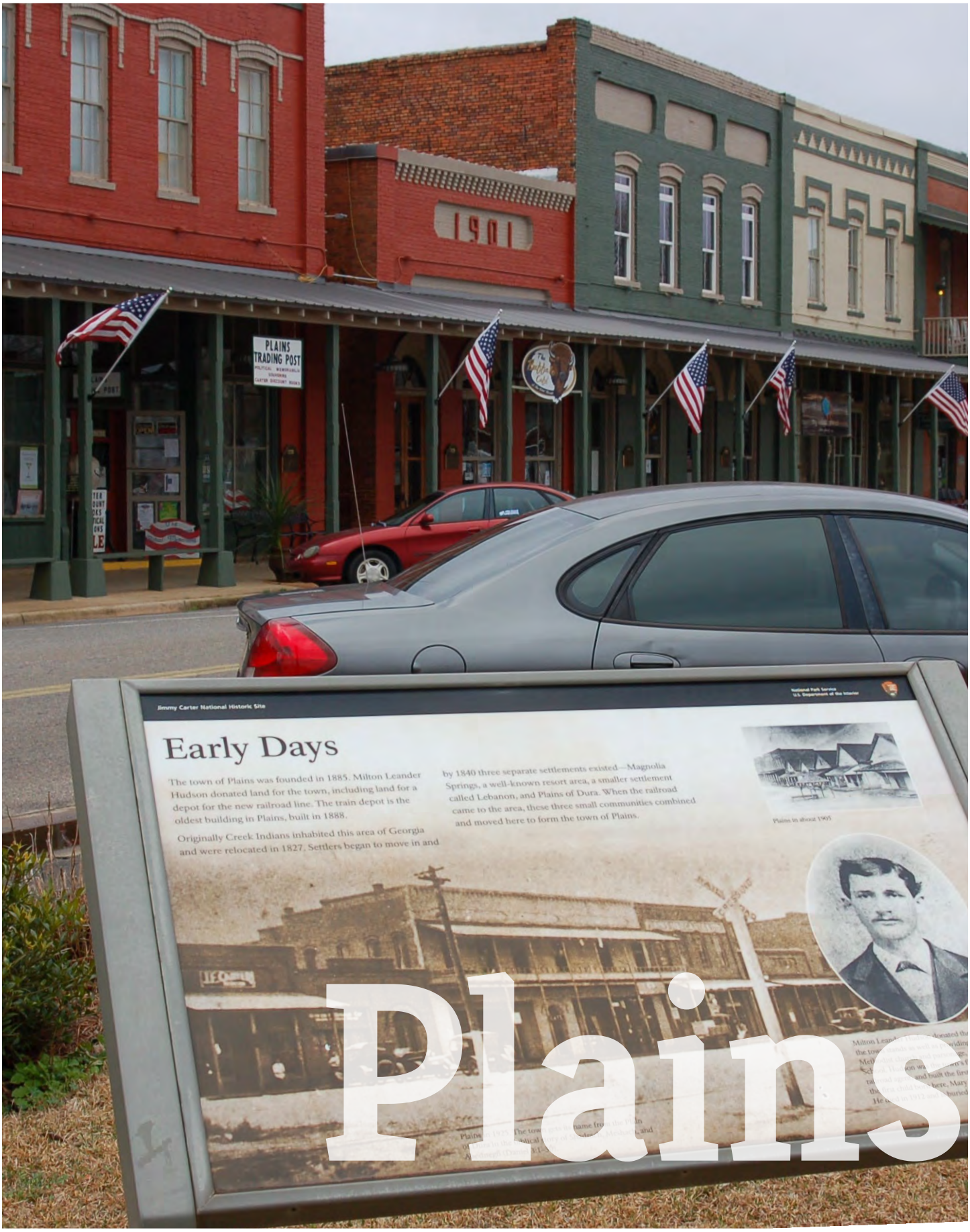

1901
PLAINS TRADING POST
Jimmy Carter National Historic Site
Early Days
The town of Plains was founded in 1885. Milton Leander Hudson donated land for the town, including land for a depot for the new railroad line. The train depot is the oldest building in Plains, built in 1888.
Originally Creek Indians inhabited this area of Georgia and were relocated in 1827. Settlers began to move in and by 1840 three separate settlements existed—Magnolia Springs, a well-known resort area, a smaller settlement called Lebanon, and Plains of Dura. When the railroad came to the area, these three small communities combined and moved here to form the town of Plains.
Plains in about 1905

# Plains

# Zone 2: Plains

Known worldwide as the small, rural hamlet that is home to the 39th President of the United States, Jimmy Carter's hometown of Plains continues to celebrate Carter and the rural community that shaped his life.

