

A Walltown-Driven Vision for Neighborhood Growth

The story of economic growth in Durham over the last decade has been **a story of gentrification and displacement**. As that growth continues, more must be done to keep residents in their homes, democratize the development process and create economic value for the most vulnerable. **It is time to change the story, and to do that we must shift the power dynamics.**

Since the sale of Northgate Mall in 2018, the **Walltown** Community Association (WCA) has been hard at work understanding the needs, concerns, and desires of neighborhood residents. During that time, we have gathered over 200 surveys from **Walltown** residents, spoken with people who use and work at the mall, and hosted several community meetings to collectively process the potential changes. As a result of these activities, the WCA has developed a community-centered vision for changes at the Northgate Mall site. Below is **our vision in 10 Solutions:**

Preserve and Build Wealth in the Walltown Community

1. Provide longtime and low-income **Walltown** residents with an ownership stake (shares of stock, seats on board) in the property developed on the mall site, empowering the community with a role in the governance, success, and economic benefits of the changes.
2. Ensure that **Walltown** residents can contribute to and benefit from the economic opportunities (construction, retail) by contracting with **Walltown** small business owners and hiring people from the neighborhood.
3. Preserve the wealth of **Walltown's** long-time and low-income homeowners by making grants available to support home repairs and property tax relief.
4. Fund partnerships between local educational institutions and employers to provide apprenticeships and vocational training for **Walltown** youth and young adults.

Develop an Accessible, Affordable, and Equitable Space for All

1. Establish a significant portion (at least 30%) of affordable units in the property's housing plan providing first right of purchase and rental to low-income **Walltown** residents.
2. Create spaces for affordable retail, including a cooperative grocery store (opportunity for community ownership), so that residents can have nearby access to healthy food and other items needed for work, school, and home.
3. Design and enhance the built environment with consideration for pedestrian safety, environmental sustainability, and accessibility for seniors, families with children, and people of diverse abilities and socio-economic backgrounds.
4. Foster community gathering and cultural enrichment spaces, such as, the Durham Arts Council clay studio, a satellite library branch, and an interactive **Walltown** history exhibit.
5. Develop a section of the property as a transportation hub for buses and bike riders, including a Park-and-Ride serving nearby universities, hospitals, and downtown Durham.
6. Provide space for a Community Advocacy Resource Center, which can serve as a hub for neighborhood residents about city and county services, access to homeownership and renter's rights, and other information based on the interests and needs of the community.

In order to make this vision a reality, we propose that **Walltown**--along with the other Northgate Mall adjacent neighborhoods--engage in **a six-month collaborative planning process** with Northwood Investors, Duke University and the City of Durham.

For more info, contact the Walltown Community Association at walltownnorthgatecmte@gmail.com

Why Walltown-Driven?

Walltown was founded in 1906 by George Wall, a formerly enslaved man who moved to Durham to work for Trinity College (eventually Duke University). Since then, the neighborhood has been home to **generations of Black working-class families who, in the face of structural racism, have embodied a spirit of self-determination and resilience.** When Northgate Mall, under the ownership of the Rand family, sought to encroach upon residential space, residents organized to keep their land. Now that the mall is in a state of transition, **Walltown** has organized again.

