Cooper Ferry Partnership

Purpose of the Organization/ Program

Coopers Ferry Partnership (CFP) is a non-profit economic development organization located in the City of Camden, New Jersey. The mission of CFP is to plan and implement high-quality urban redevelopment projects throughout the city to help replenish Camden’s tax base and to create jobs for city residents. CFP also works to improve the city’s natural assets to make Camden a more desirable place to live, work, invest and visit.

CFP has developed a detailed five-part model that aims to leverage the power of Camden’s anchor institutions in an effort to bring economic development to the city. This model includes: clean and safe streets; stable residential neighborhoods adjacent to the anchors; commercial corridors that offer an attractive mix of amenity retail; a vibrant arts and cultural offering; and human capital programming that builds capacity among Camden’s residents.

Clean and Safe Streets

Camden Special Services District (CSSD):
Now in its 8th year, the CSSD's traditional clean and safe program continues to improve the physical appearance of downtown Camden and adjacent business corridors, and provide an enhanced sense of safety and hospitality. Supported by separate voluntary contributions, grants, bank sponsorships, and fee-for-service contracts from more than 30 sources, including major institutional anchors in the city, local and county government and private businesses. The program benefits existing businesses, supports new investment, and creates job opportunities.

Stable Neighborhoods

Kroc Center: For more than four years, CFP has led a stakeholder group in the effort to develop a 120,000 s.f. community center on the former Harrison Avenue Landfill site in Cramer Hill. Originating with the involvement of the Greater Camden Partnership in the competitive application for the Ray and Joan Salvation Army Kroc Corps Community Center, CFP continues to support the effort in the areas of fundraising, government approvals, and community outreach. The environmental remediation of the site began December 2011, with the importing of more than 12,000 truckloads of clean fill. Based on the current schedule for both the remediation and construction, the Kroc Center is on target to open in the first quarter of 2014.

Haddon Avenue Transit Village:
Working together with our development partners Grapevine Development, Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center, and the Camden County Improvement Authority (CCIA), CFP continues to work on developing a 15-acre mixed-use transit village on a former industrial strip situated between the Lourdes campus and the Ferry Avenue PATCO Station. The development will include a grocery store, parking garage, office building, and residential housing.
In September 2012, the project reached two significant milestones. First, Fresh Grocer, an urban grocery operator based out of Drexel Hill, PA, signed a letter of intent to open a 55,000 SF grocery store within the Haddon Avenue Transit Village (HATV) site adjacent to Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. This supermarket will be the first major chain supermarket to open in the City of Camden in 30 years.

**East Camden Neighborhood Plan:** In June 2012, CFP launched its largest planning endeavor to date—My East Camden: Many Voices, One Vision- Nuestro Este Camden- Muchas Voces, Una Visión, which will provide a comprehensive vision for the four census tracts that comprise the East Camden neighborhood (Marlton, Stockton, Dudley, Rosedale). In 2009, CFP began working with St. Joseph’s Carpenter Society (SJCS) to transform the two square block area once know as “The Alley”, one of the most notorious drug areas in the City of Camden during the 1990’s, into a safe and vibrant community.

**Camden Power Offering Widespread Energy Recovery (POWER)**
An energy efficiency retrofit program, Camden POWER has two components – Residential and Commercial. A City of Camden program, POWER leverages city & state dollars against a federal stimulus grant by the U.S. Department of Energy, with the goal of reducing energy usage to homes and businesses by at least 25%.

**Residential POWER Program:** Working together with the City and the Division of Housing Services, CFP acted as the local program administrator for the POWER Residential program since October 2010. CFP made considerable progress towards the program goal of retrofitting 160 Camden homes with the installation of new roofs, insulation, hot water heaters and HVAC systems, as well as life and safety repairs:

**Live Camden:** CFP is working with the Camden Redevelopment Agency (CRA) to brand LiveCamden.com as the image of homeownership in the city. In August, the CRA hired a marketing firm to assist in selling and promoting NSP2 properties. The CRA, CFP, and the marketing firm determined that using the Live Camden logo would help to create brand identity, unify residents and developers, and also encourage people to purchase homes. CFP created the Live Camden logo and website a year ago under the support of a grant from the William Penn Foundation. The Live Camden logo is now featured on billboards throughout the city, as well as in marketing materials for NSP2 properties. LiveCamden.com also features a NSP2 page that highlights available properties and useful links to realtors and Community Development Corporations. CFP, the CRA and all community partners involved hope that the new marketing campaign will inspire people to visit LiveCamden.com and also to purchase a home in the City of Camden.

