

Jacksonville BPAC Meeting Notes  
Hybrid Meeting  
September 14, 2023 @ 5:30 PM  
Ed Ball Building – 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
214 N Hogan Street – Jacksonville FL

**Copies of presentation materials from the September 14, 2023 BPAC meeting may be viewed or downloaded from the COJ BPAC page on the City of Jacksonville website. A link to the COJ BPAC page is [HERE](#).**

**Meeting Attendees:**

***In-person:*** Peter Borenstein (Chair), Lauren Rushing (Secretary), Matt Fall (COJ Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator), Len Burroughs (CPAC, NFBC), Wiatt Bowers (Atkins), Daniel Ashworth (EMT, SPAR), Alyssa Goldberg (EXP), Bill Delaney (City Council Liaison), Tyler Blair (EXP),

***Virtual:*** Lauren Chapell, Larry Roberts, Robert Barto (ECG), Jonathan Cagle, Derek Dixon, Lee Durban (COJ), Kelly Jones, Chris

Peter Borenstein chaired the meeting.

**I. Introduction & Adoption of Minutes**

Peter Borenstein moved for the adoption of the notes for the BPAC meeting that was held on August 3, 2023. Lauren Rushing seconded the motion. The vote to approve the meeting notes was unanimous.

**II. Presentation - Parking Craters, Bill Delaney, The Jaxon Magazine, City Council Liaison for Mayor Donna Deegan**

The presentation focused on the impact of parking craters on pedestrian and bicycle viability downtown.

A parking crater is a depression in an urban area formed by the absence of buildings where car storage has usurped land that should be used for buildings. Local government policy often creates this issue because parking minimums and pricing are often based on assumptions rather than local data. These assumptions often don't account for bike, ped, and transit use.

Parking has negative impacts on the pedestrian environment by impacting the pedestrian "walkshed" – the distance people are willing to walk from parking. About ¼ mile is the ideal walkshed, about 5 minutes, but this can be extended or shortened by the way we design our built environment. Bill showed several pictures that gave examples in Jacksonville of parking lots that create an unwelcoming environment for people walking downtown as compared to places like 5 Points in Riverside.

One issue that perpetuates this problem is that there still seems to be a myth that downtowns can be successful without adequate parking, but there are already 44,000 parking spots in downtown Jacksonville according to the Downtown Investment Authority. Larger cities with thriving downtowns like Nashville and Miami have fewer parking spots than Jacksonville. If anything, there seems to be an inverse relationship between parking and vibrancy and walkability.

Another issue is the strategy of "Godzilla" urban development or "urban renewal" which says that old buildings are not adequate for modern public needs, so we tear them down. This mentality had a negative impact in many Jacksonville neighborhoods such as LaVilla and downtown. In the recent past, we demolished the Landing, the courthouse, and several other public buildings.

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Bill showed maps of empty surface lots and vacant properties in downtown Jacksonville, which encompasses more than half of the area of downtown. The issue is elevated by a number of “undeveloped” parks that now exist in place of demolished buildings and existing parking garages. More than half of the existing parking garages have no retail and provide parking only. This all despite the fact that downtown is one of the areas in the city that has an exception to parking minimums. Various parking management methods, such as how late garages are open and how they are priced and paid for, can impact whether a development or business may choose to provide its own parking despite the absence of city parking requirements. Garages often have separate contracts for management and use.

Bill offers a number of easy solutions starting with the “Three C’s”: Clustering of Complementing Uses in a Compact setting. Other solutions included:

- Prioritizing key areas/streets
- Implement complete streets with bike/ped infrastructure
- Making retail improvements

Peter Borenstein mentions that the city should stop paying to help development build parking garages and make people feel the real cost of parking when they come downtown. Wiatt Bowers countered that this is sometimes a trade-off. For example, the Vystar parking garage was built to get Vystar downtown. If you don’t have adequate multimodal alternatives, then people need a way to come downtown or they just won’t.

It is also important to have good transit connections to downtown. Right now the courthouse gives out parking waivers or shuttles potential jurors to its location. A city-run shuttle or improved bus system would bring people downtown naturally.

There was a discussion about the Skyway which was originally meant to extend further and connect more areas than it ever has. Density downtown is the most important factor in the success of a system like this. Not many cities implemented skyways, but Miami’s has been quite successful because they integrated it with other transit and have invested in maintenance of the system.

## **II. Presentation – Tactical Urbanism: The Memphis Experience, Daniel Ashworth, Jr., AICP, RLA, ASLA, Planner & Senior Landscape Architect, England-Thims & Miller, Inc.**

Daniel is a planner and landscape architect that has lived and worked in several states across the United States and as such brings a unique perspective to planning in Jacksonville. Daniel worked for Alta Planning in Memphis Tennessee.

Retrofitting how we’ve designed our cities is an expensive undertaking. Not every city needs the “Mercedes” treatment to get the Complete Street results we want. Memphis uses tactical urbanism to improve it’s streets.

The city has implemented a series of tactical urbanism, quick-build projects around the city over the last several years. Daniel worked on several of these projects. The program was initiated by strong

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leadership out of the Mayor's office, who created a new Department of Innovation. The project was implemented in partnership with a local district - Memphis Medical District Collaborative – who leveraged funds from hospitals and applied for grants.

One of the projects that Daniel worked on was in the Broad Avenue Arts District where there was a thriving artist community. The art community joined the city in painting a bike lane on the street which was later turned into a permanent two-way bicycle facility.

The Plan for the Medical District looked at 50 different intersections for quick-build improvements and was followed by designs for construction. Many of the improvements were made through the repaving schedule. Several of the improvements made were narrowing turning radii, adding bike lanes, and putting in reverse angle parking. Tactical urbanism allowed for testing of different materials which helps particularly when identifying which materials are easiest to maintain for longer periods of time. Some of these projects have been out there for 3+ years. The community, through a CDC, is responsible for maintenance. Manassas Street was another project that took a 5-lane street in a historic district of Memphis and redesigned it as a 3-lane street with separated bike lanes. The series also implemented the first tactical protected intersection in the state.

#### **IV. Wrap-up / Announcements / Next Meeting Info**

- COJ will celebrate Parking Day tomorrow (9/14) on three streets in San Marco which will be transformed into parklets from 10AM-4PM.
- Lem Turner Trout River Bridge Public Hearings will be held virtually Tuesday Oct. 3 at 5:30PM or in-person on Thurs Oct 5.
- Next BPAC meeting will be held on October 5<sup>th</sup>.

#### **V. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM