

Richlands' Clinch River Pedestrian Walkway Extension Conceptual Design



Prepared for the Town of Richlands, VA  
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## Acknowledgments

**Rod Cury**

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**Richard Smith**

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**Members of the Planning Commission**

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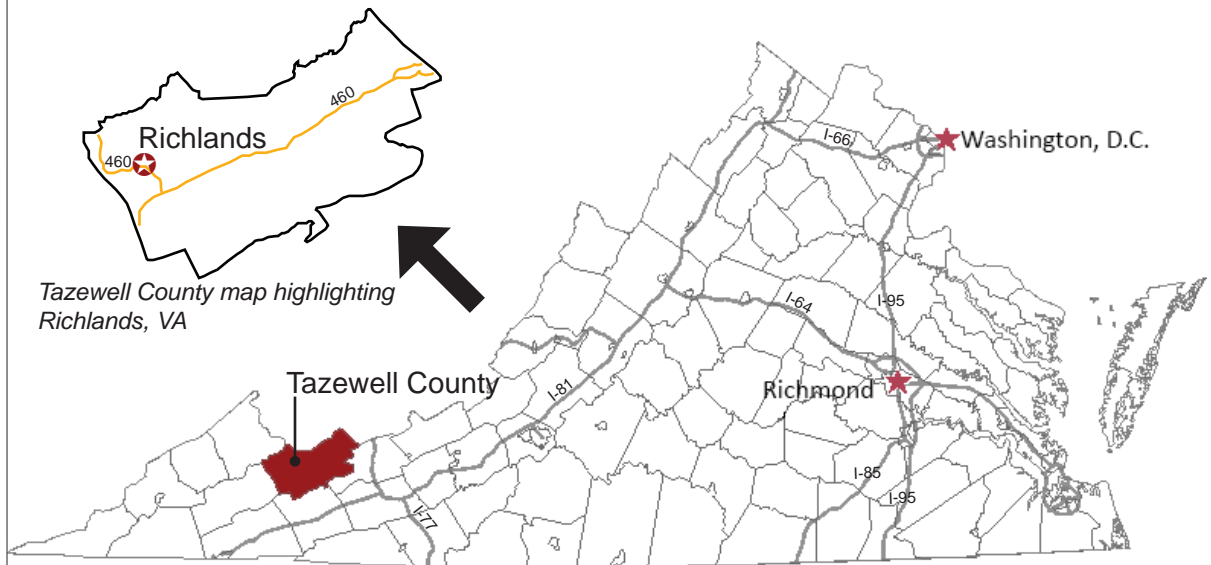
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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION



Tazewell County map highlighting Richlands, VA

Virginia State map highlighting Tazewell County

Richlands, a small town in the mountains of southwest Virginia, is located near the origins of the Clinch River, a 135 mile river which flows through the Great Appalachian Valley before joining the Tennessee River. The Clinch, along with the Powell River, is considered one of the only ecologically intact (undammed) headwaters of the Tennessee River system and is the home of a number of rare and endangered species.<sup>1</sup>

Originally established as a planned community whose economy would be supported by mining of rich coal deposits, Richlands was intended to be the Pittsburgh (PA) of the South by the Clinch Valley Coal and Iron Company of Philadelphia. The coming of the Norfolk & Western Railroad supported the capital investment to create a town that would manufacture products such as steel, brick, and glass. It also showcased the deluxe Hotel Richlands and other businesses as well as residential areas. Because the Town was uniquely situated along the Clinch River, the plan encompassed development and growth along both sides of the river. One particular stretch of railway, which paralleled the Clinch River, was used for transporting raw materials for brick manufacturing. It was this piece of original railroad track bed that paved a way to the future. In 2000, the Town of Richlands received a Transportation Enhancement grant from the Virginia Department of Transportation to create a

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

walking trail along the old railroad track in order to connect the Williams Field/Critterville Playground to downtown Richlands.<sup>2</sup> The trail's official name is the Clinch River Pedestrian Walkway. A portion of the trail was built, but plans to connect the trail to downtown Richlands were not completed.

The Community Design Assistance Center was tasked with developing a conceptual design for a greenway that extends the existing walking trail approximately 1.67 miles to complete the connection to downtown and a historic swinging bridge. The goal would be to provide increased benefits and equal access to the river for the larger community.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Taken from the Nature Conservancy (1/29/13)

<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/tennessee/placesweprotect/clinch-river.xml>

<sup>2</sup>Taken from the Town of Richlands Application (2/25/13)

<sup>3</sup>Taken from the Town of Richlands Application (2/25/13)

## DESIGN PROCESS & SITE VISIT

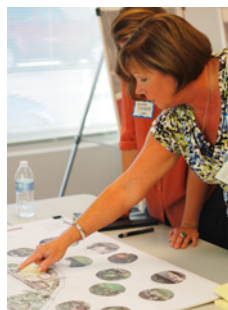
The design process began with an initial site visit to Cleveland in June 2013. The CDAC team met with project stakeholders and walked along sections of the Clinch River and downtown Richlands to assess possible route options and focal areas. By gathering on-site data and documenting the site, the team was able to understand the opportunities and constraints for the greenway extension. This analysis would later influence the design concepts.

After careful consideration of all the factors, a set of preliminary conceptual design alternatives were developed and presented to the community in July, 2013. The team worked closely with the community members to better understand their vision for the greenway. After the presentation, tables were set up with different focal areas of the greenway where community members could discuss their interests. Based on community feedback, the design alternatives were then revised and combined into a final conceptual master plan.

The final master plans were presented at a second and final community meeting in September, 2013.



CDAC team member, Alyssa Malobicky, discusses design concepts with local community members.



A local community member provides feedback on preliminary concepts.



CDAC team members Matt Dunn and Alyssa Malobicky present preliminary conceptual designs at a community meeting.

## INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

During the initial site visit to Richlands, the team inventoried existing site elements and analyzed site conditions. The inventory was predominantly based on topography, property ownership, vehicular and railroad circulation, open space areas, views, surrounding landscape character, potential access points to the river, and potential access points to the greenway from residential neighborhoods and the hospital. These items became the foundation for analysis studies that would lead to a conceptual understanding of possible routing options for the trail system.

