



Finding Solutions

Building Consensus

Generating Momentum

THE CITY OF
NEW ELLENTON, SC

April 30 - May 1, 2014

ULI SC Technical Assistance Panel



**Urban Land
Institute**

South Carolina

WHAT ARE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS

TAPs provide expert and objective strategic advice to sponsoring organizations on complex land-use and development issues. TAPs link public agencies and nonprofit organizations to seasoned real estate, planning, financing, marketing and technical experts through ULI district councils. TAPs are part of ULI's Advisory Services program which has assisted more than 500 communities worldwide since 1947.

How do TAPS Work

Sponsors request the services of a TAP with regard to a specific issue that can be addressed by a panel of experts in one or two days. The District Council assists the sponsor in refining the scope of the assignment and convenes a panel to address those specific issues. The sponsor works within ULI guidelines to provide background information to ULI panelists prior to the panel's convening. When convened, members of the TAP view the subject site, hear from public and private stakeholders, and then deliberate on the assigned issues. At the conclusion of its work, the panel presents an oral report to stakeholders; that is followed by a written report within approximately six weeks.

WHAT DO TAPs Cost

TAP fees depend on the size of the scope, length of the panel and the detail of the final report but typically run between \$10,000 and \$15,000. Each TAP is different and fees are negotiated individually. Panel members donate their time and are only reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses such as overnight lodging and transportation to attend the TAP. To ensure objectivity, panel members cannot be involved in matters pending before the sponsor, be working for the sponsor, or solicit work from the sponsor during the panel's assignment period.



Panelists touring the study area with the TAP sponsor

The Panel Process

TAP PANEL SELECTION

The ULI South Carolina District Council considered the City of New Ellenton's goals for the TAP. Six panelists were selected based on their expertise.

SPONSOR PRESENTATION

The TAP Panelists assembled at the New Ellenton Community Center for a presentation by the TAP sponsor. The presentation was made by Roger Le Duc and Mayor Vernon Dunbar.

TOUR OF STUDY AREA AND ENVIRONS

Following the sponsor presentation, the TAP panelists toured New Ellenton via mini bus and on foot. The study area included Greenwood Elementary, both the east side and the west side of Highway 19 and approximately 1.5 miles in either direction of the municipal complex. The tour concluded at the municipal complex.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The afternoon of April 30 and the morning of May 1, panelists met with community stakeholders including elected officials, business owner, local teachers and students and leaders from the private sector and the faith based community.

PANEL DELIBERATIONS

The panelists held two working sessions, the first on Monday evening following the site tour and sponsor presentation and the second upon the conclusion of the sponsor education on Tuesday morning. During these sessions the panelists reviewed the significant findings, addressed the focus areas, identified opportunities and challenges, defined guiding principles, developed recommendations and prepared a PowerPoint presentation that addressed the formation of a task force, branding and communication and prepared conceptual drawings.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

The panelists presented their PowerPoint presentation of findings and recommendations at 3:00PM on Thursday, May 6 in an open session to the TAP sponsors, community stakeholders and interested public in the New Ellenton Community Center. They then took questions and comments from the audience.

REPORT PREPARATION AND RELEASE

The TAP, under the leadership of the ULI South Carolina District Council, prepared this report on its conclusions and recommendations. It presented the report to the sponsors in June 2014.

The City of New Ellenton Technical Assistance Panel

APRIL 30 - MAY 1, 2014 | NEW ELLENTON, SC

The Urban Land Institute South Carolina
205 1/2 King Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Executive Summary

Under the direction of the Urban Land Institute's South Carolina District Council, the New Ellenton Technical Assistance Panel convened in New Ellenton, SC, from April 30 to May 1, 2014, bringing together community leaders, stakeholders and a panel of planning, design, engineering and development professionals for a day and a half session focused on helping New Ellenton continue a community revitalization launched by the development of a new civic and municipal complex.

A community created in the 1950s when the federal government bought property for the Savannah River Site and moved the town of Ellenton about 14 miles north, New Ellenton has suffered considerable decline in recent years. But new city leadership is helping to revive the town's identity and sense of community pride.

The panel was asked specifically how New Ellenton could:

- Overcome issues with SC 19, a four-lane highway that splits the community
- Promote pedestrian activities, activate civic spaces and create connections
- Create a sense of place and community identity
- Link the new municipal complex and Evans Park with SC 19



The TAP prepared its recommendations based on a review of the briefing materials, a debriefing with the mayor and city consultant, a tour of the study area and extensive interviews with stakeholders. Panel deliberations included a S.W.O.T analysis, determining key focus areas and recommendations.

The panel made a broad series of recommendations focused on:

Community Identity – Urging New Ellenton to revitalize and capitalize on its brand as “The Atomic City” and to leverage that brand as a draw to the community

Communication – Emphasizing the importance of telling the community’s story, sharing its vision and developing partnerships to assist the community

Economic Development – Revitalizing the city’s only commercial and retail corridor

Master Plan for Evans Park & Civic Buildings – Leveraging the new Municipal Complex and revitalized Evans Park to create a new town center.

SC 19 Improvements – Mitigating the traffic and safety concerns, and dealing with a poor public perception of the highway.

Neighborhood Revitalization – Dealing with issues of rundown

Sponsor and ULI Participants



Panelists deliberate following stakeholder interviews

SPONSOR

City of New Ellenton

TAP CHAIR

KJ Jacobs, McMillan Pazdan Smith
Greenville, SC

TAP MEMBERS

Jennifer Bihl, Bihl Engineering
Charleston, SC

Gary Collins, Seamon Whiteside
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Fred Delk, Columbia Development Corporation
Columbia, SC

Tracy Hegler, Richland County
Columbia, SC

Todd Ward, Vannoy Construction
Columbia, SC

ULI SOUTH CAROLINA PROJECT STAFF

Heather Foley, Executive Director
ULI South Carolina

Grant Jackson, Consultant / Technical Writer
Columbia, SC

Sydney Parker, Contractor
ULI South Carolina

Jenna Wylie, Associate
ULI South Carolina

Table of Contents

SPONSOR AND ULI PARTICIPANTS	4
BACKGROUND & SCOPE	6
STAKEHOLDER INPUT & KEY ISSUES	8
OBSERVATIONS & FINDINGS	12
TAP RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS	18
KEY TAKE AWAYS	27
PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES	29

Background & Scope

and abandoned properties

New Ellenton is located in Southern Aiken County approximately one mile from the Savannah River Site. In 1950, when the Savannah River Site was built, the town of Ellenton was relocated 14 miles north to its current location and renamed New Ellenton. Both people and some buildings were moved.

