



Board Meeting Agenda Abstract

Tuesday, October 22, 2024

Location: 134 N. Main Street, Fuquay-Varina, NC 27526

Agenda Item

Downtown Generational Plan - (Seymour)

Item Explanation

The purpose of this agenda item is to consider adopting the recommended Downtown Generational Plan.

Staff Comments

The Town of Fuquay-Varina Board of Commissioners authorized funding for a comprehensive downtown generational plan. In January 2023, the Town hired consulting firm McAdams, a full-service planning, design, and engineering firm, to create the downtown plan. This downtown generational plan is intended to be a blueprint for investment in downtown (DC-1 and DC-2 zoning districts) specific to housing, commercial/retail development, cultural arts, landscaping, and recreation amenities. The proposed Plan recommends changes to the built environment that could be made over the next several decades while considering current demographic profiles, economic conditions, and community goals. In addition, the Plan examines local, national, and international downtown development trends that will impact development patterns throughout downtown Fuquay-Varina.

The Downtown Generational Plan will:

- 1) Serve as a blueprint for downtown planning efforts to advance the downtown's economic and physical success over the next several decades.*
- 2) Serve to attract and retain businesses, residents, and visitors downtown while ensuring that the uniqueness and authenticity of Downtown Fuquay-Varina are maintained.*
- 3) Coordinate the right blend of new development, redevelopment, rehabilitation, and infill development opportunities.*

- 4) *Create a unified downtown vision that includes a comprehensive strategic implementation strategy to ensure the continued development and redevelopment of Fuquay-Varina and a high-quality, mixed-use design.*
- 5) *Serve as a reference document and a policy guide for local government officials in decision-making.*
- 6) *Builds consensus among engaged stakeholders, including property owners, residents, businesses, developers, and elected officials.*
- 7) *Identify downtown's historical significance and recommend empowering historic preservation in conjunction with new, modern forms of downtown infill development projects.*
- 8) *Focus on key initiatives and opportunity sites to assist the Town in making a strategic public investment in infrastructure while leveraging new, private-sector investment that creates robust mixed-use and infill development opportunities.*

By analyzing existing Town plans, studies, and the downtown's physical and economic conditions, the Town and McAdams developed a comprehensive understanding of downtown's development potential. Collaborative community and staff engagement was integral to the process, ensuring that the Plan reflects the community's vision for the downtown's future. The resulting document outlines recommendations and strategies to develop Fuquay-Varina's downtown into a destination.

The Plan provides recommendations that align with the Town's overall Strategic Plan, supporting goals of the NC Main Street including economic vitality, preserving character and identity, enhancing safety and security, and improving quality of life. Specifically, the Plan contributes to the Town's economic development strategic plan by supporting initiatives focused on commercial and retail recruitment development, infill development, transportation, infrastructure, and utilities investment.

Community input is an essential part of any planning process. This Plan uses input from the residents of Fuquay-Varina, town staff, the Fuquay-Varina Downtown Association (FVDA), and focus group participants to inform the community engagement portion of the information-gathering process. The FVDA has worked strategically with the Town to help develop the Plan and support its adoption.

Since presented to the Town Board for review on August 20, the Plan was put on the Town's online engagement platform, Let's Talk FV, for 30 days following McAdam's presentation. Survey responses from Let's Talk FV included 57 informed responses, with a total of 326 people reviewing the Plan. Upon review of the Plan, the following feedback was provided:

- 1) *Accessibility, Walkability, and Connectivity*

- *Emphasis on improving accessibility for all visitors downtown by making areas more walkable on N Main Street and secondary streets (i.e., Fuquay Avenue, Spring Avenue).*
- *Desire for physically connecting the Fuquay District to the Varina District.*
- *Enhance multi-modal transportation options, including the ability to bike downtown, dedicated walking routes, and create the Rail Trail as an amenity.*
- *Interest in enhancing walkability, adding sidewalks, and improving pedestrian safety to make the downtown more accessible.*

2) Preservation of Small-Town Charm and Historical Character

- *Maintain downtown's historical character and charm as new infill development continues.*
- *Preserve existing buildings and landmarks as new development occurs.*

3) Parking and Traffic Management

- *Concerns about downtown traffic flow specific to commercial truck traffic through downtown.*
- *Need for new parking solutions that create more parking, including surface lots and parking decks.*

4) Support for Green Space and Public Areas

- *Support for creating public parks, green spaces, and community gathering areas that provide shade and comfort.*
- *Support public art and community-focused spaces encouraging engagement, events, and cultural activities.*

5) Community Engagement

- *Make development efforts inclusive and support all populations.*
- *Engage the public for input when making the downtown project decision-making process to be reflective of resident needs and expectations.*

6) Transformative Places

- *How will the proposed Piney Woods Park impact the Fuquay-Varina Emergency Food Pantry?*
- *How will the proposed Piney Woods Park impact existing businesses?*
- *What type of apartments will be included in the Junction Mixed-Use District?*

7) Support for Economic Growth and Housing Options

- *Interest in expanding high-density residential downtown to increase the vibrancy of downtown while ensuring affordable housing options.*
- *Demand for more affordable retail and business spaces to support local enterprises and small businesses.*

Overall, the public feedback was optimistic and supportive of the Town's proposed Downtown Generational Plan and its potential to improve the Town's downtown. The Plan highlights the community's desire for thoughtful growth that balances modernization with preserving downtown Fuquay-Varina's unique character while addressing practical concerns like traffic, accessibility, and economic inclusivity. One of the notable changes to the Plan since the draft presentation to the Town Board on August 20 includes removing a section of Piney Woods Park at the same location as the Fuquay-Varina Food Pantry. As reflected in the final Plan, the commercial buildings located south of Piney Woods Park are shown as existing buildings and are not part of the Park's conceptual planning.

Fiscal Note

No

Recommendation:

MOTION TO: Adopt the proposed Downtown Generational Plan as presented and recommended.

ATTACHMENTS

[Downtown Generational Plan FINAL 10.22.2024](#)