



ANNUAL REPORT

**DOWNTOWN FLORENCE
MAIN STREET PROGRAM**



JANUARY-DECEMBER 2024

2024 Program Summary

As we reflect on 2024, we wanted to share several program accomplishments from the last twelve months. Business growth continued to be strong with the district adding a net eight new businesses and one business expansion. These additions led to 39 additional net jobs and represent a total reinvestment of \$866,684 for 2024. The private sector was responsible for \$641,664 of that investment with support from public dollars at \$225,520 across various projects.

2024 was also a year to celebrate our volunteers. The program launched a new online portal for district volunteer aggregation called Lend a Hand Downtown to help the public access downtown partner opportunities in one convenient place. Collectively, 365 volunteers donated 1,350 hours to programs and initiatives, representing a value of \$44,950. Local corporations and businesses supported events and programs with \$114,000 in sponsorships.

Events and programs continued to be strong with a 3% increase in total attendance at the SC Pecan Music and Food Festival (56,000) with an increase of 18% on visitors from at least 50 miles away. Downtown Restaurant Week also had an estimated \$150,000 impact in September. In total, the Downtown Florence team produced and supported over 20 events in the district attracting 92,663 attendees.

Our program continues to be influential at the National level. In 2024, Downtown Florence was the only South Carolina community to be asked to pilot Main Street America's new Entrepreneurial Peer Support System. Three downtown businesses participated. The program manager was selected to participate in a mature Main Streets panel, a cohort to redesign MSA's professional development offerings, and earned the Main Street America Revitalization Professional credential. Program staff led a session on event evaluation at the Main Street NOW conference in Birmingham, AL. The program also hosted several communities in Downtown Florence to learn best practices in revitalization providing over 90 hours of technical assistance.

The program played a significant role in the City of Florence's update to its Downtown Design Standards, which will be adopted in 2025. Main Street SC held its annual leadership retreat in Downtown Florence, attracted 35 program leaders from across the state and generating over \$13,000 of direct economic impact over two days.

Looking ahead to 2025, Downtown Florence will continue to see growth with several new businesses slated to deliver over the course of the year, new housing, advanced entrepreneurial support, design projects, and the delivery of the Carolina Theatre.

Main Street Stats Snapshot

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2024



INVESTMENT STATS

2024

TOTAL REINVEST.	\$866,684	3	FACADE IMPROVEMENTS
PRIVATE	\$641,664	15	BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS
PUBLIC	\$225,520	8	NET NEW BUSINESSES
		39	NET GAIN JOBS
		1	PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

BUSINESS SUPPORT

\$148.1K TOTAL AWARDED GRANTS

97.5 TECHNICAL SERVICE HOURS

The Downtown Florence Main Street Program offers a robust suite of small business support from idea to open through Redevelopment, Design, Facade, and Sign grant programs, business license credits, ongoing small business training opportunities, marketing support, and partnerships.

VOLUNTEER STATS

1,350 TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS

\$44.95K VOLUNTEER VALUE

Welcome New Businesses!

- **Jack's Books** (152 S. Dargan St.)
New & Used Books / Gifts
- **Ship with E's** (150-C N. Dargan St.)
Independent Packing & Shipping
- **Trendy Twist Boutique** (182 W. Evans St.)
Women's Apparel
- **Signature Accounting** (135 S. Dargan St.)
Financial Services
- **Grace & Grounding** (116-B S. Irby St.)
Faith-based Wellness + Yoga
- **Smiling Scoops, LLC** (184 W. Evans St.)
Ice Cream Shop
- **Downcountry Grill** (360 N. Irby St.)
Fast Casual Dining
- **Inetta's Sewing Shop** (292 W. Evans St.)
Alterations & Repair



Honors & Awards

- **Main Street SC Inspiration Award** - North Dargan Mural Project
- **Post & Courier Best of the Pee Dee** - SC Pecan Music & Food Festival
- **Morning News Best of the Pee Dee** - Florence After 5 & SC Pecan Music & Food Festival

Project and Program Highlights

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2024



Evans Street
Breezeway Refresh



Downtown Restaurant
Week



Jack's Books
Store Opening



Main Street NOW

As an Accredited Main Street Community, Downtown Florence's Main Street Program follows the Main Street Approach™, made up of four focus areas, **Design**, **Promotion**, **Economic Vitality**, and **Organization**. This preservation-based economic development model is practiced by a network of over 1,200 communities nationwide.

ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES

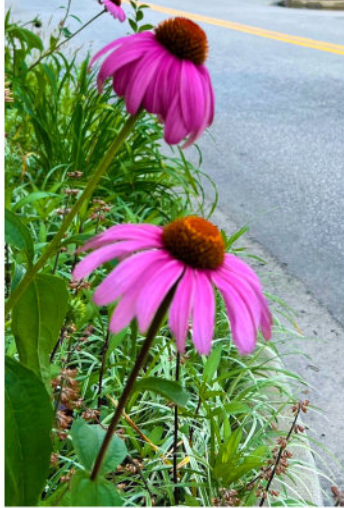
- Earned Grow With Google Partner status
- Earned Main Street Accreditation in 2024
- FDDC board hosted a strategic planning retreat
- Launched the *Lend a Hand Downtown* online volunteer portal
- Established a print media partnership for downtown business owners with SAVVY Mag
- Staff presented a session at the National Main Street conference in Birmingham, AL
- Provided 97.5 hours of technical service
- Established a new low interest loan pool partnership with First Bank
- Secured over \$114,000 in sponsorships for events and programs
- Program manager earned Main Street America's Revitalization Professional credential
- Participated in the SC Broadband Main Street 101 Series with Main Street SC, earning earmarked corridor study grant funding and further diversifying FDDC's budget sources.

