



CAIROGA

RENAISSANCE STRATEGIC VISION & PLAN
SEPTEMBER 2013

Produced by the Carl Vinson Institute of
Government at the University of Georgia



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SPECIAL THANKS

A Special Thanks to the Archway Partnership Executive Committee, Mayor, City Council, City Manager, Chamber of Commerce, downtown merchants, building owners, and citizens who have all come together to embark on this initiative of revitalizing the heart and soul of their community—Historic Downtown Cairo.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT CAIRO

Cairo was incorporated in 1870 and neighbors two cities, sitting 15 miles west of Thomasville, Georgia and 30 miles north of Tallahassee, Florida. Cairo's identity has been tied to a long history as the primary syrup producer of the South, but the city also embraces its agrarian surroundings and southern lifestyle. Cairo's location is central to southwest Georgia and northern Florida, and it is known as "the Hospitality City." Though Cairo's population has seen modest growth over the years, the 9,600-person city represents quintessential small-town southern living.

INTRODUCTION

Vibrant and sustainable downtowns have countless features in common: walkable streets with short blocks and alleyways; a mix of uses and densities; rings of historic housing stock surrounding the downtown; easily accessible daily destinations such as schools, libraries, public green spaces, and government services in addition to traditional businesses and restaurants; and design features like trees, plantings, lighting, seating, and other pedestrian amenities. Downtown Cairo has great bones, including governmental services, frequent events that bring the community together, cultural offerings, and public green spaces, but the town has lacked a unifying and organizing force that will illuminate the multiple and diverse goods of Cairo while improving upon the areas that need enhancing.



RENAISSANCE STRATEGIC VISIONING AND PLANNING

In Cairo, the Georgia Municipal Association, the Georgia Cities Foundation, the Archway Partnership, and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government came together to assist the city in creating a strategic vision, plan, and short-term work program that will enable Cairo to achieve a higher investment-ready designation within the proposed Georgia Downtown Renaissance Act. Cairo's strategic vision and plan was created via a three-stage process: 1) public input and engagement, 2) visioning and design, and 3) an implementable work program.

THE GEORGIA DOWNTOWN RENAISSANCE PARTNERS IN CAIRO:

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government

For more than 85 years, the 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, DDA Basic Training, and the Renaissance Award.

The Archway Partnership

The Archway Partnership, founded in 2005, is a community engagement platform within University of Georgia Public Service and Outreach. Its purpose is to enhance the university's land-grant mission of teaching, research, and service, while addressing community-identified priorities in selected locations across the state. Archway is an exciting initiative of "portal" counties through which communities gain the wealth of expertise offered by faculty and students, who in turn gain practical experience outside the classroom.

THERE ARE **3** KEY STEPS IN THE STRATEGIC VISIONING AND PLANNING PROCESS:

- 1. *Where are we now?*** It is essential to understand the current conditions of downtown Cairo. The first step relies on demographic research, plan reviews, and public engagement. Focus groups, one-on-one interviews, town hall meeting, community-wide surveys, and a visual preference assessment reveal the community's story as well as issues and opportunities.
- 2. *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.
- 3. *How do we get there?*** The final step in the strategic visioning process is the creation of an implementation plan that moves the community toward its vision for the future. Community input and effort create the implementation plan, which is critical for a successful outcome.



The diagram above shows the three-step Strategic Visioning and Planning Process.





The Cairo Downtown

RENAISSANCE STRATEGIC VISIONING AND PLANNING PROCESS:

Creating a downtown Strategic Vision and Plan (R.S.V.P.) using the Institute of Government's visioning process requires months of hard work and commitment to a process that results in a shared vision, reflective of the community's goals, wants, and needs. The visioning process gives the community a chance to engage with the planning process, vet ideas, discuss and establish goals, and work together to shape and reshape the city's future. The community must be committed to moving forward together and sharing a vision—one that belongs to the entire community, not just to one or two individuals. Downtown R.S.V.P.'s are living documents that offer a vision for a prosperous future. The steps involved in creating the Downtown Cairo Strategic Vision and Plan follow.

As part of the engagement process, the Institute of Government relied on three proven methods of receiving valuable public input:

- *Written and electronic surveys:* The broadest effort was through a survey, available in both written and electronic form, which was provided to and distributed by the city. We received approximately 500 completed surveys.
- *Interviews:* The Institute of Government conducted one-on-one interviews with key community stakeholders in Cairo. One of the many benefits of one-on-one interviews is that comments remain unattributed and anonymous; this is critical for open and honest input and for determining how to best address the issues and opportunities that affect any community.
- *Focus Groups:* Members of the Cairo community took part in focus groups. Focus groups consisted of city employees, elected officials, religious leaders, property owners, building owners, business owners, volunteers, citizens, youth, and minorities. This format allowed for a facilitated discussion around specific questions.

The top issues identified within Cairo's downtown were derived from these forms of input.

PHASE I: WHERE WE ARE



MARCH 5, 2013

Presentation of the Renaissance Strategic Visioning Process

- Archway Executive Committee
- Downtown Issue Work Group

Survey Development and Distribution, which initiates the public engagement process

- Developed an electronic and hardcopy survey
- Survey was live for 10 weeks
- Survey analysis

Data Collection and Review

The Institute of Government team conducted a plan review and demographic analysis.

JUNE 26 THROUGH 28, 2013

Initial Downtown Issue Work Group Meeting

The Institute of Government team led a kickoff session with the Downtown Issue Work Group to

- Review the scope of work
- Define the project area
- Conduct a Steering Committee focus group
- Review the community survey results
- Explain the Visual Preference Assessment and charge the committee with its implementation

Conduct Interviews and Community Input Meeting

The Institute of Government team conducted face-to-face interviews and focus groups with key citizens.

Downtown Tour and Vision Project Selection

The Institute of Government team toured the downtown and identified possible sites for remediation based on information gathered through the community survey, meetings, focus groups, and key interviews.



PHASE II: WHERE WE ARE GOING

JULY 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

Vision and Plan Development

The Institute's downtown and planning team spent the next eight weeks focused on integrating the community input (from the surveys, focus groups, visual assessments, and formal and informal interviews) into illustrative designs.



PHASE III:

HOW WE GET THERE

JULY 1 THROUGH AUGUST 1, 2013

Work Program Development

The Institute's downtown and planning team spent the four weeks integrating the community input (from the surveys, focus groups, visual-assessments, and formal and informal interviews) into possible short-term and long-term work programs.

JULY 30, 2013 AND AUGUST 29, 2013

Downtown Issue Group Work Program and Action Item Development

The Downtown Issue Work Group established four subgroups and developed work programs for each.

