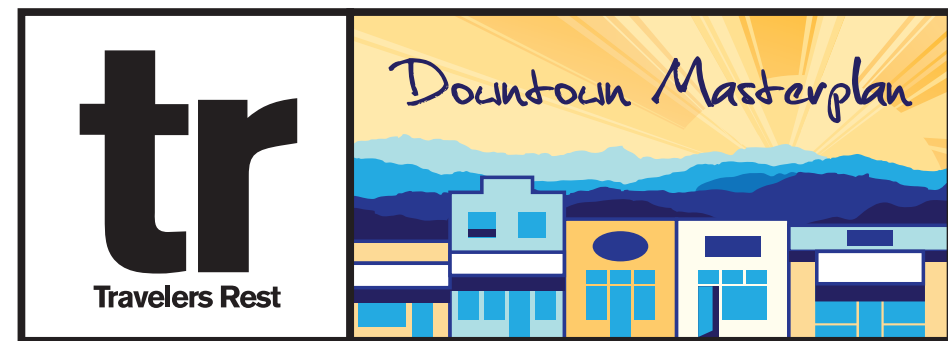


# The City of Travelers Rest Downtown Master Plan 2019



## Travelers Rest Downtown Master Plan 2019

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# Planning Process

During their annual workshop in 2018, the Travelers Rest City Council prioritized the need to develop a Downtown Master Plan to provide strategic recommendations that strengthen the downtown as the economic and cultural heart of the community.

The first step in engaging the public and other stakeholders was conducting an online survey with questions to further define the core values that were highlighted in the 2018 City of Travelers Rest Comprehensive Plan. Over 2200 responses were collected, and the results of the survey are in appendix A.

Additional community input included a 3-day design charrette held in May with participation from stakeholder focus groups (composed of landowners, business owners and key partners) and public open house drop-ins to share the results of the survey and recent market analysis studies while soliciting ideas for several key parcels in the downtown area. These results were combined with the quantitative data from the survey to inform the Master Plan. Examples of these ideas are documented as diagrams in Appendix B.

The prime product of this effort is The Action Plan which is organized into three categories:

- 1. Business Vitality
- 2. Promotion and Image Building
- 3. Design

Within each of these categories, strategies and recommendations are presented with detailed action steps. Actions include a recommended time frame and possible partners for implementation.



*Downtown Travelers Rest Design Charette*



*Architect Stephen Fuller*



# Master Plan

## Downtown Assessment

To create a foundation for plan concepts, an assessment of downtown Travelers Rest’s key assets, challenges and opportunities has been developed based on input from the design team and data from the online survey and community/ stakeholder input.

Assets	Challenges	Opportunities
<div><p><b>Business Opportunities</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Locally Owned, Independent Businesses</li><li>Maturing market - 25% visitors</li><li>Expanded Trade area to include Greenville</li><li>Swamp Rabbit Trail frontage</li><li>Opportunity Fund designation</li></ul></div>	<div><p><b>Business Opportunities</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Main St connection to Park/ Special Events</li><li>Perception of Available parking</li><li>Stronger connections between Main St and Poinsett and Center St.</li><li>More 7 day businesses/consistent business hours</li></ul></div>	<div><p><b>Business Opportunities</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Market leakage in hospitality/ tourism</li><li>Market leakage in grocery, specialty food and retail</li><li>Retain/grow businesses &amp; attract new ones</li><li>Demand for mixed use and variety of housing types</li><li>Family friendly experiential retail</li><li>Co work space</li></ul></div>
<div><p><b>Promotion &amp; Marketing</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Successful events that focus on having fun downtown</li><li>Successful City Brand available to businesses</li><li>History Museum acts as a visitor center</li><li>Strong identity with the Swamp Rabbit Trail</li></ul></div>	<div><p><b>Promotion &amp; Marketing</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>No Overall Marketing Strategy</li><li>No existing organization with mission to promote downtown businesses</li><li>Wayfinding for businesses from 25 and the trail</li></ul></div>	<div><p><b>Promotion &amp; Marketing</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote downtown as a destination</li><li>Update brand &amp; promotion program that sells experience</li><li>Bike and trail tourism is growing</li><li>Partner with History museum to expand hours</li></ul></div>
<div><p><b>Design</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Swamp Rabbit Trail and Main St Streetscape</li><li>Existing authentic character</li><li>Gateway and Trailblazer park as open space anchors for downtown</li><li>Walkable scale</li></ul></div>	<div><p><b>Design</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Improve connectivity and pedestrian/bicycle safety</li><li>Preserve historic/iconic buildings - Spring Park Inn/Sunthrift</li><li>Gateway Park maintenance/ improvements</li><li>Directional Signage to Downtown</li><li>Parking strategy for short, medium and long term growth</li></ul></div>	<div><p><b>Design</b></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand Streetscape on Eastside of Main St</li><li>Create design guidelines to preserve and reinforce character</li><li>Create Park/s Master Plan</li><li>Expand open space/pocket parks along trail and Main St</li><li>Develop Entrance/Gateway Feature on 25/276</li></ul></div>





## Key Elements

The Action Plan is organized by the key elements of: Business Vitality, Promotion and Image Building, and Design with key initiatives, action steps, partners, and recommended time frame for each. The matrix below provides a snapshot of the plan’s recommendations. More detailed descriptions are included.

Action	Timeframe
<b>BUSINESS VITALITY</b>	
<b>Initiative 1 : Business Retention and Expansion</b>	
Create Business Assistance Team	1 year/ongoing
Regular Business walkabouts	1 year/ongoing
Develop talking points/summary	1 year/ongoing
<b>Initiative 2: Property Marketing</b>	
Complete vacant property database	immediate/6 months
One on One meetings with property owners	1 year/ongoing
<b>Initiative 3 Business Attraction</b>	
Create collateral materials/tools	1 year/ongoing
Partner to develop Co work space for start ups	1 year/3 year
Develop referral database	immediate/6 months
<b>Initiative 4: Develop a Downtown Business Organization</b>	
Assist in developing goals, objectives and guidelines for operation	1 year/ongoing
Appoint City Liaison for Downtown Organization	1 year/ongoing
<b>Initiative 5: Vacant Building Ordinance</b>	1.5 year/ongoing
<b>PROMOTION and IMAGE BUILDING</b>	
<b>Initiative 1 : Develop a Marketing Strategy</b>	
Develop Communication and Social Media Plan	immediate/6 months
Update City Website	immediate/ongoing
<b>Initiative 2: Expand Events to Drive Traffic Downtown</b>	
Evaluate and enhance current events	immediate/ongoing
Add downtown community event	1 year/ongoing
<b>Initiative 3 : Promotion Tools and Materials</b>	
Update downtown merchant guide/map	1 year/ongoing

## Key Elements cont'd

Action	Timeframe
<b>DESIGN</b>	
<b>Initiative 1. Create a CBD Overlay District</b>	
Develop design guidelines & standards for the Downtown	6 months/1 year
Consider locally funded Façade Improvement program	1 year/ongoing
<b>Initiative 2: Enhance Gateways, Pathways &amp; Wayfinding</b>	
Improve southern entrance to City- 276/25	1 year/3 years
Improve crosswalks on Main St - lights	immediate/6 months
Improve current signage and wayfinding program	6 months/ongoing
Develop streetscape plans for Eastside of Main Street	1.5 years/3-5 years
<b>Initiative 3: Develop plan for City Owned Entrance Parcel</b>	
Develop as linear park	1.5 years/3 years
Develop History Museum parking lot as Trailhead	immediate/6 months
Selective Clearing to enable view of Trailblazer as Entering City	immediate/6 months
<b>Initiative 4: Swamp Rabbit Trail Enhancements</b>	
Create plan to widen and light trail through City.	1 years/3 years
Add signage to educate trail users on trail etiquette	immediate/1 year
<b>Initiative 5: Parking</b>	
Develop parking strategy	1 year/2 years
<b>Initiative 6: Character Enhancement and Preservation</b>	
Make historic preservation a community priority	1 year/2 years
Develop public art master plan	1 year/3 years
<b>Initiative 7: Reimagine Gateway Park &amp; Trailblazer Park as complimentary parks</b>	
Develop a Master Plan for Gateway Park to create TR’s “ Falls Park”	1 year/2 years (3-5 yr implementation)
Update Trailblazer Master Plan to reflect Active Recreation focus	1 year/2 years (3-5 yr implementation)
Develop a transition strategy /phasing for both parks	1 year/2years
Develop a plan for short term park improvements	immediate/1 year
Study feasibility to develop central lake amenity as stormwater infrastructure	6 months/1 year
<b>Initiative 8: Poinsett and Center Streetscape Project</b>	
Seek funding to implement streetscape projects including stormwater, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.	



# Business Vitality

This section of the action plan addresses how to organize to help existing businesses succeed, attract new business and engage/encourage property owners to envision and work toward a strong unified central business district.

The keys to an economically vital business district should incorporate the following principles and activities:

- Pro actively work to retain business and civic anchors and expand other uses that will increase foot traffic downtown (lodging, mixed use etc.)
- Promote existing business and competitive assets (Swamp Rabbit Trail frontage) with other opportunities for retail growth

## 1. Business Retention and Expansion

Satisfied and successful local businesses have a substantial impact on our small town and these entrepreneurs are often the best sales people for recruiting new businesses as well.

