



RIVERFRONT & DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

BOUDREAUX +  ARNETT MULDROW +  TOOLE DESIGN + MAHAN RYKIEL ASSOCIATES INC





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INTRODUCTION



Acknowledgements

The City of Conway is a beautiful success story that is determined to keep writing new chapters of development while never forgetting the stories and the work that got them where they are today. City leaders, city staff and community leaders recognize that vibrant downtowns and cities are perpetual work yet succeed when there is vision and a strategic path to the future.

The Conway Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan is a testament to the city's leaders knowing when it is time to roll up sleeves, listen to the community and keep the planning and work going. The master plan is focused on making the riverfront and downtown seamless. The riverfront is a beautiful, shaded, curvy border that influences the character, personality and scale of the built environment of downtown. Downtown, while a historic grid of city blocks, acknowledges the languid, soft, porosity of the rivers edge.

These recommendations, while focused on downtown, will impact the entire City of Conway. Downtown and the River are the heart of the City. Strong cities need healthy and vibrant hearts.

We are grateful to the 200+ people who participated in stakeholder groups and public meetings as well as the nearly 700 people who participated in an online survey. Your voices, ideas and opinions helped shape this plan. We are indebted to City Council, City Staff and the Planning 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 Conway's Riverfront and Downtown.

Respectfully submitted,

The Master Planning Team

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Acknowledgements

The master plan and the master plan charrette were successful due to the vision, passion and hard work of the City of Conway'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

Mayor Barbara Blain-Bellamy

Council Member Amanda Butler

Council Member Beth Helms

Council Member Alex Hyman, Mayor Pro Tem

Council Member William Goldfinch IV

Council Member Justin Jordan

Council Member Larry White

Planning Advisory Committee

Adam Emrick: City Administrator

Mary Catherine Hyman: Deputy City Administrator

John Rogers: Deputy City Administrator

June Wood : Public Information Officer

Hillary Howard : Executive Director of Conway Downtown Alive

Devin Parks: Economic Development Director Conway Chamber of Commerce

Yvette Arendt: CCU art professor

Angie Johnson: owner of Curtains N Things (retail)

Darren & Cindy Smith: owners of Rivertown Bistro and Bonfire

Tom Anderson: contractor, owner of several downtown properties, and former Council member

Sean Kobos: owner of Crafty Rooster and Chanti's Pizza

Special thanks are offered to **Debbie Smith** and **Bess Harry** for their hospitality and tireless preparations for the charrette. They made the planning team feel right at home.

A Strong Foundation for the Future

City leaders understand that a thriving city cannot sit back on its successes. A thriving city is in a perpetual state of *study, plan, design, implement* to meet the needs and the opportunities of a growing, livable community. Conway is a thriving city and recognized it was time to study the successes and the challenges, to understand the changing dynamics and to create a master plan that positions the City to keep the momentum going with new partnerships and economic and placemaking opportunities.

Master Plan Foundation: a strong starting point

- Conway's downtown is a remarkable success story spanning decades. Conway realized years ago that downtown vitality was a key to the future economic success of the City.
- The downtown is rooted in cooperation and solid planning beginning with façade renovation plans, downtown charrette work, community branding, downtown market studies, and master plan documents.
- Conway has been tireless in pursuing partnerships between the public and private sector that have resulted in sustained investment over many years.
- The City realizes that a central public gathering space, improved alleyways, and sustainable creative parking solutions are essential for ongoing success.
- Conway's success is built on relationships and expects top echelon expertise in creating plans that can be both visionary and implementable.
- Conway represents the single largest collection of independently owned shops, restaurants, and services in one geographic location in Horry County.

This Master Plan affirms the value of the Riverfront and Downtown and establishes a path of progress for the next few years for downtown Conway.



Downtown Study Area

Guiding Principles

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

- Streets and corridors are safe and accessible connections within downtown.
- Design and development reflect and respect the historic character of downtown.
- Design, development and activities respect, respond, and enhance the natural environment of the Waccamaw River.
- Downtown has increased opportunities and options for living.
- Downtown is a living museum and laboratory for the convergence of sustainable and resilient design and development, public art, and stewardship of the public realm.
- Downtown provides places and activities that appeal to all ages, incomes, and backgrounds.
- Capital public improvements are intentionally planned, budgeted and implemented incrementally and sustainably.
- Downtown Conway is vibrant district that celebrates the spirit of the city, the Waccamaw River and the river ecosystem, local artists and culture, and elevates the convergence of arts, quality of life, economic development, and the natural environment.



2030 Goals

The following benchmarks establish the vision of what the public and stakeholders want to see in downtown in the near future. These benchmarks should serve as the City's north star for the master plan implementation.

- Downtown Conway has 150 new residential units.
- Downtown is home to a state-of-the-art Higher Education Center that will provide higher education and entrepreneurial offerings.
- The Conway Town and Gown Partnership (City of Conway, Coast Carolina University, Horry Georgetown Technical College, Conway Chamber of Commerce, and Conway Downtown Alive) successfully raised community and financial support for the Conway/CCU/HGTC Greenway.
- Parking resources are clearly articulated, well-managed and enhanced with landscaping and lighting, and include a parking structure adjacent to the Education and Cultural Center.
- Downtown Conway welcomes visitors in 150 new units of unique lodging options.
- The Riverwalk connects from Highway 905 to the former Grainger Plant site.
- The Riverwalk and the core of downtown are connected with dedicated pedestrian and cycling options.
- Laurel Street is a nationally recognized Complete Street.
- The Lawn is the centerpiece of civic life in downtown Conway.
- Downtown Conway is a South Carolina Cultural District, designated by the SC Arts Commission.
- Public Art is sustainably and annually supported with City hospitality tax revenues.
- The City continues to support creative placemaking efforts such as holiday celebrations, third places and public art.



Most Impactful Strategies

2022 - 2025

The recommendations of this master plan take a long view toward downtown revitalization, providing projects and strategies that can be implemented over the next seven to ten years. We believe, however, there are key projects and efforts that can start now and have a meaningful impact in the next three years. The recommendations of this master plan are grounded in ideas from residents, the public and stakeholders who participated in focus groups and public meetings.

The City can and should prioritize actions in each of the following recommendations, accomplishing something in each. City Council and staff should commit with leadership, staff and financial resources and to building necessary partnerships. More specific strategies and recommendations are provided throughout this plan. There are numerous additional recommendations in this master plan. The following are actions the City can take now to start the ball rolling on shorter-term projects and to create the framework for longer-term projects. These projects will build public support and excitement, thereby laying the foundation for the other recommendations.

As Conway's leadership knows, no one thing will revitalize downtown. Sustained and authentic revitalization will require a multi-faceted and multi-year commitment and approach.

Reinvigorate the Town & Gown Partnership to start planning for the Higher Ed Center and Conway/CCU/HGTC Greenway	Upgrade crosswalk materials along Main Street to help define the heart of downtown
Design and construct The Lawn	Update downtown master plan annually
Design and redevelop the city parking lot and entrance sign at 4 th /Kingston	Create new public recreation area at the former tennis courts site
Continue to renovate historic buildings and improve downtown appearances	Create incentives and necessary policies to encourage downtown residential
Plan and design the Laurel Link, determine ROWs, costs and construction schedule	Design & construct the Garden Walk extension, connecting to the Riverwalk
Explore creating a statutory development commission to handle complex land and development deals, such as the Columbia Development Corporation	Update & promote façade and rehabilitation incentives
Design and construct The Terrace	Recruit two boutique hotels into downtown

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC INPUT



Public and Stakeholder Meetings

The public and stakeholders were invited to share their visions for the future of downtown Conway and the riverfront. They came. They shared. One of the highlights of the charrette was being the inaugural event in the City's newly renovated building at 196 Laurel Street. The building was perfect: technology, accessibility, design, comfort, and location. These recommendations reflect the hopes, concerns, what is sacred in downtown, and big, bold ideas of all who participated in person during the charrette or through the online survey (results provided starting on page 17). The planning team thanks each and every participant and hope that each of you see a bit of your ideas in our recommendations.

City of Conway Riverfront and Downtown Master Plan | Charrette Schedule

Wednesday, February 2

10:30 am Team meeting and Downtown Walk with Mayor Blain-Bellamy, Adam Emrick, Mary Catherine Hyman and other Key Staff

12:00 – 1:00 pm Team Lunch in workspace with Key Staff

1:30 – 4:30 pm Stakeholder

5:30 – 6:30 pm Public Input Session

6:45 – 8:30 pm Team Working Dinner with Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)

Thursday, February 3

8:00 am – 9:00 am Public Input Session

9:00 am – 12:00 pm Team Work Session and Stakeholder

12:00 – 1:30 pm Team Lunch

1:30 – 3:30 pm Team Work Session (Council members invited to drop in)

4:00 – 5:00 pm Review meeting with PAC

5:30 pm until Team dinner and work session

Friday, February 4

9:00 – 10:00 am Master Plan debrief with Mayor Blain-Bellamy, Adam Emrick, Mary Catherine Hyman and other Key Staff

10:00 am – 2:30 pm Team Work Session and presentation set-up

3:00 – 4:00 pm Public Presentation of Draft Master Plan



WHAT IS SACRED TO DOWNTOWN CONWAY?

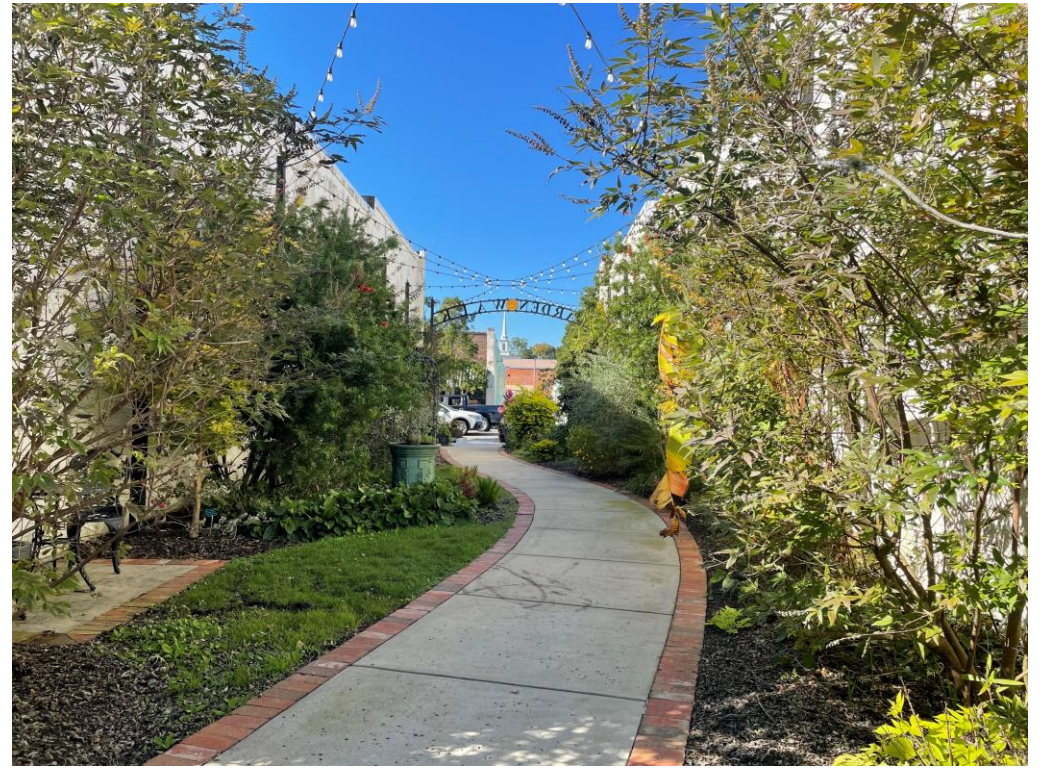
Residents shared the things that make downtown Conway unique, that give Conway a special soul... the sacred things that define this beautiful city on the Waccamaw River. These things should never be diminished.

The Waccamaw River is the defining physical element in downtown Conway. The Riverwalk is a beloved path that puts people on the river, providing places where people can relax, slow down, take in nature, fish, have fun, and just be. As one resident shared, “The river will change the town before we change it.”

The **Historic Character** of downtown contributes to Conway’s charm and appeal as a place to visit, shop, do business, live, and have fun. Many buildings have been rehabilitated and are home to local businesses. The scale of the buildings, the architectural details, the variety of styles and building types create a vibrant retail district where history is reflected in concert with new development. Notable buildings include the historic Horry County Courthouse and historic City Hall and town clock.

Sense of Community is evident throughout downtown. Murals, public art, banners celebrating local schools and universities, festivals, holiday celebrations, and the well-maintained public realm all speak to a close-knit community that is welcoming, progressive, and charming with a quaint small-town atmosphere. Conway is home, where people feel connected to each other and to the place.

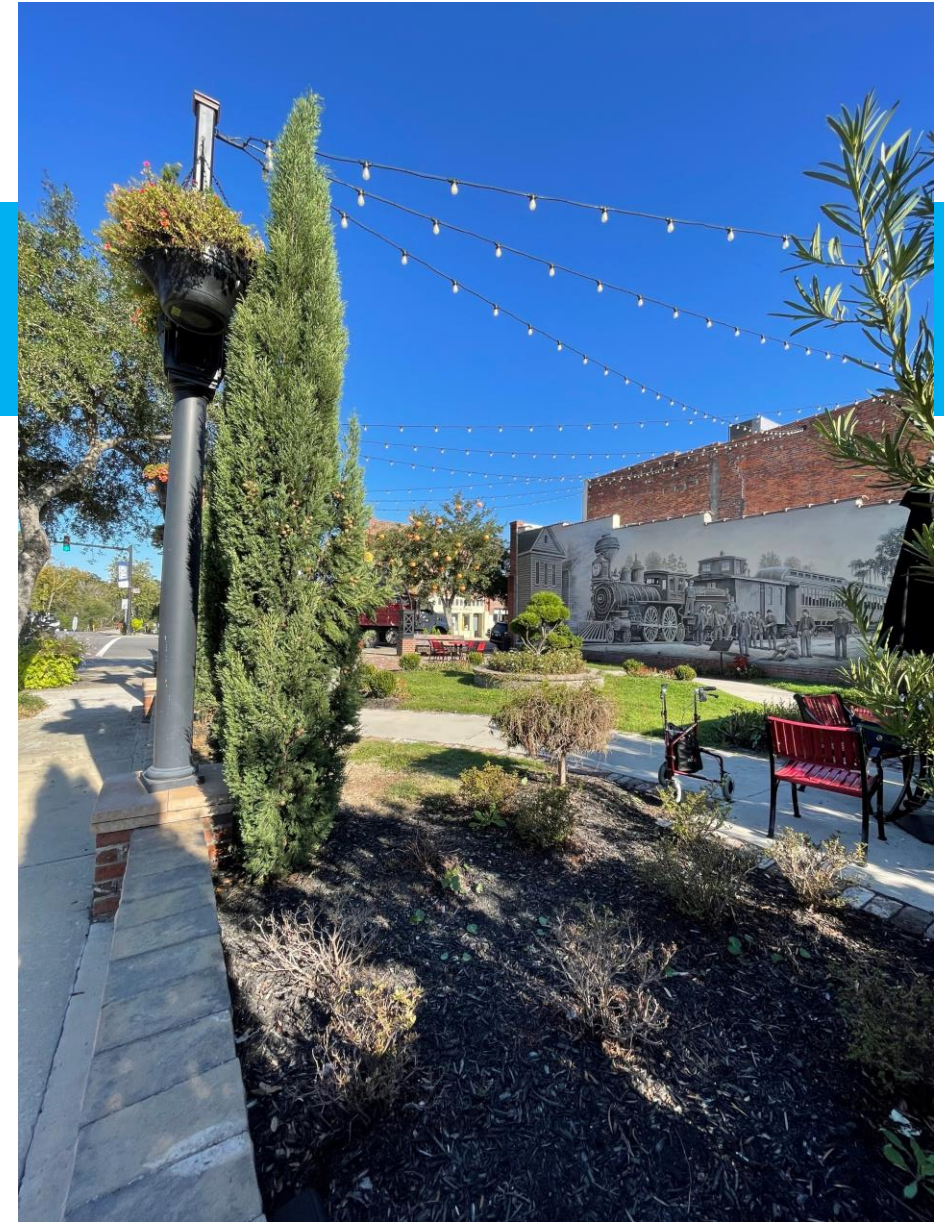
The Landscape is a central character in downtown Conway. From the trees and native plants along the Waccamaw River to the gardens and parks and the majestic live oaks holding court, the landscape is a revered and integral part of the City. The landscape connects, defines, provides places of beauty and rest, and speaks to the history and values of the community. The live oak trees are particularly held sacred as they are living testaments to the City’s history and future and provide a physical presence and scale that is respected and honored through development and land use. Coming over the bridge, the views of the river, the trees, the historic buildings let people know they are coming into a special place. The landscape provides a peaceful nature in the midst of growth and a booming downtown.



A True Sense of Hospitality and Home connect residents to each other and to the place. Conway is local where you know folks and where people help each other. Conway is a close-knit community of people who have been here a long time and new people. There is a low-key feeling where all feel welcomed and where people enjoy living.

The City looks the best it has in 50 years!

Downtown Conway is a **Celebration of Arts and Culture**, a sensory feast with something for everyone! Listening to the church bells and the birds that roost along the river, observing the beautiful murals and woodland sculptures, the interesting storefronts and the reflection of trees on the waters of the Waccamaw, taking in the aromas of from bakeries or multiple restaurants, feeling the breezes from the river or the textures of buildings or plants, experiencing joy through the final act of a play or hundreds of pumpkins hanging from trees... downtown Conway is a celebration of authentic culture. Downtown is a place of diverse histories, creative arts and community festivals that brings people together.



ONE BIG, BOLD IDEA

Residents shared one big, bold idea they believed would help transform downtown Conway well into the future. The following summarizes the hundreds of visionary ideas shared.

More people living downtown. The current ratio of downtown jobs to people living downtown (15:1) must improve for downtown to be a viable market and worthy investment for the desired businesses and services. Those who live downtown now and those who will move there before a bodega opens or services are within walking distances will be pioneers. Pioneers are needed! When there is a critical mass of people living and working in downtown 24/7, businesses will follow and will stay open longer. To attract more downtown residents, more housing options need to be available, and the pedestrian environment must be safer and better connected. More people living downtown is catalytic to the successful implementation of the Big, Bold Ideas.

Downtown is home to a local grocery store and market that serves the needs of residents living and work downtown. Downtown Conway models downtown living with the businesses and services that support residents, which is good for recruiting other businesses and cultural activities and enticing visitors.

Pedestrian and Bike Connectivity is key to development and to creating the retail and residential vibrancy desired in downtown. Many people want to be able to ride their bikes back and forth from downtown Conway to CCU all the way to Myrtle Beach. Most importantly, connectivity within downtown and throughout the City should be a priority.

Regional Connectivity will transform the market in downtown by increasing access and providing multiple transportation modes for getting to downtown. Transit facilities should support improved bike/ped mobility. Many suggested a light rail or monorail (rails to trails) from Conway to Myrtle Beach, with stops along the way. This would decrease traffic on the highways and create an accessible experience for residents and visitors.

Beautiful and Accessible Amenities for Visitors will pay dividends for a long time by making it easier to get into downtown, making it easier to park and stay for a while and making their experiences in downtown so enjoyable that they will come back many times. Well-designed and unique signage needs to grab visitors from the surrounding highways and interstates and direct them into downtown. Once visitors arrive, directions to a nice and safe parking facility (streets, lots and a deck) will let visitors know they are welcome. Beautiful, accessible and well-maintained public restrooms, greenspace and seating areas will make visitors feel right at home and more inclined to stay for a while.



The landscape contributes to resiliency, beautification and public education and awareness. The City's commitment to preservation of the landscape and watershed is evident through the Riverwalk, native plantings throughout town, stormwater management, and care of the trees. The landscape can become a more vital partner in resiliency with opportunities to teach while it provides beauty, shade, filtering, and sustainability. The landscape, whether a central greenspace or a small garden border can become habitats for teaching and for preserving flora, fauna and the watershed.

The Grainger property becomes a mixed-use destination and a best practice exemplar for development that respects and reflects the historic character of downtown Conway and the natural beauty of the Waccamaw River while providing recreational and entertainment options for residents and visitors, including a large, outdoor performance venue. A popular part of the development is the natural park and playground that serve as the trailhead for the Waccamaw Blue Trail and Heritage Habitat.

Downtown boasts new boutique hotels that offer unique experiences for accommodations and events.

CCU's beautiful new building in downtown offers graduate programs, community education, Horry Georgetown Technical College classrooms and culinary center, entrepreneurial and maker space and support as well as a unique gallery, museum and event space.

The Riverwalk extends over the marina to the new development at the Grainger property, connecting to the city paths, greenways and parks.

String of parks and greenways connect neighborhoods with downtown to the River, providing diverse recreational opportunities along the way.

Youth programming is nationally recognized due to the commitment of the City, community organizations and businesses to maintain parks, mentor and hire youth, tailor retail and recreation to them, and to value their opinions and ideas.

The historic downtown buildings are restored and fully occupied by businesses and residences.

Residents contribute to the continued improvement and development of downtown Conway due to the City's monthly Listening Sessions and commitment to engage all.





February 2022 Survey

679
Participants

Community Survey

In addition to hosting in-person meetings, we created an online survey for those that could not attend. This online survey provided a flexible platform for valuable feedback. The following pages summarize the opinions expressed by the 679 members of the community who participated in the survey.

The majority of respondents surveyed have lived in Conway for less than 10 years.

1-10 Years

333

10-20 Years

225

20+ Years

217

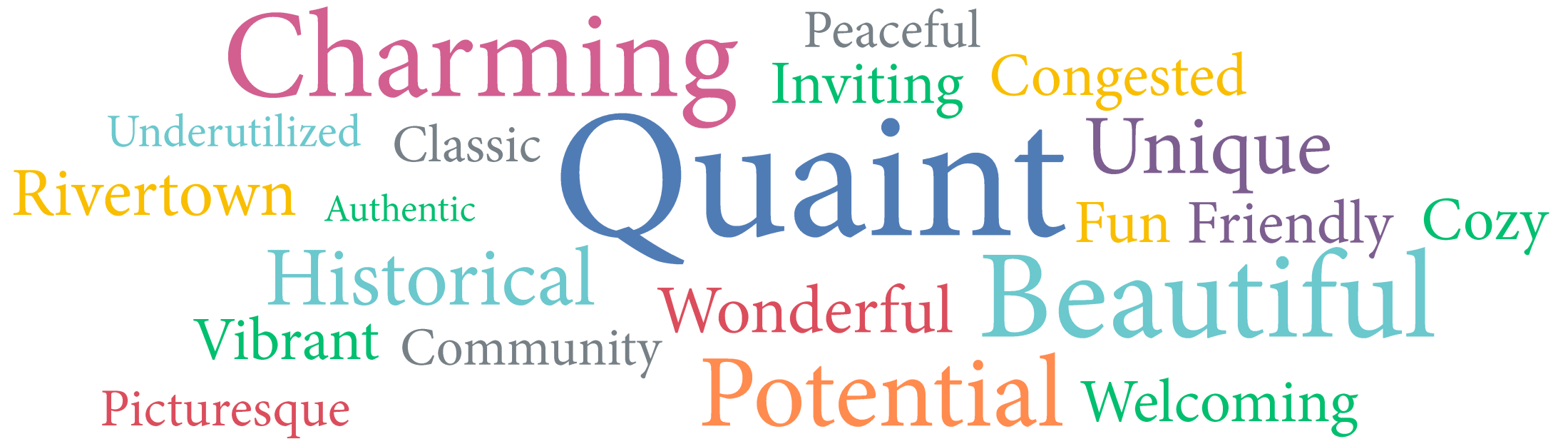
51%

of respondents surveyed, live in the City of Conway, the other 49% live in the Unincorporated County



1

What ONE word best describes Downtown Conway?



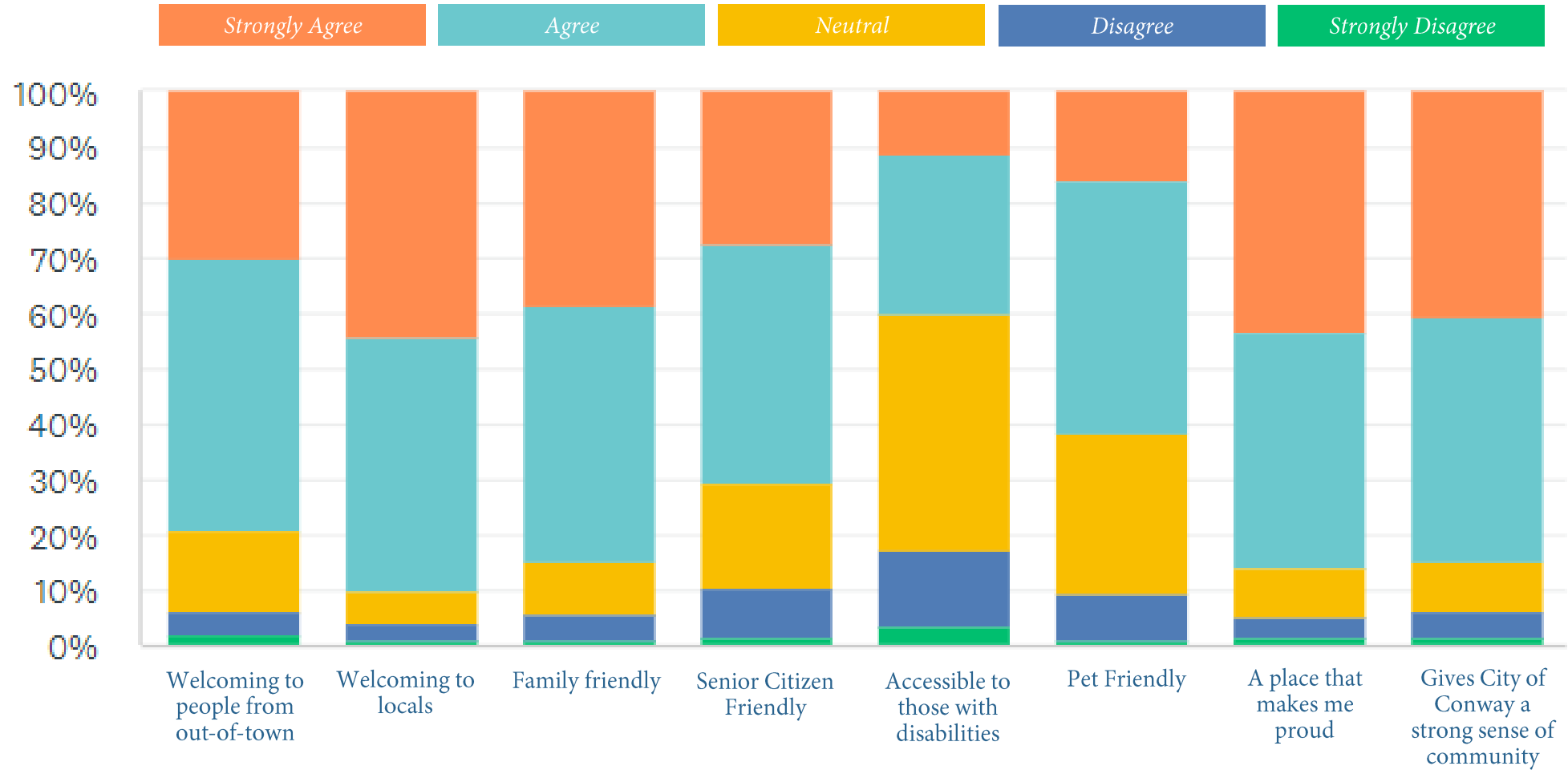
A word cloud of responses for Downtown Conway. The words are arranged in a non-uniform, overlapping manner. The largest word is 'Quaint' in blue. Other prominent words include 'Charming' in purple, 'Beautiful' in teal, 'Potential' in orange, 'Historical' in light blue, 'Wonderful' in red, 'Inviting' in green, 'Congested' in yellow, 'Unique' in purple, 'Fun' in yellow, 'Friendly' in purple, 'Cozy' in green, 'Vibrant' in green, 'Community' in grey, 'Peaceful' in grey, 'Underutilized' in light blue, 'Classic' in grey, 'Authentic' in green, 'Rivertown' in yellow, 'Picturesque' in red, and 'Welcoming' in green.

