

HENDERSON DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Appendix to Henderson Vision Plan



DRAFT 12-2-19

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Henderson Downtown Master Plan was created by community leaders who engaged in a visioning process to define where the downtown should be headed in the future. A special thanks to those listed below for the effort they contributed to the Plan.

DOWNTOWN PLAN COMMITTEE

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DOWNTOWN

Henderson Downtown Master Plan

background

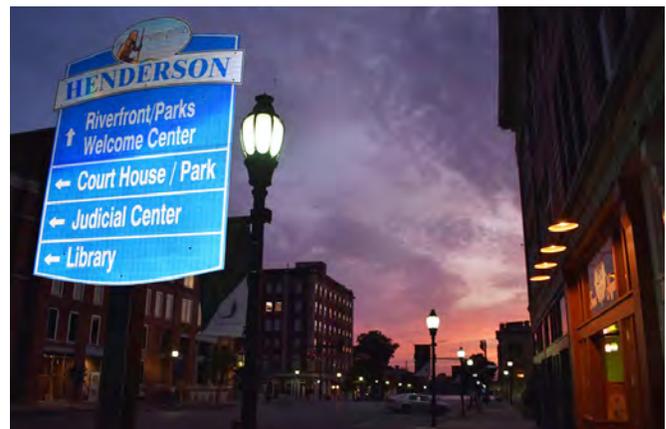
In July of 2018, a group of representing a number of community organizations was organized and convened to begin discussion about a Downtown Master Plan. The idea explored at that initial meeting was to expand on the 2015 Henderson Vision Plan and dig deeper into the Riverfront and Downtown Engagement theme to create a “Downtown Master Plan.” This master plan would be an extension and continuation of the Henderson Vision Plan and become an appendix to that document.

After the initial meeting, the Henderson City-County Planning Commission and the Downtown Henderson Partnership took the lead in organizing and conducting informational sessions and “mobile meetings” to engage local businesses owners and leaders as well as everyday citizen groups for their ideas on identifying:

1. Catalyst projects that need timely focus in order to advance Downtown Henderson;
2. Priorities to move those projects forward; and
3. Next steps needed to implement the Downtown Master Plan including responsible parties, funding and time lines.

Multiple groups provided leadership and input in creating the Downtown Master Plan, including:

- Henderson City-County Planning Commission staff
- Downtown Henderson Partnership staff and board members
- Henderson Vision Group and board members
- Henderson Audubon Board of Realtors
- Henderson Tourist Commission
- City of Henderson City Manager and staff members
- Henderson County Public Library staff
- Downtown business leaders, including Field & Main and Rookies



Henderson Wayfinding Sign

building upon the vision plan

The Downtown Master Plan references the Catalyst Projects identified in the Henderson Vision Plan and aimed to expand and move many of these projects forward. The initial Vision Plan identified seven catalyst projects within the “Riverfront & Downtown Engagement” theme as well as 16 other supporting projects that would further downtown redevelopment and reinforce downtown as a destination. These projects are listed below. Details on each project and the current status can be found in the Vision Plan and 2019 Vision Plan Report Card.

Vision Plan Catalyst Projects:

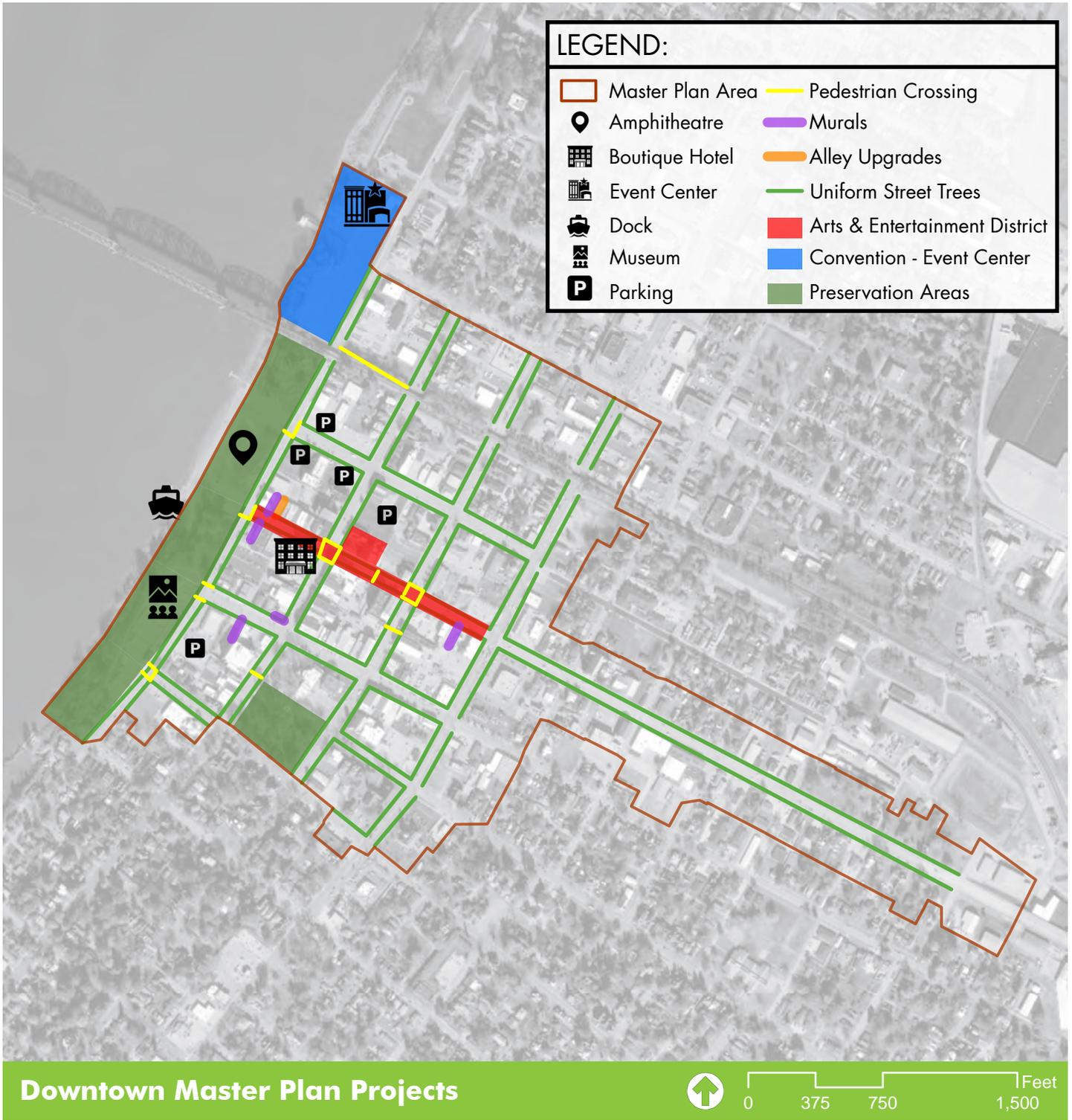
- ▶ Arts Education Center & Gallery
- ▶ Boutique Hotel
- ▶ Downtown Events & Programming
- ▶ Downtown Living Options
- ▶ Events Center
- ▶ Redevelopment Opportunities
- ▶ Transient Dock/Marina

Other Vision Plan Supporting Projects:

- ▶ Additional Downtown Parking (Parking Garage)
- ✓ Alcohol Permits for Events
- ✓ Amphitheatre/Outdoor Performance Space
- ▶ Atkinson Park Expanded Programming
- ▷ Dog Park
- ▶ Downtown Trolley
- ▶ Entertainment & Arts District
- ▶ Hospital Engagement with Riverfront. Hospital/Health Services Facilities
- ▶ Main Street Tree Planting
- ▶ Micro-Brewery/Distillery
- ✓ Promenade/Boardwalk
- ▶ Restaurants & Retail
- ▶ Riverfront Gateway/Landmark Feature
- ▷ Riverwalk Trail Extension
- ▶ Season Ice Skating Rink

- ▷ Not Started
- ▶ In Progress
- ✓ Completed

The geographic boundaries of downtown were identified and the above projects from the Vision Plan were mapped, allowing the working committee to identify additional projects or areas that needed additional improvement.



