

THE HOTEL BLANCHE

A KEY DOWNTOWN CATALYST PROJECT

The City of Lake Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) was established in 1981 to create an area in which the Central Lake City Business District would evolve into a more dynamic office, service, financial, entertainment, residential and governmental area. The initial “*Lake City Downtown CRA Action Plan*” from 1981 was completely revised in November 2011. Now known as the *CRA Redevelopment Master Plan*, public involvement and input during the 2011 revision provided assurance that the 1981 plan framework for the City’s Business District was brought forward to the present. Thus, today’s Master Plan defines a clear community vision and policy direction for the City’s downtown redevelopment program. As may be gleaned from the following November 2011 CRA Master Plan excerpts, the Historic Hotel Blanche is recognized as a “Key Community Asset” and must be perceived as crucial to the successful revitalization of the CRA’s Central Business District. Within the Plan, the Blanche is appropriately designated a key private sector Catalyst Project in the downtown which presents an immense opportunity in support of the City’s historic preservation and downtown redevelopment goals.

REDEVELOPMENT OF THE HOTEL BLANCHE – CRA Master Plan Goal

- The Hotel Blanche is the central spine of the Historic Downtown CRA District and its location is pivotal to creating a “sense of arrival” to downtown Lake City. The CRA Master Plan envisions the Blanche for a variety of “moderate density” mixed-use redevelopment purposes which may include restaurants, retail shops, antique stores, business offices, Art Gallery, meeting/conference facility and condos.
- The CRA Master Plan identifies redevelopment of the Hotel Blanche as a key private sector driven project in the downtown and presents an opportunity to create an extremely desirable destination use that will support the City’s historic preservation and local economic development goals. The 2011 Master Plan recommends the CRA to continue an aggressive effort culminating with adaptive redevelopment of the Blanche.
- The Hotel Blanche qualified and was listed on the United States Department of the Interior “National Register of Historic Places on January 18, 1990. It is noted that the present setting for the Hotel Blanche is little changed from the early 1900s. Regrettably, the Hotel’s condition has continued to deteriorate and only three tenants remain (Chasteen’s, Blanche Barber, and a Beauty Salon.) A structural assessment was completed June 14, 2010 which reveals the building is basically sound and capable of being renovated for conventional occupancy.
- Integrity Development Partners, (IDP) LLC, a Georgia Company registered to do business in Florida proposes to redevelop and operate the Hotel Blanche in partnership with the City of Lake City and Columbia County under terms and conditions yet to be agreed upon. The proposal is for mixed use of the Blanche’s 79,600 square feet consisting of commercial space, office space, residential units, and a conference room. Construction financing is proposed by IDP in partnership with the City and County by means of conventional financing, Federal Historic Tax Credits, Federal New Market Tax Credits, soft loans/grants and developer equity projected at approximately \$14 million.
- An Economic & Fiscal Impacts Analysis was prepared on December 12, 2014 by Fishkind and Associates Economic Consultants. The analysis reveals positive community value in the form of significant economic impact both during construction and upon completed redevelopment of the Hotel Blanche. The Report is available for public review upon request.

"The Hotel Blanche," in Lake City, Florida

During this meeting, The Lake City Community Redevelopment Advisory Committee and representatives from Integrity Development Partners (IDP) will present and introduce an opportunity for the future of the historic *Blanche Hotel*. As a Nationally registered historic site, *The Blanche Hotel* is a critical element in our community's rich history. Discussion topics will cover the history of *The Blanche*, as well as proposed restoration and development plans for the future. The meeting is open to the public and all members of our community are encouraged to attend.