The Jimmy Carter National Historic Site and the Plains Welcome Center host an average of about 65,000 visitors a year. The National Park Service (NPS) managed sites are the Plains High School housing a Visitors Center and Museum, the Depot that served as Carter's campaign headquarters, and the Boyhood Farm at Archery. The one-block row of historic commercial businesses, the residential historic district and the peanut industry are other points of interest.

## Public comments:

**What we heard during the charrette**

### POSITIVE

Historic sites in Plains.

Rosalynn Carter Butterfly Trail.

Welcome Center.

Photographs with big peanut statue in Plains.

Billy Carter Museum.

Sam Shortline Railroad.

Beautiful downtown area in Plains.

Hebron Baptist Church on HWY 49 - In the movie "To Dance with the White Dog".

### NEGATIVE

Signs in Plains need to be more specific - Visitors have a hard time gathering their bearings without asking.

USA Foods and Mimmie's on HWY 280 are not attractive.

Billy Carter Museum lacks proper signs.

Trash on highways, specifically HWY 280.

Overgrowth of grass on HWY 280.

Big peanut statue should be at the Plains Welcome Center.

Koinonia Farm is difficult to find.

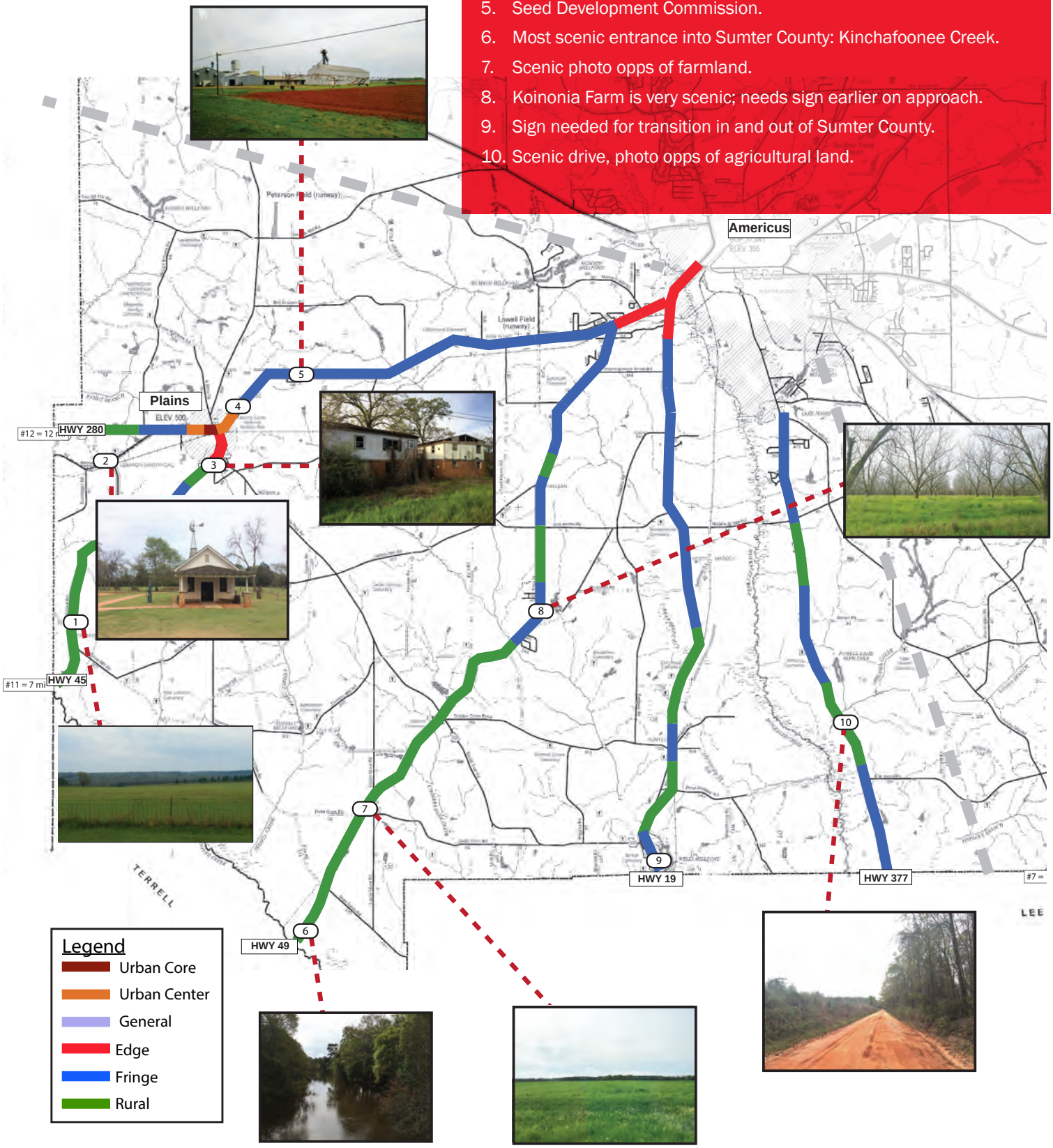
No signs directing to Plains from Ellaville and Leslie.