SEPTEMBER, 2013

Final Report Development

The Institute of Government team finalized the plans and recommendations and laid out the document for the printer. The final report is a full-color illustrative plan that provides before and after visuals of design scenarios along with phased implementation recommendations. The final report is also accompanied by a compact disc appendix that includes the public engagement information, demographic analysis, and other relevant information gleaned throughout the process.

OCTOBER, 2013

Final Report Presentation

The Institute of Government team, along with the Steering Committee, will host a presentation of the final report so that the community members can see what was developed and is recommended based on their input.

PUBLIC INPUT

WHAT WE HEARD

Surveys, interviews, and focus groups solicited the same types of information. The following briefly highlights participant input. The full text of each can be found in the digital appendices.

- 1. What is working well in downtown Cairo?** Downtown Cairo has a set of distinguishing assets that sets it above and ahead of many similarly sized towns. The position of Cairo, central to southwest Georgia and northwest Florida, makes it a prime location for business, shopping, and industry. And while the City of Cairo is centrally located, it remains a small, tight-knit, and family-oriented place to live and work. The most outstanding asset of Cairo, though, is that the downtown area has amazing bones: great historic building stock, public green space, ample parking, and many available cultural and civic services. These services and cultural amenities create a web over the downtown area that could easily be used to begin to form walkable connections throughout downtown Cairo.
- 2. What needs improvement in downtown Cairo?** The citizens of Cairo have many ideas and desires for improving their downtown. Many cited a need for more businesses and more diverse businesses and shops downtown: businesses that attract foot traffic, offer wider selections of goods, offer an “evening of activities” (meaning places that complement one another), provide youth services, and serve as gathering places that can build community. It seems that a greater commercial pull in downtown would make the area feel more vibrant and allow people to feel a greater sense of community. Beautification of downtown was also stressed as a top desire: shade and street trees, benches on which to sit and rest, planted flowers, revitalization of historic buildings, and maintenance of the downtown area were all mentioned time and again. A beautiful and clean downtown builds morale in the community as well as drawing people from outside the immediate community. Other improvement issues mentioned were that downtown Cairo needs a unified theme and look, regional promotion, better infrastructure, coordination of events, and a more welcoming attitude toward ethnic diversity.
- 3. What does a vibrant downtown Cairo look like?** Asking community members to imagine the downtown 10 years from now hopefully allowed them to be realistic; their responses fell into the key issues and work plan almost perfectly. The people of Cairo have a unique, vibrant, and achievable vision for their downtown: they desire a beautiful, maintained, and green downtown embraced by the community with active and coordinated events and festivals that bring people together in the downtown. They desire economic development and diversity, spaces for new and unique businesses to get started, and a more walkable pedestrian downtown. All of this is possible with proper coordination, promotion, design, and economic development, and with the help and commitment of community members, government employees, and downtown stakeholders.



- 4. What other possibilities can you imagine for Cairo?** When asked about other possibilities for downtown Cairo, respondents' answers fell into three major categories: gathering places, entertainment, and beautification. Gathering places are needed to serve all members of the community: a place to grab a coffee in the morning, a place to sit and chat with neighbors, and a place that allows young people to hang out in the evening would all add to the social fabric of downtown Cairo. Many also mentioned needing a place for young children to meet and play; when young children are downtown, their parents will also be downtown. This is an opportunity to both serve the youth of Cairo and bring more patrons to existing and new businesses downtown. Entertainment needs are also begging to be met: an art gallery, an amphitheater, and "first Friday" events were all mentioned as assets that would improve upon downtown Cairo. Finally but not lastly, citizens of Cairo are aware that their downtown does not "look" or "feel" inviting, like a place one would want to spend time or money. Enhancing the beauty of downtown while embracing the "small-town feeling" of the city would encourage people to want to spend time there.

YOUR CONCERNS:

Leadership

Revitalization of façades

Beautification and expansion of streetscapes

Coordination and connection of existing improved areas

Development of a proper commercial mix

Code enforcement

Community involvement in decisions

Businesses welcoming all groups and ethnic minorities

Economic development

TOP ISSUES

The work plan addresses nine key issues that were mentioned again and again by the diverse group of people involved in the community input process. These are the main issues that influence the collective vision for the future of downtown Cairo. By addressing the following key issues, Cairo is ensuring that the community's needs are being met.

VISIONING & DESIGN SOLUTIONS



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 trends that are affecting the community, articulates big-picture goals, and develops short-term and long-term strategies for implementation.

