
SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR DOWNTOWN SALISBURY

INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters document the extensive process of surveys, interviews, focus group meetings, market analysis, and other information gathering and analysis activities that have been undertaken to better understand the opportunities before downtown Salisbury. In this chapter, all of this information is distilled into seven strategies for the future of downtown Salisbury. These seven strategies will become the foundation of the master plan.

One of the great strengths and unique qualities of downtown Salisbury is the array of organizations that have a direct stake in this geographically small slice of Salisbury/Rowan County. Listed below is a partial list of significant community organizations that have a substantial presence and investment in downtown Salisbury.

- Banking/financial community
- Retail businesses
- Other private employers
- City of Salisbury
- Rowan County
- Downtown churches
- Rowan Library
- Waterworks
- Historic Salisbury Foundation
- Rowan Chamber of Commerce
- Rowan Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Rowan Economic Development Commission
- Rowan Museum
- Meroney Theater/Piedmont Players
- Downtown residents
- NSSA Hall of Fame

- State of North Carolina
- Amtrak
- Property owners
- Developers

Each of these groups has its own independent mission and goals. Yet, they are all linked by a common interest in the health and vitality of downtown Salisbury. The success of each organization is in some way connected to the success of downtown Salisbury as a whole. There is no other place in Salisbury or Rowan County where the interests of so many community groups converge in a single place.

The success of a new master plan for downtown Salisbury will not be the result of brilliant new designs created by outside consultants. Rather, success will be achieved by knitting together the independent goals, plans and projects of the various community organizations into shared strategies for the future of downtown Salisbury. The whole truly can become much more than the sum of the parts through a renewed commitment to communication and collaboration combined with a healthy dose of creativity.

The seven strategies outlined below are a synthesis of input, ideas, complaints and dreams of hundreds of local citizens and community leaders. The strategies create a framework for linking the plans and needs of various community groups to a shared vision for downtown Salisbury's future. Each organization and each planned project or initiative represents a distinct and valuable strand of the community's future. Through these seven strategies, organizations, projects and initiatives are woven into a rich tapestry, with each strand supporting and complementing the others. Emerging from the combination of these individual strands is an exciting, challenging and achievable vision for downtown Salisbury's future.

STRATEGY ONE: A PLACE TO EXPERIENCE HISTORY

Planned/Proposed History Projects	
1. Expansion/Relocation of Rowan Museum	Rowan County
2. Ice House/Confederate Prison Interpretive Center	Historic Salisbury Foundation
3. Single ticket for historic attractions	Rowan Museum, RCCVB & Hist. Salisbury
4. Designation of downtown as local historic district	City of Salisbury
5. Trolley link between downtown and Spencer Shops	Downtown Salisbury, Inc.

Most people rightly identify “history” as the most distinguishing characteristic of downtown Salisbury. It is one of the oldest cities in the Piedmont region of the Carolinas, founded in 1753. Salisbury has ten National Register Historic Districts, including downtown Salisbury and its adjacent neighborhoods. The community has been a national leader in the preservation of its historic buildings and neighborhoods. Visitors’ information brochures tout “Historic Downtown Salisbury” as a destination for history lovers. The table at left lists planned or proposed projects that will enhance downtown Salisbury as a historic place.

Despite its wealth of historic resources and its many successes in preserving historic buildings, Salisbury has not succeeded in telling the story of its past. People and events in Salisbury had a significant role in the early settlement of the interior of the Carolinas, the American Revolution, the exploration and settlement of the Ohio Valley, the Civil War, and the golden age of railroads. National figures including George Washington, Nathaniel Greene, Lord Cornwallis, Daniel Boone and Andrew Jackson made history in Salisbury. Local citizens like Elizabeth Maxwell Steele and Judge Spruce Macay played influential roles in the lives of these historical figures. This rich history (and much more!) is known mostly from history books. Very little of Salisbury’s colorful past is presented or interpreted for local citizens or visitors.

