

A Technical Assistance Program Report
The Urban Land Institute – Charlotte District Council



Town of Mooresville
Broad Street Enhancement Study

May 2007

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INTRODUCTION

ULI - The Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) was established in 1936 and has over 37,000 members from more than 80 countries. It is one of America's most respected sources of information and knowledge on urban planning, growth and development.

ULI is a nonprofit research and educational organization. *Our mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.* To encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences, ULI membership crosses a variety of backgrounds and professions; among the members are developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, public officials, planners, brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students, and librarians.

ULI Charlotte

ULI Charlotte is a District Council of the Urban Land Institute. It offers ULI services and benefits at a regional level. The mission of ULI Charlotte is to complete the ULI experience at a local level through continuing education, research and the exchange of ideas and experiences.

One of the services of ULI Charlotte is to offer Technical Assistance Programs (TAP). TAP panelists are volunteer members who seek to further the objectives of ULI and make authoritative information available to those seeking knowledge regarding the long-term use of urban land.

Client

ULI Charlotte was engaged by the Town of Mooresville to provide a Technical Assistance Program. Mooresville is approximately 30 miles north of Charlotte, in southern Iredell County. In 2006, the estimated population of Mooresville was more than 23,000; that number is projected to reach more than 27,000 by 2011. Mooresville maintains its charm, even as the community is booming with new business and industry. It is described as a great environment for living, working and pursuing recreational interests.



ULI Charlotte





Technical Assistance Program

Objective

The Technical Assistance Program (TAP) is offered by ULI Charlotte to provide local municipalities and community-based nonprofit organizations objective and responsible advice on land use planning, development and redevelopment issues.

Program Description

District Council TAP is a service offered as part of ULI's national Advisory Service Program. Since 1947, the Advisory Service Program has assisted communities by bringing together real estate, planning and development experts to provide unbiased, pragmatic advice for addressing complex land use planning and development issues.

The ULI Charlotte TAP provides similar services to local government and community-based nonprofit organizations. Once a project is designated as a TAP, ULI Charlotte's District Council assembles a panel of volunteers with expertise in areas that are necessary to focus on the sponsor's particular problem or issues.

Because of the District Council members' diverse expertise, a broad array of issues can be evaluated. Members' expertise is available on commercial retail, office, industrial, residential, and mixed land uses in a multiplicity of urban forms.

Under ideal circumstances, a TAP panel will focus on issues surrounding a particular site. The scope of the analysis is intended to benefit a specific site in a neighborhood or community. Analysis will typically be organized around defining site characteristics and limitations, identifying and assessing community and neighborhood goals, considering alternative land use strategies in the context of preliminary feasibility analysis, and making recommendations for next steps.

The sponsoring organization is responsible for gathering the background information necessary to understand the project, and presenting it to the panel. TAP panel members spend one day developing an understanding of the problem, coming up with recommendations, and presenting those findings and recommendations to the sponsoring organization.

Acknowledgements



TAP Committee Chair

ULI Charlotte's TAP Committee is chaired by Brian Jenest, Managing Partner of ColeJenest & Stone, whose committee is responsible for the marketing, review and implementation of Technical Assistance Programs.

TAP Panelists

Members of ULI were selected to provide a wide variety of experiences. The panelists for the Town of Mooresville TAP include:



James R. Williams, AIA, LEED AP *Architect*
National Director of Design
Little Diversified



M. Rhett Crocker, RLA *Landscape Architect*
Principal, Landscape Architect
LandDesign



Nathan C. Daniel, AIA, LEED AP *Architect*
Associate and Lead Designer
LS3P

Full biographical sketches are included in the appendix to this report.

Stakeholder Interviewees

Invitations to stakeholders were extended through personal invitations and a general solicitation from the Town of Mooresville. Of those invited, 17 individuals met with ULI panelists including town staff, property owners, community leaders, and business owners. The following individuals participated in the interviews:

Ross Adams, AIA – Adams & Associates Architecture
(tenant & building owner)

Bob Amon – Rankin & Amon building owner and Town of Mooresville Planning Board chair

Tim Anderton – Building owner (multiple buildings)

Chris Bauer – Town of Mooresville transportation planner

Tim Brown – Town of Mooresville planning director

Lonnie Bulger – Town of Mooresville engineer department/Main Street improvements

Penny Christy – Setzer's (tenant)





