

Local Governments, Social Equity, and Sustainable Communities

ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY GOALS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY

CASE STUDY SERIES



ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY
**in Durham, North
Carolina**



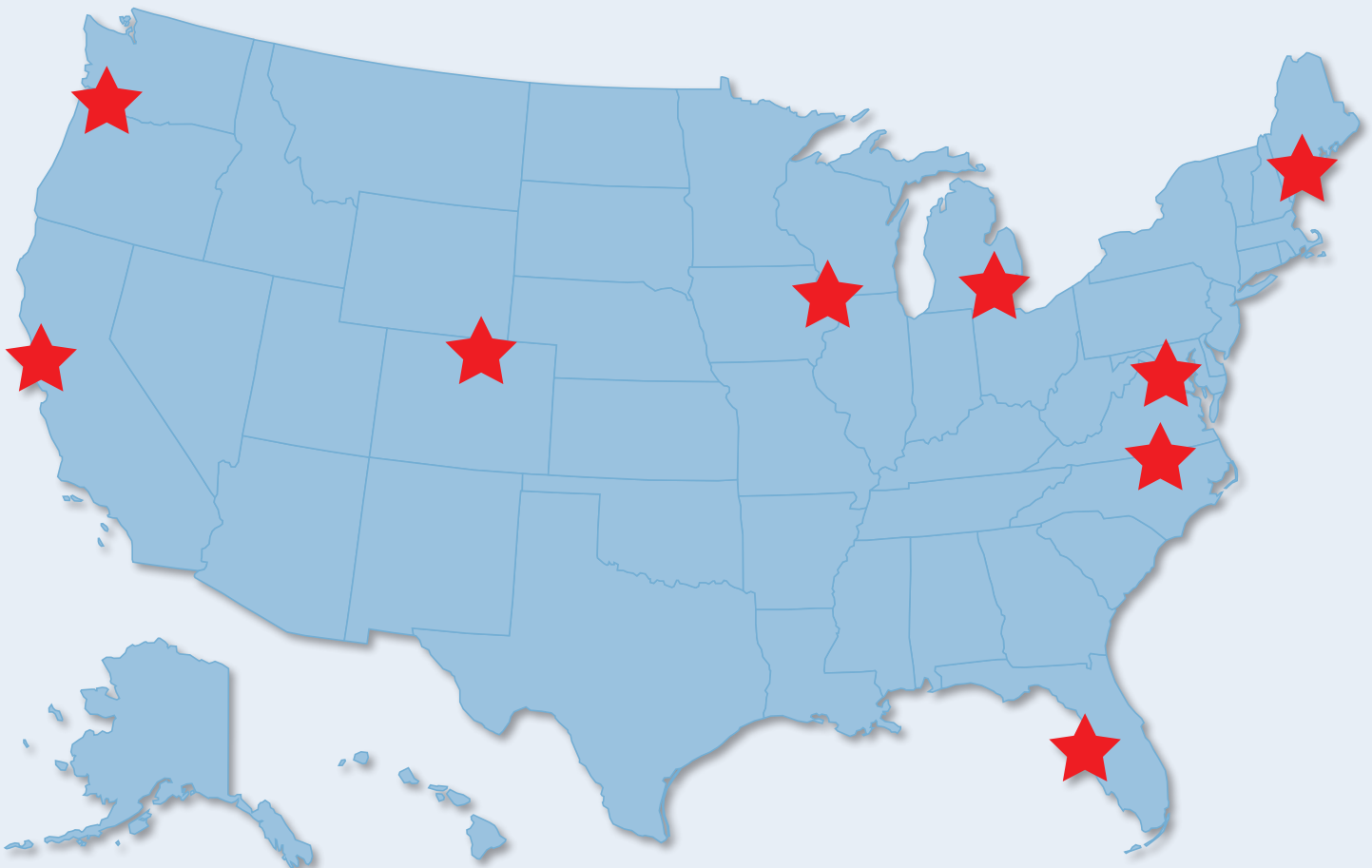
ICMA

ABOUT THIS PROJECT: ADVANCING SOCIAL EQUITY GOALS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY

This research was conducted by ICMA and Arizona State University to identify and describe current activities, leading practices, and achievements of sustainable communities created through a comprehensive, integrated approach supported by inclusive engagement. Based on results of the ICMA Sustainability Survey in 2010, a follow-up survey was sent to 300 local governments whose original responses showed high levels of sustainability activity. Using results from the follow-up survey and primary and secondary research on leading social sustainability practices around the United States, nine communities whose responses indicated high levels of social equity-related activity were selected for case studies. Case study communities include the following:*

- Washtenaw County, MI (Pop. 344,791) and Ann Arbor, MI (Pop. 113,934)
- Dubuque, IA (Pop. 57,637)
- Hayward, CA (Pop. 144,186)
- Manatee County, FL (Pop. 322,833)
- Lewiston, ME (Pop. 36,592)
- Durham, NC (Pop. 228,330)
- Arlington, VA (Pop. 207,627)
- Clark County, WA (425,363)
- Fort Collins, CO (Pop. 143,986)

Each case study details findings from individual communities that provide insight into how they have been able to promote social equity and achieve greater social sustainability through their policies, programs, and other activities. Data was collected primarily through face-to-face interviews and secondary sources.



*Populations based on 2010 Census base.

Advancing Social Equity Goals to Achieve Sustainability: Case Study Series

Advancing Social Equity in Durham, NC
By James Svara, Arizona State University

In this Report

Community Profile – Durham City	2
Community Profile – Durham County.....	2
Findings in Brief.....	4
History of Sustainability and Social Equity in Durham, North Carolina	4
Findings	8
List of Study Participants.....	19
Endnotes	20

Community Profile – Durham City

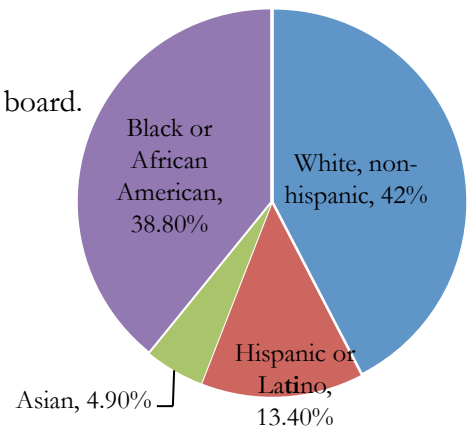
- **Form of Government:** Council-Manager
- **County Commission:** Mayor elected directly and six council members, three elected from specific wards and three elected at-large.
- **Demographic Information (2012):**
 - **Total Population:** 228,330
- **Annual Budget (FY2014):** \$169.6 million General Fund Budget
- **Sustainability Budget:** The city pays \$90,000 of the Sustainability Office housed in Durham County. This amount does not include other related to sustainability efforts in departments throughout the city government.
- **Sustainability Plans and Strategies:** Strategic Plan. In addition, there is a joint City-County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan, and the joint Comprehensive Plan which guides a lot of sustainability activities.

