

# DOWNTOWN IMAGINED: COMMUNITY VISIONS

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA



Developed from community input through the Rosemary Imagined & Downtown Imagined planning process

Draft as of October 27, 2014

Have thoughts, ideas, or feedback? Let us know!

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For more information visit

[www.townofchapelhill.org/downtown](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/downtown)

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# HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

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## Vision and Implementation Plan

The Downtown Vision and Implementation Plan provides visions and ideas for the future of downtown Chapel Hill.

Within this plan, the visions are organized by the six themes of the Chapel Hill 2020 comprehensive plan which was adopted by the Town Council in June of 2012.

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## The Chapel Hill 2020 comprehensive plan themes are:



Create a Place for Everyone



Develop Good Places, New Spaces



Support Community Prosperity and Engagement



Nurture Our Community



Facilitate Getting Around



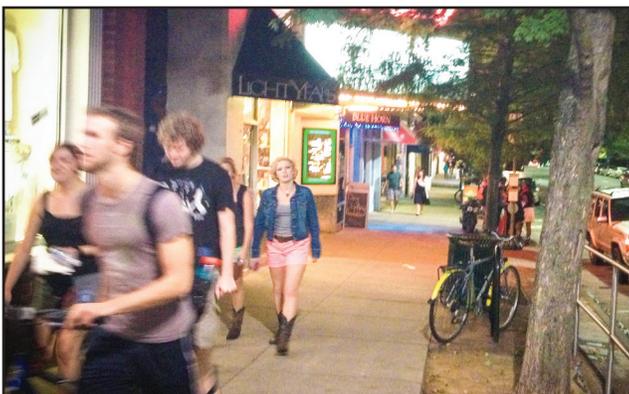
Grow Town and Gown Collaboration

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## Leads and Partners for Implementation

For each vision, a lead project manager and partners are identified. The lead and partners will be the doers, or the implementation gurus, for each of the visions.

If your organization is interested in being a lead or a partner, let us know! All are invited to be engaged in the implementation of the plan – we welcome your energy, creativity, and ideas!



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## Implementation Steps

For each vision, “next steps” are identified. These are the “to do” items for the lead and their partners.

## What about other ideas?

Great ideas were shared throughout the process to develop this plan, and we want to capture these within the Downtown Vision and Implementation Plan. Some visions contain a “What if We...” section that includes creative and engaging ideas that community members imagined and dreamed.

## Dig In!

So dig in, start reading, highlighting, and deciding where you’d like to help! Does a specific vision spark your imagination? Are you excited by one of the “What if We...” ideas then join in, and be a part of the movement to implement these visions for downtown Chapel Hill.

*If you are interested in learning more or participating, visit [www.townofchapelhill.org/downtown](http://www.townofchapelhill.org/downtown)*



# AFFORDABLE AND MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING



## Vision

Downtown, especially Rosemary Street, includes many housing types that are affordable to low and moderate income individuals and households.

## Tactics

- Identify opportunity sites for affordable housing and multi-family housing on the Chapel Hill Land Use Plan and rezone these sites to allow for this use, if necessary.
- Partner with affordable housing providers and development partners to provide affordable housing downtown.
- Pursue opportunities for aging-in-place.

## Lead

- Office of Housing and Community
- Economic Development Office

## External Partners

- CASA
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Community Home Trust
- DHIC
- EmPOWERment, Inc.
- Habitat for Humanity of Orange County
- Housing for New Hope
- Marian Cheek Jackson Center
- Self-Help Credit Union's Real Estate Team
- Orange County Affordable Housing Coalition
- Orange County Department on Aging
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## What if we...

- Include more affordable rental housing downtown

# SPACE FOR YOUTH AND TEENS



## Vision

Downtown Chapel Hill has physical spaces and engaging programs that attract, interest, and educate young people.

## Tactics

- Provide spaces for youth and teens by utilizing currently available spaces and partnering with local organizations and funders to renovate and improve spaces.
- Provide youth and teen programming that is administered by multiple Town Departments, community organizations, and other municipalities as described in the Chapel Hill 4 Youth initiative.
- Recruit businesses that appeal to youth and teens.
- Use social media to reach youth and teens to provide information about programs and events.