New Ellenton was sited with SC 19 running through the center of town. For most of the past 60 plus years, the Savannah River Site has grown, and currently, the SRS footprint extends 310 square miles and employs more than 12,000 people. SRS is a vital economic engine for the region. But as the Savannah River Site has grown, SC 19, which is considered New Ellenton's Main Street, although it never developed as a true Main Street commercial district, has evolved into a four-lane highway that splits the town.

SC 19 for years also split New Ellenton racially, with the African-American population settled largely on the east side of the highway and the white population on the west. Although that has changed over the years, a perception of racial division continues, especially among older residents. The character of SC 19 suffers from a poor public perception. The streetscape is characterized by strip center development without sidewalks or street trees making the conditions along the road dangerous and inhospitable to pedestrians and bicyclists. The highway is also viewed by many as a speed trap. The single purpose automobile infrastructure has created obstacles to active living habits essential to the health and well-being of the residents in New Ellenton.

In its early years New Ellenton was dubbed "The Atomic City" and an annual Atomic City Festival continues to be held. But the town's connection to the Savannah River Site seems to be focused largely on SC 19 which Savannah River Site employees use as a primary artery for commuting to and from work. The expansion of the highway into a four-lane highway carrying 15,000 vehicles a day with heavy peak morning and evening traffic has also divided infrastructure investment thus creating a

deeper divide between the communities on both sides of the highway. Over the years, New Ellenton has also experienced political discord and as a result suffers from poor infrastructure including an inadequate sewage system and lack of and deteriorating sidewalks. Much of this has resulted in a distrust of public officials.

But in recent years, New Ellenton has made strides to revitalize itself. A City Council retreat resulted in agreement to focus on 4 major issues:



New signage for the City Hall is prominent along Highway 19

- 1. Completing the Sewer System.**
- 2. Revitalizing Neighborhoods.**
- 3. Renovating Evans Park.**
- 4. Connecting across SC 19.**

The construction of new civic buildings and revitalization of Evans Park are evidence that the time is right to examine issues of walkability, connectivity and community perception.

To help facilitate the city's revitalization efforts, the Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel was asked to address these issues/questions:

- How to best to overcome the poor public perception of SC 19 to support commercial and residential growth?
- How to best promote pedestrian activity, activate civic spaces and create new connections on both sides of SC 19?
- How to create a sense of place and identity to draw commuters along SC 19 into the town?
- How to create landscaping to link the civic buildings including the library, city hall, the community center and Evans Park with SC 19?

Stakeholder Input & Key Issues



Highway 19 is a divided highway designed to accommodate 15K+ vehicular

Following a briefing by Mayor Vernon Dunbar and city consultant Roger LeDuc, a tour of New Ellenton, and interviews with numerous stakeholders, the panel identified several key issues with direct relevance to the questions posed for the TAP:

South Carolina Highway 19 splits New Ellenton, not only from the standpoint of a major four-lane highway through the middle of the community's only commercial district, but also it still splits the town racially with the majority of African-American homes on the east side of the highway and white homes on the west. While there has been integration in housing, New Ellenton can still feel like a racially segregated community.

In addition to contributing to a segregated feel, stakeholders also mentioned several other issues with SC 19:

- **Image as a Speed Trap.** This seems to be largely the result of traffic on its way to the front gate of SRS not realizing that even though SC 19 is a four-lane highway, the speed limit drops as it crosses into the municipality and traverses the commercial district.
- **Lack of Connectivity.** SC 19 has no pedestrian crossings and no sidewalks. Traffic flows at a high rate of speed endangering pedestrians. New Ellenton has a single stop light on SC 19 at George and Smith avenues with no designed pedestrian crossing. Plans are in the works to remedy this by redesigning the intersection as a pedestrian crossing and putting in sidewalks on the west side north to reach the Reid's shopping center and on the east side south to the Popeye's restaurant. This is a start, but stakeholders want to see a lot more sidewalks put in.
- **Lack of Curb and Gutter.** The lack of street curbs with defined cuts for business access has created an issue with parking at some businesses, with vehicles literally just pulling off the highway and parking barely off the roadway. This creates a very unsafe passage for pedestrians and forces drivers often to back right onto the highway to resume their journey.

No Town Center

With the relocation of Ellenton and the creation of New Ellenton in the 1950s, the town lost its traditional Main Street and never seemed to have developed a new true town center. In the years since it also seems to have lost its sense of community and focus.

Mistrust of Politicians and the Political Process

Events in New Ellenton's recent past, especially the misappropriation of funds to build the sewer system and the subsequent jailing on federal charges of a former mayor have contributed to a culture of mistrust of politicians and the town government. This also may be a contributing factor in the lack of other community organizations, especially churches, becoming involved in civic life. But recent efforts by current Mayor Vernon Dunbar and City Council and by consultant Roger LeDuc, a well-respected former Aiken city manager, seem to have mitigated this issue somewhat. The opening of the new City Hall and municipal complex are also positive steps.



