

Subject: Civitas designs Greenville's ONE City Plaza for pedestrian comfort

Civitas Re-imagines Downtown Greenville, South Carolina
New ONE City Plaza creates lively urban destination with historical roots



A shade structure in downtown Greenville's Civitas-designed ONE City Plaza references the area's weaving industry roots. (Image courtesy of Fish Eye Studios)

Denver, Colorado – DATE – “It’s gem-like in a gem-like city,” says [Mark Johnson](#), founding principal of Denver’s urban design studio [Civitas](#) about the new ONE City Plaza in Greenville, SC. The project’s simple elements – including urban sofas, trees, water and shade structure – combine for maximum impact in creating an outdoor experience that attracts pedestrians for shopping, dining or just strolling in the city’s central downtown district. Civitas designed the project in collaboration with Bob Hughes of Hughes Development Corp., 4240 Architects, and the City of Greenville, including Mike Murphy, Director of Public Works, and Dwayne Cooper, Engineering Services Manager, who were instrumental in getting approval on material upgrades that have contributed to the transformed urban space’s success.

The completed project references Greenville’s textile industry history through weaving, layers and folds, both in its overall plan and in the fabric-like canopies that artfully provide shade. At the same time, the elegant simplicity of the design and palette, including the stainless steel sun shades and the granite pavers

underfoot, “match the sophistication of Greenville’s growing creative and tech community,” says Johnson.

At a spring [dedication and ribbon cutting](#), Mayor Knox White praised the redesigned plaza as one of the city’s “great places.” The \$5 million renovation of [ONE City Plaza](#) and the pedestrian Laurens Street helped attract a number of retailers to the area. “With ONE City Plaza, downtown Greenville really joins the big leagues of retail centers in our region,” said White.

Before the Civitas redesign, the area had been called the Piazza Bergamo – named for Greenville’s Italian sister city from the Eisenhower era. The piazza, created in the early ‘80s, was home to events and concerts for 25 years, but in recent years had become worn, with concerts devolving into weekly loud beer parties. A Civitas-led community engagement process highlighted a desire for a more restrained, comfortable and attractive plaza for daily use for downtown workers and visitors alike, with the potential for occasional smaller events.

While Civitas is known for its major urban projects that transform entire cities, “It’s not the scale of a project that draws us,” says Johnson of the smaller-scale Greenville plaza renovation, “but rather the opportunity to make cities more green, more healthy, and ultimately more satisfying for increasingly diverse populations. The next generation of city-building depends on making public spaces that are used and loved by everyone.”

With a core purpose of “creating healthier cities,” Civitas is an idea-based practice of urban designers, architects and landscape architects engaged in strategic planning for urban change and project design for built works. Celebrating its [30th anniversary](#) in 2014, the consultancy and design studio advises on a wide range of strategies for re-imagining urban life and places. For more information, visit Civitas online at www.civitasinc.com.

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