

The Downtown East Strategy

Just east of the historic core of downtown Rock Hill is a six-block area connected by Main Street, Elizabeth Lane, Black Street and Saluda Street. This area is best known today as the home of Comporium, one of Rock Hill's largest and most important businesses. First Presbyterian, one of the city's oldest and most beautiful churches, is also located here. Yet, despite the presence of these landmarks, this eastern edge of downtown Rock Hill is unremarkable. The heart of the area is a lightly used City-owned parking lot that occupies an entire block. In addition to Comporium and First Presbyterian, a vacant funeral home, a branch bank and several empty buildings from the 1960's and 1970's surround the parking lot.

Downtown East is a strategy for transforming this largely dormant area into an important activity center for downtown Rock Hill. The heart of Downtown East is an urban park highlighted by a fountain and pool. The strategy envisions the park to be surrounded by a diverse mix of uses including businesses (highlighted by Comporium's corporate headquarters and customer service center), townhomes and condominiums, a hotel, retail and restaurants, and a new civic center. First Presbyterian's historic tower provides a dramatic, unchanging backdrop to all the activities of Downtown East.

Downtown East is a collaborative vision of Comporium and the City of Rock Hill. For Comporium, Downtown East represents an opportunity to give back to the community that has been its home for more than 100 years. For the City, Downtown East represents an important economic development opportunity for attracting jobs, residents, visitors and private investment to downtown Rock Hill. Important outcomes of the Downtown East strategy include:

- A significant geographic expansion of the downtown's urban core to the east, providing additional land, buildings and activity that are needed to create a critical mass of business and civic activities
- The creation of the first significant green space in downtown Rock Hill
- The expansion of opportunities for living in downtown Rock Hill
- Downtown's first hotel in nearly fifty years
- A newly constructed Civic Center with a main theater seating 500 people
- An important new destination for visitors that complements the White Home, Glencairn Gardens and Old Town; significant new traffic for Old Town retail and restaurants.
- Stronger connections between downtown Rock Hill and the East Town Neighborhood and a stimulus for new private investment in East Town
- \$20 million in new private investment
- Up to 150 new private jobs
- New tax revenues for the City, County and Rock Hill Schools

Downtown East is a strategy that may take a decade to fully realize. This partnership between the City and Comporium actually began in 2009 with the creation of the current Community Performance Center, located at Downtown East, in a Comporium-owned facility that was improved using funds from the City. Over the next year, the City and Comporium will take steps to further define and begin to implement their shared vision for Downtown East.