

Common Themes

DRAFT for Advisory Committee Discussion

These Common Themes represent a summary of comments received from the Advisory Committee and other stakeholders interviewed during the Wilmington Downtown Circulation Study listening tour.

1. Ensure that Downtown streets balance all modes of travel (walking, bicycling, transit, and driving) and include buildings and streetscape that enhance street life.
2. Provide convenient, frequent transit service throughout the City, especially to the train station.
3. Promote a vibrant, healthy Downtown, with a mix of 24-hour uses, through transportation improvements.
4. Make Downtown more walkable.
5. Improve the existing street system for all modes of travel by timing traffic signals, evaluating street direction changes, and managing on-street parking and loading.
6. Match parking demand with supply.
7. Reclaim Rodney Square as Downtown's premier public space.

DRAFT

1. Ensure that Downtown streets balance all modes of travel (walking, bicycling, transit, and driving) and include buildings and streetscape that enhance street life.

What transportation issues exist in downtown Wilmington today?

- Bicycle lanes are not striped; generally speaking, we need to encourage more walking and bicycling.
- Wilmington is not as pedestrian friendly as it could be. Intersections throughout Downtown (and neighborhoods) are not striped for crosswalks. Example: Pennsylvania Avenue is pedestrian unfriendly; it's auto-centric, yet it is bordered by dense neighborhoods.
- Need for more friendly-to-pedestrian ways.
- Safe and clean streets.
- MLK sweep near the train station is confusing
- Pedestrian crossings of MLK are too long and unsafe (2)
- King Street is too wide and fast
- Walking under the Amtrak bridges is very uncomfortable
- Need better accommodation for school buses on 500 block of Market St; pulloffs?
- Poor design of buildings failing to interact well with the street
- Rodney Square needs a solution for transit. Connect various parts of City to Downtown, more frequent service to other parts of the City. How can we move people more efficiently? Trams; access to tourist areas w/o a car. King St. is a highway, needs to be a boulevard, same with Orange St. More development of surface lots.

How do you see downtown Wilmington changing over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

- Encourage means of transportation without automobiles!
- Public open spaces, wider sidewalks, decorative treatments, streetscapes (4th & Shipley park), 4th Street, West Street to Downtown.
- Visitors, particularly from downstate, need a very positive first impression of downtown Wilmington
- Downtown needs to be prettier, not so dingy (although Downtown Visions has made a difference)
- Work with City beautification projects, increase pedestrian safety measures.
- Development considers interaction with the street as an imperative.

What would you like downtown Wilmington to look like then?

- City with crosswalks and defined pedestrian corridors
- More attractive, safe, walkable
- Development should proceed in a more contiguous fashion, building on existing areas rather than creating isolated, "Fort Apache" style development
- More pedestrians; more improvements – trees, plantings, etc.
- Still consider bike paths, encourage bicycle-to-work from Highlands, 40 Acres, other neighborhoods.

In what ways can transportation improvements help accomplish that vision?

- Most important to help with image of Wilmington.
- King gets very wide after 9th Street. Minneapolis has little parking on-street, this could be useful (Shipley Street?) – no parking and wider sidewalks; loading zones.
- Cosmetic, streetscapes should be more durable and less prone to vandalism
- Streetscapes.
- Provide a better connection between the courthouse and Market Street for employees, jurors
- More opportunities for bicycling
- Have a bike rack design competition
- Remove the sweeps
- Two-way streets slow traffic and help pedestrians

General comments

- Increase focus on multimodal – residential trend
- Intersection of downtown buildings with street - 10th St./12th St./Delaware Ave.
- No connection to multi-use – single purpose
- Code changes to encourage different use
- New design guidelines for riverfront
- Need to better accommodate pedestrians at intersections, especially along MLK (connections between Downtown and the Riverfront). Basic crosswalks and signal visibility are important.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists must be accommodated everywhere.

2. Provide convenient, frequent transit service throughout the City, especially to the train station.

What transportation issues exist in downtown Wilmington today?

