

# AAARRC



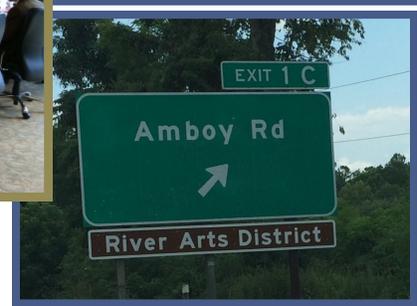
## Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission



Annual Report



2014



**A City of Asheville Advisory Board Partnership with the Town of Woodfin, Buncombe County, Council of Independent Business Owners, RiverLink, and the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce to nurture regional riverfront redevelopment.**



## Letter From the Chair

It's been an exciting year of progress for the Asheville Area Riverfront, and it has been a pleasure for those who serve as AARRC commissioners to participate in the development of an area so key to the economic vitality, culture, and wellness of our community.



During the past year, the Commission approved bylaws that established the Planning and Design Review Committee. We provided guidance and support for the Riverside Drive Development Plan that has been adopted by City Council, as well as the Alternatives to Gentrification study. We also celebrated the \$14.6 million Tiger VI grant awarded by the US Department of Transportation, the \$5 FBRMPO STA grant, the \$1.8 million Tourism Product Development Fund grant and the Duke Energy partnership around 48 acres of riverfront.

The Commission has been active outside the boardroom. Our daylong Annual Retreat included a multi-modal tour of the river district with in-depth presentations and a work session. Following the retreat, another tour of the Swannanoa River corridor helped to illuminate issues in the district including identification of dilapidated buildings and infrastructure needs.

Two priorities top our list for 2015: to help to guide the RADTIP and RAD Innovation District investments by the City; and, to assist the City in the production of a new development code for the greater River Arts District. We also look forward to the early stages of implementation of the Riverside Drive Development Plan, including the adaptive reuse of 14 Riverside Drive that will provide an important focal point for the RAD.

We will continue to explore long term objectives that are important to preserving the uniqueness of the district, while providing for community needs and economic vitality. These issues include developing and maintaining affordable places for artists to live and work, and helping to develop a dilapidated buildings policy. The Commission will explore opportunities to promote sustainable and mixed income residential development. And, we will continue to expand our area of focus beyond the RAD to explore a larger area of planning and potential investment with the help of key constituents in nearby areas.

Sincerely,

Patty Torno



**Presentations heard at our regular meetings** *Being informed is our number one priority:*

- Riverside Drive Development Plan: Plan Consultants from Heritage Directions, Site Design Studios, and Mathews Architecture
- Riverfront Planning & Zoning Issues: Judy Daniel, City of Asheville Planning Director and Christy Carter, Asheville Planning and Zoning Board member
- Smoky Mountain Adventure Center: Stuart Cowles, founder
- French Broad River Greenway West Bank Connection & Pedestrian Safety Issues on Amboy Road: Cathy Ball, COA Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Multimodal Development
- 14 Riverside Drive Preferred Redevelopment Strategy: Heritage Directions
- New Belgium East Coast Expansion: Jay Richardson, General Manager, NBB Asheville
- City of Asheville Communications Tools: Dawa Hitch, Director of Communication & Public Engagement
- Historic Preservation Master Plan for Asheville & Buncombe County: Stacy Merten, Urban Planner
- Park Avenue Bridge Feasibility Study: Cathy Ball and COA Project Engineer Alvin Fuller
- East of the Riverway/TIGER II Grant: Community Development Director Jeff Staudinger
- 5-Year Plan for Riverfront Redevelopment, RAD focus: Riverfront Coordinator Steph Monson Dahl
- Quiet Zones in Asheville: Riverfront Coordinator Steph Monson Dahl
- Brownfield Programs in North Carolina: Kate O'Hara, Planner, Land of Sky Regional COG
- City of Asheville Graffiti Program: Cathy Ball
- Town of Woodfin Storm Event Update: Woodfin Mayor Jerry VeHaun
- River Arts District Transportation Improvement Project (RADTIP) updates: Transportation Planner Dan Baechtold
- Craven Streets Project update: Asheville City Manager Gary Jackson
- I-26 Update: NCDOT Engineer Rick Tipton
- Financing Riverfront Capital Investments, Municipal Service Districts: Cathy Ball
- Construction Drawings for 14 Riverside Drive: Steph Monson Dahl
- Alternatives to Gentrification Report: Planning Consultant Sasha Vrtunski
- Affordable Housing Report: Asheville Affordable Housing Advisory Board Member William Irby
- Dilapidated Buildings Policy Alternatives: Development Services Director Shannon Tuch
- Ethics and Conflict of Interest for Boards and Commissions: Assistant City Attorney Jannice Ashley
- Asheville Parks & Greenways Foundation Overview: Ben VanCamp, Chairman of APGF
- Friends of Connect Buncombe: Ann Babcock

## Accomplishments of the Commission

*We are proactive and involved in the community. This year our commission:*

- Approved new bylaws for operating the newly chartered Planning and Design Review Committee
- Created a book of area photographs for New Belgium's time capsule
- Wrote a letter of support for the City's TIGER VI application
- Attended an Annual Retreat and trolley tour which included:
  1. Overview of all projects proposed for the French Broad Riverfront
  2. Detailed explanation of the Craven Streets Improvement Project and New Belgium Brewing project
  3. Tour of north end of Riverside Drive to discuss long term planning issues
  4. Closer look at the Amboy Road Bridge bicycle/pedestrian facility deficiency issue
  5. Walk on future French Broad River Greenway west bank extension with Jason Walls from Duke Energy
  6. Lunch at French Broad River Park
  7. Electro-Bike ride from the Wedge Building to the trailhead of future Clingman Forest Greenway
  8. RADLOFTS overview by developer Harry Pilos
  9. Closer look at Lyman Hollow development opportunities
  10. Tour of WC Reid Center renovations and overview of Green Opportunities workforce development
  11. 2015 Goal area brainstorming session at Boat House pavilion next to Asheville Green Works and the future Smoky Park Supper Club
- Attended a van tour of the Swannanoa River corridor that included:
  1. Multimodal infrastructure development potential
  2. Identification of dilapidated buildings
  3. Discussion on new development potential and existing design and form
  4. Sharing information on new and existing businesses
  5. Tour of Lake Craig/Azalea project
  6. Meet and greet with John Swann of Katuah Market
- Authorized the Chairperson to sign a letter of support for the City's Tourism Product Development Fund grant application
- Performed the following Formal River District Design Reviews: El Camino restaurant ▪ Smoky Mountain Adventure Center ▪ Antique Tobacco Barn solar array ▪ River Mill Lofts
- Met informally to further discuss 2015 goals and priorities
- Strengthened and maintained the Chair's [AVRiverfront.com](http://AVRiverfront.com) website



## Committees

*Our working committees also met monthly and achieved the following accomplishments:*

### *Networking Subcommittee*

- Monthly review and sharing of formal updates from appointing boards and partners
- Service on focus group for City's economic incentives policy review
- Attendance at Riverside drive development plan work-sessions
- Attendance at Riverfront Coordinator's Open Office Hours on third Thursdays
- Attendance at Asheville-Buncombe Historic Preservation Plan public meeting
- Outreach to property and business owners in the riverfront
- Research on Swannanoa property ownership and development potential

### *Planning and Design Review Subcommittee*

- Training and design review orientation
- Review of guidelines and creation of list of updates needed
- Finalized list of historic assets and properties developed by networking group
- Began discussions with community on Form Based Code in the Riverfront
- Made River District Design Review recommendations to the full Commission

