MKSK

Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan

Final Report | February 2020

LANCASTER
THE RED ROSE CITY

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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1.0 | Introduction

1.1 Background

Purpose

As it approaches the bicentennial of its original incorporation, the City of Lancaster, South Carolina is faced with many questions:

- How do we create a stable economic foundation?
- What is our competitive advantage?
- How do we engage productively with our immediate surroundings and larger Charlotte metro region?
- How do we balance desired future growth with preserving the unique and beloved qualities of the Red Rose City?
- How do we create a unified vision for the future of our historic Downtown and design a road map to get there?

The City of Lancaster engaged the urban planning consultancy MKSK to work with the community in tackling these questions, with a special focus on the last issue. Through an iterative process of sharing, critiquing, and refining plan concepts and alternatives, the consultants collaborated with City staff, a stakeholder advisory committee, appointed and elected officials, and the citizens of Lancaster to advance a shared vision for the future of the City's historic Downtown.

Project Area

The project area consists of a Downtown study area and a smaller focus area within the district. The study area includes property in and adjacent to Downtown, roughly a half-mile radius from the intersection of Meeting Street and Main Street. The focus area includes the major blocks within the City's historic Downtown core.

Project Goals

The project featured the development of a creative, comprehensive, market-based development plan for the revitalization of Downtown. The primary goals of the *Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan* are to:

- Craft a clear vision for the revitalization of Downtown;
- Develop a detailed action plan that includes a market assessment; and
- Provide preliminarily assistance with the implementation of the plan to ensure the achievement of the vision.

The project study area includes a smaller focus area (outlined) for which detailed recommendations were developed.
Focus Area
Meeting St
White St
Market St
Main St
Dunlap St
Calawba St
Gay St
French St
Arch St
York St
Chesterfield St
Lancaster County Offices
USC Native American Studies Center
Red Rose Park
Springs Block
Mural & Sculpture Park
Lancaster County Library
City Hall
Williams St
Cultural Arts Center
Wylie Street Pool
Sidewalk
Green & Open Space
Facade w/ Public Frontage
Focus Area

1.2 Planning Process

Project Phases & Tasks

This project featured an eleven month-long planning process, which started in February 2019 and concluded in early 2020. The four primary phases of work included:

Phase 1: Project Initiation

In Phase 1, the consultants conducted background research and convened community-based groups to guide plan development. Additionally, the consultants worked with stakeholders to develop a community engagement strategy with guiding principles to ensure opportunities for community input and an intentionally-crafted set of project goals and objectives.

Phase 2: Understanding

In Phase 2, the consultants engaged key stakeholders and conducted desktop and on-site research into the physical, social, economic, and environmental existing conditions in Downtown Lancaster. The consultants researched the plans, policies, and market conditions that underpin the physical environment. They worked directly with downtown stakeholders to prepare a comprehensive, data-based inventory of opportunities and constraints that frame future recommendations. Throughout Phase 2, the team engaged local stakeholders and directly involved the general public in the planning process.

Phase 3: Strategies & Recommendations

In Phase 3, the consultants coordinated with a working group and stakeholder advisory committee to develop a unified vision for Downtown Lancaster. This vision incorporated robust strategies for physical, economic, and community development. The project team then identified opportunities, policies, catalytic projects, and implementation strategies to sustain and lead to the stability and vibrancy of Downtown Lancaster.

Phase 4: Deciding & Implementing

In Phase 4, the consultants developed a set of strategic recommendations for actions required to implement the vision and goals of the plan. These recommendations identify a set of strategies and tactics for encouraging social and economic opportunity and ensuring that the entire Lancaster community will share in the growth of Downtown in the coming years.

The project started in February 2019 and concluded in early 2020. The major phases and tasks are outlined below.

feb
mar
apr
may
jun
jul
aug
sep
oct
nov
dec to 2020

Phase 1: Project Initiation

1.01 Staff Kickoff Meeting
1.02 Project Management Protocol
1.03 Working Group and Stakeholder Committee Establishment
1.04 Community Engagement Strategy
1.05 Draft Guiding Principles (Working Group Meeting #1)

Phase 2: Understanding

2.01 Stakeholder Committee Meeting #1
2.02 Downtown Tour
2.03 Policy and Plan Review and Analysis
2.04 Community Life Analysis
2.05 Existing Conditions and Physical Environment Analysis
2.06 3-D Model
2.07 Market Analysis
2.08 Benchmarking and Downtown Case Study Analysis
2.09 Focus Group Meetings
2.10 Working Group Meeting #2
2.11 Stakeholder Committee Meeting #2
2.12 Public Meeting #1
2.13 Community-Facilitated Public Engagement

Phase 3: Strategies & Recommendations

3.01 Physical Environment Strategies/Recommendations
3.02 Financial and Economic Development Strategies/Recommendations
3.03 Community Branding and Marketing Concepts
3.04 Urban Design Workshop
3.05 Stakeholder Committee Meeting #3
3.06 Public Meeting #2

Phase 4: Deciding & Implementing

4.01 Draft Downtown Revitalization Plan
4.02 Working Group Meetings
4.03 Stakeholder Committee Meeting #4
4.04 Public Meeting #3
4.05 Final Plan Document
4.06 Final 3D Model
4.07 Executive Summary Brochure
4.08 Plan Adoption
4.09 Plan Roll-Out

1.3 Guiding Principles

Significance

The best plans are those that are grounded in shared values, not assumptions about what is best for a community. Although a team of consultants developed the strategies and recommendations in this plan, they made a deliberate effort to listen and learn from Lancaster stakeholders and residents to understand the important issues, opportunities, and desired outcomes of the Downtown revitalization planning process.

Consensus Principles

In an effort to clearly understand the values that resonate with the Lancaster community, the consultants worked with the stakeholder committee to develop the following series of guiding principles to illuminate the path forward and serve as benchmarks to pursue throughout the planning process.

1. Establish a unique and memorable district brand identity rooted in Lancaster's rich history and cultural assets.
2. Reposition Downtown Lancaster as a lively and accessible live-work-play district.
3. Focus on strengthening and revitalizing Downtown Lancaster's built environment.
4. Promote strategies that attract and retain talent while fostering redevelopment & growth.
5. Create an action-oriented plan that capitalizes on Downtown Lancaster's current momentum and maximizes its future potential.
6. Invite the community to help shape the future of Downtown Lancaster through a transparent & participatory planning process.

2.0 | Understanding

2.1 Existing Conditions

Introduction

Throughout early 2019, the consultants conducted an existing conditions analysis of Downtown Lancaster that included the following issues:

- History and significance
- Community life
- Points of interest
- Road network
- Pedestrian network
- Urban form
- Parking
- Main Street streetscape
- Open and green space
- Regulatory environment
- Property ownership

This chapter provides a summary of observations that are relevant to a full understanding of the district.

Significance

For two centuries, Historic Downtown Lancaster has functioned as a center of government, culture, commerce, and community life for Lancaster County and beyond.

As the heart of the City and Lancaster County, Downtown is a home to numerous local government services, including Lancaster County Administration, the Lancaster County Courthouse, and Lancaster City Hall.

Downtown is a center of culture and is a district that includes many of the community's oldest church congregations, dozens of national and state register historic structures, and unique public spaces such as Mural/Sculpture Park and Red Rose Park. Downtown itself is recognized as a Cultural Arts District by the State of South Carolina. The legacy of the community's textile heritage is still evident in the Springs Block, which occupies an entire block of Main Street in the center of the Downtown.

Downtown is also a place that brings the Lancaster community together. It provides the venue for the City's signature public event, the Red Rose Festival, as well as parades and performances. It is home to the USC-Lancaster Native American Studies Center, a unique facility that pairs public education and research with a large collection of Catawba and other Native American artifacts. Additionally, Downtown features numerous community-inspired murals and other public art that reflect the pride of place that residents have in Lancaster.

However, Downtown in its current condition (physical, business mix) is not the center of activity and commerce for the residents of other parts of Lancaster County. For all its assets and amenities, it is not a place that people outside of the City think of when it comes to a place to go, to shop, or to be entertained. In the coming years, a revitalized Downtown could become a destination for Lancaster residents, County residents, and even a place where folks in Indian Land can go to to get local culture and commerce.

Shriners Parade - Main Street 1970

St. Patrick's Day Parade - Main Street 1985

Street Festival - Main Street Present Day

Community Life

Downtown plays a central role in community life in Lancaster. The district provides the backdrop and specific locations for a variety of activities and events throughout the year.

Downtown Events

Downtown is home to Lancaster's signature event - the Red Rose Festival - every May. Throughout the Spring and early Summer, Downtown offers a series of concerts as well as a weekly outdoor event (Finally Friday!). Throughout the Fall and Winter, events take on a seasonal flair, with Halloween and Christmas-themed events and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebrations driving the highest event attendance levels.

Downtown Venues

Downtown features several event venues, including the USC-L Native American Studies Center, Leroy Springs House, and Cultural Arts Center. Other venues include private artist studios (Bob Doster's Backstreet Studio and Chastain's Studio) as well as local businesses (the Craft Stand).

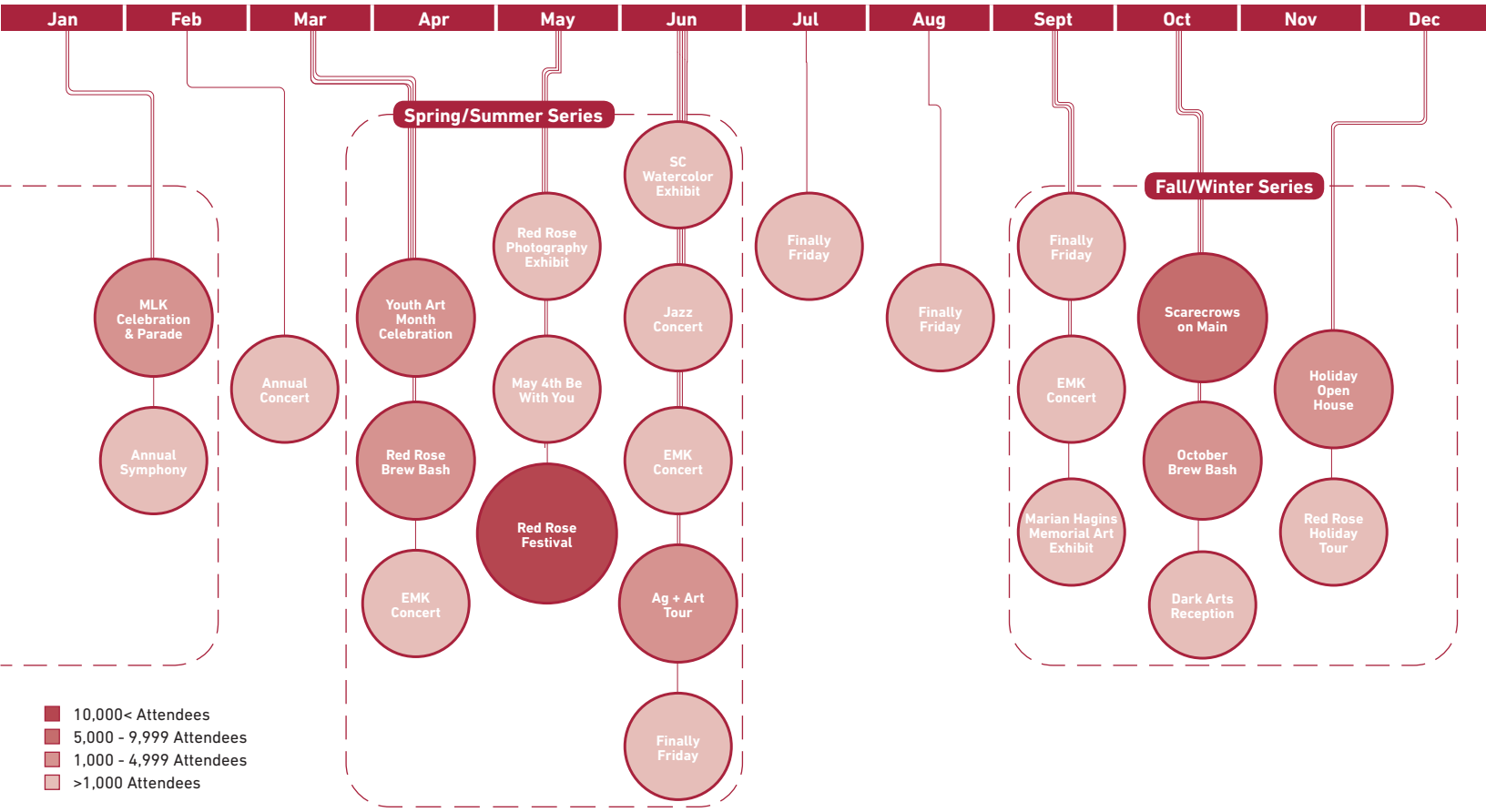
For larger events and parades, Main Street and Gay Street are utilized as the primary venues. Arch and French Streets provide secondary locations for event space when needed.

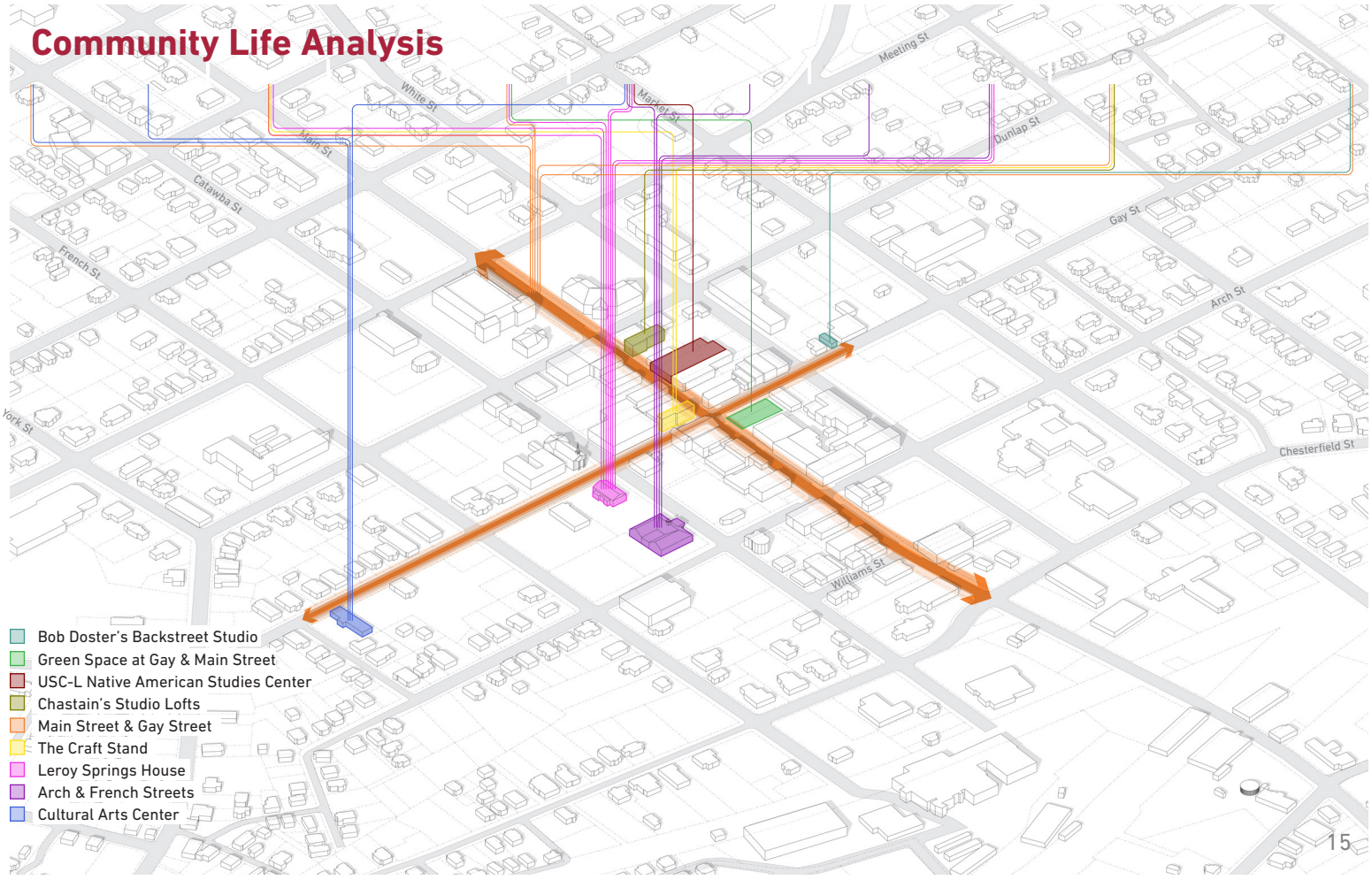
Red Rose Festival

Red Rose Festival

Christmas Parade

Community Life Analysis





Assets, Features, & Points of Interest

Downtown Lancaster enjoys a wealth of significant amenities, buildings, and activity centers.

Assets

Downtown itself is both a designed historic and cultural arts district by the State of South Carolina. Key assets within Downtown include the government offices for the City of Lancaster and Lancaster County. Other key assets include historic churches (such as the AME Zion Church and First United Methodist Church) and institutions such as USC-Lancaster (the USC-L Native American Studies Center is located on Main Street). Downtown is also an employment center for small, locally-owned businesses. The district's residential offerings include single-family detached units and apartment buildings (including some upper story loft units)

Features

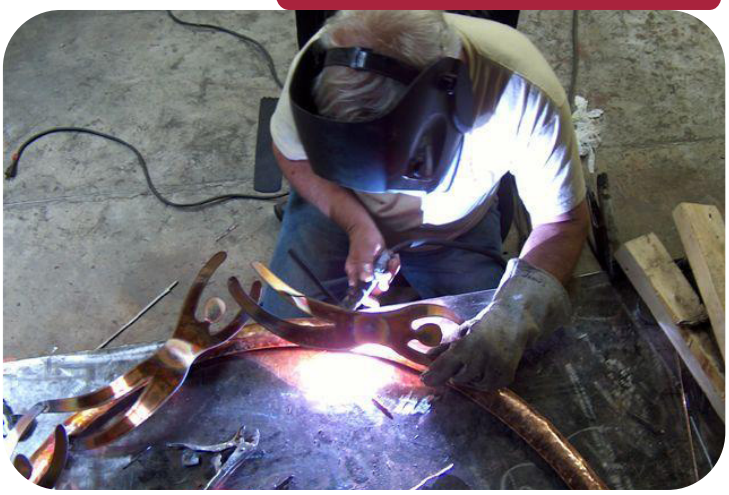
Downtown is a walkable, grid-based district with a tree-lined Main Street and (mostly) gently sloping terrain. Signature public spaces include Sculpture/Mural Park, Red Rose Park, and the Old Courthouse Green. Public art is located throughout the district, and street banners and benches feature student artwork.

Points of Interest

There are too many points-of-interest to list, but Downtown includes two historic Robert Mills-designed buildings (the Old Courthouse and Old Jail), the Leroy Springs House (which houses the Lancaster County Council of the Arts), the Old Bank of Lancaster building. Numerous murals and sculptures dot the district. The Lancaster County Library Main Branch is located on the edge of Downtown, as is the Cultural Arts Center (which is located in the Old Presbyterian Church).

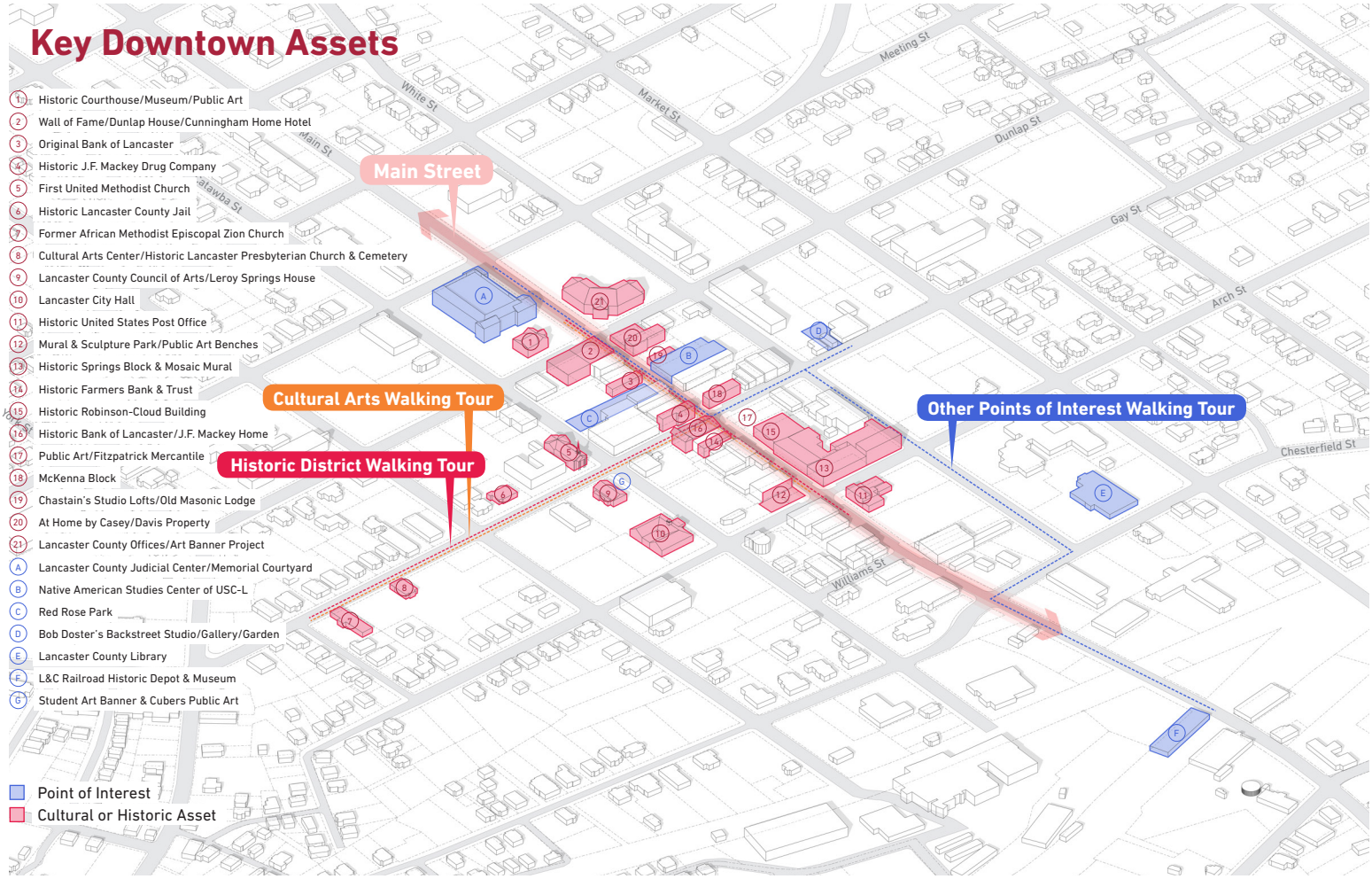
USC-L Native American Studies Center

Bob Doster's Backstreet Studio

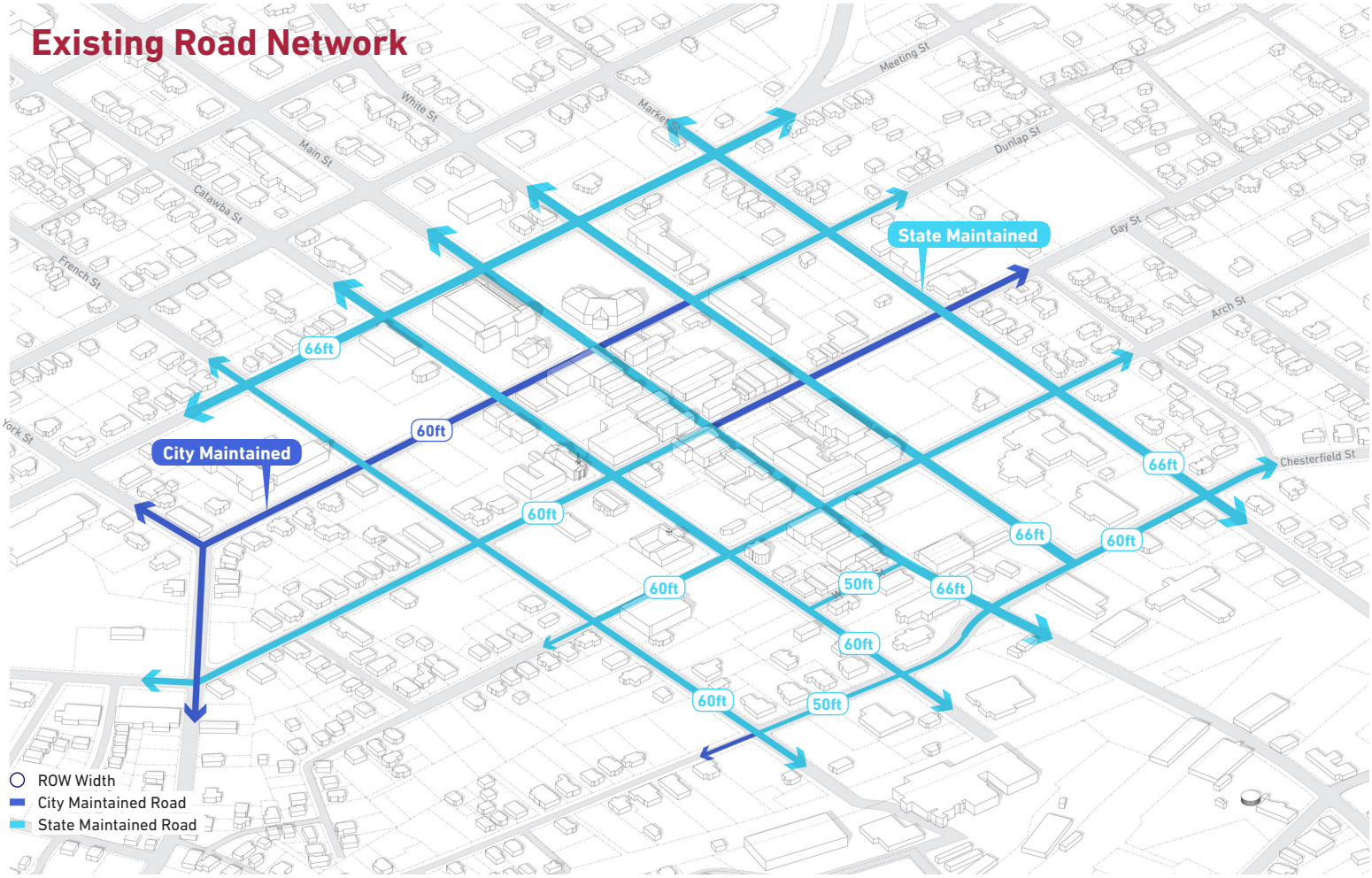


Outdoor Painted Sculpture Series

Key Downtown Assets



Existing Road Network



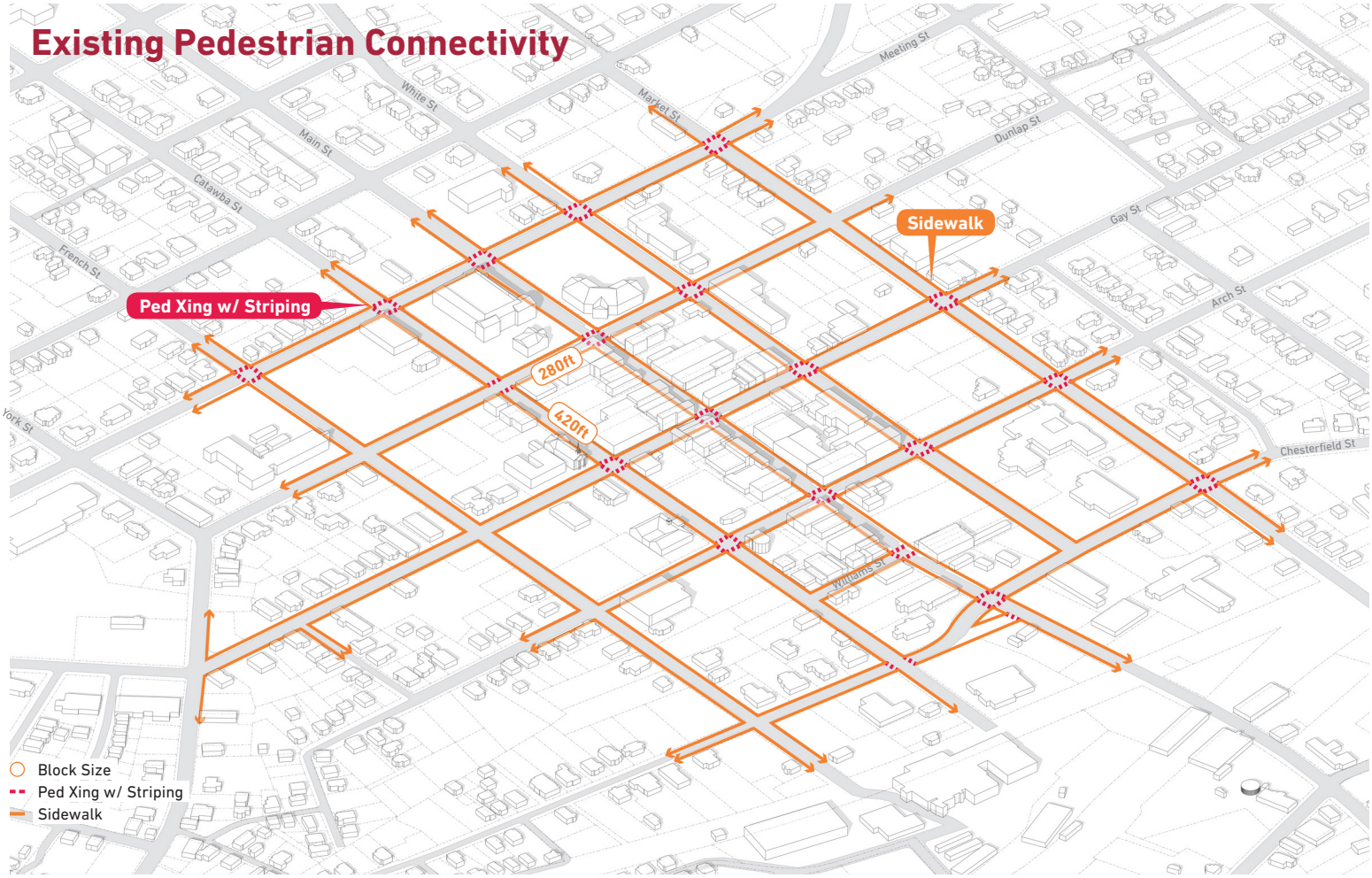
Road Network

Downtown Lancaster features a traditional, human-scaled, grid-based roadway network. (This general layout is common for historic downtown districts.) Short Downtown blocks include mostly two-lane roads with relatively wide rights-of-way of 60' to 66'. Some roads include center turn lanes, on-street parking, and painted bicycle "sharrows" to make motorists aware of on-street bicycle travel.

Main Street is designated as U.S. Route 521 Business, which runs to the Highway 9 Bypass to the north and 521 Bypass to the south of the project area. Within the district, East Arch Street and West Meeting Street are designated as SC Highway 9.

The majority of the Downtown road network is state (rather than city) maintained, which is typical for South Carolina cities. The overall condition of Downtown roads is good and traffic congestion is minimal.

