

DOWNTOWN DURHAM

BLUEPRINT 2035



Agenda

- **Public Engagement**
 - Who Did We Reach?
 - What We've Heard
- **Review of Previous Plans**
- **Downtown Today**
- **Vision, Goals, and Strategies**
- **Implementation**

Who Did We Reach?

People of all background that care deeply about downtown's future

- **2,230** survey responses
- **Hundreds of** participants across **9 pop-ups.**
- **300 participants** of State of Downtown project kick-off
- **75 people** attended Black Voices for the Future Panel
- **200 participants** in the January Open House
- **Bilingual** materials + survey
- **20 interviews** with various stakeholders
- **38 local businesses** participated in interviews and focus groups
- **15 Steering Committee members** helping to guide the process



Who Did We Reach?

*We held some **pop-ups** in the summer and fall...*

Latino Credit Union



Foodie Fare



Super Compare Foods



Back to School Block Party



Durham Central Park Farmers Market



NCCU Eagle Mania



Who Did We Reach?

...we hosted a ***Black Voices for the Future Panel***...



Who Did We Reach?

*...and we discussed some ideas for downtown at the **Downtown Future Fest**.*



What We've Heard

- We need more **communications, enhanced wayfinding, and meaningful engagement that leads to action.**
- We must **honor Durham's history and rich cultural heritage.**
- Downtown should be a place where **small, minority-, and women-owned businesses are supported.**
- Downtown should **feel more like a neighborhood** with **diverse housing options.**
- We need to invest in infrastructure to create **safer streets** and a **more accessible Downtown for all.**
- **Public spaces should be transformed** to create **inviting, safe, and well-utilized areas** that enrich the downtown experience.

And in your own words...

"I love the blend of African American history."

"It's great that most of the businesses are local and not soulless national chains."

"We need more shade and seating!"

"I have four kids and work full time. I would love to be involved but would need to be an easy way."

"We should encourage and build more pedestrian plazas!"

"Downtown is cost prohibitive to people like me who work downtown."

Three Key Priorities

During the planning process, **three priorities below came up in nearly every conversation**. Together, they form the **foundation of the plan** and are reflected throughout the recommendations that follow.

*...be safe and
welcoming*

*...keep Durham
Durham*

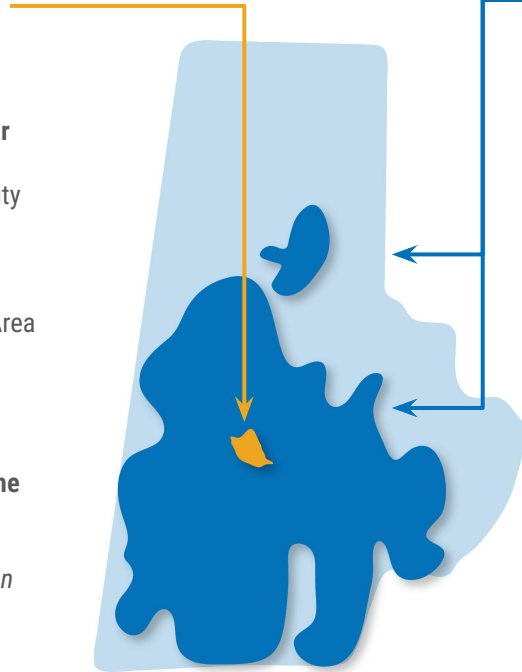
*...be vibrant and
growth-oriented*

Review of Previous Plans

DOWNTOWN-FOCUSED PLANS

- **Downtown Durham Master Plan (2000)**
- Durham Cultural Master Plan
- **Downtown Durham Master Plan: Seven Year Review & Updated Work Plan (2008)**
- Downtown Durham Loop: Two-Way Feasibility Study
- Downtown City Center District: Creating an Environment for Retail
- Comprehensive Parking Study: Downtown Area
- Downtown Open Space Plan
- Downtown Durham SmART Vision Plan: A Cultural Quilt
- Business Diversity in Downtown Durham
- **Downtown Master Plan: A Framework for the Future (2017)**

**bold text indicates a Downtown Master Plan*



RECENT CITY AND COUNTY-WIDE PLANS

- Durham Bike+Walk Implementation Plan
- Move Durham: Central Durham Transportation Study
- Durham County Transit Plan
- Durham Comprehensive Plan
- Durham Destination Master Plan
- Durham Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Systems Plan
- Durham Bike+Walk Plan Update
- Unified Development Ordinance Update
- Durham Cultural Roadmap