- Implement a local transportation system – trolley or small bus – that is independent of the routes that move people in and out of the City.
- Lack of transit alternatives beyond standard DART buses. Need more variety: wheeled trolleys, vans, taxicabs, pedi-cabs (a replacement is needed for Philly Car Share!). Need bike fleets (as in Paris, Copenhagen, etc.).
- Multiple buses at a single stop can be confusing
- Rodney Square needs a solution for transit. Connect various parts of City to Downtown, more frequent service to other parts of the City. How can we move people more efficiently? Trams; access to tourist areas w/o a car. King St. is a highway, needs to be a boulevard, same with Orange St. More development of surface lots.
- Rodney Square bus hub is problematic in all ways mentioned
- Rodney Square “hub” does not work.
- There should be close ‘satellite Park & Rides’ on US-13, Miller Road S.C., Governor Printz to serve Downtown employees with high frequency transit/shuttles, as is done in Atlantic City for casino workers.
- Riverfront Park & Ride is too close and brings too many cars into Wilmington
- Trolley is not serving its intended purpose – trips are too infrequent for ease of use and costs too much. Music on the trolley is often too loud or not appropriate.
- Rodney Square as currently configured is an impediment to pedestrian and vehicular traffic: buses often stacked; difficult for pedestrians to cross (ex. 10th and King Streets); fumes from idling buses not welcome
- The trolley doesn’t work – it’s uncomfortable and service is far too infrequent
- Bus schedules are hard to read and understand; transit needs to be something you can comfortably “hop on” and use without a lot of prior planning
- Trolleys are uncomfortable and too expensive for short downtown trips – in many cities, they’re free

How do you see downtown Wilmington changing over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

- Buses should make a statement about a city.
- Improve transit facilities to improve perception – partner with development
- Buses are not attractive, too big, use newer, smaller vehicles
- 7th Street has more residential, but there need to be neighborhood amenities, and getting people around. Buses are intrusive and require advance knowledge.

What would you like downtown Wilmington to look like then?

- Residents should have more transportation options, especially those who want to live Downtown. The transit system should serve Downtown and other city neighborhoods as well as it does the current suburban commuter network. Transit schedules are not intuitive if you are not going out to suburbs and not enough city bus stops are shown.
- The transit situation at Rodney Square must be addressed to reclaim the park as a Downtown center and reduce the number of buses around the Square. What is status of Front & Walnut Streets transit center?

- Enhanced retail development on Market Street; provide access for target market from Trolley Square, Wawaset Park, Westover Hills, Greenville

In what ways can transportation improvements help accomplish that vision?

- City circulator that can interact well with a relocated hub at the train station
- Get [people] to arts community, Opera Delaware, Delaware Theater Company, Art Museum, need to connect to this study and to Downtown
- Very frequent bus service
- Distinctive (color-coded) routes for downtown transit
- Trolley extended to Trolley Square with much more frequent service
- Transit shuttle between downtown transit hub and train station with almost constant service (like Denver)
- Better rail service to Philadelphia and the airport (something between SEPTA and Amtrak in terms of time and cost)
- Keep big buses off of Market St

General comments

- Review DART hub location: unsafe condition Rodney Square, and confusing for riders
- Neighborhoods surrounding the City need good access to Downtown
- Transit service to support residential growth
- More information and marketing needed for transit – where can you buy passes and get better schedule info. DART website should have trip planning.
- Downtown transit should have different vehicles than suburban routes. There needs to be a better partnership between City and DART. There could be funding partnerships with businesses but decision-making for transit needs to be cooperative.
- There should be an ‘Easy Pass’ or smart card that would allow use on transit, for parking (on and off street)
- Need intelligent response on transit side – transportation vs development; green technology
- Mass transit investment (E/W?) needed if city becomes more livable and walkable
- Distance to transit
- Getting around downtown vs. to downtown
- Is one centralized transit hub needed?
- Great increase in transit use from Middletown
- Some streets were not designed to handle traffic they see today – transit can’t access everywhere
- There needs to be better cooperation with Amtrak and more information available about improvement projects.

3. Promote a vibrant, healthy Downtown, with a mix of 24-hour uses, through transportation improvements.

How do you see downtown Wilmington changing over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

- More of its own identity – not a suburb of Philadelphia
- Focus on transportation investments that support quality development
- Improve transit facilities to improve perception – partner with development
- More residents; more businesses, commercial uses, neighborhood vibrancy.
- Downtown should have dense, mixed uses with nighttime activity – the pedestrian experience is paramount
- Visitors, particularly from downstate, need a very positive first impression of downtown Wilmington
- A vibrant Downtown, with businesses open late, more residents to bring in a greater variety of retail businesses, and a well-lit, safe pedestrian environment
- Greater population density driving greater variety of activities and venues
- Development considers interaction with the street as an imperative.
- 7th Street has more residential, but there need to be neighborhood amenities, and getting people around. Buses are intrusive and require advance knowledge.
- Development of South Wilmington across the river from the train station.
- Greatly increased housing opportunities, more of a “neighborhood” feel, more 24-hour activity.
- Focus on unique aspects

What would you like downtown Wilmington to look like then?

