City of Asheboro

City Center / Downtown Community Revitalization Plan (CRP)

The City Center / Downtown Community Revitalization Plan (CRP) comprises (I) a narrative about the process that led up to its adoption; (II) a report on on-going community revitalization plans and programs, and (III) a section on goals and strategies toward which the adaptive reuse of the B&H Panel Company buildings as “Asheboro Mill Lofts” contribute.

The purpose of the City Center / Downtown Community Revitalization Plan is to recall and consolidate standing planning elements that impact the CRP Area (Exhibit 4, CRP Boundary Map) and update them under the unifying umbrella of the CRP. It is designed to bring new light to the considerable accomplishments already achieved in this part of Asheboro, to foster coordination among overlapping goals and objectives, and to otherwise bring encouragement and renewed direction to ongoing and new revitalization efforts.

This CRP was prepared through the City of Asheboro Planning Department with assistance from the City Manager’s office. The CRP was created in part to support the 2011 application for low income housing tax credits (LIHTC) for affordable housing in the former B&H Panel Company buildings on S. Church and W. Academy St. It also serves to document that the City Center / Downtown is an area where community revitalization work is “actively underway” and otherwise meets the other CRP criteria presented in the 2011 Qualified Allocation Plan (page 17 of 32).

The vision of the Community Revitalization Plan incorporates the visions of various City of Asheboro planning elements (see Exhibits List). May it serve to draw major development investment into downtown Asheboro, reinforcing the strong efforts already underway.

I. Context and Foundation

Through the leadership of City Council and City staff, major investment and land development decisions are made using a full array of municipal planning instruments including small area plans, ordinances, projects and programs that comprise urban design principles, policies, and strategies for the betterment of the community overall.

Attached is an Exhibits List of such planning elements which together are the comprehensive foundation document for this Community Revitalization Plan (CRP) in the downtown area around the proposed Asheboro Mill Lofts. In preparation of these documents, the City has focused on residents’ concerns and contributions along with professional planning analysis. From there it provides details for development and recommendations for administrative tools for development control, short and long term.
In addition to the vision and framework of which it is a part, this CRP targets the reuse of important neighborhood assets, particularly the B&H Panel Company buildings as appropriate infill as part of the City’s downtown housing diversification strategy. In addition to building on vacant lots between buildings, appropriate infill includes adaptive reuse (‘refill’) of existing larger scale buildings that if left to vacancy, could become sites of vagrancy and vandalism, if not crime.

Fruit of such “infill and refill” efforts in the CRP area are already visible in the beautiful Farmer’s Market at 134 S. Church Street that is operated by the City Cultural and Recreation Services Department and the $1,000,000 historic rehabilitation of the mixed use building at 130 S. Church Street which features Timothy’s, a gourmet restaurant. (Both of these properties are directly across S. Church Street from B&H Panel Company). In light of these public and private investments, the possibility of a 2011 adaptive reuse of an historic landmark as affordable housing as Asheboro Mill Lofts through the use of low income housing tax credits (LIHC) and federal and state historic tax credits (HTC) will be another plank in the platform of revitalizing downtown Asheboro.

This Community Revitalization Plan focuses on the City Center / Downtown, the CRP Map referenced above as Exhibit 4. The CRP planning area is defined as Salisbury St. on the North; Fayetteville St. on the East; Spencer Ave. – Armfield Ave. – Birkhead St. on the south; Uwharrie St and McCravy St. on the west. This is a primarily residential area that is impacted by the standing small area plans and investments, and now this Community Revitalization Plan.

The attached Revitalization Composite/Context Map (Exhibit 13) shows how the City’s ongoing community development efforts relate to (have impact in) the Community Revitalization Plan (CRP) area.

II. On-going Community Revitalization Activities

The following is a list of overlapping plans that when taken together, portray a concerted effort toward community revitalization, in line with which the proposed LIHTC adaptive reuse is being received by the City as a major stimulus. Likewise, these instruments are already in place and at work around the proposed site of “Asheboro Mill Lofts” and will provide security for the LIHTC investment from the standpoint of there already being “eyes on the street”, and LIHTC is not the “only investment in town”. These plans and instruments include:

- Center City Planning Area (Overlay District)
- Central Small Area Plan, Asheboro 2020 Land Development Plan (update 2009)
- Proposed National Register Historic Districts
- Fit Community Project
- Comprehensive Pedestrian Transportation Plan, adopted 2008
- Asheboro’s NEXT ACT – the Sunset Theatre (circa. 1929)
- Local Farmer’s Market Complex
- Housing Initiatives
III Goals and Strategies toward which adaptive reuse of the former B&H Panel Company as quality affordable housing contributes.

