INTRODUCTION

The aim of this Public Art Master Plan is to complement the extraordinary ten-mile West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway Linear Parks with artworks and events. The idea is that the space act as a meeting point, a venue for civic life, and a source of inspiration for the community.

In this document, we will show how artworks in the form of social sculptures and spaces can be incorporated into the green and bike ways to enhance the lives of residents, turning the existing linear structure into an unprecedented linear park.

This Public Art Master Plan is presented through a series of sample projects. The art projects are like front porches along the trail; they are occasions to pause during a walk or run. The works will bolster neighborhood pride and identity, and encourage community engagement at strategic points in the linear park.

The home and the flower are this plan’s inspirational images. They represent the spirit of West Ashley and are the leitmotif of a series of events promoting community engagement, common purpose, and recreation.

The West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway Public Art Master Plan underscores the area’s unique qualities, bringing together art, design, and landscape in everyday life. At the same time, the plan contributes to the already high quality of life in the City of Charleston.
The West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway are a remarkable asset for the city and its residents. These linear parks provide more than ten miles of spectacular uninterrupted open green public space in the heart of West Ashley.

The linear parks run through the West Ashley neighborhood with its parks and schools, and shopping and office districts; they could potentially cross the Ashley River to connect the neighborhood to historical Charleston. This alternative pedestrian connector would complement the streets in a manner unique to Charleston.

The West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway Master Plan speaks of different segments along the course of the trail. Local geography and key locations such as schools, churches, and sports venues are points of references for the community.

While segments of the trail have exuberant green tunnels that, because protected from the sun, are favorites of pedestrians and runners alike, much of the trail lacks a distinct visual identity or a clear divide between public and private space. Furthermore, there is a striking absence of community amenities, meeting points, and landmarks.
Charleston’s unique urban beauty and quality of life are directly related to the number, variety, and attributes of its public spaces. Colonial Lake, Riley Waterfront Park, Middleton Place, and a number of small urban squares have a common organizational principle: the generosity of the local geography and the outdoor life the environment makes possible.

Charleston public spaces are civic extensions of the home. They are organized like “rooms” that belong to all citizens. Riley Waterfront Park and Middleton Place are prime examples of this. A quiet, understated system of low hedges and walls creates intimate social spaces with shaded seating areas that encourage contemplation and exchange. Rows of trees and hedges provide definition on a human scale. Iconic elements such as fountains embellish spaces and provide visual points of reference in parks and squares.

These complementary iconic places and elements are expressions of a forgotten public art tradition on which to build anew.

**HISTORIC CHARLESTON**

THE CITY OF CHARLESTON—A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK WITH WELL-PRESERVED ARCHITECTURE, COBBLESTONE STREETS, AND PUBLIC PARKS—ALONG WITH THE INFORMAL AND RESIDENTIAL WEST ASHLEY DISTRICT ARE THE SOURCES OF INSPIRATION AND POINTS OF DEPARTURE FOR THIS PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN.
West Ashley, known for its openness, informality, and public participation, is the perfect complement to Historic Charleston.

West Ashley is domestic in scale, and fun-loving by nature. The single-family home with unfailing front porch—embodiment of the district’s openness—is prevalent throughout this urban landscape.

Facing the street, the porch invites neighbors to stop by for a chat; it is an emblem of friendship. Many porches are outfitted with swings and skirted by welcoming flowerpots. The home thus brings its sense of recreation and beauty to the street, with the porch as threshold between the public and private realms.

This public art master plan calls for the creation of unique artworks that draw inspiration from historic Charleston’s formality here transformed by the playfulness and informal spirit of West Ashley.
South Carolina is known across the country for its beautiful flowers in springtime.

The streets of Charleston are lined with flowering trees and shrubs that, along with the flowers planted by local residents, define the city’s ambiance.

Flowers are a welcoming symbol that underscores the culture of southern hospitality. There are often flowerpots in the entryways, gardens, and porches of homes in West Ashley, and there are already pop-up flower gardens along the trails.

The ubiquitous presence of jazmines, azaleas, crepe-myrtles, and gardenias among other flowers, with their beauty, colors and aroma, gives the city an unforgettable natural identity.
West Ashley Open Home

Charleston is affectionately known as “a city set in a garden.”

That phrase perfectly captures the unique interrelationship of exterior and interior spaces typical of Charleston.

Homes in Charleston incorporate the “piazza” as a transitional space connecting home and garden; the city’s parks, squares, and gardens are structured like “rooms.”

The crossing of the public and the domestic, private and public space, is innate to the city’s character. The idea of home is ever-present.

This public art master plan looks to these twin local traditions to build an open-air home belonging to everyone. The home and the flower are our foundational images; they are parts of everyday life essential to the trails’ visual identity. They also encourage a sense of ownership and belonging to the community’s public realm.

