



Downtown Revitalization Concept Tasks

The Town of Spring Hope, NC

February 1, 2020



Approach

Cardno and the Spring Hope Downtown Development Board (DDB) has developed a number of revitalization strategies and accompanying tactical actions designed to drive positive changes in Spring Hope's downtown and transition areas. The report was accomplished under the Town's ongoing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Assessment program and in concert with the NC Main Street Program and the Upper Coastal Plain COG's update of Spring Hope's existing and future land use plans. In accordance with the EPA Brownfields Program's goal of facilitating the redevelopment of vacant or underutilized properties, the redevelopment of which may be hindered by perceived or real environmental contamination, this effort seeks to identify strategies and potential catalyst brownfield sites to encourage the revitalization of Spring Hope.

The downtown revitalization strategies are based on:

- A brief assessment of existing conditions
- A review of town regulations, governing land uses, and blighted conditions
- An abbreviated market study/gap analysis
- Identification of catalyst sites
- Community engagement
- A downtown vision statement

We have focused our tasks around three primary considerations: community engagement, downtown beautification steps (i.e., elimination of blighted properties in the downtown and transition areas), and neighborhood scale small businesses. The goal of these tasks was to provide the community with a path forward to preserving what makes Downtown Spring Hope special, while outlining strategic opportunities to move the downtown forward as a vibrant destination for residents and visitors alike. In doing so, we have considered Spring Hope's attributes, challenges, and resources which possess the potential to impact the recommended strategies as Spring Hope advances over the next 5 years.

We suggest a second community engagement session for some time in February or March of 2020, exact date and time to be determined (TBD). Prior to and following this session, Cardno will draft the report for the presentation and adoption by Spring Hope's Mayor and Board of Commissioners. The final report will present recommended strategies and tactical actions and a framework for the implementation of the same actions.

Existing Conditions

Spring Hope has a number of unique attributes that position the Downtown for a successful revitalization campaign, including:

- The Town’s rich history, which has been proudly preserved that history through its Historical District that includes over two dozen homes and a total of 160 properties;
- The old railroad depot in the heart of downtown and across from Town Hall, which has been turned into a public library;
- The downtown Business District, which remains mostly intact with several buildings in good condition and many fully utilized by specialty shops and local retail;
- The Spring Hope Historical Museum, which is locally run and operated to educate visitors and residents alike on the Town’s history;
- Several local events which run through the middle of downtown, including the Annual Pumpkin Festival, Old Fashioned Christmas event, and the Spring Hope 5k race; and
- The other regional attractions located near the Town including the Tar River Trail, Paddle Creek, Battle Park, and two public golf courses.

Cardno consulted a number of sources in evaluating Spring Hope’s population characteristics, emerging trends, and other relevant demographics, but our primary sources were the US Census Bureau’s American Fact Finder – Community Facts and city-data.com. *Figure 1* presents census data across the years 2000, 2010, and 2017. In addition, City-data.com presented data from 2014, which is incorporated into the text of our summary. As a word of caution, the 2017 census data is based on estimates or projections, which may conflict with other sources, and cannot be relied upon 100%. Still, the overall picture presented and any emerging trends are informative and generally reliable for discussion and planning purposes within the scope of this task, a downtown revitalization strategy for the Town of Spring Hope.

Spring Hope’s population has experienced some growth during the period 2000 through 2017; and the population is beginning to reverse a decade or more where the median age was steadily increasing. Both findings are encouraging and support the “sense” that a number of local residents have voiced that Spring Hope may be becoming a bedroom community for those commuting to and working in the Greater Raleigh Area. As another caution, however, different US Census reports estimated the total 2018 population for Spring Hope as 1,567 1,307 1,320. It is not uncommon to see these kinds of discrepancies in smaller population areas, but it does call into question what to celebrate and when.

City-data.com reported fairly level home sales for the years 2012, 2013, and 2014. However, the median sales price for homes sold over this same three-year period nearly doubled, another leading indicator that a younger, working population is discovering Spring Hope.

Other seemingly positive trends are higher college attainment levels, (closing in on 20%) and increasing commuter times with nearly 25% of those employed commuting 45-60 minutes. We also found that 50% of all employed, work outside of the county. While the Town will want to work to create more local opportunities for employment, these trends further support that Spring Hope may be becoming a place to live, even if their employment resides elsewhere. There were 225 more residents with full-time employment in 2017 than in 2000. We also noted that there was a total of 300-500 residents and nonresidents in 2018 who worked within the Town's limits. Both of these employment data points are positive factors for local businesses and downtown merchants.

When looking across all of the data in *Figure 1*, we conclude that while Spring Hope may be well positioned for growth, the data reported for 2010 presents the more likely and reliable data, with a few exceptions. We believe much of the 2017 data or estimates reported are suspect. And, even if this data is accurate, real growth continues to elude Spring Hope. In subsequent tasks, we considered why this may be the case and what options the Town may have to develop and implement a break-through strategy, including how a revitalized downtown can help to drive this real growth.

From the NC Main Streets Data that Cardno and the Town collected in 2019, the current conditions of the downtown show the potential for revitalization efforts to be successful. A total of 82+ businesses currently exist in downtown and over 56+/- of those are locally owned. Approximately 20 of the total buildings in downtown are in good condition and roughly 40 are in fair condition with a majority of them being fully utilized and fully occupied. A majority of the buildings are built in between the 1900s and 1910s (8 were built between 1900-1910 and 29 between 1910-1920), which further celebrates the Town's proud history as a railroad, lumber, food, and retail hub. After evaluating the square footage and total assessed value of each building, the average value per square foot of the downtown area currently is approximately \$9.00.

Figure 1

Spring Hope, NC Demographics			
Source: 2000-2018 US Census Data			
	2000	2010	2017
Total Population	1,261	1,320	1,570 est.
-60 years of age and over	25.50%	30.50%	24.40%
Median Age	39.4	47.1	37.4
Race			
-White	50.80%	47.00%	47.40%
-Black or African American	42.80%	47.00%	42.10%
-All Other	6.40%	6.00%	10.50%
Employment Status			
-16 Years in Age and Over	970 or 100%	Unknown	1,195 or 100%
-In Labor Force	560 or 100%	Unknown	596 or 100%
-Employed	518 or 92.5%	Unknown	545 or 91.46%
-Unemployed	42 or 7.5%	Unknown	51 or 8.60%
Dominant Occupations			
-Management/Professional	25.10%	Unknown	25.00%
-Service	17.00%	Unknown	19.00%
-Sales and Office	22.20%	Unknown	20.00%
-Farming	2.90%	Unknown	0.05%
-Construction	7.30%	Unknown	12.00%
-Production and Transportation	25.50%	Unknown	24.00%

Spring Hope, NC Demographics-CONTINUED			
Source: 2000-2018 US Census Data			
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2017</u>
Median Household Income	\$30,469	\$27,677	\$30,313
Mean Income	\$41,254	\$37,266	\$42,121
Poverty Level (16 Years of Age and Older)	12.00%	23.00%	19.00%
Housing Data			
-Occupied Units	544	642	621
-Owner Occupied	297 or 54.5%	287	248 or 40%
-Renter Occupied	247 or 45.5%	355	373 or 60%
-Average Size Owner Units		2.25	Unknown
-Average Size Rental Units		1.90	Unknown
Vacancy Rate			
-Owned Rates	4.80%	4.30%	Unknown
-Rental Units	3.10%	6.80%	4.00%
Median Value of Owner Occupied Units	Unknown	Unknown	974
Educational Attainment			
-Population (25 Years of Age and Over)	837	Unknown	974
-Less than High School	280 (33.5%)	Unknown	198 (20%)
-High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	234 (28%)	Unknown	280 (29%)
-Some College or Associates Degree	196 (23.5%)	Unknown	310 (32%)
-Bachelor's degree or higher	127 (15%)	17.30%	186 (19%)

One of the challenges identified were the approximately 31 vacant properties/storefronts in the downtown and the total of 34 underutilized properties (i.e. properties that may have some ownership, but are not 100% occupied). However, there was recently a flurry of activity with regard to the sale, sales pending, and new listings of commercial properties within the Downtown area that signals that interest is building. The following summary was compiled by the Town's Clerk, reporting for the period of September through December of 2019:

Downtown Spring Hope Buildings Sold or Pending		
Address	Date Sold	Business
111 E Railroad St	9/11/2019	Auction House
108 N Pine St	9/27/2019	Appliance Store
103 S Pine St.	10/15/2019	General Store
122, 124, 126 S Pine St. (3 Buildings)	10/31/2019	Possible Restaurant
116 N Pine St.	"Sale Pending"	
205 W Main St.	Buyer and Seller in Negotiations	Furniture Store
408 W Nash St.	Listed	Possible Motorcycle Sales and Services

Town Regulations Review: Zoning Code Review and Managing Blight

Zoning Code

A review of Spring Hope's current zoning code suggested favorable conditions for redevelopment and revitalization of the Town's Central Business District (CB). Residential uses potentially allowed include bed and breakfasts, boarding houses, and dwellings accessory to businesses. Entertainment possibilities include night clubs, entertainment in-doors, snack bars, and temporary venues. Minimum square footage and lot coverage requirements were also favorable to redevelopment and revitalization opportunities. There is also an option for creating a Historic Overlay within and abutting the CB District. All-in-all, there were no actual perceived barriers to the goals of this downtown revitalization strategy.