## Lead

- Parks and Recreation Department

## Internal Town Partners

- Chapel Hill Public Library
- Transit Department

## External Partners

- EmPOWERment, Inc.
- Kidzu Children's Museum
- Marian Cheek Jackson Center
- Sacrificial Poets
- Street Scene Teen Center
- Town of Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department
- Volunteers for Youth

## What if we...

- Offer a culinary arts and vocational training program for youth
- Recruit a bowling alley

# DESIRED DOWNTOWN COMMERCE



## Vision

Downtown Chapel Hill has a variety of businesses and entrepreneurial opportunities that serve all residents and visitors.

## Tactics

- Conduct a needs assessment and market study of the types of 'daytime' and retail businesses that are needed in downtown.
- Attract the following services to Rosemary Street that are desired by the community: bank, 24-hours fitness center, grocery store, and meeting space.

## Lead

- Economic Development Office

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill – Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Development Partners
- Downtown business and property owners
- Orange County Economic Development Office
- UNC Property Office and Real Estate Development

## What if we...

- Have a beer garden and climbing wall
- Have spaces available for food trucks

# ENTREPRENEURIAL & INNOVATION HUB



## Vision

Rosemary Street - a center for creativity, growth, and connections. Provides spaces and infrastructure for businesses, and supports an entrepreneurial ecosystem.

## Tactics

- Identify opportunity sites for both large and small spaces for startups and existing businesses, and rezone sites to allow for commercial, retail, and offices use, if necessary.
- Attract a tech center to Rosemary Street that provides office space, co-working opportunities, and programs for businesses in all stages of growth.
- Develop a plan for cutting-edge technology and infrastructure, such as high speed internet, that supports innovation and entrepreneurship.

## Lead

- Economic Development Office

## Internal Town Partners

- Technology Solutions Department
- Chapel Hill Public Library

## External Partners

- Chapel-Hill Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Downtown Business and Property Owners
- Launch Chapel Hill
- Orange County Economic Development Office
- Kenan Flagler School of Business
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Utility Providers: Duke Energy, OWASA, PSNC Energy, and AT&T

## What if we...

- Provide inexpensive offices space for young and growing businesses
- Have a kitchen incubator space
- Provide space for pop-up businesses
- Develop shared space and materials for non-profits

# CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY



## Vision

Chapel Hill is like a wheel with multiple spokes; the area has walkable, bikeable, and drivable connections within the downtown core and surrounding areas.

## Tactics

- Improve the formal and informal connections between downtown and surrounding areas.
- Address right-of-way needs, and acquire the right-of-way for additional sidewalks.
- Conduct a feasibility review of having a trolley, or circular bus, in downtown Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

## Lead

- Office of Planning and Sustainability

## Internal Town Partners

- Parks and Recreation Department
- Public Works Department
- Transit Department

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Downtown and neighborhood residents
- Town of Carrboro

## What if we...

- Increase the width of the sidewalks
- Increase the density on Rosemary Street to encourage more walkability
- Encourage entrepreneurial ways of getting around downtown, such as pedicabs or jitneys
- Study best practices from Raleigh's R-Line, Durham's Bull City Connector, and Orlando's LYMMO

# MANAGED TRAFFIC CONGESTION



## Vision

Downtown Chapel Hill has a steadily moving, headache-free flow of traffic that mingles safely with pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, and other modes of transportation.

## Tactics

- Address the traffic congestion downtown, especially on Columbia Street, by:
  - Considering rerouting or developing new routes for the buses
  - Considering possibility of building bus pull-outs
  - Conducting an assessment of the need for a transit center, including studying possible locations
  - Analyzing traffic flow and light timing
  - Providing clear spaces for bicyclists and pedestrians
- In the short-term, connect both Nunn Lane and Kenan Street to Rosemary Street as pedestrian/bicycle connections. In the long-term, connect Mallette Street and Kenan Street to Rosemary Street as car connections.
- Conduct further discussions with the Town of Carrboro and Triangle Transit to identify options for the possible extension of light rail or streetcar service from the UNC Hospitals light rail station through downtown Chapel Hill to Carrboro.
- Identify funding to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the transportation impacts of future downtown developments. Coordinate this analysis with Town-wide projects as necessary.