Of all the communities of the Carolina Piedmont, Salisbury is uniquely qualified to authentically interpret the rich history of the region. In order to achieve this status, Salisbury’s history must be brought out of the history books and onto the streets of downtown Salisbury. Opportunities for experiencing Salisbury’s history might include:

Strategy One
A Place to Experience History

Downtown Salisbury is the foremost historic center of the Piedmont, a place where 250 years of history are experienced through architecture and through creative interpretation and presentation of the community's rich history.

“The major obstacle to ... success ... is the lack of any organization that has adopted as its mission the exploration, interpretation and marketing of Salisbury's history.”

- Expanded hours of operation for existing house museums and Grimes Mill;
- Historic markers/descriptions on downtown buildings;
- Public art featuring important people and events in Salisbury's history;
- A film or multi-media presentation providing an overview of Salisbury's important role in the history of the Piedmont;
- Storytelling or other dramatization of history;
- Interpretive signage along tour routes;
- Presentation of “forgotten” history: i.e. the shooting of Otto Wood, a most-wanted gangster, on Innes Street in 1930;
- Interpretation of the depot and Salisbury's rail history along with opportunities to tour the depot;
- Restoration of the Empire Hotel or other downtown lodging with a historic theme;
- Celebration of Salisbury's proud tradition of entrepreneurship: Cheerwine, Stanback, Food Lion, etc.
- Historic festivals, reenactments, and other history-themed events;
- Tours of Salisbury's historic churches;
- Tours of downtown buildings (a la the Rufty's basement tour, or a downtown “tour of homes”);
- Interpretation of Salisbury's African-American History;
- A “Steele's Tavern” restaurant featuring a colonial era-theme or other historically-themed businesses;
- Exhibits on Elizabeth Dole, the Hanford Buggy Company, and the ways that this family and town have influenced one another.

Celebration of the 250th anniversary of Salisbury's founding (2003) would be an excellent opportunity to build regional awareness of Salisbury's position as the historical center of the Piedmont. The major obstacle to defining and achieving success in this strategy is the lack of any organization that has adopted as its mission the exploration, interpretation and marketing of Salisbury's history. The Historic Salisbury Foundation, the Rowan Museum, the Rowan Library and the Rowan

Convention and Visitors Bureau each has an interest in local history, but none at present is prepared to undertake the types of challenges outlined above that would help make Salisbury the premier historical center of the Piedmont.

STRATEGY TWO: A PLACE OF LASTING IMPRESSIONS

“Downtown Salisbury is, arguably, the most successful small-city downtown in the Charlotte region or the North Carolina Piedmont.”

Downtown Salisbury is, arguably, the most successful small-city downtown in the Charlotte region or the North Carolina Piedmont. Few downtowns are as attractive or have vacancy rates as low as downtown Salisbury. Even fewer have successfully preserved a landmark of the size and quality of the Plaza. Salisbury was a pioneer in attracting downtown housing; no comparable community has attracted more adaptive-reuse residences in downtown buildings. The beautifully restored Salisbury depot is a national model for community-based preservation efforts. Private developers and public agencies are making new investments in downtown Salisbury at a record pace: witness the slew of new office projects planned or underway. The problems of downtown Salisbury – most notably parking – are actually indications of the downtown’s tremendous success: there are many communities that aspire to have sufficient downtown activity to create a parking problem.

“Despite downtown Salisbury’s many successes, it remains relatively unknown outside of Rowan County.”

Despite downtown Salisbury’s many successes, it remains relatively unknown outside of Rowan County. Located midway between the Carolinas’ two largest metropolitan areas (combined population in excess of 2.5 million), downtown Salisbury would seem to be ideally positioned to attract residents, businesses and visitors to its unique mixture of urban sophistication and small town charm. In fact, most of downtown Salisbury’s development momentum is generated locally. In contrast, urban and “new-urban” developments are attracting new residents and businesses to Davidson, Cornelius and Harrisburg. Developers are flocking to these areas because there is market demand for urban living.

