

The public input meetings of Chattanooga Forward were held over three occasions in May, June, and July to solicit input from all of Chattanooga citizens. Additionally, our task force meetings were well attended by members representing the downtown community over many occasions throughout the year. Most recently the task force convened in September at River City Company to discuss the latest report, suggest changes for a final document, and to hear final input and results of some of the earlier recommendations.

This document represents the second, and final, Downtown Task Force report, highlighting categories of emphasis identified by the task force early in the process as well as additional ideas generated in the public meetings attended by hundreds of Chattanoogaans throughout the summer. In addition to the strongly attended public meetings, we received additional survey input through the Chattanooga Forward [website](#) that has supplemented our task force's working document. For reference, the April report is included on the last page of this document.

The Downtown Task Force identified at its first meeting in January six categories of improvement on which to focus.

- Increase the supply of workforce housing
- Enhance transportation / parking options
- Renew focus on filling downtown office space
- Strengthen Downtown / UTC connection
- Protect current investment and encourage new development
- Renew focus on public realm

Since the focus of Chattanooga Forward is action, the initial report in April sought to identify short-term, implementable ideas — turning real ideas from real Chattanoogaans into doable projects and initiatives that help improve our community for the people that live here.

For downtown, one of the pervasive themes is to continue to emphasize that downtown is for every Chattanoogaan — accessible, attractive, approachable, and usable by as wide a range of people as possible. While the task force recognizes the importance of tourism to our downtown, the downtown first and foremost should be for local Chattanoogaans, from Lookout Valley to East Brainerd to the Southside.

Everything we do should reinforce mass appeal and accessibility. A healthy downtown for Chattanoogaans will be a place that tourists want to visit.

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New Recommendations

Enhance Transportation/Parking Options

By End of Calendar Year 2014

- Completion of new policies and guidelines for complete streets – to aid developers, the city, and utility companies in improving safety, usability, and value of our downtown street, cycle-route, and sidewalk grid
- Two-Way Conversions – work towards additional two-way conversions for increased safety and improved connectivity in the downtown.
- Develop bike infrastructure implementation plan, to include, but not necessarily be limited to,
 - Re-stripping of streets in association with yearly resurfacing to accommodate all travel modes
 - Protected bike lanes to connect neighborhoods within the “bowl” (Missionary Ridge to River, Mountain to Stringer’s Ridge) to include a hierarchy of secondary and primary east/west and north/south protected lanes.
- Develop policy for how to incorporate public art into traffic improvement (crosswalks, control boxes, bike lane markings, signage, bus shelters, or other enhancements) – some ideas include:
 - Control boxes for traffic control signals
 - Public Art incorporated into CARTA bus shelters and other street furniture
 - Artful design and engineering integrated into department’s regular capital improvement and operational programs.

Calendar Year 2015 and Beyond

- Make frequency, fare, route, or other changes to downtown services for busses to improve connectivity and increase public transit usage.
- Create long-term parking plan, including strategies for fares, wayfinding, new parking (structured garages and otherwise), and parking requirements for development
- Develop downtown streetscape plan, for funding, implementation, and integration with future private development
- Develop a plan for a new multi-modal transit center(s) and associated routing and service improvements

Foster Vibrant Downtown Development Atmosphere

By End of Calendar Year 2014

- Adopt and implement affordable housing downtown PILOT
- Design Studio – Work with private and public partners to determine a mechanism for advocating for high quality building design
- Create and hire a Development Concierge to improve development quality and DRC customer service
- Identify boundaries of, and planning process for, an innovation district

Calendar Year 2015 and Beyond

- Develop and Implement Form-Based Code
- Create a public space and development plan for remaining development parcels in the vicinity of the city’s waterfront edges
- Develop an incentive plan for filling vacant downtown space
- Identify public realm Impact or Development fee structure for adding value and improving public realm amenities for downtown developers.

Strengthen Downtown/ UTC Connection

By End of Calendar Year 2014

- Expand existing Mocs shuttle for direct access to the Central Business District
- Increase participation of internships as they relate to developing initiatives that promote better university – downtown inter-connectivity

Calendar Year 2015 and Beyond

- Implement at least one bike route (buffered and/or protected) that connects campus to downtown
- Develop an Urban Fellows program to attract creative students to come to, or stay in, Chattanooga, working in fields of public service.

Renew Focus on Public Realm

By End of Calendar Year 2014

- Develop new public spaces/special events strategy/policy for improved customer service, enhanced event benefits and participation, and development of the city's brand as a great, mid-sized, outdoor-focused city.
- Improve street closure policy for special events
- Develop a strong connection between community and safety personnel (fire and police) to work to prevent emergencies before they happen and build ownership among neighborhood leaders.

