experience

South Carolina

Hammond’s Ferry
North Augusta, SC

I’On
Mount Pleasant, SC

Old Town Master Plan
Bluffton, SC
experience

infill & retrofit

Sunset Drive
South Miami, FL

Glenwood Park
Atlanta, GA

Columbia Pike
Arlington, VA
Infill

Streets

Mix of Uses

Natural Features

Neighborhoods

Parks

Density

Shopping

Preservation
How El Paso Ended Up With America's Best Smart Growth Plan

The city’s new plan will improve downtown, increase public transportation options and revitalize older neighborhoods.

KAID BENFIELD | @Kaid_at_NRDC | Mar 8, 2012 | 12 Comments

Love CityLab? Make sure you're signed up for our free e-mail newsletter.

Earlier this week, the city council of El Paso, the nation’s 19th-largest city, unanimously adopted a detailed comprehensive plan built around the principles of smart growth and green development. With significant economic importance and a rich cultural history, but plagued with sprawling recent development patterns coupled with alarming rates of land consumption and carbon pollution, the city constructed Plan El Paso over the past two years. It is among the best, most articulate comprehensive plans I have ever seen.
phase 1: detailed analysis

review previous plans, conduct stakeholder interviews, on-site analysis
phase 1: create public awareness
phase 2: charrette workshops

Step 1: Kick-off / Hands-on Design Sessions
(2 to 3 days: multiple community input sessions)

Step 2: Open Studio / Work-in-Progress
(5 days: on-site design studio, stakeholder meetings, open house, community work-in-progress presentation)
kick-off & hands-on sessions

Sessions will be held in different locations in West Ashley
open design studio
work-in-progress presentation

- introductions
- update: the process so far
- draft: plan principles & illustrations
- economics: findings & strategy
- mobility strategy for great streets
- regulatory strategy: initial thoughts
- what happens next
gathering feedback: polling, surveys

Do you think the Downtown & Connectivity Plan is generally on the right track?

1. yes
2. probably yes
3. probably not
4. no

Siloam Springs Downtown & Connectivity Plan Charrette
Work-in-Progress Presentation, April 4, 2014

Did you attend the Plan Kick-off Presentation (February 11, 2014)?
Yes No

Did you attend the Hands-on Design Session (Monday, March 31st)?
Yes No

Did you visit the Design Studio (Tuesday, April 1st – Thursday April 3rd)?
Yes No

Of the many ideas you heard tonight, which idea should be made a top priority?

Are there any elements of your vision for Downtown we might have missed?
Charrette Work-in-Progress: Keypad Polling Results

Did you attend any of the charrette events earlier this week?
- Kick-off & Hands-on Session: 53%
- Charrette Studio: 39%
- Open House: 8%
- This is my first event: 45%

Would you support the establishment of the “Folly Trolley” and its park-and-ride lot?
- Probably yes: 57%
- Probably not: 34%
- No: 19%

Would you support the implementation of the improvement projects described so far?
- 93% probably yes
- 7% probably no

Which of these features of the draft vision are you most interested in? (pick up to 3)
- A safe, continuous walking and biking facility: 81%
- Green infrastructure (trees, stormwater): 59%
- Upgraded aesthetics on and along Folly Road: 50%
- Optimized signal timing: 46%
- Dedicated transit lanes: 23%
- Other: 4%

Is the vision generally on the right track?
- 65% yes
- Maybe: 21%
- No: 18%
- Can’t tell yet: 6%

How would you rate the draft vision for introducing new public green spaces?
- 88% LOVE IT
- 4% KINDA

How would you rate the draft vision for a safer, separated walking and biking path?
- 83% LOVE IT
- 10% MIGHT

How would you rate the draft vision for upgrading commercial sites?
- 78% LOVE IT
- 10% MIGHT

How would you rate the draft vision for enhanced transit?
- 74% LOVE IT
- 18% MIGHT
phase 3: illustrative vision details

applying the vision: Red Cedar / Frandor District

The Red Cedar/Frandor District is located at the western edge of Michigan State University, at the site of the existing Frandor Shopping Center and former Red Cedar golf course. This area is envisioned to transform over time to a more sustainable settlement form, which provides a greater mix of uses (including housing), improved stormwater handling, and greater benefit to the surrounding community.