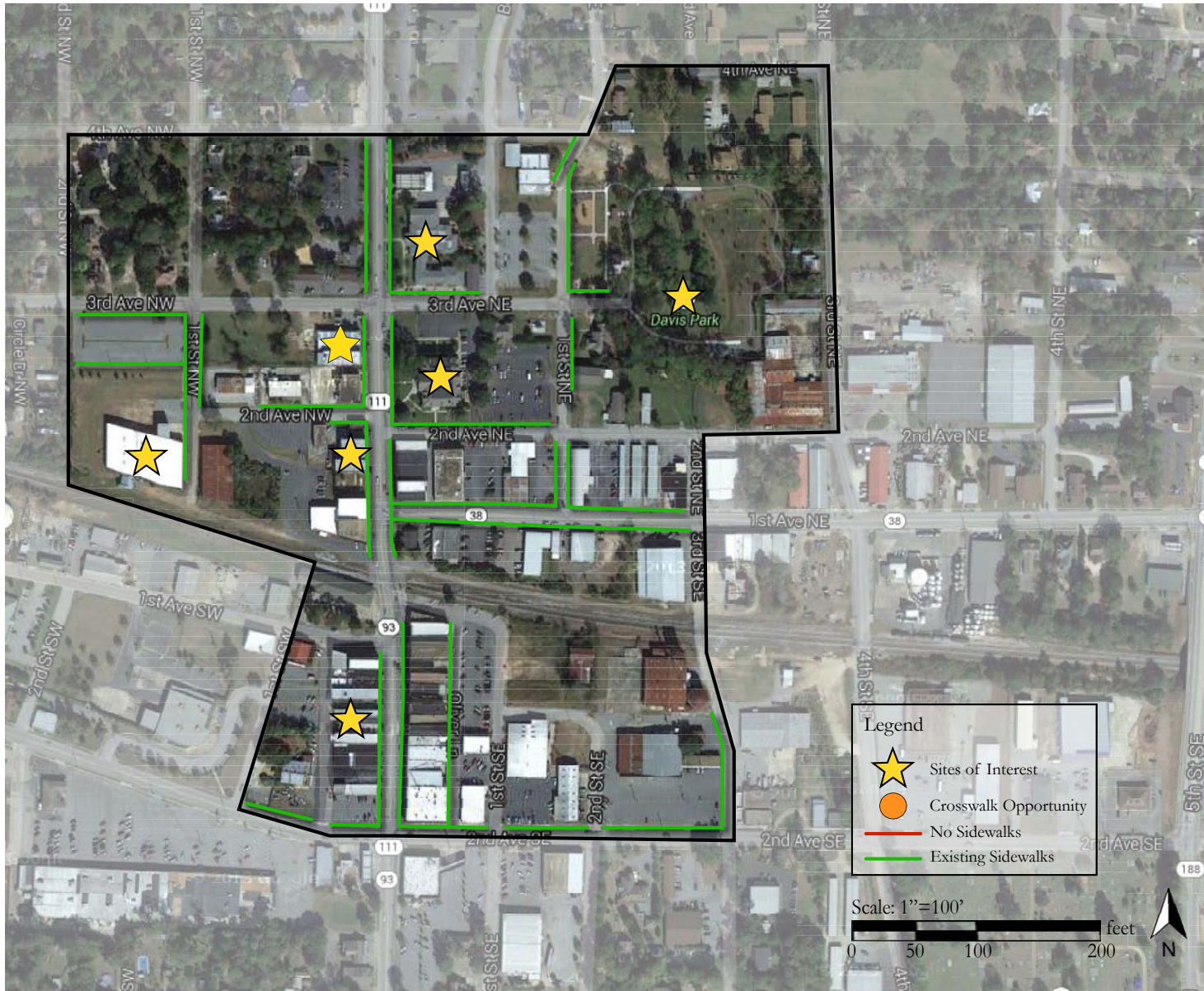
DOWNTOWN CAIRO BASE MAP



Base map by Jeremy Arnett.

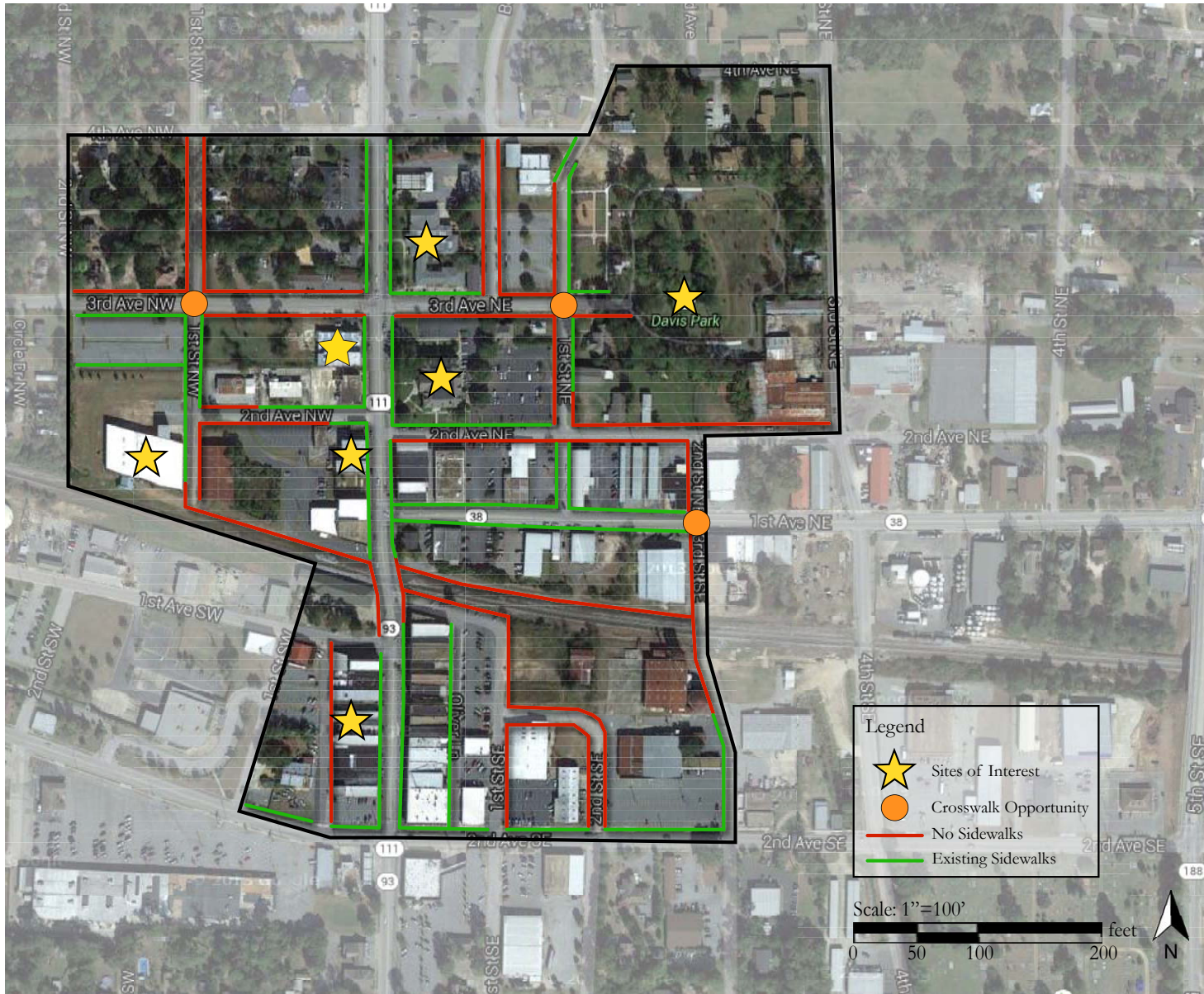


EXISTING SIDEWALK & CROSSWALK INVENTORY



A sidewalk inventory is conducted to address connectivity concerns for a prominent area of downtown Cairo. This map shows the locations of existing sidewalks surrounding key sites within the downtown fabric.

