



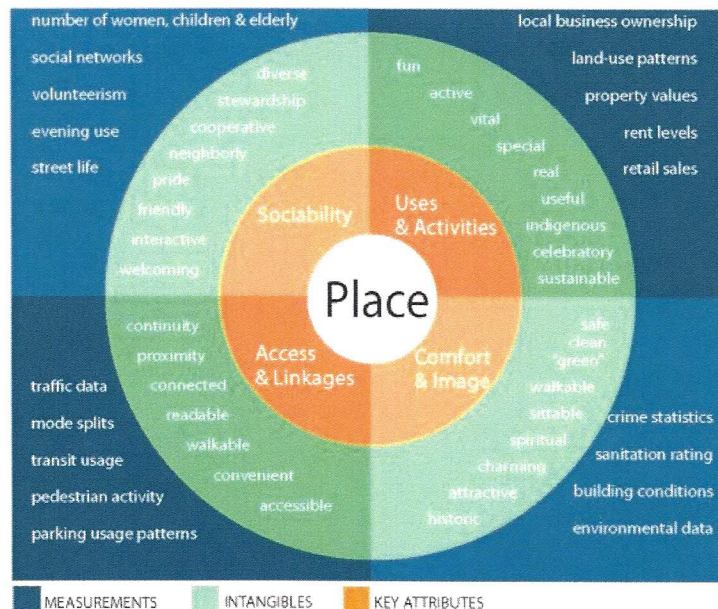
Henderson City Center Catalyst

Creating Great Places: Successful Public Spaces and Links

Cities are like living organisms, while there may be parts of less-than-optimal health, a truly thriving place is one where the whole is robust and healthy. While improvements can be made around the edges, without a healthy core, communities will struggle to survive. Great public spaces are where celebrations are held, social and economic exchanges take place, friends run into each other, and cultures mix. They are the “front porches” of our public institutions – libraries, field houses, neighborhood schools – where we interact with each other and government. When the spaces work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives. These are some of the principles used to create the proposals for Henderson’s Catalyst Projects. What makes some places succeed while others fail? In evaluating thousands of public spaces around the world, researchers have found that successful ones have four key qualities:

- They are **accessible**;
- People are engaged in **activities** there;
- The space is **comfortable** and has a good image; and finally,
- It is a **sociable** place: one where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit.

The **Place Diagram** is a tool to help people in judging any place, good or bad:



Imagine that the center circle on the diagram is a specific place that you know: a street corner, a playground, a plaza outside a building. You can evaluate that place according to four criteria in the orange ring. In the ring outside these (the green ring) main criteria are a number of **intuitive or qualitative** aspects by which to judge a place; the outer edge (in blue) shows the **quantitative aspects** that can be measured by statistics or research.

Access & Linkages

You can judge the accessibility of a place by its connections to its surroundings, both visual and physical. A successful public space is easy to get to and get through; it is visible both from a distance and up close. The edges of a space are important as well: For instance, a row of shops along a street is more interesting and generally safer to walk by than a blank wall or empty lot. Accessible spaces have a high parking turnover and, ideally, are convenient to public transit.

Questions to consider on Access & Linkages:

- Can you see the space from a distance? Is its interior visible from the outside?
- Is there a good connection between the space and the adjacent buildings, or is it surrounded by blank walls? Do occupants of adjacent buildings use the space?
- Can people easily walk to the place? For example, do they have to dart between moving cars to get to the place?
- Do sidewalks lead to and from the adjacent areas?
- Does the space function for people with special needs?
- Do the roads and paths through the space take people where they actually want to go?
- Can people use a variety of transportation options – bus train, car, bicycle, etc. – to reach the place?
- Are transit stops conveniently located next to destinations such as libraries, post offices, park entrances, etc.?

Comfort & Image

Whether a space is comfortable, is attractive and has a good image – are keys to its success. Comfort includes perceptions about safety, cleanliness, and the availability of places to sit – the importance of giving people the choice to sit where they want is generally underestimated. Women in particular are good judges on comfort and image, because they tend to be more discriminating about the public spaces they use.

Questions to consider on Comfort & Image:

- Does the place make a good first impression?
- Are there enough places to sit? Are seats conveniently located? Do people have a choice of places to sit, either in the sun or shade?
- Are spaces are clean and free of litter? Who is responsible for maintenance? What do they do? When?
- Does the area feel safe? Is there a security presence? If so, what do these people do? When are they on duty?
- Are people taking pictures? Are there many photo opportunities available?
- Do vehicles dominate pedestrian use of the space, or prevent them from easily getting to the space?

