2015

DOWNTOWN gainesville

RENAISSANCE STRATEGIC VISION & PLAN

CARL VINSON INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT
The University of Georgia

STEAK & SEAFOOD
re-cess
& EVENT FACILITY
PINK SAKE

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DID YOU KNOW? AFTER WORLD WAR II, A LOCAL BUSINESSMAN NAMED JESSE JEWELL STARTED THE POULTRY INDUSTRY IN GEORGIA, WHICH HAS SINCE BECOME THE STATE'S LARGEST AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT. THIS $1 BILLION A YEAR INDUSTRY HAS GIVEN GAINESVILLE THE TITLE **"POULTRY CAPITAL OF THE WORLD."**

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DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE | 2015 STRATEGIC VISION & PLAN

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POULTRY PARK
Downtown Gainesville

the georgia DOWNTOWN RENAISSANCE PARTNERSHIP

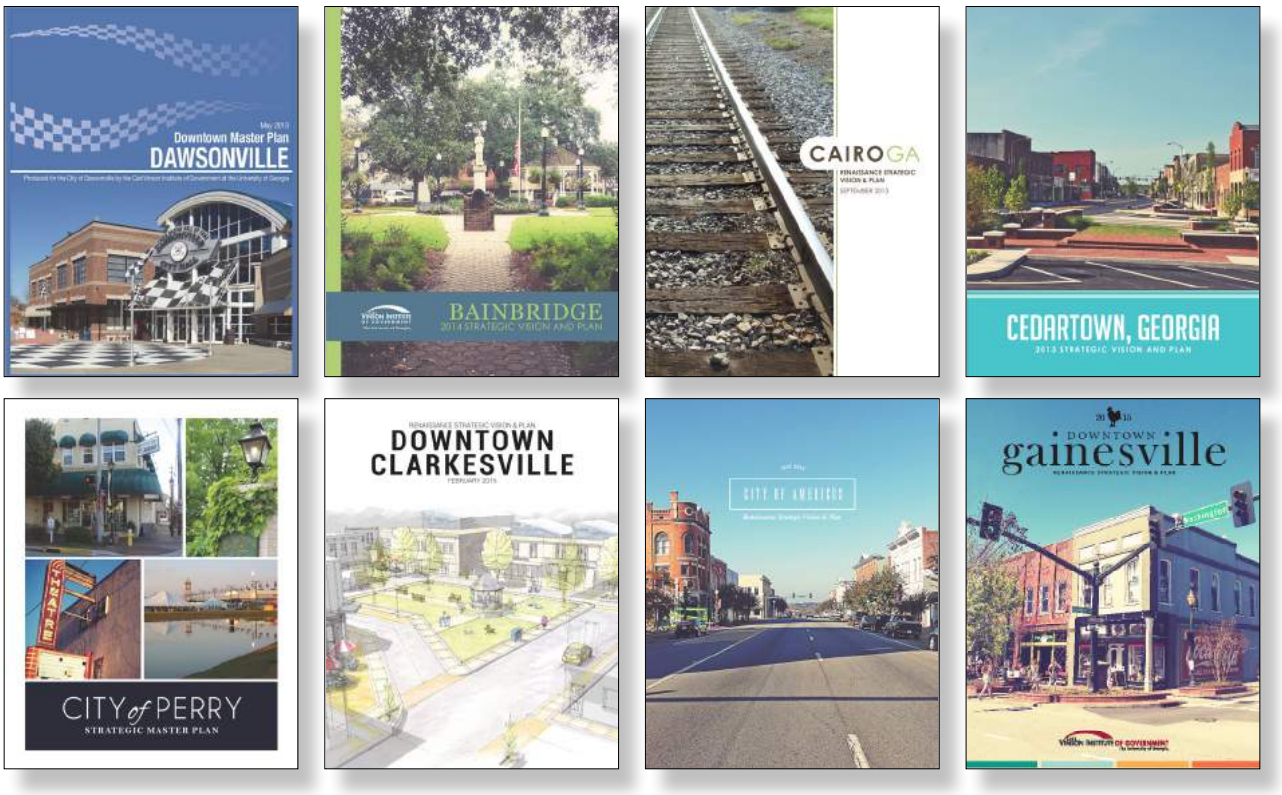
The Georgia Downtown Renaissance Partnership, which includes the Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Cities Foundation, and the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government, facilitates the creation of strategic visions, plans, and work programs for communities in Georgia. By working with government leaders, chambers of commerce, downtown merchants, property owners, lending institutions, and citizens, the Georgia Downtown Renaissance Partnership helps ensure that all cities in Georgia have access to what they need in order to realize their vision and maximize their potential.

Georgia Municipal Association

Created in 1933, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) is the only state organization that represents municipal governments in Georgia. Based in Atlanta, GMA is a voluntary, nonprofit organization that provides legislative advocacy and education, employee benefit, and technical consulting services to its members. GMA's purpose is to anticipate and influence the forces shaping Georgia's communities and to provide leadership, tools, and services that assist local governments in becoming more innovative, effective, and responsive.

Georgia Cities Foundation

The Georgia Cities Foundation, founded in 1999, is a nonprofit subsidiary of the Georgia Municipal Association. The foundation's mission is to assist cities in their efforts to revitalize and enhance downtown areas by serving as a partner and facilitator in funding capital projects through the revolving loan fund. Its services include



RENAISSANCE STRATEGIC VISIONING AND PLANNING REPORTS: Dawsonville, Bainbridge, Cairo, Cedartown, Perry, Clarkesville, Americus, and Gainesville. Not pictured: St. Marys, Cordele, and Villa Rica (upcoming).

the Revolving Loan Fund Program, the Heart and Soul Bus Tour, the Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Tour, the Downtown Development Authority Basic Training, and the Renaissance Award.

Carl Vinson Institute of Government

For more than 85 years, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government at the University of Georgia has worked with public officials throughout Georgia and around the world to improve governance and people's lives. From Georgia's early days as a largely agrarian state with a modest population to its modern-day status as a national and international force in business, industry, and politics with a population of almost 10 million, the Institute of Government has helped government leaders navigate change and forge strong directions for a better Georgia.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1821, Gainesville has served as the county seat of Hall County and the bustling commercial center of Northeast Georgia. Overwhelmingly, Gainesville residents see Downtown as the heart and soul of the community. Downtown, defined in public input sessions as the area from Northeast Georgia Medical Center and Brenau University to Lake Lanier and from the Gainesville Civic Center to Gainesville Amtrak, is the economic engine of Hall County and the surrounding region. Downtown's location and unique assets identified by the community help to ensure that Gainesville maintains this historic position as a local and regional hub.

From the sleepy crossroads known as Mule Camp Springs, Gainesville emerged in the early 1800s as a booming gold-rush town and critical market center for Northeast Georgia farmers. Following the development of the Atlanta and Richmond Air-Line Railway in 1872, Gainesville accelerated development as an important manufacturing and transportation center. Much of the Midtown area—home to Gainesville's Amtrak station—reflects this industrial and railroad heritage, while manufacturing remains a critical sector of Gainesville's economy.

In 1936, Downtown Gainesville was devastated by one of America's deadliest tornadoes. With 203 killed and much of Downtown in ruins, the people of Gainesville pulled together to confront the difficult work of rebuilding Downtown. Despite the destructive tornado, the City boasts a wealth

"Downtown Gainesville is who we are – it's the heartbeat, the rhythm of the community. It's slightly sophisticated and chicken city all rolled into one, and it's home."

PUBLIC INPUT

of historic and architectural treasures, particularly the array of art deco buildings that arose with the assistance of the federal government following the 1936 tornado.

Thanks in part to local farming pioneer Jesse Jewell, Gainesville today is renowned as the "Poultry Capital of the World." Gainesville is a global leader in the production of broiler chickens and serves as the epicenter of Georgia's $18.4 billion poultry industry. In addition to the City's prominence in the poultry industry and in manufacturing, institutions like the Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Brenau University, the Smithgall Arts Center, and Riverside Military Academy all contribute to the economic vitality of Gainesville. These important institutions help crown the "Queen City of the Mountains" as Northeast Georgia's cultural and economic hub.

With an estimated daytime population of more than 100,000, today Gainesville is the vibrant, young, and diverse anchor of the Gainesville Metropolitan Statistical Area and an important slice of the larger Atlanta Combined Statistical Area. Due to Gainesville's regional economic prominence, the city's proximity and connection to Metro Atlanta, and the lush natural beauty of the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains and Lake Lanier, Gainesville is well positioned for growth long into the future.

basic DEMOGRAPHICS

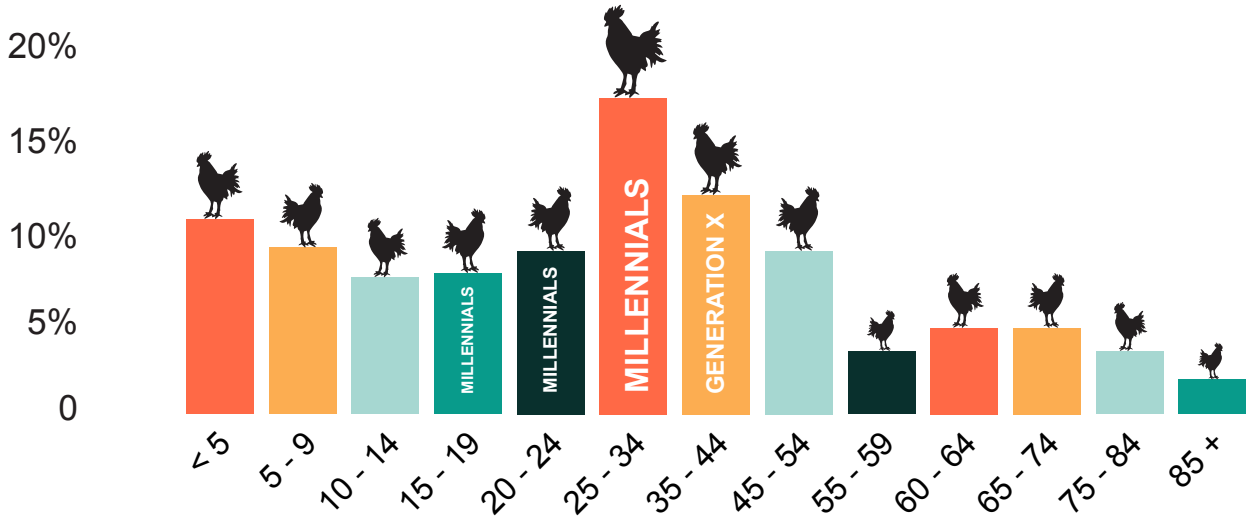
Gainesville has experienced rapid growth and demographic change over the past two decades. From 2000 to 2010, the Gainesville Metropolitan Statistical Area grew 29%, ranking third in the nation for metro area population growth. Gainesville proper grew 32.16% during the same period. While development has slowed following the recession, Gainesville remains a growing city.

With a median age of 28.5, Gainesville's population is significantly younger than the state as a whole. As of 2014, citizens under the age of 18 comprised 37.1% of Gainesville's population. Gainesville's youthful population is a significant contributor to the overall vitality of the city, reflected in many issues addressed by community members. If properly cultivated, Gainesville's large population of young workers can create a competitive edge for the city in attracting new businesses and retaining existing employers. Actions focused on creating more housing, entertainment, connectivity, and other options for this growing demographic are key elements for any successful planning effort. Increasing walkability is an essential component to retaining Gainesville's young professionals. In addition, nurturing Gainesville's young population by providing educational and employment opportunities is a critical consideration for the community. Gainesville's young population is likely a factor in the city's lower-than-average homeownership rate and median income. Both of these findings reveal a demand for affordable lofts and rental units Downtown, a key issue raised by Gainesville citizens.

Perhaps the largest demographic shift over the past two decades is the rapid growth of the Hispanic and Latino populations of Gainesville, many of whom settled in the area for work in the poultry industry. According to the most recent United States Census Bureau estimates, Hispanic and Latino citizens now make up a plurality of the City's population. While Gainesville faces the challenges of providing educational and employment opportunities for a young population, the City's vibrant, growing, and diverse population provides the opportunity to incorporate new citizens and build on the community's unique heritage.

AGE OF GAINESVILLE RESIDENTS

2014 MEDIAN AGE: 28.5 YEARS



MILLENNIALS (AGES 18–34)

Comprising more than a third of Gainesville's total population, Millennials make up the city's largest age group. Most researchers use birth years ranging from the 1980s to the early 2000s. More than any age group, Millennials prefer walkable, downtown living. A recent survey by Deloitte confirmed that 67% of American Millennials prefer to live in neighborhoods with "everything within walking distance." A similar survey by TransitCenter found that 32% of those under age 30 identified city neighborhoods (residential or downtown) as their "ideal" neighborhood types compared with 16% of those over age 30.

GENERATION X (AGES 35–50)

In Gainesville, Generation X and Millennials outnumber Empty Nesters / Baby Boomers. Marketing and programming efforts should be implemented to reach the largest segment of the population.

EMPTY NESTERS / BABY BOOMERS (AGES 51–69)

In 2010,16.75% of Gainesville's population was made up of Baby Boomers. According to a 2011 study by the American Realtors Association, twice as many Boomer generation members desire to live in urban downtowns than currently do. The same study revealed that 51% of Boomers and Empty Nesters would like to see more public transportation within walking distance and 39% would like to see more places to walk or exercise for fun.

gainesville by the numbers

POPULATION IN 2014
36,306

POPULATION GROWTH RATE 2000–2014
41.94%
GEORGIA AVERAGE
23.34%

POPULATION GROWTH RATE 2010–2014
7.4%
GEORGIA AVERAGE
4.2%

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$32,283
GEORGIA AVERAGE
$49,179

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROWTH 2000–2012
4.58%
GEORGIA AVERAGE
15.89%

MEDIAN RESIDENT AGE IN 2013
28.5 years
GEORGIA AVERAGE
35.3 years

HOMEOWNERSHIP IN 2013
38%
GEORGIA AVERAGE
65.1%

HISPANIC OR LATINO
42.1%

WHITE
37.8%

AFRICAN AMERICAN
15.6%

ASIAN
3.5%

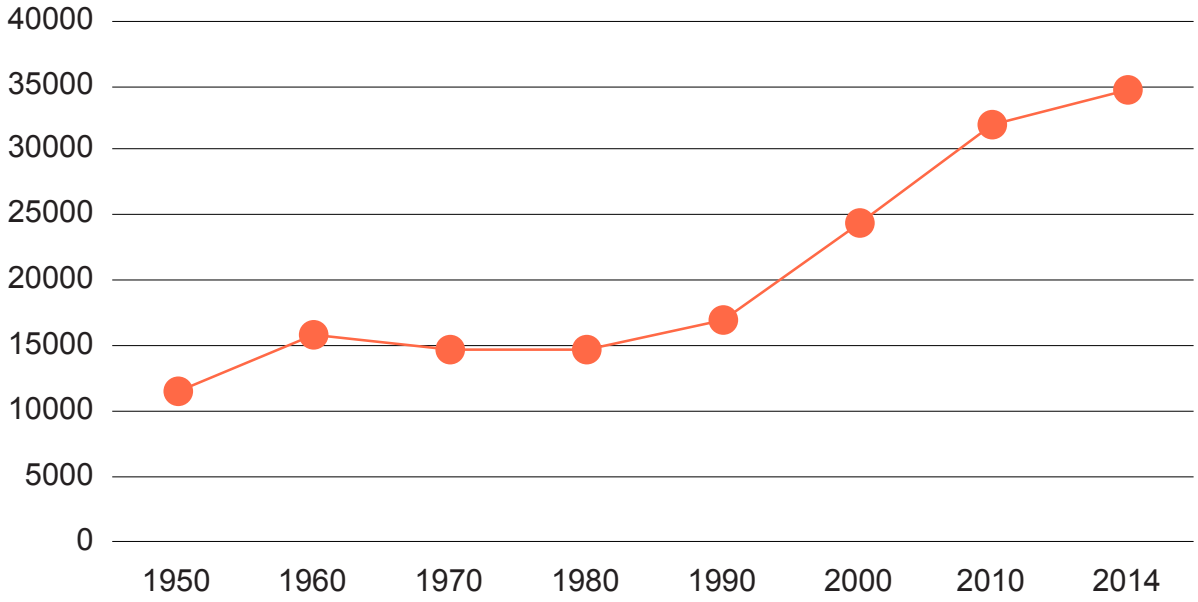
MULTIRACIAL
0.8%

OTHER
0.2%

LATINOS

LATINOS MAKE UP GAINESVILLE'S LARGEST DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP. ACCORDING TO A 2011 STUDY BY THE AMERICAN REALTORS ASSOCIATION, A PLURALITY (33%) OF LATINOS PREFER URBAN LIVING, AND THE DESIRE FOR "SIDEWALKS AND PLACES TO WALK" IS A TOP PRIORITY. SEVEN IN 10 LATINO FAMILIES PREFER MIXED-USE AND SIMILAR COMMUNITIES WITH A MIX OF HOUSES AND BUSINESSES (68%) OVER COMMUNITIES WITH HOUSING ONLY (30%).

POPULATION OF GAINESVILLE



the STRATEGIC VISIONING & PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic visioning is a collaborative planning and decision-making process that relies on broad stakeholder involvement and a focus on asset-based development to create a shared community vision, plan, and implementation work plan.

Strategic visioning helps citizens better understand unique community assets and more clearly identify collective priorities. Together, these become the basis for effective community-led planning. Throughout the development of the plan, the community identifies pressing issues, articulates big-picture goals, and develops short-term and long-term strategies to address neighborhood concerns.

The strategic visioning and planning process involves three steps:

1 WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- Plan Review
- Demographic Scan
- Visual Preference Assessment
- Steering Committee Meetings
- One-on-One Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Community Survey

It is essential to understand the current conditions of Downtown Gainesville. The first step involves demographic research, a review of prior plans and studies, and public engagement. Focus groups, one-on-one interviews, community-wide surveys, and visual preference assessments are tools that can be used to reveal the community's story as well as current issues and opportunities.

2 WHERE ARE WE GOING?

- Design
- Renderings
- Visualization

In the second phase of the process, the community looks to the future to shape a new vision. This vision is interpreted through illustrations and design recommendations so that all can see the physical translation of the collective vision.

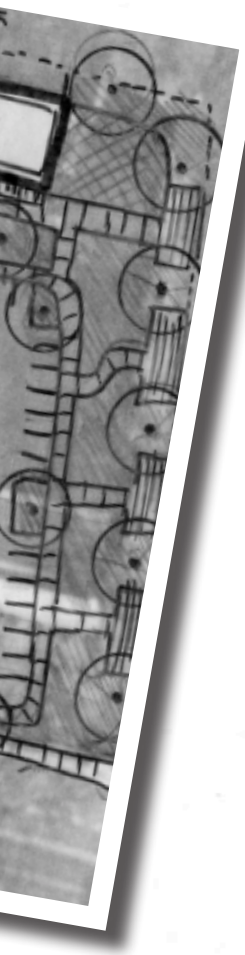
3 HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- Work Program
- Design Solutions
- Short-term (1–12 months)
- Long-term (12 months–10 years)

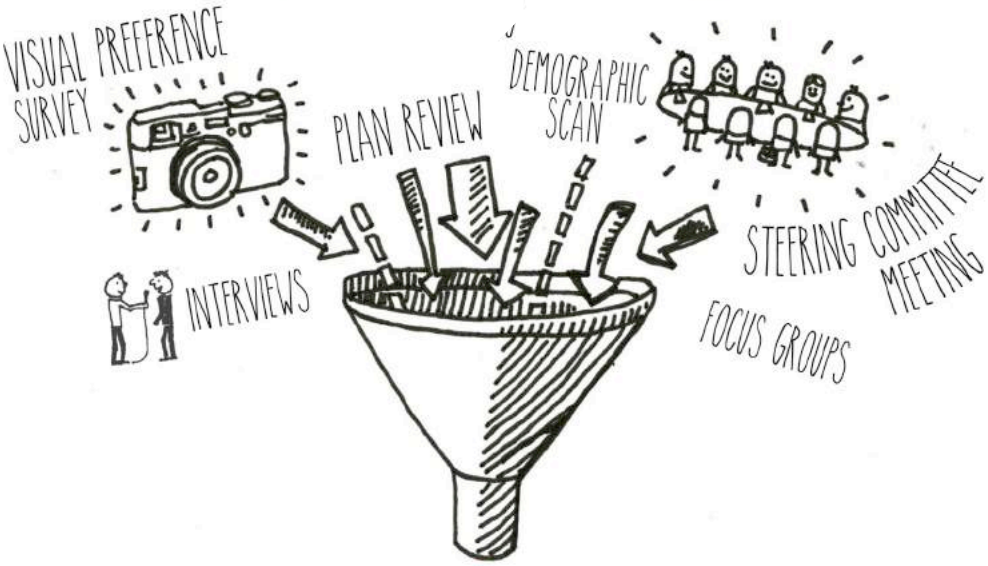
The final step in the strategic visioning process is to create an implementation plan that moves the community toward its vision for the future. Community input and effort form the foundation for the implementation plan, which is critical for successful outcomes.

timeline

DECEMBER | STEERING COMMITTEE
JANUARY | PLAN REVIEW
FEBRUARY | FOCUS GROUPS, INTERVIEWS, PLAN REVIEW
MARCH | FOCUS GROUPS, INTERVIEWS
APRIL | FOCUS GROUPS, INTERVIEWS, STEERING COMMITTEE
MAY | STEERING COMMITTEE
JUNE | PREPARE ACTION ITEMS
JULY | PREPARE ACTION ITEMS
AUGUST | STEERING COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER | PREPARE FINAL DRAFT & CITY STAFF REVIEW
OCTOBER | FINAL PRESENTATION



1. WHERE ARE WE NOW?



2. WHERE ARE WE GOING?

3. HOW DO WE GET THERE?

PLAN REVIEW

PLANS REVIEWED:

GAINESVILLE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
1980 PROGRAM FOR DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
1962 "HAMMER PLAN" – DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE PLANS FOR ACTION
REDEVELOPMENT PLAN – THE RENAISSANCE OF MIDTOWN GAINESVILLE (PHASES I AND II)
VISION 2030 REPORTS
PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN
GAINESVILLE HUD CONSOLIDATED PLAN
HISTORIC RESOURCES STRUCTURAL SURVEY

A comprehensive review of recent plans and studies of Downtown Gainesville confirms that Downtown is the economic engine of Hall County and the surrounding region. Previous plans envision Downtown continuing to be the vibrant center of Gainesville with provisions for additional office and housing space. A review of previous plans also reveals strong support for local businesses by both the City and local consumers. Issues raised in multiple plans reiterate topics and top issues identified in contemporary public input sessions: the need for a more connected and walkable downtown experience, the desire for more residences Downtown, opportunities for a rejuvenated Midtown, and the necessity that new development conform to Downtown's historic character.

Echoing many of the issues raised in public input sessions, transportation and connectivity dominate many of the extant plans. Gainesville's 2030 Comprehensive Plan and others recognize that the corridors of Academy Street, E.E. Butler Parkway, and Jesse Jewell Parkway all face problems associated with traffic congestion. This plan and others recommend pursuing traffic calming and traffic mitigation strategies to enhance the walkability and safety of the corridor.

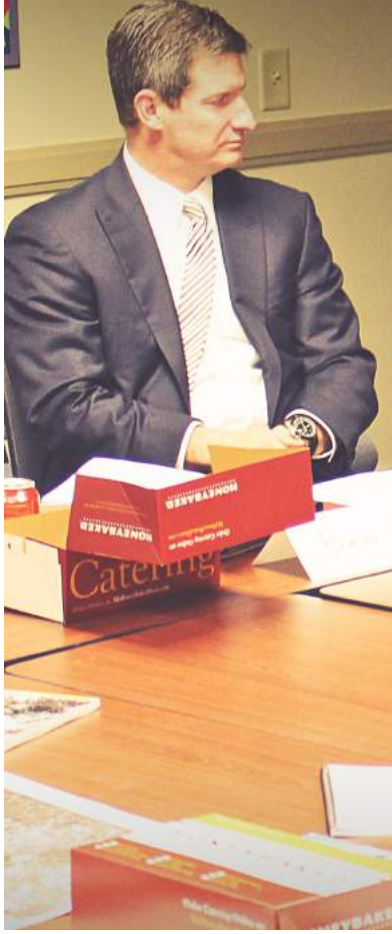
Additionally, previous plans for the Midtown area recommend extending downtown streets across Jesse Jewell Parkway to enhance vehicular and pedestrian connectivity between Downtown and Midtown to help ease traffic congestion along the corridor. Development and extension of the Midtown Greenway is also listed as an important element of connectivity between Downtown and Midtown. Previous plans further recommend traffic calming strategies and pedestrian enhancements like streetscaping extensions and planted medians along Jesse Jewell Parkway, noting that these improvements help to increase economic activity and attract private investment. Studies of Gainesville's transportation is-

sues reveal the largely untapped potential of the Gainesville Amtrak station, which could become a commuter rail station, creating a new economic hub and focal area for additional development and redevelopment.