From the Comprehensive Plan: **“Our Vision:** Durham is the leading city in providing an excellent and sustainable quality of life. **Our Mission:** To provide quality services to make Durham a great place to live, work and play. **Our Goals:**

- Strong and Diverse Economy
- Safe and Secure Community
- Thriving, Livable Neighborhoods
- Well-Managed City
- Stewardship of City’s Physical Assets

Community Profile – Durham County

- **Form of Government:** Council-Manager
- **County Commission:** Five commissioners including chair selected by board.
- **Demographic Information (2012):**
 - **Total Population:** 288,133
 - **Poverty Rate:** 17.1%
- **Annual Budget (FY2014):** \$360.3 million General Fund Budget that includes transfer to Durham Public Schools of \$119.6 million for a net county budget of \$240.7 million.



Population by Race (2010)

- **Sustainability Budget:** The county pays \$110,000 of the Sustainability Office budget. This amount does not include other related to sustainability efforts in departments throughout the county government.
- **Sustainability Plans and Strategies:** Strategic plan. In addition, there is a joint City-County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan, and the joint Comprehensive Plan which guides a lot of sustainability activities.

The Mission

Durham County provides fiscally responsible, quality services necessary to promote a healthy, safe and vibrant community.

The Vision

Durham County: a thriving, vibrant, diverse community with abundant opportunity for all residents to live, work, learn, play and grow.

- Goal 1: Community and Family Prosperity and Enrichment
 - Goal 2: Health and Well-being for All
 - Goal 3: Safe and Secure Community
 - Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship
 - Goal 5: Accountable, Efficient and Visionary Government
- **Number of Sustainability Staff:** Two staff members dedicated to sustainability in the Durham City/County Sustainability Office plus staff members in other departments working on other programs related to sustainability.
 - **Location in Government:** Sustainability and related activities are led by departmental leadership within the city and county, with overarching vision guided by the city and county managers.
 - **Major Social Equity Activities in the Community:** Restoration and expansion of physical and cultural assets, strong neighborhoods, economic and workforce development, public safety, wellness, and access. Formerly, there were funds for the Neighborhood Energy Retrofit Program and Home Energy Savings Program through American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, but those programs are no longer active.

Findings in Brief

- FINDING 1 – Building the future is based on restoring the physical and cultural assets of the past.
- FINDING 2 – Promoting vital neighborhoods is a multifaceted effort that supports numerous other goals.
- FINDING 3 – Promoting economic development requires building the workforce as well as pursuing and creating new economic opportunities.
- FINDING 4 – Increasing safety and security entails community-based approaches and partnerships between law enforcement officials and residents.
- FINDING 5 – Wellness is essential to a vibrant community and requires a comprehensive approach.
- FINDING 6 – Outreach is important to involve lower-income residents in energy conservation efforts.
- FINDING 7 – Physical access is enhanced by community design, decentralized development, and multiple modes of transportation.

History of Sustainability and Social Equity in Durham, North Carolina

The City of Durham, the fourth-largest city in North Carolina, began as a railroad station and settlement named for Dr. Bartlett Durham. While its official birth date is April 26, 1853, when the U.S. Post Office was established, the town was incorporated in 1869 and was originally part of Orange County. Durham County was created in 1881. Of the 100 counties in North Carolina, 84 are larger than Durham County. Durham City is the only incorporated municipality in Durham County.

Even before its incorporation, Durham was a center for the small-scale manufacturing of tobacco products. In 1874, tobacco farmer and small-scale manufacturer Washington Duke¹ decided to expand the operations on his farm by building a factory in Durham. The town increased in population from 256 in 1870 to 2,041 in 1880 and more than doubled in the next decade. In the twentieth century, textiles were also a major industry. Banks and insurance companies made Durham an important financial center, with both white- and black-owned companies. In 1898, John Merrick founded the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, which today is the largest and oldest African American-owned life insurance company in the nation. With its founding in 1907, Mechanics & Farmers Bank became one of the nation's strongest African-American owned and managed banks. Many other businesses joined these two on Parrish Street in the heart of downtown Durham, so that the area became known as “Black Wall Street.” The Hayti district just south of downtown was also a center of commercial activity for the black community.

Large population increases occurred in the decades starting in 1900, 1920, 1940, and 1960, and Durham's population exceeded 100,000 by 1970. The decline in tobacco manufacturing began in the 1960s, but major changes occurred when Liggett and Myers moved its headquarters to New York in 1979. In 1986, both Liggett and the American Tobacco Company ended cigarette manufacturing in Durham. The number of tobacco auction houses in Durham dropped from 13 in the 1950s to only 1 in 1986.²

The building of the Durham Freeway (NC 147) clearance adjoining the highway south of downtown for redevelopment wiped out the Hayti business district and much of its residential property. Many business and residential structures in the downtown area were also demolished both to remove blight and to make way for new development. In retrospect, the economic, environmental, and social policies of the 1960s and 1970s were not sustainable. By the 1970s, shopping malls and suburbs had drawn people away from the downtown historic district.

After virtually no growth in the 1970s, Durham has experienced sustained growth since 1980 along with the transformation of its economy. An important part of that transformation began with the establishment in the 1960s of Research Triangle Park (RTP) in undeveloped land in an area between Raleigh, Chapel, and Durham. Founded in 1959 as the first research park linked with research universities, it has grown from the original size of 4400 acres to nearly 7000 acres currently.³ It houses over 170 companies and more than 39,000 full-time equivalent employees with an estimated 10,000 contract workers. RTP is primarily in Durham County, so its property owners do not pay any city property taxes. The provision of health care has also expanded in Durham. With over 300 medical firms and practices, including Duke Medical Center, health care is now the area's leading industry.⁴

Higher education has also been instrumental in Durham's development. Since its founding in 1924 (building on the renamed Trinity College), Duke University has grown into a prestigious private university with a highly ranked medical center. The university is the largest employer in Durham, providing jobs for more than 18,000 city residents out of a total employment of over 31,000. The city is also home to North Carolina Central University, founded in 1909 as the first state-supported liberal arts college for African-American students in the United States. Durham Technical Community College offers traditional academic and vocational training as well as customized programs to meet changing industry needs.

