

## Northside Initiative, Spartanburg

### Panelists

Nonprofit: Russell Booker, Superintendent, Spartanburg County School District Seven

Business: Bill Barnet, CEO, Barnet Development Corporation

**1. What, as succinctly as possible, is the Northside Initiative working to accomplish?**

Through partnerships between residents, businesses, organizations, philanthropies, and nonprofits, the Northside Initiative aims to create and enhance a diverse, thriving community of homes, businesses, educational initiatives, philanthropies, parks, and a farmer's market in 400 acres of Spartanburg's Northside.

**2. Why – what are the particular challenges Northside Initiative is addressing? Currently,**

the Northside area is an area of urban blight brought on by the closure of a mill in 2001. The area has a high concentration of vacant and rental housing, high unemployment and poverty, rampant crime, and citizens with no access to healthcare services or nutritious food. The work currently includes working with local residents to chart a vision for the future, remove urban blight, enhance the community, and provide a model for future development in Spartanburg.

**3. What are the essential, major elements of the Northside Initiative enterprise, e.g., major education, healthcare, mental health, housing, employment, etc.?**

- Engaged community resident base
- Attractive, mixed-income housing
- Business development
- Innovative educational model in public school - Cleveland Elementary
- Health and wellness center at the proposed T.K. Gregg Community Center (2017)
- Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine chose Northside location over Charlotte
- Farmer's Market on Howard Street (area was previously a 'food desert')
- Culinary Arts training program center
- Community café
- Garden

**4. What areas/communities does the Northside Initiative serve? Characterize.**

Residents in Northside of Spartanburg, an area previously full of distressed and vacant properties

5. **Program start date:** In progress; Northside Health Food Hub to be completed spring 2014; Brawley Street Model Housing Block to be completed late 2014

**6. Who is involved – partners?**

- Purpose Built Communities, an Atlanta nonprofit that provides a model for holistic community revitalization
- City of Spartanburg
- Spartanburg School District 7
- Spartanburg Housing Authority
- Mark Black Foundation
- Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine
- Wofford College
- Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System
- Spartanburg County Foundation
- Federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provided \$300,000 grant
- Future T.K. Gregg Community Center
- Butterfly Foundation
- Milliken Corporation
- Hub City Farmers Market
- United Way of the Piedmont

**7. What has Northside Initiative gotten done? What successes are they seeing?**

- Two year planning process complete
- Garnered \$5 million dollars of support from a broad variety of sponsors, including the federal government, nonprofits, local businesses, corporate donations, private and individual donations, and the City of Spartanburg
- Northside Development Corporation (NDC) founded to manage funds for the project
- NDC and City purchased over 160 homes, though no owner-occupied homes were purchased.
- \$1,600,000 dollars of funding was secured for the food hub; ground broken on the food hub (which will house the farmer's market, a café, a large community garden, and the Butterfly Foundation – a nonprofit that offers culinary arts training)
- Spartanburg Housing Authority committed \$700,000 for the Brawley Street Project; ground broken on the Brawley Street Model Block of housing in December 2013
- Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine has made a \$25 million dollar investment for its Carolina Campus in the neighborhood

- Spartanburg named a 'Network Member' of the Purpose Built Communities organization, one of only nine such community projects
- Cleveland Elementary School became the first 205-day elementary school in South Carolina
- City of Spartanburg committed to build the T.K. Gregg Recreational Center in Northside by 2017
- Northside Initiative was one of just 17 project selected for the \$300,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant by the US Department of HUD.
- Completed a Neighborhood Planning workshop that included 22 different topic discussions and over 350 community residents and stakeholders attending

Next steps center around intensive work on the physical land, additional revitalization planning work, and the search for additional funding as the project moves forward.