



Realizing Laurens Road
Transit-Oriented Development Study

Summary Report

December 2022

Acknowledgments

This effort is being guided by Greenville County with the support of the City of Greenville, the City of Mauldin, and Greenlink Transit. Resources for the process have in part been provided by an award from the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) TOD Planning Grant program. Additionally, further support and guidance for the process is being provided by a variety of local and regional stakeholders identified by the partner agencies.



Prepared by:



In association with:



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Project Beginnings



Introduction – Realizing Laurens Road

Realizing Laurens Road is a multi-jurisdictional strategic plan prepared to leverage multimodal transportation investments and key development nodes to enable the corridor's transformation into a series of thriving activity centers. At the end of the Realizing Laurens Road process, Greenville County will have a coordinated plan for the entire corridor, detailed ideas for identified pulses of activity (referred to as Mobility + Development Hubs), and an action plan that shows how public and private entities can work together to realize results. While the future of Laurens Road has been explored in previous plans, Realizing Laurens Road is the first corridor in Greenville County to blend considerations related to land use, urban design, market, and mobility through the lens of walkable, transit-oriented development. The process is envisioned as a model for similar corridors throughout the Upstate.

Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

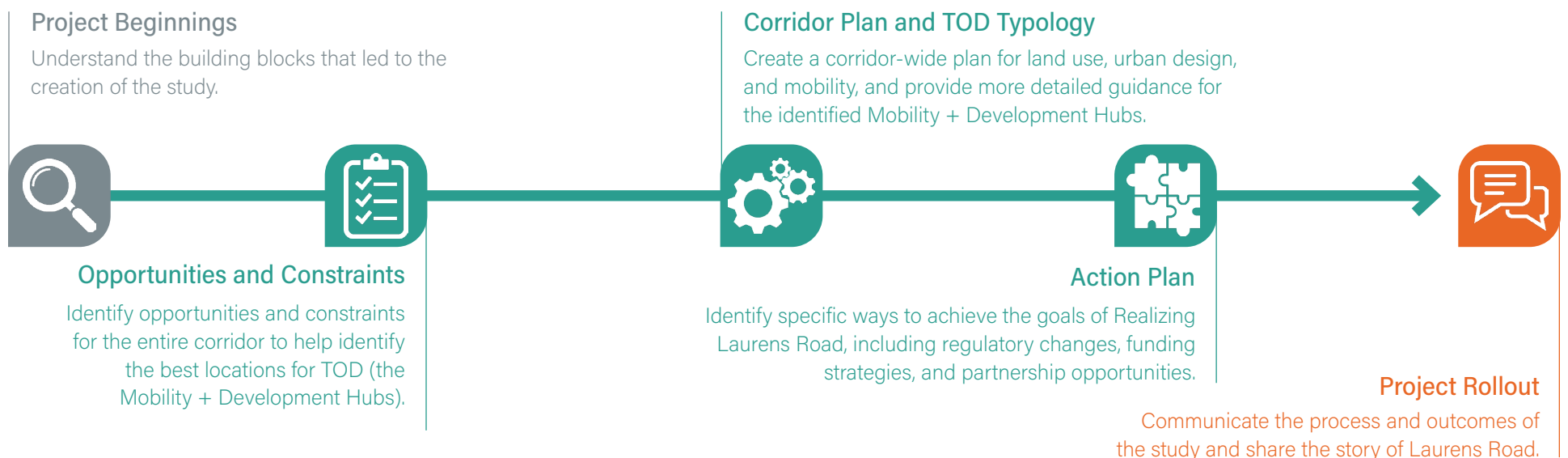
While TOD can take a variety of forms, it typically features more dense, walkable, mixed-use development. TODs are intended to create a concentration and mix of uses that provide a one-stop environment to live, work, shop, and learn. TOD reduces single-use trips and is designed to encourage a park-once environment.

Laurens Road

Laurens Road is ideally suited to leverage transit and multimodal investments to support corridor reinvestment and vitality for residents, businesses, and visitors. Focusing intentional growth around transit stations takes full advantage of public investments in transit. Successful TOD needs access to and density around transit stations. Together TOD and transit hubs result in better transportation options, higher transit ridership, and a host of other benefits.

Study Process

Realizing Laurens Road took shape within a simple, straightforward process that used information from previous plans, community conversations, and new analysis.

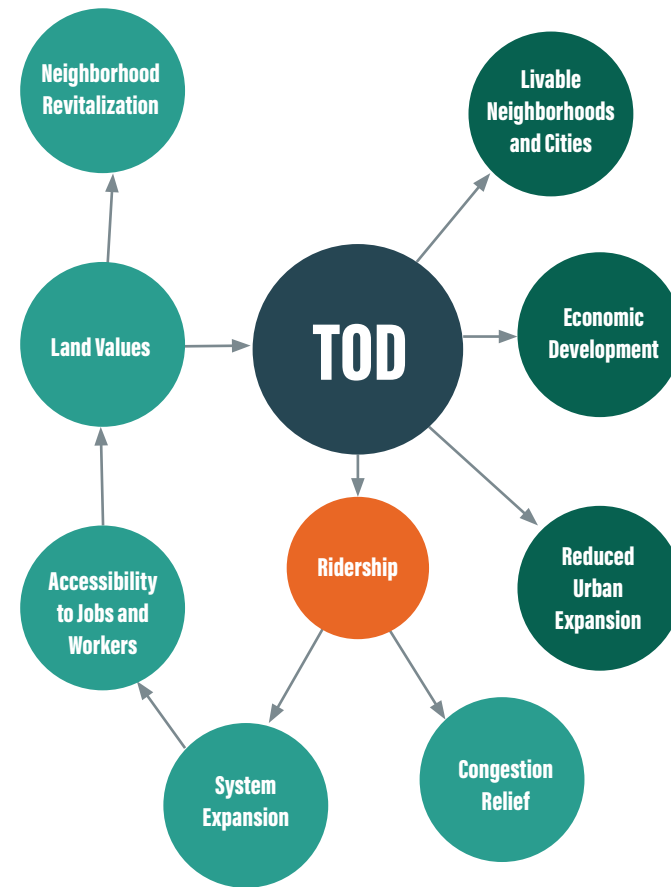


Importance of TOD

TOD is a virtuous cycle in which investments in mobility—combined with focused centers of jobs and housing—result in better accessibility, more housing options, stable property values, and transit-supportive growth. TOD supports more multi-purpose trips, trip reduction, and increased access to jobs, housing, and opportunity.

TOD Virtuous Cycle

- TOD leads to increased ridership
- Ridership supports system expansion
- System expansion increases transit accessibility
- Accessibility enhances attractiveness of land for developers
- Increased value supports more TOD



FTA's Pilot Program for TOD Planning

The Federal Transit Authority's (FTA) Pilot Program for TOD Planning requires the study to "examine ways to improve economic development and ridership, foster multimodal connectivity and accessibility, improve transit access for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, engage the private sector, identify infrastructure needs, and enable mixed-use development near transit stations."



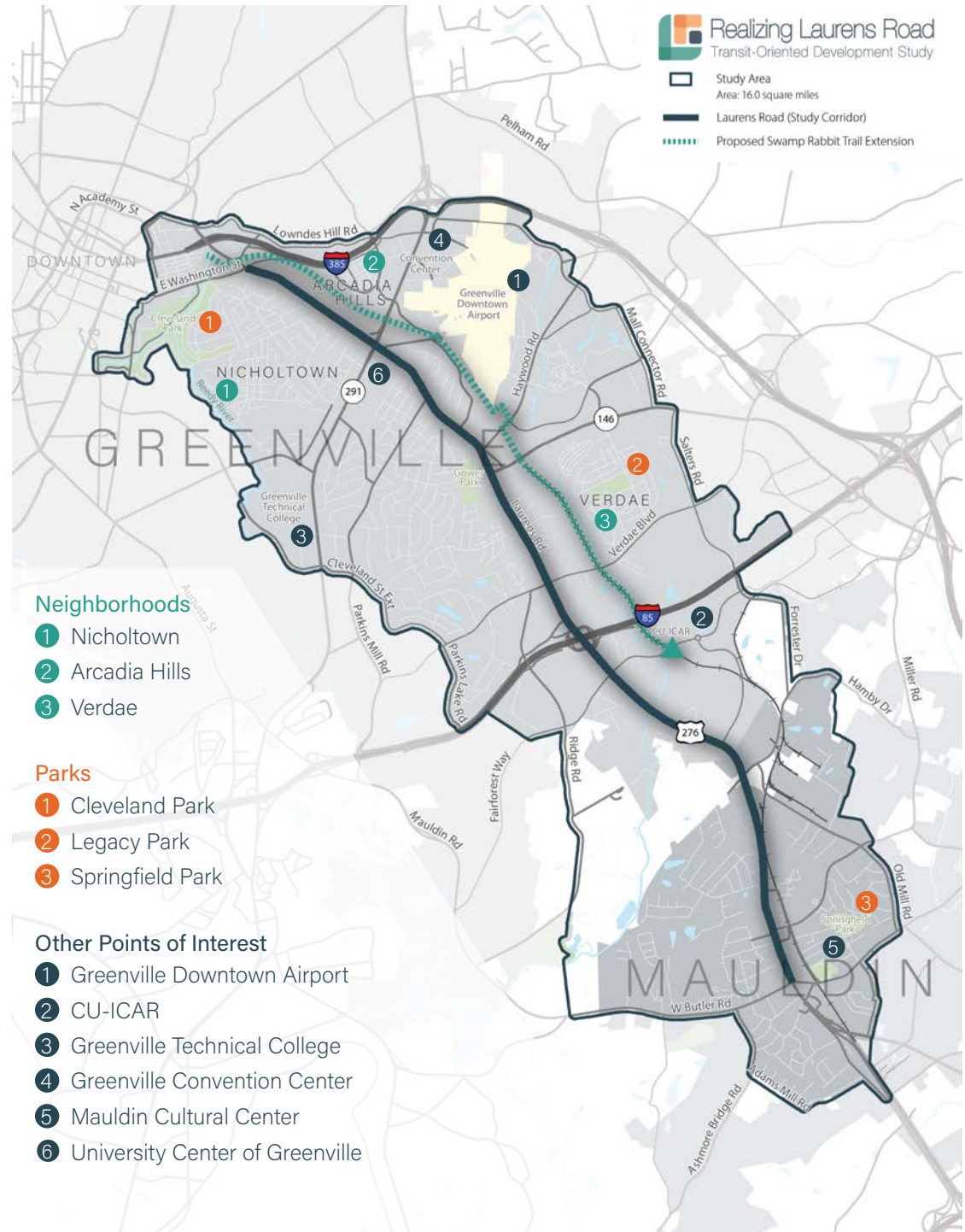
Laurens Road Corridor at a Glance

The Laurens Road study area **extends 6.7 miles along Laurens Road from East Washington Street (near downtown Greenville) all the way to Butler Road in Mauldin**. The study area for this process encompasses those neighborhoods and developments that are most closely tied with the corridor. As the study takes shape, the focus will narrow from this larger study area to planned pulses of activity, referred to as Mobility + Development Hubs.

Assets + Neighborhoods

The map to the right highlights important neighborhoods, parks, and points of interest within the study area. Critical assets within or near the study area include:

- Swamp Rabbit Trail
- Bon Secours Wellness Arena
- Greenville Convention Center
- Greenville Downtown Airport
- Nicholtown and other neighborhoods
- Pleasantburg Drive intersection, including McAlister Square and the University Center
- Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR)
- Redevelopment sites
- Undeveloped land

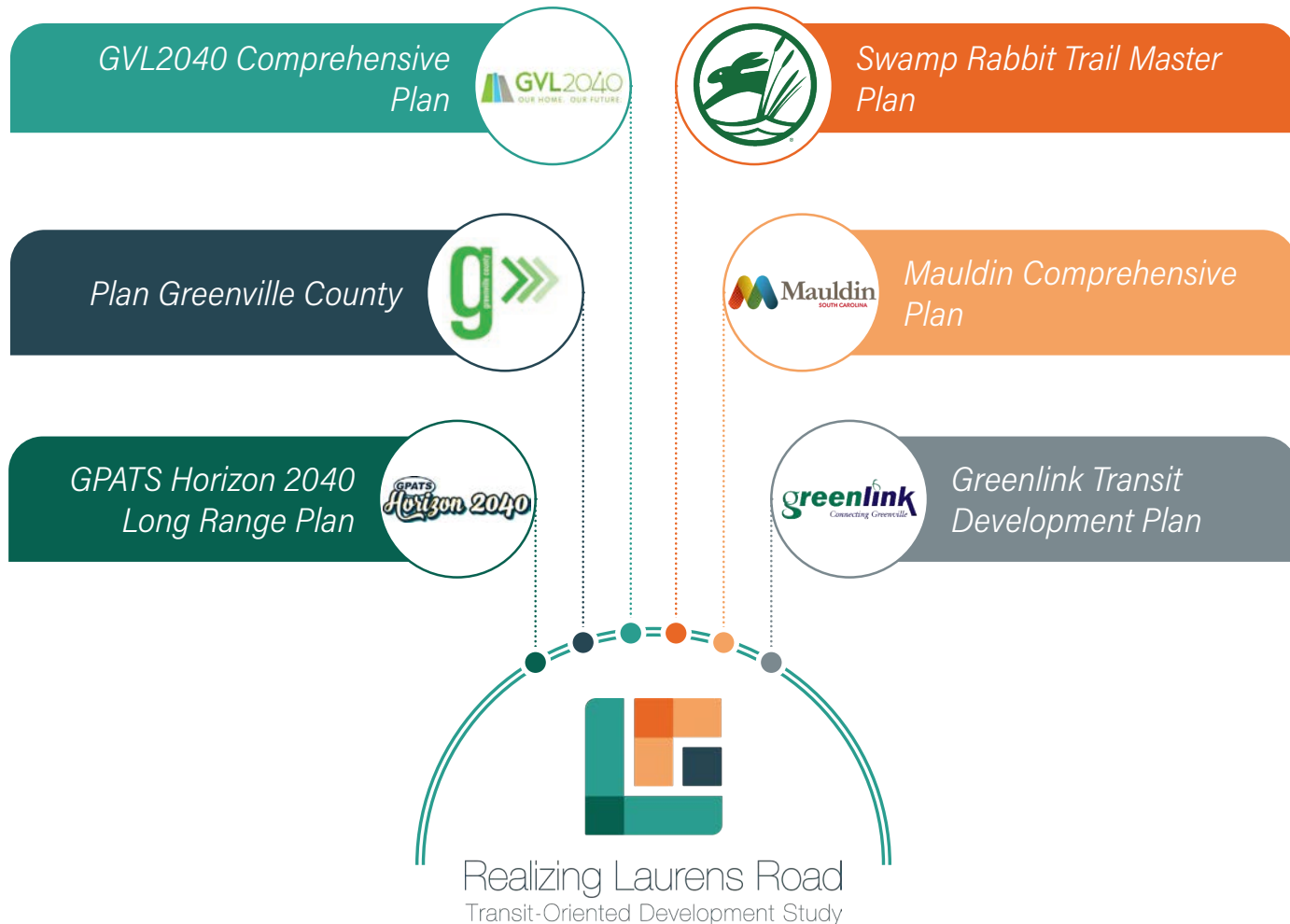


Building Blocks

Laurens Road has changed dramatically in recent decades, and the changing corridor has long been a topic of conversation between planners, engineers, and urban designers. The Realizing Laurens Road TOD study builds upon recent and ongoing planning efforts. The review of past plans—or building blocks—allows us to take advantage of previous engagement efforts, better understand community values, and begin the TOD study with a full understanding of recommended projects and policies in the study area.

As we invest time in the building blocks for Realizing Laurens Road, we are looking at:

- *Community Input*
- *Vision and Guiding Statements*
- *Data and Analysis*
- *Relevant Recommendations*



GVL2040 Comprehensive Plan *(December 2020)*

GVL2040 is the City of Greenville’s guiding document through the year 2040. GVL2040 documents the City’s core values and planning principles, describes critical trends and conditions, establishes priorities, and presents a strategic framework for implementation.



GVL2040 classifies Laurens Road as an important corridor and identifies potential development nodes within the Realizing Laurens Road study area: Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR), Verdae Development at Laurens Road, McAlister Square, and the Greenville Convention Center. GVL2040 describes the City’s vision to transform the Laurens Road area into a walkable, mixed-use, transit-oriented corridor.

Plan Greenville County *(January 2020)*

Plan Greenville County is a guiding document that reflects a community-centered vision for the future. The Plan gives direction for nine elements required by the state: population, economic development, natural resources, cultural resources, community facilities, housing, land use, transportation, and priority investment. The Plan’s Future Land Use Map describes the County’s land use vision.



Plan Greenville County emphasizes the importance of integrating land use and transportation planning to achieve densities needed for efficient transit. In the Future Land Use Map, most of the Laurens Road corridor is classified as suburban mixed-use, which is complementary to transit-oriented development.

Greenlink Transit Development Plan *(April 2018; updated May 2021)*

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) identifies ways to improve Greenlink’s fixed route and paratransit network throughout Greenville County, including the cities of Greenville and Mauldin. The TDP includes a prioritized service plan for Greenlink expansion and makes the case for additional transit funding. A May 2021 update to the TDP focuses on key updates to the fixed route service expansion plan and includes a capital cost plan and countywide demand response plan.



Based on estimated ridership and likely cost, the 2018 TDP evaluates a fixed-route radial route along Laurens Road and Woodruff Road. The 2021 TDP update affirms the need for and further highlights the shortened headway plan for this route. The TDP is scheduled to be fully updated in 2023.

GPATS Horizon 2040 LRTP *(July 2018)*

Horizon 2040 is a regional strategy for a connected transportation system that accommodates existing and future mobility needs. The Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) analyzes the region’s transportation needs and specifies which projects should receive state and federal transportation funds through the year 2040. The LRTP also makes additional project recommendations to be funded by other means.



Previous LRTPs identified the need to improve Laurens Road. The 2040 LRTP allocates nearly \$7 million in the 2024-2030 horizon to improve Lauren Road between I-85 and Innovation Drive. Two intersection improvements in the 2031-2040 horizon and many non-funded recommended projects are also identified.

Mauldin Comprehensive Plan *(November 2009, updated 2014)*

Mauldin’s Comprehensive Plan offers guidance organized around the nine planning elements required by the state, including land use, economic development, and transportation. The Plan was revised in 2014 to reflect updated demographics and show progress on goals, objectives, and strategies. The City will be updating the Plan again in the months to come, with a final update scheduled to be complete by 2022.



The 2014 update mentions that high-quality transit service should be part of the long-range plan to manage traffic congestion through Mauldin, though funding was identified as a challenge. The Plan also recommends some bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Laurens Road.

Swamp Rabbit Trail Extension Master Plan *(November 2020)*

The City of Greenville’s Swamp Rabbit Trail Extension Master Plan establishes a vision for the area around the planned extension of the Swamp Rabbit Trail from Cleveland Park to CU-ICAR. The Master Plan prioritizes updated mobility to ensure connectivity and access to the future trail from surrounding neighborhoods. It also identifies opportunities for development and redevelopment to promote greater housing diversity and economic growth.



The Swamp Rabbit Trail Extension Master Plan study area is included within the Realizing Laurens Road study area, and the planned trail closely parallels Laurens Road. One of the project goals established in the Master Plan is to transform Laurens Road into a parallel, multimodal route with trail-supportive development.

Opportunities and Constraints



Opportunities and Constraints

The Opportunities and Constraints section is designed to present information, data, and analysis to show what the Laurens Road corridor is like today. The data showcased here is foundational to the recommendations. Throughout the development of this report, several key takeaways emerged and are described briefly below:

Previous planning efforts help provide the vision for the future of the corridor.

It's clear that utilizing the planning work that has come before the Laurens Road process is vital to understanding the future vision of the corridor and how it fits into the larger regional context.

Several critical locations along the corridor showcase opportunity for TOD.

Mobility + Development Hubs represent the greatest potential for higher intensity development that is supportive of premium transit access. These hubs will likely be located in areas with high potential for redevelopment.

Investment in premium transit can help create a more equitable and mobile region.

Creating a more equitable future for the region can start with Laurens Road. Increased access to transit and other multimodal options spurs economic vibrancy for all who live along the corridor and throughout the region.

Potential is high for investment in premium transit

along Laurens Road.

Current mobility in the Laurens Road area is lacking multimodal options. Transit investment along the corridor will mitigate congestion, enhance multimodal connectivity, and improve safety across the region.

The opportunity exists to improve the quality of design along the corridor.

Urban design along the corridor today is lacking the amenities and sense of place of a premier community. Increased investment in transit and development along the corridor should improve the quality of design on Laurens Road.

The time is now for investment in Laurens Road.

Though the exact mode is yet to be defined, it's clear that investment in premium transit is critical to achieving the vision for Laurens Road and the region as a whole. As growth continues to trend upwards and the 21st Century needs of the region continue to increase, it will be critical to begin now to realize a new Laurens Road that supports the growth and needs of the community.

Transportation and Infrastructure

The Role of Transportation in TOD

Transportation and infrastructure naturally play an important role in successful TOD. Likewise, the land uses we choose and the urban design we create within transit-oriented development must make it safer and easier for people to bike, walk, use mass transit, and/or drive along and across the corridor. As we think about transportation and infrastructure for Laurens Road, we need to find ways to **give people more transportation options, increase transit ridership, and promote healthier lifestyles.**

Transportation on Laurens Road

Laurens Road plays many roles in the Upstate's transportation network. It's US Highway (US 276), an important commercial corridor, and a major commuter route to downtown Greenville. Laurens Road is classified as an urban principal arterial and, according to SCDOT, **26,000 to 39,000 vehicles per day** traveled along Laurens Road from Washington Street in downtown Greenville to Butler Road in Mauldin in 2019. The corridor is mostly four to six lanes with a center section that varies between a two-way left turn lane and divided median.

While Laurens Road has sidewalks on both sides between Washington Street and I-85, these sidewalks are immediately adjacent to fast-moving vehicles that make the walk uncomfortable. Many gaps in the sidewalk network exist between I-85 and Butler Road. No bicycle facilities are provided along Laurens Road, though the planned extension of the Swamp Rabbit Trail extension would parallel the corridor. Additionally, Laurens Road remains an important corridor in Greenlink's existing transit network.

Transportation Quick Facts



The Laurens Road Corridor is **6.7** miles long.

In 2019, **26,000 to 39,000** vehicles per day traveled along Laurens Road.



The corridor is directly served by Greenlink **Routes 510 and 601.**

Nearly **3,500** people per month ride the Route 510 and 601 buses through the corridor.



Over **8,000** people are within a 5-minute walk of a transit stop.

Between 2015 and 2019, there were more than **5,500 crashes** along Laurens Road, of which there were **8 fatal crashes.**



Transit

Greenlink operates three transit routes within the Realizing Laurens Road study area. These include:

Route 501: Pleasantburg

Connects Downtown Greenville, Nicholtown, Arcadia Hills, and Greenville Technical College

Route 510: Laurens Road

Connects Downtown Greenville, CU-ICAR, and other destinations along Laurens Road

Route 601: Simpsonville Connector

Connects Mauldin and Simpsonville

Most residents of the study area north of I-85 and near downtown Mauldin are within a 15-minute walk to the nearest transit stop. The southeast portion of the Study Area, near Ridge Road, has the least transit access.

Based on ridership data from Routes 510 and 601, the stops with the most boardings are where the two routes connect on Old Mill Road and the Route 510 stop at Washington Street and Ebaugh Avenue.