**Demographic, Socio-Economic, and Poverty Data
Durham City and County and North Carolina
2010**

Category	Durham	Durham County	North Carolina
Population white, not Hispanic	37.9	42.1	64.0
African-American	40.4	38.8	22.0
Hispanic	14.2	13.4	8.7
Foreign-born		14.0	7.4
Median household income		\$50,078	\$46,291
Per capita income		\$27,988	\$25,256
College graduate		44.3	26.5
Individuals below poverty level	18.6	17.1	16.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Despite its assets, Durham has been challenged for the past 50 years. Although it came through the civil rights revolution in the 1960s with greater cohesion than many southern cities, the destruction of Hayti and the social and economic changes that it produced, including high levels of crime, contributed to serious racial division in the city that has extended into the new century. A recent community assessment summarized conditions in this way: “Ten years ago, Durham County was in the midst of recovery from an economic crash caused by the declines in the tobacco and textile industries in the 1970s and 1980s. It was a city formerly divided by race learning to live together.”⁵⁵ The city has seen a reduction in crime over the past decade and now has lower crime rates than its peers in the region and the nation as a whole. It seeks to restrain sprawling settlement patterns and achieve “more human-scaled, sustainable development.”⁵⁶ The city and county also seek to ensure that people with limited socioeconomic resources are not left behind in the expanding high-tech economy that contributes to Durham’s success.

Approach to Sustainability

Durham City includes “sustainability” in its vision statement: “Durham is the leading city in providing an excellent and sustainable quality of life.”⁵⁷ Durham County, on the other hand, does not use the term in its vision statement although it includes elements of sustainability: “Durham County: a thriving, vibrant, diverse community with abundant opportunity for all residents to live, work, learn, play and grow.”⁵⁸ The inscription on the recently completed County Social Services building expresses the core of social sustainability: “Durham’s vitality is built upon the health of our residents and the capacity of our community to foster and enhance the wellbeing of every citizen.”

The specific goals of the two governments largely match up with each other and include the economic, social, and environmental components of sustainability.⁹

Goals	City	County
Economic	A. Strong and Diverse Economy	Goal 1: Community and Family Prosperity and Enrichment
Environmental	E. Stewardship of City's Physical Assets (includes natural assets)	Goal 4: Environmental Stewardship
	C. Thriving, Livable Neighborhoods (includes environmental stewardship)	
Social equity	C. Thriving, Livable Neighborhoods/	Goal 2: Health and Well-being for All/
	B. Safe and Secure Community	Goal 3: Safe and Secure Community

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The joint City-County Sustainability Office contains this broad definition of sustainability:

What Is Sustainability?

Sustainable communities meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To achieve this goal, truly sustainable communities are environmentally healthy, socially responsible, and financially secure.

A healthy environment is rich in living resources, with clean air, water, and soil—providing for human and environmental well-being. Fair, just government and citizenry together ensure that the needs of everyone in the community are met. Financial security depends on and supports social and environmental health.¹⁰

Taken together, the goals and policies of the city and county match this definition, but other than a “healthy environment,” the qualities are not commonly linked to sustainability goals among the officials who provide them or the citizens who observe and contribute to the work of the city and county.

The record of the sustainability program in Durham is extensive. The main task of the City-County Sustainability Office is implementing Durham’s Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan adopted in 2007. This plan sets ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by government and the community by 2030. Emphasis has been given to reducing energy use in public buildings and in the community, expanding recycling, and conserving natural resources. Committed to green buildings, Durham County seeks to by achieving high levels of LEED certification for all new facilities and major renovations. Ten projects have already received or are seeking LEED certification. In addition, the city has acquired four electric vehicles and the county owns two electric vehicles.

A new initiative launching in 2014 is “Charge Ahead Durham”—a program intended to engage Durham residents and challenge them to take small steps in their everyday lives that will have a big impact on our environment. The campaign will provide weekly e-mails with specific actions and clear guidance on steps you can take to save energy, conserve water, reduce waste, and connect with nature.

Participants can report back through the website on what they have done and get entered to win prizes every week. Participants can also get points by helping others take the actions to protect the environment.

Findings

FINDING 1– Building the future is based on restoring the physical and cultural assets of the past.

After the 1960s’ emphasis on urban renewal by clearing the built environment, the revival of Durham starting in the 1980s was based on a mix of adaptive reuse of existing structures along with new construction. Two abandoned tobacco warehouses were converted into a distinctive shopping center in an area adjacent to the city center, and nearby neighborhoods attracted new residents who restored historic houses.¹¹ The Carolina Theatre in the center of the development was renovated for performances and movies. A major early public investment was a new baseball stadium for the Triple A franchise baseball team just south of the city center. The project began in 1993 and opened in 1995. In 1993, Downtown Durham, Inc. (DDI)—a 501(c) 6 organization with a board consisting of government officials and business and community leaders—was formed to serve as a catalyst for downtown revitalization in close cooperation with the city and county governments.¹² As an intermediary between government and the business sector, DDI helped to structure public-private partnership agreements for consideration by local governments. After years of laying the groundwork, in 2003 DDI brokered the renovation of the American Tobacco Campus (ATC) adjacent to the ballpark. With New Market Tax Credit financing and a commitment of \$43 million by the city and county to build three parking decks and other infrastructure in and around the campus, renovation resulted in a large center with office, retail, and residential space. After the ATC opened, renovation and new construction increased dramatically. The 2000 downtown development plan was updated in 2008, and the downtown boundaries were expanded with the addition of the Golden Belt district anchored by a renovated former textile mill. In all, the city and county have supported 11 major renovation projects since the 1990s, as well as 4 major new construction projects in the downtown area.¹³

An important tool that facilitated the renovation process was the *Downtown City Center District Study: Creating an Environment for Retail* study in January 2010.¹⁴ This report, which was coordinated and managed by DDI, and was funded by the City of Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the Parrish Street Advocacy Group, provides the strategic vision that led the Durham city council to support funding for Incentive Grants. These grants are used to help renovate buildings, upgrade/acquire signs and façades, and make it possible for retail businesses wanting to locate downtown, all of which has led to a significant increase in small businesses downtown and to Durham’s “foodie” reputation. Small grants—15 between 2010 and 2013—have been awarded to businesses for building improvements, and signage improvement grants were available to enhance the visibility of businesses in the downtown.