Charming Peaceful
Inviting Congested
Underutilized Classic
Rivertown Authentic
Quaint Unique
Fun Friendly Cozy
Historical
Vibrant Community Wonderful Beautiful
Picturesque Potential Welcoming

2

Downtown Conway is...

Responses using a 5 point scale.



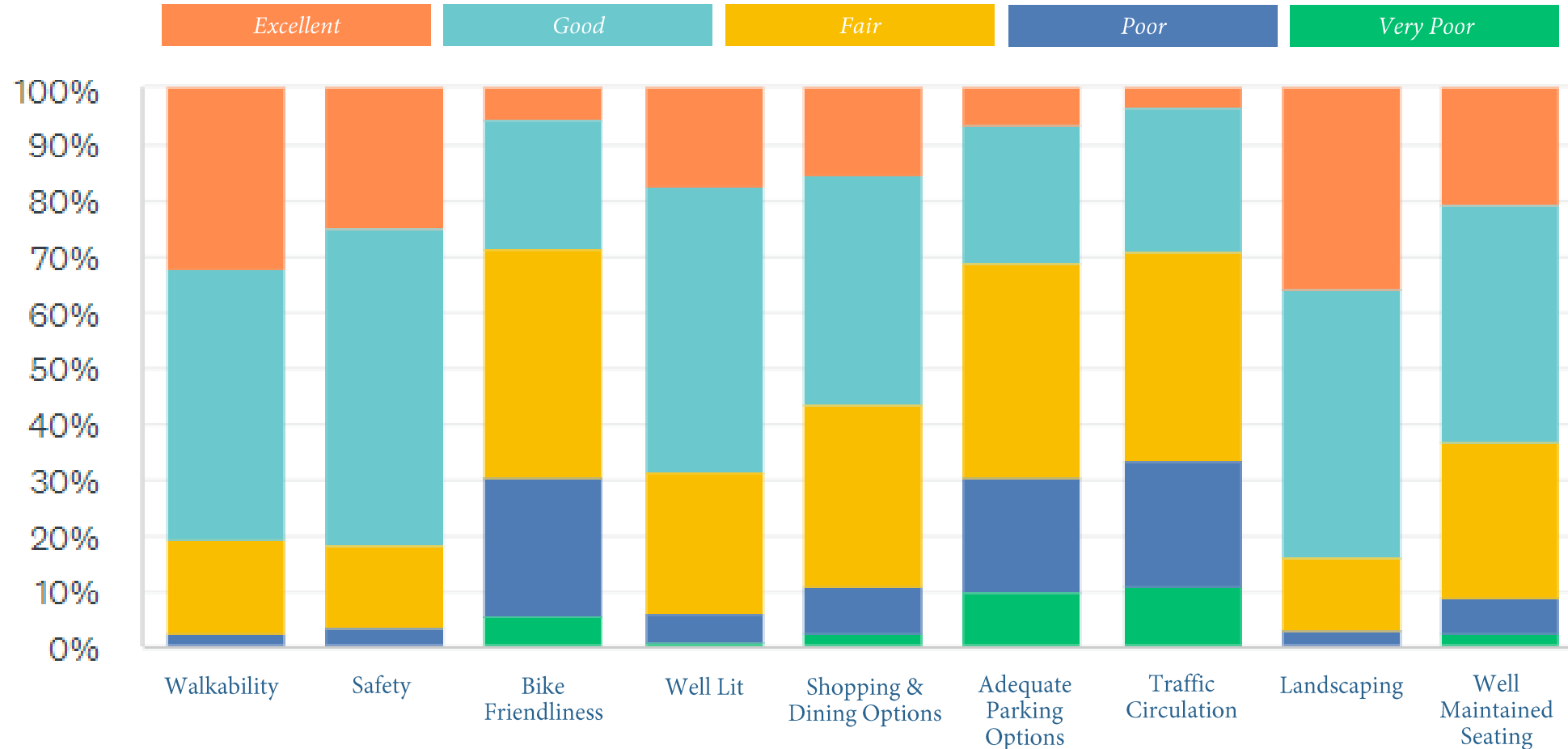
What makes Downtown Conway unique?

Friendly People
 Murals
Riverwalk
 Thriving Downtown
 Oak Trees
Small Town Feel
 Waccamaw River
 Walkability
Historic Buildings & Architecture
 Theatre of the Republic
 Diversity
 Local Businesses
 Historic Charm
Holiday Decorations
 Hometown Feel

4

Rate the quality of each of the following elements in Downtown Conway.

Responses using a 5 point scale.

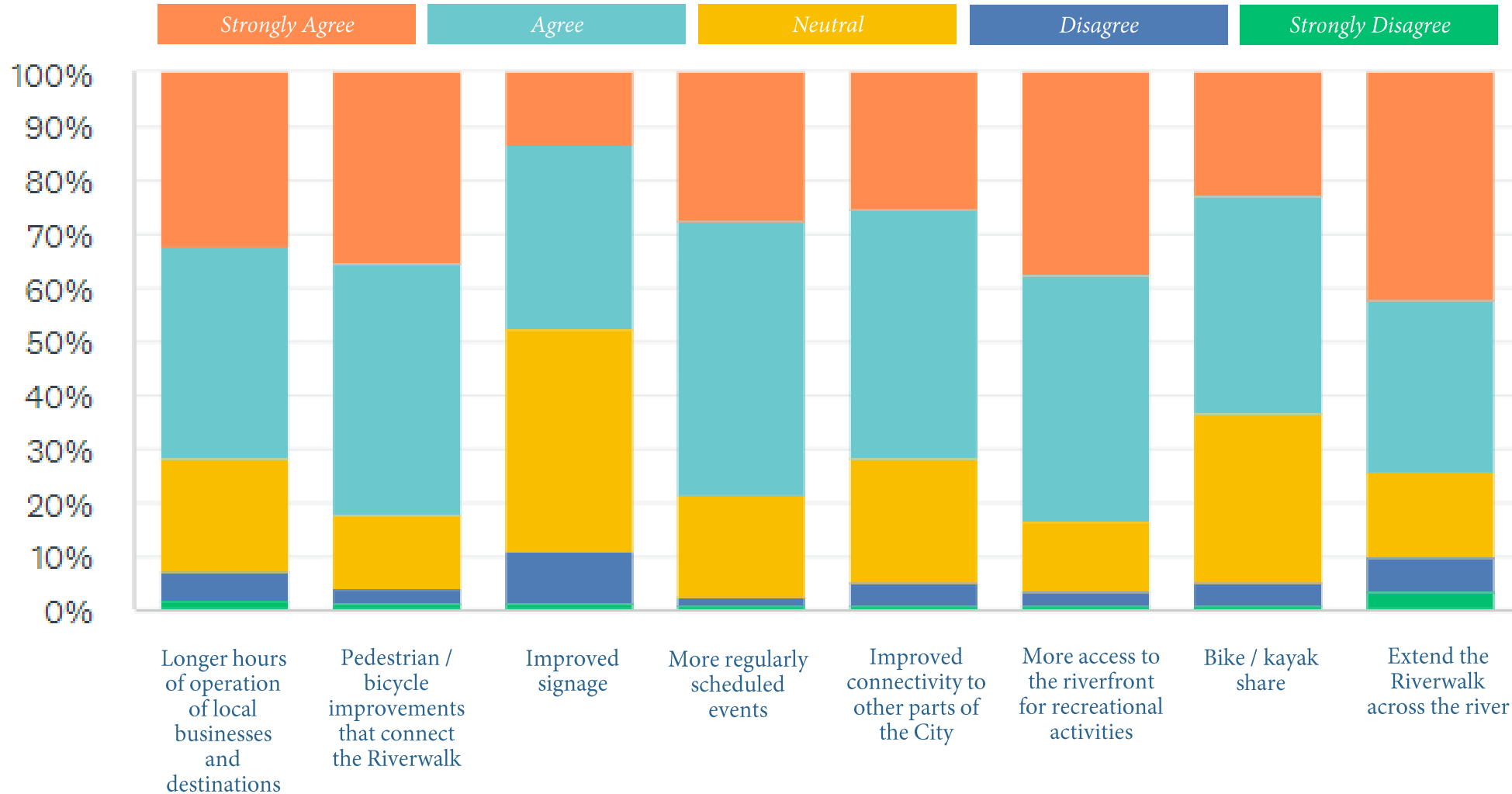


The Bistro **Riverwalk** Old Courthouse
 Main Street Papas General Store
 Historic Clock
 Conway Business Bridge
 Kingston Park **Town Hall** Crafty Rooster
 Courtyard with Train Mural

6

The following would improve the overall quality of life in Downtown Conway.

Responses using a 5 point scale.



We are giving you a magic wand. What one thing would you do to improve Downtown Conway?

Create bicycle paths and make roads bike friendly

Splash pad for kids with seating for families

We need traffic solutions

Later hours for businesses

Plant more trees and flowers More activities and events

Renovate older buildings instead of building new

We need a grocery store Bring unique local shops

Improve traffic flow, especially downtown

Fill empty storefronts

More dining options

Less cars, more pedestrian friendly areas Extend the Riverwalk

More accessible parking Make it more friendly to Coastal Carolina students

Waterfront improvements Replace the bridge – safety issues Add more black owned businesses

Tennis and pickleball courts

Parking

Create an outdoor center square for town activities

Outdoor seating options that are dog friendly

Maintained sidewalks for accessibility

Host concerts on the river, or any live music downtown

8

What three businesses would you like to see in Downtown Conway?



TOP 3

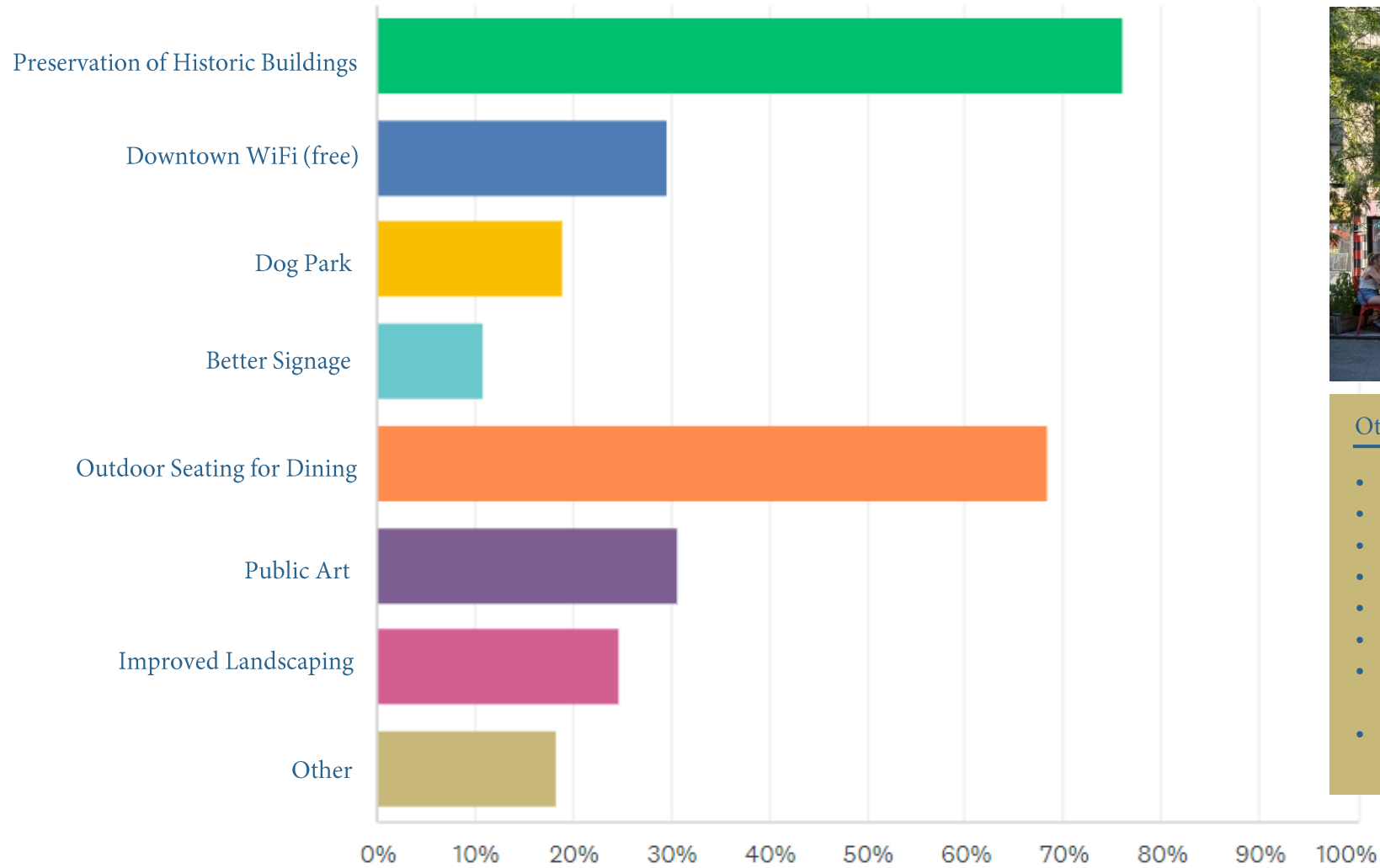
1. Entertainment
(bowling alley, axe throwing, small movie theatre, etc.)
2. Microbrewery
3. Gourmet Market



- Other Suggestions:
- Target Retailer
 - Craft store
 - Hotel
 - Tennis Center with clay courts
 - Publix Grocery
 - Steakhouse
 - Breakfast restaurant
 - Pottery classes
 - Bookstore
 - Ice cream shop
 - Trader Joe's
 - Shoe store
 - Antique store
 - Music Venue
 - Farmer's Market
 - Bed and Breakfast
 - Museum
 - Live / Work
 - Skating rink
 - Cigar bar
 - Bike rental / Local tours
 - Billiards
 - Outside dining

9

What amenities do you want to see emphasized in Downtown Conway?



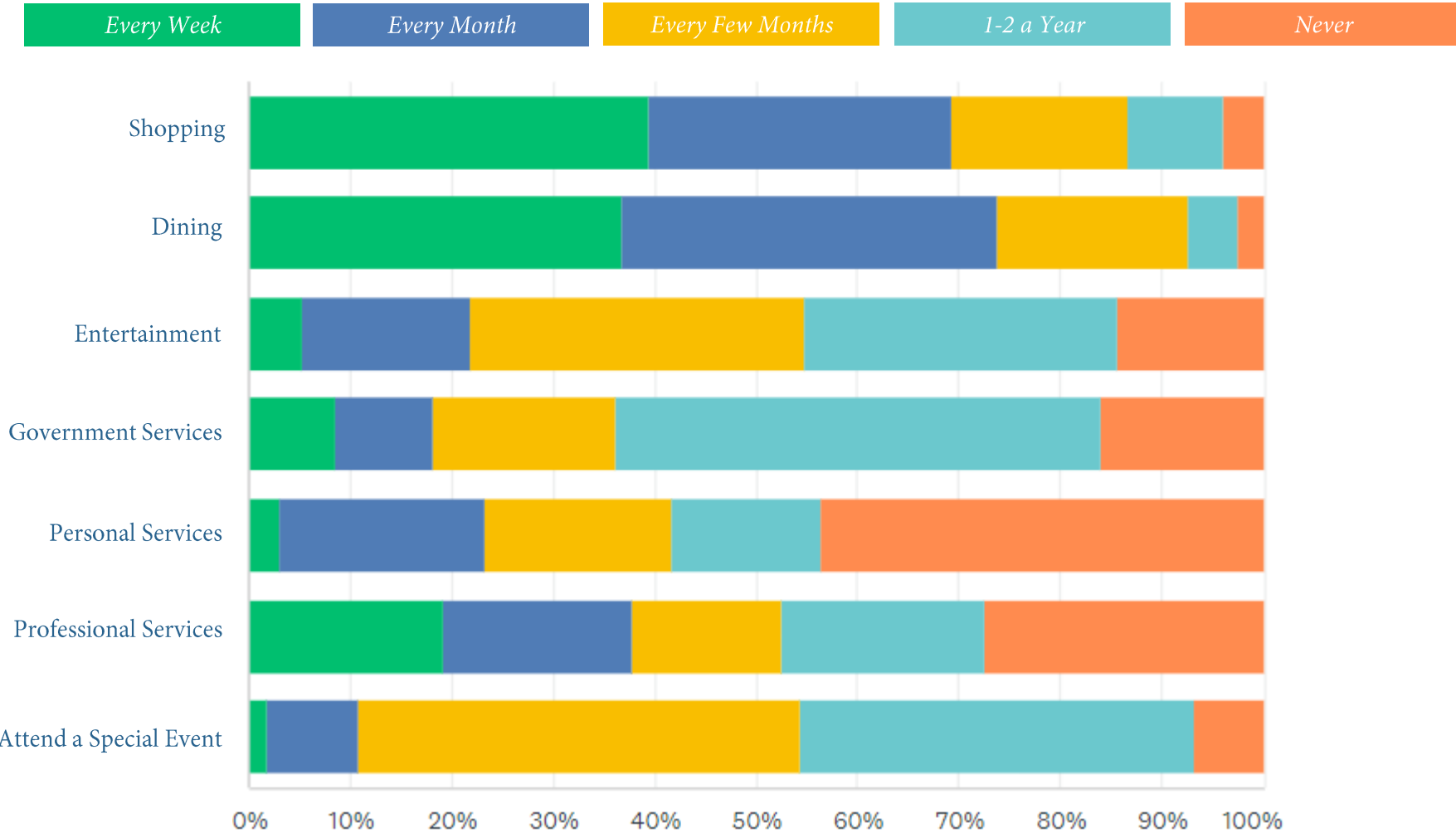
Other Suggestions:

- Streetscaping
- Bike Lanes
- Parking
- Lighting Improvements
- Free Trolley
- Water Feature for Children
- Improve Public Restrooms at Riverwalk
- Recreation Center
- More public events
- Live Music
- Sidewalks
- Handicap Accessibility
- Enforce longer business hours
- Alley improvements
- Road Improvements & Maintenance

10

How often do you visit Downtown Conway?

Responses using a 5 point scale.



11

Top 3 wants for
Downtown Conway.

TOP 3

More variety of
restaurants for all times
of day

Convenient parking
that's accessible

Stores that are open
longer hours and bring
families out

12

Top 3 favorite places
in Downtown
Conway.

TOP 5

The Trestle Bakery & Cafe

Rivertown Bistro

Crafty Rooster

Crooked Oak Tavern

Bonfire Taqueria

13

Top 3 businesses you
frequent outside of
Downtown Conway.

TOP 3

Target

Walmart

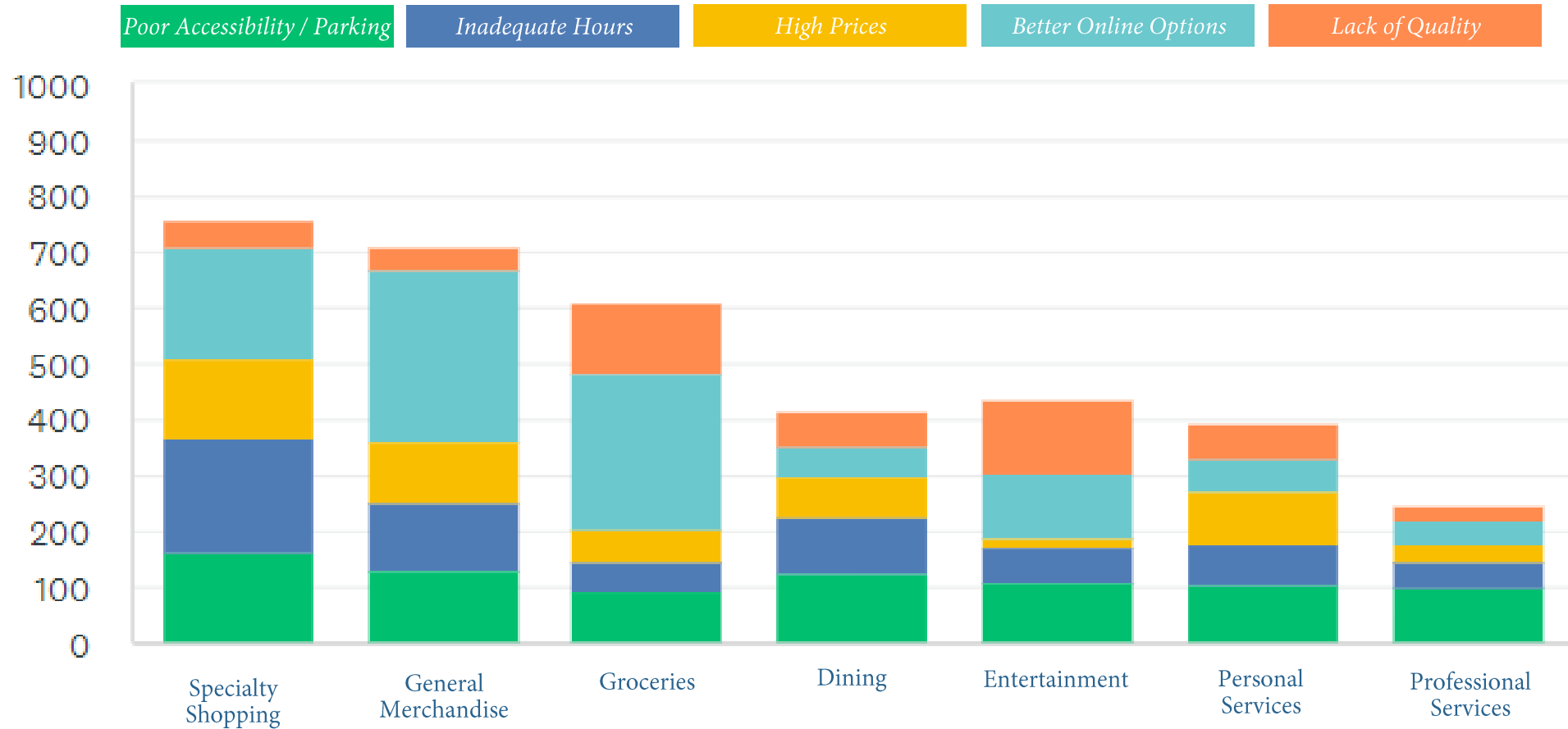
Publix

Community
Responses

14

If you DO NOT visit Downtown Conway for the following goods and services, please indicate why.

Responses using a 5 point scale.



15

If there is something you can't find or do in Downtown Conway, where are you most likely to go?



Myrtle Beach, SC



Charleston, SC



Murrells Inlet, SC



Surfside, SC

What types of retail and restaurant businesses are needed in Downtown Conway?

