

Charrette Team



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This report (6 brochures) summarizes the input received from the Standing Subcommittee for the development of the River.

The meeting (October 27th, 2004) was facilitated by **Pratt Cassity**, Director of the University of Georgia's Center for Community Design and Preservation, who prepared the final comments you are reading.

The facilitated session was followed by a River Development Design Charrette (October 28th and 29th, 2004) involving 7 landscape architecture graduate students directed by **Carmine Fischetti**, Landscape Designer at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and **Cassity**.

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The University of Georgia



ROME



RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT



The Next Decade (2004-2014)



Results of the Work Session and Design Charrette October, 2004. University of Georgia and Department of Community Affairs

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Team Members included: Lisa Smart, Angela Pappas, Dorothy Koslowski, Julia Reed, Julien Derocher, Beth Gillespi, Rachel Von Ins.

Summary of Facilitated Work Session

Review of successes

Ridge Ferry Park is repeatedly mentioned as a shining example of compatible riverfront development for Rome. The connection it makes to the city is good and its beauty is undisputed. The addition of programming components like a seasonal Farmers Market, the playground, picnic areas, park shelters and gazebos, the comfort stations, and the outdoor stage make for a splendid urban amenities that is being used and well-maintained.

The government's program for property acquisition is a success. As planned 10 years ago, the steady identification and purchase of river frontage has made the "return to the river" a much more attainable achievement.

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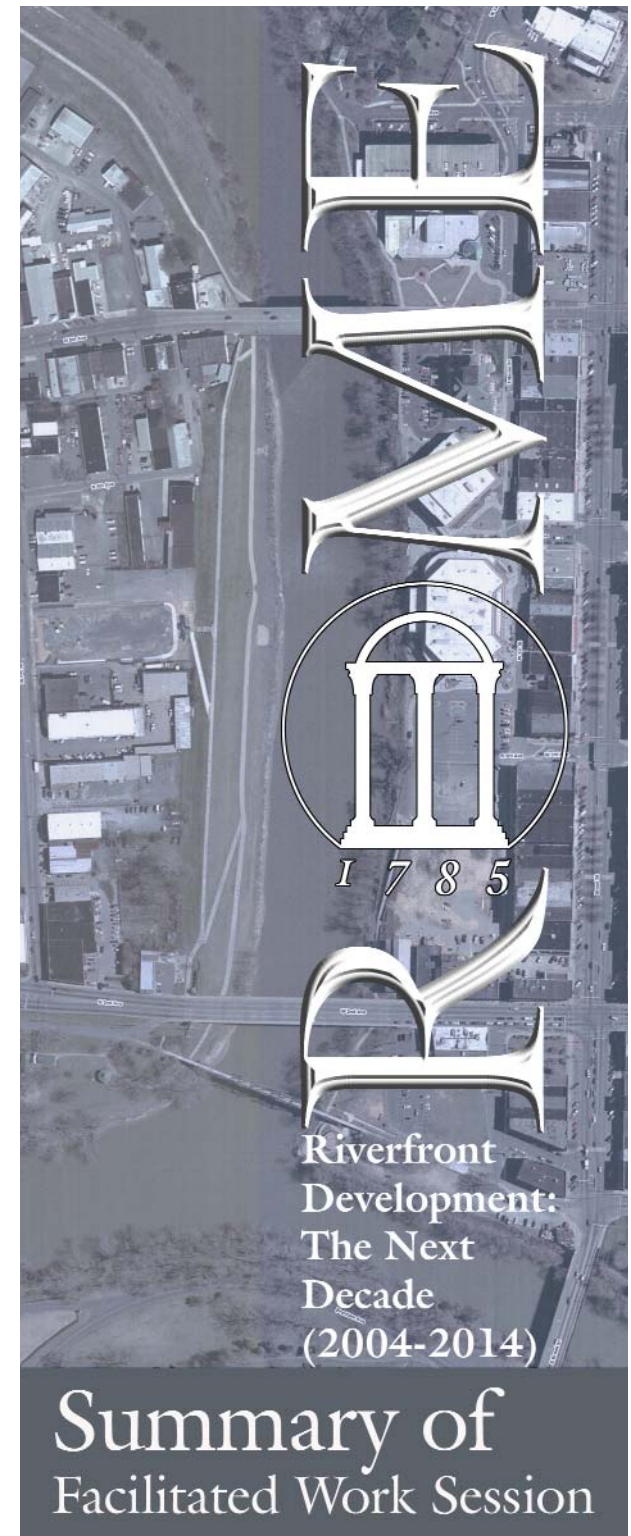
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The continued relationship with the National Park Service, the programming at the Chieftains Museum, the broader connection of current facilities to walking, hiking and bike paths, underwater archeological investigations and provision of boat launching areas ranks as successful products of the plan implementation.

Projects left to complete

1. Greater access to the water.
2. Pedestrian bridge across the river.
3. Restoration of the riverbank along the downtown side of the Oostanaula.
4. Restitution of the Roman Holiday and docking facilities for her.
5. Wetland recognition, interpretation and protection.
6. Walking trail extension and connections to other recreational facilities.
7. Development of a dog park at Burwell Creek.
8. Recreation and rental facility at town center.
9. Creation of a nature area at Silver Creek
10. Aesthetic improvements to the levee.
11. Redevelopment of area near The Forum.
12. Redevelopment across the River behind the levee.

Mission

A discussion of the Mission of the organization is the best way to begin to chart future direction for standing subcommittee. The members were asked to write down what they felt the original mission for the group was and if that had changed, or should change, now and for the next decade. The answers were very instructive.