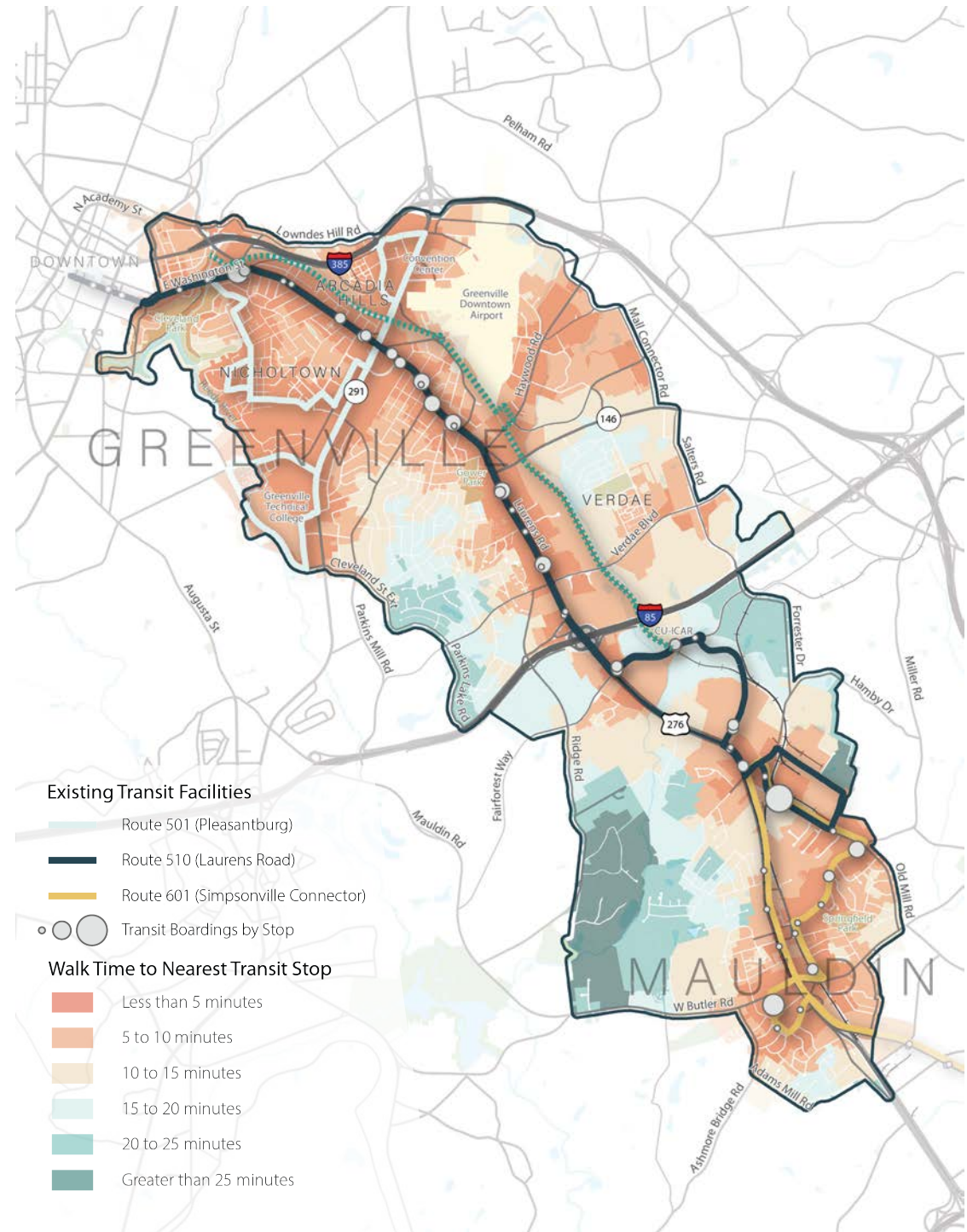
3,500

Passengers per month on routes 510 and 601



26.5

Miles of transit service within the study area



Active Transportation

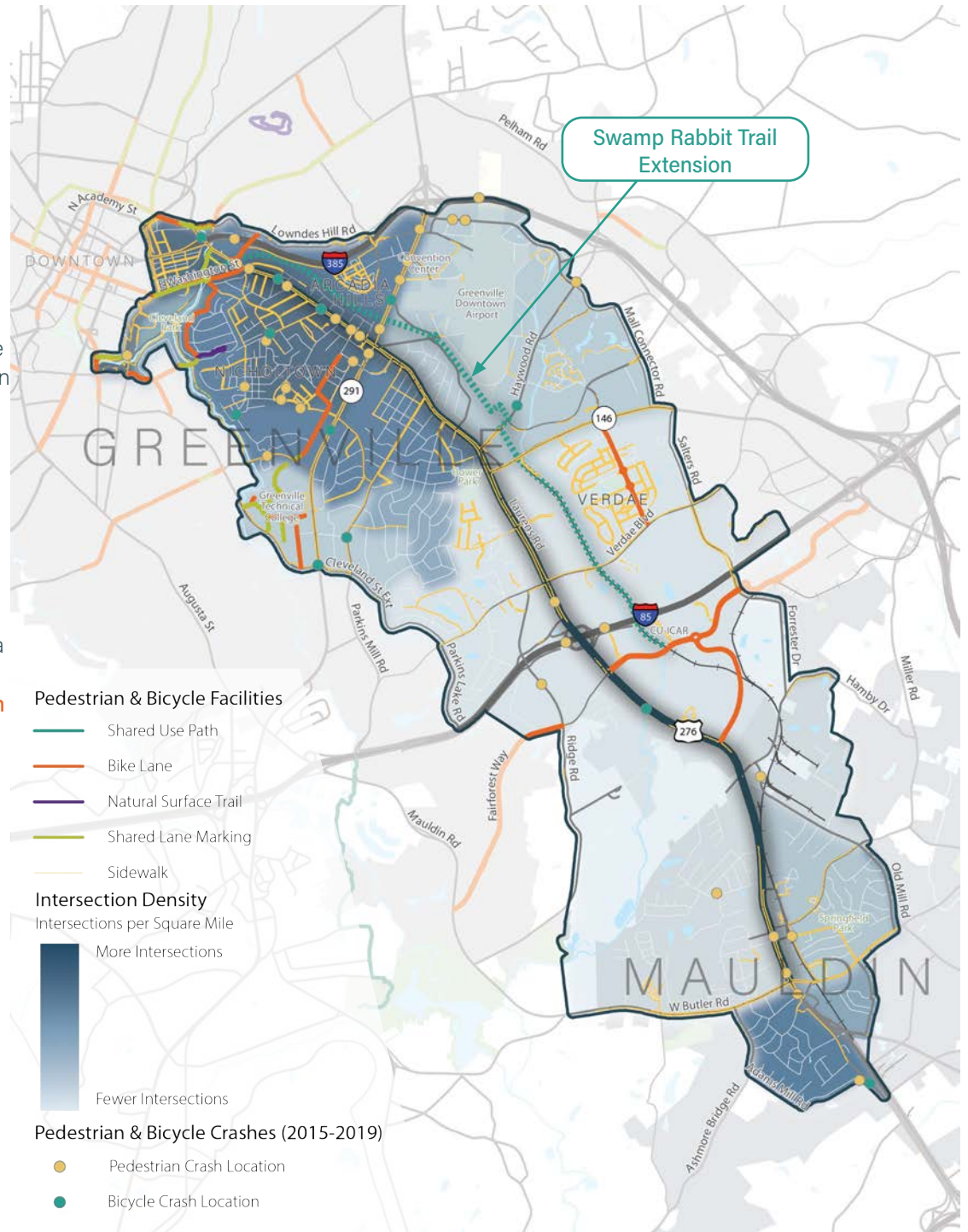
The study area includes some pedestrian and bicycle facilities, such as shared use paths, bike lanes, natural surface trails, shared lane markings, and sidewalks. Most facilities are near the Nicholtown and Verdae neighborhoods and CU-ICAR. The future Swamp Rabbit Trail extension will act as a greenway superhighway for the region.

The map to the right also shows the locations of pedestrian and bicycle crashes between 2015 and 2019. These are concentrated in the northern part of the study area, including many along Laurens Road between East Washington Street and Pleasantburg Drive. These high-crash areas likely **indicate a greater presence of pedestrians and bicyclists and insufficient facilities to accommodate them.**

Another important factor for pedestrian and bicycle comfort is intersection density. The presence of more intersections creates greater connectivity, providing more low-stress options for walkers and bicyclists. Only the far northern and southern portions of the study area (Nicholtown, Arcadia Hills, and near downtown Mauldin) have high intersection density. **Much of the study area has very low intersection density,** limiting multimodal access.

By the Numbers

	Study Area	Laurens Road
Miles of Sidewalks	95	8.5
Sidewalk Coverage	24%	64%
Pedestrian Crashes	42	9
Bicycle Crashes	12	3





Market and Economics

Leveraging Transit

The relationship between transit and economic development is clear; embracing higher-density, mixed-use development with easy access to reliable transportation options increases an area's walkability and vibrancy, which can be leveraged to attract new residents and employers. Transit can be an important catalyst in transitioning the Laurens Road corridor into a diverse, mixed-use environment that offers high-quality streets, enhanced bike and pedestrian accessibility, and welcoming public spaces to attract global talent and investment.

Sharing Regional Success

Upstate South Carolina has gained notability, both nationally and worldwide, for offering a top-ranked business climate, innovative research environments, and quality of life. The region leverages competitive tax rates, megaregional accessibility, and workforce development in growing and attracting automotive, life sciences, advanced materials, and photonics industries. The cost of living is about 10% lower than the national average and cultural and recreational opportunities are abundant. As a result, the region has attracted more than 145 large and small companies with more than \$7.8 billion in capital investments in the past five years.

People

The study area is home to a fast-growing population that is more diverse, has smaller household sizes, and is more likely to rent rather than buy their home, compared to residents Countywide.



25,537

Total population



40.7%

Non-White population



48.5%

Owner-occupied housing units

Prosperity

The study area hosts a greater share of the County's jobs than its residents (**12.2% vs. 4.8%**). Employment is relatively diversified, with a majority of jobs offering low wages. Study area residents have higher levels of education than their Countywide counterparts, yet have a lower median household income overall.



34,158

Full-time jobs



15.4%

Workers in retail trade
(largest industry in area)



96.2%

Workers living outside study area



\$55,380

Median household income



49.3%

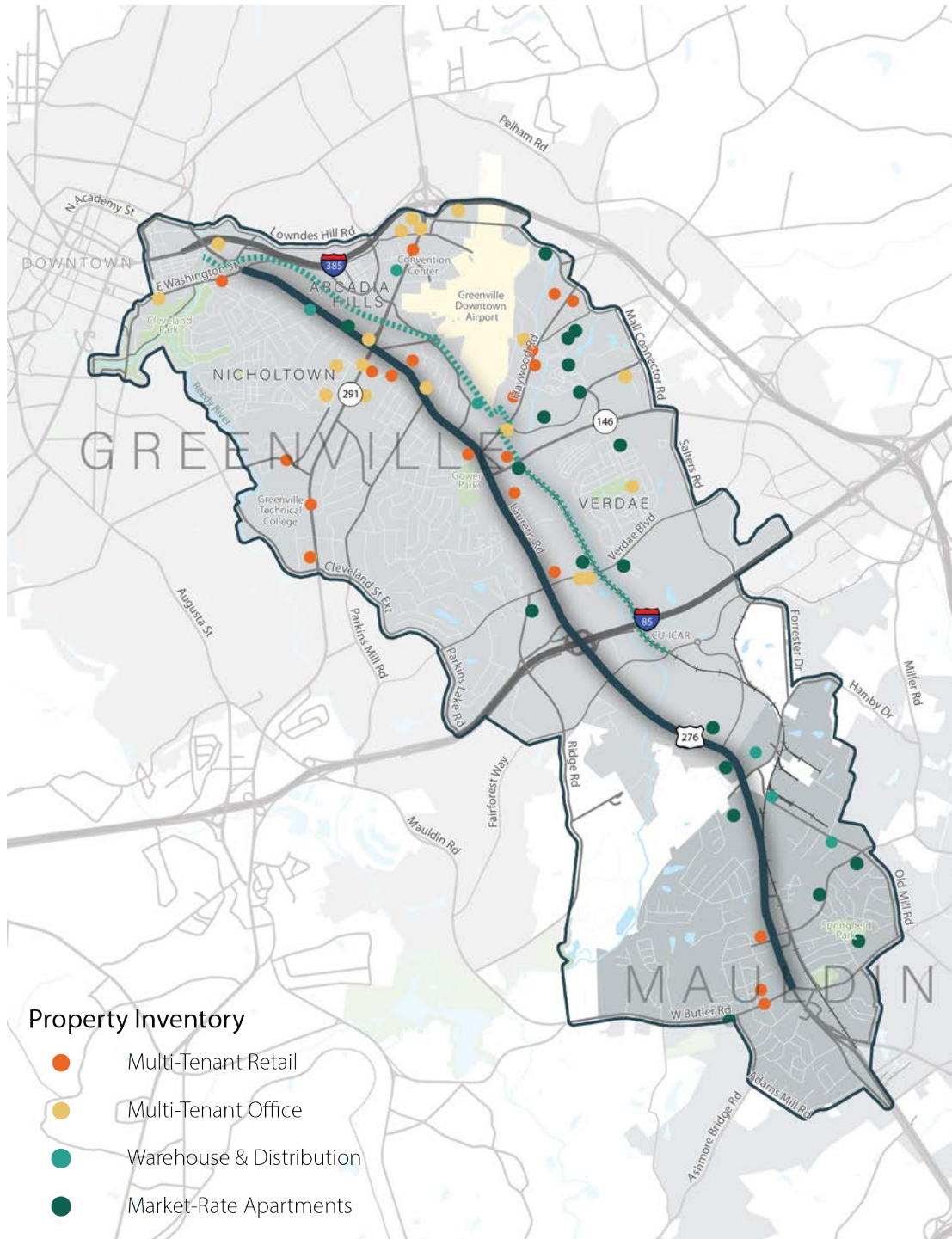
Adults with associate degree or higher



Property Inventory

Understanding the current real estate uses and market dynamics in the study area is key to leveraging existing assets and identifying potential opportunities for new development. The study area hosts a variety of property types, as further discussed in the section on land use. Multi-tenant office properties are concentrated north of I-85, within Greenville's city limits. Retail shopping centers are also primarily located within the northern half of the study area, with a few located in Mauldin. Warehouse and distribution properties, albeit limited, are scattered to the north and south. Market-rate apartment communities are located throughout the study area, with a majority east of Laurens Road.

Single-family homes are the most prevalent type of housing in the study area, comprising more than half of all residential units. As of 2019, nearly 80% of residential building permits were for single-family homes. While permitting activity has steadily increased since the Great Recession in 2008, it has not yet returned to pre-Recession highs. The most common home value range is \$100,000 to \$149,999, and approximately half of homes are valued under \$200,000. The median home value is \$195,594, which is lower than the City of Greenville's median, but higher than the Metropolitan Statistical Area's (MSA's) median.



In Study Area:



Multi-Tenant Retail



Multi-Tenant Office



Warehouse & Distrib.



Market-Rate Apartments

	Multi-Tenant Retail	Multi-Tenant Office	Warehouse & Distrib.	Market-Rate Apartments
Total SF/Units	1,708,975	1,349,024	439,627	4,746
Total Properties	20	19	6	21
Newest Property	2008	2020	1998	2020
Avg. Lease Rate (/mo)	\$12.53	\$16.60	\$5.58	\$1,153/mo
Avg. Vacancy	12.7%	14.8%	5.1%	9.6%

Property Values

Mapping property value by acre helps identify areas where land may be underutilized. The areas with the greatest value per acre, which are less likely to be redeveloped, tend to be the densely developed residential neighborhoods north of I-85 and west of Laurens Road as well as east of the Greenville Downtown Airport, where there is a concentration of retail, office, and multi-family developments. The undeveloped land that is bisected by Laurel Creek, between Laurens Road and Ridge Road, has the largest concentration of land with low value per acre.



Minimum

\$79

(Multi-family Common Area)



Maximum

\$49,950,000

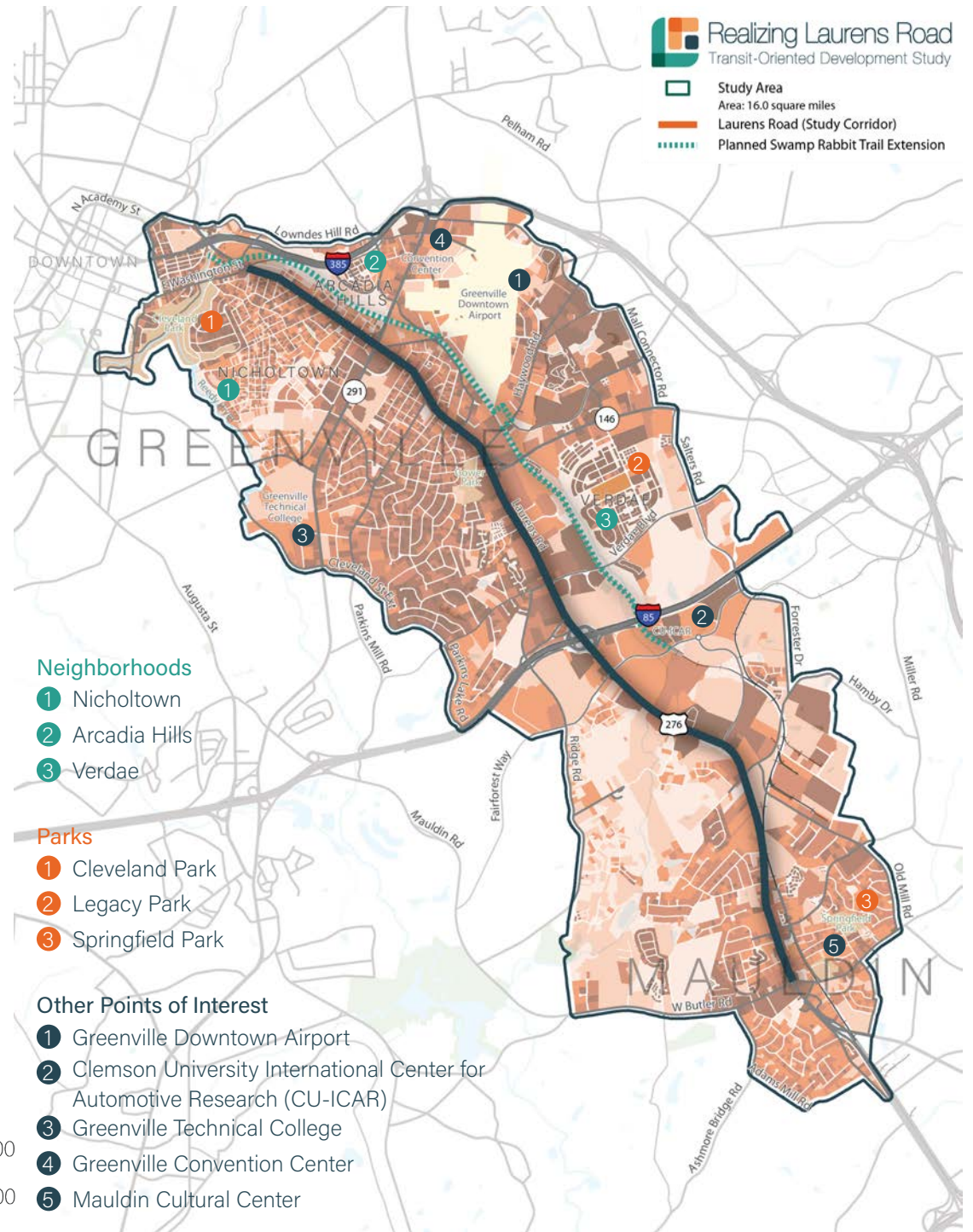
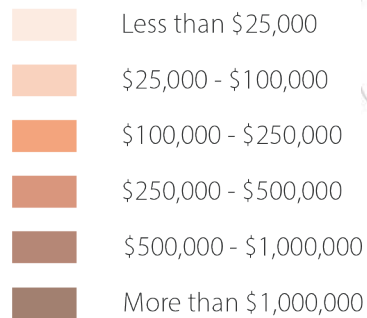
(Residential Condo)



Average

\$1,107,890

Property Value per Acre



Neighborhoods

- 1 Nicholtown
- 2 Arcadia Hills
- 3 Verdæ

Parks

- 1 Cleveland Park
- 2 Legacy Park
- 3 Springfield Park

Other Points of Interest

- 1 Greenville Downtown Airport
- 2 Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research (CU-ICAR)
- 3 Greenville Technical College
- 4 Greenville Convention Center
- 5 Mauldin Cultural Center

Land Use and Urban Design Overview

Understanding current land use development patterns and identifying opportunities for change is a critical component of the Realizing Laurens Road process. Land use and transportation decision-making need to be integrated to make sure changes to the corridor are consistent with and supportive of the community's vision. Land uses need to support future transit investment likely by prioritizing density, infill, and mixed-use development strategies. The analyses presented here are crucial building blocks for future recommendations along Laurens Road.

Auto-Oriented Commercial

Auto-oriented development prioritizes automobile travel over any other travel mode and is typical of development after 1940, as compared to compact, "traditional" patterns common before 1940. This pattern is dependent on the availability of convenient and free parking with easy access to businesses. Buildings are often set inconveniently far from the sidewalk behind a field of surface parking.

Single Family Residential

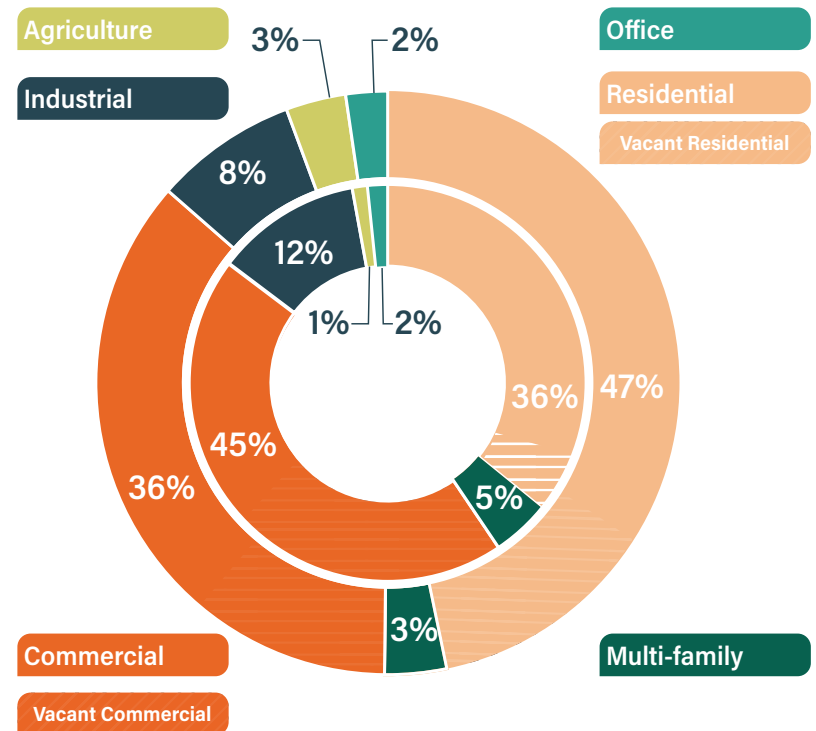
50% of the more than 4,700 acres within a half mile of the study area is dedicated to residential use, mostly single-family residential. These are primarily mature neighborhoods constructed from the 1940s to the 1980s.