- Residents should have more transportation options, especially those who want to live Downtown. The transit system should serve Downtown and other city neighborhoods as well as it does the current suburban commuter network. Transit schedules are not intuitive if you are not going out to suburbs and not enough city bus stops are shown.
- Downtown residential growth is one of the most important developments in Wilmington.
- Enhanced retail development on Market Street; provide access for target market from Trolley Square, Wawaset Park, Westover Hills, Greenville
- Development should proceed in a more contiguous fashion, building on existing areas rather than creating isolated, “Fort Apache” style development
- Fully integrated with housing

In what ways can transportation improvements help accomplish that vision?

- Transportation is key. Focus on good transportation handling will lead to better, more vibrant life in City and in Downtown.

General comments

- Increase focus on multimodal – residential trend
- Downtown life after 5 pm
- Transit service to support residential growth
- Needs: walkability / retail centers
- 24/7 character vs. work week
- Increase in jobs within city limits
- Encourage use of underutilized office space
- Existing infrastructure – focus on employment growth
- Attracting younger work force to live and work in city
- Available space / underutilized sites
- Master Plan ideas – ongoing study
- Need Market Street to take the lead
- Economy drives downtown growth
- Ensure that transportation doesn't limit growth
- Raise Market Street to allow development
- Hospital expansion to 600 jobs
- In 20 years, we want Wilmington to be able to compete with the suburbs
- Wilmington needs to be a destination for future generations to live and work
- No connection to multi-use – single purpose
- Code changes to encourage different use
- Piggyback with a market study/economic development study

4. Make Downtown more walkable.

What transportation issues exist in downtown Wilmington today?

- Wilmington is not as pedestrian friendly as it could be. Intersections throughout Downtown (and neighborhoods) are not striped for crosswalks. Example: Pennsylvania Avenue is pedestrian unfriendly; it's auto-centric, yet it is bordered by dense neighborhoods.
- Walking a few blocks doesn't even occur to a lot of people
- Pedestrian crosswalk counters to inform pedestrians of time to cross the street.
- Pedestrian disaster at Jackson and Pennsylvania Avenue.
- Need for more friendly-to-pedestrian ways.
- Safe and clean streets.
- City needs to have countdown pedestrian signals throughout Downtown, but especially along MLK intersections
- Pedestrian crossings of MLK are too long and unsafe (2)
- 4th and King is uncomfortable for pedestrians
- Walking under the Amtrak bridges is very uncomfortable
- MLK and 4th Street are hard for pedestrians to cross
- Wilmington police do not have a traffic enforcement so speeding and California stopping add risk to pedestrian proliferation.

How do you see downtown Wilmington changing over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

- Strolling is a comfortable activity
- Need to be a more comfortable walking city, how to deal with new ways to do things.
- Washington Street, Delaware Avenue, now easy to walk – 4th Street or 6th, 7th Streets are not comfortable, Jackson Street not easy or comfortable.
- Work with City beautification projects, increase pedestrian safety measures.
- Downtown should have dense, mixed uses with nighttime activity – the pedestrian experience is paramount
- A vibrant Downtown, with businesses open late, more residents to bring in a greater variety of retail businesses, and a well-lit, safe pedestrian environment

What would you like downtown Wilmington to look like then?

- City with crosswalks and defined pedestrian corridors
- More attractive, safe, walkable
- More pedestrians; more improvements – trees, plantings, etc.

In what ways can transportation improvements help accomplish that vision?

- Signal progression that benefits pedestrians by keeping traffic flowing smoothly, but slowly
- Provide a better connection between the courthouse and Market Street for employees, jurors
- Enhanced pedestrian signs
- Excellent pedestrian access (good lighting, better pavement markings, countdown signals)
- Great pedestrian paths to the train station
- Two-way streets slow traffic and help pedestrians

General comments

- Optimize signal phasing – extended all red/leading pedestrian interval
- Increase focus on multimodal – residential trend
- Pedestrian amenities/green City
- Needs: walkability / retail centers
- Encouraging locals to walk – compared to other cities
- Need to better accommodate pedestrians at intersections, especially along MLK (connections between Downtown and the Riverfront). Basic crosswalks and signal visibility are important.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists must be accommodated everywhere.

5. Improve the existing street system for all modes of travel by timing traffic signals, evaluating street direction changes, and managing on-street parking and loading.