Managing Blight

Cardno requested the Brough Law Firm, PLLC, to review the Town of Spring Hope's ordinances and provide recommendations for strengthening ordinances for abating residential and commercial blight, especially in the downtown. Their findings are summarized below, along with the information regarding the approved Nuisance and Minimum Housing Standards they helped the Town draft and approve.

Previous and Current Conditions

The Town had a minimum housing ordinance (See, Code Chpt. 6, Art. II), but no ordinances regulating vacant and/or dilapidated nonresidential structures. Also, the Town does not have any commercial aesthetic standards. The Town had public nuisance ordinances, but they were limited to prohibiting noxious weeds and similar issues (See, Code Chpt. 10, Art. III). The only enforcement mechanism for these public nuisances were civil penalties (See, Code Sec. 10-2).

Spring Hope previously indicated that all code enforcement relating to dilapidated buildings was done through the Nash County Building Inspections Division, with ongoing inspections for building permits taking priority over code enforcement.

Recommendations and Actions Taken

There are several ordinance changes that the Town could make to strengthen its code enforcement program, but we believe the first step is for the Spring Hope Board of Commissioners to commit to funding ongoing code enforcement efforts for a period of years. While the current Board of Commissioners cannot legally bind future boards with regard to spending decisions, a commitment is nonetheless important. Successful programs in communities of comparable size to Spring Hope typically require that the community be willing to fund a part-time code enforcement position and budget funds for demolition and other abatement work over a period of years and, realistically, indefinitely. In our experience, ongoing funding is important because Counties generally lack the resources to do meaningful code enforcement – that appears to be the case here – and because code

enforcement programs rarely, if ever, fund themselves.

Because of Spring Hope's interest in downtown revitalization, adopting a nonresidential minimum standards code is a good start. Authorized by N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160A-439, municipalities may adopt an ordinance that allows non-building inspectors, which could include Town staff or part-time contractors, to conduct inspections on occupied and vacant nonresidential structures using a process very similar to the minimum housing enforcement process.

By adopting more robust public nuisance standards, this will allow Spring Hope to abate more types of public nuisances and would create a process whereby the Town could abate the nuisances itself, if necessary.

The minimum housing standards have been updated to meet current statutory requirements and clear up some discrepancies in the current ordinances. For example, it was unclear why the Town needed both a minimum housing code and Code Sec. 6-109, which prohibits residential buildings that are unfit for human habitation.

The Town may also consider adopting commercial aesthetics standards. However, aesthetic standards raise the cost of doing business, and some communities have found that they do not have the luxury of possibly turning down new businesses that cannot meet aesthetic standards.

Last year the General Assembly adopted a statute (N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160A-439.1) that authorizes municipalities to petition the Superior Court to place dilapidated commercial properties into receivership to facilitate rehabilitation or demolition. This is a cumbersome process, but it might be a useful tool in those cases where a commercial property is still economically viable, but the owner is doing nothing to maintain the property.

After proposing changes to the code to strengthen the ordinance, Brough helped the Town draft a new Nuisance Standard and Minimum Housing Standard as part of the Town's ordinance. The recently adopted standards were approved by the Town Planning Commission and are included at the end of the report, see *Attachments A & B*.

Market Assessment and Retail Gap Analysis

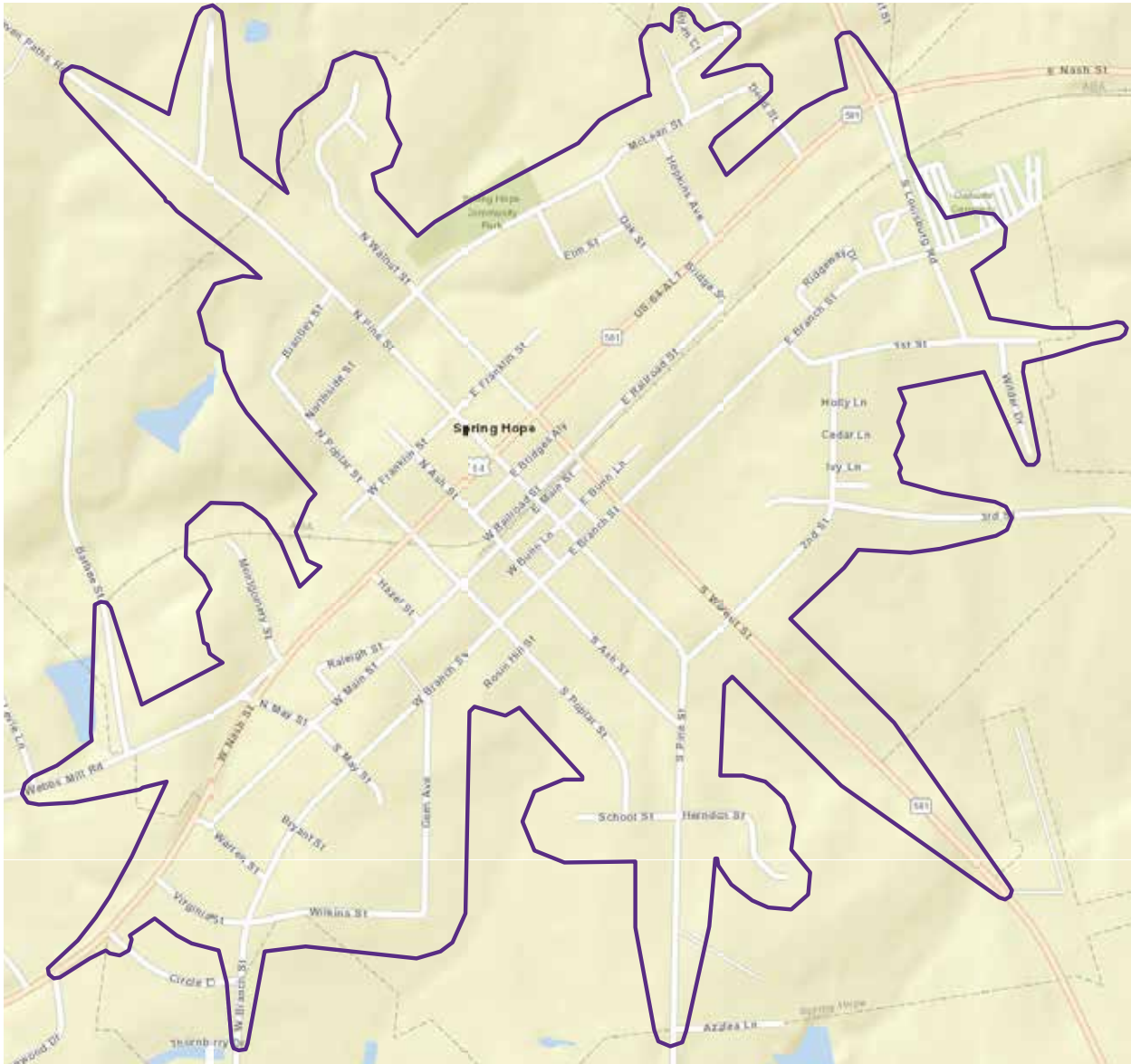
Cardno has completed an Opportunity Gap Analysis by retail store types. This evaluation considered three distinct trade areas:

- Trade Area I - 10 Minute Walk (or less) to Downtown Spring Hope
- Trade Area II – 10 Minute Drive (or less) to Downtown Spring Hope
- Trade Area III – 15 Linear Miles (or less) from Downtown Spring Hope

The 2019 data for all three trade areas was obtained from Environics Analytics (EA).

Trade Areas I and II reported similar demand and supply patterns, where demand only moderately exceeded supply, see *Figures 2 and 3*. Several candidate business types, generally considered as good potential neighborhood scale business types, were reported to be heavily saturated (i.e., supply significantly exceeded demand). Examples here included a range of automotive parts stores, paint and wallpaper stores, building material and garden centers, home centers, and hardware stores. Business types showing up as potential opportunities in these two trade areas were food and beverage stores, specialty food stores (e.g., meat and fish markets, baked goods, chocolatiers, and neighborhood grocers). It is important to note, however, that these potential new business opportunities would also be challenged to be successful on the strength of consumers in Trade Areas I and II alone or what we would consider “resident consumers”.

