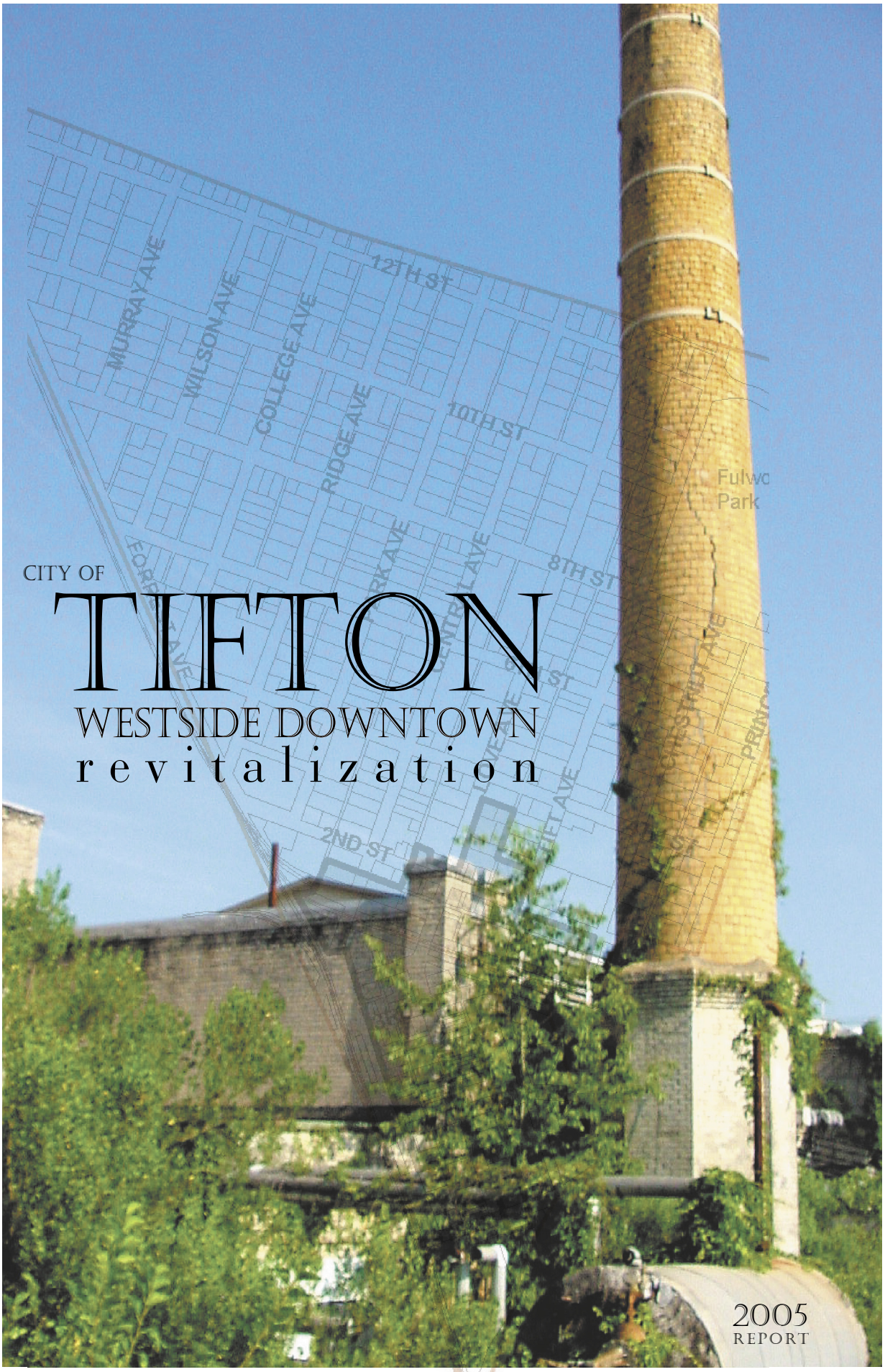

CITY OF

TIFTON

WESTSIDE DOWNTOWN revitalization

2005 REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
& IMPLEMENTATION
ASSESSMENT

PRE-CHARRETTE
BROCHURE

CITY OF

TIFTON

WESTSIDE DOWNTOWN
revitalization
2005
REPORT

CHARRETTE REPORT
NEWSPAPER INSERT

MEDIA COVERAGE

City of Tifton
Westside Downtown Revitalization

"Horizon Mill"
Design Charrette

Executive Summary
&
Implementation Assessment

by
The University of Georgia
Alliance for Quality Growth

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Executive Summary

The site of the former Horizon Mill on the western edge of downtown Tifton, Georgia, has been used as industrial and commercial property since the late 1800s. It began as a packaging and distribution warehouse for tobacco in 1888 and was a textile dyeing facility from 1950 to 1992. Since 1992, the 8+ acre property has been vacant with only small portions being used for storage. Under the city of Tifton's 2000 Urban Redevelopment Plan, the former Horizon Mill site was identified as a high priority for redevelopment.

In April 2004, the city of Tifton hosted the first statewide brownfields regional workshop, one of 12 workshops focusing on the State of Georgia's new brownfield redevelopment incentives. The Horizon Mill site was highlighted and discussed during this workshop. Furthermore, the Horizon Mill site was identified as the highest priority in the community for redevelopment during a May 2004 strategic planning retreat involving City Council and Development Authority members.

The site is adjacent to but just outside the city's historic district, it is part of the Urban Redevelopment Area, and it is located in a state Enterprise Zone. According to the city's Urban Redevelopment Plan:

> *"There is a potential brownfields area along 9th Street where a number of abandoned agriculture and light industrial buildings exist. A number of large vacant lots mark the site of prior demolitions.* ***Anchoring the north end of the area is an 8-acre site of the former Horizon Carpet Mill.*** *The facility has been mostly vacant since the mid-1990s."*

The site is also within the jurisdiction of the Downtown Development Authority and a newly-constituted Development Authority. The city does not currently own the site but has been given permission to conduct soil and groundwater samples by the current owner, Mr. Earl Barrs of Macon, Georgia.

The Horizon Mills site is immediately adjacent to a low income residential neighborhood traditionally known as "The Heights" and is part of Census Tract 9907. The population in Census Tract 9907 is 58.7% African American, compared to 28% African Americans in Tift County. Nearly 43% of residents in this census tract do not have a high school diploma, compared to 30% in the city of Tifton. The median household income in Census Tract 9907 was $20,367 in 1999, compared to $32,616 in Tift County. 42.4% of all residents in the census tract live below the federal poverty level, compared to just 20% in Tift County.

The South Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) is also a partner in this redevelopment effort and used the Horizon Mill site as a model in a pilot project to help residents envision new uses for the property. The RDC has developed a computer-simulated "flyover" of a new use for the redeveloped space that is available on CD.

The city of Tifton has adopted "Sustainable Growth Principles" which will help "create a livable community designed for people, not just cars" and "encourage development that is compact yet contains open space provided in the form of greenspace, squares or parks." An additional principle encourages 15-20% of space in any new or large-scale infill development be

dedicated to open or greenspace. These principles will play a key role in the redevelopment of the Horizon Mills property.

In November 2004, the city applied to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a $200,000 grant to determine the types and extent of environmental contamination on the property, the first step toward redevelopment of the site. The site is not on the state Hazardous Site Inventory or the federal NPL ("superfund") list, but hazardous substances including asbestos and soil contamination were identified on the site in the early 1990s. Several underground storage tanks were removed, along with contaminated soil. The EPA made positive comments on the city's application but ultimately decided not to fund it. Grant reviewers cited a "lack of specific vision for the site" and "insufficient public input and information on how the site will impact the overall community" as items needing improvement in the grant proposal.

The city engaged the University of Georgia (UGA) to help produce "a redevelopment concept plan with broad-based citizen input." A project team was assembled from UGA's Alliance for Quality Growth, a multi-disciplinary group of faculty who share the belief that education and community involvement are critical to achieving sustainable growth at the policy level and in Georgia's communities. The project team was made up of faculty from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government's Community & Regional Development Division, the College of Environment & Design's Center for Community Design & Preservation and Institute of Ecology, and the Small Business Development Center Network's Office of Economic Development Assistance. The team contracted to deliver educational materials in advance of the public input phase, an intensive weekend public input phase called a design charrette, written and visual descriptions of the design products, and a written implementation assessment report. The target time for the charrette was set for the weekend of May 13, 2005, with a presentation of initial results to be provided on Monday, May 16, 2005. The city established a steering committee to guide the UGA project team in designing educational materials, the charrette exercise, and to advise the city on implementation issues. The steering committee was composed of about 25 citizens who were owners and operators of local businesses, government and elected officials, community volunteer leaders, and neighborhood leaders.

In essence, the charrette itself provided a forum for gathering and analyzing broad-based public input on ideas for reuse of the site, it clarified some consensus community vision for the neighborhood, and it strengthened citizen support for the city's leadership of the task. The brownfield charrette undertaken by the citizens of Tifton specifically addressed the issues raised by EPA and others. Several educational and informational activities were conducted in the weeks and days leading up to the charrette weekend. The UGA team developed informational materials that informed citizens about brownfields, redevelopment, revitalization, and the Horizon Mill neighborhood. The information was distributed by (1) news articles published in the Tifton Gazette, (2) customized brochures handed out at public gatherings, civic events, and in a door-to-door campaign, and (3) a "revitalization tools" workshop for public and professionals. Special efforts were directed toward Tifton's Hispanic community, which represents a higher percentage of residents than statewide averages. Because a number of Hispanic citizens live in the adjacent neighborhoods, several measures were taken to inform them of the project and their opportunity to participate in its design. The charrette brochure was translated into Spanish for distribution by steering committee members, and a presentation was given by steering committee members and city staff following Spanish mass at a local catholic church. UGA faculty also

developed an online web site for the steering committee that residents were able to access at their convenience to learn about the redevelopment and site issues and to provide development/re-use ideas on the site. The web site was widely utilized by Tifton residents, and responses were used by the UGA team as input for the charrette process.

The city hosted a kick-off celebration on Friday evening of the charrette weekend at the city's Welcome Center, itself a redeveloped former gas station. UGA faculty and students were present to answer questions and explain the charrette process. Children were encouraged to draw their visions for the site on large scrolls of paper. Refreshments were served, and computers were available for residents to access the online survey about the site.

The actual design work of the charrette was accomplished on Saturday and Sunday. The UGA charrette team visited the site with cameras and sketch pads, assimilated all the citizen input received to that time, discussed various ideas, produced many drawings of small-scale and large-scale design ideas, etc. for the entire two days and into the wee morning hours. Citizens were encouraged to drop by, observe the design work, and to provide reactions and/or new ideas.

On the Monday morning after the charrette, about 40 people attended a public lunch at which the charrette team presented its initial results. Besides Tifton citizens and UGA personnel, there were representatives of US EPA, GA EPD, GA Department of Community Affairs, and the South Georgia Regional Development Center in attendance. The presentation and Q&A session were video-taped for later broadcast on the city's public access television channel.

It was evident from the range of ideas proposed and discussed during the charrette weekend that the Horizon Mill property offers many redevelopment opportunities. Many of these ideas had been captured in visual images over the weekend and were displayed on the walls of the meeting room. The presentation opened with a historical review of the mill as a vital part of Tifton's heritage and economy. The review focused on numerous unique architectural features of the mill, as well as its architectural evolution over the decades. A popular fact about the mill's history was that the original name was Imperial Mill. The audience was very receptive to immediately reviving the name in referring to the redevelopment project. The historical review was followed by discussion of guidelines for rehabilitating the historic mill building, incentives for public and private partnerships to jointly accomplish a redevelopment project, and – most importantly – several redevelopment scenarios that incorporated the unique aspects of the property and the multiple needs expressed by the citizens. An important point common to all the redevelopment scenarios was the historic nature of the mill and the potential for listing the property in the National Register of Historic Places. National Register listing would trigger additional financial benefits to assist in rehabilitation of the Mill structures, and federal standards for rehabilitation were addressed.

The proposed design scenarios were firmly rooted in the desires and suggestions from the community input survey. The first scenario drew upon the mill's historic architecture to create a mixed-use development fusing the new and old. A second scenario used Tifton's history of agricultural advancements to create a park and museum complex. The third scenario focused on the site's central location and proposed a pedestrian hub connecting residential neighborhoods, academic campuses, and institutional facilities to downtown Tifton. The final scenario used the Mill's industrial history to form a conceptual plan of an industrial park and museum detailing the history of industry in Tift County. Each redevelopment scenario addressed the range of specific uses included in the conceptual design, along with their defining characteristics (commercial,

residential, tourism, public amenity, greenspace) and how each use relates to the whole. Other main considerations addressed in each scenario include connectivity of the site to adjoining areas and principal community centers (e.g., Abraham Baldwin College), the "draws" that would attract citizens and visitors to the redeveloped site, and the sense of heritage the Imperial Mill exemplifies. A draft full-color, four-page newspaper insert was presented for comment. The insert's purpose would be to disseminate the design concepts to all Tifton's citizens so as to provide a basis for continuing broad-based dialogue about the Mills redevelopment.

The weeks following the charrette weekend, the UGA team continued to take community input and reactions, to refine the initial design results into high-quality visual displays and the newspaper insert, and to produce an assessment of implementation issues. The remainder of this report presents the implementation assessment.

In the story of Imperial Mills, the charrette design exercise described here is far from an end product. It is a fresh beginning for a long term labor of love by Tifton's citizens to:

- Care for a significant part of their heritage
- Celebrate the Mill's past
- Rejuvenate the Mill for new uses to be enjoyed by future generations of Tifton's citizens

Adherence to the Sustainable Growth Principles described above will result in an asset that pulls together various aspects of the community and serves as a catalyst to revitalize western downtown, perhaps even all the way to Interstate 75.

