

A Technical Assistance Panel Report

Graniteville, South Carolina



Graniteville Community Vision Phase II
Graniteville, SC
06.05.2012 - 06.06.2012



Urban Land **South Carolina**
Institute

Graniteville, South Carolina

Master Plan and Community Vision

Graniteville Community Vision Phase II
A Technical Assistance Panel Report
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The Urban Land Institute South Carolina
205 1/2 King Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401



ULI – THE URBAN LAND INSTITUTE

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) was established in 1936 and has over 30,000 members from more than 95 countries. It is one of America's most respected sources of information and knowledge on urban planning, growth and development. ULI is a nonprofit research and education organization. Its mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. To encourage an open exchange of ideas and sharing of experiences, ULI membership represents the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service. Among its members there are developers, builders, property owners, investors, architects, planners, public officials, brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, academics, students and librarians.

ULI SOUTH CAROLINA

In local communities, ULI District Councils bring together a variety of stakeholders to find solutions and build consensus around land use and development challenges. The ULI South Carolina District Council was formed in 2005 to encourage dialogue on land use and planning throughout this state and with each of the three main regions (Upstate, Midlands, Coastal), and to provide tools and resources, leadership development, and a forum through which the state can become better connected. The District Council is led by an Executive Committee with statewide and regional representation, as well as steering committees within each region that focus on the development of membership, sponsorship, programs and Young Leader initiatives. With some 500 members, ULI South Carolina is committed to bringing together leaders from across the fields of real estate and land use policy to exchange best practices and serve community needs.

HOW DO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANELS 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 local District Council assists the sponsor in refining the scope of the assignment and convenes a panel of volunteers from the ULI membership base to provide objective, multi-disciplinary advice. The sponsor works within the 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 before making recommendations. At the conclusion of its work, the panel presents an oral report to stakeholders, that is followed by a written report within four to six weeks.

GRANITEVILLE CDIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL SPONSOR

The Graniteville Community Vision TAP is sponsored by the Brownfields Community Oversight Team, consisting of the Community Development & Improvement Corporation (CDIC) and GVW Community Investment Corporation (GVWCIC). Funding for the TAP sessions is made possible through various Brownfield-related grants from US EPA and SC DHEC.

CDIC was formed in 1996 as a subsidiary nonprofit of the Aiken Housing Authority to address challenges encountered by low to moderate income families and to provide education, experience and jobs and to promote a future of self reliance.

GVWCIC is investing management talent and skills, knowledge of community needs and enablers, along with monetary resources to aid in the recovery of the mill villages of Graniteville, Vacluse and Warrentville.

DIVERSE EXPERTISE

- *DEVELOPMENT*
- *COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*
- *PLANNING & URBAN DESIGN*
- *ARCHITECTS*
- *LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS*
- *ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT*

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ULI TAP Panelists tour the site with representatives from the Graniteville Community Development Improvement Corporation

The Panel Process

Phase II of the Graniteville Community Vision TAP consistent of eight steps.

TAP PANEL SELECTION

The ULI South Carolina District Council considered the Graniteville CDIC's goals for the TAP. Half of the panelists from Phase I returned to serve on Phase II. Four new panelists joined the team to address Graniteville's evolving needs.

REVIEW OF PHASE I REPORT AND BRIEFING MATERIALS

Prior to arriving in Graniteville, the TAP panelists received and reviewed the final report and presentation made in October 2011. The materials included the recommendations, opportunities and challenges within the community.

SPONSOR PRESENTATION

The TAP Panelists assembled at the offices of the Graniteville CDIC for a presentation by the TAP sponsor. The sponsor presented the progress they have made implementing ULI's initial set of recommendations. The presentation was made by Reggie Barner, President and CEO of the Barner Group and Lasima Turmon, Executive Director of Graniteville CDIC.

TOUR OF STUDY AREA AND ENVIRONS

Following the sponsor presentation, the TAP panelists toured the Graniteville Community Vision study area on foot. Time was spent examining Hickman Hall, the Old Granite Mill, the Masonic shopping center and the surrounding residential properties. The study area included a half mile radius from the offices of the Graniteville CDIC.

SPONSOR EDUCATION

The following morning, the panel made a series of presentations to the TAP sponsor and community stakeholders. Using ULI's framework of "10 Principles" the panelists shared the principles for public private partnerships, master planning, zoning and downtown revitalization.

