




**CARL
VINSON INSTITUTE
OF GOVERNMENT**
The University of Georgia.

BAINBRIDGE

2014 STRATEGIC VISION AND PLAN

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MEREDYTH EARNEST First United Methodist Church
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INTRODUCTION

About Bainbridge

Bainbridge's charm emerges from the rich sense of history that residents and the land alike hold.

Long before the arrival of European settlers (Spanish explorers were in the area as early as 1540) and modern settlements (the first in 1765), the Seminole and Creek Indians had settled on the banks of the Flint River for centuries. In 1818, Spanish and U.S. troops defeated and removed the remaining Native Americans. The Georgia Legislature formed Decatur County in 1823, with the city itself being incorporated just six years later in 1829. Modern-day Bainbridge sits in the southwest corner of the state, serving as the county seat of Decatur County, and its southern-most boundary is the Florida state line. Bainbridge is also centrally located, with easy access to some of the South's largest cities, sitting 40 miles north of Tallahassee, Florida, 60 miles east of Dothan, Alabama, and 60 miles south of Albany, Georgia at the intersection of U.S. highways 84 and 27.

The Bainbridge-Decatur County area offers much more than memories of an exciting past. Because of its location adjacent to the meandering Flint River, Decatur County's soil makes for lush and fertile agricultural land. In addition to wealthy farming lands, Bainbridge serves as one of Georgia's two inland ports. Bainbridge has its own boat basin and is close to Lake Seminole, making

the river an important economic and recreational resource. Watersports, particularly bass fishing, have recently attracted new visitors and commerce to Bainbridge. In 2011 and 2012, the city profited more than \$1.5 million from the popularity of bass fishing tournaments. City residents are beginning to recognize the growing power of these fishing tournaments and are excited to harness that power to enliven their downtown. If residents, city officials, and community leaders can develop ways to attach the city to its greatest resource, Bainbridge's charming and historic downtown will be well on its way.

Recent Happenings

In September 2013, a team from the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Cities Foundation, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs began working with Bainbridge's leaders to develop a strategic vision and plan for the city. While the team's public input approach revealed many of the city's needs and potential spaces for improvement, it also highlighted how proactive and successful Bainbridge's downtown leaders have been in recent years.

In 2013, 11 new businesses opened and a total of 30 jobs were created, while only 4 businesses closed with a loss of 6 jobs.

Other highlights from 2013 include the following:

- The Downtown Development Authority launched a new downtown website: www.downtownbainbridgega.com.
- Willis Park, the centerpiece of downtown Bainbridge, was completely re-landscaped.
- Bainbridge was designated as a GEMS community by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Georgia's Exceptional Main Street (GEMS) program is a pilot program for Georgia's Main Street network and provides advanced technical assistance for communities that have shown proven leadership in the field of downtown development.
- Two new downtown events were developed: the Art & Wine Walk and a Progressive Dinner.
- A downtown recruitment packet and incentives were redesigned to inspire and encourage future entrepreneurs and current property holders.
- SPLOST funds were used to undertake a \$4.6 million rehabilitation of Bainbridge City Hall.
- Bainbridge became a member of the 2013 National Main Street Program.

PARTNERS

The Partnership, consisting of Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Cities Foundation and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, working in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs assisted the City of Bainbridge by creating a strategic vision, plan, and short-term work program. Bainbridge's strategic vision and plan was created via a three-stage process.

Partners

Carl Vinson Institute of Government

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

Georgia Municipal Association

Created in 1933, the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) is the only state organization that represents municipal governments in Georgia. Based in Atlanta, GMA is a voluntary, nonprofit organization that provides legislative advocacy, educational, employee benefit, and technical consulting services to its members. GMA's purpose is to anticipate and influence the forces shaping Georgia's communities

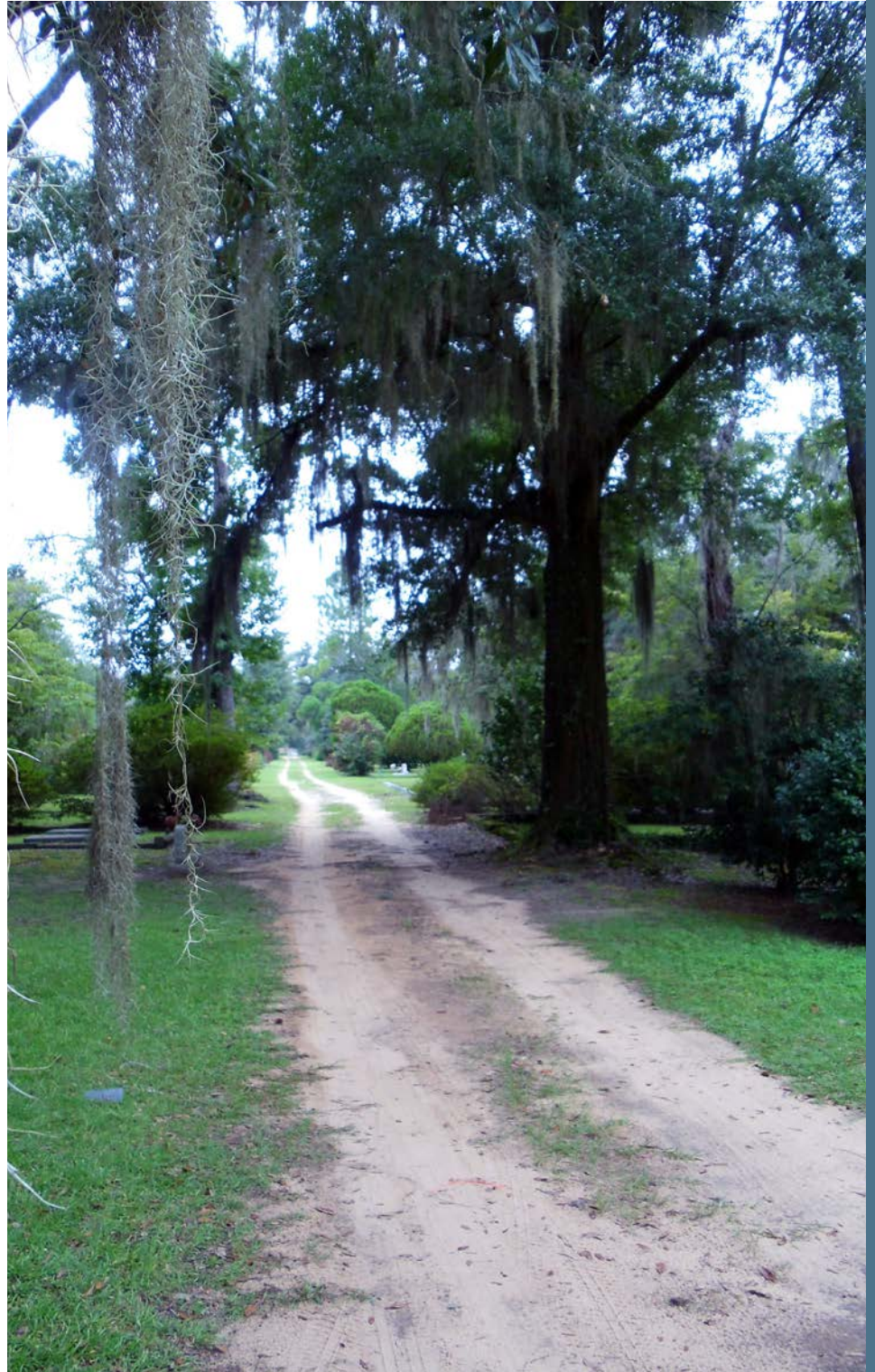
and to provide leadership, tools, and services that assist local governments in becoming more innovative, effective, and responsive.

Georgia Cities Foundation

The Georgia Cities Foundation, founded in 1999, is a nonprofit subsidiary of the Georgia Municipal Association. The foundation's mission is to assist cities in their efforts to revitalize and enhance downtown areas by serving as a partner and facilitator in funding capital projects through the revolving loan fund. Its services include the Revolving Loan Fund Program, the Heart & Soul Bus Tour, the Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Tour, the Downtown Development Authority Basic Training, and the Renaissance Award.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) was created in 1977 to serve as an advocate for local governments. On July 1, 1996, the Governor and General Assembly merged the Georgia Housing and Finance Authority with the Department of Community Affairs. Today, DCA operates a host of state and federal grant programs; serves as the state's lead agency in housing finance and development; promulgates building codes to be adopted by local governments; provides comprehensive planning, technical, and research assistance to local governments; and serves as the lead agency for the state's solid waste reduction efforts.



THE STRATEGIC VISIONING AND PLANNING PROCESS

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

Strategic visioning helps communities better understand their assets, more clearly identify priorities, and then use both as a basis for planning. Throughout the development of the plan, the community identifies issues that are affecting the community, articulates big-picture goals, and develops short-term and long-term strategies to address the issues.

There are three key steps in the strategic visioning and planning process:

Where are we now?

It is essential to understand the current conditions of downtown Bainbridge. The first step involves demographic research, plan reviews, and public engagement. Focus groups, one-on-one interviews, a town hall meeting, community-wide surveys, and a visual preference assessment reveal the community's story as well as issues and opportunities.

Where are we going?

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

How do we get there?

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

The 3-step Planning Process

1 WHERE WE ARE

- Plan Review
- Demographic Scan
- Visual Preference Assessment
- 1-on-1 Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Survey

2 WHERE WE ARE GOING

- Design
- Renderings
- Visualization

3 HOW WE GET THERE

- Work Program
- Design Solutions
- Short-term (6-18 months)
- Long-term (2-10 years)

PROCESS TIMELINE

Step One:

KICKOFF MEETING WITH DANNY BIVINS TO DISCUSS INITIAL PLANS

- Steering Committee formation
- Steering Committee meeting dates
- Survey development
- Survey distribution
- Local plan collection

Step Two:

FINALIZE SURVEY AND SEND TO THE INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT

- Plans submitted to the Institute of Government for review
- Steering Committee meetings scheduled
- Site visit dates scheduled
- Survey distribution plan

Step Three:

PUBLIC PROCESS KICKOFF

- Begin scheduling face-to-face interviews, focus group meetings, and town hall meeting
- Launch survey
- Distribute survey

Step Four:

COORDINATE

- Steering Committee, focus groups, and interviews
- Distribute survey

Step Five:

COLLECT SURVEYS AND SUBMIT TO THE INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT FOR ANALYSIS

Step Six:

SITE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT VISIT

- Steering Committee meeting
- Focus groups
- Photo documentation
- Interviews
- Steering Committee meeting update
- Solicit work program volunteers

Step Seven:

ANY FOLLOW-UP INFORMATION TO THE INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT

- Close survey
- Solicit work program volunteers
- Reminder of next Steering Committee meeting

Step Eight:

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING

- Public input review
- Work Plan overview
- Solicit work program volunteers

Step Nine:

WORK PROGRAM MEETING

- Work Plan overview
- Work Plan area of interest selection
- Action groups formed
- Initial Action Items selection

Step Ten:

WORK PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to develop implementation steps for Action Items

Step Eleven:

WORK PLAN FINALIZATION

- Internal meeting with Amanda Glover and each Action Item subgroup
- Finalize Action Items
- Report progress to date
- Determine six-month calendar

Step Twelve:

FINAL PRESENTATION

- Presentations
- Action Item subgroup presentations



Steering Committee Meeting
VISUAL PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT

PUBLIC INPUT

More than **250** electronic and hard copy surveys were completed.

12 focus groups were held with strong participation from the following:

- Steering Committee members
- The Chamber of Commerce and the Industrial Development Authority
- Downtown property and business owners
- Realtors and bankers
- The Mayor, City Council, City Manager, administrators, and employees
- Youth
- The Downtown Development Authority, Planning Commission, and Historic Preservation Commission
- Civic organizations
- Community leaders
- County Commissioners, administrators, and employees

One-on-one in-depth interviews were held with other key members of the community.