The vision of the City has continuously been to “foster a mixed use, mixed-income pedestrian-friendly downtown which preserves its historic character.” Residential adaptive reuse of the former B&H Panel Company buildings would result in approximately $12 million investment toward fulfilling that vision, as articulated in the following documents.

A. Existing Goals and Planning Principles

The B&H Panel Company buildings are located inside the Central Business District Overlay District (Tier 1) as shown on the Center City Planning Area Map, presented as part of Exhibit 5. The CRP Area includes the portion of the Tier 1 Area that is west of Main Street.

1. “The Council’s goal is to promote development that encourages a stable, attractive, economically viable, pedestrian-scaled environment, and that preserves and enhances the visual appeal of streets leading into and out of Asheboro’s Central Business Planning Area (Tier 1)” … (Asheboro Zoning Ordinance, Article 200A: Center City Planning Area, p. 1.)

2. “The Central Business Planning Area (Tier 1) is hereby established to strengthen Asheboro’s Center City Planning Area by incorporating a mix of commercial, office, institutional, residential and public open space uses. Design standards for revitalization and new development in the city center encourage a pedestrian oriented mix of two and three story buildings located close to the street...” (Asheboro Zoning Ordinance, Article 200A: Center City Planning Area, p.1.)

3. “As the historic core of community life in Asheboro, the City (Activity) Center designation incorporates a mix of commercial, office, institutional, residential, and public open space uses. Implemented by the Tier 1 Ordinance referenced above, design standards for revitalization and new development efforts in the City Center will help encourage a pedestrian-oriented mix of two- and three-story buildings located close to the street and containing an attractive mix of first-story storefronts, and second- and third-story office and residential uses. Ample sidewalks and street trees, and a blend of on-street and side or rear parking lots, coupled with complementary building types and public landmarks and spaces will serve to create a unique and vibrant atmosphere setting the City Center apart from other districts.” (Asheboro 2020 Land Development Plan, updated 2009, page 82, Exhibit 6).

4. “Areas designated to promote and accommodate a mixture of medium-high density single and multi-family residential uses in and around the Town Center and designated Village Centers. The intent of the Urban Residential designation is to accommodate existing multi-family residential uses, and to encourage a mixture of new, medium-high density residential uses within walking distance of commercial areas and major thoroughfares. The district includes small neighborhood or “pocket” parks that service the needs of local residents. Urban residential developments should create a “sense of place” and a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere at a higher density. Design elements include smaller lots, building placement close to the street, interconnectivity between neighborhoods, sidewalks, and street trees,” (Asheboro 2020 Land Development Plan, updated October 2009, page 85, Exhibit 6).
5. The Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) concept is offered as an alternative to conventional development. (Like) traditional neighborhood development (historic adaptive reuse infill) promotes the diversification and integration of land uses within close proximity to each other. As a result, development like Asheboro Mill Lofts provides opportunities to achieve the following objectives:

a. To preserve and promote Asheboro’s identity and sense of community through enhancement and reinforcement of the City’s unique character and small-town atmosphere.

b. To allow greater design flexibility and cost-efficiency in the siting, provision, and maintenance of services and infrastructure, including the opportunity to reduce the length of roads and utility runs.

c. To reduce the potential for adverse impacts of new development on surrounding properties, the natural environment, the general public, and the business economy through encouraging infill and adaptive reuse development.

d. To reduce traffic congestion and vehicle miles of travel by minimizing the need for automobile trips, freeing up arterial capacity, and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle mobility. (Asheboro 2020 Land Development Plan, updated October 2009, page 94).

6. A wide variety of land uses are found within the Central planning area. The area contains the historic core and Central Business District. A variety of established residential areas are located within the planning area... There is a limited amount of vacant land within the Central planning area, and much of it is in relatively small tracts, compared to other planning areas. Much of the vacant land has severe topography conditions, poor soils, and/or contains flood plains. The greatest development opportunities within the Central planning area include revitalization of the City Center.