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 conceptual drawings.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

The panelists presented their PowerPoint presentation of findings and recommendations at 4:00PM on Wednesday, June 6 in an open session to the TAP sponsors, community stakeholders and interested public in the sanctuary of Christian Heritage Church. 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 August 2012.

DAY 1

- Presentation by Graniteville CDIC
- Site Tour
- Panel Deliberations

DAY 2

- The ULI Toolkit
- Panel Work Session
- Created a vision statement
- Defined guiding principles
- Initiated masterplan process
- Developed recommendations
- Public Presentation

Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

In October 2011, ULI South Carolina assembled a multi-disciplinary panel of eight land use professionals. The panel was tasked with providing its' Sponsor, the Graniteville CDIC, with recommendations for encouraging downtown revitalization, redevelopment of brownfield sites, economic development strategies, and finding ways for the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to work together toward a common goal.

The panel made three broad sets of recommendations to respond to the problem statement and specific questions raised by the TAP sponsor. The recommendations focused on the following;

- Capitalize on community sense of place: Enhance community engagement and pride by protecting natural, historic and cultural assets.
- Create a vision for downtown: Establish a task force of community leaders and stakeholders who are responsible for identifying priorities, the development of a communications strategy, and the development of a physical and strategic master plan.
- Create a mechanism for implementation and communication: Bridge the relationship with Aiken County administrative offices and host a series of monthly task force meetings that are open to the public.

The panel also stressed to the TAP sponsor and members of the community who attended the presentation the importance of the strong community leadership within the county, improving the relationship with the county, and taking action on short-term priorities an effort to overcome mistrust and pull the community together.

The initial set of recommendations included specific short and long term tasks on which the sponsor should focus their efforts. The tasks included the following:

Short term implementation tasks (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 tasks (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 tasks (More than 180 Days)

- Physical & strategic master plan
- Designate Horse Creek as part of the SC Waterways
- Seek historic building designations
- Exploit recreation opportunities including new water trail
- Engage with the Aiken County School Board regarding the viability of the Middle School
- Explore "Special District" under South Carolina Municipal Improvement

MISSION

The mission of the ULI TAP is to provide Graniteville CDIC with a schematic strategic and physical master plan for downtown Graniteville and provide educational on ULI tools and resources to help Graniteville achieve their goals.

In June 2012, ULI South Carolina returned to Graniteville. The purpose of this second visit was twofold. First, the panel was tasked with evaluating the progress, implementation and success of ULI's initial set of recommendations made in October. Second, the panel was asked to initiate the master planning process.

In the nine months since ULI's first visit, Graniteville CDIC had realized great success breaking down barriers with Aiken County, forming an alliance with Aiken County Parks and Recreation and planning community events to create awareness and excitement within the community. Strong definitive leadership continues to be an issue. The sponsor has struggled with the formation of a task force and drawing participation from the Vaucluse and Warrenton communities.

Using the initial set of recommendations and the information provided by the sponsor, the panel focused on the formation of the task force, planning and development schedule and visual communication of the vision. The vision presented by the panelists argues for a cohesive well-development town center that provides a sense of place for the GVW community as well as the larger Aiken County community. The ULI panel stressed the importance of public spaces with civic forums that provide opportunities for the community to come together. The panel also emphasized the significance of Hickman Hall, the Granite Mill, Masonic shopping center, Leavelle McCampbell Middle School and the Red Barn property. All of these buildings are historically significant and represent a time when the GVW community was prosperous and flourishing. The proximity of these buildings also provide a compact footprint where business and civic leaders, students, and tourists can come together. It is an ideal forum to set the stage for the next generation of Graniteville.

The vision presented by the panel uses a combination of guiding principles, tasks, milestones and visual strategies. The recommendations are short and long-term and incorporate financial incentives, encourage activities that will attract diversity and encourages the adaptive reuse of existing buildings to reflect the culture, values, and history of the GVW community.

ULI South Carolina intends to return to Graniteville in the first quarter of 2013. This will be the third and final visit for building the Vision for GVW. Again, ULI will meet with the sponsor to learn more about the progress and how it has been received by the community. We will work closely with the task force to understand the opportunities, challenges, and obstacles they encounter. Through this ongoing involvement and repeated visits, ULI South Carolina seeks to build a strategy for successfully implementing the recommendations and vision made by the panels.



