

BISHOPVILLE

South Carolina

Adopted: April 2, 2024

DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN 2024

BOUDREAUX +  THOMAS
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City of Bishopville

Downtown Master Plan 2024



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The Master Planning Team

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Bishopville is a beautiful historic city, home to legends such as Pearl Fryar, Drink Small and the Lizard Man. A gateway to the Pee Dee and a fertile agricultural area, Bishopville has struggled to maintain its once prosperous downtown and thriving population. With its historic and cultural assets, how can the elected leaders, residents and business owners reestablish downtown as the vibrant heart of Bishopville? You plan for it. City Council is committed to and invested in the successful implementation of the plan’s recommendations.

The city hosted a two-day charrette (workshop) that entailed a series of stakeholder meetings and one public input session to allow the planning team to listen. Participants shared their love for Bishopville, their desire for Main Street to prosper, and their ideas for her future. Residents and business owners want a vibrant downtown where they can walk, shop, eat, meet friends, and welcome tourists. All want a downtown that inspires home-grown talent and new people to move here, invest here and build prosperous futures here.

However, downtown languishes with empty buildings, many of them deteriorating, presenting a negative appearance to those passing through. Main Street is not a welcoming place for people (shoppers, visitors) to walk and linger due to the noise, speed and offensive odors of dozens of trucks speeding through downtown each day. There are several local business owners who are committed to downtown, yet they are concerned with these challenges and the long-term opportunities to sustain and grow their businesses. City Council is committed to changing the trajectory of downtown Bishopville.

Revitalization takes time. Revitalization takes a commitment of resources, both financial and human, to propel this work forward to successful implementation. This master plan presents a long-term vision but focuses on what needs to be done in the next three years. In three years, the city should be celebrating numerous successes and be ready and willing to update the master plan for the next three years.

The City of Bishopville is poised to grab the attention of residents, potential investors and people visiting through the implementation of these recommendations. These recommendations, while focused on downtown, will impact the entire city. Downtown is the heart of the City. Strong cities need healthy and vibrant hearts.

We are grateful to the 100+ people who participated in stakeholder groups and public meetings. Your opinions, in concert with our professional expertise, helped shape this plan, which provides a framework with actionable steps to revitalize downtown. We are indebted to City Council, city staff and the Project Advisory Committee who provided leadership, thoughtful comments, flawless execution of the charrette schedule and a welcoming environment.

Thank you for this opportunity to help propel the continued revitalization and prosperity of Bishopville’s downtown.

Respectfully submitted,

The Master Planning Team

Acknowledgements

The master plan and the master plan charrette were successful due to the vision, passion and hard work of the City of Bishopville’s leaders – elected, staff and community. We are grateful for this opportunity and for the collaborative effort that made this master planning process possible.

City Council

- Luke Giddings, Mayor
- Gloria Lewis, Mayor Pro Tempore
- Edward Byrd
- Wayne Hancock
- Belinda Hay
- Shirley Hill
- Keishan Scott

City Staff

- W. Gregg McCutchen III, *City Administrator*
- Brittany Hyman, *Asst. City Administrator/Finance Director*

Project Advisory Committee

- Gloria Lewis, Mayor Pro Tempore
- Wayne Hancock
- Shirley Hill
- Ronnie Williams
- Emma Logan
- Ty Atkinson
- Janice Atkinson
- Kualonda Lewis
- Jenna McGuirt
- Ennis Bryant



Project Schedule

Wednesday, August 16, 2023

Team Site Visit and Kick-off Meeting with Steering Committee

MASTER PLANNING WORKSHOP

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

10:30 am	Focus Group Meeting
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Public Input Session at the Community Center
1:00 – 2:45 pm	Team Lunch and Work Session
3:00 – 4:45 pm	Stakeholder Interviews
5:30 – 6:30 pm	Public Input Session at Chappell Park Gymnasium
6:45 – 8:30 pm	Team Working Dinner with Project Advisory Committee
8:30 pm	Team Work Session

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

8:30 am – 1:00 pm	Team Work Session
1:30 – 3:00 pm	Public Presentation of Draft Master Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

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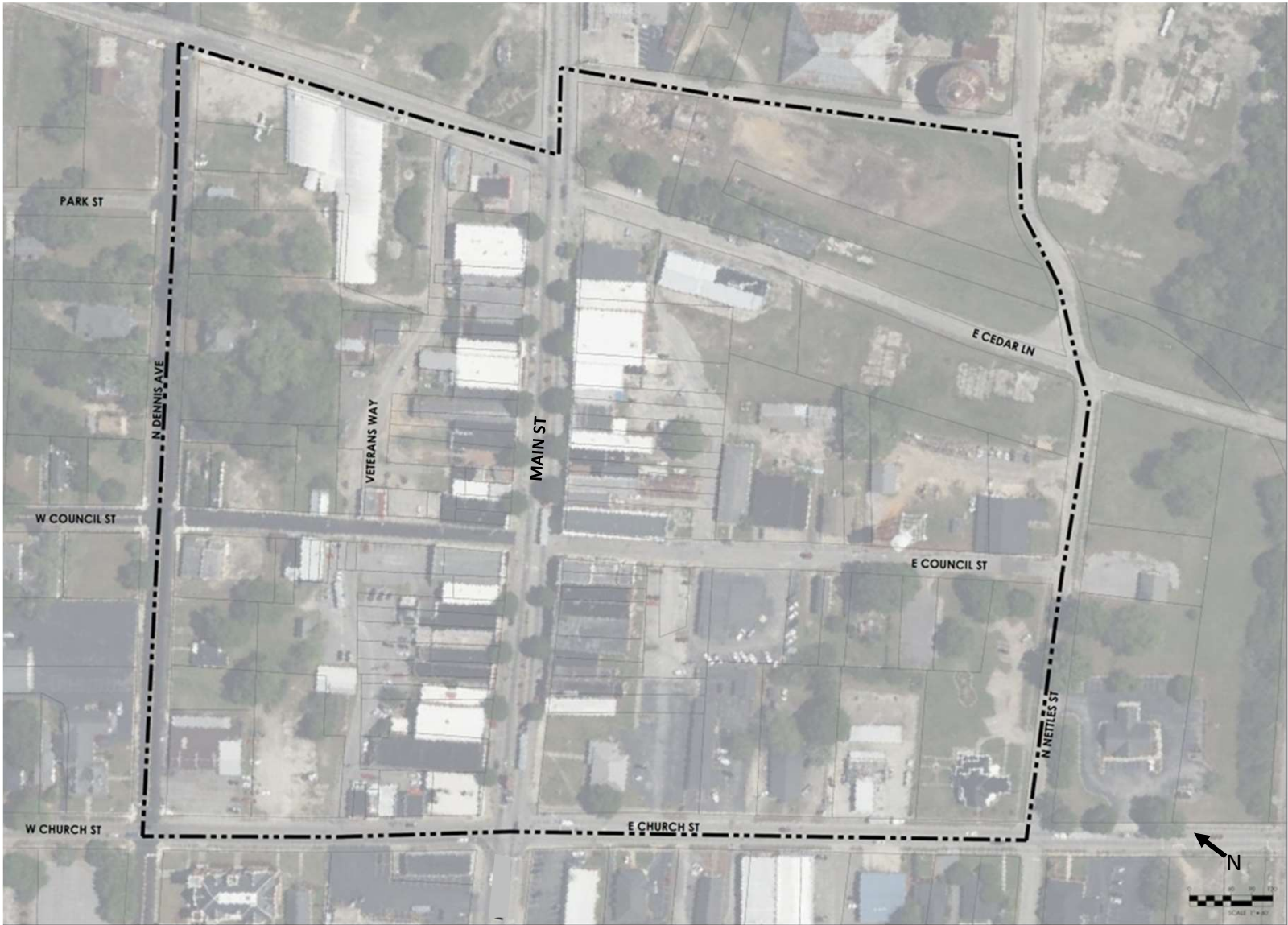
Master Plan Goals and Study Area

MASTER PLAN GOALS

- Create a plan and strategic guide for the revitalization of downtown.
- Create a plan for preserving and using the historic downtown buildings.
- Provide design recommendations for city-owned lots and alleyways in downtown.
- Create guidelines for financial assistance programs to stabilize and enhance downtown buildings.
- Provide recommendations for improvements to downtown landscaping and greenspace.
- Provide recommendations for economic development opportunities.

DOWNTOWN STUDY AREA

The downtown study area boundaries were Church Street, Dennis Avenue, Nettles Street, and Cedar Lane with a primary focus on Main Street.



Vision for Downtown Bishopville

The City of Bishopville is blessed with a historic downtown at the heart of the city. Downtown is characterized by two blocks of beautiful historic buildings lining Main Street. While many of these buildings are maintained and house successful businesses, the majority of these buildings are in poor condition. The city has taken a proactive approach to buying a few buildings with the intent to rehabilitate and/or sell the buildings with expectations that the buildings will be restored and filled with businesses that will help revitalize downtown.

We heard dozens of residents’ and business owners’ lamentations for what use to be in downtown and a yearning for downtown to return to the vibrant heart it once was. Residents want to keep talent at home and to give visitors reasons to stay awhile. They want downtown to thrive with rehabilitated historic buildings. The vision for downtown Bishopville reflects this yearning and informed the recommendations of this master plan.

The Vision is a north star to guide the City of Bishopville, ensuring development remains focused on revitalizing downtown. The journey to this vision starts now and will be a commitment for years to come.

*“Let’s not just look at this moment right here.
Let’s look at five to ten years down the road.”*

Gregg McCutchen, City Administrator

Vision

Keep | Stay | Thrive

Downtown Bishopville is a vibrant and well-preserved historic district with unique local businesses and cultural offerings.

Downtown Bishopville is a place for all ages to live, work, play, and gather.

Downtown Bishopville is a welcoming and accessible place that captivates people, inspiring them to experience all that downtown offers for hours...

... and longing to return.

Guiding Principles

These Guiding Principles, developed in response to the community’s love and vision for downtown Bishopville, will keep master plan implementation on track and ensure that all revitalization efforts and projects reflect the city’s vision and community values.

Sustain downtown as the heart of Bishopville by investing in the physical, economic and cultural infrastructure that makes downtown a desirable, prosperous, beautiful, creative, safe and accessible place to live, work and play.

Elevate the sense of community and level of community engagement through consistent and intentional communications with residents, business owners, property owners and local organizations and by inviting all residents to serve as stewards for the long-term revitalization of downtown, particularly through the Main Street Program.

Capture and promote the history, stories and legendary characters of Bishopville to connect more people to the place, distinguishing Bishopville from other communities and spurring tourism and entrepreneurship through unique, local economic development and cultural programming efforts.

Require the highest quality design and development in all projects, new and redevelopments, to reflect the City’s values, to increase the sense of place, to reflect and respect the City’s history, to inspire hope for the future and to establish Bishopville as a progressive City committed to developing its potential and increasing prosperity for all residents.

Increase pedestrian and bike connectivity by creating places and connections within downtown and the City that engage people with people, people to places and support residential, retail, cultural, recreational, entrepreneurial and entertainment activities, all of which are paramount to retaining and enhancing an authentic small-town appeal and a vibrant downtown.

Create an entrepreneurial culture that supports existing local businesses and cultivates new home-grown businesses that will differentiate downtown Bishopville and contribute to the sustained prosperity and vibrancy of downtown Bishopville.