## Corridor Transect Map

ZONE 2:Plains

**SIGNIFICANT POINTS:**

1. Need pull off area for photo opp.
2. Signs needed for Boyhood Farm-Archery, very interesting and educational.
3. Rundown housing.
4. Create one entry sign for Plains.
5. Seed Development Commission.
6. Most scenic entrance into Sumter County: Kinchafoonee Creek.
7. Scenic photo opps of farmland.
8. Koinonia Farm is very scenic; needs sign earlier on approach.
9. Sign needed for transition in and out of Sumter County.
10. Scenic drive, photo opps of agricultural land.



# Analysis

The southwest part of Sumter County along Hwy. 377 transitions predictably from an "Edge" zone in Americus along South Lee St. (commercial sprawl intermixed with business, industry and residential properties) to "Fringe" (predominately pasture land with more regular residential).

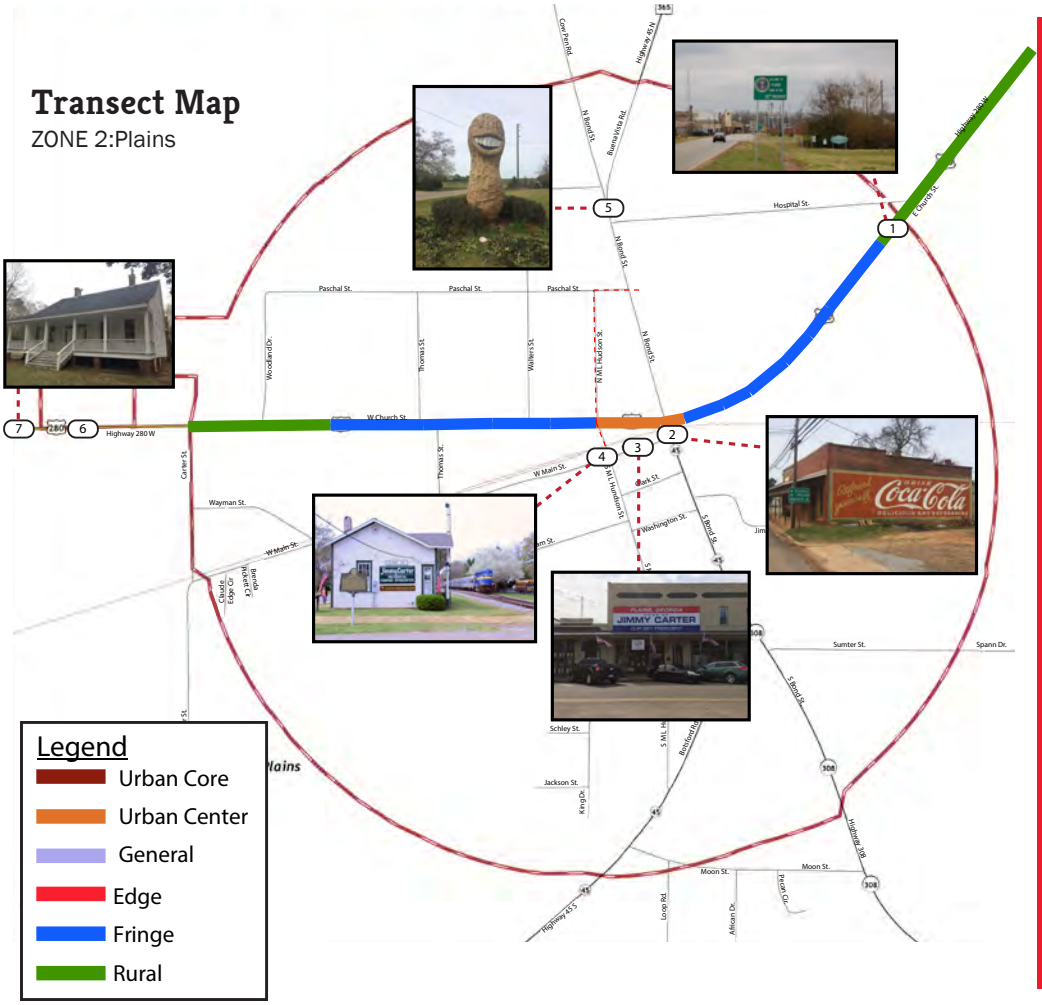
The road immediately becomes rural outside the city limits, characterized by large parcels with wide-open views, making for a scenic drive of agricultural and pastoral landscapes.

