



Town of Pelzer Community Master Plan

Pelzer, South Carolina

Final Report - September 2019

MKSK

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Pelzer Community Master Plan

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Background

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1.1 Project Background

Welcome to Pelzer, South Carolina!

The Town of Pelzer, South Carolina is a recovering textile community located on the Saluda River along Anderson County's border with Greenville County.

The town is located two miles from The Town of Williamston and shares its western border with the Town of West Pelzer. Pelzer has easy access Interstate 85 and is within commuting distance of the cities of Greenville and Anderson.

An expansion of the town's limits in 2015 increased its population to approximately 1,300 residents. The town offers municipal water and sewer service, trash collection, fire protection, and community recreation facilities.

The town's two legacy mill sites were acquired in recent years by the Pelzer Heritage Commission, which as received EPA and SCDHEC funding for the environmental remediation of these sites.

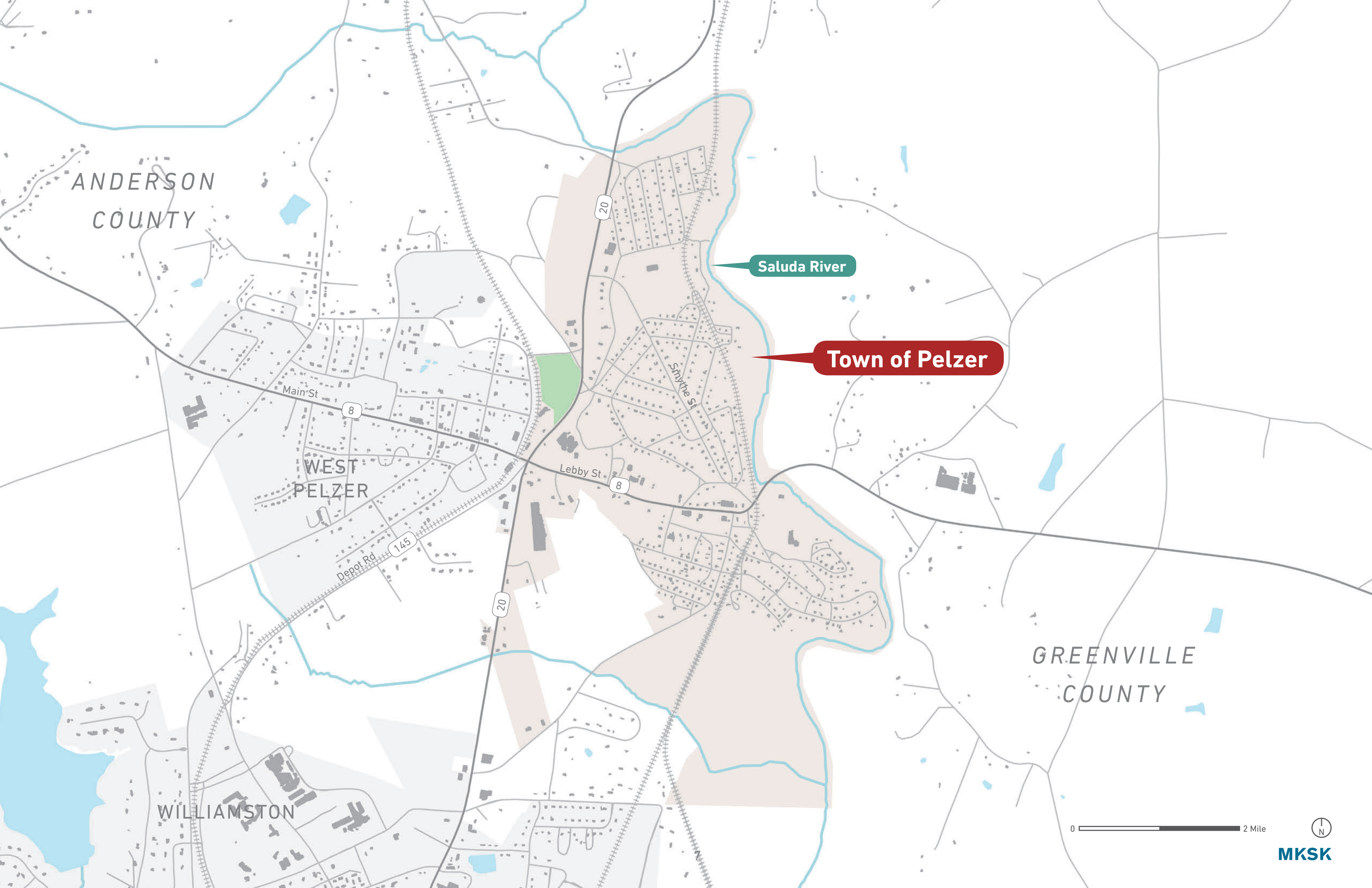
Pelzer also is the site of the Mill Town Players, a highly successful community theater company, and several buildings in town are either listed on or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

This project is the direct result of a planning grant awarded by the Appalachian Regional Commission to the Town of Pelzer. The town, in partnership with Anderson County, hired a consultant team led by MKSK to prepare a Community Master Plan for the Town of Pelzer.

This plan is multi-year in scope and primarily addresses issues related to overall town revitalization, such as economic development, town infrastructure, community life, and organization and partnerships. Additionally, this plan explores development concepts for the Upper and Lower Mill sites, Saluda River corridor, and Lebbey Street.

This plan concludes with a 10-Day Action Plan and Implementation Matrix. Together, these provide a road map to plan implementation that is both achievable and ambitious.





ANDERSON
COUNTY

Saluda River

Town of Pelzer

WEST
PELZER

GREENVILLE
COUNTY

WILLIAMSTON

0 2 Mile



MKSK

1.2 Planning Process

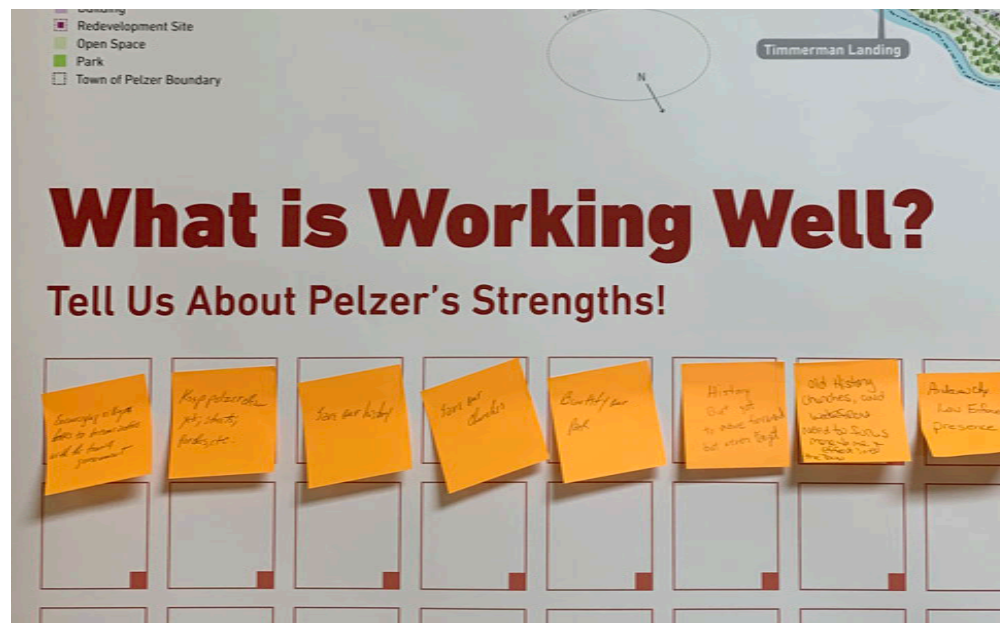
Schedule and phases

This master planning effort was a three-month-long process that was divided into three distinct project phases. The consultant team worked closely with a project steering committee and various stakeholders whose support will be needed to help achieve the plan's vision.

In **Phase 1: Initiation and Understanding**, the team conducted the research and analysis necessary to ensure a solid foundation for the plan. Phase 1 concluded with a public open house to solicit community input on opportunities, challenges, and future vision of the town.

In **Phase 2: Strategies and Recommendations**, the team synthesized the information gathered during Phase 1 and developed concepts firmly rooted in community engagement, environmental conditions, and economic feasibility. Phase 2 concluded with a second public open house to share draft recommendations and solicit input on preferred concepts and strategies.

In **Phase 3: Deciding and Implementing**, the team refined these draft concepts based on input received in Phase 2 and crafted the steps needed to implement the collective vision for Pelzer. Phase 3 concluded with a third public meeting and presentation of final recommendations to Town Council.



June 2019	July 2019	August 2019
<div><div>Phase 1</div><div>Initiation & Understanding</div><div>Tasks</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">1.01 Project Management Plan1.02 Steering Committee Establishment1.03 Guiding Principles & Goals1.04 Project Kickoff Workshop<div>Deliverables</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Milestone and Meeting SchedulesProject Management PlanGuiding Principles & GoalsProject Area Base MapsSummary of Public Input<div>Meetings</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Kickoff Workshop (Includes Public Meeting #1Steering Committee Meetings #1&2</div>	<div><div>Phase 2</div><div>Strategies & Recommendations</div><div>Tasks</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">2.01 Physical Environment Strategies & Recommendations2.02 Community & Economic Development Strategies & Recommendations2.03 Public Meeting #2<div>Deliverables</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting Presentation & MaterialsDraft Physical Environment Strategies & RecommendationsDraft Community & Economic Development Strategies & Recommendations<div>Meetings</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Steering Committee Meeting #3Public Meeting #2</div>	<div><div>Phase 3</div><div>Deciding & Implementing</div><div>Tasks</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">3.01 Draft Plan Document3.02 Steering Committee Meeting #43.03 Final Plan Document3.04 Final Plan Presentation<div>Deliverables</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Meeting Presentations & MaterialsDraft & Final PlanExecutive SummaryTown Plan IllustrationsPlanning-Level Cost EstimatesMaster Files for Town Distribution<div>Meetings</div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Steering Committee Meeting #4Final Plan Presentation</div>

1.3 Guiding Principles

Big ideas driving the plan

Public involvement and engagement were a fundamental part of this project team's community-based planning and design approach. An initial visioning process was a critical step in building understanding, support, and ownership of concepts and ideas that will ultimately lead to effective plan implementation.

Phases 1 and 2 of the planning process allowed for learning and collaboration between the project team, steering committee, and the Pelzer community. This guided our planning efforts as we developed plan strategies and recommendations in Phase 3.

The project team and steering committee developed four major themes, or guiding principles, to serve as project cornerstones:

- Celebrate the Saluda
- Remember our Roots
- Build a New Legacy
- Foster Investment

These guiding principles (each is described on the following page) comprise the organizing framework for the strategies and recommendations of this plan.



Guiding Principles



Celebrate the Saluda

Celebrate and strengthen Pelzer’s relationship with the Saluda River. Reposition Pelzer as a “river town” and enhance access, activity, and stewardship along the town’s nearly three miles of riverfront.



Remember our Roots

Make visible the stories, qualities and places that make Pelzer exceptional. Enhance existing assets and amenities, and invest in high-quality places that contribute to community storytelling, pride, and vibrancy.



Build a New Legacy

Cultivate energy and investment at Pelzer’s historic mill sites. Focus on ways they can benefit the community and set the stage for future capital investments, public-private partnerships, and private development.



Foster Investment

Promote strategies and partnerships to attract investment in Pelzer. Enhance the town’s ability to generate revenue, provide public services, and signal to potential investors that Pelzer is a capable partner in accomplishing projects.

2.0 Analysis

2.0 Analysis

Understanding characteristics and features

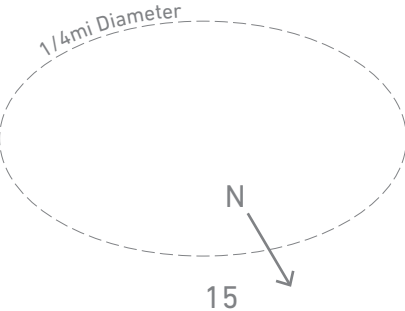
To ensure that investments are positioned to best accomplish the community's goals for the Town of Pelzer, analysis was conducted to understand the trajectory of future development. The analysis involved exploration of regional connectivity and mobility patterns, land ownership, regulatory and policy parameters, regional economic trends, watershed and ecological context, local environmental conditions, cultural and historical strata, as well as qualitative assessments of the built and natural environment in the district. This understanding paired with our robust community engagement effort, informed the development, location, and implementation strategies for the master plan's recommendations.



Town of Pelzer, SC



- Minor Thoroughfare
- Major Thoroughfare
- Building along Major Thoroughfare
- Building
- Redevelopment Site
- Open Space
- Park
- Town of Pelzer Boundary



Saluda River

Pelzer is a River Town

Established on the banks of the Saluda River in the late 1800's, Pelzer historically relied heavily on this resource to fuel its growth and vibrancy. The Town has nearly three miles of riverfront along the Saluda River.



Saluda River Mile 34

Pelzer Mills Dam

Saluda River Mile 32

- Saluda River
- Town of Pelzer Boundary

Pelzer Dam c1894



A dam was constructed where Lebbby Street meets the Saluda River today, that powered the Pelzer Manufacturing Co's operation. It still produces hydroelectricity to this day. By some accounts it is the longest operating hydroelectrical plant in the world.

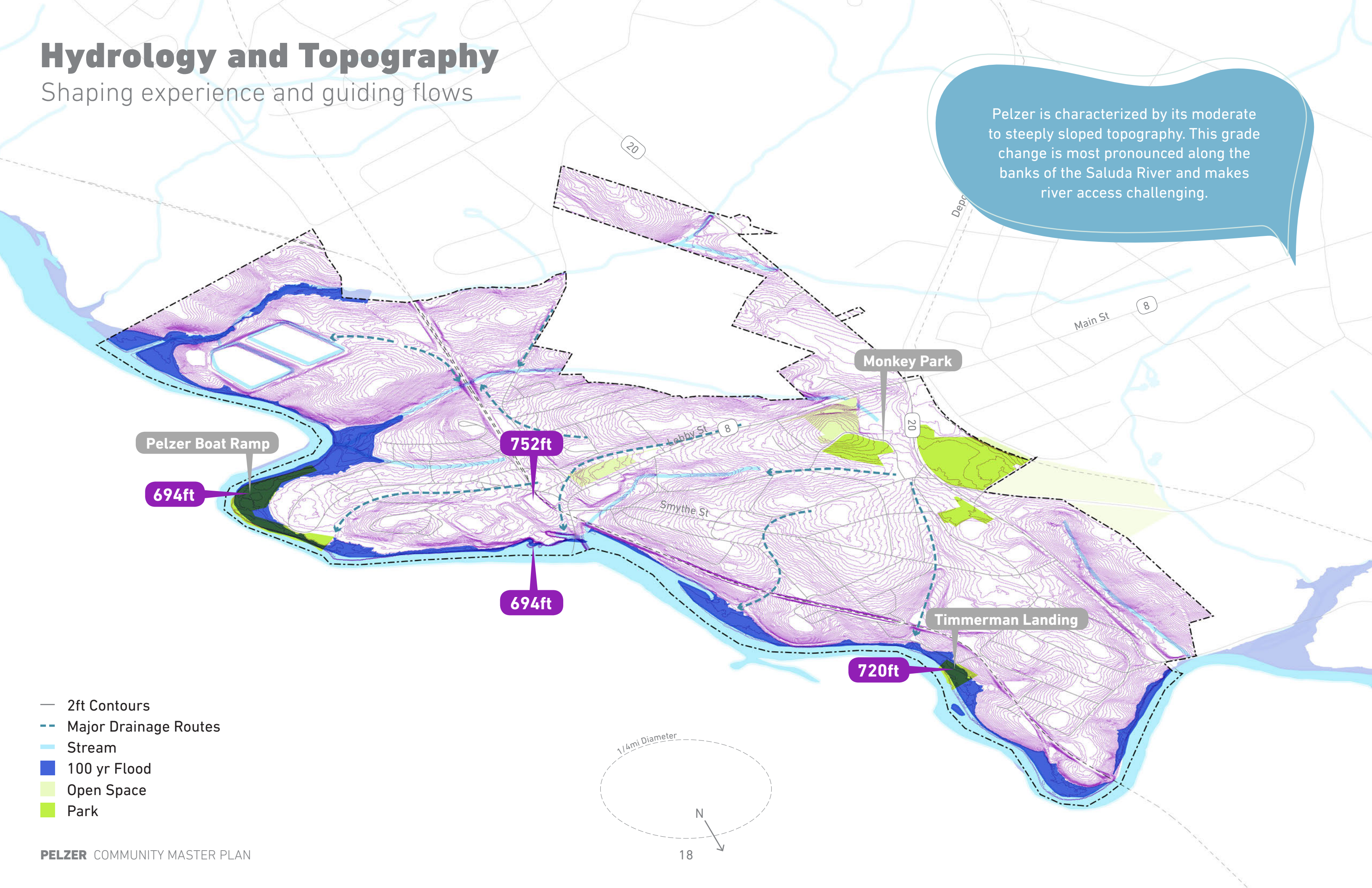
Pelzer Dam 2019



Hydrology and Topography

Shaping experience and guiding flows

Pelzer is characterized by its moderate to steeply sloped topography. This grade change is most pronounced along the banks of the Saluda River and makes river access challenging.



- 2ft Contours
- - Major Drainage Routes
- Stream
- 100 yr Flood
- Open Space
- Park



View of the Railroad from Green Street



River views from River Street



River views from the Pelzer Boat Ramp

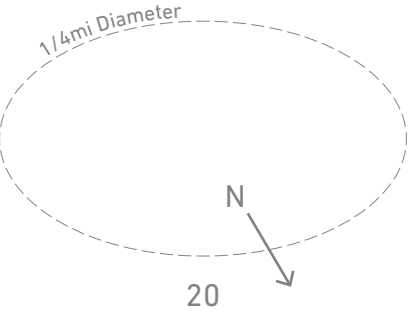
Physical and visual access to the Saluda River is challenging due to the natural and man-made topography of Pelzer.

Built Environment & Urban Form

Streets and intersections structure Pelzer's unique urban form

Pelzer's unique urban form reflects the community's Mill heritage. Lebbby Street and Highway 20 form the backbone of this network and provide critical connections to the region.

- Rail
- Arterial
- Major Local
- State Road
- Minor Local



The streets in Pelzer form the backbone of the community. Today, they offer opportunities to create a greater sense of place and identity for Pelzer.



The current gateway into Pelzer lacks a presence



Crucial corridors should have vibrant streetscapes



Residential streets should promote safety in their design

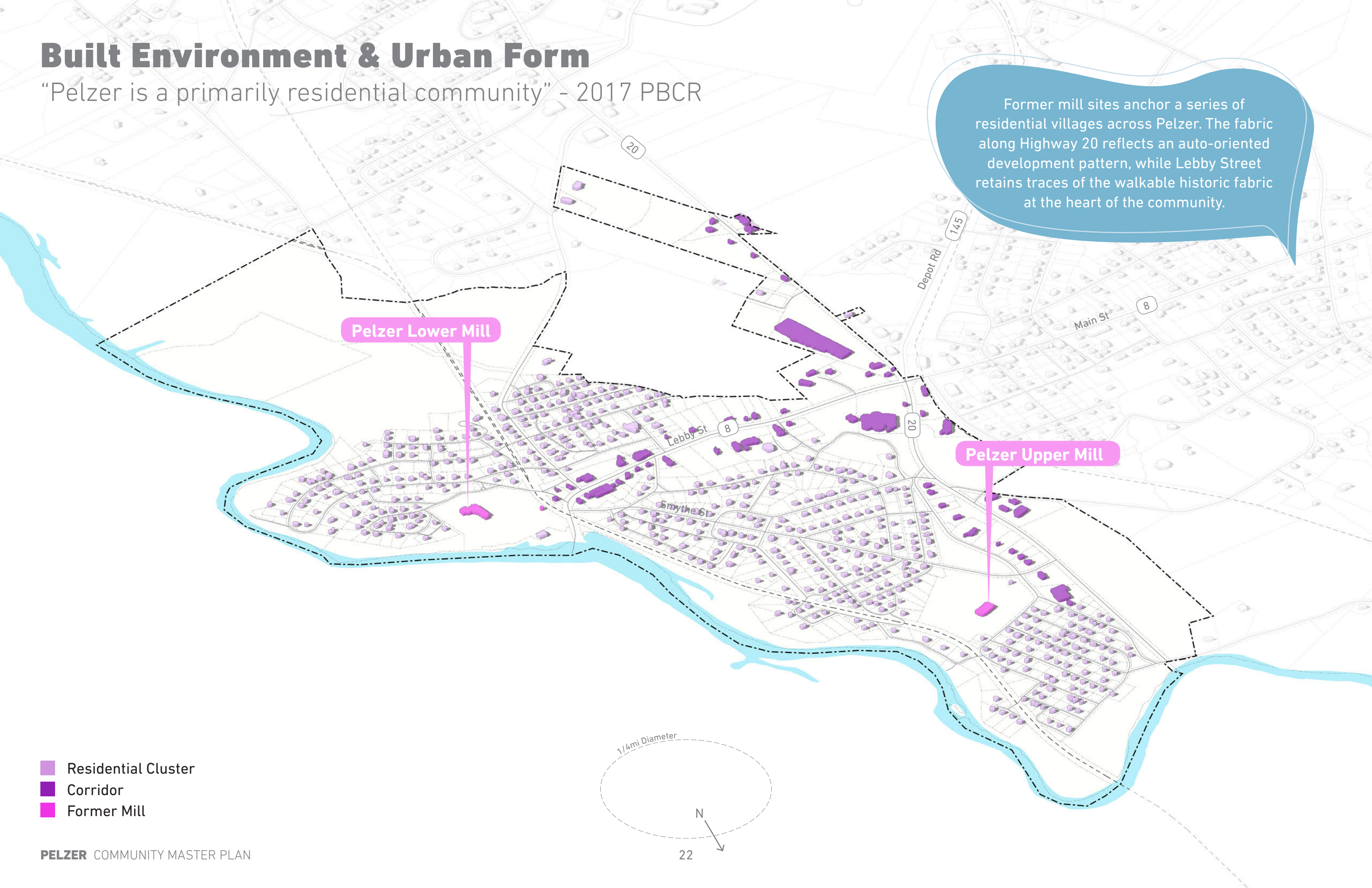


Crossing the bridge into Pelzer should be a better experience

Built Environment & Urban Form

“Pelzer is a primarily residential community” - 2017 PBCR

Former mill sites anchor a series of residential villages across Pelzer. The fabric along Highway 20 reflects an auto-oriented development pattern, while Lebbby Street retains traces of the walkable historic fabric at the heart of the community.



- Residential Cluster
- Corridor
- Former Mill

The building stock in Pelzer reflects the community's mill heritage and has remained largely intact.



Mill Village Housing



Mill Village Housing



Former Lyceum



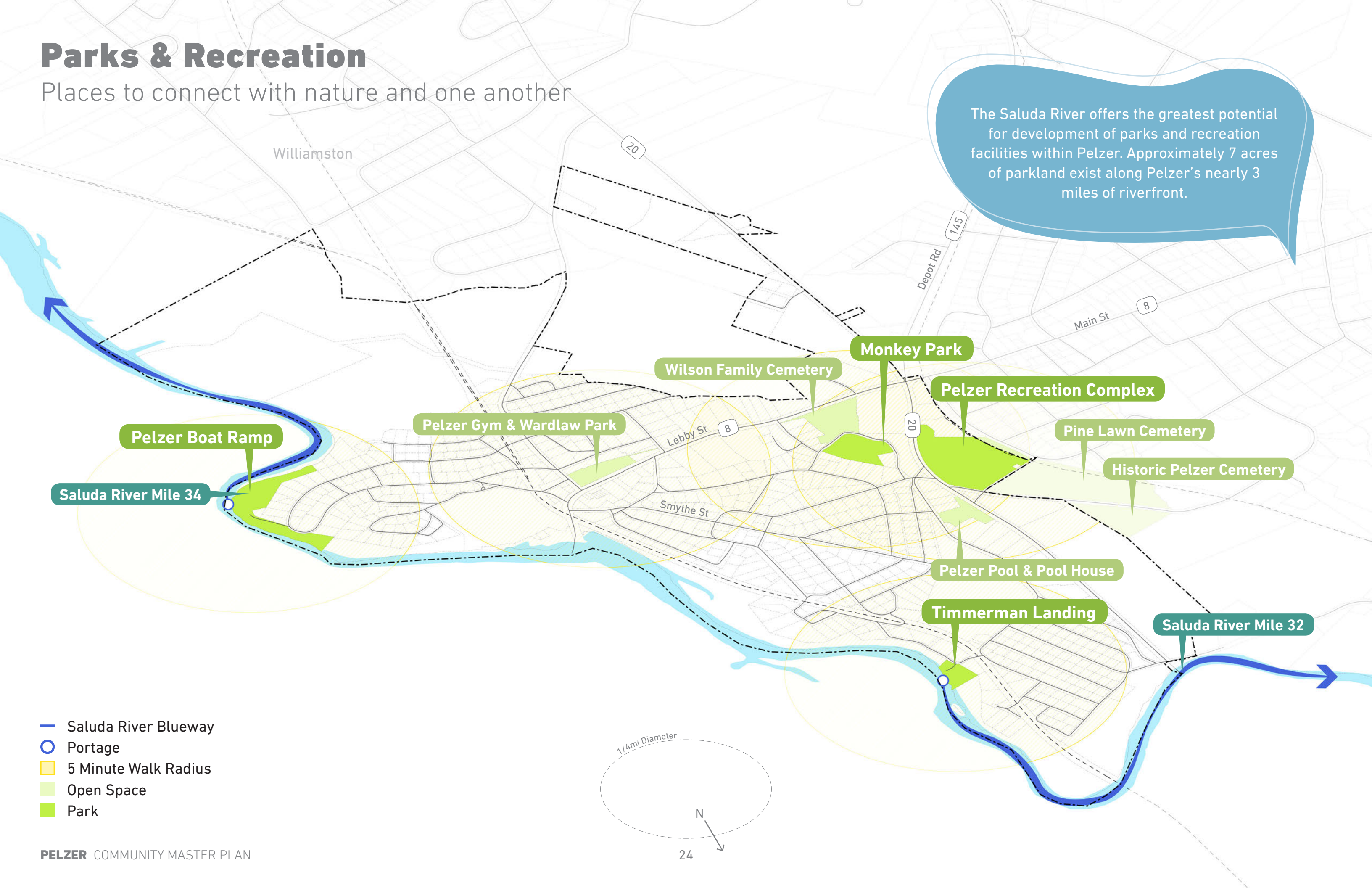
Smyth House



Pelzer Gym

Parks & Recreation

Places to connect with nature and one another



There is a significant inventory of public spaces including parks and waterfront access. These spaces and their potential reinvestment will enhance the quality of life for the community.



There are facilities that provide great river access



Opportunities to enhance the streetscape



Monkey Park provides a neighborhood gathering space



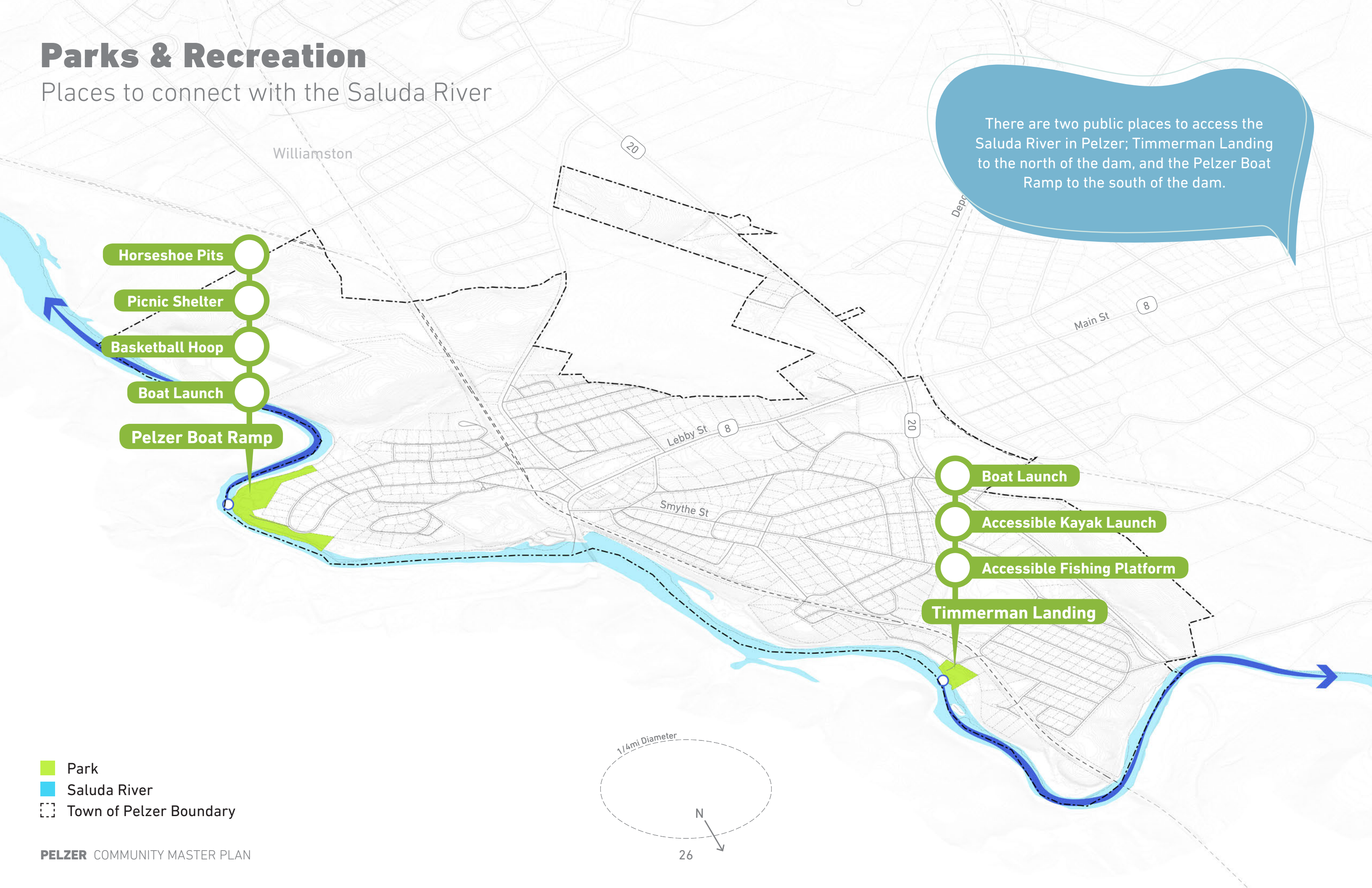
Trails and access to the Saluda



Wardlaw Park has potential for a central community gathering space

Parks & Recreation

Places to connect with the Saluda River



There are two public places to access the Saluda River in Pelzer; Timmerman Landing to the north of the dam, and the Pelzer Boat Ramp to the south of the dam.

Horseshoe Pits

Picnic Shelter

Basketball Hoop

Boat Launch

Pelzer Boat Ramp

Boat Launch

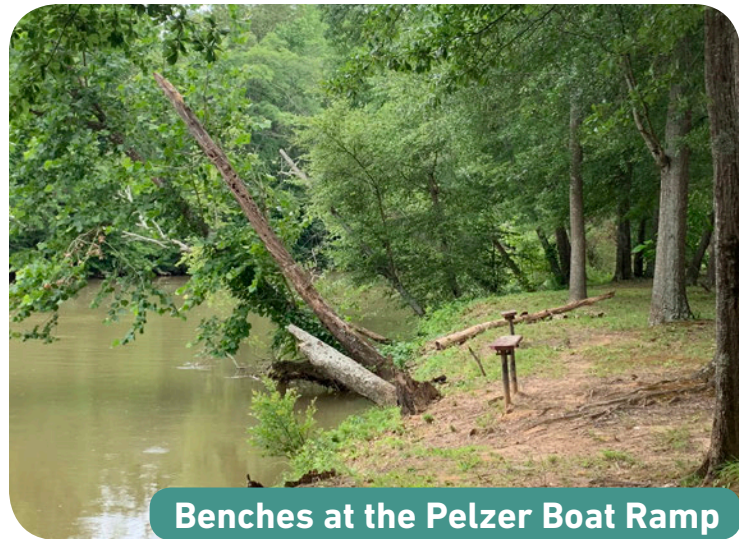
Accessible Kayak Launch

Accessible Fishing Platform

Timmerman Landing

- Park
- Saluda River
- Town of Pelzer Boundary

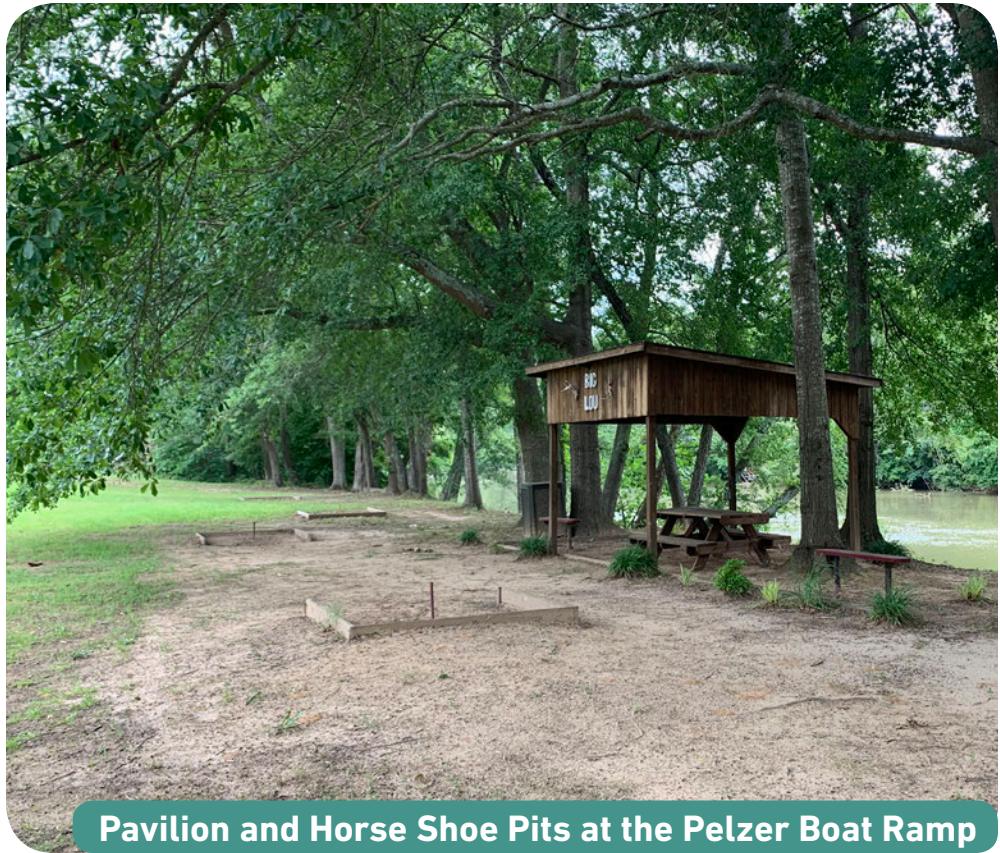
Recreational amenities along Pelzer's riverfront have occurred organically over the years. They are largely the result of successful collaborations between passionate community members and committed elected officials.



Benches at the Pelzer Boat Ramp



Basketball Hoop at the Pelzer Boat Ramp



Pavilion and Horse Shoe Pits at the Pelzer Boat Ramp



Pelzer Boat Ramp



Accessible Fishing Pier & Kayak Portage at Timmerman Landing

Pelzer c1947

The street network reflects the community's mill heritage.

2019 Pelzer Boundary

Pelzer Upper Mill

Pelzer Lower Mill

Saluda River

Pelzer c2018

The physical fabric of Pelzer has remained largely intact over the last 70 years.

