

City of Inman

Downtown Master Plan 2021



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City of Inman

Downtown Master Plan 2021

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Introduction

“We’ve got to get it right!
We need a *vision* to get us there!”

Mayor Huff shared this goal when we first began talking about a master plan for downtown Inman in 2018. There is a sense of urgency, he stated, as he has noticed an increasing number of people moving into the City from all over the country, primarily from the north and midwest according to the demographics of new residents in the mayor’s neighborhood. Since 2018, the City continues to experience tremendous growth in population and housing starts. The master planning kicked off in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (October 2020), soon after Chapman High School was recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School. COVID-19 has propelled many people to move to smaller communities since the workplace and the office are becoming more and more wherever an employee chooses to live. Inman can benefit from this. While this puts pressure on existing infrastructure, this new wave of in-migration presents opportunities for the City to reinvent, revitalize and reimagine its future, especially the historic downtown.



Mayor Huff and City Council established the following goals for the downtown master plan, which shaped our planning approach.

- create a continuing streetscape design plan to add on to recent projects
- create a public improvement analysis and prioritization checklist
- provide recommendations for improvements to downtown landscaping and greenspace
- evaluate the need for additional public facilities downtown, to possibly include a new City Hall, Farmers Market and concert pavilion, dog park, etc.
- recommend best uses for the existing vacant downtown properties
- recommend best uses for existing publicly owned properties

This master plan report addresses these goals as well as additional goals and ideas gathered from residents during the planning workshop in December. The master plan is a roadmap to begin the journey to revitalizing downtown. *This is a journey of a lifetime... probably a few lifetimes. The most important and hopeful part of any journey is preparing to take the first step and then taking the first step.*

We have outlined the first few steps and stops along the way to achieving the vision. This journey will be hard. It will require commitment, all hands on deck, and a lot of partners along the way. The journey will be worth it and will lead to other stops along the way that are yet unimagined.

We invite you to *Imagine Inman* and to *Invest in Inman* so that you can reach your *Destination: Inman!*



Acknowledgements

The City of Inman is blessed to have a group of elected leaders and community leaders who care deeply for the future of downtown. Most of them were born in Inman, several have lived here for many years, a few are newcomers. The tie that binds them all together is a sincere belief in the potential of downtown. Investing in a master plan is taking a risk and makes the City vulnerable to the eyes and opinions of “outside experts”. City Council was ready to accept the risk and to provide candid and hopeful input for this master plan. Members of Council know that things have to change for downtown Inman to reverse the downward trajectory as evidenced by vacant historic buildings, the small number of local businesses, and a lack of private investment.

This master plan is focused on downtown – the heart of the City of Inman. The recommendations will impact the entire City, but they are designed specifically for downtown. Shepherding this master plan has been an honor for our team, and we are thankful for the dozens of people who showed up (in masks and safely distanced) to provide their perspectives and takes on challenges. In addition, we are grateful to the 215+ people who completed the online survey, helping to shape this master plan. Most importantly, we are indebted to City Council, City Staff and the Comprehensive Plan Task Force who provided leadership, thoughtful comments, flawless execution of the workshop schedule and a welcoming environment.

Thank you for this opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

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Executive Summary

Downtown Inman is poised to become a vibrant destination for shopping, doing business, experiencing history and the arts, and for enjoying the charm and the spirit of an historic town that is wired and ready for the future. By preserving and reimagining historic buildings and places and by elevating local business and cultural opportunities, Downtown Inman will thrive and provide pathways to prosperity for residents. Visionary and passionate leadership is inspiring a new generation of entrepreneurs, artists, and investors. This master plan provides a roadmap for these leaders and the community to start the journey towards Downtown Inman's preferred future.

This master plan, based on community input, establishes a vision for Downtown Inman, priority recommendations for immediate and long-term action, and a framework and guiding principles to steer the City towards this vision.

Vision: Destination Inman

Downtown Inman will be a preferred destination, not only for residents but for visitors from throughout the Upstate and beyond, providing one-of-a-kind shopping, dining, recreational, cultural, working and living experiences.

What do residents want to make Destination Inman a reality?

- Keep historic character, modernize, and rehabilitate buildings downtown
- Fill the empty buildings downtown
- Bring dining options so people do not have to leave Inman to eat dinner
- Vibrant shops that appeal to different demographics
- Child-friendly places
- Incorporate art into downtown
- Build an amphitheater for live music and event opportunities
- Pedestrian friendly downtown
- Build a park or walking trail downtown
- Create social settings for people to gather

Guiding Principles

These Guiding Principles, developed in response to the community's love and hope for Inman, will keep the Vision on track and ensure that all revitalization efforts and projects reflect the city's values and community spirit.

- Sustain downtown as the heart of Inman
- Elevate the sense of community and level of community engagement
- Capture and promote the history and stories of Inman
- Require the highest quality design and development in all projects
- Increase pedestrian and bike connectivity
- Build multi-jurisdictional and regional partnerships to continually improve and to sustain the City's and the region's quality of life
- Strengthen the qualities that define the spirit of Inman

Implementation Framework

The only way to achieve this vision it to create and commit to an administrative and management framework to guide the work of the city and the process of revitalization. Revitalization takes a team... a committed team, visionary leadership, policies, and resources. This master plan provides the framework for starting and keeping all people and elements working in concert toward the vision.



Catalyst Projects

Catalyst projects are ones that can transform a community and build the momentum for continued progress and successful project implementation. The following projects deserve the City's priority attention, commitment, and investments for they will be the catalysts to transforming Downtown Inman. Planning for these projects can begin now to ensure successful implementation over the new few years.

- Improve, appropriately renovate, and reuse the historic buildings downtown
- Main Street and Mill Street streetscape improvements
- Rails to Trails conversion: Greenway
- New City Hall
- Farmers Market Pavilion

Priority Recommendations

Many of these are long-term projects, yet the planning for them can and should start immediately. The farmers market pavilion is the easiest to start immediately and will build momentum for the other projects (catalyst). Start now to build the regional partnerships and support for the Rails to Trails conversion by getting the right people, SCDOT, Norfolk Southern, Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG), to the table.

Other Facilities

- Infill Development Opportunities
- Trail-oriented development at Mill and Main

Streetscaping and Connectivity

- Improve and activate alleys behind Main Street buildings: lights, landscaping, art, outdoor seating, signage
- Main Street
 - Reducing lane width to 11 feet with lane reallocation to two lanes
 - Head-in angled parking on both sides of street
 - Wider sidewalks, with sidewalk on east side of street (on tracks)
 - Narrower crossing distances with vehicular brick paving in intersections
 - Street trees (canopy and accent trees)
 - Redesign curb extensions
- Mill Street
 - pedestrian amenities such as well-designed and visible crosswalks and pedestrian-scaled lighting
 - appropriate street trees
 - infrastructure to support Mill Street to serve as Inman’s “festival street”
 - Redesign curb extensions
- Downtown Gateways
 - intersection at the current City Hall location, at South Main and East Main
 - intersection of Mill Street and Humphrey Street
 - intersection of Wingo Street and Prospect Street with North Main Street
- SCDOT Coordination
 - Lane width reduction and improved parking on North Main
 - Removing traffic signals
 - Reconfiguring East Main and South Main
 - Norfolk Southern Coordination for Greenway



Economic Development

- Create an economic development information clearinghouse with part-time staff
- Cultivate potential downtown investors
- Expand and diversify the façade grant program benefits
- Consider National Register Historic District designations

Leadership and Organization

- Utilize organizations to support the City
- Create a Downtown Merchants Organization
- Create and publish an official City newsletter (monthly)
- Provide education and training for downtown merchants and businesses
- Join The Four, making it The Five (regional leadership group)
- Create a Task Force for implementing the Economic Development Plan

Additional Recommendations for City Council

- Prohibit storage and residential use in commercial storefronts
- Discourage Downtown demolition and demolition by neglect
- Study alternative truck routes
- Create opportunities and incentives to encourage the re-development of buildings, including the warehouses along the Norfolk Southern rail line
- Consider special tax districts to finance improvements and incentivize development
- Downtown wayfinding signage
- Collect, share, and promote the history and stories of downtown and the City
- Consider removing the hedgerow adjacent to the railroad tracks

Timing

The master plan suggests a phased approach to implementation, focusing on projects to accomplish within the next three years. ***The time to start is now!*** As one task is accomplished, as one project is completed, as one new business opens or building renovated, celebrate! And then use each success as a springboard for the next success and for making the case for the vision.

Destination Inman



Project Schedule

The Master Planning process involved research and analysis conducted by team members as well as the three-day workshop that enabled the team to listen to the community, to gather public input and to experience downtown. Listening is essential to creating a successful master plan. We are honored that so many shared their time, their unrestricted opinions and their ideas with us. When visioning, there are no wrong answers. We asked people to think of big ideas, not held back by money or perceived capacities. **Potential** and **Opportunity** were common themes shared through all meetings as well as a few big ideas that are worthy aspirations. The project schedule follows.

Master Plan Kick-Off Meeting: Oct. 6, 2020

The team met with Mayor Huff, City Council and Staff, and the Comprehensive Plan Task Force and toured the downtown. We discussed the planning process, goals, public input opportunities and data requests.

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 9:30–10:15am | Planning Team meeting with Mayor Huff and City Staff debrief on project goals, challenges, perspectives |
| 10:15–12:15pm | Walking Tour of Downtown with Mayor Huff and City Staff |
| 12:30–2:00pm | Lunch with City Council and the Comprehensive Plan Task Force: provide overview of the master planning process, gather input, visioning |
| 2:00–3:30pm | Planning Team meeting with City Staff to discuss data requests, public input, workshop agenda and other information needed to prepare for the workshop |

Facilities Master Plan Staff Interviews: Nov. 23, 2020

BOUDREAUX met with key City staff to tour facilities and to discuss operations and future space needs for the municipal facilities master plan. We thank the following staff for generously sharing their time with us.

Robin Henderson, City Clerk
Mandy Shaw, Assistant City Clerk
Chief Keith Tucker, Police Department
Lt. Brian Hall, Police

Downtown Master Plan Workshop/Charrette: Dec. 8-10, 2020

The master plan workshop allowed the planning team to immerse in the daily happenings of the City. Starry Night was home for the three days and gave the team a front row seat to downtown. Residents, property and business owners, and community stakeholders showed up, shed light on challenges and shared thoughtful ideas for the future of downtown. The workshop served as the changing of the guard from Trey Eubanks to Joe Lanahan as the new City Administrator. We are thankful for the leadership that Trey provided over the months and excited that Joe was able to jump in, bringing his enthusiasm and experience to the table.

Tuesday, December 8

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 10:30 am | Team meeting with Mayor Huff, City Administrator and Key Staff |
| 12:00–1:00pm | Public Input Session |
| 2:00–4:30pm | Stakeholder Interviews: Focus on downtown businesses |
| 5:30–6:30pm | Public Input Session |
| 6:45–8:30pm | Team Working Dinner with Planning Task Force |

Wednesday, December 9

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 8:30–12:00pm | Team Work Session and Stakeholder Interviews; meeting with SCDOT |
| 12:00–3:30pm | Team Work Session |
| 4:00–5:00pm | Review meeting with Comprehensive Plan Task Force |
| 5:30pm until | Team work session |

Thursday, December 10

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 9:00–10:00am | Master Plan debrief with Mayor Huff, City Administrator, Key Staff |
| 10:00–2:00pm | Team Work Session |
| 3:00–4:00pm | Public Presentation of Draft Master Plan
(Recorded for Public Review: https://youtu.be/CVqwPn1ITqE) |

Downtown Vision: Destination Inman

Throughout the three-day workshop, during our one-day kick-off meeting and during the planning meetings with Mayor Huff, Council, Missy House (former City Administrator), and Trey Eubanks, we heard a resounding message: “We want to have restaurants, a museum, breweries, fun shops, a trail. We want to be a destination like Landrum or Saluda or Greer or Tryon.” Mayor Huff was determined to establish a vision for downtown that could inspire the City to action.

As the planning team considered all of the elements to include in Inman’s vision statement and the words to communicate this so that it would inspire all, we found that the vision was simple:

Destination Inman

The residents of Inman want to be a destination like Landrum, Saluda, Greer and Tryon, but they don’t want to be them. Inman is different, and Inman has tremendous potential to become a unique, authentic place - a destination for living, dining, shopping, recreation, exploring.

To become a destination for others, downtown Inman first must become a beloved destination for residents. Inman is a caring community and very supportive of local downtown businesses. The City needs to provide the framework, the planning, the resources and public investments for ensuring that Inman provides for the quality of life residents want and deserve. The City needs to commit and work hard to recruit and retain the restaurants and amenities residents want. Others outside of Inman will notice and will come.

In addition and most critical to becoming a destination, downtown Inman must have the destination places. The City of Inman needs to begin the important work of placemaking. Placemaking is essential to becoming a destination.



Most importantly, achieving the vision requires a solid process and framework to guide the leaders and members of the community. The following pages outline a process and a framework to bring Downtown Inman’s vision to life.

Placemaking & Prosperity

The work of revitalization is all about placemaking and prosperity.

“Strong leadership is essential. Success requires vision and planning. You’re all in it together now.

Place matters—take advantage of it.”

– Restoring Prosperity, 2008, Brookings Institute Report

Placemaking is about creating authentic places where people want to be to experience and enjoy a community, to make memories, to connect with people and to enhance life. Placemaking is about creating Third Places.