Key issues within the Central planning area include: Preservation and revitalization of the Central Business District (City Center) and Preservation and revitalization of existing residential neighborhoods.

Central – Small Area Plan Recommendations include: A large area is designated as the City Center, and will receive additional attention, as part of a separate “City Center” planning process. The City Center is bounded on the west by Park Street, on the north by Presnell Street, on the east by Main Street, and on the south by West Dixie Drive. To encourage its re-emergence as the City’s primary public activity center, a wide mix of land uses is designated and accommodated within the City Center... and Urban Residential uses are designated throughout the planning area, to accommodate existing, and some new, higher, density residential uses, in the most appropriate places, and with the least impact on existing neighborhoods. (Asheboro 2020 Land Development Plan, updated October 2009, Central Small Area Plan, I page 101, Exhibit 6).
7. The City has analyzed its inventory of built structures by age and has identified from that analysis three areas that are to be proposed for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as National Register Historic Districts (in contrast to local historic districts), colored red, green and blue on Exhibit 7. The proposed adaptive reuse of the B&H Panel Company property is located within the green cluster of properties unofficially called “the Downtown Asheboro National Register Historic District cluster”. The City Hall and the Federal Building are also in this cluster and their designation as Local Historic Landmarks is being proposed by the City Council, which recently voted to fund the National Register Nomination for the historic Theatre mentioned below. Asheboro has received a “Preserve America” designation and is considering applying for its funding with which to establish the historic districts. These districts will help attract federal and state historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and the North Carolina Mill Rehabilitation Tax Credit, two of which (federal and mill) are proposed in the adaptive reuse of the B&H Panel Company. (Article from the Asheboro Courier-Tribune entitled “City Council to Pursue Historic Designations”, published November 5, 2010).

8. Part of a new urban lifestyle includes walking and jogging and other forms of daily exercise. In December, 2009, the City of Asheboro adopted its “Fit Community Project” which proposes walking and jogging route projects and establishes pre-measure route in the through the center city area for use by the community. As shown on the Fit Community Project Map (Exhibit 8), the proposed adaptive reuse of the B&H Panel Company property is situated along the 2 mile walking/jogging route and is ½ block from the 1 mile walking/jogging route. Such amenities are hand in glove for proposed infill in the form of Asheboro Mill Lofts.

9. As part of its vision for a vibrant downtown, the City of Asheboro adopted a Comprehensive Pedestrian Transportation Plan, a Vision for 2025 (January 2008, Exhibit 9). The vision statement of that plan and its goals foster the type of urban environment that resident of “Asheboro Mill Lofts” would appreciate near their homes:

“In the year 2030, Asheboro will provide a safe and pleasant pedestrian experience and be accessible to all people. Asheboro will achieve this by establishing innovative programs, projects and policies designed to create a unique experience for City residents and visitors. Asheboro pedestrians will be a well-organized community, fostering a culture of walkability through awareness and education, while striving to encourage a healthier and more active lifestyle for everyone". Equally compelling, the goals of that document are to: 1. Provide a safe, pleasant and accessible pedestrian experience for all ages; 2. Create an attractive, unique pedestrian experience for residents and visitors; 3. Foster a strong awareness, expectation and culture of walkability in Asheboro; and 4. Encourage healthier, more active lifestyles.

To achieve these goals, the city is divided into Small Area Planning Areas, each with specific improvements planned. Exhibit 9 presents an excerpt entitled “Downtown and Frazer Park Small Area Plan Map” that shows the subject property located in the Downtown and Frazer Park Area (brown-shaded) adjacent “Project A7”. Improvements scheduled there are shown as ADA Compliant Curb Ramps (at the corner of S. Church St. and W. Academy St.) and a sidewalk along W. Academy St. Page 5 indicates that the aforementioned sidewalk is a top propriety project as designated by the steering committee and is planned to run from S. Church Street to S. Fayetteville St, a length of 819 ft (1,638 ft on both sides) with curb and gutter on one side at a cost of $82,000 on one side or $164,000 on both sides. These planned amenities will directly serve the residents of Asheboro Mill Lofts.
10. Located one-half block from Asheboro Mill Lofts downtown’s “Sunset Theatre begins its ninth decade. Along with its transformation into a Performing Arts Center, it is poised to become the vibrant centerpiece of the downtown’s revitalization effort. The City of Asheboro has invested more than $1,000,000 in seed money and is partnering with the local affiliate of the nonprofit North Carolina Community Foundation to make gifts to the project tax deductible. To complete the renovation and expansion of the historic Sunset Theatre, $1,200,000 in additional funds is needed. The City funds were used to stabilize the building, replace the roof, acquire space for expansion and purchase a new marquee.