- Develop a Business team of at least 5-6 individuals that can help organize and communicate with downtown businesses
- Do regular business visitation or walkabouts. The goal is to connect with the business owners to share information, hear from them and get them engaged. Each team member should build rapport with several other business owners. These visits should be informal and last about 15 minutes
- Create talking points or common question s related to the following and refresh on a regular basis
  - Summary handouts addressing Retail Market Study Opportunities
  - Upcoming events, promotions and how to take advantage of them
  - Business outlook reports: concerns or opportunities
  - Specific needs and interests ( finance, hiring, marketing etc)
  - Information about and interest in topics like parking, extended store hours
  - Ideas for joint and cooperative marketing campaigns

Potential Partners – Business owners, Greater TR Chamber of Commerce

## 2. Property Marketing

Market opportunity and market ready properties go hand in hand to create business district vitality.

- Complete the property database of vacant downtown commercial properties - develop a property database form that can be used to prepare and keep an up to date “Available Properties“ list
- Meet one on one with owners of vacant or underused properties to share information on going rents, asking prices and vacancy rates. Inquire as to their plans for the property and interest in assistance with marketing

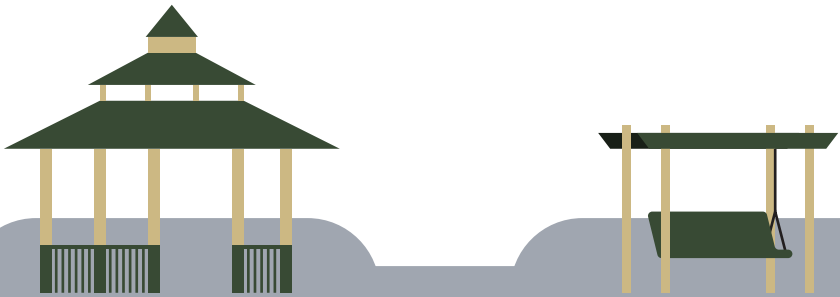
Potential Partners – Local realtors, brokers, Furman intern

## 3. Business Attraction

The Market Analysis update in 2017 indicates that the combined trade area for Travelers Rest is a “leaking market” to the tune of \$761 million each year. Opportunities exist for Travelers Rest to capture that retail leakage in select categories including restaurants, clothing and general merchandise.

- Create simple collateral materials/tools to use in business attraction including websites, handouts, master plan, market analysis
- Partner with Furman to create a co – work space in downtown that is oriented to innovation and entrepreneurs
- Develop a referral database of contacts, including leading realtors, brokers, small business resource providers and community and business leaders

Potential Partners – Furman, consultants, TR Chamber of Commerce



## 4. Develop a Downtown Business Organization

To effectively manage the Downtown Master Plan implementation, downtown stakeholders should partner with the city to ensure a collaborative and sustained effort.

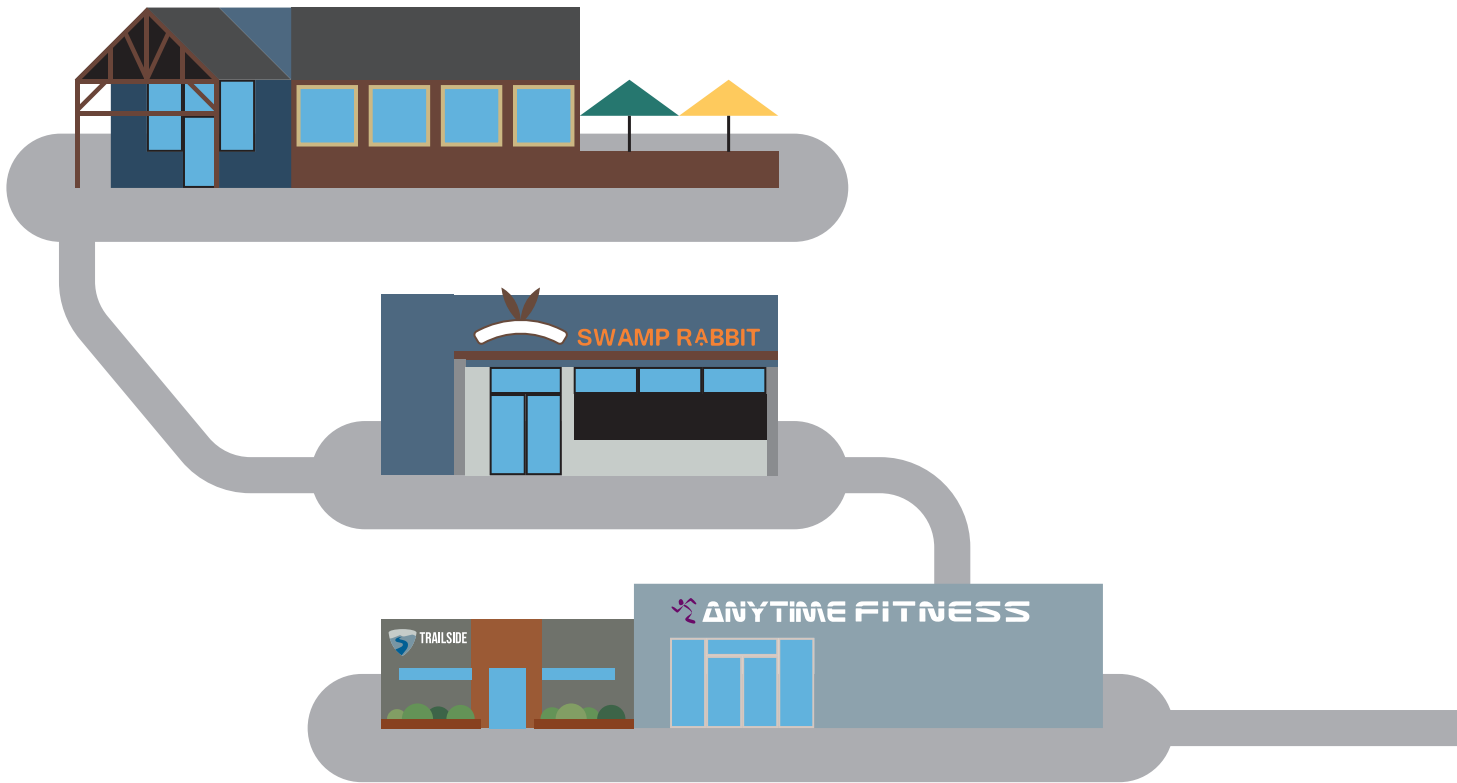
- Assist in developing goals, objectives and guidelines for the Downtown Business Organization
- Appoint a city Liaison for the Downtown Organization

Potential Partners – TR Chamber of Commerce, business owners, civic partners

## 5. Develop a Vacant Building Ordinance

Key properties that sit vacant for extended periods are a deterrent to a successful downtown.

Investigate regulatory tools that would provide both incentives and deterrent(s) to limit the term of vacancy.



# Promotion & Image-Building

The city of Travelers Rest needs to reflect on its current image and marketing, the diverse characteristics and interests of both local and visitors, its unique assets to promote and the most effective strategy to create more foot traffic and a positive image. Many aspects of image are tied to downtown’s physical development, but this section of the action plan focuses on ways to influence what downtown stands for in the customers mind through events, promotions, customer experience and marketing communications.

## 1. Develop a Marketing Strategy

The Master Plan process and follow through provide one of many opportunities to reinforce the positive market view of Travelers Rest. The survey that was conducted as part of the Master Plan helped to flush out key themes which can help guide the marketing strategy and public relations:

- “Small, charming, Quaint and Neighborhood friendly, Community spirited”
- “Outdoorsy, Adventurous, Energetic and Warm, welcoming, down to earth”
- Develop a Communication and Social Media Plan for the City of Travelers Rest to be useful for both residents and visitors with regular content updates on business happening, weekly events, key messages, etc.
- Update City Website - revamp to make more user friendly with focus on visitors and local businesses.



## 2. Expand Events to Drive Traffic Downtown

Special events are designed to create a sense of liveliness, build community and provide an inviting atmosphere for families to have fun.. They include seasonal events, cultural and holiday activities and are important for creating a positive feeling and increasing awareness of and interest in downtown.

- Evaluate the current events to identify what’s working, what needs improvement and ways to enhance existing activities and connections to Main St when events are held at Trailblazer Park.
- Add downtown community event(s) to the current calendar.

Potential Partners – Current event participants ( TR Art Crawl, Art on the Trail, Farmers Market)

## 3. Promotion Tools and Materials

Downtown’s image and ability to attract customers are directly tied to its marketing and promotion tools as well as event tactics.

- Update downtown merchant guide/map

Potential Partners – proposed downtown business organization, current businesses



## Design

The physical design of downtown contributes to the health and vitality of both the City and the downtown. The arrangement of uses as well as the design of the public realm - streets, walks, plazas and parks – should be legible and attractive and support community activities. Well designed and appealing streets and public places will better serve our residents while attracting visitors and investors. Downtown should be a destination that serves as the community center for culture, commerce and events.

### 1. Create a Central Business District Overlay

The intent is to strengthen the downtown as the “heart” of the community and as a logical place for people to gather and act as the city’s business, residential and visitor center. The zone is intended to support this goal through elements of design and appropriate mixed use development. An overlay zone is a regulatory tool that creates a special zoning district, placed over an existing base zone which identifies special provisions in addition to those in the underlying base zone.

- Develop design guidelines and development standards for downtown. Establishing standards specifically tailored to the more urban nature of the downtown, incorporating appropriate signage, site furniture, building context and scale will assist in maintaining the character of the downtown.

### 2. Enhance Gateways, Pathways & Wayfinding

Downtown businesses and community institutions rely on both local and visitor dollars to sustain jobs and the economy. More attractive gateways and improved wayfinding may entice travelers to visit the community and downtown.

