

Action Plan



Action Plan

Five major goals were identified by committee members and workshop participants during the summer of 2005 as the basic framework for the North Columbia Master Plan.

- ◆ Reinvent image of North Columbia
- ◆ Preservation of existing single-family neighborhoods
- ◆ Develop supportive retail services
- ◆ Maintain and develop new parks and community open spaces
- ◆ Increase educational services and outreach programs

The Action Plan expands upon each goal and the steps necessary in obtaining these goals. While many goals can be achieved within a reasonable amount of time, the major projects that will have the most dramatic change on the community will take time and will involve many partners negotiating to ensure that the vision of the community is implemented correctly.

Community Goal: Reinvent the Image of North Columbia

The North Columbia area suffers from a negative image within the City of Columbia. This area is described as being crime ridden and lacking in quality housing and retail services. Unfortunately, outsider's initial view of the community is that of the vacant former commercial corridors of N. Main Street and Farrow Road. Many of these outsiders are unaware of the historic neighborhoods of Earlewood and College Place or the beautiful suburban communities of Greenview and Northwood Hills. They are uninformed about the historic institutions of Columbia College and Lutheran Seminary School. They may also be unaware of the beautiful community parks of Greenview, Earlewood and Hyatt Parks. The North Columbia Coordinating Committee identified a need to change these misconceptions about the community as a major priority item.

Item One: Establish community branding identification (North Columbia)

- ◆ Expand on the “Villages of North Columbia” concept developed during the workshop into an identifiable slogan to be seen throughout the community.
- ◆ Market the three distinct “Villages” located within the community
 - **Artist Village** which focuses on a walkable artist friendly community with galleries and public art located in and around neighborhood parks
 - **College Village** which focuses on developing the energetic communities around Columbia College and Lutheran Seminary School
 - **Gateway Village** which focuses on preserving the more traditional suburban communities but with all the amenities that intown living can provide

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (North Columbia Coordinating Committee (NCCC))

Item Two: Implement a marketing campaign to combat the negative perception of being a high crime area

- ◆ Focus on the beautiful housing inventory already in place in many of the more established neighborhoods
- ◆ Emphasize the close proximity to downtown and easy interstate access

- ◆ Highlight the partnership roles that Columbia College Lutheran Seminary and South university play in the community and expand upon their courses that are offered to the community
- ◆ Highlight the recent improvements and new programs implemented by the School Board, including the renovation of the Logan School, the new Gibbs Elementary School, the improvements at Alcorn Middle School and Eau Claire High School
- ◆ Highlight the Capital Improvements from City including the N. Main Street streetscape and Eau Claire Development Corporation's (ECDC) N. Main Plaza and recent infill housing achievements.

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (NCCC, City)

Item Three: Improve community markers and develop Gateway monuments

- ◆ Improve existing neighborhood markers by identifying additional locations and improving complimentary landscaping.
- ◆ Develop a consistent gateway monument and landscaping scheme that can be implemented at key gateway intersections to provide some cohesion in identifying the Village of North Columbia. Key intersections not already addressed by the N. Main Street Streetscape project include:
 - Elmwood Avenue at N. Main Street
 - Broad River Road at Broad River
 - Sunset Drive at N. Main Street
 - Monticello Road at Dixie Avenue
 - Fairfield Road at Prescott Road
 - N. Main Street at Wilkes Road
 - Farrow Road at Cindy Street
 - Farrow Road at Cushman Street
 - Farrow Road at Columbia College Drive

Timeframe: Medium Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Neighborhood Associations, City's Forestry and Beautification)

Item Four: Create volunteer clean-up brigade for each district

- ◆ Utilize workshop findings to identify key areas within the community in need of clean-up and improvements
- ◆ Utilize the City's Forestry and Beautification Department to identify funding sources for new projects and expertise on implementation strategies

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (NCCC, Neighborhood Associations, City's Forestry and Beautification and Code Enforcement)

Community Goal: Preservation of existing single-family neighborhoods

The overwhelming positive attribute identified by participants in the public workshop process was the preservation of the beautiful neighborhoods within North Columbia. There is concern from current residents that new development might infringe upon existing the neighborhood character. The new developments do not reflect the existing density, style or scale of many of the surrounding homes. Another significant concern is the large amount of vacant or neglected properties located within some of the less economic stable neighborhoods within the area. Many of these properties are boarded up or overgrown. There is a perception among residents that the City does not have adequate code enforcement measures in place to confront these problems.