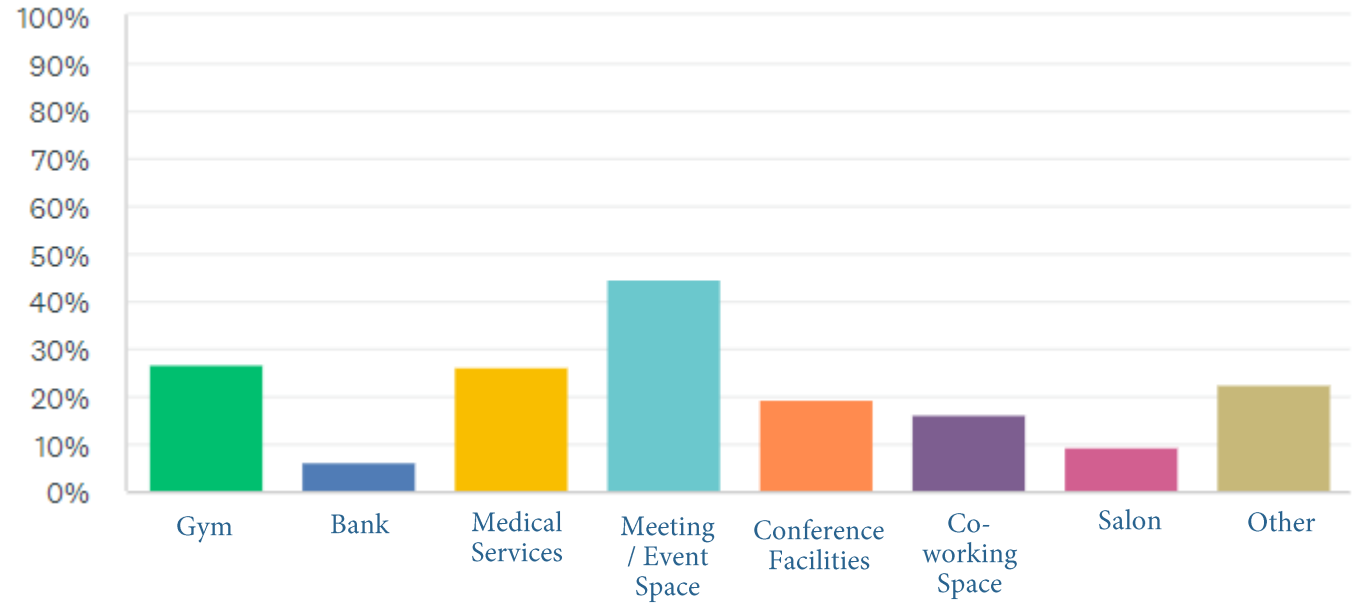


Other Suggestions:

- Yoga
- Comic Book Store
- Ice Cream Parlor
- Plant Nursery
- Publix Grocery
- Costco
- Whole Foods
- Fabric Store
- Bowling Alley
- Candy / Fudge Shop
- Food Trucks
- Bakery
- Antique Mall
- Health Food Store
- Bank of America
- Skating Rink

17

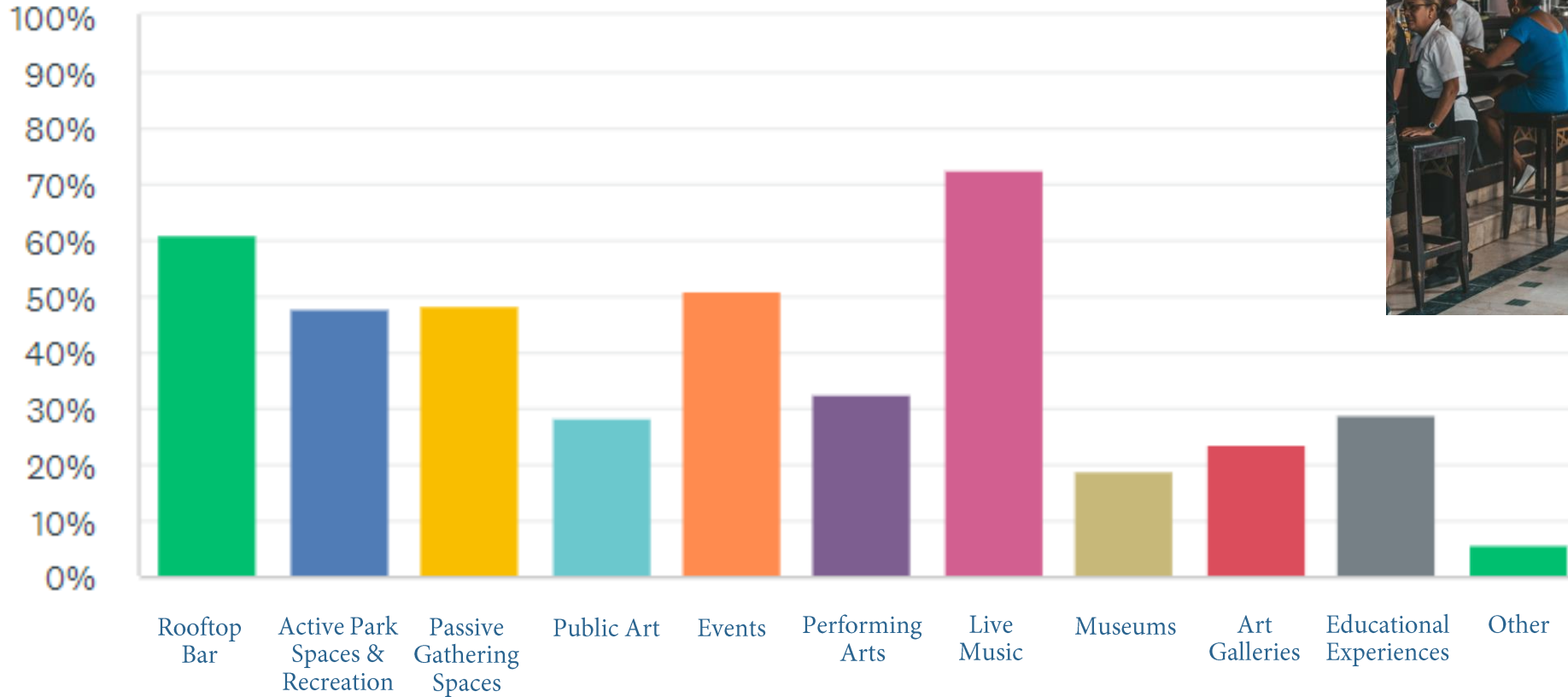
What types of services are needed in Downtown Conway?



Other Suggestions:

- Trolley service
- Music Venue
- Massage & Health
- Arts Center
- Nail Salon
- Pickleball
- Boutique Hotel
- Bike Repair
- Daycare
- Dog Groomer
- Pharmacy
- Tennis Courts
- Florist

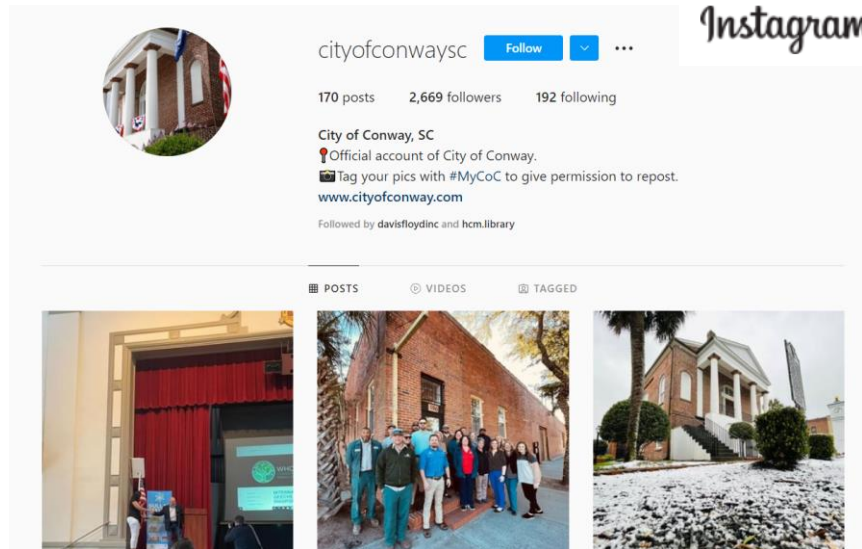
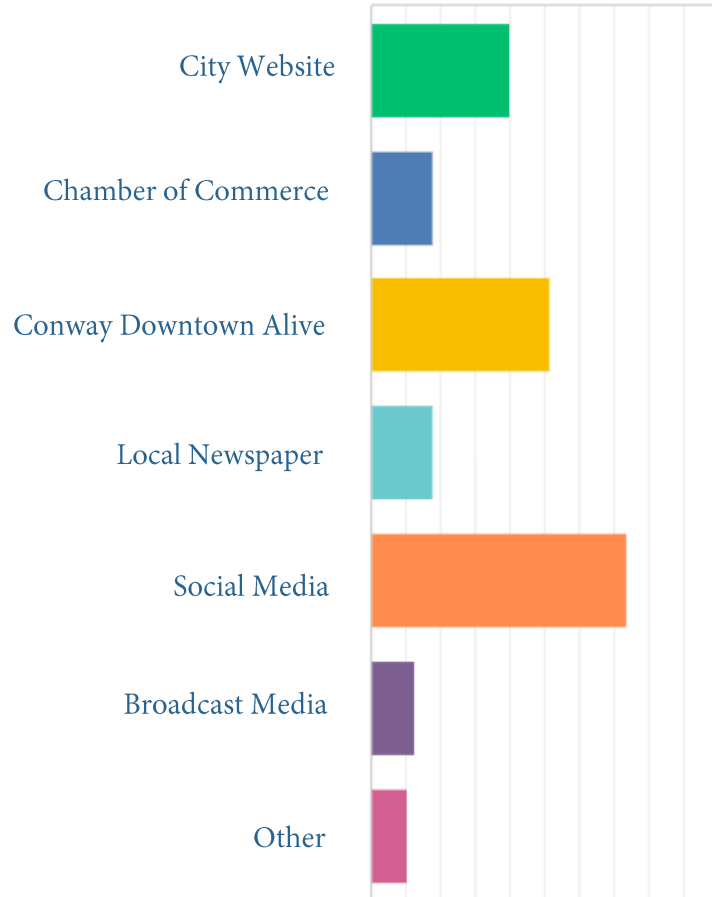
What type of public spaces, activities, and cultural components are needed in Downtown Conway?



Other Suggestions:

- Rivertown Square
- Community Garden
- Historic Interpretive Markers
- Water Fountain
- Historic Tours
- Parking

Where do you get your information about Downtown Conway?



Please indicate anything you would like to add about Downtown Conway.

Protect the Riverfront.

Old does not always mean historic.

Keep downtown quaint.

Your holiday decorating draws me to you. The first encounter with you was driving into Conway with all the pumpkins in the trees. It was amazing and awesome and made me want to go back to your town. I still talk about the pumpkins. The Christmas lights are also amazing.

More businesses open on Mondays!

More trees please!

Downtown Conway has a lot of untapped potential.

Provide priority for new/renovated spaces for local minority organizations and focusing on really connecting the historically Black neighborhoods and history to our downtown space. Since the 378 buyouts are focusing on historically Black owned businesses, it would be nice to see these businesses represented more in downtown Conway.

Please do not overbuild.

Build a welcome arch (like the Riverwalk) over bridge coming into Conway; thank you for visiting signs when leaving Conway.

Fix the traffic congestion.

I love the downtown charm.

It's what sold us on our location!

We need traffic solutions and quality grocery shopping.

Huge shout out to the department who does all the decorating - THAT has made Conway feel like home from the day we moved here.

I realize Conway is embracing its historic side, but some modernization is desperately needed. Get rid of the derelict buildings. Improve lighting, current lights allow too much light pollution.

Bigger is not better.

Just wanted to say one more time. KEEP it small, not over-loaded for "tourists" we need a place for locals to enjoy without so many out of towners. Think of the people that actually LIVE here.

Have downtown reflect more of the diversity of Conway.

Love the small town feel.

We don't need to chase tourism dollars. We need to focus on the residents and locals. If we make it the best place we can for them, the tourists will follow.

Flood mitigation strategies.

I would like to see more of an initiative for litter control/pickup and more of an emphasis on helping to improve the wildlife in the area.

We need a new City Hall.

Please don't give away the old style hometown feel.

Please find a way to not destroy the Ocean Fish Market. It has the best seafood in Downtown.

I wish the City would enforce the rules and make everyone abide by them. Some of the building need to be cleaned up and opened for retail. We also have several buildings that work began on and was never completed. It is an eye sore. Other store fronts are being used as storage.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES





The Master Plan Overview

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

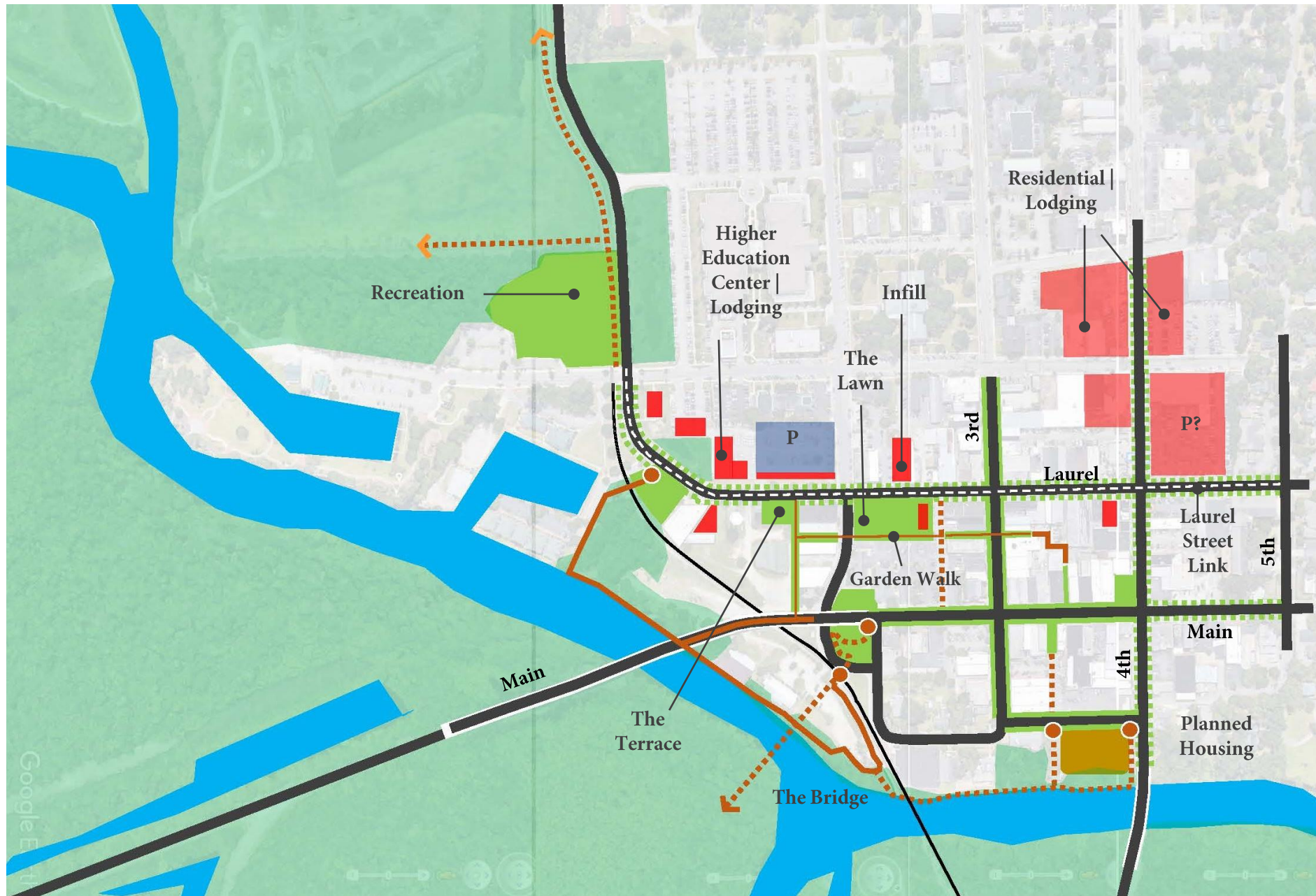
Resiliency is an overarching theme, extending the natural environment from across the Waccamaw River into downtown, with an emphasis on tree preservation and planting, stormwater management integrated into the overall site design in creative ways, and building with sensitivity to flooding.

Creative Placemaking is another overarching theme, with an emphasis on creating great places for residents and visitors to be throughout downtown, building upon the City's successful track record of creating such spaces.

Third Places, as defined by Ray Oldenburg in *The Great Good Place*, are public places on neutral ground where people can gather and interact and put aside their concerns and simply enjoy the company and conversation around them. Home is our first place. Work or school is our second place. Therefore, our Third Places are more important than ever before and are essential to community and public life. There was a resounding call for more Third Places in downtown: cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, parks, places to listen to live music, bowling alleys... all great Third Places.

DOWNTOWN FRAMEWORK

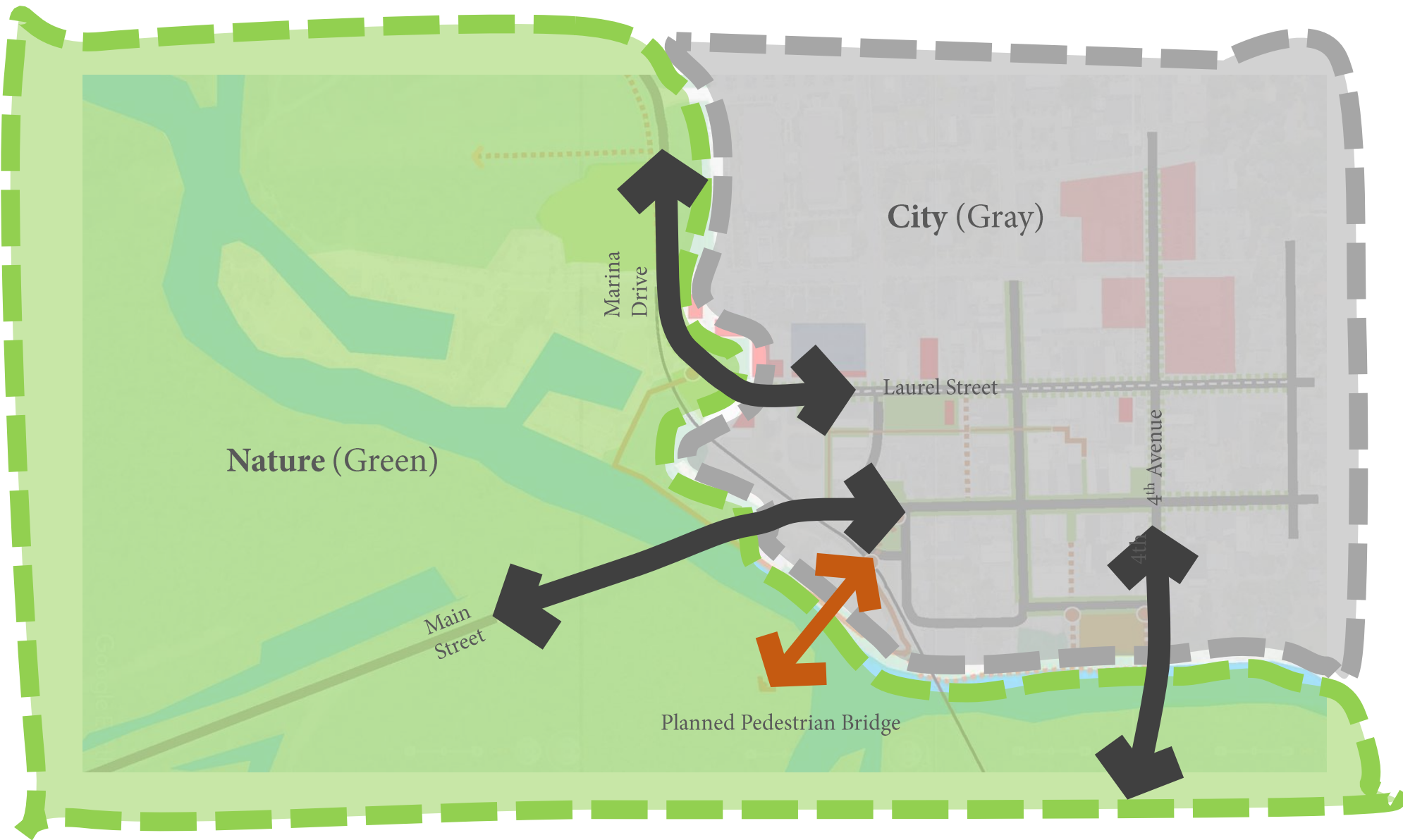
This framework illustrates the major elements of the downtown master plan and their connectivity and relationship to each other. This framework provides the physical structure for continued public and private investments. By focusing on strengthening and expanding this framework, the City will have a sustainable and resilient plan for infill development, new parks and greenspace, expansion of bike and pedestrian connectivity, and creative placemaking.

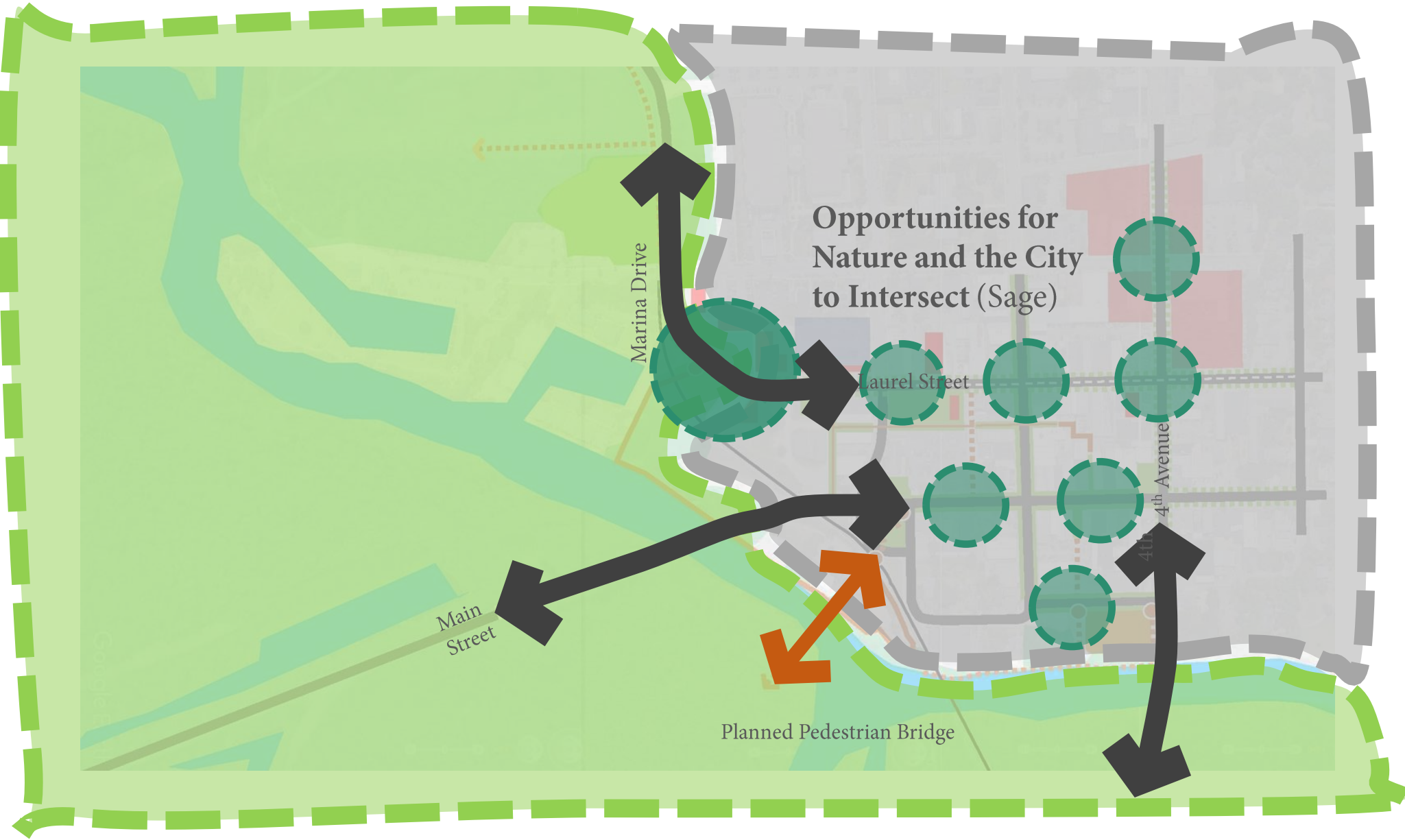


All dashed lines represent possible expansion of bike and pedestrian connectivity.

NATURE vs. CITY

One of the appealing characteristics of Conway is the distinct boundary between the natural and man-made environments, joined by the Waccamaw River, Kingston Lake and their associated green spaces. This relationship heightens one's gateway experience when arriving downtown from the south and east along Main Street and from the west along Marina Drive/Laurel Street. The planned pedestrian bridge will offer visitors on foot this same dramatic experience of crossing the river into historic downtown Conway.





Opportunities for Nature and the City to Intersect (Sage)

**SAGE
NATURE + CITY**

Nature can be integrated into the man-made environment in an aesthetically pleasing way that reminds residents and visitors of this unique relationship that downtown has with the natural environment. This also provides for educational and interpretive opportunities through native vegetation, rain gardens, bioswales* and flow-through planters integrated into streetscapes and public spaces, and through the use of interpretive signage.

**Bioswales are landscaped elements used to manage stormwater runoff instead of concrete gutters and storm sewers. Bioswales are effective and enhance the natural aesthetics of landscape.*

The Public Realm & Creative Placemaking

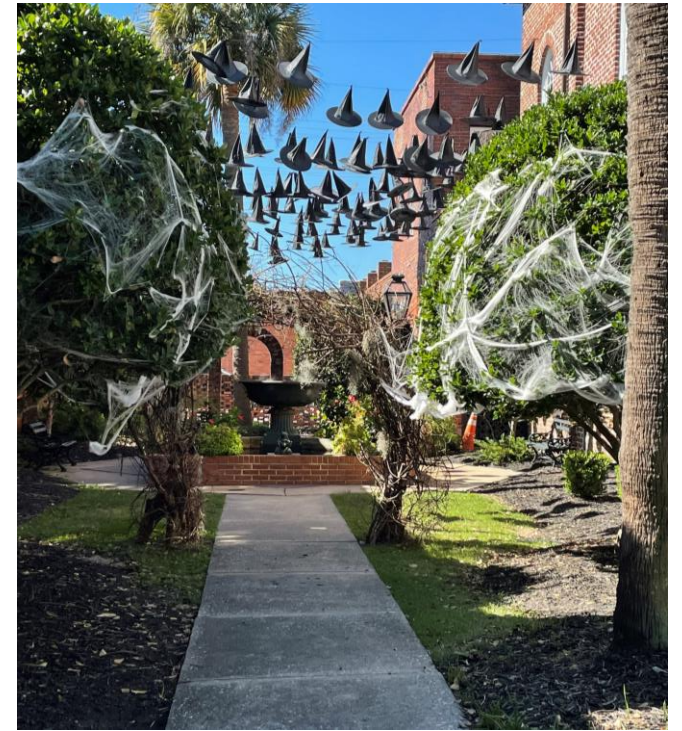
Creative Placemaking: Leveraging art and culture in tandem with great design to create a distinctive sense of place—culturally rich, engaging, and economically thriving.

WHY DOES CREATIVE PLACEMAKING MATTER?

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

Charles E. Fraser Chair on Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy at the Urban Land Institute



WHY DOES CREATIVE PLACEMAKING MATTER IN SOUTH CAROLINA?

The arts in South Carolina:

- creative enterprise in the state engenders an impact of \$9.7 billion
- support 115,000 jobs
- are responsible for \$3.8 billion in labor income
- generate \$269 million in tax revenue

2018 analysis: SC economy associated with the arts, design, crafts and related activities

Dr. Doug Woodward, Director of the Division of Research at the Darla Moore School of Business at the UofSC



CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN DOWNTOWN CONWAY

Conway is an exemplar of creative placemaking. When the City Administrator's dream is to make people feel like they've driven into or walked into a Hallmark movie, creative placemaking is a priority! From hundreds of pumpkins roosting in the trees that line Main Street during Halloween to millions of lights twinkling in those same trees during Thanksgiving and Christmas to murals, river creature sculptures and Chanticleer stencils on sidewalks, Conway is creative. The planning team encourages the City to continue to increase and improve creative placemaking. It works and enhances downtown's unique spirit and authenticity.

