



JANUARY-DECEMBER 2025

# ANNUAL REPORT

DOWNTOWN FLORENCE  
MAIN STREET PROGRAM



# 2025 PROGRAM SUMMARY

In 2025, Downtown Florence celebrated another banner year of growth and development. We welcomed five net new small businesses, one large employer, and celebrated two business expansions. These additions led to 137 net new jobs and represent a total reinvestment of **\$134,599,887.98**. The private sector was responsible for \$121,663,799.76 of that investment with support from public dollars at \$12,936,088.22 across various projects including the new parking deck at Urban Square and streetscape improvements in the Dargan Street corridor.

2024 was also a strong year for volunteer engagement. Collectively, **328** volunteers contributed over **1,000** hours of service to Main Street events and programs, valued at \$35,411.94. Local corporations and businesses supported events and programs with over \$135,000 in sponsorships.

Events and promotions attracted over **80,000** attendees and visitors to the district across 23 downtown events produced by the Downtown Florence team and partner organizations. Promotional highlights included Summer of Stories, Downtown Restaurant Week, Downtown Hygge Holiday, and our annual Shop Local Campaign. Foot traffic downtown during the holidays **increased by over 6% in 2025!**

We celebrated our medical and educational partners' achievements including the completion of MUSC Health's Leatherman Behavioral Health Pavilion, HopeHealth's Streeter Community Center, the Poynor Healthcare Innovation School by Florence 1 Schools, and ongoing projects at FMU and FDTC's downtown campuses. We also worked on an innovative partnership with FMU's new doctoral program in occupational therapy, where students completed walkability and accessibility assessments of 17 blocks downtown.

Our program continues to lead at the state and national level for Main Street work. In 2025, our team delivered four conference sessions at the Main Street NOW conference in Philadelphia, led two national webinars and two statewide workshops, participated in national- and state-level pilot programs and focus groups, and delivered nearly 200 hours of technical support tackling small business challenges, working with prospective developers, and lending a hand with our network peers. Downtown Florence was also the recipient of the Hartford Retail Accelerator Grant, with plans to open a retail accelerator space in May 2026 in the 300 block of W. Evans Street.

Work also continued on several downtown commercial and residential construction projects and we completed a corridor study for the entire Redevelopment District through Place + Main Advisors to identify growth and development opportunities for new businesses and residential units.

Looking ahead to 2026, Downtown Florence is positioned to see additional growth, especially in residential development, delivery of advanced entrepreneurial support, new partnerships, and the delivery of the Carolina Theatre.

# MAIN STREET STATS SNAPSHOT

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2025



## INVESTMENT STATS 2025

**TOTAL REINVEST.**

**\$134,599,887.98**

**PRIVATE**

**\$121,663,799.76**

**PUBLIC**

**\$12,936,088.22**

**2** **FAÇADE  
IMPROVEMENTS**

**11** **BUILDING  
IMPROVEMENTS**

**5** **NET NEW  
BUSINESSES**

**137** **NET GAIN JOBS**

**3** **PUBLIC  
IMPROVEMENT  
PROJECTS**

**BUSINESS SUPPORT** **\$195.6K** TOTAL AWARDED  
GRANTS (2025) **152.5** TECHNICAL  
SERVICE HOURS

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

### VOLUNTEER STATS

**1,007**

TOTAL VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

**\$35.4K**

VOLUNTEER  
VALUE



### Welcome New Small Businesses!

- **Funky Flow Fitness** (167 N. Dargan St.) *Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Studio*
- **Lucky Dog Re-Tail Thrift** (236 W. Evans St.) *Thrift Retail*
- **Florence Nutrition** (292 W. Evans St.) *Juice & Tea*
- **Bojangles** (130 S. Irby St.) *Fast Casual Dining*
- **El Venue** (157 W. Evans St.) *Event Space*



# PROJECT & PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2025



Dargan Street  
Streetscape Refresh



Summer of Stories



NuMarket Pilot Program



FMU OT Program  
Walkability

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.