A “wish list” of ideas was generated that expanded upon the Vision Plan projects and is organized by the themes used in the Henderson Vision Plan. The updated “wish list” of projects for downtown was expanded to include the following:

Riverfront & Downtown Engagement

- Amphitheatre/stage built in
- Boutique hotel
- Parking garage
- Trees
- Riverfront seating and interaction
- Uniform open signs for all merchants
- Experience-driven merchants
- Permanent outdoor entertainment venue
- Retail options
- Atmosphere (landscaping, lights, public arts and crosswalks)

Community Investment

- Convention Center
- Arts district
- Preservation area - green space
- Event center

Community Viability

- Sports complex
- Organic/fresh grocery/farmers market
- Arts district with downtown theatre
- Museum of some sort)

Access & Mobility

- Trolley
- Wayfinding signs (including indicators for parking, restrooms)
- Creative sidewalks
- Bike trails, bike share
- Accessibility for bike and pedestrians into downtown

Landmarking & Sense of Place

- Lighting
- Distillery on bourbon trail
- Murals and alley way cleanup



Second Street & Main Street Historical Photo



Historical Marker on Main Street

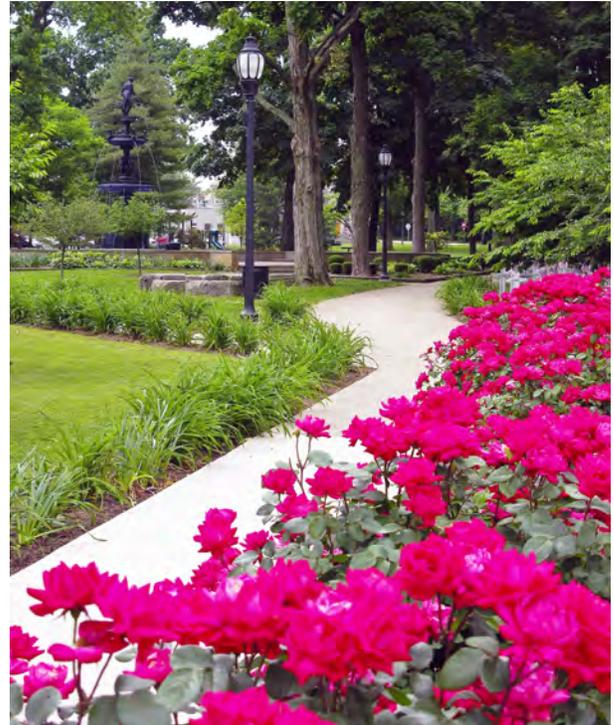
public engagement & input

In the Spring of 2019, the working committee began an intensive input process to determine the priority of projects that should occur in downtown. Through “mobile meetings” as well as a display that moved around the community, residents and business owners were able to rank each project on the “wish list” for downtown. Presentations were made during mobile meetings to the following organizations:

- Downtown Merchants.
- Downtown Professionals.
- Downtown Restaurant Owners.
- Henderson Community College.
- Henderson Rotary Club.
- Henderson Lions Club.
- Henderson Leadership Initiative.
- A panel of Henderson County High School and Middle School students recruited by the school administration.
- Henderson Vision Group.
- Rotaract.
- Downtown Henderson Partnership Breakfast.
- City-County Cooperative Study Team.

Additionally, the boards used during the mobile meetings were also displayed at the following locations to allow additional input:

- Henderson County Public Library.
- Henderson Municipal Center.
- Field & Main Bank.
- Henderson Tourist Commission office.
- The Gathering Place senior citizens center.
- Housing Authority of Henderson.
- Independence Bank



Flowers Along the Riverwalk



W.C. Handy Blues & Barbecue Festival

Following the data collection period, results were tallied by the Henderson City County Planning Commission staff and the projects were assigned a score, ranking them within their respective categories. The project rankings included (lowest number indicating most popular):