Existing Pedestrian Connectivity



Pedestrian Network

Downtown Lancaster enjoys a robust network of ADA-compliant sidewalks, crosswalks, and signals throughout the district. Although some sections of this infrastructure require maintenance or repair, its overall condition is good.

Main Street features wide sidewalks separated from the street by a vegetated curb lawn. Most other streets in the project area feature a curbed sidewalk or are set behind a smaller curb lawn.

Main Street features shade-giving street trees throughout the project area, and most of its crosswalks are stamped and painted to resemble brick pavers.

Urban Form & Appearance

Downtown Lancaster's traditional, human-scaled, grid-based roadway network supports a walkable urban form. The average block size in Downtown is 280ft x 420ft. For comparison, the average block size in Savannah, Georgia is 220ft x 320ft and Charleston, South Carolina is 230ft x 660ft. Most buildings within Downtown are between one and three stories tall and have little or no setback from the sidewalk or one another.

Set within this framework is a collection of historically designated and era-significant buildings that give Downtown Lancaster it's unique character. Main Street is home to the majority of these architectural assets.

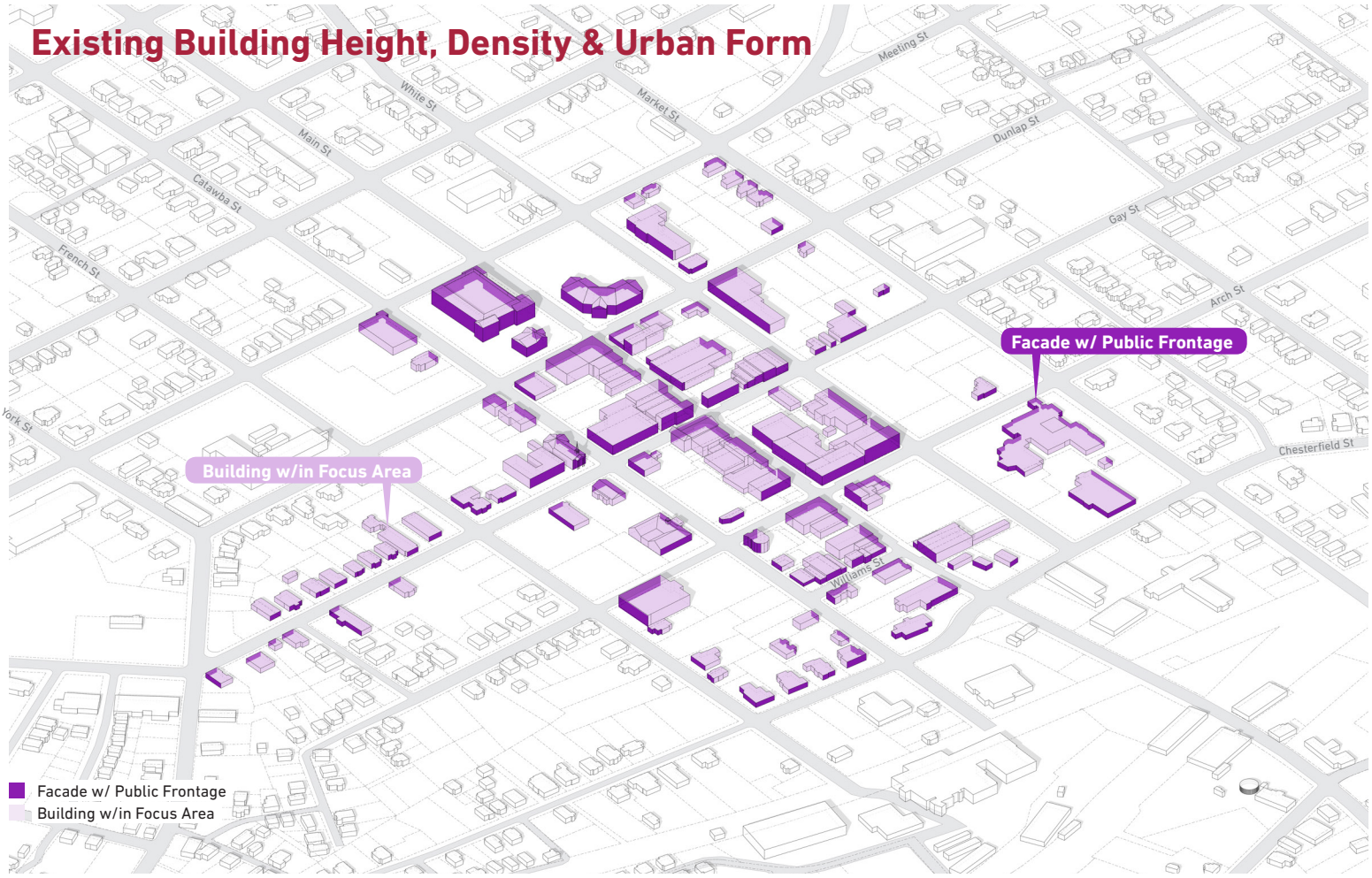
Preservation of what remains is imperative as once these resources are lost they cannot be regained. Evidence of this is visible throughout Downtown in the form of "missing teeth" where empty lots have sprung up where buildings once stood.

West Gay Corridor

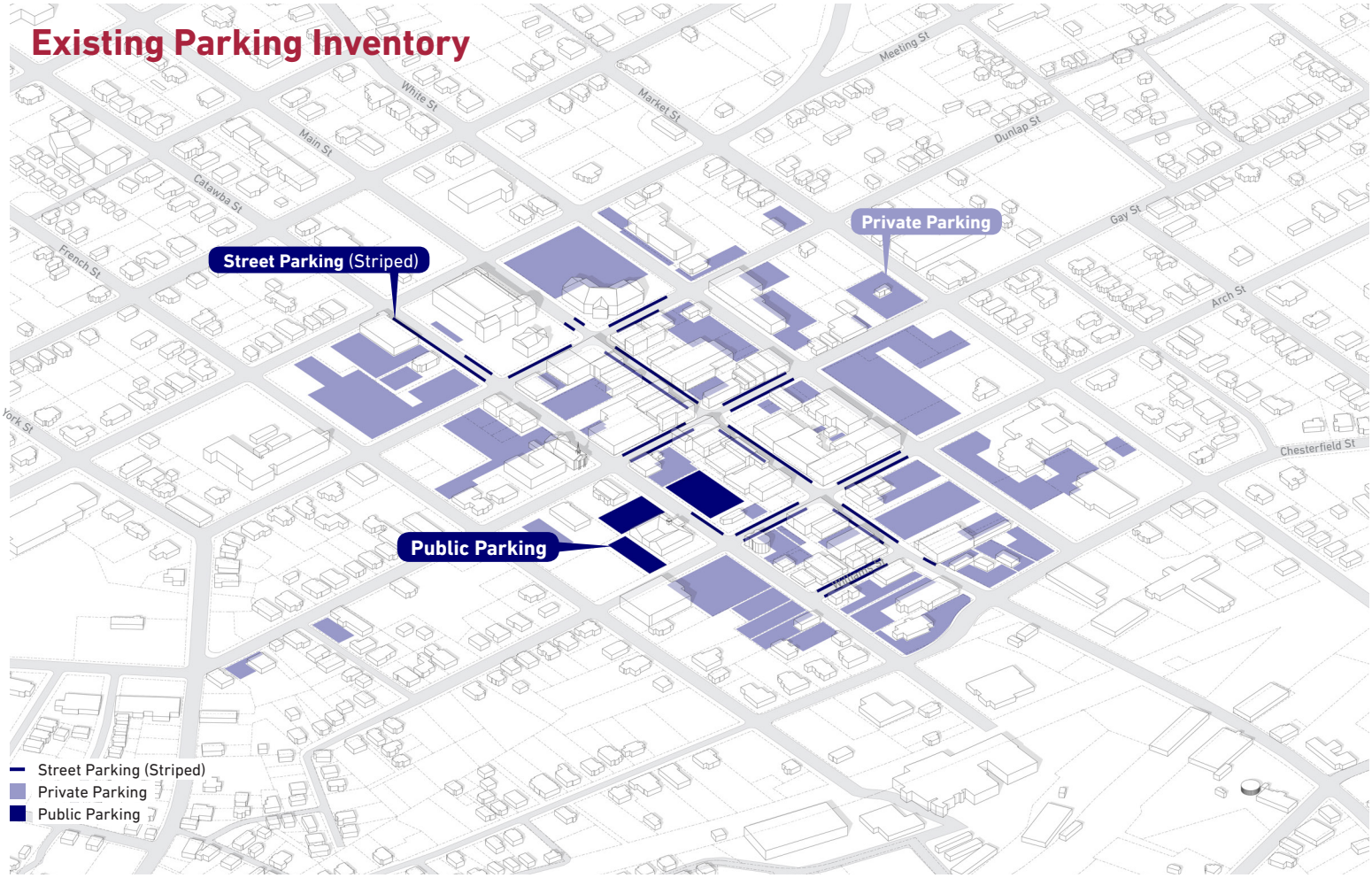
Back-of-House / Alley Access

"Missing Tooth" in Urban Fabric

Existing Building Height, Density & Urban Form



Existing Parking Inventory



Parking

Vast parking reserves exist within Downtown Lancaster. Only a small percentage of this inventory is publicly-controlled, which creates a perceived parking shortage in Downtown.

Three public parking lots exist in Downtown, all of which are located adjacent to City Hall. Public on-street parking exists throughout the district. Privately-owned, off-street surface lots account for the majority of parking resources within the district.

Main Street Streetscape

The appearance, uses, and vibrancy of Main Street streetscape has changed over the past fifty years.

1960s

Well into the 1960s, Main Street was the commercial heart of Lancaster and the surrounding area. Main Street was a vibrant district will high levels of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. One of the noticeable features of Main Street in 1968 is the prevalence of articulated signage and awnings that create visual interest along the corridor.

1990s

By the 1990s, Main Street was no longer a major destination. In fact, it was battling a decades-long trend of suburban-style growth along Downtown bypass. In 1994, the articulated signs of the 1960s have largely been removed. At the same time, the young street trees along Main Street indicate signs of public investment in the district.

2010s

By the 2010s, public investment in Main Street included decorative street lamps and traffic signals. Street trees appear mature and investment in building awnings add vibrancy to the district.

Main Street & Gay Street Looking North - 1968

Main Street & Gay Street Looking North - 1994

Main Street & Gay Street Looking North - 2018

Open & Green Space

Open & Green Space in Downtown Lancaster provides opportunities for passive recreation and reflection in the district.

Public Parks

- **Red Rose Park** - This park is located on the former site of a Main Street department store. The park, which is also accessible from Catawba Street, has a linear layout, featuring a central paved pathway and water feature that are framed by adjacent buildings, vegetation, and benches.
- **Mural and Sculpture Park** - This signature pocket park, which is located at the corner of Main Street and Arch Street, features a large mural and monumental sculptures framed by vegetation and seating.
- **Wylie Street Pool** - This facility sits on the edge of the district and features a swimming pool and weathered tennis courts, and additional green space.

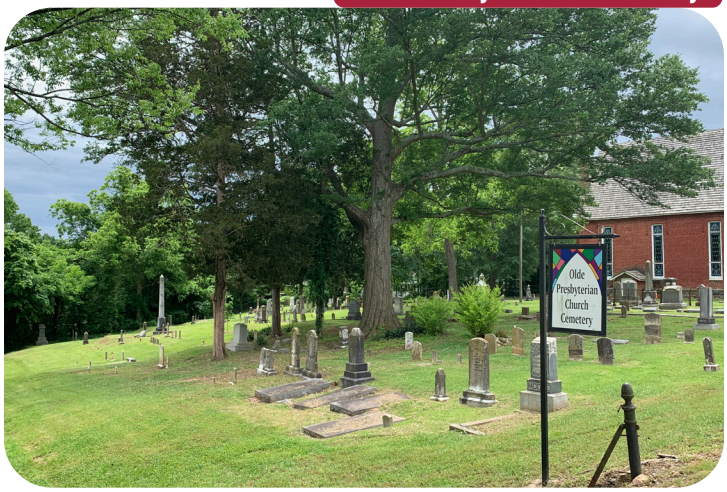
Other Open & Green Space

- **Old Courthouse Grounds:** The area surrounding the 1828 Courthouse features a well-kept lawn and historic markers (including a large Confederate monument).
- **Old Presbyterian Cemetery:** This park-like cemetery features trees and turfgrass.
- **Lancaster County Library Commons:** The grounds at the entrance to the library will be updated as part of a site-wide renovation.
- **Lancaster County Buildings:** Both the County Administration Building and Courthouse feature areas with sculpture, seating, and attractive vegetation along the Main Street corridor.
- **Lindsay Pettus Greenway:** This multi-use path, which is currently under development, lies outside of the study area but provides an opportunity for future connectivity to Downtown.

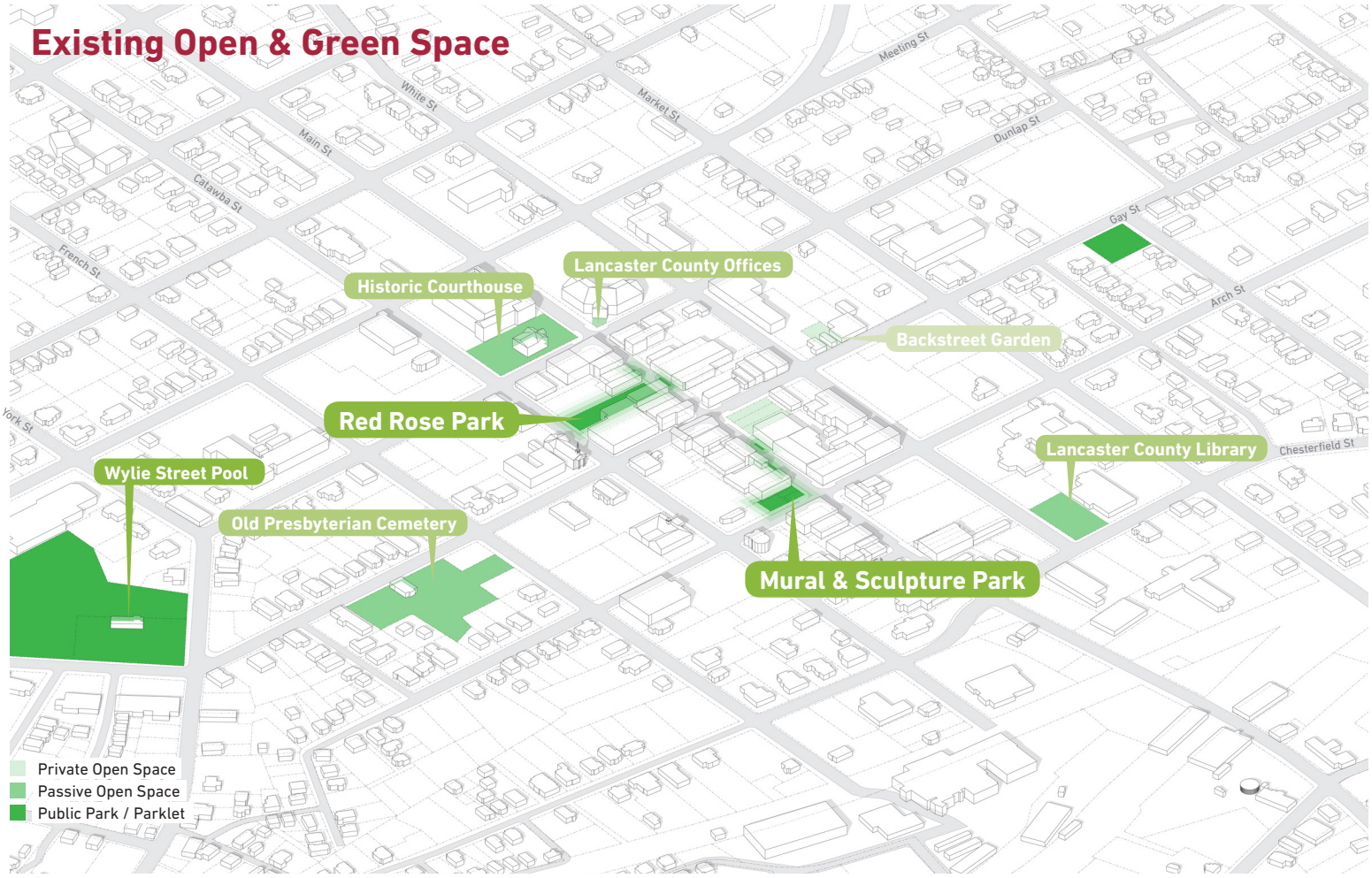
Red Rose Park Entrance

Lancaster County Library Green

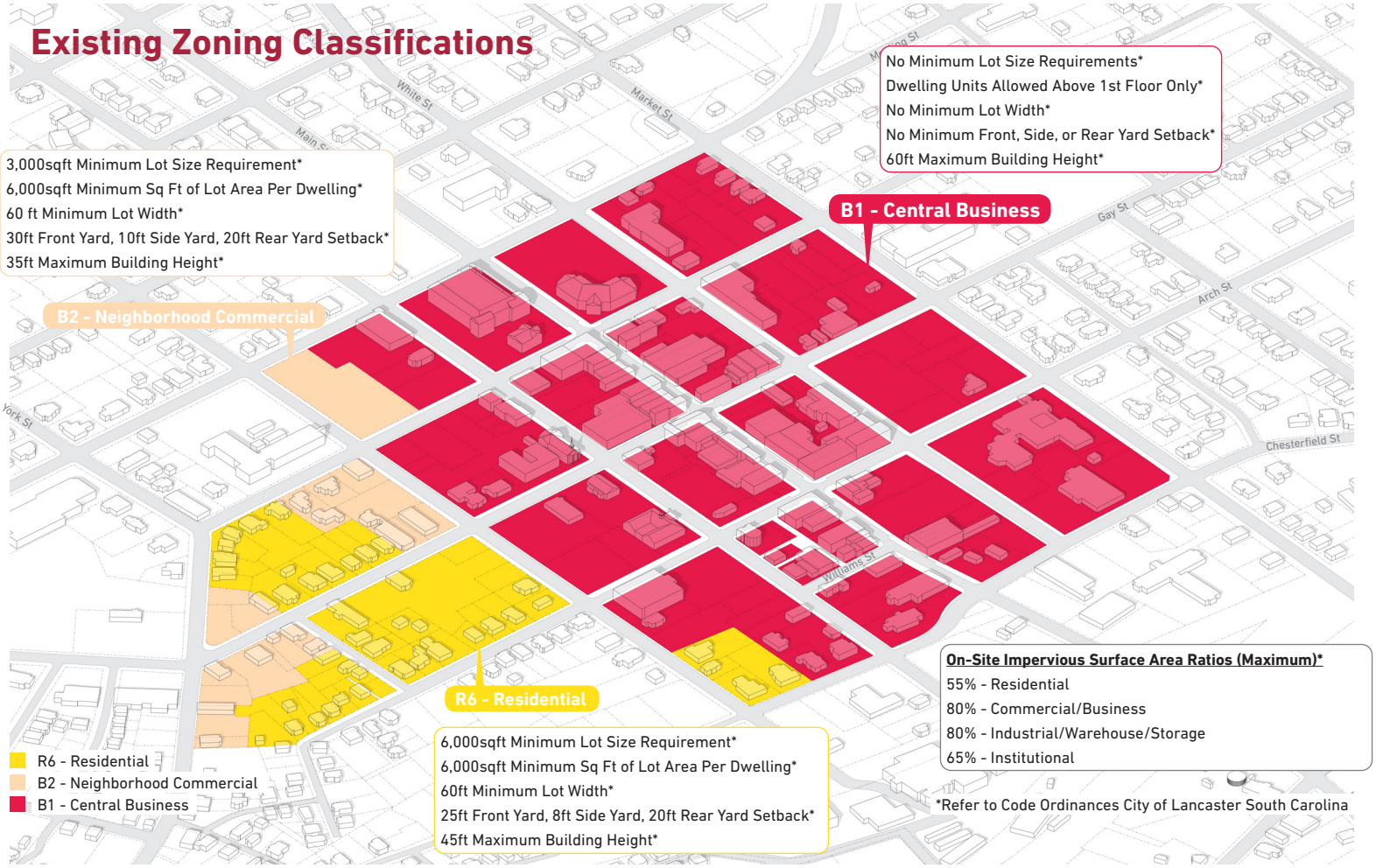
Old Presbyterian Cemetery



Existing Open & Green Space



Existing Zoning Classifications

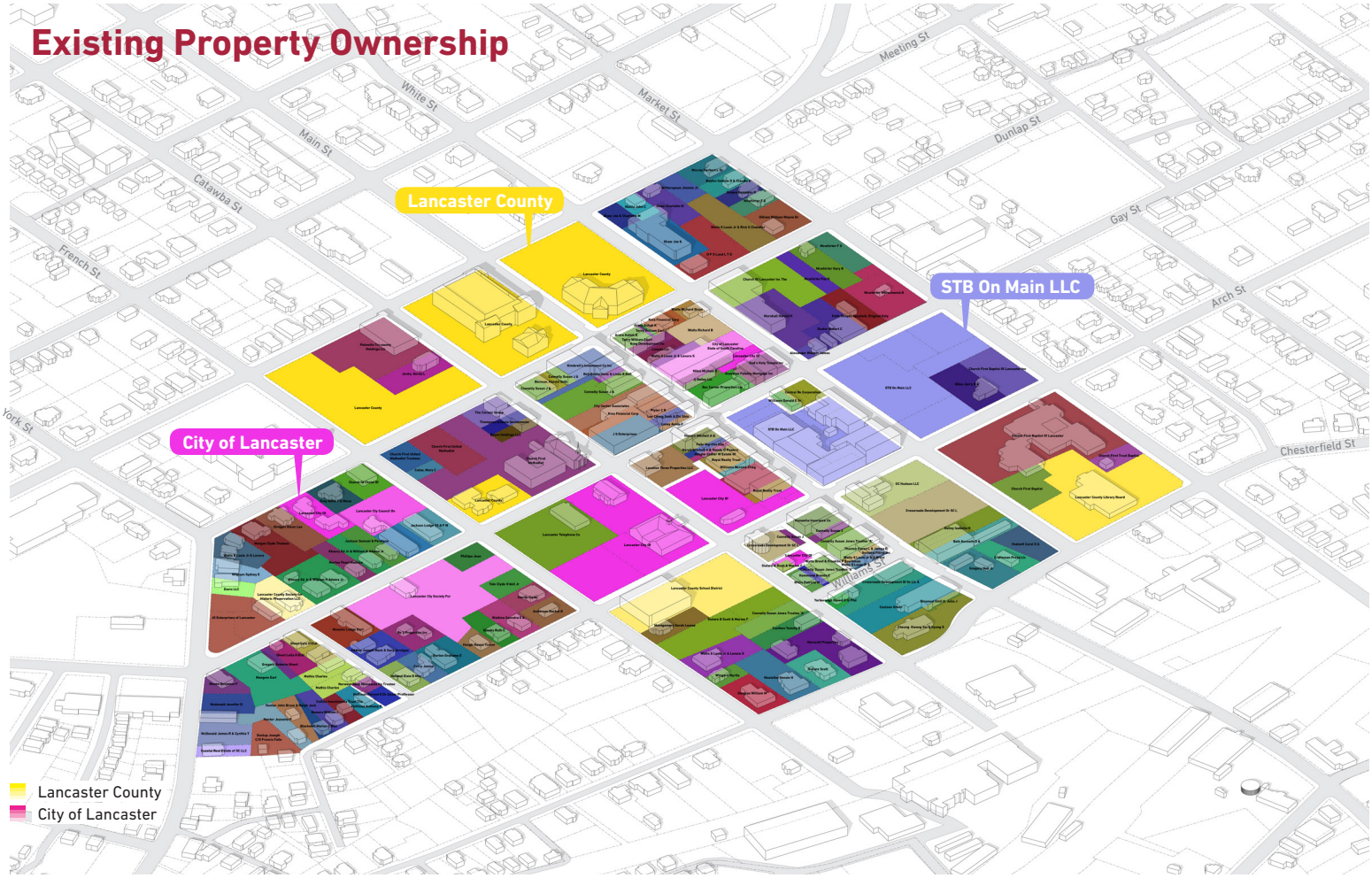


Regulatory Environment

Zoning is a tool used by local governments to guide development in accordance with existing and future needs and to promote the health, safety, convenience, order, appearance, and general welfare of present and future inhabitants of the City. Refer to the Code Ordinances City of Lancaster South Carolina for more information about zoning in general and the specifics of the three zoning districts present in Downtown Lancaster.

- R6 - Residential
- B2 - Neighborhood Commercial
- B1 - Central Business

Existing Property Ownership



Property Ownership

As is typical with many historic downtowns, property ownership in Downtown Lancaster is complex, with dozens of owners. Many property owners are inheritors, and many more are investors (whether individuals or corporations).

However, there exist a handful of key property owners in the district. These entities include:

- City of Lancaster
- Lancaster County
- STB on Main, LLC, the owner of the Springs Block (and most of the block to the east of it).

2.2 Community Guidance

Community Engagement Strategy

This project featured a deliberate community engagement process, which is detailed below.

Strategic Approach

At the outset of the planning process, the consultants developed a community outreach strategy to specify lead responsibilities and support activities between the consultant team, City staff, and other local stakeholders.

The community outreach strategy outlined roles and responsibilities for the following groups and activities:

- Working Group
- Stakeholder Committee
- Focus Groups
- Elected Officials
- Community Meetings
- Community Outreach Toolkit

Working Group

Throughout the planning process, the consultants conducted a weekly standing meeting with a working group of City staff. The City Administrator served as the direct day-to-day contact point for the consultant team.

The working group acted as the consultants' closest advisors throughout the project and provided the first level of review of all products. It assisted in assembling existing data and directing the consultants to appropriate sources of other information, providing logistical and outreach support, and scheduling and providing any needed advertising for community engagement and other meetings.

Stakeholder Committee

The working group organized a stakeholder committee consisting of representatives selected by City staff and elected officials to inform the planning process and serve as community-based advocates of the plan. The consultants met with the stakeholder committee at critical milestones to share draft findings and materials and solicit input and review. Additionally, the stakeholder committee served as a conduit for community messaging and outreach for planned public meetings.

Focus Groups

The working group organized a series of focus group meetings that the consultants conducted early in the planning process. These meetings were designed to deepen understanding of the forces shaping Downtown Lancaster and empower a broader spectrum of community members to take ownership of the planning

process. These stakeholders included public sector officials and agencies, property owners, residents, businesses, developers, philanthropies, and major employers.

Elected Officials

Lancaster City Council was involved in the planning process at multiple points throughout the project. Early in the planning process, the consultants solicited input directly from elected officials during a regularly-scheduled council meeting. The consultants provided periodic updates to City Council as well as a presentation of draft recommendations in January 2020.

Community Meetings & Survey

The consultants collaborated with the working group and the J. Marion Sims Foundation to bring the conversation about Downtown out into the community. Through a series of centralized public meetings and community-facilitated outreach efforts, the project team engaged citizens in discussions and interactive exercises with attendees on the desired vision and ideas for the future of Downtown Lancaster. The purpose of these meetings was to help the consultants understand the specific details, concerns, and opportunities facing Downtown. This effort also included the promotion of a consultant-developed online survey instrument.

Community Outreach Toolkit

The consultants worked with City staff and the J. Marion Sims Foundation to develop a toolkit of customized public engagement activities and project overview materials for use throughout the planning process. These materials included brief informational presentations and information cards to be shared at community events and meetings, as well as interactive mobile displays that were taken to community events, festivals, and neighborhood meetings to facilitate additional community conversation, reach under-represented populations, and meet people where they are comfortable discussing the future of Downtown Lancaster.

Community Meetings & Survey

Throughout the planning process, the project team worked with the City and its partners to engage the Lancaster community to solicit valuable input, develop shared ideas, and present draft and final recommendations.

Community Meeting #1

The consultants hosted the first community meeting on the evening of June 4, 2019, at the historic Robert Mills-designed County Courthouse. This meeting provided background information on the project and posed a series of "big questions" to help the project team understand perceived strengths, opportunities, challenges, and desired future vision for Downtown. Over the subsequent five weeks, the J. Marion Sims Foundation "Simterns" took the Community Meeting #1 conversation out into the community. This group of college-age volunteers hosted 17 additional community meetings across Lancaster. Each Sims Foundation-facilitated meeting featured the same exhibits and questions as the kickoff meeting.

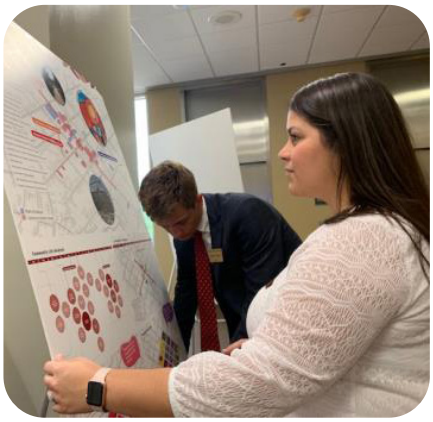
Community Survey

From May-July 2019, the consultants worked with the City and the J. Marion Sims Foundation to develop and promote an online survey aimed at broadening the reach of the community engagement effort. The survey was widely publicized, and participation was high. Of the 1,745 responses, 79% completed the survey, ~83% lived in 29720 ZIP Code, ~22% were between the ages of 45-54, ~72% were female, and 12% were African-American.

Downtown Design Workshop (Community Meeting #2)

On August 13-15, 2019, the consultants hosted a three-day design workshop at the USC-L Native American Studies Center. The workshop provided multiple opportunities for the public to drop in and discuss their ideas with the consultants. These opportunities included several hours each day for the public to "drop-in" as well as two evening open house events. The workshop week also included follow-up interviews with key stakeholders as well as a project update to City Council.

Community Outreach



Community Meeting #3

On October 7, 2019, the consultants presented draft strategies and recommendations to the community during an evening open house meeting at City Hall. The consultants conducted several follow-up meetings with property owners and stakeholder groups in the weeks following the meeting.

Community Meeting #4

On January 14, 2020, the consultants presented draft recommendations from the plan to City Council during a Council meeting at City Hall.

Community Engagement Results

The community input received during the planning process was plentiful and diverse. Below is a list of some key ideas and themes that emerged:

- Downtown is a walkable district full of public art, from murals and sculptures to street banners. These qualities are major points of pride for the community.
- Compared to places like Downtown Waxhaw, it is apparent there is a lot of work to be done to improve Downtown Lancaster.
- There exist strong desires for new housing and employment opportunities in Downtown.
- A public park with a splash pad for children is a strongly preferred amenity.
- The history of the district is unique and should be preserved. This history includes the stories and buildings that make Downtown special.
- Downtown should be a place for *EVERYONE*, not just people with money to spend on dining or concerts.
- The community must be supportive of existing businesses, but there needs to be a greater diversity of offerings to consistently draw people to Downtown.
- The community should be welcoming to new investment in Downtown, and it should prioritize locally-owned businesses.
- There is a need for new creative spaces in Downtown. Workspaces for artists, makers, and small-business owners should be a priority.
- Downtown should be a place for the community to gather, but the community needs additional reasons to visit the district.

21 community meetings were conducted during the planning process

We received over **725 comments** during the engagement process

Open from 06/02-07/31, the online survey received 1,745 responses

Community Outreach

What draws people to Downtown Lancaster?

1. Dining
2. Special Events

What are the strengths of Downtown Lancaster?

1. Unique History & Culture
2. Walkability
3. Public Art

What new ideas make sense for Downtown Lancaster?

1. Splash Pad
2. Green Space
3. Encouraging Small Business and Micro Retail
4. Gay Street Improvement

What areas need improvement? What would you like to see?

1. Support for Existing Businesses
2. A Welcoming Community for Diverse Populations
3. Connection to Surrounding Communities

When asked to describe the Downtown Lancaster of tomorrow, these ideas rose to the top...

"We need more retail, retaurants, business, apartments, etc - **more life**"

Vibrant

"Downtown should be **historic yet progressive**"

"We need public pride in downtown & to **see what's possible**"

Fun

"We need more safe pathways to **walk everywhere**"

Hopeful

"We need more family-owned businesses. **Keep the money in the community**"

Active

"We need green spaces that **encourage people to gather.**"

Lively

2.3 Market Analysis

Introduction

In Spring 2019, the consultant team conducted a market analysis for Downtown and the greater Lancaster community. This assessment identified the local market base and examined demographics, market segmentation, commercial, residential, and employment markets. This assessment developed a greater understanding of current market realities and present opportunities for the recruitment of new business and development to Downtown Lancaster.

Market Definition

The market analysis started with a ZIP Code survey of customers conducted by local businesses. The purpose of this exercise was to determine the primary and secondary trade areas to be the basis for the ensuing market research. Secondarily, the survey determined Downtown Lancaster's market penetration into the greater Charlotte metropolitan region, as well as a snapshot of the local visitor market. The participating businesses represented a variety of uses including restaurants, retail, drinking establishments, professional services, personal services, lodging, and cultural destinations.

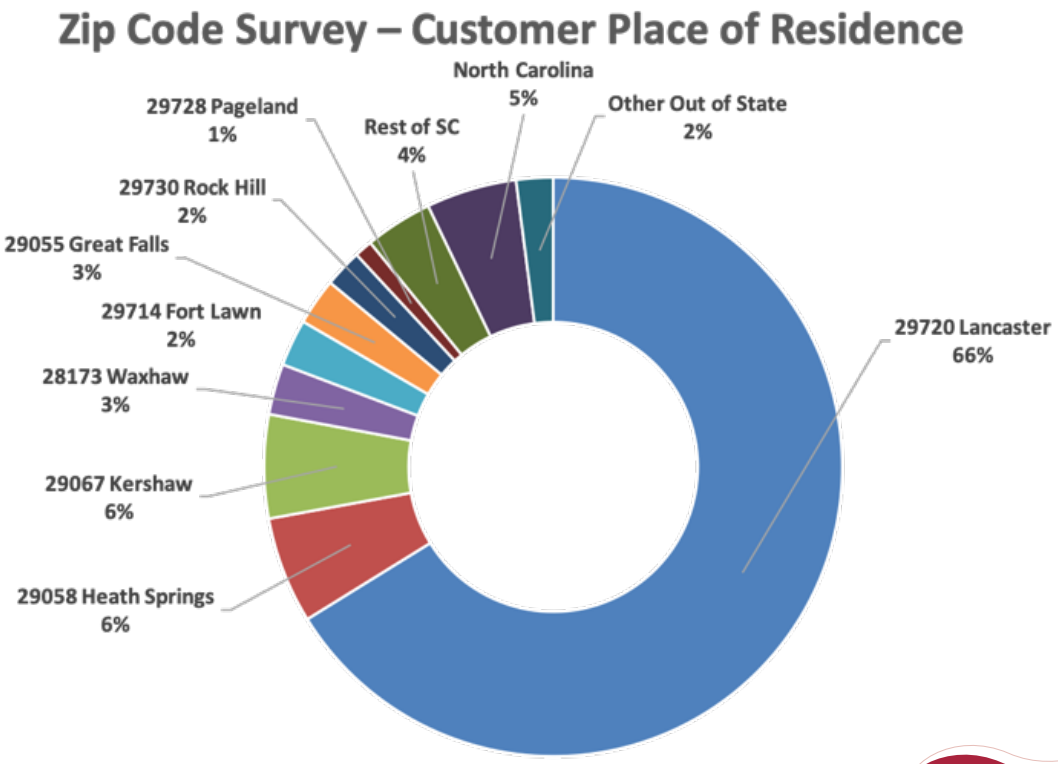
Data from the week-long survey included:

- Survey conducted April 17th – 23rd 2019
- 28 businesses participated
- 1,798 visits recorded
- 104 unique zip codes
- 17 states
- 1 foreign country

Overall, the survey showed that Downtown Lancaster has a strong local-oriented customer base:

- 66% of all customers reside in the primary Lancaster zip code 29720
- 80% live in Lancaster County
- 93% are from South Carolina, and just 2% reside outside of SC/NC

In addition, the survey showed that very few customers come from the City of Charlotte (0.8%). It also showed just 1.8% of downtown's customers come from the Indian Land area (29707). Indian Land is the high-growth part of Lancaster County and has been identified by stakeholders as being a priority to capture customers coming to downtown.



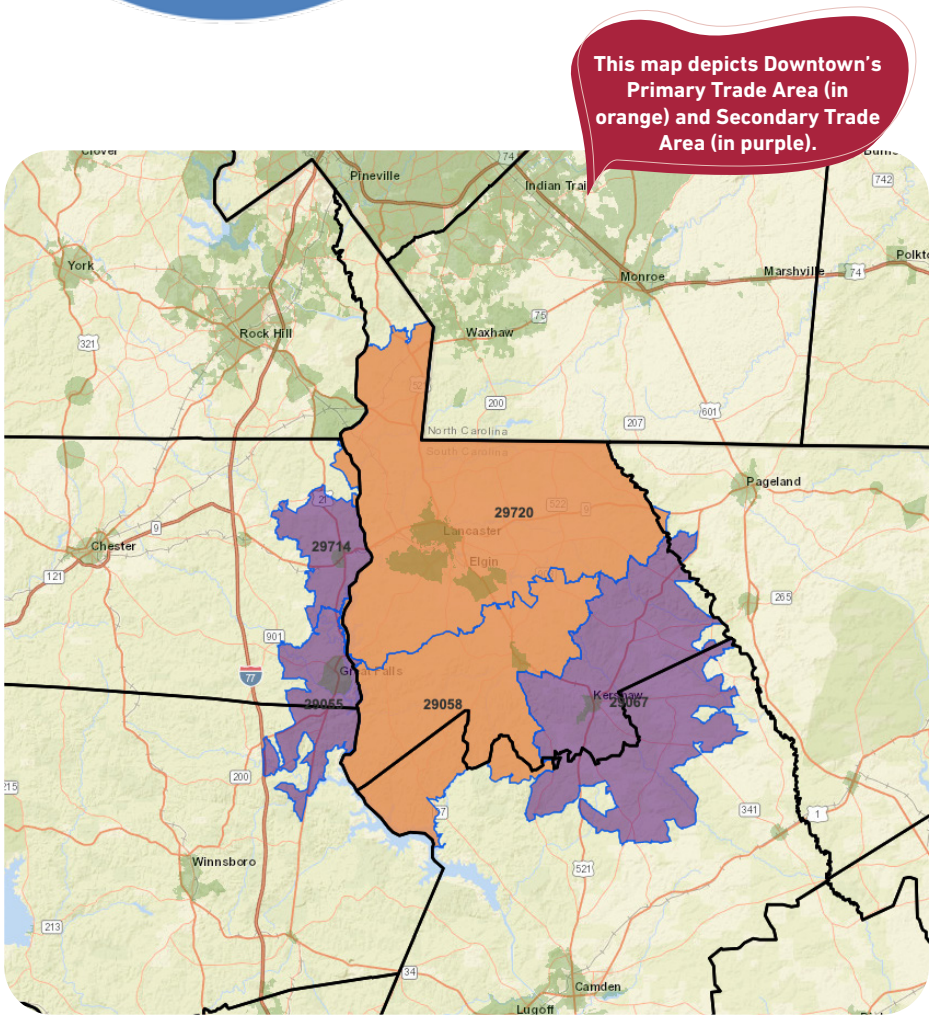
A similar ZIP Code survey was conducted in 2003. While the 2019 market is broader in terms of unique ZIP Codes and states, the local trade areas have not changed.

Primary Trade Area

Downtown Lancaster's Primary Trade Area (PTA) is comprised of the Lancaster (29720) and Heath Springs (29058) ZIP Codes. Customers from the PTA represented 72% of total visits.

Secondary Trade Area

The Secondary Trade Area (STA) for Downtown included the ZIP Codes for Fort Lawn (29714), Great Falls (29055), and Kershaw (29067). Customers living in the STA represent 11% of all visits.



Demographics

A demographic profile of Downtown Lancaster's Primary and secondary trade areas and the surrounding region examines various indicators such as population growth, income, age, and educational attainment.

Population

The estimated population for the City of Lancaster in 2019 is 9,105 people. However, Downtown businesses are relevant to a much larger area as identified by the local trade areas. Downtown's PTA has 59,512 residents while the STA has a population of 18,522 - for a combined trade area population of 78,034.

While the City of Lancaster's population has experienced moderate growth (6.8% between 2010 and 2019), the region has seen unparalleled population growth. Lancaster County grew by 57.6% between 2000 and 2019, while the Charlotte metro grew by 50.9% during the same time. Overall, the areas in the southern part of Lancaster County grew at a much slower rate.

Growth is expected to continue over the next five years, as the PTA will see 9.2% growth from 2019 to 2024. By 2024, there will be approximately 84,246 people living in the combined trade area including 2,696 new households.

Age

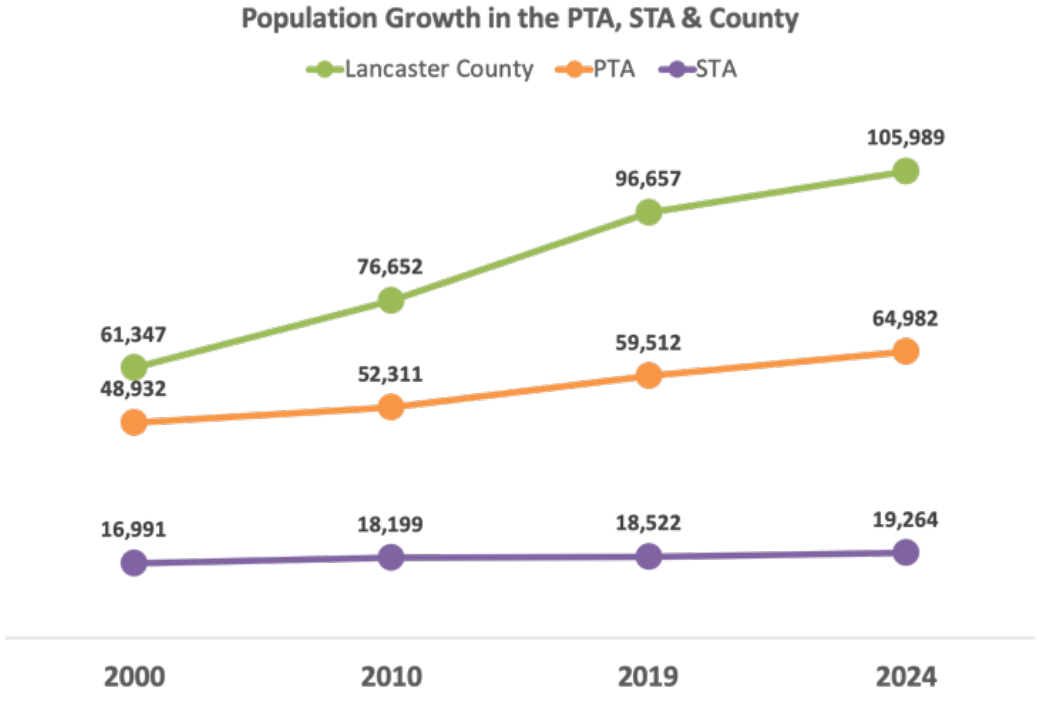
The primary trade area has a health mix of age groups with the highest segment being Baby Boomers between the ages of 55-74 (25.9% of population). Median age in the PTA is 42 and approximately 41.8% of residents are younger than 35. The City of Lancaster and the PTA trend older than the region.

Education

45% of the PTA population age 25 years or older have at least some college education, with 18% having a bachelor's degree or higher.

Income

Median household income is $47,580 in the PTA. This is compared to $56,997 in Lancaster County and $87,181 in the 29707 Indian Land zip code. The City of Lancaster has a median income of $35,991. 27.6% of families in Lancaster live below poverty levels.



Primary Trade Area Demographics

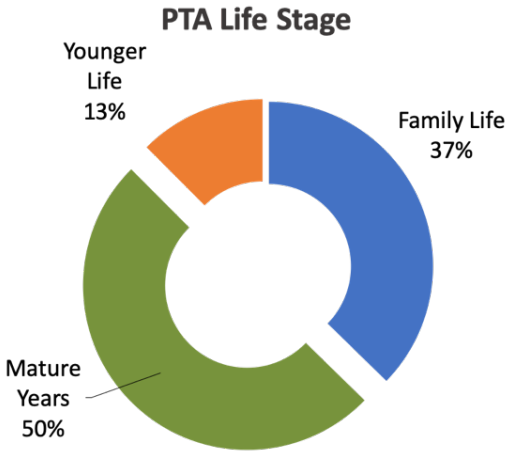
- 59,512 – 2019 Population
- 13.8% - Population growth between 2010-2019
- 42 – 2019 Median Age
- 45% = Age 25+ with at least some college education
- $47,580 = 2019 Median Household Income
- 16.12% = Families below poverty.

Market Segmentation

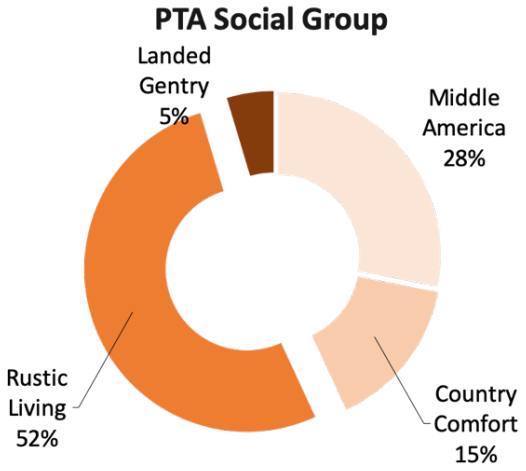
A market segmentation study provides a better understanding of the makeup of Downtown Lancaster's existing and target markets by analyzing the behavioral traits and consumer patterns of various "segments." These segments are based on demographic data including age, income, education and family structure. Segmentation data comes from the leading national market research firm Claritas. The segmentation analysis was conducted for the Primary Trade Area, Lancaster County, and the 29707 Indian Land ZIP Code. The Indian Land area was chosen as it was identified as a key growth area for downtown businesses to expand their customer base.

Life Stage

The Life Stage analysis breaks down households into three classes – Younger Years, Family Life, and Mature Years. In Downtown Lancaster's Primary Trade Area (PTA), 50% of households are classified as "Mature Years" indicating that the PTA is generally an older market demographic. When we compare this to the Indian Land area (29707), we see that the majority of its households (58%) are in the "Family Life" category. This is important to understand because while the localized trade area may be aging, the key growth area in northern Lancaster County is predominantly families, a key target demographic for Downtown businesses.



Source: Nielsen Claritas



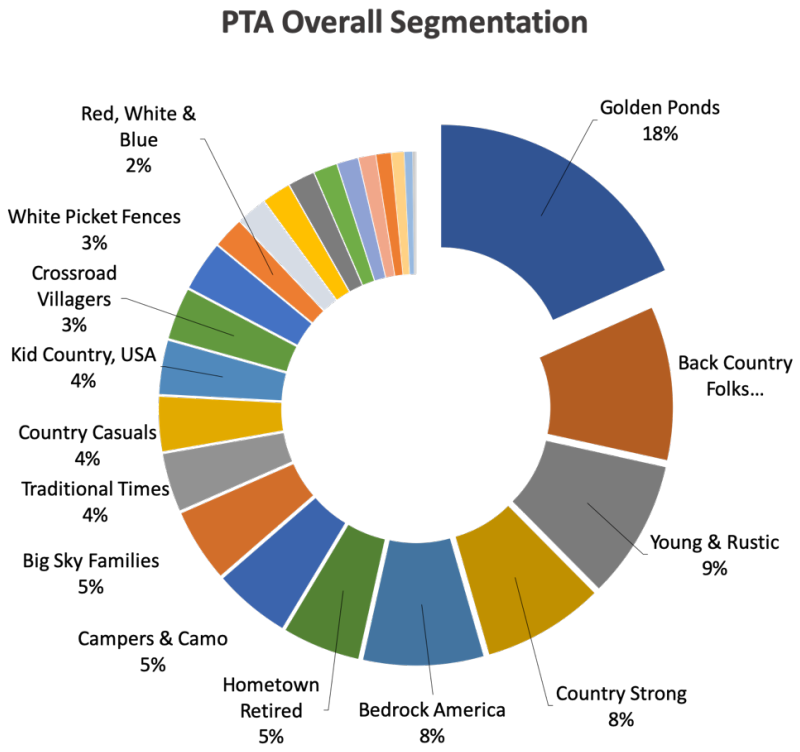
Source: Nielsen Claritas

Overall Segmentation

The PTA includes 24 of the 58 PRIZM market segments identified by Claritas. By contrast, the 29707 ZIP Code includes just 14 segments, representing a more narrow overall market base. The largest segments in the PTA include:

- **Golden Ponds** (18%) – age 55+, no kids at home, retired, downscale in terms of income
- **Back Country Folks** (10%) – below average incomes in older housing, older, typical of farming and mill communities
- **Young & Rustic** (9%) – younger singles and families, hunt & fish, watch NASCAR
- **Country Strong** (8%) – middle class families in rural areas, own their homes, blue collar
- **Bedrock America** (8%) – economically challenged families in smaller isolated communities, with modest education, service jobs, and live in small houses and mobile homes.

By contrast, the 29707 market has two key segments making up much of its market in New Homesteaders (19%) and Township Travelers



Source: Nielsen Claritas

(15%). These segments are upper-middle class and higher, college-educated, own their homes and generally have children at home.

It is very important to note that a healthy Downtown should be relevant to all segments as opposed to just one or two. An individual business however may see wisdom in targeting or catering to select segments, depending on its type of use. A full description of all individual segments can be found at: www.mybestsegments.com.

Commercial Market Assessment

The retail market assessment includes a retail leakage analysis, shares study, capture scenarios, as well an examination of existing commercial in Lancaster and surrounding area. It is intended to identify potential opportunities for growth based on existing market demand.

Retail Leakage

"Retail leakage" refers to the difference between the retail expenditures by residents living in a particular area and the retail sales produced by the stores located in the same area. If desired products are not available within that area, consumers will travel to other places or use different methods to obtain those goods. Consequently, the dollars spent outside of the area are said to be "leaking." For the purposes of this study, the retail leakage analysis is performed on Downtown Lancaster's primary and secondary trade areas as identified by the ZIP Code survey.

This analysis indicates that both the primary and secondary trade areas experience retail leakage, meaning that residents of the trade area are purchasing more than stores are selling. Stores in the primary trade area sold $756 million over the past year. During the same time period, residents of the PTA spent $1.03 billion, indicating that the area leaked $275 million in sales. Stores in the STA sold $160 million over the past year. During

the same time period, residents of the secondary trade area spent $1.3 billion, indicating that the area leaked $104 million in sales. Note that the City of Lancaster actually gained $153 million last year, which is typical of the commercial center of a rural county. Still, a combined trade area leakage of $379 million translates directly to unmet demand, and points to opportunities for commercial growth.

Key Opportunities in Retail

The leakage study indicates that stores in Downtown Lancaster are not currently meeting the demand by residents living in its trade areas. It is not reasonable to expect to capture 100% of retail dollars leaking from the trade areas. Consumers will continue to shop online for certain goods, drive to Charlotte to shop from time to time, or patronize outside businesses on their commute back home each day. However, through strategic recruitment, economic development, and marketing as detailed in the recommendations section that follows, a certain amount of new or expanded retail could be recaptured in Downtown Lancaster.

A conservative capture scenario estimates recapturing 20% of leakage from the primary trade area (just one in every five dollars) and 10% from the secondary trade area (one in every ten dollars).

Based on this retail leakage and capture study, Downtown Lancaster could conceivably capture up to 157,176 square feet of new or expanded retail. Key categories include:

- **Restaurants**: Foodservice and drinking places show demand for over 61,000 square feet of new space. With a combined $46 million in leakage in the "full-service" category, this illustrates a tremendous opportunity for new sit-down restaurants (as opposed to fast-food restaurants) in Downtown. A typical independent restaurant may be from 2,500 to 5,000 square feet or more, so this demand likely exceeds downtown's capacity, but numerous restaurants could be supported.
- **Cafes**: In addition to conventional restaurants, Downtown Lancaster's trade areas are leaking $3.6 million in Coffee Shops, $1.1 million in Ice Cream, and $1.4 million in Doughnut Shops. Downtown currently has no coffee shop, which is typically found in a courthouse downtown, or a downtown that is an employment center like Lancaster.
- **Drinking Places**: As learned throughout the ongoing community engagement process, the Craft Stand in Downtown Lancaster is one of its anchor businesses, and is enjoyed by local residents but also draws in customers from the northern areas of the county and beyond. With $7.7 million in leakage and 13,000 square feet of demand, this analysis suggest opportunity for similar-type businesses. Businesses like Queen Park Social in Charlotte, Craft Axe in Greenville, or Fr8yard in Spartanburg are successful businesses that combine entertainment with drinking establishments.
- **Clothing**: There is demand for more than 19,000 square feet of clothing from the local trade areas. In fact, with the recent closing of Goody's outside of downtown and Hi-Lites within, this demand is actually greater than specified in this study. The majority of clothing demand is in the family and women's category.
- **Sporting Goods**: There is demand for about 8,500 square feet in this category, which would equate to a store or more in a downtown environment. In Lancaster, this is a key opportunity as it builds more recreational assets like the Lindsay Pettus Greenway, but also with the presence of USC-Lancaster and its student body. Improved connectivity from downtown to USC-L would mean more walking and biking, and more business for sporting goods. In addition, with the demand for clothing shown above, a local sporting goods operation could also potentially include screen printing for local schools and recreational teams.
- **Grocery**: There is about 8,500 square feet of demand in this category, which is well below the conventional grocery store average of 45,000 square foot plus. However, as more residential product comes to Lancaster and possibly in Downtown, this demand would increase. Moreover, the current study shows some leakage in specialty food categories of meat markets and fruit and vegetable markets. This demand could potentially be filled by a new farmers market in Downtown.

- **Home Furnishings**: Downtown Lancaster currently has some quality establishments that fit this category, but demand shows opportunities for upwards of an additional 11,300 square feet. With current population projects and housing trends showing additional housing units being created in the Lancaster area, demand for this category may increase.
- **Specialty Retail**: A number of specialty retail categories show opportunity for a new or expanded store in downtown including:
    - Shoes – 7,714 square feet
    - Jewelry – 3,439 square feet
    - Health & Personal Care – 2,023 square feet
    - Hobby & Toy – 4,577 square feet
    - Gift Shops – 3,057 square feet
    - Book Stores – 1,882 square feet – note that this demand was established before the recent book store opened in downtown, likely filling this need
    - Art Dealers - $1.8 million in demand from the combined PTA/STA

It is important to note that even with demand, a business will only succeed if it has a sound business plan and meets the needs of the market. Therefore, it is important for any new or expanded business to understand the demographics and market segmentation in order to provide a good or service that is relevant to the people who will patronize stores in Downtown Lancaster.

Office and Mixed-Use Potential

As Lancaster has changed with the evolution of the textile industry, development of bypasses, and population loss, Downtown has been left with a significant amount of vacant spaces. Some of these are individual retail spaces that could be filled with businesses based on the demand outlined above. Others are larger buildings with much bigger footprints that may make more sense for mixed-use or office uses. The market itself varies widely within Downtown and generally is tied to both the size and condition of the specific building. Most of these spaces are being marketed by independent property owners and it is therefore difficult to project real estate trends or lease rates overall. However, it has been conveyed by numerous stakeholders that there is pent-up demand for new office space in Downtown.

Like values, the marketability of each space depends on the quality of the space itself. Certain spaces in downtown are being marketed for as low as $5 per square foot in lease rates. Other owners mentioned a need of upwards of $25 per square feet to make a project viable or profitable. As a frame of reference, Downtown Greenville's current office market shows rates ranging on average from $17/sf to $28/sf and above. Downtown Anderson currently offers a range of lease rates capping about $23/sf. With Lancaster's current and desired rental rates mentioned by stakeholders, this illustrates the divide created by large vacant spaces and the perception of a viable market in Lancaster. When we compare to other markets such as Greenville or Anderson, a $25 per square foot rent rate may be difficult to achieve in Lancaster without the perfect building for the perfect use.

Further complicating the Downtown Lancaster market is that property values are so low, making it easy to acquire property regardless of condition, with low property taxes serving as a disincentive to develop until "the right project" comes along.

Consequently, some owners are holding on to Downtown properties until the Charlotte market grows south to meet Lancaster, bringing with it new investors. That may not occur in the near future, so these buildings are remaining vacant.

Still, numerous opportunities were mentioned by various stakeholders and property owners including:

- Leasing of key buildings such as the Springs Block, Old Post Office, and Old Bank of Lancaster Building.
- Ground-floor retail where the building would allow with second-level office space or housing.
- Professional offices or call centers in some of the larger buildings in downtown, particularly those that have available parking in the rear or side and do not need to rely on on-street parking.
- Institutional spaces, such as an expanded presence of USC-L in Downtown to complement the existing Native American Studies Center's classrooms and office space.
- Courthouse uses, such as professional offices for attorneys, banking, financial services, etc.
- Co-working space for independent businesses, entrepreneurs, or even corporate travelers.
- Experiential uses such as a children's museum, cultural center, or other activity generator.
- Services such as fitness and wellness or gym.
- Meeting spaces, and potentially a conference facility.

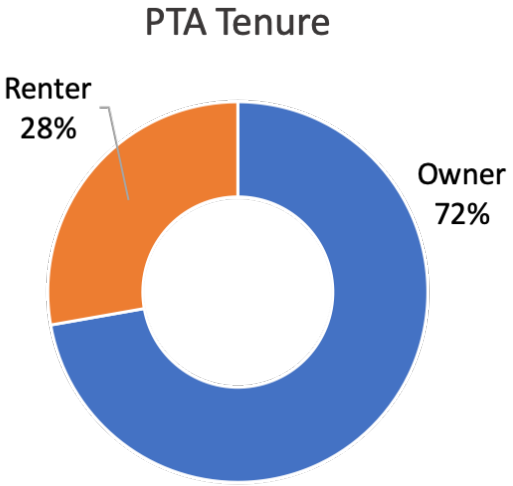
Residential Market Assessment

The residential assessment examines components of Lancaster's market including housing tenure, type, and value as well as trends in the for-sale and rental markets.

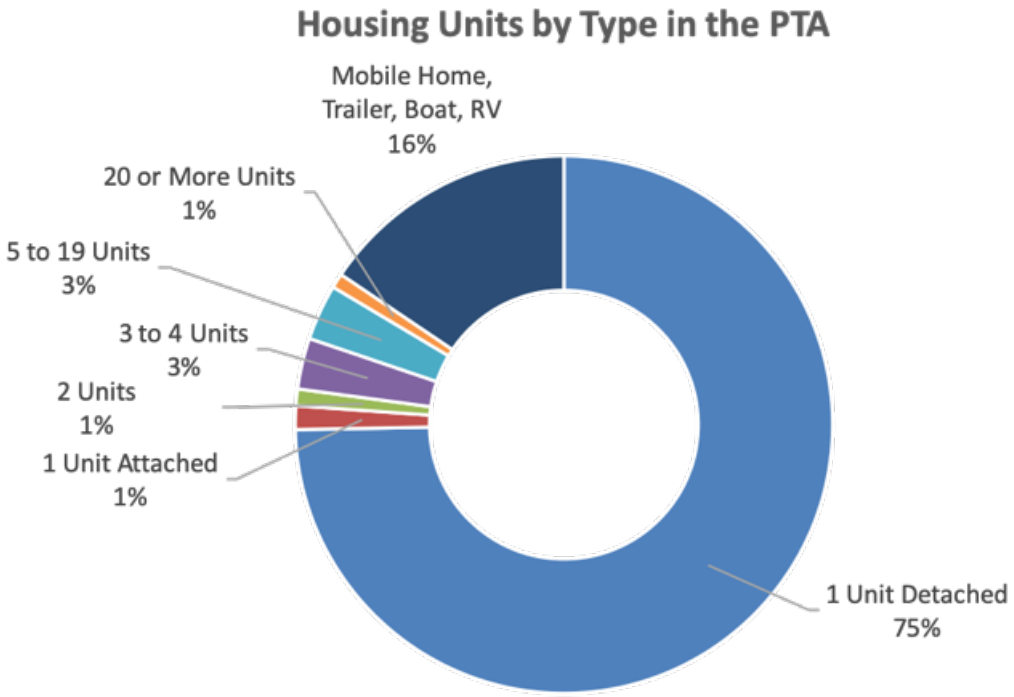
Type and Tenure

The vast majority of housing in Lancaster's PTA is single-family detached homes (75%). Approximately 16% are mobile homes, and the remainder (8%) are multi-family. The largest period of housing growth was in the two decades from 1970-1979, and 46% of all units were built prior to 1980. Another spike in housing growth occurred from 2000-2009, but construction slowed significantly during the Great Recession. Since 2014 however, another 2,853 housing units have been built in the PTA, mirroring the growth trends shown earlier in demographics.

The City of Lancaster is split between renter-occupied units (51%) and owner-occupied (49%). It has a higher mix of rental housing than the PTA (28%) and remainder of the county. As a comparison, the high-growth area of 29707 (Indian Land) has just 11% renter-occupied.



Source: Nielsen Claritas



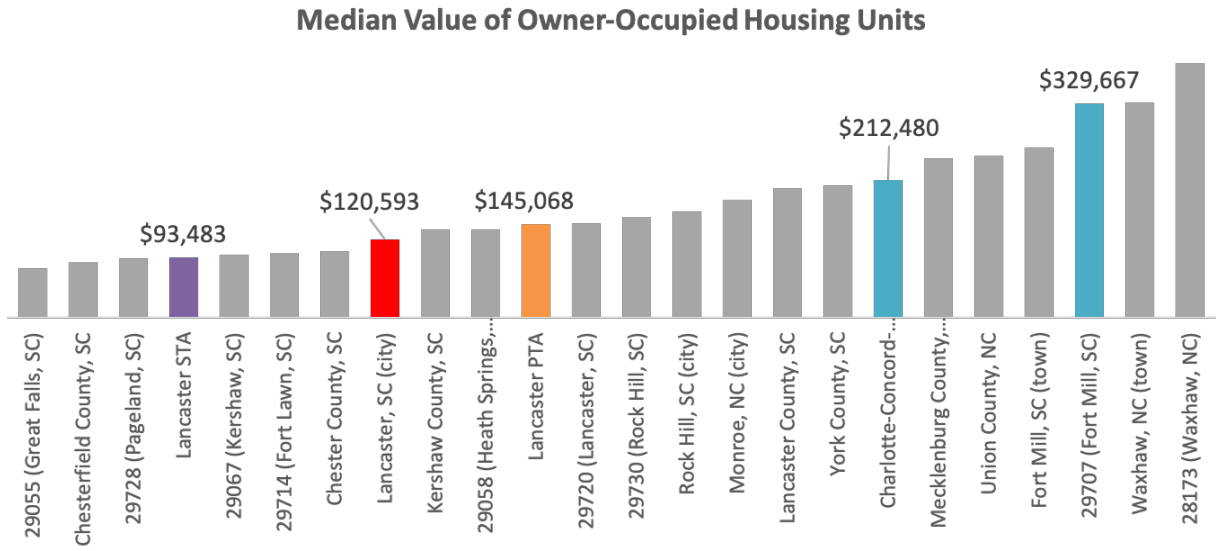
Source: Nielsen Claritas

Value

The median value of owner-occupied housing in 2019 in Lancaster's PTA is $145,068. This is compared to metro median of $212,480. The City's housing values are in the lower third of the region at $120,593. Still, the current market in 29720 is very healthy, and median market values have grown from $69,100 in 2013 to $128,000 in 2019.

For-Sale and Rental Markets

Zillow describes 29720 as a "very hot" seller's market and predicts housing values will continue to rise by 5.2% over the next year. The median list-price today in 29720 is $269,900. Days on market are currently at 68, down from a peak of 129 a year ago.



Source: Nielsen Claritas

By the same token, average rental rates have decreased from $1,290 per month in 2015 to $1,036 in 2019. This could be due to a lack of new product overall, with renters not being able to find suitable units locally or preferring to commute in from other communities.

Potential Growth and Housing Opportunities

It is important to note that while the City of Lancaster has grown in population and households, it has not seen any significant residential growth in decades. Much of the new residential growth and development has occurred in the northern neck portion of Lancaster County above Van Wyck, and predominantly in the Indian Land area. However, there are currently approximately 235 single family units and 125 multi-family units being planned or under development within the City currently.

Moreover, stakeholders expressed a growing demand for new housing, including:

- Units for young professionals who need affordable, yet quality housing. According to some stakeholders, there is extremely limited product, and it may take a year or more for a suitable unit to come on the market.
- Downtown housing for USC-Lancaster students or faculty, either developed within one of the larger vacant Downtown buildings, or part of a mixed-use redevelopment.
- Corporate apartments for professionals visiting short-term at a local employer or industry.
- Low-cost housing for artists or artisans, potentially with studio space.
- Short-term rental or boutique lodging.
- Lofts and studio apartments above retail uses, such as those currently seen at Chastain Lofts.
- Affordable for-rent price points for Downtown units from around $800-$1,000 per month.
- Affordable housing and units for the disabled and elderly.

3.0 | Recommendations

3.1 The Shared Vision

Organizing Themes

The consultants worked with the stakeholder advisory committee to develop a series of five themes to articulate a shared vision for the future of Downtown Lancaster. These themes, which are based on the consensus guiding principles and analyses of existing conditions, community engagement, and retail and housing market, also provide the organizing framework for the various recommendations in this chapter. They are described below:

Downtown Lancaster is... Authentic

Let's build on the historic and cultural assets of Downtown to create a place and a culture of inclusivity unlike any other.

Downtown Lancaster is... Welcoming

Let's celebrate Downtown's existing assets and ensure future growth supports the creation of an attractive and safe district.

Downtown Lancaster is... Accessible

Let's strengthen connections to Downtown to ensure it is an easily accessible destination for all, by all transportation modes.

Downtown Lancaster is... Vibrant

Let's expand the places and spaces for people in Downtown to connect with one another and with nature.

Downtown Lancaster is... Thriving

Let's bring more buzz to Downtown through incentivizing business investment with emphasis on empowering local entrepreneurs.

The Downtown Promise

In an effort to "wrap our arms" around the present and future of Downtown Lancaster, the consultants developed a statement (*below*) that reflects the qualities of a revitalized district. It demonstrates the aspirational identity and "promise" that Downtown Lancaster should offer to residents, visitors, business owners, and other district stakeholders. Furthermore, this statement may be used as an element of future Downtown marketing efforts.

We are Downtown Lancaster, South Carolina.

We are a place where *art* lives. Our Downtown is an expression of our vibrant creativity. From historic murals to children's art installations, we celebrate our inspired nature in venues throughout the district.

We are a place where *history* lives. Our community was built around industries that brought prosperity and stability to our community. Even though the times and companies have changed, we still cherish the irreplaceable historic landmarks that provide structure and depth to our Downtown streets and blocks.

We are a place where *culture* lives. We possess rich cultural and historic resources in this community. In the heart of our Downtown, we showcase our region's Native American heritage, artifacts, and ingenuity to visitors near and far.

We are a place where *community* lives. Our Downtown is a welcoming place for all people. From families gathering to watch a parade or take in a play, to picking up fresh veggies or enjoying a snow cone, we love to come together and experience all the joys Downtown Lancaster has to offer.

We are a place where the *future* lives. We are crafting a vision for our community where our thriving Downtown is accessible to everyone and a place where people desire to live, work, and enjoy life...

Welcome to Downtown Lancaster and the Red Rose City!

3.2 *Downtown Lancaster is...* Authentic & Welcoming

Introduction

An authentic, welcoming Downtown Lancaster celebrates the cultural legacy and preserves the historic fabric of the district for future generations to enjoy. It is also a safe, inclusive place that welcomes people of all ages, abilities, interests, and incomes.

Recommendations for this chapter are divided into the following sections:

- Community Branding and Marketing
- Community Events
- Environmental Graphics
- Public Art
- Vibrancy Amenities
- Temporary Treatments and Uses
- Community Pride
- Historic Preservation

Community Branding & Marketing

For nearly two decades, the City of Lancaster has been using a red rose icon and "Red Rose City" tagline to great effect. However, the highly-detailed rose graphic as well as the red and black color palette are limiting factors when trying to expand to a broader array of connected identities. Our objective in updating the Lancaster brand is primarily in crafting a destination identity for Downtown Lancaster. Through research, public engagement, and consideration of potential future needs, we developed a broader color palette, updated font options, and evolved the iconic rose.

Color Palette

Taking inspiration from the existing black and red color palette, the consultants kept the red, softened the black into a dark, navy blue, added some light and dark blues and greens to represent the public parks throughout the community and the open skies often portrayed in the public art and murals, as well as purple and orange for additional vibrancy and to play into Downtown Lancaster's designation as a South Carolina Cultural Arts District. This expanded palette creates flexibility and expandability when applied to single color versions of these logos and the broader system of connected identities.

Typefaces

The formal typeface for the City of Lancaster has been updated to a slightly more modern font that has more balance in its structure. A secondary, sans serif font provides a subtle contrast and creates a visual hierarchy to the reader. A script-like font that is more informal and appears hand-written, imbues a sense of energy and personality into the logos where it is utilized.

FORMAL TYPEFACE

Olympian

SECONDARY

Montserrat

Informal

Mak Dah

Rose Icon Evolution

In the early 2000s, the current rose icon was established as the primary graphic representation of the Red Rose City. Since then, the original icon has evolved. First, the black outline was dropped, and then the outline softened over the years. There are even examples of on overhead rendering used throughout Downtown.

Rose Icon, ca. 2000

Rose Icon, 2020

City Identity

The logo set on this page replaces the existing City logo. The design of the new logo should be considered a "refresh" of the old one, as it features the same basic elements and structure, but with updated typefaces as well as a revised color palette and rose icon.

Logo options include versions with the architectural arch (similar to the existing logo) or without the feature, as well as various header, footer, and tagline options. There are now type-based variations including or excluding "City of," "South Carolina," and "The Red Rose City."

A new seal combines the above-mentioned updated elements with the City's year of incorporation.

Overall, the new City identity system is intended to be a subtle update to the existing set. Therefore, it should be relatively easy for the City to transition to the new logo set over time.

CITY OF
LANCASTER
SOUTH CAROLINA
THE RED ROSE CITY

LANCASTER
SOUTH CAROLINA

CITY OF LANCASTER
18 30
SOUTH CAROLINA

Downtown Rose Icon

The new rose icon continues its evolution into a top-down view of a rose consisting of six petals. A brush stroke texture may be applied to the petals to add depth and character as well as reflect the artistic nature of Downtown Lancaster. The basis of this icon began as a representation of the Downtown Revitalization Plan, but after significant positive feedback from the community, the decision was made to build off that equity and apply it to the overall brand platform.

Downtown Identity

Combining the new rose icon with the updated script font, the destination identity for Downtown Lancaster portrays a vibrant, artistic, welcoming destination for visitors and locals alike. The idea of a marketing identity for Downtown is a new one for Lancaster, although it is a typical practice for visitor-oriented communities. In Lancaster, it makes sense to start cultivating a strong Downtown identity that can stand on its own and be leveraged by multiple partners, including private businesses.

Cultural Arts District Identity

By taking inspiration from the existing Cultural Arts District identity and marrying it with the new icon, this colorful new identity creates an incredibly strong connection between the Downtown as a destination and a designated hub for the arts and entertainment.

See Lancaster

See Lancaster, the City's designated Main Street program and marketing arm for City events, features a new logo that takes advantage of the expanded color palette of the Cultural Arts District, but uses the more refined version of the rose icon.

Expansion

With the new color palette, typefaces, and icon established, Lancaster has all of the tools necessary to create a broad array of connected identities and collateral. Whether they are partner organizations, events, initiatives, environmental graphics or marketing materials, these designs are just the beginning of what Lancaster will be able to accomplish with their dynamic new identity package.

Downtown Marketing

The big marketing idea for Downtown is the concept of a messaging campaign: "Where _____ lives!" The "blank" should be filled by by an noun or adverb that reflects the positive qualities, amenities, attractions, and events in the district.

As the health and vibrancy of Downtown increases, there may be a need to revisit Downtown messaging to reflect a larger sense of what Downtown has to offer.

Recommendations

- **Conduct a "soft roll-out" of the new city logo.** Incorporate the city logo into business cards, stationary, accessories, and other materials as they are replaced over time.
- **Conduct a comprehensive, concerted roll-out the Downtown Lancaster logo.** Introduce the new logo in district print, digital marketing efforts, and all social media platforms.
- **Create window stickers for Downtown merchants that read: "Where _____ Lives!"** Instruct business owners to fill the blank with a word that characterizes their business. This will create buy-in for the campaign and combine the strength of the overall message with the diversity of Downtown's offerings.
- **Use the "Where _____ lives!" campaign in digital and print marketing materials.** This effort should be introduced across media in the same manner as the Downtown logo roll-out.

Community Events

Downtown is the heart of the Lancaster community when it comes to signature public events, such as the Red Rose Festival and Christmas Parade. There are many opportunities to build on these offerings and supplement them with a series of new smaller public events. A future Downtown Farmers Market, "Finally Friday!" series, Art Fest, and fun bike ride ("Petal Pedal") can be programmed in the recommended public space enhancements for Downtown.

Recommendations

- **Continue to host signature community events in Downtown.** The value of the Red Rose Festival to Downtown is tremendous, as the event creates positive associations with the district. This holds true for other signature Downtown events, which should be hosted in the district as well.
- **Once a permanent home for a Downtown Farmers Market has been created, recruit vendors and promote this event regionally.** Use a future Downtown Farmers Market as an opportunity for programming and family-friendly activities to add vibrancy to Downtown.
- **Consider an outdoor event schedule for new public spaces in Downtown.** Recommendations like Petal Park and Gay Street Commons (both of which are detailed in the following chapter).
- **Explore additional community events to promote inclusiveness and attract new visitors to Downtown.** Not everyone is interested in buying fresh vegetables or listening to an acoustic concert. As a first step, efforts should be made to conduct outreach to learn about the interests and desires of under-represented populations for future Downtown events.

Community Events - “Petal Pedal Fun Ride”

Petal
PEDAL

Environmental Graphics

Street Banners

Downtown currently utilizes a street banner system that displays schoolchildren's artwork. This is a fantastic program and a manifestation of community pride that should be continued in the future.

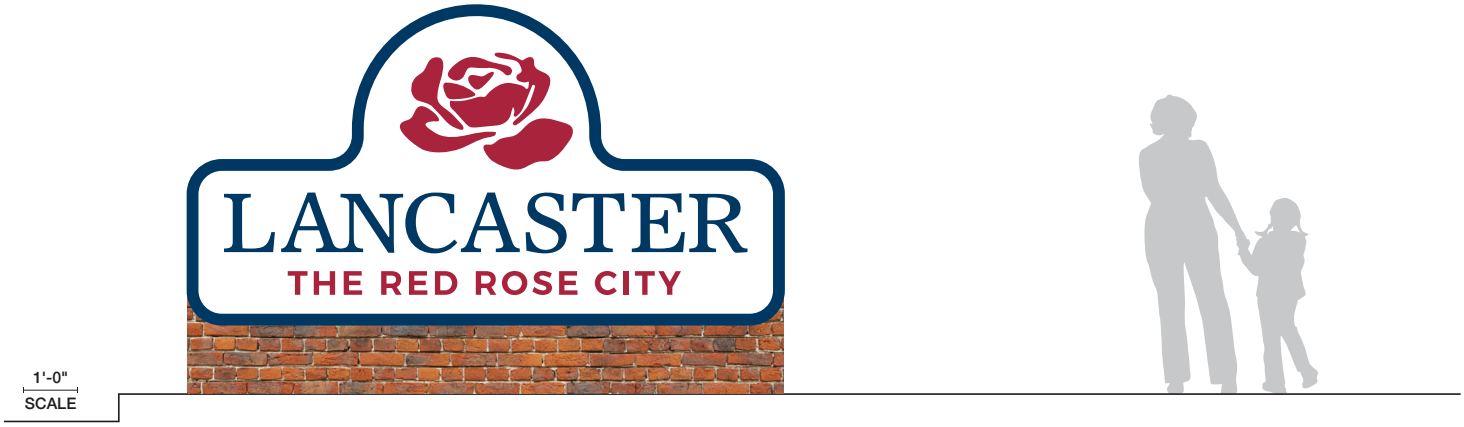
At the same time, there are opportunities to promote the Downtown marketing identity with a banner system that displays Downtown-themed banners next to the artwork-based ones as well as incorporating the Downtown identity into a footer on the "blank canvases" that feature children's art. These Downtown banners can promote the district as a whole, the Cultural Arts District, or upcoming Downtown events.

Wayfinding

Lancaster currently enjoys a wayfinding signage system that includes gateway and directional elements. A redesigned wayfinding system should incorporate the updated brand, new destinations, as well as parking and pedestrian-scale elements.

Recommendations

- **Update Downtown banner system.** Downtown street banners should be updated to include the district identity system.
- **Consider updating the City's wayfinding signage system.** While a new wayfinding system is not a high priority today, it will become an important tool to promote new Downtown destinations (such as Petal Park) once they are developed.
- **Consider updating Downtown parking signs.** As the City works to enhance and expand public parking options Downtown, it should work with property owners to update parking signage to reflect new public access as well as improve awareness of existing parking amenities.



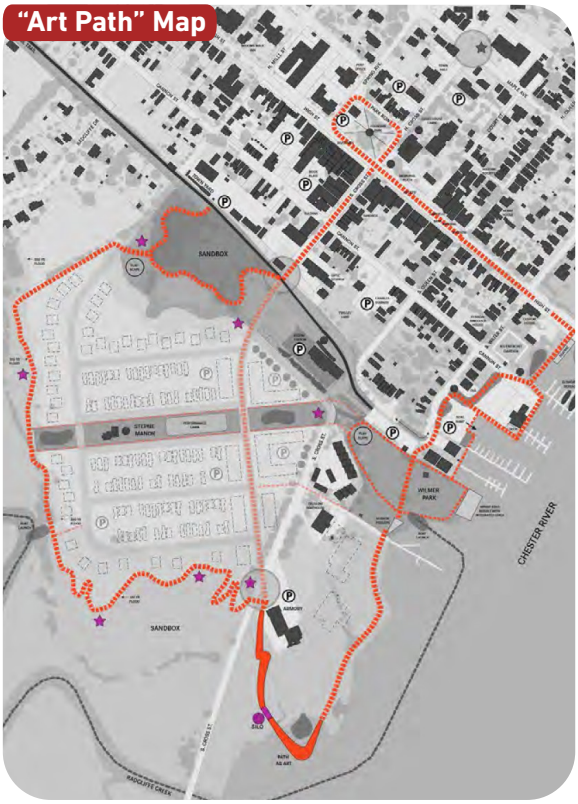
Public Art

A major point of pride for Lancaster is the wealth of community-based art in Downtown. This resource is a great foundation for ongoing efforts to cultivate Downtown as an arts district in the coming years.

Recommendations

- **Create an "art in public places" committee.** This body would be responsible for planning and implementing public art in the district. In addition to organizing community art production, it would work to commission new works and maintain existing pieces, especially murals.
- **Consider a small-scale sculpture series to encourage discovery.** Many communities have deployed a series of small-scale sculptural pieces that are intended to be discovered by children (who, presumably, will bring along their parents, grandparents, or other supervising adults in tow).
- **Integrate public art into the built environment.** Whether these are quotes embedded into sidewalks or interactive sculptures that rest on benches or low walls, a deliberate approach to commissioning and placement can yield surprising results.
- **Consider an "art path" through the district.** A strategic, organized approach to art placement can guide the visitor and create a richer experience of place.

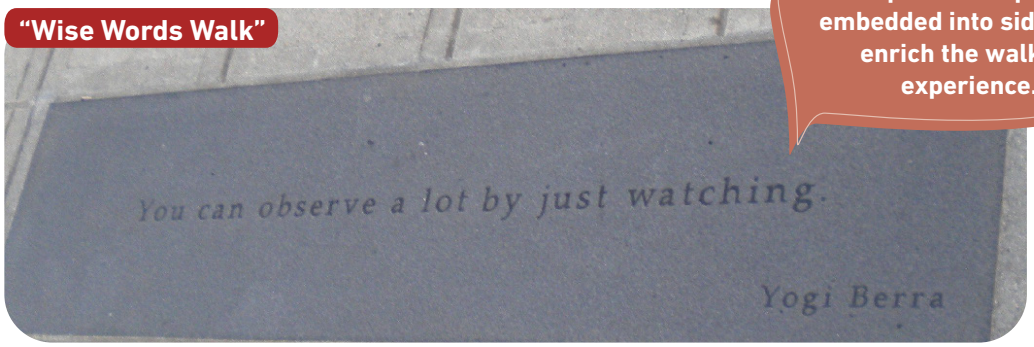
"Art Path" Map



Interactive Sculpture

Kid's Sculpture Series

"Wise Words Walk"



Inspirational quotes embedded into sidewalks enrich the walking experience.

Vibrancy Amenities

Vibrancy amenities are inexpensive but impactful features - such as outdoor games and colorful street furnishings - that are designed to create energy and activity and to add life to a space. Vibrancy amenities may not be the attractions capable of drawing people to Downtown Lancaster, but they can be the things that give people a reason to "stick around" and enliven the district once they arrive.

Recommendations

- **Identify desired activities and amenities.** Conduct a community survey and work with local partners to generate a list of desired amenities and then acquire - or construct - them. Implementation can include school or scout projects in addition to purchasing items.
- **Identify suitable locations for different types of desired vibrancy amenities.** This would include working with property and business owners to activate storefronts and underutilized spaces (such as vacant lots or alleys) for vibrancy amenities.
- **Create a program to leverage vibrancy amenities during events and on weekends.** Consider lawn game or miniature golf tournaments to introduce new vibrancy amenities to the community and ensure they are being fully utilized.

Outdoor Dining

Outdoor Board Games

Miniature Golf

Colorful Chairs

Jumbo Scrabble

Lawn Games

Temporary Treatments & Uses

Downtown currently includes numerous unoccupied or underutilized buildings that make parts of the district feel desolate. One way to combat this feeling and instill optimism for the future of the district is to leverage temporary window treatments and pop-up shops to activate storefronts and interior spaces in Downtown buildings. Vacant building treatments may include large-scale historic photographs, artwork, or district branding and marketing. Pop-up uses are typically seasonal (such as a Christmas Market) or cultural (such as an art gallery or coffee shop with a performance space). They can provide would-be entrepreneurs an opportunity to test ideas and hone their vision with minimal investment.

Recommendations

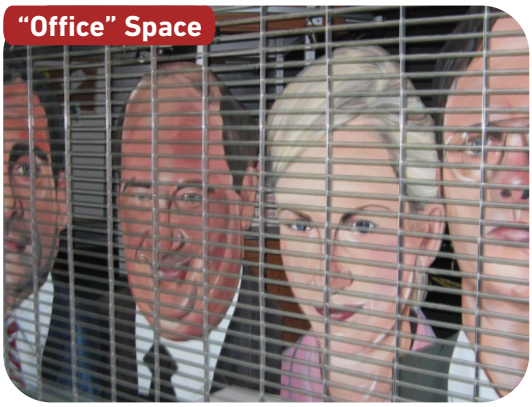
- **Work with property owners to develop window treatments for empty buildings.** This effort could be undertaken in conjunction with a facade enhancement program.
- **Encourage temporary uses where appropriate.** The City should ensure certain temporary uses are allowable Downtown in buildings capable of providing desired uses.

Vacant Building Treatments

"Pop Up" Art Displays

Historical Imagery

Remembering Historic Uses


"Office" Space

Full Window Coverage

Community Pride

Public input suggests there is significant community pride in Downtown Lancaster. However, this spirit could be described as "latent," mainly because there currently are not sufficient outlets to express it in meaningful ways that benefit the district. Two avenues for realizing community pride in Downtown are community art initiatives and community clean-up days, each of which is detailed below.

Recommendations

- **Continue to advance community mural-creation efforts throughout Downtown**. There are many ways to accomplish this initiative, including formalizing mural creation into an annual project led by an "art in public places" committee. Locations for new murals should be identified and prepared in the months leading up to the actual painting of the artwork, which would become a weekend-long community volunteer event. Regardless of its organizational form, this project should pay equal attention to the rehabilitation or replacement of dull and aging murals with fresh paint.
- **Host community clean-up or beautification events.** Another way to provide opportunities for community participation would be in direct day-long efforts to enhance Downtown. It is important that such events not duplicate services that the City should undertake. Rather, it should include highly-visible projects that can be accomplished (and maintained) with relative ease by a group of volunteers. The event should be marketed to the community, and t-shirts and food should be provided to volunteers.

Beautify LANCASTER

Historic Preservation

Downtown Lancaster features dozens of valuable historic structures within the district. In fact, several buildings, including the Robert Mills-designed Old Courthouse and Jail, are priceless. To protect and preserve the district's historic buildings, the City should act as a facilitator to educate property owners about available resources and encourage them to take steps to stabilize and improve structures.

Recommendations

- **Host a Downtown property workshop for City staff, property owners, business owners, and potential investors.** Topics of discussion could include the following: Bailey Bill; state and federal historic building tax credits; South Carolina abandoned buildings tax credits; creative code compliance approaches; Opportunity Zone implications; and target markets.
- **Explore a facade component grant program.** Rather than continue the City's existing facade grant program, the City could turn it into an annual component-based program, which would simplify the decision-making process for property owners and grant administration for City staff. Eligible facade components for Downtown buildings could include: signs, paint, awnings, rears of buildings, slipcover removal, storefronts, windows, doors, and lighting.
- **Consider stabilization and weatherization grants for Downtown buildings.** As part of or in addition to the facade component grant program, the City could offer grants that would help property owners with improvements to roofs, gutters, caulking, and foundation repair as well as water damage and environmental contaminant mitigation.
- **Work with a preservation architect to develop and implement a facade master plan.** The City could contract with an architect who specializes in historic preservation to create a facade master plan that would identify specific needs and recommendations for historic Downtown buildings. The architect could then work with the City and building owners to implement the plan over time.

3.3 *Downtown Lancaster is...* Accessible & Vibrant

Introduction

An accessible, vibrant Downtown Lancaster is a destination that is easily navigable by foot, bike, or car. It is a lively district that brings people together to connect and celebrate life in a high-quality environment.

Recommendations for this chapter are divided into the following sections:

- Streets and Public Rights-of-Way
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Network
- Main Street
- Gay Street
- White Street
- Parks and Public Spaces
- Gay Street Commons
- Petal Park
- Red Rose Park

Street & Public Right-of-Way Enhancements

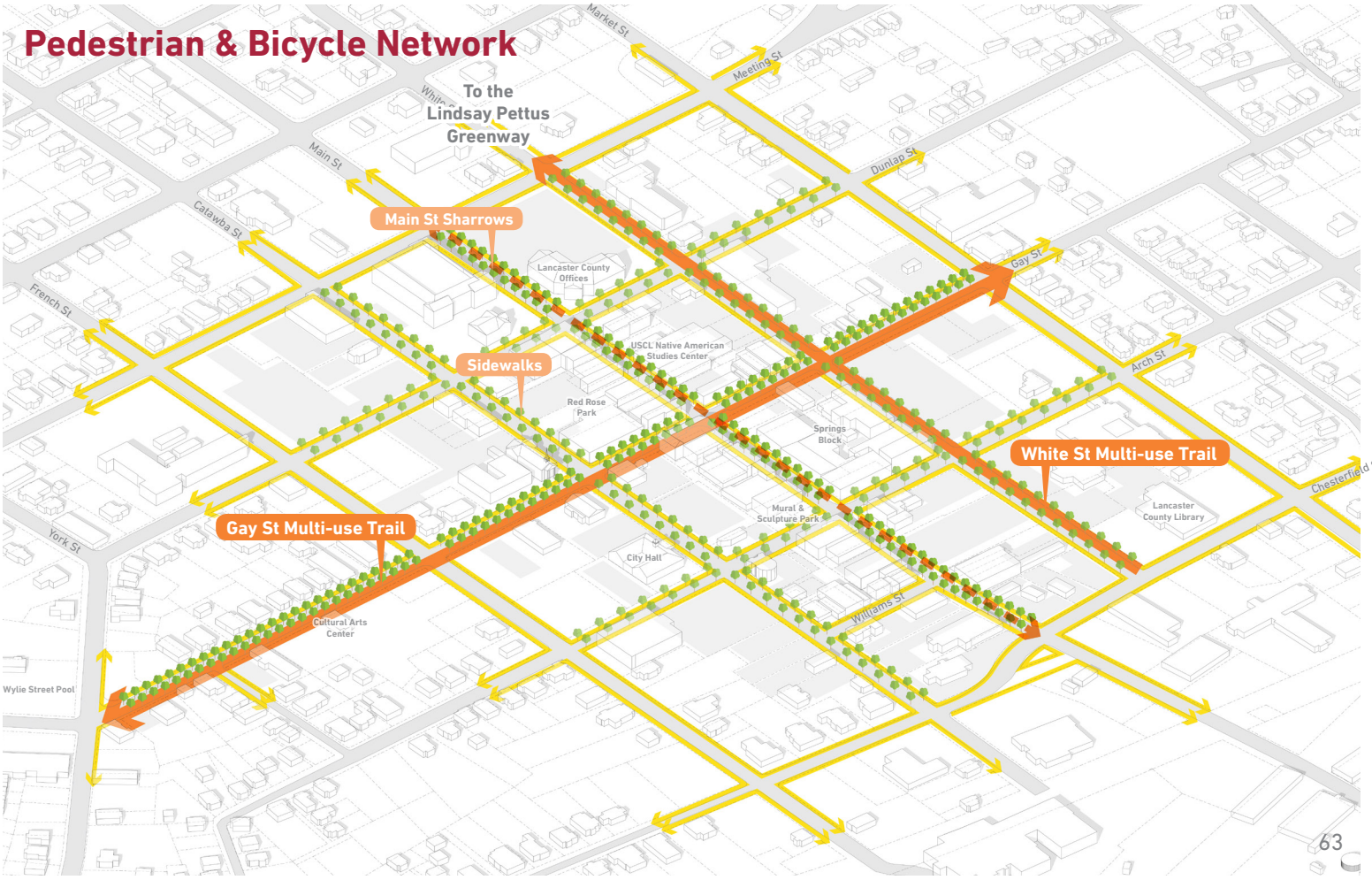
Downtown Lancaster will feature three key improved corridors - Gay Street, Main Street, and White Street. Each of these streets will assume a unique identity and role within the district (each of which is detailed below.) In addition to the primary three streets, another three corridors - Catawba Street, Dunlap Street, and Arch Street - will receive "typical" streetscape treatments consisting of new street trees and enhanced vegetation, sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Network Enhancements

Downtown will feature two perpendicular multi-use trails to provide safe multi-modal access to and transportation through the district. The overall goal is to integrate Downtown trails into the Lindsay Pettus Greenway and create a district-wide loop. These multi-use trails will be located off-street along the Gay Street and White Street corridors.

Streets & Public Rights-of-Way

Pedestrian & Bicycle Network



Main Street Improvements

The Main Street corridor can serve as a "civic spine" for Downtown Lancaster. As the designated route for the Carolina Thread Trail, Main Street can also highlight the various cultural and historic attractions in the district.

Enhancements to Main Street should be incremental and build on its existing character. Specific improvements include replacing the existing aluminum street furnishings (which are excellent as public art but inadequate as seating) with traditional benches and trash cans, planting new street trees (ensuring that new trees are shade-giving specimens), and adding bike racks on the sidewalk. Additionally, vibrancy amenities such as cafe tables and chairs, public art, and small parklets should be incorporated into an enhanced Main Street streetscape.

This effort should be implemented over time as enhancement funding becomes available or in conjunction with private development along Main Street.

Gay Street Improvements

The Gay Street corridor could become a "cultural corridor" for Downtown Lancaster. It will connect the numerous art- and history-related assets and attractions that exist along the corridor and will provide a platform for additional public art, informal performance spaces, art galleries, and artist housing, among other amenities. Gay Street will also feature a multi-use path on the south edge of the corridor. This will serve as an east-west active transportation connection through Downtown, and will become part of a trail loop that ties the district to the Lindsay Pettus Greenway.

Two blocks of Gay Street enhancements will occur as part of the Gay Street Commons project, although other improvements will happen incrementally as project funding is made available.

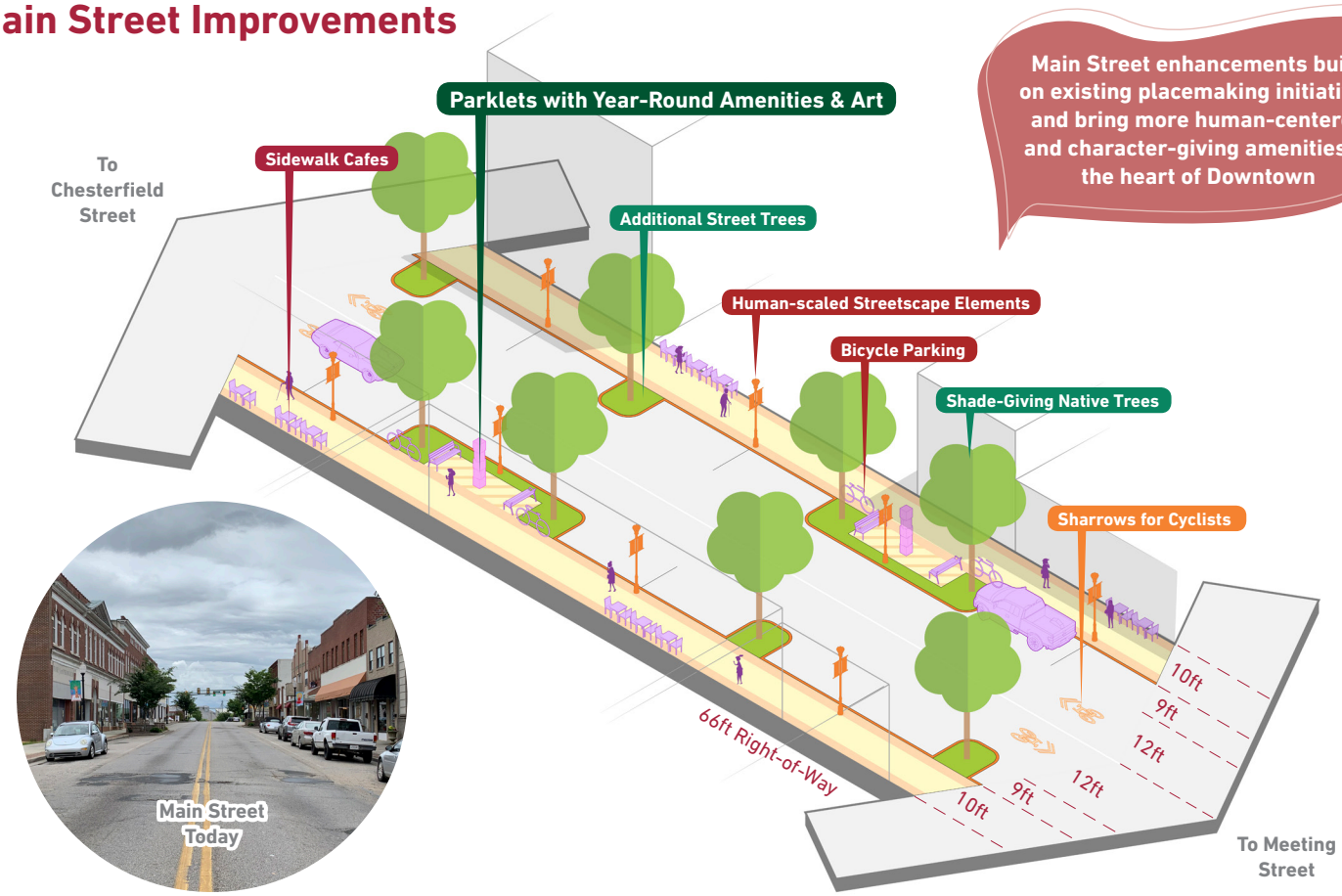
White Street Improvements

The White Street corridor could become a "green street" designed to mitigate stormwater inflows into aging underground infrastructure as well as provide public amenities such as street trees and a multi-use trail for bicyclists and pedestrians. The White Street trail would connect the Lancaster County Library to the Lindsay Pettus Greenway, providing a north-south greenway spine for Downtown (to match the east-west spine along Gay Street).

Project implementation should be undertaken as development occurs along the corridor and as funding becomes available.

Main Street Improvements

Main Street enhancements build on existing placemaking initiatives and bring more human-centered and character-giving amenities to the heart of Downtown

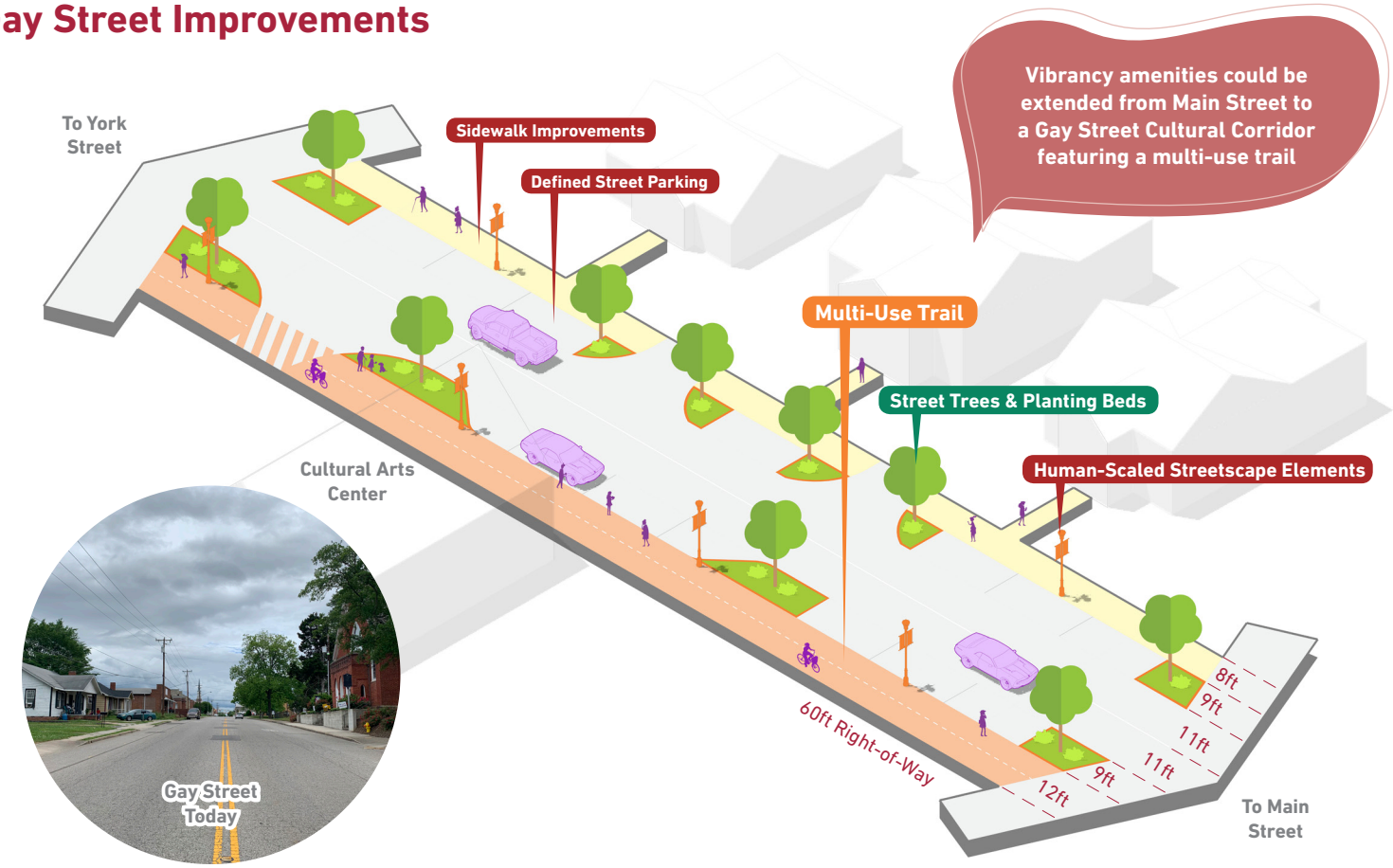


Lively Streets

Human-centered Environment

Artistic Detailing

Gay Street Improvements

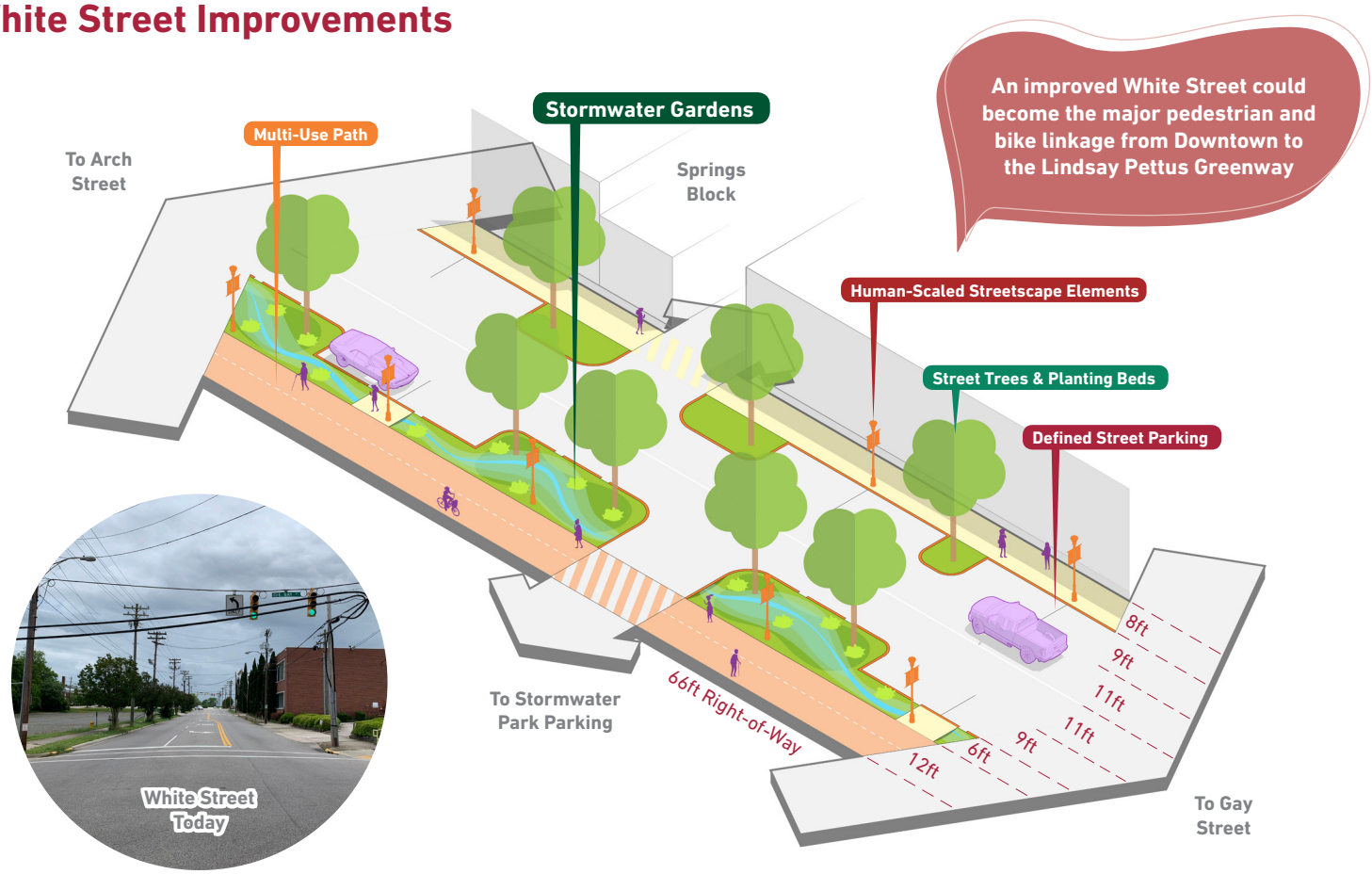


Multi-Use Trail

Opportunities for Vibrancy Amenities

Sidewalk and Crosswalk Enhancements

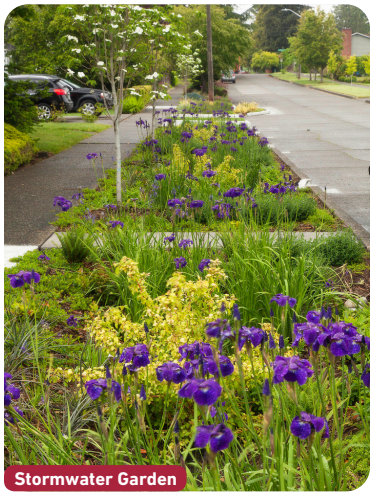
White Street Improvements



Expanded Vegetated Zone at the Stormwater Park

Multi-use Trail

Multi-use Trail


Stormwater Garden

Stormwater Garden

Parks & Public Spaces

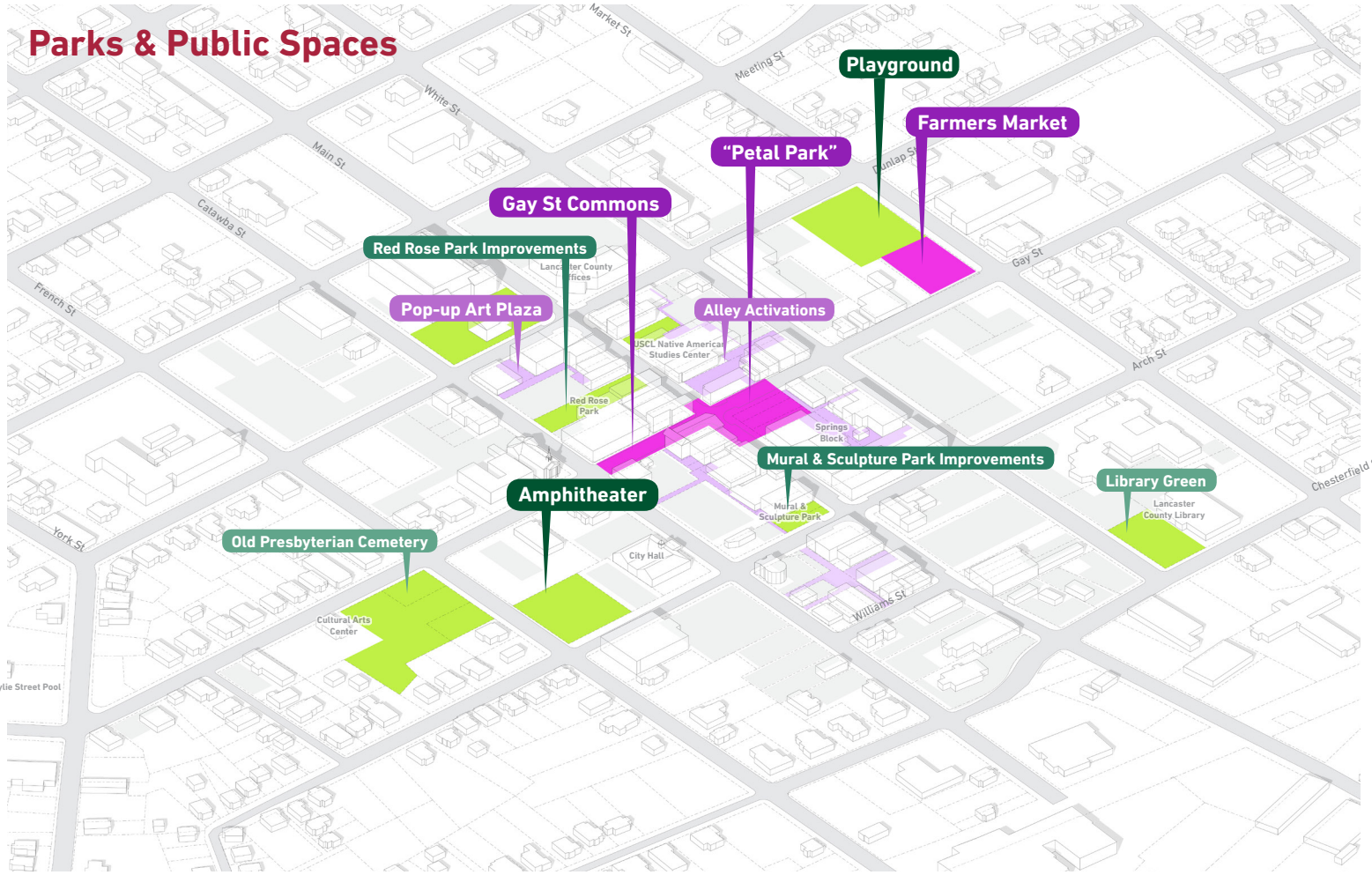
In addition to three major projects (Gay Street Commons, Petal Park, and Red Rose Park, each of which is detailed below), there are a handful of other projects that should be considered over the coming years:

- Alley Activations
- Public Art Plaza
- Mural & Sculpture Park
- City Hall Amphitheater
- Farmers Market
- Playground

Recommendations

- **Partner with business and property owners to activate alleyways throughout Downtown.** Many of these interstitial spaces could be transformed into informal, but high-quality places with a simple kit of parts, such as festival lighting, improved paved surfaces, vibrancy amenities, easy-to-maintain vegetation, attractive "back-of-house" screening, consolidated waste service areas, and secondary entrances (where applicable) to enhance these spaces and provide opportunities for people to gather in small groups.
- **Consider seating and vegetation modifications to Mural and Sculpture Park.** This effort could include reorienting the existing seating and replacing existing vegetation with canopy trees and low-maintenance grasses that will not occupy the same viewing zone as that of the large mural or multiple sculptures within the space.
- **Consider an informal pop-up art plaza in the interstitial space between buildings across from the Old County Courthouse building on Dunlap Street.** During the planning process, a group of local volunteers created a series of small murals in this very space. This effort could be enhanced by the addition of vibrancy amenities to provide seating, shade, and potentially a small performance space for visitors. Over time, the art in this plaza could be replaced by new pieces, such that the space becomes a kind of "community canvas" for muralists.
- **Consider developing an outdoor amphitheater behind City Hall.** At the intersection of French Street and Arch Street, this naturally shaded space could feature stone retaining walls and grass seating rows. The performance space could be turfgrass (with a removable wooden platform) or concrete, as desired. To the extent possible, existing trees should be preserved to provide shade during warm months and to create an intimate feeling within the space. This facility could be used for small outdoor concerts or dramatic performances and could leverage City Hall parking. Such an amenity would be sensitive to the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- **Consider developing a permanent farmers market along East Gay Street.** This facility, which would include an open-air structure with storage and restrooms as well as loading and parking areas, could be located in a number of spaces in the district. One potential site is at the northwest corner of E Gay Street and S Market Street.
- **Explore developing a playground adjacent to the permanent farmers market.** The utility of the farmers market could be enhanced by a new adjacent playground. This facility could include play equipment for children as well as outdoor exercise equipment for adults (in separate parts of the playground).

Parks & Public Spaces

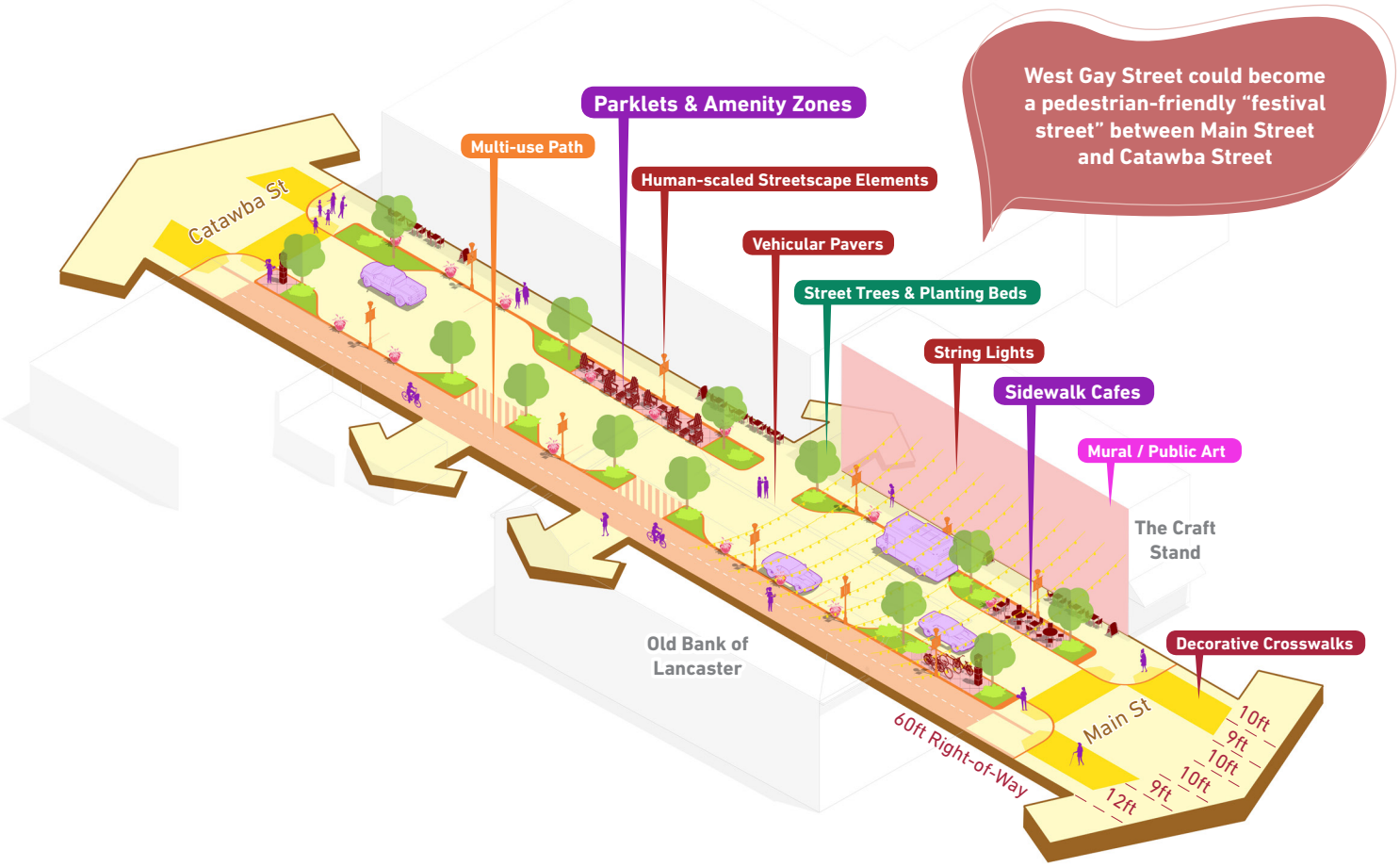


Playground

Activated Alleys and Rears of Buildings

Permanent Farmers Market Structure

Natural Outdoor Amphitheater



Gay Street Commons

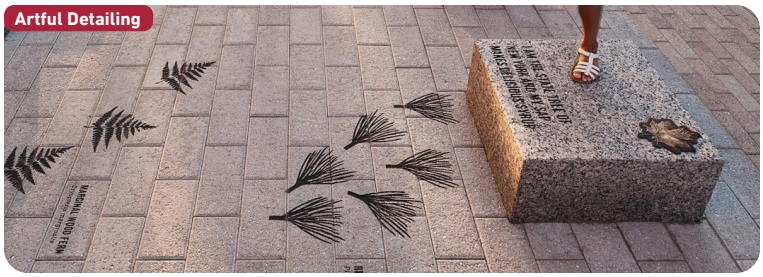
One of the big ideas of this plan is the transformation of one block of West Gay Street (between Main Street and Catawba Street) into a "festival street" capable of functioning as a "normal" vehicular street as well as a pedestrian-only venue for special events. Features of the street could include:

- Streetscape enhancements such as brick pavers, lighted bollards, curbless gutters, street lamps, and street trees and plantings
- Parklets and vibrancy amenities such as cafe tables and chairs, outdoor board games, overhead string lighting, and murals
- Functional public art such as large bollards, inscribed pavings, and decorative crosswalks
- A multi-use path on the south side of Gay Street.

Gay Street Commons could be used as a venue for the Red Rose Festival, among other special events. Additionally, public realm improvements should encourage private investment in adjacent buildings along West Gay Street. (Facade improvements to existing buildings could be undertaken as part of a City facade enhancement program.)

Recommendations

- **Design and build the festival street.** The City should explore funding opportunities, develop a detailed site plan, and construct the project.
- **Develop a plan for festival street programming, public art, and special events.** As a signature Downtown space, Gay Street Commons should include a wide array of activities, events, and artwork.



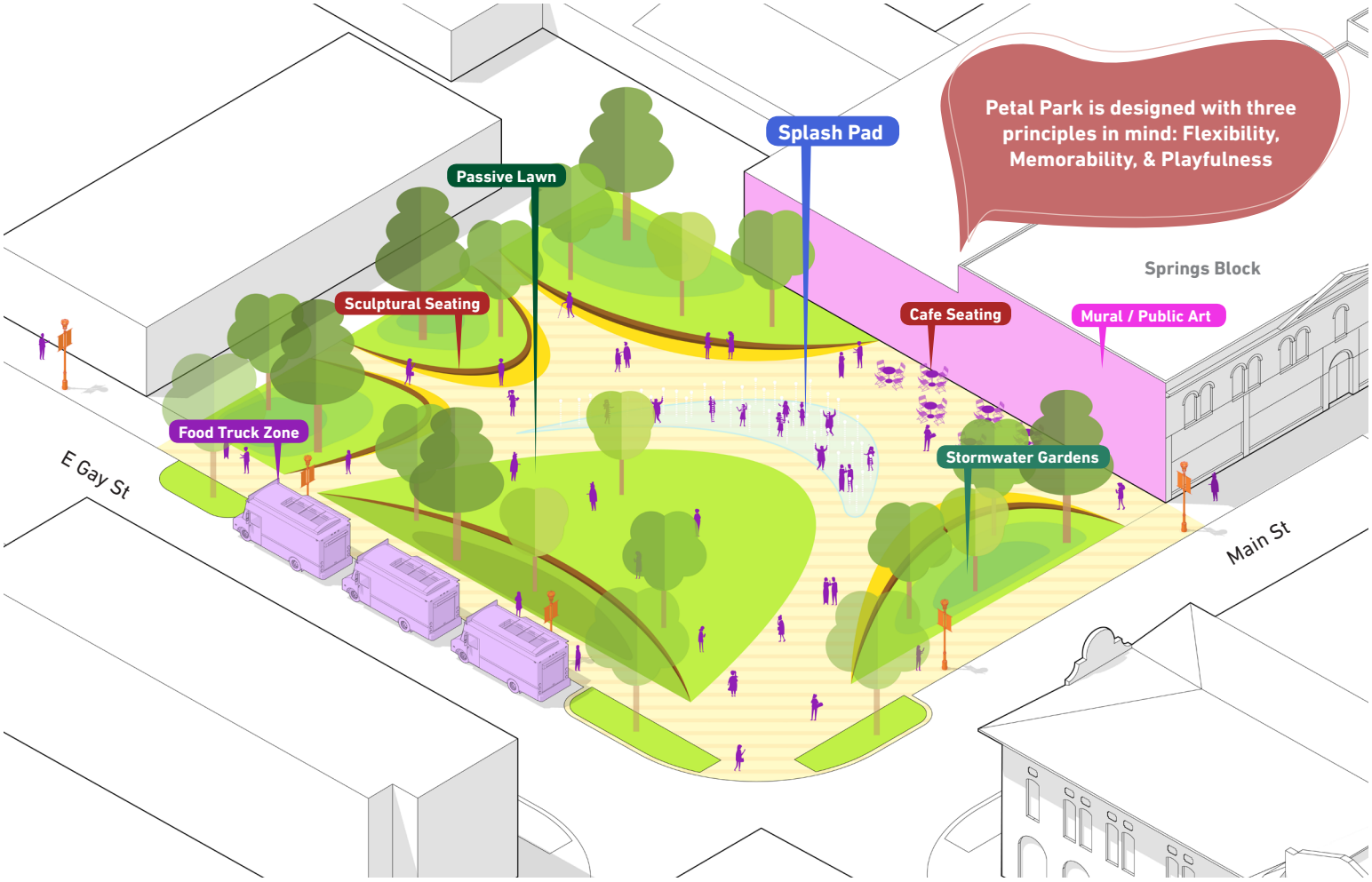
Buildings on West Gay Street are well-suited to micro-retail and small-business opportunities

Gay Street Commons - Typical Use

Cultural
arts district
TOYOTA
HILUX

Gay Street Commons - Festival Use

Cultural
arts district
Cultural
arts district



Petal Park

A new public park at the corner of Main Street and East Gay Street could become the premier public space in Lancaster County as well as a signature, family-friendly anchor for Downtown. This place, called Petal Park, would be a high-visibility project that would become a major destination capable of attracting people of all ages, incomes, and abilities to Downtown Lancaster. Petal Park would also take advantage of Downtown's "100% Corner" and serve as a catalyst for much-needed investment in adjacent properties, including the Old Bank of Lancaster Building and the Springs Block.

Petal Park would feature numerous high-quality amenities, including:

- a crescent-shaped splash pad with flush-mounted pop-jets (which would enable the space to act as a plaza when not in operation)
- a passive lawn for picnicking and seating during special events, such as outdoor concerts and movies
- Movable cafe seating, including tables, chairs, and umbrellas
- On-street parking that would be utilized as a food truck zone during festivals and other special events
- Shade-giving trees and signature vegetation, including native grasses and red rose bushes
- Stormwater gardens wrapped by low walls that provide seating
- A wide variety of public art, including murals, sculptures, and banners.

Recommendations

- **Design and build the park.** The City should acquire the property, explore funding opportunities, develop a detailed site plan, and construct the park.
- **Prepare an operations and maintenance plan for the park.** The City should be prepared to maintain the park, with special attention paid to the splash pad.
- **Develop a plan for park programming, public art, and special events.** As a signature Downtown space, Petal Park should include a wide array of activities, events, and displays.
- **Market and promote the park.** Ensure Petal Park is featured prominently in local and external marketing for Downtown.

Grassy Knoll & Public Art

Splash Pad

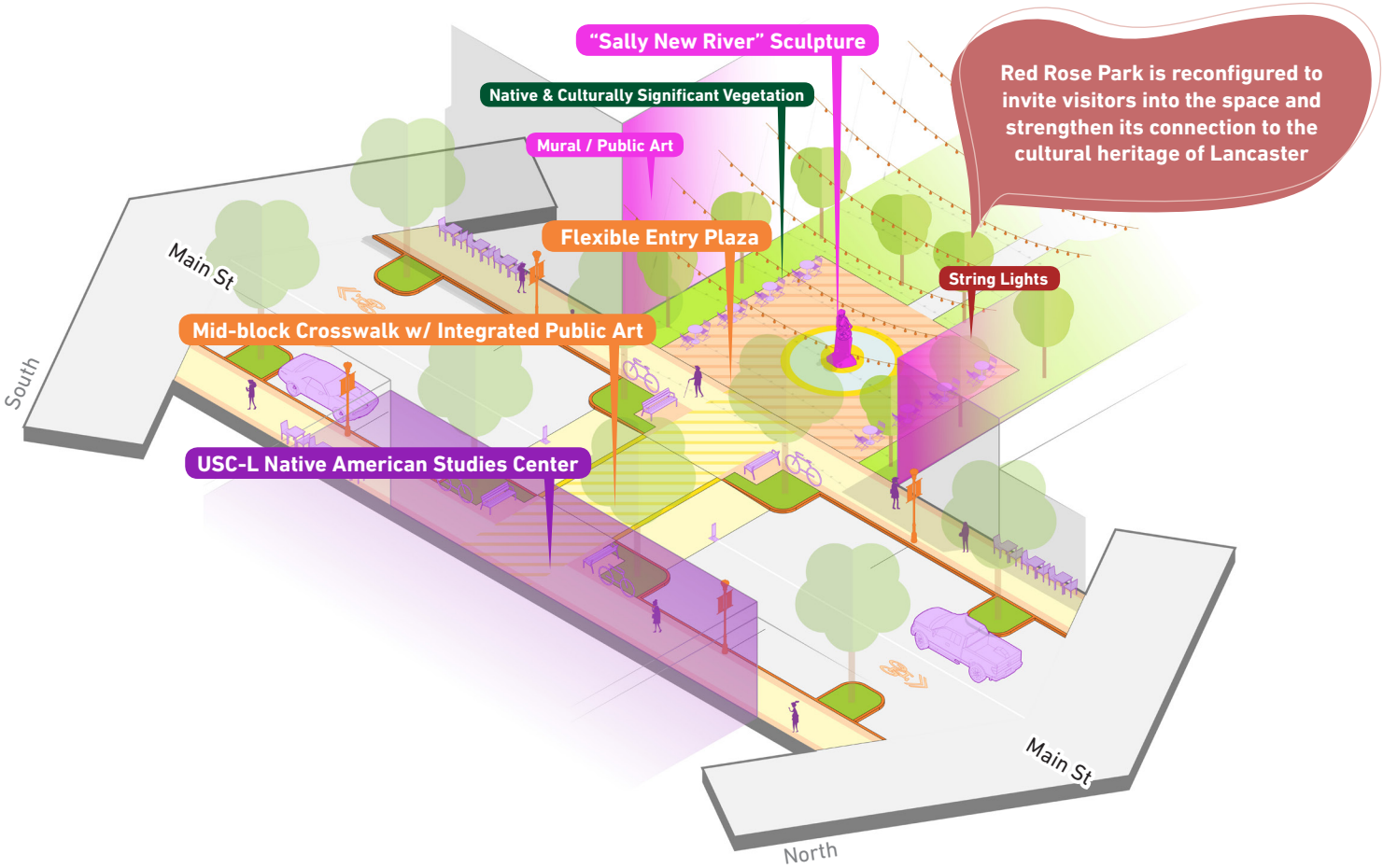
Sculptural Seating & Living Infrastructure

Pollinator Garden

Shade Structure & Swings

Public investment in Petal Park will incentivize private investment in adjacent buildings, such as the Springs Block

Petal Park

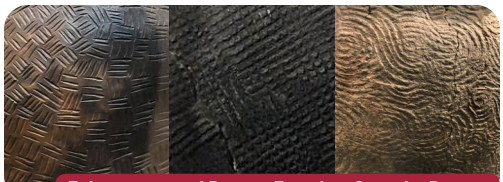


Red Rose Park

As one of Downtown Lancaster's signature public spaces, Red Rose Park should provide opportunities for relaxation and community gathering in a well-defined space that is clearly connected to Main Street and surrounding amenities. One of these amenities is the USC-Lancaster Native American Studies Center, which offers a robust collection of Catawba artifacts and educational resources in a former commercial building on Main Street. In an effort to "bring the museum to the community," there exists an opportunity to create a well-defined pedestrian crosswalk across Main Street to connect the entrance of the Native American Studies Center to Red Rose Park, which could be re-imagined as an outdoor educational and sculpture garden dedicated to Catawba history and culture.

A reimagined Red Rose Park could feature the following elements:

- Catawba-inspired artwork or pavers on a Main Street tabletop crosswalk and park entrance
- Mural artwork on adjacent commercial buildings within the park space
- A large sculpture and water feature that pays homage to important Catawba individuals, such as Sally New River
- Decorative overhead string lighting
- Furnishings, including tables, chairs, and benches
- Native species vegetation, including trees and shrubs
- A small educational garden to demonstrate Catawba agricultural practices
- Interpretive signage and illustrative panels.



Enlargements of Pattern Found on Catawba Pottery

Midblock Crossing - Tabletop

Inspiration for "Sally New River" Sculpture

Representation of "Sally New River"

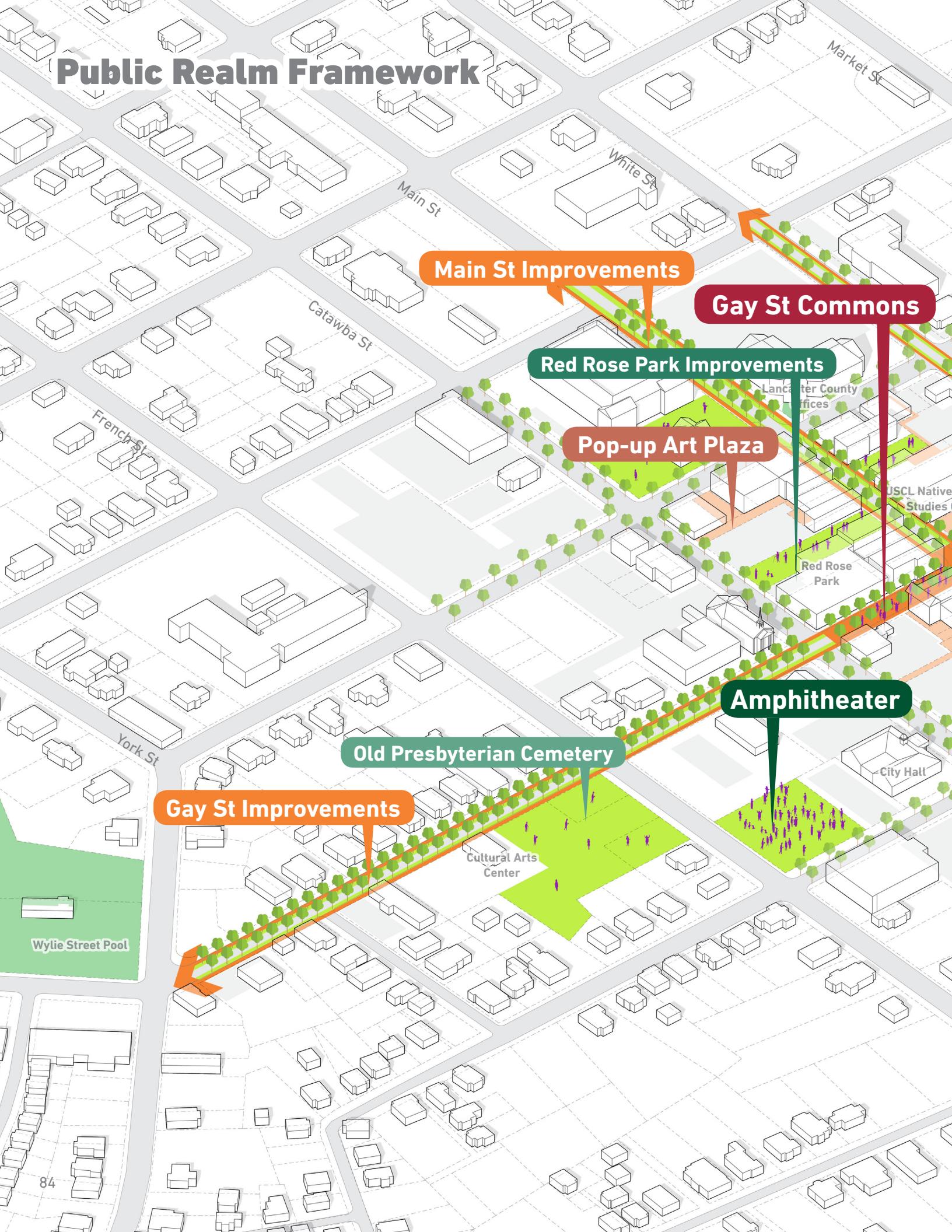
Crosswalk with Integrated Public Art

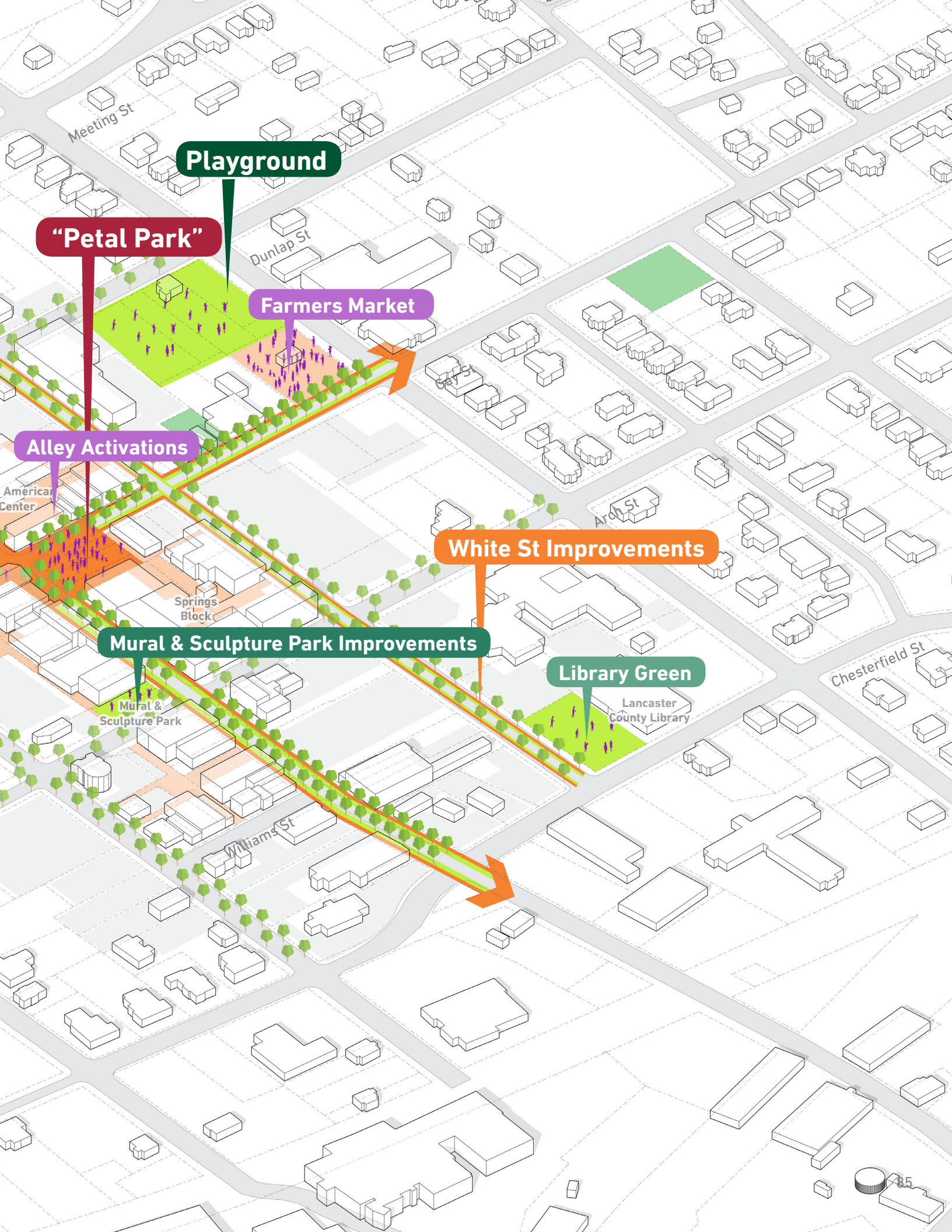
Recommendations

- **Design and build the park.** The City should work with USC-L and the Catawba Nation to develop a detailed site plan and construct the park, including the crosswalk connection across Main Street.
- **Prepare an operations and maintenance plan for the park.** The City should work with USC-L to properly maintain the space and the artwork within it.
- **Develop a plan for public art.** As an outdoor art and sculpture garden dedicated to Catawba culture, Red Rose Park should feature pieces commissioned and maintained by USC-L and the Catawba Nation.
- **Market and promote the park.** Ensure Red Rose Park is featured prominently in local and external marketing for Downtown as well as materials issued by the USC-L Native American Studies Center and Catawba Nation.

Red Rose Park - Connection to USC-L Native American Studies Center

Public Realm Framework




Playground
"Petal Park"
Farmers Market
Alley Activations
White St Improvements
Mural & Sculpture Park Improvements
Library Green
Meeting St
Dunlap St
Gay St
Arch St
Chesterfield St
Williams St
American Center
Springs Block
Mural & Sculpture Park
Lancaster County Library

3.4 *Downtown Lancaster is...* Thriving

A thriving Downtown Lancaster is a busy place buzzing with investment in buildings, businesses, housing, and creative spaces. It is a place where institutions, investors, and home-grown entrepreneurs work together to improve the social and economic fabric of the heart of Lancaster.

Recommendations for this chapter are divided into the following sections:

- Economic Development
- Public Policy
- Organization

Economic Development

Current Business Climate

- While the northern portion of Lancaster County has seen explosive growth over the past two decades, City growth has been much more gradual and subdued. Many Downtown property owners and stakeholders discussed the pending growth of the Charlotte metro moving further down US 521 towards Lancaster. Still, this same sentiment has been shared since at least the 2003 plan and has not yet been realized. With several new single-family and multi-family residential units being planned within the City Limits, that long-awaited growth surge may be closer than in years past.
- This slow but steady growth seen in the City has not translated to any significant investment in Downtown, and there are currently no planned projects in the district. However, Downtown does have many vacant buildings that can be receiving areas for new investment. Many of these buildings are quite large, including the Springs Block, Old Post Office, Old Bank of Lancaster, and others. These larger footprints may make these buildings more conducive for mixed-use or creative redevelopment projects that could be catalyst sites for additional Downtown investment.
- Many of the vacant buildings in Downtown are in poor condition. While this makes rent more affordable at the moment, several structures need significant upgrades or simple stabilization to be viable locations for Downtown uses.
- All of this translates to a Downtown real estate market that is not ideal for a healthy downtown. With low property values and taxes, a high vacancy level, and the general condition of buildings, there exists a disincentive for property owners to make significant investments in their properties.
- Downtown Lancaster has several high-quality, successful businesses. Some are

long-standing independent retailers, while others have come into the market within the past few years. Still, there is not yet a critical mass of retail businesses in Downtown and a limited variety of shops overall.

- The City has seen businesses close in the past year, including Hi-Lites and Rite Aid in Downtown, and Goody's at Lancaster Square. These closures are likely due to national trends that project that within seven years, 25% of all retail purchases will be made online.
- However, given current demand, there still exists an opportunity for more than 157,000 square feet of new business that could be accommodated in Lancaster. Key demand-based categories include dining, coffee shops, clothing, sporting goods, and various specialty retail.
- Current retail opportunities include nearly 62,000 square feet of demand in full-service restaurants and drinking establishments, as well as cafés that could offer coffee and ice cream.
- To meet existing demand, new or expanded businesses must meet the needs of Lancaster's market demographics and provide an experience that is focused on customer service.
- Recruitment efforts should look to businesses and uses that drive traffic to Downtown such as restaurants, micro-breweries, and food trucks, as well as activity generators such as museums, cultural and arts facilities, greenway connections, and amenities such as a splash pad.
- The City of Lancaster currently does not have an economic development framework. This situation is not uncommon for communities the size of Lancaster, but the vision established in this plan will require a focused economic development effort to be realized.
- The newly established Red Rose City Development Corporation and the existing See Lancaster organization can help perform the local government's role. However, the City cannot accomplish this plan on its own, and will be critical for strong partnerships with critical players such as USC-Lancaster, the J. Marion Sims Foundation, Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce, Lancaster County, and the private sector to play significant roles.
- Lastly, there seems to be an overall negative perception of Downtown that is permeating within the general citizenry and some of the key partner agencies. In order for this plan to be successful, the community must get past this attitude and focus on potential and opportunity rather than negativity and pessimism. The vision created in this plan should be a conduit to inspire local residents, partner organizations, and future investors.

Recommendations

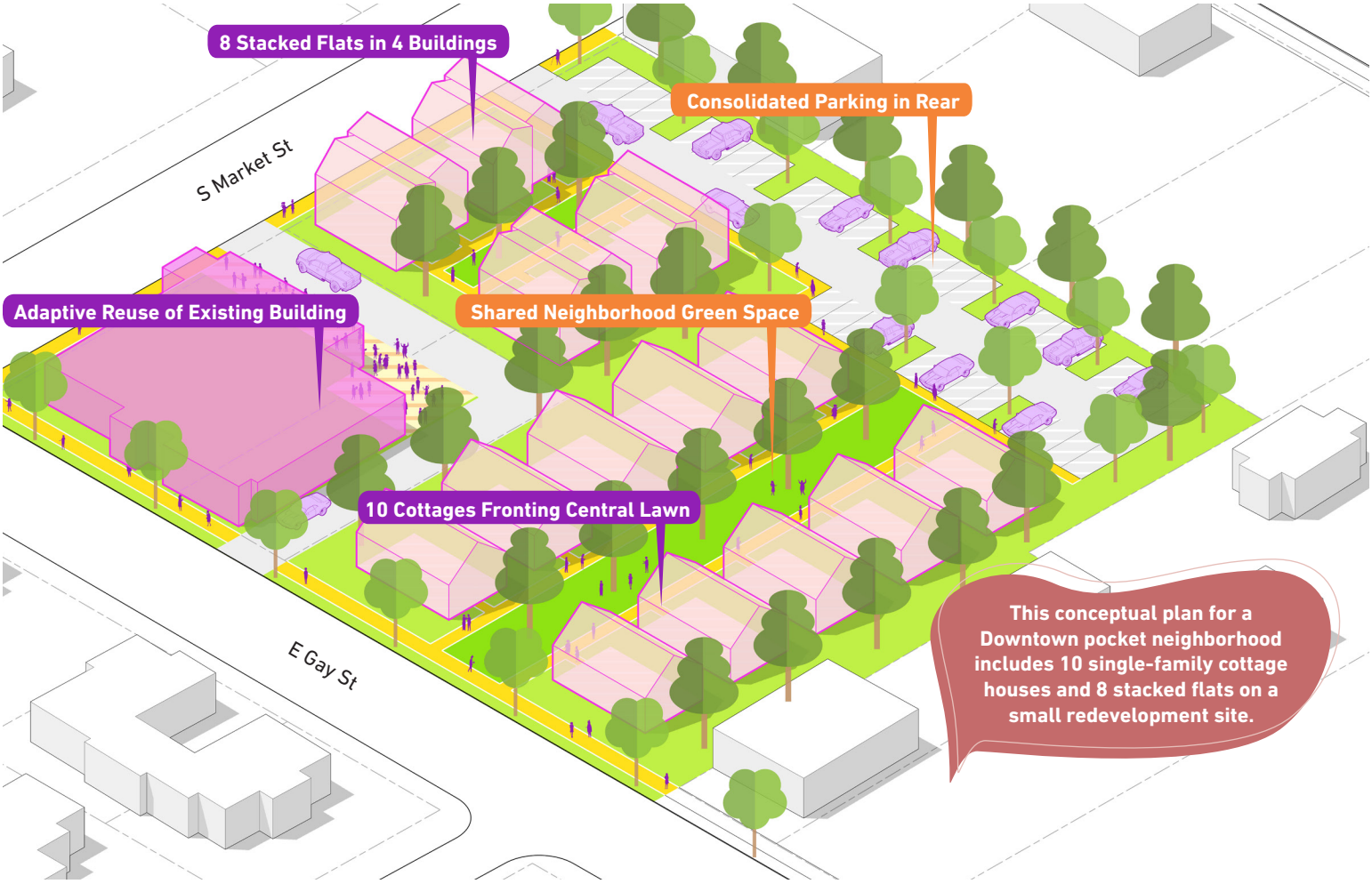
- **Produce market profile and share data with local businesses and economic development partners.** The market research conducted in this plan outlines true opportunities based on current trends and demand. It has been a foundation to guide the strategies of this planning effort, but also should be shared with existing downtown business owners, prospects, and economic development partners.
    - Create a branded, one to two-page profile of the market findings (demographics, segmentation, and demand) as an executive summary that could also be used for promotion.
    - Provide market research as a digital PDF to share with all who are interested.
    - Create a recruitment package (branded folder with pockets) to include market profile, incentive information, testimonial ads, available property sheets).
- **Focus recruitment efforts on market research.** In particular, the City should frame its early recruitment efforts on key opportunities that drive downtown activity such as restaurants, café's, entertainment uses, specialty retail, etc. This can be done by:
    - Establishing small incentives (small grants for business planning, marketing, etc.) tied to desired and supportable businesses.
    - Working with individual property owners of key sites to collaborate on recruiting these target businesses.
    - Establishing regular engagement with the real estate community to open a dialogue

that will lead to contacts with business prospects and investors. This could be quarterly roundtable meetings to share the progress and vision of the plan.

- **Cooperatively market to northern Lancaster County.** Downtown businesses must be relevant to Lancaster residents in order to be successful, but numerous business owners and stakeholders identified the Indian Land area as a target market opportunity. Local private businesses should be encouraged to pool marketing resources to target these high growth areas. This effort could be done through advertising in HOA newsletters, having a presence at community events, and conducting active social media marketing within the region.
- **Develop a co-working space in Downtown.** The City should partner with a Downtown property owner, USC-L, and industry such as Nutramax to develop a co-working space in a downtown building. These private businesses can provide dynamic office space for entrepreneurs or business travelers, as well as collaborative meeting space, both of which were identified as needed by stakeholders. LOOM Co-Working in downtown Fort Mill is a great example. Memberships can be purchased as low as $20 for a single day or up to $199 per month. LOOM even has an indoor art gallery called Studios@LOOM, which celebrates the community's textile heritage and creative energy.
- **Promote opportunities for Downtown housing.** Market research illustrates an improving market and a growing demand for new housing in Lancaster. With the lack of any current development activity in Downtown, coupled with the challenges that some key sites will present, a market for Downtown will have to be created. It will be critical for the City to build partnerships with the development community and collaborate for new development. While partnerships are listed in a separate recommendation below, this recruitment strategy begins with investor engagement.
    - Coordinate one-on-one meetings with regional investors who have had success with mixed-use developments to share the plan and explore potential. Even if investment does not initially occur, the City may learn from the experience of these regional developers, but also get on their radar for future investment.
    - Approach USC-L to discuss potential for downtown housing for faculty or students. Determine needs, price points and potential amenities to attract that market, and approach owners of key sites for a potential public/private/institutional collaboration. Similar collaborations have led to institutional presence in peer downtowns such as Anderson, Greenwood, Clinton, and others. Opportunities could include new infill such as The Greens at Fort Mill, or adaptive reuse of buildings such as the Springs Block.

Case Study: The Greens at Fort Mill

- 64-unit infill development in downtown Fort Mill
- 77,000 square foot, four-story structure
- Built in 2016 with design sensitive to historic downtown
- Market-rate rents of $1,100 to $1,600+ per month
- 741 to 1,317 square foot units
- Amenities include fitness center, dog park, and common courtyard
- Marketed to young professionals commuting to Charlotte as well as empty-nesters



- **Develop a pocket neighborhood in Downtown.** One housing concept that was suggested by the consultants and warmly received by the community is that of a pocket neighborhood. A pocket neighborhood is a type of infill development that incorporates small-footprint residential units (typically cottages, but this can include stacked flats or small townhomes) that are oriented around a shared common space (typically, a lawn or community garden) with parking in the rear. The intent of this design is to maximize land use for development as well as create an amenity space that will reinforce neighbor-to-neighbor interaction. Pocket neighborhood units can be built to various price points, so it may be possible to develop a mixed-income community in the heart of Downtown.

- **Recruit a Children's Museum to Downtown.** One of the visionary ideas of this master plan is to recruit a children's museum to Downtown Lancaster. This would create both a private investment as well as a significant activity generator and anchor to the development of Downtown. From ongoing community engagement, a children's museum and splash pad were two of the most mentioned needs for the Lancaster community. Both would provide activities and a destination for all of the youth and young families, much like similar projects have become catalysts in other communities. These museums come in all shapes and sizes from a new building in Greenville, adaptive reuse historic building in Lynchburg, Virginia, and even a one-story storefront in Rutherfordton, North Carolina.

  In Lancaster, an ideal location may be the Old Post Office at the southern end of Main Street. The City should begin by partnering with the property owner to conduct a feasibility study to determine the potential for the project. If the project is feasible, the two could explore potential partnership opportunities where the public role could be grant funding, parking, event planning, etc. A signature facility in Lancaster could be tied to the Cultural Arts District with a component designed for makers and creators.

Case Study: KidSenses Rutherfordton, North Carolina

Rutherfordton is a small town of about 4,000 residents about one hour west of the Charlotte Metro. In 2004, a private investor looked to a small one-story historic storefront and adaptively reused the building as a museum for children. The facility is the primary activity generator in Downtown Rutherfordton and has had a tremendous level of success. Most recently it is undergoing an expansion to develop KidsFactory - a tech lab, "maker space," and culinary kitchen aimed at children and teenagers.

- Opened 2004
- Brought over 1 million visitors to downtown in 15 years
- 11,000 square foot facility incorporating street level storefront and basement
- 8,500 square foot expansion for KidsFactory
- $1.4 million capital campaign to fund the expansion

Colorful signage and artwork enhance the exterior of the Old Post Office building, which could become a signature children's museum

- **Study the feasibility of a boutique hotel.** Another common theme from stakeholder engagement is the need for better lodging in Lancaster, and potentially in Downtown. Lancaster currently has limited offerings with several one and two-star hotels, in addition to a historic bed and breakfast located just outside of town. A 2012 study looked at the need for a conventional hotel in Lancaster and identified limited demand. That study is dated now and was limited to assessing mid-tier level lodging products like a Jameson Inn. Now, seven years later, the City should look to conduct a feasibility study for a more specific boutique offering in Downtown. It could perhaps partner with owners of the Springs Block or another site, in addition to employers such as USC-L and Nutramax, who both expressed a need for high-quality short-term lodging for its corporate visitors.

  Boutique hotels will require the right investor and creativity, but have become much more common and have found success in communities much smaller and more economically challenged than Lancaster. A common denominator in this success stories is a hospitality investor who has done it before. As part of the feasibility analysis, the City and its partners can reach out to these investors who are always looking for that next project.

- **Grow the Cultural Arts District by recruiting artists and galleries along Gay Street.** Another big vision idea detailed in another section of this plan is developing Gay Street as a festival street and gathering area to be the active anchor for Downtown. This idea could be connected to Lancaster's arts and creative assets by targeting either East and/or West Gay Street as a small artist neighborhood featuring artists and gallery spaces.

  It is important to note here that this is not suggesting that any residents in the six or so homes on West Gay be relocated. Rather, if and when these homes come on the market, the City and local investors with a shared vision could target these for acquisition, home restoration, and rental as low-cost homes and studio space for artists and creators. The vision could be led by the RRCDC or private sector, with the potential to use grants for cultural arts and historic preservation.

Case Study: Western Front Hotel St. Paul, Virginia

St. Paul is a tiny town of just 900 residents nestled in the mountains in the heart of the coalfields in rural southwest Virginia. The community has long struggled with the decline of the coal industry, seeing its population decline slowly over the past thirty years. Today the community is experiencing a resurgence as it (and the rest of the region) has embraced outdoor recreation as its new economy. A catalyst to St. Paul's revitalization is the Western Front Hotel, a unique boutique hotel developed two years ago. Like Lancaster, the hotel was borne out of an ongoing visioning process and downtown revitalization planning.

- Opened 2017
- Town and partners solicited specific boutique hotel developer that had done other products in Virginia and other states
- 30-room boutique hotel that is an adaptive reuse of a historic structure in downtown
- $7.8 million in funding for development of the hotel
- Developers stacked funding from a variety of sources including private investment, town and county appropriations, state and federal preservation tax credits, CBDG grants, ARC grants, and Virginia Tobacco Commission money
- The hotel is geared specifically towards outdoor recreation enthusiasts and ATV riding and has become an economic catalyst to Downtown St. Paul, spinning off a fine-dining restaurant, brewery, and specialty retail

Case Study: smART Kinston Arts & Cultural District

Kinston is a small town of about 20,000 people in the rural plains of Eastern North Carolina. The community has a rich history but had experienced significant economic decline as agriculture and industry also declined. Kinston's resurgence has been in celebrating its unique history, African-American music heritage, and more recently, its arts and cultural assets. A large part of Kinston becoming a hub of the arts in Eastern North Carolina was borne out of the singular vision of a local entrepreneur.

A native of Kinston, Stephen Hill chose to return to his hometown to develop a brewing company and two unique boutique hotels. An advocate for the arts and preservation who sits on the North Carolina Arts Council, Stephen always incorporated local art and creativity into his businesses. He recognized a creative energy in Kinston and envisioned an Arts & Cultural District that would celebrate the town's unique visual, performing and cultural arts. That vision was smART Kinston.

- 501 (c)(3) organization focused on creating an arts village
- Historic but deteriorating textile mill village adjacent to downtown
- Hill acquired as many homes as he could in the district; many residents loved their neighborhood and wished to stay, and it was important to Hill that the neighborhood not gentrify
- Ultimately, Hill restored 50+ homes in the neighborhood, including numerous homes of long-time residents who wanted to continue to live in this dynamic neighborhood
- Each renovated home is painted in bright colors with white picket fences, creating a distinct identity for the district
- 25 of the homes were used for artists residences and galleries, and creative individuals were recruited through an artist relocation program
- The non-profit provides the homes at low-cost rent, with a stipulation that the artists have open studios at least once a quarter

- **Create an entrepreneurial empowerment program.** Lancaster Main Street, USC-L, and the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce should partner to create an entrepreneurial empowerment program. This would not be a simple business association, but rather a gathering of ideas where local businesses could share their knowledge base with their peers. Regular meetings could include topics such as grant application, business planning, merchandising, and social media marketing.

  Numerous program models exist, including "1 Million Cups" – an effort of the Kaufman Foundation focused on building diversity and equity into small business ecosystems. The free initiative focuses on volunteers and local organizations, and now is located in 163 communities across the country, including Anderson and Rock Hill.

- **Partner with USC-Lancaster for a small-business startup challenge.** Other communities and downtown development organizations have created small, locally-focused entrepreneurial challenge programs funded through public and private seed monies. For example, the City of Anderson provided startup grants of $12,000 to local entrepreneurs. Each prospective business went through an eight-month process offering training and resources geared towards bringing new retailers into downtown. Businesses included a downtown chocolatier, independent theater company, and specialty boutique. Each winner received a monthly grant of $1,000 for an entire year.

  Similar initiatives each have their parameters based on the community, including the P.E.E. D.E.E Idea Challenge in Hartsville, or Opportunity SWVA in Southwest Virginia. They are often funded through federal or state

grants, such as the Hometown Economic Development Grant in South Carolina. In Lancaster, this partnership could include USC-L, Chamber of Commerce, and others. Financial assistance could come from grants or the private sector, including employers like Nutramax or financial institutions like Founders Credit Union.

- **Create micro-retail spaces in vacant Downtown spaces.** With the growth in online sales, the retail industry has evolved tremendously, creating a more dynamic environment for entrepreneurs and downtown businesses. Today's businesses carry less inventory and use less space, and creative programming of individual spaces can make the property more marketable and the business more viable. Many communities are working with property owners to maximize space by partitioning downtown buildings for multiple businesses. For example, a downtown retailer may not need or be able to afford a 2,500 square foot space, which may render that space vacant. Maximizing space by carving out a 200-800 square feet retail space in the front (depending on the business) and leaving the rear portion of the building for office space(s) or other use would actually make the building more profitable.

  In Lancaster, many vacant buildings are excessively large and not conducive or affordable for a single retail business. The City and its partners should work with property owners to identify those buildings which may be favorable for micro-spaces, and then recruit businesses based on the opportunities identified in the market analysis. It could also tie small incentives for signage or upfit costs to help recruit desired businesses.

Main Street features many opportunities for micro-retail uses that would meet existing market demand with lower operating costs

East Gay Street has several buildings well-suited for micro-retail concepts as well as alleyway activation and enhancements

- **Promote Lancaster's one-stop-shop for development.** Several business and property owners mentioned a lack of understanding of where they need to go or what they need to do to open a business, including business licensing, permitting, or zoning. The City does have a one-stop shop with consolidated services for acquiring this information, but few know about it. Much like Hartsville has done with the Hartsville Navigator, the City should consider branding and promoting the effort. Also, it should create a web portal for the effort, as well as a branded business assistance guide. It can even consider how it can incorporate other services (power, Internet) from private providers within the one-stop-shop.

- **Develop a prospectus for key development sites and market opportunities for Opportunity Zone funding.** The Opportunity Zone Program is a new economic development tool that provides an unparalleled federal tax incentive for investment in lower-income areas across the country. The program has limited constraints and allows people to invest unrealized capital gains in a project, with the potential to have much of that capital gains tax excluded depending on how long they hold that investment. The goal is to stimulate investment with private-sector funding.

  The entirety of Lancaster's Downtown is in a designated Opportunity Zone. Many of the big catalyst ideas in this plan can be funded through this program, but it is not easy as investors are looking for the right project and a return on their investment. It is, therefore, very competitive, and cities must take a more proactive approach to solicit funding as opposed to how they may seek grant funding. The first step will be to work with property owners and developers to identify a specific development project – for example, a children's museum or boutique hotel. The City and development partners can then work together to develop a prospectus document for the potential development of the site, then shop it to specific Opportunity Zone Funds that may share a similar vision (mixed-use, hospitality, etc.).

  A directory of Opportunity Zone Funds with their geographic and investment focus can be found at: www.ncsha.org/resource/opportunity-zone-fund-directory/

Public Policy

Current Climate

- The City's current downtown revitalization policy toolkit is largely limited to a facade improvement grant program for Downtown buildings.
- The City of Lancaster has an opportunity to enhance its policy toolkit for Downtown revitalization substantially.
- Given the poorly-functioning Downtown real estate market, there is a clear need for policy changes to incentivize investment in Downtown properties and channel revitalization-related resources into the district.

Recommendations

- **Acquire Certified Local Government Status.** The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is a federal program that recognizes local governments that have established preservation programming. The program comes with significant benefits, such as access to a dedicated pot of grant monies geared towards preservation planning, as well as brick-and-mortar preservation projects. CLGs also get advanced technical assistance from the State Historic Preservation Office in Columbia. To become a CLG, the City of Lancaster would need to establish a historic preservation commission, designate a district, and adopt design guidelines. Lancaster has some of the most important historic structures in the state, including its two Robert Mills buildings. More importantly, it has seen a recent deterioration of Downtown historic structures that has, in at least one case, resulted in the loss of a building. A qualified and active historic preservation program will allow the City to protect the irreplaceable.
- **Adopt local provisions of the Bailey Bill for historic preservation.** The Bailey Bill allows local governments to offer special property tax assessments to rehabilitated historic properties. A community must adopt the bill by ordinance and establish its expenditure requirements, length and amount of assessment, while also creating a

process by which a property owner can apply for and obtain the assessment. Ultimately, this program provides a property owner with a significant financial incentive that can be "stacked" with other incentives (such as federal and state historic tax credits) and could be the final piece of the *pro forma* that can make a project feasible.

- **Focus Red Rose City Development Corporation (RRCDC) efforts in Downtown.** The RRCDC's incorporation articles establish a broad definition of revitalization with a focus on the old Springs Mill site. However, it does include Downtown and the Cultural Arts District, and moving forward, its mission should incorporate downtown revitalization. In fact, the RRCDC can play a major role in Lancaster's overall economic development framework and lead a number of the recommendations of this plan.
- **Consider establishing a TIF District in Downtown.** Tax-increment financing is an innovative tool used quite often in South Carolina. The program uses increases in tax base that occurs with new private investment to pay for public projects and infrastructure tied to a downtown plan. The statutory program requires a determination of a redevelopment area, identification of public projects, and a projection of increment. The reality in Downtown Lancaster is that the tax base is significantly low, and any new investment in property has the potential to drive up enough increment to fund many of the public projects in this plan. Cities like Greenville have used TIF extensively for downtown revitalization.
- **Review the City's Accommodations Tax assessment and allocation.** The City uses accommodations tax dollars to fund tourism efforts and event programming conducted by See Lancaster. With a new vision for Downtown, the City should review the existing tax and determine specific projects in this plan that can be funded through this resource.
- **Consider establishing new funding streams for Downtown public realm improvements.** The City should consider establishing a local accommodations tax to supplement the revenue from the existing (county) accommodations tax. Other funding streams could include a vehicle registration fee that would direct collected funds to needed City street improvements.
- **Develop a set of "carrots and sticks" to address vacant buildings.** Over time, the City should develop and test out a complementary set of incentives for property owners to invest in their properties (or alternately, to convey their properties to more willing investors). Examples of such tools include heritage architect consultations and "Downtown vibrancy grant" programs. *Only when* Downtown development and investment is booming, the City could deploy a series of "sticks" to spur recalcitrant property owners to either improve or sell their properties. The first step the City could take is the adoption of a vacant building ordinance, which would require vacant buildings to meet certain standards for maintenance, appearance, etc. Such a move would likely break the Downtown real estate market from its current "buy-and-wait" dysfunction. (If attempted now, such a move would likely stifle, rather than encourage, long-term investment.) Another idea to spur investment during a healthy market is that of a "Renaissance Zone" overlay district. This would require and enforce minimum standards for vacant and occupied buildings alike. Again, this policy step should not be undertaken until the Downtown real estate market is robust enough to justify higher rents, which is most likely years away.
- **Work with private property owners to expand public parking options in Downtown.** Downtown Lancaster currently has sufficient surface parking to satisfy demand for a thoroughly revitalized district. The issue is not whether Downtown needs additional parking, but how to make the existing inventory (most of which is privately-held and unavailable to the public) accessible for public use. The City should work directly with property owners to address their concerns and remove barriers to allowing public use of their lots. The City may need to devise creative solutions to resolve the issue, whether it be after-hours parking at county offices, weekday and evening parking at churches, repaving smaller private lots in exchange for public access, etc.

Organization

Current Climate

- This plan offers a series of ambitious recommendations that will require significant long-term partnerships to address and accomplish.
- Although Lancaster has many advantages that similar-sized cities do not, it must reverse a decades-long downward trajectory that has resulted in low expectations for the future of Downtown.
- To accomplish the vision of the plan, the Lancaster community will need to rally and harness public and private investment in Downtown.
- There is a real need for improved coordination among Downtown stakeholders, including elected officials, City staff, property owners, investors, and the general public.

Recommendation

- **Create a formalized public-private-partnership (PPP) effort**. Partnerships with the private sector are often needed to incentivize development, particularly with many of the catalyst projects identified in this plan. The level of partnerships can range from small incentives and expedited review to larger efforts such as parking and public investment. As Downtown Lancaster becomes more desirable for investment, the City should consider a formalized approach to communicate to the development community Lancaster's willingness to invest in downtown. It would also allow for a more active effort to cooperatively plan for any public role in advance of a project.

  This would include creating a simple but formal application process, establishing development criteria based on the vision of this plan, and actively marketing the program on the City website, prospect sheets, and business recruitment guide previously mentioned. This program would allow the City to assess its role on a case-by-case basis. Depending on the project, this could include providing parking resources, land acquisition, streetscape enhancements, infrastructure and public spaces tied to a private development.

- **Allow the RRCDC to become the conduit to communicate to regional developers.** Upon adoption of this plan, the RRCDC should meet with regional developers to share the general vision, but also to solicit interest in investment, particularly for those catalyst projects identified in this plan. Simple communication and regular engagement with the development community is one of the most impactful ways to drive interest in downtown development.
- **Establish an Implementation Committee.** The City cannot complete this project on its own and must rely on its partner agencies as well as the private sector to realize the plan vision. Fortunately, the City of Lancaster has key allies that many other communities do not and has an opportunity to succeed where other communities may fall short. The City should form a Downtown Master Plan Implementation Committee made up of key representatives from partner organizations. While the City would lead the implementation of the overall plan, this committee would meet quarterly to discuss the plan, evaluate the process, and adjust priorities if needed. This plan should be dynamic, and active communication among these implementation partners will lead to a consistency in the overall vision and success. Roles for each organization could be as follows:
  - City of Lancaster – Lead implementer of plan
  - RRCDC and Lancaster County Economic Development – Economic development related to recruiting investment, partnerships for catalyst developments
  - Main Street/ See Lancaster – Marketing and promotion, small-business support
  - J. Marion Sims Foundation – Community engagement and data collection
  - USC-Lancaster – Potential partner on key projects, academic support related to business development
  - Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce – Small business and entrepreneurial support
  - MUSC - Potential partner on key projects
  - Private Industry – Representation of private sector and employment needs related to the plan

- Private Sector – Investment, business recruitment, partnering with local government partners
- Small Business – Peer business support and cooperative marketing

This plan is the result of a year-long open and spirited community engagement process. While there may not be 100% consensus on individual strategies, it does represent a collaborative community effort. To that end, it is critically important that the representative from each of the partner agencies be an advocate for this plan within their respective organizations and commit to positive and constructive participation on the implementation committee. This plan cannot be successful without buy-in from community partners, and a mechanism of ongoing and constructive dialogue will ensure that the plan is moving forward.

Key steps in this task include:

1. City Council adopts the Downtown Revitalization Master Plan.
2. City requests each of its partner agencies appoint a representative from its organization to be on the implementation committee. It would be ideal for that representative to have been involved in the master planning process, but not critical. Some of these representatives could transition from the initial steering committee.
3. This committee should be comprised of about ten individuals, but no more than fifteen.
4. Implementation committee convenes initial meeting to:
    - Determine a quarterly calendar for regular meetings.
    - Review plan vision, but particularly the implementation strategies of this plan.
    - Discuss potential roles and assign lead implementation agencies to each task.
    - Discuss and establish a mechanism to regularly engage with residents.
5. After the initial meeting, the representative from each organization would then share the plan vision with their respective boards or agency.
6. Meet on a quarterly basis to benchmark the plan – discuss successes, adjust priorities as opportunities and challenges arise, and ADD implementation tasks where appropriate. The plan and its implementation should be a dynamic, living process.
7. Continue an ongoing community discussion related to this plan.

The last task here is critical. It has been apparent from this process that the general citizenry may have an overall negative perception of Downtown. Similarly, while the downtown plan is very focused on a single district in the community, a number of important topics came up throughout public engagement that tangentially impact this plan. These include, but are not limited to, inclusion, gentrification, public safety, quality of public education, socioeconomics, race relations, town-gown relationships, and others. A downtown revitalization plan cannot solve all of the issues that Lancaster and its citizens face. Still, perhaps its implementation can be a conduit for an ongoing, positive, and inclusive discussion about how to make Lancaster the best community in the state!

4.0 | Implementation

4.1 100-Day Action Plan

The early days following the completion of the *Downtown Revitalization Plan* will be critical to its long-term success. Implementation of this ambitious plan must start with small actionable steps that provide opportunities for the Lancaster community to work together and generate positive momentum behind the plan.

The following list of recommendations should be considered a series of actionable steps that can be completed within 100 days of project completion to kick-start the implementation process.

1. Adopt this plan.
2. Conduct a plan implementation workshop.
3. Form a plan implementation committee.
4. Identify key parcels for City acquisition.
5. Start the application process to become a Certified Local Government.
6. Determine vibrancy amenity and public art projects for public/private partnerships and capital funding.
7. Draft a scope of work and identify funding for the conceptual design of Petal Park.
8. Draft a scope of work and identify funding for the conceptual design of Gay Street Commons.
9. Review existing regulations and codes to remove roadblocks from redevelopment of historic Downtown buildings.
10. Develop a "how-to" guide to opening a business Downtown.
11. Develop an investment guide to Downtown, featuring market research from this plan.
12. Adopt the Downtown Lancaster brand system.
13. Utilize the Downtown logo for upcoming events and public art projects.
14. Begin the roll-out of the updated City logo set.
15. Plan for a bike-friendly event in Downtown Lancaster.

Downtown
LANCASTER

4.2 Implementation Matrix

Purpose

This section focuses on the long-term implementation of the *Downtown Revitalization Plan*. Although the recommendations in this section are described in Chapter 3, this section provides additional details related to the "who," "when," and "how much" for each recommendation.

How to Use

The *Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan* features sixty-eight recommendations organized by strategy ("Authentic and Welcoming," Accessible and Vibrant," and "Thriving") and category ("Community Pride," "Historic Preservation," etc.). Each recommendation includes additional information to help the City and its partners identify a clear path forward.

- **Primary Partners:** This is a list of the critical organizations and stakeholder groups that should be involved in successful implementation of a plan recommendation. (Note: This is not a comprehensive list of stakeholders or participants who could or should be involved in decision-making or action.)
- **Time Frames:** With the exception of long-term improvements to Downtown streets and subsurface infrastructure, the plan has a target implementation deadline of five years. While this time horizon is aggressive, recommendations can be accomplished under optimal conditions.
    - <1: Less than 1 Year (2020)
    - 1-2: Between 1 and 2 Years (2021-22)
    - 3-5: Between 3 and 5 Years (2023-25)
    - Ongoing: Will Require Ongoing Efforts
- **Cost:** The cost to implement recommendations is highly variable, with a mix of inexpensive (or cost-free) policy or organizational steps and high-dollar infrastructure or public realm enhancements. For the purposes of a master plan, a simple range of estimated costs is sufficient. (Detailed cost estimates for Gay Street Commons and Petal Park are provided in Appendix A.)
    - $ = $0 - $999
    - $$ = $1,000 - $4,999
    - $$$ = $5,000 - 49,000
    - $$$$ = Over $50,000

Implementation Matrix

Actions and Time Frames for Successful Implementation

ACTION	PRIMARY PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME	COST
Strategy: Downtown is... Authentic & Welcoming			
Branding & Marketing			
Conduct a "soft roll-out" of the new city logo.	City	<1 Year	$
Conduct a comprehensive, concerted roll-out the Downtown Lancaster logo.	City, See Lancaster, Chamber, Owners	<1 Year	$$
Create window stickers for Downtown merchants.	City, See Lancaster, Chamber, Owners	<1 Year	$
Use the "Where _____ lives!" campaign in digital and print marketing materials.	City, See Lancaster, Chamber, Owners	1-2 Years	$$$
Community Events			
Continue to host signature community events in Downtown.	See Lancaster	Ongoing	$-$$$
Once a permanent home for a Downtown Farmers Market has been created, recruit vendors and promote this event regionally.	See Lancaster	1-2 Years	$$-$$$
Consider an outdoor event schedule for new public spaces in Downtown.	See Lancaster	1-2 Years	$$-$$$
Explore additional community events to promote inclusivity and attract new visitors to Downtown.	See Lancaster	1-2 Years	$-$$$
Environmental Graphics			
Create Downtown identity and Downtown event banners to accompany existing kids' artwork banners.	See Lancaster	<1 Year	$$
Consider updating the City's wayfinding signage system.	City	3-5 Years	$$$
Consider updating Downtown parking signs.	City	3-5 Years	$$
Public Art			
Create an "art in public places" committee.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	<1 Year	$
Consider a small-scale sculpture series to encourage discovery.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	1-2 Years	$$
Integrate public art into the built environment.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	Ongoing	$-$$$
Consider an "art path" through the district.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	<1 Year	$-$$
Vibrancy Amenities			
Identify desired activities and vibrancy amenities.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA, Sims Foundation	<1 Year	$
Identify suitable locations for different types of desired vibrancy amenities.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	<1 Year	$
Create a program to leverage vibrancy amenities during events and on weekends.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	1-2 Years	$
Temporary Treatments and Uses			
Work with property owners to develop window treatments for empty buildings.	City, See Lancaster, Chamber, Owners	<1 Year	$$
Encourage temporary uses where appropriate.	City	Ongoing	$
Community Pride			
Continue to advance community mural-creation efforts throughout Downtown.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	Ongoing	$-$$
Host community clean-up or beautification events.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	Ongoing	$-$$
Historic Preservation			
Host a Downtown property workshop for City staff, property owners, business owners, and potential investors.	City, Owners	<1 Year	$
Explore a facade component grant program.	City, Owners	1-2 Years	$$-$$$
Consider stabilization and weatherization grants for Downtown buildings.	City, Owners	1-2 Years	$$-$$$
Work with a preservation architect to develop and implement a facade master plan.	City	1-2 Years	$$$-$$$$

Implementation Matrix

Actions and Time Frames for Successful Implementation

ACTION	PRIMARY PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME	COST
Strategy: Downtown is... Accessible and Vibrant			
Infrastructure			
Street & Right-of-Way Enhancements	City	Ongoing	$$$$
Bicycle & Pedestrian Network Enhancements	City	Ongoing	$$$$
Main Street Improvements	City	Ongoing	$$$$
Gay Street Improvements	City	Ongoing	$$$$
White Street Improvements	City	Ongoing	$$$$
Parks & Public Spaces			
Partner with business and property owners to activate alleyways throughout Downtown.	City, See Lancaster, Owners	Ongoing	$-$$$
Consider seating and vegetation modifications to Mural and Sculpture Park.	City	1-2 Years	$$$
Consider an informal pop-up art plaza in the interstitial space between buildings across from the Old County Courthouse building on Dunlap Street.	See Lancaster, LCCA	1-2 Years	$-$$
Consider developing an outdoor amphitheater behind City Hall at the intersection of French Street and Arch Street.	City	3-5 Years	$$$$
Consider developing a permanent farmers market along East Gay Street.	City	3-5 Years	$$$$
Gay Street Commons			
Design and build the Gay Street Commons.	City	1-2 Years	$$$$
Develop a plan for Gay Street Commons programming, public art, and special events.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	1-2 Years	$$$
Petal Park			
Design and build Petal Park.	City	1-2 Years	$$$$
Prepare an operations and maintenance plan for Petal Park.	City	1-2 Years	$$$
Develop a plan for Petal Park programming, public art, and special events.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	1-2 Years	$$$
Market and promote Petal Park.	City, See Lancaster, LCCA	Ongoing	$$$
Red Rose Park			
Design and build Red Rose Park.	City	1-2 Years	$$$$
Prepare an operations and maintenance plan for Red Rose Park.	City, See Lancaster, USC-L	1-2 Years	$$$
Develop a plan for public art in Red Rose Park.	City, See Lancaster, USC-L	1-2 Years	$$$
Market and promote Red Rose Park.	City, See Lancaster, USC-L	Ongoing	$$$

Implementation Matrix

Actions and Time Frames for Successful Implementation

ACTION	PRIMARY PARTNERS	TIMEFRAME	COST
Strategy: Downtown is... Thriving			
Economic Development			
Produce market profile and share data with local businesses and economic development partners.	City, Chamber	<1 Year	$-$$
Focus recruitment efforts on market research.	City, Chamber	1-2 Years	$-$$
Cooperatively market to northern Lancaster County.	City, Chamber	1-2 Years	$-$$$
Develop a co-working space in Downtown.	City, USC-L, Investors	1-2 Years	$$$
Promote opportunities for Downtown housing.	City, USC-L, Investors	Ongoing	$-$$$
Develop a pocket neighborhood in Downtown.	City, Owners, Investors	1-2 Years	$$$$
Recruit a Children's Museum to Downtown.	City, Owners	Ongoing	$-$$
Study the feasibility of a boutique hotel.	City, Owners, Investors	Ongoing	$$
Grow the Cultural Arts District by recruiting artists and galleries along Gay Street.	City, See Lancaster	Ongoing	$$
Create an entrepreneurial empowerment program.	City, USC-L, Investors	1-2 Years	$$-$$$
Partner with USC-Lancaster for a small-business startup challenge.	City, USC-L	1-2 Years	$$-$$$
Create micro-retail spaces in vacant Downtown spaces.	City, Investors	1-2 Years	$$-$$$$
Promote Lancaster's one-stop-shop for development.	City	<1 Year	$
Develop a prospectus for key development sites and market opportunities for Opportunity Zone funding.		1-2 Years	$$
Public Policy			
Acquire Certified Local Government Status.	City	1-2 Years	$$
Adopt local provisions of the Bailey Bill for historic preservation.	City	1-2 Years	$
Focus Red Rose City Development Corporation (RRCDC) efforts in Downtown.	City, RRCDC	<1 Year	$
Consider establishing a TIF District in Downtown.	City, County, School District	<1 Year	$$
Review the City's Accommodation Tax assessment and allocation.	City	<1 Year	$
Work with private property owners to expand public parking options in Downtown.	City, Owners	Ongoing	$-$$$
Organization			
Create a formalized public-private-partnership (PPP) effort.	City, RRCDC, Owners, Investors, USC-L	Ongoing	$$
Allow the RRCDC to become the conduit to communicate to regional developers.	City, RRCDC	Ongoing	$$
Establish an Implementation Committee.	City, Multiple Others	Ongoing	$

5.0 | Appendices

5.1 Project Cost Estimates

This section provides opinion of probable constructed cost (OPC) estimates for two signature projects: Gay Street Commons and Petal Park.

The OPC sheet for Gay Street Commons is a "per block" estimate for the project, which ultimately entails two city blocks. (The full cost of the two-block undertaking is listed in the Project Summary sheet.)

The OPC sheet for Petal Park includes the proposed infrastructure and amenities depicted in the project renderings detailed in the plan.

The Project Summary sheet also provides a series of qualifications, assumptions, and exclusions for the OPCs.

Project Summary

OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTED COST - REVITALIZATION PLAN ESTIMATE

MKSK

PROJECT NAME: **Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan**
LOCATION: **Lancaster, South Carolina**
OWNER: **City of Lancaster**

PROJECT NUMBER: **s18729**
DATE: **January 31, 2020**
PREPARED BY: **MKSK**

ESTIMATE SUMMARY

	Gay Street Commons (2 Blocks)	Petal Park	Estimated total
Estimated Expenditures			
Estimated Construction Cost	$3,694,097	$1,796,877	$5,490,974
Contingencies (15%)	$554,115	$269,532	$823,646
Administration, Engineering, Legal (PSA + 5%)	$346,125	$244,767	$590,892
Total Esimated Project Costs (Feasibility)	$4,594,337	$2,311,175	$6,905,512

*All assumptions included in this conceptual cost estimate are based on the Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan dated January 2020.

QUALIFICATION & DISCLAIMER

First quarter 2020 unit prices are based on previous projects and/or current building cost guides and/or general enquires within the industry and is valid for 90 days.
Opinion of cost accuracy range and confidence level is proportional to the degree of project definition as per ASTM E2516.
Contingencies are within ranges recommended by AACE & ASPE practices and ASTM E2516.
This opinion of cost is intended for use in guiding project design and budgeting rather than estimating future construction costs.
The consultant team can not guarantee that opinions of cost will not vary from future construction costs.

ASSUMPTIONS & EXCLUSIONS

Assumes project area along Gay Street extending from building face to building face and from mid-intersection of Catawba Street to mid-intersection of Main Street (1 block).
Assumes construction starts Q1 2020 and ends Q4 2020 without major delays or scope changes.
Assumes min. number of bid packages of max. contract value for economy of scale.
Assumes softscape is ordered and installed in accordance with appropriate seasons.
Excludes traffic control, out of hours site security
Excludes independent geotechnical, remediation or archeological testing and/or monitoring by owner.
Excludes acceleration, over-time or night work contingencies for construction.

Gay Street Commons (One Block)

OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTED COST - REVITALIZATION PLAN ESTIMATE

MKSK

PROJECT NAME: **Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan**
LOCATION: **Lancaster, South Carolina**
OWNER: **City of Lancaster**

PROJECT NUMBER: **s18729**
DATE: **January 31, 2020**
PREPARED BY: **MKSK**

LEGEND

C.Y. - Cubic Yard	Ea. - Each
S.Y. - Square Yard	L.F. - Lineal Foot
Allow - allowance	L.S. - Lump Sum
L.F.T. - Lineal Foot of Tread	S.F. - Square Foot
F.S.F. - Face Square Foot	Ac. - Acre

ASSUMPTION OF SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Item	Description	Total Qty.	Unit	Unit cost ($)	Sub total ($)	Total Cost ($)	Remarks
DIV 04	**MASONRY**						
	Stone Materials - Roadway						
	6"w x 6"ht. Granite Curb - planter/roadway	440	L.F.	$100.00	$44,000.00		*At planter-roadway interface*
	6"w x 6"ht. Granite Curb - sidewalk/roadway	140	L.F.	$100.00	$14,000.00		*At sidewalk-roadway interface at intersections. 40 L.F. per landing at Main St, 30 L.F. per landing at Catawba St.*
	12"w Flush Granite Curb	490	L.F.	$100.00	$49,000.00		*At sidewalk-planter and sidewalk-roadway interface*
	24"w x 6" ht. Granite Curb	16	L.F.	$115.00	$1,840.00		*At sidewalk-planter interface at Main Street intersection*
	Subtotal					**$50,840**	
DIV 26	**ELECTRICAL**						
	Exterior Lighting						
26.01	String Lighting	720	L.F.	$35.00	$25,200.00		*60' span*
26.02	Ornamental 14' Pole Lights	10	Ea.	$7,000.00	$70,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$95,200**	
DIV 31	**EARTHWORK**						
	Site Clearing						
31.01	Selective low-growth vegetation, stump removal & limbing	1	L.S.	$5,000.00	$5,000.00		
31.02	Fine Grading & Site Preparation	1	L.S.	$5,000.00	$5,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$10,000**	
DIV 32	**EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS**						
	Pedestrian Paving						
	Brick Unit Paver, Pedestrian Grade, Running Bond	1,370	S.F.	$25.00	$34,250.00		*Sidewalks*
	Natural Stone Unit Paver, Pedestrian Grade	4,673	S.F.	$75.00	$350,475.00		*12'w multi-use trail, cafe seating areas, 1' bands on brick sidewalk edges*
	Subtotal					**$384,725**	
	Vehicular Paving						
	Brick Unit Paver, Vehicular Grade, Running Bond	9,153	S.F.	$40.00	$366,120.00		*Main roadway*
	Natural Stone Unit Paver, Vehicular Grade	1,500	S.F.	$95.00	$142,500.00		*+/- 250 S.F. per crosswalk; assumes half of crosswalks across Main Street and Catawba Street*
	Subtotal					**$508,620**	
	Site Furniture						
	Movable Café Seating - Set of (4) Chairs, Table, Umbrella	7	Ea.	$7,500.00	$52,500.00		
	Movable Seating - Adirondack Chair	10	Ea.	$700.00	$7,000.00		
	Movable Seating - Ottoman	4	Ea.	$425.00	$1,700.00		
	6' Ipe and Steel Backed Bench	10	Ea.	$2,565.00	$25,650.00		
	Litter / Recycling Receptacles	10	Ea.	$2,000.00	$20,000.00		
	Bike Racks	10	Ea.	$600.00	$6,000.00		
	Lit Bollard	30	Ea.	$1,500.00	$45,000.00		
	Artistic Bollard	10	Ea.	$2,000.00	$20,000.00		
	Large Plant Pots	14	Ea.	$500.00	$7,000.00		
	Outdoor Board Games	1	Allow	$500.00	$500.00		
	Subtotal					**$185,350**	
	Signs						
	Wayfinding & Regulatory Signage, double-sided	1	Allow	$5,000.00	$5,000.00		
	Pedestrian Light Pole Banners	20	Ea.	$25.00	$500.00		
	Subtotal					**$5,500**	
	Public Art						
	Public Art Allowance - Murals, Sculptures, etc.	1	Allow	$25,000.00	$25,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$25,000**	
	Detectable Warning Pavers						
	Ductile Iron Detectable Warning Pavers	8	Ea.	$750.00	$6,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$6,000**	
	Irrigation System						
	Irrigation system and controls	1	L.S.	$20,000.00	$20,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$20,000**	
	Planting						
	Planting Soils						
	Scarify & till subgrade	1,143	S.F.	$0.20	$228.60		
	Tree Pit Soils	2	C.Y	$80.00	$160.00		*3 CY per tree*
	Planting Soils	64	C.Y	$80.00	$5,120.00		*18" Depth*
	Subtotal					**$5,509**	
	Plants						
	Containerized / B&B Plants						
	Large Deciduous Tree, 4" cal.	13	Ea.	$1,200.00	$15,600.00		
	Shrubs, Perennials, Groundcovers, and Mulch	1,143	S.F.	$35.00	$40,005.00		
	Subtotal					**$55,605**	
	Planting Accessories						
	Refillable water bags	13	Ea.	$50.00	$650.00		
	Subtotal					**$650**	
DIV 33	**UTILITIES**						
	Streetscape Utilities						
	Electric Ductbank	1	Allow	$250,000.00	$250,000.00		*Along roadway*
	Communications Ductbank	1	Allow	$262,500.00	$262,500.00		*Along roadway*
	Street Light Wiring	1	Allow	$25,000.00	$25,000.00		*Along roadway*
	Trench drains and underground piping	1	Allow	$20,000.00	$20,000.00		*Along roadway*
	Subtotal					**$557,500**	
TOTAL PARK COST						**$1,910,499**	

Petal Park

OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTED COST - REVITALIZATION PLAN ESTIMATE

MKSK

PROJECT NAME: **Lancaster Downtown Revitalization Plan**
LOCATION: **Lancaster, South Carolina**
OWNER: **City of Lancaster**

PROJECT NUMBER: **s18729**
DATE: **January 31, 2020**
PREPARED BY: **MKSK**

LEGEND

C.Y. - Cubic Yard	Ea. - Each
S.Y. - Square Yard	L.F. - Lineal Foot
Allow - allowance	L.S. - Lump Sum
L.F.T. - Lineal Foot of Tread	S.F. - Square Foot
F.S.F. - Face Square Foot	Ac. - Acre

ASSUMPTION OF SITE IMPROVEMENTS

Item	Description	Total Qty.	Unit	Unit cost ($)	Sub total ($)	Total Cost ($)	Remarks
DIV 03	**CAST IN PLACE CONCRETE**						
	Pedestrian Concrete Pavement						
	Concrete pavement, broom finish, 4" depth	855	S.F.	$8.00	$6,840.00		*Main Street sidewalk plus Gay Street intersection landing*
	Subtotal					**$6,840**	
	Seat Walls						
	18"w x 18"ht. Concrete Seat Wall	198	L.F.	$300.00	$59,400.00		
	Subtotal					**$59,400**	
DIV 04	**MASONRY**						
	Stone Materials - Roadway						
	6"w x 6" ht. Granite Curb	111	L.F.	$115.00	$12,765.00		*At planters, not including curb adjacent to roadway*
	Subtotal					**$12,765**	
	Stone Materials - Site						
	4"w x 3" ht Granite Curb	480	L.F.	$100.00	$48,000.00		*At edges of ornamental planters*
	Large Natural Boulders	10	Ea.	$5,000.00	$50,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$98,000**	
DIV 06	**ROUGH CARPENTRY**						
	Wood Seating Boards						
	Ipe Boards for Seat Walls	111	L.F.	$300.00	$33,300.00		
	Subtotal					**$33,300**	
DIV 10	**SPECIALTIES**						
	Custom Site Furniture						
10.01	Swing Benches with Shade Structure	1	Allow	$60,000.00	$60,000.00		*(4) benches @ +/- $15,000 ea.*
	Subtotal					**$60,000**	
DIV 26	**ELECTRICAL**						
	Exterior Lighting						
26.01	String Lighting	500	L.F.	$35.00	$17,500.00		
26.02	Ornamental 14' Pole Lights	3	Ea.	$7,000.00	$21,000.00		
26.03	Pedestrian Pole Lights	20	Ea.	$5,000.00	$100,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$138,500**	
DIV 31	**EARTHWORK**						
	Site Clearing						
31.01	Selective low-growth vegetation, stump removal & limbing	1	L.S.	$5,000.00	$5,000.00		
31.02	Fine Grading & Site Preparation	1	L.S.	$5,000.00	$5,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$10,000**	
DIV 32	**EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS**						
	Splashpad Feature						
	Water Feature	1	Allow	$350,000.00	$350,000.00		*Flush mounted pop jets; excluding pavement costs*
	Subtotal					**$350,000**	
	Pedestrian Paving						
	Brick Unit Paver, Pedestrian Grade, Running Bond	300	S.F.	$25.00	$7,500.00		*Main Street sidewalk accents*
	Natural Stone Unit Paver, Pedestrian Grade	1,692	S.F.	$75.00	$126,900.00		*12'w Multi-use trail, 141' foot segment*
	Natural Stone Unit Paver, Pedestrian Grade	6,235	S.F.	$75.00	$467,625.00		*Remaining hardscape areas*
	Subtotal					**$602,025**	
	Site Furniture						
	Movable Café Seating - Set of (4) Chairs, Table, Umbrella	6	Ea.	$7,500.00	$45,000.00		
	Movable Seating - Adirondack Chair	6	Ea.	$700.00	$4,200.00		
	Movable Seating - Ottoman	2	Ea.	$425.00	$850.00		
	6' Ipe and Steel Backed Bench	4	Ea.	$2,565.00	$10,260.00		
	Litter / Recycling Receptacles	4	Ea.	$2,000.00	$8,000.00		
	Bike Racks	10	Ea.	$600.00	$6,000.00		
	Lit Bollard	5	Ea.	$1,500.00	$7,500.00		
	Artistic Bollard	5	Ea.	$2,000.00	$10,000.00		
	Large Plant Pots	3	Ea.	$500.00	$1,500.00		
	Subtotal					**$93,310**	
	Signs						
	Primary Park ID, double-sided	1	Ea.	$5,500.00	$5,500.00		
	Downtown Wayfinding Kiosk	1	Ea.	$5,500.00	$5,500.00		
	Wayfinding & Regulatory Signage, double-sided	1	Allow	$5,000.00	$5,000.00		
	Pedestrian Light Pole Banners	6	Ea.	$25.00	$150.00		
	Subtotal					**$16,150**	
	Public Art						
	Public Art Allowance - Murals, Sculptures, etc.	1	Allow	$50,000.00	$50,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$50,000**	
	Irrigation System						
	Irrigation system and controls	1	L.S.	$20,000.00	$20,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$20,000**	
	Planting						
	Planting Soils						
	Scarify & till subgrade	7,878	S.F.	$0.20	$1,575.60		
	Turfgrass Soils	33	C.Y	$60.00	$1,980.00		*4" Depth*
	Tree Pit Soils	2	C.Y	$80.00	$160.00		*3 CY per tree*
	Planting Soils	193	C.Y	$80.00	$15,440.00		*18" Depth*
	Stormwater Basin Soils	84	C.Y	$80.00	$6,720.00		*18" Depth, higher sand content. Basins located in large planting areas between sidewalks and splashpad*
	Subtotal					**$25,876**	
	Plants						
	Turf & Grasses						
	Seed	2,708	S.F.	$0.56	$1,516.48		
	Subtotal					**$1,516**	
	Containerized / B&B Plants						
	Large Deciduous Tree, 4" cal.	20	Ea.	$1,200.00	$24,000.00		
	Shrubs, Perennials, Groundcovers, and Mulch - Ornamental	3,470	S.F.	$35.00	$121,450.00		
	Shrubs, Perennials, Groundcovers, and Mulch - Stormwater Basin	1,507	S.F.	$35.00	$52,745.00		*Basins located in large planting areas between sidewalks and splashpad*
	Subtotal					**$198,195**	
	Planting Accessories						
	Refillable water bags	20	Ea.	$50.00	$1,000.00		
	Subtotal					**$1,000**	
DIV 33	**UTILITIES**						
	Subsurface Drainage						
	Trench drains and underground piping	1	Allow	$20,000.00	$20,000.00		*Splashpad area*
	Subtotal					**$20,000**	
TOTAL PARK COST						**$1,796,877**	

5.2 Primary Trade Area PRIZM Profiles

The Lancaster market features a Primary Trade Area (PTA) composed of local households with distinct socioeconomic characteristics and spending preferences. This section provides a detailed summary of the four largest household market segments in the Lancaster PTA. This information is derived from the PRIZM Premier Market Segmentation by Claritas, Inc.

