

## Trinity Center City Plan

### What does Sustainability mean to Trinity?

Sustainability is more than just protecting the environment and using compact fluorescent light bulbs. And it goes beyond making sure that we can afford to maintain infrastructure that is being installed today. In fact, true sustainability is about ensuring the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development). It is a holistic approach to community growth and development that helps us better understand why some communities prosper over time while others have a growth spurt then wither on the vine.

Trinity is in a unique position to establish a different type of growth mantra. By establishing a unique and differentiating look and feel to our community we can help to ensure our long-term viability, keep taxes reasonable, and be a place that people want to live in for generations. And we can do this by balancing the necessities of the environment with our urban needs.



For example, the image of the Dushanbe Tea House in Boulder, CO is by most standards an economically and socially successful space with its adjacency to the rushing waters of Boulder Creek in downtown. But, by today's one-sized-fits-all environmental regulations, the lack of a sizeable buffer to the creek would make this scene illegal to replicate.

This doesn't mean to suggest that environmental regulations should be disregarded in the name of economics. On the contrary, all planning should strive for the highest level of achievement for each element and then calibrate to adjust for various scenarios. What isn't shown in the image of Boulder is that the City has aggressively protected the headwaters and the entirety of the channel to the point that it enters and as it leaves the downtown area (see image on lower right). This permits the creek to receive some level of pollution in the short stretch it travels through the urban environment because it is otherwise pristine on either end.



Why do we want to develop places like the Dushanbe Tea House and other compact, walkable downtowns? Because places that are energetic and full of activity are also efficient. They require fewer miles of sewer line, less electricity, and less gasoline to accomplish many tasks than the typically shopping center built miles from our homes will offer. In truth, many shopping centers often fall prey to the next, newer shopping center that attracts tenants away. This is evidenced by the fact that there are more than 140,000 stores across the United States that are currently

vacant. They fell victims to the newer store which stole their market away and were then hit with a weakened economy. But don't just blame the economy – even in the best of times the issue of big box blight was already running rampant. We have miles and miles of empty highway strips throughout the Triad.



But that is just a piece of our sustainable puzzle. Another key element is that we are able to hold taxes low for our residents and still be able to provide the services needed to maintain or improve our quality of life. To do this we need to diversify our tax base beyond our current near-exclusive reliance on residential property taxes. We will need commercial tax base to provide not only higher tax revenues with less service demands but we also need to capture all of the sales tax dollars that are currently leaving our borders. We all have to head to Thomasville, Archdale, High Point or beyond to get our groceries, buy clothes and sometimes even to get gas. And each one of those trips requires a long car ride that uses gas.

A sustainable community is therefore defined as one that maintains the integrity its natural resources over the long term, promotes a prosperous economy, and hosts a vibrant, equitable society. The Shell Corporation also defines this as “People – Planet – Profit”. Combined, this is called the Triple Bottom Line. Many local governments have considered each of the Triple-Bottom-Line elements in planning efforts – environmental, social, and economic capital, but they rarely are considered as a comprehensive approach to overall community sustainability.

We have an opportunity to change that as we embark on planning the center of Trinity. We can plan for environmental sensitivity and economic prosperity simultaneously. They need not be mutually exclusive. And, in the process we can create a center that is memorable and worth caring for - a place that will be unique - a place that will be our center. Our goal is complete sustainability, and our children and grandchildren will be thankful for our contributions to their future.

Come out and help us prepare a sustainable future for Trinity.

Key Dates:

Kickoff Public Workshop – Trinity City Hall  
Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm

Public Design Charrette – Trinity City Hall  
Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>

Closing Charrette Presentation – Trinity City Hall  
Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm

