





Cardno and the Spring Hope Downtown Development Board (DDB) have developed a number of revitalization strategies and accompanying tactical actions designed to drive positive changes in Spring Hope's downtown and transition areas. This 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 Council of Governments' update of Spring Hope's existing land use plans and for the purposes of future land use planning. In accordance with the EPA Brownfield 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 that will encourage the revitalization of Spring Hope.

The downtown revitalization strategies are based on the following elements:

- 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 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 components, such as small businesses and commercial redevelopment. 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 five years.

We conducted a community engagement meeting in the fall of 2019 and suggested a second community engagement session for some time in the spring of 2020; however, the pandemic brought all project meetings to a halt until December 2020. Following the January 26, 2021 meeting of the DDB, Cardno prepared this final report to be presented for adoption by Spring Hope's Board of Commissioners. This final report outlines the recommended strategies and tactical actions to be taken by the DDB and a framework for the implementation for those strategies and actions.

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

- The Town's rich history, which has been proudly preserved through its Historical District that includes over two dozen homes and a total of 160 properties;
- Spring Hope's proximity to Raleigh and communities east of Raleigh present probable, future residential development and growth;
- 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, which may conflict with other sources.. Still, the overall picture presented and the 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. Updating *Figure 1* with 2020 Census data will be important and informative when that data becomes available.

Spring Hope's population has experienced some growth during the period 2000 through 2017; the overall population is beginning to reverse a downward slide that occurred in the previous decade or more where the median age of residents steadily increased. 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 a 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 qualify the validity of the "sense" of growth. Again, 2020 Census data will clarify the population figure.

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 as compared to the State average, (closing in on 20%) and increasing commuter times with nearly 25% of those employed commuting 45-60 minutes. There were 225 more residents with full-time employment in 2017 than in 2000. We noted that a total of 300- 500 residents and nonresidents in 2018 worked within the Town limits. We also found that 50% of all employed residents work outside of the county. Both of these employment data points are positive factors for local businesses and downtown merchants. While the Town will want to work to create more local opportunities for employment, these trends further support the probability that Spring Hope may be moving towards the designation as a more desirable place to live, even if residents' employment is located elsewhere.

When reflecting on the data in *Figure 1*, we concluded 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 may be suspect and, even if this data is accurate, significant growth continues to elude Spring Hope. On the other hand, if the population data in *Figure 1* proves to be accurate, it does record a 24% increase between 2010 and 2017. US 2020 census data will most certainly provide a more accurate and reliable accounting of Spring Hope's population growth over since 2010. As the DDB moves forward with the implementation of strategies and action items recommended in this report, it will be important to consider in developing a break-through strategy how a revitalized downtown will help to drive significant and sustainable residential/population growth.

From the NC Main Street Data 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 were built in between the 1900s and 1920s (eight were built between 1900-1910 and 29 between 1910-1920), and 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.

<b>Spring Hope, NC Demographics</b>			
Source: 2000-2017 US Census Data			
	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2017</u>
<b>Total Population</b>	1,261	1,320	1,570 est.
-60 years of age and over	25.50%	30.50%	24.40%
<b>Median Age</b>	39.4	47.1	37.4
<b>Race</b>			
-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%
<b>Employment Status</b>			
-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%
<b>Dominant Occupations</b>			
-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%

<b>Spring Hope, NC Demographics-CONTINUED</b>			
Source: 2000-2017 US Census Data			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Median Household Income</b>	\$30,469	\$27,677	\$30,313
<b>Mean Income</b>	\$41,254	\$37,266	\$42,121
<b>Poverty Level (16 Years of Age and Older)</b>	12.00%	23.00%	19.00%
<b>Housing Data</b>			
-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
<b>Vacancy Rate</b>			
-Owned Rates	4.80%	4.30%	Unknown
-Rental Units	3.10%	6.80%	4.00%
<b>Median Value of Owner Occupied Units</b>	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
-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. The following summary was compiled by the Town’s Clerk, reporting for the period of September through December of 2019 and into 2020:

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

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## 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). Potential residential uses that may be allowed with current zoning include bed and breakfasts, boarding houses, and dwellings accessory to businesses. Entertainment possibilities in the CB include nightclubs, entertainment in-doors, snack bars, and temporary venues. Minimum square footage and lot coverage requirements are also favorable for redevelopment and revitalization opportunities. A possible action option exists to create a Historic Overlay within and abutting the CB District. All-in-all, no actual perceived barriers exist to the goals of this downtown revitalization strategy.

