



LIBERTY

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

North Carolina

CPNI Workshop Report April 4-5, 2019

Prepared by Maya Anderson, NC Growth Analyst

"Liberty is an All-American town in the Heart of N.C. We are rooted in our heritage, embracing the present while moving towards the future. We are a diverse community united in our efforts to promote growth, leadership, economic development and family values."



ABOUT CPNI

CPNI is an independent research institution focused on the construction industry and founded by the Construction Professional Network of North Carolina (CPN), a non-profit membership organization. CPN started the Institute in 2006 as a committee effort to expand its mission of service to the construction industry and communities throughout North Carolina. The mission of the Institute is to identify key issues related to industry performance, economic development, and the betterment of CPN members and the communities they serve. Through workshops in communities across North Carolina, members of CPN leverage their expertise to consult with local government and community leaders on redevelopment strategies for their town.

Learn more at www.cpni-nc.org



ABOUT NCGROWTH

NCGrowth is an EDA University Center at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill that helps businesses and communities create good jobs and equitable opportunities through applied research and technical assistance. With a passionate staff and a dynamic pool of graduate student analysts, we partner with businesses, communities, governments and other organizations to tackle outcome-based economic development and entrepreneurship projects.

Learn more at www.ncgrowth.unc.edu

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Figure 1: Highlights of Liberty, NC's town offerings from the town website.

Executive Summary

CPNI and NCGrowth held a two-day workshop in Liberty, NC on April 4-5, 2019. Team members met with town officials and community stakeholders to assess the built assets and economic conditions of Liberty. In addition to touring buildings and the downtown landscape, workshop participants identified key issues areas and brainstormed potential strategies for the town moving forward.

Discussions in the workshop rested on revitalizing the downtown main street and improving connectivity between Liberty's key assets within that scope: the Liberty Showcase, the Liberty Hardware Store, the Liberty Antiques Festival, and the location of government buildings. Recommendations focused on four key areas:

- Creating a Downtown Development Corporation located in downtown
- Coordinating with Reynolds Neely to create Land Use Plans and create coordinating Small Area Plans
- Developing public open space as a "Heart" downtown
- Working with Randolph Community College to have a presence in downtown Liberty

Liberty is a town of almost 3000 located near the larger metropolitan areas of Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, Greensboro, and Asheboro. As such, the CPNI workshop focused on incorporating factors that will allow Liberty to become a desirable "bedroom community" that services commuters to these larger metropolitan areas. In order to do this, Liberty needs to revitalize its downtown and entice small business to service retail needs and builders to add new housing stock to the city. Liberty plans to leverage the already successful Liberty Antiques Festival and the Liberty Showcase for the captive audiences they bring to town.

Renewing itself as a "bedroom community" with a revitalized downtown will also help Liberty prepare for the eventuality of the development of one of the nearby megasites. Development of these sites will likely mean a large influx of people to the area which will strain the small town's current resources. Putting a plan into place through the CPNI workshop will help Liberty anticipate this growth and mitigate any negative side effects.

Liberty plans to have a bustling downtown that will support retail and restaurants, as well as the festivals the town already hosts. This will bring small business back into Liberty, decreasing the brain and financial drain they are currently experiencing due to proximity to these larger towns. Liberty's downtown development will spur Liberty's economy and support the commuters who choose to make the small town of Liberty home.



Figure 2: 200 Scale Map of Liberty NC. Downtown exists at the center of this map where the two roads meet. This also highlights the main access road for Liberty: Swannanoa Avenue (NC-49) and Greensboro Street (Old NC 421).



Figure 3: 100 Scale Map of Liberty, NC. Downtown Liberty is highlighted inside of the red box. Liberty has a clearly defined downtown area that would benefit significantly from a small-area land use plan to limit use to retail and restaurant space.



Figure 4: Map of Liberty, NC.

