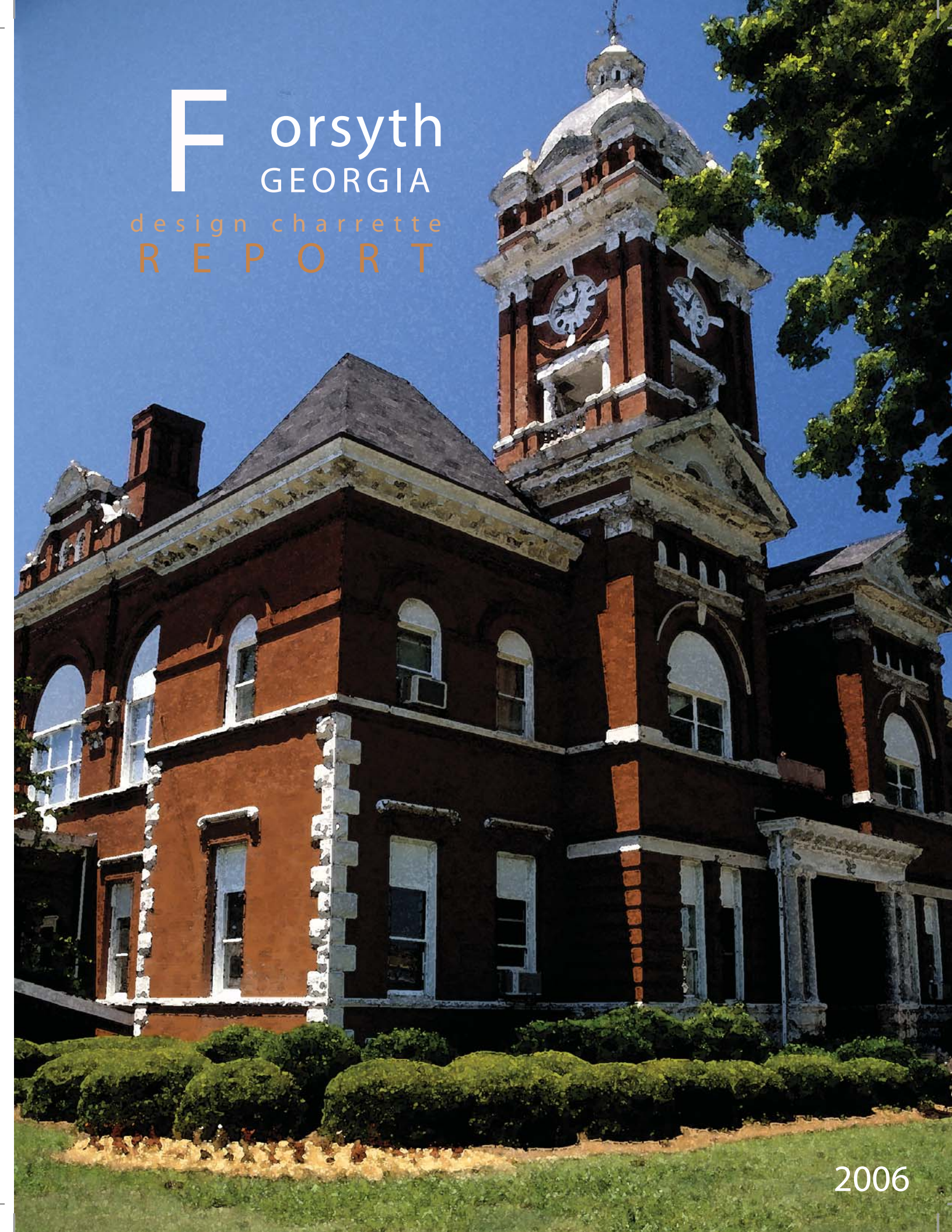


Forsyth GEORGIA

design charrette
REPORT



2006

Forsyth GEORGIA

design charrette REPORT

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Center for Community Design, Planning & Preservation
College of Environment & Design
The University of Georgia

Forsyth, GA
March 24-26, 2006

A message from the charrette coordinator...



The University of Georgia

Pratt Cassity
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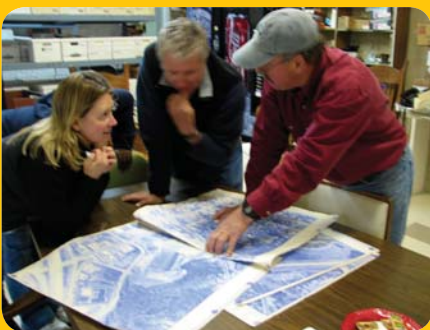
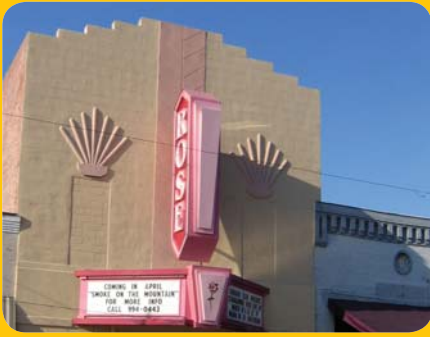
College of Environment and Design
Center for Community Design, Planning and Preservation

March 26, 2006

The City of Forsyth now joins a prestigious list of cities strengthening their commitment to a vision for future change by using the design charrette to guide local decision-making. Charrettes enhance local governments' ability to obtain funds for improvements and galvanize support for community change.

Our design team has worked hard to glue together Forsyth's past community improvements and downtown revitalization successes with the latest desires expressed by the community. This process has produced a wealth of recommendations that will be detailed on the following pages.

The hospitality of the fine folks of Forsyth has been overwhelming. So many people deserve credit for bringing us here. Thanks go to Mayor Pace, Hal Clarke, Harold Clarke and especially Better Hometown Director Joanna Banks.



What is a Charrette?

Charrette is a French word that translates as “little cart.” At the leading architecture school of the 19th century, the Ecole des Beaux- Arts in Paris, students would be assigned a tough design problem to work out under pressure of time. When time ran out, students had to place their work on a cart wheeled around the studio professor.

Today we define a charrette as an intensive, multi-disciplinary planning process. It is designed to facilitate an open discussion between all of the stakeholders of a given development project, including architects, community groups, developers and neighbors. A charrette is usually a short process, from 3 days to 2 weeks long, resulting in a clear, detailed, realistic vision for development.

There are 3 main parts to a charrette:

- **Exploration and issue Identification:** Stakeholders and design professionals meet to explore the area (e.g. building, site, neighborhood) and discuss issues important to the development.
- **Design:** Design professionals create schematic images to represent numerous design solutions for the problems at hand. Issues discussed in the first step are taken into consideration: building typology, design elements, green spaces, landscaping, parking, recreation, traffic, safety, sustainable development, water management, to name a few.
- **Implementation Plan:** A document summarizes the vision and is adopted by stakeholders as a guide for present and future developments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION Pages 6-11

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

CIRCULATION Pages 13-17

VISUAL OBSTRUCTIONS Pages 18-23

SITE-SPECIFIC ISSUES Pages 24-29

ARCHITECTURE Pages 30-39

FUNDING SOURCES Pages 40-43

INTRODUCTION

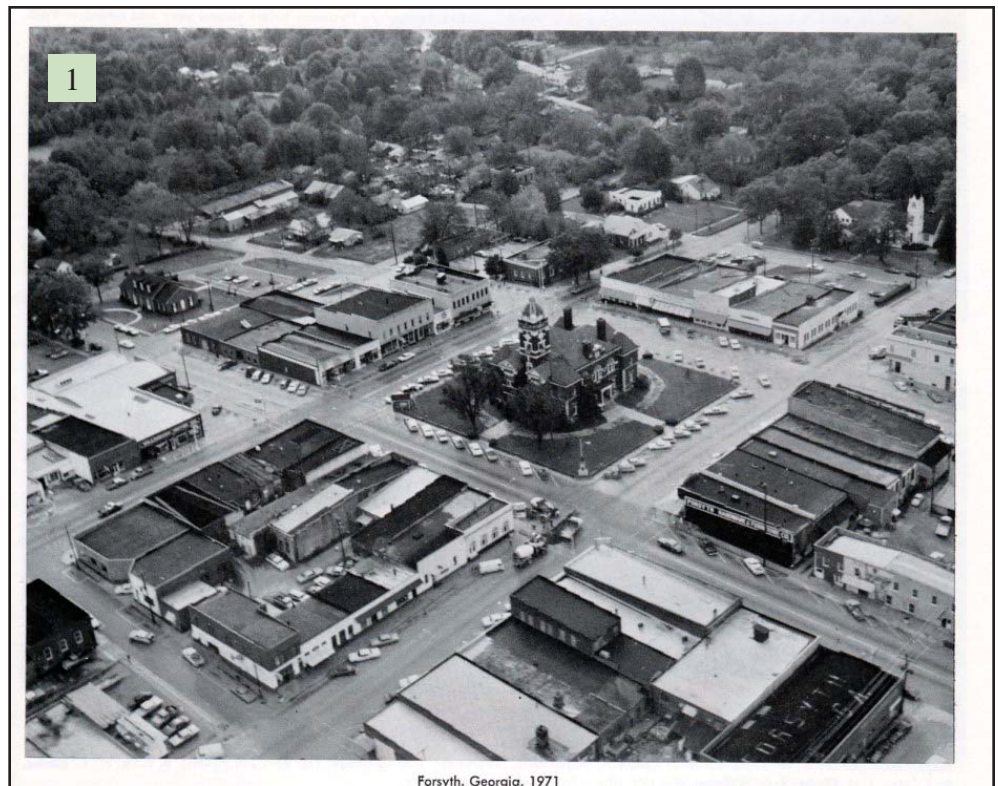
What's Good About Forsyth?