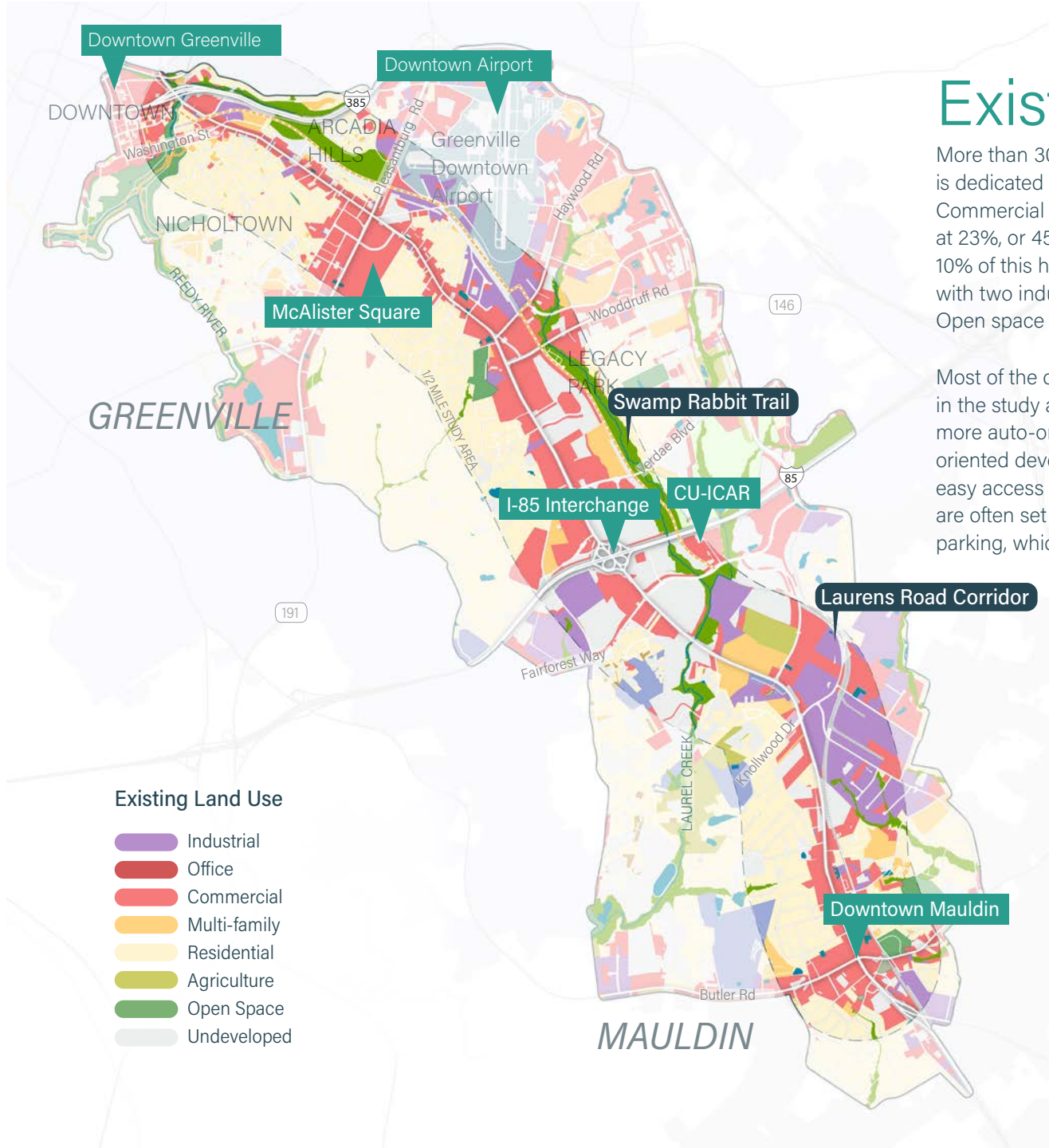
Industrial

Greenville County continues to grow as an advanced industries and logistics hub in the Upstate and beyond. Many industrial and logistics businesses are located within or near the Laurens Road corridor because of proximity and access to I-85 and the Greenville Downtown Airport.

Existing Land Use

The two rings below represent the study area (outer ring) and the 0.5-mile corridor surrounding Laurens Road (inner ring).





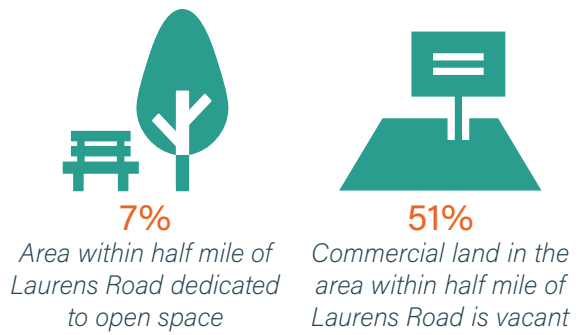
Existing Land Use

- Industrial
- Office
- Commercial
- Multi-family
- Residential
- Agriculture
- Open Space
- Undeveloped

Existing Land Use

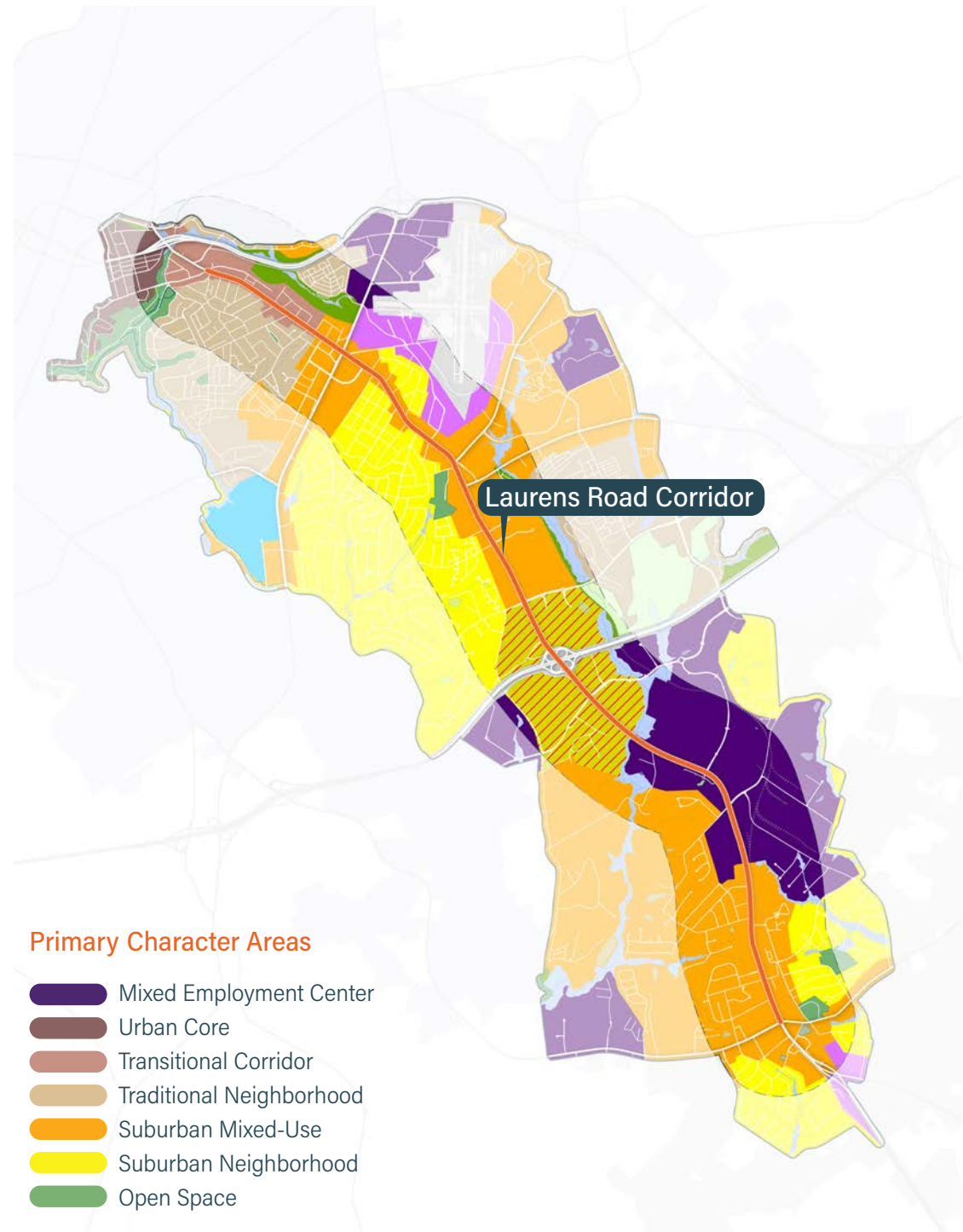
More than 30% of the land within a half mile of Laurens Road is dedicated to residential use, mostly single-family residential. Commercial makes up the second largest land use within this area at 23%, or 45% when including vacant commercial land. Nearly 10% of this half-mile corridor is dedicated to industrial land uses, with two industrial and logistics clusters comprising the majority. Open space in this area is just 7%.

Most of the commercial districts and residential neighborhoods in the study area were developed since the 1950s and are much more auto-oriented than the patterns common before 1940. Auto-oriented development prioritizes the availability of free parking with easy access to businesses. Land uses are separated, and buildings are often set back far from the sidewalk behind a field of surface parking, which is inconvenient for everyone.



Future Land Use/ Character Areas

Greenville County updated its County Comprehensive Plan in January 2020. Through this update, the County transitioned its approach to future land use to use character areas. Character areas offer a qualitative alternative to traditional single-use land categorization. Character areas may include a variety of specific land uses, with each designation prescribing development characteristics, such as development intensity, mobility options, topography and natural cover, and employment types.



Redevelopment Propensity

The redevelopment propensity index is a classification tool supported by a quantitative and qualitative assessment of many factors, which all play a role in shaping the desirability and likelihood of (re)development of property within the Laurens Road corridor. Highlighted below are some of the factors included in the assessment.

Areas with higher propensity for (re)development



Land-to-Building Value Ratio

Buildings are a major asset for properties. When the land-to-building value of a property exceeds a 40:60 ratio, a property becomes more attractive for redevelopment from an investment perspective.



Access to Amenities

Areas adjacent to amenities, such as parks and open space, Swamp Rabbit Trail, community and cultural facilities, and walkable retail nodes, are more attractive for (re)development.



Greyfields

Economically obsolescent, outdated, or underutilized lands, such as older malls or retail centers, no longer attract adequate investment or tenants for the existing use.



Undeveloped Land

Undeveloped property with connections to water and sewer that is not set aside or preserved as public open space or for conservation is prime for development.



Large/Contiguous Parcels

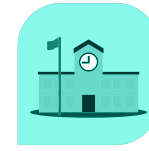
Large parcels or parcels connecting or contiguous to other parcels—which creates a larger development area—can be more attractive for development.

Areas with limited to no propensity for (re)development



Residential Neighborhoods

Intact residential neighborhoods with strong fabric are not considered for redevelopment. The resources and coordination to negotiate multiple small parcels is challenging.



Place of Worship and Schools

Functioning schools and places of worship like churches and temples are not likely to change. However, closed or vacant facilities could be repurposed or redeveloped.



Parks and Open Space

Parks and community open spaces are publicly owned and cannot be developed for private use.



Environmental Sensitivity

Environmentally sensitive landscapes, such as steep slopes, wetlands, waterways and riparian zones, and floodplains, are important to protect as they provide critical ecological services. Development in these areas can also be costly and/or prohibited by law.



Active Industrial Zones

Greenville County continues to grow as an advanced industrial and logistics hub. Allocating and reserving land in strategic transportation corridors is necessary to promote economic development.

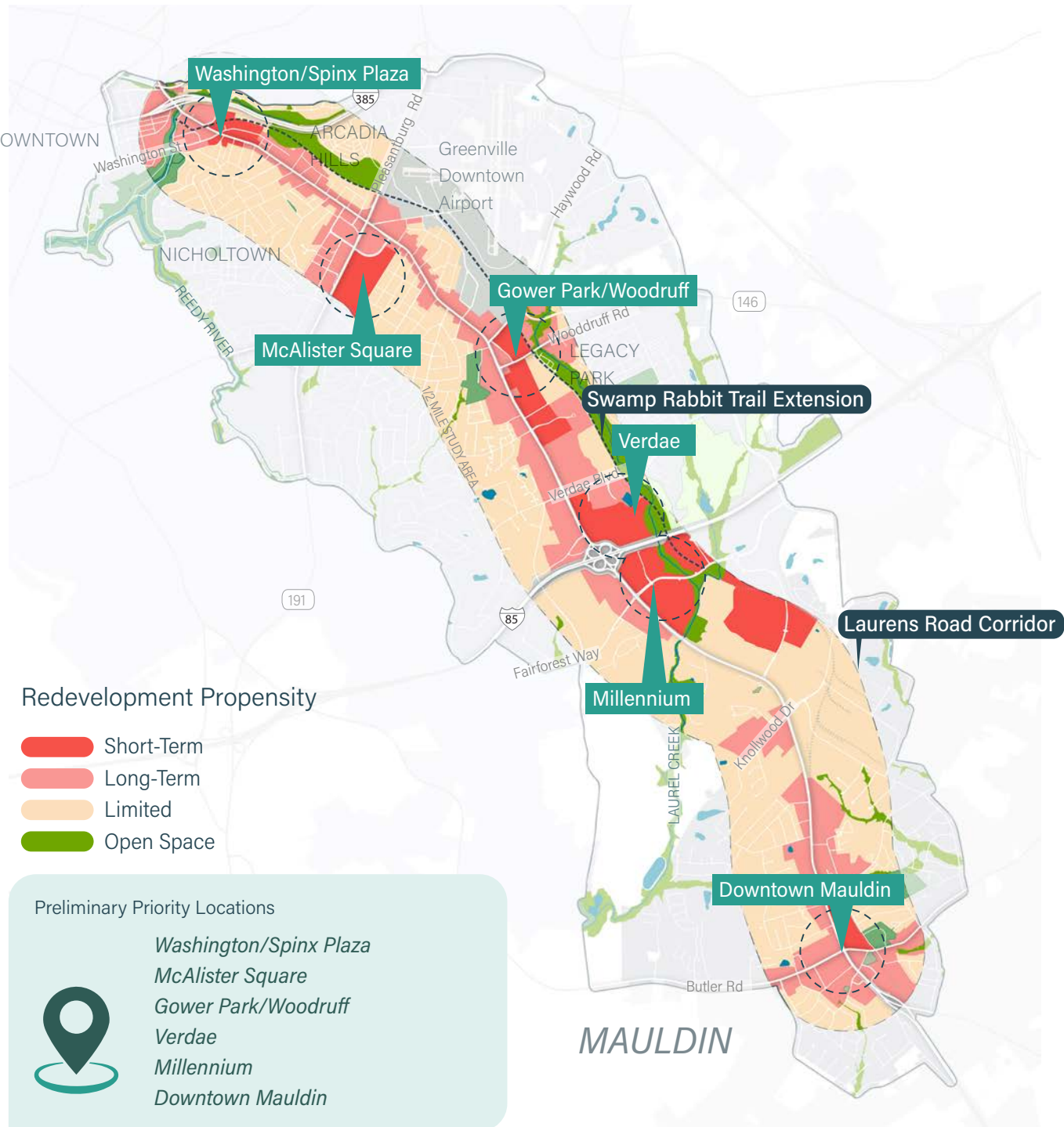
The redevelopment propensity index is a classification tool supported by both a quantitative and qualitative assessment of the many factors that play a role in shaping the desirability and likelihood of the (re)development for property within the corridor. The index categorizes the (re)development potential of properties as short-term, long-term, or limited. More than half of the corridor provides limited opportunity for added development. This is reflected in the large area within the corridor dedicated to single-family residential. Within the corridor, there are six areas, Washington/Spinx Plaza, McAlister Square, Gower Park/Woodruff, Verdae, Millennium, and downtown Mauldin, with high attractiveness for short-term (re)development opportunity, each with unique desirability features.

Primary Patterns

- Auto-Oriented Commercial
- Single-Family Residential
- Industrial

Other Patterns

- Office
- Education
- Open Space and Undeveloped, such as Surface Parking Lots



Urban Design

Urban design involves the layout of streets, developments, and communities. It includes the physical placement of buildings, greenspace, and amenities. Good urban design can improve walkability, accessibility, support transit, and enhance the overall character of place. Poor urban design can present barriers that restrict access for pedestrians, bicyclists, the elderly, and those with physical disabilities as well as degrade the overall character of a community. The existing urban design of the Laurens Road corridor was assessed by analyzing the following elements: block size, street connections, sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian facilities, land use, building placement, and the location of surface parking lots.

“Today, Laurens Road is a typical auto-oriented suburban corridor. The roadway was designed to move private automobiles with little consideration to accommodating pedestrians, bicyclists, or transit users. Although a sidewalk exists along the curb, few people would want to walk there. The street is fronted by large parking lots with buildings set back far from the street. Land uses are primarily commercial and retail. This suburban form is a result of land development regulations not unique to Greenville. Many suburbs across America have regulations aimed at producing the same thing.”

- GVL2040 Comprehensive Plan

Major takeaways



Land Use

Laurens Road is primarily a commercial corridor with a variety of other uses along the roadway or nearby. There are large shopping centers and car dealerships that attract workers and shoppers from the broader area. Existing land uses are not supportive of existing or future transit along Laurens Road.



Pedestrian Connectivity/Amenities

While sidewalks are present in many areas, overall the corridor is lacking in pedestrian amenities. Existing sidewalks are a maximum of four feet and there is no amenity zone between the sidewalk and the roadway. Signed or signalized crosswalks are limited to a few large intersections. There is currently no bicycle infrastructure along the corridor. The existing bicycle and pedestrian network lacks the access necessary to support premium transit and address underlying goals related to land use, urban design, and economic investment.

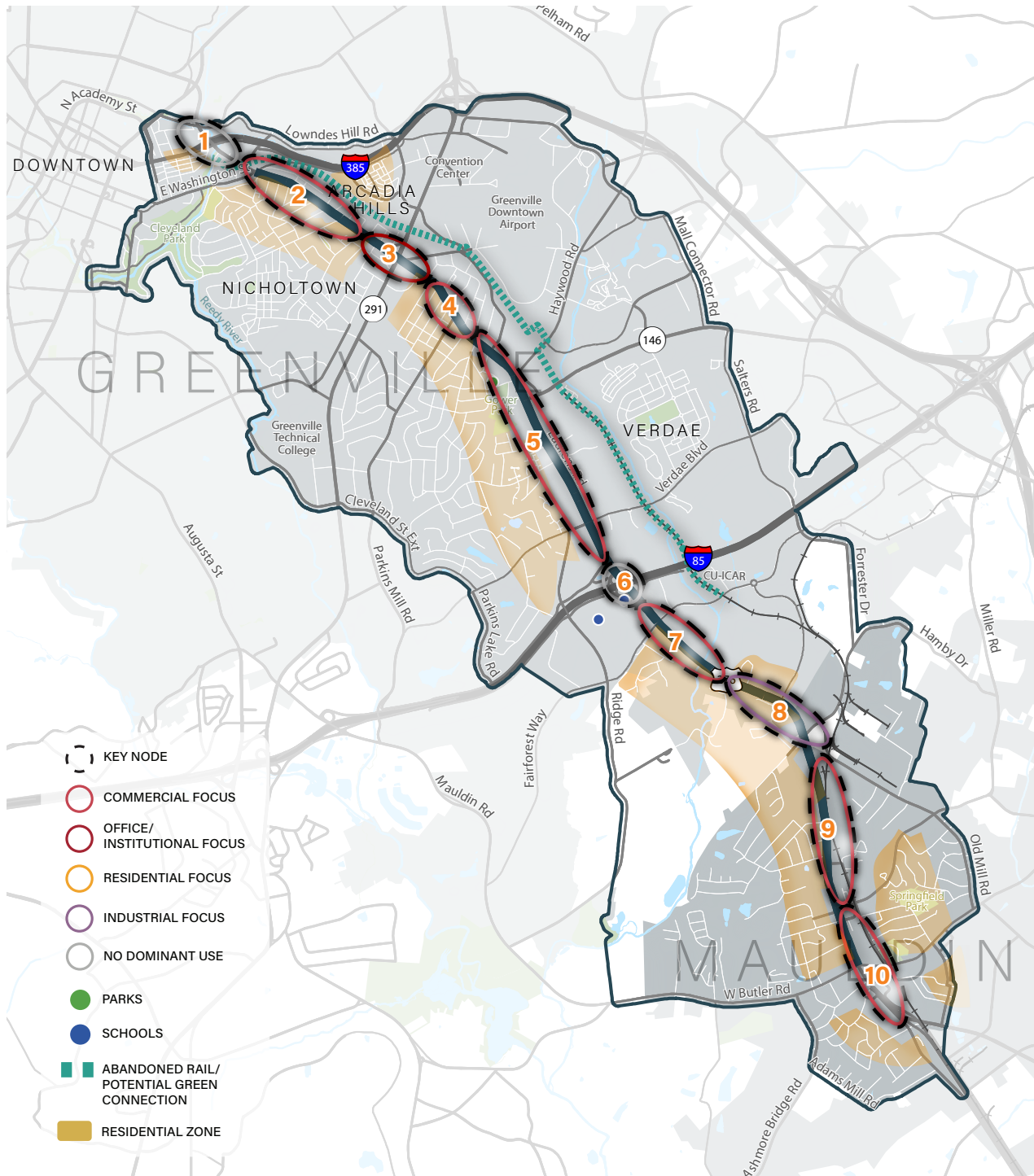


Corridor Character

The corridor was organized into 10 character nodes based on existing urban design character. Currently, none of the character nodes include many of the urban design elements needed to create a walkable, transit-supportive environment. The northern nodes have more appropriate scaled block sizes and connectivity that provide a foundation for improvement.

Laurens Road Character Nodes

The almost seven-mile length of Laurens Road within the study area is made up of several distinct areas that each have their own character, typical uses, and mobility elements. These areas are called Character Nodes, and there are 10 along the corridor. The rest of this section provides details on each of the Character Nodes.



