

City Discussion of ULI Advisory Services Panel Report Recommendations

Public Meeting

March 30, 2015

Comments Received

Comment Cards from Public Meeting

Like everything that I heard. Looking forward to the process

Parking, Handicapped parking, Handicapped Access – new traffic flow for downtown. On proposal seems to be an answer to many problems.

With the current development north of Jackson Ave., can a tie be made between those areas to the Jackson Avenue area as the other areas in this report?

We at the Blount Mansion are interested in how the site can participate in linking South Knoxville Baptist Hospital development to the city. How can we help bring more activity to S. Gay?

As part of the Jackson Avenue site, I think it's crucially important to have green space in that area. That part of downtown is largely devoid of public green space. A greenway would be even better!

The Auditorium and Coliseum have a precious asset that no other venues offer: adequate parking! Pedestrian friendly is fine as long as everyone remembers most of us need to park our cars in order to become a pedestrian downtown. Renovate, don't remove or relocate.

Public Restroom Facilities

- Creation of barrier-protected bike lanes, instead of on-street parking proposed for the Henley Street Corridor
 - Creation of protected bike lines in place of on street parking currently along Gay Street
 - Both of these streets enhance connectivity to the Urban Wilderness
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The talent put in charge of implementing these recommendations should be the key initial priority. The prospects being contemplated are complex, public private partnerships. Where is the real life private sector real estate development experience in the city? Without that experience, dealing with master developers will put the city at a huge disadvantage. As John Collins says – First who? Then what? The Mayor’s legacy here will be who is put in charge to start these projects and how that is structured to span future city administrations. The talent I see makes this presentation is excellent at the public process, but real life development leadership is needed.

How will cyclists be included in the development of downtown? Currently the greenway system is disconnected to downtown. See Copenhagen, Denmark could we change the parking meters to a debit/credit card system to promote more street parking options.

1. Like the idea of a master developer for Jackson Ave. and echo Nick’s suggestion for “improving view of Knoxville from I-40”
2. Glad to hear city is looking to purchase State Supreme Court site and encourage preservation of the building. Another auditorium seems redundant.
3. As former KMA Board Chair, I’ve always viewed the World’s Fair Park as an ideal cultural district for our families and community. Clarence Brown would be ideal.
4. Coliseum holds countless fond memories, though seems to be reaching the end of its useful life. Would prefer to see more green space than the reversal of Urban Renewal with residential development.
5. Probably the toughest challenge, while the costs are likely high, the idea of building an extremely wide crossing over Henley might serve as a much contemplated/desired connection between UT, WF Park and Downtown.

Thanks for engaging the community discussion.

- Connectivity is so important to enhancing the experience in and near downtown as well as furthering transit and its use.
 - Also please keep affordable/workforce housing options in mind for Jackson Avenue.
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- Preserve the Coliseum/Auditorium and honor its architectural significance to the city
 - Leave Henley Street as a well-used connection to South Knoxville, but coordinate the traffic signals to make it easier to drive and to cross the street on foot
 - Learn to spell “urbanlandinstitute” in your presentation!
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Please make it a priority to connect the World’s Fair Park greenway to the North. It would be a huge benefit to the city to connect Old North and Mechanicsville to the World’s Fair via greenways. This would open up so many people to downtown and greenways.

1. State Supreme Court Site – please consider building/expending the downtown library at this site. This can also be a retail site, a melting place for non-profit organizations and a place of small to medium theatre performance within the library.
 2. Civic Coliseum – considered a gateway to the east but it is also the East’s gateway to downtown. It is a treasure. Do not remove this architecture relic. A UT theatre class in 2010 or 2012 did a class project and found that the current look of the coliseum is a wonderful structural performance that connects outward to the surrounding community or city. I will send this website to you.
 3. Lastly, the coliseum area is live music, and its parks and recreations connector can be enhanced while still maintaining the coliseum.
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Re: KCAC. If moving from disinvestment to investment is the goal, the proposal to convert this site to housing is appropriate. Mixed income housing seems best, especially considering that the urban renewal of the 60’s destroyed many African-American residences, businesses or churches. I am privileged to live in pricey downtown housing but would much prefer to live in a diverse community.

