



Notes from Stakeholder Interviews

The following is a summary of raw comments received during the master plan stakeholder interview process. The comments are not intended to represent endorsements of specific ideas by the consultant or planning teams, but rather provide a starting point for understanding current conditions and exploring future opportunities.

Markets/Economic Development

- We need economic clusters like the film/mixed-use project near the arena and an entrepreneurial center for start-up businesses
- Film industry project is overrated and may not be as much of an engine as people think; the state tax incentives, the scope of the country, are not great
- World-class creative corridor, thriving, funky arts district
- Focus on local businesses and retail
- Could Union Pacific land on North Broadway be redeveloped?
- Need a grocery store, hardware, dry cleaners, etc.
- A few new major employers would really help
- Need a Mexican restaurant or more family-style restaurants
- Need new pharmacy.
- Need services that attract people from outside the neighborhood.
- Need a city-wide comprehensive plan, not just Argenta
- Northeast Argenta near I-30 is what people see first—should be a better gateway.
- Let's not overbuild retail, but attract shops to now-vacant storefronts.
- Need outdoor amphitheater/performance area for bands
- Need a multi-function theater/sound stage/education center/performance hall/retail/restaurant center for all income levels, also perhaps a bowling alley
- Office development (3-story) could succeed due to interstate proximity, either in Mill District or facing the river, maybe medical office
- Plan should be designed with implementable stages or areas
- Need to implement the plan and a showcase project as soon as possible
- Argenta is part of North Little Rock and should not have a different name
- There's a lack of philanthropy
- Need a hostel on the trolley line
- A new downtown charter school could be great
- Railroad is a good source of jobs
- Agri-tourism could be created
- Need to coordinate efforts of Argenta and Downtown Little Rock
- More professional services needed

- Don't create new development that competes with Main Street
- Need a convention center
- More Art Walk-type events could benefit area
- Improved signage from interstate
- New culinary school
- Plan must be achievable
- Retail space is currently affordable at \$1 to \$1.1 per square foot
- Land in control of city and small number of private groups
- Not enough people to take the financial risks
- City is in good shape financially
- Not enough residents yet to support businesses
- Outdoor market is an asset
- Restaurants have been successful on Main Street
- Creative power and synergy of residents, eclectic people
- Combination of restaurants and art galleries
- Baseball stadium and arena are benefits
- Proximity to downtown Little Rock
- There's not the right demographics to make artsy urbanism work (lack of students in metro area)
- Post office closing, taking away a reason to come downtown
- Current economic situation killed growth
- Adaptive re-use that preserves history will be key to making the area memorable
- The Argenta CDC is very pro-active; they already are a champion
- There are 5,000 housing units in downtown Little Rock; product is much more urban than North Little Rock may get
- Government can be slow or unresponsive (e.g. with new developments)
- Not enough jobs in Argenta area
- The differences between downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock need to be lessened; the area is a single core and development in one will benefit the other
- Downtown North Little Rock could be like Cow Hollow in San Francisco
- The cohesiveness of government, businesses, and residents is a great strength
- Public buildings already attract people for government business
- Pawn shop is a weakness
- Perceived inferiority compared to Little Rock and provincialism are barriers
- Still some homeless people are present
- Apathy of residents and division among neighborhoods in Argenta will be a barrier
- Perceptions of crime, not actual crime, are the real issue, although there are breakins
- There needs to be a mix of daytime and nighttime uses
- Downtown North Little Rock is very well positioned regionally; it has great access
- The area needs souvenir shop, Hallmark store, affordable shops, Restoration Hardware, dance studio, cooking classes, wedding specialty store, and a florist.
- Day time and special event parking is a problem.
- Restaurants need signs so people driving or walking by can immediately see them.
- Signs need a common theme or character that goes with the branding of Argenta.

- There's little reason for tourists in Little Rock to cross the bridge
- No big box stores should open here, offer what a suburban area doesn't offer
- North Little Rock's nightlife should be more mature than the River Market
- The Smart House Way may need to be an office or educational use, not housing
- There are funds to assist marina development; that could be a boost to the area.
- The community is not likely to accept the closing of Riverfront Drive for a development due to the short time that the roadway has existed, without a firm commitment by developers to follow-through and build. Even with a commitment, that concept may be difficult for many to embrace
- Argenta brand has cache that will attract people
- Office space renting from \$12/sf to \$20/sf for new space
- New retail space renting at \$18/sf, lower (\$5 to \$7) for older space
- Lack of "ready to go" retail and office space in downtown; vacancies are because buildings need improvements
- Empty nesters will be big market for downtown North Little Rock versus restaurants/bars in Little Rock geared toward younger markets
- Sales tax collection in North Little Rock down with several big box store closings including Goody's, Linens N Things, Sports Authority, several restaurants
- McCain Mall not being kept up to speed
- Main Street businesses should stay open later
- Need more hotel options to really attract any visitors; Wyndham has little competition
- Downtown could probably support another upscale restaurant, seafood restaurant and a good sports bar
- Need a greater nucleus of activity to attract shoppers, visitors, new residents, etc.
- Underutilized commercial space
- Need destination on north end of Main Street to attract people from the interstate

Housing

- Need more housing to attract families—mid-price range, not condos which only attract singles
- Housing should be hip to attract young people
- Area should have more residential character, like Brooklyn or Georgetown
- Diversity without gentrification
- Building new houses under historic regulations may be cost-prohibitive
- All housing prices and types for all ages—there is a housing undersupply currently
- Need more high-density housing, especially near the river
- Need more for-rent apartments
- An nice looking hotel would be good
- Melrose Circle is a great unique place
- Infill homes should be period appropriate
- Rehabbed homes more important than new housing
- Area has a good supply of affordable housing
- There are affordable refurbished historic homes and bungalows
- Local culture does not favor urban living