As reflected in interviews with the community, previous plans and studies of Downtown indicate a strong interest in encouraging downtown living. The Gainesville 2030 Comprehensive Plan lists public improvements such as the new pedestrian bridge and Midtown Greenway network as key catalysts in a movement in the district toward mixed-unit housing and a more diverse mix of land uses. The 2030 plan recommends updating the Tax Allocation District (TAD) redevelopment plans for Midtown and Downtown to look at the feasibility of mixed-unit, mixed-use residential projects. Additionally, plans for the Midtown area recommend redevelopment of the Gainesville Housing Authority's Green Hunter (also known as "Atlanta Street") Homes complex to create more mixed-income, mixed-use development. Other recommendations include implementing an infill housing program to increase the number of single-family homes, updating zoning ordinances to allow for more flexibility for mixed-unit developments, and providing assistance to first-time home buyers.

Plans for the Midtown area envision the district evolving into a thriving extension of Downtown. Midtown Gainesville has historically been a dynamic district. Significant population growth occurred following the construction of the Southern Railroad and depot, and growth continued as the railroad expanded. Over time, Midtown's residential neighborhoods turned into commercial and industrial areas, and growth has stagnated in recent decades. Existing plans as well as interviews with the public reflect the desire for urban-scale development in Midtown, particularly at Jesse Jewell Parkway and E.E. Butler Parkway, the Atlanta Street Homes site, the Gainesville Amtrak terminal, and the now idle Hall County Law Enforcement Center. Recommendations include creating a TAD for Midtown, enhancing vehicular and pedestrian connectivity, expanding the Midtown Greenway, encouraging a diverse mix of uses, extending downtown streetscaping, and targeting vacant properties for infill development.

As the economic engine of the region and the heart and soul of the community, Downtown Gainesville currently houses government buildings as well as retail stores, services, and special event spaces. The area has seen a number of public improvements in recent years including extended streetscapes and public art around the Downtown Square (usually referred to as "the Square"), Rock Creek Veterans Park, and the Midtown Greenway. These investments are helping to attract private enterprise and development in and around Downtown. Echoing current community feedback, previous plans recommend high standards for infill, historic preservation efforts, and completing the south side of the Square with compatible development to help uphold the strong sense of place in Downtown. The Gainesville 2030 Comprehensive Plan and others recommend addressing downtown walkability by continuing streetscaping improvements specified in the City's Sidewalk System Improvement Program, enhancing connectivity and calming traffic congestion along major corridors, incentivizing small businesses, and considering improvements to the Hall County Public Library, which is a common sentiment in the community.



PUBLIC INPUT

As part of the public input phase of the visioning process, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government conducted 12 diverse focus groups and 17 one-on-one interviews to help paint a comprehensive picture of Gainesville by the people who live and work there. First, focus groups discussed positive features and aspects of Gainesville. During the second portion of the meetings, they identified things that need improvement and issues that should be addressed in the future. These public input forums were recorded and Institute faculty combined, analyzed, and summarized the results. This summary revealed what is currently working and needs to be capitalized on in the community, as well as the elements that need improvement or are missing.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WERE HELD WITH THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

- Gainesville Middle School students
- Chamber of Commerce's Vision 2030 Downtown Committee
- Main Street Gainesville Board
- Downtown business owners
- Youth Leadership Hall
- Gainesville Housing Authority and City Housing Programs staff
- Gainesville High School students
- Gainesville City Council
- Gainesville Planning & Appeals Board
- Gainesville Historic Preservation Commission
- Leadership Hall County
- Brenau University's BULLI Program & Vision 2030 Wisdom Project "Wisdom Keepers"
- Brenau University's Student Government and Greek Council
- "One Community" & "Concerned Citizens" representatives

DOWNTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE

WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

Focus group participants acknowledged a number of factors that make Gainesville an enjoyable and viable place to live. There are multiple opportunities for development and redevelopment within city limits and throughout Downtown, and these properties are huge assets. Gainesville can focus on filling in vacant lots and bringing in the types of businesses the residents want.

Several positive qualities of Downtown Gainesville were brought up repeatedly throughout the focus groups. Currently, the City contains a healthy mix of local businesses and amenities, with some variety in retail, dining, and entertainment. Downtown's beautiful Square characterizes the whole area and serves as a community gathering place and the focal point of outdoor activity. The Square, coupled with the streetscape and outdoor lighting, contributes to the overall attractiveness of Downtown as well as the historic and "traditional" character of the area. The quaint charm and small-town feel of Downtown was widely recognized as one of the best things about Gainesville.

Recreational opportunities, the Midtown and Rock Creek Greenways, Brenau University, and proximity to Lake Lanier are other positive draws for the City mentioned by participants. Family-friendly activities, sports facilities, and walking/biking trails attract a variety of age groups. Brenau, now bringing more than 1,500 students to the Gainesville campus annually, provides a young consumer base for Downtown and connects the City with an immense source of talent. Programmed outdoor events and festivals also bring in diverse crowds, making Gainesville not only an enjoyable place to live, but a regional destination as well.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

Capitalizing on what is working well, the City can enhance the quality of life of residents and continue to grow the community.

Business needs to stay in Gainesville, and existing vacant properties should be filled before new properties are built. Simple façade improvements can drastically improve the aesthetics of Downtown while implementing design guidelines will keep new architecture in line with the current character of Gainesville. One of the most voiced needs was increased downtown housing: This would keep young professionals and Empty Nesters in the area around the clock. Having residential areas Downtown might also encourage shops to stay open later and operate on weekends.

Many participants expressed a desire for greater walkability and connectivity within Gainesville. Making busy intersections more pedestrian-friendly and improving the condition of sidewalks will encourage people to walk to and from Downtown, which will help remedy traffic and parking issues—a common complaint.

Multiple focus groups expressed the desire for more variety Downtown, including more retail, more diversity in restaurants, grocery options (including a permanent indoor farmers market as a reliable source of fresh, healthy food), a community meeting space/conference center, and entertainment/evening options. Since so many people appreciate the beauty and character of Downtown, extending the streetscape, adding more outdoor lighting, and increasing arts programming were common suggestions. Overall, people in Gainesville thoroughly enjoy outdoor activities, with wide support for Main Street Gainesville's 51 ongoing events continuing to enliven Downtown.

Capitalizing on its biggest assets (the Midtown Greenway, Lake Lanier and Brenau University), Downtown Gainesville has the potential to be a premiere destination for leisure and recreation. With effective marketing and promotional strategies, Gainesville will continue to be a place where people feel comfortable visiting, working, living, and going to school.

GAINESVILLE'S TOP ISSUES

During the public engagement process, participants from throughout the community shared their vision for Downtown Gainesville's future and raised important issues that must be addressed for the City to achieve continued success. A diverse set of concerns were discussed, many of which can be compiled into broad categories. Priorities addressed in prior proposals and studies mirror the critical issues raised by the City's citizens. Together, these ideas laid the groundwork for a plan of action. Throughout this process, a Steering Committee of dedicated Gainesville citizens reviewed all of the information compiled in public input sessions and previous plans, honing down the priorities to create a successful strategy for Downtown. Having too many priorities equals having no priorities, and Gainesville has only so much time, energy, and resources. Thus, tackling a succinct list of concerns is an essential element of a successful plan. Downtown Gainesville's Steering Committee was instrumental in focusing public input, previous plans, and elements of responsible planning into four key categories addressed in the Gainesville work plan: connectivity, programming, design, and economic development.

wordle

TOP WORDS DESCRIBING DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE:

gainesville's TOP ISSUES

CONNECTIVITY

- CROSSING "THE MOAT"
- STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
- WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

PROGRAMMING

- ENTERTAINMENT
- FOOD

DESIGN

- "THE LOOK"
- MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT
- EXPANDING DOWNTOWN

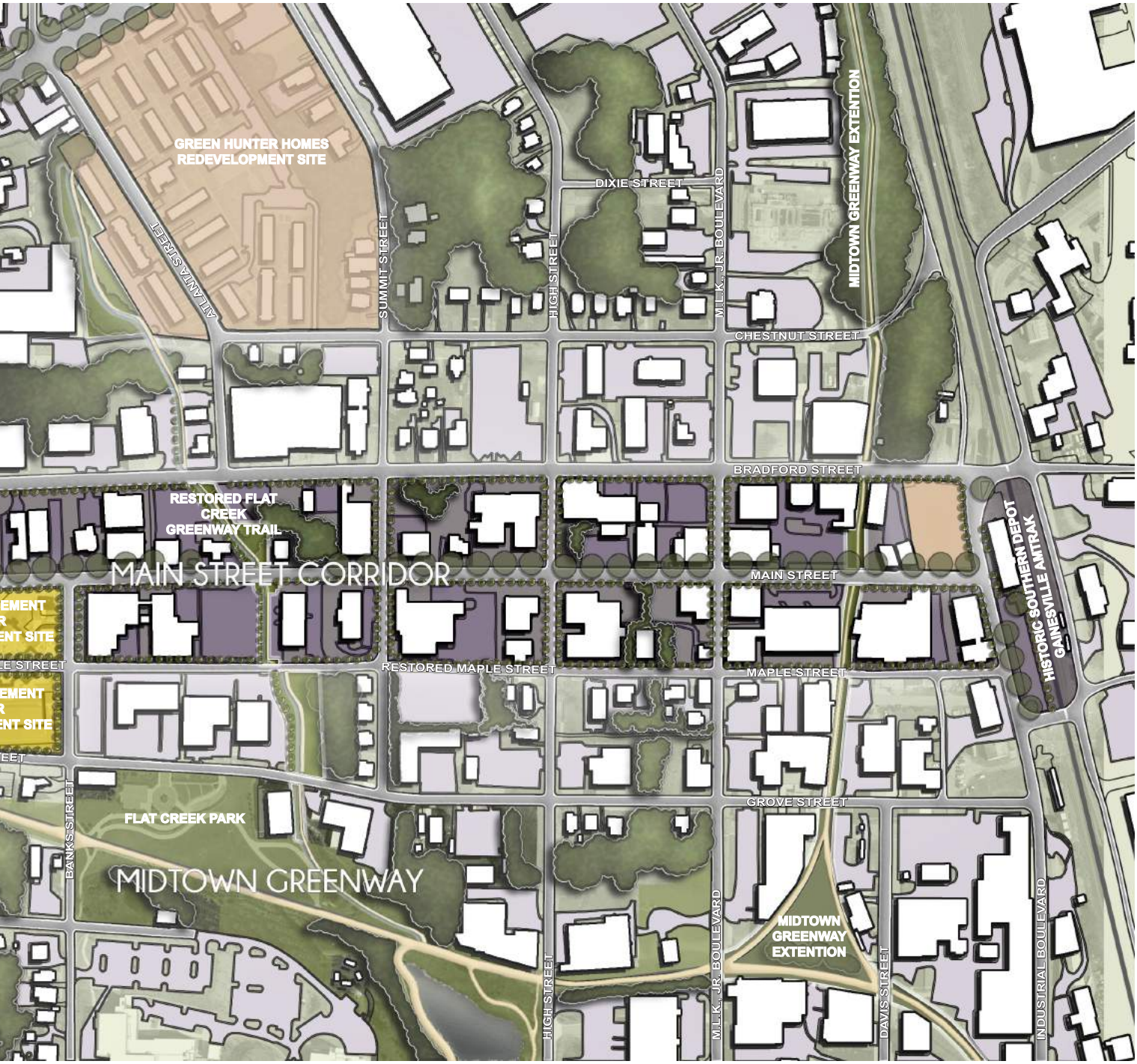
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- INCENTIVES FOR REDEVELOPMENT
- DOWNTOWN LODGING
- HOUSING

—2045—
CONCEPT PLAN

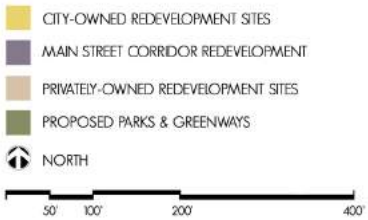
COMMUNITY. CONNECTION. CHARACTER. Voices throughout Gainesville recognize the unique assets that define downtown. Building on these strengths, community members envision a walkable, connected downtown that preserves the rich heritage and character of Gainesville's past while embracing a more vibrant future. The proposed conceptual master plan integrates this community vision, creating a road map to a more active, lively, and connected future for Downtown.

Enhancing connectivity emerged as one of Gainesville's critical issues during public input sessions. With an expanded greenway network, a restored street grid, and improved pedestrian accommodations and infrastructure, the proposed master plan radically advances connectivity throughout Downtown Gainesville.



MAJOR CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENTS INCLUDE

- Major green space extensions of the Midtown Greenway network, creating a safe pedestrian connection between Downtown, Midtown, and Newtown
- Linking the Green Hunter Homes development site, Gainesville Connection Transit center, and the Midtown Greenway with a new pedestrian pathway along a restored Flat Creek in Midtown
- Restoring Gainesville's historic street grid by reconnecting Maple Street at the former Hall County Law Enforcement Center and Ward's Funeral Home in Midtown. Relink Henry Ward Way with Green Street Downtown
- Expanded crosswalks, sidewalks, and a unified downtown streetscaping program extended throughout Downtown and Midtown



CONNEC

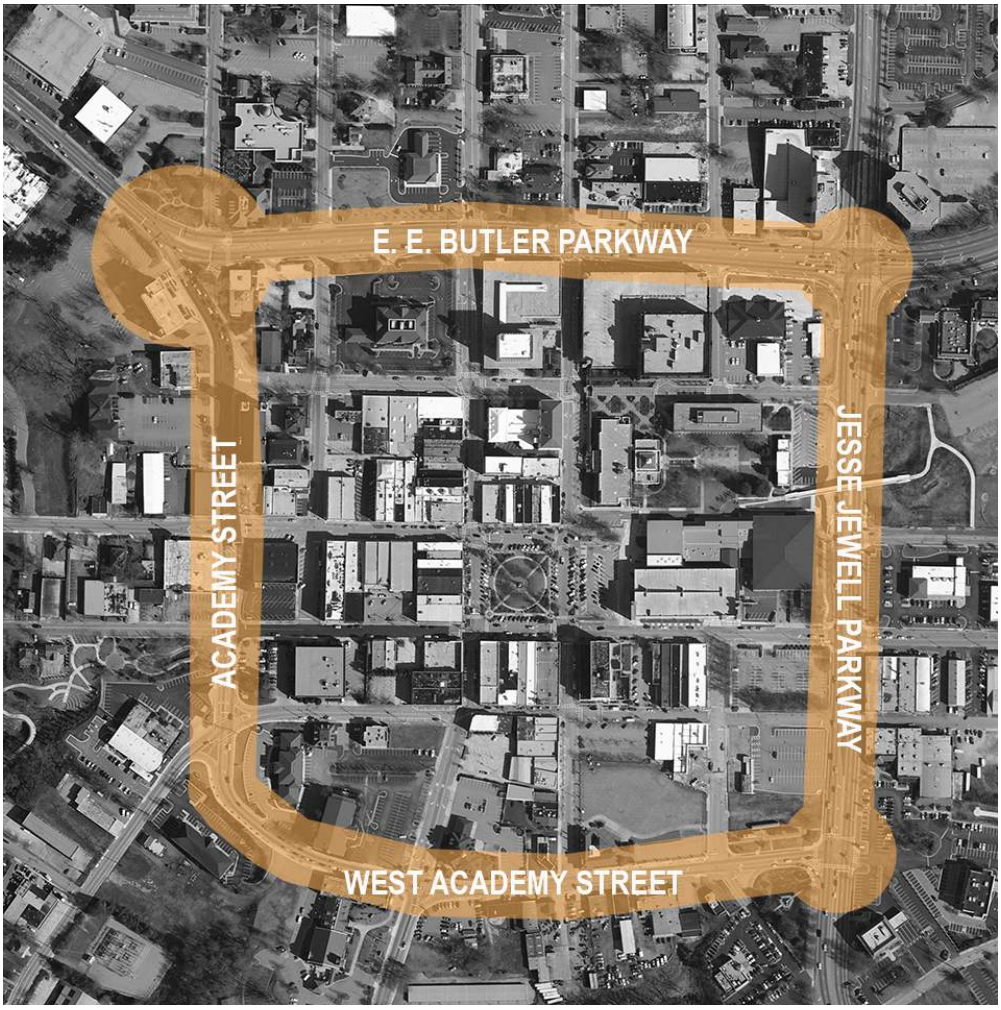
CTIVITY

top issues: CONNECTIVITY

Repeatedly in public input sessions, Gainesville citizens brought up problems associated with urban connectivity. What is connectivity? In Gainesville, as in many cities that developed intensely after the 1950s, connectivity is among the most pressing issues in urban design. According to the Transportation Research Board, connectivity is defined as “the degree that a street network provides multiple alternate routes between two points.” In simple terms, connectivity is the catchall term for the myriad pathways people use to get to where they need to be. Short blocks, frequent intersections and crosswalks, gridded streets, and complete street and sidewalk networks are all generally effective gages of urban connectivity. The area immediately surrounding Gainesville’s historic Square is an example of an environment with abundant urban connectivity. Ample and attractive pedestrian connections, multiple pathways, intersections, and service alleys all work to greatly enhance the connectivity of the downtown area. These connections come together to create an area loved by citizens throughout the community.

In contrast, fragmented street networks, one-way streets, dead-ends, cul-de-sacs, wide collector roads, and limited or unsafe pedestrian crossings all pose serious barriers to connectivity. Examples of all of these barriers can also be found in Downtown Gainesville. Green, Bradford, Maple, and Broad Streets have all become disjointed over time, resulting in poor connectivity between the Downtown and Midtown areas. When important secondary roads like these become barriers to connectivity, pedestrians and vehicles are discouraged from entering Downtown, keeping activity and business out of the area.

Thoughtful urban connectivity allows community members to efficiently navigate the urban fabric via any and all means of transportation. Excellent connectivity spurs pedestrian activity, removes cars from the road, and fosters communities that encourage interaction between groups of stakeholders. While connectivity can ease commutes, increase property values, create healthier, safer neighborhoods, and tie together our existing assets, it can also make us better neighbors.



"THE MOAT" AERIAL VIEW

The "moat" surrounding Downtown is Gainesville's most pressing connectivity issue, and limits safe pedestrian movement into Downtown and separates Downtown from the surrounding neighborhoods.

WHERE ARE WE? SURROUNDED BY THE MOAT

Gainesville's most pressing connectivity issue involves getting pedestrians safely across the Downtown perimeter roads of Academy Street, E.E. Butler Parkway, Jesse Jewell Parkway, and West Academy Street. With a compiled average of approximately 70,640 vehicle trips per day, these busy corridors become a sort of "Moat" that limits safe pedestrian activity to the interior of Downtown and separates Downtown from surrounding neighborhoods.The width and intensity of these principal roads coupled with the lack of safe crosswalks severely hampers pedestrian connectivity between Downtown, Midtown, Brenau University, and surrounding neighborhoods. These roads also funnel passing vehicular traffic—and potential business—out of Downtown. Where crosswalks do exist along these arterial roads, the width of the unbroken asphalt, absence of vegetated buffers, and lack of distinction between the crosswalks and the surrounding vehicular corridor create physical and psychological barriers for pedestrians and contribute to the perception that the area is unsafe for those on foot.

WHERE ARE WE GOING? CROSSING THE MOAT

Addressing connectivity issues Downtown requires a cost-effective, flexible approach to bridge "the Moat." Recent developments like the pedestrian bridge across Jesse Jewell Parkway are positive steps toward pedestrian connectivity but are a prohib-

"THE MOAT"
The photograph above shows the hazardous crossings at the intersection of E.E. Butler Parkway and Jesse Jewell Parkway.

itively expensive, inflexible approach to facilitating safe connections. A flexible approach to increasing connectivity must include a variety of short- and long-term strategies to create a more connected, pedestrian-friendly environment while addressing other issues raised by Gainesville residents, visitors, and business owners.

SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

In contrast to costly new infrastructure, many short-term strategies can be implemented quickly—within six to 12 months—at little cost. Short-term solutions to address connectivity along "the Moat" include extending waiting times for pedestrians at crosswalks and delaying red light changes for three to seven seconds for more comfortable pedestrian crossings. Additionally, color-coding pedestrian crossings can increase the perception of safety and alert drivers to the presence of pedestrians. In addition to crosswalk improvements, pedestrian and vehicular circulation Downtown would be greatly enhanced by reconnecting Henry Ward Way and Green Street. Simply removing the existing bollards and delineating a driving lane would allow one-way access heading north through the Kenyon Plaza area. By reducing congestion on Jesse Jewell Parkway, reconnecting these streets would improve pedestrian and public safety. Reconnecting these roads would also eliminate cut-through traffic in the adjoining parking deck and wrong-way turns out of the parking deck onto Spring Street. While these improvements have limited associated costs, both approaches can measurably increase the ease and safety of pedestrian connections.

SHORT TERM ACTION ITEMS

* EXTEND SIGNAL TIMING AT CRITICAL INTERSECTIONS
* COLOR-CODE PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS WITH BRIGHT PAINT
* INSTALL FLASHING CROSSWALK SYSTEMS AT CRITICAL INTERSECTIONS
* REMOVE BOLLARDS TO RECONNECT HENRY WARD WAY & GREEN STREET

SHORT-TERM SOLUTION: REMOVING THE BOLLARDS

Pedestrian and vehicular circulation Downtown would be greatly enhanced by reconnecting Henry Ward Way and Green Street. Simply removing the existing bollards, upgrading the existing traffic light, and delineating a driving lane would allow one-way access heading north through the Kenyon Plaza area.

EXTEND SIGNAL TIMING AT CRITICAL INTERSECTIONS

IMPROVE SAFETY BY DELAYING VEHICULAR MOVEMENT AN

ADDITIONAL 3–7 SECONDS

IMPROVE SAFETY BY ADDING FLASHING CROSSING SYSTEMS

LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS—CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

Long-term solutions, while requiring more commitment and investment, reap additional benefits. Among the most popular of Gainesville's assets revealed in public input sessions is the attractive streetscaping around Gainesville's historic Square. The wide brick-accented sidewalks in this area readily accommodate groups of pedestrians, reflect Downtown's historic character, are aesthetically pleasing, and contribute to a feeling of investment and safety Downtown. Extending the attractive streetscaping of the Square throughout Downtown and along the Main Street corridor would create a visual tie between Downtown and Midtown while enhancing neighborhood connectivity. Along critical access points to Downtown, repaving existing crosswalks with brick edging, installing flashing crosswalk signs, and planting vegetated medians where possible would visually tie "the Moat" to Downtown while breaking up the bleak, unwelcoming expanses of asphalt. Doing so would create safe and attractive connections for pedestrians while broadcasting a sense of arrival to drivers and pedestrians alike.

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

BRADFORD STREET

AFTER

Improvements shown in the rendering above include: sidewalk widening with brick edging added to match the Square's sidewalk design where possible; large oak trees along the sidewalk define the street and offer shade to pedestrians; in smaller spaces, adding under-story trees help divide pedestrians from vehicular traffic; and off-limits painted areas where no parking is allowed are converted to bioswales and green medians where possible.

BEFORE

BEFORE

The photograph above shows a view of Main Street just north of the former Hall County Law Enforcement Center in Midtown. On the left is Flip Your Dog Yoga Studio and C.C. Dickson company occupies the eastern side of Main Street. With narrow sidewalks, cars parked in pedestrian pathways, wide automobile traffic lanes, limited crosswalks, and a lack of shade, this area has limited appeal for pedestrians.

AFTER

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN
MAIN STREET

AFTER

The digital rendering below shows several streetscape improvements along this section of Main Street, including: sidewalk widening with brick edging added to match the Square's sidewalk design; large street trees placed along the sidewalk with planted medians replacing paved areas where possible; to encourage alternative transportation to the Amtrak Station and the Gainesville Connection Transit stop just down Main Street, a bicycle lane has been added to both sides of the street, and a mural has been installed at Flip Your Dog yoga studio.