Forsyth has many things going for it. First, as evidenced by community attendance and assistance with this charrette, it has involved, effective citizens. The city has also made an effort to preserve many of its historic assets, providing a rich foundation on which to build. In addition, Forsyth has historically practiced very thoughtful planning, the results of which give the visitor a sense of connectivity, accessibility and well-defined space.

Three highlights the team noticed:

- The downtown square
- The network of well-differentiated destinations
- The tradition of pedestrian-friendly design

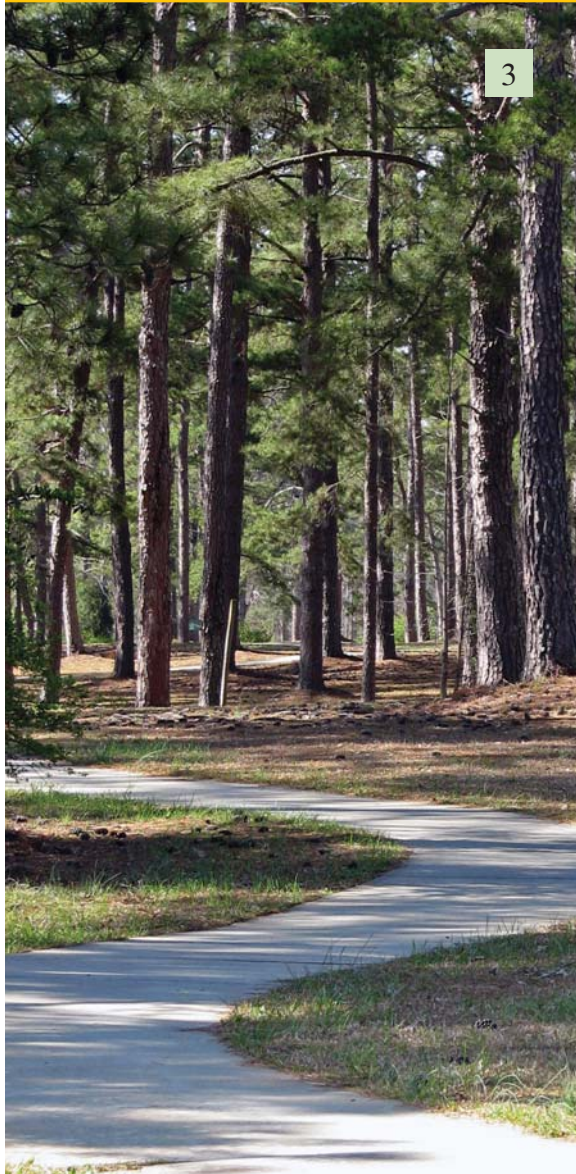
The largely intact downtown square (1). With all four sides of the square contributing to the historic district, Forsyth has protected its assets better than many other cities and enters this charrette stronger because of it.





2

Forsyth is composed of various campus-like nodes; a mix of interconnected buildings and related landscapes. Each node is a destination. Obvious nodes are the downtown square, Tift College (2), the golf course area (3), and the residential corridor, but there are others as well.



3



4

Pedestrians' safety when moving between nodes is enhanced by Forsyth's wide sidewalks and traffic-calming street and parking layouts (4).

What Problems Does Forsyth Face?

Local residents and officials attended this charrette because they sensed some threats to Forsyth's traditional quality of life. Those who moved to Forsyth from the schizophrenic, hyperactive suburbs around Atlanta and other metro areas have noticed the very characteristics they fled creeping into their refuge in Forsyth. To those who have always lived in Forsyth, the changes have been even more stark.

What both groups are noticing can be grouped into three categories:

- **Inappropriate development:** From poorly-conceived architecture to signage that is inappropriate in size, location or style, the traditional character of Forsyth is being obscured by designs meant only to be noticed. The North Lee Street corridor (1) is of most concern, though not unique. The Ingles shopping center displays a similar disregard for aesthetics. (2)
- **Threats to historic resources:** Areas of concern include the Tift College campus that will be taken over by the Department of Corrections, the nearby depot buildings which appear lost among new developments and vacant land, and various sites on the edges of town where new subdivisions are springing up.
- **Increasing traffic congestion:** Whether caused by an influx of new residents riding the wave of growth surrounding nearby cities like Atlanta and Macon, or by travelers moving between these points, traffic in Forsyth has increased. This causes additional dangers for pedestrians, frustrating delays for local drivers and makes Forsyth less desirable to potential new residents.

1



2



Tools to Implement Change

All the good intentions in the world will fail to bring development problems under control if the local government lacks the ability to enforce new mandates. Luckily, Forsyth has recognized this fact for some time. Since 1983 the city has had a National Register Historic District. Other efforts are currently underway.

Updated zoning regulations were being written at the time of the charrette and a decision to focus efforts on downtown historic districts has been made. The zoning regulations are being written by an outside consultant with at least a dozen satisfied Georgia cities on his resume. The focusing on downtown historic districts includes three efforts. First, the designation of a local historic district is being pursued. Design guidelines for projects within that historic district are also being developed. Finally, the city will make sure its own assets meet the new expectations by standardizing streetscape improvements in the district. An Athens-based landscape architecture firm with a wealth of experience in small Georgia cities is heading up that project.

What's the Difference Between a National Register Historic District and a Local Historic District?

A National Register District Identifies; a Local District Protects.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) works closely with the Center for Community Design and Preservation at the University of Georgia in Athens to coordinate local preservation planning programs and to assist communities in protecting their historic resources. Both National Register districts and locally designated historic districts can be used as effective preservation tools, either independently or together, to help preserve a community's historic resources. For example, the National Register program might be used as a convenient and credible way to identify a community's historic resources, followed by local district designation, which would further protect and enhance those resources through the process of design review. Conversely, a local survey to establish a local historic district might also be used as the basis for a National Register district nomination, which would afford additional preservation incentives, including rehabilitation tax credits, to properties protected in the local district. Local district designation might also be used to selectively protect portions of National Register districts



considered especially significant to a community or subject to particularly strong development pressures. Local designation also might be afforded to an area larger than a National Register district to provide an even greater degree of protection to the historic resources within the National Register district.

Some communities' preservation needs may be met entirely with either a locally designated district or a National Register district; there are many examples in Georgia of both situations. Other communities may believe that a package involving both types of districts works best. Remember: local districts and National Register districts are different, but complementary, and can work effectively by themselves or together to meet a community's historic preservation needs.

Published by:
Georgia Department of Natural
Resources -- Historic Preservation
Division

http://hpd.dnr.state.ga.us/assets/documents/NR_vs_local_fs.pdf

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

With an agreed-upon plan to acquire the necessary regulatory tools in place, Forsyth can turn its attention to the specifics of its approach to development. These specifics are built on a framework of guiding principles. We have shown that the city of Forsyth faces development issues in numerous forms. For that reason, it is best to break these principles into four categories:

- **Circulation**

If it involves the movement of people or cars into and around Forsyth, it's a circulation issue.

- **Visual Obstructions**

Utility poles, billboards and signs are everywhere. We have some advice on dealing with the problem.

- **Site Specific Issues**

Having difficulty conveying the development themes to property owners? Our section on site specific issues is a good place to start.

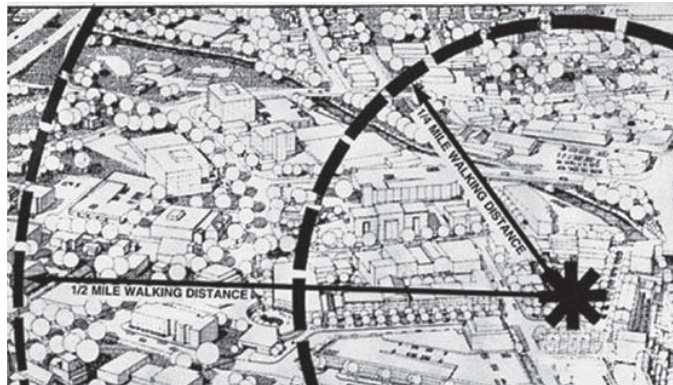
- **Architecture**

Good intentions can fall victim to poor execution. Keep architectural details up to standards using our guidelines.

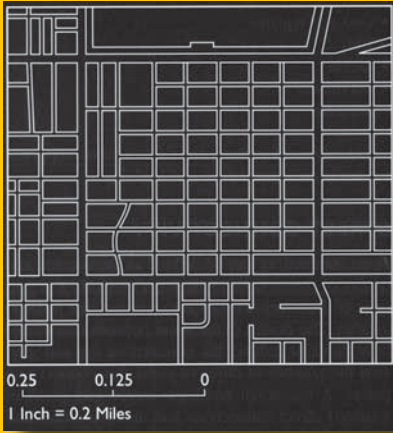
◀ CIRCULATION ▶

The first step in maintaining comfortable circulation in the face of development pressure is to **identify the patterns** in existing areas of the city. What the charrette team noticed in Forsyth, as mentioned earlier, is that the city is composed of nodes. Each of these nodes resembles a campus, in that it consists of a nicely integrated collection of buildings and landscapes. These nodes are complemented and in many cases connected by the grid layout of the downtown area.

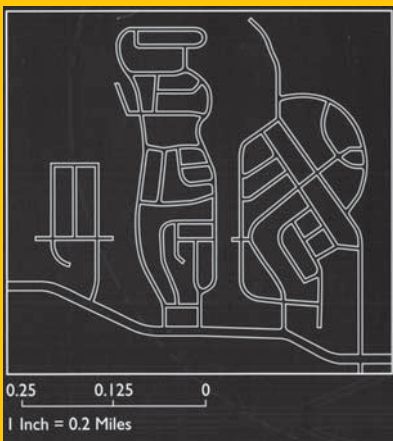
The original planners of Forsyth may not have known it at the time, but they followed the very principle we recommend to enhance walkability. We call it obeying the pedestrian mandate. Generally, the principle states that one should have to walk no farther than 1/2 mile to the core of a neighborhood center, or in the case of Forsyth, the downtown area. This half-mile trip should also be on safe, comfortable sidewalks.