CHARACTER NODES

1 - Downtown Greenville Gateway

No dominant use

2 - Nicholtown District

Commercial use is dominant

3 - McAlister Square

Institutional/office use is dominant

4 - Gower Estates

Commercial use is dominant

5 - Haywood Road/Verdae Boulevard

Commercial use is dominant

6 - I-85 Interchange

No dominant use

**7 - Millennium Boulevard/
Innovation Drive**

Commercial use is dominant

8 - Innovation Drive/Forester Drive

Industrial use is dominant

9 - North Mauldin

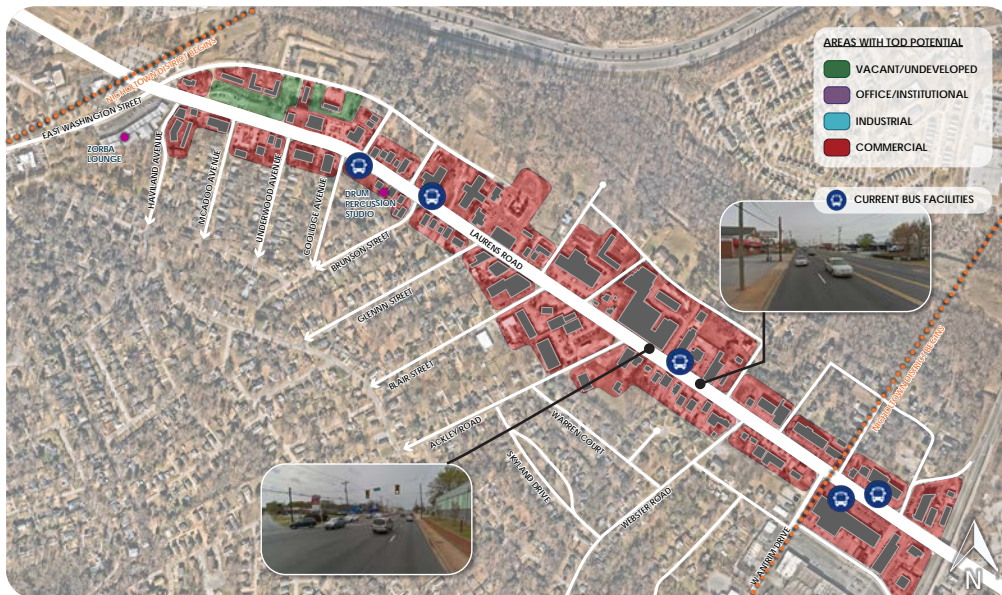
Commercial use is dominant

10 - Mauldin

Commercial use is dominant

Node 1 - Downtown Greenville Gateway

The Downtown Gateway node serves as a primary connection and gateway between downtown Greenville, I-385, the Nicholtown community, and the rest of the Laurens Road corridor. This node consists of older, low-density commercial and residential development as well as civic uses. This node has limited street connections, larger block sizes, a mix of deep and shallow building setbacks, a creek, and interstate transitional areas. The existing bicycle and pedestrian network is characterized by four-foot sidewalks with no additional pedestrian amenities, no buffer between the roadway and the sidewalk, and no bicycle facilities.

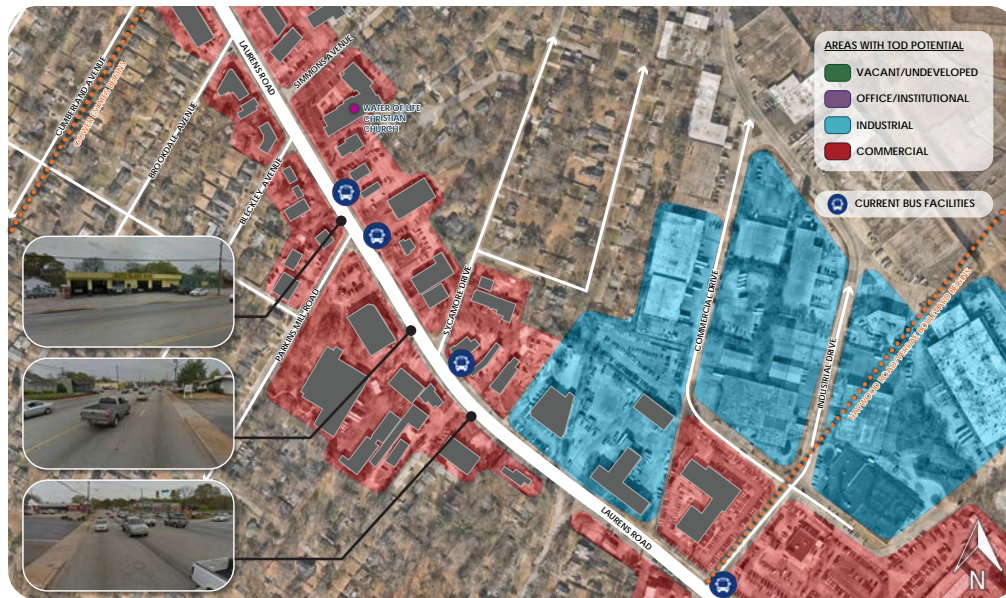


Node 2 - Nicholtown

The historic Nicholtown node consists of older, low-density commercial and residential uses. Many street connections to the southwest create smaller block sizes relative to other areas along the corridor. Despite limited connections to the north, the planned Swamp Rabbit Trail Extension presents new opportunities to connect beyond the corridor. The existing bicycle and pedestrian network is characterized by four-foot sidewalks along Laurens Road with limited crossings located only at major intersections. Beyond the existing sidewalks, no pedestrian amenities, no buffer between the sidewalk and the roadways, and no bicycle facilities exist. Several existing bus stops are located within this node.

Node 3 – McAlister Square

The McAlister Square node consists of predominately commercial and office uses with a mix of shallow and deep building setbacks. Several large commercial blocks with large surface parking areas present a barrier to pedestrians and bicyclists accessing the surrounding community. Additionally, while the grade-separated intersection at Laurens Road and North Pleasantburg Drive may reduce traffic delays at the intersection, it presents a barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists. The existing bicycle and pedestrian network is characterized by four-foot sidewalks along Laurens Road with limited crosswalks located at major intersections. No additional pedestrian amenities, no buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway, and no bicycle facilities exist. Several existing bus stops are located within this node.



Node 4 – Gower Estates

The Gower Estates node consists of commercial, industrial, and civic uses with shallow to medium building setbacks. Traveling north to south, this node transitions from having several street connections and smaller block sizes to few connections and larger block sizes. The existing bicycle and pedestrian network is characterized by four-foot sidewalks along Laurens Road with limited crosswalks located at major intersections. There are no additional pedestrian amenities, no buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway, and no bicycle facilities. Several existing bus stops are located within this node.

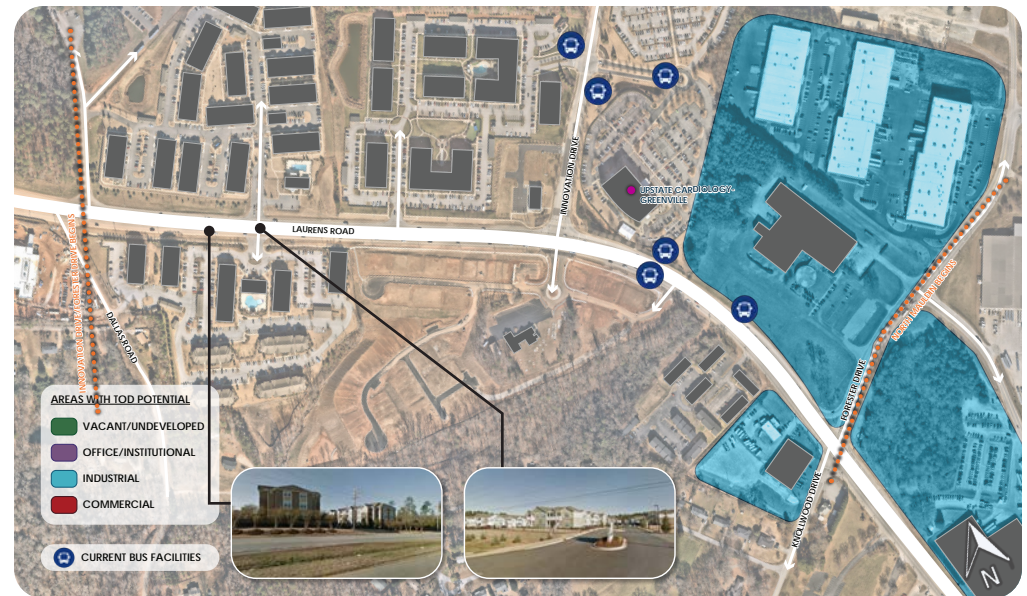


Node 7 – Millennium Boulevard/Innovation Drive

The Millennium Boulevard/Innovation Drive node consists of undeveloped land and limited commercial development with few street connections, large blocks, and moderate building setbacks. No sidewalks exist within this node, with only one pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Laurens Road and Millennium Boulevard. One set of existing bus stops are located on the northwestern edge of this node.

Node 8 – Innovation Drive/Forester Drive

The Innovation Drive/Forester Drive node consists of residential, office, and industrial uses with moderate to large setbacks. The residential development is predominately gated, garden-style apartments. This node has few street connections, resulting in larger blocks and reducing access to surrounding areas. Sidewalks are limited, disconnected, and approximately four feet wide along Laurens Road. No additional pedestrian amenities and one limited crosswalk at the intersection of Laurens Road and Forester Drive exist. Several existing bus stops are located within this node.



Node 9 - North Mauldin

The North Mauldin node consists of a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential uses with shallow to moderate building setbacks, few street connections, and larger blocks relative to other areas within the corridor. The northern portion of this node does not have sidewalks along Laurens Road. The southern portion of this node, closer to the Mauldin Node includes four-foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadway, with no other pedestrian amenities. A rail corridor to the east presents a barrier to accessing the communities to the east. Limited bus stops are located within this node.



Node 10 - Mauldin

The Mauldin node is centered on the intersection of Laurens Road and Butler Road. This node consists of predominately commercial and civic uses, with shallow to moderate setbacks, limited street connections to the west, and moderate to large block sizes. Laurens Road includes four-foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadways with limited crosswalks at three locations and no additional pedestrian amenities. A rail corridor to the east presents a barrier to accessing areas beyond the corridor. Limited bus stops are located within this node.



Equity and Transit

TOD can be a tool to improve equity. Understanding the unique characteristics of each neighborhood in the study area is of vital importance. TOD may bring new resources and opportunities to currently underserved areas, but also brings some risks, such as displacement or worsening of existing inequities. This analysis primarily uses Census data to identify areas of concern according to the four equity measures described on the next page.

To accurately understand the corridor's context, we must explore the great diversity of the Laurens Road corridor and explore what areas present opportunities to increase equity and quality of life for residents.

Key Facts (Entire Study Area)



39.9%
Adults with Bachelor's Degree or higher

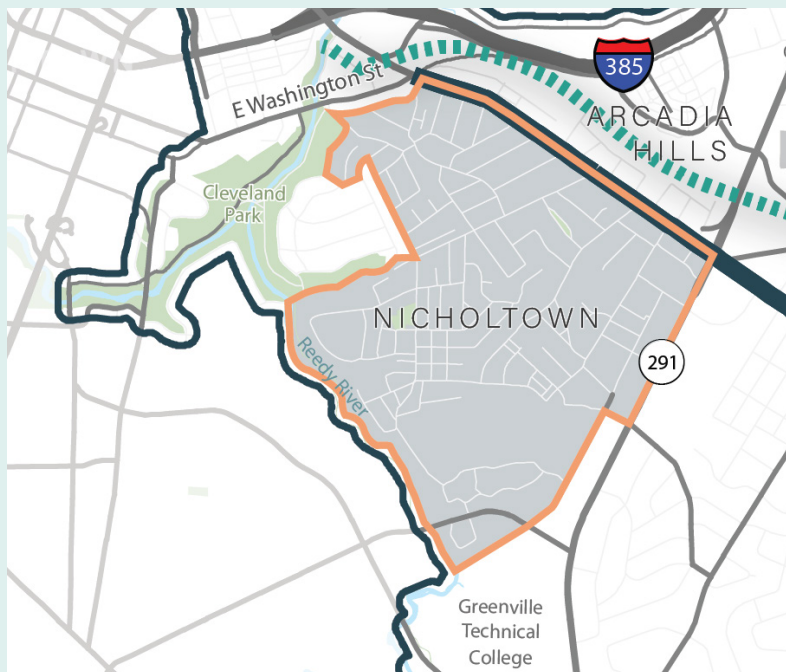


\$55,380
Median household income



10.8%
Households without vehicle access

Spotlight: Nicholtown



Nicholtown is a neighborhood at the heart of Greenville with a rich history and a strong community. Due to a large presence of historically underprivileged groups, such as African-American and low-income residents, Nicholtown merits close attention so that the Realizing Laurens Road process is in line with the community vision and leads to community enhancement, not the displacement of residents.



3,579
Population



1,616
Households



\$28,376
Median household income (51% of Study Area MHI)



22%
Adults with Bachelor's Degree or higher



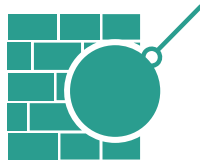
80%
Residents identifying as Black



> 25%
Households with an income below \$15,000

Equity Measures

Vulnerability to Displacement. Displacement is always a risk of economic development. Ensuring that those who have the most to benefit from TOD are able to remain is crucial to project success. These areas are identified by analyzing:



Vulnerability to displacement is greatest in Nicholtown, Arcadia Hills, and some areas in the study area south of I-85. These areas have a larger renter-occupied population, lower household income, and lower educational attainment than the county average. The study area is home to deeply rooted communities, which deserve careful planning to ensure that development is inclusive and does not lead to displacement of residents.

- Median household income*
- Renter-occupied housing units*
- Educational attainment*

Access to Opportunity. Land use change is an opportunity to bring new opportunity to those who need it most. These areas were identified by analyzing access to key locations within 0.5 mile:



Access to community amenities like parks, grocery stores, and retail is greatest closer to downtown Greenville and downtown Mauldin. Areas between I-85 and downtown Mauldin and west of Laurens Road have less access to these amenities. Residents of these areas have to drive a few miles to access parks and shopping.

- Access to parks*
- Access to grocery stores*
- Access to other commercial areas*

Transit-Dependent Populations. Areas with the most people reliant on transit for their daily transportation needs may be the most positively impacted by improved transit service. These areas were identified by:



The areas with the greatest percentage of residents dependent on transit are at the far north and south ends of the study area. Concentrations of residents under 17, over 65, and households without vehicle access are found in the Nicholtown and Arcadia Hills neighborhoods of Greenville and in eastern Mauldin.

- Population 17 and under*
- Population 65 and older*
- Households without vehicle access*

Housing and Job Diversity. TOD can be an opportunity to add greater housing and job diversity to the area. Existing diversity was identified by:



Most of the study area has relatively low housing and job diversity when compared to the rest of Greenville County. Housing tends to be skewed either toward small units or large units and residents spend a large portion of their income on housing. Industries are also generally less diverse than the County as a whole.

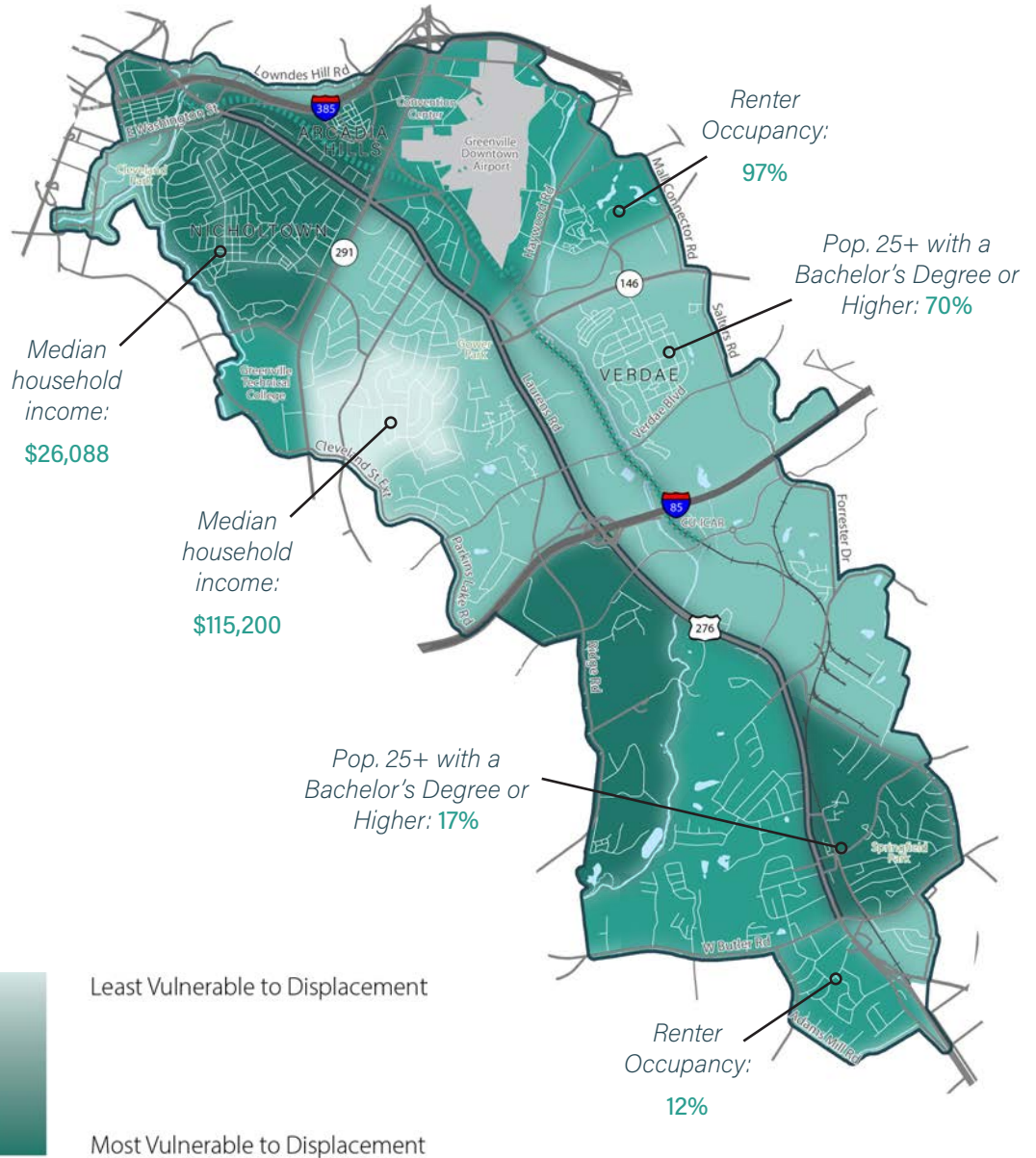
- Home size diversity*
- Housing cost (% of income)*
- Job/industry diversity*

Vulnerability to Displacement

Changes to land use and improvements to infrastructure invite the possibility of gentrification. Gentrification involves a complex group of neighborhood dynamics, some positive and others negative, that occur when an area experiences an influx of investment and/or higher-income residents.

Gentrification may lead to involuntary displacement, where current residents are unable to afford their rents and other expenses due to increased cost of living. Mitigating displacement involves deliberate action to preserve existing communities and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are distributed equitably to residents and business owners.

Recent population growth and housing price increases in the region compound the urgency of this issue. The map at right shows the parts of the study area with the most residents vulnerable to displacement. **Vulnerability to displacement is greatest in Nicholtown, Arcadia Hills, and some areas in the study area south of I-85.** The least vulnerable areas include neighborhoods such as Gower Estates and Verdae.



\$941

Median Gross Rent in the Study Area (2018)



50.4%

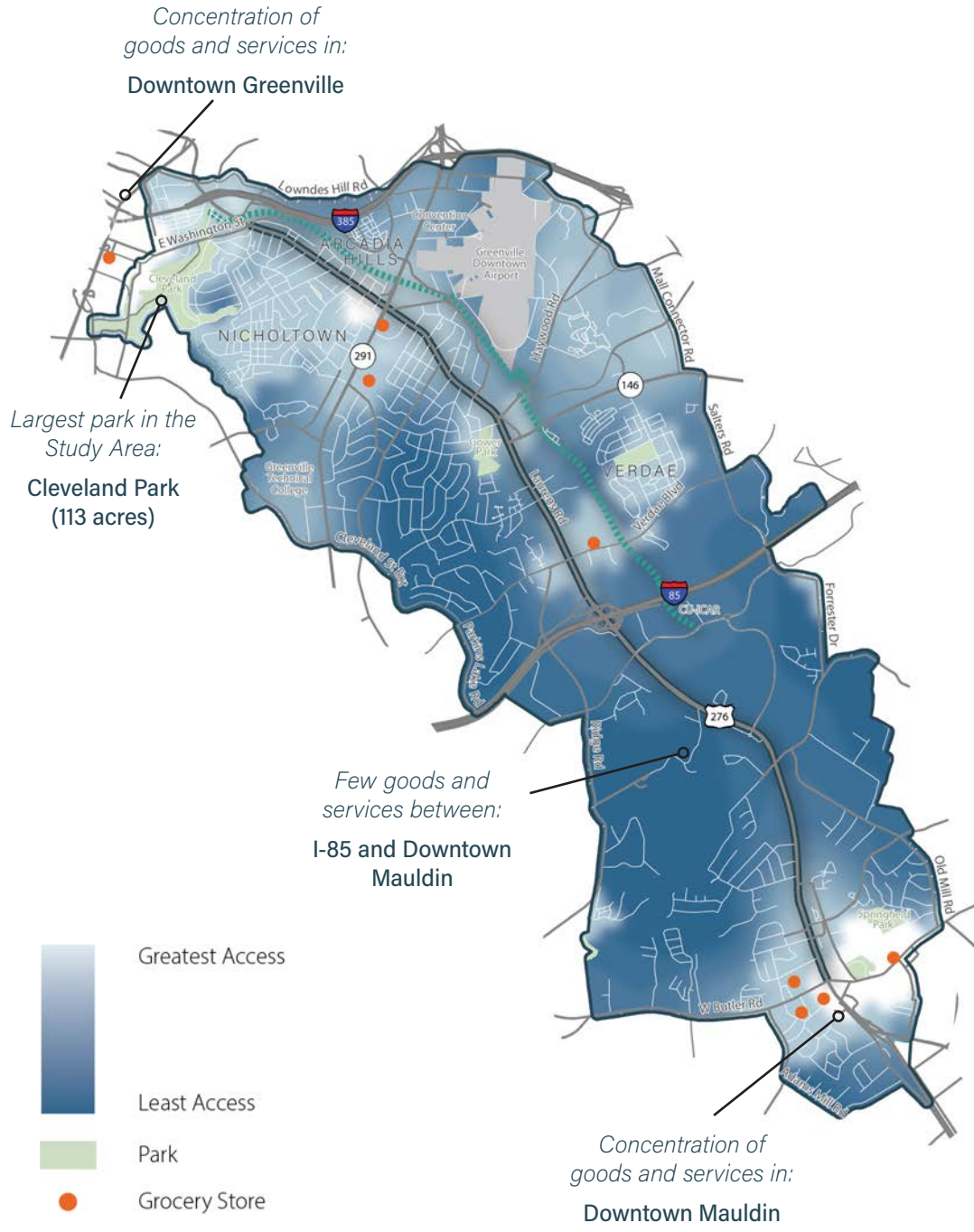
Renter Occupied Housing Units in the Study Area (2020)

Median household income + Renter-occupied housing units + Educational attainment = **Vulnerability to Displacement Index**

Access to Goods and Services

Realizing Laurens Road aims to help provide more equitable access to amenities and quality-of-life infrastructure throughout the study area, so that every resident may live in a neighborhood complete with basic services and amenities. Access is measured here through access to parks, large grocery stores, and other commercial areas. However, this index does not take into account the transportation infrastructure required to access these locations. Equitable access to opportunity strengthens our collective prosperity and improves outcomes for all.

