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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CITY COMMITS \$4.2M FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, DOWNTOWN TRANSFORMATION**

Sanford, NC – November 16, 2022 – Sanford City Council has committed to spending \$4,268,444 for four transformative community initiatives, as defined by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Passed in 2021, ARPA Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds were designed to help local governments recover from the COVID-19 pandemic by investing in projects that will benefit communities for years to come. These funds can make an even greater impact when combined with other grant opportunities and collaborations.

“Our major goal is to leverage these funds to truly transform our community for generations to come,” says Mayor Rebecca Wyhof Salmon. “We have this rare opportunity to jumpstart the next wave of revitalization,” she says.

The City of Sanford received \$9,588,012 in ARPA Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. However, the act stipulates that all its funding be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026– not leaving much time for significant impact.

To allow for more time and get the most benefit, Sanford City Council chose to obligate its ARPA funding for premium payments and revenue replacement for salaries and benefits. This decision frees up an equal amount of funding to invest in initiatives that may take longer than the 2026 deadline to complete but will have a more significant and lasting impact.

“While we have obligated ARPA funds to revenue replacement, we still want to meet the spirit of the Act by leveraging grant opportunities, working with community partners, and focusing on collaboration to achieve our goals,” Salmon says.

In that spirit, Sanford City Council committed to the following:

- **\$690,444 to provide and protect affordable housing.** The City of Sanford will contract with Brick Capital Community Development Corporation to provide home buyer education. The City will loan funds to Brick Capital and the Sanford Affordable Housing Development Corporation to help with the cost of maintaining or improving existing affordable housing stock.
- **\$703,000 to renovate the Depot building.** Recognizing the vital role of Depot Park in downtown Sanford's success, the City of Sanford will renovate the historic Depot building for modern use. Private donors and the General Assembly have contributed a combined \$600,000 for this effort.
- **\$2,800,000 to begin the Sanford Central Green transformation.** The City of Sanford will begin transforming the area between downtown and Weatherspoon Street into "Sanford Central Green" by building the Sanford Agricultural Marketplace, which has received funding from Pilgrim's, the Tobacco Trust Fund, North Carolina Rural Transformation Grant Fund, and Farm Bureau Insurance. Sanford Central Green will be a multi-use community green space anchored by the marketplace that serves as a connector between a future downtown mobility hub and City Hall.
- **\$75,000 for a downtown strategic plan.** The City will fund a study that develops a strategic plan for infrastructure and other improvements in downtown Sanford. Specifically, the study will focus on the area's residential and retail needs while also determining the best location for additional parking and other improvements.

These initiatives fall in line with the City of Sanford's ARPA-related funding previously committed, which include:

- **\$315,000 to the Outreach Mission shelter.** Lee County Government and the City of Sanford allocated \$315,000 each to OMI for program services to address homelessness.
- **\$250,000 for a home repair program.** Lee County Government and the City of Sanford allocated \$250,000 each to help low-income residents with urgent home repairs. Funds allocated by the City may only be used for homes located inside Sanford's city limits.
- **\$850,000 to Brick Capital Community Development Corporation** to provide infrastructure for a new affordable housing project off Washington Avenue that will provide a 45 single-family lot land trust model subdivision and a 16-unit apartment complex for supportive housing. This \$850,000 is supplemented by a matching grant from Lee County Government and a \$950,000 Community Development Block Grant.

All of these initiatives align with the City of Sanford's Strategic Framework, a guideline developed to ensure smart, planned growth. Specifically, the ARPA-related projects fall under Goal 1: Economic Prosperity for All, Goal 2: Preserving & Creating Affordable Housing, Goal 3: Vibrant Downtown, and Goal 4: Planning & Infrastructure Growth.

As most of these projects are already in the preliminary stages, residents can expect to see movement on them in the near future.

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