

MILLENNIAL

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THE 'M' FACTOR

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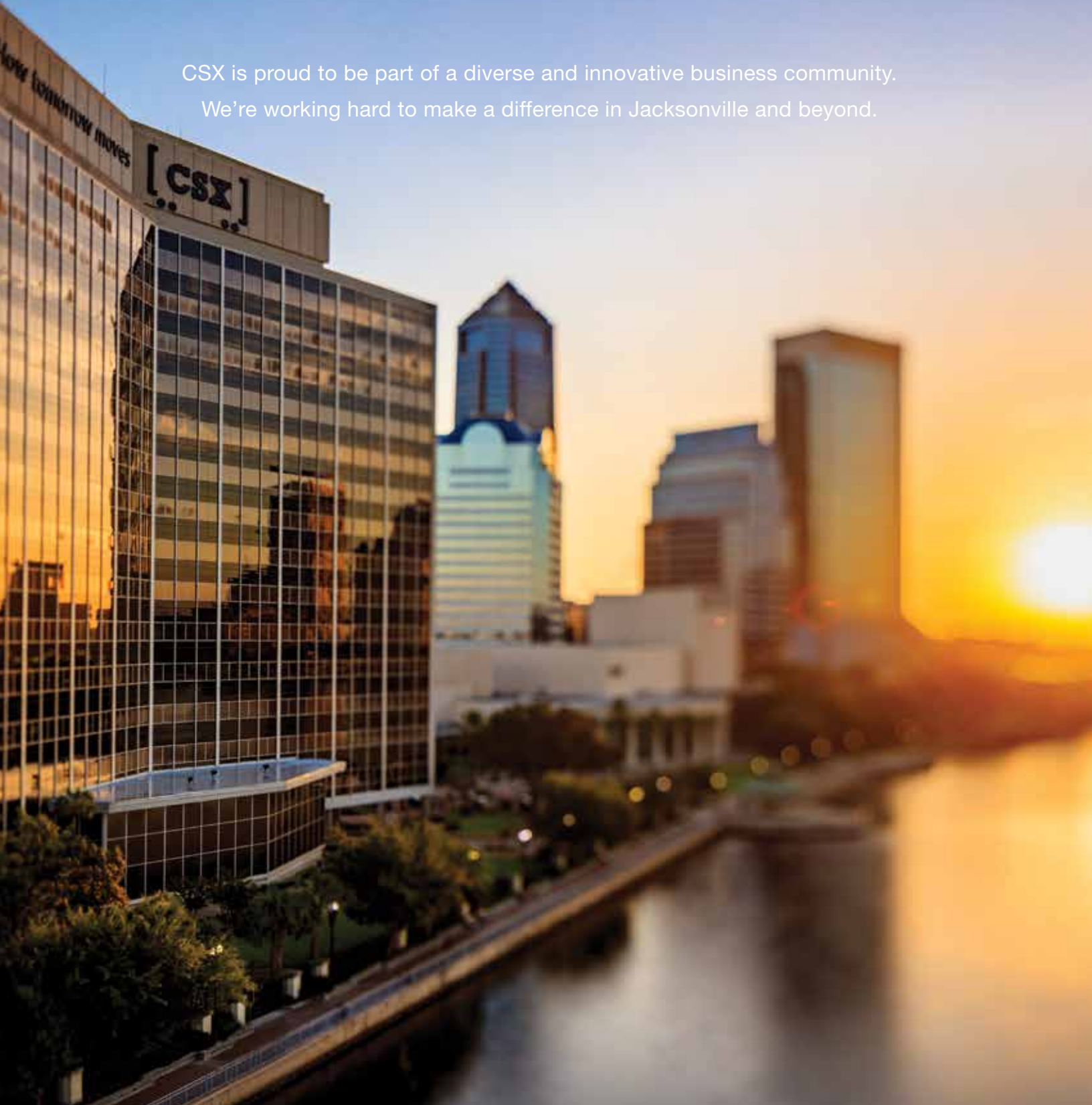
CAN OUR DOWNTOWN BE A
MAGNET FOR MILLENNIALS?

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70 PORTS 23 STATES 1 HOMETOWN

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A smiling man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue VyStar button-down shirt and a striped tie. He has a name tag that says "VyStar" and "CHARLES ROGERS".

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Ilesha Jackson and Matthew Clark are two of the millennials who participated in a J Magazine round-table discussion about the future of Downtown Jacksonville on the rooftop of Cowford Chophouse. // SEE PAGE 26

STORY BY FRANK DENTON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB SELF

J MAGAZINE

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE REBIRTH
OF JACKSONVILLE'S DOWNTOWN

GREATER TOGETHER



LOOK FOR J MAGAZINE AT SELECT RETAIL OUTLETS



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DOWNTOWN
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PUBLISHER

Mark Nusbaum

GENERAL MANAGER/ CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Jeff Davis

EDITOR

Frank Denton

ADVERTISING

Liz Borten

DISTRIBUTION

Amy McSwain

WRITERS

Michael P. Clark

Roger Brown

MAILING ADDRESS

J Magazine, 1 Riverside Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32202

CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:

(904) 359-4236, frankmdenton@gmail.com

ADVERTISING:

(904) 359-4099, lborten@jacksonville.com

DISTRIBUTION/REPRINTS:

(904) 359-4459, amcswain@jacksonville.com

WE WELCOME SUGGESTIONS FOR STORIES.
PLEASE SEND IDEAS OR INQUIRIES TO:

frankmdenton@gmail.com

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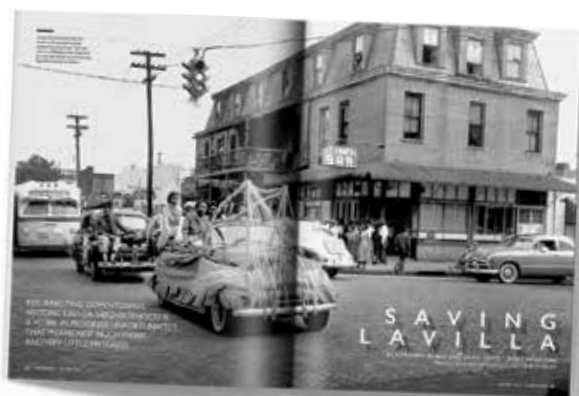
THE LEADERSHIP ISSUE

WE WAITED AN ENTIRE YEAR AFTER our inaugural issue to take a look at what is perhaps the single most important component in revitalizing Downtown: leadership. A year of observation and evaluation of Downtown leaders — from private investors to local elected officials — proved to be a hot and sometimes contentious topic.

RE: WHO IS LEADING? *Downtown is at a critical stage. Building on the momentum of the past year demands leaders who lead.*

“While some improvements have happened, they aren’t happening fast enough. The people leading the Downtown effort need to be held accountable for slow progress.”

KAREN DAWSON



RE: SAVING LAVILLA: *Resurrecting Downtown’s historic neighborhood is a work in progress. That means very not much work and very little progress.*

“Money to rehabilitate will solve it. Taxpayer money will have to be used.”

ALAN GORDON

“That area is a lost cause. Don’t waste one dime on it.”

GEORGE RIZK

“We need to do everything possible to preserve our history.”

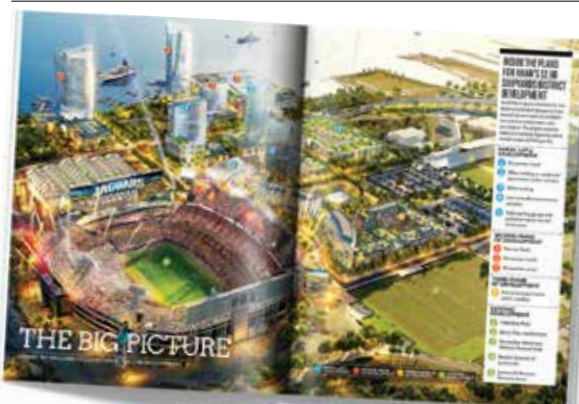
JACKIE TURNBILL

“Don’t spend a dime of taxpayer money. Let private dollars fix it.”

RICHARD SNODGRASS

“When driving to and from the Times-Union Center ... we passed blocks and blocks that were almost empty of buildings and people. So this was the lively center of African-American life and of other marginalized groups. I hope some of your ideas can be realized, but it appears that it would take significant investment.”

PAT DEWITT



RE: ‘NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT’: *Inside Khan’s massive \$2.5B Downtown development.*

“If the city will get a return on their incentive investments and tax deferments, do it.”

JIM WEBB

“NOPE! Will never happen ... talk, talk, talk ... how many of these Downtown proposals have been presented over the last 25 years and nothing happened?”

TUCKER CLEVELAND

“Make Jacksonville Great Again.”

CEDRIC O’NEAL

“Shad Khan’s \$2.5 billion Shipyard District development is exactly what Jacksonville needs to spur economic growth and avoid congestion problems of other regional cities.”

TYLER GRANT

“Give [Shad Khan] the entire city for pennies on the dollar.”

RALPH JONES JR.

“It makes sense to convert the Landing to a classy urban park and shift the dining and entertainment

away from 2 Independent Drive and toward the stadium area where there’s parking and accommodations for large crowds. Shad wants that area to be a destination Downtown something the Landing could not sustain.”

RONALD PAUL MILLER

“Too much money is being spent on the football stadium. The money would be better spent on public education and better pay for the educators (teachers). Lenny Curry is following the Trump line (as is Rick Scott) rewarding positions to his donors even though they are not qualified for these positions. If Shad Khan, planners & builders want to invest in Jax, let them use their own money and let us use taxpayers money for improving our public schools, gun control, better roadways and safer pedestrian areas. We also need better policing.”

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RIVERTOWN

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The First Coast's New Hometown™

Authenticity crucial piece of Downtown millennial puzzle



**FRANK
DENTON**

When I tell people why I like living in Jacksonville, I end up saying it is a *real* city with diversity, seasons, a Southern tone and a sense of place built on 450 years of rich and fascinating history.

This issue of J looks at Downtown revitalization through the lens of millennials, and one standard they value in choosing a city is *authenticity* — the opposite of what some call “generic,” cookie-cutter buildings and chain stores.

You don’t have to be a millennial to value living in a town with real roots — generations of diverse human experience and endeavor and epic events. But this sense of place is not part of our civic consciousness.

For some reason — perhaps race, since much of our history is African-American — most Jacksonvilleans do not recognize, much less celebrate, their city’s heritage. You’d think our history started with the Great Fire of 1901.

The “visioning” effort called truJax studied what it called “Jacksonville’s unclear sense of self and vague identity” and concluded our essence, our DNA, is this: “Jacksonville is the water life center of America.” Our abundant water spawned the “life” part, the human experience the geography attracted.

After the native Timucua, this area was fought over by the French, the British and the Spanish. Confederates and Yankees took turns occupying Jacksonville.

You probably already know about the historical importance of LaVilla as the “Harlem of the South” and an important Chitlin’ Circuit stop for black entertainers, but our rich history well predates that.

Downtown now unfortunately is largely isolated from the St. Johns, but next time you’re on a Riverwalk, pause for a moment and think about the amazing events that happened right there on our river.

In 1806, Zephaniah Kingsley, slave trader and plantation owner, sailed up the St. Johns, through what was then called Cowford, with some African slaves he had bought — including 13-year-old Anta Majigeen Ndiaye, whom he had just impregnated after her arrival on a

slave ship from what is now Senegal.

Somehow recognizing her abilities, Kingsley put her in charge of his house and other slaves. He came to present “Anna” as his wife, had three more children with her and freed them all in 1811. He also gave Anna her own house and slaves across the river in Mandarin.

In 1812, “Patriot” raiders from the U.S. swarmed the area, looking for things to steal and freed blacks to kidnap and sell up north. To protect her family, Anna loaded her children and some of her slaves onto a Spanish gunboat that had sailed up the St. Johns from near Cowford.

With scores of bandits lurking in the woods, she canoed back to the fortified Kingsley house and torched it to prevent its use as a sanctuary then did the same with her own house before escaping on the gunboat.

She was 20 years old.

Anna Kingsley became matriarch of a community of freed blacks across the river from what is now Downtown. Daniel L. Schafer wrote in his remarkable biography.

She fled during the Civil War, so she missed the last voyage of the *Maple Leaf*, the side-wheel steamboat that led the convoy of Union ships that, in 1864, chased out the Confederates and began the fourth Union occupation of Jacksonville.

Two months later, the *Maple Leaf*, returning from Palatka, laden with the equipment and personal belongings of three Union regiments, struck a Confederate mine just off Mandarin, near where the Kingsleys’ houses had been. Most of those aboard survived, but the boat and its cargo sank in 20 feet of water.

About 3,000 artifacts were salvaged in 1989, but the vast majority are still there, awaiting retrieval as a cultural treasure.

“The wreck of the *Maple Leaf* is unsurpassed as a source for Civil War material culture,” wrote Edwin C. Bearss, National Park Service chief historian emeritus. “The site combines one of the largest ships sunk during the war, carrying all the worldly goods of more than a thousand soldiers, with a river bottom environment that perfectly preserved the ship and cargo. It is the most important repository of Civil War artifacts ever found and probably will remain so.”

Jacksonville is not generic.

You can experience some *Maple Leaf* artifacts at the Museum of Science and History and the Mandarin Museum and visit the remaining Kingsley Plantation on Fort George Island, but an authentic city that embraces its history should help salvage the other *Maple Leaf* artifacts and display a proper amount in an expanded MOSH.

FRANK DENTON, who was editor of *The Florida Times-Union* in 2008-16, is editor of J. He lives in Riverside.

EMAIL

frankmdenton@gmail.com

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BRIEFING

By The Florida Times-Union Editorial Board

DIGITS

8,100,000

The estimated total population of millennials in the U.S. when the generation is expected to peak in 2036 according to the Pew Research Center. For comparison, the Census Bureau projects the Gen X population will peak at 65.8 million this year, while baby boomers peaked at 78.8 million in 1999. (PAGE 18)

HITS & MISSES



Thumbs up for **AUN-DRA WALLACE** who has been the brains behind much of the development Downtown. He was the first CEO of the DIA and is moving to head the JaxUSA Partnership for the JAX Chamber. Developing Downtown always is more complex than taking a raw piece of land in the suburbs. Wallace will be a hard act to follow.



Thumbs up to the **JAGUARS'** soaring ticket sales for the 2018 season, a clear byproduct of coming up just a few minutes short of making the Super Bowl last season.



Thumbs down to Downtown still lacking the strong weeknight **"HAPPY HOUR"** culture that's in cities with great downtowns. Too many people still rush out of Downtown Jacksonville once the clock hits 5 p.m.



Thumbs up — way up — to **VYSTAR CREDIT UNION** for purchasing the SunTrust Tower and planning to eventually move its headquarters to the eye-catching Downtown building.



Thumbs down to **LOITERING** being the No. 1 complaint raised by those who either work or live Downtown, according to a survey done by Downtown Vision Inc.



Thumbs up to the huge uptick in plans to build **AFFORDABLE HOUSING** Downtown, like a recent proposal to construct more than 100 units for seniors on Ashley and Newman streets.



Thumbs up to **FRONTIER AIRLINES** for adding six cities to its non-stop route schedule to and from Jacksonville International Airport. The easier it is for more and more people to come to Jacksonville, the more likely they will spend time in our Downtown, a mere 20-minute drive from the airport.



Thumbs down to **AUTO BURGLARIES** remaining a pesky Downtown problem, largely because people don't lock their cars or leave valuables in sight. A little common sense will reduce a lot of these burglaries.



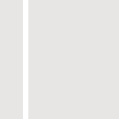
Thumbs down for the fact that Jacksonville is losing hundreds of thousands of dollars in **BED TAX** income. The City Council Auditor estimates that the city could be passing up nearly \$400,000 a year because of multiple failures involving the room-sharing industry typified by Airbnb.



Thumbs down to the **UNSIGHTLY BLIGHT** near Confederate Park, a Downtown recreation site that's still a popular place for area residents.



Thumbs up to **CITY HALL's** latest vision for transforming The Jacksonville Landing into a park-like setting on the waterfront with a number of shops and restaurants a short distance away.



Thumbs down to the end, for now, of a program that enabled the St. Johns Riverkeeper to take lower-income Duval County students on river taxi trips to learn about the St. Johns River, which flows majestically through Downtown. The school district cut the program for budget reasons, but the Riverkeeper hopes to find community funding to keep it going.

Thumbs up to the successful opening of the new **GREYHOUND BUS TERMINAL** in LaVilla, the first phase of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority's regional transportation center project.

FIRST PERSON

"What are we waiting for, people?"

EMILY MOODY-ROSETE, DOWNTOWN MILLENNIAL BUSINESS OWNER (PAGE 26)

J MAGAZINE'S PROGRESS REPORT



AMBASSADOR HOTEL

A St. Augustine development firm plans to restore the historic hotel and, on the rest of the block, build 200 apartments and retail space.

STATUS: The developers are seeking permits and hope to begin work this fall with completion within two years.



UNF DOWNTOWN CAMPUS

UNF is planning a Center for Entrepreneurship of the Coggin College of Business with about 25 faculty and staff and 150 students on two floors of the Barnett Bank building.

STATUS: UNF got a \$380,000 loan from the DIA to put with donated money for the project. Classes are to start in January.



LAURA STREET TRIO & BARNETT BANK BUILDING

A \$79 million renovation of the iconic buildings into residences, offices, a hotel and commercial/retail uses.

STATUS: Barnett is under renovation that should be complete in the spring. Next is construction of the nearby parking deck. Then the Trio renovation will begin in 2019.



HYATT PLACE HOTEL

Main Street LLC, developer of the parking garage at Hogan and Independent Drive, exercised an option to acquire the parcel at Hogan and Water and build a hotel with 100-150 rooms.

STATUS: Going through design approval with the Downtown Development Review Board.



FSCJ CAFE & STUDENT HOUSING

This project to give FSCJ a presence Downtown includes 20 apartments for 58 students and a café as part of the school's culinary program.

STATUS: Café 20W is open for breakfast and lunch weekdays as a student-served farm-to-table, counter-service restaurant. The housing is under construction and should be open by fall.



MCCOYS CREEK

The city's capital improvement plan calls for \$8 million over four years to restore and improve 2.8 miles of the creek ending at the St. Johns with greenways, kayak launches and a new pedestrian bridge.

STATUS: Groundwork Jacksonville has cobbled together almost \$200,000 to begin a "natural channel" design for the jewel in the Emerald Necklace.



JACKSONVILLE LANDING

The city owns the site but has leased it long-term to Sleiman Enterprises, and the two sides have long sparred over its value to Downtown and its future.

STATUS: Both have sued, and court awaits. Meanwhile, the city sent an eviction letter and released a rendering showing the orange-roofed building demolished and the site turned into a major riverfront park.



RIVERSIDE



JONES BROTHERS FURNITURE

An \$11 million adaptive reuse of the historic building would bring 28 apartments plus 10,247 square feet of retail space and 1,040 square feet of office space to a block near City Hall.
STATUS: The DIA has approved almost \$2.4 million in city assistance, and the project is in for a preliminary design review.

SPRINGFIELD



CATHEDRAL DISTRICT

St. John's Cathedral created a master plan to build a diverse community of people who want to live, work and play Downtown, including a school and retail.
STATUS: Cathedral District Jacksonville bought the Community Connections property and selected Vestcor as its developer. Next: the design phase.



PARKING LOT J/ SHIPYARDS/METRO PARK PROJECT

Shad Khan announced that his proposed Shipyard/Metro Park development will begin on Lot J next to the stadium with an entertainment complex, two office towers and a hotel that could have some residences.
STATUS: Iguana Investments has partnered with the Cordish Companies of Baltimore, and, if plans and funding are worked out, construction should begin in spring 2019.



MATHERS SOCIAL GATHERING

This "sophisticated yet comfortable" Orlando speakeasy, offering drinks and small plates, plans to expand to 120 E. Forsyth St. adjacent to the Florida Theatre.
STATUS: Orlando operator Team Marketing Group won a bidding war for the building and told the Daily Record the venue should open by the end of the year.

SPORTS COMPLEX



USS ADAMS

The Adams, a retired U.S. Navy guided-missile destroyer, is to be anchored as a museum ship in the St. Johns off Berkman II, connected to the proposed family entertainment center.
STATUS: The ship is still stuck at the Philadelphia Navy Yard as the Navy has been dragging its feet at releasing it. U.S. Rep. John Rutherford pushed top Navy leadership, and barring last-minute snafus, the Adams should be here by Veterans Day.



BERKMAN PLAZA II

The 23-story riverfront structure has been a major Downtown eyesore since it collapsed under construction in 2007.
STATUS: Sold! The new owners plan a \$150 million 312-room hotel, 500-car parking garage and a "family entertainment center."

ST. JOHNS RIVER



THE DISTRICT

Peter Rummell's community concept will have up to 1,170 residences, 200 Marriott hotel rooms and 285,500 square feet of office space with a marina and public spaces along an extended Southbank Riverwalk.
STATUS: City Council approved. Elements, the developer, closed on the property, and construction is expected to start "as quickly as possible."

NEW APARTMENTS

Under construction/approved/ seeking approval

- 1 Lofts at Monroe
- 2 Lofts at Jefferson Station
- 3 SoBa
- 4 Houston Street Manor
- 5 Broadstone River House
- 6 Vista Brooklyn
- 7 Southbank Apartment Ventures
- 8 Ashley Square



OLD CITY HALL & COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The city budget includes \$8 million to raze the empty buildings and clear the site for a possible new convention center.
STATUS: Environmental Holdings Group outbid three other firms on the \$8 million demolition. Meanwhile, the DIA issued an RFP to develop a new convention center, hotel and parking garage on the site.

DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE

TRACKING DEVELOPMENT IN THE URBAN CORE

SAN MARCO

RATING DOWNTOWN

By The Florida Times-Union Editorial Board

Downtown apartment projects racing to meet sizable demand



PUBLIC SAFETY

Serious crime remains so low this should be an 8. Hemming Park has been cleared of unsavory behavior. The shooting at the Landing could have happened anywhere. Perceptions linger.

PREVIOUS: 5



LEADERSHIP

In the last issue, we dinged city leaders for getting embroiled in politics, but we have regained momentum with the redevelopment of Berkman II, competing convention center plans and more.

PREVIOUS: 6



HOUSING

Apartment buildings proliferate all around and all over Downtown — credibly planned, under construction or open and occupied. They add up to the critical mass of 10,000 people we need.

PREVIOUS: 5



INVESTMENT

We were told cautious investors were ready to jump in, and they're taking the plunge: New money is coming for Berkman II, the Ambassador Hotel, the Hyatt Place Hotel and Jones Brothers.

PREVIOUS: 4



DEVELOPMENT

A major city's Downtown shouldn't have all those vacant buildings. Surrounding progress makes them stand out in their ugliness even more. We say again: City leaders must take the initiative.

PREVIOUS: 3



EVENTS & CULTURE

Top acts still fill Downtown venues. We're grading this up a notch based on the credible promises of Lot J, the USS Adams and the family entertainment center planned for the Berkman II rebirth.

PREVIOUS: 5



TRANSPORTATION

JTA is actively seeking \$25 million from the feds for the first phase of its Ultimate Urban Circulator connecting the Sports Complex to the new transportation center, supercharging everything in between.

PREVIOUS: 3



CONVENTION CENTER

The city has money budgeted to raze the old City Hall and Courthouse site, and proposals are on the table. Meanwhile, Shad Khan has proposed one for his Shipyards project. Whichever prevails, Downtown wins.

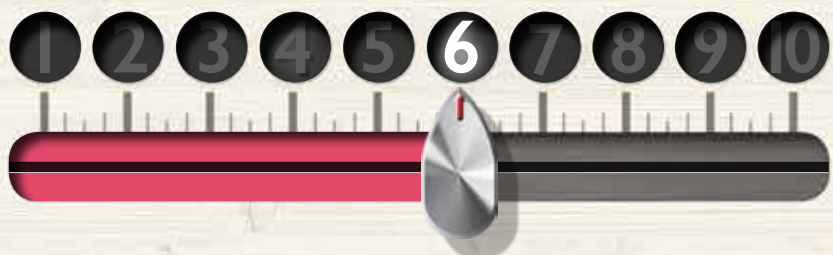
PREVIOUS: 3

OVERALL RATING

Some of those grand plans won't pan out, but most certainly will and some already have, as evidenced by cranes and construction walls.

We have traction. Now we need liftoff!

PREVIOUS: 4





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J PARTNER PROFILE

By Barbara Gavan

KELLY FLANAGAN, senior vice president and chief financial officer of the Jacksonville Jaguars

Jacksonville Jaguars

Jaguars CFO envisions thriving Downtown entertainment district to elevate Jacksonville

Kelly Flanagan has come full circle. “I grew up in Jacksonville, watching the early Jaguars, and now I work for them,” said Jaguars’ Vice President and CFO. “I have a great deal of respect for Mark Lamping and see Shad Khan as a visionary leader our city is lucky to have.”

Flanagan agrees wholeheartedly with Khan’s involvement in creating a vibrant Downtown Jacksonville.