Downtown redevelopment is a critical component of smart growth strategies to preserve open space, create mixed-use neighborhoods, provide a variety of transportation options, and fully use existing infrastructure. Many communities in both metropolitan and rural areas are working to restore the vitality of their downtown cores through infill development – the creative use of vacant or underused land and buildings.

Successful infill development relies on numerous design principles, including:

- Engaging citizens in identifying a community vision for growth.
- Strengthening pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods that offer a mix of activities within walking distance of homes.
- Reclaiming blighted and abandoned areas to restore the community's economic and social fabric.
- Connecting neighborhoods to regional transportation and land use systems.
- Providing public open spaces for recreation and landscapes for civic buildings.
- Integrating new buildings with the architectural character of the neighborhood, reflecting the best examples of local architecture.

Source: Wells.

Implementation Assessment -- Keys to Success

When a community recognizes a special brownfield site that has significant potential to contribute to revitalizing a neighborhood, community leaders often ask, "What do we do now?" The National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals analyzed many successful brownfield programs across the country and articulated "Ten Keys to Community Revitalization" to guide officials through the implementation of a plan such as the Imperial Mill redevelopment project. These keys are enumerated below, along with specific steps that may follow, and suggestions for resources and support available to implement each key.

1) **Forming a strong brownfield team with leadership from the top**. A successful brownfield project must have a commitment from community leaders, who put together a strong team with the variety of skills and expertise required to handle the various issues that surround a brownfield redevelopment project. Committed leadership from city officials gives others confidence in the project's ultimate success.
   a) **What do we do now**?
      i) Tifton's leaders have demonstrated a strong commitment to the Imperial Mill project over the past several years. The leadership should maintain their aggressive approach and continue the concept design process in order to leverage funding and technical assistance from the available state and federal programs and to pursue collaboration with private sector allies and investors. The Charrette Steering Committee represents a cross-section of Tifton's government and community, and its members have already assumed a leading role in supporting the Imperial Mill redevelopment. The Steering Committee may be well suited to continue to provide the leadership, community involvement, and vision this project needs.
      ii) Unsuccessful or marginally successful community initiated redevelopment projects are often undermined by volatile leadership and redirected priorities brought about by changes in leadership. Due to the long-term commitment necessary for these projects, continuity of oversight and consistency of focus are integral to success. Projects delegated to an authority or public-private entity whose purpose is project development and implementation are less susceptible to political inconsistency, and thus, these projects are generally more successful. The city should consider delegating oversight of the project to an authority or public-private entity.
      iii) Georgia's Urban Redevelopment Act allows Tifton to delegate many of its redevelopment powers to an Urban Redevelopment Authority or the Downtown Development Authority, as described in Table 1. The Authority can be empowered to, among other things, exempt areas of the defined Urban Redevelopment Area from zoning requirements or to create special overlay districts if this action will facilitate a desirable form of development in that area. The city should consider that the proposed Imperial Mill project may require exemption from local zoning requirements and, in that case, may wish to outline some of the design requirements that the Authority should specify for the site.

Table 1. Georgia's Urban Redevelopment Act
Structural Options for Implementation (O.C.G.A. 36-61-17)

Possible Entities	Appropriate Situations	Pros	Cons	Other Comments
Local Government	Small scale projects, particularly if complete funding will come from traditional municipal funding sources.	• Avoids creating new political entities. • May prevent conflicts w/ multiple local development organizations.	Provides less political cover and separation.	
Urban Redevelopment Authority	Where no other authority already exists. City/County coop projects, mixed use projects, brownfields, gov't facilities or buildings.	• New agency has no past political history. • Can contain sunset date. • Powers delegated can be customized, possibly divided.	Creation of a new development agency may create conflicts or redundancies if overlapping a DDA.	Good for major brown/grayfield projects. Effective for mixed use, "new urbanist" developments, or entertainment/tourism projects.
Housing Authority	Project focused primarily on neighborhoods and housing.	Existing relationships with local groups and state/federal housing resources.	Limited value outside of housing issues.	Can be regional, multi-gov't body. Certain aspects may be delegable to housing non-profits.
Downtown Development Authority	Projects in/near central business districts.	• May be a pre-existing body w/ local real estate experience. • Powers similar to URA.	• Limitations on contracting authority. • Somewhat more complex structure as it may be limited by both URA and its own implementing resolution and statute. • Not authorized to act outside its designated area.	Intended primarily to focus on downtown.

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs

iv) The changes specified by the Authority should be written into the city's Urban Redevelopment Plan, as should the goals of the site. This institutionalizes the project, and the Authority will have a mandate to see the project through. Also, this will protect it from political volatility that frustrates many such projects.

v) Technical expertise in dealing with complex redevelopment projects, like brownfields, is particularly difficult to gather in rural areas. In Georgia, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and the University of Georgia promote knowledge of brownfield programs and emphasize their potential for significant economic and community benefits; this knowledge is growing among service providers in the Regional Development Centers (RDCs) and Regional staff at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Because of these efforts, assembling a strong team of city staff, community leaders, and technical service providers in rural Georgia is much easier than it was even six months ago.

2) Connect Brownfields to Community Revitalization Priorities. The potential environmental problems associated with restoring a brownfield site can be easily surmountable given current federal and state policies. Restoring and reusing a brownfield site provides an opportunity for the government to partner with private investors to encourage quality growth improvements and secure greater support from the public than a greenfield development might enjoy. Emphasizing how the Imperial Mills project contributes to Tifton's larger revitalization goals makes it more attractive to competitive state and federal government programs. One crucial step will be identifying the benefits that will accrue from the specific plan for the redevelopment.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) Almost all successful brownfield projects incorporate some market analysis to calculate the potential returns and benefits. Conducting such a study based on the envisioned end use of the site would provide quantifiable data about the economic impacts on the surrounding areas. This information would also provide valuable information to potential partners and investors.

(1) The Imperial Mill can contribute to Tifton's general economic improvement by increasing commercial traffic downtown. Analyzing how the project's components will affect traffic patterns will provide a basis for calculating some of the economic benefits the project will bring to the surrounding downtown. Such studies also provide information about the best end use for the site; each design suggestion offers different possible benefits, and a market study would allow a more meaningful comparison of possible economic impacts.

(a) Analyzing how people will likely move through the site will suggest what types of business are best suited for inclusion in the project, and this will help quantify the overall benefit the project will bring to the community. If part of the site is for a cultural purpose, it will attract visitors from nearby communities and tourists from the interstate. If part of the development is dedicated to residential uses, then more residents will be located within a short walk of all of downtown, which will increase foot traffic and decrease traffic congestion. Also, any improvement of the site removes a blighted area that

harms surrounding property value, which may attract more investment in the surrounding neighborhoods. Sound market analysis will provide more concrete figures to support these vague ideas, and investors respond much more positively to specifics.

(2) Tifton's Comprehensive Development Plan commits the city to restoring its historic neighborhoods; redevelopment of the Imperial Mill site provides an excellent opportunity to stimulate economic growth in some of these areas.

(a) Attracting commerce to the site can provide jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for people from the adjacent neighborhoods, which will help alleviate the depressed condition of these neighborhoods. The design proposals from the charrette include a number of possible commercial uses. Examining market conditions will allow the city to attract the types of commercial interests that are best suited to the project and the overall redevelopment goals.

(b) Restoring the mill removes an obstacle that currently inhibits investment in the surrounding properties. A well designed development that connects now disparate parts of the city will transform the Mill from a hindrance to economic growth into an asset that boosts the value of the surrounding area.

ii) The Mill is a significant part of Tifton's heritage, and preserving that piece of history is one of the most important aspects of this project. Tying the Imperial Mill project to historic preservation opens up a number of different avenues for technical assistance and funding. It can also serve as a rallying tool to develop community support and to market the project to investors and future visitors. Some of the site's history remains somewhat vague; fleshing out the building's history and its place in the community is a good place to begin preparing for historic preservation funding. Two examples of financial assistance available to historic properties such as this Mill are briefly described below; a comprehensive search would turn up additional sources.

(1) Obtaining National Historic Register designation makes the redevelopment project eligible for a 20% federal tax incentive through the National Park Service. More specific information about receiving this credit is available at http://www.cr.nps.gov/helpyou.htm.

(2) The National Trust for Historic Preservation provides loan financing to facilitate preservation projects connected to economic revitalization. Eligible sites include both state and nationally registered sites and locally recognized historic sites. Loans are available up to $350,000 to either directly finance a project or create a local revolving fund for future projects. Tifton could use these funds for restoring the Imperial Mill building, or the funds could be used to promote subsequent projects in the adjacent neighborhoods to further the overall revitalization plans.

(a) A good example of this neighborhood redevelopment is Macon's Huegnin Heights Project managed by the Historic Macon Foundation. The Foundation received a number of community revitalization loans to create a revolving fund to buy and rehabilitate lots in an historic neighborhood. After investing in about 25 homes out of approximately 85, the city saw property values in the

neighborhood increase dramatically and crime rates substantially decrease as residents were drawn back to downtown neighborhoods.

(b) Durham, North Carolina used these funds to restore a number of old tobacco warehouses that now form a key part of the city's downtown. These old warehouses now provide vast amounts of residential and commercial space in the heart of the city that attract both residents and visitors back to downtown. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's web site provides information about both of these projects and additional examples. http://www.nationaltrust.org/community_revitalization/casestudyintro.html.

iii) The Imperial Mill site is well situated between commercial and residential areas, serving as a link for alternative transportation between the neighborhoods and downtown. Incorporating the Imperial Mill site into a larger transportation program will allow the city to derive additional benefits for redevelopment and open up new sources of funding and assistance.

(1) The extension of sidewalks and bike paths will also improve the quality of life of the Mill's adjacent neighborhoods. Attracting more residents downtown will encourage reinvestment in Tifton's historic neighborhoods, while reducing other problems associated with sprawling developments. Encouraging alternative transportation such as biking and walking also contributes to a more physically healthy community.

(a) The United States Department of Transportation provides grants and technical assistance for expanding means of alternative transportation. Almost every federal highway funding category may be used for building or improving pedestrian facilities. In particular, Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEAs) may be used for any pedestrian improvement project; they make up ten percent of each state's annual funding from the DOT's Surface Transportation Program (STP), but it is left up to states to set priorities on how these funds are used.

(b) Georgia's Transportation Enhancement program (TE) requires funds be used for one of 12 enumerated tasks related to a surface transportation project. Due to the smaller scale of TE projects when compared to most highway projects, they generally receive expedited review. The TE program will provide up to 80% of the project costs; the remaining 20% must come from the project sponsor, which may be provided in the form of direct funding, project services, land or other similar contribution. TE projects are divided into three segments for funding purposes: preliminary engineering, right of way acquisition, and construction. TE funding will be awarded based on the costs of one or more of these segments, which may be less than the requested 80%. The program uses both federal and state funds. If the grant includes federal funding, the sponsor may have to bear the entire cost and be reimbursed, though the program tries to ensure payment as quickly as possible. GADOT relies on the Transportation Enhancement Advisory Council, which is made up of experts in each TE field from around the state to select projects; the State Transportation Board must approve this Council's selections. Currently,

GADOT is updating the Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP), which will conclude in December 2005. The current guidelines for preparing a TE grant proposal are available for GADOT at http://www.dot.state.ga.us/DOT/plan-prog/planning/projects/index.shtml, or contact Ronda Britt at (404) 657-8422 or ronda.britt@dot.state.ga.us.

(2) Including a link from the site to ABAC with a bike path brings what is now a distant area into closer proximity to downtown. Students would be more willing to live and shop downtown if they could access it more easily. The city should explore opportunities to use the rail rights of way traversing the Mill property.

(a) USDOT also supports using railroad right-of-ways to build foot and bike paths. Using active railways presents several additional concerns. Potential liability for injuries that occur on the trail will likely concern the railroad, but these issues will fall under Georgia's Recreational Use Statute. This law exempts landowners from liability when they open their land for public recreation except in cases of gross negligence. Also, the Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing programs receive ten percent of STP funds that may be used to correct dangers to pedestrians near railroads. States are required to implement this program, and funding is applicable to survey hazardous locations, construct projects on any publicly owned pedestrian pathway or to install safety-related traffic calming measures. USDOT has conducted a study evaluating such projects in the past, including how large railroads have responded to these kinds of efforts. This study is available at http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/rwt/index.htm.

3) Begin with the End in Mind. Defining the end goals provides focus and direction from the outset, which is essential to rally public support. This early plan can speed remediation, attract investment, and jump-start leveraging strategies and the marshalling of public support. Communities often spend time and money on cleanup efforts without considering the overall purpose, and projects become stalled as stakeholders lose interest or the process becomes bogged down in debate about its goals. Also, Georgia's remediation standards are based on risk assessments that relate to the intended end use of the site. Knowing at the outset how the property will be used makes it clear how much cleanup will be necessary.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) The charrette in May delivered three conceptual proposals for reuse of the Imperial Mill site. These conceptual designs will guide the ultimate project design as the city's specific objectives are defined. The ultimate design should take into account community need and commitment, available public programs, and investor interests.

ii) Look at what similarly situated communities have done in the past to identify strong points that might be adapted from their proposals. The EPA designated 28 cities as Brownfield Showcase Communities. They were chosen because they represent the wide variety of brownfield situations faced by other communities across the nation. Each is a comprehensive brownfield program, encompassing a number of individual projects. This is a good place to begin to see the issues associated with a particular end use. Specifically, Jackson, Mississippi's program is focused on revitalizing their

downtown historic areas, and it offers some strong similarities to Tifton's overall goals. Information about all of the Showcase Communities is available at http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm.

iii) Prepare materials to promote and market the project. Produce conceptual drawings or models of the final intended use; this can spark the imagination of the community and provide evidence of a real vision that investors will find attractive.

iv) Develop design standards for the revitalization project. Be ready to commit public amenities on and around the site to design standards that are at least as high as those designated for the project. Investors will feel more comfortable with high design standards if the public sector is already using those standards for its projects in the surrounding areas.

v) Include the results of market feasibility studies for the final intended use, and include highlights of these results in presentation packages for public assistance and private investors.