What can be done to get more condos built and financed? I know many baby boomers who want to retire and live downtown. They need permanent residences, not rentals. Downtown is a neighborhood and a great place to live.

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LOVE!! The idea of the Clarence Brown Theatre on Henley! Please develop a short branding phrase for Knoxville. I like Jim Briggs catch phrase: Knoxville First! When I mention this to people, they say "I get it!" we have everything here in Knoxville. No need to go to Nashville, Atlanta, etc. we need to stay and energize our own community instead of spending resources outside our community. Thank you. This is very exciting.

Build in green/park space into Jackson plan – great "front door" opportunity for downtown. Also need to address connection to North Knoxville and another city park mixed in with parking, retail and residential could help achieve this. Embrace the industrial feel.

Jackson Avenue – mix to include a new central library that needs performance and meeting space needs along with many others. Make it an uplifting public space.

Complete streets policies should be applied to all redevelopment projects to comply with the city's complete streets ordinance. These policies enhance quality of life, are economic drivers and make residents HAPPY and HEALTHY!

Please consider a "Multi-way Boulevard" for Henley Street. This type accommodates both high-speed and local traffic in one right-of-way.

Coliseum is obsolete. Time to build a new one!

Telephone call to Mayor's office

Have community buildings downtown to host 21-step programs...AA, etc.

I appreciate the suggestions for helping connect Maplehurst, Campus and Ft. Sanders with downtown. Small changes, like light timing adjustments might make Henley safer for everyone. I also appreciate the plan to more fully investigate the KCAC facility's future.

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Theatre Knoxville Downtown. Our theater was chartered in 1976. We are very interested in the development of city owned property with an eye toward inclusion of a performing arts component.

TKD is Knoxville's longest continuously running, all volunteer, non-academic, not for profit, community theater. With 8 shows each years, our current annual impact is 3100 patrons, 10,000 volunteer hours and economic impact of approximately \$73,000* for the city. Our current expansion plans without partnership with the city will grow that to 8,000 patrons and an annual economic impact of \$177,000. We have helped the city with the Christmas in the City Kick off, we are members of the Arts and Cultural Alliance and we connect with Visit Knoxville with our rack cards and brochures.

The Cumberland County Playhouse in a city with a population of 56,000 generates revenue of \$10 million dollars. Barter Theater generates \$34 million dollars.

We would love to see the city utilize Theatre Knoxville Downtown as a cornerstone of its artistic development in the downtown area. We have a proven track record, a solid patron base and the ability to partner with the city to generate a robust theater presence in the downtown area.

*Calculated using the average dollars spent per person by arts events attendees in similar communities based on the calculator created by the Americans for the Arts.

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Lack of meeting spaces in Knoxville for non-profit groups that need free or cheap space; most need spaces in the evening even though parking is available in downtown after hours, and libraries are useful; other meeting spaces should be available during the day for non-profits. We don't have the Candy Factory any more. Groups usually head to the library but at times it's not available.

Define "master developer"

City reply:

The City has not used this process during this administration

- *Individual or team to develop a conceptual plan for the site;*
 - *Include public and private input on what it should look like*
 - *Bring business side to the table; what the market needs and what the market could support*
 - *Enter into negotiation-Fee or ownership based*
 - *Looking for a firm that is strong enough to guide City in right direction*
 - *Ex: garage underneath; ULI recommendation to work on smaller parcels above the garage possibly*
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How do you go about the process to find a master developer? What steps are involved? What happens before recommendations for selection?

City reply:

- *Request for Letters of Interests (LOI) –allows City to talk to potential teams without either side investing lots of up front resources;*
 - *Selection of 3-4 qualified Master Developers ; give us your proposal on how you would develop the site;*
 - *2 step process- 1) ask for qualifications; 2) public input process*
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The description in your proposal for a master planner will have to be critically important and must have a good feel on how work should be developed. In the 3 parcels surrounding the WFP, State Supreme Court site, how will the street (Henley) be adjusted to handle the traffic ; and still give you what you want at street level for stores. You can't reduce the traffic there without increasing it somewhere else. That is going to involve some traffic planning. How the street should be developed should be adjusted to handle the traffic and still handle traffic on store level.