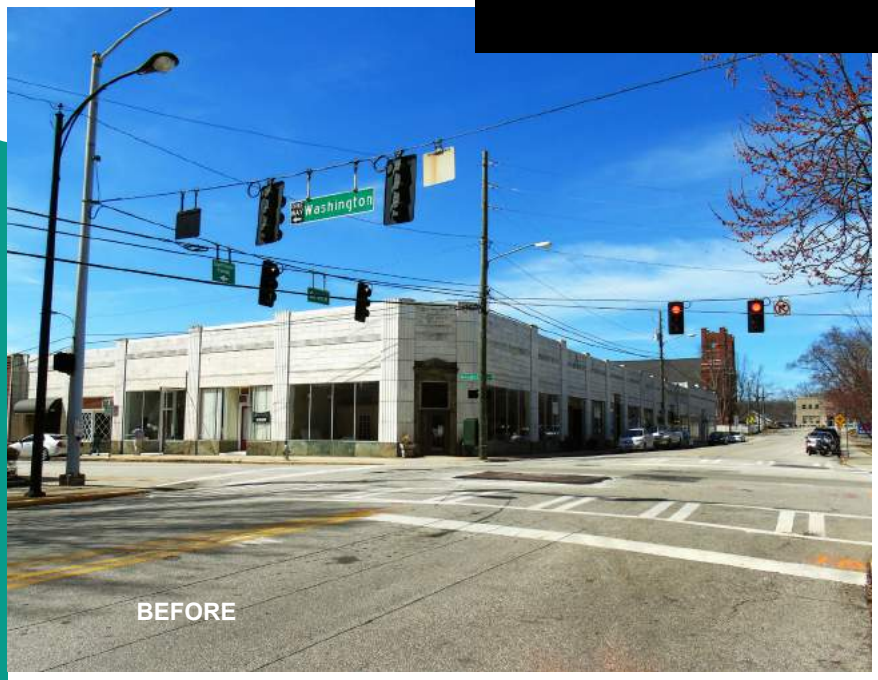
Green striping indicates the Midtown Greenway.

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* EXTEND DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPING MATERIALS & PLANTINGS THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN & MIDTOWN
* REPAVE CROSSWALKS WITH BRICK PAVERS
* INSTALL VEGETATIVE MEDIANS
* PAINT GREEN STRIPE ON STREET FOR BICYCLE LANE (S)

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

GREEN STREET



BEFORE

LONG-TERM SOLUTION: EXTENDING THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

BEFORE: The photograph shows the Walton Jackson Building, a handsome marble art-deco structure located at the intersection of Washington and Green Streets. Currently, Sun Trust Bank on the right sits in the center of a large parking lot with no buildings addressing the corner. The narrow sidewalks here prohibit café seating and discourage pedestrian activity.

AFTER: The digital rendering shows the street dimensions changed to widen the existing sidewalk. Street corners and crosswalks use handsome brick pavers to connect this area with the streetscaping elements surrounding the Square. Parallel parking spaces are adjusted to accommodate the new sidewalk dimensions. Trees are planted along the sidewalk to define the street and provide shade.

AFTER

CONNECTING
DOWNTOWN

IMPROVING THE MOAT

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT AREAS ARE SHOWN ON THE MAP BELOW, INCLUDING CROSSWALKS AND GREENING.

BRICK CROSSWALKS AND STREET TREES ARE DESIGN ELEMENTS CONSISTENT WITH THE DOWNTOWN SQUARE.

DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE "MOAT" AERIAL VIEW, STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

E. E. BUTLER & ACADEMY

LONG-TERM SOLUTION: EXTENDING THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

BEFORE: The photograph below shows a view of the Academy Street and E.E. Butler Parkway intersection.

AFTER: In an effort to continue the streetscape design from the Square, design elements such as brick edging, street trees, and vegetative medians have been added to the intersection.

BEFORE

AFTER

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

E. E. BUTLER PARKWAY

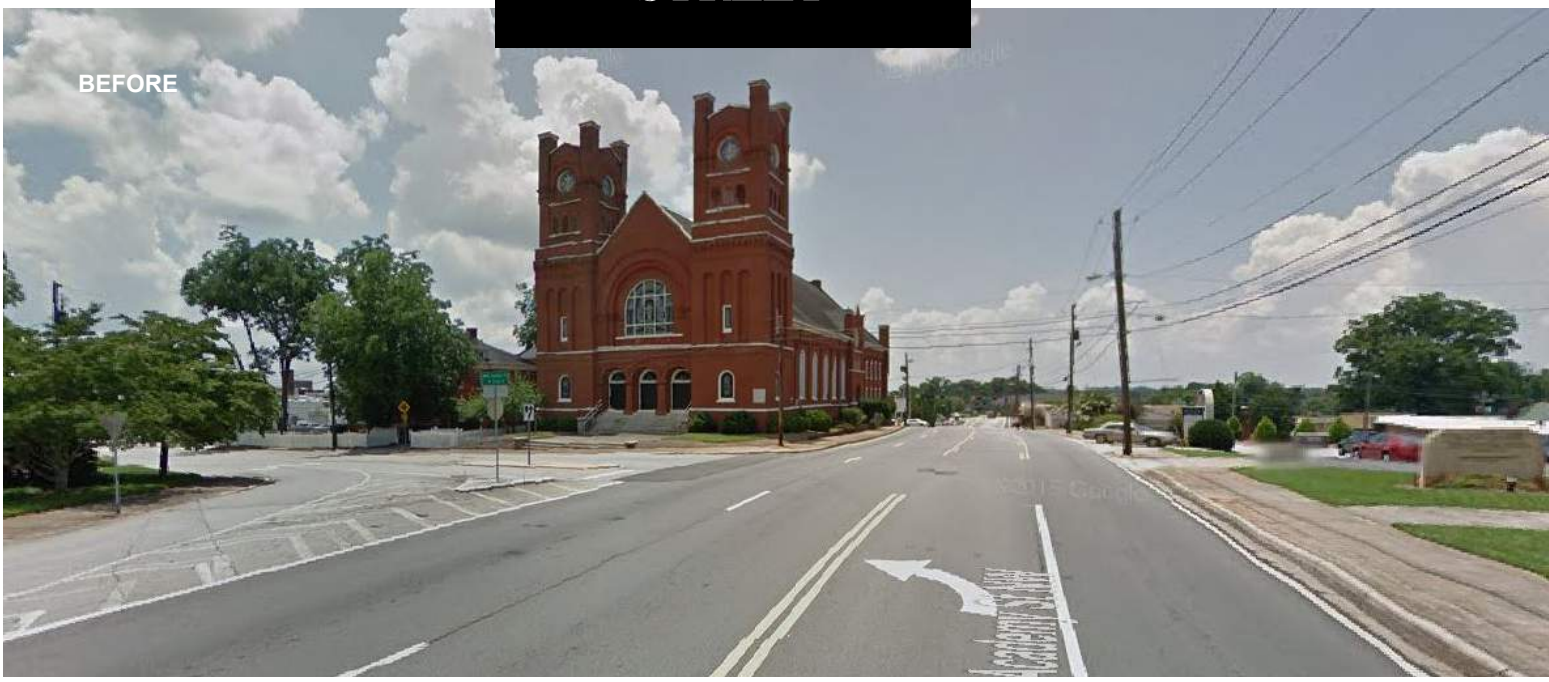
LONG-TERM SOLUTION: EXTENDING THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

BEFORE: The photograph below shows a view of a crosswalk and median on E.E. Butler Parkway at the intersection with Spring Street. The width and busy traffic along E.E. Butler Parkway divide Downtown from Brenau University.

AFTER: In an effort to keep the streetscape design along E.E. Butler Parkway consistent with Downtown's Square, this rendering shows the crosswalk treated with red brick, a center safety median installed, and the addition of crape myrtle trees.

CONNECTING
DOWNTOWN

ACADEMY STREET



LONG-TERM SOLUTION: EXTENDING THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

BEFORE: The photographs show views of Academy Street. Currently, the street is missing some design elements that would make it consistent with the streetscaping around the Square. The width of the street and lack of designated crosswalks all deter pedestrian activity and connectivity.

AFTER: The digital renderings show several streetscape improvements along Academy Street, including:

- Brick edging added to the sidewalk to match the sidewalk design around the Square
- Trees planted along the sidewalk right-of-way where possible
- Medians are converted to bioswales to collect storm water runoff. Trees are planted to provide shade and beautify the streetscape.

BEFORE

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

JESSE JEWELL PARKWAY

LONG-TERM SOLUTION: EXTENDING THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

BEFORE: The photograph above shows a view of Jesse Jewell Parkway from the pedestrian bridge looking west toward Bradford Street. Currently Jesse Jewell's four lanes of heavy traffic currently divide Downtown from Midtown. The corridor lacks a unique sense of arrival, and pedestrian connections, safe crossings, and shade are limited.

AFTER: The rendering below shows several streetscape improvements along this section of Jesse Jewell Parkway, including: sidewalk widening with brick edging added to match the Square's sidewalk design; brick crosswalks and landings calm traffic while clearly delineating pedestrian crossings; a center safety median with curved green ends provides a buffer for the pedestrian crossing; and a center median planted with turf and crape myrtle trees.

AFTER

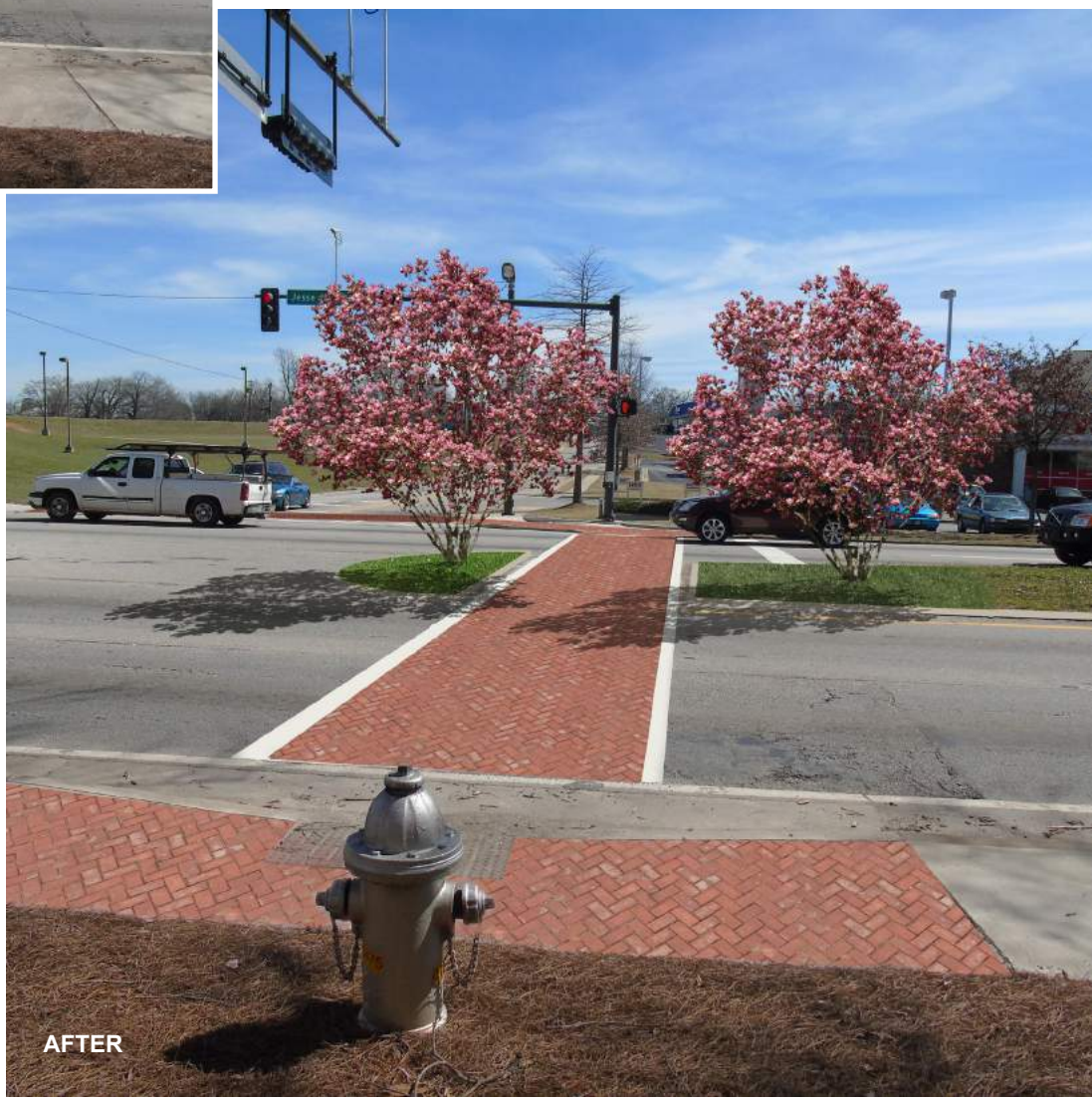
LONG-TERM SOLUTION: EXTENDING THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE

BEFORE: The photograph shows a view of Jesse Jewell Parkway from the pedestrian bridge looking east toward E.E. Butler Parkway.

AFTER: The digital rendering shows several streetscape improvements along Jesse Jewell Parkway, including:

- Sidewalk widening with brick edging added to match the Square's sidewalk design
- Center median planted with turf and crape myrtle trees
- Large oak trees planted along streets where possible
- Parking lot greening and tree planting

LONG-TERM SOLUTION: EXTENDING THE DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPE



BEFORE: The photograph above shows a close-up view of a Jesse Jewell Parkway crosswalk at the intersection with Bradford Street.

AFTER: The digital rendering shows several streetscape improvements at the crosswalk, including:

- Sidewalk widening with brick edging added to match the Square's sidewalk design
- Brick crosswalks and landings calm traffic while clearly delineating pedestrian crossings
- Center safety median with curved green ends provides a buffer for the pedestrian crossing
- Center median planted with turf and crape myrtle trees

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

SIGNAGE & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

SIGNAGE CONCEPTS

Designed by SkyDesign to inform and serve as a piece of artwork, the new signage concept uses glass to represent movement of water in Lake Lanier and area waters while the stacked stone symbolizes the mountains to our north. This "family" of wayfinding signage is to be installed by the City of Gainesville, to include the placement of the larger primary sign at the City's gateways along I-985 (Exits 20, 22 and 24) and at other significant entryways along Thompson Bridge Road, Dawsonville Highway, Browns Bridge Road, and Cleveland Highway. Other signage within the family will be placed at locations internal to the City to provide directional cues.

SIGNAGE AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Currently nothing informs a visitor along busy Jesse Jewell Parkway or E.E. Butler Parkway that the charm of Downtown Gainesville and the Square is just a couple of blocks away. Attractive directional signage can help to create a sense of arrival Downtown while informing potential visitors of unique local assets. Particularly along these busy corridors, Gainesville needs uniform, aesthetically pleasing signage to increase connectivity and to reduce visual clutter. To accomplish this goal, a new signage campaign is being led by Gainesville's Communications and Tourism staff to direct traffic to Downtown and the City's cultural and entertainment destinations. Meanwhile, this effort should strive to connect Downtown to the wider community. By directing visitors to significant destinations including the recently opened Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Gainesville, and the Lake Lanier Rowing Venue (a legacy of the 1996 Olympic Games) assets around the community are further linked to Downtown. Installing directional signage from these areas to Downtown and providing information at these venues about downtown businesses and restaurants could help expand the customer base of local establishments; ensuring a more vibrant downtown experience.

ACTION ITEMS

*SUPPORT SIGNAGE CAMPAIGN

* PROVIDE INFO ABOUT DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES & RESTAURANTS AT COMMUNITY ATTRACTIONS

* INSTALL DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE LEADING VISITORS TO ATTRACTIONS

* INSTALL SIGNAGE LINKING DOWNTOWN TO GREATER COMMUNITY

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

TROLLEY NETWORK

TROLLEY NETWORK

Many Gainesville citizens might be surprised to learn Gainesville was a pioneer of urban connectivity and alternative transportation. In 1875, Gainesville became one of the first cities in Georgia to charter a streetcar network. The Gainesville Street Railway Company operated a horse-drawn streetcar system connecting Downtown with the Southern Railway Depot, now Gainesville Amtrak. From 1903 until the 1920s, electric streetcars operated on the same route with extensions to Gower Springs. By 1916, streetcar mileage had doubled, connecting Downtown with New Holland to the east and northward to the former Chattahoochee Park. While most of the park was claimed by Lake Lanier, a vestige of Chattahoochee Park remains at the American Legion's newly restored Chattahoochee Park Pavilion off Riverside Drive. With lines connecting neighborhoods throughout the city, Gainesville's trolley service proved successful enough that a streetcar line was considered to connect Gainesville with Dahlonega, a full 20 miles away.

The streetcar was sold and shut down in the 1920s, despite its popularity among tourists and visitors arriving on the railroad and bound for Downtown. Modern long-term solutions to Gainesville's connectivity issues could honor the City's streetcar heritage. Minor extensions and alterations of Lines 2 or 3 would allow Hall Area Transit's Red Rabbit bus system or the City's Gainesville Connection service to create a trolley-themed "Downtown Hopper" connection linking Downtown, Brenau University, and the Northeast Georgia Medical Center. The "Hopper" would thus emulate the streetcar line to New Holland and connect visitors and locals with some of Gainesville's largest employers and tourist draws. Temporary service extensions to Longwood Park for special events would help connect recreational opportunities along Lake Lanier with Downtown while functioning similarly to the old streetcar line to Chattahoochee Park at the end of Riverside Drive.

ACTION ITEMS

* EXTEND EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICE TO LINK NEARBY ASSETS WITH DOWNTOWN

* DEVELOP TROLLEY-THEMED MARKETING MATERIALS

* EXPLORE RESTORING GAINESVILLE'S ORIGINAL STREETCAR LINE FROM DOWNTOWN TO GAINESVILLE AMTRAK

TROLLEY NETWORK: NOT A NEW IDEA
The historic photo shows the Gainesville trolley that once existed Downtown.

LONG-TERM SOLUTION: TROLLEY NETWORK

AFTER: The rendering below shows how a trolley stop could look.

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

MIDTOWN GREENWAY NETWORK

MIDTOWN GREENWAY

Other long-term solutions have the potential to greatly enhance pedestrian connectivity between Downtown and Midtown while tying neighborhoods together across “the Moat.” One example is the continued development and expansion of the Midtown Greenway network. If fully developed, the Midtown Greenway has the potential to be Gainesville’s answer to the Atlanta Beltline—a visionary proposal to link neighborhoods and parks, boost community health, and drive development in the Midtown and Downtown neighborhoods.

Currently, the north end of the Midtown Greenway terminates just short of Jesse Jewell Parkway at the Wild Wing Café. A pedestrian connection between the northern terminus of the greenway and Downtown could vastly increase foot-traffic between the two areas. Linking the remnants of Mule Camp Springs in the center of the Wild Wing Café parking lot with Poultry Park, Engine 209 Park, and the Smithgall Arts Center would create a permanent pedestrian connection between Midtown and Downtown. Developing this connection would activate these important and historic cultural resources while honoring the original route of the Gainesville and Midland Railroad.

The Midtown Greenway currently pauses at the intersection with Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, despite City ownership of the original route from MLK Boulevard to the Queen City Parkway bridge. Extending the Midtown Greenway along CSX’s portion of the abandoned Seaboard Railroad corridor south toward Queen City Parkway and eastward to the intersection with Athens Street could drive the redevelopment of Midtown while linking Midtown, Downtown, and Newtown with a dedicated pedestrian connection. If acquisition is successful and an easement is granted, potential exists for further extension eastward past Athens Street and the Newell Recycling property. Extending the Greenway network into the heart of Newtown has the potential to connect Desota Park with community parks while providing another safe crossing of “the Moat.”

ACTION ITEMS

* SHORT-TERM: ACQUIRE ACCESS TO CSX'S ABANDONED EAST / WEST SPAN

* LONG-TERM: DEVELOP A POCKET PARK AT MULE CAMP SPRINGS; EXPAND MIDTOWN GREENWAY TO QUEEN CITY & E.E. BUTLER; EXTEND MIDTOWN GREENWAY TO DESOTA PARK

THE GREENWAY

Bike paths and multi-use trails like Gainesville's Midtown Greenway have been proven to stimulate economic activity. Georgia's trails:

- Increase revenues for nearby businesses;
- Increase property values;
- Increase tourism spending;
- Increase easy exercise choices;
- Create clean alternatives to driving; and
- Attract young employees and new business

In Atlanta, the BeltLine is surpassing expectations with the first segment of trail packed to capacity any sunny weekend. Since 2005, more than $1 billion in new private development was invested, especially in industrial areas previously underdeveloped and abandoned. Redevelopment of the multi-use Ponce City Market complex alone represents a $300 million investment by a private developer. The building's proximity to the BeltLine Trail is critical to its success.

When completed in 2030, the BeltLine will have 22 miles of rail transit, 33 miles of multi-use trails, 1,300 acres of parks, and 5,600 units of affordable housing in 40,000 anticipated new residential units. The actual cost of the BeltLine is about $4.8 billion, yet the total projected investment is $30 billion in public and private funds.

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

GREEN SPACE CONNECTIONS

GREEN SPACE CONNECTIONS

While long-term solutions like extending the Midtown Greenway network will seriously improve connectivity across Downtown and Midtown, some simple short-term solutions have the potential to further connect community assets while ensuring that Gainesville's existing public spaces serve locals and visitors more effectively. For instance, while Gainesville has an impressive trail system that connects the Midtown Greenway to Lake Lanier, the greenway connection through the Square—Gainesville's most beloved public space—is not easily recognizable. Mimicking Boston's Freedom Trail, Gainesville could create an attraction by installing a green stripe along the sidewalk, curb, or street to guide pedestrians from the Midtown Greenway and pedestrian bridge to the Square and onward to Rock Creek Veterans Park and Wilshire Trails. Connecting these spaces visually with the "Gainesville GreenLine" would provide an unobtrusive, low-cost solution to further link Gainesville's public spaces.

Providing immediate and spontaneous access to the Midtown Greenway is an important opportunity to enhance the draw of this significant public investment and bring more users into the park. Community bike stations, such as the privately-owned Citi Bike system or Washington, D.C.'s Capital Bikeshare, loan bicycles to users for a nominal fee. Whether through public investment or private enterprise, affordable on-site bike rentals are an excellent way to increase the user base of Gainesville's public spaces while encouraging alternative transportation. Easy access to bicycles creates a memorable experience and draw for potential users and Greenway visitors. This effort could supplement a drive to increase the availability of bike racks around the Square and throughout Downtown. Extending access to alternative transportation and installing bike racks that serve as public art could create a unique Downtown Gainesville experience while easing vehicular congestion.

BIKE SHARE STATION

BEFORE: The photograph shows a paved area next to Brenau Downtown Center.

ATTRACTING MILLENNIALS

A survey in the Transportation Research Record reports that users of the Capital Bikeshare system in Washington, D.C., found the system was a particular draw for millennials. A survey revealed that 55% of annual members and 43% of short-term users were between the ages of 25 and 34.

A BIKE RACK WITH CHARACTER

BEFORE: The photograph to the left shows an area Downtown near the Square.

AFTER: The rendering below shows a chicken-themed wire bike rack that allows Greenway bike riders to park conveniently Downtown. The chicken theme is subtle but fun. A green painted stripe on the pavement marks where the Greenway continues through Downtown.

BIKE SHARE STATION

AFTER: The rendering to the right shows what a bike share station could look like in this centrally located area.

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

PUBLIC SAFETY & LIGHTING

PUBLIC SAFETY & LIGHTING

In addition to increasing bicycle access, lighting some of Gainesville's existing parks and trails could increase the use and effectiveness of Gainesville's public spaces. Downtown trails and parks represent significant local destinations. People from all across the Gainesville community take advantage of these amazing outdoor recreational resources. Overwhelmingly, the community supports the City's public spaces and perceive these areas as safe. Continuing to ensure public safety in Gainesville's parks must be a top priority.

