



In hard economic times, smart local governments must become more effective and efficient while also being visionary. What if your community needed to **market prime acreage to industries** yet also **provide recreation for residents**? Does your city want to **accommodate growth**, but not at the expense of its **historic town center**? Perhaps a coastal community needs **innovative stormwater management solutions**, but isn't sure where to begin? Like Effingham County, Suwanee and Tybee Island, respectively – you look to a charrette.

“Charrette” describes a rapid, intensive, and creative work session, usually lasting several days, in which a design team focuses on a particular design problem and arrives at a collaborative solution. Charrettes are product-oriented. The public charrette is fast becoming a preferred way to face the planning challenges confronting American cities.

The University of Georgia's College of Environment and Design has been using the charrette process to help communities for many decades. Charrette teams usually range in size from 10 - 25 participants and includes students and faculty. As part of the College of Environment and Design, our core Team comes from the disciplines of Landscape Architecture, Historic Preservation and Environmental Planning, but we often draw on the greater UGA community and other disciplines.

The format of individual charrettes remains flexible to satisfy the unique community needs and to respond to the local strengths and opportunities. Charrettes can be used to begin solving a variety of community concerns, such as:

- **Downtown Revitalization**
- **Open Space and Recreation**
- **Historic Schools**
- **Corridor Planning**
- **Environmental Management**
- **Affordable Housing**

Charrettes occur in three phases:

#### **Phase I - Research, Assessment, & Preparation**

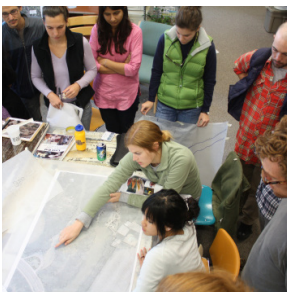
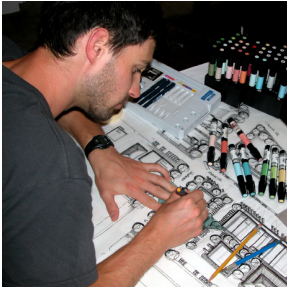
Working with a local steering committee to identify stakeholders and user groups, set goals, develop base maps, research historic photographs, gather previous plans and studies, and plan for Phase II. Timeframe: 2-4 months

#### **Phase II - Design Workshop**

A 3-day event held in the community, beginning with direct public discussion to inform the charrette team of relevant issues, begin constructive visioning for community improvement, and create community buy-in. Work proceeds by refining ideas and eliminating ineffective options through regular feedback loops from stakeholders. The team's work space remains open to the public so that citizens can stop by to provide feedback and additional information. The workshop concludes with a presentation of the team's solutions for final input from stakeholders.

#### **Phase III - Refine the Concepts**

Our charrette team can generate a variety of final products to best suit each project, including press releases and newspaper articles; presentation boards; annotated PowerPoint presentations; brochures, maps, and other handouts; publicly-accessible websites and social media sites; and/or complete, full-color final reports enhanced with related case studies and sources for implementation. Timeframe: 2-3 months.



For more information about charrettes, including examples, please visit:  
[www.tinyurl.com/CEDcharrettes](http://www.tinyurl.com/CEDcharrettes)

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