## Managing Blight

Cardno requested that the Brough Law Firm, PLLC, 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 that they helped the Town draft and approve.

### *Previous and Current Conditions*

The Town has 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 has public nuisance ordinances, but they are limited to prohibiting noxious weeds and similar issues (See, Code Chpt. 10, Art. III). The only enforcement mechanism for these public nuisances are 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 take to strengthen its code enforcement program, but 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 could not legally bind future boards with regard to spending decisions, their commitment to move forward is nonetheless important.

**FINAL DRAFT**



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 communities generally lack the resources to do meaningful code enforcement – that appears to have been 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, Spring Hope now has the ability to abate more types of public nuisances and created a process whereby the Town may now abate nuisances, as may be 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 is 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. This has been corrected.

The Town may also at some time in the future 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.

In 2019 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 adopted standards were approved by the Town Planning Commission and are included at the end of the report, see Attachments A & B.

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

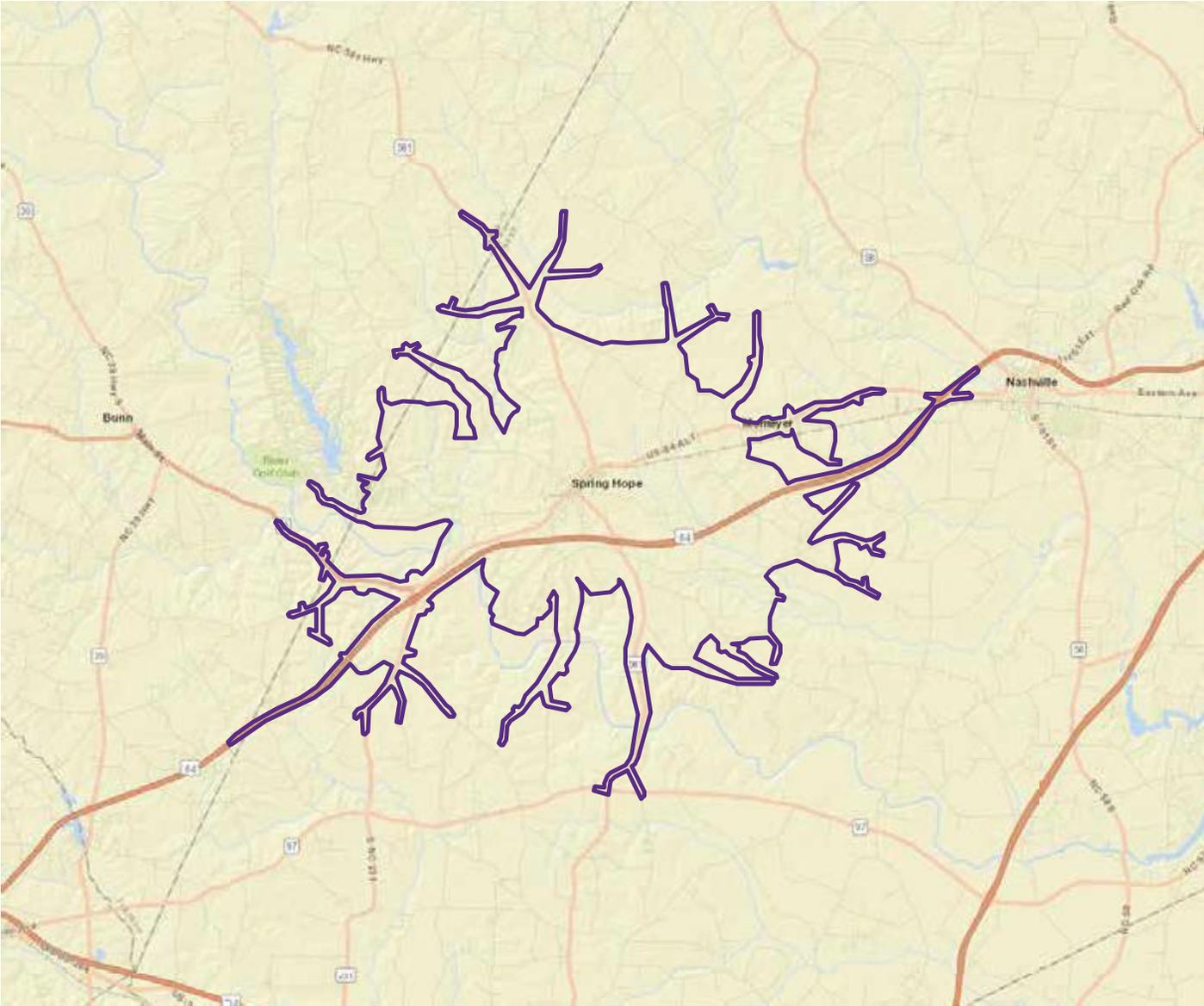
- Trade Area I - 10 Minute Walk (or less) to Downtown Spring Hope
- Trade Area II – 10 Minute Drive (or less) to Downtown Spring Hope
- Trade Area III – 15 Linear Miles (or less) from Downtown Spring Hope