4) Involve Citizens from the Start. The charrette assimilated a great deal of information about the site and the community's views of how it should be used, and it provided three concepts for the site's ultimate purpose.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) Public input should continue to be collected for significant decisions regarding the final purpose of the site. It is particularly important to ensure that thoughts of minority and otherwise disadvantaged parts of the community are included. This should go beyond local property owners and include all citizens who will be impacted by the project, especially local tenants who may ultimately be displaced by the revitalization efforts. Environmental justice issues are an important part of evaluating the merits of a project and assuring that all parts of the community are included in the discussion. This public outreach needs to be more than disseminating information about the project; it should be a means of engaging stakeholders, identifying concerns, and developing strategies to address those concerns. Up to 10% of an EPA assessment grant can be used to fund community outreach and education. Should Tifton receive a grant, these funds should be used to bolster their means of developing community support.

ii) Keeping the citizens apprised of progress is important in maintaining their interest and support. Make it a point to promote or celebrate milestones along the way. In long-term projects, citizens may forget to notice the progress being made.

5) Engage the Private Sector and Reduce its Risk. In general, brownfields will be revitalized by the private sector, or at least with major support from private financing. Many of the reforms that have improved the viability of brownfield projects dealt with reducing the uncertainty associated with investing in brownfield redevelopment, but the stigma attached to these projects can still make lenders and investors uncomfortable because they believe these projects to be significantly more risky than other real estate opportunities.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) In conjunction with the information developed for community outreach, information should be provided to possible sources of funding to show them the opportunity that the Imperial Mill project presents. Make sure they understand about the limited liability protection the eventual developer of the site will receive. Show them the financial incentives and all of the public sources of funding that will be utilized. In short, make them realize that the preconceptions they may have about brownfield redevelopment are not true and, in particular, are not true for this project.

ii) Loan guarantees can limit borrowers' exposure; using these measures to ensure a minimum return to lenders can limit their exposure to unforeseen issues that may affect the value of the property, making the project much more attractive to lenders.

iii) Through the Community Reinvestment Act, banks are required to make funds available at attractive terms for projects that enhance the community. This is an often overlooked source of private sector assistance.

iv) Utilizing available tax credits and property tax phase-ins, as well as reducing licensing fees and other "front end" costs for the eventual development, will improve the project's proforma cash flow, making it more attractive to lenders and investors. Utilizing these public sources of funds reduces the project's dependency on private lenders for a large percentage of the financing.

v) Development agencies are authorized to issue bonds, or otherwise directly fund these projects in ways that can be repaid from the revenue generated by the city's stake in the development. The more the city or the relevant development agency directly contributes to the project (financially or in kind services), the less money has to be found elsewhere.

vi) Environmental insurance is increasingly used to provide more certainty to brownfield projects and reducing financial risk. It can cover additional, unexpected cleanup costs, legal liability insurance, and be used to secure loans when the borrower defaults because of an unforeseen environmental problem. Insurance is more prevalent with large projects; however some insurers have "bundled" smaller projects to create a more diversified risk pool, thereby improving accessibility and affordability of environmental insurance for these projects.

vii) Ownership of real estate by the Authority provides several benefits for reducing private sector risk. The Authority has the "luxury" of time to resolve issues that cause uncertainty, and the Authority is situated to address pre-development and due diligence uncertainties such as performing environmental assessments and cleanup, performing preliminary site work, and controlling property price and surrounding land uses. Ownership provides great flexibility for the Authority to negotiate with private sector investors and can assure the best win-win outcome for the community.

6) **Make Cleanup Work for You**. Local officials need to be educated and well informed about the cleanup process in order to integrate cleanup with reuse as part of their larger objectives. Cleanup standards depend on the future use. Understanding the problems presented by a particular site can significantly reduce cleanup costs, making it less likely that environmental costs will be a significant barrier. Also, both the state and federal governments provide

grants and other assistance for cleanup and reuse; making use of these incentives can allow a city to significantly direct the course of redevelopment to further their larger objectives.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) Tifton is already preparing a new application for an EPA assessment grant to determine if the site remains contaminated. These grant proposals encourage cities to link proposals to larger economic revitalization goals and to seriously consider environmental justice issues in developing this project. In deciding on an eventual end use, it is important to show how the surrounding neighborhood needs government assistance and how the site will help these areas.*

ii) Institutional controls are important to provide long-term protection on the site. Such controls consist of including restrictive covenants in the transfer of title, easements, and zoning or design specifications that ensure the site will be used as it was intended during the cleanup phase. This is particularly important where cleanup standards are based on an intended use that would prevent future exposure to contamination at the site. Provisions should include a means of enforcement to ensure the control standards are respected in the future. Institutional controls should also contain means for future monitoring of the site, if monitoring is deemed necessary.

iii) Maintaining contact between local leaders and state and federal agency experts can also facilitate the cleanup and redevelopment process. New methods and technologies are regularly coming into use to potentially speed cleanups and reduce costs. For example, projects in New York and New Jersey have successfully used vegetation-based approaches to extract chromium, lead and other toxic metals from the soil. These approaches are far less expensive, and the fact that contaminated soils are not disturbed protects surrounding property from the spread of contaminants. The EPA Technology Innovation Office provides information and technical assistance on available technologies and can identify developers who are experienced with particular techniques and methods. See web site http://www.epa.gov/etop/user/.

7) Leverage Local Funding. Frequently the success of brownfield projects will require the city to serve as a "brownfield broker," as it must oversee initiation of cleanup activities as well as manage relations between EPD, an Authority or other owner, and the prospective developer. The city and its Authority are positioned to coordinate a variety of funding sources from state and federal agencies, private lenders and investors, and provide its own funds to initiate the redevelopment project. This kind of involvement can facilitate real estate deals that would otherwise have been abandoned or ignored by private parties who are situated to marshal the same resources. It is important that local officials not only look upon funding such projects as a public investment that will be recouped through job creation, expansion of the tax base, and enhanced quality of life, but also that they communicate this message regularly and explicitly to the public.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) A number of tools are available to localities to facilitate brownfield development. Georgia's Redevelopment Powers Act allows the creation of Tax Allocation Districts

* Having invested in the charrette as a public involvement exercise and a conceptual design and development process will be a major enhancement to Tifton's proposal in the next round of EPA grants

in areas needing economic redevelopment. This financing method is generally known as Tax Increment Financing. The basic idea is that the project will create value on the site and in the surrounding area, and *ad valorem* taxes on the increased value (i.e., the tax increment) is specifically allocated to financing the project. Thus, the redevelopment authority could issue bonds to fund a particular part of the Imperial Mill project such as land acquisition, cleanup, or needed infrastructure improvements, and the cost would be paid by the property owners who benefit directly instead of by the community at large. The city benefits by attracting new business to the depressed area, and the businesses benefit by having improved facilities provided for them. Any traditional public facility can be financed in this way including water and sewer lines, streets, sidewalks, parking facilities, and public parks. It is important to note, however, that the legislation enabling Tax Allocation Districts imposes significant procedural requirements.

ii) Tax abatements are also available for the Imperial Mill site because it is designated a State Enterprise Zone. *Ad valorem* taxes for industrial, commercial, tourism, and residential properties will be foregone according to a sliding scale that remits 100% for the first five years, 80% for years six and seven, 40% in year nine, and 20% in year ten. This schedule can begin at any time; thus, a business can take advantage of these credits whenever they most need the cash flow benefits. The local government can also abate other taxes and fees, as deemed necessary to attract new businesses or to stimulate new business creation. The city can also waive ordinances affecting the area. Taxes for the school district and sales taxes are not affected by this power.

(1) The Imperial Mill site falls within the boundaries of the Enterprise Zone and the city's Urban Redevelopment Area, and because it demonstrates certain characteristics of pervasive poverty and stagnant growth, it can be designated an Economic Opportunity Zone. This allows any business that locates within the Opportunity Zone, and creates at least five quality jobs, to receive an additional $2500 tax credit for each job it creates. Another $500 credit per job is available because Tifton's Enterprise Zone is incorporated into the Tift-Turner-Worth-Cook Joint Development Authority and coordinated with their Comprehensive Plan.

iii) The city can consider enacting a City Business Improvement District (CBID), which creates a special taxing district to fund professional services such as advertising, sanitation, security, or business recruitment and development. These districts can be cumbersome because their creation requires specific approval from the affected taxpayers.

8) Join Forces with the State. State brownfield programs are growing in importance as the Brownfield Revitalization Act shifts the focus of brownfield cleanup and reclamation to the states.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) Encouraging state environmental officials to visit the site and the community brings them into contact with local decision makers who are then better able to turn to the state agencies for technical assistance or advice. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Small Business Assistance Program offers confidential technical assistance on a variety of specialized environmental issues related to brownfields.

ii) The Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) offers liability protection for "innocent" prospective purchasers who complete a certified action plan. Furthermore, the tax incentives discussed above and Georgia's brownfield tax incentive allow prospective purchasers to recoup the cost of assessment and cleanup. The city or its Authority can take these steps, obtain the liability relief and tax abatement benefits, and transfer these benefits to a future innocent purchaser.

9) Partner with Federal Agencies. More than 20 federal agencies provide assistance for brownfield reclamation projects, though only two—the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development—have programs that address only brownfields. A complete list of these agencies, their programs, and a contact name and phone number can be found at web sites http://www2.icma.org/upload/library/2003-05/{3E52F1FD-02D1-45FC-A3E1-5ED8D7C055B7}.pdf and www.epa.gov/brownfields/partnr.htm#fpart. Despite the increasing funding available to brownfield projects, these resources are becoming harder to obtain due to increased competition. Thinking creatively about how to approach multiple federal agencies that may provide funding is essential to successfully utilizing these sources.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) Analyze the goals the city wants to accomplish with this redevelopment project, and then contact representatives of all the appropriate federal agencies to discuss what funding opportunities exist for different components of the project.

ii) The EPA is the biggest source of funding. They provide assessment and remediation grants and revolving loan funds to help launch brownfield programs. EPA also provides job-training grants to educate local residents and the community about brownfield issues to facilitate cleanup and help people enter the environmental field. Regional EPA offices also provide targeted brownfield assessments for communities that are not seeking to establish long term brownfield redevelopment programs. These grants are to spark revitalization of a specific site. This may be a more appropriate avenue to pursue funding if the city has no further brownfield redevelopment plans beyond the Imperial Mill project. The EPA published a comprehensive, in-depth review of its brownfield programs, and it is available at http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/partners/federal_programs_guide.pdf.
This document also discusses several other brownfield initiatives through other agencies, and it can serve as a good overview of most federal brownfield programs.

iii) HUD provides Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) designed to address one of three national objectives: help low or moderate income people, address areas of slums or blight, or meet an urgent community need. Because the Imperial Mill site falls within an area already determined to be a slum area (during establishment of Tifton's Urban Redevelopment Area), the project is eligible for these funds. The CDBG program is complimented by HUD's §108 loan guarantee program that can be used to finance projects too large for a single year block grant such as land acquisition, infrastructure rehabilitation, or site remediation. HUD also provided about $25 million dollars to create a Brownfield Economic Development Initiative

(BEDI). These funds are awarded competitively every year in conjunction with CDBG and §108 funds. Information about these and other HUD programs is available at http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/about/cpd_programs.cfm. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs administers CDBG funds and §108 loans in Georgia's non-entitlement communities (e.g., Tifton). Note that federal budget proposals currently under consideration call for the consolidation of CDBG and other economic development assistance programs, so the rules may soon change.

iv) The Department of Transportation provides grants for both street and highway improvement as well as for sidewalk and bike trails that can be used if the overall project includes such construction. As discussed in #2 above, the DOT has also conducted studies into the feasibility and advisability of locating walking and biking trails along existing rail corridors. Including representatives from DOT could provide a good source for both funding and technical assistance for connectivity and transportation aspects of the Imperial Mill proposal.

v) Other federal agencies provide funding under various conditions. For example, the Army Corps of Engineers provides grants if a brownfield project can be related to water quality protection. The Department of Agriculture provides loans at low interest rates to public or private organizations to improve the economic and environmental climate of rural communities. If the Imperial Mill Site is developed for a public works function, it may receive funding from the Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). In recent years, the EDA spent as much as 20% of its project resources on brownfield projects.

vi) Success in obtaining funding from federal sources requires a pro-active approach that brings together key federal officials with local leaders and other potential project supporters to analyze the community's situation and overall needs and discuss how different agency resources might fit into the project.

10) Success Breeds Success: Successful redevelopment of a site like the Imperial Mill can serve as a catalyst for future redevelopment and revitalization efforts across Georgia and beyond. A success on this scale would give confidence to the community and to investors, assuring them that the city is committed to urban redevelopment. With this proven success, people will be much more likely to support future projects.

a) **What do we do now**?

i) Look for success stories that have accomplished what Tifton wants to accomplish. Visit those projects and ask many questions. Bring "best practices" home to Tifton. Table 2 lists several successful mill redevelopment projects in Georgia and provides a reference for additional information.

ii) Durham, North Carolina, briefly discussed above, has successfully renovated a number of old tobacco warehouses into vibrant downtown centers. To date, the city has renovated over 1 million square feet of warehouse space to create residential and commercial space, as well as a biotechnology lab and transportation center. This has been such a success that the city plans to redevelop another million square feet as condominiums, stores, parks and other greenspace, along with a new Amtrak station.

To date, Durham's downtown redevelopment has received $60 million in public funds and over $310 million in private investment. Attracting that level of investment is clearly a success, but the real benefit comes from the new vitality this project brings to downtown Durham. The city acquired these private funds through a number of incentive programs very similar to those discussed in this paper, along with other local measures that promote historic preservation. More detailed information about how these incentives were actually used is available at http://www.downtowndurham.com.

iii) The Savage Mill in Baltimore, Maryland demonstrates the successful conversion of an abandoned textile mill into a specialty-shopping district. The 175,000 square foot complex houses one of the largest concentrations of high quality antiques on the east coast. The complex also boasts many specialty retail shops, dozens of art and craft studios, art galleries and eateries, including an authentic French bakery. The county owns a significant part of the original 17 acre site that it maintains as a public park; the buildings on the site are owned and managed by a private non-profit corporation committed to the further development and promotion of the site. Specifics are available at http://www.savagemill.com.

