

District Placemaking and Urban Design Plan

(Re)Development Strategies Overview

The strategies proposed herein are designed to implement the “placemaking” projects described in the preceding section. It is important to prioritize and implement the projects that have the greatest potential to change the image of North Jacksonville and enhance the quality of life for area residents. The District “Placemaking” and Urban Design Plan includes recommendations for both public realm and private realm projects. Public realm projects that “set the table” for private investments can be stand alone projects or can be tied to requiring corresponding private actions and investments. The Private realm “placemaking” projects are not likely to occur along the corridor without a strong public commitment to improving the area. Thus, private realm improvements are more likely to occur as Private/Public Co-Ventures.

Private Realm (Re)Development Strategies

There is a strong public purpose in achieving a true “placemaking” project that can serve as a community gathering place and enhances the image and quality of life for North Jacksonville residents.

The private realm (re)development “placemaking” projects are difficult to initiate because they require a willing developer to invest in an area of the community that has not previously experienced high quality development. Thus, the recommendations of this plan prioritize and articulate the design and mix of uses for “placemaking” projects that respond to the best market opportunities to achieve a successful coordinated public and private redevelopment program. Public investments to “set the table” to leverage private investment is basic element of any successful redevelopment program, and is even more necessary to initiation of a “placemaking” project.

Although, it is conceivable that the Oceanway South or the Garden City Nodes could be of immediate interest to developers, the Highlands Nodal project stands out as a project that could dramatically improve North Jacksonville. As previously indicated there are four (4) potential nodal projects that are large enough to be considered true “catalyst” and true “placemaking” projects that are prioritized in terms of their potential for successful development as follows:

- Priority # 1: Highlands Node
- Priority # 2: Garden City Node
- Priority # 3: Oceanway South Node
- Priority # 4: Oceanway North Node

Prototype Implementation Process

The North Jacksonville Vision and Master Plan recommended a Prototype Process for implementing, and incentivizing where necessary, mixed –use “placemaking” projects. The Dunn Avenue and Main Street Corridor Revitalization Plan accomplished some of the requirements, but other steps remain to be accomplished.

A prototype process for implementing catalyst projects is provided below, but the process will vary with each catalyst project depending on various factors such as:

- The strength and timing of the market,
- Is it within the JIA/CRA boundary,
- Is it initiated by the private sector or in response to a City initiated public request for proposal for a developer.

Step # 1: Establish Public Realm Responsibility: Establish the appropriate City Agency as the implementing entity:

- If only City regulation of development is required to review a private initiative, it is the planning department.
- If incentives are required, the JEDC or JIA/CRA may be the appropriate entities and require negotiations with existing owners or solicitation of a potential developer.

Step # 2: Identify a Private Realm Responsibility (Viable Development Entity).

- It may be the current owners) of the site.
- Where public incentives are used a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a developer and negotiation of a Development Agreement may be required.

Step # 3: Determine the Incentive Package. Based upon achieving the recommended nodal projects a targeted set of incentives that the City would consider as part of the negotiations of a Development Agreement. Examples are as follows:

- Will Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or other financing be available for public investments in the following:
 - o Streetscaping,
 - o Pedestrian connections,

- o Bus Rapid Transit, and other projects, and
- o Façade grant programs?

- Will the City establish “Green Tape” development approval procedures to expedite the nodal projects if they conform to the basic concepts of the recommended development programs and design standards?
- Will the City restructure zoning to allow increased intensities and reductions in parking in return for Nodal projects?
- Will the City or other government agencies site public facilities such as Bus Rapid Transit Facilities and bus stations, libraries, parks/squares, cultural facilities and community meeting places, postal facilities and government administrative buildings within the centers to raise property values, to serve as anchors and inducements for spin-off private investments?
- Will the City attempt to create Assessment Districts to serve as Business Improvement Districts?

Step # 4: Negotiate and Adopt a Redevelopment Agreement: The JEDC and (Re)Developer agree to the terms and conditions of (re)development. (Who does what and when and under what conditions)

Step # 5: Implement the Development: The terms and conditions of the Development Agreement will guide development of the project including:

- Preparation and Approval of Design Specifications
- Obtaining Entitlements
- Private and Public Funding
- Public and Private Construction Schedules.