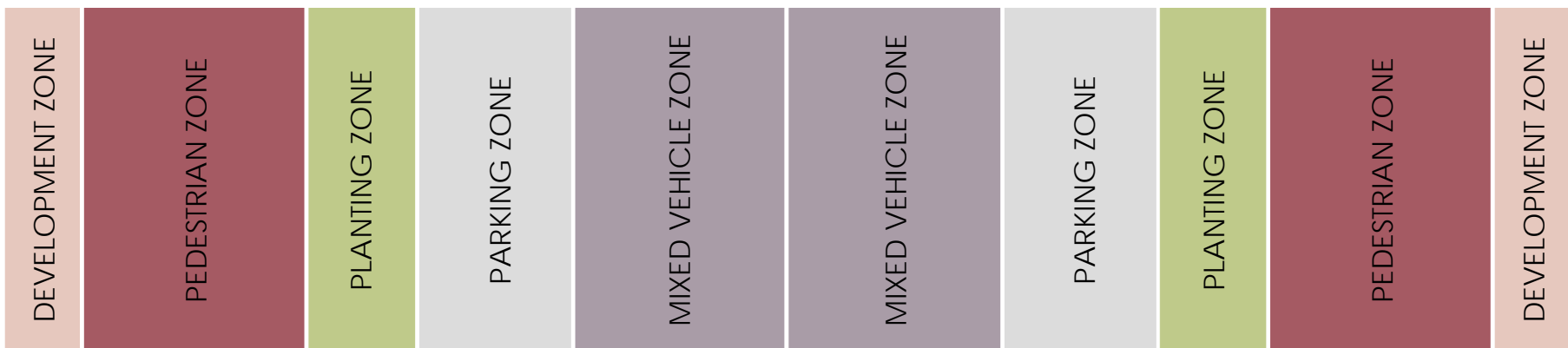
SIDEWALK & CROSSWALK OPPORTUNITIES



In addition to the existing pedestrian routes, this map displays opportunities for new sidewalks and as key locations for crosswalks within the downtown study area. Notice the use of railroad easements to provide a more direct connection between the east and west ends. These routes may also be used as circuits for health and wellness programs.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS



The above section illustrates recommended parameters for a typical streetscape. Municipalities are encouraged to buffer pedestrian activity with planting and/or parking areas. The street should also include adequate space to accommodate mixed vehicle use safely and effectively.

STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

CITY HALL

Before: When entering downtown Cairo on 1st Avenue, the first impression of downtown is cluttered by power lines, an unattractive traffic light, and dingy building exteriors.

After: By removing the distracting wires, upgrading the conventional traffic signal to a historic-styled traffic light, and adding welcoming signage and street trees, this entryway into downtown becomes more welcoming and worthy of Georgia's Hospitality City.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

CITY HALL

Before: This image shows the current landscape of Cairo City Hall.

After: This image shows the landscape when the existing crape myrtles are properly maintained and pruned appropriately to reach a feasible height and fullness. Their stature brings welcomed interest and shade to the space. For proper tree pruning and maintenance instructions, see the Appendix.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

1ST AVENUE

Before: View of the current streetscape on 1st Avenue NE.

After: Planting crape myrtles and introducing a grassy strip along this street softens the appearance, increases the amount of pervious surface, adds visual interest, unifies the downtown, and provides shade.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

2ND AVENUE

Before: View of the current streetscape on 2nd Avenue.

After: Planting crape myrtles along this road will expand the streetscape, unify downtown, increase visual interest, and, in the future, provide shade.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

2ND AVENUE

Before: View of the current streetscape on 2nd Avenue.

After: Planting crape myrtles and shrubs along this road will expand the streetscape, unify downtown, increase visual interest, and, in the future, provide shade.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENTS

Before: This image shows the current driveway and parking lot of Center Drugs, located on 2nd Avenue.

After: This rendering shows Center Drugs' parking lot planted with crape myrtles and a vegetated island. Planting a tree in this spot will reduce unsightly parking, add visual interest to the parking lot, and increase shade.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

THE GREENWAY

Before: This image shows the current state of the railroad and the underutilized asphalt road that runs alongside it.

After: This image shows the conversion of the underused and unattractive asphalt road into a greenway path. The community of Cairo needs better connectivity; a greenway will provide a safe and social alternative.

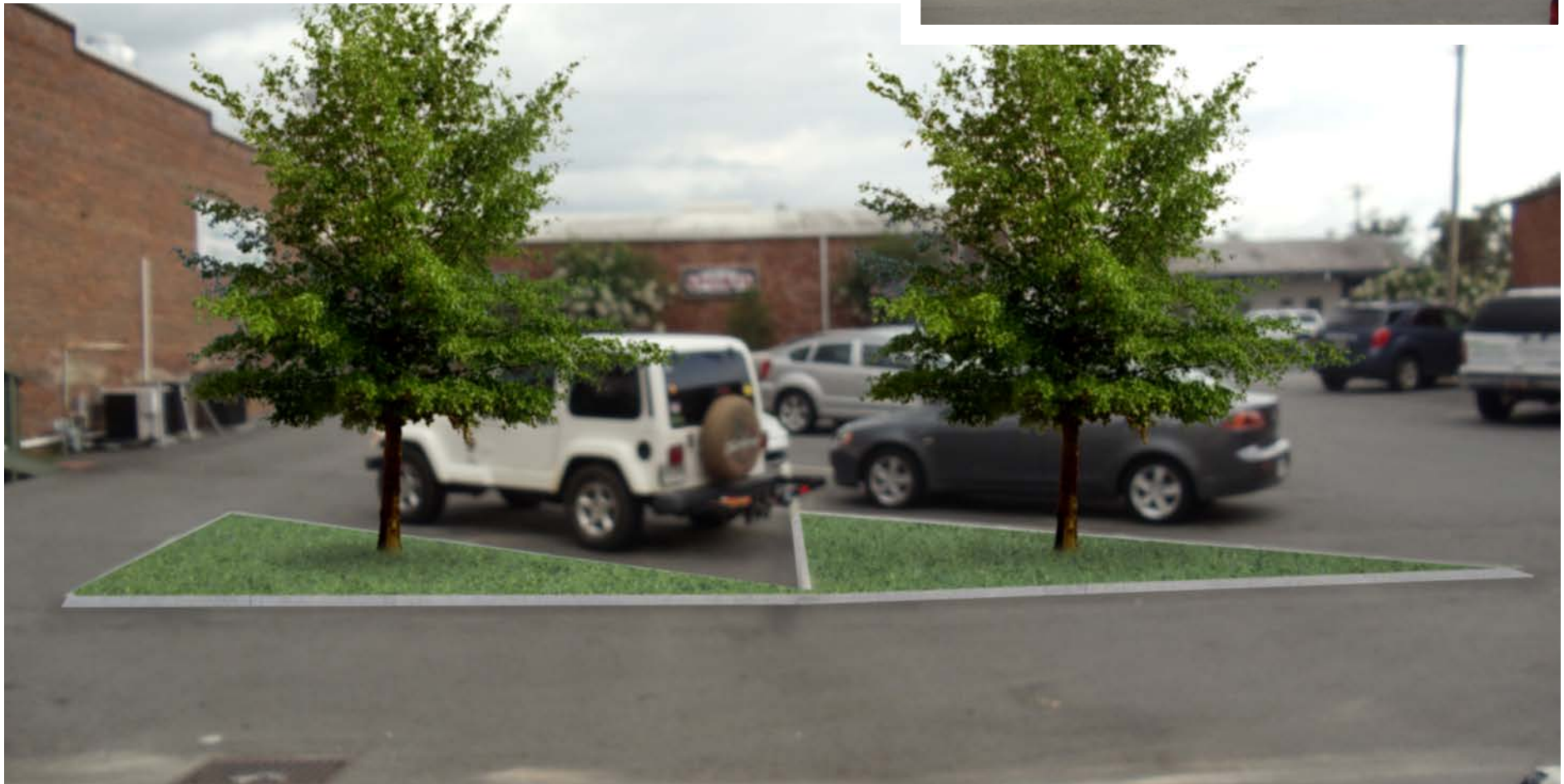


STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

PARKING LOT GREENING

Before: One of Cairo's most impressive attributes is the quantity and availability of parking. This is a typical parking lot that sits directly adjacent to downtown Cairo.

