

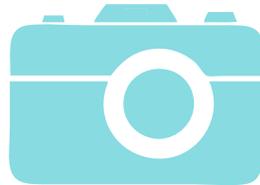
DOWNTOWN RALEIGH EXPERIENCE

A TEN YEAR PLAN FOR
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

August 21, 2014



Experience It.
DOWNTOWN RALEIGH



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CHALLENGES &
OPPORTUNITIES REPORT

August 2014



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Challenges & Opportunities Report

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- B. Context and Engagement
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INTRODUCTION

Downtown Raleigh is booming.
Let's keep the momentum going!

DOWNTOWN RALEIGH PLAN OVERVIEW

This Challenges & Opportunities report outlines the challenges to confront and opportunities to embrace in Downtown based on an analysis of data, maps, and studies. Raleigh is one of the best places in the US to live, work, and recreate. Today, Downtown is central to the city's achievements and its economic competitiveness. It is a place for people, a destination for business, and a hub of urban activity. Downtown is the historic, functional, and symbolic heart of Raleigh. It contains the largest concentration of government and commercial buildings in Raleigh, and lies at the nexus of the city's roadway and public transportation networks. It is the seat of government for the County and State as well as the municipality. Raleigh's Central Business District (CBD) generates almost 7.5 times the tax revenue per acre as the City outside the CBD. The average tax yield per acre inside the CBD is \$22,821.93; outside the CBD is \$3,077.81. More cultural venues, attractions, and events are located in Downtown than any other area of the region.



CONTEXT & ENGAGEMENT

A downtown master planning process has taken place in roughly 10-year increments since the first plan was published in 1953. The most recent plan, Liveable Streets, as approved by City Council in 2003 and sought to revitalize Downtown...and it did. The opening of Fayetteville Street, known as North Carolina's Main Street, was a transformational investment and pivotal given the \$25 million public investment that has thus far generated \$2.3 billion in private investment. The Downtown Raleigh Plan is guided by a City Council nominated 33-member advisory committee whose membership represents a broad cross section of downtown stakeholders. Following are statistics on major public events:

- 1,000+ attendees at Public and Stakeholder meetings
- 18,000+ views on PlanningForRaleigh, the City's social media application

- 6,000+ unique visitors on PlanningForRaleigh
- 10,000 DRA newsletter subscribers

Feedback and ideas covered a broad range of issues for Downtown Raleigh, and can be categorized in the following groups:

- Green Space
- Walkability and ground-level activity
- Housing and neighborhood services
- Transit and bicycling
- Cars and parking
- Heritage
- Image of the city
- Healthy economy and growth
- Events, attractions, and the arts



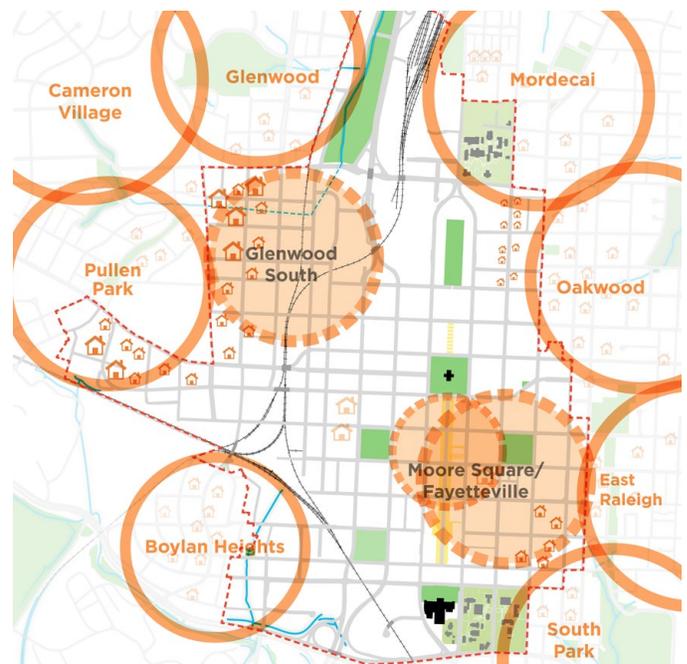
THE DOWNTOWN RALEIGH EXPERIENCE

The community's long-term goal is to develop an inclusive downtown for all ages. Downtown already provides a great experience for many age groups. Diversity, multiculturalism, and multi-generational households are growing throughout the country, influencing how communities plan for new populations. At the heart of the plan is the conviction that successful downtowns today are mixed-use, dynamic, multi-functional places. To that end, planning for the future has been charged to go beyond consideration of land uses and functional issues, and consider how the many, unique experiences of Downtown Raleigh can be supported or created, as well as how they can reinforce downtown's identity as it grows and evolves.

