



EATONTON

AN ARTS  
COMMUNITY

**EATONTON, GA**



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## WHAT IS A CHARRETTE?

The word charrette means “little cart” in French. At the leading architecture school in the 19th century, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, students were assigned tough design problems to complete under time pressure. They would continue sketching as fast as the could, even as the little carts (charrettes) carried their drawing boards away to be judged and graded.

Today the word “charrette” describes a rapid, intense, and creative work session, in which a design team focuses on a particular design problem and arrives at a collaborative solution. Charrettes are product oriented and are fast becoming a preferred method to solve planning challenges confronting American cities.

The charrette process is a way of evaluating resources through new eyes. Fresh ideas are what help communities maintain and build their vitality. Through this report and supporting materials, readers will experience the enthusiasm that comes from a broad group of students, faculty, practitioners, and the public.



Public input session, April 13, 2007

The University of Georgia conducted a design charrette for the city of Eatonton, Georgia, April 13 – 15, 2007. The project was a collaborative effort utilizing input from residents of Eatonton, city and county government and the Middle Georgia Regional Development Center (MGRDC). The process resulted in a set of recommendations to help the city protect and promote its existing resources while continuing to grow in economically and socially viable ways. The recommendations in this charrette report are based on input of the citizens of Eatonton as well as best management practices and professional experience. A public input session was held at 12 noon on Friday, April 13, 2007 at the Hut in Eatonton, and a closing presentation to the public took place at 2 p.m. on Sunday, April 15 in the same location.



Closing presentation, April 15, 2007



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### Introduction

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## CHALLENGES/NEGATIVE ELEMENTS

Trash (litter, dumping of tires)

Abandoned school houses

Broken down homes

Not a beautiful entrance into town  
(entrance and exit are first and last impression)

Not enough parking

Lack of business downtown (need for more restaurants, bars, boutiques)

Lack of everything you don't need, but want (small luxury stores)

Lack of an "office park" (however, there is more commercial space available downtown)

"Shade tree mechanics"

Dead end streets

Broken up sidewalks

Sign pollution

Need connectivity

Lack of irrigation for trees & plants downtown

Lack of handicap access

Billboard next to city hall

Lack of playground and parks

Lack of recycling program

Lack of protection of historic buildings downtown

Infrastructure

(power lines, low railroad overpass)

Awnings on buildings downtown are all different

Retail stores need unique appearance to stand out from all the rest.

Understanding of public that change takes longer than expectations- assembling funds and plans takes years.

Impulsive actions do not always result in the best solutions.

Need more coordination with the county

Parking around Courthouse



# *in your own* WORDS

Community comments during the public input session of Friday, April 13 helped inform the design team's work. Members of the public and government were asked to identify the best characteristics of Eatonton, the community's biggest challenges, and what they would change first if funding was not an issue.



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ONE PHRASE THAT CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF EATONTON:

Sitting on front porch

Charm

Nice caring people

Potential

Beauty

Progressive

Hungry

Dedicated/committed

Heritage

Sleepy/slow paced

Danger of too much growth

Key location/convenient

Laid back

Small town

Green

Comfortable

Growth

IF FUNDING WASN'T AN ISSUE, WHAT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD YOU MAKE FIRST?

Stores and Restaurants open at night

Appearance of gateway coming into town

Decent motel/hotel

Disguise raw aluminum windows and doors downtown

Sidewalks

Redesign red lights/ wires

Better parking

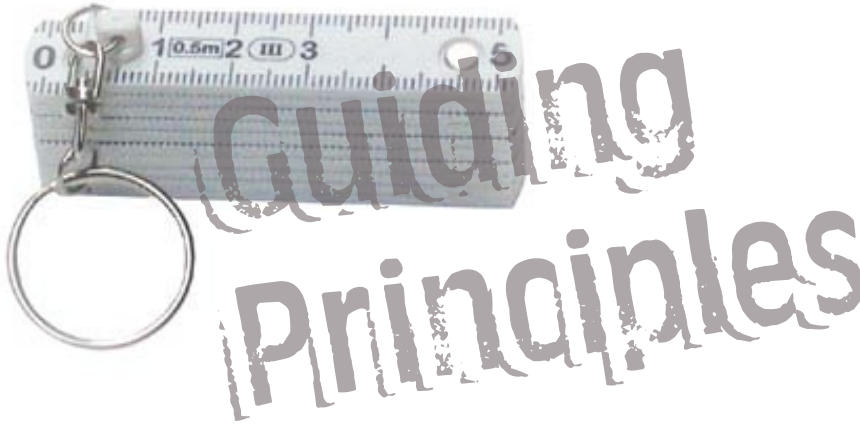
Shade trees &

hanging baskets in downtown

Provide housing (Work-Force Housing). Large daytime influx of people coming into work, need housing for those employees in county.

"The School" on Madison

Arts Center



## 1. CAPITALIZE ON EXISTING ASSETS

### **Promote your heritage**

Eatonton's list of Who's Who includes more than authors Alice Walker and Joel Chandler Harris. Blues musician Peg Leg Howell learned the blues on the red clay soil of Putnam County. The accomplished painter, Walter Ellison was born in Eatonton and went on to study at The Art Institute of Chicago in the 1930s, and later exhibited work in the Library of Congress. The city has long been a community of artists. Promote the roots of these successful artists and create an atmosphere that is supportive of the arts.

### **Be small business friendly**

Eatonton will grow and become more attractive to national chains. As this happens, the city must continue to stay in touch with the needs of small businesses and make them a priority.

## 2. GROW GREEN

### **Don't let the bypass get ugly**

Curb billboard proliferation and use creative signage idea, described within this report.

### **Require new growth to follow traditional neighborhood design principles**

Sidewalks, connections to the existing street grid, on-street parking and mixes of housing types should be the norm.