The design of streets is also partly dictated by pedestrian safety. Our philosophy is composed of three components: sacredness of the existing street pattern, safety of street corners and maintaining traditional street width.



Traditional Grid Pattern



Cul-de-sac and Connector Pattern

Traditional street grid versus curvilinear designs.

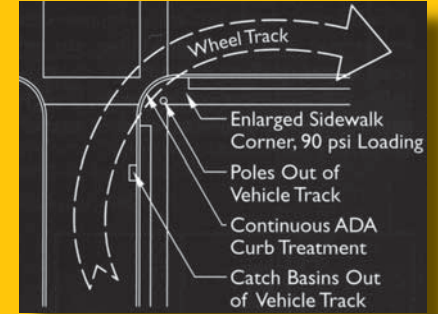
As shown in the illustrations above, a grid system provides relatively direct connections between places and offers multiple routes; in short, it provides high connectivity. Curvilinear designs often seen in today's suburban landscape lack these direct connections and route choices and are therefore described as having low connectivity.

Taken from "Planning and Urban Design Standards" by the American Planning Association.

The sacredness of the existing street pattern is due to the proven success of this design over time. The grid pattern followed by Forsyth's original planners avoids the problems of today's cul-de-sacs and connectors. This less hierarchical arrangement offers drivers a choice of routes between destinations and improves safety by spreading the traffic load over a wider area. Cars are not funneled into pinch points where a small accident or construction project can wreak havoc on the schedule of so many. In short, we recommend that as the city of Forsyth grows, the existing grid be extended to serve new developments.

The corners created by this grid pattern must be kept safe through the implementation of strict design guidelines. Beyond federally-mandated curb cuts for the disabled, curb heights should be low along the entire length of the walk for those stepping on and off in between intersections. Corners should also be designed with a small radius. In this way they will cater to pedestrians, not cars. The wide, sweeping curves that facilitate fast, easy turns for large cars and trucks on many of today's roads are a pedestrian's nightmare. For even greater traffic calming and to add more options for landscape improvements, consider adding bulbouts (also known as curb extensions or bumpouts), shown below, which narrow streets at intersections.





How can Forsyth accommodate trucks with small radius street corners?

As shown in the illustration above, trucks can be accommodated, even if intersections within the city use small radius corners. This is done by allowing the rear wheels of a tractor-trailer to track across the sidewalk portion of the corner. To prevent damage to infrastructure and to preserve the safety of pedestrians, certain guidelines should be followed when pursuing this design.

First, utility poles and signage should be located inside of the path of the vehicle tires.

Catch basins also need to be located away from the corner to prevent them from being crushed.

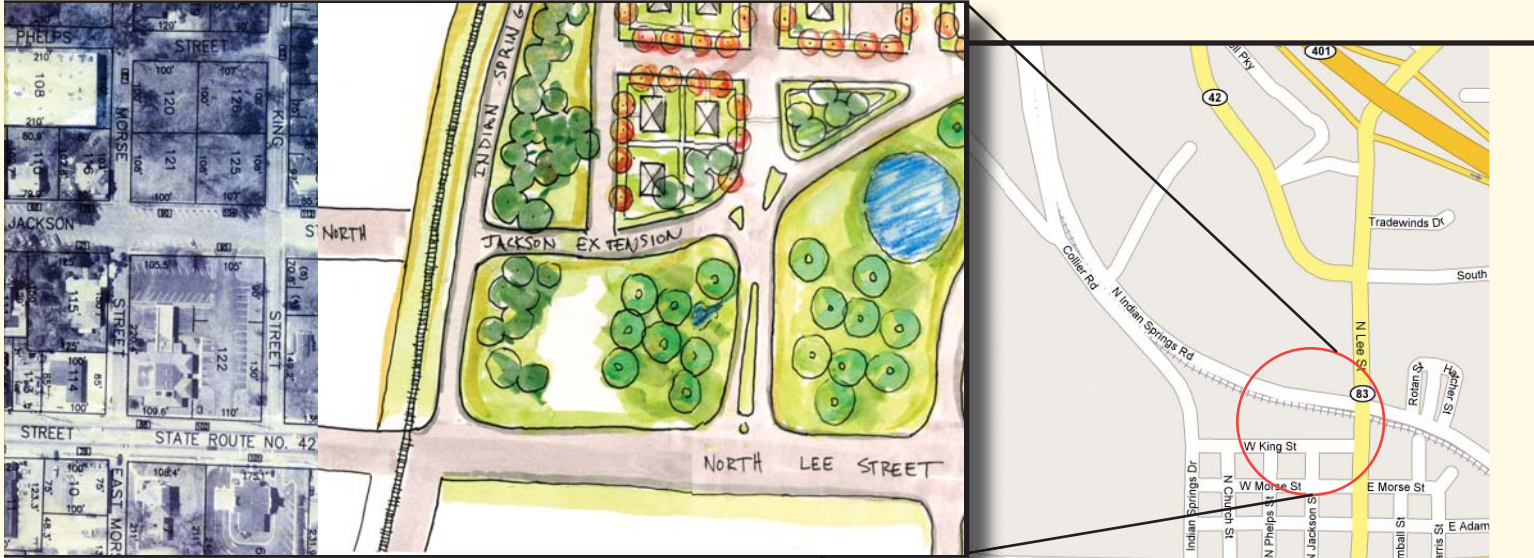
ADA curb-cuts should be widened to encompass the entire corner. This will make it easier for the trucks to pass over them and will decrease wear on the curb and sidewalk.

Taken from "Planning and Urban Design Standards" by the American Planning Association.

Another nightmare for pedestrians is the very wide street so commonly seen today. Wide streets should be avoided for the sake of both drivers and pedestrians. It has been proven that wide streets do not prevent traffic snarls and that narrower streets calm traffic and keep nearby pedestrians safer. The images shown above and below, taken in Athens, Georgia, 38 years apart, show how even a bustling college town can benefit from the narrowing of streets.

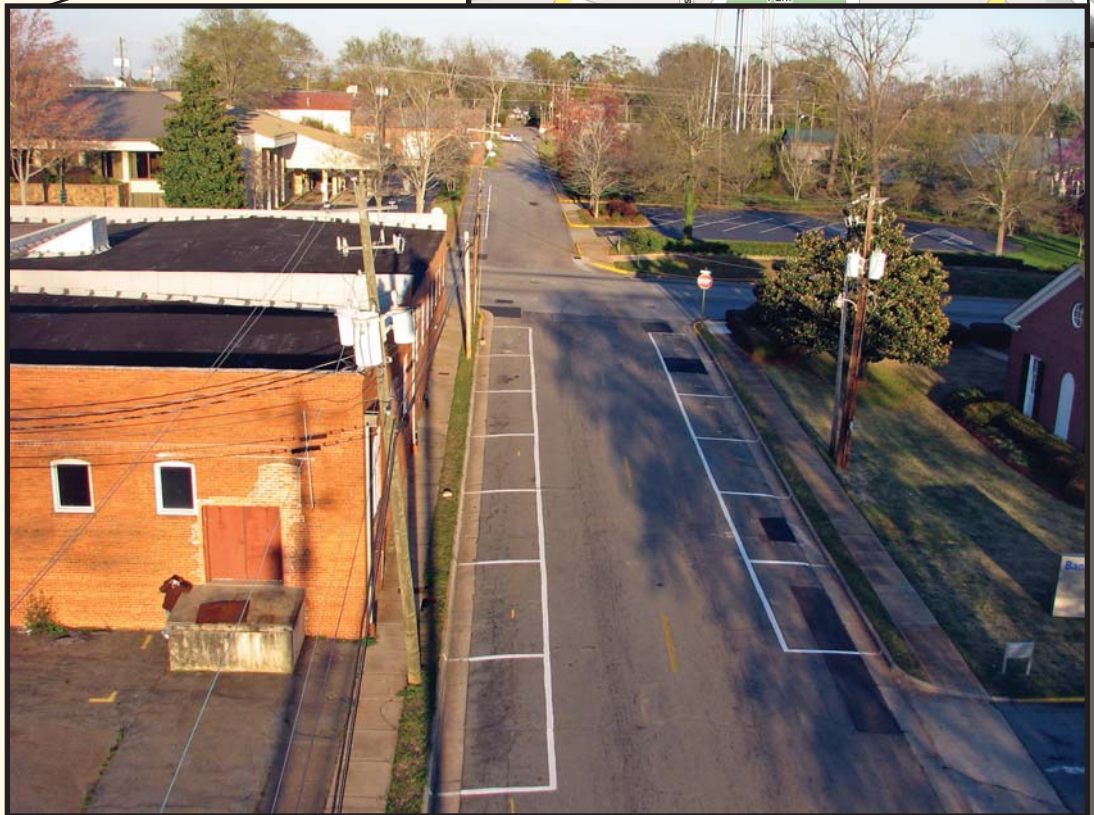


Focus on Forsyth: Circulation



As stated in the introduction, the original Forsyth street design is one of good circulation. However, there have also been some changes made over time that have resulted in less than ideal connectivity in spots. Here we look at three examples covering both the good, and the "can be made good."