Building on analysis and feedback, a downtown framework has been developed within which the evolving recommendations can logically fit. The framework builds on historic and contemporary development patterns and the city's underlying topography and environmental opportunities. It acknowledges the strength of Fayetteville Street as the city's dense urban spine. It organizes future development by extending the spine north into the Capital District and south towards MLK Jr. Boulevard. The framework connects the two north-south greenways located at topographic low points in the four corners of downtown by introducing new urban green spaces. This overarching structure supports better connections between districts, and

between the central business district and surrounding neighborhoods, especially to the south and east, through a secondary network of east-west streets. The following themes capture the most talked about topics throughout the process:

- Greenspace: Nature and green infrastructure woven into the urban fabric.
- Connections: Walking, biking and transit the preferred ways to get in and around downtown.
- The City Bountiful: Every block full with living, commerce, tourism, entertainment, and culture.
- Partnerships: Teamwork accelerating the implementation of the Downtown vision.



Established and Emerging Neighborhoods

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES FOR DOWNTOWN

The analysis of downtown was focused at two different scales: (1) On a macro, downtown-wide level and (2) in more detail on a district-by-district level.

DOWNTOWN-WIDE OBSERVATIONS

Urban Form and Function

- Districts have different pockets of activity that lend interest to each, but the connections between them are frequently weak, especially after dark.
- There is a significant amount of underutilized land in all the downtown districts, in the form of surface parking and low-scale buildings occupying property zoned for greater height and intensity. Every district has room to grow by filling in.
- Although Downtown was fortunate to have avoided being bisected by an urban freeway like so many North American cities, existing and proposed transportation infrastructure still present barriers that require creative thinking to bridge.
- At around 300 acres, the Dorothea Dix property is by far the largest single assemblage of land adjacent to downtown. While the future use of the property is still being negotiated and debated, there are few conceivable scenarios that would not benefit from stronger connections to and from downtown. The rolling hills and remarkable views available at the Dix property are a local treasure that should be widely shared and enjoyed.



How can new construction enhance downtown and bring new value to historic landmarks?

Market and Land Use Trends

- In downtown, residential remains a strong market in the future. This strong market demand can be best leveraged through strategic public interventions to shape the future downtown the community desires.
- The small size of the regional office market constrains significant new office development. Large-scale office development downtown will be tenant-driven and therefore unpredictable.
- Downtown is known as a restaurant and bar destination, but its retail scene is much less developed. Interventions and tools can help limit leakage to surrounding competitive retail, and support the creation of neighborhood service retail and unique, local destination retail options.

Neighborhoods & Housing:

- As population has increased, so has demand for convenient residential services, especially a full service grocery store or a smaller format market.
- The co-existence of downtown residential and entertainment uses has produced new challenges. While some conflict is unavoidable, unnecessary nuisance impacts should be properly managed.
- Housing affordability (both near and long term) is an important consideration for downtown. Careful consideration should be given on how to increase the range of pricing, size, and diversity of housing options.
- Homelessness continues to be a challenge in Downtown Raleigh, but progress has been positive over the past decade. A strategy for service delivery and facilities should be examined.



McDowell and Dawson Streets

Green Space and the Environment:

- For Raleigh to continue to attract residents and office workers, it will be important to invest in expanding and improving its downtown open space and parks system.
- Currently, public open space is lacking in the western third of downtown, especially in the Glenwood South district.
- With a growing residential population and a desire to support families and daytime workers in the downtown, the demand for park space will only increase. New and existing spaces should be designed to accommodate a diverse range of new users (young, old, individuals and families.)
- Underutilized spaces, such as along rail lines or excess rights of way, should be leveraged as possible park locations.
- Devereux Meadows, a proposed new park north of Peace Street, is critical in providing access to green space in an underserved area.

Driving & Parking:

- Dawson/McDowell, Peace Street and Western/MLK, Jr. Blvd are important to vehicular movement, but they function as barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- One-way streets and dead ends caused by rail lines impact vehicular circulation, navigability,

and bus movement through downtown. Despite its regular grid, few streets continue entirely across downtown to surrounding neighborhoods either north-south or east-west.

- Downtown, by the numbers, is already in a parking deficit situation due to spaces that are committed to future developments.
- Strategic decks, changes to parking policies, or additional transportation demand management may be needed as downtown grows or as existing commitments are claimed.

Walking:

- With its compact size, Downtown Raleigh has the framework to be a highly walkable area. Currently, however, the pedestrian experience is uneven across different parts of downtown limiting safe and comfortable movement.
- Narrow rights of way that were laid out in the original downtown grid which provide limited opportunities for wide sidewalks, outdoor dining, and other enhanced features in the pedestrian environment without narrowing vehicular travel lanes or removing on-street parking.
- Parts of downtown include stretches of inviting streetscape coupled with active uses, but these areas are not well-connected to one another.
- An expansion of the pedestrian wayfinding system is needed.