Original Mission or Mandate:

- Rome began its effort to develop "the rivers" by creating targets:
 - Rome Floyd County Library

- Law Enforcement Center
- The County Building
- The Forum
- River Development with Preservation and Environment as Guides
- To make Rome's Rivers an Asset to the Community (Citizens and Business)
- To Oversee the development and Usage of the rivers
- Recommend Actions/Items to Enhance the Rivers
- (Advise) Guide governmental bodies how to enhance rivers and parks
- Promote Non-consumptive use of the rivers and to enhance the current conditions of the rivers
- Take advantage of "while protecting" our river resources.
- To develop and coordinate ideas for improvements to river usage and protection
- I don't know
- To monitor River development to suggest and promote non-destructive use of the river corridor

Mission now:

- To Provide Vision and Guidance for Use of the rivers and their resources in an environmentally friendly manner
- In cooperation with Parks and Recreation, Downtown Development Authority, Planning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission, promote Rome's identity as a river city, protect the environmental quality of the rivers and their corridors and provide opportunities for active and passive enjoyment of the river corridors
- To develop, with public input, for public access to our rivers and protection of our river resources
- Some protection, but mostly development - some good, some bad
- To protect and improve the conditions of the rivers (including biotic and abiotic fac-

- tors) from outside and local influences - increase use
- Become the driving force to make rivers key to Rome's environment
- Promote the rivers and increase their usage through enhancements and education
- To give guidance to the future development and assure usage of the river ways
- To improve and link together the assets along the rivers and to find funding and create support for these projects
- To get our citizens to the river and provide a spectrum of recreation and beauty with environmental quality
- To develop the river greenspace for the education, entertainment and leisure activities of Rome/Floyd and all who choose to visit us

Themes or action words emerging from this exercise include:



- Enhance
- Advise
- Guide
- Protect
- Conservation and Preservation
- Development
- Coordinate
- Recreation
- New public assets
- River as asset
- Oversee usage
- Non-destructive use



- Improve
- Find Funding
- Educate
- Entertain
- Provide vision
- Public Input
- Connect

Additional Issues that will affect Subcommittee success:

Public Relations

There will be a growing and important aspect of the subcommittee's work plan involving public relations. This becomes key in changing habits (encouraging parking across the river, shifting attitudes about development across the river) and advocating for new legislation (the passage of stronger local ordinances, or even perhaps state statutes to create a River Advisory Board with regulatory powers).

The subcommittee will also play a big role in local education. The successes of the river work thus far will need to be touted and the future directions for the subcommittee as it changes composition, strength or focus should be properly explained through the media.

Creative and clever marketing strategies are no stranger to Rome and its downtown development programs. This approach should also be employed in riverfront materials.

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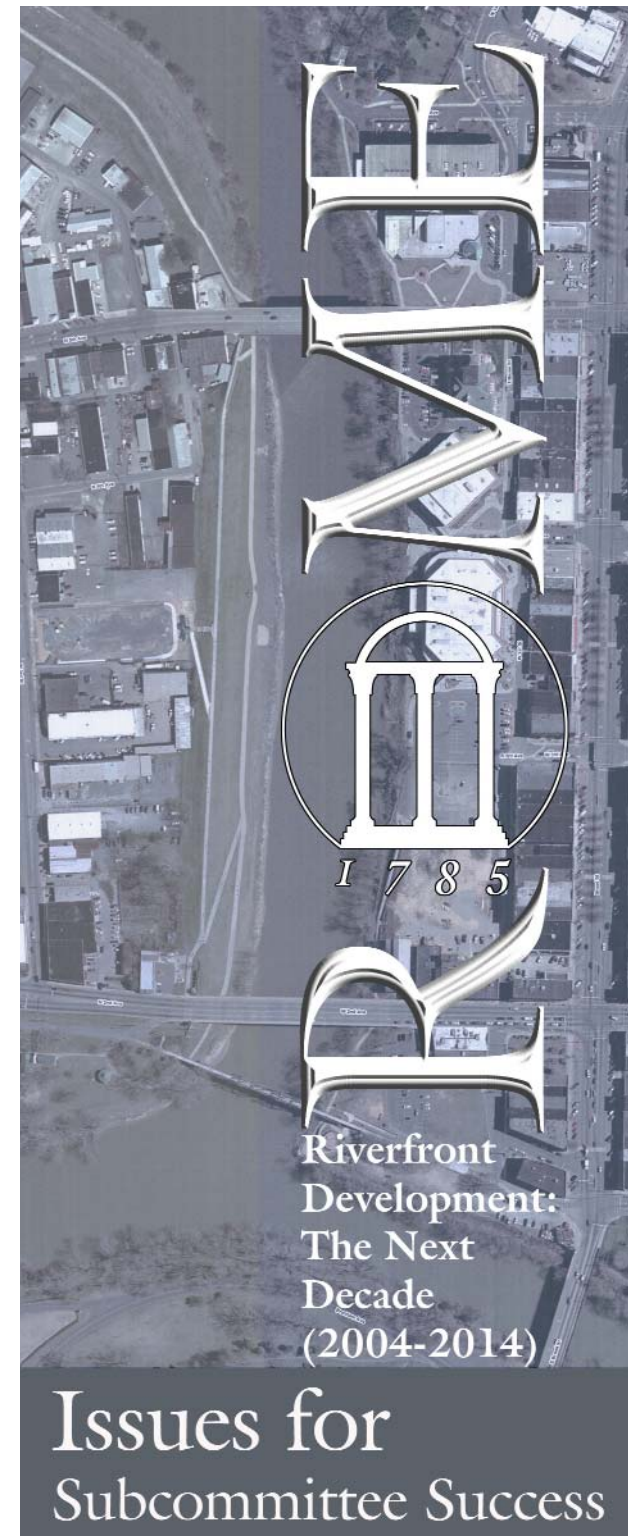
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Roles

The differences in responsibilities and the limitations of each of the participants in riverfront redevelopment activity are at the root of understanding the future organizational framework of the subcommittee. The importance of having the buy-in from the following sectors cannot be understated: elected officials, appointed members of boards and commissions, staff, private sector for-profits, private sector not-for-profits, and the general public. Each group of stakeholders and decision makers carry restrictions on the kinds of activities they can do. The reverse is also true; there are strengths that certain positions bring to redevelopment strategies. Clearly defining roles of the players in the organization will help avoid problems in the future.