“Downtown needs reasons to be a destination,” she said. “Businesses bring people in from Monday through Friday, but we need sports, entertainment, the arts to draw people in the evenings and on weekends.”

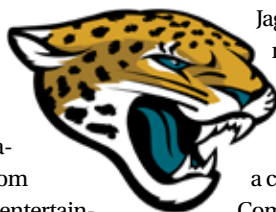
The Jaguars bring fans to TIAA Bank Field during football season but also are increasing the number of stadium concerts and other events, such as the Florida-Georgia game and TaxSlayer Bowl.

“The Jaguars’ affiliate Bold Events is filling Daily’s Place with music on a weekly basis,” Flanagan said. “It’s

great that, on a Tuesday night, people come Downtown for a concert. Once there, they need places to eat and drink. The restaurant scene is evolving; when people come, they want bars, restaurants and shops.”

Presently, Iguana Investments, an affiliate of the Jaguars, is teaming with the Cordish Companies, a nationally recognized firm specializing in downtown development, for a \$2.5 billion mixed-use district in the sports complex on Lot J. Iguana also announced a collaboration with DeBartolo Development Company and Rimrock Devlin Development on the construction of a riverfront convention center and hotel as the first phase of its Shipyards project.

“We’re working with industry experts to bring the best possible mix of content and real estate development to Downtown,” Flanagan said. “We’ve studied successful mixed-used entertainment projects around sports venues in cities like Baltimore and St. Louis. Now, it’s Jacksonville’s turn.”



QUICK TAKES

DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE HAS IDEAL LOCATION

“You couldn’t find a Downtown with a better geographical location than Jacksonville’s. Interstate 95 creates a critical access point for Downtown, and that is a tremendous opportunity to showcase the things that are worth stopping for.”

ST. JOHNS RIVER IS UNIQUE DESTINATION

“We have to capture the natural beauty of our river and then build on it. Downtown entertainment could easily be centered around the river. You can even access the Downtown area by water.”

FOUNDATION ALREADY IN PLACE

“The foundation for a great Downtown is already here, we just have to build on it and add content. We need retail, restaurants, arts and theater venues, hotels and homes – the more, the better.”

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MILLENNIALS

While Jacksonville has done a good job attracting millennials, getting them to live, work and play Downtown has been a much bigger challenge

BY MATTHEW T. CORRIGAN // FOR J MAGAZINE



WANTED



ILLUSTRATION
BY J MAGAZINE

Millennials,

the largest living adult generation in the United States with a population of more than 79.8 million, will determine the economic and cultural future of the nation. If Downtown Jacksonville is to thrive over the next 30 years, millennials will have to lead the way.

Understanding this demographic group and how it connects to Downtown development is a priority of policymakers, businesses and community activists.

What is a millennial?

Definitions vary. Most researchers and observers put the millennial generation into the group of American adults who are between 18 and 38 years of age. The idea behind using the word millennial is it reflects citizens who spent most of their adult lives in the year 2000 and beyond. Of course, there are limits on grouping such a wide swath of population because of age similarities. Among other racial, social and economic differences, the tragedy of 9/11, the Great Recession and the technological revolution of the early 2000s have helped to shape the perceptions and demands of this age group.

The Pew Research Center has been studying millennials for the last decade and now declares “millennials” as a larger generation than Generation X or Baby Boomers. In general, this group is much

less religious, much less likely to get married and politically different than their older counterparts.

Millennials tend to be more liberal/moderate when compared to other American adults. However, they are much less likely to vote with only about 50 percent of eligible millennials casting a vote in the 2016 presidential race, compared to 70 percent of senior citizens. If millennials seek to have a voice in public policy issues like Downtown development, they will have to become more politically engaged.

National marketers have tried to adjust to this emerging adult population. Jim Kreyenhagen of the Forbes Magazine Communications Council has targeted his electronic Bill Pay company directly at the millennial generation. Kreyenhagen wrote for Forbes that millennials “value flexibility, accessibility and usefulness.” He also found this generation values “word of mouth” through social



35%

of people under 35 owned their own homes in 2016, compared to 41 percent in 1982.



27%

of 18-34-year-olds lived with a spouse in 2016 compared to 57 percent being married in the mid 1970s.



50%

of eligible millennials cast a vote in the 2016 presidential race, compared to 70 percent of senior citizens.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center

THE CITIES WHERE MILLENNIALS ARE MOVING

Making up nearly 80 million Americans, millennials are expected to surpass baby boomers in 2019. That makes millennials a coveted generation for cities looking to bolster their workforce and tax base. Here is a look at the 10 cities leading the way in attracting millennials:

1

SEATTLE, WA

Total population: 724,745
Median rent price: \$2,700

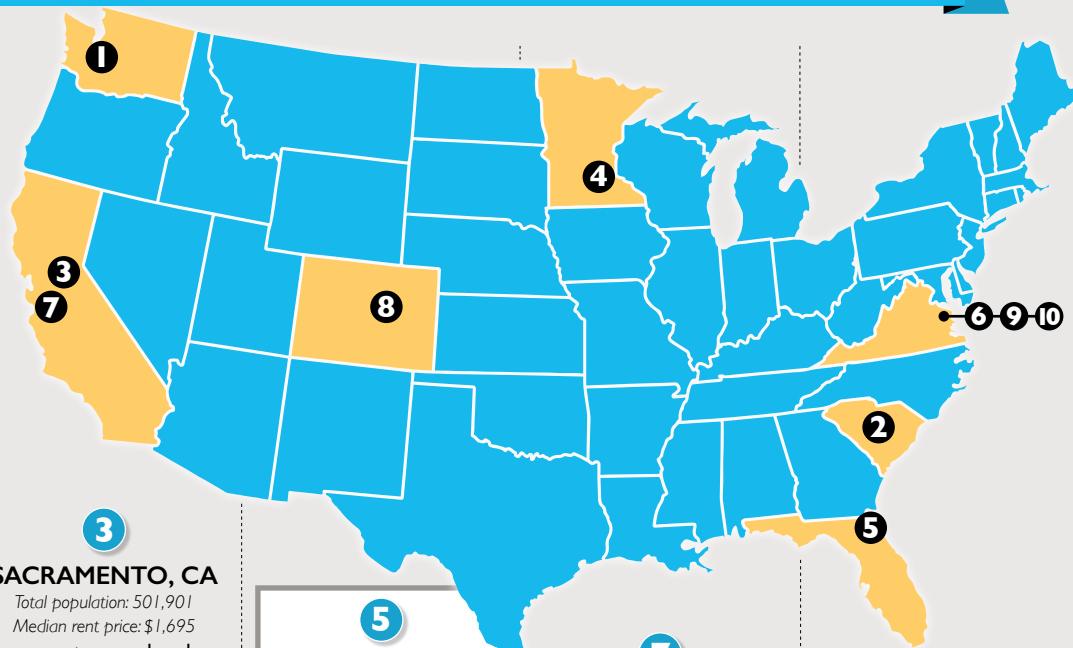
Nearly 30,000 millennials moved to Seattle while just over 22,000 moved out of the city. This left the city with a net influx of 7,300. That is a large number when you consider Seattle is a city of only around 700,000. It's no surprise that millennials are flocking to The Emerald City. It is one of the best cities for young professionals, and Washington has no income tax.

2

COLUMBIA, S.C.

Total population: 724,745
Median rent price: \$2,700

In total, Columbia received 6,900 more millennials than it lost. A large chunk of the millennials coming to Columbia are out-of-staters. In total, around 8,000 millennials came to Columbia from outside of South Carolina, while 3,700 millennials decided to leave Columbia for another state.



3

SACRAMENTO, CA

Total population: 501,901
Median rent price: \$1,695

Sacramento was already a popular spot for millennials in California. Around 10,000 millennials came to Sacramento from elsewhere in California while only 5,600 left Sacramento for another part of California. After tallying up millennials immigrating and emigrating, data shows that Sacramento received about 6,700 millennials.

4

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

Total population: 422,331
Median rent price: \$1,795

In total, 21,758 millennials decided to make Minneapolis their new home, and 15,229 decided to pursue opportunities elsewhere. Minneapolis was especially popular for millennials coming from other parts of Minnesota. Over 12,000 Minnesotan millennials moved to Minneapolis. It fell short of Columbia by only

5

JACKSONVILLE

Total population: 892,062
Median rent price: \$1,199

Jacksonville was separated from 4th place Minneapolis by fewer than 200 millennials. It isn't hard to see why this city is a millennial hot spot. Florida has no income tax, and Jacksonville residents are some of the least taxed in the country. For millennials who want to live in a low-tax environment and get started on retirement, Jacksonville's tough to beat.

6

NEWPORT NEWS, VA

Total population: 179,388
Median rent price: \$1,200

Newport News is the second-smallest city in this top 10. This city saw its number of millennials increase by 5,667, thanks to 11,664 immigrating millennials and 5,997 emigrating millennials. If we were ranking millennials' mobility relative to population, Newport News would rank even higher as net influx of millennials is equal to over 3% of the city's population.

7

SAN JOSE, CA

Total population: 1,035,317
Median rent price: \$3,390

Like in Sacramento, you were more likely to see a millennial moving to San Jose from within the state than from outside of it. Of the 20,000 millennials who moved to San Jose, nearly 13,000 came from within California.

8

DENVER, CO

Total population: 704,621
Median rent price: \$2,195

Once again Denver is a popular spot for millennials, moving up to eighth place from ninth last year. Last year, we estimated that Denver saw a net influx of over 4,200 millennials while this year we estimate this city received 5,100 more millennials than it lost. Denver is a very mobile city with over 76,000 millennials coming or going.

9

NORFOLK, VA

Total population: 244,703
Median rent price: \$1,350

The list ends with two Virginia cities. Up first is Norfolk, a top five finisher last year. Norfolk saw a net influx of just under 5,000 millennials, which is a decrease from last year. In total, 18,603 millennials moved to Norfolk while 13,606 decided to leave.

10

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA

Total population: 450,435
Median rent price: \$1,450

It was a tight race between the 9th, 10th and 11th place cities. Virginia Beach fell short of Norfolk by 13 millennials and beat 11th-placed Charlotte by 57. It was residents coming primarily from out of state that pushed Virginia Beach into 10th. In total, nearly 12,000 of the 19,100 millennials who immigrated to Virginia Beach came from out of state.

Net migration data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau and reflects the number of people between the ages of 20 and 34 who moved to the state in 2016 minus the number who moved out of the state.

SOURCE: SmartAsset

"Recent college graduates' choosing to move to Jacksonville and Downtown Jacksonville over a Charlotte, Atlanta, Miami, Orlando, Tampa, etc., is a top-priority goal."

JAKE GORDON, CEO OF DOWNTOWN VISION

media more than traditional branding and advertising.

Millennials and Jacksonville

What is the picture of the millennial generation in Jacksonville? University of North Florida master of public administration graduate students produced a study last fall that looked at how to attract millennials to "live, work and play" in Downtown Jacksonville.

The UNF students found a large group of millennials in the area. According to Census data, Jacksonville has more than 95,000 millennials with a five-year growth rate of 4 percent. This number is on par with cities like Charlotte and Austin. Jacksonville is one of the younger cities in Florida because it developed as a business and shipping city rather than a retirement destination. Many Florida cities in the southeastern and southwestern part of the state have an average age of over 50. The average age in Jacksonville is 33.

The students found that a plurality of Jacksonville's millennials earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000 a year, and about 25 percent of them make more than \$50,000. Over 30 percent of millennials come Downtown at least once a month. Almost a majority come to Downtown only "a couple of times a year." If this large group could be enticed to come Downtown 10-20 times a year, it could transform Downtown businesses with increased traffic and interest.

According to the various analyses, Jacksonville is attracting millennials from across the nation. The website SmartAsset looked at net migration among cities across the country in 2016, and Jacksonville

was the fifth-most popular city "where Millennials are moving." The website cited Jacksonville's lack of a state income tax as a major attraction for millennials starting their careers, along with steady economic growth that produces jobs. Jacksonville, the only Florida city in the top 10, came in close behind Minneapolis. Seattle was listed as the top migration destination for millennials.

Marketing to millennials?

With this combination of local millennials who are open to more Downtown activity and millennials coming from outside the city, how are local experts making the case that millennials should live, work and play in Downtown Jacksonville?

Lindsay Wise and her team at the Dalton Agency, which is headquartered Downtown and is one of the leading marketing agencies in the South, have developed specific marketing strategies for millennials. Entities that want the attention

and the business of millennials cannot focus on traditional marketing techniques. Wise says that the Great Recession has had a lasting impact on most young adults. Thus traditional "life markers" like marriage, having a family and buying a home have been delayed. Messaging to this group must be "heavily mobile, reflect corporate social responsibility and be authentic." Online reviews and messages are tremendously important to this age group and help them decide almost every spending decision.

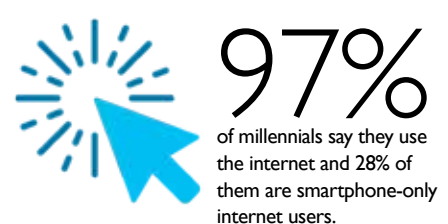
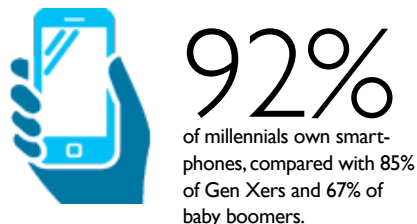
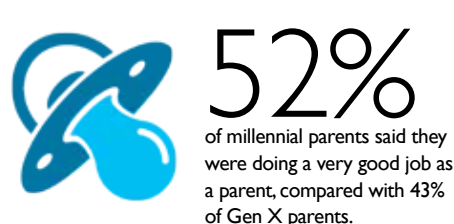
The views on how Downtown can improve, according to Jacksonville millennials, are similar to the perceptions of other age groups. Crime, parking, homelessness and navigating the streets of Downtown were cited in the UNF survey as issues that need at-

THE STATES WHERE MILLENNIALS ARE MOVING

State	Net Migration	State	Net Migration
1 WASHINGTON	39,590	6 OREGON	11,989
2 TEXAS	33,650	7 NORTH CAROLINA	9,647
3 COLORADO	26,547	8 NEVADA	8,220
4 VIRGINIA	18,338	9 FLORIDA	7,195
5 GEORGIA	17,621	10 ARIZONA	7,077

Net migration data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau and reflects the number of people between the ages of 20 and 34 who moved to the state in 2016 minus the number who moved out of the state.

SOURCE: SmartAsset



SOURCE: Pew Research Center

JEFF DAVIS

“We are still very much growing our fan base. As we approach our 25th season next year, we’re in the midst of recruiting that second generation of Jaguars’ fans, including millennials.”

CHAD JOHNSON, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF SALES AND SERVICE OF THE JAGUARS

tention of policymakers. These issues directly impact ease of mobility and transportation, which are critical factors for millennials. However, as you will read elsewhere in this edition, these issues are not unique to Downtown Jacksonville, and some of the perceptions about these issues may not be accurate. For example, while pan-handling regularly occurs Downtown, violent crime is relatively rare, especially in comparison with other areas of the city.

Jake Gordon, CEO of Downtown Vision, believes his business members understand the importance of attracting millennials. “As a community, we should strive for a Downtown with a palpable vitality, a welcoming sense of place, world-class destination and amenities, as well as anchor institutions and as many new jobs as possible,” Gordon said. “Recent college graduates’ choosing to move to Jacksonville and Downtown Jacksonville over a Charlotte, Atlanta, Miami, Orlando, Tampa, etc., is a top-priority goal.”

The ability to attract millennials to Jacksonville and specifically Downtown is critical to the economic growth of the city. Daniel Davis, president and CEO of JAX Chamber, says the top priority of the Chamber is to attract “talent” to the city, especially young professionals beginning their careers. He believes there is “synergy” among Downtown stakeholders that will drive growth and make Downtown more welcoming to millennials.

Davis sees 10,000 residents living downtown as the tipping point when more entertainment and recreational opportunities will open up. There are waiting lists reported for some of the half-dozen or so apartment complexes now under construction Downtown with more planned, and that momentum is expected to continue.

This is important because renters make up a significant portion of the 18-38 set. According to Pew, millennials are much more likely to be long-term renters when they seek their own housing. In 1982, 41 percent of householders under 35 owned their homes. By 2016, the number of homeowners under 35 had dropped to 35 percent. Living arrangements are connected to marital status as well. In the mid-1970s, 57 percent of 18-34-year-olds lived with a spouse. By 2016, only 27 percent of this age group were married

and living with a spouse.

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority is planning for adults who are not as enamored with their cars. “Millennials are a significant demographic that is driving

change in the mobility marketplace,” said Brad Thoburn, JTA’s chief planner. “We need to focus on emerging technologies and the increasing desire for mobility as a service or shared mobility solutions instead of automobile ownership. Automation is only going to accelerate that trend.”

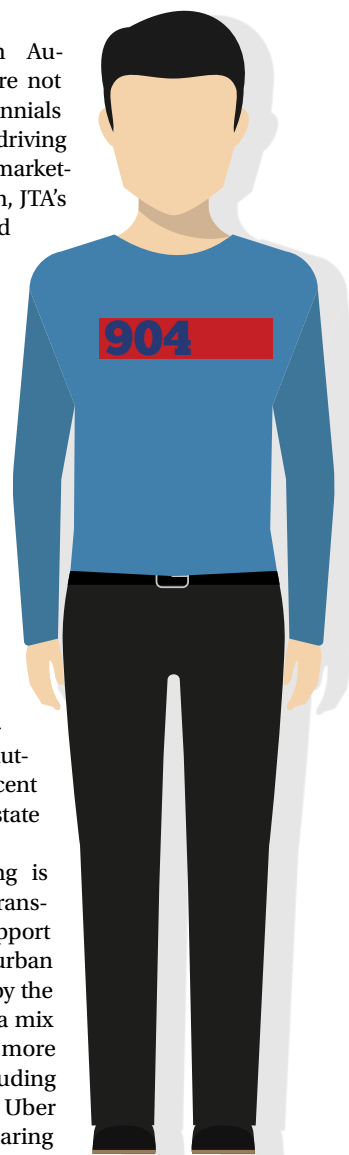
Part of the advances in technology could be something like the Ultimate Urban Circulator or U²C. This system aims to modernize and expand the Down-

town skyway using autonomous shuttles to connect Downtown with adjacent neighborhoods. JTA is pursuing both state and federal government financing.

Thoburn said Downtown parking is a potential issue for millennials. “Transportation solutions also need to support the lifestyles of millennials — active urban areas where mobility is not dictated by the availability of parking, but access to a mix of mobility solutions.” JTA is thinking more broadly about the future as well, including partnerships with companies such as Uber and Lyft, taxis and car- and bike-sharing

UNF GRAD STUDENTS RESEARCH MILLENNIALS & DOWNTOWN

Under Matthew T. Corrigan, UNF professor of political science and public administration, these public administration graduate students produced a study of how to attract millennials to live, work and play in Downtown Jacksonville: Lauren D’Amico, Matthew Harbison, Travis Hawkins, Todd Higginbotham, Ryan McDonagh, Andrew Stevens and Karen Tobi.



65%

of millennials disapprove of Trump's job performance, compared with 57% of Gen Xers disapproving.



41%

of millennials say religion is very important in their lives, compared with 53% of Gen Xers.



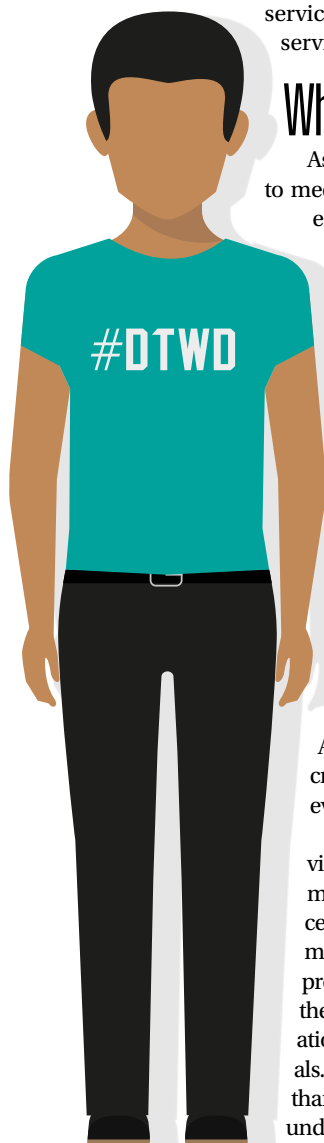
44%

of millennials are Hispanic, African-American, Asian or another race.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center

“Transportation solutions also need to support the lifestyles of millennials — active urban areas where mobility is not dictated by the availability of parking, but access to a mix of mobility solutions.”

BRAD THOBURN, CHIEF PLANNER FOR THE JACKSONVILLE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY



services to “augment traditional transit services.”

What about fun & games?

As housing and transportation evolve to meet the demands of this incoming generation, the big question is whether entertainment and recreational options keep pace?

The UNF graduate students conducted an online focus group of young adults in the area who are members of civic organizations. A common response was there needs to be “more to do” for young people. “More to do” includes restaurant and bar options, recreation and live entertainment.

A variety of venues is supplying some of these entertainment options. Downtown Vision reported more than 60 events Downtown for the first week of August. Venues such as Daily’s Place, Veterans Memorial Arena and TIAA Bank Field have increased the frequency of entertainment events Downtown.

Chad Johnson, the Jaguars’ senior vice president of sales and service, sees millennials as crucial to the future success of the franchise: “We are still very much growing our fan base. As we approach our 25th season next year, we’re in the midst of recruiting that second generation of Jaguars’ fans, including millennials. Our front office leads the way, as more than 50 percent of full-time employees are under 35-years-old.”

For example, a new program for 2018 will be “JagBars.” The team will partner with 17 bars to “enhance our visibility” with fans who are watching an away game or still considering purchasing tickets, Johnson said. The Jaguars are also reaching out to college-age students by offering season ticket packages at a reduced rate through the student government associations at UNF and JU.

Jason Hunnicutt, the owner of the 1904 Music Hall and Spliff’s Gastropub in the Elbow area, believes in the potential of Downtown. He sees many millennials returning to the concept of urbanism and away from suburban developments. He believes young adults value “sense of community” and “unifying identity” that only Downtown can create. He also believes it says a great deal that many bar and restaurants Downtown are locally owned and “offer something unique” since millennials value authenticity. He says simple improvements, such as keeping parking garages open 24 hours, will allow those young adults who don’t live Downtown to visit more often.

Conflict or Consensus?

An important issue for future growth of millennials Downtown is changing cultural and political attitudes. Will this new generation find a cultural and political fit in traditionally conservative Jacksonville? As the demographics of Downtown residents and visitors change, will both government and businesses respond to these changes?

For example, the city was slow to adopt the LGBT protections compared with most other large cities.

Millennials are also much more racially diverse than previous generations. Will this more diverse generation be able to constructively engage on issues like police-community relations and economic inequality that have stymied baby boomers and seniors?

Will the city allow a bar and restaurant district to stay open past 2 a.m. as Tampa and Orlando do?

The answers to these cultural/political questions may determine the ultimate success of all of the varied development efforts listed above.

MATTHEW T. CORRIGAN is a professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of North Florida. Last year, he led his public administration graduate class to study millennials and Downtown Jacksonville.



88%

of millennials live in metro areas, compared with 84% of Gen Xers living in metropolitan areas when they were young.



53%

of millennials say they used a library or bookmobile in the previous 12 months. That compares with 45% of Gen Xers and 43% of baby boomers.



71%

of millennials say they support the legalization of marijuana, up from just 34% in 2006.

SOURCE: Pew Research Center

TELLING THE GENERATIONS APART



GENERATION	SILENT	BABY BOOMER	GEN X	MILLENNIAL
OTHER NAMES	Veterans Seniors Matures Lucky Few Traditionalists	Boomers Baby Boomers The Boom Generation	The 13th Generation MTV Generation Boomerang Generation Baby Busters	Generation Y Generation Why? Echo Boomers The Net Generation
CORE VALUES	Adhere to rules Conformity Dedication/sacrifice Delayed reward Discipline Duty before pleasure Family focus Giving back Hard work Law and order Loyalty Patriotism Patience Respect for authority Responsibility Savers Trust in government	Anti war Anti government Anything is possible Equal rights Equal opportunities Involvement Optimism Personal gratification Personal growth Question everything Spend now, worry later Team oriented Transformational Trust no one over 30 Youth Make a difference	Balance Diversity Entrepreneurial Fun Highly educated High job expectations Independent Informality Lack of organizational loyalty Pragmatism Seek life balance Self-reliance Skepticism/cynical Thinking globally Techno literacy	Achievement Avid consumers Civic duty Confidence Diversity Extreme fun Highly tolerant Hotly competitive Like personal attention Self confident Global community Educated Extremely techno savvy Now! Optimism Street smarts
WORK ETHIC	Dedicated	Driven	Balanced	Determined
EDUCATION	A dream	A birthright	A way to get there	An incredible expense
DEALING WITH MONEY	Put it away Pay cash Save, save, save	Buy now, pay later	Cautious Conservative Save, save, save	Earn to spend
TECHNOLOGY	Adapted	Acquired	Assimilated	Integral
VIEWS ON AUTHORITY	Respectful	Impressed	Unimpressed	Relaxed
WORK IS ...	An obligation A longterm career	An exciting adventure A career	A difficult challenge Just a job	A means to an end Flexible work arrangements
MOTIVATED BY ...	Being respected Security	Being valued, needed Money	Freedom Time off	Working with other bright people Time off

SOURCE: WMFC



Emily



Iesha



David



Shawana



Brett



Matthew



Todd



WHAT DO JACKSONVILLE MILLENNIALS
WANT TO SEE HAPPEN DOWNTOWN?
WE ASKED THEM.