Gap Analysis: Trade Area I (10 Min. Walk or Less)

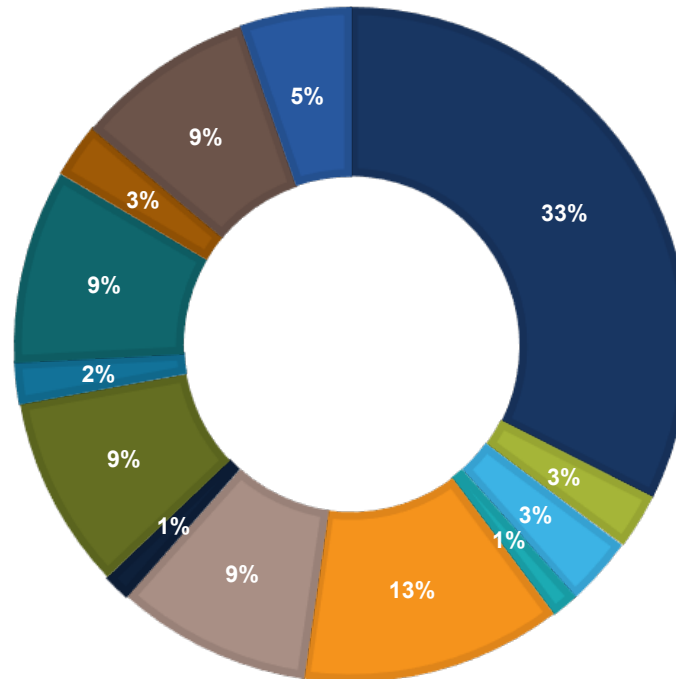


Map drawn by Environics Analytics (EA)

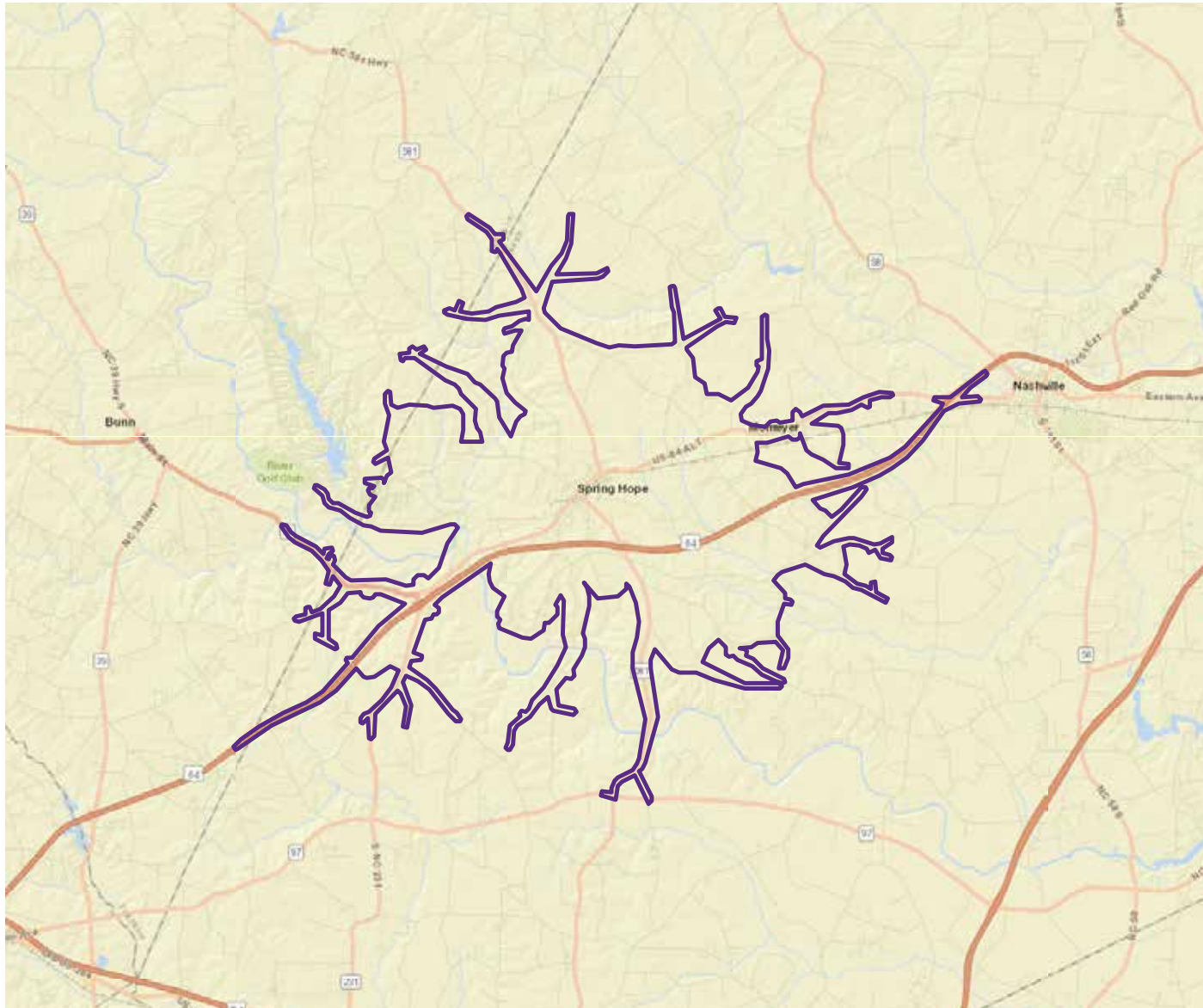
Figure 2

GAP ANALYSIS - TRADE AREA I (10 MINUTE WALKING OR LESS)

- Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers (\$9,629,793)
- Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores (-\$821,471)
- Electronics and Appliance Stores (\$968,299)
- Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers (-\$447,883)
- Food and Beverage Stores (\$3,695,061)
- Health and Personal Care Stores (\$2,686,185)
- Gasoline Stations (-\$498,344)
- Clothing and Accessories Stores (\$2,821,606)
- Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores (\$704,025)
- General Merchandise Stores (-\$2,735,700)
- Miscellaneous (-\$884,147)
- Non-store Retailers (\$2,703,757)
- Food Services and Drinking Places (\$1,574,533)



Gap Analysis: Trade Area II (10 Min. Drivetime)

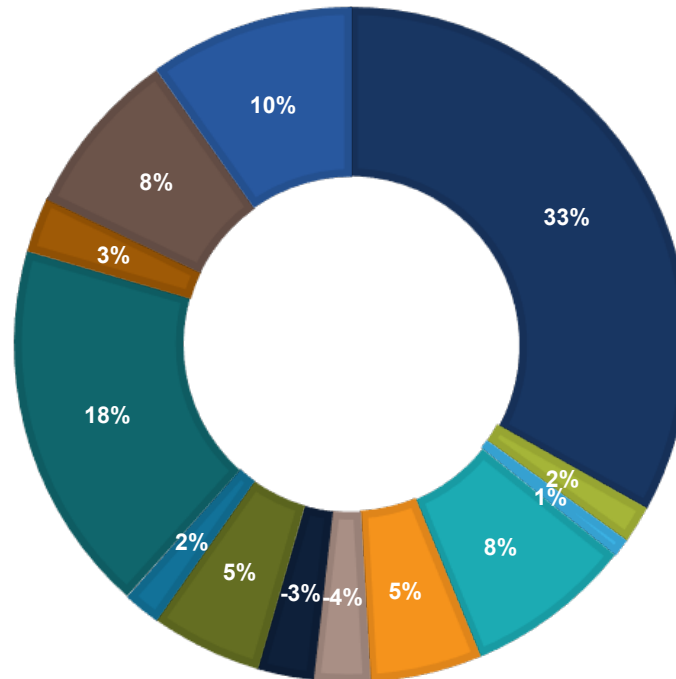


Map drawn by Environics Analytics (EA)

Figure 3

GAP ANALYSIS –TRADE AREA II (10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME)

- Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers (\$71,175,338)
- Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores (\$3,419,170)
- Electronics and Appliance Stores (\$2,940,871)
- Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers (\$17,247,510)
- Food and Beverage Stores (\$10,694,361)
- Health and Personal Care Stores (-\$4,483,420)
- Gasoline Stations (-\$4,918,199)
- Clothing and Accessories Stores (\$10,976,497)
- Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores (\$3,602,779)
- General Merchandise Stores (\$38,509,677)
- Miscellaneous (\$4,997,490)
- Non-store Retailers (\$17,675,595)
- Food Services and Drinking Places (\$22,040,064)