Opportunities

The subcommittee has several opportunities for change in the future. The following list explains the most obvious ones:

River Overlay - The river subcommittee may benefit from a more institutionalized and strengthened presence. The same overlay design review districts that protect historic districts and other vulnerable resource districts can be created for the river corridors in Rome. Many publications and precedents exist for doing this. Attached to this report is a white paper prepared for Jackson County's Greenspace Plan related to creating overlay districts. Information can

be found on the "toolkit" section of the website for Georgia's Department of Community Affairs. Additional information can be obtained from the American Planning Association's Planners Press.

Fundraising and Development Plan

- As projects become larger and private sector involvement increases, a funding plan should be developed for projects, subcommittee staff support and program expansion.

Public Relations - A public relations and community education plan should be developed in coordination with the development plan.

Partnerships - As time has passed and the success of the subcommittee's work is apparent, new partnerships will need to be developed and old one's reconfirmed. This is especially true with Floyd County, The Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Natural Resources, conservation organizations, local community institutions and private property owners.

Incentives - Certain incentives (tax abatement, tax credits, flexible zoning, grants and loans) may need to be directed to private property owners as they become more involved in development scenarios along the river.

Accountability - The regular report or work session with the City

Commission must become part of the annual work program for the subcommittee. This should be coordinated through staff and the Commission appointments to the subcommittee.

Work Plan - This report and the design charrette should form the foundation for a work plan. The work plan should be reviewed annually and updated when necessary. The plan should be developed based on 5 year segments and should have milestones and evaluation elements.



ANCHOR ENDS OF THE RIVERWALK

The perceived anchors of the Riverfront improvement zone are at Ridge Ferry Park and at the Confluence site. The concept here is to enhance the anchors by two approaches:



See the River - Cross the River

A pedestrian bridge that connects the two sides of the city allows access to the recreation areas on the levee side. Proposed new retail and housing could also be seen and accessed from the new bridge. The new bridge will provide an irresistible urge to be at the "Riverwalk" and cross the river by increasing visual interest as well as city energy and vitality.

New urban space configuration at the bridge access point along Third will direct pedestrians toward the bridge. They will literally be funneled from town by the extension of the zero-lot-line solid urban wall. One side of the street will be the masonry edge of a new building while the other side will be a landscape feature designed in the spirit of an Italian colonnade, loggia, or aqueduct. This will serve identify the street edge, provide a walkway to the new bridge and add a sculptural element for growing evergreen vines. Night lighting will continue the effect during the evening.

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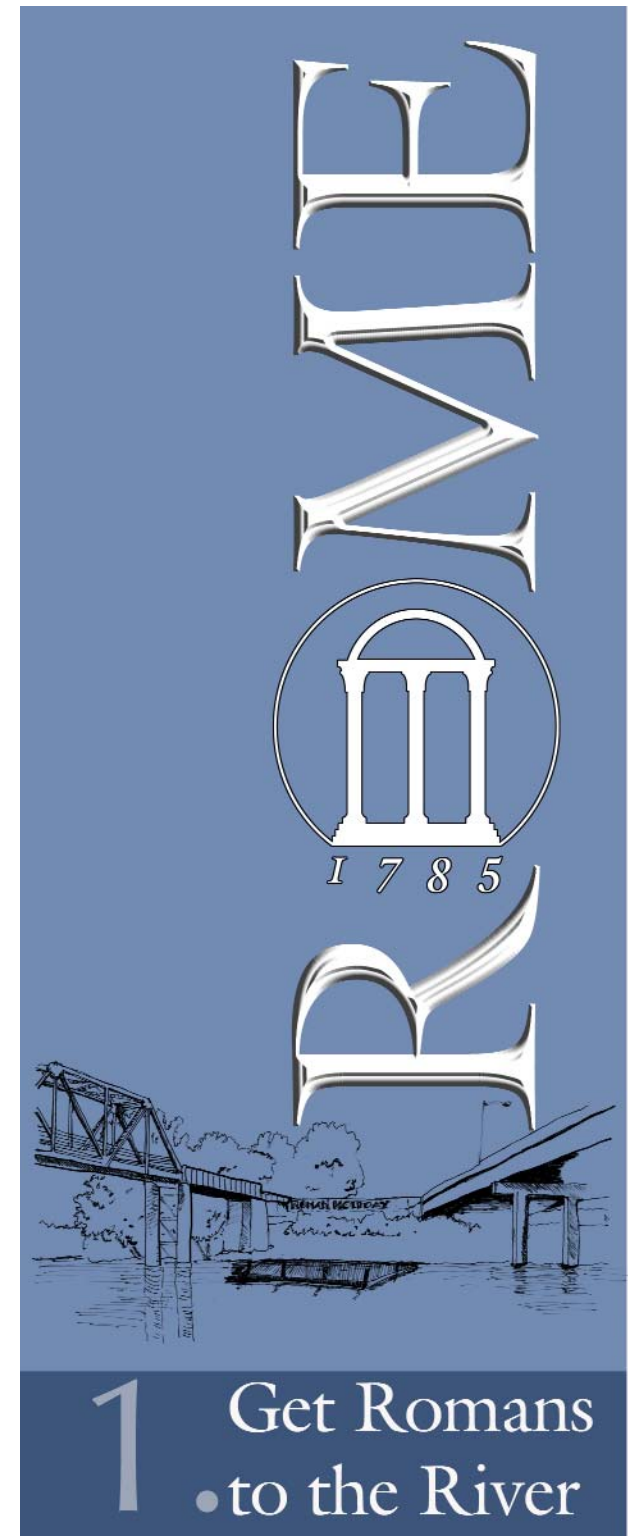
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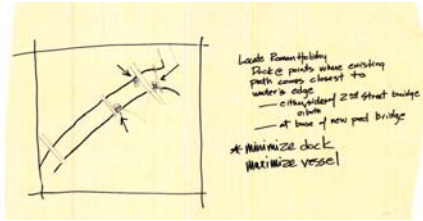