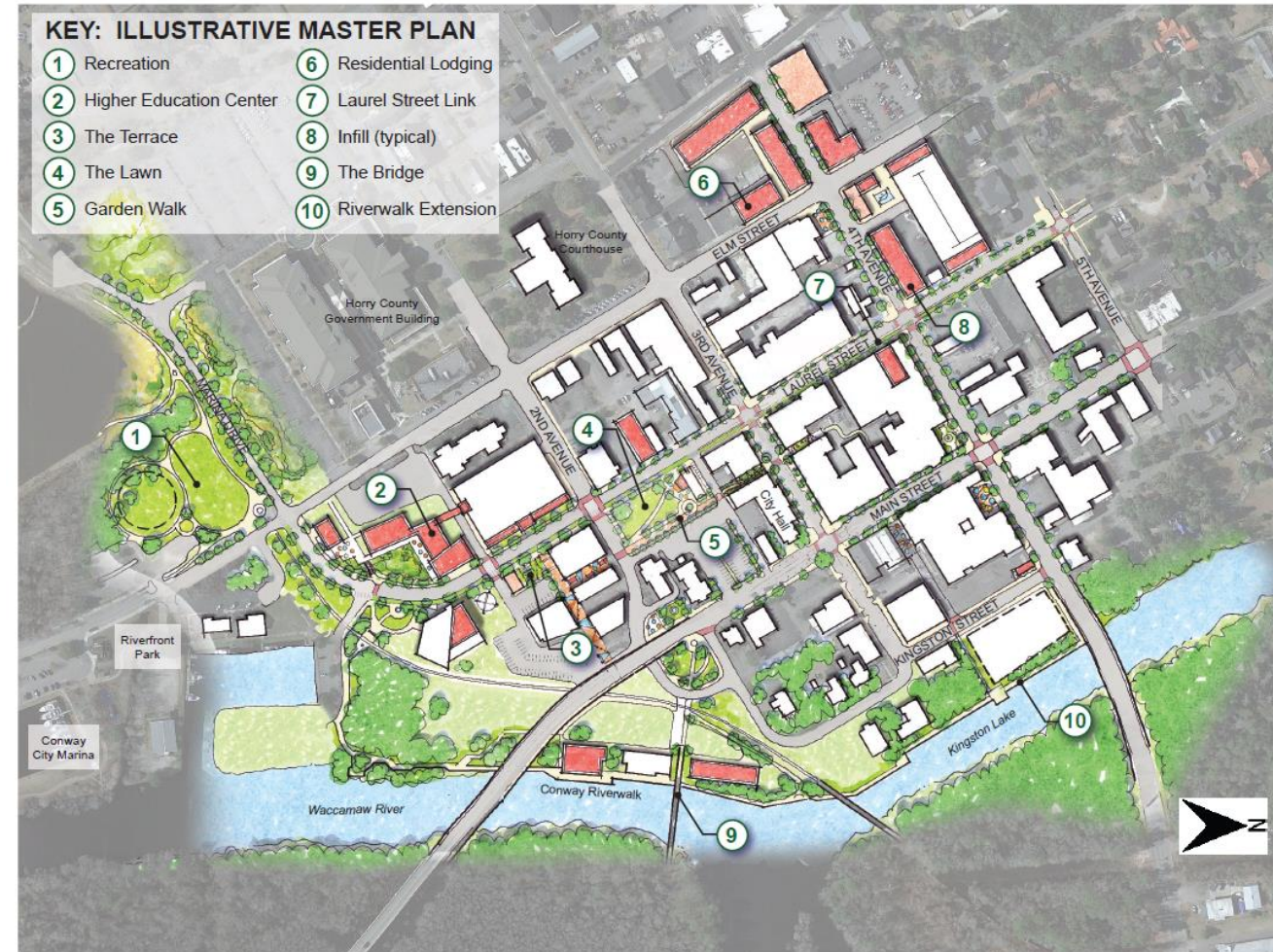


THE PUBLIC REALM

Conway's downtown public realm is anchored by the Conway Riverwalk ("Riverwalk"); the downtown streetscapes, particularly Main Street and 3rd Avenue; the Garden Walk, Norman Alley, and other connecting alleys; and park spaces such as Kingston Park, the City-owned green space at Laurel Street and 2nd Avenue, Horry County Courthouse grounds, and numerous informal green spaces throughout downtown. A vibrant public realm is vital to a downtown as it not only connects buildings and uses, but it is the venue-those "third places"- for much of Conway's civic life. The City of Conway has invested significantly in its public realm to the benefit of the community.

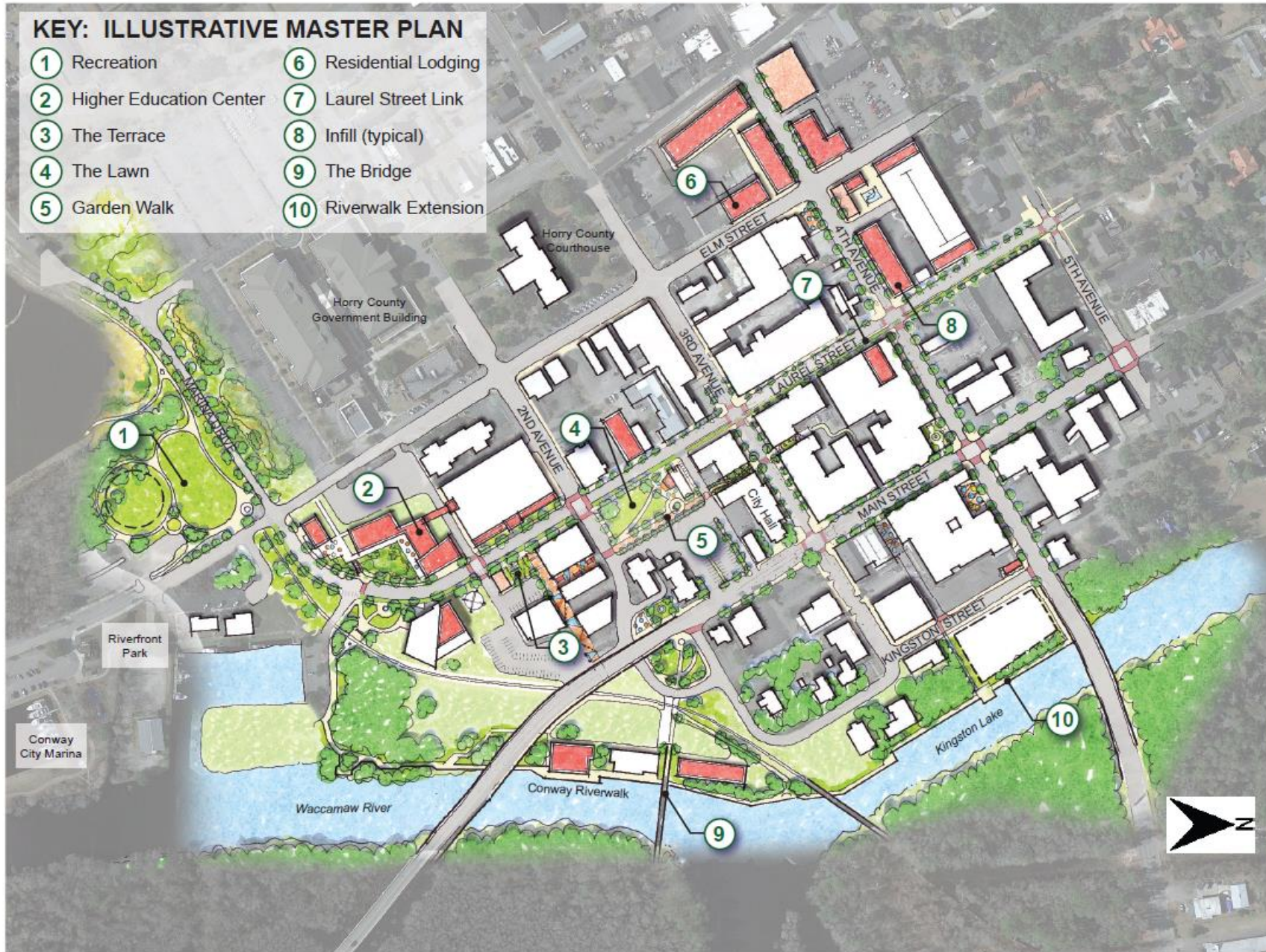
As the City continues these investments, the Team recommends the following, which as described on the following pages.

- Riverwalk Extension
- Waccamaw River Ped Bridge
- Grainger Property Link
- Riverfront Gateway Park
- Laurel Street Fountain Park
- The Lawn
- The Terrace
- Garden Walk
- Elm Street Park
- Laurel Street Stormwater Garden
- Marina Drive Stormwater Garden
- Bike & Streetscape Infrastructure
- Streetscape Planting



KEY: ILLUSTRATIVE MASTER PLAN

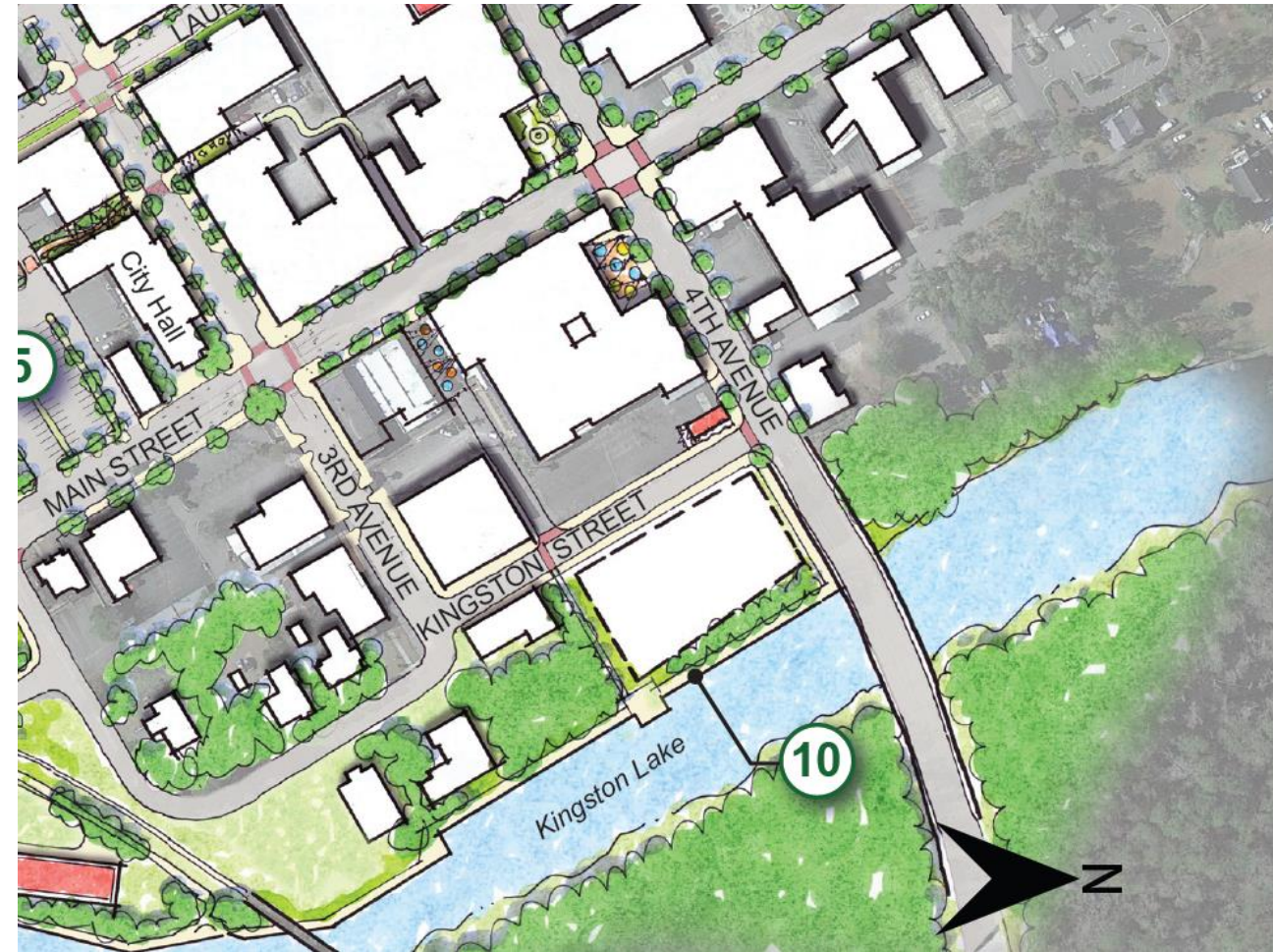
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| ① Recreation | ⑥ Residential Lodging |
| ② Higher Education Center | ⑦ Laurel Street Link |
| ③ The Terrace | ⑧ Infill (typical) |
| ④ The Lawn | ⑨ The Bridge |
| ⑤ Garden Walk | ⑩ Riverwalk Extension |



RIVERWALK EXTENSION

Continue to plan for and design the extension of the Riverwalk between the intersection of Kingston Street/4th Avenue, along the Kingston Presbyterian Church property, to connect with the existing Riverwalk, south of the railroad spur.

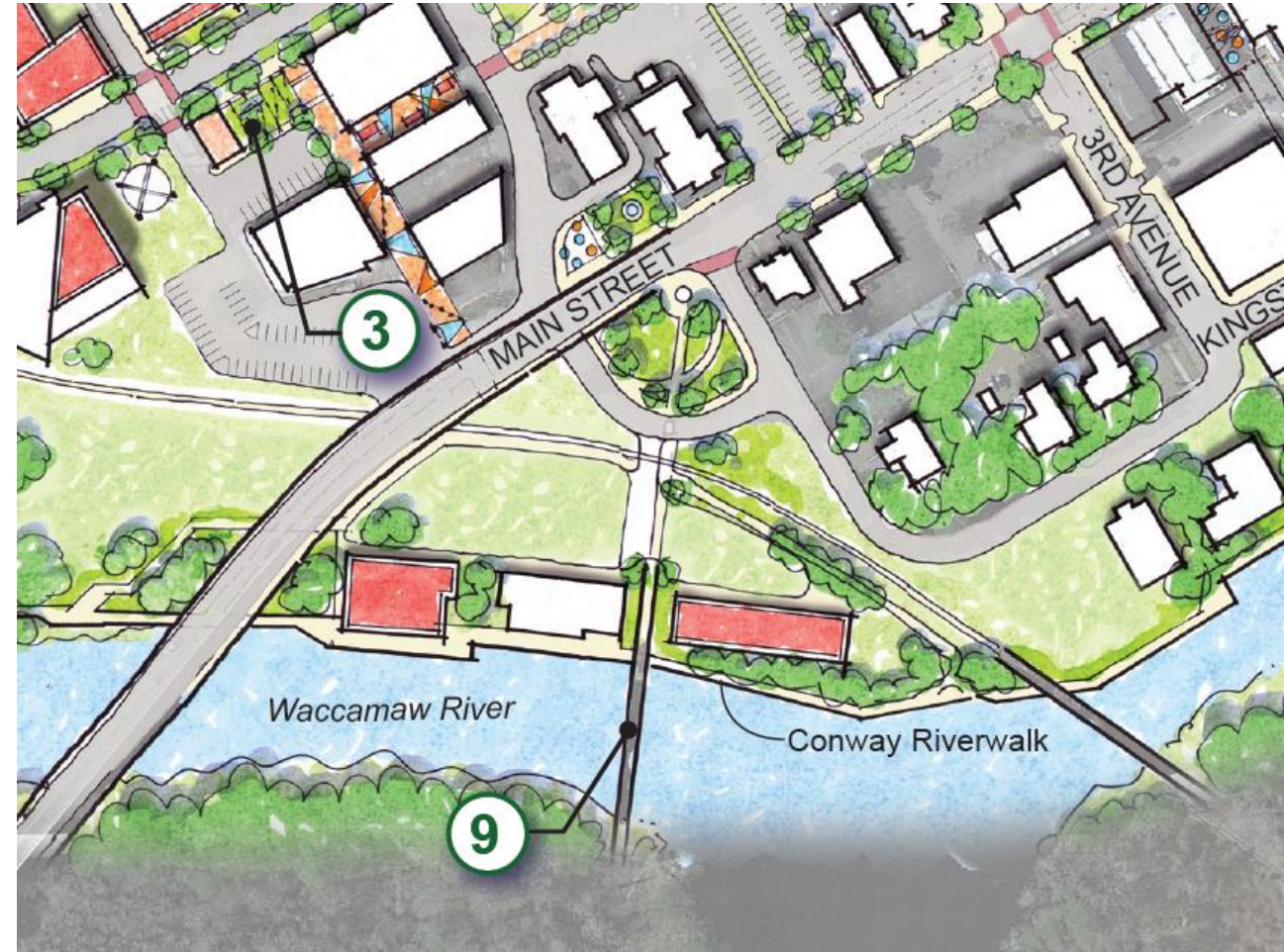
- Work with the developers of the Kingston Square residential development and new restaurant to coordinate site planning and interface with their properties and associated private outdoor areas to ensure that the new development activates and engages-rather than blocks off- the Riverwalk Extension.
- Coordinate with the design of the Garden Walk extensions, described below, to provide a pedestrian connection to the Riverwalk at Norman Alley.
- Provide a connection along Kingston Street to connect with the existing trailhead along 2nd Avenue.
- Work with the church to coordinate how the Riverwalk extends behind church property without allowing direct, public access to the church property. Consider lighting and clear sightlines to discourage negative activity.



WACCAMAW RIVER PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Continue to explore the feasibility of a new bridge across the Waccamaw River, dedicated to pedestrians, bicyclists, and users of other forms of micro-mobility such as scooters and golf carts.

- Align the new bridge with the corner of Main Street/Kingston Street and the existing abutment on the Waccamaw River Park side of the river. This alignment will connect Main Street and the Riverwalk trailhead at 2nd Avenue.
- Bisect the parking lot that serves the riverfront restaurants and delineate the pathway connection to minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.
- Align the path and bridge connection between the existing riverfront restaurant and proposed new building so that businesses in both buildings can respond to and activate the bridge landing area.
- Design the bridge so that it maintains appropriate clearances for river traffic while accommodating ADA accessibility at each end of the bridge.
- Consider how public art and lighting can be incorporated into the bridge design and how the bridge itself can be public art, celebrating the connection between nature and downtown – the “green” and the “gray”.



GRAINGER PROPERTY LINK

Extend the Laurel Link and sidewalks along Laurel Street along Marina Drive as part of a multi-use trail and into the City-owned portions of the Grainger Property as part of a connected trail network system.

- Coordinate with and/or consider future private development along Highway 501 and how the trail network can connect to it.
- Establish a series of multi-use trail “loops” throughout the Grainger Property to provide access to the river in various locations and to provide a variety of experiences for trail users.



RIVERFRONT GATEWAY PARK

Consider closing the Kingston Street exit from the Main Street Bridge to better connect this “island” of sloping green space to Main Street. This will require SCDOT input. Prepare design drawings for an intentional park space that serves as a gateway to the riverfront from downtown and a direct link to the Riverwalk trailhead at 2nd Avenue and the proposed Waccamaw River Pedestrian Bridge.

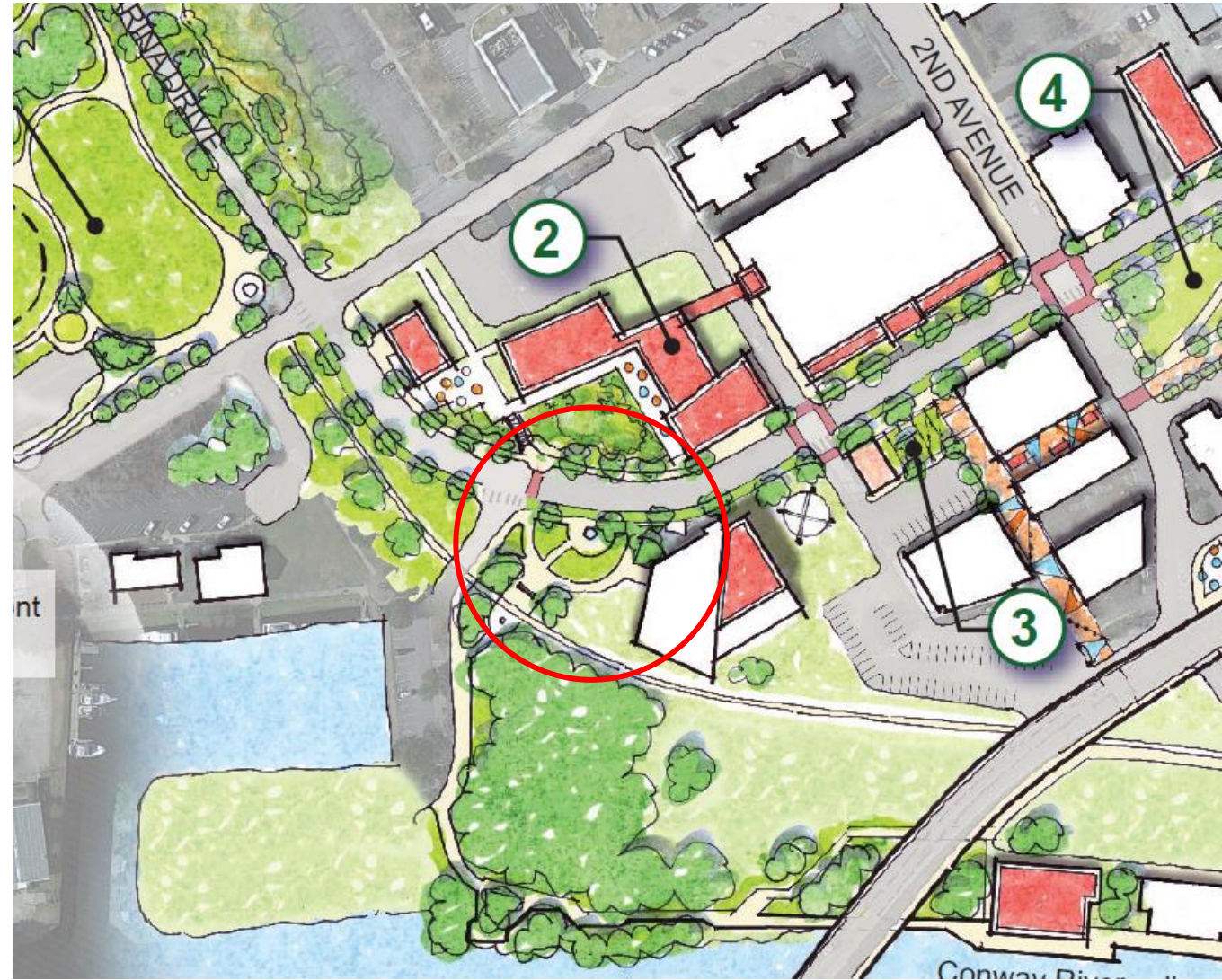
- Consider a small plaza at Main Street with signage to the riverfront.
- Take advantage of and accentuate the gentle slope of the space to create an appealing and accessible way for pedestrians to get from Main Street to 2nd Avenue. This could include a direct connection that includes stairs interfacing with a gradual ramp.
- Provide occasional canopy shade trees to provide comfort and scale to the space while allowing for views beneath the mature canopies and framing views to the riverfront.



LAUREL STREET FOUNTAIN PARK

Close the unnecessary drop-off lane around the fountain at Laurel Street and the Riverwalk trailhead and prepare design drawings for a more useable park space that interfaces with the proposed Laurel Link.

- Provide additional canopy tree plantings to define the space and provide shade.
- Consider the use of portable tables and chairs that could accommodate trail users and patrons to adjacent restaurants.
- Consider temporary and permanent displays of public art to celebrate the riverfront.
- Incorporate bike racks and other amenities for trail users and visitors arriving by way of the Laurel Link.



