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- Cathy Sloss Jones, ULI Birmingham
- David Fleming, REV Birmingham
Birmingham, Alabama
Leveraging the Civil Rights District’s Assets

The Rose Center
FOR PUBLIC LEADERSHIP

NATIONAL LEAGUE
of CITIES

ULI Urban Land
Institute
Mission:
To encourage and support excellence in land use decision making.

“We should all be open-minded and constantly learning.”

--Daniel Rose
Elected officials and staff from more than **19,000 US cities, towns and villages** are members of NLC or its 49 state municipal leagues.

**Mission:**
Helping city leaders build better communities
Urban Land Institute

Mission:
Providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide

36,000 members worldwide:
- Developers
- Investors, Bankers and Financiers
- Architects, Designers and Consultants
- Public officials
- Academics
Rose Center Programming

- Policy & Practice Forums
- Education for Public Officials: webinars, workshops, and scholarships to attend ULI conferences
Daniel Rose Fellowship

• Four cities selected for yearlong program of professional development, leadership training, assistance with a local land use challenge

• Mayor selects 3 fellows and team coordinator

• Participating cities to date:
  Austin, Boston, Charlotte, Detroit, Hartford, Honolulu, Houston, Indianapolis, Kansas City, Louisville, Memphis, Minneapolis, Nashville, Oakland, Omaha, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland, Providence, Sacramento, Seattle, Tacoma & Tampa
Daniel Rose Fellowship: alumni mayors
Daniel Rose Fellowship: class of 2016

Long Beach

Denver

Birmingham

Rochester
City Study Visits

- Assemble experts to study land use challenge
- Provides city’s fellowship team with framework and ideas to start addressing their challenge
- Part of yearlong engagement with each city
The Panel

- **Co-Chair**: Carlton Brown, Direct Invest Development, New York, NY
- **Co-Chair**: Ashley O’Connor, AECOM, Arlington, VA
- Cissy Anklam, Museum Concepts, Clinton, MS
- Anne DaSilva Tella, Department of Neighborhood and Business Development, City of Rochester, NY (Rose Fellow)
- Adam Gelter, 3CDC, Cincinnati, OH
- Hon. Christopher Herndon, City Council President, City of Denver, CO (Rose Fellow)
- Bryan C. Lee, Jr., Arts Council of New Orleans, LA
- Linda Tatum, Department of Development Services, City of Long Beach, CA (Rose Fellow)
- Ashley Wilson, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, DC
How can Birmingham leverage the assets of its Civil Rights District to promote community and economic development and the city’s international brand?
Presentation Outline

1. Observations
2. Organizational Structure
3. Site Recommendations
4. Neighborhood Recommendations
5. Implementation
6. Conclusion & Homework
Observations

- Downtown Birmingham is experiencing an economic boom
- Birmingham’s tourism and applications for national monument and UNESCO World Heritage Site designation offer great base
- Unprecedented collaboration and partnership is essential for a successful outcome
Assets
Assets
Assets

• Mayor Bell’s leadership
  – Relationships with external stakeholders
• City’s reputation as Ground Zero for Civil Rights
• District footprint is walkable & compact
• Civil Rights Trail
  – Connection to regional trail network
Assets

4th Avenue North Commercial Corridor
Assets:
Masonic Temple
Assets:
Challenges

No Identity
- no community
- no pride
- no character
- no branding
- not recognized as distinct area

Isolated
- barriers
  - I-65
  - Railroad Tracks
- segregation
- sparse housing

No Amenities
- lack of diversity in services provided
- minimal food

Program Ideas
- Neighborhood
  - Street Park
  - Bike Path
  - UAB Bistro
- District
  - Civil Rights
    - Base
  - Theater
  - Jazz
  - UAB North SPEEDWAY
- REASONS
  - ARTS/OUT.
Challenges

- Finite City resources inadequate to cover capital & operating costs
- Unsubstantiated negative perceptions
  - Safety, walkability
- Current social justice activists not connected to historic movement institutions (e.g., immigrant rights, refugee sanctuary cities, Black Lives Matter, occupy movement, Color of Change, LGBTQ)
- Lack of investment in new development/infrastructure in adjacent areas
- Physical condition of district resources
  - BCRI, Gaston Motel, Church
Challenges

• Underutilization of assets
• Muddy and unclear vision for the site
• Unclear oversight authority
• Lack of identification of and collaboration with stakeholders
  • Development community, neighboring institutions, business community
Challenges

• Lack of private funding, corporate sponsors
• Stakeholder blinders to the mission
• Stagnation of the BCRI
  • Funding challenges
  • Board recruitment and development
  • Expansion of vision
  • More programming
  • More community outreach
  • More and stronger partnerships
Presentation Outline
1. Observations
2. Organizational Structure
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4. Neighborhood Recommendations
5. Implementation
6. Conclusion & Homework
Organizational Structure

• Assets
  – Strong support from Mayor
  – Functioning institutions with track records
    • Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
    • 16th Street Baptist Church
    • Foot Soldiers
    • First Methodist Church
    • Carver Theatre/Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame
    • Urban Impact
    • REV Birmingham
Organizational Structure

- Challenge: Institutions are in silos
  - Vision is not clearly articulated or uniformly shared
  - Limited community buy-in
  - Too few stakeholders at the table today
  - Institutions may not see the value in collaboration
Short-Term Leadership