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City Reply: *It is a major traffic artery and connector between downtown and World's Fair Park; all those factors will be taken into consideration.*

Stance on protected bike lanes - Lack of bike lane infrastructure; any plans for protected bike lanes in the near future?

City Reply:

This particular study did not specifically address dedicated bike lanes. However, Jim Hagerman (Director of Engineering) will be available after this meeting to provide information in regards to bike lanes. The Engineering Department has been very active in adding more bike lanes and it is more of a priority as we look at implementing complete streets in our downtown and surrounding areas.

When the City resurfaces streets, we are evaluating to see if bike lanes can be incorporated.

Does the City have the capability to change the timing of lights (on Henley Street) without permission from the State (TDOT)? It will be a high impact but low investment - improving the safety of pedestrians that cross Henley. It will be valuable to have more time to cross Henley.

City Reply: *Yes we have the capability; it would still need to be studied.*

(Statement/Comment) - A written statement on Civic Coliseum and Auditorium; want to put things in perspective for those studying the coliseum

"Almost 54 years ago (when a student at Knoxville College), I read in the newspaper that the Civic Coliseum would open shortly ; made a phone call to the box office and asked if there would be a sections for Negroes". The response was that the coliseum would be open on an integrated basis. When I told that to the people in my office, everyone jumped and shouted for joy".

East Knoxville had only one other public space which was Chilhowee Park, during that period the facility was open for Blacks only on Thursdays.

For black people the opening of the Coliseum was like having a taste of New York or Los Angeles. All 8 fraternities and sororities, social clubs and professional organizations utilized the facility. Many groups supported legal control and won the hard fought battle to get liquor stores in Knoxville. We had been told that without liquor stores that the Civic Coliseum could not attract conventions. It was doubly hard for us to fight the church groups that did not want liquor on a moral basis and a harder fight against the boot leggers that did not want it for economic reasons. Yet we prevailed and all of Knoxville had no

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problems with coming to East Knoxville to enjoy things at the magnificent arena that we call the Civic Coliseum that our tax dollars paid for.

We had the symphony and the circus, we had Charlie Pride and Ray Charles, we had Broadway musicals and high school graduations and proms. We have some of the best parking in the City of Knoxville. Now we come to discuss if the facility is too old and too out dated to maintain. I do hope that our real concern rather than some hidden scheme; I don't want it to be some hidden scheme to grab the land for some other kind of development. We already have a white elephant (Convention Center) on Henley Street. We certainly don't need to build another one somewhere else. The Civic Coliseum is a tremendous asset to the City, if it can be renovated then that should be our course. Building a new one on another site is irresponsible and outrageous. And I tried to be as positive as I can but if I have to get in other conversations where I can be negative...I can do that, too."

City Reply:

Thanks for your comments and experience. The City is well aware of the significance of the site. We are looking at the use of the facility; how it can be renovated and we will be sharing the study when it comes back and will begin a full process; what the proper use of the site (continuing or expanding) whatever the uses might be.

Happy to see the City will acquire the Supreme Court Site which is on Knox Heritage's "Fragile 15 List". Do you have thoughts on what the plan or redevelopment will be?

City Reply:

At this point, the plan will be to purchase the property to control what happens to the site (locally). Get it to where it is being maintained and managed properly as we work toward a public input process on what the future uses look like.

If we don't take this step, if it goes through the state, the state will sell as surplus property. So the City would like to take the first step in purchasing the site.

The City will make sure to gather community consensus on what everyone wants before going back out to the market to try to get it developed.

Henley Street and the Supreme Court site have a lot of possibilities so we want to be sensitive when we go out with a proposal. The City has the capability to guide the development; that why it's critical to take the next step.

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Goal of Knoxville toward Sound Urban Design and Organic Growth; Define Knoxville's Brand; Principles for market driven growth and organic growth

City Reply:

ULI commentary to further develop Knoxville's brand; by strategically looking at each site and marketing through the process based on those five sites. Wayfinding is another element for branding downtown Knoxville.

City staff has discussed each perspective on what does Knoxville's brand mean? Live music scene, parks and recreation, urban wilderness, where business happens. Various opportunities to brand Knoxville based on several themes.

ULI's perspective to define Knoxville's brand by looking at these five sites that would continue growth and development and looking at strategic locations for opportunities that would have civic areas incorporated with the development.