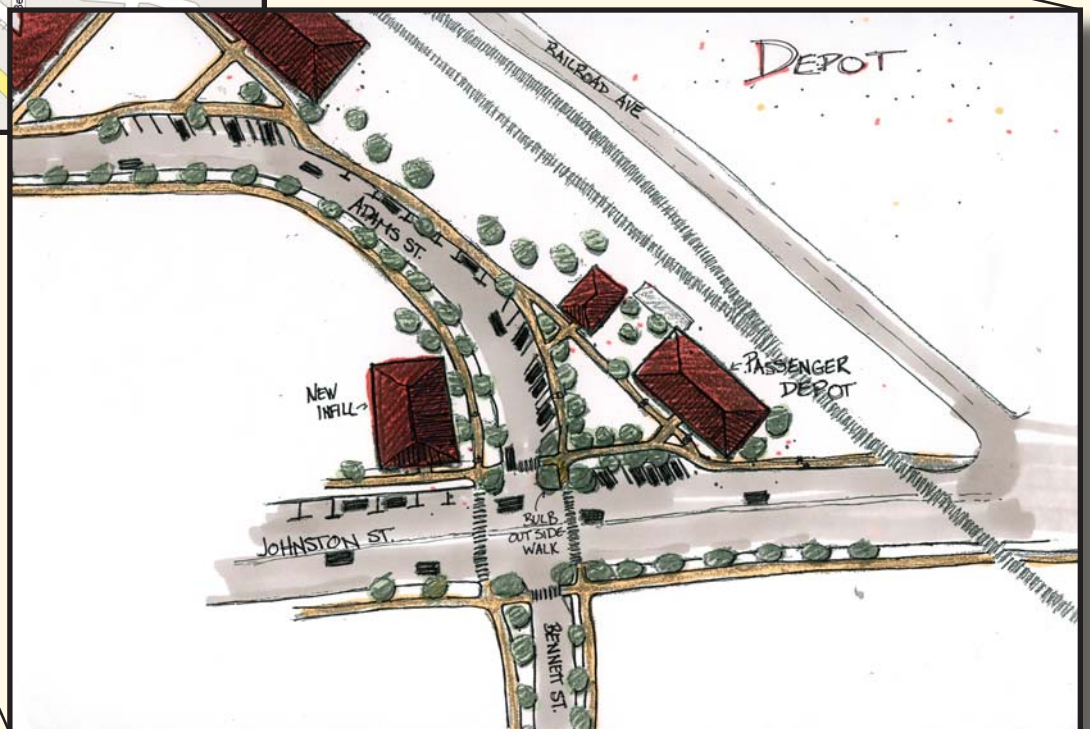
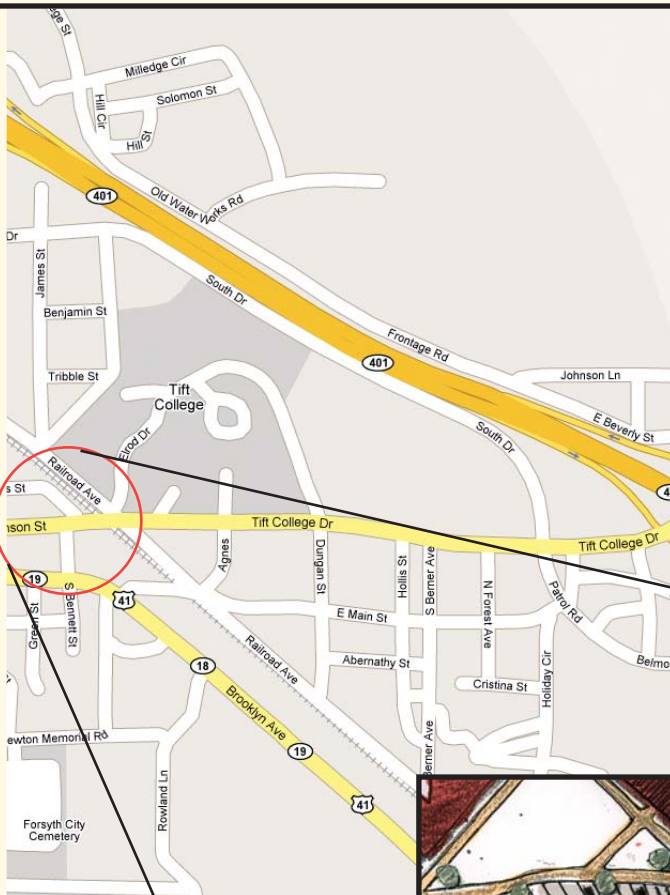
The south side of the Wal-Mart shopping center falls into the latter category. The area where North Jackson Street dead-ends into the railroad track presents a solution, though. In our design, shown above, North Jackson Street is extended with a new rail crossing and becomes a new entrance to the shop-



ping center. This could ease traffic congestion on North Lee Street and also help to create a small grid system that would be the basis of a redevelopment of the shopping center and its outparcels.

In the photo at lower left, we see an area where Forsyth got things right. Where East Chambers Street intersects with South Lee Street, a direct connection has been provided to allow through traffic to cross South Lee Street without difficulty. This site also shows a good example of street narrowing and on-street parking. Both elements calm traffic and make the area safer for pedestrians. Located only one block south of the square, this thoroughfare provides an alternative to more congested adjacent streets.

Another good example of a circulation issue that can be easily solved is the intersection of John-



ston, Bennett and Adams Streets. Currently, Bennett Street and Adams Street are not aligned, though they join with Johnston very close to one another. Our design proposal, shown below, aligns the two streets, allowing traffic to flow more smoothly. We have also added new on-street parking and created a landscaped plaza in front of the old passenger depot.



VISUAL OBSTRUCTIONS

The first question asked of community members by the charrette leader, Pratt Cascity, was "What would you like to see changed, visually, in Forsyth." The reason why the visual aspect was the first discussed is because it tends to be the most noticeable component of planning. Traffic congestion and poor walkability may be recognized in time, or under certain circumstances, but visual distractions cannot be missed. Some visual issues can be described as visual obstructions and those are what this section deals with.

Utilities are the source of many visual obstructions and, in this regard, Forsyth is no exception. Although the city has, admirably, relocated downtown utility lines and poles from the square to streets behind the downtown buildings, the problem exists elsewhere. Indeed, throughout town, power, telephone and cable wires droop in front of building facades and scenic vistas all too frequently.

Minimizing the intrusion of utilities into the public thoroughfare can be a daunting task. The most effective solution is to bury the utili-

ties underground but the costs of doing so are large and many small cities don't have the money to spend on something some consider frivolous.

Burying utilities is not a frivolous project, however. There are numerous benefits to doing so, beyond aesthetics. First, a utility company can reduce maintenance and repair costs by eliminating their lines' exposure to severe weather and potential accidents. Second, utility poles and lines can be a safety hazard to the public in the same situations. Finally, buried utilities can improve property values and spur economic development. Often, the installation of a city's new streetscape is an opportunity to bury utilities under sidewalks.

There are some sources a city can turn to for funding to bury utilities. One is the federal government. The federal Transportation Enhancement grant program offers funding via application to the state Department of Transportation. Alternatively, a city may decide to vote on the establishment of special assessment districts within which an additional fee is added to utility bills in advance of and as funding for a burying program. As with most funding searches, it pays to be creative. Additional information on funding is at the end of this report.

If no source of funding can be found, there are a few less expensive alternatives for minimizing the presence of utilities. These include consolidating utilities on one side of a street or in alleyways, wrapping multiple wires into a single bundle, and screening ground level transformers and junction boxes with landscaping.

Signs and billboards are another issue for Forsyth. While every business has a right to advertise, the situation can become one of diminishing returns as more and more signs of all shapes, sizes, and lighting styles compete for the attention of the passerby. A well thought out sign ordinance can therefore be of benefit not only to city and its visitors, but to business owners as well.

A sign ordinance can be included in a comprehensive zoning code or issued as a stand-alone ordinance. In either

An Introduction to Sign Types

There are many types of signs, especially when one counts those attached to building facades. Luckily, the main concern here is the sign that sits away from a building. These can be classified as follows:

Monument sign: A freestanding sign supported primarily by an internal structural framework or integrated into landscaping or other solid structural features other than support poles.

Freestanding sign: A sign on a frame, pole, or other support structure not attached to any building.

Temporary sign: A sign installed for a limited time and not constructed or intended for long term use.

Portable sign: A sign that is movable and not permanently attached to a structure or the ground. Portable signs include sandwich board signs, portable reader boards, on wheels that display changeable letters, trailer signs, gas filled balloons, and similar signs.

Adapted from "Planning and Urban Design Standards" by the American Planning Association.



case the sign ordinance usually establishes standards regulating dimensions, materials, lighting, methods of support, placement and in many cases aesthetic values as well. The ordinance often specifies different rules for different zoning districts. Sign ordinances have often been controversial and legal battles are well-known. To avoid this hazard, a city must, above all things, be consistent and fair when applying rules within a district.

For the purposes of this charrette report and the topic of visual obstructions, only some of the many sign types will be discussed here. Those are the ones not attached to a building facade, such as monument signs, freestanding signs (including billboards) and temporary signs. To keep these types of signs under control we have a few recommendations.

As has been seen in many towns and cities in the United States, large national chains can be made to conform to local sign ordinances. If guidelines are clear and fair, a city can avoid the traditional internally lit, oversized signs seen so often at highway interchanges. The Bottle Works development in Athens, Georgia is a good example of understated signs on a chain restaurant. (See top photo on facing page)

For those businesses that depend on larger signs to list prices or other information, such as gas stations, monument signs are a good alternative to the usual pole sign. Locally appropriate materials like brick, stone and wood can be used to further integrate the sign. The pictures at the lower left and right show how far we've come in integrating some signs into their surroundings.

Billboards, on the other hand, by their very nature are almost impossible to make look good. Though one could argue that billboards on the interstate are the only way to quickly communicate local attractions to passersby, downtown billboards do not serve this purpose and should be banned altogether. Instead, consider using a system of Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs. (See Sidebar)

Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS)

There is an alternative to billboards called the Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign. These signs are arranged in groups with uniform size and color. They utilize internationally recognized symbols and can inform the traveler of not only the name and type of a business, but the distance and direction to travel to find it.





North Lee Street is a good place to look for visual obstructions in Forsyth. This page shows two views of that area, each as they exist now, and also as they would look if some measures were taken to reduce the visual obstructions.

