



AT A CROSSROADS

What does Laurel have the will to be?



GOOD THINGS HAPPENING

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- Ramble Redevelopment Plan
- Downtown Development District Designation
- Strong Neighborhoods Application for Old Town
- Kayak launch built (Ramble)
- Nature-based playground designed (Ramble)
- \$12 million water-wastewater project tying in large commercial properties
- Nature/heritage tourism strategy
- Branding

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

*Laurel Plan Advisory
Team formed - met five
times*

*Online survey - 355
responses*

*Created guiding
principles to govern plan
and future decision-
making*



REIMAGINING LAUREL
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2017

STAND-OUT ISSUES

.....
Challenges for the Town



NEED MORE ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES

Top employers in Laurel

	Employer	No.
1	Laurel school district	271
2	Food Lion	65
3	Town of Laurel	32
4	D&C Auto Sales	32
5	Schwan's Home Service	30
6	US Postal Service	26
7	Insurance Market	24
8	Health and Social Services - Poplar St.	22
9	M&T Bank	22

Four of top 9 employers do not pay property taxes.

Lack of good-paying, sustainable jobs

Johnny Janosik (200 employees) not in town

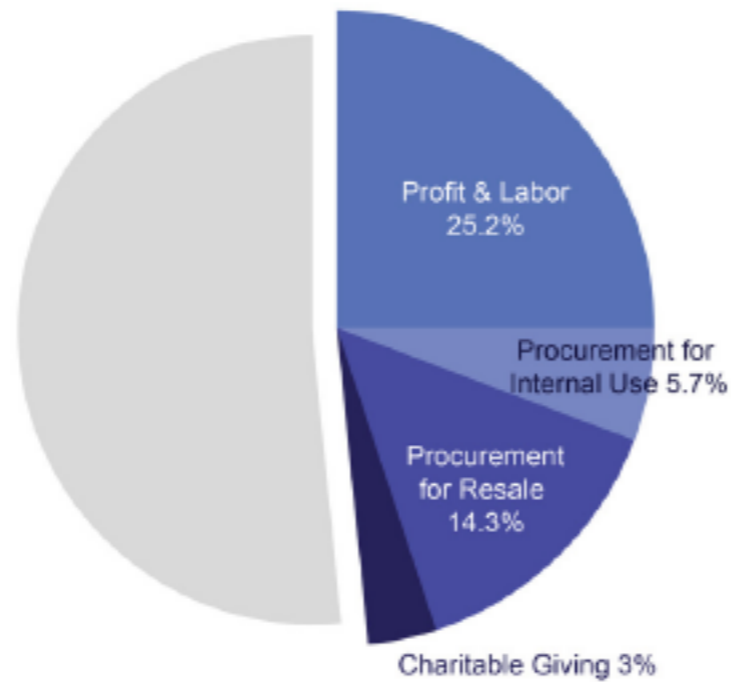
Source: DEDO

Local Economic Return of Indies v. Chains

Chain Retailers



Independents



Local Recirculation of Revenue: 13.6%

Local Recirculation of Revenue: 48%

*Compiled results from nine studies by Civic Economics, 2012: www.civiceconomics.com
Graph by American Independent Business Alliance: AMIBA.net

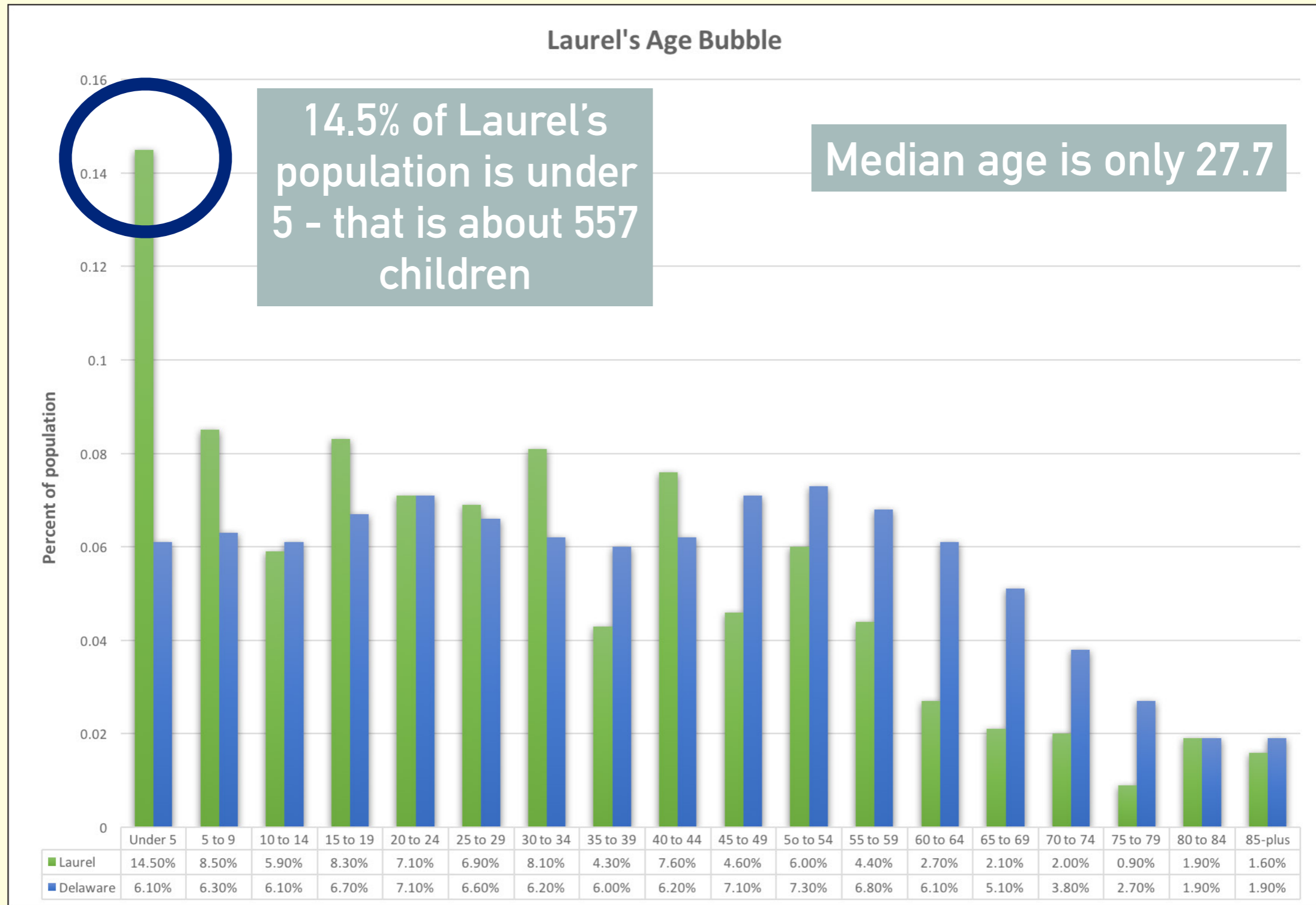
Chains recirculate 13.6% of their revenues locally, vs. independents, which recirculate 48%

Sample wages by industry, Sussex County **Fig 6-5**

Industry	Annual average weekly wage	Annual wages per employee
General freight trucking, local (2014)	\$1,072	\$55,730
Education and health services	\$996	\$51,768
Merchant wholesalers, durable goods	\$959	\$49,886
Construction	\$829	\$43,122
Manufacturing	\$793	\$41,231
Goods producing	\$802	\$41,679
Professional and business services	\$785	\$40,827
Service providing	\$680	\$35,359
Natural resources and mining	\$676	\$35,153
Trade, transportation and utilities	\$625	\$32,502
Retail trade	\$511	\$26,581
Miscellaneous store retailers	\$444	\$23,105
Leisure and hospitality	\$374	\$19,444
Restaurants	\$356	\$18,490