Third Places

Third Places are critical components to diversifying and sustaining a strong local economy and to becoming a desired destination for residents, visitors and businesses. As defined by Ray Oldenburg in his seminal book, *The Great Good Place*, “**Third Places** are important for civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing feelings of a sense of place.”

Oldenburg calls one's "first place" the home and those with whom one lives. The "second place" is the workplace — where people may actually spend most of their time. Third places, then, are "anchors" of community life and facilitate and foster broader, more creative interaction. In modern times, people intentionally seek out these informal meeting places. Oldenburg suggests the hallmarks of a true Third Place are: free or inexpensive; food and drink (not essential, but important); highly accessible (within walking distance for most); involve regulars who habitually congregate there; welcoming and comfortable; both new friends and old.

Inman needs more Third Places downtown as evidenced in the overwhelming comments about more restaurants, bars, parks, bakeries, hangouts for students and art spaces.



Historically, downtown was the essence of a Third Place - where people shopped, met friends for coffee or ice cream, ran into friends on the sidewalk and enjoyed conversations. This is the spirit that is desired in Inman's downtown: an environment that encourages people to congregate and interact with others outside of the home or workplace. Upstate Coffee and the library (when it reopens) are examples of current, popular Third Places. Amenities that will attract people to use downtown as a Third Place include free Wi-Fi, shaded seating, sidewalks that are buffered from passing vehicles allowing patrons to converse and watch the world go by, coffee shops, art studios, and ale houses and wine bars that are open past 5:00 in the evening. Residents would like to have more Third Places such as wine bars, pocket parks and more coffee shops, restaurants and bakeries.

Inman will truly benefit from supporting more Third Places, which are typically locally-owned businesses as well as thoughtfully-designed and appropriately placed outdoor spaces. The majority of responses were for more Third Places. Third Places (a variety of indoor and outdoor gathering places) will provide the critical mass to support existing and additional businesses in town, invite more people to be on the streets and sidewalks, all of which elevate the perception of safety, encourage positive experiences and memories for residents and visitors, and build a stronger sense of community for all residents, particularly with young professionals, students, and faculty.

BOUDREAUX has developed a few different ways of approaching downtown and placemaking:

- **Pilates of Place**
- **5 G's**
- **Gumbo**

Pilates of Place

Pilates is a form of exercise, developed by Joseph Pilates, that emphasizes the balanced development of the body through core strength, flexibility, and awareness in order to support efficient, graceful movement. When the body's core is strong, the rest of the body is stronger, healthier and vibrant.

The same of true with cities and towns. When the downtown, the core of a city or town, is strong, the rest of the community is strong, healthy, vibrant and prosperous. If the downtown is not strong, city's need to start Pilates of Place. This involves intentional focus and commitment to balanced development of the economy, buildings, streetscape and civic infrastructure. This is a focus on placemaking, creating a core that supports the quality of life throughout the city or town.

Inman is starting Pilates of Place by its intentional focus on downtown.



5 Gs

Another approach to placemaking is the through 5Gs.

Grab: If Inman wants to be a destination, the City needs to grab visitors from the interstate, from the highways leading into town, from its website, from social media and other forms of media. Visitors and potential residents and businesses need to be introduced to Inman and inspired to go there.

Guide: Once the City has grabbed their attention, visitors need to be guided into the City and, most importantly, into downtown. Whether through signage, a very interesting and user-friendly website or magazine articles and ads, guide them to downtown to the local businesses, special places and amenities. Make the journey easy.

Greet: Let visitors know they have arrived by greeting them with welcoming signs, well-maintained streets, landscape and buildings, banners and smiling faces. Make the welcome authentic to Inman.

Gather: Once they have arrived, give them accessible, fun, safe, beautiful and interesting places to gather. This can be restaurants, parks, a library or bookstore, ice cream shop or brewery, a bench under a shade tree or a gallery. These are the draw and the reasons people visit and will return.

Got ‘em! When they experience the special places in Inman, the City’s got ‘em! Their first trip to Inman should inspire them to return again and again.

We believe that these approaches to placemaking can lead to sustained prosperity for Inman.

Placemaking is also about making gumbo.

Gumbo is taking what you have at hand, mixing it together with spices, seasonings and herbs, and stirring and cooking slowly until you have a delicious pot of gumbo to share and enjoy. Good gumbo can’t be rushed. The seafood, meat and vegetables are better when they are simmered and integrated with the spices, seasonings and herbs. Like cities, no pot of gumbo is alike. Each pot has its own flavor, its own ingredients. Inman can be a delicious pot of gumbo, a destination like no other. Inman has unique assets, such as Inman Mills, the street form of downtown along the railroad, the peach history, and intact historic buildings. Inman has a special community spirit and inspired ideas. Stirring all of these together, taking the time to plan and design, mixing in Inman’s history and potential will create delicious places that will help to revitalize downtown.



Vision: Delicious Gumbo – Authentic Taste

Recipe, Pot and Spoon, Roux,
and Herbs and Spices

Onions	Oysters	Catfish
Garlic	Okra	Tabasco
Peppers	Tomatoes	Thyme
Oregano	Chicken	Parsley
Shrimp	Sausage	Lemon Juice
Crabs	Duck	Abita Beer



Vision: Prosperous City – Authentic Place

Master Plan, Government and Land,
Infrastructure, and Quality of Life

Leadership	Recreation	Education
Jobs	Libraries	Health Care
Architecture	Events	Culture
Arts	History	Business
Parks	Churches	Industry
Housing	Third Places	Hospitality

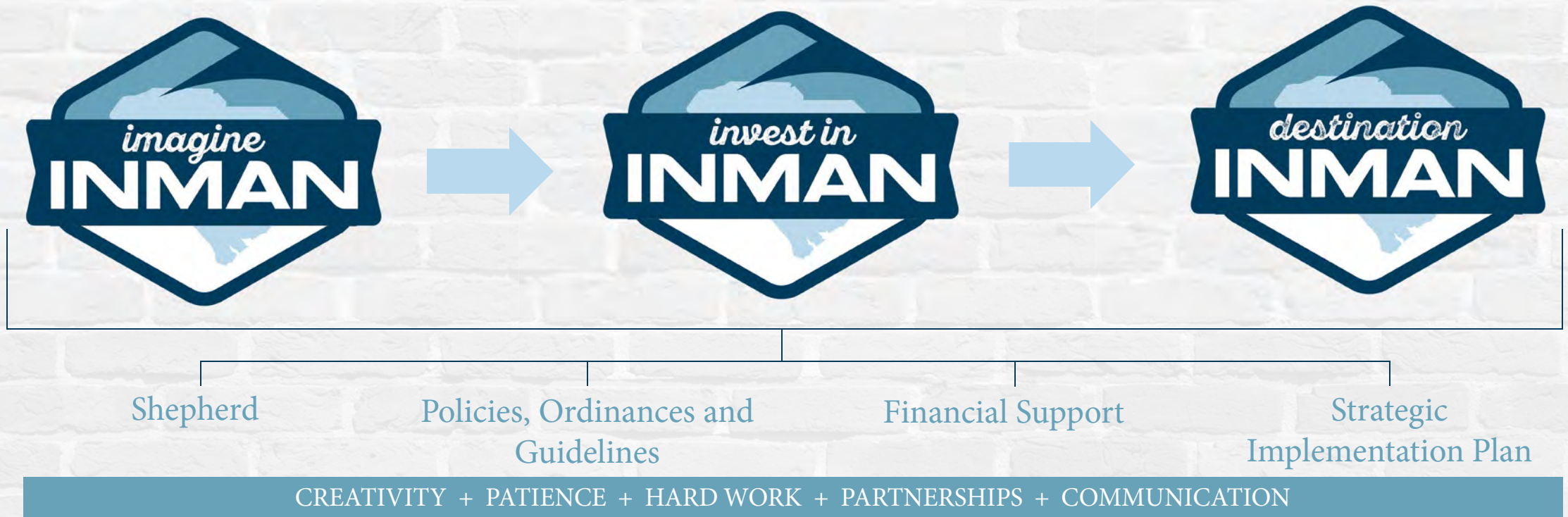
Implementation Framework

The implementation of this downtown master plan will require a dedicated administrative framework to guide and drive revitalization. This framework will provide the human, financial, management and other resources necessary to support the work of revitalization such as facade improvements, promotions and recruitment of new businesses, and creating more reasons for people to gather downtown.

The City (elected leaders and staff) cannot do this alone. There needs to be a shepherd for the journey. There need to be policies and ordinances to ensure that projects and developments are what the City envisions. There needs to be sustained financial support. And there needs to be a prioritized plan to guide implementation, keeping the City on track. This will take copious amounts of creativity and patience, dedicated and innovative partners, and consistent and clear communications.

Commitment to the framework and process will lead to successful implementation. Successful implementation will make the vision a reality.

Inman will start to become a local and regional destination by implementing two or three of the priority recommendations. The City should focus on successfully accomplishing a few projects, programs and policies to build enthusiasm and to demonstrate what can be done. Celebrate each accomplishment and build from each success. There will be challenges and setbacks, but the vision will always propel the City and inspire the residents.





Becoming *DESTINATION INMAN* will be hard work and will take time. The first step in the journey has begun: *IMAGINE INMAN*. Residents and business owners shared ideas and hopes. They imagined what Inman can be, what they want downtown to be, which are shared in the Public Input section.



The next step (and the City needs to keep their imaginations going) is where the real work begins: *INVEST IN INMAN*. The City will need to lead by investing in the public realm and by providing incentives for private investments. By investing in the public realm, the City will show its commitment to and belief in the vision. The vision, *DESTINATION INMAN*, and the guiding principles should keep the City laser-focused on investments, policies, partnerships and programs that keep the downtown progressing toward becoming a local and regional destination.

Establishing a framework and process for achieving the vision is critical to success, to providing the foundation for public investments and to recruiting private investments.



Placemaking is inherent to becoming a sustainable and thriving destination.

Achieving the vision will require perpetual effort... the journey will never end, but each part of the journey will fuel the next steps and continue to create memorable, fun and prosperous places that make Downtown Inman a popular destination.

These taglines can be incorporated into the branding, promotions and planning of the master plan projects. Put these on banners, bumper stickers and t-shirts. Host an @ImagineInman on Instagram to invite residents to continue to share their ideas. Use these tag lines as the City develops prospectus for potential investors.

Guiding Principles

The following principles support the master plan and the vision and should be used as a barometer for all new developments, projects and policies. For example: Does the development reflect the unique history of Inman as well as the positive, progressive nature of the community? Does the project enhance the sense of community and the small town feeling? Is the development intentionally designed to be authentic to Inman and sustainable? Does the project increase the connectivity within downtown and to the City and region? Does the policy or project advance the implementation of the master plan? Are partners engaged in the project? Will this project or policy elevate opportunities for prosperity? These principles are timeless and should guide the city for generations to come.

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

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

Capture and promote the history and stories of Inman to connect more people to the place, distinguishing Inman from other communities and spurring entrepreneurship through unique, local economic development efforts.



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

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

Build multi-jurisdictional and regional partnerships to continually improve and to sustain the City's and the region's quality of life through leveraged resources and planning, collaborative marketing and promotions, improved infrastructure, multi-modal accessibility and connectivity, cultural and recreational opportunities, place-based economic development, and collective stewardship of the natural environment.

Strengthen the qualities that define the spirit of Inman, which are exemplified through family values, award-winning schools, neighbors helping neighbors, a welcoming and safe atmosphere, the ability to see the potential and opportunities for the future, and the resolve to work for this future.



Summary of Public Input

Public Input: Imagine Inman
Surveying Inman

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Public Input: Imagine Inman

The public was invited to provide input through an online survey and by attending one of the public sessions during the workshop. Over 209 people completed the survey while over 75 people attended the in-person public meetings. This number of people showing up under COVID circumstances was a testament to community commitment.

During the public meetings, the planning team gave each person a proverbial magic wand to imagine one thing they would do if money were no object... just IMAGINE one big 'if I had a magic wand' wish. The following is a summary of the wishes.

Magic Wand Wishes

- Develop both sides of the railroad tracks and align streets to better connect both sides; encourage redevelopment and infill development (nice restaurant) in the first block along the railroad (Howard Street between Church Street and Brock Street).
- Need a signature restaurant in a Main Street building that will be a big, regional draw and serve as an anchor for recruiting other businesses to downtown.
- The railroad becomes a walking/bike trail up to Tryon, such as the Greenline in Atlanta and the Swamp Rabbit Trail from Travelers Rest to Greenville.
- Be different.
- Become a nostalgic destination like Mt. Airy, NC (Mayberry).
- Renovate/modernize City Hall: This is the first impression, needs to set example and be flagship building in the City.
- Commuter rail to Spartanburg.
- Peach Express Train ride: short train from Inman to Landrum, Tryon and Saluda. Can dine at the Hare & Hound, and then ride back home. And people from Landrum, Tryon and Saluda can ride to Inman for dinner, shopping and events.
- Provide new, fun and inclusive activities for all ages: parks, senior activity center, children's play and discovery; Movies and/or Music on Mill Street (food trucks, community gatherings); amphitheater; zoo; food truck rodeos, bring back the Moonlight Drive-in
- Parks throughout town with diverse uses and purposes such as passive recreation and enjoying the outdoors, playgrounds, neighborhood-scaled parks, dog park.