- Improve southern entrance to the City before split of Highways 25 & 276
- Improve pedestrian safety on Main Street and throughout the downtown area – with a focus on improving crosswalks
- Improve current signage and wayfinding program – work with the County on developing trail-oriented wayfinding/signage

Potential Partners – Greenville County Parks & Recreation (SRT), SCDOT



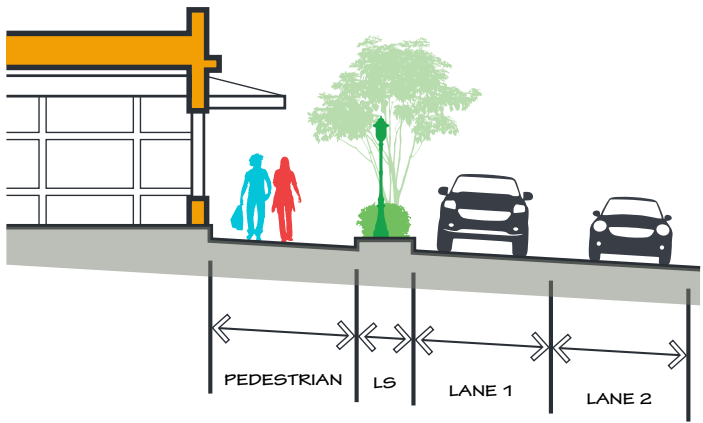


Fig. 1: Concept render for proposed streetside development (one-story)

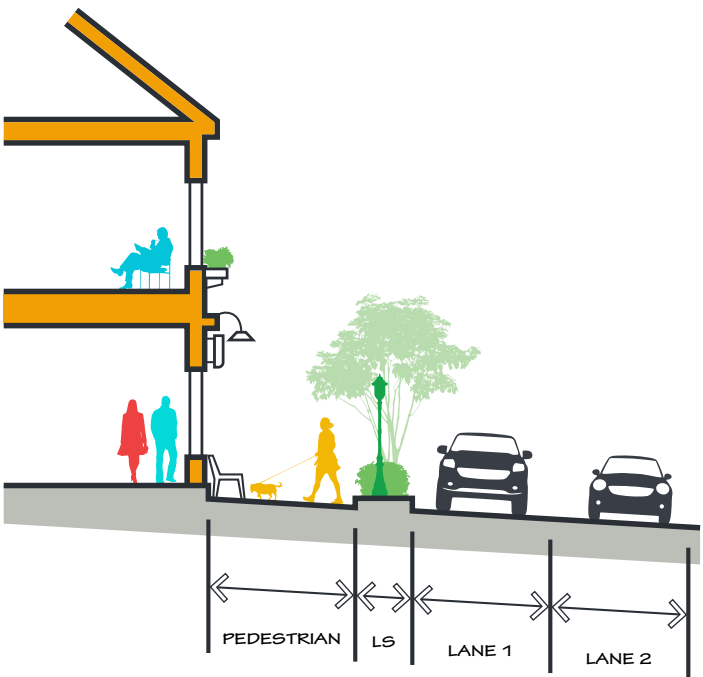


Fig. 2: Concept render for proposed streetside development (two-story)

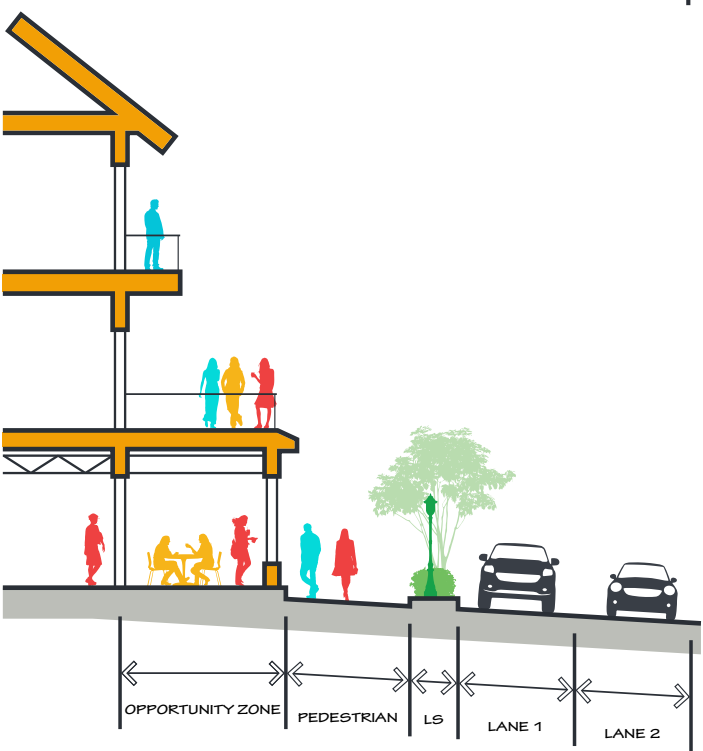


Fig. 3: Concept render for proposed streetside development (three-story)

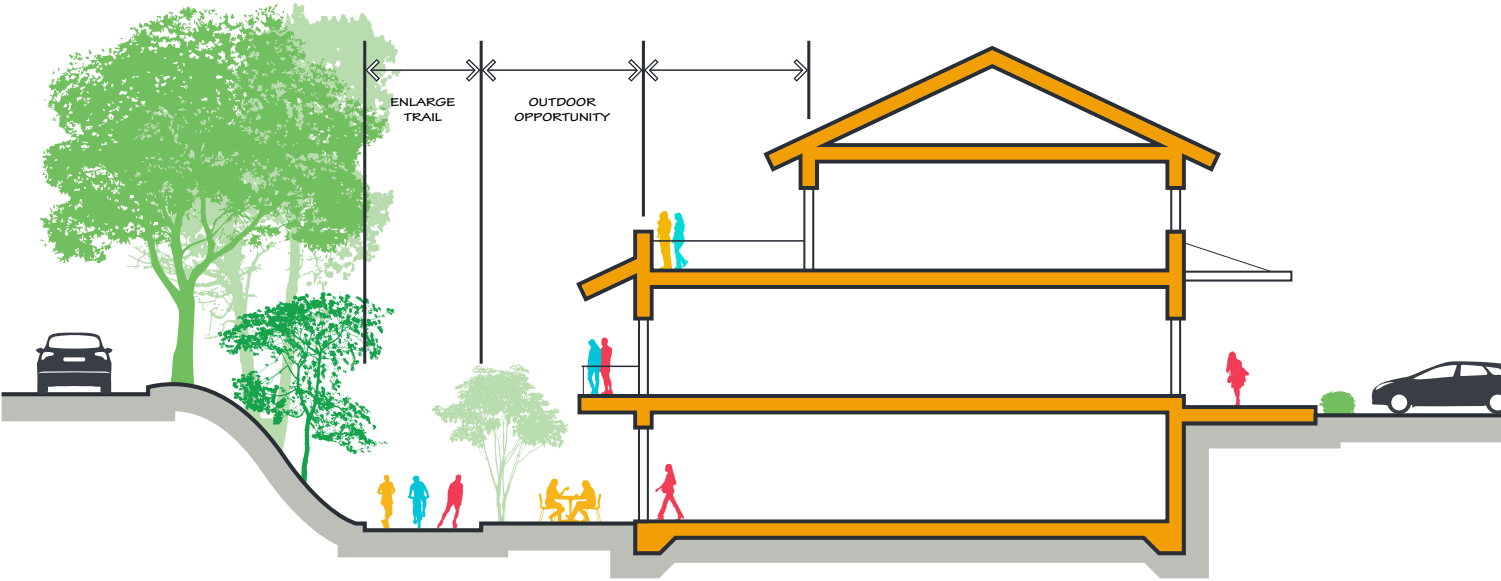


Fig. 4: Concept render for proposed trailside development (three-story)

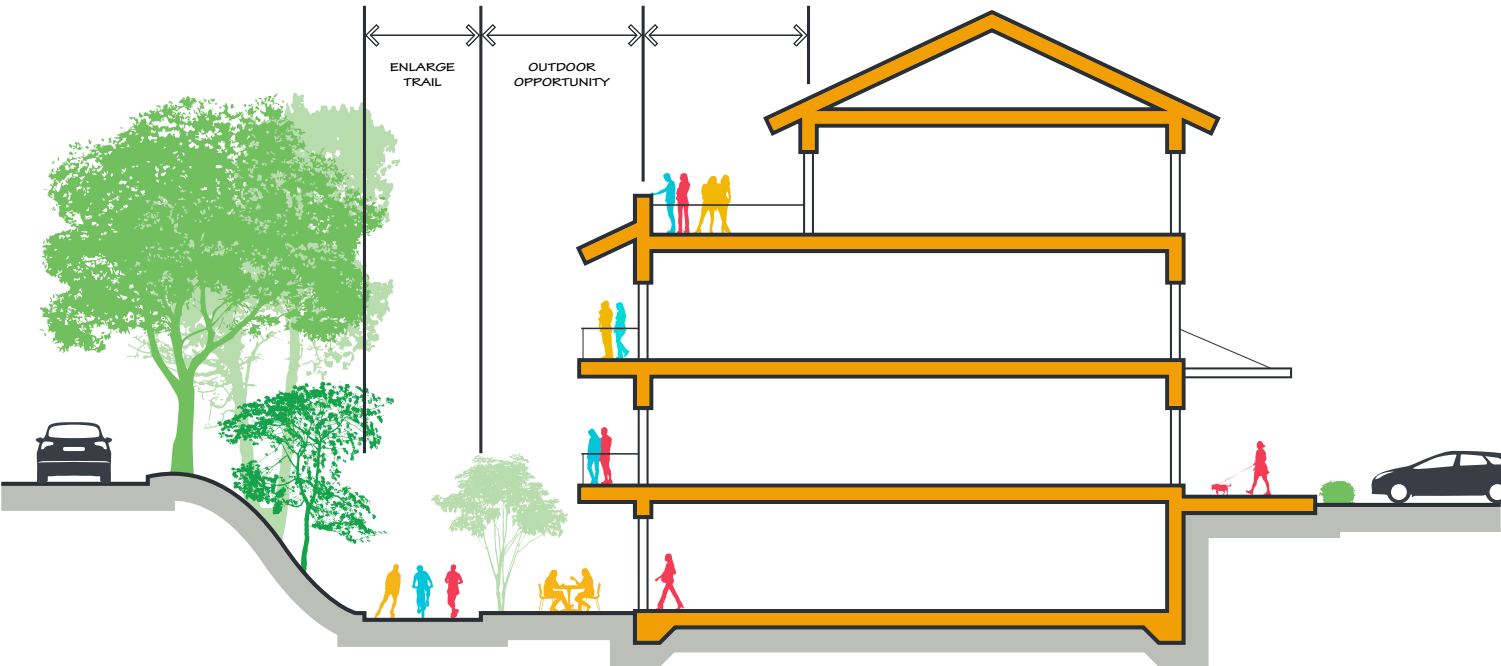


Fig. 5: Concept render for proposed trailside development (four-story)

