



MARCH 2022 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

SUBMITTED BY
HEART OF BREVARD

www.brevardnc.org



HELLO FROM THE HEART

PHOTO BY SEYL PARK

Dear Mayor Copelof and Brevard City Council Members,

We would like to thank you once again for your continued support of Heart of Brevard and for your leadership of our community. We appreciate your past support and deeply value our partnership and the collective impact that we have on our community.

Heart of Brevard (HOB) is writing to request city funding at \$30,000 in the coming year. We are also requesting that the following annual events be recognized as City of Brevard sponsored events:

- Arts in March (4th weekend in March)
- Art is in the Air (Fall)
- HeART of the Season (weekend before Thanksgiving)
- Tuesday Night Block Party Series (June-August)

We have enjoyed a positive and long-standing relationship with the City of Brevard and this support has been vital to the success of our organization and our downtown business community in the face of many recent challenges. Our enduring relationship with the City of Brevard has allowed HOB to grow our program of work and to celebrate successes in downtown. HOB is responsible for fulfilling core North Carolina Main Street mandates that allow Brevard to be recognized as a North Carolina Main Street town and a Nationally Accredited Main Street program. This long-term approach to economic development strategy focuses on four key elements: Design, Economic Vitality, Promotions and Organization.

In addition to following the Main Street model, HOB hosts over 20 events and programs annually, including White Squirrel Weekend, Halloweenfest, the downtown Holiday Windows Competition, the official Tree Lighting Ceremony and the Old Time Street Dance Series. Support from the City of Brevard is integral to the continued success of our events. Each year, our two-person staff is faced with the challenge of producing quality free community events amid rising costs while balancing our extensive program of work.

While we are well known for our free, community events, the scope of HOB reaches much farther and has historically been instrumental in supporting the downtown business economy. It is important that HOB be a resource for businesses downtown and encourage business investment and redevelopment. HOB provides façade grants, grants for building improvements and historic preservation and assistance to existing and prospective property/business owners pursuing grants and tax credits. It is important for HOB to balance the emphasis on events with involvement in other important areas of downtown and economic development.

Continued on next page.

Our belief in our community and shared strength of response created a model of resilience for our business community. Notably, we saw \$1,221,819 in public and private investment and over 10 business expansions in the Heart of Brevard district last year. We have over 100 business ambassadors proudly asking the community to “Think Local” through our support local program. We adapted our event lineup to provide safe, festive community celebrations and introduced new holiday events and lighting that received an overwhelmingly positive response from residents of Brevard, Transylvania County and visitors. We will continue to be a resource for businesses downtown and encourage business investment and redevelopment through our grant programs, historic preservation, advocacy and promotion.

Over the past two years, we have shifted our priorities to supporting the evolving needs of businesses. Our strategic and comprehensive approach to problem solving allowed us to respond effectively to the needs of our small businesses, maintain quality of life and ultimately support the vitality of the Heart of Brevard district. Our board and committees meet annually to identify goals and set priorities to improve the business climate and overall vitality of the HOB district. The attached documents seek to outline those plans and include information on special projects and initiatives while highlighting the financial and staff resources required for annual events.

We look forward to 2022 knowing that we remain a strong advocate for our vibrant downtown. On behalf of the Heart of Brevard and the businesses that constitute our iconic and vital downtown, thank you for your continued support of our organization and community—your partnership and support is essential to the success of our organization.

My best,



J. Nicole Bentley
Executive Director



PHOTO BY SEYL PARK

GET TO KNOW US



Nicole Bentley
Executive Director

Originally from Abingdon, VA, Nicole fell in love with western North Carolina while attending Rockbrook Camp. After graduating from Hollins University, she moved back to the area. Nicole offers over a decade of experience in nonprofit leadership and downtown development. When not seen somewhere on Main Street, Nicole can be found cooking, backpacking or practicing yoga.