Item One: Code Enforcement

- ◆ Provide City Zoning and Building enforcement division and Fire Department with additional staff to properly enforce the ordinances
- ◆ Provide a Code Enforcement Education Outreach Campaign to inform residents of the community about the code enforcement process and efforts. In addition, it also creates a partnership between the department staff and residents.
- ◆ Address areas identified during the public involvement process for immediate and concentrated enforcement sweeps
 - Parcels in and around catalyst projects
 - Belmont Neighborhood
 - Hyatt Park north of Duke Avenue
 - Hyatt Park Annex
 - North College Place

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Zoning and Building Enforcement Division, Fire Department)

Item Two: Regulatory Enhancements

- ◆ Adopt North Columbia Master Plan
- ◆ Pursue and adopt historic conservation guidelines for all applicable neighborhoods similar to those used successfully in the Cottontown and Old Shannon Neighborhoods. These guidelines will ensure new development is in keeping with the scale and size of the neighborhood. Neighborhoods include:
 - College Place
 - Hyatt Park
 - Seminary Ridge
 - Windemere Springs
- Designate “blighted” neighborhoods as Redevelopment Areas. This designation allows for access to federal funds and additional acquisition strategies in order to change the negative direction of the community and allows the measures identified in the Master Plan to take place. Neighborhoods identified are:
 - Belmont
 - Edgewood Acres
 - Golden Acres
 - North College Place
- ◆ Develop an infill design guideline ordinance to preserve existing communities that are currently not covered by historic guidelines. These guidelines would ensure that renovations, expansions or new infill construction would be consistent in size, scale and materials to that of its adjacent neighbors. Neighborhoods include:
 - Greenview & North Columbia Civic Club
 - Fairwold Community
 - Farrow Hills and Terrace
 - Northwood Hills

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (City Council, City Planning Department, Neighborhood Associations)

Item Three: Rehabilitation of existing homes

- ◆ The preservation of the existing homes within many of the neighborhoods is vital in maintaining the unique single-family character and diversity of the community. It is also necessary in preventing any individual property from negatively influencing the surrounding community.
- ◆ Identify homes in need of repair and educate homeowners on available funds
 - Utilize existing HOME and CDBG programs that provide grants homeowners to provide for affordable housing
 - Provide workshops at neighborhood association meetings to educate homeowners about the available funding sources and low interest loans and the process required in obtaining these loans

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Neighborhood Association, NCCC, Community Development, ECDC)

Item Four: Infill Development

- ◆ Identify and inventory vacant lots or dilapidated homes within the community in need of new or redevelopment
 - Identify parcels with tax delinquencies, property liens, continual code enforcement violations, etc.
- ◆ Acquire vacant parcels
 - Identify appropriate funding source (CBHG and HOME funds)
 - Utilize code enforcement sweeps and fines to put pressure on parcel owner to improve property
 - Identify appropriate use of acquisition powers that can allow for neighborhood input into the decision making process
- ◆ Attract infill development
 - Identify in-town builders who exhibit quality construction within the city and actively recruit them to North Columbia.
 - Attend local home builder association meetings to network and identify potential builders
 - Initiate a residential community open house for real estate brokers, home builders, Eau Claire Development Corporation and neighborhood leaders to showcase inventory within targeted areas for infill and catalyst projects

- ◆ Partner with builders to develop identified catalyst projects described in the Catalyst Section of the master plan (Section Four)

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Private/Public (Neighborhood Association, NCCC, Community Development, ECDC)

