

**MINUTE BOOK 23, PAGE 251  
CITY OF STATESVILLE SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING – September 14, 2009  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS – CITY HALL  
STATESVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA**

**Mayor Kutteh presiding:**

**Council present: Eisele, M Johnson, Steele, C.O. Johnson, Matthews, Stallard, Huggins**

**Staff Present: Ashley, Davis, Hites, Craddock, Pressley, Watts, Miglin, Currier, Salmon**

**Planning Board Present: Stamey, Alexander, Collier**

**DSDC – Tomlin, Konczal, Woodside, Dooley**

**Media – J McNally**

**Others: 45**

**I Call to order**

Mayor Kutteh called the meeting to order.

**II Invocation**

The invocation was given by the City Clerk.

**III Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Kutteh led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV Presentation of the recommended Statesville Downtown and NC-115 Streetscape/Land Use Master Plan**

Shaun Ferguson, a consultant with Land Design, reviewed the plan and stated it could be carried out in seven phases and sub-phases over the course of 10 years.

**Purpose of the Statesville Downtown & NC-115 Streetscape/Land Use Master Plan**

The purpose of this undertaking was to maintain and enhance the aesthetic appeal, access and impact of the historic downtown core and facilitate the redevelopment of the NC-115 corridor.

The consulting team assisted the city and DSDC in developing a master plan for the central downtown area and the NC-115 corridor to serve as a guide for future policy and investment decisions as well as detailed planning and design initiatives. The plan provides the necessary vision for directing growth, resources and investments.

**Guiding Principles**

The guiding principles were set early in the planning process with input from the Advisory Committee and the community. They describe in more detail the objectives of the Statesville Downtown & NC-115 streetscape/Land Use Master Plan. The plan and the supporting recommendations were developed in accordance with these principles.

- Enhance economic vitality through land use, design and marketing.
- Support existing viable businesses and other uses that complement the vision of for the study area. Encourage incremental development and redevelopment that adds to and enhances the current uses.

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- Create a new development pattern that is complementary to the existing historic character and fabric.
- Establish a balanced transportation system that supports access, safety and vitality for all users.
- Allow the downtown to function as the primary destination.
- Enliven NC-115 corridor as an important gateway into downtown.
- Embrace the interdependency of the downtown and NC-115 corridor with their adjacent neighborhoods to foster overall success.

## **Overview**

The Statesville Downtown & NC-115 streetscape/Land Use Master Plan was created in response to continued dialogue around issues and opportunities identified by the Advisory Committee and the community. Early in the plan process, a community meeting was organized and input gathered around various elements of the plan. This dialogue culminated in a two-day design workshop where plans were developed for each plan element. Plans developed during the workshop were reviewed by the Advisory Committee, elected officials and the public at a second community meeting held in conjunction with the two-day design workshop. The resulting plan comprises the vision for the future of downtown and the NC-115 corridor.

The plan recognizes existing land uses that are intended to continue, including those structures that contribute to the historic character and fabric. The plan also encourages incremental development and redevelopment that adds to and enhances existing land uses. To strengthen economic health of the downtown and the NC-115 corridor it is imperative to promote a diverse mix of uses and activities throughout study area. This should include a mix of retail, office institutional, residential, dining, entertainment and public open space.

The plan organizes new land uses by a set of eight districts. Districts are defined areas that emphasize a special or unique purpose within Statesville. Typically, each has a unique character.

## **North End**

This district consists of mixed office and residential uses. Limited retail and services and hotel are also allowed. The district includes established institutional areas including the Iredell County Public Library. This district is well connected to downtown and adjacent neighborhoods and has a similar character. This district is envisioned west of Center Street and north of Water Street.

## **Restaurant Row District**

The district is contiguous with the Downtown Retail District and provides a connection between this district and Mitchell Community College. Accommodations for pedestrian and walking, restaurants with outdoor dining and college-oriented businesses are envisioned for this district. College-oriented businesses intended for this district may include casual dining restaurants with outdoor dining, bookstores, cafes and similar uses. The district has a storefront façade character.