After: Greening the existing parking lots in Cairo is important for a few reasons: 1) greening parking lots reduces impervious surfaces and is more ecologically responsible; 2) trees beautify and reduce parking lot heat; and 3) having more beautiful off-street parking options will likely increase patronage of downtown businesses.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

PARKING LOT GREENING

Before: The photograph shows IGA's current parking lot.

After: Landscaping improvements have been implemented on the corner and shade trees have been added to the parking lot.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

PARKING LOT GREENING

Before: This is an empty strip shopping center's parking lot on 2nd Avenue. The parking lot is large, unattractive, and currently unused.

After: By adding trees and grassy islands throughout the parking lot, several goals are met: 1) the parking lot is no longer simply sitting empty, but is now mitigating stormwater; 2) the parking lot looks more beautiful, gaining curb appeal; and 3) with added curb appeal, the space becomes more viable, increasing its chances to be rented or sold.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

PARKING LOT GREENING

Before: This parking lot sits behind Broad Street and allows patrons back-door access to the shops along Broad Street.

After: Planting trees in the already grassy parking median will make the parking lot more visually pleasing and ecologically functional and will cool the lot during the warmer months.



STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS

DUMPSTER SCREENING

Before: This is an area of the parking lot that sits behind Broad Street. The Dumpsters that serve the commercial spaces nearby are in public view.

After: By screening the Dumpster, it begins to look much less invasive and much more presentable. The parking lot no longer feels dirty or unwelcoming.





FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

COMMERCIAL SPACE

Before: This image shows a common sight in Cairo—an empty and viable commercial space.

After: The existing structure could, through façade improvements and additions, be transformed into an attractive and functioning restaurant or commercial space. Having active and attractive commercial space outside of the central business district will make these areas feel safer and look more beautiful, and will inspire like-minded development.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

TRAIN DEPOT APARTMENTS

Before: The historic train depot currently houses the Cairo Police Department. However, the Police Department needs to be renovated and relocation is being considered.

After: This image shows the train depot redeveloped into a commercial space. Using the train depot as a commercial space makes sense in two ways: 1) when the Police Department vacates the depot, this will offer the city or a private investor the perfect opportunity to renovate the space, and 2) converting the depot from public to commercial space will encourage activity in downtown Cairo.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

CAIRO POLICE DEPARTMENT

Before: This image shows an empty commercial space. As long as the space is not utilized it will only add to the negative perception of downtown Cairo.

After: This rendering shows the empty commercial space being used as the Cairo Police Department. With façade improvements, landscaping, and the addition of grassy strips and street trees, the empty commercial space is transformed into an attractive, spacious, and accessible location for the Police Department.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

WAREHOUSE REMODEL & SPLASH PAD

Before: This warehouse sits between 2nd Avenue NW, 1st Avenue NW, and the train track and is currently empty and unused.

After: By turning the warehouse into a space filled with shops, restaurants, and other amenities and by adding a splash pad playscape, both children and their parents will be drawn to this space and into downtown Cairo. This is one of Cairo's greatest opportunities to serve the community while increasing downtown's economic viability by creating a downtown destination.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

YOUTH-OPERATED CAFÉ

Before: This empty space is central to downtown Cairo, sitting on the corner of N Broad Street and 2nd Avenue NW.

After: The rendering shows the current storefront space utilized as a youth-operated coffee shop. This will give youth an opportunity to become involved in their community while offering the people of Cairo a service most agree they desire, adding much-needed spirit and energy to downtown.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

MURALS

Before: The photograph to the right shows an empty wall at a prominent intersection in downtown Cairo.

After: By adding a mural of Jackie Robinson to this empty wall near downtown, the city celebrates its rich and diverse heritage while adding life to the downtown space: beautifying, but with a purpose.



FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS

MURALS

Before: View of an empty wall at a prominent intersection.

After: Adding a historical advertisement to this empty wall as a mural-in this case, an advertisement for Dixie Maid Syrup-the city both increases visual interest and provides a nod to the town's long history with syrup.





SIGNAGE & GATEWAYS

SIGNAGE & GATEWAYS

DOWNTOWN PARKING SIGNS

Before: With little or no signage directing patrons to the parking located directly behind most stores in downtown Cairo, many do not know that it exists or feel uncomfortable using it.

After: Shown here is an example of themed signage: a magazine advertisement from the 1950s is turned into an attractive and helpful directional sign.



SIGNAGE & GATEWAYS

DOWNTOWN PARKING SIGNS

Before: With little or no signage directing patrons to the parking located directly behind most stores in downtown Cairo, many do not know that it exists or feel uncomfortable using it.

After: Shown here is an example of themed signage: an antique car illustration is turned into an attractive and helpful directional sign.



SIGNAGE & GATEWAYS

DOWNTOWN PARKING SIGNS

Before: This beautiful but underutilized pocket park also serves as a thoroughway for those who have parked behind the commercial spaces on Broad Street. However, the space is lacking direction.

After: Adding a fun and funky wall graphic livens up the space while acting as a directional tool-public art at its best.