Uses & Activities

Activities are the basic building blocks of a place. Having something to do will give people a reason to come to a place – and a reason to return. When there is nothing to do, a space will be empty and that generally means that something is wrong.

Principles to keep in mind in evaluating the uses and activities of a place:

- The more activities that are going on and that people have an opportunity to participate in, the better.
- There is a good balance between men and women (women are more particular about the spaces that they use).
- People of different ages are using the space (retired people and people with young children can use a space during the day when others are working).
- The space is used throughout the day.
- A space that is used by both singles and people in groups is better than one that is just used by people alone because it means that there are places for people to sit with friends, there is more socializing, and it is more fun.
- The ultimate success of a space is how well it is managed.

Questions to consider on Uses & Activities:

- Are people using the space or is it empty?
- Is it used by people of different ages?
- Are people in groups?
- How many different types of activities are occurring – people walking, eating, playing baseball, chess, relaxing, reading?

- Which parts of the space are used and which are not?
- Are there choices of things to do?
- Is there a management presence, or can you identify anyone in charge of the space?

Sociability

This is a difficult quality for a place to achieve, but once attained it becomes an unmistakable feature. When people see friends, meet and greet their neighbors, and feel comfortable interacting with strangers, they tend to feel a stronger sense of place or attachment to their community – and to the place that fosters these types of social activities.

Questions to consider on Sociability:

- Is this a place where you would choose to meet your friends? Are others meeting friends here or running into them?
- Are people in groups? Are they talking with one another?
- Do people seem to know each other by face or by name?
- Do people bring their friends and relatives to see the place or do they point to one of its features with pride?
- Are people smiling? Do people make eye contact with each other?
- Do people use the place regularly and by choice?
- Does a mix of ages and ethnic groups that generally reflect the community at large?
- Do people tend to pick up litter when they see it?



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Henderson City Center Catalyst

Henderson Public Market

Public markets can revitalize communities, promote economic development, and perhaps most importantly, create an infectious sense of goodwill. Henderson is an important commercial center and strategically located for easy access making it a natural location to explore the potential for a public market. A public market in Henderson, in addition to serving as a catalyst for new businesses, may serve as a catalyst for conferences, market shows, and product showcasing events like an annual flower show, textiles show, etc.

Drawing on the experience of other places, public market can:

- Catalyze neighborhood and downtown revitalization
- Build community and create a sense of local ownership and pride
- Educate members of the community, especially schools and local businesses, about the myriad benefits of markets
- Promote economic development; Support local products and the local exchange of goods
- Build and enhance social capital: Markets as places which draw people together
- Provide accessible food to all members of the community through EBT, food stamps and other programs
- Inspire a feel-good ambiance
- Create opportunities for small businesses

Catalyze neighborhood and downtown revitalization. Markets serve as an anchor attraction for a downtown or neighborhood, drawing foot traffic which – with the right location – spills into adjacent retail areas and can spark neighborhood revitalization. A great example can be found in Barcelona, which has 46 markets (most of them indoor market halls) in the city itself and over 150 if you consider the surrounding province. In the 19th Century, the expanding city developed a plan that laid out an infrastructure of water, utilities, streets, parks – and markets to provide food – as key public investments. Today, few people in Barcelona live less than a 10 minute walk from a market hall with abundant food products. The city is spending millions of dollars renovating its public markets, helping to reinvigorate neighborhoods they have served for over a century. Barcelona provides a powerful example of how government and citizen input can leverage the transformative role of markets.

Build community and create a sense of local ownership and pride. Markets can help build community because they are, indeed, about all things local. They are also invaluable tools to improve low-income communities. “High Hopes for Low-Income, Neighborhood Markets,” by Karen Washington of La Familia Verde, Daniel Ross of Nuestras Raices, and Jason Harvey of Oakland, CA Food Connection write about individual efforts to create community-based markets in high-risk neighborhoods. All three programs developed from the community’s needs and are operated by community members. Their relationship to the community makes their markets’ value priceless because of the sense of pride they have instilled in the neighborhood.

Educate members of the community, especially schools and local businesses, about the myriad benefits of markets. Markets are wonderful places to educate people and make learning fun. In Portland, OR, the Portland Farmers Market uses online tools and in-person events to bring people together and connect them to both one another and their local markets. Cooking classes, children’s events, live music from local artists and holiday celebrations highlight assets of the Portland area. Interactive market maps online allow people to track their favorite farmers, and online profiles introduce

shoppers to local vendors in advance. These efforts have been so successful that when Education and Events Manager Anna Curtin tried to start a market page on the widely-popular social networking site Facebook, she found that an individual shopper had already done so.