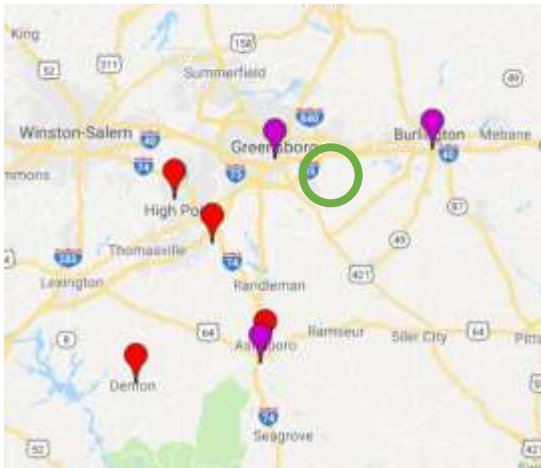


Figure 5: Map highlighting Liberty's proximity to Greensboro, Asheboro and RTP. As well, all small business centers in the area are highlighted with purple and red pins. Liberty is at the green circle.



Figure 6: Liberty, NC is in the Carolina Crescent between Raleigh (RTP) and Charlotte. This area is also getting re-branded as the "Carolina Core" because of its access to both large cities and the opportunity for new companies to grow in the area. Liberty has the opportunity to be a bedroom community for this area with their offerings of small-town life, cheap housing, and proximity to multiple metropolitan areas.

Workshop Participants

Town officials and community stakeholders in attendance included:

- Filmore York, Mayor
- William Doerfer, Liberty Town Manager
- Kevin Franklin, Randolph County Economic Development
- Linda Brown, Asheboro Chamber of Commerce
- Teresa Bruchon, Liberty Chamber of Commerce
- Tyson Nixon, Town Council
- Billy Hardin, Liberty resident & Randolph County Economic Development
- Shirley Pabst, Liberty Chamber & local business owner
- Tammy O’Kelly, Tourism Division of “Heart of North Carolina”
- Kevin Bowman, Liberty resident & Owner of the *Liberty Leader*
- Julie Powers, Interim President of the Redevelopment Committee, Liberty area Realtor
- Reynolds Neely, Consultant for Land Planning
- Jessica Brown, Town Clerk
- Dewey Brown, Co-owner of the Liberty Showcase
- Leslie Brown, Co-owner of the Liberty Showcase & Randolph Tourism Development Authority Board Member
- Elbert Lassiter, VP of Randolph Community College Economic Development, Immediate Former President of the Randolph County Economic Development Corporation
- Dr. Bob Shackelford, President of Randolph Community College
- Bob Durand, Randolph Community College
- Dr. Stephen Gainey, Randolph County Schools
- John Jacobs, Superintendent of Education of Randolph County Schools



Figure 7: The CPNI workshop group crossing Greensboro St. upon which the elementary school sits in downtown Liberty.



Figure 6: The CPNI Workshop group discussing downtown possibilities outside of shops on W. Swannanoa.

CPNI volunteers included:

- Michael Cole, ColeJenest & Stone, Leader of the Liberty CPNI Workshop
- Julie McLaurin, Little Diversified Architectural Consulting
- Douglas Burns, SGA NarmourWright Designs
- Sara Downing, Shiel Sexton
- Jeffrey Oleynik, Brooks Pierce
- Maurice Harrison, Schneider Electric
- Pat Fogleman, CPNI Staff
- Carolyn Fryberger, NCGrowth Economic Development Manager
- Maya Anderson, NCGrowth Analyst
- Rachel Taylor, NCGrowth Analyst



Figure 9: The CPNI workshop group in front of the Liberty Showcase.

Existing Conditions

ASSETS

Historic District: The town of Liberty has been on the National Historic Register since 2001. As such, it can enforce and protect the historic built assets on W. Swannanoa, the downtown main street. Liberty is currently working to create a museum, the Patterson House, outside of town hall that honors its history.

Small Town Life: At just under 3000 residents, much of what attracts people to Liberty is the high quality of “small town life” just outside of the metropolitan areas of Greensboro, Asheboro, and the Chapel Hill-Durham-Raleigh area. As well, as the most diverse town in Randolph County, Liberty can build upon its diverse cultural heritage and the ability to offer services that span a wider range of people. Liberty is 67.5% White, 19.8% Black, 16% Hispanic, and 7.4% other “single race” populations.



Figure 10: Liberty's Fire Department of yore. Today, Liberty's Fire Department still plays an important and well-respected role in the town and brings their new firetruck to all Liberty celebrations.



Figure 11: Vendor at the Liberty Antiques Festival held twice yearly in April & September



Figure 7: Aerial view of the Liberty Antiques Festival which features hundreds of vendors from around the country.

Liberty Antiques Festival: Named the best Antiques Festival in the Mid-Atlanta region, this twice annual festival attracts visitors to a site just outside of Liberty. It also spurs a flurry of garage and estate sales across Liberty. The festival is held in April and September, though the owners of the festival are not very involved with the town of Liberty. As aging owners, there is a chance that the festival could be sold within the next decade.



Figure 13: Interior view of stage set at The Liberty Showcase. The Showcase mostly has country music performances, but also occasionally has plays and other performances.

Liberty Showcase: Owned and operated by husband/wife couple Dewey & Leslie Brown, the Liberty Showcase attracts people from all over North Carolina (and occasionally the world) to come and see popular Country and Bluegrass acts. Dewey is an accomplished touring musician from nearby Graham, NC who has used his musical connections to create a celebrated musical community through the Liberty Showcase. Leslie & Dewey also have their own musical act that performs at the Liberty Showcase.

Liberty Hardware & General Store: One of the oldest businesses in town, the Liberty Hardware & General store has

been running continuously since 1928. Many old architectural features in this building are still in good condition, including the ceiling and stained-glass windows. Because of the location of the register and issues with theft, the main door is off the side of the building instead of facing W. Swannanoa. As well, like most retail business in Liberty, the store closes too early at 5pm, while most commuters don't get home until well after that time.

Greensboro-Randolph & Chatham-Siler City Megasites:

Two top megasites in North Carolina are within minutes of Liberty, NC. When these sites are developed, Liberty can expect a huge amount of growth. Liberty's current economic development and revitalization work is in anticipation of this growth, to ensure they can maintain Liberty's small-town character.

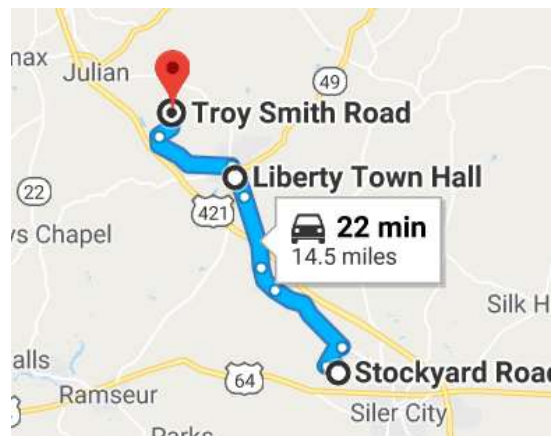


Figure 14: The locations and proximity of the Greensboro-Randolph and Chatham-Siler City Megasites.

Farmer's Market: A new open-air farmer's market pavilion was recently finished last year and is located across from the Food Lion. The market opened on April 1, 2019.

Celebrate Liberty Festival: A festival held in July that celebrates the town's history, this festival regularly brings in over 3000 visitors to the town each year and includes fireworks.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

1. **Starter Housing:** Liberty appeals to many first-time homebuyers because of the relatively cheap prices; however, the stock of homes is generally old and is not renovated. For many first-time homebuyers, this puts undue economic pressure on buying a home in Liberty. If there were new housing, more young people would choose to commute out of Liberty. Liberty is also in a watershed region that prevents building on sites smaller than 1/2 acre and would need to look

into site plans that allow for denser building with shared greenspace. Liberty should encourage that initial sites be within walking distance of the downtown.

2. **Bedroom Community Retail:** Most of the retail in Liberty closes well before commuting citizens get back to the city. This is preventing 1) people spending time in the downtown area 2) growth & competition within downtown retail and 3) money spent in Liberty as citizens choose to do their shopping in the larger nearby towns.
3. **Restaurants & Lodging:** The Liberty Showcase attracts hundreds of people to the town 2-3 times a month. Unfortunately, because of the lack of restaurants that stay open late and almost complete lack of lodging, most of the travelers are forced to eat dinner and stay in Asheboro. Similarly, during the Liberty Antiques Festival, travelers to the region stay in Asheboro. There is a clear opportunity for growth in these sectors because of the captive audience already drawn in by the venues. Liberty may want to consider the possibility of a Bread and Breakfast in one of the older Historic Houses. Conducting a feasibility study will allow Liberty to see if there is a possibility based on number of events and number of visitors.

Downtown Assessment

Downtown Liberty is lined with historic brick buildings that are the key to creating a respected and thriving “small-town downtown” that people will come from other towns to spend time in. The façade of many of these buildings needs some attention, but overall the look will help Liberty to create a highly admired downtown.

Business Use in Downtown Buildings

Most of the buildings in Liberty’s downtown are occupied, but not by customer-facing companies. There are more than a few offices, a blood bank, a now-defunct restaurant space serving as a catering hub, and the hardware store that is not open to main street. Open to the street are Tropica Tan, Carolyn’s (a clothing store), and Shadow Box Inc (an antiques store) among others. There are a few vacant spaces that are available for rent, but generally regarded to be in too poor of condition to be turn-key and therefore affordable to a small business in Liberty.



Figure 15: Street view of 112-118 W. Swannanoa Street which currently houses a variety of business: A CBD shop, tanning salon, and karate studio.



Figure 16: Logging trucks coming through main street. Liberty's W. Swannanoa Street is lined with historic buildings, but the noise from the frequent logging trucks coming through on NC-49 distracts from the peace of main street.

Logging Trucks on Main Street

Another issue that Liberty’s downtown has is that the logging trucks make use of State Route 49, part of which is W. Swannanoa. The frequency with which these trucks pass through the downtown is enough to detract from the quiet of the street. Liberty is interested in finding a way to possibly circumvent this route around the downtown.

Asset Opportunities



Figure 17: Exterior view of the Roy Reitzel building which used to serve as Liberty Town Hall.

Roy Reitzel Building: The Roy Reitzel Building is owned by the government and used to be the seat of town hall. Currently this building functions as a community center. While the group did not get the opportunity to tour this building, because it is already owned by Liberty, it is a good candidate for use by the town due to the greatly reduced investment amount needed to return it to functional office space.



Figure 18: Interior view of the Roy Reitzel Community Room.

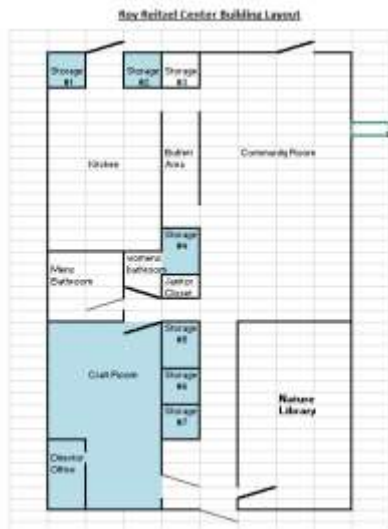


Figure 19: Architectural layout of the Roy Reitzel building.



Figure 8: Interior of the Roy Reitzel building which currently serves as the Nature Library.

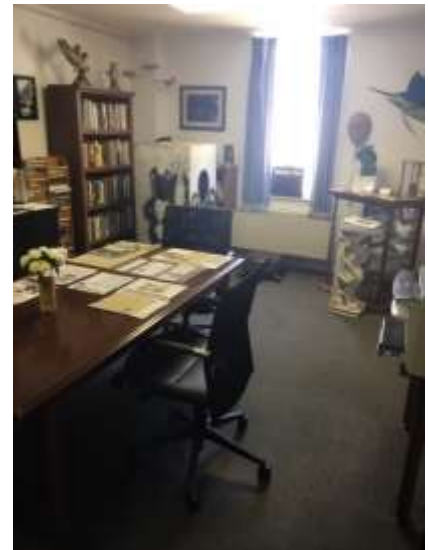


Figure 9: Another interior view of the Roy Reitzel Building.

114 W. Swannanoa: The second story of this building is available for rent and the entire building is available for sale by Billy Hardin, one of the workshop participants. The CPNI team believes any renovation would require asbestos remediation because of the older ceiling tiles. While it potentially presents an interesting opportunity for some sort of incubator space, CPNI would recommend focusing on a space with more architectural and historical value to begin to anchor the downtown in.



Figure 22: Interior view of 114 W. Swannanoa's 2nd Floor available for rent. The ceiling likely requires asbestos remediation and has evidence of leaks in several places.



Figure 10: Entrance to 114 W. Swannanoa's Second Floor flanked by the entrances to the other spaces that are part of the building. 112 currently serves as Tropica Tan, a tanning salon.

Liberty Showcase: The Liberty Showcase is a successful example of the potential for small business growth in Liberty. Opened by husband-wife team Dewey & Leslie Brown, the Liberty Showcase brings in hundreds of attendees 2-3 times per month. Their draw comes from the curating of musical acts as well as the musical connections of Dewey Brown who used to perform with Ralph Stanley and is well connected in the Country & Bluegrass music business. Recognizing that the Country performances bring in more guests from all over the world, the Liberty Showcase has focused on these shows.

The asset opportunity deriving from the Liberty Showcase is the business that could be created from supplying other services to show-goers. Currently, show-goers have very few restaurant options in town and no lodging options. As a result, this overflow business is funneled to Asheboro. Liberty can capitalize on these out of town guests by supporting and promoting restaurant, shopping, and lodging growth around the downtown main street.



Figure 24: The Liberty Showcase hosts country music events 2-3 times a month drawing in crowds of hundreds from all over the state, country, and world. Liberty's downtown should capitalize on this draw by offering services concert-goers expect.

"Established in 1949 as The Curtis Movie Theater, this historic venue now offers the best shows in the industry such as Vince Gill, Gene Watson, Lorrie Morgan, Del McCoury, and many more. A great place to bring the entire family with live shows almost every Saturday night!"

--The Liberty Showcase Website

Liberty Depot: Currently owned by the widow of the railroad's former Lawyer, the Liberty Depot presents an opportunity for Liberty to create a downtown heart, i.e. a public space that can be used for town meetings, festival centerpieces, and other events. Located right next to the downtown, this depot could be transformed into a meeting space with an outdoor patio, useful for a multitude of events that Liberty currently hosts while also utilizing the historic architecture already present in the town. The widow also owns the Staley Depot, so there is some potential opportunity to bring in another depot building to create an even larger downtown heart space.



Figure 25: The Liberty Depot is in the downtown and possesses the historic architecture Liberty wants to highlight in its revitalization of downtown. This building would serve as the publicly accessible "heart" of downtown.

Recommendations

1. Create a downtown development corporation

- a. Form a 501 C-3 non-profit
 - i. Allows for quicker action, less red tape than government committee
- b. Goal will be to promote specific initiatives to develop downtown
- c. Can be created out of the current Liberty Re-Development Committee
- d. Housed downtown
- e. Will be involved in grant-writing and all following recommendations
- f. Incubator/Co-Working Space funded by downtown development center
 - i. Potentially should be combined with retail (coffee shop, ice cream shop, sandwich shop, etc.)
 - ii. Work with Randolph Community College as possible tenant
 - iii. Host a presentation by the Rural Center on Funding Programs/Grants to start up incubator businesses
- g. Wayfinding: Create Liberty's wayfinding signs
 - i. Get graduate students to do needed design work
 - ii. Possible partner colleges provided in resources
- h. Create festivals that incorporate more than one interest & town's assets
 - i. i.e. Music + Antiques + Agro-Tourism

2. Coordinate with Reynolds Neely to create Land Use Plans and create coordinating Small Area Plans

- a. Need to limit allowable uses in the downtown to promote only customer-facing retail and restaurants
- b. Visit Benchmark: Look at other towns in North Carolina & South Carolina who have implemented new zoning laws & historic districts
 - i. Examples: Ft. Mill, SC, Rock Hill, SC, Elkin, NC
 - ii. All cities accredited National Main Street in NC for 2019 website location listed in resources
- c. Host a Workshop for CPNI Liberty group from Preservation NC on Tax Credits: The Benefits, The Myths
- d. Current land use plan already has started on idea of "Historic Commercial" plan
 - i. Clearly Define
 - ii. Create zoning language/overlay district(s) to encourage development by lessening restrictions in exchange for amenities
- e. Complete a Land & Downtown Building Inventory (for Liberty as a whole, and specifically downtown Liberty)
 - i. Additionally complete a property ownership inventory
 - ii. Can use graduate students to help put this together
 - iii. Use this information to help promote transparency, as well as awareness of large & multiple-adjacent tracts with single owners
- f. Code Enforcement:
 - i. Conduct a series (perhaps 3) workshops to explain the program. Invite the general public
 - ii. Conduct a survey of vacant, non-compliant buildings

- iii. Determine, if the property is seized, such as single-family houses, refer to the NC Housing Finance Agency for grants and forgivable loans and offer the housing at no cost, or the delinquent taxes for economically challenged families. Need to verify if the Town offer that once they take possession of the property
- g. To develop commitment to the community, a synergy and center of activity, plan for all public buildings to be in downtown Liberty
 - i. Maintain the school downtown to maintain anchor for citizens to be downtown
- h. Design the city around the idea of a bedroom community
 - i. Provide housing & services that appeal to commuters when they return home
 - 1. Determine creative uses for land given the watershed limitations
 - 2. Encourage current and future retail/restaurant to stay open past 5pm

3. Develop public open space as a “Heart” downtown

- a. Depot needs to be repurposed, potential option (see photo on cover and figure 24)
 - i. Used for storage currently, contact the widow of railroad lawyer who also owns the Staley Depot
 - ii. Verify if tax credits are still applicable
- b. Needs to: have outdoor area (Town Center/Town Square), be accessible to everybody, center town’s events around this space

4. Work with Randolph Community College to have a presence in downtown Liberty

- a. Can be done through incubator or small business center
- b. Incorporate RCC’s agricultural programs as well to help with agro-tourism
 - i. Agro-business, horticulture, agro-tourism
 - ii. Incorporate the College’s Cosmetology Program into student internship at the Liberty Theater

Next Steps

The immediate next step for Liberty is to create the Downtown Development Corporation. CPNI recommends Liberty does this by pulling the Liberty Re-Development Committee out of the government and turning it into a non-profit.

1. Separate the Liberty Re-Development Committee from City of Liberty Government
2. Form a 501 C-3
3. Incorporate By-laws including, but not limited to:
 - a. Vetting process to ensure members committed to donating time to DDC
 - b. Enter specific goals to be achieved & amended as downtown develops
4. Help downtown development corporation to establish itself in a downtown building

Additional Resources

Professional groups

These groups can be a starting point for identifying professional consultants.

- Urban Land Institute (ULI): <https://uli.org/>
- American Institute of Architects (AIA): <https://www.aia.org/>
- American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA): <https://www.asla.org/>
- American Planning Association (APA): <https://www.planning.org/>
 - American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP): <https://www.planning.org/aicp/>
- American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE): <https://www.asce.org/>
- American Council of Engineering Companies of North Carolina (ACEC/NC): <https://www.acecnc.org/>

Non-Profit, State, and University Groups

- North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (NC SHPO), <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/>
- League of Historic American Theatres (LHAT), www.lhat.org
- UNCG Center for Community-Engaged Design, <https://iarc.uncg.edu/cc-ed/nc-main-street/>
- Project for Public Spaces (PPS): A nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build strong communities. They have extensive web resources as well as examples of successful placemaking projects that can serve as inspiration for Liberty, <https://www.pps.org/>
- Development Finance Initiative (DFI): DFI partners with local governments to attract private investment for transformative projects by providing specialized finance and development expertise. They are a good organization to engage in transforming sites that are owned by the town. They charge fee for service and offer pro-bono assistance through classes, <https://dfi.sog.unc.edu/>
- NC State University College of Design: Meg Calkins, FASLA, Professor and Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture, mecalkin@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8342
- UNCC College of Arts & Architecture, Deborah Ryan, ASLA, Professor of Architecture and Urban Design, Director of the Master of Urban Design Program, deryan@uncc.edu, 704-687-0123
- Appalachian State University, Dr. Kathleen Schroeder, Professor & Department Chair, Department: Geography & Planning, schroederk@appstate.edu, 828-262-7055

Potential Funding Sources

- Piedmont Triad Regional Council, Business Investment Fund
 - <https://www.ptrc.org/services/economic-development/business-investment-fund>
 - Loan fund for small businesses that could be an aid to an incubator or co-working space, or even the downtown development group
- Department of Transportation (DoT)

- Planning Grant Initiative
 - <https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/Planning-Grant-Initiative.aspx>
 - Funding Cycle: Call for Proposals in August; Deadline in November; Decisions in February
 - Project Types: Annual matching grant program to encourage municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans.
 - Transportation Alternatives (TA) Funds <https://trade.railstotrails.org/index>
 - Project Types: Federal government funds for projects that expand travel choice, strengthen the local economy, improve the quality of life, and protect the environment. Eligible projects include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, safe routes for non-drivers, and historic preservation.
 - Contact: State DoT TA Coordinator, Johanna I. Cockburn (919) 707-2601; jicockburn@ncdot.gov
- Economic Development Assistance Program
 - <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppld=306735>
 - Funding Cycle: Ongoing
 - Not eligible for non-profits with a 501 (c)(3) status
 - Requirements:
 - A feasibility study establishing the presence of a critical mass of support factors, entrepreneurial demand for use, and community support for the facility;
 - A pro-forma demonstrating financial capacity to operate the facility and reach a positive cash flow within a reasonable period of time; and
 - A management plan for operation of the facility that at a minimum addresses:
 - Tenant selection policy;
 - Tenant lease agreement terms;
 - Business assistance policy (identify sources of assistance);
 - Tenant records review policy;
 - Tenant graduation policy; and
 - Management oversight of incubator operations.
 - Main Street Solutions Fund
 - Economic development planning assistance available for Main Street Communities and micropolitans located in Tier 2 and 3 counties
 - Funding Cycle: Announced in May
 - Program goals are to:
 - Provide direct financial benefit to small businesses.
 - Spur local investment in association with small business.
 - Retain and create jobs in association with small business.
 - Awards up to \$200,000 to local government
 - 2019 Accreditation Recipients: https://www.nccommerce.com/news/press-releases/north-carolina-communities-achieve-2019-national-main-street-accreditation?fbclid=IwAR1_oX1dNbuuiWxMP9pMp_SqZD3mh5EdEp68q0H_yml4Tx7illZ8gi4CHm0

- Contact: Dan Becker, Main Street Grants Administrator, dan.becker@nccommerce.com, 919-814-4668
- North Carolina Department of Commerce Building Reuse Program
 - Grant Information: <https://www.nccommerce.com/grants-incentives/building-or-site-funds/building-reuse>
 - Available for renovating vacant buildings or renovating and expanding buildings occupied by companies operating in NC for at least the last 12 months
 - Contact info: Hazel Edmond, Building Reuse Program, 919-814-4659, hazel.edmond@nccommerce.com

Community Development

- NC Main Street
 - Next application round in 2019, workshops for this year occurred on April 9 & 11
 - Application rounds every other year
 - Requirements
 - Must be an incorporated NC municipality with identifiable traditional downtown business district
 - Certified population of less than 50,000
 - Applicant must work with NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center for three years and meet the following requirements:
 - Generally: participation, establish a working group to conduct responsibilities, establish work plan, designate a program coordinator dedicated to minimum 20 hours per week and attend training, establish support for revitalization, adopt historic preservation ethic, demonstrate downtown vision
 - Acceptance dependent on:
 - Generally: acceptance of Main Street philosophy, commitment from town and officials, demonstration of ability to become Main Street designated, interest from public & private sectors, evidence of past economic development efforts, indications of reinvestment in downtown, need for Downtown Associate Community program, presence of historical resources, city council signing resolution
- Opportunity Zone Program:
 - Program description: The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act designed opportunity zones to spur investment in distressed communities through tax incentives to investors; There are 252 designated opportunity zones in North Carolina. This program could make a development project in these zones more attractive to an investor – however, the incentive accrues only to the investor and not the project so the project itself needs to be financially feasible on its own.
 - For more information, visit:
 - [IRS Guidance issued Oct 19, 2018](#)
 - [Opportunity Zones Frequently Asked Questions, IRS](#)
 - [School of Government Resources for Local Governments and Investors](#)

- Direct IRS contact for questions related to Opportunity Funds and Opportunity Zone Investments:
 - Phone: (414) 231-2240
 - E-mail: CC.ITA.Section.1400@irs.counsel.treas.gov
- Z. Smith Reynolds (ZSR) Community Progress Fund <https://www.zsr.org/community-progress>
 - Funding Cycle: Letters of Intent accepted starting Oct. 1, 2018; Selected proposals receive an invitation to submit a full application in February; Grant decisions made in May 2019 (next funding cycle should be similar, but not yet posted)
 - Award Amount: \$20,000 - \$30,000 per year for one or two years
 - Project Types: Short-term funding for projects with community momentum; primarily for organizations serving people of color that are in areas of NC with limited philanthropic resources

Business Development

Venture Asheboro

Jonathan Thill, Co-Founder

(336) 918-8561 | jonathan@ventureasheboro.com
727 S. Cox St., Asheboro, NC 27203

Randolph Community College

Jessica McDaniel, Small Business Center Director

(336) 633-0240 | jlmcdaniel@randolph.edu
629 Industrial Park Ave., Asheboro, NC 27205