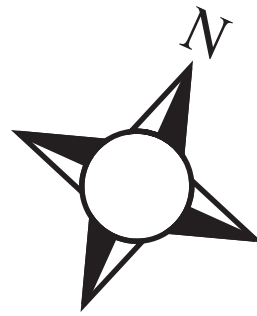
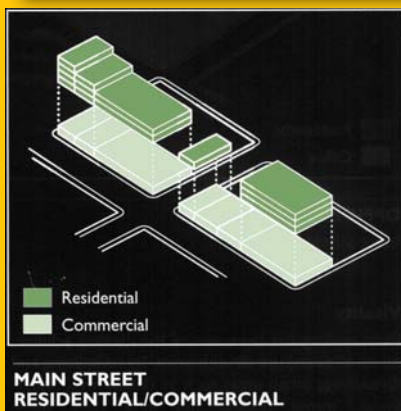
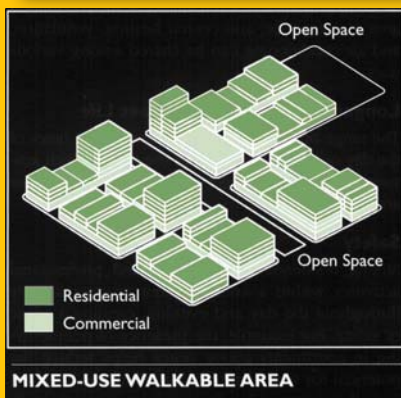
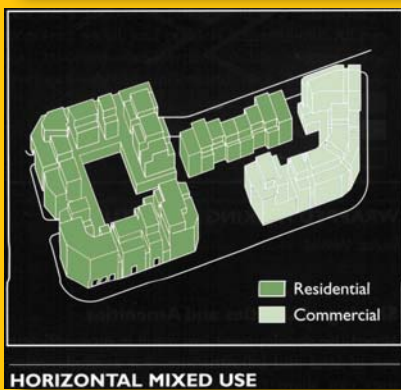
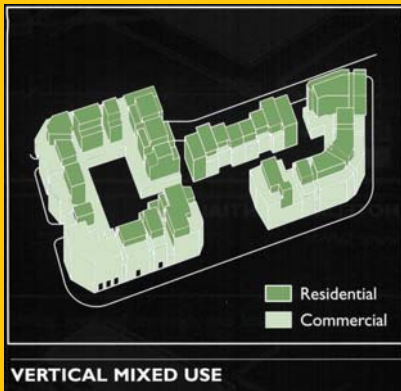
In the photo at top and the rendering above, the affect of burying utility lines and establishing a new sign ordinance are clearly demonstrated.

In the photo at right and rendering below, one can appreciate the effectiveness of landscape plantings to screen unsightly utility boxes and poles. Restrained signage is also shown for this North Lee Street property.



Type's of Mixed-Use Developments

A Visual Guide



SITE SPECIFIC ISSUES

Prior sections of this report dealt with big picture issues — the layout of a city and those elements that affect one's perception of it. This section deals with issues of a smaller scale. Herein we discuss the specifics of how a site can be developed: the purpose and use of the development, its relationship with its neighbors, access to the site and landscape improvements.

One thing any city can do to increase viability of a given neighborhood is to mix uses, design styles and income levels within a single building or building group. (See Sidebar) For one thing, these projects foster a sense of community among residents since the variety of uses encourage interaction. Mixed use developments also tend to be pedestrian-friendly. If planned well, social and retail destinations are never more than a block or two from one's residence. In addition, the variety of activities present within a mixed use development support longer hours of activity, keeping streets safer later into the evening.

Parking is another major issue that presents itself, whether the project is residential, commercial or municipal. Parking can be on-street or off-street in private or public lots. Both locations have their own issues.

Access to off-street parking involves the construction of



Amphitheater in Suwanee, GA



Stormwater Management in Des Moines, IA

Environmentally-Friendly Paving Techniques

Parking areas and driveways are often the least attractive and most environmentally damaging elements in a city. Great expanses of asphalt and concrete contribute to the "heat island" effect found in urban areas and many traditional stormwater management practices increase runoff and limit nearby plants' access to natural irrigation. There are alternatives to traditional paving, however. A few are explained below:

Porous Concrete and porous asphalt are similar to their traditional counterparts except for one major difference. The porous versions eliminate the fine aggregates from the mix, resulting in an extensive network of air spaces within the material through which water can easily pass.

<http://www.perviouspavement.org/>
<http://www.thcahill.com/pasphalt.html>

Stabilized Gravel refers to a surface composed of a gridlike plastic matrix covered with a layer of small stone aggregate. The resulting surface looks like only well-raked gravel, but is resistant to the displacement caused by traffic and stormwater.

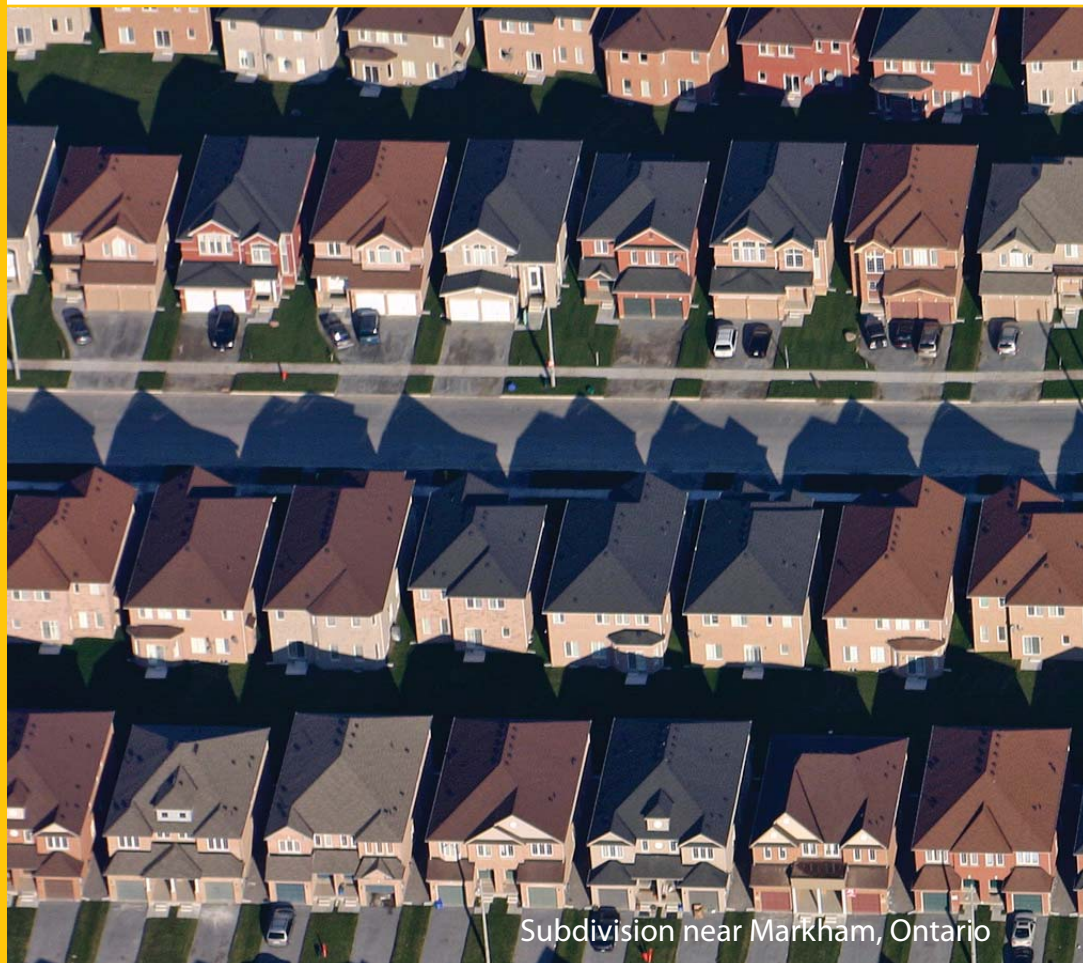
<http://www.invisiblestructures.com/GV2/gravelpave.htm>

Stabilized Grass, is similar to stabilized gravel, but instead of a stone aggregate, a layer of soil and seed are spread over the grid system. The end result looks like an ordinary line but can support vehicles. Due to the susceptibility of grass to damage from crushing, toxic fluid leaks and intense shade these surfaces are only suitable for intermittent use.

<http://www.invisiblestructures.com/GP2/grasspave.htm>

driveways. A city can minimize its paved areas by encouraging neighboring properties to share a single driveway, instead of each having their own lot with separate driveway. Residential properties can suffer from a related condition. Many homes today are built as what some call "snout houses," a house with a front elevation dominated by a garage door. (See Photo Below) Communities will look less auto-centric and more pedestrian friendly if builders are encouraged to design with side- or rear-entry garages.

The legal requirements for on-site parking are sometimes to blame for over-abundant paved surfaces. A city should study its requirements for parking space to building volume ratios and rewrite its ordinances to allow shared parking and relaxed requirements based on business types, if necessary. If a business is not forced to maximize the number of parking spaces it provides, a parking lot can be made much more attractive. (See Photo at Right)



Subdivision near Markham, Ontario

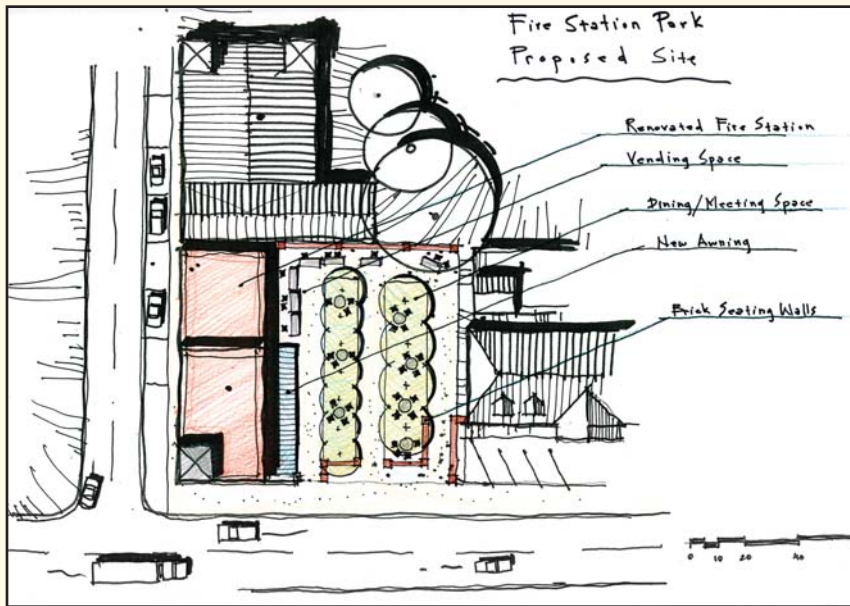


Parking Lot in Statesboro, GA

On street parking should not be forgotten as an option. This report has already stated that parallel parking on streets can calm traffic and enhance the safety of pedestrians. For some businesses, on-street parking may be enough and this option should be encouraged.