Promote economic development and support local products and the local exchange of goods. As supermarkets have come to dominate our national and international food distribution system, we have the ability in most cities to eat pretty much what we want to when we want to. However, we have lost the local connections – and economic development potential – that growing, making, and selling locally produced products can bring to a region.

Market places, like those in Germany, The Netherlands, Canada, and United Kingdom, are showcases for local products and annual fairs including many Christmas Fairs, book fairs, industrial fairs, and flower shows. In New England, annual antique and holiday product shows are highlights of a community's annual calendar.

Build and enhance social capital: Markets as places which draw people together. Markets are community anchors: they provide a way to bring people together, anchoring a community around food and place, but they are always “shifting” and evolving, just as a community shifts and evolves.

Provide accessible food to all members of the community through EBT, food stamps and other programs. Too many neighborhoods lack access to fresh, healthy food, and community leaders, health providers and politicians are turning to farmers markets to help solve this problem. However, simply putting a once- or twice-a-week farmers market into a food insecure neighborhood is often not enough because for many low-income shoppers, the price of local food is a huge barrier. For these markets to begin to meet the needs of their communities they need to go beyond bringing healthy produce, meat and dairy into the neighborhood.

Inspire a feel-good ambiance. One of the greatest things about a market is its ability to generate happiness and goodwill at the heart of a community. It is often difficult, however, to find space for a market that is both centrally located and accessible to a diverse range of community members.

Create opportunities for small businesses. Markets are, by their nature, business incubators. With the right management, market managers can help new vendors start businesses in markets and help them learn and appreciate how being a market vendor is different than running other retail businesses. David O' Neil, of a private-public market consulting firm, PPS, speaks about the importance of vendor education: “Markets lower the rungs of economic opportunity to a level where almost anyone with a good idea can get started at an outdoor market,” he said. “It’s very important to preserve markets as places for small businesses to get a foothold so cities and towns do not just become places for the well-to-do. A vendor can rent 100 square feet (or less) at a market, which opens up economic opportunities to an entire class of people who are priced out of renting a store.” PPS is currently working on a handbook that provides vendors in minority markets with a framework for a successful market stall. It includes tips on how to conduct initial research, manage inventory, grow business and build a customer base. It also has sample forms including a rental agreement and budget sheets.



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Henderson

North Carolina

Henderson City Center Catalyst – Streets

Characteristics of a **Great Street** include:

- Provides orientation to its users, and connects well to the larger pattern of ways.
- Balances the competing needs of the street — driving, transit, walking, cycling, servicing, parking, drop-offs, etc.
- Is lined with a variety of interesting activities and uses that create a varied streetscape.
- Has urban design or architectural features that are exemplary in design.
- Encourages human contact and social activities.
- Promotes safety of pedestrians and vehicles and promotes use over the 24-hour day.
- Is well maintained, and capable of being maintained without excessive costs.

Has a memorable character.

The streets of our cities and towns are an important part of our communities. They allow children to get to school and parents to get to work. They bring together neighbors and draw visitors to neighborhood stores. These streets ought to be designed for everyone – whether young or old, on foot or on bicycle, in a car or in a bus – but too often they are designed only for speeding cars or creeping traffic jams.

NCDOT and numerous cities, towns and counties around the state and country have adopted Complete Street policies and have begun to install “complete streets”.

What are Complete Streets?

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from train stations.

“First and foremost, a great street should help make community... A great street should be a most desirable place to be, to spend time, to live, to play, to work... Streets are settings for activities that bring people together.”

“It’s no big mystery. The best streets are comfortable to walk along with leisure and safety. They are streets for both pedestrians and drivers. They have definition, a sense of enclosure with their buildings; distinct ends and beginnings, usually with trees. Trees, while not required, can do more than anything else and provide the biggest bang for the buck if you do them right. The key point again, is great streets are where pedestrians and drivers get along together.”

What are some of the benefits of Complete Streets?

Complete streets can offer many benefits in all communities, regardless of size or location. The National Complete Streets Coalition has developed a number of fact sheets: www.completestreets.org/factsheets

Complete Streets improve safety.

A Federal Highways Administration safety review found that streets designed with sidewalks, raised medians, better bus stop placement, traffic-calming measures, and treatments for disabled travelers improve pedestrian safety. Some features, such as medians, improve safety for all users: they enable pedestrians to cross busy roads in two stages, reduce left-turning motorist crashes to zero, and improve bicycle safety.

“Streets are places of social and commercial encounter and exchange. They are where you meet people – which are a basic reason to have cities in any case.”