Access to community amenities like parks, grocery stores, and retail is greatest closer to downtown Greenville and downtown Mauldin. Grocery stores are located near McAlister Square, Verdae, and downtown Mauldin. A large segment of the study area between I-85 and downtown Mauldin does not have any parks or grocery stores, making it difficult for residents of this area to access goods and services without a car. Enhanced transit could help improve this access throughout the corridor. **Over 50% of the study area's park land is encompassed by Cleveland Park.**



211

Acres of Park Land Within the Study Area



8

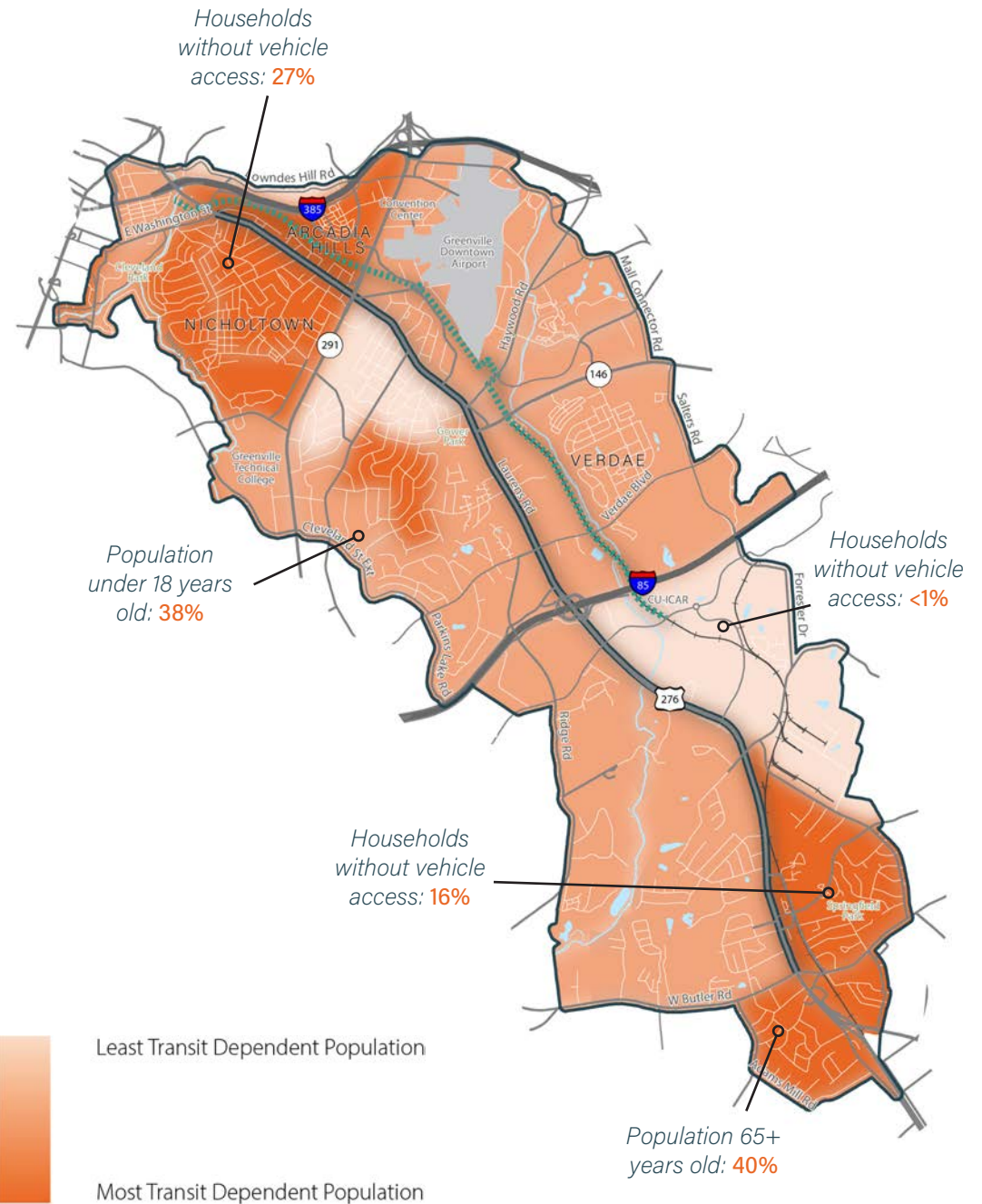
Grocery Stores Within the Study Area

$$\text{Access to parks} + \text{Access to grocery stores} + \text{Access to other commercial areas} = \text{Access to Goods and Services Index}$$

Transit-Dependent Populations

Some populations are more likely to be dependent on transit for their daily needs than others. When designing transit systems and multimodal improvements, the areas with the greatest transit-dependent populations should be initially emphasized. Transit dependency can be measured by the percent of households who lack access to a vehicle, which is often correlated with lower-income areas. Additionally, children and some older adults are unable to drive due to age or physical condition, so they may be more likely to use transit. Areas with large minor or elderly populations should be considered as more transit dependent.

The areas with the greatest percent of residents dependent on transit are at the far north and south ends of the study area, including Nicholtown and northeastern Mauldin. Neighborhoods near McAlister Square east of Pleasantburg Road and areas southeast of the I-85 interchange have the least transit dependency and will likely see less demand for improved services. Concentrations of transit dependency at both ends of the study area suggest that an efficient connection between Greenville and Mauldin could serve many who need it most.



19.9%

Population Under 18 in the Study Area



17.1%

Population 65+ in the Study Area

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{Population} \\
 \text{under 18} \\
 \text{years old}
 \end{array}
 +
 \begin{array}{r}
 \text{Population} \\
 \text{65+ years} \\
 \text{old}
 \end{array}
 +
 \begin{array}{r}
 \text{Households} \\
 \text{without} \\
 \text{vehicle} \\
 \text{access}
 \end{array}
 =
 \begin{array}{r}
 \text{Transit-} \\
 \text{Dependent} \\
 \text{Populations} \\
 \text{Index}
 \end{array}$$



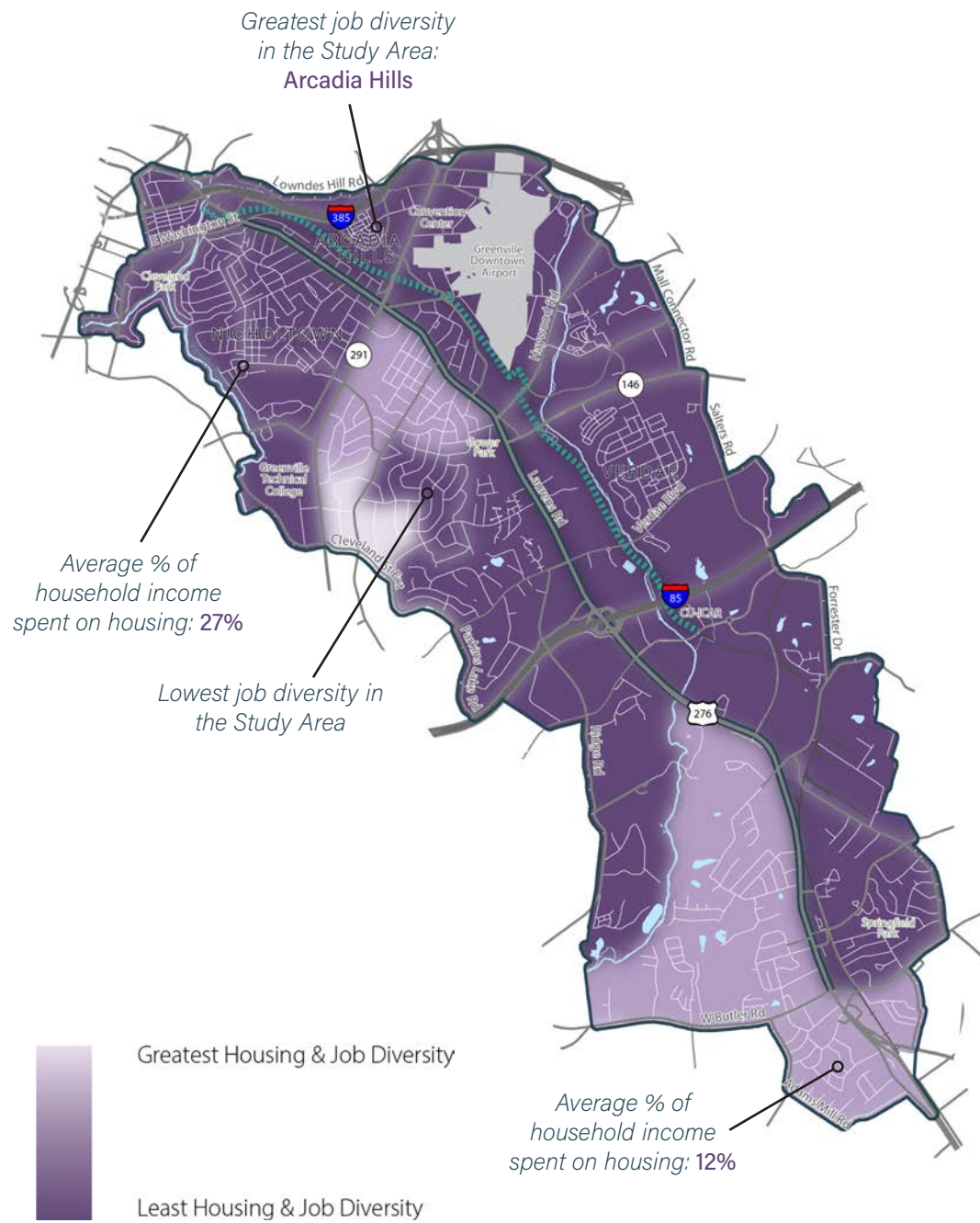
Least Transit Dependent Population

Most Transit Dependent Population

Housing and Job Diversity

Housing and job diversity is an important asset to any community, because it describes complete neighborhoods with equitable access to quality employment options and housing choices appropriate for households of different ages, sizes, and incomes. A diverse supply of housing encompasses different prices, sizes, and a mix of rental and for-sale properties. Housing diversity promotes affordability by eliminating barriers to entry and providing choice for those of lower incomes. Access to a variety of high-quality jobs enables people of different incomes and levels of education to find employment and support their families.

Most of the study area has relatively low housing and job diversity when compared to the rest of Greenville County. Neighborhood homogeneity and exclusivity threatens to separate those who are most and least privileged and stifle economic mobility. Some neighborhoods just southeast of the Pleasantburg Road intersection and areas of Mauldin see slightly higher housing and job diversity. Low diversity is generally seen in both the more- and less-affluent areas of the corridor, showing that different populations are largely separated.



51%
Percent Single-Family Housing in the Study Area



14%
Jobs in the Study in Retail Trade (Largest Sector)

$$\text{Home size diversity} + \text{Housing cost (\% of income)} + \text{Jobs/industry diversity} = \text{Housing and Job Diversity Index}$$

Corridor Plan and TOD Typology



Introduction

Market dynamics, mobility investment, and effective planning will influence the future land use along Laurens Road. Future premium transit investment along Laurens Road will need to be supported by TOD that is most intense around future transit stations. These areas, called Mobility + Development Hubs in this document, should contain a higher mix of land uses and focus on critical connections between multiple transportation options, including active transportation facilities (sidewalks, bikeways, greenways) and transit. This chapter begins to create a framework of development typologies along the corridor that:

- Can be applied to other transit corridors in Greenville County
- Establish transit supportive design principles to guide future policies and development
- Create conceptual examples to demonstrate the near term application of the design principles

Successful TOD includes transit that connects major destinations for employment, education, shopping, and entertainment, thus providing alternatives to commuting by automobile. Realizing Laurens Road seeks to achieve these through the establishment of transit-oriented design principles organized into four primary categories: **mobility**, **buildings and blocks**, **streetscape**, and **open space**.

TOD Principles



Mobility: Enhance mobility options and shift mode use by creating greater connectivity and reducing reliance on cars.

- Increase connectivity
- Allow for seamless mode change
- Prioritize active transportation
- Change parking patterns
- Introduce high quality public transit



Buildings and Blocks: Create a vibrant environment by increasing density and providing compact walkable developments with a mix of uses and affordable housing.

- Provide a mix of uses
- Diversify housing types and affordability
- Decrease block sizes
- Enhance building scale and articulation
- Leverage frontage opportunities



Streetscape: Activate the street and sidewalks to create inviting and comfortable people-centric spaces.

- Integrate public art and placemaking
- Activate sidewalk zones
- Provide street trees and buffer zones
- Prioritize pedestrian-oriented design
- Balance zones within the public realm



Open Space: Create meaningful public commons and green spaces that enhance livability and serve the local communities.








- Utilize green infrastructure
- Ensure equitable access
- Provide multimodal connections
- Accommodate multifunctional spaces

What is Premium Transit?

Previous plans have identified Laurens Road as a regionally significant corridor that needs a more premium transit experience to address existing needs and support goals associated with land use and economic investment. However, premium transit needs to be appropriately sized to the corridor.

One of the key considerations of the Realizing Laurens Road TOD Study is that transit, to be truly effective as an alternative to single occupant vehicle travel, needs to feature premium elements. **Realizing Laurens Road will not specify exactly what transit will look like in the Laurens Road corridor.** The specific mode (i.e., type of vehicle and associated infrastructure) and the right-of-way design will have to be decided based on careful considerations of development context, available space or physical constraints, costs and available technologies, and timeframe to implementation. The table below illustrates comparative cost ranges and design considerations among various transit modes.

The focus of Realizing Laurens Road is **to lay the groundwork for a high-quality corridor to enhance regional mobility.** Regardless of the specific mode, it is critical that key elements of transit service, technology integration, vehicle types, and infrastructure design be prioritized in strategic corridors, such as Laurens Road. The next page illustrates features that should be expected. Each of these comes with a cost, but also a higher return on investment.

	Mode	Construction Cost * (per mile)	Typical Station Spacing	Runningway	Land Value Impact
	Light Rail	\$60-120M	1/2 to 1 mile	Mostly dedicated, minimal shared with traffic	High
	Streetcar	\$35-50M	1/4 mile or more	Mixed flow and dedicated lane	High
	Bus Rapid Transit **	\$10-35M	1/4 mile or more	Primarily dedicated	Medium-High
	Personal Rapid Transit	\$10-20M	1/4 to 1/2 mile	Dedicated roadway	Medium-High
	Express Bus	\$1-2M	Limited stops	Mostly mixed flow, may benefit from HOV or other dedicated lanes	Low
	Local Bus	<\$1M	1-2 blocks to 1/4 mile	Mixed flow	Low
	On-Demand Electric Vehicle Service	Varies	Varies	Mixed flow	Very Low

* Cost estimates vary widely. Typical costs are based on case studies of recent projects in the United States.

** Assumes Bus Rapid Transit operating in dedicated runningway and other premium transit features (see next page).

Key Elements of Premium Transit

Premium transit implemented in the Laurens Road corridor should include a suite of features that provide a high level of service and quality of experience to riders. These examples illustrate how service features and characteristics typically associated with light rail can be integrated into bus-based transit at a significantly lower cost. With this combination of service and design features, premium transit can essentially operate as “light rail on rubber tires.” As specific modes and designs are determined for Laurens Road and similar corridors in the Upstate, these types of features should be prioritized.



Level Boarding and Multi-Door Boarding

Elevated platforms and multi-door boarding simulate a train station experience and speeds the boarding process.



Off-Board Fare Collection

Fare collection is conducted through off-board and/or digital payment, eliminating the lag time associated with on-board fares.



Dedicated Right-of-Way

Right-of-way may be designated with pavement color, pavement markings and signage, or physical separation.



Signal Priority and Intersection Control

Connected signalization and priority movement through intersections enhances on-time performance.



Modern Vehicle Design

Vehicles can be designed to simulate modern rail, through external appearance, interior comfort, and ease of ride.



Frequency and Capacity

Vehicles are typically larger and arrive with frequent, predictable headways, moving more people faster. Lines could also accommodate smaller, more agile vehicles where needed.



Enhanced Stations

Stations are amenitized, conveniently accessible, and more widely spaced from one another to minimize stops and decrease travel time.



Adaptability

Emerging technologies will allow for continued performance improvements, with continued commitment to the critical role of the transit workforce.

Technology and Innovation

Technologies that can be deployed during implementation of the Laurens Road TOD corridor include transit signal priority at intersections to ensure vehicles can maintain rapid and reliable movement through the corridor. Further leveraging emerging technologies will allow for continued performance improvements as well as the potential for evolution of vehicle designs and connected vehicle communications. Laurens Road is uniquely positioned to be a test case for new technology that can be applied throughout the Upstate and beyond.



Intersection Control

Transit Signal Priority (TSP). Utilizing sensors installed on transit vehicles and at intersections for detection, TSP can alter signal timing, providing an extended green or an early green, truncate an opposing movement, or insert a bus movement, thus reducing the delay up to 50% at target intersections.

Signal Timing. Modifying signal sequences, such as cycle length, phasing changes, and offsets reduces delay for transit vehicles. This technique requires no additional components.

Transit Vehicle Priority (TVP). Methods to provide preference or priority to transit vehicles to pass through intersections or sections of roadway reduce the overall delay of vehicles at traffic signals, and achieves improved schedule/headway adherence and consistency.

Queue Jump. TVP can be coordinated with queue jumps to allow greater transit vehicle access, for example, clearing an intersection queue to facilitate faster nearside boarding. Conversely, a reverse queue jump will halt traffic behind the bus until boarding is complete and allows safer re-entry into traffic.



Passenger Information Systems

Pre-Trip Planning. By utilizing an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) telephone system, 511 information number, cell phones, computers, and tablets to receive information, passengers can use real-time or static data to help plan their trip ahead of time.

En-route/Real Time/Next Bus. This is real-time information given to the customer via a web-enabled device during their trip to the station while waiting for their bus. This information can include next bus arrival/departure times, park-and-ride availability, or whether the transit rider has missed their prospective bus.

In-Vehicle/Next Stop. While in the transit vehicle, passengers can receive information about their route, such as next stop, vehicle schedule, transfers, or delays. This information can be delivered via an automated announcement system (AAS), consisting of dynamic message signs (DMS) and audio announcement.

Station/Terminal. Provided via a Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) or through the use of a touch screen kiosk, information can be given at the station indicating the arrival/departure times of vehicles, delay information, and other information, such as route maps, fares, weather, local events, and traffic.

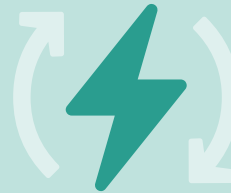


Communications

CAD/AVL. Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) uses voice and data to communicate important route information to BRT operators. CAD systems rely on Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) to monitor the exact location of the bus rapid transit (BRT) vehicle to assist transit operators with route and schedule adherence.

CCTV. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) are video cameras that feed back to a central control room and allow real-time monitoring and recording of transit systems.

Fiber/Wireless Connectivity. To provide high-quality video streaming for CCTV and other services, fiber optics is often a required infrastructure improvement. Connectivity to transit vehicles is significantly enhanced where the technology infrastructure already exists.



Future Proofing

Electric Transit. Electric-powered, zero-emissions vehicles can be used in place of typical gas powered transit vehicles to reduce the overall emissions from the transit system.

Connected Transit. Transit vehicles can be equipped with sensors and communication systems to improve the operations and safety of the system. These systems are data-based solutions that can streamline trips, assist with schedule adherence, provide crash warnings, and provide other relevant data to aid in transit agency decision making. Connected buses could even platoon in a dedicated lane (imagine trains with tires).

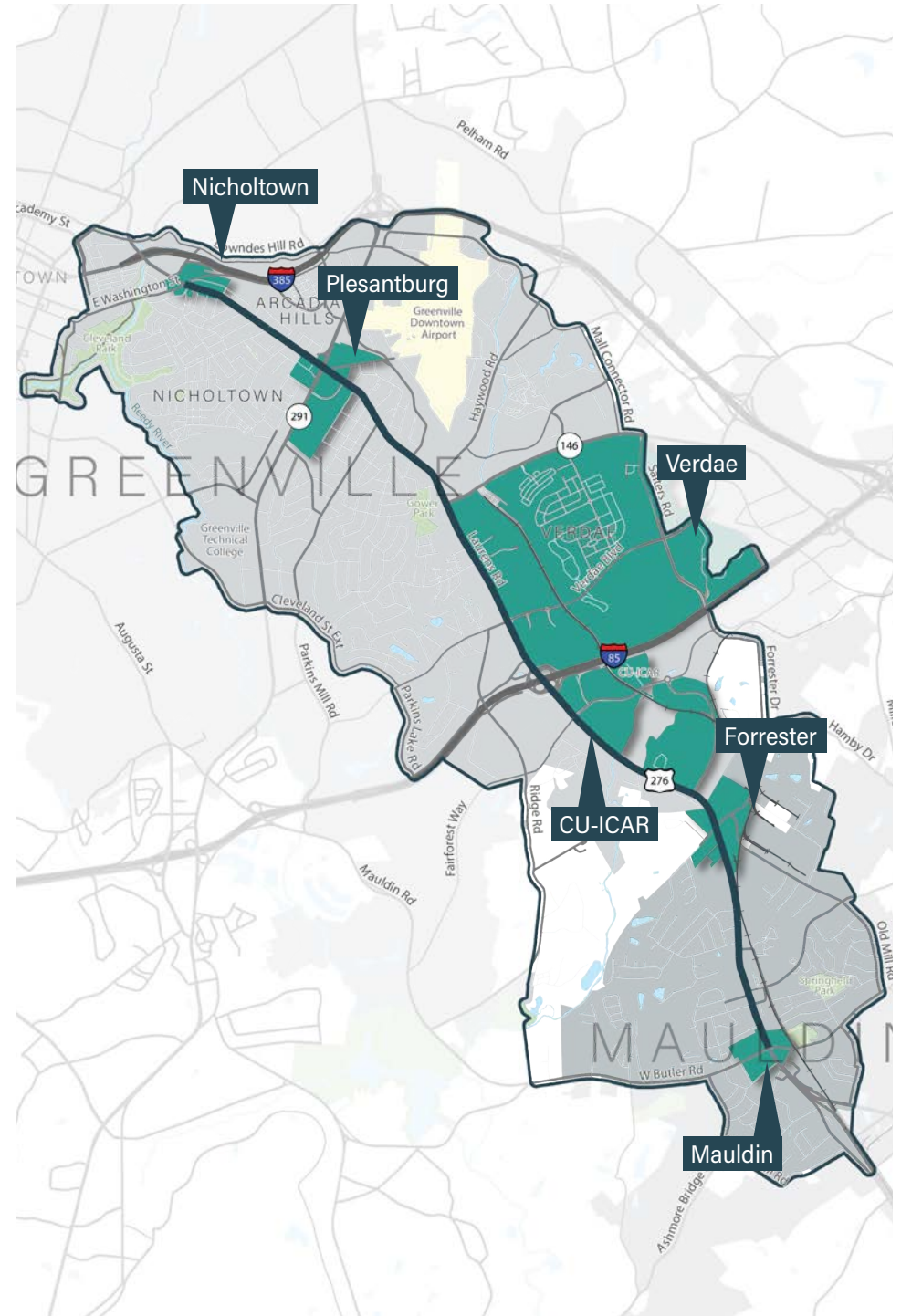
Autonomous Transit. Self-driving vehicles, such as autonomous shuttles, autonomous buses, and urban circulators, are being piloted across the country. The majority of the vehicles are small, limited-capacity, micro-mobility solutions. The City, County, and Greenlink can partner to implement autonomous shuttle pilots, to serve as a first mile/last mile resource downtown, around the University Center, and to and from the Greenville Downtown Airport. Pilots like these can encourage agencies to evaluate the possibility of deploying the technology at a grander scale in the future. Specifically, agencies are leveraging the successes of autonomous shuttle pilots and applying automated and connected vehicle (AV/CV) technology in transit corridors. Greenville would be an opportune location for an autonomous shuttle or transit pilot.