## Lead

- Office of Planning and Sustainability

## Internal Town Partners

- Public Works Department
- Transit Department

## External Partners

- Bicycle community

## What if we...

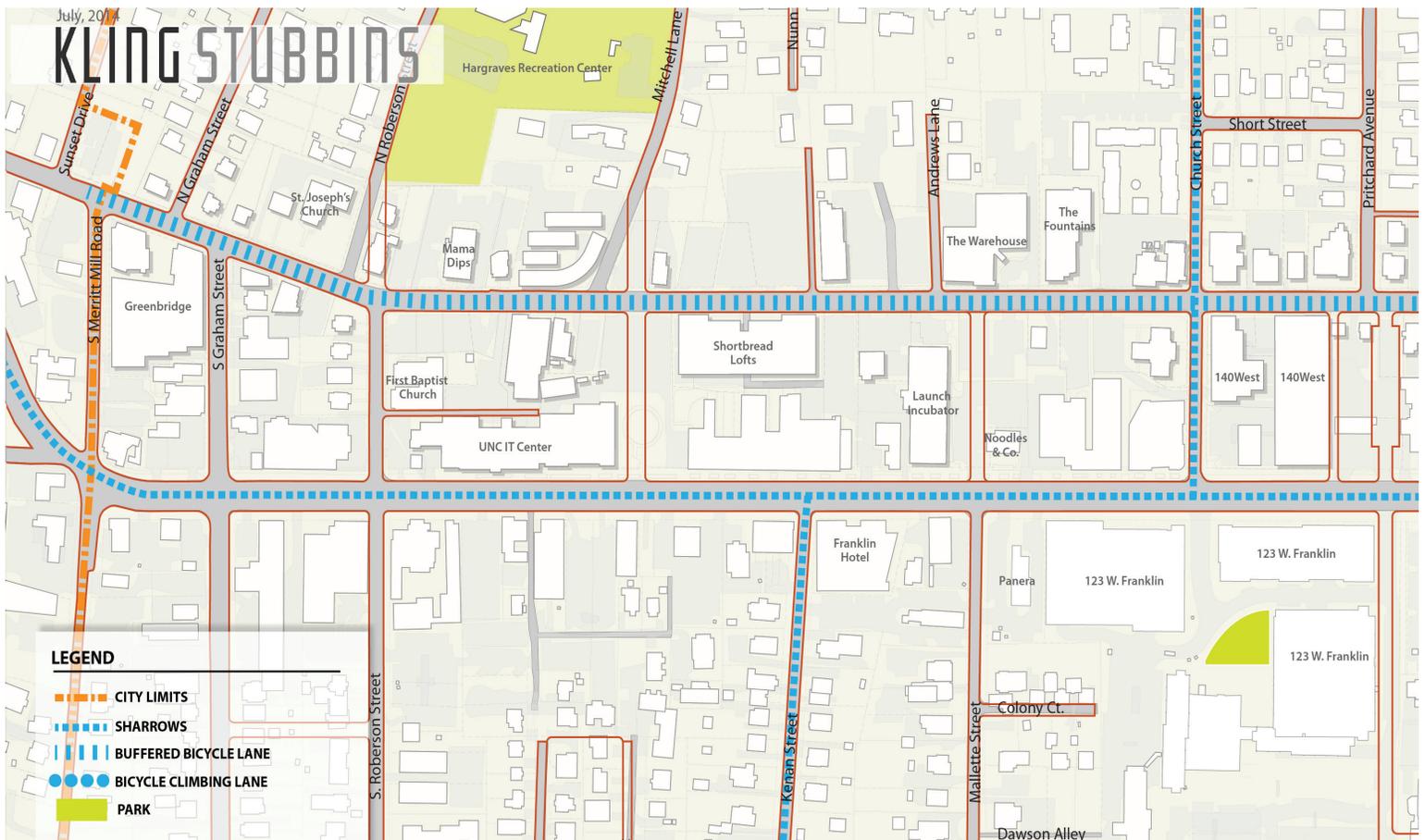
- Provide car-sharing opportunities
- Expand bus service in the evenings and weekends

# BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE



## Vision

Downtown Chapel Hill has a continuous bicycle system that is enjoyed by bicyclists of all ages and abilities and comprehensively connects downtown, neighborhoods, and the University.