### **Density is not a four-letter word**

Eatonton's downtown and surrounding neighborhoods are already dense. The city's pattern of downtown buildings with shared party walls and single family homes on small lots are examples of what is called "density." As the city grows, continue this street pattern on an interconnected grid composed of small lots.

### **Mix uses and encourage compatible infill**

Use a downtown overlay district to promote more flexibility of uses than permitted under conventional zoning regulations.



### 3. CAPTURE THE CREATIVE CLASS

#### **Artists, restaurants, boutique hotel, high tech industry**

Retain youth and attract a variety of demographic groups to Eatonton by positioning the city as an arts center and rehabilitating the Mill Village.

#### **Encourage individuality**

Part of the authenticity and charm of Eatonton's downtown is the variety of building facade types. Eatonton does not need to "unify" the downtown building facades by requiring awnings for every storefront or over done streetscape improvements. Encourage individuality within the historic preservation design guidelines.

#### **Pedestrian infrastructure, amenities and street trees**

Retain and repair existing sidewalks, planters and street trees. Extend pedestrian infrastructure along 441 South to connect the south side of the city to downtown.

### 4. PROMOTE INCLUSIVENESS

#### **Provide work force housing**

Continue to provide housing, dining, and entertainment options for a wide demographic range.

#### **Diversify the economic base**

Protect the local economy by diversifying and attracting businesses that rely on the creative class (described within this report).

### 5. ENGINEER CONSENSUS

#### **Educate to reach consensus**

Eatonton is emerging into a new era where growth will happen more rapidly than it has in the recent past. Processes such as the UGA design charrette help educate on growth issues and how to grow without sacrificing community character. Continue the dialog and seek professional assistance to navigate through new growth and preservation issues.

#### **Develop policies to protect what is important**

Eatonton is blessed with beautiful historic architecture. Preserve and protect these architectural gems with a local historic preservation ordinance, which includes flexibility for individual business owners within predetermined historic preservation guidelines. The Historic Preservation Commission should lead this process.



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# PROTECT & PROMOTE DOWNTOWN



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The design team visited downtown in the middle of a Friday afternoon in April and was excited to see many active businesses and offices, outdoor dining, and a musician playing the guitar on the sidewalk. Simply put, downtown Eatonton has a lot of good things going for it. Many towns throughout the state long to have the type of downtown atmosphere that already exists in Eatonton.

Eatonton's downtown buildings are grand resources. However, there is room for improvement of several of these facades. While they are functional, with a few

Once lost to demolition, communities cannot replace the quality of construction, scale, or significance of their historic structures.

design changes such as reintroducing traditional storefronts, filling window openings with the proper size windows, and judiciously using canvas awnings, buildings that aren't looking their best can again become community showpieces.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) should continue to lead the process of

local historic district designation for downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods. Designation is an honor,



Presbyterian Church



McClaine House



Rosewood B&B



Tudor Revival



Victorian cottage



Panola Hall



Williams House



Plaza School



Ezell House B&B



and an indication that the community believes the architecture, history, and character of downtown Eatonton is worthy of recognition and protection.

The Charrette team encourages an elevation of the HPC's role as community educator. The HPC should produce a series of fact sheets and technical notes to demonstrate the breadth of preservation options for downtown, from avoiding replication of historic buildings (old should be old and new should look new) to preservation of the recent past (gas stations from the 1950s and 1960s are historic, too).

The National Register of Historic Places has identified Eatonton's historic resources as valuable and worthy of preservation. Designation of these resources as provided for in

Local historic districts can help to improve property values by stabilizing and enhancing the character of the community.

Eatonton's historic preservation ordinance would further recognize and protect these areas from detrimental changes.

Property owners benefit because they are protected from decreases in property values resulting from inap-

propriate changes to neighboring properties, which detract from the special qualities of historic districts.

North Madison Avenue, Church Street, Wayne Street and North Lafayette house some of the most significant historical residential architecture in Eatonton, along with notable cultural institutions such as the historic school, the Presbyterian Church and the Carnegie Library.

The structures in this district are standing monuments to the ebb and flow of the community's past prosperity, telling the story of cotton, the boll weevil, the dairy industry,







Methodist Church



Taliaferro House



Cartmill House



Bronson House



Slade Hall



Sichveland House

the Great Depression and World War II. It is fitting that such remarkable manifestations of the community's past be ensured for its future citizens to learn from and feel proud. We recommend that this area become Eatonton's first local historic district.

Meanwhile, the city should work with Downtown business owners and the Historic Preservation Commission to develop incentives for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures in the central business district. Proposed zoning amendments to allow upper-story residences and sidewalk dining are essential first-steps to creating a more livable and vibrant Downtown. In addition to these types of updates, many communities have also included a demolition review provision for historic structures. This type of non-binding assessment by council and an HPC is essential for retaining Downtown's most valuable assets in the absence of district designation and design review.

There have been design mistakes made in Eatonton during the "lean years" such as fast food franchise architecture, unwarranted demolitions, strip shopping centers, and large paved parking areas surrounding monstrous new buildings. Now, Eatonton's goal should be the prevention of further mistakes and the correction of past ones. The easiest way to fix "the uglies" is to hide them: dense vegetation, out-parceled new structures and landscaped parking areas should do the trick.

Eventually, as Eatonton's population and retail activity increases, compatible infill should fill the gaps in the urban fabric - like replacing missing teeth in a snaggle-toothed smile.



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Once the ethic of a more art centered community grows, the city might be able to explore more fanciful options such as this design for one of the historic gas stations in town. The illustration shows a big tire on the roof and a well landscaped, improved parking area. The result is a resource that is visually interesting and contributes to the community.







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Proposed restoration of the downtown theater. This building could be a venue for an future Eatonton-Putnam County film festival.





Replace missing pieces with elements that are compatible such as the art deco glass illustrated.





The historically accurate storefront for this Italianate building would include plate glass windows and a traditional kick plate wooden door with large plate windows.



