



*West Main Street
Corridor Visioning Project*

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	7
Existing Conditions: Historic, Social, Physical, Transportation, Economic Development, Land Use, Signage.....	10
Existing Conditions: Historic.....	11
Existing Conditions: Social.....	14
Existing Conditions: Physical	17
Existing Conditions: Transportation	24
Context Zones.....	24
Connectivity	27
Existing Conditions: Economic Development	31
Existing Conditions: Land Use.....	33
Existing Conditions: Signage, Public Art, and Wayfinding.....	35
SWOT Analysis	37
Strengths	37
Weaknesses.....	37
Opportunities	38
Threats	39
Final Plan Proposal: Approaches.....	40
<i>Visioning Transportation Approach.....</i>	41
<i>Visioning Land Use Approach.....</i>	49
<i>Visioning Context/Place Approach.....</i>	54
<i>Proposed Elements.....</i>	54
<i>Visioning Economic Opportunity Approach.....</i>	57

Figure 2: Project Scope in Context.....	10
Figure 3: Spartanburg Historic District	11
Figure 4: 1927 Masonic Temple	13
Figure 5: Spartanburg BMW Plant.....	14
Figure 6: Census tract east of railroad	16
Figure 7: West census tract	17
Figure 8: Coca Cola Bottling Plant.....	18
Figure 9: Vacant Property along Corridor.....	19
Figure 10: West Main Artist Co-Op	20
Figure 11: Single Family Home Used as Commercial.....	20
Figure 12: Spartanburg Business Corridor Redevelopment Program	21
Figure 13: Downtown Spartanburg Gateway	22
Figure 14: Context Zone 1.....	25
Figure 15: Context Zone 2.....	26
Figure 16: Context Zone 3.....	27
Figure 17: Context Sections Map.....	28
Figure 18: Existing Bus Stop	29
Figure 19: West Main Street Development District.....	32
Figure 21: West Main Street artist co-op artwork.....	35
Figure 22: Spartanburg "Spot of Pride" examples	35
Figure 23: Abandoned mill on West Main Street	36
Figure 24: Collection of character signs.....	36
Figure 25: Existing Conditions from Google Maps	42
Figure 26: Existing conditions	42
Figure 27: Proposed Changes	43
Figure 28: Proposed Changes Experiential View.....	44
Figure 29: Nodes Map.....	45
Figure 30: Planned Cross Section for West Main Street Downtown.....	46
Figure 31: Separated Bike Lane.....	47
Figure 32: Multi-Use Path Example	48
Figure 34: Mixed Use Node Context	52
Figure 35: Proposed Mixed Use Center Concept.....	53
Figure 36: Gateway sign concept	56
Figure 37: Spartanburg signage	56
Figure 38: Broad Street TIF.....	59
Figure 39: Typical TIF implementation process	Error! Bookmark not defined.

W. Main Street Corridor Visioning Project: DRAFT

Executive Summary

Our team was tasked with creating a plan for the future development of the West Main Street Corridor. The study area consists of the portion of W. Main Street and W.O. Ezell Boulevard between the railroad tracks just west of the intersection of W. Main Street and Ezell Street, and the intersection of Briarwood and W.O. Ezell Boulevard to the west. We first evaluated the current conditions of the corridor, prepared a SWOT analysis, developed goals and strategies and, finally, developed implementation strategies.

Historic Current Conditions: The most significant historically contextual element related to the W. Main Street study area is the Spartanburg Historic District that is centered around Morgan Square, located only ¼ mile from the eastern edge of the study area. The spoke-like pattern created by the many railroad lines servicing the booming textile industry around the turn of the century led to Spartanburg becoming known as the “Hub City”. The depression led to a downturn in the economy that was followed by a second boom in the textile industry following WWII.

In the 1960s much of the textile industry was lost to foreign competition which resulted in the urban renewal projects in downtown Spartanburg in the late 1960s and 1970s. In 1983 the Spartanburg Historic district was established with the Masonic Temple being the most prominent historic building. In 1993 BMW came to Spartanburg County, which eventually led to resurgence in the development of the downtown area.

Social Current Conditions: Looking at the demographics of the area, in the census block groups immediately to the east of the railroad tracks that delineate the east edge of the study area, the average household income is \$81,405 and the population is 81.9% white. In the census block groups to the west of the railroad tracks along the study area, the average household income is \$27,383 and the population is 70.8% African American. These

statistics illustrate a strong racial and socioeconomic divide between the residents on the east side of the railroad tracks and those on the west side, and this will be an important factor to consider when developing the West Main Street Corridor Plan.

Land Use Existing Conditions: The approximate 1.5 miles of the West Main Street Corridor study area consist of several distinct areas with different commercial, industrial and residential uses. Looking at the study area from east to west, the first section of the study area is characterized by a mix of commercial uses with buildings separated by ample space which is predominantly parking lots. There are also several vacant properties and businesses mixed in within this area. The next section of the corridor has a more residential feel with smaller scale buildings set closer to the road. There are several single family homes in this area; however, most of them have been converted to commercial office uses. The character of the corridor then returns to commercial and light industrial uses seen in the first section of the study area. Finally, the eastern portion of the corridor becomes a divided parkway with a wide planted median bordered by single-family homes.

Planning Existing Conditions: *All of the parcels adjacent to West Main St. in the study area are included in Spartanburg's Business Corridor Redevelopment Program.* This program's main goal is to encourage redevelopment along these corridors with a focus on underutilized or vacant parcels. The first few blocks of the study area is included in Spartanburg's existing Downtown Master Plan. According to the Master Plan, this block is to become a "gateway" to the downtown area, with two relatively large mixed-use buildings located on either side West Main St. at the corner of N. and S. Forest St. consisting of a mix of residential units and commercial.

Transportation Current Conditions: The West Main Street corridor currently acts as a major transportation corridor funneling traffic in and out of downtown Spartanburg to I-26 and West Spartanburg suburbs. Businesses located directly off of West Main are inclined to serve the transportation population that utilizes this transportation system delivering large populations in and out of the city downtown area. There are 3 distinct transportation context zones along the corridor.

1. From the eastern railroad tracks to West St. John Street has a moderate block size and cut-through streets providing connectivity to the north and south. The roads consist of single travel lanes with a center turn lane, and 6' wide bike lanes on either side. The total curb-to-curb width is over 55'. The pedestrian infrastructure consists of sidewalks and incomplete striping at crosswalks.
2. The second section is between West St. John Street and the split with West Main Street and W.O. Ezell Boulevard. The transportation as a whole is less complete; with far less connectivity to the north and south. There are two 12' travel lanes in

each direction with a center turn lane. The bike lane ends before this section, and there are some sidewalks but no crosswalks in this section.

3. The third and final section is between the West Main Street/W.O. Ezell Boulevard and Briarwood Road and S-564. The nature of this road infrastructure is notably different because this section transitions from a 5 lane (2 travel lanes in each direction with a center turn lane) to a 4-lane, limited access, divided highway of sorts. The speed limit increases to 40 miles per hour.

There is also an existing transit stop along the corridor. This stop does have a covered shelter but had no sidewalk or other pedestrian infrastructure around the bus stop. There is also a planned trail connection just west of the study area connecting Barritt Avenue across W.O. Ezell Boulevard to Vanderbilt Road, and continuing northeast. While this is outside of the scope of this project, is important to recognize that this corridor is part of a larger network of connectivity.

Economic Current Conditions: The West Main Corridor falls within jurisdiction of the Business Corridor Redevelopment Program which offers significant reduction of the high cost of redevelopment for small businesses through property tax rebate incentives. The West Main Corridor is eligible to participate in a TIF program but has not yet been a region that has participated in the TIF program. Furthermore, there is no current organized economic development group for businesses along the corridor. There is a significant amount of abandoned or vacant properties lining portions of the corridor.

SWOT Analysis: Based on the subsequent review of the current conditions of the corridor, the following SWOT Analysis was created:

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to downtown • Diversity of Economic Base • Variety of parcel Size 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor Steetscaping and Landscaping • Poor transportation Infrastructure • Lack of access to green space • Lack of Identity • Limited economic resources
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of gateway to downtown • Economic development • Trail connectivity • Branding • Extending downtown form-based code • Creation of a TIF for street improvements 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentrification

Goals and Strategies: Based on the SWOT analysis, the following Goals and Strategies were developed:

<p><i>Transportation Goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provide a more pedestrian friendly environment ❖ Provide a safer biking infrastructure ❖ Provide accessibility for existing transit stop(s) along the corridor ❖ Provide an esthetic and structural connection to the downtown area ❖ Increase alternative transportation 	<p><i>Transportation Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Streetscape improvements at the intersection of St. John St. and W. Main St. ❖ Provide transportation improvements by the transportation context zones ❖ Connect to the existing trail system
<p><i>Land Use Goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Create a more pedestrian friendly urban form ❖ Create an environment that promotes economic development 	<p><i>Land Use Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Extend or overlay the existing downtown form based code ❖ Promote a mixed-use development in the western end of the corridor
<p><i>Context/Place Goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Create an identity for the West Main Street Corridor ❖ Create a gateway to the downtown area 	<p><i>Context/Place Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop a West Main Street Corridor Brand ❖ Evoke the brand with signage ❖ Develop Public Art Standards
<p><i>Economic Opportunity Goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Encourage policies that support small businesses ❖ Encourage economic development in the corridor 	<p><i>Economic Opportunity Strategies</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Develop capacity-building support for small businesses ❖ Assess economic development instruments

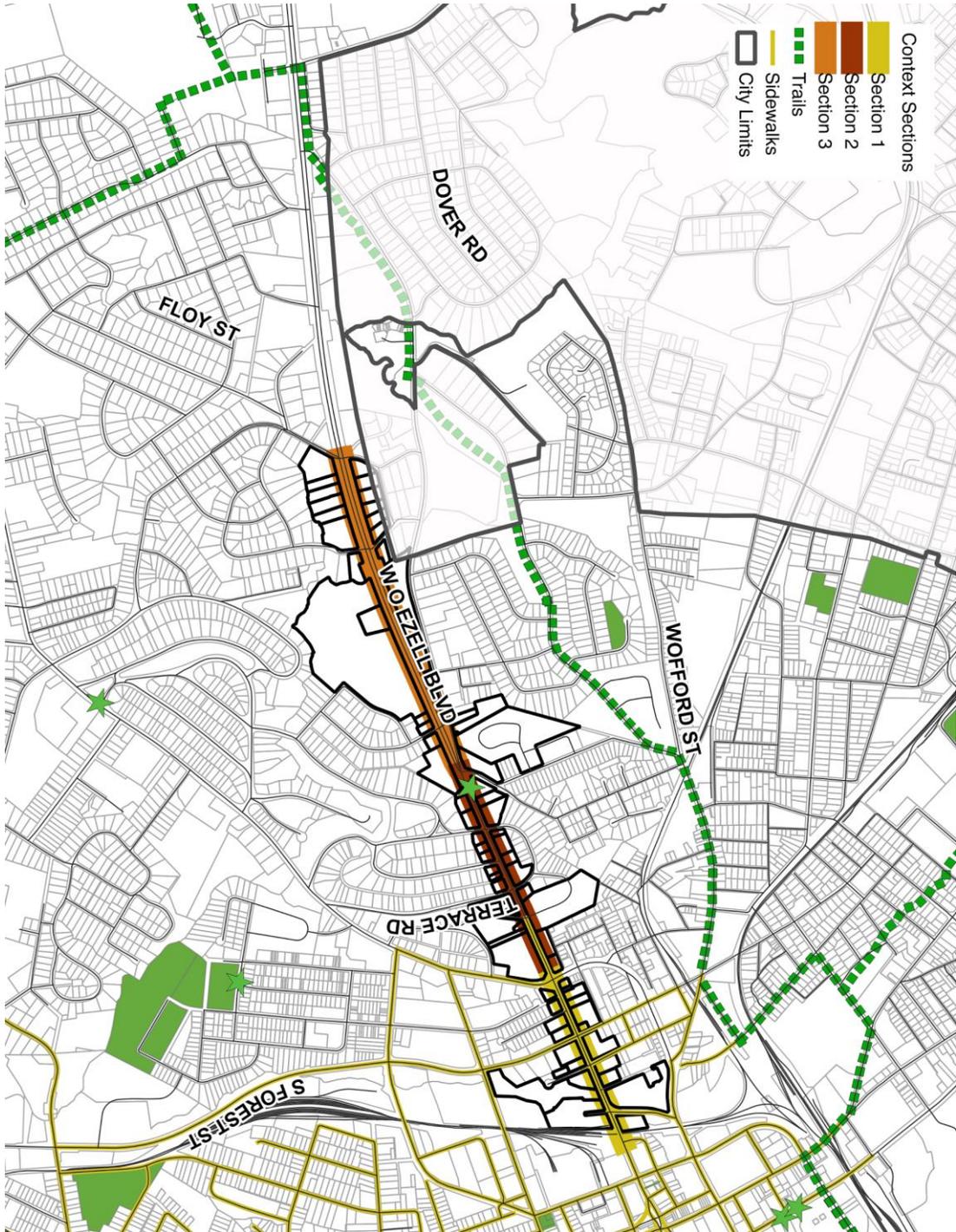
Introduction

The study area for the West Main Street Corridor Vision Plan consists of the portion of W. Main Street and W.O. Ezell Boulevard from the railroad tracks just west of the intersection of West Main Street and Ezell Street to the intersection of Briarwood and W.O. Ezell Boulevard (see Figure 1 below). Before such a plan can be created, it is necessary to understand the contextual elements of the corridor, which includes the historical background, social characteristics, the physical inventory and condition of the corridor, and the current planning environment of Spartanburg. This study summarizes the historical

context of the City of Spartanburg by analyzing the historical, social, and physical inventory of the condition and characteristics that identifies possible paths that community may take, moving forward, to create a new visionary plan that incorporates the W. Main Street Corridor into a downtown experience.

The W. Main Street Corridor visioning project is composed of many elements, including a historical background understanding, an inventory of current and existing conditions, goals and strategies, and implementation of strategies. The historical background will provide context for moving forward to create a vision and goals to correctly align with the current conditions of the social, land use, transportation, and economic elements of the corridor. Additionally, these elements are used to create a SWOT analysis—a holistic review of the strengths, opportunities, and threats—that will outline and prioritize goals, strategies, and implementation of strategies. While the careful planning has been conducted to theorize a vision of success and economic vitality of the corridor, it is crucial that citizens be integrated into the process to plan and adopt a living vision that the city can adopt, guide, and lead to enhance safety, walkability, transportation, and economic redevelopment success.

Figure 1: West Main Corridor Breakdown



Source: Esri, 2010 US Census, and City of Spartanburg Planning Department (2017)

Existing Conditions

The study area for the West Main Street Corridor Visioning Project consists of the portion of W. Main Street and W.O. Ezell Boulevard between the railroad tracks just west of the intersection of W. Main Street and Ezell Street, and the intersection of Briarwood and W.O. Ezell Boulevard to the west. To better inform the vision for this corridor, it is necessary to have an understanding of the contextual elements of the corridor, which are the historical background, social characteristics, the physical inventory and condition of the corridor and the current planning environment of Spartanburg.