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VOICES OF
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BY FRANK DENTON // ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF DAVIS
J MAGAZINE

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• CHOPH

7/18

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tudies, theories and ideas are fine, but how do Jacksonville millennials themselves think and feel about Downtown?

Considering there are about 83 million of them in the U.S., a fourth of the population, even more than baby boomers, generalizing about that entire generation is risky, but J could hardly produce an issue about millennials Downtown without getting the perspectives of some.

So we put together a focus group of seven genuine millennials to discuss Downtown — its problems, its progress, its plans, its opportunities and its promise.

Our seven are not a random or representative sample, even of Jacksonville millennials. They are mostly toward the older end of the generation, they are better educated than a typical millennial, they generally already have a great start in their careers, they are active in the community and they are committed to Jacksonville, especially Downtown.

We probably would have gotten significantly different input if we had recruited focus group participants at the beach or in the suburbs, in college classes or, well, OK, the jail.

But millennials like our seven are likely to be the leaders of tomorrow's Downtown.

We gathered them in a prominent symbol of the revitalization of Downtown: the classy rooftop bar of the Cowford Chophouse, the elegant new restaurant created out of the historic 1902 bank building at Ocean and Bay streets.

From there, as they discussed their frustrations, plans, hopes and dreams for Downtown, they had a grand panorama of the heart of the city. **READ ON »**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB SELF // J MAGAZINE

OUR PANELISTS WEIGH IN ON WHAT'S NEXT FOR DOWNTOWN

While they don't completely agree on what it will take to make Downtown great, they all say that it needs to be.



SHAWANA BROOKS

AGE: 38
OCCUPATION: Arts and Culture Developer, Jax Makerspace, Main Public Library
EDUCATION: BA, University of North Florida
HOMETOWN: Vallejo, CA
CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD: Sugar Hill
FUTURE: "The narrative that has plagued Downtown's identity must be challenged. Downtown is the heart of Jacksonville and, we need to make sure it is healthy and thriving."



BRETT CROMER

AGE: 29
OCCUPATION: Chef of FSCJ's 20W Cafe
EDUCATION: Associate degree in culinary management, FSCJ
HOMETOWN: Jacksonville
CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD: Springfield
FUTURE: "Passionate about bringing forward-thinking, healthy options to Downtown and invested in the revitalization of Downtown and the



TODD HIGGINBOTHAM

AGE: 23
OCCUPATION: Graduate student at UNF. Member service representative, Jax Metro Credit Union
EDUCATION: BA, UNF
HOMETOWN: Jacksonville
CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD: Westside
FUTURE: "The one thing Downtown is really missing is people. Everything else we want our Downtown to be will follow as soon as there are enough people living there."



J Magazine editor Frank Denton visited with a group of Jacksonville millennials during a roundtable on the rooftop of Cowford Chophouse in Downtown.

Most of your parents are probably baby boomers, so how would you say your generation is different than theirs?

BRETT CROMER: My parents only come Downtown for Jaguars games. They stay on the Southside where they live, and they don't really care to explore too much of the city. It was very difficult to convince them to come to my restaurant. When I left their household, I explored what Jacksonville has to offer, and I was very pleasantly surprised.

SHAWANA BROOKS: That would be

my experience, too. There are narratives the previous generation has of certain sides of town, even when they have been disproven. I grew up in Arlington, and until I was a teenager I didn't even know that Riverside existed. More and more, we need to cross all the ditches, all the bridges and see what Jacksonville has to offer. The only time my mom comes Downtown is for the Jazz Festival. I look online first and figure out my commitments around those. My parents only recently got on

Facebook, God bless them.

IESHA JACKSON: I see myself more as an adventurer. My parents stay in their little comfort zone and their box because it's safe.

Like many downtowns, Jacksonville would like to attract more young people to the core. Do you spend much time Downtown?

TODD HIGGINBOTHAM: I actually work Downtown. I wanted to work Downtown. I like riding the Skyway. I love Down-



EMILY MOODY-ROSETE

AGE: 37

OCCUPATION: Co-owner of Wolf & Cub, former founder of Underbelly

EDUCATION: Flagler College

HOMETOWN: Jacksonville

CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD: Atlantic Beach

FUTURE: "The opportunities in Jacksonville are endless if you have the passion and drive to make it happen. We hope to see Downtown thriving in a few years and look forward to creating more concepts to help get it there!"



MATTHEW CLARK

AGE: 31

OCCUPATION: Senior vice president of retail property for Prime Realty, specializing in urban mixed use

EDUCATION: BS, University of North Florida

HOMETOWN: Lewiston, ME

CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD: Riverside

FUTURE: "Urbanism is the mirror of humanity. I am looking forward to our Downtown streets filled with variety, commotion and crowds — seven days a week."



IESHA JACKSON

AGE: 27

OCCUPATION: Relationship manager, Wells Fargo

EDUCATION: BS in Business Administration, Florida A&M University

HOMETOWN: Monticello, FL

CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD: Southside

FUTURE: "I look forward to the day when the riverfront is more developed, restaurants are opened over the weekends, and entertainment venues are more prevalent."



DAVID COHEN

AGE: 38

OCCUPATION: President and co-founder, Manifest Distilling

EDUCATION: Bachelors in Theater Arts, Rollins College

HOMETOWN: Jacksonville

CURRENT NEIGHBORHOOD: Lakewood

FUTURE: "The future is bright. The momentum and synergy Downtown is incredible right now. I'm proud to own and run a business down there."



SHAWANA BROOKS



MATTHEW CLARK

town. I try to experience as much as I can.

IESHA: Most of the time it will be in Riverside, the Town Center or the Beaches.

MATT CLARK: Until recently, I was a resident Downtown, lived in the Churchwell lofts. I loved being close to the games, walked to the bars. I really liked the convenience. Now my focus is repurposing assets Downtown, really focused on entertaining clients coming in from New York City and Miami and the West Coast and showing them what we find special about the urban core. If you dropped someone in Downtown Jacksonville, they wouldn't know which direction to go. When you show someone Cowford, Bellwether, taking them to Doro, MOCA, the library, they really start to feel an energy about Downtown and really start to get excited. A lot of time I spent has been

getting other people to fall in love with Jacksonville and Downtown Jacksonville.

SHAWANA: I do a lot of socializing here but because my work is in arts and culture. What I struggle with is that after hours it can be a little bit more desolate. You can have the whole bar to yourself. It's me and three other people at the Omni Hotel.

EMILY MOODY-ROSETE: Being a small business owner, you're kind of at your business all the time anyway. I don't live Downtown. I enjoy spending my time here. It's harder on the weekends to get food somewhere because the restaurants are closed.

BRETT: I'm down here all the time. I love the opportunity here, the potential for growth, and what is already here is fantastic. There may not be tons of options, but there is

plenty to do if you know what to look for.

When you stop and think about our Downtown, what do you see as the strengths?

SHAWANA: The river.

EMILY: There's an energy. The people have invested in Downtown because they care about it. I could have gone other places to open the shop and maybe had fewer challenges, but I want Downtown to be exciting, I want people to feel the arts and culture and all these cute small businesses. But we've got to be trailblazers because people are scared to open anything down here except for a handful.

BRETT: The reaction of people coming to 20W (Café), as soon as they walk in, they say "Wow." That's kind of how Downtown is in general.



TODD HIGINBOTHAM



IESHA JACKSON

SHAWANA: They're surprised.

BRETT: Oh, you're here!

EMILY: You can spend a day easily doing things Downtown, and people say there's nothing to do.

SHAWANA: And there's a lot of free programming. But they do have to find that, I don't like that either. We need a source that can showcase all of these things.

DAVID COHEN: We keep coming back to the bigger issue of changing the conversation. People are saying, 'Jacksonville has really come around.' No, it has come around, it's here. Stop saying there is nothing to do.

EMILY: We're just growing and getting better from here.

DAVID: The people who are down here have chosen to be down here. I have found that the people have traveled, they have seen

other big cities, and they have chosen to come back and do something creative.

How do you think others see our Downtown?

EMILY: I just got back from New York literally two days ago and was chatting with someone, and she said, "Oh, Jacksonville. I am hearing such great things about it. It's so cure." So the local people are the ones being down on it. Doesn't get us anywhere. I think the perception is much better than we give ourselves credit for. We've got a self-esteem problem.

MATT: I agree. When we bring in people from the West Coast, Miami, New York, they really fall in love with Jacksonville. They really feel the energy; they love the architecture. They're like kids in a candy shop because

our real estate is so cheap. They can make a really big impact; they've got a lot of money. I agree it's about changing the conversation. We've got to have a little more pride.

OK, let's cut to the chase, what do you see as our Downtown's biggest problems?

SHAWANA: I think the perception of the homeless. Working in such a public place (the Main Library), they have to come in there. It's like any other major city dealing with mental health issues or homelessness. They're everywhere. It's the same 30 people; I can recognize them. Maybe the shooting that happened Downtown, the one shooting over a decade of Art Walks, and now Art Walk is scary. We don't even want to bring our kids. Now we have more of a police presence, which makes people feel uneasy;



EMILY MOODY-ROSETE



DAVID COHEN

they don't want to come out. Again, that's perception, but perception is reality to some people.

IESHA: Downtown Jacksonville is not a bad place; it's just a matter of degree. It's changing the way we think more than anything else.

EMILY: I have a (panhandling) issue at my shop, but I just tell people they have to go. I can text the art district officer. The density isn't there of contributing citizens so it seems so much worse, but panhandlers aren't committing assault. If you ask any of the officers, they will tell you that Downtown has one of the lowest crime rates, but I'm always educating people when they come into the shop. "Oh, do you feel safe around here?" I don't have any threat.

IESHA: The only scary thing is that when

I am out at 9 o'clock and there is a problem, nobody would be around to save me. I just went to Charlotte, and that was not the case. Tryon Street was filled. The challenge is to get locals on board. People come here from other places, and they can stick a flag because Miami is already overdeveloped. When I first started here, I used to walk around and count all the empty buildings that surrounded us. It's amazing, the incredible buildings, but if those buildings are empty, it affects everybody. Another negative perception is why are these building owners holding onto these properties? How does this work?

MATT: It comes down to capital. We have owners like Farah and Farah who have the ability to forego city incentives and are all in on Downtown Jacksonville and have

the ability to speculate and say I know that Downtown will be elevated and I will be willing to be here for the next 50 years and I'm willing to put millions in my property and get Bellwether in and rehab the lobby. A lot of buildings you see vacant have been owned by the same families for generations and are waiting. Luckily we are getting to the point where there is enough critical mass for people outside Jacksonville to come in. That's why you're starting to see projects redevelop. We're on our way ... Now we have groups coming to Jacksonville, there is a feeling of momentum, which is causing other groups to invest in Downtown, which is exciting.

DAVID: It's important to point out that a lot of it has to do with the way the city interfaces with the public. Seven years ago,



BRETT CROMER

I tried to buy a building Downtown and redevelop it. We had capital and really cool plans for it but had a nightmare of issues. We're in a different administration now, I don't want to get into politics, but that does play into it. Thankfully I wasn't turned off and just moved on. We ran into issues that could have been overcome with a little more support. Zoning, permitting, all the governmental stuff. People unwilling to step outside the box — let's find a way to make it work.

EMILY: I do think that the lack of support for the small guy Downtown is the reason that we don't have more boutiques down here and cool shops because people are scared and the rent is not cheaper. Right now, anything in vacant spaces would be positive. The city gives millions of dollars to bigger guys, and I get that, but it's the little guys who create that feeling of wanting to be part of something.

DAVID: The city continues to give money to people with deeper pockets who have the financial fortitude to sustain nine months of garbage revenue and still keep the doors open while someone like myself or Emily, if we had no sales for nine months, we probably wouldn't be open anymore.

What would need to change Downtown in order to make it a desti-

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nation for socializing rather than the beach or St. Johns Town Center?

MATT: I'm driven by product. I'm always craving Dos Eatos or Bellwether. It's just better products. Downtown Jacksonville is starting to happen and getting better options for people to come Downtown, a place to eat or happy hour.

DAVID: There's a lot coming, but you can only eat and drink so much in the evening — and I've tested that — so you could have a bowling alley or go-karts or dozens of creative outlets so that you have a staged evening, so you go out for dinner or drinks and entertainment after. We've got the larger venues — the amphitheater and the Times-Union Center — for ticketed events, (but then) where can you pop in and do something for an hour or two with your friends? The reason that isn't here yet is that the people willing to do that can't see there is enough foot traffic to sustain a business.

IESHA: You are spot on. For me, entertainment is something I'm really excited about, like Lot J. I was in St. Louis three weeks ago; Ballpark Village is right next to the stadium. That is just amazing, you have this live entertainment area, different restaurants.

SHAWANA: We're missing a real green space. I like being able to just come and sit. I lived in Savannah for four years. They took really big pride in their parks. We have tons of parks; you wouldn't know that. I want to see more greenery.

In just the past several years, Hemming Park has been both the boon and bane of Downtown. What are your thoughts on that space?

BRETT: I was appalled when Hemming took out so many seats. Why would I go there now?

EMILY: The people they wanted to "push out" are the people sitting on the steps of Snyder Memorial Church or against a wall.

MATT: I was sad when the privatization of Hemming Park went away because there was a much different vibe. When the city took it back, there was a shift. I've heard it from retailers on Laura Street who don't benefit from anything in Hemming Park. I can't explain the shift; there was an energy shift. Different people are doing programming.

EMILY: One thing that made it desirable to be so close to Hemming is that there was so much activation there. Two years ago, it was a totally different park, there was Jaxson's Night Market and all kinds of things, and now it is severely

lacking. I know they're trying to get it going again.

It seems like every Downtown revitalization project talks about walkability. How important is that?

DAVID: That's another excuse, that Jacksonville is such a huge city. There are plenty of cities that are huge. With Downtown, the lack of walkability isn't an issue. There are a couple of simple ways to tie in. You have the rentable bikes that I have used in Chicago; I didn't even have a car for two weeks.

BRETT: I try to bike as much as possible. I plan on biking to work from Springfield. Everything is extremely accessible if you plan accordingly.

IESHA: Yeah, Jacksonville doesn't have the best transit system. I do try to walk a lot, but I have been almost hit seven times. Our city has a history with pedestrian deaths. Is Downtown really safe? I can have a "walk" sign, but people feel they have a right to turn right on red. We're not a very pedestrian-friendly area. We don't have fun walkways. I have seen people driving the wrong direction on one-way streets. That's scary.

What it would take for you to live in Downtown Jacksonville?

SHAWANA: More amenities.

DAVID: Green space. I really cherish my backyard. If we had a bigger park system that would substitute for the ability to be outside, be near the water.

TODD: For me, it's finding a way to afford it. Rents are going crazy Downtown. I've wanted to live Downtown my entire life, and I'm finally in this position where I'm employed, and I can't afford it.

BRETT: I've heard about a lot more affordable living in Brooklyn.

SHAWANA: I don't want to live in a cookie-cutter apartment building that looks just like one three blocks away.

BRETT: Downtown is historic. All these different people have done all these different things.

EMILY: The promise of the Laura Street Trio — there is momentum now.

SHAWANA: I want to see workspace for artists. They make an area hot, and the first thing we do is get out because we can't afford it.

BRETT: CORK Downtown would be amazing.

How much do you value authenticity when deciding to spend time in an area like Downtown?

EMILY: For me, my husband, friends of ours, we seek out supporting locals so much more. My parents see our passion and want to do it, too. In any city, that's what I'm looking for.

DAVID: There's the whole concept of adaptive reuse. Why tear something down when it's still functional? The building I'm in was built in the early '40s. Thankfully we had a developer who saw that. For me and the people in my circle, that is really important. I look at it as being historically accurate. Things are far better that have an interesting story.

EMILY: We just released a couple jazz T-shirts in our shop. There is this whole jazz subculture. Ray Charles lived blocks from here, but who knows that? When I travel, I like going on little subway tours because my husband and I like to hear about the history from someone local, and there's not even that here.

Over the years, much has been made about race in Jacksonville. Do you think race is the reason we don't celebrate our history?

SHAWANA: So much of our history is rooted in the black culture, so that is why so much of it doesn't get uplifted. If we're talking about Downtown, we have to talk about the LaVilla community. The dismantling of that in the mid-'90s, that story still hasn't been told because it doesn't always show us in the brightest of lights, so we steer away from it. People say, "Jacksonville doesn't know its identity." They just don't want to lay claim to it. If we're talking about Downtown and its history, a lot of that is rooted in black culture. That's great for tourism. Most of the cities that do that do get people coming in. I'm excited that there are some developments, but still not enough resources are thrown at it.

DAVID: Look at our city's namesake, there's not a great story behind that gentleman. Personally, I don't know why, but I am hopeful that at least my generation is very comfortable with acknowledging the history of something and realizing the importance of it. I don't know why somewhere along the way, people said let's just sweep this under the rug and pretend it didn't happen. It does need to be addressed, and it has value even if it is lynchings and stuff that we don't want to think about. It doesn't mean we need to stew in it, but it is part of our story.

IESHA: There is nothing wrong with acknowledging it and then using it to help make the future better. It requires courageous conversations.

Do you think race and gender are less of an issue to millennials as they were to previous generations?

DAVID: That's very true.

IESHA: I agree.

SHAWANA: I always say, if I have not been to your home, then we're not friends. We see a lot of socializing, and then we go back to our neighborhoods, our churches, and you see that disconnect. We're still a Southern city, but we're not the people in charge of doing these bigger projects. Those people think it's bad for business and don't want to associate it with their projects.

Another continuous knock on Downtown is parking. Do you see that as a problem?

EMILY: People say, where should I park when I come Downtown?

DAVID: Anywhere.

SHAWANA: I don't like the narrative that there's not enough parking. There's plenty of parking; please stop saying that. I struggle with the walkability side, with people thinking they should be able to park right in front of the venue rather than use the parking garages.

EMILY: You want to be in a big city, but yet you don't want to walk a block to get to where you're going ... You can park at the Prime Osborn and come on in (on the Skyway) and you don't have to deal with ...

DAVID: The "awful" parking.

SHAWANA: And the view you get, the bird's-eye view of the historic architecture that you never see at street level.

On extending the Skyway at street level to LaVilla, the stadium and Five Points with autonomous cars

EMILY: It can't come soon enough.

TODD: I'm not a big fan of extending the Skyway. I've studied mass transit systems. I actually don't think the vehicles have enough capacity with eight to 10 people at a time. They made a mistake with the monorail, but I think they'll make a similar mistake with autonomous vehicles.

MATT: I'm really excited about autonomous vehicles. I think it will help traffic in big cities and will only continue to evolve. I think it's very forward-thinking for Jacksonville. I'd love to be a city that explores

it more. I love the adaptability, being able to use the infrastructure we already have in place with on-ramps and off-ramps. Connecting Riverside and these urban markets like San Marco and Springfield will make this work and thrive the most in addition to the other development Downtown. When one area Downtown starts to become more popular, we don't have to build another rail system.

Entertainment districts seem to be vital in creating an environment for millennials. Do you spend much time in Downtown's Elbow district?

DAVID: All the time.



SHAWANA: I used to when there were things in the Elbow.

BRETT: I go to 1904 Music Hall often. There is still a good bit to do.

EMILY: When I was co-owner of Underbelly, it was really a marketing thing, a way to show one face to the entire city. If it did that, cool, but I don't know if it's still thriving or not.

DAVID: All these things, One Spark, the Elbow, are all attempts to make something work. I'm not speaking negatively, you've got to try 10 things, and then one will work. Some things have worked and then evolve to create this really cool fabric of the city, and it's developing every day.

EMILY: It's people taking a risk, so you've got to give props to anyone willing to do that.

Another challenge facing Downtown is money. What are your views on higher taxes to help revitalize Downtown?

DAVID: I own a condo Downtown and

pay a tax to Downtown Vision. I would pay more. I think it is a great asset to Downtown as long as you see where that money is going.

SHAWANA: There is a percentage that goes to the Cultural Council. I wish there were a way to increase that. So many other cities have really great sponsors to their cultural council entities.

OK, one final question for anyone who might want to weigh in ... If you were in charge of Downtown, what would you do?

EMILY: I really think there are minimal changes, grassroots efforts that don't take

six months to a year that could be done now. What are we waiting for, people? Let's rock this out with people who are passionate and are here.

DAVID: I wouldn't want the job. It's easy to say what one would do, but there is so much that we don't know, and there are so many people with hands in it, it's really difficult to get anything done. So you have to look at the entire system and figure out what's broken with the system.

TODD: We are almost at the point

now where a lot of things that we need to be doing are small things. Create a green strip Downtown. To me, all of that green space in front of the courthouse is one of the most underutilized spaces in the city. We need to start thinking that Laura Street is our Main Street. Main Street is designed to move traffic.

MATT: From a business development standpoint, working on property tax incentives for developers, that benefits the small guys buying a \$300,000 building (as well as) the big guys buying a \$5 million to \$30 million building. Streamline the permitting process. It's not easy. The city needs to work on unloading their assets and do a better job of marketing those properties to people outside of Jacksonville. They have no marketing strategies to put these properties out to people in New York, Boston, LA or Miami. It's basically put out an RFP and see who responds.

FRANK DENTON, editor of *J*, was editor of *The Florida Times-Union* in 2008-16. He lives in Riverside.





DOWNTOWN SPORTS TEAMS
HONE THEIR GAME-DAY EXPERIENCES
TO ATTRACT MILLENNIAL FANS

FANS OF FUN

BY ROGER BROWN // ILLUSTRATION BY JEFF DAVIS
J MAGAZINE

How are Jacksonville's Downtown-centered sports teams and sports-related organizations working to attract millennials as spectators and participants? Well, making alcohol available has been proven to help.

"For the average race we do, the percentage of millennial-age runners we have is about 10 percent," said Doug Alred, owner and founder of 1st Place Sports Running, the area firm that holds an estimated 100 running events a year, including the wildly popular Gate River Run through the streets of Downtown Jacksonville.

Alred laughed.

"But when we add the perk of serving beer to runners after they finish the race, the percentage of





A winning team on the field and lots of unique stadium amenities — from swimming pools and cabanas to a new dog park — have helped the Jaguars attract millennial fans.

millennial runners usually goes up to 20, 25 percent,” Alred said.

“There does seem to be a correlation there.”

And Sarah Ruwe, the communications director for the Icemen — the city’s professional minor league hockey club — also chuckled when asked what team promotion has been the most successful in bringing more millennials Downtown to the games in the Veterans Memorial Arena.

“I would have to say it’s our ‘Wine Down Wednesdays,’” Ruwe said, referring to an Icemen promotion that lets fans buy beer or wine for as little as \$2 during any Wednesday home game.

Let’s make one thing clear, however.

The chuckles from Alred and Ruwe are out of sheer affection for Jacksonville’s millennials — and a genuine sense of appreciation for what these folks bring to the table as a target demographic for local sports teams and companies.

“They add a lot to what we do,” Alred said. “They aren’t as competitive in nature as a lot of the previous generations are, so what really attracts them to participate in one of our events is the social aspect of it. And we like that.”

Added Alred: “The millennials in this city

bring a unique flavor to our events that we really embrace.”

Ruwe echoed Alred in marveling at the upbeat, fresh vibe that Jacksonville’s millennials bring to Icemen home games. “They are absolutely a segment of Jacksonville that we consciously focus on as part of our fan base,” she said.

And the city’s flagship sports franchise, the NFL Jaguars, is also keenly aware of the influence of local millennial fans.

In an email reply, Chad Johnson, the Jaguars’ senior vice president of sales and service and chief content officer, noted that the Jags are still a relatively young pro football franchise that is continuing to grow its fan base — and that millennials are a key element of that effort.

“As we approach our 25th season next year, we’re in the midst of recruiting that second generation of Jaguars fans, including millennials,” Johnson wrote. “Our front office leads the way as more than 50 percent of full-time employees are under 35 years old.”

Johnson said the Jaguars take a wide-ranging, holistic approach to attracting more millennial fans, including out-

reach to local colleges and their student populations, an aggressive social media strategy and a “grassroots marketing program (that primarily targets) millennials and young families,” Johnson wrote. “In 2017 alone, we made appearances at 228 events, including community events, runs and festivals.”