Strengthen regional partnerships to continually improve and to sustain the City’s quality of life through leveraged resources and planning, collaborative marketing and promotions, improved infrastructure, cultural and recreational opportunities, place-based economic development, and collective stewardship of the natural environment.



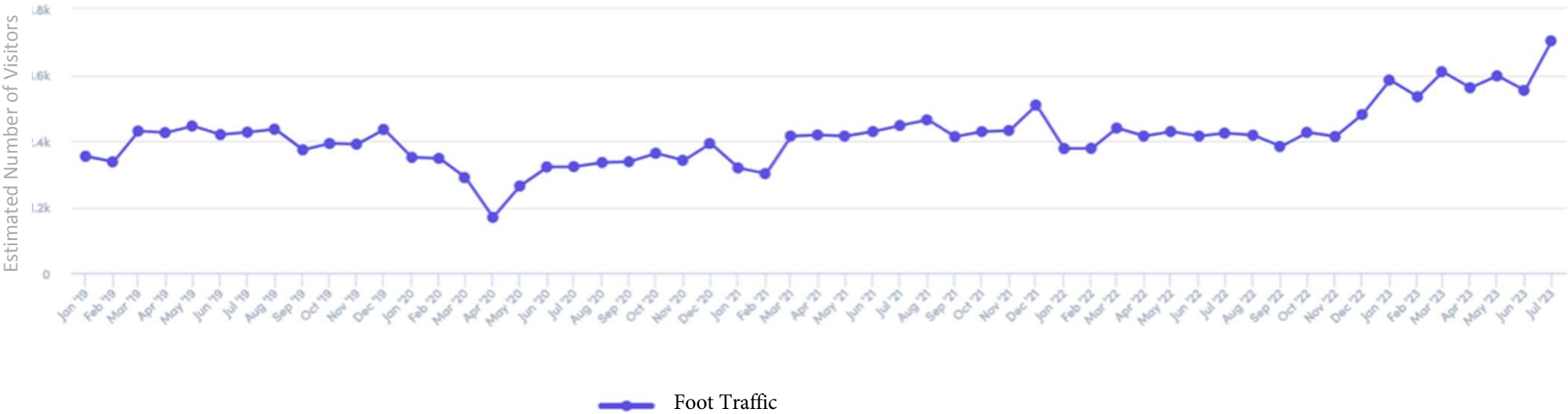
Changing the Trajectory: The New Economy

Downtown Bishopville stands at a crossroads. According to data from The Retail Coach, the community is facing a projected decline in its retail trade market's population over the next five years. The forecast extends to consumer spending, with key small business sectors like retail, food, and apparel expected to experience a similar downward trend.

Amidst these challenges, however, a glimmer of hope emerges from The Retail Coach's data, revealing an increase in downtown foot traffic in recent years. This surge in interest and patronage for downtown businesses signifies a potential positive that can be harnessed to change the trajectory of downtown Bishopville.

The imperative now is to capitalize on this increased engagement through strategic intervening measures such as those outlined in this plan. By acknowledging these trends and proactively addressing them, stakeholders have an opportunity to not only navigate the impending challenges but also to shape a thriving and resilient downtown community.

Consumer Spending	Consumer Spending in the Downtown Bishopville Trade Area					
	5 Min. Drive		10 Min. Drive		15 Min. Drive	
	Current Yr	5 Yr Proj	Current Yr	5 Yr Proj	Current Yr	5 Yr Proj
Total Retail	\$5M	\$5M	\$20M	\$20M	\$45M	\$44M
Food	\$846K	\$815K	\$3M	\$3M	\$8M	\$7M
Apparel	\$216K	\$210K	\$866K	\$843K	\$2M	\$2M
Entertainment	\$263K	\$254K	\$1M	\$1M	\$2M	\$2M
Personal Care	\$100K	\$98K	\$402K	\$395K	\$881K	\$866K



Source: The Retail Coach

Four Pillars of Downtown Revitalization for Bishopville

To change the trajectory and to successfully work toward the vision, the city should build upon and leverage investments and projects on the Four Pillars of Downtown Revitalization: Placemaking, a Pedestrian Focus, Preservation and Prosperity. These pillars support what is needed change the trajectory of the economy and will support sustained development in downtown. All projects, programs, partnerships and incentives should build upon one or more of these pillars.

“If we don’t invest, we’ll keep getting people who retire here to live in the middle of nowhere and want to do nothing.”

a Bishopville Resident
during the public input session

Placemaking

Downtown Bishopville is a celebrated exemplar of creative placemaking and leveraging the city’s authentic cultural assets.

Pedestrian Focus

Main Street is, first and foremost, a safe and accessible pedestrian-focused public realm for people.

Preservation

The city is committed to the appropriate preservation and reuse of all the downtown historic buildings and landscapes.

Prosperity

The city is a great place to do business due to the city’s public/private partnerships, investments in technology and infrastructure, accessibility to resources for entrepreneurs and business owners, incentives for development and redevelopment, and workforce readiness.

Implementation Framework

This master plan's recommendations offer a forward-looking perspective on downtown revitalization, proposing projects and strategies for the coming years. While the long-term vision is essential, immediate and short-term implementation of key projects and initiatives can yield significant results within the next three years.

Acknowledging several proactive and ongoing projects, activities, and investments made in downtown Bishopville in recent years, as well as the City’s constraints in terms of staffing, finances, and time, these recommendations stem from the invaluable insights of residents and stakeholders who actively participated in focus groups, establishing a strong foundation of community support. To move forward, the city should prioritize actions across these recommendations and commit to a dedicated path of action, rallying the support of City Council, staff, financial resources, and essential public/private partnerships.

Downtown revitalization is a complex, sustained effort that demands a multi-faceted, multi-year approach. The Main Street Program framework provides an excellent starting point for this transformative journey.

**Implement Public
Realm
Improvements**

**Implement
Creative
Placemaking**

**Promote Local
History, Arts,
Culture, and
Assets**

**Renovate Historic
Buildings and
Improve
Downtown
Appearances**

**Leverage the Main
Street Program**

**Build Policy
Framework and
Organizational
Capacity**

Catalyst Projects & Investments

The success of the master plan depends on intentional implementation of the recommendations. The master plan recommends short- and long-term projects and investments. The following projects and investments deserve the city’s priority attention, commitment, and investments for they will ignite the transformation of downtown Bishopville. Planning for these projects and investments can begin now which will ensure successful implementation over the new few years.

Immediate (within 12 months)

- Hire a full-time Main Street/Economic Development Director (see p. 28)
- Invest in stabilization of the city-owned historic buildings on Main Street (grants + city funding)
- Pursue four-way stop or other traffic calming intervention at the Main and Council Streets intersection
- Obtain easement/approval to develop the abandoned rail bed and open space
- Formalize and strengthen regional partnerships: economic development, education, tourism
- Reinstate the Greater Bishopville Foundation
- Design and construct the alleys with connections to new parking areas behind Main Street buildings
- Establish a maintenance and preservation program for the trees that line Main Street
- Implement incentives program for stabilization and facade improvements for historic buildings on Main Street
- Host training on downtown development strategies and incentives

Short Term (1-3 years)

- Design and construct the Depot Park, which will include a Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden Walk and the multi-use path (rails to trail project)
- Refurbish the Main Street medians with appropriate plantings or infill pavers
- Confirm plan to reroute all truck traffic off Main Street and begin design phase of new route
- Create and implement new branding and wayfinding for downtown Bishopville
- Complete stabilization of all city-owned historic buildings on Main Street
- Design and construct new Veterans Way parking lot
- Work to become an Accredited Main Street Community
- As city-owned buildings are stabilized, market buildings to developers and new businesses

Long-Term (3-10 years)

- Construct and enforce new truck route
- Design and construct new parking lot(s) behind Main Street buildings on east side of Main Street



SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT

Summary of Public Input

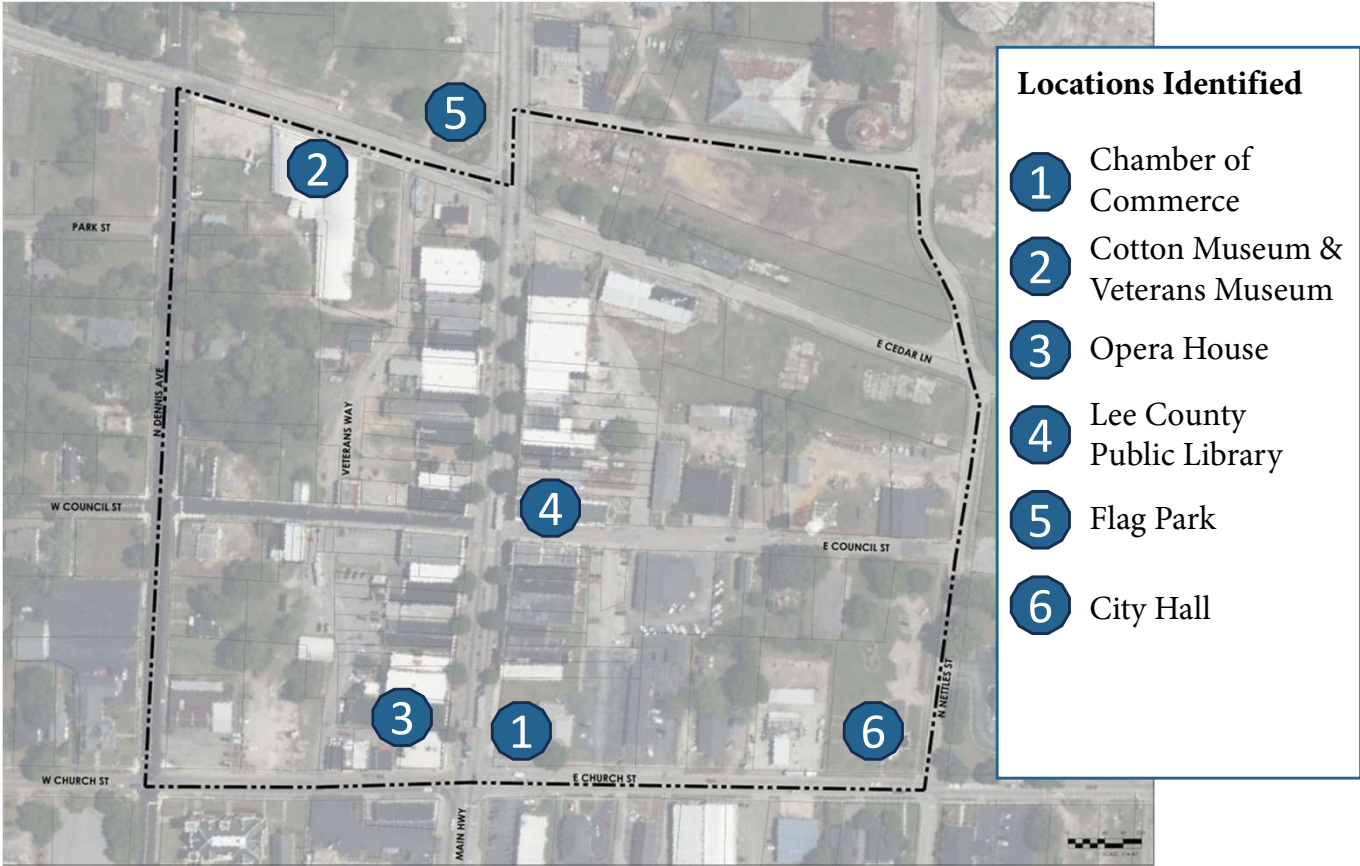
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One Word to Describe Downtown Bishopville

We asked participants in the focus groups and the public input session to share one word that comes to mind when they think of downtown Bishopville. The word bubble below represents the most offered words, with the largest being the top words. While some of the words may be negative, they represent opportunities for improvement.