The inventory and analysis maps can be seen on the following pages.



The CDAC team touring sites along the Clinch River with stakeholders.



**Inventory: Swinging Bridge Area**

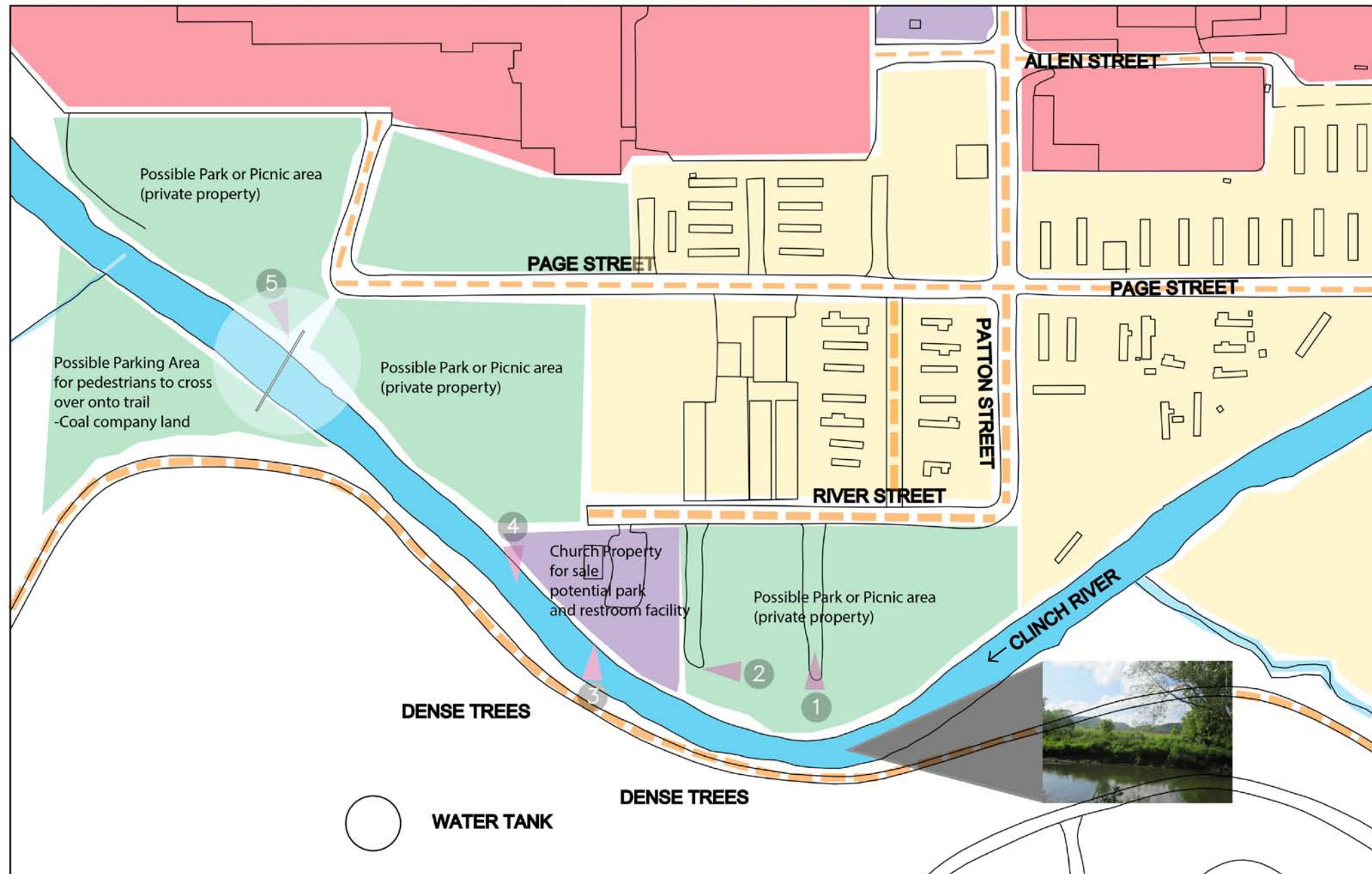
Richlands, VA  
Inventory  
"Brown's Field"  
Potential Park Space  
1:150