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*Photo credit: Georgia Department of Economic Development*





Key to a more beautiful downtown: proper plant selection, proper soil preparation, irrigation, selecting drought resistant, native varieties of trees and shrubs, and not over accessorizing downtown



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This is a parcel of land that could become a very successful showcase for outdoor dining, gallery shows, and entertainment.



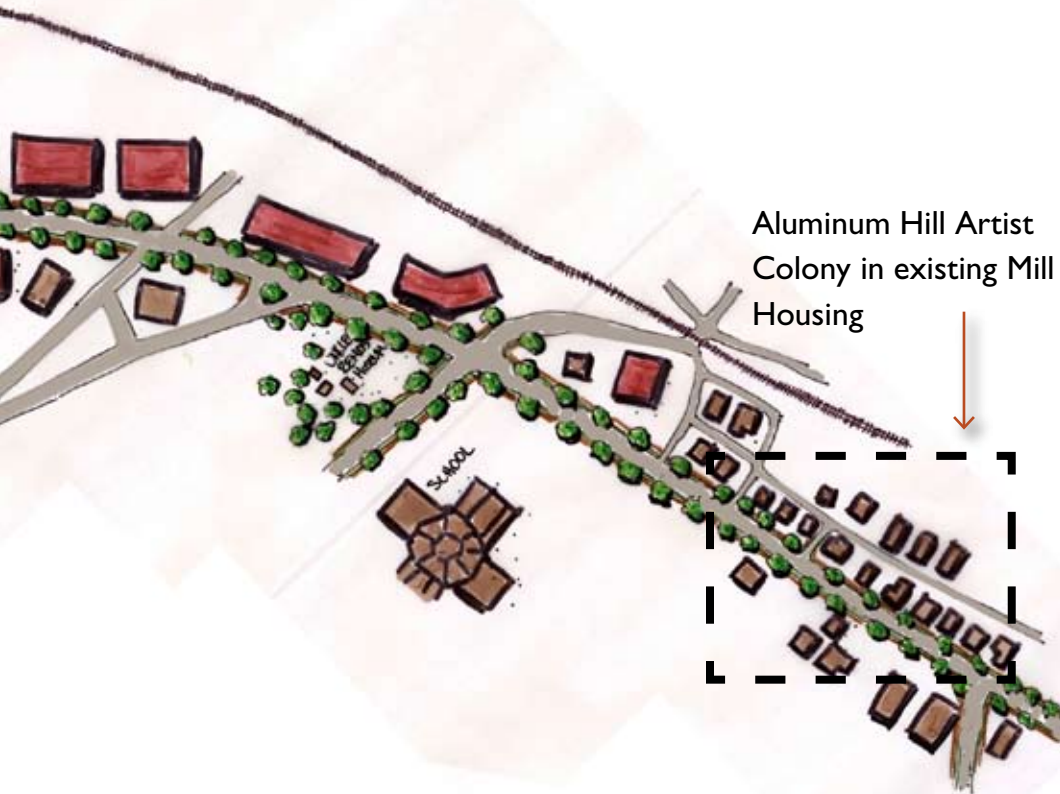
THE MASTER PLAN ILLUSTRATES

 brown : existing buildings

 red : opportunities for sensitive infill



# EATONTON MASTER PLAN



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In downtown, infill buildings are small in scale and intended to reweave the fabric of the downtown streetscape. South of town on 44I, infill building footprints may be slightly larger, but new buildings should still front the street, which should include sidewalks and street trees. Parking should be on-street, at the rear of buildings and in the interior of blocks, as illustrated.

The team spent a lot of time thinking about where **street trees, sidewalks** and **crosswalks** could be placed. Like many other towns, Eatonton needs to continue to encourage safe ways for pedestrians to move around. Now, many people drive from businesses in one corner of the square to another corner of the square. This should not be encouraged. If the downtown is beautified with more shade, making walking more pleasant, pedestrians will be willing to walk a little farther and will also have opportunities to spend more money in the downtown.

- PARKING MGT SIGNS, ADA, ORGANIZATION
- EDUCATION / IMPROVEMENT
- YOUTH PROGRAMS - A/D/D "BRAIN DRAIN" 5th Floor
- LANDSCAPE EDUCATION / MGT
- LEADERSHIP PREFAB INFLU
- WASTE Mgmt - Litter Recycling
- Funding
- ~~...~~



# PARKING

The design team heard a great deal about parking during our time in Eatonton. This is a problem is not going away. It is difficult to find parking in every great city in the world, and it is a sign of life and vitality in downtowns. It means business is good, and people are shopping, eating and working there. Downtowns without parking problems are the ones that are in trouble. It has been said that the more parking space there is, the less sense of place. Don't let this happen in downtown Eatonton. Buildings should not be torn down to make room for more surface parking.

Resolve confusion about where to park with well designed and well placed signage directing visitors to available lots and spaces. The city has already taken several steps in the right direction. Fix the sign design issues and position signs in locations that are easy for visitors to find.

Those that work, live and regularly shop downtown should not park in the premium parking spaces, and should instead park in less desirable lots. Leave the best parking spaces available for those who are going to be spending money in downtown.

# PLANT MATERIALS

Eatonton has learned well the role that seasonal plant color and street trees can play in beautifying the town. However, properly prepared beds, native and drought resistant varieties, and irrigation during dry spells will result in healthier, happier and more beautiful plants.

Maintenance and proper plant selection is the key. Under story trees and plants that can withstand crown pruning should be selected for planting in confined spaces such as beneath power lines. Larger specimen and canopy trees should be planted in areas where they can are best suited.



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This Mill Village is one of the most important historic resources in the region. The buildings must be protected and restored.





# REUSE the mill village

Eatonton's Mill Village on 44I South of town has appeared on the state's most endangered resource list. If you talk to people who have traveled along 44I between Athens and Milledgeville through the years, they remember that little mill village. People have memories of this area because it has character and quaintness that some other parts of town lack. These are qualities that other communities wish for.