What is the heart of downtown?



What Residents Want Downtown

Through focus groups and the public input session, residents and stakeholders shared what they would like to see in downtown, especially in the available historic buildings. All of these will bring more people downtown and elevate tourism and economic development.

- Coffee shops
- Family friendly entertainment
- Activities and places for youth to enjoy and gather
- Wine and cheese shop, gourmet foods
- Bakeries
- Boutiques – especially for men
- Shoe Stores
- Nice restaurants (non-fast food)
- Art galleries and studios
- Upgraded infrastructure and improved storm water drainage
- Renovated buildings downtown
- Well-landscaped and safe parking behind buildings
- More people shopping downtown
- More places to shop downtown
- More parks, greenspace, places to sit
- More pedestrian and bike connectivity
- Clean and well-maintained downtown







What Residents Want Downtown

Following the analysis of feedback and comments from our community outreach meetings, the following prominent themes have emerged:

- 1. Establish a plan to slow or reroute truck traffic along Main Street.
- 2. Provide accessible and visible parking behind Main Street buildings.
- 3. Utilize vacant land and rail depot property for public parks and event space.
- 4. Improve lighting throughout parks, parking, and streets.
- 5. Improve and develop safe, equitable, and accessible walking paths and pedestrian zones throughout the core of the downtown area.
- 6. Create more opportunities for outdoor gathering spaces and community gatherings/activities.



Bishopville Study Area: Focus Areas

-  Main Street Streetscape
 - Street Trees
 - Existing Infrastructure
-  Open Space along pre-existing Rail
-  Alleyways
-  Parking behind Main Street



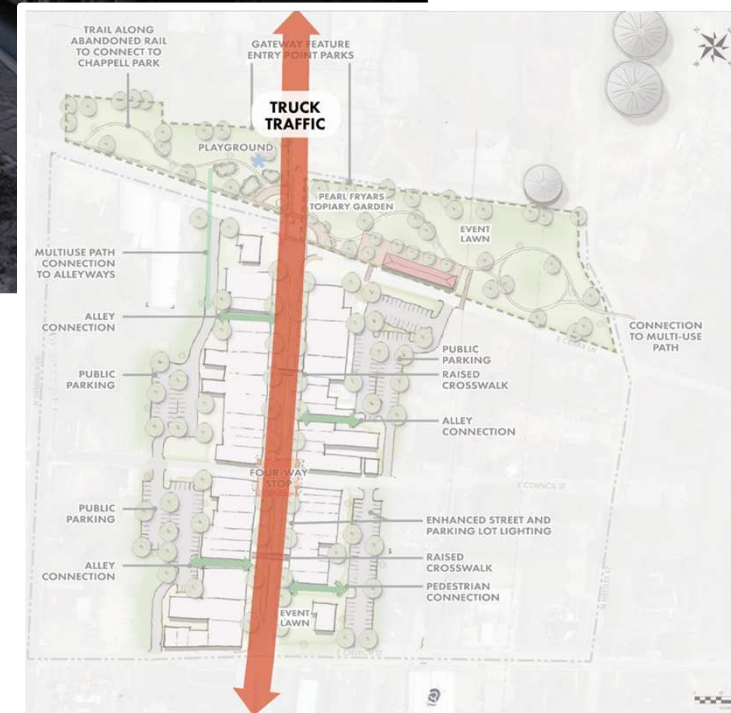
Challenges & Constraints

The following were identified as challenges or constraints for Downtown Bishopville:

- The constant flow of large trucks passing through downtown is a critical issue. Their speed, coupled with the unpleasant odor of their cargo, makes walking and parking along Main Street a real challenge. This not only affects the quality of life for residents and visitors but also impacts the overall atmosphere of the area.
- Parking is a concern. On-street parallel parking is uncomfortable due to the quantity and speed of large truck traffic on Main Street. Parking is available to the rear of Main Street businesses; however, many visitors perceive this area as less accessible, leading to underutilization. There is also ambiguity regarding the availability of these parking spaces to the public, which further hampers their use.
- Downtown's aging water, sewer, and stormwater systems pose potential risks and could limit the city's ability to adapt to future needs and attract new businesses. Updated infrastructure is a vital aspect to consistent revitalization.
- A shortage of local skilled workforce and the difficulty of retaining young, home grown, educated talent in the community create a talent drain that can hinder growth and innovation.
- The condition and appearance of downtown buildings are a visual representation of the city's challenges. Many properties show signs of neglect, disrepair, or visible vacancy which affects the overall appeal of the area.
- Inactive/absent building owners and lack of maintenance contribute to the large number of vacant buildings. Some structures are used for storage or other purposes that do not align with the purpose, vision and vibrancy of Main Street.
- The lack of available tenant-ready leasable space on Main Street is a barrier to attracting new businesses looking to establish a presence in the downtown area.



Daily truck traffic on Main Street



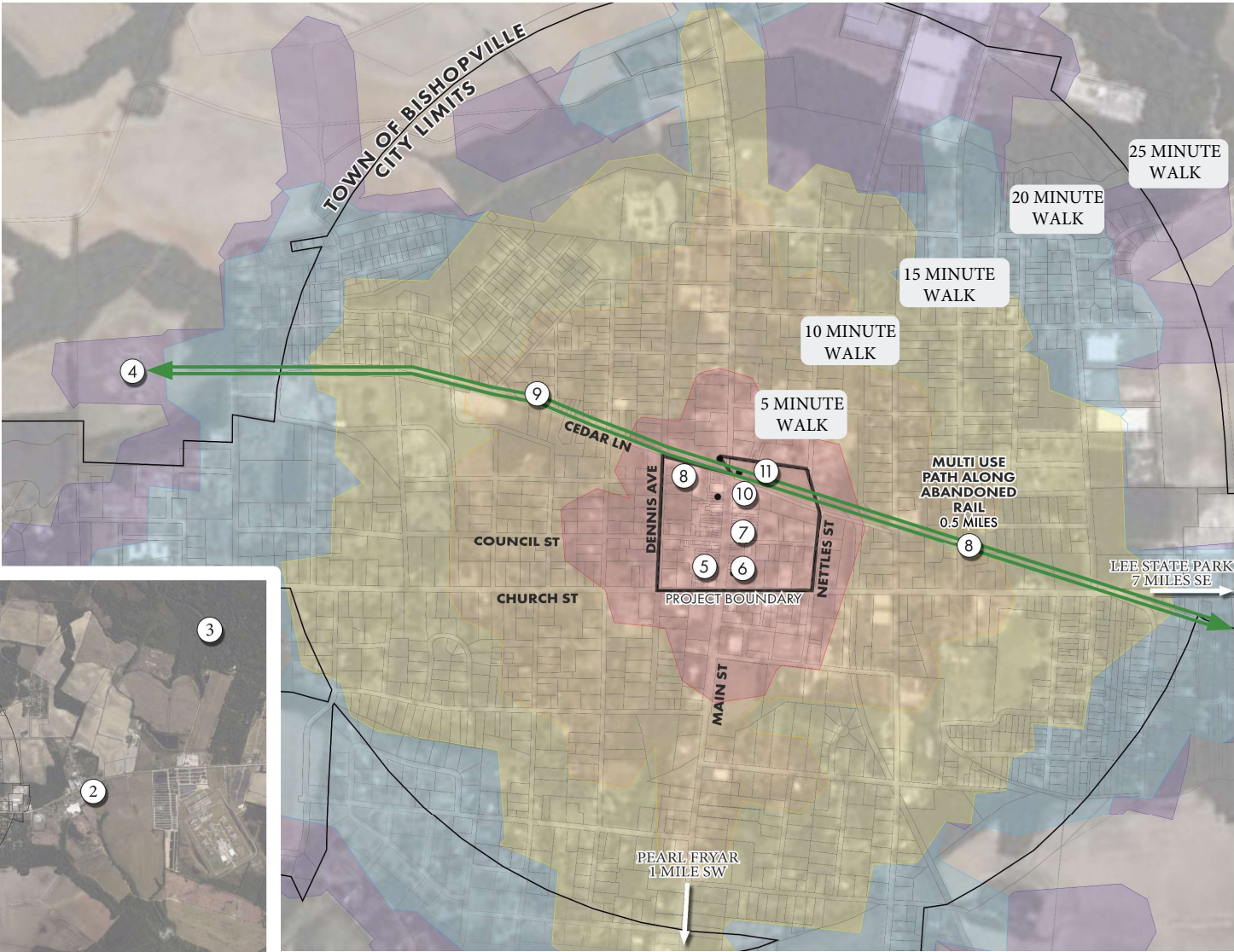
Challenges & Constraints *(continued)*

- Lack of effective coordination between business owners to collectively promote downtown, beyond the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce. A united approach can have a more significant impact on revitalization.
- Lack of informed maintenance and perceived issues with the mature trees along Main Street poses maintenance concerns for roofs and building facades and threatens the life of the trees. The trees add beauty and a nice sense of scale to the street. The trees need to be maintained and protected.
- A lack of business development programs hinders new businesses. To foster economic growth, the city should create an educational program for new business owners and entrepreneurs. Such initiatives can help stimulate economic activity and attract fresh talent to the community.
- Participants were asked to where would they turn for resources when starting a new business in downtown Bishopville. Top responses included City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, and local REALTORS. The Chamber of Commerce was noted as providing a link between potential or current business owners with local educational opportunities and providers, which are rarely utilized.
- Lastly, historic inconsistency in the implementation of regulations such as the Zoning Ordinance or Building Code can lead to confusion and hinder the proper development and revitalization of the downtown area.



Bishopville Assets

The following asset map and overview display the City of Bishopville and adjacent Lee County property assets that have an existing and potential future impact on the area's culture, people, and built and natural environments.



People

Influential people have the ability to impact cities through arts and culture, which can make economic impacts on the communities they serve. Below is a list of local famous people who have made significant impacts on the City of Bishopville through their community service and professions.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| ① Pearl Fryar | Gwendolyn Bradley |
| Lizard Man | Doc Blanchard |
| Drink Small | |

Places

The following is a list of existing places that are key points of interest within the Bishopville area, contributing to the downtown economically, socially, and environmentally.