Additional thoughts on branding – Please provide us with your thoughts on the comment cards and city website.

Over the last 15-20 years' organic growth has been one of the best principals in downtown development; trying to sync organic growth with the master developer idea given that along Jackson Avenue you have a scale and massing that ULI was talking about probably in excess of \$100 million. A little concerned about the timing and the process it takes to get that scale and developer and get started.

City reply:

Again, the City has not used a master developer before and with our research there are several different ways it can be approached.

One of the issue that led to ULI's recommendation – was the need for large scale public improvements attached to the private development; you get the public improvement part executed and planned out and then phase it to have a concept design and when it's ready to move forward release for the next step for the development; you wouldn't build the whole thing at one time.

Ex: Phased work- Foundations (2 story garage); Phase 2- build on top of the foundation

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The Jackson Avenue site is a very large space; blank canvas- don't want to turn over to one large development (goes against organic growth) on the other hand the entire parcel should tie together.

Need a Master Developer to make sure the parts tie together; from aesthetics, design and massing - that's why this approach was recommended rather than putting parcels out independently.

Can master developer be more than one person?

City Reply: Yes

Usually a team composed of several different professional backgrounds: engineers, landscape architects, architects, real estate developers, etc.

Typically in other areas Master developers look at sites larger than the scale of the Jackson Avenue site. For the City of Knoxville, a 2-5 acre site in the downtown core is still significant. Other cities look at 100 plus acres such as former military bases. So a master developer could also come from a more local context than a national context.

Earlier Jackson Avenue meeting discussion asked for public input about the redevelopment of the site. What kind of designs are suitable for the site; opinions varied greatly. The goal of the city with the Master Developer team will be to make sure it's done right with public consensus. More dialogue will continue.

Is there a timeframe on the selection of a master developer?

City Reply: *There is no timeframe set at this time*

Master developer should think about the vision and appearance of Knoxville from the interstate (I-40); opportunity to building it out and orient activity toward Jackson and put a better face on downtown and the old industrial buildings.

I hope that the City won't reject what the consultant said about Henley on the belief that this is really an important artery and part of the highway system. Henley is also a big barrier that restricts the use of World's Fair Park (that is a great amenity). Think more long term; make it more bike, pedestrian and retail friendly and then the people just passing through could use "real highways" so locals can have a more integrated downtown; we can live, work and play for the next 20-50 years downtown and people that want to pass by and around can take the interstate around. Consider the opportunity to turn into more pedestrian friendly place to unite the park and make the greenway more attractive.

City Reply:

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Henley Street is a different location than Cumberland Avenue (and the city's proposed road diet project); but there are some similarities; connectivity is important; the key is to pull the connectivity together...certainly that is the goal.

Comments from ULI's conclusions: Minimum additional staffing and with KCDC. Does KCDC have the staffing to implement such a vast plan?

City Reply: At this point, we have not thoroughly discussed this recommendation with KCDC; but the capacity in regards to staffing will be added to move the project forward as needed.

Lived in East Knoxville over 60 years; one of the better decisions that the City made was when they put the Coliseum where it is. Houses were removed to build the Coliseum. The location is convenient, parking is also available. Maybe the study should identify why it's not being used or maybe it's priced too high; or maybe we can take part of the building for other activities, events or businesses to help offset costs. I think that of all the negative things we talked about in East Knoxville, we certainly don't need to spend the money. If you tear down a building and still owe on it, but find a place to build another one, how do you come out ahead?

City Reply:

The feasibility study (on the Civic Auditorium and Coliseum) will address some of these issues. Expect to receive the results/recommendations of the feasibility study this summer.

Theater Knoxville "is the longest running theater in Knoxville." They are very happy to hear the mention of a public arts venue as part of the redevelopment.

The Barber Theater in Abingdon, VA generates \$36M/year and Cumberland County Theater generates \$10M/year in economic benefit; definitely a plus partnering with community theaters to make that kind of money for Knoxville; opportunity for regional partnerships. Good to have a Mayor that supports the arts.

Looking for year round theater space; medium size; encourage common art space that could be an economic benefit to a number of groups.