Stakeholder Input & Key Issues

Poor Infrastructure

Stakeholders emphasized both incomplete infrastructure, such as the sewer system, and poorly maintained infrastructure. The incomplete sewer system is a major concern, especially as it affects commercial and economic development. The lack of a sewer line running the length of SC 19 through New Ellenton is a significant impediment to attracting new commercial activity. Completing the sewer system was mentioned by several stakeholders. It should be noted that finishing the system is one of the city's priorities and the city has made progress with repairs and upgrades paid for by a grant from the South Carolina Rural Infrastructure Authority. Having the sewer system controlled by the city and the water system under a separate Commission of Public Works contributes to problems in developing and maintaining both. On the tour of the community prior to the stakeholder interviews, panelists noted a significant number of infrastructure issues. Poorly maintained and incomplete sidewalks topped the list. Sidewalks which are in disrepair and/or not continuous do little to contribute to pedestrian connectivity. While considering the installation of new sidewalks along SC 19, it is also important to maintain existing sidewalks and connect open sections.

Drainage issues along SC 19 also need to be addressed

Unfortunately many of the infrastructure issues the panelists saw during the community tour were on the east side of SC 19, further reinforcing the perception of a segregated community.

One stakeholder remarked on the need for better maintenance of both infrastructure and community assets.

Abandoned & Rundown Properties

The panelists noted numerous abandoned and rundown commercial properties along SC 19 and also residential properties. Unfortunately as with infrastructure, the preponderance of property issues appeared to be to the east of SC 19 in the largely African American neighborhoods. Stakeholders also noted the need to tackle rundown and overgrown property. While many of the properties did appear to be abandoned, some unfortunately remain occupied but suffer from a significant lack of maintenance. Fortunately, the city has recognized the issue and has already begun to focus on the neighborhoods.

Crime

Crime was brought up as an issue by many of the stakeholders. Much of the crime is drug-related – burglaries or other property crimes – and also likely precipitated by a lack of constructive activities for young people. The town’s small police force has difficulty focusing both on this kind of activity and on enforcement of the speed limit along SC 19.

Poor Self Image

Several stakeholders commented that the community seems to have drifted and lost its sense of place. Several commented about former community activities saying, “We used to do (xxxx), but we don’t do that anymore.” They also commented that the loss could generally be attributed to the loss of a dynamic individual “who just got tired.” For example, while an annual Atomic City Festival is still held, it does not appear to have the size, scope and vigor of years past. The community’s connection to the Savannah River Site does not appear to be as close in years past either. “If you make it the Atomic City, make it live up to its name,” one stakeholder commented.

Some stakeholders characterized New Ellenton as a dead-end town.

This was seen as especially detrimental to the community’s youth with stakeholders noting that there is little for the youth to do. This has led to both a real and perceived crime problem, stakeholders said.

Stakeholders said there is a need to change the perception of New Ellenton. Several also commented on the need for community champions.

Relationship to SRS

New Ellenton would not exist had the Savannah River Site not been created in the 1950s, and SRS has been a primary source of employment for New Ellenton residents in the past. But the relationship has been a love-hate affair to some degree. Some stakeholders feel that SRS should be doing more for the town. Others are concerned about the impact of all the traffic from SRS on SC 19. A declining workforce at SRS is also of concern. Officials of SRS (the Department of Energy) certainly indicated a willingness to be more engaged with the community, but the community needs to reach out and renew the relationship.

Stakeholder Input & Key Issues

Educational System

New Ellenton gets very high marks for its local schools, especially the award-winning New Ellenton Middle School. With only about 180 students, classes are small and students get a great deal of individual attention. For many, New Ellenton is the middle school of choice. The school sits on SC 19 just outside the town limits and pedestrian safety is a major concern. The school has no sidewalks and students are not allowed to cross SC 19. The elementary school, which has about 430 pupils, is in the rundown Greendale neighborhood and stakeholders were concerned with the safety of students walking in the area. Many of the sidewalks are incomplete and/or in disrepair. There has been some discussion of consolidating the elementary school onto the middle school campus. If that were to occur it would create an opportunity for reuse of the elementary school building.

Youth View

Several panelists interviewed a group of students at the New Ellenton Middle School, whose perceptions in some cases paralleled the adult stakeholders, but at other points were considerably divergent. Many of those youth interviewed have extended family ties in the area and said those ties might bring them back to New Ellenton after college if there were opportunities. While the students do see the disparities that still exist as a result of the segregated past – one student commented that the west side is clean, while the east side is dirty – they also exhibit a generational divide in the community, where the students believe that “everyone gets along.” They commented that one of the things that they liked about New Ellenton was “some of the people.”

Like the adults they are aware of the problems with vacant and abandoned housing and the need to tackle the issue. They also confirmed the adult stakeholders’ view that New Ellenton’s churches are not involved in the community. “Church is just for church on Sunday,” one student commented. Safety was also an issue for the students, who echoed the need for sidewalks and pedestrian crossings on SC 19 and voiced the desire for a bike lane. They also expressed concern about crime and were aware of issues with some of the so-called ‘clubs’ in the area.

However, the students said they can tell that New Ellenton “is getting better.” But just not quickly enough. When these Middle School students come home from college they are hoping “to see a big, big change” in their community.

Youth Needs & Wants

The need for recreational facilities topped the students want list, such things as a community pool for swimming lessons and an indoor gymnasium with a game room/video arcade. They feel that the basketball courts at Evans Park are one of the best things about the community. They are excited about the renovation of Evans Park, but think the community needs more recreational opportunities. Several mentioned adding a movie theater, bowling alley and skating rink, and were surprised to learn that the community once had these types of amenities. They like the new library in the municipal complex and see potential in the new community center to create a place where kids can hang out.

The students all wanted more commercial establishments in New Ellenton, especially restaurants and retail stores. Many of their family members work in Aiken and North Augusta and the students pointed out the need for more jobs, especially in retail where they might be employed as students.



Signage difficult to see & needs updating

Observations & Findings (SWOT)

Based on the briefing, tour and stakeholders' interviews, the Panel performed a simple S.W.O.T. – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – analysis.