2019 Pelzer Boundary

Pelzer Upper Mill

Pelzer Lower Mill

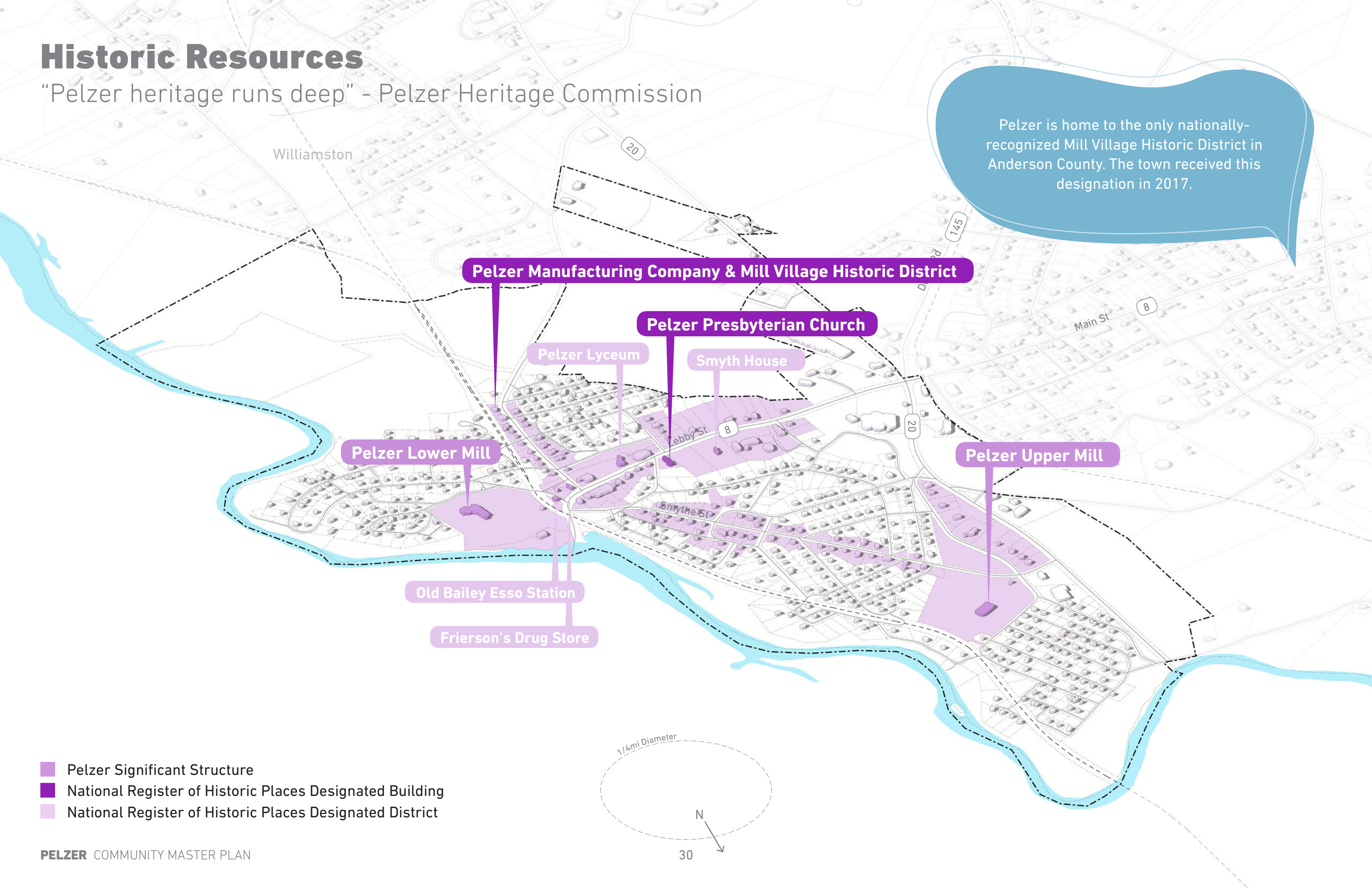
Saluda River



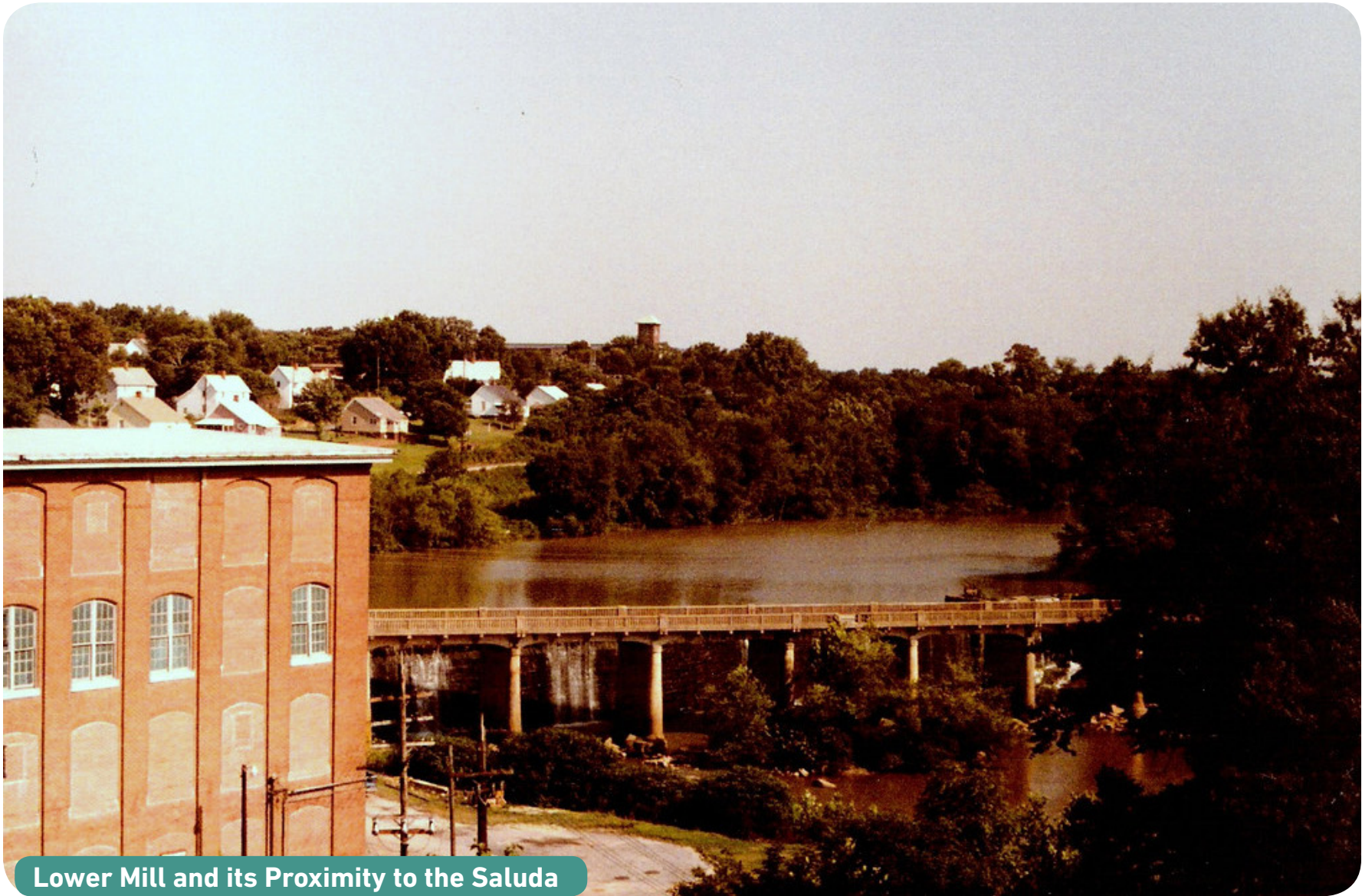
Historic Resources

“Pelzer heritage runs deep” - Pelzer Heritage Commission

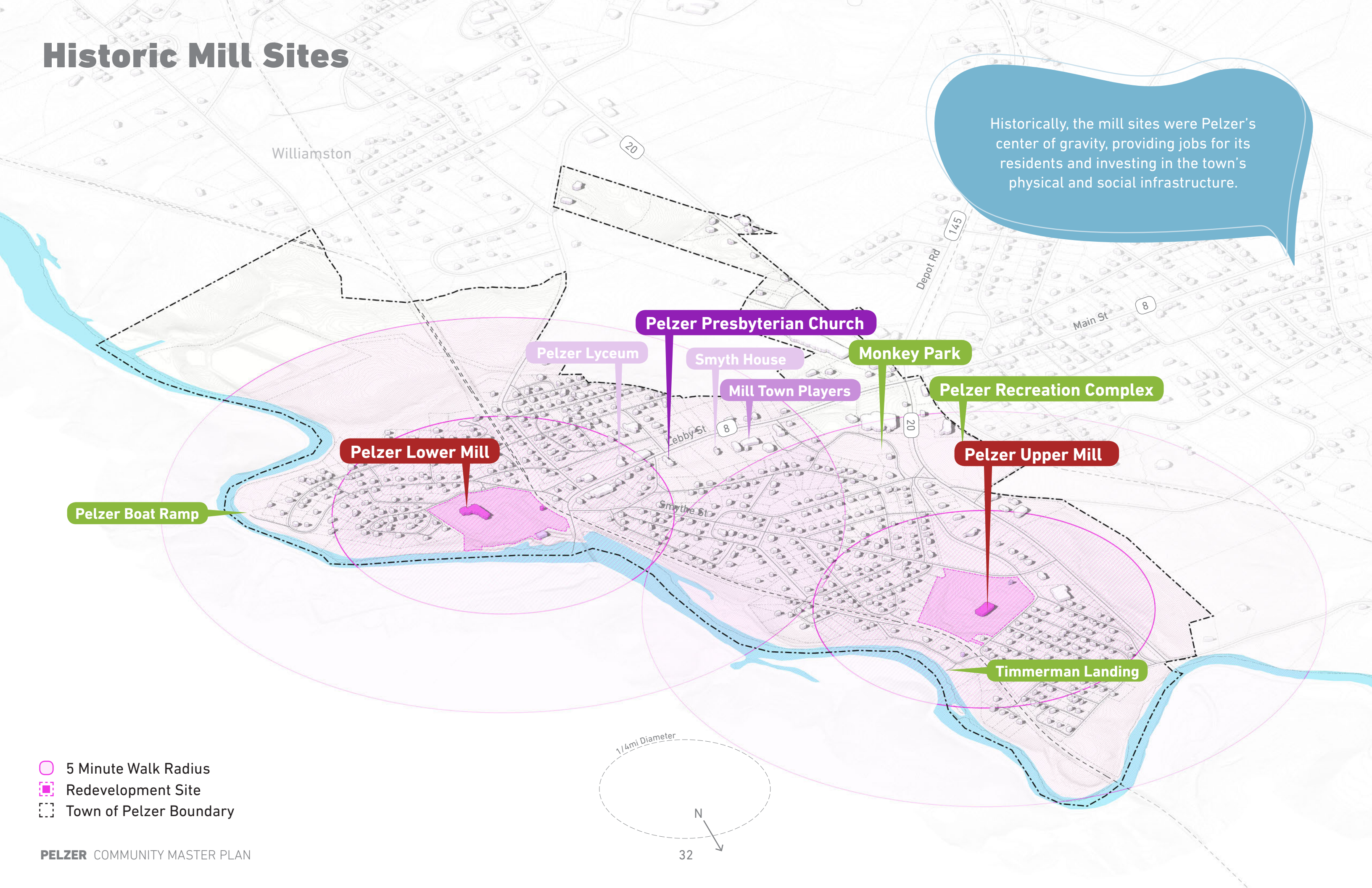
Pelzer is home to the only nationally-recognized Mill Village Historic District in Anderson County. The town received this designation in 2017.



Historic resources in Pelzer remind us of the foundation of excellence upon which the community was established. The remaining historical resources in Pelzer should be celebrated and highlighted.



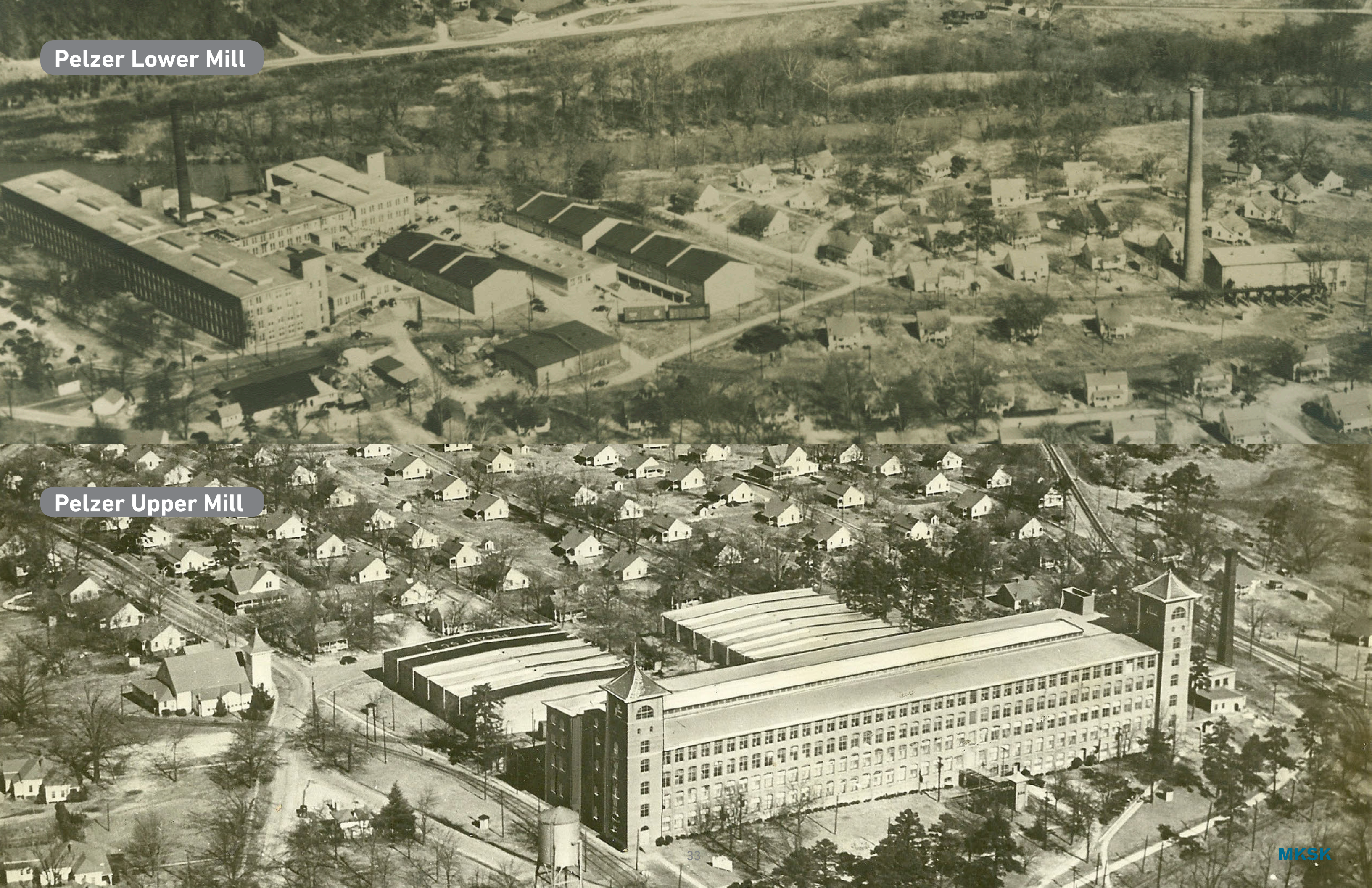
Historic Mill Sites



Historically, the mill sites were Pelzer's center of gravity, providing jobs for its residents and investing in the town's physical and social infrastructure.

Pelzer Lower Mill

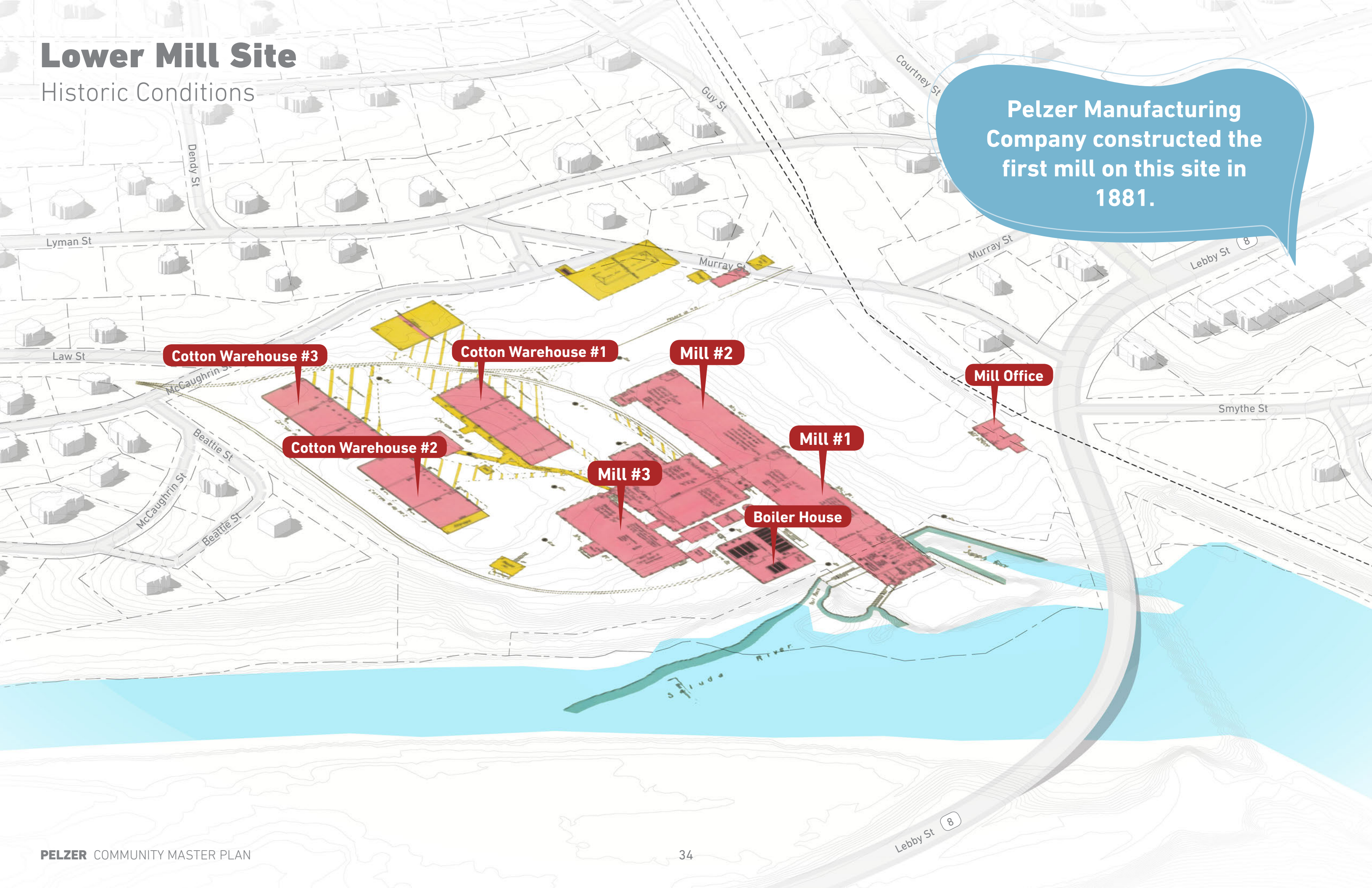
Pelzer Upper Mill



Lower Mill Site

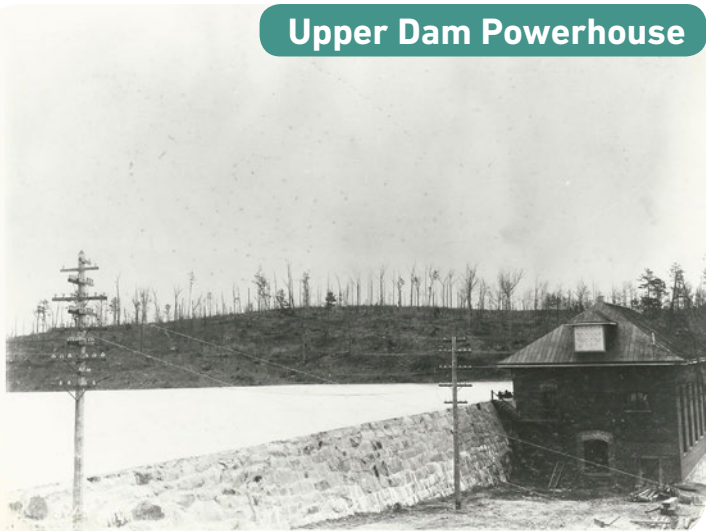
Historic Conditions

Pelzer Manufacturing Company constructed the first mill on this site in 1881.

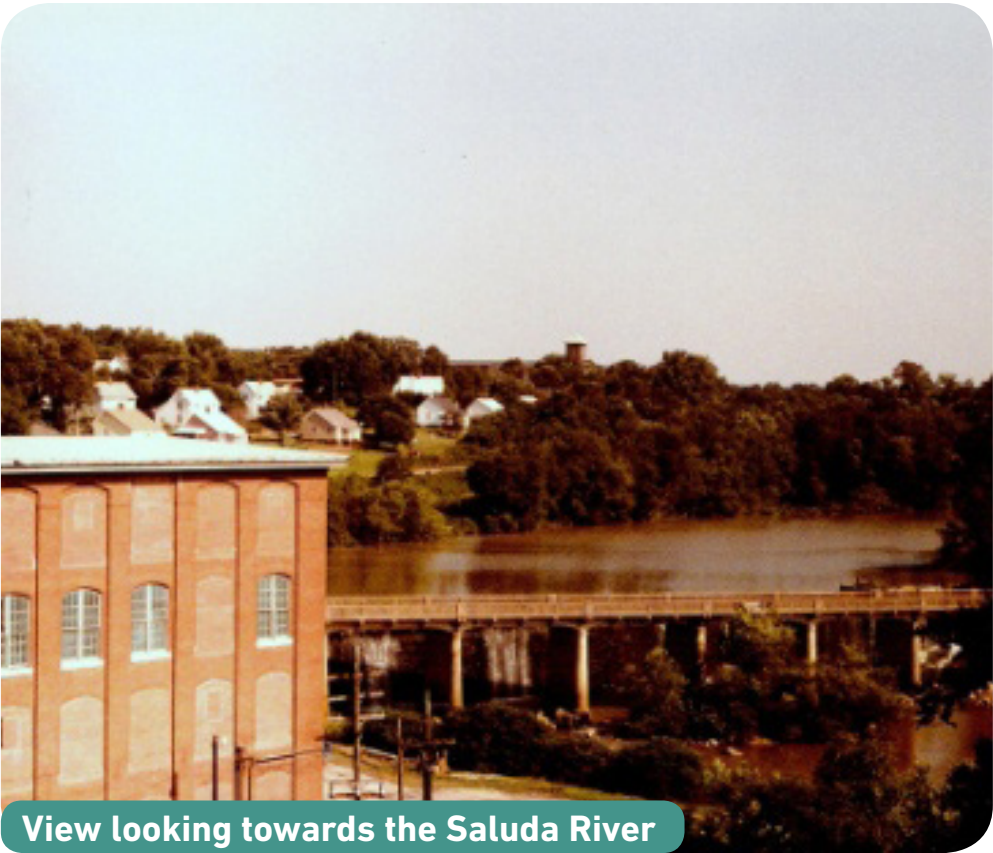


Between 1881 and 1885, three mills were constructed on the lower mill site by the Pelzer Manufacturing Company.

Upper Dam Powerhouse



Transmission lines to the Generator Room



View looking towards the Saluda River



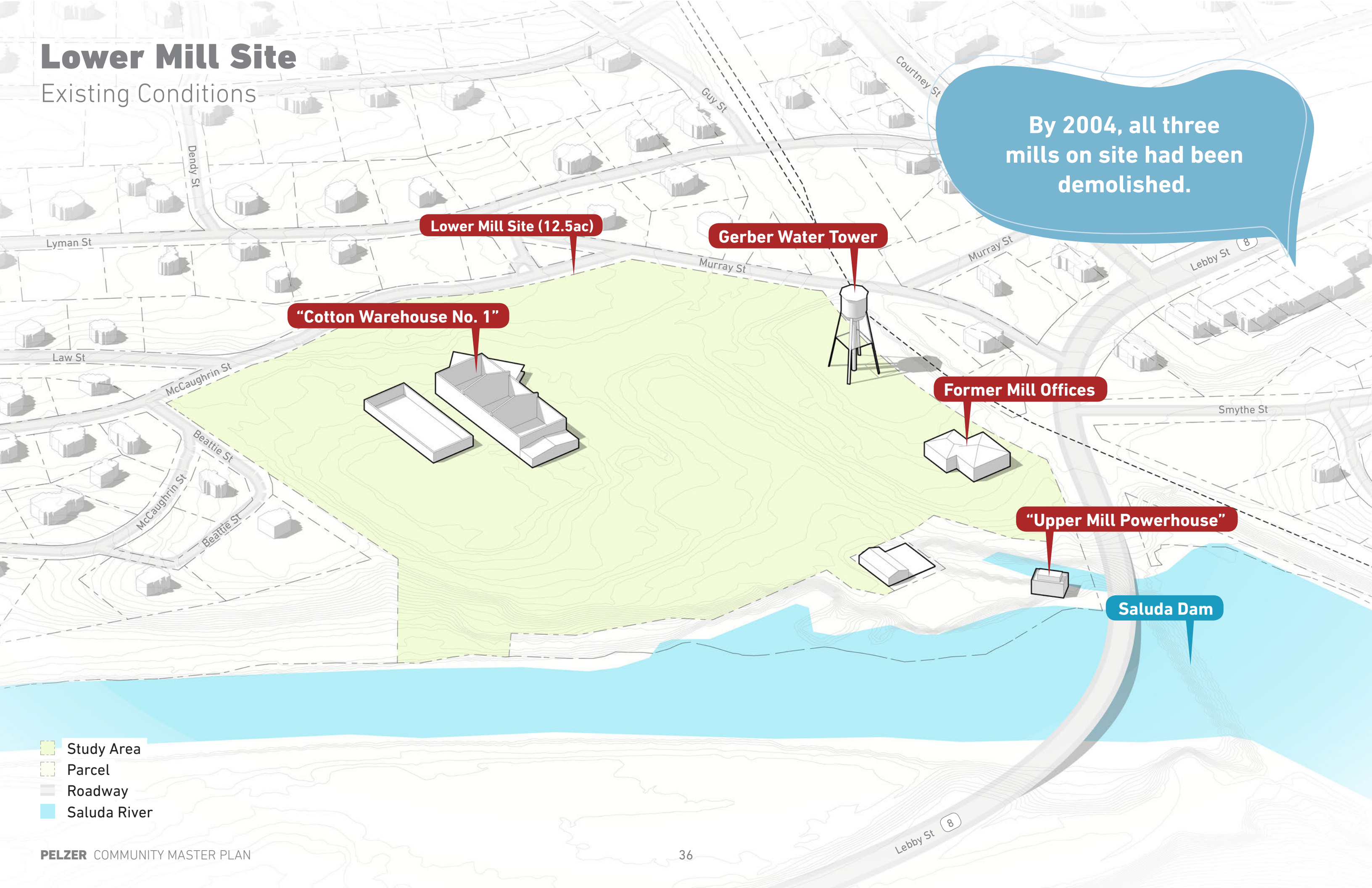
Cotton Mill #1



Cotton Mills #1,2,3

Lower Mill Site

Existing Conditions



By 2004, all three mills on site had been demolished.

Lower Mill Site (12.5ac)

Gerber Water Tower

"Cotton Warehouse No. 1"

Former Mill Offices

"Upper Mill Powerhouse"

Saluda Dam

- Study Area
- Parcel
- Roadway
- Saluda River

The larger of the brick structures on site was built during the turn of the 20th century and is the only remaining cotton warehouse from Pelzer Manufacturing Company's operation. It's roof was destroyed in 2012 after wooden palettes stored inside the building caught fire.