Strategy Two
A Place of Lasting Impressions

Downtown Salisbury is known throughout the region as a premier place to visit, shop, live and work.



The Square should be a “focal point” for both residents and visitors.

Why then, is not Salisbury attracting greater notice, investment, relocations and visitation from the surrounding metropolitan centers? The most obvious answer is a lack of marketing. Other than a few retailers there is little active marketing of Salisbury in Charlotte or Greensboro - Winston-Salem. As a result, Salisbury has no clear, strong image in the metropolitan centers.

A second issue that impacts Salisbury’s image (or lack thereof) is the Innes Street Corridor. Contrary to the historic charm of downtown Salisbury, the I-85/Innes Street gateway into downtown Salisbury is an intensive strip of drive-through restaurants, tall pole signs, overhead power lines and unlimited curb cuts. This street provides the first and strongest image of Salisbury and its downtown.

Downtown Salisbury must do a better job of developing and projecting an image as a lively, historic, urban place and marketing its strengths to potential investors, business prospects, visitors and residents. Two important initiatives are already underway:

- Improvements to the Innes Street corridor are planned in accordance with a design plan; and
- The Rowan Chamber of Commerce, Rowan Visitors and Convention Bureau and the Rowan Economic Development Commission are relocating to a new facility on Innes Street and are committed to creating at this location a high quality gateway to all of Rowan County

Other opportunities for building a strong and memorable identity include:

- New logo, graphic identity and slogan targeted to desired marketing themes;
- Redesign of “The Square” to create a strong focal point for downtown;
- Image advertising and placement of stories in regional media;
- I-85 billboards;

- Cooperative marketing of cultural/arts facilities: Rowan Museum, Historic Salisbury Foundation, Waterworks, Piedmont Players, Symphony;
- Festivals and events marketed to regional audiences;
- Development of rail-based visitation packages for Charlotte and Greensboro-area residents;
- Develop and market a retail identity based on a concentration of antiques and related shopping;

STRATEGY THREE: A PLACE OF BUSINESS

Downtown Salisbury is the largest and most important employment and business center in Rowan County. According to data from Claritas, Inc. downtown Salisbury in 1998 supported 4,673 total jobs, including 594 retail jobs, 678 jobs providing business services, 190 positions in finance, insurance and real estate, and more than 500 legal, accounting and other professional jobs. In all there are over 360 private businesses located in downtown Salisbury.

Downtown Salisbury continues to grow and attract significant new investment as a business center. Recent and planned investments include a new corporate headquarters for the Farmers and Merchants Bank, the new headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce, the redevelopment of the former Flowers Bakery buildings for office and other uses, and the relocation and expansions of Telespectrum.

Attracting investments by new and expanding businesses to downtown Salisbury is neither a simple process nor an automatic consequence of market forces. Typically, there is a very limited supply of quality office space available for sale or lease in the downtown area at any given point in time. Thus, employment growth in downtown Salisbury usually requires the complete renovation of an existing historic building or construction of new space. Finding and acquiring an appropriate building or site in downtown Salisbury and the process of construction or renovation often takes one to two years or more, a time frame that is prohibitive

1998 Workplace Population Downtown Salisbury (Census Tract 501)	
<u>Industry</u>	<u>Jobs</u>
Business/Repair Services	678
Retail	594
Manufacturing	549
Professional Services	512
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	190
Construction	93
Wholesale Trade	94
Communications/Utilities	84
Other Private Sector	112
Total Private Sector	2,906
Total Public Sector	1,767
Total Workplace Population	4,376

Source: Claritas Inc.

Strategy Three
A Place of Business

Downtown Salisbury is the largest, most diversified employment center in Rowan County and continues to attract new jobs and investment.



South Main Street (view from Thomas Street north) offers many sites for infill development.

for many businesses. The lack of easily developed sites and the slow turnover of existing buildings magnify the difficulties. In contrast, a business can acquire a vacant site in a rural business park and begin construction very quickly.