Segment	Golden Ponds	Back Country Folks	Young & Rustic	Country Strong
Description	Golden Ponds is mostly a retirement lifestyle, dominated by downscale singles and couples over 65 years old. Found in small bucolic towns around the country, these high school-educated seniors live in small apartments on less than $35,000 a year; one in five resides in a nursing home. For these elderly residents, daily life is often a succession of sedentary activities such as reading, watching TV, playing bingo, and doing craft projects.	Strewn among remote farm communities across the nation, Back Country Folks are a long way away from economic paradise. The residents tend to be poor, over 65 years old, and living in older, modest-sized homes and manufactured housing. Typically, life in this segment is a throwback to an earlier era when farming dominated the American landscape.	Young & Rustic is composed of middle age, restless singles. These folks tend to be lower-middle-income, high school-educated, and live in tiny apartments in the nation's exurban towns. With their service industry jobs and modest incomes, these folks still try to fashion fast-paced lifestyles centered on sports, cars, and dating.	Country Strong are lower middle-class families in rural areas that embrace their day-to-day lives. They are focused on their families and prefer hunting and country music to keeping up with the latest technology.
Households in PTA (% of Total)	**4,346 (18.3%)**	**2,400 (10.1%)**	**2,160 (9.1%)**	**1,895 (8.0%)**
Households in Lancaster County (%)	4,847 (12.7%)	3,212 (8.4%)	2,854 (7.5%)	2,326 (6.1%)
Households in 29707 (%)	492 (4.2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Social Group	Rustic Living	Rustic Living	Rustic Living	Middle America
Lifestage	Sustaining Seniors	Sustaining Seniors	Striving Singles	Mainstream Families
Med HH Income	$42,302	$38,825	$35,090	$53,823
Income Producing Assets	Below Average	Low	Low	Below Avg
Age	55+	55+	<55	<55
Pred HH Composition	Mostly w/o Kids	Mostly w/o Kids	Family Mix	Family Mix
Pred Tenure Type	Mix Owners/Renters	Mostly Owners	Mix Owners/Renters	Mostly Owners
Pred Education	High School	High School	High School	High School
Pred Employment	Mostly Retired	Mostly Retired	Mix	Blue Collar Mix
Household Tech	Below Avg	Lowest	Below Avg	Below Avg
Urbanicity	Rural	Rural	Rural	Rural
Lifestyle Traits	Owns a Buick Eats at Dairy Queen Shops at Dollar General Listens to Gospel Watches Daytime TV Travels to Alaska	Owns a GMC Eats at Hardees Shops at Dollar General Follows NASCAR Watches Game Shows Listens to Classic Country	Own Dodge Ram Eat at Hardee's Shops at Dollar General Listens to Classic Country Stays at Days Inn Visits www.com	Owns Dodge Ram Eats at Hardee's Shops at Walmart Hunts Stays at Days Inn Listens to New Country

5.3 Facade Grant Approaches

The following section provides a detailed examination of facade grant approaches for historic downtowns. This information was developed for the City of Lancaster by Community Design Solutions.

FACADE GRANT APPROACHES

Facade Component Grants

Overall Building Grants

Facade Master Plan

COMMUNITY DESIGN SOLUTIONS

1. Facade Grant Approaches: Facade Component Grants

Facade Component Grants

Since many building owners are intimidated by overall façade renovations coupled with a grant process, the City or Main Street program might consider simplifying the initial phases of a façade grant program and focusing on individual façade elements --or components-- instead of expensive, overall façade improvement approaches. In other words, consider conducting an annual facade component grant program that is focused on a singular element, such as an awning grant program, or a slipcover removal program, or a signage grant program. Once property owners become familiar with individual façade component programs, then consider moving on to entire-façade-based grant programs or a comprehensive Facade Master Plan if needed or desired.

The advantages of a component approach to facade grants include, but are not limited to:

- Specific facade issues can be addressed (e.g. paint, or lighting, or signage, etc.)
- Easier to administer
- Limited funds can go farther
- More buildings can be affected
- Easier to understand for the property owner or tenant

Examples of facade component grants follow on the next few pages.

Rear of Building Treatment Component Grants

Example of Rear of Building Treatments from Lake City, SC (above): This row of buildings had all manner of unsightly items behind them ranging from trash dumpsters to HVAC units to weatherheads to downspouts and much more. But since they fronted a town green it was imperative that these items be concealed. The approach taken was to paint the buildings a common palette of autumnal colors, then erect a simple structure comprised of 4x4 posts with 1x strips screwed into them and painted gray. This lattice conceals the unsightly elements and unifies the entire row of buildings. Foreground landscaping completes the rear of building treatments.

1. Facade Grant Approaches: Facade Component Grants

Slipcover Removal Component Grants

Conway, SC: This furniture company removed the metal slipcover from their building to expose a beautiful building underneath.

Conway, SC: The local government, in association with the Main Street program, realized the positive impact slipcover removal made. Therefore, they enacted a component facade grant program for slipcover removal and five other buildings in downtown removed their slipcovers. The visual improvement to their main street was remarkable!

1. Facade Grant Approaches: Facade Component Grants

Awning Component Grants

Beaufort, SC: Main Street Beaufort initiated a component grant program featuring awnings.

1. Facade Grant Approaches: Facade Component Grants

Signage Component Grants

One of the quickest ways to make a positive first impression from a design perspective is to have downtown buildings that feature quality, eye-catching signage. By coupling a public sector incentive with a private sector investment, the building and/or business owners are able to design and install signs of a caliber and quality that might otherwise be unaffordable. As part of the signage grant, a thoughtful review of existing sign ordinances is likely in order to ensure that quality signs like those featured at right are not prohibited by an outdated code requirement.

Should the community lack local sign designers and fabricators to execute the kinds of signs depicted at right, they might consider participating with the Co-Sign project. CoSign is a program developed by the American Sign Museum that helps communities create unique signage for revitalizing business districts. More information about this cutting edge program may be found at:
www.cosigncincy.com

2. Facade Grant Approaches: Overall Facade Grants

B. Overall Facade Grants

Once the methodology for applying for component facade grants is established and the City or Main Street program has a proven track record for administering them, consider 'graduating' up to overall facade grants that address the entire face of a building. This approach would be reserved for more 'troublesome' buildings that require far more physical enhancement than a singular component approach could provide. However, this approach requires far more financial capital and administrative oversight to execute than a component grant approach.

Lake City, SC: The owner of this building took advantage of a matching facade grant to convert the vacant space into a photography studio and office. The redesign featured a contemporary paint scheme, bold awnings, creative lighting, and professional signage.

C. Facade Master Plan

At some point, a more ambitious approach to enhancing multiple façade in a relatively short time period might be warranted. In this case, the Façade Master Plan approach as developed by Community Design Solutions and other communities across America might be appropriate. Unlike a traditional facade improvement program, the Façade Master Plan is a comprehensive rehabilitation of many downtown buildings at once. The instrument that makes this new approach to building enhancement possible is an easement. The property owner gives the City, or local non-profit administering agent, a temporary easement on the facade of their building allowing the local government to spend funds on its improvement. In exchange for this temporary easement, the grant funds pay for the facade improvements. The advantages of this type of façade program are that it allows for a single source of project management, a single source of design, and a single source for construction.

The author of this report is pleased to offer all the documentation necessary to promote and execute a Facade Master Plan. A synopsis of this approach is described herein. Additionally, a download link to these documents is available at the following link: http://www.communitydesignsolutions.com/public/FacadeMasterPlanDocs.zip

Benefits: The single source of project management streamlines the project and removes the burden of façade enhancement from each individual property owner. The single source of design, used in conjunction with the Main Street Program's Design Committee or a set of quality design guidelines, ensures that all façade enhancements are sympathetic to the historic architectural heritage of their place. The single source of construction allows for dramatic cost savings since the contractor purchases all construction supplies for the entire enhancement project, rather than each property owner having to buy their own sign, door, windows, paint, awnings, etc. However, the biggest advantage to this approach is the ability for a downtown district to receive an overall appearance facelift in a remarkably short amount of time. Moreover, when used in conjunction with a grant source like federal CDBG funds, an individual state's department of commerce grant, or other federal, state, or local funding sources, the facade enhancements are realized with no costs to the building owner or tenant. If the funding and/or grant source requires a match from the property owner, the enhancements are still realized with nominal investment on their part that is far less than if they improved their façade on their own using solely private sector funds.

Lessons Learned:

- While design is important, it isn't all-important. It is necessary to address the underlying economy of the place –reflected in the retail vibrancy of the downtown buildings—at the same time as façade enhancements are performed. Said simply, a comprehensive/holistic approach to downtown revitalization must be utilized in the process of enhancing the exteriors of the buildings.
- While it is appropriate to establish the overall project budget on a per façade basis, it should NOT be the basis for actual improvements as each building has unique needs that will cost more or less than others.
- The administration of the façade master plan must be nimble. If the process for the owner is cumbersome or there is no flexibility in the product, participation will be compromised.
- Receive bids on an add-alternate basis to ensure you have a "buildable project" regardless of the low bid.
- There are good ways and frustrating ways to fund the Façade Master Plan.
- There are good practices and frustrating practices for interfacing with your SHPO if required.

3. Facade Grant Approaches: Facade Master Plan

Process:

- Apply for and receive grant funding for design and construction.
- Develop guidelines for the administration of the grant funds.
- Solicit RFQ for design professionals to develop the facade enhancement designs.
- Negotiate and hire design professional.
- Design professional photographs subject properties and interviews each property owner/tenant to ascertain appropriate enhancement approach.
- Design professional develops renderings and technical recommendations for each facade.
- Administrative party and design professional develop specifications and bid documents.
- Prospective contractors pre-qualified.
- Bid package submitted to pre-qualified contractors.
- Negotiate with and hire low bidder.
- Construction commences with oversight by administrative party and design professional.
- Punch list and project close out.

Budget:

- Design & Project Management: $1,000 - $1,500/facade
- Construction Allowance: $5,000 - 10,000/facade
- Scope: To be determined by the local government. Generally speaking, include at least 20 facades, but consider executing 40-80 so that the improvements can affect entire blocks of downtown structures.
- Total: As determined/multiplied by the number of facades being considered against the budget estimates noted above
- Schedule: Begin phase one immediately upon receipt of grant or private funding.
- Responsible Party: Local government or downtown revitalization agency.
- Funding Source Design: TIF Funds, CDBG Grants, Department of Commerce grants, local bank consortium funds/low-interest loans, fund raising, private sector investment, local government budget.
- Funding Source Construction: TIF Funds, CDBG Grants, Department of Commerce grants, local bank consortium funds/low-interest loans, fund raising, private sector investment, local government budget, foundation grant funding.

Example of a Façade Master Plan from Gulfport, MS
After Hurricane Katrina, Gulfport undertook a Facade Master Plan that transformed more than 80 facades in a little less than two years.

3. Facade Grant Approaches: Facade Master Plan

Example of a Façade Master Plan from Whitmire, SC.
Existing & proposed conditions rendering of the 100 block of East Main Street.
22 Facades were completed in 5 months.

Example of a Façade Master Plan from Union, SC.
Actual before and after photographs from Main Street. 80+ facades were completed in 18 months.

5.4 Dealing with Abandoned & Dilapidated Buildings

The following section provides a detailed examination of different strategies to address abandoned and dilapidated buildings in historic downtowns. This information was developed for the City of Lancaster by Community Design Solutions.

TACKLING THE TOUGH STUFF

Strategies for Dealing with Abandoned and Dilapidated Buildings

COMMUNITY DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Abandoned and Dilapidated Buildings

The presence of abandoned and dilapidated buildings in various states of disrepair downtown sends a message to visitors that downtown is not cared for. The reasons for these conditions are myriad but include absentee ownership that perpetuates an "out of sight, out of mind" mentality; unrealistic expectations in terms of property values that prevents buildings being sold at reasonable prices; deferred maintenance has led to such degradation that the remedies cannot be absorbed by the income-producing capability of the building for too great a time; etc.

Considerations

In cities and towns of all sizes, municipal officials point to dilapidated structures as a challenge in their efforts to promote the highest possible quality of life and bring economic growth to their hometowns. The failure of offending property owners to repair or demolish dilapidated structures creates blight and a financial drain on community resources. It shifts the cost of abating violations from the responsible party to all taxpayers.

Dealing with these unsafe commercial and residential structures is a challenging task that requires officials to consider and carefully balance the rights of the offending property owners with rights of the owners of adjacent properties and the community at large. Because of the wide array of situations encountered and sensitivity of the property rights issue, municipalities must have a variety of tools that can be selected and effectively applied to the specific circumstances of each code enforcement case.

What's Available

Cities and towns can adopt ordinances relating to the upkeep of property. These ordinances may provide for notification to the owner outlining the conditions needing to be corrected and may require the owner to take the necessary steps to correct the conditions. The ordinances may also outline how the municipality may correct the conditions if the owner fails to take appropriate action.

As with any ordinance, cities and towns must have procedures in place that provide for due process and proper notification to the property owner when the city moves to abate a problem. Likewise, any local ordinance needs to spell out explicitly the notice procedures, method of notice as well as a procedure for appeals of decisions made by the code enforcement officials.

State law gives cities and towns the authority to enforce the International Building Codes and to adopt by reference certain appendices to this code. One of the most widely adopted appendices is the International Property Maintenance Code, which establishes standards to help ensure public health, safety and welfare of the community by requiring the maintenance of existing structures and premises. The International Property Maintenance Code provides a framework for dealing with dilapidated structures in any city no matter the size.

The International Property Maintenance Code contains a prescribed and tested process of providing proper notice as well as a specific method of serving the notice to property owners. Because this code can be adopted by reference with only minor modifications, it is a good option for municipalities starting a new code enforcement program or looking to modify their existing program. A PDF version of this code may be found by following this link: https://www.dropbox.com/s/upw4ttgdgusxoz0/2012_International_Property_Maintenance_Code.pdf

What happens when property owners fail to correct serious code violations? One option available to the municipality is to correct the violation. If the municipality corrects the unsafe conditions associated with the property, most state law allows the municipality to place a lien equal to the cost of the abatement on the property and collect the lien in the same manner as municipal taxes.

Challenges

These code enforcement methods have limited effectiveness in certain situations. Liens on property generally can only be collected when a property is sold, and many county governments do not recognize code enforcement liens at tax sales. This means that liens might not be collected at tax sales.

Another problem with liens is that there is often a significant lag between filing the lien and collecting payment because sales of dilapidated properties occur infrequently. Likewise, ordinance summons are not effective when a property owner cannot be located or lives outside of the community or state. Ordinance summons must be personally served upon the offender.

These tools also have limited effectiveness when the property owner lacks the financial resources to abate the violations. Jailing offenders only increases the cost to the municipality and often fails to correct the violation.

Clearly, there are no "silver bullet" solutions that can solve each unique situation in every community. However, all across America certain strategies for dealing with abandoned and dilapidated buildings have begun to gain traction in dealing with this issue. A few of these strategies are noted below.

1. Early Warning Database

Use an early warning database to identify problem properties and to facilitate collaboration.

Too often, municipalities only find out about vacant properties after they have started to cause serious problems. An early warning database collects and organizes basic information about conditions that suggest a property is likely to become vacant. Local officials and organizations can use that information to identify at-risk properties and take action before a problem grows or gets out of control. A database can be useful for code enforcement officials, police and fire departments, community development departments, Main Street programs and neighborhood organizations.

A database can be as a simple as a spreadsheet that lists problem properties and indicates whether each property has one or more of the key indicators of vacancy or abandonment, such as tax delinquency, nuisance abatement actions, utility shut-offs, or foreclosure filings. It can also be expanded to include information about the district where the property is located, such as demographic data, crime statistics, and real estate conditions. An even more comprehensive database could include information about these properties from various municipal departments. Many municipalities already collect much or all of the information in a basic database, and it is just a matter of putting that information together in one place. Even the most simple database can be used to identify problem properties and neighborhoods, guide decision making, and coordinate activity across municipal departments.

Key Benefits

Identify problem properties

A database helps a municipality identify properties that are vacant or at risk for vacancy, making it possible to intervene early and avoid more serious problems for the property.

Coordinate municipal action

A database helps a municipality share critical information with various local government departments and other key stakeholders and use it to coordinate action and facilitate collaboration.

2. Minimum Maintenance Ordinance

Use a minimum maintenance ordinance to provide an objective, district-wide standard of care for properties.

The failure to maintain property directly impacts property values of adjacent property and, in the worst case, can provide an area that attracts criminal activities. To protect a district from deterioration, a number of local governments have established property maintenance standards. There is a limit, however, on how far a jurisdiction may go in regulating unsightly areas on private property. It is an open question in many states whether their courts would uphold a beautification ordinance or a property maintenance or appearance code if the regulation is based purely upon aesthetic grounds.

The premise is that failure to provide minimum maintenance creates unsanitary and unsafe conditions, negatively impacts the aesthetic value of the community, and reduces property values. Local governments considering property standards need to work with legal counsel to make sure that the necessary procedural requirements are included in any public nuisance or property maintenance ordinance and that staff responsible for enforcement receive the necessary training.

The hardships encountered when enforcing MMOs are typically two-fold. First, the local government lacks the political will or manpower to enforce the ordinance. Second, the municipality lacks the funding required to enforce the ordinance by providing temporary clean-up and/or stabilization and weatherization measures.

Key Benefits

Objective standards

Every property owner is held to the same standard of care. This should hopefully address concerns that enforcement is due solely on the grounds of subjective aesthetic standards.

Legal authority

Assuming due process and clear communications are in effect, a MMO provides solid legal grounds for enforcing upkeep on any individual property for the sake of the community good in terms of safety and welfare.

3. Visual Enhancement Treatments

Use visual enhancement treatments as a temporary means of improving the appearance of a building while it is being prepared for occupancy or sale.

The appearance of vacancies in the downtown area can send a negative message and create the perception of a lack of retail vibrancy. To combat those perceptions and "buy time" until a building becomes occupied, any of the approaches noted below and illustrated at right can be considered.

Place artwork in vacant display windows if the interior space appearance is satisfactory. If the interior space is in detrimental condition, consider masking the windows from the interior with butcher paper or from the exterior with vinyl cling wraps. The masks can feature nostalgic photos or historic postcards of the community or images such as a map of downtown highlighting shopping and dining destinations. Place "community hero" posters in the windows to build community pride and draw attention away from the vacant building.

Treatments such as those illustrated above can temporarily make buildings presentable while waiting to secure tenants or owners in vacant buildings. These treatments include community pride posters, artwork, nostalgic scenes, and vinyl cling directories.

Key Benefits

Inexpensive

The above-noted techniques are inexpensive yet can reap significant visual rewards and temper perception of the district while buildings are being rehabilitated or sold.

4. Financial Incentives

Use financial incentives to stimulate private sector building renovation investment.

While it can be argued that a property owner that has neglected their property should not be rewarded with a financial incentive, by the same token, the economic and community benefit derived from an improved building typically outweighs perceived injustices. There are a whole host of potential incentives that can be brought to bear on this issue. Some of the most common and strategic methods are noted below.

- Facade Grants: Either single components (e.g. signs, awnings, paint) or overall facade grants can motivate an owner to enhance their building.
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits: Qualifying buildings are eligible for either 10% or 20% federal tax credits while many states match the federal credits up to 25%.
- Tax Abatement: This strategy freezes the taxable rate at the pre-renovation value so that improvements to the building do not render an immediate spike in property taxes.

Key Benefits

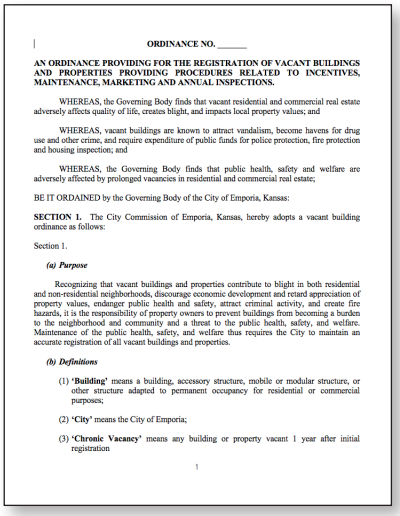
Gap financing

Sometimes these financial incentives are the difference between rehabilitating a building or letting it sit vacant. Through a nominal incentive from the public sector, the private sector might be motivated to invest in the renovation of an otherwise marginal property.

5. Vacant Building Registry

Use a vacant building registry to motivate owners to maintain buildings and return them to productive use, identify the party responsible for problem properties, monitor vacant properties, and defray costs of providing related municipal services.

A vacant building registry requires owners (and, in some cases, financial institutions with an interest in a property) to register vacant buildings with a municipality. Effective registry programs also require registrants to pay a fee at regular intervals, which defrays the additional costs of providing municipal services associated with such properties. Fees also create a strong financial incentive for owners to secure and maintain vacant property and return it to productive use. Effective programs require registrants to provide 24-hour contact information, which makes it easier for a municipality to contact the owner or the owner's agent if there is a problem with the property. Some registry programs go further and include provisions that compel registrants to maintain, secure and insure vacant properties, and prepare and implement plans to return them to productive use. Good registry programs are implemented in conjunction with strong code enforcement and often include steep fines for noncompliance.



ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR THE REGISTRATION OF VACANT BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES PROVIDING PROCEDURES RELATED TO INCENTIVES, MAINTENANCE, MARKETING AND ANNUAL INSPECTIONS.

WHEREAS, the Governing Body finds that vacant residential and commercial real estate adversely affects quality of life, creates blight, and impacts local property values; and

WHEREAS, vacant buildings are known to attract vandalism, become havens for drug use and other crime, and require expenditure of public funds for police protection, fire protection and housing inspection; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Body finds that public health, safety and welfare are adversely affected by prolonged vacancies in residential and commercial real estate;

BE IT ORDAINED by the Governing Body of the City of Emporia, Kansas:

SECTION 1. The City Commission of Emporia, Kansas, hereby adopts a vacant building ordinance as follows:

Section 1.

(a) Purpose

Recognizing that vacant buildings and properties contribute to blight in both residential and non-residential neighborhoods, discourage economic development and retard appreciation of property values, endanger public health and safety, attract criminal activity, and create fire hazards, it is the responsibility of property owners to prevent buildings from becoming a burden to the neighborhood and community and a threat to the public health, safety, and welfare. Maintenance of the public health, safety, and welfare thus requires the City to maintain an accurate registration of all vacant buildings and properties.

(b) Definitions

(1) **'Building'** means a building, accessory structure, mobile or modular structure, or other structure adapted to permanent occupancy for residential or commercial purposes;

(2) **'City'** means the City of Emporia;

(3) **'Chronic Vacancy'** means any building or property vacant 1 year after initial registration

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Emporia, KS: Emporia, Kansas has formulated an excellent Vacant Building Registry Ordinance. A copy of the ordinance may be accessed at: https://www.dropbox.com/s/cu9tko9eiwunpr8/VBO_Emporia_Kansas.docx?dl=0

Key Benefits

Motivate owners

Code enforcement alone isn't always enough to motivate owners to maintain vacant properties. Vacant building registries usually require payment of fees, and these added costs create an additional incentive for owners to maintain their properties.

Identify responsible parties to contact if there is a problem

Municipalities can use the information collected in the registry to contact the party responsible for a property if there is a problem.

Defray costs

Revenue generated from registration fees helps cover costs incurred by municipalities in monitoring vacant properties and enforcing vacant property requirements.

6. Receivership

Ensure that someone with the necessary expertise and resources repairs or rehabilitates a vacant property.

Receivership is a powerful but infrequently used tool for ensuring that seriously troubled properties are repaired or rehabilitated. Receivership is sometimes used as a last resort when other strategies, like traditional code enforcement, don't motivate an owner to perform necessary maintenance and repairs and a property is a danger to the community. If a property is not being properly maintained, a municipality can go to court and seek to have a receiver appointed to take care of the property. If the court appoints a receiver, this third party is authorized to act as if it owns the property. The receiver can take any step the court authorizes to repair or rehabilitate the property.

Receivers can finance the work with cash loans from banks or the municipality. In exchange, the receiver gives the lender a special certificate, which basically guarantees that it will get the full value of the loan back with interest. If the owner of the property doesn't pay back the receiver's loan with interest, the certificate becomes a lien on the property, which must be paid back before all other encumbrances on the property except taxes. This process provides the receiver with funds needed to repair the property and allows the bank or municipality financing the repairs to make a profit on its loan.

Key Benefits

Repair and rehabilitate vacant property

When other methods fail to motivate an owner to maintain a property, this process, enabled by state law, can give a receiver powerful tools to ensure that troubled properties are repaired or rehabilitated.

Pay for repairs and rehabilitation

It is often difficult to get financing to repair or rehabilitate a vacant property. The receivership process, if enabled by state law, gives receivers this critical tool to finance such repair activity.

Property owner rights

Since the property owner may retrieve the property at any point in the process by reimbursing the receiver for all costs associated with the project, the issue of property takings is addressed.

7. Acquisition or Demolition

Acquire properties to stabilize or rehabilitate individual properties or to redevelop an entire area or district in communities with large numbers of vacant properties. Demolish vacant properties that pose significant danger to the community and cannot be adequately addressed in any other way.

Acquisition: In districts where property values have fallen significantly, owners and private investors may not take proper care of a property. This neglect can cause problems for adjacent properties, and the problems can begin to spiral out of control. In situations where the private market has little incentive to act, the best alternative may be for a municipality to acquire properties.

The municipality can act aggressively (especially if it possesses a Community Development Corporation or a Redevelopment Authority) to improve a single property that is causing problems, or to improve several properties in an effort to redevelop a larger area. Municipalities can acquire properties individually or as part of a coordinated acquisition and redevelopment strategy. Where downtown stabilization or revitalization efforts require acquisition of larger numbers of properties, land banks have proven to be a very effective strategy. Though acquiring properties can be a useful and powerful tool, it is not a quick solution to a pressing problem—the process often takes a very long time.

Demolition: When a property is causing very serious problems that present a danger to the surrounding community, and the owner is not taking necessary steps to address the problem, a municipality may initiate demolition proceedings. After complying with procedures specified by state law and/or municipal ordinance, the municipality can demolish the property.

While the preservation of a downtown's architectural assets --especially its historic buildings-- is of paramount importance, occasionally the demolition of a delinquent building may cost a municipality less than taking care of a troubled property. What's more, under some circumstances, a municipality can recover the costs associated with the demolition. Carefully targeted demolition can help stabilize property values in the surrounding community and help lay the foundation for redevelopment.

Key Benefits: Acquisition

Return properties to productive use

By acquiring vacant properties that have no near-term prospect of being redeveloped by the private market, municipalities can return them to productive use, helping to stabilize communities more quickly.

Promote redevelopment

Property acquisition allows municipalities to reshape an entire district.

Key Benefits: Demolition

Remove blight

Demolishing seriously troubled buildings can help stabilize or improve struggling districts. Demolition may be the best option when vacant properties are hurting the community around them and nothing else can restore the property to productive use.

Prompt owners to take responsibility

Sometimes a threat by the municipality to demolish a property compels recalcitrant owners to take responsibility for troubled properties.

Minimize municipal costs

While demolishing a building is expensive, it is sometimes less expensive in the long run than incurring all of the municipal costs associated with taking care of a troubled building.

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