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 if at all, 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 MINUTE WALKING OR LESS)	
Store Type	Opportunity Gap/Surplus (\$)
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	\$ 1,517,744
Food and Beverage Stores	\$ 1,050,996
Non-Store Retailers	\$ 637,567
Health and Personal Care Stores	\$ 604,976
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	\$ 601,041
Gasoline Stations	\$ 570,671
Electronics and Appliance Stores	\$ 218,849
Food Services and Drinking Places	\$ 193,137
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores	\$ 162,069
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	\$ (185,321)
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	\$ (210,505)
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$ (398,298)
General Merchandise Stores	\$ (1,517,541)



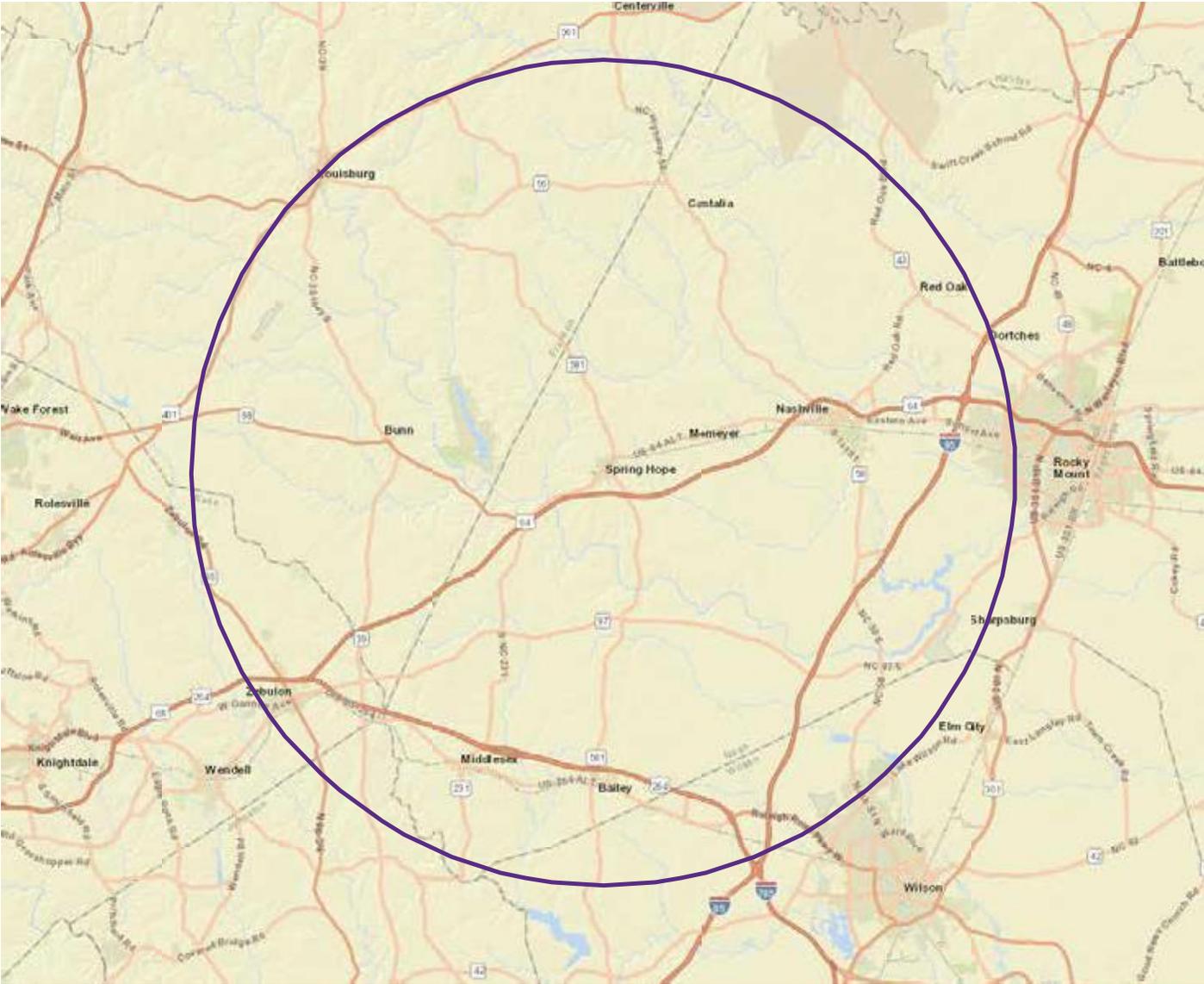
Map drawn by Environics Analytics (EA)