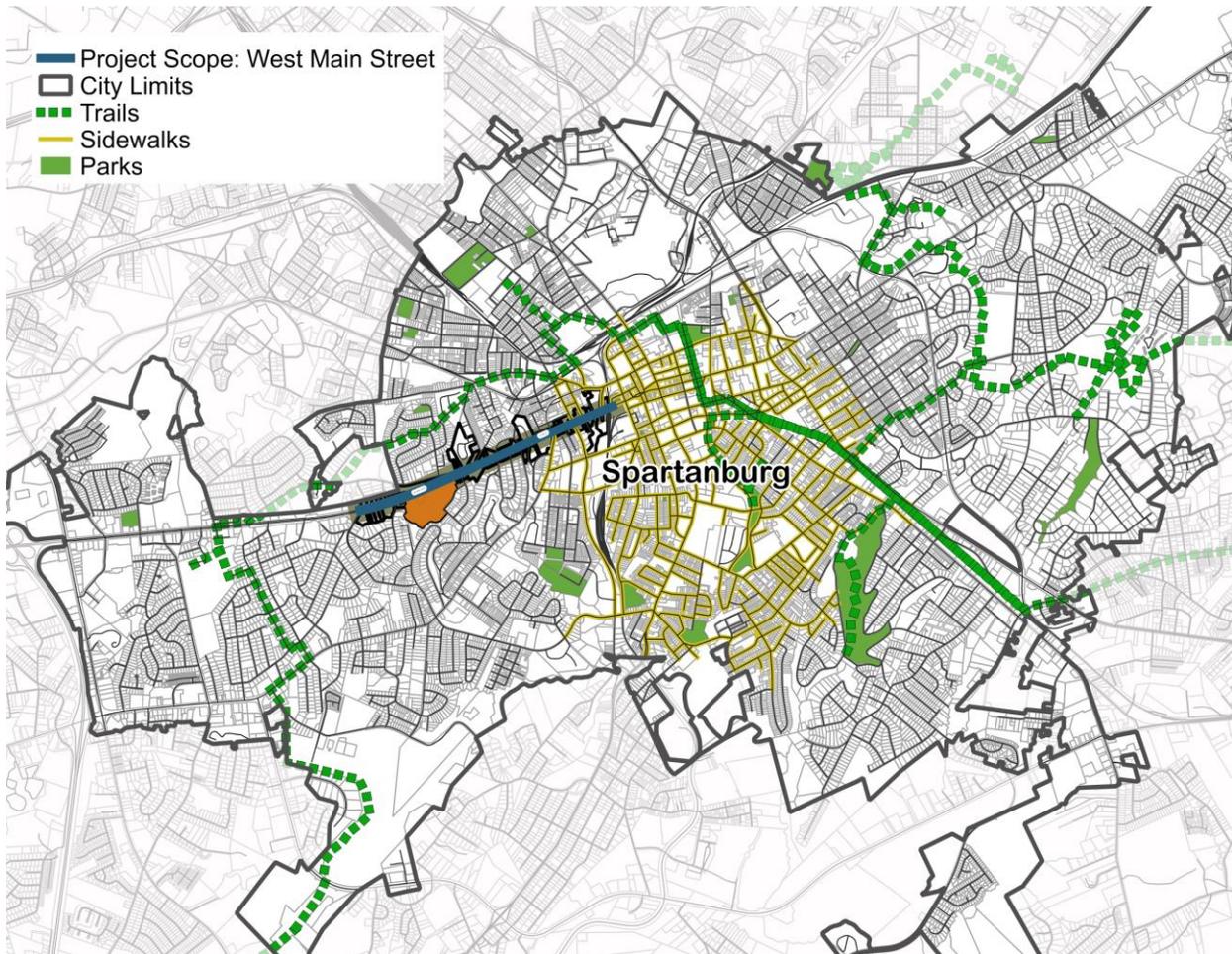


Figure 2: Project Scope in Context
Source: City of Spartanburg

Existing Conditions: Historic

The most significant historically contextual element related to the W. Main Street study area is the Spartanburg Historic District that is centered around Morgan Square in downtown Spartanburg. Morgan Square is located on West Main Street approximately ¼ mile to the east of the railroad tracks that delineate the eastern end of the study area. A brief synopsis of the history of Spartanburg will be helpful in illustrating the significance of this area.

Spartanburg Historic District

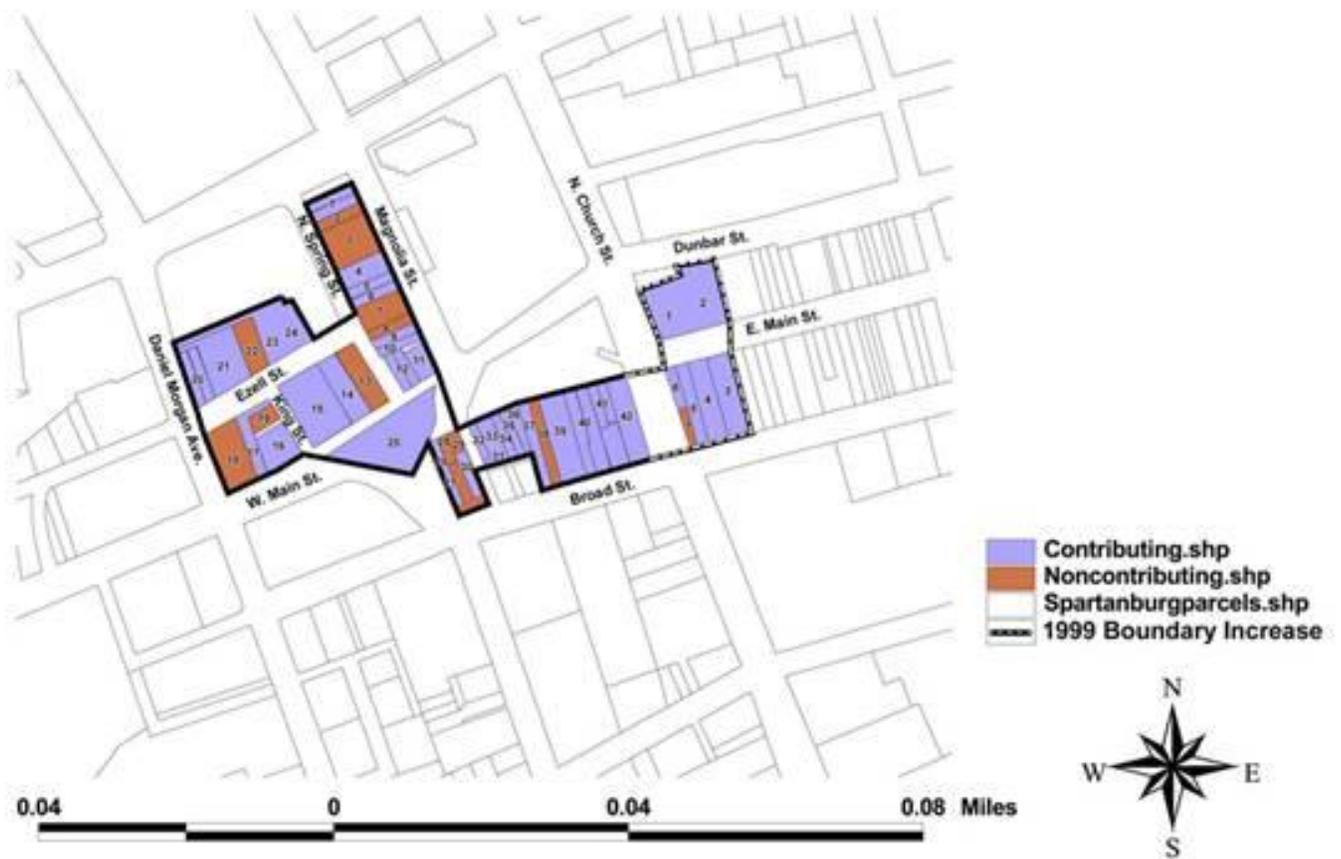


Figure 3: Spartanburg Historic District
Source: City of Spartanburg

Spartanburg County was created in 1785 and by 1789 there was a sufficient number of settlers in the area to justify the building of a courthouse and jail. This first log-building courthouse was placed in what was then the center of the public square, which later became

Morgan Square. For the first half of the 19th century, the town of Spartanburg grew slowly; however, with the construction of a railroad between Spartanburg and Columbia in 1858, Spartanburg entered a growth period that would last until the great depression in the 1930s (Spartanburg, 1983).

In 1880 Spartanburg was granted a city charter from the state legislature, and this incorporation afforded the city the luxury of such municipal improvements as paved roads, water service and fire protection. By the turn of the century, downtown Spartanburg had become the commercial and financial center for the area, and was also a center for travelers and shipping due to the town being an intersection of three major railroad lines. The spokes of these railroad lines radiating from the center of town would give rise to Spartanburg being known as the “Hub City”. The rapid growth of the area in the late 19th and early 20th century was also due to the establishment and flourishing of the textile industry in the area. The first mill was constructed in 1888 and by 1909 there were nine mills in the Spartanburg area. (Lewis, 2007)

The great depression caused an economic downturn for Spartanburg, as it did most cities during that period. From WWII to the early 1960s, Spartanburg benefited from its second period of prosperity due to a boom in the peach growing industry and a resurgence of the textile industry. However, by the middle of the 1960s, the textile saw a dramatic decline resulting in the economic depression of the area. In the 1970s, urban renewal projects aimed at revitalizing the downtown area led to the destruction of two historic buildings adjacent to Morgan Square. In 1983 the Spartanburg Historic District was established, with the city declaring a “commitment to revitalizing the historic commercial area around Morgan Square” (Spartanburg, 1983). One of the most historically significant buildings in the historic district is the neoclassical Masonic Temple built in 1927. (See Figure 4 below)



Figure 4: 1927 Masonic Temple
Source: Blogspot Image

In 1993, BMW opened a factory in Spartanburg County, which has continued to grow over the past 25 years; it now employs 8,000 workers. This factory, along with the many other automotive part manufacturers that have since opened factories in the Spartanburg area, has revitalized the entire economy of the area. Since 2000, there have been 104 renovation and new construction projects in downtown Spartanburg consisting of \$433 million dollars in capital investments. One of the latest of these development projects is the 10-story AC Hotel at the corner of W. Main Street and S. Daniel Morgan Ave. just one block from the railroad tracks mentioned earlier. This hotel was obviously designed within the historic architectural context of the downtown area and will be important in the development of the West Main Street Corridor Plan (Lewis, 2007).



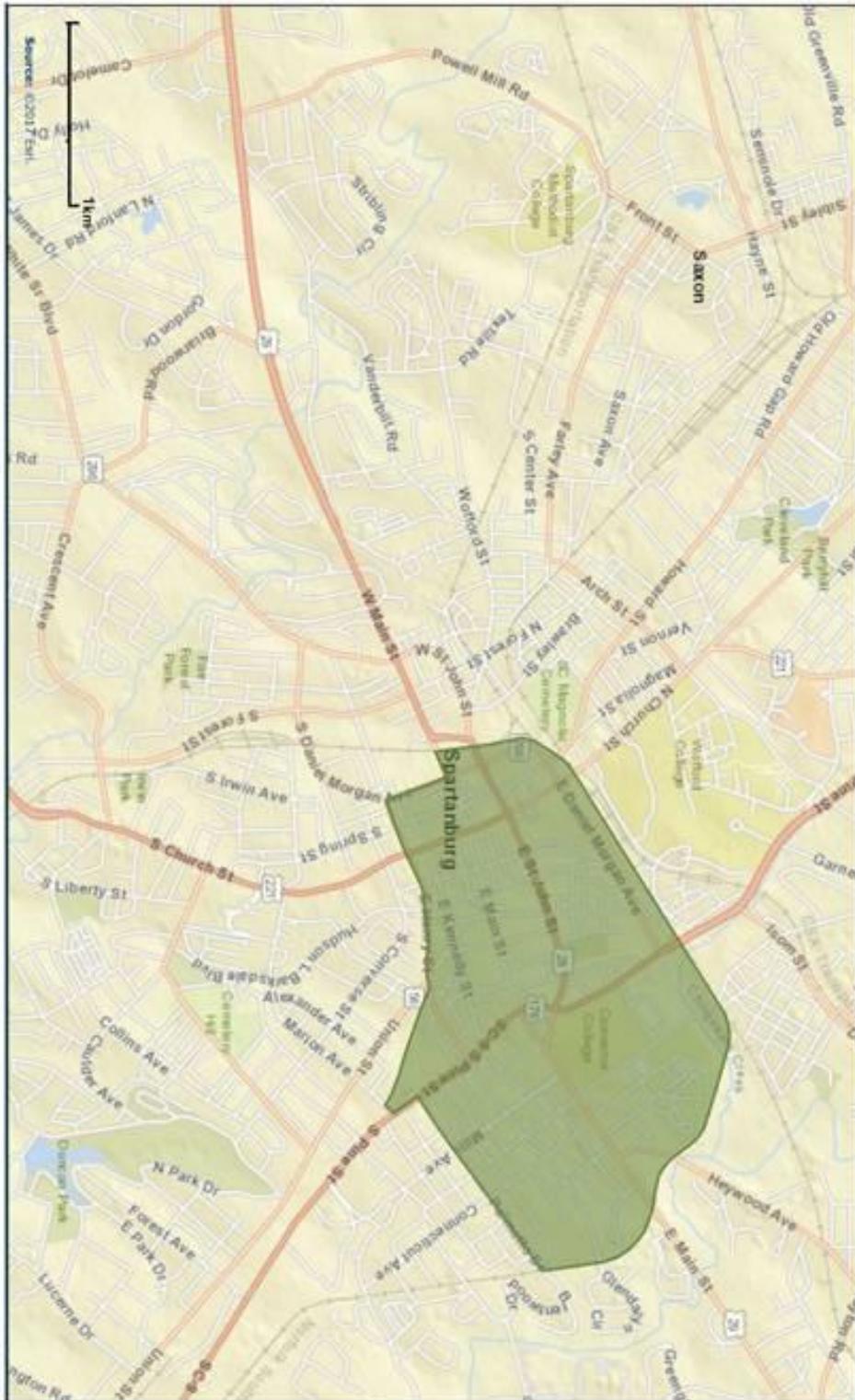
Figure 5: Spartanburg BMW Plant
Source: Autonews.com

Existing Conditions: Social

It is important for the success of the plan to consider the social characteristics in the existing downtown area and along the proposed West Main Street Corridor, especially regarding disparities in income. The census block groups shown in figure 5, below, begin at the railroad tracks of the study and continue east, encompassing the Spartanburg Historic District and the surrounding area. In this area, the median household income is \$46,669 with an average household income of \$81,405. This block group is 81.9% white, 14.1% African American and 4.4% Hispanic. The housing stock in this area is 47.0% owner occupied, 38.2% renter occupied and 14.7% vacant. This report will refer to this census block grouping as Group 1.



East of Railroad



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Figure 6: Census tract one, east of railroad

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

The residents in the census block groups shown in Figure 6 below, begin at the railroad and run west to Briarwood Rd. have a median household income of \$27,383 with an average of \$36,599. This area also consists of 24.4% White, 70.8% African American and 3.1% Hispanic. The housing stock in this area west of the railroad consists of 42.4% owner occupied, 45.4% renter occupied and 12.2% vacant. This report will refer to this census block grouping as Group 2. These statistics illustrate a strong racial and socioeconomic divide between the residents on the east side of the railroad tracks and those on the west side, and this will be an important factor to consider when developing the West Main Street Corridor Plan.



Figure 7: Census tract 2, east of railroad

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Existing Conditions: Physical

The approximate 1.5 miles of the West Main Street Corridor study area consist of several distinct areas with different commercial, industrial and residential uses. Looking at the study area from east to west, the first section runs from the railroad tracks near the new A.C. Hotel to the intersection of Highpoint Road and West Main St. This stretch of the study area is characterized by a mix of commercial uses such as Wakefield Automotive Center, Town Beauty Supply and Family Dollar and light industrial uses such as the Coca Cola Bottling Plant and the Kapasi Glass Mart. In this first stretch of the corridor the buildings are separated by ample space which is predominantly covered with parking lots, and most of the buildings are set back from the street with the parking in front. There are also several vacant properties and businesses mixed in within this area.



Figure 8: Coca Cola Bottling Plant
Source: Wallpapersafari.com



Figure 9: Vacant Property along Corridor
Source: Google Maps

The next several of blocks of the study area—from Terrace Road to S. Highpoint Road—have a more residential feel with smaller scale buildings set closer to the road. These blocks have more trees close to the street and less parking immediately adjacent to the street. There are several single-family homes in this area; however, most of them have been converted to commercial office uses. The West Main Artist Co-op is located at the corner of N. Highpoint and West Main Streets and appears to be a repurposed church.



