

from City of the New South

Durham

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Chapter Eight: Support Development

CHAPTER 8

support development

*“Nature. . . has ordained that difficulty should precede every
work of excellence.”
- Quintillian*

Additional Development

Beyond the Major Development Strategies outlined earlier, there are a number of development and redevelopment activities that must take place to reinforce downtown as a vibrant and lively activity center. The *Proposed Land Use Plan* shown on page 67 indicates a number of areas where substantial alteration of the existing land use pattern could reinforce the goals of the master plan. These areas and their related land use objectives are outlined below.

Bull Durham District

The Bull Durham District encompasses an area immediately south of the City Center and adjacent to the Development Bridge. In fact, the Development Bridge will be an important piece of the Bull Durham District, but the former American Tobacco warehouses give the area its unique character. The Durham Bulls Athletic Park is another notable landmark in the district. The Bull Durham District has long been the focus of major commercial development discussions. The vacant American Tobacco site and several underutilized land parcels offer significant development potential given access to NC147, existing market demand and recent area investments. The close proximity to the Research Triangle Park, in addition to new county office space, also adds to the appeal of this area for future office development.

If developers are able to assemble land affordably and the City facilitates their efforts, there is the potential for several major commercial developments to occur over the next three to ten years. Commercial development potential includes larger office users and a modest amount of entertainment uses. Residential development in and around the Bull Durham District may also be a possibility.



The Lucky Strike smokestack is a visual landmark in the Bull Durham District.

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Potential residential development west of the American Tobacco complex

This development is a logical extension of the ballpark development. Sports venues by themselves are not enough to revitalize an area. They require appropriate uses in the vicinity. These uses include restaurants, bars, and other entertainment that will attract people before a game and keep them after a game. The area also needs commercial uses that will attract people to the area when the stadium is not in use. Hotels, specialty retailers, and theaters are appropriate for the mix. The development of the American Tobacco complex only reinforces the need for the Development Bridge. Without enhanced connections between south end attractions and City Center, Downtown will continue to be a collection of fragmented destinations.

Lansing, Michigan built a new stadium for its single-A baseball team, the Lansing Lugnuts. In the first 14 months after the stadium opened, an additional \$4 million of construction took place near the stadium. Restaurants and clubs have renovated previously abandoned or underused warehouses near the stadium in which to house their businesses.

South End - West: Introduce New Single and Multi-Family Housing

The area immediately east of Carr Street (former American Tobacco complex) will undergo substantial change if proposed plans for the site come to fruition. This change will include the introduction of new office, commercial, entertainment, retail, and residential uses. This development will significantly impact the redevelopment potential of the blocks to the west, roughly bound by Carr, Jackson, Gregson, and the Durham Freeway. The uses currently occupying land in the west portion of the area south of the railroad tracks are a sparse mix of offices, vacant structures, and auto sales that do not reinforce the idea of Downtown as a dense, pedestrian-friendly activity center. As such, the potential to substantially transform this area to support the overall Downtown development goals is good. Because the visibility of this area is prominent from the highway, significant positive change in this area will go a long way in improving the perception and image of Downtown.

Because analysis of the real estate market in the Durham area indicated that residential development is likely to be one of the strongest market sectors in the years ahead, the identification of areas where substantial new housing

could be introduced became one of the critical tasks of the master planning process. The west area of the south end is a good candidate for this type of development activity because of the existing single-family homes that exist west of Duke Street and because of the potential to strengthen connections to existing neighborhoods to the west and south of the interstate.

As many as 400-700 new multi-family apartments or condominiums could be provided in this area between Jackson and the interstate. As this development activity proceeds, it will be important to ensure that building siting, parking arrangement, and architectural design is compatible with the character of surrounding structures. Examples of similar downtown infill construction exist throughout the country and are good models for consideration as redevelopment moves forward. For example, Quality Hill in Kansas City provides 363 units of new housing within blocks of the Central Business District. This project maintains and reinforces the character of the urban environment while providing a new product for the Downtown housing market.



Quality Hill in Kansas City, Missouri

South End - East: Introduce New Office Uses

The eastern portion of the area south of the railroad tracks is not unlike the west area in its presentation of low-density, auto-oriented uses. The brick warehouse at Pettigrew and Roxboro is the only significant historic structure. This area, also like the east end, is fortunate to have good highway visibility and access which will help in the marketing of the properties to developers. Significant visible change in this area will also assist in Downtown image enhancement efforts because of its prominence to highway travelers.