- ② Existing Industries – Martech, Coca-Cola
- ③ Lee State Park
- ④ Chappell Park
- ⑤ Opera House
- ⑥ Chamber of Commerce
- ⑦ Lee County Public Library
- ⑧ Cotton Museum

Opportunities

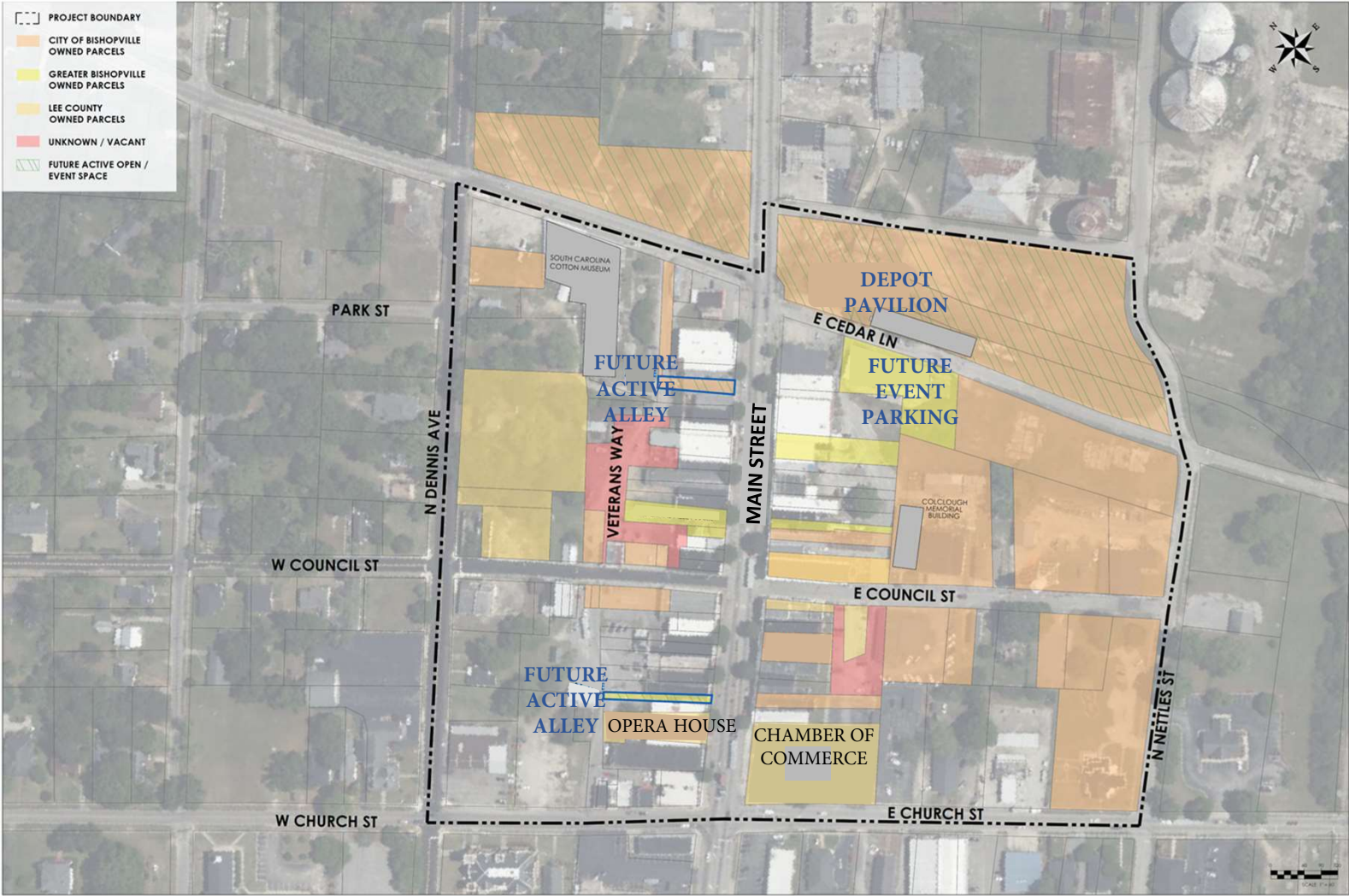
Below is a list of opportunities within the City of Bishopville that are in the planning process while others are potential opportunities for the community.

- ⑨ Dennis High School
- ⑩ Wellness Center
- ⑪ Rail Depot
- Downtown Streetscape & Architecture
- Existing Open Space and Vacant Properties

Downtown Assets

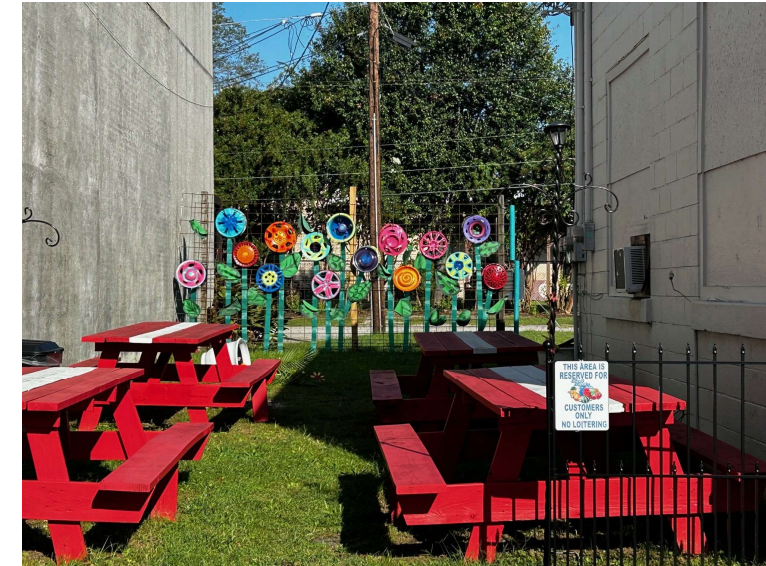
When asked to identify the greatest assets is downtown Bishopville, the following were identified.

- Key assets to downtown are community interest and strategic civic investment. The people of Bishopville are deeply committed to their city's growth and well-being, and it shows in the way they come together to support local initiatives. This community spirit is complemented by a City Council that is dedicated to positive change and investments in downtown. Their focus on progress is a driving force behind the city's revitalization.
- One remarkable advantage that sets downtown Bishopville apart is the city's control over a significant number of key historic properties in the area. This control allows for thoughtful planning and development, ensuring that the town's historic charm is preserved while moving forward.
- New mid-block alleyways have been introduced to enhance accessibility, especially to parking opportunities behind Main Street businesses. This improvement not only makes it easier for residents and visitors to access local shops but also adds to the overall appeal of the downtown area.
- The city's proximity to Lee State Park is a strategic asset that leverages visitors and the green economy. Nature enthusiasts and adventure seekers are drawn to Bishopville, bringing business to local establishments and contributing to the town's sustainable growth.
- Central Carolina Technical College's presence in downtown Bishopville is an asset. Students bring additional foot traffic to local businesses and activities, fostering a dynamic and diverse community. Its educational and cultural offerings have the potential to enrich downtown's vibrant atmosphere.
- Considering the scale of the Bishopville community, there is an excellent opportunity to increase connectivity to downtown through improved bicycle and pedestrian connections, particularly a rails-to trails facility.



Downtown Assets (continued)

- Concerts and programming at the Bishopville Opera House provide cultural enrichment and entertainment, creating a lively social scene for residents and visitors alike. This arts and culture scene adds a unique dimension to the city's character.
- The historic 100 and 200 blocks of Main Street include a large number of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places and two historic districts, each with a story to tell. These architectural treasures preserve the city's heritage and add to its overall charm.
- Main Street is scaled for the pedestrian, making it the ideal place for walking, shopping, and supporting local businesses. It's a welcoming space that encourages community engagement and social interaction.
- Downtown Bishopville's existing local businesses offer a diverse range of products and services which provides a good base for business growth.
- One of the city's most remarkable assets is its personable environment. In Bishopville, people know one another, fostering a sense of belonging and unity that is hard to find in larger urban areas.
- City control of multiple key properties and its strategic location between multiple desirable communities and the proximity to Interstate 20 provide a strong foundation for economic growth and development.
- Lastly, the city's rich history and character are woven into every aspect of Bishopville. It is a place where the past and present coexist, creating a unique atmosphere that celebrates its heritage while embracing the future.



Opportunities

The following are for catalyst opportunities identified for downtown Bishopville:

- One of the key opportunities lies in offering incentives for new businesses or community-serving establishments downtown. By linking these incentives to investment, the city can attract a diverse range of enterprises that can breathe new life into the area.
- Participants described the desire to foster growth of catalyst businesses to reinvigorate Downtown Bishopville and improve the economic ecosystem. These businesses include but are not limited to: coffee shops, family friendly entertainment, art galleries, activities and places for youth to enjoy and gather, wine and cheese shop, gourmet foods, bakeries, boutiques (especially a men's store), and shoe stores.
- New or expanded businesses or uses that draw additional visitors and patrons to downtown is a promising avenue for growth. These enterprises can add vibrancy and economic activity to the heart of Bishopville.
- Enhancing programs and partnerships with Central Carolina Technical College can be a game-changer. By leveraging the educational institution's resources, the city can tap into a wealth of potential and talent, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Rerouting the large truck traffic around downtown is a vital step to ensure safety and will create an improved pedestrian experience. This initiative can make downtown more inviting and accessible.
- To capture the current cut-through traffic, the city can slow down vehicular flow and introduce new businesses and an attractive streetscape, enticing travelers to stop and explore what downtown has to offer.
- Creating and enhancing mid-block access to parking areas behind Main Street businesses in each quadrant of the study area is a practical solution to the parking issue. It can make the entire downtown experience more convenient for both residents and visitors.
- Improved public off-street parking areas with landscaping, lighting, and wayfinding elements, enhancing comfort and accessibility, and making downtown more welcoming.
- Reinvigorate the City of Bishopville Architectural Review Board to ensure consistent and historically-responsible building improvements is essential to preserving the city's unique character and heritage.
- The introduction of new or expanded community events at the new depot event pavilion is an exciting prospect. These events can draw both visitors and residents into downtown, creating a sense of community and fostering a sense of belonging.
- Improving code and zoning enforcement is crucial to prevent the deterioration of buildings and discourage inappropriate uses along Main Street. This measure can help maintain the city's aesthetic and character.
- By pursuing uses and businesses that cater to all segments of the population, downtown Bishopville can become an inclusive and diverse community that offers something for everyone.
- Lastly, by coordinating promotional efforts between businesses and creating a cohesive marketing strategy for Downtown Bishopville, the city can build a strong and unified brand that attracts visitors and supports local commerce.

**Downtown is a place,
not a pass-through.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

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The Master Plan Overview

The master plan presented on the following pages illustrates a variety of public and private sector improvements that can be implemented over time to build upon Bishopville's downtown revitalization success. Plan recommendations focus on improvements to the **Public Realm** – those spaces that connect buildings and uses within downtown, including active and passive parks and open spaces, streets, alleys and trails – and improvements through development and redevelopment.

Creative Placemaking is another overarching theme, emphasizing the creation of vibrant and engaging places for both residents and visitors to experience downtown. It should serve as a guiding principle for all development, acting as a catalyst for the revitalization of the downtown area.