Parking is another major obstacle for employment growth in downtown Salisbury. Few sites or buildings have the luxury of adequate on-site parking. In some areas of the downtown there is not sufficient parking to support full utilization of existing building spaces and no land available for new parking facilities. The only effective solution to parking needs in a densely developed downtown area is a system of parking facilities that are shared by all businesses and property owners. Another portion of this master plan addresses downtown Salisbury's parking needs and opportunities for shared parking facilities.

In a suburban setting, a business can buy sufficient land to create a desirable business environment and to separate the business from neighboring uses. In downtown Salisbury, the business environment is established by a combination of public (streets, sidewalks, landscaping, lighting) and private (buildings and related improvements) investments. Businesses are dependent on public sector planning, regulation and investment to create and maintain a desirable environment.

Downtown's key advantage in competing for new business investment is its mix of uses and urban amenities. The ability to walk to restaurants, stores, business services, meeting facilities, government offices, and proximity to other professionals is a unique feature of the downtown environment. The maintenance of a strong, attractive retail, dining and services sector is key to the success of downtown Salisbury as a business center. The continued presence of city, county, and state government facilities in downtown Salisbury is vital.

In summary, downtown Salisbury's future success as a place of business depends on community actions in the following areas:

- 1) Identification/assembly/marketing of appropriate sites and buildings for new investment;

- 2) Development of a parking strategy that maximizes the investment potential of existing buildings and new construction;
- 3) The creation and maintenance of an attractive and appealing business environment through improvements to streets, sidewalks, landscaping and lighting; and
- 4) Recruitment, marketing and incentives designed to maintain a diverse, healthy mix of uses in the downtown area. Possible opportunities for new uses to support the downtown business environment include a conference center and a downtown hotel.

STRATEGY FOUR: A PLACE TO SHOP AND DINE

Over the coming decade, downtown Salisbury's strongest challenge may be to increase its prominence as a retail and dining center. In the face of growing competition and a changing market (see Chapters One to Five) downtown Salisbury must develop a stronger focus as a retail center, and market itself more aggressively than ever before. Retail activity should be concentrated on Main and Innes Streets. Retail development in other parts of the downtown should generally be discouraged as it will tend to compete with the large volume of ground floor retail space that already exists. The keys to retail success will be:

- Convenience – Downtown Salisbury is centrally located to a large and growing population of residents, employees and visitors. These people who are in downtown on a daily basis, should be targeted as a primary market for downtown retail. For these folks, leaving downtown to go to Wal-Mart, a drug store or restaurant is an inconvenient choice made necessary only by some deficiency in downtown's retail offerings or environment. If desired products are available, if stores and restaurants can be accessed conveniently on foot by downtown residents, employees and visitors, and if customer parking is convenient to stores and readily available then

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Strategy Four
A Place to Shop and Dine

Downtown Salisbury is a successful retail and dining center based on its convenience to a growing population of residents, employees and visitors, its unique hometown stores and old-fashioned personal service, its historic and pedestrian environment, and its role as the center for community activities and events.

downtown will capture a large share of the retail expenditures of this growing group of customers. If downtown retailers can successfully target this group of customers, then increasing the numbers of downtown residents, employees and visitors will become a primary retail strategy.

- A Regional Positioning and Identity – With the development of one of metropolitan Charlotte’s largest retail concentrations in nearby Concord, Salisbury-area residents have more retail choices than ever before. In the process, Salisbury’s position as a retail center is changing from “the retail center of Rowan County” to “a part of the Northeast Charlotte-Concord retail marketplace.” In the future, Downtown Salisbury cannot rely as heavily on its historic base of Rowan customers. As the market evolves from a primarily local market into a regional market, downtown Salisbury must seek to attract more customers from the larger region. Fortunately, downtown Salisbury has historic resources and a physical environment that make it truly distinctive within the region. It has “hometown” businesses with a nostalgic appeal (Rufty’s, Bernhardt’s, the Emporium, the Stitchin’ Post) that enhance and complement its historic appeal. And, it might develop a regional specialty (perhaps antiques?) that would attract shoppers from the large metropolitan markets of Charlotte and Greensboro – Winston-Salem, as well as visitors to Concord Mills and furniture shoppers.
- Historic and Pedestrian Environment – Downtown Salisbury’s success as a retail center depends upon the preservation and enhancement of its historic and pedestrian environment. Salisbury’s history gives it the opportunity to be distinctive within the region and appeal to regional customers. A good pedestrian environment will assure the comfort, safety and enjoyment of downtown customers and will encourage their return to downtown