Willis Park
BAINBRIDGE, GA

PUBLIC INPUT

Question 1:

**What makes Bainbridge unique?
What is your favorite thing about downtown Bainbridge?**

Focus group feedback and survey responses were honest and insightful. Although the community recognizes aspects of their downtown that could be improved, they are also aware of the strengths their downtown possesses. Willis Park, the centerpiece of downtown Bainbridge, is a point of pride for the city. Willis Park was re-landscaped in 2013, and many view it as an oasis that has the potential to serve many purposes, from a quiet and beautiful place to eat lunch on a workday to the social center for downtown events and festivals. Willis Park is a successful green space because it is attractive, social, and functional. Bainbridge also possesses a small-town charm and quiriness that is swiftly disappearing across the South. The city feels open, friendly, and nostalgic, with Bainbridge and her inhabitants happy to move at their own pace. Both the aesthetics and the history of Bainbridge lend to this charm. Great historic buildings, eclectic architecture, and towering oak trees make residents and visitors feel at home. Survey and focus group responses also show that many are excited about the recent improvements in Bainbridge, naming specifically the streetscape plan, the connectivity plan, and the improvements to City Hall. These improvements, matched with the daily and annual activities Bainbridge

provides its community members, are cause for excitement. Although downtown Bainbridge could improve upon night-time activities, there is a certain buzz during the workday. Finally, Bainbridge's greatest resource is also its most under-accessed resource: the Flint River. Residents are beginning to realize how much potential the river holds.

Question 2:

What is working well in downtown Bainbridge?

Survey and focus group responses centered on recent improvements in Bainbridge, businesses, activities, accessibility, the city government, and aesthetics

Recent improvements:

Bainbridge residents are excited about the direction their city is going. In recent years, due to the city's investment coupled with a host of grants and trainings, downtown Bainbridge has seen renovations. While some of these renovations are simply cosmetic (façade grants are to thank), some renovations have touched buildings that have long been in need of renewal. Building renovations will reintroduce once important historic structures back into downtown Bainbridge, allowing them to function and serve the community. Residents are also excited about the possibility of downtown residential spaces. With such development comes a population that will use downtown during the hours that most do not, after 5:00 pm.



Businesses:

Bainbridge residents are appreciative of stable downtown businesses. They also recognize that city leadership is working hard to bring in new businesses and services, providing training programs for business owners, and offering grants for building improvement. Bainbridge believes in growing well and healthily, embracing a diversification in shopping and eating opportunities while maintaining patronage to local mom-and-pop businesses that have long been the economic cornerstones of downtown Bainbridge.

Activities:

Part of what makes a place a “home” is how that place encourages socializing, fun, and community among its residents. Bainbridge has successfully produced a string of annual events in addition to developing new ways to bring people downtown, most recently through the Art & Wine Walk and a Progressive Dinner in 2013. These activities and events offer residents a safe and fun environment in which to socialize or celebrate, while actively reminding them that their downtown provides a base of businesses and services at their fingertips.

PUBLIC INPUT

Accessibility:

Bainbridge is central to some of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama's prominent towns and cities as well being an inland port on the Flint River. Survey and focus group feedback shows that residents appreciate the walkability of their city, with access to the river, greenspace, and recreation within walking distance of the center of downtown. And although connectivity within downtown Bainbridge could be improved, these resources stand as reasons that residents and visitors would want to spend time there.

The City Government:

Focus group and survey responses show overwhelming popular support for Bainbridge's city government and the work it is doing. Residents see the city government as proactive, responsible, and interested in making life in Bainbridge better for all. Residents have noticed that the Downtown Development Authority (DDA)—an entity that is underutilized in many towns—is active in the redevelopment and rehabilitation of every aspect of downtown Bainbridge. Elected officials support their city as well, opting for action rather than complacency. Residents also appreciate that city leaders seek support from outside sources, be it financial support or alliances with the Department of Community Affairs, Georgia's Main Street Network, and the University of Georgia. Residents know that while their city has not yet realized its full potential, their leadership is mindful and will not settle for less when more is possible.

Aesthetics:

Bainbridge residents are pleased with certain aesthetic elements of their downtown. The historic square with Willis Park at the center is well represented in survey and focus group feedback. The square and park are the heart of downtown, and residents realize how unique and valuable these assets are to Bainbridge. Residents also find downtown Bainbridge's historic architecture to be an invaluable part of the city's charm. Feedback shows that a majority of residents support the rejuvenation and reuse of historic buildings, as long as the reuse protects and preserves historic elements of the structure. Pulling the city together are the big oaks sprinkled throughout Bainbridge. Focus group and survey feedback acknowledges the trees' importance to the identity of the city.

Question 3:

What needs improvement in downtown Bainbridge?

Although many elements of downtown Bainbridge are functioning at a high capacity, survey and focus group feedback revealed several areas in need of improvement.

Vacancy and Blight:

Vacancy and blight are downtown Bainbridge's main ailments. Though downtown contains many successful and vibrant shops, restaurants, and services,

the number of vacant and derelict buildings can be overwhelming. At the end of 2013, there were 23 vacancies in downtown Bainbridge. Many of those vacant storefronts are being used as storage facilities. In many cases, these vacant buildings are not in a functional state. Maintenance and upkeep on vacant properties are essential for a swift turnaround, and when vacant buildings sit unattended for long periods of time, their chances of being renewed decrease.

Activities and Events:

Focus group and survey feedback uncovered a few obstacles to Bainbridge's downtown activities and events. Many suggested that the city hold more community-wide events. However, the city already runs numerous and diverse activities and events. The breakdown is in communication. Many community members are simply unaware of events taking place in downtown Bainbridge. Heightened publicity of these events is key. Another issue mentioned in the community feedback is concern about a lack of a downtown option for big events. Though Willis Park and the river facilities serve many event needs, downtown Bainbridge has no clear venue for larger cultural events.

Businesses:

Bainbridge residents have some concerns about downtown businesses. Because Bainbridge considers itself to be in the regional shadow of Thomasville

and Tallahassee, many are painfully aware that local business is lost to the two larger towns. Keeping local buyers and attracting outside business is important to the success of downtown. This concern correlates with a voiced desire for more diversity in first-floor businesses. Residents want to feel as though all of their needs could be met by visiting downtown: from a small grocer to children's clothing, people want options. Business hours are an issue as well. Extended hours at downtown stores was a widely mentioned need. Many stated that their schedules simply do not allow them to access downtown because most services end at 5:00 pm. Extended hours could increase local business transactions. Survey and focus group feedback also showed a mass desire for nightlife in downtown Bainbridge.

Coordination and Promotion:

Focus group feedback acknowledges difficulties with coordination and promotion in downtown. One issue is the long-range coordination and promotion of events and activities, which could be more successful if properly marketed, both within Bainbridge and regionally. The other issue lies within the promotion and coordination of special programs, resources, and incentives offered by the city to business and property owners. While the city is successful in the number of resources and incentives they offer, their communication regarding these programs is perceived to be lacking.

PUBLIC INPUT



Infrastructure and Connectivity:

Focus group and survey feedback suggests room for a few infrastructure and connectivity improvements. First, traffic routing is considered a problem. Because Bainbridge does not have local control of the main road running through downtown, semi-trucks frequently pass through. This makes pedestrians feel unsafe, regardless of how walkable Bainbridge is. Second, a widespread perception is that parking is significantly lacking in downtown. This feeling stems from the fact that most visitors to downtown are uncomfortable with parallel parking and want to park directly on the square. Parking space analysis shows that Bainbridge actually has an abundance of parking throughout downtown, but because of the orientation of the parking (parallel) and designated private lots, most think there are limited parking options. A lack of directional parking signage is partially to blame. And, of course, third, there is the lack of connection between downtown Bainbridge and its most glowing asset: the Flint River. Almost all feedback underscores a belief that downtown Bainbridge would thrive if the city could find ways to connect itself to the river.

Public Amenities:

Public amenities such as public restrooms, outdoor eating areas, dog parks, and well-lit pedestrian trails are missing in downtown Bainbridge. Feedback voiced the public's desire for these community services. Each of these amenities would help to better serve the community.

Demographics:

The community needs activities and opportunities for youth involvement. Most feel as though the youth population is

underrepresented in downtown Bainbridge. Feedback also suggests that added residential development in downtown would bring a more populated feel to the area, giving it a sense of place and increasing downtown's hours of usage.

Question 4:

What is your vision for a vibrant downtown?

The Bainbridge community acknowledges all of the positive attributes of their downtown but concedes that more can be done. The top 10 signs of vibrancy mentioned were:

1. People out and about ("a sidewalk community"),
2. Filled storefronts and business additions,
3. Night-time activities,
4. Downtown living,
5. A downtown that embraces and connects to the Flint River,
6. Business incentives,
7. Family-oriented activities,
8. Promotion of downtown,
9. Improvement of derelict properties, and
10. Integration of youth into downtown planning.



Top Issues:

- Parking
- Attraction or draw for children and families
- Design: gateway, streetscape, and pedestrian improvements
- Connectivity to the river
- Housing: increase the number of upper-story and traditional downtown residences
- Business recruitment: groups and incentives
- Derelict and vacant buildings
- Integration of youth into downtown

BAINBRIDGE WORK PLAN

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government is using an organized and systematic approach to downtown redevelopment and revitalization modeled after the Main Street Four-Point Approach®. The process involves creating a community vision based on broad community engagement and input that leads to the development of an implementation plan with a step-by-step guide for success. The plan focuses on four program components: **Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Development**. To be successful, communities must look to address issues and opportunities in each of the components, working with broad public support for the betterment of the community.

Across each of the four program components, there is a critical element: public engagement.

Those who live in a place know more than anyone what is needed and what is wanted. The buy-in and support of the community are essential so that we can address issues and seize opportunities. A community must, first and foremost, meet the needs of its residents—after that, opportunities to increase tourism and other economic opportunities will follow. Bainbridge has created a work program built upon the input of its residents that addresses the following components:

Organization:

Organization refers to working to establish accord and co-action among the various and diverse groups that have a stake in the downtown district. By getting everyone in the downtown district to work together toward a unified goal, the coordination of the Main Street Program can provide direct and consistent management for downtown.

Promotion:

The goal of promotion is two-fold: creating a positive image of downtown that will both ignite community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in the downtown. Promotion includes advertising, retail promotion, special events, and the marketing of events.

