



MMP

MACON ACTION PLAN for the heart of macon

October 2015



a very special **THANK YOU**

Acknowledgements

Macon Action Plan (MAP) is a comprehensive plan that envisions the future of Macon's Urban Core. The Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority received generous grants from the **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation** and the **Peyton Anderson Foundation** to fund this community-driven effort to plan for our collective future. Thank you to the funders and to everyone who volunteered their time and talents, ideas, expertise, and resources to help us plan for the heart of Macon.

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MAP MEETING HOSTS

Thank you to all of the organizations in the Macon community that graciously hosted a MAP presentation. These sessions brought the strategies for our Urban Core before a collective audience of more than 750 people who had the opportunity to ask questions and offer suggestions:

100 Black Men
Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association
Bibb Family Connection Community Partnership
Bragg Jam Board
College Hill Corridor Commission
Downtown Rotary Club
Fickling & Company
First Baptist Church of Christ
Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce Board
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Kiwanis Club of Macon
Macon Arts Alliance Roundtable
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Macon Rotary Club
Mulberry Methodist Church
New Fellowship Baptist Church
NewTown Macon Board
North Macon Rotary Club

One Macon
Potpourri Garden Club
Roving Listeners
Shalom Zones
Shirley Hills Neighborhood Association
USGBC

In addition, thanks to the following organizations and entities for your participation, support, and publicity of MAP events:

11th Hour
13 WMAZ
41 NBC
Cox Capitol Theatre
Fox/ABC
Georgia Sports Hall of Fame
GPB
Historic Macon Design Wine Dine
Junior League of Macon
Leadership Macon
Macon Civic Club
Macon Magazine
Main Street Macon
Mercer University
Mercer University SGA
Navicent Health
Rookery
The Telegraph
Washington Memorial Library
WPGA

STEERING COMMITTEE

Many thanks to the MAP Steering Committee members who served as a sounding board and provided guidance throughout the planning process.

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The list below includes all who gave generously of their time and local knowledge in an interview or focus group as well as those who signed in at the MAP Open House or MAP Party where the planning team revealed the proposed recommendations.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Macon Action Plan (MAP) is a comprehensive, community-driven plan that envisions the future of Macon's historic downtown and intown neighborhoods.

All members of the Macon community – those who live, work, worship, learn, and play in Macon's Urban Core – were welcomed participants, invited to help craft a collective vision for the future and identify key actions for change to make our shared vision become reality.

Facilitated by the Macon-Bibb Urban Development Authority, Macon-Bibb County, and their partners, MAP is our roadmap to guide change and decision making in coming years. Because the A in MAP is for Action, the MAP movement is already well underway, building upon the positive change afoot in Macon's Urban Core, which includes:

- Mixed-use development at Mercer Village and neighborhood revitalization in Beall's Hill
- New lofts in College Hill and downtown as well as a host of new businesses downtown
- Placemaking and creative entrepreneurship initiatives spurred by College Hill, both focused on urban vitality and economic development
- Park improvements and streetscape investments that brought the vision for the 2nd Street Connector to life
- Campus wayfinding initiatives spearheaded by the recently rebranded Navicent Health
- A bid to expand Ocmulgee National Monument as Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve, and complementary efforts to revitalize East Macon's Main Street neighborhood

With our plan now in place, we turn our full focus to the hard work (and fun!) of MAP implementation – the act of transforming ideas and inspiration into real places and spaces within our Urban Core for all to inhabit and enjoy. That “we” includes you. The success of MAP calls for sustained support and involvement by the whole of our community.

What is the Urban Core?

The “Urban Core” refers to Macon's historic downtown and nearby neighborhoods. The Urban Core is where the City was first established, and it remains a center of employment, entertainment, and institutions, as well as home to a collection of historic and diverse neighborhoods and communities. The urban core is the heart of Macon and is bound by I-75 to the west, 7th Street and the Ocmulgee National Monument to the east, Little Richard Penniman Boulevard to the south, and Emery Highway to the north.

#MaconActionPlan
FRI 4-9PM @
GA SPORTSHall of FAME





The Making of MAP

MAP benefitted from an extraordinary body of committed stakeholders who engaged with the year-long planning process in multiple ways.

MAP launched its [website](http://maconactionplan.com) (maconactionplan.com) in July 2014, offering an introduction to the plan and inviting the public to get involved. The website featured a collaborative map in which participants could offer place-specific input and served more generally as a platform for updates on progress. In total, the website received over 1,200 unique visitors.

MAP conducted [interviews and focus groups](#) with over 75 local stakeholders, community leaders, and elected officials to test ideas and gain insight from local expertise. MAP launched two [surveys](#): a resident survey and an employee survey, available online and at MAP events. All told, 573 surveys were completed, each offering feedback on how people inhabit and utilize services in the Urban Core.

[MAP met the community](#) at numerous regularly scheduled meetings and events from a festive Second Sunday Concert in Washington Park to 30 formal presentations to community groups with a collective audience of approximately 750 people.

[The community came to MAP](#), participating in a month-long [Open House](#) at the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame where visitors engaged in interactive activities that covered topics including visioning, programming, downtown spending, activating alleys, and transportation. More than 130 guests signed in on opening night, and over 300 community members attended in total in fall 2014. Come spring 2015, the community came out to celebrate at a [MAP Party](#) hosted at the Cox Capitol Theatre to unveil the plan's preliminary recommendations. 220 attendees helped prioritize the proposed strategies.

With the help of Goods PR, MAP maintained an active presence on [social media](#), too, through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. These platforms encouraged participation and a way for web visitors to share feedback and be kept abreast of updates, upcoming events, and key findings from public input.

Indeed, the community responded in force to MAP's call to action, and the plan is richer as a result. From the bottom of MAP's heart, we thank you for your ideas and input, and the time and energy spent thinking, together, about the future of the heart of Macon!

MAP's vision for the future echoes the community input and provides a road map for the future grounded in the values of the people who live, work, worship, learn, and play in Macon's Urban Core.

In **your words**:

A Vision Statement

for Macon's Urban Core

photo credit: Alexdi at English Wikipedia

Your words, highlighted in pink, are the building blocks:

We are proud of our city - its **good bones, rich history** and traditions that give rhythm to community life.

Our future will respect, honor, and **complement our past**.

We see **positive momentum** at work in our urban core, and we are ready to work together to continue this trend.

We are **full of promise**. We are **eager to take ACTION** and **grow** Macon's urban core.

We are ready for the heart of Macon to become Middle Georgia's **flagship downtown experience**.

Vibrant, diverse, and historic yet modern, our urban core will **thrive** as a unique collection of neighborhoods, a **college town**, and a **center of culture, commerce, 21st century jobs** and **new connections** -- all nestled within the **intimate, comfortable scale** of a small city.

Together, for our future we will:

1. Grow with grace



We will evolve as a city that is **historic** and **modern, inclusive** and **diverse, home** to **families** and people of all ages, with **walkable** streets, **new businesses**, and **riverfront connections** that add **vibrancy, livability**, and **sustainability** to daily life.

2. Build upon Macon's good bones



Our beautiful buildings, strong institutions, rich and ancient history, and big employers will continue to **draw people** and **jobs** to **strengthen** our urban core.

3. Dance to our local rhythm



Our local talent will **bring us together** through the calendar of **events** that form the beat of community life, and Macon's **charm** and **creative** spirit will remain a **magnet for tourists**, **new businesses**, people who come to play, and those who **choose to stay**.

4. Care for our heart



We will **revitalize** neighborhoods and meet the needs of our residents, businesses, and investors by adopting **progressive** policies and programs for a **clean, safe**, and **livable** urban core.

5. Coordinate & focus for maximum impact



We will be **strategic**, target limited resources, and leverage recent and proposed investments. We will cultivate **leaders** and **champions**. We will **take action**.

GOALS & STRATEGIES

The Macon Action Plan focuses on four main goals for Macon's Urban Core, each intended to increase vitality and support economic development for a sustainable future in the heart of Macon:

1) SUPPORT THE ENGINES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Urban Core is, and should remain, the economic center for the region. A focus on diversifying the local economy is critical to ensure that the Urban Core is competitive and attractive for new businesses. The Urban Core must bring back anchor businesses and attract new businesses by creating a culture that is friendly to start-up businesses and new job opportunities. In short, the Urban Core needs a range of businesses to support a greater range of jobs as well as more residents that support local restaurants and stores. Part of how this will be accomplished is to create a place that offers an experience attractive to businesses and residents.

To ensure long-term economic growth, MAP is focused on enabling people to both live and work in the Urban Core. The first chapter – Support the Engines of Economic Development – sets the overall context for how Macon can ramp up economic opportunities for new and existing residents alike in the Urban Core. The strategies recognize that significant collaboration among those involved in attracting businesses and talent to Macon is essential and that MAP is just one initiative within a much larger economic discussion about the Urban Core, the City and the region. In subsequent chapters, MAP details many specific actions designed to make the Urban Core more lively, unique and welcoming to new investment, jobs and residents.



1.1 Support Macon's institutions as economic anchors for future growth

- Promote an Urban Core Health District via a medical corridor that helps to forge connections among the major health institutions in the Urban Core including Navicent, Coliseum Medical Center, Regency Hospital and the Mercer School of Medicine
- Create an attractive, 21st Century campus for Navicent Health that incorporates wayfinding, streetscape improvements, and a mix of uses that includes housing
- Build better support for economic anchors including Mercer University by expanding commercial businesses that cater to local employees, adding supportive services like hotels for visitors and by encouraging medical office space that supports the health institutions

1.2 Send a clear message that Macon is open for business

- Strengthen competition and re-establish natural churn in the local market by providing build-out assistance to prospective retailers, services and offices as well as offering pop-up storefronts to test business concepts
- Initiate Urban Core-specific business attraction efforts by redefining the draw area, pursuing business recruitment, and seeking to diversify the business mix
- Work with existing commercial property owners to encourage movement in market through outreach and education
- Initiate talent attraction efforts to build local economy and diversify the workforce
- Attract more customers through programming, clustering, and consistent hours

1.3 Support start-ups and attract job-creating businesses

- Embrace and support start-up culture by fostering collaborative workspace, improving infrastructure for high-speed internet, fostering initiatives for networking, small business promotion, and information accessibility, and supporting the Mercer Innovation Center
- Encourage modern industrial uses along 7th Street by remediating brownfields, assembling land, and marketing shovel-ready sites
- Establish creative work space within existing underutilized buildings for maker spaces and commercial offices

2) CREATE AN UNPARALLELED URBAN CORE EXPERIENCE

One of the primary features of successful downtowns across the country is that they offer a distinctive experience that draws visitors, attracts talent, drives investment, and creates jobs. The urban experience is rooted in a city's vibrancy and unique spirit, how much there is to do, the social life of a community, and the vibe of the spaces and events that bring people together or encourage them to explore and get to know a place. In other words, a successful urban center must offer a wide range of activities that make people want to visit, stay, play, live, work, launch, and invest.

One of the most frequently repeated comments throughout the public outreach process was, "We'd like more things to do" as well as programmed places and gathering spaces where people can come together. How can the Urban Core experience become the flagship downtown experience we all want in central Georgia? Strategies to do this address the following themes: cleanliness and safety, events and programming, parks and public space, branding the Macon experience, and promoting local culture and history.

"In large measure, our whole community is defined by downtown... we need to play it up and make it better."



2.1 Keep the urban core clean and safe for all to enjoy

- Enhance the comfort and appeal of the urban core's public realm through beautification projects and public art, additional lighting on buildings, street trees, and trails, and data tracking on crime in the Urban Core
- Introduce additional trash, recycling, and maintenance efforts from a comprehensive municipal recycling strategy to a trash and recycling bin audit

2.2 Transform Macon's sidewalks and public spaces as the center stage for community life

- Improve use of underutilized spaces, including alleys, medians, and vacant storefronts with movable furniture, stewardship by a friends of the medians group, and storefront installations
- Improve and expand passive open spaces to create a central gathering space in the historic downtown and in each neighborhood with opportunities for action in Bernd Park, Booker T. Washington Community Center, Central City Park, Cherry Street Plaza, Coleman Hill Park, Cotton Avenue Plaza, Daisy Park, Poplar Yards, Rosa Parks Square, Tattnall Square and Washington Square as well as potential new open spaces
- Integrate the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail as a key amenity by adding trail segments for a downtown river loop and connecting the trail throughout the Urban Core via medians, on-street bike lanes, and bridge improvements

Rendering of a Rosa Parks Square redesign



Proposed improvements to the Clinton Street entrance to the Ocmulgee National Monument

2.3 Program downtown's social life and build the local audience

- Maintain support for existing events (like First Friday, Second Sunday Concerts, Bragg Jam, and Cherry Blossom) and add new programs (from pop-up beer gardens or mini-golf to movie screenings and opportunities to bring people to the river)

2.4 Foster a sense of arrival and make good first impressions at gateways

- Improve Downtown approaches from main thoroughfares by investing in gateways with signage, landscaping, and public art
- Capitalize on local institutions and assets as gateways to the Urban Core by re-designing intersections for improved circulation and a more beautiful and navigable public realm
- Develop a signage & wayfinding system for key destinations, major employers and parking areas in the Urban Core

2.5 Generate national buzz about Macon's unique assets and broaden the tourism audience

- Brand Macon's Urban Core with a consistent and compelling message
- Support the Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative's (ONPPI) bid to expand the Ocmulgee National Monument as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve through community advocacy and investment in East Macon's public realm
- Focus on the broader story, past, present and future, to encourage tourism in Macon

3) FOCUS ON URBAN CORE LIVING

The Urban Core has a substantial amount of space to fill. Based on a detailed survey of all properties in the Urban Core conducted in spring 2014, 30 percent of parcels are wholly or partly inactive. The mixed-use historic downtown, for example, has a lower proportion of vacancy but is surrounded by “gaps,” or areas with a high concentration of vacant land or buildings and surface parking lots. These voids disconnect the historic downtown from other nearby, relatively prosperous neighborhoods, including parts of InTown and neighborhoods near Mercer University. Several residential neighborhoods suffer from high concentrations of vacancy and blight, as do industrial areas along the rail line and Seventh Street. High levels of vacancy and blight destabilize neighborhoods.

The Urban Core needs additional residents as well as healthy and stable neighborhoods in order to sustain a pattern of growth and increased vibrancy. The strategies addressed in this section include: increasing residential development in downtown and nearby, and fighting blight and revitalizing neighborhoods throughout the Urban Core.

“We’re headed in the right direction with the new housing going in. We need people who don’t leave with the sun.”



3.1 Encourage more households to locate in the historic downtown

- **Focus on key sites for mixed-use development** to grow the historic downtown’s mixed-use center and extend the urban fabric to the River
- **Increase the diversity of housing choice** through adaptive reuse and loft development, urban infill with for-sale and rental homes, and townhomes
- **Welcome new residents** as members of a close-knit community

3.2 Update regulations and codes to encourage investment

- **Upgrade Urban Core zoning with a form-based code overlay** to streamline development review process
- **Add capacity to streamline the design review process** for historic preservation through training and/or the creation of a Preservation Commission

3.3 Strengthen Urban Core neighborhoods to offer the best of both worlds – Downtown or Intown living

- **Stabilize and grow neighborhoods in the Urban Core** through blight removal, vacant land management, land acquisition, code enforcement, and selective rehab and infill
- **Continue to invest in Beall’s Hill** with single-family rehab, new apartments, and public realm improvements
- **Revitalize East Macon’s Main Street neighborhood** through blight removal and land stewardship, Main Street improvements and greening, Clinton Street improvements, and the Mill Hill Arts Village
- **Focus investment in Pleasant Hill** beginning with community organizing through a collaborative planning process to guide blight removal and land stewardship, strategic residential rehab/ infill, and investments in neighborhood institutions including the Booker T. Washington Recreation Center and Bobby Jones Performing Arts Center

Rendering of the proposed Mill Hill Arts Alley and revitalization effort in the Main Street neighborhood

4) CULTIVATE CONNECTIVITY

As the hub of business and government in Central Georgia, the Urban Core has excellent local and regional vehicular connections through its grid network and interstate highways. The movement of vehicles to and from Downtown has long been a priority of its transportation system.

The Urban Core needs a different approach to transportation. Pedestrians are critical to the success of the Urban Core and their safety should be the highest priority in the design of its streets. A streamlined parking system will improve the Downtown experience for residents, employees, and visitors. Improvements to public transportation and bike infrastructure will increase transportation choice. They will furthermore alleviate some of the challenges faced by drivers and pedestrians through the reduction of traffic, which in turn results in better parking and pedestrian conditions. These types of improvements will help to attract the next generation of residents, employees, and business owners. In the meantime, it is likely that these choices will require public investment before the market, demographics, and Downtown can fully support private investment. This section addresses parking, pedestrian safety, and active forms of transportation.

“The parking situation is the most frustrating aspect of living downtown.”



Example of a mobile parking application, Parkmobile

4.1 Manage the parking system in the historic downtown in a comprehensive manner

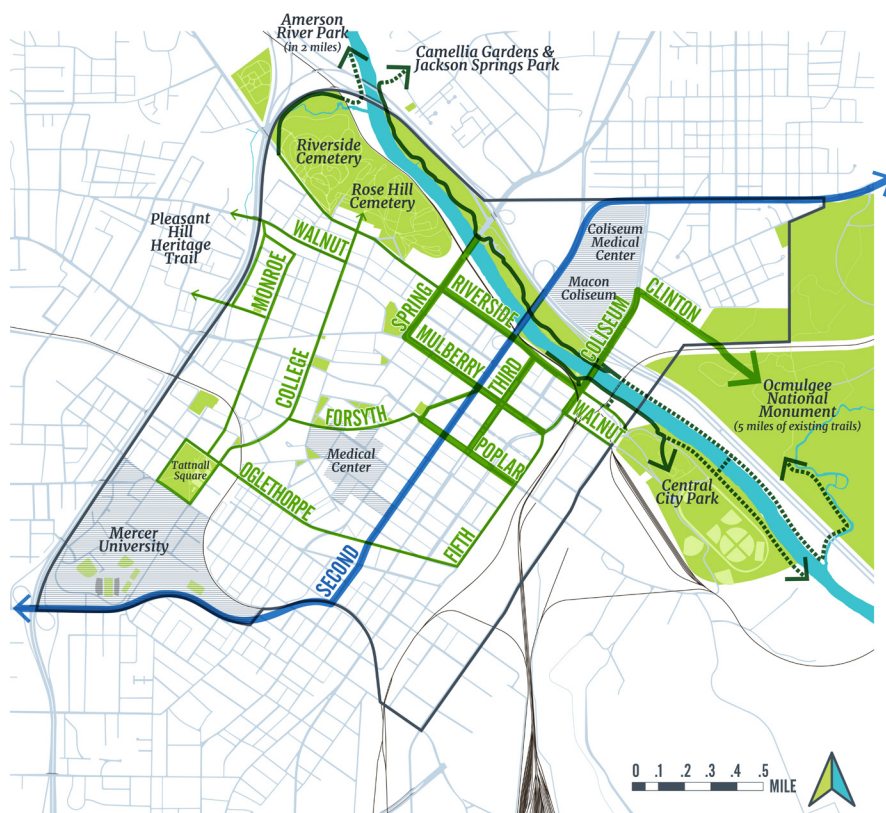
- Install parking meters and price meters to encourage turnover where demand is highest
- Utilize technology and mobile applications for both payment and enforcement
- Consider creating a parking authority
- Encourage use of parking garages through improved signage
- Introduce a residential permit parking program
- Selectively convert angled parking to reverse angled parking, only in concert with planned roadway restriping

4.2 Enhance safety

- Mitigate truck traffic on MLK by re-routing trucks along 7th Street
- Prioritize pedestrian safety and connectivity at signalized intersections by adding pedestrian countdown signals, leading pedestrian intervals, prohibiting right turns on red, eliminating double signals, and introducing international crosswalks
- Develop pedestrian encouragement and education programs

4.3 Improve multi-modal transportation options

- Improve bus/shuttle connections to link Terminal Station with regional destinations such as Atlanta's airport, and explore Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Improve bicycle infrastructure with additional on-street bike lanes, bike share, and support for group rides
- Improve the pedestrian experience by instituting streetscape standards, investing in sidewalk improvements, and relocating utilities
- Make it easier to live in the Urban Core without a car through car share, electric car infrastructure, and ride share



Map of proposed Ocmulgee Heritage Trail network throughout the Urban Core

- existing river trail
- proposed river trail
- downtown heritage trail
- on street connection
- 2nd street connector
- open space
- rail

INTO ACTION: *our first year*

As the plan's name suggests, from the very beginning, the Macon Action Plan has been about action. To maintain interest and momentum in the Urban Core, implementation must proceed quickly. While some strategies will take many years to bring to fruition, MAP includes a range of shorter term action steps that can and should progress in the coming year.

To help MAP transition from planning to implementation, leverage partnerships, and maximize existing resources to effect early change that the community wants to see, necessary first steps include:

- **Form an Implementation Committee** tasked with stewarding the plan from vision to reality
- **Dedicate staff time for focusing on MAP implementation** so that not a day goes by when the plan sits on the proverbial shelf
- **Seek dedicated and sustainable funding** to provide regular dollars to support a range of activities in the Urban Core from programming and sidewalk improvements to ongoing business attracting efforts
- **Involve the community** through a host of new strategies for action across the Urban Core; launch a next generation challenge grant for the Urban Core to empower neighbors, the emerging downtown neighborhood association, and other community groups throughout the Urban Core as agents of change
- **FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS** by directing resources to targeted projects for maximum impact. This plan outlines many strategies that cover a broad range of topics and geographies in the Urban Core. Strategic implementation of these action items is critical so as not to dilute their impact.

The Macon Action Plan is a living document. It is important to remember that MAP's success relies on actions both big and small. The early, incremental actions and stepping stones between projects are just as necessary as the larger catalyst projects; every step forward should be celebrated to maintain energy and support for the Urban Core.

We built this plan together, Macon. Now, let's roll up our sleeves and take **ACTION**.







INTRODUCTION

The Macon Action Plan (MAP) is a comprehensive, community-driven plan that envisions the future of Macon's historic downtown and intown neighborhoods. All members of the Macon community – those who live, work, worship, learn, and play in Macon's Urban Core – were welcomed participants, invited to help craft a collective vision for the future and identify key actions for change to make our shared vision become reality. Thank you to the thousands of you who engaged with the planning process and in doing so enriched this plan. Your words, your ideas, and your energy are present in every page.

Facilitated by the Macon-Bibb Urban Development Authority, Macon-Bibb County, and their partners, MAP is our roadmap to guide change and decision making in coming years. But because the A in MAP is for Action (now!), the MAP movement is already well underway, building upon the positive change afoot in Macon's Urban Core. With our plan now in place, we turn our full focus to the hard work (and fun!) of implementation – the act of transforming ideas and inspiration into real places and spaces within our Urban Core for all to inhabit and enjoy. That “we” includes you. The success of MAP calls for sustained support and involvement by the whole of our community.

Macon Action Plan defines the Urban Core as the area bound by I-75 to the west, 7th Street and the Ocmulgee National Monument to the east, Little Richard Penniman Boulevard to the south, and Emery Highway to the north. As such, the Urban Core includes downtown Macon, Intown, Beall's Hill, Pleasant Hill, College Hill, Tattnall Heights, Huguenin Heights, and East Macon's Main Street neighborhood, as well as Macon-Bibb County Government Center, Mercer University, Navicent Health, Coliseum Medical Center, Regency Hospital, the 7th Street Industrial Corridor, and numerous historic parks, cemeteries, and riverfront trail segments along the Ocmulgee River.

What is the Urban Core?

The “Urban Core” refers to Macon's historic downtown and nearby neighborhoods. The Urban Core is where the City was first established, and it remains a center of employment, entertainment, and institutions, as well as home to a collection of historic and diverse neighborhoods and communities. The Urban Core is the heart of Macon.

Introduction

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MACON'S URBAN CORE: *yesterday & today*

With its location along the Ocmulgee River, present-day Macon evolved from the home of ancient indigenous civilizations, complete with ceremonial mounds now part of the Ocmulgee National Monument, into a prosperous center for commerce and trade developed over the course of the nineteenth century. As Macon entered the twentieth century, a confluence of rail lines, concentration of large downtown buildings, and a strong textile industry defined the city. Macon hosted a dense and vibrant urban environment, with bustling and walkable streets populated by a diverse mix of uses. Its downtown was a center of commercial activity, including an array of shopping options and an active entertainment scene.

Despite its economic success, Macon started to experience a decline in its population in the 1950s. As witnessed by many industrial boomtowns at that time, residents began to push out of the urban core, lured by the new housing and lower cost of living in suburbs. Retail followed suit with the development of new malls that attracted stores and services formerly located downtown. As if these trends were not enough, the new and expanded highways combined with the changing nature of industrial production resulted in the relocation or closure of local factories. Simply put, the loss of residents and jobs directly results in fewer workers, tax payers, customers, visitors, students, and businesses. There was less revenue and economic activity to offset the disinvestment occurring within the City, a challenge still faced by local leaders.

The effects of disinvestment in Macon's Urban Core remain visible today. Many of the neighborhoods that surround downtown face the challenges of poverty and low incomes. Vacancy and blight have hit these neighborhoods particularly hard and are prevalent in the historic downtown as well, both in the vacant storefronts visible at street level and in uninhabited upper floors. At the same time, and to Macon's great benefit, the legacy of the city's past grandeur is still present in the urban fabric today, and the city enjoys an inventory of beautiful buildings on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as wide and lushly planted streets designed as thoroughfares that pass through the basic grid of the City. These good bones set Macon apart and position the Urban Core for re-growth, contributing to a sense of place and unparalleled backdrop for small-city urban living. Indeed, Macon's juxtaposition of decline and grandeur lies at the heart of the central challenge and opportunity for the Urban Core, namely:

- **How do we reach our full potential**, reactivate our once vibrant streets, and revitalize our intown neighborhoods?
- **How do we rebuild a full-service Urban Core** where people can live, find work or grow new businesses, and shop to meet their needs downtown or nearby, while also enjoying a quality of life improved by the ability to safely walk or bike, sit in the shade of a public park, or come together with fellow Maconites at a local event? How do we draw more visitors and leave a lasting impression that brings them back time and again, infusing the local economy with outside dollars each time?



(Left) 2nd & Cotton c.1912 (Center) 3rd & Mulberry c.1940s (Right) Mulberry Street c. 1950
Source: Middle Georgia Archives, Washington Memorial Library



(Top) Bell House, 315 College Street Photo Credit: <http://www.historicmacon.org/blog>

(Bottom) View looking East down Cherry Street looking at 2nd Street (Right) Street closure for public event at 1st & Poplar, Source: Shannon Fickling Architect

Much as it took time for residents and businesses to leave the Urban Core, it will take some time to recover. Today, the Urban Core's total population is only 8,990 residents of Macon-Bibb County's 155,000 residents¹. In addition, the historic downtown area, roughly defined as Pine to Riverside and Fifth to New Streets, had a population of only 440 in 2010, now slightly larger due to the development since that time of new lofts in the area. Overall, the US Census reveals a modest increase in population since 2000 which is promising, but the Urban Core needs substantial and sustained growth in order to regain urban vitality, support a more robust range of retail offerings, rebuild the tax base to upgrade infrastructure and public spaces, and reinforce the tentative inklings that after decades of decline, the Core is heading in the right direction.

This growth must come not only in the form of new residents, but also in the form of new jobs and businesses. The Urban Core hosts over 25,000 jobs, with over half of employees employed at medical institutions. Other major institutional employers include the municipal government, federal court, and Mercer University. Despite this concentration of jobs, commercial activity lags; the Urban Core has a surplus of retail over expenditures, meaning that at present, there are not enough local dollars spent in the Urban Core to support additional stores and services. In order to reach a critical mass and, in turn, help fill in some of the retail spaces, we must attract and retain talent, build more housing, and encourage new business growth and job creation within the Core.

Macon is well-positioned to overcome its challenges. The recent successes of the College Hill Corridor initiative offer proof that the city – and importantly, its citizens – are very capable of planning and following through with actions to implement a plan. In the span of just five years, College Hill welcomed many positive transformations fueled by a unique combination of private sector and philanthropic funding coupled with a local do-it-yourself attitude: mixed use development in Mercer Village, an increase in neighborhood housing throughout the Corridor, improved parks, a plethora of new programs, streetscape improvements for a safer, more beautiful public realm, all championed and built through partnerships and grassroots efforts.

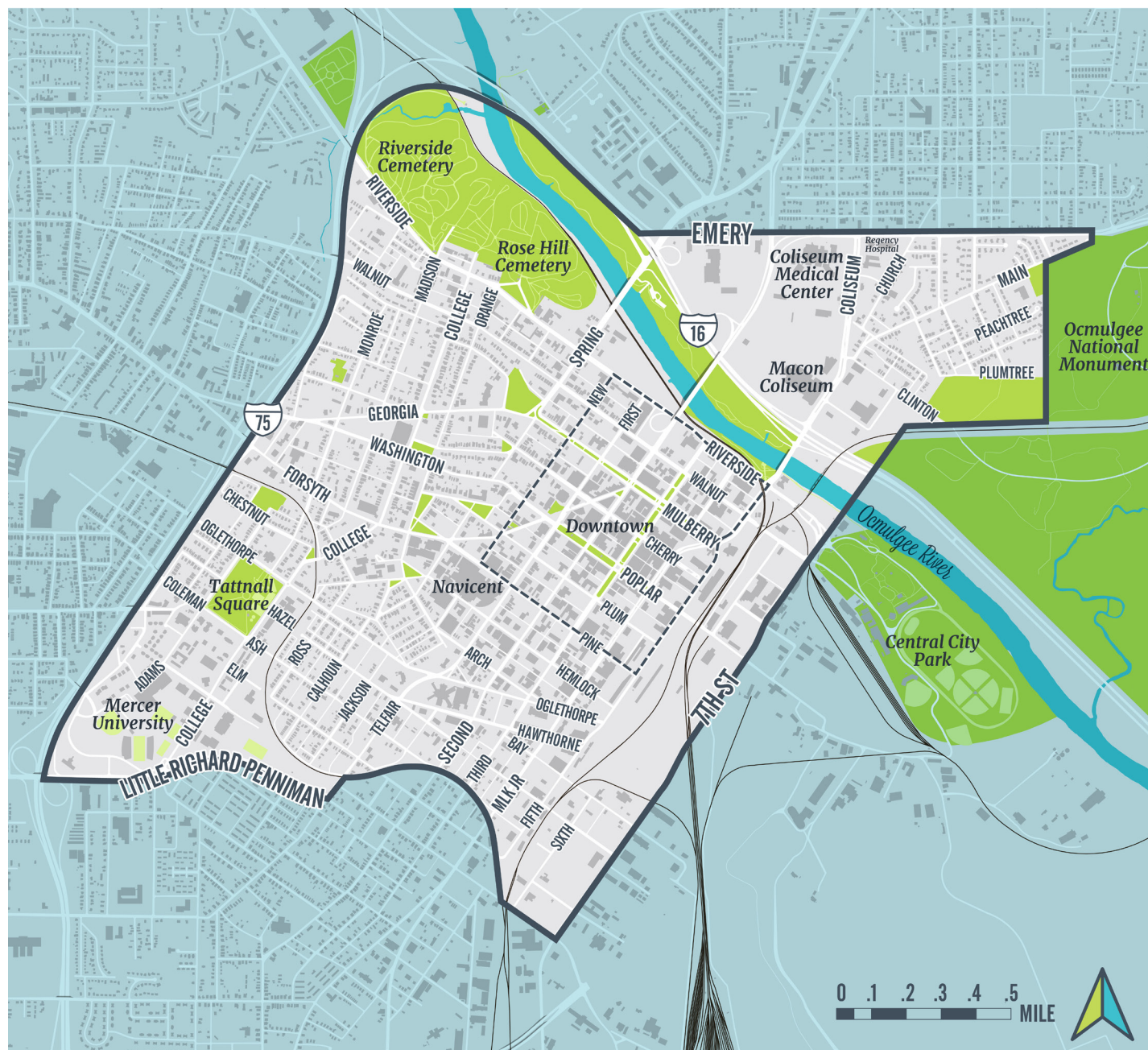
Such success is not only limited to College Hill; Macon's downtown has also experienced a recent boost in development interest and activity. New lofts, breathing new life into old buildings with creativity and vision, are attracting more downtown residents. New retail and restaurants are repopulating storefronts, generating foot traffic and adding much needed buzz and activity to downtown. Streetscape improvements underway on Cherry and 2nd Streets, and along adjacent alleys, are making the Urban Core more walkable and beautiful, a perfect backdrop for new placemaking initiatives that will celebrate and build community within the Core's unique public realm.

Numerous other recent and proposed projects are scattered throughout the reaches of the Urban Core, and therein lies an issue to address: the efforts to revitalize the Urban Core have momentum but are not always connected. A common refrain from people is that the Urban Core has so many wonderful places and assets but they are too often islands unto themselves. Navicent feels separated from the historic downtown. Downtown is not yet well connected to the Ocmulgee Trail. The Ocmulgee National Monument is adjacent to East Macon but not a part of it. These are just some of the many issue raised by stakeholders in this process. The challenge is in "connecting the dots" such that investment and improvements in one location strengthen the entire Urban Core.

Much as Urban Core itself lacks a physical center, it also lacks a central guiding force. This plan aims to restore the heart of Macon by uniting stakeholders and neighbors around a shared vision for the future of Macon's Urban Core and a course of action that will enable us to take action for implementation, swiftly and together.

¹ 2010 Census Summary File 1, US Census Bureau

THE STUDY AREA



- urban core study area
- historic downtown
- open space
- rail

Source: Interface Studio
Figure 1– Map of Urban Core with historic downtown area

Actions underway IN MACON'S URBAN CORE

A significant amount of investment can be seen on the ground in the Urban Core, much of which has taken place in the past five years.

With recent and proposed projects across the entire study area, MAP has the opportunity to build on this momentum and help tie the following accomplishments and ongoing initiatives together:

Mixed-Use Development at Mercer Village – built in the years following the original College Hill Corridor Master Plan, Mercer Village created a new commercial hub within the Urban Core with student housing in the Lofts at Mercer built atop ground floor commercial including Mercer's campus bookstore (Barnes & Noble), a mix of food and drink options including Jittery Joe's, Sauced Pizza, Francar's Buffalo Wings, Margarita's Mexican Grill, and Fountain of Juice, as well as beauty services. Traffic calming and new plantings have fostered a pedestrian-friendly environment that connects with Tattnall Square Park and Lofts Phase 3, flanking the park.

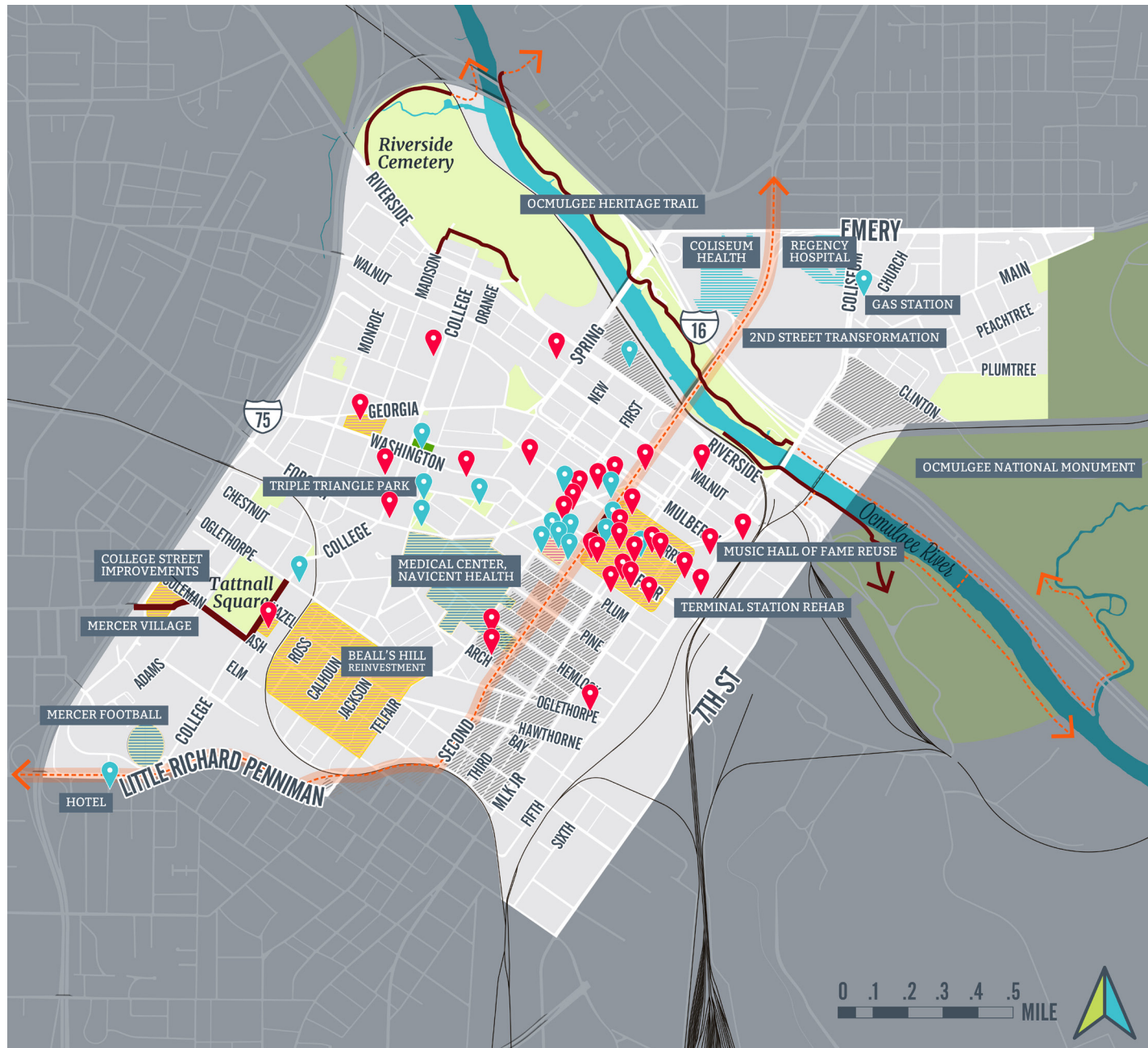
Neighborhoods Rebuilding – residential infill has transformed many blocks in Beall's Hill, with a mix of historic home renovations and new construction taking the place of once blighted properties. Investments coordinated by the Historic Macon Foundation through the Historic Hills & Heights Development Corporation, private developers, new homeowners, and long-term residents are complemented by the efforts of the active Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association, which brings neighbors together to address community issues and discuss future opportunities for change, including the potential for loft rentals and improved stormwater management.

Catalyst Projects – in addition to residential infill, the Urban Core is home to several new and proposed catalyst projects including the Dannenberg lofts and the Lofts at College Hill which have brought modern design and a mix of residential and retail space to the site behind the Macon Post Office. Just down College Street in both directions, new cultural institutions have found homes in old buildings: the Tattnall Square Center for the Arts and Mercer University's Townsend School of Music. And proposals for new mixed use developments downtown and closer to the Ocmulgee River promise to strengthen and grow the center of downtown proper.



(Top) Mixed-use development at Mercer Village
(Middle) New construction houses at Tattnall Place in Beall's Hill
(Bottom Left) Streetscape improvements on Cherry Street from the summer of 2014
(Bottom Right) Poplar Lofts on Third Street downtown

RECENT & PROPOSED INVESTMENTS



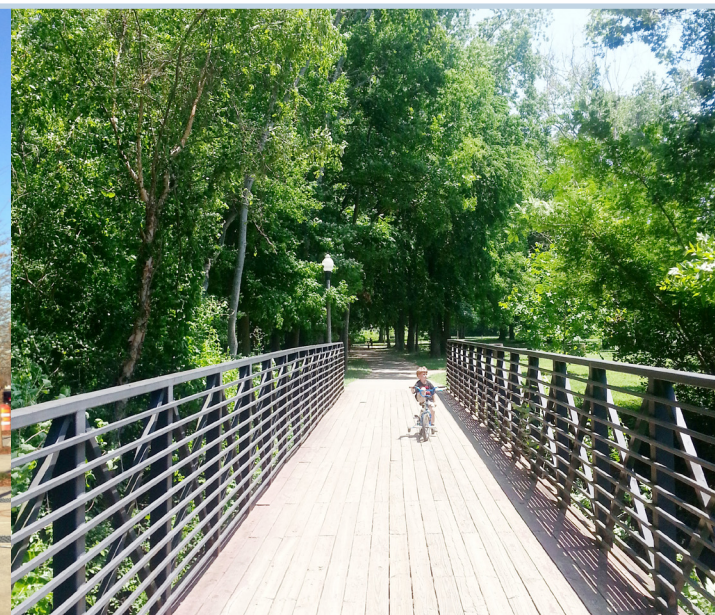
Source: Newtown Macon, Interface Studio
Figure 2- Map of recent & proposed investments in the Urban Core



Improvements in Tattnall Square Park, Source: Friends of TSP



Second Street Connector Model Block Completed Winter 2014



Ocmulgee Heritage Trail improvements

Tattnall Square Park Master Plan – the park at the heart of the College Hill Corridor has received much love and investment, with Friends of Tattnall Square Park spearheading a Master Plan for the park and overseeing smaller-scale, grassroots improvements, like new seating areas, the pavilion re-painting, and over 200 tree plantings, as well as larger-scale capital improvements including new sidewalks, formal entrances, and a fountain at the park’s center.

Spaces and Places for Play – beyond the investments in Tattnall Square, the Urban Core has multiple new places for play, and, more importantly, ever more reasons to play. The Urban Core hosts the Macon Dog Park, Second Sunday Concerts, bike rides led by local cycling advocates, and access to the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail along the River and new destination parks to the north (Amerson Park) and south (Central City Park, soon to be improved). Downtown’s unique system of alleyways are being reclaimed and reprogrammed for public enjoyment, and pop-up/temporary events sponsored by local businesses are beginning to find a home in Rosa Parks Square.

Mercer Football – the stadium opened for Mercer’s new football team in fall 2014, welcoming students, alumni, and local fans at games and tailgate celebrations. The weekend games drew big crowds – among them visitors looking to spend the weekend and spend some dollars to support bars and restaurants in the Urban Core! There is now renewed interest in destination and boutique hotels downtown.

College Hill Refresh – the 2014 update to the original College Hill Corridor Master Plan, the Refresh charts a course for continued revitalization and implementation within the Corridor. As the Corridor is a key part of the Urban Core, the Refresh offers a planning foundation for the Macon Action Plan to build upon and is attached as a MAP Appendix.

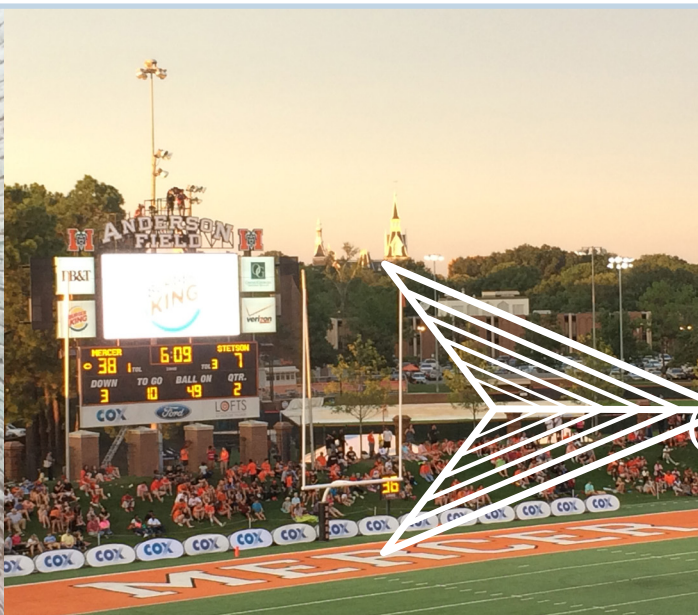
Open for Business – retail and restaurants continue to crop up. Since MAP’s launch in summer 2014, the Urban Core has welcomed Just Tap’d, Spud Dog, The Mill, Kudzu Seafood, and BowFresh Bowties, to name a few.

2nd Street Connector – the vision block between Poplar and Cherry showcases how a new parking design, landscaping, shade trees, curb bump-outs, sidewalk improvements, benches, and bike lanes can transform the experience of a corridor for those traveling on foot, by bike, or by car. With transit investments still under discussion in an effort to better link Mercer University with downtown and beyond, planned investments will help connect anchor institutions with the center of downtown.

Navicent Health – recently re-branded, Navicent Health has invested to improve Pine Street and is working to improve campus wayfinding. As the region’s biggest medical center, gateway improvements in the Urban Core at large, but also around Navicent, will be critical to inform positive impressions among visitors and to keep the medical campus integrated as a recognizable feature within the city’s fabric.



Recent alley activation with string lighting and planters



Mercer Football, Source: Shannon Fickling Architect



Ocmulgee Nat'l Monument seeks designation as a National Park & Preserve

Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve – across the river stand the ancient Indian Mounds of the Macon Plateau, today part of Ocmulgee National Monument. The Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative (ONPPI) is working to expand the Ocmulgee National Monument and merge it with Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge along the Ocmulgee River Corridor from Macon to Hawkinsville. If the site receives National Park and Preserve designation, it would be the first National Park in Georgia, and the first Park and Preserve (a designation that allows hunting and fishing in portions of the grounds) east of the Mississippi. The new designation will impact preservation, recreation, and tourism, all at the doorstep to the Urban Core.

Mill Hill Arts District – with talk about National Park designation and more visitors to the Mounds, conversations have commenced about the approach to the Monument through East Macon's Main Street neighborhood. The UDA has stepped in as a lead partner in working with the City-County on blight removal and an improved gateway along Clinton Street. The Macon Arts Alliance, in collaboration with community leaders at the Family Investment Center, is exploring the potential of creating an arts village anchored by a community arts center and a community of artists living and working with residents to revitalize the neighborhood.

Now MAP is in the mix, offering more than a plan... a plan for coordinated ACTION. True to its name, MAP took action and brought change to the Urban Core while the plan was in progress. MAP retrofitted the Cherry Street tree pits with new plantings, supported the creation of a Downtown Neighbors Association, and established a revolving loan fund for commercial space fit-outs to help new businesses open their doors in the Urban Core. MAP tackled the critical (if unsexy) tasks of improving waste management and downtown parking, with new studies aimed at improving necessary services for all.

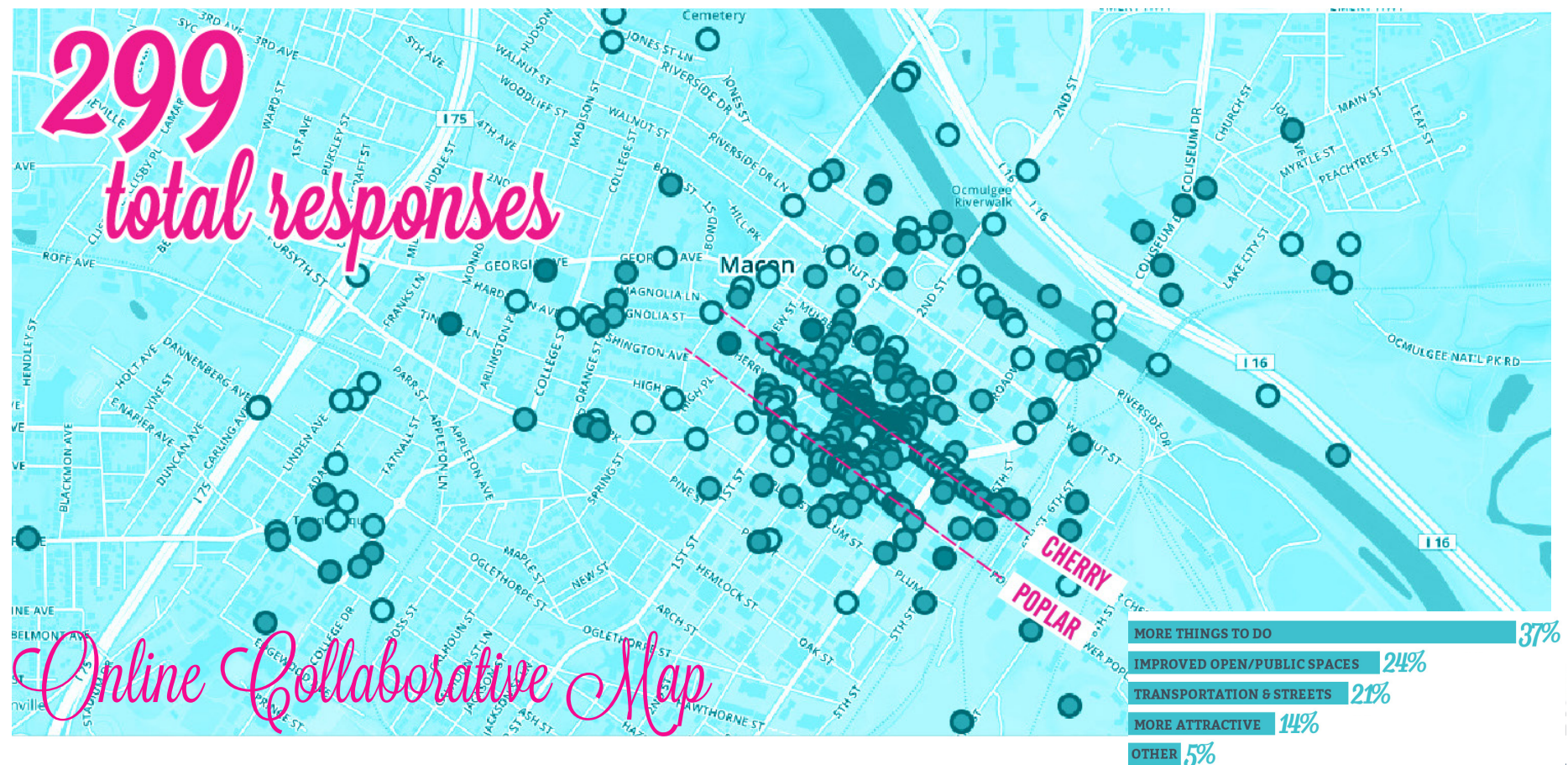
Going forward, MAP has limited resources through the Urban Development Authority to expend in the Urban Core toward plan implementation, and MAP has unlimited opportunities to partner with the movers, shakers, and doers in our community to keep the MAP movement moving forward.

THE PLANNING process

Amidst this positive change and momentum, MAP has the benefit of an extraordinary body of committed stakeholders collaborating with the planning team about what to do now and what to do next. Public input has been integral to MAP's planning process, beginning with the Steering Committee of 25 volunteers who met eight times over the course of the year to oversee MAP's development. In turn, Steering Committee members and the MAP planning team invited residents and employees in the Urban Core to help shape the plan as well at several events throughout summer and fall 2014 and into spring 2015. In addition to these events, MAP's public outreach has also employed social, digital, and print media to connect with the Urban Core community.

Online Presence & Collaborative Map

MAP launched its website (maconactionplan.com) in July 2014, offering an introduction to the plan and the planning process and inviting the public to get involved. The website featured a collaborative map in which participants could place a marker at a specific location, select a theme (Business, Housing, Parks/River, Parking, Public Safety, Public Space, Streets/Parking, Walking/Biking, or Other), and offer a related idea or comment. All input was visible for other visitors to see. The website subsequently served as a platform for updates on progress, including a video from the first public Open House event and a slideshow from the MAP Party. In total, the website received over 1,200 unique visitors at the time this document was published.





Participants sharing their “Big Idea” for the Urban Core on speech bubbles.

The Speech Bubble

Odds are you have probably seen it already, since it has been all over town! The speech bubble is a blank slate on which community members can write down their big ideas for the Urban Core. Sometimes it is a chalkboard (or two) sometimes a piece of paper cut in the form of a speech bubble, but one thing has remained the same: EXCELLENT contributions captured in some pretty cute photos!

Surveys

MAP launched two surveys in September 2014 to reach out to the public: a resident survey and an employee survey. The resident survey sought input on participants' experience as residents in Macon's Urban Core and included questions on their housing situation, characteristics of their community, their shopping habits, and how they travel around Macon. The employee survey sought input on participants' experience as employees in Macon's Urban Core and included questions on what types of businesses they patronized and what they considered to be a reasonable distance to walk from where they park to where they work. Steering Committee members helped circulate the surveys among their networks, and it also was among the activities at the first Open House event. An online version was available as well. All told, 573 surveys were completed.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Throughout the process, the MAP planning team conducted approximately 75 interviews and focus group discussions with local stakeholders, community leaders, and elected officials to test ideas and gain further insight from local expertise.

Social Media

With the help of Goods PR, MAP has maintained an active presence on social media through Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. These platforms have encouraged participation and a way for web visitors to share feedback and be kept abreast of updates, upcoming events, and findings from events.

The opportunities for the community to get involved with the Macon Action Plan have been many, and the community responded in force to MAP's call to action. Your input informed the plan. Look through it, read it, and you'll see and hear yourself and your neighbors, your colleagues, friends, family, and fellow Maconites... Again, from the bottom of MAP's heart, we thank you for your ideas and input, and the time and energy spent thinking, together, about the future of the heart of Macon!



maconactionplan.com



Macon Action Plan



#MaconActionPlan



@MaconActionPlan



Q: *What would make YOUR COMMUNITY a better place to live?*

A: “
MAKE DOWNTOWN **MORE AESTHETICALLY PLEASING**
MORE **STREET LIGHTS**
MORE **RETAIL** IN WALKING DISTANCE
MORE TO OFFER TO **FAMILIES**
A **PARKING PLAN** FOR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS
COMPREHENSIBLE & CONSISTENT **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
MORE **GROCERY STORES**
MORE **RESTAURANTS**
DEDICATED **BIKE LANES**
BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE FOR **WALKABILITY**
MORE **GREEN SPACE**
MORE **FESTIVALS**
MORE **EVENTS**”



Events

Second Sunday The first public MAP event was on Second Sunday in July 2014, when MAP joined Macon residents and visitors at the Second Sunday Concert in Washington Park. Equipped with the chalkboard speech bubbles and an ample supply of chalk, the MAP team introduced the Macon Action Plan and asked Maconites to share their big idea for the Urban Core.

October Open House October 2014 marked the next public MAP event: an Open House generously hosted by the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame. On opening night, participants engaged in interactive activities that covered topics including visioning, programming, downtown spending, activating alleys, and transportation as well as a physical version of the collaborative map. The employee and resident surveys were available as well.

More than 130 guests signed in on opening night. Participants enjoyed hot dogs from Nu-Way and beer from the Macon Beer Company, in addition to other drinks and snacks. The lawn in front of the Sports Hall of Fame became a temporary park and playground, with outdoor games, tables, chairs, and umbrellas. Participants were also able to “launch” their big idea after jotting it down on a piece of paper and then folding it into a paper airplane. The speech bubble made an appearance at the event.














After opening night, the Open House remained open for the public through the end of November. Additional visitors included school groups and Mercer classes, NewTown board members, One Macon, Georgia ASLA, AIA, USGBC, Sheridan Solomon & Associates Realtors, Historic Macon Foundation staff, and Hay House staff. In addition, Mayor Reichert and Just Tap’d hosted a mini-MAP Open House for an evening to collect more big ideas and contributions to the collaborative map. In all, over 300 community members attended the Open House during October and November 2014.

March MAP Party March 2015 marked the MAP Party, with the Cox Capitol Theatre as the gracious host. This event debuted MAP’s preliminary recommendations. Boards summarizing the recommendations hung in the theater for public view, and a more in-depth slideshow ran on loop. A formal presentation of the slideshow took place as well.

Participants were given a “scorecard” to make comments under the main themes of the recommendations during the presentation. In addition, they participated in a budgeting exercise involving allocating play money into “piggy banks” along specific themes (clean & safe, events & programming, marketing, public realm improvements,

Ocmulgee Heritage Trail Network, park space design, gateways & pedestrian improvements, neighborhood stabilization & housing development, and economic development) to indicate their priorities.

220 attendees signed in at the Party (although more came!). After opening night, the MAP Party went on the road, sharing a presentation on preliminary plan recommendations with approximately 750 people at 30 meetings and events.

<i>Public Outreach (to date)</i>		
	RESIDENT & EMPLOYEE SURVEYS	573
	INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUPS	70
	FACEBOOK LIKES	423
	TWITTER FOLLOWERS	154
	INSTAGRAM FOLLOWERS	111
	UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS	1,200+
	OPEN HOUSE VISITORS	300+
	COMMENTS ON WHERE YOU’D INVEST IN THE URBAN CORE	299
	IDEAS FOR ACTIVATING ALLEYS	200+
	RESPONSES ON CURRENT & FUTURE SPENDING DOWNTOWN	370
	THUMBS UP/DOWN STICKERS RATING PROGRAMMING OPTIONS	1265
	TODAY/TOMORROW POST-ITS	261
	OTHER IDEAS YOU SHARED WITH US	180+

Summary of total public participation

#MaconActionPlan
FRI 4-9PM @
GA SPORTSHall of FAME





Thanks for all of your input, Macon!

MAP's vision for the future echoes the community input and provides a road map for the future grounded in the values of the people who live, work, worship, learn, and play in Macon's Urban Core.

In **your words**:

A Vision Statement

for Macon's Urban Core

photo credit: Alexdi at English Wikipedia

Your words, highlighted in pink, are the building blocks:

We are proud of our city - its **good bones, rich history** and traditions that give rhythm to community life.

Our future will respect, honor, and **complement our past**.

We see **positive momentum** at work in our urban core, and we are ready to work together to continue this trend.

We are **full of promise**. We are **eager to take ACTION** and **grow** Macon's urban core.

We are ready for the heart of Macon to become Middle Georgia's **flagship downtown experience**.

Vibrant, diverse, and historic yet modern, our urban core will **thrive** as a unique collection of neighborhoods, a **college town**, and a **center of culture, commerce, 21st century jobs** and **new connections** -- all nestled within the **intimate, comfortable scale** of a small city.

Together, for our future we will:

1. Grow with grace



We will evolve as a city that is **historic** and **modern**, **inclusive** and **diverse**, **home** to **families** and people of all ages, with **walkable** streets, **new businesses**, and **riverfront connections** that add **vibrancy**, **livability**, and **sustainability** to daily life.

2. Build upon Macon's good bones



Our beautiful buildings, strong institutions, rich and ancient history, and big employers will continue to **draw people** and **jobs** to **strengthen** our urban core.

3. Dance to our local rhythm



Our local talent will **bring us together** through the calendar of **events** that form the beat of community life, and Macon's **charm** and **creative spirit** will remain a **magnet for tourists**, **new businesses**, people who come to play, and those who **choose to stay**.

4. Care for our heart



We will **revitalize** neighborhoods and meet the needs of our residents, businesses, and investors by adopting **progressive** policies and programs for a **clean**, **safe**, and **livable** urban core.

5. Coordinate & focus for maximum impact



We will be **strategic**, target limited resources, and leverage recent and proposed investments. We will cultivate **leaders** and **champions**. We will **take action**.

VISION TO ACTION: MAKING MAP HAPPEN

So, how do we pursue our vision and achieve our goals? The Macon Action Plan details actionable strategies in the following chapters. In order to implement the strategies, however, we need to form partnerships and involve the community (including YOU). Much as the planning process has been built on the foundation of local expertise and participation, the implementation process should be the same!

Community members must help implement these strategies through stewardship and participation. Community members helped to shape this plan. Residents, business owners, employees and property owners have essential roles to play in making MAP a reality. Moving forward, MAP must:

- 1) ***Enlist engaged members of the community as volunteers to help implement key strategies most important to them.*** Maintaining a base of volunteers can add extra capacity to local organizations when needed. To accomplish this, MAP will need to regularly engage community members as implementation moves forward and send regular updates about MAP's progress via newsletters and social media.
- 2) ***Nurture the fledgling downtown neighborhood association.*** Neighborhood associations aim to improve quality of life in their respective neighborhoods through community activities and involvement. As MAP seeks to transform downtown into a true neighborhood, it will benefit from a structure and organization among residents to address key issues. The start of a neighborhood association was launched during the MAP planning process. This organization will need support as it finds its voice and begins to tackle issues specific to living downtown.
- 3) ***Launch a next generation challenge grant for the Urban Core.*** The Neighborhood Challenge Grant funded by the Knight Foundation invites innovative and transformational ideas from a given community. A Neighborhood Challenge grant competition took place in College Hill from 2009–2014 and sought to transform College Hill into a vibrant, green college town: “A broad-based program, the Challenge funded the best ideas – small and large – that gave College Hill a sense of place, spruced up its parks and public spaces, or enhanced the arts and entertainment scene.” Learn more: <http://www.cfcga.org/knc>. The opportunity now is to launch a similar initiative to help address several key issues in the Urban Core – vacant storefronts, empty commercial space, inactive alleyways, job training through land stewardship in neighborhoods. A challenge grant will accelerate the revitalization of the Urban Core and involve community members in the process.

Local partnerships are required to implement MAP's strategies through effective local organizing and coordinating investments.

There are three components to this critical task:

1. ***The Urban Core requires dedicated and sustainable funding.*** Funding sources should be identified to provide regular dollars to support a range of activities in the Urban Core from programming to sidewalk improvements, stewardship of improved park spaces to ongoing business attraction efforts. The creation of a Community Improvement District (CID) with participation by major institutions will help to accelerate investment and establish real momentum in the Urban Core. This builds off the recommendation in the College Hill Refresh, College Hill's updated master plan, which calls for an improvement district to help local institutions save money by sharing specific services like security, branding, maintenance, and programming while coordinating on larger physical improvements in the area. However, downtown has a unique opportunity to use tax legislation and public dollars to provide a sustained funding stream that complements and encourages continued private investment in the area.

As explained by NewTown Macon, “the CID would cost property owners approximately \$200 for every \$100,000 in property value per year, and would generate approximately \$300,000 per year that could be used for safety, streetscapes, sidewalks, planning, design, and sanitation throughout downtown.”

<http://www.newtownmacon.com/cid/>

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CID)

& local institutions

additional potential partners:



Figure 3- Map of Urban Core with Community Improvement District (CID)

- CID (NewTown Macon)
- Mercer University
- Navicent Health
- rail

2. MAP implementation must capitalize on and maximize the capacity of local organizations. In addition to City-County leadership, government agencies, and private sector actors, the Urban Core has many organizations making valuable contributions to the MAP movement. These organizations fall into two general categories: topic-driven organizations and place-based organizations. The topic-driven organizations are those that are dedicated to advancing a particular idea like the arts or economic development but whose mandate extends throughout the County or region. These include the Macon Arts Alliance, Historic Macon Foundation, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon Civic Spaces, Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative, and the Convention & Visitor's Bureau among others. Neighborhood organizations such as Intown and the Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association, in contrast, have a hyper-local, more topical focus on individual neighborhoods within the Urban Core. The involvement of all of these organizations is essential to the future of MAP. We need their continued involvement, interest, and capacity to carry out specific actions that fall within their expertise.

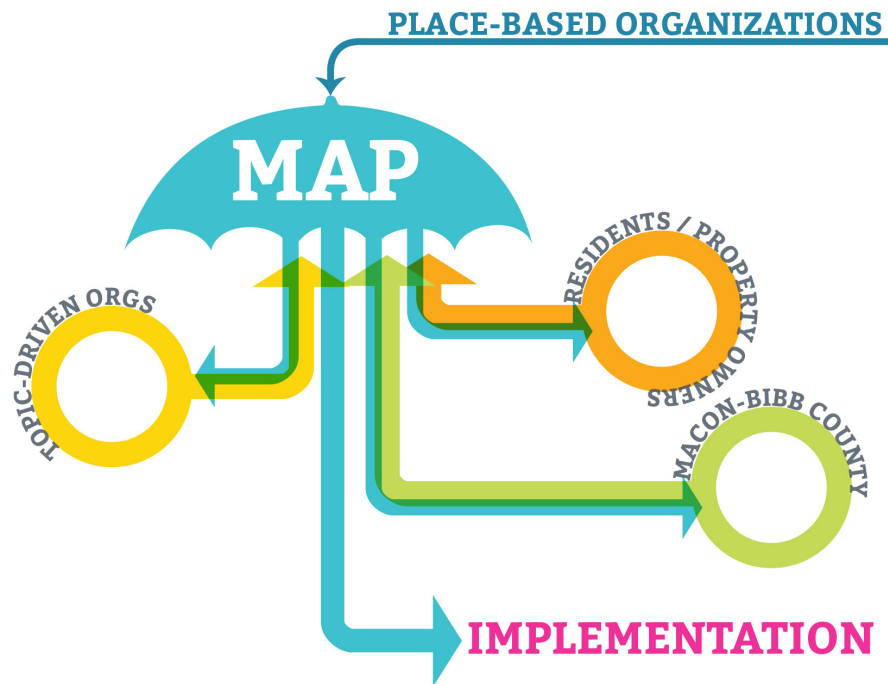
The Urban Core's place-based organizations on the other hand carry out various activities throughout the Urban Core. Five main groups comprise this list: the Urban Development Authority (UDA), Historic Hills & Heights Development Corporation, Main Street Macon, NewTown Macon, and the College Hill Corridor Commission. These five organizations bring different skill sets and capacity to bear on MAP. In seeking improvements to the Urban Core, we want to ensure we are maximizing what each is best at accomplishing and utilizing the capacity that exists.

But at the same time, while each organization has a unique skill set and expertise, they also share similar visions and missions. Learning from other cities and what has ensured long-lasting investment and improvement, the most effective implementation model is to create a formal alliance or umbrella that ensures implementation measures are coordinated not just among the place-based member organizations but with partners including City-County leadership, public agencies, residents, businesses, and property owners.

There are three elements key to launching this alliance:

- i. **Form a MAP Implementation Committee** – Representatives from the boards of each of the five place-based organizations (UDA, Main Street Macon, NewTown Macon, and College Hill Corridor Commission, and Historic Hills & Heights) along with a few members of the MAP Steering Committee would meet quarterly to discuss implementation activities and ensure ongoing coordination. We initially suggest two or three members from each Board plus three or four MAP Steering Committee members.
- ii. **Dedicate Staff Time for MAP Implementation** – There are two approaches for ensuring that MAP retains dedicated people-power committed to pushing plan implementation forward each day.
 - 1) To start, draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between place-based organizations detailing which organizations accept responsibility for which MAP strategies. Each organization will then, in turn, allocate staff time toward implementation of those strategies.
 - 2) If implementation under the MOU fails to proceed as quickly as desired, consider creating one new full-time Coordinator position, hired by and paid for by the organizations represented by the MAP Implementation Committee, to help align local resources and implementation activities. The Coordinator would field questions and requests on behalf of MAP and MAP's partners and would help connect those seeking to make improvements or investments in the Urban Core to the appropriate organization or government agency best suited to help move it forward.
- iii. **Track Investments & Progress** – All activities should be tracked and aligned in a central database for easy access by partner organizations. The progress towards MAP's implementation should be highlighted in an annual report, presented at the partner organizations' annual board meetings and used for future discussions regarding coordination and local capacity. A communications strategy to keep the community informed about progress will also be necessary.

In either case, there would be staff specifically tasked with day-to-day MAP implementation activities, which was a key driver of success with plan implementation in College Hill.



EXISTING PLACE BASED ORGANIZATIONS:

Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority (UDA), focuses on economic development in the historic downtown areas of Macon-Bibb County (www.maconbibbuda.com)

Main Street Macon, focuses on economic development specifically in the Central Business District (www.mainstreetmaconga.com)

NewTown Macon, a downtown non-profit is dedicated to the revitalization of Macon's historic downtown (www.newtownmacon.com)

College Hill Corridor Commission, administers and implements the College Hill Corridor Master Plan (now Refresh) that covers a two-square mile area between Mercer University and downtown (www.collegehillmacon.com)

Historic Hills & Heights Development Corporation helps combat blight and facilitate the rehabilitation and development of neighborhoods

3. FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS. MAP must direct resources to targeted projects for maximum impact. This plan outlines many strategies that cover a broad range of topics and geographies in the Urban Core. Strategic implementation of these action items is critical so as not to dilute their impact. Along these lines, the implementation matrices found at the end of each chapter indicate which action items should take priority in the short-, medium-, and long-term; the Implementation Committee should revisit and update the list of priorities each year, adjusting the work plan as necessary to ensure that MAP remains a living document that evolves along with the Urban Core. A summary chapter at the end of the plan provides direction on how to best approach the short-term action items first.

MAP's goals and strategies contained in the chapters that follow represent a wide range of necessary actions. Some strategies can be accomplished very quickly, while others will take time due to many factors including the availability of money. MAP, however, is designed to help local partners raise dollars from outside sources to help make the vision a reality. To help move MAP forward, each of the goals and strategies chapters include a specific implementation approach that seeks to answer the following questions for each and every strategy:

- Who will take the lead to ensure this action is implemented?
- Who are the partners that need to be at the table?
- When should we implement?
- How much will it cost?
- Where will funding come from?

This is an **ACTION** plan. Those who have given us their ideas and helped shape this plan expect results. It is important to remember that MAP's success relies on actions both big and small. The early, incremental actions and stepping stones between projects are just as necessary as the larger catalyst projects; every step forward should be celebrated to maintain energy and support for the Urban Core.

The Urban Core is poised for real change that will benefit all of Macon-Bibb and the region. Stay involved and work with us to achieve your vision.



GOALS & STRATEGIES

The Macon Action Plan focuses on four main goals for Macon's Urban Core, each intended to increase vitality and support economic development for a sustainable future in the heart of Macon:

VISION

an overarching aspirational statement that synthesizes the community's hopes for the urban core and describes the desired future outcome

*Anatomy
of a Plan:*

1. **SUPPORT THE ENGINES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
2. **CREATE AN UNPARALLELED URBAN CORE EXPERIENCE**
3. **FOCUS ON URBAN CORE LIVING**
4. **CULTIVATE CONNECTIVITY**

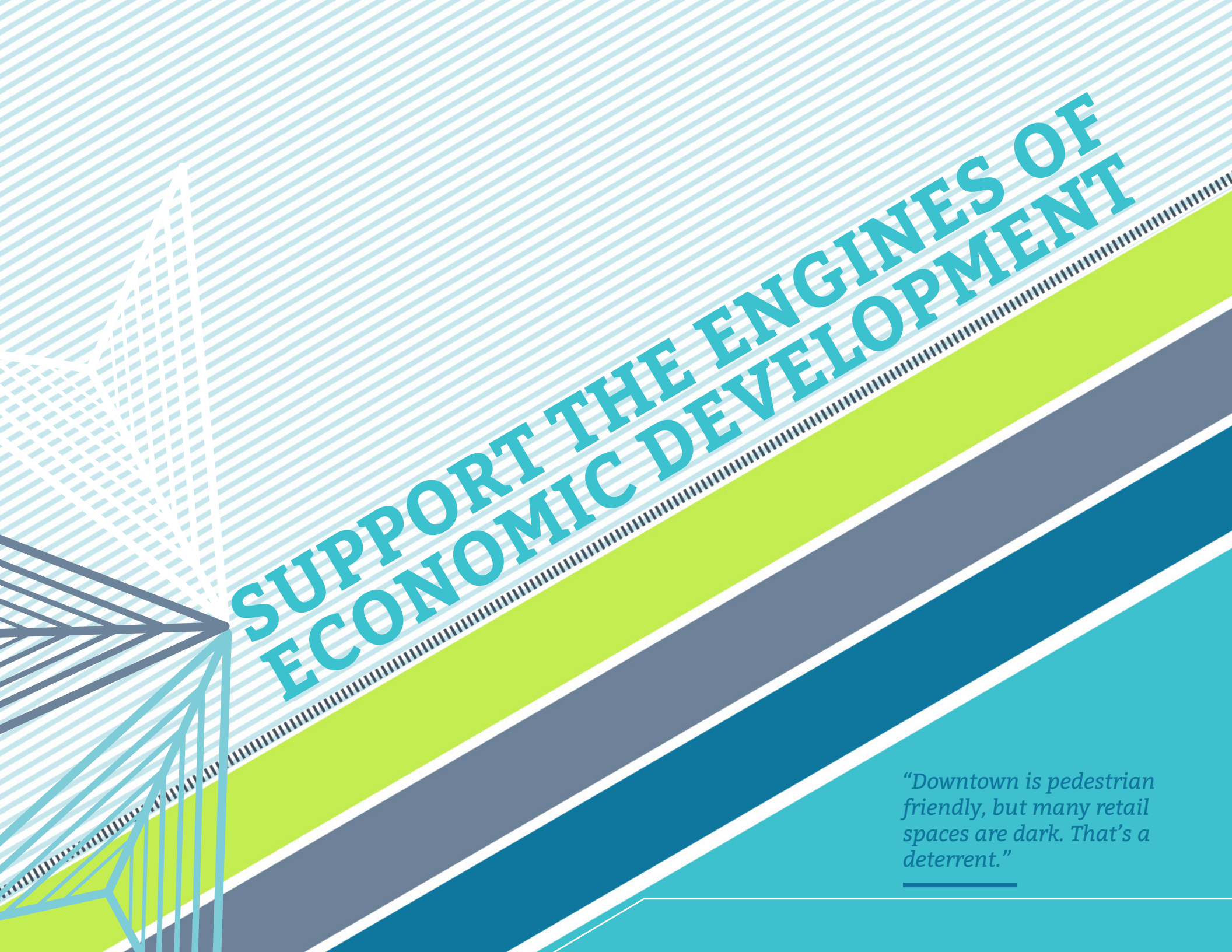
Each of these goals encompasses a set of specific strategies and action steps targeted toward the achievement of the goal. Every strategy and proposed action step grew from the public process, informed by the input collected through the public events, interviews, focus groups, and online feedback.

GOALS

statements designed to help achieve the vision and provide a framework for organizing strategies


STRATEGIES

what should be done, where, when & how to fulfill the goals



SUPPORT THE ENGINES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

"Downtown is pedestrian friendly, but many retail spaces are dark. That's a deterrent."



“Macon has no killer loft office space.”

“The whole world of retail was downtown – a generation grew up with that. But then the Macon Mall opened, and we are still holding a grudge.”

This chapter focuses on the fundamentals of economic development in order to attract talent, drive investment, and create jobs. Health care, universities and government related jobs are the primary drivers behind the economic relevance of the Urban Core. Health care is a definitive and proven foundation for a regional economy, delivering on number, type, and wages of jobs. Government jobs are a necessary and important part of the local economy; however, they are generally not a basis around which to build economic prosperity. The Urban Core also has a strong presence of higher education institutions, including Mercer University.

This cornerstone of institutional employment is not sufficient to support the positioning of the Urban Core as a regional economic center. Its economic challenges are further underscored by the relative lack of remaining corporate headquarters and limited destination shopping and entertainment available in the Urban Core.

There are several key market dynamics that cut across all commercial property types (retail, office, and industrial) and influence Macon’s Urban Core as a whole:

Consider the following findings from the market and economic analysis:

- Over decades, the commercial uses that were concentrated downtown dispersed throughout the region. The “center” did not relocate. Instead, the dispersal resulted in a dilution and weakening of the region’s economic performance as a whole.
- All three sectors (retail, office, and industrial), but especially in the retail market, are witnessing a surplus of space over demand. This “slack” in the market has resulted in high vacancy rates, low rental rates, a lack of reinvestment in buildings, and a significant number of marginal retail businesses drawn to the area.
- The disinvestment that has occurred over the last several decades is deep. Buildings, and many businesses, have not actively adapted and transformed as the commercial development and consumer landscape has changed across the country.

Among the themes this section addresses are:

- **Institutional assets:** how can we support our medical and educational institutions?
- **Commercial development:** how can we address this disconnect between the offerings of the Urban Core and how customers choose to spend their money?
- **Industrial development:** how can we upgrade our industrial areas to ensure their viability going forward?

“We’re headed in right direction with the new housing going in. We need people who don’t leave with the sun.”



Engines of Economic Development

See Appendix 2 (Commercial Market Snapshot) for data & details

Economic Overview

- The market value per acre in the Urban Core is nearly ten times the rest of the city-county, even with 52% of its market value being tax exempt. Tax revenue per acre is nearly five times the rest of the city-county.
- Overall, Macon's Urban Core has strong positives in relation to growth in job numbers, types of jobs, and size of businesses. However, there are notable negatives in relation to concentration of jobs, economic base diversification, and income and earnings levels.

The Urban Core is, and should remain, the economic center for the region. A focus on diversifying the local economy is critical to ensure that the Urban Core is competitive and attractive for new businesses. The Urban Core must bring back anchor businesses and attract new businesses by creating a culture that is friendly to start-up businesses and new job opportunities. In short, the Urban Core needs a range of businesses to support a greater range of jobs as well as more residents that support local restaurants and stores. Part of how this will be accomplished is to create a place that offers an experience attractive to businesses and residents.

To ensure long-term economic growth, MAP is focused on enabling people to both live and work in the Urban Core. This first chapter – Support the Engines of Economic Development – sets the overall context for how Macon can ramp up economic opportunities for new and existing residents alike in the Urban Core. The strategies recognize that significant collaboration among those involved in attracting businesses and talent to Macon is essential and that MAP is just one initiative within a much larger economic discussion about the Urban Core, the City and the region. In subsequent chapters, MAP details many specific actions designed to make the Urban Core more lively, unique and welcoming to new investment, jobs and residents.

Below is a snapshot of some of the challenges and opportunities with respect to retail, office and industrial development in the Urban Core.

Retail Snapshot:

Current Situation: Regional retail migrated with residents as they moved to the suburbs, and the retail market has split into smaller nodes to the north and south, thus weakening the regional draw area overall. As a result, limited competitive retail remains in the Urban Core, which is evidenced by significant vacancies and low rental rates and reflected in the spending habits of local employees, as the majority of those surveyed indicated that their weekly expenditures in the Urban Core amounted to \$30 or less.

Perhaps surprisingly, there is nonetheless a surplus of sales to spending in Macon's Urban Core. This is common for centrally located urban retail

districts, which attract customers from farther afield drawn by a high volume of discount retailers. That people report feeling underserved by businesses downtown while numbers alone evidence the opposite demonstrates a real supply and demand mismatch occurring in Macon's Urban Core.

Figure 4- Retail spending, in millions

Source: Claritas

URBAN CORE RETAIL GAP/SURPLUS

Retail Category	Expenditures	Sales	Gap/Surplus
Furniture & Home Furnishings	\$1.74	\$4.81	\$(3.07)
Electronics & Appliances	\$2.54	\$7.71	\$(5.16)
Garden Ctr. & Bldg. Materials	\$9.06	\$16.56	\$(7.49)
Grocery & Beverages	\$14.11	\$33.65	\$(19.54)
Health & Personal Care	\$5.53	\$8.90	\$(3.37)
Clothing & Accessories	\$5.46	\$16.84	\$(11.37)
Hobby, Books, Music & Sporting Goods	\$2.82	\$34.84	\$(32.01)
General Merchandise	\$13.38	\$3.20	\$10.18
Miscellaneous	\$3.50	\$3.74	\$(0.24)
Restaurants	\$12.18	\$23.31	\$(11.14)
Total	\$109.70	\$219.61	\$(109.92)

ONLY 1
CATEGORY
WITH
GAP

However, several strong, relevant individual businesses have proven the destination retail market can still exist for downtown, and participants in the first MAP Open House indicated that they would spend 250% more every week if downtown amended or increased its retail offerings.

Opportunity: Downtown's location is primed to be the central, regional destination with a larger draw area. Increased programming and diversity of businesses would increase destination customer capture.

Office Snapshot

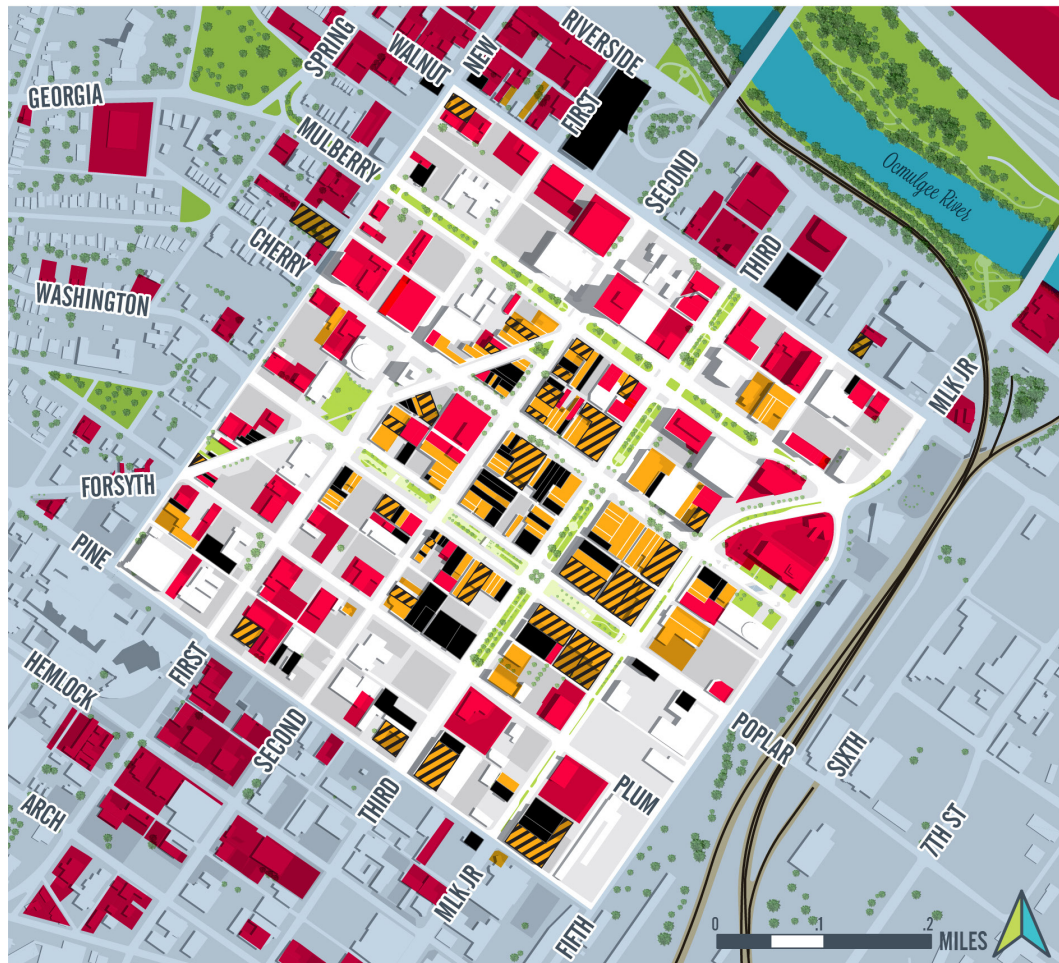
Current Situation: The office market dispersed into the region and developed on a smaller scale in areas spread out and closer to residents. Some office uses still remain in Macon's Urban Core, with medical and government-related offices as the current anchors alongside a few major corporate users. The office market appears soft in terms of vacancies and rental rates for the Urban Core.

Opportunity: Downtown's location is an asset for regional office of all sizes. An increase in amenities such as high-speed internet, move-in ready office space, and the growth and attraction of key users could make downtown a more viable and relevant business hub.

Industrial Snapshot

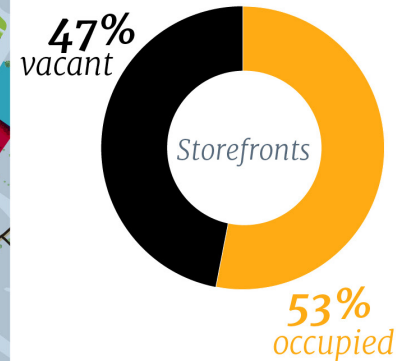
Current Situation: Industrial users comprise a low proportion of commercial development in the Urban Core. There is significant vacancy, underutilization, and even open land, as most industrial users have moved to the outskirts of the region, near the airport, or into designated industrial parks. There are a handful of artisan production businesses as well as some adaptive re-use of industrial buildings with updated tenants. There are significant vacancies and low rental rates for industrial in the Urban Core.

Opportunity: The location of downtown and the character of the available industrial space represent a potential niche for small-scale / artisan / value-added manufacturing and adaptive re-use for commercial purposes.



WALKABILITY ANALYSIS

storefront locations



but
163 of those
storefronts
are vacant

- 1 or more vacant storefronts
- all vacant storefronts
- commercial property with storefront
- commercial property
- rail

Figure 5- Walkability analysis
Almost half of storefronts in the historic downtown are vacant.
Source: Spring 2014 Field Survey, Interface Studio



1.1 SUPPORT MACON'S INSTITUTIONS AS ECONOMIC ANCHORS FOR FUTURE GROWTH

1.1a) Promote an Urban Core Health District

Background: The primary destination-related reason to go downtown currently is medical care. There are three hospitals within the Urban Core (Navicent Health, Coliseum Medical Center, and Regency Hospital) as well as Mercer's medical school. As it currently stands, there is no distinct physical connection between these major institutions that lie within close proximity of one other.

Key ideas: *medical corridor, health district*

Action: Medical Corridor Create a "medical corridor" to link major health-related institutions. The immediate opportunity is to link Navicent with Mercer University School of Medicine along College and Forsyth Streets with secondary connections along Columbus and Oglethorpe Streets. This linkage can be expanded the other direction along Forsyth to 2nd Street and over to Coliseum Medical Center and Regency. These linkages must be carefully designed to express these institutions' commitment to public health through careful branding, signage, landscaping, special paving and crosswalks. Further, these corridors should promote walking and bicycling or "active" transportation in line with their missions. Enhancing these physical linkages between medical institutions will help to highlight their importance to the region's economy while enabling visitors to more easily find their destinations.

Health District Maps illustrating this health district including the major institutions and other medical assets such as First Choice Primary Care and the Riveredge Behavioral Health Center, should be promoted locally and nationally through the Convention & Business Bureau, One Macon and their partners.

1.1b) Create an attractive, 21st Century campus for Navicent Health

Background: Over the years, Navicent has grown to include new buildings concentrated in and around First, Pine, Hemlock and Orange. As the largest employer in the area providing an invaluable service to the region, Navicent's campus should reflect its mission.

Key ideas: *medical campus, streetscape improvements, wayfinding, new housing*

Action: Medical campus Design a 21st Century Campus to help bring unity to the existing buildings, improve the customer experience and enhance local streets. This work will support previously discussed strategies that recognize the importance of Navicent's campus including

the creation of a signature gateway on Forsyth (see Strategy 2.4b), the design of new Navicent signage (see Strategy 2.4c), and the development of a form-based code (see Strategy 3.2a).

Streetscape improvements Specifically, the opportunity is to promote walking and activity through the thoughtful design of the streets in and around Navicent. Working with designers, the first step is to create guidelines for the design of wayfinding, sidewalks, benches, and landscaping.

New housing Additionally, Navicent should consider the development of new housing on and near campus to help encourage more employees to live in the Urban Core. Private developers should also be encouraged to pursue housing, medical office, and other hospital support services projects that are aligned with the form-based code and reinforce Navicent's mission and design goals for its medical campus district.

1.1c) Build better support for economic anchors by expanding commercial businesses

Background: Mercer University, Navicent Health, Coliseum, and Regency are significant assets to the Urban Core. In addition to the high-quality services they provide, these institutional centers represent the majority of employment in the Urban Core. Their employees are therefore a key customer segment for businesses. Currently, however, there is a lack of commercial options around these centers; this gap represents an opportunity for further development.

Key ideas: *employee-oriented businesses, medical office space*

Action: Employee-oriented businesses Recruit and support healthcare employee-related businesses, such as healthy convenience stores and food services. This focus on supporting commercial businesses oriented towards better serving healthcare employees is important for the continued expansion of businesses. These employee-related businesses will serve students and residents of the area as well. In addition, recruit new hotel space to better support visitors and prospective employees of these institutions.