What transportation issues exist in downtown Wilmington today?

- 6th and 7th Streets both run in the same direction
- 9th Street (300 block) a choke point for fire trucks
- South Walnut Street and MLK has devastating crashes; signal timing issue?
- Quick speed transitions from Lancaster Ave to MLK to Front. Need better signage because lane numbers and widths change.
- Fire Station 1 has difficulty releasing trucks up West Street
- Signals along MLK are not coordinated
- Bad lane shift on Orange St at 9th

How do you see downtown Wilmington changing over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

What would you like downtown Wilmington to look like then?

In what ways can transportation improvements help accomplish that vision?

- Two-way: may need to do more within Downtown
- Fine days to regulate loading/deliveries
- More 2-way streets, fewer one-ways
- Signal progression that benefits pedestrians by keeping traffic flowing smoothly, but slowly
- Two-way streets slow traffic and help pedestrians

General comments

- Optimize signal phasing – extended all red/leading pedestrian interval
- Partner with communities to reduce cut-through traffic
- Street network – difficulty to get around
- Congestion on roadways leading to city – buses stuck in traffic
- Concentrate on congestion issues
- Congestion on King Street
- During rush hour it's easy to leave downtown – problems occur outside of city
- Neighborhoods controlling traffic – Trinity
- Congestion in City is not bad
- On-street parking occupancy
- Coordinate signals; “show that the City cares” about transportation.

6. Match parking demand with supply.

What transportation issues exist in downtown Wilmington today?

- Parking Issues – need better enforcement
- Cost of parking may deter commuters but is especially difficult for employees of small businesses and service/hospitality workers. Can there be different parking rates for different levels of employment?
- Riverfront Park & Ride is too close and brings too many cars into Wilmington
- Difficult parking for emergency vehicles on 9th and Market St.
- Parking code is too restrictive for downtown residential development
- Students can use parking permit stickers to park at meters on Market St; enforcement? policy?
- Perception that there's not enough parking

How do you see downtown Wilmington changing over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

What would you like downtown Wilmington to look like then?

- Free parking at the Riverfront could undermine the urbanity of Downtown

In what ways can transportation improvements help accomplish that vision?

- Fine days to regulate loading/deliveries.
- Parking kiosks to do away with so many parking meters
- Garages with longer hours to support around-the-clock activity
- Good guidance to parking: Web-based application to find available spaces, parking on maps, more parking guide signs

General comments

- Parking Issues – safety perceptions
- Trends in parking demand / commuting habits
- Cost of parking may deter commuters
- On-street parking occupancy
- There should be an 'Easy Pass' or smart card that would allow use on transit, for parking (on and off street)

7. Reclaim Rodney Square as Downtown's premier public space.

What transportation issues exist in downtown Wilmington today?

- Rodney Square as currently configured is an impediment to pedestrian and vehicular traffic: buses often stacked; difficult for pedestrians to cross (ex. 10th and King Streets); fumes from idling buses not welcome
- Difficult to police Rodney Square area: transit users present all day, "opportunists" mix themselves in; homeless in the square (panhandle; some affluent residents and transit users do not like them and complain to police); criminals (members of gangs who conduct business; petty thieves)
- Rodney Square needs a solution for transit. Connect various parts of City to Downtown, more frequent service to other parts of the City. How can we move people more efficiently? Trams; access to tourist areas w/o a car. King St. is a highway, needs to be a boulevard, same with Orange St. More development of surface lots.
- Rodney Square "hub" does not work.
- Rodney Square bus hub is problematic in all ways mentioned
- The Rodney Square situation has angered some residents of BPG who want to enjoy the park on their terms—that is minus the heavy bus traffic, homeless and criminals. BPG is worried this keeps many away.

How do you see downtown Wilmington changing over the next 5, 10, 20 years?

- Rodney Square needs to be a green space (it's the only one for Downtown residents!) rather than a bus terminal

What would you like downtown Wilmington to look like then?

- The transit situation at Rodney Square must be addressed to reclaim the park as a Downtown center and reduce the number of buses around the Square. What is status of Front & Walnut Streets transit center?

In what ways can transportation improvements help accomplish that vision?

- Possible solutions for Rodney Square: another place for buses to layover (ex. Water Street); DART should police its own hub or pay for officers to do so

General comments

- Review DART hub location: unsafe condition Rodney Square, and confusing for riders
- Downtown center – Rodney Square
- Is one centralized transit hub needed?