Design:

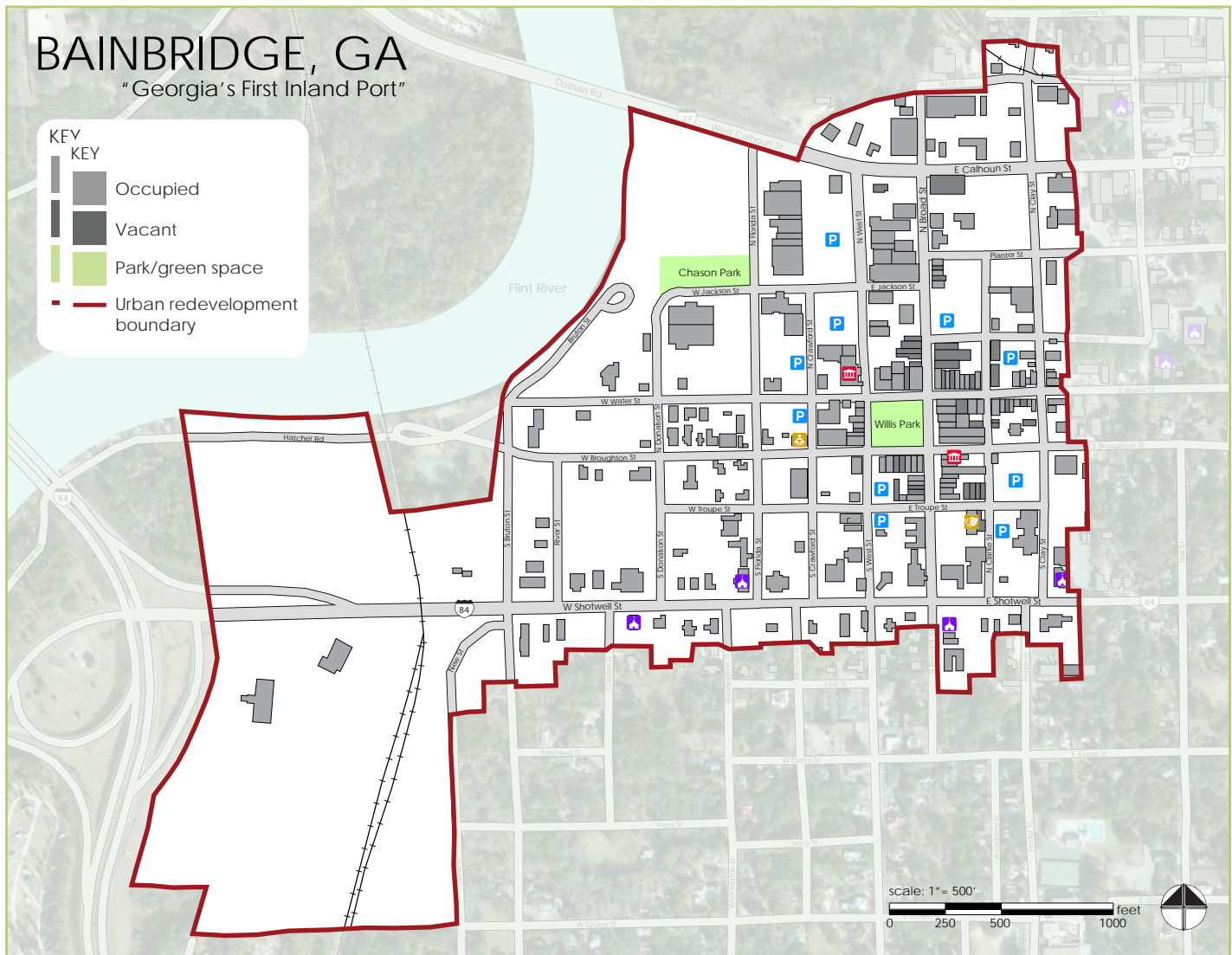
Design simply means re-creating downtown to be a safe, beautiful, and welcoming space for all who visit, work, and live there. Design includes giving attention to public and private buildings, storefronts, signage, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandizing, window displays, and promotional materials.

Economic Development (the Four-Point Approach uses the term “economic restructuring”):

Economic development means building on and strengthening a community’s existing economic assets while diversifying the economic base. Economic development can be achieved through techniques to

retain and expand successful businesses and thus providing a balanced commercial mix. Other strategies include sharpening the competitiveness and merchandizing skills of business owners and attracting new businesses the local market can support.

These four points work together, each supporting and assisting the others, to improve the social, political, physical, and economic vitality of a downtown.



Bainbridge, Georgia Scope of Work Map: The base map displays the Urban Redevelopment Area for the City of Bainbridge marked by the red line. Important sites are illustrated with the corresponding icon, while vacant buildings within the downtown area are shown in dark gray.

ORGANIZATION

Work Program Items

Mid-to Long-Range Work Program Strategies

Organization

1. Partner with Bainbridge State College:

A college is a great community and regional asset. Downtown Bainbridge could explore the possibility of creating a strategic relationship with Bainbridge State College to grow both the downtown and the college.

- *Expand college classes to downtown:* For example, offer a cosmetology program, adult education, an international program, and/or student housing downtown.
- *Connect with Bainbridge College:* Bainbridge College is a fantastic resource for the city. Students and professors could be recruited to aid in the downtown planning process. This would be an opportunity for students and professors to actively learn while improving the quality of their home.

2. Organize a Local Merchant Group:

Develop a group for merchants focused on retail promotion. This group would give long-established merchants such as Ronnie Godwin and new merchants a chance to meet, exchange promotion and sale ideas, organize downtown events, and share wisdom and new

techniques. This group would meet quarterly to strategize. Developing a local merchant group would also be helpful for those interested in starting a new business in downtown Bainbridge.

3. Create a Youth Main Street Advisory Board:

Downtown Bainbridge has an active Main Street program with strong local government and community support, and there is an opportunity to groom future leaders with an interest in downtown. Creating a youth advisory board would benefit both the participants and the downtown: youth can be actively involved, lending new and creative ideas while helping downtown Bainbridge understand how to better serve this sector of the population. This would make the younger population active downtown stakeholders, allowing them to feel invested in the success of their downtown.

4. Develop a Shop Downtown Campaign:

Starting a “shop local” or “shop downtown” campaign in partnership with high school students is a way to remind community members to consider spending money locally rather than at national chain stores. For every \$100 spent in locally owned stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll, and other expenditures. For every \$100 spent in a national chain, only \$43 stays local. Spend it online, and nothing stays local. By working with high school students, the community could develop a local customer base of

students and their family members. By shopping locally, money stays in the community, and this encourages a positive economic environment for people interested in starting small businesses. One community member suggested using online resources such as Cash Mob or the 3/50 Project to help generate retail traffic.

- *Follow up with Ronnie Godwin*

5. Help Promote Nonprofit Downtown

Events: During the public engagement process, people specifically asked for more events downtown. Downtown Bainbridge currently has many events, but participation numbers are inconsistent. Many residents said that they simply did not know about the activities. A first step could be to develop multiple ways to publicize current downtown nonprofit attractions and their events.

- *Bainbridge Little Theatre*
- *Firehouse Gallery*
- *Museum*

6. Recruit New Volunteers for Activities

and Events: During the public engagement process, many people expressed an interest in becoming more involved in the future development of downtown Bainbridge. Some specific residents were identified as having particular and valuable skills in community leadership that are not being utilized. (For instance, Ted Snell has

experience with the New Hampshire State Senate and 4-H program and could be a resource for the Farmers' Market. He could meet one-on-one with farmers and backyard gardeners to help reorganize and reinvigorate the market.)

ORGANIZATION



PARTNER WITH BAINBRIDGE STATE COLLEGE

Before: This building at the corner of Florida Street and Water Street is currently up for sale and vacant. The building looks dated and the property needs landscaping.



After: The rendering above shows the building being used for new classroom space for Bainbridge State College, which would provide another connection between downtown Bainbridge and the College. The rendering shows the following improvements to the building: a new roof has been installed and a brick veneer façade has been installed to match the west exterior wall. The following improvements have been made to the property: the parking lot has been repaved and re-striped, Bainbridge State College sign has been added, and grass, shade trees, shrubs, and flowers have been planted.

PROMOTION

- 1. Brand Downtown:** The Downtown Development Authority and the Main Street Program have an opportunity to enhance their graphic look. A local graphic artist could volunteer his or her time and expertise to create a downtown brand. (The Design Committee is also working on this item.)
- 2. Generate Local Positive Press:** Generating local and regional positive press could lead to immediate excitement about the new developments in downtown Bainbridge. To achieve this, the Bainbridge Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Downtown Development Authority, and other organizations should map and coordinate an annual calendar of events. These organizations could then partner with local and regional media to publish a monthly calendar of events for downtown Bainbridge that would include group ad rates for any businesses wanting to advertise or give seasonal updates. This would actively promote all the activities and progress taking place in downtown.

a day out, or nightlife. All the while, downtown Bainbridge has its own set of assets that should be acknowledged and advertised regionally. A short list of Bainbridge's most important assets and/or events should be made and appropriate regional advertising implemented. Continued coordination with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and other local organizations is critical.
- 3. Engage in Regional Advertising:** Focus groups and survey results suggest that Bainbridge citizens perceive themselves as being in the regional shadow of Tallahassee and Thomasville. Most reported that they were more likely to travel to Tallahassee for shopping, dinner,
 - 4. Link Downtown Assets:** Bainbridge's downtown is rich with assets, yet focus group and survey results show that many people still feel as though something is missing in their downtown. Creating links among existing downtown assets like Chason Park, the Flint River, and Oak City Cemetery could help raise community members' awareness of their downtown's assets. Links could be made with infrastructure as well as through programming and events. The Connectivity Master Plan already contains ideas for connecting Chason Park and the Flint River. Another idea is for the city to create its own landmarks. For example, the largest oak tree in the downtown could be determined and then transformed into a destination, much like The Big Oak in Thomasville, Georgia.
 - Create QR codes for Willis Park
 - Monuments, history, time capsule
 - Example: Central Park in New York

- Design and install a kiosk for Willis Park and Cheney Griffin Park

5. Create Multiple Child/Family Draws: Bringing children and families into downtown is a vital step in creating a vibrant city. Bainbridge could implement a series of playgrounds for active play, connecting downtown to the Flint River. These playgrounds would be fun, interactive, and educational. A splash pad would also be an excellent resource for Bainbridge. Splash pads are useful when there is no centrally located city pool. They are cost effective, no life guards are necessary, they can be turned on for unexpected hot spells, and they require little maintenance. The Little Theater, located in downtown, is also an excellent resource for children and families. This resource could be expanded to aid in childcare for parents who want to have a night out in downtown, or it could become a venue that serves adults as well as children. For example, Bainbridge could sponsor a progressive dinner in downtown, ending the night with a film at the Little Theatre.



The Old Library
BROUGHTON STREET, BAINBRIDGE, GA

PROMOTION



BRAND DOWNTOWN

The Downtown Development Authority and the Main Street Program have an opportunity to enhance their graphic look. Downtown Bainbridge logo designs were created by Nikki Rich of Rich Graphics.



Downtown Bainbridge brochures designed by: Nikki Rich of Rich Graphics, downtown Bainbridge, GA.