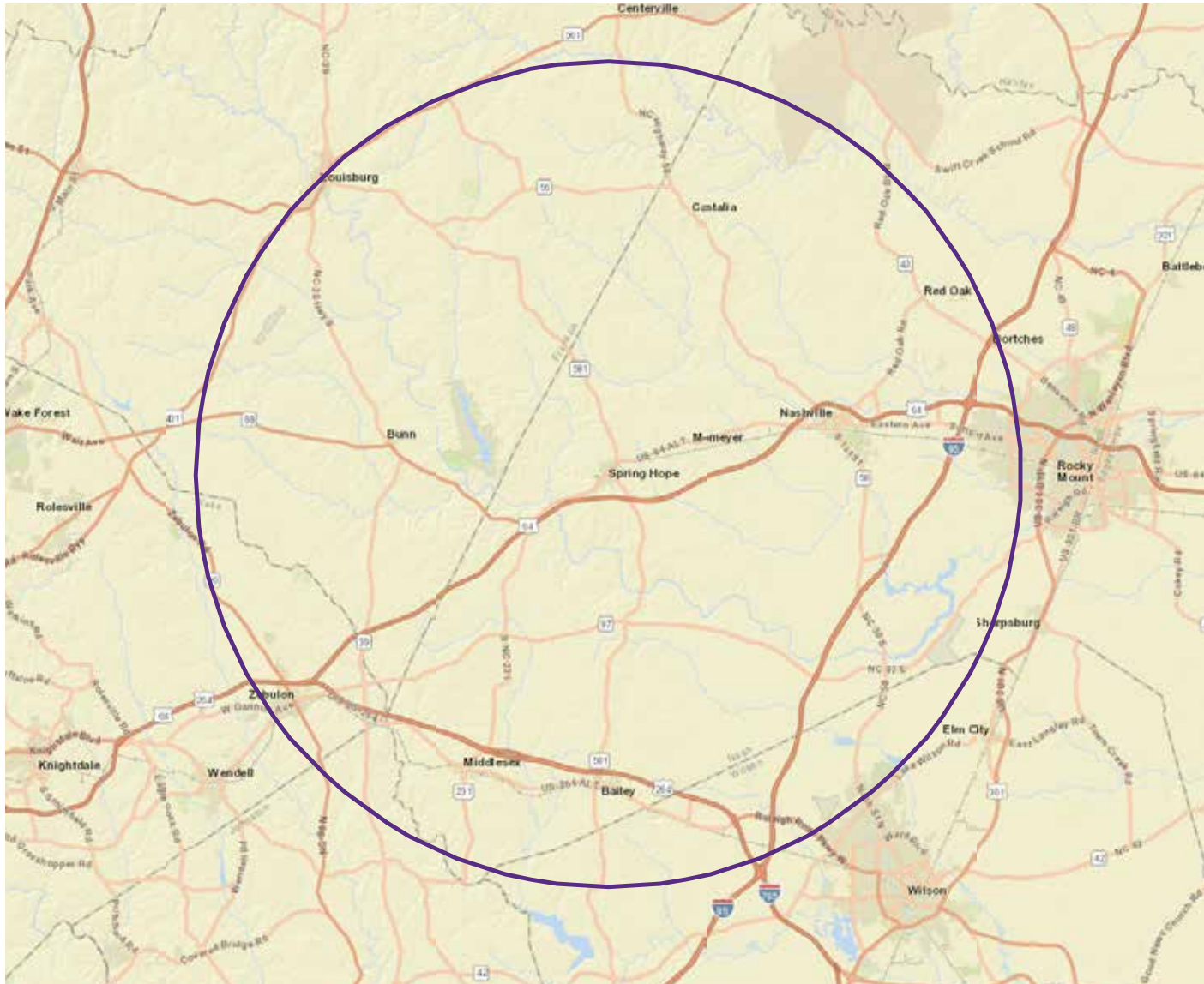


Trade Area III begins to show greater separation between demand and supply, in favor of demand and thus more opportunities for new business types in Downtown Spring Hope, see *Figure 4*.

Trade III consumers and beyond represent “destination consumers” who demand unique, high quality business types, products, and services. These consumers, who are willing to make the trek to downtown, along with “resident consumers” will drive and sustain the revenues of Spring Hope’s downtown businesses and service providers. Examples here include women’s clothing, children’s and infants’ clothing, specialized sporting/hobby/musical instruments/book stores, pet and pet supplies stores, and restaurants and other eating and drinking places. When all is considered and weighed, Retail/Restaurants/Recreation rule in attracting and sustaining consumer spending.

Some other important considerations will be existing local and nearby competition; businesses that fit a downtown scale (e.g., building types, sizes, and access); and the importance of complementary businesses and services. Services (e.g., banks, attorneys, insurance and government services), while not “retail”, will draw in consumers to discover the retail attributes of a downtown. Many of these services are already in place in Spring Hope, so the primary focus for the Town should be on the “Three Rs”, and entertainment. Finally, housing in and near the downtown and employment in and around the downtown are two important factors needed to support and sustain downtown businesses.

Gap Analysis: Trade Area III (15 Min. Drivetime)

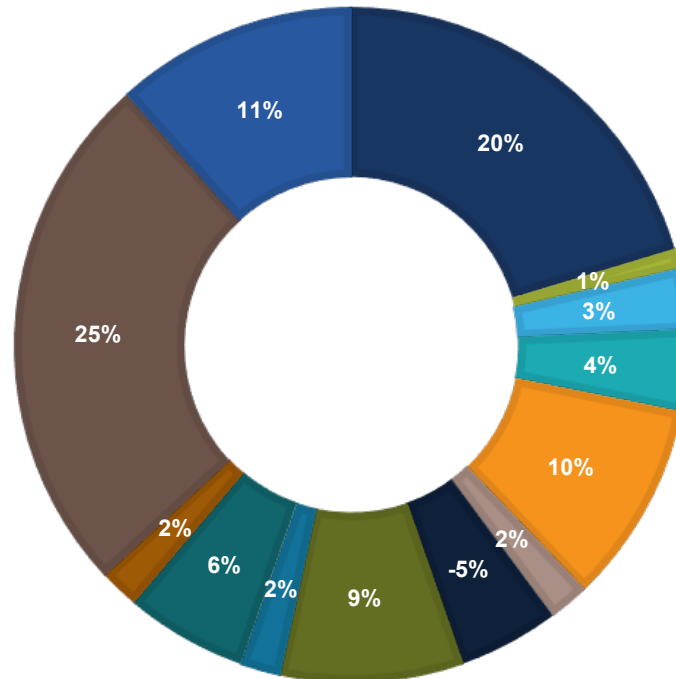


Map drawn by Enviroics Analytics (EA)

Figure 4

GAP ANALYSIS –TRADE AREA III (15 MINUTE DRIVE TIME)

- Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers (\$151,923,591)
- Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores (\$8,802,263)
- Electronics and Appliance Stores (\$21,374,821)
- Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers (\$21,374,821)
- Food and Beverage Stores (\$66,259,421)
- Health and Personal Care Stores (\$18,181,147)
- Gasoline Stations (-\$35,057,201)
- Clothing and Accessories Stores (\$58,503,741)
- Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores (\$16,668,801)
- General Merchandise Stores (\$42,257,576)
- Miscellaneous (\$15,072,447)
- Non-store Retailers (\$168,836,093)
- Food Services and Drinking Places (\$79,141,362)



Downtown and Town-Wide Visions and Strategic Actions

The next step proposed to help the Town with its revitalization efforts, was to propose a series of vision statements that accurately reflected the Town's beliefs and goals for its future. These statements are intended to serve as a guide to help the Town make decisions that align with those beliefs and declared set of goals as it continues to grow and move forward. It was also important that the vision statements reflect the Town in two different aspects. The first, a condensed vision that applies just to the Downtown and the goals to revitalize its centralized district. The second applies to the Town as a whole, envisioning its beliefs for the future of its overall growth.

In addition to the vision statements, Cardno also helped the Town prepare five (5) strategic goals to help focus their revitalization efforts towards the overall vision of the Town and Downtown. These goals serve as a guides and parameters in which the Town can measure its success, as it continue to grow and develop, ensuring that the efforts fit with the overall goals for the Town's continued success.

After proposing and drafting the two vision statements and strategic goals, the Town, along with the help of the Downtown Development Board (DDB), approved them and implemented them into their framework moving forward. The following pages show both the Downtown Vision and the Town-wide Vision, as well as the Strategic Goals.