- Downtown is a thriving, unique destination with 24/7 foot traffic (open after 6:00 pm – fun nightlife for all): welcoming, accessible, fresh with plenty to do; restaurants, unique, local shops, art, bakery, breweries (such as FR8yard), arts/film/theater center, jazz club, farmers market; all buildings are occupied by thriving businesses that reflect the breadth of customer needs and interests (similar to a department store).
- Downtown appeals to all senses (case study: Laurel, Mississippi)
 - Sight: beautification and appropriate renovation of buildings, landscaping, streetscaping, art, activate the alleys
 - Taste: restaurants, food trucks, festivals, breweries and wine shops
 - Smell: landscaping, bakery, restaurants
 - Hearing: people walking and visiting, music, laughter
 - Safety: enforce building codes, safe pedestrian crossings that are ADA compliant, improve the alleyways, lighting, improved parking
- Attract investors to downtown: tap into big businesses (national) on Asheville Highway; provide incentives; nurture relationships with potential local investors (Is there a philanthropic family in Inman such as the Johnson family in Spartanburg?); collaborate with One Spartanburg; encourage mixed-use, live/work developments
- Create beautiful, welcoming, unique entrances into downtown: Beautification at Highway 176/Main Street intersection; digital sign at Asheville Highway/Mill Street to direct people downtown and to communicate all that's happening in downtown; unique wayfinding into and through town; improved parking management and signage.
- Remove bumpouts and rebuild appropriate bumpouts that improve pedestrian safety, enhance the beauty and function of the streets and parking, and provide space for well-designed lighting, signage, seating, trash receptacles and other amenities.
- Fun, safe hangouts for high school students such as the Rexall, the Old Biltmore.





December 2020 Survey

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Participants

Surveying Inman

In addition to hosting in-person meetings, we created an online survey for those that could not attend or chose not to for health reasons. This online survey allowed us a flexible platform for valuable feedback. The following pages summarize the survey responses.

The majority of respondents surveyed have lived in Inman for more than 20 years.

1-10 Years	10-20 Years	20+ Years
54	50	112

15%

of respondents surveyed, own business or property in downtown Inman.



1

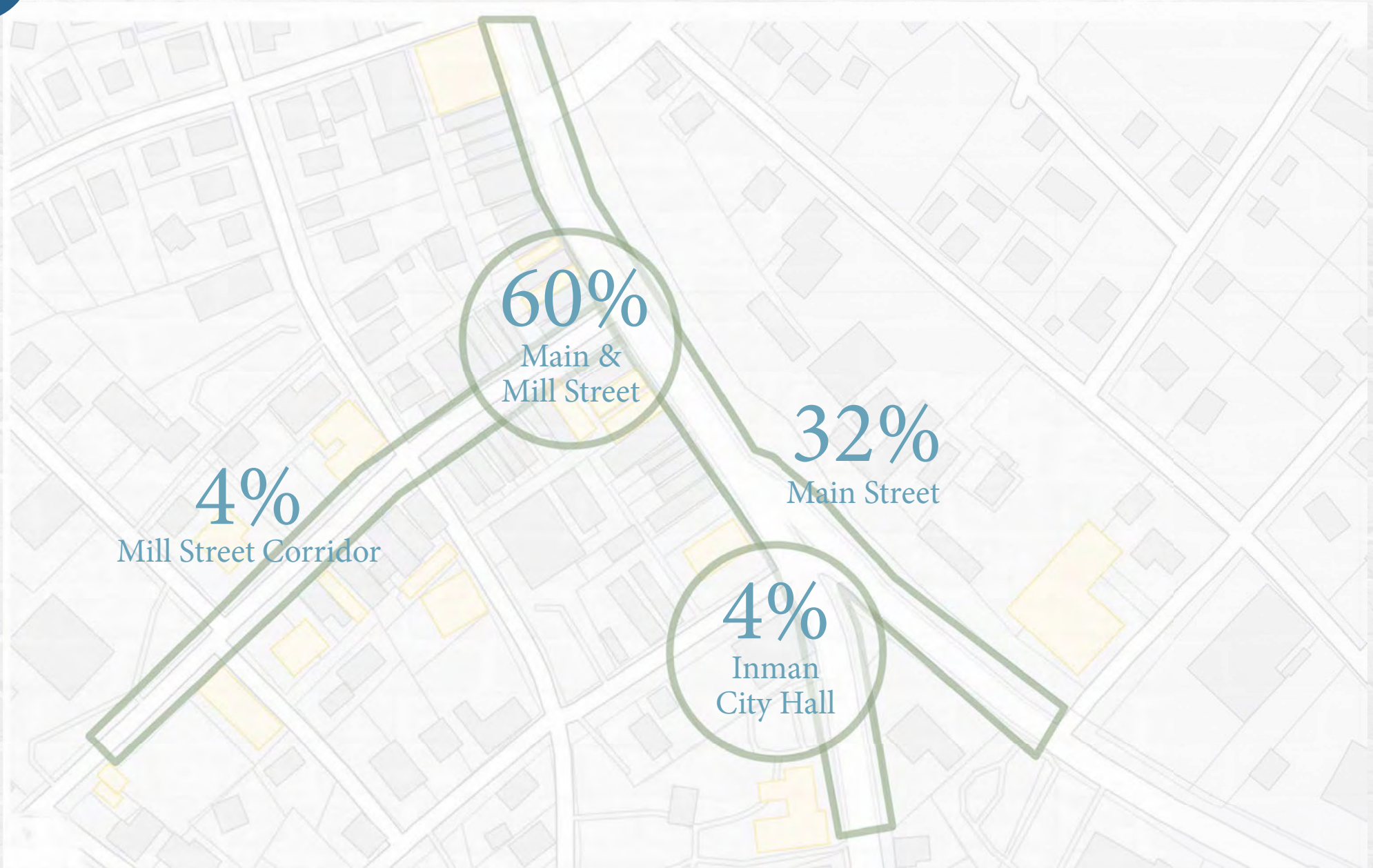
What ONE word best describes Inman, specifically the downtown?

Size of Word = Frequency of Responses



2

Where is the HEART of the City... the place that says, "This is Inman"?



3

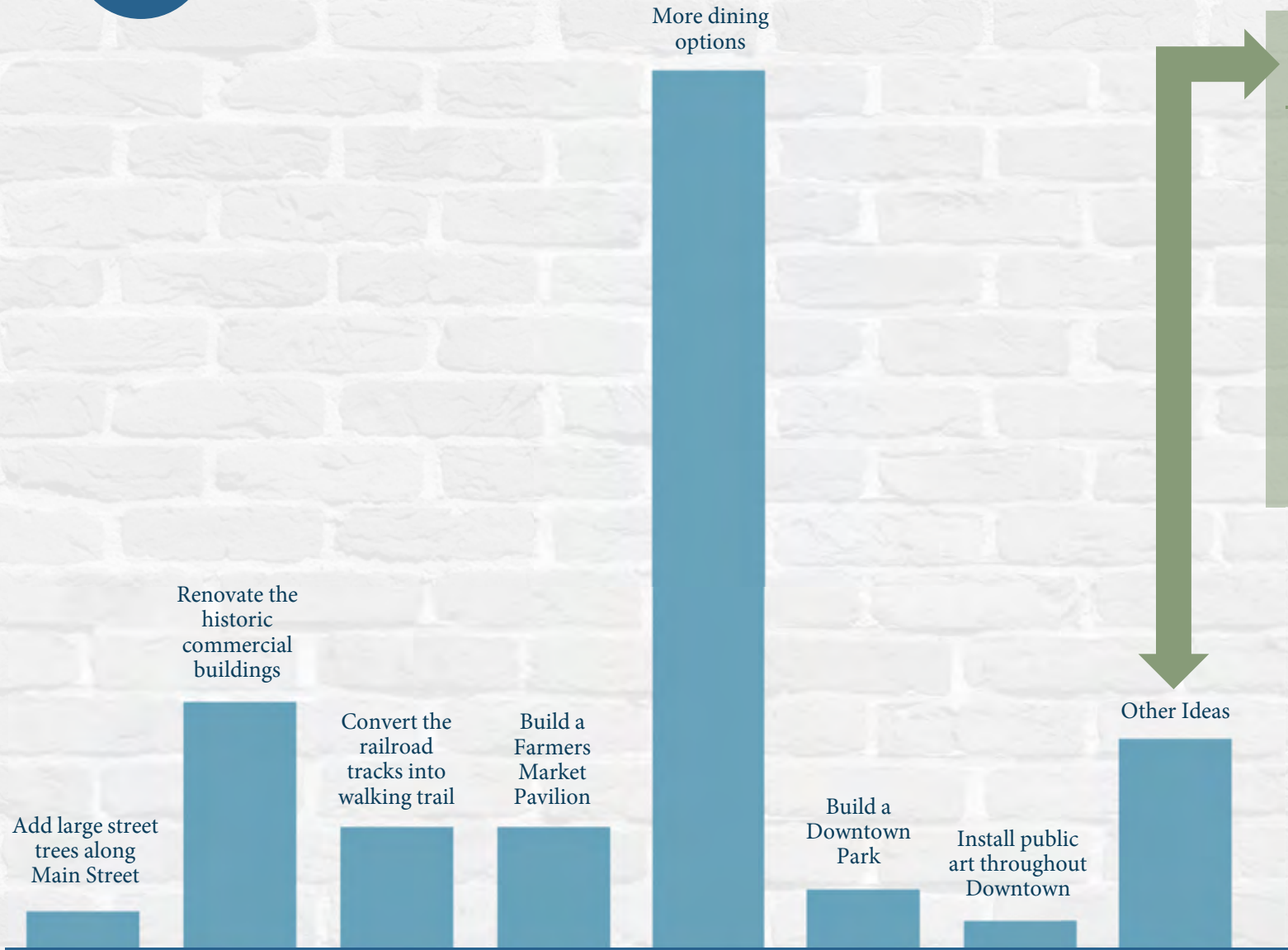
Where is your favorite place in downtown Inman?

Size of Word = Frequency of Responses



4

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



Ideas generated during the survey from Inman residents:

1. More parking, take cement slabs off spaces.
2. Build a Youth Center for the children.
3. Build a pavilion on Mill Street.
4. Need a night life.
5. Traffic quieting.
6. Marketing improvements, define who we want to be.
7. Repurpose the Wilkins Lumber Yard into a parking structure with pedestrian path leading to Main Street and Mill Street.
8. Undo the curbs on Main Street and Mill Street.
9. Build a Community Center, parking, park walking trail in Wilkins Lumber Yard.

5

What is your vision for downtown Inman?
Imagine what you would like to be able to do downtown.
Where would you like to do it?
How does downtown look in your vision?

Vision for Inman

Highest ranked answers from survey:

- Keep historic character, modernize and rehabilitate buildings downtown
- Fill the empty buildings downtown
- Bring dining options so people don't have to leave Inman to eat dinner
- Vibrant shops that appeal to different demographics
- Inman needs kid friendly places
- Incorporate art into downtown
- Build an amphitheater for live music and event opportunities
- Pedestrian friendly downtown
- Build a park or walking trail downtown
- Create social settings for people to gather



Landrum, South Carolina



Greer, South Carolina

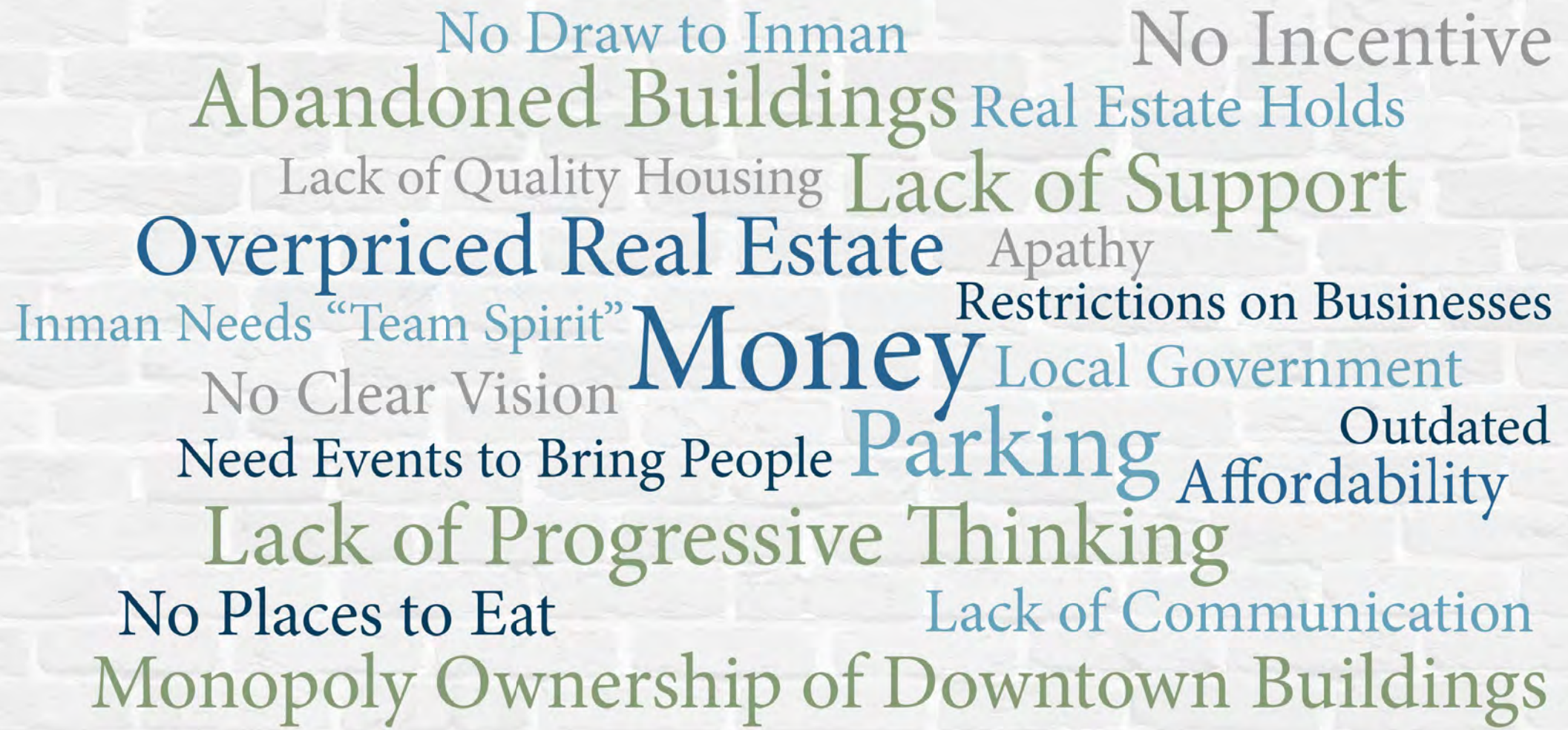
“My husband & I love to drive downtown Landrum and Greer because there are so many diverse shops, dining, and the landscaping is beautiful.”