Numerous community members addressed the lack of lighting within Longwood Park and other public spaces around Gainesville. This absence of well-lit trails deters use and perpetuates a feeling that Gainesville's parks are unsafe. Particularly during winter months, the lack of lighting in many public spaces prevents residents from enjoying a safe place to walk, bike, or jog after work. While 24-hour lighting is unnecessary, lighting parks in the evening hours—particularly until 9:00 PM—would allow more users to enjoy Downtown's existing parks while increasing public safety and recreational opportunities at very little cost.

LIGHTING AT IVEY TERRACE PARK

AFTER: The digital rendering shows Ivey Terrace Park with new lighting at night. The lamps chosen in this design match the character of the Square. Using consistent streetscaping materials helps to visually connect the park with the remainder of Downtown.

ACTION ITEMS

* VISUALLY LINK EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES WITH GAINESVILLE GREENLINE
* PROVIDE BIKE RENTALS ON MIDTOWN GREENWAY
* INSTALL BIKE RACKS DOWNTOWN
* LIGHT PARKS UNTIL 9PM

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

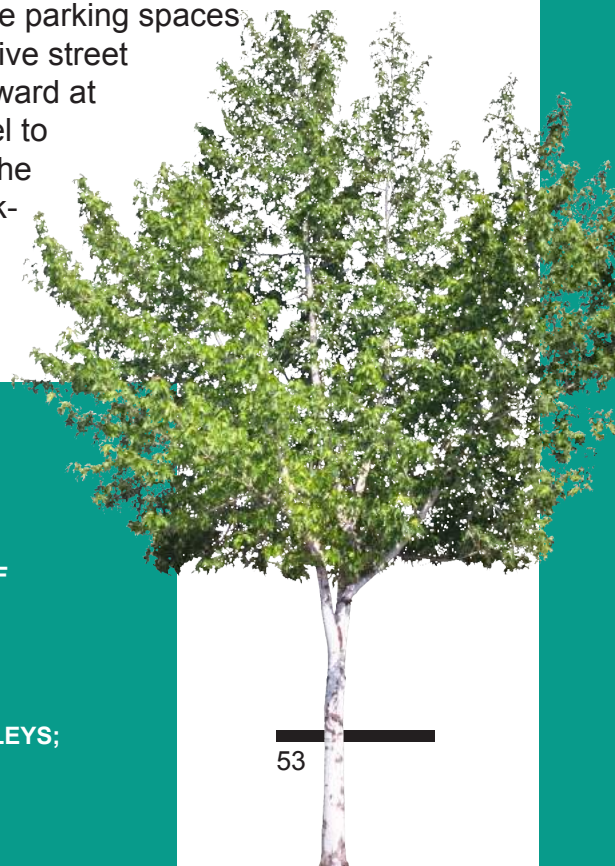
ALLEYWAYS & STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT

ALLEYWAYS & STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT

The historic alleys that bisect Downtown Gainesville are a significant element of connectivity within Downtown. They help to subdivide blocks to make pedestrian travel a varied and efficient experience. Reopening alleys that have been blocked to pedestrian through-traffic, as is the case with the former alley between Main and Maple Streets Downtown, would significantly increase pedestrian connectivity within Downtown with little or no capital outlay. In addition to enhancing connectivity, Downtown's alleys serve numerous service functions for downtown property owners and merchants. In addition to service functions like trash pickup, deliveries, and parking, inventive businesses like Inman Perk use courtyards adjoining alleys for café seating.

While Downtown's alleyways perform a variety of important functions, many locals shared the opinion that they were aesthetically lackluster and generally unpleasant to be in. Many of these concerns can be mitigated through attractive, standardized receptacles for trash pickup as well as additional lighting and code enforcement to ensure continual cleanliness. Businesses can and should be allowed to utilize these resources for their service needs. Thus, developing courtyards and outdoor seating is best focused on the front of buildings, where café seating and other public functions can augment and enrich the experience of downtown life rather than hiding away these public functions.

To provide the desired "front door" downtown experience, "Parklets" could be strategically employed to create wide sidewalks for pedestrian activity and café seating prior to intensive and time-consuming streetscaping or permanent upgrades. A parklet is a temporary sidewalk extension installed in existing parking lanes designed to provide additional space for amenities such as seating and landscaping. Parklets typically utilize multiple parking spaces to extend active street activities outward at sidewalk level to the width of the adjacent parking space.



ACTION ITEMS

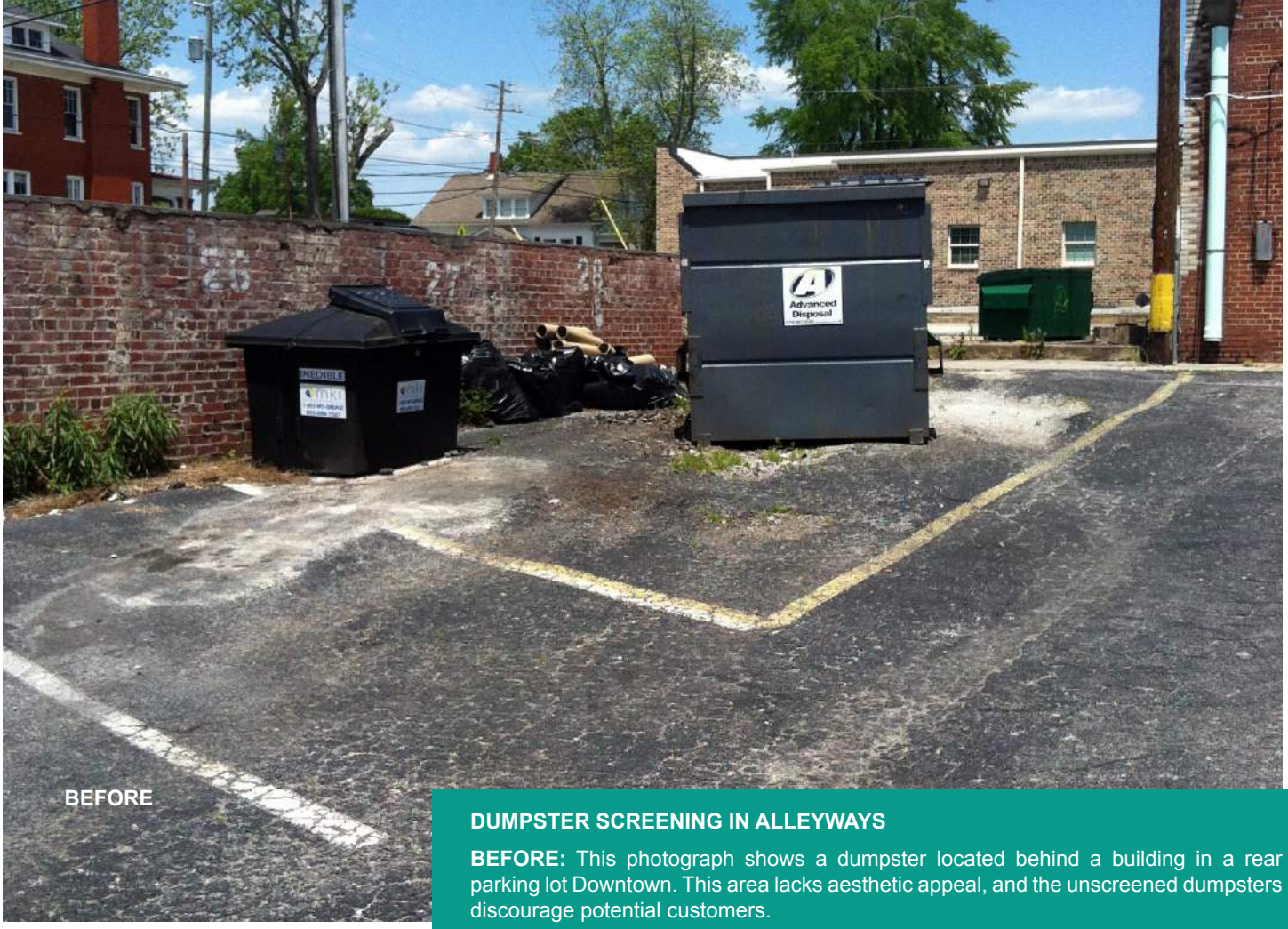
SHORT-TERM:
DEVELOP A REGULAR MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE FOR DOWNTOWN ALLEYWAYS; CREATE STANDARDS FOR THE SIZE AND SCREENING OF WASTE RECEPTACLES; DEVELOP A PLAN TO ENHANCE ALLEYWAY LIGHTING; INCENTIVIZE PRIVATE PROPERTY RENOVATIONS; CREATE PARKLET SPACES IN HIGH-PRIORITY AREAS.

LONG-TERM:
WORK WITH PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS TO REOPEN BLOCKED ALLEYS; EXTEND DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPING MATERIALS AND PLANTING PALETTE THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN AND MIDTOWN.

ALLEYWAYS & STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS:
REAR BUILDINGS

BEFORE: The photograph below shows a lot located behind a group of buildings Downtown. The rear side of buildings are often neglected; however, they are still an important part of the overall downtown streetscape.

AFTER: The rendering above shows the rear of the buildings cleaned up and vegetative areas added where possible. Crape myrtles are planted along the sidewalk to screen the lots and beautify the streetscape. A poultry-themed mural can be seen from the street.



BEFORE

DUMPSTER SCREENING IN ALLEYWAYS

BEFORE: This photograph shows a dumpster located behind a building in a rear parking lot Downtown. This area lacks aesthetic appeal, and the unscreened dumpsters discourage potential customers.

AFTER: The rendering shows the parking lot following repaving. A handsome matching brick wall and metal swing doors now screen the unattractive dumpsters. The lot is cleaner and appears safer with these improvements.

AFTER

55

DOWNTOWN PARKLETS

BEFORE: (RIGHT) A view of Bradford Street SW, looking toward Brenau Avenue. Bradford Street is one-way with parallel parking spaces along both sides of the street. Sidewalks here are generally too narrow for outdoor seating and other elements of a vibrant street life. The street also lacks shade, discouraging pedestrian activity.

AFTER: (ABOVE) The digital rendering shows two spaces on Bradford Street transformed into a public parklet. Created by extending the sidewalk, the parklet is a platform topped with multi-use modules that allow for a range of activities. Some modules are meant to be used as tables, others as chairs, and some have small trees, plants, and flowers planted in them. A temporary or permanent installation, the parklet activates this public space, creating a destination Downtown where people can relax, read a book, or enjoy lunch breaks outdoors. The parklet concept can be applied in many areas of Downtown as either temporary or semi-permanent installations. Parklets help to make the street more pedestrian-oriented and less car-centric while offering fun, unique spots for people to gather.

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN

GATEWAY CORRIDORS

GATEWAY CORRIDORS

More than 100,000 people commute daily to and from work in Gainesville. These are just a fraction of the travelers passing through town on Jesse Jewell Parkway and E.E. Butler Parkway bound for I-985 and points north, south, east, and west. The intersection of these roads is the crossroads of Northeast Georgia, with nearly 55,000 individual cars passing through on US-129 and GA 369 daily. These gateways are the first and last impressions made by the City of Gainesville on visitors, employees, and locals alike. Gateways are a visual indicator of a community's pride. Is the community prosperous, or is it in decline?

The appearance of the major roadways into and out of town, such as Jesse Jewell and E.E. Butler Parkways, was an issue continually raised throughout the public engagement process. Currently, visitors passing through may be completely unaware that the Square and the bustling streets of Downtown are just a block away. These critical gateways lack a sense of arrival, something that says definitively to visitors and locals that they have arrived at Downtown Gainesville. While the proposed streetscape extensions with attractive brick crosswalks, vegetated medians, and street trees will address the aesthetic quality of these gateways and will help tie these corridors to Downtown and Midtown, they also communicate a sense of community pride, downtown character, and arrival. Additionally, streetscape improvements will amplify the new signage campaign led by Gainesville's Communications and Tourism staff to direct traffic to Downtown and to the community's cultural and entertainment destinations.

GATEWAY TREES

The photograph above shows the beautiful trees planted along E.E. Butler Parkway.

PROGRA

AMMING

top issues: PROGRAMMING

From the "First Friday Concert" series and the downtown Farmers Market to "Movies on the Lawn" screenings at the Smithgall Arts Center, Gainesville offers a wealth of special events Downtown. Main Street Gainesville operates 51 successful programs annually, luring visitors and locals alike to energize Downtown year-round. Clearly, there is plenty to do Downtown. While a variety of events help bring users to the area, several issues arose during the public engagement process that could be addressed through more private development programming. The most pressing programming and promotion issues raised in the public input sessions include the following:

- Availability of Downtown parking;
- Enhanced entertainment options to make Gainesville a regional destination;
- Creative programming and redevelopment opportunities at the City View Center site, the former Hall County Law Enforcement Center, and elsewhere Downtown; and
- Opportunities for the arts, tactical urbanism, and creative redevelopment in Midtown.

Encouraging more private programming and positive development in Downtown Gainesville is as easy as ABC: **A**lways **B**e **C**reative. One creative decision has the potential to inspire others, building a cycle that leads to a more enriching downtown experience for all of Gainesville. By following the ABCs, every issue raised in the public input sessions can be addressed imaginatively to enhance Gainesville's existing assets and character while refreshing the downtown experience and enticing new visitors. From a food truck hub and a pop-up fairground to multi-story community events murals, the ABCs were used throughout the strategic planning process to develop effective, inviting, and innovative programming designed to build on and enrich Gainesville's sense of place while bringing the community together Downtown.

PARKING

In nearly every city, the first issue voiced by focus groups and community members is the availability of parking. Because they are inherently densely packed, often historic areas, downtowns require a different mindset when it comes to parking. Although a patron at Inman Perk or other Downtown establishments may have to park a block away, Downtown Gainesville features plen-

FARMERS MARKET
The Square

PARKING

tiful on-street parking, private and public parking lots, and two free public parking garages. Gainesville's problem is not a lack of parking. Rather, it is a reluctance to walk multiple blocks.

> As one resident said, "Gainesville doesn't have a parking problem; we have a walking problem."

To address problems associated with the availability and safety of downtown parking, a parking hierarchy with time limits or meters could be put in place. Creating a time limit on premium spaces, a three-hour limit on parking around the Square for instance, could help resolve these issues. For spaces with less demand, including Green Street's on-street parking, time limits could be raised to five hours or more. Additional programming options to address Gainesville's perceived parking issues include encouraging downtown business owners and staff to use the downtown parking decks, which would free up valuable spots on the street. If parking is still perceived to be an issue, Gainesville might consider working with downtown businesses to provide a discount for patrons who use the free downtown parking decks, or even an alternative transportation discount at participating businesses for walkers, joggers, and bicyclists. An alternative transportation discount would both remove cars from Downtown lots and promote a walkable lifestyle, an important issue addressed in the public input sessions. Over the long-term, as Downtown Gainesville continues to grow and more people choose to live, work, and play Downtown, increasing the amount of parking could be necessary. Future construction of a parking deck on the north end of Downtown could alleviate issues associated with increased housing and activity Downtown.

The perceived safety and attractiveness of downtown parking decks were other important issues brought forth in public input sessions. As Gainesville continues to grow and emerge as a destination, providing resources to ensure the safety of residents and visitors is vital. A dedicated bicycle or Segway police officer assigned to patrol downtown parking decks and surrounding blocks would go a long way toward enhancing the perception of safety Downtown. A downtown neighborhood patrol, perhaps operating in conjunction with Brenau's campus security officers, would improve the public perception of downtown parking decks and the City as a whole. Meanwhile, simple measures like additional plantings could enhance the aesthetic appeal of downtown parking.

ALWAYS BE CREATIVE

UTILIZE CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE DOWNTOWN A FUN & UNIQUE DESTINATION FOR ALL AGES

PARK 'N SLIDE

PARK 'N SLIDE

BEFORE: This photograph shows the Hall County Courthouse parking deck Spring Street entrance. The severe architecture, lack of retail or other activity, and imposing scale of the deck discourage pedestrians.

AFTER: Making Downtown a fun place to visit is a key factor in getting more people to visit Downtown. Adding a spiral slide to the courthouse parking deck is one way to take an otherwise mundane experience like parking and make it a fun activity—not to mention a much faster way of getting to the street! Of course, the slide would have to be safe, complete with a recycled rubber tire landing and a planted buffer to block the landing from the sidewalk and street.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* ENCOURAGE DOWNTOWN EMPLOYEES TO USE DECKS
* LIMIT TIME IN PREMIUM SPACES
* CONTINUE COMPLIMENTARY GARAGE PARKING
* PARTNER WITH BUSINESSES TO PROVIDE PATRON DISCOUNTS
* CREATE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION DISCOUNTS
* FUND A DEDICATED DOWNTOWN BICYCLE OR SEGWAY POLICE OFFICER
*BEAUTIFY DOWNTOWN PARKING

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* INSTALL METERS ON PREMIUM SPACES
* CONSIDER BUILDING A NORTH END PARKING DECK

PROGRAMMING DOWNTOWN

ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

ENTERTAINMENT VENUE

In part because much of the traffic coming through Gainesville is routed along “the Moat,” few cars make it Downtown without a specific destination in mind. While this presents a challenge for downtown businesses, Gainesville can build on a history of successful special events and the City’s position as a regional hub to heighten its image as a destination. Strategically concentrating cultural, civic, educational, and economic institutions creates a consistent customer base for downtown businesses and enhances Gainesville’s draw as a destination city. Downtown has plenty of opportunities for diversion during the day, but there is a lack of programming and downtown activity after 6:00 PM. Many Brenau students noted that they currently leave town on the weekends (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights) in search of social activities.

Among Gainesville’s most iconic architectural resources is the former Gainesville First United Methodist Church on the northern edge of Downtown. The currently vacant structure is owned by the Arts Council, and significant community momentum exists for the building’s restoration. To utilize this asset to its full potential, the Arts Council could launch a renovation campaign through Kickstarter or a similar crowd sourcing website to adapt the facility for use as a flexible entertainment venue for live music, movies, dancing, and special events. Creating a safe place for social activities that integrate young people into the cultural and social fabric of the community brings talented Millennials and commerce Downtown. Throughout the public engagement, the community voiced overwhelming support for a consistent live music scene, movies, and dancing options Downtown. Restoring and reprogramming the former church creates an ideal venue for these uses while preserving a unique piece of Gainesville’s history and culture. Another option to enhance entertainment venues in town would be to create an entertainment overlay district over part of the Midtown area. An entertainment district could incentivize development of entertainment options by allowing alcohol sales without a food/beverage ratio.

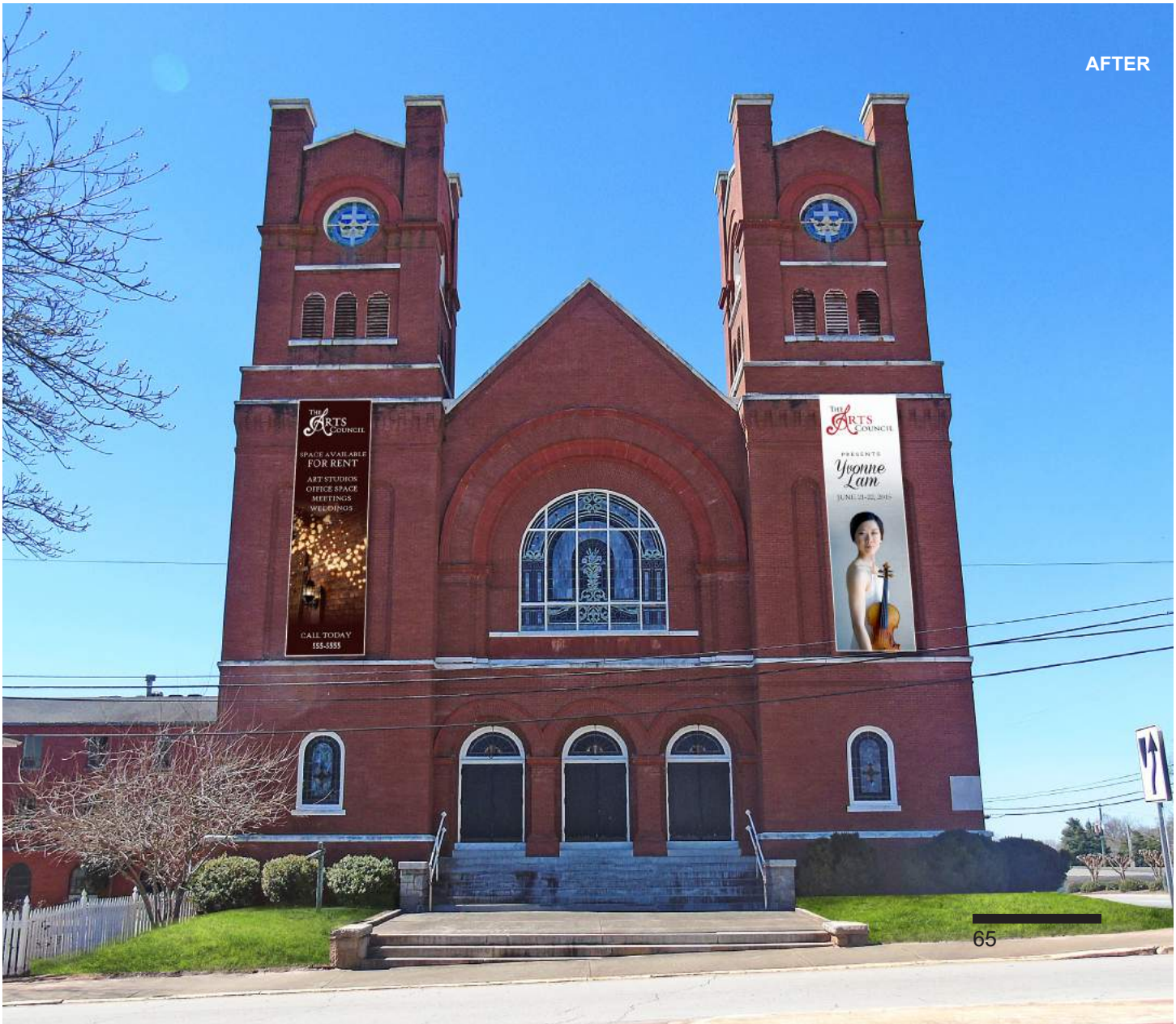
SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* LAUNCH AN ONLINE CAMPAIGN TO RESTORE THE HISTORIC FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
* CREATE AN ENTERTAINMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT IN MIDTOWN

FORMER FIRST METHODIST CHURCH / PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX

BEFORE: The Arts Council Performing Arts Complex was the former First Methodist Church of Gainesville (which later became Westminster Presbyterian Church and school). Located at the corner of Academy Street NW and Green Street NE, the facility houses three Arts Council properties: the performing arts auditorium, an educational wing, and the Arts Council Cottage. Meeting, studio and office space is available for rent in the education wing on a limited basis. The Arts Council Cottage provides a quaint setting for small weddings, arts events, meetings, or parties.

AFTER: The digital rendering shows what the main building would look like with some simple landscaping improvements and large printed banners advertising the events at the Performing Arts Center. Advertising for available office, meeting, and event spaces could also be placed on these large banners.



MUSIC IN MIDTOWN: CREATE AN ENTERTAINMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT
An entertainment district could incentivize development of entertainment options by allowing alcohol sales without a food/ beverage ratio.

REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

GAINESVILLE FOCUS GROUPS DISCUSSED SEVERAL LARGE PROPERTIES WITH PUBLIC MOMENTUM FOR REDEVELOPMENT. THE LONG-TERM REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER CITY VIEW CENTER SITE, THE FORMER HALL COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER, AND THE REGIONS BANK AND FORMER INDEPENDENCE BANK OF GEORGIA HEADQUARTERS ALL REPRESENT UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO RE-IMAGINE DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE AND BRING MORE DIVERSITY OF USES TO THE AREA. IN THE SHORT TERM, CREATIVE PROGRAMMING CAN TRANSFORM THESE UNDERUTILIZED ASSETS INTO ACTIVITY GENERATORS FOR DOWNTOWN THAT ENLIVEN THE AREA.