GAP ANALYSIS – TRADE AREA II (10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME)	
Store Type	Opportunity Gap/Surplus (\$)
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	\$ 9,629,793
Food and Beverage Stores	\$ 3,695,061
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	\$ 2,821,606
Non-Store Retailers	\$ 2,703,757
Health and Personal Care Stores	\$ 2,686,185
Food Services and Drinking Places	\$ 1,574,533
Electronics and Appliance Stores	\$ 968,299
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores	\$ 704,025
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	\$ (447,883)
Gasoline Stations	\$ (498,344)
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	\$ (821,471)
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$ (884,147)
General Merchandise Stores	\$ (2,735,700)

**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 Spring Hope along with “resident consumers” will drive and sustain the revenues of 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 are 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.



Map drawn by Environics Analytics (EA)

GAP ANALYSIS – TRADE AREA III (15 MINUTE DRIVE TIME)	
Store Type	Opportunity Gap/Surplus (\$)
Non-Store Retailers	\$ 168,836,093
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	\$ 151,923,591
Food Services and Drinking Places	\$ 79,141,362
Food and Beverage Stores	\$ 66,259,421
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	\$ 58,503,741
General Merchandise Stores	\$ 42,257,576
Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers	\$ 27,361,153
Electronics and Appliance Stores	\$ 21,374,821
Health and Personal Care Stores	\$ 18,181,147
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Musical Instrument, and Book Stores	\$ 16,668,801
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	\$ 15,072,447
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	\$ 8,802,263
Gasoline Stations	\$ (35,057,201)

The next step to help the Town with Spring Hope's revitalization efforts was to propose a series of vision statements that accurately reflected the Town's beliefs and goals for its future. These statements were 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 reflected the Town in two different aspects. The first was a condensed vision that applies just to the Downtown and the goals to revitalize its centralized district. The second applied 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 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 lifestyle with safe and attractive neighborhoods, streets, and community facilities. Growth will be orderly and provide the entire community with physical and social benefits.