A continuous network of green/park spaces is introduced through the site, culminating at Red Cedar Park. Stormwater is managed with innovative techniques, including swales and water features that also provide civic art in green spaces. A portion of the former Red Cedar golf course is allocated for new development, the remainder is utilized for stormwater retention as well as active and passive recreation. New streets are added to the existing street network, subdividing large parcels and providing more ways to transverse the district. Streets are fronted by buildings; the tallest, most dense are envisioned for the Michigan Avenue frontage, decreasing in scale away from the corridor.

key recommendations

1. Design Michigan Avenue to incorporate dedicated BRT lanes and center stations, wide medians, crosswalks, street trees and on-street parking
2. Activate public park space along the Red Cedar river with recreational fields and mixed-use development adjacent to Michigan Avenue
3. New development between Homer and Clippert street includes apartments, townhouses, mixed-use and office buildings
4. Create defined center with civic, plaza and green spaces, and redefine Frandor Avenue as the central axis
5. Rethink intersection of Saginaw Street and East Grand Avenue (see page 4.22)
6. North to south connection of green spaces and parks, including new pedestrian/bicyclists paths
7. New buildings on corridor front the street with parking placed at the rear of lot
8. A new network of streets is introduced to subdivide large parcels and provide connectivity

below: The existing Frandor Shopping Center consists of single-story buildings surrounding a large parking lot with little trees or shelter. The view below (area “D” in the plan at right) shows the desired new form of development, enhancing the experience for users by placing parking behind liner buildings and creating high quality public park and plaza spaces at the core of the mixed-use district. Street trees and on-street parking along the open spaces and shopfronts provide shade and shelter for pedestrians.
KEY TOPICS:
urban design
WHAT IF shade trees lining Folly Road were once again the rule, rather than the exception?
WHAT IF shade trees lining Folly Road were once again the rule, rather than the exception?
WHAT IF you could walk safely down a pleasant sidewalk, between any two points along the corridor?
visualizing change
visualizing change
visualizing change
visualizing change
visualizing change
KEY TOPICS:
transportation
two approaches to transportation

1. Widen Existing Roads
   • Creates capacity, alleviates traffic (temporarily)
   • Can create barriers to non-motorized travel
   • Focus on *moving cars*

2. Provide Travel Choices /
   Evolve the Network
   • Provides alternatives (mode and route choice)
   • Contributes to sense of place
   • Focus on *moving people*
conventional strategy

- capacity
- operational efficiency
- vehicular LOS
- minimize vehicular delay
holistic strategy

- livability and balance – “Complete Streets”
- combine land use and transportation improvements
- full range of seamless multi-modal opportunities – transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and roadway networks
- context sensitive solutions – utilize inherent flexibility in design
- collaborative, interdisciplinary, and community-led design
KEY TOPICS:
green infrastructure
Green Infrastructure, Sprawl Repair, & Implementation
STRATEGY #5
Facilitate the evolution of the West Ashley Greenscape

"No single park, no matter how well designed would provide citizens with the beneficial influences of nature; instead parks need to be linked to one another and to surrounding neighborhoods." – Frederick Law Olmsted

Working with partners and alliances, the City will focus on completing a fully-interconnected open space network and strategically target areas of West Ashley for additional park development and connecting infrastructure.

NEXT STEPS

Leverage private sector development projects—both commercial and residential—to create and finance new open spaces and bike/pedestrian connections.

Invest public funds to improve open spaces and create new bike/pedestrian infrastructure and connections.

Linear Parks & Greenways: West Ashley Strategic Plan, 2014
KEY TOPICS:
economics & affordability
Looking at the Regional Context to understand Local Conditions
But Future Demand Could Look Quite Different From Past Demand

According to another 2014 Met Council Study:

- Demand for new townhouses, condos, apartments share of total housing demand: 41%
- Households without children: 79%
- Downsizing households: 85% of new housing.

Lake Elmo Household Types

BRT Will Create a Strong Competitive Advantage for Lake Elmo

Planning for Current and Future Residents by Understanding Trends, Projections, and Product types
Addressing Gentrification Starts With Understanding Where Change is Happening, and to Whom
Bringing More Affordable Housing to West Ashley May be a Case of “Hidden in Plain Sight”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Units in Building</th>
<th>Properties</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Average Units Per Property</th>
<th>% of Total MF Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-Family</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Family Units</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 4 units</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 19 units</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 49 units</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 or more</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1,368</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Multi-Family</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>2,364</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
national discussion around Affordable Housing Tools – but tools must always be tailored to the specific local conditions

Policy Tools
• Working with state housing finance authorities to ensure that low income housing tax credit programs can work for “urban” projects
• Reducing parking requirements for affordable projects
• Putting multifamily housing zoning in place
• Inclusionary requirements

Production/Preservation Tools
• City-wide property/parcel taxes to establish housing funds
• Tax increment funds “set aside” for affordable housing
• Property acquisition/rehabilitation
• Land banking
A HEAVY LOAD:
The Combined Housing and Transportation Burdens of Working Families

October 2006
Combining Housing & Transportation Costs

“location-efficient” neighborhoods
- 59% disposable income
- 32% housing
- 9% transportation

auto-dependent ‘burbs
- 43% disposable income
- 32% housing
- 25% transportation
KEY TOPICS:
implementation
‘bespoke’ implementation strategy

- Respond to community needs & objectives
- Reflect local market conditions
- Match development types to the range opportunity sites
- Work with property owners
- Strategically use appropriate funding & financing tools

- We get that West Ashley is not the Peninsula or North Charleston; customizing is #1
- We know that West Ashley has largely grown up around the automobile
- We see that all sites and corridors are not equally ripe for evolution
- We realize the importance of thinking of change over time, that it won’t all happen overnight
In addition to the base open-space and growth sectors, the Future Land Use Map contains a series of overlay designations. These overlays define key generators of movement and economic activity, prime locations for new compact neighborhoods, and protection zones.

