



REID CENTER **reborn**

Community Roots. Partnerships. Economic Opportunities

At a Crossroads

The story of urban renewal in Asheville – its unsettling history and enduring community effects – was chronicled effectively by community members and UNCA faculty in the **Crossroads** publication of the NC Humanities Council in 2010. Families and local commerce in each historically black neighborhood in our town suffered trauma and disruption. In that *Crossroads* document summary Sasha Vrtunski, Project Manager of the Asheville Downtown Master Plan offered this assessment of how those lingering effects might be overcome if communities come together going forward.

“ *There now seems to be a new vision held by many of strengthening the bonds of neighborhood residents and stemming the tide of gentrification ... Recovery comes through reclaiming history, restoring esteem, and redefining one’s participation in weaving the future.* ”

Today, with the help of strategic and community partners, the Reid Center represents a pivotal, concrete project set to achieve meaningful transformation in neighborhoods that need it most.

Moving Forward

The Reid Center project leaders are committed to preserving the center as a community asset. They envision the center as a place where people from the surrounding neighborhoods could access education, job training, support services, and other resources that help them achieve greater self-sufficiency and empowerment.

Specifically, the Reid Center is being developed into a job green jobs and education training facility that incorporates the following components:

- **Technical training, life skills training and job placement**, with an emphasis on jobs that improve community, environmental and human health
- **Basic adult education** and credit recovery programs for out-of-school youth
- Continued high quality, **early childhood education** in the Lonnie Burton Building
- **Youth programs** designed to engage local youth in positive, community-based activities, including music, academics, arts, sports, and pre-employment training and services
- **Monuments, displays, and programs** that honor the contributions of prominent African-Americans from the Asheville area



Our Approach

The Housing Authority for the City of Asheville (HACA), Green Opportunities, and their strategic partners are committed to modernizing the center, improving the energy efficiency and sustainability of the existing building.

A core principle in the project vision is engagement of the surrounding community. Community members have been involved in the design process and, most importantly, the renovation of the building itself is providing ongoing opportunities to train and employ public housing residents and other low-income community members. To date, the project has resulted in the hiring of 42 people in need of jobs.

Need

The grant awarded to the HACA by Housing and Urban Development and additional funding from HACA and the City of Asheville provided 4.3 million dollars to help modernize the center, but more funds are needed for the center to fulfill its potential as a transformative space.

Scope of the Renovation

- Complete a thorough asbestos remediation
- Replace the building's windows and doors; include more day-lighting in the building
- Update the plumbing system; Modernize / expand the current restrooms to meet code. Install water efficient fixtures
- Update the electrical system; Update switches, receptacles, ballasts and other electrical equipment with more energy efficient versions; Replace old lighting with high-efficiency lighting;
- Install a modern high-efficiency heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system; Install building controls to reduce unnecessary and wasteful energy consumption
- Replacing or repairing the air handler units above the gym
- Install updated interior finishes (paint, flooring, etc.)
- Exterior space improvements
 - Create covered entrances and spaces around the building
 - Enhance existing community gardens
 - Install rain water catchment to reduce runoff and water gardens
- The renovation project will seek LEED certification through the US Green Building Council.

Visions for the Future

GO envisions a facility that offers students a state-of-the-art training experience that dignifies the people who occupy it. The Center programs for workforce development will feature hands-on training as a central component with learning labs, business activities and active work crews that offer students job skills and work experience in applied settings, as they also serve to maintain the facility.

The Reid Center Reborn will be a beautiful training space, filled with ample natural light, beautiful furnishings and elegant design that sends its occupants the message that we value them and stand ready to invest in their future.

The Reid Center 2015 will serve, inspire, and empower the local community and the surrounding region. As the home of the GO enterprises, The Green Jobs Training & Education Center will be an example of sustainable urban reclamation for other municipalities. On-site renewables, sustainable agriculture, and energy-efficient place design will all culminate into the Reid Center Reborn - serving the community in a sustainable way for many years to come.

For more, call Green Opportunities at 828-398-4158, or visit our website www.greenopportunities.org.