PROGRAMMING DOWNTOWN

CITY VIEW CENTER & BRIDGE

CITY VIEW CENTER / PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Gainesville's pedestrian bridge to the City View Center site is a major step forward for downtown pedestrian connectivity. The City View Center site represents a major redevelopment opportunity for the City, but it is currently undeveloped and underutilized. While redevelopment is a critical long-term priority, in the short term finding appropriate temporary uses for this prominent site could augment Downtown's allure while drawing more visitors Downtown. For instance, creatively programming the site for any of the following would help to provide new activities and entertainment options Downtown, a critical issue raised in public input sessions:

- Temporary fairgrounds for regional festivals
- Seasonal ice skating and holiday light display
- Downtown drive-in for outdoor movie screenings
- Oktoberfest beer garden or food truck market

FAIR

The pedestrian bridge stretches over busy Jesse Jewell Parkway. Brenau University, Gainesville City Hall, and public buildings border the north end of the bridge, while the south end terminates at the vacant City View Center site adjacent to CVS Pharmacy. The empty lot is a future development opportunity for the City of Gainesville, but until that development occurs the lot could be used for a multitude of purposes.

In the digital rendering (shown top, right) the empty lot is shown as a vibrant fairgrounds, complete with rides, games, and food, as well as a hot air balloon launching site. Temporary uses like fairs activate this prominent space, bringing new visitors to Downtown and creating an iconic statement at busy Jesse Jewell and E.E. Butler Parkways. Though the concept shown in the rendering is a fair, any event could be held in this space, including outdoor concerts on the lawn and additional festivals.

ICE RINK

The pedestrian bridge stretches over Jesse Jewell Parkway from the empty City View Center site next to CVS Pharmacy.

In the digital rendering (shown bottom, right), the empty lot is shown as being used as a temporary ice skating rink. Gainesville's position as the hub of Northeast Georgia creates potential for unique regional draws like ice skating. Creating safe, family-friendly attractions would help to attract more of the community Downtown.

FAIR, DIGITAL RENDERING

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEM

* CREATE A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) TO USE THE VACANT SITE FOR COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEM

* PRIORITIZE THE SITE FOR REDEVELOPMENT

ICE RINK, DIGITAL RENDERING

FOOD TRUCKS

Near the City View Center site, the former Hall County Law Enforcement Center's central Midtown location presents a unique opportunity to serve as a model for future creative development while establishing an economic anchor for this and surrounding neighborhoods. Currently, much of the Midtown area maintains an industrial feel distinct from the traditional downtown experience around the Square and elsewhere inside "the Moat." While there are mixed feelings surrounding the fate of the facility, many community members desire immediate aesthetic upgrades, improved site connectivity, and the eventual prioritization of the site for redevelopment. The long-term redevelopment potential of the facility creates a unique opportunity to enhance connectivity between Midtown and Downtown by reconnecting Maple Street. Redevelopment on site could highlight the industrial heritage of the neighborhood and serve as a model for future growth—honoring the past while laying the foundation for a trendy, creative district primed for future growth.

Whether or not there is momentum for demolition of the former jail, the facility could bring immediate activity to the community in the short term by serving as a food truck or small business incubator. Programming the site with these functions would offer a unique service to those seeking to launch small businesses and food trucks. Doing so would boost entrepreneurship while providing Gainesville with creative dining options. Easing restrictions and changing city codes to support local food truck vendors could rapidly enhance Downtown's programmatic footprint, encourage a variety of dining and retail options, and create more accessible avenues for business ownership with little to no capital outlay. A food truck incubator at the former jail could benefit spaces all over Downtown. Longwood Park, for example, is an ideal location for food trucks to set up shop. Food trucks could brand the park as a unique destination, and the park's existing connection to Downtown via the Rock Creek Greenway trail system could encourage use. Additionally, food trucks are often very diverse in their offerings and could bring exciting new flavors to Downtown Gainesville, a frequent issue raised by students and other focus group participants.

FOOD TRUCKS AT THE LAKE

Before: The photograph to the right shows the scenic drive along Lake Lanier at Longwood Park. The park features beautiful waterfront views that could be highlighted with lake front activity programming.

After: The rendering below shows a night view of the same area with gourmet food trucks parked along the street and visitors enjoying dinner at picnic tables by the lake. String lights hang from the pine trees and music fills the air. This programmatic concept could work as a food festival or seasonal activity to draw visitors to Longwood Park.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* EASE CURRENT RESTRICTIONS ON FOOD TRUCKS
* CONVERT JAIL TO FOOD TRUCK OR SMALL BUSINESS INCUBATOR
* ENCOURAGE FOOD TRUCKS AT SPECIAL EVENTS / PARKS

AFTER

PROGRAMMING
DOWNTOWN

FORMER JAIL

STREET VIEW, AFTER: The streetscape illustrated here is a model of what could be for all of Main Street, with ample and attractive shaded walkways uniting Midtown and Downtown and developments that promote unique neighborhood character.

AERIAL VIEW, AFTER: This rendered aerial view shows what a new site design could look like.

LONG-TERM SOLUTION:

THE FORMER HALL COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

The former Hall County Law Enforcement Center on Main Street provides an excellent opportunity to reveal what Main Street can become: an economically and socially vibrant corridor linking Downtown to Midtown's historic Gainesville Station.

The scale and exterior materials of the proposed building honor regional tradition, while the overall form responds to Midtown's unique industrial character. The mixed-use development houses trendy retail shops or cafés on the ground floor, while upper stories contain upscale office spaces for ambitious young businesses, light industry, and upper-story housing. A restored Maple Street through the center of the block creates another critical link between Downtown and Midtown, enhancing much-needed pedestrian connectivity. The park at the western end of the development further enhances connectivity and creates a natural link between the site and the Midtown Greenway.

FORMER REGIONS BANK & 311 GREEN STREET

Other important sites targeted for redevelopment include the largely vacant former Regions Bank headquarters and 311 Green Street, most recently the home of the Independence Bank of Georgia. As Downtown Gainesville's best examples of mid-century architecture, these buildings add architectural diversity Downtown while embodying a style particularly attractive to Millennials and those seeking a slice of cosmopolitan urban living. One of the critical subjects addressed during the public input phase is the importance of arts and culture and the long-term need for more people living and working Downtown. Both of these multistory buildings have major long-term potential for residential or mixed-use conversion, creating a convenient base of customers for downtown businesses. Using the ABCs, in the short term, these buildings can help brand and promote Downtown by serving as a multistory canvas for projected events boards and murals by local artists. By illuminating the towers, the City grants local artists and designers an expansive new creative outlet, and Gainesville gains two new iconic downtown experiences at a very minimal cost. City officials could also explore an MOU with the building owners in order to lease the parking lots of both buildings for other users and special events.

PROGRAMMING
DOWNTOWN

FORMER REGIONS BANK

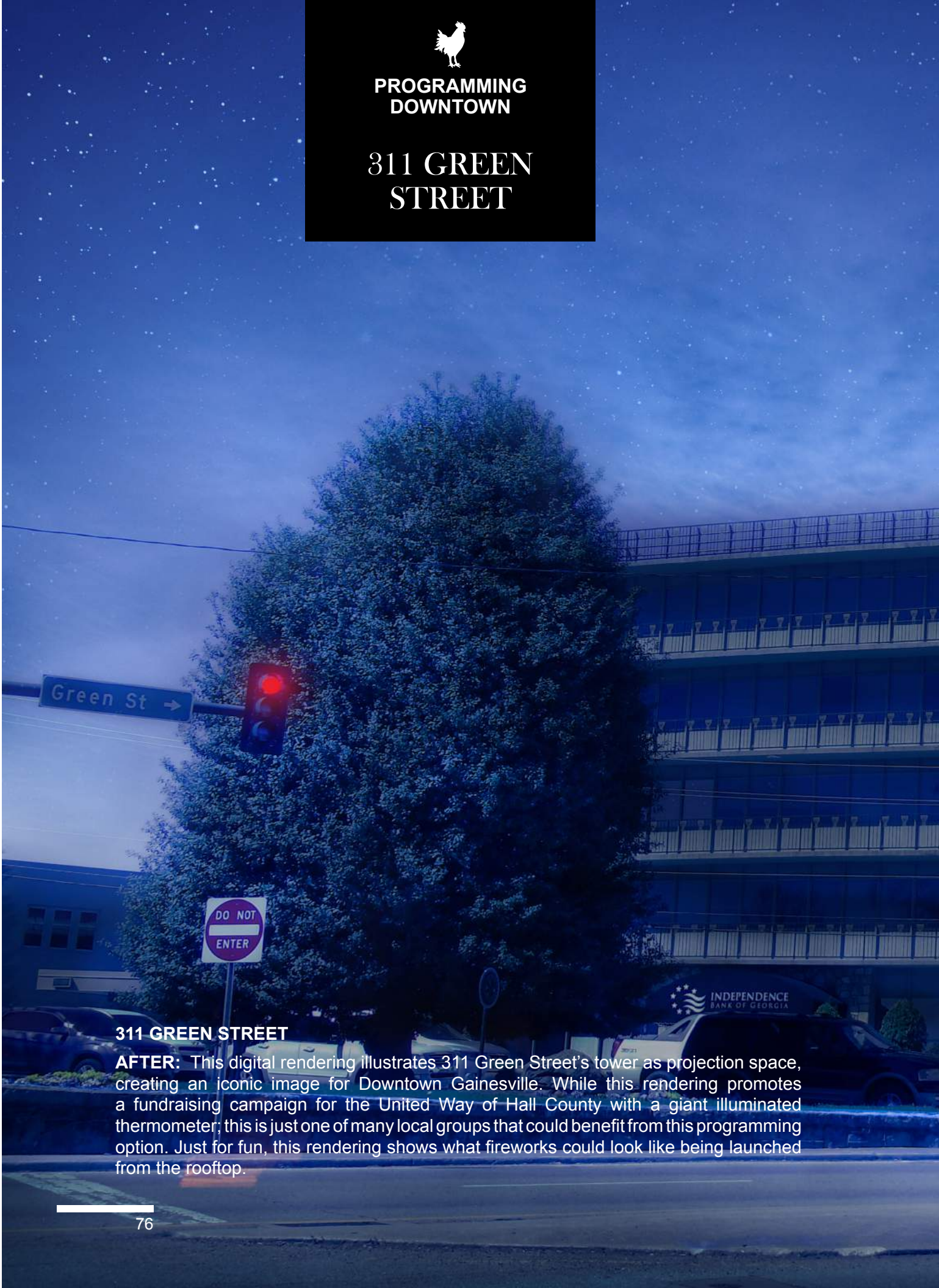
FORMER REGIONS BANK, BEFORE

BEFORE: (Above) Located at 111 Green Street, this vacant building once housed Regions Bank. The former bank features unique mid-century modern architecture, contributing to the architectural diversity Downtown and warranting preservation. Large concrete walls and a prominent Downtown location offer some creative opportunities to display programmatic signage.

AFTER: The digital rendering (left) shows a nighttime view of the bank building with projected signage advertising a summer concert series. While a summer concert series is merely one concept, a variety of events, murals, and advertisements could be presented here. Featured graphics could be played on a rotating reel of several projections, creating a changing billboard for Downtown. This type of projected signage, visible for several blocks, is temporary and harmless to the structure, preserving property values.

PROGRAMMING
DOWNTOWN

311 GREEN STREET



311 GREEN STREET

AFTER: This digital rendering illustrates 311 Green Street's tower as projection space, creating an iconic image for Downtown Gainesville. While this rendering promotes a fundraising campaign for the United Way of Hall County with a giant illuminated thermometer; this is just one of many local groups that could benefit from this programming option. Just for fun, this rendering shows what fireworks could look like being launched from the rooftop.

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEM

* PRIORITIZE SITES FOR ADAPTIVE REUSE & REDEVELOPMENT

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* NEGOTIATE MOU TO ILLUMINATE GREEN STREET BUILDINGS
* CONTRACT WITH LOCAL CREATIVES TO DEVELOP MURALS & PROMOTIONS
*USE EXISTING PARKING FACILITIES FOR OTHER USES / EVENTS

PROGRAMMING
DOWNTOWN

HALL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

HALL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Libraries are among our most important public institutions. Public libraries grant all citizens universal access to the wealth of knowledge available in our current information age. Our libraries are important facilitators of communication that bring all ages together. As such, the health and location of our public libraries is an important barometer of the vitality of our communities. The Hall County Public Library is among Gainesville's most popular downtown institutions. The library creates a hub for citizens of all ages and backgrounds, preserving Downtown's important civic functions while serving as a vital magnet for the public.

The Hall County Public Library is a popular and well-utilized local resource, but its early closing times were frequently mentioned in the public input sessions. Additionally, a common sentiment was that the library could benefit from renovations. In the long term, developing a sustainable funding source beyond public tax dollars to support the library would be advantageous. In the short term, a few actions could be taken to help engage those who rely most heavily on the library:

- Adjust the Saturday morning hours to allow for later use. Even overachieving high school students sleep later on the weekends. By opening the library at 10:00 AM rather than 9:00 AM, students would have greater access to public resources.
- Enhance the library's position as a community gathering space by developing a small café area. Allowing library customers to drink coffee, tea, or a soft drink in a space similar to the Friends Café at the Spout Springs Library could create a community atmosphere while generating a small revenue stream. A library café could be staffed by community volunteers or even high school students. In focus groups, community members envisioned Inman Park being an integral part of the library café, creating a new opportunity for the library, the community, and a local business.
- Explore a Brenau Library partnership. Brenau's recent move into Downtown creates an excellent opportunity for expanding an already strong community partnership. During the Brenau focus group, students recommended building a relationship with Gainesville High School to allow student access to the Brenau Library. Due to current Hall County budget reductions, the library no longer provides enough evening and weekend hours for high-performing students. Allowing local students access to Brenau's resources would make a positive impact on the education of Gainesville's best and brightest students. A continued Main Street partnership approach of working with Brenau students, staff, and faculty could significantly increase the vibrancy of Downtown.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* ADJUST WEEKEND LIBRARY HOURS
* CREATE A LIBRARY CAFE SPACE
*CONTINUE RELATIONSHIP WITH BRENAU
* PARTNER WITH BRENAU FOR EXPANDED LIBRARY ACCESS

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* EXPLORE RENOVATION / EXPANSION OF FACILITY
* DEVELOP SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCE

PROGRAMMING DOWNTOWN

GRASSROOTS PROMOTION & BRANDING

GRASSROOTS PROMOTION & BRANDING

As revealed in interviews and focus groups with a wide spectrum of Gainesville citizens, Downtown is a draw for locals of all ages and backgrounds but more could be done to bring locals Downtown. The diverse nature of downtown customers and businesses is an essential element of the area's charm and vibrancy. To expand awareness of Downtown throughout the community, participants in the public input sessions expressed a demand for a "Shop Local" or "Shop Downtown" campaign as a way to integrate students and the wider community into the fabric of Downtown. A community-driven campaign, perhaps in partnership with Brenau University, Lanier Tech, and the public K–12 schools, would also help to remind Gainesville citizens that a dollar spent Downtown supporting fellow community members makes a greater impact than spending the same amount at national chain stores or Internet retailers. For every $100 spent in locally owned stores, $68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. For every $100 spent in a national chain, only $43 stays local. Spend it online, and nothing stays local.

Just south of Downtown, the Midtown area is poised for future development. The Midtown Greenway helps connect the area with Downtown. Additional proposed connections, passenger rail access, and a concentration of large redevelopment opportunities means that Midtown can look forward to a bright future as both an extension of Downtown and a neighborhood with its own unique character and heritage. Despite the promise of Midtown's future, public input sessions revealed confusion about Midtown's boundaries and a lack of real connection to the "Midtown" name. To address this and brand a neighborhood integral to Gainesville's future, local officials could propose a community-wide naming competition. Seeking the input of local students, business owners, and the wider community could expand awareness of Midtown's unique assets and character while ensuring public investment in the area's bold future.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* DEVELOP A "SHOP DOWNTOWN" CAMPAIGN
* HOLD A COMMUNITY-WIDE COMPETITION TO NAME MIDTOWN

DESIGN

top issues: DESIGN

What makes destinations like Savannah, Charleston, and even Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom so popular? Whether visitors know it or not, thoughtful urban design is a major element in the allure of these and other popular destinations. Studies by the United Kingdom's Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) have proven that good urban design adds value to communities, boosts community accessibility, ensures a healthy return on investment, and shares these benefits across a broad spectrum of community stakeholders—all without necessarily increasing building costs. In simple terms, urban design is the study of the relationships that create the urban fabric: how buildings, streets, and most importantly, people coalesce into a community. Attentive urban design is a people-focused process that creates and builds on a unique sense of place. Good urban design, as seen in Savannah and elsewhere, honors the past while embracing the future. It positively interacts and connects with the surrounding environment, values cohesion without homogeneity, and, fundamentally, is scaled, oriented, and nurturing toward people. Positive urban design recognizes that streets and buildings don't make a town. People do.

The love of Downtown Gainesville expressed by community members of all stripes reflects the thoughtful design of the blocks surrounding the historic Square. Consistently in public input sessions, Gainesville locals listed the Square itself as their favorite feature of Downtown. Any thoughtful planning effort must take into account what makes the Square so loved and consider replicating these values in future development. Gainesville's downtown core, designed in a time before the proliferation of the automobile, features human-scaled walkable blocks, alleyways and unexpected pathways, appropriately scaled streets that act as connections rather than barriers to pedestrians, historic buildings and mon-

uments that provide a sense of community character, and verdant public spaces that encourage interaction among community members. All of these features are critical elements of thoughtful urban design; these are the features that make the Square a magnet to the community. Whether folks know it or not, great places like this do not happen naturally. Creating a place for people is always a work of careful planning.

DOWNTOWN ZONING

Luckily for Gainesville, the successful planning of the Square and its immediate vicinity can serve as a model for future development. By following the precedent of successful planning around the Square, Downtown ensures future development that puts people first while honoring Gainesville's heritage. An immediate way to address the challenges of guiding new development would be to rezone all of Downtown Gainesville, including the corridors of West Academy Street, Academy Street, E.E. Butler Parkway, and Jesse Jewell Parkway, as a Central Business District. This classification would help protect Downtown assets and ensure that new construction appears and operates similarly to existing businesses—the look and feel the people of Gainesville desire.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* EXTEND CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONING CLASSIFICATION THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN

applying the FRESH method

TO DOWNTOWN GAINESVILLE

Simple tools are available to guide successful infill development of vacant and underutilized lots throughout Downtown—a major issue brought up in public input sessions with Gainesville locals. Because the consistency of Downtown buildings was a frequently addressed issue during these sessions, the FRESH method has been applied to each of the proposed Downtown infill designs. Utilizing the FRESH method developed by Pratt Cassity, Director of Public Service and Outreach at the University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design, ensures that future infill development is compatible with adjacent buildings in scale, height, materials, shape, orientation, rhythm, mass-void proportion and texture which are all essential elements of good urban design. The FRESH method helps to break down these elements in a simple formula for new development in Downtown. By following all five elements of the FRESH method, new development will be cohesive and complementary to surrounding structures, regardless of the architectural style of the new construction:

FOOTPRINT

- The outline of a building as seen from above
- The footprints of new structures should be similar to the footprints of surrounding and adjacent buildings.
- New buildings should respect the established setback line and generally should not protrude from it.
- The orientation of the proposed building should align with adjacent buildings.

ROOFLINE

- The profile of or silhouette made by a roof or series of roofs

- The roof of new buildings should be consistent with the pitch, complexity, and orientation of existing adjacent roofs.

ENVELOPE

- The outside shape or form of a building
- New infill buildings should maintain a similar size, spacing, and massing to nearby historic buildings.
- If the infill area is significantly wide, consider a series of bays.
- New infill on corner lots should address the corner.

SKIN

- Materials used on a building's façade
- New structures should be clad in visually and physically similar materials or skin.
- New infill façade construction should be of similar materials and colors but should not imitate features of historic styles.
- Use building materials that have a texture, pattern, and scale similar to existing structures in the district.

HOLES

- Doors, windows, and other openings
- Holes should mimic the style and pattern of openings used on surrounding structures.
- The size and proportion of the holes should mimic those of surrounding buildings.
- Holes should maintain the rhythm established by adjacent buildings.

While adopting the FRESH method helps to ensure that new construction "fits" within Downtown's existing fabric, special consideration should be paid to the character of Downtown and Midtown development. Gainesville citizens strongly expressed a preference for traditional design Downtown. This strong desire for new buildings to conform to Downtown's existing historic context can be addressed both by following the FRESH method and by establishing historic preservation guidelines to inform the redevelopment of historic structures and the construction of new buildings. Gainesville officials could also study and modify proven models of success. Woodstock, Georgia, a city with many similarities to Gainesville, has successfully rejuvenated its downtown over the past decade. It has generated new income and activity and brought in new residents while preserving the character and historic feel of downtown. Adopting model ordinances like Woodstock's downtown zoning to guide new development is an important consideration for Gainesville officials. For the Midtown area, locals expressed a desire to maintain the industrial feel of the area while encouraging new development and the reuse of historic warehouses. Midtown and Downtown each have a distinct character, history, and sense of place. As such, different approaches should guide development in the two areas. While a development in Downtown might be limited in the future to a traditional brick or stone façade, development in Midtown should be less restrictive and cultivate the funky, industrial flavor of the area with more building design and material options.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEM

* CODIFY THE "FRESH" APPROACH FOR URBAN INFILL TO COMPLEMENT HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

DESIGNING
DOWNTOWN

INFILL AT THE SQUARE

The FRESH approach should be used in designing infill for the vacant lot on the fourth side of the Square. As reflected in the public input, the Square is the most important area of Downtown Gainesville and reflects the character of the community as a whole. Therefore, extra care and consideration should be placed on new design so that it is in keeping with the Square's overall design and character. The renderings (right) show concepts that were designed based on the five points of the FRESH approach: Footprint, Roof line, Envelope, Skin, and Holes. After a careful examination of all surrounding buildings, this concept is one of many that could work.

F THE FOOTPRINT of the new infill is similar to surrounding structures; the building fronts the Square, and the setback is the same as existing setbacks around the Square.

R THE ROOF LINE of the new infill is flat with a decorative parapet, similar to surrounding structures.

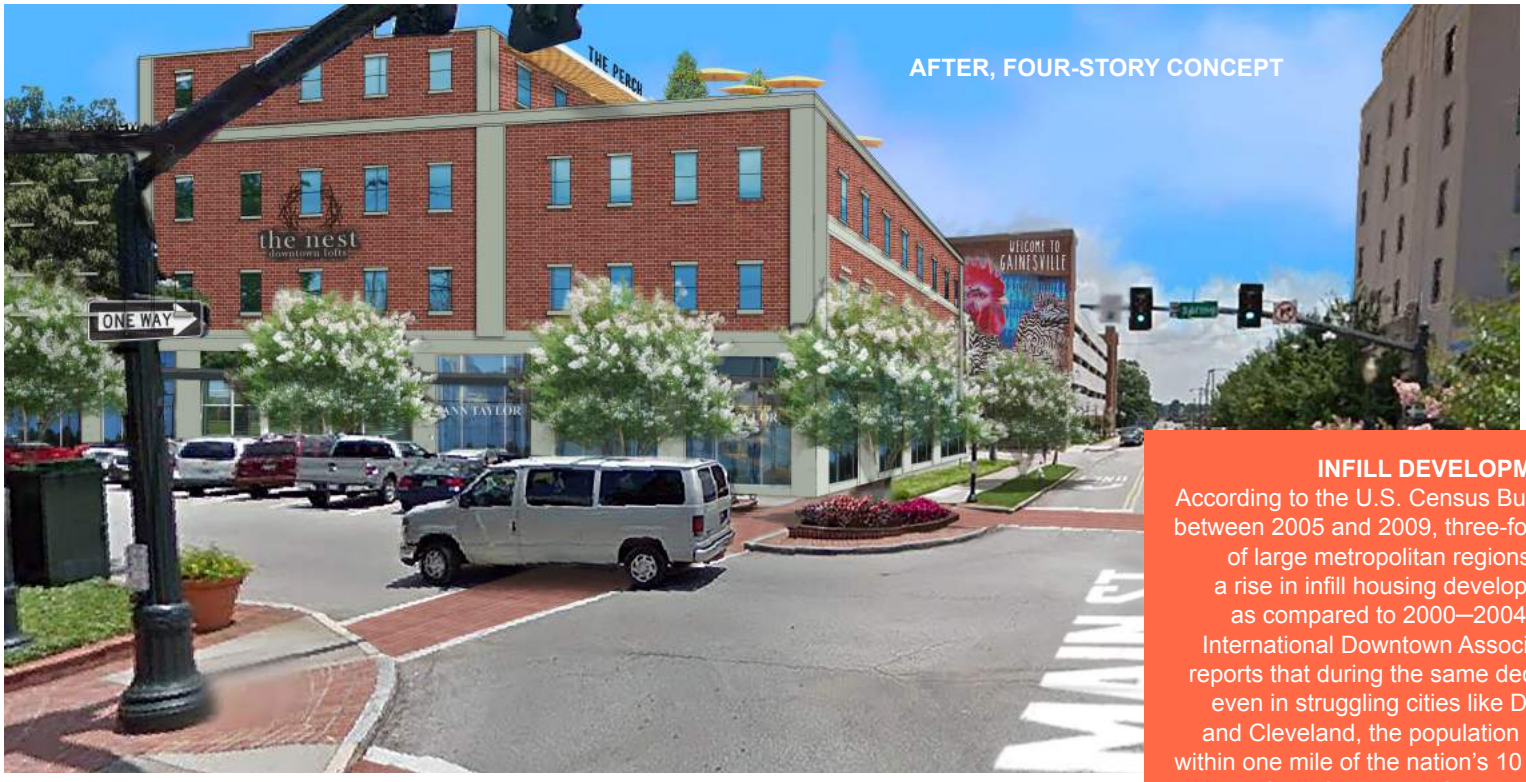
E THE ENVELOPE of the new infill is rectangular, with a series of bays, and addresses both the Square's center as well as the street corner.