The next corridor, Hwy. 19, is a four-lane divided highway from Americus to the county line, and is the most heavily traveled corridor in this zone. Two notable assets on this drive are a large dairy farm and the collection of historic buildings at intersections. Entry signs into Sumter County were noticeably absent in both directions.

Hwy. 49 is scenic and pastoral, with notable views at Kinchafoonee Creek and the agricultural fields at Koinonia Farm – well known as the community that grew the seed of an idea that became Habitat for Humanity.

Hwy. 280 consists of a fringe zone west of Americus that becomes rural before it reaches Plains. The road suffers from too many signs at the city limits. The majority of the signs advertise individual establishments and are faded and hard to read, but there are also multiple signs advertising Plains as the home of Jimmy Carter, all competing for visitors' attention. The picturesque view of the historic downtown marks the center of the community and draws visitors in as a natural place to begin exploring.

Westward, the highway continues through a small residential historic district and leads to the Jimmy Carter Boyhood Farm in the rural Archery community. Hwy. 45 branches south from Hwy. 280 and is a highly scenic rural road. The Thomas Mill Road intersection was specifically noted as spot that would benefit from a roadside park to observe the view.




**SIGNIFICANT POINTS:**

1. Sign consolidating and decluttering needed.
2. Coca Cola mural is a visual landmark, could be higlighted.
3. Downtown Plains has interesting buildings and various businesses, directional signs could be improved.
4. Depot should be used as a visitor information center.
5. Large peanut is a significant landmark.
6. Boyhood Farm is very interesting; visitor experience is best if ranger is available for interpretation.
7. The "Haunted House" was an intriguing mystery.