### 3. Develop plan for City Owned Entrance Parcel

The city owns the linear parcel at Edwards St to just beyond the walkway connection from the trail to Old Buncombe.

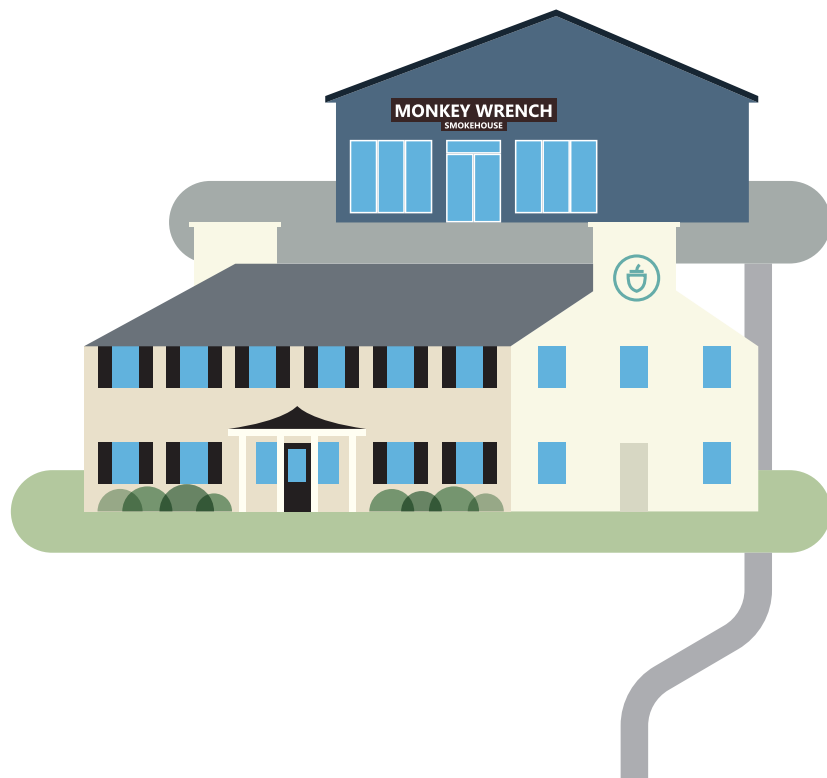
- Work with the History Museum to improve the parking lot and create a trailhead at this entry to the city
- Develop linear park accessible from Swamp Rabbit Trail
- Continue selective clearing of pines to enable view of Trailblazer Park as entering city

### 4. Swamp Rabbit Enhancements

The online survey that initiated this Master Plan effort highlighted that the Swamp Rabbit Trail is considered one of the key assets of the City. The trail has enhanced the economic development of the city and it is a priority to maintain and improve this asset.

- Create a plan to widen the trail where feasible and add lights in the downtown area
- Add signage to educate trail users on trail etiquette

Potential Partners – Greenville County Parks & Recreation (SRT)



### 5. Parking

The majority of visitors to Travelers Rest and downtown arrive in vehicles. If parking supply is adequate, convenient and well located, visitors will park their cars and become pedestrians and customers which contributes to the success of downtown. There is a current perception by some citizens and stakeholders that there is inadequate parking for downtown and as the city continues to grow this will be a growing concern.

- Develop a parking strategy to include current inventory assessment, future need projections and a strategy to shape downtown parking expectations.

### 6. Character Enhancement and Preservation

The character of the streets and public realm of downtown conveys a sense of community values and priorities.

- Develop streetscape improvements on the eastside of Main St.
- Consider establishing a locally funded Façade improvement program for the downtown as a tool to encourage redevelopment compliant with design guidelines.
- Make preservation a community priority.
- Work with the Historical society to develop an inventory of historical and culturally important sites and develop a strategy to encourage their preservation.
- Develop a public art master plan that will express and enhance the community's unique character.
- Identify and implement short-term beautification initiatives to include flower baskets/planters, benches, landscape improvements, public art, trail art, murals, etc.

## 7. Reimagine Gateway Park and Trailblazer Park as complementary parks

One of the “Big Ideas” that came out of the Master Plan Charrette was to reimagine Gateway Park as Travelers Rest “Falls Park or Central Park” while focusing the active recreational components at Trailblazer Park.

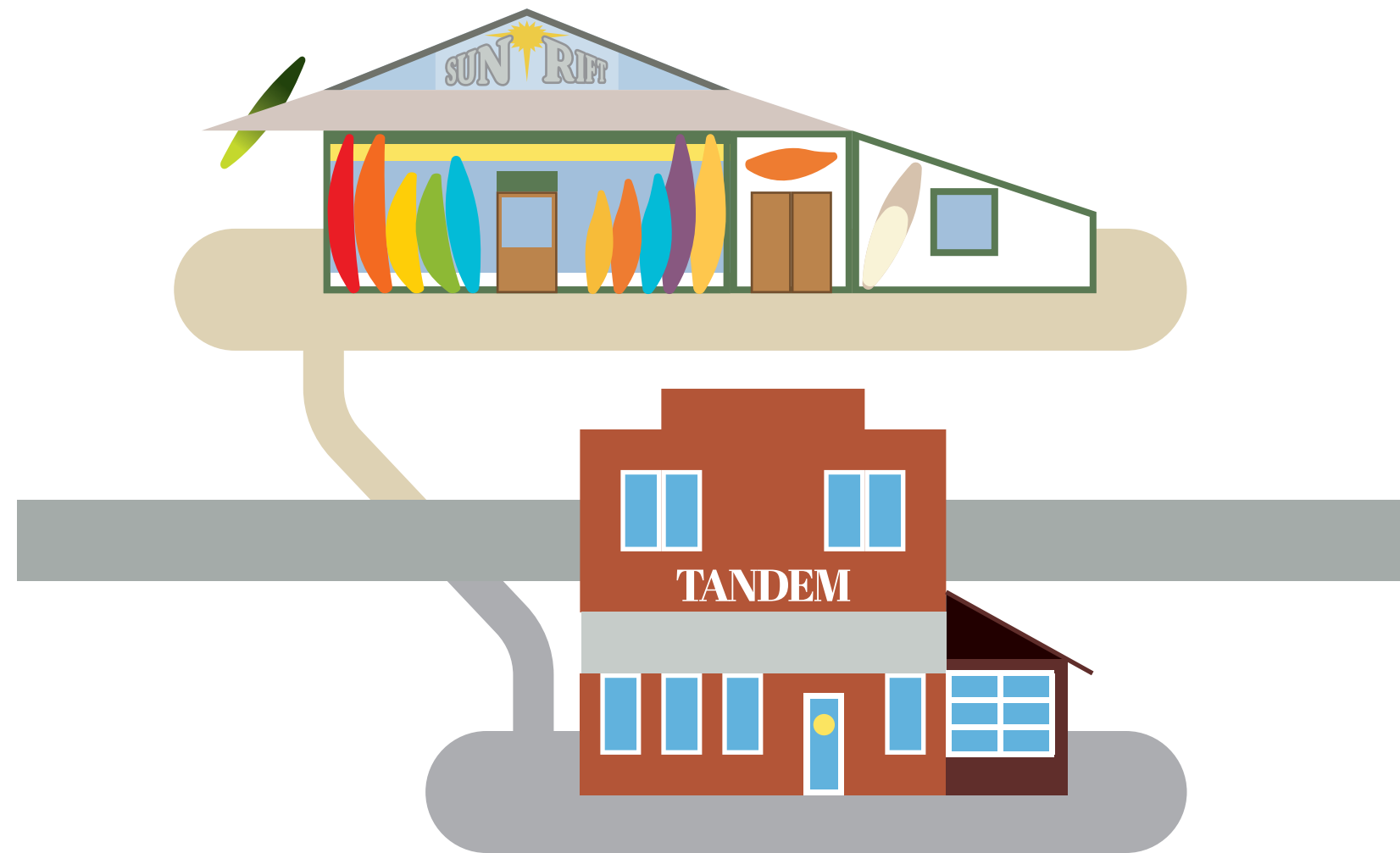
- Work with Greenville County Parks and Recreation to develop a master plan for Gateway Park to create TR’s Falls Park that is integrated with the downtown and Main Street presence to include an event venue, water features, gardens, walkways, etc.
- Study the feasibility of developing a central lake as a green infrastructure feature for stormwater management for the park and downtown redevelopment.
- Update the Trailblazer Park Master Plan to reflect an active recreation and bike amenity focus (to include a bicycle park, dog park, basketball courts, tennis courts, play equipment)
- Develop a transition strategy/phasing plan for both parks
- Develop a short-term improvement program for Gateway Park which should include cleaning up and renovating the restrooms, landscape elements, additional site furniture, trash cans, bike racks, benches, etc.