**Thriving Commercial Corridors**

**Broadway Main Street:** The Broadway Main Street program seeks to transform the Broadway corridor into a cultural and commercial hub which will attract residents and visitors from all neighborhoods. Toward this end, the program provides access to tax incentives and information on resources available through government programs, assists the CSSD in beautifying business
corridors by removing litter and producing street banners, and assists in developing a long-term plan for the design of the business district.

Most recently, the Broadway Design Guidelines, a project funded by the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, were finalized and presented to the Camden City Planning Board. These guidelines will be a valuable tool for façade restoration and revitalization of the Broadway commercial corridor.

**Commercial POWER:** Commercial POWER shares the same energy efficiency goals as the Residential component, but targets a different audience – Camden businesses – through a different program with different incentives. Free supplemental financing for state programs is available, as well as low-interest loans for greater upgrades. New Jersey’s Direct Install Program offers subsidy up to 70% of the energy efficiency repairs for a commercial business. The City of Camden offers grant funds to businesses for the remaining 30%, making the program completely free and attractive to most Camden businesses.

Not only are the eligible businesses getting energy upgrades and energy retrofits to their buildings, but many of them also participate in the UEZ Business Façade Program. In total the two programs provided over $1.5 million dollars in improvements to local Camden businesses.

**Camden UEZ Business Façade Program:** The Camden Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) Business Façade Program offers supplemental façade improvement grant assistance for businesses utilizing the Camden POWER incentives.

The UEZ façade program, although a grant, requires a business to front the money and then get reimbursed once the repairs are completed, making the program unreachable by many of the small businesses located here in Camden. Cooper’s Ferry, in an effort to mitigate this issue developed a low interest bridge loan program in partnership with the Camden Empowerment Zone (CEZ) to offer special bridge loans to qualified façade improvement applicants. Since the business owners does not have to put out their own money while waiting to be reimbursed by the UEZ Program, the Façade program becomes much more attractive to the small business community.

**Workforce Development**

CFP recently completed a study of a pilot program that would employ certain at-risk populations (e.g., ex-offenders, youth, etc.) as workers in the Camden Special Services District Program. This initiative would allow existing clean and safe, business development, and workforce funding streams to work in synergy by providing a source of employment and training while improving the condition of the business environment in the Downtown. Following the study of how this program would work with existing re-entry and Workforce Investment Board programs, CFP is currently seeking funding for implementation.

**Education:** One of CFP’s goals is to work with the anchor institutions to create K-12 educational opportunities that serve two purposes. The first goal is to allow existing Camden residents to access the opportunities that are likely to be created in a resurgent Camden. The
second goal is to ensure that young families can remain in Camden when their children reach school-age. CFP is working on several fronts to achieve this goal. We have partnered with two of the city’s charter schools to help develop new school sites. We are working with Rowan University and the Center for Family Services on a Promise Neighborhood Initiative for the new Lanning Square Elementary School; and we are working toward the implementation of a policy recommendation for a joint Rutgers/Rowan effort to centralize, coordinate and measure anchor participation in schools across the city.

**Vibrant Arts & Culture**

**Art Gallery Series:** CFP’s Holiday Art Gallery and Camden Spring Art Gallery Series blend art events with development projects by utilizing the city’s vacant commercial and retail spaces to showcase local and regional talent. This program also seeks to improve the environment for local retail and to attract new residents. The latest art gallery series was a public private partnership with two gallery showings on one night, very well attended, and the foundation for future events.