Sara Jerome
Community Engagement Manager

Born and raised in Brevard, Sara always knew she'd make her way back to the mountains of her hometown. Her love for the area and her career in development and special events led her to her current role at the Heart of Brevard. When she isn't at the Heart, she's running in the forest or spending time with her husband and two dogs.

Board of Directors

Billy Parrish President, Resident

Keavy McAbee Vice President, WOLFBREW Bottle Shop

Lucy Clark Vice President, Lucy Clark Gallery & Studio

Sarah Hysong Secretary/Treasurer, Connestee Falls Realty

Mark Burrows Blue Zones Project

Emrie Carlton Territory Brevard

Maureen Copelof Mayor, City of Brevard

John Felty Mountain Song Productions

Curtis Greenwood PLATT

Clark Lovelace Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Transylvania County Tourism

Brittany Marcum Cohn United Community Bank

John Nichols Nichols Company

Brian Stretcher, Ph.D., Attorney and Counselor at Law



BOARD COMMITTEES

Executive

The Executive Committee ensures a focus on the organizational vision, actively manages the organization with the Executive Director, ensures a focus on the economic strategies outlined in the organizational work plans and ensures the organizational pillars and values inform the work planning and outcomes.

Marketing, Events & Promotions

Guided by the organizational pillars the Marketing, Events and Promotions committee oversees organizational branding, promotions, events, marketing and the outdoor crossroads brand.

Built Environment

The Built Environment committee manages the organization's programs for downtown urban design, walkability, connectivity, historic preservation and building design enhancements.

Hub for the Arts

Hub for the Arts works to establish downtown Brevard as a vibrant hub for the arts community. We strive to increase visibility for downtown artists and retail businesses that showcase local artists through a unique marketing plan, promotions and signature events.

HEART OF BREVARD

Organizational Pillars and the Main Street America Four Point Approach



Heart of Brevard is responsible for fulfilling core North Carolina Main Street mandates that allow Brevard to be recognized as a North Carolina Main Street town and a Nationally Accredited Main Street town. The Main Street Four Point Approach® is a unique preservation-based economic development tool that enables communities to revitalize downtown and neighborhood business districts by leveraging local assets from cultural, historic, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride.

I. Downtown is an Outdoor Crossroads

Brevard is surrounded by incredible outdoor assets, including national and state forests, trails, parks and rivers. These assets are drivers for growth, tourism and industry. Heart of Brevard is positioned to play a primary role in this outdoor economy.

II. Downtown is a Hub for the Arts

Brevard is home to a thriving visual and performing arts and music scene. Heart of Brevard is adjacent to renowned performing arts venues that host artists from around the world. These venues attract visitors and support a vibrant arts-based economy. Heart of Brevard connects the community through arts initiatives and events, and is an advocate for its artists, galleries and venues.

III. Downtown is Local-Centric

With a small town vibe anchored by local, independent businesses, Heart of Brevard will support local-centric efforts and preserve our small town experience through retention, expansion and recruitment of local, independent businesses. Heart of Brevard is dedicated to welcoming diverse business owners and fostering connections within the business community.

IV. Downtown is a Place for Community

For generations Brevard has been a highly desirable place to live and recreate because of its commitment to supporting quality of life, prioritizing wellness and outdoor amenities. Brevard is home to diverse groups of full-time and part-time residents, including multigenerational natives, long-time transplants, new residents, young families and retirees. Heart of Brevard supports optimizing the built environment to ensure downtown is a desirable place to live and work. With annual events and festivals, Heart of Brevard showcases downtown as a family-friendly destination year round. Brevard's restaurants, shops, and galleries are enjoyed by locals and visitors alike, as well as those who work downtown.

V. Authenticity Guides the Work of HOB

From our natural outdoor assets to our locally owned businesses to our historic downtown, our community is unique and authentic. As Brevard's downtown development organization, Heart of Brevard actively encourages business support activities, new business development and building and infrastructure improvements that fit the character and context of the Brevard community. Our future directions will be forward-thinking, community-driven and inclusive, grounded in our commitment to the preservation of our historic and natural resources and anchored by our small town, small business character.