Vegetation on Site



Cotton Warehouse No.1 Interior



Cotton Warehouse No.1 Interior



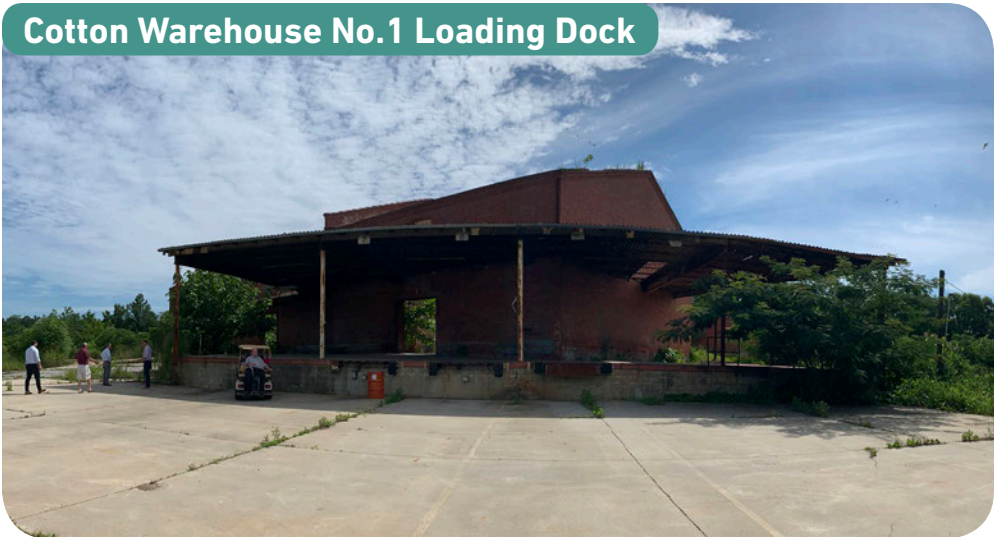
Cotton Warehouse No.1 Exterior



Mill Office & Water Tower



Service Road Adjacent Cotton Warehouse No.1



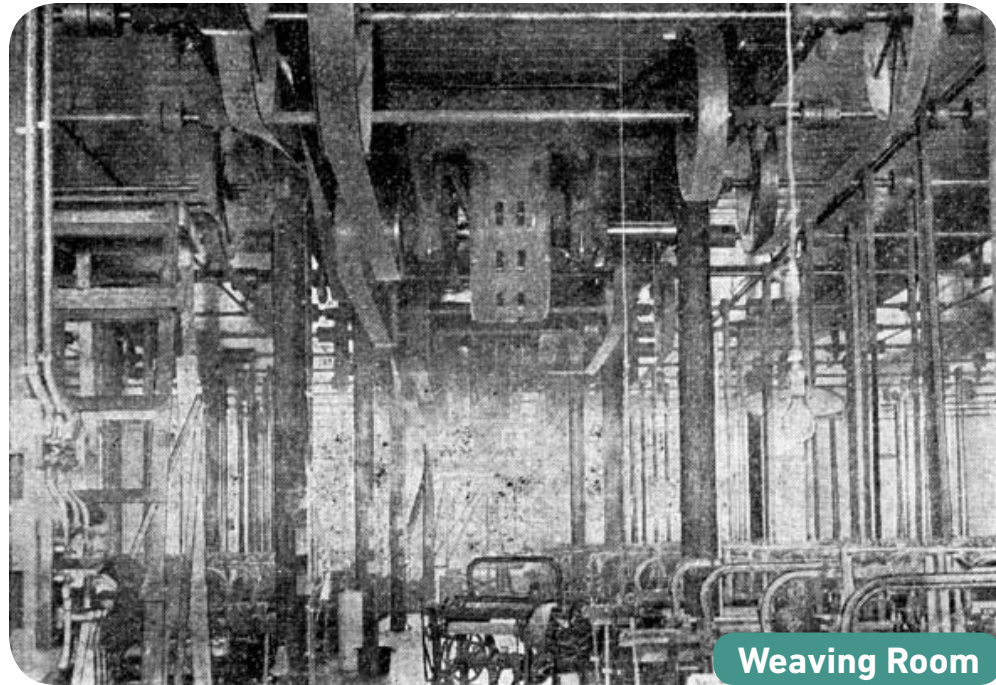
Cotton Warehouse No.1 Loading Dock

Upper Mill Site

Historic Conditions

Pelzer Manufacturing Company constructed the first mill on this site in 1894.





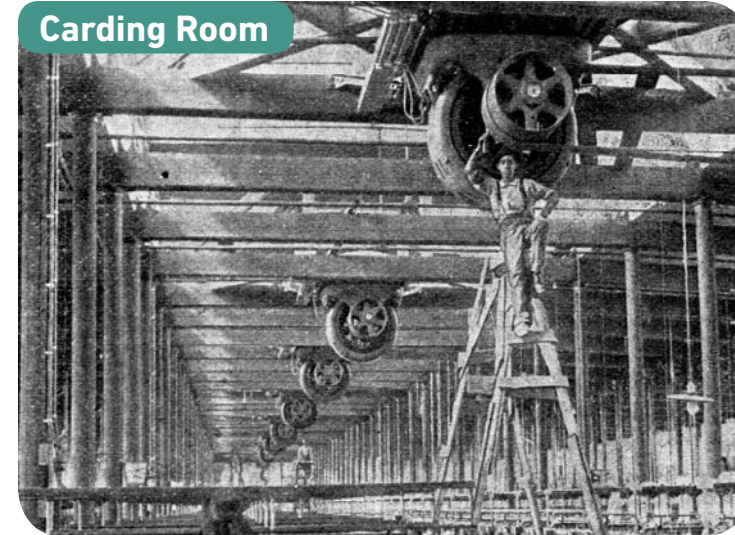
Weaving Room



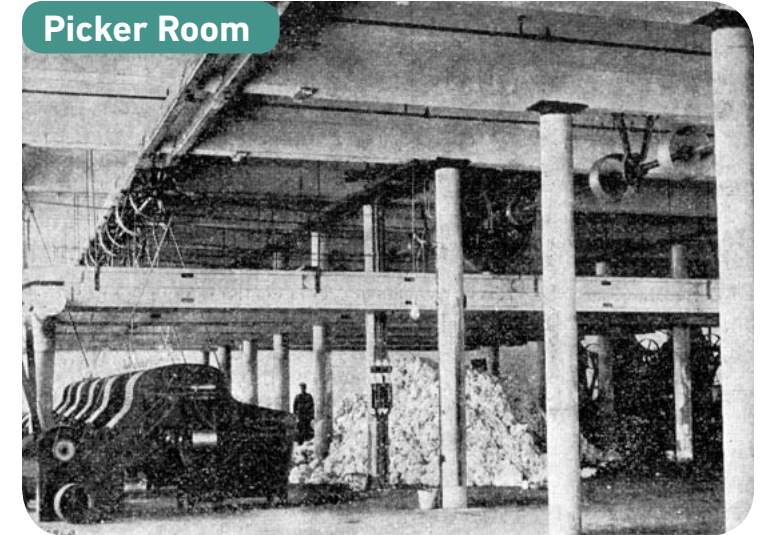
Spinning Room



Mill #4 Exterior



Carding Room



Picker Room

Mill #4 was the first cotton mill in the world to employ incandescent lighting and be powered by electrical power transmitted from a long-distance.

Upper Mill Site

Existing Conditions

Upper Mill Site (12.95ac)

Former Cotton Warehouse

Today, only a former cotton warehouse remains

The remnants of a former cotton warehouse dating back to the mid-1900's and the concrete pads of former mill buildings are the only traces left of the Upper Mill site's history.



Cotton Warehouse Interior



Cotton Warehouse Exterior



Upper Mill Site



Upper Mill Site

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 Celebrate the Saluda
- 3.2 Remember Our Roots
- 3.3 Build a New Legacy
- 3.4 Foster Investment

3.1 Celebrate the Saluda

Strategies to strengthen Pelzer's relationship with the Saluda River

The Saluda River is Pelzer's most underutilized asset. It will take concerted effort to reorient the town to the river; fortunately, the opportunities to do so are significant and efforts to reimagine this relationship are already underway.

"Pelzer is a river town." This statement summarizes a vision of a future Pelzer that embraces the Saluda River as a quality-of-life amenity, an economic driver, a natural resource to be respected and protected, and a fundamental component of community identity.

The project team has identified three strategies the Town of Pelzer and its partners can use to better celebrate the Saluda River.

- **Improve Accessibility** - Provide more places for people to get to the Saluda River. River access (for non-boaters) is currently limited to Timmerman Landing above the falls and the Pelzer Boat Ramp facilities below the falls. The town enjoys nearly three miles of riverfront, which represents an opportunity for additional riverfront parks and recreation facilities.
- **Diversify Programming** - Provide more ways for people to enjoy the Saluda River. New uses, such as camping, biking, horseback riding, and nature trails can better activate Pelzer's riverfront.
- **Restore Biodiversity** - Provide greater opportunities for people to connect with nature. A healthy riverine environment should be a priority, as it supports nature and provides opportunities for education and stewardship.



Celebrate the Saluda

Strategies to strengthen Pelzer’s relationship with the Saluda River



Improve Accessibility

Provide more places for people to get to the Saluda River.



Diversify Programming

Provide more ways for people to enjoy the Saluda River.

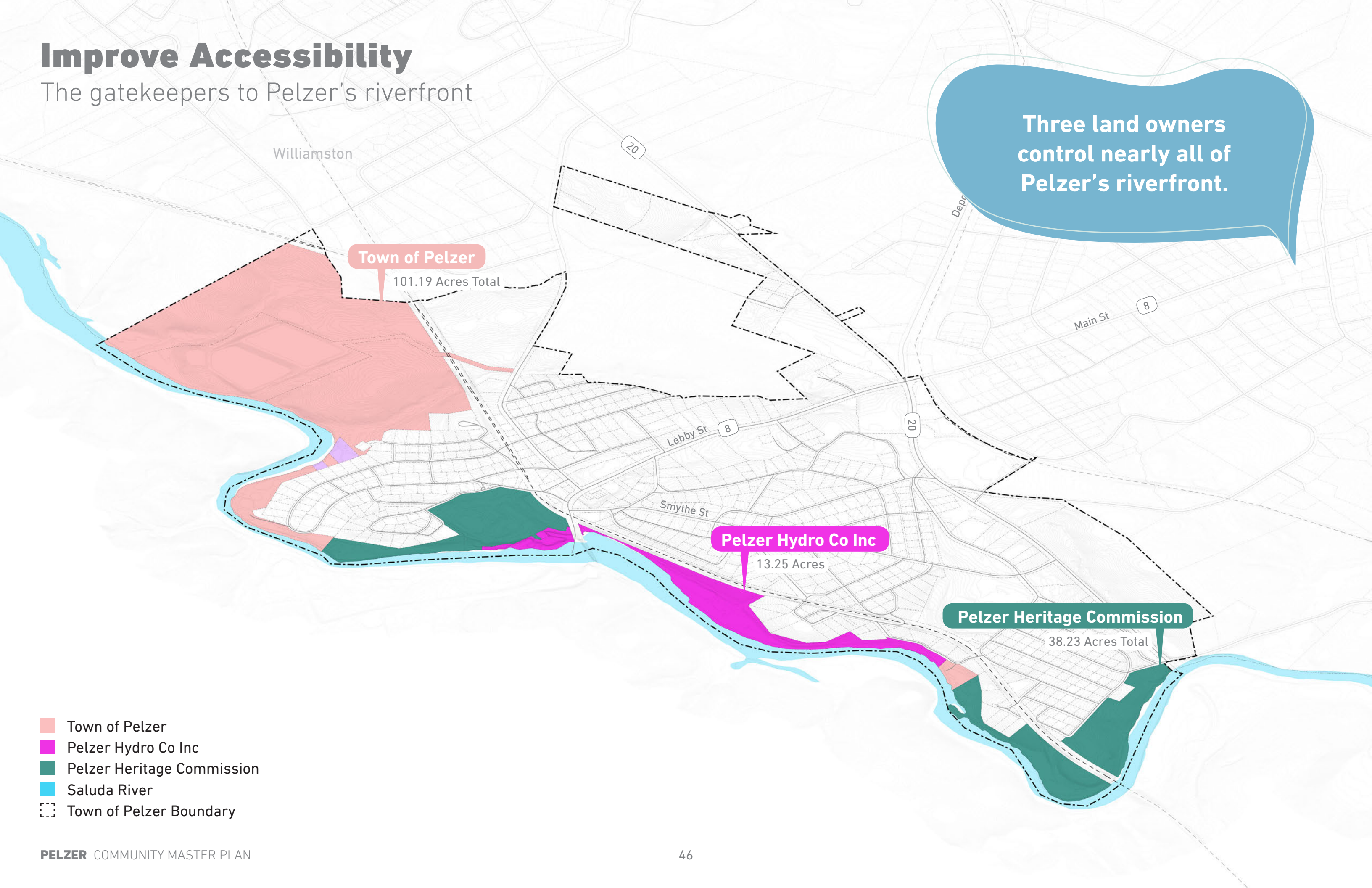


Restore Biodiversity

Provide greater opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Improve Accessibility

The gatekeepers to Pelzer's riverfront

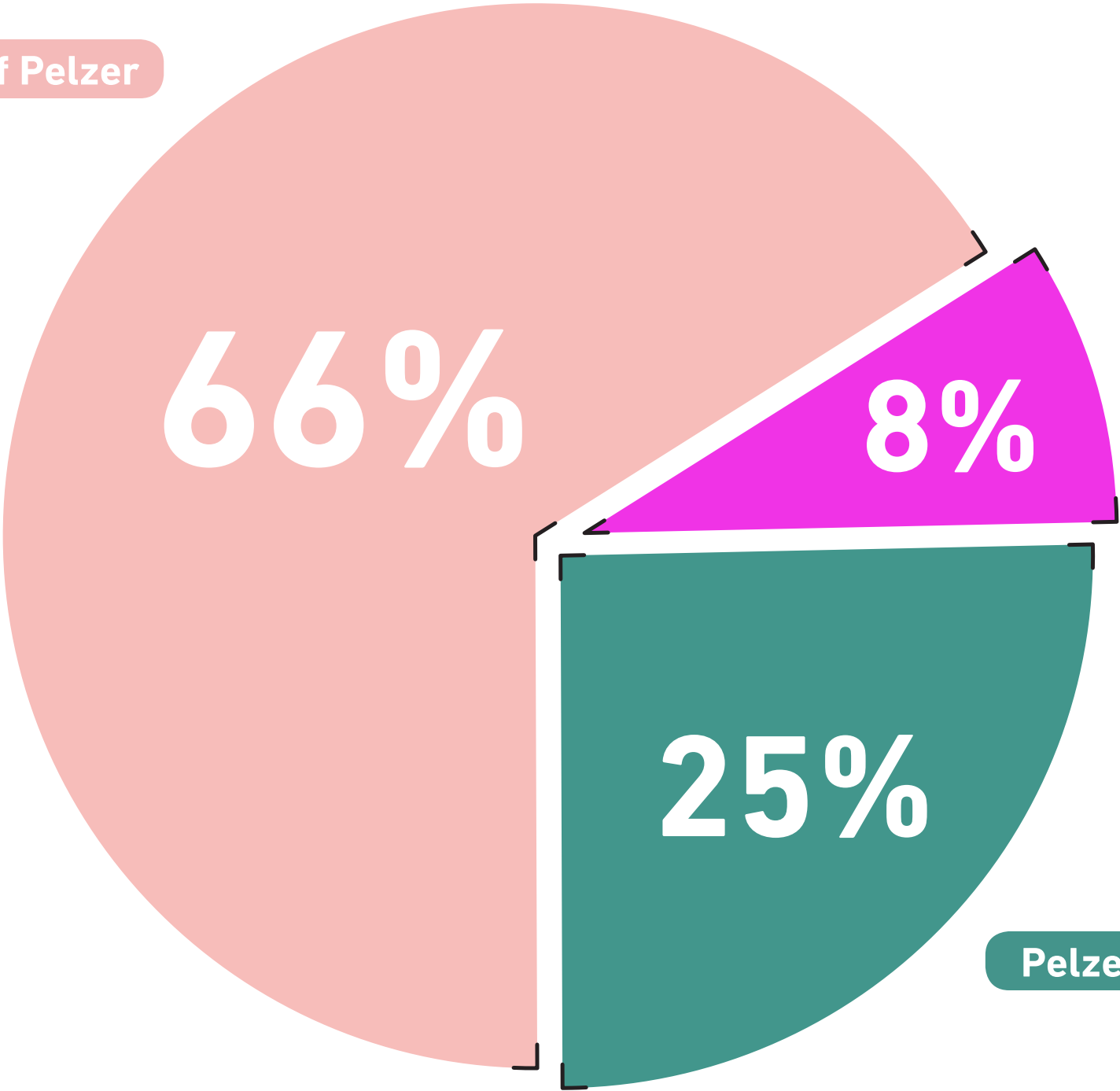


Town of Pelzer

Pelzer Hydro Co Inc

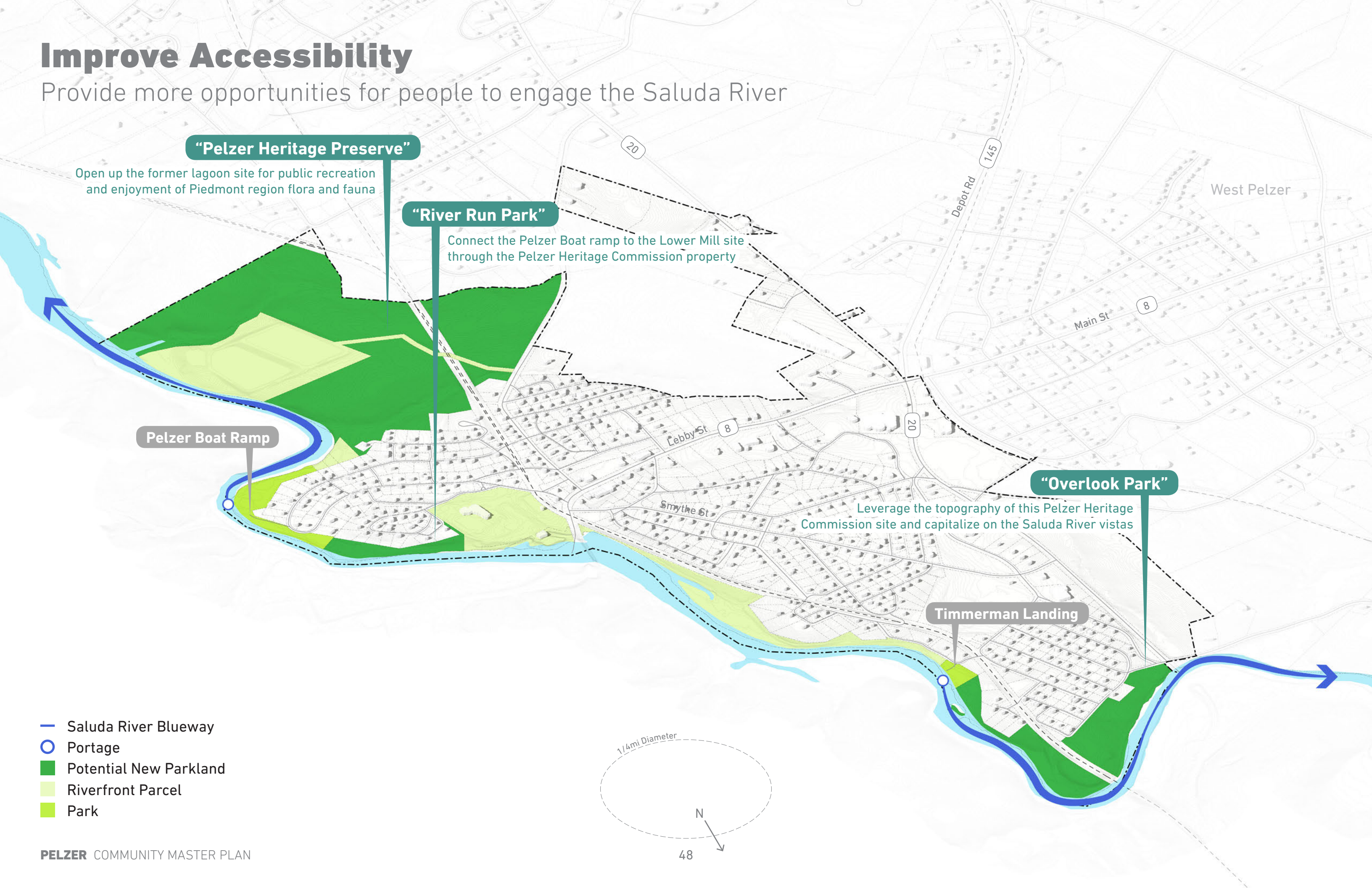
Pelzer Heritage Commission

- 101.19 Acres
- 13.25 Acres
- 38.23 Acres



Improve Accessibility

Provide more opportunities for people to engage the Saluda River



“Pelzer Heritage Preserve”

Open up the former lagoon site for public recreation and enjoyment of Piedmont region flora and fauna

“River Run Park”

Connect the Pelzer Boat ramp to the Lower Mill site through the Pelzer Heritage Commission property