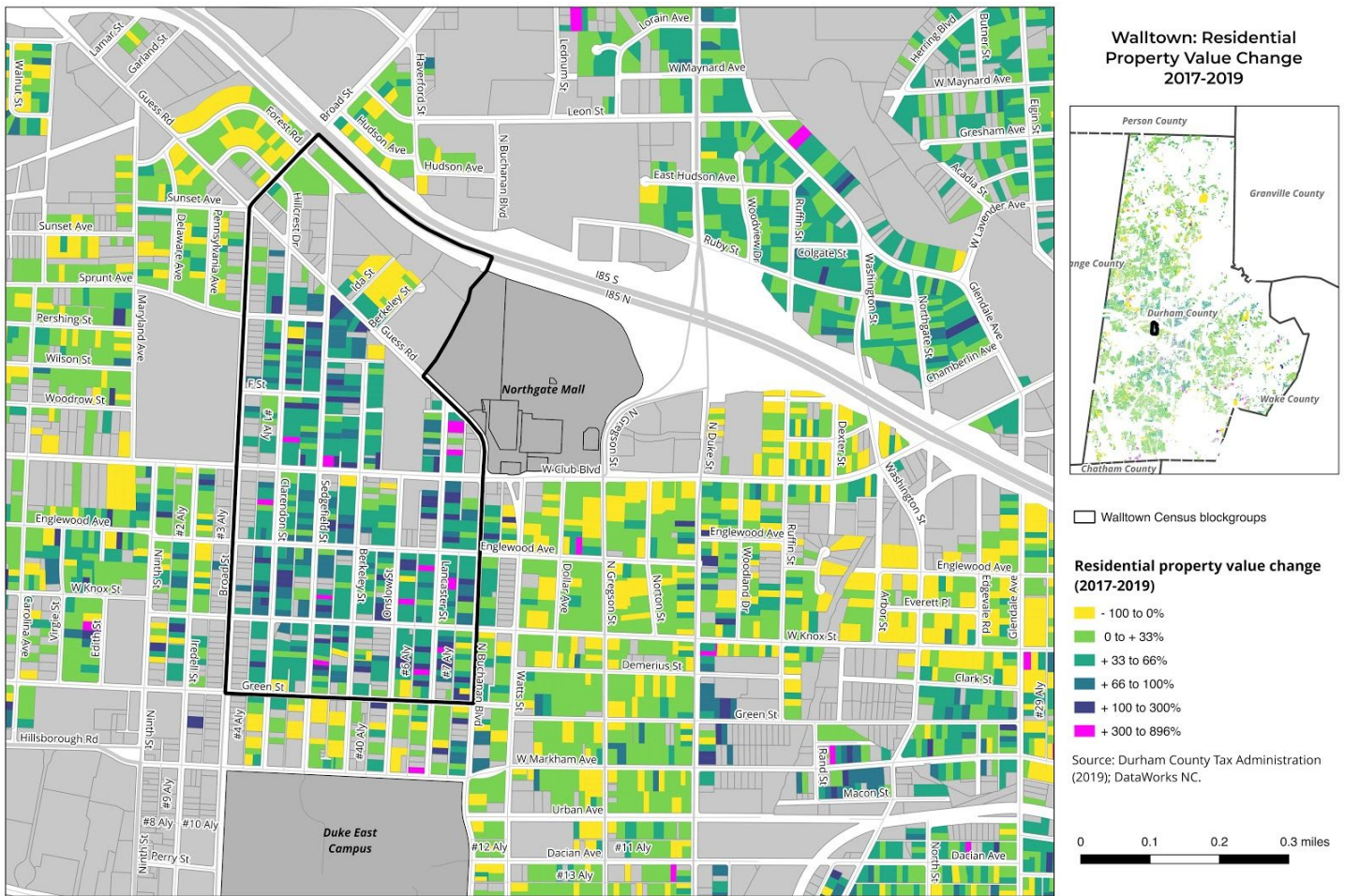
WHAT RESIDENTS **WANT** TO SEE...

- 52%** said “affordable housing”
- 48%** said “affordable retail”
- 35%** said “safe walking/transportation”
- 34%** said “access to healthcare”

WHAT RESIDENTS **DON'T WANT** TO SEE...

- 71%** said “luxury/expensive housing”
- 59%** said “luxury/expensive retail”
- 49%** said “liquor retail”
- 45%** said “tobacco retail”

Walltown has been the Northgate-adjacent neighborhood most impacted by **gentrification**:



Increased property values and stagnant wages

This map shows changes in property values in **Walltown** (outlined in black) and other neighborhoods around Northgate Mall. Decreases in values are in yellow, moving up to the greatest increases in values in dark blue and magenta. The greatest concentration of large increases exists within **Walltown**. This makes residents **vulnerable to displacement** because **53%** of **Walltown** workers are in sectors that have had flat or decreasing wages over the last 20 years.

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