Summary

Brownfield redevelopment is a fast growing and highly effective means of community development and urban revitalization; local governments and private investors are increasingly recognizing that these opportunities are available. However, while there are tools in place to encourage and facilitate these revitalization projects, it takes an extraordinary commitment from a talented team to make the projects truly successful. Tifton has demonstrated that its community and its leadership are committed to the Imperial Mill project. Developing a tangible vision for the site, as outlined in the charrette and in this report, is necessary to marshal the many financial and technical resources available for brownfield redevelopment. If Tifton continues to thoughtfully pursue this redevelopment project, it will result in immense benefits for the community.

Table 2. Georgia Mill Redevelopment Success Stories

Atlantic Station	Atlanta	http://atlanticstation.com/
The Bottleworks	Athens	http://www.thebottleworks.com/intropage/
Cabbagetown	Atlanta	http://geoscience.gsu.edu/projects/cabbagetown/
The Castleberry Hill Neighborhood	Atlanta	http://www.castleberryhill.org/
The Crown Mill	Dalton	http://roadsidegeorgia.com/site/crownarchives.html
The Puritan Mill	Atlanta	http://www.puritanmill.com/
The Whitehall Mill	Athens	http://www.whitehallmill.com/features.html
The Leathers Bldg.	Athens	http://www.callbridget.com/Listing/Agent/ViewListingDetails.aspx?ListingID=218844&ShowCompact=False
Broadway Lofts	Macon	www.apartmentguide.com/Property/property.asp?wsv_psPropertyID=23077&partner=6223
Enterprise Mill	Augusta	www.enterprisemill.com
Canton Mill Lofts	Canton	http://www.lofts-atlanta.com/properties/cantonmill.html
Sunbelt HQ /Canton Cotton Mills	Canton	www.sunbeltgc.com/html/news_scroll.html
Cotton Hall	Colquitt	www.colquitt-georgia.com/site/page5870.html
Columbus Trade Center	Columbus	http://www.columbusga.org/TradeCenter/
Eagle and Phenix Mills	Columbus	www.ledger-enquirer.com/mld/ledgerenquirer/2005/03/27/news/local/11239792.htm
Johnston Mill Lofts	Columbus	www.johnstonmillloftsapts.com
Porterdale Mill	Covington	www.atlantaloftco.com/porterdale/porterdale_intro.htm
GA Rural Telephone Museum	Leslie	www.roadsideamerica.com/attract/GALEStele.html
Madison Markets	Madison	www.madisonmarkets.com
Brumby Crossing	Tifton	www.tifton.net/cityoftiftonhistory.html
Williams Bros. Grocery Warehouse	Tifton	www.tifton.net/cityoftiftonhistory.html
Candler-Smith Warehouse	Atlanta	www.atlantaactionstorage.com/page3.html
Mattress Factory Lofts	Atlanta	www.bradenfellman.com/apartments/mattressfactory/
King Plow Arts Center	Atlanta	www.artery.org/KingPlow.htm
City Hall East	Atlanta	www.alexander-garvin.com/publications/AtlantaBeltline_rpt_Ch4.pdf
The Lumberyards	Atlanta	www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/stories/2000/06/12/newscolumn2.html
StudioPlex	Atlanta	www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/stories/2001/03/05/focus17.html
Arizona Lofts	Atlanta	www.newsouthconstruction.net/arizona_lofts.htm
Telephone Factory Lofts	Atlanta	http://www.rjamesproperties.com/telephonefactory/
A & P Lofts	Atlanta	http://www.greatga.com/ap_lofts.htm
Ford Factory Lofts	Atlanta	http://www.forrent.com/search/detail.asp?site=1000382
Ezell Lofts	Atlanta	http://www.890memorialdrive.com/
The Stove Works	Atlanta	http://the-stove-works.com/
Freedom Lofts	Atlanta	http://www.paulclare.com/webdesign/freedomlofts/web/history.htm
Hastings Seed Co.	Atlanta	http://www.artery.org/Cooledge-HastingsSeedCo.htm
Atlanta Buggy Co.	Atlanta	http://www.artery.org/AtlantaBuggyCo.htm
Stoval/Abattoir	Atlanta	http://www.artery.org/Abattoir.htm
White Provision Co.	Atlanta	http://www.artery.org/WhiteProvisionCo.htm
Griffin Mill Lofts	Griffin	http://www.lofts-atlanta.com/properties/griffin.html

Implementation Assessment -- Brownfield Liability

Background

In an effort to fund the cleanup of hundreds of thousands of contaminated industrial sites around America, in the 1980s the federal government devised a harsh liability scheme that placed the financial burden of environmental remediation on virtually any party significantly connected with a contaminated site whether or not they were directly responsible for the contamination. This system was somewhat effective in terms of promoting site restoration, but it also had other unintended consequences. The fear of liability associated with old industrial sites, or brownfields, was one of the factors that, led developers away from traditional city centers. They chose to build on unblemished "greenfields" that were not subject to the threat of environmental liability. The biggest uncertainties to redeveloping brownfields include: the extent of the contamination, the scope of possible liability, the level of cleanup required, questions about regulatory finality, and other costs and delays that might be involved in a cleanup effort. Any effort to encourage investment in brownfield sites must first address these uncertainties in the "due diligence" phases.

The Comprehensive Environment Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) is the federal law that establishes liability for cleaning environmentally contaminated sites. It allows the federal government, a state government, or a private citizen to recover the costs of cleaning a contaminated site from any potentially responsible party (CERCLA §107 (a)). CERCLA focuses on cleaning up the country's most contaminated sites, which are those that are listed on the National Priorities List (NPL); these are known as the Superfund sites. However, presence on the NPL is not a requirement in applying CERCLA's liability provisions. It can be used to facilitate the cleanup of any contaminated site. Any party, including the state or federal government, who incurs costs in cleaning a contaminated site may seek to recover those expenses from any potentially responsible parties (PRP) for any necessary cleanup that is done in compliance with the federal government's National Contingency Plan for hazardous site remediation. (CERCLA §107(a)(2)(B)).

A potentially responsible party is anyone who has owned or operated the facility since the time of the contamination, as well as those who generated the hazardous waste, those who transported the waste to the site, and those who otherwise arranged for disposal of such wastes on the site. All potentially responsible parties can be held jointly and severally liable for all of the clean up expenses unless there is a clear means of allocating costs among the parties. This means that a single party may be liable for all of the cleanup costs even if they played no direct role in causing the contamination. Obviously, the risk of being hit with that sort of bill to cleanup someone else's mess makes people wary about investing in potentially contaminated sites, and that uncertainty is the biggest obstacle to redeveloping these sites.

In order to eliminate some of the most patently unfair results of CERCLA liability, Congress enacted the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA) to protect certain classes of innocent landowners. Also, in 2002, President Bush signed the Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfield Revitalization Act, which expanded on this idea of the innocent owner defense to include the "bona fide prospective purchaser." Henceforth, parties who acquired land involuntarily, e.g., through foreclosure, inheritance or bequest, or those who acquired such land voluntarily but without a reason to know of the contamination, may not be

held liable for cleanup costs as long as they cooperate fully with the cleanup effort. The "reason to know" standard required a prospective purchaser to carry out "all appropriate inquiries" before taking title to the site, which meant an investor had to conduct an environmental assessment of the site and possibly take steps to prevent the contamination from worsening.

The Brownfield Revitalization Act substantially increases federal assistance in the form of brownfield redevelopment grants, available to specified types of "eligible entities." CERCLA defines "brownfield" to be "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant or contaminant" ((§101(39)(A)). Generally, CERCLA excludes petroleum and petroleum products from its definition of "hazardous substances," which means that sites contaminated by petroleum products would not be brownfields. However, under certain conditions, the Brownfield Revitalization Act allows sites contaminated with petroleum that otherwise meet the above definition to receive brownfield classification (§101(39)(D)). This potentially brings tens of thousands of additional sites into the scope of brownfield programs that can now be reclaimed much more easily.

The Act provides for $50 million per year for 2002 through 2006 to fund this subsection mainly through three programs: assessment grants, revolving loan fund grants, and cleanup or remediation grants. With some exceptions, funding may be available to any "eligible entity" that will use it to "protect human health and the environment, and either promote economic development or enable the creation of, preservation of, or addition to parks, greenways, undeveloped property, other recreational property, or other property used for nonprofit purposes" (§101(39)(C)). Eligible entities are those who are not already responsible for cleaning up the site.

With an assessment pilot grant, the EPA uses a competitive process to select cities, tribes, or other entities as recipients of pilot grants. The selected entities develop a brownfield reuse strategy and process, identify sites, and carry out site assessments to determine reuse potential. Basically, the $200,000 pilot grant award can be used for any pre-cleanup activity including planning and community outreach, but not the cleanup itself.

Brownfield revolving loan funds provide certain designated communities (those classified as pilot projects or those that have received targeted brownfield site assessments) with up to one million dollars to provide loans for brownfield cleanup. This pool of money is replenished as loans are repaid. Remediation grants are available where there are no viable potentially responsible parties who are liable for cleanup costs at a particular site.

The Brownfield Revitalization Act is premised on the idea that states should take the lead on brownfield reclamation. In a press briefing EPA Administrator Christie Todd Whitman stated, "[The Act] recognizes the importance of our state and local partners by increasing funding and granting them more flexibility. It also assures prospective redevelopers that the federal government will not hold them responsible for past pollution at the redevelopment site" (Press release, EPA, Whitman Praises Passage of Brownfields Legislation, Dec. 21, 2001, at http://www.epa.gov/epahome/headline_122101.htm). This shows the EPA's commitment to foster state action by providing more funding and greater flexibility for state cleanup programs to encourage participation in state voluntary cleanup programs (VCPs) through the Act.

Prior to its enactment, a great deal of uncertainty existed about the relationship between federal and state liability for contaminated sites. For those who completed a state cleanup

operation, the threat still remained that the federal government would require addition remediation. Fourteen states (not including Georgia) had entered into agreements with the EPA detailing the conditions under which the EPA would accept the state's assurance that no further action was necessary. However, the Act now states that if a party is participating in a VCP the federal government will not pursue recovery action with the exception of the following: the state requests federal assistance; the contamination threatens to migrate across state lines; there is new information that makes the state response inadequate; or the cleanup may leave substantial harm to human health or the environment (CERCLA §128(b)). To emphasize this point, since 2002, the EPA has removed between 25,000 and 40,000 sites from the NPL, making them available for state cleanup programs.[1]

Georgia's Hazardous Sites Response Act (HSRA) is our state's contaminated site law; its liability provisions are largely based on those found in CERCLA (OCGA 12-8-200). There is a mandated course of action for sites listed on the state's priority list, sometimes called state superfund sites, and what is known as the Certified Action Plan (CAP) for sites not listed. If a qualified prospective purchaser submits a site assessment and proposed cleanup plan, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) can approve this plan as a CAP, and the prospective purchaser may receive protection from any future liability related to the site's past contamination. The purchaser must not be a responsible party or have a connection to any responsible party, and must agree to perform corrective action or otherwise bring the property into compliance with the appropriate risk reduction standards, which are based upon the future use of the property (OCGA 12-8-206). Once a purchaser verifies that the site has been cleaned to EPD's requirements, the state's certification of the site will also protect the owner from federal liability. To account for some of the additional costs the CAP program imposes on a developer, HSRA also provides for up to ten years of property tax abatements that allow the property owner to recoup the costs of environmental assessment and cleanup. This abatement allows the owner to have the property assessed at its pre-cleanup value for up to ten years, or until all of the cleanup costs have been recouped.

These changes are intended to increase the marketability of brownfields. The uncertainty that surrounded these properties for many years has caused them to be left abandoned. Many of these sites should be very attractive to developers because they often have advantages in location, existing infrastructure, and other features associated with sprawling development plans. However, the fear of possible contamination and the associated CERCLA liability has kept investors at bay. Redevelopment tools such as liability limitations for prospective purchasers, protecting developers from liability from state and federal agencies, and providing assessment and remediation grants, as well as tax abatements, are intended to draw investment into these sites.

Brownfield Liability & The Imperial Mill Project

Once a tangible vision for the project has been developed and incorporated into the city's overall redevelopment goals, those responsible for seeing the project through will still have many complex issues to deal with. A major first step is to identify the status of contamination at the

[1] Flannery P. Collins, Note: *The Small Business Liability Relief and Brownfields Revitalization Act: A Critique*, 13 Duke Env L & Pol'y F 303 (2003).

site. The potential liability attached to the land from its possible past contamination means that the city (indeed any prospective purchaser) must determine the status of the contamination before it acquires the land. The city can fund this assessment itself, or it can re-apply for an EPA assessment grant.

Contamination at the Imperial Mill site was assessed in 1993 before the current owner purchased it. Some remediation was done at that time, but no certification was granted from either EPA or EPD. In order to avoid liability for the past contamination, the city, its relevant Authority, or any prospective purchaser can obtain innocent purchaser protection under HSRA. First, appropriate investigation is required, after which if there is no hazardous condition, EPD can certify the site, and the city can proceed. Otherwise, cleanup may be required if unacceptable levels of contaminants are found in the soil or groundwater. A corrective action plan (CAP) must be submitted and approved to address these issues. Submission of an action plan will be considered an application of liability limitation, and it must be accompanied by an application fee of $3000. If approved, compliance with the plan will be verified, and then the purchaser (but not the seller or other potentially responsible parties) may be relieved of liability for the past contamination, not only from EPD but also from private third party claims. This release from state liability should also satisfy EPA under the Brownfield Revitalization Act provisions discussed above.