The mill's original brick cotton mill building, now demolished, dated from the late 1860s-1870s; the mill houses were built between the 1880's and 1910. In the 1920's the mill changed ownership to the Enterprise Aluminum Company, which manufactured a



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# REUSE the mill village





range of aluminum goods. The 17 mill houses that remain on the property are in remarkably good condition.

This Mill Village is one of the most important historic resources in the region. The buildings must be protected and restored. To do this, the city need not recreate the wheel. Preservation North Carolina the state historic preservation organization for the state of North Carolina is an excellent model for restoration of mill village housing.

A combination of options including the Urban Redevelopment Act, proper preservation practices, and recruitment of a restoration minded developer should be explored to reuse these important resources.

One idea is to restore the buildings into housing or studios for an artists' community. Artist's studios could be located in the mill houses and apartments inside the mill or vice versa.



## Examples from Preservation North Carolina



*(Before and After) Glencoe Mill Village Edenton, North Carolina*



*(Before and After) Glencoe Mill Village Edenton, North Carolina*



*(Before and After) Rocky Mount Mills Historic Mill Village, Rocky Mount, North Carolina*







# ENHANCE THE THE UNCLE REMUS MUSEUM



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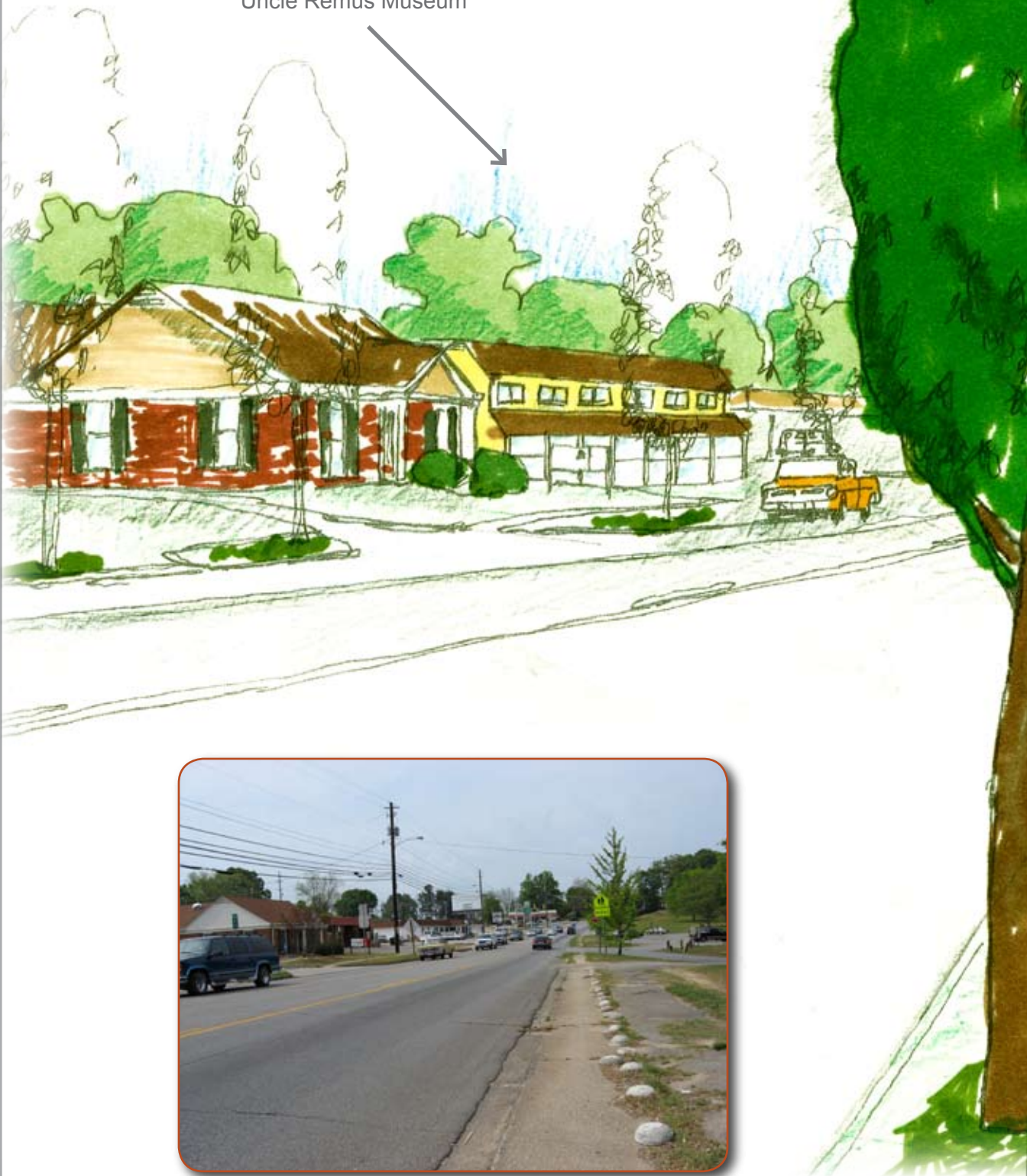
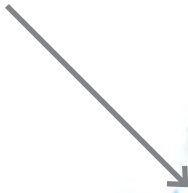
The Uncle Remus Museum is a great asset to Eatonton, and is visited by thousand of people each year. The museum and grounds are a beautiful oasis.

However, the views from the museum across the parking lot and along the roadway are in need of improvement. Landscape improvements to the entrance of the museum should extend in both directions along 44I to create a more welcoming experience for the visitor.