Item Five: Infrastructure Investment

- ◆ Improve pedestrian safety to enhance single-family community
 - Identify areas in need of sidewalks and crosswalks, areas in and around schools, parks and cut-through traffic corridors
 - Implement bike lanes that connect neighborhoods to civic uses and spaces
- ◆ Implement traffic calming measures to slow traffic through residential neighborhoods
 - Focus on cut-through traffic corridors
 - Avoid using speed humps
 - Neighborhood streets include: Duke Avenue, Frye Road, Wilkes Road, Prescott Road and River Road)
- ◆ Replace existing, inadequate curb & gutter and open ditches in the neighborhoods of Fairwold, Farrow Hills & Terrace and Greenview neighborhoods

Timeframe: Moderate to Long Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Neighborhood Association, NCCC, City Engineering Dept, SCDOT)

Community Goal: Develop mixed-use activity nodes

The North Columbia Community does not have adequate retail services. The creation of new retail spaces was identified as a major goal by the North Columbia Committee and was supported by participants during the public workshop process. In addition, the lack of retail, is a negative attribute associated with the image of North Columbia that hampers the efforts in attracting potential new residents.

Item One: Develop primary road corridor design overlays

- ◆ The overlays provide a development tool to preserve and enhance the area
- ◆ Design overlays that protect the existing neighborhood character
- ◆ Protects investors from adjacent future development that is not in keeping with the “vision” of the community
- ◆ Addresses building location and parking location as well as pedestrian spaces

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Neighborhood Association, City Planning Dept)

Item Two: Identify potential users and operators

- ◆ Identify retail uses within the community that would benefit from relocation into the various activity nodes
- ◆ Identify retail uses outside the area that compliment and support the community and recruit them to the community

Timeframe: Moderate Term

Implementation Partners: Public (NCCC, ECDC, Community Development)

Item Three: Identify potential partnerships

- ◆ City to assist in land acquisition
- ◆ Initiate development open houses with city officials, institutions, neighborhood leaders, ECDC and recognized developers and real estate brokers to present mixed-use catalyst projects

- ◆ Partnership between City, Columbia College and developer for mixed-use catalyst project at N. Main Street and Columbia College Drive
- ◆ Partnership between City and developers for live/work units at N. Main Street and River Drive
- ◆ Partnership between City and ECDC to develop mixed-use catalyst project at N. Main Street and Prescott Road
- ◆ Identify partner with Columbia Housing Authority for the redevelopment of Hammond Village
- ◆ City to facilitate negotiations during rezoning process between neighborhood and future developers to ensure Master Plan vision

Timeframe: Moderate Term

Implementation Partners: Public/Private (Columbia College, City Staff, ECDC)

Item Four: Provide incentives for greyfield/brownfield redevelopment

- ◆ Supply incentives for greyfield development to reduce the additional costs imposed upon the developer caused by existing structural removal
 - Apply a density bonus or parking reduction for mixed-use projects to generate more financial return to the developer
 - City to provide tax credits to make redevelopment financially feasible
- ◆ Identify grants for brownfield redevelopment to reduce the additional costs imposed upon the developer caused by the removal of existing structures on these sites
 - EPA Assessment Grant to inventory and assess brownfield sites
 - EPA Brownfield Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund Pilots
- ◆ Identify alternative storm water management practices to allow for maximum development opportunities within the site making project more financially feasible

Timeframe: Long Term

Implementation Partners: Public/Private (City Engineering Dept, City Planning Dept, Public Works, Community Development)

Item Five: Coordinate Streetscape and Utilities improvement

- ◆ Streetscape improvements to improve pedestrian safety and improve overall aesthetic of the community
 - Farrow Rd within activity nodes
 - Extend N. Main Streetscape from Oakland Avenue to Frye Road
 - Improve pedestrian conditions on Broad River Road between River Drive and bridge

Timeframe: Long Term

Implementation Partners: Private/Public (City Engineering Dept, SCDOT, Planning Dept)

Community Goal: Maintain and develop new parks and community open spaces

The North Columbia area is fortunate in having three outstanding parks within the community and the Three Rivers Greenway, but more neighborhood or “pocket” parks are necessary in order to provide public spaces for residents to, exercise, relax, meet and interact. Many neighborhoods within the community, such as Belmont, North College Place and Golden Acres do not have any greenspace areas.