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015

LAUREL HAS AN INVISIBLE POPULATION, AND IT'S YOUNG



LAUREL IS DELAWARE'S POOREST MUNICIPALITY

Laurel Income Statistics		
Category	Laurel	Delaware
Median Household Income	\$33,387	\$60,231
% of families/people below poverty level	24.7%	8.2%
% receiving food stamps	42.6%	12.7%
% unemployed	10.2%	8.5%

Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey (US Census)

“Laurel needs to transform itself from a bedroom community with an invisible, disengaged population to a truly complete community with engaged citizens who work in town, own a business, or are actively retired and enjoying the recreational opportunities in and around Laurel.”

- From the Comprehensive Plan

DOWNTOWN LAUREL HAS A BLIGHT PROBLEM

- Long-term vacant buildings
- Derelict buildings
- Trash
- Absentee landlords and landlords who are chronic violators of town codes
- Empty or unattractive storefronts



Consider a building with a few broken windows. If the windows are not repaired, the tendency is for vandals to break a few more windows. Eventually, they may even break into the building, and if it's unoccupied, perhaps become squatters or light fires inside.

Or consider a pavement. Some litter accumulates. Soon, more litter accumulates. Eventually, people even start leaving bags of refuse from take-out restaurants there or even break into cars.

- ***“Broken Windows,” James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling***



The Broken Windows theory in action. If you haven't become used to it, Laurel looks blighted, sad, and a little dangerous.

THIS PLAN ASSUMES THAT LAUREL WANTS TO TAKE CONTROL OF ITS DESTINY.

To safeguard the character of its community,
help businesses grow and attract new ones,
address blighted properties that are ugly and unsafe,
and attract new residents.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE 10-YEAR GROWTH PLAN

We will be a close-knit community that creates walkable streets, safe neighborhoods and attractive public places so that all our residents feel secure and confident about their town.

We will improve the appearance of Laurel's homes, commercial buildings and properties to honor our history, build community pride and attract new residents and businesses.

We will attract a strategic mix of new small businesses, entrepreneurs, small manufacturers and shopping that will provide quality employment for our citizens and meet community needs.

We recognize Broad Creek as our greatest natural asset and a focal point for recreation, relaxation, nature tourism and sustainable waterfront development.

We will encourage home ownership and housing choices, via both restoration and new development compatible with Laurel's community character, to attract new residents and raise the standard of living for all our citizens.