- Not kid-friendly enough, should be more fun activities
- Need more citizen support
- Need housing for young professionals
- High occupancy rates for apartments (95-100%) in last few years
- People moving to Argenta from out of town, the north (20% of local market) and from Little Rock (80% of local market)
- No new product in recent years
- Homes in Argenta neighborhood sell quickly, often by owner rather than using real estate agents
- Never big housing boom so not feeling national housing downturn as badly as other places, although some planned developments on east side of town are on hold
- Most new housing in North Little Rock in the east – Faulkner Crossing, Cypress Crossing, Stone Links

Transportation

- Trolley is a great asset and a great way to get around
- Trolley service should start at 7:00 a.m. instead of 8:30 a.m. to benefit commuters
- Trolleys should run faster, more frequently, and more reliably to be legitimate transportation rather than just for tourists
- A new trolley line, rubber tired at first, could link historic North Little Rock neighborhoods with historic Little Rock neighborhoods
- Trolley connection to hotels north of Argenta could be good for ridership
- Multi-modal trolley/bus transfer station could work
- Signs could be installed to show how many minutes until next trolley
- Current bike trail is more for recreation than transportation
- Need more bike lanes everywhere—Argenta is becoming a biking hub
- Bus depot on 7th Street should be relocated
- Trolley should make a loop, not a T, to connect to baseball stadium and arena
- Trolley funding will be a significant issue in the future
- Parking hasn't been much of an issue, deck would be unnecessary
- We need a parking deck
- On-street parking should not be free
- Great place for walking
- Rock Island pedestrian bridge (in the future) should be connected to Argenta
- There are no pedestrian connections to adjacent neighborhoods
- Bypass means cars never reach Main Street
- Need better relationship between I-30 and Mill District
- City bus service is popular and works well
- Argenta has the facilities to handle inter-city rail one day
- Bottleneck at Broadway and Broadway
- A study of future traffic flows and parking needs (after development) is needed
- Noise from freight trains is a problem
- Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department is not a friend of walkable areas; they do not like to change their standards

- River trail is an asset
- Interstate access and trolley access are assets
- Everything is close, walkable, and cohesive
- Good pedestrian traffic exists
- Considering lowering the northern Main Street bridge over the rail line to better connect it to the surroundings
- There's no pedestrian crossing from the River Front Park to Faucette Park
- 3rd Street/East and West Broadway Street is a state route and has few crosswalks
- We should consider a multimodal station and public parking on the east side of Main Street at Washington Street; it could include taxis, trolleys, and Greyhound buses
- The trolley should extend to the airport, but go faster to get there
- We need bus rerouting in the study area
- On-street parking on state routes would be beneficial to calming traffic
- They need a few more handicapped spaces down the block from city hall.
- We need bike lanes
- Regional commuter rail is needed to transform the area to a sustainable and dense urban neighborhood.
- The Main Street Viaduct needs to be replaced with the streetcar extending north to the North Little Rock Library on West Pershing or the Park Hill Neighborhood.
- The community needs cheap, available vehicle fuel to continue our modern lifestyle; petroleum being neither cheap nor certain.
- Roundabout at Pike and Broadway will help traffic issues

Infrastructure

- There is sufficient water and sewer capacity, but specific lines on certain streets may be undersized
- Existing low-quality infrastructure (e.g. faded sidewalk pavers) is a disadvantage
- There was insufficient sewer pipe for the new townhouses on Maple Street

Land Use/Urban Design/Open Space

- Should be more low rise than downtown Little Rock, less finance and business
- Don't make buildings look historic, but make them compatible—e.g. Argenta Place
- Hotels should be near the river to have views, maybe with second-floor restaurants
- Transitional area east of Main Street will be important
- Perhaps a linear park along I-30
- Buildings should not exceed 3 stories
- 7-8 story buildings are appropriate
- Need more density and zero-lot-line development
- Must have a good zoning code to implement master plan
- Could use a contextual architecture overlay district
- Nice streetscapes are important
- Bishop Lindsey (7th Street/North Broadway) should be a gateway boulevard
- Mixed uses could extent from Main Street along 7th Street

- Farmer's Market could use a permanent pavilion (attracts 1,000-2,000 people on weekends)
- Paths could be built behind homes, like at Rosemary Beach
- Don't make it feel too urban—should be like a community
- Good street grid and infrastructure already exists
- Argenta should have a unique design
- Add marina to riverfront
- Need more high-density housing (City Grove is good example)
- Need underground utility wires, improved water and sewer
- New park could be made by assembling land, or with smaller pocket parks
- Bring the river into Argenta with a canal, or maybe just a fountain or pool that visually connects, maybe like Riverwalk
- Need a focal point, like a park or bandstand
- Must design to include people with disabilities
- There are few neighborhood parks
- So many buildings have been torn down
- The National Register District gives some recognition, but no protection
- Downtown North Little Rock should have a smaller scale than Little Rock, with not more than a few tall buildings near the highway or river
- Gaps on Main Street with vacant or missing buildings
- Large vacant/industrial/parking/blighted areas near downtown
- There is already a true neighborhood feel—livable
- Argenta is not like a big city—big trees and houses with yards
- Existing architectural variety is good
- Little development exists that takes advantage of the river
- Potential environmental pollution is a problem, potential brownfields where diesel engine repair occurred
- Faucette Park is under-used and may be better as something else
- There is a bend in the levee just west of Broadway Street that looks like it could be straightened out to create more park land on the north side
- No neighborhood school, schools in the area not the best
- Children don't learn the history of the area in schools
- Expand the "Festival Square" where the farmers market is located. Concerts should be held there. People could bring their lunch and sit
- More green space with a water fountain.