A major emphasis in the past five years has been placed on encouraging entrepreneurial activity and supporting start-up firms through Bull City Startup Stampede and American Underground.¹⁵ The Bull City Startup Stampede, starting in 2011 and initiated by the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce in partnership with DDI and Self-Help Durham, selected 15 start-up companies to come to downtown Durham and provided space, support, and networking to help launch them. American Underground is an ongoing venture that houses and supports start-up companies. Started in basement space in the ATC, a second site in Durham for start-ups at an earlier stage of development was established in a renovated office building on Main Street provided by Self-Help Durham.¹⁶ There are more than 100 start-ups at the two locations. Both North Carolina Central University and Duke University have space for their students to work in American Underground, there are opportunities for high school students to develop new ideas, and a network of experienced entrepreneurial women mentoring other women called “Soar” has been established with American Underground as a sponsor. American Underground is one of seven “tech hubs” in the United States and Canada selected for a new entrepreneurial support program run by Google.¹⁷

The traditions of the city are highlighted in Durham’s new “History Hub,” which opened in October 2013 in a formerly vacant, revitalized downtown bus station. The Museum of Durham History was identified as a high priority in the 2004 Durham Cultural Master Plan approved by the city and county; aiming to present a “coherent story of Durham’s past and its relevance to the present,” it offers exhibits highlighting the city’s diversity. In addition, the city and county are committed to the preservation of Parrish Street—the “Black Wall Street” in the middle of what was the white business district in central Durham in the early 20th century.

FINDING 2 – Promoting vital neighborhoods is a multifaceted effort that supports numerous other goals.

Maintaining and revitalizing neighborhoods are central priorities of the city’s strategic plan, and the county plays a supportive role. The divergent strategies that have been developed to meet the distinctive conditions and needs found in particular areas are illustrated in two neighborhoods: Northeast Central Durham (NECD) and Southside. These are also the oldest and newest priority areas for neighborhood revitalization. Both are close to downtown Durham, and the downtown development area boundaries have already been extended into NECD and the portion of Southside that adjoins the ATC.

Northeast Central Durham

The NECD neighborhood was formerly a group of mill villages for factory workers in the area. It was also the location of one of Durham’s first two public housing projects—Few Gardens—originally occupied by white residents. The close of the factories and the decline in neighborhoods east of downtown in the 1960s, and the disruption and dislocation caused by building the NC 147 expressway, which opened along the southern border of NECD in 1970, changed the neighborhood composition. By 1970, three of NECD’s four neighborhoods had become predominantly black, and the number of welfare recipients had risen greatly. For the next two decades, the neighborhood was largely ignored and continued to decline.

Between 1995 and 2000, NECD began to receive more attention from city leaders, and social and physical revitalization efforts were put in place or began to be considered. Partners Against Crime (PAC) was established, Eastway Elementary School opened in 1995, and discussions began about the HOPE VI development and Golden Belt renovation. Neighborhood organizations increased and pressure was applied on local governments to focus more attention and funding on NECD.¹⁸ In 2002, the city decided to eliminate an area of concentrated crime by acquiring and demolishing 46 dilapidated houses on Barnes Street close to Few Gardens, and then removing the public housing complex itself through HOPE VI, \$35 million revitalization grant. The demolished houses were replaced with affordable units—30 single-family homes and 16 condominiums—and the street was renamed Eastway Village. By 2008, 83 units of assisted housing replaced Few Gardens, and an additional 67 units are anticipated to be added, in addition to 260 units in three adjacent neighborhoods. Both the Hope VI project and Eastway Village were built to high environmental standards. Eastway is built to System vision standards (stronger than Energy Star).

In 2009, previous planning efforts for NECD were reviewed, and college and high school students launched NECD VOICE, an outreach effort to inform the community and engage students in revitalization efforts.¹⁹ The Holton Career and Resource Center opened in a renovated school building to provide NECD residents with career and resource services from the Durham School System and the city. Duke Medicine operates a community health clinic there. In addition, a covered pedestrian bridge across the expressway, which had been closed since 1995 because it was the site of criminal activity, was removed in 2009 and replaced in 2010 by a new bridge with an open design at Lakeland Street. Northeastern and Southeastern Central Durham once again have an exclusively pedestrian connection.

A major community visioning activity with extensive citizen engagement was held in 2010. The Northeast Central Durham Livability Initiative grew out of a two-day community workshop that assessed the past, catalogued the strengths and weaknesses of the area, and identified ways to align the local vision with a wide range of external resources. The initiative seeks to incorporate the principles of livability developed by the U.S. Department of Urban Development (HUD), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. Department of Transportation. Four schemes were created through various meetings among local NECD stakeholders and state and federal agencies:

1. **Workforce and Economic Development:** To provide entrepreneurial education; attract the creative class and industry; develop brownfields; provide access to quality, locally owned affordable foods; stimulate local investment; and improve streetscapes.
2. **Safe and Healthy Environment:** To provide housing and social services, mobilize the community, and ensure safety. The citizens in this group want to increase homeownership, financial literacy, and access to quality education; decrease crime; and promote better health.
3. **Coordinated Public Transportation:** To design and enhance streetscapes, improve and expand transportation options, provide regional connectivity, and ensure pedestrian safety.
4. **Multifunctional Community Open Space:** To provide green spaces, energy programs, and education. The citizens in this group want to encourage local food enterprise, improve the environment, improve health, and educate the community.

Major initiatives undertaken so far include renovation of another former school building in the neighborhood: the historic Y. E. Smith School now houses the Maureen Joy charter school. Other initiatives under way include streetscape and storefront improvements, the redesign of Alston Avenue as a “complete street,” community gardens linked to the Durham Network of Agriculture, “build a better block” and “fix your street” projects, and neighborhood clean-ups on both sides of the new pedestrian bridge.

Another major community initiative is the East Durham Children’s Initiative (EDCI).²⁰ Organizing began in 2008, and EDCI started operations in 2011 to support the educational development of about 3,000 children, from birth to college entrance, within a 120-block area inside the NECD boundaries. EDCI works with a wide range of neighborhood, community, and governmental organizations, including the NECD Leadership Council. The “pipeline” of services starts with nurses who visit families with a newborn and continues with a range of early childhood services, including health and nutrition, for the elementary-school child during the school year and the summer. Supporting all these is a parent advocate program to empower parents to help further their children’s education. Additional programs are available for middle school and high school students, and these will be expanded in the future.