ULI TAP Panelists tour the site with representatives from the Graniteville Community Development Improvement Corporation

Recommendations

JUNE - SEPTEMBER 2012

- Identify Task Force Members
- Communicate Roles and Responsibilities of Task Force Members
- Paint Water Tower
- Paint Hickman Hall
- Clean up and construct “Mill Center Green”
- Identify new downtown location for Middle School
- Establish a “Municipal Improvement District”
- Create a conceptual plan for “Red Barn”

IDENTIFY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- Secure consistent and coordinated leadership by establish a “champion” for the project to define clear goal, build broad constituencies, bring the right people to the table and bridge the private project management with the political leadership
- Ensure the all expertise is represented: *Design and Construction, Marketing and Public Relations, Economic Development and Volunteer Management*
- Understand your partners and key players by creating a three-way partnership among the private sector, government and the broader community including representatives from Graniteville, Vaucluse and Warrentville
- Designate a project spokesperson on the public and private side

COMMUNICATE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- Manage Expectations by creating awareness and building a schedule
- Create a shared vision by building consensus and include all stakeholders (including those who oppose the project)
- Prepare for mutual success by distributing the resources and responsibility appropriately based on the core competencies of all sectors.
- Define roles and responsibilities and establish the “go to” people for key tasks early in the process.

PAINT WATER TOWER AND HICKMAN HALL

- Target achievable and goals that require minimal financial investment.
- Create momentum for the vision by completing tasks that are visible and tangible to the entire GVW community.
- Plan a community event to showcase the water tower and Hickman Hall.

CLEAN UP AND CONSTRUCT “MILL CENTER GREEN”

- Maintain genuine green spaces to promote public gatherings.
- Create an identify for the downtown w
- Create momentum for the vision by providing opportunities to celebrate the progress.
- Add pedestrian amenities including shade trees, benches, wide sidewalks and sufficient lighting

IDENTIFY NEW DOWNTOWN LOCATION FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Develop a plan for a multi-functional downtown that attract a wide range of individuals and activities.
- Create partnerships with the school to provide opportunities for after school programs
- Preserve the existing middle school building and the historical integrity of the downtown

ESTABLISH A “MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT”

- Determine how GVW community can use public regulatory and financial tools to achieve their goals.
- Establish the specific boundaries of the District.
- Identify partners including financial institutions and nonprofit entities.

CREATE A CONCEPTUAL PLAN FOR “RED BARN”

- Create an identity for the “Red Barn” that is inventive and reflects the community.
- Seek to serve the surrounding neighborhood.
- Determine what use(s) the local market can support.
- Determine if there is a secondary market including cyclists, tourists and students.
- Create a vision that provides a strategic framework for imagining and implementing the plan.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF MILL CENTER TASK FORCE

- Host a community event where all task force members are present
- Utilize all forms of media to communicate the roles and responsibilities of the Task Force
- Create a website where the community can learn more about the task force and the volunteer for community clean up initiatives.
- Emphasize the importance of the GVW community working together toward common goals.

DEVELOP THE PLANS FOR RED BARN

- Identify financial assistance that may available for facade improvement, building improvements to achieve code compliance, new signage and the like
- Design easily accessible and high visible parking that is convenient to drive activity.
- Attract the cycling community by including bicycle parking
- Plan a special event to give the GVW community a chance to respond to the plan.
- Include pedestrian amenities including shade trees, benches, wide sidewalks and sufficient lighting.

DESIGN OF WATER TRAIL LAUNCH AREA

- Include pedestrian amenities including shade trees, benches, wide sidewalks and sufficient lighting.
- Establish a connection with adjacent neighborhoods with bike and walking trails.
- Develop a signage package and maps for a consistent and safe experience.
- Utilize the county, COG, and Visitor’s Bureau to market the resource to the paddling community.
- Provide plenty of parking and accommodate universal access.
- Work with DNR
- Determine ongoing management and maintenance requirements and costs.
- Determine where additional launch areas could be located.