Medical office space In addition, support and prioritize medical office space development in proximity to Navicent, Coliseum, Regency and Mercer as market pressure demands. This office space will serve as a complementary use to the health centers and thus have a positive economic impact.

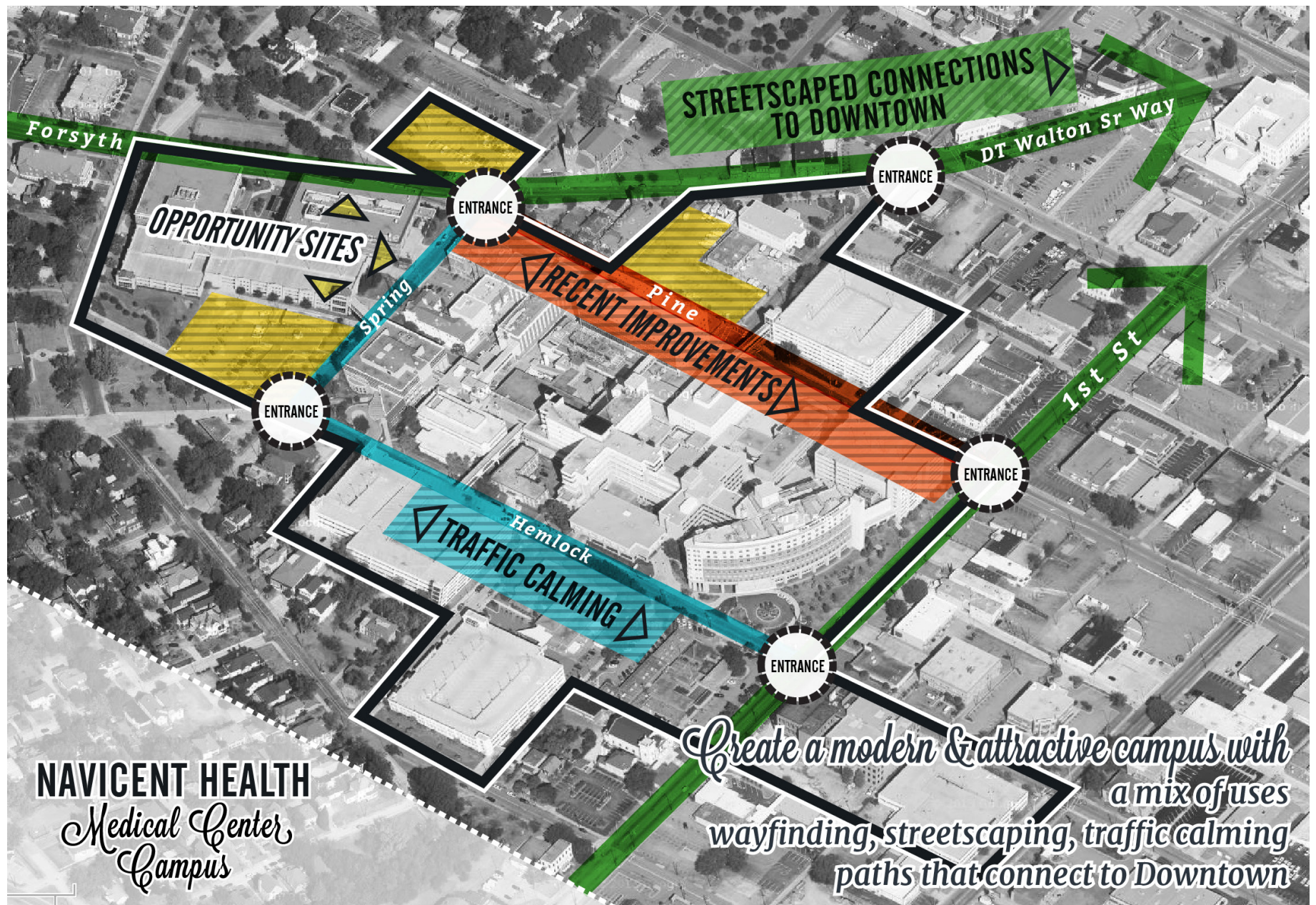


Figure 6- Proposed improvements to the Navicent Health Medical Center campus

Goal: 1.2 SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE THAT MACON IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

1.2a) Strengthen competition and re-establish natural churn in the local market

Background: High vacancies in the Urban Core have resulted in low rents and some discount tenants. The increase in the number of residents over the last few years, however, is showing signs of a positive impact on the commercial market. Further growth in the quantity and diversity of businesses will be crucial to ensure stronger performance in the local commercial market.

The greatest obstacles faced by businesses in the Urban Core center on finding competitive space ready to lease. Assistance with delivering competitive space to the market is therefore essential. Incentives and financing strategies are two potential forms of assistance for existing and prospective business owners. In addition, trial periods for start-ups are necessary. They first need the opportunity to “test” their businesses in a storefront and make any needed modifications before taking on long-term commitments.

Key ideas: *build-out assistance, pop-up storefront space*

Action: **Build-out assistance** Provide tenant build-out assistance through revolving loan fund to enable more competitive space to enter local market. A revolving loan fund involves small loans to new and small business from a central fund which is replenished as loans are paid back. It is particularly suitable for “high-risk” borrowers: those without credit history, or otherwise do not qualify for traditional loan services, as they are small producers. New tenants looking to get their small business off the ground would be fitting recipients of this assistance.

Explore opportunities to incentivize build-out of smaller turn-key retail or office spaces, which would afford lower overhead without compromising on quality of tenants. With so many larger footprint buildings in the Urban Core, smaller spaces would represent a new product on the market for prospective niche businesses.

Pop-up storefront space Dedicate and underwrite storefront space for pop-ups to go through “proof of concept” phase (60–90 days). This window of time should provide the needed trial period for new businesses to test out their location and refine their spatial needs.

1.2b) Initiate Urban Core-specific business attraction efforts

Background: The economic challenges in the Urban Core result not only from the disinvestment occurring over several decades that plagued many industrial boomtowns, but also from a lack of adaptation. Some businesses are in the same state as when people started leaving downtown for the mall and suburbs. Many have not adequately responded to the changing commercial development and consumer landscape across the country. To date, the Urban Core has not seen a strong or well-developed push for the “want-based” users for downtowns, namely residents, creative and knowledge businesses, destination shoppers, and entertainment customers.

Key ideas: *redefining draw area, business recruitment, diversification*

Action: **Redefine draw area** Redefine potential draw area and capture rate expectations to leverage downtown’s location as center of the region. This area should expand beyond the Urban Core to a radius of a minimum 30-minute drive time to create a regional pull of a larger share of customers.

Business recruitment Identify and recruit businesses (1) from outside of Macon to relocate to the Urban Core, and (2) from other parts of Macon to open second locations in the Urban Core. This support should prioritize viable business models and not focus solely on local ownership. Community members offered many ideas for adding to the business mix, from additional restaurants and bars to kid-friendly food and entertainment businesses, boutiques to healthy take-out; the challenge is to match available spaces and community preferences with viable businesses.

Diversification Include hotel, office and industrial businesses in recruitment efforts as economic building blocks beyond healthcare and government. While healthcare institutions are a substantial anchor for the Urban Core, diversification is critical to its future economic viability.

1.2c) Work with existing commercial property owners to encourage movement in market

Background: The Urban Core has several attributes that should point towards a successful commercial real estate market, including access to interstate highways, a location central to the regional market, and a rich stock of historic buildings. The Urban Core is faced with several challenges, however, that have hindered progress in seizing upon these inherent advantages. Unfortunately, many building owners do not view the area as worthy of or ready for reinvestment for their properties, which has resulted in a lack of competitive space to attract more successful retailers and corporate office tenants. In addition, falsely inflated speculation has had a negative impact on the natural churn of investment and reinvestment.

Key ideas: outreach & education

Action: Outreach & education Conduct outreach to building owners to better understand their individual portfolios. Educate building owners about the value and process of vetting potential tenants, as well as criteria that potential businesses tenants consider, including move-in ready space. Emphasize the potential of a more stable tenant base to improve their bottom line in the long term, and show property owners the return-on-investment for white-box retail or office spaces. Alternatively, analyze the potential for property disposition as a legitimate option, and provide any needed assistance. The encouragement of property sales when appropriate will enable organic competition and growth to actually occur.

1.2d) Initiate talent attraction efforts to build local economy

Background: The central location of the Urban Core in central Georgia in addition to its proximity to many colleges and universities represents an opportunity for economic diversification, which is imperative to ensure a competitive and positive future for the Urban Core.

Efforts toward diversification should include the recruitment of high-paying jobs in expanding creative and technical fields. In addition, these efforts should focus on the attraction of additional residents with higher-level education levels, skill sets, and incomes. Employers should advertise jobs beyond Macon and select candidates based primarily on education, skill sets, and experience.

Key ideas: talent attraction, workforce diversification

Actions: Talent attraction & workforce diversification Encourage employers to attract and hire highly-skilled and -experienced candidates to ensure a high-caliber and diversified workforce. Potential high-skill and high-wage job opportunities should be advertised outside of Macon to further attract talent.



1.2e) Attract more customers

Background: Efforts to add new housing in Macon's Urban Core are important to improving both the quality of life in the area and the perceptions outsiders have of the Urban Core. The residents of this new housing, however, will not be able to support enough businesses to fill a historic downtown that was built as the commercial hub for the entire region. The Urban Core needs more people as customers and tenants in order to take up the existing slack in commercial market space.

Changes in the habits and travel patterns for the Urban Core, including those of area residents, regional residents, employees, college students, and visitors, are essential for bringing in additional customer activity.

Key ideas: *consistent programming, clustering*

Actions: Consistent programming Institute small-scale, consistent programming to attract a diverse customer base (see Strategy 2.3a). Include a varied array of programming activities to appeal to a range of ages and backgrounds. Incorporate consistent activities to create "regulars," while also including new options and one-off events to bring in newcomers.

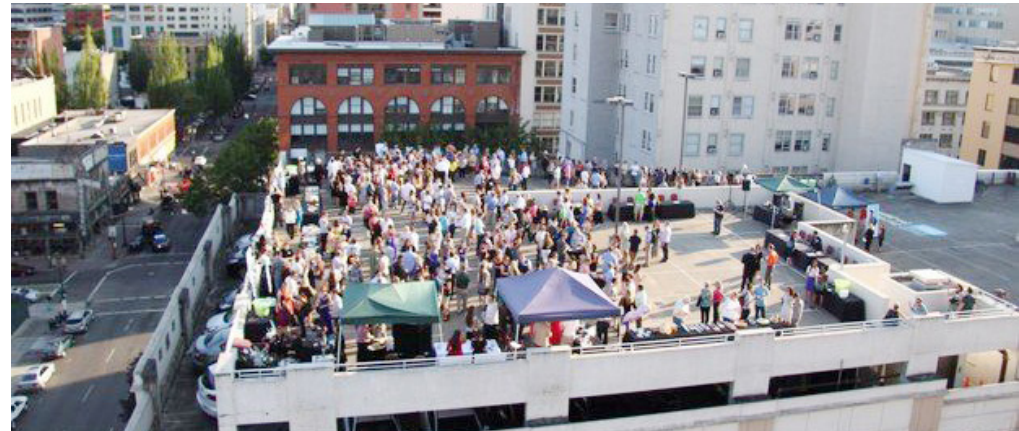
Clustering Encourage clustering of complementary businesses, as feasible, to provide multiple destinations for customers. For example, a row of restaurants gives customers multiple options in an immediate area from which they can choose. This grouping also comes to the mutual benefit of the restaurant owners: if one restaurant is experiencing long wait times, for example, consumers may opt to go to a neighboring restaurant, and vice versa. Encourage downtown businesses to market and adhere to specific hours of operation, as sometimes it can be difficult to determine when certain businesses are open. Organize special evenings with business owners to stay open later and market the event to draw customers.

"There needs to be more foot traffic."

"Open more stores and different kinds of restaurants to promote the growth of Downtown Macon"



Programming of medians



Programming of rooftops



Programming of vacant lots

Action: Consistent Programming

Goal:

1.3 SUPPORT START-UPS AND ATTRACT JOB-CREATING BUSINESSES

Entrepreneurs and small businesses account for the majority of employment in the nation and are projected to continue to be the foundation of the American economy. Trends also indicate that small-scale, customized production will be a meaningful component of future value-added manufacturing in the United States.

These national characteristics are relevant to the Urban Core as well, and it will therefore be crucial to recognize the importance of small enterprises and a niche industrial market for small-scale manufacturing in the creation of a vibrant and sustainable community. Attracting these types of companies and manufacturers to the Urban Core will require proactive and diverse efforts.

1.3a) Embrace and support start-up culture

Background: Entrepreneurs can be a critical linchpin in the transformation and diversification of the local economic base. Entrepreneurs tend to be “sticky.” They tend to stay in the same place or at least in close proximity to the place they started their business; beginning what is called a “virtuous cycle.” Entrepreneurs are an asset for a community because they make localized decisions, increase local leadership capacity, and create wealth locally, thus keeping local dollars cycling through the local economy. The following strategies are a central focus of the College Hill Refresh too.

Key ideas: *collaborative workspace, high-speed Internet, networking, small business promotion, information accessibility, Mercer Innovation Center*

Action: Collaborative workspace Invest in collaborative workspace, such as co-working spaces, fabrication labs, and office shares, among others. These types of workspaces encourage and support entrepreneurial endeavors, as they are cost-effective options for those who are just starting out. Because these spaces attract a diverse array of entrepreneurs, they furthermore offer opportunities for networking.

Co-working spaces invite entrepreneurs, freelancers, and independent contractors, among others, to rent desks or workspaces in a shared environment. Fabrication labs are a means of entry for those looking to explore their creative potential and offer access to modern tools, such as laser cutters and 3-D printers, which are otherwise cost-prohibitive for those starting out on a limited budget. Office shares entail more than one company sharing an office space as a means to share rent costs. They also present the opportunity to create a richer office environment by bringing together employees of different organizations under one roof.

“Develop a creative economy that drives tourism and improves quality of life.”

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE

NextFab Studio, Philadelphia, PA.

NextFab Studio is a collaborative workspace with tools and equipment for woodworking, metalworking, laser cutting and engraving, 3D printing, textile processing, electronics, photography, and 2D printing. Computer stations with professional design software are also available for use. The facility also houses a work area, conference room, kitchenette, lounge, café, and private offices available through residencies. Different types of membership are available, including weekend-only use. The facility also offers classes.



www.nextfab.com

High-speed Internet In addition, evaluate the current high-speed Internet and WiFi infrastructure downtown and work with local partners to develop a strategy to upgrade to fiber where possible. Appropriate fiber networks are essential for the creation of a competitive advantage for the Urban Core. In the modern economy, slower Internet speeds and lack of WiFi access can be a deterrent for technology-related and creative businesses.

Networking, small business promotion, information accessibility & Mercer Innovation Center Finally, support innovation efforts at the area colleges and universities that will continue to build the start-up culture in Macon, such as Mercer University's planned Innovation Center, which will incubate new businesses. MAP should also reinforce additional entrepreneur-related strategies detailed in Chapter 7 of the College Hill Refresh: Master Plan Update, “The Biz.” Recommendations include strengthening networks among local makers, promoting local small businesses, and increasing the accessibility of information for emerging businesses.

1.3b) Encourage modern industrial uses along 7th Street

Background: The industrial area in the Urban Core along Seventh Street is part of the downtown Industrial District that once was home to the Central Georgia Railroad and Southern Railroad, manufacturing plants, and cotton, brick, and paper mills, among others. Today, however, this area contains large swaths of vacant and underutilized parcels. Much as commercial uses must adapt to current trends, so must industrial. Although traditional industrial uses are not likely to return in the near future, this area nevertheless has inherent value given its industrial legacy and the presence of large parcels.

Key ideas: modern industrial, brownfields grant, land assembly, industrial protection area, marketing

Action: Modern industrial Create a modern industrial park between the rail and Seventh Street, extending up to Poplar Street in the north and down to Edgewood Avenue in the south. Modern industrial uses have a distinctively different appearance and impact on their surrounding environment than traditional industrial uses. Although these uses often still require large-footprint buildings, their appearance is akin to modern, technology-oriented office buildings with landscaped buffers and setbacks akin to those seen in office parks.

Brownfields grant Remediation is a necessary first step in order to create the industrial park. Submit for brownfield grants to assist with clean-up costs. Macon was awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to begin to revitalize this area through a contamination assessment and feasibility study of five parcels, however more funding will be necessary to carry out this analysis for additional parcels and subsequently engage in remediation efforts.

Land assembly In addition, land assembly will be necessary in those instances in which it makes sense to group multiple neighboring parcels that are smaller in size so that they may be used by a larger-footprint facility.

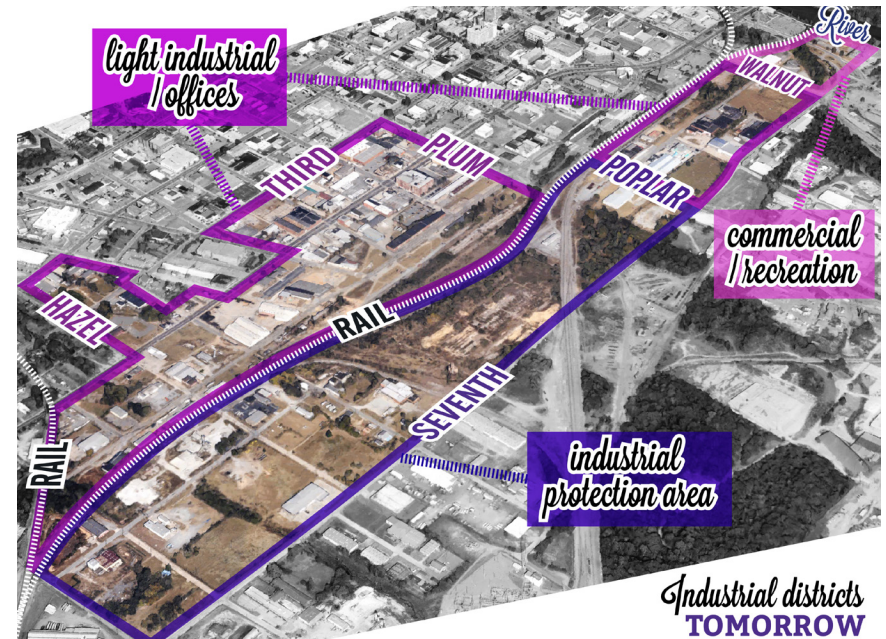
A new image of industry...



New Stroud Facility on 3rd & Oak Street

Industrial protection area In concert with land assembly there is a need to develop policy that protects this land for industrial use. An “industrial protection area” would serve to restrict the development of other uses like retail or housing that drives the cost of the land up thereby pricing out potential industrial businesses and jobs. As demonstrated by other cities, this protection must be greater than simply zoning the land as industrial. Variances can always be granted through zoning. Industrial use needs clear expectations and assurances that they will not be priced out in the future.

Marketing A final essential step for the creation of the modern industrial park will be targeted marketing to appropriate businesses. An emphasis on modern facilities, access to regional transportation and proximity to downtown should feature prominently in marketing materials.



Industrial districts along the rail

“I’d like to see new energy in the industrial area.”



Figure 7- Proposed downtown industrial employment districts

DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS- *tomorrow*

Create a light industrial area:

- 1** BETWEEN THE RAIL & 3RD
(south of Plum)
- 2** BETWEEN THE RAIL & 7TH
(north of Poplar)

Create a modern industrial park:

- 3** BETWEEN THE RAIL & 7TH
(south of Poplar)



INDUSTRIAL LAND

Greening & Creative Screening



- greening
- screening
- vacant building in poor or distressed condition
- ▨ institution
- rail

Figure 8 – Aesthetic improvements to industrial properties

1.3c) Establish creative work space within existing underutilized buildings

Background: The industrial areas west of the rail and north of Poplar Street also have a high proportion of vacant and underutilized land and buildings. This area is different from the industrial area along Seventh Street, however, in that it houses more structures, such as former mill buildings, that are suitable for repurposing.

Key ideas: *maker spaces, commercial offices, aesthetic improvements*

Action: **Maker spaces** Repurpose mill buildings as artist studios, makerspaces, or fabrication labs to foster creative production and entrepreneurship. These creative work spaces should place emphasis on learning, collaboration, experimentation, and prototyping. Look to learn from and collaborate with SparkMacon, Macon's first maker space, which is located on Cherry Street in the historic downtown. The large and raw industrial spaces in the Urban Core present different opportunities to store shared tools and technology for use by Macon's creative entrepreneurs, thinkers, and tinkerers.

Commercial offices Incorporate commercial offices in these industrial areas as well. This use can take the form of new construction on vacant parcels or rehabilitation of existing buildings. Because commercial office space downtown comes at a higher price, this area represents an opportunity to appeal to startups, as it can offer space at a lower cost due to its less central location within the Urban Core.

Aesthetic improvements Finally, improve the appearance of the area with aesthetic treatments. Portions of MLK Drive have more recent tree plantings; continue to green this and other key corridors such as Third Street with additional trees and landscaping. Screening is another effective method of aesthetic improvements. Public art, such as inventive building murals and artistic fence treatments, are some examples of screening.

“Warehouse district can be a terrific area to be developed for businesses, etc.”

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE

The Plant, Chicago, IL

The Plant is located in a 93,500 square foot repurposed industrial building. Its operations center on the cultivation and production of food. As a vertical farm, artisanal food business incubator, and non-profit education and research center, the Plant includes a fish hatchery, hydroponic garden, commercial kitchen, and brewery for both beer and kombucha tea. The Plant is net-zero energy. It is funded in part through grant money from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.



www.plantchicago.com

Goat Farm Arts Center, Atlanta, GA

The Goat Farm Arts Center is housed in a formerly industrial complex dating back to the nineteenth century. Spanning ten acres, the center includes performance and exhibition halls, a café/library, an organic farm, an education center, and approximately 5,000 square feet dedicated to contemporary dance and creative studios for artists. Over 450 artists, performers, designers, researchers, creatives, and individuals involved with small tech start-ups make use of the space. The Goat Farm has regular programming, including concerts, performances, screenings, exhibitions, and workshops.



facebook.com/TheGoatFarmArtsCenter

Crane Arts, Philadelphia, PA

The Crane Arts building is a former plumbing warehouse with close to 60,000 feet of renovated space. It is home to numerous groups and organizations that include architects, designers, engineers, and arts- and culture-related non-profits, among others. Roughly 50 artists and craftspeople have studio space at Crane Arts as well for painting, drawing, sculpture photography, printmaking, graphics, and glass art, among others. Crane arts hosts an array of events, including exhibits, performances, and gallery nights and also has space available to rent for special events.



www.cranearts.com



What you told us:

"Downtown needs another grocery store (with affordable prices)."

"WiFi within the core."

"Food incubator/accelerator for food startups."

"More after-hours activities other than bars."

"Revival in the industrial district with mixed-use (living, office, restaurant, retail, etc)."

"Downtown needs to be revitalized to include more shops/boutiques and restaurants."

"Attracting mid-sized companies into larger storefronts."

SHOW US THE MONEY (to help MAP prioritize)

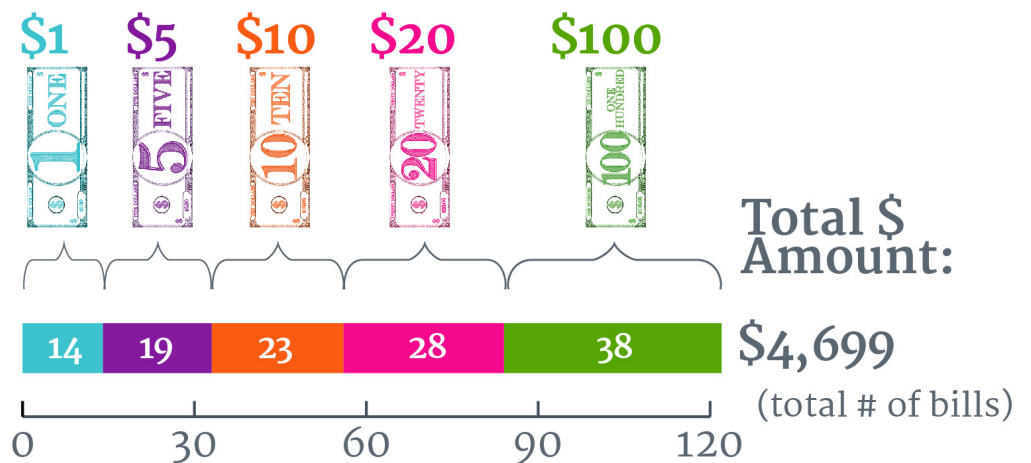
Resources for implementing the Macon Action Plan are limited, so we need **YOU** to help us prioritize!



MAP asked you to take a set of play money (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$100) and spend it wisely on the items you think are most important...


#1 top priority




ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





Excerpt of results from "Show Us the Money" exercise

Support the Engines of Economic Development

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
1.1 Support Macon's institutions as economic anchors for future growth							
a. Promote an Urban Core Health District							
	YES	i.	Create a medical corridor to link Navicent with Mercer School of Medicine along College and Forsyth Streets, Columbus and Oglethorpe	short	\$20,000 (marketing)	Navicent, Mercer, Coliseum, Regency, Macon-Bibb Public Works	institutions, general fund
		ii.	Incorporate branding, signage, landscaping, paving, and crosswalks to promote active transportation (walking & biking)	long	\$100,000 (initial improvements in wayfinding, marketing, trail markers)	Navicent, Mercer, Coliseum, Regency, Macon-Bibb Public Works	institutions, general fund
	YES	iii.	Create a map of Macon's Health District for local, regional, and national promotion	short	\$5,000	Navicent, Mercer, Coliseum, Regency	institutions
b. Create an attractive, 21st Century campus for Navicent Health							
		i.	Incorporate wayfinding, streetscaping, and traffic calming	medium	TBD	Navicent	Navicent, Macon-Bibb
		ii.	Include housing for a mixed-use campus	medium	\$100-\$125 per sq. ft.	Navicent, private developers	private equity, public-private partnerships
c. Build better support for economic anchors							
		i.	Recruit & support healthcare employee-related businesses (such as convenience & food services) which will serve students & residents as well	medium	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Chamber of Commerce, Mercer	--
		ii.	Support & prioritize medical office space	medium	--	Navicent, Mercer, Coliseum, Regency, NewTown Macon, UDA, Macon-Bibb	--
1.2 Send a clear message that Macon is open for business							
a. Strengthen competition and re-establish natural churn in the local market							
	YES	i.	Offer incentives and financing strategies for existing and prospective business owners (storefront improvement matching fund, fit-out incentive, start-up assistance, underwrite pop-up temporary storefront space)	short	up to \$500,000	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb County	Public, private, & foundation

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
b. Initiate Urban Core-specific business attraction efforts							
		i.	Redefine potential draw area & capture rate expectations to leverage DT's location as center of region	short	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon	--
		ii.	Identify & recruit businesses (1) outside of Macon to relocate or (2) in other parts of Macon to open second locations	medium	\$40,000-\$60,000	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb County	Public, private, & foundation
		iii.	Include office & industrial businesses in recruitment efforts as economic building blocks beyond healthcare & government	medium	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb County	--
c. Work with existing commercial property owners to encourage movement in market							
	YES	i.	Conduct outreach to building owners to better understand portfolios & potential property disposition	short	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon	--
		ii.	Encourage property sales, as appropriate, to enable organic competition & growth to actually occur	medium	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon	--
	YES	iii.	Educate building owners about value of vetting potential tenants & how it improves everyone's bottom line	short	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon	--
d. Initiate talent attraction efforts to build local economy							
		i.	Encourage businesses to advertise high skill/wage jobs outside of Macon to attract talent	short	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb County	--
		ii.	Encourage employers to attract & hire people that are really good at what they do in order to diversify workforce	short	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb County	--
e. Attract more customers							
	YES	i.	Institute small-scale, consistent programming to attract a diverse customer base	short	up to \$15,000/year	Main Street Macon, NewTown Macon, UDA, College Hill Commission	Public, local commercial & institutional sponsors, foundation
		ii.	Encourage clustering of complementary businesses, as feasible, to provide multiple destinations for customers	short to medium	--	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb Planning & Zoning	--

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
1.3 Support Start-Ups and Attract Job-Creating Businesses							
a. Embrace and support start-up culture							
		i.	Invest in collaborative workspace	medium	up to \$50,000	UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, SparkMacon	Public, private, & foundation
		ii.	Build out high-speed Internet and WiFi infrastructure	medium	TBD	UDA, Macon-Bibb County, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce	Public, private
	YES	iii.	Support the entrepreneur-related strategies in the College Hill Refresh	ongoing	up to \$100,000	Main Street Macon, UDA, NewTown Macon, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb County	Public, private, & foundation
		iv.	Support innovation efforts at area colleges and universities	medium	--	Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, Macon-Bibb County, Mercer University, Wesleyan College, Middle Georgia State College & University	--
b. Encourage modern industrial uses along 7th Street							
		i.	Create a modern industrial park (between rail and 7th Street)	long	TBD	Macon-Bibb Industrial Authority, UDA, Chamber of Commerce	Federal & state grants, SPLOST
	YES	ii.	Submit for brownfield grants to assist with clean-up costs (remediation)	ongoing	--	Mayor's Office	--
		iii.	Assemble land	long	TBD	Macon-Bibb Industrial Authority, UDA, Chamber of Commerce, private land owners	Federal & state grants, SPLOST, Macon-Bibb
		iv.	Create an industrial protection area	medium	--	Macon-Bibb Planning & Zoning	--
		v.	Market to appropriate businesses	long	--	Macon-Bibb Industrial Authority, UDA, Chamber of Commerce	--
c. Establish creative work space within existing underutilized buildings							
		i.	Repurpose mill buildings as maker spaces (e.g. Atlanta Goat Farm, The Plant in Chicago, Crane Arts in Philly) to foster creative entrepreneurship	medium-long	\$80-\$100 per sq. ft.	UDA, NewTown Macon, Macon-Bibb Planning & Zoning, Macon-Bibb Industrial Authority, SparkMacon	private equity, public-private partnerships
		ii.	Upgrade for aesthetics (greening & screening)	medium	up to \$500,000	UDA, Macon-Bibb Public Works, Macon Water Department, local institutions	General fund, local institutions

The image features a dynamic, abstract background. On the left, a series of white and grey lines radiate from a central point, creating a sense of depth and movement. The right side of the image is dominated by several thick, parallel diagonal stripes in shades of light blue, lime green, grey, and dark blue. Overlaid on these stripes is the text 'CREATE AN UNPARALLELED URBAN CORE EXPERIENCE' in a bold, teal, sans-serif font. The text is slanted to follow the angle of the stripes, enhancing the overall sense of forward motion and modernity.

**CREATE AN UNPARALLELED
URBAN CORE EXPERIENCE**



“Downtown has experienced a remarkable renaissance lately, please keep it up.”

Although Macon is unique, we can learn from the experience of other cities. One of the primary features of successful downtowns across the country is that they offer a distinctive experience that draws visitors and nurtures residents. The urban experience is rooted in a city’s vibrancy and unique spirit, how much there is to do, the social life of a community, and the vibe of the spaces and events that bring people together or encourage them to explore and get to know a place. In other words, a successful urban center must offer a wide range of activities that make people want to visit, stay, play, live, work, launch, and invest.

What defines the Urban Core experience in Macon today? One of the most frequently repeated comments throughout the public outreach process was, “We’d like more things to do.” Almost 40% of comments on the collaborative map requested more entertainment options and restaurants, with retail open later and restaurants and bars open seven days a week.

Macon also craves downtown places and gathering spaces where people can come together: the Urban Core has a collection of passive green spaces. Some, like Tattnell Square and Washington Park serve as valuable amenities for the surrounding neighbors and institutions. But in downtown, there is no dedicated civic gathering space with program and a distinctive personality. Although downtown has 1.2 miles of inhabitable medians, they are underutilized. While almost two-thirds of the study area is within a five-minute walk of public open space, much of that open space is not performing to its maximum capacity. This underutilized open space includes the riverfront, and people are eager to do something about it; in rating programming options for the Urban Core, nightlife on the riverfront stood out as the top choice.

How can the Urban Core experience become the flagship downtown experience we all want for Central Georgia? Strategies to do this address the following themes:

- **Clean and safe for all:** How does the Urban Core look and feel, night and day?
- **Events and programming:** What exciting things can we do?
- **Parks and public space:** Where can we do these exciting things? Where can we relax and take in this beautiful city?
- **Branding the Macon experience:** What do I first see when I come to the Urban Core as a visitor? What is the brand? How easy is it to navigate for residents and visitors?
- **Promotion of local culture and history:** Why should I come here as a visitor? And why might I stay?





Urban Core experience

Goal: 2.1 KEEP THE URBAN CORE CLEAN AND SAFE FOR ALL TO ENJOY

2.1a) Enhance the comfort and appeal of the urban core's public realm with expanded streetscaping efforts

Background Getting the fundamentals right on safety, aesthetics, and beautification is an essential first step in the creation of a flagship downtown experience. The look and feel of a downtown impacts the first impression of visitors, the experience of customers, and the well-being of residents and employees, and a place that is well maintained, well lit, and well populated with people coming and going feels safe and welcoming, sending the message that you have arrived somewhere you are supposed to be. While many have noted that public safety is a priority for the Urban Core, data and discussions with Macon-Bibb Police underscore that the Urban Core, and downtown in particular, are safe places to be. Improvements that generate additional activity and enhance the comfort and appeal of the public realm will draw more people, which in turn will combat perceptions and misconceptions about crime and safety.

The Urban Core enjoys the good bones of its beautiful buildings and existing urban tree canopy, which form the backdrop of the public realm. The MAP movement is already tackling the city's streets, for example through the new planters on Cherry Street. Now onto the next steps:

Key ideas MAP beautification projects, adopt-a-planter program, lighting on buildings, street trees, and trails; public art on alleys and rear walls, data tracking of crime specific to the Urban Core

Action MAP beautification project With leadership and funding from local partners, organize a MAP beautification project to keep the public realm lush, clean, and maintained. To maintain investments in public realm improvements, hire an individual or small crew dedicated to daily maintenance (see precedent, top right).

Adopt-a-planter While DIY programs such as an adopt-a-planter program can invite local businesses, organizations, groups, and families to participate in greening the downtown, a dedicated management plan and staff will be necessary for achieving the desired standard for a cleaner and more beautiful Urban Core. This staff will work with local businesses and volunteer groups to cultivate the existing tree canopy, maintain flower beds and planters, and clear litter from the sidewalks. In most successful downtowns, a business improvement district (locally proposed as a CID) serves this function effectively by dedicating staff to address these opportunities.

"Well-kept planters."

"My idea is simply to 'modernize' and clean up downtown and provide a safer feel for the Urban Core."

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE:

NKCDC's Corridor Cleaning Program, Philadelphia, PA

With a tight budget, this commercial corridor focused on keeping the corridor clean with a single worker, whom they are able to pay a living wage (\$13/hr) with benefits and sick time. Provided with a custom green-painted tricycle, it houses brooms, trash bags and cleaning chemicals, this worker is dedicated to keeping the commercial corridor clean. He is now the sole expenditure of the program with the exception of bike maintenance and cleaning products, keeping the budget for street cleaning to a minimum.



Adopt-a-planter program, Chico, CA

The Downtown Chico Business Association has run the Adopt-a-Planter program since 1998. Families, community groups, and businesses have adopted 43 planters to assist with maintenance. Other cities with similar programs include: Jordan, Minnesota; Gillette, Wyoming; and Sterling, Illinois.



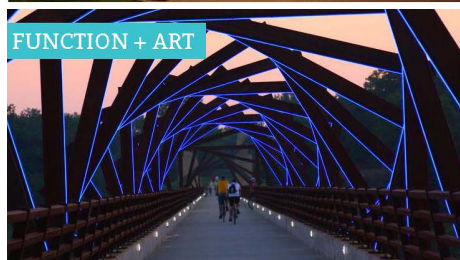
Unwelcoming sidewalk on Mulberry Street



SOLAR LED PAVERS



WHIMSICAL



FUNCTION + ART



GLOW-IN-THE-DARK



Figure 9– Rendering depicting tree lighting on the 3rd Street median

Lighting on street trees, buildings, and along the trails Start a “city of lights” campaign. This could also happen through sponsorships by Urban Core businesses and other interested groups. Sponsorships could be tiered by scale and cost: silver (tree), gold (building), and platinum (trail). Small plaques could adorn the trees, lampposts, and building

facades to show appreciation. Test these ideas first and expand later. For example, start the lighting of street trees on Cherry Street from Terminal Station to Cotton Avenue and coordinate a group of five building owners to volunteer their façades for creative lighting.

Public art Work with the Macon Arts Alliance and put out an RFP (request for proposals) to local and regional artists to gauge interest and capacity for adorning alleys and rear walls with mural art. In addition to two-dimensional art, consider commissioning sculptural work; the empty concrete podiums in the Mulberry Street median are poised to serve as foundations for such art. Pursue funding from the Artworks Program by the National Endowment for the Arts. Seek opportunities to support emerging artists, and explore community paint days for pre-selected mural designs to engage the broader community in beautifying the Urban Core.

Data tracking of crime specific to the Urban Core Finally, collect and track crime data specific to the Urban Core to measure success. Quarterly reports will help to bring more information to the conversation around safety in the Urban Core and highlight the role MAP is taking in addressing the issue.

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE:

Wall Therapy, Rochester, NY

"We are intervening visually to address a fundamental collective need of our citizenry, the need for inspiration." The wall therapy project started with a week-long festival in which 11 street artists from across the globe painted 16 walls throughout the city. By 2013, the number of murals had grown to 48. The project was sponsored by Dr. Ian Wilson, a local radiologist.



"Every streetscape improvement, building remodel, or other infrastructure project should include public art (broadly understood)- living walls, art created fixtures, painted industrial objects."



Figure 10– Rendering depicting mural on industrial building

2.1b) Introduce additional trash, recycling, and maintenance efforts

Background: The collection of recycling is currently limited in the Urban Core. Weekly collection of newspapers and magazines only (no cardboard) occurs in the entire City on the same day as regular trash pickup. Single-stream collection occurs bi-weekly in four neighborhoods in Macon: Intown, Shirley Hills, Vineville, and Wimbish Road, however these do not cover all neighborhoods within the Urban Core. In the single stream program, residents are provided a 65-gallon blue roll-off cart to collect glass bottles, clean paper, mail, newspaper, magazines, catalogs, phone books, paperback books, wrapping paper (no foil or ribbons), plastic bottles and jugs (no caps or lids), clean plastic dairy jugs (yogurt, margarine, etc.), and aluminum, steel, and tin-plated cans. Paper and cardboard can be dropped off at local fire stations; the only location in the Urban Core is Fire Department Station 1 on 195 Coliseum Drive. In terms of public recycling amenities, the Urban Core has no public recycling bins on its streets.

To address these limitations and other challenges, the Macon-Bibb County Materials and Solid Waste Management Plan has set forth two main goals: “1) Reduce by 25 percent the total amount disposed (per person) in MSW [municipal solid waste] landfills by 2025, and 2) divert 30 percent of the materials collected from residents through recycling and composting by 2025.” The first strategy in order to achieve these goals is to develop a “Recovered Materials Processing Facility” (RMPF) that will process and market recyclables in the region.

The plan then offers several strategies that will impact the Urban Core once this facility opens. Firstly, it aims to collect single-stream recyclables from all residents in the county. Participation will be required of all residents, and an extensive education and outreach plan will accompany the increase in collection. Drop-off centers at fire stations will continue to accept recyclables, and additional, more comprehensive recycling drives will take place in order to collect items not accepted curbside, such as electronics. Yard trimmings will also be collected separately and taken to a proposed construction and demolition debris management facility.

The Solid Waste Department also aims to work with the Urban Development Authority to offer single-stream recycling in areas in the Central Business District with high volumes of pedestrian traffic. It will work with Macon-Bibb County Parks and Beautification to offer single-stream recycling in county parks as well. Furthermore, through partnerships the department will collect recyclables at special events, such as the Cherry Blossom Festival.

An additional strategy is to streamline solid waste and recyclable collection system in the Central Business District. The Solid Waste

Department will provide containers and organize collection. In addition, collection of recyclables will take place in the Central Business District once the RMPF opens. The plan outlines a “model recycling program” for businesses and multi-family properties in the Central Business District. All downtown properties will have to pay for recycling containers regardless of whether they use them. They will be charged for garbage disposal and therefore incentivized to recycle. This program will be implemented with the Urban Development Authority and include technical assistance and promotional materials. Macon-Bibb County will also assess whether commercial and institutional organizations should manage organic materials on-site in anaerobic digesters as part of helping the streamlining process.

The plan also details significant education and outreach efforts, including ongoing collaboration with the Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, Internet and social media usage, presentations, print materials, educational school programs, an education and training center, and technical assistance for businesses and institutions.

Key ideas: *comprehensive municipal waste removal & recycling strategies, trash & recycling bin audit*

Action: *Comprehensive municipal waste removal & recycling strategies* Press forward with implementation of the comprehensive municipal waste removal and recycling strategies in the Macon-Bibb County Materials and Solid Waste Management Plan. By integrating single-stream recycling bins within the public realm and facilitating recycling pick-up for all households and multi-family complexes, recycling will become more convenient, and therefore more of a habit for members of the community, at home, at work, and at play in the Urban Core.

Trash & recycling bin audit To locate new bins where they are most needed, undertake an audit of street trash and recycling bins in the Urban Core to understand where they exist and where they are lacking. Consider human behavior in deploying additional trash bins, aiming to locate bins every 75 feet (or 30 steps) in areas with high foot traffic.

“Macon needs a comprehensive, state of the art municipal recycling facility with a strong environmental education component for creating an informed and enthusiastic recycling community.”

Solar-powered self-compacting bins in College Hill



2.2 TRANSFORM MACON'S SIDEWALKS AND PUBLIC SPACES AS THE CENTER STAGE FOR COMMUNITY LIFE

2.2a) Improve use of underutilized spaces, including alleys, medians, and vacant storefronts

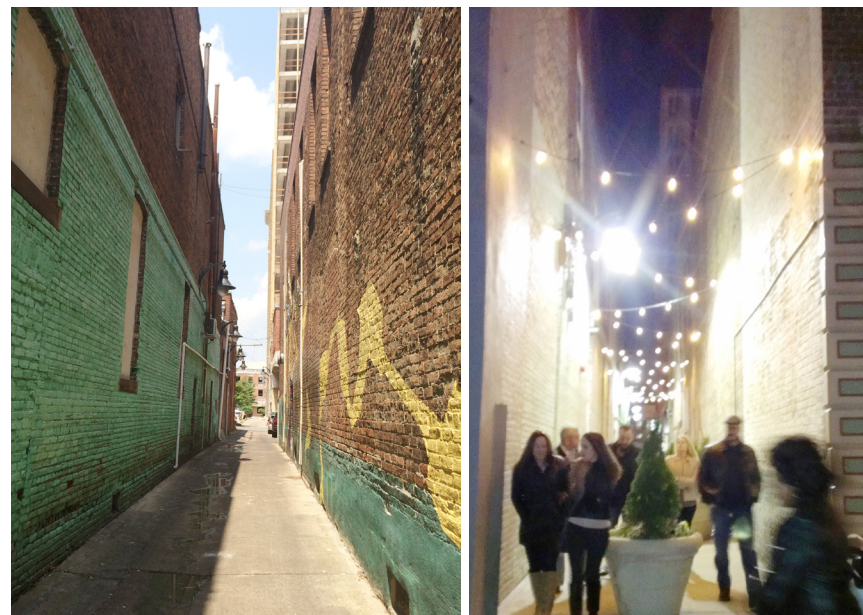
Background: Alleys, medians, and vacant storefronts are underutilized spaces in the Urban Core. Participants explained during the public outreach process that they liked to use the alleys as walkways, yet these unique, small-scale spaces could be opportunities for creative expression and relaxation as well. The underutilization of the medians stems from their separation from activity on sidewalks by fast-moving traffic and rows of parked cars. Some also have limited landscaping and as such are uninviting during hotter months. Vacant storefronts are valuable opportunities to close gaps along the streetscape in the Urban Core.

