

City of Hartsville MASTER PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City of Hartsville Master Plan

The Hartsville Master Plan was made possible by a generous grant from the Byerly Foundation through the work of the Community Foundation for a Better Hartsville.

Acknowledgements

As one member of the Master Plan Steering Committee stated during the first steering committee session, “We are starting at a good place.” This master plan did start at a good place, an enviable place. Hartsville is blessed with tremendous community assets. From leadership, both elected and civic, to deeply rooted corporate citizens, from an intact downtown with thriving businesses to beautiful parks and natural resources, from a vibrant arts community to a diverse and innovative education community, Hartsville is impacting the world. The leadership within the City, particularly the Community Foundation for a Better Hartsville, values these assets, yet recognizes that the City should nurture them and be vigilant in ensuring that Hartsville remains progressive, prosperous and ready for future opportunities to grow, to attract and retain talent and jobs, and to remain a place people want to call home. The commitment of the City, the Foundation and members of the Steering Committee to the goals and success of this master plan is admirable and can position the City to become a more competitive force in building a sustainable future. Shepherding this master plan has been an honor and privilege for The Boudreaux Group team. Thank you for the opportunity.

Respectfully Submitted,

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The Steering Committee provided wonderful leadership, candid critique and thoughtful visioning toward the creation of this master plan. We are thankful for the commitment of each committee member to the process and to remain dedicated stewards of this plan.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose OF MASTER PLAN

To address the design quality and appeal of downtown and the major corridors leading into the City of Hartsville.

- 4th Street
- 5th Street/US Business 15
- Carolina Avenue
- Downtown
- Oakdale Neighborhood

Goals OF MASTER PLAN

Be a Vibrant College Town

- Recruit and retain young professionals
- Maximize use of Center Theater
- Improve downtown
- Keep Hartsville local... and promote

Provide Diverse Housing Options

- Recruit and retain young professionals
- Redevelop Oakdale Neighborhood
- Redevelop former Thornwell School

Improve Gateways and Corridors into the City

- 4th Street
- 5th Street/US Business 15
- Carolina Avenue
- College Avenue
- Enhance 6th Street Corridor

Improve Coordination among the Hartsville Community Development Foundation, Main Street Hartsville, Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, the City of Hartsville and Darlington County.

Guiding Principles OF MASTER PLAN

The following principles support the Master Plan and the Vision and should be used as a guideline for all new developments, projects and policies. For example: Does the development reflect the history of Hartsville as well as the progressive nature of the community? Do the policies support the continued revitalization of downtown? Does the project enhance the positive image and sense of community? Is the development intentionally designed to be authentic to Hartsville? Is the project sustainable (financially and environmentally)? Does the project increase the connectivity of its neighborhood to the larger context of the city? Does the project or policy advance the implementation of the Master Plan? Does the project or policy encourage and engage partnerships? Does the project or policy elevate the city as a vibrant college town? These principles are timeless and should guide the city for generations to come.

Sustain downtown Hartsville as the vibrant center of commerce, culture, intellectual and creative capital, and civic partnerships within the city and the county.

Present a positive image of Hartsville through gateways and corridor development that reflects the values of the residents, the rich history of Hartsville and the promise of the future.

Require the highest quality design in all projects and developments in order to reflect community values, to elevate the sense of place and the human spirit, and to distinguish Hartsville as an innovative city committed to increasing the prosperity of all residents.

Increase pedestrian activity by creating safe and walkable connections within town that support educational, entertainment, cultural and retail activities, encourage and sustain new downtown residential development, increase the “college town” atmosphere of downtown Hartsville, reengage people with people and people to places, and encourage life-long wellness for all residents.

Create the partnerships necessary to implement and sustain the vision and to represent the values, needs and ideals of all residents.

It used to be that January was a month for the residents of Hartsville to catch their breath from a busy holiday season. However, for the past two years, January has become the kick-off to the annual Hartsville Innovation Symposium that now draws over 500 leaders in education, entrepreneurship and the arts from across the country. This year, the International Town and Gown Association is holding its annual conference in collaboration with the symposium since Hartsville is lauded as a rising star in the top College Town rankings. The symposium began five years ago as a conference for potential investors in downtown. The response to the conference was so positive that the symposium was created as an avenue to explore and implement economic, cultural and scientific programs that can be implemented and sustained in predominantly rural areas. Hartsville is an ideal place for these discussions and provides numerous case studies for participants to experience first-hand the committed and vibrant synergy within the corporate, educational and cultural communities.

