



Creative Solutions FOR Thriving Communities

CENTRALINA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

REGIONAL CONFERENCE

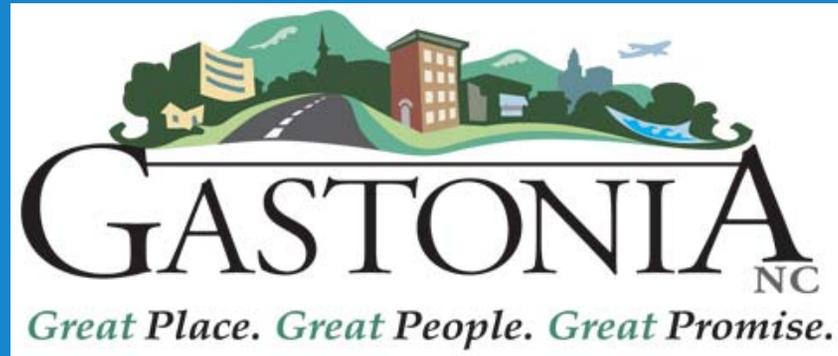
Making a Great Place

Downtown Gastonia

Progress Through Partnerships



GROWING Jobs and Our Economy | CONTROLLING Cost of Government | IMPROVING Quality of Life



- Population 73,000
- Part of Charlotte MSA – pop. 2.4 million
- Located 20 miles west of Uptown Charlotte
- Roughly 46 square miles in area
- 2010 All-America City
- 2010 City Livability Award – US Conference of Mayors
- 2011 Marvin Collins Outstanding Planning Award for Sustainable Community Planning
- 2012 Great Place in the Making Award

Celebrating Great Main Streets in 2012

2012

GREAT MAIN STREETS

ASHEVILLE



LEXINGTON AVENUE

MOUNT AIRY



MAIN STREET

HILLSBOROUGH



CHURTON STREET



**CELEBRATING
GREAT PLACES IN
NORTH CAROLINA**



GASTONIA



MAIN AVENUE

CHARLOTTE



TRYON STREET

SOUTHPORT



HOWE & MOORE STREETS

EDENTON



BROAD STREET

The North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association celebrates excellence in planning.

Where Were We?

- Established a grant program providing upfit assistance and rent subsidy for startup businesses.
- City began offering basic design assistance free of charge following adoption of new design standards for downtown.
- Adoption of the Downtown Streetscape & Public Realm Plan, 2025 Comp Plan and UDO, all within previous 3 years.
- Had just completed a resurfacing and intersection/streetscape enhancement project on downtown streets.

Gastonia Conference Center is a state-of-the-art 30,000 sq ft meeting and events facility located on Marietta Street in the heart of downtown Gastonia.



**Lunchtime activity surrounding the kinetic tree sculpture “Ghillie Dhu’s Enchantment”
in the Center City Park along Main Avenue.**





Historic Craig & Wilson Carriage Company building restored for condos & retail and adjacent streetscape enhancements (crosswalks, planters, street trees, etc.) along Main Avenue and Marietta Street.