THE LAWN

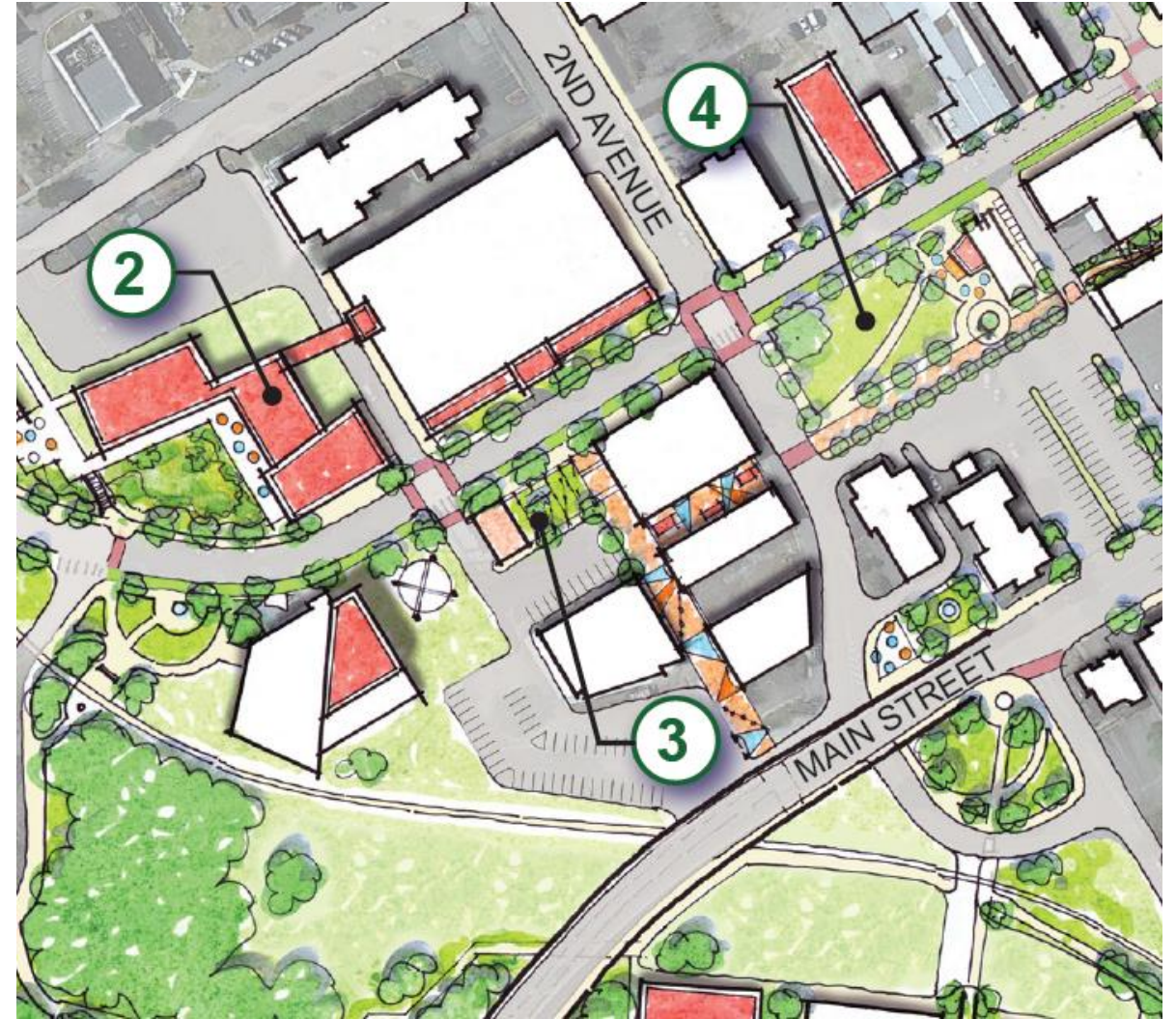
Design and implement enhancements to the existing City-owned open space at Laurel Street and Second Avenue to serve as downtown Conway's "town square" and center of civic life. Specifically:

- Re-brand the open space as "The Lawn."
- Consider adding the following to the existing one-story building at the north end of the space: a covered pavilion/stage or "transparent" park-related building that could include covered space to support park events, electric and water service/potential small catering kitchen, storage for park furniture, public restrooms, etc. Also, incorporate an ERF on the north side of the building to serve adjacent businesses and public functions. The south side of the building facing The Lawn could be a canvas for a new mural or other public art.
- Maximize flexibility for the space by not over-designing it and filling it with numerous permanent elements and plantings. Provide for a broad open lawn and paved gathering area around the new stage or pavilion.
- Coordinate with surrounding streetscape designs to provide for canopy trees to define the perimeter of The Lawn while allowing for open sightlines into and out of the space beneath their canopies.
- Incorporate the Garden Walk, described below, along the eastern perimeter of the space. Because this edge abuts the City-owned parking lot, consider the use of narrow evergreen trees, use of a "living wall", and/or public art to provide definition of this edge. Consider how paving patterns, lights, overhead shade sails, etc. might animate this section of the Garden Walk while also supporting use of The Lawn.
- Provide a prominent location for and plant a Christmas Tree, integrated into the overall park design. Consider visibility to the tree from surrounding streets and from approaches along the Garden Walk. Avoid the temptation to place the tree in the middle of The Lawn where it would impede flexibility of the use of the space.
- Incorporate stormwater management with the use of permeable paving and bioswales/rain gardens that are integrated as a feature into the overall design of the space.



THE TERRACE

- Continue to use the open space behind the new City building at 196 Laurel Street for community gatherings and enhance and rebrand it as “The Terrace” (3).
- Maintain adjacent street trees along Laurel Street that help shade the space from afternoon sun.
- Utilize a low retaining wall or stepped terraces to reconcile the elevation change between the space and Laurel Street.
- Construct a platform at the southern end of the space that can be used as a stage or gathering area when not used as a stage.
- Incorporate overhead string lighting and potential shade sails with consideration for how the space can still be utilized for movies and performances.
- Carefully coordinate the interface between The Terrace, the east-west spur of the Garden Walk, described below, and the entry porch into the City’s building.



GARDEN WALK

Build upon the placemaking success of Norman Alley and the 3rd Avenue mid-block connections and continue to extend the Garden Walk (5) throughout Downtown, reinforcing pedestrian connections among districts and the riverfront. Because the Garden Walk spaces are often discreet and not located along “front door” streets, continue involving the local arts community, merchants, youth, etc. in developing solutions for these spaces that are colorful, whimsical, interactive, comfortable, and purposeful to their specific locations. Starting in the east at the Riverwalk and moving westward to The Terrace:

- Continue to coordinate with the new riverfront residential/restaurant development at 4th Avenue and Kingston Street to provide for a new direct pedestrian connection from the Riverwalk Extension to Kingston Street at Norman Alley. Work with the developers and their design team to provide architectural edges, design treatments, and uses that enliven this pedestrian connection.
- Consider pavement markings to extend the Garden Walk from the new pedestrian connection described above to the west to connect to Norman Alley. The pavement markings can incorporate public art and will delineate pedestrian areas within a space shared by automobiles and service vehicles.
- On the west side of Main Street, across from Norman Alley, work with property owners to brand and enhance the narrow private alley between buildings as a distinct segment of the Garden Walk. Because the façade brickwork is an asset already, consider improvements that accentuate this feature such as façade or overhead lighting and delineation of the blocked window openings with paint.





GARDEN WALK *(continued)*

- Where the existing Garden Walk ends at Scarborough Alley, continue the walk south toward 2nd Avenue as part of eastern perimeter of The Lawn, described above. For this segment of the Garden Walk, coordinate its design with the design of The Lawn and the reorganization of the City parking lot to the east. Reorganize the parking so that the garden walk can align with the gap between buildings on 2nd Avenue, with views to the water tower.
- Provide a mid-block crossing at Second Avenue and extend the Garden Walk south, between the City’s new planning building to the west and the privately-owned building to the east. Consider incorporating the remnant brick footings into the overall design of this segment as an interpretive opportunity and provide overhead shade in the form of colorful shade sails or architectural structures. Consider the addition of structures that could serve as farmers market stalls or pavilions for pop-up businesses/vendors during events.
- South of the City’s building, extend the Garden Walk to the west and east to connect to The Terrace/Laurel Street and the Riverwalk Trailhead beneath the Main Street Bridge. Continue use of shade sails and architectural structures through this east-west link to support markets and events.



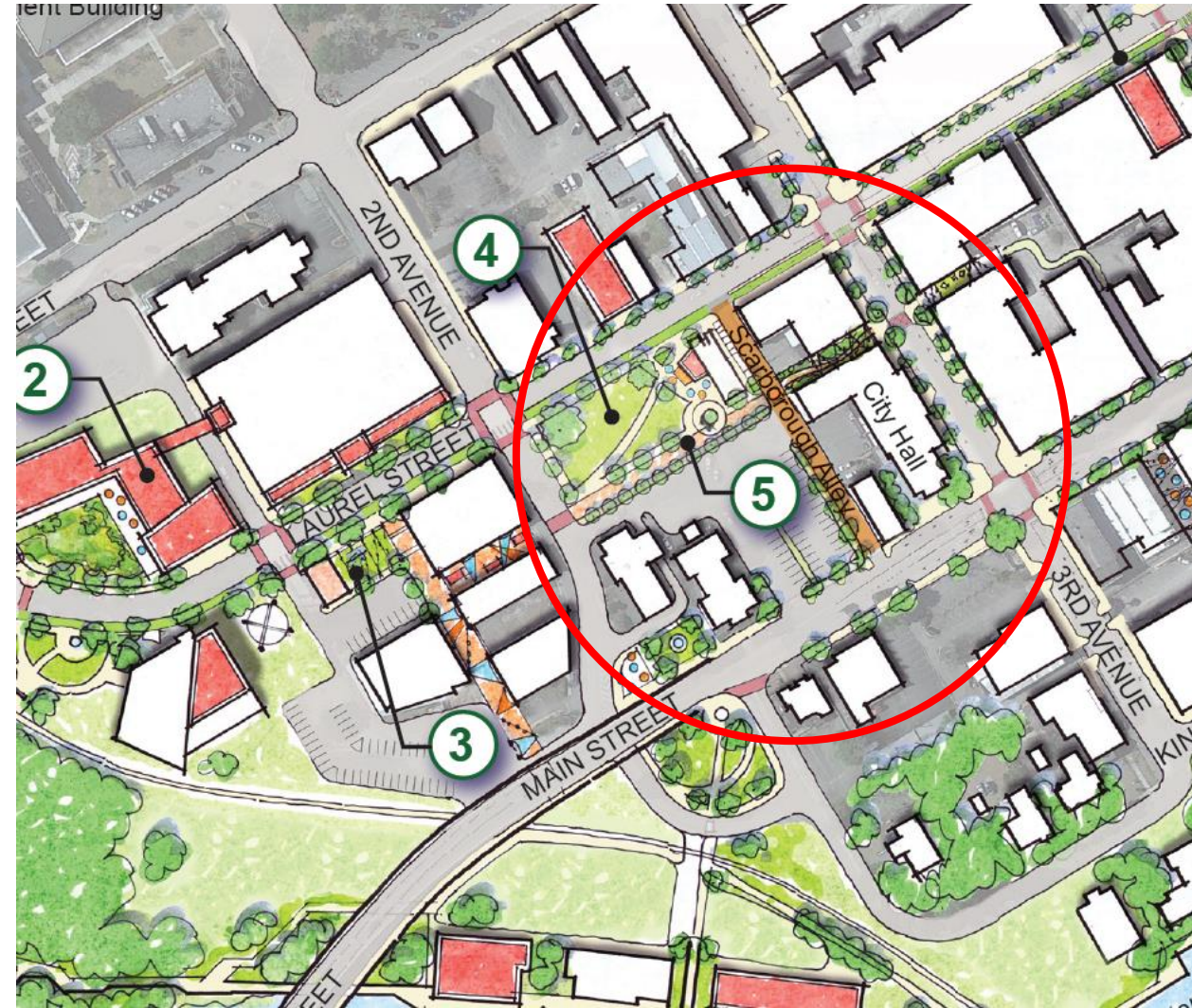
The photos illustrate successful examples of incorporating art, community heroes and history, seating, and whimsy into the pedestrian walks and pathways, making them interactive and memorable.

SCARBOROUGH ALLEY & CITY HALL PARKING

With the extended Garden Walk and The Lawn, the existing parking lot next City Hall will need to be redesigned (red circle). Scarborough Alley is a major entrance and exit from the parking lot, which creates conflicts between pedestrians and cars.

As the City of Conway has already demonstrated, alleyways between buildings offer opportunities to extend the pedestrian realm from the streetscape to public parking and rear entryways into businesses. Scarborough Alley is a prime candidate to serve as a catalyst project that builds momentum for The Lawn and the expanded Garden Walk. A quick-build approach could include the installation of movable planters, outdoor seating, overhead lighting, and the use of a street mural to activate the space and increase people's awareness for future projects in the immediate vicinity.

The Planning Team recommends a detailed study to reconfigure the parking lot and to make Scarborough Alley more pedestrian while servicing surrounding businesses. The study also should explore closing the Main Street exit to create more greenspace and improved pedestrian and bike safety and connectivity, traffic flow and parking efficiencies.

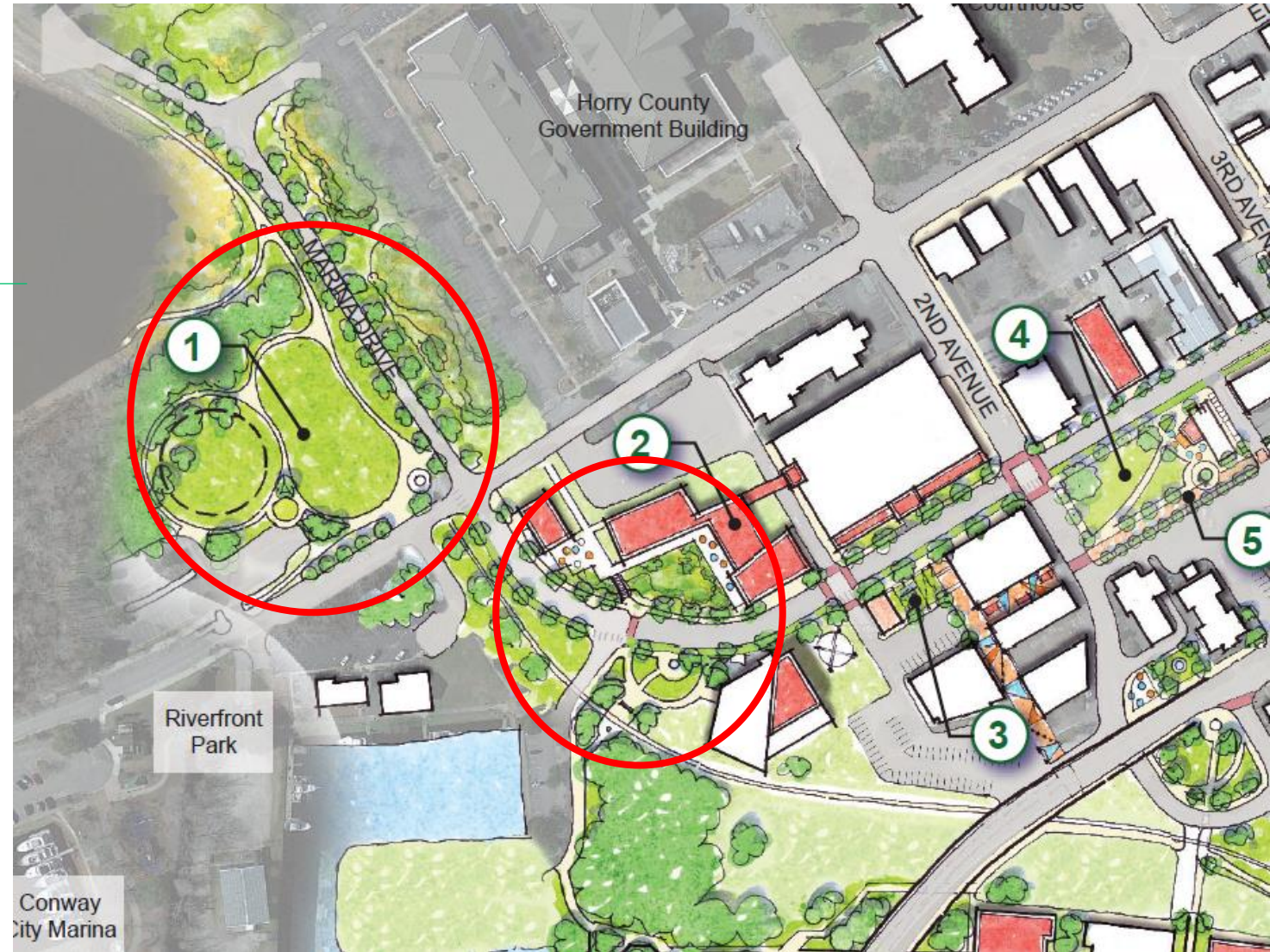


NEW PUBLIC GREEN SPACE & ACTIVE NODES

Two proposed greenspaces (red circles) are planned to become active nodes along the extended Riverwalk, the Laurel Link, Garden Walk, and connection to future Grainger property development. These greenspaces can serve multiple purposes.

- Recreation space (to be programmed)
- Passive recreation
- Storm water gardens, contributing to resiliency and sustainability
- Environmental education (signage)
- Gathering space (programmed, reserved, public)
- Community festivals and markets

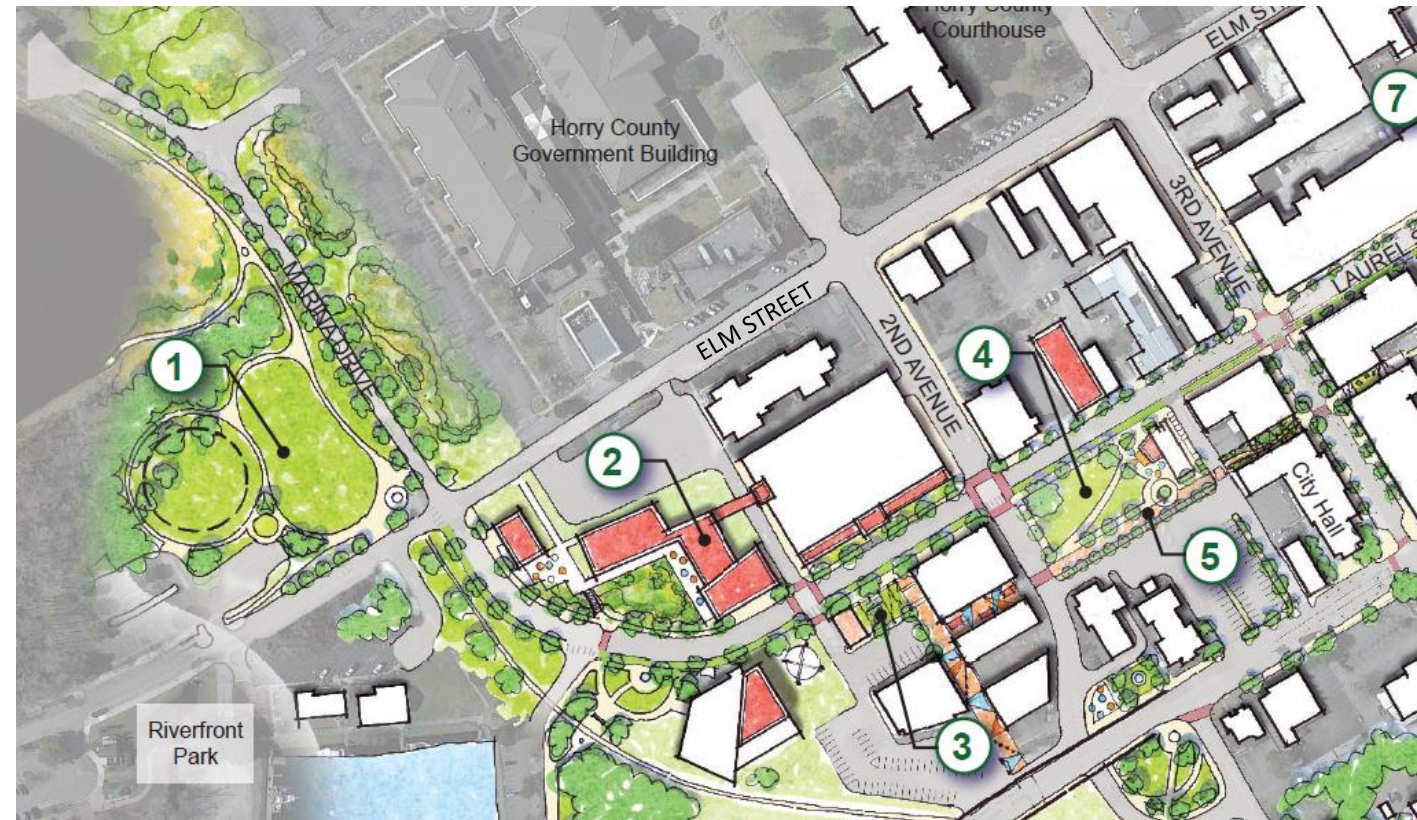
Most importantly, the City needs to intentionally program these nodes and activate them with public art and amenities such as benches, tables, shade, and perhaps water features. These amenities and programming will draw people to the River and will welcome those coming into downtown from the River.



ELM STREET PARK (1)

Preserve the former tennis court area as public property and redevelop as dedicated park space that can be utilized for a variety of recreational activities.

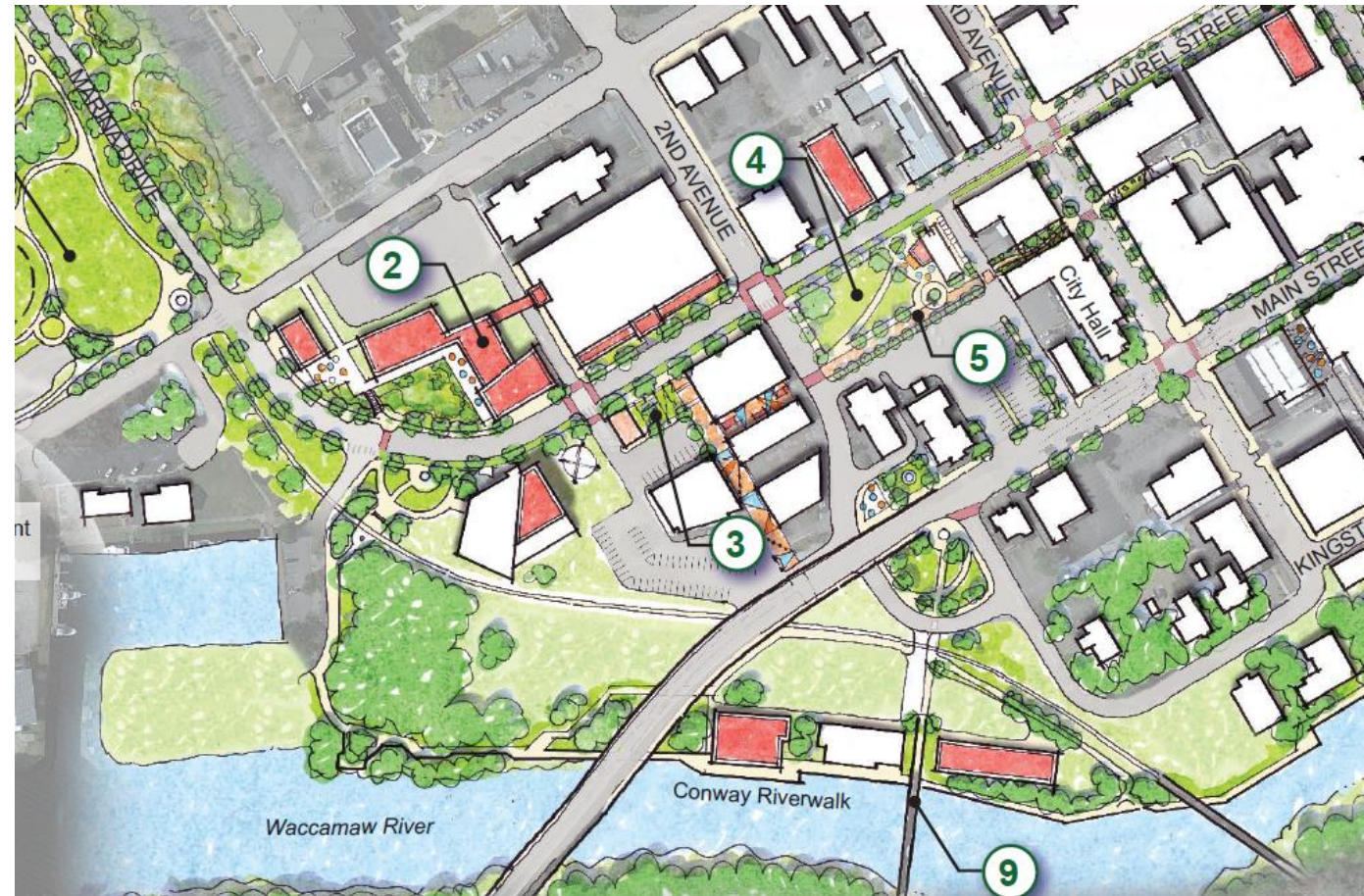
- Provide a pathway network that ties into the proposed broader pathway network on the Grainger Property and the Laurel Link.
- Provide for a flexible lawn area that can be programmed in a variety of ways.
- Incorporate creative stormwater management and integrate into the overall landscape along with the stormwater gardens described below.
- Strategically plant native canopy trees around the perimeter of the space and spaces within to provide delineate use areas and provide shade.
- Explore a variety of “floodable” active recreation amenities that could be incorporated into the site that might include nature-based and adventure playgrounds, skateparks, and a dog park.
- Considering its location along the Laurel Link and future trail network within the Grainger Property, provide bicycle accommodations including bike racks.



LAUREL STREET STORMWATER GARDEN

Enhance the existing stormwater management pond across from the fountain on Laurel Street as a stormwater garden, integrated into the overall site design of the proposed Higher Education Center/Accommodations Project, described below.

- Utilize a variety of water-tolerant native plant materials to provide seasonal interest.
- Consider how a naturalized edge can be provided along the street frontage and a more architectural edge adjacent to future buildings, with pathways, boardwalks, and terraces providing breakout space for the building uses while engaging with the garden.
- Utilize interpretive signage and consider how the stormwater garden can be used for educational purposes as part of the Higher Education Center.



MARINA DRIVE STORMWATER GARDENS

Restore and enhance the rain garden planting within the existing stormwater management ponds along Marina Drive as part of the County property. Consider how these stormwater facilities can become an extension of the restored natural and educational landscape extending from the Grainger Property, along Marina Drive, into downtown.

The photos illustrate successful examples of stormwater gardens.



Market & Economic Development

The Planning Team researched existing market conditions along with demographic data to understand what the market will bear and the possibilities for economic development. This was not a market study, rather an understanding of current influences and capacities.

Strong leadership is essential.

Success requires vision and planning.

You're all in it together now.

PLACE MATTERS, take advantage of it.

-2008 Brookings Institute Report



DEMOGRAPHICS: POPULATION

Conway and Horry County continue to be the epicenter of growth in South Carolina with the county marking the fastest growth rate in the state between 2010 and 2020. Even more interesting is that while the 2010 population of Conway was 17,103 representing 6.3% of Horry County residents, the 2020 population of Conway rose by a staggering 61.7% during this time to 27,706 residents. This increased Conway's share to 7.8% of Horry County residents.

Source: US Census

The net effect is that almost two (1.6) out of every three residents of Conway were not here in 2010. This presents important opportunities for the community to continue to invest in the historic downtown of the community as *the* gathering place for a fast-growing community seeking authentic places to dine, shop, gather, live, and do business.

DEMOGRAPHICS: INCOME

The median household income in Conway is \$50,514, nearly identical to that of Horry County at \$50,570 and lower than that of South Carolina at \$61,900. It is important to note, however, these income levels are very likely to under-represent spending power of local residents as Coastal Carolina University students are factored in with the many retired residents of Horry County. For obviously different reasons, the spending power of these two demographic segments is not accurately reflected in the income levels (parent spending in the case of students and retirement income in the case of the older population in the County).

Source: Claritas



DOWNTOWN'S POSITION IN THE CONWAY ECONOMY

To understand Downtown's importance in the overall Conway economy, it is important to delve deeper into what happens in downtown vis-à-vis in the community as a whole.

Retail

The City of Conway represents a market that has annual sales of \$786 million in retail and restaurant sales. Downtown Conway accounts for \$122 million of that market. For a city the size of Conway with significant suburban retail sales, the fact that **\$1 in every \$6** of retail sales is a “downtown dollar” indicates the power of the independent retailers and restaurants in downtown. The downtown district is arguably the largest collection of independently owned businesses in Horry County.