Nine types of overlay designations are shown on the Future Land Use Map. The first five are specific geographic points of movement and activity:
- **Border Crossings**: The four international ports of entry between El Paso and Juarez are key regional links for the movement of people and freight, including raw materials and finished products traveling to and from maquiladoras in northern Mexico.
- **Colleges**: Campuses of the University of Texas at El Paso and El Paso Community College are major activity centers for students, teachers, and staff.
- **Hospitals**: Hospitals are major activity centers for patients, doctors, and staff.
- **Regional Transportation Hubs**: The El Paso International Airport and the Union Depot are major regional transportation hubs, supplemented by numerous bus terminals between the border and Downtown El Paso.
- **Local Transfer Centers**: The eight transfer centers operated by Sun Metro are key links in daily movement through El Paso.

The sixth and seventh overlay designations are geographic areas where compact walkable neighborhoods are a key goal of City policy:
- **Rapid Transit Systems (RTS) Stops**: Four bus rapid transit lines are planned by Sun Metro. Each will terminate at a designated transfer center while also offering additional stops at approximately one-mile spacing. Each stop is designated on this map by a circle with an indeterminate outer edge. This circle indicates a presumed area of influence around each RTS stop where passengers will be arriving and departing as pedestrians. Each of these stops has the potential to generate or reinforce compact walkable development due to increased pedestrian activity. Each stop is also a highly desirable location for future residents and businesses who will be able to depend on regularly scheduled, high-quality public transportation.

- **Future Compact Neighborhoods**: A larger series of future compact neighborhoods are also designated on this map, including one surrounding each local transfer center. El Paso has only a limited number of areas where compact walkable development or redevelopment can take place with convenient access to existing services and facilities.

Each of these areas provides an excellent opportunity for El Paso to grow without the constant outward expansion of past decades.

Illustrative plans in other elements of Plan El Paso visualize the future physical context of each future compact neighborhood and many RTS stops and transfer centers.

The eighth and ninth overlay designations are protection zones that identify land that deserves special attention in the planning and development process:
- **Armories**: Many armories have been destroyed or replaced by engineered buildings. Others are already protected by public ownership or private covenants. Armories as identified in this overlay have neither been destroyed nor protected and would likely be endangered by careless development practices in the future. The edges of the armories shown on this map are generalized.
- **Military Buffer**: In certain locations, new neighborhoods and other noise-sensitive uses would be subject to potentially severe noise impacts from training activities at Fort Bliss. These areas should not be introduced into the designated military buffer zones.

**Compact Urban Areas**

The designation of base sectors and overlays allows the City of El Paso to group together a series of designations where special incentives, policies, or regulations should apply.

The Urban Design and Transportation Elements of Plan El Paso use this technique by defining “Compact Urban” all land in the following designations:
- **Base Sectors**: G-1, G-2, and G-7
- **Overlays**: Local Transfer Centers, RTS Stops, and Future Compact Neighborhoods.

In Compact Urban areas, the Transportation Element indicates that more walkable thoroughfares are anticipated as discussed in “Compact Urban, Drivable Suburban” on page 436.

The Urban Design Element indicates that the preferred locations for higher density development are sites in Compact Urban areas, as well as the remainder of the G-3 “Post-War” and the G-4 “Suburban” sectors, while not precluding this approach elsewhere.

These policies are carefully worked to make it clear that a different set of standards will apply to thoroughfare design, new development, and redevelopments on the remainder of Compact Urban areas, such as in the remainder of the G-3 “Post-War” and the G-4 “Suburban” sectors, while not precluding this approach elsewhere.
implementation: El Paso, TX
making towns more complete

Dorn Avenue, before
making towns more complete
making towns more complete: mixed-use infill

Glenwood Park – Atlanta, GA
making towns more complete: mixed-use infill

Glenwood Park – Atlanta, GA
re-imagining corridors

Existing, 2002  Vision  Existing, 2010

Columbia Pike, Arlington County, VA
re-imagining corridors

Existing, 2002
Vision
Existing, 2010

Columbia Pike, Arlington County, VA
form-based code results

Old Code – fortified windowless base

New Code – continuous covered walkways across property lines

New Code – habitable liners with real doors and windows
thank you!