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Is there a master plan for the developer to look to? Still needs to be a next layer to connect the dots to the ULI sites studied. There is still the transportation question to be address. How do these sites get more bikeable, more walkable between Jackson and the World's Fair Park?

City Reply:

We are not there yet with the master plan for the master developer to look to. We understand that needs to occur on the Jackson Avenue site specifically. There are a series of projects underway or planned on Jackson Avenue that will solve most of the connectivity issues. The Jackson Avenue Streetscape projects will start later this year (2015); some discussion of Broadway going north of Jackson could be improved; the Jackson Avenue ramps project; Jackson Avenue into Old City; from World's Fair Park into the Old City, and eventually out east to Caswell Park and Five Points. These projects will enhance connectivity through the downtown and branching out.

Speaker expressed the importance of East Knoxville area and the Coliseum, emphasizing that the opinions of guests at the meeting should be taking into consideration and taken seriously. Urban Renewal devastated the African American community. African American wealth was destroyed. Attended over 1000 meetings (like this one) and when the opinions were expressed and we tell how we feel; our places still get torn down. Primarily African American community or innocent community; or people that see themselves powerless, but they can come to a meeting and express themselves, but when the money hits the table (\$20M, \$40M, \$100M) the people are usually left out.

It is terrible not to be able to walk your children or relatives to places where you used to live because others dismissed places that were important to you.

Have to be inclusive about what is going on with the process.

City Reply:

Thank you for your comments.

We have a lot of opportunity to utilize these areas during fun events.

Henley Street Corridor - not a corridor it's a street; 43,000 Average Daily Trips (ADT). It's not a barrier to connectivity. Making it a pedestrian corridor is moving backwards.

From Henley to Market; no retail is active at night

Corridor of activity is Market Square over to Old City; lot of people that go to World's Fair Park and don't have trouble getting there. During the 7 Saturdays for UT Football; folks don't have trouble walking to their destination

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Plans will cost millions of dollars to get these suggestions put into play for Knoxville's benefit
Is there a priority list of what needs to happen first? What kind of order we need to take?

City reply: There are some priorities established:

- 1) Going to request funding for the acquisition of the State Supreme Court site*
 - 2) Jackson Avenue - funds are committed to the site already*
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Disconnect from Mechanicsville due to Interstate configuration has divided the neighborhoods. The reports state an opportunity for a bike path from Old North into Mechanicsville. What are the plans on this connectivity?

City Reply:

Jackson Avenue Streetscape Project –widening of the sidewalk adjacent Jackson Avenue from World's Fair Park (going east) to the ramps. The ramps are being reconstructed by TDOT (2016) to provide connectivity northbound.

Knoxville - Knox County Parks, Recreation and Greenways Plan- has identified greenway priority projects (contact Joe Walsh, City Parks and Rec Director) to see if there is a priority connection near Mechanicsville.

Bicycle Facilities Plan Public Meeting, April 8, 2015 - ETCH at 6:00 PM to discuss plans on bicycle facilities. The Plan looks at the whole city and evaluates priorities and opportunities to implement some bike lanes.

Request for access of tonight meeting's comments and presentation to be reviewed by the public.

City reply: Comments and questions will be available on the City's website. Presentation will also be available on the City's website.

2nd ULI study had the same conclusion recognizing the green space in an inner city environment is valued. The Knoxville Convention and Exhibition Center could be evaluated to assist with those local theater groups for utilization.

City Reply: ULI's recommendation to preserve green space and activate edges is a good direction.

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What is the appraised value of the State Supreme Court Site?

City reply: *The appraised value is \$2.4 million*

When can the City focus on development in East Knoxville, Burlington and Knoxville Center?

City Reply: *Our Strategy is to move from disinvestment to investment from the downtown core outward*

Several City Departments are working in East Knoxville, including Office of Redevelopment, Community Development, and KCDC.

We have a Magnolia Avenue Streetscape project where we have a design consultant to preparing final designs for the model block section. We are requesting to put money in the budget to move forward. City has invested \$800,000 per year into KCDC for the Five Points Redevelopment. Prosser Road Improvements have been made. \$10,000,000 has been invested for Zoo Improvements. Improvements to the Jacobs Buildings and Fire Department (station upgrade) are also in progress.

Chilhowee Park is a major City asset, which the City will continue to invest in.