A common mistake developers make is to ignore landscape design issues until the end of a project. Actually, a landscape architect should be consulted early on in a project to offer advice on building siting, stormwater management and other issues that can't be changed late in the game. A landscape architect trained in sustainable construction methods may be able to design a landscape that not only provides comfort for visitors to a site, but also minimizes the impact development of that site will have on the environment.

Focus on Forsyth: Site Specific Issues



The Forsyth Charrette produced a number of proposals for specific building sites in the city.

The old city hall/fire station building on the corner of Adams Street and Lee Street contains an empty lot next to the historic building and the city has been collecting proposals for a pocket park on the site. It was the judgement of the charrette participants that the proposals were not

appropriate in scale or features, so a new design was created and is shown here in both plan view (above) and perspective (below). Instead of the other design's attempts to naturalize

the site, this layout is clearly an urban gathering space. Two rows of shade trees will create a canopy under which people can gather. Brick seat walls delineate the



space and add some protection from street noise. The current addition on the north side of the building will be removed and replaced with a canopied vending area. In addition to the site improvements, the former city hall/fire station building should be renovated to become a mixed use facility.

Another site about which community members expressed concern was the Wal-Mart shopping center. Though it is unclear what the future plans of Wal-Mart and other lessees have for the site, it was decided that the site should be redesigned without constraints to

show what could be possible if all parties were to agree to think outside the (big) box. The result of that exercise is shown at top right. In this proposal, the footprint of Wal-Mart has been greatly reduced by building up instead of out. Wal-Mart has built multi-story buildings in a number of cities around the world, proving the concept possible. Though Forsyth does not have the ultra-expensive urban real estate that typically dictates multi-story construction, a store of that design would work well with a mixed use, village-like arrangement. The Central Market concept shows such an arrangement and also benefits from the new road connection discussed on page 16.



The Ingles shopping center on Tift Drive has a similar space utilization issue. The southern side of the property is an empty void with a large blank wall of the Ingles building as a backdrop (See page 9). The rendering at left shows how this space could be improved with the planting of a tree screen between the shopping center and an architecturally

appropriate mixed-use facility.

A comparable project should be considered for the northeast and southeast corners of the intersection of East Johnson and North Harris Street. The block running from this intersection to the east contains both commercial and residential structures. New infill of a





rchitecture

The best planning of site, connectivity and usage can become worthless if a building is the victim of poor architecture. Here we examine the elements can make or break the appearance of a building. They can be put into three general categories: building style, materials and signage.

Building style is represented by various elements of shape, size, arrangement and detail and a single building can borrow from many styles.

Materials are very important to the perception of quality and propriety in a building design. Reconstructing a historic building using modern elements is one of the most common mistakes made and can severely detract from the character of the building.

Signage is a similar issue. Historic buildings were usually designed with a certain style and size of sign. Lighting, colors and sign materials are usually indicative of a certain period and the identity of a building can become confused if the original intentions of the architect are not honored.



Art-Deco Architecture in Columbus, GA

Helpful Architectural Terms

Roof shape refers to the degree of slope, if any, of the roof surface and the relationship between roof and exterior wall. (see sidebar on next page for guide)

A building should have a **sense of entry**. This means that the public entrance of a building is clearly identifiable, offers a feeling of shelter from the elements and fits the style of the facade of the building.

Proportion and scale in architecture are two different things. Proportion usually refers to a mathematical relationship between building elements meant to convey a sense of coherence and harmony. Scale refers to the apparent size of an object in comparison to a standard measure such as the human body. A building can be very large but the design can still seem based on a human scale.

Rhythm, in architecture, refers to a form of repetition seen in major or minor elements of a building. It is commonly seen in the arrangement of doors and windows on a building facade.

In architecture, a **platform** is a raised floor or terrace, either open or roofed. These can be used to great effect in urban, mixed use areas for dining and entertainment purposes.

Envelope is a term used to describe the imaginary shape of a building representing its maximum volume.

Ornamentation refers to the placement of anything that embellishes, decorates or adorns

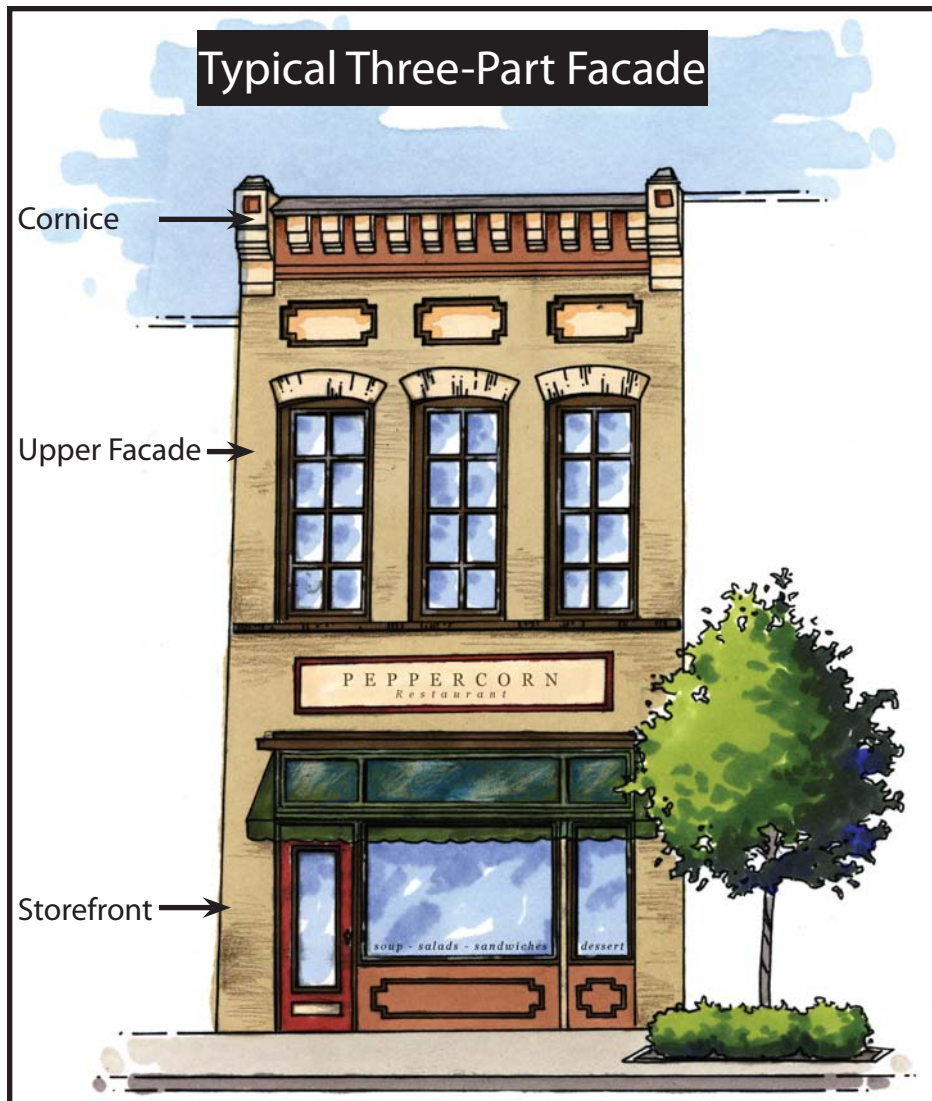
In discussing architecture in Forsyth, it is useful to divide the issue and recommendations into two categories: architecture in the downtown historic area and freestanding retail, commercial and residential architecture that occurs beyond the downtown boundaries.

Architecture in the downtown historic area is largely determined by existing styles. Most development that would occur in this area involves restoration or rehabilitation of historic buildings. If a new building is required, it also needs to integrate well with those surrounding it. New construction, therefore should follow these principles:

- **Proportion and Scale:** New development must be compatible in scale with the surrounding buildings and respect the pedestrian-oriented nature of the downtown area. The proportion and scale should relate to the pedestrian scale of the street. Historically, most buildings were two stories tall, and this tradition should be maintained by new buildings.
- **Details and Ornamentation:** Most historic buildings in downtown areas of Georgia cities display thoughtful architectural details and ornamentation that contribute to the rich character of the place. Rhythm and a sense of entry are both desirable in the details of any new building.
- **Materials and Color:** Buildings should utilize high quality materials, especially at the ground level subject to pedestrian inspection. This conveys a sense of permanence and purpose. Materials should be chosen to provide variation between buildings. Color is equally important to downtown harmony. Subtle, warm colors are suggested since they integrate well with existing, historic building colors.
- **Roof shapes:** Simple rectangular building shapes with bold cornices and parapets clearly defining a roofline are historically appropriate for the downtown area. Any new construction should include these features.