“Overlook Park”

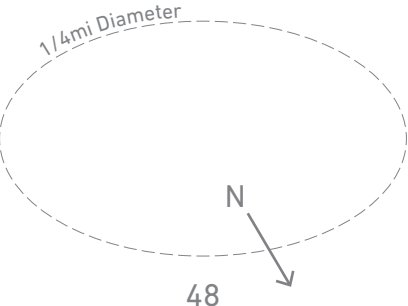
Leverage the topography of this Pelzer Heritage Commission site and capitalize on the Saluda River vistas

Pelzer Boat Ramp

Timmerman Landing

West Pelzer

- Saluda River Blueway
- Portage
- Potential New Parkland
- Riverfront Parcel
- Park



“Pelzer Heritage Preserve” Site



“Overlook Park” Site



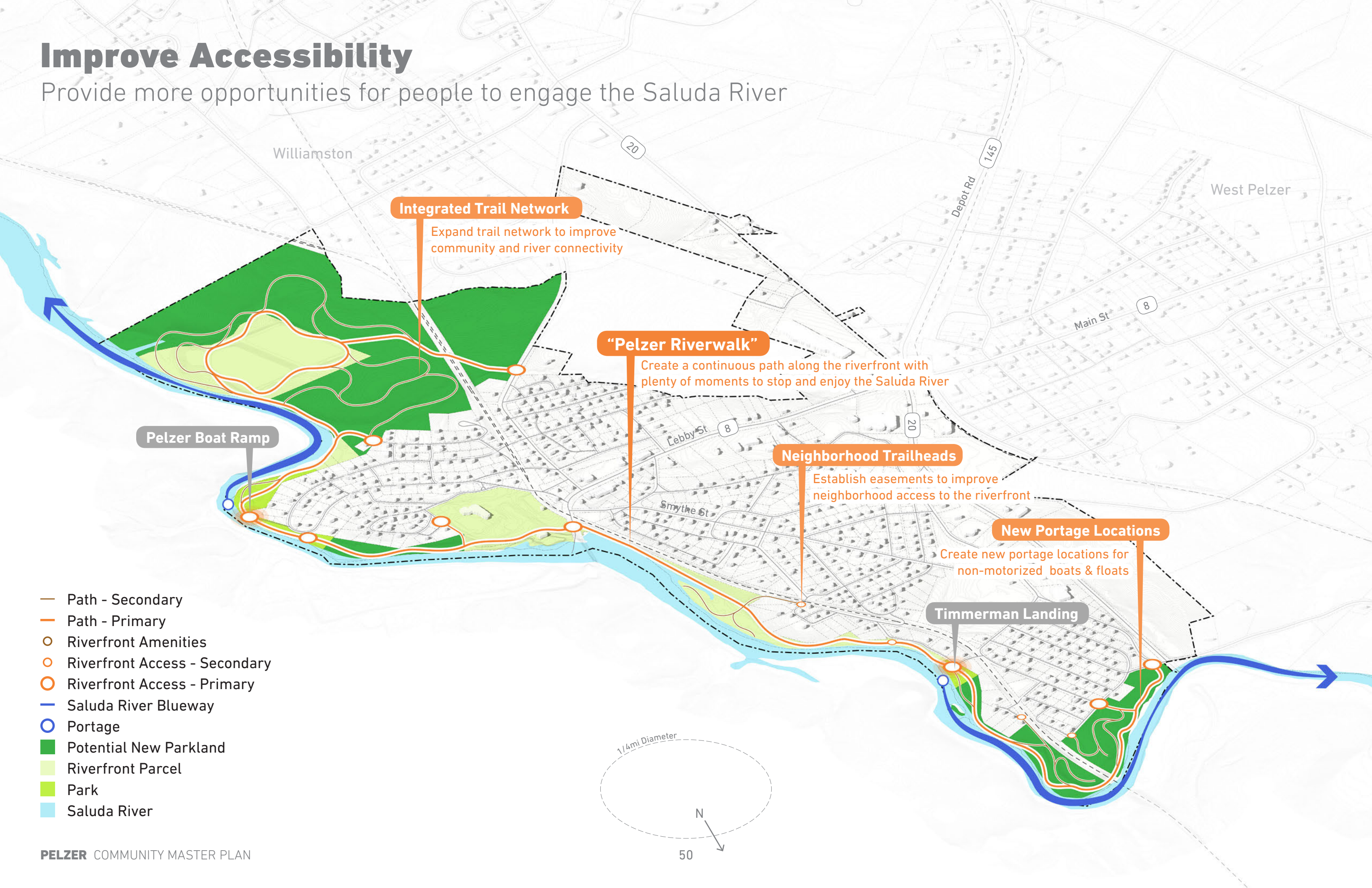
“River Run Park” Site



The parcels identified above would add roughly 1.25 miles and 92.75 acres of contiguous public riverfront for the enjoyment of those living in and visiting Pelzer.

Improve Accessibility

Provide more opportunities for people to engage the Saluda River



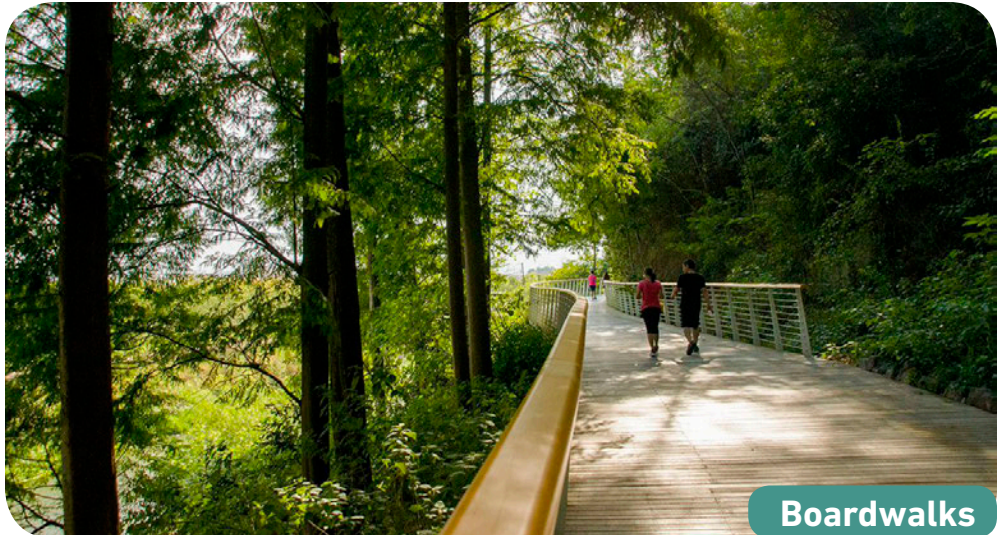
- Path - Secondary
- Path - Primary
- Riverfront Amenities
- Riverfront Access - Secondary
- Riverfront Access - Primary
- Saluda River Blueway
- Portage
- Potential New Parkland
- Riverfront Parcel
- Park
- Saluda River

A diverse and integrated trail network across Pelzer's riverfront will provide new opportunities for all to enjoy and access this shared resource.

Horseback Riding



Nature Trails



Boardwalks

ATV Riding



Mountain Biking



Multi-use Trails



Diversify Programming

Provide more opportunities for people to enjoy the Saluda River



New uses activate Pelzer's riverfront and expand the ways people of all abilities can enjoy the river and interact with one another



Restore Biodiversity

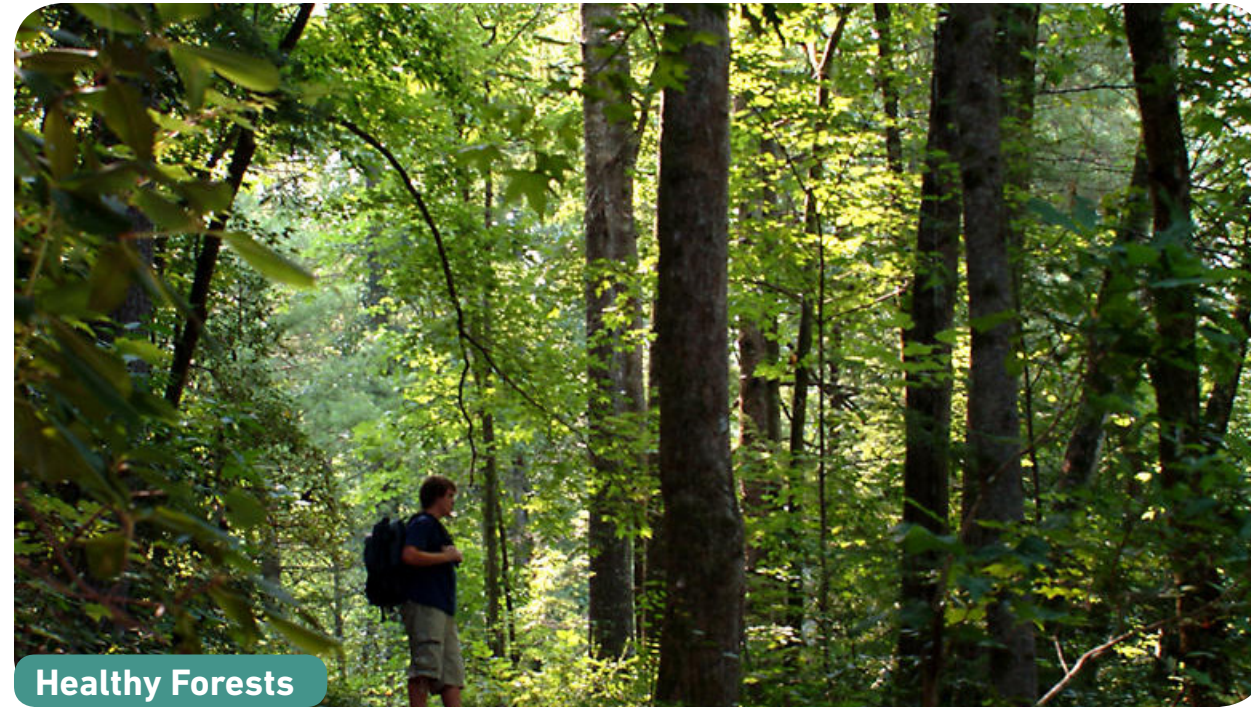
Provide more opportunities for people to connect with nature



- 100 Year Floodplain
- Riverfront Parcel
- Park
- Saluda River



Aquatic Habitat



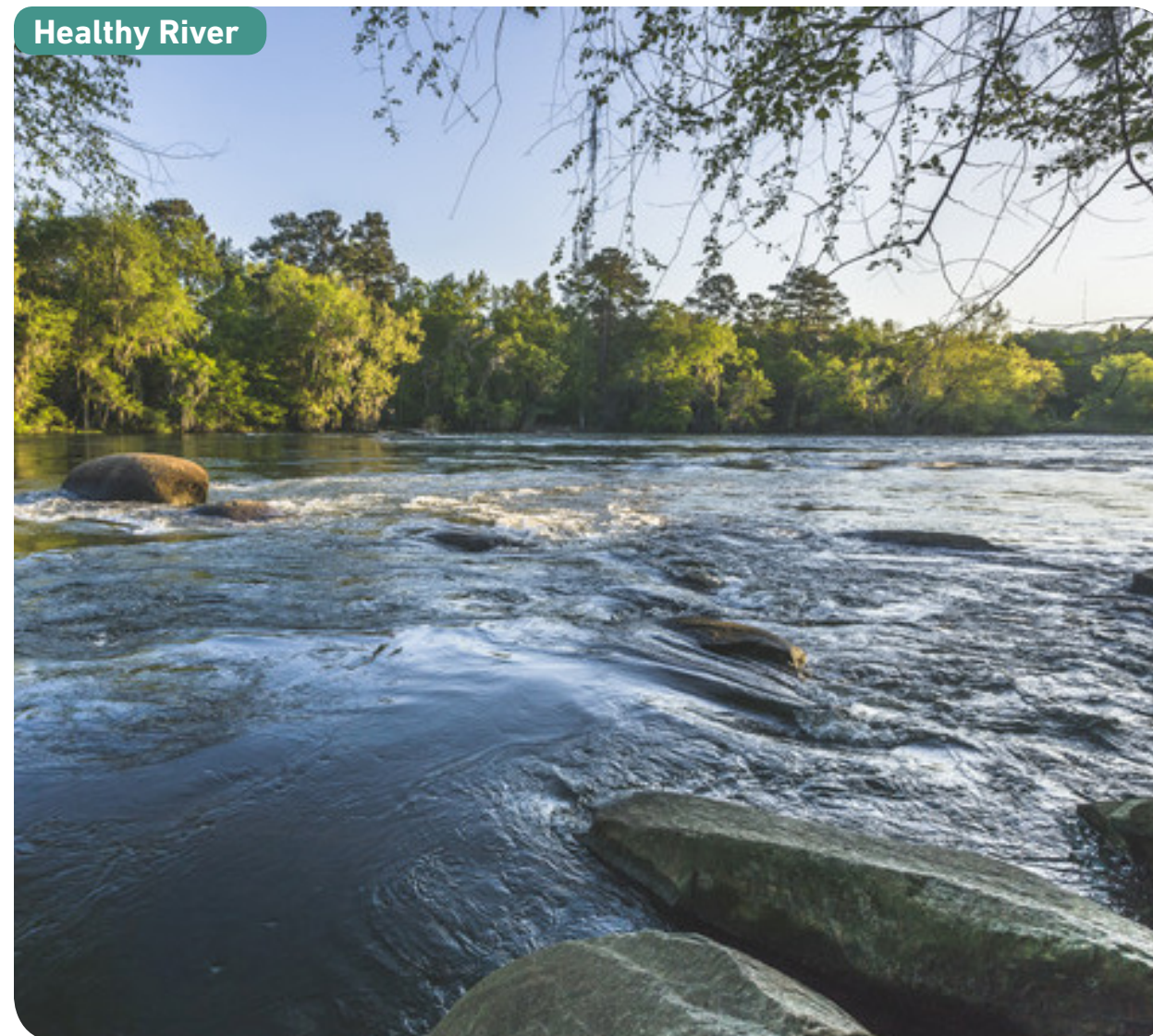
Healthy Forests



Terrestrial Habitat



Emergent Habitat



Healthy River



Educational Programming

A healthy riverine environment supports a diverse range of native fauna and flora. Educational programming sheds light on the value of this natural resource and cultivates the next generation of stewards.

Celebrate the Saluda: Vision

Celebrate and strengthen Pelzer's relationship with the Saluda River

Pelzer is a Rivertown
Potential for 200+ acres of riverfront parkland

"Pelzer Heritage Preserve"

Open up the former lagoon site for public recreation and enjoyment of Piedmont region flora and fauna

"River Run Park"

Connect the Pelzer Boat ramp to the Lower Mill site through the Pelzer Heritage Commission property

"Pelzer Riverwalk"

Create a continuous path along the riverfront with plenty of moments to stop and enjoy the Saluda River

Healthy Saluda River

Improve the scenic beauty and ecological value of the riverfront through restoration of native riparian plant communities

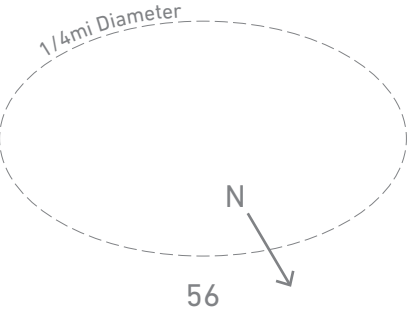
"Overlook Park"

Leverage the topography of this Pelzer Heritage Commission site and capitalize on the Saluda River vistas

Pelzer Boat Ramp

Timmerman Landing

- Path - Secondary
- Path - Primary
- Riverfront Amenities
- Riverfront Access - Secondary
- Riverfront Access - Primary
- Saluda River Blueway
- Portage
- Riverfront Parcel
- Park
- Saluda River



“Pelzer Heritage Preserve” Site



Treetop Adventure



Terrestrial Habitat

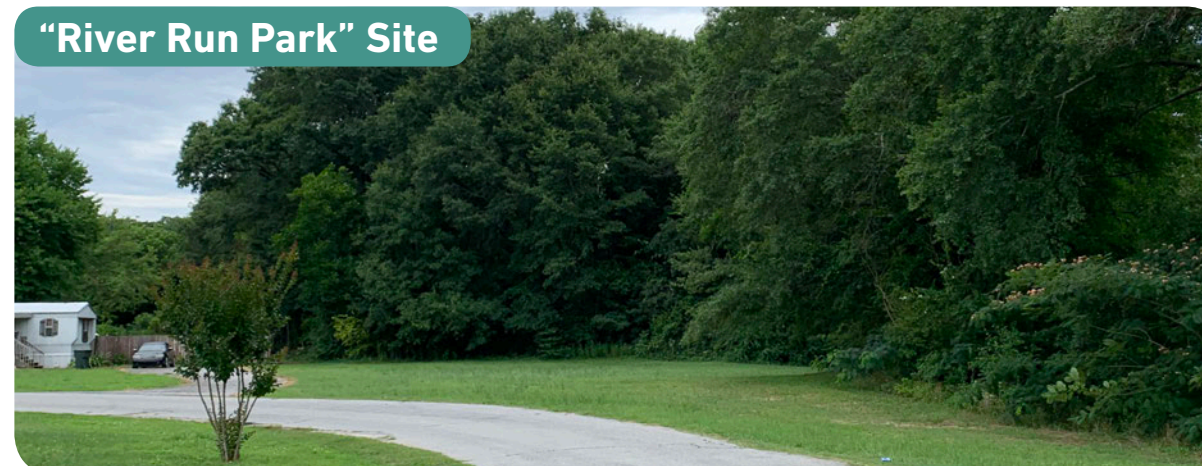


Emergent Habitat

Multi-use Trails



“River Run Park” Site



Fishing

3.2 Remember our Roots

Look back on Pelzer's heritage to provide guidance in shaping its future

Pelzer is a community with a remarkable history. From its earliest days as a trading post on the Saluda River to the explosion of the textile industry to its transition away from manufacturing, Pelzer's story is one of change and transformation. Throughout the years, notable people, places, and stories have emerged that speak to the value and importance of this community.

Fortunately, there are already numerous individuals and organizations dedicated to the preservation of the town's stories, artifacts, and historic sites. In the coming years, their efforts can be amplified and expanded in a variety of ways that will enrich the experience of Pelzer and enable the community to make its storied past accessible to future generations.

The project team has identified two strategies the Town of Pelzer and its partners can use to remember the history and heritage of the community.

- **Shape Place** - Enhance the public spaces and streets that define the backbone of Pelzer. Lebbby Street and the core of the town can be enhanced to welcome visitors and provide places to celebrate community life.
- **Share the Story** - Use our heritage to create a stronger sense of place. We can use environmental features, landmarks, and historic images to tell the story of Pelzer and enhance the town's character.



Remember our Roots

Look back on Pelzer’s heritage to provide guidance in shaping its future



Shape Place

Enhance the public spaces and streets that define the backbone of Pelzer.

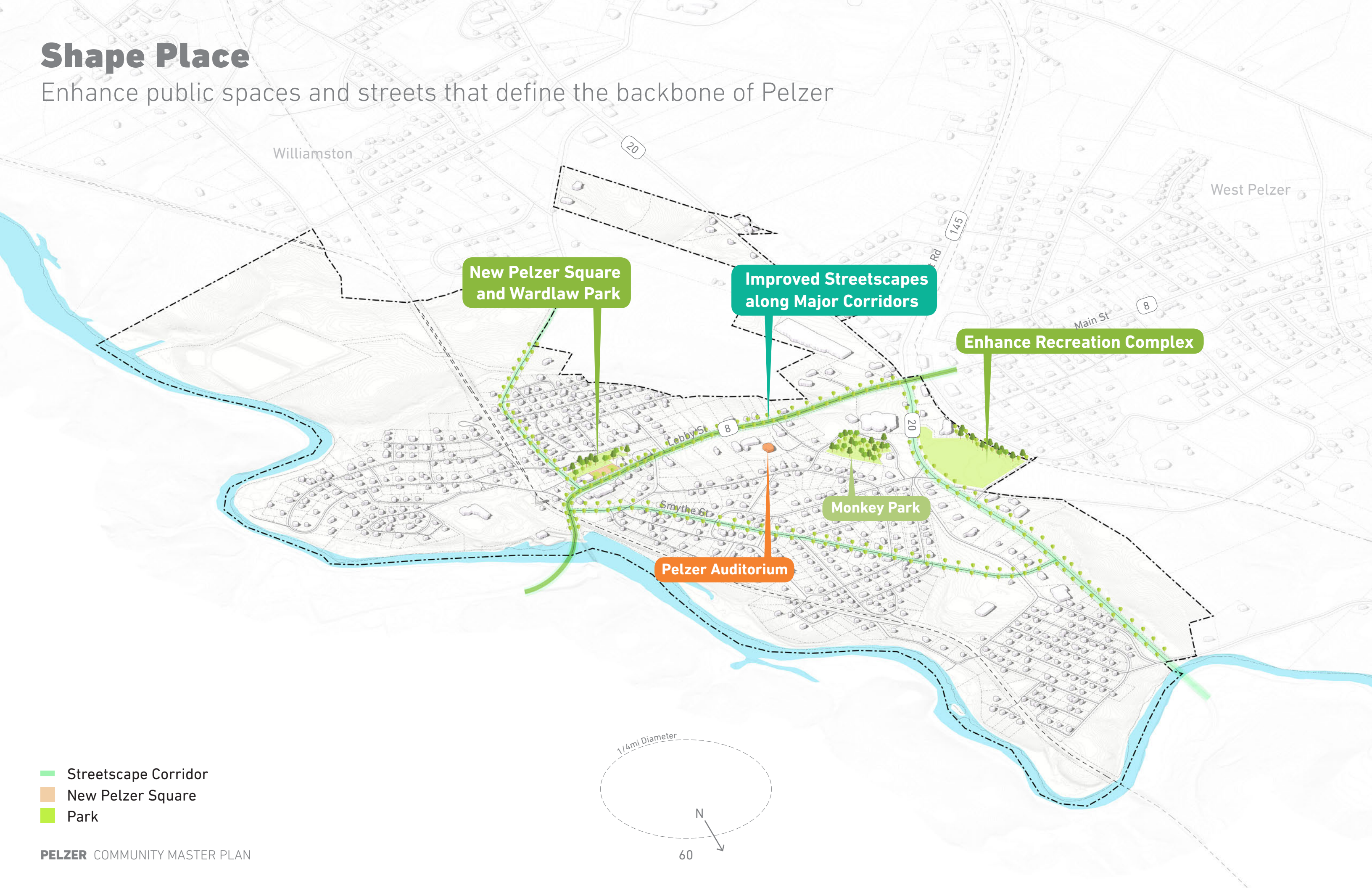


Share the Story

Use our heritage to create a stronger sense of place.