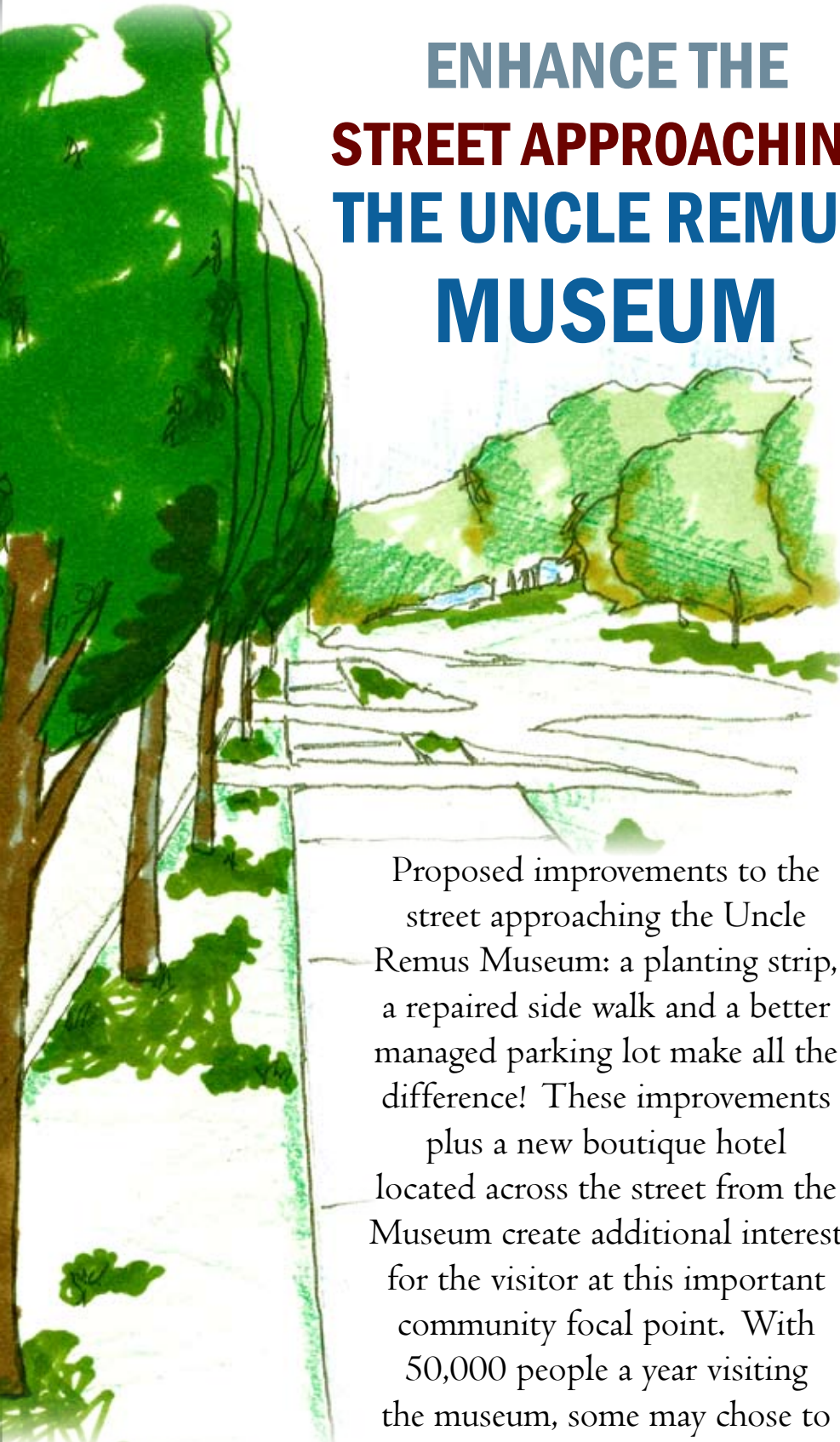




Proposed location for a new boutique hotel, across from the Uncle Remus Museum



# ENHANCE THE STREET APPROACHING THE UNCLE REMUS MUSEUM



Proposed improvements to the street approaching the Uncle Remus Museum: a planting strip, a repaired side walk and a better managed parking lot make all the difference! These improvements plus a new boutique hotel located across the street from the Museum create additional interest for the visitor at this important community focal point. With 50,000 people a year visiting the museum, some may chose to spend the night across the street at a new boutique hotel.



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An aerial photograph of a town bypass area. The image shows a mix of green fields, roads, and some buildings. The text is overlaid on the image. The top text is in a yellow-green color, and the main title is in white with a distressed, hand-painted font style.

**Work to keep  
the edges  
of town as  
beautiful as  
the center.**

# keep the bypass green



In the WPA guide to Georgia, US 441 was called “Georgia’s Ribbon of Green.” Looking at many stretches of Eatonton’s bypass, it *is* a ribbon of green. Eatonton’s bypass is its calling card and for many travelers, it is all they may ever see of the town.



Imagine how beautiful this image could be if the median was completely filled with purple cosmos. The result would be a very natural look, but also one with a little hidden message: “The Color Purple,” referencing Alice Walker and her significance as an author born in Eatonton.



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Eatonton bypass, existing conditions



Eatonton Bypass, proposed.

# keep the bypass green



Eatonton bypass, existing conditions

The Ribbon of Green that is Eatonton's bypass will not stay green if it is left alone. Highway billboards, unregulated can overtake the bypass, obscure the vista and making Eatonton somewhere people will want to get through as fast as possible.



A frightening view of the future for Eatonton's bypass if billboard proliferation continues unchecked.





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Areas that are already somewhat compromised...



can get much worse.....

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## TREE COVER

The amount of tree cover in the city of Eatonton is astounding. This image illustrates the existing canopy. But with every tree that is cut down, with every road that widened, that resource is chipped away.