DOWNTOWN VISION

The Town of Spring Hope desires a Downtown that is appealing in its appearance, architecturally significant, business friendly, walkable, safe, and welcoming to residents and visitors of all ages. A thriving center for unique retail, dining, and entertainment attractions.

Honoring the Past... Building the Future

TOWN-WIDE VISION

Spring Hope's small town atmosphere and a strong sense of community will continue into the future. It will be a place people enjoy a comfortable life style with safe and attractive neighborhoods, streets, and community facilities. Growth will be orderly and provide the entire community with physical and social benefits.

Strategic Goals

STRATEGIC GOAL #1: Leverage Spring Hope's architectural significance and place in American History

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: Brand Downtown Spring Hope as regional center for antiques and related products and services

STRATEGIC GOAL #3: Establish the downtown as a local destination for retail, dining, and entertainment that are uniquely Spring Hope

STRATEGIC GOAL #4: Attract local businesses and entrepreneurs to locate and grow downtown employment

STRATEGIC GOAL #5: Establish an efficient sustainable framework for advocating Spring Hope's planned initiatives for the revitalization of its downtown

Possible Revitalization Initiatives and Tactics

As of their December 17, 2019 meeting of the Downtown Development Board (DDB), members discussed a range of tactical actions to advance the betterment and revitalization of Downtown Spring Hope. The following is a summary of the different ideas and tactical actions identified.

All DDB members (those present or absent) were requested to review the summary actions listed below and rank and order their Top 5 recommendations or priorities. For example, it was agreed at our previous community and DDB meetings that managing blight in the downtown and beyond is “the” top priority, so the follow-up question was what should be the **next 5** priorities which will provide a starting point for the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan in February of 2020, led by the DDB.

Tactical Action Opportunities and Priorities:

Top Priority: Blight Management

- Strengthen Nuisance standards
- Strengthen Minimum Housing Standards
- Contract Part Time Code Enforcement Officer
- Publicize progress and results accomplished, widely throughout the Town and/or County

Strengthen Chamber and Business Community Relationship with greater focus on recruiting and sustaining new and existing businesses

- More Special Events (e.g., the Pumpkin Festival and Christmas in Spring Hope)
- Host up to 4 Business After-Hours events each calendar year to foster greater business to business understanding and opportunities
- Institute Recognition or Awards Programs for businesses leading by example
- Restart Business Education Programs
- Host a Jobs Expo and Business Forum
- Host an “All In” Spring Hope Expo (i.e., all businesses, employers, churches, civic and town representatives, county agencies, etc.) with the purpose of promoting civic understanding, participations, and actions supporting the revitalization of the Town
- Ensure a sustained focus on initial and any other future Catalyst Sites

Strengthen Town and Chamber/Business Community Relationship

- Target and Incentivize Businesses for Recruitment (e.g., neighborhood scale grocer, hardware store, laundry)
- Investigate Grant Opportunities with County and State to help finance new business start-ups or to assist existing businesses with upgrades or expansions (e.g., Susan Phelps with Nash County)

- Town to investigate Tax Rebates for new and expanding businesses, facade or other grants to local businesses
- Partner with Chamber to co-fund, on an annual basis, a no or low interest revolving loan fund for local business investments (e.g., new equipment or remodel and entrance or interior, etc.)

Engage Community Influences (In and near Spring Hope): leading employers, school districts, churches, bankers, developers, realtors, and others to contribute their time, talent, and people to the betterment of Spring Hope

- Expand Chamber’s membership to incorporate more churches, individuals/neighborhoods, educators, any and all who want to make Spring Hope a place they want to live/work and just be
- Draw on larger local businesses and industries to “invest” in Spring Hope as a means to growing the local labor base and future development: community service days, job fairs, workforce training, meaningful charitable contributions to the Chamber and to special community events
- Open up a dialogue with local and Grater Raleigh area residential developers on why Spring Hope and how Spring Hope will work to encourage new and quality development to happen.

Leverage the Power of Residents through volunteer programs supporting town events, neighbor to neighbor initiatives, mentoring programs, participation on Town and Chamber boards and at public meetings, church community and outreach programs, and the like... *All in Spring Hope*

DDB Recommendations

While the order of priority rankings among the DDB members varied slightly, the focus areas were significantly consistent. The consensus opinion was that the Town of Spring Hope should take more of a leadership position in community and business engagement by:

- Hosting more special events including a town-wide Spring Hope Expo;
- Assisting existing and recruiting new business;
- Leveraging the power of residents and business owners, including Spring Hope’s faith based community; and
- Strengthening code enforcement activities.

Another important consideration noted was the suggestion that the Town take the lead on event planning and coordination freeing up the Chamber to focus more on furthering critical business development and recruitment activities. Finally, it was suggested that the Town would do well to improve its own public appearance with respect to cleaning streets, not allowing grass to grow over the curbs, removing weeds in sidewalks, keeping storm drains clean, regular and reliable trash and brush removal, pothole management, repair or replacement of broken signage, and maintaining cemeteries and other public areas with landscaping directly owned by the Town.

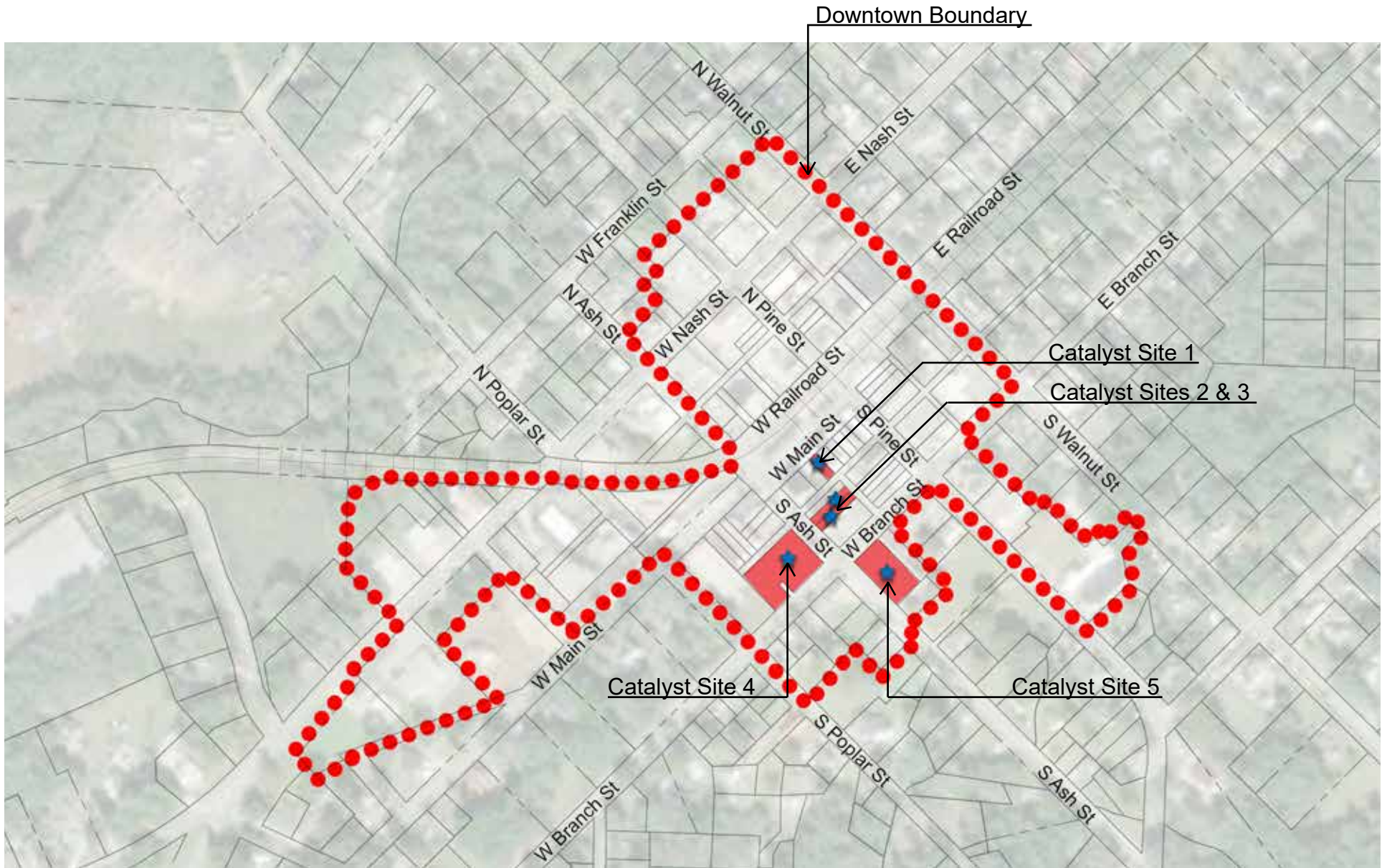
Catalyst Sites

Cardno, working with Spring Hope's Downtown Development Board, identified five (5) catalyst sites which are believed to represent the types of properties and locations that when redeveloped, have the potential to fuel other redevelopment projects and investments in the Downtown area. All five sites are considered brownfield sites due to perceived potential environmental issues either due to their past use or their age (potential asbestos or lead-based paint in building materials). These five sites are offered as examples of the types of properties that can help to drive others to follow suit, but are not the only ones that serve as catalyst sites. Other sites worthy of consideration include the following:

- Little River Gas
- The Alford Building
- The Edwards' Building at the corner of Ash and Main
- The RO Mullen Buildings

The following pages show the location of the five catalyst sites identified and goes into deeper discussion as to why they were chosen and recommendations Cardno has offered for improving their appearance and potential use.