RIVERFRONT & DOWNTOWN ENGAGEMENT	
PROJECTS	RANKING
Boutique hotel	2.4
Trees	2.4
Atmosphere landscaping lights public art— crosswalks for example	4.0
Uniform open signs for all Merchants	4.8
Experience driven merchants	5.0
Permanent outdoor entertainment venue	5.2
Amphitheatre/ stage built in	6.0
Retail options	6.6
Riverfront seating and interaction	6.6
Parking garage	9.2

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT	
PROJECTS	RANKING
Event Center	1.2
Arts District	2.0
Convention Center	2.8
Preservation Area - Green Space	3.4

COMMUNITY VIABILITY	
PROJECTS	RANKING
Arts district with downtown theatre	1.6
Sports Complex	2.2
Organic/fresh grocery/farmers market	3.0
Museum of some sort	3.2

ACCESS & MOBILITY	
PROJECTS	RANKING
Accessibility for bike and pedestrian into downtown	2.2
Creative sidewalks	3.0
Trolley	3.2
Bike trails - bike share	3.2
Way finding signs	3.4

LANDSCAPING & SENSE OF PLACE	
PROJECTS	RANKING
Murals and alley way cleanup	1.8
Lighting	2.0
Distillery on bourbon trail	2.2

In addition to the ideas vetted through the public, a number of additional projects were identified but were not included in the recommendations of the Downtown Plan. These suggestions are less tangible in nature but could still contribute to the quality of life and are included for reference.

Riverfront & Downtown Engagement

- Escape Room, Arcade.
- Piano/Recreation Area.
- Family Entertainment Center (similar to one in Newburgh, Ind.).
- Vertical Escape.
- Paintball or laser tag venue.
- Riverfront cleanup.
- List of downtown businesses that offer free Wi-Fi.
- Place to study or hangout.
- Food trucks on the riverfront.
- Mini-Carnival more often.
- Zoo.
- Programming, more activity
- Little beach, sand area at Redbanks Park
- Safe place to hang out.
- Instagram or Twitter as a way to promote events to younger generations.
- Concerts after football games.
- More exotic food choices.
- 10-10-10 concept: 10 eateries, 10 retail shops in three blocks with 10 open after 6 p.m.
- Pick one block as a demonstration project for a makeover.
- Expand free parking hours.
- Beautification and curb appeal (hanging flowers, planters, benches, signs)
- Inventory of community intellectual assets (tour guides specializing in various topics, visual artists, musicians, culinary artist, etc.) that could provide unique experiences
- New features for Christmas in the Park

Community Investment

- Pool in the downtown area.
- Homeless Shelter.
- Solar panels.
- A downtown Fine Arts Center.
- Restaurant discounts for youth.
- Science Center/Discovery Center or a CMOE.
- Mall with more shopping opportunities.
- More advertising for our downtown.
- Youth town halls to discuss current events or politics.
- Downtown living options.
- Showcase for functional arts, crafts (in addition to fine arts).
- Bourbon museum.
- Spectator seating at tennis courts.
- Updated Calisthenics gym.

Community Viability

- Community garden.
- Boutiques for shopping.
- Brighter downtown roads.
- Free music events.
- Movies geared at teens.

Access & Mobility

- Walks or charity events.
- Trail close to Sunset Park.
- Bike Lanes.
- Walking tours.
- Scooter rentals.

Landmarking & Sense of Place

- Amusement park or a Ferris wheel.
- Guitar sculpture.
- Historic or Wax Museum.
- Downtown brick crosswalks/pathfinding
- Maintaining historic nature of downtown.
- Marking downtown gateway.
- Giving downtown a name/identity aligned with branding.

next steps

Bringing this vision for Downtown Henderson to reality will require many partners and a number of years to accomplish. Based on the priorities identified during this planning process, input from residents, businesses and elected officials, and potential funding, the following action steps have been identified to continue building momentum and complete the highest priority projects.

Plan Maintenance

A plan is created in a single point in time. It paints a long-term picture of where the community wants to go and attempts to anticipate change but responding to unforeseen change can be difficult. The following action steps are necessary to continually monitor the plan direction, gauge success or challenges, and reassess key projects for the next year.

