

# City of Kannapolis

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## Kannapolis, NC

### Studio 431 Element:

Custom Swings

### Landscape Forms Elements:

Parc Centre Tables & Chairs, Catena Tables, Ring Bike Racks, Scarborough Litters, Sorella Planters, Kornegay Larkspur & Dune Planters

### Design Partners:

505 Design, Land Design

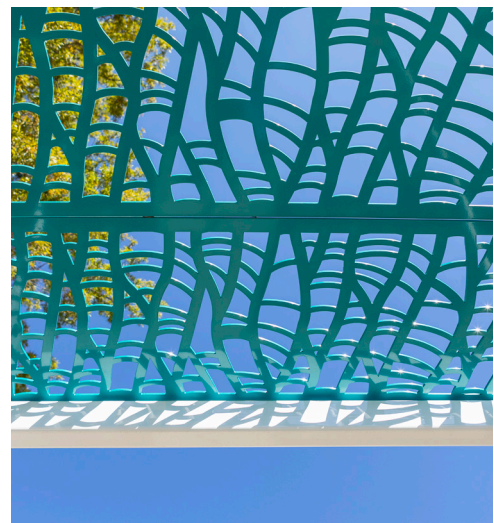
The city leaders of Kannapolis take downtown revitalization seriously. In 2015, the city purchased the entire downtown district—approximately 50 acres and eight blocks of buildings—and began a \$113 million undertaking that includes streetscape improvements, a linear park, and a sports and entertainment venue. The recently completed first phase has brought new life to West Avenue, the city's main street. The Charlotte office of 505 Design worked with landscape architecture firm Land Design's master plan to create what 505 Design's Taylor Milner Compton calls "urban interiors" along West Avenue.

"Land Design envisioned a number of outdoor rooms along the street, different rooms for different activities," explains Compton. A variety of Landscape Forms site elements, including custom swings, has helped to establish "the language of the streetscape rooms" and will provide city leaders with a palette to follow as revitalization expands through the downtown district.

West Avenue now stands in stark contrast to the empty, eerie one the city purchased in 2015. "We've brought back the spirit of main street and made being downtown a pleasurable experience," says Compton. "It's charming, inviting, and active, just as Land Design had envisioned."

Compton partnered with Landscape Forms' Studio 431 to create "a feature moment" in the form of custom swings. The swings, wide enough to comfortably fit two people, feature bright teal canopies that grab the attention of people walking and driving along the street. "We needed an element that stood out and created an irresistible experience." This outdoor room, in Land Design's vernacular, has a park vibe that invites engagement and play.

While Compton had the design vision for the swings, she relied on Studio 431's expertise to make her vision come to life—and within budget. "We've got experience and knowledge of the form and ergonomics of a lounge contour," explains Studio 431's John Shimer. "We understand weight loads, swing ranges, and have the tools and technology to model, test, and manufacture the swings and structure."



Working with 505 Design in the early stages of the project allowed Studio 431 to contribute its full range of services, including budget planning. The suggestion to use the Harpo lounge chair as the swing seat instead of creating a new form kept the custom project in budget. “The experience and history that Studio 431 has in creating custom elements gave me confidence. It was a great experience working with them,” says Compton.

The swing’s powdercoated teal canopy is a laser cut pattern designed by 505 Design’s environmental graphics team. The pattern simulates the sun coming through trees, creating dappled shadows on the ground that move with the light. The same laser cut pattern is repeated in another outdoor room framed by Kornegay Sorrel planters. Color and texture are a large part of Compton’s vision for West Avenue, which this space illustrates. “The neutral tones of the Sorrel planters play off the white canopy, which also introduces warm wood,” says Compton. She goes on to describe the subtle textural distinctions of the Kornegay planters and Landscape Forms furnishings selected for the West Avenue linear park.

“There is a tactile garden approach to the streetscape,” explains Compton. “We didn’t want anything too slick or polished. Dune planters on each of the intersections are a statement and stand in contrast to the grays and reds of the pavers and buildings. They introduce a beautiful texture that is neutral and rich.” Larkspur planters serve as both planters and bollards along West Avenue.

Bumble bee yellow Parc Centre tables and chairs along West Avenue “add vibrancy and visually move you down the street,” says Compton. Another outdoor room is furnished with silver Catena tables and Parc chairs. Ring bike racks and Scarborough litterers round out the Landscape Forms site elements that are now standards for downtown Kannapolis. “The city wanted a brand of products used repeatedly throughout all phases of the revitalization so that downtown felt like one connected place,” says Compton.

The modern aesthetic of Landscape Forms’ site elements and custom swings appealed to 505 Design’s goals for West Avenue. “The vision for main street wasn’t to take away its historical characteristics but to mix old and new in ways that balance and complement each other,” says Compton. “We didn’t want site elements that felt nostalgic. The furniture is fresh and contemporary and reflects Kannapolis, a city that is totally refreshing itself.”