Catalyst Sites Map



Catalyst Site 1



Former Bank Building

Address: 117 W Main Street

This building is located right on Main Street in the heart of downtown, on a block with other historic storefronts that support current businesses, many of which are locally owned and operated. The diligent care and upkeep on the facade of the building, built in 1910, makes it a primary architecturally significant landmark to not only the other storefronts, but the Historic District of the Downtown and Town itself.

Currently, the entire space is vacant and while there is clearly some space above, it is unclear at this time what condition that space is in. However, it is believed that this is more than just storage and could potentially be an opportunity to add residential units of some capacity above, which would support people living in the downtown. This could be small apartments, condos, or other dwelling units. It may also be a prime candidate for a small bed and breakfast, which would also bring in tourists right into the heart of downtown.

As for the first floor, this is recommended to still remain a commercial use and it is envisioned to be another locally owned and operated business that residents and destination consumers could support. Some uses that Cardno envisioned would be professional office space or a small eatery/bistro or coffee shop.

Due to the age of the building, Cardno recommends an Asbestos-Containing Materials (ACM) and Lead-Based Paint (LBP) inspection be completed prior to redevelopment.

Catalyst Sites 2 & 3

Addresses: 119 & 121 S Ash Street

Both of these buildings are Town-owned, and the Consignment Shop at 119 is currently renting the commercial space from the Town. These locations present an opportunity where the Town could sell the properties to the local business owners.

Overall, the facades are generally good shape. However, minor improvements may help attract local businesses and add to the streetscape character along S Ash Street to create more interest for people visiting the Downtown. Improvements to the white building may include adding an awning, similar to its neighbors and small architectural improvements, such as adding reliefs in the area above the shop for signs and/or architectural details to highlight the history of the building dating to 1910. Architectural details could also be above the red striped awning of the tan brick building, since it too was built in 1910.

Streetscape improvements would add to the character of the building and enhance the pedestrian experience. These could be small improvements, such as creating planter boxes just below the windows or adding some small planter/vases (as the Consignment shop has already done). By also removing the step up into the white building, the shop becomes accessible for everyone off the street, an improvement that will need to be done to meet ADA standards no matter who occupies the property.

Due to the age of the buildings, Cardno recommends ACM and LBP inspections completed prior to redevelopment.



Catalyst Site 4

Former Hardware Store Address: 120 S Ash Street



Across from the previous catalyst sites, this former hardware store can become a site to add character and interest to the downtown. Built in 1921, its facade and architectural details make it unique to the downtown and should be preserved. Minor improvements can be made in places where paint has cracked or peeled off, and there are bricks that need to be replaced or washed, especially on the sides of the building. Cardno also suggest that its sides be re-painted to incorporate local artist murals, similar to the side of the Active Fitness Building on W Main Street. This would add more arts/cultural interest to the character of the downtown and make the pedestrian experience more vibrant.

Some potential uses for the building include more local businesses, such as a furniture store, new or used; but, it also could support more unique entertainment/cultural options because of its large storefront and interior space. One such option could be a design market, where local artists, carpenters, and creators could sell their wares in an open floor market setting. Another option could be to turn the space into studios for local artists, writers, and/or creators that maybe could also support a small gallery that could be open for the public to enjoy. The third option could also turn this space into small live performance venue, ranging from small live bands or small local theater productions, if desired.

Due to the age and the past uses of the building, Cardno recommends a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) and an ACM and LBP inspection be completed prior to redevelopment.



Catalyst Site 5

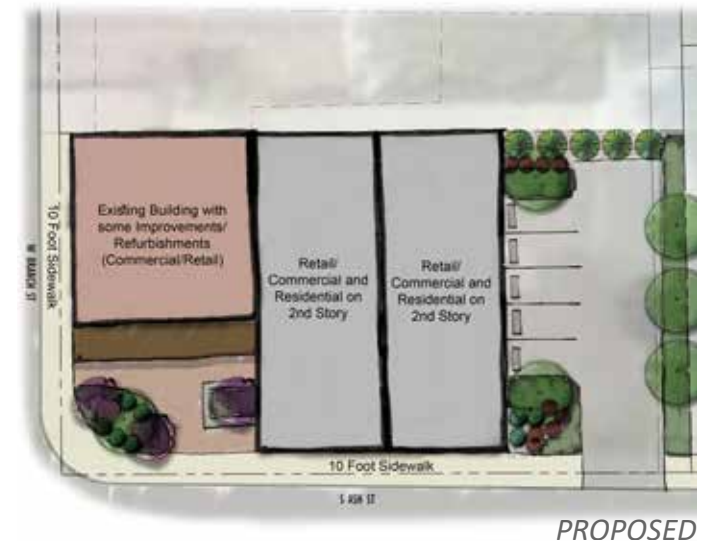
Address: Corner of E Branch Street & S Ash Street

This catalyst site sits diagonally across Branch Street from the former hardware store and further south on Ash Street from Catalyst Sites 2 & 3. Currently, the site is vacant, but it has storage sheds/structures residing on it from its previous uses. Located on the very edge of the downtown boundary the site also serves as a key transition between the downtown district and the rest of the town, including the surrounding residential. This is important because it can act as a bridge to bring the resident population further into the downtown and also has the potential of bringing new residents in that can further strengthen that transition. This area of Town should be re-evaluated for a designation as a General Business Zone or District, as it is current considered part of the Central Business.

Alternatively, this could be a great site to develop some slightly higher density residential, such as townhomes to add more residents without overpowering the character of the downtown. It would also create more pedestrian traffic throughout the downtown, increase the local consumer base, and help maintain the local-businesses.

A third option for this site could also be the creation of flexible event space. Depending on their condition, one or more of the shed structures could be kept and remodeled into perhaps another small food/bar spot or local venue. Other parts of the parcel could then become event space for a local farmer's market or outdoor art/crafts fair venue during different parts of the year.

Due to past use of the site, Cardno recommends a Phase I ESA be completed prior to redevelopment.



Implementation Framework

All successful revitalization programs require plans that fit their communities; resources to act on their planned actions; and most importantly, focused and sustained leadership. In the case of Spring Hope, we recommend the Downtown Development Board (DDB) be the designated lead for reviewing, prioritizing, and incorporating essential tactical action items. Further, we recommended that the DDB assign scheduled actions to applicable work groups for implementation. We suggest two work groups be established for advancing the five (5) strategies set forth in this report:

Community Engagement Work Group

STRATEGIC GOAL #1: Leverage Spring Hope's architectural significance and place in American History

STRATEGIC GOAL #5: Establish an efficient sustainable framework for advocating Spring Hope's planned initiatives for the revitalization of its downtown

Business Development Work Group

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: Brand Downtown Spring Hope as regional center for antiques and related products and services

STRATEGIC GOAL #3: Establish the downtown as a local destination for retail, dining, and entertainment that are uniquely Spring Hope

STRATEGIC GOAL #4: Attract local businesses and entrepreneurs to locate and grow downtown employment

The DDB will decide which tactical actions best support these stated strategies, as assigned, and their timing. For now, we suggest these two groups pull from the tactical actions that the DDB members generated on December 17, 2019, and which are listed in this report. We anticipate other tactical actions will follow with time, successes achieved, and lessons learned. The DDB working groups are anticipated to include both residents and business owners, and the DDB may decide to add an additional working groups with time.

We suggest that Spring Hope's Town Manager take the lead on advancing the planned code enforcement and catalyst sites initiatives, with the full endorsement and support of the DDB, the Mayor, and the Board of Commissioners. The key point here is that while all of the tactical actions require teamwork par excellence, it is especially true for these two... ***"Spring Hope All In"***.