## 8. Poinsett and Center Streetscape Project

- Seek funding to implement streetscape projects including stormwater, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting.

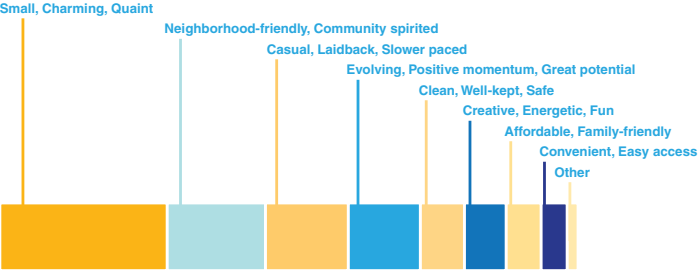


## Appendices\*

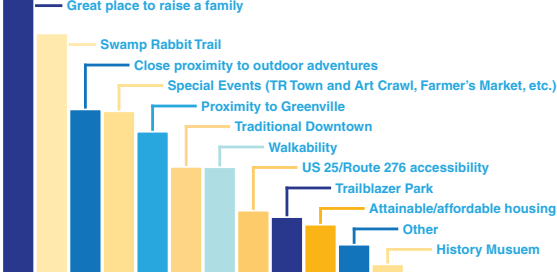


\* The concept diagrams (Appendix B) reflect some of the ideas developed for some key parcels in the city.

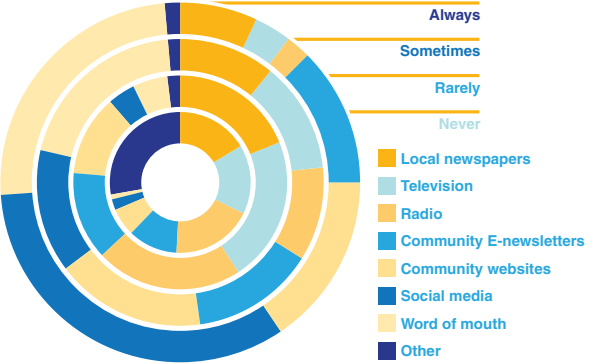
Think about your favorite Travelers Rest experiences...  
What descriptions come to mind?



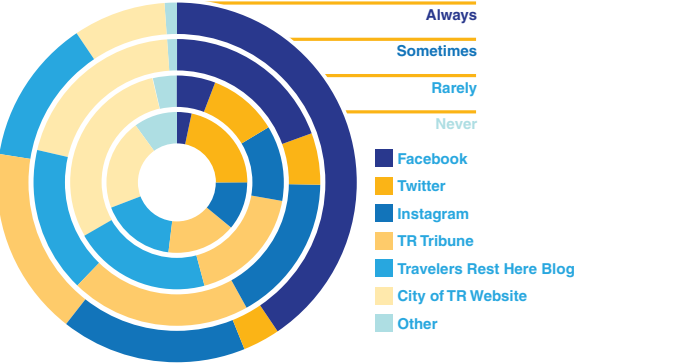
What are the most important attributes and assets to the City of Travelers Rest?



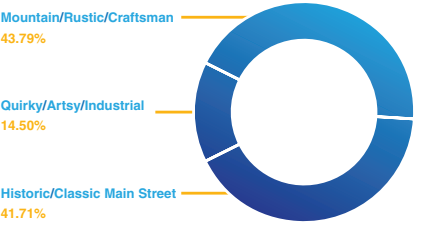
How do you keep up to date with what's happening in the City of Traveler's Rest?



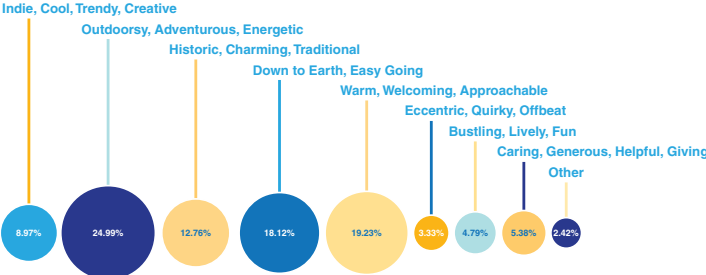
Please indicate how likely you are to use the following media platforms to find information about what is happening in the City of Travelers Rest?



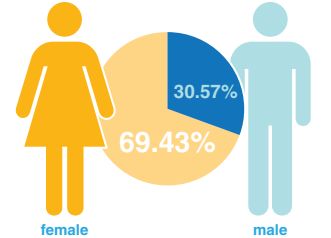
Which of the following styles would you prefer for downtown Travelers Rest?



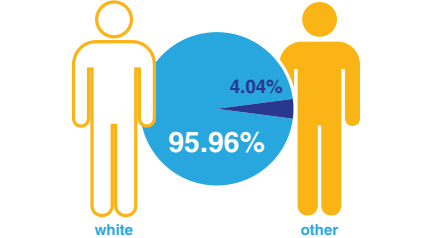
If you were going to describe the "personality" of the City of Travelers Rest, what words come to mind?



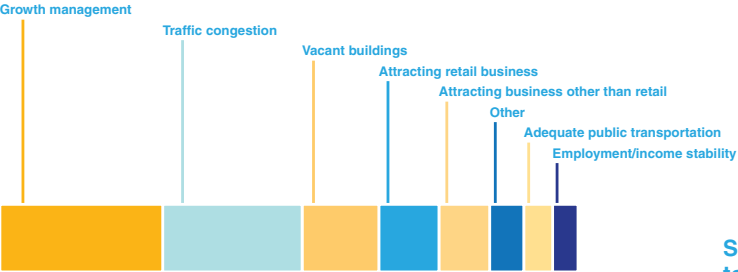
Please indicate your age...



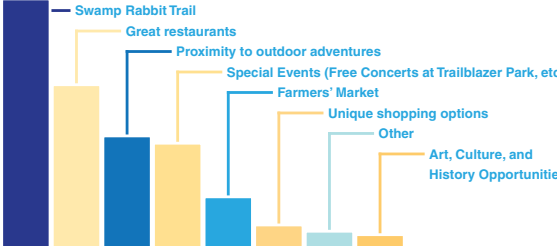
Please indicate your race/ethnicity...



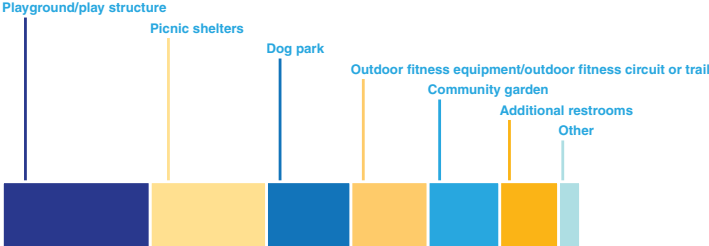
What are the biggest challenges currently facing the City of Travelers Rest?



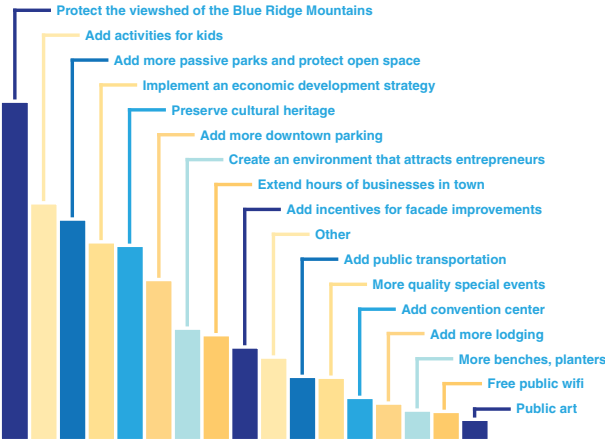
In your opinion, what are the best things about Travelers Rest that attract visitors?



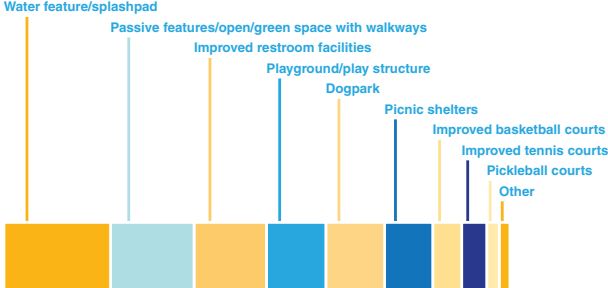
Select up to your top 2 amenities/features you would like to see developed in Trailblazer Park...



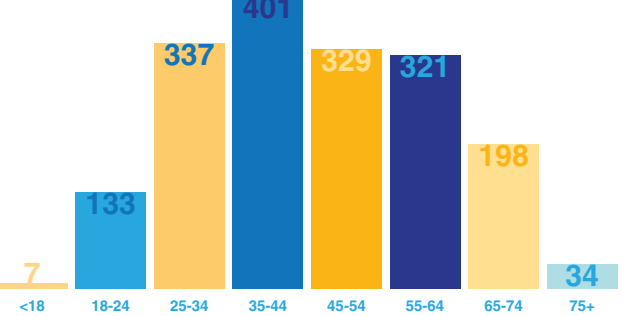
If you could change something to positively affect the future of TR over the next 10-20 years, what would those be?