Sketches

Evolution

Peanuts - landscape

Stars turn into seeds

**CED** student developing ideas for Plains, Sumter County

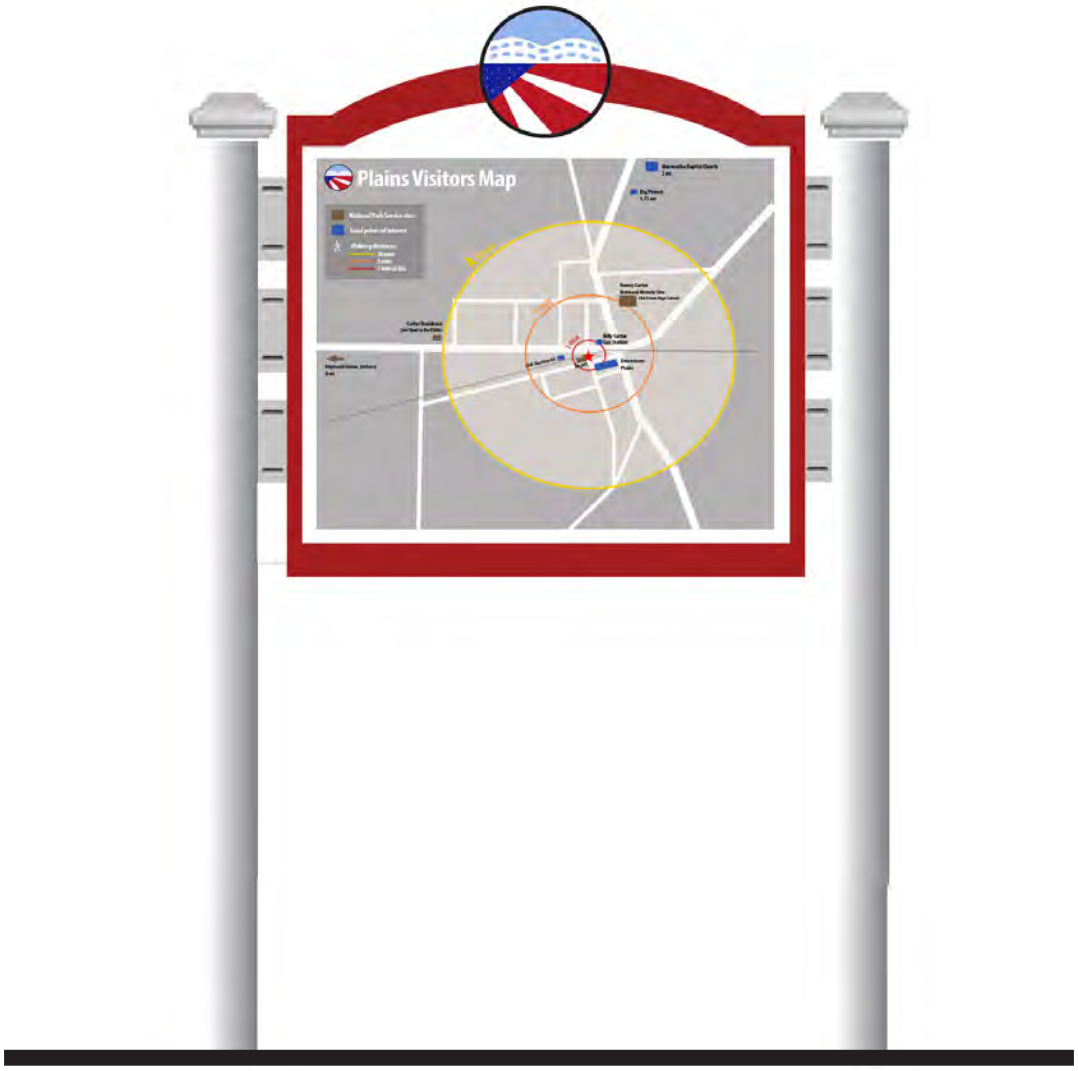
PLAINS

## Graphic Identity

Currently, Plains lacks a cohesive graphic identity, with many different designs, colors and fonts, representing the town. Two different images emerged as icons for the town: Jimmy Carter, the 39th President of the United States, and the peanut. These two themes are prevalent throughout town, with all tourist sites relating to these themes. The round logo was inspired by political campaign buttons seen in many places around town, and features the American flag and the peanut. Prototypes were created to represent Plains' identity both with text and without before settling on the final design.

*Above: Entry Sign*

*Below: Visitors Orientation Map*



# Recommendations

## Seed to Shelf

Plains' strong ties to agriculture, specifically the peanut industry, provides visitors a unique agricultural perspective to experience the peanut industry from "seed to shelf." A few miles outside of Plains, the rural highway is lined with agricultural fields and tree farms. The Georgia Seed Development rises out of the flat landscape at a monumental scale. Georgia Seed Development produces seeds and plant stock for most agricultural products in Georgia, including peanuts. This begins the agricultural progression, followed by the University of Georgia Agricultural Research station and several agricultural fields which create a silhouette of the peanut processing industry's silos and warehouses. Visitors on Main Street in Plains can then purchase peanuts and peanut products at locally-owned businesses. Within a few miles, visitors are able to experience the peanut from a seed to the shelf. This industry plays an important role in Plains' story relating both to the town's history and Jimmy Carter's story. Agri-tourism appeals to all visitors. Plains' peanut industry can be a key component for enhanced tour experiences for visitors.

*Current signs*

## Entry Sign

Removing the faded signs and the DOT signs at the city limits in favor of a new, larger sign keyed to a new graphic identity program for Sumter County would serve as an attractive welcome. Consider relocating the recently-installed brown entry sign to another visible corridor, or perhaps to the Plains Welcome Center

*Proposed entry sign*

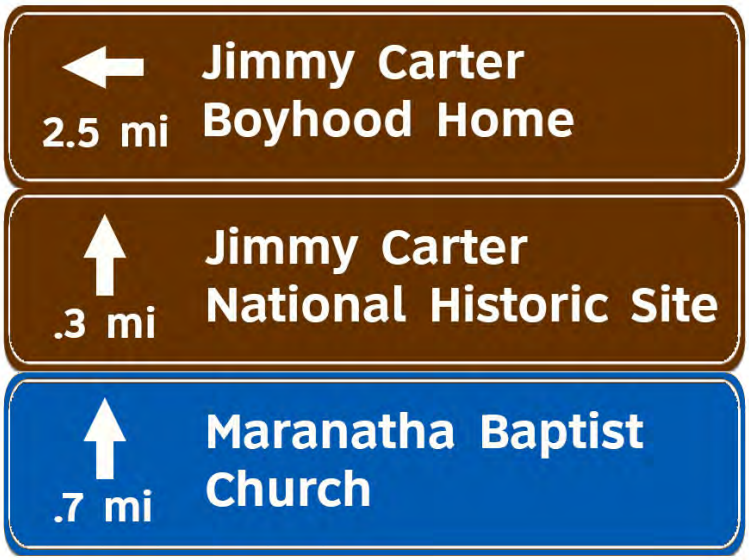
*VDOT criteria for TOD participation by local businesses is available here: www.virginiadot.org/programs/resources/IDSP-CTBFinalCriteria6-16-05.pdf*

## Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODS)

Carter-related sites are not contiguous and demand clear and concise information and wayfinding tools to help visitors move from site to site. Tourist Oriented Directional Signs (TODs) are used along roads that do not have limited access, such as most primary and secondary highways, to guide motorists to businesses, services, recreation and other facilities nearby. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has developed TOD standards as part of a larger integrated sign design program for its roadways.