## Tactics

- Implement the vision outlined in the Chapel Hill Bike Plan (adopted June 2014) for downtown.
- Develop well-lit greenways/bicycle paths on the Nunn Lane extension, the realigned Mitchell Lane to Cameron Court, and in the short-term, Kenan Street extension and the Mallette Street extension as identified in the concept plan.
- Install bicycle-friendly stormwater drains that are safe for cyclists.
- Provide improved way-finding and signage for cyclists such as a mapping of the bicycle network throughout town and signed bike routes to various destinations. Connect this signage with directional signage in Carrboro.
- Coordinate improvements with those identified in UNC's Bicycle Master Plan and the Town of Carrboro's Comprehensive Bicycle Plan.

## Lead

- Office of Planning and Sustainability

## Internal Town Partners

- Public Works Department
- Parks and Recreation Department

## External Partners

- Bicycle Community and Downtown Businesses
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



## What if we...

- Partner with the University to implement a bike-share program
- Paint the bicycle lanes according to artists designs
- Provide more bicycle parking or bike corrals

# DESIGN DISTRICT



## Vision

A design district has been developed for downtown that regulates the physical form of structures and provides a predictable development process.

## Tactic

- Develop zoning regulations that allow for appropriate height, density, and uses and provides a unified character and feel for downtown.

## Lead

- Office of Planning and Sustainability

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Downtown business and property owners
- Downtown and neighborhood residents

## What if we...

- Have space for innovative architecture
- Encourage heights of buildings to follow the grade of the street

# AVAILABLE DOWNTOWN PARKING



## Vision

Downtown has parking opportunities that foster accessibility and safety for residents, visitors, and businesses.

## Tactics

- Implement the action items from the 2008 Parking Study.
- Identify the current and future needs, and build parking to meet these demands. In the long-term, this goal should not be achieved through surface parking lots.
- Build parking decks in appropriate locations.
- In the short-term, identify opportunities to increase metered public parking on surface parking lots.

## Lead

- Parking Services Division
- Police Department

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Downtown business and property owners
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- UNC Department of Public Safety

## What if we...

- Provide designated scooter parking
- Including parking for expectant parents and families with small children

# ADDRESSING INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS



## Vision

Downtown Chapel Hill has continuous public works infrastructure such as easily-navigable sidewalks and is visually attractive because of the streetscapes and buried powerlines.

## Tactics

- Address right-of-way issues needed to acquire ownership and make improvements to the streetscapes.
- Update information from Duke Energy on the feasibility and costs of converting from overhead and underground power (i.e., burying the powerlines), especially on Rosemary Street.
- Develop an infrastructure plan for solid waste, recycling, organics, and grease.
- Review lighting needs throughout downtown through a “light audit” and consider both traditional and non-traditional ways to provide more visibility.
- Identify designated loading and unloading zones for delivery trucks, and update Article V: Parking Meters, Section 21-35: Loading and unloading of delivery vehicles of the Municode to identify specific times for loading and unloading.
- Explore the options for municipal financing of needed infrastructure.
- Develop a stormwater management plan for downtown that addresses flooding issues and utilizes best management practices.

## Lead

- Public Works Department

## Internal Town Partners

- Business Management Department
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Office of Planning and Sustainability
- Technology Solutions Department

## What if we...

- Include electric car charging stations
- Install distinctive street lights

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Downtown business and property owners
- Utility Providers: Duke Energy, OWASA, PSNC Energy, and AT&T

# CULTURAL AND ARTS SPACE



## Vision

Downtown Chapel Hill is a destination spot and focal point for cultural arts, entertainment, and recreation.

## Tactics

- Designate downtown Chapel Hill as an arts district to emphasize downtown's cultural and creative identity.
- Develop Rosemary Street as a place for creative enterprises and focus on attracting unique business, non-profits, and retail.
- Provide live/work spaces for artists, musicians, innovators, and entrepreneurs, and invite them to have "residencies" on Rosemary Street.
- Expand and fund public arts programs – such as Windows on Chapel Hill and mobile street performers, musicians, and artists – to continue to bring creativity to downtown Chapel Hill.
- Coordinate with objectives and strategies outlined in the 2014 Chapel Hill Arts Plan.

