Graniteville TAP: Developing a Community Vision

SPONSORED BY:
Graniteville Community Development Improvement Corporation
Mission
To provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide.

ULI is a non-advocacy research and education institution with some 28,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS (TAPs)

• Objective, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues developed over the course of one and a half days

• ULI members from across the region volunteer their time to participate as panelists
Developing a Community Vision: Graniteville TAP

Diverse Expertise

– Developers
– Market Analysts
– Planners
– Architects and Urban Designers
– Economic Development Experts
– Attorneys
Developing a Community Vision: Graniteville TAP

Panel Chair:
Tom Hund, Making Places, LLC, Charleston

Panelists:
Pat Dilger, Overstreet Studios, Greenville
Mac Horton, Clemson Sandhills Institute, Columbia
Matt Kennel, City Center Partnership, Columbia
Sarah Kirsch, Technical Writer, Atlanta, GA
Tommy Lavender, Nexsen Pruet, Columbia
Stephanie Monroe, City of Spartanburg, Spartanburg
Ron Rasmussen, IMI Living, Greenville
Jim Warren, Wyche, Burgess, Freeman and Parham, Greenville
Questions/issues to be addressed by the ULI tap panel:

• What are the strategies for encouraging downtown revitalization?

• What is the best way to regulate development of appropriate housing types in Graniteville and the surrounding communities?

• How can Graniteville improve traffic calming and pedestrian safety?
Grow in Graniteville: The mission of this ULI TAP Panel is to identify opportunities to grow Graniteville into a sustainable community for the NEXT generation.
Developing a Community Vision: Graniteville TAP

Day 1:
- Project Orientation & Site Tour
- Meeting with Industry Representatives & Elected Officials
- Panel Deliberations

Day 2:
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Panel Deliberations
  - addressed focus areas
  - identified opportunities and challenges
  - defined guiding principle
  - developed recommendations
- Public Presentation
1. Public Officials
   - Willingness to help
   - Lack of Local Representation

2. Economic Development
   - Demand for Workforce & Market Housing
   - Potential for Greenfield Development

3. Education
   - Concerns about the physical quality of middle school
   - Strong Job Training
COMMUNITY INPUT

4. The Community

- Challenging relationship with the county
- The importance of the faith-based community & existing businesses
- Competing entities with similar missions
STRENGTHS

1. Strong Community Pride
2. Faith-based Community
3. Historic Context of the Community as a Mill Village
4. Industrial Core with Substantial Growth
5. **Water:** *Langley Pond, Horse Creek, Bridge Pond*
6. Single Land Owner of Five Mills
7. Access to Quality Education, Recreation, and Natural Resources
CHALLENGES

1. **Communications Strategy:** *What is the most effective means to communicate with county, town, and community?*

2. **Lack of Political Leadership**

3. **Limited Practical Industrial Reuse**

4. **Undefined Downtown District**

5. **Relationship with & Perception of the County**

6. **Aging Population:** *How to retain and attract future generations*

7. **What is the vision of Graniteville**

8. **Condition of the Middle School**
OPPORTUNITIES

1. Current & Future Recreation Opportunities: YMCA, Cycling Community, Rowing Community, Hiking, Golf, Paddling, Gregg Center

2. Arts, Events, and Entertainment

3. Connection to Heritage Corridor


5. Mill and Community Heritage and Culture

6. Corporate investment in the Public Realm

7. Community Transportation System
TAP TEAM TWO FOCUS AREAS

1. One team is focused on the authenticity of place including the natural resources, architecture and historic assets to drive economic growth while maintaining the character and sense of place.

2. The second team is focused on land use and zoning issues that could create a vision to redevelop the area along Canal Street. The group would study development strategies, funding mechanisms, and market dynamics.
TEAM OBSERVATIONS

1. Community pride and commitment
2. Stronger economic growth in the region
3. 1.5 million square feet is equivalent to a regional mall
4. Redevelopment will require phasing over many years
5. Lack of connectivity
6. Mistrust with the county
7. Community Champion
8. The Red Barn; Water Tower
9. Alternative redevelopment plan for Hickman Hall
What are the strategies for encouraging downtown revitalization?

**GOAL:** To strengthen existing businesses and attract new businesses

**STRATEGY:**
- Beautification of the canal corridor into the downtown area
- Streetscaping of retail area
- Micro loans to support the small business community
- Signage to welcome visitors to downtown Graniteville
What is the best way to regulate development of appropriate housing types in Graniteville and the surrounding communities?

**Goal:** To protect and enhance property values through land use regulations

**Strategy:**
Create a community redevelopment plan to be incorporated into the Aiken County Comprehensive Plan
Evaluate and pursue rezoning efforts
Package the 13 “Blue Row” and other mill homes for refurbishment
DESIGN CONCEPTS
Establish Neighborhood Connections
Leverage Existing Assets
Leverage Existing Assets

Community Gateway

Phase 1

1. Renovate & Occupy Hickman Hall with Civic Uses
2. Renovate Purchasing Office
3. Renovate Water Tower
4. Create New Park at Canal Head
   - Space for Community Events
5. Develop new streetscaping for Canal Street
   - Improve pedestrian experience
   - Provide new lighting
   - Landscaping along street and canal
   - Install community signage
PRECEDEENT STUDIES

Downtown Greenville, SC

Downtown Graniteville, SC
COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Capitalize on community sense of place
2. Create a vision for downtown
3. Create a mechanism for implementation and communication
1. CAPITALIZE ON COMMUNITY SENSE OF PLACE

- Protect & Create Green Space
- Leverage Existing Natural Assets
- Historic and Cultural Assets
- Enhance Community Engagement & Pride
2. CREATE A VISION FOR DOWNTOWN

- Establish Task Force of Community Leaders and Stakeholders
- Identify Priorities
- Develop a Communications Strategy
- Development of Physical & Strategic Master Plan
3. CREATE MECHANISM FOR IMPLEMENTATION & COMMUNICATION

- Schedule a series of County Council Meetings in Graniteville
- Bridge the Relationship with Aiken County Administrative Offices
- Monthly Task Force Meetings
In the next (30 – 60 Days)

- Host a county council meeting in Graniteville
- Host one community program in the Mill Building
- Highlight the work of the Youth Mission by opening Hickman Hall to the public for a specific period of time(s)
- Increase the sense of community and the voice of the community
- Identification of Task Force
MID-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

In the Next (60 – 180 Days)

• Recreation-centered event to attract the Rowing and Cycling Communities with community festival following the removal of the steam pipes (April 2012)
• Partner with Aiken County Parks and Recreation to promote the use of the waterways
• Initiate a vision exercise to define the downtown district through the identification of task force leaders
LONG TERM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Long Term (More than 180 Days)

- Physical & Strategic Master Plan
- Designate Horse Creek as part of the SC Waterways
- Historic Building Designations
- Exploit Recreation Opportunities including new water trail
- Engage with the County School Board regarding the viability of the Middle School
- Explore Special District Under South Carolina Municipal Improvement Act
DONT STOP DREAMING

- Graniteville the Tuscany of the Carolinas
- SCAD to Fill Up Mill Buildings
- Rowing Mecca with Indoor Training Facility
KEY TAKE AWAYS

- Empowering, engaging, and connecting leaders