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Feel the River - Boat the River

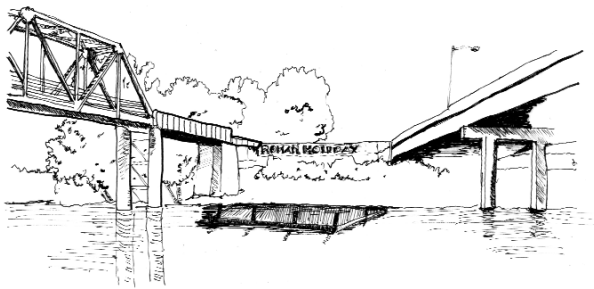
It is at Ridge Ferry and beneath the bridges that the path and pedestrian activities come nearest the water's edge. Here is where the boat docks should be located.



There are already amenities at Ridge Ferry but docking facilities for the Roman Holiday

could be added at the point in the river directly beneath the 2nd Street Bridge. Docking location can be established on both sides of the river and can be designed to float with rising water levels. This design might be incorporated into existing bridge pilings or cabled to the bank.

The site overlooking the confluence needs special attention. The current condition of the overlook site where the Etowah River and the Oostanaula River converge is not only visually unappealing, but it is also unstable and disconnected from its surroundings. The instability renders the site

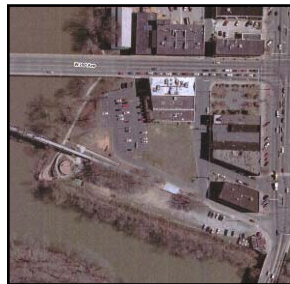


unsafe for public use in the future as the rivers erode the banks. This separation from surrounding greenspace and the river walk make the site ripe for change and innovation.

Recommendation:

1. Commission hydrologist to study the effects of construction along the river and stabilize riverbanks to ensure safety and longevity
2. Establish design guidelines for building and landscape materials and accessories (i.e. lampposts, paving materials, and plantings)
3. Keep existing path to pedestrian rail-to-trail bridge
4. Connect existing river path around the convergence point and create an informal overlook space, removing the existing patio and stabilizing the bank with native plantings
5. Create a path closer to the Etowah River, mimicking the topography in this area
6. Remove existing access road to parking lot and create a new road adjacent to buildings on the river side of First Street

7. Remove existing stage area and parking lot, and create new amphitheater-shaped "bandstand" area on grass/parking lot
8. Add plantings to backside of new amphitheater to create enclosure
9. Use hardscape in the area as needed, keeping grass areas for picnicking, etc.
10. Create formal garden space on First Street frontage area, possibly for local Garden Club



3 RIVERS PARK



Stabilize and naturalize the downtown side of the Oostanaula.

Bank stabilization of the Oostanaula is a top priority. Serious erosion has already occurred and the current state of the bank appears to be unstable. Investigation of the best method of stabilization including but not limited to terracing, walls and plantings should be undertaken as a first step in developing the site.

Hydrology of the river should be studied to determine the long term effect of these strategies on the river flow. Stabilization of the river bank would improve view sheds of the river, looking toward the city from the levee side as well as views from the bridges at 2nd and at 5th street.