Pat Culberson – Beautification Committee
Joe Cullen – Beautification Committee chair
John Finan – Town of Mooresville street department
Wayne Frick – Mooresville Downtown Commission
executive director
Violet Knox – Beautification Committee
Mitchell Mack – Building owner (retired)
Irene Mann – Town of Mooresville zoning administrator
& Beautification Committee staff liaison
Diane Neese – H&R Block (tenant)
Theresa Spencer – Mitchell Community College
Shelley Williamson – Centralina Council of
Governments

Photos

The photographs in this report depicting the exterior of the buildings and street/rail views were provided by the Town of Mooresville.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REPORT

Background

In May 2000, the Town of Mooresville commissioned the Lawrence Group to prepare a Master Plan for Downtown Mooresville with special emphasis on Main Street, the old hospital and the impact of a potential transit line. While a substantial number of the recommendations have been accomplished, the town desires to set new goals, one of which includes enhancing the image of the backside of the buildings fronting Main Street between Center and Iredell.



The Downtown Master Plan recommendations yet to be addressed include:

- Appearance of the back of the downtown buildings on Main Street facing Broad Street.
- Expansion the Downtown Master Plan study area to include the Mooresville Mills redevelopment project.
- Review of the infrastructure issues.
- Review of alley/easement access and maintenance related to surface parking areas.

Based on the prioritization of these issues, the Town of Mooresville engaged ULI Charlotte to conduct a one-day Technical Assistance Program addressing the backs of the downtown buildings facing Broad Street.



Key Issues and Nature of the Assignment

The TAP panel was charged with reviewing the design for the backs of buildings that front Main Street as determined by:

- two blocks along Broad Street in the central business district of Mooresville, and
- blocks adjacent to the Norfolk/Southern Rail Line between Center and Iredell Avenues.

During the initial discussions with the Town of Mooresville, ULI identified key issues that the TAP panelists were asked to address. In a one-day study, three panelists:

- studied and discussed information provided by the Town of Mooresville;
- were briefed by town staff;
- toured the project area;
- met with key stakeholders;
- heard a variety of perspectives from community members and discussed issues and concerns; and
- debated the issues and framed recommendations.

Below are highlights of the assignment that the ULI TAP panel was engaged to address:

- prepare a conceptual land plan that includes vehicular circulation, pedestrian circulation, typical elevation sketches and schematic landscaping;
- prepare a phasing plan for implementation.

On March 29, 2007, ULI Charlotte conducted a session addressing these issues. The session consisted of touring the study area, interviewing key stakeholders, preparing the plan and presenting the recommendations to the public. The report is intended to provide general considerations that the client might wish to use in future planning for the Town of Mooresville.



Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key community stakeholders were interviewed by the TAP panelists, discussed the outlined issues and compiled their visions for the study area. The stakeholders met in two group interview sessions. The following input was provided with many points consistent between the two discussion groups:

Strengths

- Located in a historic area with a number of authentic buildings
- Adjacent to a potential commuter rail
- Could act as an economic development catalyst
- Has strong population growth
- Town committed to the downtown area



Challenges

- No "sense of place"
- Uncertainty of boundary lines and easements
- Rail line is a barrier to Broad Street
- Uncertainty of commuter train
- Location of the Duke Power lines
- Limited pedestrian and vehicular access
- Present appearance of buildings
- Multiple building owners
- Some existing land uses may conflict with future vision.



Following the stakeholder discussions, the ULI TAP panelists developed a conceptual plan for the two blocks along Broad Street (facing the Main Street buildings) and a phasing plan for implementation of the recommendations. This plan is intended to be starting point for discussion among Mooresville's leaders and residents. Stakeholders viewed the possibilities of the plan with enthusiasm and trepidation.

Panelist Comments and Recommendations

Overall Thoughts and Observations

To capitalize on the unique character of this street/alley and create an asset for the town and property owners, meeting the needs and objectives of all stakeholders.

The architecture of the rear of the buildings facing Main Street, although primarily designed as the “service side,” is appealing. The original brickwork is intact, and most of the original windows and doors have been preserved. The variation in building height and the irregular placement and size of windows creates a positive, eclectic vernacular that is unique and should be seen as an asset. The scale of this space is comfortable to pedestrians with the commingling of some controlled vehicular access. All this provides a great base from which to work, not only to beautify this area but for the potential to add value to the property and, therefore, ensure a positive return on investment.

The relationship to the existing railroad track (and potential light rail), and the relationship to buildings across the way that face Broad Street provide an additional opportunity to not only focus on the improvements to the rear of these buildings but to create a unique Broad Street corridor.