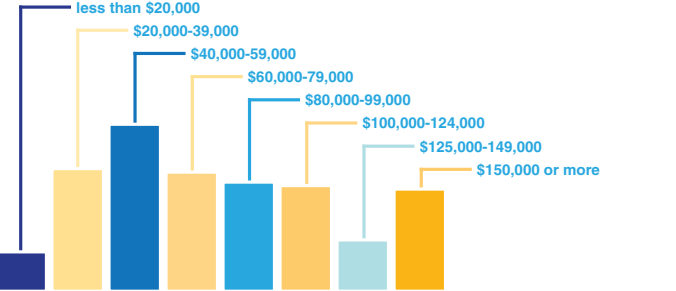
Select up to your top 2 amenities/features you would like to see developed in Trailblazer Park...



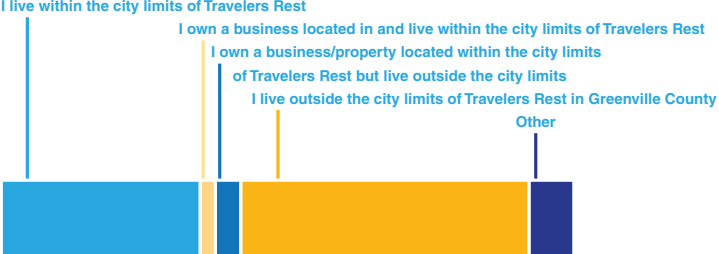
Please indicate your age...



Please indicate your annual income...

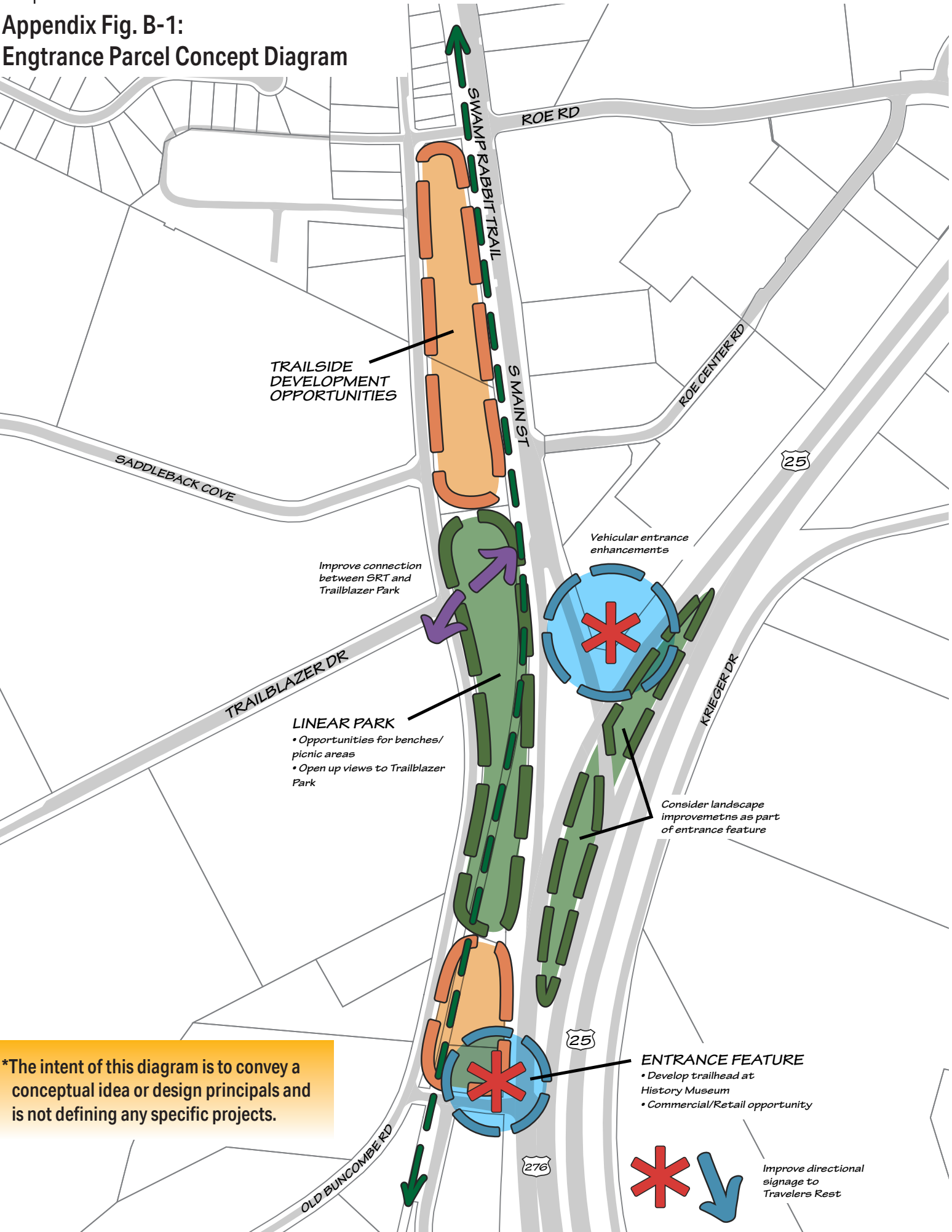


Please select the option that best describes you...