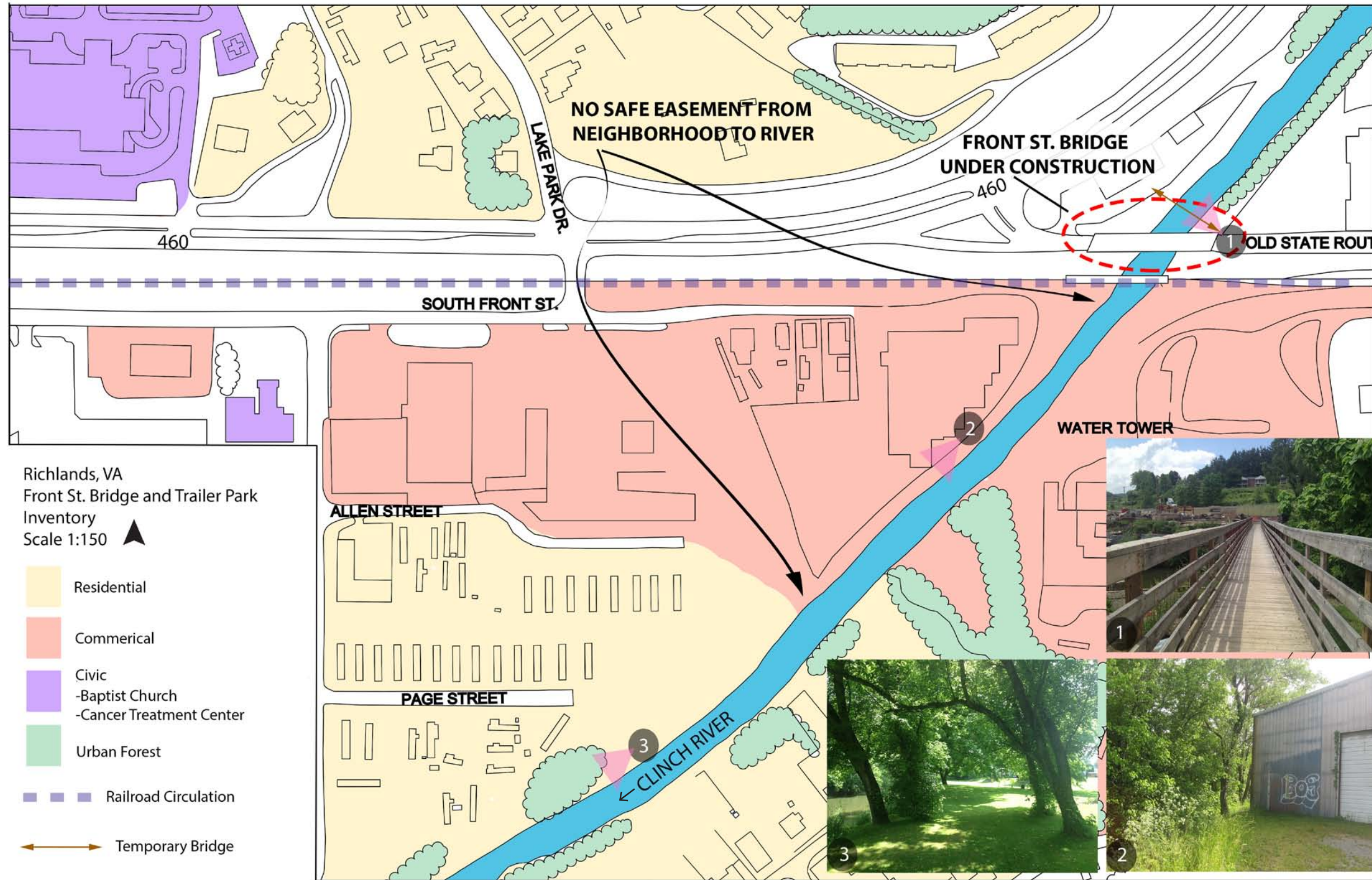
- Existing Businesses
  - Richlands Shopping Mall
  - Parking lots
  - Storage Yards
  - Private Businesses
- Possible Trail and Park Space
  - Private Property
  - Adjoining Church
  - open green space
- Residential
- Civic
  - Church property for sale
  - Baptist Church
- Swinging Bridge
  - Pedestrian Transportation Access

