



The Sumter Connectivity Initiative

Manning Avenue / North Main Street Corridor
TIGER VIII Grant Application 2016



CREATING ACCESS TO EVERYTHING.

Total Project Cost:	\$26,333,713
Matching Funding:	\$7,500,000
Grant Requested:	\$18,833,713

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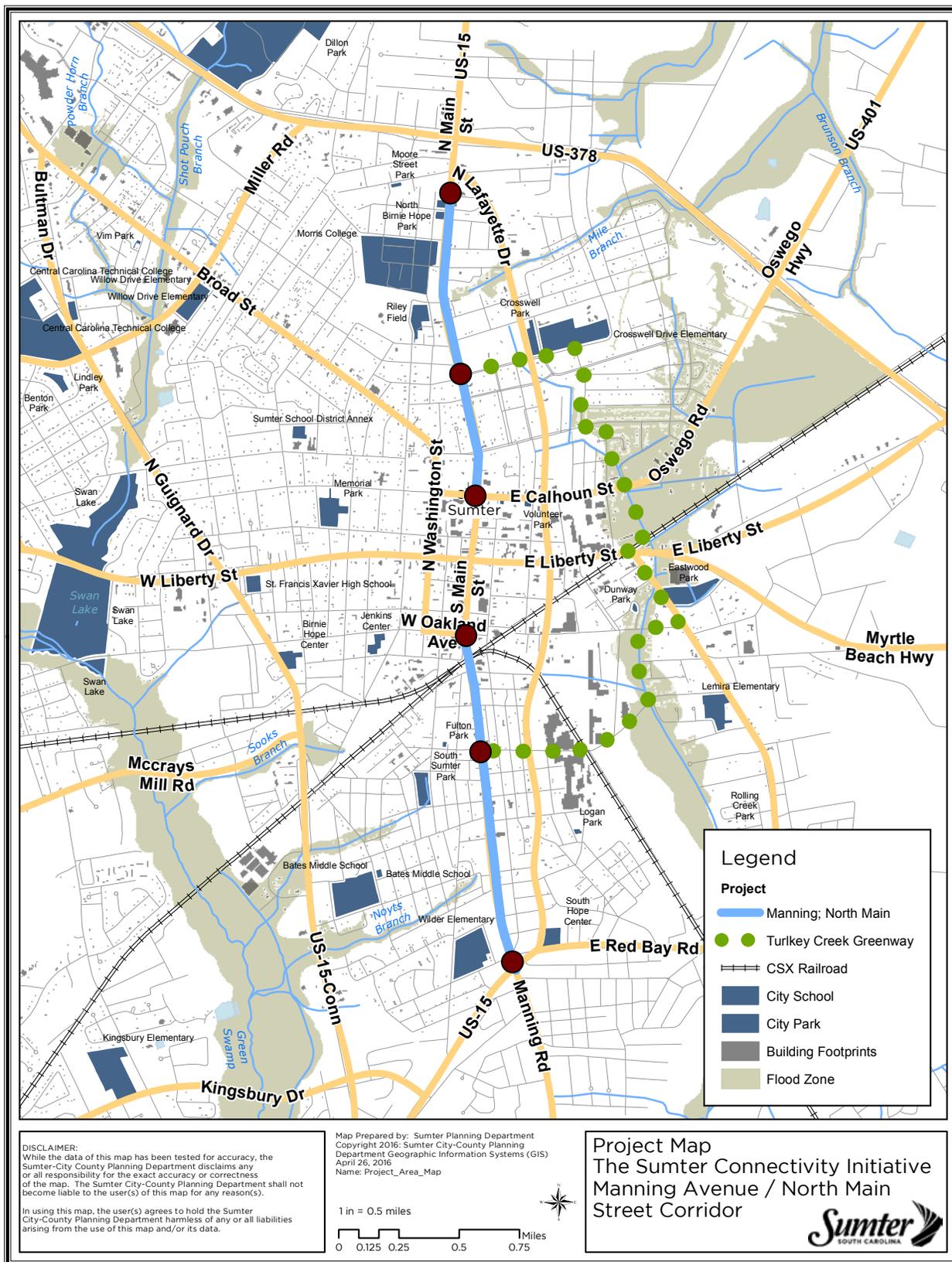
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Cost of Project: \$26,333,713

Grant Request: \$18,833,713

Local Match: \$7,500,000

Cover Photo: The Railroad Yard from South Sumter Street, looking towards the Manning Avenue Bridge.



PROJECT

The Sumter Connectivity Initiative is a Complete Streets and Greenway project connecting neighborhoods along the Manning Avenue and North Main Street corridors to downtown Sumter. The Initiative improves access to jobs and services for the community, and transforms the corridor both functionally and aesthetically, to encourage economic investment. It introduces transit, pedestrian and bicycle elements and corridor design attractive to business. The 3.5 mile project creates ladders of opportunity and expands access to job opportunities for a traditionally underserved population. It transforms a car dominated corridor into one that serves multiple transportation interests, elevating pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and ADA users to a more equal footing. The Initiative removes barriers and creates transportation options in an underserved, predominantly African-American, low- to moderate-income area of the City. The new greenway, part of a planned, citywide trail network, links the corridor with residents to the east, along Turkey Creek. The project builds upon two locally funded intersection construction projects at each end of the corridor—the Lafayette Interchange Project at North Main Street and the 378 Bypass, and the Southern Gateway Intersection Project at Manning Avenue and Lafayette Drive.

The 3.5 mile corridor project will:

- Introduce Complete Street elements to Manning Avenue and North Main Street.
- Install 24 bus shelters and 10 bus stop signs in the project area.
- Construct/Reconstruct sidewalks, and plant street trees within verge area.
- Construct multimodal paths along the corridor, as well as bicycle lanes, where right of way width allows their installation.
- Remove continuous center lane and replace with a planted median.
- Rehabilitate the Manning Avenue Bridge and make it more accommodating to bicycles and pedestrians.
- Relocate or place existing utilities underground where feasible.
- Rehabilitate existing intersections with pedestrian crosswalks and ADA elements, mast arms, lighting, and rebuild nonconforming ADA ramps and crossings.
- Construct the Turkey Creek Greenway, safely connecting multiple neighborhoods, schools and community centers to the project.
- Create a partnership between local government, the technical college and other stakeholders to facilitate entrepreneurship and workforce development in the downtown and project area.

Right: The Manning Avenue Corridor Plan¹⁷, drawn by the LandPlan Group South (2013) provides the basis for the design concept outlined here.



See Attachment 17 - Manning Avenue Corridor Plan, by LandPlan Group South 2013.

Project Vision



Dirt trail leading to Manning Avenue from beneath the bridge and the rail yard. This is a heavily traveled pedestrian traffic area, despite its substandard pedestrian infrastructure.

The Initiative seeks to connect North Main Street, Turkey Creek, and Manning Avenue by linking dozens of neighborhoods, schools, Morris College, and downtown Sumter. The project area needs infrastructure investment that addresses failures of the existing facilities. Today it is a predominantly car-centric environment, and this project shifts focus to a multi-modal system where pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorized vehicles co-exist in relative safety and harmony.

There are multiple barriers to connecting South Sumter with the rest of the community to the north. The most significant barrier to overcome in this Connectivity Initiative is between the disconnected neighborhoods of South Sumter

and downtown. South Sumter - reached by the Manning Avenue Bridge, which crosses over a railroad switching yard - is completely separated from the rest of the City. South Sumter is quite literally on “the other side of the tracks”.

Currently the most direct way to access the neighborhoods of South Sumter without crossing over railroad tracks is via the Manning Avenue Bridge. While the bridge makes accommodation for pedestrian users, the design of the walk-ways feels unsafe and offers little protection from oncoming traffic. This is underscored by the fact that many people choose to walk underneath the bridge and across the railroad tracks when traveling to or from the downtown area. The railroad barrier is significant, not only because of the danger in crossing tracks, but also because of the desolate, under-utilized industrial areas that surround the rail yard. These areas are not pedestrian friendly.

The Connectivity Initiative removes many of these barriers, and will create better access to work, education, shopping and recreation, all without ever having to get into a car. The Initiative is a vital step in transforming the Manning Avenue and North Main Street Corridor into vibrant Complete Streets for Sumter residents by introducing safe pedestrian and cycling elements while implementing corridor design elements attractive to new private investment. More to the point, it connects these three areas to the downtown, a major employment node, which is the center for healthcare, social services, legal services, and local government in the community. Downtown Sumter is also home to the regional public transit hub—the James E. Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center. Enhanced transit infrastructure connects the underserved communities around these corridors to employment and education opportunities both within and outside the scope of the project area.



Project Context

The City of Sumter is the seat of and the largest city in Sumter County, with a population of 40,929 (2015). It is the eighth largest metropolitan area in the State of South Carolina. Sumter is located in the midlands region, between the capital City of Columbia and coastal destinations like Myrtle Beach and Charleston.

The project connects to several important transportation networks: US Hwy 378 Bypass that connects South Carolina’s capital, Columbia, with both I-95 and Myrtle Beach, a very important tourist destination; Hwy. 521, which serves not only as a truck route between I-20 and I-95, but also locally connects to Continental Tire, a major employer. US Hwy 15, which becomes this corridor within the city, connects to the town of Bishopville to the north, and to an Industrial Park and several other major local employers to the south.

The Sumter Connectivity Initiative focuses on providing better connections between the project area and the historic downtown, a major employment and activity center. In recent years Sumter has invested significantly in improving downtown with the installation of streetscape improvements such as mast arm traffic lights, decorative pavement, landscaping, and lighting. The transformation of downtown resonates most with those residents who remember the vacant, somewhat unsafe environment that

existed before revitalization, and to those who remember its vibrant heyday.



Photo of Downtown Market on a Saturday morning.