PROMOTION



LINK DOWNTOWN ASSETS

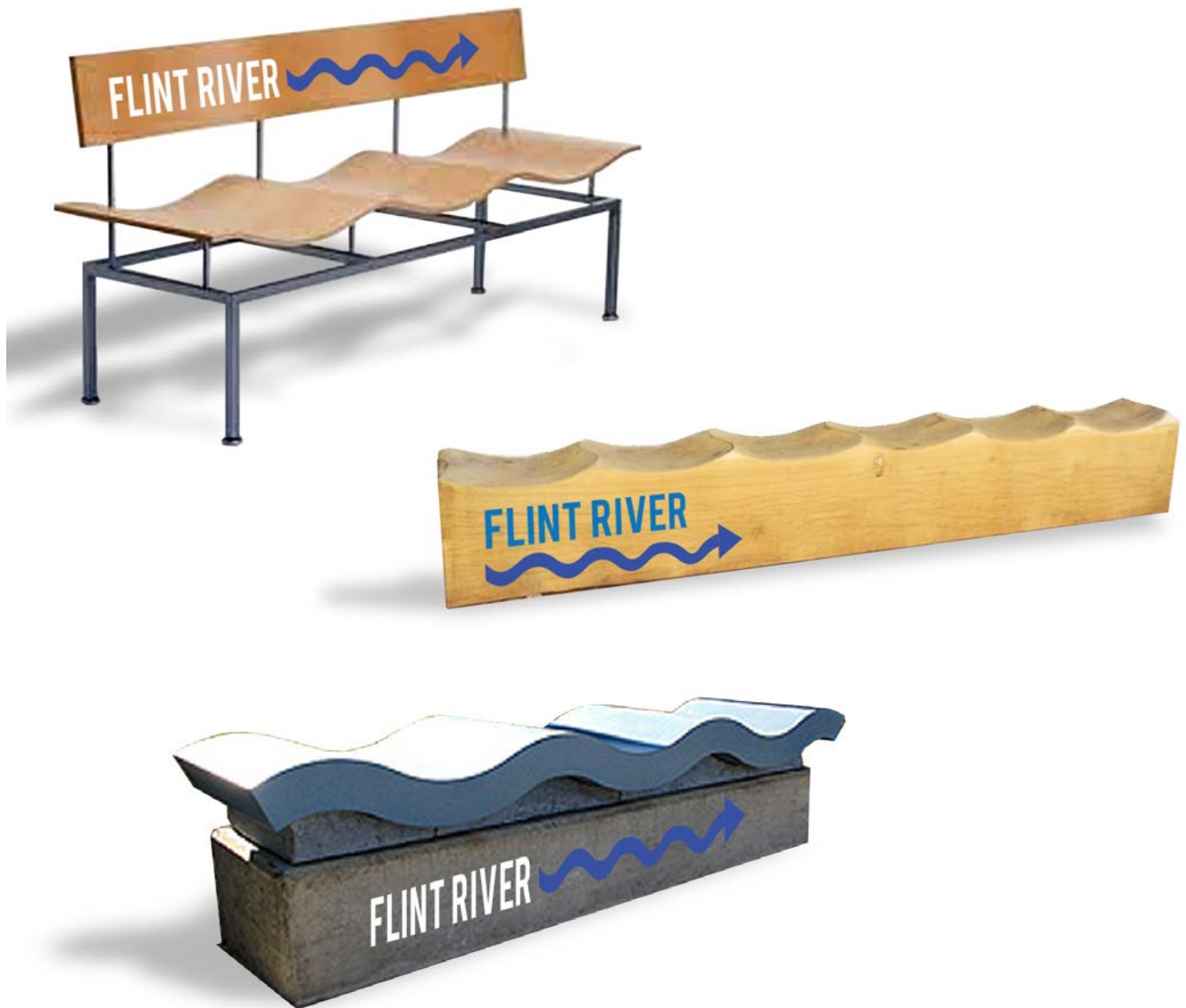
Before: Utility boxes stand at two of the corners of the square in Willis Park. Currently it takes away from the beautiful landscape of the square.



After, option 1: A chalkboard has been added in to the utility box to serve as a message board for current local events. The event shown in this rendering is the 2014 Bassmaster Elite tournament held in March.

After, option 2: This option shows a printed advertisement that is attached to the utility box. Both options beautify what was once an unsightly object and utilize it to share information with downtown visitors.

PROMOTION



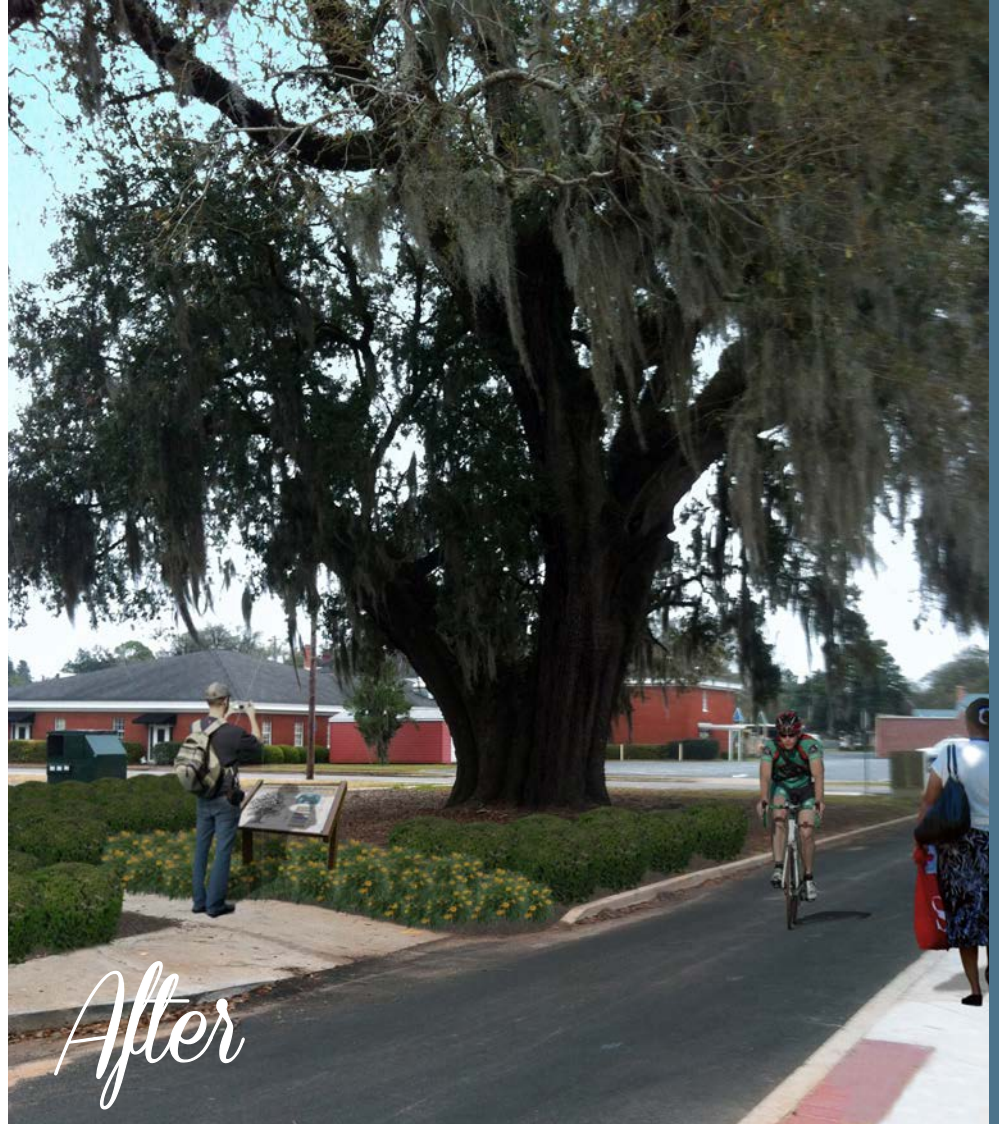
LINK DOWNTOWN ASSETS

River-inspired bench designs such as these could decorate downtown while serving as directional signage to the Flint River.



Before: The largest tree in Bainbridge is unfortunately only seen by vehicles and their occupants without people ever realizing the tree's significance.

After: By adding a small informational sign and some plantings, the largest tree in Bainbridge gains the recognition it deserves becoming an additional attraction to the downtown area.



BAINBRIDGE OAK TREES

As a way to link downtown assets and create destinations within downtown, the largest oak tree in the downtown could be determined and then transformed into a destination, much like The Big Oak in Thomasville, Georgia.

PROMOTION



CREATING CHILD AND FAMILY DRAWS

Before: This space is located along the riverfront.

After: The rendering shows what the space would look like with a new playground that would draw visitors to the river. A slide has been installed adjacent to the staircase (see rendering right.)



After: The rendering (right) shows a detail of the hill slide in the above rendering.



PROMOTION

CREATING CHILD AND FAMILY DRAMS: NORTH BROAD STREET COMMUNITY PARK DESIGN

**Created by The Georgia Department of Community Affairs Downtown Design Studio and The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation for the Bainbridge Main Street Program.*



Georgia Department of Community Affairs
675 Pulaski Street, Suite 900
Athens, Georgia 30601



*Created by The Georgia Department of Community Affairs Downtown Design Studio and The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation for the Bainbridge Main Street Program.

PROMOTION

CREATING CHILD AND FAMILY DRAWS

Rebuilding the dock

Before: This area located on Bruton Street near Chason Park has the remnants of a dock. The dock posts remain intact and could easily be used to build a platform.

After: The dock posts have been used to build the platform so that park visitors can use it again.



DOWNTOWN BAINBRIDGE MOVIE NIGHT

Before: This empty parking lot and large wall on the side of The Langston Center building in downtown Bainbridge poses a good opportunity for downtown activities.

After: During the nice weather months, downtown Bainbridge could host a movie night once a month. Any property like this one that has a large wall and open lot would work. The rendering shows a projector screen showing a movie as members of the Bainbridge community lounge in their camping chairs, eat picnic dinners, and relax.



DESIGN

1. Create and Implement a Parking Campaign:

Parking was one of the predominant issues mentioned during the public input process. There is a widespread feeling that downtown Bainbridge does not have enough parking; however, this is only a perception. To begin to address this negative parking perception, Bainbridge could conduct a parking count. The city should determine the number of on-street parking spaces in downtown, the number of on-street parking spaces on the square, the locations of all public parking lots, and the overall number of spaces. The location of all private lots and the number of private parking spaces should also be determined. All businesses and offices should be surveyed to see where owners and employees are currently parking, and, if needed, the city could explore the option of partnering to utilize private lots for public parking. The city could create a map and graphic to communicate parking availability. Parking signage would also be helpful: attractive parking signage, “no parking” signs, and parking way-finding. In addition, signage could state the number of feet to a parking area.

- *Explore the possibility of reconfiguring parts of downtown for angled parking:* The survey results show that many Bainbridge residents prefer angled parking to parallel parking. In many cases, if only parallel parking is

available, people feel as if there is no parking available. A study could be done to assess the configuration of downtown to learn if there is enough room to convert parking spaces to angled parking to better serve Bainbridge residents.

- *Revitalize the Calhoun Street bridge “streetscape”*
 - *Need design of new lighting on bridge, trees*
 - *Check on property adjacent to Daren’s Service Center. Good place to install downtown “welcome” sign/directional signage*
 - *Design directional signage to downtown*
 - *Refer to the programmatic study done by SkyDesign to determine sign locations*
- ## 2. Gateway Signage:
- The purpose of gateway signage is to announce the presence of and entry into a destination. Because of the multiple ways in and out of downtown as well as the bypass, one can pass by downtown Bainbridge without connecting to the heart and soul of the community. By defining the main entrances into Bainbridge with distinctive signage and plantings, passersby would be more likely to recognize and access the downtown.
- ## 3. Expose Brick Streets:
- Downtown Bainbridge could continue to expose certain sections of the historic brick

streets. Exposing the brick streets will reinforce the charm of Bainbridge that is already represented by the historic downtown architecture, traditional square formation, and big oak trees. Exposed brick streets would act as an effective traffic calming tool as well.

4. Engage in Targeted Property

Development: The North Broad area is a good district on which to focus redevelopment efforts. The city, Downtown Development Authority, other organizations, and residents of the neighborhood could work together to develop a recruitment plan for buildings and businesses. The neighborhood could then begin to imagine vacant land as mixed-use properties. These ideas could be illustrated with before and after renderings.

5. Expand the Downtown Streetscape

Plan: Expanding the downtown streetscape plan outside of the current parameters to include other sections of the downtown would beautify the spaces and draw people and businesses into those areas. An extension of the streetscape plan would allow the entire downtown to feel uniform, maintained, and attractive. A complete streetscape plan would address alleyways as well. Many cities and towns are now using alleyways as through-ways: places for public art, plantings, and pedestrian lighting.

In so doing, they are transforming alleyways from perceived dangerous spaces into active, beautiful, and useful ones.

6. Improve Downtown Parking Lots:

When parking lots are located in and around downtown centers, they can often decrease the “human scale” of a downtown. The River Plaza Shopping Center, located on North West Street, is within walking distance of downtown and the Flint River. Greening River Plaza’s parking lot could help make the strip center more attractive and cohesive with the surrounding areas. River Plaza is also in need of a face-lift: some simple cosmetic amendments could make the space more accessible.