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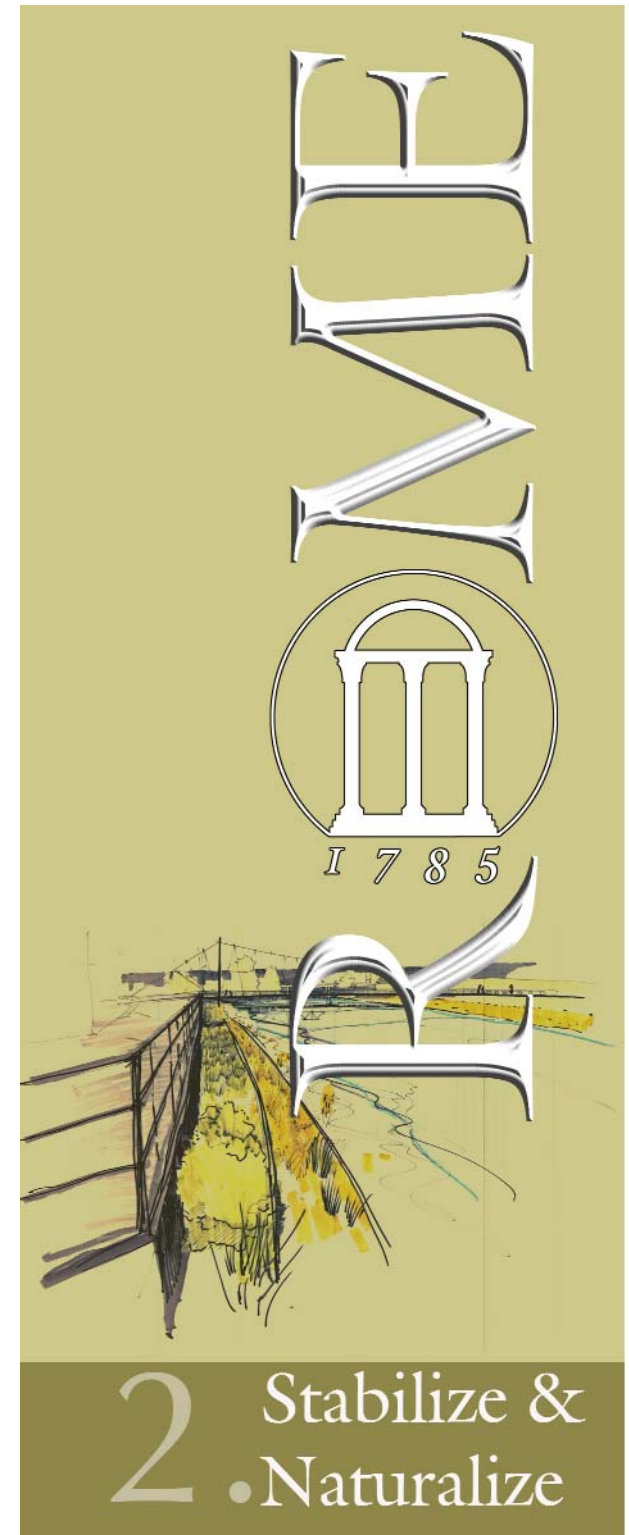
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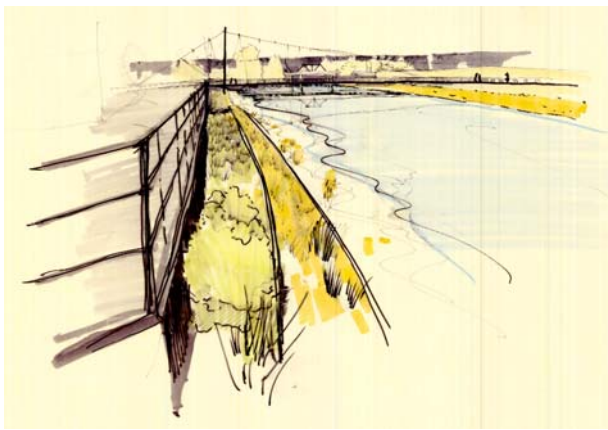
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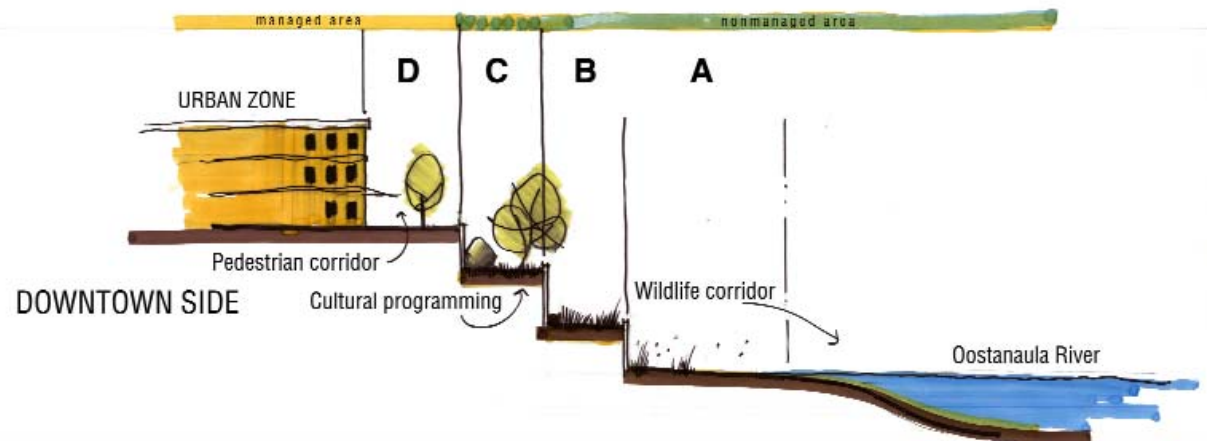
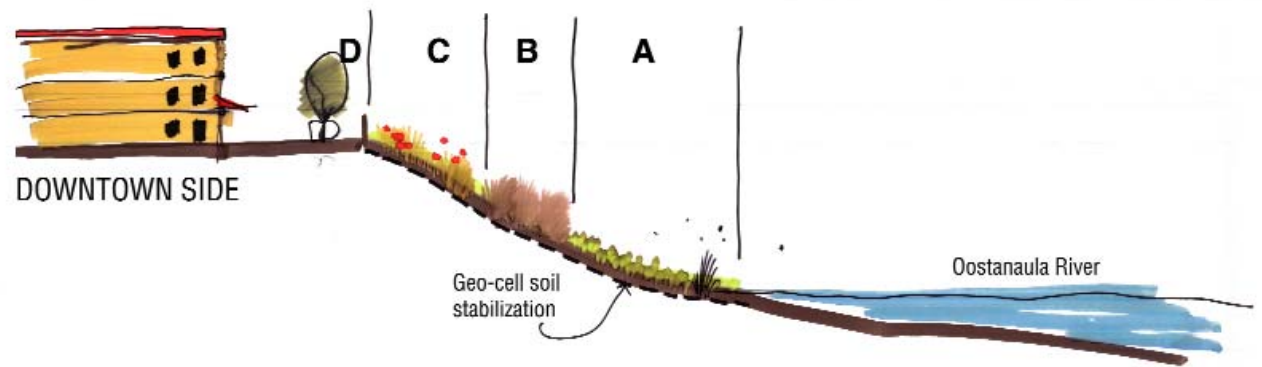
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River Wall / Bank Stabilization Issues