## Lead

- Public and Cultural Arts Office
- Parks and Recreation Department

## Internal Town Partners

- Chapel Hill Public Library
- Economic Development Office

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill and Orange County Visitors Bureau
- Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Downtown business and property owners, including the Ackland Art Museum and FRANK Gallery
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## What if we...

- Require new construction on Rosemary Street to include high profile public art to identify the area
- Have more alternative venues, art galleries, and art studios
- Provide seasonal flags and signage along Rosemary Street as a part of a branding campaign
- Have space for temporary public art and performers
- Restore the mural program
- Use surface parking lots for festivals, fairs, and markets, as identified in the Chapel Hill Downtown Streetscape and Lighting Master Plan (adopted June 2009)
- Install a branch of the Chapel Hill Public Library on Rosemary Street

# BUFFERS BETWEEN NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMERCIAL AREAS



## Vision

A definition exists between the residential neighborhoods and the commercial uses in downtown that respects the neighborhoods and provides clarity for future developments and uses.

## Tactics

- When new development is proposed downtown, ensure that the proposals are in keeping with the Northside Neighborhood Conservation District, the Cameron-McCauley Historic District, or the Franklin-Rosemary Historic District as appropriate.
- Place a landscaped buffer, such as trees, bushes, or attractive fencing behind the properties on Lindsay Street and the commercial properties on Rosemary Street, as shown in the concept plan.
- When new structures are built along Rosemary Street, incorporate setbacks and stepbacks that respect the adjacent residences.

## Lead

- Office of Planning and Sustainability

## Internal Town Partners

- Office of Housing and Community

## External Partners

- EmPOWERment, Inc.
- Marian Cheek Jackson Center
- Northside neighborhood and downtown residents
- Preservation Chapel Hill

## What if we...

- Have gateways at the entrances to the Northside neighborhood

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL CENTER



## Vision

On Rosemary Street is located a historic and cultural center that celebrates the history and culture of the Northside neighborhood and the Midway community.

## Tactics

- Identify a location, preferably along West Rosemary Street, for the historic and cultural center and rezone the site for this use, if necessary.
- Identify an organization to operate the center and manage the programs.
- Work with partners to develop programs, presentations, and displays for the center.

## Lead

- EmPOWERment, Inc.
- Marian Cheek Jackson Center

## Internal Town Partners

- Chapel Hill Public Library
- Office of Housing and Community

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill and Orange County Visitors Bureau
- Northside neighborhood and downtown residents
- Northside Elementary School
- Preservation Chapel Hill
- Town of Carrboro