- STRATEGIC GOAL #1:** Leverage Spring Hope’s architectural significance and place in American History
  
- STRATEGIC GOAL #2:** Brand Downtown Spring Hope as a 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

At 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 engagement 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 five (5)** priorities, which will provide a starting point for the implementation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan in February of 2020 (now 2021), 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**

- Offer more special events (e.g., the Pumpkin Festival and Christmas in Spring Hope)
- Host up to four (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 virtual Downtown Showcase
- 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

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### **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 Greater 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;

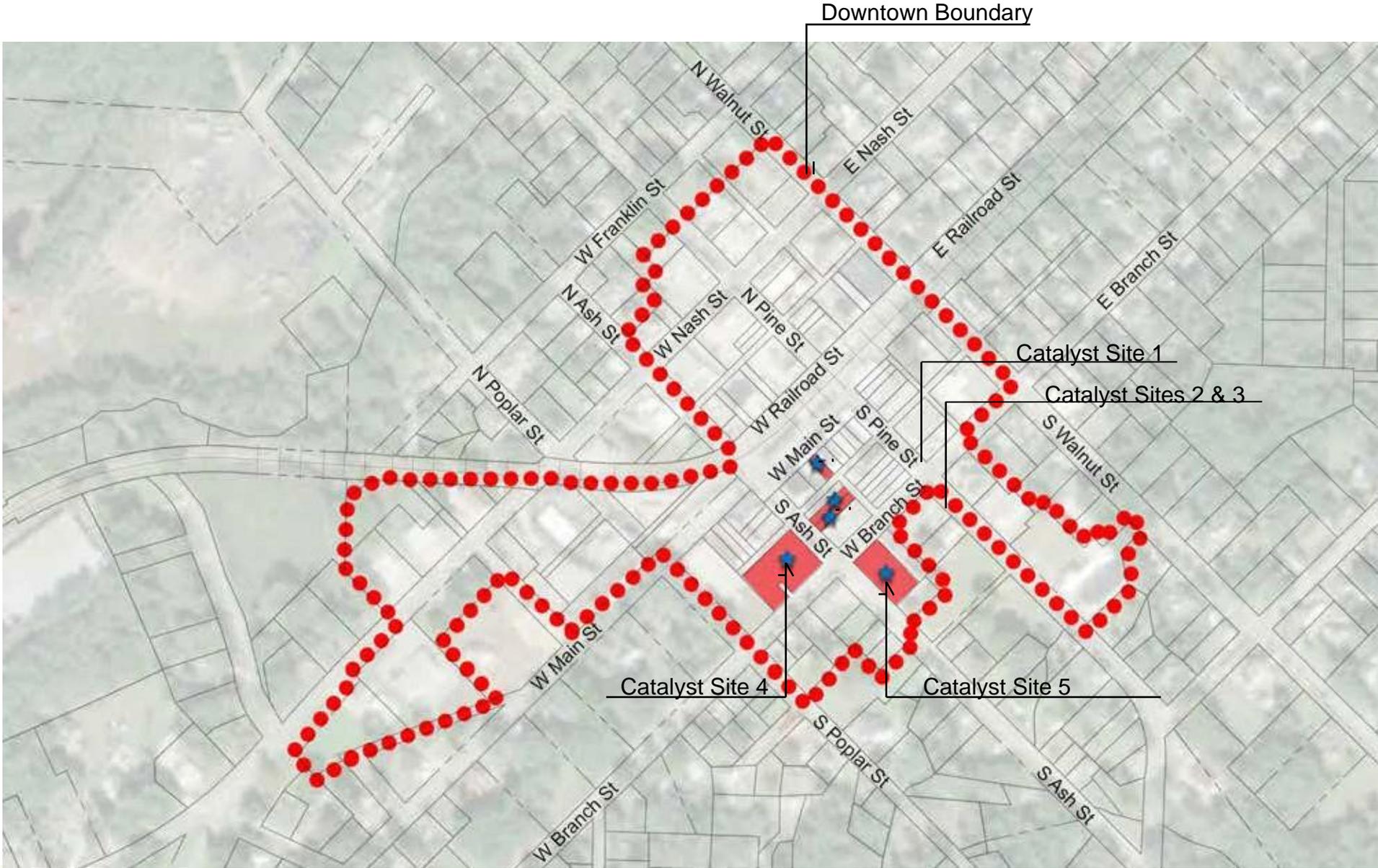
- Leveraging the power of residents and business owners, including Spring Hope's faith based community; and
- Strengthening code enforcement activities.

Another important consideration noted was the suggestion that *over time* that the Town take the lead on event planning and coordination, and thus, 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.

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.