STRENGTHS

- *Clear community vision with goals and priorities*
- *New civic buildings*
- *Strong community advocate in Roger LeDuc*
- *Strong K-12 school system*
- *Proximity and connection to SRS and its contractor resources.*
- *Success in obtaining grants to enhance municipal projects*
- *Opportunities created by approval of the county's one-cent sales tax*



New civic buildings create a strong core for gathering and city identity.

WEAKNESSES

- *Lack of Identity, sense of place & civic pride*
- *Vestiges of a segregated community*
- *No communication strategy with residents*
- *No communication strategy with Aiken County, the Lower Savannah Council of Governments or neighboring communities.*
- *Abandoned housing stock*
- *Apathy & opposition to change*
- *Only one commercial corridor in SC 19*
- *Lack of consistent sewer along SC 19*
- *Declining employment base at SRS*
- *Compromised regional perception of the community*



Aging infrastructure and inadequate maintenance of public space



Decrepit fence is a physical and psychological barrier

Observations & Findings (SWOT)

OPPORTUNITIES

- *Revitalize the Atomic City brand*
- *Harness the momentum of the new civic complex*
- *Revitalize Evans Park*
- *Celebrate the community's successes*
- *Rehabilitate and adapt existing buildings for new uses.*
- *Adopt and enforce a property code that is consistent with the town vision*
- *Enforce the zoning code to make it consistent with the town vision*
- *Repaint / rebrand gateway signage*
- *Attract new breakfast and lunch restaurants*
- *Create community gardens*
- *Create partnerships with outside organizations*
 - Mobilize the faith-based community to focus outward on the town's needs.
 - Foster SRS contractor relationships
 - Employ alternative financing tools
 - Create a place for youth to hang out.



Celebrate the brand of the Atomic City

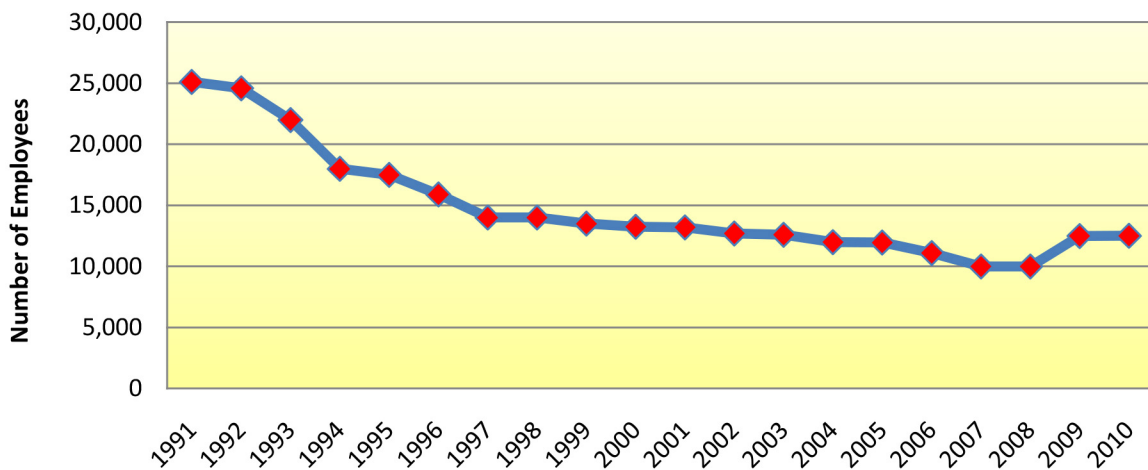


Combine Public Art & City Identity

THREATS

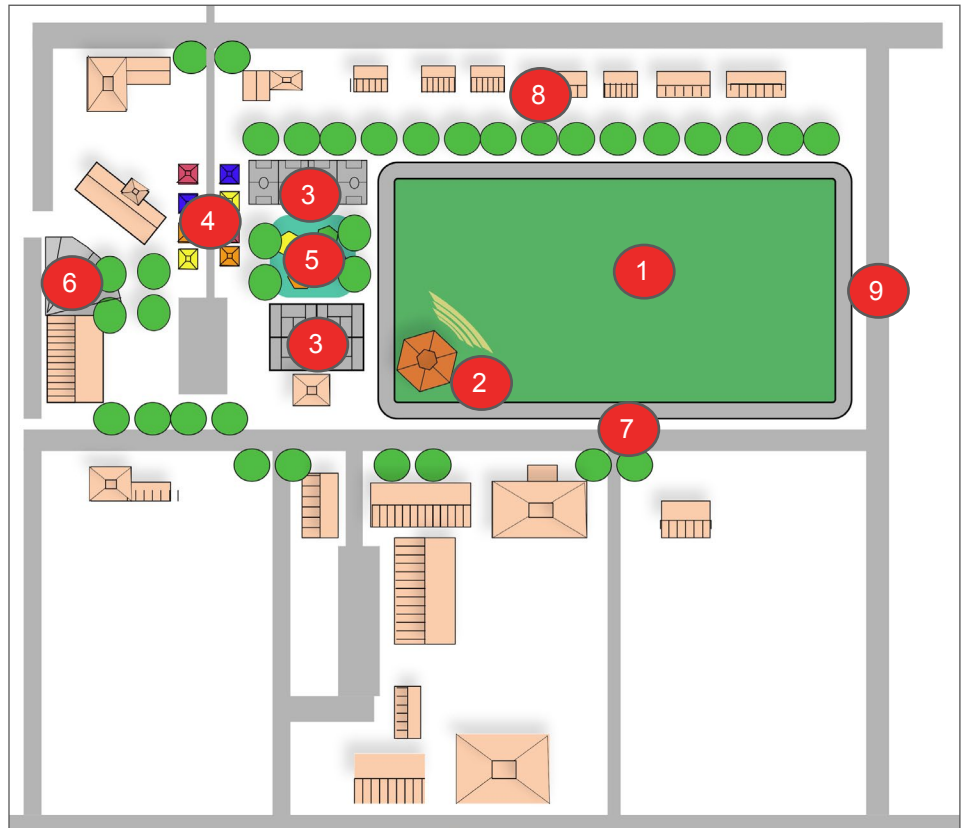
- *Segregation*
- *Mistrust in community*
- *Poor physical infrastructure*
- *Declining employment opportunities at SRS*
- *Aging community – the next generation is leaving New Ellenton for college education and jobs*
- *Poor attainment rates for high school diploma/GED*