Automobile Circulation

Clinch River



Inventory: Front Street Bridge Area



Richlands, VA  
4TH St. and River Edge Inventory  
Scale 1:150

- Residential
- Commerical
- Civic -Christian Academy  
-Church
- Urban Forest

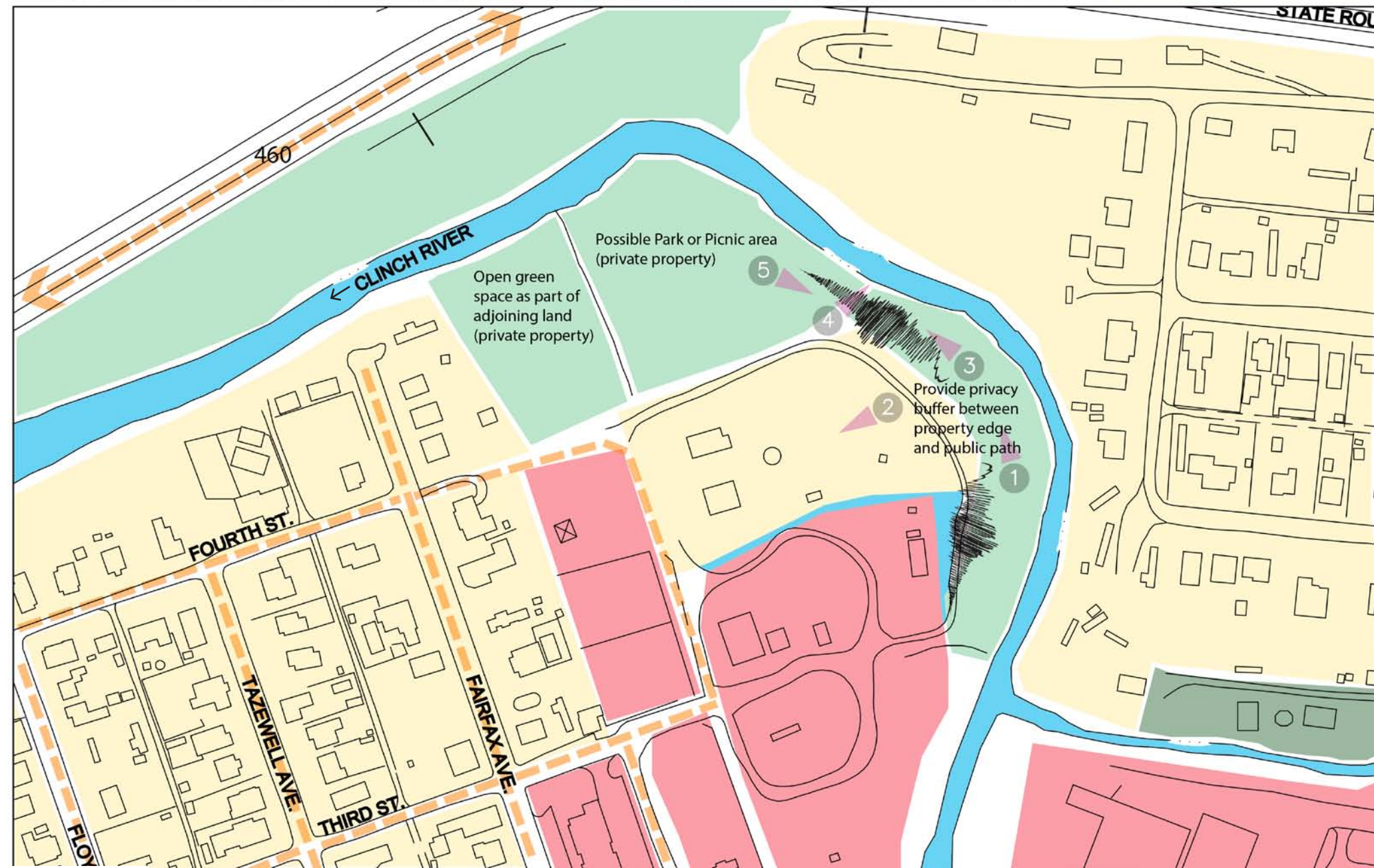
Potential access points



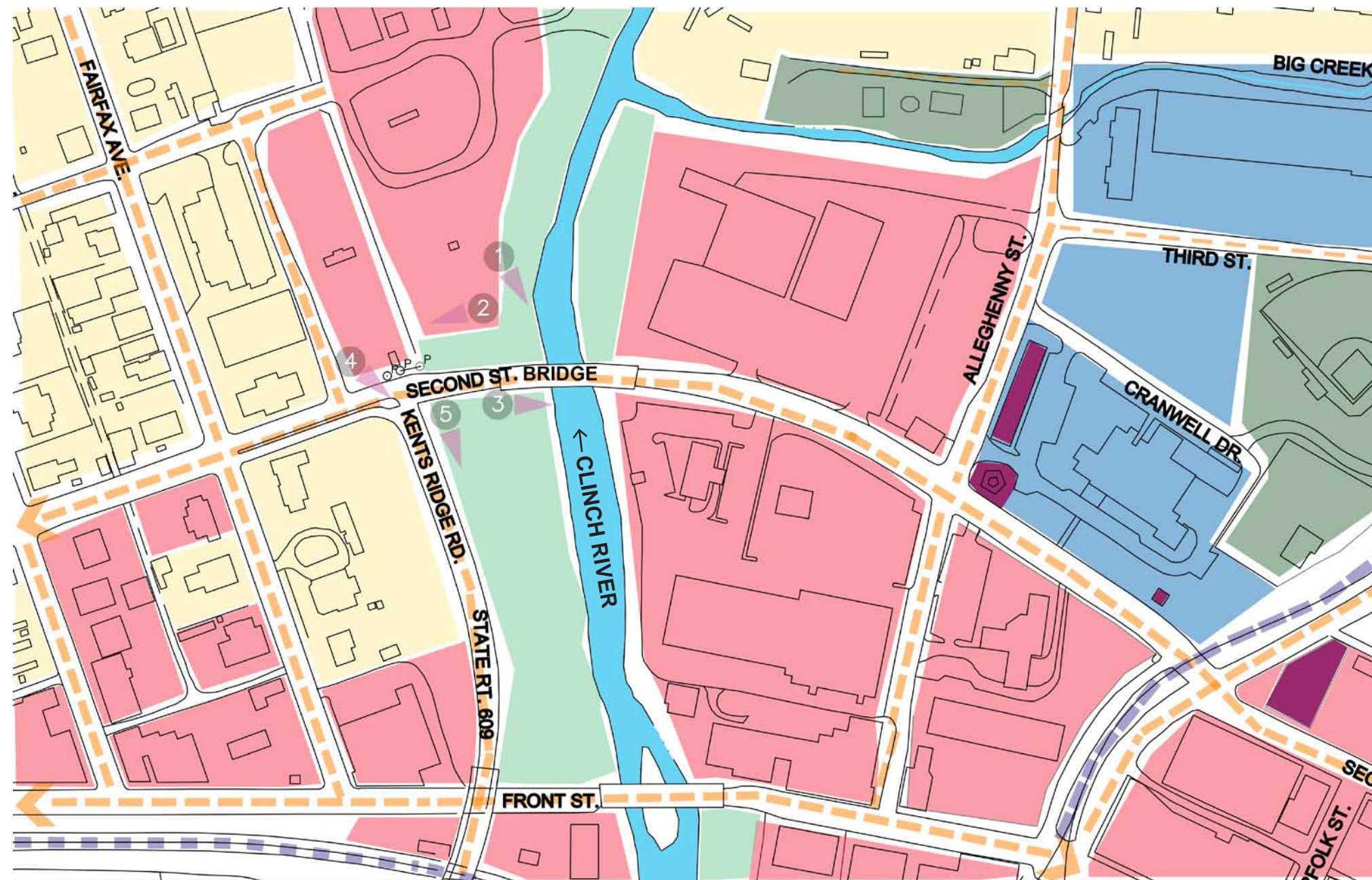
Richlands, VA  
Inventory  
"Andy's Field"  
Potential Park Space  
1:150



- Existing Businesses
  - Auto Repair
  - Storage Yards
  - Private Businesses
  - Shopping Mall
  
- Existing
  - Britt's Park
  
- Possible Trail and Park Space
  - Private property
  - Adjoining open green space
  - Potential Trail Space in Urban Forested
  