A YEAR WITH HOB

january

ANNOUNCE 2022
EVENTS ROSTER

march

ARTS IN MARCH + MADE BREVARD
NC MAIN STREET CONFERENCE

may

NATIONAL MAIN STREET CONFERENCE
SATURDAY STROLL

july

TUESDAY NIGHT BLOCK PARTY SERIES
FEATURING OLD TIME STREET DANCES
START OF NEW FISCAL YEAR
SATURDAY STROLL
COMPLETE ANNUAL ECONOMIC
IMPACT SURVEY OF HOB DISTRICT
JULY 4TH FIREWORKS EXTRAVAGANZA

september

HUB FOR THE ARTS
ANNUAL ARTIST MEETING
ART IS IN THE AIR EN PLEIN AIR FESTIVAL

november

HEART OF THE SEASON
SHOP SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY AND
SHOP LOCAL KICKOFF
DISPLAY HOLIDAY LIGHTS + SEASONAL DECOR

february

OPEN 2022 EVENT
APPLICATIONS TO VENDORS

april

DOWNTOWN CLEAN UP DAY
SATURDAY STROLL

june

WHITE SQUIRREL WEEKEND
SATURDAY STROLL
MAIN STREET STATISTICS DUE
TUESDAY NIGHT BLOCK PARTY SERIES
FEATURING LEAF GLOBAL ARTS
HOB BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING

august

NC MAIN STREET MANAGER'S MEETING
SATURDAY STROLL
TUESDAY NIGHT BLOCK PARTY SERIES
FEATURING OLD TIME STREET DANCES

october

HALLOWEENFEST + SPOOKY STROLL

december

HOLIDAY WINDOWS COMPETITION
LIGHT UP THE NIGHT



ANNUAL STATISTICS

FY20-FY21

PHOTO BY KAINE MCCALISTER

**HEART OF
BREVARD
STATISTICS**
\$1,221,819

**Public & Private
Investment**

**NORTH
CAROLINA
STATISTICS**
\$361,454,314

10

**Buildings
Rehabbed/Expanded**

242

3

Facades Improved

398

10

New Businesses

260

36

**Gained
Full-Time and
Part-Time Jobs**

1,262

1,320

(VALUED AT \$247,488)

**Volunteer
Hours**

84,017

(VALUED AT \$2,032,371)

2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Organization

- Received 2021 Main Street America **national accreditation**.
- Worked to **broaden relationships** with communities surrounding downtown by including new program and event partners, such as Biltmore Church, LEAF Global Arts, Asheville Hoops, Rosman Magic Book Bus and more.
- **Increased communication** with downtown businesses through the collection of event and program feedback via online surveys.
- Revised organizational bylaws and board roles and expectations.
- Activated new committee structures with a focus on the return to safe and in-person community events; **20 events and programs** are planned for 2022.
- Nominated for a North Carolina Main Street Award for **Best Economic Recovery Initiative** for Transylvania Tomorrow.

Promotion

- Maintained a **28%** open rate for our weekly newsletter, the Heart Beat.
- **7.5k** Facebook Followers, **2.6k** Instagram Followers.
- Social media reach increased **48.8%** (Facebook) and **106.7%** (Instagram) over the past year.
- Social media page visits increased **23%** (Facebook) and **86.8%** (Instagram) over the past year.
- Updated Downtown Shopping & Dining Guide quarterly.
- Enhanced event **focus on downtown business promotion** by collecting post-event data from businesses, responding to business feedback and offering open house and micro-event formatted events.

Design

- Increased the **pedestrian accessibility and safety** of downtown by conducting the annual Walkability Assessment.
- Participated in the City of Brevard Master Plan process.
- Partnered with the Downtown Master Plan Committee to **research, coordinate and manage** the W. Jordan Street Trash & Recycling Pilot Program.
- Allocated **\$11k** (FY21-22) to Downtown Master Plan Committee.
- Strengthened downtown's **branding and aesthetic** through the utility box wayfinding project, updated holiday lighting and décor and Think Local Transylvania pole banners.