S THE SKIN of the new infill is brick and concrete with large glass storefront windows on the first floor, and in a scale similar to existing structures around the Square.

H THE HOLES of the new infill mimic the size, shape, pattern, rhythm, and proportion of doors and windows of surrounding buildings.

BEFORE
The corner of Spring and Main Streets downtown makes up one of the four corners of the historic Square. Currently, this side of the Square serves as a surface parking lot with a parking deck as a backdrop. The prime location of this lot presents an excellent redevelopment opportunity, and new infill should complement the existing building design of the Square.

INFILL AT THE SQUARE, THREE-STORY CONCEPT, AFTER
After an analysis of the buildings within a three-block radius of the Downtown Square, most buildings fit within the two- to five-story range. This digital rendering shows what new, multistory infill development would look like at three stories. The design is a traditional brick building with a taller center parapet, but with modern elements such as a glass and steel first story that would be used as retail space. A rooftop garden patio on the roof of the three-story areas creates opportunities for rooftop bars, restaurant patio seating, or outdoor patio spaces for building residents. The top floor space is reserved for residents and/or offices.



INFILL AT THE SQUARE, FOUR-STORY CONCEPT, AFTER
The digital rendering shows what the same design could look like as a four-story building.

INFILL DEVELOPMENT
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2005 and 2009, three-fourths of large metropolitan regions saw a rise in infill housing development as compared to 2000–2004. The International Downtown Association reports that during the same decade, even in struggling cities like Detroit and Cleveland, the population living within one mile of the nation's 10 most populous downtowns increased by 17%—nearly twice the rate of total American population growth.

DESIGNING DOWNTOWN

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDELINES & TARGETED RESTORATION

While adopting the FRESH method helps to ensure that new construction "fits" within a downtown's existing fabric, special consideration should be paid to the character of Downtown and Midtown development. Gainesville citizens expressed a strong preference for traditional design Downtown. This desire for new buildings to conform to Downtown's historic context can be addressed both by following the FRESH method and by establishing historic preservation guidelines to inform the redevelopment of historic structures and the construction of new buildings.

Meanwhile, actively restoring certain key properties could create catalysts for economic development. While many community members see the historic Gainesville Southern Railway Depot, now Gainesville Amtrak, as an important long-term asset and future hub for the Midtown neighborhood, some perceive the area as unsafe and lacking in aesthetic appeal. Constructed in 1910, Gainesville's depot is an important, working historic resource for the community. While the community can explore Historic Landmark designation, improvements to the depot and grounds should reflect its historic character and attractive Italianate architecture. Investments like planting street trees, installing lighting, paving and delineating designated parking, and creating a small outdoor waiting area would all visually enhance this important community asset and improve the feeling of safety in the area. Although the depot is owned by Norfolk Southern, Amtrak's use of the depot qualifies the site for the Great American Stations Program, which assists Amtrak-served communities in revitalizing stations and surrounding areas. The program provides assistance, preservation guidelines, and access to many federal grants and funding options.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS:

- ESTABLISH HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDELINES
- REGISTER THE GAINESVILLE SOUTHERN RAILWAY DEPOT AS A HISTORIC LANDMARK
- APPLY TO THE GREAT AMERICAN STATIONS PROGRAM

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEMS:

- PARTNER WITH AMTRAK & NORFOLK SOUTHERN TO RESTORE THE GAINESVILLE SOUTHERN RAILWAY DEPOT

BEFORE

Constructed in 1910 as Gainesville's Southern Railroad depot, Norfolk Southern's Gainesville Station serves as a stop along Amtrak's Southern Crescent, providing daily passenger rail service between New York, Atlanta, and New Orleans. Gainesville Station is one of only five Amtrak-served communities in Georgia, contributing to Gainesville's reputation as a regional hub. Approximately 6,500 passengers utilize Gainesville Station annually, making this an important and frequently overlooked front door to the city. Gainesville's existing passenger rail service and rail connection to Atlanta has the potential to become a critical economic engine for the city as demand continues to grow for reliable commuter rail service among both the professional class and large corporations.

Gainesville Station is a working resource for the city and an important historical landmark. However, the depot is neglected, lacks significant public investment, and is seen by many in the community as unsafe. While passenger Southern Railroad service allowed Gainesville to boom in the late 1800s, the depot's pivotal role in local history is not officially recognized through National Register status. Over time, the depot's lack of historic designation has compromised the historic integrity of the building. Historic doors have been replaced, and the depot's Italianate windows have been obstructed with air conditioning units. The lack of outdoor lighting presents public safety hazards and encourages the perception that the area is unsafe.

Despite the fact that the station serves as a hub for alternative transportation, the nearest Hall Area Transit stop is a full half mile away. Additionally, with cars allowed to park directly in front of the building, no sidewalks or pedestrian accommodations have been put in place. Although the depot serves as a waiting and departure area for long trips, it lacks public restroom facilities and little shade is provided for those waiting outside.

AFTER

The historic Gainesville Southern Railroad depot has been restored to its former glory as a community and regional hub. Following registration as a historic landmark, the depot's historic doors and windows have been restored and reconstructed. Repeating the traditional lighting, brick sidewalks, and granite curbs from the Downtown Square complements the historic architecture of the depot while imparting a feeling of public investment, welcoming visitors, and tying the depot to the remainder of Downtown. Wide brick sidewalks have replaced the building-front parking, creating ample space for pedestrian activity and café seating. Street trees shade a pocket park, Southern Plaza, which serves as a pleasant outdoor waiting area and comfort station while paying homage to the depot's role in Gainesville history. A connection to Hall County Transit's "Downtown Hopper" service enhances the depot's connectivity, creating a multi-modal transit hub and community anchor.

EXPOSE BRICK PAVERS

EXPOSE BRICK PAVERS

Actively preserving Gainesville's history could also complement a larger comprehensive streetscaping effort. Along Bradford Street and other streets Downtown, the historic brick pavers beneath Gainesville's asphalt streets are becoming visible due to wear and tear. These bricks could be an amazing opportunity to boost any streetscaping program and enhance Downtown's historic character. In downtowns across Georgia, cities have removed asphalt topcoats and repaired historic brick streets to improve their streetscapes' aesthetic appeal, pay homage to local history, and slow traffic flow—all of which benefit businesses and pedestrians alike. Perhaps beginning with the street most in need of repair, Gainesville could uncover streets on a case-by-case basis. If the decision proves popular in the community, the program could expand throughout Downtown.

PHOTOGRAPH OF THE HISTORIC BRICK PAVERS BECOMING VISIBLE ON BRADFORD STREET.

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEM

* UNCOVER BRICK STREETS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEM

* REFRAIN FROM RESURFACING HISTORIC STREETS

DESIGNING
DOWNTOWN

MODEL CITY ORDINANCE

MODEL CITY ORDINANCE

Gainesville officials could also study and modify proven models of success. Woodstock, Georgia, a city with many similarities to Gainesville, has successfully rejuvenated its downtown over the past decade. It has generated new income and activity and brought in new residents while preserving the character and historic feel of downtown. Adopting model ordinances like Woodstock's downtown zoning to guide new development is an important consideration for Gainesville officials. For the Midtown area, locals expressed a desire to maintain the industrial feel of the area while encouraging new development and the reuse of historic warehouses. Midtown and Downtown each have a distinct character, history, and sense of place. As such, different approaches should guide development in the two areas. While a development in Downtown might be limited in the future to a traditional brick or stone façade, development in Midtown should be less restrictive and cultivate a trendy, industrial flavor of the area with more building design and material options.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEM

*** EXAMINE MODEL ORDINANCES AND ADOPT A SIMILAR SET OF MIXED USE AND ZONING CODES DOWNTOWN**

DESIGNING DOWNTOWN

PUBLIC ART IN MIDTOWN

PUBLIC ART IN MIDTOWN

As Downtown continues to grow and develop, the community desires an increase in the amount and diversity of public art in the Downtown area. Following the ABCs, public art can take an unlimited number of forms. To increase the diversity of art in the community, the idea of unplanned contemporary and traditional public art was brought up during public input sessions. Public art is created through a series of trials and errors, failures, experiments, and successes. There must be a place or places dedicated that respond to artwork and the creative process. Gainesville can use currently vacant or underutilized property throughout Midtown as a blank slate for creative expression. Partnering with local arts organizations or Brenau University's College of Fine Arts & Humanities, the City should target a series of spaces that allow art to unfold over time. It's important that the City and stakeholders remain open to the potential for unforeseen experiences. The Midtown area could capture this artistic philosophy and create an artistic sense of place. Additionally, creating an arts program similar to Atlanta's Art on the BeltLine could draw new users to the Midtown Greenway, creating momentum and even raising funds for the Greenway's expansion.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS:

- PARTNER WITH LOCAL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS AND BRENAU UNIVERSITY TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT AND DIVERSITY OF GAINESVILLE'S PUBLIC ART
- EXPLORE CREATING AN ANNUAL ART ON THE GREENWAY PROGRAM TO SHOWCASE PUBLIC ART
- EXAMINE CREATING AN MOU FOR MURALS AND DISPLAYS ON PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

Public art can come in a variety of ways, such as this example of using a wire fence to create artistic patterns. See page 98 for other examples.

BEFORE: A view of Main Street near the Big Bear Café looking toward Downtown. Streetscape design elements from the Square are not continued this far down Main Street. Sidewalks and shade are limited near the station, discouraging pedestrian activity. This area's prominent location adjacent to Gainesville's Amtrak station could become Gainesville's front door in the future.

AFTER

The area near the Big Bear Café and Gainesville's historic Southern Railroad Depot is one of the city's greatest development opportunities. The area is already industrial in nature and offers an array of industrial buildings that could be re-purposed to drive economic growth. In the digital rendering, this area has been transformed into an entertainment district that could offer both residential and commercial spaces. The arts are encouraged here, along with creative signage and self-expression. Art and yoga studios, restaurants, breweries, offices, retail, and downtown living could all exist here. Though this area would have a different character than Gainesville's Downtown and the Square, the streetscape elements remain consistent, creating a cohesive look and visual connection throughout Downtown and Midtown.

Streetscape improvements include: repaving of sidewalks and parking lots, planting street trees and turf, installing brick edging on new sidewalks, and making general landscaping improvements.

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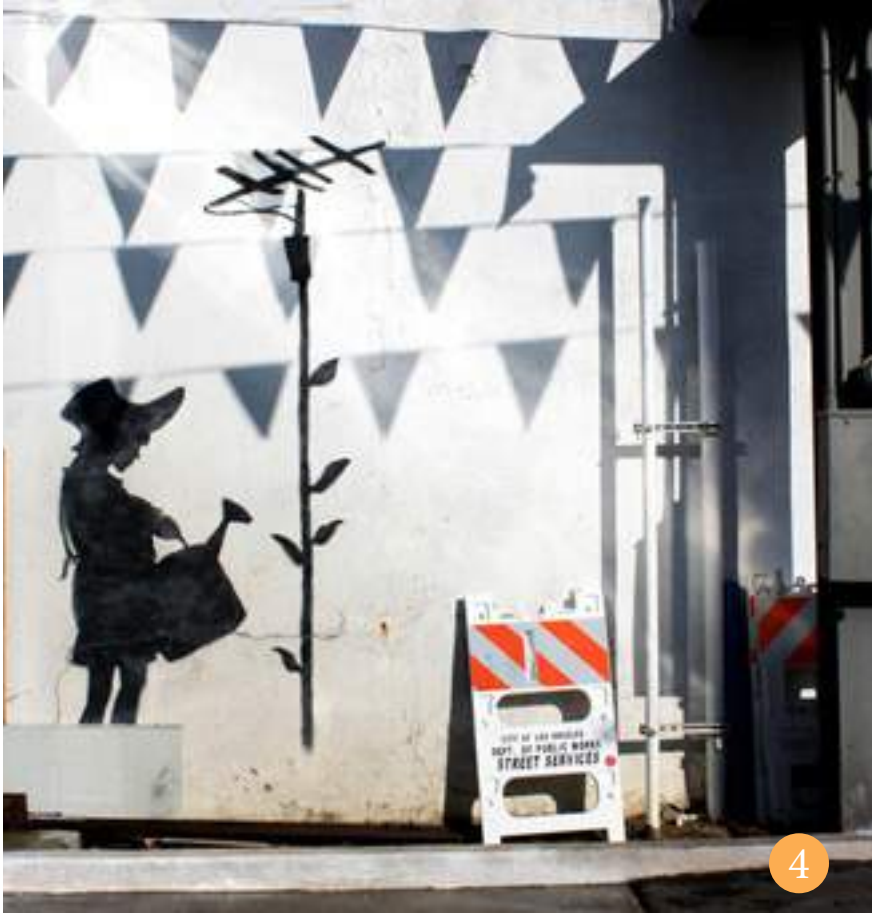

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5

6

EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC ART

Midtown could become a creative district that welcomes public art in all forms. Here are a few examples of what forms public art could take:

1. PAINT SUPPORT STRUCTURES OF BRIDGE UNDERPASSES
2. UTILITY FIXTURES COME TO LIFE WITH PAINT
3. STAIR RISERS CREATE BEAUTIFUL MURALS
4. PAINT INTERESTING SILHOUETTES ON WALLS
5. COLORFUL MURALS BRING AN OLD BRICK WALL TO LIFE
6. A CAN OF SPRAY PAINT GIVES EXISTING UTILITY BOXES PERSONALITY
7. PLAIN OLD WIRE FENCING CAN BE TURNED INTO A WORK OF ART
8. AN R2D2-INSPIRED CROCHET COVERS A CONCRETE BOLLARD
9. MURAL MEETS SCULPTURE IN THIS WALL DECORATION
10. PARK BENCHES ARE TRANSFORMED WITH A CAN OF PAINT

THE ARTS MEANS BUSINESS

ACCORDING TO THE GEORGIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS,

THE ARTS REPRESENT A 29 BILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRY IN GEORGIA, EMPLOYING AROUND 200,000 PEOPLE,

ATTRACTING TOURISM, AND NEW INVESTMENT ACROSS THE STATE. 2011 ESTIMATES FROM THE NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS INDICATE THAT FOR EVERY $1 SPENT BY AN ARTS ORGANIZATION, $2.10 IS GENERATED IN THE WIDER ECONOMY.

ABC

{ALWAYS BE CREATIVE}

DOWNTOWN SHOULD BE AN EXPERIENCE OF ITS OWN. PEOPLE WANT TO VISIT A PLACE THEY CAN TELL THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT—A PLACE WITH CHARACTER. THE FOLLOWING IDEAS PLAY WITH GAINESVILLE'S UNIQUE CHICKEN HISTORY.

CHICKEN FEET "HOPSCOTCH" CROSSWALK:
WHY WALK IF YOU CAN HOP ACROSS?

CHICKEN JOKES ON PAVEMENT AT STREET CROSSINGS

A DOWNTOWN WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR

Another way of celebrating Gainesville's unique title of "Poultry Capital of the World" is to place chicken jokes at the crosswalks. The question will be answered on the other side of the street, with the text shown in the same direction as the crosser.

Jokes can be painted, printed on stickers, or stamped onto the concrete. Perhaps the City could invite people to write their best chicken jokes in chalk at street crossings for a more temporary solution.

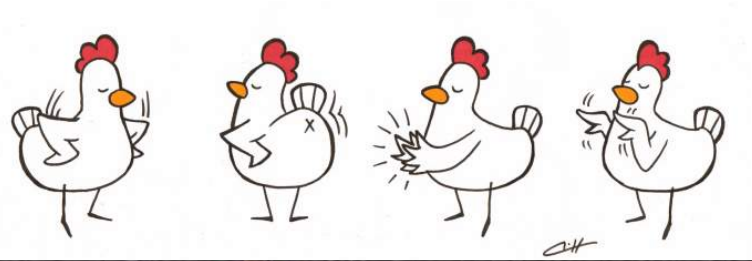
GAINESVILLE CHICK T-SHIRTS

DOWNTOWN T-SHIRTS

The T-shirts shown left read, “I’m a Gainesville Chick” and “I’m Married to a Gainesville Chick.” These are just two of many ideas that could play with the poultry theme and could be sold downtown or at special events.

Q: Why did the chicken cross the playground?
A: To get to the other slide.

Q: Why didn’t the chicken cross the road?
A: Because he was a “chicken”.



DANCE STEPS ON THE SIDEWALK: COULD THE CHICKEN DANCE STEPS BE PLACED IN DOWNTOWN?

DO THE CHICKEN DANCE

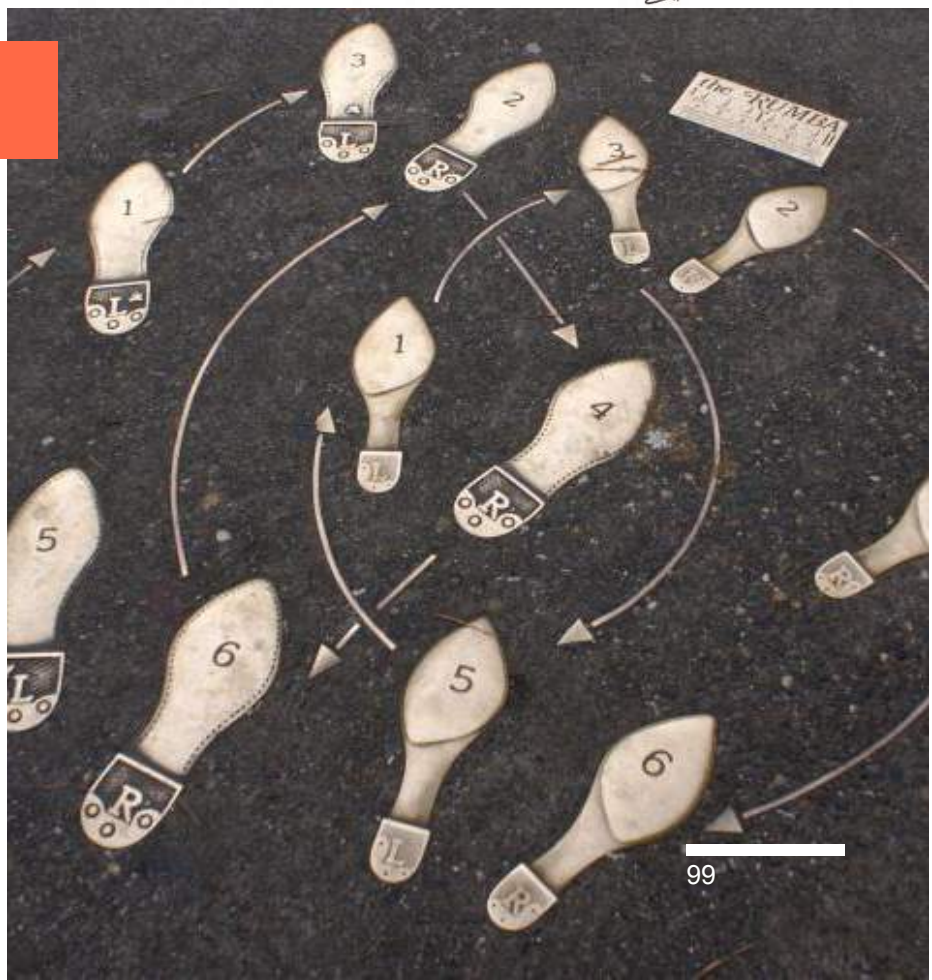
The image shows bronze dance steps to the “Rumba” inlayed into the sidewalk on Frazier Avenue in North Chattanooga, Tennessee along with other dances such as “The Hokey Pokey” and “The Waltz.”

Gainesville could do something similar with “The Chicken Dance” or “The Funky Chicken.” The point is to create a downtown experience that is fun, creative, and engaging to all ages, while adding a bit of humor and nod to history.

In case you have forgotten, the illustration shown above can remind you how to do the “Chicken Dance.”

FUN FACT:

The “Chicken Dance,” is an oom-pah song that is now a contemporary dance throughout the Western world. The song was composed by accordion (Handharmonika) player Werner Thomas from Davos, Switzerland, in the 1950s.