## **Mixed Office & Residential**

This district consists of mixed office and attached residential uses. Examples of residential uses include condos, townhome or multi-family residential. Live-work uses that include a mix office and residential uses would be encouraged in this area. Limited retail and services and hotel are also allowed in nodes typically at key intersections, with a storefront character. This district includes an established mix of office and residential areas. New buildings in downtown are to be oriented to Center St, E Broad St. and Front St. Mass, height and orientation of buildings to these frontages is important to create a pedestrian –friendly environment. This district is urban in

character, with building setbacks and facades that are scaled to the pedestrian. This district is intended to strengthen the vitality of the Downtown Retail District.

### **Downtown Retail District**

This district consists of a wide mix of uses. The primary use shall consist of retail (ground floor). Office, hotel and attached residential are also allowed. Due to the presence of existing storefront buildings, the type of residential use is likely to include condos above existing ground floor retail/office. The district is the primary retail destination in downtown and has the most accommodations for pedestrian and walking. The district has a storefront façade character.

### **Arts District**

This district consists of local arts, cultural and historical facilities. The district is oriented to the established arts and museum facilities along Meeting St. (the old jail) and flanking the Downtown Retail District. A cluster of museums and galleries is envisioned for the district along with multi-story office and residential uses. Museums may be considered for this area. Programs such as artist in residence or related programs, including affordable opportunities for tenants, are encouraged. This district would allow for enhanced educational opportunities and events in downtown. The district is urban in character, with building setbacks and facades that are scaled to the pedestrian.

### **Arts & Entertainment District**

This district serves multiple purposes and builds off of an already interesting blend of architecture, land uses and urban patterns unique from the rest of the study area. This district would consist of a strong east west connection with art studios, music venues, and funky restaurants lining the streets. Rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of some existing buildings is intended in the long term to enliven this district and better connect adjacent underutilized blocks to Center Street and the Academy Hill historic residential area to the northwest. This district would also serve to lessen the divide between downtown and the Shelton Avenue corridor created by Garner Bagnal and the rail line.

Portions of the existing mill site located at the terminus of Center Street can be adaptively reused for boutique shopping, dining, entertainment, farmer's market, offices and special events.

Storefront buildings on Western Avenue can be adaptively reused for retail uses such as shops, dining, a cultural center and art gallery. Additional residential uses can be integrated on site.

Sites along Center Street and to the west along Steele St. may include possible entertainment and retail uses such as live music venues, restaurants and pubs. A neighborhood theatre is another possibility. Established industrial uses can continue. If abandoned, some may be adaptively reused to accommodate office and art related uses (crafts, glass blowers, metal workers, potters and art studios).

The Historic Depot is a strategic site, owned by NCDOT, with long term potential for a passenger rail stop in Statesville. In the long term, it provides for enhanced pedestrian connections between the Historic Dept and the Arts and Entertainment District via the underpass (NC-115) and/or a pedestrian bridge across the railroad north to the node at the terminus of Center St. Any new development proposals on this site should take into consideration a long term master plan for this site contemplating a passenger rail stop, plaza and related facilities.

### **South District**

This district serves the adjacent neighborhoods with mixed use development, office and attached residential uses. This district is well connected to a proposed park and adjacent established residential neighborhoods. General descriptions of the areas with this district are:

- Mixed use node (primarily multi-story office and residential-condos above, limited retail) near the intersection of Hwy 70 (Garner Bagnal Blvd) and NC-115
- Attached residential uses such as townhomes along west side frontage of NC-115, north of Raleigh Avenue
- Linear park along east side of NC-115, recognizing the limited depth of properties between right-of-way and existing railroad.
- Office uses along west side frontage of NC-115, south of Raleigh Avenue transition to attached residential (townhome) uses in proximity to existing residential neighborhoods
- Relocate existing police substation to the area designated within the Gateway District.

### **Gateway District**

This district provides for mixed use, attached residential, civic and institutional uses including a new municipal services node. Mixed use areas are more likely to have chain retailers and limited anchor retailers such as a grocery store. Multi-story office is expected in the mixed use area. West of NC-115, residential uses would likely include condos above ground floor uses. East of NC-115, residential uses would consist of condos transitioning to multi-family uses to the east. This district serves as a southern gateway to the corridor and downtown.