Economic Development

- Cultivated **close relationships** with property owners and managers to maintain a database of downtown businesses and properties.
- Maintained and marketed a list of **available downtown spaces and properties** on HOB's website.
- Expanded downtown business small **grant opportunities**.
- Regularly **communicated with and supported** businesses currently engaged in downtown development projects including: City Camper Brevard, Sycamore Cycles, Brevard Brewing Company, Earth Mountain Bicycles and more.

EVENTS & PROGRAMMING UPDATE



4th Annual Arts in March presented by Territory Brevard March 26-27

Celebrating arts and culture in downtown Brevard, this two-day art walk attracts visitors to downtown with live music, artist demonstrations, special offers at participating businesses and more. This year's event will incorporate, ***made brevard***, our first-ever makers, creators and artists market.

Expected Attendance: 2,000-3,000

Highlights

This year's event features live music, food trucks and our first-ever makers market, ***made brevard***, that will welcome 25 local artists and makers to sell their wares in the Heart.



Saturday Strolls April-August

Held on the 4th Saturday of each month, Heart of Brevard's Saturday Strolls are free and open to everyone to enjoy a self-guided tour of shops, galleries and other downtown businesses featuring curated events and promotions.

Expected Attendance: 2,000-3,000 per event

Highlights

In 2021 Saturday Strolls were designed to offer visitors a safe way to experience downtown in an open house setting. This model, a favorite for our HOB business community, is back in 2022 with plans to increase business participation and marketing efforts.



White Squirrel Weekend June 3-4

The beloved White Squirrel Weekend combines a stellar live music line-up, a smorgasbord of tasty offerings from vendors and local craft breweries, plus free activities for the entire family into one fantastic weekend-long event.

Expected Attendance: 30,000

Highlights

It's back! After a two year hiatus we're bringing back the beloved event with a new date and fresh lineup!

EVENTS & PROGRAMMING UPDATE CONT'D



Tuesday Night Block Party Series featuring LEAF Global Arts and Old Time Street Dances June 14-August 2

Held weekly, mid-June through early August, Heart of Brevard's Tuesday Night Block Party series offers free fun for the entire family. New in 2022, HOB and LEAF Community Arts invites one and all to experience a world without borders! From music, to dance, to drumming and arts, LEAF will bring a new lineup of cultural art experiences and live music to our June block parties.



Join us in July for a decades-long tradition, our Summer Street Dances. These dances celebrate our Appalachian heritage with a free, fun-loving and family-friendly event that's sure to give you happy feet. A lively bluegrass band and an experienced caller will take you step-by-step through a collection of moves that combine square and contra dancing styles.

Expected Attendance: 300 per event

Highlights

- Rebranded Event: Tuesday Night Block Party Series.
- Featuring popular 2021 band, Whitewater Bluegrass at the Old Time Street Dances.
- Partnering with LEAF Global Arts to offer a new lineup of cultural art experiences and live music.
- Adding food trucks and other free family activities.



Arts Is In the Air En Plein Air Festival September 15-18

Art Is In the Air invites artists to our beautiful downtown to practice their craft outdoors with the Heart of Brevard as their subject. Works created during the event are displayed in a Wet Paint Sale at the end of the weekend. Event attendees are invited to come enjoy downtown, see the artists at work and come back to purchase their favorite pieces at the sale.

Expected Attendance: 2,000-3,000

Highlights

This successful inaugural event is back by popular demand. In an effort to respond to our post-event surveys and to activate the shoulder season we are moving the event to the fall. We plan to expand on the event with downtown street closures, food trucks and live music.

EVENTS & PROGRAMMING UPDATE CONT'D



Halloweenfest

October 29

For this event, held annually on the Saturday before Halloween, we will close downtown streets to traffic to allow for our costume competition and parade, pet costume competition and parade, live music, virtual pumpkin carving contest, downtown trick or treating and more. Based on feedback from our downtown business community, we won't have retail vendors at this event.