Downtown

Downtown Sumter is a charming, walkable destination with several pubs and restaurants, pocket parks, historic architecture, and even some original brick streets. The Downtown district is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.¹ Several major employers including Palmetto Tuomey Regional Hospital, Central Carolina Technical College’s Nursing School, and the City of Sumter’s government offices make the downtown a vibrant and rapidly evolving part of the Sumter Community.

Across from the historic Sumter Opera House, which serves as Sumter’s City Hall and a concert venue that attracts nationally known artists, is an open space where a 92 room boutique hotel is to be built. Infill redevelopment and adaptive reuse of historic buildings has been a downtown development strategy for many years. Construction of the new hotel is planned to begin this summer, adding to the redevelopment momentum in the central part of the City that began in the early 2000s with the opening of the James E. Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center on Telephone Street, and the opening of Central Carolina Technical College’s School of Nursing on South Main Street.



Man waiting for bus downtown. Installing bus shelters is an important component of this project.



Several new restaurants have recently opened downtown.



Central Carolina Technical College Nursing School

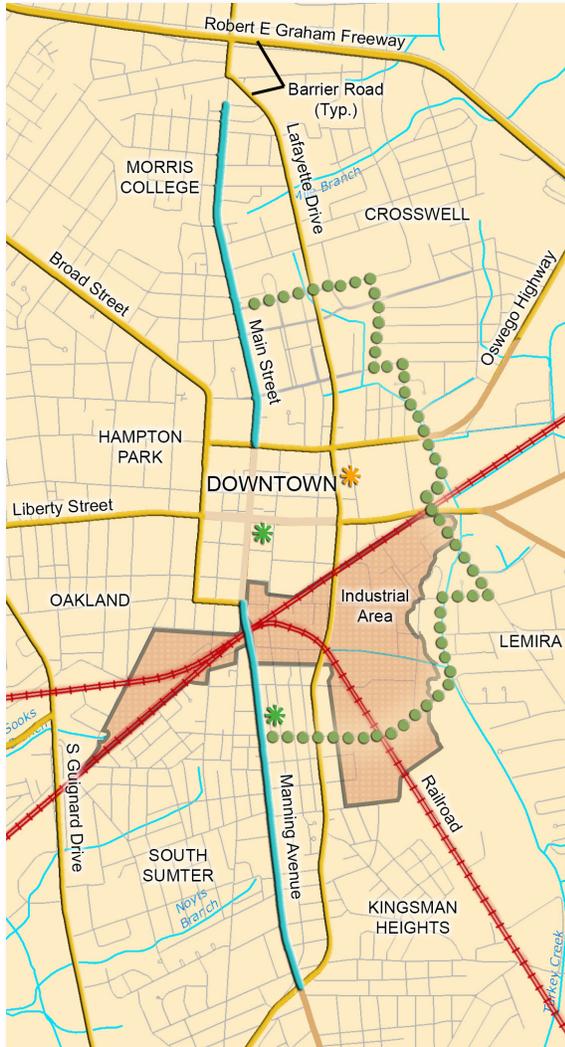


Above: A new high-end menswear store and several other boutique retail establishments indicate downtown is turning a corner and becoming a shopping destination.



Left: Open space where construction of hotel begins in summer 2016.

See Attachment 1 - Historic Resources of Sumter map.



KEY

-  Turkey Creek Greenway
-  Manning Avenue & North Main Street Corridors
-  Railroad Tracks represent a significant barrier to pedestrian and bike traffic throughout the City.
-  Three- to five-lane roads with minimal verges and no traffic calming, and numerous curb cuts that kill walkability.
-  Desolate industrial areas and the rail yard further disconnect the South Sumter community from downtown.
-  Farmer's Markets
-  Grocery Store

Barriers

The primary barriers for pedestrians and cyclists in the project areas are railroads, outdated four-lane roads with excessive curb cuts, long bridge expanses, narrow or dilapidated sidewalks, decrepit or nonexistent ADA facilities, and roads through desolate, industrial areas (see map). The aged infrastructure was clearly designed long ago for cars, not people. These elements create a hostile walking and cycling environment that ranges from unfriendly to completely impassable.

The demographics of this part of Sumter include the highest poverty rates in the City, the lowest median income, the highest proportion of minority populations, the highest unemployment, the highest percentage of residents without dependable access to a car, and the highest non-car commute mode share (despite unfriendly infrastructure).

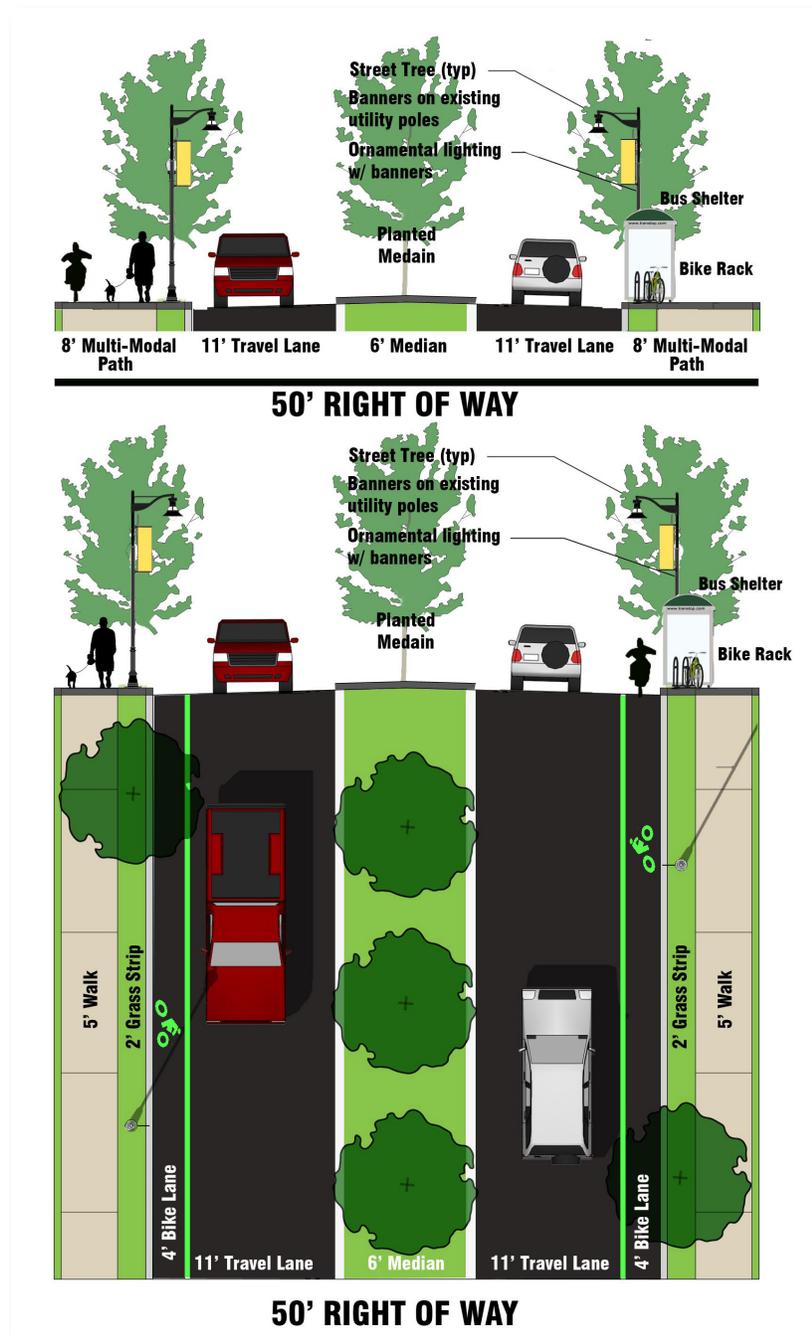
The Manning Avenue bridge is the only direct pedestrian accessible method of crossing the railroad yard from downtown to South Sumter. It is also the only bridge over the railroad tracks for 0.9 miles west (Guignard Drive) and 0.4 miles east (Lafayette Drive). Crossing at Guignard and Lafayette is also undesirable from a pedestrian perspective.

One of the big obstacles in the project area is access to groceries. South Sumter is a food desert. The nearest full size grocery stores are shown on the map (left), and the Farmer's Markets are seasonal. The downtown market operates in the spring and summer and the South Sumter market operates in the fall. Other stores such as convenience stores and general stores (such as Dollar General) do not typically offer fresh produce or healthy food options. Many residents of south Sumter have been observed walking across the bridge or railroad yard carrying bags of groceries.

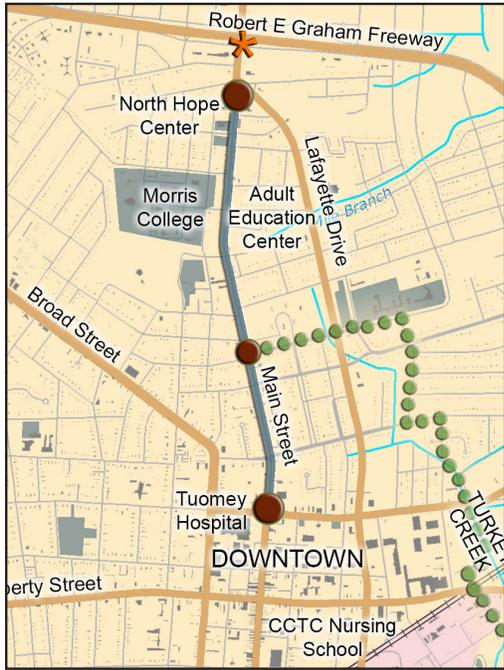
Two of the census tracts encompassing the project area are food deserts, according to the USDA Food Access Map. They are classified as food deserts because they are low income areas where a significant number of residents are greater than 1 mile from the nearest supermarket.

Complete Streets

The Sumter Connectivity Initiative will implement a Complete Streets design philosophy along both North Main Street and Manning Avenue, to include planted medians as well as tree-lined verges on either side for traffic calming, a combination of sidewalks, bicycle paths and multimodal paths depending on available right of way, and integrated transit infrastructure. The intersections will see improvements like what has already been implemented in Downtown Sumter, with mast arms, crosswalks and lighting. The entire project area will provide a variety of mobility options, to replace today's car-dominated environment.