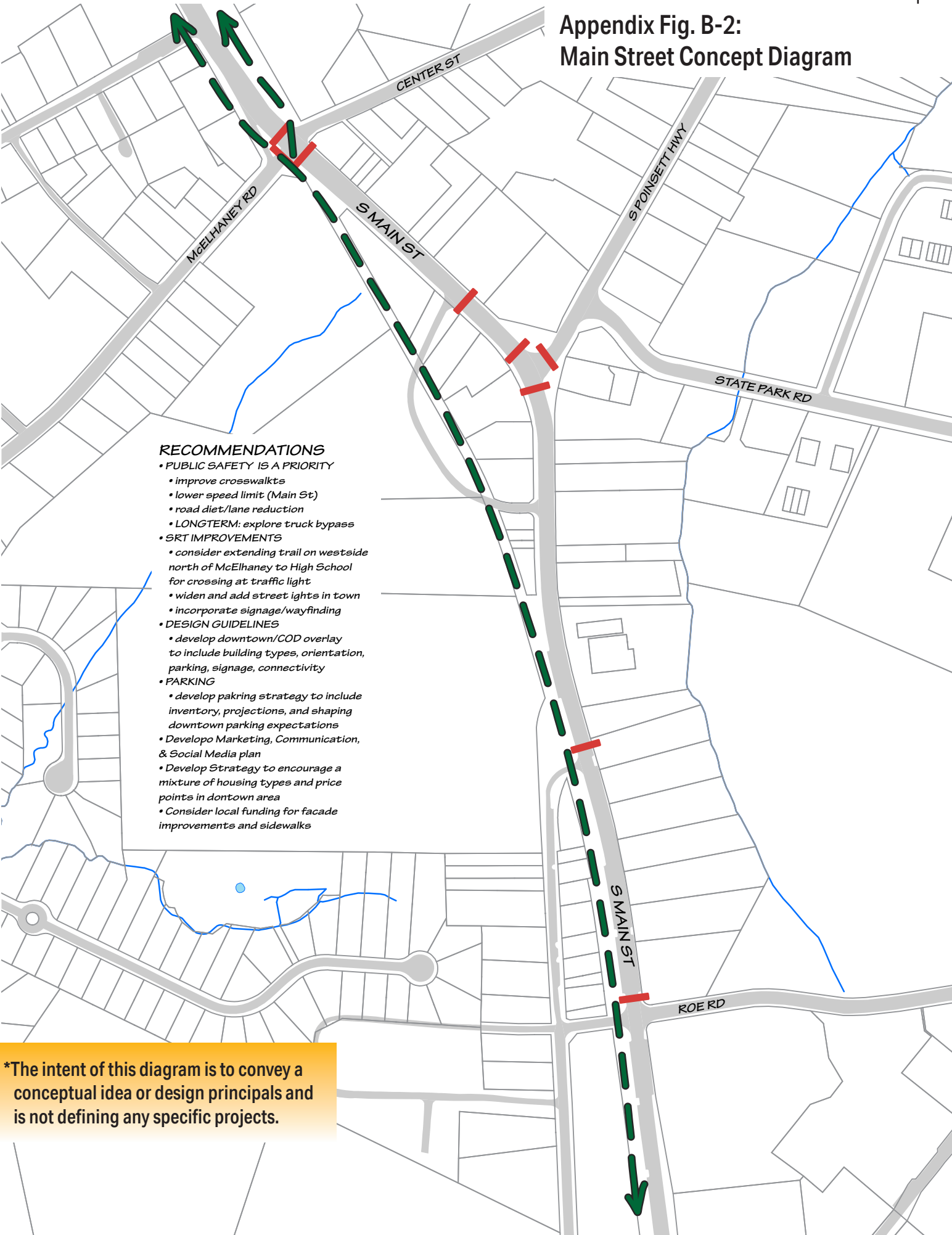




Appendix Fig. B-1:  
Engnrance Parcel Concept Diagram

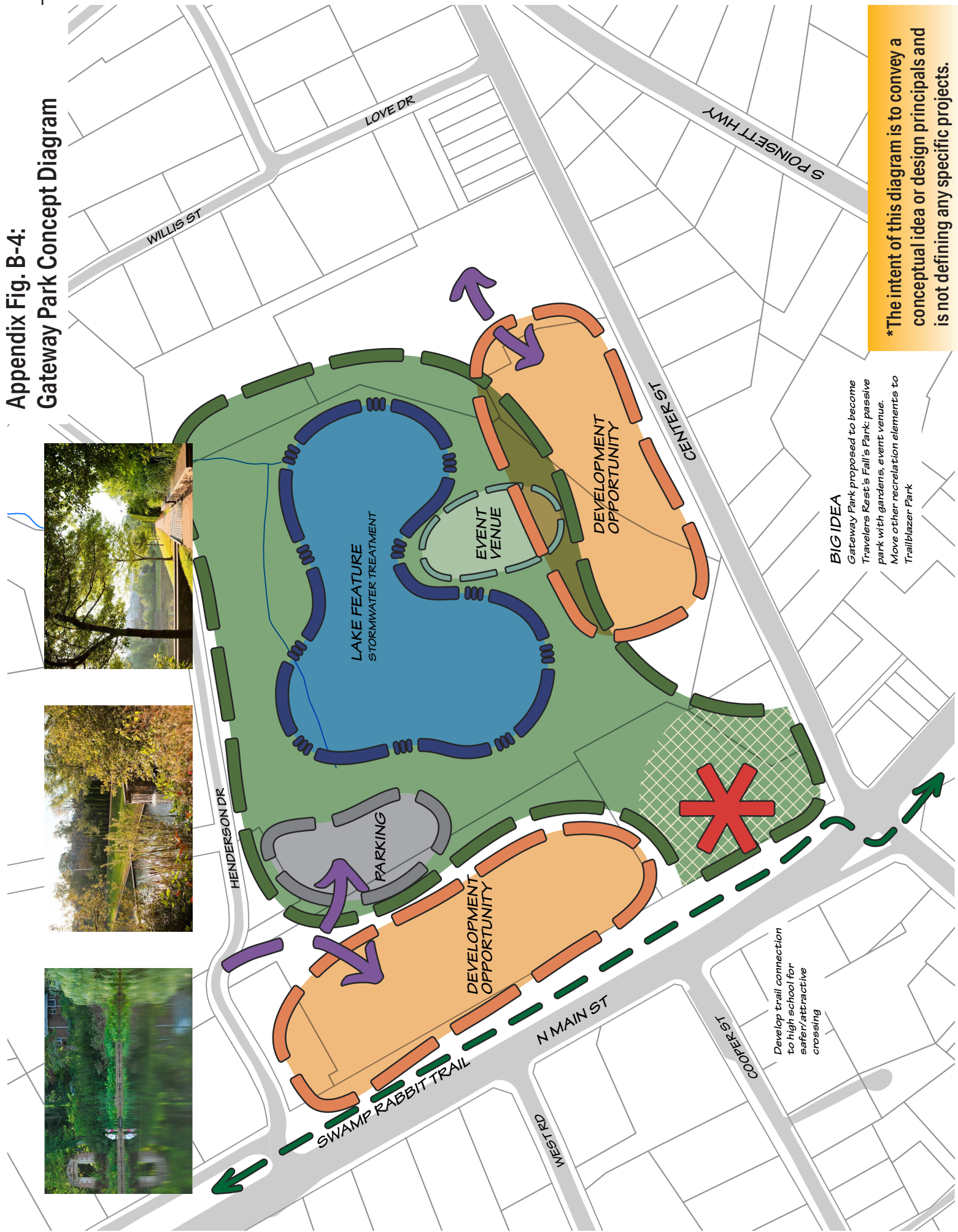


Appendix Fig. B-2:  
Main Street Concept Diagram

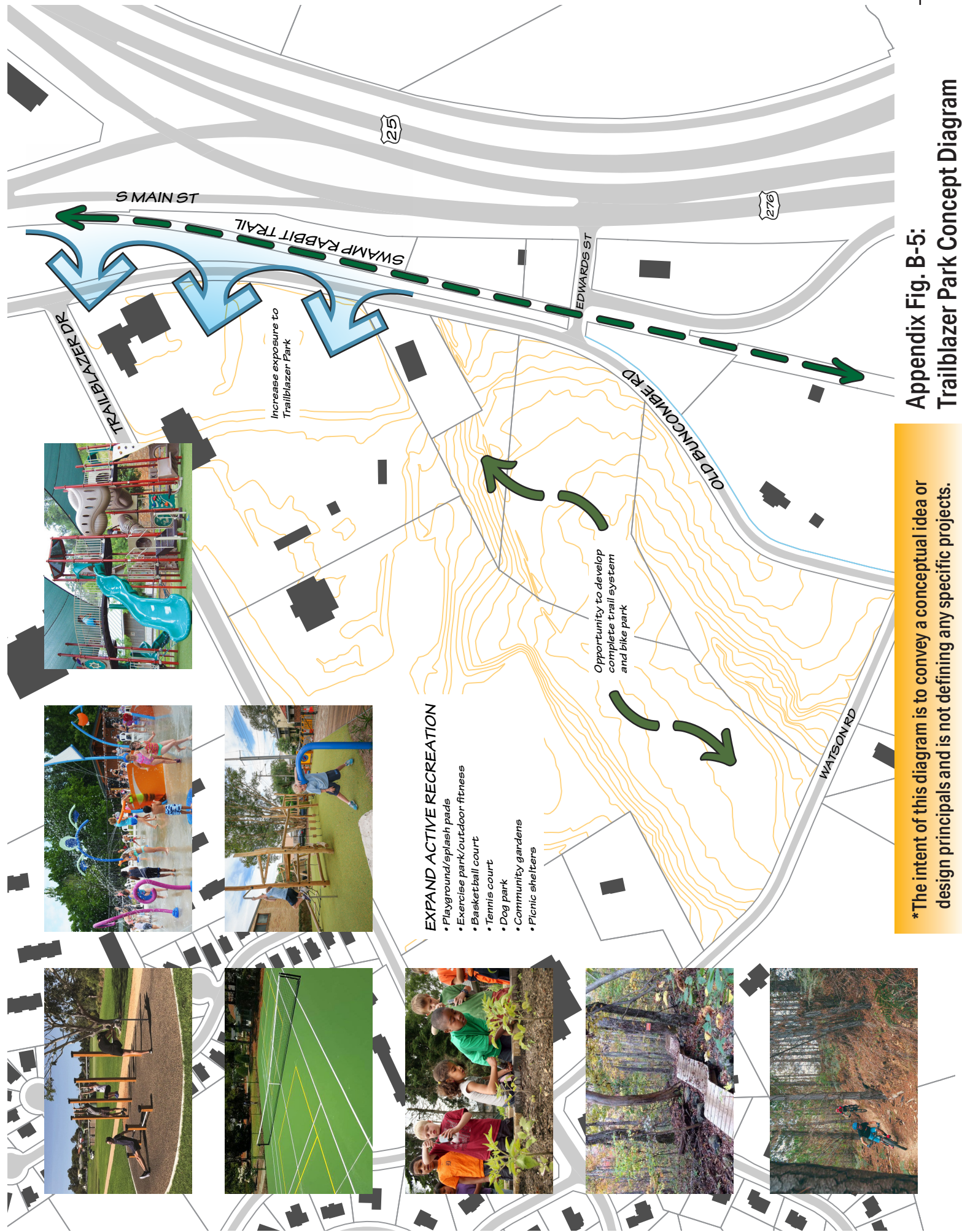




Appendix Fig. B-4:  
Gateway Park Concept Diagram

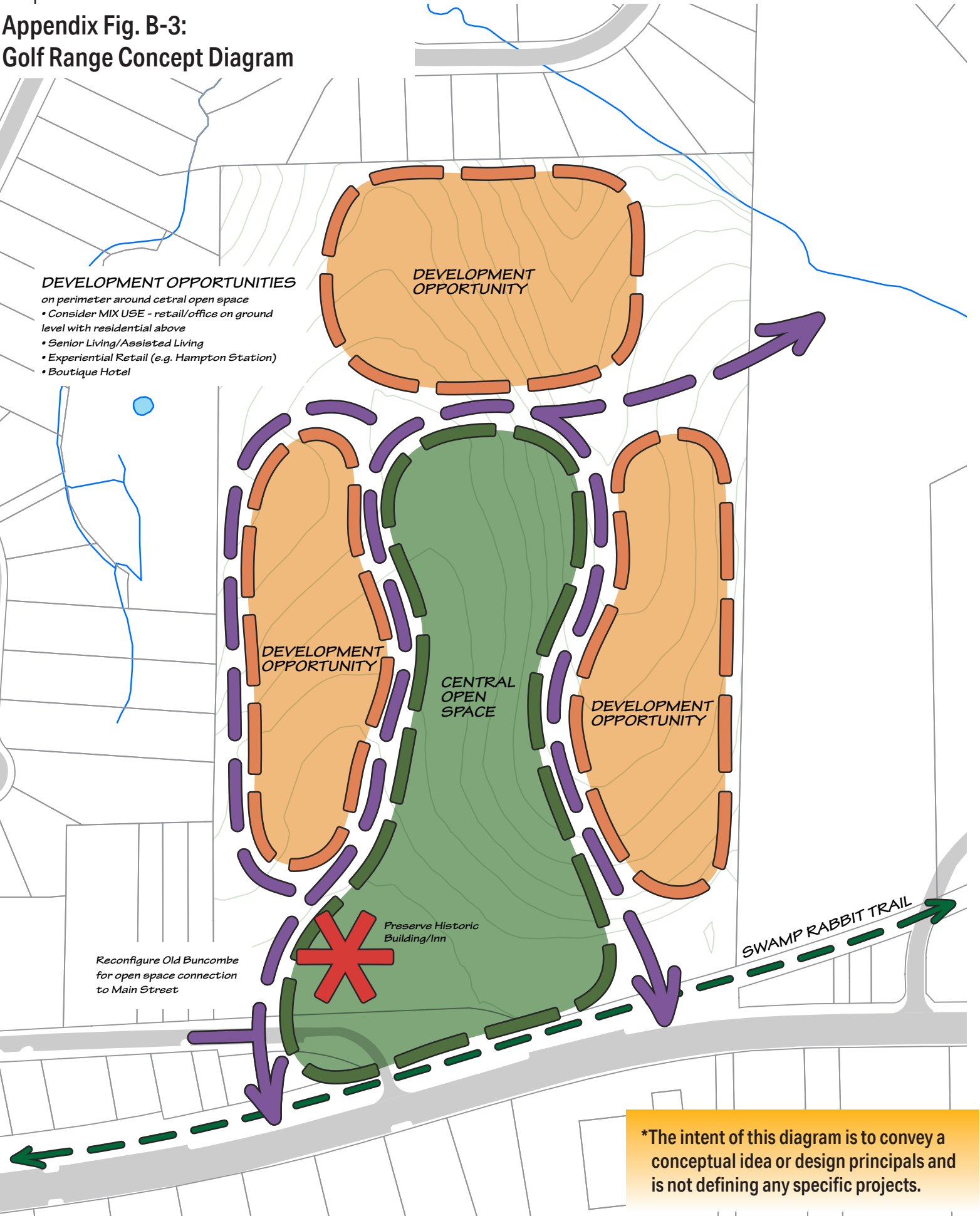