3-month task force

- Assemble wide range of stakeholders
  - Birmingham government leaders
  - Local corporate director-level leaders
    - Utility corporations
    - Financial institutions
    - Local foundations
    - Religious institutions
    - Other key institutions
  - BCRI
  - Local academic institutions
  - Local Civil/Human Rights organizations
  - Veterans
  - Urban Impact
  - Foot soldiers

- Refine shared vision
- Determine long-term operating structure for the district
Long-Term Leadership

• Launching entity
• Refine and articulate mission of the organization
• Develop the organization and district story
  – Local community
  – Foundations and other investors
  – National & global community
Greater Birmingham Strategy

• Rolling out vision and getting feedback from communities across the city:
  – Young professionals groups
  – Social justice organizations (e.g., LGBTQ, anti-poverty, etc.)
  – Congregations
  – Civic organizations
  – Veterans
  – Local businesses (4th Avenue North)
  – Other citywide groups

• Refine vision based on community feedback
Presentation Outline

1. Observations
2. Organizational Structure
3. **Site Recommendations**
4. Neighborhood Recommendations
5. Implementation
6. Conclusion & Homework
Site Plan
Site Diagrams

Currently

16TH ST.

BCRI

AG GASTON

GASTON

Recommended

16TH ST.

BCRI

AG GASTON

GASTON

INGRAM PARK
11 Most Endangered Places 2015

A.G. Gaston Motel
Birmingham, AL

Carrollton Courthouse
New Orleans, LA

Chautauqua Amphitheater
Chautauqua, NY

The Factory
West Hollywood, CA
A. G. Gaston Axonometric
Site Activation at A.G. Gaston Motel
Short-Term Activation

6 months-1 year
less than $200k

- Mural Arts
- Oral Histories
- Food Trucks
- Event Space
- Dinner Lab
- Music Events
- Temporary Tech Dive
- Incentivize Culinary Interests

Perpetual Engagement Process
in a bathrobe stands looking off into the distance. After a long moment she's joined by a Man.
Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to eat all the candy and

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to

Before I die I want to
Short-Term and Long-Term Activation

6 months-1 year less than $200k

- Mural Arts
- Oral Histories
- Food Trucks
- Event Space
- Dinner Lab
- Music Events
- Temporary Tech Dive
- Incentivize Culinary Interests

Year 2 and beyond

- Renovate to Match Program
- Implement Landscape, Architecture, and Interpretive Plan

Perpetual Engagement Process
Presentation Outline

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District – creating a vibrant and sustainable neighborhood

• Build out and forward from the Civil Rights District
• Seamlessly integrate diverse activities and assets into a connected place
• Take advantage of connectivity to focus and leverage investments
District – creating a vibrant and sustainable neighborhood
Boundaries – real, imaginary, political, social
Current land uses
Parking and vacant lots
District – creating a vibrant and sustainable neighborhood

- Existing and potential assets can be woven together into a revitalized vibrant urban fabric that includes:
  - Residential
  - Entertainment
  - Food & beverage

- While there is some historic building stock that could be repurposed, there is also opportunity for new construction
What can this look like?

- Revitalized historically black entertainment and dining destination (U Street, Washington, DC)
What can this look like?

- Food trucks can quickly activate public space and can spur economic activity, with minimal public investment.
What can this look like?

- Entertainment opportunities can be culturally relevant and attract a cross-generational audience
How to get there?

• Holistic and coordinated development
• Broad based partnerships and stakeholders
• Leveraged investments and assets
Presentation Outline

1. Observations
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Financial Strategy

- Develop and implement strategies to leverage public investment
  - Capital for the site
  - Operation for site
  - Capital for neighborhood
  - Operating expense for neighborhood

- **Restrict major capital public investment to activities that have matching private investment**
Human Capital Strategy

• Implementation of financial strategy
  – Ombudsman (working in concert with the mayor) in charge of marshalling financial resources from business, philanthropic and institutional leadership in Birmingham
  – Development director to work with ombudsman on local efforts and lead national and international partnerships and fundraising
Human Capital Strategy

• Develop staff capacity to execute the site vision and mission
  – Mayor’s Office: Charm Offensive
  – Manage engagement and short-term actions previously identified
  – In-house or external development management team for the physical project development
    • Hire and manage design and construction professionals
    • Manage project-specific financial planning
  – Develop and operate on-going programming for the site

• Create CDC-type organization for neighborhood economic development
Presentation Outline
1. Observations
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5. Implementation

6. Conclusion & Homework
Conclusion

- This is a great vision and achievable idea: Birmingham can expand its global identity in a way that can transform the city
- Greater collaboration among a wide definition of stakeholders is critical to achieving your vision
- Need to develop a strong organizational leadership plan
- Don’t invest major public funds until you raise capital and operating money from partners
Conclusion

- There are low-cost, high-impact actions in the short-term that can both engage stakeholders and build momentum for longer-term investments
- It will take time for these investments to bring transformative changes to the neighborhood
- Build on and strengthen your existing assets and their inherent cultural and historical value
Homework

1. Convene stakeholders to form the task force
2. The task force develops an initial shared vision for the site
3. The task force determines the organizational structure to execute the vision & short-term strategies

**Next check-in:**
Rose Fellowship Retreat
Philadelphia, April 19
Thank you to the following people; their assistance was essential to the panel’s work: