



**St. John Community Development Corporation, Inc.**



**501-C3 Organization**

**Comprehensive Plan**

**639 Walnut Pender Street**

**Wilson, North Carolina 27893**

# **St. John Community Development Corporation, Inc.**

## **Our Mission**

*To provide quality services to our community through the integration of two principal approaches: to foster economic development and improve support services to individuals and families while being fiscally responsible.*

## **Our Vision**

*To grow as a strong organization that helps hurting families find hope in education, vocational training, economic development, housing and culture.*

## **Our Core Values**

*Serving Wilson County citizens with Pride:*

*Professionalism*

*Respect*

*Integrity with accountability*

*Diversity*

*Excellent Service*

*Recognizing that all people are different, we treat everyone with dignity and serve our diverse population with professionalism, respect, integrity and excellent service.*

### **History**

St. John A.M.E. Zion Church was founded in 1868, organized to serve the faith and social requirements of the African American community of Wilson, North Carolina. In 1998, the Pastor and members of the congregation filed documents and received approval for a separate 501 C 3 organization, named St. John Community Development Corporation (St. John CDC). Its overall mission is to provide economic and social support to residents of the targeted communities and the City of Wilson as a whole. The purposes and intent of the activities of St. John CDC are to acquire and develop real estate, which when developed, will increase economic development opportunities for low and moderate income individuals and households, and provide for the commercial re-development and revitalization of the East Wilson community so that human, financial, and other resources create positive change and improve the lives of community residents. This in turn, will beautify the community and improve public safety for residents of East Wilson. The creation and facilitation of economically empowering programs and services has been shown to stimulate the vast improvement of sustained economic activity within the community (Porter, 1995; 1997)

### **Description of The CDC's Current Assets and Planning**

St. John CDC owns and has site control of several parcels of property, bordering Pettigrew, Church, Smith and Pender streets. The vision of the Board of Directors encompasses two related goals concerning this property over the next five years: First, to develop a mixed use project consisting of residential and business called the Wilson Renaissance Center. The second goal is to provide services and educational opportunities for children and adults.

Based on 2010 US Census data estimates, the community that St. John CDC serves has a majority population of African-Americans, with households near or below the poverty level. These community residents have a high incidence of health issues, from a lack of primary care, maternal and child health and specialty care. There is also a high rate of unemployment and a low rate of economic development and entrepreneurship in this section of the Wilson community. The need for the services, programs, and economic stimulus the St. John CDC will provide is clearly defined in the above mentioned market. (U.S. Census, 2010 Updated Data Sets; NC Department of Health and Human Services, 2009)

St. John CDC will be both a direct provider and facilitator of services that emphasize a holistic approach to the health and well being of community members. Our focus will be

concentrated on a complete process that will first, provide a community venue which will assess specific needs of clients from intake and provision of services, to referrals and facilitation of services to local practitioners and facilities. By clearly determining client needs, resources can be efficiently utilized to guide and support the efforts to address those needs. The programs and services of the CDC will be funded by third-party and government funded insurance payments, grants from private foundations and government, contracts with city, state and federal entities, corporate support, and individual donations. Thereafter, upon the acquisition or construction of the Wilson Renaissance Center, St. John's CDC will have established a comprehensive multi-agency service center, the impact of which will be to enhance the way in which Wilson City and County provide vital services for the residents. Our partnership with offices on the city, county and state levels is evidence of the willingness of all parties to address this critical need in our community.

### **Administration**

At the present time, St. John's CDC is operated collectively by the Board of Directors. Dr. Gary Danes, Vice President Barton College is our current chairman and Mrs. Annie Ward, Deputy Director of Wilson Department of Social Services, Vice Chairperson. Mr. Lee Stephenson, President/CEO of Stephenson Mill Works is our past chair. Other Chairpersons were Alice Edwards, Retired educator. Mr. William Myers retired assistant superintendent a 40-year veteran in education. Dr. Michael S. Bell serves as the Executive Director of the CDC. He has an extensive track record of service to the various communities in which he has served. The Board of Directors serve on a volunteer basis, and represent a cross-section of Wilson's community in terms of its' social, geographic and ethnic diversity. It is the belief of St. John CDC that it takes all members of the community. The Board consists of educators, attorneys, local business owners, and the faith community. The executive director is responsible for the day to day operations of the CDC. The program director is responsible for administering the various educational and service programs. The administrative assistant does the administrative work for the St. John CDC. There is currently a paid staff of 30 individuals that work in the various programs. A management consultant with specific background in CDC development, strategic liaisons and funding has been retained to execute specific duties during this interim period which includes infrastructure development, grant writing, and research on how the CDC will adhere to city, state and federal regulations for the activities to be undertaken.

### **Youth Programs**

The St. John CDC provides youth services to the community by way of the S.A.Y. (Save A Youth) Programs. The S.A.Y. Program has four components: the afterschool program, the summer camp, the gang prevention program and the vocational program. Over the past ten years the St. John CDC has provided an afterschool program and summer camp for youth in grades K-12, serving more than 3000 students since 2005. In August 2010, the CDC was awarded the 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) grant by the NC Department of Public Instruction, a four year grant focused on providing quality afterschool educational programs for students in grades k-12. We believe that starting children at an early age enhances academic achievement immensely.

During the 2010-2011 school years the program served more than 375 students in two community sites in Wilson. The S.A.Y. program provides community learning centers that support academic enrichment opportunities to help students meet state and local student standards and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children. More than 90% of the youth served are from low performing schools and are economically disadvantaged. However, over the past five years, 96% of the students attending the S.A.Y. programs have met or exceeded state and local standards in core academics areas and promotional requirements. The push to build or to buy a facility to accommodate our program is primary. After many years of the SAY Program being hosted by the St. John A.M.E. Zion Church at 119 East Pender, the continued growth of the program moved the board of directors to find a more suitable location. The SAY Programs is now located to 639 Walnut Street, Wilson, NC. The former Adams Learning Center came available and we went into a lease agreement. In 2014 we purchased the Adams Learning Center now the SAY Youth Center. Due to our consistency in providing exceptional educational enrichment for our youth, in 2014 we were awarded another 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant covering another four years of afterschool and summer camp.

The S.A.Y. Gang Prevention program supports academic achievement, character education and social growth with a focus on gang awareness and prevention. The program was funded by the City of Wilson Police Department Gang Prevention Initiative. Local law enforcement officers and community leaders serve as speakers and role models for the youth. The program has been operating since 2008 and has made a positive impact on more than 1500 youth and their families.

The S.A.Y. Summer Camp provides a safe educational haven for the children, providing interactive activities for our youth in areas of: Math, Reading, Computer Technology, Arts and Crafts, Swimming, Bowling, Skating, Culinary Arts, Character Education, Gang Prevention, Sports and Field Trips. Over the years the S.A.Y. Summer Camp was not supported by grant funds, so we rely on volunteers and donations to provide student scholarships, field trip funding and instructional materials for our youth. Over 1,100 youth have been served. 2015 we will celebrate the tenth annual operation of the summer camp (June through August of 2015). The summer camp is funded in part by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) and by parent fees and additional support by donations from local business and financial institutions. For many years our summer camp had a small operating budget and served 150 students. In 2015 summer camp year we served 292 campers with the help of our 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant.

***The S. A. Y. Vocational Program*** is a grant funded program sponsored by the St. John CDC and funded through the North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The program serves Wilson County Youth ages 12-17 who are court-involved or who have been released from one of the State's Youth Development Centers and have been identified as at-risk of gang involvement, associates with gang members or are involved in a gang. The program teaches the youth marketable employment skills in the areas of computer building and repair, advance computer technology, apps building for android phones and tables, culinary arts, hardwood floor installation and repairs. Forty week sessions are devoted to hands-on job skills training

and 8 weeks focus on community service projects and field trips to enhance both vocational and social skills.

### **Sustainability**

In late 2011 St. John CDC acquired the historical Old Terminal Drug Store, a 24,000 square foot two floor building. This building is presently occupied by four independent businesses that pay the non-profit rent. The second floor is not occupied and is in need of over \$750,000.00 in repairs. St. John CDC has developed a **Limited Liability Company (LLC)** to manage the building and be the driver for the sustainability of the various programs. The business model for the sustainability of the non-profit is to find the resources to outfit each store front for business rentals. The **Ice-Cream and Deli Restaurant**, (this store was opened in August 2013) **Fresh Market Store and Convenient Store** (work in process), **A Pharmacy** (Wilson Value Drugstore was open in 2014) **Triple C Outreach** opened in 2015. These four businesses will help to sustain the non-profit. St. John CDC is committed to remodeling the second floor with a 16 Studio apartments e for Veterans and homeless individuals and families. This restoration project is known as the **Wilson Renaissance Complex**. At the completion of this project it will enhance one of the entrances to our beautiful city.