OTHER RECENT & ONGOING PLANS RELEVANT TO DOWNTOWN

- Durham Belt Line Trail Master Plan
- Reimagine Durham Freeway Study
- Roxboro St. and Mangum St. Resurfacing and Study
- Durham Athletic Park Feasibility Study
- Durham Central Park Greenprint

Downtown Today

- **New construction** is rapidly **changing the feel and cost of living and working** downtown.
- Hybrid work policies have led to **decreased weekday foot traffic**.
- Downtown's **open spaces need a makeover** and downtown needs to **offer more to do** for everyone.
- Downtown is carved up by **major one-way roads** and offers a **disjointed street experience**.
- **Parking is an issue** for both downtown employees and customers
- Downtown's anchors and food/beverage establishments drive traffic but we **need more variety**.
- **Safety concerns** discourage visitors from coming downtown.
- There is a **perception that downtown isn't for everyone**.
- Despite these challenges, **downtown Durham remains unique, cool, quirky, and funky**.

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN DURHAM

SEVEN GOALS

ROOTED & READY

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

WELCOME HOME

WALK ÷ ROLL

COMMON GROUNDS

DOWNTOWN WORKS

THE MORE YOU KNOW

ROOTED & READY

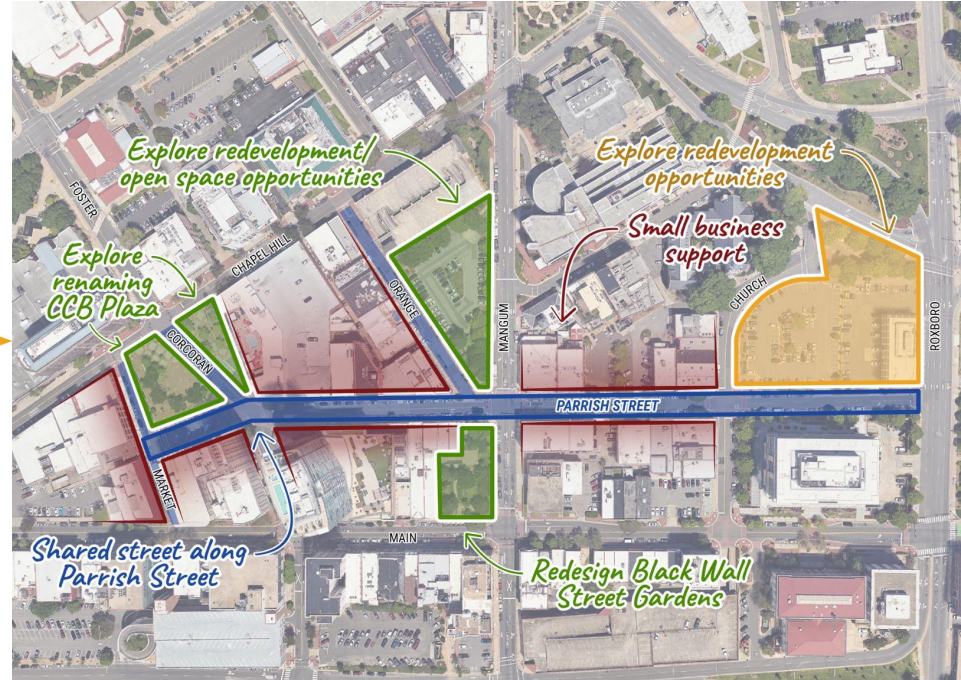
GOAL 1

Downtown will be a welcoming space for people of all ages and backgrounds by celebrating Durham's history and rich cultural heritage and providing a diverse range of activities and experiences.



ROOTED & READY

1. **Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination** that reflects both past and present identities.
2. **Create a hub for Durham's growing Latino community** in the heart of downtown Durham.
3. Create more **high-quality destinations for families**.
4. **Infuse the public realm with art and culture** through a public arts initiative.
5. **Streamline the permitting process for events**.



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

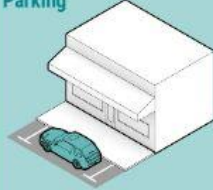
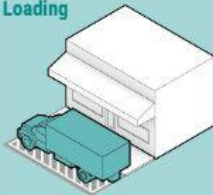
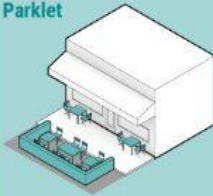
GOAL 2

Downtown will be a place where small businesses feel supported and customers feel safe and encouraged to explore all that downtown has to offer.