Education Level	Number	Percent	National Average
Less than 9th Grade	41	2.6%	5.8%
9 - 12 Grade (No Diploma)	185	11.9%	7.9%
High School Graduate / GED	660	42.6%	28%
Some College (No Degree)	414	26.7%	21.3
Associate's Degree	137	8.8%	8.0%
Bachelor's Degree	88	5.7%	18.2%
Graduate or Professional Degree	26	1.7%	10.9%



Recommendations & Next Steps

1. Micro-Soccer and T-ball field – focus on the youngest residents.
2. Relocate the pavilion
3. Switch the location of the Tennis and the basketball courts.
4. Monthly Farmer market
5. Change the location of the playground
6. Create a welcoming entrance / plaza to identify the civic complex
7. Remove chain link fence and provide direct access to community center from Evans Park
8. Focus development along park edge.
9. Create a vehicular edge to all edges of the park to facilitate access



Revised Master Plan for Evan Park

The Panel determined six areas of focus relating to the questions posed by the sponsors:

- **Community Identity**
- **Communication Strategy**
- **Economic Development**
- **Master Plan for Evans Park & Civic Buildings**
- **SC 19 Improvements**
- **Neighborhood Revitalization**

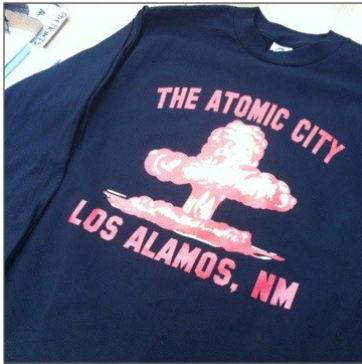
With regard to each of the six areas of focus and the four questions posed to the Technical Assistance Panel, the panel makes the following

Community Identity

The panel was asked how New Ellenton can create a sense of place and identity to draw commuters along SC 19 into the town.

The major recommendation for tackling the issue of community identity is to reinvigorate the New Ellenton brand. New Ellenton needs to foster a sense of civic pride.

Because of its history with the Savannah River Site, New Ellenton is known as the Atomic City and the community has even held an annual Atomic City Festival. But both the brand and the festival seem to have been neglected in recent years. New Ellenton has an opportunity to take advantage of its place in S.C. and the Nation's history and reinvigorate its Atomic City brand.



Celebrate the identity as the



Utilize the new community center as a gathering place for the youth and the seniors within the community

- Design a logo for the Atomic City
- Refocus on and reinvigorate the Atomic City Festival utilizing the setting of a refurbished Evans Park
- Engage the Aiken County Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department as a potential partner
- Use the walls of the new Community Center to create displays telling the New Ellenton Story
- Partner with the Aiken County Historical Society & Savannah River Archeological Research Program
- Commission an Historical Building Survey, focusing on and marking those buildings that were moved from the original Ellenton
- Talk with SRS about resuming Family Day tours of the original site of the town.
- Make a pitch to become part of the SC BBQ Trail
- Leverage subcontractor relationships at SRS to assist the city
- Commission a large piece of Atomic City themed public art to be displayed either in Evans Park or at the front of the Municipal Complex
- A corporate sponsor such as First Citizens Bank could be sought for this project
- Create an Historical Trail Map

Communication



Distinctive signage and logo, like the City of Greenville, will create an identity for New Ellenton that will distinguish the community

- Brand the new logo as the identity for New Ellenton
- Create a marketing plan for New Ellenton
- Publicize and market the new community center
- Develop signage campaign with new branding
- Create a “Vision Road Show” and get out and tell organizations you could partner with about the city’s vision.
- Maintain the city’s Gateway Signs and update with new identity
- Expand branding campaign to include Americana/nostalgia from atomic history
- Create a “Rolodex” of potential Who’s Who partnerships. Examples include:
 - S.C. Municipal Association
 - Aiken County Representatives
 - Faith-Based Leaders
 - SRS Contacts – both DOE and Contractors
 - Lower Savannah Council of Governments
 - Savannah River Archaeological Research Program
 - Aiken Regional Hospital
 - Aiken Parks and Recreation
 - Nearby Municipalities
- Create a Merchants Association
- Promote pride in the public schools
- Engage the community’s religious institutions
- Invite the Public Works Commission to be involved in a positive way
- Establish a community leadership group to steward the city’s vision

Economic Development

Drawing commuters from SC 19 into the town will require more than creating an interest in the town's history. Commuters also seek goods and services. New Ellenton currently has one opportunity to create economic development and bring new business to town to serve commuters and city residents, and that is to focus on SC 19. Improvements to SC 19 mentioned later in this report will help, but the panel also recommends:

- Developing a complete sewer plan for SC 19. Access to city sewers along the entire length of SC 19 as it traverses the city is absolutely key. Businesses are not likely to locate if they do not have adequate sewer connections.
- Working with the Public Works Commission to extend water lines to any properties along SC 19 not currently served.
- Performing a building inventory along SC 19 and identifying those vacant properties that already have sewer availability.
 - Identify and begin marketing those buildings that have the greatest potential.
 - Focus some redevelopment efforts on the Reid's grocery plaza.
- Establishing a Façade Improvement Program using CDBG grants.
- Identifying additional projects for the Penny Sales Tax
- Ensuring the city's Zoning Ordinance is consistent with the city's vision
- Adopting and enforcing a property code that is consistent with the city's vision
- Creating a merchants association to provide a business voice in front of the City Council.