Figure 10: West Main Artist Co-Op
Source: Google Maps



Figure 11: Single Family Home Used as Commercial
Source: Google Maps

From the intersection of N. Highpoint and W. Main Street to the new Dollar General on W.O. Ezell Boulevard, the character returns to commercial and light industrial uses seen in the first section of the study area. This area has more unused properties than the first section but has more green space between businesses. On the west end of this section there is a large wooded area surrounding the Dollar General and adjacent to Fairforest Creek. As the corridor transitions from West Main Street to W.O. Ezell Boulevard, it

becomes a divided parkway with a wide planted median. The last section of the study area is roughly from the Dollar General east to Briarwood Road. This last section is characterized by large single-family homes and is anchored on the southeast side by the Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Finally, understanding the current planning environment of Spartanburg is critical to the development of the West Main Street Corridor Plan, because the plan will need to be consistent with Spartanburg’s current plans and momentum. All of the parcels adjacent to West Main St. in the study area are included in Spartanburg’s Business Corridor Redevelopment Program. This program’s main goal is to encourage redevelopment along these corridors with a focus on underutilized or vacant parcels. These parcels will be given a 30% rebate on the portion of real property tax increase due to the redevelopment. The rebate is provided for 15 years or until 20% of the total project costs have been recouped (Planners, 2007). See Figure 12 below.

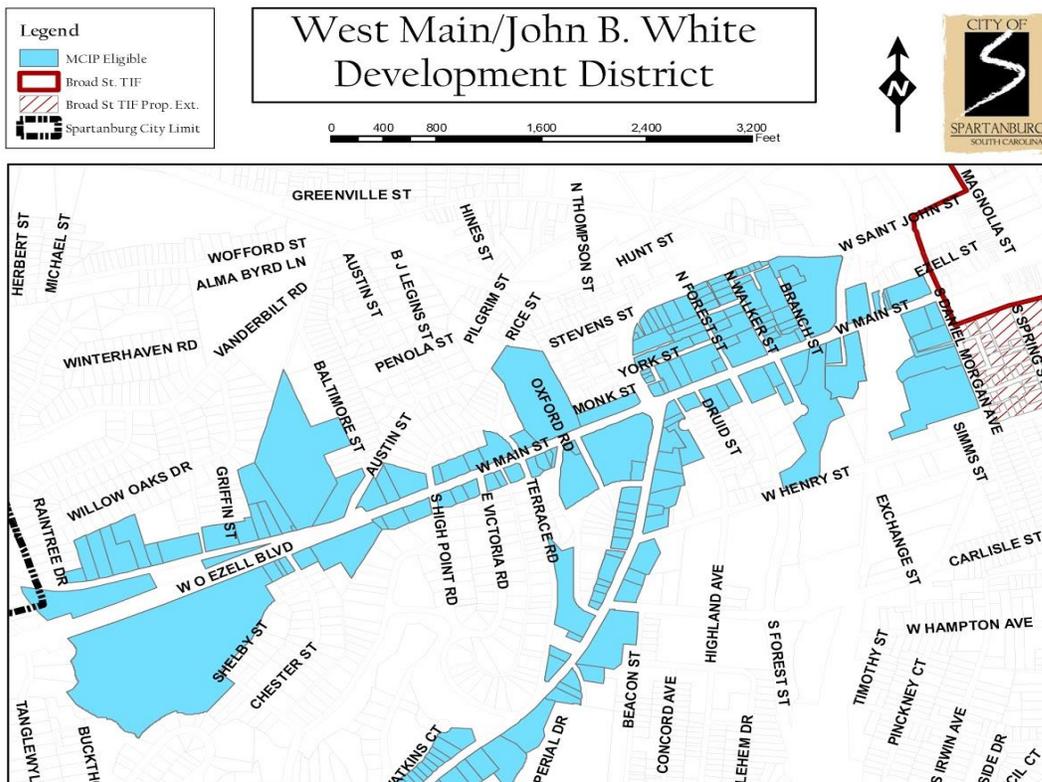


Figure 12: Spartanburg Business Corridor Redevelopment Program
Source: City of Spartanburg

The first several blocks of the study area between the railroad tracks and Reidville Rd. is included in Spartanburg’s existing Downtown Master Plan. According to the Master

Plan, this block is to become a “gateway” to the downtown area, with two relatively large mixed-use buildings located on either side West Main St. at the corner of N. and S. Forest St. consisting of a mix of residential units and commercial. The plan calls for a mix of office and retail along each side of West Main St. designed with sound urban principles such as, “consistent build-to lines closer to the street, parking to the rear and pedestrian-friendly facades.” These requirements along with other street improvements will serve to extend the existing downtown experience further down West Main St. See Figure 13 below.



Figure 13: Downtown Spartanburg Gateway
Source: Spartanburg Master Plan

Urban corridors like the West Main Corridor in Spartanburg experienced political change because of convenient transportation. This change brought about major implications to community organization, pride, and cultural significance in urban areas. Evolving from local provision of economic and welfare service generators to the more popular demanding outward-oriented focus on economic development, the West Main corridor currently acts as a major transportation corridor funneling traffic in and out of downtown Spartanburg to I-26 and West Spartanburg suburbs. There are many services provided along West Main to include transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, and accommodation and food services. Businesses located directly off of West Main are inclined to serve the transportation population that utilizes this transportation system delivering large populations in and out of the city downtown area. When planning on expanding a walkable downtown atmosphere and more protection traffic conditions, land use planning for a pedestrian-friendly environment must include a more diverse provision of services such as arts, entertainment, and recreation services or professional and technical services. This cannot be successfully implemented without the image and physical connectivity of the surrounding residential community. Any gaps in this process will translate to a failed urban form coordinated planning.

Existing Conditions: Transportation

The following sections describe the existing transportation conditions of the West Main Street/ W.O. Ezell Boulevard corridor in terms of existing context zones, connectivity, and streetscaping and landscaping.

Context Zones

To coherently characterize the existing conditions of the corridor, it has been divided into three sections. Each of the sections have an existing land use and road infrastructure typology, and therefore each segment should have separate analyses and recommendations to promote safe travel for both motorized and active forms of travel.

Context Zone 1:

The first section of the corridor has been defined from the eastern railroad tracks to West St. John Street. This area is largely commercial in nature, with larger lot sizes and various business along the corridor. The transportation network is relatively connected; the average block size is around 380 feet, with the cut-through streets providing connectivity north and south of West Main Street.

In terms of the road infrastructure, the existing character in this section is more urban. The streets are single travel lanes with a center turn lane/median combination. Each lane is 11', and the total curb-to-curb width is over 55'. There are existing 6' bike lanes. These bike lanes do not carry through intersections. Most of the intersections (except for St. John Street) are not skewed,

There is also some pedestrian infrastructure in place, including sidewalks along the corridor and some striping at intersections. However, the striping is incomplete and fading in some areas. Figure 13 displays the aerial view of section one.

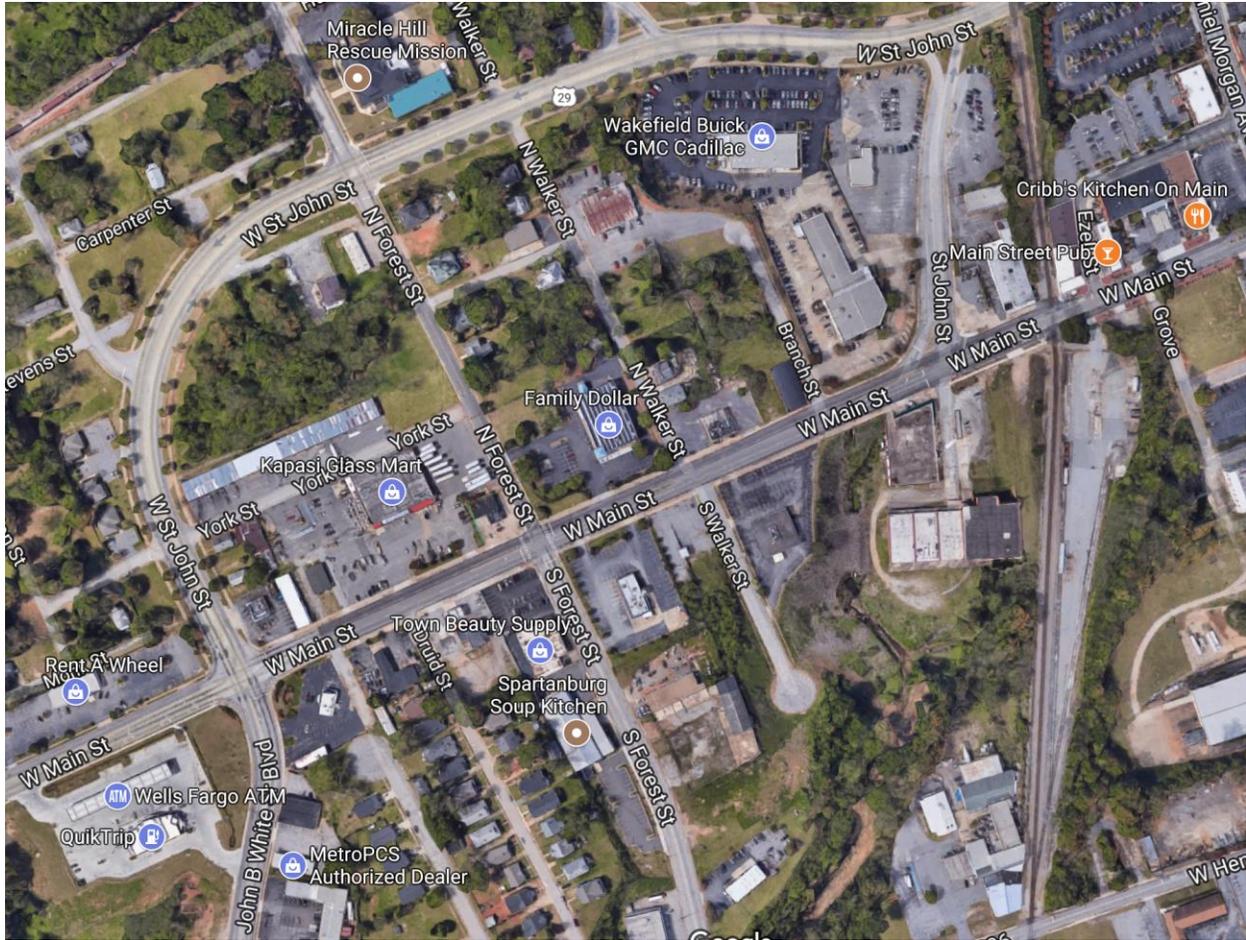


Figure 14: Context Zone 1
Source: Google Maps

Context Zone 2:

The second section is between West St. John Street and the split with West Main Street and W.O. Ezell Boulevard. Section 2 consists of mostly residential uses, with some commercial uses facing the corridor. The transportation as a whole is less complete; while there are cut-through streets, they do not connect to other streets north of West Main Street, and there are minimal connections south of the corridor.

The actual road infrastructure changes significantly in this section. There are two 12' travel lanes in each direction with a center turn lane. The bike lane ends before this section, and there are no other bicycle accommodations. While there are still some pedestrian accommodations in the form of sidewalks, there are no crossing opportunities for pedestrians wanting to cross either north or south. With 5 wider travel lanes, a 35-mph speed limit, and no crossing infrastructure, it is not safe for pedestrians to cross West Main Street. Figure 14 displays the aerial view of section two.

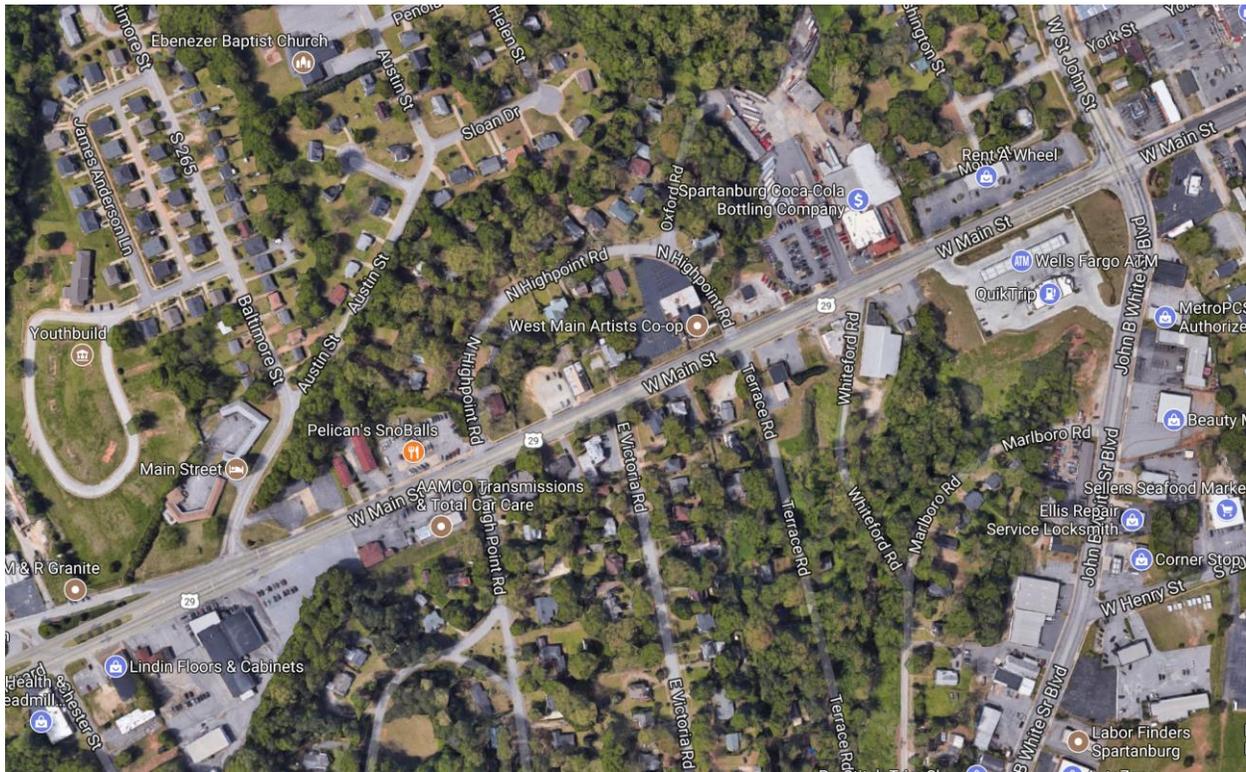


Figure 15: Context Zone 2

Source: Google Maps

Context Zone 3:

The third and final section is between the West Main Street/W.O. Ezell Boulevard and Briarwood Road and S-564. This section is characterized by larger, irregularly shaped commercial parcels that face the corridor, most of which are vacant. Further along this section, there are residential uses that are buffered by several feet of trees so that they do not interact with the road itself.

The nature of this road infrastructure is notably different because this section transitions from a 5-lane (2 travel lanes in each direction with a center turn lane) to a 4-lane, limited access, divided highway of sorts. The speed limit increases to 40 miles per hour, which is very fast for any sort of on-street bicycle or pedestrian facility. Figure 15 displays the aerial view of section three.

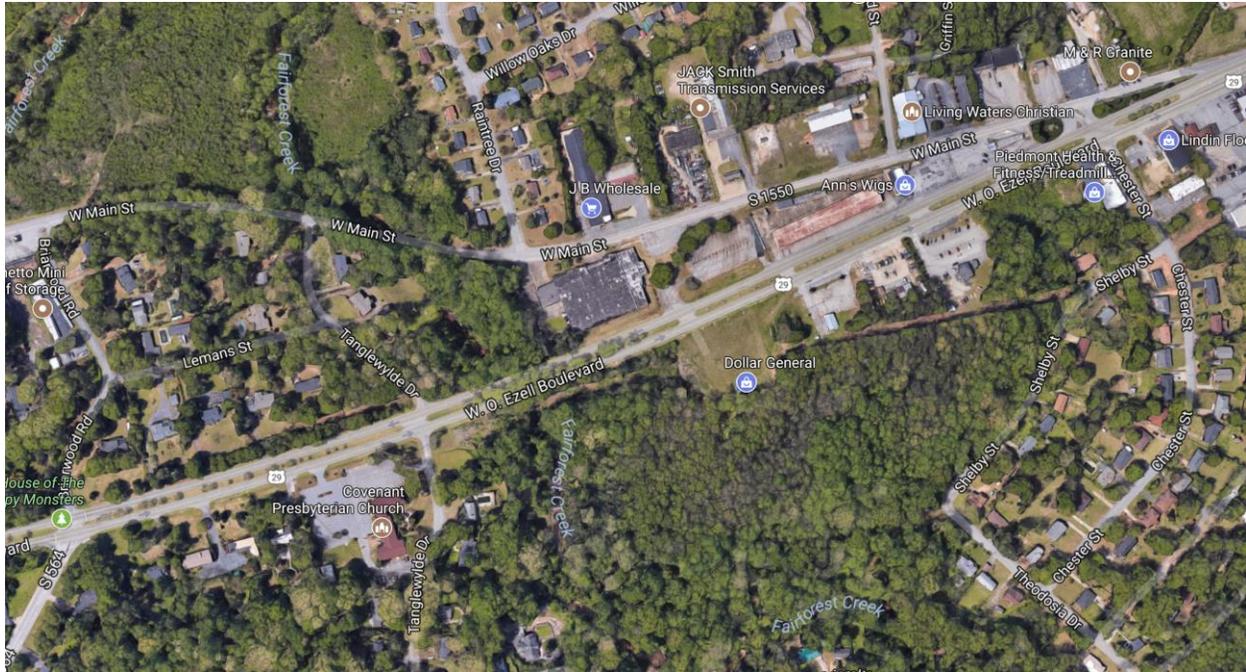


Figure 16: Context Zone 3
Source: Google Maps

Connectivity

To improve connectivity for alternative modes of transportation, it is helpful to first identify existing infrastructure dedicated to active transportation. First, there is a largely complete network of sidewalks just east of the study area in downtown Spartanburg, as shown in the image below.

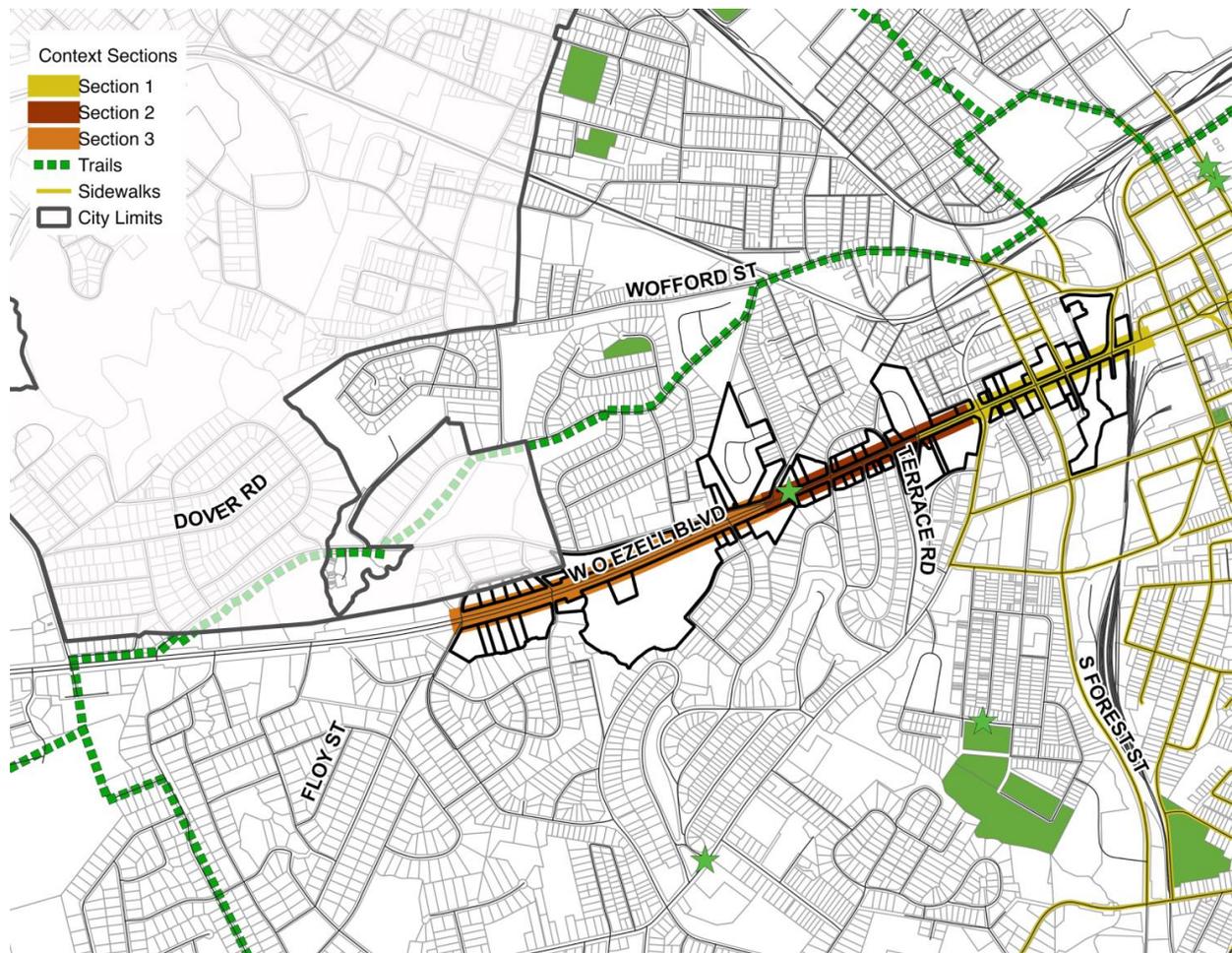


Figure 17: Context Sections Map
 Source: Spartanburg Master Plan

There is also an existing transit stop (denoted by the green stars) along the corridor. This stop does have a covered shelter to provide a more comfortable waiting experience for transit patrons. There is not, however, any sidewalk or other pedestrian infrastructure around the bus stop, making first and last mile connections difficult. “Desire lines”, or unofficial pedestrian paths, show where pedestrians using the stop would like to walk but are not provided their own separated, safe space. Lack of infrastructure makes transit use difficult for those with physical disabilities who would require ADA ramps to safely get to the stop. See Figure 18 below.



Figure 18: Existing Bus Stop
Source: Google Maps

As shown in the figure above, there is a planned trail connection just west of the study area connecting Barritt Avenue across W.O. Ezell Boulevard to Vanderbilt Road, and continuing northeast. While this is outside of the scope of this project, it is important to recognize that this corridor is part of a larger network of connectivity. Recommendations should be mindful of this planned trail and seek to connect it to the gateway into downtown.

As a part of federal requirements, the Spartanburg Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) (known as the Spartanburg Area Transportation Study, or SPATS) created the Spartanburg Area Long Range Transportation Study (LRTP). This plan encourages municipalities within the MPO to encourage active transportation, transit, and efficient travel through several means: creating partnerships, infrastructure developments, advocacy supporting, and local initiatives.

The first goal listed in the LRTP is improving bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel. The plan identifies more specific goals to improve active transportation in Spartanburg:

- (1) Roadway crossings need to be safer
- (2) Off-road facilities need to be better connected and more extensive
- (3) Incorporating on road facilities into design efforts
- (4) Looking for opportunities to engage the business community in planning and design.

The LRTP identifies that the many residents in the Spartanburg area have become more accepting of biking and walking in recent years. In the US, around 60% of people categorize themselves as “interested but concerned,” meaning that they would ride bikes for transportation and recreation, but that there are safety concerns that keeps them from doing so (US Bicycling Participation Benchmarking Study, 2014). The plan endorses the “Six E’s of Biking and Walking”:

1. Engineering--providing the actual infrastructure needed to bike and walk safely
2. Education--teaching all road users to use infrastructure carefully
3. Encouragement--showing citizens that biking and walking are good options of transportation
4. Enforcement--ensuring that everyone who uses roads and other transportation infrastructure abide by the rules and laws in place
5. Evaluation--identifying and regularly analyzing quantitative success measures to ensure that the transportation network is always improving
6. Equity--ensuring that resources are distributed fairly among all geographical areas and sociodemographic groups within the Spartanburg area

The LRTP identifies that a notable portion of the West Main Street Corridor--from S. High Point Road to John B White S. Boulevard, and from Powell Mill Road to S. High Point Road--has been identified for infrastructure improvements; bike lanes are planned for these sections.

Existing Conditions: Economic Development

A large portion of the study area is included in the West Main/John B. White Development District which is part of the City of Spartanburg Corridor Redevelopment Program. (See Figure 18 below). This program gives rebates on property tax increases due to redevelopment for up to 20% of the project cost. This district will serve as the base for the specific land use proposed elements discussed in the Final Plan Proposal section of this report.

The West Main Corridor falls within jurisdiction of the Business Corridor Redevelopment Program which offers significant reduction of the high cost of redevelopment for small businesses through property tax rebate incentives intended to reward small business property owners for taking the initiative to redevelop and upgrade structures, basic infrastructure, and physical services associated with demolition, site preparation, and site improvements.

The West Main Corridor is eligible to participate in a TIF program but has not yet been a region that has participated in the TIF program. Furthermore, there is no current organized economic development group for businesses along the corridor. The lack of organized business leaders or business organizations to represent the corridor is seen as a great opportunity.

There is a significant amount of abandoned or vacant properties lining portions of the corridor. This is one of the larger issues due to owners abandoning or not taking interest in these properties for numerous reasons. These properties, and the few undeveloped properties along the corridor offers a unique opportunity and challenge for business owners along this corridor.

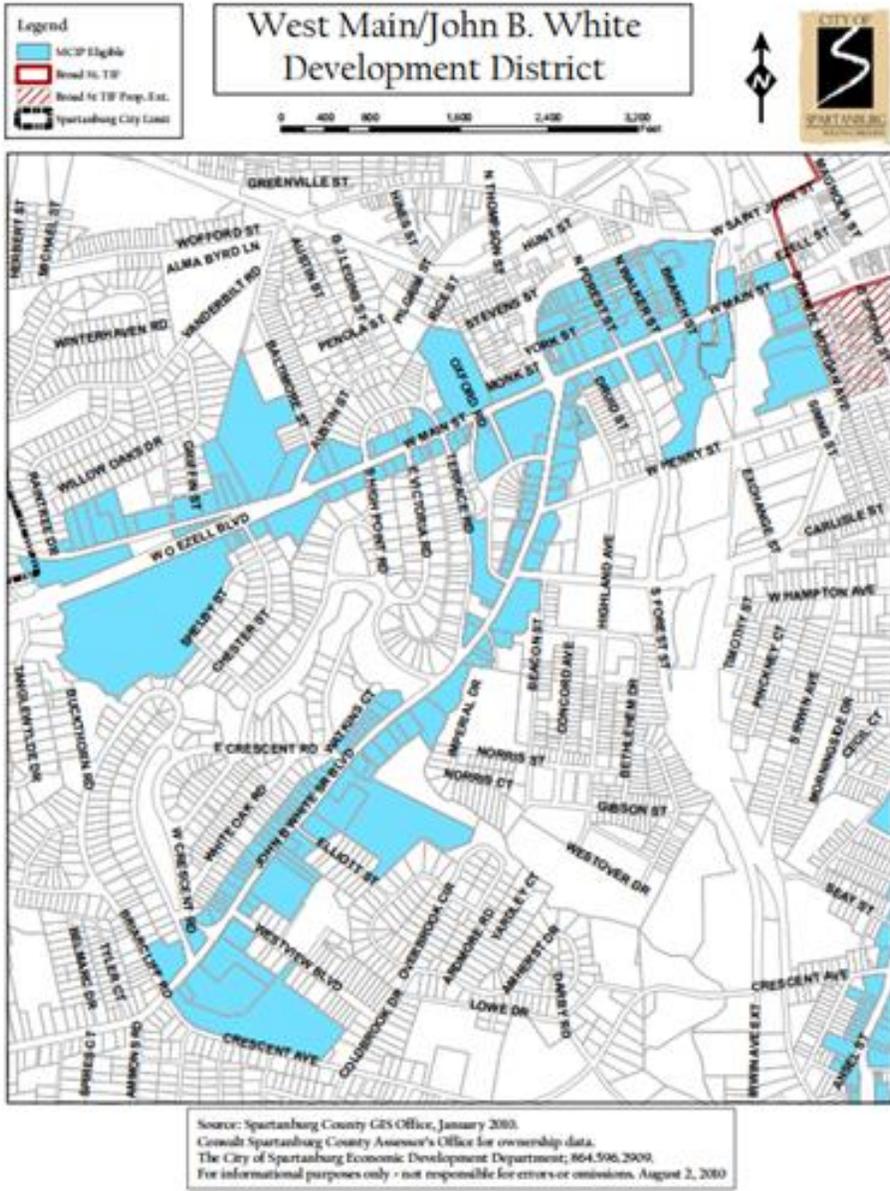


Figure 19: West Main Street Development District
 Source: City of Spartanburg

Existing Conditions: Land Use

The City of Spartanburg has recently updated the zoning ordinance in accordance with South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 (Article III, Title XI). The ordinance covers most of the district in commercial, business, and urban center districts with little neighborhood shopping and residential layers. This diversity of zones in such a small amount of space significantly complicates the ability to improve infrastructure, economic development and redevelopment efforts, and can even contribute to general hazardous issues by reducing the ability of pedestrian traffic and vehicular traffic to navigate along and around the corridor. Additionally, the zoning ordinance does not extend outside of the jurisdiction of the City of Spartanburg. A small portion of the corridor traverses into the Spartanburg County jurisdiction and is not covered under the city's ordinance.