Item One: Identify issues/needs within existing parks

- ◆ Development or sale of undeveloped Lincoln Park
 - With close proximity to Hyatt Park and lack of capital investment, Lincoln Park could be sold to developers for new infill construction. The profits from this sale could then be used to purchase greenspace in other areas of the community
- ◆ Significant improvements to Marshall Park
 - Park needs general cosmetic changes such as defined paths, replanting of grass and improved signage and increased maintenance
- ◆ Increased accessibility to Three Rivers Greenway
 - Implement proposed access at future bus barn
 - Improve access location monuments
 - Implement access from Elmwood Cemetery

Timeframe: Long Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Planning Dept, Community Development, Parks and Recreation Department)

Item Two: Acquire areas for new parks as identified by the Master Plan (Section Four)

- ◆ Highway 277 property greenway
- ◆ Hawthorne Avenue in Hyatt Park
- ◆ Geraldine Street in North College Place
- ◆ Belmont Neighborhood
- ◆ Greenway connection from Earlewood Park to Broad River through Ardincaple neighborhood

Timeframe: Short to Long Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Planning Dept, Community Development, Parks and Recreation Department, Trust for Public Land)

Item Three: Identify funding sources

- ◆ Identify potential partnerships/land swaps for land acquisition
- ◆ Utilize Recreation Land Trust Fund for acquisition of parcels
- ◆ Utilize Park and Recreation Development Fund for implementation of park
- ◆ Utilize Recreational Trail Program grant for trail connections to Three Rivers Greenway

Timeframe: Short to Long Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Community Development, Parks and Recreation Department, Trust for Public Land)

Community Goal: Increase in social services and expand cultural programs

The North Columbia community is a very diverse community. While some neighborhoods have begun and/or maintained their economic vitality and aesthetic beauty, some neighborhoods are showing areas of neglect and blighting influences. An important goal identified by the workshop participants and committee members was maintaining the economic and social diversity within the community while providing the necessary resources to less fortunate residents. In a community where over 18% of residents do not own a car and must rely on bus transit or walking, the availability of services within the community is a vital element for these residents.

Item One: Inform and improve social programs within the community

- ◆ Identify neighborhoods that would most benefit from continuing education and life resource programs
- ◆ Inform the community through neighborhood association meetings and community open houses about available programs provided by the City available at Eau Claire Town Hall
- ◆ Inform community through neighborhood association meetings and community open houses about available programs provided at future Life Resource center
- ◆ Identify potential users for programs at available park facilities
- ◆ Identify and advertise programs and courses available from higher education institutions

Timeframe: Short Term

Implementation Partners: Public (NCCC, Neighborhood Associations, ECDC)

Item Two: Identify potential partnerships with education facilities

- ◆ Partner with Midlands Tech to provide courses within the community
- ◆ Identify partner to provide location for Midlands Tech courses
- ◆ Partner with Columbia College to provide community outreach programs

Timeframe: Moderate Term

Implementation Partners: Public/Private (Community Development, Midlands Tech, ECDC)

Item Three: Increase police presence within the Community

- ◆ Develop a police mini-precinct within the retail activity node at N. Main Street and Prescott Road as part of the catalyst project
- ◆ Identify future and expand existing neighborhood watch programs to improve safety

Timeframe: Short to Long Term

Implementation Partners: Public (Community Development, Neighborhood Associations, Police Department)

Item Four: Identify cultural programs and groups for community

- ◆ Identify potential users within and outside the community in need of rehearsal and studio space looking to relocate within the community
- ◆ Identify existing buildings within the community that can be converted to accessible, inexpensive spaces
- ◆ Partner with Columbia College and Eau Claire High School for use of performance halls
- ◆ Utilize new outdoor amphitheatre within Earlewood Park
- ◆ Identify areas within existing parks for public art exhibits

Timeframe: Short to Moderate Term

Implementation Partners: Public/Private (Columbia College, School Board, Community Development, Neighborhood Associations, NCCC, ECDC)



For Additional Information

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