Key ideas: Destination alleys, movable furniture purchasing plan, friends of the medians, storefront activation

Actions: Destination alleys Create destination alleys by restricting traffic and adding functional and decorative lights as well as seating, among other possibilities. Alleys too narrow for passage or programming are good opportunities for stormwater management through permeable pavers, though any repaving efforts should focus on smoothing the surface for easy walking along these pedestrian-oriented routes. Start with three to four of the 10-foot wide alleys, which run parallel to 2nd and 3rd streets, and opt for those that are next to existing active commercial uses (see map). This should be a joint effort between the CID and Public Works Department.

“Pedestrian-friendly alleys that connect a walkable, urban downtown to the Riverwalk.”

Figure 11- Alley activation



Alley improvement including artwork, lighting & planters

Movable furniture purchasing plan Established and temporary public spaces across the country are reinventing themselves by inviting visitors to customize their own experiences through the use of movable furniture. The CID should develop a movable furniture purchasing plan to coordinate the quantity and type of tables and chairs, the best vendor, and the appropriate time. These tables, chairs, lounge chairs, and shade umbrellas should be tested and deployed throughout the Core, in existing plazas and medians, along destination alleys, and where opportunities exist to improve downtown's wide sidewalks. One such place is at the intersection of 3rd and Cherry, defined by many as the heart of downtown. Here, the linear placement of benches in front of The Dempsey is not conducive to conversation and visiting, failing to adequately serve the Dempsey residents and preventing others in the Urban Core from feeling welcome in this shared space. This key intersection should be redesigned to encourage use of the sidewalk by all Urban Core residents and visitors.



Example of moveable furniture

Friends of the Medians Launch a "Friends of the Medians" group to focus on infusing life and color into Macon's historic medians. Flower gardens, sandboxes in the shade for tots, and picnic areas populated with movable furniture (see above) near cafés and restaurants can all breathe new life into these mid-road spaces and drive foot traffic to nearby businesses. Partner with Bibb County Master Gardener Program (UGA Cooperative Extension), Macon-Bibb Parks & Beautification, Macon Civic Spaces, Main Street Macon, and adjacent businesses.

Storefront Activation Activate vacant storefronts with pop-up installations. Work with Main Street Macon and the Macon Arts Alliance to solicit installations from local artists and others in Central Georgia. Pair the debut of the installations with other evening events, such as First Friday. Focus on some key streets, in particular along 2nd Street and Cherry Street.



Examples of art & lighting in vacant storefronts

2.2b) Improve and expand open spaces to create a central gathering space downtown and in each neighborhood

Background: Parts of the Urban Core have wonderful parks that serve as centers of the community; think of Tattnall Square Park and Washington Park in College Hill. But the historic downtown needs a central gathering space, as do some of the neighborhoods in the Urban Core, including Pleasant Hill and East Macon's Main Street neighborhood. As demonstrated by College Hill's success, to help improve the Urban Core experience, residents should make the most of their public spaces, activating them as destinations for many types of users. The Urban Core has five distinct opportunities, each with its own identity:

ROSA PARKS SQUARE civic plaza

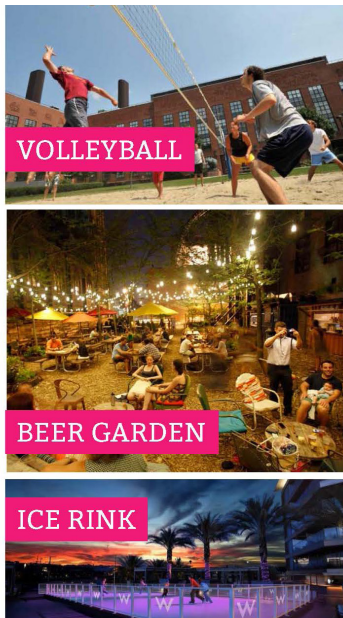


CAFE

FAIR

PASSIVE

CHERRY ST. PLAZA "blank slate"

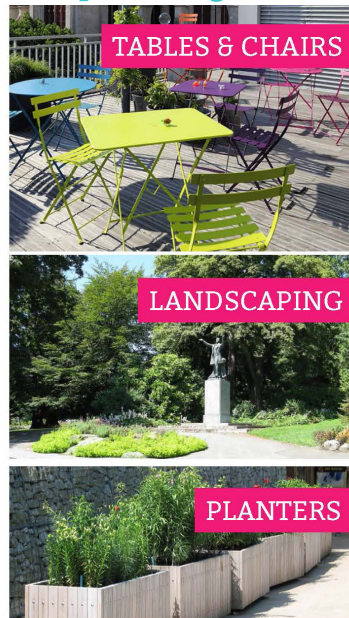


VOLLEYBALL

BEER GARDEN

ICE RINK

COTTON AVE. PLAZA passive & green



TABLES & CHAIRS

LANDSCAPING

PLANTERS

Different types of open space programming for each space

With its central and picturesque location, proximity to active retail, local government and institutions, and ample size, Rosa Parks Square is ideally suited to serve as downtown's central gathering space. Currently underutilized and often people-free, the Square's many assets will help transform it into a vibrant space with opportunity for active and passive uses during both daytime and evening hours. In its current state, it has very little connection to nearby uses, and no 'active edges' making it feel isolated and disconnected.



Source: Hood Studio

Poplar Yards when it was first installed in 1998- showing clearly defined circulation paths & spaces



Source: Google

Poplar Yards today- the gravel paths have become overgrown & the fountains remain off

Improvements to the Cotton Avenue Plaza at Second Street will complement to those at Rosa Parks Square and offer an additional opportunity for passive recreation and relaxation. Currently, the triangular green space is small, relatively unused save for a Civil War statue, and surrounded by a mix of active and vacant storefronts.

In contrast, Cherry Street Plaza will become the "blank slate" for Macon, offering a large, flat, open space for a range of active uses. Currently, it is really a parking lot with a small plaza inside. There is an opportunity to activate this space, integrate the fountain, and add greenery. More of a park, less of a parking lot!

The Poplar Street median, known as the Poplar Street Yards, was redesigned to be a series of 'backyards' after a National Competition in 1998 by Hood Studio. When it was first installed, as seen in the photo to the right, the park had a series of rooms, forming many different kinds of hang out space. 15 years later, many of the gravel paths have disappeared due to lack of maintenance, and the fountains are off leaving pools of water that collect trash and have an unpleasant smell. A better management plan and some new programming would encourage more residents to take advantage of this valuable open space and breathe new life into this underutilized park at the heart of redevelopment activity.

And last but not least, there is need and opportunity to upgrade and/or create neighborhood parks to ensure that all Urban Core residents have improved access to community green space within their neighborhoods.



Figure 12– Opportunities for a central gathering space in the historic downtown

Actions: Rosa Parks Square Augment the design of Rosa Parks Square. To accommodate both passive (a quiet, relaxing, park-like setting) and active (concerts, yoga, movie nights, and other programs) uses, this remodel includes design features to suit both of those programs. New garden rooms enclose the perimeter, each providing greenery and a structure for passive recreational uses. These rooms should be situated to frame the view of the City Auditorium, so when standing on the steps of City Hall looking into the park the magnificent architecture remains in clear view. To activate the central space, incorporate a park café, ice cream shop, or food court oriented along the former Shriner Temple.* This café will not only help draw users into the park, it will help generate income for the maintenance of the park and gardens. Transforming some of the open lawn into an open plaza space in front of the café will allow for flexible seating and gathering configurations. By providing dedicated space for programming, the remainder of the park's landscaping will be better protected. The sloped portion of the park should be re-graded to create a flat lawn for passive use and better welcome visitors to the Auditorium. This type of space requires an inviting main entrance to draw people in, and the corner at First Street and Poplar Street can meet that need. The existing statues, monuments, and plantings can all be incorporated into this redesign, particularly in the garden rooms. Rosa Parks Square can thus remain an important memorial space while also serving as a beloved and often-frequented gathering place for all visitors and residents in Macon's Urban Core.



after

Figure 14– Rendering depicting a Rosa Parks Square redesign

*Note: The Shriners Temple, an auditorium built in 1929, is located on the northwest side of the park and is currently vacant. The proposed café could be located in the Temple if it is redeveloped in the near future. In this case, the developer should ensure that the main frontage of the café opens onto the park to activate that edge. In this case, the café design could utilize a new opening in the façade, or occupy a retrofit to the existing carport. Ideally, this new development would fold the existing driveway into the new open space, so that car traffic does not conflict with pedestrians and park users, and so that the café becomes integrated with the park. To test the idea, the driveway could be used in the short term as an area for food trucks. These food trucks would serve the same function as a café but on a temporary basis.

before



Cotton Avenue Plaza Improve upon the Cotton Avenue Plaza triangle, making it a little bigger by closing Cotton Avenue between Mulberry Street Lane and Mulberry Street and extending the triangle to the curbside. Introduce tables and chairs for passive use and lunchtime dining, and add flowers and landscaping to provide color, shade, and greening. Automobile circulation would be changed slightly; motorists traveling toward Second Street on Cotton would instead make a right onto Mulberry Street Lane at the plaza space, before turning on Second Street. This configuration is safer for pedestrians, and the larger plaza will provide a beautiful capstone to one of Macon's most historic streets. Research has shown that in cities both smaller and larger than Macon, this type of public investment attracts more customers who, in turn, support local businesses.

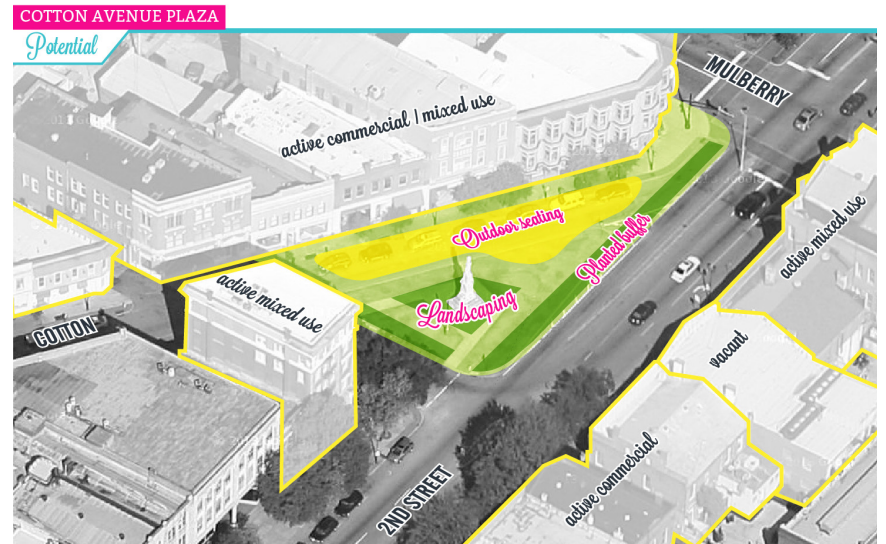
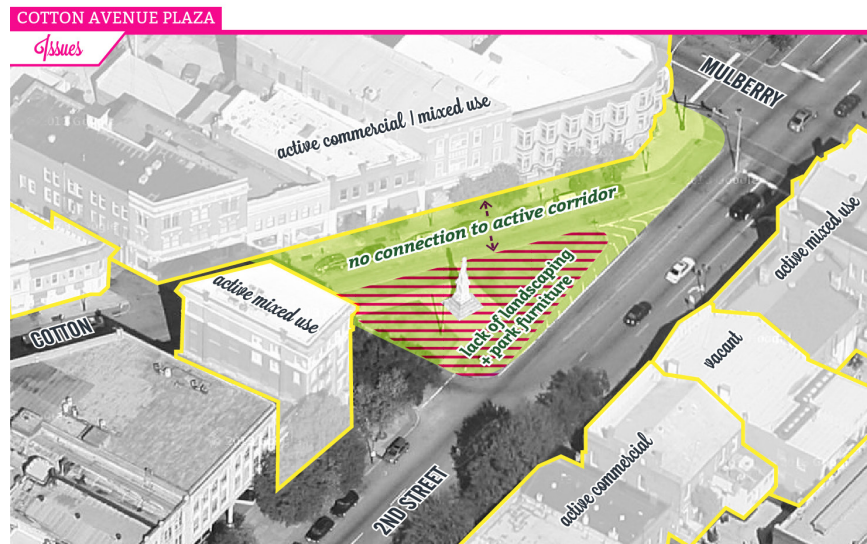


Figure 15- Cotton Avenue Plaza issues & potential

after



Figure 16- Rendering of the proposed Cotton Avenue plaza improvements

Cherry Street Plaza Formalize the lawn in front of the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame as a programmable blank space in Cherry Street Plaza. Ideally, improvements should incorporate a new surface material (brick) on the western half of the park. In the first year, however, test run various programs in the space first before incorporating new paving. Start off with a beer garden and beach volleyball for the spring and summer months, for example. Transition the space for cooler weather with an ice rink during the holiday season. After this trial year, evaluate whether formal paving would facilitate better use of the space. To better connect the central fountain area to the rest of the park, create a long raised crosswalks on both sides of the fountain to visually link the fountain with adjacent lawns and landscaping and slow oncoming traffic. The current fencing is unwelcoming and should be removed. Remove the parking spaces that are adjacent to the fountain to add some much needed greening in the middle of the street and provide some shade for parents watching children play in the fountain. Plant street trees along the edges of the park. Strategy 4.3a includes recommendations for additional transit connections at Terminal Station, which would also bring more people to and through Cherry Street Plaza.

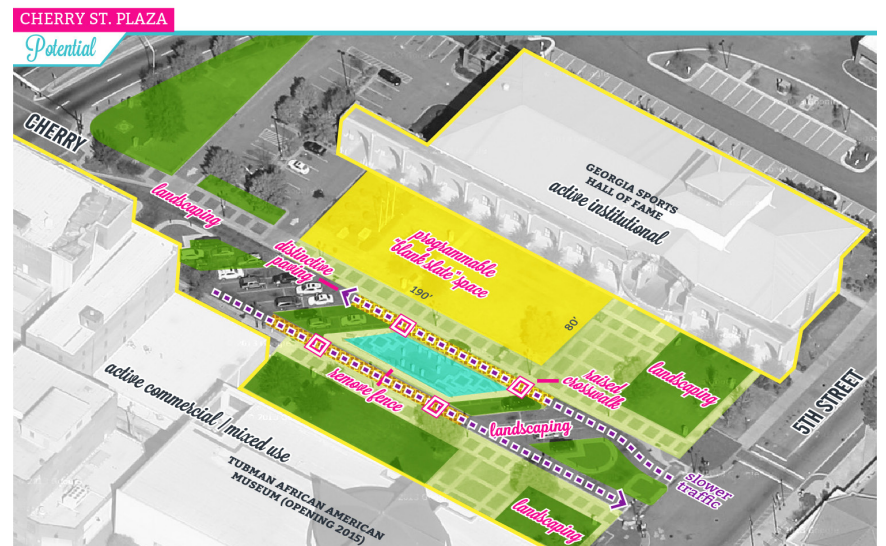


Figure 17- Cherry Street Plaza issues & potential



Figure 18- Rendering of the proposed Cherry Street Plaza improvements

Upgrade Neighborhood Parks to serve as focal points and vibrant public spaces for neighbors. There are key opportunities in each community.

- Reclaim excess asphalt at the three-way intersection of Cherry, Magnolia, and Spring streets adjacent to **Bernd Park**, extending the green space such that the Spring Street block face and sidewalk aligns with the blocks above Cherry and below Magnolia. Upgrade the park as a neighborhood park with new floral plantings, shaded seating, and elements that give the park some personality, drawing neighbors in rather than letting them continue to pass by this passive space. Take cues from the work projects accomplished by neighbors through the Friends of Tattnall Square Park.
- Support continued investments in **Tattnall Square**. The Friends of Tattnall Square have done a remarkable job to organize park improvements and leverage partnerships with Mercer University and the City. What was an overlooked park is now an important destination for College Hill, Beall's Hill and the region. Support and celebrate continued improvements and programming.
- Improve the **Booker T. Washington Recreation Center**. This resource has long been an important amenity for Pleasant Hill. To maximize its potential, improvements are necessary to ensure the facility and programming fully engage and support local youth and families.
- Create **new open spaces in the Main Street neighborhood**. There are no public parks in this community, and strong boundaries such as high-traffic roads make accessing nearby parks difficult. MAP identifies two initial opportunities for green space: 1) As a part of the Clinton Street improvements to enhance access to the Indian Mounds, establish a "stormwater park" between Clinton and Schell to serve as a beautiful and passive entrance to the community; and 2) Repurpose the lawn in front of the Family Investment Center as an active orchard maintained organized by local youth and families. Community members and local youth highlighted the need for youth educational and recreational programming and play space during a community dinner and early planning session for the Arts Village.

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE:

Sister Cities Park, Philadelphia, PA.

Sister Cities Park covers 1.3 acres in Philadelphia and features a café, children's discovery garden, play-ground, and fountain. Despite its location next to a busy roundabout, it offers an oasis that is open and intimate at the same time. This 5.1 million dollar park received funding from the Knight Foundation.

www.ccdparks.org/sister-cities-park



Poplar Yards Upgrade the landscaping and programming at the Poplar Yards. Given that the fountains are not functioning, the City should determine whether or not it is feasible to turn them on again and maintain them as fountains. If not, they should fill them with soil and convert them to planters so they once again become an amenity to the park. In addition to the fountains, the grass in the median has bled into the gravel pathways making the park circulation indistinguishable from the lawn areas. To make the design of the park easier to maintain, the existing gravel should be replaced with concrete or pavers to restore the intended circulation patterns. Some of the larger passive lawn areas, such as along the winding path between 3rd street and MLK, are underutilized. By incorporating a landscape destination, such as a butterfly garden, residents would not only have something that is more beautiful, they would be attracting more users to the park. As for programming upgrades, the seating underneath the pavilions is a little too rigid and uncomfortable. By replacing the formal layout of the benches with flexible seating options, such as picnic tables, movable furniture (as in Strategy 2.2a) and community grills, nearby residents would be able to take advantage of the shade structures for informal gatherings and family events. Other ways to activate the Yards include incorporating a rotating outdoor gallery for public art near the concrete symbolic 'hay bails' between First and Second streets, providing informal play spaces, inviting food trucks, and fencing in a small dog run equipped with waste stations. Signage that includes the name "Poplar Street Yards" with a bit of background on the site will also help promote the uniqueness of this space in the near term.

POPLAR YARDS UPGRADE

Existing

DESIGNED TO BE A SERIES OF "YARDS" AFTER A NATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION IN 1998 BY HOOD STUDIO

BUT, THEY ARE CURRENTLY UNDERUTILIZED



POPLAR YARDS UPGRADE

Potential



Figure 19- Action steps for Poplar Yards

2.2c) Integrate the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail as a key downtown amenity

Background: A recurring theme throughout the community engagement process was the desire to foster a better connection to the Ocmulgee River. While most of the historic downtown is within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile (or a 15 minute walk) of the River, existing access points are not always visible, clear, or welcoming. The trail has proved successful in drawing people from across Macon to the River. However, the trail's location across the River creates a gap between this amenity and downtown. Currently, the side of the River adjacent to downtown has the least mileage of dedicated trail, linking just past Gateway Park where the Otis Redding statue stands to Central City Park. Continuation of this part of the trail is constrained by topography, existing rail lines, and costs. In 2011, a \$500,000 investment was made to improve the sidewalk on the north side of Riverside Drive to provide an on-street connection on the downtown side of the River. While this sidewalk is an important step in continuing the trail, additional improvements have the potential to transform the roadway as a greenway in the event that the dedicated trail on the south side of the River is deemed unfeasible.

The far side of the River, including the forthcoming Walnut Creek Trail, provides a more traditional (and much loved) river trail experience, providing a great asset for the Urban Core. Access from downtown to the trail is difficult; trail users must either cross the Otis Redding Memorial Bridge (MLK) or the Spring Street Bridge. These bridges were not designed with bicyclists or pedestrians in mind, and neither includes safe bicycle access. There is limited protection buffering between cars and pedestrians. The Georgia Department of Transportation's I-16/I-75 Improvement Project includes plans for expanding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard Bridge to six lanes with a raised, landscaped median. Plans also call for it to be reconstructed as a pedestrian friendly gateway to Macon with 10-foot sidewalks and lighting. The design for the bridge has not been finalized, though preliminary designs for the bridge expansion can be found online at <http://www.i16i75.com>. Given the importance of the MLK, Jr. Boulevard Bridge connection and its role as a major gateway to downtown Macon, this expansion is an opportunity for the Urban Core to partner with GDOT in creating a bridge that is not only visually appealing, but also an integral greenway connection in the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail system.

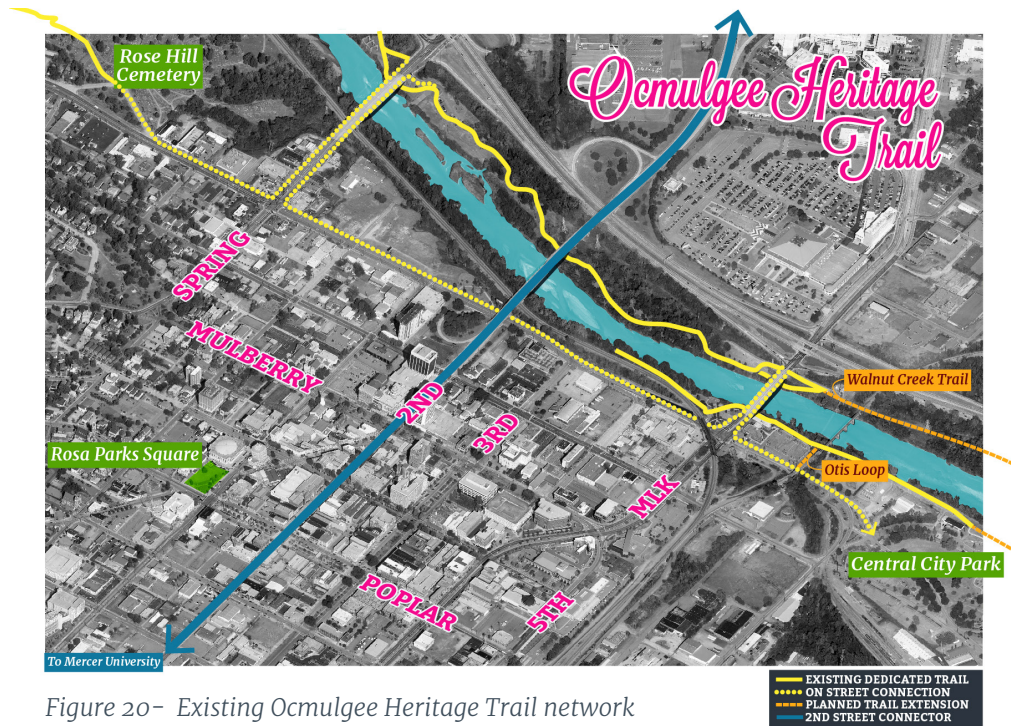


Figure 20- Existing Ocmulgee Heritage Trail network

“Extend and enhance park all the way to the river over RR tracks.”



Figure 21- Proposed Ocmulgee Heritage Trail network in Historic Downtown

See Figure 53 on page 126 for full trail network map

Key ideas: *Downtown River Loop, Riverside Drive greenway, riverfront trail, median improvements, on-street bike lanes, bridge improvements*

Actions: Downtown River Loop Create a connected, continuous Downtown River Loop as part of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail Network. Consider two options for this:

1) **Riverside Drive greenway** Design and build a true greenway along Riverside Drive. Existing traffic volumes along Riverside Drive between Spring Street and MLK Boulevard do not require more than four lanes. By re-allocating space to create a dedicated trail along Riverside Drive, the total loop length would be 1.7miles.



Transformation of the sidewalk on Riverside Drive into a lush greenway, similar to that of the Indianapolis Cultural Trail

“What about Riverside Drive? It could use some sprucing up.”

Figure 22– Improvements to Riverside Drive: before & after sections



2) **Riverfront trail** Alternatively, create a riverfront trail connection along the southside of the Ocmulgee River, as seen in Figure 21 on page 61. As demonstrated by other cities, the trail can be designed to be beautiful but also fully floodable to accommodate the rising River. In this instance, Macon could have a trail loop along the water on both sides of the River. The total loop length would be 1.5 miles.

Investments in the River Loop will improve local health by providing a beautiful and easily accessible walking, jogging, or biking path. Expand exercise opportunities along the trail by integrating calisthenics stations where trail-goers can build personal strength and endurance as well as stronger connections to the Ocmulgee River.

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE:

Vera Katz Eastbank Esplanade, Portland

At 1,200 linear feet, the floating walkway is the longest of its kind in the United States and offers the sensation of walking on water. The adjoining 120-foot public boat dock provides moorage for recreational boaters as well as space for a future river taxi and other commercial uses.

// Length: 1.5 miles Cost: \$30M Completion: 2001



Schuylkill River Trail Boardwalk, Philadelphia

The boardwalk, which connects the Schuylkill River Trail from Locust Street to the South Street Bridge can withstand floods, ice, and heavy rains. The lights were designed to keep working no matter what Mother Nature brings including large logs, branches and other debris that sometimes come down the river and wind up on the trail. The boardwalk also includes a solar light system designed to work even when the boardwalk is underwater.

// Length: .38 miles Cost: \$18M Completion: 2014



Boardwalk at Lady Bird Lake, Austin

This boardwalk features over 300 piers, 2,200 pre-cast concrete deck planks, 13,000 LED lights, 1.3 million pounds of structural steel, 7 viewing areas, an ADA accessible pier, and a new trailhead restroom.

// Length 1.3 miles Cost: \$28M Completion: 2014



Allegheny Riverfront Park, Pittsburgh

While technically not a boardwalk, this trail traverses a 25-foot grade change. The path is 15-foot wide to accommodate walkers and bikers. The cantilevered section of the walkway sweeps out over the river and around the base of an intersecting bridge. The trail withstands fierce annual floods that can surge as much as twenty feet above the river's mean pool level.

// Length: .75 miles Cost: \$11M Completion: 2001



Median improvements & On-street bike lanes Extend the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail through the Urban Core and connect to the Downtown River Loop via medians and on-street lanes (e.g. Third Street, Mulberry, Poplar medians). Why stop the Trail along the River? Imagine if, regardless of where you live or work in the Urban Core, you could easily access the River. This is an experience few other cities can offer. Other cities are spending millions to create trails within new street medians. In Macon, the medians are already part of the urban fabric. By simply redesigning the middle of the Third Street median as part of the Heritage Trail system, the trail could extend to meet Riverside Drive. The design, as seen in Figure 21, would welcome both bicyclists and pedestrians. This approach could also apply to the Mulberry Street median, though

here the redesign would widen the existing sidewalks on the outside of the median. This would preserve the large canopy trees in the middle of Mulberry's median. Where space and shade along the trail permit, explore opportunities to integrate naturalistic exercise stations here too. The Poplar Street median would be harder to redesign to accommodate a trail. In this case, the trail could be integrated along the street, designed to provide enough protection from moving cars and retain the existing on-street parking.



Figure 23- Transformation of the 3rd Street median into the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail



Figure 24- Circulation of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail along the Mulberry St. median

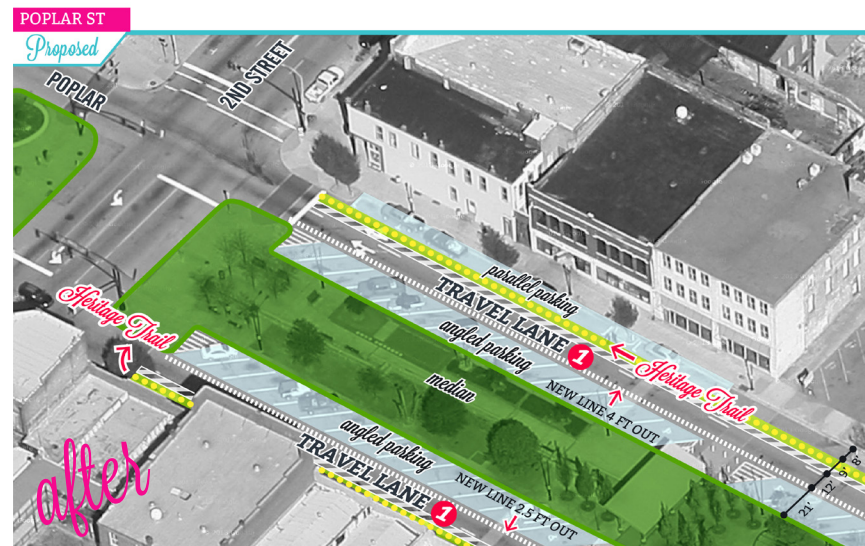
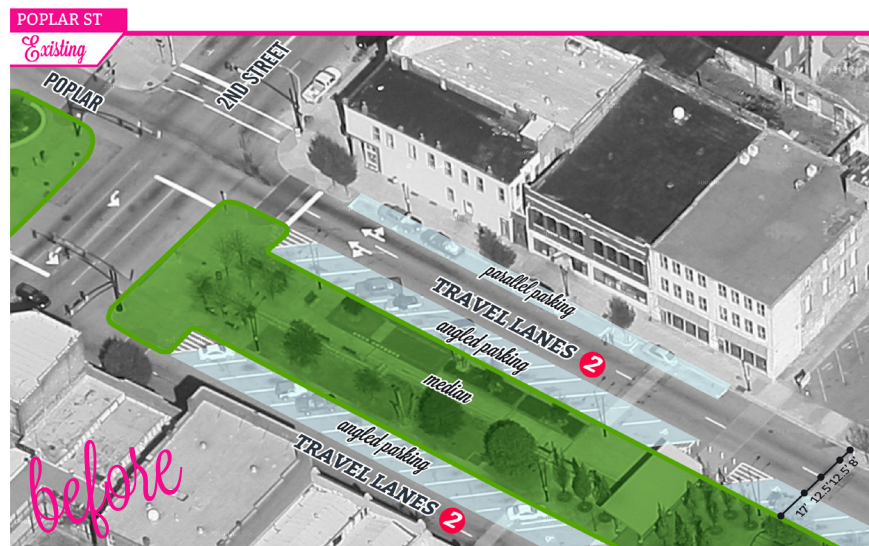


Figure 25- Circulation of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail along the Poplar St. median

With improvements planned for Central City Park, the on-street trail network should also extend along Riverside Drive and Walnut Street to meet this large urban park. Treatments on Riverside proposed between MLK and Spring Street can be extended all the way to the Park entrance while retaining two-way car traffic.

Investments in pedestrian and bicycle connectivity and safety here are particularly important given Strategy 4.2a, which outlines a recommendation to re-route truck traffic off of MLK and onto Seventh Street to bypass the historic downtown. The roadway redesigns for these two strategies will require coordination.

“Connect downtown to Central City Park/the Riverwalk coherently via bikes and pedestrians.”

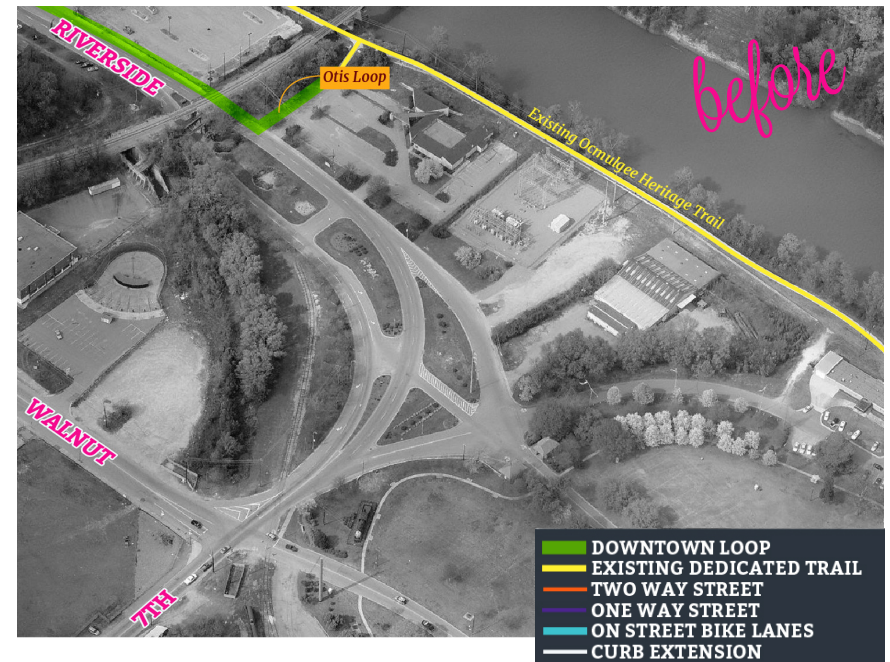
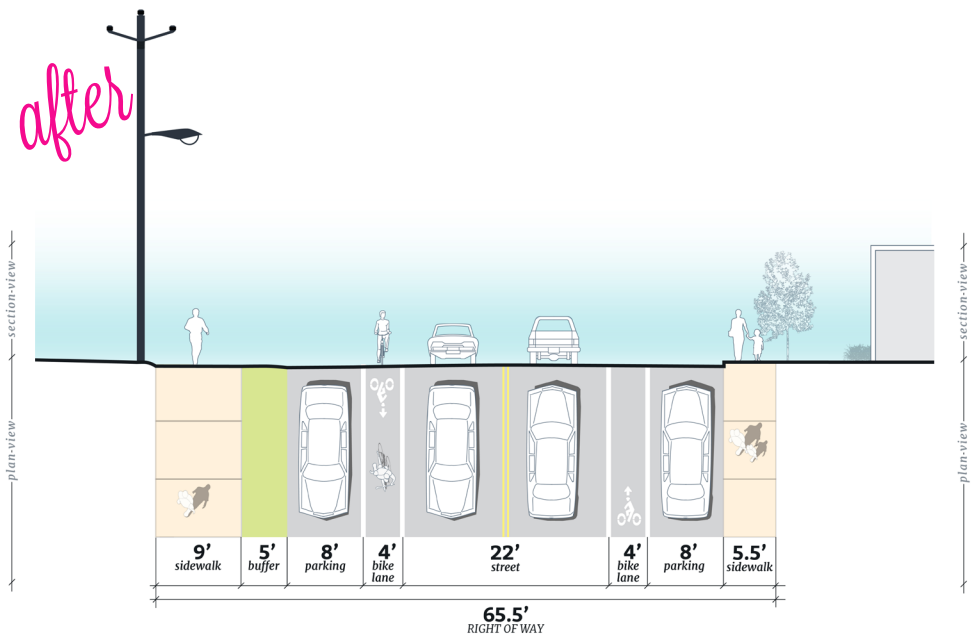
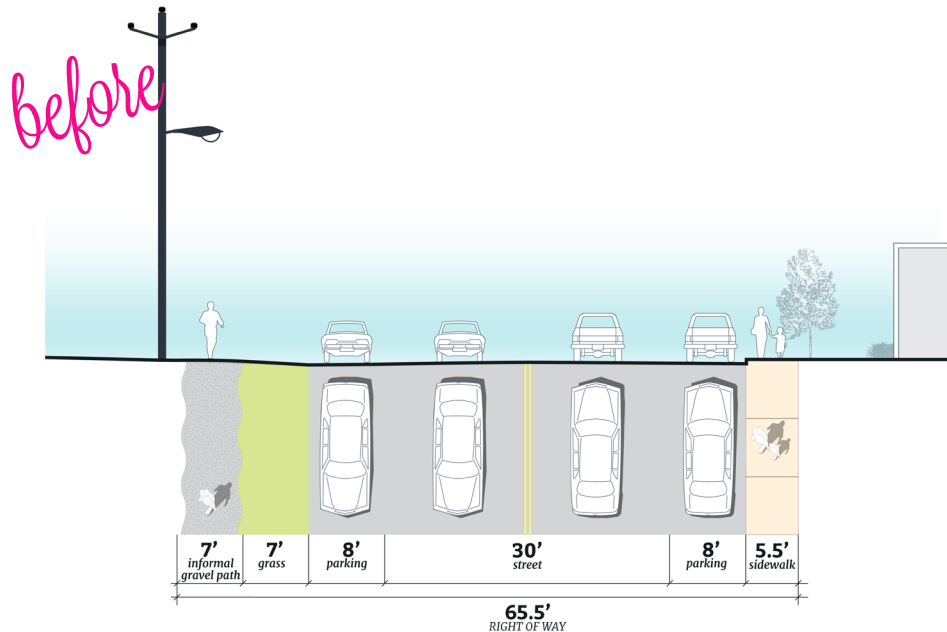


Figure 26– Improvements to Walnut Street: before & after sections



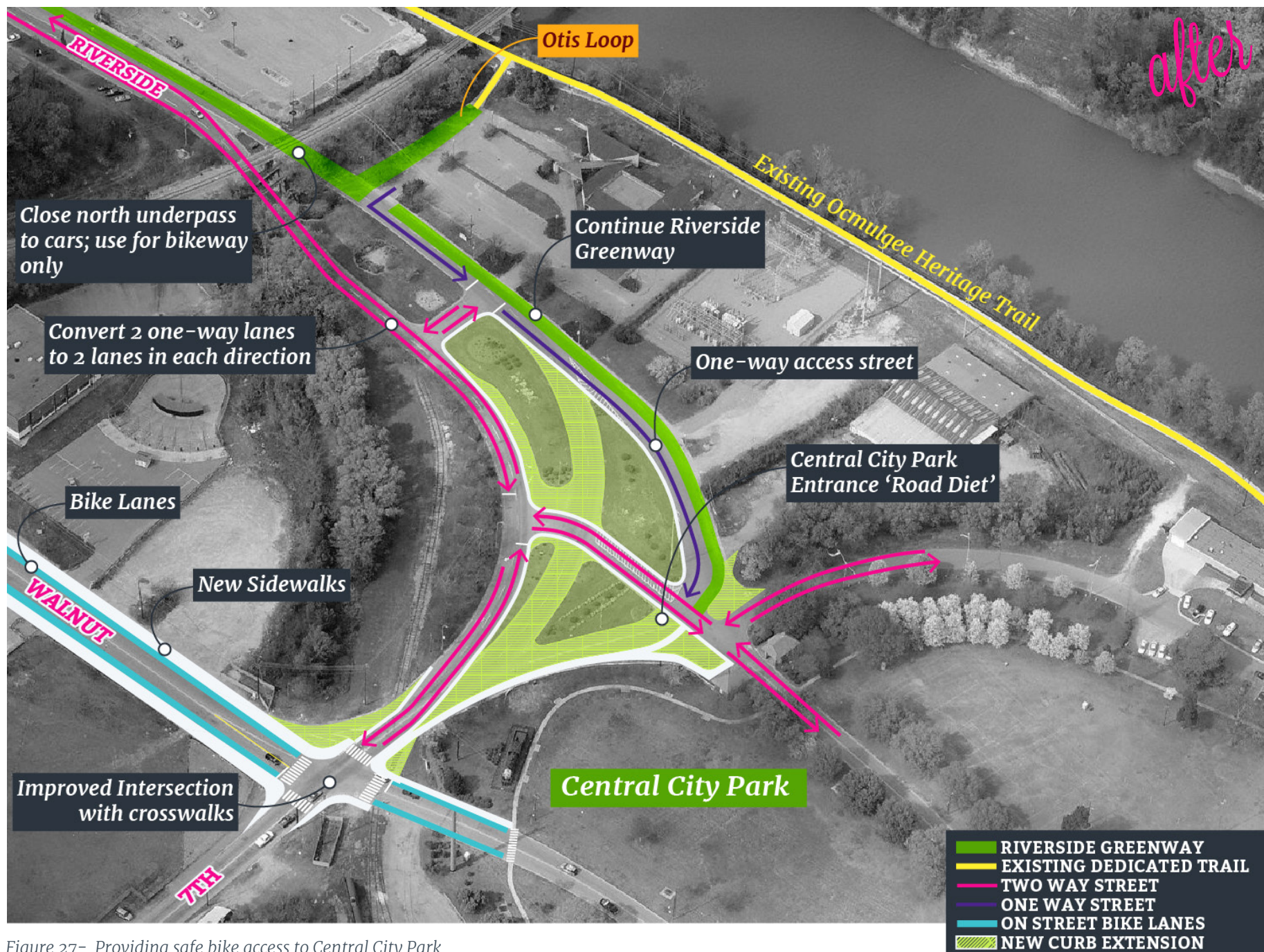
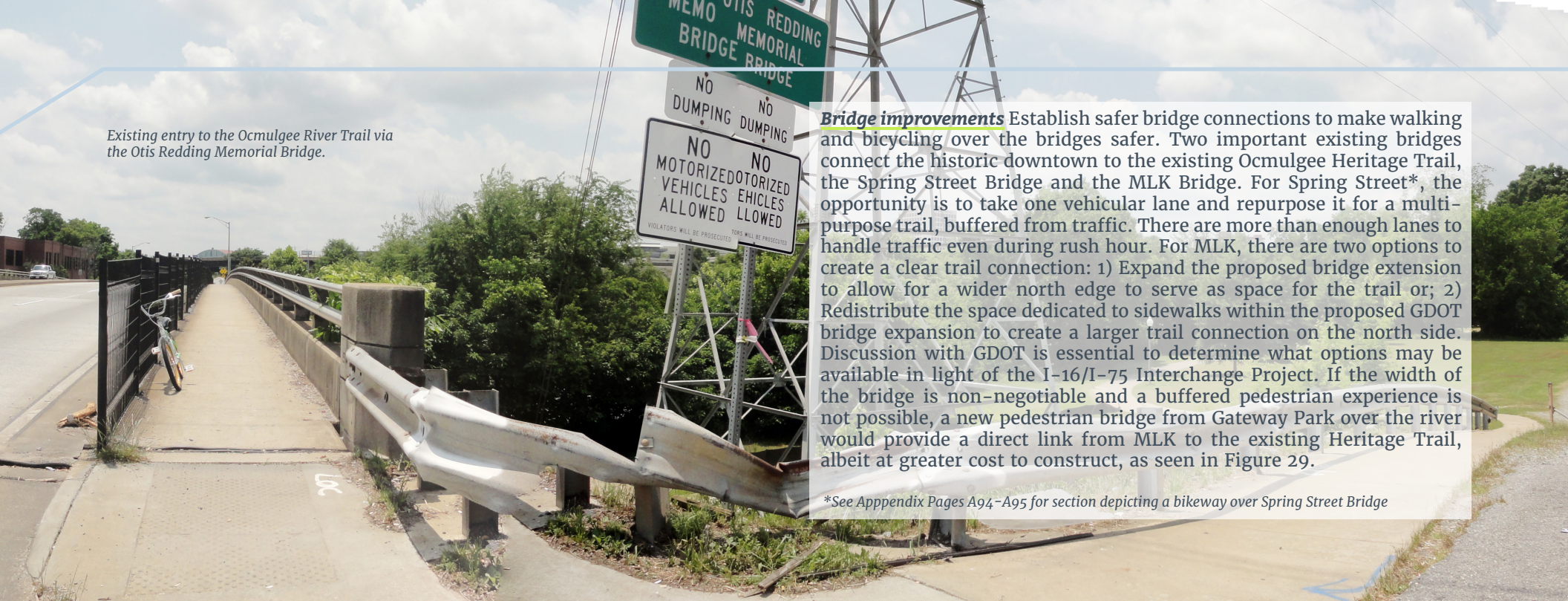


Figure 27- Providing safe bike access to Central City Park

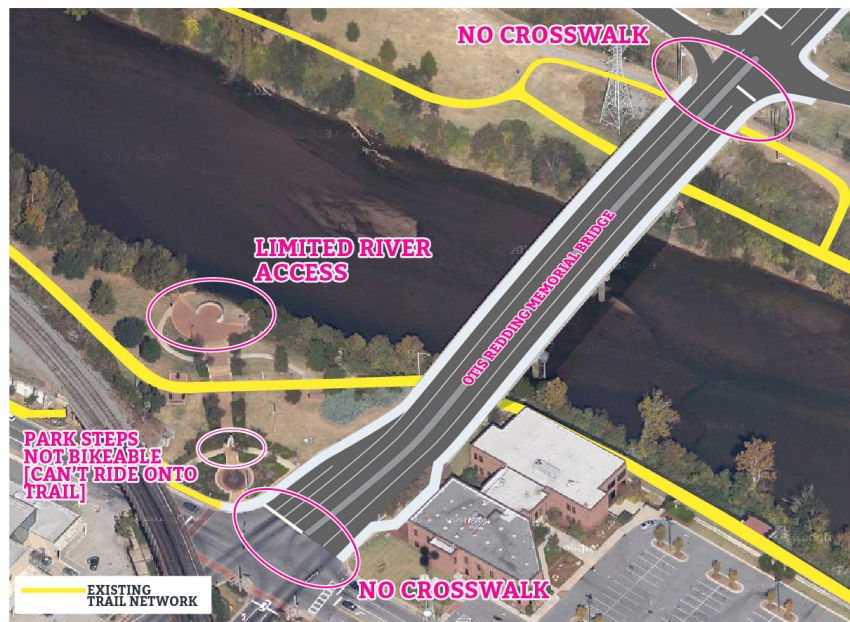
Existing entry to the Ocmulgee River Trail via the Otis Redding Memorial Bridge.



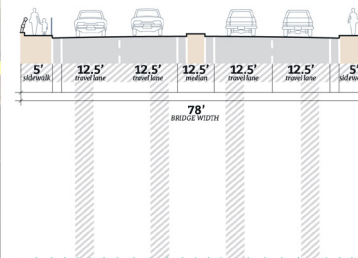
Bridge improvements Establish safer bridge connections to make walking and bicycling over the bridges safer. Two important existing bridges connect the historic downtown to the existing Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, the Spring Street Bridge and the MLK Bridge. For Spring Street*, the opportunity is to take one vehicular lane and repurpose it for a multi-purpose trail, buffered from traffic. There are more than enough lanes to handle traffic even during rush hour. For MLK, there are two options to create a clear trail connection: 1) Expand the proposed bridge extension to allow for a wider north edge to serve as space for the trail or; 2) Redistribute the space dedicated to sidewalks within the proposed GDOT bridge expansion to create a larger trail connection on the north side. Discussion with GDOT is essential to determine what options may be available in light of the I-16/I-75 Interchange Project. If the width of the bridge is non-negotiable and a buffered pedestrian experience is not possible, a new pedestrian bridge from Gateway Park over the river would provide a direct link from MLK to the existing Heritage Trail, albeit at greater cost to construct, as seen in Figure 29.

*See Appendix Pages A94–A95 for section depicting a bikeway over Spring Street Bridge

Figure 28– Existing Otis Redding Memorial Bridge conditions



before

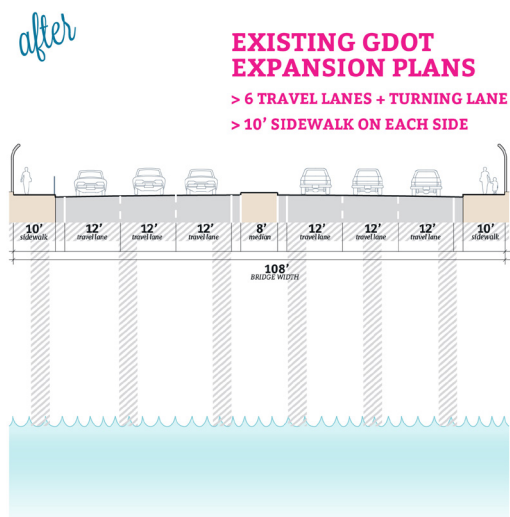
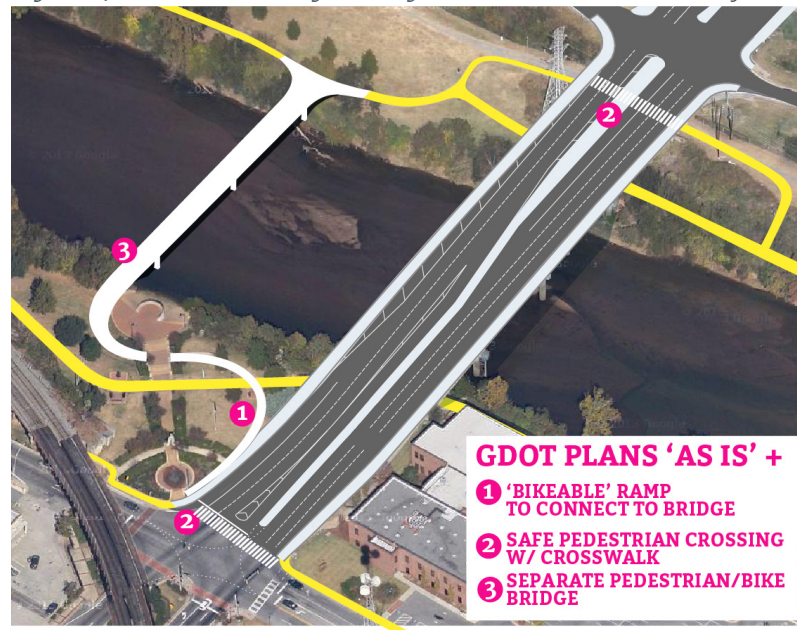


OTIS REDDING MEMORIAL BRIDGE
(facing northeast)

“Pedestrian bridge across the Ocmulgee/I-16.”

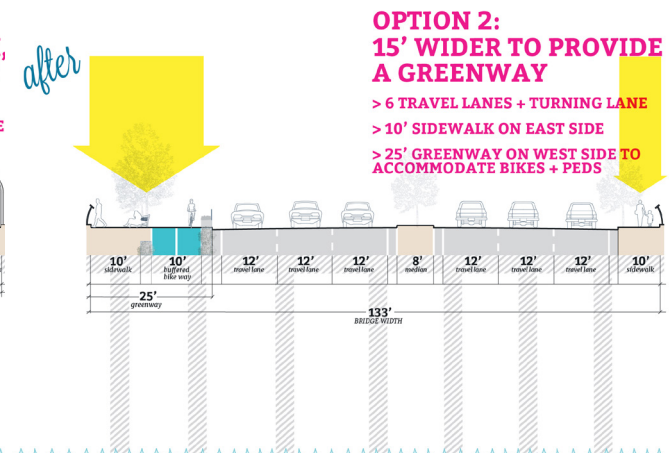
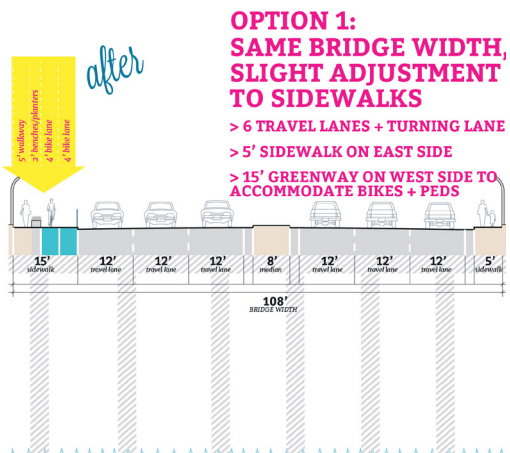
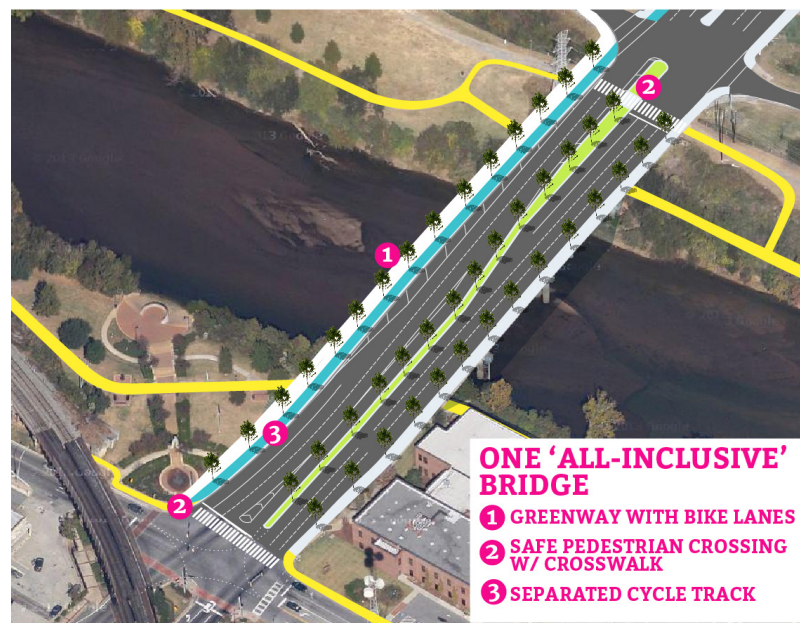
The existing access across the River does not provide pedestrian safety (there are no crosswalks) nor does it feel safe to bike from Riverside Drive to the north side of the River.

Figure 29- Pedestrian bridge linking the Charles H. Jones Gateway Park to the north side of the river



Existing GDOT expansion plans call for 3 travel lanes in each direction and a center turning lane / median, as well as a 10' sidewalk on each side. If GDOT cannot include a greenway in their bridge design, a new pedestrian bridge could serve as the main pedestrian connection across the River.

Figure 30- Augmenting GDOT's existing plans to include a bikeway & enhanced pedestrian experience



In the event that GDOT can alter their plans to include a greenway and enhanced pedestrian experience, there are two options to consider. Option 1 is the same planned width of the GDOT plans, but instead of 2, 10 foot sidewalks, reconfiguring the design to have one 15 foot greenway and a 5 foot sidewalk. The more preferred option 2, includes a 25' greenway to allow for recreation amenities on the bridge as well as a buffered cycletrack. Both of these options shows the bikeway on the west side of the bridge, as to link downtown, and the Gateway Park, to the Macon Coliseum.

2.3 PROGRAM DOWNTOWN'S SOCIAL LIFE AND BUILD THE LOCAL AUDIENCE

2.3a) Maintain support for existing events and add new programs

Background: Events and programming will complement the physical transformations to the public spaces in the Urban Core. Events and programming form the beat of community life and offer the opportunity for Macon's charm and creative spirit to shine through. Having a broad palette of events for residents and visitors to choose from is important for serving diverse interests. Regular events – both new and existing – can tie communities together and generate a consistent stream of support for local businesses. One-off events generate buzz, offering something exciting for residents while enhancing the appeal of the Urban Core for visitors and newcomers. Place-specific programming can activate spaces that have inherent value but are not currently used to their full potential.

Key ideas: existing programs & events; new events & programming: one-off/temporary events, regular events, place-specific programs

“Make the Ocmulgee more prominent in downtown.”

Examples of programming events for the Ocmulgee River



“Activate our public spaces with art, music, and community!”

- EXISTING PROGRAMS & EVENTS -	- ONE-OFF/TEMPORARY EVENTS -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Friday • First Saturday Village Market in Mercer Village • Mulberry Market in Tattnall Square Park • Second Sunday Concert Series • Bragg Jam • Cherry Blossom Festival • Make-end Maker Festival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof-top Pop-Up (dinner and/or dance party) • Beer Garden • Mini-Golf • Ice Skating • Open Streets
- - REGULAR EVENTS -	- PLACE-SPECIFIC PROGRAMS -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Parklets • Park(ing) Day • Food Truck Rally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming for downtown medians, e.g. yoga, fitness, sandbox for kids, wildflowers/bird & butterfly gardens, informal play spaces • Riverfront (movie screenings, night cruises, rubber ducky race, DIY float race, etc.) • Downtown Senior Center

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE:

Anything that Floats Race, Key Largo, Florida Keys

This reflects work done by the Friends of the Trail a few years ago on the Ocmulgee. The race in Key Largo involves a half-mile course in which participants are challenged to be resourceful and use items from around their home, including PVC pipes and buckets, pool noodles and lawn furniture. Prizes are awarded to best-costumed crew, most creative vessel, fastest boat, best hard-luck story, and the vessel containing the most participants (that still floats). The event is organized by the Key Largo Merchants Association, a non-profit established to host community events in Key Largo.



keylargoanythingthatfloatsrace.com/about-us/

Actions: Existing programs & events Macon's Urban Core already hosts an impressive range of regular programs such as First Friday, Mulberry Market, and the Second Sunday Concert Series as well as annual events like Cherry Blossom Festival, Bragg Jam, and Design Wine and Dine. Consistency is key, so keep up the good work and maintain the Urban Core's calendar of existing events and programs.

New events & programming whether singular, temporary, or recurring, should target underutilized spaces primarily. The tops of buildings with underutilized parking lots, for example, are interesting spaces for an occasional pop-up event with a view. Regular events sponsored by MAP should utilize locations that will generate foot traffic and increase spending at local businesses. NewTown and College Hill, with experience in bringing creative programming to the Urban Core, can offer support for new events, but new players will need to step up to help as well. Private businesses can develop events that contribute to the Urban Core's sense of place if well marketed to build on the brand; business-based specials from karaoke to trivia to live music will help add vibrancy and draw customers to area businesses.

The emerging downtown neighborhood association will be integral in getting one-off pop-up events off the ground. Approach potential sponsors from small local businesses to larger employers and institutions. Yoga and fitness instructors could offer "pay-as-you-wish" classes in the medians. Ocmulgee Outdoor Expeditions and Riverkeepers or Friends of the Trail could collaborate in bringing a DIY float race to the Ocmulgee River.

Certain events and programming are better suited for busier areas. The bustle of Second Street lends the street to parklets and Park(ing) Day. Spring parklets could start on a) Second Street between Cherry Street and Mulberry Street Lane and b) Poplar Street between First and Second Streets. The UDA or Parking Authority would be best suited for organizing the rental of parking spaces for the spring parklets from the City-County. Organize a Park(ing) Day within the Urban Core and invite local schools, institutions, community groups, and businesses, to participate by dreaming, designing, and building temporary park spaces for a day in place of a parking space. Hold food truck rallies in parking areas that are close to nightlife, such as the Cherry Street Plaza. The temporary reduction in parking spaces due to occupancy by the food trucks will be more than made up for with the increased foot traffic the trucks will generate.

While many community events and programs take place outdoors, others might find permanent homes in underused spaces indoors. Seek indoor space and consider a satellite Senior Center in downtown. Successful downtowns need residents of all ages, and likewise, elderly residents require services in close proximity to where they live. Currently, many seniors live in the Dempsey at Second and Cherry in the center of downtown and would benefit from programs and space for socializing nearby.

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE:

Open Streets, North America

Open Streets events temporarily close off streets to traffic to allow for temporary programming and activities, such as walking, biking, games, dancing, yoga, and small markets. These events transform streets into spaces defined by public use as opposed to mostly automobile use. Open Streets events are growing in popularity, with over 100 events documented in North America so far.



openstreetsproject.org

Park(ing) Day, worldwide

Park(ing) Day is an annual global event in which participants transform parking spaces into temporary public places. Participants have used the space for art installations, musical performances, playgrounds, parks, and games, among other activities. Park(ing) Day takes place on the third Friday in September, every year.



parkingday.org

Philadelphia Parklet Program, Philadelphia, PA

Parklets are raised platforms spanning two parking spaces with tables and chairs that offer places to sit, relax, eat, and enjoy the life of the street. The Mayor's Office of Transportation and Utilities works with local business owners and community groups to bring parklets to neighborhoods.



www.universitycity.org/parklets

2.4 FOSTER A SENSE OF ARRIVAL AND MAKE GOOD FIRST IMPRESSIONS AT GATEWAYS

2.4a) Improve downtown approaches from main thoroughfares

Background: The points at which main thoroughfares enter the Urban Core are the first places that visitors see when they arrive here. These gateways are one of our greatest opportunities to create a sense of arrival, make good first impressions, and must send the message that the Urban Core is vibrant, well-kept, and unique. Signage (see Strategy 2.4c) must incorporate the brand of the Urban Core (see Strategy 2.5a) along with place names and wayfinding that increase visibility of destinations and navigability of the Urban Core as a whole.

Key ideas: landscaping, signage, public art

Action: Landscaping, signage, public art Incorporate large entrance signage, plantings, and public art at the main gateways into the Urban Core:

- Riverside Drive at College Street and reaching toward Second Street
- Spring Street Bridge
- MLK, Jr. Bridge
- MLK Jr. Boulevard at Riverside on the elevated rail infrastructure
- Second Street Bridge
- Forsyth Street
- Second Street Rail Bridge

Strategy 2.4b illustrates gateway opportunities at major institutions and destinations in the Urban Core.

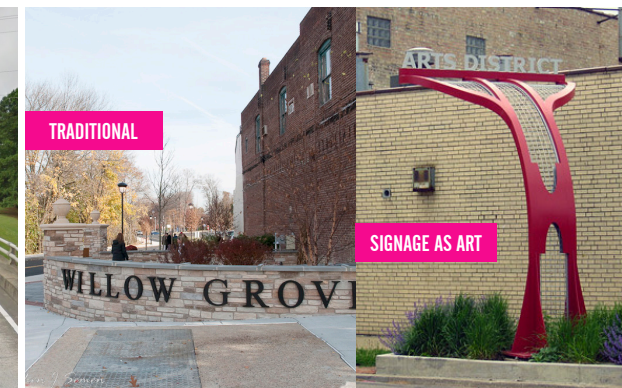




Figure 31- Gateways and gateway opportunities

GATEWAYS

- key gateways to the Urban Core
 - A Riverside at College Street; see *College Hill Update* pp. 36 & 45
 - B Spring Street Bridge; see *MAP Appendix 1* pp.93-94
 - C MLK, Jr. Bridge; see p. 51
 - D 2nd Street Bridge
 - E Forsyth Street; see original *College Hill Master Plan* pp. 195-196
 - F 2nd Street Rail Bridge
- gateway opportunities at major institutions & destinations
 - 1 Mercer University; at Mercer Village & Stadium
 - 2 Navicent Health; see p. 57
 - 3 Hay House/Coleman Park; p. 58
 - 4 Government Center/ Rosa Parks Square; p. 61
 - 5 Cotton Avenue Plaza; pp. 36-37
 - 6 Cherry Street Plaza; pp. 38-39
 - 7 Central City Park; p. 49
 - 8 Clinton Street/ Ocmulgee Mounds; p. 62-63



2.4b) Capitalize on local institutions and assets as gateways to the Urban Core

Background: Local institutions and assets are gateways to the Urban Core as well in that they are primary destinations. They often consist of stately and beautiful buildings, but the approaches from adjacent streets are at times confusing and can inhibit the appreciation of Macon's built form. Furthermore, many of the key gateway intersections in the Urban Core were designed at a time when the main objective was to minimize delay for vehicles entering and exiting downtown. Redesigning these intersections will enhance connectivity, slow speeds and enhance the sense of arrival, and ensure the safety and comfort of all users.

Key ideas: alterations to circulation patterns, intersection reduction, landscaping, beautification

Actions: Redesign intersections to better announce major institutions and local assets, as well as to create safer travel conditions, maximize green space, and incorporate bike lanes where possible. Opportunities include:

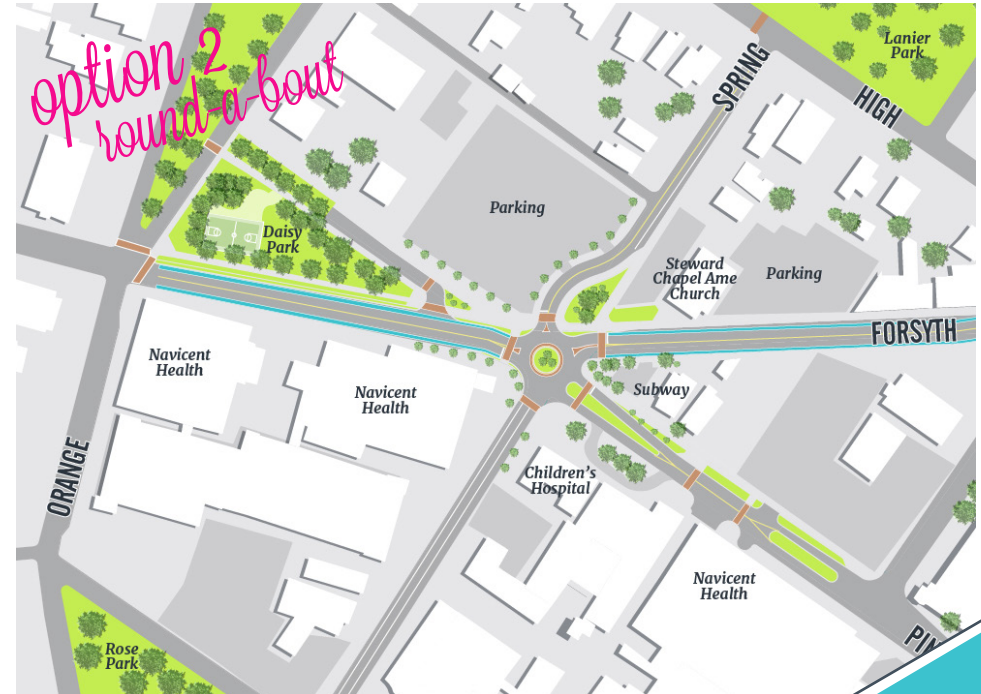


Navicent gateway at Triple Triangle Park: One of the primary front doors of Navicent Health is the intersection of Spring, Forsyth, and Pine Streets. This five-legged intersection is very large and confusing for all modes of transportation. Confusion threatens safety when vehicles are making a turn while pedestrians are in the crosswalk.

MAP proposes two options for boldly announcing the location of Macon's largest employer. Option 1 would reduce the size of the intersection by providing a new pedestrian island crossing Forsyth along Spring Street. The design would consist of a small landscaped island, which would still serve to slow and direct traffic, in addition to pronounced crosswalks and curb bumpouts.

Option 2 is to include a roundabout with pronounced crosswalks to include landscaping in the intersection, ease travel, and create safer conditions. While this option provides the opportunity for more greening and fewer conflicts between pedestrians and motorists, additional assessment about advantages and drawbacks for ambulances traveling through the roundabout is needed. Additionally, this option would require a considerable amount of right-of-way, and would require realigning Spring Street through an existing Navicent surface parking lot.

Figure 32– Site plan options for improving the Navicent gateway



Spring & Georgia by Mercer Law & the Hay House: The forecourt of the Hay House is an unsafe intersection. A redesign could make it safer and more attractive through an extension of Coleman Hill Park to connect with the existing traffic island in the middle of the intersection, a realignment of Spring Street so it meets the intersection at a less acute angle, and the incorporation of bike lanes connecting Mulberry Street to the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail. A traffic signal should be installed at the intersection along with international style crosswalks and pedestrian countdown signals. These improvements provide a beautiful forecourt for the Hay House, create a safe pedestrian entrance at Coleman Hill Park and will not impact the entrance gates to the Hay House driveway, providing instead, safer access to this historic resource.

Figure 33- Site plan of Spring & Georgia intersection improvements





Figure 34- Rendering of the Spring & Georgia intersection improvements



Figure 35- Rendering of the proposed oval-a-bout on 1st Street at City Hall



Poplar & First by City Hall & Rosa Parks Square: This intersection presents an opportunity to truly welcome people to the Macon-Bibb government center with an “oval-about.” This will help keep traffic flowing but also provide a visual marker for Navicent employees just a few blocks away. Median islands on Poplar and First Streets will complement the oval-a-bout and direct and slow traffic. Pronounced crosswalks will make it easier for pedestrians to navigate the intersection (and make their way to Rosa Parks Square!).

Figure 36– Site plan of the proposed oval-a-bout on 1st Street at City Hall



East Macon/Mounds on Coliseum at Clinton Street: The intersection of Coliseum at Clinton Street currently resembles many suburban intersections and does not represent a gateway to either the East Macon neighborhood or the Ocmulgee National Monument. There is no signage for the Ocmulgee National Monument at the existing approach to Clinton Street, which currently leads to a bicycle and pedestrian entrance of the park. The parcel north of Clinton Street is currently vacant, and the parking lot does not serve as the best entrance to Macon's first Neighborhood or the National Monument. These areas could be creatively landscaped to create a bolder and greener entrance to the park that hints at the unique landscape

within the future Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve. See Strategy 3.3c for details.

Macon-Bibb County should lead the design and construction of these pedestrian safety and connectivity improvements and work with additional partners, including Georgia DOT, UDA, Navicent, Hay House, Coliseum, Regency, and individual businesses. The cost of these improvements will be high and likely require outside funding.

"A clearly defined and attractive entrance would draw more people to this local treasure."

after



Figure 37- Proposed improvements to the Clinton Street entrance to the Ocmulgee National Monument

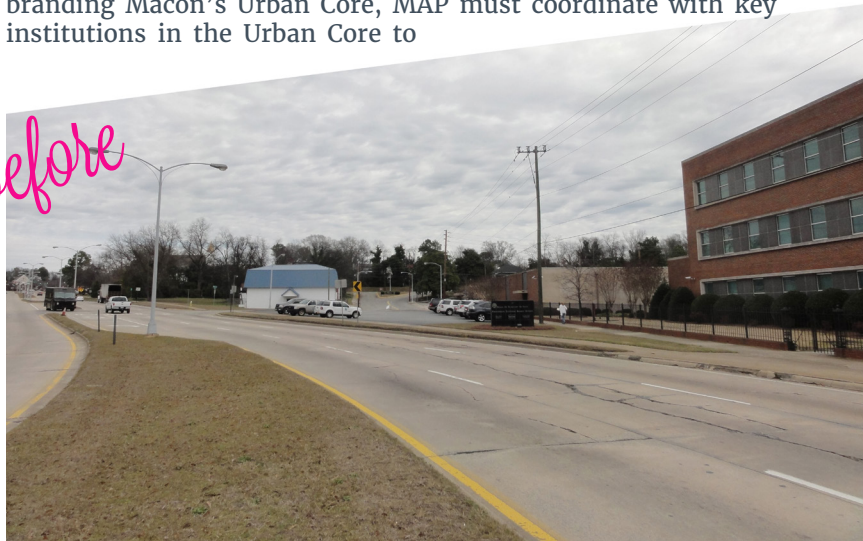
2.4c) Develop a signage & wayfinding system for key destinations, major employers and parking areas in the Urban Core

Background: College Hill recently installed wayfinding signage throughout the Corridor to direct visitors traveling by car or on foot to major destinations. Beyond navigational cues, the signage communicates the College Hill brand, and in doing so helps to announce your arrival in the Corridor. Much like College Hill, Macon's broader Urban Core will benefit from a consistent signage and wayfinding system that directs people to main hubs like Navicent, Mercer, Government Center, and downtown's central business district, destinations like the proposed Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve or the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, as well as parking areas that serve these crowd-attracting uses.

Key ideas: wayfinding for key destinations, consistent signage, signage for parking lots & structures

Action: Wayfinding for key destinations Design a palette of signs to assist with wayfinding for key destinations within the Urban Core. Sign design and size should vary according to intended location from gateways at entrances to the Urban Core, to the street network within the Core, to the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, and deployment of signs must be thoughtful and selective to avoid cluttering Macon's public realm with too much signage. Convene a sub-committee of designers and representatives from major Urban Core institutions to spearhead the initiative.

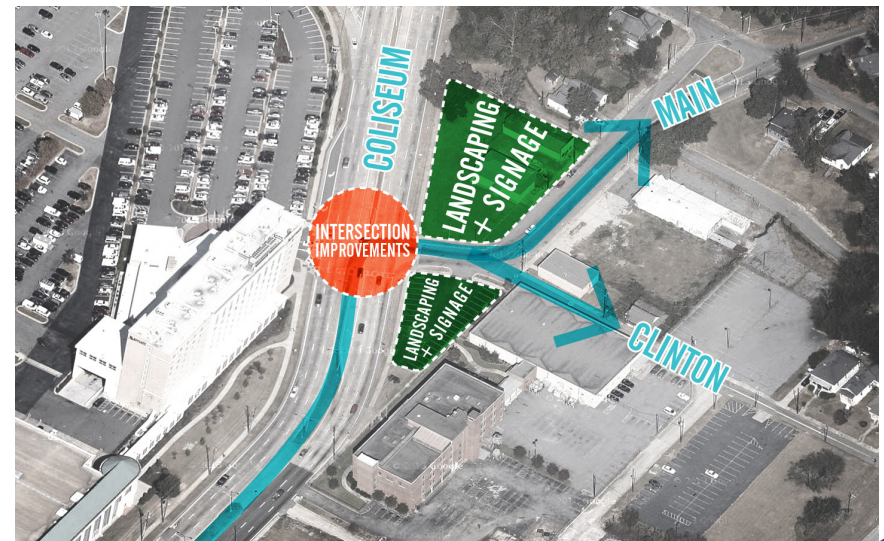
Consistent signage In concert Strategy 2.5a, which recommends branding Macon's Urban Core, MAP must coordinate with key institutions in the Urban Core to



ensure that the new signage and wayfinding system speaks the same graphic language resulting in consistent signage that not only helps visitors navigate to their destinations but also increases legibility of the Urban Core as a whole. As College Hill recently installed wayfinding in the Corridor, that signage should serve as a starting point for the design to ensure cohesiveness. Navicent's preparations to invest in wayfinding within its medical campus present an opportunity for MAP to partner and collaborate in the design and deployment of the next round of signage.

Signage for parking lots & structures In addition to wayfinding for destinations, the MAP process revealed that Macon's Urban Core also needs signage for parking lots and structures that clearly communicates how to find off-street parking, and who can park in which lots and parking garages, when. Beyond directional signage installed downtown, create an online parking map as a resource for businesses and institutions that draw guests from near and far. Strategy 4.1e provides additional details about how to increase public use of available off-street parking through signage.

“More wayfinding signs- downtown business directories. Comprehensive list on multiple websites. App- simple, intuitive directory + map”



2.5 GENERATE NATIONAL BUZZ ABOUT MACON'S UNIQUE ASSETS AND BROADEN THE TOURISM AUDIENCE

2.5a) Brand Macon's Urban Core

Background: Through the MAP planning process, the Macon community has invested a lot of time and thought in crafting a vision for the future and a series of action strategies to help make vision a reality. But there is no need to wait for full implementation of the plan before Macon invites the world to come explore the Urban Core. Indeed, with its host of new businesses and full calendar of events, the Urban Core is already ready for prime time. The challenge is in crafting the brand and message to attract a diverse range of visitors and potential new residents and businesses to come see what the heart of Macon is all about.

Key ideas: *messaging & branding*

Action: Messaging & branding The first step in spreading the word about the positive change afoot in Macon's Urban Core is to develop a recognizable logo and brand for the historic downtown or the Urban Core and a consistent, compelling message. As demonstrated by the successes of the College Hill Corridor, a clear brand, applied to events and implementation efforts large and small, will help highlight progress spurred by the MAP movement, generate buzz, and catalyze yet more energy and activity within Macon's Urban Core. Convene a team of designers, marketing folks, and people who love (and love to champion) Macon to map out a branding brainstorming effort; consider hiring marketing professionals to run the project. Clarify the focus of the brand: downtown proper or the Urban Core? Explore graphics and language, and once finalized, communicate the brand near and far, on signage, in the media and on social media, in conjunction with events and ribbon cuttings.

2.5b) Support the Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative's bid to expand the Ocmulgee National Monument as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve

Background: Expansion of Ocmulgee National Park The Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative (ONPPI) is currently working to expand the Ocmulgee National Monument and Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge along the Ocmulgee River Corridor from Macon to Hawkinsville into the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve. With this new designation, the site would become the first National Park and Preserve east of the Mississippi, preserving grounds for hunting and fishing, learning and exploration, increasing tourism and economic development opportunities in the Urban Core, and providing a larger trail system for recreation.

Key ideas: *community advocacy, East Macon destinations*

Action: Community advocacy Cultivate community advocacy for the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative. Many area residents refer to the mounds as the Indian Mounds but do not realize that the site is already a National Monument. ONPPI recognizes that Park and Preserve designation has the power to increase community awareness of this unique local feature as well as build pride at the neighborhood and City-County level. MAP partners should reach out their networks to help build and sustain local support of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Initiative, collecting necessary signatures at MAP events and spreading the word about this effort to bring East Macon and Macon-Bibb greater recognition across the country.

East Macon destinations As further detailed in Strategies 2.4b, 2.4c, and 3.3c, the effort to grow the National Monument into a National Park and Preserve must be accompanied by investments in the public realm and East Macon neighborhood to create a suite of East Macon destinations near the mounds. The UDA has initiated a redesign of the Clinton Street entrance to the mounds to bring the park's entrance out to meet Coliseum Drive with greening, landscaping, signage and a widened boulevard that connects Coliseum with a vehicular entrance to the park. Collaborate with Macon Arts Alliance and the Family Investment Center in East Macon on community revitalizations efforts at the proposed Mill Hill Arts Village. Explore a partnership and grant opportunity from the National Park Service (NPS) for public art or interpretive signage leading from the historic downtown to the mounds via the proposed expansion of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail throughout the Urban Core.

2.5c) Focus on the broader story, past, present and future, to encourage tourism in Macon

Background: The Urban Core boasts a rich collection of historical and cultural assets, including Ocmulgee National Monument, beautiful pre-civil war buildings, and a musical legacy rivaled by few cities in the country. In addition to its history though, a new story is emerging in Macon as a place that is creative, hip, funky, and accessible, where new ideas can be tested and new businesses can experiment. Both past and present should feature prominently in messaging to visitors from the region as well as travelers from afar.

Key ideas: *traditional tourist destinations, insider access*

Action: Traditional tourist destinations Package traditional tourist destinations at Macon's historical and cultural sites for tourists as part of the urban experience, rather than highlighting one-off sites. Draw links between museums and restaurants, parks and bike shops, tours and the best cocktail in town. Complement promotion of Macon's past with news and information about Macon today; highlight Macon Made, which exists to cultivate a sense of pride and place in the people, products, and businesses made in Macon. The movers, shakers, and makers of today can collectively create tomorrow's cultural draw for visitors in the know.

Insider Access The new Macon Made website offers insider access to locals and visitors, alike, celebrating the people and businesses that make the Urban Core unique. Add to it a catalogue of upcoming events to reach an audience on the hunt for unique and off the beaten path experiences.





What you told us:

"Community Arbor Day for planting trees and gardens."

"Something that younger crowds can do."

"Convert alleys to pedestrian/ bike-friendly with lighting/ clean space/and smooth pedestrian-friendly surfacing."

"Make/organize Christmas Market (as Weihnachtsmarkt) or make more "street" parties"

"More live music and free community events."

SHOW US THE MONEY (to help MAP prioritize)

Resources for implementing the Macon Action Plan are limited, so we need **YOU** to help us prioritize!



MAP asked you to take a set of play money (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$100) and spend it wisely on the items you think are most important...

#2 out of nine

OCMULGEE HERITAGE TRAIL NETWORK

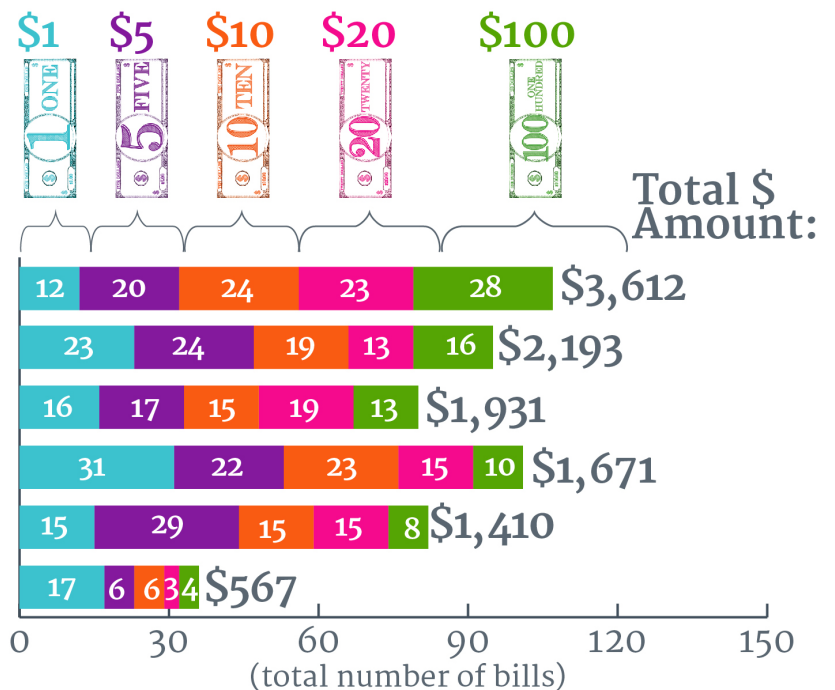
PARK SPACE & DESIGN

EVENTS & PROGRAMMING

CLEAN & SAFE

PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENTS



MARKETING











Excerpt of results from "Show Us the Money" exercise

Create an Unparalleled Urban Core Experience

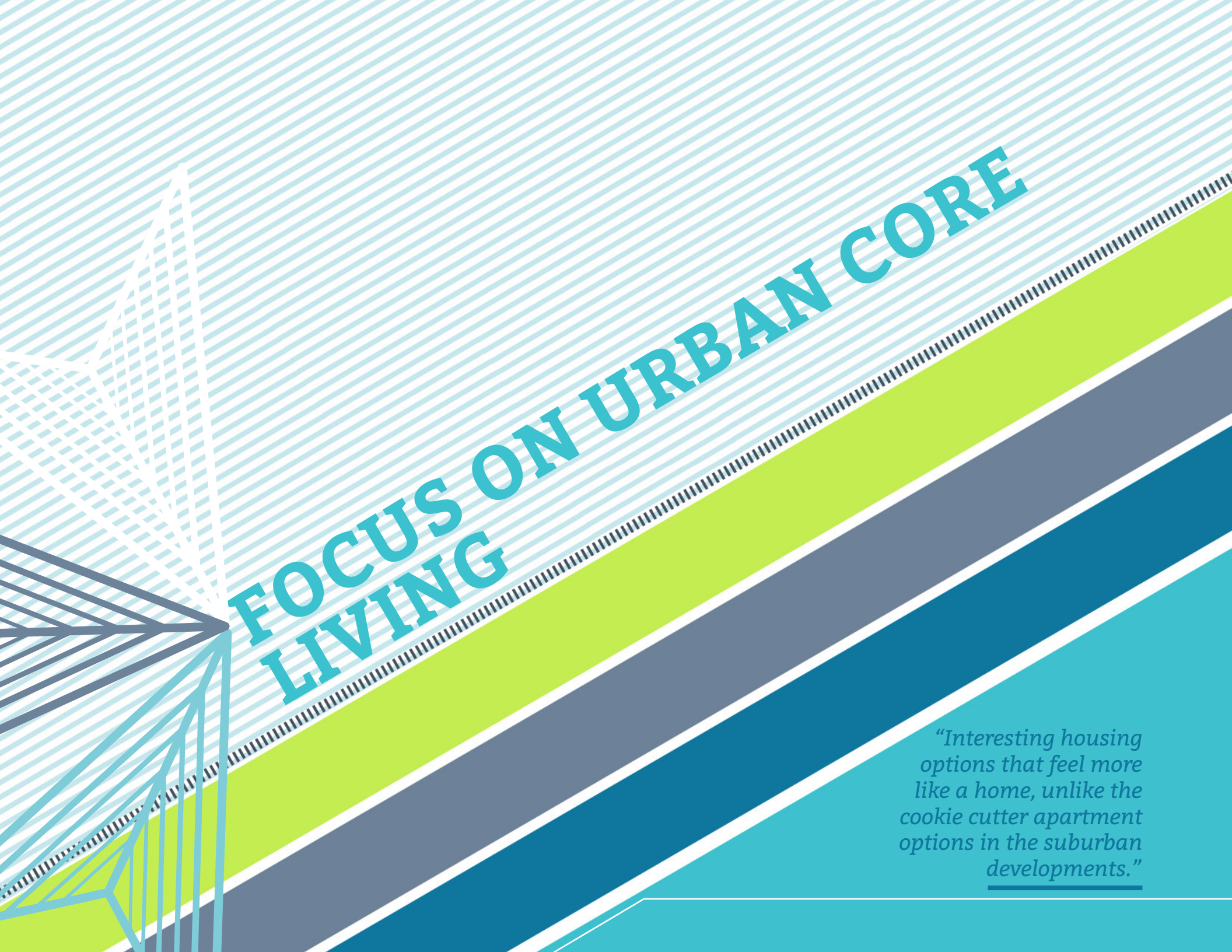
	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
2.1 Keep the urban core clean and safe for all to enjoy							
a. Enhance the comfort and appeal of the urban core's public realm							
	YES	i.	Take on a signature MAP beautification project	short	\$5,000–\$10,000	UDA, NewTown Macon, Main Street Macon	UDA, NewTown Macon
		ii.	Invite local businesses and volunteer groups to tend to street trees or adopt-a-planter to ensure that the Urban Core is bright and beautiful	short	\$5,000	UDA, NewTown Macon, Macon Tree Commission, Main Street Macon, Macon Civic Spaces	UDA, private
	YES	iii.	Incorporate lighting on street trees, buildings, and along the trails	short to medium	\$3,300,000	UDA, NewTown Macon, Macon-Bibb Parks and Beautification, Public Works Department, Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, Macon Tree Commission, Main Street Macon, Macon Civic Spaces	Foundation support, Capital dollars from local partners
b. Introduce additional trash, recycling, and maintenance efforts							
		i.	Institute a comprehensive municipal recycling strategy that includes public recycling bins	medium	Under review by Macon-Bibb Solid Waste Department	UDA, Macon-Bibb Solid Waste Department, Macon-Bibb County Parks and Beautification, Macon-Bibb Green Team, Public Works Department, Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, Georgia Recycling Commission	public
		ii.	Introduce single-stream recycling bins in the Urban Core's public realm	medium			

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
2.2 Transform Macon's sidewalks and public spaces as the center stage for community life							
a. Improve use of underutilized spaces including alleys, medians, and vacant storefronts							
		i.	Create destination alleys with restricted traffic, decorative lights, seating, and permeable pavement for stormwater management	short, medium (permeable pavers)	\$1,200,000	UDA, NewTown, Public Works Department, Adjacent business owners	public, private
	YES	ii.	Develop a movable furniture purchasing plan (umbrellas, tables, chairs, lounge chairs)	short	\$275,000	UDA, NewTown	Capital dollars from local partners
		iii.	Launch a Friends of the Medians group that focuses on infusing life and color into Macon's historic medians	short	\$5,000	Bibb County Master Gardener Program (UGA Cooperative Extension, Macon-Bibb Parks & Beautification, Macon Civic Spaces, adjacent businesses)	UDA, NewTown Macon
		iv.	Activate vacant storefronts with pop-up installations		\$25,000	Macon Arts Alliance, NewTown	Capital dollars from local partners
b. Improve and expand open spaces to create a central gathering space downtown and in each neighborhood							
	YES	i.	Rosa Parks Square – “Civic Plaza” (café w/outdoor seating, plaza, open lawn, gardens)	short (design development, landscaping); medium (full development)	\$1,250,000	Macon-Bibb Parks and Beautification, Public Works Department, Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, Macon Tree Commission, Main Street Macon, Macon Civic Spaces; UDA, NewTown	Public, Capital dollars from local partners
		ii.	Cotton Avenue Plaza – “Passive & green” (tables, chairs, landscaping. Closing of Cotton Ave. between Mulberry St. Lane and Mulberry St.)	short (test phase); medium (full development)	\$750,000		Public, Capital dollars from local partners
		iii.	Cherry Street Plaza- “Blank slate” (programmable space, better connections to fountain, landscaping, raised crosswalks, distinctive paving)	short (test phase); long (full development)	\$1,250,000		Public, Capital dollars from local partners
		iv.	Revisit the landscaping at Poplar Yards and add programming	short (landscaping); medium (full re-design)	\$50,000 (initial improvements); \$500,000 (paving)	UDA, Macon-Bibb Parks and Beautification, Public Works Department	Public, private support
		v.	Upgrade Neighborhood Parks	medium	\$150,000 : Bernd Park / \$1,100,000: Tattnell Sq./ TBD – Booker T Washington / \$600,000: Stormwater park on Clinton Street \$150,000: Family Investment Center orchard	Neighborhood groups, UDA, Macon-Bibb Parks and Beautification, Public Works Department, Macon Civic Spaces	Public, private support