Employment

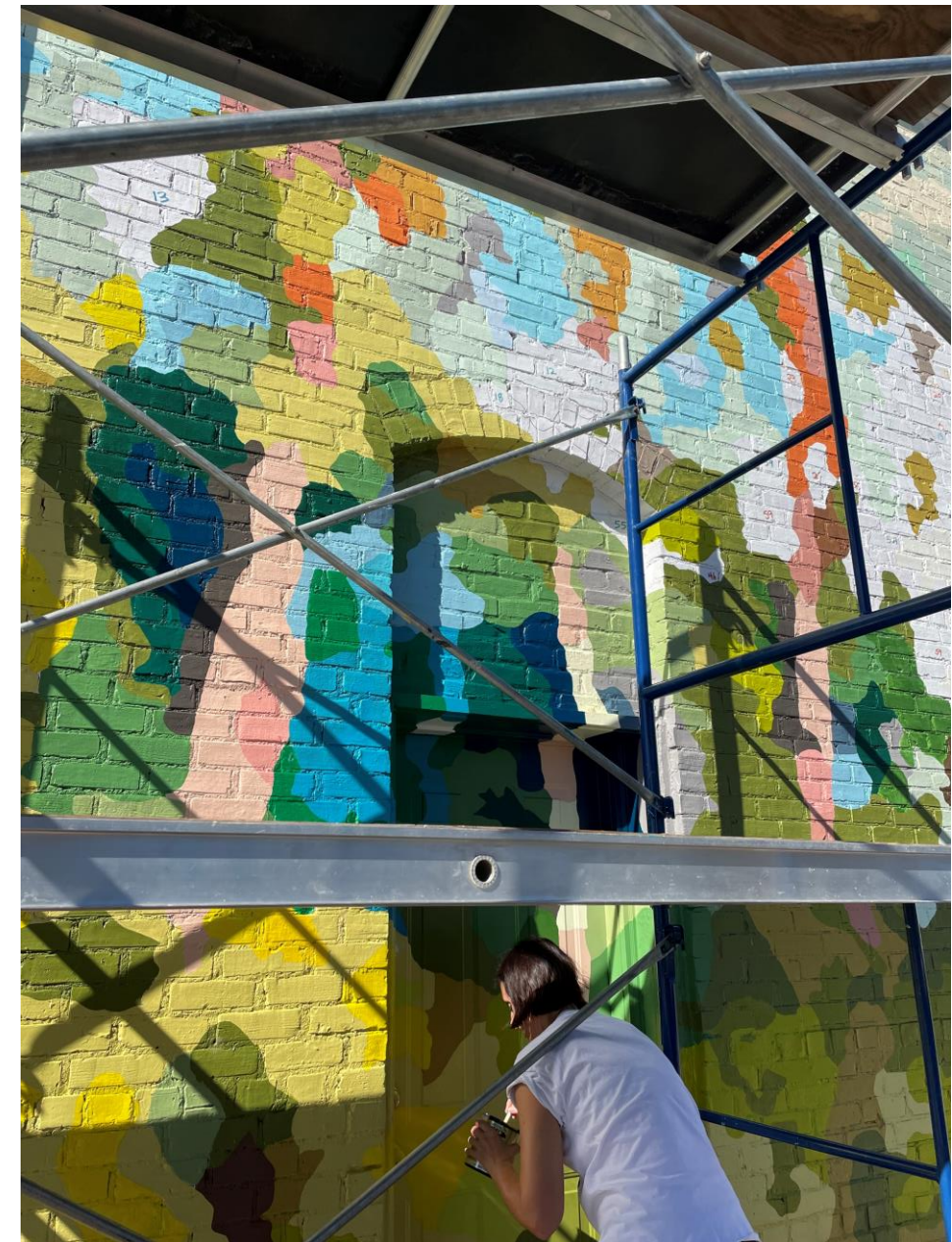
The City of Conway has 19,626 jobs. Of those jobs 1,632 are downtown representing the presence of Horry County Government, the City of Conway, and the many independent businesses in the district. In fact, **1 in every 12** jobs is a “downtown job” in the City of Conway. Considering that Coastal Carolina, Horry Georgetown Tech, and the school district are large employers, this is a highly impressive figure.

Source: Claritas

Commuting

Of the 1,632 jobs downtown, 1,617 of them are held by people who live outside of downtown. According to the US Census “On the Map” data, **15 people** both live and work in downtown. This represents an important gap in the market strength of downtown where residential units represent a very small proportion of the overall uses in the district. There is a significant opportunity to grow the residential population in downtown, which would not only decrease inflow and outflow traffic but also would introduce a greater variety of housing options in the City of Conway where single family detached housing represents a significant proportion of the housing product.

Data Source: US Census on the Map 2019 data



ACCOMMODATIONS

The City of Conway has been exploring a downtown accommodation option for several years. The proximity to the largest concentration of hotel rooms in the Carolinas in Myrtle Beach has presented a unique challenge for downtown Conway to recruit a hotel. However, national trends are shifting, and travelers are seeking more unique downtown options where they can walk to amenities such as shopping and dining.

National brands are responding to this trend with unique brands and a break from the strict brand standards that have hampered downtown hotels in the past. Conway should ensure that it is pursuing a “right-sized” accommodation product. Some considerations should be as follows:

Meeting Space but not a Convention Center

A full-scale Convention Center is unlikely for the foreseeable future. Myrtle Beach has eight facilities each with 10,000 square feet of space or more including the very large Myrtle Beach Convention Center with 250,000 square feet alone. The total square footage of meeting space is over 500,000 along the coast.

Furthermore, Downtown Conway already has several dispersed meeting spaces that could accommodate small conferences, reunions, wedding parties, and smaller events where the charm of downtown would be appealing.

Do not Depend on Waterfront Property

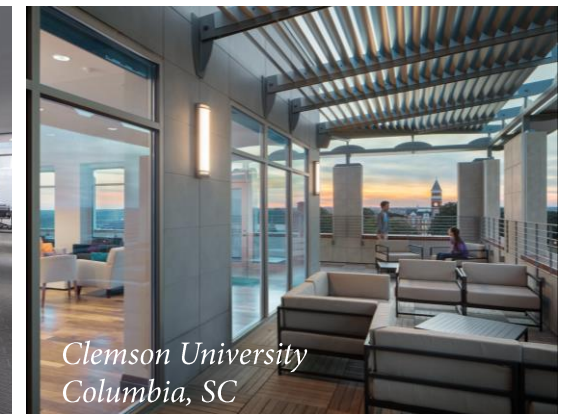
While the appeal of a waterfront hotel property is strong, Conway’s downtown and the proximity to the Waccamaw River is enough appeal to have a hotel a few blocks from the river. This would reserve limited and ecologically sensitive waterfront property for open, public space and selective development on key sites.



Hotel Trundle
Columbia, SC



University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC



Clemson University
Columbia, SC



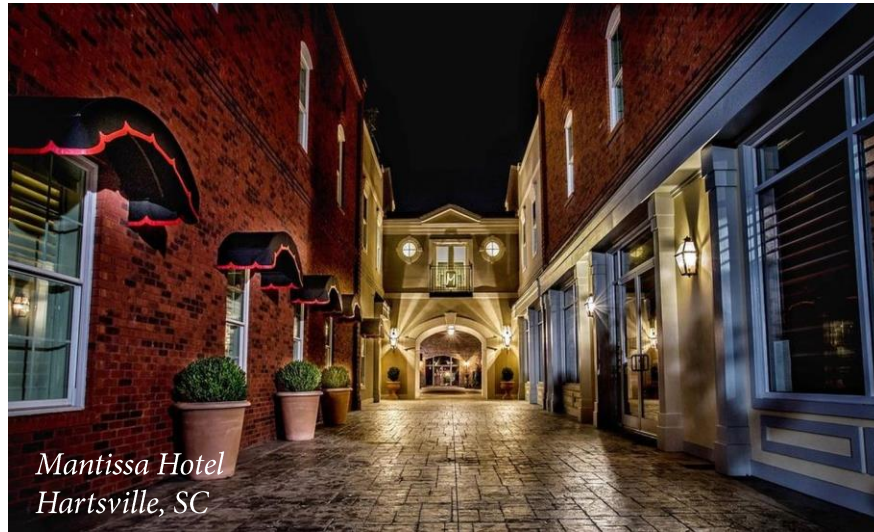
*Hotel Florence
Florence, SC*



*Hyatt Place
Florence, SC*



*Hotel Trundle
Columbia, SC*



*Mantissa Hotel
Hartsville, SC*

Explore a Variety of Options

As mentioned, there is much more flexibility in hotel design from major brands and independent hotel developers. These include major brands branching off with boutique flags such as Tapestry and Curio by Hilton, Moxy and Tribute Portfolio by Marriott, Hotel Indigo by IHG, and Hyatt Place by Hyatt.

Likewise, private developers have found a niche in self-catering extended stay products in a variety of formats. These trends bode well for downtown Conway and regional examples abound such as the Hotel Florence and Hyatt Place in downtown Florence, the Hyatt Place in downtown Sumter, the Inn at the Crossroads in Lake City, the Mantissa Hotel in Hartsville, and Hotel Trundle in Columbia.

COASTAL CAROLINA & HORRY GEORGETOWN TECHNICAL COLLEGE IN DOWNTOWN

Downtown Conway has been considered a key location for extension of programming from Coastal Carolina and/or Georgetown Technical College throughout several plans. The community and the schools have engaged in meaningful discussions through the years, as recommended in the 2008 and 2017 master plans. The time is right for those discussions to continue with a reflection that a higher education facility in downtown Conway would enhance the standing of both the district and the institutions.

The plan reflects an ideal location adjacent to the County Office Building and could contain a mixture of uses including structured parking, a boutique hotel, higher education space, meeting and event space, offices, and cultural space. Ideally, this facility would house a graduate level program and adult education that would bring wage-earning students into the district. The programs could vary from a business school to environmental science. Leading institutions of higher learning are finding downtown locations to be key enhancements to communities in South Carolina including the following examples.



*Higher Education Center...
an Idea (at least) 14 Years in
the making*



2008 Master Plan



2017 Master Plan

The City of Conway should continue to pursue this important opportunity in partnership with Horry County, Coastal Carolina University and Horry Georgetown Technical College.

During the master plan charrette, leaders from the city, county, CCU, and HGTC confirmed interest in pursuing this opportunity and agreed the following centers can serve as relevant case studies for understanding how to structure development partnerships.



Clemson University at Greenville ONE

Clemson University at Greenville ONE

Located in downtown Greenville, this facility is home to Clemson’s MBA and Master of Real Estate Development programs as well as their Graduate level accountancy program. It is home to meeting space for online continuing educational learning and is open to the public. Uniquely, this center also provides coworking space for the community.



“The George”

“The George,” Spartanburg

The George Dean Johnson College of Business & Economics in downtown Spartanburg is home to over 100 faculty and students and is a graduate level program of USC Upstate. The state-of-the-art facility offers classrooms, computer lab and three galleries featuring rotating exhibits from The Johnson Collection, the personal art collection of Susan Phifer Johnson and George Dean Johnson, Jr. adjacent to the Spartanburg Cultural Arts Center.



The Carter Center

The Carter Center, Florence

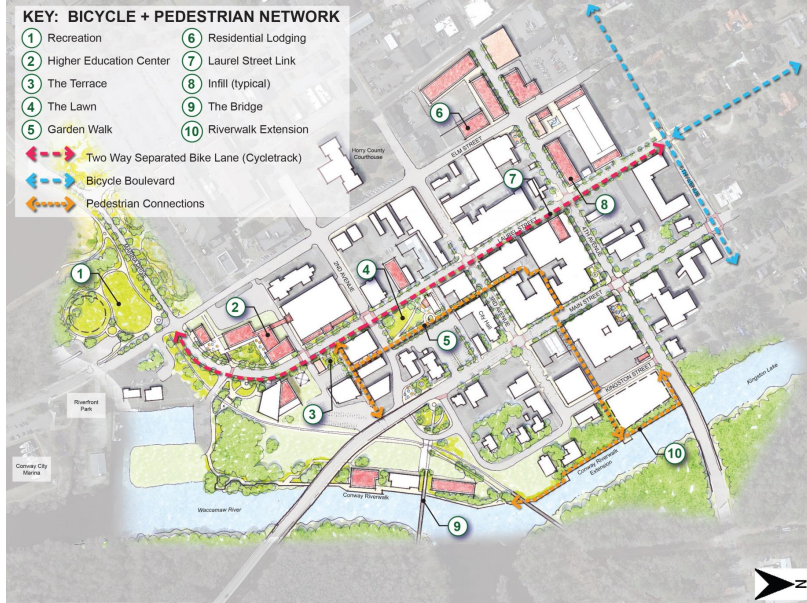
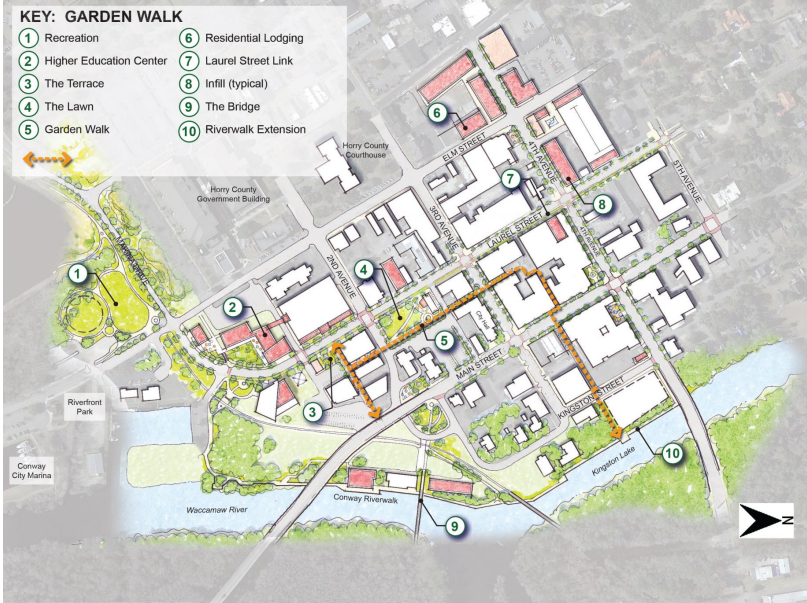
The Luther F. Carter Center for Health Sciences is 51,000 square feet of new and repurposed space in downtown Florence. It is the home of Francis Marion University’s Physicians Assistant’s (PA) and Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) programs. The facility offers a 150-seat auditorium, labs, classrooms, lockers, and meeting space.

Proposed Pedestrian Realm Improvements

COMPLETE STREETS APPROACH and POLICY

Collectively, streets are our largest and one of our most important public spaces. Designing from the outside in means starting with pedestrian and public space needs on the outer edges of the cross-section, then thinking about bikeways and curbside demands, and then allocating the remaining space to private automobiles. This Complete Streets approach, which is codified in the City of Conway's Unified Development Ordinance, ensures that many of this plan's guiding principles will be realized including safety, accessibility, inclusivity, health, environmental sustainability/resiliency, community character, and economic vitality. This public space approach to street design helps prioritize space for street trees and other people-first elements.

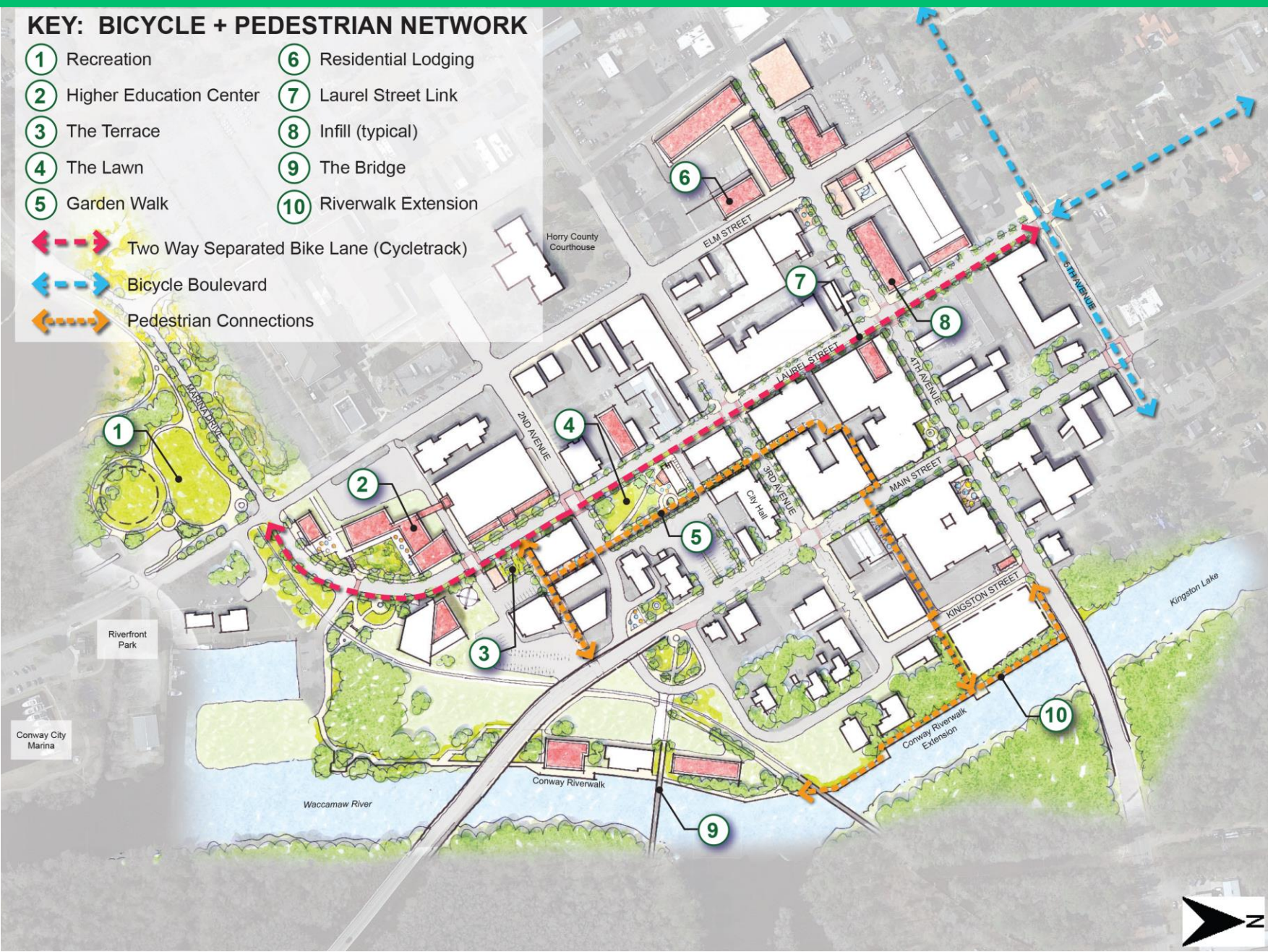




KEY: BICYCLE + PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

- ① Recreation
- ② Higher Education Center
- ③ The Terrace
- ④ The Lawn
- ⑤ Garden Walk
- ⑥ Residential Lodging
- ⑦ Laurel Street Link
- ⑧ Infill (typical)
- ⑨ The Bridge
- ⑩ Riverwalk Extension

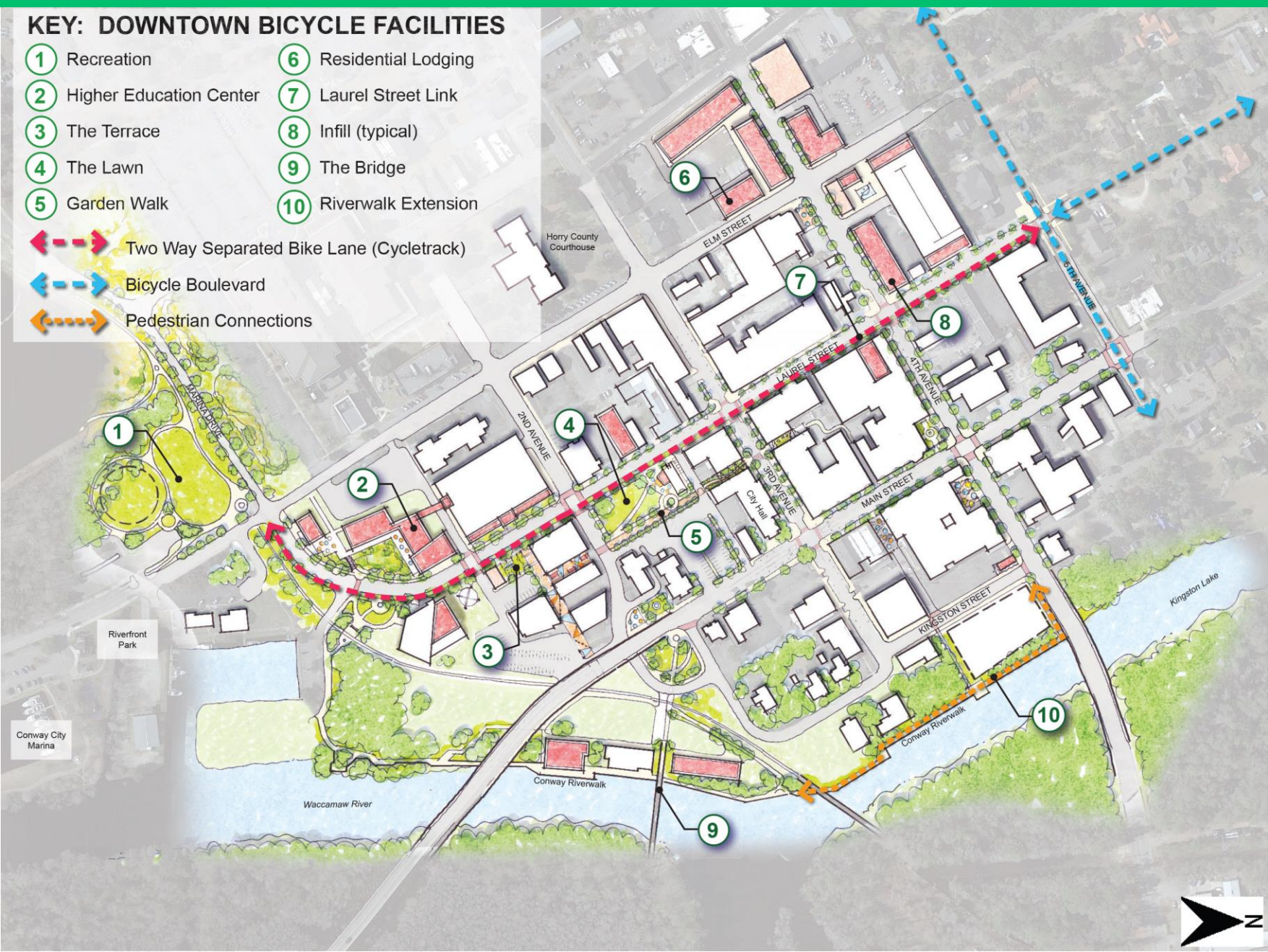
- Two Way Separated Bike Lane (Cycletrack)
- Bicycle Boulevard
- Pedestrian Connections



KEY: DOWNTOWN BICYCLE FACILITIES

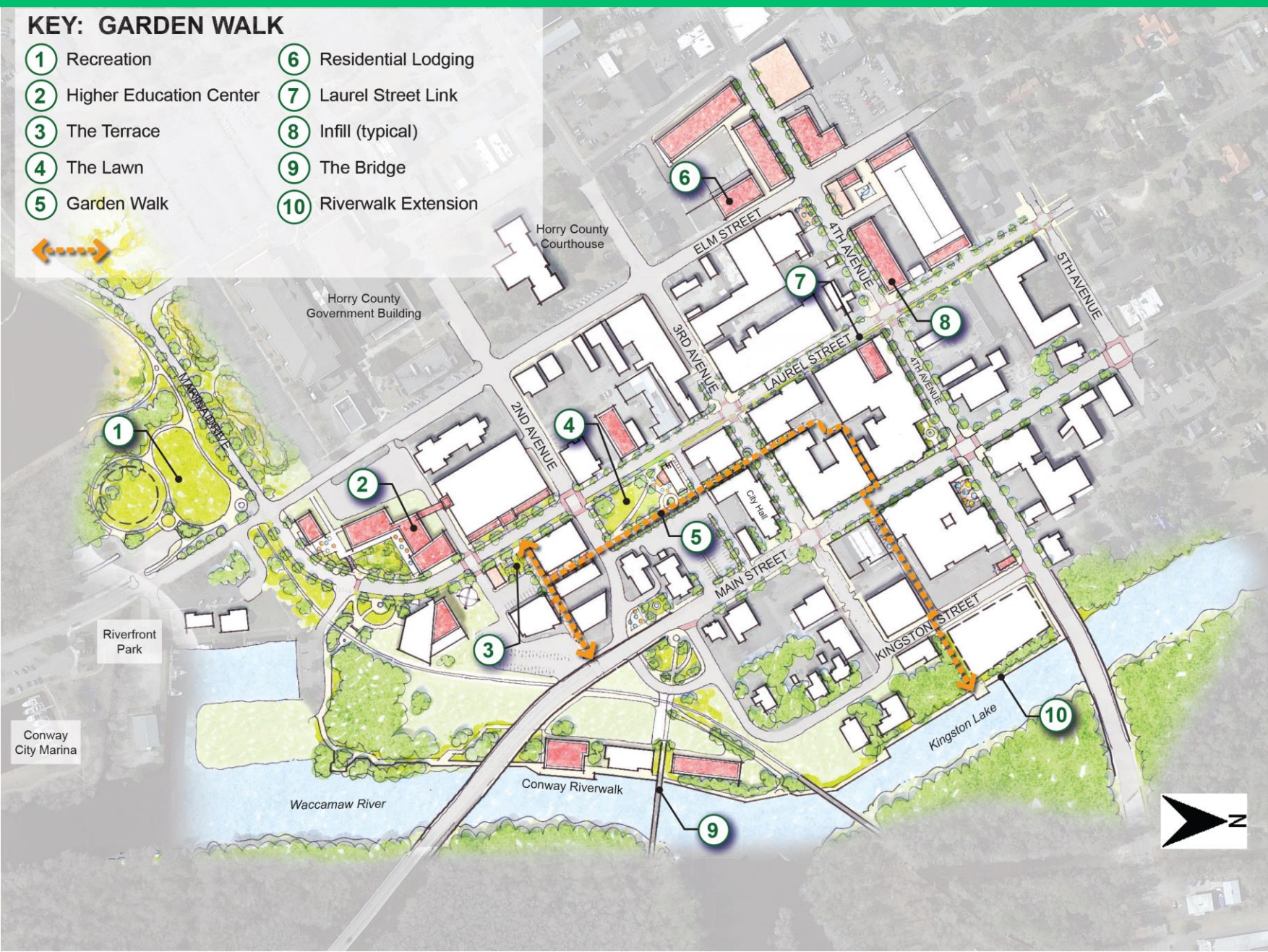
- ① Recreation
- ② Higher Education Center
- ③ The Terrace
- ④ The Lawn
- ⑤ Garden Walk
- ⑥ Residential Lodging
- ⑦ Laurel Street Link
- ⑧ Infill (typical)
- ⑨ The Bridge
- ⑩ Riverwalk Extension

- Two Way Separated Bike Lane (Cycletrack)
- Bicycle Boulevard
- Pedestrian Connections



KEY: GARDEN WALK

- ① Recreation
- ② Higher Education Center
- ③ The Terrace
- ④ The Lawn
- ⑤ Garden Walk
- ⑥ Residential Lodging
- ⑦ Laurel Street Link
- ⑧ Infill (typical)
- ⑨ The Bridge
- ⑩ Riverwalk Extension



PRINCIPLES OF STREET DESIGN

The following principles, inspired by this plan's guiding principles, will shape the design of Conway's streets.