And yes — like the area’s other sports teams and organizations — the Jaguars also have recognized the zest that many of Jacksonville’s millennials have for the occasional adult beverage.

During the current NFL season, Johnson wrote, the Jaguars have launched their “rebranded ‘JagBars’ program specifically tailored to reach the Jaguars’ young, 21-and-over crowd. By partnering with 17 different bars throughout Jacksonville, we’re hoping to enhance our visibility with fans who are watching an away game or still considering purchasing tickets.”

Added Johnson: “Our sales team has also found millennials frequently respond to a more casual sales approach. They prefer congregation and camaraderie over a hard sales pitch.”

Securing a connection with local millennials is also a major priority for the Jumbo Shrimp, Jacksonville’s minor



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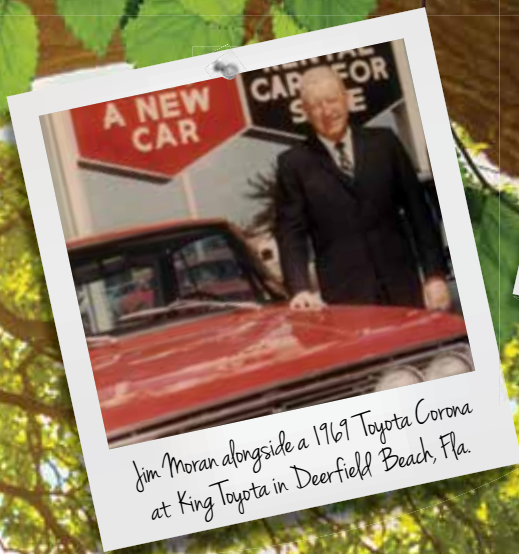
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“You have to give [young mothers] five or six reasons why it’s worth spending time at the ballpark. In reality, that really applies to all of the **MILLENNIAL FANS** we want to attract, too.”

KEN BABBY, OWNER OF THE JUMBO SHRIMP

league baseball franchise.

Jumbo Shrimp owner Ken Babby said millennials make up a huge part of the Double A team’s demographic sweet spot.

“We’re committed to staying true to our mission, which is never forgetting that the fan base for minor league baseball is traditionally families in general, young families in particular and younger people as a whole,” Babby said.

To appeal to that millennial-heavy audience, the Jumbo Shrimp do a variety of things in casting a wide net to bring millennial fans to games at the Baseball Grounds. And in doing so, Babby said, the team has found one subset of millennials to be particularly receptive to spending a day or evening at the ballpark: local millennial women.

“More than 50 percent of our spectators are female, and particularly young mothers,” Babby said. “If you can convince a young mom that it’s worthwhile to come out to the ballpark and spend an evening there with dad and the young kids, it’s a huge plus.”

That’s why the Jumbo Shrimp load up their promotional plate with family events that include allowing young kids to play catch on the field before Sunday home games — and to come back on the ball diamond after those games to run the bases.

And it’s why the team puts an emphasis

on having clean restrooms and food specials that appeal to millennial moms who want decent fare at reasonable prices.

“We’re very conscious about appealing to those moms because they really control a household’s economic priorities,” Babby said.

“You have to give them five or six reasons why it’s worth spending time at the ballpark. In reality, that really applies to all of the millennial fans we want to attract, too,” Babby added.

With a chuckle, Babby said the Jumbo Shrimp have become accustomed to counting on a particular promotion to be among the compelling “five or six reasons” that motivate Jacksonville millennials to come out to a ballpark.

“During our Thursday home games during the season, we have ‘Thirsty Thursdays’ where you can buy beer for as low as \$1,” Babby said.

“It’s a popular night for us, for sure.”

Indeed, the mindset that Babby’s team and Jacksonville’s other sports organizations are taking toward millennials — which is to understand their desire to have fun and unique opportunities to socialize with each other, and meet that desire without pandering to them — that more of our city’s non-sports entities should embrace.

More of them should follow the lead of the Jacksonville Symphony, which has developed a nice “Symphony in 60” series that unapologetically seeks to attract millennials to a performance by essentially declaring:

“Hey, we’re going to play for 60 minutes so you already know how long you’re going to be in your seats. But before we perform, we’re going to have a happy hour where you can have a beer or drink and talk with your friends about what you did during your day. And after the happy hour — but before we perform — we’ll explain to you what we’re going to perform. And once our performance ends, we’re going to have a cool after-performance gathering where you can have another beer or drink — and this time talk with your friends about what a great time you had attending our performance.”

That’s the kind of “give us something we enjoy that lets us feel connected, but spare us the heavy sales pitch to try and tie us down” approach that truly is music to the ears of Downtown Jacksonville’s millennials.

Even more than the sound of a popping wine cork.

ROGER BROWN is a Times-Union editorial writer and member of the editorial board. He lives Downtown.

IT TAKES MORE THAN A GAME TO BRING FANS

Sports teams understand that today’s fans, especially younger ones, demand entertainment beyond what happens on the field and amenities that deliver a memorable, shareable experience.



JAGUARS

LEAGUE: National Football League

HOME VENUE: TIAA Bank Field

HOW THEY ATTRACT MILLENNIALS: Outreach to area universities, partnerships with area bars in the “JagBars” program, stadium amenities including swimming pools and a new dog park.



JUMBO SHRIMP

LEAGUE: Southern League (Double-A baseball)

HOME VENUE: Baseball Grounds of Jacksonville

HOW THEY ATTRACT MILLENNIALS: “Thirsty Thursdays” (where beer is available for \$1), Sunday family days.



ICEMEN

LEAGUE: East Coast Hockey League

HOME VENUE: Veterans Memorial Arena

HOW THEY ATTRACT MILLENNIALS: Events like “Wine Down Wednesday” and holding a Georgia-Florida hockey game during the annual football game weekend.



SHARKS

SPORT: National Arena League football

HOME VENUE: Veterans Memorial Arena

HOW THEY ATTRACT MILLENNIALS: Various theme nights, including “Superhero” and “Hawaiian” nights.



GIANTS

LEAGUE: American Basketball Association

HOME VENUE: Veterans Memorial Arena

HOW THEY ATTRACT MILLENNIALS: Summer camp offerings, appearances by the mascot “Mr. Biggs.”

Meet three millennials willing
enough to bet on the future
of Downtown Jacksonville to
open businesses there

Hustle and Soul

BY LARRY HANNAN
PHOTOS BY BOB SELF
J MAGAZINE

When Emily Moody-Rosete looks out of
the window at her Wolf & Cub boutique
in Downtown Jacksonville, she's trying to
imagine a future with a vibrant Downtown.

"I've always loved Downtown,"
Moody-Rosete said. "I've seen how vibrant
the downtown is in cities like Atlanta and San
Francisco. I want Jacksonville to have that."

Moody-Rosete is smart and impressive
when you meet her. Exactly the type of per-
son you want when you're looking for busi-
ness owners to help revitalize Downtown.





Emily Moody-Rosete

owner of Wolf & Cub,
a boutique at 105 N. Laura St.



Jamee Yocum

owner of Bark Downtown,
a pet boutique at 45 W. Adams St.



But for Moody-Rosete and others, the clock is ticking. They came Downtown, but if Downtown doesn't become what they expect in the next few years, they could be gone.

A block away, Jamee Yocum looks out the window at Bark Downtown at 45 W. Adams St. and sees construction across the street. She hopes that construction leads to more Downtown redevelopment and more people living, working and shopping Downtown.

Two blocks away on East Bay Street, Brian Miller expressed satisfaction at the decision to expand Bold City Brewery into Downtown. It's been hard at times, but he's confident the expansion will succeed as more bars and restaurants come into the area.

Moody-Rosete, Yocum and Miller are business owners who are making a bet on Downtown. The bet is that the long-promised revitalization will happen, and the stores and bars they have opened up will reap the benefit by getting prime real estate early.

Moody-Rosete and Yocum are both 37, and Miller is 36, which is ancient for a professional athlete but young for a business owner. This puts them at the tail end of being millennials in a micro generation some are calling xennials, which describe people born between Generation X and millennials.

And while Downtown needs business owners of all ages, getting young people is important, said Jake Gordon, CEO of Downtown Vision Inc.

"I think younger people are more willing to take risks," Gordon said. "But what you don't have at that age is the capital."

It can also be a challenge getting support. Moody-Rosete and Yocum both express frustration with the price of Downtown rent and said more small businesses would come if there were rent support.

"They should find a way to base your rent on how much your business makes," Yocum said.

Rosete said her rent just went up by \$300, but she's committed to remaining in Downtown for at least another year. However, if redevelopment stalls, she may

have to look elsewhere at some point.

Miller, who opened Bold City with his mother, Susan Miller, said there are still challenges. For example, the sidewalk outside needs repair, and they've had people trip and fall.

But he's glad they're Downtown and looking forward to the future.

Yocum opened the dog boutique Bark

on Park in Riverside in 2009. Three years ago she expanded and opened Bark Downtown. She sees parallels between Riverside nine years ago and

Downtown today.

Riverside has changed to the point where it's a destination that a lot of businesses would now like to be in. She hopes Downtown follows a

similar trajectory.

For the time being, Bark Downtown is only open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays. Yocum said that's when most of her business comes. Opening earlier or later can't be justified due to the lack of business.

Even when there are events Downtown, it doesn't bring more business, a source of frustration.

For the time being, most of her business remains in Riverside. She has 16 employees at Bark on Park, only one at Bark Downtown. But they do decent business during the lunch hour.

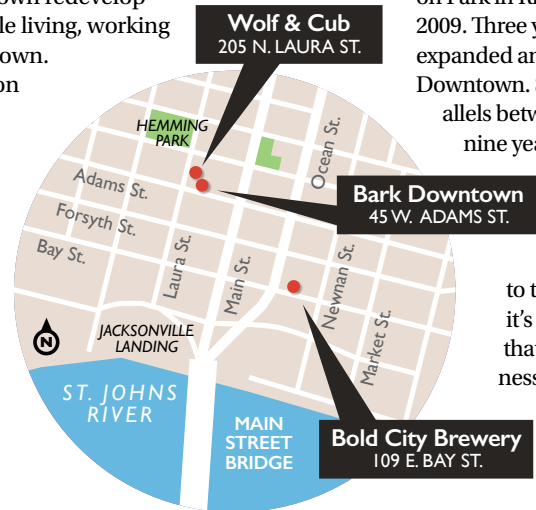
Yocum is also launching a grooming shuttle that will offer grooming services to people who have their dogs Downtown. She provides it in Riverside.

Miller also started in Riverside, and the original Bold City remains on Roselle Street. But the Millers decided to open up a second location a few years ago at the urging of DVI.

"We always wanted to be Downtown," Miller said. "We just couldn't find a good location when we got started."

But he got excited about the possibility when the Downtown renaissance began, and he jumped at the chance for their current location.

"We had looked at similar places to ours in places like St. Petersburg," said Susan Miller. "When we saw that, we knew we wanted to do something similar in Downtown Jacksonville."





Brian Miller

co-owner of Bold City Brewery,
a microbrewery at 109 E. Bay St.



Location was key.

"We could have done it in a strip mall, but that's not the way we wanted to go," Brian Miller said. "It was important to be in the historic Downtown."

MORE PEOPLE MEANS MORE CUSTOMERS

The challenge is the lack of people Downtown, which makes it hard to get customers who don't come down specifically for Bold City. But Miller said he's hopeful that will change as more people live and work Downtown.

But while their taproom in Riverside is designed to let people know Bold City exists and serve as a platform for their beer, the Downtown location is designed to be run as a business that is expected to make a profit on its own.

And it's worked out well. Miller's entire family works at the two locations, with his mother as co-owner, his dad often behind the bar and his wife and other relatives and friends often helping out.

"It gives the family something to be proud of," he said.

Moody-Rosete previously had a store in Riverside and also operated for a while out of Underbelly, a late-night music venue that was the seen as a big hope for Downtown before it closed.

After a few years working for the Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Moody-Rosete said the itch to run her own business returned. She started Wolf & Cub, a clothing and accessories boutique, at One Spark and eventually ended up at 205 N. Laura St., a few doors down from Chamblin's Uptown. She is co-owner with her husband, Varick Rosete.

"I was still making jewelry and other stuff even when I didn't have a business," Moody-Rosete said. "I looked at Five Points when I started, but I'd been there and done that."

She knew Chamblin's was a good anchor for the area, so she rented in Downtown.

A LEAP OF FAITH

Despite a lot of hope about the future, vacant storefronts remain common Downtown. Perhaps the most depressing is the one Moody-Rosete has a connection with: Underbelly at 113 E. Bay St., founded by Cameron Beard and others to bring live music to Downtown. The Underbelly sign is still visible, a reminder of its absence.

Beard, who was a vocal proponent of revitalizing Downtown, could not be reached for comment. But Elias Hionides, the real

estate broker looking to lease the property, strongly pushes back against the suggestion that the venue failed.

"Cameron sold it for a profit because he wanted to move to Colorado," Hionides said. "The new owner did not run Underbelly well."

Hionides said Underbelly still could be successful with the right people running it. He's gotten some interest but hasn't found the right fit.

Miller said he'd welcome a new live music venue next door, and Gordon said success can breed success Downtown.

"We love stores like Wolf & Cub," Gordon said. "That's the kind of store that we need Downtown."

Gordon said he was recently in Boston, and stores in that downtown can count on walk-in traffic to be successful. Jacksonville hasn't reached that point with most business being destination-driven, which means people come to the store intentionally and aren't just walking down the street and decide to check out something they see.

Gordon also said small businesses had a point when it came to rent. Most of the focus has been in supporting big businesses coming to town, but he hopes in the next few years to have more programs focused on helping small businesses.

A BOOST FROM THE CITY

An incentive program that awards hundreds of dollars is just as hard to run as an incentive program that awards tens of thousands of dollars, so governments usually focus on the big fish that can be awarded a lot of money, Gordon said.

The Downtown Investment Authority does have a retail enhancement program that has awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in money to retain and recruit businesses into the Downtown.

"We have funds available in the retail enhancement program and will allocate more funds for the program beginning Oct. 1," said Aundra Wallace, outgoing CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority. "Additionally, we utilize our Downtown economic development fund to assist businesses as well."

Until that happens, the business owners already entrenched will battle on, hoping for a new day.

"I want more retail, and I'd love to see more boutiques," Moody-Rosete said. "Downtown has so much to offer, I want to see it succeed."

LARRY HANNAN was a Florida Times-Union reporter in 2008-2017. He lives in Riverside.



DOWN TOWN U.

Jacksonville's colleges
and universities see Downtown
as a place to expand offerings
and draw students

BY EMILY SULLIVAN
PHOTOS BY WILL DICKEY
J MAGAZINE





DESIREE COPE
is a business student at
Florida State College at
Jacksonville, and works
at the school's 20West
Cafe on West Adams
Street Downtown.



ESIREE COPE, 20, TAPPED HER fingernails on the table in front of her, struggling to imagine what might happen if more college students like her embrace Downtown.

“Young people have a lot of fresh ideas that can be for the better,” Cope began.

She paused, unsatisfied with her answer, searching for the right words.

Explaining young people’s Downtown presence is understandably complicated. Local college and university students acknowledge Downtown is inching toward revitalization, but students often turn elsewhere to eat, live and engage. Some students cite safety and crime concerns; others agree few attractions fit their squeezed budgets and calendars.

Still, when Florida State College at Jacksonville offered 58 new Downtown housing units, just seven blocks from the decades-old Downtown campus, more than 500 students replied with interest.

For now, Downtown’s appeal does not appear to outweigh the convenience offered to many students living on or near suburban campuses where affordable meals and entertainment venues are already accessible. If they work or intern Downtown, maybe they’ll stick around past close of business for a happy-hour beer, but it’s more likely they will just go home, leaving Downtown at the lonely mercy of joggers and stragglers.

Administrators and professors across FSCJ, Jacksonville University, University of North Florida and Edward Waters College want to help expedite Downtown’s comeback, leasing metro classroom space, building partnerships with businesses or offering housing to help young people find interests in Downtown’s growth and invest themselves as stakeholders in its long-term success.

That’s where Cope’s thoughts settled: College students could push youthful vibrancy into Downtown, but first they need to find a stake, a reason to care about Downtown, to take pride walking its sidewalks.

A January Kinder Institute for Urban Research working paper, “Cementing Millennials Downtown: Expressions and Impacts,” cited a similar sentiment. Young professionals with college degrees “want to be in a place they can help shape; they want an urban environment that is not ‘done,’” accord-

THE IMPACT OF JACKSONVILLE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ON DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE



Florida State College
at Jacksonville

FSCJ

Florida State College at Jacksonville will open 58 housing units above its Downtown 20West Cafe, just seven blocks from the college’s Downtown campus.



JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

JU houses some graduate courses Downtown and plans to bring its film school to the WJCT studios off Gator Bowl Boulevard.



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

UNF will launch its Center for Entrepreneurship in the redeveloped Barnett building and keep cultivating its partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art.



EDWARD WATERS COLLEGE

Edward Waters College is located in proximity to Downtown and encourages student leadership in Downtown growth.

**WE ARE SPECIFICALLY TRYING TO CREATE AN
ATMOSPHERE OF WELCOMING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.
THE UNIVERSITIES ARE UNBELIEVABLY IMPORTANT FOR THAT.**

JAKE GORDON, CEO OF DOWNTOWN VISION

ing to the working paper. Young people want to matter in the development of a city, to help shape its character.

"You have to be the change-starter, and that's the benefit," Cope concluded, as hot sun lit the 20West Cafe on West Adams Street she runs with fellow FSCJ students and alumni as part of the college's culinary program.

She sealed her answer with a convincing nod of her head.

Cope is just one of thousands of college students and recent graduates next in line to lead the charge in Jacksonville. If those young people don't find stakes in Downtown's success, though, they might flock to a city more established for young people, one that has more restaurants like Burrito Gallery, more eye-popping, walkable events like Art Walk and more of an inclusive, shared narrative.

Downtown has a ways to go, as less than a fifth of its residents and less than a quarter of its employees are aged 18 to 34, based on responses from the 2017-2018 Downtown Vision survey.

Still, Downtown Vision CEO Jacob Gordon said those results indicate forward strides compared to several years ago, which could correlate with higher education's expanding footprint.

"We are specifically trying to create an atmosphere of welcoming for young people," Gordon said. "The universities are unbeliev-

ably important for that."

Gordon said the expansion of JU, which was born Downtown and houses its main campus in Arlington, is notable. First, with the help of a \$274,000 Downtown Investment

That move gives Downtown around 40 more students to extract inspiration from its streets and care about its improvement.

Hopefully, any students taking classes Downtown will find stakes in the area's devel-



MADISON SHORT

is a senior art history major at the University of North Florida, and works as a UNF ambassador at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Authority loan, the university rented more than 18,000 square feet to offer some graduate courses in the SunTrust Tower, seeking to boost enrollment by 100 incremental students and business internship participation from 15 to 20 percent.

Based on that move's success, the DIA granted JU a \$100,000 forgivable loan to bring its film school to the WJCT studios off Gator Bowl Boulevard, according to Thomas Daly, DIA manager of finance and compliance.

opment and opportunities, said Don Capener, dean of the JU Davis College of Business.

Capener said getting a baseline student population to move Downtown, contributing to a total critical mass of about 10,000 people, is a chicken-and-egg quandary. He added JU has abundant chances to get involved.

Beginning in the fall, the school plans to host educational events Downtown where students can network with Downtown professionals from CEOs to the more than 60 JU

BREAKING NEW GROUND

Investing in our students
and the revitalization of
Downtown Jacksonville

20WEST

FSCJ CULINARY AND HOUSING EXPERIENCE

20West Housing

58 Apartment style-living spaces
in the historic Lerner Building.

20West Cafe

Farm-to-table style restaurant
operated by FSCJ Culinary program.
Open to the public.

20 West Adams St.

➤ fscj.edu/housing

➤ fscj.edu/20westcafe

FSCJ

Florida State College
at Jacksonville

I THINK A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE ARE REALIZING THEY CAN CREATE THE DOWNTOWN THEY'VE ALWAYS WANTED.

RICHIE MULLANEY, 23

alumni working at Black Knight.

"It facilitates their participation," Capener said, optimistic for his students and what lies ahead.

Hassan Pordeli and Angela Mattia, two JU professors who've taught Downtown business classes, agreed networking and employment opportunities could show students the worth of participating in Downtown revitalization.

While a revived Downtown would surely appeal to students, Pordeli emphasized what's currently at their disposal is not sufficient.

Based on what they've seen, some students agree.

Madison Short, 21, mulled over all this while standing duty as one of six UNF ambassadors at the Museum of Contemporary Art. MOCA, which became a UNF cultural institute in 2009, plans to reopen as a second location for Generation Us, a shop that sells classic contemporary furnishings and accessories. The first location of Generation Us is in Five Points.

Still, colors popping from the museum walls around her, Short conceded many students have difficulty justifying a Downtown trip.

"I think it's the same for a lot of people who work Downtown, which is sad," she said.

Arianna Pinto, 23, another MOCA ambassador, is hopeful that Downtown's lack of young people will soon change. Downtown is "coming up" and "changing," she swears; to her, it's convenient, a place she can walk down the street and purchase a \$2 Chamblin's iced coffee.

Downtown's capacity to satisfy young people's preferences is expanding, slowly, she said, and that ultimately should attract more invested young people.

"They want to see places thrive. They want to see little businesses thrive," Pinto said. "They bring a breath of fresh air."

INTERACTIONS BETWEEN UNF AND Downtown footholds like MOCA are crucial to promoting Downtown's narrative and the personal growth of students, said new UNF President David Szymanski, who's met with city officials and stakeholders over higher ed-

ucation Downtown.

Szymanski admitted "no one secret sauce" will cause Downtown to boom, but UNF's plans to open its Center for Entrepreneurship and offer graduate classes in the Barnett National Bank Building starting the first week of January might help slightly. That building is being renovated and modernized.

Mark Dawkins, dean of UNF's Coggin College of Business, said that entrepreneurial space will serve 10 to 15 innovators at a time, some UNF students and some Downtown employees. Those individuals might propose, workshop and implement projects to boost Downtown's muscle, adding opportunities for young people's investment.

Impacts of Downtown graduate coursework in business as well as public administration could segue into sending undergraduates Downtown, but Dawkins said no plan for business students is on the table, yet.

What administrators have thrown onto the table includes a variety of cross-institution partnerships to bring more students Downtown, streamlining master's degree candidates or collaborating to simplify transportation and logistics.

"We are not in competition. We should be in collaboration for the community," FSCJ Interim President Kevin Hyde said.

EWC, a historically black college just minutes from Downtown, has been a city stakeholder since 1866 and is receptive to any opportunity to expand its academic footprint in the interest of Downtown, said Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Vice President Eric Jackson.

Around 78 percent of EWC students come from Florida, and 20 to 25 percent come from Jacksonville, so many students are naturally equipped with "a vested interest to be here and stay here and work," he said.

As higher education moves into more of Downtown's vacant spaces, more college graduates might wade into and work to better Downtown, Jackson said, noting, "We want to be a part of that."

Two EWC students, Devante Mccloud, 22, and Cervantez Dennis, 21, said they've found stakes in frequenting Downtown

through volunteering close by to bring fruit and vegetables to the city's homeless population, from Hemming Park to the Rosa Parks Transit Station.

Mccloud and Dennis would like to see more life and vibrancy Downtown, just like most of their peers, but they emphasized students should take on initiatives like helping clean up the city to promote engagement.

Richie Mullaney, 23, agrees young people have a duty to engage in and push to broaden Downtown opportunities. He grew up just 30 minutes from Downtown but chose to leave for college and employment in Washington, D.C.

Mullaney said he would consider returning to Jacksonville when it's more millennial-friendly and entertainment-reliable with more initiatives that promote its collective narrative.

Downtown's potential is there, he said, so young people should set their stakes and help develop an environment they find comfortable, timeless, enthralling and meaningful.

"I think a lot of young people are realizing they can create the Downtown they've always wanted," Mullaney said.

That's what FSCJ students, including Desiree Cope, are doing at 20West Cafe, nestled under the 58 new housing units.

Hyde added the more opportunities students see Downtown, the more invested they'll become and the more additional opportunities will open for them, a cycle of sorts.

"This is a really good opportunity for those students to determine how they can have an impact," Hyde said of brewing Downtown activity.

Mullaney said that as young people become engaged in the Downtown revival, they will become invested and empowered as future leaders, no matter how their stake appears.

"Young people are very, very important," Mullaney said, "but also easy to forget in all of this."

EMILY SULLIVAN graduated from Emory University this year with a bachelor's degree in international studies. She worked as a summer newsroom intern with The Florida Times-Union.