The plan encompasses different levels of public intervention and community programming and participation. The permanent interventions create a “necklace” of meeting points and landmarks on the trails. Community programming encourages public participation and further enlivens the life of the trails.

PUBLIC ART CONCEPT AND THEME
The Public Art Master Plan’s large-scale “gateway” projects are located at important junctures along the Greenway and Bikeway. Like the Pineapple Fountain in Charleston, these are landmark projects that create memorable images along the Greenway. They also act as commons or squares, as platforms for civic and cultural events.

Neighborhood centers address a neighborhood’s need for meeting points and places for public life. The smaller-scale public art in these spaces will form part of the landscape and have functional elements such as benches, shade structures, etc.

Points of interest or resting areas are small-scale interventions along the Greenway and Bikeway. They can be located anywhere along the trails where an amenity is desired. Examples of these installations include benches, swings, community gardens, and entrance markers.

These three scales create a system of interconnected public spaces along the Greenway and Bikeway. The projects punctuate the trails and enhance the linear parks’ identity, as well as the civic realm. They create singular experiences that turn the park into an unforgettable open home. Through these projects, the community will appropriate the park and experience it as its own garden.

The West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway Public Art Master Plan calls for the creation of a series of public art projects on three distinct scales: Gateway Projects, Neighborhood Centers, and pauses or Resting Points along the trails. The first two tend to be unique while the third has a repetitive quality that unites the parkway as one. The proposed locations were chosen on the basis of input from residents and community stakeholders, and pursuant to site visits by the design team.
PUBLIC ART OPPORTUNITIES

1. MARYVILLE GATEWAY: MAIN STREET & CHICKADEE AVENUE
2. POINT PARK GATEWAY: FOLLY ROAD BOULEVARD
3. WAPPO ROAD AND SAVANNAH HIGHWAY INTERSECTION
4. STONO RIVER COUNTY PARK

GATEWAY & LANDMARK PROJECTS

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS

1. PLAYGROUND ROAD
2. ST. ANDREW’S SCHOOL: CAMPBELL DRIVE AND CULBERTSON DR
3. COBURG ROAD AND TIMMERMAN DRIVE
4. CHARLESTON TENNIS CENTER: FARMFIELD AVENUE
5. WAPPO ROAD
6. UNIVERSITY: CLEMSON COASTAL AND USDA RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL CENTERS

RESTING MOMENTS

RESTING MOMENTS WILL BE LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE GREENWAY AND BIKEWAY.
PUBLIC ART AS SOCIAL SCULPTURE

Social sculptures are artworks that integrate functional elements, landscape, public art, architecture and urban design. They create places where social exchanges happen, celebrations take place, casual encounters come about and cultures mix.

The two examples on the right illustrate the concept of social sculptures. In both, the artworks are functional urban furniture that, along with architectural and landscaping elements, create an open-air community room.

The outdoor rooms dissolve the boundaries between fiction and reality, art and life, home and city, giving everyone involved a sense of personal ownership. The domestic iconic imagery becomes part of our collective imaginary and offers a home for shared experiences.

PUBLIC ART AT THE WEST ASHLEY GREENWAY AND BIKEWAY USHERS IN A NEW CONCEPTION OF ART IN PUBLIC PLACES. ARTWORKS WILL ACT AS SOCIAL SCULPTURES, CREATING PUBLIC SPACES THAT BRING TOGETHER ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND LANDSCAPE AS ONE IMMERSIVE ENVIRONMENT.
The Public Art Master Plan will create social sculptures using six basic elements: pavements, open-air rooms, landscapes, landmarks, functional artworks, and programs.

These elements can be classified into two groups: those that define or activate social spaces; and "rooms." They can be assembled in countless combinations and arrangements to create social sculptures that, in turn, act as community meeting points; they will carefully respond to the conditions at particular sites and to the project's needs.

What follows is an explanation of how each of the six basic elements will participate in the social sculptures. In addition, a sampling of possible configurations is presented in connection with the three scales of public art interventions (gateway projects, neighborhood centers, and pauses or resting points) specified in this Public Art Master Plan.
A public space can be defined by creating a beautiful paved area. Many renowned public spaces are known for their iconic pavement design.

The Copacabana oceanfront promenade in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil designed by Burle Marx and Piazza San Marco in Venice, Italy are two outstanding examples. Artist-designed pavements can define “rooms” with visual identities that make them special moments along the trails.

The images on the right show a few examples of unique pavement designs and materials from historic Charleston.
Examples of naturalistic and pervious floor materials.

**PAVEMENT**

- FLAGSTONE WITH GRASS
- PERVIOUS PAVERS
- GRAVEL
- TABBY CONCRETE

**SOCIAL SCULPTURES KIT OF PARTS**
Charleston’s gardens are often envisioned as open-air rooms enclosed by either brick walls or landscaped elements.