Mobility + Development (M+D) Hubs

The TOD principles will guide the design of future development along Laurens Road. To showcase these principles at work, a series of Mobility + Development Hubs (or M+D Hubs) were identified as opportunity areas. Each location is of a different scale and intensity, showcasing a broad range of implementation opportunities. The M+D Hubs are:

- Nicholtown
- Pleasantburg
- Verdae
- CU-ICAR
- Forrester
- Downtown Mauldin

The following pages illustrate a combination of potential future private development opportunities and improvements to the public rights-of-way. These graphics are intended to be illustrative of transit-oriented design principles and are not proposed site development plans. All private development improvements are subject to future decisions made by property owners and applicable zoning and development regulations existing at the time of development. All public right-of-way improvements will be determined through future design phases.





Nicholtown Community Center

112 Rebecca Street



city of
greenville
PARKS & RECREATION
864-467-4355

Nicholtown

Nicholtown is the closest M+D Hub to downtown Greenville, is intersected by Washington Street, and includes a mixture of commercial, residential, and office land uses. The commercial properties along Laurens Road host shopping centers, most notably the Spinx gas station and a shopping center across from Washington Street and caddy cornered to Willy Taco. The East Park Baptist Church on Ebaugh Avenue is permanently closed, but the existing structure provides an opportunity for adaptive reuse to preserve the character of the community. The street network between Washington Street and Laurens Road has limited connectivity and access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail. While the Nicholtown M+D Hub is not within the study area of the Nicholtown Master Plan, many of the recommended principles are supportive of Realizing Laurens Road, including:

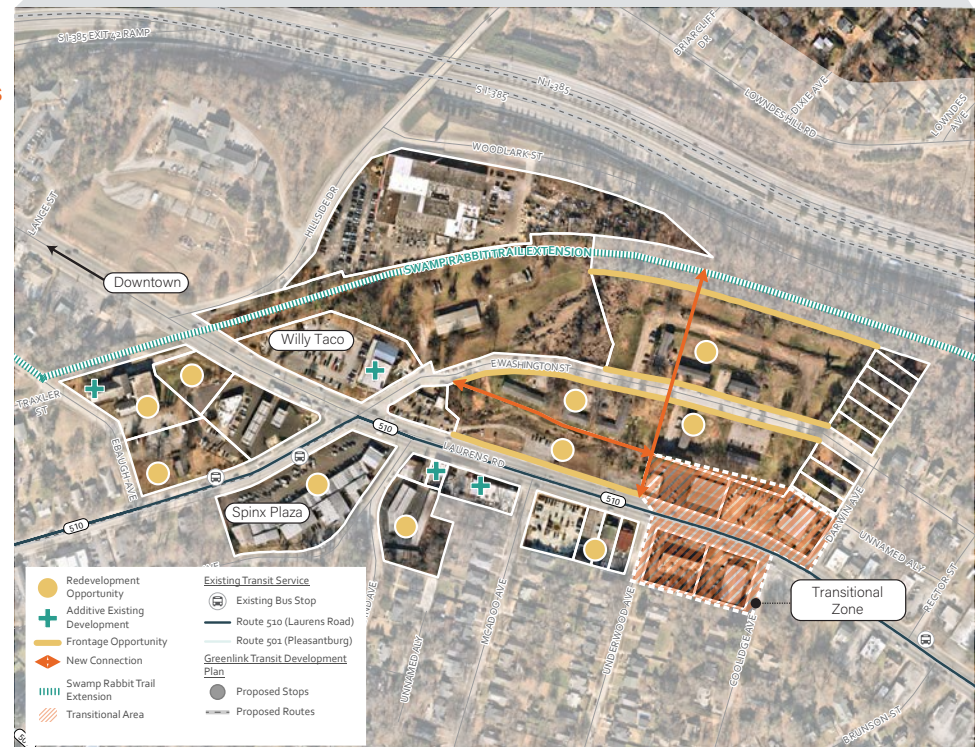
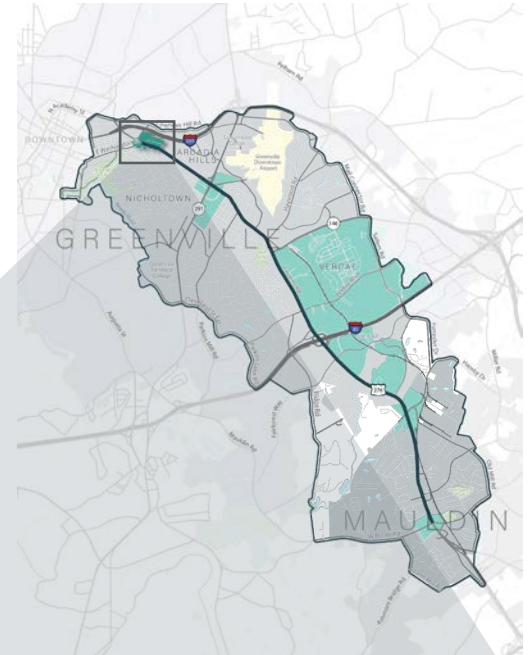
- Developing a mixed income community with diverse housing options
- Incorporating community facilities, infrastructure improvements, and open space
- Developing an interconnected road network with sidewalks

Finally, the GVL 2040 Comprehensive Plan identifies this area as Corridor Mixed-Use, intended to support a range of travel options and lined with buildings that engage the street.

The City of Greenville will be creating a Development Character Plan for portions of this location as part of the Code Connection work currently in progress.

By the Numbers

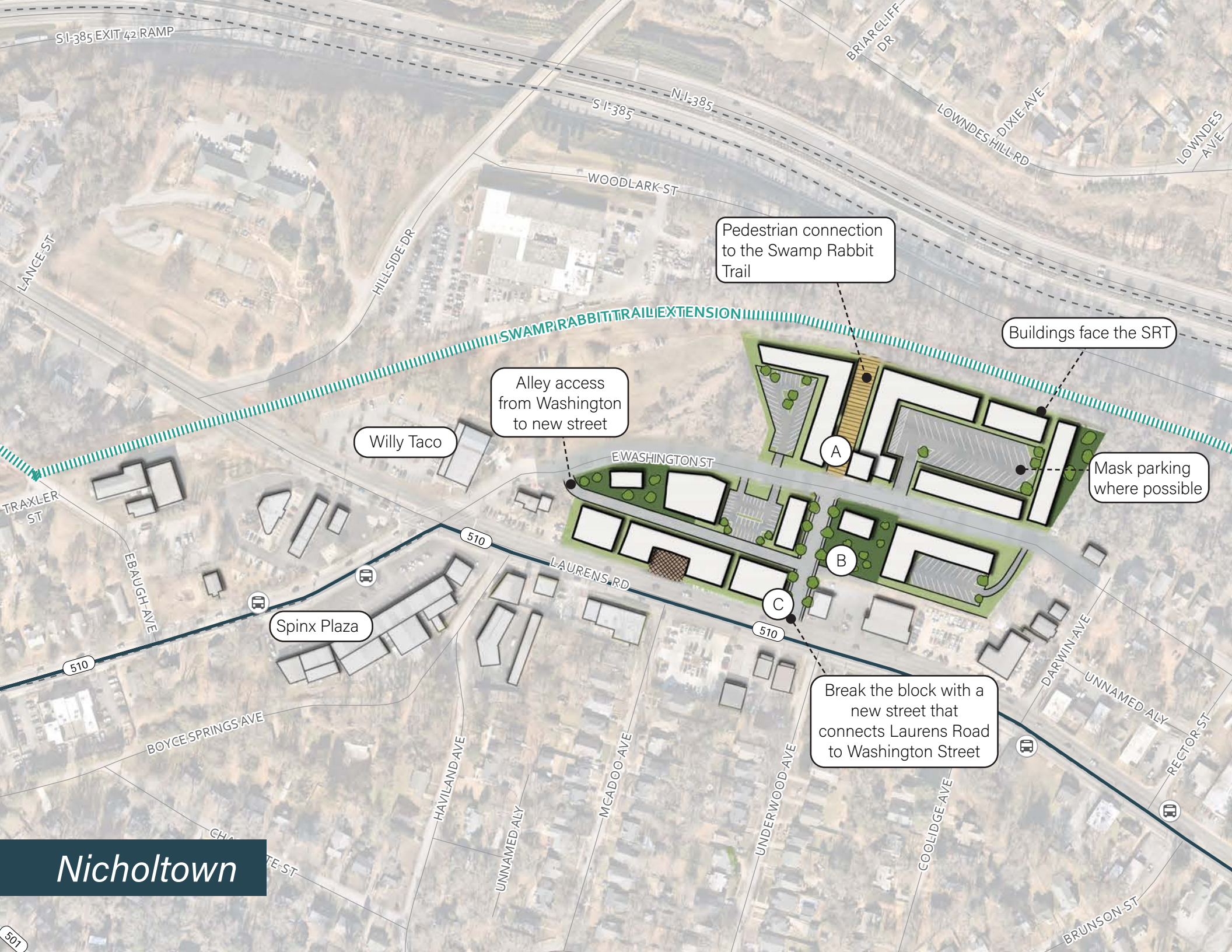
Parcels	32
Total Acres	34
Land Value per Acre	\$357,000
Employees	325
Residents	100
Businesses	37





Key Findings

- The average parcel size of less than one acre is considerably smaller than the other M+D Hubs
- Nicholtown is located just over one mile south of downtown Greenville on Washington Street. It is a 10-minute bike ride and a 30-minute walk to downtown
- The M+D Hub has one mile of frontage along the Swamp Rabbit Trail at the far east of the site
- The study area active businesses recorded approximately \$50 million in sales in 2021
- East Washington Village is the largest residential cluster, with about 50 units. Population in the M+D Hub has slightly decreased since 2010.
- Three entities control more than 10 acres each in the Nicholtown area, with limited consolidation overall in comparison to the other M+D Hubs
- The land value per acre is \$357,000, the second lowest among the seven sites, but the lowest among those within incorporated Mauldin or Greenville
- The Nicholtown neighborhood includes parcels in the western portions of the area and is a historic settlement in Greenville, with an active neighborhood association and strong interest in right-scaled development along the corridor
- The area includes several historically and/or culturally relevant structures, including but not limited to, the East Park Baptist Church, and the Feed n' Seed building (now Willy Taco).



SI-385 EXIT 42 RAMP

BRIARCLIFF DR

LOWNDES HILL RD
DIXIE AVE
LOWNDES AVE

SI-385
N-I-385

WOODLARK ST

Pedestrian connection to the Swamp Rabbit Trail

Buildings face the SRT

Alley access from Washington to new street

Willy Taco

Mask parking where possible

WASHINGTON ST

A

B

C

LAURENS RD

510

510

Spinx Plaza

Break the block with a new street that connects Laurens Road to Washington Street

DARWIN AVE

UNNAMED ALY

RECTOR ST

BOYCE SPRINGS AVE

HAVILAND AVE

UNNAMED ALY

MCADOO AVE

UNDERWOOD AVE

COOLIDGE AVE

BRUNSON ST

Nicholtown

501

Short-Term Opportunities

- Focus on larger lots on the east side of Laurens with access or frontage along the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment
- Emphasize walkability/multimodality within site plans and provide easy access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and toward a collection point/future stop for existing and improved transit service
- Prioritize a mix of housing options at multiple price points and densities
- Integrate green spaces and plazas within new development and require new landscaping, including street trees and internal plantings
- Leverage proximity to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and potential premier transit along Laurens Road as major catalyst for development/redevelopment
- Improve the overall connectivity of the street framework to facilitate access and visibility to proposed development and redevelopment projects and reduce pedestrian and vehicular areas of conflict with unnecessary curb cuts
- Accommodate surface parking to sustain parking demand in the near-term, seek sharing between uses, and mask surface lots behind front-facing development
- Integrate spaces vertically and horizontally with complementary uses



Long-Term Opportunities

- Reduce overall parking requirements in properties with access to a transit line, especially pertaining to residential development
- Integrate recommendations from the Nicholatown Neighborhood Master Plan (2004) to protect against displacement and provide more opportunities for existing neighborhood residents
- Increase density allowances for properties fronting Laurens Road or the Swamp Rabbit Trail (SRT) alignment. Consider vertical minimums for new development and emphasize higher Floor Area Ratios (FARs).
- Consider incentives that will enable property owners to redevelop, especially at key nodes



Pleasantburg

At just over 100 acres, the M+D Hub at Pleasantburg and Laurens Road is one of the larger nodes in the study area. Predominately commercial land uses, the area also includes several large office and institutional buildings. The existing commercial is characterized by large chain businesses with scattered local businesses and large surface parking lots. The corner of Pleasantburg Drive, Laurens Road, and Airport Road will see future development with the planned Enclave site development, which will introduce new mixed-use activity to the area.

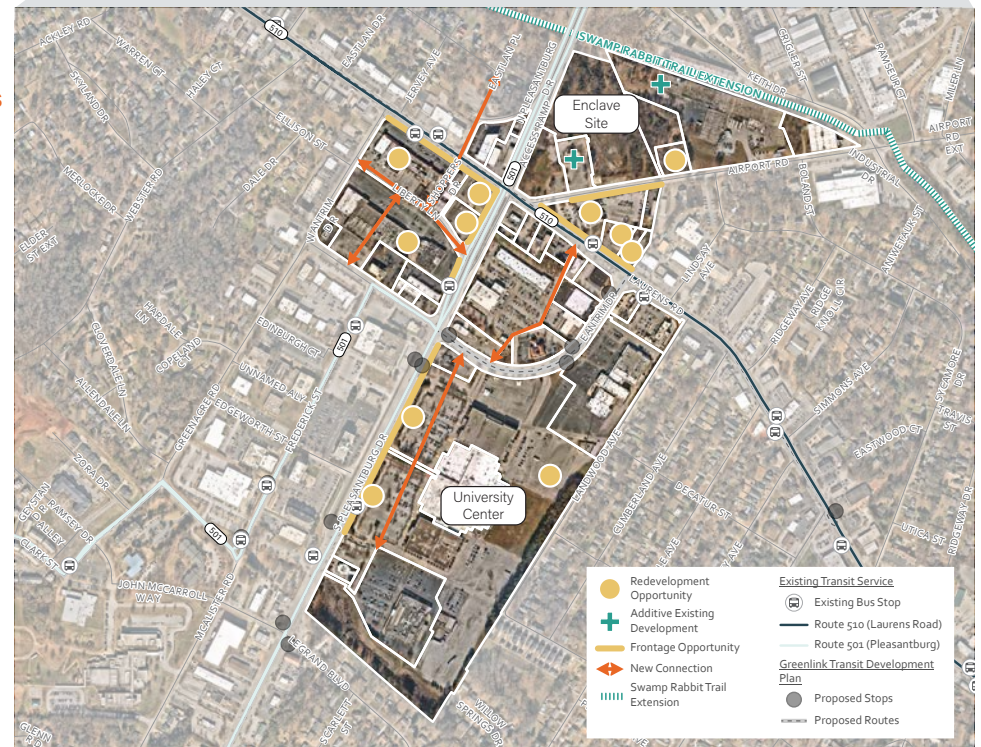
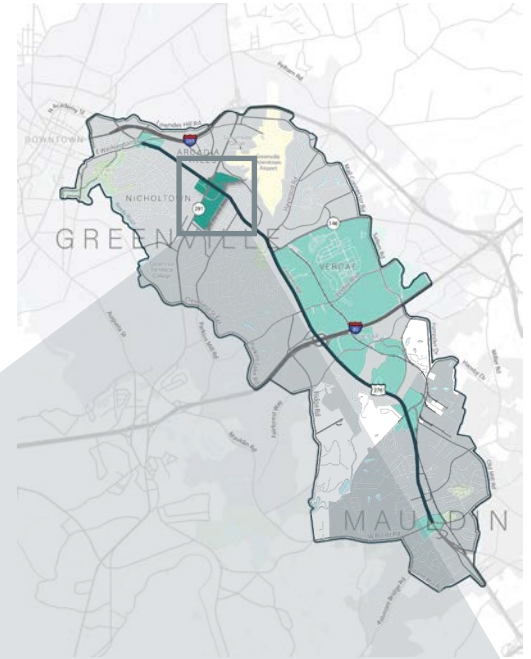
An opportunity site is the existing University Center that now serves local and regional universities and their students. The large building is surrounded by surface parking lots and no direct access to Swamp Rabbit Trail or other amenities. The existing large city blocks create an auto-centric site and do not promote walkability or access to the existing bus stops and routes that circulate the vicinity. The opportunity exists to break the block size with pedestrian-friendly streets as well as incorporate more green spaces and direct access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail.

The comprehensive plan for this area calls for taller buildings that will absorb more residential demand than the Corridor Mixed-Use character areas. The intent for this site is to enhance the street framework to create better connected and smaller blocks that increase walkability and enhance the public realm.

The City of Greenville will be creating a Development Character Plan for portions of this location as part of the Code Connection work currently in progress.

By the Numbers

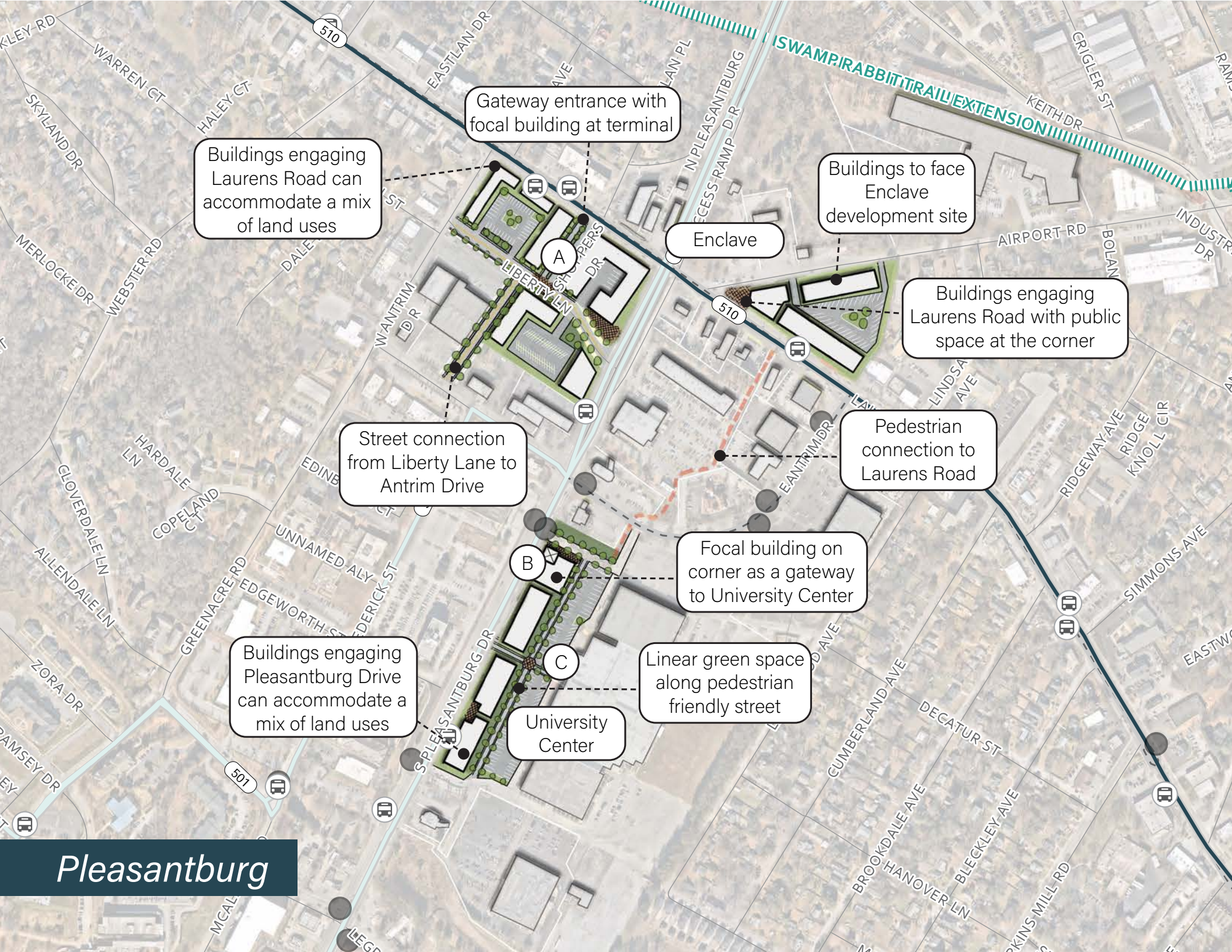
Parcels	47
Total Acres	115
Land Value per Acre	\$408,000
Employees	1,400
Commercial Use	91%
Businesses	174





Key Findings

- The existing land uses are mixed between commercial (91%) and institutional industrial (9%), with an average parcel size of approximately 2.5 acres
- Significant frontage along the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment in the far northwest of the M+D Hub is seeing active development and redevelopment interest
- The approximate drive to downtown Greenville is seven minutes via Laurens Road
- Approximately 174 active businesses with about 1,400 employees recorded \$206 million in sales in 2021 in this M+D Hub
- Very limited ownership consolidation exists, with only four groups controlling more than eight acres each. The former McAlister Square Mall site is the largest area at 36 acres, and is owned by Greenville County Community Technical Education.
- The land value per acre of \$408,000 is under-performing among commercial uses in the study area
- A major project planned for the northeast corner of Laurens Road, Pleasantburg Drive, and Airport Drive is the “Enclave Laurens,” with 400 planned residential units and 100,000 square feet of commercial and mixed-use proposed
- Limited overall vacancy among uses exists despite a significant decrease in rent demand among several commercial strip centers
- Sites in the M+D Hub have variability in the quality and upkeep, especially among commercial centers
- Major impediments to walkability in the area include missing sidewalk connections, large rights-of-way, very large block patterns, excessive curb cuts, and perceived safety issues. Uses could be better connected across parcels and large blocks through improving street and pedestrian connections that reduce curb cuts on the major corridors.
- The University Center is an adaptive reuse of the former McAlister Square Mall that now serves as a major institutional anchor with 3,000+ students, faculty, and staff.