Shape Place

Enhance public spaces and streets that define the backbone of Pelzer



- Streetscape Corridor
- New Pelzer Square
- Park

Enhance our public spaces through strategic investments to make our streets and parks more enjoyable and welcoming for all.

Program the parks to bring the community together



Enhance downtown experience with new central square and greenspace



Replace outdated Park Features



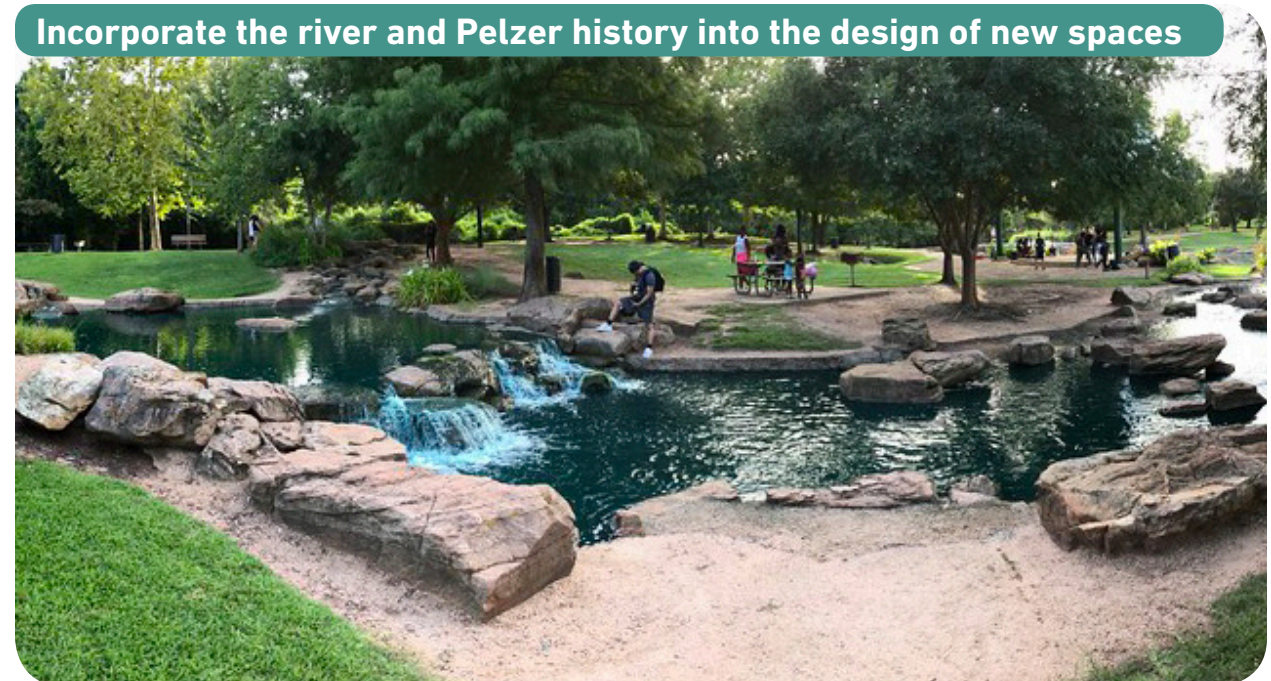
Added street vegetation and sidewalk amenities



Enhanced pedestrian crossings

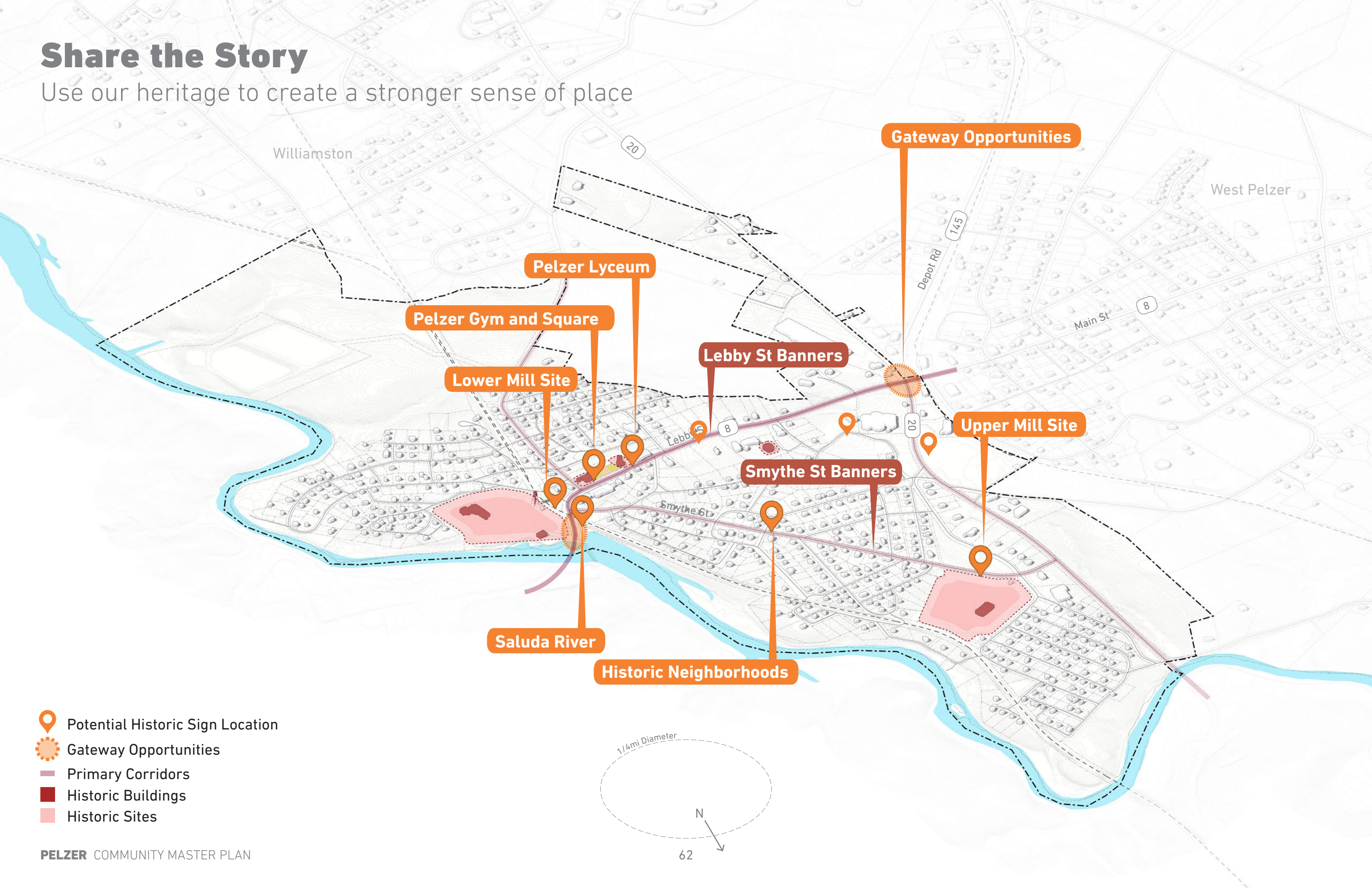






Incorporate the river and Pelzer history into the design of new spaces



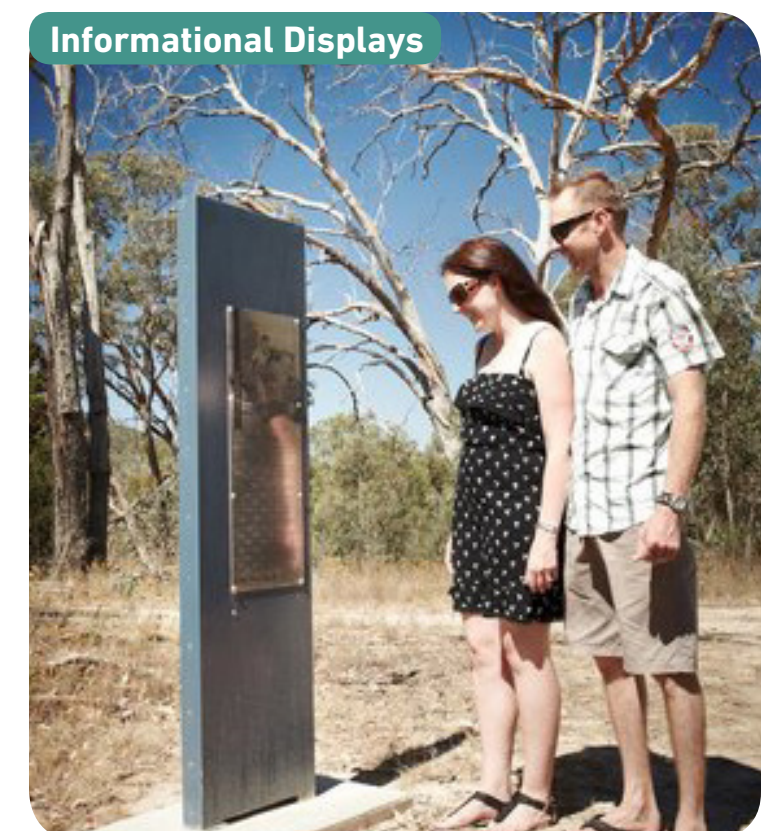
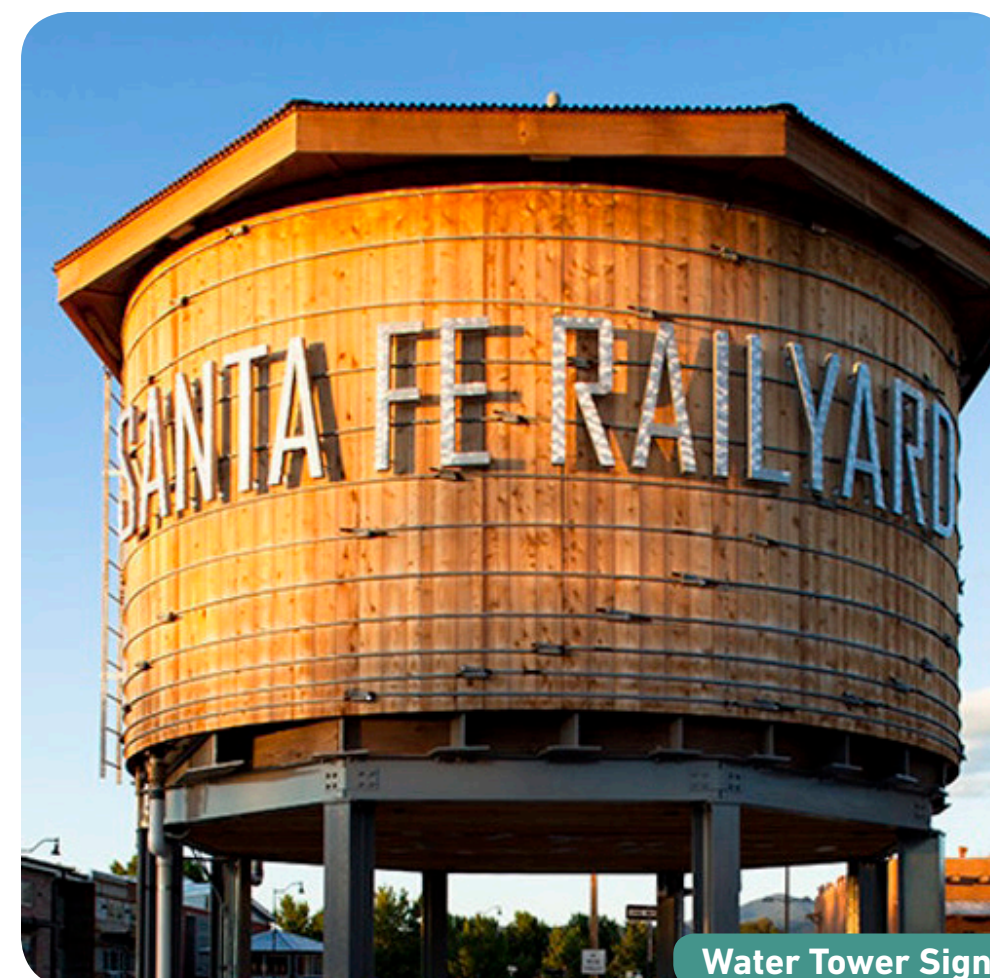
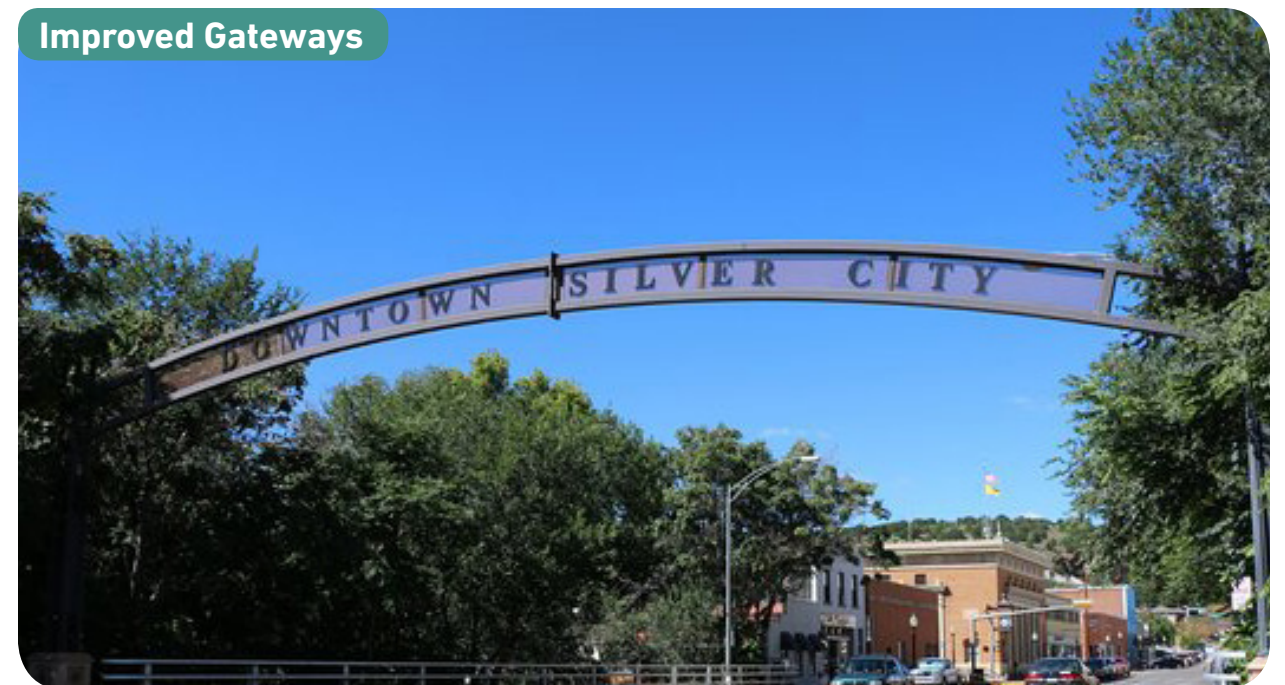
Share the Story

Use our heritage to create a stronger sense of place



-  Potential Historic Sign Location
-  Gateway Opportunities
-  Primary Corridors
-  Historic Buildings
-  Historic Sites

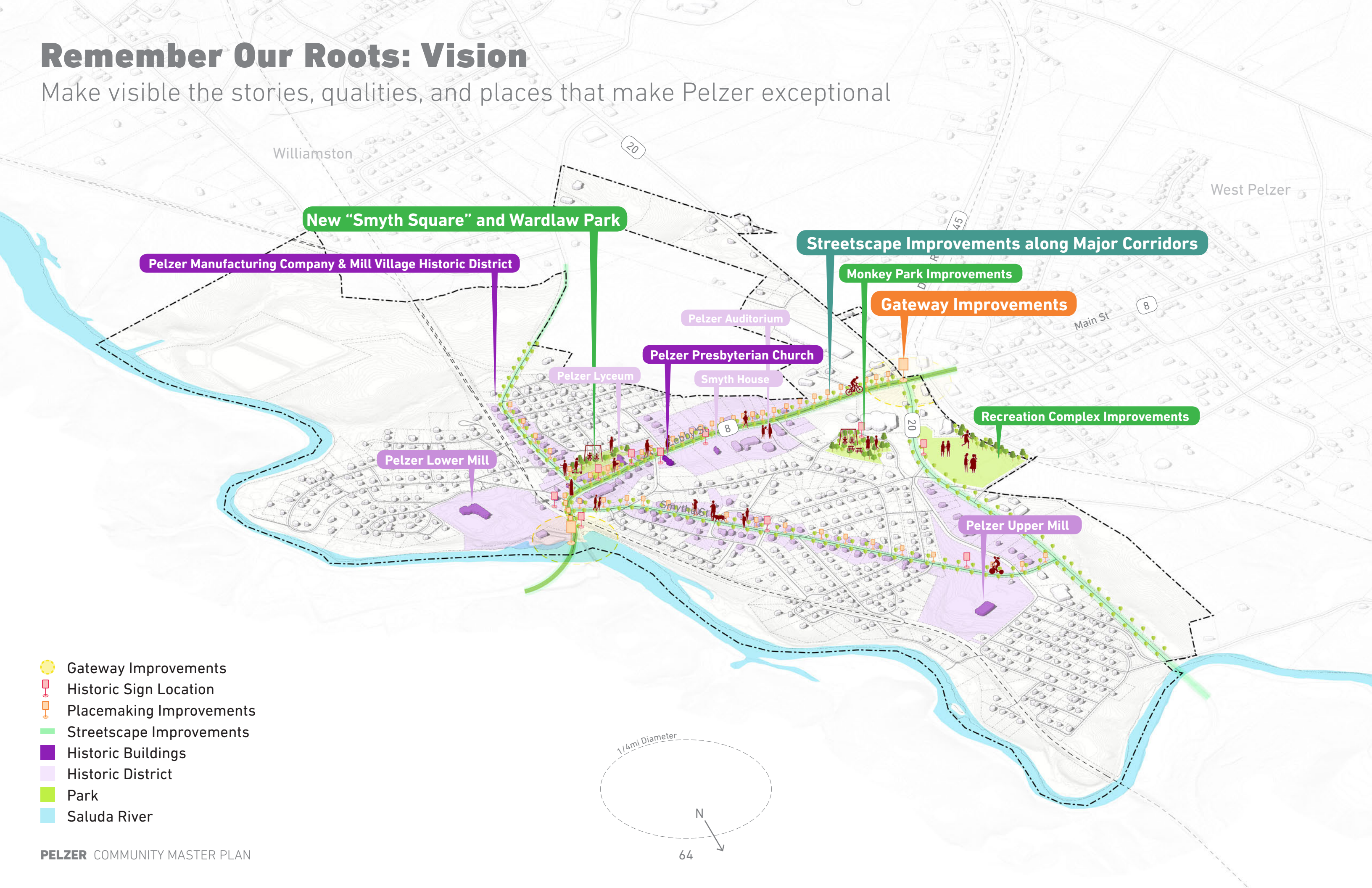
We can use the history of Pelzer to better tell its story and to create an authentic identity for the community. We want people to know they are in Pelzer and why that's significant.