Salisbury. Special attention should be give to street crossings (especially around the Square), access from parking to the streets, and way-finding signage.

- Community Activities and Events – Festivals and other special events are an excellent tool for attracting local and regional customers to experience downtown Salisbury. These activities should be planned with specific marketing goals in mind (i.e. attract 2,000 visitors/customers from outside Rowan County) and every effort should be made to assure that visitors have a positive first experience in downtown Salisbury. The events should have a specific retail component whenever possible. Some businesses may report diminished sales on the days of these events. In the long term, however, these activities will expose new customers to downtown Salisbury who will return to shop at other times.
- Clustering Retail Uses – Shoppers lack the patience and energy to walk several blocks between similar or related stores. Retail malls are addressing this issue by clustering retail stores in a themed organization. For example, at Concord Mills, the themed groupings include:
 1. Entertainment and restaurants
 2. Teen and youth
 3. Value conscious stores
 4. Higher-end specialty stores
 5. “American Classics” and children’s

Creating retail clusters in a downtown, where each building is separately owned and leased, is very difficult. One of the biggest problems with the retail organization of downtown Salisbury is the lack of continuity – the gaps between retail uses that include office, service and other uses.

Despite the obstacles to creating strong retail clusters in downtown Salisbury, there have emerged naturally several important groupings of businesses that can be supported and reinforced to create attractive clusters. These include a strong grouping of antiques/gifts/collectibles shops around the Square and the hardware/garden supply tandem of Rufty's and Barnhardt's in the East Square.

Additionally, a strong effort should be made keep a strong retail/restaurant focus on all four blocks of the Square and to discourage non-retail uses on ground floors.

STRATEGY FIVE: A PLACE TO LIVE

Downtown Salisbury has been a pioneer among cities of the Piedmont in the development of urban housing. Over the past decade the number of residential units in downtown Salisbury has grown to 100. Most of these units are rentals; many command rents that are substantially above typical suburban "luxury" apartments in the Salisbury market.

The existence of a market for downtown housing in Salisbury has been firmly established. The opportunity now exists for this market to grow and mature with larger projects, increased residential ownership opportunities, and new types of downtown housing.

Adaptive reuse opportunities exist in several large buildings on Main Street, Fisher Street and Innes Street. Parking for residents will be key in determining whether residential uses are feasible. The parking study that is part of this master plan identifies parking needs and recommends parking development and management opportunities that would serve future residential development.

Until recently, owning a residential unit in downtown Salisbury meant buying and redeveloping an old building yourself. Many potential downtown residents are

"As the number of downtown residents increases and downtown takes on the character of a neighborhood, all of the services and amenities required in a neighborhood will become necessary."

Strategy Five
A Place to Live

Downtown Salisbury is a lively urban residential district with retail, dining, parks and other amenities to serve its growing 24-hour population.

not up to this challenge. The Cheerwine residential project is providing downtown residential ownership opportunities and has been well received in the market. Additional opportunities for condominium or townhouse developments, including new construction where appropriate, should be identified. South Lee Street, with some existing residential fabric and parcels of vacant and/or underutilized land could be a prime area for new residential development.

Several new types of housing have achieved success elsewhere and may provide opportunities in downtown Salisbury. Live-work housing, combining a residence with a connected business space, has been marketed successfully in many parts of the country, including the Davidson-Cornelius area. Similarly, many communities have encouraged redevelopment by making old warehouse or industrial buildings available for artists lofts that combine a residence space with studio and retail/gallery space. Old warehouse buildings near the Depot may be candidates for this type of development.