Former Bank Building  
Address: 117 W Main Street

This building is located 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 also to the Historic District of the Downtown and the 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 space is more than just storage and could potentially be an opportunity to add residential units of some capacity, which would support people living in the downtown. This structure could be converted into small apartments, condos or other dwelling units. The site may also be a prime candidate for a small bed and breakfast, which would attract tourists to stay and to spend in

the heart of the downtown.

As for the first floor, this space should remain as a commercial use space by a locally owned and operated business that residents and destination consumers could support. Potential commercial uses would include professional/office space or a dining establishment, such as an 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

These two buildings are Town-owned. A Consignment Shop currently rents the commercial space at 119 from the Town. . These two locations present the Town with to generate revenue through the sale of these prime properties to potential business owners.

Overall, the facades are generally in good shape. However, minor improvements may help attract local businesses and add to the streetscape character along S. Ash Street. Physical improvements to the structures, such as awnings similar to the neighboring store fronts or small architectural improvements, such as adding reliefs or signage would create more interest for visitors to the Downtown. Architectural details to highlight the history of the building, dating to 1910, would emphasize the existing character of the Downtown.

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 small planters/vases (as the Consignment shop has already done). By removing the step up into the white building, the shop becomes accessible for everyone off the street, an improvement necessary to meet ADA standards, regardless of r who occupies the property.

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





Former Hardware Store  
Address: 120 S Ash Street

Across from the previously-mentioned 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 those features 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.



Potential uses for the building include businesses, such as a furniture store, new or used or unique entertainment/cultural options could be considered due to the site's 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 the establishment of working studios for local artists, writers, and/or creators and a public gallery/exhibition space that would attract residents and visitors. The third option for reuse would be the creation of a 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

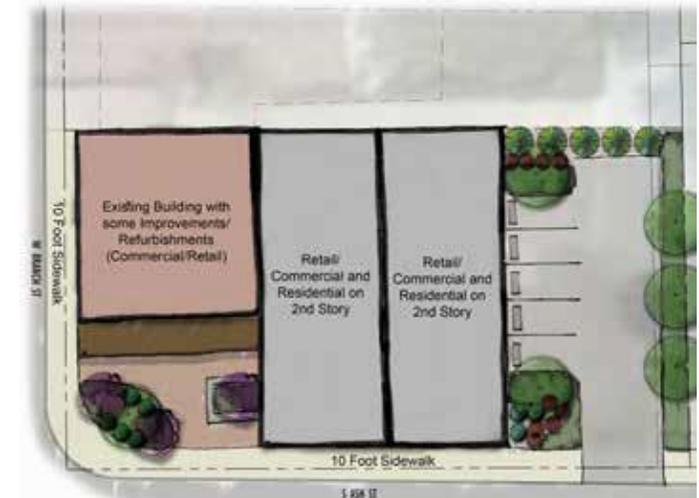
Address: Corner of E Branch Street & S Ash Street

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 storage sheds/structures are present from its previous uses. Located on the edge of the downtown boundary, the site also serves as a key transition between the downtown district and the other sections of the town, including the surrounding residential area. This is important because the property can bring the resident population closer into the downtown, while further strengthening the commercial-to-residential transition. This area of Town should be re-evaluated for a designation as a General Business Zone or District, as it is currently considered part of the Central Business.

Alternatively, this could be a prime site to develop some slightly higher density residential, such as townhomes that would enhance and reflect the character of the downtown. New housing options would also create more pedestrian traffic in the downtown, increase the local consumer base, and maintain local businesses.

A third option for this site could be the creation of flexible event space. Depending on the condition of the shed structures, these could be reused and remodeled into a small food establishment/bar 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 at carrying times throughout the year.

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



PROPOSED  
FINAL DRAFT

All successful revitalization programs require plans that fit their communities; resources to implement their planned actions; and most importantly, focused and sustained leadership to steer efforts towards sustainable redevelopment. 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 Spring Hope’s planned initiatives for the revitalization of its downtown

## **Business Development Work Group**

STRATEGIC GOAL #2: Brand Downtown Spring Hope as a 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 as successes are achieved and lessons learned. The DDB working groups are anticipated to include both residents and business owners, and the DDB may decide to form 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

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Minimum Housing Standard

# Attachment B

Nuisance Ordinance

*FINAL DRAFT*