# LITTER

Within the downtown area there is a virtually nonexistent litter problem, but citizens of the city complain that as one travels out from this area, garbage obscures the community's beauty. According to the Keep America Beautiful campaign, garbage accumulates in points of transition where people eat, drink or smoke before proceeding. Transition points may be at entrances of buildings, park benches, or along a stretch of sidewalk without trash receptacles. An easy solution to this is to identify transition points in your community, place trash

**ACCORDING TO THE  
KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL  
[www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org)  
CAMPAIGN, GARBAGE  
ACCUMULATES IN  
POINTS OF TRANSITION  
WHERE PEOPLE EAT,  
DRINK OR SMOKE  
BEFORE PROCEEDING.**

receptacles at these points and commit to proper maintenance of the receptacles.

Coordinating recycling and “adopt-a-spot” programs with local community organizations, youth groups and school groups will augment the regular maintenance of public places by the community as a whole. These programs raise community awareness and place responsibility on citizens for keeping Eatonton clean.

The city must enact public education programs on the importance of litter control and recycling programs. To find examples of such programs, visit the Keep America Beautiful web site at [www.kab.org](http://www.kab.org). Educating the public is the surest way to get participation from the community. Statistically, the most unclean areas of cities are areas where citizens are the most apathetic toward the community. Instilling a sense of concern and duty is an invaluable tool.

Two of the most successful shifts that have happened in America in the last 50 years have been youth driven: anti smoking and recycling. Partner with schools, nonprofits and civic groups to get youth involved in cleaning up.

**EDUCATING THE PUBLIC  
IS THE SUREST WAY TO  
GET PARTICIPATION  
FROM THE COMMUNITY.**



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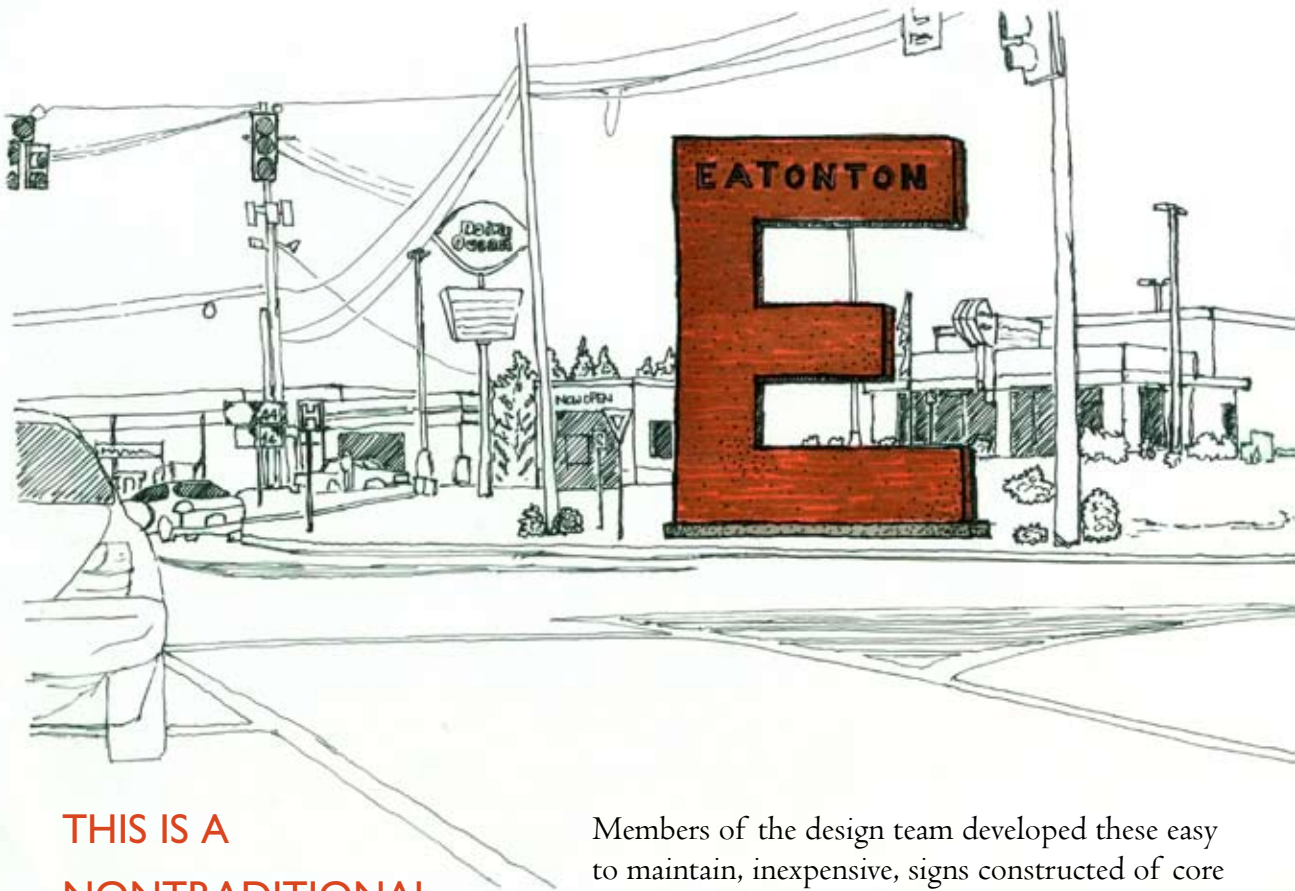
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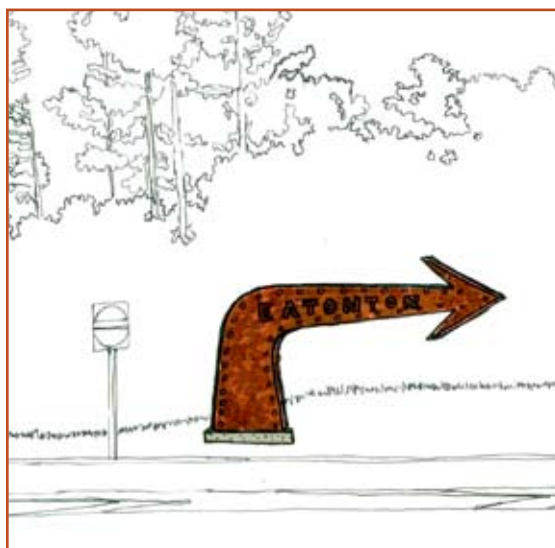
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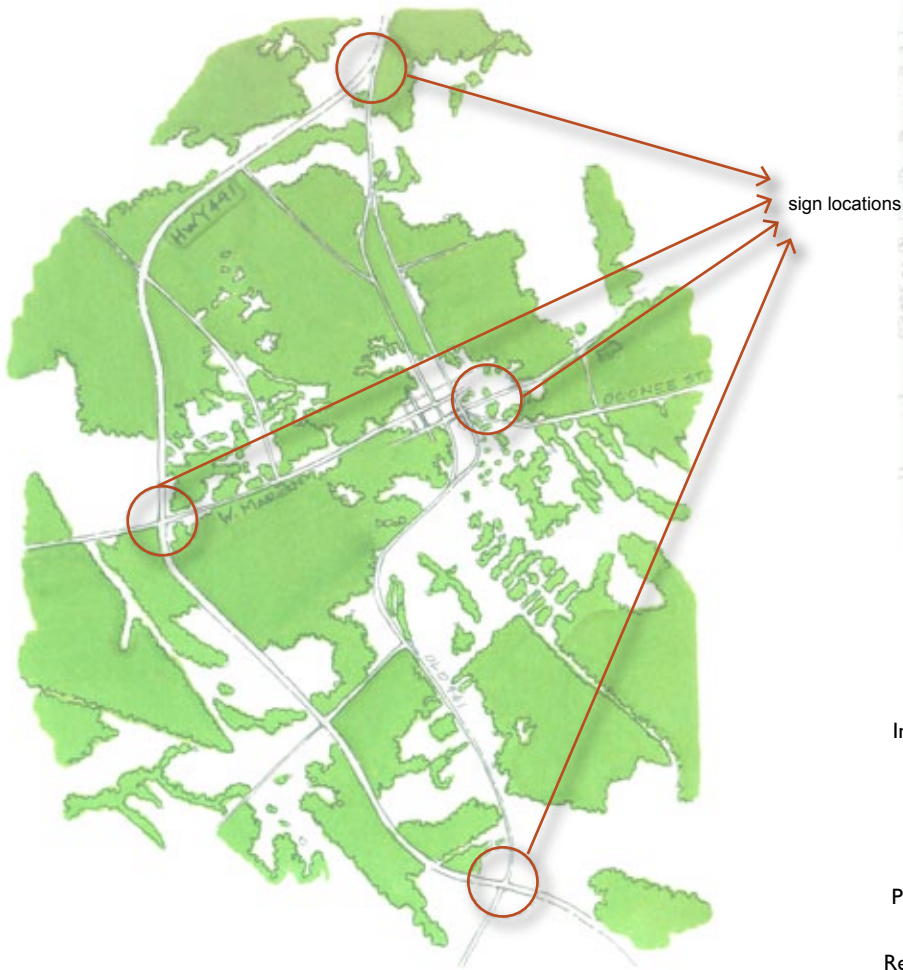