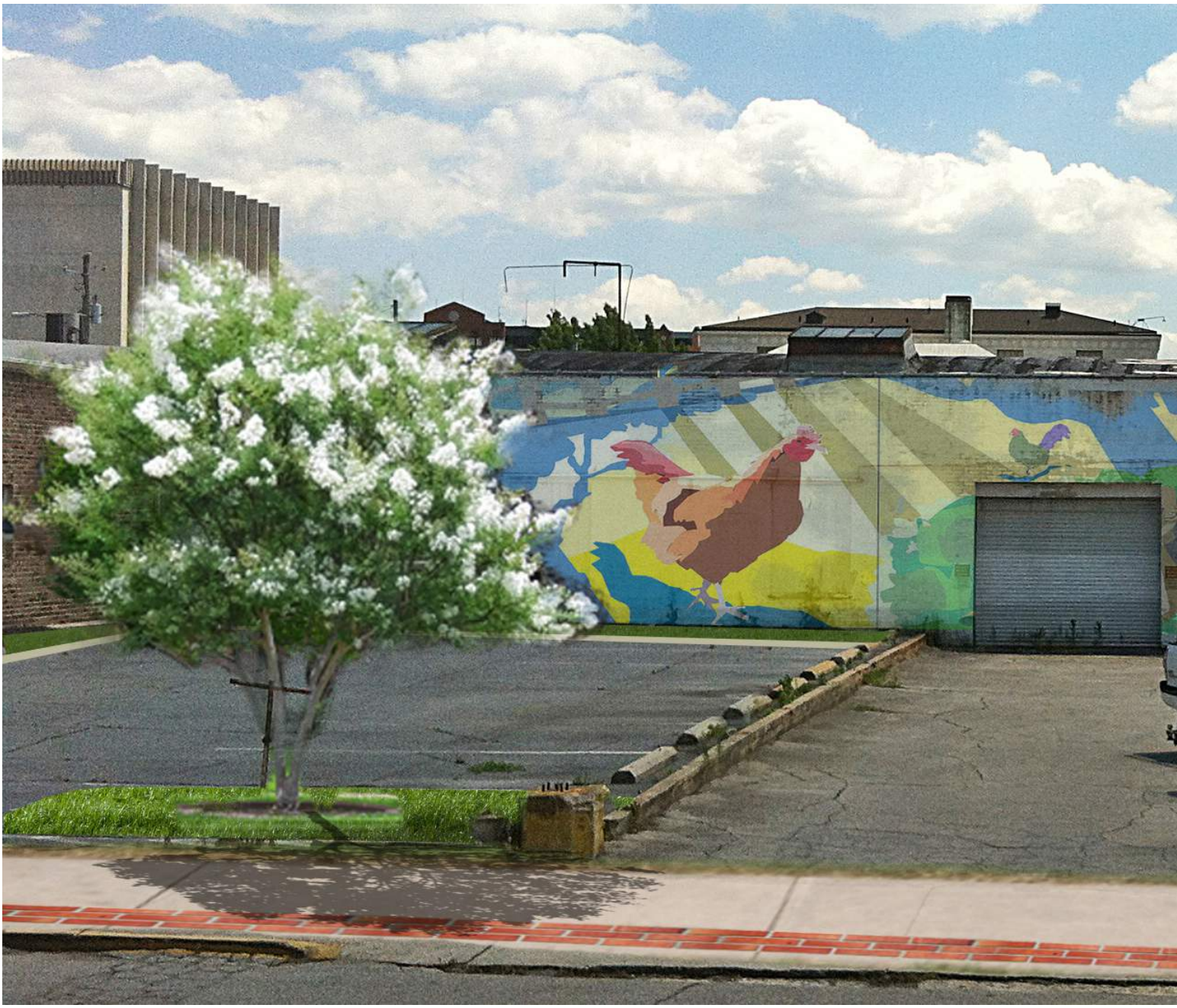


DESIGNING
DOWNTOWN

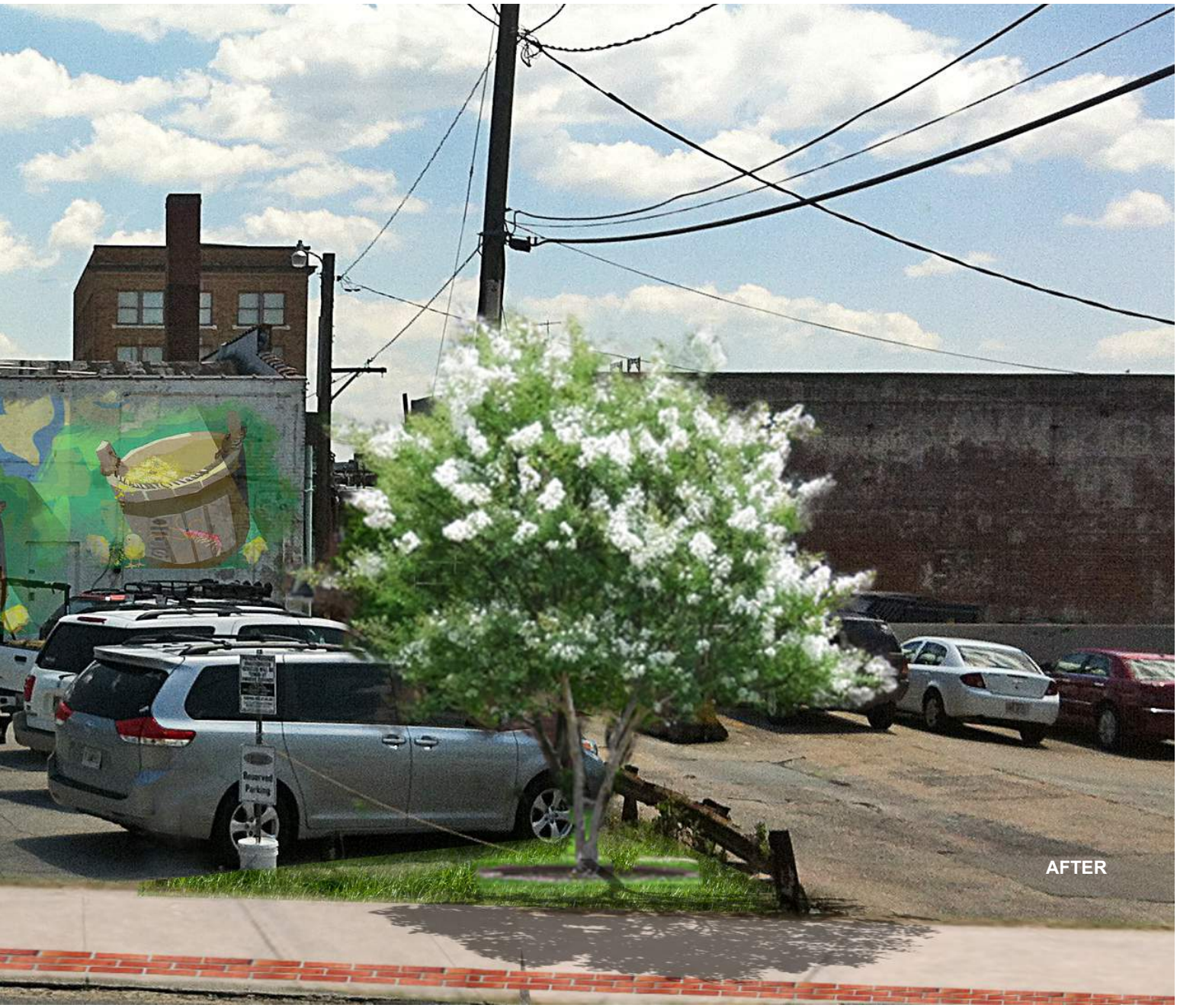
PUBLIC ART IN DOWNTOWN

BEFORE: (Right) A view of a rear lot and rear façades facing Brenau Avenue, this area could be cleaned up and transformed into a place for public art.

AFTER: (Below) The rendering shows the lot with a few improvements, including brick edging along the sidewalk, planted grass areas with crape myrtles, and a poultry-themed mural on the back of one of the buildings. Adding public art not only can help the aesthetic of the streetscape, but add personality to Downtown, make it a more interesting place to visit, and capture the unique history and character of Gainesville.



BEFORE


AFTER

EC
DEVE

CONOMIC
LOPMENT

top issues: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development means building on and strengthening a community's existing economic assets while diversifying the economic base. While Gainesville overwhelmingly sees Downtown as its heart and soul, it is also the economic engine of the County and the surrounding region. The health and vibrancy of Downtown is an indicator of the overall health and vibrancy of Hall County and Northeast Georgia. Therefore, it is necessary to pay particular attention to the future development of the Downtown area. The emotional pull of residents to Downtown makes the area more than merely the traditional commercial district. Successful development must honor this relationship, building on Downtown's assets and contributing to the area's character and sense of place. Although new historic standards in Downtown present a restriction to development, incentives can be introduced to offset the proposed standards. A carrot-and-stick approach to economic development will help ensure a future Gainesville that residents can recognize and be proud of.

DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

For Downtown Gainesville to reach its potential, the area needs more people living, working, and playing in it. People are the key to a vibrant downtown. Focusing first on attracting residents will create the critical numbers needed to address many of the issues raised in public input sessions, from entertainment venues to a more lively nightlife. National trends indicate a growing preference for urban living, and Gainesville residents repeatedly expressed the desire for downtown living. According to a recent survey by the Nielsen Company, 62% of young professionals prefer mixed-use, walkable downtown living. Downtowns across the nation are also seeing a boom in Empty Nesters, often higher income retirees and middle-aged couples looking to downsize while adopting a more walkable lifestyle close to cultural amenities, restaurants, and retail options. With its proximity to Brenau University as well as Lake Lanier's reputation with retirees, Downtown Gainesville is uniquely suited to encourage downtown living. In addition to providing a 24-hour consumer base for downtown businesses, more people living Downtown also means more eyes on the street, a boost to public safety with no capital outlay.

NEW COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, AFTER

As a person walks south across Gainesville's new pedestrian bridge, the walls of the bridge frame the view of a vibrant and cohesive mixed-use community. Descending the bridge, one feels a sensation of stepping onto a lively human stage, thoughtfully enclosed by trees and buildings.

The bottom floors of these buildings house retail, cafés, and other services to ensure an exciting and active street life, while the upper floors contain quality residences and offices. The streets are designed for slower traffic speeds, with streets that wrap around a central park. The central square—an homage to the Downtown Square—provides a safe environment for children and an arena for both planned and spontaneous events.

VACANT PROPERTY ACROSS FROM THE JESSE JEWELL PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE, BEFORE

DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Using the tools available to Gainesville's Redevelopment Authority, an incentives package could be developed to encourage residential development and upper-story lofts Downtown. For example, some communities offer upper-story sprinkler and wiring grants to encourage downtown upper-story living. Other communities waive hook and tap fees, business and alcohol licenses, and other charges to incentivize development in targeted areas. Gainesville can also explore a local property tax abatement for a period of years or create a "one-stop shop" bringing together the necessary entities to incentivize Downtown development. These can also be layered with state and federal programs. The City can assist with securing the incentives for businesses that are desired. By studying the successful redevelopment efforts of Woodstock, Rome, and other Georgia cities similar to Gainesville, city leaders can learn what incentives have helped these cities succeed in encouraging downtown living. Establishing a "Peer Downtown Leadership Tour" that allows community leaders and city staff to visit and tour these communities would be an ideal first step. Embracing the lessons learned by similar cities would greatly increase Gainesville's ability to attract downtown housing. Macon, for example, has worked for multiple years to increase the number of historic districts and historically contributing buildings on the National Register. Being a contributing building in a National Register District allows for tax incentives during rehabilitation, another potential economic incentive for Downtown redevelopment.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* SPRINKLER & WIRING GRANTS FOR UPPER-STORY LOFTS
* WAIVE FEES, LICENSES, & OTHER CHARGES TO INCENTIVIZE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
* EXAMINE LOCAL PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT
* CREATE A "ONE-STOP SHOP" FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT
* PEER DOWNTOWN LEADERSHIP TOUR TO LEARN FROM OTHERS' SUCCESSES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE GREENWAY

This old historic building on Grove Street is currently underutilized. With a historic warehouse character, the building could be reused in a variety of ways; however, the rendering above shows it being used as a recording studio and bike shop. Historic commercial and warehouse buildings often attract businesses from the arts industry as they are versatile and have a unique historic character.

BEFORE

AFTER
ECONOMIC INCENTIVES: REDEVELOP THE OLD PACOLET MILL

The rendering shows a revitalized mill with replaced windows and upper-story loft apartments. The first floor offers commercial space and the surrounding area has landscaping improvements to create a more easily walkable and bike-friendly community.

OLD MILL LOFTS
RAIL ROAD CROSSING
2 TRACKS

DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

MIDTOWN DEVELOPMENT

MIDTOWN DEVELOPMENT

Encouraging the expansion of Downtown across Jesse Jewell Parkway into Midtown is a natural progression. Midtown has a number of unique assets, several large sites targeted for redevelopment, and direct passenger rail access to cities across the United States. Mixed-use, New Urbanist development and warehouse lofts in this area are a natural fit. To incentivize development, Midtown Overlay Zone guidelines need to be strengthened to create a true urban district. For instance, removing the two-acre requirement on mixed-use developments would provide a boost to loft-style, upper-story living while providing a “density bonus.” Encouraging more walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods would help lay the groundwork for a rejuvenated Midtown. Planting trees, reducing minimum setbacks from 50 to 20 feet, and mandating parking in the rear of buildings would create the standards of a new urban district. A mixture of small and large incentives is essential to guide thoughtful development in Midtown. Small incentives might include allowing establishments in a certain geographic area to serve alcohol without a food sales quota to encourage a lively nightlife district. Similarly, the alcohol license fee could be waived for a set time period if the desire is for enhanced entertainment options. Incentives used to encourage development in Midtown could be used to incentivize development along Academy Street as well—another excellent opportunity for Downtown growth.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* STRENGTHEN THE MIDTOWN OVERLAY ZONE BY REMOVING THE TWO-ACRE REQUIREMENT ON MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS
* REDUCE MINIMUM SETBACKS & MANDATE PARKING TO THE REAR OF BUILDINGS
* DEVELOP A DIVERSE, TARGETED INCENTIVES PACKAGE
* CONSIDER APPLYING MIDTOWN OVERLAY ZONE GUIDELINES ALONG WEST ACADEMY STREET

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* EXTEND DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPING MATERIALS & PLANTING PALETTE THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN & MIDTOWN

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALONG THE GREENWAY

This empty space located between Grove Street Station and the adjacent building (shown above) is ideal for new infill development. The renderings pictured above show an extension of the Colored Egg Bakery. The new space includes a bar and/or café counter with seating and space for events such as small concerts, readings, or speeches. The patio space is accessible from the trail to be inviting to trail users during the day.

DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

WEST ACADEMY STREET DEVELOPMENT

WEST ACADEMY STREET DEVELOPMENT

Along with Midtown, the area along West Academy Street shows great potential as an extension of Downtown. Both areas present Downtown's greatest opportunities for building reuse and redevelopment. Incentives for redeveloping properties into mixed-use structures with a traditional downtown look would assist in this expansion. Additionally, the elevation change along West Academy Street creates opportunities for "below grade" parking—an important component of many vibrant urban districts. Removing parking in the front would allow for large sidewalks with trees and lighting to be installed, attracting redevelopment and beautifying this important corridor while extending the downtown footprint.

SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* CONSIDER APPLYING MIDTOWN OVERLAY ZONE GUIDELINES ALONG WEST ACADEMY STREET
* MANDATE PARKING BELOW OR BEHIND BUILDINGS
* DEVELOP A DIVERSE, TARGETED INCENTIVES PACKAGE

LONG-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* EXTEND DOWNTOWN STREETSCAPING MATERIALS AND PLANTING PALETTE THROUGHOUT DOWNTOWN AND MIDTOWN

Gainesville will benefit from an increase in businesses and retail developments closer to Downtown. On the corner of West Academy and Washington Streets, there is an automobile sales lot that does not communicate a sense of arrival or speak to Downtown Gainesville's full potential. Instead, incentivizing development of an iconic retail and office complex can contribute to the Downtown character, with the façades facing out to the street and a central tower on the corner. Retail and service establishments would occupy the bottom floor, with a number of customizable office or residential units upstairs.

DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

JESSE JEWELL PARKWAY DEVELOPMENT

JESSE JEWELL PARKWAY DEVELOPMENT

City-owned vacant lots along Jesse Jewell Parkway at the south end of Downtown represent amazing opportunities for infill development directly adjacent to the Engine 209 outdoor train park and museum. Based on community needs, a large building complex can be introduced here, elevating the urban character of Gainesville's downtown core while honoring the regional architectural style. Two distinct buildings characterize this complex with a street separating them, and an innovative pedestrian walkway connecting the second floor between the two.

The bottom floor can house exciting new shops while the upper floors provide a large number of stores, offices, or high-quality housing units. However, any combination of uses could be installed in this large multi-purpose building.

STREET VIEW, BEFORE
The photograph above shows a view of the property from across Jesse Jewell Parkway and next to Wild Wing Café.

STREET VIEW, AFTER
The rendering (right) shows the potential new infill development that could go on the property. Streetscaping elements are drawn from the Square, offering a cohesive design throughout this area of Downtown.

AERIAL VIEW, BEFORE
The aerial photograph (right) shows a view of the property for potential infill development along Jesse Jewell Parkway.

AERIAL VIEW, AFTER
The rendering (below) shows the potential new infill development that could go on the property. This view shows a potential development maximizing the lot area and fronting the corners, a design characteristic of the FRESH approach.

DEVELOPING DOWNTOWN

LODGING

LODGING

While Gainesville should work to encourage residential development over the long term, in the meantime Downtown lodging helps complement activities in the area. Visitors to local hotels are an essential contributor to a vibrant downtown experience after 5:00 PM every day of the week. Visitors staying Downtown need to eat and shop, and downtown merchants can capitalize on visitors to the area. Currently, both a Holiday Inn and a Hampton Inn operate very close to Downtown's historic core. Strengthening relationships among these hotels, the community, and downtown commercial establishments could be beneficial to all. These hotels could communicate to visitors about Downtown's special events and activities as well as local restaurants and stores. In addition to working with management, an effort to work with their front desk staff could be advantageous. Often the front desk personnel are not familiar with downtown amenities and have limited funds to enjoy those options. A little bit of "wining and dining" the management and hospitality/ concierge staff could pay dividends for local businesses.

During public input sessions, multiple people stated that the new Hilton Garden Inn on Browns Bridge Road outside of Downtown is catering to visitors brought to town by the Chamber of Commerce, Brenau University, or the Northeast Georgia Medical Center. While the Hilton Garden Inn is a newer establishment, working with Gainesville's downtown hotels and incentivizing renovations to cater to visiting professionals could pay dividends for Downtown. Gainesville, the Chamber, Brenau University, and the Medical Center should work with the two downtown hotels to develop a "downtown executive level room." This could promote the unique options afforded by the downtown location and benefit the hotels directly.

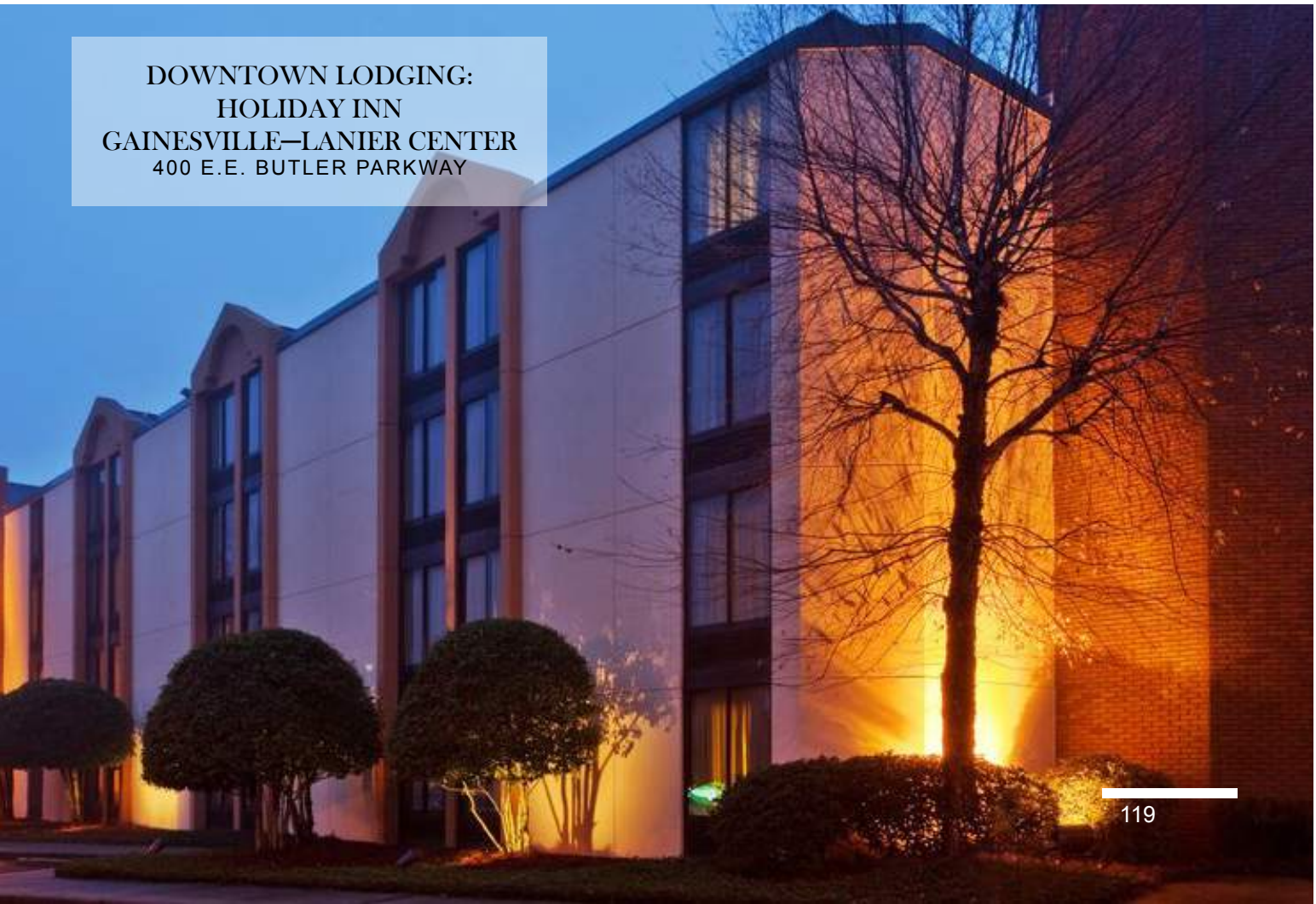
SHORT-TERM ACTION ITEMS

* PROMOTE DOWNTOWN AND CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH DOWNTOWN HOTEL STAFF

* PARTNER WITH LOCAL HOTELS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO DEVELOP A "DOWNTOWN EXECUTIVE LEVEL ROOM" OPTION FOR OFFICIAL VISITORS

* DEVELOP A HOTEL CONCIERGE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE AND MAIN STREET "BUCKS"

DOWNTOWN LODGING: HAMPTON INN GAINESVILLE
450 JESSE JEWELL PARKWAY



DOWNTOWN LODGING: HOLIDAY INN GAINESVILLE–LANIER CENTER
400 E.E. BUTLER PARKWAY

A PLAN THAT WORKS. Gainesville's action plan clarifies what resources are required to reach the community's vision for Downtown. Through a series of action items, the action plan communicates the "when, what, and who" critical to community implementation. These steps include: when action items need to be completed, what resources are required, and who is responsible for implementation. A well-developed action plan serves as a blueprint for the project managers, Gainesville's Special Projects Manager and Community Development Director, to break down a sweeping community vision into smaller, more manageable action items. These action items should meet the criteria for SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-based) goals. By following the SMART process, Gainesville's future vision becomes a reality through practical and achievable steps.

ACTION ITEMS

CONNECTIVITY

ACTION ITEMS

01

CROSSING THE MOAT

GOAL: Improve pedestrian connectivity and safety

LEAD: Public Works Director

PARTNERS: GDOT, Community Development Department, Local Garden Club

TIMELINE: Phased Approach (2015–2019)

- Phase 1 – E.E. Butler Parkway from Jesse Jewell Parkway to the split at Chamber (2015–2017);
- Phase 2 – Jesse Jewell Parkway from E.E. Butler Parkway to West Academy Street (2016–2018);
- Phase 3 – Academy/West Academy between E.E. Butler Parkway & Jesse Jewell Parkway (-2019)

FUNDING: General Fund, TAD Fund, grants (CDBG)

OBSTACLES: Timing with GDOT paving work; other City projects competing for money; potential private redevelopment competing for TAD funds

STEPS:

1. Coordination of City PWD & CDD to determine what other agencies/ organizations need to be involved and to define steps from vision to completion
2. Further refine design concept, phasing, and cost estimates
3. Coordinate with GDOT to bid out with their paving project
4. Obtain “blessing” from applicable governing bodies and appropriation of funding
5. Study/analyze and adjust pedestrian crossing facilities to increase crossing time for pedestrians and to better alert motorists of pedestrians at the intersection.

02

HENRY WARD WAY / GREEN STREET (ONE-WAYS)

GOAL: Improve circulation downtown by providing one-way access heading north through the Kenyon Plaza area, and reduce congestion on Jesse Jewell Parkway and around the Square and minimize cut-through traffic in parking deck.

LEAD: Public Works Director

PARTNERS: Community Development Department, Hall County, GDOT

TIMELINE: Phased Approach (2016–2018)

- Phase 1 – Re-open Henry Ward Way/Green Street as a one-way, northbound lane through Kenyon Plaza (2016–2017);
- Phase 2 – Close City Hall driveway, convert Bradford Street–Jesse Jewell Parkway intersection into right-turn in/out only; remove signal at the intersection (2017–2018)

FUNDING: General Fund (city and county)

OBSTACLES: Design to maintain tribute and to use existing brick pavers and archway; pedestrian traffic and visitors'/court employees' use of the plaza; political will.

STEPS:

1. Coordinate with Hall County to get buy-in on project
2. Understand design and physical construction — use existing or new surface; incorporate archway, traffic light, tribute, etc.
3. Determine cost estimate, funding source(s), and scheduling
4. Complete design/construction to re-open Henry Ward Way/Green Street as a one-way, northbound lane
5. Close and landscape driveway leading from City Hall parking lot at Bradford Street
6. Convert the intersection of Bradford Street at Jesse Jewell into a right-in/right-out only, and remove the traffic signal.

CONNECTIVITY

03

SIGNAGE

GOAL: Improve aesthetics and maneuvering around the city, and reduce visual clutter

LEAD: Public Works Director

PARTNERS: GDOT, Community Development Department, Public Works Department, Communications and Tourism Manager

TIMELINE: In Progress

FUNDING: Hotel/Motel Tax, General Fund

OBSTACLES: GDOT guidelines; competing interests (Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Hall County Government, private business)

STEPS:

1. Finalize design and placement of new city wayfinding signage
2. Coordinate with GDOT to reduce its signage within the moat
3. Install strategic wayfinding signage
4. Stamp/stripe sidewalks and/or streets to clearly demarcate the multi-use trail from Veterans Park at Rock Creek Greenway through downtown to the Midtown Greenway

04

DOWNTOWN TROLLEY

GOAL: Reduce the number of car trips and provide efficient access/ movement during peak times, particularly during the lunchtime peak travel

LEAD: Assistant City Manager

PARTNERS: Brenau, Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Main Street, Community Service Center, Hall County

TIMELINE: 2018–2020

FUNDING: General Fund, transit funds, hotel/motel and tourism funds, private funds (Brenau, Northeast Georgia Medical Center)

OBSTACLES: Funding and logistics (where, how, who: administrative, drivers, maintenance, etc.)