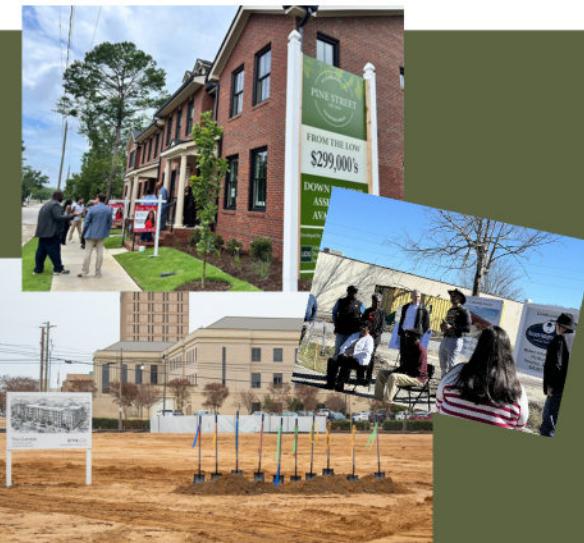
## ECONOMIC VITALITY ACTIVITIES

- Piloted NuMarket with Cru Wine & Tap, securing over \$15,000 in new non-traditional consumer-driven capital
- 5 net new small businesses opened
- 2 district business expansions
- 11 building rehabilitations
- 5 district buildings sold (\$1.62M in sales)
- Led 4 Grow with Google training sessions
- Completed the Place + Main Corridor Study
- Two residential developments held groundbreakings
- Phase 1 completed for Pine Street Townhomes
- Several district construction projects ongoing in 2025 including the Carolina Theatre, Nofal Building, Warley Townhome Redevelopment, 3 Oaks Townhome Development.
- Piloted Main Street America's new small business resource hub
- Nominated one business to participate in Main Street America's Virtual Retail Accelerator

## DOWNTOWN HOUSING UPDATE

In 2025, major strides were accomplished toward our goal of establishing new housing downtown. Six new units delivered in Phase 1 of the Pine Street Townhome development, the Warley Street townhome redevelopment project is nearly complete (8 units), 3 Oaks Townhomes at Cheves/Warley Streets is nearly complete.

Groundbreaking ceremonies were held for The Sarah Townhomes (18 units) and The Gamble Apartments at Urban Square (103 units).



# ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES

- Onboarded four new FDDC board members
- Earned Main Street America Accreditation
- Provided 152.5 hours of technical assistance
- Awarded MSA/Hartford \$100,000 Retail Accelerator Grant
- Program manager earned inBIA's ECM (Entrepreneurship Center Manager) Cert.
- Program coordinator attended MSA CTW Workshop
- Secured over \$135,000 in sponsorships
- Staff attended four quarterly Main Street SC trainings
- Program manager led 3 training sessions for Main Street SC, taught for the Richmond Fed's Community Investment Program, and led two training sessions for Main Street America

# DESIGN ACTIVITIES

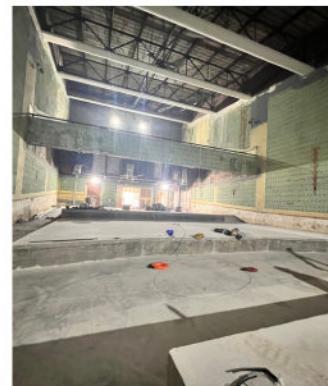
- Completed new mural for Retail Accelerator
- 2 facade improvements completed
- Led local Preservation Month campaign on social media
- Supported Dargan Street corridor streetscape improvements

- Participated in SC Cultural District expansion and renewal with Florence Regional Arts Alliance
- Established TrailsRX partnership with MUSC
- Partnered with FMU for district walkability assessments

# PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Summer of Stories campaign reached over 310K unique social media users; partnership with Main Street SC/SC Commerce
- Executed and supported 23 events in 2025
- Led downtown tours for APA-SC, FMU's Public History course, and Coastal Carolina Realtors Assoc.
- Drafted downtown rebranding RFP

- Shop Small, Shine Bright holiday campaign supported foot traffic increase of 6% during holiday shopping season
- Delivered Local Palate Magazine ad in partnership with Florence CVB
- Staff led 4 Main Street America Conference sessions in Philadelphia
- Launched new Hygge Holiday promotion, generating 20% more foot traffic than 2024.





Guided by our Downtown Master Plan, Downtown Florence has established three Transformation Strategies to better align and guide our work over the next five years. These strategies were adopted after thoughtful input from stakeholders and evaluation of local market data.