Gateway entrance with focal building at terminal

Buildings engaging Laurens Road can accommodate a mix of land uses

Buildings to face Enclave development site

Enclave

Buildings engaging Laurens Road with public space at the corner

Street connection from Liberty Lane to Antrim Drive

Pedestrian connection to Laurens Road

Focal building on corner as a gateway to University Center

Buildings engaging Pleasantburg Drive can accommodate a mix of land uses

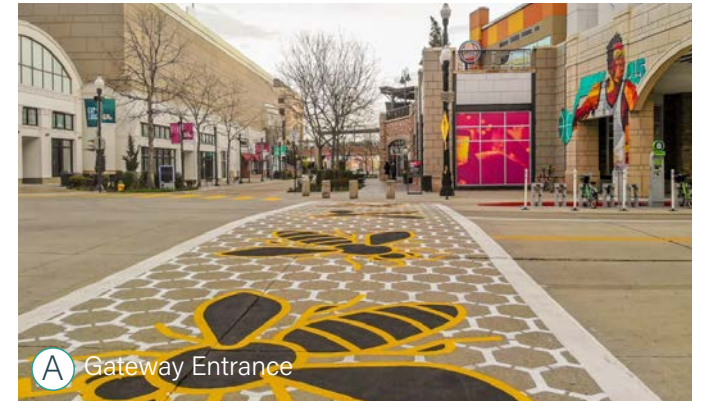
Linear green space along pedestrian friendly street

University Center

Pleasantburg

Short-Term Opportunities

- Focus redevelopment at the southwest corner of Pleasantburg Drive and Laurens Road, where vacancy rates and rent demand have decreased significantly
- Leverage future Enclave development site as a catalyst/demonstration for future projects, especially for parcels to the south and west of the site between Airport Drive and Laurens Road
- Emphasize walkability within site plans and provide easy access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail as well as toward a collection point/future stop for existing and improved transit service
- Prioritize a mix of housing options at multiple price points and densities
- Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens Road and Pleasantburg Drive, with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment
- Integrate greenspaces and plazas within new development and require new landscaping, including street trees and internal plantings
- Improve connectivity within the street framework to provide better access and visibility to proposed development at the University Center, creating more opportunities for a mix of land uses
- Accommodate surface parking to sustain parking demand in the near-term, seek sharing between uses, and mask surface lots behind front-facing development



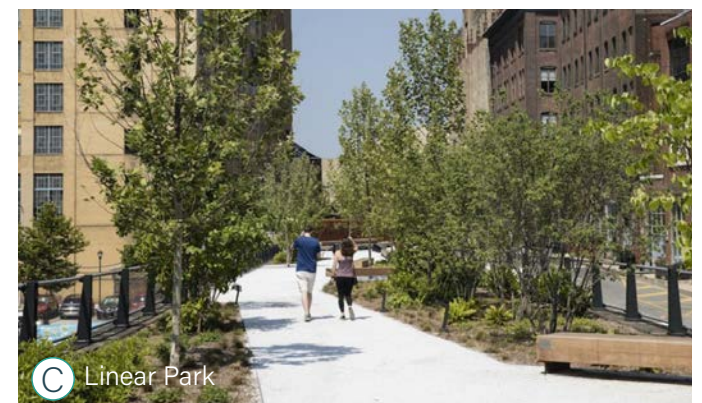
A Gateway Entrance

Long-Term Opportunities

- Reduce overall parking requirements in properties with access to a transit line, especially pertaining to residential development
- Integrate pertinent recommendations from the Nicholtown Neighborhood Master Plan to protect against displacement and provide more opportunities for existing neighborhood residents
- Improve internal pedestrian bike connections across super-block development (e.g., southeast corner of Pleasantburg and Laurens)
- Increase density allowances for properties fronting Laurens Road or the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment. Consider vertical minimums for new development and emphasize higher FARs.
- Consider incentives that will enable property owners to redevelop, especially at key nodes or explore land assemblage strategies with local partners



B Gateway Campus Building



C Linear Park

A Refreshed Vision for Verdae

Verdae Development Inc. and Hollingsworth Funds recently unveiled a bold new outlook for approximately 90 acres of Laurens Road property as Greenville's next generation destination.

The refreshed vision aims to create a vibrant and inclusive mixed-use district that reflects Greenville's cultural and social diversity while acting as a platform for economic innovation with commercial office, residential, recreation, and retail in a new urban setting.

While many details of the exact plan will be available as phases of the project are envisioned and announced by development partners, some of the vision's core elements promote accessibility, sustainability, connectivity, and affordability:

- A new central street running parallel between the Prisma Health Swamp Rabbit Trail and Laurens Road
- A new green ribbon of parks and open space
- Improved connectivity for public transit as well as pedestrian and bike friendly trails and pathways
- The conversion from a one-use retail corridor to a mixed-use district that incorporates economic development through office, small business, and entrepreneurship; provides opportunities for a retail landscape to meet current trends; introduces new areas for public recreation; and integrates a variety of housing options to maintain affordability

Verdae is the 1,100-acre master planned community that started in 2005 on one of the largest tracts of land in the Greenville area that was owned by legendary textile machinery magnate John D. Hollingsworth Jr. He left the bulk of his estate to Hollingsworth Funds, a charitable foundation established to use his vast holdings to support Furman University, the YMCA, and nonprofits benefitting the greater Greenville community. The creation of Verdae and its continued development helps fund a wide range of community initiatives annually supported by Hollingsworth Funds.

Given Greenville's tremendous growth and changes to the market over the past 15 years, and with almost half of Verdae remaining to be developed, the timing was right to revisit the original master plan to ensure that Verdae is positioned to deliver value to the Greenville community for the next 10 to 15 years. Hollingsworth Funds and Verdae Development initiated an Urban Land Institute Advisory Panel in late 2019, which helped lead to the decision to engage a world-class team of planning professionals to refresh the master plan.

Verdae: A new kind of urban node



CU-ICAR

The CU-ICAR Master Plan was designed to accommodate more than 3 million square feet of sustainably developed buildings across 250 acres. Currently, Technology Neighborhood I is the only area constructed out of the five planned neighborhoods. While the master plan was designed with vehicular traffic and access in mind, the building footprints can be preserved with minor adjustments to the street network and parking access to better align with TOD principles. Preserving the forested areas should be a priority and access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail should be enhanced. The site can serve as an employment and institutional anchor for the southern portions of the corridor, with enhanced connections to downtown Greenville.

By the Numbers

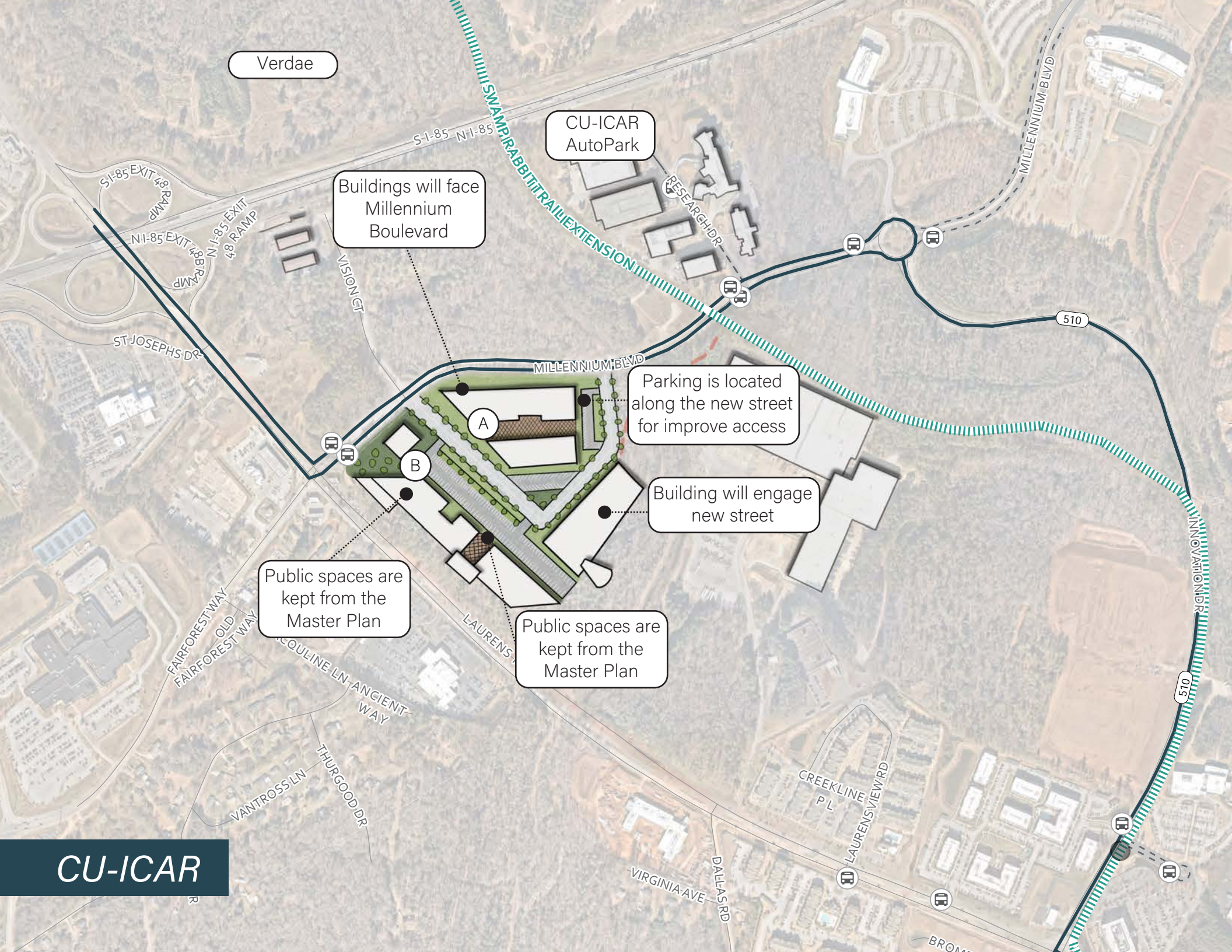
Parcels	25
Total Acres	285
Land Value per Acre	\$568,000
Employees	186
Undeveloped Land	>70%
Businesses	24





Key Findings

- The CU-ICAR M+D Hub's average parcel size of approximately 11 acres makes it the largest average parcel size compared to the other M+D Hubs
- The site is mostly undeveloped, but land uses include commercial, industrial, and newly built multifamily residential complexes in the southeastern portion of the area
- Located five miles and 13 minutes from downtown, the site has significant potential frontage along the Swamp Rabbit Trail
- Existing floodplains cause limitations at the center of the site straddling Laurel Creek
- This is the smallest mobility hub site in terms of economic output, with 24 businesses, 186 employees, and \$20 million in sales in 2021. This does not, however, account for the University activity in the area, which is significant.
- CU-ICAR owns 70% of the land area. Combined with Clemson University's 34-acre holding, nearly all the site area is controlled by the University or its affiliate entities.
- The site is planned for a five-phase master plan, with only phase one being complete as of 2022. Activity on the phase 3 site began in late 2021.
- The land value per acre is \$568,000 and, considering the amount of undeveloped land (>70% of the area), the M+D Hub has the highest value per acre in land and buildings.



Verdae

CU-ICAR
AutoPark

Buildings will face
Millennium
Boulevard

Parking is located
along the new street
for improve access

Building will engage
new street

Public spaces are
kept from the
Master Plan

Public spaces are
kept from the
Master Plan

CU-ICAR

Short-Term Opportunities

- Support the realization of the CU-ICAR Master Plan with special emphasis on the site south of Millennium Boulevard and east of Laurens Road
- Revise existing Master Plan based on market demand potential for key, potential uses like office, innovation, institutional/education, housing, etc.
- Leverage relationship with Clemson University and explore outlet opportunities from Greenville ONE, downtown Greenville campus–student housing, programs, live/work, etc.
- Emphasize walkability within site plans and provide easy access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail as well as toward a collection point/future stop for existing and improved transit service
- Prioritize employment within site plans while also providing a mix of housing options at multiple price points and densities, including student options
- Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens Road and Millennium Boulevard with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment
- Integrate greenspaces and plazas within new development and require new landscaping, including street trees and internal plantings
- Emphasize structured parking within master plan and minimize surface parking, in the near-term, seek sharing between uses, and mask surface lots behind front-facing development



A Plaza

Long-Term Opportunities

- Structure parking where possible and reduce overall parking requirements in properties, especially pertaining to residential development
- Improve internal pedestrian bike connections across super-block development
- Increase density allowances for properties fronting Laurens Road or the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment. Consider vertical minimums for new development and emphasize higher FARs.



B Walkable Campus

Forrester

The intersection of Laurens Road at Forrester and Knollwood Drives is south of the City of Greenville boundary and part of Greenville County. The M+D Hub has a mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses that are underutilized or vacant. The existing office buildings along and below Forrester Drive represent a wealth of local job opportunities. The northeast corner of the Forrester Drive and Laurens Road intersection is currently owned by Spinx company. Short-term improvements may include an urban gas station and focal building, which would serve as a gateway into the area and a connection point to the Swamp Rabbit Trail extension along Laurens Road.

The 2014 Mauldin Comprehensive Plan defines the intersection at Laurens Road and Forrester Drive as an area for a neighborhood center. The area should plan for a mix of uses in a smaller scale to accommodate amenities appropriate for the residents in the area. However, because of the current uses and property owners within the study area, introducing multifamily residential in the southwestern area of the intersection would be a long-term action.

By the Numbers

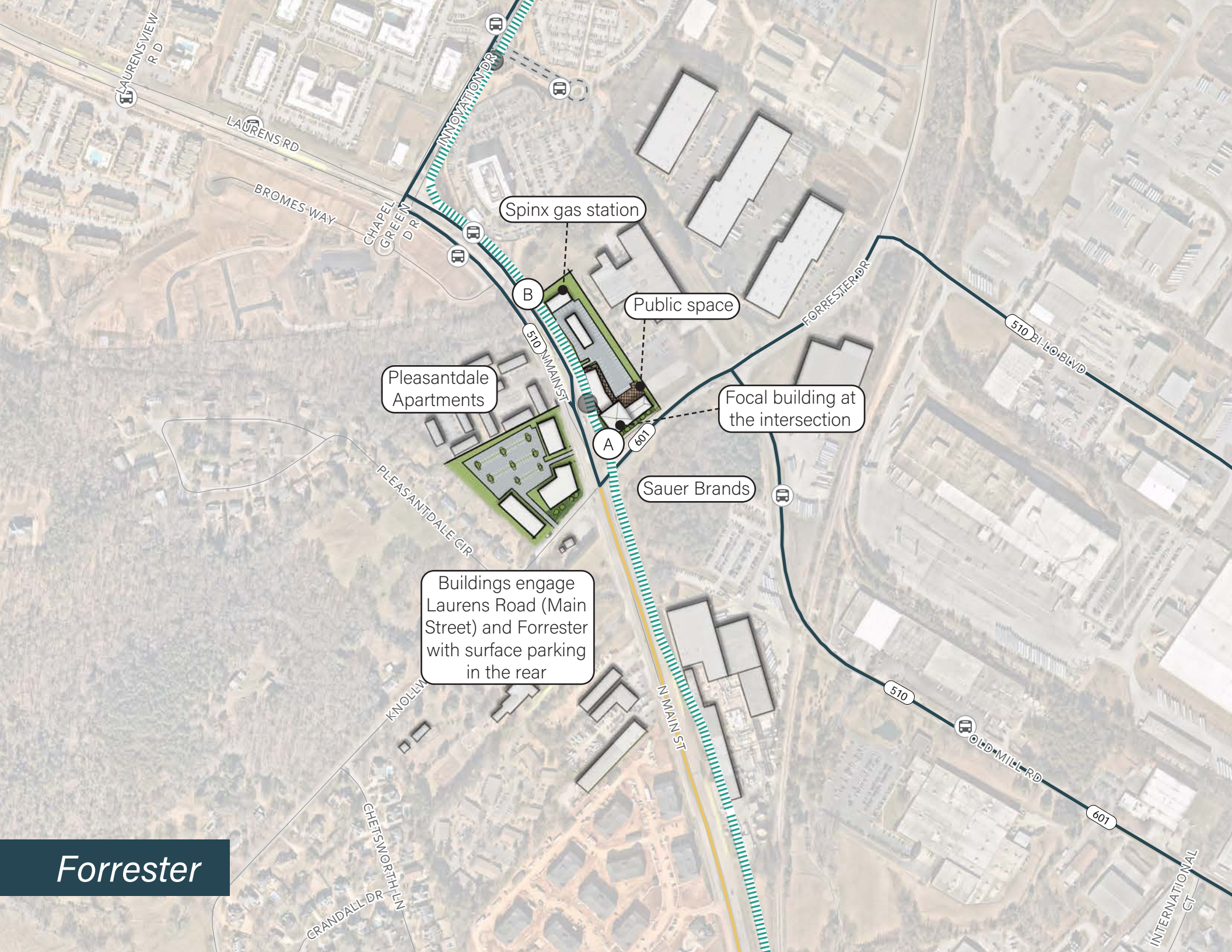
Parcels	20
Total Acres	84
Land Value per Acre	\$296,000
Employees	350
Businesses	22



Key Findings

- The Forrester Drive site is 84 acres, split between 20 parcels
- The average parcel size is approximately 4.2 acres, and only one lot in the far northwest is not in unincorporated Greenville County
- This M+D Hub does not have a dominant land use, with a mix of Industrial (57 acres), commercial (17 acres), and multifamily residential (8 acres)
- The site is located six miles and 15 minutes by car from downtown Greenville and 1.5 miles or three minutes from downtown Mauldin
- Approximately \$126 million in sales was recorded in the M+D Hub in 2021
- Sauer Spices is the dominant employer and operator with 100+ employees and \$37 million in sales. They own 40% of the land area, with one large undeveloped parcel in southeast Forrester Drive and Laurens Road.
- The land value per acre of \$296,000 is the lowest of all the M+D Hubs
- Increasing vacancy among Laurens Road-facing operations is reducing activity in a neighborhood center that should attract a mix of uses





Spinx gas station

Public space

Focal building at the intersection

Sauer Brands

Pleasantdale Apartments

Buildings engage Laurens Road (Main Street) and Forrester with surface parking in the rear

Forrester

Short-Term Opportunities

- Focus on related properties straddling Laurens Road on the northwest and northeast corners of Forrester Drive and Laurens Road, currently undeveloped or underdeveloped based on land potential
- Emphasize walkability within sites and across the area and provide easy access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail as well as toward a collection point/future stop for existing and improved transit service
- Encourage development of the Spinx property at the northeast corner of Forrester Drive and Laurens Road as a mixed-use site
- Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens Road and Forrester Drive, with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment
- Engage with Sauer Brands to consider long-term plans for their undeveloped parcel at the southeast corner of Laurens Road and Forrester Drive
- Integrate greenspaces and plazas within new development and require new landscaping, including street trees and internal plantings
- Consider gateway opportunities for the City of Greenville portions of the future Laurens Road mobility hub corridor
- Leverage proximity to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and potential premier transit along Laurens Road as major catalyst for development/redevelopment
- Improve the overall connectivity of the street framework to facilitate access and visibility to proposed development and redevelopment projects
- Accommodate surface parking to sustain parking demand in the near-term, seek sharing between uses, and mask surface lots behind front-facing development
- Integrate spaces vertically and horizontally with a complementary uses



A Focal Building



B Urban Gas Station

Long-Term Opportunities

- Reduce overall parking requirements in properties along a transit line, especially pertaining to residential development
- Integrate recommendations from the Greenville County Comprehensive Plan and Town of Mauldin Comprehensive Plan
- Increase density allowances for properties fronting Laurens Road or the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment. Consider vertical minimums for new development and emphasize higher FARs.
- Consider incentives that will enable property owners to redevelop especially at key nodes

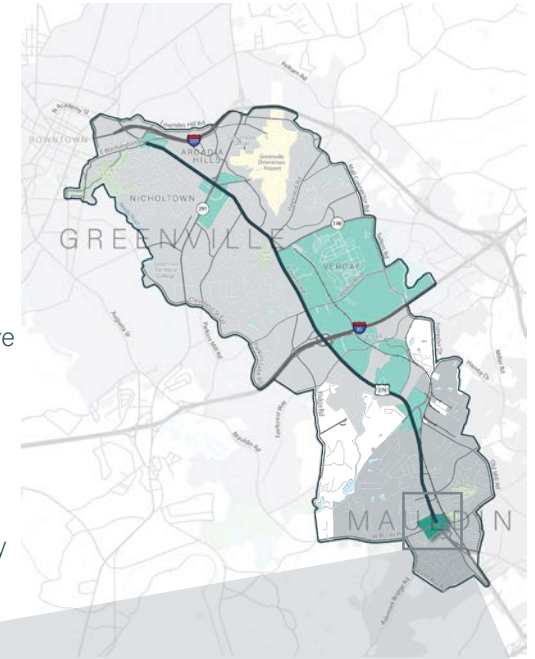


Downtown Mauldin

This M+D Hub is referred to as the downtown due to the location of City Hall and its proximity to major corridors. Although not a typical downtown with a main street, central public open space, or a connected street network, the M+D Hub instead is made up of big-box retail, public buildings, and commercial uses. The block northeast of the Laurens Road and Butler Road intersection has opportunities for a new street framework with a proper main street that introduces the walkability of a downtown and improves connectivity to a potential Swamp Rabbit Trail extension, existing park, and planned adaptive reuse projects in the area. The big-box retail parcels could also benefit from new uses along Butler Road that would create an active frontage on downtown and potentially connect to the planned projects to the east.

The 2014 Mauldin Comprehensive Plan identified Butler Road as Regional and Community Corridors with the intent of creating more connections to adjacent properties and reducing the need to use the arterial corridors for all access. Although there are good objectives in the comprehensive plan, it no longer reflects the type of density the City of Mauldin would like to see at Laurens and Butler Roads. This study area is a great opportunity to absorb more residential and commercial density while increasing connectivity to amenities like the City Park and the planned Swamp Rabbit Trail via improvements, such as upgraded bus stops, widened sidewalks, and space for bicyclists to traverse the corridor. For an area to be developed and characterized as downtown, parcels should be designated Mixed-Use and Community Center.

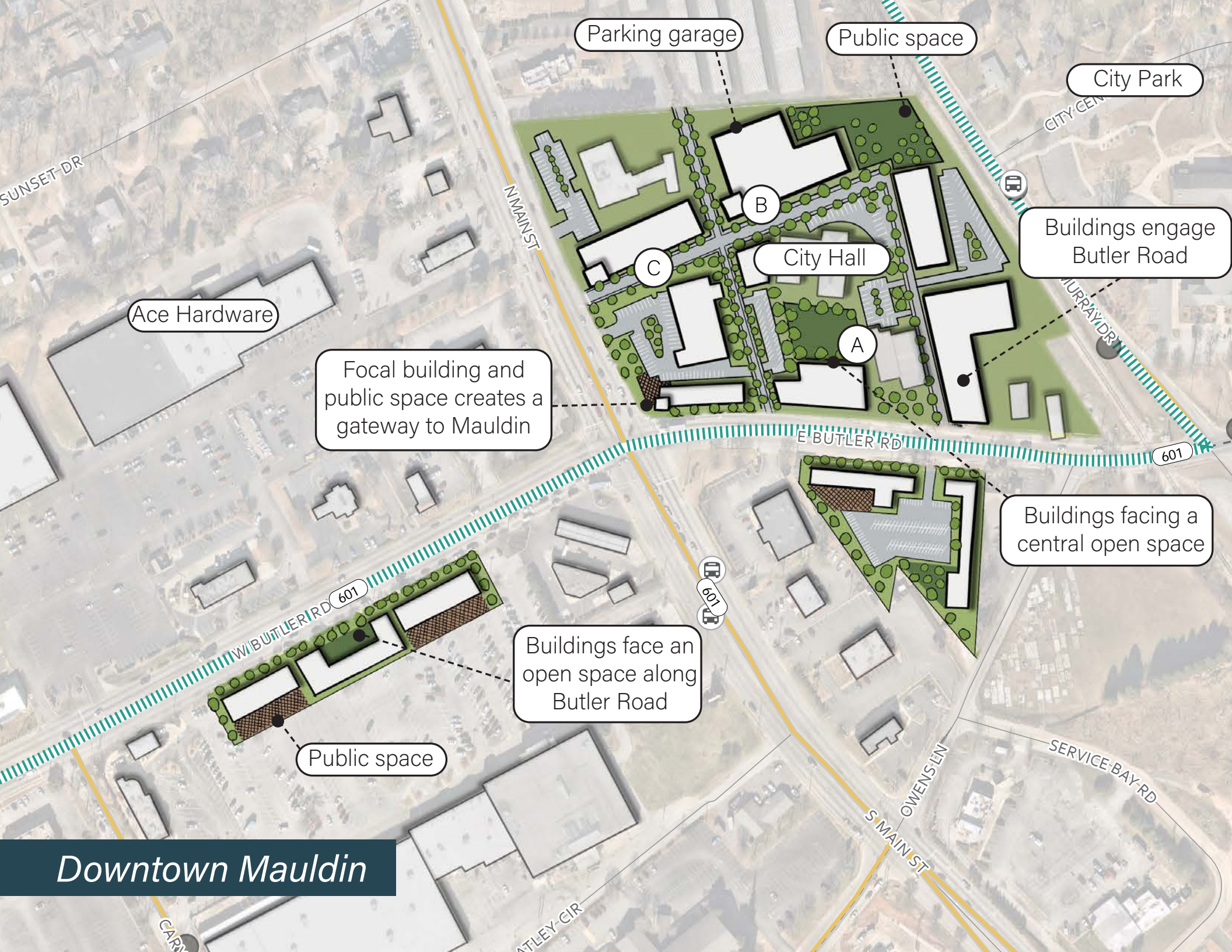
Private investors and developers are currently focusing their planning efforts on downtown Mauldin. As of early 2022, the Parker Group is planning to install a 6.5-acre, adaptive reuse project dubbed "City Center," which will feature a food hall, residential townhomes, and a 25,000-square-foot entertainment complex. "Maverick Station" is a separate project located at the corner of Laurens Road and Butler Road that focuses on the reuse of existing vacant commercial buildings. This project will include at least two restaurants, which are scheduled to open in 2022. Both projects are creating activity and increasing demand for more active uses in downtown Mauldin. With the onslaught of new development, any infrastructure improvements made by the City of Mauldin in its downtown area should be well-received by private investors, developers, and the public. A connected street network, investments in upgraded bus stop infrastructure, and improved pedestrian access to key points of interest such as City Park, the future Swamp Rabbit Trail, and new residential units are just a few improvements that may be met with widespread support and subsequent use.