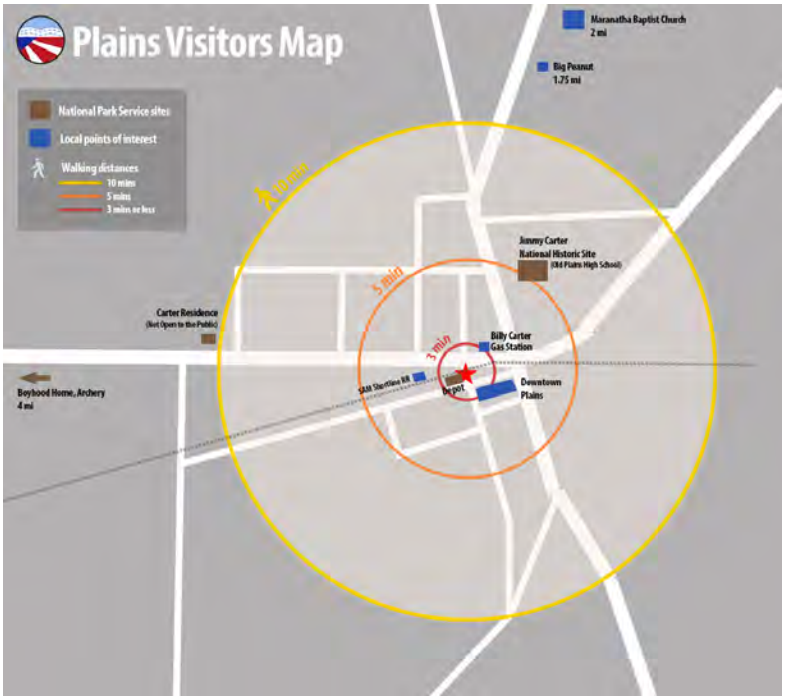
The Georgia DOT does not have the sophisticated program that is mandatory in Virginia. However, lessons can be learned at the local level from what Virginia has implemented at the state level.

Brown TOD signs could be reserved for historic sites and blue for visitor amenities, such as restaurants and lodging. A consistent format allows for grouping of multiple destinations on one post. This solution should be used throughout Sumter County, but would be especially useful in Plains, Andersonville and on Hwy. 19 approaching Americus, where a plethora of markers has led to an over-signing of the highway, resulting in sign clutter and confusion.



## SAM Shortline Railroad Stop

The SAM Shortline Railroad stop, located in a city park just west of downtown, brings visitors to town who must rely on walking to destinations. When exiting the train, a table-top version of the National Park Service map of Carter-related sites helps to orient visitors, but does not provide walking distances between sites, nor any information on other local amenities, such as shopping, lodging, and restaurants. A comprehensive map with estimated walking distances to attractions should be installed at the train platform.