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

1. Develop an integrated and centralized program of public safety interventions for downtown and other urban districts as necessary.
2. Preserve affordable space for ground-floor small businesses.
3. Provide technical support to downtown retailers and restaurateurs.
4. **Develop strategic parking and loading management for business and customer use.** →
5. Appoint a dedicated coordinator to guide businesses through permitting and operational challenges.
6. Expand business hours and programming to capitalize on downtown events.
7. Address gaps and need for increased variety of businesses through strategic tenant recruitment.

Category	Uses	Effective Hours
Parking 	Customer Parking	All Day
	Handicap Parking	All Day
Loading 	Short-Term Loading	7am-6pm
	Long-Term Loading	All Day
	Entertainment Loading	4pm-12am
Parklet 	Outdoor Dining	All Day
	Lounge Area	All Day

WELCOME HOME

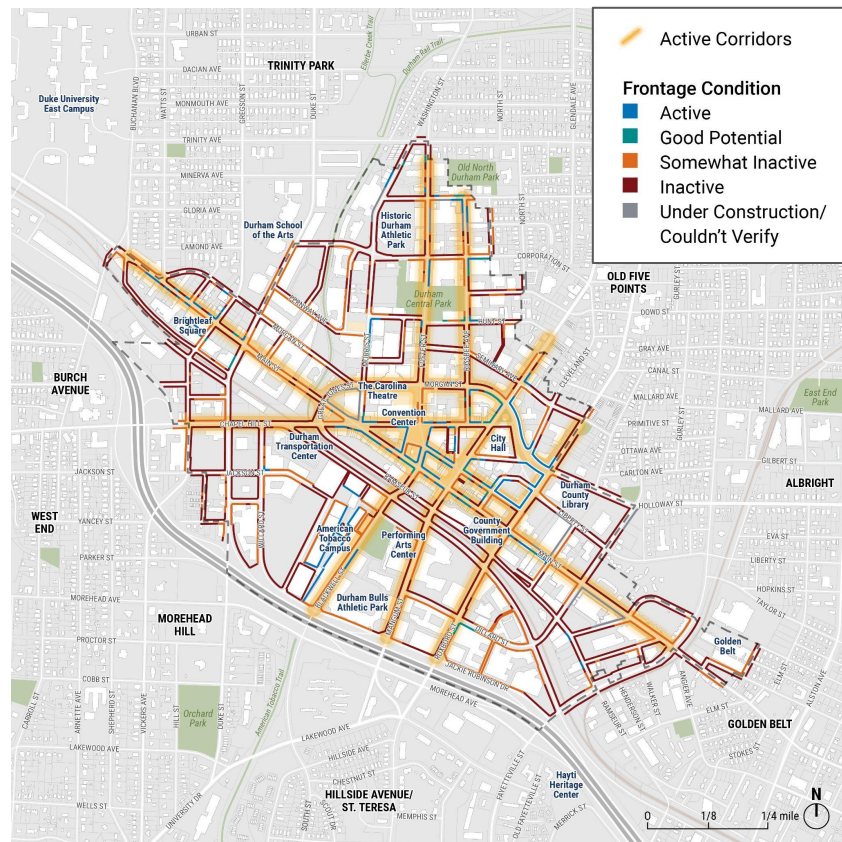
GOAL 3

Downtown will feel like a true neighborhood where diverse housing options, essential amenities, and development thoughtfully coexist.



WELCOME HOME

- 1. Reserve publicly-owned sites for future mixed-income and mixed-use development.**
- 2. Coordinate with supportive housing providers and advocates to address needs of the unhoused population.**
 - Unhoused Strategic Plan in progress*
- 3. Develop a micro-grant program for community-led implementation.**
- 4. Continue to engage downtown residents to promote a sense of community.**
- 5. Set clear expectations for how key development sites should be designed.**



WALK ≠ ROLL

GOAL 4

Downtown will offer a safer and more attractive travel experience for pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers.



WALK + ROLL

1. Redesign the Loop.
2. Strengthen multimodal connections along key streets and between anchor destinations.
3. Strengthen connections along Foster/Corcoran /Blackwell Streets as a major pathway.