- **Signage:** Signs in a downtown area need to be readable by pedestrians and drivers. Signs mounted perpendicular to the face of a building are helpful for pedestrians approaching from a sidewalk. These can complement a larger sign above the storefront. Creativity is highly desirable in sign graphics as long as traditional materials and colors are used. Interior-lit box cabinet signs are not appropriate for downtown signage and should be prohibited.

- **Awnings and Canopies:** Awnings and canopies are a historically appropriate way to provide shelter from rain and, depending on the direction the building faces, bright sun. They also offer additional space for color accent and identifying signage.



a structure, whether integrated into the design of a building or added separately.

Guide to Common Roof Styles



Flat



Mansard



Gabled



Conical

continued next page

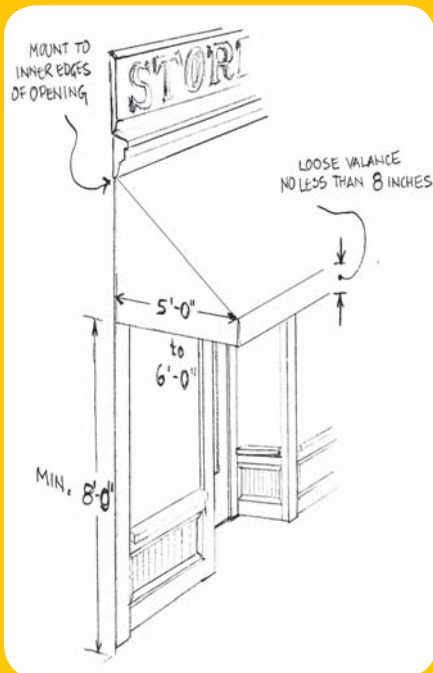


Hipped



Pyramidal

Proper Awning Placement for Historic Buildings



Their use and design in the downtown district should be informed by the placement and materials of neighboring awnings and canopies. See sidebar, bottom left.

Architecture outside of the downtown historic area involves the same building elements but differs in the following areas:

- **Proportion and Scale:** Often of major concern with new construction, these characteristics play a major role in establishing the comfort level of visitors. The massive scale of modern big-box stores can overwhelm a person and it is difficult to create a sense of proportion with the doors, windows and other elements. Where possible, groups of buildings should vary in size and gradual transitions should be maintained between the smallest and largest buildings.

- **Details and Ornamentation:** A common problem with newer buildings is a lack of distinct parts within the facade. All buildings should have an identifiable bottom, middle and top. On large buildings, architectural details and their arrangement (see rhythm and sense of entry on page 32) should be planned to reduce the perceived size of the building.

- **Materials and Color:** As with downtown buildings, those beyond the city center should be constructed of high-quality, durable materials. Colors, though not as restricted as those for downtown buildings, should coordinate well and be of muted hues with bright colors used only for accents.

- **Roof shapes:** The freestanding nature of many new buildings allows greater diversity of shape and height than those downtown. Developers should capitalize on this fact to allow a unique character for each building. The common rooftop placement of large HVAC equipment makes the use of parapets and other screening methods imperative.



Bellevue, WA



ADD SIGNS/LOGOS TO MATCHING AWNINGS
 CAFE TABLES WOULD BE WONDERFUL &
 ADD SIDEWALK ACTIVITY.

The courthouse square in downtown Forsyth is the ideal place to see locally appropriate architecture. As mentioned earlier in this report, the square is largely intact; most of the buildings are historic and many have been preserved

or restored. The block shown above is a good example. Except for some oversized and non-traditional awning shapes and canopies, the buildings are largely original, from storefront to cornice.



CONSIDER RETURNING
 2ND FLOOR USAGE →

Focus on Forsyth: Architecture



After

The block shown below needs a bit more work to bring it around. In the center, the tallest building would benefit from the rebuilding of its upper facade to include the balcony and wall openings seen in historic photos. The rest of

the buildings on this block need little attention other than alignment and coordination of awnings and the addition of signboards where needed.



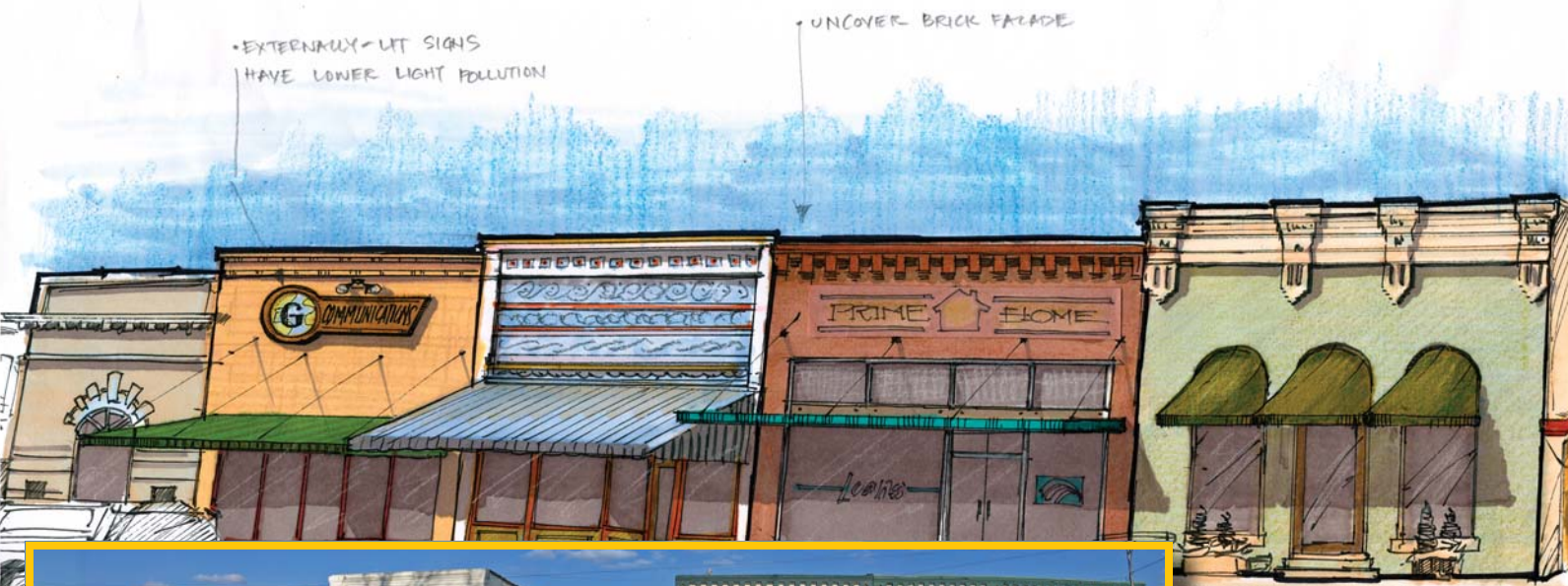
After

The eastern side of the courthouse square is shown below. Like the two blocks shown on the previous pages, its buildings are largely intact. Only a few inappropriate facade elements require changing. The multi-arched false front on the Pregnancy Center is an interesting modern interpretation of the historic arched facades on adjacent buildings, but needs to be opened up to prevent the building from looking “unapproachable”. The mesh material should be removed to allow a clearer view of the storefront behind it. An overhead screen or arbor could be added between the false facade and the front of the building to allow shade for the waiting area windows at the front of

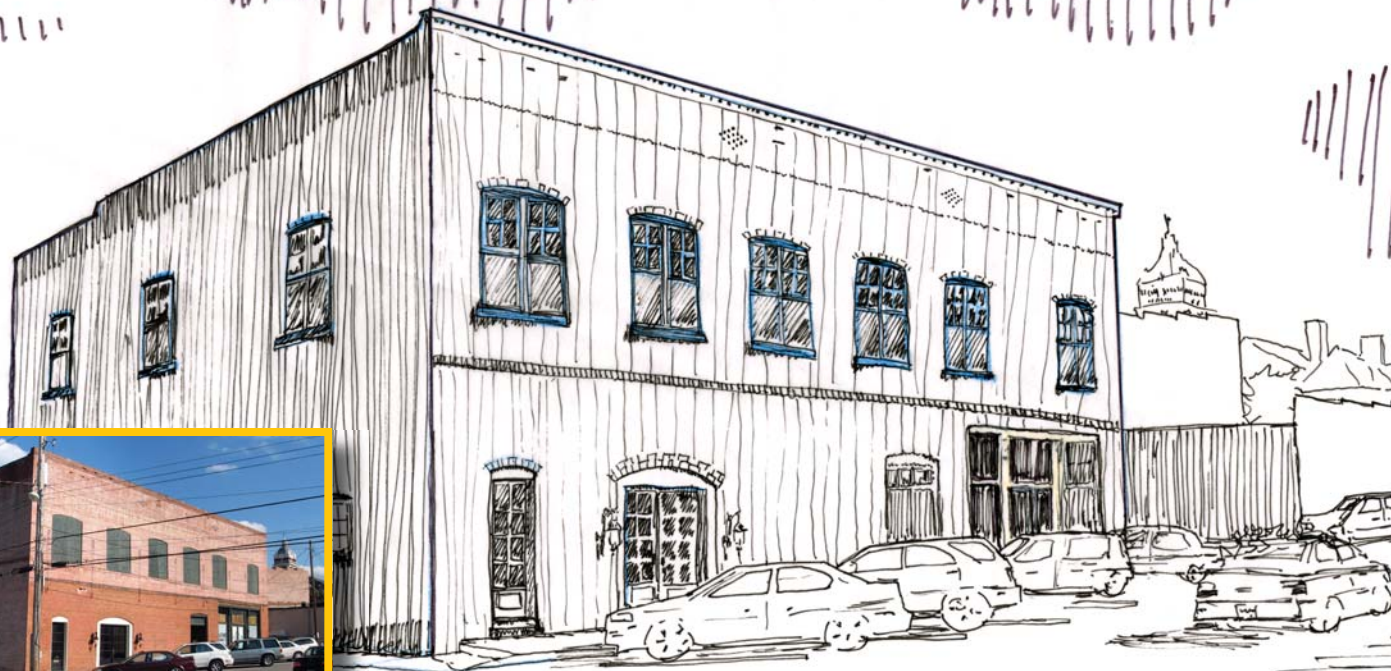
the office. Planter boxes and banners hung on the columns would also provide a more inviting appearance. The Security Finance building needs renovation of its windows and door to fill the wall openings. The upper facade of the Prime Home building should be uncovered. Signage is an issue for the Go Communications building. The internally-lit sign currently used is inappropriate in the downtown historic area. An externally-lit sign would emit less light pollution and be more attractive. Finally, the buildings from the Pregnancy Center northward should consider new paint schemes to provide greater contrast between facades.