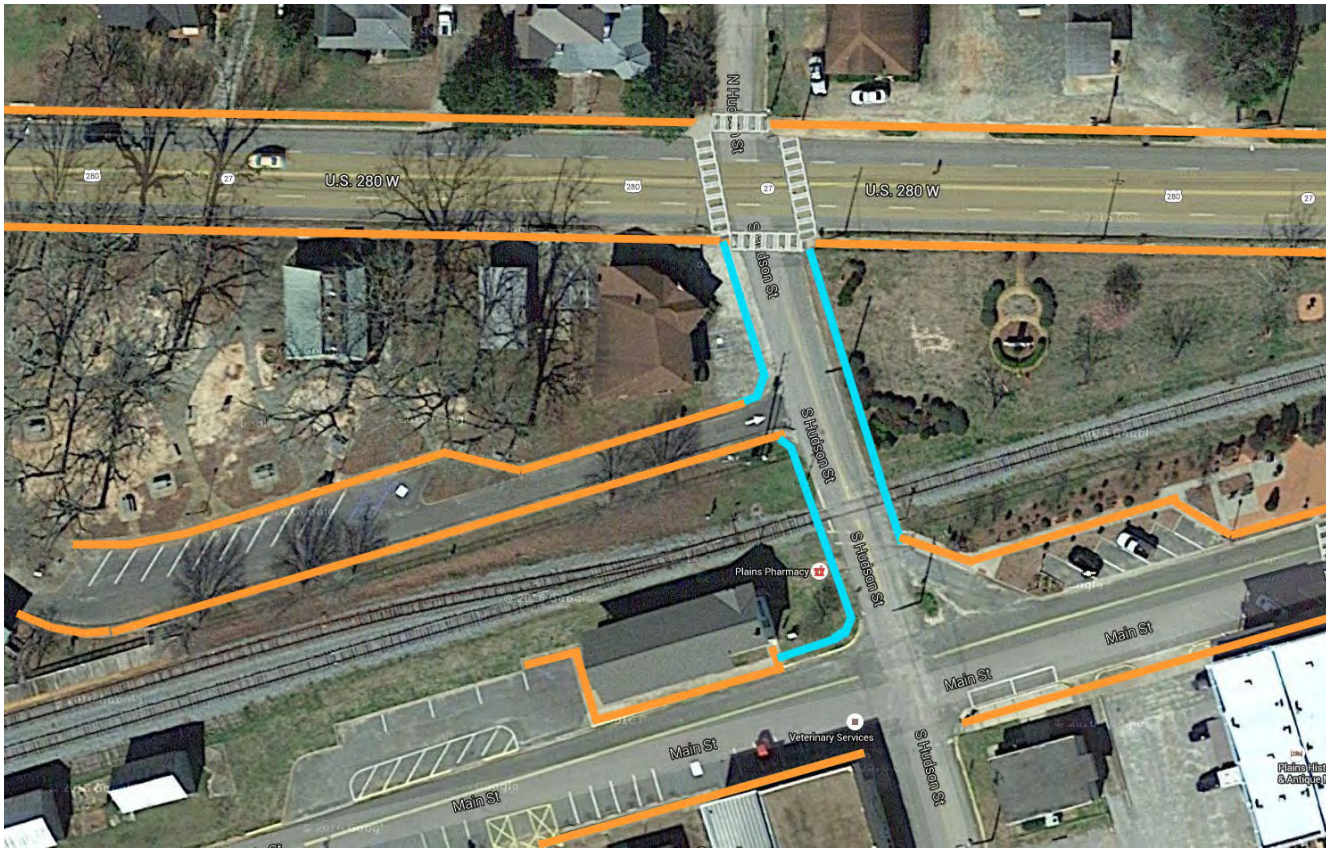



*Consider replacing the SAM Shortline kiosk with a new walking map of Plains. Incorporate SAM Shortline materials as needed*

*Depot shown marked with recognizable NPS sign*

## Historic Train Depot

The adjacent historic train depot, located just on the other side of the tracks, is owned by the National Park Service, and is a part of the National Historic Site as a campaign museum. It would make an ideal information center for Plains, allowing visitors to orient themselves, receive a National Park Service map and tourism information in addition to its museum functions. A comprehensive tourism brochure would be ideal, especially if the Depot could not be staffed full-time. The depot should be clearly marked with recognizable National Park Service sign, but any new sign added amongst the historic campaign headquarters signs should be minimal.