STEPS:

1. Research such options provided in other Georgia and US cities
2. Coordinate and obtain buy-in of stakeholders
3. Determine route(s) and roles of stakeholders
4. Determine and implement funding strategy
5. Finalize logistics: trolley or other type of vehicle, storage, maintenance, route(s), times, costs, etc.

CONNECTIVITY

ACTION ITEMS

05

LIGHTING ALONG TRAILS

GOAL: Improve access and usage for exercise and recreation after work, particularly during winter when after-work hours are dark

LEAD: Director of Parks & Recreation Agency

PARTNERS: Parks & Recreation Board, Gainesville City Council, Police Department (safety), Fire Department (medical emergencies), Georgia Power, Gainesville City Schools (cross-country teams)

TIMELINE: Phased Approach (2015–2017)

- Phase 1 – Stakeholder buy-in, determine which trail(s), determine lighting options with Georgia Power, determine funding strategy, study police patrol increases, ordinance amendment (2015–2016);
- Phase 2 – Install lighting (2016–2017)

FUNDING: Park fund, General Fund, impact fees

OBSTACLES: Funding, safety (increased police presence)

STEPS:

1. Obtain buy-in from Parks & Recreation staff and board, City Council
2. Conduct feasibility study to determine which trail(s), lighting options, safety mechanisms, funding strategy, etc.
3. Install lighting fixtures

06

BIKE RACKS & BIKE SHARE STATIONS

GOAL: Increase access to bike racks and bike share stations around the Square and Downtown, and provide a means for incorporating public art

LEAD: Assistant City Manager

PARTNERS: Public Works Department, Community Service Center, Community Development Department, Parks & Recreation Agency, Main Street

TIMELINE: 2015–2017

FUNDING: General Fund, transit fund

OBSTACLES: Physical space; funding for and security/maintenance of bike racks; “ownership”

STEPS:

1. Inventory existing facilities (location, condition, etc.)
2. Research best practice principles for the number, design, distribution/location, spacing, installation and maintenance, etc.
3. Determine whether there is a need to install additional new bike racks, relocate existing bike racks, or a combination
4. Create a budget, install/relocate the racks, and promote their use

ABC

{ALWAYS BE CREATIVE}

BICYCLE RACKS DON’T HAVE TO BE BORING. THEY CAN ALSO BE FORMS OF PUBLIC ART THAT REFLECT THE CHARACTER, HISTORY, OR PERSONALITY OF A COMMUNITY.

CONNECTIVITY

ACTION ITEMS

07

WASHINGTON STREET LANE DIET

GOAL: Create a safe, aesthetically compatible entryway into Downtown from E.E. Butler Parkway

LEAD: Assistant City Manager

PARTNERS: Community Development Department, Public Works Department, Main Street, downtown business owners

TIMELINE: 2016 – 2020

FUNDING: General Fund, Grants, TAD, CID

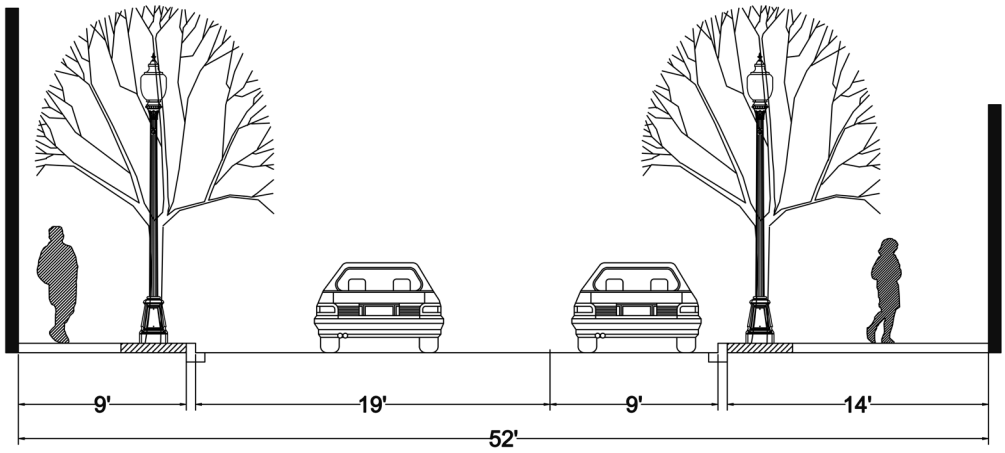
OBSTACLES: Funding, political will

STEPS:

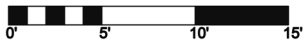
1. Determine the traffic counts and direction of flow along Washington Street between E.E. Butler Parkway and West Academy Street
2. Complete detailed design plans to include reducing number of travel lanes from two to one west of Green Street and incorporating streetscaping components and parklets in appropriate places
3. Identify and allocate funding
4. Implement

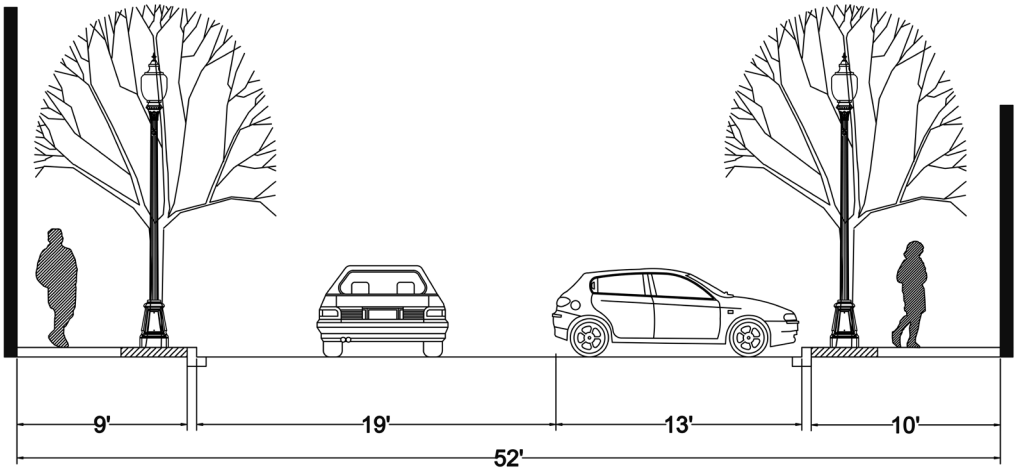
IDEAL STREETSCAPE DIAGRAM

The diagrams below show ideal streetscape designs in section view for Washington Street but could also be applied to other areas of Downtown. Wide sidewalks with a vegetative buffer and street trees offers shade and safety. On-street parking is convenient and provides an additional buffer for pedestrians on the sidewalk.

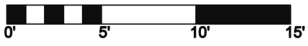


Washington Street / Option A / parallel parking facing the Square





Washington Street / Option B / 45-degree parking facing the Square



CONNECTIVITY

ACTION ITEMS

08

STREETSCAPING & ALLEYWAY MAINTENANCE

GOAL: Extend streetscaping beyond the Square, and increase programming space and connectivity

LEAD: Assistant City Manager

PARTNERS: Community Development Department, Public Works Department, Main Street, Police

TIMELINE: Phased (2015 –2030)

FUNDING: General Fund, grants, TAD, CID

OBSTACLES: Funding; owner buy-in; political will

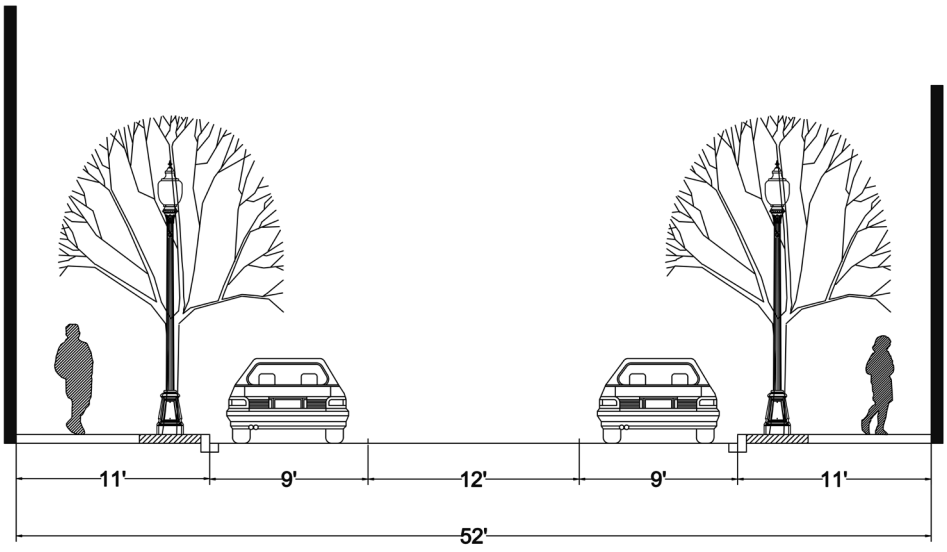
STEPS:

1. Determine existing conditions of streetscaping and where lacking
2. Determine phased implementation strategies with priorities
3. Complete detailed design plans
4. Identify and allocate funding
5. Implement

IDEAL STREETSCAPE DIAGRAM

The diagram below shows an ideal streetscape design in section view for Bradford Street but could also be applied to other areas of Downtown. Wide sidewalks with a vegetative buffer and street trees offers shade and safety. On-street parking is convenient and provides an additional buffer for pedestrians on the sidewalk.

* Diagram taken from the 2013 *City of Gainesville Design Considerations* by Downtown Renaissance Summer Fellow Elizabeth Lawandales, as part of the Georgia Downtown Renaissance Partnership.



09

PARKLETS

GOAL: Increase “outside environment” around Downtown

LEAD: Special Projects Manager

PARTNERS: Community Development, Main Street, Public Works, Fire, Hall County, business owners

TIMELINE: 2016 – Spring “Temporary” Parklet Experiment; 2017 – Permanent Parklets

FUNDING: General Fund, private funds (of determined appropriate per parklet policy/program)

OBSTACLES: Loss of on-street parking spaces; the “I’ll lose customers if no parking in front of my store” mentality (or walking problem reality); permitting process; determining ownership (Is it the public’s or is it the store/restaurant’s? Who can use it?)

STEPS:

1. Identify locations – at least three sides of the Square and Washington Street and Bradford Street (Atlas Pizza, Inman Perk, Avocados, Main Street Market & Cosa Nostra, Recess)
2. Determine how the city’s smoking ordinance may apply, especially for parklets intended to accommodate restaurant seating
3. Determine whether parklets are to remain within the public domain and government control, or whether they can be leased by businesses for use by their patrons
4. Work with building official and architect to complete an acceptable detailed design and specifications but allowing for uniqueness (want each to have their own character but still “fit/flow” together)
5. Conduct “temporary parklet” experiment and gauge feedback to determine feasibility of permanency
6. Coordinate with downtown businesses to develop a “walking” incentive for employees and customers to offset potential negative impact of losing street parking
7. Budget for materials and maintenance if to be city-owned
8. Install, enjoy, maintain, and expand where appropriate

PROGRAMMING

ACTION ITEMS

01

FOOD TRUCKS

GOAL: Increase diversity of food choices

LEAD: Main Street Manager

PARTNERS: Community Development, Main Street, Tourism, Environmental Health, Business License, Parks & Recreation, Consultant (zoning code amendment)

TIMELINE: 2015–2016

FUNDING: General Fund (consultant fee for code amendment and printing of promotional materials)

OBSTACLES: Ensuring fairness between food trucks and existing (and potential new) restaurants that have “bricks-and-mortar” locations on which they pay fees for occupancy, business license, etc.

STEPS:

1. Research models from other communities like Athens, Suwanee, Decatur, Atlanta, Alpharetta, etc.
2. Coordinate with Hall County Environmental Health or other applicable food-industry regulatory agencies to determine requirements for such uses
3. Amend the Gainesville Unified Land Development Code
4. Determine where the staging space should be placed, how it will be set up and funded, etc.
5. Explore reuse of old Hall County Jail as a business incubator site.
6. Determine where and when the food trucks would be allowed. Consider a phased implementation that starts with a seasonal approach at the Midtown Greenway and/or other location(s).

CHICKEN & WAFFLES FOOD TRUCK

THIS FOOD TRUCK CAN BE FOUND ON THE STREETS OF CALGARY, ONTARIO.

02

SAFETY AND SECURITY ELEMENTS

GOAL: Increase usage of parks and trails by installing various safety and security elements

LEAD: Police Chief

PARTNERS: Fire, Parks & Recreation staff and board, Public Works Department, volunteers like “Friends of the Parks/Trails”

TIMELINE: 2016–2018

FUNDING: General Fund, grant(s), impact fees

OBSTACLES: Funding; lack of people presence

STEPS:

1. Research models from other communities for infrastructure and equipment including call boxes, Segways and ATVs, and volunteer groups
2. Determine which and how many safety/security elements are needed to improve sense of security, and identify strategic placement
3. Budget for equipment and personnel
4. Install and GPS/map elements, train police patrol and volunteers, etc.

PROGRAMMING

ACTION ITEMS

03

DISPLAY LIGHTING ON DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS

GOAL: Activate blank spaces of Downtown buildings with display lighting used to raise awareness and engage the community through promotion of community events

LEAD: Will Hicks

PARTNERS: Property owners, City & County Public Information Officers, Main Street & Tourism, Public Works, Hall County

TIMELINE: 2015–2016

FUNDING: General Fund, Hotel/Motel Tax, User fee

OBSTACLES: Property owner buy-in, funding, security of equipment, “ownership” of responsibility of changing or accepting info from others

STEPS:

1. Conduct conversations with owners of buildings (Will Hicks), and with the City and County Public Information and Administrative officials (Special Projects Manager)
2. Research technical equipment needs, placement, and security/ maintenance
3. Determine the logistics of who will change the display lighting message, frequency of changing messages, etc.
4. Draft a policy related to display lighting, outlining who and how organizations other than the cities and Hall County can use it
5. Identify funding and budget for technical equipment, etc.
6. Install and us

04

VACANT / NONTRADITIONAL VENUE SPACES

GOAL: Foster community spirit through new activities or events using vacant tracts and nontraditional spaces in Downtown and Midtown

LEAD: Mayor or City Manager

PARTNERS: Owners of private vacant tracts like City View, Main Street, Public Works, Police, Community Development, Fire Department

TIMELINE: 2015–2016

FUNDING: General Fund, User / Vendor Fees

OBSTACLES: Private property owner buy-in and execution of MOU., funding; competing interests; development of vacant tract

STEPS:

1. Mayor talks to owners of City View property (tract on south side of pedestrian bridge spanning Jesse Jewell Parkway)
2. Draft and execute MOU/lease agreement
3. Create activity schedule
4. Promote the events and activities

PROGRAMMING

ACTION ITEMS

05

HALL COUNTY COURTHOUSE PARKING DECK

GOAL: Improve aesthetics of the Hall County Courthouse parking deck to create public art on the E. E. Butler Parkway gateway

LEAD: Special Projects Manager

PARTNERS: City officials (Mayor, Council City Manager), Hall County officials (Commissioner, Administrator, Sheriff's Office, Facilities Manager), Community Development, Vision 2030 Public Art Committee, local artist, arborist / landscape architect

TIMELINE: Phased Approach (2015–2020)

- Phase 1–Coordinate with local artist to develop concept, design, and implementation plan for public art; obtain city/county official buy-in; and vet through Vision 2030 Public Art Committee (2015)
- Phase 2–Identify and allocate (or raise) funding; install public art on all visible sides of parking deck in logical segments (2016–2020)

FUNDING: General Fund, grant(s), Vision 2030, private donations

OBSTACLES: Appropriate design given scale of building, its location and multiple impacted jurisdictions; funding; lack of community support

STEPS:

1. Coordinate with the local artist to develop a concept that is appropriate in character for Gainesville/Hall County and in scale, material, etc. given location, size, etc. of structure
2. Complete detailed design, cost estimate, and phased implementation strategy
3. Identify and allocate funding for materials, construction, installation, and artist's fee
4. Install, secure, and maintain. Coordinate with Vision 2030 Public Art Committee to document artwork piece

06

BROAD-SPRING STREETS SEWER EASEMENT

GOAL: Enhance usability of sanitary sewer easement as a pocket park with storm water quality features like rain gardens, public art or other amenity, and possible “Downtown Trolley” component

LEAD: Special Projects Manager

PARTNERS: Department of Water Resources, Community Development Department, Community Service Center/Gainesville Connection, Parks & Recreation Agency

TIMELINE: 2016 - 2017

FUNDING: PUD Fund (storm water controls/rain garden), General Funds (public art or other amenity), Community Service Center (trolley stop), Parks & Recreation (maintenance)

OBSTACLES: Sanitary Sewer line and easement restraints, funding, competing interests

STEPS:

1. Determine usability of land not containing sanitary sewer pipe
2. Draft landscape design plan for the tract as a pocket park with storm water quality elements, like rain gardens, and amenities like public art, bike racks, benches, etc.
3. Complete detailed design, cost estimate, and phased implementation strategy
4. Identify and allocate funding for development and maintenance

PROGRAMMING

ACTION ITEMS

07

PARKING

GOAL: Encourage use of free structured parking or alternatives to driving into Downtown. Facilitate reuse of on-street parking spaces for programming space (i.e., parklets to increase outdoor environment for restaurants, etc.)

LEAD: Assistant City Manager

PARTNERS: Main Street, Police, Public Works, Community Development Department, Chamber of Commerce

TIMELINE: 2020

FUNDING: General Fund

OBSTACLES: Political will — Downtown needs to be more mature/developed

STEPS:

1. Obtain buy-in on why needed and the benefits to parking meters
2. Determine costs: equipment, installation and maintenance, collection, where does money go, location of meters, pricing, and how to be implemented (all at once or a phased street-by-street approach)
3. Develop incentives to encourage use of deck parking versus on-street spaces, or develop a cost-savings annual pass for decks — “carrot”

08

NORTH SIDE PARKING DECK

GOAL: Increase parking capacity for businesses and future residential units located north of the Downtown Square

LEAD: Assistant City Manager

PARTNERS: Community Development, Main Street, Public Works, business owners, Hall County (if at library site), Water Resources Department, Fire Department

TIMELINE: 2020–2030

FUNDING: General Fund, SPLOST, TAD (if tied to private redevelopment), parking meter fees (if implemented)

OBSTACLES: Funding, location, political will and city/county coordination

STEPS:

1. Determine optimum location and then obtain stakeholder buy-in
2. Complete detailed design and estimate costs
3. Identify and allocate funding
4. Construct

PROGRAMMING

ACTION ITEMS

09

BRENAU TIGER TAKEOVER ON THE SQUARE

GOAL: Form and maintain partnerships with Brenau University; include and entice students to come to the Downtown Square to shop, dine and attend events

LEAD: Main Street Manager

PARTNERS: Student Services at Brenau University, Main Street, Communications and Tourism Manager

TIMELINE: 2015

FUNDING: Main Street Gainesville

OBSTACLES: Coordination of students, communication between students, downtown merchants and Main Street

STEPS:

1. Outreach to Brenau to find the needs/likes of the students
2. Coordinate a date/time for the Tiger Takeover night and other event
3. Logistics of concert, engaging activity for students to interact with downtown merchants, and retain a captive audience

RESULTS

On Thursday, August 20th the TIGER TAKEOVER took place on the Downtown Square. This event brought nearly 200 freshman and additional students and visitors to the Downtown Square. Tigers were hidden in various stores and a TIGER HUNT took place. Winners were awarded goody baskets filled with Gainesville welcome items. 150 Gainesville tote bags were handed out that contained information about events, activities and coupons for the students to use. In addition, a concert was held and a wild mustang was brought on to the Square for "selfies" from an equine event held out at the Chicopee Ag Center that weekend. This event allows the students to acclimate to the different establishments Downtown and get them involved with all of the activities happening Downtown. Stores reported an extra boost in sales, as did several restaurants. In addition, several merchants reported students coming back to shop in days after the event. More events will be planned in the future.

DressUp

WELCOME
BRENAU FRESHMEN!

Gainesville, Ga.
est. 1821
Gainesville, Ga.
est. 1821

DESIGN

ACTION ITEMS

01

OVERLAY DESIGN GUIDELINES AND ZONING UPDATE

GOAL: Preserve and enhance Gainesville's historic character

LEAD: Community Development Director

PARTNERS: Community Development Consultant, Main Street

TIMELINE: 2015–2016

FUNDING: General Fund

OBSTACLES: Lack of understanding; political will; striking balance between preserving historic character and timeliness/flexibility

STEPS:

1. Research other communities like Woodstock, Athens, Savannah, etc.
2. Research and evaluate various tools that can be incorporated into the overlay with design guidelines such as density bonuses, increased density allowed by right, requiring bottom floor of structured parking to be retail space,parking decks should not look like parking decks, etc.
3. Conduct internal review and discussions to evaluate existing code and overlay zones, options for achieving goal, potential roadblocks to achieving goal and/or (re)development
4. Develop an overlay with design guidelines for downtown and midtown that balances preserving the valued historic character with minimizing delays and costs to an owner/developer while affording flexibility
5. Discuss proposed overlay and guidelines with City Council
6. Prepare final version and adopt

02

DOWNTOWN DESIGN CONCEPT

GOAL: Illustrate design concepts in relation to the existing historic Square

LEAD: Georgia Power Company

PARTNERS: Community Development Consultant, Main Street, private property owner

TIMELINE: 2015–2016

FUNDING: Georgia Power

OBSTACLES: Striking balance between economic viability of development and preserving historic character; private property ownership

STEPS:

1. Illustrate proposed design concept of multi-story buildings in relation to existing development around the Square
2. Discuss any potential impacts and determine steps for moving forward to accommodate viable economic development in concert with the existing development surrounding the historic Square

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTION ITEMS

01

EXPAND NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT

GOAL: Provide opportunity for private developers to take advantage of historic preservation tax incentives for adaptive reuse of historic buildings, like converting upper stories into residential lofts.

LEAD: Special Projects Manager

PARTNERS: Consultant and Main Street

TIMELINE: FY 2017 (July 2016–September 2017)

FUNDING: General Fund, grant (Historic Preservation Fund Grant for CLGs)

OBSTACLES: Owner buy-in; lack of understanding of what National Register listing means and does not mean

STEPS:

1. Determine boundaries of an expanded Gainesville Commercial District as currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places
2. Apply for the HPF Grant for CLGs in February 2016
3. Select a preservation consultant
4. Complete National Register nomination and submit it to the Georgia Historic Preservation Division

02

MIXED-USE FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR "MAIN STREET" LOTS

GOAL: Determine type of mixed-use development that is economically viable on the City-owned downtown lots & formulate marketing strategy

LEAD: Georgia Power Company

PARTNERS: Assistant City Manager, Community Development, consultant

TIMELINE: 2015-2016

FUNDING: Georgia Power Company, Downtown Master Plan CIP Fund

OBSTACLES: Funding, timing

STEPS:

1. Coordinate with Georgia Power Company to select consultant
2. Consultant complete retail and mixed-use feasibility study, including downtown housing
3. Review findings and analysis
4. Refine City's vision and development plan for its "Main Street Lots"
5. Determine steps for marketing properties to be developed in accordance with City's vision/development plan

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTION ITEMS

03

HOTEL CONCIERGE RESTAURANT EXPERIENCE & MAIN STREET "BUCKS"

GOAL: Promote Downtown and strengthen Gainesville's hospitality industry by providing opportunities for hotel front-desk staff/concierge to experience first-hand Gainesville's local shops and restaurants

LEAD: City's Tourism Manager (Deb Gregson)

PARTNERS: City's Tourism & Main Street Managers, City's Public Information Officer, Hotels, Local Restaurants, Chamber of Commerce

TIMELINE: 2015 – 2016

FUNDING: Tourism/Main Street for printing of promotional materials

OBSTACLES: Buy-in from local restaurants, hotel front-desk staff/concierge actually participating, timing/frequency

STEPS:

1. Gain buy-in from restaurants and hotels, and determine participants
2. Coordination with restaurants on options for day- and night-time experience for hotel front-desk/concierge staff
3. Printing and promotion – packets to hotel, Chamber of Commerce, etc
4. Preservation Division

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