Bicycle accommodations are growing in the core of downtown.

Bicycling:

- Within downtown, only a few streets like Hargett and northern Salisbury Street, currently have bicycle lanes or shared lane markings.
- Peace Street now includes bicycle lanes west of St. Mary's Street, but becomes entirely auto-oriented as it enters downtown.
- West Street could become a major north-south link between the future Devereux Meadows, Peace Street, and the Dorothea Dix property.
- Bike share facilities should be linked to public transit such as at the future Union Station and downtown bus stations, to create a complete, connected system.

Transit and the R-Line:

- In order to continue to grow and remain competitive, Downtown Raleigh will require a dynamic, robust transportation system.
- A combination of long-term projects, such as the potential for high speed rail or light rail; and short-term solutions, such as improved amenities for current bus riders of the R-Line or the CAT bus lines should be considered. The addition of comfortable shelters—with shade, seating, and system information—also support user comfort and signal a high performing system.
- The Moore Square Transit Station project is critical to modernize the facility, expand short-term capacity and enhance the value and desirability of adjacent property
- Modify the R-Line route in the short term to reduce time and allow more direct routes to most destinations.
- Create an identity for the R-Line and amplify use of technology (LED live-time signage/QR code/apps)
- Address equity issues with the R-Line and other pay-for-service routes.



How can downtown transit service provide high quality service, comfortable stops, and welcoming facilities that give a good first-impression of the region's transit system?

RALEIGH'S DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS



FAYETTEVILLE STREET

Key Opportunities

- Develop key sites at the south end of the district for commercial or tourism uses.
- Grow tourism through investment that builds on the Convention Center
- Improve the arrival experience to Downtown Raleigh from the south.
- Improve east-west pedestrian connections to enhance connections to adjacent districts.
- Enhance Nash Square in order to increase its value as a world-class urban open space.
- Leverage City-owned properties throughout downtown to increase the amount of mixed of uses, including affordable housing and street level activity.
- Engage in land banking and incentives to encourage and to expand housing diversity throughout downtown.
- Attract, retain, and foster innovation and entrepreneurship across all districts.

Key Challenges

- Balancing the district's roles as the central business district, tourism hub, and restaurant and bar destination, and growing residential community.
- Pedestrian access is difficult across McDowell/Dawson; however, these streets are important vehicular corridors.
- Dark zones exist for pedestrians outside of a few limited blocks that create safety and psychological barriers to a high-quality pedestrian experience.
- Large development footprints of public buildings and institutions impact walkability and human-scaled street activity.
- Insufficient hotel rooms for tourism aspirations.
- Nash Square is poorly designed to maximize its value as a world class urban space.
- The approach to downtown from the south is out of character with an urban downtown.
- The design of MLK, Jr. Blvd and its intersections create a significant barrier to pedestrians and bike connectivity to the south and particularly the Dorothea Dix property.

- Diversity of housing throughout downtown.

CAPITAL DISTRICT

Key Opportunities

- Promote a more efficient use of land and improved urban character.
- Create a collaborative State-City partnership for planning and programming the district.
- Work with the State to activate Halifax Mall and reclaim Caswell Square with public green space.
- Improve the street level experience and walkability.
- Consolidate and organize parking to enable development.
- Create temporary pop-up programming, such as food trucks, to fill restaurant/retail gaps.
- Redevelop City-owned sites to include a mix of uses, including affordable/workforce housing.
- Purchase land with the intent to bank/develop for maintenance of housing diversity downtown.
- Work collaboratively with the State to identify parcels that may be redeveloped/used for workforce housing.
- Retool the Blount Street Master Plan to reflect

current market conditions.

Key Challenges

- The district operates as a '9-5' office district, which minimizes vibrancy on the weekend or evenings.
- Parking is too dominate a feature of the urban landscape in the district, contributing to the lack of vibrancy.
- Topography and limited connections from the surroundings inhibit access and visibility to Halifax Mall.



- Although well-integrated with the areas east and south, connections to the Seaboard and Glenwood South areas for pedestrians and cyclists need significant improvement.

GLENWOOD SOUTH

Key Opportunity

- Leverage the growing residential population to diversify the goods, services and amenities available.
- Improve the Main Street character of Glenwood Avenue.
- Create a retail strategy to add neighborhood amenities.
- Improve the Main Street character of Glenwood Avenue.
- Improve lighting and streetscapes throughout the district.
- Enhance and link West Street as an important north/south connector.
- Find potentials for new green space and better connections to nearby green spaces (such as Pigeon House Branch and future Devereux Meadows).
- Improve connections to adjacent districts and Cameron Village.
- Improve public parking signage and explore additional methods for increasing public parking



options.