**The Historic Armstrong Apartments are being renovated into
18 market rate dwelling units.**

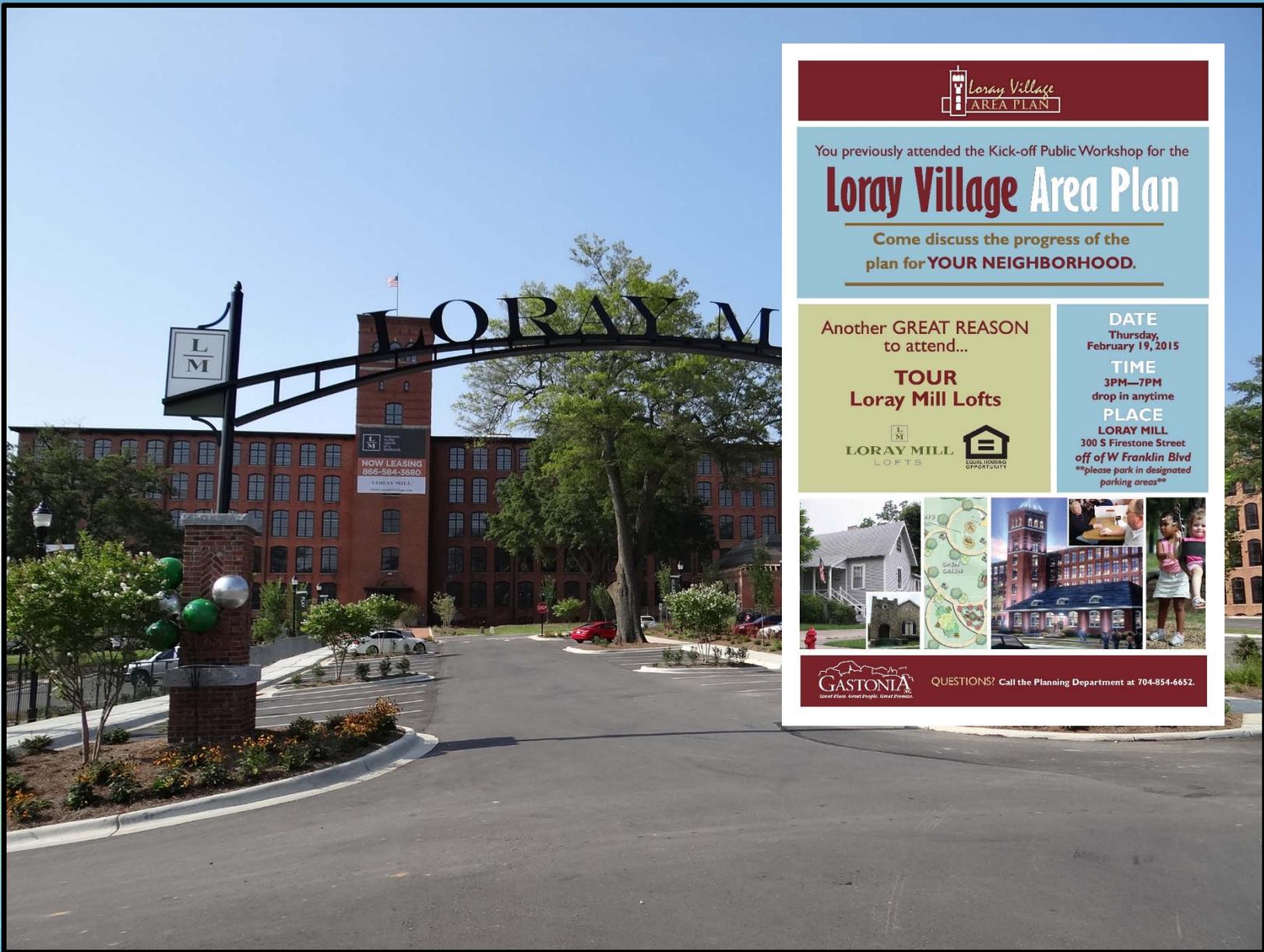




The Historic Highland Memorial Hospital is being renovated into 75 senior housing units.

What Has Happened Since?

- Continued efforts in the core of downtown but expanded efforts in neighborhoods surrounding the downtown.
- Continued and expanded IDEAL Grant Program providing upfit assistance, rent subsidy and façade funding.
- Downtown Merchants Association has formed and coordination between this group and the City has improved.
- Local Rotary has taken over coordination of concerts and events with funding provided by the City and support from merchants association.



You previously attended the Kick-off Public Workshop for the

Loray Village Area Plan

Come discuss the progress of the plan for **YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD.**

Another GREAT REASON to attend...

TOUR
Loray Mill Lofts



DATE
Thursday,
February 19, 2015

TIME
3PM—7PM
drop in anytime

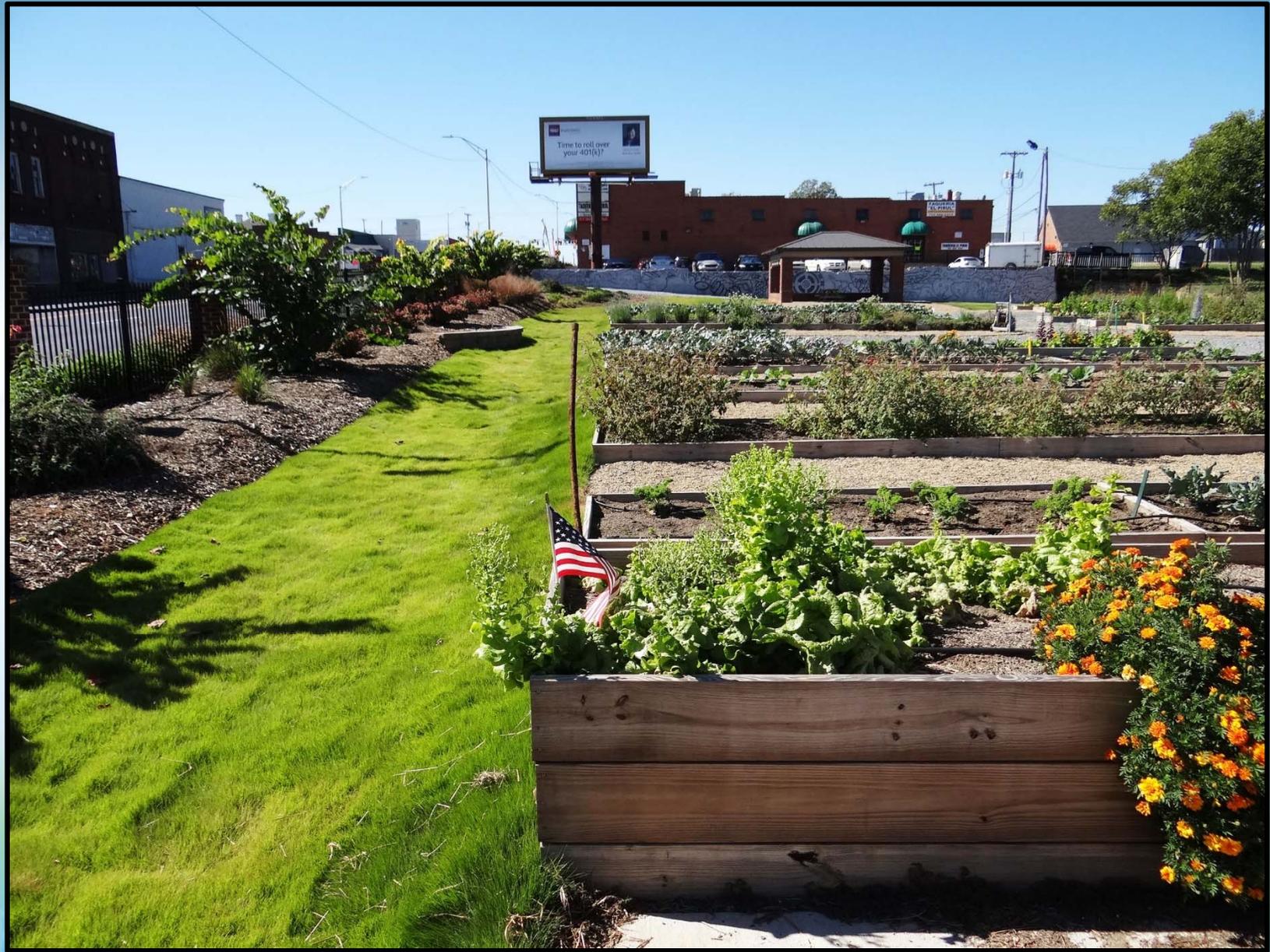
PLACE
LORAY MILL
300 S Firestone Street
off of W Franklin Blvd
please park in designated parking areas