Water Tower Sign

Remember Our Roots: Vision

Make visible the stories, qualities, and places that make Pelzer exceptional





Enhanced Streetscapes



Outdoor Dining & Plazas



Program Parks to Bring the Community Together



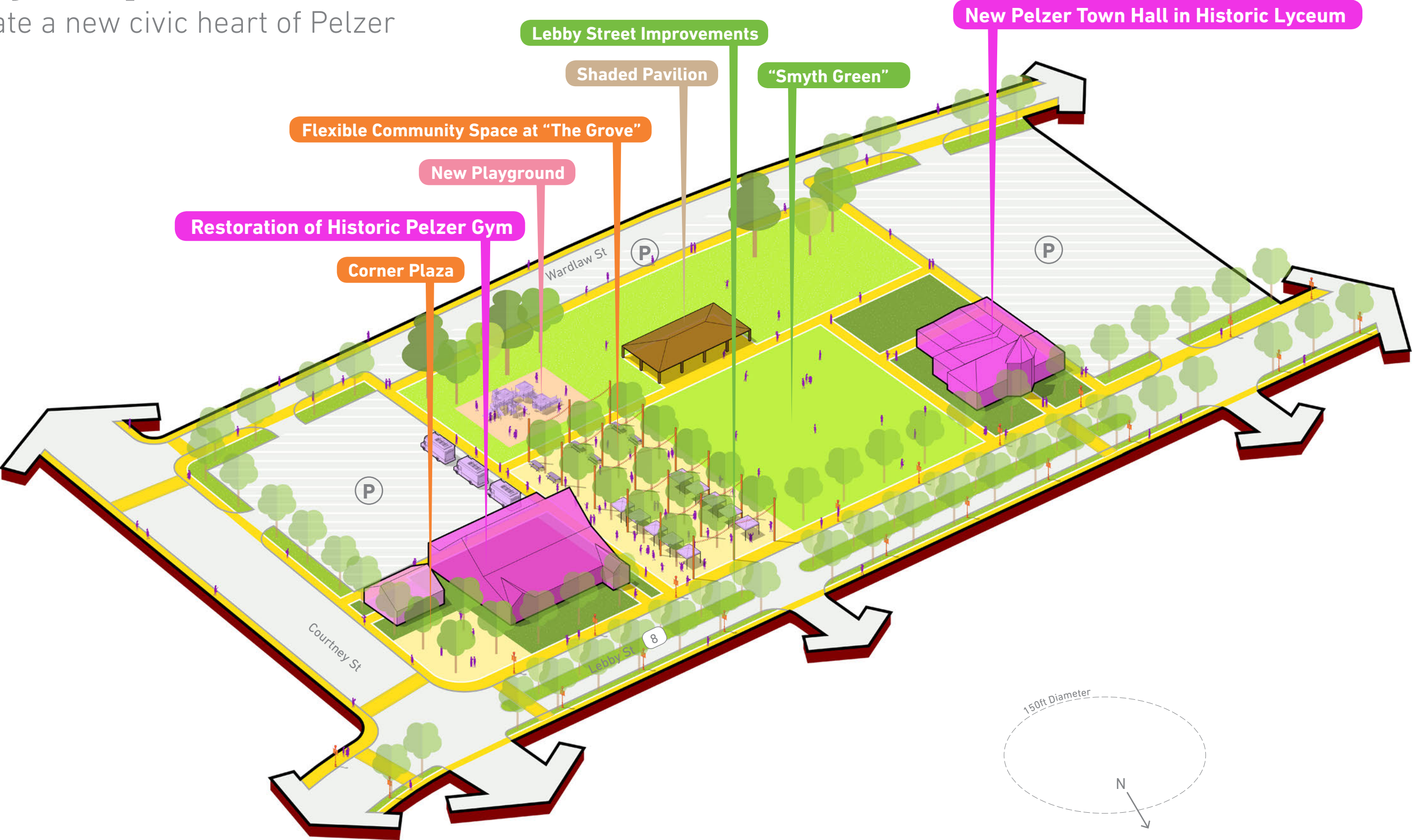
Enhance Downtown Experience with New Central Square and Greenspace



Historic Banner Signage

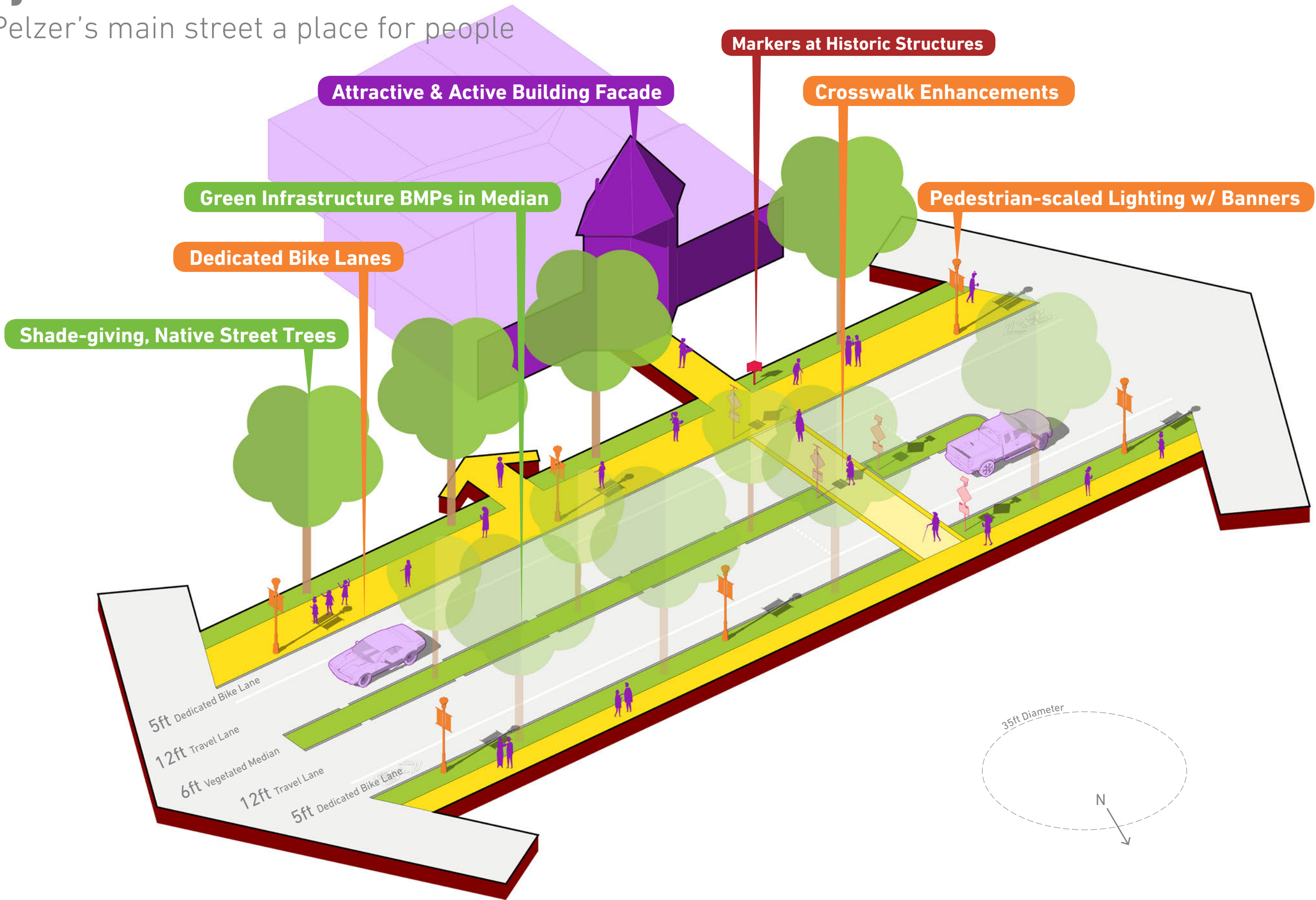
Smyth Square

Create a new civic heart of Pelzer



Lebby Street

Make Pelzer's main street a place for people



Lower Mill Water Tower

Transform the tower into a landmark of civic pride

After



Before



Historic Lyceum

Redevelop the historic lyceum into a new town hall

After



Before



Lebby Street Gateway

Enhance the eastern entrance into Pelzer



Lebby Street Shopping Complex

Improve the appearance and safety of the core



After



Before

Lebby Street Streetscape

Proposed Condition





Smyth Square

Proposed Condition





3.2 Build a New Legacy

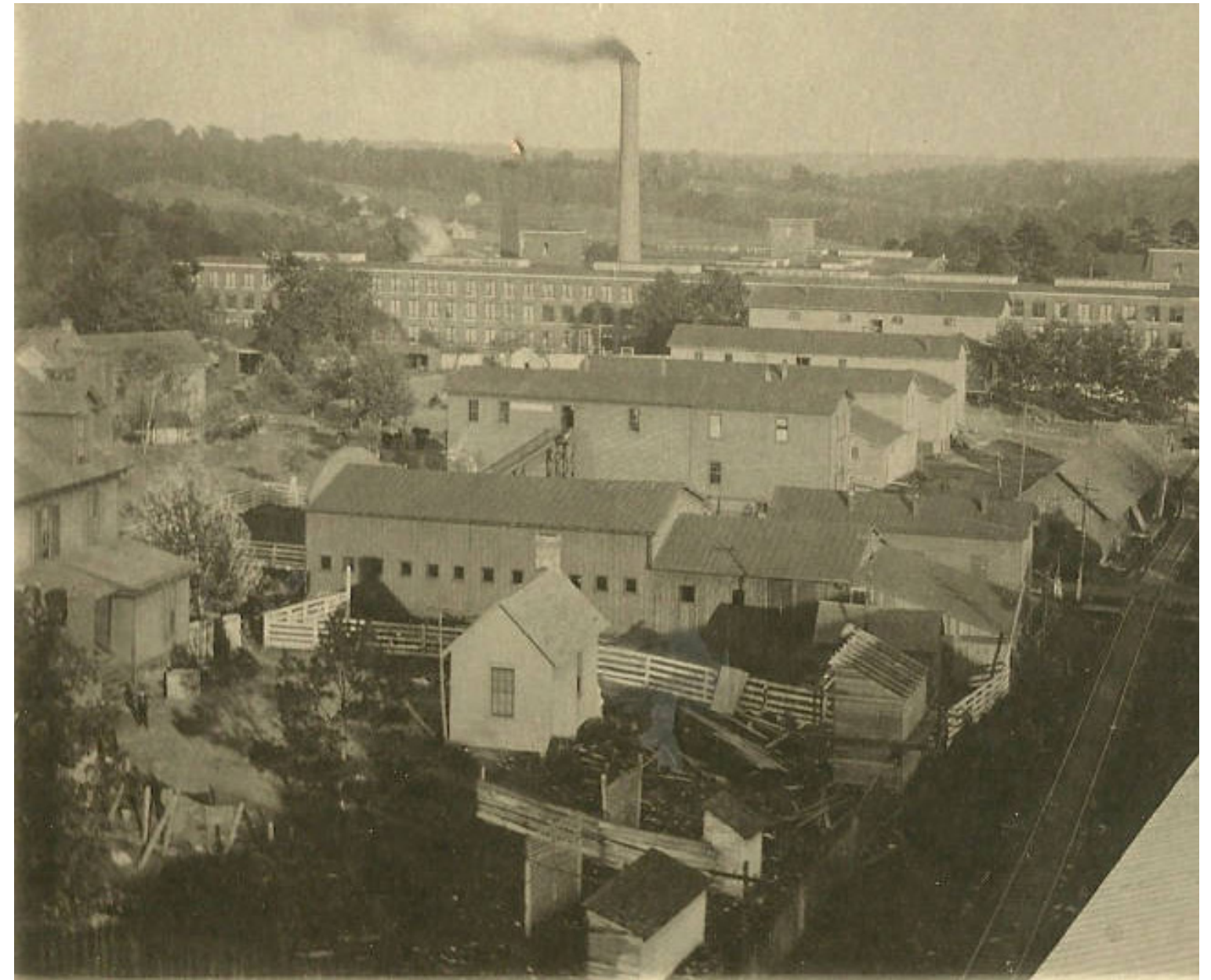
Strategies to invigorate Pelzer's historic mill sites

Pelzer was born a mill town. Although the mills have disappeared from the landscape, the town retains the form and identity of a textile community. Therefore, the significance of the historic Upper and Lower Mill sites cannot be overemphasized. Although they are largely vacant, they possess inherent value as the cradle of industry and vibrancy for the town.

As we look to the future of Pelzer, we should consider the town's role in the redevelopment of the two historic mill sites. Although this effort is being led by the Pelzer Heritage Commission, the town can advocate and support efforts to transform the sites into places that will convey public benefits to residents and visitors alike.

The project team has identified three strategies the Town of Pelzer and its partners can use to build a new legacy on these key sites.

- **Preserve Character** - Preserve and restore the integrity of the mill sites. The remaining features in the Upper and Lower Mill sites should be utilized as key elements in future redevelopment efforts.
- **Build Community** - Provide ample communal space for gatherings of all sizes and occasions. The sites should contribute to community life by offering public amenities that enable residents to benefit from and invest in redevelopment efforts.
- **Include Everyone** - Ensure a diverse mix of uses that attracts residents and visitors alike. Consider the natural assets, market-based needs, and investment opportunities that exist for each site and plan accordingly.



Build a New Legacy

Strategies to invigorate Pelzer's historic mill sites



Preserve Character

Preserve and Restore the integrity of the mill sites.



Build Community

Provide ample communal space for gatherings big and small.



Include Everyone

Ensure a diverse mix of uses that attracts residents and visitors alike.

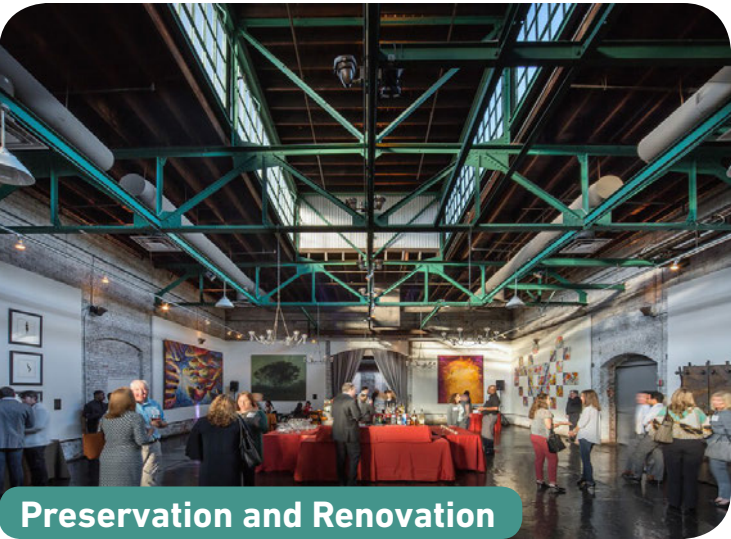
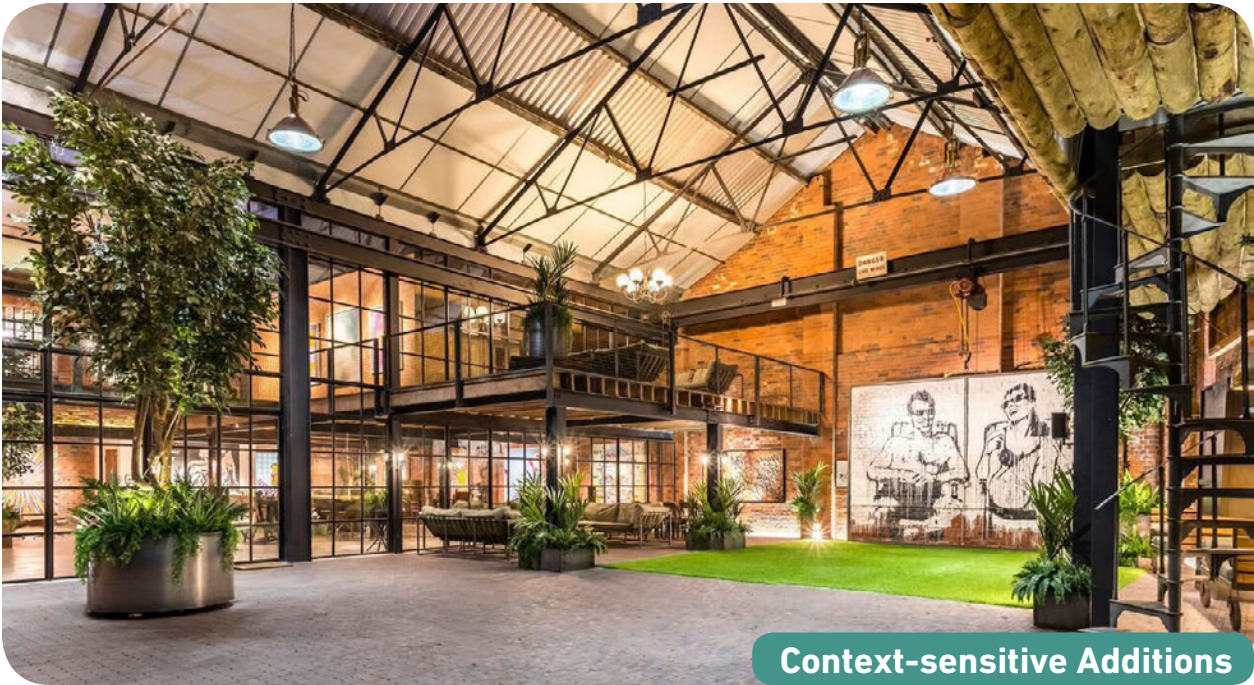
Leverage Character

Preserve and restore the integrity of the mill sites



- Historic Building
- Study Area
- Parcel
- Roadway
- Saluda River

Celebrate the industrial charm and heritage of the Lower Mill through preservation of the existing structures on site and context-sensitive architectural renovations and additions where appropriate.



Build Community

Provide ample communal space for gatherings big and small



The distinction between public and private space on the Lower Mill site should be blurred, encouraging exploration and gathering. Maintaining public access to the Saluda River is paramount.



Fitness Classes



River Views



Outdoor Dining & Plazas



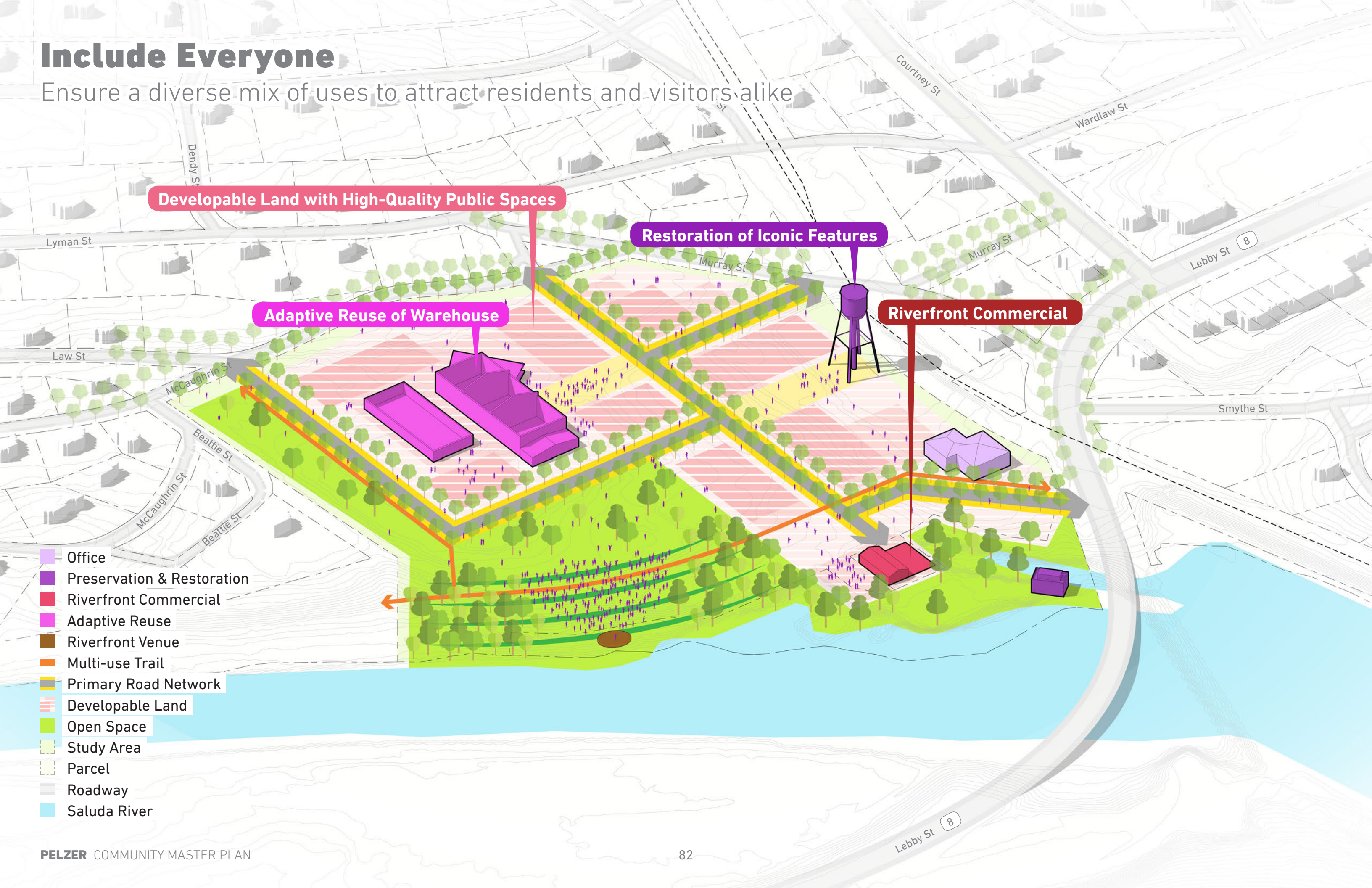
Temporary Events

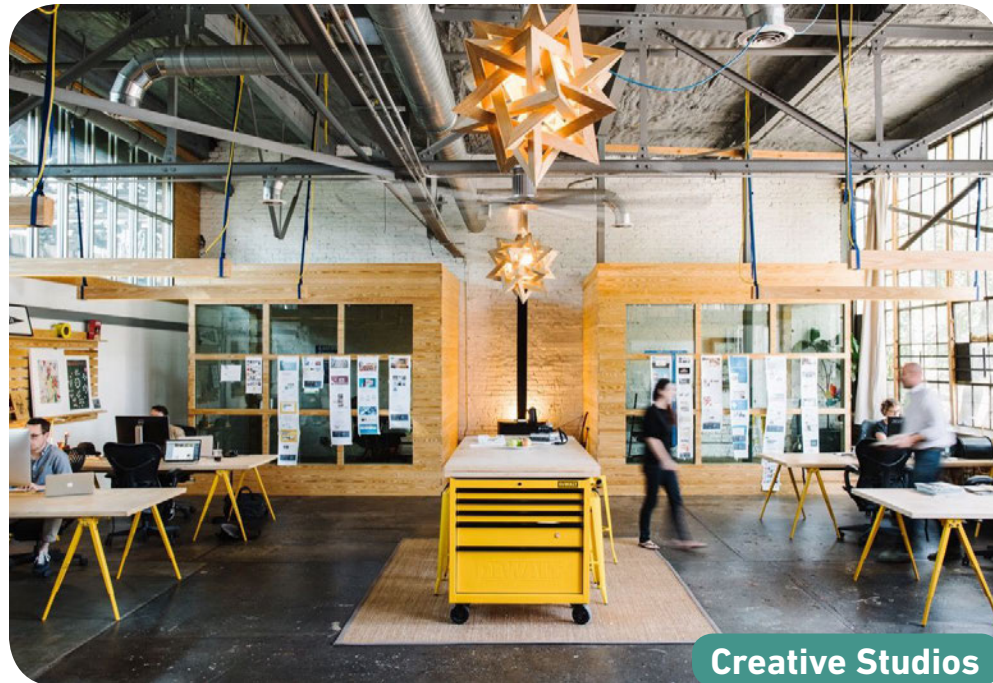


Performance Venue

Include Everyone

Ensure a diverse mix of uses to attract residents and visitors alike





Creative Studios



Events Venue



Local Retail Offerings



Craft Food & Beverage



Fresh Food & Market

A diverse mix of uses occupy the site, favoring the local, creative, and nutritional. Event and performance venues will anchor the site, while more neighborhood centric attractions will increase the livability and vibrancy of Pelzer.