1. Identify existing and future critical areas for stabilization.
2. Explore a range of existing soil stabilization systems. Determine bank soil suitability and engineering requirements of retention systems. Determine the impacts of the river wall and/or bank stabilization installation on water flow and hydrology on adjacent areas and existing banks.
3. Assess the Corps of Engineer's willingness to approve the design.
4. Consider and plan for continued riparian and wildlife protection in the design if at all possible.
5. Identify existing cultural resources in bank area and prioritize sites for integration into the design.
6. Identify suitable plantings within the installation. Present a sustained tree replacement plan with the core considering the new design. Consider using massed native grass plantings to reduce water velocity, reduce maintenance costs and add visual interest.

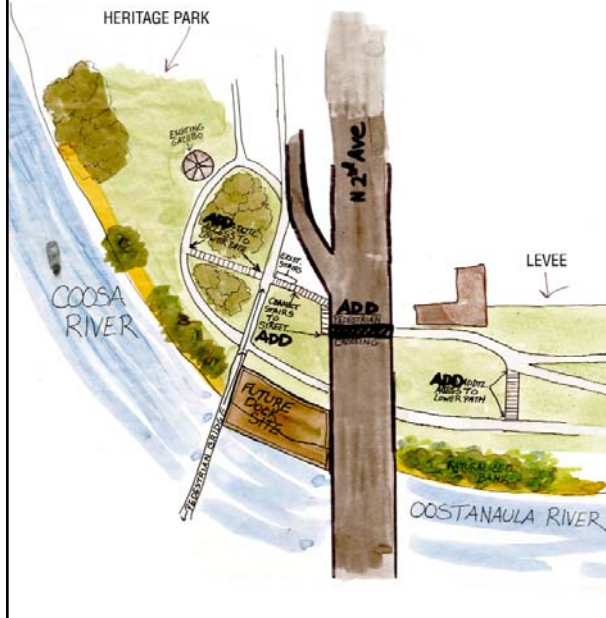


Levee

At the present time, the levee is an expanse of grass across from the downtown riverwalk. It is steep and difficult to maintain, and is unsafe at night due to minimal lighting. The concrete pad area is no longer used and thus should be removed, encouraging use of other venues in town. This would in turn allow the area to be naturalized and would create an inviting place for people to linger or to use for recreation.

1. Increase connectivity between Heritage Park and Ridge Ferry Park via the levee by adding street-level pedestrian crossing on Second Street and more access points between pathways near Second Street to prevent walking up down steep hills through the grass

Increasing Connectivity Between Heritage Park and the Levee



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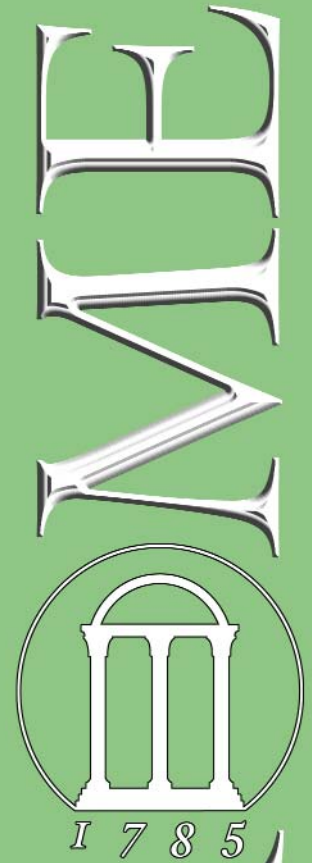
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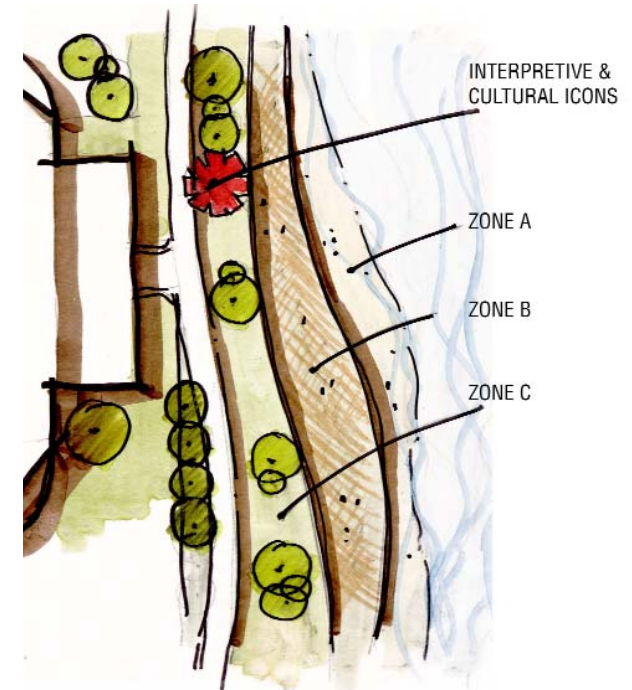
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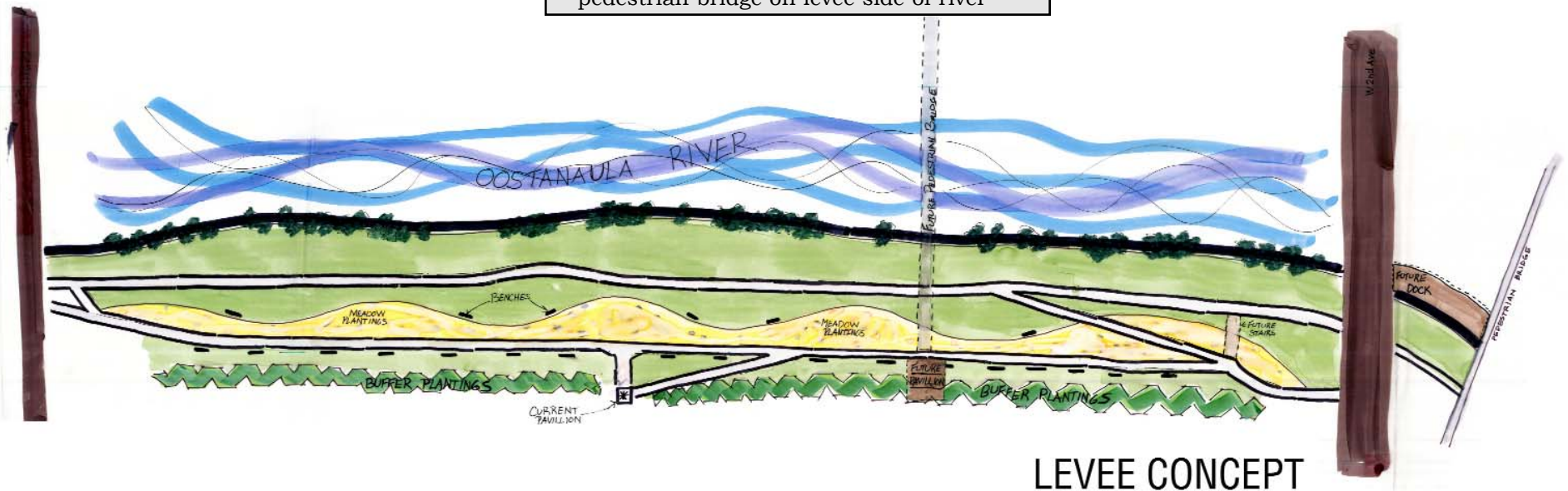
3. Improve Viewsheds