Attachment A

Minimum Housing Standard

Attachment B

Nuisance Ordinance

ATTACHMENT B

Chapter 10 - ENVIRONMENT

Commented [TCM1]: As the entire public nuisance ordinance is new, I did not redline it to make it more readable.

ARTICLE I. - IN GENERAL

Sec. 10-1. - Human waste.

No person shall urinate or deposit any human waste of any kind on any street, lot or premises except in restroom facilities.

(Prior Code, ch. VII, § 4)

Sec. 10-2. - Penalties.

- (a) Any violation of section 10-1 shall not constitute a misdemeanor or infraction as provided in G.S. 14-4, but instead shall subject the offender to a civil penalty in the amount of \$100.00. Violators shall be issued a written citation which must be paid within three days of issuance.
- (b) Each day's continuing violation shall be a separate and distinct offense.
- (c) Notwithstanding subsection (a) of this section a violation may be enforced through equitable remedies issued by a court of competent jurisdiction.
- (d) The town manager, or his designee, is hereby authorized to file suit on behalf of the town to collect any unpaid civil penalties.
- (e) Any person assessed a civil penalty may appeal by filing a written notice of appeal with the town clerk within 30 days of issuance of the citation. Failure to file a notice of appeal within this time period shall constitute a waiver of the right to contest the civil penalty.
- (f) Appeals shall be heard by a hearing officer through a quasi-judicial process. A hearing officer's decision on a civil penalty appeal is subject to further review in the superior court of the county by proceedings in the nature of certiorari. Any petition for a writ of certiorari shall be filed with the clerk of superior court within 30 days after the date that the hearing officer's written decision is issued.

(Ord. of 11-13-2006(01))

Secs. 10-3 - 10-22. - Reserved.

ARTICLE II. - ADMINISTRATION

Sec. 10-23. - Unlawful to hinder health officer.

It shall be unlawful for any person to hinder, obstruct or delay any designated health officer of the town, county, or state in the lawful discharge of his duties. The health officer of the town is the town manager.

(Prior Code, ch. VII, § 1)

Sec. 10-24. - Right to enter.

The health officer or any of his assistants shall have the right to enter at any reasonable time any premises for the purpose of making the inspections or investigations as required by this chapter.

(Prior Code, ch. VII, § 2)

Secs. 10-25 - 10-51. - Reserved.

ARTICLE III. - PRIVATE PROPERTY

Sec. 10-52. - Property kept clean.

- (a) Premises required to be kept clean. Every person owning or occupying any premises in the corporate limits shall keep the premises free from noxious weed, trash, and all other forms of animal or vegetable refuse which may be dangerous or prejudicial to the public health, or which may constitute a public nuisance. No owner or occupant of any premises shall bury therein any animal or vegetable matter which, upon decaying, may become dangerous or prejudicial to the public health, or may constitute a nuisance.

- (b) ~~Weeds; time for cutting. Every owner or person in possession of a vacant lot within the corporate limits shall cut down, within four inches of the ground, all weeds, grass or other noxious growth from said lot as needed. If said weeds or other noxious growth are not cut in compliance with this article, the town manager or the town manager's designee shall proceed to have said weeds or other noxious growth cut pursuant to the terms of subsection (c) of this section.~~
- (c) ~~Penalties and remedies. If any person shall violate the provision of either subsections (a) or (b) of this section, it shall be the duty of the town manager or another designated agent to give notice to the owner and person in possession of such premises that within seven days from the date of such notice, any material in violation of either subsections (a) or (b) of this section shall be removed. If the owner and/or the person in possession of such premises do not remove the said materials within seven days from the date of the notice, the town manager may:~~
- ~~(1) Proceed to hire a qualified third party to cut and/or remove the material in violation of this section.~~
 - ~~(2) Charge the owner and person in possession of the premises, jointly and severally, \$250.00 plus any and all costs incurred by the town pursuant to subparagraph (1) of this subsection.~~
 - ~~(3) Utilize any of the appropriate provisions of section 1-18.~~
 - ~~(4) If a private qualified third party is hired to cut and/or remove the material, the material must be carried away and properly disposed of by the contractor and not left for the solid waste collector to dispose of.~~

~~(Prior Code, ch. VII, § 3; Res. of 9-8-2008(01); Res. of 8-6-2012, § 2)~~

~~Sec. 10-53. — Stagnant water.~~

~~No landowner or occupant of any property shall allow stagnant water to accumulate or remain in cellars or anywhere on their property.~~

~~(Prior Code, ch. VII, § 5)~~

~~Sec. 10-54. — Debris from demolition or new construction.~~

~~All refuse, lumber, and debris remaining both as a result of the demolition/repair of any building or of the erection and completion of any new buildings shall be removed by the property owner within ten days from the completion of the aforesaid work. The landowner shall have a dumpster in place and is responsible for having the dumpster emptied and removed from the property at the completion of the demolition or new construction.~~

~~(Prior Code, ch. VII, § 7)~~

~~Sec. 10-55. — Outside storage.~~

~~No outside storage of any household items, tools, equipment, machinery or other such articles shall be allowed in any open air area on any residential property where such open air area is in public view from a public street.~~

~~(Prior Code, ch. X, art. A, § 14)~~

~~Secs. 10-56—10-83. — Reserved.~~

ARTICLE I. - PUBLIC NUISANCES

Sec. 10-1. — Enforcement and jurisdiction.

- (a) The Town Manager or his or her designee (collectively the "Town Manager") is charged with the duty of full enforcement of this article and shall have the full power and authority imposed by this article and is hereby authorized and directed to proceed to carry out its provisions.
- (b) As provided in G.S. 160A-193, the town has the authority to summarily remove, abate, or remedy any public nuisance in the town limits, or within one mile thereof.

Commented [TCM2]: I wasn't sure which department would do the enforcement. This allows essentially anyone on the Town staff to serve as the code enforcement officer.

Also, we could replace "Public Works Director" with "Town Manager."

Commented [TCM3]: The one-mile outside of the Town limits is set by statute and is not the same as the ETJ limits.

Sec. 10-2. – Definitions.

The following words, terms and phrases, and their derivatives when used in this article have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning.

Building materials means solid waste resulting solely from construction, remodeling, repair, or demolition operations on pavement, buildings, or other structures, but does not include inert debris, land-clearing debris or yard debris. See, G.S. 130A-290(a)(4).

Building rubbish means rubbish from construction, remodeling, and repair operations on houses, commercial buildings, and other structures, including but not limited to stones, brick, plaster, lumber, concrete, and waste parts occasioned by installations and replacements.

Combustible refuse means refuse, capable of incineration or burning, such as garbage, paper, rags, boxes and wood.

Firewood means parts of trees cut into logs suitable for use in fireplaces or for use in wood-burning heaters which are not rotten or decayed.

Garbage solid waste means all putrescible wastes, including animal and vegetable matter, resulting directly from the handling, preparation, cooking or consumption of food by humans, including food wrappers and containers, and minimum amounts of liquid necessarily incident thereto but excluding sewage and human waste. Also referred to herein as "garbage." See, Code of Ordinances section 16-1.

Harmful insects means mosquitoes, ticks, fleas and flies and other arthropods which can be living transporters and transmitters of a causative agent of a disease.

Heavily wooded lot means a lot so densely covered with trees and undergrowth that equipment cannot maneuver.

Junk means any furniture, appliances, machinery, equipment, building fixture, automotive parts, tires, or other similar items which is either in a wholly or partially rusted, wrecked, dismantled, or inoperative condition.

Litter means any discarded manmade materials, including, but not limited to, *garbage*, *rubbish*, trash, refuse, can, bottle, box, container, wrapper, paper, paper product, tire, appliance, mechanical equipment or part, building or construction material, tool, machinery, wood, or motor vehicle part, solid waste materials, industrial materials and hazardous waste, or discarded material in any form resulting from domestic, industrial, commercial, medical or agricultural operations.

Noxious vegetation means plants that cause dermatitis through direct or indirect contact or plants that cause internal poisoning if eaten or ingested including but not limited to poison sumac, poison ivy or poison oak.

Nuisance means any condition that is dangerous or prejudicial to the public health or public safety.

Open place means a yard area, a vacant lot; a deck, landing, patio, porch or carport not totally enclosed by a roof, walls, screens or glass windows; or the parkway between the sidewalk and the street curb or pavement edge. The term does not include land zoned for agriculture.

Ornamental grasses means true grasses, including but not limited to, (Gramineae) including close relatives such as sedges (Cyperaceae), rushes (Juncaceae), hardy bamboos (particularly the genus *Phyllostachys*), and others.

Pest means any destructive or troublesome insect or small animal.

Rubbish means refuse (exclusive of garbage and ashes) including but not limited to paper, rags, cartons, boxes, wood, excelsior, tires, rubber, leather, tin cans, metals, mineral matter, glass, crockery and dust, except for dust incidental to excavated earth.