- Purchase land with the intent to bank/develop for maintenance of housing diversity downtown.

Key Challenges

- Residential amenities are limited (e.g. green space, dog parks, playgrounds, grocery store/service retail).
- Peace Street, east of Glenwood is a significant safety and connectivity concern for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Publicly owned land with the potential for catalytic change is absent in the district.
- Current tension between entertainment venues and residents (e.g. noise, litter).
- Connections to Warehouse, Fayetteville, and Capital Districts are weak. The rail lines create a barrier between Glenwood South and other downtown districts.



- Glenwood Ave is narrow and a significant vehicular through-street which is a challenge for a generous pedestrian realm.
- More daytime pedestrian visits are desired by district businesses.

MOORE SQUARE

Key Opportunity

- Explore incentives or mechanisms to revitalize Cobblestone Hall / City Market as a city-wide anchor.
- Implement the Moore Square Park design to transform use of the park.
- Implement a high-quality renovation to the Moore Square Transit Station in order to enhance user comfort and utility, promote choice transit usage and value to adjacent properties.
- Expand Marbles Kids' Museum.
- Enhance connectivity between Shaw University, the district, and downtown as a whole
- Develop city-owned sites (6.3 acres total),

including the site east of City Market.

- Consider housing for homeless population.
- Redevelop City-owned sites to include a mix of uses, including affordable/workforce housing.
- Purchase land with the intent to bank/develop for maintenance of housing diversity downtown.
- Connect Chavis Park to downtown.

Key Challenges

- Perception of safety issues.
- As the historic anchor of the district, City Market remains underutilized as a commercial/retail hub.
- Shaw is an institutional anchor, but has limited access to student-friendly venues.
- Maintaining small-scale, active ground floor character and through-block connections with larger, taller new construction.
- The Moore Square Transit Station is over capacity and provides poor levels of passenger amenity and pedestrian space.
- Private ownership of City Market.
- Capitalize on the district's important history to create a uniquely Raleigh destination.
- Leverage the momentum created by the "Raleigh Food Corridor" project.
- Consider services, delivery, facility and policy



strategies to help support the homeless population.

- Moore Square Park is poorly maintained and poorly designed to modern standards of urban parks.

WAREHOUSE DISTRICT

Key Opportunities

- Keep the momentum going.
- Build on the identity and branding of the district as a center for innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Union Station can catalyze transit-oriented development.
- Historic and adaptive reuse strategies can expand development while preserving the district's valued character.
- There is potential demand for a parking deck or a hotel.
- Create walkable or bikeable connections to the Dorothea Dix property.

- Redevelop City-owned sites to include a mix of uses, including affordable/workforce housing.
- Build on the identity and branding of the City as a center for innovation and entrepreneurship with the district as a hub.
- Union Station plaza is an important asset to increase access to open space.
- Keep Warehouse character. Do not homogenize.
- Don't overlook historic identity.

Key Challenges

- Maintaining the district's unique character amid future development.
- There is limited open space in the immediate district, and Nash Square is underutilized.
- Western and southern parts of the district are disconnected by rail lines.
- McDowell and Dawson's vehicular dominance creates a safety and physical barrier to east-west pedestrian movement.
- Additional daytime pedestrian visits are needed to support retail.
- Union Station is a major opportunity for transit-oriented development; yet, there is little publicly owned land close to Union Station.
- Nash Square is poorly designed to meet the needs of a 21st Century city.
- Keeping the district's unique character amid future development.



- Western and southern parts of the district are disconnected by rail lines.
- Union Station is a major opportunity for transit-oriented development; yet, there is little publicly owned land close to Union Station.

PEACE / SEABOARD

Key Opportunities

- Improve Peace Street’s accessibility for all modes of travel (both along it and through safe intersections across it).
- Develop diverse, urban land uses on underutilized sites.
- Improve connectivity and access to green spaces, such as Pigeon House Branch/future Devereux Meadows and Halifax Mall.
- Continue to foster unique retail and community activities within the district.
- Implement Blount Person Street corridor study.
- Purchase land with the intent to bank/develop for

maintenance of housing diversity downtown.

- Improvements to the Peace Street and Capital Blvd interchange will greatly enhance pedestrian safety and comfort.

Key Challenges

- The district lacks a connective street grid and is not currently pedestrian friendly.
- Seaboard/Person is disconnected from the rest of downtown by Peace Street and the Capital District.
- Opportunities to connect over the rail to provide direct access to the future Devereux Meadows and Pigeon House Branch restoration are prohibitively complex and very expensive.
- Peace Street creates a pedestrian/bicycle safety and physical barrier to adjacent districts.
- Opportunities to connect over the future Devereux Meadows and Pigeon House Branch restoration are prohibitively complex and very costly.