**Summer Concert Series:** Organized by CFP and sponsored by Campbell Soup, Cooper Hospital, Symphony in C, and the City of Camden, the Summer Concert Series continues to present a series of four outdoor concerts each summer in Cooper Commons Park and Lanning Square Park. These events feature a variety of musical styles and draw its audience from Camden’s residents, workforce, and students.
**Job Title or Position:**
CFP Summer Intern

**Expectations/Responsibilities of the Position:**
CFP will work with the student to outline a specific project related to our economic development work and allow them take ownership of the project, formulating the project’s strategy, overseeing its development, and creating tools to measure its success. The internship will also include the opportunity to work in support of the operation of the organization through some of the projects detailed in our five-part model. Through these roles the student will be provided with the opportunity to work directly with small neighborhood businesses, community organizations, and various city government departments.

**Qualifications:**
The student should have strong interpersonal, critical thinking and writing skills. The student will be required to work directly with a range of stakeholders from community businesses and organizations to corporate funders. Spanish proficiency would be valuable but is not a requirement.

**Working Conditions:**
The student would be expected to work a standard work week. Occasionally community meetings occur in the early evening. The dress code ranges from business to business casual depending on the day’s activities. The student will have his/her own workstation as part of an open-bay arrangement. A car is not necessary for the job, though access to a car may be helpful for grocery shopping, etc. CFP will work with the student to find nearby housing, as the office is adjacent to the campus of Rutgers-Camden, and there will be opportunities for a summer sublet.

Camden is located on the east bank of the Delaware River, directly opposite Philadelphia. Camden has its share of entertainment options, with several local bars/restaurants, an aquarium, minor league baseball stadium, and the region’s leading outdoor concert venue all within walking distance. Also, there is a subway line that runs through the downtown and provides access to the major entertainment and cultural attractions in Philadelphia in less than ten minutes. Additionally, a light rail train line runs through the downtown to the Amtrak/NJ Transit station in Trenton, NJ, with direct links to New York City.

**On-Site Supervisor:**
David Foster (’98), President
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David Foster, a 1998 W&L graduate, will be overseeing this program for CFP. He has experience managing summer internship programs in his previous job as an attorney at a large law firm in Philadelphia and is committed to making sure that students have a structured and meaningful summer experience. He would take responsibility for working with the staff in Lexington to ensure a successful placement for all students in Camden, including assistance with housing and other logistics. Dave is also heavily involved with the Philadelphia region’s alumni.
chapter and will work to bring local alumni together to meet with the students during the summer.

**Supervision Plan:**
CFP will assign the student to one of its departments depending on the student’s interests. The student’s direct supervisor will be one of the company’s vice presidents. The student will be working closely with the supervisor on a daily basis. There will be many opportunities outside of the specific job description to attend meetings on other issues/projects related to development in the city.

**Preparation:**
No background checks or physical exams are required. The following background materials will be helpful (but not required) reading. Materials will include (but not be limited to):

- *BIDs: Business Improvement Districts* (2nd ed.) by Lawrence O. Houstoun, Jr. (Urban Land Institute)
- Compilation of BID articles from leading journals and trade publications (to be compiled)
- *Camden After the Fall*, Howard Gillette, Jr. (Univ. of Penn. Press)

**Additional Comments:**
The city of Camden consistently ranks among the poorest cities in the United States, yet it has a plethora of resources that offer a great deal of hope for an economic rebirth. It is located directly across the river from the sixth largest city in America, has extraordinary infrastructure and transportation access by rail, sea and air, and is surrounded by riverfront on three sides. After decades of severe decline, the level of economic activity has been on the rise, with more than five hundred million dollars of reinvestment over the past five years. But, there is still a great deal to be done. People in Camden often say that it is as if someone took all of the major problems of the inner city—drugs, crime, a failing education system, public health issues, lack of economic advancement—and dropped them on a small town (the city’s population is less than 80,000 residents). That is to say, Camden offers a front-row look at the major issues of urban poverty in a setting that is small enough for a student to truly get involved and make a difference. For a program that proposes to study poverty, it is (unfortunately) difficult to think of a better place to do it. Having a strong local W&L alumni network as a valuable and available resource makes the placement location even more compelling.