Two playground improvement projects have been completed in cooperation with KaBOOM!, a national organization working to build playgrounds within walking distance of every child in America. Cherry Grove Park is a community playground built in one day by more than 300 child, youth, and adult volunteers from East Durham and the surrounding area organized by the EDCI at Shepherd’s House Church at Driver and Main Street. Bountiful Backyards, an East Durham–based organization, worked with youth from the community to plant an edible landscape at the park, including fruit trees and bushes, and continues to provide gardening workshops for youth and interested community members at the playground. In 2013, Oakwood Park on Holloway Street in NECD was upgraded with the help of more than 200 volunteers and local community residents.

The Neighborhood Improvement Services (NIS) Department that coordinates NECD activities has used the neighborhood as a model of integrated approaches to promote livability in all parts of the city. It created the Durham Urban Innovation Center to explore broad strategies for neighborhood revitalization and sustainability. With funding from a HUD Fair Housing Partnership Grant, the center has produced concept papers on affordable housing and the linkages between housing and transit, agriculture, arts, brownfields, and health. NIS also supports revitalization through its ongoing code enforcement activities, such as proactive inspection of rental properties within a target area that includes NECD, rapid response for emergency repairs, and enforcement of fair housing provisions. The department’s Community Engagement staff, who oversee planning and implementation of neighborhood services and community outreach programs, facilitate open communication between city staff and residents, help with neighborhood organizing and community education, and assist PAC districts in community service efforts.

Southside

The second target neighborhood represents an emphasis on new housing construction to fill vacant space and stimulate private investment. The area, called Southside, is the part of the Hayti neighborhood beside the Seaboard Coast Line Railroad track that was destroyed by the construction of the NC 147 expressway in the late 1960s. The highway removed an extensive African-American commercial district adjoining the track and much of the largest African-American residential area in Durham.

The Southside redevelopment area includes a 20-acre tract that was originally part of the Hayti clearance; the area is within a half mile of the attractions constructed in downtown Durham. The city has been trying to develop this area since the 1980s, but two earlier projects ended in failure. After the second developer, using a loan from the city, completed only 9 of intended 56 single-family homes, the city foreclosed on the properties and took ownership of 33 vacant parcels and 2 partially built homes. In 2007, the Rolling Hills/Southside Steering Committee, which includes more than 40 community members and city representatives, was formed. It has served as a community sounding board for planning to redevelop the area.

The city has approved a plan for the neighborhood with three elements. First, the city council authorized spending up to \$6 million buying out homeowners in the 20-acre tract and relocating them to prepare the site for renewal. Second, the city contracted with national developer McCormack Baron Salazar to create a plan for the area. Third, the city included a larger adjacent area of primarily single-family housing in the project. At the beginning of the revitalization efforts, the enlarged 125-acre area had a high crime rate and large numbers of vacant lots and dilapidated structures. The Community Development Department, which is responsible for overseeing the Southside development, estimates that prior to recent renewal efforts, about one-third of the 450 residential lots in Southside were empty, one-third were unoccupied, and one-third were occupied but had only 24 resident homeowners.

In its approach to promoting neighborhood renewal, the Community Development Department is committed to establishing mixed-income communities. The city accepts the premise that there is enhanced performance in schools, lower rates of crime, and greater social viability when concentrations of low-income residences are avoided. To achieve this goal, it is promoting two different types of development in Southside. In the 20-acre tract, McCormack Baron Salazar is constructing 132 apartments in 12 buildings with 80 affordable units. Twenty of the units will be reserved for families earning 30 percent or below of the area median income, 12 units will be reserved for families earning 50 percent or below of the area median income, and the remaining 48 units will be restricted to families earning 60 percent or below of the area median income (AMI). In addition, there will be 39 market rate units and 13 commercial live/work units. The subsidized units are “floating” so that any unit could be subsidized to make it affordable.

In the existing single-family residence portion of Southside, Self-Help Durham has acquired 48 building lots to be used for new housing construction. The city has identified two builders that will provide a range of housing styles and sizes between \$162,000 and \$198,900. Support from the city

allows the builders to offer high-quality houses at a price that is as much as 12 percent lower than the standard price for the same house in comparable Durham locations.²¹ People with incomes above 80 percent of AMI will deal directly with the builder, although the houses will be available at the same purchase price. For homebuyers with incomes at or below 80 percent AMI, who will account for at least 51 percent of the homebuyers in Southside, there are three potential sources to make purchasing a new home affordable. The City of Durham offers both 2 percent amortizing and 0 percent forgivable second-mortgage loans of up to \$20,000. Through the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency, a forgivable second- or third-mortgage loan of up to \$18,000 is available to eligible buyers. Finally, Duke University/Duke Health System has forgivable loans of \$10,000 for 10 of its employees who purchase a home in Southside. The city estimates that a person eligible to receive all the subsidies would have payments of \$754 a month for a \$175,000 house. City officials are hopeful that the infusion of public funds to subsidize the start of a mixed-income neighborhood will be sufficient to attract more private investment and unsubsidized homebuyers to the neighborhood.

Other improvements are occurring in the neighborhood as well. A development company that was responsible for the renovation of Golden Belt is renovating a shopping center across the street from the Southside rental units. And along with the city, the county government is supporting the renovation of Whitted School—a former middle school and former African-American Hillside High School—into senior housing with a day care center at which the residents will volunteer to support the staff.

Support for the development of affordable housing was increased with the approval of a “penny for housing” tax increase in the 2012 city budget. This one-cent tax increase, which will generate about \$2.4 million per year, creates a dedicated funding source for affordable housing initiatives to make up for cuts in federal grant programs, which left a shortfall in the Southside project. The city is also committed to revitalizing residential areas east and southwest of downtown and to assisting homeless persons. The annual funds will be distributed in a five-year plan to various initiatives, such as the provision of urgent home repairs to the elderly and the disabled, and site and infrastructure preparations, acquisitions, and demolitions.²²

FINDING 3 – Promoting economic development requires building the workforce as well as pursuing and creating new economic opportunities.

The economic development function in Durham combines activities to attract new investment and support business and industry with promotion of workforce development. In its efforts to stimulate economic activities, the Office of Economic and Workforce Development (OEWD), which keeps a database of local firms, has been active in the renovation of existing structures in the city as sites for businesses and new housing. A current priority is the development of historic Parrish Street—the home of “Black Wall Street”—where the department has an outreach center with meeting space available for rent. OEWD administers the grant program for building improvements and signage. It assists businesses in recruiting employees and developing their skills.