QUESTIONS? Call the Planning Department at 704-854-6652.









NEESE LAW FIRM
Existing



City has continued to provide basic design assistance to property owners and businesses interested in façade restoration and other improvements.



National register building on Main Avenue being converted to boutique hotel. City and County to rebate tax and utility increases as a result of the project back to the developer.

What's Upcoming?

- Working with NCDOT to set the stage for streetscape/corridor improvements on Franklin Boulevard.
- City is considering an additional investment incentive program to recruit larger-scale office and retail to downtown.
- A pilot effort for downtown wayfinding has been launched and will continue to evolve and expand.
- MORE ART!

Artspace – Community Foundation of Gaston County - City – Banc of America CDC



Artspace is developing 40 live/work units/gallery space in the heart of downtown. City assisted with efforts from the beginning and agreed to sell municipal property across from City Hall for this \$7.5 million project.

Vacant site of former service station in Downtown will be an urban pocket park with public art. City is remediating old fuel tanks on this City-owned property and Keep Gastonia Beautiful is providing \$20,000 for art.



City bond funds
+
CMAQ funds

SECOND AVENUE: Marietta Street to Broad Street

EXISTING

ENHANCED

Second Avenue & Marietta Street intersection looking east

DOWNTOWN LINBERGER CONNECTOR PROJECT

PLANNING DIVISION



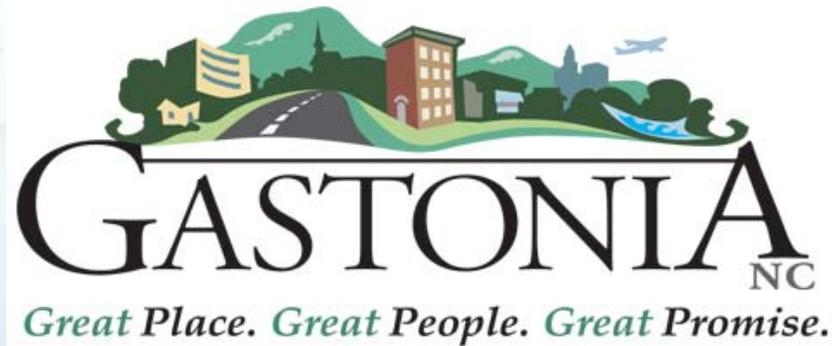
Private, NGO, Government Coordination

- Arts community has become a leader
 - *Provides creative energy and spending power.*
- Partnerships leverage resources
 - *Multiple projects would not have been possible without cooperation.*
- Businesses and other groups assuming programmatic roles
 - *Retailers and restaurants coordinating concerts and events.*
- City continuing active role in recruitment
 - *Successes are building momentum.*

Lessons Learned

- Incentive programs beneficial
 - *But not every grant will fund a long term success*
- Short-term compromise can achieve long-term goals
 - *Working with NCDOT in incremental changes is paying off*
- Success will produce other challenges
 - *Housing and noise, historic preservation concerns, parking*
- Big projects and small projects are both important
 - *Home runs are great, but singles and doubles are good too*

Making a Great Place!



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