Two cross-sections showing either the bicycle lane option (bottom) or the multimodal path option (top) to be used interchangeably in the project. Both options meet ADA standards, and both have verge on both sides, street trees, and median plantings for a 50 foot right of way. These models are applicable on Manning Avenue and North Main Street.



Proposed Complete Street (Green Line) and Greenway (Green Dots)



Sylvester walks everywhere. He lives off Boulevard Road, and walked to the North Hope Center for a class on the day this picture was taken. This is a distance of anywhere from 2 to 6 miles, depending on where on Boulevard he lives. And the route crosses Lafayette, the railroad tracks and some very busy, unwalkable areas. This project would make his walk much safer and more enjoyable.

North Main Street

North Main Street is home to Morris College, the North Hope Center, the Sumter County School District Adult Education Center, and Historic Riley Park. The new linkages created by this project will create better access to campus for Morris students, faculty and staff. All the surrounding neighborhoods will be able to reach amenities along the corridor, and of course the downtown, much more easily. New bus shelters will enhance transit service in the area and further expand connectivity, to the rest of the city and beyond.

This portion of the project builds on the \$6 million Lafayette Intersection Project (indicated by yellow star) that is about to begin construction. The Connectivity Initiative proposes a new “Complete Street” along North Main Street, with the following components:

- 2 Pedestrian Crossings with warning signals, at Morris College and at Crosswell Street, where the Turkey Creek Greenway begins.
- 6 bus shelters and 4 bus stop signs.
- A planted central median.
- Multimodal paths and sidewalks on either side of street.
- Landscaping, including street trees and trees in the median for traffic calming.
- Lighting, and relocating or undergrounding of utilities, where feasible.



One of several abandoned commercial sites along the corridor.

North Main Street



North Main Street at Morris College existing condition: no sidewalk east side, no curb or verge, utilities in road.



Photo modification showing complete street with planted median, street trees, and multimodal paths on both sides.

Morris College has an internship program supported by several businesses in downtown Sumter. The complete streets project will facilitate students getting to downtown for internship opportunities, and other part-time employment more easily. Many students, staff and faculty of the school live nearby and will be able to more safely walk, cycle, or take the bus to campus when this project is complete.

Manning Avenue & Bridge

Manning Avenue connects South Sumter to Downtown - the cultural, institutional, educational, transportation, legal, and healthcare hub of Sumter. Residents who live along the portion of the corridor south of the bridge are quite literally living on the other side of the tracks. A significant CSX train switching and track node separates South Sumter from Downtown. There is no other dedicated pedestrian access to downtown from South Sumter, other than the Manning Avenue Bridge, and the sidewalks on the existing bridge are narrow and dangerous.

The railroad tracks are a physical barrier. The Manning Avenue Bridge is a circa 1940 steel and concrete structure described by the State Department of Transportation (SCDOT) as “structurally deficient and functionally obsolete” in a June 2013 report.² The project includes match funding to rehabilitate this bridge. Rehabilitation will require a structural solution, lead paint removal, and concrete repairs. Moreover, the bridge requires significant pedestrian and bicycle upgrades. The existing 3 foot high rail with raised, adjacent sidewalk is patently unsafe today.

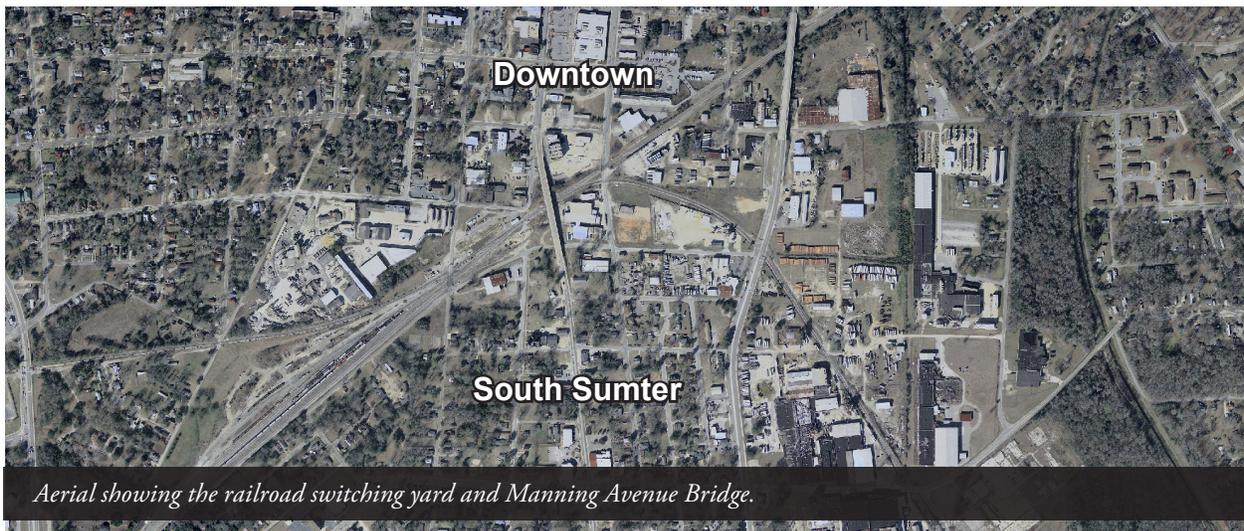
The tracks are also a psychological barrier. The desolate, industrial environment, the noise of the trains, and the safety risk all contribute to the neglected, hazardous aura of the rail yard. For those people on foot or riding a bicycle who do not have access to a car, South Sumter and Downtown are so close, yet so far.



Manning Avenue Bridge

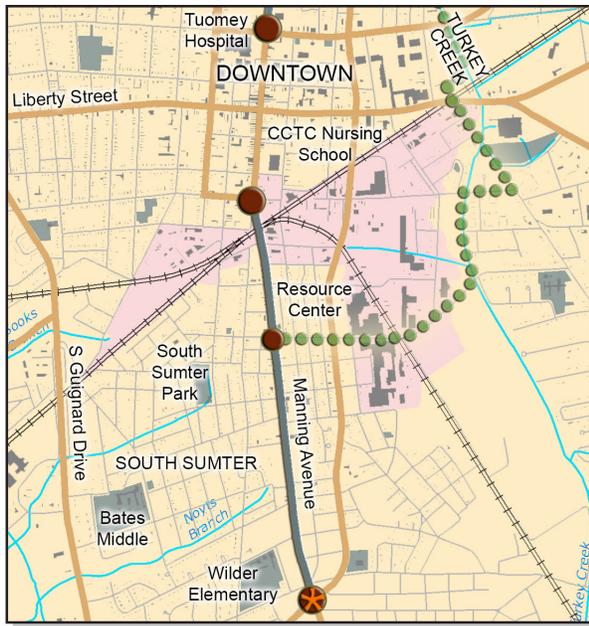


Area under Manning Avenue Bridge where many people cross the railroad tracks on foot every day. The narrow, unsafe bridge above is probably seen as much less desirable for pedestrians than the railroad switching yard.



Aerial showing the railroad switching yard and Manning Avenue Bridge.

See Attachment 2 - Plans, Specifications, and Supporting Document for Manning Avenue (S-152) Bridge Rehabilitation, June 2013.



Green Line: Proposed Complete Street

Green Dots: Greenway

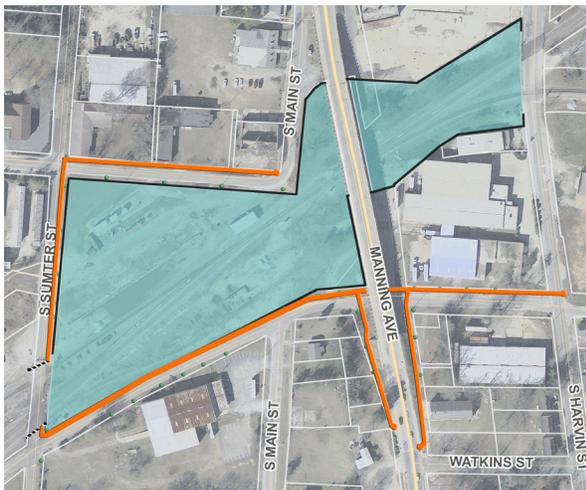
Lavender: Industrial Area & Rail Yard

Yellow Star: Southern Gateway Intersection Project

Manning Avenue & Bridge

The South Sumter Resource Center, schools, several parks, and several neighborhoods call South Sumter home. This portion of the project builds on the \$1,020,252 Southern Gateway Intersection Project (indicated by yellow star) that is about to begin construction. The Connectivity Initiative proposes a new “Complete Street” along Manning Avenue, as well as a rehabilitation project for the Manning Avenue Bridge, with the following components:

- 3 Pedestrian Crossings with warning signals.
- 10 bus shelters.
- A planted central 6 foot median.
- A combination of multimodal paths, sidewalks and bike paths on both sides of street.
- Landscaping, including street trees and trees in the median for traffic calming.
- Lighting, and relocating or undergrounding the utilities, where feasible



Concept for improving the rail yard, with street trees, paths on either side of the bridge (orange), and fencing (black) to keep people from crossing indiscriminately. Pedestrian traffic will be routed to either the bridge, South Sumter Street or Harvin Street. Railroad crossing arms are recommended for South Sumter Street.



Woman waiting for bus on Manning Avenue. There are no bus stop signs or bus shelters at this time along the corridor. People just “know where to stand”.

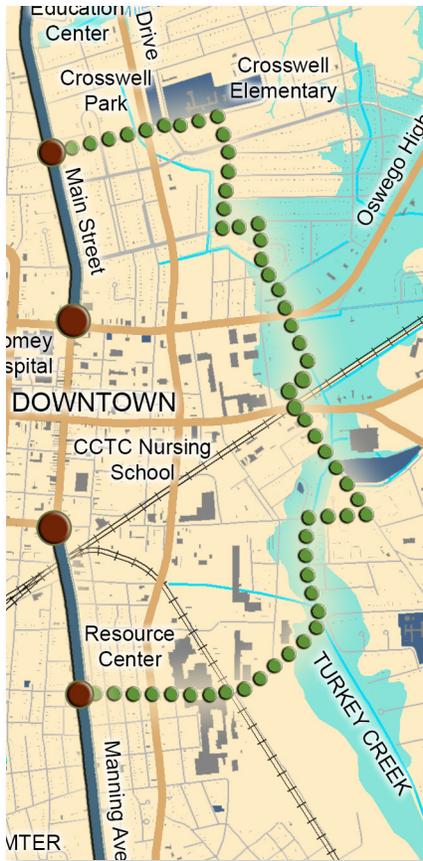
Manning Avenue & Bridge



Top: Current photo of intersection at Manning Avenue and Fulton Street.

Above: Photo modification showing complete street with planted median, bike lanes, street trees and multimodal paths on both sides. A combination of bicycle lanes and multimodal paths will be used within the existing 50 foot right of way.

Left: Pedestrians, including children, cross the street along Manning Avenue wherever they can at this time, and have few choices about where to safely do so.



Green dots indicate path of greenway



Turkey Creek current photos

Turkey Creek Greenway

The project will also create a Greenway Loop along Turkey Creek and install other Complete Street connections to the North Main Street / Manning Avenue Corridor along streets including, but not limited to Fulton Street, Bartlette Street, and Harvin Street. This greenway will be a component of a larger network of trails planned for the entire City, including Shot Pouch Creek Greenway, also approved as part of the 2016 Capital Project Sales Tax (or “Penny”, see attachment 12).

As proposed, the Turkey Creek Greenway begins at North Main Street near Morris College, and crosses Lafayette Boulevard to link Turkey Creek and the surrounding neighborhoods to downtown Sumter. It connects Crosswell Elementary School, East Calhoun Street, Boulevard Road, and Fulton Streets, and ends on Manning Avenue near Lemira and Wilder Elementary Schools. This area of Sumter is currently marked by older neighborhoods with aged infrastructure and some blight. There are numerous sites with potential for adaptive reuse and redevelopment, as well as some brownfield sites which, in combination with the demographics of the region, indicate a pressing need for environmental justice projects. The greenway opens the door for future redevelopment along this stretch of Turkey Creek. Additionally, much of the Crosswell neighborhood is in the floodplain. Strategies for mitigating some of the flood impacts in the area through constructed wetlands have been discussed. This greenway will open up educational potential and provide access to nature for the citizens of Sumter. Bus shelters and stops in close proximity to the greenway will further enhance connectivity in the area and provide additional access to employment and other destinations. The greenway will make crossing Lafayette Street safer, at Crosswell Elementary and the South Sumter Resource Center in particular.



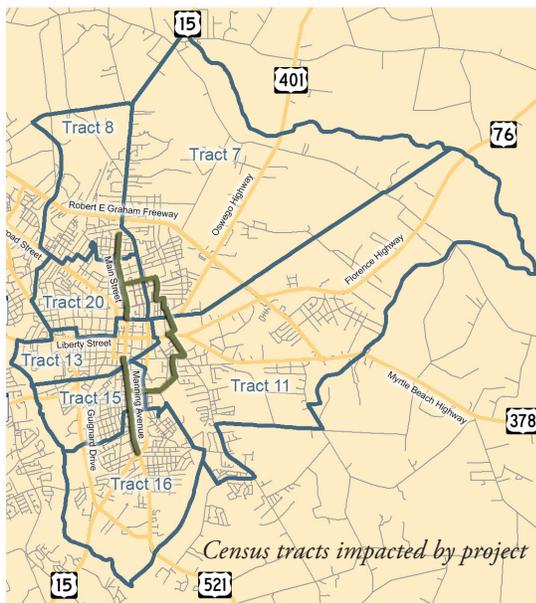
Photo modification portraying greenway

DEMOGRAPHICS

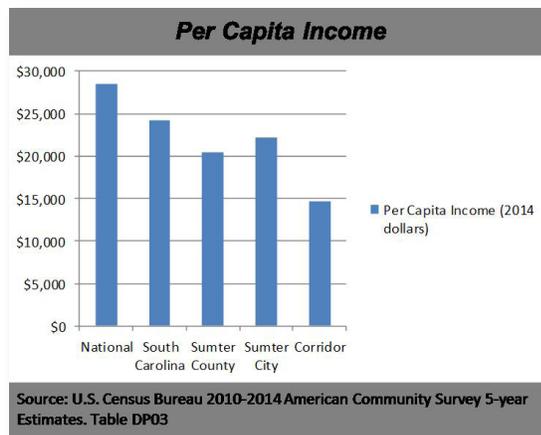


Many dilapidated, vacant commercial sites currently line the corridor.

In 2014 the City population was 40,819, and in 2015 the population was 40,929. Sixty-two percent (62%, or 25,301) of the City’s residents live within the census tracts along the project corridor, according to the 2014 American Community Survey. Citywide the poverty rate hovers just above 20%, higher than the state and national averages. In the Census tracts along the project corridor, the poverty rate surges to 32%. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the City’s African American population lives along this corridor. The per capita income within the corridor is \$14,648, just over half the national average.³



The project area’s two poorest Census Tracts, 13 and 15, have a significantly higher transit/bicycle/walk commute share than the state and county. Census Tract 15, the project area’s poorest Census Tract, has a transit/bicycle/walk commute share that is more than 8 times higher than that of the County. Also, the high walk share for Census Tract 20 reflects its proximity to downtown and commercial corridors, the relative lack of pedestrian barriers between its neighborhoods and Downtown, and its pre-WWII urban fabric, which includes sidewalks on most streets. The high walk share for Census Tract 15 probably reflects lack of options rather than ideal infrastructure.^{3A}



The neighborhoods contain a great number of distressed properties—vacant, dilapidated, or abandoned. The City of Sumter contains an estimated 1,721 vacant residential parcels and 1,150 vacant residential structures. Of the 1,150 vacant structures, 932 are located in the project corridor. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the vacant residential structures in the project area are in poor or hazardous condition.⁴ There are dozens of vacant and dilapidated commercial parcels in this corridor as well. The neighborhoods lack the multimodal options necessary to connect with jobs, services, healthcare, and shipping opportunities. This is a marginalized corridor, in decades of full decline.

See Attachments 3 and 3A - Demographic data analysis from the U.S. Census, American Community Survey (3A is based on 2013 ACS Data)
 See Attachment 4 - City of Sumter 2014 Abandoned Housing Survey.

PUBLIC INPUT

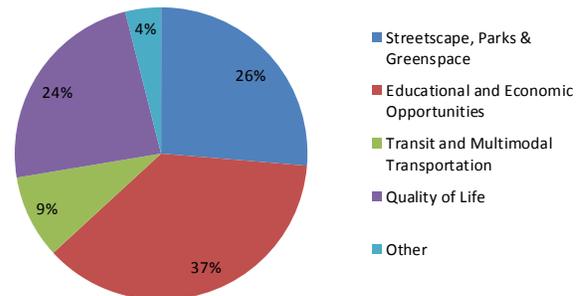
Public input sessions were held along the corridor to gauge community desires/needs in relation to the proposed project. In South Sumter, sessions were held at the South Sumter Resource Center and at Festival on the Avenue. North Main input sessions were at the North Hope Center and Morris College.

South Sumter/Manning Avenue Corridor:

South Sumter residents desire safer streets, better sidewalks, street lighting and recreational facilities. The consensus was that creating a safer, more pedestrian friendly environment and addressing quality of life issues could spur opportunities for private investment and business development in the area. Additionally, such improvements would lead to making the area attractive for more public events. The community also desires a “gateway” landscape and additional parks and recreational areas to help define community identity and further contribute to quality of life.

Other desired improvements/amenities include:

- Community Gardens and Parks
- Youth center
- Employment opportunities
- Bike racks
- A vocational technical school
- Trash receptacles, Water fountains



A total of 76 respondents desired amenities along the corridor as shown in this pie chart.

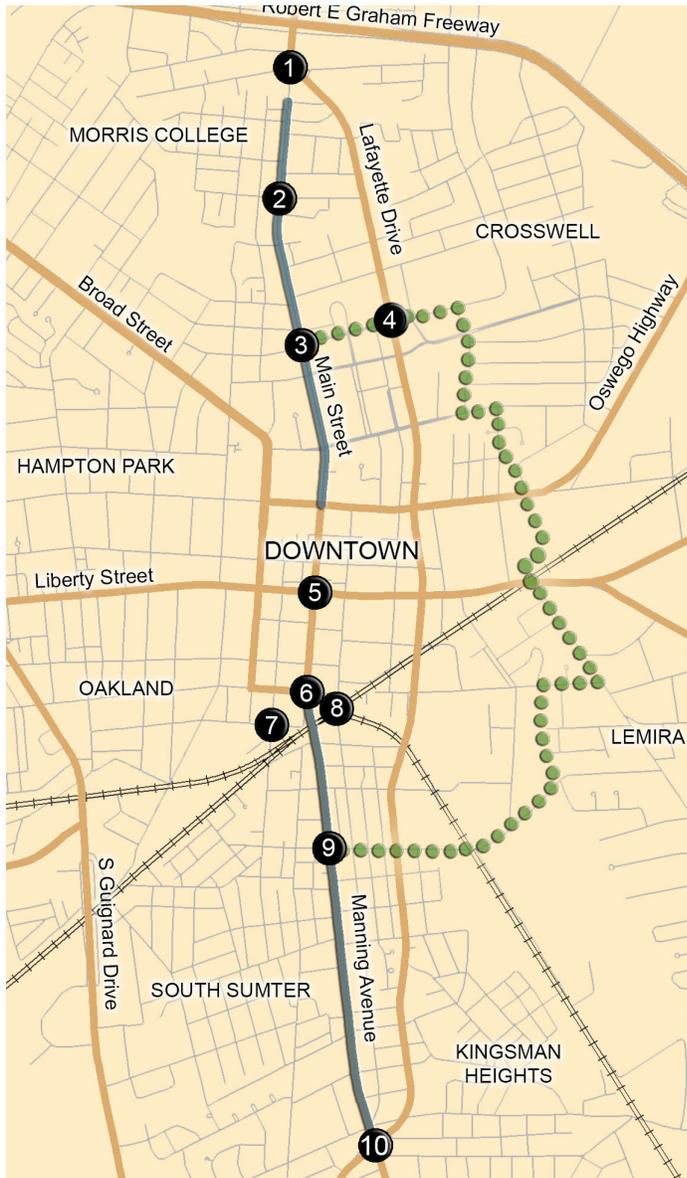
North Main Street Corridor:

Respondents in the North Main Street corridor emphasized the need for improved bus stop locations including the need for signage, benches, and shelters where possible. In addition, North Main Street residents desire:

- Activity center for the elderly
- Employment Opportunities
- Safer Sidewalks, Streetlights, Hiking/Biking Trails
- Community Fitness Facility, Community events

Morris College students are unique transit consumers. 644 of the 802 students reside on campus. The remaining 158 students live off-campus and commute daily. Students living on campus use SWRTA bus service as a primary means of transportation to employment (internships) in the Downtown as well as for access to shopping along the Broad Street corridor to the west. Many Morris College students also frequently walk to nearby retail establishments. Safer, better designed pedestrian facilities to include wider sidewalks, street lighting, and safer street crossings are of primary concern to the existing student population.

BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN COUNTS



Bicycle and Pedestrian Counts⁵ were taken at various locations along the corridor, to assess current users' needs. Counting was done in one hour segments throughout the day, see graph below:

- Blue: 7:30-8:30 am
- Red: 12:00 - 1:00 pm
- Green: 4:30-5:30 pm

The counts were held on Tuesdays and Thursdays in April. The times were chosen to encompass those walking or cycling to work or school.



Estimated Pedestrian /Bicyclist volume during one hour peak period*			
Location	AM Peak Hour	Mid-day Peak Hour	PM Peak Hour
North Main Street & N Lafayette Drive	6	58	54
North Main Street & College Street	16	29	16
North Main Street & Crosswell Drive	11	6	20
Crosswell Drive and N Lafayette Drive	33	82	38
Main Street & Liberty Street (Downtown)	11	33	38
South Main Street & Oakland Avenue	6	11	29
S Sumter Street and Dingle Street	20	54	46
South Harvin Street & Railroad	25	29	11
Manning Avenue & Fulton Street	33	70	74
Manning Avenue & Lafayette Drive	62	50	38

**the estimated pedestrian and bicyclist volume is based upon FHWA short count expansion technique (the highest 15 minute interval selected).*

See Attachment 5 - Sumter City-County Planning Department Bicycle Pedestrian Count for TIGER project, April 2015.

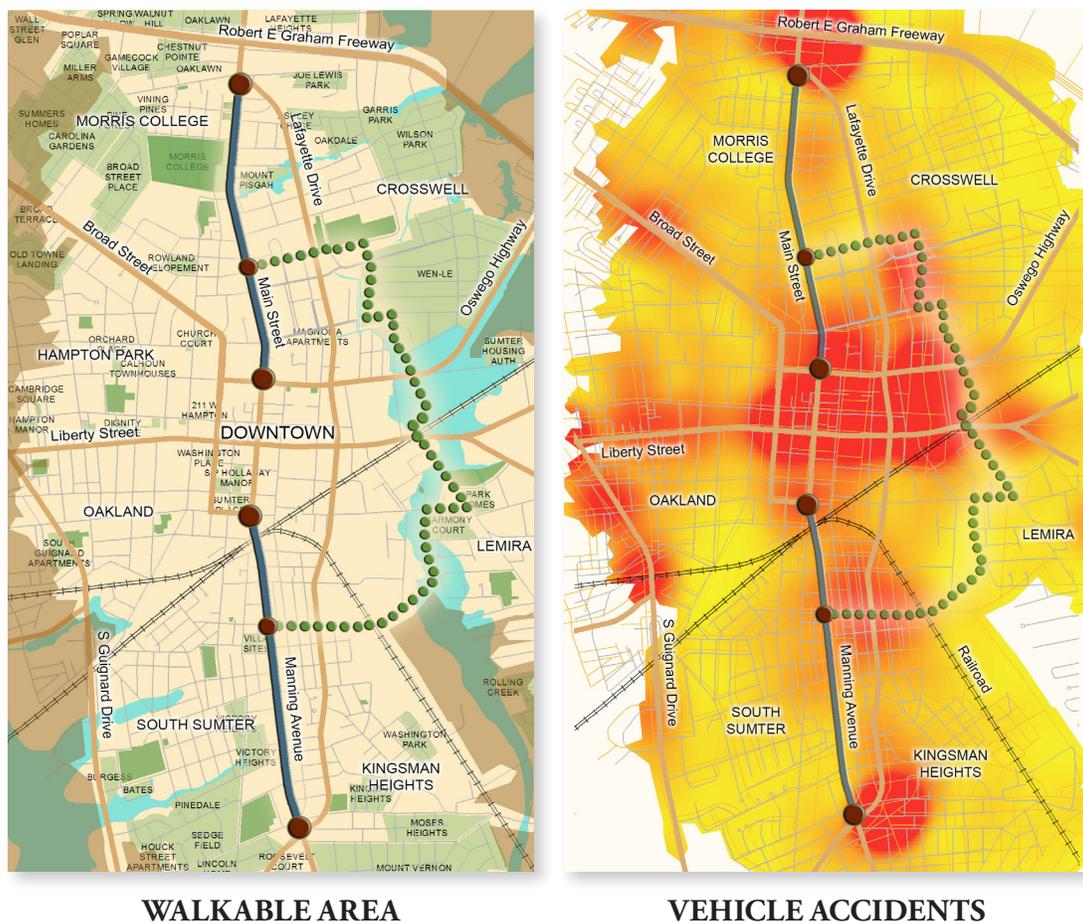
PRIMARY SELECTION CRITERIA

Safety

Since 2008, the corridor area has experienced 2,096 documented, vehicular accidents, 52 pedestrian accidents, and 27 bicycle involved accidents.⁶ The project takes direct aim at fixing a series of unsafe conditions throughout the corridor scope area. Renovation of the Manning Avenue Bridge, a critical bridge that spans CSX railroads tracks, will fix a facility deemed by the SCDOT as “deficient” and “obsolete.” Intersection improvements will protect both vehicular and pedestrian crossing movements. Dedicated bike lanes will highlight a safe zone for those users. Moving the sidewalks away from the curb will provide a pedestrian buffer for walkers. Fixing the non-compliant ADA ramps and crossing will improve conditions for the disabled.

Additionally, the Complete Streets measures include many tools for traffic calming that will increase safety along the corridor. Narrowing the travel lanes, providing street trees, planted medians and many of the other proposed street design changes will provide a safer environment for all those sharing the road.

Accident Analysis



See Attachment 6 - Sumter County Accident DATA 2008-2015, South Carolina Department of Public Safety.

State of Good Repair

The Sumter Connectivity Initiative along the Manning Avenue and North Main Street corridor will substantially improve the condition of existing transportation facilities and systems. Introduction of the complete street, transit stops, and improved street infrastructure, such as curbing and bridge work, will create a more reliable and multimodal transportation system.

In addition, the Sumter Connectivity Initiative will leverage existing infrastructure in the core of the urban area. The City, other government agencies, and private utilities have made significant infrastructure investments in Sumter's core. In keeping with the general principles of the Administration's Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the City has actively pursued and promoted the revitalization of Downtown, historic commercial corridors, and adjacent residential neighborhoods in Sumter's urban core.

Indeed, the project directly promotes four of the Partnership's six core Livability principles:

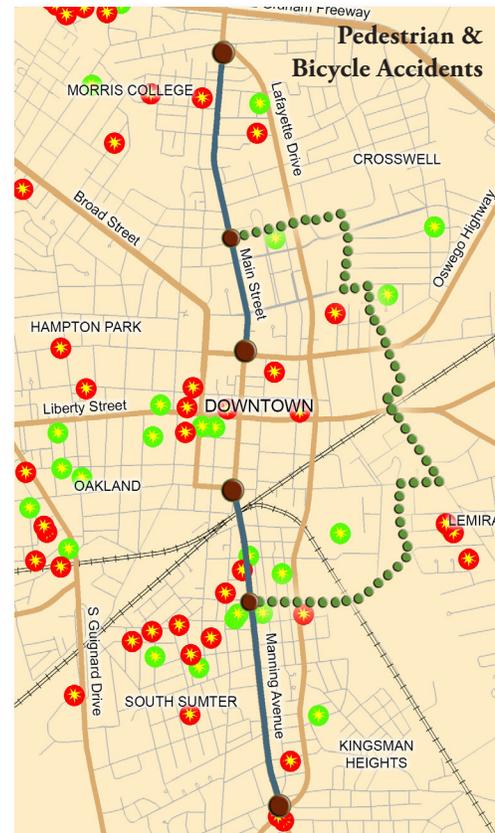
- Support existing communities,
- Provide more transportation choices,
- Enhance economic competitiveness,
- Value communities and neighborhoods

And indirectly promotes the other two:

- Coordinate federal policies and investment
- Promote equitable, affordable housing.

The project proposes the rehabilitation of a "structurally deficient and functionally obsolete" bridge. It will reconstruct non-ADA compliant sidewalks, ramps and cross walks throughout the corridor, install bike lanes, and install curbing for drainage and pedestrian safety on the North Main Street portion. It will relocate existing utility poles that are currently within close proximity to the vehicular travel way.