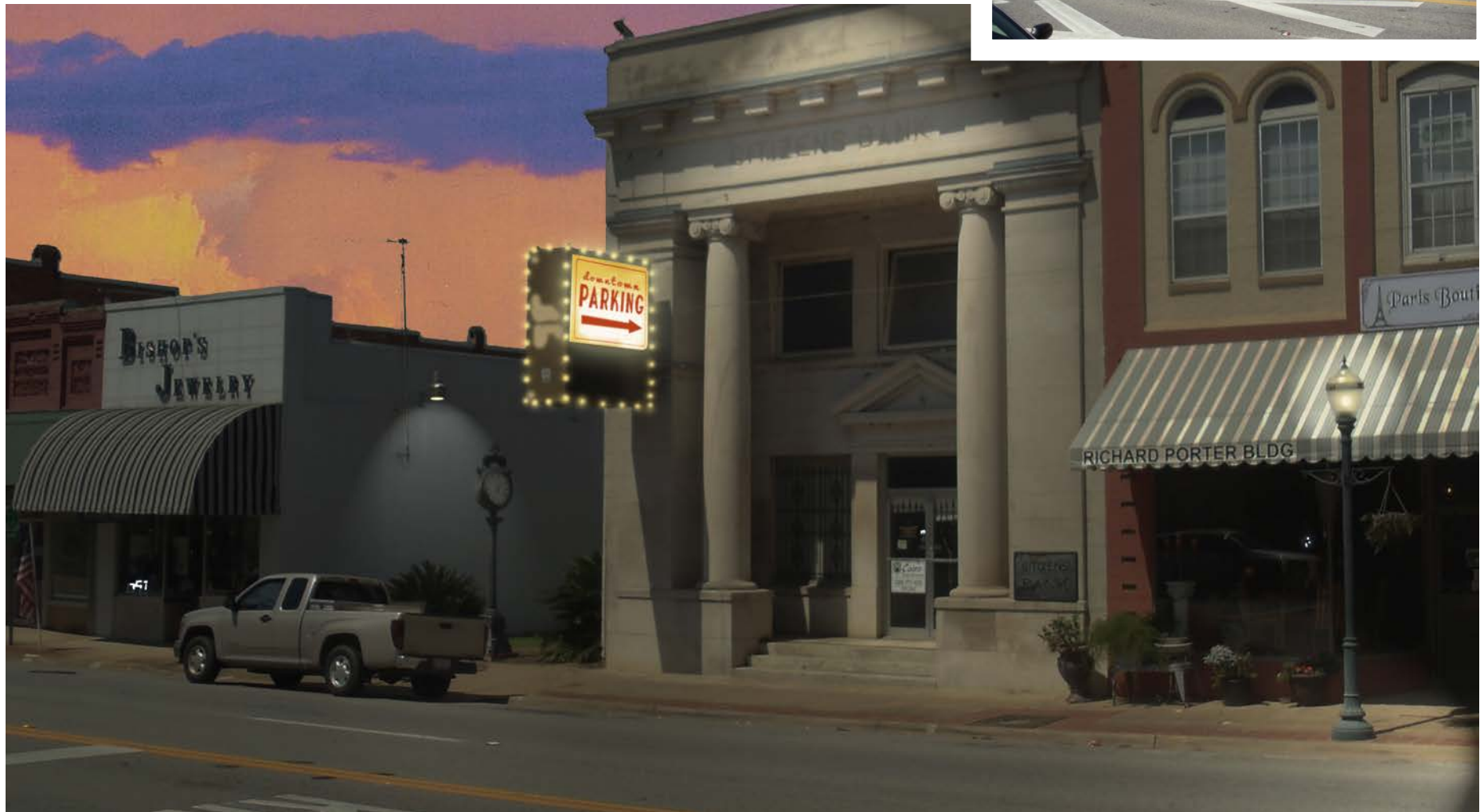


SIGNAGE & GATEWAYS

DOWNTOWN PARKING SIGNS

Before: This image is Broad Street during in downtown Cairo during the day. There are no directional parking signs present, which is particularly troublesome after dark.

After: This image shows the use of an already existing sign in a fun 1950's theme to direct night traffic to parking areas.



SIGNAGE & GATEWAYS

DOWNTOWN WELCOME SIGNS

Before: This image shows the intersection of Highway 84 and Broad Street. This is the largest and most trafficked gateway into downtown Cairo.

After: This rendering shows the intersection with gateway signage in a unique retro theme directing traffic into downtown Cairo.



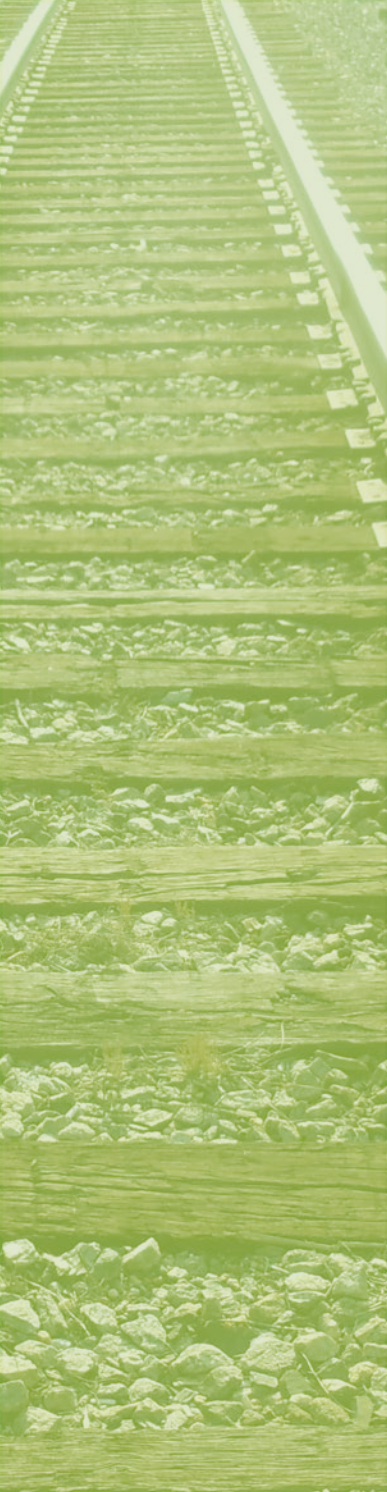


SIGNAGE & GATEWAYS

DOWNTOWN WELCOME SIGN CONCEPTS

These sketches show other 1950s-inspired signage concepts that could serve as welcome signs for visitors approaching downtown Cairo. The 1950s concepts were developed from historical photographs of downtown Cairo like the one shown below.





CAIRO WORK PLAN



The Carl Vinson Institute of Government has created an organized and systematic approach to downtown redevelopment and revitalization modeled after the Main Street Four-Point Approach®. The process focuses on 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: Coordination, 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 one critical element: public input and 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. Cairo has created a work program built upon the input of its residents that addresses the following components:

1. **Coordination:** (the Four-Point Approach uses the term “organization”) Coordination and 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.
2. **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 a downtown; this includes advertising, retail promotion, special events, and marketing of events.
3. **Design:** Design simply means re-creating downtown to be a safe, beautiful, and welcoming space for all who visit, work, and live there; this includes giving attention to public and private buildings, storefronts, signage, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandising, window displays, and promotional materials.
4. **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; this can be done by using techniques to retain and expand successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising 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.

