

# Central Square Advisory Committee

January 25, 2012



urban design/planning study for  
the **central** and **kendall square area**

# Agenda

- **Introductions**
  - Advisory Committee
  - Goody Clancy
- **Planning process**
- **What We Have Heard: Core themes**
  - Issues, trends
  - From June public meeting, Red Ribbon Commission
- **Emerging Vision**
- **Discussion**
- **Next steps**



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# The Goody Clancy team:

- Leadership, integrating all perspectives: **Goody Clancy**
- Retail market: **MJB Associates**
- Feasibility and implementation: **W-ZHA**
- Transportation: **Nelson|Nygaard**
- Community: **Goody Clancy**
- Urban design: **Carol R. Johnson Associates, Goody Clancy**



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# High Street, Columbus, OH



2010 APA National Planning Excellence Award for Implementation  
TO OUR CLIENT, CAMPUS PARTNERS, FOR REVITALIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT IN COLUMBUS, OHIO



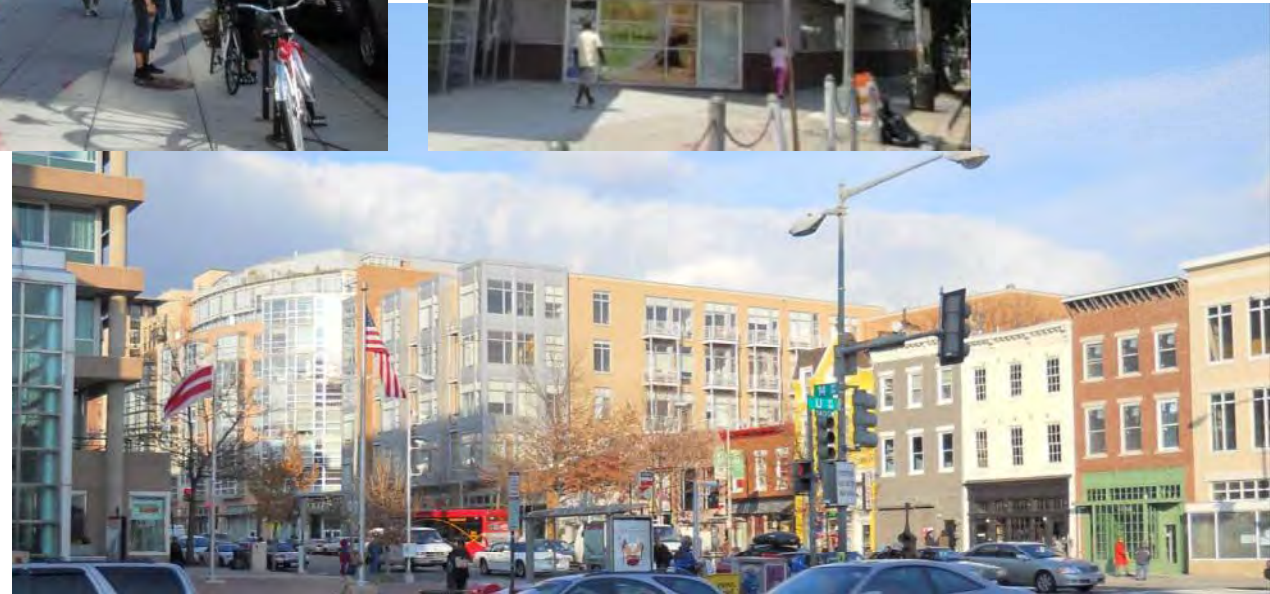
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# Downtown Asheville, NC



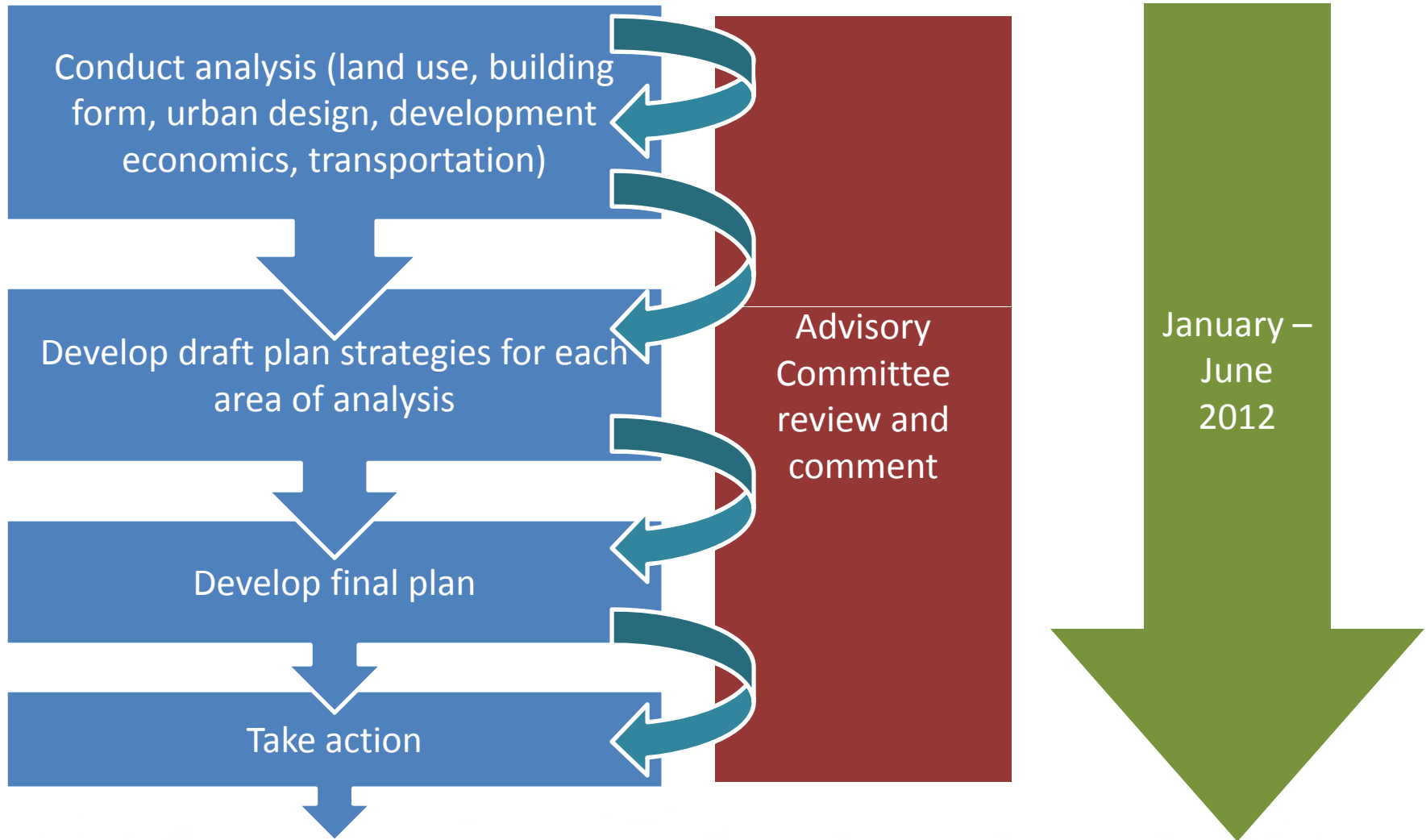
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# Washington, DC ... U Street, Columbia Heights, Eastern Market