The aforementioned transportation elements are in a state of disrepair and represent a significant threat to public safety, accessibility, network efficiency, and economic growth. The introduction of the complete street, transit stops, and improved street infrastructure, such as curbing and bridge work, will create a more reliable and multimodal transportation system.



**20% OF HOUSING UNITS IN THE CORRIDOR
HAVE NO ACCESS TO A VEHICLE.**



*Entrance to Manning Avenue Bridge looking south:
No pedestrian crosswalk or ADA conforming ramp.*



*Dirt trail leading to Manning Avenue from beneath the bridge
and the rail yard. This is a heavily traveled pedestrian traffic area,
despite its substandard pedestrian infrastructure.*

Economic Competitiveness

Sumter is a Tier 3 Economically Distressed Area, based on unemployment rate and per capita income.⁷ The neighborhoods within the project scope of the corridor are 71% Black or African American with the highest poverty rate citywide.

There is a history of minimal economic investment in the corridor and its neighborhoods outside of the central downtown Sumter area. This project represents the single largest investment in the distressed community for decades, perhaps for more than a century.

The TIGER investment will have a two-fold impact: 1) the project will improve access to jobs and services for the community, and 2) the transportation improvements will transform the corridor both functionally and aesthetically, leading to economic investment within the corridor.

The improved transit facilities, along with multimodal paths, will foster economic competitiveness by connecting the work force to primary employers, both at Downtown locations and community-wide, through the James E. Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center. This transit hub provides bus access to major employers throughout the community via the Santee Wateree Regional Transit Authority (SWRTA) and to the region via regional bus lines.⁸ Access to the Clyburn Center means access to greater opportunity in Sumter. The SWRTA routes serve major employers including, but not limited to: Tuomey Hospital (1200 employees), City of Sumter (600 employees), Shaw Air Force Base (6114 active duty, 1203 civilian and an estimated 2290 indirect employees)⁹, and Continental Tire the Americas (currently 500 employees with an expected minimum 1650 at completion of current phase). Twenty four new architectural bus shelters are to be designed and installed along the corridor, along with ten Bus Stop signs. This investment will bring about a new era of transit comfort, convenience and accessibility that has never existed in Sumter before.

See Attachment 7 - State of South Carolina Department of Revenue Information Letter #13-6 (Revised), January 8, 2015.

See Attachment 8 - SWRTA Transit ROI BCA Estimate Update.

See Attachment 9 - 2015 Shaw Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement.

Quality of Life

The Sumter Connectivity Initiative will expand affordable and convenient transportation choices for an economically disadvantaged population. Many residents of the Manning Avenue /North Main Street corridor are non-drivers, live in households without access to motor vehicles, are elderly, are school children, or are disabled. Seventy-six percent (76%) of all people identifying as disabled in the City of Sumter live in the 7 census tracts surrounding this corridor. Of those identified as disabled, 36% are over the age 65. The introduction of bike lanes, bus stops, improved sidewalks, and ADA accessible sidewalks and crossings will increase transportation choices and access to transportation services. The facilities will provide broader and expanded access to job opportunities, healthcare, training and education.

The project substantially meets the **Partnership for Sustainable Communities** livability principles as it:

- Provides more transportation choices—new pedestrian, bike, and public transit options.
- Enhances economic competitiveness—multimodal options expand access to employment, service, and education centers.
- Coordinates policies and leverages investment—the City and County have already invested over \$6.7 million in this corridor through the 2008 local Capital Sales tax referendum, or “Penny”.¹⁰ Another \$1.4 million has been invested by the City since 2008, constructing new sidewalks and streetscape along South Main Street and other downtown intersections through the use of the Penny Sales tax and local Hospitality/Tourism Tax funding mechanisms. Sumter County voters approved a second referendum in 2014 including a new \$7.5 million investment in this Manning Avenue/North Main Street Corridor.¹²
- Supports existing communities - investment in transportation facilities will spur local business and retail investments, altogether absent for decades. The project will encourage creation of jobs within safe walking distance of neighborhoods.
- Connects various components of Sumter’s Empowerment Zone, including the Hope Centers.¹¹
- Values communities and neighborhoods - this project directly invests in healthy, safe, walkable neighborhoods.
- Increases the attractiveness of the corridor, thereby enriching the investment potential of the area.
- Increases passenger volumes through better transit, reduces congestion levels, improves infrastructure condition and safety experience for all transportation users.

Environmental Sustainability

The project will reduce the absolute need for a gasoline powered car. Safer, more available access to sidewalks, bike lanes, greenway trails, and transit options will improve energy efficiency, reduce dependence on oil, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Bringing more pedestrian and cycling traffic to Sumter’s core will also reverse the decades-old trend of sprawl that burdens so much of the community’s infrastructure. The greenway will not only provide new non-vehicular transportation options, it will also provide access to nature for an underserved urban community.

See Attachment 10 - 2008 Sumter County Capital Projects Referendum list #8 Lafayette Drive (\$6,000,000) and #10 Highway 15 South Corridor and Intersection Improvement Project (\$671,000).
See Attachment 11 - City of Sumter Department of Community Development Empowerment Zone report.
See Attachment 12 - 2014 Sumter County Capital Penny Sales Tax referendum report.

The transit element in this TIGER grant application proposes to install bus stops, ADA compliant bus shelters with benches in the project corridor and throughout the City, and bike racks at the Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center. The Sumter fixed bus route transit service provider, Santee Wateree Regional Transportation Authority (SWRTA), has three bus routes along the project corridor running from Manning Avenue to North Main Street: Route 4 (North Main), Route 5 (South Main) and Route 8 (Vocational Rehab on North Main). These routes currently provide 20,340 passenger trips per year. After construction of improvements, the passenger trips are projected to be 27,100 per year. (See the attachment—Benefit Cost Analysis for SWRTA Transit Improvement).

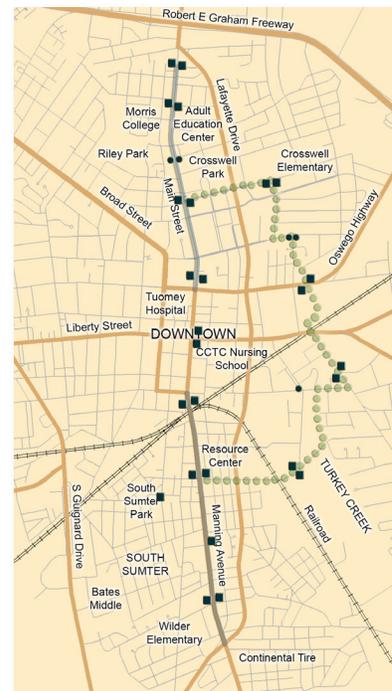
When a traveler or commuter chooses to ride a transit bus, walk or ride a bicycle instead of driving, the immediate impact on the environment is reduced production of carbon dioxide. Using the EPA's calculation of 5.1 metric tons of average annual carbon dioxide emissions by a typical passenger vehicle, 285.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide will be eliminated per year by passengers riding on SWRTA buses along the project corridor after the improvement.

SECONDARY SELECTION CRITERIA

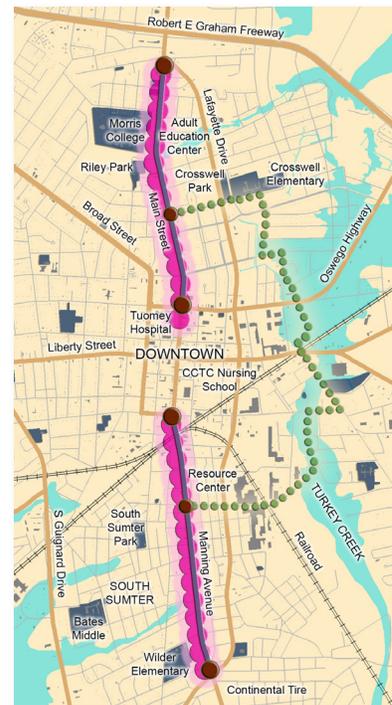
Innovation (Technological)

Broadband Access is proposed for the area, as part of this project. The Obama Administration has placed a priority on providing access to broadband internet in low income and disadvantaged areas. This free access will give residents the ability to compete for jobs, online businesses and marketing, and have better access to information that will provide numerous educational and social benefits. The project will provide pedestrian broadband access along corridor, as well as free broadband service for businesses located along the corridor, to spur economic investment for small businesses.

The Initiative also contemplates a bike and pedestrian kiosk at the Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center, depicting sidewalk and trail route options across the community. The project will also install new bike racks at the Center and along the corridors and greenway, where currently there are none. The transit portion of the project proposes to construct bus stops and shelters along the project corridor and in other locations in Sumter, and at the James E. Clyburn Intermodal Transportation Center, the multimodal hub in the City of Sumter.



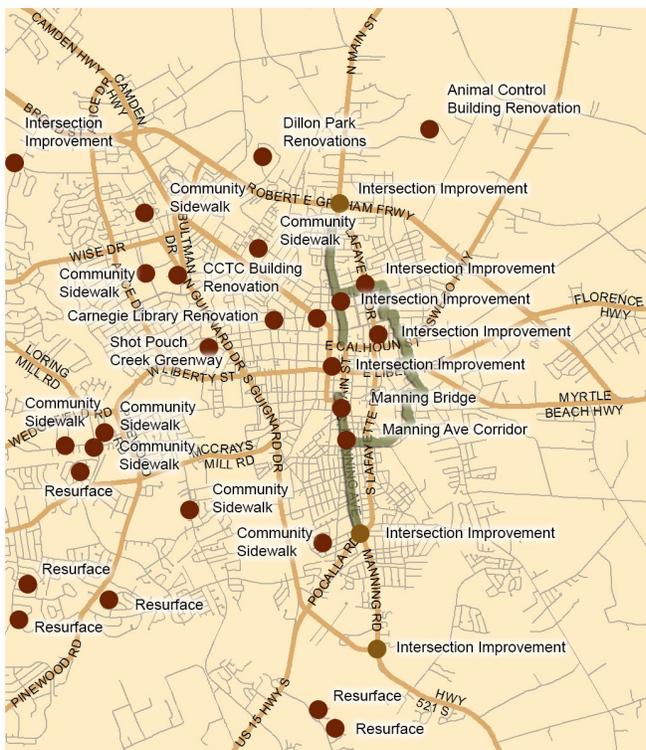
Proposed Bus Shelters and Stops in Project Area.



