

#9 CITY COUNTY PARTNERSHIPS FOR REVITALIZATION

There are many advantages for a closer working relationship between the City and County regarding a number of different housing related issues, from overall population growth to revitalization, economic development, and taxes. More specifically, if revitalization of the City's western neighborhoods is to be successful, then efforts must take into account the distressed neighborhoods outside of the City, within the County's jurisdiction.

(1) Coordinated Redevelopment and Revitalization

The concentration of distressed housing and low income households in the neighborhoods adjacent to the former Textile Crescent (see right) represents a major opportunity to target new investment. However, the area is split between areas of the City and areas within the County, each of which has its own mandates, policies and funding sources to be used within specific areas. If the City is to truly revitalize its western neighborhoods, it must work with the County in a joint redevelopment effort.

(2) Tax Based Incentives

As the regional taxing body, it behooves the City to coordinate with the County on any redevelopment tools and incentives that require the use of taxes. This includes Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts, Tax Abatement, and Tax Relief for households on fixed income.

(3) Neighborhood Scale Economic Development

Although the "heyday" of the Textile Crescent as an economic engine is past, this does not mean that the area cannot become a new hub of employment. Exploring opportunities to utilize former mill properties and various other industrial and commercial properties for light industry and other small-scale businesses could result in an enormous impact for the residents who live nearby - County and the City - who might otherwise not have the labor skills to match other economic growth areas within the region.

(4) Leverage of Not for Profit Sector

Both the City and County leverage investment dollars through not-for-profit organizations that invest in areas like affordable housing. The concentration of these organizations within the Textile Crescent and adjacent neighborhoods is a powerful asset that can become even more potent given coordinated policies, investment and planning by the City and the County.

TAX BASED INCENTIVES

Tax Abatement allows developers or buyers of homes in targeted areas to "abate" or delay payment of their property taxes, typically between and 5-10 year period. This can be an important way to make a purchase and/or investment more attractive in a distressed area.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) allows municipalities to set up districts that capture property taxes to help pay for important improvements within that district, usually infrastructure based. A "base" of taxes continues to be allocated to taxing bodies while the "increment", or additional taxes above the base are allocated for this use, thus preventing the need to allocate general funds to the task. TIFs are widely used across the country.

Tax Caps can be provided to households on fixed incomes who live in a neighborhood that is experiencing a rapid increase in property values. By capping property values at their current rates, the City can lessen the cost burden of revitalization / gentrification for low income households, thus allowing them to stay within their homes and not be forced out due to economic hardship.

REVITALIZATION OF THE TEXTILE CRESCENT



Between 1900 and 1903 manufacturers built some of the largest textile mills in the United States on the western side of Greenville County, known as the 'textile crescent'. These mills offered the County 40,000 additional jobs. As the 1900s progressed, the textile mills expanded and the population of Greenville grew. The textile mills remained an important source of employment through most of the 1970s. But by that time, foreign imports negatively affected the mills forcing manufacturers to cut production and employment. The era of the "textile crescent" was over.



The neighborhoods adjacent to the former "Textile Crescent" collectively represent one of the largest concentrations of poverty in the Upstate region. Collectively, these neighborhoods - found within both the City of Greenville and Greenville County - account for nearly 3,000 vacant structures (17% vacancy, up 3% from 2000), and have 6,850 households that made less than \$25,000 per year (4,150 make less than \$15,000). In an area that makes up 2% of the entire land area of the county (including the city), the Crescent accounts for 17% of the county's households below the poverty line.