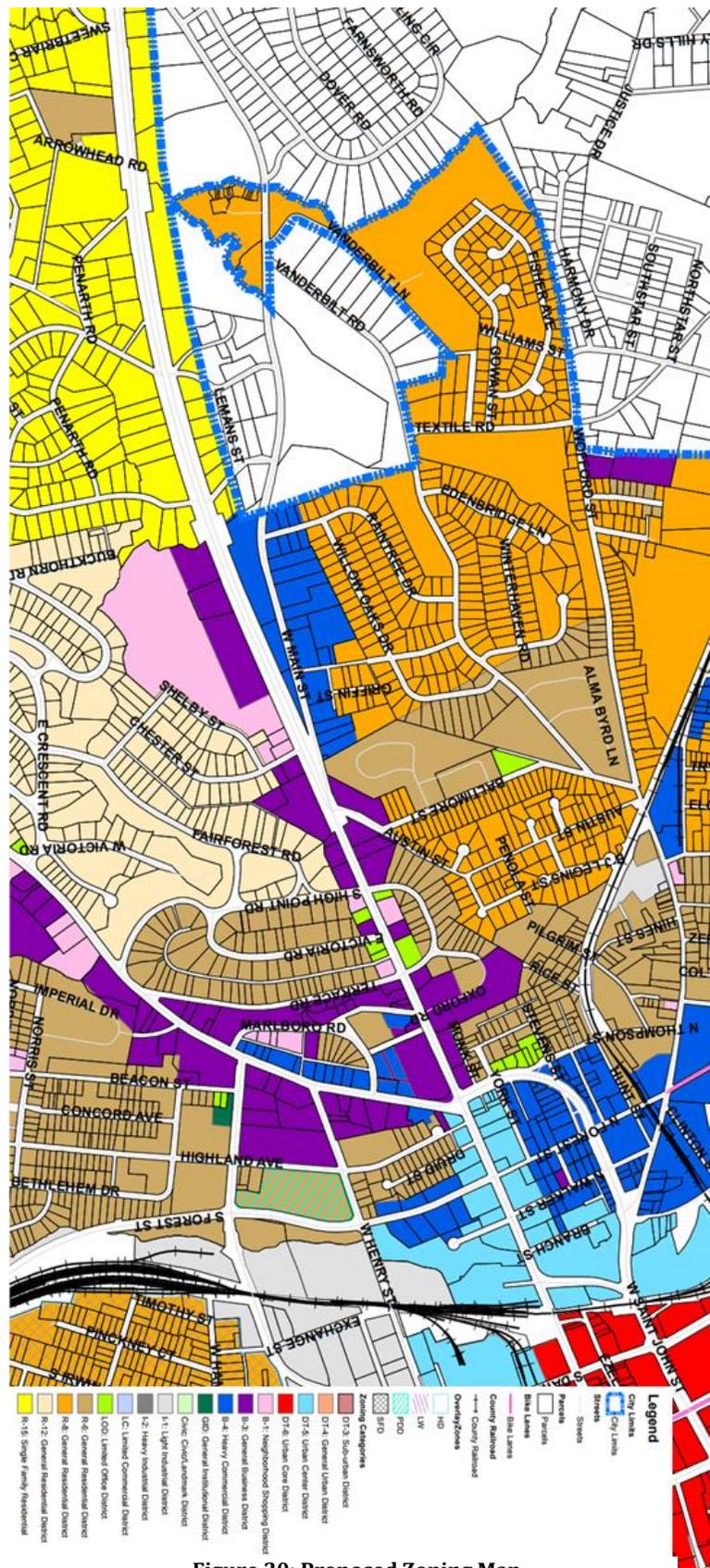


Figure 20: Proposed Zoning Map

Existing Conditions: Signage, Public Art, and Wayfinding

The West Main corridor currently lacks notable or consistent branding throughout the area. This reflects the lack of support from the city as well as the lack of public input and unity. There are few areas that showcase remarkable art or historical significance. Of these include the exhibits in front of the Artist Co Op building (see Figure 21), the Spots of Pride (see Figure 22), and an abandoned warehouse (see Figure 23). The majority of signs along the West Main corridor lack a positive contribution to the culture of the city (see Figure 24).



Figure 21: West Main Street artist co-op artwork
Source: Google Maps



Figure 22: Spartanburg "Spot of Pride" examples
Source: Google Maps



Figure 23: Abandoned mill on West Main Street
Source: Google Maps



Figure 24: Collection of character signs
Source: Google Maps

SWOT Analysis

The purpose of a SWOT Analysis-- or a “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” Analysis--is to categorize existing conditions in order to provide a perspective from which to create a new vision. By knowing what resources and challenges are present, a more realistic and holistic approach for redeveloping the corridor can be made. The following subsections delineate the West Main Corridor’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Strengths

The corridor’s strengths should serve as springboards from which to catalyze new development. They should be exploited and built upon in a way that is equitable and authentic to Spartanburg. Notable strengths are as follows:

- **Proximity:** The study area is close to the existing downtown allowing easy spillover of downtown resources and economic momentum
- **Diversified Economic Base:** The existing land uses already have a variety of different types of commercial activities that can be expanded upon.
- **Parcel Sizes:** There are a variety of parcel sizes along the corridor that can support different land uses. This includes the larger parcel recommended as a mixed-use node in the middle of the study area.
- **Beautification:** There are two areas along the corridor that are marked by signage using the phrase “Spot of Pride”. These signs allude to a beautification movement that focuses on improving medians and roadsides with appealing landscaping through sponsorship.
- **Public Art:** The West Main corridor has two local artists’ sites to engage with that may help interpret public input and craft it into an appealing brand.

Weaknesses

It is important to recognize the corridor’s existing weaknesses and how they can be improved. The weaknesses identified here should really be seen as potential future improvement opportunities.

- *Landscaping and Streetscaping:* The existing physical conditions are not aesthetically appealing. Streetscaping in downtown Spartanburg should be continued throughout the downtown extension context zone.
- *Transportation Infrastructure:* The existing physical conditions are neither aesthetically appealing nor safe for non-motorized modes of transportation. Some roads have low traffic counts and could be considered for shutdown.
- *Lack of Access to Nature:* There is a lack of green spaces like small parks within good walking distance for the residents as well as visitors along the corridor.
- *Lack of identity:* The current conditions--land use, signage, streetscaping, and transportation infrastructure--are not coordinated in a way that fosters vital activity, livability, or a sense of place, resulting in a space that is lacking in any identity.
- *Limited resources:* There may be limited resources available within the city of Spartanburg to encourage or otherwise incentivize redevelopment along the corridor.

Opportunities

The main impetus behind the visioning project is to identify possibilities for the corridor that will help extend the downtown experience. Those opportunities include:

- *Gateway:* The West Main Corridor could serve as a visual gateway into the existing downtown.
- *Local Economic Development:* The proposed plan considers and support characteristics as well as needs of local small businesses
- *Green Space:* The proposed mixed use development would contain green space, adding to the existing park and recreation space within Spartanburg.
- *Trail Connectivity:* Bicycle and pedestrian improvements along the corridor would create connections among existing and planned trails and parks.
- *Branding:* Creating a the “West Hub” brand that is similar but separated from downtown Spartanburg will create a complementary extension of the downtown experience.
- *Utilizing vacant lands:* Vacant and derelict properties abutting the corridor are opportunities for new development if the right economic incentives and infrastructure are in place.
- *Extending current urban form code:* By applying the existing urban form code to the remainder of the corridor, development styles can be maintained and the same sense of place replicated in the new corridor.

- *Existing TIF (Broad Street):* There may be opportunities to recreate the existing Broad Street TIF for the West Hub area.
- *Sign Ordinance:* the city has adopted a sign ordinance to preserve property values from unsightly, obscure, and inconsistent signage.

Threats

Issues that are not currently affecting the corridor but have a possibility of negatively impacting it in the future are threats. While it is difficult to foresee all the externalities of encouraging redevelopment on West Main Street, some potential threats have been identified as follows:

Gentrification: Redevelopment along the corridor could cause neighboring residential neighborhoods to experience some of the negative side effects of redevelopment--including rising housing prices, potential displacement of small businesses and lower-income residents, and further socioeconomic segregation of the communities

Final Plan Proposal: Approaches

Based on an analysis of the existing conditions and the SWOT analysis, the following plan proposal has been crafted to address many of noted weaknesses and threats by building on the opportunities and strengths in a way that is true to Spartanburg. This proposal outlines the strategic approach that the project team will utilize to create a vision plan for the West Main Street Corridor. The study area portion of the West Main Street Corridor has the opportunity to become an asset for downtown Spartanburg. A comprehensive strategy must guide the planning process to take advantage of existing assets and identify challenges. The general proposed planning approach is as follows:

Develop a Vision: A vision serves as a project approach's guiding ideal. It must reflect important elements of Spartanburg, including its historical connection to railroads and industrial business. At the same time, the vision must identify a trajectory towards Spartanburg's future.

The West Main Street Corridor seeks to be a place that:

- 1. Preserves the historical integrity of Spartanburg,*
- 2. Builds upon existing strengths of downtown,*
- 3. And expands the downtown experience further down West Main Street.*

Develop a Brand: While the proposed corridor will be contextually and physically connected to the existing downtown area (which is east from South Daniel Morgan Avenue), there is opportunity to distinguish these two areas. This new development has an opportunity to have its own brand. While existing development is often referred to as downtown, there is an opportunity to view this new extension as something different. A clear brand will be developed that is reflective of the historic nature of Spartanburg but that also excites residents about the opportunity for new development.

Define the Vision: The vision has been further defined through the following approaches.

Transportation Goals

- ❖ Provide a more pedestrian friendly environment
- ❖ Provide a safer biking infrastructure
- ❖ Increase alternative transportation
- ❖ Provide accessibility for existing transit stop(s) along the corridor
- ❖ Provide an esthetic and structural connection to the downtown area

Criteria for Strategies

- ❖ Coordinate improving bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel with policies that will improve biking and walking in the upstate
- ❖ Identify specific intersection crossings that need to be safer and propose intersection improvements
- ❖ Ensure that future improvements meld the public's vision of place for context sensitivity
- ❖ Ensure that proposed infrastructure improvements support connectivity with existing plans and infrastructure

Strategies

1. Streetscape improvements at the intersection of St. John Street and West Main Street:

The intersection of St. John and West Main streets is just east of the railroad tracks that delineate the eastern edge of the West Main Street corridor study area. This intersection is critical, as it connects the “gateway” intersection of W. St. John and W. Main Street identified in the Downtown Master Plan as well as the entire West Main Street Corridor to the downtown area; however, this intersection is not addressed in the existing Downtown Master plan.

Currently, this intersection is not pedestrian friendly and could be considered pedestrian hostile. The intersection has only one incomplete cross walk and no crossing signals. Power lines dominate the overhead plane and the only lighting elements are street lights located on the power line poles. The curb radius on the northwest corner of the intersection is unusually large which creates a very wide pedestrian crossing. The paving is simple concrete and there are no street trees. There is a bike lane in each direction; however, it is not a separated bike facility. One positive aspect of the intersection is that the

building located on the southwest and northeast corners of the intersection are located fairly close to the sidewalk and therefore could be integrated into a more pedestrian friendly streetscape.



Figure 25: Existing Conditions from Google Maps
Source: Google Maps



Figure 26: Existing conditions

A number of improvements will both contribute to a more pedestrian friendly environment and increase safety for biking. The curb should be moved so that the bike lane is at the sidewalk level and becomes a separated biking facility separated from automobile traffic with street trees and street lights. The lighting proposed is somewhat larger than the acorn lights of the downtown area, as this area will have a slightly larger scale. The street lights will serve automobile, biking and pedestrian traffic. The power lines will be moved underground to allow for the street trees, which will provide a comfortable, shaded and pedestrian-oriented sense of enclosure. The paving will be changed to brick paving to, matching the downtown area, to provide a continuous flow of the ground plane from the downtown area into the corridor. The radii of the intersection will be made smaller to provide a shorter pedestrian crossing distance, and the crosswalks will be painted stamped pavement similar to the intersection adjacent the new A.C. Hotel. Crossing signals will also be installed. These improvements are critical in extending the downtown experience further down W. Main Street.



Figure 27: Proposed Changes



Figure 28: Proposed Changes Experiential View

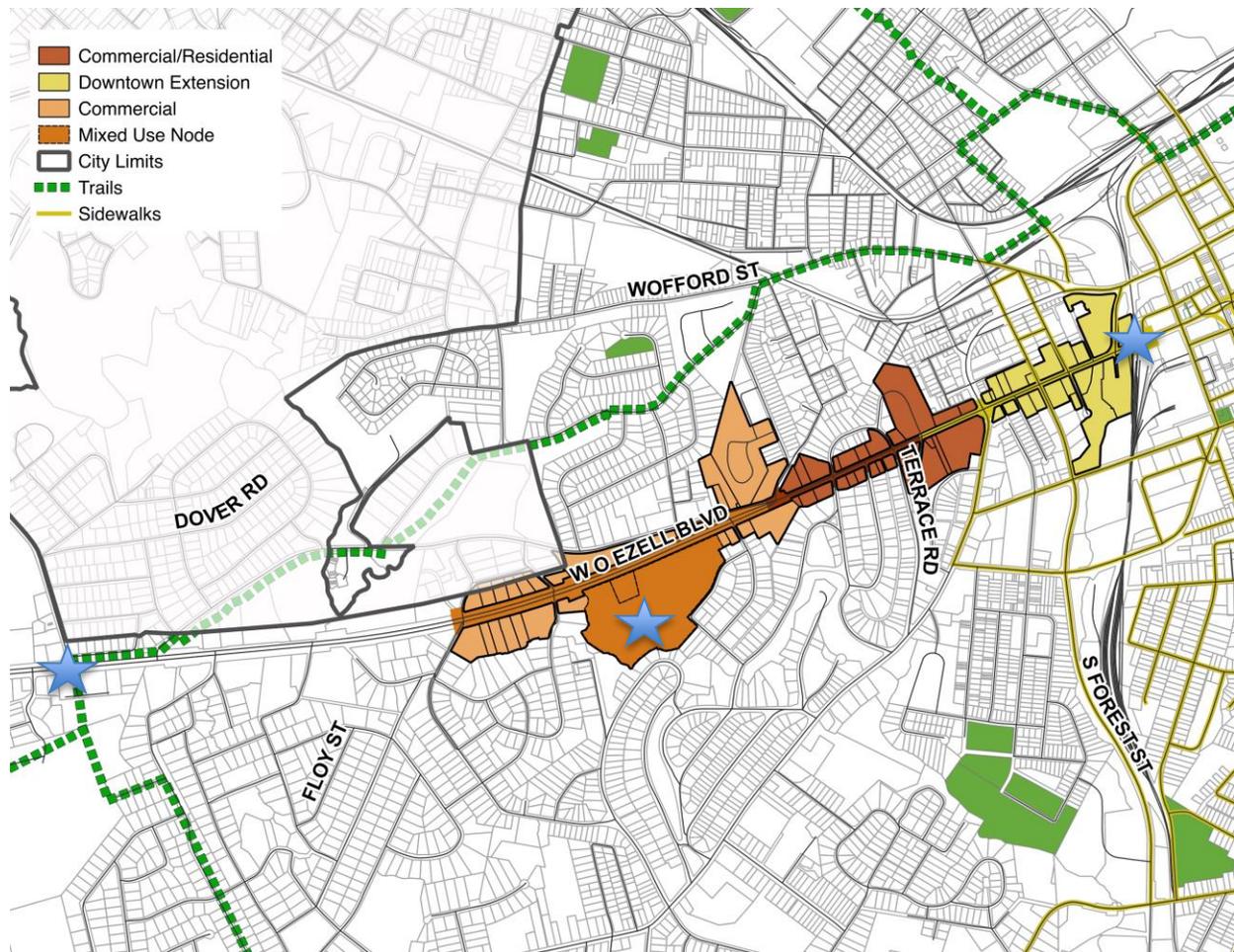


Figure 29: Nodes Map
Source: City of Spartanburg

2. Alternative Transportation Improvements by Context Zone: The existing conditions in each context zone inform the types of active transportation improvements that both appropriate for the surrounding uses and feasible to implement in the existing infrastructure.

The downtown expansion context zone should implement wider sidewalks and a separated bike lane. The following cross section characterizes the proposed street improvements for West Main Street east of the study area. This cross section should be extended into the downtown extension context zone.

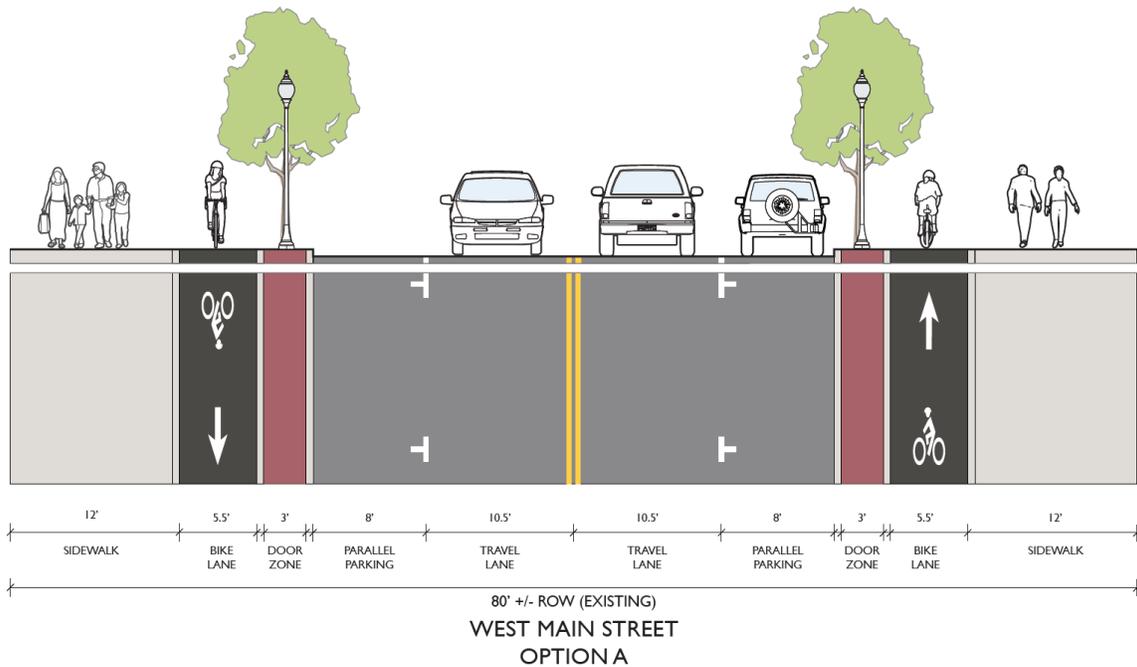


Figure 30: Planned Cross Section for West Main Street Downtown
Source: Toole Design Group, LLC

This type of facility has on street parking and a sidewalk-level bike lane that is separated from motorized traffic with physical barriers. While more expensive than a traditional bike lane, this type of infrastructure is very safe and may encourage new cyclists—who may be less experienced or confident on a bike—to use it. The bike lanes should be at least 6 feet wide to allow for comfortable riding for less experienced cyclists.

The commercial and residential section should also use a separated bike lane, but the actual context should look different (See the following character image.) This type of facility encourages riders in the same way as the previous cross section, but this type of design is more fitting to the residential and lower density commercial context.



Figure 31: Separated Bike Lane
Source: Google Images

Source: Montgomery County, MD Master Plan

The last section should implement a different type of infrastructure. While more intensive commercial has been recommended for this area, the existing road structure—limited access separated, and multi-lane per travel direction—is not conducive to separated bike lanes. Instead, a multi-use path should be implemented on one side of the street. Due to the proposed mixed-use center on the southern side of the corridor, this plan proposes that the path also be on the southern side.



Figure 32: Multi-Use Path Example
Source: Curbed Atlanta

By having the path only on one side, there is need for safe crossing options for those who are using the west-bound bike lane in the previous section. A HAWK crossing signal is proposed at the West Main Street/W.O. Ezell crossing. While outside of the scope of this project, a similar crossing is also proposed at the trail crossing west of the end of the study area.

3. Connection to existing trail system: Approximately one mile to the west of the proposed mixed-use development (See Land Use Approach below) is an existing trail system. While this trail is not in the corridor study area, it is important to provide a connection to this system to allow alternative modes of transportation such as biking and walking.

Visioning Land Use Approach

Land Use Goals

- ❖ Create a more pedestrian friendly urban form
- ❖ Create an environment that promotes economic development

Criteria for Strategies

- ❖ Coordinate with guidelines set by the Spartanburg's Business Corridor Redevelopment Program
- ❖ Propose strategies that are good examples of "flexible codes" and that result in land use patterns that create a pedestrian oriented urban form
- ❖ Propose strategies that reflect best policies revolved around common principles like maximizing economic development, resource generators, and logical land use relationships.

Strategies

1. Extension or overlay of existing downtown form based code: The City of Spartanburg has had successful implementation of a unified downtown code that fits in with the general zoning ordinance to provide a directed vision of the downtown area. We propose an extension of the downtown code to include the West Main Corridor to provide a unified vision of growth, redevelopment, and urban form. Spartanburg leadership and residents have a unique opportunity to act on some public properties and transportation elements for a complete redesign of the corridor. Utilizing growth regulator tools in the recently updated zoning ordinance of the City of Spartanburg, the detailed urban code section of the zoning ordinance (section 515), and a potential optional zoning layer could incentivize redevelopment along the corridor with a focus on pedestrian infrastructure, walkable atmospherics (trees and landscaping), and similar building materials at the expense of opting out of the traditional zoning ordinance to expedite the development/redevelopment process. This can improve the quality of life, safety, and welfare along the corridor while building into the future vision of a safe, walkable, active downtown experience.

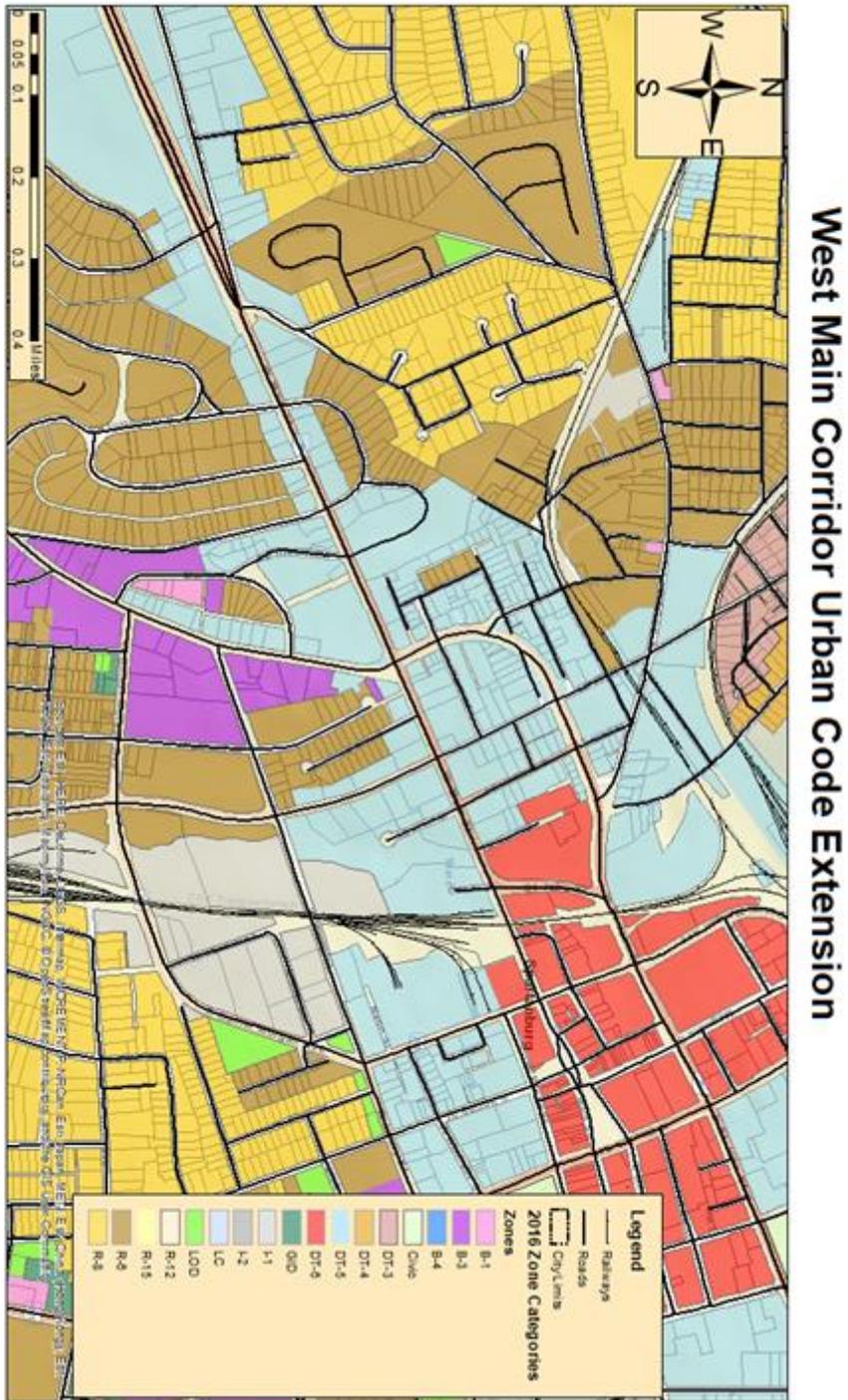


Figure 33: Proposed Zoning Extension Map

There are implications for this type of ordinance tool to facilitate economic development partnerships and create buy-in and community identity with local residents, business owners, and developers. With an option to opt-in on a more flexible ordinance at the expense of providing or working with the city to promote walkable infrastructure, the corridor makes a prime target for developers and public officials through adoption of an optional pedestrian-friendly ordinance and the extension of the urban code section of the downtown zoning ordinance guide.

2. Mixed-use development: The West Main Street corridor is a 1.5-mile linear corridor. In order to form walkable areas, the corridor will need to consist of nodes of more intense use surrounded by a gradient of less intensive uses, major nodes should be roughly spaced every mile. The first node of the corridor, moving from east to west, will be the area around the intersection of W. St. John Street and West Main Street. The area around this intersection is indicated as a “gateway” in Spartanburg’s existing Downtown Master Plan and the West Main Street Corridor should be developed in concert with this existing plan.

Located approximately 1 mile from the “gateway” node discussed above, is a 20-acre parcel that will be developed as a major node of the corridor as a mixed-use development. The only current use of the parcel is a Dollar General Store. The parcel is mostly a wooded site and is bordered by the Fairforest Creek to the west and south. The mixed-use development will be situated as to preserve the creek and as much of the surrounding riparian woodland as possible. The creek will serve as an amenity for the site.

The mixed-use development will be laid out using traditional neighborhood principles of a walkable grid consisting of 200’ - 300’ blocks, adapted to the topography on the west and southern sides to assist in preserving the creek and surrounding riparian areas. The development will use pedestrian oriented streetscapes including wide sidewalks, street trees, sitting areas, outdoor dining and pedestrian scaled lighting. The mixed-use development will consist of several larger mixed-use buildings surrounding a central park/greenspace with a mix of retail and commercial on the street level with office and residential uses located above. This higher density center of the development will be surrounded by smaller commercial and retail uses with residential townhomes located on the southern and western edges overlooking Fairforest Creek. The mixed use development will serve as an anchor for the corridor on the western end and will become a destination element. See figures below.

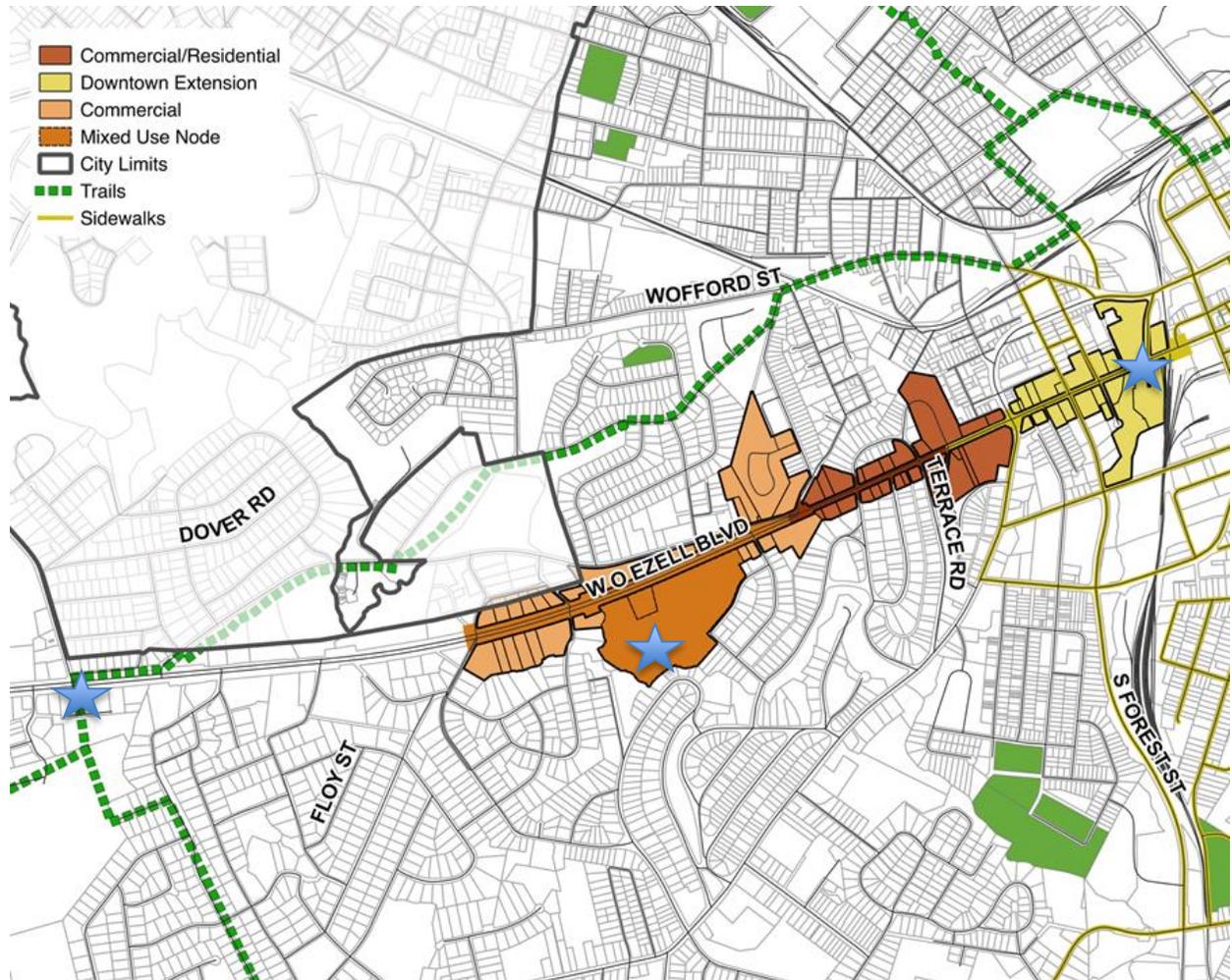


Figure 34: Mixed Use Node Context

WEST HUB MIXED-USE CENTER

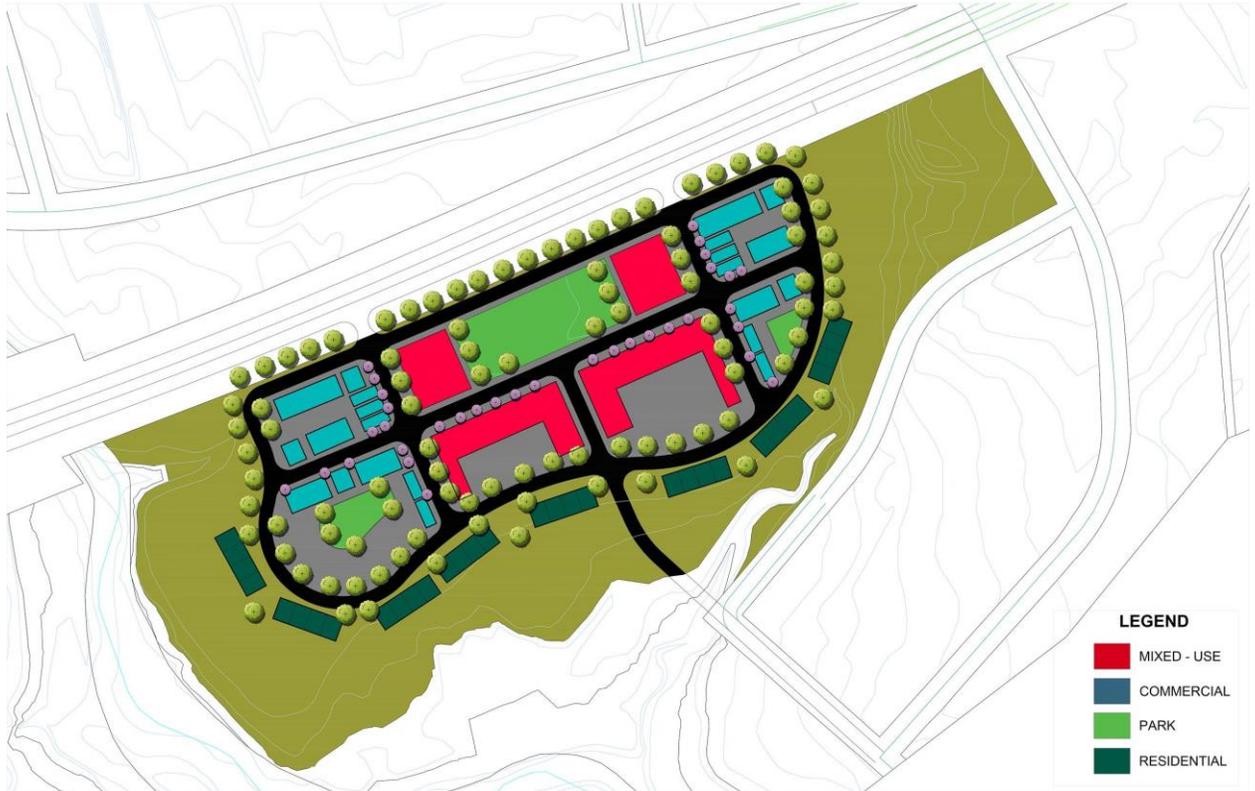


Figure 35: Proposed Mixed Use Center Concept

Strategy

- ❖ Organize community and business leadership to create a vision for the West Main Street Corridor consistent with the existing Spartanburg Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Master Plan.
- ❖ Utilize historical context and public input to create a public art and brand for the West Main Street Gateway and Corridor
- ❖ Create a vision of a place around pedestrian walkability, historic preservation, and transportation options.
- ❖ Identify standards for and encourage public art

Proposed Elements

1. Develop a Brand: While the proposed corridor will be contextually and physically connected to the existing downtown area (which is east from South Daniel Morgan Avenue), there is opportunity to distinguish these two areas. This new development has an opportunity to have its own brand. While existing development is often referred to as downtown, there is an opportunity to view this new extension as something different. A clear brand will be developed that is reflective of the historic nature of Spartanburg but that also excites residents about the opportunity for new development.