Master Plan for Evans Park & Civic Buildings

One of the questions posed to the panel was how best to promote pedestrian activity, activate civic spaces and create new connections on both sides of SC 19. The panel was also asked how to create landscaping to link the civic buildings including the library, City Hall, the community center and Evans Park with SC 19. The panel recommends that the new Municipal Complex and Evans Park be used to create a new town center for New Ellenton and made a focus for the town's revitalization.

CIVIC BUILDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a marketing plan for the community center
- Promote a variety of uses for the new community center:
 - SRS Training (SRS has indicated a desire to use the center)
 - Science Cafe (With SRS scientists presenting programs for high school age students and the general public)
 - Hospital Community Outreach (Blood drives and education programs)
 - Town Hall and City Council Meetings
 - County Council Meetings
 - Workforce Development Activities (perhaps with Aiken Tech)
 - Merchants Association Meetings
 - Civic Club Meetings
 - Senior Citizens Activities
 - School-based events
- Capitalize on the new library
- Promote youth programs, especially for the summer



Encourage healthy lifestyle options with group fitness classes in the community center.

EVANS PARK RECOMMENDATIONS

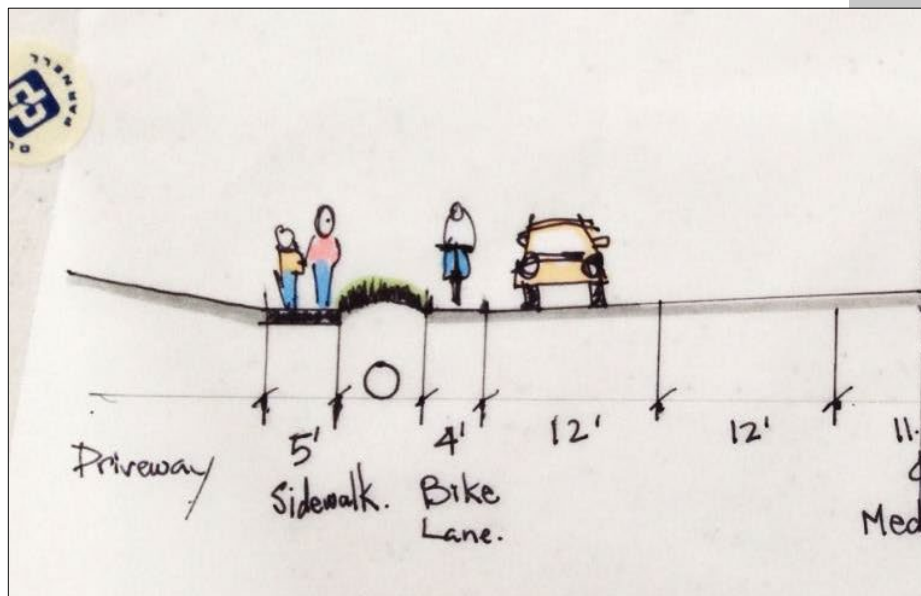
New Ellenton has committed significant resources to the revitalization of Evans Park in an effort to tie it into the municipal complex. New outdoor restrooms have been built and plans have been approved for a new picnic shelter, new tennis courts, resurfacing the basketball courts and installation of new lights around the track. Other improvements are also planned including the addition of call boxes and improving the stage used for the Atomic Festival and other outdoor events. While this is basically a sound plan, the panel also recommends:

- Removing the chain link fence from around the park, especially on the south side to create direct access to the community center from Evans Park
- Swapping the location of the tennis courts and basketball courts. Late night use of the basketball courts has been a source of irritation for adjacent residential properties.
- Adding appropriate landscaping to create a barrier between the park and any adjacent residential properties
- Placing the playground between the tennis courts and basketball courts
- Opening up space in the infield inside the walking/jogging track to create room for a series of micro-soccer and T-ball fields focusing on the youngest residents
- Moving the stage/pavilion to the southwest corner of the open field inside the walking/track to enable seating in the field
- Creating a vehicular edge to all edges of the park to facilitate access
- Creating a welcoming entrance / plaza space on SC 19 adjacent to identify the civic complex
- Commissioning a large piece of public art that could be displayed in the plaza
- Creating programming for the park that could include:
 - Space for a farmers market adjacent to the west side of the park
 - A monthly themed activity, such as a “First Saturday Farmers Market” or “Third Thursday Car Show”
 - Include things like a Bookmobile, Mobile Pet Vaccination Clinics, Mobile Doctors Care, Mobile Dental Services to bring more people into the complex.
 - Summer movies in the park

SC Highway 19

SC 19 is a four-lane highway that splits New Ellenton and is home to the town's declining commercial & retail sector. One of the questions posed was how best to overcome the poor public perception of SC 19 to support commercial and residential growth. The panel applauds the City Council's effort to make this problem a priority and, in addition to other recommendations elsewhere in this report, recommends:

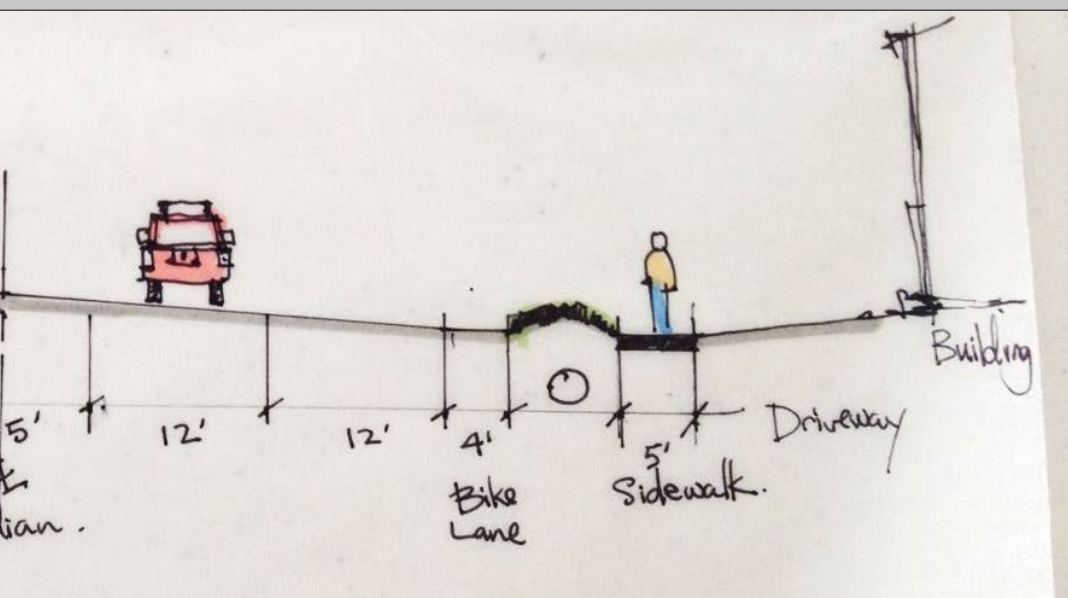
- Completing the S.C. Department of Transportation grant request for Section 1 -- sidewalks and a pedestrian crossing at the George/Smith intersection -- and beginning design and construction as soon as possible
- Developing a vision for additional sidewalks along SC 19 for a future phasing plan
 - Identify other sidewalk gaps around the community and needed connections to the proposed SC 19 sidewalks and apply for grants to help fund
- Focusing sewer improvements along the commercial corridor
- Identifying additional projects to utilize sales tax proceeds
- Installing pedestrian lighting along SC 19
- Restriping bicycle lanes when SC 19 is resurfaced
- Working with owners of properties fronting SC 19 to delineate driveways and eliminate a pull-off-the-highway at any point on the right-of-way mentality



Proposed cross-section for Highway 19 improvements

- Continuing ongoing coordination with the Lower Savannah Council of Governments and the S.C Department of Transportation.

Hopefully better defining the street's width through the installation of sidewalks, greenspace and bike lanes plus better defining commercial driveways will help remind motorists that they are in a municipality, reduce speeds and eliminate the feeling that New Ellenton is just a speed trap. While outside the city limits, the intersection of SC 19 with Old Whiskey Road, White Pond Road and Dry Branch Road needs to be realigned, and the panel recommends the city work with Aiken County and the S.C. Department of Transportation on this project.



Neighborhood Revitalization

While Neighborhood Revitalization was not directly addressed in the four questions posed to the panel, it is indirectly a part of all of those questions. Certainly a community looking to create a new sense of identity, a sense of place and draw new people into its town must look to the care of its existing neighborhoods. Neighborhood Revitalization is also one of the City Council's four priorities. The Council is placing particular emphasis on the decline in Greendale, one of the city's historically African-American neighborhoods. To reinvigorate all New Ellenton's neighborhoods and by extension the entire community, the panel recommends the city:

- Establish a Community Watch with Neighborhood Block Captains
- Establish an Adopt-a-Street plan
- Install street lighting at any problem intersections
- Hold a community cleanup day or days
- Ensure the city's zoning ordinance is consistent with the vision for neighborhoods
- Adopt and enforce a property code that is consistent with the town vision
- Plan for the potential consolidation of Greendale Elementary School with New Ellenton Middle School on the middle school campus
 - Look to potential reuse of Greendale Elementary, perhaps as a senior citizens center
- Challenge the community's religious institutions to become more involved in the community and assist with activities like community cleanups.

Key Take Aways



“Community Emerges only when we work to strengthen the values we share”

ST. AUGUSTINE



Neighborhood Revitalization

The panel identified four key take aways for the revitalization of New Ellenton:

CELEBRATE

- Plan celebrations to bring the residents together and recognize the progress and improvements to the town
- Reinstate festivals and traditions that have been abandoned
- Celebrate the unique history of the town
- Take action and focus on “low hanging fruit”

PARTNERSHIPS

- Build and nurture partnerships with SRS, the Regional Hospital System, neighboring communities and Aiken County
- Leverage corporate investment from SRS and its contractors
- Seek new partnerships with corporate entities
- Work with partners to develop a long-term strategic plan

COMMUNITY **O**UTREACH

- Use the churches and the faith-based community to spread the message and solicit volunteers
- Ask the schools for volunteers for cleanup and beautification projects

PPROMOTE **L**EADERSHIP

- Empower, engage and connect leaders

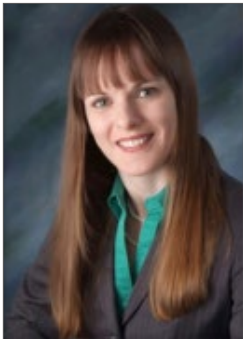
Panelist Biographies



KJ JACOBS, PRINCIPAL, McMILLAN PAZDAN SMITH ARCHITECTURE, GREENVILLE, SC

PANEL CHAIR

KJ Jacobs is a principal with McMillan Pazdan Smith Architecture in Greenville. Prior to joining the team at MPS, KJ cofounded Context Design Group, LLC in Greenville. KJ is very involved in the community. Currently, he is participating in the Liberty Fellowship program. He is a graduate of the ULI Center for Sustainable Leadership, Leadership Greenville & Spartanburg and has served on the Greenville Design Review Board. KJ earned his M.A. in Architecture from Clemson University and a B.S. in Architecture from the University of Virginia.



JENNIFER BIHL, PRESIDENT & FOUNDER, BIHL ENGINEERING, CHARLESTON, SC

Jennifer Bihl has more than 13 years of experience in traffic and transportation engineering specializing in corridor studies, intersection and roadway analyses, parking analyses, and traffic signals. Her experience ranges from analyses of single parcels to transportation related services for existing communities, redevelopment areas and new towns. Additionally, she has completed numerous parking studies determining the operations and most efficient use of parking areas. She helps clients identify appropriate access locations along a corridor to optimize the operations of the transportation system. Regardless of the services provided, Jennifer works closely with state and local agencies and understands the coordination and communication required for successful projects.