A missed use area is to be provided as part of the redevelopment of the intersection of Amity Hill Rd and NC-115. The redevelopment concept contemplates eventual transition of the existing Godfrey Lumber Company to attached residential use. The establishment of this area as a major industrial district does not meet the intent of the Gateway District.

Municipal facilities including Fire and Police would establish a desired presence in this area, promote public safety and serve as a catalyst for the large scale redevelopment at the intersection of Amity Hill Ra and NC-115.

It also serves as a major entryway from the new Larkin development and I-77 to the downtown area. The current road configuration in this area prohibits redevelopment opportunities, and needs to be reconfigured to allow for parcel assemblage to create the mass that is needed to spur redevelopment in this area.

### **Circulation and Parking**

A guiding principle for the study was to establish a balanced transportation system that supports access, safety and vitality for all users. Currently, many of the streets in downtown Statesville have more vehicular travel lanes than they need given the daily volumes they carry. In many cases, the intersections downtown are far too wide and give far too much priority to the movement of vehicles. While the movement of cars to, from and within downtown are and always will be important, accommodating of cars to the detriment of the pedestrian damages downtowns economically, Right turn lanes, which are often simply used to allow cars to keep moving quickly, should be used sparingly in downtown Statesville. Every effort should be made to have narrow intersections with right (around 25') corner radii. This will create short crosswalks, safe sight lines and a healthy balance between cars and pedestrians. The intersections designs illustrated in the proposed cross-section designs use techniques such as lane narrowing and intersection bulbouts to shorten these crosswalks.

He reviewed specific recommendations for changes to Center Street, Broad Street, Meeting Street, Front Street, NC-115 and Court Street.

An analysis of several downtown sites was undertaken to help with parking. Two sites were considered potential options:

- The first location considered is the northeast corner of Front and Meeting Street. A larger parking structure (over 400 spaces) could fit on this site. This location would require the demolition of the current abandoned buildings on this corner

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and would also occupy the land currently serving as surface parking for the Vance Hotel building.

- The other location considered was the current location of a surface parking lot along Water Street and Pecan Park. A structure on this location would be small (225 spaces), but would serve the existing buildings in the northeast quadrant of downtown. It could also serve to potentially stimulate positive redevelopment in conjunction with the County-owned property on the north side of Water Street.

## **Urban Design & Streetscape**

Promoting a strong relationship between areas within the public realm (streets, sidewalks, trails) and private property is a major focus of the streetscape improvement recommendations. The City of Statesville and DSDC have recognized the link between high quality streetscape as an incentive to private investment. Other benefits recognized include a cohesive and strong visual environment and enhanced visitor experience.

These improvements relate to sidewalks, street trees, lighting, street furniture and landscape improvements that will provide a consistent and distinct character to key streets. Each streetscape design shall relate to the character envisioned for each district area, the intended function the street and the proposed land use.

### **Commercial Main Street – Broad Street and Center Street**

These streetscapes function as the primary retail streets, and will appropriately need the highest level of design and detail that will create an environment that would encourage pedestrians to shop, stroll and linger downtown. The streets must be safe, clean, well lit, with easy parking access- well signed, and distinctive and beautiful. North Center Street streetscape functions more as a secondary retail street.

### **Commercial Collector Streets – Meeting Street and Front Street**

Meeting and Front Street function as secondary retail streets and should be distinct from the primary streets in that there needs to be less detail in the paving, less width in the sidewalk dimension, and greater spacing of benches and trash receptacles.

### **Urban Avenue Vehicular/Image Streets – NC-115/Shelton Avenue**

NC-115/Shelton Avenue is an important vehicular image street that serves as a gateway announcing arrival to the downtown to vehicular traffic. These streets should have clear signage, attractive landscaping and screening of parking lots and storage areas, and gateway elements such as welcome signs and art work.

The NC-115 corridor is a key entryway into the heart of downtown Statesville. Currently its appearance serves to interfere with creating a positive impression of the downtown. This plan recommends priority is given to this corridor for streetscape improvements to bring about an attractive tree-lined entryway into downtown.

### **Residential Streets**

Significant historical neighborhoods surrounding the downtown area need to be well connected to encourage area residents to walk to downtown and encourage visitors to explore the historic neighborhoods. This plan recommends a minimum 5 foot planting strip with shade trees and 5 foot sidewalk.