1. Downtown Henderson Partnership (DHP), Economic Vitality Committee Meetings.

As this plan is completed, project implementation is transitioning to DHP. This committee should continue to meeting at least quarterly in order to gauge progress, overcome project obstacles and continue to move projects forward. The progress meetings should focus on task lists and actions needed to complete the upcoming key projects.

2. Identify Available Funding & Finalize Key Projects Annually.

This plan identifies dozens of projects that would impact downtown and the greater community. However, they cannot all be implemented at once due to resources, volunteer time, and funding. While some projects can be started and completed quickly, others will require large investments in planning, design, volunteers or construction. These factors should be considered as projects move forward.

The projects outlined in this plan should be aligned with available funding sources, including local, state, federal and private. Through this process, the key projects that should be initiated, continued and/ or started in 2020 (and each year after) should be determined. Key projects for each year should, at a minimum, include:

- Continuing projects that are currently underway that have funding secured;
- Completing at least one “quick win” project that could be started and completed in one year;
- Beginning at least one long-term project that requires multiple steps to complete; and
- Setting up projects that have potential funding sources in order to submit a competitive grant application.

2020 Key Project Action Step Plan

While the DHP committee will refine and finalize the list of key projects for 2020, the following provides an outline of suggested projects that should occur or move forward in the next year. This list is based on continuing current projects as well as the input collected during this planning process. This list can be expanded and/or refined once the list of key projects for 2020 is finalized.

KEY PROJECT 1: Events Center

The events center was consistently identified as a catalyst project during the Vision Plan as well as this downtown plan. While discussions have occurred recently, a more formal action plan specifically for the events center needs to be created. This would include the larger tasks that would be required over the life of the project as well as a detailed task list for the upcoming year. Additionally, funding sources, responsible parties and partners should be outlined for each task for the upcoming year.



Horizon Convention Center - Muncie, IN



Riverpark Center - Owensboro, KY

KEY PROJECT 2: Arts District with Downtown Theatre

There is a desire to create a distinct arts district in downtown with a theatre that anchors the district. The vision for this district should be defined and the next steps for finalizing location and partner for the new theatre should be identified.



The Arts & Entertainment District - Bel Air, MD



Athens Theatre - DeLand, FL

KEY PROJECT 3: Lighting on Main Street

Café-style lighting was recently added to Central Park that add not only lighting for security but also add to the ambiance and user experience at the park. This type of lower-cost lighting could be extended along Main Street. Specific areas or sites should be identified and funding should be secured to complete a second phase of café-style lighting in 2020.



Commercial Street - Nevada City, CA



Granby Street - Norfolk, VA

KEY PROJECT 4: Murals & Alley Way Cleanup

A current mural is underway in downtown in partnership with the Hugh Edward Sandefur Training Center. Additional sites for murals should be identified with the intention of completing one more mural in 2020. New murals can also incorporate alley ways to make these connections more inviting and friendly. Mural designs should be vetted through the DHP committee to make sure this art reinforces the desired character of downtown.



Mural - Louisville, KY



Trader's Alley - Buckhannon, WV

KEY PROJECT 5: Creative Sidewalks & Crosswalks

Sidewalk or crosswalk projects not only improve safety for pedestrians but they can also be a creative way to display a community's character and create a unique sense of place. A current crosswalk project is funded in downtown to improve a themed-block crossing on Second Street between Main Street and Elm Street. At least one additional sidewalk or crosswalk projects should be identified to complete in 2020 with a focus on improving safety and bringing a creative atmosphere to downtown.



Southwark Street - London



Brick Paver Crosswalk

KEY PROJECT 6: Sports Complex

While this project is not located in downtown, the impact from the number of visitors will be seen downtown. As families come for sports activities and games, they will also have a need for entertainment, dining and just being tourists. The sports complex project was identified in the Vision Plan and significant progress has been made over the past few years. The DHP committee should participate as the project progresses and identify what projects are needed in downtown to support the sports complex.



Elizabethtown Sports Park - Elizabethtown, KY



Grand Park - Westfield, IN