GARY COLLINS, DIRECTOR OF CLIENT SERVICES, SEAMON WHITESIDE, MT. PLEASANT, SC

Gary Collins is a landscape architect with close to 20 years of experience. A native of Toronto, Canada, he received his undergraduate degree in Landscape Architecture from Ryerson University. He moved to North Carolina where he earned a Masters of Landscape Architecture and a Minor in Oceanography at NC State University.

Gary's role at SW+ is to provide individual attention to clients, to create and sustain business development opportunities, as well as assist the community with revitalization initiatives, neighborhood design guidelines, and project entitlements.

He is currently the co-chair of Charleston Creative Parliament and on the board of Low Country Local First, Gary also sits on the ULI Market Impact Regional Council. He is a past board member of East Cooper Land Trust.



FRED DELK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COLUMBIA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, COLUMBIA SC

Fred Delk is the executive director of the Columbia Development Corporation, the City of Columbia agency that has worked for the past 30 years to develop the Congaree Vista and the South Columbia area of the city. Fred has held the CDC position for the past 17 years, working with a wide range of projects including upscale commercial and residential development. CDC projects include Columbia's Governor's Hill, Vista Commons Apartments, the Publix Grocery Store and the renovation of 701 Whaley Street. These developments and others sponsored by the corporation were accomplished through a unique blend of creative finance and public/private partnerships. Most recently the agency purchased the 100-year-old Palmetto Compress warehouse and is pursuing the redevelopment of this 320,000-square-foot mill property into a mixed use historic preservation project.



TRACY HEGLER, PLANNING DIRECTOR, RICHLAND COUNTY, COLUMBIA, SC

Tracy Hegler is the planning director for the Planning and Development Services Department of Richland County, SC, which is home to the State's capital city and a population of just under 400,000. Prior to that, Tracy served as a senior project manager with Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc., developing designs and reports for multi-modal transportation programs. Her work centered on traditional neighborhood design principles, with development structure identified first, and then transportation solutions crafted to fit the specific, desired context. Prior to joining HPE, she worked with the Florida Space Authority as the Manager of Spaceport Transportation Planning and then Director of Planning and Spaceport Transportation. She was responsible for developing a five-year work program for the state of Florida's space-related transportation needs and assisted in coordinating with NASA/Kennedy Space Center and the USAF/Cape Canaveral Air Force Station on the long-range comprehensive master planning for the Cape Canaveral Spaceport. Tracy holds a bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina in sociology and a master's degree from Florida State University in urban and regional planning.



C. GRANT JACKSON, INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT, TECHNICAL WRITER, COLUMBIA, SC

C. Grant Jackson is a private consultant for economic & community development, strategic planning and communications.

As Senior Vice President for Community Development for the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce from 2008 to 2014, Grant was a member of the team implementing "Navigating from Good to Great," the chamber's community development and prosperity initiative.

Grant joined the chamber following a long career as a newspaper journalist, and had been Business Editor & Columnist for The State newspaper since 2003.

Grant holds a Bachelor of Arts from Mercer University in Macon, GA, and a Master of Arts in journalism from the University of Missouri. He is a graduate of ULI's Center for Sustainable Leadership. He was involved in planning and execution for the 2011 Columbia Connectivity ULI Technical Assistance Panel: Linking Main Street and the Vista, and in the ULI National Advisory Services Panel in 2013 on Columbia: Strategies for a Connected City.



Todd Ward, Business Development Manager, Vannoy Construction, Anderson, SC

Todd began his professional career as a ranger with the SC State Park Service. In addition to his regular ranger duties, he was also a member of the Park Service's Arborist Team, charged with maintaining the trees for all State Parks and the SC Governor's Mansion. When an opportunity to join the Greenville County Planning Department opened, Todd made the transition from ranger to planner. During his tenure with Greenville County, Todd oversaw the development of more than 500 new subdivisions, more than 500 rezoning cases, and was lead planner for multiple corridor and areas studies. Todd rose to the level of Principal and was recruited by The Furman Co. as Development Manager to oversee master planning, government relations and establish public private partnerships. Currently, Todd is the Business Development Manager for Vannoy Construction. Throughout his career, Todd has also presented How to Achieve Sustainable Developments to the SC Chapter of the American Planning Association and the SC Association of Counties, was a facilitator for ULI's Upstate Reality Check, developed more than 500,000 square feet of LEED Gold certified space, and master planned more than 1,200 acres of sustainable developments. Todd is a member of ULI, AICP, and International Society of Arboriculture. Todd has a BS and MPA degrees from Clemson University.



***ULI Members working on a
Technical Assistance Panel***

Who Is ULI?

ULI was founded in 1936 as a nonprofit institute to facilitate the open exchange of ideas and information among local, national, and international real estate industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places. Today it has more than 37,000 members worldwide.

ULI does not lobby or act as an advocate for any single industry. The Institute is committed to providing leadership in the responsible use of land and creating and sustaining thriving communities through the experience of its members.

It is through member involvement and information resources that ULI has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. The Institute has long been recognized as one of the world's most respected and widely quoted sources of objective information on urban planning, growth, and development.

ULI SOUTH CAROLINA

ULI South Carolina was founded in 2005 to support the larger mission of ULI. The District Council has some 500 members across the state who are working to support the mission by growing leadership, weaving the state together and creating a blueprint for statewide growth.



205 1/2 King Street
Charleston, SC 29401
843-513-9331
southcarolina@uli.org

© 2014 by the Urban Land Institute South Carolina

All rights reserved.

Reproduction or use of the whole or any part of the contents without written permission of the copyright holder is prohibited.