Once the liability problem has been settled, the city may seek to acquire the land, or a designated municipal Authority or private third party may purchase the site. If the city establishes prospective purchaser protection, similar protection can be transferred to another prospective purchaser, as long as the buyer is not associated with a previous owner of the site. Each of these scenarios offers different opportunities to leverage funding from public and private sources, and each has advantages depending upon the intended final use of the property.

Implementation Assessment – Environmental Justice

Background

The concept of environmental justice concerns the disproportionate burden born by ethnic minorities and other economically disadvantaged groups. For a long time, this was merely a theoretical issue, but it became a major concern in 1994 when President Clinton issued Executive Order 12,898 that requires all federal agencies to consider environmental justice issues before beginning any significant action. In terms of brownfield redevelopment, environmental justice issues primarily manifest themselves in two ways: how sites are selected for redevelopment and the level of local community involvement in planning. EO 12,898 was incorporated into the Brownfield Revitalization Act by making environmental justice issues part the EPA's requirements for awarding assessment and remediation grants. Proposals show a commitment to improving economically disadvantaged communities and are scored more

favorably if they incorporate more extensive community involvement in the planning of the redevelopment.

Brownfield reclamation drives redevelopment efforts because the process of turning a negative into a positive offers the opportunity for the greatest financial return. Although some of these reclamation sites are in close proximity to areas with higher property values, other areas can be found near depressed neighborhoods. In fact, in the past, environmentally undesirable projects were frequently located near poor and minority communities. As a result, many of the brownfield sites now needing extensive cleanup are located in such disadvantaged communities. Whether this is because these unpleasant industries purposefully located in poorer neighborhoods or because these neighborhoods built up around sites that depressed property values is unclear. But it is clear that the properties in economically depressed areas present additional problems to redevelopment.

Involving the public in these types of projects can require a different form of public notice and participation than that used for other public announcements. Decision makers are likely to hear the views of commercial interests, conventional environmental organizations, other local governments, and federal land managers, but not the people who actually live in the most affected areas unless their input is proactively solicited. Even where access to the decision making forum is allowed, meaningful participation can be difficult; conventional stakeholders have significantly more time, money, knowledge, and other resources to participate in these processes and influence agency policy and implementation. Residents in these areas need to be proactively targeted to elicit their input.

In1996, Portland, Oregon, began a comprehensive brownfield redevelopment initiative that prompted the EPA to name the city as one of its 16 Brownfield Showcase Communities two years later. An essential aspect of their plan was a community education and outreach program encompassing both general brownfield issues and site-specific plans. It is important that the community becomes educated about brownfields generally so that citizens appreciate the potential benefits of the proposed project. This educational process also eases the fears people have about what is happening to suspected contaminated sites in their community. Through the process, people may be more easily persuaded to support future projects. Site-specific education should include discussion of use and design alternatives, as well as clean up methods and standards. CERCLA §117 requires that the federal government make any plan for remedial action available to the public, hold a public meeting regarding the proposed cleanup, as well as provide an opportunity for oral and written comments regarding the proposal. The final plan, along with responses to any significant comments, also must be made available for public inspection before the commencement of any significant actions.

In order to reach targeted parts of the community, Portland's program sought to utilize a number of forums to communicate with the public such as libraries serving as repositories of documents and information, cable TV, radio, school programs and clubs, neighborhood groups, local churches, and other venues that would help to reach those who might not be heard by other means. One particularly innovative tool proposed was the use of onsite education booths or centers at revitalization/redevelopment project sites to provide real, site-specific education on the

entire process. Such avenues should be used to distribute as well as collect information; they increase the transparency of the process as well as enhance community involvement.[2]

Environmental Justice & The Imperial Mill Project

As for the Imperial Mill site, it is well situated to alleviate a potential environmental blight in a disadvantaged area, and thus, it should be viewed as a success-in-the-making from an environmental justice perspective. It is located on the edge of an economically disadvantaged neighborhood, and its principle purposes are to spur economic revitalization in that area and to better link that part of the community to the more economically prosperous downtown area. In order to assure success of environmental justice, the city must keep a strong citizen involvement component during planning and implementation of the Imperial Mill Redevelopment Project – giving special attention to involve the citizens who will be most impacted by the redevelopment project. In particular, citizens should be involved in EPD certification of the site or, alternatively, in devising the Cleanup Action Plan.

Tifton's charrette was a good beginning to incorporate the entire community in creating a future vision for the Imperial Mills site. Input was received from a variety of sources and was formulated into a number of possible end uses for the site. While this was an excellent way to establish what the citizens of Tifton wanted to see happen to the old mill, further public consultation is necessary in deciding between the options presented by the charrette, especially linkages to nearby neighborhoods. This future discussion should be consciously directed at the adjacent neighborhoods to ensure that there is a record of those voices being heard.

Following the design charrette, Tifton began preparing a second application for an EPA assessment grant. The results of the charrette provide strong evidence of the community's commitment to the Imperial Mill project, and the city's application will be much stronger this time. This is only one step in the process, however. The conceptual design process that began with the charrette needs to continue; the proposals should be evaluated and further information and input gathered from around the community to determine what the best end use for the site will be. With the development of a tangible vision, the city can begin marshalling support from both public and private sources to redevelop the site and revitalize the surrounding areas.

Tifton has already done a great deal in promoting the redevelopment of this site to the community. Information regarding the charrette was broadcast via a variety of media devices, and many of the publications have already been translated into Spanish. Such a commitment to community outreach should continue throughout the redevelopment process. The goal of this is to not only reach the community as a whole, but to make sure that those in the targeted area who may otherwise be overlooked are heard.

Environmental justice considerations should shape the way this project moves forward. On the one hand this process is an economic opportunity, but it is also about community development and neighborhood revitalization. The needs and desires of those in the areas most affected should be heard because such equity lies at the heart of our democratic process. Such

[2] Information about the Portland brownfield initiative and other EPA Showcase Communities can be found at http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm.

involvement also ensures broad-based public support and makes the plan more attractive for state, federal, and private participation.

Implementation Assessment – Conclusions and Recommendations

Redevelopment projects are long term in nature. They can even span decades, and there are many opportunities for modifying the original vision as implementation proceeds. Flexibility, patience, and adherence to core principles are required for success. The conclusions and recommendations listed below are intended to serve as some of the short term action steps the city might take in working through pre-development stages.

1) Maintain momentum. The city of Tifton's leadership has demonstrated strong commitment to the redevelopment of the Horizon Mill property as a strategic investment in the revitalization of the surrounding area. The high-profile activities of submitting an EPA grant proposal and sponsoring a design charrette exercise have raised expectations among the citizens that significant steps are being taken. The public's involvement in the charrette, the appeal of the visual design concepts, and the wide communication of the results serve to unify citizens, providing support needed by city officials to pursue major actions. It is important for the leadership to set tangible milestones, publicize, even celebrate the attainment of these milestones, and keep the public involved and informed.

2) Take immediate steps to re-apply for EPA grant assistance. The window of opportunity to submit EPA grant proposals for 2006 awards will open in a few months and will close about 60 days later. New criteria for submitting proposals will be available when the new window opens; yet, they will be very much the same as the existing criteria. Therefore, the city's leaders should take immediate steps to improve the grant proposal that was submitted in November 2004. They should build on the feedback regarding the 2004 proposal and investigate similar proposals that have been successfully funded to strengthen Tifton's new proposal.

3) Confirm property control options. The city's due diligence for obtaining the Horizon Mill property and refinement of the city's redevelopment plans, especially engineering assessments, will require continued access to the site over an extended period. The city's focus of time and effort is adding value to the property, and the city will want to capture that value. Under Georgia's Brownfield Program, the city cannot take title to the property prior to a detailed environmental assessment and cleanup plan being devised. The current owner will be sensitive to any "discovery" of additional engineering or environmental issues, and he will want to be shielded from any resultant increase in liability. The city should, therefore, confirm contractual arrangements and options in order to minimize any potential negotiation difficulties later on.

4) Delegate to an Authority. The city has several options for "driving" the project. There are strong advantages to delegating responsibility for planning and implementing the project to an Authority, as discussed previously. Three prominent advantages are (1) long-term continuity and consistency; (2) a specialized team serves as the city's project manager; (3) Authorities can perform certain functions more easily than both the city government and the private sector.

5) Identify local funds for specific public investments. Several sources of local funds could be (and likely will be) used in the redevelopment of the Horizon Mill property. The city should begin planning now for portions of the project that can be supported with SPLOST, general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, user fees, and other local funds. A key to redevelopment success is the creative and technical ability to layer and leverage multiple sources of assistance. The city should diversify the sources of assistance in order to maximize flexibility for leveraging funds from the various sources of state, federal, and private funds.

6) Investigate private foundation funding sources. There are literally hundreds of sources of privately funded grants. Some are for specific purposes, some for general community enhancements, some for benefit of certain underserved populations/neighborhoods, etc. A few prominent examples are:
Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation (http://www.blankfoundation.org/)
Georgia Power Foundation (see the Company's local representative)
Toyota Corp. (http://www.toyota.co.jp/en/environment/ecogrant/)
Wal-mart Foundation (http://www.walmartfoundation.org/wmstore/goodworks/scripts/index.jsp)
An excellent resource to search out private grant sources is the web site:
http://www.fundsnetservices.com/Default.htm.

7) Conduct additional planning and analysis. The charrette produces an initial broad-based visual concept design. Additional refinement, planning, and analysis are required to achieve a working redevelopment plan, e.g. site and structural engineering, environmental assessments and cleanups, architectural assessments and designs, and marketing and financial feasibility studies. These will be driven partially by the charrette results and partly by what the city truly envisions for the site/neighborhood. A variety of private developers should be invited to review the city's ideas and proposals; the more detailed the city's information, the better a developer's feedback will be. A dialogue between the city and developers will likely be iterative, involving a number of sequential dialogues and re-figuring. Marketing and financial feasibility analyses can be performed at almost any point along the way; even preliminary and "rough estimate" evaluations are better than none.

8) Market refined concept plan. As concept plans reach identifiable stages or temporary "stopping points," presentation materials should be prepared in order to share the vision and supporting information with citizens, with potential private sector partners, and with public sector allies. The project – in the planning stages – will need continual promoting, marketing, and feedback.

9) Update Urban Redevelopment Plan. Tifton's Urban Redevelopment Plan is at least five years old. Any plan needs periodic updating in order to stay current with actual conditions, with "best practices," and with changes in long-term vision. The Horizon Mill redevelopment project – and the design standards that are a part of the project – represents a significant change that should be incorporated into Tifton's Plan. The design standards and land use patterns that accompany this redevelopment project affect neighborhoods and technical guidelines beyond just the Horizon Mill site. Incorporating these features and design concepts into the Plan will give them the force of law beyond the single site, since the Plan is adopted by Mayor and Council.

10) Invest for success. The Horizon Mills redevelopment project represents a major strategic investment that will change downtown Tifton for generations and stimulate additional revitalization initiatives, by both private sector and public sector. Every component of the Horizon Mill redevelopment that is funded by the city should meet or exceed the design standards which will be expected of private investors. The city necessarily sets (and demonstrates) the standard for the entire project. The city's demonstrating its adherence to high standards provides assurance to potential private investors that the city is strongly committed to the quality of this project. Thus, the private investors will not face the uncertainty of whether the value of their investment will be compromised by inconsistent standards.

11) Be proud. Tifton's leaders have committed to a grand vision for revitalizing the western part of downtown. The 8+ acre Horizon Mill site is a substantial property to "anchor" every subsequent development/revitalization on that side of town, perhaps, in time, all the way to the interstate. And the site is the citizens' gateway from the central business district to the western business district. Revitalization of this property, according the vision that has been set in motion, will be used as a case study for rural redevelopment success not only across Georgia, but also across the entire nation. Tifton should be ready for the positive attention this project will bring.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
& IMPLEMENTATION
ASSESSMENT

PRE-CHARRETTE
BROCHURE

CITY OF

TIFTON

WESTSIDE DOWNTOWN
revitalization
2005
REPORT

CHARRETTE REPORT
NEWSPAPER INSERT

MEDIA COVERAGE

AN INVITATION
TO THE CITIZENS OF TIFTON:

Let's Create the Future!

The citizens of Tifton are invited to take part in designing the future of the City's western downtown area. An exciting and creative exercise called a "charrette" will be held May 13 -16. The City is partnering with the University of Georgia and others to conduct the charrette. Please plan to participate in the events surrounding the charrette while the University is in town … and bring the children to take part, too.

In 2000, the City's redevelopment plan called for change in this area. The change should reverse the negative effects from the Horizon Mills brownfield properties. (A brownfield is defined as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.") The redevelopment will create new and better jobs, more housing, a more attractive downtown, and improved services. Since 2000 elected officials, city staff, agencies and appointed boards have all expressed a range of ideas about revitalizing western downtown.

The University of Georgia

Alliance *for* Quality Growth

Georgia is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth and along with it, an unprecedented consumption of land. The Atlanta area alone consumes an average of 500 acres of fields and farmland every week. The economic, social, and environmental problems are far reaching, profound, and permanent.

Education and community involvement are critical to encourage attractive and sustainable growth across Georgia. The Alliance for Quality Growth was formed to increase awareness and understanding among Georgia policymakers, planners, developers, and the general public of the wide variety of planning and growth management tools available to promote efficient and sustainable land use and natural resource development.