Proposed Broadband Service.

Innovation (Financial)

The proposed funding for the project is an innovative strategy leveraging local funding through extraordinary means. As described earlier, the community has previously committed local funding of more than \$6.7 million dollars to this corridor as a result of the 2008 Capital Project Sales Tax, or “Penny”. An additional \$7.5 million dollars in local funding match via an extension of the 2008 Initiative has been committed to this project (approved by voters on November 4, 2014). Funding implementation is available in the first quarter of 2017. All told, the Sumter community will have already invested over \$13.7 million dollars in this corridor. This local commitment to invest in transportation projects is unprecedented for Sumter and displays an independent initiative to fund necessary infrastructure projects, alone, if necessary. Penny Sales Tax Investment Projects relevant to the Connectivity Initiative are shown on the map below.



2008 Penny Projects

- \$6 million Lafayette Interchange Project at North Main and 378 Bypass
- \$1.4 million Downtown Intersection and Streetscape Improvements
- \$671,000 Southern Gateway Intersection at Manning and Lafayette
- \$10 million Water and Sewer Infrastructure improvements to attract industry, like Continental Tire Americas

2014 Penny Projects

- \$7.5 million Sumter Connectivity Initiative North Main, Manning Avenue and Bridge, and Turkey Creek Greenway
- \$1 million CCTC Industrial Engineering building renovation for workforce development
- \$4 million Shot Pouch Greenway
- \$4.5 million Downtown Building Renovations and Intersection Improvements
- \$1 million Demolition of distressed structures throughout county and in project area
- \$3.3 million Renovations to Historic Courthouse and Carnegie Library, both in Downtown

Other Investments

- \$1.7 million Main Street Improvements
- \$348,000 Gateway Local Commitment

Partnership

Jurisdictional and Stakeholder Collaboration.

Although the City of Sumter is the primary and lead agency on the project, a number of jurisdictional partners have played major roles in project development. The Sumter Urban Area Transportation Study (or SUATS, the local formally designated MPO), Sumter County, the State Department of Transportation, and the Santee-Wateree Regional Transit Authority are among the key stakeholders. Planning for the project began during a process initiated by SUATS in 2007. Sumter County is the lead agency for the Capital Penny Sales Tax referendum, the innovative approach to local match funding. A majority of the improvements are planned on South Carolina State Highway system roads, and SCDOT will maintain that ownership after the improvements are made.

SCDOT has already established an important partnership by completing full engineering plans along with an estimate for the Manning Avenue Bridge rehabilitation. SWRTA has played an important role in developing a more efficient, multimodal approach, and the planned improvements to the transit system are a direct result of that interaction. Furthermore, this project shows cooperation between the City of Sumter and Sumter County, as a portion of the project on Manning Avenue is in Sumter County, and the voting body of Sumter County as a whole approved the tax referendum in November 2014 which provides the match for this funding. This project is a community project, with support from diverse jurisdictional partners.

STEP (Sumter Team for Entrepreneurial Partnership) is a comingling of several key players in the community, to explore ideas addressing job creation needs. Stakeholders have identified and prioritized the following for creating job opportunities: The easiest idea is to offer free or reduced price rent on office space or retail space in the downtown. Artist's studios with shared gallery space could also be implemented as part of this program. More involved programs could include offering rental time sharing of a commercial kitchen, workshop space for micro-industrial projects (to be located in an industrial zoning district, and possibly repurpose an existing abandoned industrial site). Finally, the idea of offering micro grants for certain desirable businesses in the downtown, or local partnering of investors with certain businesses, has been discussed. Partners in STEP include the Santee Lynches Council of Governments, Central Carolina Technical College, USC Sumter, the Chamber of Commerce, and the City's Economic Development, Community Development, Planning and Downtown management.

Disciplinary Integration

Sumter's 2030 Comprehensive Planning Process identified both Manning Avenue and North Main Street as Priority Investment Corridors. This project will directly implement the Comprehensive Plan. Sumter, through its transportation planning agency and MPO, SUATS, was first introduced to the concept of "Complete Streets" during the preparation of its first modern Long Range Transportation Plan in 2007.¹³ The design concept, whereby the transportation corridor is planned to accommodate all users and not just cars, was adopted by the SUATS Policy Board. By the end of 2009, both Sumter City Council and Sumter County Council had endorsed the complete street solution as policy in their Comprehensive Plans.¹⁴

See Attachment 13 - 2007 SUATS Long Range Transportation Plan, page ES-7.

See Attachment 14 - Sumter 2030 Comprehensive Plan, page T-2.

DETAILED STATEMENT OF WORK

Manning Avenue Bridge:

- Cleaning, removal of lead-based paint, and painting of existing structural steel.
- Installation of a new bridge railing.
- Coordination with CSX Railroad.
- Milling and Concrete road installation.
- Spall repair, and deck joint work.
- Manning Avenue approach roadway, curb, gutter, and stormwater.
- Bike lanes, and new striping.
- Sidewalk/bike lane barriers.
- Connecting paths to Manning Avenue from side streets.
- Fencing and landscaping around rail yard.



See Attachment 17 - Manning Avenue Corridor Plan, by LandPlan Group South 2013.

Manning Avenue & North Main Street:

- Mast Arms and Signals, and Street Lights.
- Street Print XD pavers at intersections.
- Curb and Gutter work, Milling and Overlay.
- Bike Lane striping.
- Sidewalk and ADA ramp construction/reconstruction.
- Landscaping and Irrigation.
- Utility Relocation.

Corridor Transit Investment:

- Design and Install 24 ADA compliant Bus Shelters and 10 Bus stop sign poles in the corridor.
- Install Electronic Message Display Board/Kiosk at the Bus terminal.
- Install bike racks at the James E. Clyburn Intermodal transportation Center and along the project area.

Turkey Creek Greenway Loop:

- Design, grading and trail construction.
- Safe street crossings.
- Signage.

Broadband:

- Free pedestrian broadband access along entire corridor.



Concept showing ADA compliant, enhanced bus shelters

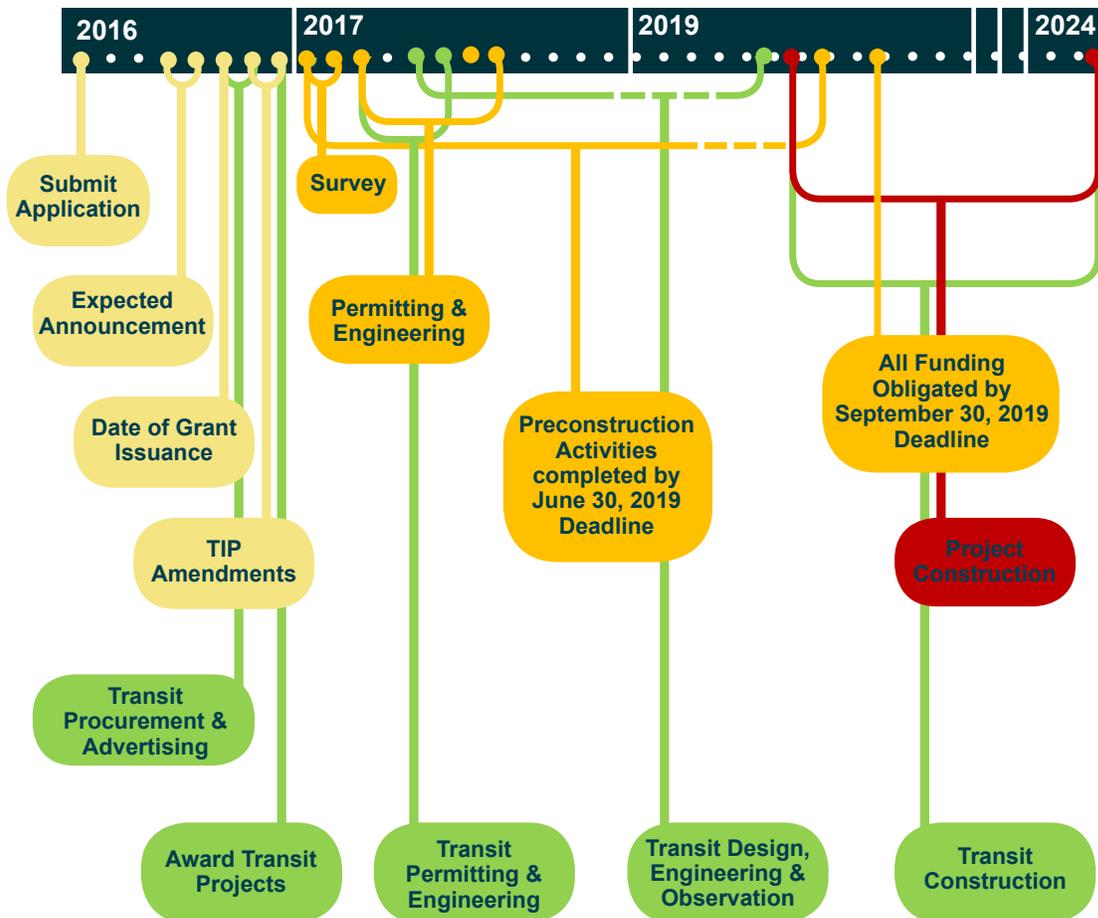


Barbara rides her bicycle everywhere. It is her primary means of transportation. She is excited about the possibility of having bike lanes, multimodal paths and a greenway. She was hit by a car once, years ago, while riding her bike, and she is scared of that happening again. She is the aerobics instructor at the North Hope Center.