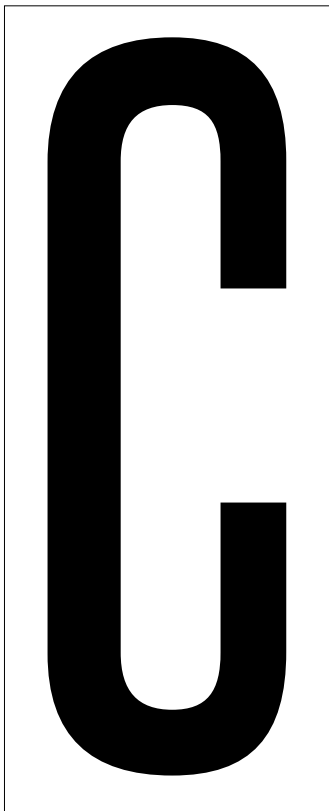


MILLENNIAL ISSUE

HOW THE STEEL CITY BECAME A MILLENNIAL MAGNET

BY RON LITTLEPAGE // FOR J MAGAZINE
PHOTOGRAPH BY JP DIROLL





ities across the United States are chasing millennials, hoping to lure them to their downtowns.

Tom Murphy is a senior resident fellow at the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit that advocates for smart growth and sustainability.

“Big cities, little cities, it’s virtually happening everywhere,” Murphy said in a recent interview. “It’s a new

way of living; it’s a new lifestyle.”

And it’s no secret what millennials want, Murphy said. They want walkable urban neighborhoods with affordable housing, good public transportation, a vibrant, exciting city with good restaurants and pubs and things like bike-sharing and scooter-sharing.

Murphy delivered the keynote speech earlier this year at a meeting of the Downtown Sacramento Partnership.

“[Millennials] are fundamentally redefining society as we know it. And 75 percent of them **want to live in walkable, urban communities.**”

— Tom Murphy, former mayor of Pittsburgh

“They are the biggest in the demographic, 83 million of them, and they are fundamentally redefining society as we know it,” Murphy said of millennials.

“And 75 percent of them want to live in walkable, urban communities. They are six times less likely to own an automobile than their parents at that age; they are interested in mobility, not what kind of car I have.

“Cities that understand that are making the kind of investments that position them to compete.”

Murphy speaks from experience. He served as mayor of Pittsburgh between 1994 and 2006. In a story published earlier this year about Pittsburgh’s rebirth, this is how Time magazine described that city:

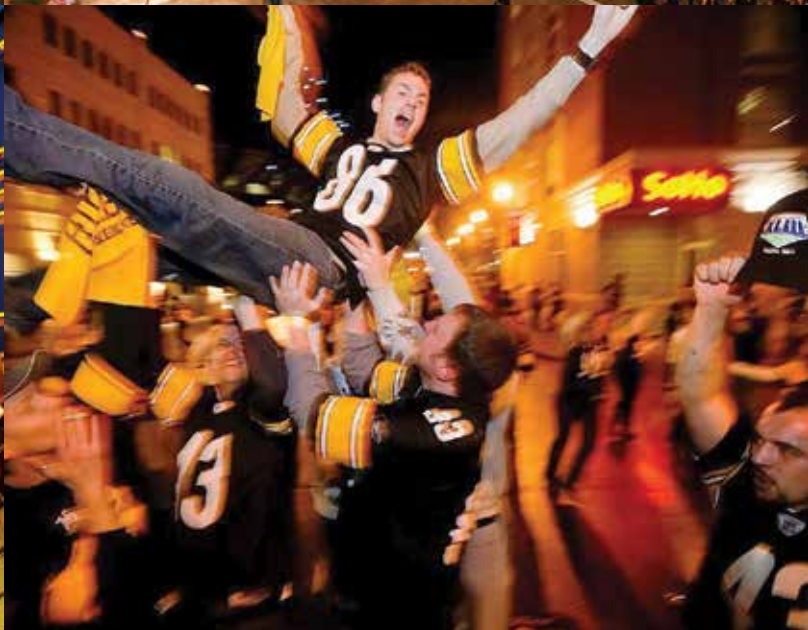
“America’s steel city was left for dead after the industry collapsed in the 1980s. Unemployment soared, the population plummeted and corporations fled.

“But gradually, Pittsburgh weathered the rocky transition from an economy built on manufacturing to one driven by cutting edge research.”

Murphy played a big part in that rebirth, and today Pittsburgh is home to a growing population of millennials and is often rated as one of the top cities for millennials to relocate to.

As mayor, Murphy developed public/private partnerships that worked with Carnegie Mellon University to create development in technology fields.

He pushed for \$4.5 billion in economic development in the city, he helped secure \$1 billion for development of two professional sports facilities and he oversaw the development of more than 25 miles of new riverfront trails and parks.



PITTSBURGH

Often rated as one of the top cities for millennials, Pittsburgh's Downtown has benefited from an influx of theaters, clubs and boutiques as well as an eclectic restaurant scene, urban parks and an enthusiastic fan base for the city's NFL football team.

HOW DOWNTOWN RICHMOND CHANGED ITS VIBE AND MADE IT STICK

BY RON LITTLEPAGE // FOR J MAGAZINE

Sydney England is 25 and lived in Downtown Jacksonville before moving to Richmond, a city that is successfully attracting millennials like her.

Where did you live in Jacksonville, and how long were you there?

I began looking for an apartment in Jacksonville, a city where I had never visited prior, upon accepting a job to join the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. At the time when I joined the staff, the duPont Fund had just moved into the newly renovated Jessie Ball duPont Center on East Adams Street. I knew from past experiences of living in Knoxville and Little Rock that I did not enjoy commuting by car. If possible, I wanted to live within walking distance to the office. It was challenging to find an apartment in Downtown Jacksonville that was affordable for one person. Again, I had never been to Jacksonville before and wasn't

interested in living with a stranger. Eventually I found a small studio within my budget. For two years, I rented a 16th-

floor studio at the City Place high-rise located on West Ashley Street.

What were things about Downtown Jacksonville you liked, and what were Downtown's shortcomings?

I liked the "staples" of Downtown Jacksonville — Chamblin's (where I could be found every morning around 8:30 a.m.), Desert Rider, Chomp Chomp (RIP), Burro Bar (RIP). The fact that two of the Downtown staples that I mention are followed by "tombstones," so to speak, is something that Jacksonville has to think about. Burro Bar and Chomp Chomp are right out of the pages of the Richmond foodie/dive scene. In my experience, there's an "economy of authenticity" that the young are drawn to — dive bars, local restaurants, farmers markets, music venues, etc. Young people like to live, work and spend money where there is a sense of community.

One of my community development peers once told me that "you can't make an economy and plop people down to stay there." It has to be real. It has to be community-need based. That can't be contrived or orchestrated by the private sector or developers.

Transit is obviously a shortcoming, but there aren't enough hours in the day to address that.

Surely you had discussions with other millennials about Downtown Jacksonville about what was needed to attract more young people to Downtown. What were some of the common threads?

I think that there was the perception, perhaps the accurate perception, that there was nothing to do and nowhere to go in

Downtown Jacksonville. It felt vacant and isolated despite being in the center of three rad neighborhoods — Springfield, Riverside and San Marco.

What drew you to Richmond?

There's just a youthful scene in Richmond — a booming local beer, wine and food scene. Lots of people are beginning to compare Richmond to Austin — a river city with a vibrant music scene and a tapestry of distinct neighborhoods, each with their own restaurants, bars, "go-to" spots, housing characteristics and recreational features. The upside to Richmond being the affordability.

What is Richmond doing that could serve as good examples for Downtown Jacksonville to follow?

There seems to be energy in Richmond, particularly from the nonprofit economic development community and the public sector, for equitable redevelopment. Locally, I've heard the term that folks are interested in "bridging RVA and Richmond." For those who are familiar with the area, "RVA" has become ubiquitous with all things young, innovative and playful in the city.

In 2011, a collaborative effort between Venture Richmond, the city, universities, businesses and other community stakeholders desired to create a stronger identity for Richmond. They printed a total of 50,000 "RVA" stickers and at the urging of the city government "stuck them on everything." Batch after batch of RVA stickers were freely distributed throughout 2011. Richmonders, the city and business community embraced the new brand. "RVA" is more than just a brand, and it's certainly more than a sticker. RVA is the microbrewery and artisanal food scene, kayakers on the James River,



SYDNEY ENGLAND

"One of my community development peers once told me that "you can't make an economy and plop people down to stay there." It has to be real. It has to be community-need based. That can't be contrived or orchestrated by the private sector or developers."

punk music venues, etc. The foil to RVA is “Richmond” — where the schools are underfunded, neighborhoods have fallen into disrepair and Confederate monuments memorialize the city’s shameful past.

At the end of 2017, the City of Richmond released a “Request for Proposals” calling on developers from across the country to submit ideas to comprehensively redevelop a 10-block parcel of city-owned land in downtown Richmond. Among its many parameters, central to the RFP were the requirements that no taxpayer dollars be used to create the development and that the community be engaged for input by developers. Over 1,000 Richmonders shaped the ultimate winning redevelopment specs that both responds to residential need — affordable housing, green space, solar infrastructure, central transit centers — and has the “big ticket” attractions for a city trying to put itself on the national map — i.e., a new coliseum and a conference/tourism hotel to attract larger events to the Richmond Convention Center.

Equitable, holistic community development wasn’t really something that I heard a lot of in Jacksonville outside of the nonprofit community. The conversations were generally “Who’s going to save the Shipyards? Who’s going to save the Trio? Who’s going to redevelop The District on the Southbank?”

It’s clear that job opportunities, including entry-level jobs, are important to millennials. How is the job market in Richmond, and where are you employed now?

I think the general feeling among young “Richmonders” is that the city offers a good number of entry-level jobs for millennials, and I think that data supports that young professionals can find an entry-level job that affords them a decent standard of living; 15 percent of millennials between the ages of 23-34 live alone in Richmond compared to the national average of 9 percent.

I work for LOCUS Impact Investing, a boutique investment advisory firm that works with foundations around the country to restructure their investment portfolios to carve out money from Wall Street and invest the money locally — in small businesses, affordable housing structures, fresh food systems, health care clinics, renewable energy technologies, etc.



ORLANDO

The Juice Bike Share program in Orlando has 25 stations and more than 3,000 users.

Murphy also relied on partnerships to transform more than 1,000 acres of abandoned industrial properties into new commercial, residential, retail and public uses.

In the interview, Murphy said Pittsburgh’s tendency to be “risk averse” had to be overcome.

“It’s about partnerships, reimagining what the city is,” Murphy said. “Find those people willing to take a risk, people who believe in the future.”

Pittsburgh is no longer a city “left for dead,” and its downtown is described as “the pulse of Pittsburgh.”

Downtown boasts of theaters, clubs, distinctive boutiques, an eclectic mix of restaurants, green spaces and urban parks that feature mid-day concerts.

“We live in this moment in time that I call the big lie theory of government, which is we can have great parks and wonderful schools and safe streets and nobody has to pay anything,” Murphy said in his keynote speech.

“And I’m not encouraging higher taxes, but I am going to say if you don’t invest in your community, you will not have the community you want to have.”

Millennials choosing to live in downtowns are bringing something else with them: Big companies are moving their operations from the suburbs to downtowns.

Murphy named some that have moved in the last two years: Kraft Foods, Motorola, McDonald’s, Google, Marriott.

“Why are they doing that?” Murphy asked his Sacramento audience. “They are

doing it because they are chasing talent. They are chasing the people that they want to get to work for them, and those people want to live in urban, vibrant areas.”

That sentiment was backed up in remarks made by Jeff Immelt, GE’s former chair and CEO, when he announced in 2016 that the company was moving its headquarters to downtown Boston:

“Greater Boston is home to 55 colleges and universities. Massachusetts spends more on research and development than any other region in the world and Boston attracts a diverse, technologically fluent workforce focused on solving challenges for the world.”

Two cities in Florida stand out as having created the urban lifestyle that millennials want — Orlando and St. Petersburg.

The University of Central Florida in partnership with Valencia College is building a campus in downtown Orlando that will bring 7,700 students to live, learn and work there when it opens next year.

For easy mobility downtown, Orlando offers LYMMO, a free bus service that runs seven days a week along its own dedicated lane throughout its three-mile route.

Orlando’s Juice Bike Share program has 25 stations and 3,000 users. Pedicabs also offer service in downtown.

The area around the former Amway Arena is being transformed into a 68-acre

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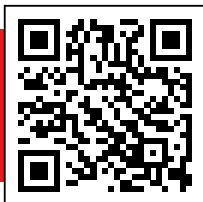
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ST. PETERSBURG

The Dali Museum in St. Petersburg is part of the city's thriving arts and culture scene.

mixed-use, transit-oriented, urban in-fill neighborhood in the heart of downtown.

Thomas Chatmon is the executive director of Orlando's Downtown Development Board.

"Downtown Orlando has a great deal going on," Chatmon said in an interview. "Since 2000, we have seen nearly a 60 percent increase in residential population.

"We now have more than 200 dining and entertainment locations, and we have expanded our transit options."

Downtown Orlando also offers performing arts options and sports venues. More than 2,500 residential units are in the works.

Chatmon said more than 1,200 events a year take place in downtown Orlando, including the Orlando Farmers Market and

free outdoor movies.

"But we are not finished yet," Chatmon said. "The area currently has \$4.4 billion in total investment underway, and you'll be seeing more on the horizon in terms of those primary draws for this generation."

Chatmon echoed Murphy's assessment of the millennial workforce.

"Research shows that progressive employers follow the best and brightest workforce," he said. "Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce. We want to create an environment that supports them and growing industries, such as tech. They are a necessary and vital component in shaping urban revitalization."

That same scenario is being played out in St. Petersburg. Just as Orlando is being

transformed from a city known for theme parks, St. Petersburg has moved past being known as "God's waiting room."

The arts and culture scene is thriving there with the Museum of Fine Arts, the Dali Museum, the James Museum of Western and Wildlife Art, and the Chihuly Collection.

Millennials are choosing St. Petersburg because of the booming nightlife, the outdoor lifestyle and downtown's growing culinary reputation.

There are seven miles of waterfront downtown, and Smart Growth America ranks downtown St. Petersburg as among the best for walking and biking.

And like Orlando, St. Petersburg is investing in the kinds of things millennials want. The St. Pete Pier, shut down in 2013, is being redesigned into a modern attraction. Even if the Tampa Bay Rays leave downtown St. Petersburg for a new stadium in Ybor City, plans are underway to turn the 86 acres around Tropicana Field into a hub of technology and university research jobs with restaurants, hotels and convention space.

Downtown Jacksonville could be on the verge of competing for millennials with developments at The Shipyards and The District on the horizon.

Many of our city's leaders are certainly familiar with the success of Pittsburgh's rebirth; twice the JAX Chamber's Annual Leadership Trip has traveled to that city.

The advice that Murphy, relying on his experience as mayor of Pittsburgh, gave his Sacramento audience would apply to Jacksonville as well.

"In my view, it's never about the money, the land or anything else," he said. "It's always about whether you have the community and political will to reach for the future.

"And that reaching for the future means that you need to kick the door down because there will be powerful forces that say, well, we can't do that.

"You know every time I went out into the community, which was a lot, and said this is what we want to do, there were 100 people giving me a reason why it can't happen.

"You know, it's the wrong color, it's the wrong place, it's too big, it's too small and, of course, we never have enough money to do that.

"Don't let them define the agenda. Kick that door down. Reach for the future."

RON LITTLEPAGE wrote for *The Florida Times-Union* for 39 years, the last 28 as a columnist, before retiring last year. He lives in Avondale.

"Millennials are the largest generation in the workforce. They are a necessary and vital component in shaping urban revitalization."

— Thomas Chatmon, executive director of the Orlando Downtown Development Board



ILLENNIAL ISSUE

Flipping *the* Switch

HOW DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE CAN GET 'LIT'



BY FRANK DENTON // J MAGAZINE
PHOTO BY KEVIN LIND // SHUTTER STYLES



One Spark, the multi-day crowdfunding festival, attracted more than 300,000 people Downtown in 2015. At its height, the annual event, built on connecting ideas with the resources to make them happen, was a popular draw among millennials.

When

that Huffington Post travel writer ranked Jacksonville as the top “secretly cool” city in the country a couple of years ago, you probably were surprised, given our town’s notorious inferiority complex.

David Landsel pointed to our entrepreneurs, microbreweries, coffee-shop culture, farmers markets and the rejuvenated Hemming Park, and you had to admit that maybe Jacksonville can be sort of cool.

But are we *awesome* — the adjective seemingly preferred by millennials, who are the key to Downtown revitalization?

We decidedly are not.

“What I struggle with is that after hours (Downtown) can be a little bit more desolate. You can have the whole bar to yourself.”

SHAWANA BROOKS

Well, at least, with all the activity and plans for Downtown, are we on our way to awesomeness?

The answer requires looking at Downtown revitalization from the perspective of those roughly 20-to-40-year-olds who are different from the rest of us in important ways other than just youth.

Before we venture into some crass generalizations about an entire generation, keep in mind the caution of Michael Dimock, president of the Pew Research Center, which has thoroughly researched millennials: “(G)enerations are a *lens* through which to understand societal change, rather than a *label* with which to oversimplify differences between groups.”

We’re already attracting more than our share of millennials. Using U.S. census data, SmartAsset.com said Jacksonville ranked fifth in the country for net gain of 20-to-34-year-olds in 2016: “It isn’t too hard to see why Jacksonville is a hot spot for millennials. Florida has no income tax, and in fact Jacksonville residents are some of the least taxed in the country. For millennials who want to live in a low-tax environment and get started on retirement, it’s tough to beat Jacksonville.”

But if we are going to compete with other, already awesome cities, we’ve got to be a lot more than cheap.

“Millennials more than others prefer to live in walkable, amenity-rich and transit-accessible neighborhoods,” three urban-planning scholars wrote in a paper for the Kinder Institute for Urban Research. “Living downtown allows millennials, who are delaying or rejecting marriage and parenthood at higher rates, to have new experiences, meet new people and remain in the life-cycle phase of ‘emerging adulthood.’”

Most cities are trying to attract millennials but may not know how. In a non-scientific survey of mayors, Politico Magazine found “a kind of lost-in-translation problem, a sense among America’s urban leaders that they don’t entirely get this crucial demographic.”

With groups like Generation Jaguar harnessing the energy of a young fanbase, Jacksonville’s NFL team has seen a large and loyal following among millennials.

In addition to the obvious — a good job, affordable housing — what other attributes are millennials looking for, and does Downtown Jacksonville offer them, on the ground now, under construction or among the ambitious plans?

A survey of the vast research and thinking about millennials suggests six standards that young people, consciously or not, might use in deciding whether to throw their futures into the critical mass that will re-energize our Downtown.

Using these attributes as lenses for revitalization efforts will indicate how successful Jacksonville will be.

[1] ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, THINGS TO DO

While a stereotype of their generation, gathering and getting out on the town is especially important to millennials, who are more likely to be single and social. They want a range of appealing options to keep them out and about.

Downtown Jacksonville, of course, has terrific arts and entertainment assets: performing arts at Veterans Memorial Arena, the Times-Union Center, Florida Theatre and the new Daily’s Place amphitheater. Professional sports in the Sports Complex. MOCA and MOSH Downtown and the

Cummer on the edge.

For socializing, there is the Elbow entertainment district along Main and East Bay streets, around the Florida Theatre. It bills itself as a “sprawling pedestrian-friendly entertainment district featuring several eateries & live music venues.” But while it has some lively places, it has not achieved critical mass as a true entertainment district.

“The Elbow is very successful for what it is,” Jake Gordon, CEO of Downtown Vision, said. “There’s not a place in the city that’s that robust, like Nashville or Duval Street in Key West, with a bunch of bars and restaurants all together.”

Asked how they socialize Downtown, participants in the millennial focus group didn’t see much Downtown. “What I struggle with is that after hours it can be a little bit more desolate,” said Shawana Brooks. “You can have the whole bar to yourself. It’s me and three other people at the Omni Hotel.”

Iesha Jackson said she socializes elsewhere. “Most of the time it will be in Riverside, the Town Center or the beaches.”

The 2014 Downtown master plan (Community Redevelopment Area Plan) said the Elbow “has potential to become much like Beale Street in Memphis or Bourbon Street in New Orleans” and recommended rebranding, with “enhanced lighting decorative banners ... and public art to add an



“I moved here for the whole experience, and there’s not much of a draw anymore. Evidently whatever was supposed to be here didn’t work.”

KRISTINA BROOKINS

innovative flair to the zone, signaling a sense of excitement and playfulness.”

The city’s rebranding was done, but the Elbow’s website, while enthusiastic, apparently hasn’t been updated since 2015, as it ballyhoos itself as “one destination that encompasses eight restaurants and nine bars with three additional spots to open by 2016.”

Shad Khan’s \$2.5 billion plan to develop Lot J and then the Shipyards would create a true, walkable entertainment district tying together Daily’s Place, the arena and the St. Johns River, transforming the east end of Downtown and almost, and maybe inevitably, connecting to the Elbow and the core. The Jaguars hope construction on the first phase will begin by spring 2019.

Meanwhile, there is promise just across

Bay Street from the Elbow, as the eyesore Berkman II is being sold to become a hotel and family entertainment center, and the city is sorting out bidders to raze the old Courthouse and City Hall in hopes of finding a private partner to build a new convention center.

All of that could put lots of feet on the street to support a lively entertainment district, drawing in those millennials now causing parking headaches in Riverside, Avondale and the beach.

But until the shovel pierces the ground, it’s all just plans.

[2]

HOUSING: MORE THAN JUST A CRASH PAD

The Kinder Institute study said some

developers targeting millennials are designing apartment complexes to support an “inside/out” lifestyle: “Inside/out refers to millennials’ tendency to see their homes as not only private, physical structures but also public-oriented communities, meaning that millennials engage in activities outside of their homes that other generations would engage in inside of their homes, such as eating, relaxing and exercising.”

Part of that is driven by their pressure “to generate timely and curated content for social media.”

A Phoenix economic development planner said that millennials’ “living space is not inside the four walls in which their bed and their kitchen exist. Their living room is outside, on the street, being with people, really engaging outside the structure in

the **HARTLEY** press

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which they live.”

The Kinder study cited developers who are cultivating inside/out lifestyles: “Building design features that support an inside/out lifestyle incorporate opportunities for these activities in common areas or have porous borders to adjacent amenities, allowing residents to fluidly move between their homes and the ‘third spaces’ that they adopt as their living rooms, kitchens and yards.”

Developers’ common-area features include resort-style lounges and pools, unique gyms, yoga studios, dog parks and wash stations, rooftop decks, ping pong tables and courts for bocce ball and shuffleboard.

Millennial housing also has to be powerfully connected. “Millennials value access to high quality information technology in their homes and communities, such as WiFi, technology-enabled amenities and high speed cable,” the Kinder report said. One developer noticed that young people, before agreeing to a tour, checked the bars on their phones, so he put “hotspots strategically located” to reassure them.

Millennials access entertainment on their devices, the study said, so they no longer need space for books, TV or stereo.

But as part of the inside/out lifestyle, they do want a sense of community and socially conscious housing, that is, “energy efficient, made from reusable materials, or defined by other design elements that limit resource consumption and waste.”

Unity Plaza was created in 2015 to help create a sense of community and inside/out living among the new apartment buildings in the Brooklyn neighborhood. Built with \$2.6 million in city money and run by a nonprofit, Unity Plaza predicted it would offer activities 260 days a year: “With year-round events and weekly community activities, there is always something to do at Unity Plaza. Featuring concerts, festivals, workshops, fitness classes and more. Come play with us!”

But this summer, the calendar on its website listed only yoga twice a week, and the three restaurants at 220 Riverside associated with Unity Plaza have closed.

Kristina Brookins told Action News Jax she came to Brooklyn to be part of the neighborhood. “I moved here for the whole experience, and there’s not much of a draw anymore. Evidently whatever was supposed to be here didn’t work.”

Still more apartments are being planned in and around Brooklyn, so Unity Plaza

may have just been ahead of its time and may be still viable.

Meanwhile, across the river, The District promises a whole new approach to inside/out and healthy living that could be a major drawing card for millennials.

SoBa, the 147-unit apartment complex under construction on the Southbank, promises: “Shared amenities include a 24-hour fitness club; co-working spaces; a coffee café; resort-style pool; summer kitchens with gas grill stations; a fire pit; garden daybeds; and outdoor yoga.”

As it stands now, millennial housing is ... under construction.

[3]

CONSTANT CONNECTIVITY

Millennials are the first generation of digital natives, and according to Pew Research, they say their use of technology is the single biggest differentiator from earlier generations.

“Millennials are synonymous with technology,” Thom Rainer wrote in *The Millennials: Connecting to America’s Largest Generation*. “It’s almost innate.”

Baby boomers have trouble getting their millennial offspring to return phone calls or even emails; they text.

And they seemingly live much of their lives on social media. One study found that more than 40 percent of people under age 34 give top priority to “Instagrammability” when picking a vacation spot.

And while millennials insist on being powerfully connected at home, of course, they also don’t want to lose that connectedness when they’re out and about.

Downtown has had free public WiFi in many public buildings and some public spaces (Hemming Park and the Landing),

and the 2014 master plan called for adding WiFi in most of the Downtown core, which has been done.