- Residential
  
- Automobile Circulation
  
- Clinch River



**Inventory: 2nd Street Bridge Area**



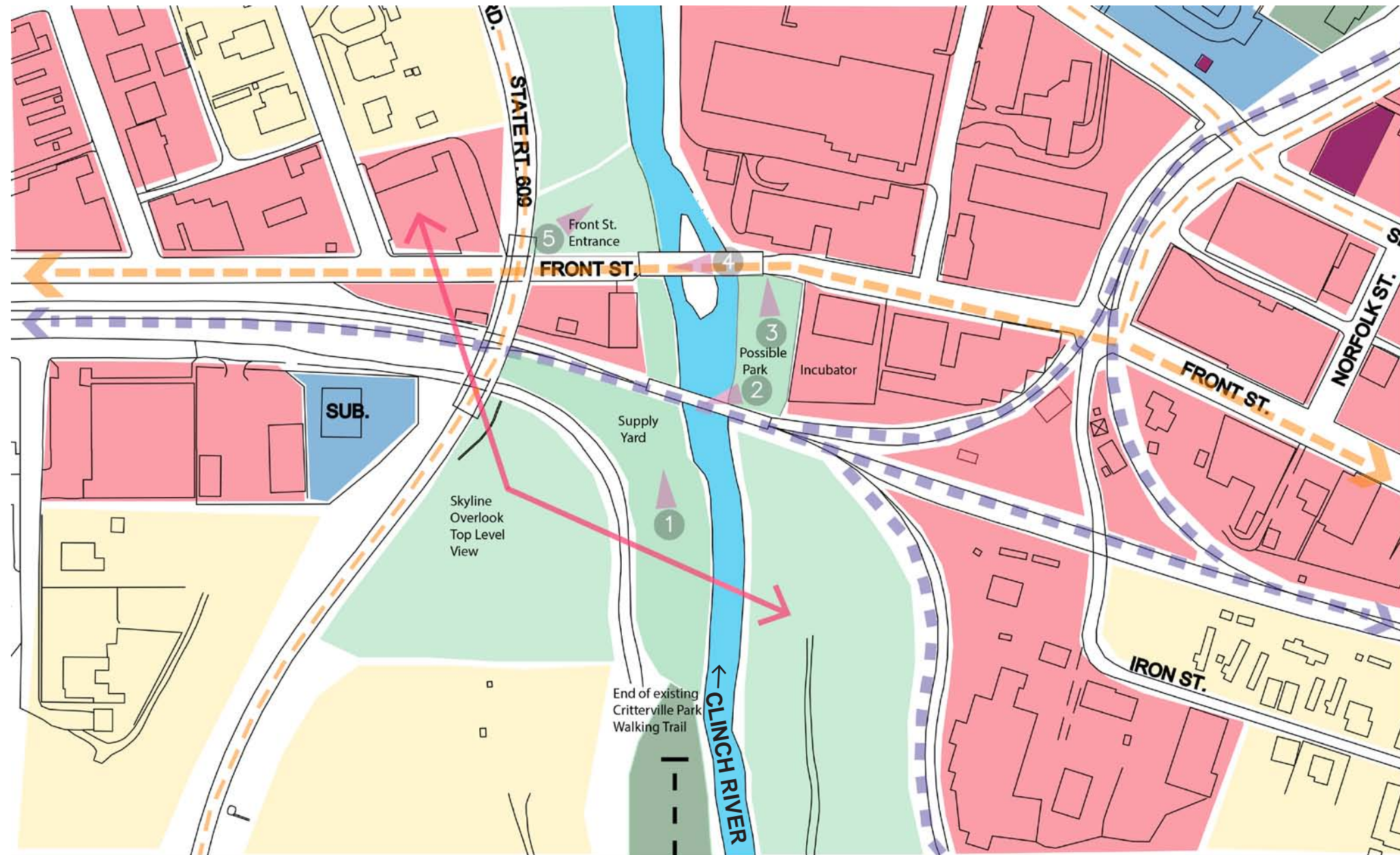
Richlands, VA  
Inventory  
"Second St. Bridge"  
Potential Trail Entry  
1:150



- Attractions
  - Farmers Market
  - Veterans Memorial
  - Brick Sculpture
  - Town Mural
- Residential
- Existing Businesses
  - Auto Repair
  - Shopping Districts
  - Private Businesses
- Municipal
  - Police Department
- Existing
  - Britt's Park
  - Baseball Fields
- Urban Forested
- Automobile Circulation
- Railroad Circulation
- Clinch River



**Inventory: Business Incubator Area**



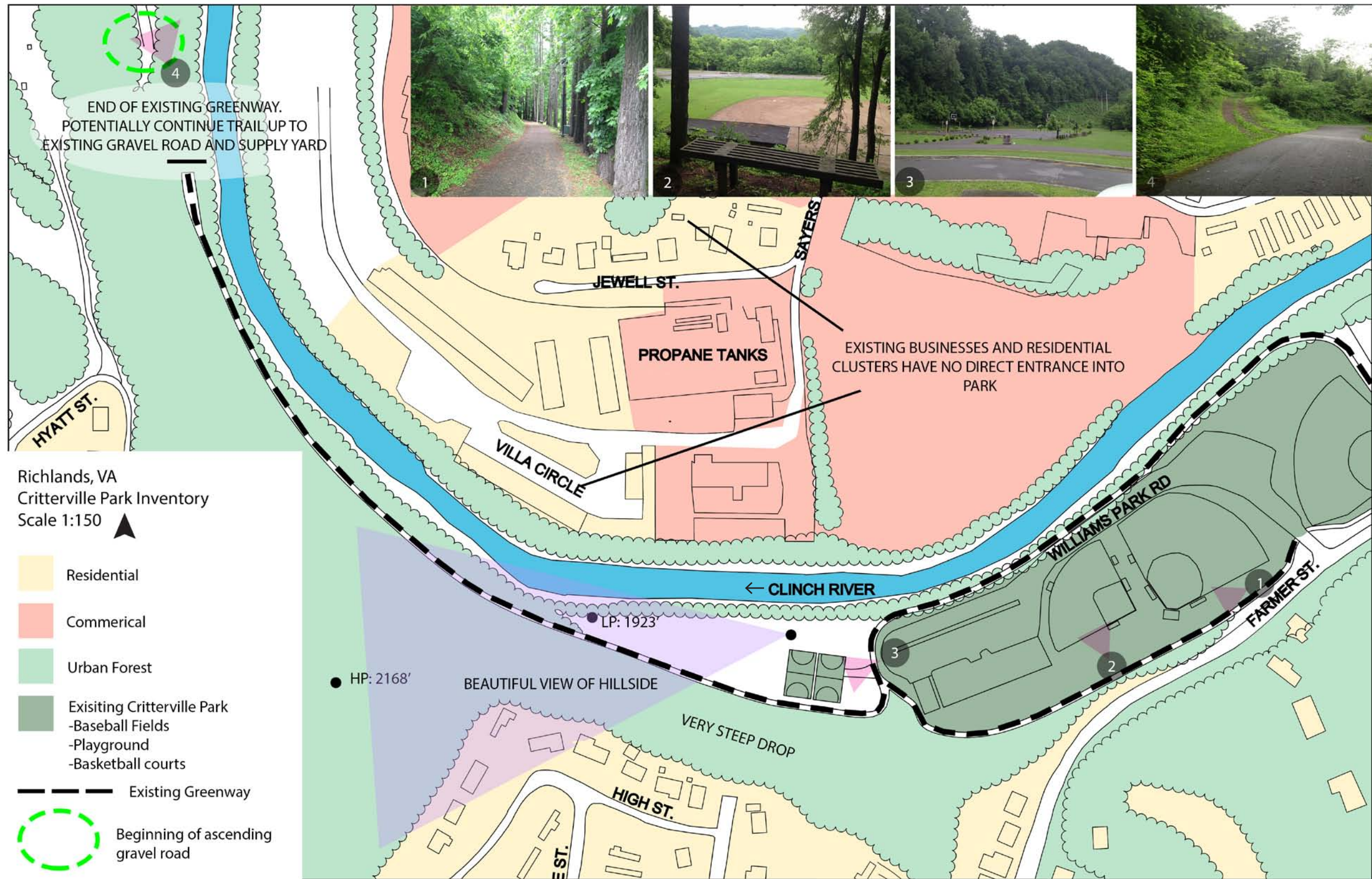
Richlands, VA  
Inventory  
"Incubator"  
Potential Nature Park  
1:150