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# Planning process



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# What we have heard: Core themes

- Character
- Public open space
- Arts and culture
- Retail
- Housing
- Development environment
- Transportation



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# Character

## ISSUES

- Diverse character
- Central Square is a crossroads for many
- Lacks spaces that promote opportunities for interaction
- Aggressive behavior and panhandling are problems
- Need to improve university-community synergies

## TRENDS

- Central Square remains ethnically and culturally diverse, with emerging strengths (restaurants, entertainment)
- Different times of day bring out different dimensions of the diverse community
- Central Square is home to many needed social service agencies for the foreseeable future



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# Public spaces

## ISSUES

- Carl Barron Plaza too inflexible for multiple uses
- Mass Ave not yet achieving full potential as civic heart
- Accessibility issues

## TRENDS

- Jill-Browne Park (Lafayette Square) has been a great success ... open space + restaurants + programming
- Public space used in different ways by different people at different times of day/week



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# Arts and culture

## ISSUES

- Arts culture present but uncelebrated
- Market pressures may displace artists

## TRENDS

- Growing identity, success as entertainment destination
- Increasingly diverse destination, attracting all ages, lifestyles



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# Retail

## ISSUES

- Too many blank/uninviting store fronts (vacancies, banks)
- Need to prevent loss of traditional, locally-based retail

## TRENDS

- Some traditional retailers are struggling due to internet, big box (since pre-recession)
- Growing market diversity
- Strong emerging restaurant district



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# Housing

## ISSUES

- Affordability challenges, especially for middle class households
- Desire for family housing
- How can business/entertainment district and surrounding housing best complement each other?

## TRENDS

- Increasingly strong housing demand from a spectrum of households (students, singles/couples, families, seniors)
- Limited housing production



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# Development environment

## ISSUES

- Numerous underdeveloped properties (single-story, parking lots) will feel increasing redevelopment pressure
- Traditional upper floor tenants (non-profits, artists, small businesses) face affordability challenges



## TRENDS

- The market is putting pressure on costs for business and residential tenants
- Biotech development is increasing, creating opportunities and challenges



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# Transportation

## ISSUES

- How to balance convenient connections among buses and Red Line with public space goals
- Pedestrian environment needs enhancement (lighting, wayfinding, connections, streetscape...)
- How to balance transportation modes (walk, bike, transit, auto)



## TRENDS

- Traffic appears stable
- Retail parking supply appears typically adequate
- Growing interest in walkability, bikeability



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# Emerging vision

A destination for cultural life, retail choices and community discovery

Supporting plan strategies:

- Enhance ability of all public spaces in/around Central Square to support active civic life and dynamic cultural arts
- Connect Central Square with the full Cambridge community with a network of great walking streets and convenient transportation choices
- Add significant quantity and variety of mixed-income housing to support life-cycle household choices, retail, community identity, the arts, workplaces
- Maintain and expand retail diversity (type, price point, ethnicity...)



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# Opportunities for change supporting the vision



- Civic/cultural core
- Neighborhood connections
- Diverse housing opportunities
- Retail choices, engaging edges



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# Civic/cultural core



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# Neighborhood connections



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# Diverse housing opportunities



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# Retail choices, engaging edges



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# What could change look like... along Mass Ave?



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# What could change look like... along Mass Ave?



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# What could change look like... at Carl Barron Plaza?



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# What could change look like... at Carl Barron Plaza?



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# What could change look like... on Bishop Allen Drive parking lots?



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# What could change look like... on Bishop Allen Drive parking lots?



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# What could change look like... along Green Street?



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# What could change look like... along Green Street?



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# What could change look like... at Lafayette Square?



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# What could change look like... at Lafayette Square?



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What could change look like...  
along Main Street?





# What could change look like... along Main Street?



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# Discussion



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