The Alliance for Quality Growth is a volunteer-collaborative effort comprised of faculty, staff, students, and state and federal partners. Working collaboratively creates win-win scenarios. Communities receive quality growth assistance, students receive real world experience and class credit, and UGA fulfills its mission to help the state of Georgia.

http://aqg.ecology.uga.edu/

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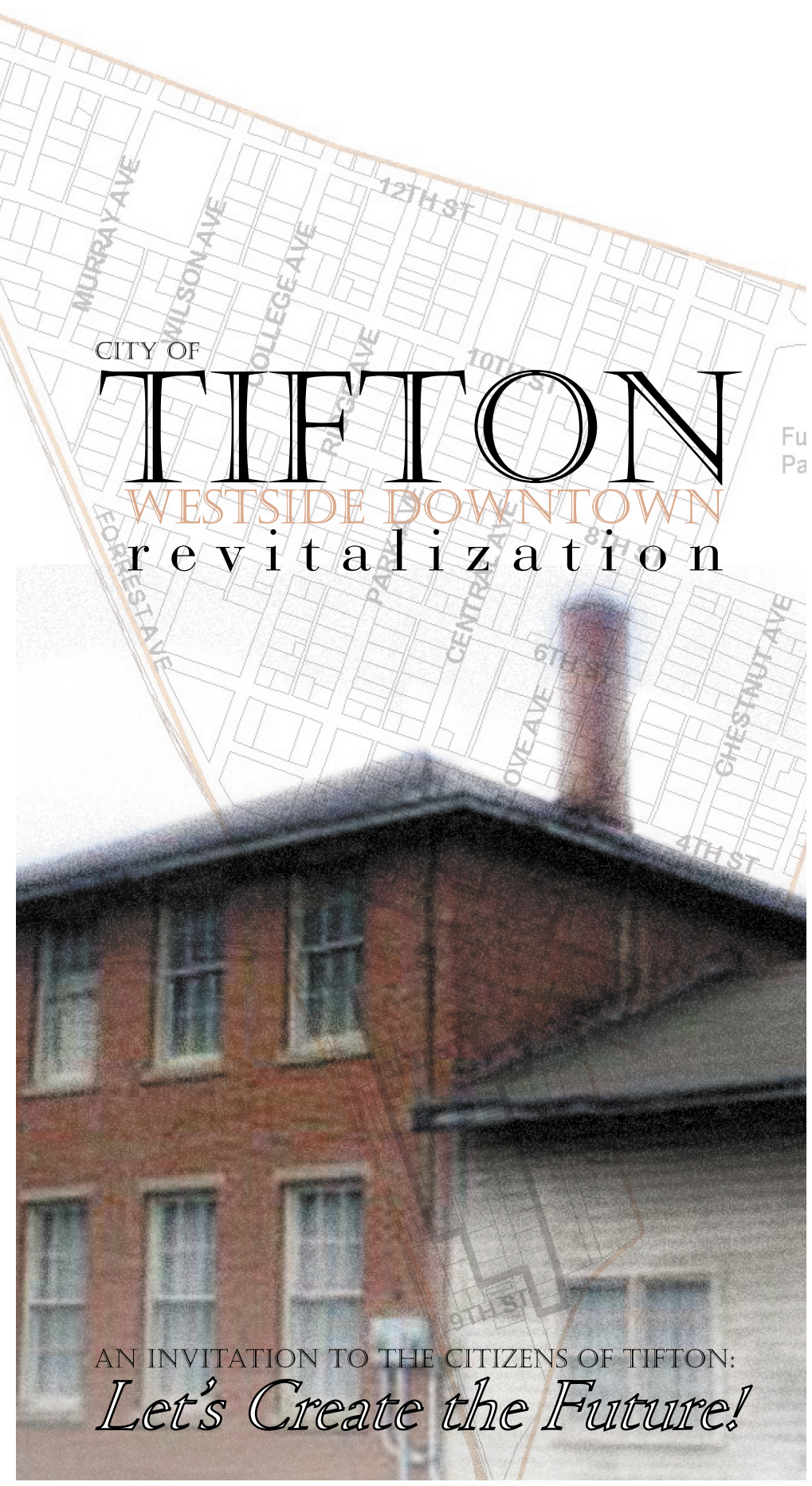
CITY OF

TIFTON

WESTSIDE DOWNTOWN revitalization



AN INVITATION TO THE CITIZENS OF TIFTON:

Let's Create the Future!

WHAT
EXACTLY IS A CHARRETTE?

The French word, Charrette means "little cart" and is often used to describe the final, intense work effort expended by art and architecture students to meet a project deadline. This use of the term is said to originate from the École des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, where proctors circulated a cart, or charrette, to collect final drawings while students frantically put finishing touches on their work.

Today the term has come to describe an intense creative period that is combined with public workshops and articulated community goals. The charrette is a collaborative planning process that harnesses the talents and energies of all interested parties to create and support a plan. It is an insider's view expressed visually by outside experts.

It has been called a creative "tornado in reverse." The process begins with a multitude of information scattered about and, with a flurry of activity, concludes in a coherent vision for a real place.

WHO PARTICIPATES?

EVERYONE is welcome!

The citizens of Tifton are key participants. The City has asked citizens to envision future uses and activities for downtown's western neighborhood. The charrette is a proven technique to gather input from a broad cross-section of citizens: residents, business owners & operators, property owners, neighborhood groups, students, churches, City officials, and others.

Several activities have already involved many local stakeholders over the past several years. Early input, suggestions, and lessons from these experiences are now being gathered and summarized by the UGA team. This information will help formulate possible design solutions to be tested and refined during the charrette. UGA's design team is made up of a diverse mix of professionals, environmental design students, and redevelopment practitioners.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Georgia's Environmental Protection Division are interested in this charrette. Their interest is demonstrated by a significant financial contribution to the charrette and consideration of Tifton as a demonstration for other communities having similar challenges.

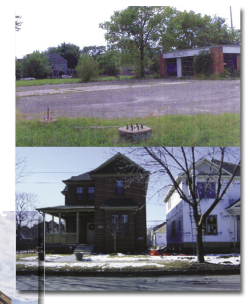
WHAT IS A
QUALITY GROWTH CHARRETTE?

A Quality Growth Charrette builds the capacity of a community to envision and design sustainable brownfield redevelopment projects. At the end of the process, the charrette team presents results on topics ranging from transit—and pedestrian-oriented designs, mixed-use development, stormwater management, historic preservation, landscape improvements, and eco-friendly buildings.

A new breed of town planners stresses that "design is not an extra." At a recent gathering of city planners, Victor Dover of Dover, Kohl, and Partners (Miami, FL) listed the five critical physical elements of traditional neighborhood design. Success, he said, often involves:

- giving the development an identifiable center and edges;
- building at a scale that encourages walking to destinations;
- offering a mix of land uses and building types;
- featuring a network of walkable streets (sidewalks, trees, shade); and
- allowing for special sites and buildings for civic purposes (library, town hall, post office).

Titan Homes
Indianapolis, Indiana



after

Old Madison Sr. High ,
Madison, Indiana

Such principles are responses to the endless miles of suburban tract housing that dominate the "garagescape," as Dover likes to call it. Even the designed high-end communities in outer-ring suburbs —because they are so isolated—discourage walking, separate land uses intentionally, and require people to spend a lot of time in their cars.

Uniroyal, Mishawaka, Indiana

Citizen involvement is a vital ingredient of a quality growth charrette. For example, the community development agency orchestrating a brownfield cleanup in Minneapolis televised its public hearings and formed a citizen task force that identified 18 areas of concern that were resolved before the project proceeded.

The City of Tifton has asked the University of Georgia (UGA) to assemble a design team to focus attention on western downtown. The team is made up of faculty members who participate in the UGA's Alliance for Quality Growth (AQG) – a diverse mix of faculty and allies who share a strong interest in the principles of quality growth. The AQG is dedicated to education and community involvement as being critical in preventing the perpetuation of sprawling, uncoordinated development. AQG knows that making better use of what we already have can be the most efficient way to grow great communities.

WHAT IS THE SCHEDULE?

Thursday, May 12	"Revitalization Tools" workshop by the Ga. Dept of Community Affairs and others.
May 13	Charrette begins – "Join the Team" kickoff event, the Tifton Business Development Center; includes citizen input opportunity and special events to enable children's contributions.
May 14 & 15	Charrette process – intensive work sessions at the Tifton Utilities Building. Public "drop-in" participation welcomed and encouraged.
Monday, May 16	Wrap-up and presentation of results. Presentation to be held at the Tifton Senior Center; lunch to be served. Public attendance is welcomed.
June 30, 2005	Delivery of final report, including implementation assessment.

WHAT IS
THE FINAL PRODUCT?

The charrette will produce a series of visual images of concepts for change in western downtown. The charrette results are redevelopment concept plans from which more detailed strategies can created and implemented. Distribution of the results is critical to charrette success … to let you know that you have been heard; to make you part of the vision of the future!

A final presentation will be held Monday, May 16, 2005 at the Tifton Senior Center. Eventually, laminated posters will be put on display at various locations around Tifton to gather more feedback. More creative methods of distributing the results are being explored, e.g., a local newspaper supplement, an online web-based response process, and public access television educational spots. The charrette results will be analyzed along with state laws, local ordinances, administrative tools, and redevelopment "best practices." This is an "implementation assessment" to provide action steps. All products will be finished before June30.

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The Tifton Charrette

Special Edition: The Tifton Gazette | Monday, May 16, 2005 | FREE

The Survey Says...

An online survey conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government sought to compile a collection of ideas for the mill site from the citizens of Tifton. Many respondents had very specific ideas on the future use of the site, in addition to more general recommendations. Below are the four survey questions and the summary of the responses received.

1 What
should it look like?

An approach that celebrates and preserves a historic appearance is preferred. The redevelopment should demonstrate a rejuvenated and visually unified appearance that preserves the mill's industrial heritage while embracing its multi-functional reuse. Welcoming and accessible, the new mill should be a center of transformed energy and activity.

2 How
should it be used?

Flexible large open spaces can be used in a variety of ways to accommodate changing uses. Restaurants, markets, offices, galleries, and shops are commercial preferences, while a mix of residential uses, incomes, and cultural features will reflect the "bridge" that the complex can become between East and West Tifton and help link the ABAC/UGA areas to downtown.

3 What (not)
would you NOT like to see?

Universally the respondents want variety and not sameness. They felt that the development trend seen in recent developments (other than those in the historic district) should be avoided, such as:

- Big boxes (Walmart and others)
- Adult-themed businesses
- Strip mall type development
- Metal buildings
- Residential development that is only for one income level

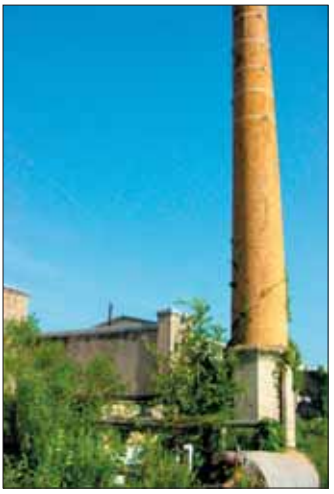
4 What
do you want to see?

A widely accessible and appealing destination for the whole family that has a mix of uses should be the goal and might include:

- In town residential development
- Dining, shopping and recreation
- Galleries, classrooms, market
- Green space and outdoor recreation

VIABLE ALTERNATIVES

More than just a mill...



The evolution of the Imperial Mill site is complicated. The changes in function, form and condition have framed the current dilemma facing the mill. One might easily cast the entire complex as not worth saving, too complex for redevelopment, or undeserving of creative solutions. These assumptions are not based in fact. The conversion of former mill properties, especially those in census tracts that are economically challenged or land that has been contaminated (a brownfield), is a popular technique for stimulating new energy in old areas of America's cities.

Tifton's opportunity is waiting to be realized. In this case there are many more assets than just the buildings and structures related to the former mill. There are unique historic aspects of Tifton's past all around the mill: wonderful views, a stream and wildlife habitat, grassy meadows, fragments of a neighborhood, a functional light industry and manufacturing district, and many recreational and municipal activities nearby. The problem is that there is no "glue" to hold it all together. This can be solved by successful reuse of the property and an ongoing process of connecting it to the other strong resources in the area.

Tiftonites have repeatedly expressed desires to make this place more than it is now (see article on page one "The Survey Says"). They have made visionary requests that community decision makers take a leadership role to make this project work. It can be a statewide, regional and

national model for intown redevelopment.

This report should inspire locals to look beyond the obvious. This will be no giant leap for Tifton. The strong local record of active historic preservation, a hardworking Main Street Program and Downtown Development Authority, a dedicated Historic Preservation Commission and a passion for going beyond the call of duty will ensure a project that will not fail.

Diversity unifies Tifton

Redevelopment of the mill property will be the first step in a gradual and badly needed resurgence of the westside neighborhood known as The Heights. To the extent possible, the mill rehabilitation should incorporate needs of residents from The Heights. Unfortunately, as in many cases similar to this, the "unheard" voices from the neighborhood should be unsilenced.

Diversity is a key to making this project work. Not just the inclusion of the diverse interests that surround the property, but also the inclusion of diverse uses. A mixed-use development has a higher rate of success than the undiversified kinds of development that characterize highway commercial construction on 82 West and newer subdivisions.

Community is more than just a place to work or sleep. It is about interpersonal action in a place that is exciting and offers surprises. Predictability breeds boredom. Variety is the spice of life.

History of the site and its redevelopment efforts

The site of the former Horizon Mill on the western edge of downtown Tifton, Georgia, has been used as industrial and commercial property since the late 1800s. It began as a packaging and distribution warehouse for tobacco in 1888 and was a textile dyeing facility from 1950 to 1992. Since 1992, the 8+ acre property has been vacant with only small portions being used for storage. Under the city of Tifton's 2000 Urban Redevelopment Plan, the former Horizon Mill site was identified as a high priority for redevelopment. In April 2004, the city of Tifton hosted the first statewide brownfields regional workshop, one of 12 workshops focusing on the State of Georgia's new brownfield redevelopment incentives. The Horizon Mill site was highlighted and discussed during this workshop. Furthermore, the Horizon Mill site was identified as the highest priority in the community for redevelopment during a May 2004 strategic planning retreat involving City Council and Development Authority members. The site is adjacent to but just outside the city's historic district, it is part of the Urban Redevelopment Area, and it is located in a state Enterprise Zone. According to the city's Urban Redevelopment Plan:

"There is a potential brownfields area along 9th Street where a number of abandoned agriculture and light industrial buildings exist. A number of large vacant lots mark the site of prior demolitions. ***Anchoring the north end of the area is an 8-acre site of the former Horizon Carpet Mill.*** *The facility has been mostly vacant since the mid-1990s."*

The site is also within the jurisdiction of the Downtown Development Authority and a newly-constituted Development Authority. The city does not currently own

The UGA Charrette team touring the mill facility with Tifton officials

the site but has been given permission to conduct soil and groundwater samples by the current owner, Mr. Earl Barrs of Macon, Georgia. The Horizon Mills site is immediately adjacent to a low income residential neighborhood traditionally known as "The Heights" and is part of Census Tract 9907. The population in Census Tract 9907 is 58.7% African American, compared to 28% African Americans in Tift County. Nearly 43% of residents in this census tract do not have a high school diploma, compared to 30% in the city of Tifton. The median household income in Census Tract 9907 was $20,367 in 1999, compared to $32,616 in Tift County. 42.4% of all residents in the census tract live below the federal poverty level, compared to just 20% in Tift County. The South Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) is also a partner in this redevelopment effort and used the Horizon Mill site as a model in a pilot project to help residents envision new uses for the property. The RDC has developed a computer-simulated "flyover" of a new use for the redeveloped space that is available on CD. The city of Tifton has adopted

Please see HISTORY, Page 2

charrette
WHAT IS IT?

The French word, charrette, means "cart" and is often used to describe the final, intense work effort expended by art and architecture students to meet a project deadline. This use of the term is said to originate from the École des Beaux Arts in Paris during the 19th century, where proctors circulated a charrette to collect final drawings while the students frantically put finishing touches on their work.

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Charrette Steering Committee

Policy Members	Staff Members
Paul Johnson	Charles Howell
Grady Thompson	Bill Park
Joe Lewis	John Leonard
Ronnie Hester	Greg Sowell
Buck Rigdon	Rona Martin
Bertha Daniel	Craig Sowell
Dixie Lightfoot	Larry Riner
Ricky Dollison	Earl Denham
Julie Smith	Michael Coleman
Ron Branch	Lequrica Gaskins
John Harper	Dave Bosse
Homer Day	Donovan Adkinson
Syd Blackmarr	
Gary Kincaid	
Chip Pfister	
Charles Styer	
Julie Pickle	
Flo Rankin	
Harold Harper	
Luz Martl	
Steve Rigdon	

Tifton Charrette Participants: Martha Reynolds, Master of Landscape Architecture(MLA) student; Mark Dejarnette, MLA student; Kristina Hyland, MLA student; Katie Parent, MLA student; Maura Blackmon, MLA student; Chad Blackwell, Master of Historic Preservation (MHP) student; Sherri Hancel, Public Administration; Jason Roberts, MLA student; Jenny An, designer; Scott Pippin, UGA Law School; Pratt Cassity, Director CCDPP and Charrette coordinator; Scott Purvis, Regional Representative, DCA; Michael Commisso, Regional Planner, SEGRDC.

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Continued from Page 1

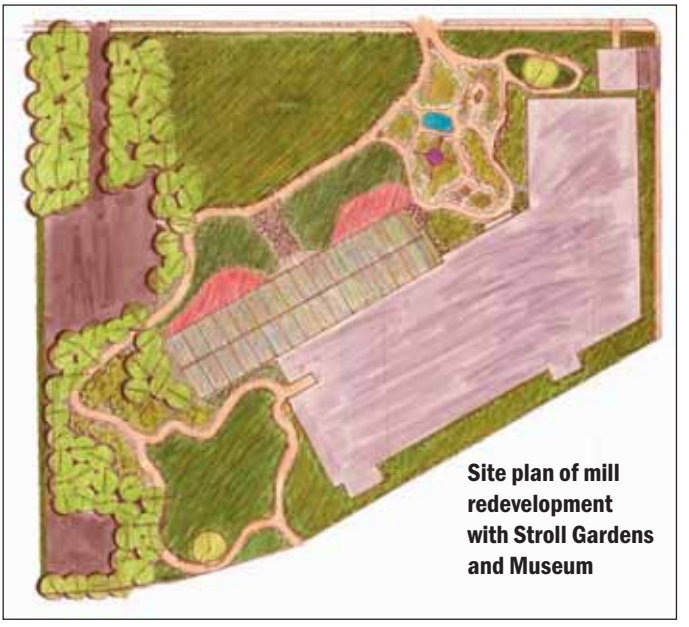
History

"Sustainable Growth Principles" which will help "create a livable community designed for people, not just cars" and "encourage development that is compact yet contains open space provided in the form of greenspace, squares or parks." An additional principle encourages 15-20% of space in any new or large-scale infill development be dedicated to open or greenspace. These principles will play a key role in the redevelopment of the Horizon Mills property. In November 2004, the city applied to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a $200,000 grant to determine the types and extent of environmental contamination on the property, the first step toward redevelopment of the site. The site is not on the state Hazardous Site Inventory or the federal NPL ("superfund") list, but contaminants were identified on the site in the early 1990s, including asbestos and soil contamination. Several underground storage tanks were removed, along with contaminated soil. The EPA made positive comments on the city's application but ultimately decided not to fund it. Grant reviewers cited a "lack of specific vision for the site" and "insufficient public input and information on how the site will impact the overall community" as items needing improvement in the grant proposal. The city engaged the University of Georgia (UGA) to help produce "a redevelopment concept plan with broad-based citizen input." A project team was assembled from UGA's Alliance for Quality Growth, a multi-disciplinary group of faculty who share the belief that education and community involvement are critical to achieving sustainable growth at the policy level and in Georgia's communities. The project team was made up of faculty from the Carl Vinson Institute of Government's Community & Regional Development Division, the College of Environment & Design's Center for Community Design & Preservation and Institute of Ecology, and the Small Business Development Center Network's Office of Economic Development Assistance. For more details visit: www.sed.uga.edu/pso/charrettes/tifton These four pages show the results of the Tifton Charrette. Enjoy!

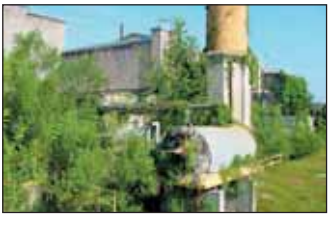
Stroll Gardens and Museum

This proposed design seeks to incorporate not only the unique history of the Imperial Mill, but also of Tifton and Tift County. This site's masonry buildings, prime location, and diverse flora and fauna make it an excellent candidate for a park and museum complex. The park features a butterfly garden, meadows, an oak grove, and walking/biking paths. Each component serves as wildlife habitat. All plantings consist of native species.

The Imperial Mill Park and Museum houses the Glenn Burton Conservatory, a turf grass and agricultural museum, and additional space for institutional and community uses.

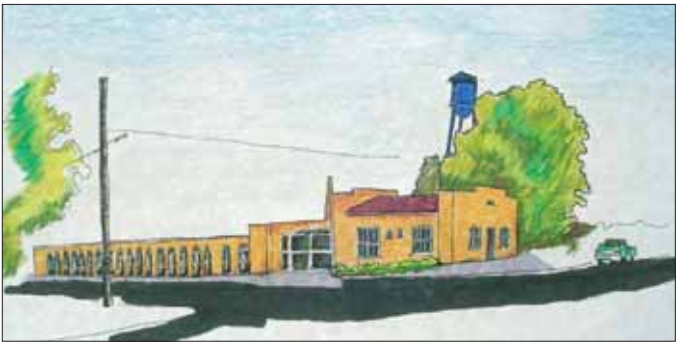


Site plan of mill redevelopment with Stroll Gardens and Museum



Can the mill be saved?

Absolutely! Although surrounded by creeper vines and hidden behind shrubs, the structure is in relatively good condition. The brick on the exterior was sandblasted sometime in the past, exposing the soft interior to the elements. Left alone, the bricks will continue to erode and compromise the structure. The addition of a new roof in the last 20-30 years has largely prevented water damage in the interior. The Imperial Tobacco warehouse can easily be rehabilitated to new uses and its continued use should be part of any redevelopment plan.



Connecting to Tifton

Site plan of path network in Triangle Park and connections to adjacent areas

Goals

- Connect Imperial Mill with downtown using pedestrian and bike friendly pathways.
- Connect Imperial Mill to surrounding neighborhoods with sidewalks, including The Heights and the historic district.
- Activate pedestrian and bike-able links between Imperial Mill and Fulwood Park to connect city green spaces.
- Provide pedestrian and bike corridor between Imperial Mill and Abraham Baldwin College.

Methods

- Implement path ways and re-use the old rail lines and rail beds in the triangular site adjoining the Imperial Mill property. Provide a crossing over the active rail lines and link with the rail line that leads into downtown beside the Chamber of Commerce
- Provide additional green space and outdoor recreational opportunity.
- Providing sidewalks and tree buffers with the street will encourage more pedestrian use. Creating green corridors between neighborhoods and green spaces
- Promote pedestrian activity in the downtown.
- Create a pedestrian and bike corridor along the active rail line that runs through downtown and passes the Abraham Baldwin College campus - enabling the opportunity for student use and access by the college to downtown and the Imperial Mill.

Architectonic Model

Sidewalks on both sides of the street are an essential element in promoting pedestrian activity and connectivity

The emphasis of this design offers the opportunity to revitalize the blighted Imperial Mill, into a desirable, sustainable and profitable space and strategically use its central location to link adjacent communities together. This design incorporates the original historic building structure of the mill with complimentary new modern structures set within a sustainable native landscape design. The historic building has its castellated corners restored while the window frames are modernized with single vertical rectangular panes. The modern addition to the mill consists of three terraced levels of glass blocks stacked atop one another culminating in five-story corner tower with castellated embattlements that reference the ornamentation of the historic building. Another retail structure faces 3rd street and is compatible with the vernacular architectural style of the mill office, formerly Groomingdales. All of the historic structures and the front retail complex showcases extensive green roofs to celebrate the various cultivars of Bermuda grass that have been developed in Tifton. Programmatically speaking, this design includes a mixed-use scheme of a neighborhood village that is somewhat self-sufficient in amenities and workspace for the residences and other members of the Tifton community. The space includes restaurants, affordable middle-income and student loft apartments, recreational facilities, retail spaces, and "build out" entrepreneurial space for professional offices, artisan and craftsman studio space, and light industrial use. The retail anchor store to serve the immediate residential community and the citizens of Tifton is envisioned to be a large international food bazaar and local farmer's market.

Architectonic plan for Imperial Mill

- The Architectonic Model features adaptive reuse of the historic structure combined with contemporary additions of energy efficient extensive green roofs and an ultramodern residential wing.
- The naturalistic native plantings add low maintenance sustainable beauty to the landscape and underlines the remnant industrial character of the site.
- The upscale restaurant on the west wing combines elegant indoor dining and casual outdoor patio seating.
- Large modern windows are incorporated into the historic building structure to bring coherence with the look of the modern wing.
- A mixed-use scheme of affordable residential, retail, recreational, and workspace define a new centrally located neighborhood village for Tifton for all to use.
- The retail and service facilities are envisioned to be multicultural and intended to serve as a central destination for all citizens of Tifton and surrounding areas to enjoy.

Mill eligible for National Register

The Horizon Mill site has been used for industry and commerce since the 1880s. Originally a packing and distribution warehouse for tobacco, the Imperial Tobacco Company of Great Britain acquired the property in 1920. The facility was used for the company's stemming operations to prepare the tobacco for distribution. Between 1950 and 1992, the mill was used primarily for textile manufacturing. J.P. Stevens ran a woolen manufacturing mill on the property from 1950 until 1988. The operation included picking, blending, carding, pindrafting, and dyeing the wool. Horizon Carpets purchased the site in 1987 and textile operations ended in 1992.

If nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the Imperial Tobacco Company site would be eligible under either Criterion A or C. Criterion A applies to properties "associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history." The Imperial Tobacco Company warehouse site is significant in the contexts of industry and commerce, and also possibly agriculture and engineering. Criterion C refers to properties "that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction." The warehouse and site are significant for typifying a late nineteenth/early twentieth century industrial style, particularly common to the southeastern United States in the 1920s.

Funding Tifton's Future

Incentives for Public and Private Partnerships

The central issue facing prospective brownfield rehabilitation projects is the massive uncertainty that faces anyone who would take. Recognizing that brownfield developments form an essential key in many urban revitalization programs, and that they provide a multitude of environmental, ecological, and social benefits, both the federal and state governments provide a number of tools to encourage public/private partnerships in tackling these projects. The partnerships make a great deal of sense as both parties have strong interests in seeing these properties reclaimed, and alone neither is well equipped to accomplish it. Private investors simply cannot afford to bear the risks and expense in the form of unpredictable cleanup costs, endless and interminable delays, and, most importantly, the possibility of liability if further harm is caused by the pollution or more cleanup is necessary. Public entities, like a city or county government, are much better situated to handle those issues, but they lack sufficient motivation to take on such endeavors; in the past, cities have settled for simply demolishing such sites and leaving development to private companies motivated solely by profit. By taking on a larger role in preparing the site and creating a vision for it, a city can better control how it fits into their overall community plan.

The Imperial Mill site presents an almost ideal project for this kind of public/private cooperation, as it is a fantastic opportunity to simultaneously advance several components of its strategic plan in what will be an attractive fashion for private investment. First, recent changes to state and federal laws now excuse liability for an innocent, future purchaser of this site. The state of Georgia goes farther and bars suits against some purchasers retroactive to 2002. Those responsible for the pollution will still be held responsible for its cleanup, but this allows new owners to make use of the site without the threat of ruinous litigation. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has also begun grant programs to provide funds for assessment of the potential contamination possible brownfield sites. The local government can then afford to begin the first steps toward redevelopment while seeking to attract private investors to return it to productive use.

Tifton's Enterprise Zone provides various tax incentives and fee exceptions to attract businesses to the downtown area. Such incentives are meant to offset the increased costs and risks developers face when dealing with possibly contaminated sites. The Imperial Mill site also falls within the city's Urban Redevelopment Area (URA). The URA gives the city more flexible control over zoning ordinances and local tax provisions; this allows the city to conform building and zoning ordinances in order to facilitate the reuse of existing sites and structures and attract desirable enterprises downtown. When these types of areas overlap even more advantages are available. In a part of the city that fall within both of the these zones and are identified as existing in particularly extreme poverty, it can be designate a Georgia Opportunity Zone, and businesses that locate in that zone receive even more extensive tax breaks based upon the number of quality, full-time jobs they create.

The real value presented by the Imperial Mills comes from the opportunity it offers to plan for the future while preserving the past. The City of Tifton is committed to reviving its historic downtown and making it into a vibrant community. This involves preserving buildings like the Imperial Mill, or at least those parts worth saving, and bringing the surrounding areas into a closer relationship. The federal government offers what is know as a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to cities that are willing to use the money to preserve local history, particularly if the preservation projects contribute to a larger economic revitalization effort that benefits the poorest parts of the community. The Imperial Mill site allows the city the chance to restore a 19th century structure that can easily be used as a means to improve the economic condition of a depressed part of town.

The site is also ideally located to provide a link between residential areas at the commercial centers downtown, and possibly even the college. Through the Department of Transportation, the federal government provides grants for cities to improve their infrastructure; half of the total funding for these grants is earmarked for biking/walking projects. The large railroad easement next to the Imperial Mill provides the opportunity to link the development to the college through a bike path that can run right out to the campus. At the same time, footpaths through the site will help link the neighborhoods to the downtown, allowing people to easily move from one to the other. This makes for a closer sense of community, and provides visitors a central location from which to access downtown. The Imperial Mill site is an integral part of downtown, and it provides a connective link to one of Tifton's most underdeveloped communities. It is a great example of the opportunities available to a city that is committed to preserving its past while looking to its future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Many contributors are involved in the success of a project of this importance and magnitude. The following are recognized for the valuable and various roles they played in the success of this community input and design process. **Sponsors:** City of Tifton, Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and Environmental Protection Division. **UGA Alliance for Quality Growth Project Team**: Mac Brown, Principal; Danny Bivins; Pratt Cassity; Laurie Fowler and Courtney Tobin.

UGA Charrette Design Team: Pratt Cassity, Principal; Eleonora Alcalde Machado, Graphics coordinator; Katie Parent; Jenny An; Maura Blackmon; Chad Blackwell; Mark DeJarnette; Sherri Hancel; Kristina Hyland; Scott Pippin; Martha Reynolds; Jason Roberts; Michael Commisso, SGRDC; Scott Purvis, Ga Dept Community Affairs.

Tifton Steering Committee and Staff Members. Thank you!

Industrial Park and Museum

The Imperial Mill grounds presents Tifton with an opportunity to celebrate its heritage and encourage future growth and integration.

This proposal for the Horizon Mill property incorporates loft living, artists' studios gallery space, a museum celebrating the research of Glenn Burton, retail space, restaurant space and recreation space.

The site's location near downtown presents an opportunity to expand Tifton's greenspace to include a corridor connecting downtown's old train depot to the new Horizon Mill complex, Imperial Mill.

Named from the building's original owner Imperial Tobacco Co. and the structure's extensive subsequent use as a mill. This celebration of the historic building's heritage is continued in the Industrial Park.

The Industrial Park is constructed from the machinery and working parts of the building left on the structure's east side. The park celebrates the industrial history of the site (an idea based on a park in Duisburg-Nord, Germany) and serves as the end point of the green corridor connecting the Mill with downtown and possibly ABAC in a similar manner.

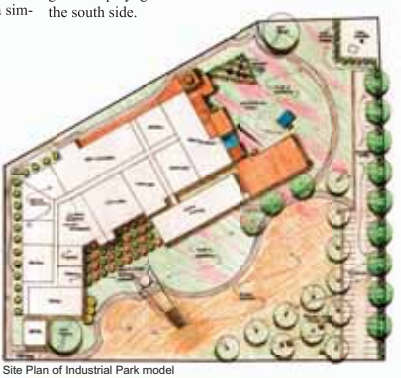
Industrial park at Duisbrug-Nord in Germany

From the park, a path leads around the Mill past a restaurant, an art gallery, artists' studios and a few business on the north side, several artists' studios, businesses, the museum and its turf and grass display garden on the south side.

This proposal brings cultural facilities, recreation, economic development, and housing to a transitional area of Tifton moving the city into the future.

Rendering of Imperial Mill Industrial Park

Rendering of potential loft apartments at Imperial Mill



Site Plan of Industrial Park model

Mill in good condition...but needs help to stay that way

The exterior of the tobacco warehouse is constructed of brick masonry load-bearing walls. The brick is a pale color, similar in composition to several other structures in Tifton from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The exterior appears to have been sandblasted, perhaps at the time of the most recent addition in the 1960s. This early date is exhibited by the advanced erosion of the brick at high volume drainage points along the exterior. A new roof was added, perhaps around the same time. The corner parapets, visible in early photographs, were removed so a band of metal coping could be installed around the roof edge.

The sandblasted cleaning undertaken mid-century has caused more damage to the structure and poses the greatest threat to its future. When bricks are fired, a hard skin is created as the silica melts creating a weatherproof shell protecting the softer, interior brick. Sandblasting, although usually used to remove paint or clean the brick, actually strips away the face of the brick and this protective skin along with it. Once the soft interior brick is exposed, water run-off from the roof washes over the brick and erodes the brick.

The vegetation that has been allowed to grow along the base of the structure, particularly along the west façade, creates several problems. Such thick growth of vegetation raises the moisture level adjacent to the building. Due to the sandblasting, the brick is permeable to moisture which migrates through the wall and creates problems on the interior. Additionally, the high moisture levels encourage the growth of "creeping plants" which climbs the walls and damage the brick and mortar wherever it attaches itself.

The roof also needs to be examined, as it has been repaired or replaced at least once in its lifetime. Problems with flat industrial roofs are often exacerbated with subsequent repairs because the new roof is often laid on top of the old roof. In addition to increasing the roof load, minor problems can be hidden and not rediscovered until significant damage has been done. Judging from the interior, the roof at the southwest corner seems to have the most problems since the entire floor in that wing was removed due to water damage.

Rehabilitation Standards

The Imperial Tobacco Co. warehouse has many distinctive characteristics that should be retained in any rehabilitation of the structure to new uses. On the exterior, the structure is defined by the rhythm of recessed brick panels (originally with arched window openings) and uniform brick construction. Inside the structure is characterized by the large spaces created by few interior walls. The hardwood flooring throughout the historic sections is also a character-defining feature. In adapting the structure to uses other than industrial or manufacturing, care must be taken to retain these character-defining elements. The large interior spaces may prove to be problematic to adapt to contemporary spaces. Uses that may take advantage of such large spaces, such as art galleries or restaurants may prove to be more suitable solutions than retail space, which often requires smaller spaces.

Among the documented features of the original structure are corner parapets and arched window and door openings. The corner parapets were removed when the roof was repaired and metal coping attached to the roof edges. The window and door opening were filled in with brick. If these feature were to be reconstructed, the new construction should be compatible, yet differentiated from the original structure. Likewise, the replacement or renovation of historic features should match the old in design, color, texture, and wherever possible, materials. For example, the hardwood floor, water-damaged in places and completely removed in others, should be repaired with like materials.

New construction, either attached to the historic structure or adjacent, should not negatively impact the character of the property or its environment and should be reversible (if removed in the future, the integrity would be unimpaired.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
& IMPLEMENTATION
ASSESSMENT

PRE-CHARRETTE
BROCHURE

CITY OF

TIFTON

WESTSIDE DOWNTOWN
revitalization
2005
REPORT

CHARRETTE REPORT
NEWSPAPER INSERT

MEDIA COVERAGE

The Tifton Gazette
Updated: 06 Jun 2005 - 10:05:55 PM

Reviving a wilted plant

Author: Angie Thompson
Publication Date: 2005-05-08

Real Estate Agent Ron Branch, right, shows the Tifton Gazette's Managing Editor Flo Rankin, left, and City Editor Angie Thompson the boiler room of the Horizon Mill plant near downtown Tifton Wednesday.
JD Sumner/The Tifton Gazette

TIFTON — You have to clear away poison oak from the door before you can go inside for a tour of the building on the property at the corner of South Ridge Avenue and Third Street.

Once inside, the musty smell that hits your nose lets you know the place isn't being used.

The flashlight tour included plenty of "watch your step" advice given along the way. The pigeons that fly by uninvited make you think the building would be the perfect place to film a Hitchcock movie.

The 140,000-square-foot building is huge and very industrial. Wood floors, concrete and steel walls, brick, and wood beams form the structure that was once bustling with activity as a carpet mill. Large pipes line the ceilings in the bowels of the building and in the boiler room.

Horizon Carpet, and before that J.P. Stevens, once owned the eight-acre lot, the factory and the separate office building. Groomingdale's occupied the office building before moving across the street. Taylor Made, the most recent tenant, rented a portion of the building.

City officials and the local development authority realized years ago that this area on the western side of downtown Tifton needed renewal.

The way a place looks is important to prospective new businesses looking for new communities to move into and the first impression of this place isn't the best.

The property once occupied by Horizon Mills is the key to revitalizing the area and its neighborhood, local planners say, and now plans are underway to do just that.

The City of Tifton is partnering with the University of Georgia to revitalize the area, but a visual plan must be created before any work can begin.

Mac Brown, the director of the University of Georgia's Office of Economic Development Assistance, said he and Tifton City Manager Charlie Howell met two years ago to talk about the area and how to improve it. Those talks led to a work session with the development authority and the city council and staff.

"We spent a Saturday in November two years ago talking and training and planning and working," Brown said. "We asked ourselves, 'What is the top priority of economic development for Tifton distinct from all of Tift County?'"

Brown said that one of the top three objectives identified by the group was the need to do something to improve the old Horizon site.

The large property is viewed as a key piece in terms of revitalizing the neighborhood to make the area more energetic and attractive. Improvements would reap benefits in economic development and the quality of life for the area. Brown sees the area as an extension of downtown Tifton.

“People now are wanting to move back closer to town and there are a lot of residents in that area already,” Brown said. “We will include them. We want to know what they want the area to look at.”

Organizers of the City of Tifton’s Westside Downtown Revitalization project are encouraging people from the community to attend next week’s events and offer suggestions of how and what to do with the property.

“It is a very intense exercise and there will be a lot of events happening next weekend to generate the visual plan,” Brown said. “The charrette is about creating a visual plan that incorporates a lot of people and a very broad cross-section of people who are affected by that area and what is going on there and in downtown Tifton.

“We want any citizen who has an interest in not just that property but the neighborhood, that part of town, to tell us what they would like to see in the future. We want to include people who live there and the people who work there and the people who drive through there.”

Once a plan is in place, seeing it through to the end will take years. The site is considered a brownfield — there are asbestos pipes and dye may have soaked into the groundwater — and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division is interested in recycling contaminated properties. Tifton applied for an EPA grant for $200,000. Winners of those grants are to be announced in the next few weeks.

To contact city editor Angie Thompson, call 382-4321.

The Tifton Gazette

Updated: 06 Jun 2005 - 10:05:55 PM

Team reports on ideas for mill site

Author: J.D. Sumner
Publication Date: 2005-05-17

After a weekend spent intensely researching the area, interviewing residents and digging up historical data from the city, the charrette team, led by Pratt Cassidy, the director of the Center for Community Design, Planning and Preservation for the University of Georgia, recommended focusing the area into either an ecological, industrial or architectonic development.

Cassidy emphasized the history of the building and suggested changing the name from Horizion Mills to its original name, Imperial Mills.

“By changing its name, we can begin to change its identity,” Cassidy said. “Imperial is a nod to the original and historical building while adding a touch of glamour.”

According to the team, the most challenging problem for any development will be the contamination from asbestos-wrapped piping and possible dye leakage into the ground. The group recommended demolishing the newest portion of the building and said that testing would need to be completed before a decision could be made on how to deal with the dye and asbestos.

“Sometimes it’s just best to leave these things alone,” Cassidy said, referring to attempts to clean up and dismantle pipes coated with asbestos. If the pipes are intact, the asbestos is safe. But if they begin to unravel or are damaged through demolition, they can pollute the area even more, Cassidy said.

Cassidy also mentioned that members of the community had told him and the team that they did not want to see the “Wal-mart-tization” of downtown, the area turned into a fast food resturant, or the area turned into a bunch of storage units.

Cassidy and the charrette team developed several renderings and uses for the eight-acre site ranging from an ecological conservatory complete with a natural South Georgia wildlife sanctuary to an industrial site full of housing, art galleries and restaurants.

One suggestion that city leaders seemed excited about was one that would help the Imperial Mills site link downtown Tifton to the Heights, the neighborhood just adjacent to the mill, and the ABAC/UGA campuses by way of a walkway or bike trail along existing railroad tracks.

“We feel it’s very important, regardless of how you decide to develop the site, to continue the redevelopment to the Heights and to ABAC to help link east and west Tifton and bring back the luster of the downtown area,” Cassidy said.

The group will give its final recommendation and report, complete with a plan on how to implement each suggestion, to city leaders on June 30. From there it’s up to city leaders and the community to come to together to develop the area.

UGA’s Center for Community Design , Planning and Preservation has held more than 30 charrettes. Team members said all have ended with the successful development of the areas researched.

CITY OF

TIFTON

WESTSIDE DOWNTOWN revitalization

"HORIZON MILL" DESIGN CHARRETTE & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & IMPLEMENTATION ASSESSMENT

BY THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, ALLIANCE FOR QUALITY GROWTH

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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The following are recognized for the valuable and various roles they played in the success of this community input and design process.

SPONSORS

City of Tifton
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division

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