Project Schedule

The Sumter Connectivity Initiative will comply with the June 30, 2019 to September 30, 2024 development window. Because the local match became available in the first quarter of 2016, all preconstruction activities are slated for completion well before June 30, 2019. The project will easily advance to construction in time for the June 30, 2019 obligation date. A great majority of the project will take place in the existing SCDOT right-of way. No extraordinary property acquisition is anticipated.

Project Timeline



Demonstrated Project Readiness

Technical Feasibility

A significant amount of engineering and pre-engineering design efforts have already taken place on distinct portions of the project plan. This project will be ready to implement within the published time frames.

A phase of the Manning Avenue Corridor project was selected by the MPO on January 30, 2012 as an enhancement project under the SAFETEA-LU federal funding program. Unfortunately, due to local matching challenges and timing, the funds expired and the project did not materialize.

The community accomplished a great deal of pre-engineering and design work. Land Plan Group of Columbia, SC, produced a Manning Avenue Corridor Design Plan that detailed the conceptual design in July/August 2009. Major elements of this initial planning included a complete street concept with new sidewalks, a multi-purpose 10 foot bike path, and intersection improvements for pedestrians, street trees, and new signals.

Pedestrian Safe Havens, engineering, environmental approval, traffic and structural analysis, cost estimates, and bid documents are complete for the Manning Avenue Bridge Rehabilitation. In partnership with the City of Sumter, SCDOT produced Plans, Specifications, and Supporting Documents for the bridge in June 2013. The City of Sumter, through non-federal state grant funding, paid \$200,000 for this engineering work.

Financial Feasibility

The estimated cost of the Sumter Connectivity Initiative is \$26,333,713 broken down according to this funding formula:¹⁵

The \$7.5 million local cash match will be available in 2017, per the Capital Penny Sales Tax. Sumter County voters approved a Sales Tax referendum held on November 4, 2014, which utilizes a penny added to the local option sales tax to pay for a list of projects over a seven-year period. The Sumter community is completing the first penny sales tax period, approved in 2008, which generated over \$70 million dollars for local capital projects.

There are no anticipated extraordinary project hurdles. It is expected that most, if not all, of the project elements will be constructed within the existing 50 foot right of way. Typical final design, engineering, and permitting processes are also planned. As the project is planned within existing rights of way, minimal environmental permitting and review, if any, is expected.

The proposed Turkey Creek Greenway is predominantly located in existing right-of-way as well. There are two properties that will require easements in order to construct the greenway according to the current proposed route. Both property owners have been contacted, and both are considering the application of an easement for the project. If the easement cannot be obtained, other possible routes for the greenway path have been identified. Acquisition of these easements is reflected in the cost opinion.

Cost of Project: \$26,333,713

Grant Request: \$18,833,713

Local Match: \$7,500,000



REQUIRED APPROVALS

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The great majority of the Sumter Connectivity Initiative takes place within existing public rights of way. The City anticipates minimal environmental impacts. Any NEPA related review, if applicable, would take place prior to June 30, 2019.

The Moving Ahead For Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) requires the FHWA and FTA to amend their point procedures to streamline compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) by designating two types of actions as categorical exclusions (CEs): (1) A project (as defined in 23 USC 101 (a)) within an existing operational right-of-way; and (2) any project that receives limited Federal funding.

Defined in the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations at 40 CFR 1508.4, CEs are a category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the human environment and which have been found to have no such adverse impact in procedures adopted by a Federal agency. Most actions and improvements in this TIGER Grant application are within the Categorical Exclusions (CEs). For example, install bus stop signs, small bus shelters or pavement markings where no substantial land acquisition or traffic disruption will occur. (See 23 CFR 771.117 (c) (8)).

Agency Review

The project requires SCDOT review and approval, culminating in the issuance of an encroachment permit. This permitting process would take place prior to June 30, 2019.

There may be small areas of potential wetlands in the area around Turkey Creek. Any wetlands permitting will be accomplished within the period leading up to June 2019.

State and Local Planning

The concept of Complete Streets was introduced to the City and County in November 2007, during and with the adoption of the MPO's 2010-2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. This Plan was incorporated in both the City and County Comprehensive Planning Process in 2009. Complete Streets and the accompanying bicycle and pedestrian elements are adopted local planning policy for City Council and County Council.

Moreover, a first phase of the Manning Avenue portion was previously selected by the MPO Policy Board when the old concept of "enhancements" was still viable.

In any event, the City intends to ask the MPO to include the project, if awarded, in the TIP and consequent STIP at the State level. This is anticipated to take place prior to June 30, 2019.

PROJECT RISKS & MITIGATION

The Sumter Connectivity Initiative anticipates minimal project risks; the great majority of the project lies within existing public right of way. Minimal environmental disturbance is projected.

PROJECT BENEFIT COST ANALYSIS

The City has prepared a Benefit Cost Analysis¹⁶ in support of the Sumter Connectivity Initiative. The estimated payback period (the amount of time, in years, for the project revenues to offset the project capital and ongoing maintenance costs) for the project was calculated to be 5.3 years, with a benefit-cost ratio of 6.39 to 1 and an internal rate of return of 24.6%. The consultant, JS Lane Company, LLC, adhered to the FHWA BCA guidance and applied a conservative approach to provide a transparent analysis and straightforward results. A BCA workbook is submitted as a part of this package, and all of the key input variables are identified clearly, with their sources, and can be adjusted individually to provide additional insight into the analysis methodology. A series of qualitative benefits were separately identified in order to preserve clarity in the quantitative benefit-cost analysis, but also to highlight outcomes that are nevertheless just as tangible to the community and are central to the motivation for conducting the project. These benefits include private investment in new and expanded business opportunities that are already beginning to enter negotiations that hinge on completion of the Project; improving access from low-income and minority communities to jobs, higher education, and job training centers; mobile source emissions reductions; and sharply improved transit facilities and services on three key bus routes into the core of our city that will result in additional transit riders and reduced reliance on private automobiles for Sumter's most vulnerable populations. The influence of the project on property values is also considered in the analysis.

The addition of free broadband access along the corridor is shown to be an important benefit in this cost benefit analysis. Sumter County has one of the lowest Internet access rates in a state that has one of the lowest access rates in the country. Sumter County had 26,599 households (67%) with access to the internet in 2013, according to the U.S. Census. South Carolina had a 2013 access rate of 73%, compare to a U.S. rate of 86%. Low rates of internet access directly correlate with education and income levels, and the Obama Administration has placed priority on providing internet in minority and poor areas.

PROJECT BUDGET	COST ESTIMATE	PROJECT PERCENTAGE
Turkey Creek Greenway	\$900,445	3%
Manning Avenue	\$11,830,855	45%
North Main Street	\$11,366,063	43%
Manning Avenue Bridge	\$2,093,622	8%
Broadband Service	\$142,729	1%
Total Project Cost Estimate	\$26,333,713	100%
Capital Penny Local Match	\$7,500,000	28%
Total TIGER Requested	\$18,833,713	72%

CONCLUSION

Sumter proposes a project that will significantly transform an important community corridor. This project will have the following impacts as it will:

- Improve the functionality of the corridor drastically with regards to transportation - not just vehicular, but also for pedestrians, cyclists and those with restricted mobility.
- Create access to Downtown, and therefore to a major employment, shopping, and health center, for the thousands of people who live on “the other side of the tracks” and in the underserved neighborhoods surrounding Sumter’s central business district.
- Create a transit network to further connect citizens with employment, medical facilities and shopping.
- Increase the livability of the entire area through better walkability, access to nature, and by placing a higher value on the existing neighborhoods in this area of Sumter, that have been ignored and neglected for far too long.
- Open up new opportunities for adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the dilapidated areas surrounding the corridor in question.
- Reverse the car-centric trend that has a stranglehold on Sumter’s development and habits, by providing other transportation options - besides driving a car - that are actually appealing to the citizens.
- Expand the connectivity network further with the Turkey Creek Greenway, which will connect many neighborhoods on the east side of Sumter to the corridor, and downtown.
- Provide a safe, aesthetically pleasing environment that will make walking or cycling a positive choice rather than an unpleasant necessity.

Note: All Application Materials and Supporting Documentation can be found at: <http://www.sumtersc.gov/tiger-grant.aspx>

ATTACHMENTS

¹Historic Resources of Sumter map.

²Plans, Specifications, and Supporting Document for Manning Avenue (S-152) Bridge Rehabilitation, June 2013.*

³Demographic data analysis from the U.S. Census, 2014 American Community Survey.

^{3A}Demographic data analysis from the U.S. Census, 2013 American Community Survey. (Source - Census Bureau)

⁴City of Sumter 2014 Abandoned Housing Survey.*

⁵Sumter City-County Planning Department Bicycle Pedestrian Count for TIGER project, April 2015.

⁶Sumter County Accident DATA 2008-2015, South Carolina Department of Public Safety.

⁷State of South Carolina Department of Revenue Information Letter #15-17, November 18, 2015.

⁸SWRTA Transit ROI BCA Estimate Update.

⁹2015 Shaw Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement.

¹⁰2008 Sumter County Capital Projects Referendum list #8 Lafayette Drive (\$6,000,000) and #10 Highway 15 South Corridor and Intersection Improvement Project (\$671,000).

¹¹City of Sumter Dept. of Community Development Empowerment Zone Report.

¹²2014 Sumter County Capital Penny Sales Tax referendum report.

¹³2007 SUATS Long Range Transportation Plan, page ES-7.*

¹⁴Sumter 2030 Comprehensive Plan, page T-2.

¹⁵Construction Cost Opinion – LandPlan dated April 11, 2016.

¹⁶JSL Consulting Services Benefit-Cost Assessment, dated April 20, 2016.

¹⁷Manning Avenue Corridor Plan by LandPlan Group South, 2013.

Project Map.

Wage Rate Certification.

All Letters of Support combined into one attachment.

***Note: All Application Materials and Supporting Documentation
can be found at: <http://www.sumtersc.gov/tiger-grant.aspx>***