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
c. Integrate the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail as a key downtown amenity							
		i.	Create a connected, continuous Ocmulgee Heritage Trail Downtown River Loop	medium	Riverside Trail: \$2,500,000 Trail along River's Edge: \$12,000,000 Expanded MLK Bridge: TBD New Ped Bridge: \$1,500,000	Macon-Bibb Parks and Beautification, NewTown	State & federal grants, donations, SPLOST, foundation support
		ii.	Connect Downtown to the Loop via medians and on-street lanes (e.g. 3rd Street, Mulberry, Poplar medians, and Riverside Drive and Walnut Street to Central City Park)	medium	\$5,000,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works Department, NewTown, UDA	State & federal grants, donations, SPLOST, foundation support
	YES	iii.	Foster bike/pedestrian connections across the river: Improve access to the existing trail from Downtown - Provide bike lanes on the Spring Street and MLK bridges	short (initiate conversations with GDOT); long (design-build)	\$350,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works Department, NewTown, Georgia Department of Transportation	State & federal grants, donations, SPLOST, foundation support
2.3 Program downtown's social life and build the local audience							
a. Maintain support for existing events and add new events							
		i.	Existing: (e.g.) First Friday, First Saturday Village Market in Mercer Village, Mulberry Market in Tattnall Square Park, Second Sunday Concert Series, Bragg Jam, Cherry Blossom, etc.	short	ongoing	NewTown Macon, First Saturday Village Market, Community Health Works, Macon Roots, College Hill Commission, Cherry Blossom Office	foundation, local commercial & institutional sponsors
		ii.	One-Off/Temporary (new): Roof-top Pop-Up (dinner and/or dance party), Pop-Up Beer Garden, Pop-Up MiniGolf, Pop-Up Ice Skating, Open Streets	short	\$10,000/pop-up	UDA, NewTown, College Hill Commission	foundation, local commercial & institutional sponsors
		iii.	Regular (new): Spring Parklets, Parking Day, Food Truck Rally	short; medium (spring parklets)	\$10,000/parklet	UDA, NewTown, Macon-Bibb Public Works Department	foundation, local commercial & institutional sponsors
		iv.	Place Specific (new): Programming for the Downtown Medians (e.g. yoga, fitness, sandbox for kids, wildflowers/ bird & butterfly garden, games, informal playspaces), Riverfront (movie screenings, night cruises, rubber ducky race, DIY float race ("anything floats" regatta)	short (test phase: e.g. informal playspaces, yoga, fitness); medium (larger-scale events)	\$60,000	UDA, NewTown, Macon-Bibb Public Works department	foundation, local commercial & institutional sponsors

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
2.4 Foster a sense of arrival and make good first impressions at gateways							
a. Improve Downtown approaches from main thoroughfares							
		i.	Landscape medians where possible, include entrance signage (e.g. from Marriot/Coliseum, from Riverside in conjunction with future redevelopment of triangle TAD site)	medium	\$500,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works Department, UDA	Public, private support
b. Capitalize on local institutions and assets as gateways to the Urban Core							
		i.	Navicent gateway at Triple Triangle Park (2 options: with or without roundabout)	medium	\$750,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works Department	Navicent, Federal / state grants
		ii.	Spring and Georgia by Mercer Law and the Hay House (road realignment)	medium	\$2,000,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works Department	Federal/state grants, private support
		iii.	Poplar and First by City Hall and Rosa Parks square ("oval-about")	long	\$1,250,000	GA DOT, Macon-Bibb Public Works Department	Federal/state grants, private support
		iv.	East Macon/Mounds on Coliseum at Clinton Street: create a bolder, greener entrance	medium	\$750,000	GA DOT, Macon-Bibb Public Works Department	UDA, Federal/state grants, foundation support
c. Develop a signage and wayfinding system for key destinations, major employers, and parking areas in the Urban Core							
	YES	i.	Design a palette of signs to assist with wayfinding for key destinations	short	\$ 50,000 (design)	Gateway Macon, Chamber of Commerce, UDA, NewTown Macon, College Hill Corridor, Main Street Macon	UDA, NewTown Macon, Gateway Macon, local institutions
	YES	ii.	Coordinate with key institutions for consistent wayfinding signage	short	\$ 250,000 (installation)	Navicent, Mercer, Coliseum, local schools	private
	YES	iii.	Develop and install signage for parking lots and structures to help visitors find a spot quickly and affordably	short	\$ 125,000 (installation)	Parking authority, UDA	Parking authority, UDA
	YES	iv.	Create an online parking map for use by venues and guests who prefer to plan ahead	short	\$5,000	Parking authority, UDA	Parking authority, UDA
2.5 Generate national buzz about Macon's unique assets and broaden the tourism audience							
a. Brand Macon's Urban Core							
	YES	i.	Develop a consistent, compelling brand and message	short	\$100,000	Gateway Macon, Chamber of Commerce, CVB, UDA, NewTown Macon, College Hill Commission, Main Street Macon	UDA, NewTown Macon, Gateway Macon, local institutions

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
b. Support the Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative's bid to expand the National Monument as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve							
	YES	i.	Cultivate community advocacy for the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve	short	ongoing	The Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative (ONPPI), Gateway Macon, Macon-Bibb Convention & Visitors Bureau, Macon Arts Alliance	The Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative (ONPPI), Gateway Macon, Macon-Bibb Convention & Visitors Bureau
		ii.	Invest in East Macon's public realm and neighborhood fabric to improve the approach to the aspiring National Park and Preserve	medium	\$100,000 (signage & public art)	UDA, Macon Arts Alliance, ONPPI	Federal/state arts grants
c. Focus on the broader story, past and present, to encourage tourism in Macon							
		i.	Package historical and cultural assets in contrast to highlighting one-off sites	medium	\$15,000	CVB, MaconMade	tourism and marketing organizations
	YES	ii.	Support College Hill's work toward a website that offers insider access about upcoming events to locals and visitors alike	short	ongoing	CVB, MaconMade	tourism and marketing organizations



FOCUS ON URBAN CORE LIVING

“Interesting housing options that feel more like a home, unlike the cookie cutter apartment options in the suburban developments.”



The Urban Core has a substantial amount of space to fill.

Based on a parcel by parcel survey conducted in spring 2014, there are 328 acres of land, or 21 percent of the Urban Core, which are vacant or host to a vacant building. Low-activity uses, which include partial vacancy, parking, and underutilized parcels, comprise nine percent of the Urban Core. Therefore, 30 percent of parcels in the study area are wholly or partly inactive.

This vacancy and underuse varies in its distribution throughout the Urban Core. The mixed-use historic downtown, for example, has a lower proportion of vacancy but is surrounded by “gaps,” or areas with a high concentration of vacant land or buildings and surface parking lots. These voids disconnect the historic downtown from other nearby, relatively prosperous neighborhoods, including parts of InTown and neighborhoods near Mercer University. Several residential neighborhoods suffer from high concentrations of vacancy and blight, as do industrial areas along the rail line and Seventh Street. High levels of vacancy and blight destabilize these neighborhoods.

The distribution of building conditions also varies throughout the Urban Core. Of properties that host a building, 19 percent are in excellent “A” condition, 31 percent are in good/average “B” condition, 30 percent are in average/fair “C” condition, 16 percent are in distressed “D” condition, and 4 percent are in deteriorated “F” condition. Larger concentrations of “A” condition buildings center on institutions and stable neighborhoods, as well as parts of downtown. A significant portion of the historic downtown, however, is distressed (in “D” or “F” condition), namely 26 percent; in the northern part of downtown, this proportion climbs to 54 percent. Even denser concentrations of distressed and deteriorated properties, however, are apparent in the residential neighborhoods hit with high concentrations of vacancy where the percentage of parcel area that is distressed is over 40 percent.

These same neighborhoods evidencing high levels of distress also have high poverty rates, ranging from 47 percent to 71 percent. As a point of comparison, the poverty rate in neighborhoods near Mercer University is only 4 percent. In In-Town, it is 19 percent.

The neighborhoods in the Urban Core therefore face two types of issues some areas have comparatively lower vacancy, distress, and poverty rates but are disconnected by adjacent “gaps” in the Urban Core’s fabric. These areas should aim to connect the dots and attract more residents. Other areas experience higher rates of vacancy, distress, and poverty, and therefore need to stabilize and establish a foundation for revitalization by helping existing residents.

Among the themes this section addresses are:

- **Residential development in the historic downtown:** How can we encourage more households to locate downtown and nearby?
- **Strategies for fighting blight and revitalizing surrounding neighborhoods in the Urban Core:** How can we strengthen them and best meet their needs?

“We’re headed in right direction with the new housing going in. We need people who don’t leave with the sun.”



Goal: 3.1 ENCOURAGE MORE HOUSEHOLDS TO LOCATE IN THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN

3.1a) Focus on key sites for mixed-use development to grow downtown's mixed-use center and extend the urban fabric to the River

Background: While the modest population growth since 2000 is a good start, the Urban Core needs to attract many more people to live in and near downtown in order to support more of the stores and services that the community desires and that will contribute to a flagship downtown experience in Macon. The Urban Core's population of 8,990 is not enough to support the range of retail characteristic of a vibrant center city.

Zimmerman/Volk Associates (ZVA) 2014 housing market study forecasts an absorption rate of 1,100 new market-rate units over the next five to seven years. The Urban Core faces several challenges relevant to the accommodation of this demand:

- Although downtown and surrounding neighborhoods have a high proportion of distressed properties, the number of vacant buildings actually suitable for reuse is not sufficient to meet the potential market for lofts. New multi-family construction for lofts will therefore be necessary to meet demand.
- The market potential identified for townhomes and urban houses (like those built by Historic Macon in Beall's Hill) would redevelop only 11 percent of current vacancy in the Urban Core. Ample vacant

space for infill requires strategic decisions about where to focus investment.

- Housing – in the form of lofts, townhomes, and urban houses – cannot be the sole solution for addressing vacancy in the Urban Core. Other uses, namely job-producing businesses, will be important drivers of demand for housing and services.

When these 1,100 additional residential units are built out, the Urban Core will have a total of approximately 11,000 residents. This population is closer to the range needed to support additional amenities. A remaining challenge exists, however, pertaining to density: this population will exist in an area roughly twice as big as many other downtowns.

Where should new housing development take place in the Urban Core? The most strategic opportunities exist on the edges of the historic downtown where there is a lot of empty or underused land, which if redeveloped, will help “fill the gaps” and make sure downtown is connected to surrounding neighborhoods, the River, and Navicent Health. New housing in and adjacent to downtown would add a lot of residents who would in turn help to support new businesses.

FORECAST ABSORPTION OVER THE NEXT 5-7 YEARS

Rental Lofts/Apartments	130-156 dwelling units/year
For-Sale Lofts/Apartments	29-34 dwelling units/year
For-Sale Townhouses/Live-Work	32-38 dwelling units/year
For-Sale Urban Houses	18-21 dwelling units/year

absorption rate = 1,100 new market-rate units

WHAT IS A DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD AMENITY?*

- 130-156 dwelling units/year
- breakfast/lunch places open on the weekend
- multiple mini-markets
- CVS/Walgreen urban format model (w/fresh food)
- neighborhood restaurants w/neighborhood price points
- dry cleaners/laundries spread throughout & open on weekends
- public space for residents and visitors
- feels like a neighborhood

* ~10,000 households or ~12,000 residents are needed to properly support these type of amenities

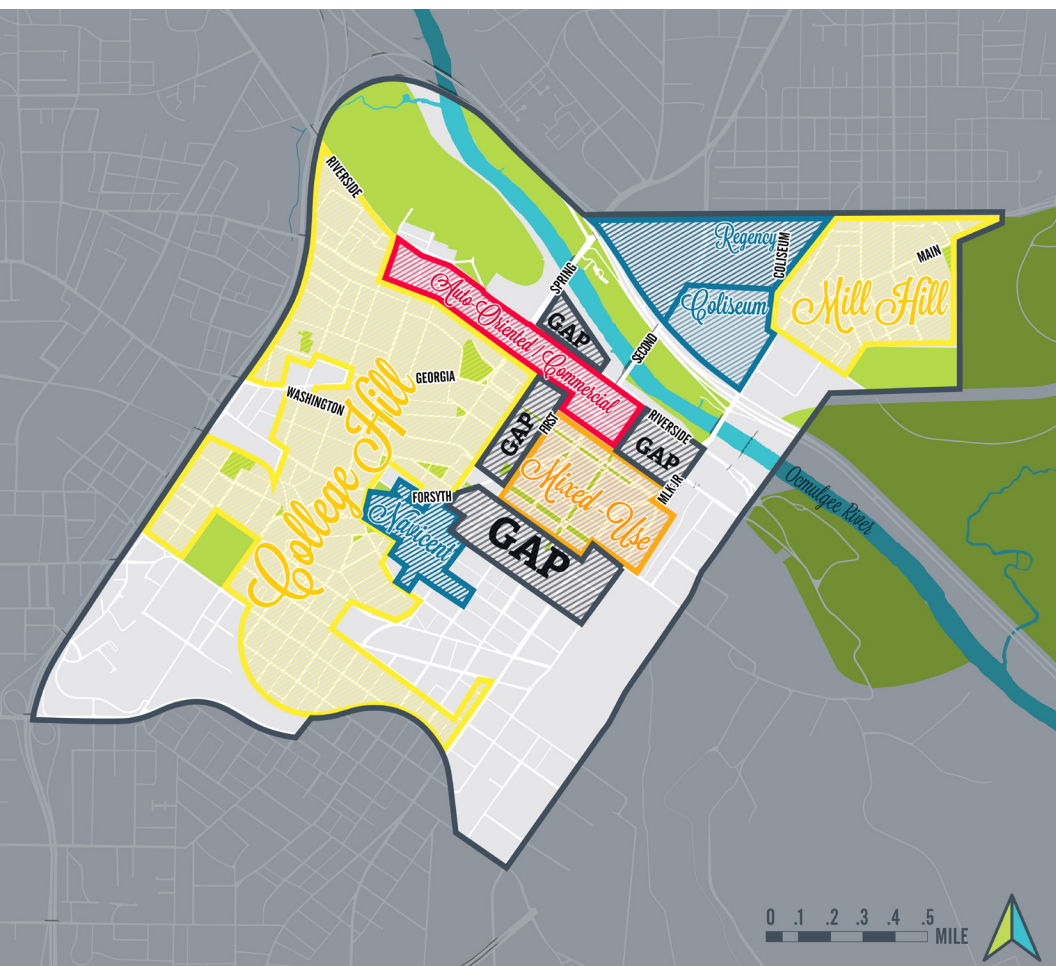


Figure 38– Urban Core residential strategy diagram

Key ideas: mixed-use development, Gateway Block, Capricorn Studio Block, New Riverside Neighborhood

Actions: Mixed-use development Building out the historic downtown is, of course, a longer term strategy, so MAP recommends focusing infill investment in the “heart” of downtown first, and then expanding out from there. Focus development of most of the 1,100 prospective units over the next five to seven years in three key zones between Mulberry and the River and Poplar to Plum in downtown (see Figure 39). These areas are well-suited for development, as they have a high proportion of surface parking lots, vacant buildings, and partial commercial or residential vacancy. Some of them have already been slotted for redevelopment. Keep larger-footprint residential uses (multi-family or mixed-use) along commercial corridors and main thoroughfares.

Investment Area 1 is bound by Poplar to the south, Mulberry to the north, First to the west, and MLK to the east. It includes NewTown Macon’s priority blocks, which were part of NewTown’s 2012 Strategic Action Plan. This portion of downtown has seen much investment in recent years, with over 100 lofts currently planned or under construction. However, 84 vacant storefronts remain in this area, as well 9 vacant buildings, 3 buildings considered in “distressed” or “deteriorated” condition, and 4.3 acres of surface parking. If all of the vacant and underutilized sites were filled in this area, 150 units would be made available to new downtown residents. Completing the rehabilitation of this area is critical to the perceptions of downtown.

Investment Area 2 presents larger opportunities for active mixed-use development, with potential to extend housing and commercial infill on available sites from Poplar to Plum and Mulberry Street to the River. Within these blocks, there are 37 vacant storefronts, 18 vacant buildings, and 6.7 acres of surface parking. These larger sites have the opportunity to not only accommodate new loft development, but also some single-family townhomes, introducing a housing type rarely seen in the Urban Core and thus providing added housing choice. Site design for these properties should be conscious of parking needs and developed to provide parking on the interior of the blocks, with building facades meeting the street. Key sites include:

- **Gateway Block:** Between Poplar and Plum, First and Second, this block holds the potential to bridge Navicent with Government Center and new retail downtown. New development should include a mix of residential and office, with boutique and long-term stay hotels under consideration as well.
- **Capricorn Studio Block:** Between MLK and Fifth, Poplar and Plum, is a block with much history and much vacancy. Once home to

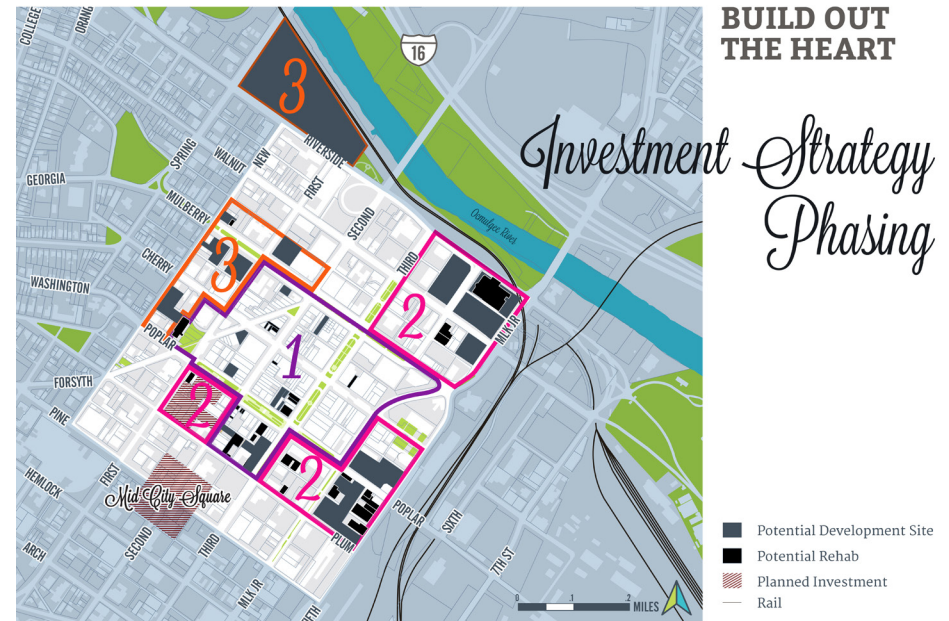


Figure 39- Downtown investment strategy phasing

Capricorn Studio, infill on this block will restore not only Macon’s urban form, but also its psyche.

- **New Riverside Neighborhood:** This area presents an important opportunity to extend downtown’s fabric to meet the Ocmulgee River. This site was once residential, as seen on Appendix page A50 (Sanborn Map), and was later redeveloped into the *Macon Telegraph* headquarters. The *Telegraph* relocated in 2013, leaving behind a specialized building that lacks historic significant and is difficult to reuse. The conceptual site plan shows a mix of multi-family lofts and townhomes in close proximity to the proposed Downtown Loop of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail (see Strategy 2.2c).

Investment Area 3 includes longer term development sites where there may be potential to infill large surface parking lots between First and New streets, as well as the vacant triangular TAD site bound by the River, Riverside Drive and Spring Street.

BUILD OUT THE HEART

1+2
Potential Units:
900



Figure 40– Downtown investment strategy conceptual site plans

3.1b) Increase the diversity of housing choice

Background: To attract more residents, the Urban Core must provide a mix of housing choices for different family sizes, household types, and a mix of incomes. The previous strategy details recommended locations for new housing development, but within these new developments, the primary target markets identified by ZVA are:

- Younger singles and couples (71%)
- Empty nesters & retirees (17%)
- Traditional and non-traditional families (12%)

ZVA's housing market study explains the housing types sought by the Urban Core's potential new residents:

- Lofts/apartments (not-for-sale: 53%; for-sale: 17%)
- Townhouses/row houses (19%)
- For-sale urban houses (11%)

Key ideas: *adaptive reuse/lofts, urban infill for-sale homes, townhomes*

Actions: **Adaptive reuse/lofts** Recent loft development in the Urban Core has made a positive impact by increasing density downtown; these flats, ideal for young singles and couples as well as for empty nesters and retirees, account for a full 70 percent of the market demand. Adaptive reuse of existing buildings should continue to breathe new life into Macon's beautiful mixed use and mill buildings.

New construction of loft apartments should proceed as well, especially as developers note that candidates for adaptive reuse are fewer these days, particularly for larger-scale projects. Work with NewTown Macon to seek bond allotments to support continued loft development, as the initial funding stream of five million dollars incentivized the development of 200 lofts downtown.

Urban infill for-sale homes Identified market-potential also indicates demand for townhouses and urban houses. Infill development and rehab of urban houses should continue in Beall's Hill (see Strategy 3.3b), and similar focused developments in Pleasant Hill (see Strategy 3.3d) and East Macon (see Strategy 3.3c) are appropriate too.

Townhomes Within downtown, where density should be concentrated, new townhomes should be encouraged. Townhomes offer single-family homeownership opportunities without the maintenance that accompanies detached homes on larger lots. Zoning Code updates should reflect this goal, enabling denser development within the historic downtown, as described in Strategy 3.2a. The goal is to create a mixed-income Urban Core where new infill development and rehabilitation offer housing choices for residents of all income levels.

3.1c) Welcome new residents as members of a close-knit community

Background: In addition to attractive and affordable housing options, Macon's Urban Core offers proximity to a growing number of bars and restaurants and a friendly community that takes advantage of local events and programs as opportunities to socialize. While the sense of community is palpable (and livedowntownmacon.com offers 100 reasons to live downtown!), some prospective residents and newcomers would benefit from a personal introduction to the downtown or InTown neighborhood experience before they feel ready to relocate.

Key ideas: *welcome materials, welcome dinners*

Action: **Welcome materials** Work with the Convention and Visitors Bureau to create materials for prospective residents. When visitors come to the Convention and Visitors Bureau, pamphlets should be available for them with details about Macon's beautiful and diverse housing stock, affordable prices, and active community members. Share these materials with area realtors, property owners, and developers, as well as the new Knight Cities Grantee, Operation Export Macon, which aims to foster city pride and attract newcomers by sending one man in a roaming trailer to nearby cities to showcase the best of Macon's food, goods, and experiences.

Work with existing neighborhood associations and businesses in the Urban Core to put together and deliver welcome baskets featuring important information on resident services and events as well as goods or gift certificates to local businesses for new neighbors who register with neighborhood association listservs.

Welcome dinners Encourage neighborhood associations to appoint local residents willing to host welcome dinners twice a year that showcase Macon's top-notch hospitality and ability to enjoy good company, good food, and good drinks!

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE

Welcome Wagons, nationwide

Welcome Wagons began in 1928 through the efforts of Thomas Briggs. "Hostesses" would deliver gift baskets with goods from local businesses to new homeowners. Due to the increase in two-income families in the new millennium, these welcome packages have transitioned to customized gift books sent by mail with the names and numbers of local businesses and services.

welcomewagon.com



ADAPTIVE REUSE / LOFTS



URBAN "INFILL" FOR SALE HOMES



TOWNHOMES



APARTMENTS



3.2 UPDATE REGULATIONS AND CODES TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT

3.2a) Upgrade Urban Core zoning with a form-based code overlay to streamline development review process

Background: The Urban Core comprises 12 different zoning classifications. In many instances, these classifications are the same for the Urban Core as they are for the rest of Bibb County. While some of these classifications are appropriate for suburban developments, they do not result in the types of walkable neighborhood developments that should be encouraged in the Urban Core. Some examples of zoning code discrepancies include:

- **Residential Development**– As recommended in Strategy 3.1a, the Urban Core must attract more residential development, particularly downtown, to generate a critical mass of people and support more retail and office development. Currently in the CBD guidelines, dwelling units in existing buildings are only allowed on upper floors, while ground floor dwellings are a conditional use. For new construction, multi-family developments are a conditional use, and are limited to lots greater than 7,500 square feet. In addition, the maximum allowable height is 35' (3 stories), except for school buildings, government buildings, and churches. Raising that maximum, where appropriate, would encourage denser development downtown, where density is not only appropriate, but a desired end goal.
- **Parking**– MAP's parking analysis (Appendix 2) shows that downtown currently has an overabundance of surface parking. The current zoning code discourages redevelopment of existing parking spaces by not allowing reductions in the total number of required parking spaces if a property is renovated in the CBD for a similar use. Furthermore, there is a minimum parking requirement for all new construction (commercial and residential) in the Urban Core: 2 spaces per unit for one or two family dwellings, 1 ½ spaces per unit for multi-family dwellings, and 1 space per unit for efficiency apartments. Requiring minimum parking requirements increases the number of curb cuts and impacts the pedestrian experience downtown.

To drive development in Macon's Urban Core will require updated zoning tools that provide developers with a clear expectations and a transparent and expedited process.

Key idea: *form-based code overlay*

Actions: **Form-based code overlay** In many cases, cities use form-based codes as a supplement to a more traditional zoning code, and that is the intent with the proposed form-based code overlay for the Urban Core. Form-based codes are a type of zoning emerged in response to auto-oriented development and cumbersome, difficult to interpret zoning codes. They focus on the "form" of buildings and public spaces rather than solely the "use" of a building, and they serve to streamline regulations, set clear expectations for development, and maintain the tradition of cities having walkable, dense, and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes.

MAP encourages Macon-Bibb to create a form-based code zoning overlay for the Urban Core to encourage development of a variety of housing choices and other uses in the Urban Core, and particularly downtown. While the current zoning code is hundreds of pages long with few illustrations, a form-based code is easier to understand and interpret, providing a range of standards that minimize the need for variances. Generally, these codes also increase the range of options over those allowed by conventional zoning codes. Undertake a follow up planning process to draft a form-based code specific to Macon's Urban Core that would upgrade Macon's CBD design guidelines with specific design requirements that:

- Respond to the block context
- Reinforce the urban form and architectural styles
- Encourage mixed-use and residential development to reinforce retail concentrations
- Promote pedestrian activity
- Provide active (not blank) facades
- Minimize curb cuts
- Integrate parking facilities
- Minimize the presence of service/loading areas

A form-based code, with clear illustrations and a checklist of design features, would clearly communicate to developers what Macon's Urban Core expects for new development. This results both in better project designs, easier staff review, and a shorter review process.

3.2b) Improve design review process for historic preservation

Background: In the Central Business District, no changes to the built form or public realm can be made without a Certificate of Appropriateness evaluating the impact of the proposed change through the lens of historic preservation. The Macon-Bibb Comprehensive Land Development Resolution explicitly states that, “No building, structure or landscape, including walls, fences, steps, and paving that can be viewed from the public right-of-way, shall be erected, reconstructed, altered, restored, moved or demolished within a design district, and no sign, fence, wall, or other appurtenant structure shall be erected or displayed on any lot, building, or structure located within said district unless an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness has been approved by the commission pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.”

Applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness are reviewed by the Design Review Board, composed of seven volunteers appointed by the Planning and Zoning Commission to serve a three-year term. The mix of volunteers must include two architects; a third member who is an architect, landscape architect, or urban planner; two people who have knowledge or background in historic preservation; a resident property owner within a designated local historic district; and a business or property owner in the Central Business District.

Properties that are at least 50 years old and are on the National Register or within a Historic District, are eligible for historic rehabilitation incentive programs, including a 25 to 30 percent Georgia State tax credit for historic building renovation, and an 8.5 year property tax freeze on the home's value before rehabilitation. To receive these benefits, property owners must adhere to strict preservation guidelines.

Key ideas: training and capacity, streamlined design review

Actions: Training and capacity Train Design Review Board members in the application process required for historic tax credits or a property tax freeze. To avoid duplication of review efforts, update the CBD guidelines to allow properties taking advantage of historic incentive programs to bypass the Certificate of Appropriateness requirement. Allow property owners who are seeking historic tax credits or a property tax freeze to circumvent the Certificate of Appropriateness process, as the application process for tax credits and the tax freeze includes rigorous design review.

Given Macon's wealth of beautiful historic buildings, explore the creation of a Preservation Commission to elevate the importance of preservation in the Urban Core and build review capacity for projects that are seeking neither historic tax credits nor a property tax freeze.

Streamlined design review This will streamline and lessen barriers in the local rehabilitation process.

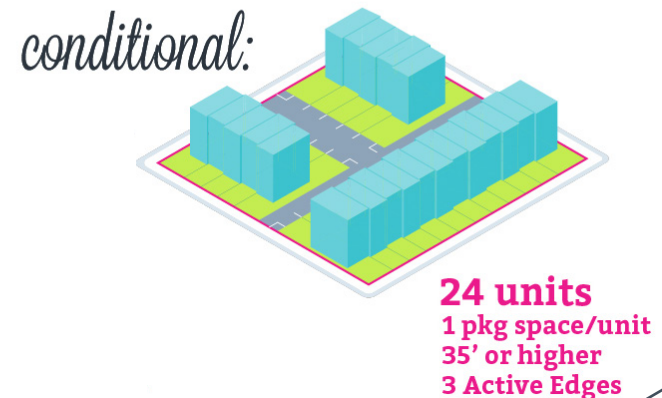
- **Maximum Density: 7.3 units/acre**
- **Maximum Building Height: 35'**
- **Minimum Parking Requirement: 2/du**

for example:

**IF YOU WERE
TO REDEVELOP
THIS 1.25 ACRE
SITE DOWNTOWN...**



- **Conditional Use: Residential dwellings as new construction**
- **Allowable Use: Tire batteries, and other automotive accessories, including the installation of accessories sold**
- **New construction standards are the same for CBD as rest of the County**



3.3 STRENGTHEN URBAN CORE NEIGHBORHOODS TO OFFER THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS – DOWNTOWN OR INTOWN LIVING

3.3a) Stabilize and grow neighborhoods in the Urban Core

Background: Downtown development is “building out” from the heart; neighborhood development is strengthening the body. Investment in surrounding residential neighborhoods is of equal importance to investment in the historic downtown. Some of these residential neighborhoods face significant challenges related to vacancy and blight, in particular East Macon’s Main Street neighborhood and Pleasant Hill. Close to half of the parcel area (including both vacant and occupied properties) in both of these neighborhoods is distressed. Efforts to stem blight in these neighborhoods can maximize the impact of Macon-Bibb County Blight Task Force efforts across neighborhoods, as reinvesting close to the region’s job center will generate added revenue that can be used to address blight elsewhere.

While rehabilitating salvageable homes remains a goal, blight removal and code enforcement are also critical to stabilization and the future health of Urban Core neighborhoods. These tasks will prevent further deterioration by cracking down on problem properties and discouraging others from becoming lax in their approach to following codes.

Key ideas: *blight removal, acquisitions, code enforcement*

Actions: **Blight removal** The first step toward stabilizing declining neighborhoods is to remove all dilapidated, vacant houses. East Macon and Pleasant Hill are two neighborhoods in which to focus the removal of these structures. In East Macon, there are currently 23 structures that are vacant and in state of deterioration beyond reasonable possibility of rehabilitation. In Pleasant Hill, there are 29 such structures. In many cases, the newly cleared lots will not be suitable for immediate redevelopment. Allocate resources for a cleaning and greening program to maintain vacant land and prevent lots from becoming overgrown and dangerous.

Acquisitions The next step is strategic acquisition of vacant properties in these neighborhoods that are abandoned but structurally sound. In East Macon, 14 properties fall into this category; in Pleasant Hill, 52 properties fall into this category. Working with Historic Hills & Heights Development Corporation, target the acquisition of properties that are close to community assets or recent investments. Rehabilitation of these properties can take place as demand for the type of housing and location they could offer grows.

Code enforcement Designate a code enforcement officer to focus specifically on neighborhoods in the Urban Core. Hold educational

sessions with community residents as a first step to give residents an opportunity to address any violations they may unknowingly make before inspections begin. These meetings are also important for new residents who may be unfamiliar with regulations.

Form strategies for engaging the community in code enforcement. Work with the Shalom Zone to form a community task force for each neighborhood to work with the Macon-Bibb County Blight Task Force. The local task forces could support code enforcement efforts by assisting with regular surveys of nuisance properties or by organizing community clean-ups. At the end of 2014, a task force of approximately 10 people was formed in East Macon to perform monthly community clean-up days. Dove Ministries spearheaded the effort; faith-based institutions or other neighborhood-based organizations are ideal avenues for creating such groups in other neighborhoods as well.

As noted in the College Hill Master Plan Refresh, Macon-Bibb has a SeeClickFix program in which users can report non-emergency issues (e.g. fallen tree, street cleaning needed, etc.) anonymously to local government using their computer or through a mobile app. The City-County is thus better tuned in and able to respond to what is happening on the ground. The College Hill Refresh also recommends that Macon-Bibb set up a 311 call-in service for reporting of non-emergency issues, thus better connecting neighbors without Internet to the City-County as well.

Finally, form additional strategies to target neighborhood improvement efforts, for example through working with the Mayor’s “5x5 program.” This program involves “events” that span five weeks and target five blocks, focusing and intensifying the services of the Macon-Bibb County Departments as well as additional services, such as Habitat for Humanity and community partnerships. As future 5x5 events take place, it is important for neighborhood organizations to get involved, including the neighborhood task forces involved with code enforcement.

HOW IT’S DONE ELSEWHERE

The City of Cleveland Code Enforcement Partnership, Cleveland, OH

A partnership between the city and community development corporations to inspect vacant properties and investigate citizen complaints. The city identified that code enforcement officers and CDCs were duplicating efforts in their surveys of structures in violation. Thus the partnership was formed to reduce the duplication of efforts. CDCs have intimate, daily involvement with residents and business owners and therefore can be strategic in their suggestions for enforcement.



URBAN CORE NEIGHBORHOODS today

MIND THE GAPS!

(vacancy)

Figure 41- Urban Core residential neighborhoods



STABILIZATION PLUS

tear down

23 PROPERTIES

that are vacant & in *deteriorated* (F) condition

acquire

14 PROPERTIES

7 of which are in *good/average* (B/C) condition;
7 of which are in *distressed* (D) condition

- vacant building to be acquired
- parcel w/vacant building (F) to be removed
- rail

Figure 42- East Macon stabilization & acquisition plan

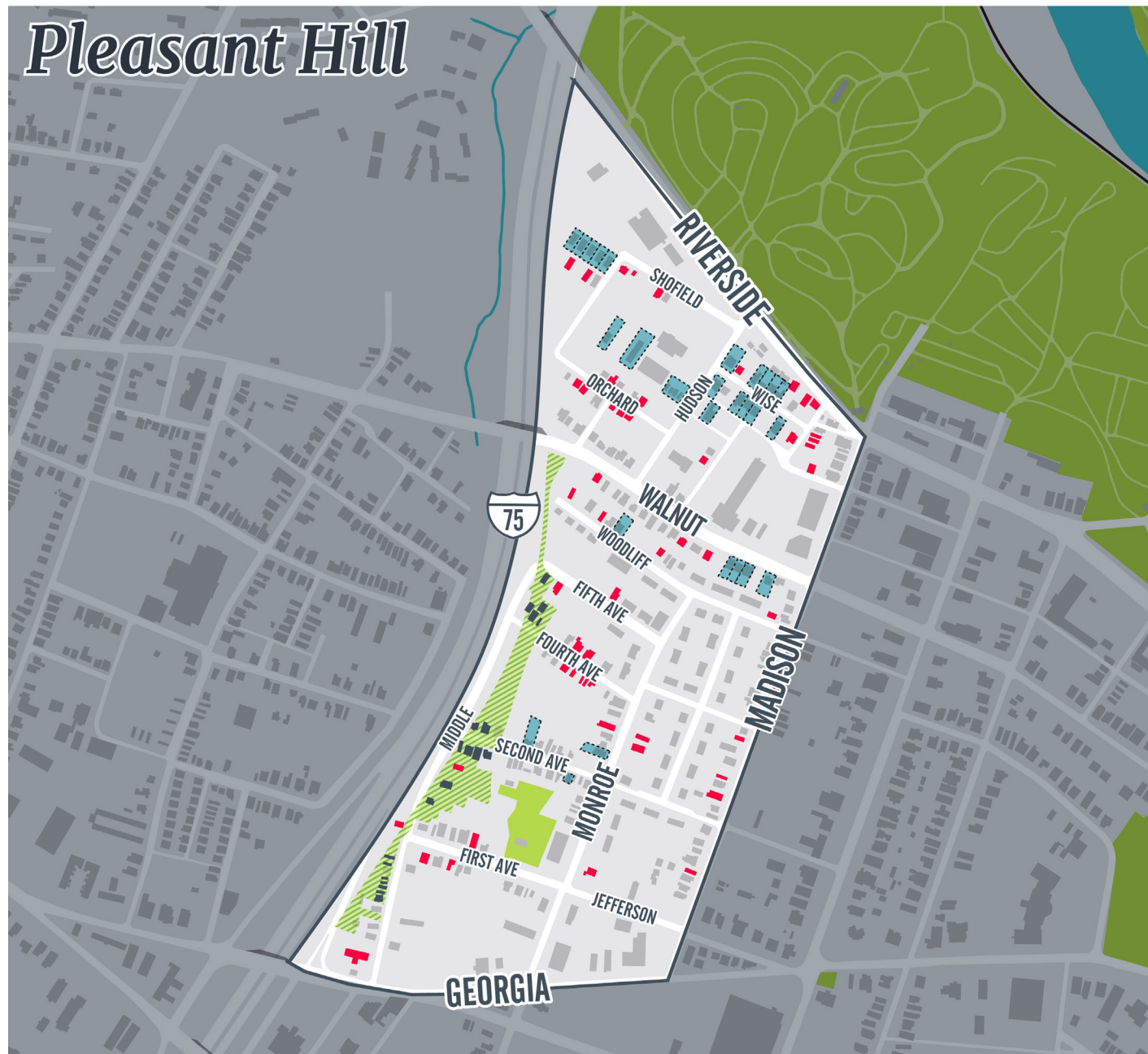


Figure 43- Pleasant Hill stabilization & acquisition plan

3.3b) Continue to Invest in Beall's Hill

Background: Beall's Hill has made significant progress in restoring and improving historic properties and cultivating a mixed-income and organized community of engaged residents. Beall's Hill has seen over 35 house rehabilitations and infill investments as part of community revitalization efforts lead by Historic Macon, and private market developers have followed, renovating or building new homes to restore whole blocks within the community. But the work in Beall's Hill is not complete.

A 2012 Housing Market Study commissioned by Historic Hills & Heights and developed by ZVA indicates that the market for single-family homes can only absorb eight to 10 new homes per year, so development or rehabilitation of single-family homes should slow down. The study also identified a new market opportunity for multi-family housing, or apartments, indicating that the housing market in Beall's Hill can support 48 to 54 units per year. This type of development will allow the neighborhood's revitalization to proceed more quickly, while also making a big impact on major streets.

Furthermore, greater density in the neighborhood will help support more stores and services, and more people and eyes on the street will improve neighborhood safety. Apartment living also means less property maintenance for tenants because that responsibility will fall upon a qualified management company. Finally, the apartments will add diversity to the Urban Core's housing stock, thereby increasing housing choice for households of different ages and composition.

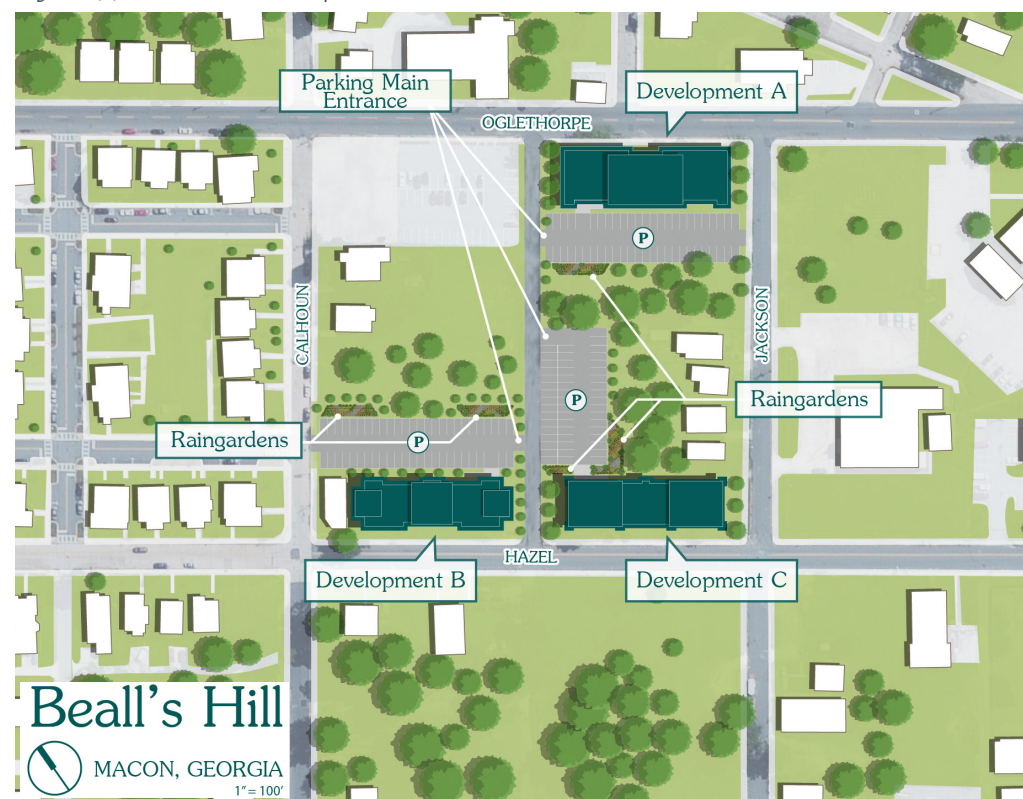
A recent grant will allow for additional infill in the form of single-family rehabilitations, new construction, and apartments. The Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association will ensure that neighbors remain informed and have an active voice at the table as investments continue.

Key ideas: *single-family rehabs, new apartments, public realm improvements*

Actions: Single-family rehabs & new apartments As recommended in the College Hill Master Plan Refresh, complete the rebuilding effort in Beall's Hill. Support Historic Macon's work on additional single-family rehab projects, as well as new market-rate apartment developments. Discussions with the Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association in the context of the College Hill Refresh, identified three potential sites: one at the corner of Oglethorpe and Jackson streets, one at the corner of Hazel and Calhoun streets, and one at the corner of Hazel and Jackson streets. Ensure that the Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association is involved to represent community concerns and objectives with these higher density projects.

Public realm improvements As residential infill and new construction move forward, the neighborhood will require public realm improvements too. Expand the sidewalk network on blocks where new housing is developed. Improve stormwater management facilities to absorb water before it reaches the lowest points in the neighborhood, easing the flooding issues on adjacent downhill blocks at lower grades.

Figure 44 - Potential development sites in Beall's Hill



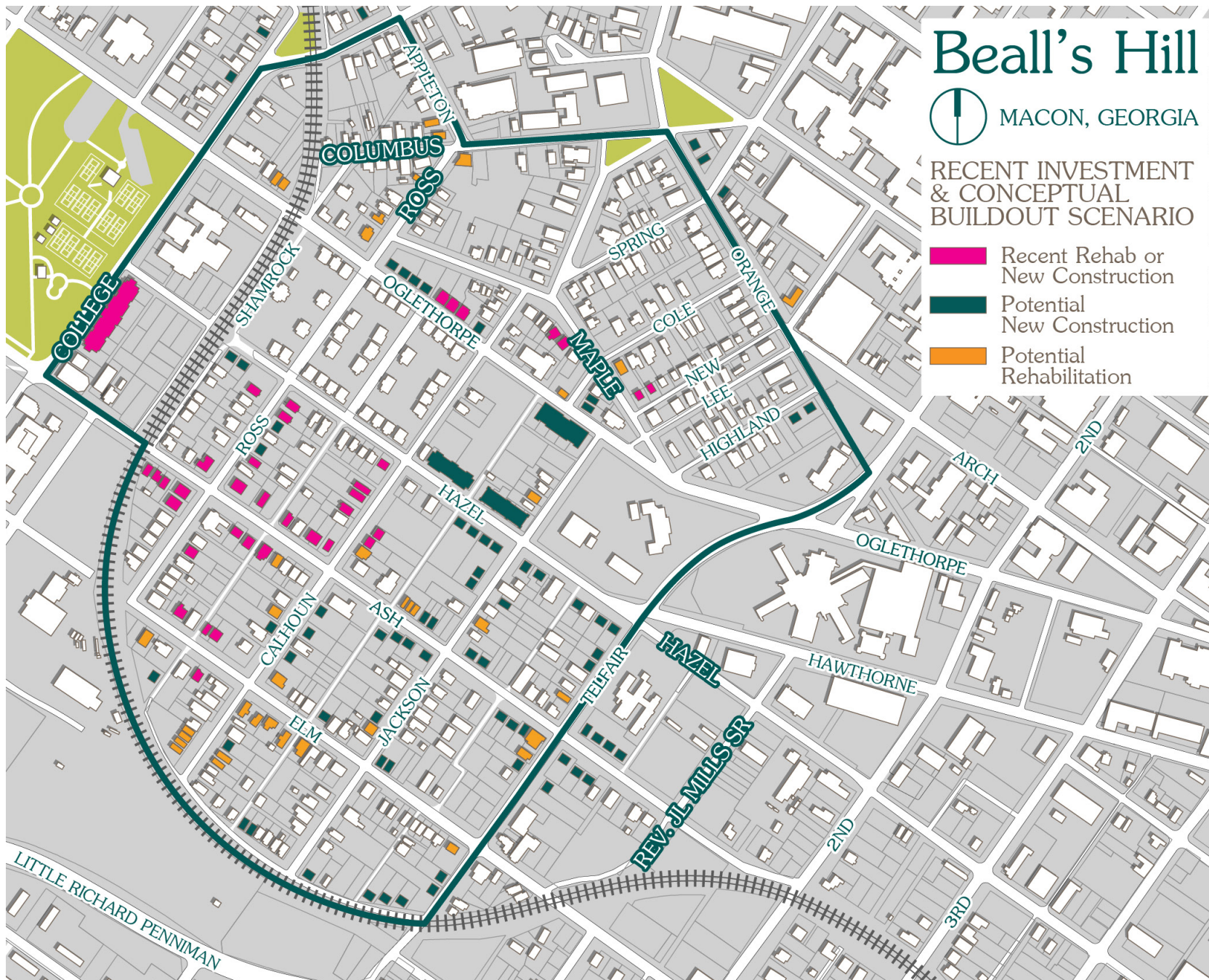


Figure 45- Beall's Hill recent investment & conceptual buildout scenario

3.3c) Revitalize East Macon's Main Street Neighborhood

Background: East Macon's Main Street neighborhood is a historic community with a mix of more recent public housing developments and beautiful old homes, many of which have fallen into disrepair. Dangerous vacant buildings and overgrown vacant lots are pervasive, comprising 46 percent of the neighborhood and posing threats to neighboring properties and residents. Stabilization efforts are critical for community members, and strategic revitalization efforts along Clinton Street are necessary too, as discussions about the Ocmulgee National Monument receiving National Park and Preserve designation move forward, promising to draw greater crowds to and through the neighborhood. The UDA has resources earmarked for funding capital improvements and will serve as a key coordinating partner in these efforts.

Key ideas: blight removal & land stewardship, Main Street improvements and greening, Clinton Street improvements, Mill Hill Arts Village

Actions: Blight removal & land stewardship First and foremost, the stabilization strategy for East Macon calls for removal of unsafe, empty buildings. The field survey located 69 vacant buildings, 23 of which were found to be in deteriorated and failing condition; demolish these unsafe vacant structures. The other 46 vacant buildings are candidates for rehabilitation depending on feasibility, availability of resources, and market demand. As any new investment of housing will need to be clustered for maximum impact, following demolition, the newly vacant lots will need to be maintained as clean and safe grassy areas. Neighborhood residents at an early Mill Hill Arts Village planning session highlighted cleaning and maintenance for improved safety in the public realm as top priorities. Grounds maintenance presents an opportunity for local job training and work.

"Our most popular tourist attraction should be surrounded by a great neighborhood."

Main Street improvements & greening Two key streets present opportunities for public realm improvements: Main Street and Clinton Street. Though Main Street is an entrance to the neighborhood and an important connection leading to the Family Investment Center, it has no sidewalks on one side of the street, narrow sidewalks on the other side of the street, no street lights, and no information about the community flanking the street. Target resources for streetscape improvements to this corridor. There is also an underutilized open space in front of the Family Investment Center, which should be repurposed as an orchard where youth in FIC programs can learn about gardening, growing produce, and nutrition.



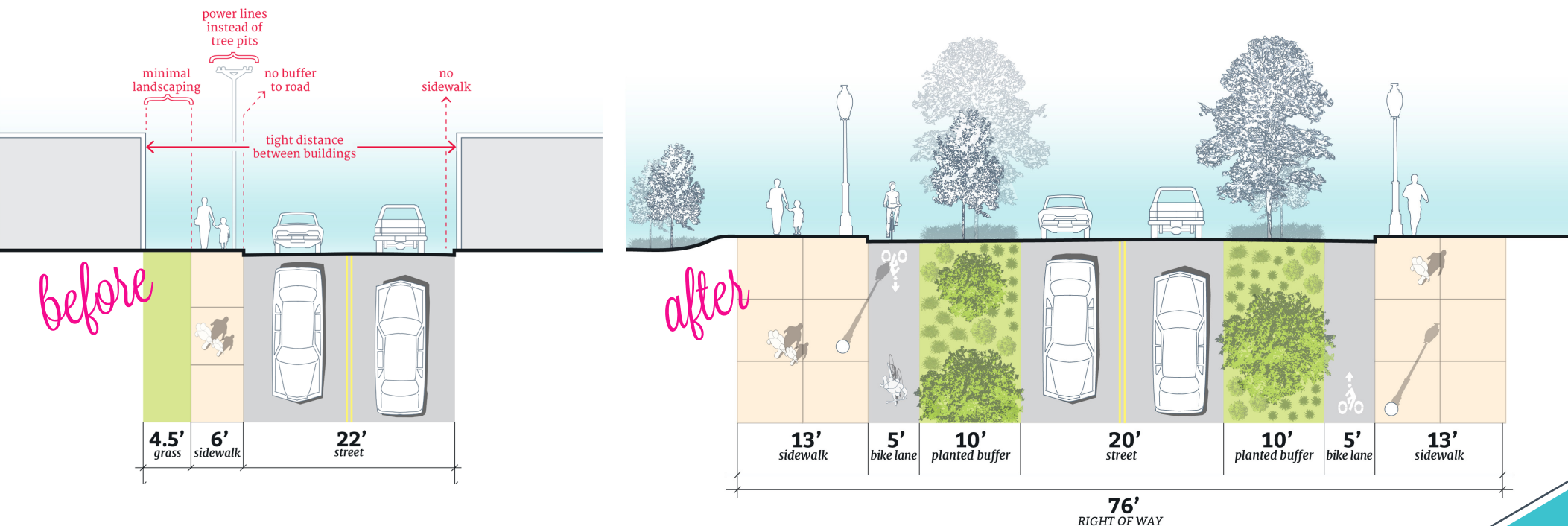
Existing Main Street issues include lack of sidewalks, deteriorated sidewalks, and a lack of street lighting.

Clinton Street improvements There is a concentration of land owned by Macon-Bibb and the UDA along Clinton Street between Coliseum Drive and the Monument. The UDA has resources earmarked for a redesign of Clinton Street that would provide a much better pedestrian crossing at Clinton and Coliseum and create a new entrance* to the future Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve to better announce this major asset. At the intersection of Coliseum and Clinton, create a true gateway to the National Park (see pages 80–81). Green the median on Coliseum approaching Clinton, and reclaim underutilized parking and vacant land flanking Clinton at Coliseum and build a new, landscaped entrance that incorporates signage for the Ocmulgee Mounds and Macon’s First Neighborhood. Study the feasibility of a traffic signal at this intersection to manage increased traffic flow with visitors to the future National Park and Preserve.

Widening Clinton Street, which is currently a two-lane 22-foot wide road, is also necessary. The proposed design would transform Clinton Street into a true boulevard leading to the National Park, adding new sidewalks on both sides of the street, new bike lanes for people wishing to explore the trail system in the Park by bike, street lights, trees, a landscaped buffer in the sidewalks, and new crosswalks. Plant an urban meadow of colorful wildflowers between Clinton and Schell to help manage stormwater draining down the hill; a portion of this open space should be active and programmed by the artists living in Mill Hill Arts Village and working in the Community Center.

* As shown in Figure 47 on the following page, the preferred entrance to the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve is along Clinton

Figure 46– Section of proposed Clinton Street improvements



Street. However, upon entering the park, this access route intersects with an active Norfolk Southern freight railroad line, which is known to block this entrance for extended periods of time. Negotiations must take place with Norfolk Southern to ensure safe and consistent passage into the National Park. If an agreement cannot be reached, an alternative location for a grand entrance at Lake City Street should be explored. This alternative would require tunneling through the existing 15-foot high railroad berm to provide an at grade, conflict free, entrance into the park.

Mill Hill Arts Village Up the hill from Clinton Street, Macon Arts Alliance has partnered with the neighborhood, Family Investment Center, UDA, and private enterprises to pursue the possibility of creating an artists' district, the Mill Hill Arts Village, bordered by Clinton, Taylor, Olive, Dewitt, Hydrolia, and Schell Streets. The goal of the Arts Village is to start an artist residency program and mixed income live-work community that is affordable for artists and community members alike along Clinton Street. This is where the limited rehab and infill in East Macon should be located in the near term. There are 14 vacant properties here for

which the Macon-Bibb Land Bank or UDA should pursue acquisition; seven of these properties are in good to average condition and are candidates for rehab, and seven of which are in distressed condition and should be evaluated to determine the feasibility of rehab versus demolition. Artists will work with community members to fix up, occupy, and creatively reuse homes along the Schell Alley of the Arts, and programs at the proposed Community Arts Center will benefit neighbors. The Arts Village will beautify the area and provide another East Macon destination for visitors to the Mounds to explore.

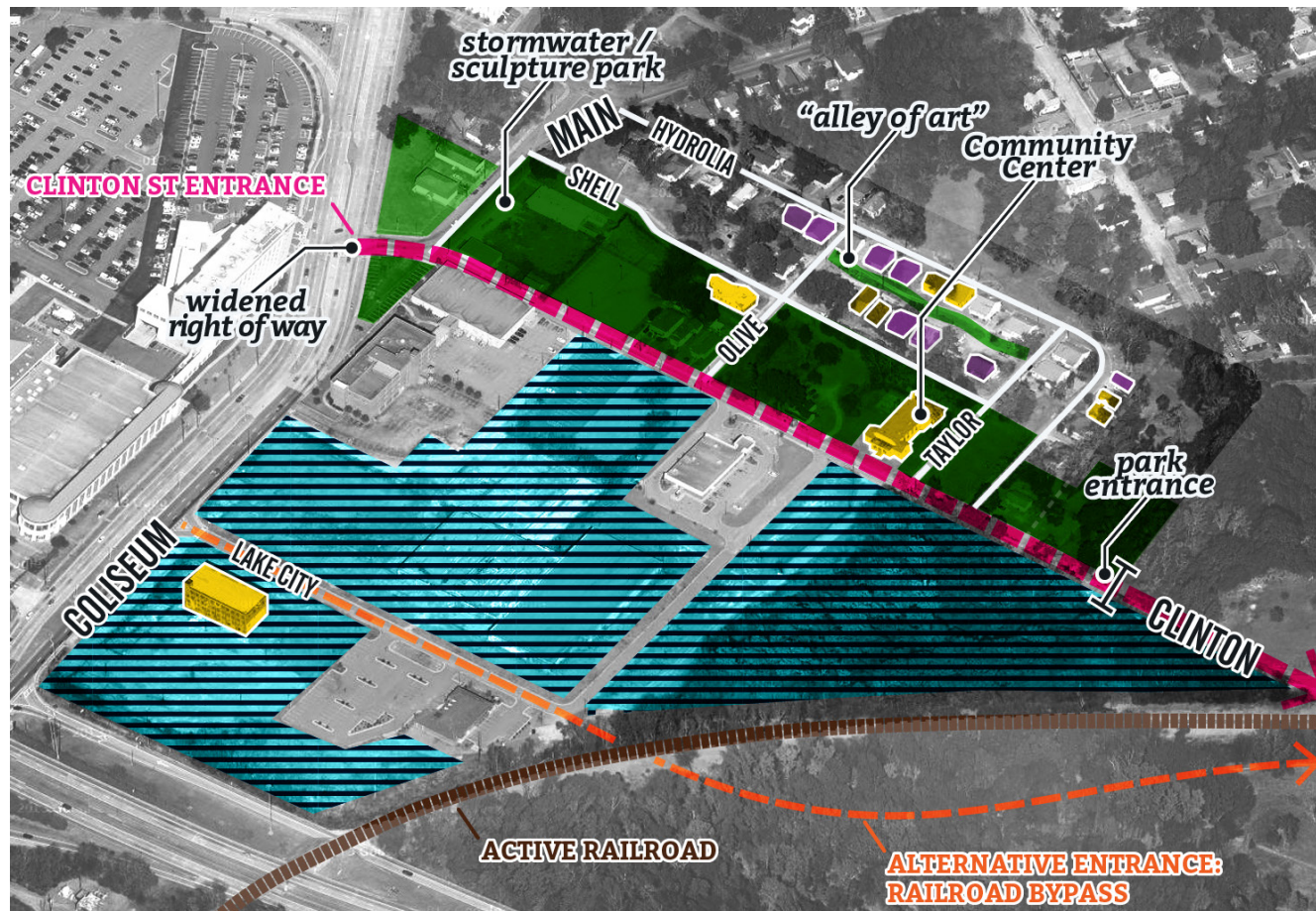


Figure 47- Diagram highlighting potential improvements along and around Clinton Street

- POTENTIAL REUSE
- POTENTIAL FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT
- POTENTIAL INFILL
- NEW PARK

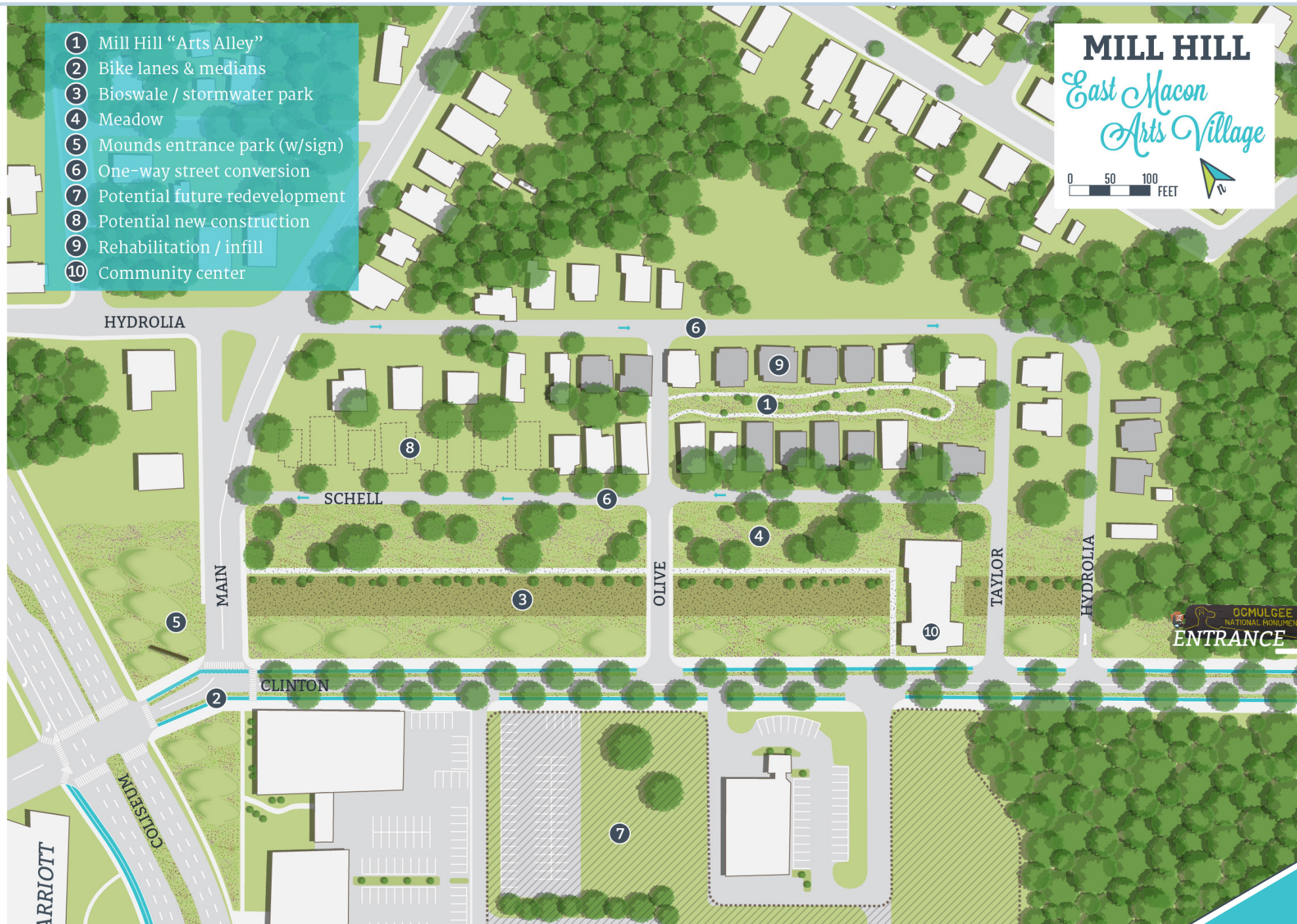
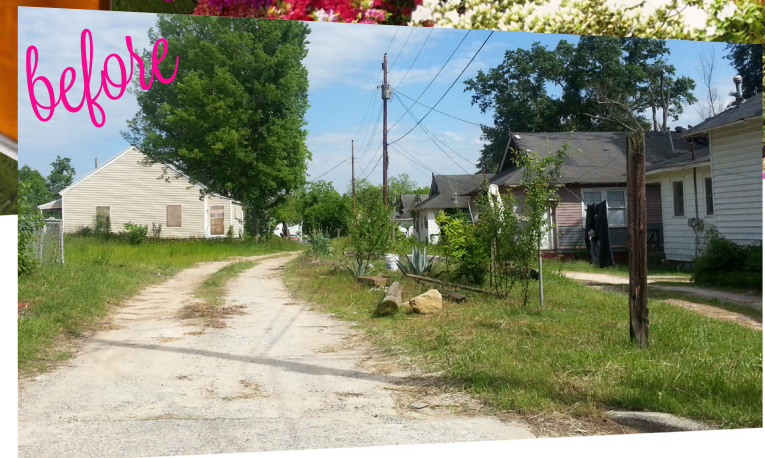


Figure 48- Site plan of the proposed Mill Hill Arts Alley



Figure 49- Rendering of the proposed Mill Hill Arts Alley



3.3d) Focus investment in Pleasant Hill near neighborhood amenities

Background: Pleasant Hill will soon welcome the opening of the new Lofts at College Hill, with 145 student apartments and 13,000 square feet of retail space, but just across Georgia Avenue, vacancy, blight, and poverty are pervasive. Much like in East Macon, there is a real need in Pleasant Hill to remove unsafe properties and stabilize the homes that can be saved. Of the 81 vacant properties that do not fall within the greening and trail segment that will accompany GDOT's widening of I-75, there are 29 vacant structures in failing condition that require demolition and 52 structures in average or distressed condition that may be candidates for rehabilitation. Community leaders also underscore the need for improved play space and programming for neighborhood youth.

But before stabilization and revitalization can proceed in the neighborhood, Pleasant Hill neighbors must come together to discuss their priorities for change in the community, and then organize to become agents of change. Community leaders underscore the need for improved play space and programming for neighborhood youth. Indeed, physical investments cannot answer the layered challenges presented by generational poverty, and a more holistic approach grounded in community organizing is warranted.

Key ideas: *blight removal & land stewardship, community organizing through collaborative planning, Booker T. Washington Community Center, strategic rehab/infill, Bobby Jones Performing Arts Center*

Actions: **Blight removal & land stewardship** As in East Macon, first and foremost, stabilization in Pleasant Hill through the removal of unsafe, empty buildings is key. Following demolition, the newly vacant lots will need to be maintained as clean and safe grassy areas. Grounds maintenance presents an opportunity for local job training and work.

Community organizing through collaborative planning For investments in stabilization to make an impact both in the neighborhood and in the lives of residents, neighbors must be engaged as active participants in revitalization efforts. Undertake a mini-neighborhood plan with Pleasant Hill residents to define local priorities, build capacity, consensus, and leadership among neighbors. Consider the following strategies as a jumping-off point for the neighborhood plan, and work with community members to develop additional strategies for action:

Booker T. Washington Community Center The much loved and well used Booker T. Washington Community Center is a key opportunity for strategic investment in Pleasant Hill. As described in the College Hill Refresh, the park and playground behind the Community Center



Figure 50– Improvements to the Booker T. Washington Community Center connection

need improvements. The play equipment, which is greatly needed by neighborhood youth, is old, failing, and in need of full replacement. The basketball courts require upgrading and amenities such as bleacher seating, and the slope down to the pool should be improved with new plantings, and a restored slide. This park and playground will be an important stop along the way when a trail is built along the southern edge of the highway during the I-75 expansion, thus connecting it to the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail network. To improve access, the College Hill Refresh recommends partnership with GDOT on a corridor study for Riverside Drive. Advocate for a signalized intersection at Madison Street and Riverside to enhance safety at the entrance to Riverside Cemetery, which is near a blind curve in the road.

Strategic rehab/infill At present, many of the homes adjacent to the Community Center and playground are in need of renovation or repair. Identify an organization to work with the community and launch a strategic rehab/infill approach similar to Beall's Hill in Pleasant Hill, with the first phase of homes located across from the Community Center.

Bobby Jones Performing Arts Center This location is also near to the Lofts at College Hill and the vacant and deteriorating Bobby Jones Performing Arts Center, which neighborhood leaders have a keen interest in restoring and re-opening. Named for Dr. Bobby Jones, the first African American to earn tenure as faculty at Mercer University, the Performing Arts Center would serve neighborhood children with cultural and educational programming in walking distance. As recommended in the College Hill Refresh, next steps should be to conduct a feasibility study for building rehabilitation and explore programming options for future building uses that meet neighborhood needs.



What you told us:

"Beautify entrances to different neighborhoods."

"I would love to see more live/work spaces for rent and sale in our urban core."

"Pleasant Hill would be an area for housing development of new single-family housing due to walking distance to downtown Macon, easy access to interstate highway I-75 and I-16."

"Ways the long-time residents or those who live in and around the area can profit from improvements."

"Loft buildings with amenities."

"Modern design single family homes."

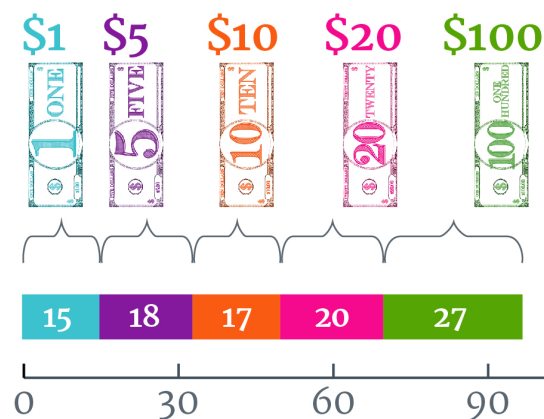
SHOW US THE MONEY (to help MAP prioritize)

Resources for implementing the Macon Action Plan are limited, so we need **YOU** to help us prioritize!



MAP asked you to take a set of play money (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$100) and spend it wisely on the items you think are most important...

#3 out of nine
NEIGHBORHOOD STABILIZATION & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT




Total \$ Amount:

\$3,375
(total # of bills)

Excerpt of results from "Show Us the Money" exercise

Focus on Urban Core Living


	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
3.1 Encourage more households to locate downtown							
a. Focus on key sites for mixed-use development to grow downtown's mixed-use center and extend the urban fabric to the River							
		ii.	Mixed-use development (gateway block, Capricorn Studio block, new Riverside neighborhood)	medium	\$100-\$125 per sq. ft.	private developers, NewTown Macon, UDA	private equity, public-private partnerships
b. Increase the diversity of housing choice							
	YES	i.	Adaptive reuse/lofts	ongoing	\$100-\$125 per sq. ft.	private developers, NewTown Macon, UDA	private equity, public-private partnerships
	YES	ii.	Urban infill with for-sale homes and townhomes	ongoing	\$80-\$100 per sq. ft.	private developers, Historic Macon, Historic Hills & Heights, NewTown Macon, UDA	private equity, public-private partnerships
c. Welcome new residents as members of a close-knit community							
		i.	Welcome materials	medium	\$25,000	UDA, NewTown Macon, neighborhood organizations	marketing funds from partner organizations
	YES	ii.	Welcome dinners	short	\$5,000 (per year)	UDA, NewTown Macon, neighborhood organizations	marketing funds from partner organizations
3.2 Update regulations and codes to encourage investment							
a. Upgrade Urban Core zoning with a form-based code overlay to streamline development review process							
		i.	Instate a downtown overlay to cover hot-button issues like setbacks, sidewalks, maximum building heights, parking requirements	medium	\$200,000	Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning Commission	public, NewTown
b. Streamline the design review process for historic preservation							
		i.	Train design review board members on historic preservation	medium	\$10,000	Design Review Board, Historic Macon	public, Historic Macon, private contributions
		ii.	Eliminate design review board oversight if applying for historic tax credits	medium	--	Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning Commission	

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
3.3 Strengthen surrounding neighborhoods to offer the best of both worlds – downtown or intown living							
a. Stabilize and grow neighborhoods in the Urban Core							
		i.	Remove dilapidated, vacant houses	medium	\$780,000	Macon-Bibb County	public
		ii.	Acquire abandoned, structurally-sound houses	medium	\$990,000	Macon-Bibb County, Historic Hills & Heights	public
	YES	iii.	Increase code enforcement	short	\$41,000	Code enforcement officer; neighborhood task forces	public
b. Continue to invest in Beall's Hill							
	YES	i.	Continue infill in Beall's Hill – single-family rehab, new construction, and apartments	ongoing	leveraged private investment	Historic Macon Foundation / Historic Hills & Heights	foundation, grants
		ii.	Public realm improvements	medium	\$ 2,000,000 (lighting, sidewalks, stormwater)	Historic Macon Foundation / Historic Hills & Heights, Macon-Bibb Public Works	Public, bonding from development
c. Revitalize East Macon's Main Street Neighborhood							
	YES	i.	Blight removal and land stewardship	short to long	leveraged private investment	Historic Macon Foundation / Historic Hills & Heights	foundation, grants
		ii.	Main Street improvements and greening	medium	\$425,000	UDA, Family Investment Center, Macon Housing Authority	UDA, public
	YES	iii.	Clinton Street improvements	short (design); medium (construction)	\$1,600,000	UDA, Macon-Bibb Public Works, Coliseum, The Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative (ONPPI), Macon-Bibb Convention & Visitors Bureau, Macon Arts Alliance	UDA, public, grants
		iv.	Mill Hill East Macon Arts Village – limited rehab/infill near approach to Ocmulgee National Monument/ Park	medium	\$8 million +	Macon Arts Alliance / Habitat for Humanity	foundation, grants

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
d. Focus investment in Pleasant Hill							
	YES	i.	Blight removal and land stewardship	short	\$ 780,000 (blight removal); \$ 990,000 (acquisition)	Macon-Bibb, UDA, Historic Hills & Heights, neighborhood organizations	Public
	YES	ii.	Pleasant Hill mini-neighborhood plan	short	\$40,000	Pleasant Hill, Shalom Zone, UDA, College Hill Commission	Foundation support
		iii.	Booker T. Washington Community Center	long	TBD	Pleasant Hill, UDA, Macon-Bibb Parks & Beautification	Public, foundation support
		iv.	Strategic rehab and infill to build off new lofts with stabilizing infill adjacent to Booker T. Washington Rec Center	medium	leveraged private investment	Historic Hills & Heights, private developers	foundation, grants
		v.	Bobby Jones Performing Arts Center	long	TBD	Pleasant Hill, UDA, Macon-Bibb Parks & Beautification	Public, foundation support



CULTIVATE CONNECTIVITY



“The parking situation is the most frustrating aspect of living Downtown.”

As the hub of business and government in Central Georgia, the Urban Core has excellent local and regional vehicular connections through its grid network and interstate highways. The movement of vehicles to and from the historic downtown has long been a priority of its transportation system; by comparison, the focus on amenities for pedestrians has been substantially lower. Pedestrian conditions in the Urban Core can be very challenging: pedestrians are faced with complex, multi-legged intersections, insufficient crossing times on high volume streets, and lack of shade or coverage, among other challenges.

Parking is another noted challenge in the Urban Core. Downtown has seen an increase in the usage of parking, which has led to the perception that it is difficult to do so. Parking availability and user preferences, however, are not at odds with each other. For example, nearly 75% of surveyed employees agreed that a five-minute walk from where they park to where they work is reasonable, and with streetscape improvements, park improvements, new businesses, and new housing that help people feel safe and intrigued by an interesting urban landscape, that percentage would increase. This distance covers most of the historic downtown; therefore, parking within a reasonable distance of their workplace is possible for employees. In particular, ample capacity exists outside of the area comprising Cotton Avenue to Third Street and Mulberry Street to Cherry Street. Improvements to parking management are necessary for this area, as the two-hour limit is often exceeded. Meanwhile, nearby parking garages are sparsely used – many are only 35% full during the day.

Furthermore, the Urban Core has limited options for those who would prefer to get around in other ways than by car or by foot. Terminal Station is a hub for bus transportation, but currently this mode primarily appeals to those who ride the bus out of necessity as opposed to choice. Moreover, bike lanes are sparse throughout the Urban Core: they can be found on the recently-implemented vision block on Second Street and several streets near Mercer University, some in the form of sharrows as opposed to dedicated bike lanes.

The Urban Core needs a different approach to transportation. Pedestrians are critical to the success of the Urban Core and their safety should be the highest priority in the design of its streets. A streamlined parking system will improve the downtown experience for residents, employees, and visitors. Improvements to public transportation and bike infrastructure will increase transportation choice. They will furthermore alleviate some of the challenges faced by drivers and pedestrians through the reduction of traffic, which in turn results in better parking and pedestrian conditions. These types of improvements will help attract the next generation of residents, employees, and business owners. In the meantime, it is likely that these choices will require public investment before the market, demographics, and downtown can fully support private investment.

Among the themes this section addresses are:

- **Parking:** How can we manage parking to better serve residents, employees, and visitors?
- **Safety:** What approaches should we take to make the pedestrian experience safer on the busy streets of the Urban Core?
- **Active forms of transportation and shared-use mobility:** How can we increase local transportation choices?

“We need to connect Downtown through transit to other areas of town. Other cities are becoming more transit-oriented. Macon needs to follow.”

Goal: 4.1 MANAGE THE PARKING SYSTEM IN THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN IN A COMPREHENSIVE MANNER

4.1a) Install parking meters

Background: Parking is the first and last experience visitors have of downtown. It is critical to get it right. The popularity of on-street parking stems from its allure of being both free and potentially closer to a given destination. However, the demand for these spaces in certain areas far exceeds the actual supply. Numerous studies recommended parking meters to better manage the fixed supply of on-street spaces downtown, and additional proposals have been submitted over the last ten years by a variety of vendors for their installation and operation. To date, however, parking meters have not been implemented.

There are approximately 5,800 parking spaces in the downtown study area, bounded by Walnut Street to the north, Pine Street to the south, Fifth Street to the east, and New Street to the west. Approximately 20% of the overall parking supply, or approximately 1,260 spaces, is on-street. The majority of these spaces have a two-hour time limit.

Key idea: parking meter installation

Action: Parking meter installation Install parking meters in downtown Macon. The initial installation must be immediately successful; the location of where to install parking meters will determine the success of the parking management program. If the coverage area is too small, it will push the existing problem to adjacent blocks. If the coverage area is too large, too many metered spaces will be unused. This will not only have serious financial impacts, but also create entire blocks of unused parking, which in turn has a negative impact on the quality of life in downtown Macon.

The recommended coverage area consists of:

- **Mulberry Street** between west of Second Street and Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
- **Cherry Street** between Cotton Avenue and Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard
- **Cotton Street** between Cherry Street and Mulberry Street
- **Second Street** between Cherry Street Lane and Walnut Street Lane
- **Third Street** between Cherry Street Lane and Walnut Street Lane

This equates to approximately 462 metered parking spaces and a total of 40 multi-space parking meters.

The type of parking meter should be a multi-space parking kiosk that accepts cash and coins, credit cards, and cell phone payments for initial or additional time, enabling customers to shop and dine longer. The multi-space meters take up less space in the streetscape than single-space meters, are easy to use, and result in lower maintenance costs. Multi-space meters can be configured for pay and display (patron pays for parking and then puts a receipt on their dashboard), pay by space (patrons pay for at the meter for the specific space they are parked in), or pay by license plate (patrons pay at the meter and input their license plate).

Set up the multi-space meters and the parking spaces initially for pay by space. Pay by space is the easiest for patrons to use, as it does not necessitate returning to one's car in order to display the receipt on the dashboard, but it is also the least efficient system in terms of its capacity for parking spaces. Transition meters eventually to pay and display in order to increase the number of parking spaces on the street.

The parking meters should operate from 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM on all streets and from 8:00 AM – 10:00 PM on Cherry Street to reflect nighttime business hours. Existing restrictions on parking duration should be eliminated, thus allowing for parking based on needs.

The Urban Development Authority should be responsible for the implementation and management of the parking meters. The UDA is best suited to ensure that the financial and social objectives of the parking meters are balanced and support the success of downtown. The first step will be to issue a Request for Information (RFI) from potential vendors to refine potential revenues and costs for different systems. After the RFI is complete, a Request for Proposal (RFP) should be issued for vendors.

A robust communications program will be necessary to ensure parking best serves the needs of downtown. This will include initial outreach to accompany the installation of parking meters in addition to improved distribution of information on parking for visitors, employers, and patrons.

On-street signage will be necessary to increase awareness of the need to pay for parking. The design of the signs should meet the standards within the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD), and the colors should be part of any branding effort in the Urban Core. Three signs will be necessary for each meter.


4.1b) Encourage turnover where demand is highest

Background: Parking turnover refers to how many times an on-street parking space is used in a day by different vehicles. Ideally, a parking space should turn over 5 to 8 times per day in a vibrant downtown.

Macon promotes parking turnover by regulating duration in most cases to two hours. Observations of turnover activity found that 44% of vehicles are parked in excess of the two-hour restrictions and furthermore that parking turnover averaged only 2 times a day. These violations reduce the productivity that can be achieved from the limited supply of on-street spaces. Moreover, low turnover contributes to the high occupancy rates of parking spaces and congestion, thus making it difficult for visitors and patrons to find parking.

Figure 51– Area with the highest parking demand



 Hard to find parking during daytime hours

Key idea: meter pricing

Action: Meter pricing Set the initial hourly price of parking meters to \$1.00 per hour, with no limit on the number of hours to start. This cost structure is similar to other downtowns in Georgia and should be revisited after six months to one year. The price can be increased if it does not rectify the existing issues with turnover and demand at this level. After six months, begin collecting data to determine if any adjustments in the price of parking should be made, including reducing the cost of parking during low demand days and increasing the cost of parking during high demand days.

44%
stay over 2 hours

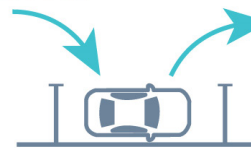


Existing Parking Demand

35%
on street spaces
available at peak

50%
off street spaces available
at peak times

average
turnover **2.3/day**



average
duration
2:20

4.1c) Utilize technology for both payment and enforcement

Background: Technology for payment and enforcement benefits both customers and providers of parking. The usage of mobile applications for payment eliminates the need for coins, offers a record of payment for the consumer, and can allow for flexibility in the duration of parking. The mobile applications generate data that are useful for providers, as they can discern peak times and popular areas for parking. With this information, providers can adjust rates accordingly. Numerous cities have introduced this technology, including Chicago, Washington D.C., and Boston.

Key idea: mobile application

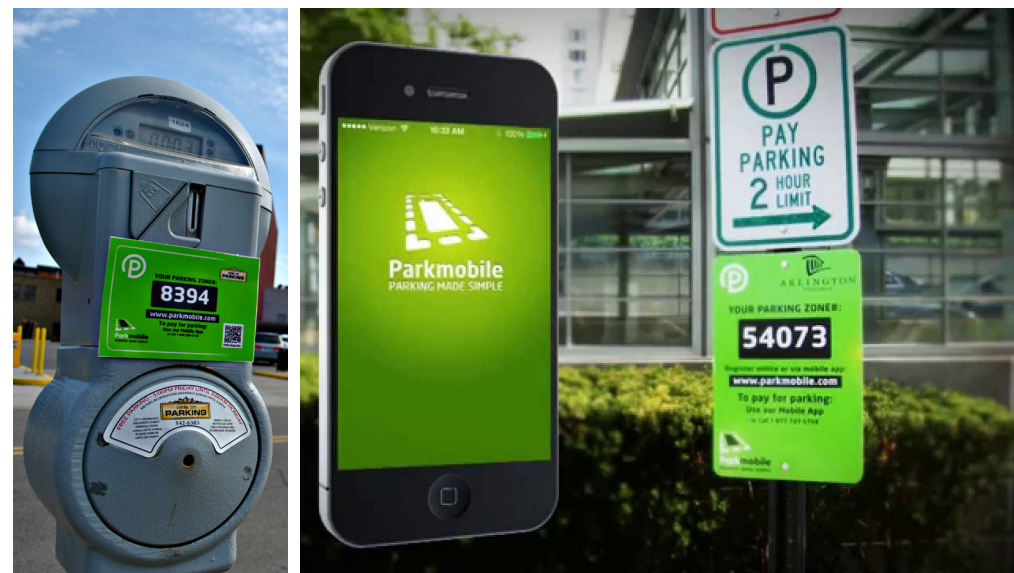
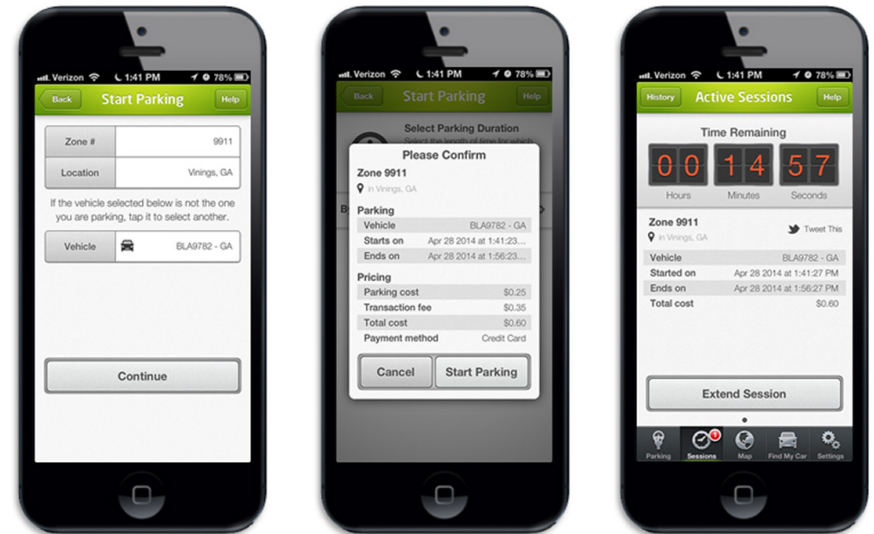
Action: Mobile application A mobile application should be developed in partnership with a vendor to enable patrons to pay for meters with their mobile device. The application should enable users who wish to do so to pay with their smartphone at the time of parking and later extend the duration of parking if desired. It should also be available for both iPhones and Android devices and be as easy as possible for users to users to install and operate. Cash or credit payment options should remain in place as well for visitors who opt not to take advantage of the pay-by-phone app. In addition, four handheld parking enforcement readers, which should allow for tickets to be processed immediately, should be purchased for the staff responsible for enforcement.

4.1d) Consider creating a parking authority

Background: Parking enforcement currently is undertaken by the Macon Police Force. The duration of stay in an on-street space is two hours in most of the Urban Core. Macon Police officers are responsible for enforcing this restriction by noting vehicles parked at one time and then coming back later in the day to see if the vehicle is still there. This is a time-consuming duty that takes up the time of officers who could otherwise be focusing on additional important responsibilities. To effectively manage parking in the Urban Core, a dedicated team must be in place that cannot only manage and enforce parking, but ensure it adds to the overall experience in the area.

Key idea: parking authority

Action: Parking authority The UDA should establish a separate parking authority board to manage parking in the Urban Core. This will include dedicated staff to oversee the program, keep it financially stable, and enforce the meters. In addition to these responsibilities, personnel in the field could also serve as Urban Core Ambassadors.



Example of a mobile parking application, Parkmobile

4.1e) Encourage use of parking garages

Background: There are seven off-street commercial parking facilities available to the general public in downtown that house approximately 1,475 spaces. Many of these spaces are available for hourly and daily use, but some of them only offer monthly parking for employees. There is a considerable amount of parking available in these facilities and no signs of congestion, particularly in the parking structure at Mulberry Street and 3rd Street Lane.

The low usage of these parking garages is attributable to several factors. Convenience is a factor, as on-street parking has greater potential to be immediately proximate to one's destination. In addition, the historic downtown lacks wayfinding to direct people where to park. During the public outreach process, participants noted that awareness of the parking garages is therefore limited. Participants also noted negative perceptions of the safety of garages.

Key idea: wayfinding program

Action: Wayfinding program A wayfinding program is necessary to better identify where people should park. Ensure that colors and styles used are in accordance with any branding effort of downtown. To alleviate negative perceptions, install public art and implement other forms of programming, as outlined in Chapter 2.

4.1f) Introduce a residential permit parking program

Background: If their building does not provide off-street parking, residents in the Urban Core currently have two choices on where to park. They can either use off-street facilities and pay for parking or they can park on-street, legally or illegally. The installation of meters and the enforcement of this program will require residents to park outside of the metered area if they do not want to pay for hourly parking.

Key idea: residential permit parking program

Action: Residential permit parking program A residential parking permit program will be necessary for people who live on the blocks where parking meters are installed. The most effective way to accomplish this is to charge \$25 per year for a parking permit that would grant residents the right to unlimited parking (no restrictions on the number of hours or day of the week) on non-metered blocks as long as they have a parking permit. To complement the permit program, encourage residents to consider purchasing a space in a nearby parking lot or parking structure.

4.1g) Introduce a residential permit parking program

Background: The design of the 2nd Street vision block incorporates reverse angle parking. Once drivers adjust to the new parking pattern, reverse angle parking offers multiple safety benefits including improved driver visibility of cyclists, car door positioning that directs passengers exiting the car toward the sidewalk rather than the street, and easy trunk loading from the sidewalk.

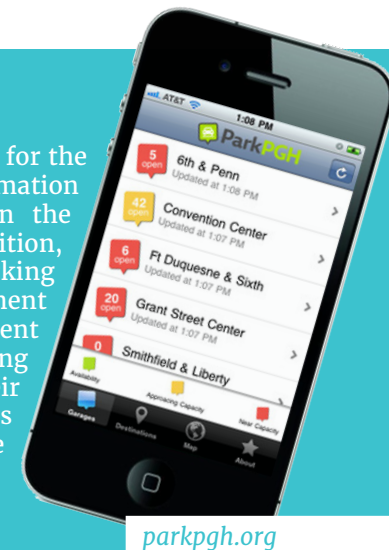
Key idea: selective restriping of angled parking

Action: Selectively convert angled parking to reverse angled parking Resources for capital improvements are limited, and with MAP's focus on the pedestrian, improvements to sidewalks in the Urban Core should be prioritized. Seek opportunities to convert existing angled parking to reverse angled parking only when such improvements can be coupled with planned roadway restriping of lanes and crosswalks. However, once more than 50% of the on-street angled parking spaces in the Urban Core accommodate reverse angled parking, move quickly to convert the remaining angled spaces to reverse for consistency and clarity for drivers.

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE

ParkPGH, Pittsburgh, PA

ParkPGH is the first "smart" parking solution for the City of Pittsburgh. It offers real-time information about parking availability in all garages in the Cultural District of the city to its users. In addition, ParkPGH includes the first predictive parking application in the country. This component analyzes historical trends and takes current events into account to predict future parking availability and thus allow drivers to plan their trips accordingly. In total, ParkPGH monitors 5,300 spaces and 25% of garage parking in the city. Information is made available to drivers via a free iPhone app, website, text, and a call-in telephone service.



4.2 ENHANCE SAFETY

4.2a) Mitigate truck traffic on MLK

Background: Although it generates a considerable number of jobs and revenue in the economy of central Georgia, the logging industry is disruptive to the downtown experience in the Urban Core. Flatbed trucks currently use MLK Drive as one of their main thoroughfares, traveling at high speeds as MLK is the most direct route between I-16 and industrial destinations. The volume of trucks on MLK creates challenges for pedestrian safety and connectivity.

Key idea: truck re-routing option

Action: Truck re-routing option A win-win solution for both downtown and the trucks is to develop an alternate north-south route on Seventh Street. This route would prioritize truck usage. Trucks will be able to access it by turning from MLK to Walnut Street and then on to Seventh Street. This improvement will likely require a new bridge across the rail tracks. At the same time, improvements to MLK Drive should be geared more toward pedestrians. Re-configuring the timing of the traffic signals will improve pedestrian safety and also reduce the speed of traffic. Macon-Bibb County and the UDA should work with the logging industry to further develop this solution and potential funding sources.

As noted in Strategy 1.2c, planned improvements to Central City Park will necessitate that this strategy to re-route truck traffic is accompanied by investments in pedestrian infrastructure along Riverside Drive and Walnut Street to ensure safe access to the park despite new truck traffic patterns.



Figure 52- Map of proposed truck re-routing



Source: Interface Studio

“7th Street Truck re-route. Get the log trucks off MLK Jr. Blvd.”

4.2b) Prioritize pedestrian safety and connectivity at signalized intersections

Background: Pedestrian safety is a primary concern in the Macon community. According to Dangerous by Design 2014, a report by Smart Growth America, the Macon metropolitan area had the highest annual pedestrian death rate (3.44 per 100,000) during 2008-2012 of any other metropolitan area in Georgia. While the next highest rate was Brunswick, Georgia (3.39), most of the other metropolitan areas were below 2. The Atlanta metropolitan area, for example, experienced 1.59 pedestrian deaths out of 100,000.

Key ideas: *Pedestrian countdown signals, leading pedestrian intervals, prohibit right turns on red, eliminate double signals, international crosswalks*

Action: Pedestrian countdown signals Introduce pedestrian countdown signals, which provide information to pedestrians on how many seconds are remaining to cross the street. Existing traffic signals should be retrofitted with this infrastructure.

Leading pedestrian intervals Introduce leading pedestrian intervals (typically three to five seconds) to delay car movements and invite pedestrians to begin crossing first before vehicles get a green light. This treatment will have minimal impact on the operations of vehicles and come to the considerable benefit of pedestrians.

Prohibit right turns on red Prohibit right turns on red. Allowing vehicles to turn right when they have a red light was initially allowed to improve vehicle delay at intersections where additional capacity could not be built. However in areas where there are large volumes of pedestrians, allowing right turns on red is a serious pedestrian safety concern.

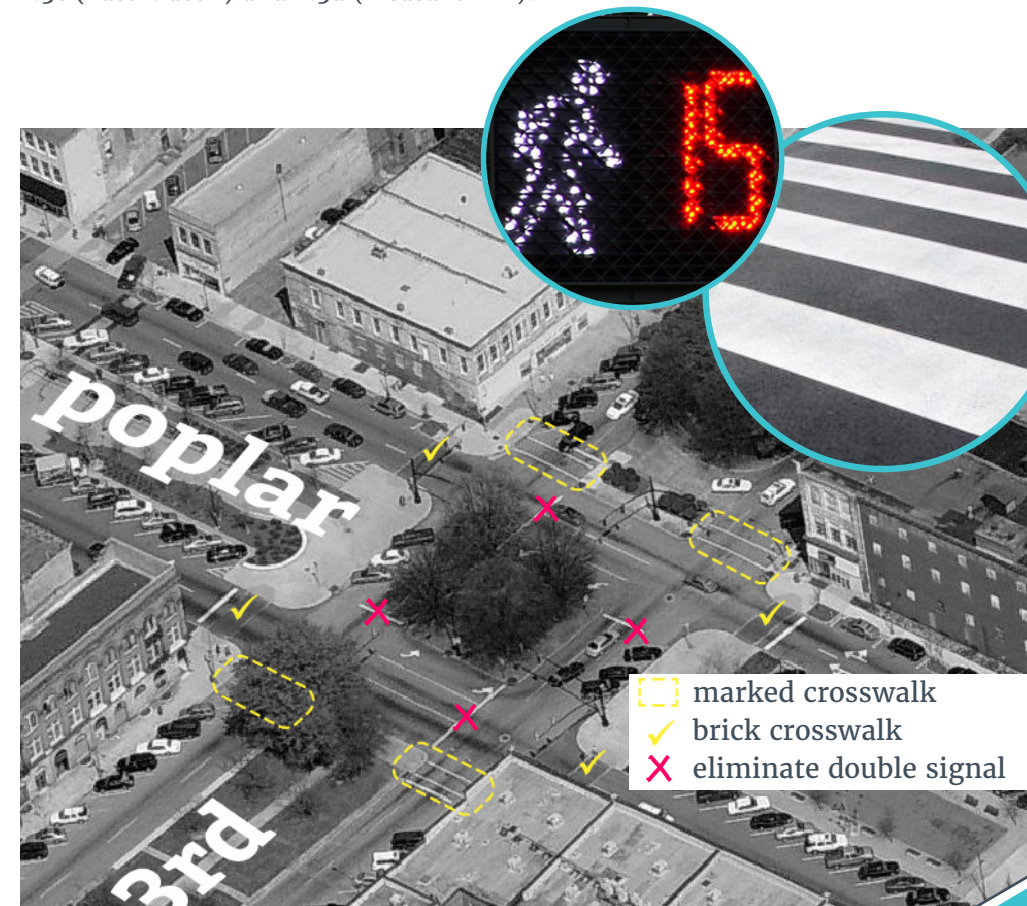
Eliminate double signals At the major intersections with perpendicular medians (ex. Mulberry & 3rd or Poplar & 3rd), eliminate the traffic duplicative traffic lights that allow drivers to stop in the center of intersections, leaving only the initial light on the first side of the intersection, and enhancing the sense of safety for pedestrians.

International crosswalks Upgrade all 'marked' crosswalks downtown to international crosswalks. These crosswalks have an appearance similar to piano keys and have been proven to provide the most awareness to drivers of crossing pedestrians.

Macon-Bibb County and the UDA should identify high priority intersections to pilot leading pedestrian intervals and prohibit right turns on red, preferably on Cherry Street and Second Street. These

pilots should evaluate the actual and perceived changes with respect to pedestrian comfort and vehicular delay. Pedestrian countdown signals should be installed with all new traffic signals and retrofitted at existing traffic signal locations where pedestrians have to cross more than two lanes of traffic.

Detailed strategies for intersection improvements designed to support pedestrian activity are included in Strategy 1.4b (Gateways) and Strategy 2.3c (East Macon) and 2.3d (Pleasant Hill).



Pedestrian countdown signal should be placed at all intersections and international crosswalks should replace all marked crosswalks

4.2c) Develop pedestrian encouragement and education programs

Background: Public messaging and programming reinforces improvements to pedestrian infrastructure through the support and encouragement of pedestrian safety and activity. Programming that focuses on specific goals and monitors progress, e.g. through the use of wearable devices like a pedometer, are more effective than those with abstract goals, e.g. those that simply encourage walking.

Key ideas: *pedestrian safety brochure, Mayor's Challenge, activity challenge, pedestrian & bicycle safety committee*

Action: Create an encouragement program to undertake the following:

- Develop a pedestrian safety brochure and include it with county mailings on traffic violations
- Join the Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets by having the Mayor leading a call to action on pedestrian safety
- Develop an activity challenge using pedometers or wearable devices that reward people for the number of steps they take
- Develop a pedestrian & bicycle safety committee that meets regularly on issues that affect downtown

The UDA should partner with Navicent to develop the pedestrian safety brochure and the activity challenge. Local businesses should be made aware of both efforts and encouraged to sponsor, either monetarily or with in-kind donations. The UDA should help establish the safety committee, which should be a volunteer run group.

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE

Mayors' Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets, nationwide

This effort invites mayors and elected city officials to participate in a year-long challenge. City leaders engage a call to action, form a local action team, and take at least one of the Challenge activities, which include a complete streets approach, addressing barriers to safety and accessibility, and context-appropriate design, among others.

www.dot.gov/mayors-challenge

Walk! Tullahoma Pedometer Challenge, Tullahoma, TN

The Walk! Tullahoma Pedometer Challenge is sponsored by the Get Fit! Initiative in City of Tullahoma. Participants of all ages and abilities sign a "fitness pledge" committing to walking 7,500 steps daily (or roughly 3 miles), making healthy dietary decisions, and using good health to do good in their communities. They also receive a free digital pedometer and instructions on how to use it. The first year of the challenge was 2014 and lasted for roughly seven weeks from July to September. Each participant who met the goal of 7,500 steps a day was entered into a weekly drawing for a pair of running shoes. The 80 participants in the challenge logged a total of 13,500 miles.



www.tullahomatan.gov/get-fit/;
www.tullahomatan.gov/walk-tullahoma-pedometer-challenge/

4.3 IMPROVE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

4.3a) Improve bus/shuttle connections

Background: As the Urban Core continues to attract more residents, employees, and visitors, it is likely that there will be a greater demand for public transportation. Moreover, this increase in population will result in greater demand to connect downtown with large job centers, such as Warner Robins Air Force Base.

Buses and shuttles are the most effective way to move a large amount of people between two destinations if additional transportation infrastructure, such as light rail, is not already present. While Terminal Station offers bus service and provides connections to some regional locations, its location is disconnected from downtown. To improve ridership of public transportation, Terminal Station must first and foremost be seen as a transportation destination. As described in Strategy 1.2b, improvements to Cherry Street Plaza will also help bring potential passengers closer to transit options.

Key ideas: *improvements to level of service, integration of Terminal Station, regional BRT transit service*

Action: Improvements to level of service To seize on the opportunity a growing Urban Core presents to the public transportation system, its current level of service should improve with respect to comfort, reliability, and overall experience in buses and shuttles.

Integration of Terminal Station Better connections to Terminal Station will result from first improvements to pedestrian connections on MLK Drive and the creation of a regional transit system with Terminal Station as the hub. Consideration should be given to providing high quality and reliable bus service, such as regional bus rapid transit, to large job centers such as Warner Robins Air Force Base as demand warrants. Providing bus/shuttle service to the Atlanta Airport would also serve a need for many residents and students who instead must find transportation to the current shuttle pick-up location in North Macon.

Regional BRT service The UDA, Macon-Bibb County, and the Macon Transit Authority should all collaborate to identify potential opportunities for regional bus rapid transit service and work with private shuttle operators to initiate service between Terminal Station and Atlanta Airport.

4.3b) Improve bicycle infrastructure

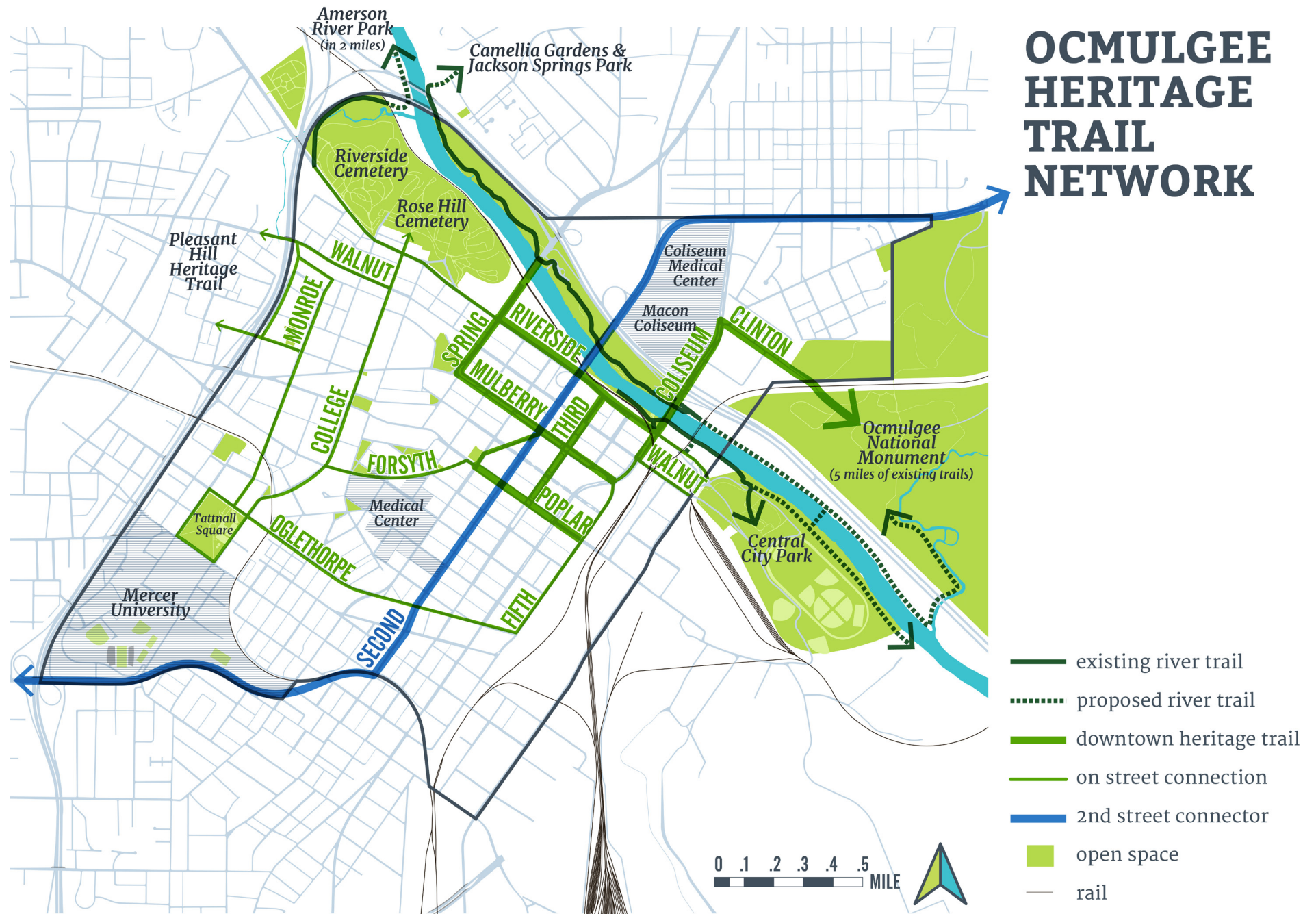
Background: The opportunity exists for Macon to be one of the best cities in the South for biking for all ages and abilities. Currently, cyclists are able to use the Ocmulgee River Heritage Trail, and a bike path exists on the recently completed vision block on Second Street. The trail and bike lane create a safer atmosphere for people to ride their bike on the street, but additional investment is needed to spur ridership. This investment should focus on an expanded network of on-street bike trails and increased access to bicycles.

Key ideas: *on-street bike lanes, bike share, group rides*

Action: On-street bike lanes Connect the historic downtown with the proposed Heritage Trail Loop to create a unique facility that is both safe and fun to travel on. Bike lanes should be installed on the rest of Second Street, Forsyth Street, and portions of MLK Drive and Fifth Street to provide initial connections. Ensure that this network also reaches into adjacent neighborhoods, with bike paths along Oglethorpe Street, Walnut Street, and College Street, among others. Additional bike parking should be installed in the Urban Core to accompany the expanded bike network, particularly along Cherry Street.

“More bike lanes and pedestrian walkways.”

Figure 53- Map of Proposed Ocmulgee Heritage Trail network



Source: Interface Studio

Bike share Bike share is a new form of transit that increases access to bicycles without requiring an actual purchase of a bicycle. It removes many of the challenges of biking in urban areas, such as parking and concerns about theft. Through a membership (which can be free or cost up to \$65 depending on the vendor), users may pick up a bike from a bike share “station”, ride to their destination, and drop the bike at the nearest bike share station. The Urban Core could support a bike share network of 15 to 20 stations, and the College Hill Corridor Commission has begun investigating this opportunity with a feasibility study. Recruit bicycle advocates at Bike Macon to support the effort.

Group rides The final piece to building a bicycling community is encouraging people to ride. Support the group rides organized by Bike Macon, as the more opportunities for people to ride in groups and get new people on a bike, the larger the potential ridership base will grow.

Macon-Bibb should stripe bike lanes on 2nd Street (as part of the overall 2nd Street project), Forsyth Street, and MLK Drive into Fifth Street. UDA should partner with bicycle advocates to complete a bike share feasibility study and develop an implementation plan. UDA should work with partnership organizations on potential additional group rides.

HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE

Capital Bikeshare, Washington, DC

Capital Bikeshare was introduced in the capital in 2010 and has grown to include approximately 2,500 bikes, 300 stations, and 5,700 users. A 2013 survey found that 25% of those surveyed reduced their driving miles since joining the program. In addition, 40% of survey participants indicated that the bike share program opened them up to locations they would otherwise not have gone to due to difficulties associated with travel, including traffic congestion.



www.dot.gov/mayors-challenge

Figure 54- Potential bikeshare locations



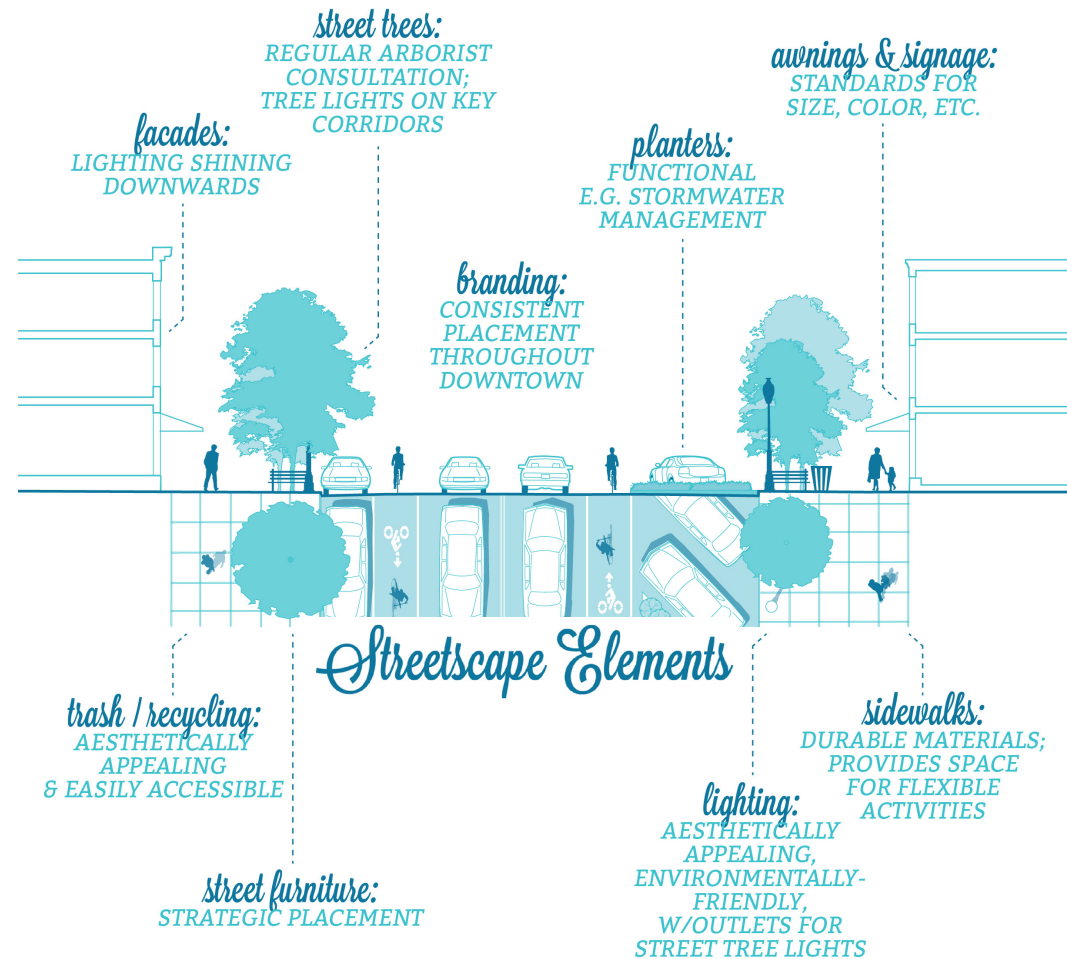
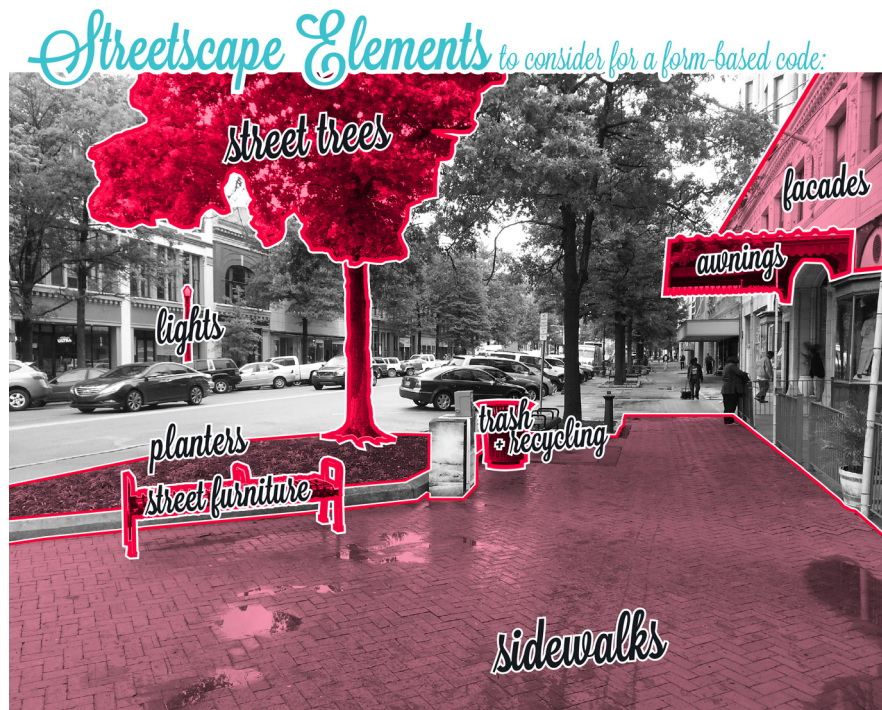
4.3c) Improve the pedestrian experience

Background: The historic downtown has the greatest opportunity to encourage more walking and activity along sidewalks. Just as Mercer Village invested in new infrastructure, sidewalks and streetscape to promote walkability and support local businesses, downtown requires the same consideration. Today, many of downtown's sidewalks are deteriorated and the look and feel of the streets require a refresh with a design treatment that is consistent across downtown streets.

Additionally, in much of the Urban Core, utilities are located above ground. For pedestrians, this infrastructure is not aesthetically pleasing and can infringe on already limited sidewalk space. Further, above-ground utilities can hamper improvements to streetscaping, as trees conflict with power lines.

Key ideas: streetscape standards, sidewalk improvements, utility relocation

"Improve the streetscape- plant trees."



Action: Streetscape standards Develop streetscape standards as a part of the form-based code for the Urban Core that guide improvements to downtown streets including sidewalk treatments, landscaping, tree planting, lighting and furniture. Use these standards to procure specific permanent street furniture like benches or bus shelters.

Sidewalk improvements Start with improving the sidewalks on one to two streets downtown to pilot the approach. Utilities should be relocated either underground or closer to the street edge, to provide an improved pedestrian experience.

Utility relocation The relocation of utilities is an expensive undertaking, in particular if they are buried. Therefore, to help minimize costs, consideration should be given to relocating utilities as part of other infrastructure projects, such as streetscaping or roadway reconstruction.

4.3d) Make it easier to live in the Urban Core without a car

Background: One of the biggest differences in millennials as compared to previous generations is their lack of emphasis on owning a car. While the Urban Core will continue to support travel by car, a framework is necessary to support future residents and employees that are interested in a car-lite lifestyle.

While daily car usage is not a necessity for some, occasional usage is necessary for most. For example a car-lite lifestyle may still require the usage of a car for trips to the grocery store. In these instances, car share is a fitting solution. As with bike share, this program involves a membership but frees its users from the burdens of ownership. Car share allows its members to rent a car by the hour or day. Fees for renting typically include all expenses associated with owning a car (gas, insurance, and maintenance, among others). Car share cars are available from dedicated on-street spaces. Users reserve them in advance and are able to access them through a card or transponder scanner on the windshield of a given vehicle, thus sparing them the trip to a rental agency. Car share programs can also be used by the government to replace employee vehicles.

The Urban Core has three charging stations. Two additional charging stations were installed at Mercer University in the spring of 2013, and an additional station was installed in the spring of 2014 at Poplar Street and MLK Drive. In addition to assisting drivers of electric vehicles, these charging stations possess the potential to have an economic impact where they are located. The stations bring drivers off nearby interstates in to the Urban Core to recharge, which can take a few hours, and thus affords the drivers an opportunity to tour, shop, or dine in the area.

Taxi service is necessary even in areas with a high level of vehicle ownership, for example to transport out-of-town guests and support nightlife, among others. The current taxi system in the Urban Core, however, is unreliable and has a poor perception. This discourages use and can also have consequences for safety, as nightlife goers may opt to drink and drive.

Rideshare is an alternative to taxi service. It connects those who are in need of a ride with those who have a car. Though a smartphone application, consumers submit a trip request, to which crowd-sourced drivers with vehicles can respond. Consumers are able view the location of available drivers from their smartphones, and payment also takes place via the app. Further, drivers and consumers are able to rate each other, which incentivizes good behavior on both accounts.

Key ideas: car share, electric car infrastructure, ride share

Action: Car share Establish a pilot car share program with a vendor. Macon-Bibb and the UDA should develop a pilot system for car share in downtown. This would include working with a vendor to place a few cars downtown for six to twelve months, marketing the service, and working with developers to encourage existing and future residents to use the service. It may also entail making up revenue gaps for the minimum monthly revenues vendors require.

Electric car infrastructure Electric car and scooter infrastructure should be installed in high visibility areas where it will be used. There is currently one space on the corner of 2nd & Mulberry Street. Other potential locations include City Hall, Cherry Street, and Poplar Street.

Ride share Consideration should be given to allowing ride share companies, such as Uber and Lyft, to operate in Macon. This would provide an additional mobility option and reduce the unknowns of the current taxi system. Macon-Bibb should study the potential of allowing rideshare companies to operate in downtown.



HOW IT'S DONE ELSEWHERE

Zipcar, Baltimore, Maryland

One year after introducing its car sharing service in Baltimore, Zipcar polled its users to assess the impact of the program on driver behavior. Users reported a less car-heavy lifestyle after joining the program: 18% had sold their vehicles after joining Zipcar, 46% avoided buying a car, and 72% stated that they would be less likely to buy a car in the future. Furthermore, participants noted an increase in using other modes of transportation: 14% noted that they biked more, 21% walked more, and 11% opted for using public transportation more. A notable outcome is that there are fewer cars on the streets in Baltimore. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake adds that the service has helped the city reduce congestion and better manage parking.



www.smartgrowthamerica.org/2011/07/20/how-carsharing-can-help-a-city-the-impact-of-zipcar-in-baltimore/



Your ideas:

"Parking meters on Cherry St."

"More greenery in downtown walking spaces!"

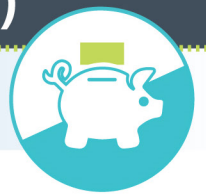
"Downtown needs transit. I think 2nd Street is a great place to start."

"Bike rider discounts at local stores. Friday bike day, 10% off."

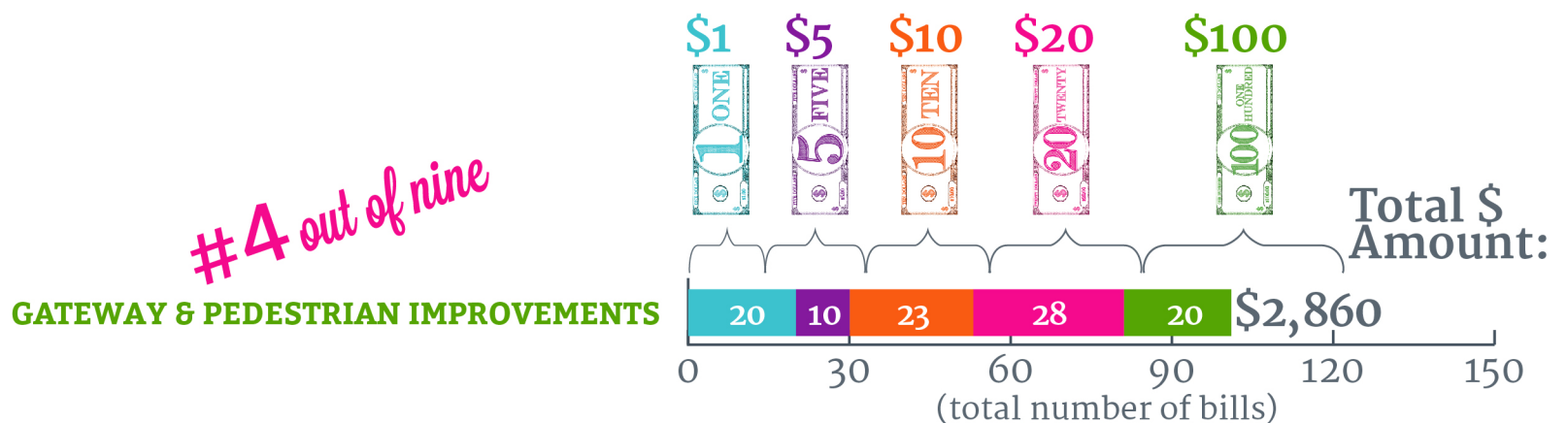
"ZipCar needs to be installed along the transportation corridor, within walking distance of the Terminal Station. Access to transportation is a must in Macon - extending this access to those who cannot afford a car is vital to continued economic growth."

SHOW US THE MONEY (to help MAP prioritize)

Resources for implementing the Macon Action Plan are limited, so we need **YOU** to help us prioritize!



MAP asked you to take a set of play money (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$100) and spend it wisely on the items you think are most important...



Excerpt of results from "Show Us the Money" exercise

Cultivate Connectivity

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
4.1 Manage Downtown’s parking system in a comprehensive manner							
a. Install parking meters							
	YES	i.	Install parking meters	short	\$800,000	UDA, Macon–Bibb	Bonds on future revenues
b. Encourage turnover where demand is highest							
	YES	i	Price meters	short	--	UDA, Macon–Bibb	--
c. Utilize technology and mobile applications for both payment and enforcement							
	YES	i.	Develop a mobile application	short	\$15,000	UDA, Macon–Bibb	Parking revenue/fee for using service to pay for parking
d. Consider creating a parking authority							
	YES	i.	Explore creating (and staffing) a Parking Authority	short	--	UDA, Macon–Bibb	Operating cost of parking
e. Encourage use of parking garages							
	YES	i.	Design and install wayfinding	short–medium	\$20,000	Parking authority (if established), UDA	Parking revenue
	YES	ii.	Develop a parking map for use by businesses and destinations	short	\$5,000		Parking revenue
f. Introduce a residential permit parking program							
	YES	i.	Implement a residential parking permit program	short	--	Residential developers, property owners	--
g. Selectively convert angled parking to reverse angled parking							
	YES	i.	Convert angled to reverse angled parking only in concert with planned street restriping	short–medium	--	Macon–Bibb Public Works	General fund
4.2 Enhance safety							
a. Mitigate truck traffic							
		i.	Mitigate truck traffic on MLK – explore re-route option on 7th Street	long	\$20,000,000	Macon–Bibb Public Works, industries, GDOT	Federal/state grants

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
b. Prioritize pedestrian safety and connectivity at signalized intersections							
		i.	Introduce pedestrian countdown signals	long	\$10,000 per intersection	Macon-Bibb Public Works, GDOT	General fund
		ii.	Introduce leading pedestrian intervals at crosswalks	long	\$2,500 per intersection	Macon-Bibb Public Works	General fund
		iii.	Prohibit right turns on red	medium	\$10,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works	General fund, parking revenue
		iv.	Eliminate double signals at intersections with perpendicular medians	medium	\$5,000 per intersection	Macon-Bibb Public Works	General fund
		v.	Upgrade all crosswalks in historic downtown to international crosswalks	long	\$2,500 per intersection	Macon-Bibb Public Works	General fund, parking revenue
c. Develop pedestrian encouragement and education programs							
		i.	Develop a pedestrian safety brochure; include it with county mailings on traffic violations	medium	\$3,000	Newtown Macon, Schools, Macon-Bibb	UDA, Foundations
	YES	ii.	Join the Mayor's Challenge for Safer People, Safer Streets	short	-	Mayor's Office	-
		iii.	Develop an activity challenge	medium	\$5,000	Navicent Health, Mercer University, City	Private
		iv.	Develop a pedestrian and bicycle safety committee	medium	-	Stakeholders in ped/bike issues	-
4.3 Improve multi-modal transportation options							
a. Improve bus/shuttle connections							
		i.	Improve the level of service	medium	\$2,000,000	Macon Transit Authority	Federal/state grants
		ii.	Increase transit options at Terminal Station to include bus rapid transit to job centers and destinations such as Warner Robbins and the Atlanta Airport	long	Over \$10,000,000	Macon Transit Authority, Employers	Federal/state grants
		iii.	Offer better regional transit service using BRT	long	Over \$10,000,000	Macon Transit Authority, Employers	Federal/state grants

	Early Action	#	Action	Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Partners	Funding Sources
b. Improve bicycle infrastructure							
		i.	Create on-street bike lanes to link Downtown with the proposed Heritage Trail Loop	medium	\$5,000,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works	Federal/state grants
		ii.	Complement the downtown Heritage Trail loop with additional bike lanes (2nd Street, Forsyth, MLK)	long	\$1,000,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works	Federal/state grants
	YES	iii.	Install additional bike parking	short	\$500 per rack	Macon-Bibb Public Works, local businesses	UDA, Newtown, Foundations, private sector
		iv.	Implement bike share (15-20 station system)	medium	\$200-500,000	Macon-Bibb County, MTA, College Hill Commission, Bike Macon	CMAQ, sponsorship, foundations
	YES	v.	Support group rides being organized by Bike Macon	ongoing	-	-	-
c. Improve the pedestrian experience							
		i.	Develop streetscape standards to guide improvements	medium	\$75,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works	Foundations, grants
	YES	ii.	Start with sidewalk improvements downtown as a pilot project	short	\$25,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works	Parking revenue
		iii.	Relocate utilities in conjunction with planned infrastructure projects	long	Over \$10,000,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works, utility companies	Include in project costs
d. Make it easier to live in the Urban Core without a car							
		i.	Establish a pilot car share program with a vendor	medium	Up to \$20,000	Residential developers, Mercer, Newtown Macon, Macon-Bibb County	Parking revenue, in-lieu of fees by developments
		ii.	Install electric car and scooter infrastructure in high visibility areas	medium	\$500,000	Macon-Bibb Public Works, private developers	Federal/state grants
		iii.	Consider allowing ride share companies to operate in Macon	medium	\$50,000	Mayor's Office	City





INTO ACTION: *our first year*

As the plan's name suggests, from the very beginning, the Macon Action Plan has been about action. To maintain interest and momentum in the Urban Core, implementation must proceed quickly. While some strategies will take many years to bring to fruition, MAP includes a range of shorter term action steps that can and should progress in the coming year. This final chapter of the Macon Action Plan highlights early action steps that will help MAP transition from planning to implementation as well as leverage partnerships and existing resources to effect early change that the community wants to see.



➤ From Planning to Implementation

Implementation Committee

As noted in the introduction, a critical first step in MAP's implementation is to formalize an Implementation Committee tasked with stewarding the plan from vision to reality. Convene leadership from the UDA, Main Street Macon, NewTown Macon, College Hill Corridor Commission, and Historic Hills & Heights, as well as a few additional members recruited from the MAP Steering Committee to form the initial MAP Implementation Committee. Set a quarterly meeting schedule for the first year, and at the first meeting, review the suggested early action items, prioritize them, and assign roles and responsibilities for making progress each quarter.

Staff Up

Dedicate staff time for focusing on MAP implementation so that not a day goes by when the plan sits on the proverbial shelf. Initially, craft an MOU between the UDA and NewTown Macon to delineate day to day implementation responsibilities. Lead organizations should then design workplans to meet their implementation targets. Depending on staff ability to integrate MAP responsibilities into existing workloads, the Committee may opt to explore the need for a new full-time MAP Coordinator position, hired and paid for by the partners organizations represented by the Implementation Committee.

Involve the Community

Macon understands service and volunteerism. Through the Knight Neighborhood Challenge Grant program in College Hill, the Urban Core learned firsthand about how much can be accomplished through the work of many toward a common goal. MAP outlines a host of new strategies for action across the Urban Core; launch a next generation challenge grant for the Urban Core to empower neighbors, the emerging downtown neighborhood association, and other community groups throughout the Urban Core as agents of change. Recruit support from the private sector too.

➤ Early Actions

The Implementation Matrix that concludes each of the Strategies chapters highlights early action items. Below is a summary of critical early actions.

SUPPORT THE ENGINES OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **Create a medical corridor** – Link the Urban Core's multiple medical campuses, increase their visibility as destinations and employment centers with signage and streetscape improvements that support active lifestyles and extend the bustle present within hospital walls to the adjacent public realm.
- **Mix up the downtown business mix** – Adopt a proactive and multi-pronged approach. Work with property owners to update retail and office spaces to better attract prospective businesses. Market the tenant build-out revolving loan fund to prospective businesses, and pilot a mini-storefront pop-up space program for entrepreneurs looking for proof of concept. Work with existing businesses to increase programming and consistent hours of operation. Finally, develop an app that allows MAP partners to track business leads.
- **Build upon College Hill's work to foster entrepreneurship and support a local start-up culture** – Invest in collaborative workspace that can incubate ideas and new businesses and inspire creative production.

CREATE AN UNPARALLELED URBAN CORE EXPERIENCE

- **Develop a consistent, compelling brand and message for the Urban Core** – The collective impact of implementation actions that flow from MAP will be more powerful if associated with and tied together by a recognizable brand and message about Macon's Urban Core. This should be reflected in an updated MAP website to communicate progress in implementation.
- **Design a palette of signs to establish the brand and assist with wayfinding** – With recent and impending investments in signage in the Urban Core, now is the time for collaboration among key partners and institutions to develop a signage system that brings cohesion and legibility to the Urban Core, while also differentiating destinations and improving navigability.



- **Beyond branding and signage, invest in placemaking with a signature MAP beautification project** – The UDA has committed funding for a capital improvement project in the first year of MAP implementation, and this pool of money must be spent wisely to make a splash in a location that connects multiple aspects of the plan, from creating a central gathering space to improving the public realm, supporting local businesses, and bolstering activity and the sense of public safety. Rosa Parks Square is a prime candidate at the heart of the Urban Core. In addition, pursue small-scale improvements including street tree lighting for Cherry and Poplar Street and purchase movable furniture to adorn 1–2 small, public spaces Downtown.
- **Demonstrate community support for the proposed Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve** – The bill that authorizes a study of the Ocmulgee River Corridor to evaluate the merit of re-designation as a National Park and Preserve is now before Congress. The local community must show support for this catalytic opportunity by supporting ONPPI in its bid for Park and Preserve status and demonstrating such support through capital improvements to the streets and neighborhood fabric that together form the approach to the Ocmulgee Mounds.

FOCUS ON URBAN CORE LIVING

- **Support mixed-use development proposals that add density and housing choice, particularly downtown** – Work with private developers to usher in new residential and mixed-use developments that add households and services to the Urban Core in keeping with the market potential identified by Zimmerman/Volk Associates' housing market study. Begin working to secure funds to develop a form-based code for the Urban Core that will create clearer expectations for new development.
- **Focus on blight removal**– Partner with the Shalom Zone to engage neighbors in the process of community stabilization, and collaborate with the Macon-Bibb County Blight Task Force to remove dilapidated, vacant houses and maintain cleared lots in Urban Core

neighborhoods where vacancy and abandonment pose threats to community health and well-being.

- **Lay the ground work for Mill Hill Arts Village** – East Macon's Main Street Neighborhood has emerged as a focus for the City-County, UDA, Macon Arts Alliance, and local residents and community groups including the Family Investment Center. Delineate responsibilities and phasing to advance the Clinton Street gateway, land stabilization, and revitalization efforts through art and community development.
- **Engage in focused community planning in Pleasant Hill** – Beall's Hill offers evidence of the importance of community organizing to unify a strong community voice in revitalization efforts. Momentum is building in East Macon for a similar grass-roots approach. Pleasant Hill has great need for stabilization and revitalization, but the community must be empowered to envision change and improvements for the neighborhood, block by block. Undertake a focused neighborhood planning effort driven by the Pleasant Hill community to build a plan that addresses local concerns.

CULTIVATE CONNECTIVITY

- **Parking!** – Everyone agrees that the current parking situation in downtown is unacceptable. To improve visitor experience and support local business by increasing parking turnover, make early strides to install parking meters, introduce a modern, technology-based payment system, increase enforcement, and improve awareness, visibility, and use of off-street parking lots and garages.
- **Improve connections to the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail along the River** Initiate discussions with GDOT about an alternative design to foster a safer and more scenic pedestrian and bicycle connection over the MLK, Jr. Boulevard Bridge and Spring Street Bridge. Begin designs for a connected, continuous Downtown River Loop with spurs via medians and new on-street bike lanes that support active transportation throughout all of the Urban Core.

As change continues to unfold and new opportunities arise, revisit and re-prioritize the early action strategies. The list may change, and that is a good thing that says the Macon Action Plan is a living document.

We built this plan together, Macon. *Now,*
let's roll up our sleeves and take **ACTION!**