- Attractions
  - Brick Sculpture
  - Town Mural
- Existing Businesses
  - Shopping Districts
  - Private Businesses
- Municipal
- Existing
  - Existing Critterville Trail
- Urban Forested

- Automobile Circulation
- Railroad Circulation
- Clinch River

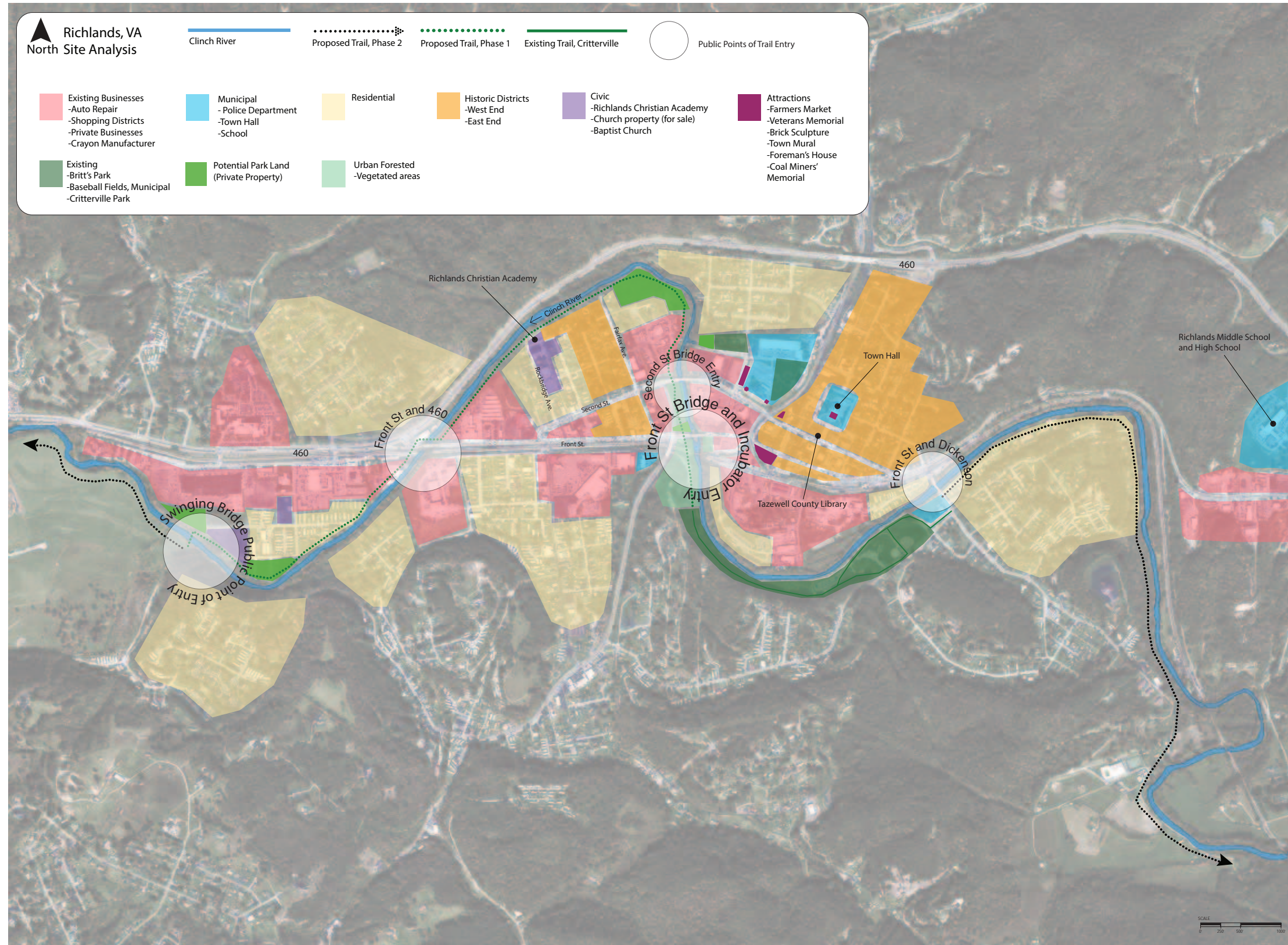




Richlands, VA  
 Critterville Park Inventory  
 Scale 1:150

- Residential
- Commerical
- Urban Forest
- Existing Critterville Park  
 -Baseball Fields  
 -Playground  
 -Basketball courts
- Existing Greenway
- Beginning of ascending gravel road