When incentives are provided to developers, such as those involved in the 21c Museum Hotel under construction, the Durham-Based Business Plan is part of the agreement. In return for those

incentives, the plan requires developers to make good-faith efforts to use Durham-based firms for contracting activities. They are also encouraged to enter into a workforce development plan to ensure that Durham residents have the first opportunity to apply for the jobs that will be created. Through this process, Durham-based firms that may otherwise be overlooked because they lack exposure to the larger business community may have the opportunity to become involved in the project at hand. OEWD maintains a database of Durham-based firms.

For people seeking employment, the OEWD helps them acquire training and search for jobs through professional networking, work readiness support, career development and counseling, educational information and financial assistance, and a variety of other support services. Opportunities for training within occupations that have growth potential are available in partnership with NC Works Online, “a one-stop online resource for job seekers and employers in North Carolina.”²³ OEWD also offers specialized services for veterans, older workers, people with disabilities, and people who are economically disadvantaged.

Several training programs are available in fields related to other sustainability efforts. For example, the city and county have received grants from federal EPA to train Durham County residents or veterans—primarily those in Northeast Central Durham—in environmental technology. With training provided by Durham Technical Community College (DTCC), participants will qualify for entry-level positions within the environmental technology field, such as general construction workers, wastewater plant operators, and environmental technicians. They will also acquire certifications and technical skills training that will enable them to seek employment in related job markets, such as asbestos abatement, hazardous waste operations, and emergency response. The first class graduated in July 2013. The Community Development Department has used Community Development Block Grants to establish the Southside Pathways to Employment Training Program at DTCC, which provides training to Southside residents in health-related programs. A Basic Construction Class with New Beginnings Outreach Community Development Corporation—a 12-week program that began in January 2013—provides training and enhances employability prospects within the construction industry; it includes a financial literacy component to enhance the participants’ knowledge of asset building and protection when they enter the construction industry.²⁴

There are also outreach efforts targeted to groups who may face barriers to employment, such as youth, emotionally challenged youth, and former inmates. Durham YES—Youth & Succeeding—is a comprehensive youth services program under the federal Workforce Investment Act legislation of 1998. The goal of Durham YES is to better prepare young adults for education and employment. Counselors work with participants to assess current academic and occupational skill levels and determine what steps are needed to promote employability. Benefits include tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school; summer employment opportunities; paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing; and comprehensive guidance and counseling. In addition, the Durham Workforce Development Board contracts with community organizations to provide youth services. It serves as the vehicle to develop comprehensive and integrated strategies to help in-school and out-of-school youth prepare for successful entry into the workforce.

Targeted assistance for young people with mental and emotional problems is provided through a partnership with BECOMING (Building Every Chance of Making It Now and Grown up). The program serves 16- to 21-year-olds with mental health conditions who are having difficulty making the transition to a productive adulthood and have become disconnected from important community services and supports such as education, families, mentors, and employment opportunities.²⁵

The Former Offender Program at the Durham Career Center provides individualized assistance with career counseling and employment search and retention for persons with criminal backgrounds and convictions to help them become responsible members of the community and workforce. Eligible participants receive employment counseling, employment search orientations and workshops, and placement services.

FINDING 4 – Increasing safety and security entails community-based approaches and partnerships between law enforcement officials and residents.

A foundation for neighborhood renewal and economic development activities in Durham has been the Partners Against Crime (PAC) program, founded in 1993.²⁶ Assisted by the citizen engagement unit in Neighborhood Improvement Services (NIS), this community-based volunteer program promotes collaboration among police officers, residents, and city and county government officials to find sustainable solutions to community crime problems and quality-of-life issues. Each of the city's five police districts has a PAC organization that meets monthly. The PAC groups have purchased bicycles for two of the police department's bicycle squads, translation equipment so that Spanish-speaking residents can attend meetings, digital speed trailers to help with neighborhood speed enforcement, and motion detector lights for elderly residents. One group purchased playground equipment to replace apparatus destroyed by vandalism. PAC groups have also worked to get rid of dilapidated housing in their neighborhoods.²⁷

FINDING 5 – Wellness is essential to a vibrant community and requires a comprehensive approach.

For the past 10 years, Durham has stressed a cooperative approach to enhance health and wellness. In 2004, the county Department of Public Health took over the Partnership for a Healthy Durham, an organization that was originally created to convene community members to improve health outcomes. Gradually, however, the Partnership became a place to build relationships among leaders, partners, and community members and thus provided not just a bridge between local government and community organizations but also a place to meet people, develop relationships, and create effective projects.

The Partnership collects and distributes county health data and participates in strategic planning. The coordinator leads the triennial community health assessment, the findings of which are used to determine county health priorities for the next three years. Reflecting a broad definition of health, current priorities recognize the social determinants of health to be

- access to medical and dental care
- obesity and chronic illness

- education
- poverty
- HIV/sexually transmitted diseases
- substance abuse
- mental health.

These determinants were the focus of the partnership's 2012 and 2013 Durham Health Summits

With these priorities, the Partnership's collaboration with Durham Public Schools (DPS) and its initiatives for increasing graduation rates and early childhood education has grown. Child and family support teams have been started in the seven schools with the highest risk of dropout and failure. In addition, the Partnership collaborates with End Poverty Durham, a group of interfaith leaders and community-based organizations working to eliminate poverty.

There are various activities designed to increase wellness through weight management, physical activity, and better eating and access to fresh food. A Healthier Durham campaign was launched in 2014 to engage 28,000 Durham residents—roughly 10 percent of the population—in exercising 420,000 hours and losing 280,000 pounds. Schools will be a major participant in the campaign, which is part of a statewide effort. The county's Agricultural Extension Agency has a 15-session program on moving more, weighing less, and eating smart. Working with community organizations such as SEEDS, which have offered community gardening opportunities to youth and homeless persons in NECD since 1994, the agency has a garden with 50 plots and provides assistance to residents who want to grow their own vegetables. In the Health Department, Dine for Life works with food stamp recipients to promote healthy eating by providing recipes and teaching kids how to create container gardens. Other efforts under way to offset food deserts include the Healthy Aisle Project: so far, one grocery store in NECD (Los Primos) has agreed to place fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, and low-fat snacks at a checkout aisle in place of candy, sodas, and potato chips, encouraging last-minute buyers to make the healthy choice. A veggie van visits the health department every Friday and, in addition to selling fresh vegetables, provides information about how to store and use them. DPS has opened the Hub Farm in north Durham as a place for career and technical educational programs focusing on agriculture, community gardens, and public information; a Health Department nutritionist is on site. Efforts are also being made to enable the use of electronic benefits transfer cards at the central Durham Farmers' Market, and additional sites for markets are being explored. Finally, the county is working with neighboring counties to create pilot corner stores that will provide better storage of fresh foods.