“Downtown Inman has much potential, but it seems desolate since there are really no businesses for shopping, dining, art, etc. Downtown Inman seems to shut down around 5pm, so when I drive through after getting off work, it seems dead and dark.”

6

What stands in the way of revitalizing downtown Inman?
What are the challenges?

Size of Word = Frequency of Responses



7

What THREE businesses/services/retail would you like to see in downtown Inman?

TOP 3 businesses/services/retail

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

- 20% Entertainment
- 15% Bakery
- 14% Microbrewery
- 11% Sports Bar
- 10% White Tablecloth Restaurant
- 7% Gift Shop
- 6% Gourmet Market
- 5% Children's Store
- 3% Women's Boutique
- 2% Live Music Venues
- 1% Art Gallery
- 1% Grocery Store
- 1% Walking Trail
- .5% Antique Shop
- .5% Dog Park
- .5% Bookshop
- .5% Sporting Goods
- .5% Local Artist Shop
- .5% Local History / Children's Museum
- .5% Mast General Store
- .5% Arcade



Dining Requests:

Steakhouse	Deli	Ice Cream Shop
Southern Cooking	Irish Pub	Seafood
Farm to Table	Sandwich Shop	Sports Bar
Casual	Pizza Pub	Coffee Shop

8

What's missing in downtown Inman?

Majority write-in responses from surveyors



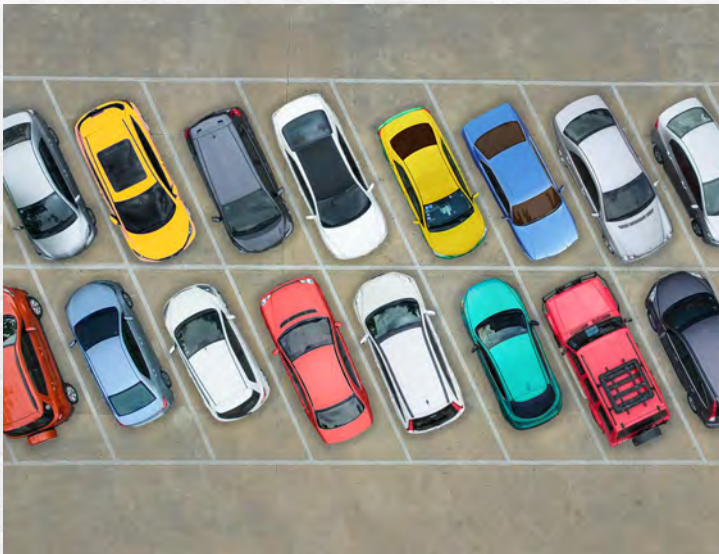
Night Life / Pubs / Sports Bars / Hangout Spots



Casual Dining / Dinner & Lunch Spots



People / Markets / Parks / Trails



Parking / Destination Spots / Wayfinding Signage



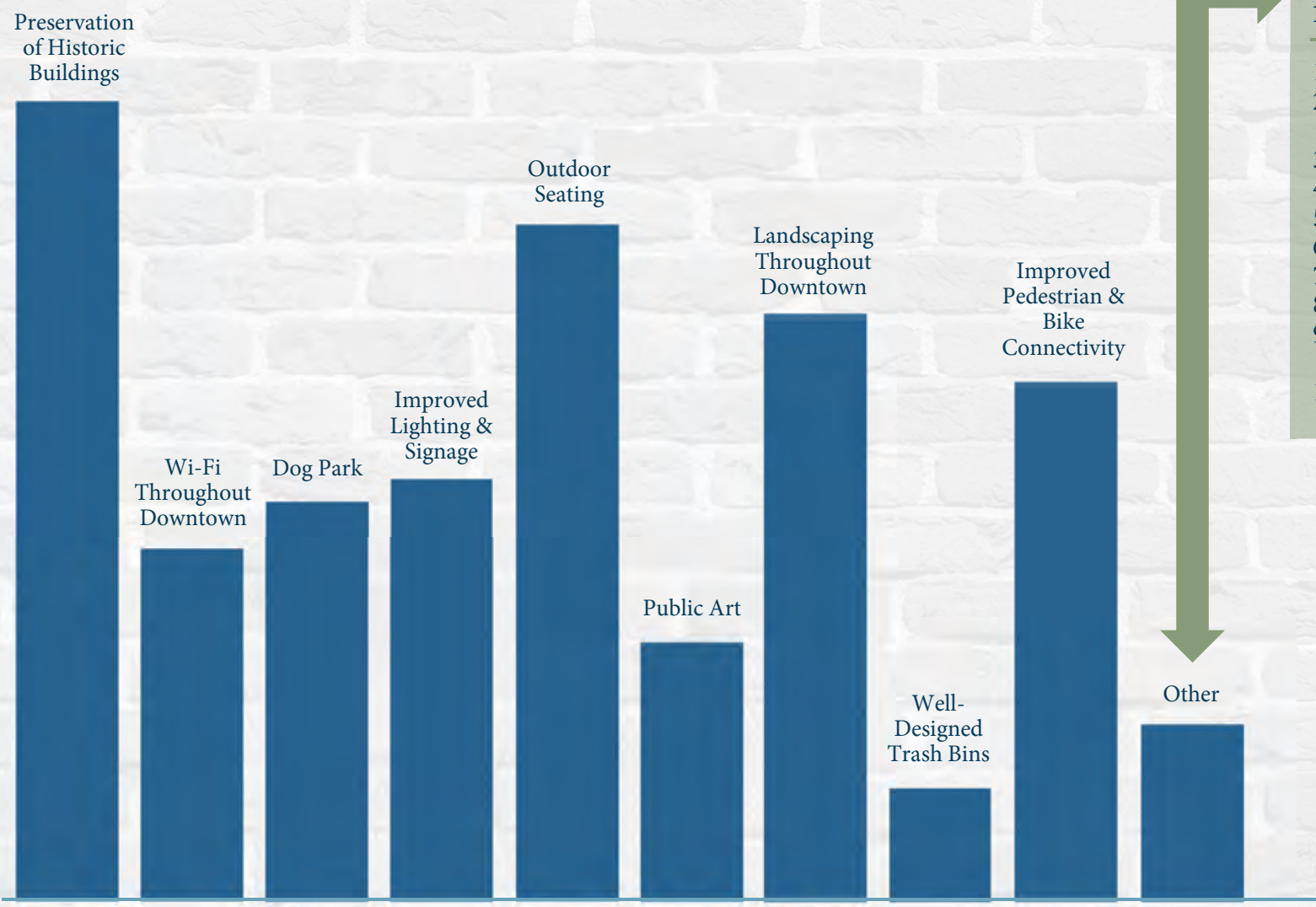
Live Music / Events / Social Gatherings / Activities



Shopping / Relevant Stores / Grocery Store / Businesses

9

What qualities or amenities do you want to see in downtown Inman, such as architecture, design, landscape, furnishing, etc...



- Ideas generated during the survey from Inman residents:
1. Bike Lanes
 2. Cleanup Highway 176 and improve wayfinding
 3. Renovate older buildings
 4. Add a pavilion on Mill Street
 5. Build an amphitheater
 6. Make downtown welcoming
 7. Create places for children, build a playground
 8. Use the old sheds for outdoor concerts
 9. Pour all your efforts into bringing new businesses and dining options
 10. Improve roads, in need of maintenance



10

What makes Inman unique?

Size of Word = Frequency of Responses



Summary of Downtown Analysis

Downtown Analysis
Assets and Opportunities

Page 35
Page 38

Downtown Analysis

Why Downtown?

When a downtown is vibrant with business, commerce and cultural activities, the rest of the city is stronger. The core of a city must be healthy and strong to support the vitality of the entirety of the city.

The dark area illustrates the center of downtown – the project area, which should be the priority development area for retail, restaurants, and entrepreneurial opportunities. By focusing on this core area, development outside of the center has greater potential to thrive and to continue to attract new businesses and visitors.

For a small city to have a vibrant and prosperous downtown, the city must value and promote its authenticity, its history, and its natural and built resources. Research from the National Main Street Center (NMSC) in Washington, D.C., validates the power of authenticity and history to create a vibrant economy.

According to the NMSC:

“Our Main Streets tell us who we are and who we were, and how the past has shaped us. We do not go to bland suburbs or enclosed shopping malls to learn about our past, explore our culture, or discover our identity. Our Main Streets are the places of shared memory where people still come together to live, work, and play.”



Downtown Study Area

PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY AND WALKABILITY

Downtown Inman is an extremely walkable area with an existing network of sidewalks and potential for extending this network to other parts of the City. This map documents the existing ped shed for downtown.

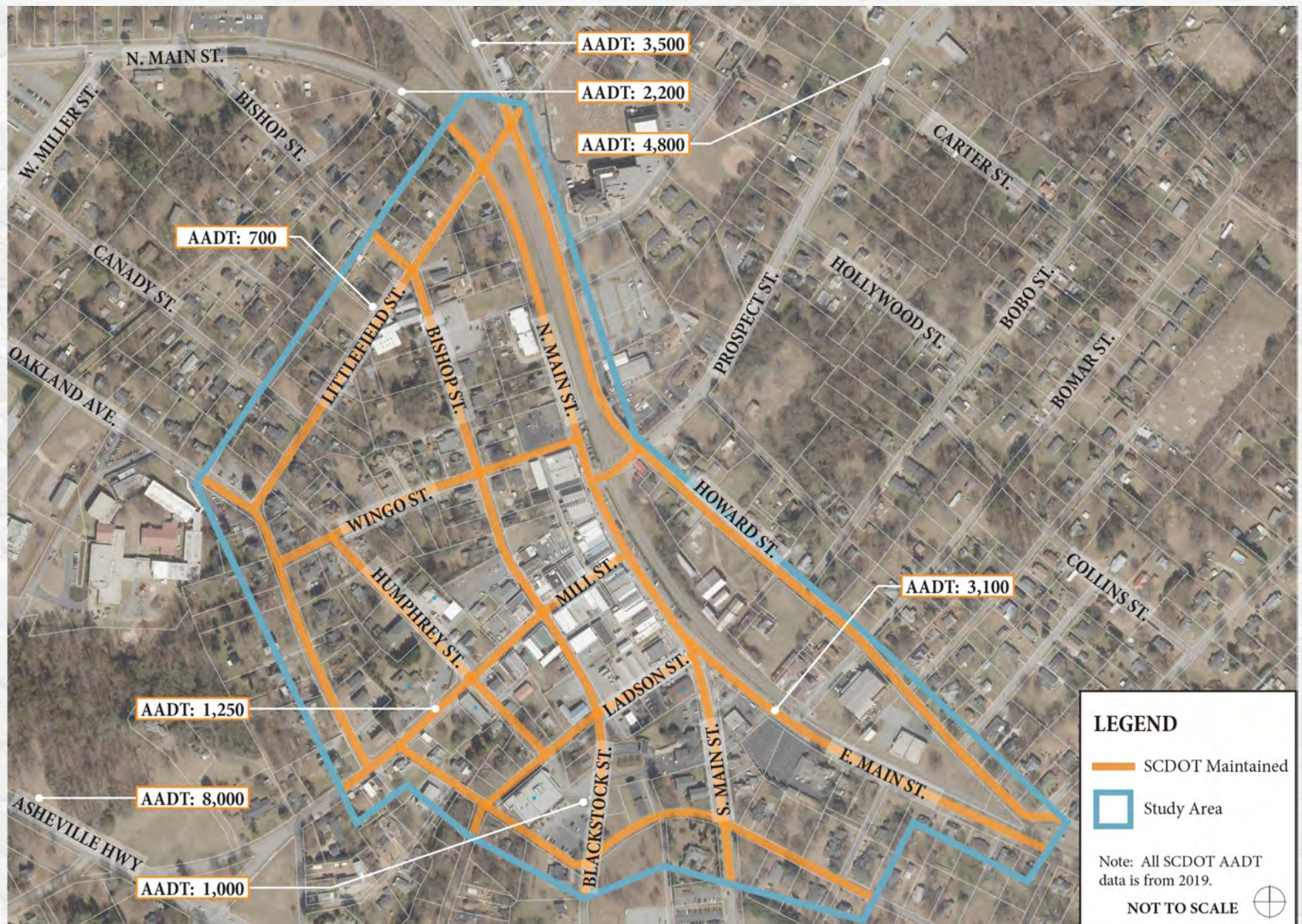
Ped Sheds are maps that illustrate the area within a five- to fifteen-minute walking distance from an activity center. The ped shed map illustrates that the majority of downtown is within a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile walk (seven to ten minutes) of the Main and Mill Streets intersection. With the vision **DESTINATION INMAN**, downtown Inman has the infrastructure in place to become one of the most walkable and vibrant downtowns in the region.