7. Create connections to the Flint River and River Park:

Throughout the public input sessions, the Flint River was listed as one of Bainbridge’s primary draws as well as one of the downtown’s most underutilized assets. Creating connections between the river and downtown that are pedestrian, golf cart, trolley, and bike friendly would provide Bainbridge a wealth of new resources by linking the city’s current resources with a path that could be used for recreation, education, and connectivity.

8. Create Renderings:

The City of Bainbridge could partner with the Institute of Government’s Spectrum Studio and the Department of

DESIGN

Community Affairs' Main Street Design Studio to display renderings of currently vacant and derelict buildings. The renderings would illustrate possibilities for the vacant spaces and would be displayed in the windows of the buildings.

- 9. Target Tree Planting:** Bainbridge is known as the City of Oaks. The large historic oaks create an attractive, unique sense of place as well as a valuable and marketable identity. By adding a few oaks at key locations, the entire historic downtown would feel as though it were covered by a canopy of trees. It is also important to plan for tree replacement as the oaks age. By replanting gradually, the downtown and surrounding areas would never appear bare.
- 10. Consider Opting for North Broad Street**
Local Control: North Broad Street, the main downtown street, is currently controlled by the Georgia Department of Transportation. A few issues need to be addressed in regard to North Broad, and local control might be the best way to address them: planting larger trees along the street, reconfiguring parallel parking to angled parking, reducing the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph, and adding a second-floor balcony on a building along Broad.





Firehouse Center & Gallery
BAINBRIDGE, GA

DESIGN

PARKING

Broad Street

Before: Broad Street has a somewhat monotone street look with each block having the same two trees and parking arrangement. Lack of seating and shade are also problematic for pedestrians.

After: Through introducing angled parking on one side of the street and curb bump-outs in the extra spaces at the block corners, the City of Bainbridge is able to increase available parking, increase the biodiversity of plantings, and create an overall improved aesthetic for the downtown area. This model utilizes the current street dimensions and can be modified to fit all along Broad Street.

Before:
Aerial view,
Google Maps

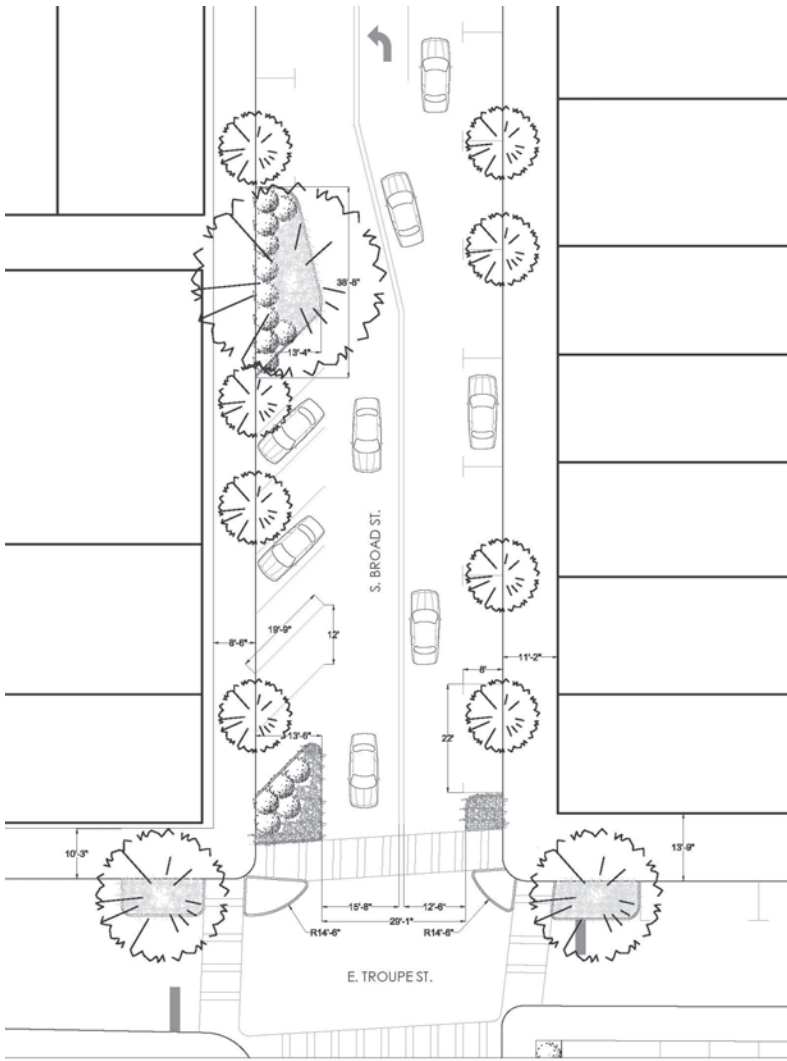


205 State Route 1 Bus, Bainbridge, Georgia, United States
Address is approximate

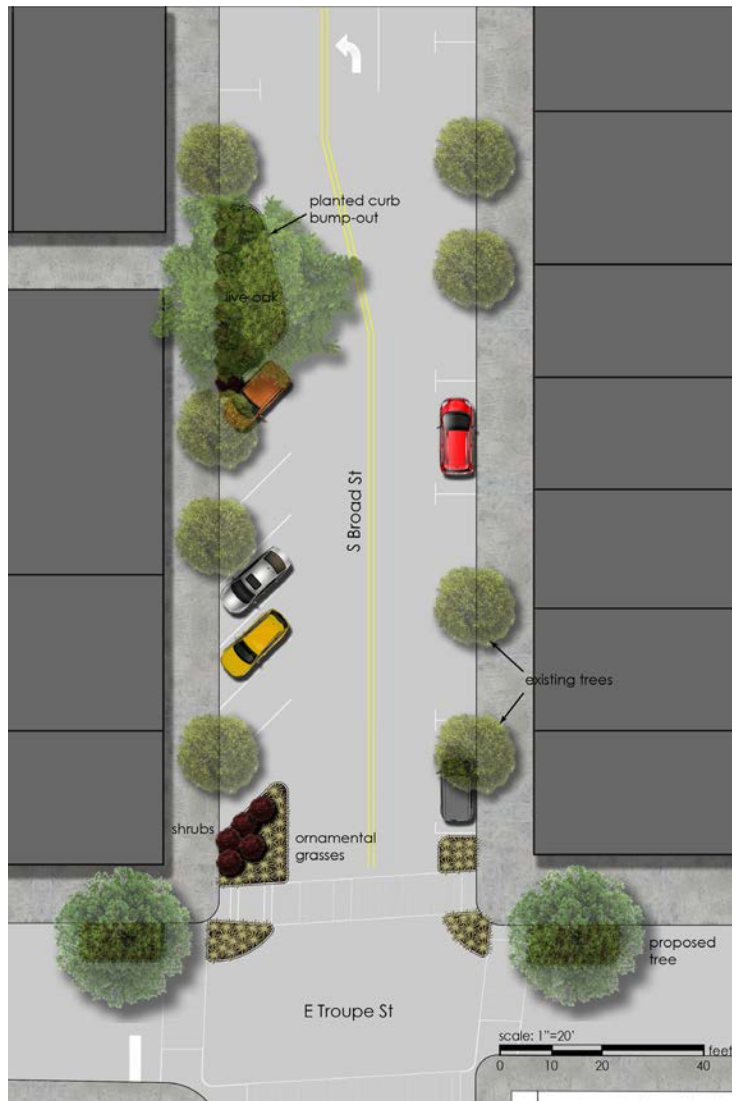


Perspective view,
Google Maps

Before



After: Dimensioned Plan View



After: Rendered Plan View



DESIGN

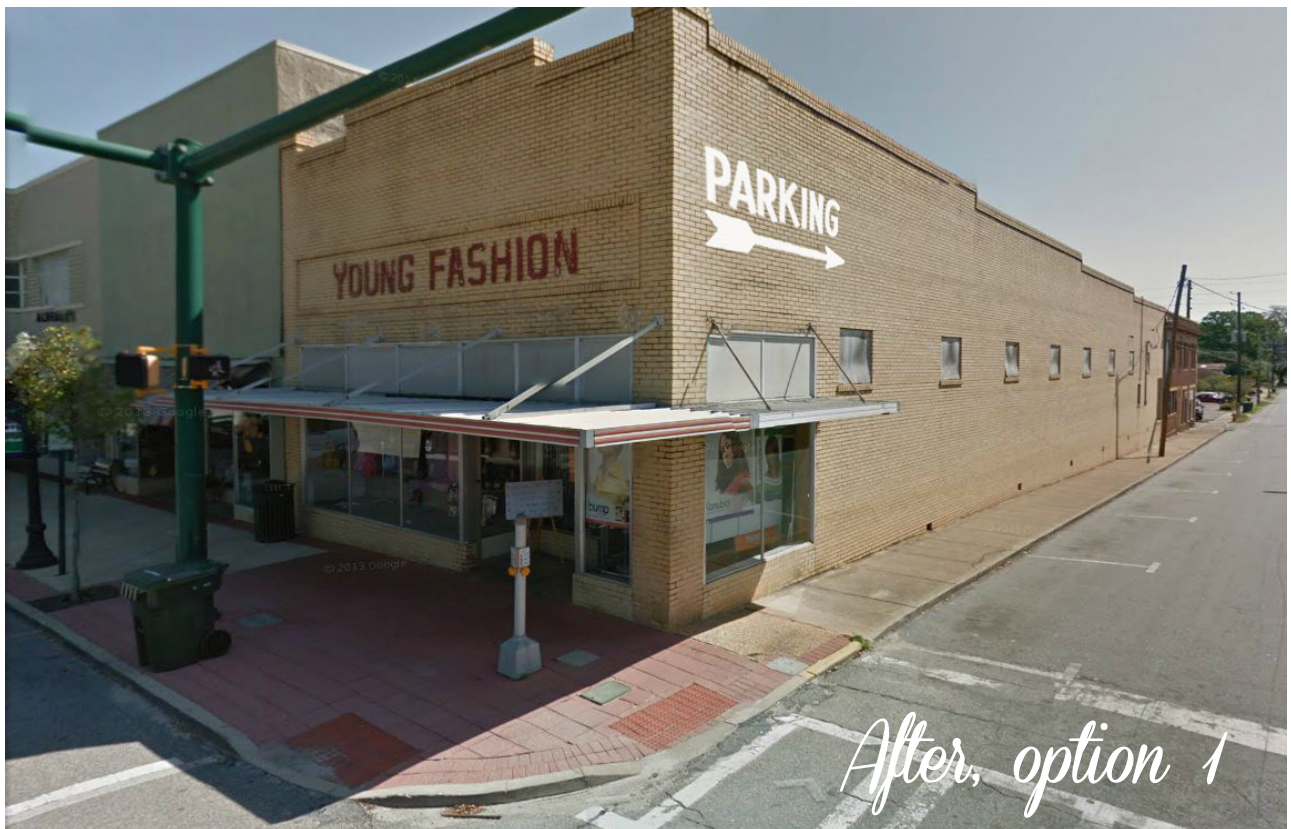
PARKING

Signage

Before: This building is located near downtown parking. There is no sign, however, to let visitors know they are close to the parking lot.



After, option 1: The rendering below shows a painted parking sign and arrow on the building close to the corner, directing drivers to the nearby parking lot.