- **Safety:** Street design in Conway should prioritize the safety of all users, with an emphasis on protecting vulnerable users – such as people walking, rolling and bicycling.
- **Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Accessible and inclusive streets ensure that people with mobility impairments can travel and access destinations with the same dignity as everyone else.
- **Healthy and Active Living:** A Complete Streets approach recognizes that streets are more than channels for transportation. Safe street design encourages healthy and active travel and lifestyle options.
- **Environmental Sustainability / Resiliency:** The design of Conway's streets should support the environment by providing shade, reducing ground-level ozone, managing stormwater runoff and respecting the City's close relationship with the Waccamaw River, and making places more comfortable for people walking, rolling, and bicycling.
- **Community Character:** An intentional approach to street design reflects and respects the City's historic character and embraces expressions of culture and public pride. Conway's streets should be attractive places to linger, with active business frontages that are positive contributors to the City's identity.
- **Economic Vitality:** Streets are places – not just transportation corridors – that contribute to the economy. The design of Conway's streets will be aligned with larger economic goals expressed in this plan, including keeping and attracting residents, reducing the cost of transportation, improving property values, and increasing sales revenue.

STRATEGIES

- **Pedestrian Realm and Curbside Features:** Streetscape features should provide a safe and pleasing environment for people walking, as well as elements that are behind and adjacent to the curb such as bike and parking, parking meters and on-street parking, and transit stops.
- **Safe and Accessible Features:** These details enhance the safety and ease of use for people using all modes of travel. They provide traffic calming by slowing motor vehicles, provide physical separation for and increase visibility of vulnerable roadway users, and enhance accessibility for users of all ages and abilities.
- **Green Infrastructure:** These elements, which include street trees, beautify streets and mitigate adverse environmental impacts from pollution, stormwater runoff, and heat island effect.

STREET DESIGN FEATURES

The street design features listed below (in alphabetical order) contain details about various street design treatments including some high-level information about how to apply such elements. *These features are identified because they fit within Conway's desired Complete Streets approach. However, project-level conditions and goals, as well as design and engineering judgement should dictate which street design elements are most appropriate.*

Bicycle Parking

Bike racks provide structures for people to securely lock their bicycles. Bike racks may be located in the amenity zone, provided there is adequate width to maintain an unobstructed path of travel for people walking and rolling. Bike parking within amenity or frontage zones cannot encroach on the clear sidewalk zone when a bicycle is parked there. A minimum clear width of 5' must be preserved. Bike parking should be sufficiently set back from the curb to ensure a bicycle of at least 6' in length will fit on the curb and will not be damaged by car doors within an adjacent parking lane.

Corners and Curb Radii

Corner design has a significant impact on how well an intersection serves the diversity of roadway users. Two of the most important corner design elements are the effective corner radius and the actual curb radius. Actual curb radius refers to the curve that the face of curb line makes at the corner, while effective corner radius refers to the curve which motor vehicles follow when turning, which may be affected by on-street parking, bicycle lanes, medians, and other roadway features

The smallest feasible curb radii should be selected for corner designs. Small curb radii benefit pedestrians by creating sharper turns that require motorists to slow down, increasing the size of waiting areas, allowing for greater flexibility in the placement of curb ramps, and reducing pedestrian crossing distances.

On streets where buses and larger vehicles need to make tight turns and on frequent freight routes, larger turning radii may be necessary to accommodate turning movements. Small curb radii may be more difficult for large motor vehicles to negotiate. However, on-street parking or bicycle lanes may provide the larger effective radii to accommodate the appropriate design vehicle.



Crosswalks

Marked crosswalks indicate a designated path for people walking and rolling through intersections, midblock crossings, and high-volume driveways. Crosswalk markings should be sited at all signalized and all-way controlled intersections and at designated midblock locations.

Crosswalks can use bricks or other special paving but be sure to include white striping on both sides of the special paving. Streetlights should be situated in advance of the crosswalk in the direction of motor vehicle travel. Restrict on-street motor vehicle parking at least 20' in advance of the crossing to provide adequate sight distance. This allows motorists approaching the intersection a wider range of vision and will allow them to see pedestrians that may be about to cross the street.

Curb Extensions

Extending the curb beyond the sidewalk or buffer edge shortens crosswalk length and increases visibility of people walking and rolling, particularly where there is on-street parking. Curb extensions are also effective tools for narrowing streets or tightening intersections to reduce motor vehicle turning speeds. Curb extensions may also be used to create a chicane or a bus bulb.

Curb extensions should keep corner radii as small as possible while still accommodating the design vehicle. The design should accommodate large design vehicles with mountable curbs or aprons while keeping corner radii tight to maintain slow turning speeds. Provide curb ramps at each crosswalk that comply with ADA. Design curb ramps so that they do not impede stormwater management and drainage. Consider any maintenance impacts for cleaning and maintenance.



Driveway Crossings

Driveways provide access from public rights-of-way onto private property. Ideally, driveways for residential or commercial uses should be constructed to be level with the sidewalk or pedestrian path of travel and provide a minimum clear width of 5' across the driveway. A level, continuous sidewalk eliminates the need for vertical transitions while also communicating priority for people walking and rolling along the sidewalk. Raised driveway crossings can also enhance protected bike lanes by raising the bike lane to sidewalk level and ramping up the driveway in the buffer area

Lane Widths

Minimizing travel lane widths is essential to creating additional roadway space for other users. Travel lane width also has an impact on motor vehicle speeds: motorists tend to drive faster in wide travel lanes and slower in narrower lanes. Traditionally, 12' has been the standard for motor vehicle travel lanes. The AASHTO “Green Book” allows 10' travel lanes in low speed environments (45 mph or less). Narrower lane widths have been avoided in the past due to concerns about vehicle occupant safety and congestion, especially on arterial roadways; however, research on suburban and urban arterials has shown that in most cases, travel lane widths between 10 feet and 11' on arterials and collectors do not negatively impact overall motor vehicle safety or operations, and also have no measurable effect on capacity.² The study found one exception where 10' wide travel lanes should be used with caution– on four-lane, undivided arterial roadways.

The benefits of narrower lane widths include:

- Lower speeds, improving the safety of all users
- Fewer, less severe crashes for all users
- Reduced crossing distance for pedestrians
- Reduced footprint of the roadway, resulting in better use of land and reduced run-off



Driveway Crossing



Lane Width Reductions

Median Refuge Islands

Median refuge islands provide a protected refuge space in the center of two-way streets to allow pedestrians to cross the street in two phases. Median refuge islands are particularly beneficial where crossings are long or where a person must walk across more than one lane of traffic per direction to reach the other side of the street. Islands also provide traffic calming by narrowing the roadway and creating edge friction

Neighborhood Traffic Circles

Neighborhood traffic circles or mini roundabouts are effective traffic calming design alternatives for low-volume neighborhood streets, particularly when used in conjunction with other strategically-placed traffic calming devices throughout a corridor. Neighborhood traffic circles may be installed with standard height or mountable curbing depending on turning radius requirements. Traffic circles also provide opportunities for plantings, special identifying signage for neighborhoods, or public art.

Pedestrian Realm Zones

Sidewalks are one of the most vibrant and active sections of the overall right-of-way. Throughout the city, sidewalks play a critical role in the character, function, enjoyment, and accessibility of neighborhoods. The citizens of Conway value the walkability of their community and neighborhoods and wish to see this quality preserved and enhanced. The function and design of the sidewalk significantly impact the character of each street. Extending from curb to building face or property line, sidewalks are, of course, the place typically reserved for pedestrians, but they also accommodate street trees, stormwater best management practices (BMPs), streetlights, bicycle racks, and transit stops. They are a place of transition and economic exchange as restaurants engage the public space and retailers attract people to their windows and shops. Sidewalk zones are covered in the 2017 Master Plan and will not be repeated here.



Median Refuge Islands



Neighborhood Traffic Circles

Pedestrian Signal Phasing

Pedestrian signals are part of a system of traffic signals that control intersection operations for people walking and rolling. Pedestrian signal phasing is intended to minimize exposure of people walking and rolling to motor vehicles, minimize delay for people waiting to cross the street, reduce non-compliant and unsafe crossing behavior, and provide accessibility benefits to people with disabilities. Pedestrian phasing falls into three categories: concurrent, exclusive, or a hybrid of the two. As much as possible, consistent approaches to pedestrian phasing should be used across the city to help make the pedestrian network predictable and consistent.

Concurrent phasing refers to phasing schemes that allow people to walk across the street at the same time and in the same direction as motor vehicle traffic. Concurrent phasing minimizes delay for all users. Exclusive phasing provides a separate phase for people walking and rolling that prohibits all motor vehicle movements while people walk across the street. Exclusive phasing can provide safety benefits by eliminating conflicts with motor vehicles; however, it often creates longer delays for all modes and leads to less safe, non-compliant crossing behavior where right-of-way is unclear. A hybrid phasing scheme may be beneficial at complex intersections including those with skewed intersections, multiple lanes of traffic, and leading protected left-turn phases. Hybrid pedestrian phasing uses concurrent phasing to minimize delay for people walking and rolling on those legs of the intersection where conflicts are minimal, while providing an exclusive phase for more challenging legs of the intersection.

Sight Lines and Visibility (Daylighting)

Setting back parking, trees, and other visual obstructions from intersections and driveways, often referred to as daylighting, provides appropriate sightlines and visibility. Daylighting can be provided by using signs, pavement markings, flex posts, and/or curb extensions. Daylighting has been shown to be an effective Vision Zero strategy.



Street Trees and Supporting Infrastructure

Trees provide a wide range of environmental, social, and economic benefits to the City's residents, visitors, and the community. Street trees are a valuable resource that contribute to the character and ambiance of the public realm and provide much-needed shade in Conway's humid climate. Trees remove pollution from the atmosphere and water, improving air quality and human health, and mitigate the effects of climate change. The urban forest is a critical component of making streets function not only as transportation conduits, but as places that support the health and safety of the community.

Street trees are both a transportation and urban design tool. As vertical elements in the streetscape, trees help to frame and define the street wall, accentuate spaces and focus view corridors. Canopy trees provide an enclosure to the street that reinforces the sense of intimacy and scale. This enclosure can have positive effects in slowing traffic and increasing driver awareness.

Street trees improve walkability by providing necessary shade and filtered light. They provide interest and intrigue to pedestrians walking along a block face. Street trees are an opportunity to express the image of a community through plant selection and arrangement. Trees also provide seasonal interest and variation.



In addition to the complete street treatments described for Main, Laurel, and Elm Streets and 3rd Avenue, plant canopy shade trees along 4th Avenue and, where appropriate, replace small ornamental trees with larger canopy trees. The intent is to reinforce spatial definition, particularly where none is provided through architecture; support traffic calming measures; and provide comforting shade while framing-not blocking-storefronts. Specifically:

- Provide as large a tree pit as possible (6' x 6') to provide ample room for tree roots. Where sidewalk width is an issue, consider a 4' x 8-12' tree pit.
- For areas where parking lots or service areas front onto the street, consider low hedges, ornamental fencing, and/or low walls to define the streetscape.

Street Trees and Supporting Infrastructure (continued)

Understanding mature tree size above and below ground, maintenance regimes, and budgets is critical infrastructure for long term sustainability and resiliency of trees in the streetscape. New plantings should be responsive to the original design intent of the streetscape while also ensuring species diversity. Installation of new plantings that yield new or unique maintenance tasks will require review and coordination with City maintenance staff.

In contrast to smaller trees, large trees provide greater economic, ecological, and social benefits, making it especially important to provide critical infrastructure and space to support long-term and healthy tree growth. Supplemental plantings can be used to physically and visually buffer pedestrians from on-street parking and drive lanes, beautify an area, and direct pedestrian traffic around established planting areas. Plantings can include deciduous and evergreen shrubs, perennials, and annuals.

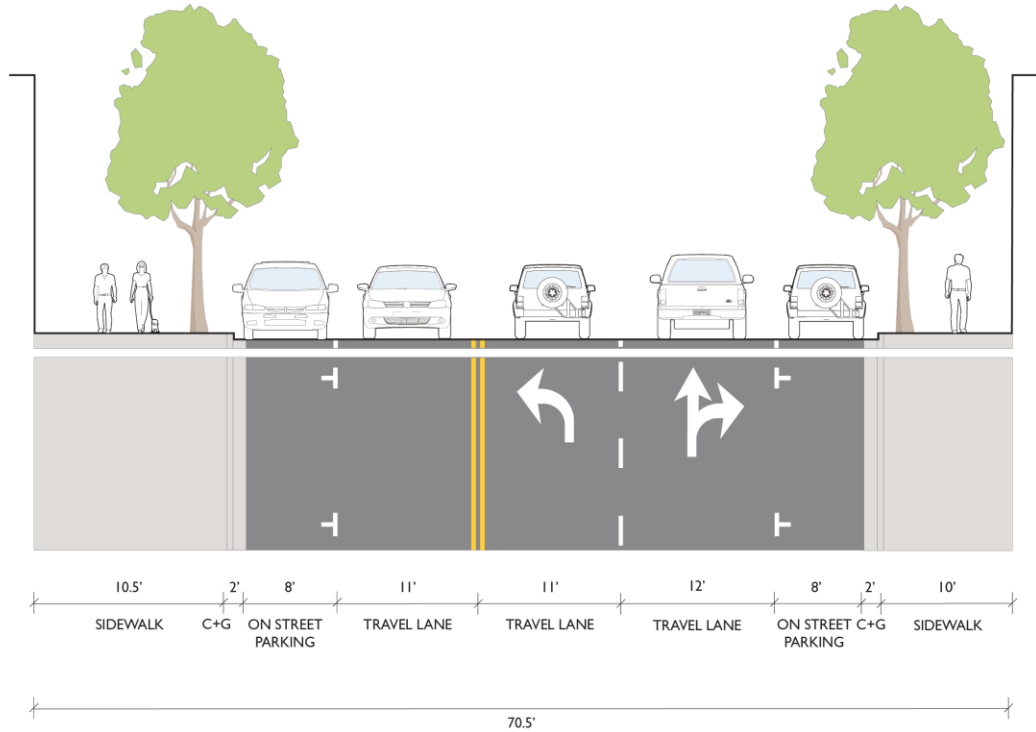
In order to select an appropriate street tree for a specific street, the species must have the appropriate scale and form for the context of the street and the adjacent land uses and, most importantly, the appropriate amount of soil volume to thrive. Tree roots are three dimensional, and it is far more important to provide a specific volume of soil than any given dimension.

Street trees will thrive when provided 1000 cubic feet of uncompacted soil volume and require a minimum of 600 cubic feet and at least 3' of rooting depth to simply survive. This volume can be accommodated with uncompacted lawn, planters with varying lengths and widths, or other subsurface technologies to support pavement while permitting subsurface air and water movement in the soil. Additional rooting area supports long-term tree growth. Tree soil volume research has shown that where soil volume is constrained in a hardscape area, structural cells provide necessary soil volume to allow greater root and canopy growth compared to minimal open surface areas or structural soils.

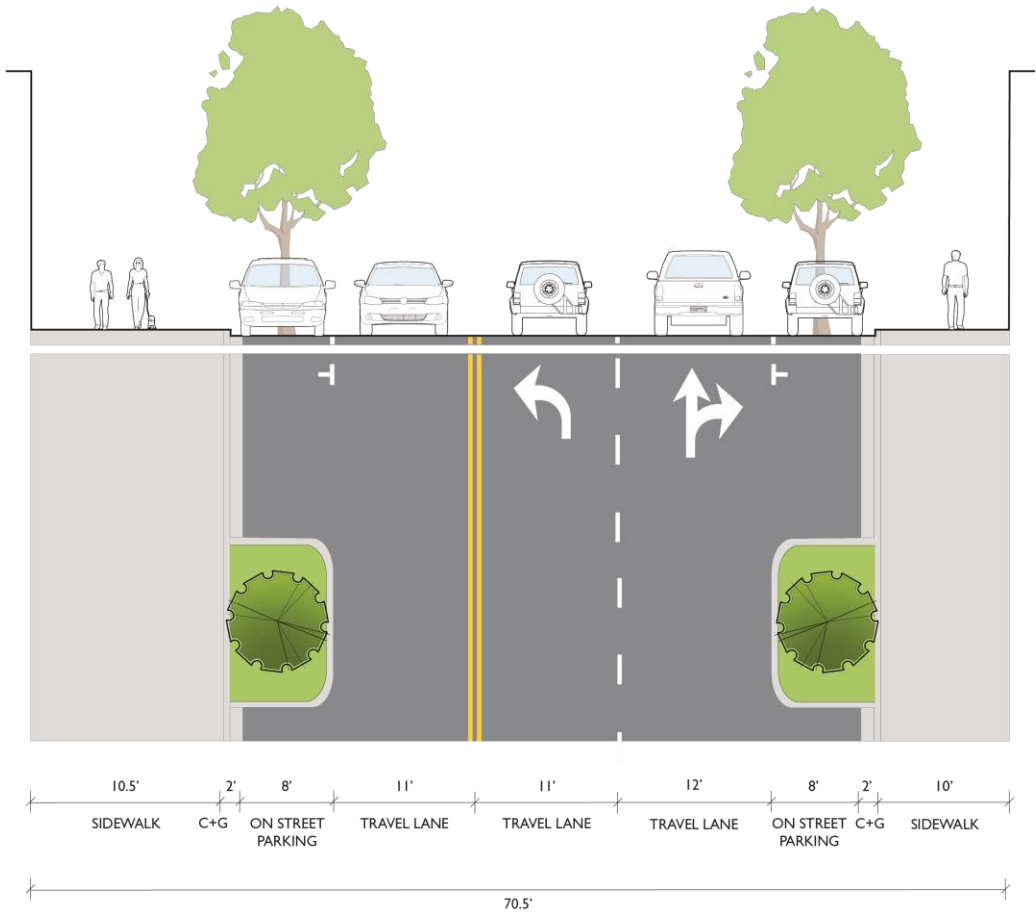


Main Street

Main Street is balancing the competing priorities of two diametrically opposing functions: path and place. On one hand, Main Street welcomes residents and visitors alike into the heart of Downtown Conway. Street trees and architecturally charming storefronts between 3rd and 4th Avenues help define a clear sense of place. On the other hand, Main Street is also known as US-501 Business and serves as a significant conduit for people passing through, to and from other destinations, including Coastal Carolina University, Tanger Outlets, Myrtle Beach International Airport, and Myrtle Beach itself.



MAIN STREET
EXISTING CONDITIONS



MAIN STREET
PROPOSED

The annual average daily traffic (AADT) on Main Street is approximately 17,100 (2018), which contributes to a less-than-pleasant experience for those walking on Main Street, especially during periods of peak traffic volume. The noise associated with vehicular traffic can drown out conversation that would otherwise occur between pedestrians or patrons of sidewalk cafés. Traffic signals currently prioritize the flow of vehicular traffic, as our team noted that pedestrians wishing to cross Main Street must wait through a long traffic signal cycle length before safely crossing the street. Our team also heard larger issues related to signal timing throughout the Main Street corridor. There are a number of modifications that can be made to Main Street in the short-to-medium term that can contribute to the goal of a safe and pleasing environment for people walking, rolling, and bicycling – without moving most of the existing curb along Main Street. In the long-term, future studies may be able to identify and solve broader transportation network challenges that shift more of the “path” function onto US-501, which could allow Main Street to better flourish as a place, rather than a road that prioritizes throughput. Given this study’s predisposition to the short and medium-term outlook, we are recommending the following design strategies:

Add curb extensions at the intersections of 3rd, 4th, and 5th Avenues

Extending the curb beyond the sidewalk or buffer edge shortens crosswalk length and increases visibility of people walking and rolling, particularly where there is on-street parking. Curb extensions are also effective tools for narrowing streets or tightening intersections to reduce motor vehicle turning speeds.

Design Recommendations:

- Keep corner radii as small as possible while still accommodating the design vehicle.
- Accommodate large design vehicles with mountable curbs or aprons while keeping corner radii tight to maintain slow turning speeds.
- Provide curb ramps at each crosswalk.
- Ensure curb extensions do not impede stormwater management and drainage. Consider any maintenance impacts for cleaning and maintenance.



Upgrade the crosswalk materials along Main Street to help define the “heart of Downtown Conway”

The existing crosswalks on Main Street are two parallel white lines that do little to emphasize the presence of pedestrians. By converting the crosswalk surface into bricks or another type of special paving can help reinforce Conway’s sense of place and provide a cue to drivers that they are entering a special district.

Design Recommendations:

- White striping should be included on both sides of the special paving.
- Streetlights should be situated in advance of the crosswalk in the direction of motor vehicle travel.
- Restrict on-street motor vehicle parking at least 20’ in advance of the crossing to provide adequate sight distance. This allows motorists approaching the intersection a wider range of vision and will allow them to see pedestrians that may be about to cross the street.

Update Pedestrian Signal Phasing

Pedestrian signals are part of a system of traffic signals that control intersection operations for people walking and rolling. Pedestrian signal phasing is intended to minimize exposure of people walking and rolling to motor vehicles, minimize delay for people waiting to cross the street, reduce non-compliant and unsafe crossing behavior, and provide accessibility benefits to people with disabilities.

Pedestrian phasing falls into three categories: concurrent, exclusive, or a hybrid of the two. As much as possible, consistent approaches to pedestrian phasing should be used across the city to help make the pedestrian network predictable and consistent. Consider providing a leading pedestrian interval to give pedestrians a head start of 3-7 seconds when entering an intersection before starting the next phase of vehicle movements. This can help increase the visibility of pedestrians and reduce conflicts with motorists.



Main Street and 3rd Avenue, Conway

Convert some on-street parallel parking spaces to planting areas to provide more space for pedestrians and create opportunities for additional street trees and/or green infrastructure

Although Main Street is currently tree-lined, the trees are located within the existing 10 ft sidewalk width. When combined with streetlights, signs, and benches, and other street furnishings, the street trees narrow the space available to pedestrians to approximately 5 or 6 ft, which makes it somewhat uncomfortable for two people to walk side-by-side. Main Street's tree canopies are also growing into building facades, which necessitates frequent pruning and results in many trees appearing lopsided.

By converting some of the on-street parking spaces to planting areas, more space would be available to pedestrians. If these planting areas hosted street trees, the trees would visually narrow the roadway and contribute to a traffic calming effect. Trees located further away from building facades would also reduce the maintenance burden.

Design Recommendations:

- Tree roots are three dimensional, and it is far more important to provide a specific volume of soil than any given dimension. Street trees will thrive when provided 1000 cubic feet of uncompacted soil volume and require a minimum of 600 cubic feet and at least 3' of rooting depth to simply survive. This volume can be accommodated with uncompacted lawn, planters with varying lengths and widths, or other subsurface technologies to support pavement while permitting subsurface air and water movement in the soil. Additional rooting area supports long-term tree growth.
- Tree soil volume research has shown that where soil volume is constrained in a hardscape area, structural cells provide necessary soil volume to allow greater root and canopy growth compared to minimal open surface areas or structural soils.
- Coordinate tree locations with emergency vehicle, sight triangle, bus stop locations, and utility equipment requirements.

Install mini-roundabouts at 3rd, 4th and 5th Avenues

Mini-roundabouts should be considered as an alternative design approach for the intersection of Main Street with 3rd, 4th, and 5th Avenues. Roundabouts are proven to improve safety and mobility for all users, including multimodal, while also maintaining the capacity of the existing intersection. Mini-roundabouts are a type of roundabout that feature a smaller diameter than a typical roundabout, and the central island and splitter islands are traversable by motorists, including emergency vehicles. In many ways, mini-roundabouts may be a preferred long-term alternative for the City of Conway, as they remove the need to maintain, coordinate and update traffic signals and simplify the decision-making process for all user groups – pedestrians, motorists, bicyclists, and emergency vehicles.

Based on our initial study of Downtown Conway, the compact size of mini-roundabouts will allow them to fit within the space-constrained environment of Main Street. Mini-roundabouts are expected to provide greater operational efficiency and less overall delay for these intersections, especially if installed consecutively on 3rd, 4th and 5th Avenues. In the U.K., mini-roundabouts have resulted in safety improvements that resulted in crash rate reductions of approximately 30% when compared to signalized intersections. Mini-roundabouts also may reduce vehicular speeds, which would positively contribute to the other traffic calming measures proposed for Main Street. If the City of Conway pursues this route, a traffic analysis and close coordination with SCDOT would be required.



Mini Roundabout

3rd and 4th Avenues

3rd and 4th Avenues are important streets that contribute to the identity and character of downtown Conway. Like Main Street, the segment of 3rd Avenue between Elm Street and Main has the character of an “A Street” as it has street trees, charming storefronts that provide spatial definition to the street, and destinations that include restaurants, City Hall, and the Garden Walk. West of Elm Street, 3rd Avenue transitions into an auto-oriented, or “B Street” development pattern, which lacks the high-quality building frontages and pedestrian interest found on Main Street.