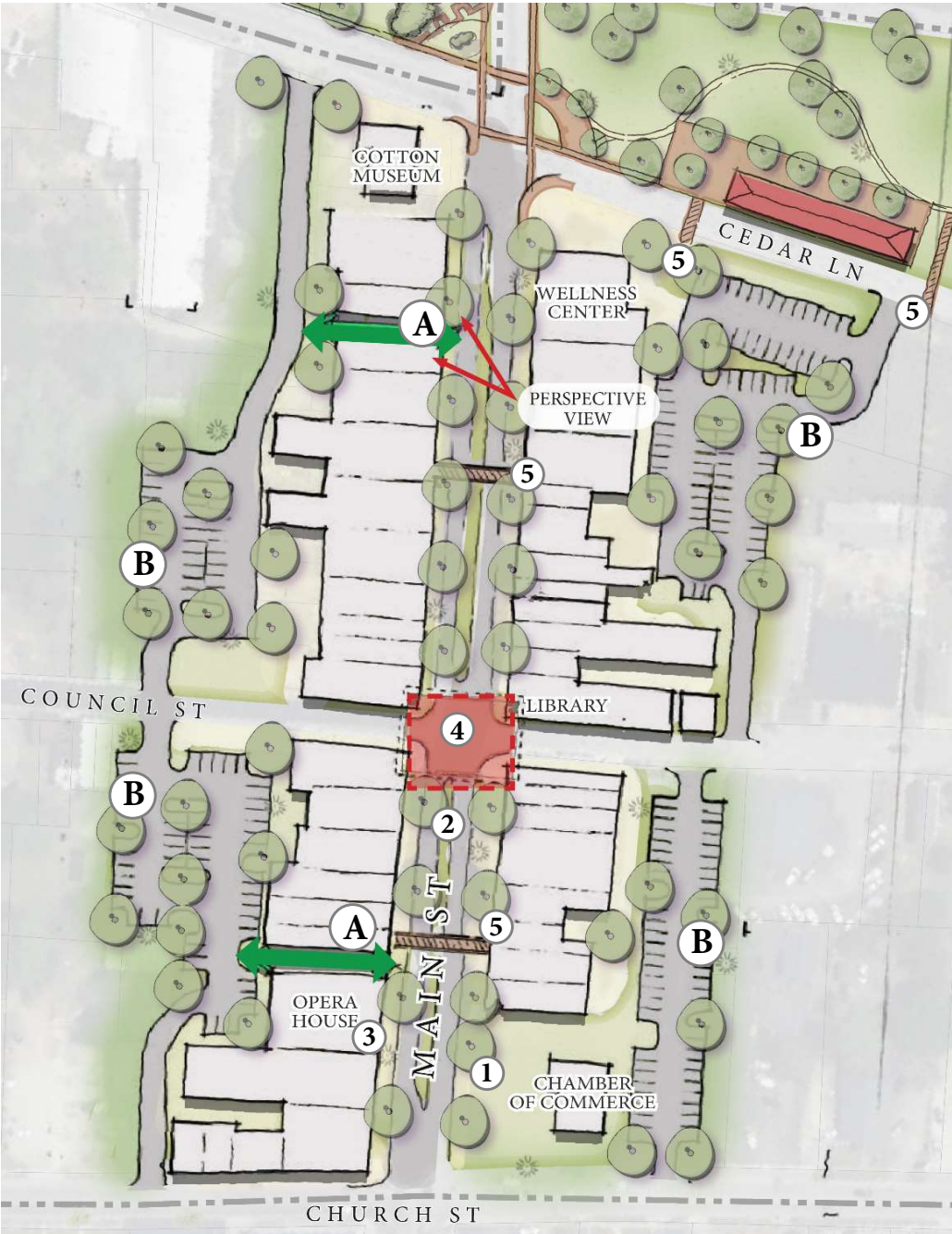


Public Realm Improvements

Main Street Bishopville seeks to be a safe and accessible place for all residents and visitors. The current roadblocks for economic growth, community, and street activation are:

- 1. Major truck traffic through Main Street causing major odor and lack of pedestrian safety
- 2. Lack of accessible & visible parking
- 3. Property maintenance

The proposed plan establishes a master plan framework based on design and planning principles that have been used to transform small towns across South Carolina. These suggestions focus on streetscape activation, pedestrian safety, and public realm beautification, all things which will create a sense of pride in Bishopville's downtown and make Main Street a place to celebrate, relax, work, and visit.



“Main Street is everyone’s hometown - the heart line of America.”

Walt Disney

Streetscape Improvements

- ① Street Tree Maintenance Plan
- ② Landscaping within the Medians
- ③ Improved Lighting

Traffic Calming:

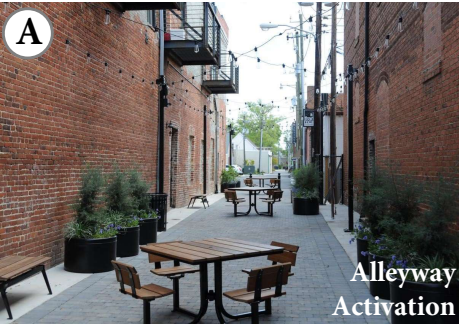
- ④ Four-Way Stop
- ⑤ Raised Crosswalks



Alleyways: Gateway features draw pedestrians into alleyways, connecting Main Street and parking.

Public Parking: Design guidelines to consider when improving parking in the future. Prior to any parking improvements, all underground utilities shall be up to code.

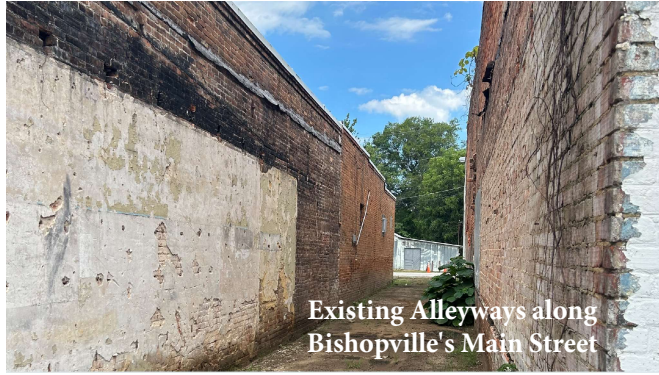
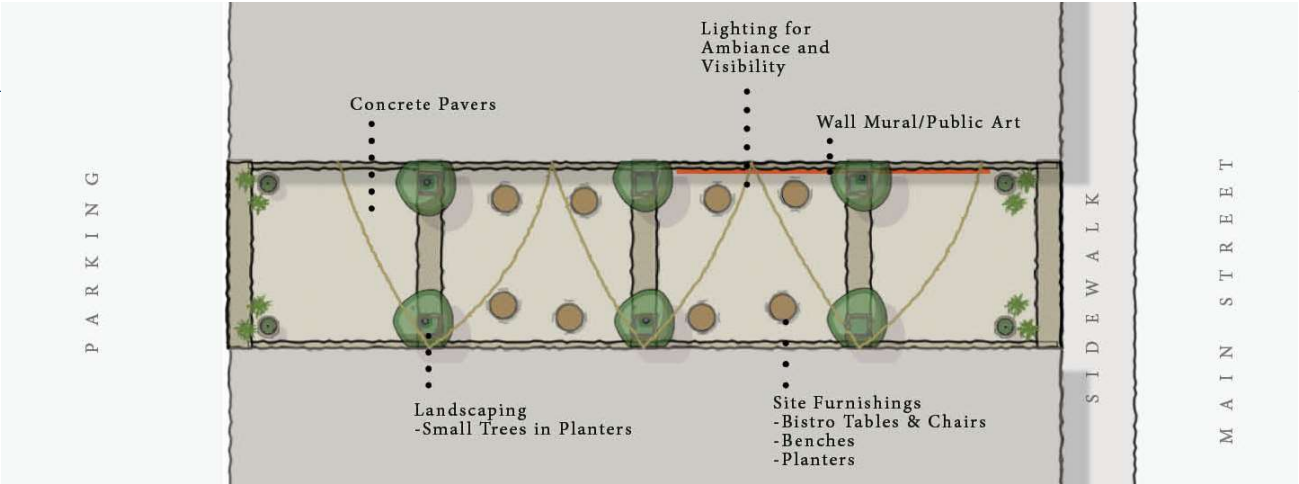
- adequate striping for parking and loading zones
- proper lighting throughout all parking zones
- safe and consistent pedestrian areas, including connectivity to alley ways and crosswalks
- signage for directing vehicles to proper parking areas
- Landscaping within parking medians and along back and side of main street buildings



Public Realm Improvements: Alleyways

Incorporating active alleys into Downtown Bishopville will serve multiple purposes: it will create a vibrant public realm, improve connectivity between parking areas and Main Street, and act as a catalyst for the overall master plan and future development in the downtown area.

To achieve this vision, it is recommended that the city collaborate with a landscape architect or architect who can create a cohesive plan for each of the individual spaces. This approach will help capture the needs and vision outlined by key stakeholders and ensure the successful implementation of active alleys in the downtown area.



Existing Alleyways along Bishopville's Main Street

Public Realm Improvements: Depot Park

Utilizing the existing property along the abandoned rail to develop both passive and active open space will accomplish multiple things:

- 1. Its proximity to Main Street shops will make the parks visible and accessible to locals and visitors driving or walking through Main Street.
- 2. The future Depot Event Hall will have direct access to an established public park that will serve its use and create a cohesive and beautiful park.
- 3. The park will serve as a multi purpose open space that will cater to all resident and serve all people.
- 4. Passive and active open spaces will be located along an abandoned rail which will be reused as a walking & biking trail, connecting downtown to Chappell Park.

The Depot Park plan proposes the following:

- 1. **Connectivity** between the rail park and the downtown shopping areas through mid-block crosswalks and an improved signalized intersection.
- 2. **Parking** for those utilizing the park or visiting the Cotton Museum.
- 3. **Active Spaces** that will serve the community and make Bishopville a unique place to visit such as a playground, event lawn, and garden.
- 4. **Rails to Trails** will connect pedestrians and cyclist to and from downtown. Additional information and grant opportunities can be found at <https://www.railstotrails.org/>.



Policy Framework & Organizational Capacity

A critical component of revitalizing downtown Bishopville is ensuring an adequate policy framework and organizational capacity. The following describes how the city can leverage existing policies and organizational structures to effectively implement downtown revitalization activities.

Utilize the Budgeting Process and Capital Improvement Program. Strategically prioritize and implement downtown projects as part of the budgeting process. The annual budget process, inclusive of the Capital Improvement Program are instrumental in strategic prioritization and implementation of downtown projects, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively.

Funding of Ongoing Maintenance. Ensure sufficient ongoing funding to provide maintenance for public improvements and infrastructure. To guarantee the sustainability of public improvements and infrastructure, ongoing funding is essential. The City is committed to securing sufficient resources to provide the maintenance necessary to keep downtown looking its best. This commitment underscores the long-term vision for a flourishing and well-kept community.

Leveraging Existing Organizational Structures and Processes. Leveraging existing organizational structures and processes, such as the Architectural Review Board's Certificate of Appropriateness, is a practical approach to streamlining incentive programs and ensuring compliance with Design Guidelines. This simplifies the process for property owners and businesses while maintaining a consistent and historically-responsible approach to building improvements.

Provide Adequate Design Guidance. Ensure Design Guidelines provide sufficient detail to ensure appropriate improvements to downtown buildings. The Design Guidelines themselves play a crucial role in preserving and enhancing downtown. They must provide sufficient detail to guide and regulate improvements to downtown buildings. This ensures that any changes made contribute positively to the area's character and maintain its historical integrity.

Code and Zoning Enforcement. Allocate sufficient resources to implement zoning regulations and the building code. Ensuring that sufficient resources are available to implement zoning regulations and building codes is crucial. This commitment underscores the city's dedication to upholding the standards that maintain the character and quality of the community. Adequate resources such as staffing, education, and regulation enable efficient enforcement and ensure that the regulations are applied consistently.

Utilize the Existing Architectural Review Board. Using the existing structure of the Architectural Review Board to implement the Certificate of Appropriateness process assures appropriate improvements to Downtown buildings.