In addition, the map indicates that the Inman Mills $\frac{1}{4}$ mile ped shed is close. A $\frac{1}{2}$ mile ped shed from Inman Mills would overlap with the Main/Mill ped shed. This is evidence that Inman Mills is a close walk to the heart of downtown. What is missing are: 1) a safe, dedicated pedestrian path/sidewalk from downtown to Inman Mills, and 2) the necessity and opportunities to extend the pedestrian (and bike) paths from Main/Mill across the railroad tracks. As the City is planning for the implementation of the recommendations, keep these connections in mind.

The team recommends, as illustrated later in this report, a few infill development sites, all of which are within the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile ped shed. Again, this affirms the validity of focusing on downtown, taking advantage of existing infrastructure, and the tremendous opportunities for downtown Inman to become a top destination for walking, shopping, working, living and exploring.



Ped Sheds: walking distances in downtown



Existing Transportation Conditions:

- Main Street is a key corridor and provides vehicular link to Asheville Highway
- Mill Street provides link to Inman Mills
- Low Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT).
- Wide lanes
- Current lane configuration meets need of current traffic volumes, and there is not a need for additional capacity.

Assets & Opportunities



Opportunities

This map indicates areas of opportunities to revitalize downtown, becoming a desirable destination.

Gateways serve as transitions and demarcate an entrance to a community. Inman currently has 3 major entry points into downtown:

1. The intersection at the current City Hall location, at South Main and East Main
2. The intersection of Mill Street and Humphrey Street
3. The intersection of Wingo Street and Prospect Street with North Main Street

Remember the 5Gs. Enhancing these gateways will allow the City to grab, greet and guide visitors to gathering places, retail and other businesses. Recommendations for each gateway will use traditional streetscape materials to reflect Inman's identity and charm. For example, the illustrative plan shows brick crosswalks and intersections that help announce the entry into downtown Inman. Each gateway will provide opportunities for public art, branding, or special landscape plantings.

Remember making Gumbo. Focus on your existing assets, flavor them and make them something better such as the alleyways, streetscaping, empty sites and the inactive rail line.

Creating new landmarks such as the farmers market pavilion, a new City Hall and public art will add renewed flavor and interest, contributing to new memories and a renewed economy.

Assets

Historic Downtown: Buildings and Urban Form	Inman Mills	Upstate Coffee
Railroad town history	Peach history	Mathis Park
Blue Ribbon High School	Inman Mills	Little Theater
Access to I-26	Mill Village and houses	Library
Peach history	Armory	Alleyways
Inman Mills	Peach sheds	Baseball field
	Lake Bowen access	City Staff

Priority Recommendations & Investment Opportunities

Priority Investment Areas:	Page 40
Facilities & Investment Opportunities	
Streetscape	Page 41
Economic Development	Page 47
Recommendations:	Page 60
Leadership & Organization	

Priority Investment Areas: Facilities & Streetscaping

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning team identified several catalyst placemaking projects for the City to pursue over the next five to ten years. City Council will need to dive deeper into these recommendations and discern which to address based on resources and capacity. These placemaking projects focus on streetscape and public facilities: capital projects. In addition to these projects, the team has outlined several recommendations that will provide for the leadership, administrative and community engagement framework necessary to support the capital projects.

The catalyst projects focus on:

- Improve, appropriately renovate, and reuse the historic buildings downtown
- Main Street and Mill Street streetscape improvements
- Rails to Trails conversion: Greenway
- New City Hall
- Farmers Market Pavilion

These are long-term projects, yet the planning for them needs to start immediately. The farmers market pavilion is the easiest to start immediately and will build momentum for the other projects. Start now to build the regional partnerships and support for the Rails to Trails conversion by getting the right people, SCDOT, Norfolk Southern, Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG), to the table.



Streetscape

A community's greatest potential for change is within its public realm. Streets make up the largest portion of the public realm. The character and allocation of space on a street plays a key role in user experience. Streets should be attractive, inviting, accessible, safe, and comfortable for all users. Often, this space is underutilized and not serving all users and/or needs in the community.

Inman is embracing its potential for creating a vibrant place and taking a "Great Streets" approach to revitalization. **Great Streets** place people first – people that drive a car, ride a bicycle, walk, shop, live in, or visit downtown. A people-first design approach celebrates life, creates inviting and vibrant public spaces, and provides opportunity for community growth.

Investment in the public realm will stimulate private investment. Emphasis on restoring and revitalizing the public realm is woven through success stories in communities across the country. Inman is ready for a catalytic change in downtown that once again establishes the heart of the community.

The master plan rendering to the right illustrates the long-term vision for downtown. The white rooftops are existing buildings with colored rooftops suggest development. These recommendations are explained further on the following pages.



Illustrative Master Plan



Main Street

Main Street can set the stage for residents and visitors and welcome them into the heart of downtown. In tandem with the recommendations for Mill Street, it is important to provide a vibrant streetscape for Main Street from the gateways at City Hall and Wingo Street. Drivers and users should be informed that they are entering a people-focused space and that speeds should be reduced. One way to accomplish this is through visual and physical cues as part of the streetscape design. The additional width gained through reallocating space on the street (reducing vehicular travel lanes) can be used for wider sidewalks, street tree plantings, additional parking, staging areas for visitors, and gathering spaces.

Recommendations include:

- Reducing lane width to 11 feet with lane reallocation to two lanes
- Head-in angled parking on both sides of street
- Wider sidewalks, with sidewalk on east side of street (on tracks)
- Narrower crossing distances with vehicular brick paving in intersections
- Street trees – canopy trees and accent trees

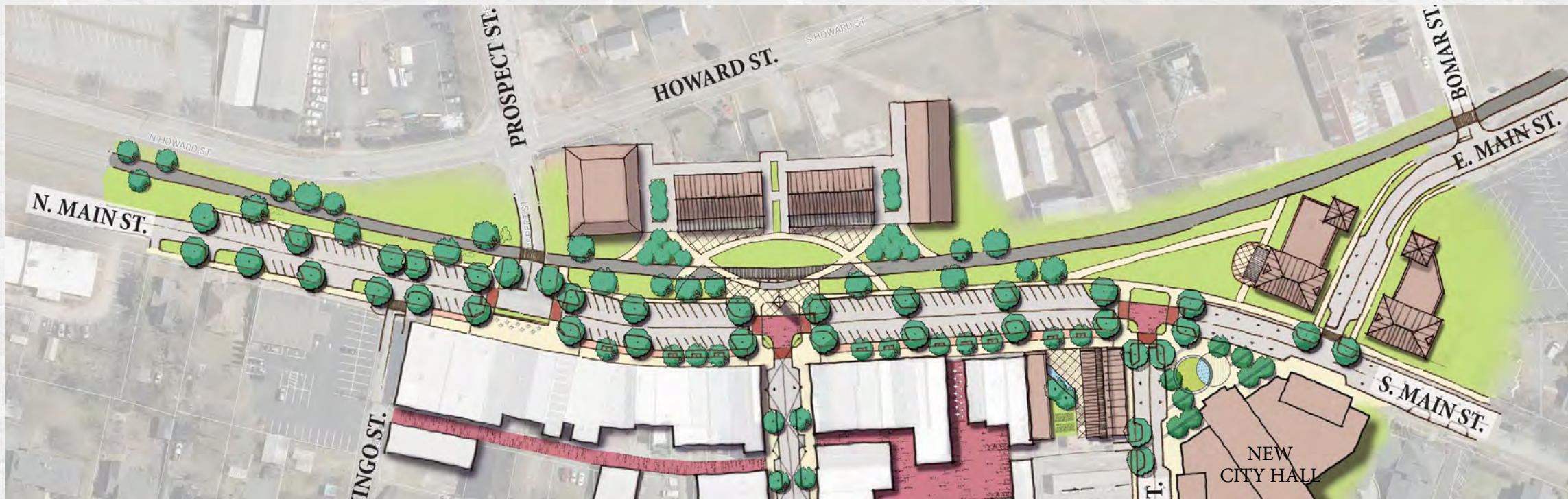


Mill Street

The proposed design of Mill Street reimagines a street focused on providing pedestrian amenities and creating an attractive corridor that invites new development and highlights existing businesses. These key elements will be achieved through a cross section that allocates more space to pedestrians, allows for street trees, and provides opportunities for Mill Street to serve as Inman’s “festival street.”

Redesigned curb extensions will now bookend Mill Street at its intersections with Main Street, Blackstock Street, and Humphrey Street. Curb extensions for tree islands and stormwater management also are proposed at midblock locations. The curb extensions will help maintain 11-foot lanes, which will promote lower vehicular speeds as motorists move through the heart of downtown. Curb extensions also will frame parallel parking, which is a continuation of the current parking configuration on Mill Street.

Outdoor dining, street trees, traditional materials, and catenary lighting will set the stage for weekly farmers markets, concerts, and events. Brick pavers will be used as the surface material at intersections and crosswalks, which will contribute to Mill Street’s identity as Inman’s festival street. In addition to contributing positively to Inman’s aesthetic character, the visual contrast and textural differences of brick pavers will signal to motorists that lower speeds are intended.



Greenway

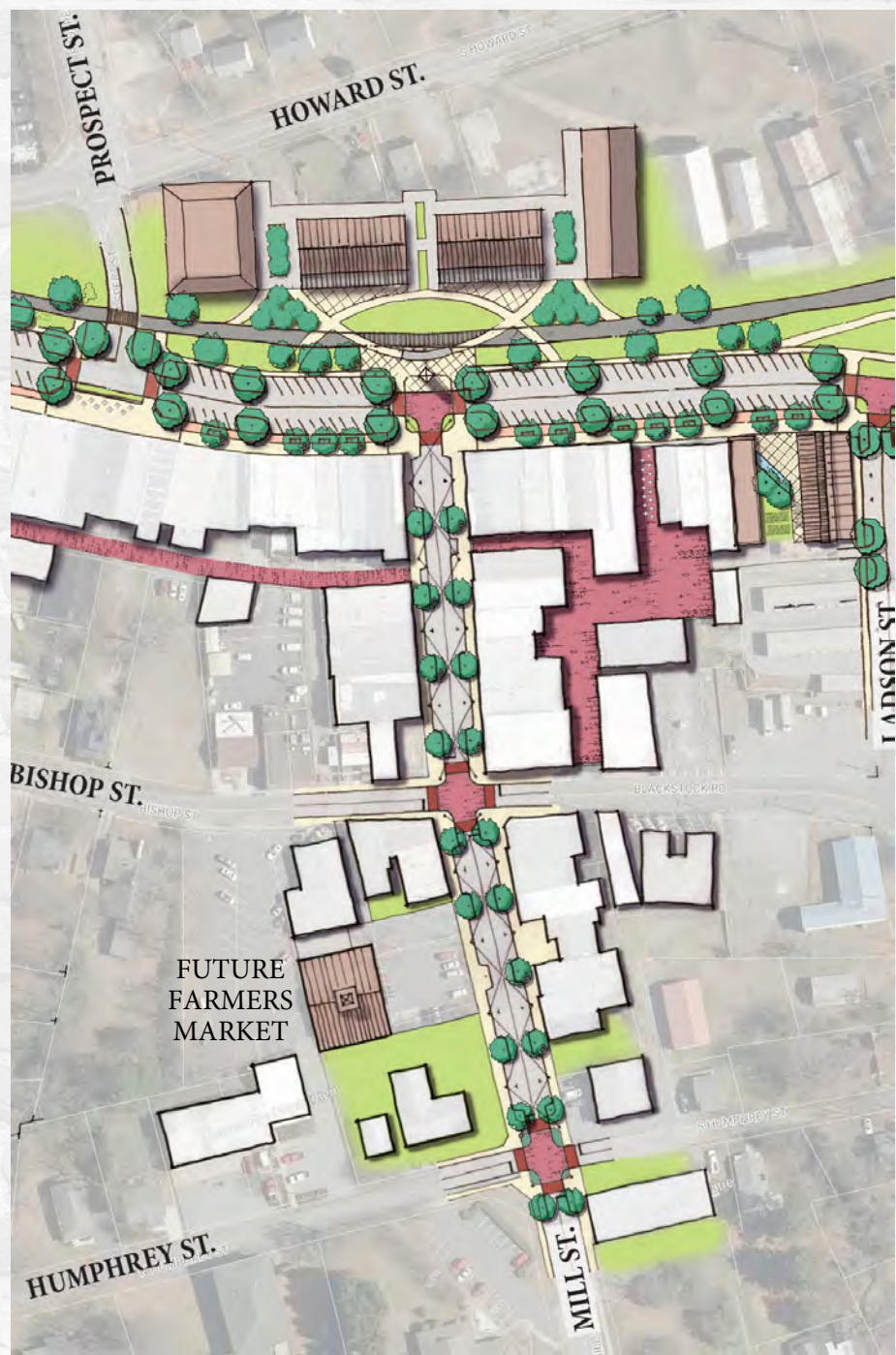
Converting the existing and inactive Norfolk Southern spur line into a greenway can be an economic game changer for the City of Inman and for the region. The City was founded by the railroad. Activating this resource will celebrate this history as well reinstate an important connection between Landrum, Tryon and Saluda, possibly Spartanburg. The economic, placemaking, community building and wellness, and tourism benefits can be as transformative as the nearby Swamp Rabbit Trail demonstrates. This project is one for a lifetime.