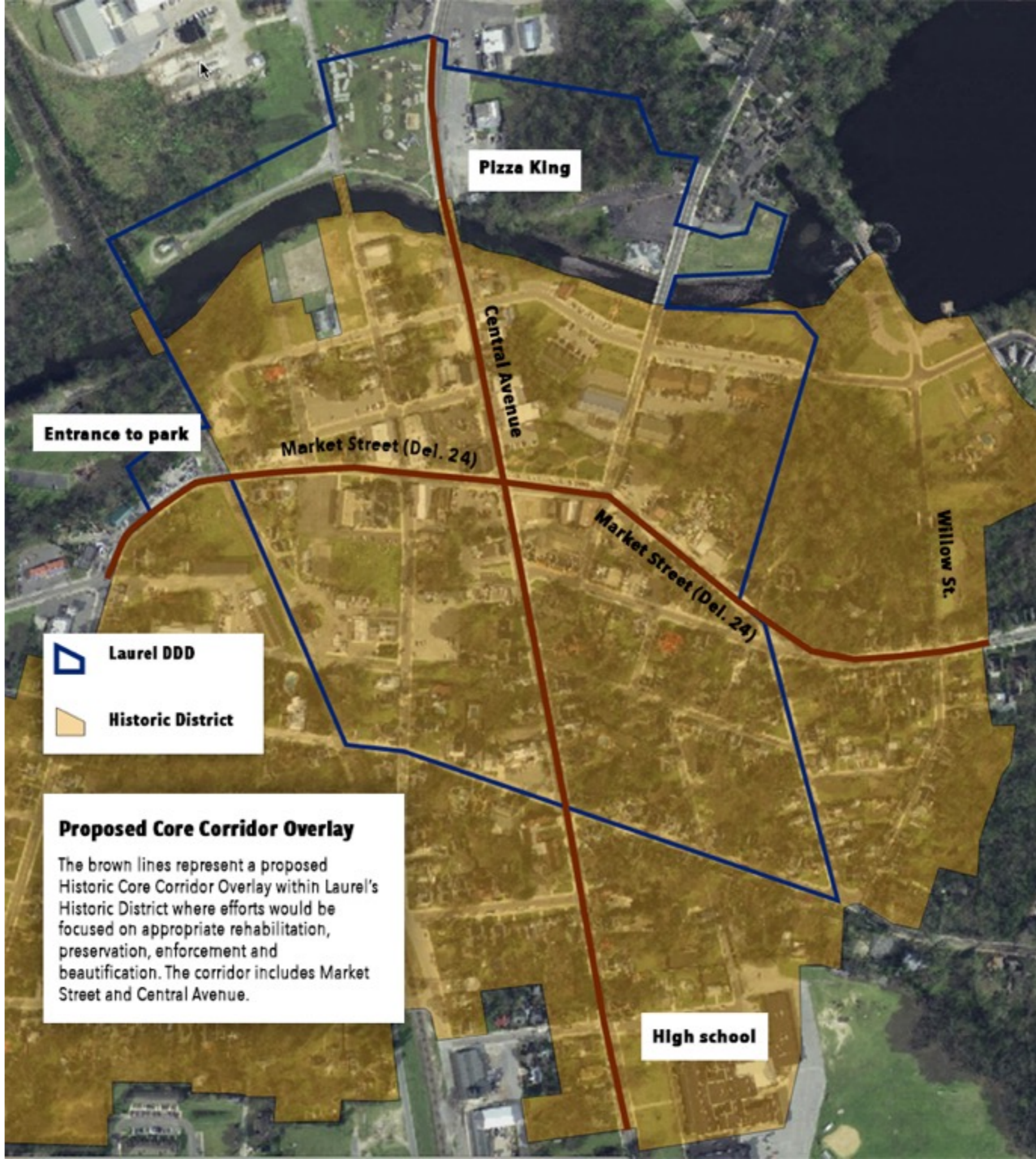
We value our downtown as the heart of Laurel's identity, history and commerce and are committed to redeveloping it as our hub for economic growth, tourism and small-town living.

1. WE WILL BE A CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY THAT CREATES WALKABLE STREETS, SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS AND ATTRACTIVE PUBLIC PLACES SO THAT ALL OUR RESIDENTS FEEL SECURE AND CONFIDENT ABOUT THEIR TOWN.

- **Adjust Town-Center zoning** to eliminate barriers to mixed use and walkability and to facilitate new residential and commercial development
- Explore feasibility of repurposing **Dunbar Elementary**
- Pursue **sidewalk improvements** with DelDOT and other funding sources, particularly in Old Town and along Market Street and Discountland Road
- Pursue Transportation Alternatives Program funding for **safe pedestrian alternative to Poplar Street bridge**
- Improve entrance and access to **Roger Fisher Park**
- Encourage DelDOT to **divert truck traffic** from Market Street with alternative route

2. WE WILL IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF LAUREL'S HOMES, COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES TO HONOR OUR HISTORY, BUILD COMMUNITY PRIDE AND ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES.