COMMON GROUNDS

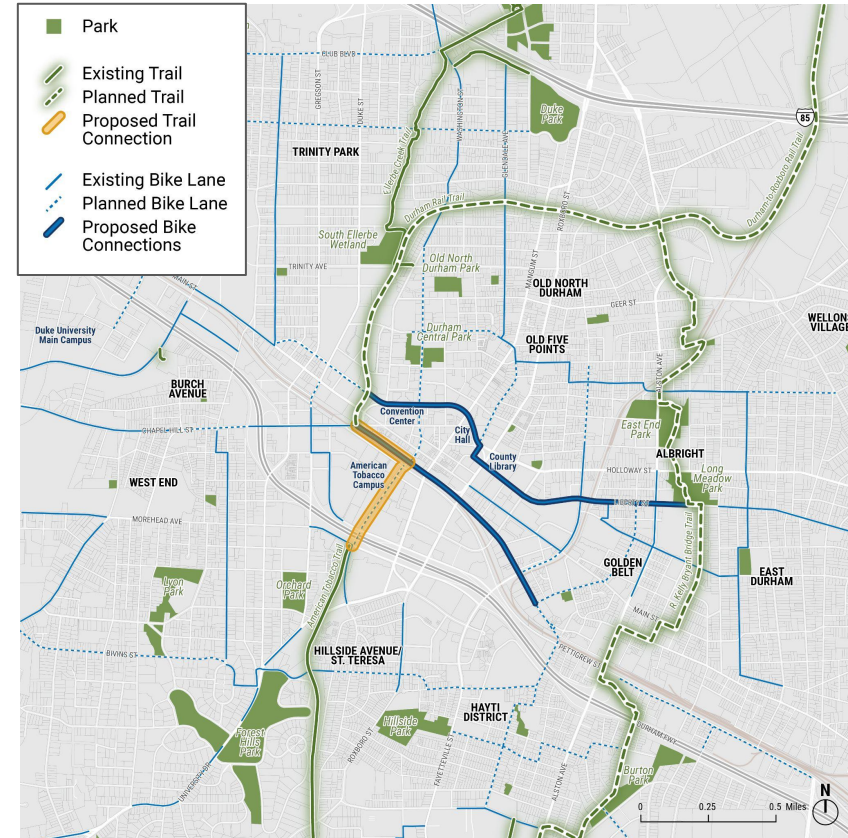
GOAL 5

Downtown will be filled with inviting, connected, and well-utilized public spaces.



COMMON GROUNDS

1. Improve connections between open space assets to create a strong downtown open space network. →
2. Upgrade CCB Plaza.
3. Redesign Convention Center Plaza.
4. Leverage the uniqueness of downtown's alleys.
5. Position the YMCA as a downtown anchor.
6. Provide more shade downtown.



DOWNTOWN WORKS

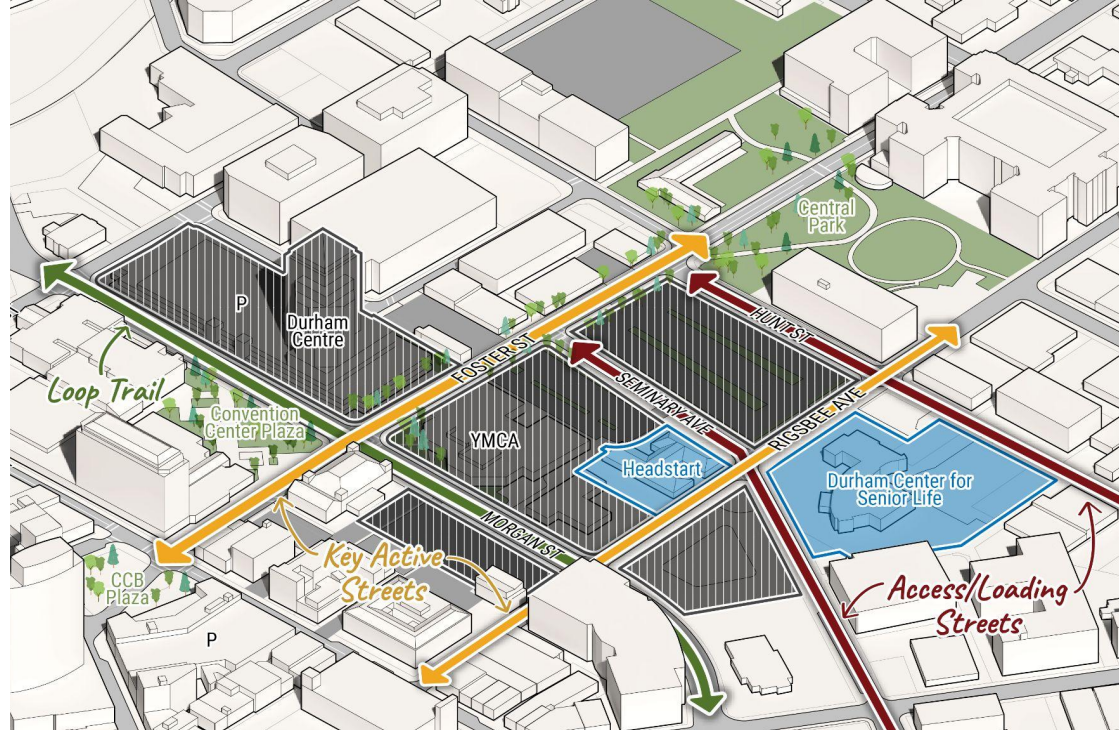
GOAL 6

Downtown will be a home for companies of all sizes, fostering job growth and cultivating a consistent daily workforce that enhances downtown vibrancy and sustains local restaurants and retailers.



DOWNTOWN WORKS

1. Preserve older, funkier downtown buildings for affordable office space.
2. Re-tenant existing office space.
3. Explore conversion of existing commercial buildings into lab space and explore locations for new construction lab buildings.
4. Keep event-driven economic activity downtown. →



THE MORE YOU KNOW

GOAL 7

Downtown will be perceived locally and regionally as a safe and welcoming destination that is easy to navigate and offers a variety of goods and experiences that are accessible to everyone.



THE MORE YOU KNOW

1. **Improve perceptions of safety in downtown through marketing and messaging.**
2. **Change the narrative that downtown isn't for everyone.**
3. **Highlight the affordable opportunities within downtown.**
4. **Unify downtown by promoting destinations and not districts.**