Provide Education and Resources to Downtown Owners and Businesses. Educate property and business owners regarding zoning regulations and common building code issues. Educating property and business owners about zoning regulations and common building code issues is an essential first step. By raising awareness and providing guidance, the city equips its stakeholders with the knowledge needed to navigate these regulations successfully. This education fosters a sense of shared responsibility and empowers property owners to contribute to the city's revitalization in a compliant and informed manner.

Strengthen and Leverage Regional Partnerships. Partnerships and relationships are critical in successful downtown revitalization for communities with limited resources. The City of Bishopville forged key relationships with other public and quasi-public entities, including but not limited to the South Carolina Department of Transportation, Santee-Lynches Council of Governments, the Economic Development Alliance, the Lee County Chamber of Commerce, the Lee County School District, and Central Carolina Technical College. Each organization represents resources, subject matter expertise, and a potential role to play in a well-rounded approach to community development.

Economic Development Strategies

Bishopville, a small city of almost 3,500 residents, is the county seat of Lee County in South Carolina’s Pee Dee region. Located just off I-20 with easy access to Columbia and Florence, Bishopville’s charming downtown has enormous untapped economic potential. With the strong commitment of Bishopville City Council, as evidenced in its Downtown Bishopville Master Plan and important public improvements (e.g., train depot), Bishopville is poised for growth and continued success.

Downtown Bishopville, with its tree-lined corridor, exudes charm and character. Downtown covers two blocks of appealing early and mid-20th century commercial buildings with long-established businesses. Additionally, Lee County takes pride in its numerous buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Lee County Courthouse, the Bishopville High School, Bishopville Commercial Historic District, James Carnes House, Dennis High School, Thomas Fraser House, William Apollos James House, The Manor, Mt. Zion Presbyterian Church, William Rogers House, South Main Historic District, Spencer House, and Tall Oaks .

Trip Advisor, one of the nation’s most trusted travel advice websites, identifies several Lee County locations as top statewide and even national travel destinations, such as the Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden, The SC Cotton Museum, The Button Museum, and Lee State Park. Bishopville is also home to the widely recognized urban legend, the Lizard Man, a giant lizard rising from the depths of a local swamp. Thousands of people flock to the annual Lizard Man Stomp Festival. These unique and sometimes quirky attractions afford an opportunity for Bishopville to market these undiscovered gems to tourists.

Bishopville’s economic development strategy should naturally include not only offering business recruitment and retention activities but also providing financial and technical assistance that improve downtown buildings and the overall business environment. To be truly successful, however, the city should continually seek innovative ways to enhance its cultural heritage, build on its rich history, and promote its quirky and natural attractions.

- 1 Create and/or reconstitute a full-time economic development corporation and Main Street Program
- 2 Leverage the South Carolina Main Street Program
- 3 Cultivate potential downtown investors
- 4 Form task force to implement the recommendations of this master plan
- 5 Offer tools for redevelopment in Bishopville
- 6 Promote unique history, arts, culture and community assets
- 7 Update city ordinances
- 8 Host training on downtown development strategies and incentives
- 9 Study alternate routes for truck traffic
- 10 Implement rails-to-trails project
- 11 Implement creative placemaking projects

Economic Development Strategies

1. Create and/or reconstitute a full-time economic development corporation and Main Street Program

During the Master Plan visit to Bishopville, the consulting team was unable to identify any comprehensive economic development strategy, or recognized and visible organization that assists businesses and entrepreneurs exploring economic investment downtown. It is recommended that Bishopville create and/or reconstitute an independent entity to manage the downtown business recruitment and retention activities and coordinate city-wide economic development projects and special initiatives requested by the city council.

The team suggests exploring a hybrid Main Street/Economic Development organization that can not only manage proposed public improvements projects but also strengthen Downtown through the traditional main street revitalization 4-point strategy as refined by the National Main Street Center for over 40 years.

This proposed new office will be the primary contact for economic development projects and grants in Bishopville and offer support to potential investors in managing city processes and policies. The new office staff will also manage the day-to-day downtown redevelopment efforts and promote available state and federal development incentives.

The Economic Development/Main Street office should be managed by a non-political board of directors comprised of local business and industry leaders who meet clearly defined categories of “best practices” standards. The City should further consider utilizing the already established organization, Greater Bishopville Inc., which is currently planning to cease operation. Since Greater Bishopville is already chartered to own property, make loans, and create development incentives, the City could significantly expedite its economic development priorities. While the by-laws and charter may need to be updated with the Secretary of State and the IRS, this should be a fairly simple process compared to the creation of a new entity.



Economic Development Strategies

2. Leverage the South Carolina Main Street Program

Main Street SC is a membership program of the SC Municipal Association that offers staff training, ongoing education and networking, and organizational tools to help cities revitalize their historic downtowns. Main Street SC has a highly successful record in SC communities and is affiliated with the National Main Street program and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Programming is specifically created around a four-point approach to downtown revitalization: Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Development. Since membership in Main Street SC is highly competitive and requires community commitment and dedicated staff, Bishopville should immediately open dialogue with Main Street SC.

3. Cultivate Potential Downtown Investors

Bishopville is fortunate that investors are already considering downtown ventures. Several of these potential investors self-identified during the Master Plan public sessions and in private meetings. Bishopville City Council has committed to investments in downtown buildings and public infrastructure that will support private investment. The newly formed Economic Development/Main Street staff should meet regularly with potential investors and share basic economic development resources for more complex projects.

Additionally, during the Master Plan public and private meetings, our team heard requests from the community for various types of potential new businesses, including the following:

Restaurants and Bars: The Bishopville market needs more prepared food and hospitality businesses, particularly in the downtown area. This category was identified as the most requested at the Master Plan public meetings numerous times.

Many communities use food trucks to demonstrate the market for permanent restaurants and other hospitality businesses. Bishopville should consider contacting area food trucks and invite them to park along Main Street to assess the market.

Some communities even create permanent food truck locations with on-site power hook-ups to reduce noise from generators, creating destination locations. Successful food trucks can also support commercial kitchens that serve both food truck preparation and opportunities for small scale bakers, caterers, and restaurants that need more cooking space.



Economic Development Strategies

Yoga, Fitness, Gyms: Fitness businesses are growing in popularity and downtown locations are ideal for businesses that attract active people. Fitness businesses can also offer activities for youth, a need expressed in virtually all public engagement meetings.

Clothing and Specialty Retailers: Several groups voiced their desire for more clothing and specialty stores. These could include consignment retail and antiques, both growing sectors. It is interesting to note that participants in the public meetings were not aware these stores are currently found downtown. While the market can likely support additional stores within this business category, marketing should emphasize these existing businesses.

4. Form a task force for implementation of the Economic Development Recommendations of this Plan

The Bishopville City Council has expressed interest in appointing a special task force to help create and promote a collaborative economic development strategy that goes beyond what the city can do alone. The proposed Task Force might best be used in two strategic ways: (1) to create and implement projects that are simple and straightforward; and (2) to promote downtown initiatives community-wide and offer unwavering and consistent support and commitment from city leaders.

The Task Force should consist of a diverse group of community leaders, including citizens who initially took part on the comprehensive development plan committee, business owners/leaders, representatives from arts and cultural organizations, realtors, local bankers, education representatives (K-12 and higher education) and others. Such deliberate inclusivity will generate greater enthusiasm and support for the plan.

5. Offer tools for redevelopment in Bishopville

Initiate a Façade Grant Program: Façade grants are key tools in downtown revitalization. Bishopville should use this highly effective resource in expanded ways to produce a greater visual impact and enhance the character of Downtown. The following enhancements to the Façade Grant program can provide the basis of a comprehensive business assistance program for Bishopville:

Contract for a Professional Design Component: The city might consider contracting with an architect to design proposed pedestrian connections between Main Street and newly developed alleyway parking areas for façade grant applicants. It is crucial that public and private improvements be attractive, appropriate, and cost-effective to not only enhance aesthetics but also preserve the history of the downtown area. All façade grant projects should emphasize the historic character of the building and its surrounding area. To ensure high-quality projects, the city should consider contracting with an architect for the first eight to ten building façade grants and provide this service to applicants at no added cost.



Economic Development Strategies

Consider Facade Grant Funding for New and Existing Business Signage. The repair/renovation of existing signage will communicate the city's character and charm. This immediate, low-cost action will heighten the visibility of current businesses and create a business-friendly atmosphere. Professionally designed and installed signage will amplify Bishopville's unique charm and the character of the individual business.

Enhance Landscaping and Promote the Use of Planters. Bishopville can improve the overall downtown appearance and show a new community commitment from merchants and property owners by providing short-term funding for planters in front of businesses and adding window boxes (where appropriate). The planters will add color, texture, and seasonal interest, and enhance overall street aesthetics. Low-seated walls, planters and public art will also enhance the new pass-throughs that connect Main Street buildings to parking in the rear.

Provide Sight-Screening. Using sight-screening in empty commercial building storefronts (and some of which is used solely for storage) will boost the overall appearance of downtown. The creation of temporary walls inside of storefront windows will allow display spaces to be used for community promotions and events, such as local festivals, art shows, and school district and nonprofit events. Sight-screening will also enhance downtown pedestrian experiences by creating a comfortable and aesthetically pleasing environment.

Encourage a Clean-up and Paint-up Program. To create redevelopment activity and show progress immediately. Downtown Bishopville is generally a visually appealing place; however, some of the buildings and private properties show signs of neglect and blight. While the City of Bishopville is creating a well-funded façade program, merchants should encourage a CLEAN-UP, PAINT-UP PROGRAM to begin immediately. Merchants should band together to remove trash and outdated signs and wash storefront windows, thus communicating the message that Bishopville businesses and property owners care about their downtown.



Economic Development Strategies

6. Promote unique history, arts, culture and community assets and legends

Bishopville is fortunate to have a considerable number of historic National Register buildings, as well as unique cultural attractions. The Master Plan team discovered that Bishopville does not have an active history organization. Most communities have historic organizations that promote and support community development efforts, advocate for critical issues like downtown improvements, and create several annual history projects (e.g., house and garden tours or lectures). Bishopville should consider the creation of an historic Bishopville organization.

Tourism is a key factor in effective economic development and the community is home to many well-known artists, musicians, and sports heroes. The city of Bishopville and Lee County should support and promote its local stars to attract visitors to the town, including the following:

Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden: Known world-wide, Pearl Fryar’s creation has been a destination for gardeners, artists, and tourists for more than 30 years. Fryars topiary is featured on travel and art websites, documentaries, and books. The topiary garden in Bishopville is regularly rated as one of the best topiary gardens world-wide. Bishopville should work with the Pearl Fryar Foundation to promote and maintain this gem.

Museums: The SC Cotton Museum, the Button King Museum and the Lee County Veterans Museum are top attractions in Bishopville. The SC Cotton Museum celebrates the textile manufacturing history of South Carolina. The Button King Museum honors the late Dalton Stevens who gained national attention for sewing and gluing buttons on everything from his suit to his car. The Button King is featured in books, travel websites and appeared on national TV talk shows. The Veterans Museum and the recent addition of the newly refurbished Korean Era T-33 Shooting Star jet trainer create excitement in the downtown.

Doc Blanchard: The recipient of a Heisman Trophy and air force pilot is well celebrated with statues and memorials downtown. The new attraction of the T-33 jet trainer further honors this American Hero.

Drink Small: his famous American blues singer and guitarist from Bishopville has been widely celebrated in South Carolina. Small deserves recognition with a mural or creative music installation.