DOWNTOWN HOUSING UPDATE

In 2024, work continued to construct the City of Florence's new parking structure on the Urban Square site. Utility and site work continued for the new market-rate apartment complex (105 units). The developer secured additional funding to break ground on the apartment phase of the project in 2025.

The Sarah, an 18-unit market rate townhome development was announced for the vacant lot on Baroody Street near Redbone Alley Foods and another 6-unit townhome development was announced for the property at Cheves and Warley Streets.





ECONOMIC VITALITY ACTIVITIES

- Welcomed 8 new businesses into the district and one business expanded operations
- 1 new small-scale manufacturer opened at the City Center Market
- 15 building rehabilitations were completed
- Completed Ph. 1 of the Carolina Theatre project and were awarded \$2M from the state for Phase 2
- Completed Main Street America’s BOOMS Tracker (only Main Street in SC)
- Led Social Media for Small Business training with 65 attendees statewide
- Facilitated website design for one business
- Hosted WeShopSC training for downtown retailers
- Piloted Main Street America’s Entrepreneurial Peer Support System

DESIGN ACTIVITIES

- Three facade improvements were completed
- Supported downtown’s SC Cultural District Designation renewal
- The Evans Street Breezeway was refreshed
- Hosted Design Review Board training
- Supported the update to the City’s Downtown Design Standards
- Earned a Main Street SC Inspiration Award for the N. Dargan Mural Project
- Participated in National Preservation Month with social media campaign

PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Executed 22 downtown events in 2024
- Saw record-breaking attendance at the SC Pecan Music and Food Festival (over 55,000 attendees!)
- Downtown Restaurant Week saw an estimated economic impact of over \$150,000
- Hosted Main Street SC’s Summer Directors Retreat with over \$13,000 of direct impact over two days
- Added kids games to Florence After 5 series
- Hosted Phil Eich of Storyville for retail and dining promotional photos
- Supported one small business with a comprehensive marketing plan
- Led conference sessions at Main Street NOW (Birmingham, AL), the MSSC Summer Retreat, Indiana Main Street (virtual), the SC Riley Institute for Mayors



MAIN STREET DISTRICT STATS



1.1 million visits

265.2K unique visitors
4.26 frequency
Increase of 0.3% YoY
Increase of 5.1% Yo2Y
Increase of 13.8% Yo3Y



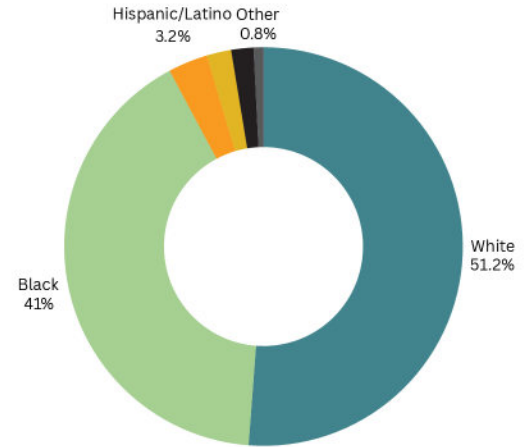
Average Dwell Time: 88 Min.

Downtown's busiest daily times were 11am-2pm (22.3%) and 5-9p (34.4%)



92,663 Event Attendees

22 Events



Visitor Demographics

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2024



Media Reach

Social Media Reach: 2.01M
Traditional Media: 2.86M
Social Followers: 113,643
(3 Facebook pages, 1 Instagram)

The Downtown Florence Main Street Program is a partnership between Florence Downtown Development Corp., a quasi-public 501c3 non-profit organization and the City of Florence. The program is led by a team of two staff and eleven board members and supported by standing committees and volunteers.

The program is nationally recognized as a model for preservation-based economic development and is an Accredited Member of Main Street America and Main Street South Carolina.

2024 FDDC Board

Dr. L. Fred Carter, Board Chairman
Ken Jackson, Vice Chairman
Brian Falcone, Treasurer
Dr. Calvin Robinson, Board Member
Ed Love, Board Member
Starlee Alexander, Board Member
Teresa Anderson, Board Member

Carl Humphries, Board Member
Tim Norwood, Board Member
Scotty Davis, Board Member
Mayor Teresa Myers Ervin, Board Member (01-11/24)
Mayor Lethonia Barnes, Board Member (11-12/24)
Jermaine Ford, Board Member (Ex-Officio)
Mike Miller, Board Member (Ex-Officio)

Staff: Hannah L. Davis, Development Manager
Austin Watters, Development Coordinator