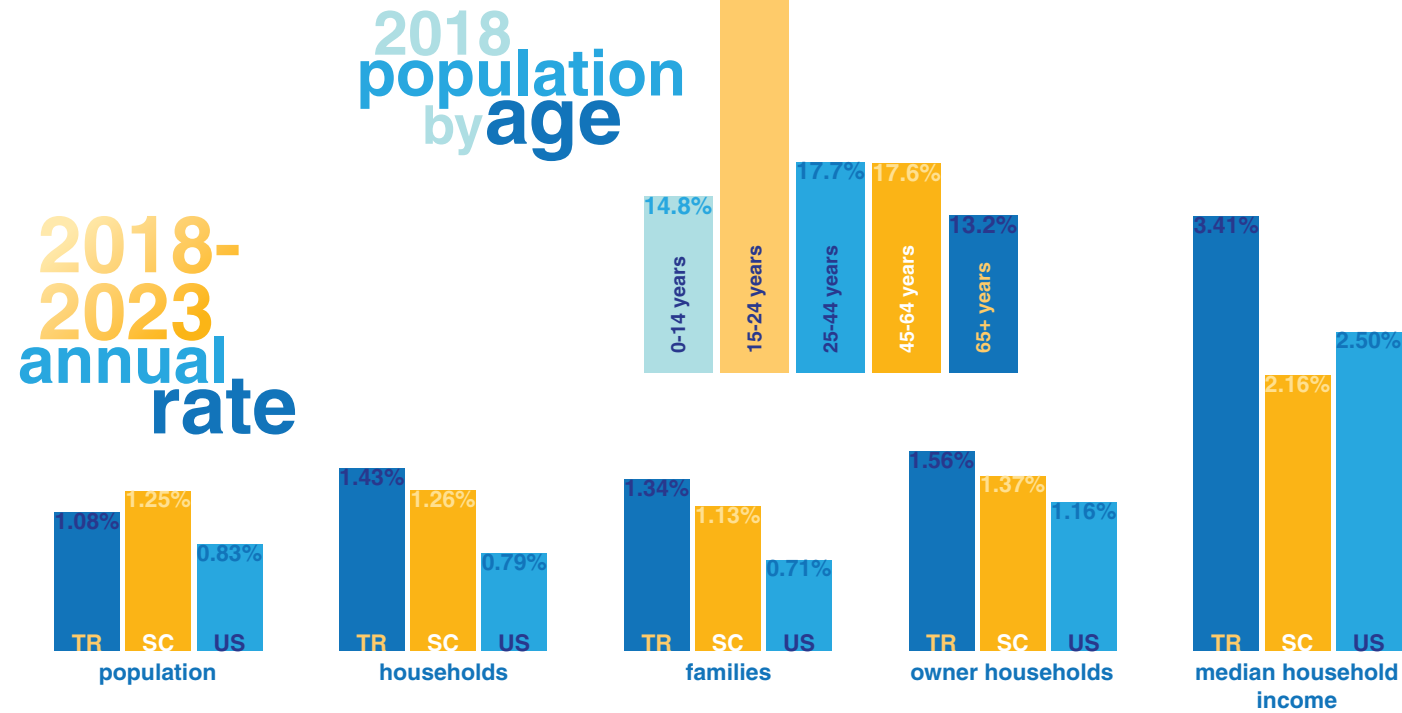
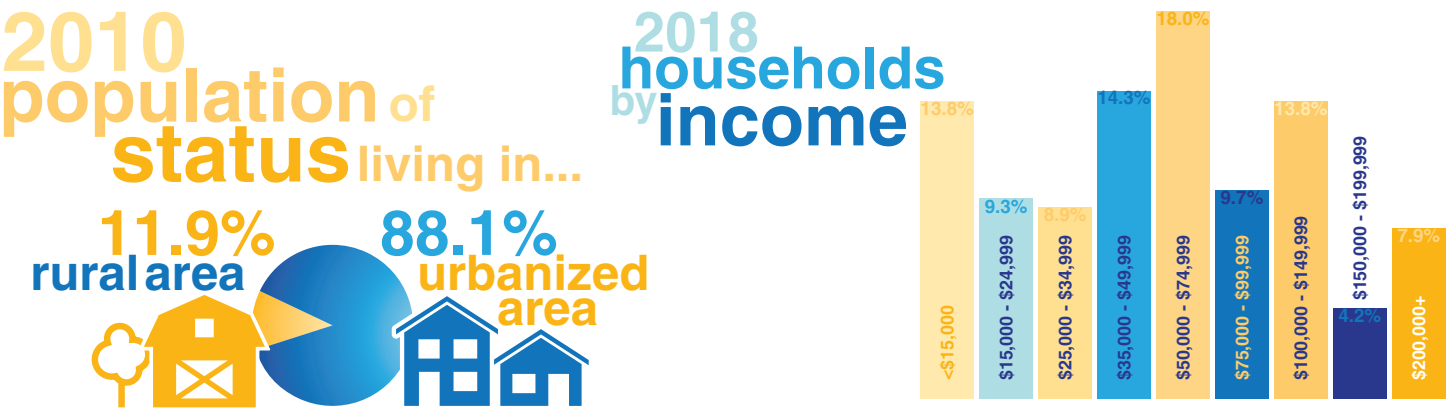
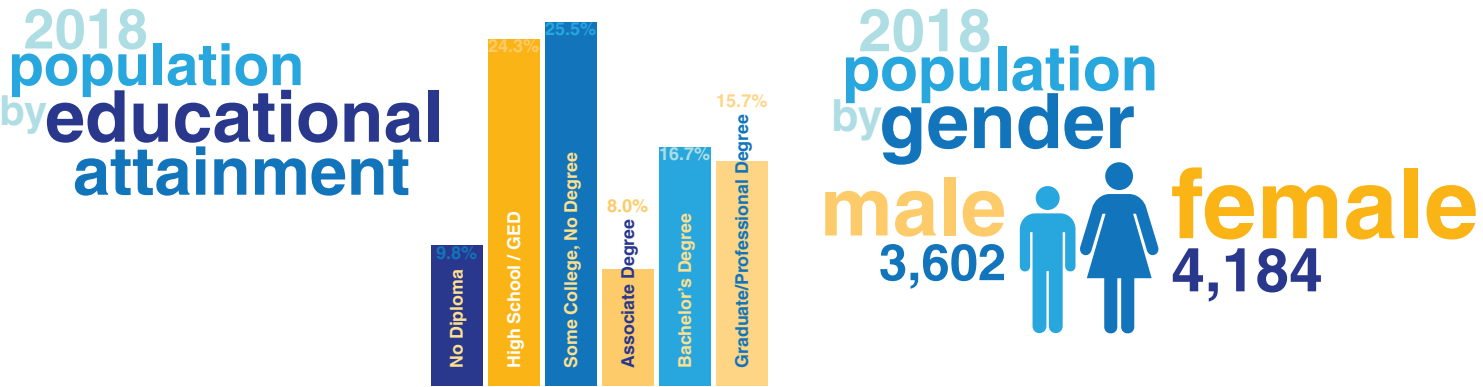
Appendix Fig. B-5:  
Trailblazer Park Concept Diagram



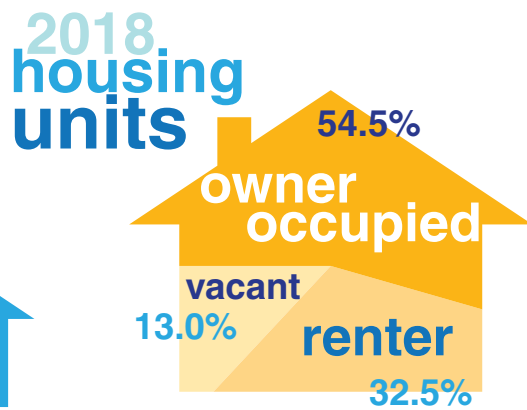


Appendix Fig. B-3:  
Golf Range Concept Diagram





2018 households 2,247







## Travelers Rest Downtown Master Plan 2019