Expected Attendance: 7,000

Highlights

Downtown businesses activated the spaces in front of their storefronts to create a fun and festive atmosphere downtown. We partnered with Biltmore Church, the Rosman Magic Book Bus and Asheville Hoops to offer additional free entertainment. The event saw over 7,000 attendees, and approximately 60% were local.



Heart for the Holidays

November 19-December 3

Come celebrate the holidays in downtown Brevard with our Heart for the Holidays Series that includes:

HeART of the Season, a two-day downtown open house that celebrates the best of what our local art community has to offer. Attendees can experience the vibrant arts community, explore downtown and kickoff the holiday shopping season.



At **Light Up the Night** visitors immerse themselves in an evening of wonder with twinkling lights and decorated storefronts. This event features the official tree lighting ceremony, live music, food trucks, shopping and holiday festivities for the entire family.



Heart of Brevard businesses decorate their windows with spectacular displays for all to enjoy. The **Holiday Windows Competition & Walking Tour** showcases festive and fun windows, mirroring the Chamber's annual Christmas parade theme. A panel of celebrity judges vote on the windows for winners in five categories. Visitors to downtown can also vote for their favorite window to win the People's Choice Award.

Highlights

- Offering live music, LEAF Global Arts Easel Rider, Happy Camper Photo Booth and activities for the whole family at Light Up the Night.
- Increased business participation at all three events.
- Over 300 visitors to downtown voted for the Holiday Windows People's Choice Award.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVE UPDATES

THINK LOCAL TRANSYLVANIA



Think Local Transylvania Gains Momentum

Think Local Transylvania is a program initiated by the Heart of Brevard, that will work, in partnership with the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, to promote and unify businesses county-wide through a strong, unique and fresh marketing campaign.

Any business or nonprofit operating in Transylvania County with less than 200 employees is eligible to join, with special distinction given to those that are locally owned/operated and/or independent. For our first year, the focus has been on the following:

- Securing businesses and nonprofits to serve as ambassadors. **More than 100** have signed up.
- Updating the website (thinktransylvania.com) to include an ambassador directory and regularly engaging on social media channels to gain new members and promote the initiative.
- Advertising and promoting the effort through downtown **pole banners, posters and yard signs for participants**, logo stickers and advertisements with local media.
- Infusing the Think Local Transylvania logo on any programs coordinated by the Chamber or the HOB that focus on buying and supporting our local businesses and nonprofits.

Visit www.thinktransylvania.org



[thinklocaltransylvania](https://www.thinklocaltransylvania.com)

TRANSYLVANIA TOMORROW





Transylvania Tomorrow Wrap Up

Following a successful Spring 2020 launch and a series of Fall and Winter funding starting in December 2020, Transylvania Tomorrow has supported 111 Transylvania County small businesses with \$249,250 in funding to date. 46 Businesses in the Heart of Brevard received \$103,750 in funding. The program's impact on our community has gone beyond simply a financial one. It has provided hope for so many businesses that were unsure of their future during and after the pandemic. The Transylvania Business Support Task Force is currently revising the grant criteria to provide ongoing support for businesses and nonprofits faced with emergency needs.

The Transylvania Business Support Task Force is made up of the Heart of Brevard, Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Transylvania County Tourism, Transylvania Economic Alliance, and Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center.

Heart of Brevard has been nominated for a 2021 North Carolina Main Street Award for Best Economic Recovery Initiative for our work on Transylvania Tomorrow.



THE STATS	
	
TOTAL AWARDED \$249,250	# OF BUSINESSES AWARDED 111
TOTAL AWARDED TO HEART OF BREVARD BUSINESSES \$103,750	# OF HEART OF BREVARD BUSINESSES AWARDED 46
DOLLARS CONTRIBUTED BY HEART OF BREVARD \$15,000	IN KIND STAFF SUPPORT CONTRIBUTED BY HEART OF BREVARD \$10,000

SUBMITTED BY

HEART OF BREVARD



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