**SITE ANALYSIS: CONTEXT**



Richlands Walking Trail Extension

July 11, 2013

Site Analysis: Context

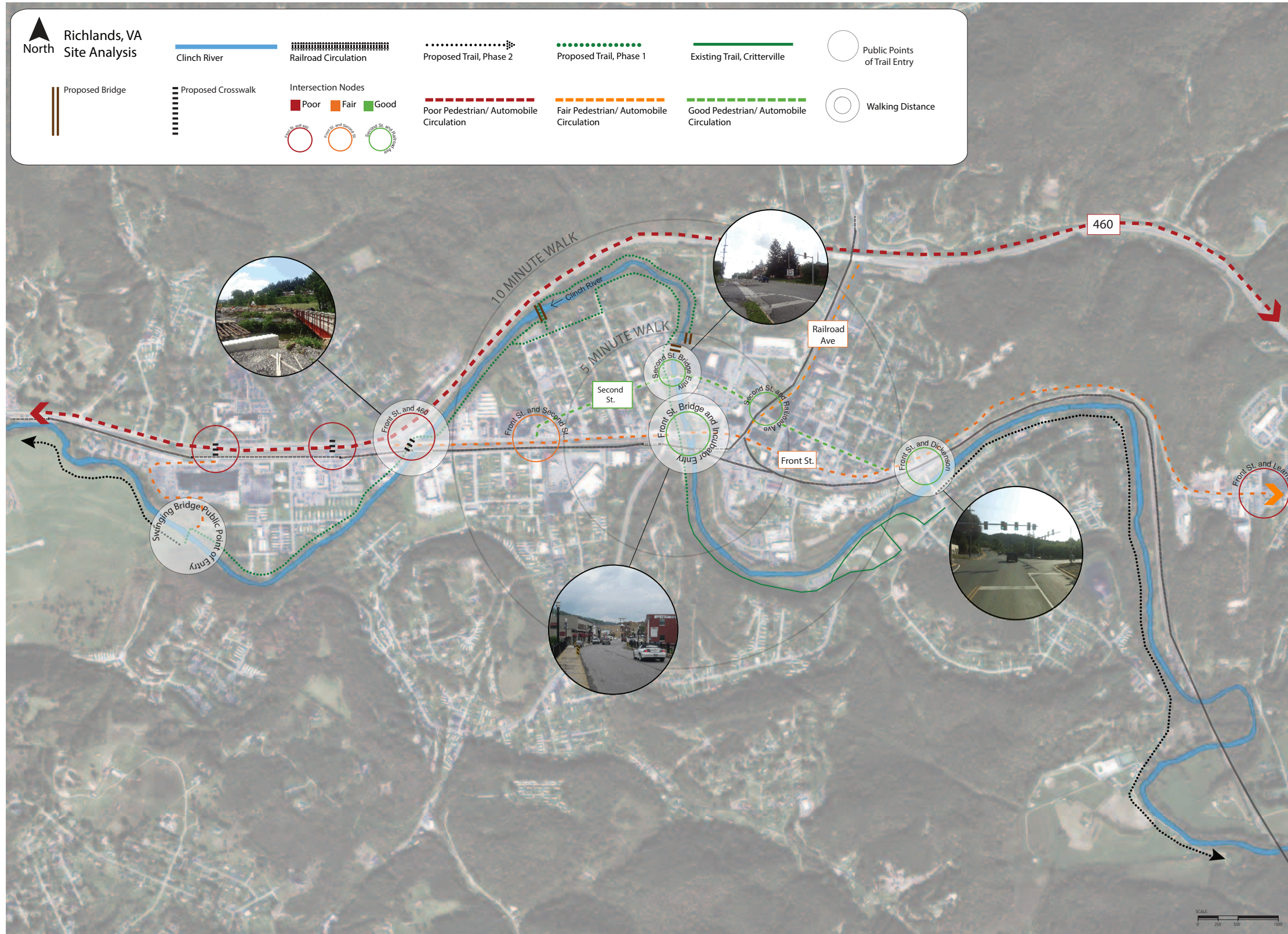
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Disclaimer: This drawing is conceptual and was prepared to show approximate location and arrangement of site features. It is subject to change and is not intended to replace the use of construction documents. The client should consult appropriate professionals before any construction or site work is undertaken. The Community Design Assistance Center is not responsible for the inappropriate use of this drawing.