“As well as to see, the street is a place to be seen. Sociability is a large part of why cities exist and streets are a major if not the only *public* place for that sociability to develop. At the same time, the street is a place to be alone, to be private, to wonder what it was once like, or what it could be like. It is a place for the mind to wander, triggered by something there on the street or by something internal, more personal, a place to walk while whatever is inside unfolds, yet again.” *Allan Jacobs – Author and Landscape Architect (1995)*

Complete streets encourage walking and bicycling for health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently named adoption of Complete Streets policies as a recommended strategy to prevent obesity. One study found that 43% of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels; among individuals without safe place to walk, just 27% were active enough. Easy access to transit can also contribute to healthy physical activity: nearly one third of transit users meet the Surgeon General’s recommendations for minimum daily exercise through their daily travels.

Complete Streets can lower transportation costs for families.

Americans spent an average of 18 cents of every dollar on transportation, with the poorest fifth of families spending more than double that figure. In fact, most families spend far more on transportation than on food. When residents have the opportunity to walk, bike, or take transit, they have more control over their expenses by replacing car trips with these inexpensive options. Taking public transportation, for example, saves individuals \$9,581 each year.

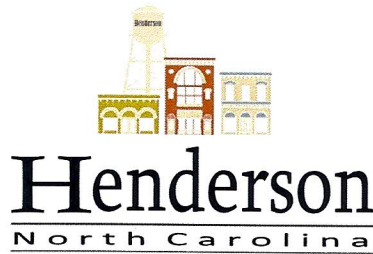
Complete Streets foster strong communities.

Complete streets play an important role in livable communities, where all people – regardless of age, ability or mode of transportation – feel safe and welcome on the streets. A safe walking and bicycling environment is an essential part of improving public transportation and creating friendly, walkable communities.

A recent study found that people who live in walkable communities are more likely to be socially engaged and trusting than residents of less walkable neighborhoods; public safety increases; and, they reported being in better health and happier more often.



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Henderson City Center Catalyst Project Summary

Proposal Highlights:

- The City of Henderson is seeking funds from the recently announced North Carolina Department of Commerce's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Catalyst Program; those funds will be used for various physical feature upgrades in the various corridors of the City that lead to neighborhoods and districts that need improvement.
- At the same time it is launching a longer-range program to identify and develop the various corridors and districts that compose and link the entire City of Henderson; that program is designed to create a new era of community wealth and prosperity that will allow growth and expansion of our physical, economic, intellectual, and cultural infrastructure of Henderson and the adjoining parts of Vance County.
- The third and possibly most vital component of this proposal is the development of a Partnership for Henderson, a partnership of our public, business, cultural and civic leadership. That leadership will work together to develop the blueprints and designs for development of each of the vital infrastructures identified above, the physical, economic, intellectual, and cultural components of our City.
- This vision of a wealthy and prosperous Henderson will emerge from the exploration of the successful redevelopment efforts of various other communities in the US that have faced the same dismal future and took action to create new, vital, thriving communities that are moving with success into the 21st Century.
- As we move to identify the various **corridors and districts** that are featured throughout Henderson, we will identify existing corridors, such as the Garnett/Chestnut Corridor, as well as new corridors that exist but need enhancement, such as the Embassy/Breckenridge/Orange corridor. One of the principal activities that will be undertaken with the CDBG Catalyst Funds will be various ways that we can highlight and enhance those corridors that connect districts that need increased connectivity and linkage to other parts of the City and to enhanced economic prospects.

- In a similar way, we will be identifying areas of Henderson that have a clear cultural and economic identity so that we can develop and enhance the advantages of those districts. Several examples include the downtown government district, the warehouse districts, the Old West End, and the emerging intermodal transportation district, along with several others. Each of these districts has advantages that in many cases have been overlooked and need identification and development.
- In order to coordinate, endorse and gather resources needed to develop these areas, the **Partnership for Henderson** will collect the various leaderships that coordinate the various aspects of Henderson's life. The leadership of the City of Henderson and Vance County governments will be included. The Partnership will include the business community, and hopefully the Henderson/Vance County Chamber of Commerce, and the Vance County Economic Development Commission, so the organizations currently including business leaders will be included rather than developing a new leadership team.
- The partnership will also hopefully include the faith-based and civic organizational leadership as well as community based organizations such as the Embassy Foundation, Franklin-Vance Warren Opportunities, etc. , which provides another aspect of the Community's leadership. As the various leadership groups and people.

As we continue to develop the proposal for the components of the CDBG Catalyst Grant Application, we will also continue to develop the various other aspects of this community-altering proposal and the City will make announcements of further refinements of the proposal as the second CDBG public hearing occurs in the near future and on other occasions as they arise.



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