## **Natural Features, Open Space, Parks and Recreation**

A critical element of any downtown is the number, location and types of public spaces. Public spaces include elements that provide necessary linkages between publicly accessible destinations within and outside of downtown. The proposed Open Space, Bike & Pedestrian Linkages map recommends enhancements to the existing public and open space framework. One guiding principle is to establish a balanced transportation

system that supports access, safety and vitality for all users. Through a variety of parks greenways and on-and off-street trail experiences, the plan seeks to enhance and diversify the options a user has to engage in outdoor public spaces in downtown and the NC-115 corridor.

Most of the park facilities are located outside the downtown core. Pecan Park represents the only public park space in the study area. The plan includes enhancements to Pecan Park to better connect it physically and visually to Center Street and Water Street. The park is presently underutilized and requires reconfiguration and improvements to be functional and accessible to the public. New public parks are envisioned at strategic locations along the NC-115 corridor to provide recreational experiences within walking distance of established neighborhoods.

Greenways offer significant connections between destinations for pedestrians and bicyclist as well as a much desired recreational amenity to their communities. The City of Statesville already has identified key greenways in their Greenway Master Plan.

Larry Pressley addressed the utility needs assessment that was done for downtown. The water line was built in 1920, it was cast iron. Also, the sewer lines date back to the 1940's. Both are at a point where they need to be replaced. Mr. Pressley suggested a new water line is constructed to replace the existing line. He further recommended that fire lines be installed on both sides of the road. Also sewer lines have very similar conditions. It is time to consider redoing those as well. He strongly encouraged that Council support the utility estimates which will serve the city for many years to come. The cost for the work is included in the proposal.

Lisa Salmon provided a financial overview. She reviewed a chart with seven phases which identify the costs for each division (streets, water & sewer, electrical and streetscape amenities). She also reviewed 5 year construction schedule with loan amortization schedule and debt service requirements. She then provided the same information for 10 year proposal. (Charts incorporated into minutes by reference).

Council member J Johnson asked if any studies were conducted to determine where the revenue would come from to pay for this. Ms. Salmon responded that if the tax base grows it would help to mitigate the impact on the tax rate but she stressed that it would definitely affect the tax rate.

### **Questions and Answer Session**

Council member M Johnson stated the numbers from Greenville have a different population base. His numbers show that from 1980 through today the public investment of \$ 118,725,000 and a private investment of \$ 298,634,000. He asked if those figures were close. Shaun Ferguson replied yes.

Mayor Kutteh remarked that doesn't come close to satisfying the debt service payments on those improvements so other sources of funding and financing would likely be needed.

Council member M Johnson countered that the tax revenue is recurrent. This is a single one-time cost. They are reaping the tax benefit off the rise in the tax base on property every year. It might cover the debt services.

Mayor Kutteh noted that Greenville had a history of significant failures which Statesville is trying to avoid. He stressed the financing will be the most complex issue to decide. He asked for comments from Council about aspects of the physical things or questions of the presentation made tonight.

Mr. Hites noted that Mr. Ferguson talked a lot about pavement, width of the lanes, etc. You really need to talk about what happens to the sidewalks? If the sidewalks get larger; explain why. The square at Center and Broad gets narrower and the crossings get narrower; explain why.

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Shaun Ferguson explained the additional sidewalks move into the travel lanes capturing additional space that can be used for something. The current sidewalk is not adequate for outdoor dining, it may not allow for comfortable pedestrian walking as well as significant landscaping. Ferguson explained the intersection design for the square. There are currently right turn lanes that really aren't needed. We will recapture that right lane area with additional intersection, narrowing the distance that the pedestrian has to cross, keeping them safer and making the pedestrian more visible to traffic and capturing additional public space.

Mayor Kutteh noted that the presentation recommended going from 4 lanes to 3 and capturing about the same amount of traffic.

Shaun Ferguson stated the volume of traffic is maximized around 25-30 mph. Currently the street is overbuilt. It was built for more volume than is actually there. That is leading to people driving a lot faster than they should through downtown. We are trying to encourage people to use slower speeds and to respect the pedestrians more.

Council member Matthews asked about the construction of the parking decks. He asked for further explanation.