FINDING 6 – Outreach is important to involve lower-income residents in energy conservation efforts.

As part of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, Durham received \$2,173,600, funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, to increase economic activity (job creation) and reduce energy use.²⁸ The city used half the funds for a neighborhood-based energy efficiency program operated by the City-County Sustainability Office. The Neighborhood Energy Retrofit Program (NERP) and Home Energy Savings Program (HESP) have focused on installing a few highly

effective upgrades in existing residences in Durham, with a target of reducing energy use by 20 percent in the 385 participating homes. Several of the targeted neighborhoods, including NECD, are low-wealth neighborhoods.

In addition, Durham received \$500,000 as part of EPA's Climate Showcase Communities (CSC) grant program, which aims to create replicable models of cost-effective and long-lasting greenhouse gas reductions that will catalyze broader local and tribal government actions to stabilize the climate and improve environmental, economic, health, and social conditions. Durham used its funds to expand the NERP and HESP by retrofitting more than 320 additional homes, and to provide energy education workshops in English and Spanish. As the grant required Durham to contribute a \$250,000 cost share, that cost share was generated by homeowner contributions to participate in the program, volunteer time contributions, additional energy retrofit work that some people could elect to purchase, and contributions of staff time by various city and county departments to aid with inspections.

NIS staff received training in holding energy education workshops, which are now provided throughout the city. From January 2013 to January 2014, these one-hour workshops, which were based on the Clean Energy Durham Pete Street Training, were provided to 85 groups, including apartment complexes, homeowner associations, and neighborhood groups, and reached 943 citizens. Participants were shown how to conduct a home energy audit, received heating, cooling, and hot water tips, and learned about do-it-yourself energy-saving projects. These workshops helped residents understand how much they can do on their own to reduce their electric bills.

FINDING 7 – Physical access is enhanced by community design, decentralized development, and multiple modes of transportation.

Durham offers comprehensive bus service through the Durham Area Transit Authority. The city faced the possibility of fare increases in the 2013 budget, but the city council chose instead to initiate a residential garbage fee of \$1.80 per month (\$21.60/year) to cover shortfalls in solid waste. This new fee enabled Waste Management to release general fund money so that the bus service did not need to not raise fees. This is a small portion of the \$8 million subsidy to public transportation to ensure mobility.

Development activities in downtown have included the creation of Durham Station Transportation Center, a new transit center that links area bus, bike, and rail transportation. The route of a free circulator bus—Bull City Connector—has expanded east to Golden Belt in NECD and west to Duke Hospital. There is a link from the central bus station to the North Carolina Central University campus in Southwestern Central Durham. Both the city and county offer free electric vehicle charging stations throughout the city.

A regional transit plan includes future expansion of transit service. In 2011, Durham County voters approved (by a 60–40 percent vote) a half-cent sales tax referendum to provide the local funding needed for Durham’s expanded bus plan.²⁹ In November 2012, Orange County followed, providing local funding for that county’s expanded bus and the light rail corridor so as to connect Orange with Durham. In the first two to five years of this plan, the counties will provide new buses and better service. In addition, a corridor for light rail or bus rapid transit has been identified and will be developed within 10 years. The corridor will include stations in Southwest Central Durham, NECD, and downtown as well as other Durham locations; early planning is under way to determine how to provide affordable housing in the development that occurs around these stations.

In 2006, the city passed comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plans, including extensive on-street bicycle lanes and separate trails, designed to promote healthier and more sustainable modes of transportation. The Durham Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission is a citizens group whose purpose is to advise Durham's city council and board of county commissioners on bicycle and pedestrian issues. To provide health, recreation, and transportation benefits to the city and county, the commission promotes

- the full integration of bicycling and walking into community transportation policies and practices
- incentives for increasing bicycling and walking
- bicycle and pedestrian programs designed for children and seniors
- bicycle touring as economic development for the community
- safety programs for bicycling and walking
- physical and mental health benefits of walking and bicycling
- funding for bicycle and pedestrian programs and facilities.

SOCIAL EQUITY SNAPSHOT

HOW ARE THE SOCIAL EQUITY GOALS ARTICULATED IN DURHAM CITY AND DURHAM COUNTY?

Durham city is committed to a “sustainable quality of life” and Durham County stresses livability in its vision statement. Sustainability is not an overarching goal that encompasses the other desired qualities, but rather implies an emphasis on energy conservation and protection of the environment—the goals of the joint City-County Sustainability Office. Social equity is represented in distinct goals related to preserving and revitalizing a vibrant city center accessible to all, viable neighborhoods and affordable housing, celebrating diversity, wellness and activity, expanding opportunity for success of all segments of the population, and accessibility.

HOW HAS SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL EQUITY CHANGED OVER TIME (PAST TO NOW, OR LIKELY IN THE FUTURE)? SUPPORT FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS?

The support for social equity appears to be increasing. In the past five years, there have been a number of positive actions to support social equity goals including the expanded support of the citizen engagement in NECD, the commitment to develop Southside, increased property tax to expand affordable housing, support for expanded transit, expanded health and wellness programs, and residential energy conservation. There has also been increased coordination of a group of departments as a “Community Building” team. These departments play “an important role in the community by enhancing the physical, economic and overall capacity of residents, business and neighborhoods, thereby increasing the long term economic, environmental and social sustainability of the community.”²⁴

There is also increased cooperation between the Public Health Department and the Durham Public Schools.

To encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel, the NECD revitalization plan includes incorporation of complete street features into a widened major street that runs through the neighborhood.