Recommendations

- Create an aesthetic and functional coordinated rear approach to all of the buildings as they approach the rail corridor. This approach contemplates a one-way loop that will allow for service vehicle access, some convenient parking, and a clearly identified pedestrian linkage along the buildings and then to the front.
- Create the “railroad” corridor and associated streetscape into an amenity/park setting that would connect the rail depot to another “anchor” of redevelopment to the north (as shown on the old gas station parcel at the corner of Broad and Moore).
- Design and coordinate all streetscapes to encourage pedestrian traffic.

- Seek infill opportunities for residential above retail. This will add to the vibrancy envisioned along the Broad Street corridor.
- Address (by Duke Power) the aesthetic and safety issues associated with the power lines adjacent to the existing buildings. The lines should be relocated underground or concealed.
- Create a unified signage plan for the entire area. Building signage, canopies, awnings and exterior building lighting will give the Broad Street corridor the vibrancy it so desires.
- Create a sense of place in the form of a civic gathering node, such as the one shown on the rendering. By developing a safe, "green," urban and pedestrian-friendly corridor along Broad Street, Main Street can continue as a successful commercial corridor.

Key Factors

- Coordinate town officials, building owners and tenants to develop a unified vision to enhance the Broad Street experience. This is critical to the success of this venture.
- Verify that all easements, town zoning ordinances and building code issues are located and identified. This will dictate the next step to the collaborative effort.
- Parts of this plan may be implemented cooperatively or individually.

A Phased Approach

- *Consolidate and upgrade all existing utilities*
This is a critical need and can be accomplished by locating utilities below grade or in a raised continuous vault that runs the length of the buildings under a "raised sidewalk."

- *Provide a wide, continuous, meandering raised sidewalk*
This raised sidewalk (boardwalk) would be about 3-4 feet above grade and meet the finished floor of each building. This can continue to be used as the access to the service/private entrance of each property or can also serve as a customer entrance if desired. The "raised sidewalk" would be accessed at a variety of points by ramps and broad steps. Furthermore, by raising the sidewalk, trash bins can be consolidated in pairs or groups of three and hidden from view while still providing usable access from the sidewalk above
- *Repave the lower pathway/vehicular access*
Specific paving material was not discussed; however, there is an opportunity to follow the sidewalk improvements underway on Main Street. The objective is to provide a path that could be used by both pedestrians and vehicles. By changing the existing asphalt paving to perhaps brick and concrete or concrete pavers and adding bollards along the edge facing the railroad, the street becomes more "controlled" and traffic could be reserved for service access, property owner or second-floor tenant parking.
- *Provide new landscaping and lighting*
The addition of plant material, both in-ground and in containers would be a needed enhancement. In addition, new architectural street lighting could contribute to the character of this space plus provide needed security. This should be designed in conjunction with improvements along the buildings facing Broad Street.
- *Promote second floor tenant use*
It was noted that most of the second-floor space in these buildings is not being used. There is an opportunity for a greater return on the investment if the improvements along this new pathway are designed to provide a more pleasing and private access to the second-floor space. Along with second-floor access, building codes could be established to allow for the integrated design of second-floor exterior balconies. It is critical to update the electric service to accomplish this.

- *Promote window/door awnings and canopies*
The addition of awnings and canopies contributes to the character of the space and provides greater tenant exposure and identity.
- *Promote building/tenant signage and graphics*
Like awnings and canopies, well-designed signage and graphics also contribute to the character of the space and provide greater tenant exposure and identity.
- *Branding*
There is a great opportunity to call attention to this improved area through unique promotion or branding/naming. Furthermore, any improvements could be strengthened and supported by being included in a unified approach with other Broad Street initiatives.

NEXT STEPS

Phase 1

- Survey and quantify all easements, boundary lines, underground utilities and storm drainage
- Negotiate upgrades and relocate the power lines underground and/or conduit service
- Seek funding sources for implementation of the plan
- Update the Downtown Master Plan and create a detailed redevelopment plan for the study area
- Develop a branding strategy for the district
- Create a public/private partnership, or designate an existing organization, to implement the plan and investigate incentives for business owners
- Review and amend zoning ordinance to accommodate the plan

Phase 2

- Complete the electric improvements and locate power lines underground
- Consolidate service areas to improve aesthetics
- Create a boardwalk/promenade to unify all building entrances
- Improve vehicular circulation by creating a one-way street
- Create pedestrian connection from Moore Square to the area
- Implement the branding strategy by incorporating signage, lighting and landscaping

Phase 3

- Create residential/office opportunities on the second floors by adding balconies
- Create an anchor at the north end of the site on vacant lot at the corner of Moore and Broad Streets
- Create a Broad Street streetscape plan
- Create pedestrian connectivity across the rail line at cross streets (McLelland, Moore, Center, and Iredell)
- Create programmed events to encourage community interest and activate the district.