Shaun Ferguson recalled that during the multi-day work session we looked at maps for a parking deck. Two properties are possibilities. Front St and Meeting St deck would provide 400 spaces at 3 levels. The deck option at Pecan Park would provide about 225 spaces at a similar height.

Council member Matthews asked about the possibility of the city renting spaces.

Shaun Ferguson agreed the possibilities are open.

Mayor Kutteh added that the City would have help in building the deck from other city partners according to past discussions.

Council member Steele applauded the plan and questioned the possibility of moving Pecan Park to the street. What advantage would that be?

Shaun Ferguson agreed that Pecan Park is unique. Currently it is surrounded by surface parking lots which distracts from how it is used. The park has wonderful pecan trees which are important to the community. The benefits of moving the park to the street would be that people would want to use the park space more frequently. It would become less of a passive park and it would have more activities. We would change the very nature of the park and how it is used.

Council member Steele asked if Garner Bagnal stays a 4-lane road. Mr. Ferguson stated it is redesigned for 4-lanes. Council member Steele asked if the bicycle lane in next to the outer lane. Mr. Ferguson explained that the bicycle lane substitutes for a sidewalk.

Doug Eason – 905 Sherwood Lane commended DSDC and the downtown committee for the job they have done. He agreed that it is absolutely critical to look to the future. He acknowledged his pleasure that the committee consulted with all of us. He stated that he is very excited about NC-115 because the gateway is critical.

Dr. Eason stated he was not in support of the aesthetic redesign plans for the downtown facelift. He noted that he didn't feel the city's financial outlay would be recouped by private investment and he said that other cities have made such investments only to discover their residents didn't like them.

David Meachem with SHA also applauded these efforts. He stressed this cost is an investment and not an expense. He thanked city staff for keeping SHA informed throughout this process.

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Anita Johnson – 323 Walnut Street- representing DSDC urged Council to do something to support businesses that are already here. It is important for people on the residential and commercial side to know that the town is making commitment to improve downtown.

Mayor Kutteh advised there are maps in the next room for anyone that wishes to review.

Becky Hill - 436 East End Avenue stated that she was in the group that went to Greenville. She stressed that it is time to invest in Statesville. We need to transform the downtown. The growth is coming up from Charlotte. Ms. Hill urged Council to approve the proposed plan as other communities have done.

Bob Dooley 411 S Center St. stated the master plan is one of the most important decisions council will ever make. It certainly is the most expensive. We all agree that the S Statesville area is hurting. Those residents have waited a long time for help. He encouraged Council to save downtown which is our best asset.

Bill Mills -1521 Shelton Ave had a question on the street itself. What is an enhanced 4 lane?

Shaun Ferguson stated the NC-115 corridor today is 4 lanes undivided. The proposal will provide a planted median. The lanes will move outward around the median. There is currently very little landscaping. The plan proposes landscaping strips. The road will be brought up to current standards and will be 50 – 100' of right-of-way wider which NC-DOT is already acquiring.

Doris Allison- 9<sup>th</sup> Street appreciated the efforts to make Statesville a vital city. She noted it is hard to see our area as part of the dream when you live where we do. She thanked Council for including S Statesville in this plan.

Ryan Scott- 444 W End Avenue on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce advised the Chamber is enthusiastic about this plan. He stated that in order to attract and maintain businesses a plan like this is what is needed.

Jan Woodside, Chair of DEDC thanked Council and the committee for their hard work and dedication. She noted that she has never seen so much enthusiasm for a project.

Peter Molleur of Mulberry Street advised this plan is going to pay benefits. It will create an entertainment area and enthusiasm for the college. He urged Council to move forward and strive to improve downtown because Charlotte is coming.

Council member M Johnson had several points about the budget. He stated that the City couldn't possibly meet the schedule for the 5 year construction plan. We have to keep merchants open. This budget is designed so the numbers can slip. If Council approves moving through the engineering and permitting phase it might be done by December of 2011. Then Council would have the opportunity to gauge the numbers and adjust accordingly. NC-115 committee and NC-DOT are working together to get the framework done.

Mayor Kutteh closed the public hearing but advised there will be more opportunities to speak later. Council will begin review and analysis of this proposed plan immediately.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

**ATTEST:**

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**Mayor**

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**City Clerk**