The City should start immediately to build relationships with Norfolk Southern and to create the regional partnerships necessary to bring this catalyst project to life.

Infill Opportunities

Property on the northeast side of the railroad tracks is prime for infill development opportunities as well as redevelopment of the peach sheds and warehouses. Developing this side of the tracks can add a nice edge to town and space for new businesses such as breweries, an outfitter, maker space, artist studios and galleries. Honoring the vernacular of the peach sheds can contribute to the unique spirit of place in downtown.

With the realignment of East Main Street, new property will be available for additional infill development. These sites on both sides of the new terminus of East Main and across the street from the proposed new City Hall will be ideal locations for businesses to support the economic and tourism activity of the greenway and new downtown businesses. Possible businesses may include an Inn (in the spirit of the old Inman Hotel), an outfitters, or a museum as well as upper-story apartments.



Alley Activation

Alleyways between buildings offer opportunities to extend the pedestrian realm from the streetscape to public parking and rear entryways into businesses. Typically, alleyways are neglected, poorly lit, and often forgotten spaces. By installing catenary lighting, murals and artwork, improving pavement surfaces, and adding planter boxes to demarcate entrances, alleyways can become integral to the fabric of downtown.

An activated public alleyway is an ideal catalyst project; it is a small-scale and low-cost investment that also is highly visible and fun. Community members can be invited to participate in beautification through community artwork, donations of plant materials and small street furniture, hang lights, or clean up. Alternatively, local artists can create murals along alleyway walls.

The alleyway adjacent to Starry Night is a prime candidate for the first catalyst project. The City could consider working with Starry Night to commission a mural, install planters and outdoor seating, and catenary lighting, which would create an inviting space. The same process could be applied to other alleyways, including the alley behind Rexall and the alley that extends from Mill Street and bends down toward Blackstock Road. If an alleyway is privately owned the City should work toward a partnership with the owner to activate the alleyway.

Farmers Market

The intended space for the farmers market is currently a parking lot and grassy vacant lot adjacent to the Inman Fire Department. This location offers plenty of parking that fronts Bishop Street and could be an excellent location for a centrally located market space. The design of the space allows for flexibility in use as a farmer's market, everyday use, and special events. An architectural structure that matches the character of downtown would front Mill Street and allow markets to take place in all weather conditions.

Parking

There is a perceived problem with parking in downtown. These perceptions can be alleviated with wayfinding signage, improved accessibility and appropriate lighting. There is sufficient parking now; however, access and management can be improved. As downtown is redeveloped, more businesses open and more people are coming downtown, the City will need to monitor parking capacity and plan for future parking needs. Business owners need to consider that the most accessible parking should be reserved for customers and visitors. The proposed streetscape plan provides additional parking that is safer and more accessible.

New City Hall

A new City Hall at a reconfigured intersection of South Main and East Main will establish a prominent, civic presence at the entrance to downtown. The reconfigured road will terminate at City Hall, leaving no doubt that visitors or residents have arrived in downtown Inman. The public plaza fronting Main Street can serve as additional community gathering and festival space. Also, the new site across from City Hall would be ideal for an inn or other business that can take advantage of the rails to trail and new retail and event activity in downtown.



Massing Concept of New City Hall



Current

Trail-oriented development at Mill and Main

Communities across the country are searching for their postcard and Instagram photos. For Inman, the intersection of Mill and Main can be that photo and should be established as the heart of the community. This space must be transformative, iconic, vibrant, and inclusive to all. The intersection can become a literal crossroads when the trail is complete and is prime for monumental art that reflects the history of Inman, such as a tall, vertical sculpture. The vertical art establishes the center point of downtown. A plaza and greenspace can serve as a nice resting place and place for watching or meeting people.

New development could reflect the vernacular of the peach sheds and serve as a trail head for those enjoying the new greenway.

“Meet me at the tower,” can become a common request for visitors shopping, cyclists riding the trail, residents meeting friends for dinner. This also has branding potential.

“Meet me at the Tower”

The concepts to the right, are to suggest that the public art could reflect Inman’s railroad history. Because the intersection of Main Street and Mill Street is the heart of town, the art or object should have a significant vertical scale in order to become an iconic landmark for the City.



CONCEPT: View looking east on Mill Street



Current



CONCEPT: View looking north on Main Street



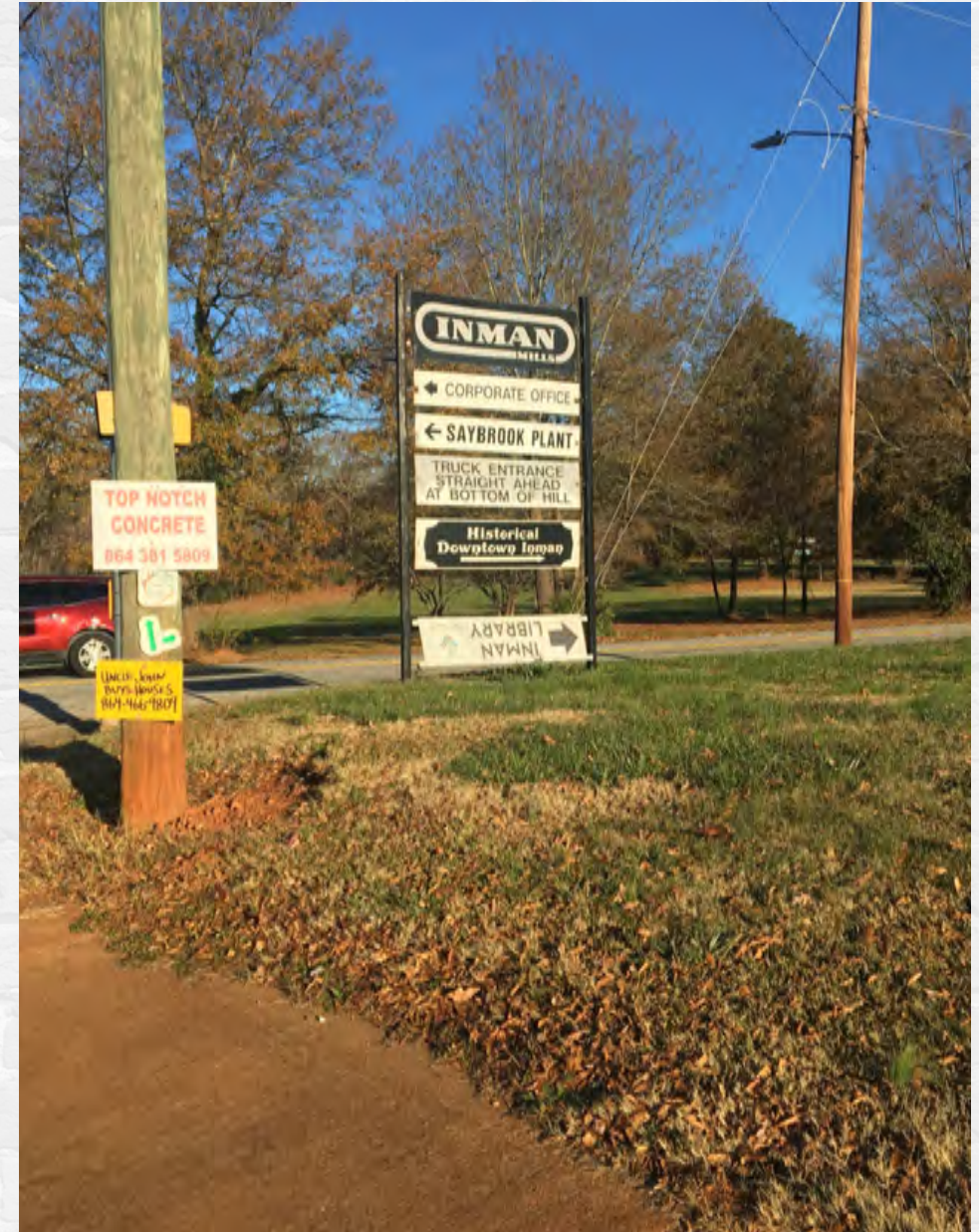
Current

Economic Development

Inman, South Carolina, is a community of incredible opportunity. Located just off I-26 in northern Spartanburg County, the city is nestled in the foothills of South Carolina, close to the Spartanburg-Greenville-Asheville metroplex. With its close proximity to the North Carolina mountains, neighboring tourist destinations, and nearby Lake Bowen with water recreational sports and fishing, Inman is attracting many new residents. It is fortunate to have a nationally-recognized school system, steady area employment, above-average median family income levels, and an influx of young professional families with children.

Inman, a “Small Town (with a) Big Heart,” has the look of a classic small town that reflects the character distinct to its textile and peach growing background. While historic mills and “ghost signs” on peach sheds pay homage to the past, a progressive city council that has invested in infrastructure and housing has positioned the town well for future economic growth and downtown revitalization.

A city’s economic development strategy should naturally include activities like business recruitment and assistance to improve the appearance of downtown buildings. But, to be truly successful, the City needs to continually seek ways to improve its cultural heritage, build on its history and unique characteristics, and continue to offer a rich, charming, and desirable environment for today and the future.



Opportunity for a Downtown Gateway at corner of Mill Street and Asheville Highway

INMAN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CLIMATE

Inman already possesses several dynamics that significantly influence economic acceleration.

A great school district: Good schools = GROWTH. The award-winning Spartanburg District 1 is attracting many new families with children, spurring a residential growth that is the envy of many cities. This growing segment of the population creates new markets for businesses to cater to these families, such as restaurants/bars and retail and service establishments (e.g., dry cleaners, hair salons, fitness/wellness companies, bakeries).

Mill Street: The initial economic development catalyst. Many towns often seek an early catalyst to kick off development and growth. Inman already has that catalyst in place with the launch of a new coffee shop and renovations of existing buildings on Mill Street. These improvements are not only encouraging additional business investment but also are providing models of appropriate revitalization practices.

The new Inman branch of the Spartanburg Library System will further stimulate growth and activity on Mill Street between Main and the Asheville Highway. The library directly faces Inman Theater which offers live professional performances and classes and clubs for family entertainment and enjoyment. The Mill Street project area is the opening volley in a long list of impending downtown development.

INVESTORS SEEKING DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES. One of the major challenges of downtown revitalization is identifying the pioneer investors who are willing to make the first moves in a downtown project. During the three-day Master Plan Charrette, a number of potential investors participated in the discussions and expressed interest in potential available downtown buildings. Additionally, several community attendees discussed with the charrette team options of investing in – or starting their own---businesses. It is evident that Inman is poised to attract new investment, particularly new local investment, that supports downtown growth and revitalization.

AN IMPROVING DEVELOPMENT CLIMATE. As the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, new businesses will begin to develop across the US, many of those taking advantage of changes in the commerce climate. More people will continue to work from home, larger corporations will need smaller office and/or meeting spaces to accommodate fewer employees on-site, and people will need nearby shopping and restaurant venues. The city of Inman can take advantage of these market advantages and create the processes and incentives to ensure appropriate businesses are located in the historic downtown area.

Population

2,435

+11.4% since 2010

Median Income

27,174

Median Age

34.4

Unemployment Rate

3.0%

Median Home Price

\$159,000

Comfort Index (Climate)

7.5/10

RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1

Create an Economic Development Information Clearinghouse with Part-Time Staff

Inman should consider a centralized clearinghouse for managing the flow of accurate and up-to-date information for current and future businesses. During the Master Plan visit to Inman, the consulting team was unable to identify a consolidated resource list to assist business start-ups, such as ready-to-occupy business locations and contact information for zoning and building inspections.

A key recommendation is to create a one-stop economic development office in which a part-time contractual individual or a staff member cost-shared with another area agency, such as One Spartanburg. The primary duties of this office are to share basic information, local knowledge and simple processes and policies with potential investors and to support the economic development efforts defined by the City Council. The individual within this office will create a simple written and online guide for potential developers, including contact information, financial resources, and easy access to helpful existing downtown business owners.



RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2

Cultivate Potential Downtown Investors

Inman is fortunate that investors are already speculating on downtown Inman. Several of these potential investors were identified when they attended the Master Plan public meetings. The newly formed Economic Development staff should identify and meet regularly with these possible investors and share basic economic development resources for more complex projects. The office should connect with Spartanburg County Economic Development, One Spartanburg, and/or consulting services (e.g., Small Business Development Center).