2. Evoke the brand with signage: The West Main corridor currently lacks notable or consistent branding throughout the area. This reflects the lack of support from the city as well as the lack of public input and unity. There are few areas that showcase remarkable art or historical significance. Of these include the exhibits in front of the Artist Co Op building, the Spots of Pride, an abandoned warehouse, and a few businesses. The majority of signs along the West Main corridor lack a positive contribution to the culture of the city.

3. Define the Vision: Creating a vision should follow best practices examples. A summary of the practices that will be used for each approach are enumerated below:

Identify Stakeholders – stakeholders may be determined through a variety of methods. Online databases filtering demographic data can help identify the socioeconomic factors influencing surrounding residential neighborhoods or the types of businesses along the corridor. Random street interviews are another way of surveying stakeholders that may spend time in the area but may not necessarily have occupancy there.

Public Participation – engaging with the public can help in both creating and implementing a vision for the area. Using tools such as charrettes and site tours encourage public input and provide information to help the public form more relevant opinions, concerns, and suggestions. Visual surveys may help the city identify what the public likes and dislikes in art, signage, and branding. Workshops can further inspire public participation by letting stakeholders reshape project boundaries or goals.

Committee Selection – building on public input, stakeholders sharing the same function or location can form into associations. Local merchants, residents, or artists can organize and meet regularly to create focused initiatives to share with the city council or consulting firm. Some of these associations may be given funding and additional authority over public amenities or redevelopment programs.

4. Public Art: The West Main corridor has two local artists' sites to engage with that may help interpret public input and craft it into an appealing brand. West Main Artists Co Op and Carolina Gallery provide support for artists by offering studios for practice and venues to sell created works. Artists affiliated with the Carolina Gallery have providing works for Cascades Verde Senior Living Community, Greenville Healthcare System, Jackson County Public Library, Joseph P. Riley Center, and Marriott at Renaissance Park.

5. Gateway Marker: As previously mentioned, West Main St. exists along the gateway corridor leading into downtown Spartanburg. Development trends beginning post-WWII encouraged uncontrolled sprawl to spread away from dense urban downtowns, causing placelessness by discouraging walkability and pedestrian-scale environments. However, creating a permeable, yet distinguished transition zone may help establish a sense of place for the visitor or resident by adding interesting and contextual visual markers to instill civic pride, direct travelers, or allude to Spartanburg's history of industry, railroads, textiles, and agriculture. The primary marker should be in a prominent area that also has ample right-of-way for maximum sightlines without hampering a driver's field of view. Figure 36 is a preliminary concept of the gateway sign at the St. John St.-W Main intersection. The sign is 10 ft. x 30 ft. x 8 ft., which adheres to Spartanburg's sign ordinance. It also rests between the commercial parcel and the city's right-of-way.



Figure 36: Gateway sign concept

Source: Google Maps



Figure 37: Spartanburg signage

Source: Google images

Secondary signs can be located along the corridor to serve the aforementioned purposes. Spartanburg currently has new wayfinding signs along other corridors, so they can be replicated here to preserve consistency. Among these are seasonal lamppost flags, which can help add visual variety throughout the year and well as inform the public of events.

Visioning Economic Opportunity Approach

Economic Opportunity Goals

- ❖ Encourage policies that support small businesses
- ❖ Encourage economic development in the corridor

Strategies

1. Capacity-building support for small businesses

The biggest challenge that small businesses have to face is the lack of financing, planning, and managing capacity. As a result, the first proposed element is capacity-building support through organizations and associations. Agencies such as business incubators or small business development centers can help guide the firms through their struggling times, and build their planning and managing capacity. These can also act as the intermediators between the banks and the firms ensuring access to credit. Spartanburg Area Small Business Development center located in E. Main street has been playing a great role in consulting and helping local firms through every stage whether starting a new business or overcoming an economic downturn. Expanding and strengthening this type of agency which has already been active in the area would be a good way to encourage local small businesses driving the economic development.

2. Assessment of Economic Development Instruments:

Corridor improvements like streetscaping and landscaping have been shown to catalyze positive changes in economic development. However, financing those projects at first is a tough economic question that the city has to face. There are various financing options that the city can choose from. Each one has pros and cons along with it.

Business Improvement Districts

One option is Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). BIDs is a way finance and deliver services and place management through additional taxes collected in certain districts especially commercial ones (Stokes 2006.) When businesses in a

district or corridor feel the services provided by the governing municipality are inadequate in some way, they may form a BIDs. While it is a form of private government, it is public in nature (Meltzer 2011.) A BID possess the power to levy taxes on all properties in the district in return for such services as improved infrastructure, street cleaning, security, and marketing. There are a couple of drawbacks to a BID. First, if property values are low in a given area, the revenue raise by a BID might be insufficient to affect real change in that area. Second, often there is a lower business size limit to the BID meaning very small businesses are not required to pay into the BID. However, the fact that there is a BID in an area often raises rents to the level that such small businesses are priced out of operating in that area. (Agency, 2015) (Robyne S. Turner, 2004) Hence, small businesses owners are often excluded from planning and policy-making processes (Turner 2002.) Unlike local residents, local merchants often lack voices in development processes concerning issues like services, infrastructure, and regulations in the areas that they run their businesses. This is especially an issue concerning commercial corridors where there are high number of businesses owners and they are more affected by any changes.

Tax increment financing

Tax increment financing (TIF) is another way for the government to finance infrastructure projects. When using TIF, municipalities pay for the infrastructure improvements up front. This new infrastructure attracts new development and higher property tax assessments that in turn lead to more tax revenue. The city then uses this additional revenue to pay off the debt incurred to build the infrastructure improvements. Various redevelopment project costs can be paid for by TIF such as land acquisition, demolition, clearing, and grading; construct public improvements; relocation costs for displaced persons/businesses; etc.

TIF has been becoming increasingly popular financing mechanism for public infrastructure. There is even a quite successful example of TIF in City of Spartanburg which is the Broad Street TIF. The figure below shows Broad Street TIF (outlined in red) located right next to West Main corridor. This was the major source of funding for downtown streetscaping and landscaping projects creating public spaces, making the streets more walkable and pedestrian friendly. Extension of the TIF district to include the corridor might be considered in order to support the redevelopment of the corridor.

There are some drawbacks of using TIF as well. The biggest thing is the risk that the city has to bear paying all the costs upfront. Attracting businesses to come to be able to obtain enough tax revenue will be important for using TIF.

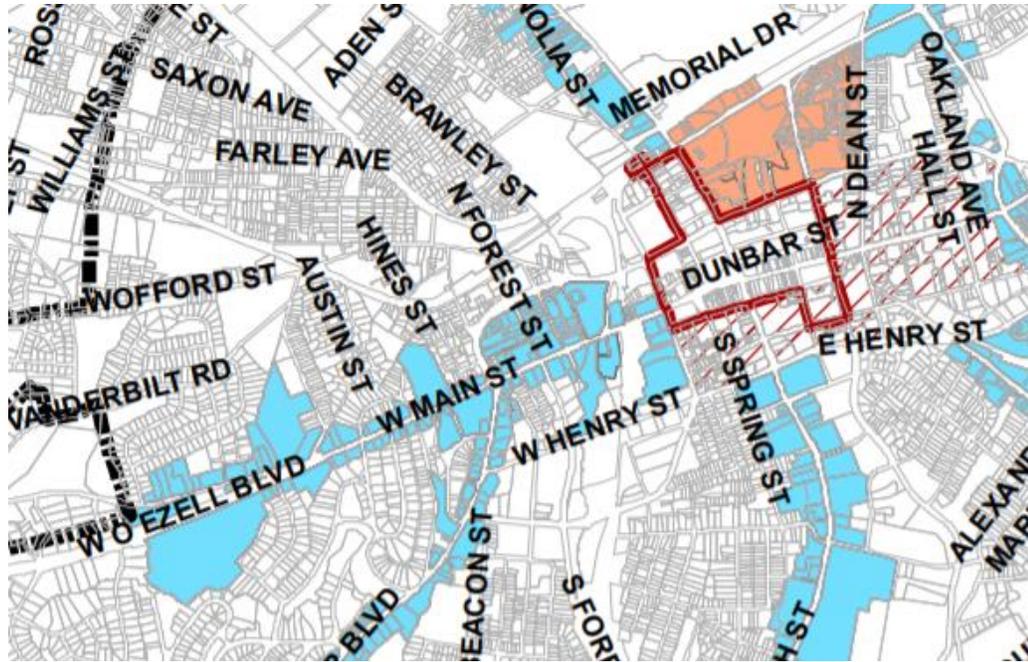


Figure 38: Broad Street TIF

Source: www.cityofspartanburg.org

Public-Private Partnerships

Encouraging Public-Private Partnerships is a good way to share the burden between the public and private sectors in providing infrastructure and public services such as public transportation networks, parks, and convention center. In this mechanism, private partners might be interested in funding projects in exchange for benefits such as operating profits from the projects.

One of this mechanism is the risk of low actual revenue from the project. For example, low demand for using roads can lead to lack of revenue from toll fees. Without additional agreement beforehand, private sector bears this risk.

3. Business Involvement in Planning Process: Another proposed element in terms of economic development is to further include businesses in planning and policy-making processes. Commercial uses account for a large portion of the corridors' activities. These are also the main drivers for the development of the corridor. Knowing the needs of the businesses and supporting them would allow better development policies.

Implementation

To clarify the resources and processes required to implement a project like that

Phasing Plan

The following phasing plan provides an outline of key steps of implementation in a timely order considering the cost, time span, spillover effects, as well as local capacity. It is recognized that this is a conceptual plan, so changes are expected according to availability of information, costs, and variations of the conditions. There may also be overlaps between the implementation of different phases. Details of each step are presented in Goals and Strategies section. Each phase consists of steps for implementing that phase, as well as a list of key stakeholders to be involved in these processes.

Phase 1: Placemaking and Branding

Phase 1 focuses on placemaking and branding interventions that should be implemented together corridor-wide. This phase aims at creating a brand presenting positive images of the corridor guiding later improvements and developments actions. Moreover, these are also “low-hanging fruit.” or actions that will not require large upfront investment.

The following steps have been identified to plan for and implement Phase 1:

Identified Steps

- *Develop a West Main Street Corridor Brand:* Creating a brand for the downtown extension that both compliments the existing downtown Spartanburg brand but also distinguishes it as its own “West Hub” is crucial to its success.
- *Evoke the brand with signage:* Through a comprehensive public engagement process, the “West Hub” signage should be coordinated to complement the existing Spartanburg Brand, but it should also be unique to the “West Hub” area.
- *Develop Public Art Standards and Urban Design Standards:* Public art standards will ensure that all future public art implemented within the existing downtown area and the proposed downtown extension are complimentary. The standards should be relaxed enough to allow for creativity from local artists, but they should also ensure that there is a consistent theme that reflects Spartanburg’s authentic sense of place.

Key stakeholders to be considered in this process are as follows:

1. *General public:* To create buy in, the public should be involved from the very beginning creating signage and a brand. While this document proposes the brand “West Hub,” the ultimate name of the downtown extension and its visual and experiential brand should be decided upon by the public.
2. *Local businesses:* The business community should also be included in the branding conversation through strategic interviews and meetings. Incoming businesses will be subject to design standards and public art standards, so including small business input throughout the process limits opportunities for stops in implementation.
3. *Local artists:* There is opportunity to engage local artists in the process of

Phase 2: Transportation Improvements

Phase 2 focuses on actions happening toward the later stage of or after Phase 1. This phase is consisted of steps that can result in immediate effects on traffic behavior, pedestrian experiences, and quality of life along the corridor. Interventions in this phase require some investment to improve the physical conditions.

Identified Steps

- *Streetscape improvements at the intersection of St. John Street and W. Main Street:* This is the “lowest-hanging fruit” of all of the steps to implement for several reasons. First, this is part of the first context zone, and it is the closest intersection to downtown. Second, it is located near the new hotel downtown; improving streetscaping near the newest building in downtown Spartanburg will show continued investment.
- *Provide transportation improvements by the transportation context zones:* Each context zone can be addressed separately, as each zone will have its own design, land use, and infrastructure needs. If funding is available, however, it may be best to address the entire corridor redesign proposed in this document at once to avoid fragmentation in design and destinationless bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. If addressed by context zones, they should be addressed in order of east (closest to downtown, which has a complete sidewalk network and existing bicycle infrastructure) to west.
- *Connect to the existing trail system:* Further outside of the study area, there is a proposed trailhead that crosses the corridor. While it is out of the scope of this project, it is important to be aware of the trail’s proximity, and future plans should be made to connect Context Zone 3 to the proposed trail.

Key stakeholders:

1. *The general public:* Spartanburg residents, especially those living within a 2-5 mile radius, must be included in the conceptual and detailed plans. This can be done through public meetings, a steering committee, and interviews.
2. *Local advocacy groups:* Special interest groups, such as Upstate Forever, Partners for Active Living, and Spartanburg BCycle, will have valuable input and resources to help create an equitable, accessible plan for the Spartanburg area.
3. *Consulting firms:* Outside consultants specializing in corridor redevelopment can be used in the concept and detailed design portions of this
4. *SCDOT:* A majority of the study area road is owned by the South Carolina Department of Transportation, and therefore the SCDOT will have ultimate jurisdiction during the final design. It is important, then, to build an informed consensus about the final design. This requires regular and clear communication among all parties involved in the road design process.
5. *Mayor and City Council:* The political leaders should be included in the conceptual design process to reduce stopgaps in the detailed design and implementation processes.
6. *City engineering:* The municipal engineer(s) should feel comfortable with the proposed designs, and thus should be included in all the concept and detailed designs.

Phase 3: Economic Opportunities

A unique and contextual brand and physical infrastructure set in Phase 1 and Phase 2 allow easier implementation of economic development actions. The focus of Phase 3 can be on interventions supporting economic development along the corridor.