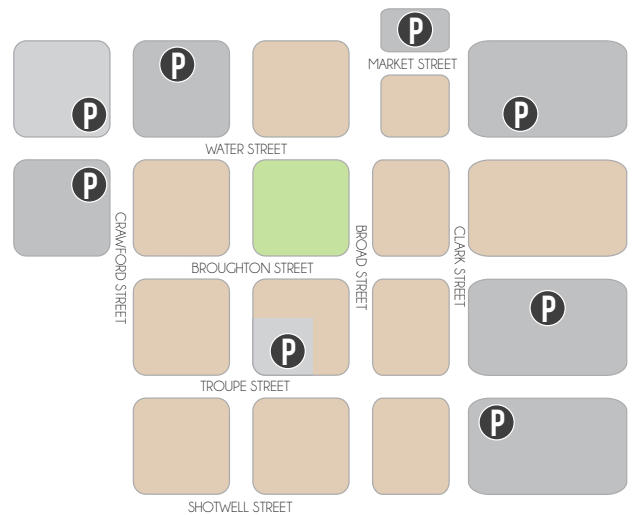




After, option 2

After, option 2: The rendering above shows a mural parking sign with a vintage car directing drivers to the nearby parking lot.

Parking Map: Downtown parking maps like this one can be placed on marketing materials and signs downtown to guide visitors to available parking.



P = AVAILABLE PARKING

DESIGN

PARKING

Parking Lots

Parking was one of the predominant issues mentioned during the public input process. There is a widespread feeling that downtown Bainbridge does not have enough parking; however, this is only a perception. This lot, for example, provides downtown parking but needs signage to direct drivers.

Before: This parking lot is used for downtown parking, however, there is no sign indicating that this is free parking to downtown visitors.

After: The rendering shows the parking lot with improved landscaping and a new downtown parking sign pointing the way to the entrance. The sign is designed using the same shape and color scheme as other downtown Bainbridge signs to improve branding identity throughout downtown.





After

DESIGN

GATEWAYS

Before: This location near the highway off-ramp is a major gateway to downtown Bainbridge.

After: The rendering shows the grass median with new downtown directional signage that reflects the character of downtown, improves branding identity, and catches the eyes of travelers.



Before: This grassy median at the highway off-ramp is a major gateway into downtown Bainbridge.

After: The rendering shows the grass median with new downtown directional signage that reflects the character of downtown, improves branding identity, and catches the eyes of travelers.





DESIGN

GATEWAYS

Cleaning up gateway properties

Before: While there is a small downtown directional sign at the corner of Clark St. and Shotwell St., it is hard to see and does not indicate a sense of arrival or character of downtown Bainbridge. Also, the adjacent property needs repair and does not portray a welcome feeling to those traveling to Bainbridge.



Before

After: The rendering below shows the corner with new downtown directional signage (the same logo design used in other gateway areas to increase downtown branding identity). Shade trees and greening improve the streetscape, and the adjacent property has been fixed.



DESIGN

GATEWAYS

Branding Mural

Before: This building is located at a gateway area to downtown on Calhoun Street.

After: A mural has been added to the building to welcome visitors.



Directional Mural

Before: This photograph shows the intersection of Broad and Calhoun Streets, which is a gateway area to downtown. However, there is no signage present indicating the way to downtown.

After: To direct visitors to downtown, a painted "DOWNTOWN" sign has been added to the Bainbridge Hardware Co. Building. Also, landscaping improvements such as planted grass and shade trees have been added to give visitors a sense of arrival and beautify the streetscape.





DESIGN

GATEWAYS

Bainbridge is known as the City of Oaks. The large historic oaks create an attractive, unique sense of place as well as a valuable and marketable identity. By adding a few oaks at key locations, the entire historic downtown would feel as though it were covered by a canopy of trees.

Before: The photograph below shows a view of Calhoun Street as one approaches downtown Bainbridge.

After: Downtown Bainbridge has a variety of large oak trees. The rendering shows what Calhoun Street could look like if the design element was continued to gateway areas.



Trees in Willis Park



Before



After



Before: The photograph shows a driveway just off of Calhoun Street heading away from downtown towards the Calhoun Street Bridge.

After: The driveway has been repaved and large oak trees have been planted to continue the design element of large oaks from downtown to gateway areas like this one.

DESIGN

EXPOSE BRICK STREETS

Before: Underneath the pavement, downtown Bainbridge has unique historic brick streets.

After: The rendering shows what this area would look like if the historic brick street was uncovered. The brick street adds more historic character and charm to downtown.





STREETSCAPE

Before: A sidewalk downtown shows cracks, no shade trees exist, and landscaping needs maintenance.

After: The rendering shows how simple improvements make a big difference. The same sidewalk design that is used around the town square in downtown is applied here with the brick edging and street lamps. Basic landscaping improvements have been done and shade trees have been planted.



DESIGN

STREETSCAPE

Alley

Before: This alley located off of Broad Street near Willis Square is underutilized. Landscaping and paving are needed to make this a connectivity asset.

After: As shown in the rendering, the alley has been transformed from an unused space to a destination. A sidewalk has been added, along with street lamps and string lights. Landscaping improvements include planted grass and flowers to add more green space to downtown. A deli and ice cream shop are shown in the rendering to activate the space, however, a number of different options are available.

Before



After

Parking Lot Greening

Before: This is a parking lot located in the Historical District.

After: Shade trees have been planted.



Before



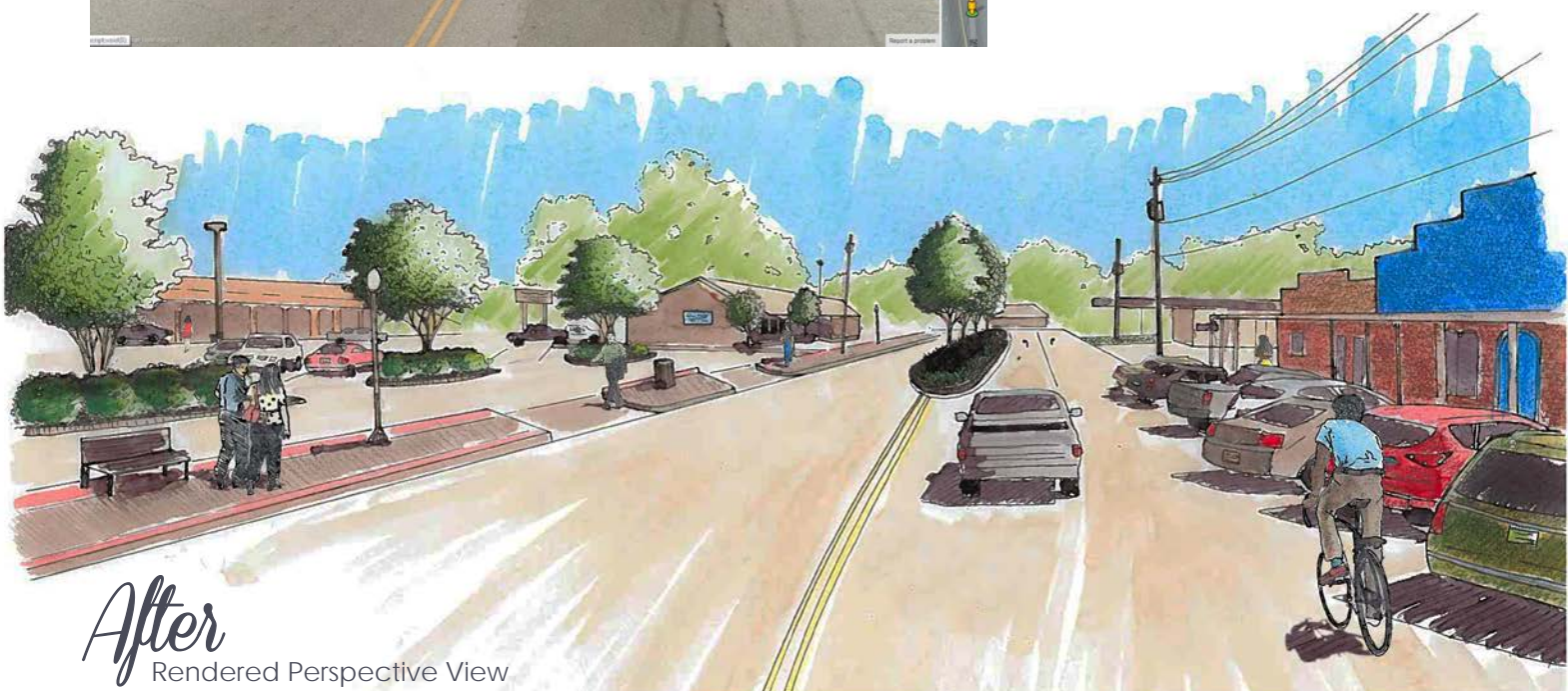
After

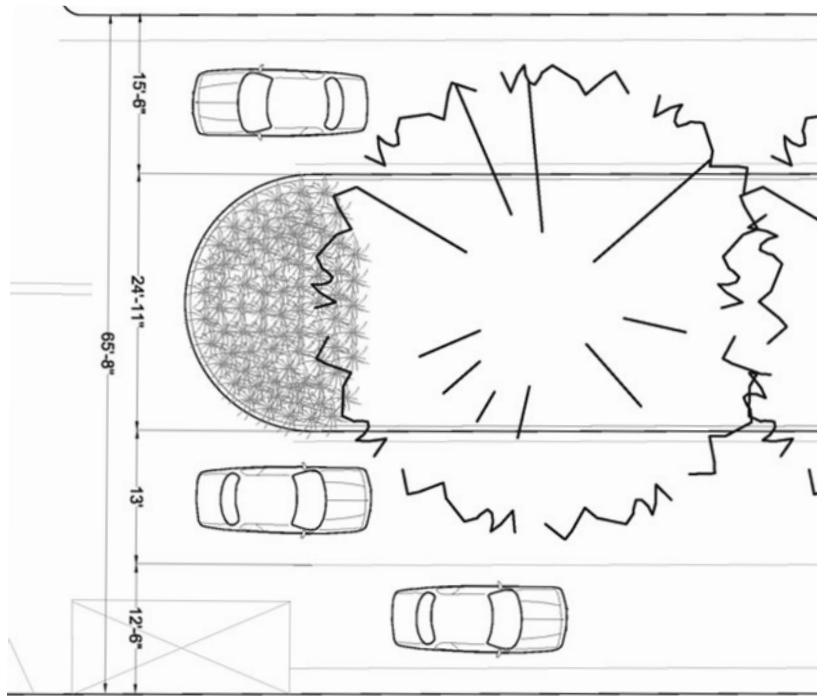
DESIGN

STREETSCAPE

Before: An oversized street adjacent to a treeless parking lot creates a hot and intimidating environment for pedestrians. On the opposite side of the street, vehicles dominate the sidewalk which is normally used for foot traffic.

After: By adding a planted center median and parking lot trees, West Street becomes a much shadier and hospitable environment for all. The median can also be used as an additional gateway for the downtown area by adding signage which fronts Calhoun St. The angled parking for vehicles is retained; however, the sidewalk is made pedestrian-friendly with additional plantings and seating.





After
Dimensioned Plan View



DESIGN

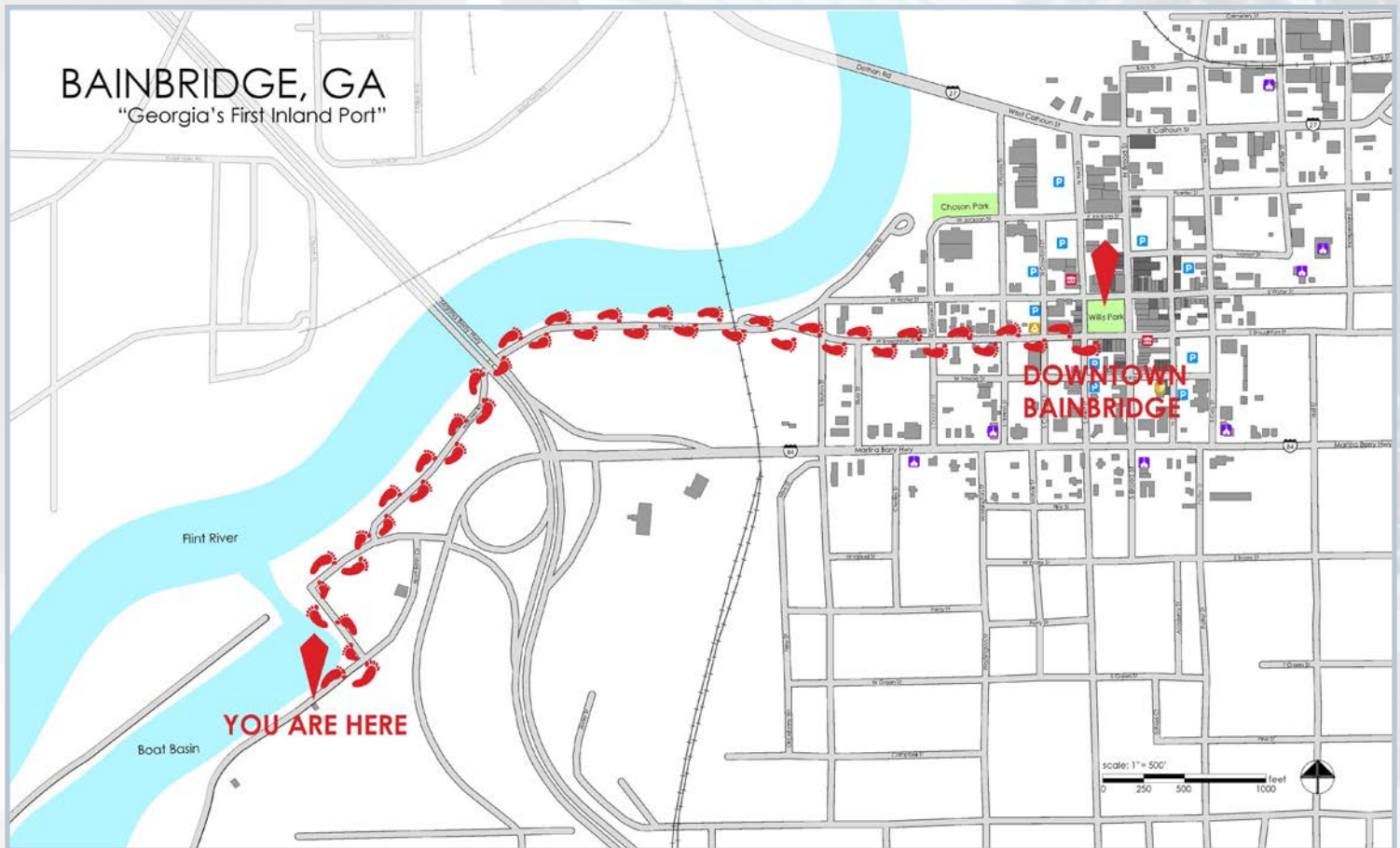
CONNECTIONS

Boat Basin Public Restroom

Before: Currently the new restroom facility at the Earle May Boat Basin serves only one function.

After: A map of Bainbridge can be added to the outside with the best route to downtown in order to better orient visitors to the area during festivals and events.





Orientation Map (shown in the rendering, below left): This map shows the pathway from the Flint River to downtown Bainbridge.

DESIGN

CONNECTIONS

Painted Sign

Before: No signage pointing to downtown exists.

After: Another way to direct people to downtown is to paint it on the ground or on infrastructure. The rendering shows what this could look like using the downtown Bainbridge logo.



Directional Sign

Before: This area near the Flint River is another opportunity for gateway signage that could lead visitors to downtown.

After: The rendering shows improved landscaping and new downtown Bainbridge signage with an arrow pointing the way to downtown via Hatcher Road. This sign utilizes the new downtown logo that is used throughout Bainbridge as a way to increase downtown branding recognition.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Fill Vacant Spaces:** Public input shows that Bainbridge is conscious of the number of vacancies downtown. To make the vacancies less daunting and more active, the Bainbridge DDA could work with local realtors to develop individual signage for each vacant building. For instance, a classic “This building is not vacant, it is full of possibility” sign could be placed in storefronts along with all of the necessary information about the space for rent: information about incentives with web address links, the DDA’s email address, and pricing.
- 2. Beautify Downtown Derelict Properties:** The best way to address the negative appearance of derelict buildings in downtown Bainbridge would be to start with a can of paint. Many of the downtown buildings could be vastly improved with a coat of paint and other minor exterior cosmetic fixes. The property owners of derelict buildings should be contacted for their involvement, but if they are not willing to comply, the Downtown Development Authority and the city could step in to improve the appearance of such buildings.
- 3. Enforce Codes:** Code enforcement can be a difficult tool to utilize, but many of the issues raised throughout the public input process could be addressed through enforcement. A first step could be a city-owned property assessment to determine compliance with current codes. This effort would be a great step forward in reducing the amount of blight and vacancy in downtown Bainbridge.
 - The next step for code enforcement is to address downtown fire safety.* During the public input process, much discussion focused on public safety concerns like downtown buildings not up to code that are used as storage. This is a significant fire safety concern.
- 4. Create Redevelopment Funds:** Derelict buildings were mentioned time and time again throughout the public engagement process. Creating downtown redevelopment funds could act as an incentive to persuade property owners to fix up their derelict properties.
- 5. Recruit New Businesses:** The need to attract new businesses and fill vacant spaces was discussed in multiple focus groups. Currently, the Bainbridge DDA takes many steps to recruit businesses. Some additional steps like categorizing vacant buildings as “move-in ready” or “not move-in ready” could help spur more development.
- 6. Develop Downtown Businesses:** UGA’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is currently working with downtown Bainbridge clients. Bainbridge should continue to work with the SBDC for business development guidance, hold training events on a regular basis, and promote training through the merchant group.
- 7. Hold a Downtown Current Economic Incentive Informational Meeting:** The informational meeting would target bankers, realtors, and developers in the city and region, educating them on downtown Bainbridge’s incentives.

8. Create Upper-story Housing Incentives/ Marketing: Bainbridge could take steps to promote the existing upper-story housing in their downtown while developing other incentives for upper-story housing.

- *Safety grants: For instance, wiring and fire safety grants could encourage upper-story housing redevelopment. (Consider creating and implementing a sprinkler system program similar to Dahlonge's.)*
- *Upper-story housing marketing: When marketing Bainbridge's downtown housing, it would be the DDA's responsibility to list upper-story housing options on its website, in addition to developing a waiting list to promote the option. To make people aware of the downtown living option, the DDA could partner with clubs within the community to host an "Upstairs Downtown Tour" of current apartments or staged prospective spaces.*
- *Specifically, market the second floor of the Belcher Building.*

9. Create a Downtown Destination:

Bainbridge's public input suggests that most people want their downtown to be active, beautiful, historic, and vibrant. For Bainbridge to thrive in these ways, it must develop downtown draws. Many residents requested activities or places that will draw children and their parents—activities that will serve the entire family. Also, creating public restrooms would allow for all-day outings.

10. Install a Splash Pad and Playground: The DDA has an existing greenspace/splash pad plan that was created by the DCA Design Studio. If the splash pad project were completed, then the water feature could become the destination that downtown Bainbridge needs. A Youth Main Street Committee should be involved in the planning and design process. Public restrooms should also be incorporated into the plan. Clean public restrooms are critical to keep people downtown throughout the day. Daily and on-going maintenance and safety plans must be incorporated.

11. Revitalize the Historic District: Focus should be on the Chason Park or West Water Street Historic Districts. Streetscape improvements should be coordinated with housing redevelopment incentives to drive downtown housing development in this area. To showcase the value of historic district revitalization, the Historic Preservation Society and the DDA could hold a private tour for bankers and realtors at the unique home in the old grocery freight building as an example of adaptive reuse.

12. Create a Business Recruitment Plan: There is an overwhelming public desire for additional restaurants and shops in downtown Bainbridge. It would be helpful if Bainbridge could explore businesses in similarly sized towns that could be recruited ("recruiting locally").

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



VACANT WINDOWS

Before: The photograph shows a vacant storefront downtown.

After: The rendering (above, right) shows what the storefront would look like if vacant windows were filled with local programs, such as this art show made by students from West Bainbridge Elementary. While the building is still vacant, at least storefront windows will be filled with programs that reflect the character and culture of Bainbridge while the space inside is waiting to be leased or sold.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

Before: This building on West Street on the square is vacant and has a broken awning.

After: The rendering (below, right) shows what the building would look like if the awning was removed to expose the original transom lights and a new metal awning was installed. Also, a business sign was added.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS: A CAN OF PAINT

Sometimes just a can of paint can significantly improve the look of a property.

Before: This corner-facing building is located at the intersection of Broad Street and Planter Street. The blue building, located just right, has a lot of unsightly chipping paint.



After: The blue building has been painted, greatly improving the aesthetic of this corner.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS: A CAN OF PAINT

Sometimes just a can of paint can significantly improve the look of a property.

Before: Located on North Broad Street, this building could use some paint and cleaning up.



After: The rendering (right) shows what it would look like if the building was painted white and minor landscaping improvements were made.



After: The rendering shows what it would look like if a bass mural was added to the improvements.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS: A CAN OF PAINT

Sometimes just a can of paint can significantly improve the look of a property.

Before: This vacant building is located on North Broad Street and is in need of painting and repair.



After: Bainbridge is known as Georgia's Inland Port City. The rendering below shows how a couple cans of paint could not only improve the aesthetic of this façade, but also capture the unique nautical history of Bainbridge.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS: A CAN OF PAINT

Sometimes just a can of paint can significantly improve the look of a property.

Before: A vacant, derelict building front is an eyesore to the local community.



Before



After; With a fresh can of paint and some elbow grease, this building façade is renewed. Local artists or even school groups can be invited to paint murals on the brickwork for temporary advertising, wayfinding signage, or simply pieces of art can be on display. Once an eyesore to the neighborhood, the building becomes a source of community pride.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS: A CAN OF PAINT

Sometimes just a simple can of paint can significantly improve the look of a property.

Before: This building on North Broad Street is currently vacant and for rent. In need of much repair, it may be difficult to attract a tenant.



Before

After: With a paint job and new awning, this property looks much better.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



VACANT LOT

Before: This empty lot is located on North Broad Street.

After: The rendering shows how the space could be used for seasonal events, such as Christmas tree sales.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

Before: This building is located on N. Broad Street. It is currently occupied by two businesses, Joe & Bev's Resurrection Car Wash and Brinson's Barber & Beauty Shop. The building looks dirty and outdated, and signage is small and hard to read from the road.

After: Two colors of paint have been added to differentiate the businesses and clean up the building's exterior. Window sills and door frames have been painted white and air conditioning units have been removed. New and larger signage has been installed for both businesses to create brand identity and make them more noticeable to road traffic.

Logo design: The logo concept shown left is a new design shown in the rendering (right). The concept is inspired by existing signage on the building.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

Before: As shown in the photograph below, The “Rich’s Casuals” building located on East Water Street is vacant and needs some maintenance.

After: As shown in the rendering (right), the building’s original brick façade has been restored (as seen in the historic photograph). The upper story is now downtown loft living space with windows and a double door installed. The ground level is shown as being occupied by an antiques business.