**SITE ANALYSIS: CIRCULATION**



Richlands Walking Trail Extension

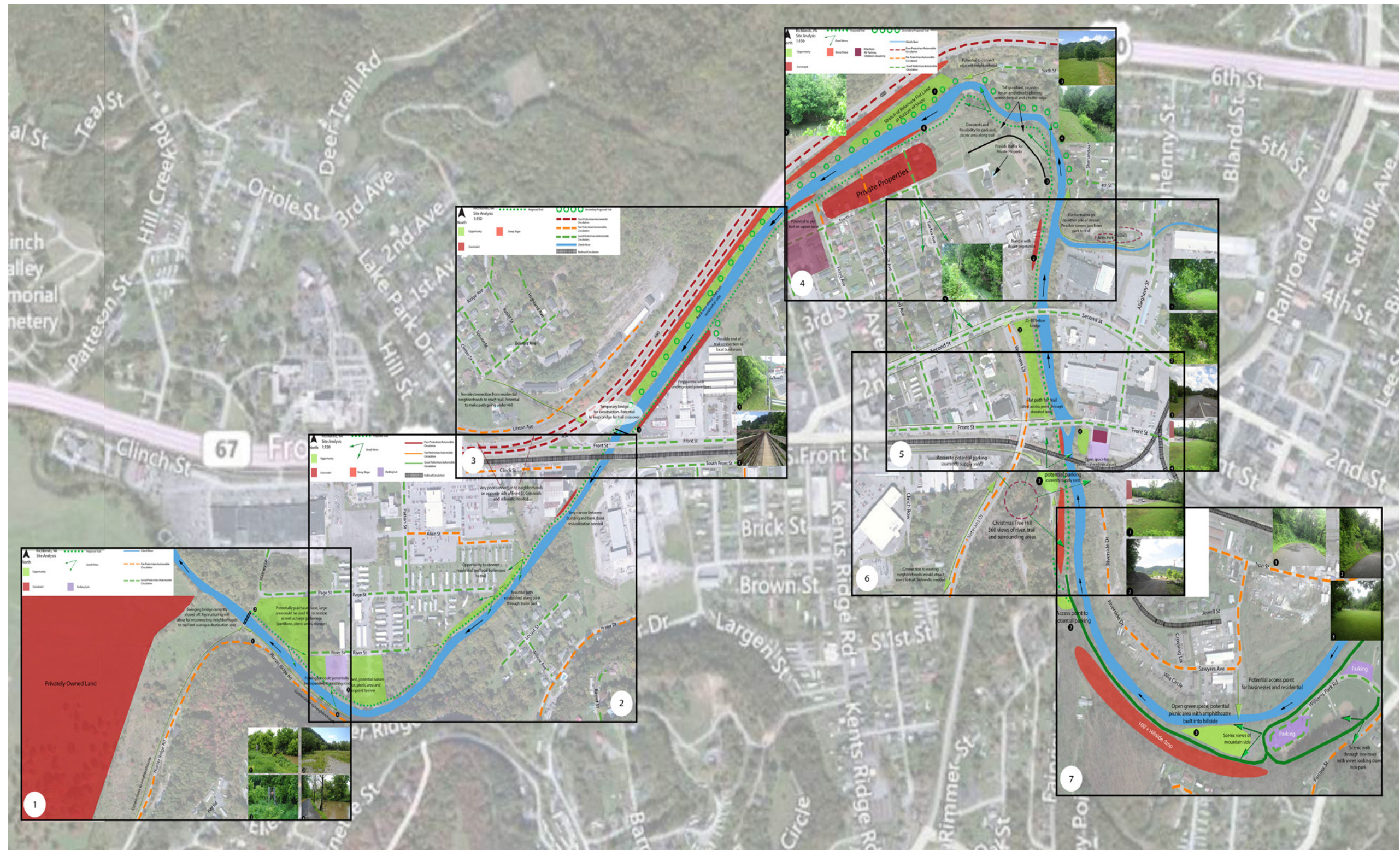
July 11, 2013

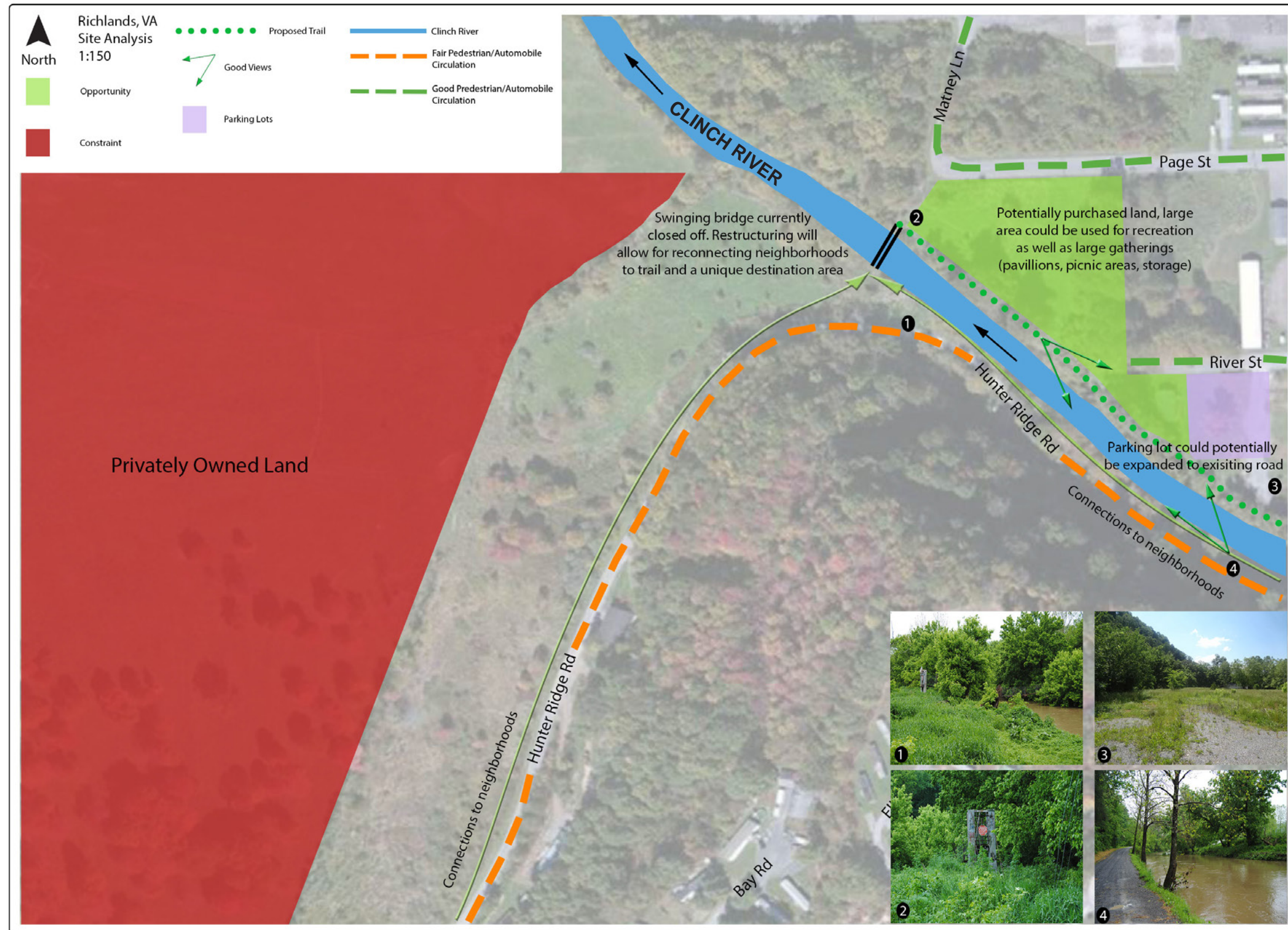
Site Analysis: Circulation

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Richlands Walking Trail Extension  
 July 11, 2013  
 Swinging Bridge Area Site Analysis

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**Richlands Walking Trail Extension**  
 July 11, 2013  
**Trailer Park and Brown's Field Site Analysis**

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