2. Buffer adjacent industrial area behind the levee with vegetation to make levee area seem more park-like
3. Remove concrete pad/stage area and use other areas in town as concert venues
4. Let area adjacent to river bank (approximately 20 feet from current water level) area remain natural (i.e. do not mow) to allow for a softer edge, similar to the area across 5th street from the levee
5. Add site furnishings to the levee (benches, trash cans, water fountain) to encourage people to linger
6. Add meadow-like plantings in curvaceous swaths to mimic the flow of the river and create a more intimate feeling in the space
7. Study lighting to determine appropriate level for nighttime activities, while being sensitive to minimizing and reducing light pollution
8. Heritage Park would be a good place for a canoe put-in/take-out. The other access point would need to be identified and an outfitter would need to be responsible for a structure to store equipment and provide a shuttle service
9. Consider levee side of river as a docking site for the future Roman Holiday II
10. Consider a plaza terminus for the future pedestrian bridge on levee side of river



Zone A = Area adjacent to bank
 Zone B = Meadow-like curvaceous swaths
 Zone C = top of levee - furniture and viewing sites



LEVEE CONCEPT

Infill with quality architecture and urban design elements to extend the urban grid and make construction materials and techniques consistent.

3rd & the river Development

Waterfront property is a highly desirable commodity, particularly in an urbanized community. The design team recommends that Rome capitalize on the natural and cultural value of the waterfront by replacing the existing surface parking lots between 2nd and 4th Avenues with an extension of downtown buildings, following the historic precedence of the urban street grid. Perpetuation of the existing downtown urban grid into the area currently being used as waterfront surface parking lots will draw downtown shoppers toward the river.



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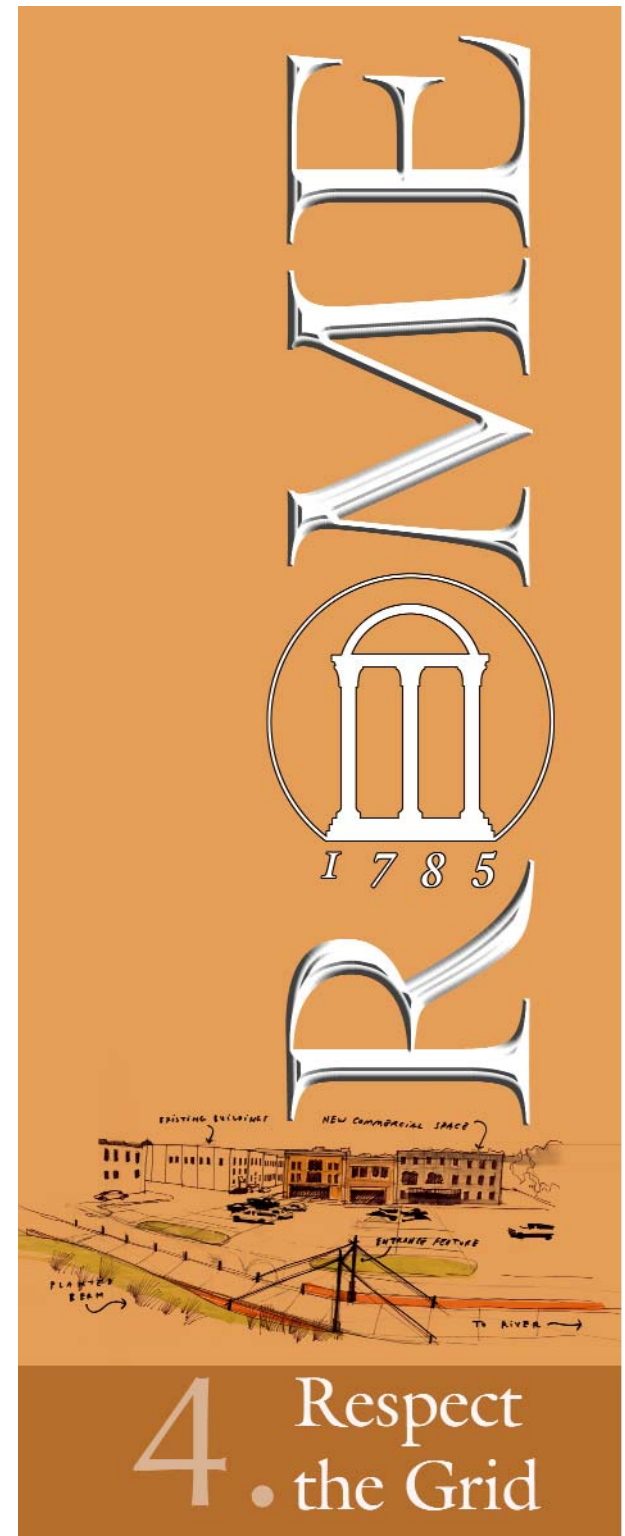
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Suggestions:

- Create a clear vista and pedestrian friendly



walkway to the new Oostanula River Pedestrian Bridge. Continuation of downtown streetscape elements (same style of sidewalk, street tree plantings, etc) will help to unify the newly redeveloped area with the existing downtown. New features such



CONVENTION CENTER CONCEPT

as a vine covered Roman colonnade could be introduced to create a special riverfront destination in the space that is currently underutilized as surface parking in some of the most valuable real estate in town. A realignment of the current parking for The Forum and its circulation will be necessary.

- Develop the lots adjacent to the forum parking with mixed-use development. These newly designed loft-style spaces will mimic the character of the historical warehouses,

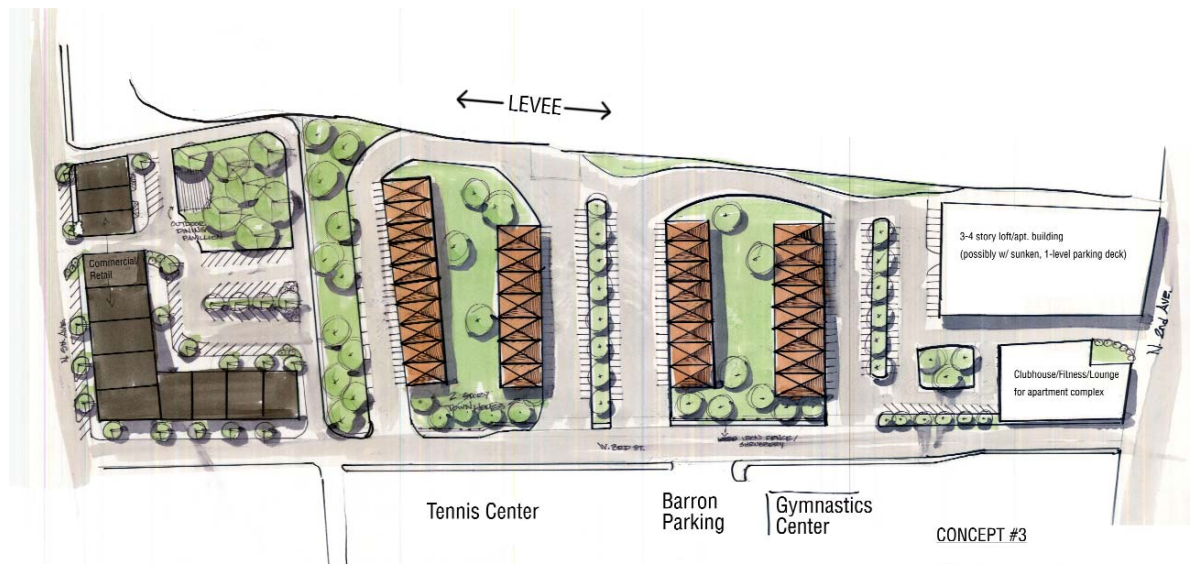


while providing increased commercial and residential space as well as parking.

- Reestablish the former river tour boat "Roman Holiday". During its heyday it carried 20,000 passengers per year. This will markedly increase the importance of the confluence site if the dock for embarkation is located here. The boat will require a dock that can accommodate water levels varying from 567 ft to 574 ft normally and an additional 30 ft if there is significant flood stage rain.
- Areas beyond the levee are prime for redevelopment. Increased connectivity to the city center should increase interest in developing these areas as convention centers, retail and residential areas.
- Increased parking will be required as the area population increases. The forum could benefit from as much as a 20 times the current level of parking. Underground parking, below building parking and parking provided across the Oostanula could alleviate this shortage. Care should be used

not to obscure the beautiful views of the river.

- Pedestrian traffic to use the new redeveloped, revitalized areas and the recreation facilities should be encouraged. By creating a vibrant riverwalk center citizens and visitors will be excited to participate in, traffic and parking will some what remediate.
- There are currently two areas where the pedestrian can cross the river. The crossing at 5th street is hazardous at this time and should be evaluated for a safer, easier crossing.
- Connectivity must be maintained and considered as each area is developed. Maintaining and continuing the vibrant usage at Ridge Ferry Park upstream. Continuing the usage of the "Heritage Riverways" logo all along the area as well as continuing the repetition of lighting standards, materials and methods from top to bottom of the riverway will provide a feeling of continuity for the users.



Redevelopment option for levee side of the river

* 3-story town homes with garages (greatly reduce surface parking!)
 * Face buildings parallel to levee and W. Third Street