansburg, Virginia: Small Town America At Its Finest, Roy W. Kanode

Applicant Information (Individual completing form if other than legal owner of property)

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐
Ms. ☒ Miss ☐

Sherry Joines Wyatt (Name)		(Firm)	
102 Junkin St (Address)	Christiansburg (City)	VA (State)	24073 (Zip Code)
sherryjwyatt@gmail.com (Email Address)		540/392-8268 (Daytime telephone including area code)	

Applicant's Signature: Date:

Notification

In some circumstances, it may be necessary for the department to confer with or notify local officials of proposed listings of properties within their jurisdiction. In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Mr. ☒ Mrs. ☐ Dr. ☐
Miss ☐ Ms. ☐ Hon. ☐

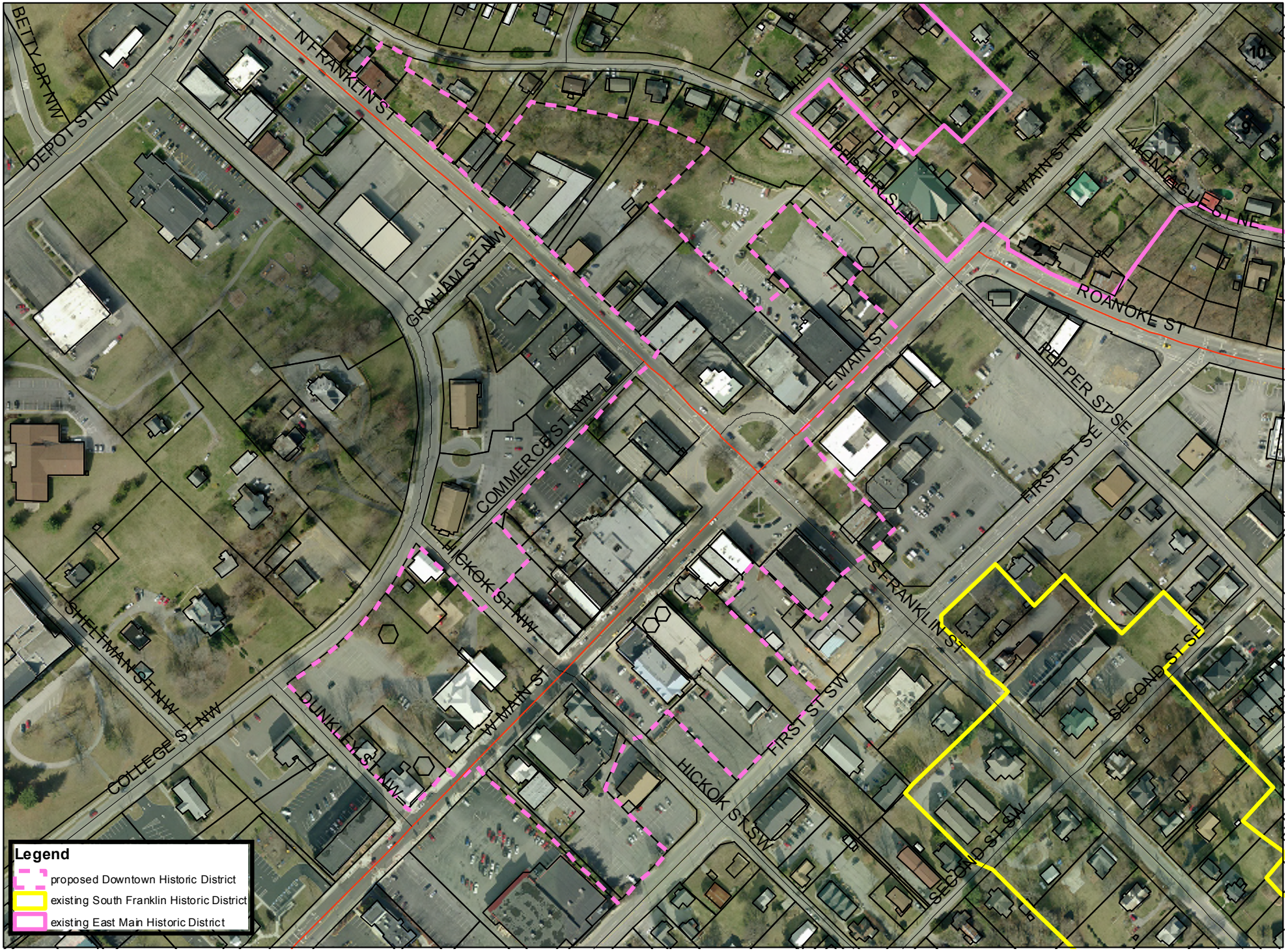
Barry (Name)		Helms (Position)	
Town of Christiansburg (Locality)		100 East Main Street (Address)	
Christiansburg (City)	VA (State)	24073 (Zip Code)	(540) 382-6128 (Daytime telephone including area code)

Please use the following space to explain why you are seeking an evaluation of this district.

The Town of Christiansburg is seeking evaluation of a Downtown Historic District in order to provide recognition for the historic buildings and monuments located in the downtown area; the historic events which have occurred in the downtown area; and the overall historic character of the area. The proposed Christiansburg Downtown Historic District would feature the United States Post Office at 2 E. Main Street (VLR 06-20-1989, NRHP 02-01-1991), Christiansburg Presbyterian Church at 107 W. Main Street (VLR 06-21-1977, NRHP 01-30-1978), and the Phlegar Building at 4 S. Franklin Street (VLR 06-20-1989, NRHP 11-13-1989) as well as Historic Highway Marker K-71 which details the Lewis-McHenry Duel of 1808.

Recognition of the proposed Downtown Historic District would allow property owners access to rehabilitation grants and loans for properties and structures in the area. Recognition could add to the tourism efforts of the Town, which rely in part on the historic culture of the Town. Additionally, the Town is considering the possibility of a Historic District Overlay District in its Zoning Ordinance for areas recognized on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places. If the Christiansburg Downtown Historic District is approved for recognition on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places, this area, along with the East Main Street Historic District (VLR 06-20-1989, NRHP 01-10-1991), the South Franklin Street Historic District (VLR 06-20-1989, NRHP 01-10-1991), and the Cambria Historic District (VLR 06-20-1989, NRHP 01-10-1991), could be included for additional protective measures if the Town were to adopt a Historic District Overlay District in its Zoning Ordinance (which could lead to measures for the preservation of historic structures and the integrity of the Districts).

Would you be interested in the State and/or the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits? Yes ☒ No ☐
Would you be interested in the easement program? Yes ☐ No ☐



Proposed Downtown Historic District

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Feet

DRAFT