• EXTERNALLY-LIT SIGNS
HAVE LOWER LIGHT POLLUTION

• UNCOVER BRICK FACADE



Before



Before

After

The large red brick building on the southeast corner of Adams and Jackson streets would also benefit from some architectural renovations. Most importantly the second story window openings should be filled with new wood-framed, historically accurate windows. The storefront on the right side of the building's

front should receive similar attention, including replacement of the transom windows and repair and repainting of the window and door frames. Miscellaneous unused hardware and fasteners should be removed from the building facade wherever possible.



- REMOVE SCREEN
- ADD PLANTS & BANNERS FOR SIGNS

• OPEN UP TRANSOM WINDOWS

After

Funding Sources

Funding Sources for Quality Growth
Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
Community Development Block Grant – Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108 Program)
http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/section108.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An economic and community development financing tool authorized under Section 108 of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended. • The program is a method of assisting non-entitlement local governments with certain unique and large-scale economic development projects that cannot proceed without the loan guarantee.
Community Development Block Grant Program – Regular Round
http://www.dca.state.ga.us/grants/grantprogram.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants for housing improvement projects, public facilities such as water and sewer lines, buldings such as local health centers or headstart centers, and economic development projects.
Community Home Investment Program (CHIP)
http://www.dca.state.ga.us/grants/homeinvestment.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants to stimulate the creation of local public/private partnerships whose goals are to expand the availability of decent, safe, sanitary, energy efficient, and affordable housing in the community.
Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF)
http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/ddrlf2.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans to non-entitlement cities and counties for small and middle-size communities in implementing quality downtown development projects.
Employment Incentive Program
http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/eip.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants for local projects intended to facilitate and enhance job creation and/or retention, principally for persons of low or moderate income.
Georgia Commission for National and Community Service/AmeriCorps State
http://www.nationalservice.org/stateprofiles/ga_intro.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants to meet community service needs which match national need areas as determined annually by the Corporation for National Service.
Regional Assistance Program (RAP)
http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/rap.html
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants for Regional Economic Development

<p>Rural Rental Housing Development Fund (RRHDF)</p> <p>http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/rrhdf_memo.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction Financing and permanent financing for the costs of constructing up to ten (10) units of new rental housing, including land acquisition, hard construction costs, and soft costs. Rental dwelling units financed through the RRHDF must be affordable by low and moderate-income households as defined in the Manual and this Program Description.
<p>Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program</p> <p>http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/lihtc.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides federal and state income tax credit for the acquisition, construction, or rehabilitation of rental housing affordable to low-to-moderate income families and individuals.
<p>HOME CHDO Loan Program</p> <p>http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/nonprofit.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans for construction financing and/or permanent financing for the costs of constructing or rehabilitating rental housing as defined in the State of Georgia's 1999 Qualified Allocation Plan. Rental dwelling units finance through the program must be affordable by low-to-moderate-income households as defined in the State of Georgia's 1999 Qualified Allocation Plan, the OAHD Application manual, and the HOME investment Partner-ships Program Final Rule (24 CFR Part 92).
<p>HOME CHDO Predevelopment Loan Program</p> <p>http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/chdopre.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans for the predevelopment costs associated with a CHDO Program-eligible project, incurred up to the closing of the CHDO Program loan (construction and permanent debt financing), as listed in the Sources and Uses Form (CHDO-025) in the Application. These costs include, but are not limited to, market study and title search costs which are incurred before applying for CHDO Program funds, and environmental review and appraisal costs which are incurred after being approved for CHDO Program Funds.
<p>HOME CHDO Permanent Supportive Housing Program</p> <p>http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/pshp_nofa_memo.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants to create the best possible projects recognizing the difficulty of coordinating the activities necessary for special needs populations.
<p>HOME Rental Housing Loan Program</p> <p>http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/rentalfin.html</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans for constructing financing and/or permanent financing for the costs of constructing or rehabilitating rental housing as defined in the State of Georgia's 1999 Qualified Allocation Plan. Rental dwelling units financed through the program must be affordable by low-to-moderate-income households as defined in the State of Georgia's 1999 Qualified Allocation Plan, the OAHD Application Manual, and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program Final Rule (24 CFR Part 92).
<p>OwnHOME Program</p> <p>http://www.dca.state.ga.us/housing/index.html</p>

- Loans for first-time home buyers with a deferred payment to cover most of the down payment, closing costs and prepaid expenses associated with their home purchase.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

[top](#)

319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant

<http://www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/environ/>

- Grants to implement activities and projects to reduce nonpoint sources of water pollution. Activities may include:
Phase II Stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES)
Best Management Practices Demonstrations
TMDL Implementation
And more

Georgia Heritage Grants

<http://www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/histpres/>

- Grants to assist eligible applicants with the rehabilitation of Georgia Register-listed historic properties and related activities.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

<http://www.serve.com/bike/georgia/trails>

- Grants for acquisition and/or development (80% Federal / 20% local) of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails including new trail construction, maintenance/rehabilitation of existing trails, trail-side and trail-head facilities.

OneGeorgia Authority

[top](#)

OneGeorgia Equity Fund Program

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/onegeorgia/funds.html>

- Grants and loans to finance activities that will assist in preparation for economic development. Eligible projects include traditional economic development projects such as water and sewer projects, road, rail, and airport improvements and industrial parks as well as workforce development projects, technology development or tourism development proposals, just to name a few.

OneGeorgia Regional E9-1-1 Fund

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/onegeorgia/funds.html>

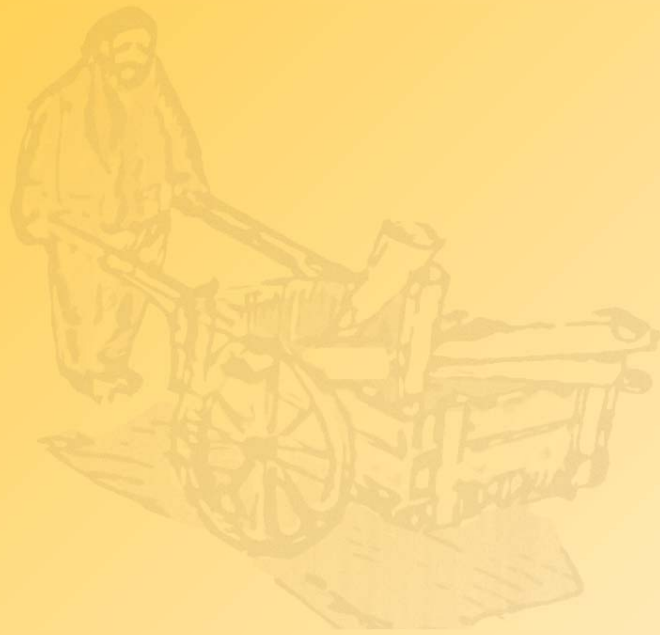
- Grants and loans to finance activities that assist the mostly rural counties in Georgia that are currently without enhanced 9-1-1 emergency telephone services ("E-9-1-1").

OneGeorgia EDGE Fund Program

<http://www.dca.state.ga.us/onegeorgia/funds.html>

- Provides financial assistance to eligible applicants that are being considered as a relocation or expansion site and are competing with another state for location of a project; and, where the EDGE Fund is used when the health, welfare, safety and economic security of the citizens of the state are promoted through the development and/or retention of employment opportunities.

Other State Programs	top
Urban and Community Forestry Assistance Program	
http://www.gfc.state.ga.us/Services/UCF/FinancialAssistanceProgram.cfm	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants designed to encourage citizen involvement in creating and supporting long-term and sustained urban and community forestry programs throughout the state. 	
Transportation Enhancement Program	
http://www.dot.state.ga.us/dot/plan-prog/planning/projects/te/index.shtml	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal grants for twelve categories of transportation enhancement activities 	
Capital Outlay for Public School Facilities Construction	
http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/schools/facilities/index.asp	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants for new Construction, renovation, and modifications of public school facilities 	
Federal Sources	top
EPA Funding for Smart Growth	
www.epa.gov/livability/topics/funding.htm	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA developed a guide of funding resources to assist local and state governments, communities, and non-governmental organizations addressing the varied aspects of smart growth. 	
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	
http://www.nps.gov/lwcf/contact_list.html	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants for acquisition of real property and development of facilities for general purpose outdoor recreation. 	
Private Sources	top
Grassroots Art Program	
http://www.gaarts.org/grants_programs/gap_program/index.html	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants to arts organizations and other groups to support Grassroots arts activities that broaden and deepen public participation in the arts. 	
Organizational Grants	
http://www.gaarts.org/grants_programs/organizational_grants/index.html	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed to provide support to arts organizations and other groups administering arts projects. 	
Georgia Cities Foundation Program	
http://www.georgiacitiesfoundation.org/	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans to cities requesting financial assistance in their efforts to revitalize and enhance their downtowns areas. 	
Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities	
www.fundersnetwork.org	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Funders Network offers a searchable database of approximately 52 private foundations that support various elements of smart growth. 	



Forsyth Charrette Report
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A Production of:

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College of Environment and Design
The University of Georgia

and

Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Office of Downtown Development



The University of Georgia - College of
ENVIRONMENT
AND DESIGN