Other Singers and Musicians: Gwendolyn Bradley, an opera singer who has performed worldwide and Jim Nesbitt, a country music artist who became famous in the 1960s, highlight the many talents of Bishopville residents.

The Lizard Man: The strange creature from Scape Ore Swamp brings visitors to Bishopville in celebration of the Lizard Man Stomp annual celebration.



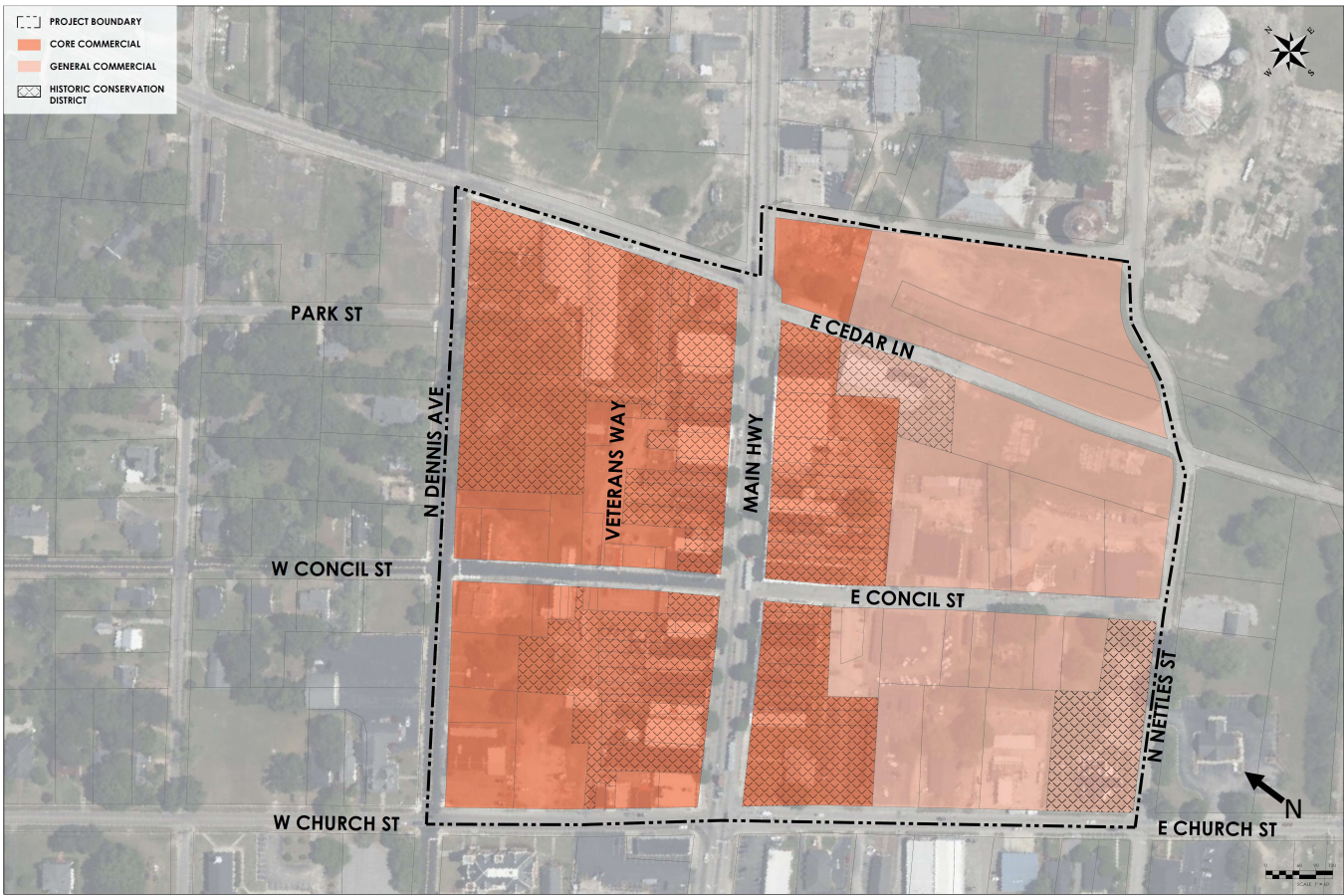
Economic Development Strategies

7. Update City Ordinances

Prohibit storage and residential uses in Main Street storefronts. Many business storefronts are being used for storage, creating blight and ultimately resulting in lower property values that might constrain downtown redevelopment efforts. The city should consider creating an ordinance to prohibit storage in commercial storefronts visible from the street with the goal of creating valuable space for retail and commercial activity. Additionally, while residential use is encouraged, these uses should be limited to upstairs and rear areas of commercial buildings, preserving valuable retail storefront spaces for commerce. Many downtown Bishopville buildings have great opportunities for residential redevelopment in the rear and upstairs of large commercial spaces. Alleys at the rear of buildings can additionally be used for residential patios and can create activity and enhance public safety. Encroachments on Main Street, the newly developed alleys and pass-throughs can dramatically encourage commercial spaces for restaurants and hospitality. In addition, use of the façade grant program for these outdoor spaces might be considered.

Discourage Downtown Demolition and Demolition by Neglect. Bishopville should discourage downtown demolition and consider adopting a commercial maintenance code. Demolition of downtown buildings is counter to any effort to create a dense and economically viable downtown. The downtown streets and eventual access to the alleys will provide enough parking for far into the future. Demolition-by-neglect by property owners will lower property values for owners who maintain their buildings. If Bishopville truly desires a strong downtown, it must protect its existing built environment.

Create Opportunities and Incentives to Encourage Redevelopment of Buildings. Buildings in the core of downtown and in historic neighborhoods surrounding the downtown should be protected from demolition. Historically designated buildings support the inherent character of Bishopville, and once destroyed, are unlikely to be replaced. Local, state, and federal incentives can help developers by incentivizing the redevelopment of these properties, change the use of properties, create new and unique downtown residential, retail, and commercial space, and reduce the size of the retail spaces to meet current market demands. Bishopville and the SC Cotton Museum celebrate the textile heritage of the City. Buildings that have been used for textile use are particularly attractive for preservation developers.



Economic Development Strategies

8. Host a Training on Downtown Development Strategies and Incentives

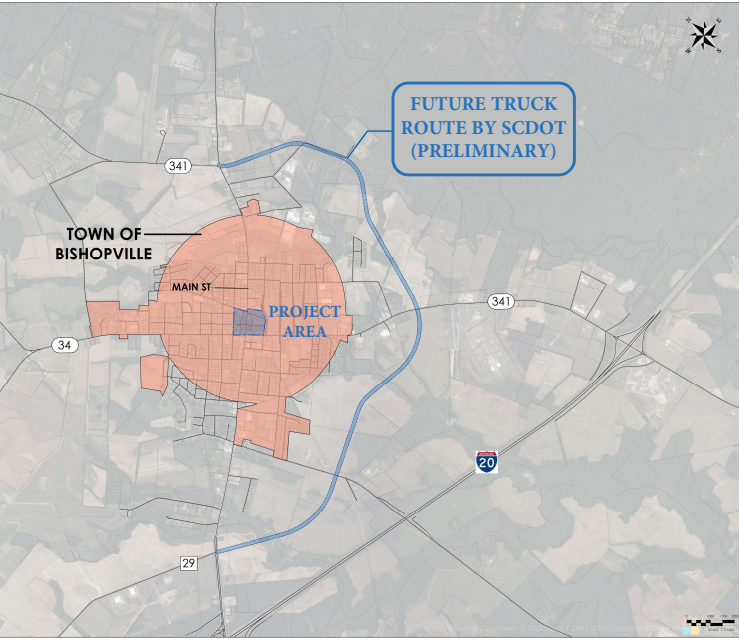
Training on potential tax incentives should be provided to deveiners and property owners. There are numerous tax incentives to spur historic preservation and economic development. Local, state, and federal tax credits, abatements, and grants can be layered to drive down the overall development cost of building restoration and historic rehabilitation. Some tax credits can be sold to be converted to equity to fund a project. Although tax credits can be complex, both City staff and developers who learn how to use these incentives can drive down costs and make redevelopment projects affordable and successful.

9. Study Alternatives for Truck Traffic

Main Street Bishopville has a large truck traffic through Main Street that creates loud noises, unpleasant smells, and unsafe streets for pedestrians. Bishopville has a responsibility to protect the safety and wellbeing of pedestrians, downtown property values, and downtown businesses, all of which are currently negatively affected by truck traffic. The city should initiate traffic calming procedures, including speed enforcement, While the city and county have worked with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) and studied alternative truck routes, funding and eventual construction could be years away. Council may want to consider working with SCDOT to determine if an alternate truck route might help improve pedestrian safety, noise, and heavy traffic downtown.

10. Implement a Rails-to-Trails Project

An impactful tourist project could be the creation of a Rails-to-Trails program, public paths created from the former railroad corridors along Cedar Lane from Main Street to the Dennis Center can encourage physical activity and tourism such as biking, hiking, and others. Even a short trail will enhance the upcoming renovation of the Depot into activity and event space.



Economic Development Strategies

11. Implement Creative Placemaking Projects

The city has the cultural and historic resources to elevate downtown revitalization through creative placemaking. Creative Placemaking is leveraging art and culture in tandem with great design to create a distinctive sense of place—culturally rich, engaging, and economically thriving. According to the Urban Land Institute Research Report, *Creative Placemaking, Sparking Development with Arts and Culture, 2020*, Creative Placemaking:

- is a proven accelerator for community revitalization
- highlights unique community characteristics
- brings people together to celebrate arts and culture and to inspire and be inspired – particularly socially and culturally diverse audiences
- can have a meaningful positive impact in low-income neighborhoods, along distressed commercial corridors, in struggling rural areas, and in other disinvested communities
- activate public spaces or create a short-term opportunity to connect residents around arts and culture
- is visible, welcoming and easily accessible
- provides opportunities to build relationships between diverse partners and to build positive change

Downtown Bishopville has excellent examples of creative placemaking: murals, the alley and the outdoor seating at Kool Treatz. The city needs to leverage more of its cultural assets to amplify creative placemaking such as Pearl Fryars topiaries, preserving the historic architectural character, infusing the musical heritage, celebrating the Lizard Man legend, and creating more places for people to gather downtown – more Third Places.

Third Places, as defined by Ray Oldenburg in *The Great Good Place* (1991), are where people go to be with other people, to socialize, to build community. First places are our homes. Second places are where we work or go to school. Third places are critical to establishing and sustaining a vibrant and sustainable downtown. Third Places, such as coffee shops, bookstores, parks, pubs, and restaurants, are creative placemaking and are essential to public and community life.

Creating more authentic places that celebrate Bishopville’s culture and history will bring more people downtown to visit, shop, invest, socialize, walk, and have unique experiences. This will spur downtown revitalization.

According to *Restoring Prosperity*, a 2008 Brookings Institute Report:

*Strong leadership is essential.
Success requires vision and planning.
You’re all in it together now.
Place matters - take advantage of it.*

**Creative Placemaking Matters.
Creative Placemaking = Authentic Prosperity.**

**“Regardless of how we get there,
we have to have a there.”**
Mayor Luke Giddings

Successful communities capitalize on their distinctive, authentic assets – their architecture, history, natural surroundings, and home-grown businesses - rather than trying to adopt a new and different identity.

Creative placemaking enhances the placemaking dividend, which is, People stay longer, come back more often, and spend more money in places that attract their affection.