- **Create a Historic Core Corridor Overlay**
 - *Targets vacant and derelict properties, protects historic structures, improves walkability and encourages targeted businesses to take root and grow*
- **Address long-term vacant properties, slumlords and absentee landlords with ordinances and enforcement**
- **Create historic district advisory board** for guidance about preservation, rehabilitation and demolition of historic properties
- **Seek funding for facade improvements** to complement DDD grants, historic tax credits and town incentives
- **Support LRC's priorities** for acquiring and cleaning up brighten properties
- **Develop basic design and landscaping standards** for new construction and rehab in Old Town, Downtown Development District and Ramble area



Pizze King

Entrance to park

Market Street (Del. 24)

Central Avenue

Market Street (Del. 24)

Willow St.

 **Laurel DDD**

 **Historic District**

Proposed Core Corridor Overlay

The brown lines represent a proposed Historic Core Corridor Overlay within Laurel's Historic District where efforts would be focused on appropriate rehabilitation, preservation, enforcement and beautification. The corridor includes Market Street and Central Avenue.

High school

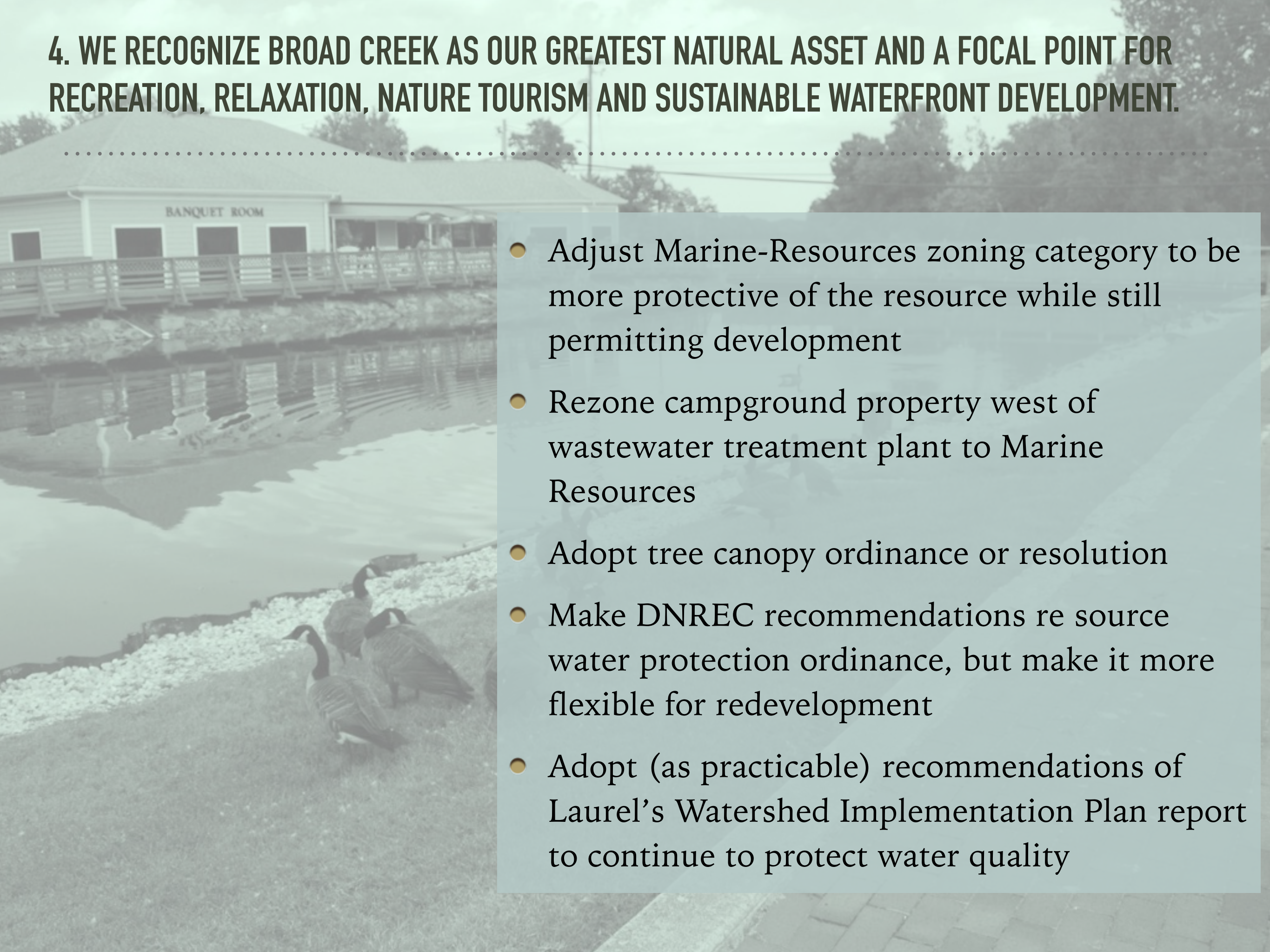
3. WE WILL ATTRACT A STRATEGIC MIX OF NEW SMALL BUSINESSES, ENTREPRENEURS, SMALL MANUFACTURERS AND SHOPPING THAT WILL PROVIDE QUALITY EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR CITIZENS AND MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS.