Stream means a natural or a modified natural water course with intermittent or perennial flow as evidenced by topographic alterations within the immediate watershed with the typical biological, hydrological, and physical characteristics commonly associated with the continuous conveyance of water.

Weed means any undesired, uncultivated plant.

White goods means residential appliances **not** limited to washing machines, clothes dryers, stoves, ranges, ovens, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, and water heaters.

Yard solid waste means grass clippings, leaves, tree trimmings, shrubbery trimmings and other small quantities of rubbish normally coming from an occupied premises. Also referred to herein as "yard waste." See, Code of Ordinances section 16-1.

Xeriscaping means landscaping in a style which requires little or no irrigation and often incorporates native plants.

Sec. 10-3. – Nuisances prohibited and enumeration.

Any of the following enumerated and described conditions occurring in an open place is hereby found, deemed and declared to constitute a detriment, danger and hazard to the health, safety, **morals**, and general welfare of the inhabitants of the town and is found, deemed and declared to be public nuisances wherever the same may exist and the creation, maintenance, or failure to abate any nuisances is hereby declared unlawful. The natural conditions on lands dedicated to and accepted by the town as natural stream corridors, floodplain or open space, which dedications were established in order to preserve natural greenways, vegetative stream buffers, or natural connecting networks along floodways, streams and creeks, are deemed and declared as exceptions for the purpose of enforcement of this section.

- (a) Any condition which creates or provides a breeding ground or harbor for rodents, harmful insects, or other pests.
- (b) A place of dense growth of weeds, shrubs, or other similar vegetation, excluding ornamental grasses, over twelve (12) inches in height. This limitation shall not prohibit xeriscaping, which is specifically allowed by this ordinance.
- (c) A concentrated growth of vines, including but not limited to honeysuckle; kudzu; poison sumac (*rhus vernix*); poison ivy (*rhus radicans*); poison oak (*rhus toxicodendron*); or other noxious vegetation that is:
 - (1) Encroaching upon any adjoining property with a dwelling or a commercial building; or
 - (2) Encroaching upon the sidewalk, or the curb or edge of the pavement of any abutting street; or
 - (3) A focal point for any other nuisance enumerated in this code.
- (d) A collection or ponding of stagnant water with conditions causing, or likely to cause, mosquitoes or other harmful insects to breed.
- (e) Any concentration of combustible refuse.
- (f) Any concentration of building materials or building rubbish which are not suitable for building construction, alteration or repair, or any concentration of building materials which becomes a focal point for any other nuisance enumerated in this article.
- (g) Any concentration of collection of garbage, animal waste, yard waste or any rotten or putrescible matter of any kind which is not maintained for collection in accordance with Code of Ordinances Chapter 16, "Solid Waste"; however, nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the generally accepted use of a properly maintained compost pile sited in the side or rear yard area being

Commented [TCM4]: The range for overgrown weeds varies. I have seen as little as 6 inches and as much as 24 inches.

used for fertilizer for lawns and gardens and for other agricultural or horticultural purposes, unless the compost pile becomes a focal point for any other nuisance enumerated in this article.

- (h) Household or office furniture, any household fixtures, white goods or other appliances, metal products of any kind and similar items not designed to withstand the elements or for outdoor use. This subsection shall not prevent:
 - (1) The use of household furniture on a totally enclosed porch having a roof, walls, screens, or glass windows; or
 - (2) The use of furniture in good condition which is designed for outdoor use such as patio or lawn furniture, on porches or landings or in yard areas or other open places.
- (i) Any junk or any concentration of litter.
- (j) Flooding caused by improper or inadequate drainage from private property which interferes with the use of, or endangers in any way the streets, sidewalks, parks or other town owned property of any kind.
- (k) Any condition including, but not limited to stumps, brush, junk, litter or other materials within or along the banks of such stream or drainage, which blocks or obstructs the natural flow of a stream, creek, or defined ditches or drains to the extent that impounded water is outside the banks of such stream or drainage.
- (l) Any collection of stagnant water for which no adequate drainage is provided and which is, or is likely to become, a nuisance.
- (m) Nuisance vehicle violation as defined by Code of Ordinances Chapter 20, Article 3, "Junked, wrecked, and abandoned vehicles." The process for abating the nuisance vehicle shall be as provided for Code of Ordinances Chapter 20, Article 3.
- (n) A concentration of firewood or logs when such concentration is a focal point for any other nuisance in this article.
- (o) Any tree or tree limb or any concentration of branches which have fallen due to an act of nature or have been cut, except in a heavily wooded lot or other natural area unless such tree or tree limb or concentration of branches becomes a focal point for any other nuisance in this article.
- (p) Any other condition specifically declared to be a danger to the public health, safety, ~~morals~~, and general welfare of inhabitants of the town and a public nuisance by the board of commissioners in accordance with G.S. 160A-193. After holding a public hearing on the matter, the board of commissioners may declare any other condition not listed in this article to be a public nuisance upon a finding that the condition is dangerous or prejudicial to the public health or public safety. The owner, occupant, and any other person having a legal interest in the property upon which the condition is located shall be given notice of the public hearing in the same manner as for alleged minimum housing violations in accordance with Code of Ordinances section 6-84 and 6-88. The notice will describe the condition and its location; that the board of commissioners will be requested on a day certain, after a public hearing, to declare that the conditions existing constitute a danger to the public health or public safety of the inhabitants of the town and a public nuisance; and that after such declaration the condition shall be abated as provided for in this article.

Sec. 10-4. – Nuisance abatement procedures; civil penalties.

When any public nuisance is found to exist on any property, the following procedures shall be used:

- (a) When the **Town Manager** has a reasonable basis to believe a public nuisance exists on a property, he or she shall conduct an inspection of the property. If entry upon the premises for purposes of investigation is necessary, such entry shall be made pursuant to a duly issued administrative search warrant in accordance with G.S. 15-27.2 or with permission of the owner, the owner's agent, a tenant, or other person legally in possession of the premises.

- (b) The **Town Manager** shall notify in writing the occupant and owner of the premises where the nuisance is located that:
- (1) The conditions identified in the notice of violation exist which constitute a public nuisance;
 - (2) The Code provision(s) identified by Code section number that have been violated by the stated conditions on the property;
 - (3) The town may assess civil penalties; and
 - (4) Unless the public nuisance is abated within ten (10) calendar days from the mailing of the notice, the town may initiate the procedures to abate the conditions constituting a nuisance;
- (c) The occupant and owner of the premises shall be given notice in the same manner as for alleged minimum housing violations in accordance with Code of Ordinances section 6-84 and 6-88.
- (d) The cost of abatement, including an administrative fee of one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00), also including the cost, if any to reseed areas which were formerly a nuisance, shall constitute a lien against the premises as provided in G.S. 160A-193.
- (e) The town, to the extent required by law, shall make application for and obtain any permit or other approval required prior to undertaking the activities to abate the nuisance.
- (f) In lieu of or in addition to abatement, the ~~Public Works Director~~ may levy civil penalties for public nuisances in the same manner as for zoning violations and in accordance with Code of Ordinances section 26-357, except that appeals of a civil penalty levy shall be to the board of commissioners as set forth in subsection (g) below and not to the board of adjustment.
- (g) The **Town Manager** is hereby given full power and authority to enter upon the premises involved for the purpose of posting the property as a public nuisance and of abating the nuisance found to exist as herein set out. Within the ten-day period mentioned in subsection (b) above, the owner of the property where the nuisance exists may appeal the **Town Manager's** findings and/or the levy of civil penalties to the board of commissioners by giving a written notice of appeal to the **Town Manager** or the Town Clerk. In the event no appeal is taken, the **Town Manager** may proceed to abate the nuisance.
- (h) If an appeal is timely filed, the board of commissioners shall hold a public hearing on the matter as soon as reasonably possible, and in any event at its next regularly scheduled board meeting. The owner, occupant, and any other person having a legal interest in the property upon which the condition is located shall be given notice of the public hearing in the same manner as for alleged minimum housing violations in accordance with Code of Ordinances section 6-84 and 6-88. After the public hearing, the board of commissioners may affirm, reverse, or modify the **Town Manager's** findings and order.

T.W.

Commented [TCM5]: This refers to the civil penalties section of the Zoning Ordinance. It would be better to make it clear elsewhere that other provisions of the Code of Ordinances can be enforced through the levy of civil penalties as well. Right now, there is no ordinance that specifically does this.

Also, Sec. 26-357 needs to be updated to reflect that the period to appeal to the board of adjustment is now 30 days per G.S. 160A-388.

[The remaining articles are renumbered accordingly.]