However, a recent check showed the WiFi signal to be sporadic and weak. If it is to fill millennials’ need for reliable and strong connectivity, free public WiFi will have to be strengthened and expanded as Downtown develops to LaVilla in the west, along the river and in the Sports Complex, as well as the Southbank.

The master plan also envisioned a project that “gathers and curates high-quality content from a variety of community partners and feeds it to an interactive app and website to enhance the user experience along the Riverwalk and in the urban core.” The content would provide Riverwalkers with information about health and wellness, arts and culture, sports, entertainment, environment and history and architecture.

The Riverwalk app is scheduled for years out, awaiting funding.

Millennials are not keen on waiting.

[4]

TRANSPORTATION: GETTING OUT AND ABOUT

Baby boomers’ teenage rites of passage included (a) getting their driver’s licenses and (b) getting their own car. That was how they defined freedom.

Millennials are more likely to define freedom as being free of car payments, insurance and parking headaches.

Researchers at the Transportation Research Institute compared the percentage of people with driver’s licenses from 1983 to 2014 and found a steady decrease in the percentage of 16- to 44-year-olds with driv-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 96



Music festivals like The Big Ticket (right) and Welcome To Rockville attract a predominately millennial crowd each year to Metropolitan Park.

WHAT'S FUELING THE RUN ON DOWNTOWN HOUSING?

BY CAROLE HAWKINS // PHOTOS BY BOB SELF // J MAGAZINE

Christina Williamson fits the profile of a young urban pioneer. The 35-year-old college professor runs across two city bridges as part of her daily fitness regimen, buys a sack of bananas at a fruit stand on the way home, walks to free concerts, stumbles upon Downtown cigar bars and wants to learn how to use the train that rushes by her apartment complex.

She isn't in New York City. She lives in Downtown Jacksonville.

"I love it," said Williamson, a resident of the new Lofts at LaVilla. "I get to have New York without the cold, without the expense and without the rudeness. It's exactly what I wanted."

Williamson and others like her are putting a new face on Downtown dwellers. Exchanging middle-aged professionals in high-rise condos for millennials and empty-nesters in amenity-rich apartment complexes.

It's not a movement engineered by some





"I LOVE IT. I GET TO HAVE NEW YORK WITHOUT THE COLD, WITHOUT THE EXPENSE AND WITHOUT THE RUDENESS. IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WANTED."

Christina Williamson, a resident of the new Lofts at LaVilla

grand revitalization scheme. It's part of a national trend, driven by changing demographics. Urban revitalizations everywhere are benefiting from the tailwinds as developers build to suit the growing demand for Downtown living.

In Jacksonville, which has tracked behind the curve, a handful of new apartment complexes have now appeared on the skyline. It's just the tip of the iceberg compared with what's coming. Projects currently on the books promise to double Downtown's

population within the next few years — a tipping point that would support the shops, eateries and events needed to create a vital urban core.

DOWNTOWN'S GROWING

For years, American downtowns have been places of empty sidewalks, potholed roads and abandoned buildings as people migrated to the suburbs. Now, the tide is turning. For the first time in decades, metro

growth has shifted to urban cores.

Between 2010 and 2015, the population in urban places grew as fast as the population in suburbs, according to a study published in June by the Urban Land Institute and real estate analytics firm RCLCO.

Millennials are one reason why.

A generation universally wooed by housing developers for their sheer size, millennials are collaborative creatures who have a different idea of what a neighborhood ought to be. They value walkable, mixed-used en-



Robert Gutierrez relaxes in the living room of his apartment at the Lofts at LaVilla,

vironments, smart transportation and community spaces with entertainment and social interaction, said JAX Chamber Chair John Peyton. Downtowns are natural places for this.

"When I turned 16, the first place I went was to get a driver's license," Peyton said. It's a rite of passage iconic to suburban living. "That's just not a priority for millennials."

But is Jacksonville hip enough to attract this young crowd? It would appear so.

Jacksonville is one of the top 25 cities millennials are moving to, Time magazine reported last year, citing another RCLCO study.

Williamson lived in Arlington before going out of state to college. When she returned, she didn't even consider her old neighborhood.

"I wanted to live Downtown. I was very specific," she said. "I

had lived in New Jersey where it was nothing to catch the train to Manhattan. We'd go out to Canal Street or to something in the park, and then we'd come home and refresh and go back out in the evening. So, if you're used to other places, you want that."

Robert Gutierrez, 34, manages an auto body shop and is a fellow tenant at Lofts at LaVilla. He grew up on the Westside. But Downtown gives him better access to other parts of the city.

"I have a lot of friends, and they're all scattered," he said. "Jacksonville is so large, from anywhere else it can be like driving out of town."

Like Williamson, Gutierrez enjoys views of the Downtown skyline when he runs and also the surprise of a weekend marathon working its way past his complex.

"I love this area," he said. "Riverside is probably my favorite part of town. If I wasn't going to be here, I just wasn't going to move."

The Downtown renters said Jacksonville's infrastructure could take a few tips from Or-

lando and Atlanta — places both firmly in recovery. They suggested more signs to easily orient them to Downtown districts and an evening lights festival to make the city more attractive.

"I wish we had an IHOP or a Waffle House in case I want to get up in the middle of the night and get some breakfast," said Ja'mere Brown, 27, also a Lofts at LaVilla resident. "We don't have that Downtown. I have to go to the Southside."

But the group gives Downtown credit for what it does have. There are historic bike tours, festivals and vendors. Gutierrez said people who live outside Downtown just don't realize how much is going on.

"One thing I see a lot is all of the art on buildings. I love that," he said.

DIFFERENT KIND OF RENTER, DIFFERENT KIND OF APARTMENT

Baby boomers, like millennials, are also moving into apartments in mixed-used

neighborhoods, where they can walk to the same shops and events millennials enjoy. It's a different kind of resident than Downtown saw 10 years ago.

In the decade prior to the recession, Jacksonville developers mainly built luxury multifamily complexes with large per-unit footprints, aimed at Downtown executives. Over half were for-sale condos and townhouses.

Today, only apartments are going up. And they look different.

"We're building smaller units just about everywhere," said Steve Moore, president of apartment developer Vestcor Companies, which built Lofts at LaVilla.

While apartment units were shrinking, clubrooms were growing. Lofts at LaVilla's community room is a large, open-style gathering space. Featuring a kitchen and bar, two TVs, games and computer stations, it's a place where people can feel comfortable just hanging out.

Jacksonville developer Alex Coley of Hallmark Partners said millennials are happy to rent smaller apartments in exchange for an avant-garde look, amazing community spaces, lower rents and walkable urban neighborhoods.

The company, in a joint venture with Tennessee-based Bristol Development Group, opened 220 Riverside three years ago. It was the first millennial-focused apartment complex built Downtown. Featuring upscale finishes, a business center, cyber cafe and saltwater rooftop pool, it drew both millennials and empty-nesters. The reaction makes Coley believe Downtown's market can support an even more amenity-rich product.

The partners will soon break ground on a second apartment development, Vista Brooklyn. The 10-story concrete complex will add a beer garden to its rooftop pool and clubhouse. And a pet friendly design will feature a grooming salon, as well as a "canine-turf" dog park atop the parking garage.

The complex will trend toward open floor plans — a more livable and economical choice that allows for significantly lower square footage.

"We saw that the smallest of the units we offered at 220 were some of the most popular," said Coley. "I had presented the 220 project to real estate organizations around the country and was discussing the small unit size ... everybody said 'Those are not small units, they're huge units.'"

One thing millennials definitely care about is cost. A 2015 survey by the Urban Land Institute showed affordability is the top housing issue millennials face. The recession delayed careers for many and left others underemployed.



DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE HOUSING SUMMARY

EXISTING

RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY	ADDRESS	YEAR OPENED	#UNITS	LEASE/SALE
Lofts at LaVilla	Bay St. and Lee St.	2018	130	For Lease
The Brooklyn	Riverside Park St. at Jackson St.	2015	310	For Lease
220 Riverside	220 Riverside Ave.	2015	295	For Lease
The Peninsula	1431 Riverplace Blvd.	2008	234	For Sale/Lease
Churchwell Lofts at East Bay	301 E. Bay St.	2008	20	For Sale
The Strand at St. Johns	1401 Riverplace Blvd.	2007	295	For Lease
San Marco Place	1478 Riverplace Blvd.	2007	141	For Sale
Residences at City Place	311 W. Ashley St.	2006	205	For Sale/Lease
The Metropolitan	421 W. Church St.	2006	118	For Lease
The Carling	31 W. Adams St.	2005	100	For Lease
11 E. Forsyth	11 E. Forsyth St.	2003	127	For Lease
Home Street Lofts	1050 Hendricks Ave.	2003	12	For Sale
The Plaza Condominiums at Berkman Plaza	400 E. Bay St.	2002	206	For Sale/Lease
Parks at the Cathedral	303 E. Church St.	2002	52	For Sale
The Townhomes at Berkman Plaza	442 E. Bay St.	2002	20	For Sale
W.A. Knight Lofts	113 W. Adams St.	2002	12	For Lease

SENIOR LIVING

Cathedral Residences	601 N. Newnan St.	1967	632	For Lease
Stevens Duval	601 N. Ocean St.	N/A	58	For Lease

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY	LOCATION	#UNITS	LEASE/SALE
The Barnett	112 W. Adams St.	100	For Lease
Broadstone River House	Prudential Dr.	263	For Lease
Houston Street Manor	Houston St. and Jefferson St.	72	For Lease
FSCJ student housing (Lerner Building)	20 W. Adams St.	56	For Lease
Elena Flats	122 E. Duval St.	4	For Lease
Lofts at Monroe	Monroe St. and Davis St.	108	For Lease
SoBa Apartments	1444 Home St.	143	For Lease

PROPOSED

RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY	LOCATION	#UNITS	LEASE/SALE
225 Laura St. Apartments	225 Laura St.	4	For Lease
Ashley Square Senior Housing	127 E. Ashley St.	120	For Lease
Former Community Connections site	325 E. Duval St.	115	For Lease
The District	Southbank	950	For Sale/Lease
Jones Brothers Furniture building	Hogan St. and Ashley St.	28	For Lease
The Shipyards	Bay St.	662	For Sale/Lease
Lofts at Jefferson Station	W. Bay St. and Water St.	133	For Lease
Southbank Apartments by Ventures	841 Prudential Dr.	297	For Lease
Vista Brooklyn	200 Riverside Ave.	308	For Lease

SOURCE: Duval County Property Appraiser and Downtown Vision, Inc.

Williamson said if Jacksonville real estate investors hope to draw millennials, they have to align rents to actual salaries. She can afford Lofts at LaVilla, which is workforce housing. But at other apartments Downtown, rents start at \$900.

"It's actually beyond what I would want to pay," she said.

That price also makes a person think twice about downsizing, said Gutierrez.

"In Jacksonville, you can get a whole lot of house for the same amount you're renting a studio," he said.

Asked whether they valued LaVilla's features and amenities, though, the millennials realized they did.

"Honestly, I'm picky," said Brown, adding he loved LaVilla's landscaping, carpeting, blinds and hotel-sized bathroom. It has a mirror that stretches from fingertip to fingertip.

Williamson said she definitely wanted to have the same kind of community spaces she had enjoyed in college.

"Millennials want to feel connected, even if we're both texting on our phones sitting next to each other," she said. "I was here in the community room and the TV was on, and another girl was next to me. And we just ate Subway, and the NHL hockey game was on. And we were just texting and eating. That's the thing."

DOWNTOWN HOUSING CONSTRUCTION CATCHING ON

Five years ago nobody was building Downtown, even though apartment con-

struction was booming elsewhere. The Great Recession had brought a surge in demand, with people moving out of foreclosed homes and into rentals. Jacksonville developers, though, were building their complexes on the Southside and beyond the Outer Beltway, not Downtown. That

Brooklyn by building an upscale apartment complex that specifically targeted millennials. Bristol Development had successfully built dozens of such projects in other cities.

"Looking at just this one market in Jacksonville, people said it was a colossal risk,"

Coley said. "But it had been demonstrated elsewhere. So, there was no reason to believe people would behave differently here than they had behaved in those other markets."

The residents came. 220 Riverside's occupancy rate soared above 90 percent. A nearby project that developed in tandem, Brooklyn Riverside, also succeeded. Stores at a Fresh Market-anchored shopping center across the street filled, and its parking lot stayed busy.

Downtown developers took notice.

"It was proof-of-concept," said Aundra

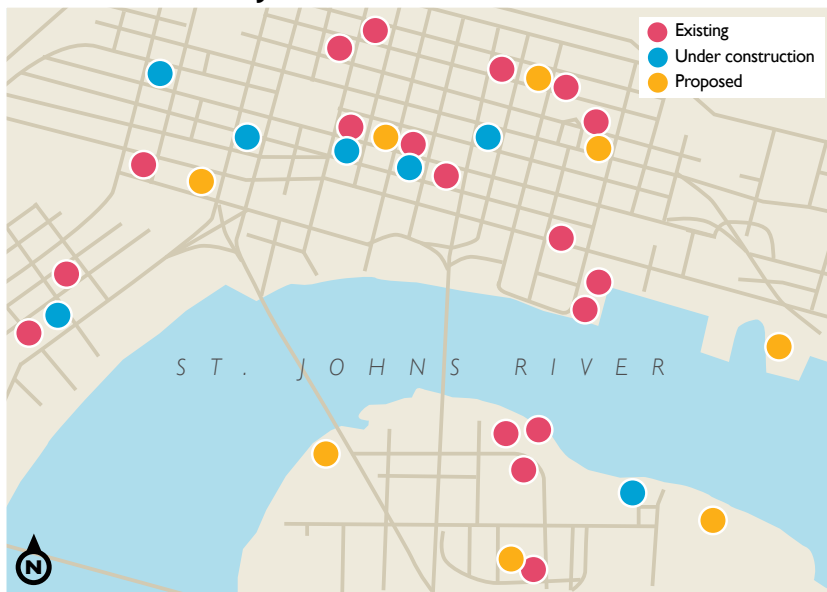
Wallace, outgoing CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority. "It showed if you provide housing with a mix of retail near it, it would be appealing to the millennial demographic."

Around the same time 220 opened, Vestcor began planning Lofts at LaVilla.

"We saw the successful redevelopment that happened at Riverside — not only the apartments, but the retail, with Fresh Market and all the restaurants," said Moore. "It was like, wow, people really do want to live in this area and to be close to Downtown."

Lofts at LaVilla opened in late 2017 fully leased. Three hundred fifty people had ap-

DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE'S HOUSING SURGE



SOURCE: Downtown Vision, Inc.

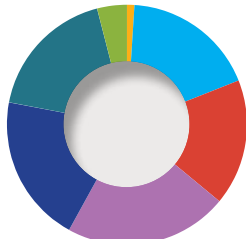
changed when 220 Riverside opened.

Hallmark's Coley had seen urban revitalization take hold in cities like Portland, Charlotte, Austin and Atlanta. The rebirths had been fueled in part by apartment complexes built in walkable neighborhoods at the perimeter of disinvested urban cores. Riverside, with its remodeled historic homes, tree-lined sidewalks and clusters of small shops and trendy restaurants, was such a place. Brooklyn, with its affordable land, sat right next to it, one step closer to Downtown.

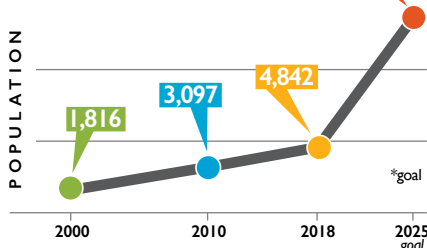
It was Coley's vision to extend Riverside's live-work-play neighborhood into

HOW OLD ARE THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE DOWNTOWN?

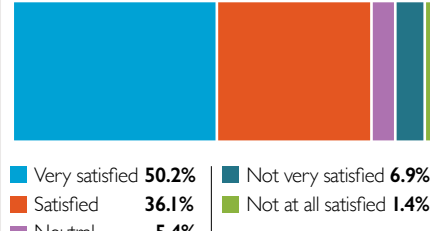
18-24	1.2%
25-34	18.1%
35-44	16.8%
45-54	21.7%
55-64	19.7%
65-74	18.4%
75+	4.1%



HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE DOWNTOWN?



HOW DO THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE DOWNTOWN FEEL?



SOURCE: Downtown Vision, Inc. and Downtown Investment Authority

During the past three years, Downtown Jacksonville has seen significant housing growth, including 310 units at Brooklyn Riverside, which opened in 2015 (top), 130 units at the Lofts at LaVilla, which opened earlier this year (middle) and 295 units at Riverside 220, which opened in 2015 (bottom).

plied for its 130 apartments.

“That’s almost unheard of,” Moore said. “We knew there was unmet demand. Did we know that it would be that strong? Not really, to be honest.”

Even more Downtown apartment projects are following. Five are now under construction, and nine others are being planned. Is there really that much capacity in Downtown’s housing market?

DIA’s Wallace said there is. Occupancy rates for Downtown apartments today average 96 percent.

“Ninety-six percent occupied means they may keep one or two apartments as show models, and everything else is leased up,” said Wallace. “When you build it, it gets occupied.”

The apartments now in the planning stage will push Downtown revitalization over a major threshold. Ten thousand residents is a number Jacksonville leaders have been targeting for decades, a tipping point where Downtown revitalization takes hold, according to urban redevelopment theory.

“That’s when you really start to change the dynamics of the way Downtown works and feels,” Peyton said. “You start developing a street life where the corner store, the sandwich shop, the dry cleaners and the grocery store become viable.”

A 2017 audit by Downtown Vision shows 4,842 people live in the urban core today. If you take into account apartments already under construction and proposed, that number climbs to 10,330, according to DVI.

The number could push even higher. Vestcor, which is currently spearheading two other urban core apartments, is bullish on future possibilities.

“We’re not done with Downtown; we’re looking for more deals,” Moore said. “We really think there’s a lot more demand there than what we’re delivering.”

Anyone who’s ever doubted Jacksonville could revitalize should pinch themselves. Apartments are poised to deliver a major leap forward. In the grand scheme of urban redevelopment, it will be just a blink of an eye before Downtown becomes an entirely different place.

CAROLE HAWKINS is a free-lance writer who lives in Murray Hill.







CAN DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE
MEET THE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET
NEEDS MILLENNIALS DEMAND?

THE CON NEC TED DOWNTOWN

BY LILLA ROSS // FOR J MAGAZINE

Millennials figure prominently in any discussion about the present and the future of Downtown Jacksonville. Getting them there is the challenge.

Known as digital natives — the first generation to be digitally connected to the world from birth — being connected to the internet isn't a convenience, it's a necessity.

A CommScope survey in 2016 found that while baby

ILLUSTRATION BY RETRO ROCKET

A SIX-PART SERIAL PODCAST FROM

The Florida Times-Union

HAVE YOU SEEN KAMIYAH?

July 10, 1998 held so much promise for Shanara Mobley. The birth of her daughter, Kamiyah, gave the teen a chance to make her troubled life right.

But in a matter of hours, it all went so wrong. When a woman in scrubs walked out of a Florida hospital, Shanara's future was tucked into her purse.

Baby Kamiyah was gone. Almost 19 years later, police announced a major break in the kidnapping case. Would it bring Kamiyah back to her mother?

On the 20th anniversary of the abduction of Kamiyah Mobley from a Jacksonville hospital, The Florida Times-Union and jacksonville.com present: "Have You Seen Kamiyah?"



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boomers think work ethic defined their generation, millennials say technology defines theirs. That same survey found that millennials value their internet service over heating and plumbing.

Millennials and their expectations for digital access will drive technological development Downtown. They will want 5G access to the internet, Smart Cities technology managing traffic and other public services, the Internet of Things at home and work.

Jacksonville is already seeking a federal grant for Smart Cities technology, which uses data collected by sensors to manage things like traffic flow and public works. The Internet of Things is still in its infancy, but if you have a FitBit or an Echo, you're already in that universe.

If you want to know what that's going to look like, keep an eye on The District. As the newest and biggest development in Jacksonville gets underway on the Southbank, it will have all the latest technology.

"Technology is part of the driving ethos for us," said Michael Munz, who has partnered with Peter Rummell to develop The District. "Millennials aren't the only group expecting technology advances, but what's different about the millennials is that for them technology isn't a 'thing,' it's a lifestyle."

While the rest of Downtown will be upgrading and retrofitting to accommodate new technology, it will be part of the residences, businesses and retail of The District from the ground up. The District is still in its early days yet, so what the multi-use development will have to offer is still in the works.

"Of course, we'll have the latest 'things,'" Munz said. "But it's more than laying fiber and building buildings. What I'm talking about is how people will live their lives."

And that's the other thing about millennials and digital connectivity — it's not just about the latest and fastest gadgets, gizmos and devices. They use their devices to connect to people, whether it's a selfie from a game, a photo of their dinner, streaming music or a making video of cute pets or hot button issues, millennials want to access the internet — the faster, the cheaper, the better.

Free public Wi-Fi is available at City Hall and other public buildings like the Main Library downtown where patrons also can stream and download books, music, videos and data.

The city's first foray into public Wi-Fi was

"What's different about the millennials is that for them technology isn't a 'thing,' it's a lifestyle."

MICHAEL MUNZ
a partner in The District



at One Spark. Jim Bailey, chairman of the Downtown Investment Authority, said the organizers thought the service would be a hit, but usage was surprisingly low.

Nonetheless, the city has a Wi-Fi hotspot in an area from Hogan to Market streets, and from Bay to Duval streets. While it's free, it isn't especially robust; it's stronger in some spots more than others. Free Wi-Fi also is available at many businesses, as well as Daily's Place and the sports complex, most of

its railroads, has rebranded itself Gig City.

Municipal Wi-Fi worked in Chattanooga because it's a small city (population 177,000) that had poor coverage from Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and like Jacksonville, it has a publicly owned utility, Mitchell said.

Back in 2009, its electric infrastructure was in poor shape, so the city undertook a massive upgrade and realized that it could lay fiber at the same time. It required a sizable investment. The city borrowed \$169 million and got a \$111 million federal stimulus grant.

But the investment paid off. Since going on line in 2010, the internet service subsidizes the utility enabling it to lower electric rates by 5 percent, Mitchell said.

Not everyone's experience has been so positive. Chattanooga's utility is one of the best in the country, Mitchell said. A municipal ISP requires maintenance and upgrades to maintain the quality of service. Customers don't tolerate poor service for long.

Another obstacle is resistance from ISPs. Jacksonville is served primarily by Comcast and AT&T. The telecommunications industry has fought municipal ISPs as unfair competition.

"The mayor would have a big target on his back," Mitchell said. "The commercial ISPs would raise the issue of why the city is spending money on Wi-Fi when there are potholes to be filled."

The telecommunications industry has lobbied for and won state legislation that creates additional obstacles. Florida has six laws that regulate internet service, including high taxes on municipal broadband projects and a requirement that municipal projects recoup their investment within four years, which Mitchell said is next to impossible.

Instead, Mitchell suggests an incremental approach.

"Officials want to do something big and flashy rather than something common sense," he said. "You can lower the cost by doing it slowly, getting in the trench when

THE DOWNTOWN WI-FI PROJECT



them requiring a password.

But some cities are moving beyond internet access that is in business-based silos to broader networks, some for free, others for pay.

Chattanooga, Tenn., was the first and so far the largest city to offer municipal Wi-Fi, said Christopher Mitchell, director of the Community Broadband Networks Initiative at the Institute for Self-Reliance. It's not free, but it's not expensive. Basic service of 100 megabytes is \$58 a month; one gigabyte costs \$70; and 10 gigs costs \$300.

Chattanooga, which used to be known for



"I don't know if [public Wi-Fi is] an asset. It's nice to have. It's cool. It's doable. But the equipment is expensive."

JIM BAILEY
chairman of the Downtown Investment Authority

someone else has opened it up."

The city can lay fiber optics as it upgrades the infrastructure over a number of years. In the meantime, fixed wireless antennas can be installed on buildings, providing Wi-Fi to smaller areas. Fixed antennas are relatively inexpensive but are vulnerable to extreme weather and need backup devices, he said.

Another scenario is for the city to lay its own fiber optic cable and lease it to a company to operate and maintain. Monkeybrains, an ISP in San Francisco, has built a network of low-cost Wi-Fi using a combination of fiber and fixed wireless, Mitchell said. Closer to home, Hotwire is doing something similar in South Florida.

But there's a game-changer on the horizon — 5G — described as Wi-Fi on steroids.

Fifth generation wireless will be up to 1,000

times faster than 4G, which is the current standard. Not only will it be faster, it will have greater capacity and be able to do things 4G can't do like network slicing, which allows the creation of multiple virtual networks.

A self-driving car would require a network slice to navigate in real time. The Internet of Things — all those devices, appliances and other things that connect to the internet — will require network slices, too.

It's going to revolutionize the internet on every level. For starters, you're going to be replacing your digital devices, which aren't capable of handling 5G. And so will businesses, universities and cities.

It will create capabilities and opportunities that no one has thought of yet. AT&T has launched 5G service in Atlanta, Dallas and Waco, Texas, and is adding Charlotte and Ra-

leigh, N.C., and Oklahoma City.