As the number of downtown residents increases and downtown takes on the character of a neighborhood, all of the services and amenities required in a neighborhood will become necessary. At present, the O. O. Rufty General Store provides a butcher shop and a limited selection of convenience groceries. The nearest full service grocery store to downtown Salisbury is more than a mile from the Square on the far side of I-85. The next closest store is on Mahaley Avenue, one and one-half miles from the Square. Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods could support a small, high quality grocery store. Food Lion has recently opened a prototype neighborhood grocery store in Virginia Beach. According to a Food Lion press release, "The Village Market is a neighborhood market concept that caters to customers' desires for convenience, quality, expanded fresh departments and style." At 17,500 square feet, such a store could easily fit into the urban, historic fabric of downtown Salisbury.

Other needs of downtown residents will include parks and greenspace, recreational facilities (particularly with the relocation of the YMCA) and possibly even a school. The downtown churches provide a wide range of services to families

including pre-school and after-school programs, recreation programs, and social activities. Several churches are considering the development of family life centers that would help to fill the recreation gap that will be left by the departure of the YMCA.

As the residential population of the downtown area grows, conflicts between residential uses and other uses and activities are likely to arise. Noise, late night business activity, and public safety are concerns that residents have expressed in other downtowns, sometimes in anger. One way to better understand the needs and concerns of residents and to avoid the possibility of future confrontations is to encourage the creation of a downtown neighborhood association or similar neighborhood forum to represent downtown residents in discussions of issues affecting the quality of downtown living.

STRATEGY SIX: A PLACE TO GATHER AS A COMMUNITY

“One of downtown Salisbury’s most important functions should be to serve as the primary gathering place for community activities including festivals, celebrations and civic meetings.”

Community festivals and celebrations bring people together for fun, food, and entertainment. They serve a more important role however, in bringing citizens together as a *community*, as people that are united by shared history, traditions and values. In many important ways festivals help to define communities. Festivals build bridges of understanding, tolerance and respect in the guise of having fun. When communities fail to share and celebrate the traditions that unite their citizens, they sometime cease to function as communities and become factions that share only a common geography.

The citizens of Salisbury and Rowan County share a rich history, special values and a cherished culture. Downtown is the heart of Salisbury and Rowan County, the symbolic center of the community. One of downtown Salisbury’s most important functions should be to serve as the primary gathering place for community activities including festivals, celebrations and civic meetings.

Strategy Six
A Place to Gather as a Community

Downtown is the heart of Salisbury and Rowan County, the place where people gather as a community to celebrate their shared history, culture and values.

Unfortunately, downtown Salisbury lacks appropriate spaces for community gatherings. In other Piedmont cities, community festivals attract 25,000 to 100,000 people or more to downtown streets. At these events “Main Street” is barricaded for the day and opened to entertainment, food vendors, artists, craftsmen and other uses. In Salisbury, the State of North Carolina controls Main and Innes Streets and has not permitted street closings due to traffic and other considerations. Small events have been held on Main Street using the sidewalks and parking lanes; other events have been located in various parts of the downtown.

Downtown Salisbury needs a designated venue for outdoor festivals and events capable of accommodating large crowds, and equipped to serve stages and vendors. This festival space should be located as close as possible to parking areas, cultural facilities, indoor exhibit/festival spaces the retail core of downtown Salisbury in order to maximize the benefits events to the community, to merchants and to festival-goers.

Downtown Salisbury also lacks gathering spaces of another type: indoor spaces for meetings, receptions, trade shows, conventions and other related activities. The Depot can serve some of these needs, but its space is inflexible and inappropriate for many potential uses. The existing Civic Center is heavily used as a community recreation center, creating serious conflicts for its use as a meeting facility.