SOLICIT DEMOLITION PLANS FOR BUILDINGS IN FRONT OF GRANITE MILL

- Build new coalitions that include business, environmental and community interest.
- Determine the environmental impact of the building removal
- Work with preservation groups to secure financing
- Determine demolition method
- Procure necessary permits from the state and county
- Host a public meeting to present plans for the land that will be available with the removal of the buildings.

SEPTEMBER – DECEMBER 2012

- Public announcement of Mill Center Task Force
- Develop the plans for Red Barn
- Design of Water trail launch area
- Solicit demolition plans for buildings in front of Granite Mill
- Begin clean up of Granite Mill
- Review concepts for Master Plan

JANUARY – JULY 2013

- Remove of buildings in front of Granite Mill
- Open the Red Barn to the public
- Begin construction on water trail launch.
- Present Mill Lawn Park to the public
- Begin conceptual design for Granite Mill

BEGIN CLEAN UP OF GRANITE MILL

- Empower neighborhood groups by offering volunteer opportunities.
- Identify corporate resources to support the
- Engage environmental consultants

REVIEW CONCEPTS FOR MASTER PLAN

- Revitalize historic buildings for a commercial or civic use.
- Create a list of natural, physical, historic resources that exist within the community.
- Utilize opportunities for historic and mill tax credits to finance the project.
- Articulate a vision statement that is realistic and achievable

REMOVE OF BUILDINGS IN FRONT OF GRANITE MILL

- Review the demolition method and blueprint for building removal
- Recycle and salvage materials as possible
- Maintain an active role in the process to monitor costs

OPEN THE RED BARN TO THE PUBLIC

- Host an event to celebrate the milestone
- Turn the Red Barn over to a private entity for management
- Provide visibility for the task force

AUGUST – DECEMBER 2013

- Finish removal of buildings in front of Mill
- Mill Lawn Park concepts are finalized
- Amphitheatre concepts unveiled
- Finalize plans for Graniteville Mill Building

BEGIN CONSTRUCTION ON WATER TRAIL LAUNCH

- Procure necessary permits.
- Engage with an environmental consultant
- Include DNR as partner in the project.
- Expose the greatest number of new users by partnering with regional outfitters.
- Obtain state designation of a water trail
- Host community training and volunteer day