## What if we...

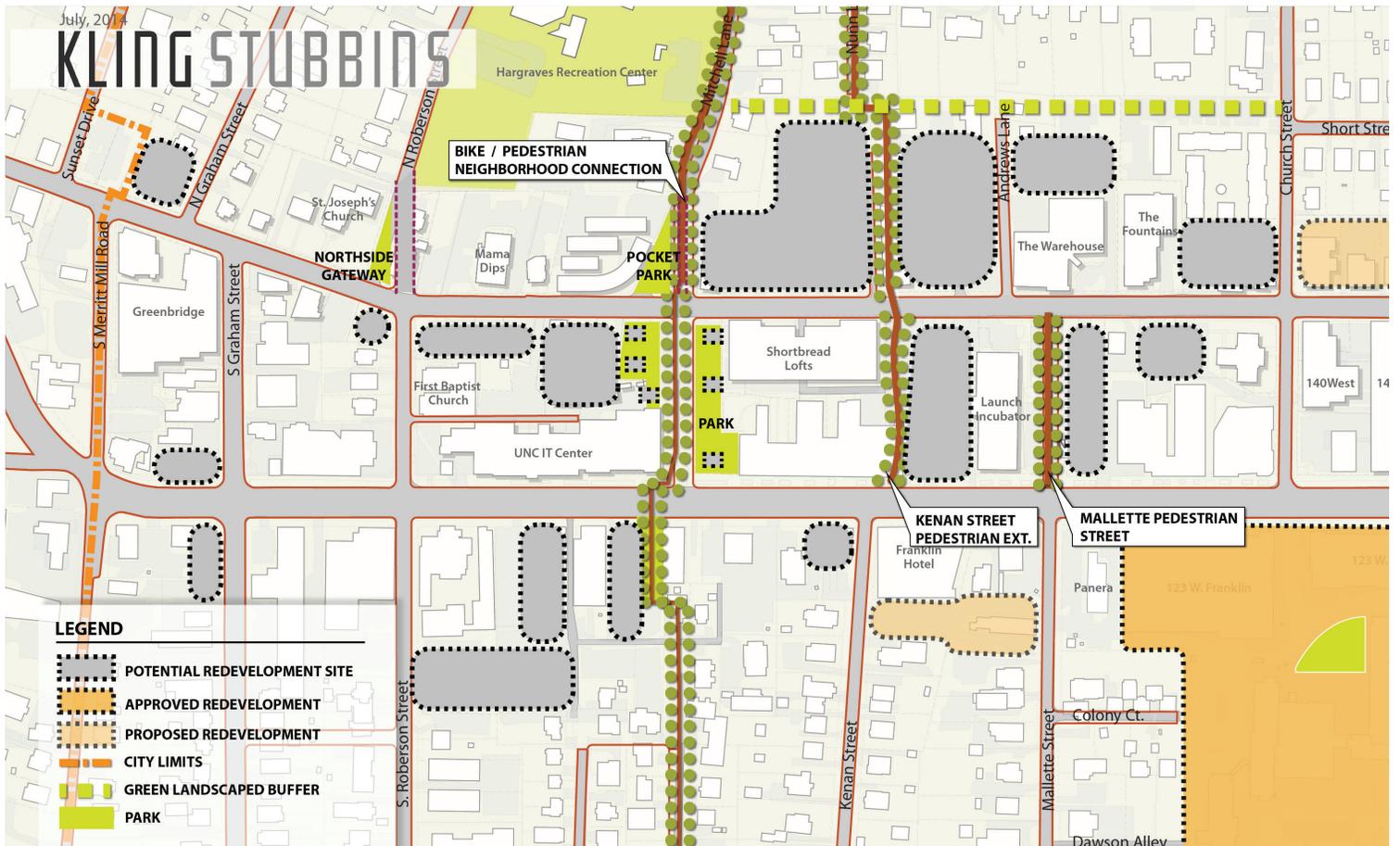
- Use the historic and cultural center as an early voting site

# DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT



## Vision

Vacant, underutilized, and opportunity sites in downtown have been developed and/or redeveloped and revitalized.



## Tactics

- Encourage the redevelopment of the properties identified as potential redevelopment sites on the concept plan.
- Encourage infill development.
- Pursue public private partnerships to develop a market and park at the Rosemary/Columbia Lot; if necessary rezone this property to allow for this use.
- Rezone surface parking lot for higher uses.

## Lead

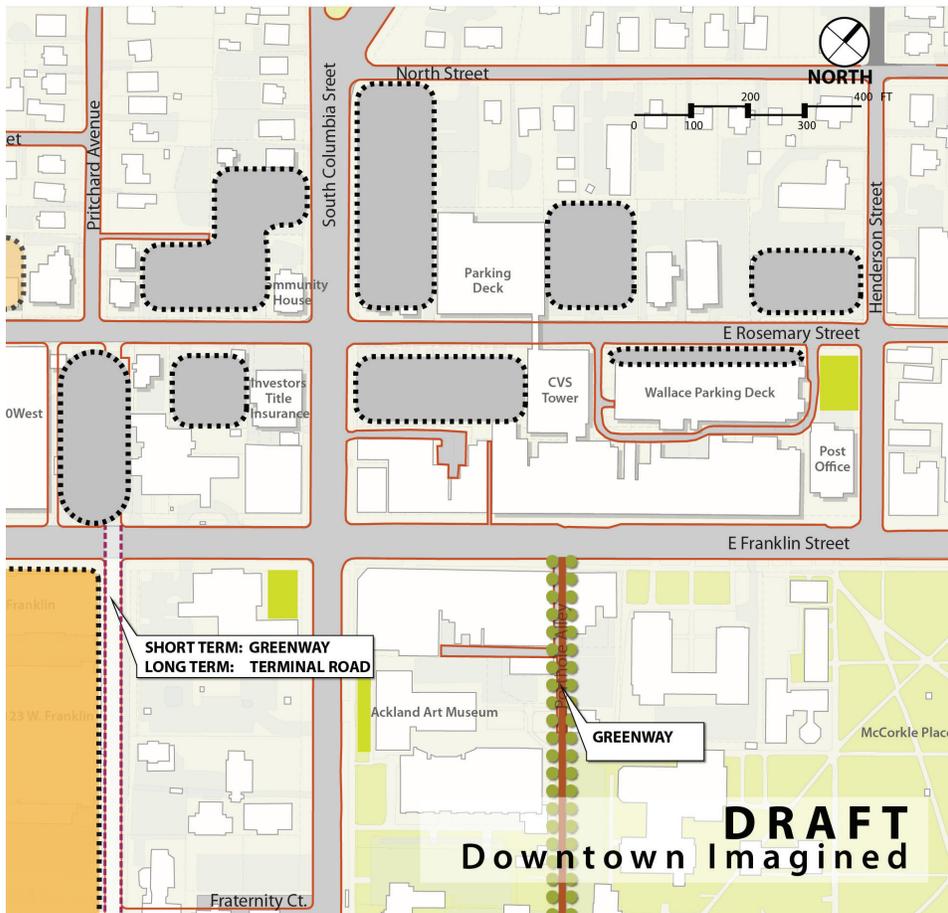
- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership

## Internal Town Partners

- Economic Development Office
- Office of Planning and Sustainability

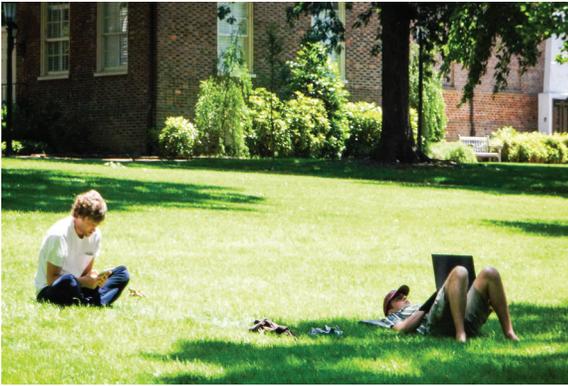
## External Partners

- Chapel Hill–Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
- Development Partners
- Downtown business and property owners
- UNC Property Office and Real Estate Development
- Orange County Economic Development



Potential redevelopment sites were identified as such by the community and/or private property owners. This does not exclude the redevelopment of non-identified parcels or property.

# GATHERING AND GREEN SPACES



## Vision

Throughout downtown are green gathering spaces where people of all ages and abilities enjoy themselves.

## Tactics

- Develop the linear park and gathering spaces along Mitchell Lane to Cameron Court. Include a green market and café pavilions, and connect with the park at the UNC ITS building.
- Formalize the parklet that is located at the corner of Rosemary and Henderson Streets so that it is accessible and inviting.
- When new developments are proposed and built, include green spaces and other gathering spaces in the development.
- Create a park at the Rosemary/Columbia lot which has been identified as one of the few remaining opportunities for a park in downtown.

## Lead

- Parks and Recreation Department

## Internal Town Partners

- Office of Planning and Sustainability
- Public Works Department

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- Downtown business and property owners
- Downtown and neighborhood residents

## What if we...

- Include a “splashground” and playground equipment for kids
- Have chairs in the gathering spaces that can be moved around
- Create a Civil Rights Memorial in one of the green spaces that honors local civil rights leaders; this could adjoin the historic and cultural center
- Include a sculpture garden in the park
- Encourage business to install green roofs, green walls, and solar panels
- Build a pavilion space that is wired for power
- Plant Carolina jasmine throughout downtown
- Have a designated dog park
- Have a weekly farmer’s market

# PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION



## Vision

Downtown Chapel Hill is the vibrant, magical place it is because of the visions and efforts of many partners, including the partnership between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Town of Chapel Hill.

## Tactics

- Partner on efforts to beautify and bring energy to Rosemary Street such as:
  - Developing entrepreneurial opportunities for businesses in all stages of growth
  - Repurposing surface parking lots
  - Connecting the UNC ITS park with the linear park along Mitchell Lane to Cameron Court

## Lead

- Facilities Services at UNC Chapel Hill
- Office of Planning and Sustainability

## Internal Town Partners

- Economic Development Office
- Office of Housing and Community

## External Partners

- Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership
- UNC Local Relations, Office of the Chancellor
- UNC Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life & Community Involvement