It is introducing its 5G Evolution — the precursor to 5G — by the end of the year to 400 cities, including Jacksonville, said AT&T spokeswoman Karen McAllister.

But 5G is not expected to go on line until 2020 at the earliest.

AT&T is the ISP provider to 175,000 customers in Jacksonville, but McAllister said it's too early to say where in Jacksonville its 5G Evolution service will be available.

"We have existing technology in place, and we can build on it to create the ideal foundation for 5G. We can go from very fast 4G to faster 5G Evolution, and that will get us to 5G network," McAllister said.

But until then Downtown could beef up its internet access — or not.

"There are so many ways you can get connected, I really don't know how valuable public Wi-Fi is," the DIA's Bailey said. "I don't know if it's an asset. It's nice to have. It's cool. It's doable. But the equipment is expensive, and how much do people care if you don't have it?"

That's a baby boomer talking.

LILLA ROSS is a freelance writer who worked as a reporter and editor at The Florida Times-Union for 35 years. She lives in San Marco.

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THE 20 MUST-HAVES FOR SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWNS

BY MIKE CLARK // J MAGAZINE

If you had visited 2,000 downtowns in the U.S. and Canada over a 35-year period, you would develop an educated opinion about what makes a successful one.

Roger Brooks, founder of the Destination Development Association in the Phoenix area, did just that. His team compiled the 20 characteristics of successful downtowns or separate districts in larger downtowns.

Even the best downtown doesn't hit 20 of 20. The best downtowns achieve 14 of 20. Once you drop below 5 of 20, well, it's time to get to work. Hello, Jacksonville.

A phone interview with Brooks reveals just how far behind Jacksonville is. It's beyond belief that city leaders can visit outstanding peer cities every year, and still our Downtown remains so far behind.

"We're in the age of 'third places,'" Brooks said. "The first place is our home, the second place is where we work and the third place is where we go to hang out. Starbucks built an entire brand out of being third places. This is why downtowns are so important. Downtowns are about after work and weekends. The days of the suburban mall are ending."

So here are the 20 ingredients of a successful downtown along with my assessment of Jacksonville. The bottom line: Jacksonville gets a charitable 3 of 20.

1

BEGIN WITH A PLAN

(1 OF 1)

Jacksonville has a plan for Downtown. Jacksonville is great about plans. We call ourselves a “three-ring binder city.” As Frank Denton wrote in the spring edition of J magazine, Jacksonville has a detailed 381-page plan that was approved by City Council in 2015. It involved consultants, several hundred community stakeholders and 43 public meetings.

The Downtown Investment Authority is assigned to implement the plan. And it's fair to say that much of the progress Downtown would not have happened without the expertise of the authority. Many Downtown buildings require additional financing options and complex renovations.

The DIA, led by outgoing CEO Aundra Wallace, is tasked with making these projects work for the investors, the taxpayers and businesses and residents Downtown.

We have concerns that the Downtown Investment Authority has neither the staff nor the funding to make speedy progress. See the next item.

But there is a Downtown plan, and it is being implemented.

2

THERE IS A STRONG BRAND

(1 OF 2)

Jacksonville generally, and our Downtown in particular, lacks a strong identity.

Ever since the days of “Bold New City of the South” about 50 years ago, Jacksonville has struggled to identify itself.

In part, we believe this

has to do with ignoring our outstanding history, much of it surrounding our strong African-American culture.

Jacksonville also has failed to promote the fact that our city has an amazing series of waterways. We have a wide expanse of the St. Johns River Downtown, much like Baltimore's Inner Harbor. We have Hogans and McCoys creeks, which could be used like San Antonio's.

A brand could refer to just one district Downtown. But even the Elbow is in its infancy as a brand.

3

THERE ARE CLUSTERS

(1 OF 3)

Critical mass is needed Downtown. As Brooks says, “We found out that the No. 1 activity of visitors in the world is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly setting. That is where 80 percent of the non-lodging spending takes place. If your locals aren't hanging out Downtown, neither will your visitors.”

A minimum of three straight blocks are needed for critical mass, the consultants state.

This means 10 places that sell food, such as coffee shops, bistros, cafes, restaurants, wine stores, delis and confectioneries.

There also should be 10 destination retail shops, such as galleries, antique stores, collectibles, books, clothing, home accents and the like.

And there should be 10 places open after 6 p.m. that would include entertainment, a theater, bars and bistros, specialty shops and open air markets.

Laura Street from Hemming Park to The Jacksonville Landing was designed to offer that sort of clustering. You can see the potential there, which is a well-known Jacksonville curse. But it's a long way from reaching critical mass.

4

THERE ARE ANCHOR TENANTS

(1 OF 4)

“To be a successful community, you must have at least one or two anchor businesses, ones that people would drive an hour or more to visit,” the Brooks team suggests.

The Jacksonville Jaguars, combined with Daily's Place, Veterans Memorial Arena and the Baseball Grounds, provide entertainment. But right now there aren't enough attractions besides the actual events. That ought to be solved once the Jaguars develop Lot J.

The USS Adams might be a regional attraction and so would an aquarium.

As for the Landing, it once was an anchor many years ago, but its time has passed.

All in all, Downtown doesn't have an anchor tenant now, but possibilities are on the horizon.

5

OPEN AFTER 6 P.M.

(1 OF 5)

Having an active Downtown after working hours is a key trait of a successful Downtown.

In too many cases, there isn't much to do in Downtown Jacksonville after 6 and on weekends.

As the Brooks team states, 70 percent of all consumer spending takes place after 6 p.m.

“People spend the night where there are things to do after 6 p.m. Visitors don't like sitting in a hotel room after dinner watching TV. Conferences and conventions are booked around things to do after the meetings adjourn that day.

“For cities trying to turn around downtowns, start by staying open on Friday and Saturday until 7, then add Thursday, then Wednesday.”

Downtown has ArtWalk, but that's one Wednesday evening per month, and even that event has been scaled down.

6

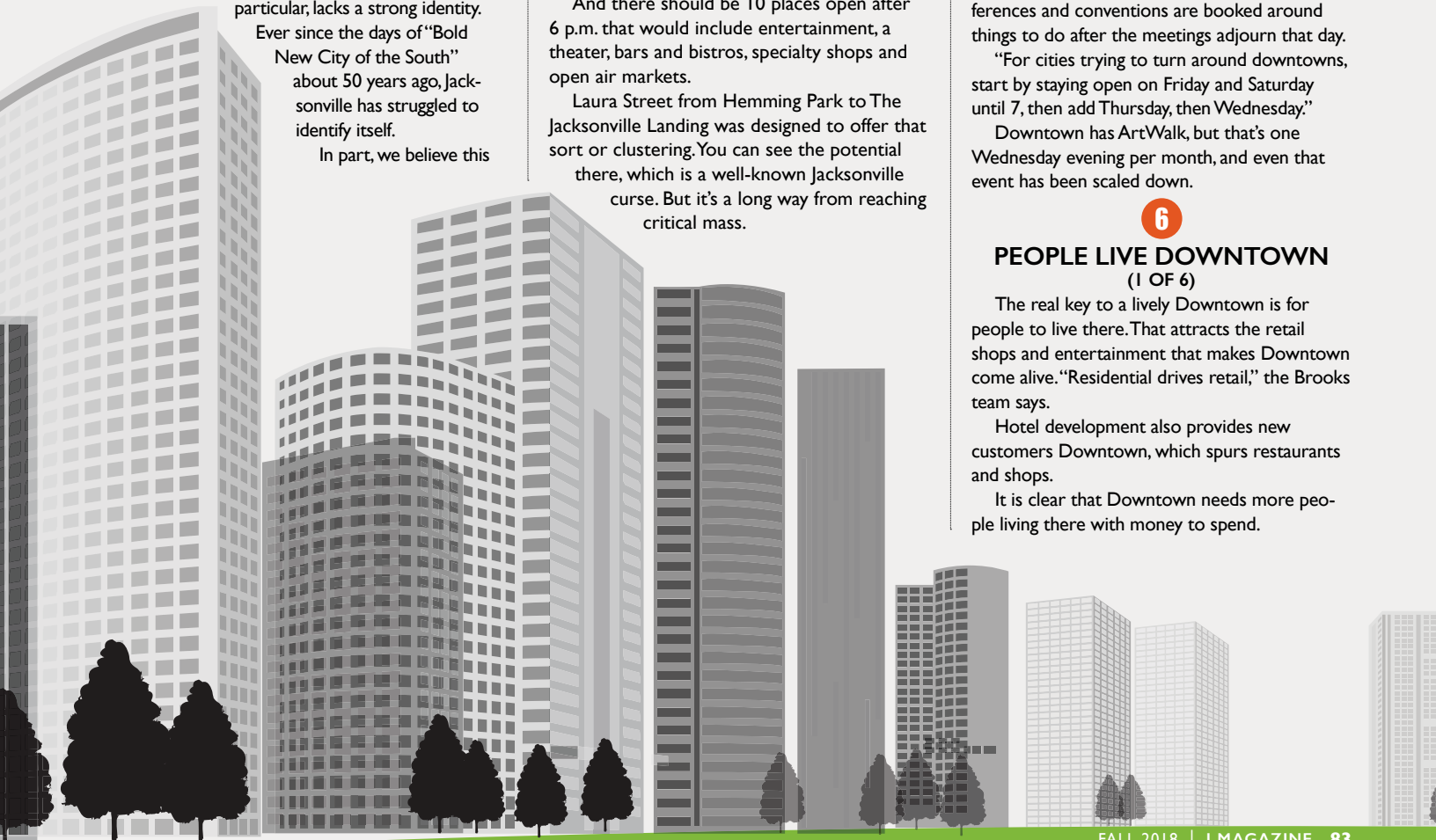
PEOPLE LIVE DOWNTOWN

(1 OF 6)

The real key to a lively Downtown is for people to live there. That attracts the retail shops and entertainment that makes Downtown come alive. “Residential drives retail,” the Brooks team says.

Hotel development also provides new customers Downtown, which spurs restaurants and shops.

It is clear that Downtown needs more people living there with money to spend.



7

PIONEERS HAVE INVESTED (1 OF 7)

"Every downtown revitalization effort requires property owners with patient money, the will 'to make a difference' and the ability to think long-term," the Brooks team states.

There are a few notable examples of this Downtown, such as the Farah and Farah law offices, the Vestcor apartment developers, the Jessie Ball duPont Center, the Cowford Chophouse, the Hallmark developers of 220 Riverside, the Jacksonville Jaguars and the developers of The District.

We haven't seen all the results of those investments, and we certainly need more.

"It takes one-third of the property owners, working together, to reinvent downtown in terms of business mix, curb appeal, upper-story living units, etc.," the Brooks team says.

Jacksonville is getting there. To reach scale, there may need to be more financial incentives. The Brooks team suggests reducing rental rates until there is the critical mass that makes Downtown a destination.

8

START WITH A DEMONSTRATION (2 OF 8)

Start with just one or two blocks to make a big impact. That was the idea behind developing Laura Street with its narrow lanes, sidewalk activity and shade.

Unfortunately, it didn't create much of a spinoff effect. Nevertheless, Jacksonville does have a few blocks to use as a model.

9

SOLVING THE PARKING DILEMMA (2 OF 9)

Two-hour parking tells visitors to stay away, that Downtown is a place to leave quickly.

Jacksonville has too many ancient parking meters that require quarters. We don't have enough meters that use various coins or credit cards.

And other cities have been introducing app-based parking systems that show drivers where the spaces are, allow payment on the smart phone and even text customers when time is up, giving them a chance to extend their

parking time with the app.

The Brooks team also suggests that downtowns need to do a better job of identifying where long-term parking is located. The Cowford Chophouse website does an excellent job of that.

Consider incentive parking programs:

- If you spend \$20 or more, you get free parking.
- Have local banks and businesses sponsor free parking days.
- Reduce parking fees the longer customers park.
- Angle parking generates more parking spaces and creates more space over parallel parking.

10

PUBLIC WASHROOMS (2 OF 10)

This might surprise some, but "restrooms should be the heart of spending districts," the Brooks team says. "The No. 1 reason passersby stop in a town is to use restroom facilities."

Once people get out of the car, there is a four times greater chance they will spend money.

Public restrooms need to be clean and safe. People will judge a Downtown by restrooms alone.

11

HAVE GATHERING PLACES (3 FOR 11)

"Turn parks into plazas," the Brooks team says. That would include trees, stages, public planters, public art and music.

We're glad to say that the revived Hemming Park fits that description.

What once was a blight across the street from City Hall is now a safe and inviting gathering place.

The District will be built around one.

A renovated Jacksonville Landing, designed as a similar park setting with stages and retail, would make a perfect complement at the end of Laura Street.

12

CREATE A GOOD IMPRESSION (3 OF 12)

Downtown needs good signage that reflects well on Downtown as a

place full of civic pride.

Gateways can span the street with decorative crosswalks, pole banners and "a sense of arrival."

Downtown has some of this but not nearly enough.

13

HAVE A WAYFINDING SYSTEM (3 OF 13)

Have clear signs that show visitors where to go Downtown. Jacksonville's Downtown is full of historic sites, but there are precious few ways for people to find them.

"Nationally, fewer than 5 percent of visitors stop at visitor information centers," the Brooks team states.

Using social media and web-based services offer good ways to direct visitors to Downtown sites, especially in large areas like Jacksonville's.

14

CREATE GATEWAYS (3 OF 14)

There should be a sense that people are entering or leaving a special Downtown district. Such gateways also foster a sense of pride among merchants.

"They should always be attractive and reflect the ambience of the town, promoting a feeling that you have arrived at a special destination," the Brooks team states.

15

SPECIAL SIGNS FOR BUSINESSES (3 OF 15)

Develop signs that stick out over the sidewalk with merchants staffing a review committee. Get rid of "no public restrooms" and instead have signs directing people where they can find public restrooms.

16**MORE INTIMATE SPACES****(3 OF 16)**

The biggest trend in successful downtowns is to make surroundings feel more inviting, not as pass-throughs for cars.

Water features and sidewalk cafes are typical.

That means elements like narrow streets and wider sidewalks, trees every 30 feet, buffers between traffic, decorative crosswalks and lighting.

17**INVEST IN CURB APPEAL****(3 OF 17)**

Curb appeal can account for 70 percent of new visitor sales, the Brooks team reports.

This means an extension of window displays to exterior spaces, not folding tables of goods.

Laura Street has a little of this, but it's an exception.

18**ACTIVITIES AND ENTERTAINMENT****(3 OF 18)**

Open air markets should operate for at least three days a week during at least a 24-week season.

Street musicians and artisans should be available on weekends. Outside events are recruited into plaza areas.

The Riverside Arts Market would fit that description, except it's open only on Saturdays, and it's separated from most of Downtown.

Hemming Park and The Jacksonville Landing come close in this arena.

Still, Jacksonville misses the mark.

19**GIVE DOWNTOWN A NAME****(3 OF 19)**

Consider Bricktown in Oklahoma City, Ybor City in Tampa, the Gaslamp Quarter in San Diego and Bourbon Street in New Orleans.

Jacksonville's Downtown doesn't have a name or an identity.

20**DON'T SEPARATE DOWNTOWN****(3 OF 20)**

Too many downtowns have a major thoroughfare cutting them in two like Phoenix.

The key is having two lanes with no one-way streets. For instance, Oklahoma City has converted its downtown streets to two ways.

Main Street in Jacksonville separates the Elbow district and the Florida Theatre from the Landing and Hemming Park.

"You can't do sidewalk cafes if your down-

town is separated by a freeway," Brooks said.

We need ways to link our Downtown districts, perhaps with trolleys. But first we need a few destinations worth the name.





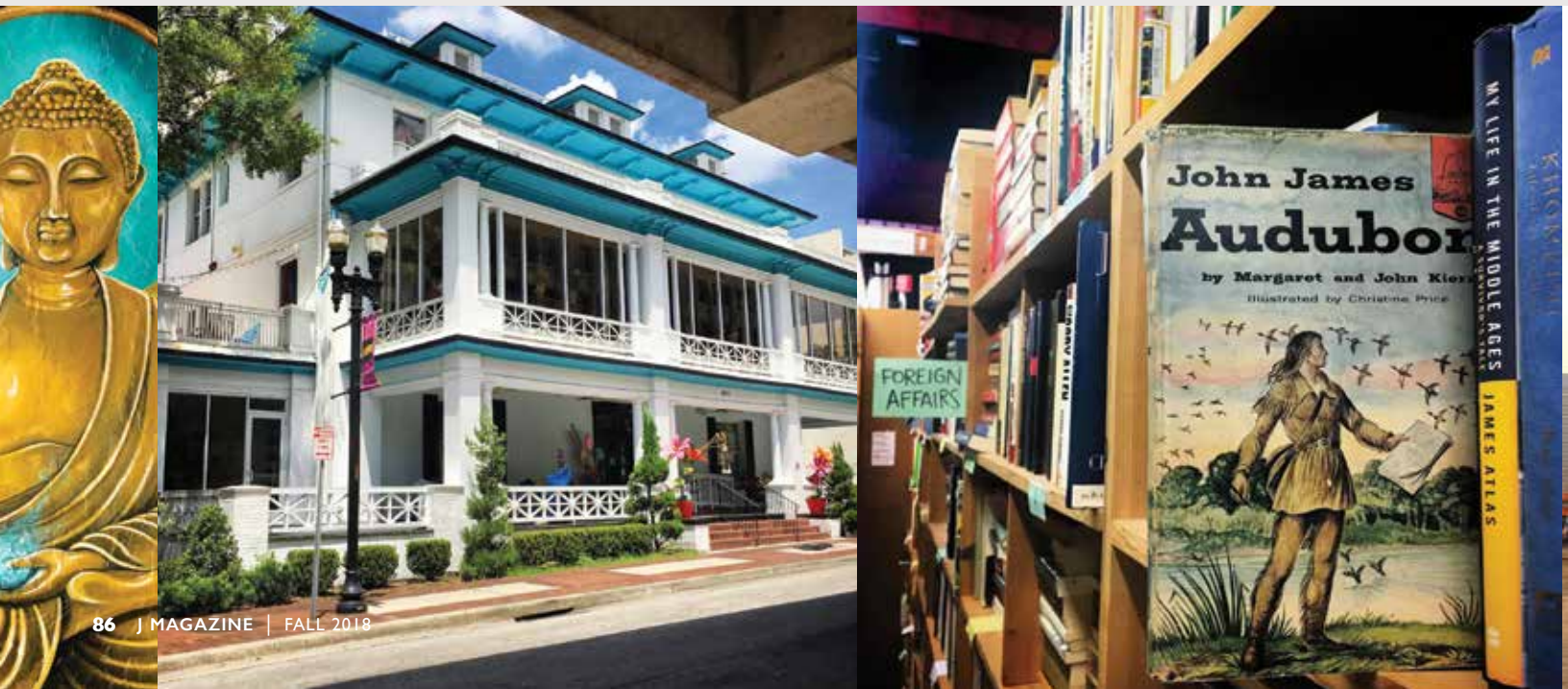
12 HOURS IN DOWNTOWN

Seeing our Downtown through younger eyes

BY KEVIN O'HALLORAN // FOR J MAGAZINE

I came to Jacksonville six years ago to attend UNE, so most of my time was spent around the campus, the beaches and the surrounding suburbs. But I've always really loved the history and culture of the urban core. There is just a creative spirit there that I never experienced living in any other part of Jax. So after graduation, I moved to Springfield. I go Downtown all the time for meetings, for entertainment, for dining and recreation, so I have experienced the good and the bad.

I have also made a point to travel to metro areas like Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston and Orlando — cities with cultural similarities to Jacksonville. But we have a distinct history of disinvestment and failed projects that have set our Downtown back decades.





So I have decided to look at Jacksonville through the eyes of a tourist, the same way I experienced those other downtowns. Of course I know the insider tips but will try to forget them and find everything via Yelp, online sources and signs to guide my journey. I'll end each stop with what could be better.

10 A.M. CANDY APPLE CAFE

I woke up and figured I would go for brunch Downtown like any true millennial. Yelp said about the only place open was Candy Apple Cafe. I walked out of my house toward Main Street and saw no signs of light rail stops or bike-share stations like I'm used to in other places. Not wanting to walk the roughly 10-block distance across a "highway" and vacant lots in the July heat, I called an Uber.

I was wonderfully surprised by the weird and fun design of Candy Apple, a real-life Jacksonville version of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory! There were a few other guests enjoying a meal, but the cafe was

quiet overall. Luckily, the food, service and drinks were all fantastic! I would recommend the chicken and waffles and mimosa popsicle!

Downtown needs more places open for breakfast and brunch on the weekends. Jacksonville also needs better connections to Downtown via transit, bike and walking. Luckily JTA is planning a retrofit of the current Skyway system, and the city is working on a bike lane to come down Hogan Street.

11 A.M. MOCA & HEMMING PARK

I walked across the street to Hemming Park. It was very well landscaped with a few chairs and tables sitting out. Only about five others were in the park, and there was some gentle music playing in the background. It was a nice place for me to sit and make a quick phone call. Afterward, I walked over to the Skyway station thinking maybe this cool monorail could take me somewhere. It turns out it doesn't run on weekends. I then walked over to the Museum of Contemporary

PHOTOGRAPHS BY J MAGAZINE



Art (MOCA). What a place! The latest Project Atrium exhibit was an awesomely vibrant inflatable form by Claire Ashley.

12:30 P.M. CHAMBLIN'S

I continued down Laura Street where I happened upon Chamblin's Uptown. WOW. If you are a bibliophile and have not found yourself at Chamblin's, you need to head Downtown! They even have a great little cafe. I picked up a Jax souvenir by purchasing the latest issue of Bridge Eight, a literary magazine featuring both local and national writers of poetry and short stories.

A few more cool/quirky businesses like this would be awesome. Wolf and Cub, a clothing and accessory store just next door, is a great example. It can be tough for a small boutique business to justify the high rents of Downtown, so there really should be a specialty market venue similar to Union Market in D.C. or East End Market in Orlando where start-ups can get into an established location for less than a full storefront and test their concepts at a lower entry point. The Landing?

2 P.M. LANDING & RIVERWALK

After spending over an hour inside the windowless book mine, I was ready to get back outside. I continued down Laura admiring all of the construction going on around the Barnett Bank Building and Laura Street Trio before approaching the Landing. I walked into the dead strip mall and felt I had the whole building to myself. Unless I wanted to visit Hooters, there wasn't much to do. There were more stores than I expected, but many were closed and those that were open didn't really capture my interest. If you ever have anyone visiting from out of town, I would not recommend you bring them here!

The Landing simply needs a total overhaul. With the right focus on local culture, it could truly be a gateway to the best the First Coast has to offer.

The Landing is such a shame because as soon as you reach the Riverwalk you are greeted by spectacular views of the St. Johns and the city skyline. It was hot, but I decided to walk and enjoy the view for awhile until I found one of the rare spots of shade.

3 P.M. BOLD CITY BREWERY

After the hot walk, it was time for a cold drink. To my delight there were two local craft breweries Downtown. Although it looked like Intuition had a cool rooftop bar, I decided to check out the closer one, the Bold City Brewery Downtown taproom.

What a great spot! The staff was super friendly and the beer delicious. I had the seasonal special, Big John's Apricot Wheat, great flavor and a light fruity note. Bold City's bar bites also proved to be the perfect late afternoon lunch. I recommend the steak tacos!

Locals need to check out all the cool spots to drop in for a mid-afternoon drink Downtown. Spliff's Gastropub is just around the corner.

4 P.M. MOSH

Wanting to save anymore libations for later that night, I tried to find something that was entertaining yet would keep me cool indoors for the rest of the brutal afternoon. Yelp led me to the Museum of Science and History across the river. The Skyway would have been the perfect thing to get me there, but I had to take the long hot walk over the Main Street bridge. In retrospect, the walk was actually really pleasant with awesome views of the city and the river. Thankfully, you get a pretty good amount of shade and a nice breeze. This walk reminded me a lot of the pedestrian bridge in Nashville that crosses the Cumberland River. Though you share the structure with cars in a separate space, it was a nice crossing by foot.

My personal favorite MOSH exhibits turned out to be the history of Northeast Florida and the current signature exhibit Mission: Jax Genius. I was even lucky enough to catch the 5 p.m. Tour of the Solar System show at the Bryan-Gooding Planetarium, which was great!

Jacksonville really needs a dedicated history museum focused solely on the city from the Timucuan settlements to today. MOSH touches on some of this history, but it is more regional. The Ritz Theatre & Museum also does a good job of exploring some of the African-American legacy of LaVilla, but it is very focused. There needs to be a museum that explores every facet of our city's rich history. The good, bad, ugly, black, white and otherwise.

6 P.M. INDOCHINE

For my evening Downtown, I decided to cheat a bit on the "tourist for a day" theme and invite some friends down for dinner and drinks. We decided on Indochine, one of my favorite Downtown dining spots. It has a great Asian/urban loft feel that would fit in any major American city, and the food is awesome! I would recommend either the tofu pad Thai or green curry.