PRESENT MILL LAWN PARK TO THE PUBLIC

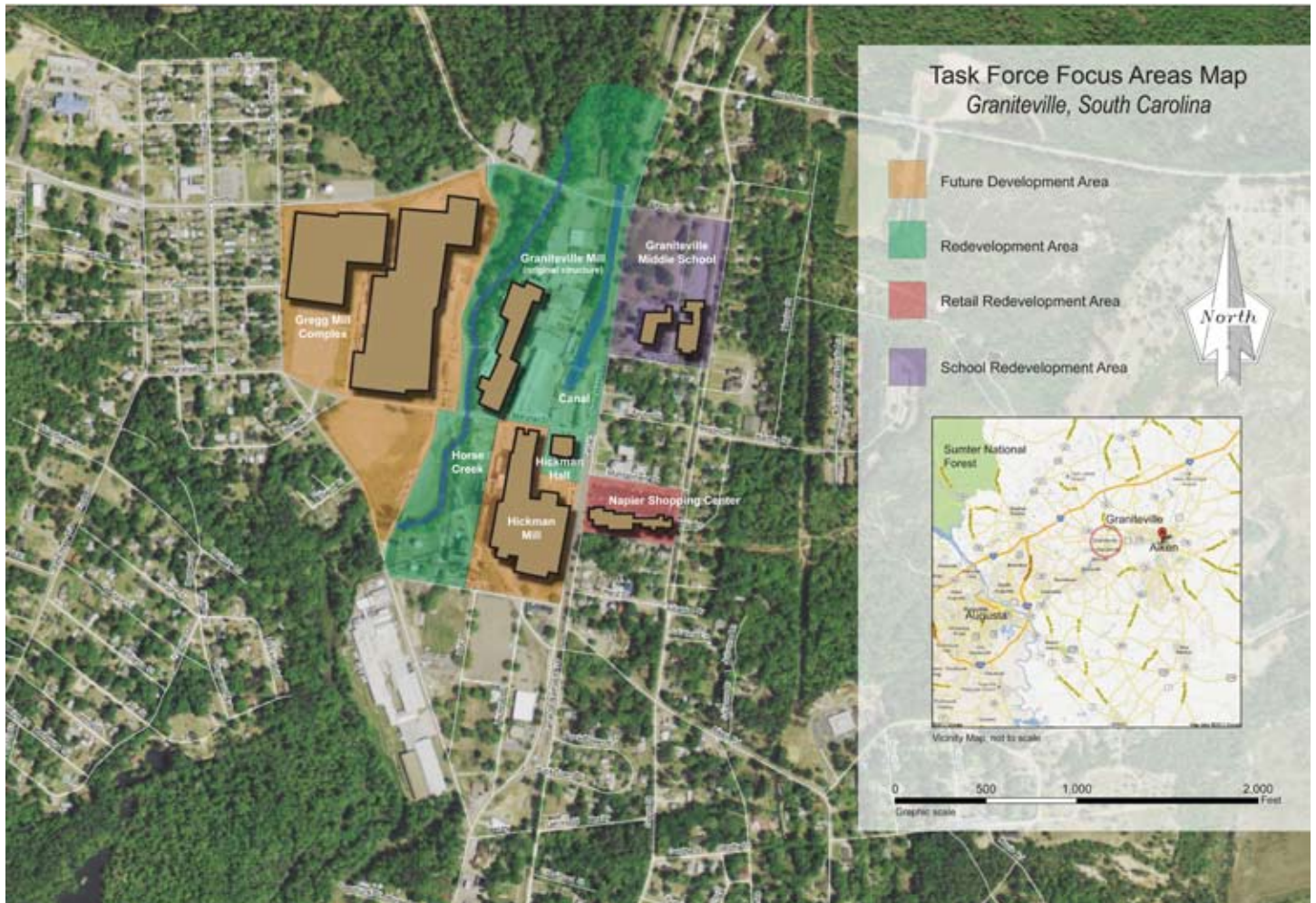
- Establish a land conservancy to preserve the park over time
- Schedule a county event to celebrate the dedication
- Nurture alliances with entities who have a sustained commitment to the project
- Provide the task force with speaking opportunities
- Reiterate the community vision and direction

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2014

- Finish Mill Lawn Park
- Construction of Graniteville Mill Building begins

BEGIN CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR GRANITE MILL

- Consider the needs and desires of the GVW community
- Host a public charette to solicit input
- Consider a plan that allows for flexible use
- Maintain the historic integrity of the building
- Secure financial resources to engage consultants
- Partner with Clemson University School of Architecture for design scenarios



A detailed plan provides the Leadership Task Force, the county, and the COG clear work plan.

Design Concepts

HICKMAN HALL PLAZA



Celebrate the natural, historical and cultural resources of the community. It will attract people from across the county and become a destination for recreation and tourism.

HICKMAN HALL PLAZA



Hickman Hall, the canal and the water tower can become a destination for the community. Proper planning can establish the area as a vital center for activity, entertainment and recreation. It will attract citizens from across the county as well as tourists. This will contribute to the economic health and vitality of the GWW community. It also re-establishes the identity for the area and creates a focal point for which the community can rally. The preservation of buildings and monuments preserves the values and time and place.



Design Concepts

THE RED BARN



The existing “Red Barn” Property located along Aiken Augusta Highway



Concept rendering for the Red Barn Country Store and Restaurant

Conclusion

Corporate investment and the spirit of the GVW community will bring major change over the next five years. Preparing for the growth and establishing effective leadership will be the difference between a community that reinvents itself with open space, regional presence, and a strong sense of place that reflects the history of a flourishing community that helped to define the manufacturing past, present and future of South Carolina and a community that holds onto to the past as the path to the future.

Being prepared to take advantage of these opportunities means that the GVW community must establish strong and cohesive leadership that that actively participates with corporations, organizations, and institutions that work

to shape the future of the GVW community. The GVW community must assert its interests as it becomes a more and more important contributor and participant to the viability of Aiken County. It is time to focus on quality of life and build a community for the future. The GVW community are empowered to create a place that people will wish to live in.

As the plan evolves, the GVW community must have conviction that its future can be desirable and prosperous. Having a well-articulated vision and strong leadership with the discipline to implement it over the long term will make that happen. Remember ***“a goal is a dream with a deadline”***.

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