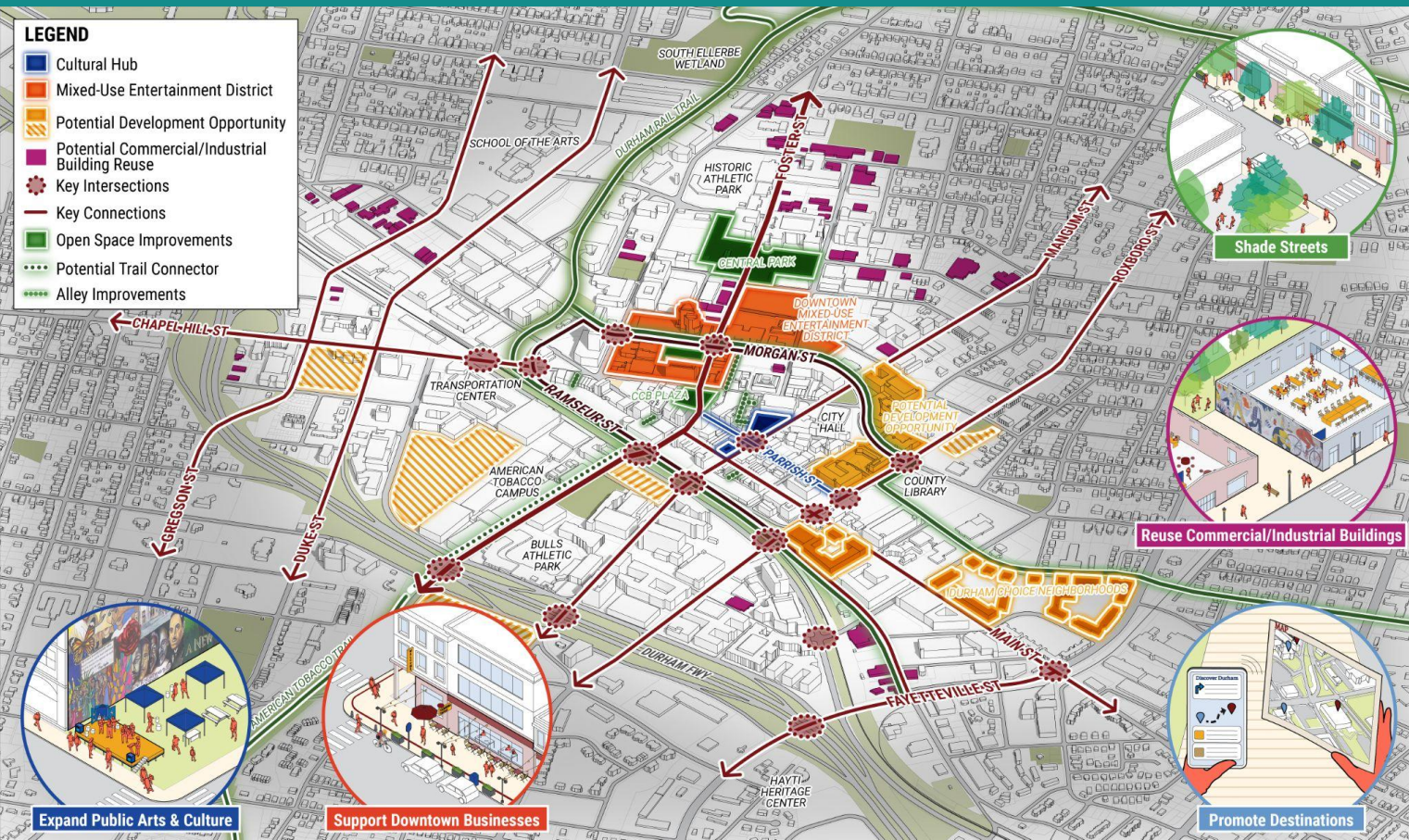


Sources: All Together Studio (right); Downtown Norfolk Council (left)

VISION FOR DOWNTOWN DURHAM

LEGEND

- Cultural Hub
- Mixed-Use Entertainment District
- Potential Development Opportunity
- Potential Commercial/Industrial Building Reuse
- Key Intersections
- Key Connections
- Open Space Improvements
- Potential Trail Connector
- Alley Improvements



ROOTED & READY

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

WELCOME HOME

WALK + ROLL

COMMON GROUNDS

DOWNTOWN WORKS

THE MORE YOU KNOW

Implementation

Implementation

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Action Number	Action	Action Type	Other Relevant Actions	Early Action Project?	Status	Lead Partner (department/organization)	Lead Contact(s) (person + contact information)	Other Partners	Notes
2	(1) Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination that reflects both past and present identities.									
3	1.0	Form a TAG to guide the overall vision for Parrish Street as a must-see cultural destination.								
4		- Convene a meeting(s) with relevant stakeholders, community members, and City/County staff to determine who will be part of the TAG for the Parrish Street Vision.	Coordination		EARLY ACTION PROJECT	NOT STARTED ▾	DDI		- Parrish Street business owners - Hayti Heritage Center - Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce - Former Parrish Street Forum members - City-County Planning - City Transportation Department - General Services Department - Environmental and Street Services Department - Property owners	
5		- Create a multi-year action plan to implement the Parrish Street vision, including identifying opportunities for public engagement and community workshops as well as partners and potential funding sources.	Planning		EARLY ACTION PROJECT	NOT STARTED ▾			- Parrish Street TAG	
6	1.1	Redesign Black Wall Street Gardens to honor the area's history while welcoming a greater range of visitors and foot traffic.								
7		- Convene a meeting relevant City/County departments and stakeholders to discuss a redesign/expansion of Black Wall Street Gardens.	Coordination			NOT STARTED ▾	City's Cultural and Public Art Program		- Parrish Street TAG - DDI - Public Art Committee - Hayti Heritage Center	
8		- Perform public outreach to gather input on what the future Black Wall Street Gardens should look like.	Engagement			NOT STARTED ▾			- Parrish Street TAG - DDI - Public Art Committee - Hayti Heritage Center	
9		- Identify potential funding sources and philanthropic donors for improvements.	Fundraising			NOT STARTED ▾			- Parrish Street TAG - DDI - Public Art Committee - Hayti Heritage Center	
10		- Develop a call for artists/artist selection process, which may include a selection panel composed of artists, community members, and local officials.	Procurement			NOT STARTED ▾			- Parrish Street TAG - DDI - Public Art Committee - Hayti Heritage Center	

TAG, You're It!

Tactical Action Groups (TAGs)

- A temporary and dedicated group of individuals that are tasked with helping to ***implement*** specific recommendations or initiatives outlined in the Downtown Blueprint (in collaboration with additional partners).
- TAG members should represent key partner organizations most aligned with each recommendation.
- For example, transforming Parrish Street would be led by one or more TAGs, while redesigning the Loop would be led by a different one.
- The process to form each TAG will vary based on the specific recommendation. TAG members will represent different skill sets, expertise, backgrounds, and interest.

Implementation Example:

Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination that reflects both past and present identities.

Three primary elements

Physical Improvements



Small Business Opportunities



Events & Placemaking

Led by

Tactical Action Group



Other Partners:

- City-County Planning
- City Transportation Department
- General Services Department
- Environmental & Street Services Depart.
- City's Cultural & Public Art Program
- Public Art Committee
- Durham Parks & Recreation
- Parrish Street Business Owners
- Property Owners
- Hayti Heritage Center
- Greater Durham Black Chamber of Commerce
- Former Parrish Street Forum members

Implementation Example:

Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination that reflects both past and present identities.

Action

1.0 - Form a TAG to guide the overall vision for Parrish Street as a must-see cultural destination.

- Convene a meeting(s) with relevant stakeholders, community members, and City/County staff to determine who will be part of the TAG for the Parrish Street Vision.
- Create a multi-year action plan to implement the Parrish Street vision, including identifying opportunities for public engagement and community workshops as well as partners and potential funding sources.



Implementation Example:

Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination that reflects both past and present identities.

Action

1.1 - Redesign Black Wall Street Gardens to honor the area's history while welcoming a greater range of visitors and foot traffic.

- Convene a meeting relevant City/County departments and stakeholders to discuss a redesign/expansion of Black Wall Street Gardens.
- Perform public outreach to gather input on what the future Black Wall Street Gardens should look like.
- Identify potential funding sources and philanthropic donors for improvements.
- Develop a call for artists/artist selection process, which may include a selection panel composed of artists, community members, and local officials.



Implementation Example:

Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination that reflects both past and present identities.

Action

1.2 - Explore redevelopment opportunities for the Chapel Hill Street surface parking lot.

- Perform an assessment to determine if the Chapel Hill Street surface parking lot and the parking garage could be redeveloped, based on existing and future parking needs.
- If appropriate, hire a structural engineer to determine the lifespan of the existing parking garage.
- If open space is determined to be the more appropriate use, hire a landscape architect to design the new open space.
- If a new mixed-use building is determined to be the more appropriate use, develop an RFQ/RFP for potential developers. Prioritize uses that will complement the larger vision for Parrish Street.



Implementation Example:

Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination that reflects both past and present identities.

Action

1.8 - Improve access to capital for entrepreneurs, especially Black small business owners and developers who have historically had limited access to capital.

- Partner with mission-driven lenders, CDFIs, and philanthropic organizations to establish or expand local grant and loan programs with flexible underwriting criteria to better serve Black entrepreneurs who have historically faced barriers to traditional financing.
- Provide technical assistance and financial coaching to help entrepreneurs navigate the lending landscape, prepare business plans, improve credit profiles, and complete loan or grant applications successfully.



Implementation Example:

Celebrate Parrish Street as a unique destination that reflects both past and present identities.

Action

1.11 - Provide storytelling opportunities through programming and temporary and permanent installations.

- Convene a meeting with relevant stakeholders to discuss how to best integrate existing public art into the redesigned Parrish Street and identify opportunities for new temporary/permanent art installations.
- Develop a call for artists/artist selection process to create new art installations for Parrish Street.
- Install temporary and permanent art installations.
- Coordinate with the broader downtown public arts initiative to ensure the Parrish Street installations are included in the long-term maintenance plan and any marketing strategies.



Example: Greenwood Rising, Tulsa, OK

Things are already happening!

Rooted & Ready

- Public art in downtown

Open For Business

- Safety Ambassadors
- Safety resource (magnet) for downtown businesses
- Retail Market Analysis & Strategy
- Retail Incubator (Market on Market)

Welcome Home

- Unhoused Strategic Plan–Community Solutions
- County RFP for day-center for unhoused
- Revamp of our It's Your Neighborhood/Resident Council

Walk & Roll

- Numerous transportation plans

Common Ground

- Paper Streets (w/ City's Innovation Team)
- Historic Durham Athletic Park Feasibility Study
- Durham Central Park Vision

Downtown Works

- Commercial Land Trust Study
- DDI's Available Properties Database
- Explore Event Driven Opportunities

The More You Know

- DDI Marketing/Promotion efforts

Thank you!