

LEXINGTON BRANDING

If someone heard that Lexington was an interesting place to visit, how would they learn more about it? Typical online searches should yield more information on Lexington. Small towns like Lexington often lack a website explaining the government functions, resources within the community, and the activities and sites the town has to offer. More online information will encourage visitation and help communicate with residents. Though a few local businesses have a Facebook page, neither the city nor the Downtown Development Authority have an active Facebook presence. The "Oglethorpe Echo" newspaper is likely the best means of communicating upcoming events in the town, but the issues aren't available online, limiting outsiders from knowing what is occurring. Lexington needs a modern, proactive advertising plan geared towards visitors and locals.



The city logo should be used for other municipal locations, such as public parking lots, public restrooms, Meson park signs, letterhead, website, Facebook, etc.



A municipal website would attract potential visitors who are considering planning a trip. They will want to know the history of the town, where to shop and eat, upcoming events, weather forecasts, directions, and available parking.



As part of a unified marketing plan, using a well-recognized local image as an updated logo would improve the city's appeal to prospective visitors. While attractive, the current logo is not easily recognizable or particularly unique to Lexington. Using a more identifiable and prominent feature -- such as the courthouse tower -- would make it easier for visitors to connect with the city. Updating the logo is integral to a comprehensive wayfinding and signage program.



Attractive and well-maintained banners enhance the visual appeal of the Lexington and catch the eye of passersby. A variety of banner sizes makes the signage system adaptable to different uses and situations, such as advertise special events, Downtown shopping after game day weekends, or the Farmer's Market.

CITY HALL CONVERSION

The building that currently houses City Hall provides an excellent location for public restrooms for visitors. The existing lot in front of this space would be ideal for a public parking area, especially those passing through on UGA game days. One side of the building could then be a centrally-located visitor/welcome station; the other could be retrofitted for public restrooms.



Descriptive signage should be visible on the building, to orient visitors.

Replacing the garage doors with transparent, roll-up doors or large framed, gridded windows (depending on the indoor use of this space) update the building and make it feel accessible.



Existing



Existing

This existing City Hall parking lot is ideal for public parking for visitors, but its neglected appearance, lack of striping and unattractive signs deter users. Restriping and adding new signage indicates lot is open for visitors. A sidewalk installed along the drainage swale leads pedestrians to Downtown businesses and crosswalks. When municipal functions relocate to the Meson Park area, the existing building should be converted to a Visitors Center or another commercial function.



New, updated signage better identifies this lot as open for visitors.

Installing a new sidewalk between the drainage swale and the existing parking area will make it more accessible to downtown.

MESON PARK AND MUNICIPAL CENTER

A unified master plan for Meson Park, the Presbyterian Manse, and the future site of City Hall will improve the appearance of the city-owned parcels. Unifying these three plats will create a vista (A) towards and pedestrian access to the new municipal building via Meson St., with traffic access along Academy Drive. A granite path, reflecting the natural granite outcroppings, will create a natural guide through the park. Other amenities include a proposed public garden, future placement of purchased playground equipment, and a new use of the historic stairs of the old gymnasium.



(A) A granite path, reflecting the natural granite outcroppings, will create an easy pedestrian access through the park from downtown via Meson Street.

(B) Locating the new playground near the existing memorial avoid placing it in the way of the proposed path, and allows the memorial walls to provide caregiver seating.

Avoid over-cluttering the park with structures and attempt to decrease the amount of turf mowed. Open fields with native grasses and perennials will reduce maintenance and water demands.

Repurposing the existing sheet metal building into a Municipal Center to house City Hall and its staff, council meetings and a community room will provide much needed space, but renovations are necessary to improve its appearance.

The unfinished loading dock can be converted into outdoor seating. New doors and windows will greatly improve the appearance, too.



Paint the facade a dark, neutral color to allow it to blend into the landscape.

Use container plants and trees to camouflage the metal siding and add interest to the site. "Espaliered" trees -- those trained to grow on a flat frame -- would cover the expanse of wall in an interesting way. This could be an opportunity for local nurserymen to provide plants for the city.

Replacing the garage doors with transparent, roll-up doors update the building and make it feel accessible.



Granite stones embedded in the grass provide a low profile path that visually ties the new municipal building to the park.



The historic gymnasium stairs are an interesting element of the community's past. Creative reuse of the steps as a stage for community activities would provide another low-impact improvement for outdoor events.