Identified Steps

- *Develop capacity-building support for small businesses:* Small businesses can be potential drivers for long term economic development of the area. However, they normally face great challenges due to lack of capacity compared to large scale corporations. One major solution to this can be improving and expanding support to small businesses especially through organizations such as the already existed Small Business Development Center. These can be partners helping with capacity building for local small businesses

- *Assess economic development instruments such as Business Improvement Districts:* Development instruments focusing on improving the commercial experiences and activities along the corridor such as Business Improvement Districts as previously explained can be considered.

Key stakeholders:

1. *Mayor and City Council:* Municipal leadership should be included in the planning process from the very beginning to ensure smooth implementation. Political partners are crucial in allowing a welcoming and supporting environment for businesses to come and thrive.
2. *Local developers:* Developers who have a history of projects in the Spartanburg area should be included throughout the process; they may provide feedback about how to make the project more successful for local business.
3. *General public:* Residents and business within a mile radius of the corridor should be invited to comment on their hopes and concerns in the wake of the economic changes likely to happen as the corridor redevelops.
4. *Small business owners in the area:* Business owners along the corridor are one of the most important stakeholders to involve in this phase. They know the best what can and should be done to foster the economic scene of the area. To attract local (city of Spartanburg) or outside small business development along the corridor, these owners should be identified and solicited through a strategic engagement process.
5. *Local organizations:* Local organizations should actively participate in any economic development action. They can be great partners working with both the businesses and the government supporting the economic growth along the corridor. Moreover, more than the local government they are great resources both in terms of expertise and capital to work with especially local small businesses.

Phase 4: Land Use Strategies

Managing land use patterns is put into final Phase due to its complexity as well as huge probable costs required for creating mixed-use development, which is the key intent of this phase.

Identified Steps

- *Extend or overlay the existing downtown form based code:* This step may be completed in tandem with the art development standards to ensure cohesiveness of the ordinances.
- *Promote and implement a mixed-use development in the western end of the corridor:* This development will serve as the west most “hub” of commercial and residential activity that encourages foot traffic.

Key stakeholders

1. *Mayor and City Council:* The mayor and city council should be included in creating an informed consensus to ensure that the land use changes treat all constituents and interests as fairly as possible.
2. *Local developers:* Developers can often indicate where certain codes are too strict, and should therefore be included in these processes. They may also have input on the types of development and commercial retailers that would best suit the proposed mixed use center.
3. *General public:* All land owners who will be affected by mixed use center or the overlay zone should be included in this process.

Financing

The following sections propose several options that may be used to finance a project of this magnitude, including a concept-level estimate of the costs that these projects may incur. It should be noted that none of these options in themselves are likely to entirely fund the projects, but instead, the most applicable, feasible, and convenient of these recommendations should be used together to create capital to extend the downtown experience.

Cost estimate

The following cost estimate gives a conceptual level cost estimate for each of the proposed improvements. It should be noted that these estimates are based on industry standards under normal conditions, so this estimate is subject to considerable variation. More detailed cost estimating can be completed by a consultant or through the municipal engineering department.

Table 1: Concept-level cost estimate

Sources: People for Bikes¹, EV Studios², Bushell, et al. (2013)³

Improvement	Description	Concept Level Estimate
Context Zone 1 Roadway		
Separated bike lane (option 1)	Physically separated bike lane with concrete curb separation for 0.35 miles at \$50,000 per mile ¹	\$17,500
Separated bike lane (option 2)	Physically separated bike lane with flex posts as an interim solution at \$20,000 per mile 0.35 miles ¹	\$7,000
Context Zone 2 Roadway		
Separated bike lane (option 1)	Physically separated bike lane with concrete curb separation for 0.5 miles at \$50,000 per mile ¹	\$25,000
Separated bike lane (option 2)	Physically separated bike lane with flex posts as an interim solution for 0.5 miles at \$20,000 per mile ¹	\$10,000
Context Zone 3 Roadway		
None	NA	NA
Context Zone 1 Pedestrian Improvements (not including E St. John Street)		
Expand sidewalks	Create 10' sidewalks where applicable at \$32 per linear foot for 0.35 miles ³	\$60,000
Striping	Update missing or inadequate pedestrian crossing striping at intersections at \$400 per crosswalk ³	\$2,400
ADA requirements	Update missing or inadequate ADA ramps at \$1000 each on ** intersections ³	\$6,000
Context Zone 2 Pedestrian Improvements		
Extend sidewalks	Ensure that existing sidewalks meet Context zone 3; approximately 200 feet at \$32 per linear foot ³	\$6,400
Mid-block crossing	HAWK signal to provide safe crossing for pedestrians and cyclists north and south ³	\$60,000

Striping	Update missing or inadequate pedestrian crossing striping at intersections at \$400 per crosswalk ³	\$2,800
ADA requirements	Update missing or inadequate ADA ramps at \$1000 each on ** intersections ³	\$7,000
Context Zone 3 Pedestrian Improvements		
Multi-use path	10 foot-wide paved path on the southern portion of the corridor; approximately 0.6 miles at \$300,000 per mile ³	\$1,800,000
Pedestrian crossing at West Main/ W O Ezell Intersection	HAWK signal at intersection to provide safe crossings for cyclist and pedestrians crossing to southern side of corridor ³	\$60,000
St. John Street Improvement		
Brick pavers	Add to pay homage to downtown paving pattern at \$75 per linear foot ³	\$18,750
Striping	Update pedestrian crossing at \$400 per crosswalk ³	\$1,600
ADA requirements	Update ADA ramps at \$1000 each ³	\$4,000
Plantings	Beautification planting	\$15,000
Curb adjustments	Changing curb radii to ensure proper turning speeds and removing turn lanes	\$100,000
Street furniture	Adding street furniture to encourage pedestrian gathering spaces ³	\$15,000
Mixed Used Development Center		
Aggregate building cost	Estimated at \$200 per square foot for (1) two buildings with 48,000 square feet, (2) mixed used building with 80,000 square feet, (3) and 40,000 square feet of small commercial ²	\$43,200,000
Planting, landscaping	Beautification planting	\$5,000,000
Parking lots	Parking for residents and commercial businesses ³	\$50,000
Grading work	Leveling site ³	\$2,000,000
Total (assuming option 1)		\$52,451,450
Proposed estimate assuming		\$73,432,030

Financing options

There are many financing mechanisms that can be used separately or together to implement the proposed actions. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is proposed as the main source of funding for the corridor redevelopment plan. Other sources such as TIGER Grant Program, Group of 100, and Sales Tax raising referendum can be considered along with TIF or after TIF period. This section of the plan will go into details and main process of each above funding sources.

Tax Increment Financing

Depending on the local capacity as well as the improvement plans, there are many different ways to finance TIF redevelopment projects:

--*Pay as you go financing*: Expenditure is spent as incremental revenues are collected. This method lowers the costs and risks associated with large debt financing.

--*Developer financing*: Developers take the risk of debt financing. The government reimburses the costs to the developers as they collect incremental revenue.

--*Municipal financing (revenue bonds)*: In this case, the government issues bonds to finance TIF projects. This is suitable for costly projects during the early stage of TIF to initiate redevelopments and draw interests for further investments.

--*Municipal financing with developers' participation*: In this method, the municipality issues bonds and developer's ledge to purchase all or major portion of them on a tax-exempt basis. This method helps keep the interest and issuance costs low and increases the certainty of the process.

Typical implementation process

A typical implementation process of TIF consists of 4 major stages with smaller steps as presented in the below figure. The first year of TIF is considered the beginning or preparation stage. In this stage, the TIF district is defined, the base property values are defined, and list of phase 1 improvements to be funded by TIF is set. In the short term period normally from year 1 to 4, bonds are issued, public improvements are made leading to some increase in property values. In the midterm of TIF after year 6, incremental revenues from property or other forms of tax are collected and put in the special fund to pay back the debt. In the long term, after all the debts are paid, all taxes collected in the district turn into regular tax base. Broad Street TIF in city of Spartanburg contributed over

\$900,000 to the 2015 tax revenues in the area. This source of funding is crucial to many different streetscaping and landscaping projects in the downtown.

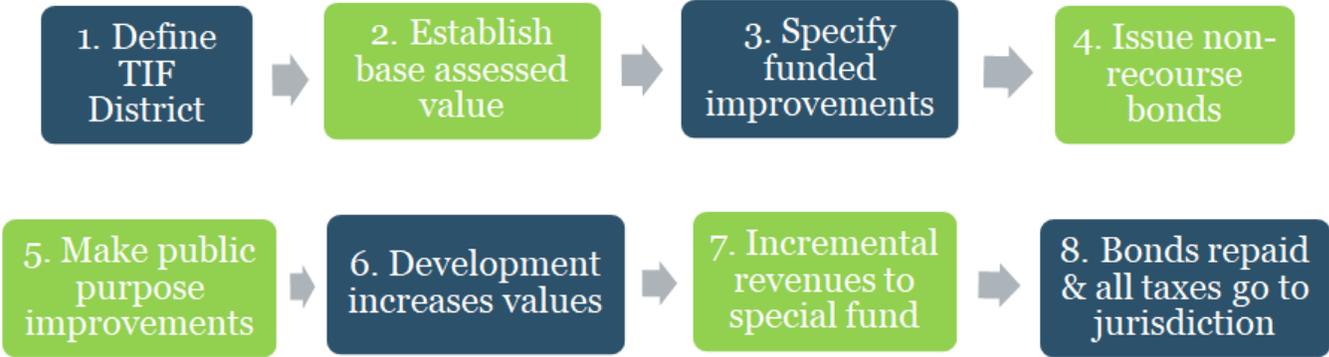


Figure 39: Typical TIF process

Drawback and risk of TIF

There are however some drawbacks and risks of TIF. First of all, there is a risk that the incremental revenues will fail to pay the debt putting more burdens on the jurisdiction. Moreover, there is also concern that TIF might take away attentions from other budget priorities. Some action can be done in order to mitigate these risks. A backup special tax can help avoid failure to pay the debt. This special tax can be set so that TIF district will have to pay an increased tax values unless the incremental amount is already enough for paying off the debt. A limitation on the share of incremental revenues to be used for TIF can be set in order to preserve the budgets for other priorities.

Requirement for TIF

In order to implement TIF appropriately and effectively, there are some preparation steps to be done before the process. First of all, a proof of underdeveloped conditions of the area must be submitted as required by the state laws. Moreover, it must also show that it is difficult or impossible to generate growth in the area without public intervention thus the necessity of TIF. Deciding improvements projects to be funded by TIF is a very important steps. Participation from the residents, businesses owners as well as the government and different local organizations are required so that the funding can be spent reasonably contributing to the overall development of the corridor without bias.

The TIGER Grant Program is sponsored by the US Department of Transportation (USDOT). Through this program, the USDOT provides funding for transportation improvement projects that will “have a significant impact on the Nation, a metropolitan area, or a region (USDOT, 2017),” including road projects that may be more difficult to support through normal municipal or regional funding mechanisms. Eligible projects are construction projects that prioritize regional connectivity and economic development. In 2017, the USDOT allotted \$500 million to this fund, and each of the grants amounted between \$5 million and \$25 million (except for \$1 million projects in rural areas), as per the Consolidated Appropriations Act (USDOT, 2017).

The application for TIGER Grants is competitive; applicants from all 50 states and other US territories are able to apply. Projects that improve multimodal travel especially intended to benefit disadvantaged populations are of special interest to the USDOT, and therefore are given extra consideration in the 2017 fiscal year application period, however, the program gave even more consideration to projects that were posed to improve safe and multimodal transportation options in more rural areas, especially those that supported economic development and regional connectivity within those rural areas. This may be the case again in the future; in this scenario, there is even greater opportunity for the West Main Corridor to be considered. In many ways, the West Main Extension project meets these special consideration qualifications (connectivity, supporting disadvantaged populations, and multimodal transportation), and it may be given more attention as it is a less urban area.

TIGER Grant applications require the following elements:

A detailed benefit-cost analysis (BCA): This analysis requires applicants to identify and quantify different costs and benefits of investment. The USDOT provides guidance on the best way to complete this section of the grant in their online guide, “Benefit-Cost Analysis Guidance for TIGER and INFRA Applications” that can be obtained on the USDOT TIGER Grant website.

Description of project readiness: Projects that are ready to be funded are my likely to receive a TIGER grant. A key component of this project readiness is identifying other funding sources, as TIGER grants do not usually fund the entirety of the costs associated with the project.

The project should be described in detail to ensure that it is ready for funding. Steps include identifying technical and financial feasibility, creating a realistic project schedule, an understanding of and ability to obtain required approvals, and an assessment of project risks and potential mitigation strategies (USDOT, 2017).

TIGER Grants do not usually fund entire projects, but instead supplement existing or committed funding from other sources. It is beneficial, then, to pair a TIGER Grant application with one of the other proposed methods here.

Group of 100 and Other Institutional Sources

The Group of 100 is a non-profit dedicated to beautifying the City of Spartanburg through generous donations from its members. The group consists of 100 Spartanburg residents who each donate \$1,000 per year towards a beautification project within the city. Previous projects include cleaning up and beautifying the corner of St. John Street and Pine Street, Four Seasons Park on Howard Street, street enhancements on Howard Avenue, and many other landscaping projects (GoUpstate, 2016).

During the downtown extension project, the board members of the group should be solicited to become involved in the beautification and streetscaping projects, specifically those around St. John Street and others closer to the existing downtown area. While assistance from the Group of 100 will not completely cover any portion of this large-scale project, it could still help considerably in funding some of the streetscaping elements.

Other private sources, whether individual sources, nonprofits, and local institutions, should also be encouraged to be deeply involved in the planning processes and, potentially, the financing portion of the project. Some of these sources could be the local colleges, including Wofford College, Converse College, and Spartanburg Community College (Downtown Campus) as they are closer to the West Main Street corridor.

Sales Tax Referendum

Another opportunity to create capital for redeveloping the West Main Corridor is through holding a tax referendum. The proposed tax ballot would implement a temporary increase in sales tax; funds collected from this specific tax would go towards implementing the downtown extension project.

Creating this tax requires a detailed plan, rigorous public involvement, and careful addition to the ballot during a voting year. First, a strategic plan must be created that considers and researches many factors, including but not limited to:

- *Detailed cost estimate*: An estimate for the cost of the project to be implemented will inform the rest of the study about the scope of funds needed. This should take into account other sources of funding as well.

- *Current and projected population projections:* Understanding the current and projected population statistics will inform how many will be affected by these infrastructure improvements.
- *Current and projected sales tax revenue:* This calculation, paired with an understanding of the current and future populations in Spartanburg, can be used to estimate the total yield from implementing this type of tax, and it is also useful in determining how long the tax should be in place.
- *Analysis of current municipal budget and capital improvements project:*
- *Traffic volume for every major intersection on the corridor (current and projected):* Traffic volumes should be estimated (both for present-day conditions and future conditions) to understand how many Spartanburg City and County residents will be affected by this project.
- *Projected growth caused by the infrastructure improvements:* If implemented, this project will have major impacts on the city of Spartanburg's economy. A general estimate of the benefits expected to come from redeveloping the corridor, such as the increase in tax base and other economic and social externalities) should be calculated to provide an understanding of the potential benefits from investing in this type of redevelopment.

This plan should also include results from public engagement activities. Investing time and resources into to understand the public's perspective(s) before attempting to add the tax to a ballot will help the City of Spartanburg gage the potential success of such a ballot.

While the exact recommendation for the type and amount of tax should be investigated and summarized in a detailed preliminary report, some assumptions can be made up front. A successful penny sales tax passed in Spartanburg City in 2016 as a part of the judicial strategic plan (Justice Planning Associates, 2017). This shows that this type of measure can be successful in the current political climate in Spartanburg. Also, a sales tax may be the most effective means for passing such a tax, as it has been more popular politically in many states.

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