The continued collaboration among the Duke Energy Center for Innovation, Coker College, Florence-Darlington Technical College, the Governor's School for Science and Mathematics, Sonoco, Duke Energy, the Byerly Foundation, the City of Hartsville, Main Street Hartsville, Coker Farms and Darlington County makes this possible and is a testament to the spirit of community within Hartsville. This collaboration has had such a positive impact in the Pee Dee on creating jobs, increasing the high school graduation rates and inspiring residents to pursue higher education and careers in STEM-related fields as well as agriculture and creative fields.

Taking advantage of all possible clichés of its name, the City of Hartsville is banking on being the *Small Town*

with a Big Heart... a big and healthy heart. Following the symposium, residents and businesses prepare for the city's biggest festival of the year: Party Hearty in Hartsville, which takes place the week of Valentine's Day. Party Hearty in Hartsville raises awareness of and funds for heart research at the Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center. The medical center is recognized as a leader in rural wellness and health delivery, focused on lowering diabetes and heart disease in the Pee Dee. But the medical center is not alone in this. The YMCA is working closely with the medical center to encourage healthier lifestyles and exercise programs. The Y has engaged the Hartsville Polar Bear Cycling Club and athletes from Hartsville High School and Coker College to serve as captains/coaches for numerous walking, running, cycling, and weight lifting clubs for all ages. Collectively, these programs have helped lowered the incidents of diabetes and heart disease within the county over the past three years, with more success each year. Exercise and healthy eating habits are mainly responsible; however, research is showing that the sense of community and of belonging to a group contribute to the success of the wellness and health initiatives. Hartsville is one healthy place.

Party Hearty has a week of education programs such as cooking classes with local celebrity chefs. The Hartsville Young Professionals and Hartsville Polar Bear Cycling Club are sponsoring the Party Hearty Triathlon: run/walk, bike and Zumba. The city is hoping to break the world record for the largest Zumba class on the Red Foxes football field. *The Today Show* will be on hand for the gala and document the personal stories of residents who have turned around their lives. At the gala, everyone will celebrate those who have made the greatest healthy changes, the announcement of the funds raised and the crowning of the King and Queen of Hearts.

Building on the party theme, Hartsville started two other festivals to celebrate its cultural and intellectual assets.

Party Smarty is a week-long celebration of higher education and the intellectual diversity in Hartsville. As one of *Livability.com's 2018 Top 20 College Towns Under 25,000 Residents*, there is so much to celebrate. Coker College, FDTC, the Governor's School and the Duke Energy Center for Innovation have taken college town to heart and worked tirelessly with the city to promote and support this culture. People have noticed, particularly retirees looking for a small town atmosphere but still wanting access (availability and walking) to big city amenities such as vibrant restaurants and arts, a local bookstore, wellness and healthcare. and numerous opportunities for lifelong learning. *Carolina Living* magazine recently published an article on Hartsville's accolades and have documented hundreds of requests for more information on this charming college town.

One of the most exciting Party Smarty events is the Sonoco Regatta. Teams from Coker, GSSM, FDTC, HHS, Scouts and Boys and Girls Clubs design and construct boats out of Sonoco products then race across Prestwood Lake. The challenge is a way for Hartsville students to become familiar with Sonoco products, learn about innovation through collaboration and the integration of science, math, engineering, art, teamwork and good old fun. Each team has members from all schools and works together for a week to design and construct the boats. Each team also has a member of Sonoco's company to advise on the materials. The week culminates with a party at Lawton Park.

Party Artsy in Hartsville has become a much anticipated regional arts festival that celebrates the arts while raising funds to support the public art program, the Black Creek Arts Council, the Hartsville Museum,

K-12 arts programs, the Kalmia Artist-in-Residency Program, and a juried biennial art exhibit throughout the city and Coker College. The week is full of concerts, exhibits, readings, a musical review and a play at Center Theater, demonstrations and classes. Visitors love looking for the Red Foxes downtown and strolling from venue to venue. The festivities end with a costume party and prizes for those with the most outrageous and creative costumes.

There is so much to celebrate in Hartsville. These three festivals not only bring the community together to revel, but they invite so many others in to experience the city.

Second Thursdays has become one of the most popular monthly events downtown. Businesses stay open later, restaurants and galleries showcase local food, art and musicians. People stroll about downtown, dining, meeting friends for drinks and coffee, gallery browsing, and enjoying the open houses at Revolution Renaissance. You never know what to expect from this community of creative entrepreneurs. Revolution Renaissance is a new neighborhood of live|work units along Railroad Avenue. Local developers are looking for property in downtown to build more of these units in order to meet the demand from faculty, recent graduates and the numerous young professionals moving to Hartsville in search of a well-supported business, technology and arts incubator environment and a thriving community to raise families.

The Butler Heritage Foundation will celebrate the opening of Butler Village in March. Butler Village is a residential community on the grounds of the historic Butler High School for active retirees who want to serve the community by working

Vision STATEMENT

with youth in after school programs, disabled veterans and other adults looking to enhance life skills. The beautiful gardens of the Village and the renovated high school buildings will serve as living labs and classrooms for the retirees to mentor, teach, advise and build relationships. Butler Village is gaining national recognition for its intergenerational approach to building healthy neighborhoods while celebrating the heritage of the school. The Village has had a positive impact on economic development activity along 5th and 6th Streets. With 70 new residents in the Village and numerous new families moving into the surrounding neighborhood, a new grocery store has recently opened as well as a coffee shop, two locally owned restaurants and numerous professional offices.

The leadership of the city is dedicated to ensuring the city remains prosperous, safe, healthy and beautiful. This is evident at the beautiful entrances at the city limits and along the corridors leading into downtown and throughout the city. Numerous organizations and businesses have adopted these gateways and corridors and help the city care for them. The return on investments has been impressive. Downtown businesses have seen a 148% increase in business due to visitors traveling on Highway 151 and being drawn to downtown. When asked what brought them to town, visitors frequently respond with the following.

"We were so charmed by your gateways, landscaping and signage that we just had to see this town."

"We can't go to the beach without stopping for some frozen yogurt from yogART and some good beach reading from Burry's."

"We love taking home honey fried chicken and some local produce from the Market."

"I love walking around downtown and grabbing lunch."

But, first and foremost, Hartsville is a beloved hometown. Hartsville provides a wonderful, welcoming community that is grounded in the values of family, faith, life-long learning, beauty, fun, and stewardship and love for one another and the place. People no longer need incentives to move to Hartsville. Hartsville is where people want to be.

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Recommendations

This master plan was undertaken in order to address the design quality and appeal of downtown, the Oakdale Neighborhood and the major corridors leading into the City of Hartsville, specifically:

- 4th Street
- 5th Street @ 151
- College Avenue
- 5th/6th Intersection
- West Carolina @ 151

During the master planning process, the scope was adjusted to address those corridors and issues that are most pressing over the next five years. Carolina Avenue is in good shape relative to the other corridors, so was removed as a focus area. Input from the public and through focus groups illuminated the needs of the 6th Street corridor, particularly relating to the development of the Butler High School campus, the proposed enhancements of the gateway at the intersection of 5th and 6th Streets, and the efforts to complement the improvements to Pride Park.

Housing became a major challenge very early in the master planning process. While Oakdale Neighborhood is a priority development area for the City, particularly in providing housing, there is resounding support and need for more, market rate housing options, rental and purchase, within downtown. In addition to Oakdale Mill Village, the Thornwell School site and the Railroad Avenue/4th Street area are good candidates for housing redevelopment.

Implementation of this master plan will require a strong, long-term commitment by the city and by residents and the business community. In a 2008 study, *Restoring Prosperity*, the Brookings Institute identified four key elements to community revitalization. These elements, shared below, should be taken to heart by the City of Hartsville.

1. Strong leadership is essential.

Vital to the revitalization of each of these communities was strong leadership, which, self-evident as its importance may be, can't be taken for granted. In each city, civic and political leaders' willingness to come together to develop and implement a bold vision for recovery was the key driver of change. Without such leadership, these cities would have been unable to move beyond the parochialism, conflict, and inertia that continue to weigh many older industrial regions down.

2. Success requires vision and planning.

While serendipity and luck are often cited as important, if underrated, components of economic success, bold vision and a clear strategy are stronger bets. In all three of these communities, strong leadership was manifested in the creation and implementation of a defined vision and plan for reaching it—whether focused on transforming the physical landscape, as in Chattanooga, uniting the political and economic region, as in Louisville, or promoting better cooperation among the city, its suburbs, and the broader region, as in Akron.

3. You're all in it together now.

Strong leadership comes in many forms, and emerges most forcefully when leaders from different sectors work with one another toward common goals. These communities were able to turn their best laid plans into concrete actions—and concrete successes—because business, government, and the non-profit communities all recognized the dire need to change their city's current trajectory, and put their respective strengths to work, collaboratively, for change.