The Downtown dining scene certainly has

some great spots, but compared to other hot spots in the urban core like Five Points or San Marco Square, options are pretty limited and spread out. If more people were Downtown in the evenings, restaurants would certainly expand hours and create dinner menus to serve them.

8-10 P.M. THE ELBOW

After some great food, my friends and I decided to partake in the Downtown bar scene. The Elbow, centered around Ocean and Bay streets, has plenty of cool spots to enjoy at late night. We were able to catch the sunset at Cowford's rooftop bar, which had spectacular views and delicious cocktails.

For the budget conscious, there are plenty of options for good deals and even better times. If you're feeling adventurous, grab a \$5 Blue Plate special at Dos Gatos, which rotates but includes a shot and a beer. We hopped from place to place and had a great time!

Downtown has some late-night watering-hole gems if you know where to go — Volstead, 1904, Justice Pub, Dos Gatos, Island Girl Cigar Bar and Cowford are great spots to socialize with friends while Myth and the newly open Live Bar are solid options if you are trying to hit the dance floor.

But to rival other truly great bar scenes like downtown Orlando or even our own Jacksonville Beach, we need more venues that cater to different audiences and offer unique experiences all clustered in one place.

What The Elbow has today is a good start, but with the closing of Underbelly and Burro Bar last year, we have lost some unique local favorites. Luckily, others from out of town have also started to notice the potential of the district. Mathers Social Gathering, a favorite speakeasy in downtown Orlando, recently announced its intention to open on Forsyth near the Florida Theatre. We need more of these interesting concepts Downtown to attract new nightlife patrons.

Something else that could also take The Elbow to the next level would be a special ordinance that allows the bars in that area to stay open later to 3 a.m. This makes coming Downtown unique for those wanting to stay out longer — especially as Jacksonville Beach considers a midnight bar time. That could instantly kill that scene, and Downtown could take advantage.

KEVIN O'HALLORAN, 24, a 2016 graduate of the University of North Florida in International Studies, is project coordinator at Springfield Preservation and Revitalization (SPAR). He lives in Springfield.



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Formed to revitalize and preserve downtown property values and prevent deterioration in the downtown business district.

The Downtown Investment Authority was created to revitalize Downtown Jacksonville by utilizing Community Redevelopment Area resources to spur economic development. The Downtown Investment Authority is the governing body for the Downtown Community Redevelopment Areas established by the City Council of Jacksonville. The DIA offers a variety of incentives for businesses to locate Downtown, including expedited permitting and economic development incentives.



J PARTNER PROFILE

By Barbara Gavan

QUICK TAKES

PROJECTS COMING TO FRUITION

"What I am most proud of is that the projects we approve, we are getting built or renovated or restored."

PACE OF PROGRESS PICKING UP

"Some may feel that our progress could have been faster; but as a city, we're just hitting our stride. And as long as we have a strong economy, you will see us continue to attract new businesses and further development to the Downtown area."

EVERY PROJECT AN IMPORTANT ONE

"Small projects are just as important as the larger ones. We can ill afford to miss any opportunity for growth; we must work on every project that makes financial sense and has a positive impact on Downtown Jacksonville."



AUNDRA WALLACE, outgoing CEO
of the Downtown Investment Authority

DIA

Downtown Investment Authority works in partnership with government, community to revitalize Downtown

The Downtown Investment Authority has three primary functions. It is responsible for adding Downtown real estate redevelopment and revitalization opportunities, for business recruitment and for public parking within the Downtown core. And success in these areas depends on many factors.

"I see the necessities for a viable Downtown to be, first, alternative and obtainable housing options," said outgoing DIA CEO Aundra Wallace. "Second is retail that appeals to those living Downtown and, third, a vibrancy that is safe and appeals to all ages."

Jacksonville seems well on its way toward fulfilling those requirements.

"The housing options are coming along swiftly, especially the Vestcor projects," Wallace said. "We need both affordable and workforce housing in Downtown Jacksonville to accommodate those making minimum wage to \$39,000 and those who earn from \$40,000 to \$95,000."



Wallace also sees great value in the growing college presence Downtown with Jacksonville University, the University of North Florida and Florida State College at Jacksonville all building facilities in the city's core.

And when asked why it seems to take a long time for projects to come to fruition, Wallace said that years of work had to be done beforehand.

"What you're seeing now, like The District and the Barnett building, we've been working on for the last 24 months,"

he said. "For the success of a project or a restoration, we have to play out every possible development scenario and see how to mitigate any risk. It's a very involved process on the front end."

Wallace added that nothing gets done at all "without the partnership of the DIA, the Mayor's office, the City Council and the community. And that partnership seems to be functioning very well. We have tremendous momentum, and it's all due to that partnership."

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By Roger Brown

Culture clash

Some question Downtown's ability to offer entertainment for more sophisticated visitors

S

abeen Perwaiz, 33, is exactly the kind of millennial that Downtown Jacksonville needs to fulfill its untapped promise.

A native of New York City, Perwaiz is the executive director of the Downtown-based Florida Nonprofit Alliance, a past One Jax Humanitarian Award winner, the executive producer of TedxJacksonville and a

member of the Florida Commission on Community Service, to which she was appointed earlier this year by Gov. Rick Scott.

Trust us, that's just a small portion of Perwaiz's list of achievements.

Perwaiz also embodies the millennial spirit of

fearlessly embracing what's new and next: She has traveled to 40 countries — with a goal of reaching 100 — and she did volunteer work in Cambodia for six months.

If that isn't enough, Perwaiz has a young family as well as a successful career: She and her husband, Asghar, have a seven-month old son, Raza.

Add it all up, and who could possibly be a better subject for this millennial edition of J magazine's Q & A?

What overall grade would you give Downtown as a place for millennials to live, work and enjoy?

I would give Downtown a grade of "C" for live, work and play. But I would also give it an "A" for effort.

Wow, why the two grades?

The "C" is because while I've seen a lot of improvement in Downtown since I moved here in 2011, I've also seen us fall back in some respects. But the "A" is because there are now so many great projects in the works for Downtown that I'm

SABEEN PERWAIZ

WORK:

Executive director of the Florida Nonprofit Alliance

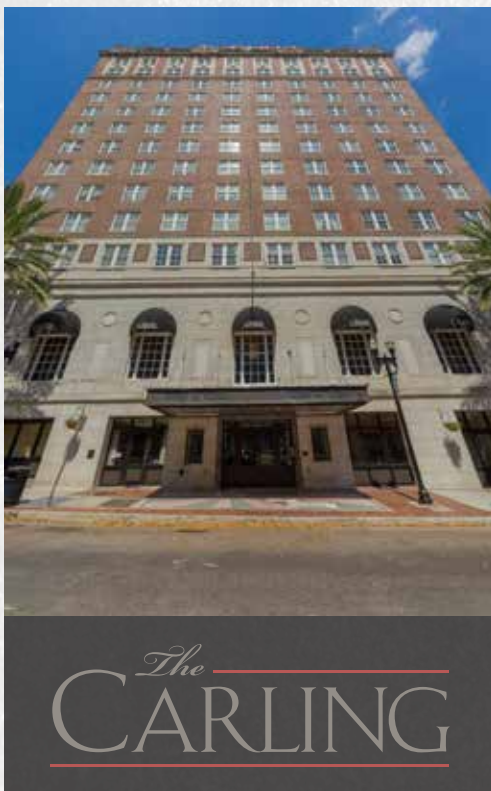
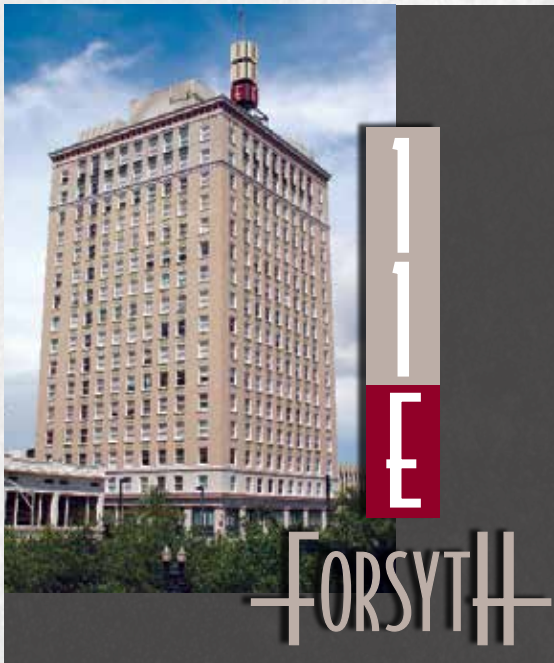
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New York City

LIVES IN:

Riverside

URBAN LIVING IN DOWNTOWN JACKSONVILLE



VESTCOR

“I would focus on making Downtown Jacksonville a true cultural hub by significantly investing in arts and culture — and making it a real priority.”

SABEEN PERWAIZ, JACKSONVILLE MILLENNIAL

excited to see them come to fruition.’

What has improved about Downtown Jacksonville since you came to this city?

First, the arts. There’s a ton of art around Downtown now: murals, sculptures, all kinds of work that wasn’t here when I first arrived. That’s been exciting to see.

Second, there are distinctive areas like the Doro that are thriving — I mean, regardless of the day of the week, you’ll see people in Intuition Ale Works or Manifest. That’s brought a lot of energy to the Sports Complex area and Downtown. I can’t wait to see how projects like the Lot J entertainment district will build on that.

What kind of things are dropping Downtown down to a “C”?

Well, the Landing, definitely. It’s a sore spot, and that’s really, really hurting Downtown. It’s always frustrating to me when family comes to town and they want to go on the waterfront. We really can’t take them to the Landing; the only real option is to take them on a river taxi tour. We shouldn’t have to take them to St. Augustine to enjoy a variety of places that are on the water and in an attractive setting. It’s embarrassing. It’s sad, really. We’re not making the most of our beautiful St. Johns River, and the Landing is a big reason why we aren’t.

You have just become the mayor of Jacksonville. What would be your first three steps regarding Downtown Jacksonville as it relates to millennials?

Well, I’m an avid traveler, and the first thing I want to do when I go to another place is get a sense of its arts and culture scene. So first I would focus on making Downtown Jacksonville a true cultural hub by significantly investing in arts and culture — and making it a real priority. We’d make back 10 times the investment in additional tourism alone, and then there are the other benefits we’d get from it.

Second, I’d love to have a food hall Downtown. Why not take an old building Downtown that doesn’t have much purpose at the moment and transform it into an indoor food court? We need something like The Hall on Franklin in Tampa or Chelsea Market in New York City. We need a popular, distinctive and communal indoor attraction. We

need some place that will compel people in our city — and not just millennials — to gather Downtown on a Saturday afternoon when it’s blistering hot.

And that’s not a rare Saturday afternoon in this city.

Exactly! And third is water activation. We’ve been talking about it for so long, so I’m glad to see Councilwoman Lori Boyer’s work on river activation take off and gather the momentum it has. More boat tours, more eco-tourism highlighting our river, more things that show off the wonders of our bridges. I would push strongly for more of that.

You’re a proud native of New York City, which has the kind of vibrant urban atmosphere in its center that all cities want. Of course, Jacksonville isn’t as big. But do you see a day when our Downtown can be seen as the “New York City of the South?” You know, the type of place that inspires songs of affection the way NYC has from everyone from Frank Sinatra to Jay-Z?

Absolutely, our Downtown has that potential.

So many of us are very proud to be in Jacksonville, and I’m one of those people. But what we need now as a city is to develop a deep sense of connection to Downtown that makes you feel like when you aren’t in it, you can’t wait to be back in it again. When you think about it, that’s really the feeling that inspires all of those songs you hear about New York City.

And I think our Downtown is getting there.

I think there’s going to be lots to brag about and sing about in the future.

ROGER BROWN has been a Times-Union editorial writer since 2013. He lives in Downtown Jacksonville.



Sabeen Perwaiz, executive director of TEDxJacksonville, gives feedback to speakers during a practice session at Jacksonville University in 2015.

FLIPPING THE SWITCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 69

er's licenses. Only 69 percent of 19-year-olds had a driver's license in 2014, compared to almost 90 percent in 1983. The percentage of people in their 20s with driver's licenses fell by 13 percent over the 30 years, and fewer Americans in their 30s and 40s now have driver's licenses.

A 2014 Global Strategy Group study of millennials in 10 major cities found a large majority want to have more transit options and to be less reliant on a car. Fifty-four percent said they would consider moving to another city if it had more and better options for getting around, and 66 percent said that access to high-quality transportation is one of the top three criteria they would consider when deciding where to live.

Almost half (46 percent) of current vehicle owners surveyed agreed they would seriously consider giving up their car if they could count on a range of transportation options, including walking, public transit, ride-sharing, biking or bike-sharing.

In the millennial focus group, Iesha Jackson said, "Jacksonville doesn't have the best transit system. I do try to walk a lot, but I have been almost hit seven times. Our city has a history with pedestrian deaths."

Jacksonville's history and infrastructure are almost defined by the automobile, but the master planners recognized that Downtown must develop a different relationship with the car.

One of their seven major redevelopment goals is to improve walkability, bikeability and connectivity within Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods and the river.

The low-hanging fruit in the plan has been picked. Public art, which contributes

to walkability and bikeability, is all over Downtown if you haven't looked lately and growing, including sculpture. Improvements include bike racks and other "street furnishings" — benches, chairs, trash cans, planters and other touches where people gather.

The plan also calls for slowing Downtown traffic. Converting those high-speed one-way streets back to two-way is still with the traffic engineers, awaiting funding.

On the Southbank, the plan is to put oversized Riverplace Boulevard on a "road diet," to "calm traffic and create a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment." Aundra Wallace, outgoing CEO of the Downtown Investment Authority, said that project should have broken ground by the time you read this and be completed next year.

But the true test of easy (that is, non-auto) transportation will be in the Downtown core, especially along the river, as the entertainment options coalesce from Lot J and the Shipyards to the Elbow, the Landing and beyond. Mayor Lenny Curry already has been thinking about it: "How do you move people, if there's a convention center, to the Sports Complex and from farther west, the Landing?" he asked in a J interview last year.

The answer could be the big excitement in Downtown transit: Jacksonville Transportation Authority's plan to convert and expand the Skyway into the Ultimate Urban Circulator or U2C, using autonomous vehicles (now being tested) operating largely at street level.

JTA, with a consortium of other public and private agencies, is seeking a \$25 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation to help pay for the first 3.2

miles of the project along the Bay Street corridor from TIAA Bank Field to the new Regional Transportation Center next to Prime Osborn.

U2C ultimately would extend to Five Points and Riverside Arts Market, to UF Health in the north and, via a new bridge, to San Marco, The District and Baptist Health.

Now *that* is a millennial dream.

"It can't come soon enough," Emily Moody-Rosete, a Downtown business owner, said during the millennials focus group.

All it will take is money.

[5] HEALTHINESS: EATING RIGHT AND EXERCISING

Millennials, by most accounts, are more concerned than previous generations about staying healthy. "For millennials," Goldman Sachs summarized research, "health doesn't just mean 'not sick.' It's a daily commitment to eating right and exercising."

According to the Yahoo Health Study in 2015, millennials value health and wellness more than anything except family: 84 percent exercise at least once a week. Though they earn less than their seniors, they spend more on health and fitness. They're more likely to do yoga, meditate and use natural therapies. They use health and wellness apps and share information with their friends.

Deep Patel wrote in *Forbes* that millennials are "leading the food revolution." They not only eat out more, but they are healthy eaters — 52 percent of organic consumers are millennials — and they eat 52 percent more vegetables than their seniors.

Of the six millennial standards, this may be Jacksonville's strength, at least now.

One of the master plan's seven development goals is to "promote design for healthy living," but other than the plans for walkability, it's difficult to identify specific public projects that would make Downtown a healthier environment for millennials.

Fortunately, we already have powerful assets, starting with our climate, our extensive parks system and, oh yes, that beach within reach.

Our Riverwalks encourage exercise, and by summer 2020, they will be connected across the expanded Fuller Warren Bridge via a "shared use path" for walkers, runners and bicyclists. You can

Millennials flocked to the short-lived Jaxsons Night Market, a unique monthly open-air showcase that included local farmers, local beer, food trucks and fashion trucks near the Laura Street Trio.



see it under construction now.

The Southbank Riverwalk can take you to the new and expansive Winston Family YMCA right on the river off Riverside that inspired this love note from Rachel C. to Yelp: “We joined the Winston Y two weeks ago and we are absolutely in love. The facility is brand new and has all the extra features. Indoor track, kid zone where you can get two free hours of childcare while you work out, heated pools, sauna and dozens of classes every day. I love the yoga classes and body flow, but of course they also offer spin, body pump, Zumba, etc.”

While most of Downtown is essentially a food desert, one oasis just across Riverside from the Y is The Fresh Market, a specialty grocery store with particular appeal to millennials, especially those who can walk there from Brooklyn apartments.

And then, of course, there is The District, whose working title was Healthy Town. Its developers say it will be “an entirely new approach in community living. It is a place where people can get the most out of life, mind, body and soul. Here, residents will have everything they need to live the most healthful of lives—and to feel truly alive. Healthier lives are, indeed, happier lives. And The District is designed from the ground up to provide every essential element for promoting fitness and for living the healthiest of lives.”

City Council approved incentives in June, and the developers closed on the land in July — and said construction will begin “as soon as possible.”

[6] AUTHENTICITY AS OPPOSED TO GENERIC SAMENESS

“Authentic charm and sense of place has solidified the importance of urban centers in the 21st century,” the Kinder Institute study of downtown millennials said.

For a definition, that report pointed to Richard Florida’s 2012 revisit to the creative class: “Places are also valued for their authenticity and uniqueness. Authenticity comes from several aspects of a community — historic buildings, established neighborhoods, a distinctive music scene or specific cultural attributes. It especially comes from the mix — urban grit alongside freshly renovated buildings ...”

“I don’t want to live in a cookie-cutter apartment building that looks just like one three blocks away,” Shawana Brooks said during the millennials focus group.

Last year, Edge Research said millennials are twice as likely to prefer shopping or eating in historic downtowns (52 percent)

and in places with historic appeal (49 percent) over malls and planned commercial districts (26 percent) or new places (22 percent). They value a mix of old and new buildings.

Even when building new housing, the Kinder study said some developers try to create a sense of authenticity by working with historic buildings, adaptive reuse of other older buildings or at least building on unique sites. “Developers in downtown Phoenix and Houston targeted millennials by creating ‘authentic’ properties, meaning housing that is one-of-a-kind and context-specific — the opposite of the ‘cookie-cutter’ suburbs.

Sadly, Jacksonville has lost most of its physical history. What the Great Fire of 1901 didn’t destroy, expressway construction and “blight” demolitions mostly did.

Downtown does have a National Historic District designation and some historic buildings, obvious ones being the unused Snyder Memorial Church on Hemming Park and the remarkable adaptive reuse of the Renaissance Revival bank building on East Bay into the Cowford Chophouse.

But authentically historic buildings are too scattered to create a walkable environment.

One exception is LaVilla. In the summer issue of J, Adrienne Burke and Ennis Davis proposed a process for saving what’s left of the historic multicultural district (<https://bit.ly/2LDh0Mc>).

The master plan envisions creating a different kind of authenticity Downtown: an arts district by “repurposing derelict structures by converting them to affordable, viable and sustainable housing and studio environments for artists,” as well as galleries and other arts-related organizations.

That was to be done in 2016-2017, but it is awaiting developers.

If Jacksonville can’t evoke authenticity through historic buildings or an arts district, it can create a true and unusual sense of place through ... water.

TruJax, an ongoing visioning process by JaxChamber, Visit Jacksonville and the city, has identified the city’s essence or DNA: “Jacksonville is the water life center of America.”

After more than a year of research and discussion, TruJax identified our uniqueness: “This community was literally shaped and built around our waterways. The ocean. The river and its tributaries. Our preserves. The Intracoastal. They come together here like no other region in the world. Our diverse waterways are the connective tissue

— the very heart — of this community.”

TruJax proposed actions around a set of “strategic pillars” (see trujax.com), including improving the water experience; building connections to health, wellness and adventure; strengthening sense of place; starting “signature events and/or festivals” and developing an environmental ethic — all directly addressing millennials’ lifestyles and needs.

While “The Water Life” was not developed particularly with millennials in mind, Will Ketchum, a TruJax leader, said, “These concepts absolutely support what they want.”

And some plans now in the works support the TruJax pillars. One of the seven goals of the 2014 master plan is to “establish a waterfront design framework to ensure a unique experience and sense of place.”

That includes specific plans to create many more access points so people can use and enjoy the river, developing a “landmark public park” on the river (which could be part of The District or a better use for the Landing property) and developing and linking the “Emerald Necklace” to the river.

City Councilwoman Lori Boyer is leading an effort to create a series of nodes or pocket parks along the St. Johns, and the city budget includes money to get started with the first two: the “Music Heritage Garden” area behind the Times-Union Center and the “Exploration of the St. Johns River” renovation and upgrading of Friendship Park. Both will be phased in over the next 18-24 months.

You might be asking: Do we really want to reimagine our Downtown and make all those investments just to appeal to the generation of millennials who — let’s face it — will soon age into having children and probably wanting more room, backyards and other suburban attributes?

Urban planning scholar Dowell Myers writes that the phenomenon of urban millennials will peak and begin to decline as soon as 2020. But even after that, “There are certainly many benefits that millennials have brought to the inner districts of central cities, including economic revitalization, an improved tax base, a pronounced youthification, and a general increase in vitality.”

Go back and read the six standards and how Jacksonville might meet them. Isn’t that a Downtown that would draw you *back* to the heart of the city too?

And what will the post-millennials — Generation Z — want in a real city?

FRANK DENTON, editor of J, was editor of *The Florida Times-Union* in 2008-16. He lives in Riverside.

'Sharing the torch' is a must for our core to catch fire



SEAN LAHAV

Jacksonville has grown tremendously over the past few decades into what is now a bold new city that holds great promise for the future. From the early years of consolidation to the present day, the city has come a long way.

What makes Jacksonville so special are its sunny beaches, scenic waterways and pristine conservation areas. Beyond these natural amenities, our city is home to a wide array of vibrant social scenes, unique restaurants and small businesses managed by passionate, hard-working people.

Despite the many positive qualities that make Jacksonville wonderful, an untapped resource sits at the heart of our city. Just as the St. Johns River ebbs and flows, so has urban development in Downtown Jacksonville. While areas like Jacksonville Beach and Five Points continue to develop economically — with community events, nightlife opportunities and new shopping attractions on the rise — Downtown Jacksonville seems to remain in the dark after the sun sets.

If we wish to mirror the qualities that make other cities special, we must first recognize that a cohesive Jacksonville should include a downtown area that is fun, exciting and worthy of a commute. From establishing more green spaces and waterfront recreation areas, to incentivizing small-business development that will attract more foot traffic, a series of incremental steps can be taken to bring our prosperous city to even brighter horizons.

Those concepts seem feasible at first glance, but none of these changes will ever occur unless fiscal norms are reformed.

Beyond the waterways and sunshine that we love so much, our city is also home to one of the lowest millage rates in Florida. While low property tax rates are desirable for any homeowner, what is often

overlooked are the negative effects that arise because of the low rates when the city is faced with a national economic recession or housing-market collapse.

When it comes to financing a revitalization effort, there is this reality: If Downtown development initiatives are to happen, local residents must share some of the costs.

One solution could be the establishment of a special taxing district that would streamline Downtown development projects and set aside a designated source of revenue. By establishing such a district — which can only be done through a referendum — city leaders can show potential developers that there is actual public support for projects and that there are governmental funds ready to turn that support into action.

If a special taxing district were to be established with a millage rate of 0.5 percent, for example, the city could see upwards of \$25 million in additional revenue each year (conservative estimate) for Downtown development. Over 10 years, that would be a sizable development fund with tangible benefits.

While such an initiative may face a great amount of skepticism from city leaders and residents, millennial growth patterns are on an upward trajectory — to the point where millennials are expected to outnumber baby boomers in 2019. We must acknowledge that our city is now home to a young, energized demographic ready to tackle future development challenges with newer, more forward-thinking strategies.

If we wish to change the future, we must start with a vision, and integral stakeholders in that vision are the leaders of tomorrow. Similar to the ritual transference of power from one U.S. president to the next, it is now time to pass the torch to the next generation of leaders so that creative solutions are able to be brought to light. Maybe a better image is sharing the torch; the emphasis here is on reaching across the table to find solutions, mentoring each other through perspectives both old and young and partnering together to make actual change occur.

Such a sharing of the torch is no simple task for it requires community dialogue, engagement and collaboration on matters of serious concern, but if we start now, the tide can begin to turn.

SEAN LAHAV is a graduate teaching assistant in the Political Science & Public Administration Department at the University of North Florida. He is the producer of "Exploring Northeast Florida's Special Places," a video series on WJCT that highlights the public parks of Northeast Florida.

EMAIL
sean.lahav@unf.edu



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