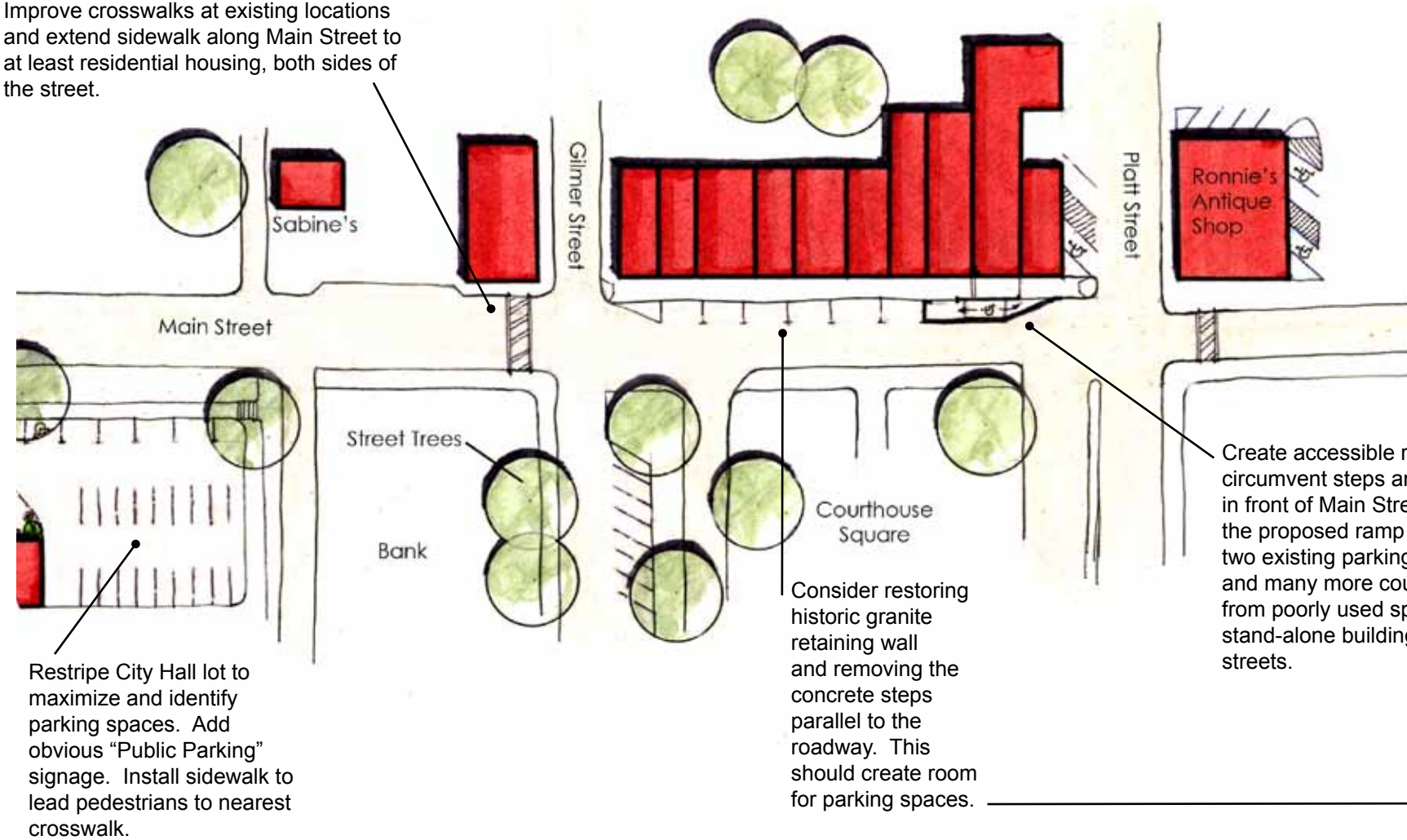
STREETSCAPE PHASE 1: ACCESSIBILITY

After gathering community input from focus groups on the traffic functions of downtown, a three-phase strategy emerged that will improve pedestrian and vehicular accessibility, safety and aesthetics along Main Street. The various improvements are dependent on funding and infrastructure, and are informed by the primary areas of concern and gathered from the public:

- Traffic calming is a top priority
- Sidewalks and a vehicular-dominant Main Street deter pedestrians and degrade the sense of community
- Lack of street trees and green space degrade the aesthetics of the main street corridor
- Parking is an issue when court is in session (3-5 days per month)

Phase 1 addresses concerns of accessibility for pedestrians, including navigating the sidewalks and finding nearby parking.

Improve crosswalks at existing locations and extend sidewalk along Main Street to at least residential housing, both sides of the street.



LEXINGTON DOWNTOWN CHARRETTE | LEXINGTON, GEORGIA | OCTOBER 25-30, 2012

CENTER FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN AND PRESERVATION | COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN | UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

SHEET 4 OF 6 | Designed by Cameron Fox, Eduardo Tapia, Lilly Miller, Allen Pratt | HIPR 4680/6680 | Professor Pratt Cassity



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STREETSCAPE PHASE 2: AESTHETICS

Landscape enhancements not only beautify downtown, they also serve as traffic calming measures. Safer pedestrian connectivity is possible through nodes and strategic landscape changes at planted bumpouts (planting beds that extend beyond the sidewalk into the parking zone) and crosswalks. Two nodes could be located at the intersections of Main and Gilmer Street, and Main and Platt Street.

A key provision for successful, verdant and robust plantings is irrigation. Depending on hand-irrigation will doom long-term survival of plants along paved corridors.



Only small trees should be planted under utility lines. Take caution and install plant materials that do not block side street-views of traffic approaching along Main Street.

Work with your Georgia Forestry Commission representative and local nurserymen to determine the best varieties for Downtown. Some to consider are: Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), smoketree (*Cotinus coggygria*), Eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), common lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*), star magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*).

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STREETSCAPE PHASE 3: TRAFFIC CALMING

Residents expressed a need for traffic calming measures on U. S. Highway 78 through town. They often cited how it was difficult to cross the road and how speed prevented visitors from seeing what was in Lexington or how to access parking. Lack of activity downtown, blurred edges between the road and parking areas, and complete lack of speed enforcement makes speeding through town too easy for drivers. Logging trucks are often perceived as the culprit, but several residents voiced concerns about others, too. Another concern was the visual clutter of state highway signage leading into town.

Ultimately, introducing rows of street trees and lighted crosswalks would improve aesthetics and deter speeding.



CHEVRONS

Converging chevrons, spaced with decreasing space as a driver enters a transition zone, gives drivers the perception of going too fast and encourages them to reduce their speeds. Painted chevrons are cost-effective, do not impact drainage, do not affect vehicle operation nor impact emergency vehicles.

A Minnesota study showed that the highest speeds were reduced from 58 to 44 mph one week after installation. After four years researchers determined that fading paint was impacting the results. Repainting the chevrons resulted in similar speed reductions as after initial installation.

For more information: <http://www.ctre.iastate.edu/reports/traffic-calming-rural.pdf>



Aerial view showing suggested chevron placement along Highway 78 approaching Downtown from the West (L) and East (R).