The courtroom in the Old Courthouse (also known as the “Red Room”) is an excellent resource for meetings and other events. The lack of an elevator makes access difficult for many, however. The Rowan Museum has proposed to add an elevator to the building, a project that will make the “Red Room” a much more valuable asset to the community.

Other opportunities for community meeting space include the “McCanless Garage” located adjacent to the future Waterworks Gallery on East Liberty Street, space within the relocated and expanded Waterworks Gallery, and the former ballroom space in the Empire Hotel.

STRATEGY SEVEN: A PLACE TO CREATE AND LEARN

Strategy Seven
A Place to Create and Learn

The successes of the East Square Arts and Cultural District combined with other cultural initiatives have propelled downtown Salisbury to regional prominence as an arts and cultural center.

“[A] synergistic grouping of cultural and visitors facilities is now being realized in downtown Salisbury’s East Square... there is a very strong potential for establishing the “East Square Arts and Cultural District” as one of downtown Salisbury’s premier attractions.”

Few cities of comparable size can boast a cultural life as diverse or robust as Salisbury’s. With the Piedmont Players and Meroney Theater, a symphony orchestra, the Waterworks Gallery, a library renowned for its historical collections, and three colleges Salisbury is rich in cultural offerings. In addition, downtown Salisbury is home to the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association Hall of Fame containing exhibits and displays of our national sports culture. In nearby Spencer, the North Carolina Transportation Museum offers the South’s largest exhibit of transportation history. Salisbury’s impressive array of cultural facilities will grow significantly in coming years with the relocation and expansion of the Waterworks Gallery, the growth of the Rowan Museum at the Old Courthouse, the reopening of the NSSA Hall of Fame, and continued expansion of the North Carolina Transportation Museum.

All of these organizations serve important educational as well as cultural roles in the community. Most provide special programs and services to local schools. Several sponsor summer camps to provide cultural enrichment for local youth. Classes, seminars, lectures, performances and exhibitions for adults are scheduled throughout the year.

Downtown Salisbury is the unrivaled cultural center of Rowan County with an array of cultural facilities that is unmatched among peer communities of the region. Yet surprisingly, downtown Salisbury displays remarkably little of its cultural identity. Furthermore, it lacks the energy and excitement expected in a community that is so culturally rich. One reason for this is that downtown’s cultural facilities are widely dispersed and lack any central focus.

The grouping of cultural facilities in close proximity in downtown Salisbury would create increased visibility, heightened awareness, and a cultural synergy that would attract more artists, visitors, school groups and arts-related businesses. Imagine the appeal of Salisbury’s vibrant, historic downtown if the Waterworks

Gallery, the Rowan Museum, the Depot, the NSSA Hall of Fame, the Visitors Center, a farmers market, the Fisher Street festival zone, the Easy Street Arts Walk and the Spencer trolley were all located within a 2-block radius of one another. Within 4 blocks would be the Meroney Theater, the Ice House/Confederate Prison Interpretive Center, the Rowan Library, the Empire Hotel, the Salisbury Emporium, historic house museums and all of historic Main Street. Imagine the opportunities

for school groups if it were possible to disembark from busses at the new Visitors Center and visit Waterworks, the Rowan Museum and all of downtown Salisbury's attractions on foot.

This synergistic grouping of cultural and visitors facilities is now being realized in downtown Salisbury's East Square. Only a few of the pieces have yet to fall into place (Waterworks, a farmers market, funding for expansion of the Rowan Museum into the Old Courthouse, etc.) and many of these are active or proposed initiatives.

This part of downtown Salisbury is rapidly developing a strong identity as the center for cultural and visitors activities. With the possible addition of the Waterworks Gallery, the development of Easy Street as an "arts walk" featuring sculpture and other outdoor art, and the opportunity to redevelop old warehouses as artists lofts and studios, there is a very strong potential for establishing the "East Square Arts and Cultural District" as one of downtown Salisbury's premier attractions. Strong emphasis should be given the completion of this synergistic grouping.