- Identify and adopt incentives to encourage annexation along US 13 and fill in gaps to that town boundary is continuous
- Identify parcel or parcels for business/industrial park; put infrastructure in place; develop it with specific strategy and goals
- Identify and prepare a parcel on US 13 that would be shovel ready for hotel or similar venture
- Implement nature/heritage tourism strategy; identify quick wins and ID parcels for brewpub-type establishment and outdoor outfitters
- Ensure that development and approval process is transparent; put town codes on line
- Identify a path to funding a position focused on community and economic development



BEST CANDIDATES FOR BUSINESS PARK

4. WE RECOGNIZE BROAD CREEK AS OUR GREATEST NATURAL ASSET AND A FOCAL POINT FOR RECREATION, RELAXATION, NATURE TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT.

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- Adjust Marine-Resources zoning category to be more protective of the resource while still permitting development
 - Rezone campground property west of wastewater treatment plant to Marine Resources
 - Adopt tree canopy ordinance or resolution
 - Make DNREC recommendations re source water protection ordinance, but make it more flexible for redevelopment
 - Adopt (as practicable) recommendations of Laurel's Watershed Implementation Plan report to continue to protect water quality

5. WE WILL ENCOURAGE HOME OWNERSHIP AND HOUSING CHOICES, VIA BOTH RESTORATION AND NEW DEVELOPMENT COMPATIBLE WITH LAUREL'S COMMUNITY CHARACTER, TO ATTRACT NEW RESIDENTS AND RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS.

- Continue to implement the community improvement program outlined in our Downtown Development District Plan
- Secure funding through Neighborhood Building Blocks program to successfully implement these plan measures
- Attract quality developer for pocket neighborhood of cottages that is signature element of The Ramble
- Complete Villas on Broad Creek (now part of DDD)
- Ensure that new residential development pays for itself and does not overly burden town or school district
- Revisit Large Parcel Development Overlay District specifications



6. WE VALUE OUR DOWNTOWN AS THE HEART OF LAUREL'S IDENTITY, HISTORY AND COMMERCE AND ARE COMMITTED TO REDEVELOPING IT AS OUR HUB FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH, TOURISM AND SMALL-TOWN LIVING.

- Pursue feasibility study for Library Director's proposed Arts and Information District
- Adopt a cohesive and differentiating town wide economic development strategy so downtown Laurel is not competing with US 13 corridor for projects
- Continue to support and seek a variety of funding for The Ramble - including the cottages, nature-based playground, and commercial development
- Many previous recommendations are repeated here



“ “ Where there is no vision, the
people perish.

- Proverbs 29:18

Towns perish too.



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

COMPLETE DRAFT AVAILABLE ON WWW.REIMAGINELAUREL.NET