Special performances by guest stars are part of the fundraising strategy underway. Funds raised in the capital campaign will enable expansion of the lobby and concession area, creation of handicapped-accessible restrooms, and the addition of two multi-purpose rooms, for rehearsals and storage. It also will provide for new sound and lighting systems – required for a wider variety of live events – and other updates for the “comfort and convenience of the audience” (See Exhibit 10, Asheboro’s NEXT ACT brochure, www.SunsetTheatre.org). This amenity, when complete, will enrich the lives of residents at Asheboro Mill Lofts by putting night time activity on the street half a block away and providing enriching cultural entertainment.

11. Near to the heart of every downtown revitalization effort is a beautiful Farmer’s Market. The City of Asheboro’s Cultural and Recreation Services Department operates a model facility and program at 134 S. Church Street, directly across the street from Asheboro Mill Lofts. Open from April 3 to October 30, 2010, on every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday it sells fresh local produce and craft goods. Special theme days, like October 16th’s “Pumpkin Day,” provide a festive air to stimulating commerce downtown while the local people enjoy buying locally grown products. Again, Asheboro Mill Lofts is perfectly located to take advantage of this amenity. (See Exhibit 11).

12. Throughout the aforementioned planning documents, the provision of safe, sanitary and affordable housing has been a priority for the City of Asheboro. It has applied for a CDBG grant for the area around Hoover Street, Sunset Avenue, Memorial St. and Cherry St., all within the Community Revitalization Plan (CRP) boundary (See Exhibit 4 and Exhibit 13, Item 12). Additionally, CDBG grants have been used for Central Falls, Peachtree St. and East Asheboro. The city is familiar with affordable housing through North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA), having worked with Sherwood Place, a 40 unit new construction LIHTC development for the elderly funded in 2006. The City has been partners with the Asheboro Housing Authority since the 1960’s and looks forward to working with them to assist the residents of Asheboro Mill Lofts. Asheboro Mill Lofts would be a direct continuation of the City’s efforts to foster quality affordable housing in downtown Asheboro.

B. Strategies for Affordable Housing through Historic Preservation.

While the City Center / Downtown presently contains neither locally designated historic districts nor National Register historic districts, the rehabilitation of the aforementioned former mill buildings in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for historic preservation will contribute to the city’s inventory of respected and preserved historic properties. It will also meet a documented need for safe, sanitary and affordable housing.
Strategies for implementing the plan and program goals listed above and for meeting the need for affordable housing among families through historic adaptive reuse in the City Center / Downtown include the following:

1. Seek funding for adaptive reuse of the historic former B&H Panel Company including but not limited to housing (LIHTC) tax credits through the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) in the 2011 funding cycle.

2. Pursue placement of the historic former B&H Panel Company on the State Study List and then on the National Register of Historic Places in order to position it for eligibility for federal and state historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits.

3. Consider using the preservation instruments such as historic preservation easements and rehabilitation agreements to protect the historic integrity of the former mill buildings.

4. Provide incentives for its rehabilitation through use of City housing development funds leveraged through CDBG and other sources, working to rehabilitate the historic former B&H Panel Company as a highly visible testimony of the heritage of Asheboro’s historic City Center / Downtown area.

IV Conclusion

As indicated above, the City Center / Downtown Community Revitalization Plan (CRP) comprises (I) a narrative about the process that led up to the adoption of the City Center / Downtown CRP; (II) a report on on-going community revitalization achievements and (III) a section on goals and strategies toward which the adaptive reuse of the B&H Panel Company buildings contribute.

As a document to be submitted to the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) in support of the 2011 LIHTC application for the adaptive reuse of the former B&H Panel Company as affordable housing, it meets all the criteria on page 17 and 18 of 33 of the 2011 Qualified Allocation Plan.