Ed McMahon former ULI senior resident fellow
Charles E. Fraser Chair, Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Index of Catalyst Projects & Investments

Based upon the recommendations of this plan, the following table describes actions and projects with general timeframes following the adoption of this plan (listed on p.12, “Catalyst Projects and Investments”). The activities described are not listed in order of importance or magnitude and should be pursued as opportunities arise and reassessed periodically as circumstances change.

Immediate (within 12 months)

No.	Activity Description	Plan Reference
1	Hire a full-time economic Main Street/Economic Development Director	Economic Development Strategy No. 1 (p.30)
2	Invest in stabilization of the city-owned historic buildings on Main Street (grants + city funding)	Economic Development Strategies No. 3 & 5 (p.31 & 32)
3	Pursue four-way stop or other traffic calming intervention at the Main and Council Streets intersection	Public Realm Improvements (p.25)
4	Obtain easement/approval to develop the abandoned rail bed and open space	Public Realm Improvements (p.25), Economic Development Strategy No. 10 (p.36)
5	Formalize and strengthen regional partnerships: economic development, education, tourism	Policy Framework & Organizational Capacity (p.28)
6	Reinstate the Greater Bishopville Foundation	Economic Development Strategy No. 1 (p.30)
7	Design and construct the alleys with connections to new parking areas behind Main Street buildings	Public Realm Improvements: Alleyways (p.26)
8	Establish a maintenance and preservation program for the trees that line Main Street	Public Realm Improvements (p.25)
9	Implement incentives program for stabilization and facade improvements for historic buildings on Main Street	Policy Framework and Organizational Capacity (p.28) Economic Development Strategy No. 5 (p.32)
10	Host training on downtown development strategies and incentives	Economic Development Strategy No. 8 (p.36)

Continued on next page

Appendix A: Index of Catalyst Projects & Investments

Short Term (1-3 years)

No.	Activity Description	Plan Reference
1	Design and construct the Depot Park, which will include a Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden Walk and the multi-use path (rails to trail project)	Public Realm Improvements: Depot Park (p.27) Economic Development Strategies No. 10 & 11 (p.36 & 37)
2	Refurbish the Main Street medians with appropriate plantings or infill pavers	Public Realm Improvements (p.25)
3	Confirm plan to reroute all truck traffic off Main Street and begin design phase of new route	Economic Development Strategy No. 9 (p.36)
4	Create and implement new branding and wayfinding for downtown Bishopville	Public Realm Improvements (p.25-27), Economic Development Strategy No. 11 (p.37)
5	Complete stabilization of all city-owned historic buildings on Main Street	Economic Development Strategies No. 3 & 5 (p.31 & 32)
6	Design and construct new Veterans Way parking lot	Public Realm Improvements (p.25)
7	Work to become an Accredited Main Street Community	Economic Development Strategies No. 1 & 2 (p.30 & 31)
8	As city-owned buildings are stabilized, market buildings to developers and new businesses	Economic Development Strategies No. 3 & 5 (p.31 & 32)

Long Term (3-10 years)

No.	Activity Description	Plan Reference
1	Construct and enforce new truck route	Economic Development Strategy No. 9 (p.36)
2	Design and construct new parking lot behind Main Street buildings on east side of Main Street	Public Realm Improvements (p.25)

APPENDIX B: Common Programs Available for Downtown Revitalization

Federal Programs

Program Name	Summary	Requirements	Benefits
Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit	Financial incentive provided by the Federal Government (administered by the National Parks Service and the Internal Revenue Service) to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places and not tax-exempt • Completion of a Historic Tax Credit Application • Additions to structures not typically eligible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Tax Credit equal to 20% of Qualified Rehabilitation Expenses
Federal New Market Tax Credits (NMTC)	Federal incentive program to stimulate economic development and job creation in low-income and economically distressed communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administered through Community Development Entities (CDEs) • Commercial real estate must qualify as a business • Activity must create jobs, provide goods or services to low-income communities, foster minority ownership, create environmentally sustainable outcomes, or related impacts • CDE invests in the project as a loan or equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Tax Credit equal to 39% of the CDE's investment (over 7 years) • CDE provides owner/developer with interest-only loan for 20% of the project cost
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	Federal program competitively administered by the State of South Carolina to support a wide range of community development activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program must assist a low- and moderate-income population or census tract, or eliminate slum and blight • Economic development activities must support the creation or retention of jobs primarily for low- and moderate-income individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds provided as a grant for a wide variety of community development activities and improvements
Opportunity Zone	Federal program to encourage economic development and job creation in low-income communities by promoting the investment of unrealized capital gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity Zones are designated Census Tracts determined by the Governor or each state • Allows the creation of Opportunity Funds as a new class of investment, which invest in Opportunity Zone projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investors can defer tax on any prior gains in a Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF) until the earlier of the date on which the investment is sold or exchanged, or December 31, 2026 • If the QOF investment is held for 5+ years, they may receive a 10% step-up-in-basis for deferred gains • If the investor holds the investment in the Opportunity Fund for at least 10 year, the investor pays no capital gains on the appreciation

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APPENDIX B: Common Programs Available for Downtown Revitalization

Federal Programs (continued)

Program Name	Summary	Requirements	Benefits
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	Federal program to assist state agencies and local governments acquire, develop, and/or renovate outdoor recreation areas and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property must be owned by applicant if request is a new park• 50% match required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grants range from \$50,000-\$300,000• In some instances, acquisition of land is supported
5 Star Wetland and Urban Waters Restoration Grants	Federal grant administered by the National Fish & Wildlife Federation and Wildlife Habitat Council to increase access to nature, reduce environmental hazards, and engage local communities (particularly underserved groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligible applicants include governments, nonprofits, and educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grants range from \$10,000-\$40,000

South Carolina programs begin on next page

APPENDIX B: Common Programs Available for Downtown Revitalization

South Carolina Programs

Program Name	Summary	Requirements	Benefits
South Carolina State Historic Tax Credit	Financial incentive provided in the South Carolina Code to encourage rehabilitation of historic properties by offsetting state corporate income tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property is eligible under the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit• Minimum investment of \$15,000• Limited to one structure every 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State income and insurance premium tax credit equal to 10%-25% of Qualified Rehab Expenses
South Carolina Abandoned Building Credit	South Carolina financial incentive to promote the rehabilitation of abandoned or vacant buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Site must be 66% abandoned for five years• Must incur \$150,000 in eligible expenses for communities with a population 1000-25,000• Must send Notice of Intent to Rehabilitate to the municipality in which the site is located	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Income tax credit or property tax credit equal to 25% of expenses incurred at the site (taken over 3 years)
Bailey Bill Property Tax Incentive	Local incentive enabled by the State of South Carolina to grant special property tax assessments for rehabilitated historic properties or low- and moderate-income rental property	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Owner is rehabilitating a locally-recognized historic property• Proposed rehabilitation receives local approval through preliminary certification• Project incurs "minimum expenditure for rehabilitation" as determined by local government ordinance• Local government grants final certification for work complete and verification of expenditures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property's tax valuation is frozen at the fair market value at the time preliminary certification is granted for a period of time determined by local ordinance (up to 20 years)
Tourism Advertising Grant Program	South Carolina program to promote festivals and events, attractions and destinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• local government must have an established tourism and marketing program• Either a 50% or 33% match is required, depending on the nature of the activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grants range from \$3,000-\$100,000
Multicounty Business Park	Tool to promote economic development for downtown or commercial development, enabled by the State of South Carolina	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner counties (and municipality) negotiate with private developer for fee in lieu of taxes• Requires a partnership with at least two adjacent counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allows targeted local and private investment into an areas, with tax revenues shared by partner governments• Fee in lieu of taxes can go toward public improvements to make the project possible

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APPENDIX B: Common Programs Available for Downtown Revitalization

South Carolina Programs (continued)

Program Name	Summary	Requirements	Benefits
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District	Tool available to municipalities to finance public improvements to revitalize an area that has become, or in danger of becoming, blighted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The municipality must define redevelopment project area and the conditions of blight or threat of blight • The municipality must draft a redevelopment plan that describes the proposed projects to be pursued in the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The municipality can incur debt for redevelopment activities, which are paid by future tax revenue from inside the district • Public improvements made inside the district create value within the district over time
South Carolina Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	Program administered by South Carolina Parks, Recreation & Tourism under the Federal Highway Administration to create motorized and non-motorized recreational trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants recipient pays 100% of project cost, and receives reimbursement for up to 80% • Utilized to construct new trails, trail heads, and trail side facilities (including acquisition of trail corridors) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grans range from \$10,000 - \$100,000
South Carolina Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside Program (TAP)	Program used to fund nonmotorized projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and coordinated through the South Carolina Department of Transportation through Federal Highway Administration Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant funding must be coordinated through a local Transportation management Area (typically a Metropolitan Planning Organization) for urban areas, or directly through SCDOT for rural and small urban areas • 20% local match required • Utilized for on- or off-road non-motorized facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows local governments greater access to funds and technical assistance for sidewalk, trails, and bicycle-pedestrian projects as a mode of transportation
Capital Projects Sales Tax	Voluntary 1% tax enabled by the State of South Carolina and used to fund specific local capital projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipality must be part of a participating county • Specific projects and county participation must be approved by local voters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of funding for local-preference projects not otherwise funded by state or federal entities
Hospitality Tax	Voluntary tax of 1-2% on prepared meals, food, and beverages sold by local establishments to promote visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds must be utilized for tourist-related buildings, cultural, recreational, and historic facilities, and advertising (or other facilities related to tourism-related activities) • Must be approved by local voters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source of funding for local-preference projects not otherwise funded by state or federal entities to bring tax revenues from outside the community

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APPENDIX B: Common Programs Available for Downtown Revitalization

South Carolina Programs (continued)

Program Name	Summary	Requirements	Benefits
Accommodations Tax	Voluntary tax capped at 3% cumulatively between counties and municipalities on accommodations used to promote local tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be utilized for activities to promote local tourism• Must be approved by local voters• May require a local advisory committee for distribution of funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Source of funding for local-preference projects not otherwise funded by state or federal entities to bring tax revenues from outside the community
Textile Communities Revitalization Credit	Tool made available through the State of South Carolina for renovating, rehabilitating and redeveloping abandoned mill sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A textile mill, together with the lands and other improvements ancillary to the operation must be at least 80% non-operational for a minimum of one year• Property owner must not have owned the site before it was abandoned• Property must not have previously received a textile mill credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The taxpayer rehabilitating the property can chose between two available tax credits:<ul style="list-style-type: none">1) Credit taken against state taxes (including income tax, license tax, or both, bank taxes, or insurance premium taxes) of 25% of eligible rehab expenses2) Property tax credit equal to 25% of eligible rehabilitation expenses multiplied by the local taxing entity ratio for each entity consenting to the credit
Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARD)	Noncompetitive statewide grant that funds public parks improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funds are distributed at the county level• Applicants may apply on a monthly basis• 20% match required but may be in-kind labor or equipment use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awards typically under \$20,000
Undiscovered SC Grant Program	Grant to assist in developing public attractions, including natural areas and renovating structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be a local government with less than \$900,000 annually in Accommodations Tax• Projects cannot be otherwise eligible under PARD, RTP, or LWCF programs• 50% match required	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grants range from \$50,000-\$200,000

CITY OF BISHOPVILLE

Downtown Master Plan

04/02/2024



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