**THIS IS A  
NONTRADITIONAL  
ENTRANCE SIGN, BUT IS IT  
ALSO VERY MEMORABLE:  
PEOPLE ARE GOING TO  
REMEMBER THE TOWN  
WITH THE BIG E.**

Members of the design team developed these easy to maintain, inexpensive, signs constructed of core tin, and industrial material that rusts naturally. This is a nontraditional entrance sign, but is it also very memorable; people are going to remember the town with the Big E. Looking in the background of this image, if the Big E were removed, the view looks like Anywhere USA with asphalt, power lines, convenience stores and a dairy queen. But all of that disappears behind the creative entrance sign.







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## SIGNAGE FOR EATONTON

The design team strategized about how encourage people to get off the bypass and into town. Cities throughout the country have adopted a standard “Welcome to Fill-in-the-Blank” sign. However, if Eatonton is to put itself on the map as an arts center, the city’s welcome signs should be both directional and artistic. Make people think that Eatonton is different from Madison, and different from Milledgeville. Make them realize that there is something special here.

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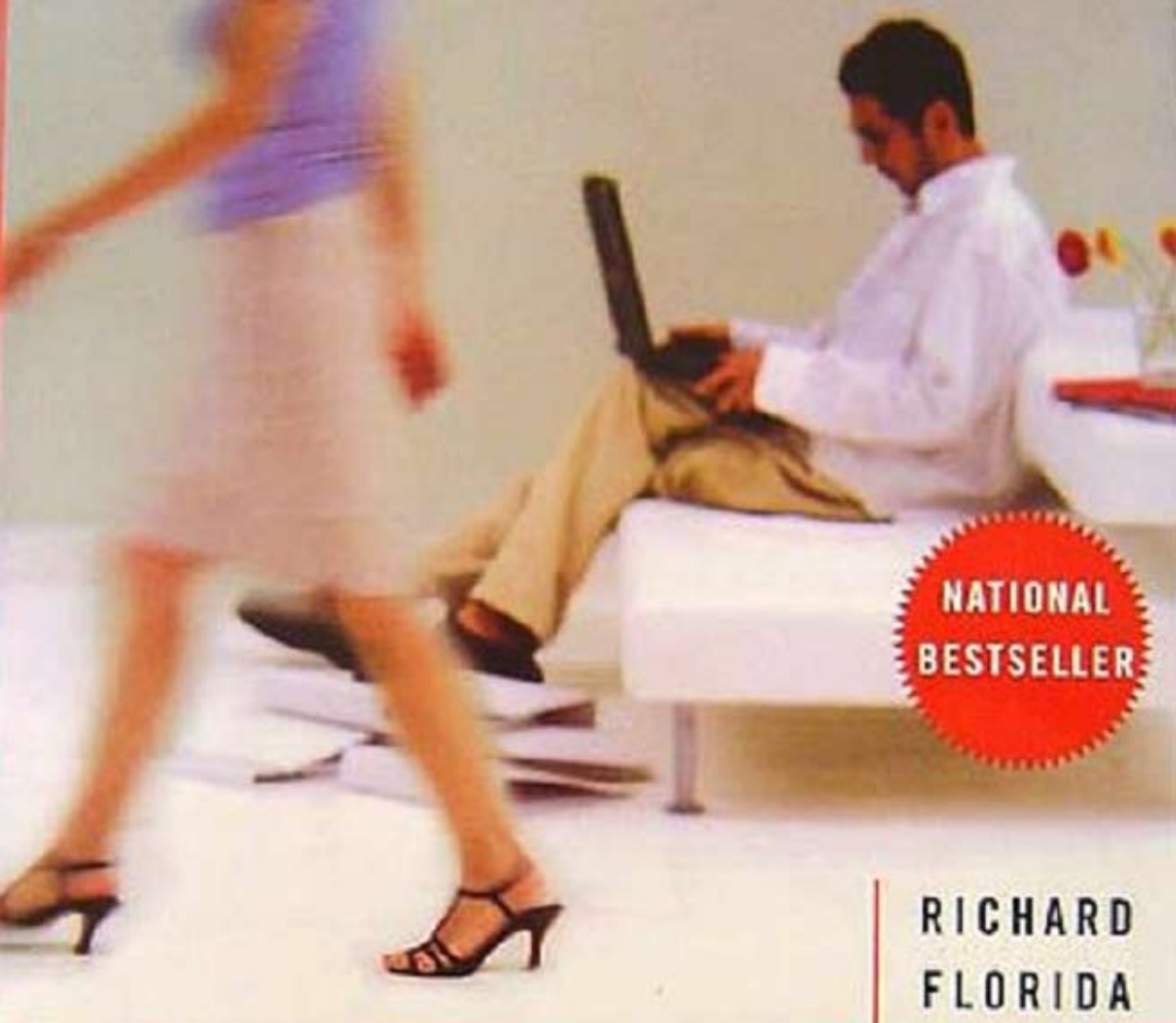
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**NATIONAL  
BESTSELLER**

**RICHARD  
FLORIDA**

# **The Rise of the Creative Class**

*and how it's transforming work, leisure,  
community and everyday life*

Eatonton Community Design Charrette | April 13 - 15, 2007

Produced by UGA's Center for Community Design & Preservation in partnership with the City of Eatonton & the Middle Georgia Regional Development Center



"If you ask most community leaders what kinds of people they'd most want to attract, they'd likely say successful married couples in their 30s and 40s---people with good middle-to-upper-income jobs and stable family lives. While it is certainly important for cities and communities to be good for children and families, less than a quarter of all American households consist of traditional nuclear families. Therefore focusing solely on their needs has been a losing strategy, one that neglects a critical engine of economic growth: young people.

Young workers have typically been thought of as transients who contribute little to a city's bottom line. But in the creative age, they matter for two reasons. First, they are workhorses. They are able to work longer and harder, and are more prone to take risks, precisely because they are young and childless. In rapidly changing industries, it's often the most recent graduates who have the most up-to-date skills. Second, people are staying single longer.

The average age of marriage for both men and women has risen some five years over the past generation. College-educated people postpone marriage longer than the national averages. Among this group, one of the fastest growing categories is the never-been-married. To prosper in the creative age, regions have to offer a people climate that satisfies this group's social interests and lifestyle needs, as well as address those of other groups.

Furthermore, a climate oriented to young people is also attractive to the creative class more broadly. Creative-class people do not lose their lifestyle preferences as they age. They don't stop bicycling or running, for instance, just because they have children. When they put their children in child seats or jogging strollers, amenities like traffic-free bike paths become more important than ever. They also continue to value diversity and tolerance. The middle-aged and older people I speak with may no longer hang around in nightspots until 4 a.m., but they enjoy stimulating, dynamic places with high levels of cultural interplay. And if they have children, that's the kind of environment in which they want them to grow up."

Source: *The Rise of the Creative Class*, by Richard Florida, professor of regional economic development at Carnegie Mellon University

## CAPTURING THE CREATIVE CLASS

Richard Florida's 2003 book "The Rise of the Creative Class" examines the question: What characterizes cities and regions that are economically successful? His conclusions are based on statistical evidence from years of studying successful communities and emerging leaders.

Florida presents an argument against the conventional perception that in order to boost an area's economy, large companies must be attracted to create jobs. In fact, Florida's study's showed that companies locate where the talent is; all the tax breaks in the world will not bring a large company to town if those companies are not able to find the employees they want there. Often, talent itself will generate new companies and create jobs instead.

For several decades, cities across the country have pursued quick fixes in the form of sports stadiums, freeways and shopping centers, to make their community more attractive. However, the reality is that creative people prefer authenticity -- so to make your city just like everywhere else is a sure way to kill its attractiveness!



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*Photo credit: Georgia Department of Economic Development*



We saw something in Eatonton, which isn't present in a lot of communities: spirit of cooperation. We know that there are issues, and grievances and in many ways it is your role as a citizen to communicate and get involved. But we know that you, as a community also work together in ways that are beneficial.

Keep using that power of cooperation and that power of coming together to make Eatonton a better place. In the end, you have to be patient. Recognize that the problems did not occur overnight and the solutions are not going to occur overnight, either. But they will occur eventually if you have a vision and if you stay the course.



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CITY OF EATONTON  
PUTNAM COUNTY

**Middle Georgia Regional Development Center**  
The Planning & Development Agency for Middle Georgia



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The University of Georgia

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