APPENDIX

Panelist Biographical Sketches **page 16**

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Conceptual Plans of the Broad Street Enhancement Area **page 21**

Panelist Biographical Sketches

James R. Williams, AIA, LEED AP

National Director of Design, Little Diversified

As National Director of Design, Jim leads Little's design directors responsible for ensuring that clients receive a design solution that is not only outstanding architecture but also a catalyst for improved performance. Williams has more than 20 years of international architectural design, project management and due diligence experience, primarily with large-scale, mixed-use, community, office and retail projects. Previously, he served as an associate vice president for RTKL. His project experience ranges from Johnson & Wales University, Residence Hall in Charlotte, NC, to the J.R. Railroad, Miyazaki Train Station, Kyushu, Japan. Williams is board member of the Charlotte chapter of the US Green Building Council and has served as an adjunct professor for the University of North Carolina at Charlotte College of Architecture. He also is on the university's professional advisory board. Committed to local planning and smart development efforts, Williams has served as the chairman of the City of Concord historic preservation commission.

M. Rhett Crocker, RLA

Principal, Landscape Architect, LandDesign

Education:

Bachelor of Landscape Architecture
Clemson University, 1997

Licensing: NC, Landscape Architect, No. 1232

Affiliations:

Member, Congress for New Urbanism (CNU)
Member, International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)

Mr. Crocker is a Landscape Architect responsible for master planning for mixed-use developments, preparing design guidelines, and designing traditional neighborhoods, residential communities, and commercial/office development. Mr. Crocker is also responsible for preparing construction documents for residential, commercial and office project developments.

Recent Projects:

Southborough (Uptown Lowe's Mixed-Use), Charlotte, NC (Lowe's Home Improvement / Conformity Group)

Project Manager, 11-acre uptown site incorporating 2-story Lowe's Home Improvement, structured parking, residential, rooftop gardens, and urban plazas.

Downtown Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, MI (Downtown Kalamazoo, Inc.)

Project Manager, Redevelopment of the Downtown Vision Plan that created a master plan for a downtown theater, arena, convention center, street network, open space, and infill opportunities.

Baxter, Fort Mill, SC (Clear Springs Development)

Project Staff, Rezoning and master planning of more than 1,000 acres as a Traditional Neighborhood Development, including an elementary school, mixed use residential, office, retail, civic and open space.

Blumenthal Property, Cabarrus County, NC (American Asset Corporation)

Project Staff, Master planning and rezoning of a 300-acre mixed-use development.

Nathan C. Daniel, AIA, LEED® AP

Associate and Lead Designer, LS3P

Education: Auburn University, Bachelor of Architecture, 2000

Registration:

NC 2006 Architecture

USGBC LEED® Accredited Professional

Affiliations:

Urban Land Institute

International Council of Shopping Centers

NATHAN C. DANIEL, AIA, LEED® AP, is an LS3P Associate and Lead Designer in the Envision studio. He is responsible for the design of the overall project character for retail, entertainment, mixed-use, and streetscape projects. Nathan's role is one of guidance, seeing the project from concept through to completion; and mediator, helping to foster trust and respect between client and architect. Both are imperatives for sound design.

Recent Projects:

The Villages at Brunswick Forest Phase I, Leland, NC

Project Designer. A 100,000-square-foot mixed-use retail and professional office and entertainment center to serve the Brunswick Forest community. The village center will feature broad sidewalks, landscaping amenities and an outdoor performance area for concerts, plays and other exhibits.

Modern Square, Winston-Salem, NC

Project Designer. An urban infill mixed-use development sited on the old Modern Chevrolet site and nestled between new and existing residential communities. Just outside the Arts and Entertainment District, the components include 127,150 gross square feet of office; 5,100 gross square feet of street-level retail; four two-story luxury residential condominiums.

Lofts Dilworth, Charlotte, NC

Architectural Intern. A 32-unit, infill condominium development in a newly rezoned Transit Oriented Development District. Project features exposed structural masonry walls, heavy pine decking floors and exposed wood frame ceilings for a modern interpretation of a classic loft space.