Key Findings

- The downtown Mauldin M+D Hub has an average parcel size of approximately 1.4 acres—the second smallest in terms of overall area and average parcel size
- The land use is all classified as commercial, but the M+D Hub also is home to approximately five City-owned parcels, including City Hall and several vacant buildings
- The terminus of the Laurens Road TOD corridor, the M+D Hub is eight miles and 18 minutes by car from downtown Greenville
- Downtown Mauldin has a Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment to the east within walking distance
- Businesses in the M+D Hub recorded \$100 million in sales in 2021
- Downtown Mauldin has very limited ownership consolidation across the area, with six publicly owned parcels clustered around City Hall.
- Although it is one of the smallest mobility hubs in acreage, the land value per acre is \$802,000, the highest of all focus areas
- Significant decreases in rent demand have been recorded among several of the plazas on both sides of Butler Road





Parking garage

Public space

City Park

Ace Hardware

Focal building and public space creates a gateway to Mauldin

City Hall

Buildings engage Butler Road

A

E BUTLER RD

601

Buildings facing a central open space

Buildings face an open space along Butler Road

Public space

Downtown Mauldin

C

B

CARR

ATLEY CIR

S MAIN ST

OWENS LN

SERVICE BAY RD

MURRAY DR

CITY CENTER

SUNSET DR

N MAIN ST

W BUTLER RD

601

601



Short-Term Opportunities

- Intensify development at the northeast corner of Laurens and Butler Roads through a master planning process of city-owned land
- Create a true “town center” for Mauldin on the site that integrates multiple uses (including retail, restaurants, housing, etc.), engages future transit opportunities on Laurens Road, and provides a community core
- Emphasize walkability within sites and across the area and provide easy access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail, and toward a collection point/future stop for existing and improved transit service
- Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens and Butler with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment
- Consider front lot redevelopment opportunities through zoning modifications of “big box” properties south of Butler Road
- Integrate greenspaces and plazas within new development and require new landscaping, including street trees and internal plantings
- Consider gateway opportunities for the City of Mauldin portions of the future Laurens Road mobility hub corridor
- Leverage proximity to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and potential premier transit along Laurens Road as major catalyst for development/redevelopment
- Improve the overall connectivity of the street framework to facilitate access and visibility to proposed development and redevelopment projects
- Accommodate surface parking to sustain parking demand in the near-term, seek sharing between uses, and mask surface lots behind front-facing development
- Integrate spaces vertically and horizontally with a complementary uses



A Central Open Space



B Parking Garage



C Walkable Streets

Long-Term Opportunities

- Reduce overall parking requirements in properties with access to a transit line, especially pertaining to residential development
- Integrate recommendations from the Town of Mauldin Comprehensive Plan
- Increase density allowances for properties fronting Laurens Road or the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment. Consider vertical minimums for new development and emphasize higher FARs.
- Consider incentives that will enable property owners to redevelop, especially at key nodes



Summary of Opportunities

Short-Term

Action	Nicholtown	Pleasantburg	CU-ICAR	Forrester	Downtown Mauldin
Emphasize walkability/multimodality within site plans and provide easy access to the Swamp Rabbit Trail, toward a collection point/future stop for existing and improved transit service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Integrate green spaces and plazas within new development and require new landscaping, including street trees and internal plantings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve the overall connectivity of the street framework to facilitate access and visibility to proposed development and redevelopment projects and reduce pedestrian and vehicular areas of conflict with unnecessary curb cuts	✓			✓	✓
Accommodate surface parking to sustain parking demand in the near-term, seek sharing between uses, and mask surface lots behind front-facing development	✓	✓		✓	✓
Leverage proximity to the Swamp Rabbit Trail and potential premier transit along Laurens Road as major catalyst for development/redevelopment	✓			✓	✓
Integrate spaces vertically and horizontally with complementary uses	✓			✓	✓
Prioritize a mix of housing options at multiple price points and densities	✓	✓			
Focus redevelopment at the southwest corner of Pleasantburg Drive and Laurens Road, where vacancy rates and rent demand have decreased significantly		✓			
Focus on larger lots on the east side of Laurens with access or frontage along the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment	✓				
Leverage future Enclave development site as a catalyst/demonstration for future projects, especially for parcels to the south and west of the site between Airport Drive and Laurens Road		✓			
Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens Road and Pleasantburg Drive, with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment		✓			
Improve connectivity within the street framework to provide better access and visibility to proposed development at the University Center creating more opportunities for a mix of land uses		✓			
Prioritize employment within site plans while also providing a mix of housing options at multiple price points and densities, including student options			✓		



Action	Nicholtown	Pleasantburg	CU-ICAR	Forrester	Downtown Mauldin
Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens Road and Millennium Boulevard with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment			✓		
Support the realization of the CU-ICAR Master Plan with special emphasis on the site south of Millennium Boulevard and east of Laurens Road			✓		
Revise existing Master Plan based on market demand potential for key, potential uses like office, innovation, institutional/education, housing, etc.			✓		
Leverage relationship with Clemson University and explore outlet opportunities from Greenville ONE, downtown Greenville campus - student housing, programs, live/work, etc.			✓		
Emphasize structured parking within master plan and minimize surface parking, in the near-term, seek sharing between uses, and mask surface lots behind frontfacing development			✓		
Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens Road and Forrester Drive, with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment				✓	
Focus on related properties straddling Laurens Road on the Northwest and Northeast corners of Forrester Drive and Laurens Road, currently undeveloped or underdeveloped based on land potential				✓	
Encourage development of the Spinx property at the northeast corner of Forrester Drive and Laurens as a mixed-use site				✓	
Engage with Sauer Brands to consider long-term plans for their undeveloped parcel at the southeast corner of Laurens Road and Forrester Drive.				✓	
Consider gateway opportunities for the City of Greenville portions of the future Laurens Road Mobility + Development Hub corridor				✓	
Improve pedestrian crossings at Laurens Road and Butler Road with special attention to paths leading to existing/future Greenlink stops and toward the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment					✓
Create a true "town center" for Mauldin on the site that integrates multiple uses (including retail, restaurants, housing, etc.), engages future transit opportunities on Laurens Road, and provides a community core					✓
Consider gateway opportunities for the City of Mauldin portions of the future Laurens Road Mobility + Development Hub corridor					✓
Consider front lot redevelopment opportunities through zoning modifications of "big box" properties south of Bulter Road					✓
Intensify development at the northeast corner of Laurens and Butler Roads through a master planning process of City-owned land					✓

Summary of Opportunities

Long-Term

Action	Nicholtown	Pleasantburg	CU-ICAR	Forrester	Downtown Mauldin
Increase density allowances for properties fronting Laurens Road or the Swamp Rabbit Trail alignment. Consider vertical minimums for new development and emphasize higher Floor Area Ratios (FARs)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consider incentives that will enable property owners to redevelop especially at key nodes or explore land assemblage strategies with local partners	✓	✓		✓	✓
Reduce overall parking requirements in properties with access to a transit line, especially pertaining to residential development	✓	✓		✓	✓
Improve internal pedestrian bike connections across super-block development		✓	✓		
Integrate recommendations from the Nicholtown Neighborhood Master Plan (2004) to protect against displacement and provide more opportunities for existing neighborhood residents	✓	✓			
Structure parking where possible and reduce overall parking requirements in properties, especially pertaining to residential development			✓		
Integrate recommendations from the Greenville County Comprehensive Plan and Town of Mauldin Comprehensive Plan				✓	
Integrate recommendations from the Town of Mauldin Comprehensive Plan					✓



Call to Action



Realizing Laurens Road

The Realizing Laurens Road Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Study is a multi-jurisdictional strategic plan prepared by Greenville County, in collaboration with the City of Greenville, the City of Mauldin, and Greenlink Transit. The study was completed as part of a US Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Pilot Program for TOD Planning Grant, which planned for TOD along a high-capacity transit corridor between downtown Greenville and Mauldin. Realizing Laurens Road is intended to leverage multimodal transportation investments and key development nodes and enable the corridor's transformation into a series of thriving activity centers identified here as Mobility + Development Hubs.

Realizing Laurens Road establishes an integrated land use and transportation implementation vision for transit-supportive development and infrastructure. It provides recommended strategies to realizing the community's vision for the Mobility + Development Hubs along the 6.7-mile Laurens Road corridor and promoting transit ridership that can support elements of premium service.

Realizing Laurens Road reflects the unique character, land use conditions, and community-informed vision of each M+D Hub and tailors strategies to capture their respective development opportunities. Recommendations for each M+D Hub provide a flexible framework that can be adjusted and modified as development gains momentum and evolves over the years to come. The strategies are based on TOD-supportive policy and provide diverse and equitable housing and economic development opportunities, preserve neighborhood character, create transitions to new development, and enhance mobility and access within and between the M+D Hubs.

Realizing Laurens Road allows each jurisdiction to implement policy recommendations based on local preferences. The City of Greenville can incorporate recommendations into the ongoing Development Code update where appropriate. The City of Mauldin and Greenville County can consider including policies related to the M+D Hubs into future planning efforts. Recommendations made throughout the corridor also may have countywide implications and can be leveraged by Greenlink Transit, Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS), and other cities for future transit corridors.

Who Should Use this Document?

The Realizing Laurens Road TOD study is intended for use by city, county, and transit agency staff, elected officials, residents, civic organizations, business owners, property owners, and the development community.

City Staff. Use this study as a guide to develop land development regulations, policies, and infrastructure investments that achieve the stated vision, yield the greatest community benefit to support high-capacity transit investments, and guide development that enhances equity, connectivity, and accessibility within the M+D Hubs and beyond.

GPATS and Transit Agency Staff. Use this study as a framework for future high-capacity transit investment corridor plans.

Elected Officials. Use this study as a guide to the community's vision and redevelopment potential for the M+D Hubs to inform policy and budgetary decisions that will bring economic, community-building, housing, and multimodal opportunities to the community.

Residents and Civic Organizations. Use this study as a citizen's manual to understand how the high-capacity transit investment and future character node redevelopment presents opportunities for your community, to ensure your corridor-wide and character nodes visions are fully implemented by city staff and your elected officials, and to guide your engagement on issues that matter to you (e.g., transportation options, affordable housing, neighborhood character, etc.).

Business Owners, Property Owners, and Developers. Use this study as an investment guide to capitalize on infrastructure and transit investments in a way that supports the community vision for the corridor, follows the recommended development standards, and enhances the overall potential of future high-capacity transit investment.

Foundational Steps

Greenville County, the City of Greenville, the City of Mauldin, and Greenlink are well on their way to initiating some of the transformative changes required to realize change along Laurens Road and other corridors ripe for investment in the Upstate. This momentum, combined with continued growth, requires intentional partnerships, strong internal alignment, and a refined toolbox for making land use decisions. The actions outlined below are critical initial steps to catalyze positive change along the corridor.

Creating a TOD-supportive policy framework.

- Update land use policies and zoning as needed to ensure transit-oriented development is possible. The City of Greenville is in the process of doing this currently and will set the stage for the rest of the corridor partners. The County and City of Mauldin can apply lessons learned from Greenville to their own codes, and scale them according to their respective contexts.
- Reassess parking requirements. Right-sized parking requirements for residential, office, and retail development promote efficient and sustainable land use. Additional consideration should be given to the form and design of parking locations within individual development sites.
- Consider changes to building form and design regulations. Local policy should promote ways to activate the street and prioritize the user experience, such as buildings that front the street, wider sidewalks, bicycle parking, and other transit rider amenities. These form and design requirements should also include standards for direct pedestrian connectivity between the sidewalks and buildings within mobility and development hubs.

Continuing the legacy of proactive planning.

- Conduct a study of housing mix and affordability to create a long-term plan to ensure affordable housing within mobility and development hubs along the corridor. The study may identify tools and strategies for both incentivizing and subsidizing affordable housing.
- Work with the City of Mauldin and Greenville County to identify the most effective alignment of the Swamp Rabbit Trail through their jurisdictions.
- As the corridor begins to redevelop and transit ridership increases, revisit the 2013 BRT Feasibility Study and continue conversations with SCDOT about dedicated facilities for transit and the appropriate phasing.



Spotlight: Nashville's Parking Maximums

Nashville, TN is the latest City to enact major changes to the parking requirements in the City's zoning code. In November of 2022, the City did away with parking minimums in favor for parking maximums in the city's Urban Zoning Overlay.

[Read More Here](#)



Spotlight: MORPC's Regional Housing Strategy

Much like Greenville, Central Ohio has seen unprecedented growth over the last 10 years. This growth coupled with demographic changes and a competitive real estate market lead the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission to complete the Regional Housing Strategy. The RHS sets a vision for how housing can play a critical role in creating greater equity among Central Ohioans.

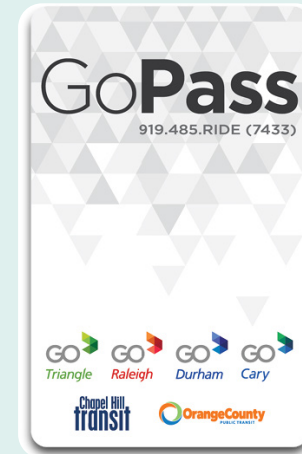
[Read More Here](#)

Building and sustaining partnerships for change.

- Promote placemaking strategies throughout the corridor as part of both public and private investments.
- Partner with major corridor employers to offer subsidized Greenlink fares or other rider incentives as part of an employee commuter benefits/ transportation demand management program.
- Convene a developer round table to coordinate potential public-private investment opportunities as development occurs.
- Partner with Greenlink and private developers to build new and enhanced bus stops as redevelopment occur.

Maintaining focus on implementation.

- Identify a reliable funding source. Realizing Laurens Road explored the use of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to finance infrastructure based on anticipated development in the proposed M+D Hubs. The development within the station areas, together with base property value appreciation, could generate a total of \$61 million in incremental property tax revenue over the next 20 years. This analysis noted that a TIF revenue bond would likely be the most suitable approach to capturing this value and supporting the infrastructure investments necessary to catalyze development.
- Continue to work with Greenlink to move forward recommendations from the 2020-2024 Transit Development Plan, including the Laurens/Woodruff and Blue Ridge/Pleasantburg/Halton routes in the corridor vicinity.

**Spotlight: GoTriangle's GoPass**

GoTriangle – the regional transit agency for the Raleigh-Durham metro – provides the opportunity for employers, property managers, and developers to offer their employees and tenants a GoPass. GoPass is free for one year on all routes with any partner agency, and then may be subsidized by the employers after the first year.

[Read More Here](#)

**Spotlight: Atlanta BeltLine TIF District**

The Atlanta Beltline transforms Atlanta's mostly abandoned freight rail corridor into a 33-mile trail and 22-mile transit corridor. The successful economic development project leverages a multitude of funding sources and partnerships, but a key tenant is a Tax Allocation District (Georgia's term for TIF). The Atlanta BeltLine project offers many similarities to the Laurens Road corridor and parallel Swamp Rabbit Trail Extension.

[Read More Here](#)

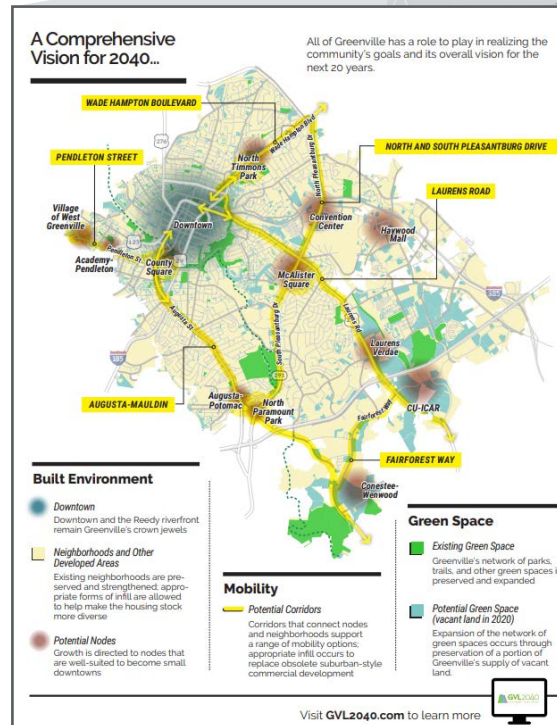
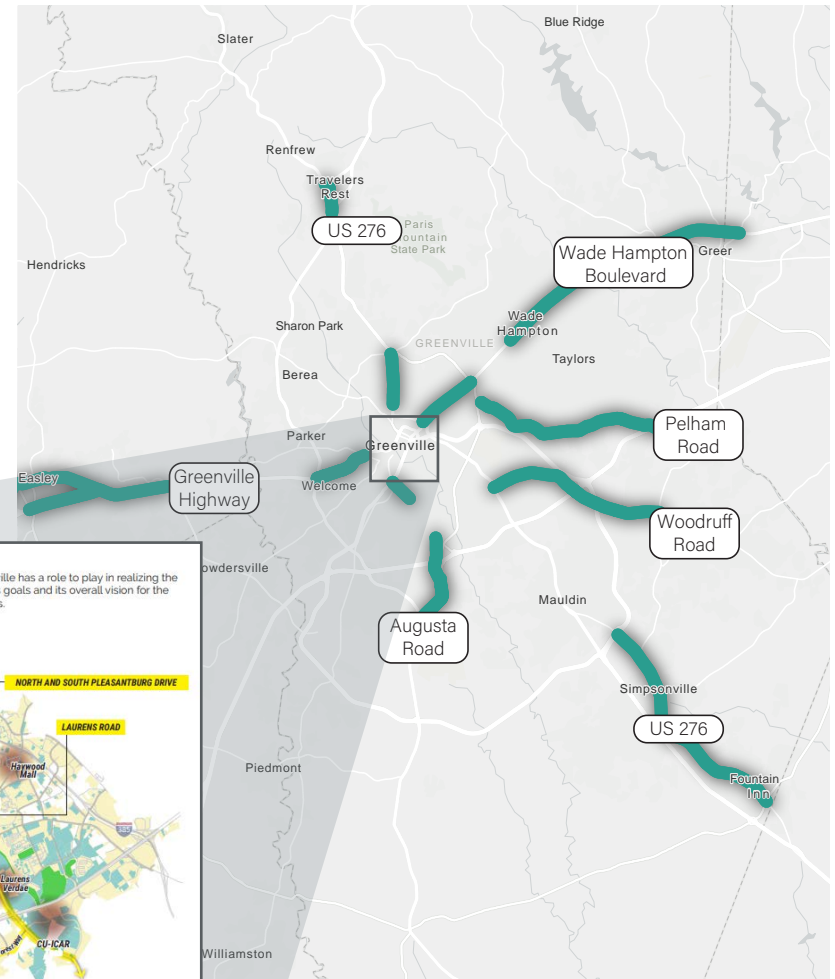
Beyond Laurens Road

Greenville County and the City of Greenville continue to attract population and employment growth. This growth will increase the pace of unwelcome trends and invite new challenges. It has the potential to raise home prices and rents, increase travel times, and consume even more open space. For this reason, the region is intent on applying the lessons learned through the Realizing Laurens Road process to similar corridors throughout the Upstate.

While the challenges brought by growth are daunting, the City and County have already begun the work necessary to create a strategy for balanced growth and infrastructure investments. The City and County's new comprehensive plans set the stage for growing in a new, more intentional way. Realizing Laurens Road builds off of the guidance established as a part of these efforts, and sets an example for other growth corridors within the City limits and connects the neighboring Greenville County jurisdictions to opportunity. These communities include:

- Wade Hampton Boulevard
- August Street
- Woodruff Road
- US 276
- Pleasantburg Drive

These corridors were discussed in previous planning efforts and with stakeholders throughout this planning process. The region should continue to work together to identify and prioritize corridors that spur economic development, reduce the need for driving, and create vibrant walkable neighborhood nodes.



Spotlight: Metropolitan Council's TOD Scoring Tool

Throughout the planning process, many stakeholders reiterated the need for Laurens Road to serve as a model for future TOD studies and investment. While many candidate corridors were identified, a critical next step is to evaluate each with regards to their suitability for TOD. One option for doing so is to mimic the methodology developed through a partnership between the Metropolitan Council in the Minneapolis/St. Paul region and the University of Minnesota.

The Metropolitan Council's **TOD Scoring Tool and Framework** leverages three primary criterion to gauge the potential for TOD, each of which and the variables that comprise them are briefly outlined below. Each station area or corridor receives four scores: Travel Behavior, Built Environment, Community Strength, and the total score. In addition to using the scores to gauge the TOD suitability, Metro Council uses the subscores to understand each location's strengths and weaknesses.



Travel Behavior

- Transit Ridership
- Vehicle Ownership
- Daily Traffic



Built Environment

- Population Density
- Intersection Density
- Housing Costs
- Bike Facilities



Community Strength

- Economic Diversity
- Racial Diversity
- Job Density
- Amenities

[Read Metropolitan Council's full TOD evaluation method here.](#)

Conclusion

Laurens Road is ideally suited to leverage transit and multimodal investments to support corridor reinvestment and vitality for residents, businesses, and visitors in the spirit of FTA's Pilot Program for TOD Planning. A fully realized TOD vision for Laurens Road would focus growth around vibrant transit stations in way that fully leverages public investment in transit. More than that, a new Laurens Road would enhance accessibility, diversify the region's housing options, stabilize property values, and induce transit-supportive sustainable growth.

But for the Upstate, it shouldn't end with Laurens Road. Greenville County and its cities and towns continue to be attractive places to live and invest. The resulting growth places new stress on affordability, convenient travel times, and the things we value—notably an enviable sense of place and abundance of open space. Realizing Laurens Road is ideally suited to set a benchmark for how the region's other growth corridors can embrace change and realize a more sustainable future for generations to come.



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Transit-Oriented Development Study