SHORT-TERM WORK PLAN OPTIONS:

1. Coordination:

- a. Appoint a downtown point person: Selecting a city employee as the downtown point person is essential in this process. This person should take charge of all coordination concerning the further development of downtown Cairo. Throughout the public engagement process, community members stated the pressing need for one person to wake up every morning thinking about and working to improve downtown.
- b. Apply to become a Main Street: The designated downtown point person would apply to the Department of Community Affairs' Main Street Competitive Start-Up Application Process that opened in July of 2013. This person would become Cairo's Main Street Director.
- c. Join the Georgia Downtown Association: This is a key resource for education, training, networking, and best practices for downtown economic redevelopment.
- d. Network with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Municipal Association: These organizations are resources for downtown redevelopment.
- e. Conduct maintenance:
 - i. Pressure wash sidewalks: Pressure washing the sidewalks in downtown Cairo is one of the quickest and most affordable ways to send a visual cue to those in and visiting downtown that the downtown is cared for and being improved.
 - ii. Restripe crosswalks and stripe new crosswalks: Restriping crosswalks will improve the look of the city's downtown and allow people to easily realize that improvements are happening. Most importantly, restriping and striping new crosswalks will send a visual cue to those driving through downtown to be aware of the presence of pedestrians and to slow down. One of the most prominent complaints about downtown Cairo is that drivers are moving too quickly for pedestrians to feel safe when getting out of their cars or crossing the road. Adding new crosswalks at mid-block intervals will act as a needed traffic calmer.

Cairo: Georgia's Hospitality City

- iii. Implement truck restrictions (except local deliveries) and create a truck route(s) to direct this traffic off Broad Street: Implementing truck restrictions will promote a pedestrian-safe and bike-friendly Broad Street.
- iv. Clean out vacant storefronts and alcoves: The current dust, dirt, trash, cigarette butts, and pigeon droppings send a message to anyone who works in or visits downtown Cairo that there is a low maintenance standard in the city. Simply keeping storefronts clean and debris-free would do much to beautify the downtown area.
- v. Maintain plants properly: The pocket parks scattered throughout downtown should be points of pride. However, the current maintenance of these parks seems to be either lacking or too severe. A proper plant maintenance system should be followed so that pocket parks are neither overgrown and perceived to be dangerous to walk through nor severely pruned. Particularly, allowing the crape myrtles in downtown to grow and reach their fullness will add elements of aesthetic appeal.
- vi. Plant trees in the sidewalk grates in the areas not affected by the upcoming streetscape project on South Broad Street.
- vii. Remove trash from the backs of stores: By quickly removing trash from the backs of stores, store owners could easily create a feeling of safety. This would also ensure that people use back entrances to stores more often.
- viii. Use other maintenance resources: It is important to access maintenance resources from sources other than the city, especially if the city maintenance team is overwhelmed with its current duties. Using inmate labor and community service labor is a lower cost alternative.

2. Promotion:

- a. Publicize festivals and events: During the public input sessions, citizens, stakeholders, and public officials all mentioned the need for more events in downtown Cairo. They hypothesized that more events and activities would draw more people downtown. However, the city already has a surprising number of annual events. The first step is to coordinate and promote existing events so that everyone is aware and involved (downtown shop owners, the community, those outside the central business district who want to be involved, etc.). These stakeholders can work with the downtown point person to fashion ways that these festivals and events can be a success, both for the community and for those who are financially invested in downtown Cairo.
- b. Create a start-up marketing plan: The plan should include but not be limited to cross-promotions, advertising, press releases, an image library, branding, retail merchandising (front windows and back alleys), a website, and a social media presence with a regional reach.

3. Economic Development:

- a. Ordinance review and amendment: The downtown point person and the community should work with city attorneys to identify ordinances that are inhibiting positive change and economic development in downtown Cairo and to build new ordinances that will better serve redevelopment downtown and in adjacent areas.
- b. Business development: Time and again community members stated that they would like more businesses and more diverse businesses, including gathering places that are open later (4–10pm) and serve all members of the community, including the youth. During the youth focus group session, there was consensus that the young people of Cairo go elsewhere so that they can have an “evening of activities.” Offering places for community members to have chance encounters with one another will increase the vibrancy of downtown Cairo.
 - i. Create a café: Work with the high school students to create a café. The outbuilding adjacent to the Roddenberry Memorial Library could act as the initial startup location.
 1. Establishing the café would encourage social entrepreneurship in the community and create a gathering space so many people have mentioned needing.
 2. In the future, this café could be converted to a private business with local ties.
 - ii. Refurbish the Zebulon Theater: The Zebulon is truly one-of-a-kind and the gem of Cairo. If the Zebulon were refurbished and converted to digital, it could easily become one of the driving forces of downtown Cairo, bringing in people from all around to enjoy a night at the movies.
 1. Have downtown businesses work with the Zebulon to create an “evening of activities,” meaning something to do before the film, the film, and something to do after the film. This will bring more people in and encourage them stay in downtown longer, and they will be investing in their local economy.
 2. Research converting the theater to all-digital media: Investigate used digital projectors and come up with an estimate of the total cost to completely refurbish the Zebulon.
 - iii. List all vacant properties in and adjacent to downtown on Cairo’s website: Listing vacant properties will allow those interested in starting businesses to view the latest vacancies, locations, square footage, amenities, prices, and contact persons.
- c. Economic studies: Access UGA or other Grady County–specific economic studies including the Over/Under Study and the Retail Market Analysis.
- d. Best Practices: Explore retail incubator models and best practices.

4. Design:

- a. Improve parking signage downtown: Installing parking and directional signage will increase awareness of the ample parking behind the central business district in downtown.
- b. Install “Welcome” signs: Installing “welcome” signs will help make people aware that they are entering downtown Cairo and send a message to the community that exciting things are happening in their downtown.

LONG-TERM WORK PLAN

1. Design:

- a. Improve connectivity: Improving and implementing sidewalks, trails, bikeways, and greenways will provide an elevated sense of community; by getting people out, walking around, recreating, and exercising, downtown Cairo will begin to feel alive. The improvement of these connections will also help link the major pulls of downtown Cairo—its cultural and governmental offerings—to one another so that downtown becomes a network of attractions.
- b. Redesign gateways into downtown Cairo: Redesigning and landscaping gateways into downtown Cairo will let people know they have arrived at a destination and that the city is cognizant of and cares about how people perceive their downtown.
- c. Expand the Broad Street streetscape plan: Expanding the Broad Street streetscape plan outside of the current parameters to include other sections of the downtown area will beautify and draw people and businesses to those areas.
- d. Enhance signage for public facilities: All public and governmental facilities, including parks, should have consistent and attractive signage; this will lend a unified air to the downtown and help people navigate the area.

2. Economic Development:

- a. Register downtown Cairo as an Opportunity and Enterprise Zone.
- b. Move the police station from the train depot and redevelop that space as a private development: Moving the police station will serve both the police and downtown. The police currently need more space than the train depot provides, and with the police moved out, the train depot will offer prime space for a number of different kinds of developments: a restaurant, artist studios, a farmers market, etc.
- c. Develop a sports bar and grill with memorabilia relating to all of Grady County’s sports heroes.
- d. Build a splash pad in downtown Cairo: Building a splash pad in downtown Cairo will provide the downtown the pull it needs to attract both children and parents. Bringing more people downtown means that people will spend more money in downtown businesses.