## EDS & MEDS

- Created/implemented new partnership with FMU's Occupational Therapy doctoral program to conduct walkability/accessibility assessments of 17 blocks of the Redevelopment District.
- MUSC Health Leatherman Behavioral Health Complex opened (\$100M)
- Poynor Healthcare Innovation School opened (\$15M)
- HopeHealth Streator Community Center opened in a former Green Book site demonstrating adaptive re-use of a landmark historic building (\$3.9M)
- New residential growth in underway with 151 announced units (15% toward 2030 goal)
- FMU demolished the Circle School to make way for a new medical consortium building, capping McLeod's Medical Mile on the west end.

## ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS

- FDDC Low Interest Loan Pool was utilized for a mixed use development at 262 W. Cheves St.
- The program was awarded the \$100,000 Hartford Retail Accelerator Grant in partnership with Main Street America to support the establishment of a two-tenant retail accelerator space with 12 months of wraparound services
- The program led two pilot initiatives from Main Street America locally to support two entrepreneurs in growing their businesses sustainably and with non-traditional capital capacity building.

## DEFINING DOWNTOWN

- Pedestrian kiosks were installed as part of the Dargan Street corridor streetscape improvements
- The Place + Main Corridor study led to the planned development of 262 W. Cheves St.
- Work continues on several district construction projects including the Carolina Theatre, Nofal Building (ABTC and HTC), 175 N. Dargan Street (infill), and 135 N. Dargan Street
- The program drafted an RFP for the rebranding of Downtown Florence (project planned for 2026)

"The Florence Downtown Development Corp.'s Low Interest Loan Pool has been instrumental in making our Cheves Street project a reality. This innovative financing structure provided the financial flexibility we needed to move forward with confidence. This partnership has allowed Florence Renaissance, LLC to invest downtown while maintaining fiscal responsibility. FDDC's commitment to supporting local development through accessible financing options for property acquisition demonstrate their genuine dedication to revitalizing our community. We're grateful for the support and look forward to seeing the positive impact this project will have on Downtown Florence."

- Chris Cawthon, Florence Renaissance, LLC

# MAIN STREET DISTRICT DATA



## 1.1 million visits

264.5K unique visitors

4.21 frequency

Decrease of 0.7% YoY (2024)

Decrease of 0.5% Yo2Y (2023)

Increase of 4.2% Yo3Y (2022)



## Average Dwell Time: 125 Min.

42% increase since 2024

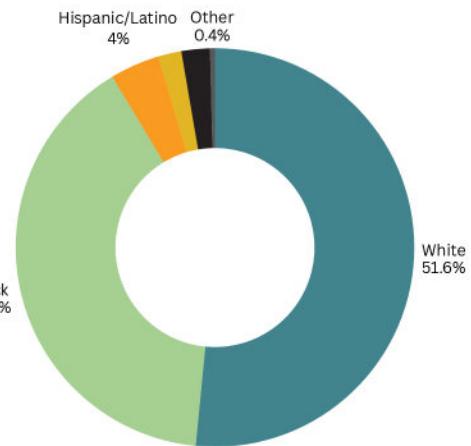
Downtown's busiest daily times were 11am-2pm (23.3%) and 5-9p (32.9%)



**83,066**

## Event Attendees

23 Events



## Visitor Demographics

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2025



## Media Reach

Social Media Reach: 3.08M

Traditional Media: 1.55M

Social Followers: 69,299

(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.

## 2025 FDDC Board

*Ken Jackson, Board Chairman*

*Lesli McGee, Vice Chairman*

*Carl Humphries, Treasurer*

*Dr. Calvin Robinson, Board Member*

*Ed Love, Board Member*

*Dr. Fred Carter, Board Member*

*Teresa Anderson, Board Member*

*Marvin James, Board Member*

*Tim Norwood, Board Member*

*Scotty Davis, Board Member*

*Mayor Lethonia Barnes, Board Member*

*Jermaine Ford, Board Member (Ex-Officio)*

*Mike Miller, Board Member (Ex-Officio)*

*Staff: Hannah L. Davis, MSARP, HREDFP, ECM, TMP Development Manager*

*Austin Watters, Development Coordinator*