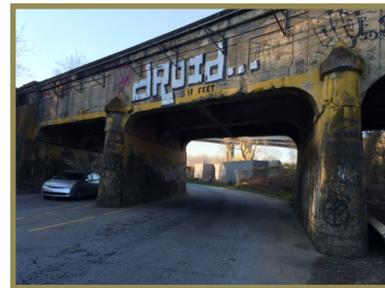
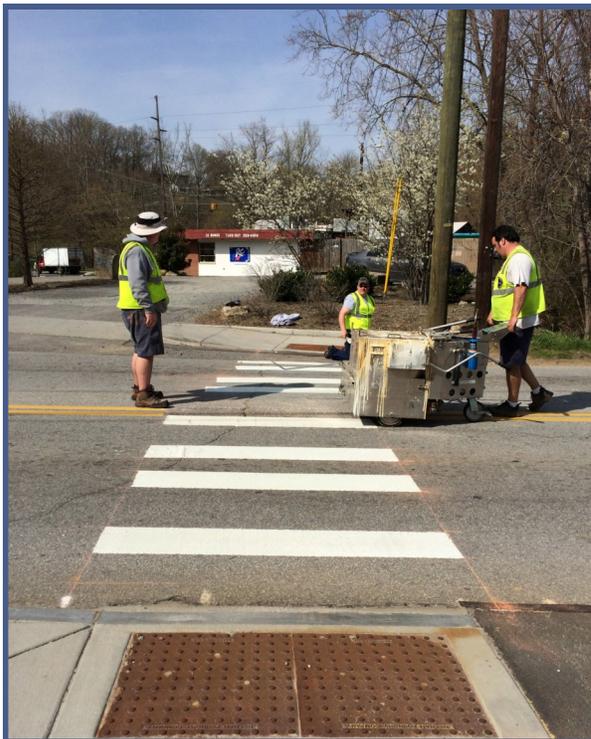




## Recommendations made to Asheville City Council

*We maintain an open dialogue with decision makers and provide formal advice when applicable. This year we successfully:*

- Recommended changes to our City of Asheville charter ordinance to add a River District Design Review function via the Planning and Design Review Committee
- Recommended adoption of the Riverside Drive Development plan to City Council
- Recommended Council adopt a policy on the naming of creeks and streams
- Recommended support for the naming of Penland Creek in West Asheville



## **2015 Priorities**

Review and monitor the RADTIP and RAD Innovation District investments by the City

Assist in the City's production of a new development code for the greater River Arts District

Work with City Staff towards adaptive reuse of 14 Riverside Drive

## **2015 Goals to Explore**

- Expand the focus on Riverway Planning and Investment beyond the River Arts District:
  - North to UNCA through Woodfin
  - East through the Swannanoa Corridor
  - West to the Arboretum
- Explore opportunities to promote sustainable and mixed income residential development in the greater River Arts District
- Support the creation of a Dilapidated Buildings Policy
- Support creation of affordable artists' work and live spaces
- Support economic development tied to clean tech & clean industry
- Expand work on wayfinding
- Mixed-use, mixed-income district development
- Multimodal transportation connections to & throughout Riverfront

# December 2014 Membership Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission

## **CHAIRPERSON OF THE AARRC**

### **City Council Appointee**

Pattiy Torno

[avriverfront@gmail.com](mailto:avriverfront@gmail.com)

## **VICE CHAIRPERSON**

### **Chamber of Commerce Appointee**

Stephanie Brown

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### **City of Asheville Appointee**

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### **Buncombe County Appointee**

County Commissioner David King

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### **Town of Woodfin Appointee**

Mayor Jerry VeHaun

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### **City of Asheville Appointees**

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### **CIBO Appointee**

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### **RiverLink Appointee**

Peter Sprague

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Administrative Support to the Commission is provided by City of Asheville staff liaisons:

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Caroline Long, Administrative Assistant [clong@ashevillenc.gov](mailto:clong@ashevillenc.gov)