- e. Reconstitute/reinvigorate the Downtown Development Authority: Include training, job descriptions, scope of work, development plan, financial workshops, marketing/promotion, façade grants, revolving loan funds, tax credits, and other development tools.

Short-Term Action Items by Committee:

DESIGN

Action Item	<p>Improve Parking Signage Downtown</p> <p>Installing parking and directional signage will help make people aware of ample parking behind the Broad Street corridor. (Standard Green DOT Signs)</p>
Lead	Pam Grigg
Partners	Archway Partnership, City of Cairo, Hazel Mills, Becca Cline, Lewis Oliver, Alan Saul, Connie Saul, Zerric Clinton
Timeline	<p>September 30, 2013: public parking inventory, locations, and quantity</p> <p>To be determined (TBD): Costs estimates, fabrication and installation</p>
Funding	TBD
Obstacles	Cost of signs – design, fabrication, installation
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify all public parking areas on and adjacent to Broad Street 2. Determine possible locations for signage 3. Determine number of signs and directional arrows to be produced 4. Obtain cost estimates 5. Arrange for fabrication with City of Cairo Sign Shop 6. Arrange for installation by city staff

Action Item	Install “Welcome” Signs Installing “welcome” signs will help make people aware that they are entering downtown Cairo and send a message to the community and visitors that exciting things are happening in downtown.
Lead	Pam Grigg
Partners	Archway Partnership, City of Cairo, Hazel Mills, Becca Cline, Lewis Oliver, Alan Saul, Connie Saul, Zerric Clinton
Timeline	September 30, 2013: gateway identification, sign locations, and quantity TBD: Costs estimates, fabrication, and installation The committee would like to have these signs in place by the Christmas Parade
Funding	TBD
Obstacles	Cost of signs—design, fabrication, installation
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify all gateways to downtown 2. Determine possible locations for signage 3. Determine number of signs and directional arrows to be produced 4. Obtain cost estimates 5. Arrange for fabrication with City of Cairo Sign Shop 6. Arrange for installation by city staff 7. Contact and coordinate with FFA, 4-H, Interact and Key Clubs, horticulture class at Cairo High School 8. Follow up on progress after clean up

PROMOTION

Action Item Create Marketing Plan

Lead Jennifer Majors

Partners Merchants, Cairo Messenger, The Zebulon, Chamber of Commerce, City of Cairo

Timeline September 1, 2013

Funding No funding needed (at this time)

Obstacles Time, eventually funding

- Steps**
1. Establish a social media presence, including Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram, Twitter, etc.
 2. Create a calendar of events and activities to inform the public
 3. Utilize the Cairo High School newspaper (The Red and Black)
 4. Promote with media outside of Grady County and cross-promote within the city (tent cards at restaurants listing upcoming events)
 5. Contact the city to find out their current maintenance practices
 6. Coordinate efforts with the city and downtown merchants

Action Item Coordinate Downtown Activities and Events

Lead Jennifer Majors, Debbi Miller

Partners Library, City of Cairo, The Zebulon, Grady Cultural Center, Cairo Messenger

Timeline Chamber of Commerce, Cairo Messenger

Funding No funding needed (at this time)

Obstacles Time, lack of public awareness

- Steps**
1. Publicly announce through the newspaper and other outlets that the Chamber of Commerce is leading the effort
 2. Create a campaign to solicit events
 3. Work closely with key partners
 4. Create a monthly master calendar of existing events
 5. Arrange for the calendar to be posted on all partners' websites and distributed via the newspaper
 6. Look to partner with locally owned downtown businesses as well as businesses outside downtown (Mr. Chick, etc.) to promote the downtown as the heart and soul of the community

Action Item	List Vacant Downtown Properties on Cairo’s Website
Lead	Nola Daughtry
Partners	Archway Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, Code Enforcement/ Vicky Redden, Realtors, Clerk of Courts
Timeline	September 30, 2013
Funding	No funding needed
Obstacles	Time, permission to market properties
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect information about vacancies in downtown using Sharon Liggett (Archway), the Chamber, and other partners 2. Fill in missing components 3. Contact property owners for permission to market properties 4. Put signage on available properties 5. Post vacancy information on Cairo’s website 6. Decide who will follow up on vacancies and maintain the list

Action Item Implement Truck Restrictions
Lead Celeste Tyler
Partners City of Cairo
Timeline December 30, 2013
Funding City of Cairo, Department of Transportation
Obstacles Convincing trucks to actually take truck route

Steps

1. Celeste will speak with City Manager by August 2, 2013
2. Establish timeline
3. Determine signage needs

COORDINATION

Action Item	Clean Storefronts
Lead	Celeste Tyler
Partners	City of Cairo, civic clubs, Cairo High School clubs, Chamber of Commerce, Southwest Georgia Technical College (Cairo branch)
Timeline	November 30, 2013
Funding	Keep Grady Beautiful, City of Cairo, and business owners
Obstacles	Ongoing maintenance, property owners' buy-in, South Broad Transportation Enhancement
Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Determine initial project boundaries2. Conduct a needs assessment of downtown properties3. Identify and contact partners4. Build support with property and business owners5. Engage public works department with scheduling

WORK GROUPS

I. ORGANIZATION/COORDINATION

1. Don Nickerson, Planning Commission
2. Margaret Tyson, Planning Commission
3. Celeste Tyson, City of Cairo

II. PROMOTION

1. Dot Moses, Community Volunteer
2. Felecia Hunter, Banking, Downtown Business Owner
3. Debbi Miller, Downtown Business Owners and Building Owner
4. Lisa Oliver, Educator, Downtown Building Owner
5. Jennifer Majors, Chamber of Commerce/JDA
6. Glenn Barrett, Community Member
7. Stephanie Gonzales, Interpreter, Marketing, LULAC
8. Gabriella Sanchez, Cairo High School Student

III. DESIGN

1. Hazel Mills, Downtown Merchant and Building Owner
2. Becca Cline, Grady County Historical Society Museum
3. Lewis Oliver, Downtown Property Owner
4. Alan Saul, Downtown Business Owner
5. Connie Saul, Downtown Business Owner
6. Zerric Clinton, Educator, Community Member
7. Pam Grigg, Library Director

IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Mesha Wind, Cairo Messenger, Archway Partnership
2. Nola Daughtry, Family Connection
3. Chadd Mathis, Chamber of Commerce/JDA
4. Don Clark, UGA Extension
5. Marilyn Dollar, Downtown Business Owner and Building Owner
6. Luther Dollar, Downtown Merchant and Building Owner
7. Matt Sanders, Edward Jones, Chamber of Commerce President, Downtown Business Owner and Building Owner



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