Housing that is being developed in the downtown area and adjoining neighborhoods provides pedestrian access to work and leisure opportunities. Plans are under review for a downtown open-space plan that will expand and connect green spaces, improve walkable entrances to the downtown from surrounding neighborhoods, and link up major bicycle trails through the downtown. Final action on the plan is expected in May, 2014.³⁰

List of Study Participants

The author of this report conducted interviews with 23 individuals familiar with social equity-related issues in Durham city and Durham County. The author wishes to thank the following individuals for their contributions:

City of Durham

- William Bell, mayor
- Don Moffitt, council member
- Steven Schewel, council member
- Thomas Bonfield, city manager
- Constance Stancil, director, Neighborhood Improvement Services Department
- Wanona Satcher, creative director, Durham Urban Innovation Center
- Nick Allen, Community Engagement Coordinator District 1 & NECD, NIS
- Darrell Solomon, business services manager, Economic and Workforce Development
- Reginald Jones, economic development coordinator, Economic and Workforce Development
- Larry Jarvis, assistant director, Community Development Department, City of Durham

Durham County

- Ellen Reckow, commissioner
- Lee Worsley, deputy county manager/acting county manager
- Drew Cummings, assistant county manager
- Tobin Freid, sustainability manager, Durham City-County Sustainability Office
- Gayle Harris, public health director

Community

- Phil Azar, NECD Leadership Council
- Tucker Bartlett, Self-Help Durham
- Cynthia Brown, Conservation Fund
- Ray Eurquhart, Rolling Hills/Southside Revitalization Committee, Southside Neighborhood Association
- DeDreana Freeman and Cate Elander, East Durham Children's Initiative
- John Hodges-Copple, chief planner, Triangle J Council of Governments

- Adam Klein and Molly Emerest, American Underground
- Melissa McCullough, senior sustainability advisor, U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development, Research Triangle Park
- Melissa Norton, Downtown Durham Inc.

Endnotes

¹ Duke, who established a major tobacco company and other related businesses, contributed money to bring Trinity College to Durham, and in 1924, the family funded the expansion of the college and renamed it in his honor.

² Jean Bradley Anderson, *Durham County: A History of Durham County, North Carolina* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2011), 351–352.

³ Research Triangle Park Foundation, “About RTP,” <http://www.rtp.org/about-rtp>.

⁴ City of Durham, Community Development Department, *2010–2015 Consolidated Plan*, p. 1-1. 2010 http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cb/cdd/Documents/consolidated_plan10-15.pdf.

⁵ Partnership for a Healthy Durham, <http://www.healthydurham.org/docs/2013%20Roadmaps%20to%20Health%20Prize%20essay%20II%202013.pdf>.

⁶ City of Durham, Community Development Department, *2010–2015 Consolidated Plan*, 2010, p. iv.

⁷ City of Durham, “City of Durham Strategic Plan” (2014), http://durhamnc.gov/ich/as/bms/Pages/Strategic%20Plan/sp_SPHome.aspx.

⁸ Durham County, *Strategic Plan Progress Report 2013*, <http://strategicplan.dconc.gov/sample/DCOStratPlanProgress.pdf> and <http://strategicplan.dconc.gov/page/Progress.aspx>. In the *Strategic Plan Progress Report*, the term *sustainability* is used only in connection with environmental stewardship.

⁹ Both also have a goal to be a “well-managed” (city) and “accountable, efficient and visionary” (county.)

¹⁰ City of Durham, City-County Sustainability Office, “What Is Sustainability” (2014), <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cmo/sustainability/Pages/Home.aspx>.

¹¹ Trinity Park, Old North Durham, Old West Durham. <http://preservationdurham.org/about-durham/durham-history/>

¹² In 2001, DDI formed a sister 501(c)3 organization named Renaissance Downtown Durham, Inc. (ReDDI) to promote and assist the city and county in the revitalization, historic preservation, and development of downtown Durham, in a manner consistent with the Downtown Master Plan.

¹³ <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cb/oewd/Pages/MajorDevelopmentProjects.aspx>. The Golden Belt project is not included in the list at this site. The four new major downtown projects are the renovation of the Sun Trust Bank building as a hotel, a proposed 28-story building that includes the site of the former Woolworths, housing development in Central Park, and expansion of the Durham Performing Arts Center.

¹⁴ Downtown Durham, Inc., City of Durham Office of Economic and Workforce Development, and Parrish Street Advocacy Committee, *Downtown City Center District: Creating an Environment for Retail* (January 2010), http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cb/oewd/Documents/city_center_retail_report.pdf.

¹⁵ Adam Klein has been a catalyst for enhancing the growth of entrepreneurs in Durham first in the Chamber of Commerce Bull City Stampede and since 2012 as Chief Strategist for American Underground. See information about the initiatives, see <http://www.startupstampede.com/> and <http://www.americanunderground.com/>.

¹⁶ The nonprofit Center for Community Self-Help (or Self-Help) combines several organizations including a federal credit union that together provide financing, technical support, consumer financial services and advocacy to promote development in female, low-income, low-wealth, rural and minority communities across North Carolina, Washington D.C., California and many other states. It has been a major investor in rehabilitating existing buildings in downtown Durham and expanding housing for low and moderate-income families. <https://www.self-help.org/>.

¹⁷ <http://www.newsobserver.com/2013/09/25/3227771/google-tabs-durhams-american-underground.html#storylink=cpy>.

¹⁸ For history, see Partnership for Sustainable Communities, “Northeast Central Durham Livability Initiative: Aligning the Local Vision with External Resources.” Neighborhood Improvement Services, City of Durham, 2010.

¹⁹ The Northeast Central Durham Community VOICE is a collaborative effort among the journalism programs at UNC–Chapel Hill and North Carolina Central University; teens; the City of Durham; and area civic, church, business, and educational leaders. The goal is to foster civic engagement and present the authentic voices of NECD. The VOICE is supported by an equipment grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, with newsroom space in the Golden Belt Campus provided by Scientific Properties, and printing donated by the Daily Tar Heel of UNC–Chapel Hill. Five web editions are issued each semester at www.durhamvoice.org, and three monthly print editions are made available each semester for free at local schools, businesses, churches, libraries, and civic offices.

²⁰ <http://edci.org/>.

²¹ <http://bwallacebuilt.com/files/2013/08/brochure.pdf>.

²² <http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/05/21/2080930/proposed-durham-budget-raises.html#storylink=cpy>.

²³ <https://www.ncworks.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>.

²⁴ <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cb/cdd/Pages/Southside-News.aspx>.

²⁵ <http://becomingdurham.org/>.

²⁶ <http://www.heraldsun.com/news/x533458534/Partners-Against-Crime-discusses-crime-prevention-in-downtown-police-district>.

²⁷ <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/op/DPD/Pages/PAC.aspx>.

²⁸ <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cmo/sustainability/Pages/Grant-Projects.aspx>.

²⁹ If Wake County voters approve the tax increase, the plan could also add commuter rail that will run between Durham to Research Triangle Park to Raleigh to Garner. The Wake County Commission has not yet decided whether to hold a referendum on participation in the regional plan.

³⁰ <http://durhamnc.gov/ich/cb/ccpd/Documents/dosp/DowntownOpenSpacePlan1-14-2014.pdf>.

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