The strength and success of the Diamond View office project at Mangum and Dillard indicate the potential for an expansion in this area of that market segment. The area roughly bound by Mangum, Dillard, Roxboro, Pettigrew, the railroad tracks and the interstate, offers more than 150 acres of potential redevelopment space. Because of the lack of such significant area within the core/'loop' area, this eastern portion of the south end may offer the greatest



Potential office development to the east of the Durham Bulls Athletic Park

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opportunity to introduce office uses that prefer more horizontal building configurations, immediately adjacent parking, direct highway access, and a more open, 'campus-type' environment. The potential exists to create more than 800,000 square feet of new office space and up to 700 parking spaces in surface and structured lots.

Again, the detailed design of such a development in this location will greatly influence the first impression that many visitors and downtown users gain as they enter Downtown from the south. As such, the importance of building design, siting, and parking arrangement must be carefully considered so that the appropriate image of Downtown Durham is projected.

Durham Central Park - East: Extend Park-Related Uses Eastward

Current plans for Central Park are evidence of the leadership and commitment present in Downtown Durham and of the visionary thinking necessary for any city to remain competitive in the current marketplace. There are opportunities, however, for the area of Central Park to be expanded to increase its visibility and presence, to make stronger connections to Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, and to reinforce existing uses, such as the YMCA.

The master plan proposes the incorporation of an additional 13 acres into the Central Park environs by more directly incorporating the old Durham Athletic Park, the parking lot north of the YMCA, and the western half and south third of the block bound by Hunt, Mangum, Seminary and Rigsbee. This expansion would allow for additional active spaces such as soccer or other recreational fields that are currently lacking in the existing proposal. As a result of this expansion, Central Park would be only two blocks from the City Center area— an easy walk even during a short lunch hour.

East End: Introduce New Housing and Neighborhood-Commercial Uses

The ability of east end neighborhoods to be integrated with and connected to Downtown has been inhibited by a proliferation of County facilities and social services between Roxboro and Dillard. The master plan proposes that new and existing County facilities be scattered roughly between Mor-



Potential expansion of Central Park to the south and east



gan and Dillard on both the east and west sides of Roxboro. This proposal would free up some sites between Roxboro and Dillard for new uses.

Because of the goal of bringing the neighborhoods closer to Downtown, new housing and neighborhood-oriented services (grocer, dry cleaner, drug store, etc.) would be the most appropriate uses as parcels become available. In fact, the block bound by Main, Queen, Ramseur, and Dillard offers roughly 9 acres which could result in the development of up to 180 new housing units. In addition, the area immediately west of Queen offers adaptive reuse space. To the north of Main there is the potential for additional neighborhood commercial space. There is the potential for partnerships with not-for-profit housing providers and community development corporations (CDCs), such as the Hayti Development Corporation, to facilitate development in this area.

Main Street: Develop Pedestrian-Oriented Entertainment Corridor

Main Street between Gregson and Fuller (Brightleaf area) is currently one of the biggest draws within Downtown. Approximately 225,000 people visit Brightleaf each year. Yet this traffic is not spilling over into the core/City Center area. In order to reverse that trend, the master plan proposes the development of an entertainment-related corridor that would extend from Brightleaf to the City Center and intersect with the Development Bridge project at Corcoran Street. The Bridge Development, the Durham Bulls Athletic Park, and the American Tobacco site have the potential to be major activity generators. Identifying ways of linking this area to activities in Brightleaf and the west end is a critical element of the master plan.

'Entertainment-related uses' do not have to be only bars and nightclubs; but should incorporate restaurants and specialty retail (unique, one-of-a-kind shops) that provide the streetscape with interesting and inviting facades and storefronts. Art galleries, coffee shops, and bookstores are additional uses that are compatible with this approach. As indicated in the *Urban Design* section of Chapter 6, careful thought should be given to the development of design guidelines for this area that respect the historic character of the buildings but also maximize creativity, vibrancy, color and lighting in a manner that supports daytime and evening activity.



Potential new residential and commercial uses east of Roxboro Street