Calendar Year 2015 and Beyond

- Develop policy including incentives (carrots) and requirements (sticks) to encourage neighborhood-friendliness of industrial-based employers
- Develop long-range plan for Chattanooga-driven public space/special events, including a community event calendar.
- Begin construction on new Miller Park and MLK plaza
- Begin construction on new Patten Parkway
- Complete construction of Broad Street protected bike lanes
- Draft a downtown Ambassador Program, modifying existing programs or creating new ones that would focus on the public realm, including providing directions, safety, graffiti clean-up, streetscaping, and other services in downtown.
- Implement high speed wi-fi in all public spaces, including parks and buildings.

Previous Recommendations and Update

Housing – Through efforts of many of the task force members – of both the Downtown Task Force, Housing Task Force, as well as mayor’s staff, the city council passed a new Downtown Residential PILOT, which incentivizes the development of more affordable housing downtown.

Transportation – the Transportation Department is working through a Complete Streets Implementation plan, initiated first by passage of a Complete Streets [Ordinance](#) in March. Through the implementation plan, the department is developing Chattanooga-specific street standards, a biking infrastructure network plan, and sidewalk gap closing study (to prioritize new sidewalk projects).

Downtown/UTC – the City has continued to foster a stronger collaborative relationship with UTC, including, but not limited to

- Completion of a studio in the Graphic Design curriculum led by Professor Aggie Toppins to develop a communications strategy and platform, called [This Way](#), for increasing multi-modal transportation. The platform was presented at the end of the spring semester, on April 17, again at the state Bike Summit in May, the Pro Walk Pro Place conference in Pittsburgh in September, and is currently being implemented by the department and other agencies such as CARTA under the leadership of an OMA intern (see below) who worked on the project in Prof Toppins’ course.
- CARTA has worked with the university to improve downtown connectivity for the free Mocs Shuttle. With changes to the service implemented at the beginning of the school year, students can now directly access downtown on the free Mocs Shuttle.
- The Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs has continued its very successful internship program, which recruits from UTC, as well as other colleges in the area, to encourage students to gain valuable exposure and experience in public policy and local government.

All Categories:

Broad Street Protected Bike Lane - The Transportation Department is at 30% design of this project, which improves safety and usability of Broad Street for a wider range of users without sacrificing function for motorized traffic. Project completion is expected before Jan, 2016.

Enhance Public Spaces – Improvements identified in the [Center City Plan](#) for Miller Park and MLK between Market and Georgia Ave were funded in the city’s current capital budget. The project creates more value and function out of our public spaces, street networks, and emphasizes the importance of strong, active edges for all of our downtown public spaces. The project will double the size of our most versatile core downtown public space and increase usability for all Chattanooga while utilizing existing assets so that the overall project cost is a fraction of what a new park would cost to build in the center of our city. The project is in the consultant procurement phase, in developing an RFQ for professional design services.

Development System Improvements

Zoning and Development – The city is currently negotiating a contract with a consulting firm to lead us through the process of the development of a form-based code to replace outdated suburban zoning codes for the downtown area.

Innovation District

The Enterprise Center’s mission has been redefined to emphasize the gig and technology; and they are actively working towards establishing the core of the new district.

Enhance Public Transit Connection between UTC and Downtown

See excerpt above on interrelationship of UTC with the downtown.

The Downtown Task Force has had three meetings with significant turn out and attendance resulting in six categories of recommendations. The Task Force will continue to meet periodically to explore additional ideas as well as explore in more depth some of the recommendations that need further attention. We will issue interim reports throughout the process. The categories of recommendations include:

- Increase the supply of workforce housing
- Enhance transportation / parking options
- Renew focus on filling downtown office space
- Strengthen Downtown / UTC connection
- Protect current investment and encourage new development
- Renew focus on public realm

Based on input from the task force over many weeks, we recommend the City move forward with the following initiatives in the following ways. Items 1-3 are seen as ongoing projects that can be immediately – if not already – implemented. Recommendations within item 4 are considered achievable in the short term but with some additional detail needed leading up to implementation.

1. Housing
Development and passage of a residential PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) to encourage development of affordable downtown residential property.
2. Transportation
Pass a complete streets ordinance that assures that all aspects of our City's transportation network accommodate safe use by all travel modes.
The CS ordinance should be the foundation for developing a street and sidewalk network that supports not only safe and functional transportation options, but also is a great place to be. As part of the CS initiative, the City should review and revise its policies to reflect the fundamental differences between needs of different neighborhoods, including, and especially, downtown.
3. Downtown/UTC
Advance projects and curricula that encourage students to share ideas about downtown. Students are one of our most valuable resources for innovative ideas and the downtown area is their neighborhood. Additionally, the quality of our downtown is an attraction for students; including downtown projects into curricula of the university will improve the educational experience and increase competitiveness for the university.
4. All categories:
 - a. Broad Street protected bike lane
 - b. Enhance public spaces such as Miller Plaza and Park in Center City as well as planning for future phases of waterfront improvements.
 - c. Pursue development of changes for zoning and/or other development codes through policy changes, form-based code, or other initiatives
 - d. Creation of a pre-construction development ombudsman to facilitate downtown development
 - e. Creation of an innovative district
 - f. Enhance public transit connection between UTC and downtown