4. Place matters—take advantage of it.

The history of where, why, and how cities grew as they did provides an important backdrop to their present economic, cultural, and social development. Just as cities can overcome the disadvantages of place—limited water supply, cold weather, earthquakes—so, too, must they recognize, and maximize, the advantages. Each of these cities has made capitalizing on their respective assets—the river in Chattanooga, the central location of Louisville, expertise in polymer chemistry in Akron, and downtown core of all three—a principal part of their recovery.

This master plan is a roadmap for how the city can develop in order to meet the vision and goals of the community. The plan should guide decisions, particularly through the integration of the Guiding Principles. The plan also should allow for flexibility and updates (every three to five years) to respond to changes in business and industry, the needs of other areas of the city, capital projects investments or yet-to-be-imagined projects and opportunities. In the end, the plan is about how to make the City of Hartsville an even more authentic, beautiful and prosperous place for people to live, work, play and visit.

PHASE I

MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

IMMEDIATE PROJECTS

(one to six months)

- Present to Planning Commission for review and support
- City Council Retreat to Address Master Plan Recommendations: budget, ownership and stewardship of each strategy
- Work with Butler Heritage Foundation to plan redevelopment of the Butler campus
- Organize group to address and redevelop the site at the intersection of 5th, 6th and Lawton Streets
- Gateway: Virtual - website coordination
- Develop and Implement Knowledge Branding that promotes Hartsville as a knowledge and higher education community
- Stripe Pedestrian Crossings at College Avenue and 4th Street
- Review CFBH bylaws to insure it can function as a Community Development Corporation (CDC)
- Celebrate Progress

THREE TO NINE MONTHS START

Economic Strategies

- Create a working cultural collaborative among the City of Hartsville, Main Street Hartsville, the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce, Coker College, and the Black Creek Arts Council
- Establish a strong partnership with Darlington County to implement master plan
- Identify and Promote Heart of Downtown
- Create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in downtown to help stimulate new investment through infrastructure investment and utilize the existing MCBP to enhance downtown development.
- Create an Entrepreneurial Culture by supporting and encouraging the cooperation of the Duke Energy Center for Innovation with the network of young professionals at existing partners including Coker, GSSM, Sonoco, FDTC, the Greater Hartsville Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups as well as integration with the existing academic programs at Coker, the GSSM and Hartsville High School with the Duke Energy Center for Innovation.
- Work with businesses in heart of downtown to establish “college town” hours and services.
- Stimulate additional housing opportunities in the downtown area, the City should review its building codes and regulations to determine if any could be amended to foster new housing development – in partnership with the CFBH/CDC and local banks.

Oakdale Village

- Initiate Housing Development: market to developers or issue an RFP for developers
- Close access to Dove Street from Easy Street (*in process*)

Gateways

- 151 @ West Carolina Avenue
- City Limits @ South 5th/6th Streets
- North 5th Street

Corridor Development

- College Avenue, North 5th Street to South 4th Street

Community Development

- Create an annual back to school celebration for Coker College, GSSM, FDTC and Hartsville K-12 schools
- Engage the Hartsville Young Professionals, particularly as new community leaders
- Create a working “Co-Creator” group to implement the master plan
- Establish and promote a pedestrian friendly/walking route in downtown
- Establish a comprehensive recognition and promotion program for students and faculty

Update Master Plan and Celebrate Progress

PHASE 2

Economic Strategies

- Develop incentive and marketing program for co-working spaces in downtown
- Focus on growing retail, dining and entertainment businesses downtown
- Promote and support outdoor recreational opportunities such as cycling, kayaking, fishing
- Maximize use of the Center Theater
- Host a Downtown Business Summit: *Becoming a College Town and a Life-Long Learning Community*
- Work with the Duke Energy Center for Innovation and local realtors to develop a web-based housing service
- Promote and support the redevelopment of the former Thornwell School

Gateways

- 4th Street @ South Marquis Highway
- 5th Street @ South Marquis Highway
- 151 @ South 5th Street
- West Carolina Avenue @ West Home Avenue Traffic Circle
- 151 @ 14th Street

Corridor Development

- 5th Street between 6th Street and Washington Street
- Complete Street Grid - new street from McNair Avenue to Easy Street

Community Development

- Support the update of the Coker College Master Plan
- Create an "I am Hartsville" campaign

Update Master Plan and Celebrate Progress

PHASE 3

Economic Strategies

- Create Housing Development Opportunities for 4th Street, Chinaberry and Railroad Avenue area

Gateways

- 151 @ Kelleytown Road
- 151 @ Shaw Drive
- 151 @ 4th Street

Corridor Development

- Coker Avenue between 4th Street and Railroad Avenue with intersection improvements

Update Master Plan and Celebrate Progress