### **Stages of Development**

St. John CDC has developed a business plan in addition to this Comprehensive Plan. The Business Plan addresses the CDC's marketing, fiduciary, administrative and programmatic trajectory annually, including resources needed. Presently the Wilson Renaissance Center (WRC) is operated out of the St. John CDC office. As stated above, renovation work will begin on the physical space for the WRC as soon as funding is available. The planning stages of this plan are briefly excerpted, below:

- **Pre-Development:** This stage includes development of critical organizational models, due diligence and planning documents, including:
  - ✓ A feasibility study, detailing the viability of the aforementioned revenue-generating services, to be prepared in conjunction with the Small Business Technology Resource Center [SBTDC] at North Carolina State University. This will be used not only to inform the process, but to petition the Wilson Zoning Board for a minor change in zoning status for the area around the current parsonage;
  - ✓ Holding public “town hall” meetings, where residents of the East Wilson and greater community can hear and contribute ideas to the planning for the revitalization of this targeted area.\*
  - ✓ Work and Architectural Plans, for the minor structural renovation of the WRC;
  - ✓ Preparation of a loan application to Self-Help Credit Union of NC, to assist with the capital improvements called for in the architectural plan. A Funding Plan (concerning types of grants to be submitted and timelines, as well as prospects on State and Federal Funding, and Major Gifts;
  - ✓ The research and origination of a fee schedule (including a sliding scale fee policy for those not eligible for Medicaid or third-party insurance), and a policies and procedures manual, which will encompass the specific regulatory

data that is required for the operation of an outpatient mental health center in the state of North Carolina;

- ✓ The continual formation of binding strategic alliances, in the form of Memoranda of Agreement/Understanding with local agency partners in the city, county and throughout the state;
- ✓ Preparation and obtaining of city and state licenses for the WRC facility, to include the administrative licenses and site approval (occupancy certificates, etc.)
- ✓ Interviewing and hiring of prospective professional and administrative staff for the WRC

\* St. John CDC was organized as a vehicle to serve the people of Wilson, with special emphasis on the people of East Wilson, who are historically underserved by traditional means. It is imperative that the people of this community have a prominent voice in whatever the CDC undertakes. Thus, while community input is sought in a variety of ways, it is especially critical that we hold “town hall” meetings with the community on a quarterly basis throughout this five year revitalization process. This, indeed is the “People’s Project”.

**This entire pre-development stage:**

- **Phase One-Site Development for the Wilson Renaissance Center:** In July 2011, the next phase of planning and implementation of the CDC’s projects shall be undertaken. This includes the following activities:
  - ✓ The establishment of a full time professional staff for the CDC, to include a salaried Executive Director, a full-time administrative assistant and part-time clerical support (either salaried or consultant)
  - ✓ The launching and operation of the WRC with a full complement of staff
  - ✓ The cleanup and demolition of structures on the CDC’s own land slated for development by the CDC;
  - ✓ Site Plan and Architectural drawings for the WRC
  - ✓ A Capital Campaign, to obtain private and public financing for the Wilson Renaissance Center
  - ✓ Obtaining the legally binding commitments of previously-canvassed business tenants.
  - ✓ Commissioning of a traffic plan, to inform both the CDC and the city regarding proposed changes to the traffic flow around the proposed Wilson Renaissance Center area.

\*\* Agencies partnering with St. John CDC will be occupying 50% of the space of the Center for office space. Remaining space will be utilized for a public meeting space/auditorium, private practitioners and related commercial sites, such as a pharmacy, and a financial institution.

- **Phase Two: Construction and Opening of the Wilson Renaissance Center.** St. John CDC was able to find the resources to complete a feasibility study and site development plan; however, due to changes in federal mandates in reference to our project near the train lines it is necessary to review and make changes to our original plans. It is anticipated that the construction of the Wilson Renaissance Center will be delayed until the review is completed. Revisions to this Comprehensive Plan will be made at periodic intervals to inform and refresh

tasks in conjunction with realistic time lines thereof.

**Future research and development**

Future development of projects (as identified in the strategic plan) will be determined by analysis of marketing research and the feedback from current and future community members. Current and Ongoing Collaboration with the City/County of Wilson, members of the U.S. House of Representatives (1<sup>st</sup> District of North Carolina), and the North Carolina General Assembly Representatives ; Court Services of Wilson County, Wilson Community Improvement Association Community Development Corporation, a residentially-oriented CDC, (WCIA), Opportunities Industrialization Center Inc, Wilson Department of Social Services, Wilson County Schools, Wilson Technical Community College, The Wilson Council on Aging, Barton College and the Wilson Chamber of Commerce will yield data that will assist in determining the strategic direction of future projects.

The Wilson Renaissance Center will provide a centrally located resource for health care, social services, economic development opportunities, education, job training and skill development, senior citizen activities and support for at risk youth, as well as being a pivotal community outreach catalyst. St. John CDC continues the over 160 year tradition that has made this entire faith community a beacon of light in the history of Eastern North Carolina. We now endeavor to partner with our fellow community members in transforming a section of our home into an economic engine that will drive better health, services, and greater prosperity for all Wilsonians.