The Greenway and Bikeway’s social sculptures are also conceived as open-air rooms delimited by low walls or hedges around the perimeter. Low walls at the edge of social sculptures double as seating or surfaces for leaning, providing further opportunity for community interaction and exchange.

Examples of low walls used in landscape design are shown on the right.
Charleston is revered for its gardens; they are crucial to the city’s atmosphere and character. South Carolina immediately brings to mind large public gardens such as Middleton Place and Magnolia, public squares, and small-scale private gardens.

The landscape plays a key role in the layout of the city’s streets and public spaces. By bringing shade and beauty to the public realm, nature enhances the quality of life in the city.

The integration of landscape and the social space is a cornerstone of this Public Art Master Plan.
The Public Art Master Plan calls for large-scale “gateway” projects to be located at key junctures along the West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway.

These landmarks highlight an element of the history and/or geography of their immediate surroundings. These one-of-a-kind artworks contribute to the construction of public space.

Public art must have an active relationship with the community and pursue personal engagement and public participation. We hope that the works proposed in this Public Art Master Plan become objects of public affection and emblems of civic pride.
The social spaces include amenities that invite local residents and visitors alike to unwind, play, and socialize.

All the amenities in gardens and public spaces (shade structures, benches, tables, water fountains, and playground structures) are potential sites for artists’ interventions. While functional in nature, these items can be interpreted by artists in ways that enhance social engagement and participation.

The large number and quality of these amenities is directly related to the trails’ success as public space. They are key to enabling people of all ages, interests, and backgrounds to fully engage the Greenway and Bikeways.
The elements outlined above are permanent in nature; they provide platforms for civic engagement. That social nature sets the stage for the specific programs in which the linear parks’ spaces are appropriated by the community.

A program of activities for the Greenway and Bikeways is a key component of the Public Art Master Plan. The year-round program features a wide range of cultural and community events—it is fundamental to the Plan’s success.

Programs that encourage citizens to make active use of the social sculptures and to maintain them are vital to the success of public art projects (one example is the Park Angels program run by the Charleston Parks Conservancy). Neighborhood participation in cultural life strengthens the community’s social fabric and fosters a sense of common purpose and shared hope; it also reduces social isolation and builds relationships across neighborhoods, ethnicity, and social class.

If well produced and well communicated, cultural events and festivals have the potential to draw outsiders to the West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway and to turn them into a regional destination.
Temporary art installations renew interest in public spaces. The Greenway and Bikeway in general, and the social sculptures in them in particular, are ideal sites for temporary projects.

A variety of constituencies can be attracted to the trails by a program of temporary artworks. The involvement of additional segments of the community is important to the sustainable development of the trails.
Gateway projects include large-scale artworks that act as landmarks to draw attention to key junctures in the trails within the city’s urban framework. These projects make public spaces memorable and provide iconic images of the Greenway and Bikeway.

The diagrams on the right present possible arrangements of social sculptures at Gateway Project locations on the basis of this Master Plan’s kit of parts. We present a variety of connections between social spaces and the Greenway and Bikeway and of landscape compositions designed to meet different goals.
Neighborhood Center projects provide places of encounter along the trails. These projects are tailored to meet the specific needs of the neighborhoods where they are located. These works are smaller in scale than the Gateway Projects; landscape and functional elements invite neighbors and others to participate in the social sculpture.

The sample configurations on the right illustrate a vision of the trails as “an open-air home that belongs to everyone.” In each example, an iconic element from the domestic realm is brought outdoors. A dining-room table, a sofa, or a chimney is turned into an artwork and displayed as a fragment of home life; their use as social sculptures fosters a sense of personal ownership of the public realm.

Familiar items become extraordinary, unique, and memorable, and the West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway an experience to share with others.
The primary aim of these smaller-scale projects is to provide different amenities to West Ashley neighbors and trail users. The projects are resting points, areas to play or sit, relax, and enjoy the view. Resting points will be located along the length of the Greenway and Bikeway. The absence of items of this sort is one of the obstacles to full community involvement in the public space.

Artist-designed functional art is an excellent way to incorporate artworks into the public realm. Benches, swings, and planters designed specifically for the trails introduce a visual vocabulary unique to the Greenway and Bikeway and reinforce their visual identity. Unlike the Gateway Projects and Neighborhood Centers, which are one-of-a-kind, the resting points are repetitive in essence, but unique because of how they are deployed along the trails.
DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS LOCATION MAP
The Maryville Gateway on Main Street marks the beginning of the Bikeway at Main Street, Maryville. It is named for educator, community leader and Maryville founder Mary Mathews Just.