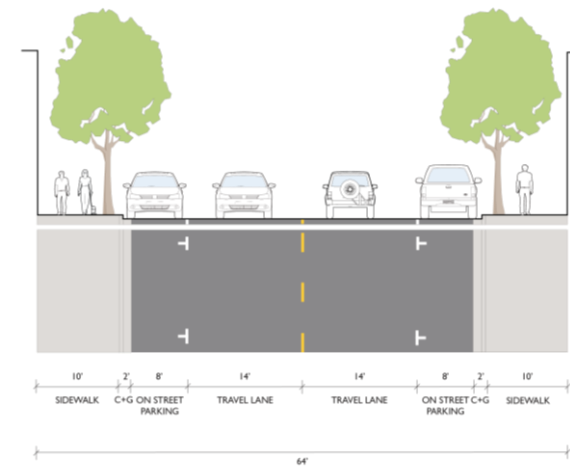
4th Avenue (US-701/SC-905) is a major east-west thoroughfare through Conway, with the 4th Avenue bridge over Kingston Lake serving as a major gateway into the City. The development along 4th Avenue is generally auto-oriented, with parking lots fronting much of the street. The character of 4th Avenue changes to a more people-oriented urban form as one moves east of Laurel Street. 4th Avenue also serves as the unofficial northern boundary of downtown Conway, with a large residential area to the north.

The recommendations that follow are aimed at two things:

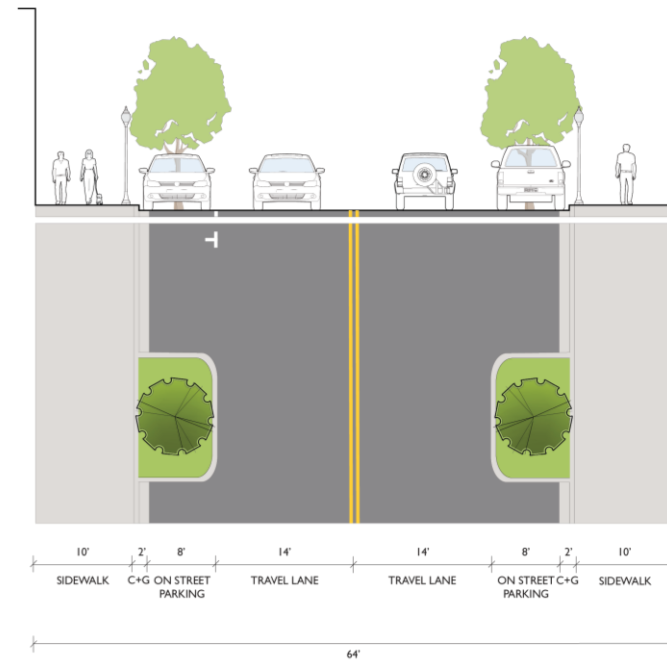
1. Reinforce 3rd Avenue’s status as an A Street that provides a welcoming pedestrian environment.
2. Lay the foundation for 4th Avenue to transition to an A Street by serving as the northern boundary of the heart of downtown Conway.

Many of the recommendations for Main Street also apply to 3rd and 4th Avenues, including:

- Add curb extensions at the intersections of 3rd and Main as well as 4th and Main
- Upgrade the crosswalk materials at these intersections to help define the heart of Conway
- Convert some on-street parallel parking spaces to planting areas with street trees
- Update pedestrian signal phasing



THIRD AVE
EXISTING CONDITIONS

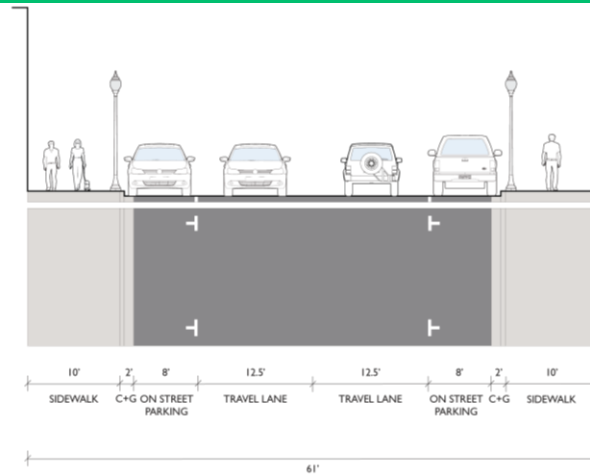


THIRD AVE
PROPOSED

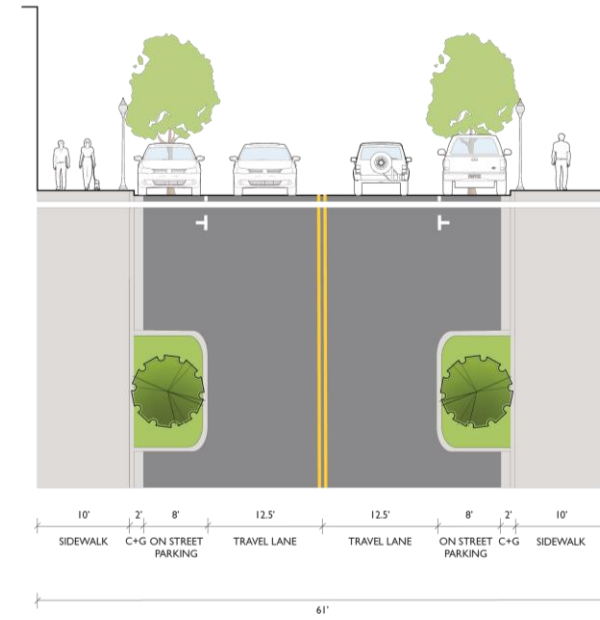
Elm Street

Elm Street is the north-south cousin to 4th Avenue, as both serve as the de facto edge of downtown Conway. Like 4th Avenue, Elm Street provides a direct connection to the City Marina, the Horry County Court House, and Conway Middle School. The recommendations for Main Street and 3rd and 4th Avenues also apply to Elm Street, including:

- Add curb extensions at the intersections of Elm and 2nd, Elm and 3rd, and Elm and 4th Avenues
- Upgrade the crosswalk materials at these intersections to help define the heart of Conway
- Convert some on-street parking spaces to planting areas with street trees
- Update pedestrian signal phasing



ELM STREET FROM 3RD AVE TO 5TH AVE
EXISTING CONDITIONS



ELM STREET FROM 3RD AVE TO 5TH AVE
PROPOSED

Proposed Bicycle Realm Improvements

A well-designed multimodal network must consider and address the safety and comfort of all users while providing appropriate access to destinations within a community. The transportation system should provide mobility options and accommodate and/or prioritize more vulnerable users such as pedestrians and people riding bicycles along travel corridors and intersections. Safety should be prioritized over saving a few seconds per trip, and Conway's downtown multimodal network should be a place where all users are welcome. While the street network is connected for motorized vehicles, other modes of travel have fragmented or limited infrastructure. While installing a single bicycle or pedestrian facility might support and encourage active travel in one specific place, it is unlikely to have a greater impact on how community members travel.



The more effective approach to encouraging bicycling and walking is through developing a network of interconnected facilities that run between key destinations. Complete networks promote the following elements for all modes of transportation with specific attention to the needs of pedestrians and people on bicycles:

- **Safety:** The frequency and severity of crashes are minimized and conflicts with motor vehicles are limited.
- **Comfort:** Conditions do not deter bicycles due to stress, anxiety, or concerns over safety
- **Connectivity:** All destinations can be accessed using a complete bicycle and pedestrian network with no gaps or missing links.
- **Directness:** Bicycling distances and trip times are minimized.
- **Cohesion:** Distances between parallel and intersecting bike routes are minimized.
- **Attractiveness:** Routes direct bicyclists and pedestrians through lively areas and personal safety is prioritized.
- **Unbroken Flow:** Stops, such as long waits at traffic lights, are limited and street lighting is consistent.

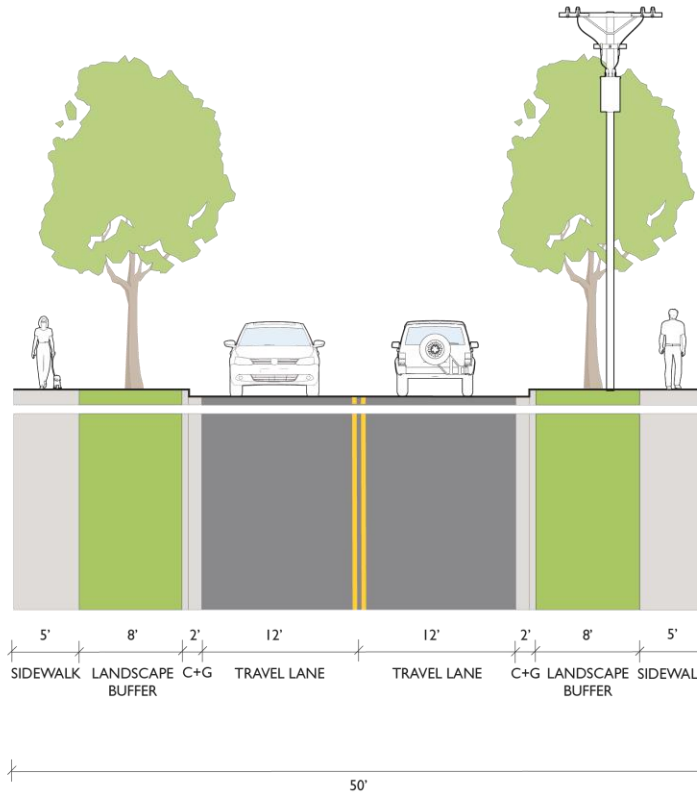
GOALS FOR THE BICYCLE NETWORK

- Connect residents to Downtown Conway and surrounding amenities.
- Create a low stress network that attracts the greatest number of users.
- Identify the first steps that will encourage the most people to begin traveling by bicycle

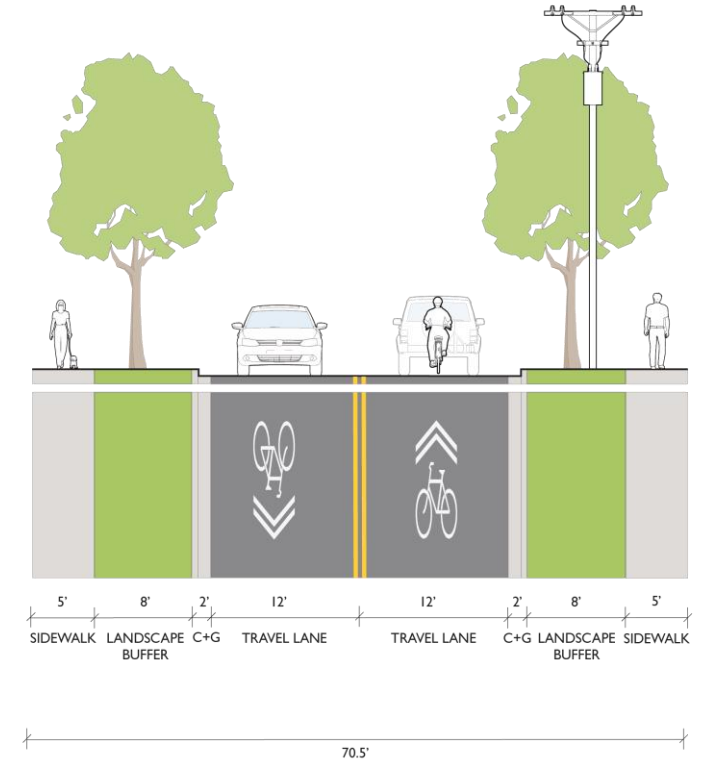


Laurel Street Link

Laurel Street emerged as a candidate for a north-south bicycle facility for several reasons. First, it has excessively wide travel lanes for much of its length through downtown Conway. In some areas, travel lanes are 14 ft wide, which is 3-4 feet wider than recommended lane widths in urban environments. Second, Laurel Street runs parallel with Main Street and provides direct connections to a number of civic destinations. Destinations north of downtown include Conway Middle School, Collins Park, and the County Library, while downtown destinations include the Riverwalk, Kingston Pointe Marina, and the future Lawn that will serve as Conway’s community gathering space. As the Grainger site eventually redevelops, Laurel Street/Marina Drive will be an important conduit connecting this area to downtown Conway. Third, Laurel Street likely has low traffic volumes. SCDOT does not have AADT data for Laurel Street, but it is likely comparable to Elm Street, which has ranged from 2,400 to 3,700 AADT since 2018.



LAUREL STREET LINK:
BIKE BOULEVARD
EXISTING CONDITIONS

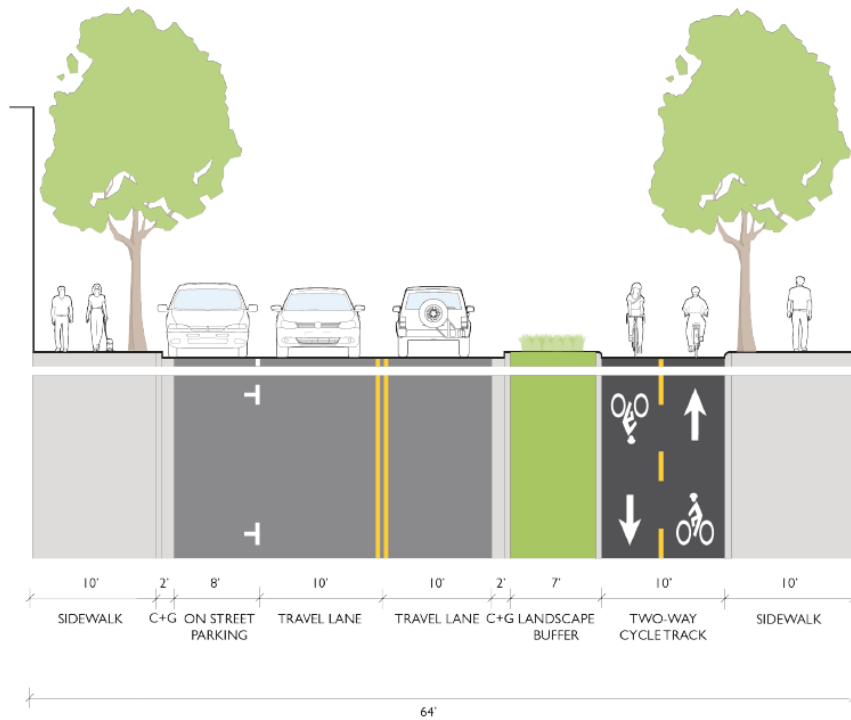


LAUREL STREET LINK:
BIKE BOULEVARD
PROPOSED

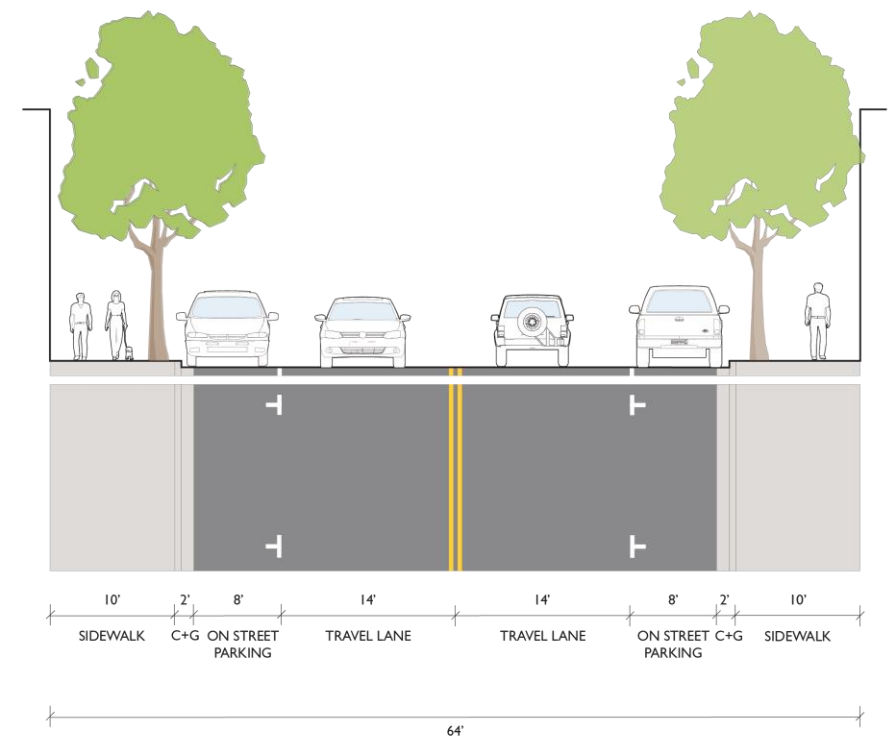
South of 5th Avenue: Two-way Bicycle Facility / Cycletrack

To achieve the goal of creating a low-stress bicycle facility that attracts the greatest number of users, we recommend a separated two-way bike facility for Laurel Street from its intersection with Elm Street near the Kingston Pointe Marina to the intersection of Laurel and 5th Avenue. A separated two-way bike facility, commonly known as a cycletrack, will provide physical separation from motorized traffic, which may provide more comfort with bicycling to a wider range of people. The cycletrack would remove on-street parking from the east side of the street and replace it with the two-way separated bike lane and a physical street buffer that separates the bike lane from motorized traffic.

The goal of the street buffer is to maximize the safety and comfort of people bicycling and driving by physically separating these roadway users with a vertical object or raised median. The buffer can consist of raised concrete medians, landscaped medians, flexible delineator posts (flexposts), parking stops, planter boxes, or other treatments. In choosing the type of buffer, the City should consider capital costs, anticipated maintenance and replacement costs, stormwater drainage implications, and other factors. Flexposts offer one of the lowest capital costs, but they may need routine replacement, which increases long-term maintenance costs.



LAUREL STREET LINK:
TWO-WAY CYCLE TRACK
PROPOSED



LAUREL STREET LINK:
EXISTING CONDITIONS

North of 5th Avenue: Bicycle Boulevard

North of 5th Avenue, we recommend that the Laurel Street Link transition to a bicycle boulevard. Bicycle boulevards are streets that are designed to prioritize bicycle travel. Minimum design elements for bicycle boulevards include:

- Route identification and wayfinding to help bicyclists navigate the route
- Shared lane markings to emphasize the presence of bicyclists
- Using the BICYCLES MAY USE FULL LANE sign (R4-11) to emphasize bicyclist priority on a bicycle boulevard

Traffic calming strategies also should be used to help reduce traffic speeds and bring motor vehicle speeds closer to those of bicyclists. Reducing speeds along a bicycle boulevard helps to improve the comfort and safety of bicyclists using the corridor. Traffic calming strategies recommended for the Laurel Street Link (north of 5th Avenue) include curb extensions (neckdowns).

Curb extensions are applied to mid-block locations so they can visually narrow the street and horizontally deflect motorists to slow their travel path. Curb extensions also create additional space for landscaping or storm water management, among other features. When trees are planted on neckdowns, they can be an effective treatment to visually narrow a street.

5th Avenue Bicycle Boulevard

Conway's east/west bicycle facility should be the 5th Avenue Bicycle Boulevard. 5th Avenue parallels the much busier 4th Avenue, which is a more difficult candidate for a bicycle facility because of the multiple lanes, high traffic volumes, and the frequent driveways that create numerous potential conflicts between motorized traffic and bicyclists. Given that 5th Avenue is a quiet, relatively narrow residential street, it is an appropriate first choice for prioritizing bicyclists and pedestrians. 5th Avenue may also pick up bicyclists from the Racepath, Pinewood, Buckwood, and Greenbriar areas that feel comfortable traveling on the low-volume local streets. The connection between the 5th Avenue Bicycle Boulevard and the Laurel Street Link will help encourage bicyclists of all ages and abilities and contribute to the goal of creating a low-stress bicycling experience. The same design elements and traffic calming strategies applied to the Bicycle Boulevard portion of the Laurel Street Link should also be applied to the 5th Avenue Bicycle Boulevard.



Chicanes

Chicanes slow traffic by creating a serpentine travel path by alternating street features from one side of the street to the other. Curb extensions or on-street parallel parking may be used to produce a chicane. Chicanes and pinch points slow motor vehicle traffic, allowing a more pleasant environment for people walking and biking in the roadway. They can be used for stormwater drainage catchment, street tree planting, benches, bicycle parking, and other amenities.

Planted Median Islands

Planted median islands slow traffic by narrowing travel lanes and requiring drivers to shift their lateral position. Like chicanes, planted median islands can be used for stormwater drainage catchment, street tree planting, benches, bicycle parking, and other amenities. Islands and chicanes may be used in combination with each other to establish a serpentine alignment.

Speed Tables

Vertical deflection, including speed cushions, humps, and tables, are some of the most effective treatments for slowing motor vehicle speeds. These treatments are also a form of “soft diversion,” which can make streets less desirable to motorists and potentially reduce motor vehicle volumes.

Neighborhood Traffic Circles

Neighborhood traffic circles are effective traffic calming design alternatives for low-volume neighborhood streets, particularly when used in conjunction with other strategically-placed traffic calming devices throughout a corridor. Neighborhood traffic circles may be installed with standard height or mountable curbing depending on turning radius requirements. Traffic circles also provide opportunities for plantings, special identifying signage for neighborhoods, or public art.



Redevelopment Opportunities

In addition to the City's ongoing investment in the public realm, the private sector continues to make investments in new businesses, improvements to properties, and new development. Several opportunities exist over the short and long-terms for additional redevelopment and infill development.

The Team recommends that the City works with the private sector and community partners such as Coastal Carolina University and Horry Georgetown Technical College to facilitate the following key opportunities:

- **Laurel Street Higher Education Center / Accommodations**
- **Laurel Street Parking Deck**
- **4th Avenue Residential Accommodations**
- **Infill – Planned & Potential: 196 Laurel Street**
- **4th Avenue and Kingston Street Parking (City Owned)**
- **Infill – Planned & Potential: 6th Avenue and Main Street**



LAUREL STREET HIGHER EDUCATION CENTER / ACCOMMODATIONS

Preserve opportunities and work with public and private-sector partners to plan for and create a mixed-use development on the County surface parking lot along Laurel Street, south of 2nd Avenue.

- Consider how this development can be a gateway anchor to downtown, approaching from Highway 501 along Marina Avenue and Laurel Street.
- Establish the Higher Education Center, described earlier, as the anchor to the development.
- Include a component for lodging and accommodations in the form of a downtown hotel.
- Design the center so that it engages with the site, including the Laurel Street Stormwater Garden and the Laurel Link as described earlier.
- Design in coordination with or to allow for a new public parking deck, as described below, that will serve the center, hotel guests, and visitors to downtown.

LAUREL STREET PARKING DECK

Continue to preserve the opportunity to construct a parking deck on the portion of the surface lot bounded by 2nd Avenue and Laurel Street.

- Incorporate ground level retail uses along or “wrap” the Laurel Street frontage to activate and enliven Laurel Street and The Terrace, located across the street.
- Utilize high quality architectural treatments for any facades visible along Laurel Street and 2nd Avenue.

4TH AVENUE RESIDENTIAL / ACCOMODATIONS

Preserve long-term opportunities to redevelop the automobile dealership property along 4th Avenue at Laurel, Elm and Beaty Streets as residential mixed-use and accommodations.

- Plan for a combination of new construction and renovation. Renovate portions of buildings that highlight Mid-Century architecture.
- Orient new buildings to street edges with parking and amenities located internally.
- Coordinate new development with adjacent streetscape improvements.



Conceptual Rendering



Existing

Redevelopment: 209 Laurel Street

This lot, left vacant after the collapse of the building, is ideal for a mixed-use redevelopment. With Laurel Street slated to become the Laurel Street Link (a cycletrack - two-way separated bike lane) bordering The Lawn (proposed), a new building will provide a beautiful edge to the public space and much needed life on the streets. The conceptual design takes architectural clues from historic commercial buildings in downtown while infusing modern details. We recommend three to four floors, which will provide much-needed height and scale. The ground floor street front should house active retail and a restaurant. This will provide activity from morning throughout the night, creating a safe and more vibrant environment. The upper floors are ideal for residential. This development can establish a beautiful precedent for other redevelopment along the Laurel Street corridor.



209 Laurel Street Concept

INFILL – PLANNED & POTENTIAL

Continue to work with private sector property owners to encourage high quality mixed-use infill development to further activate streets and open spaces and reinforce important downtown connections.

- Work with the property owner on the new restaurant infill development at the corner of Elm and Laurel Streets to develop a building that takes advantage of and respects this prominent downtown gateway location. Consider and plan for connectivity to the adjacent Higher Education Center and hotel site.
- Continue to support small-scale boutique hotels as infill developments. Prominent locations, such as along Laurel Street and adjacent to the riverfront and historic Peanut Warehouse, should be encouraged to design all visible facades with attention to the street and the pedestrian.
- Encourage multi-floor infill on Laurel Street with active restaurant retail uses that could help activate The Lawn. More density along Laurel Street will provide a well-scaled edge to The Lawn and the public realm, creating a more intimate, vibrant and interesting environment for pedestrians. Green spaces with defined edges feel safer and convey a more intentional sense-of-place feeling.
- Continue to encourage infill development along Laurel Street, south of 4th Avenue that respects the scale and character of adjacent development.



Conceptual Rendering



Existing

Gateway Development: 4th Avenue and Kingston Street

Crossing the Kingston Lake on 4th Avenue and entering downtown, a bare city parking lots greets visitors and residents. This is a well-traveled road into the City of Conway and downtown and should reflect the City's commitment to design. This conceptual design proposes a gateway sign to anchor the parking lot along with lighting and landscaping to make the parking lot welcoming, safer and beautiful. The brick walls of the signs double as the walls of an environmental refuse facility (ERF), the City's unique commercial trash collection areas. In addition, the landscaping around the ERF serves as storm water gardens, capturing run-off at this low point. The signage is fun and whimsical with individual LED-light letters. These letters can be Chanticleer Teal and Bronze, Conway High School's green and gold, the blues of Hanukkah, the reds and greens of Christmas, pinks for breast cancer awareness... the colors can reflect the community.



Conceptual Rendering



Existing

Redevelopment: Corner of 6th Avenue and Main Street

This former gas station on the edge of Main Street commercial and residential neighborhoods is an ideal candidate for redevelopment. The conceptual design suggests a fun, open neighborhood bistro and market. The bistro can become a much-needed Third Place for neighbors to gather. With improved pedestrian crosswalks and a new dedicated bike lane, this corner development will be walkable and bikeable for hundreds of residents and visitors. This concept also will work for the corner of 4th Avenue and Laurel Street.



Conceptual Rendering



Existing

Redevelopment: Corner of 6th Avenue and Main Street

This development, a local food establishment, will create a sense of community and security, particularly at night..



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