ANTIQUES

bainbridge
ANTIQUES

After

Decatur County Courthouse
DOWNTOWN BAINBRIDGE, GA





SHORT TERM ACTION ITEMS

BY COMMITTEE

ORGANIZATION

ACTION ITEM: DOWNTOWN BAINBRIDGE ART & WINE WALK

Lead: Cheryl Carvajal & Amanda Glover

Partners: Vicki Bailey, Rollins Miller, Suzy Loeffler

Timeline: April 17 Kick-off (4:00–8:00 pm) through May 3

Funding:

- DDA—ticket and brochure printing, wine glasses
- B-DCCA—children’s art kits (giveaway)
- Businesses—wine/food purchases

Obstacles:

- Obtaining enough participating businesses
- Gathering enough participating artists

Steps:

1. Approach businesses to recruit the targeted number of artists.
2. Gather willing artists to submit applications by March 21.
3. Consider recruiting top high school artists.
4. Match artists to businesses, and create contact links.
5. Design the brochures.
6. Get the word out through all media outlets.
7. Sell tickets/order glasses/print brochures.
8. Set up artwork (April 14–17).
9. 3:00 pm, April 17: Set-up tables, etc.
10. 4:00–8:00 pm, April 17: Run event, photograph windows/displays
11. May 3, assist artists with tear down/removal of art.
12. Solicit feedback via survey from artists and business owners.

ACTION ITEM: DOWNTOWN MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION

Lead: Shawn Edwards

Partners: Amanda Glover, Lee Tennyson, Lori Shiver

Timeline: 2nd and 3rd quarter, 2014

Funding: Merchants' dues

Obstacles: Vacant/ unoccupied/ blighted buildings; unwilling merchants

Steps:

1. Coordinate meetings with downtown merchants and property owners; establish an association, charter, etc.; assign duties and responsibilities.
2. Coordinate/ partner with Chamber, CVB, DDA.
3. Create cooperative advertising such as billboards, TV, radio, etc. to promote downtown merchants.
4. Begin planning events (i.e., First Friday, street dance) to bring people downtown and bring merchants together.
5. Create website/ social media outlets to advertise and promote events, businesses, available properties, and job openings.

ORGANIZATION

ACTION ITEM: INVOLVE BAINBRIDGE STATE COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SEVERAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS FOR THE DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Lead: Brian and Karen Cook

Partners: Bainbridge State College administration and students

Timeline: Students need to be involved during the brainstorming of these projects.

Funding: Should be little to no cost for development. Just the printing and any ads deemed necessary for a successful campaign.

Obstacles: Simple coordination of all assets

Steps:

1. Contact college counselors, SGA, and student ambassadors and arrange a meeting to talk to the students.
2. Pitch for interns to head the project.
3. Coordinate all assets and arrange meetings with students.
4. Give them a clear timeline and express expectations.
5. Set measurable goals for execution and roll-out.
6. The DDA will have the final say on what is published and what is not.
7. Allow a final grade for projects and feedback from the panel.

I think a student-based ad campaign will add a youthful flavor to our ad campaign and give students the ability to do some real world design. Also getting the college on board with this not only equates to manpower but a substantial cost saving.

ACTION ITEM: VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Lead: Amanda Glover

Partners: Community

Timeline: Continual

Funding: N/A

Obstacles: N/A

Steps:

1. Find potential volunteers in the community.
2. Listen to new ideas presented by the volunteers.
3. Place volunteers in their area of interest.

PROMOTION

ACTION ITEM: THIRD FRIDAY

Lead: Adrienne Harrison

Partners: DDA, Downtown Businesses

Timeline: Hold event by the end of May 2014

Funding: CVB

Obstacles: Other communities' events, getting businesses to buy in

Steps:

Choose a date (maybe April or May?).

- May 16, 2014
 - Street Dance: End of year school blowout (Dr. Rayfield)
 - Downtown movie night: project movie on side of Bainbridge Little Theatre (Fall 2014)
 - Downtown Living History Tour (Fall 2014)
1. Create a downtown steering committee group made up of businesses and students from the high school and college.
 2. Find entertainment that will attract crowds of all ages to the street dance.
 3. Encourage businesses to stay open late (maybe offer sales or other attractions?).
 4. Create ads for the local newspaper.
 5. Create fliers to distribute at downtown businesses and local schools.
 6. Visit the local radio station to talk about the events.

✓ ACTION ITEM: RIVER TOWN DAYS PARKING

Lead: Jessica Barwick

Partners: Chamber, CVB, DDA

Timeline: Finalize logistics by February 28, 2014. Have all materials printed by March 7, 2014.

Funding: DDA

Obstacles: Other parking areas, visibility, getting people to travel down Shotwell Street instead of bypass

Steps:

1. Secure two trolleys from Ag Expo.
2. Find drivers for the trolleys.
3. Decide on what parking areas to promote.
4. Decide on a pick-up point for the trolleys.
5. Develop the banner and signage for the parking and pick-up points.
6. Develop the route for the trolleys.
7. Work with RTD to promote the downtown parking areas.
8. Encourage stores to promote downtown parking for the event.
9. Create a generic brochure about Downtown Bainbridge.



PROMOTION

ACTION ITEM: CHAMBER OF COMMERCE YOUTH PROGRAM DOWNTOWN EXCURSION DAY

Lead: Diane Strickland

Partners: Chamber of Commerce, City and downtown non-profits

Timeline: Two months, then yearly

Funding: N/A

Obstacles: N/A

Steps:

1. Schedule a partners meeting.
2. Develop a one-day youth schedule.
3. Deliver a downtown leadership day.
4. Survey feedback.
5. Schedule for following year.

DESIGN

ACTION ITEM: EXPOSE BRICK STREETS AROUND WILLIS PARK

Lead: Tom Conger

Partners: To be determined

Timeline: To be determined

Funding: City of Bainbridge

Obstacles: Getting Mayor and City Council on board

Steps:

1. Call the City of Thomasville and learn how much it cost to remove asphalt and restore its brick streets.
2. Discuss the pros and cons of brick streets.
3. Call the City of Bainbridge and determine the cost for the West Water Street.
4. Determine possible funding options.
5. Meet with the Mayor and Council to discuss exposing brick street.
6. Finish work on West Water Street (in front of the Courthouse).
7. Prioritize which streets to uncover.

ACTION ITEM: REPLANTING OF SHADE TREES IN DOWNTOWN

Lead: Meredyth Earnest and other members of design committee

Partners: Hal Earnest, City of Bainbridge, possibly the Georgia Urban Forest Council (gufc.org), and local urban forester, if applicable

Timeline: To be determined

Funding: To be determined, possibly fundraisers or “name a tree” promotion

Obstacles: Funding, space downtown to plant on right of ways

Steps:

1. Determine if downtown Bainbridge has access to an urban forester or a key person employed to deal with trees in downtown.
2. Contact that person.
3. Create a downtown tree asset map.
4. Determine public spaces suitable for tree planting.
5. Develop plan goals for the replanting of trees.
6. Determine private spaces suitable for tree planting.
7. Outline funding needed to achieve these goals.
8. Develop a fundraising plan or secure a program sponsor.
9. Promote that it is happening.
10. Plant the trees.
11. Partner with the City Tree Committee.

DESIGN

✓ ACTION ITEM: UPDATED GRAPHICS FOR DOWNTOWN

Lead: Nikki Rich

Partners: DDA

Timeline: Graphic complete, board approved

Funding: N/A

Obstacles: N/A

Steps:

1. Survey citizens and ask what Bainbridge means to them.
2. Meet with Amanda and Adrienne to discuss ideas and color.
3. Create the logo and branding concepts.
4. Present the logo concepts and determine the final look.
5. Get DDA Board approval.
6. Utilize the new designs.
7. Celebrate the new designs.
8. Communicate the success through all media outlets.

Updates:

1. Inspiration: old southern town, hometown, roots, classic American architecture, the River, love of outdoors and nature, welcoming people, close-knit community
2. After taking these descriptions to heart, we decided the logo should have a historic, traditional feel while keeping it fresh and modern. It should also reflect the southern architecture in downtown. The colors chosen are historic and complement the paint schemes present in downtown today. They are also complementary to the DDA website.
3. While creating the downtown logo, we are concurrently working on a logo for Bainbridge. We are very close to a finished logo and are awaiting council approval. The logos for downtown and the city will be complementary in design and color.



DESIGN

ACTION ITEM: DOWNTOWN BAINBRIDGE PARK AND CHILDREN'S PLAY AREA

Lead: Julie Harris

Partners: Sonya Dean, Christi Surratt

Timeline: Completion expected in Spring 2015

Funding: Land: city owned; restroom facilities: city provided; parking lot: city provided; lighting: city provided; play structures and tables: donations from civic organizations

Obstacles: Lack of existing lighting, lack of restroom facilities, possible security issues, lack of parking

Steps:

1. Work with Bainbridge city leaders to select an appropriate location.
2. Select and get approval on the play structure from the City of Bainbridge.
3. Get a lighting plan from the City of Bainbridge.
4. Get a parking plan from the City of Bainbridge.
5. Get a restroom facility plan from the City of Bainbridge.
6. Get a signage plan from the City of Bainbridge.
7. Approach local civic organizations about support.
8. Complete funding.
9. The City of Bainbridge will install lighting, signage, parking, and the play structure.
10. Promote the park through local radio and newspaper spots.
11. Work with Bainbridge Public Safety on a continuing basis.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTION ITEM: ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING

Lead: Zack Parsons/Stephen Whittaker

Partners: Zack Parsons/Stephen Whittaker/To be determined

Timeline: Host first training in summer 2014

Funding: Fee for admission/Sponsorships (I think we need to work to make it free to entrepreneurs.)

Obstacles: Identifying and publicizing to entrepreneurs; funding the program

Steps:

1. Identify downtown success stories in Bainbridge and other communities.
2. Meet with local business owners to identify keys to developing a successful and effective business plan.
3. Meet with SBDC to discuss consulting opportunities available to entrepreneurs. Identify how entrepreneurs can prepare for an effective meeting with SBDC.
4. Meet with local lending institutions to identify common keys for successful and effective loan requests. Identify underwriting requirements that are common across local lenders.
5. Identify incentives or small business/downtown loan programs to entice entrepreneurs to develop downtown.
6. Design an entrepreneurs' package that includes a list of key contacts (DDA, lending institutions, realtors, SBDC, etc.), downtown success stories, a checklist of items needed for effective meetings with SBDC and lending institutions, advice from successful business owners, and a list of available properties in downtown.
7. Present this package to DDA.
8. Develop entrepreneurs' workshops.
9. Meet with the college to see if it is interested in participating/hosting entrepreneurs' workshops.
10. Hold the first workshop in the summer of 2014.
11. Based on the results of the workshop, tweak the plan.

ACTION ITEM: ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM (“AIR”)

LEAD: Rollins Miller

Partners: Frank Aultman, Arts Council (BDCCA)

Timeline: One year to develop plan and find space

Funding: To be decided

Obstacles: Finding a suitable space

Steps:

1. Develop a business plan that explains and defines the project.
2. Develop the pros and cons.
3. Create a financial plan.
4. Find an initial starter space.
5. Recruit artists.
6. Work the plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ACTION ITEM: ECONOMIC INCENTIVE PACKET

Lead: Amanda Glover

Partners: Adrienne Harrison

Timeline: Complete by April, 2014

Funding: for printing and binding \$300.00

Obstacles: N/A

Steps:

1. Evaluate incentive programs.
2. Prioritize information.
3. Spectrum Studio will create the initial packet layout.
4. Amanda and Adrienne will edit and adjust the design.
5. Organize properties by "move-in ready" status.
6. Send the document to the printer.
7. Disseminate the new packet to potential developers.

ACTION ITEM: NEW BUSINESS DOWNTOWN

Lead: Matt Palmer and Rob McRae

Partners: To be determined

Timeline: 2014

Funding: N/A

Obstacles: Existing businesses and financial concerns

Steps:

1. Gauge interest among local restaurant owners.
2. If interested, Rob will prepare financials for potential restaurant additions.
3. Sit with the potential business owner and present a business plan.
4. Help coordinate with property owners and begin building/ opening of the new restaurant.
5. If not interested, begin to search for small franchises/ ideas.
6. Collect information on franchises and costs.
7. Prepare a business plan for a presentation.
8. Make a list of potential investors.
9. Present the plan to those who are interested.



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