The first “room” is located on the eastside of the Bikeway across from Main Street in Maryville, West Ashley. The public square acts as an open-air community room in the neighborhood. Like a public square, this project meets a community need by building a meeting point that serves as a platform for a multidisciplinary program of events for all ages, from music and dancing to puppet theater and cinema.

Together, the M and the public square constitute a landmark. The M doubles as a gateway to the Higgins pier and closes the westward view from the pier. The M is a unique contribution to Maryville’s identity and a memorable and meaningful display of community pride.
THE M DOUBLES AS A GATEWAY TO THE HIGGINS PIER AND CLOSES THE WESTWARD VIEW FROM THE PIER.

THE M IS A UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO MARYVILLE’S IDENTITY AND A MEMORABLE AND MEANINGFUL DISPLAY OF COMMUNITY PRIDE.
The St. Andrews Open Room is located at the corner of Campbell Drive and the Greenway, across from St. Andrews School of Math and Science. The square brings art, architecture, design, and landscape together as an open-air community room.

The project restructures an unremarkable triangular area into a distinct shaded place of encounters. With its gentle and intimate open-air spaces, the St. Andrews square acts as a resting point in the Greenway. The square creates an exceptional experience, an open-air living room that belongs to everyone.

The oversized sofa is a sudden and wondrous apparition; it is at once real and fantastic, familiar and remarkable, a slice of domesticity in a public park. The long sofa is an invitation to converse, to linger for a moment or meet up with a friend; the sense of home is increment ed by the two lamps and the fireplace.

The St. Andrews Open Room blurs the boundary between fiction and reality, between art and life. It creates a sense of personal ownership of the public realm. Domestic imagery becomes part of our collective imaginary and offers a home to remember shared experiences.
The Farmfield Open Room is located on the west side of the crossing between the Greenway and Farmfield Avenue. The lot is next to the Charleston Tennis Center and near a shopping center with a Whole Foods on Savannah Highway. The open site is a natural place for residents to assemble, rest, and share.

The Open-Air Oval Room is envisioned as a social sculpture, a meeting point and stage for daily life. A low sitting wall surrounded by trees provides a boundary and acts as a foundation for the fresco room. A 24-foot-long table doubles as a lace tablecloth, inviting us to converse or take a moment to rest.

Like the St. Andrews Open Room, Farmfield Open Room builds on the theme of the open-air home, bringing a slice of domesticity into a public park. Together, the pieces accompany our journey through the West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway. The open rooms relate place and story; they are at once familiar and fantastic, and help make public squares more personal and intimate.
We have invented a new type of flower garden for the West Ashley Greenway & Bikeway. With unique flower-shaped benches at appropriate intervals, *Flower Fields Forever* offers moments of rest along the Greenway & Bikeway.

*Flower Fields Forever* is a platform for community expression. The flower structure can be “dressed” for different needs and seasons. It can become a flower garden, a community vegetable garden, a shade structure, or even a fountain.

*Flower Fields Forever* provides the Greenway and Bikeway with a unique visual identity; it communicates ideas of friendship, camaraderie, and love poetically, in the universal language of flowers.
THE FLOWER SCULPTURES CAN BE COMBINED IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO CREATE A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT PUBLIC SPACES.
This project celebrates the encounter of the city grid and the Greenway and Bikeway. Flowers and Flowers is an exceptional version of a commonplace item: the flower pot.

The project balances repetition and difference to make each crossing unique while building the trail’s continuous visual identity. Greenway and Bikeway will produce a unique visual identity that will unmistakably be associated with the Greenway and Bikeway.
FLOWERS & FLOWERS

DEMOSTRATION PROJECT: RESTING MOMENTS
The holistic approach of the West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway Public Art Master Plan changes the area’s visual landscape and provides platforms for community expression and economic development. The Plan creates a new system of interrelated social spaces that are both landmarks and places of encounter; they involve the community in the project of creating a better and safer environment for all.

The ultimate goals of this Public Art Master Plan are to enhance the quality of life and to create a more beautiful environment for everyone. To that end, all forms of community engagement are encouraged. Cultural and recreational programs will foster community participation and create an active support system of future efforts for the betterment of the trails as West Ashley’s main public amenity.

The Greenway and Bikeway bring together people and nature. Creating easily accessible year-round arts and cultural programming for residents of all ages is crucial to developing the West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway as a regional destination.

New economic opportunities for the community are a natural consequence of these efforts. Open-air rooms may include fresh produce, flower, or other markets during weekends. Food trucks at designated spots would provide a variety of culinary experiences and foster interest and exchange between diverse communities.

Involved residents with a strong sense of community is what creates and invents great towns and beautiful neighborhoods. This West Ashley Greenway and Bikeway Public Art Master Plan is a tool to help this community reach its full potential.
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