Development Incentive Model: City of Florence

The City of Florence has an extensive and innovative program to promote all types of downtown redevelopment, including grants, design assistance and funding for historic redevelopment and special assistance for waste removal and utilities. Find out more info at the site below:
https://www.florencedowntown.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Events/incentivepackage_2020_rfs.pdf



INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

CITY OF FLORENCE
DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
324 W. EVANS STREET | FLORENCE, SC 29501
843-678-5912 • PROGRESS@FLORENCEDOWNTOWN.COM

Historic District (H-1) and Food, Artisan, Warehouse District (W-1) Incentives



Irby Street Corridor Overlay District (ISC-OD) Incentives

Map of Irby Street Corridor Overlay District
Properties covered by the hash marks are included in this district from Lucas Street to Cherokee Rd.



RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3

Expand & Diversify the Façade Grant Program Benefits

Inman's existing Façade Grant program has been a key component in the revitalization of Mill Street with sufficient funds to provide substantial assistance to developers. It is suggested that Inman use this highly effective tool in expanded ways to produce a greater visual impact on the downtown.

The following enhancements to the Façade Grant program can provide the basis of a comprehensive business assistance program for Inman:

- **ADD A PROFESSIONAL DESIGN ASSISTANCE COMPONENT:** The city might consider contracting with an architect to assist façade grant applicants in crafting the most attractive, appropriate, and cost-effective design that not only enhances aesthetics but also preserves the history of the downtown area. All façade grant projects should emphasize the historic character of the building and surrounding area. The city may want to contract with an architect initially for the next 8 to 10 building façade projects and provide this service to the applicants at no additional cost.



3
cont.

- **CONSIDER FUNDING NEW BUSINESS SIGNAGE** and repair of existing signs that demonstrate the town’s character. This immediate step will enhance the visibility of current businesses and indicates a business-friendly atmosphere. Professionally designed and installed signage will exemplify Inman’s unique charm and the individual business’ character.
- **LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENTS AND PLANTERS** will improve the overall downtown appearance and demonstrate a new community commitment from merchants and property owners. Planters in front of businesses and window boxes, partly funded (on a short-term basis) by the expanded grant program and maintained by the private business, will add color, texture, seasonal interest, and enhance street appearance.



COMPARISON OF SC FAÇADE GRANT PROGRAMS

City	Range of Façade Loan	Type of Loan	Match Requirements
Columbia	\$5,000 to \$15,000	Forgivable loan; 30%/year over 3 years	80% city, 20% applicant
West Columbia	Up to \$10,000	Grant	50% city/50% applicant
Florence	Up to \$10,000	Grant	50% city/50% applicant
Greenville	Up to \$10,000	Grant	50% city/50% applicant
Pickens	Determined by project size	Grant	50% city/50% applicant
Clinton	Maximum grant \$5000 with 2 tiers	Grant	50% city/50% applicant
Greer	Maximum grant \$5000	Grant	50/50

RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4

Consider National Register Historic District Designations

Many communities in South Carolina have elected to utilize historic preservation as a tool to preserve and enhance their downtowns. Cities and towns of all sizes have pursued historic preservation or locally-designated landmark districts to help preserve local character and market their city's unique historic resources.

- **Inman should begin a series of discussions with the SC Historic Preservation Office at the State Department of Archives and History and the Spartanburg County Historical Association** to present/discuss the historic resources of Inman, assess possible creation of National Register Historic Districts, and gain an understanding of the financial incentives that accompany this designation, including state and federal tax credits that can be used by private developers to offset the cost of historic rehabilitation. Research has validated that historic-designated areas increase in value and promote increased community investment. Both Inman's tax base and investment climate are likely to benefit considerably if such historic designations were granted. A National Register Historic Designation, along with local landmark designations, can provide significant substantial tax incentives to support downtown redevelopment, such as the SC Bailey Bill. This 1992 South Carolina law allows local governments to adopt the Bailey Bill, a local property tax abatement available to owners of historic buildings that make substantial qualifying investments. This ordinance can allow a property owner to keep the building's assessed value at the same pre-rehab amount for as long as 20 years. These tax savings can result in substantial incentives for a building owner.



4
cont.

- **The city of Inman, with its array of beautiful and historic homes, might benefit from creating Historic Walking Tours.** A history tour will promote the historic downtown and its adjacent beautiful neighborhoods. The Spartanburg County Historical Association has previously offered Inman city leaders assistance in creating a historic walking tour that could be operated by Inman volunteers. The Spartanburg County Historical Association also is willing to share its expertise about the steps involved in creating commercial and residential historic districts.
- **Create an organization to promote and manage downtown revitalization efforts such as Main Street South Carolina:** Main Street SC is a membership program of the SC Municipal Association that offers staff training, knowledge, and organizational tools to help cities revitalize their historic downtowns. Main Street SC has a highly successful record in SC communities and is affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Programming is specifically created around a four-point approach to downtown revitalization: **Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Development.** Since membership in Main Street SC is highly competitive and requires community commitment and dedicated staff, Inman should immediately open dialogue with Main Street SC about membership. In addition, leverage existing relationships with the Chamber and One Spartanburg.



RECOMMENDATIONS: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

5

Additional Recommendations for City Council

Commit to develop the Farmer's Market Pavilion: The Master Planning process has recommended a new Farmers' Market Pavilion with a multi-purpose facility, near the intersection of Main and Mill Streets. Development of the Farmers' Market and related connectivity improvements will attract new business and new customers and strengthen the City's revitalization efforts. This is also an ideal location for the city to consider public restrooms to serve downtown. The market will provide space for myriad community events, including local festivals, public and private celebrations, and local food and craft demonstrations. A considerable catalyst to downtown business growth, the Farmers' Market will bring substantial new activity to the area.

The City Council, in collaboration with other local organizations such as The Task Force on Implementing the Economic Development Plan, should request a presentation to The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Public Facilities program. USDA is one of the most appropriate funding sources for rural communities and small towns, particularly those with farming history such as Inman. *While USDA* is an appropriate funding source for this project, the City should explore other creative ways to finance this community enhancement, including individual, corporate and foundation support.



5
cont.

Focus on improving the condition of the buildings on Main Street and Mill Street. If you want people to come to Inman, visit here, invest here, stay here, the City and its property owners must first demonstrate that they care about the city. First impression: Main Street. The condition of the buildings and the number of empty storefronts is not a good first impression, nor does it show that the City is serious about its future. The condition of Main Street conveys that the City has no vision for the future. The City should consider the concept of pre-vitalization by partnering with building owners to feature branding and art to animate empty storefronts.

Prohibit storage and residential use in commercial storefronts. Many business storefronts are being used for storage, creating blight and ultimately resulting in lower property values that will limit downtown redevelopment efforts. The City should consider creating an ordinance to prohibit storage in commercial storefronts visible from the street, creating additional valuable space for retail and commercial activity. Additionally, while residential use is encouraged, these uses should be limited to upstairs and rear areas of commercial buildings, preserving valuable retail storefront spaces for commerce. Many downtown Inman buildings have great opportunities for residential redevelopment in the rear and upstairs of large commercial spaces. Alleys at the rear of buildings can be additionally be used for residential patios and will mesh well with outdoor commercial spaces for restaurant and hospitality.

Discourage Downtown demolition and demolition by neglect. Inman should discourage downtown demolition and consider adopting a commercial maintenance code. These activities will encourage a strong, dense and economically viable downtown. The downtown area and the alleys will provide enough parking for far into the future. Demolition-by-neglect by property owners will lower property values for owners who currently maintain their buildings. If Inman wants a strong downtown it should protect its existing historic and character structures.

TARGETED BUSINESSES

Restaurants and Bars: The Inman market needs more prepared food and hospitality businesses, particularly in the downtown area. This category was identified as the greatest need at the Master Plan public meetings.

Yoga, Fitness, Gyms: Fitness businesses are growing in popularity and should surge after COVID-19 issues are resolved later in the year. It is likely that work-at-home will be more common, leading opportunities for more local fitness-related businesses.

Outfitters: This segment of businesses has shown remarkable growth over the last 10 months and is expected to continue to expand. Inman does not currently have any business meeting the needs of outdoor enthusiasts.

Co-working businesses: Office-sharing spaces are developing in many cities, providing a place where people who work at home or visit the community can do business in a professional environment in a reasonable price.

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cont.

Study alternative truck routes. Large truck traffic through Main Street is loud and sometimes unsafe. City Council may want to consider working with SC Department of Transportation to determine if an alternate truck route might help improve pedestrian safety, noise, and traffic downtown.

Create opportunities and incentives to encourage the re-development of buildings, including the warehouses along the Norfolk Southern rail line. Historically designated buildings help communities maintain character. There are many local, state, and federal incentives to assist developers by incentivizing the redevelopment of these properties. Buildings that have been used for textile use may be particularly attractive for preservation developers.

Consider special tax districts to finance improvements and incentivize development. South Carolina law allows cities, with approval of other taxing authorities, to create Tax Finance Increment Districts (TIF) to capture new tax revenues in a defined area to pay for improvements in the district. TIF has been widely used throughout the state to pay for street and public infrastructure improvements. Other tax related tools, like the Bailey Bill tax abatement for historic buildings and Business Improvement Districts are commonly used tools to promote downtowns

Downtown wayfinding signage. A downtown wayfinding sign system will assist visitors in finding their way in the downtown. However, these systems can be expensive so City Council should consider a phased-in approach to a simple wayfinding system.

Rail-to-Trail and improved connectivity. The City should encourage and promote an eventual rail-to-trail project on the Norfolk Southern railroad line. Rail-to-trail projects create multipurpose public paths created from former railroad corridors. While it may take years of work with Norfolk Southern and surrounding communities to eventually accomplish a railroad connection, the city should begin discussions. The project should focus on improved crosswalks on Main Street and better utilization of the alleys both public and private.



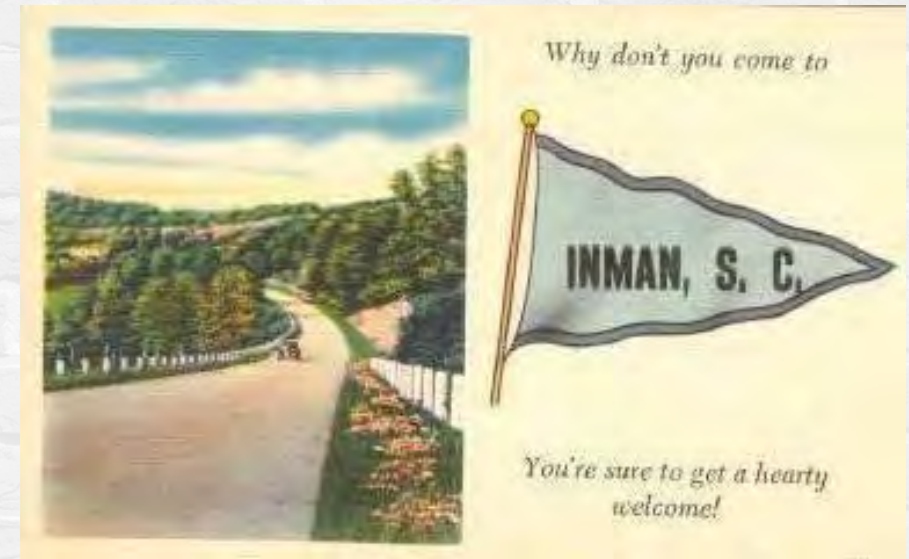
Collect, share and promote the history and stories of downtown and the City.

During the workshop, numerous residents shared amazing stories and memories, many that are unknown to most residents and are listed below. These stories will build community pride and spirit, contribute to tourism and economic development, and provide opportunities for public art and cultural events.

Storylines for Downtown

- The Oak Tree in Mathis Park planted in memory of a child
- Inman Barbers
- Peaches (but no more)
- The Railroad and how it came to Inman
- Inman Mills: Saybrook still operating, the apartments
- Origins: intersection of Blackstock and Howard Streets
- Two founding families: Gowans and Bishops. Gowans had the land (Pete's). Bishops owned the 30 acres. Which were given to the railroad, even though Inman was not the best place for a railroad. Mr. Bishop promised to build a town and depot if they would name the town after him. Inman was either the railroad official or the surveyor for the railroad. Inman is a railroad town built in 1876/1877 and incorporated in 1882.
- 1930's: Inman was the fresh peach capital of the world because they loaded 100 boxcars of fresh peach in 24 hours.
- What is Inman's story? Everything was here. Everyone shopped here for everything.
- Dewell Gwin Furniture – Inman was a furniture mecca, which kept Inman alive for over 20 years
- The Inman Hotel
- Lake Bowen Life

Consider removing the hedgerow adjacent to the railroad tracks. Currently litter collects there, which is unsightly. Also, the height of the hedgerow can diminish the sense of safety. Consider replanting with plant material lower to the ground.



Historic Mill Street Photo & Historic Inman Postcard

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cont.