Lower Mill Site
Proposed Condition





Leverage Character

Preserve and restore the integrity of the mill sites



- Historic Building
- Study Area
- Parcel
- Roadway
- Saluda River



Celebrate the distinctive architectural qualities and scale of the adjacent mill village and the remaining warehouse through context-sensitive architectural renovations and additions where appropriate.

Build Community

Provide ample communal space for gatherings big and small



The Upper Mill has great potential to improve the neighborhood open space offerings and improve pedestrian access to the Saluda River.



Nature Trails



Neighborhood Connections



Pedestrian Bridge Spanning Railway



Complete Streets



Neighborhood Gathering Space

Include Everyone

Ensure a diverse mix of uses that attracts residents and visitors alike



The Upper Mill features uses that support the most vulnerable in Pelzer, the elderly and food insecure. An urban farm anchors the site offering access to healthy food, promoting physical activity, and forging relationships between community members. Affordable senior housing on site provides much needed housing options for this increasing population.



Urban Farming



Food Hub



Small-lot Senior Housing



Community Gardens



Community Center



Sustainable Site Design

Upper Mill Site

Proposed Condition





3.4 Foster Investment

Promote strategies and partnerships to attract investment in Pelzer

The Town of Pelzer faces a set of difficult challenges that are not uncommon for recovering textile communities. For example, the closure of the historic mills decimated the town's economic base, damaged its sense of identity, and left behind contaminated sites. For decades, mill operators provided civic leadership, community programming, and other quality-of-life amenities that have been difficult to reproduce in their absence.

Fortunately, the town and its partners have been actively working to address and remedy these historic challenges. In the coming years, the town must also reposition itself as a community of choice and opportunity. This will not be an easy undertaking; Pelzer will need many allies as it transitions into a leader in small-town revitalization.

The project team has identified three strategies the Town of Pelzer and its partners can use to foster community investment in the town:

- Build Capacity
- Inspire Confidence
- Leverage Partners



Foster Investment

Strategy 1: Build Capacity

Build Capacity: The town must focus on increasing its ability to generate revenue and provide basic services (health, safety, and welfare) to its residents. Specific actions include the following:

- Explore a solar farm lease arrangement for town-owned property. Eighteen acres of frontage along Courtney Street has been identified as a potential site for a solar farm. If a solar farm on this site proves feasible, the town could then lease this property to a solar firm, which would generate a monthly revenue stream the town could use to fund projects or serve as a local match for grants or other programs.
- The town should consider hiring a part-time code enforcement officer to initiate a town-wide review of current issues and deficiencies. Once this review has been conducted, the officer would continue to provide code enforcement services to the town either in a part-time or full-time capacity.
- The town should continue to work with its state legislative delegation to secure a dedicated millage-based property tax regime. This will require an amendment to Act 388, so coordination among the State House, Senate, and Governor’s offices will be required.
- The town should consider creating a landlord registration program. Once the town has initiated a code enforcement program, a landlord registration program would prevent substandard rental housing and increase accountability for property owners to provide safe and decent housing to tenants.
- The town should develop a capital improvement priority list. This would guide town capital planning and funding over the coming years. Such a list would provide guidance for grant applications and repair and rehabilitation requests.
- As budget permits, the town should increase its police presence and hours of service. Under current arrangement with the Anderson County Sherriff’s Office, the town receives forty hours of police protection per week. This could be extended over time to a full 24-7 contract.



Foster Investment

Strategy 2: Inspire Confidence

Inspire Confidence: The town must invest in community infrastructure and public spaces. Additionally, the town should become a reliable partner in order to lead public-private partnerships and spur private investment. Specific actions include the following:

- Redevelop the existing parking lot between the Gymnasium and Lyceum into Smythe Square.
- Promote the town’s existing high-speed internet availability as well as its location in the Anderson-Greenville metro area d access to Interstate 85.
- Actively recruit restaurant and retail uses. The market analysis from the 2016 planning charrette contains data that are still relevant to Pelzer. There remain market-based opportunities for certain categories, including restaurants, that the town should actively market to potential investors.
- Leverage the community brand. The 2016 planning charrette included a community brand package that should be incorporated into the town website, social media presence, and marketing materials. Additionally, this identity can be applied to business cards, stationary, and any marketing collateral (such as hats or polo shirts) for community leaders and ambassadors.
- Establish a façade component grant program. The town should work with Anderson County to set up a program to fund different façade improvements (such as awnings, roofs, signage, windows) on an annual basis. Such an approach will be more affordable for the town and will allow program dollars to impact more properties than a traditional façade grant program.
- Identify neighborhood infrastructure needs and repair as needed. The town should conduct an audit of neighborhood sidewalk conditions and develop a running repair list to be incorporated into its capital improvement priority list. Additionally, the town should work with Duke Energy to inspect streetlight fixtures and install replacement bulbs as needed.



Foster Investment

Strategy 3: Leverage Partners

Leverage Partners: The town must work with others to implement key community projects and initiatives. These partners include government, non-profit, and for-profit entities that have an interest in the ability of the town to become a more vibrant, thriving community.

- **Arts and Culture:** The town should work with the Mill Town Players to host pre- and post-performance events/activities, explore an artist housing program, and bring back the Pelzer Light People. The town should also work with PHC to paint the Lower Mill water tower with the town logo.
- **Economic Development:** The town should work with Anderson County and the Palmetto Business Association on business recruitment efforts. Additionally, the town should work with PHC to explore an urban farm project on the site of the Upper Mill. Partners in this effort could include the US Department of Agriculture and Mill Village Farms.
- **Housing:** The town should work with Anderson County and Homes of Hope to recruit a low-income or senior housing developer. The town should also work with ACOG to explore senior housing rehabilitation opportunities as well as rehabilitation and new construction with Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County.
- **Parks and Recreation:** The town should form a “Pelzer Trails” group and coordinate with partners such as Anderson County, SCPRT, Upstate Forever, Greenville County, Paddle SC, and Clemson University on future park planning, development, and clean-up initiatives.



Plezer Plaza Shopping Center

Existing Conditions

The shopping center is mostly vacant and in disrepair.

CVS Pharmacy

El Maguey Mexican

Family Dollar

Salt N Light Ministries

Advanced Auto Parts

- Study Area
- Parcel
- Roadway

The shopping center sites along major corridors in the area and is in need of reinvestment.



Family Dollar is the primary active tenant



The site is not active for and in need of investment

Local restaurants along the corridor



The corridor is not walkable or inviting

Strategic Reinvestment

Enhance the site and existing building to provide flexible spaces for new uses.

Small investment in the existing building and flexible spaces would encourage diverse uses



Added Greenspace

Expanded Pedestrian Space for Outdoor Uses

Flexible Spaces

Consolidated Parking

- Commerical Re-Use
- Parking
- Primary Road Network
- Open Space
- Study Area
- Parcel
- Roadway

Reinvestment in the plaza should promote flexible spaces and uses .

Outdoor Dining Options



New Plaza Facade with Smaller Bays



Maker-Spaces are an easy reuse of the larger storefronts



New Destinations in the Community



Enlarged Pedestrian Spaces



Welcome Investment

Work with interested parties to create new economic development opportunities for the area.

Logistics and light manufacturing uses would bring jobs and revenue to the area.



Logistics and light manufacturing are just some uses that would bring jobs, people, and revenue to Pelzer.

Office space in support of the new industry



This site provides access to state routes for distribution

Logistics jobs provide opporutnities for current and new residents



New Destinations in the Community

Foster Investment

Betty Boops



After



Before

Foster Investment

Rena's Custom Framing



4.0 Implementation

4.1 Implementation Strategy

4.2 Potential Funding Sources and Partners

4.3 100-Day Action Plan

4.1 Implementation Strategy

The table below and on the facing page outlines the various initiatives from this plan and possible resources to aid in the implementation of each initiative. These resources include an suggested time-frame for implementation, potential partners, potential funding sources, magnitude of cost, and whether this initiative should be part of the 100-day plan. Funding sources are numbered based on list of potential funding sources on the pages following this matrix.

List of Abbreviations: Pelzer Heritage Commission: PHC; Anderson County: AC; Town of Pelzer: Town; RTP: Rural Trails Program; SCPRT: SC Parks, Recreation, Tourism; SCDNR: SC Department of Natural Resources; TAP: Transportation Alternative Program; Transportation Alternatives Program: TAP; State of South Carolina: State; Appalachian Regional Commission: ARC

Plan Initiative	Initiative Type	Timeframe	Primary Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Cost Magnitude	100-Day Plan
CELEBRATE THE SALUDA						
Overlook Park	Public Space	2-5 Years	PHC; Town; AC	4, 9	\$\$	X
River Run Park	Public Space	5-10 Years	PHC; Town; AC	4, 9	\$\$\$	
Pelzer Heritage Preserve	Environment	5-10 Years	Town; AC; RTP; Solar/Energy Provider	4, 9	\$\$	
Trail Network	Transportation	2-5 Years	PHC; Town; AC	4, 7, 8, 9	\$\$	
Healthy Saluda River	Environment	5-10 Years	PHC; Town; AC; State of SC	5, 9, 11	\$\$\$	
REMEMBER OUR ROOTS						
Smyth Square	Public Space	2-5 Years	Town; Mill Town Players; AC	4, 7, 9	\$\$\$	
Lebby Street Streetscape	Transportation	2-5 Years	Town; Town of West Pelzer; TAP	1, 7, 9	\$\$\$	
Street Banners	Placemaking	0-2 Years	Town; Town of West Pelzer; TAP; Visit Anderson	1, 3,	\$	
Gateway Enhancements	Placemaking	2-5 Years	Town; AC	1, 3, 7, 8	\$\$	
Murals	Placemaking	0-2 Years	Town; Business/Property Owners	1, 3, 4, 9	\$	X
Signage	Placemaking	0-2 Years	Town	1, 3, 7, 9	\$	
Interpretive Panels	Placemaking	2-5 Years	Town; PHC; Pelzer Historical Society; AC; Visit Anderson	1, 3, 4, 5, 7	\$	

Plan Initiative	Initiative Type	Timeframe	Primary Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Cost Magnitude	100-Day Plan
BUILD A NEW LEGACY						
Lower Mill Public Space	Public Space	0-2 Years	PHC; Town; AC; State	2, 3, 4, 7, 9	\$	
Lower Mill Water Tower	Placemaking	2-5 Years	PHC; Town	2, 3, 4, 7, 9	\$\$	X
Lower Mill Connectivity	Transportation	2-5 Years	PHC; Town; AC	4, 7, 9	\$\$	
Upper Mill Open Space	Public Space	2-5 Years	PHC; Town; State	2, 3, 4, 7, 9	\$	
Upper Mill Urban Agriculture	Development	5-10 Years	PHC; Town; Mill Village Farmers; AC	7, 9, 10	\$\$	
Upper Mill Market Hall & Community Center	Development	5-10 Years	PHC; Town; USDA; ARC	7, 9, 10	\$\$\$	
Upper Mill Senior Housing	Development	5-10 Years	Town; Homes of Hope; ACOG; Other Developers	6, 7, 9	\$\$\$	
FOSTER INVESTMENT						
Potential Solar Farm lease on town-owned property	Development	0-2 Years	Town; Solar/Energy Provider	N / A	\$	X
Hire Code Enforcement Officer	Policy / Logistics	0-2 Years	Town; AC	N / A	\$	
Secure dedicated millage-based funding source	Policy / Logistics	2-5 Years	SC Legislature; Town	N / A	\$\$	
Landlord Registration	Policy / Logistics	0-2 Years	Town	N / A	\$	
Additional Town Employees	Policy / Logistics	2-5 Years	Town	N / A	\$\$	
Increase Police Presence/Hours	Policy / Logistics	0-2 Years	Town; AC	N / A	\$	
Promote High-Speed Internet Availability, location/access	Development	0-2 Years	Town; PBA; AC	N / A	\$	
Actively recruit restaurant/retail uses, senior housing developer	Development	2-5 Years	Town; PBA; Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce	1	\$	
Promote Community Brand	Placemaking	0-2 Years	Town	9	\$	X
Establish facade component grant program	Policy / Logistics	2-5 Years	Town; AC	1, 9	\$\$	
Maintain Lighting and Sidewalks	Public Space	0-2 Years	Town; Duke Energy; AC; State	9	\$\$	
Bring back the “Light People”	Placemaking	0-2 Years	Town; Mill Town Players	N / A	\$	X
Plan Adoption	Policy / Logistics	0-2 Years	Town	N / A	\$	X

4.2 Potential Funding Sources and Partners

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Listed below, are potential funding sources to aid in accomplishing the initiatives of this master plan. Based on our preliminary research there are various funding resources at a local, state, and federal level that could disperse funds for implementation of this plan. We recommend additional research and conversations regarding these funding sources as well as identifying an individual or team of individuals to be tasked with procuring funding to support this plan.

The number for each source corresponds to the numbers listed in the Implementation Strategy table on the previous pages.

1. **Palmetto Business Association** - This organization has funded streetscape projects in the past and could be a resource for the streetscape enhancements recommended in this plan.
<http://palmettobusiness.org/>
2. **Anderson County Parks/Rec/Tourism** - This branch of Anderson County does offer the *Accommodations Tax Grant*, where parties can be awarded monies to be used for activities and improvements related to travel and tourism.
<https://www.andersoncountysc.org/parks-recreation-tourism-division>
3. **Main Street South Carolina** - A part of the Municipal Association of South Carolina, Main Street South Carolina does provide awards and some funding to individuals and organizations working to revitalize their downtowns.
<https://www.masc.sc/programs/main-street-south-carolina>
4. **SC Parks, Recreation, Tourism Grant Program** - Provides numerous potentially helpful grant programs. Their grants include tourism marketing grants as well as the following:
 - *Parks and Recreation Development Fund*, which is an 80-20 match program to help in building parks.
 - *Recreational Trails Program*, is another 80-20 match program for developing or improving facilities for off-road vehicles, bicycles, horses, walking, hiking, and kayaking/canoeing.
 - and the *Undiscovered SC Grant Program* for publicly owned tourism products that encourage visits to South Carolina.<https://www.scprt.com/grants>
5. **Upstate Forever** - While they don't seem to provide explicit grants or funds to directly apply for, they do seem to partner and potentially fund numerous projects.
<https://www.upstateforever.org/blueway-mapping>

6. **Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)** - Provides several funding opportunities and programs that cover housing development, infrastructure improvements, and business development.
<https://www.arc.gov/funding/GrantsandFunding.asp>
7. **South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG)** Provides assistance in grant writing as well as their own funding offerings. Two applicable grant opportunities are the *Basic and Economic Infrastructure Grant* and the *Community Infrastructure Grant*. Both of these programs work towards funding infrastructure improvements in a community that are tied to improving the quality of life for residents and enhance the community's economic competitiveness.
<https://www.scacog.org/>
8. **SCDOT Transportation Alternative Program** - Presents a good opportunity for funding of pedestrian and bicycle facilities as well as streetscape projects in Pelzer.
<https://www.scdot.org/projects/community-transportation-alternatives.aspx>
9. **CDBG of South Carolina - Community Development Block Grants** (CDBGs) offer a great opportunity for funding a diverse set of project types as we have in this plan. They can be used to fund street improvements, neighborhood facilities and public services, economic development infrastructure, and planning activities. However, because of their widespread applicability, expect a deep applicant pool for these grants.
<https://www.cdbgsc.com/>
10. **US Dept. Of Agriculture (USDA)** - The *Farmers Market Promotion Program* could be a funding source for the eventual farmers market on the Upper Mill site. This grant works to improve and expand domestic farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs and more.
<https://www.usda.gov/topics/farming/grants-and-loans>
11. **South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control** This state agency could provide resources for taking on some of the environmental and natural resource initiatives of the plan.
<https://www.scdhec.gov/>

POTENTIAL PROJECT PARTNERS

In addition to the funding sources we have uncovered, we have come across other organizations that offer the possibility of additional partnerships in implementation. Some of them may have access to funds that could be used, or could provide other resources in procuring funding or simply staffing for doing the implementation alongside the community.

- **Anderson Area Chamber of Commerce**
<https://www.andersonscchamber.com/>
- **Anderson School District 1**
<https://www.anderson1.k12.sc.us/>
- **Anderson County Economic Development**
<https://econdev.andersoncountysc.org/>
- **Municipal Association of South Carolina**
<https://www.masc.sc/>
- **AnMed Health System**
<http://anmedhealth.org/>
- **Paddle SC**
<https://www.gopaddlesc.com/waterways/trail/saluda-river>
- **Mill Village Farms**
<http://www.millvillagefarms.org/>
- **Habitat for Humanity of Anderson County**
<https://www.hfhac.org/>
- **Homes of Hope**
<https://www.homesofhope.org/>
- **Anderson Interfaith Ministries (AIM)**
<https://www.aimcharity.org/>
- **United Way of Anderson County**
<https://www.unitedwayofanderson.org/>
- **HUD HOME Program**
https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/affordablehousing/programs/home/
- **SC Department on Aging**
<https://aging.sc.gov/>
- **Clemson – College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences**
<https://www.clemson.edu/cafls/>

4.3 100-Day Action Plan

As part of crafting the implementation strategy we have examined the comprehensive listing of initiatives and identified seven which could be completed within the first 100 days of the plan’s lifetime. These initiatives fall into the label of “low-hanging fruit,” and include both full completion of initiatives as well as taking partial steps to show the community that progress is being made. The seven initiatives have been highlighted below for further explanation.

- 1. Overlook Park** - For Overlook Park, its involvement in the 100-Day Plan would be incremental. The completion of all its recommendations will not happen within the 100-day timeframe, but we can identify some basic first steps that can be achieved early on to show progress and build community support and buy-in for the plan. Possible steps to be taken could include a simple trail/path creation or installing overlook benches/seating.
- 2. Lebby Street Mural** - The town, along with help from interested business and property owners, could solicit the skills of a local artist to create a mural on Lebby Street. If possible, the artist could design the mural and then utilize the community to help in actually painting the mural. This is a great opportunity for further community buy-in and involvement in the plan’s implementation.
- 3. Solar Farm Lease Arrangement** - The town should pursue conversations with local and regional utility / energy providers who might be interested in utilizing town-owned property along Courtney Street for a solar farm. This would take a underutilized publicly-owned property and create an revenue-generating opportunity for the town using a solar lease arrangement.
- 4. Community Brand Roll-Out** - The town could take steps to promote the existing community brand identity in several ways. These include updating the town website and social media presence with the updated logo, creating new town marketing materials with the brand that help to recruit new businesses, residents, and tourists to the community.
- 5. Bring Back the Pelzer Light People** - This tradition is something that could define the uniqueness of Pelzer and should be reintroduced into the area. The town should partner with the Mill Town Players and other community groups to reimagine this event as a new community tradition.

- 6. Paint Lower Mill Water Tower** - The town should coordinate with PHC to paint the town logo on one side of the old Gerber water tower at the Lower Mill site. This would be a bold statement of civic pride. (A good example of a similiar project can be seen in downtown Pickens, South Carolina.)
- 7. Plan Adoption** - One of the first steps the town should take is to formally adopt this plan. This step will make the procurement of funding easier going forward as many grant programs reward municipalities have adopted a vision for their communities that includes the projects they are trying to fund.



Images: Pelzer Light People (Above)
Public Art/ Mural Inspiration (Top Right)
Overlook Park (Bottom Right)