As a record of on-going progress and an articulation of additional goals and strategies, it stands as a valuable instrument for use by the City of Asheboro and others for fulfillment of the original vision of the City Center / Downtown planning documents which are still in effect individually and collectively through this coordinated Community Revitalization Plan.

The following Exhibits are included as part of the CRP as foundation documents of on-going community revitalization efforts and as the platform for continued progress in and for the City Center / Downtown of Asheboro, North Carolina.

EXHIBITS
The following are numbered to correspond to the paragraphs in section above entitled “III. Goals and Strategies.” There are no Exhibits for paragraphs 1, 2, 3 or 12. Exhibit 13 is a summary of how these elements tangibly serve the site at the corner of S. Church St. and W. Academy St. proposed for Asheboro Mill Lofts.

4. CRP Boundary Map

5. Center City Planning Area (Overlay District) Contents & Map

6. Central Small Area Plan, Asheboro 2020 Land Development Plan

7. Historic Inventory -- Proposed National Register Historic Districts

8. Fit Community Project


10. Asheboro’s NEXT ACT – the Sunset Theatre (circa. 1929)

11. Local Farmer’s Market Complex

13. Revitalization Composite/Context Map
Zoning Ordinance

Ordinances are available in Adobe PDF format. Note: Some files may take a moment to download completely.

ARTICLE 100: GENERAL REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 200: SCHEDULES OF DISTRICT REGULATIONS
   Table 200-1 Table 200-2 Notes to Table 200-2
ARTICLE 200A: CENTER CITY PLANNING AREA
ARTICLE 300: MODIFICATION OF YARD AND HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS
ARTICLE 300A: SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 300B: WATERSHED PROTECTION REGULATIONS
ARTICLE 400: OFF-STREET PARKING AND LOADING
   Table 400-1 Diagram 400-1 Diagram 400-2 Diagram 400-3
ARTICLE 500: SIGN REGULATIONS
   Sign Table 500-1 Notes to Article 500
ARTICLE 600: SPECIAL USES
ARTICLE 700: FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE
ARTICLE 800: NON-CONFORMING SITUATIONS
ARTICLE 900: BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT & WATERSHED REVIEW BOARD
ARTICLE 1000: ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL PROVISIONS
ARTICLE 1100: DEFINITIONS
For a Performing Arts Center

As Sunset Theatre begins its ninth decade along with its transformation into a performing arts center, it is poised to become the vibrant centerpiece of the downtown’s revitalization effort. The City of Asheboro has invested more than $1 million in seed money and is partnering with the local affiliate of the nonprofit North Carolina Community Foundation to make gifts to the project tax deductible. To complete the renovation and expansion of our historic Sunset Theatre, $1.2 million in additional funds is needed.

The City funds were used to stabilize the building, replace the roof, acquire space for expansion and purchase a new marquee. Funds raised in the capital campaign will enable expansion of the lobby and concession area, creation of handicapped-accessible restrooms, and the addition of two multipurpose rooms for rehearsals and storage. It also will provide for new sound and lighting systems — required for a wider variety of live events — and other updates for the comfort and convenience of the audience.

www.SunsetTheatre.org
Farmers' Market

134 S. Church Street

The Farmers' Market will be open from April 3 to October 30, 2010. It will be open every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. during these dates.

2010 Downtown Farmers' Market Application
Summary of 2010 Rules Changes
Farmers' Market Rules

2010 Special Events

Saturday, October 16, 2010 Pumpkin Day

Directions to the Market:

The Asheboro Farmers' Market is located at 134 South Church Street. From US 220, exit onto Sunset Avenue. Continue east on Sunset until you reach Church Street. Turn right onto South Church Street. The market will be on your right.

http://www.asheboroparksandrecreation.com/farmersmarket.html

11/5/2010
5 Center City Planning Area Ordinance (Tier 1)
6 Entire CRP Area is inside the Central Planning Area of the Land Development Small Area Plan
7 Historic Properties Inventory (green parcels)
7 City Hall, Proposed Local Historic Landmark
7 Federal Building, Proposed Local Historic Landmark
8 Fit Community Project walking/jogging routes (orange)
9 Downtown and Frazer Park Small Area Plan, Pedestrian Transportation Plan (pink boundary)
10 Sunset Theatre Performing Art Center
11 Farmer's Market
12 Housing Initiative: CDBG Area
13 Housing: Asheboro Mill Lofts adaptive reuse