Top 10

Ways to Support Main Street

1. Walk downtown. Fight the "drive-thru" mentality by parking and walking downtown to run your errands. Your local economy (and waistline!) will thank you.
2. Pick up someone else's litter. So what if it's not your trash? Pick it up and throw it away. One small step for man. One giant leap for beautification.
3. Act like a realtor and sell your community. Tell visitors about places to see and visit that are unique to your community. And by all means, don't tell them there is nothing to do! Think of all there is to do in Inman now... be creative.
4. Tell your history. Know and tell your town's history well and be sure to tell where you are now!
5. Volunteer. On a committee. For an event. Or just be a friendly ambassador and give someone directions.
6. Celebrate the arts. Every town is home to artists, craftsmen, writers and musicians. Showcase and support your local talent!
7. Eat local. It's all about eating local! Research top dining and food trends for 2021.
8. Encourage entrepreneurs. Host a competition or seek local angel investors and cool workplaces to make available.
9. Support existing businesses. Sure, we want new businesses but let's not forget to support the ones we already have!
10. Think creatively. Empty storefront? Ask a local artist or school to display their art as a makeshift window display. Vacant alleyway? Create an attractive walk-through! Blank wall on a building? Work with the creative sector (and students) to paint a mural that reflects the character of your town.

Excerpted from the Mississippi Main Street Newsletter

Top 10

Basic Rules of Every Good Storefront

1. A clear vision and concept will tie the entire store together.
2. A good, epic story will guide the design, service ethics, mood and in-store experience.
3. The store is a stage for a performance
4. The façade and the sidewalk should create an outside room to make people feel like they already stepped in.
5. Design proportions are not just pretty.
6. The path through the store should feel like a parade with highlights, landmarks, and pauses.
7. Every aspect of the store should amplify the message.
8. A good display window where things happen will engage people and make them look in.
9. A coherent brand will make the message easy to understand.
10. The best thing to attract people is more people.

Reference: @StorefrontMastery

Recommendations: Leadership & Organization

UTILIZE ORGANIZATIONS TO SUPPORT THE CITY

Downtown Merchants Organization: As the City of Inman increases its commitment to support downtown, it is imperative that downtown merchants and business owners return that support by organizing a more formalized merchants' group. While the merchants' association should maintain good communication with the city, it should not be dependent on the city or city staff. The group should be self-supporting and self-managed.

The group's primary responsibility is to develop and maintain a **MONTHLY EVENT** to promote community involvement, such as a bluegrass band, outside movies projected on buildings, and regularly scheduled food trucks/vendors.

Creating regular family activities in the downtown, sponsored and managed by the new merchants' group, will create pedestrian traffic and make the downtown even more inviting. Care should be taken so the entire projects are self-managed by the new merchants group. City staff can assist with some elements, but this should be a merchants' organization program to supports the city's efforts for additional development downtown, not a city event.

Downtown Inman is generally a visually appealing place, some of the buildings and private properties show signs of neglect and blight. While the City of Inman has stepped-up with a well-funded façade program, merchants should encourage a **CLEAN-UP, PAINT-UP PROGRAM**. Merchants should band together to remove trash and outdated signs and wash storefront windows, thus communicating the message that Inman businesses and property owners care about the downtown.

Create and Publish an Official City Newsletter (monthly). City website, link in social media, print and make available in local businesses. This would be a very good way to engage the local high school students and other volunteers as writers, photographers, graphic designers, etc. The City will need to designate a staff person to manage and control publication.



Provide education and training for downtown merchants and businesses. Merchants and business owners can benefit from education programs on promotions, storefront design, creating a good first impression with buildings and attitudes, parking (spaces in front are for customers!). This can elevate collaborations, put downtown on the map for customer service and leverage resources. Retail therapy!

Join The Four, making it The Five, regional leadership meetings. Joe Lanahan needs to join the group of city managers from Landrum, Tyron and Saluda to share the City's vision, recruit regional support and cooperation for revitalizing downtown Inman, to participate in and benefit from regional tourism and promotions, and to begin the work of converting the rail to a regional trail system.

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

The Task Force should consist of a diverse group of community leaders, including citizens who initially participated on the comprehensive plan committee, business owners/leaders, representatives from arts and cultural organizations, realtors, local bankers, and others. Such deliberate inclusiveness will generate greater enthusiasm and support for the plan.

The committee should be prepared to work with city council and assist in promoting and accomplishing the proposed **FARMERS' MARKET**. There will be considerable opportunity for sponsorships; the Task Force can use its talents, expertise, and ample connections to identify and recruit sponsors and to garner larger-scale community support.



The Task Force, in collaboration with the Inman City Council, should participate in conversations with SC Archives and History and other groups to discuss the benefits of a **NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER DESIGNATION** for downtown Inman and adjacent neighborhoods. The Task Force can be a powerful tool in educating the residents about the tax incentive and other economic development benefits for historic designated properties.

Related to this issue, The Spartanburg County Historical Association has previously expressed interest in creating a historic walking tour that could be run by Inman volunteers. The Task Force can lead the effort to create the **HISTORIC WALKING TOUR** by meeting with the Historical Association, helping identify and plan the tour (s), and even finding sponsors and tour leaders.

Additionally, the Master Plan team discovered that Inman does not have an active history organization. Most communities have historic organizations that promote and support community development efforts, advocate for critical issues like downtown improvements, and create several annual history projects (e., g. house and garden tours or lectures). The Task Force could encourage the creation of such an **HISTORIC INMAN ORGANIZATION**.

The task force has a unique opportunity – and responsibility – to create plan to repaint **GHOST SIGNS ON THE HISTORIC PEACH SHEDS**. The peach sheds are unique to downtown Inman and can easily be enhanced to improve the appearance of the downtown revitalization area. Funds required for enhancing the “ghost signs” should be minimal, but the project will require an experienced artist. With agreement of the building owner and the assistance of the SC Arts Commission, this project should be easily accomplished.



Finally, The Task Force should plan to implement at least two annual **PUBLIC ART AND/OR CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**. The South Carolina Arts Commission, private industry, the South Carolina Peach Council and the Spartanburg County Foundation should be approached to provide technical and funding assistance with these projects.

The Task Force can also assist the city by identifying and approaching regional industries, foundations, and organizations that might provide funding and sponsorships for community enhancement. The Inman work force is employed at dozens of industries that encourage their employee involvement. Organizations like the Spartanburg County Foundation have money set aside for enhancement projects from health care to public art. Milliken, Duke Energy, BMW, Fluor, Michelin, Spartanburg Regional Health and many more corporations and organizations within the Greenville/Spartanburg are maintain funds to assist communities.



Recommended Phasing

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Phasing & Implementation Considerations

A plan that is not ground in truth is a plan that will sit on a shelf. The Inman Downtown Master Plan will not be realized overnight. Careful planning, negotiating, design, funding, and construction can take several years to materialize. Understanding this, attention must be given to a succinct and well thought out phasing and implementation plan. The Inman Downtown Master Plan provides a clear vision for the future of Inman. While conceptual designs have been developed, many details must be further explored before and during design and construction of each project. Additional attention must be given to the following as implementation progresses. These are outlined below.

SCDOT Coordination

With nearly every street or road within the study area is maintained by SCDOT, the City's partnership with SCDOT is critical for the implementation of this plan. During the December 2020 planning workshop, the consultant team met with SCDOT representatives to discuss several initial ideas developed in the master plan. These ideas included a reduction the lane widths on North Main, removal of traffic signals where North Main Street intersects with Prospect and Mill Streets, and the reconfiguration of the East and South Main intersections adjacent to City Hall.

Lane width reduction on North Main

Travel lane widths on North Main Street within the heart of downtown currently range from 12 feet to nearly 20 feet. This presents an opportunity to right-size the lanes to widths more appropriate for a central business district. SCDOT's Roadway Design Manual recognizes that "In urban areas and along rural routes that pass through urban settings, narrower lane widths may be appropriate." Elsewhere, the Roadway Design Manual states that "travel lane widths in CBDs may be 11 feet if the truck traffic is less than or equal to 5 percent." North Main Street meets these conditions. Therefore, the proposed Main Street cross section recommends 11-foot-wide travel lanes, which will enable the provision for wider sidewalks, reduce pedestrian crossing distances, allow for on-street angled parking, and provide space for street trees.

During a conference call with SCDOT during the December 2020 planning workshop, the consultant team communicated the desire to reduce lane widths on North Main to 11 feet. SCDOT acknowledged the possibility that 11-foot-wide lanes would be acceptable. SCDOT's primary concern was to ensure that 11-foot lanes would permit safe turning movements for trucks turning left from Prospect Street onto North Main. Evaluating truck turning movements and potential lane widths would need to be included in a feasibility study prior to moving forward with full design.



Removing traffic signals

The City of Inman should consider removing one or both traffic signals where Prospect and Mill Streets intersect with North Main Street and converting these intersections to three-way stops. The relatively low traffic volumes (as indicated in 2019 AADT data) and the close spacing of these two intersections align with SCDOT’s design guidelines regarding traffic signal removal.

According to the SCDOT Roadway Design Manual, “signalized intersections that are too close to each other may result in unnecessary delay, frequent vehicle stops/starts and increased fuel consumption and emissions. Correctly spaced signalized intersections will allow traffic signal timing plans to efficiently accommodate all types of traffic conditions.” SCDOT set the minimum distances for traffic signal spacing based on the functional class of the roadway. The functional classification of streets and roads is a way of describing the character of service that the roadway provides and is a key factor in determining the design approach of streets. North Main Street is designated as a Minor Arterial south of Prospect Street and an Urban Local north of Prospect Street. The Roadway Design Manual specifies that for these functional classes, signalized intersections should be 1320 feet apart. However, the distance between the current traffic signals at Prospect and Mill Streets is only 280 feet.

During the December 2020 planning workshop, SCDOT was receptive to the idea of removing one or both signals. Their representatives appreciated that removing the signals would lessen SCDOT’s maintenance burden. They also acknowledged the close spacing of the intersections and that traffic volumes on the affected streets would not likely warrant the need for signalized intersections. SCDOT noted that the request to remove traffic signals would need to come from the City of Inman, and a study would likely be required to show that a three-way stop would be an acceptable design solution.

Reconfiguring East Main and South Main

During the December 2020 call with SCDOT, the consultant team shared their starter ideas that addressed safety concerns stemming from the unusual geometry of this intersection. The idea that gained the most traction during the call was changing the geometry of East Main to form a T-intersection with South Main. The team also discussed the idea of a roundabout, but all involved expressed concern that negotiating with Norfolk Southern to acquire the necessary amount of right-of-way would be difficult based on recent experience.

In looking at the possible alignments for the proposed T-intersection, SCDOT was generally supportive of the idea, but noted that the City would need to consider potential impacts to private properties and whether the new roadway alignment would change the property use or require the relocation of parking spaces for commercial properties. Such changes might impact property appraisals.



Norfolk Southern Coordination

The City will need to reestablish its relationship with Norfolk Southern to coordinate right-of-way issues and potential purchase with the intent to convert the abandoned spur into a multi-use greenway. During the December 2020 planning workshop, SCDOT cautioned that the City would need to confirm the extent of Norfolk Southern's right-of-way when considering a major reconfiguration of North Main Street. The City should also be aware of the potential for significant time lags when coordinating with Norfolk Southern. SCDOT encountered this issue on a project in Lyman. Norfolk Southern took a year to come to the negotiating table and was generally not supportive of the project. The City should begin restoring their relationship with Norfolk Southern now in anticipation of the possible challenges outlined above.

Staffing and Maintenance

Once constructed, Inman will need dedicated public works staff for routine maintenance of downtown. Routine maintenance may include landscaping, street sweeping, watering hanging baskets, refuse collection, banner hanging, and festival/market setup, breakdown, and clean up. At full build out of downtown a dedicated three-man crew with equipment must be established to keep Inman beautiful. This will require an increased fiscal year budget for public works but is a necessity to create a vibrant destination.



Recommended Phasing

WHERE TO START

Support residents who are trying to revitalize downtown. Mill Street has already started!

Create and complete a Catalyst Project

Economic Development Partners: School District, One Spartanburg, SC Dept of Commerce, BMW, Bon Secours, Michelin

4 MONTHS

- Create and implement community communications plan
- Create the Economic Development Task Force
- Create monthly events to build and demonstrate community support
- Create 1 public art project – and continue annually
- Institute the twinkle lights as permanent, year-round features in downtown (turn on every night)
- Host a façade workshop to educate current property and business owners, City Council and staff and potential owners on the appropriate guidelines for historic buildings, resources available and the value of appropriate building and development guidelines (creation and enforcement).
- Begin exploring ordinance options for downtown appearance and use issues
- Plan field trip for Council and Staff to visit other cities for downtown case studies

8 MONTHS

- Expand Façade Program and revise Hospitality Tax Program
- Create a planning committee for celebration of the new Inman Library and Mill Street revitalization as key initial successes.
- Move forward with the design and construction of the Farmer's Market Pavilion
- Create a Rails to Trails committee
- Begin planning for Art & Culture project #2
- Hire consultant to write the historic district nomination for downtown.
- Create Downtown Merchants Organization

12 MONTHS

- Consider joining
- Main Street SC
- Completion of Economic Development Marketing Incentive Package
- Unveil plan to recruit new businesses into downtown
- Unveil a new public art project
- Conduct feasibility study and concept design for new City Hall
- Conduct a one-year review of the Master Plan progress and share successes with the community.

16 MONTHS

- Celebrate Library opening and revitalization of Mill Street
- Celebrate the opening of new businesses in downtown
- Celebrate the completion of 5 façade enhancements

2 - 3 YEARS

- Conduct a corridor study of Asheville Highway
- Update the Priority Projects list for the next 2-3 years



City of Inman

Downtown Master Plan 2021