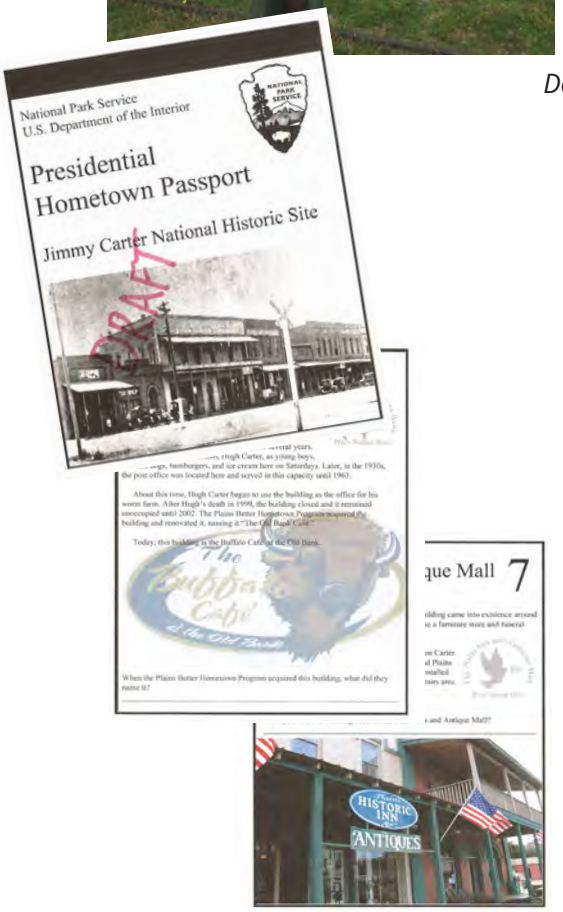

*Blue lines indicate lack of sidewalks on Hudson St.*

## Sidewalks and Crosswalks

Complete the existing network of sidewalks downtown by extending the sidewalk on both sides of Hudson St. Crosswalks at both the Hudson St. and Bond St. intersections would accommodate visitors forced to walk across Hwy. 280 to reach the visitor center at Plains High School. Work with GDOT to find a solution that increases pedestrian safety but has a minimal impact on the rural character of Plains, such as painted crosswalks.

*Proposed painted crosswalks at Hwy. 280 and Bond St.*

*Deteriorating signs advertise a self-guided tour that is no longer available*




## Self-guided Tours

Several signs advertise a defunct Plains Historical Preservation Trust tour of homes. These should be removed until a new tour can be developed in conjunction with the National Park Service or others who can update and maintain a tour program.

The National Park Service has recently produced a booklet entitled Presidential Hometown Passport for school-aged children visiting Plains. This booklet is a great opportunity for children to interact with the story of Jimmy Carter, as the intent is to visit each site and collect stamps with a prize for completion. The information is in draft form, but it a good example of a blended publication of NPS-managed and private-sector historic sites.

## Big Peanut

The "Big Peanut" is a famous roadside attraction on the way to Maranatha Baptist Church, where Jimmy Carter is a member and frequent Sunday School teacher. Located at a gas station, the sculpture is a humorous sidebar to a solemn destination, but quite popular with visitors. There have been discussions of moving the Big Peanut to the Plains Welcome Center, but keep in mind how it has been used as a wayfinding tool for decades. Depending on its age, it may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and moving it could impact its integrity.

## Koinonia Farm

Koinonia Farm was established in 1942 by two white Baptist ministers and their wives as an intentional, Christian community that promoted pacifism, racial equality and a rural farming existence (1). The farm struggled from the beginning to sustain itself financially as a farming enterprise, due to boycotts and violence from those who were against the idea of racial conciliation and equality. In 1969, the farm prepared to close when Millard Fuller joined Koinonia and began a program of building over 200 low-cost, no-interest partnership houses. This initiative became the basis for Fuller's Habitat for Humanity in 1976, which since then has helped more 6.8 million people through providing decent shelter. (2)

Koinonia farm returned to farming in 2008, focused on grass-fed beef, pecans, natural produce and fair-trade products for retail business. Still committed to peacebuilding, racial equality and Christian living, Koinonia farm also hosts courses, retreats and summer camps. (3) However, it is hard to locate Koinonia Farm because its driveway is on a curve and its entry sign is on the opposite side of the road from the driveway. A "confidence marker" posted within a ½ mile of the entrance can increase and improve the visitor experience to Koinonia Farm.

[1] *http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/koinonia-farm, accessed June 7, 2016*

[2] *http://www.habitat.org/how/historytext.aspx, accessed June 7, 2016*

[3] *https://www.koinoniafarm.org/*

### THE ARRIVAL SIGN

The arrival sign for Koinonia Farm is appropriately scaled, but is confusing because it is located on the opposite side of the road from the entrance. Relocating the sign will make the entrance more obvious.

Leslie

Desoto

LAKESHORE
Grill
229-853-2275
Lake Blackshear

# Zone 3: Leslie, Desoto and Lake Blackshear

Leslie is a small town (pop. 500) in the southeast corner of Sumter County, approximately twelve miles from Americus. It is known as the home of the Georgia Rural Telephone Museum – a large, private collection of telephone-related memorabilia as well as antique cars and other items in a 1920s cotton warehouse.

Along with daily agricultural-related operations, Leslie hosts a well-known antique festival each year. Leslie transitions seamlessly to the west into the tiny town of Desoto (pop. 187) along Hwy. 280. Pecan groves line the seven miles between Desoto and Lake Blackshear, which most locals refer to as "the river".

*Green GDOT signs announce "Unincorporated Cobb", on one of the most beautiful corridors in Sumter County, where pecan trees frame the drive to Lake Blackshear on Hwy. 280. Cobb is home to the largest pecan orchard in the world. Sumter County can capitalize on agri-tourism related to the pecan industry, just as peanuts have become associated with Plains.*

## Public comments:

**What we heard during the charrette**

### POSITIVE

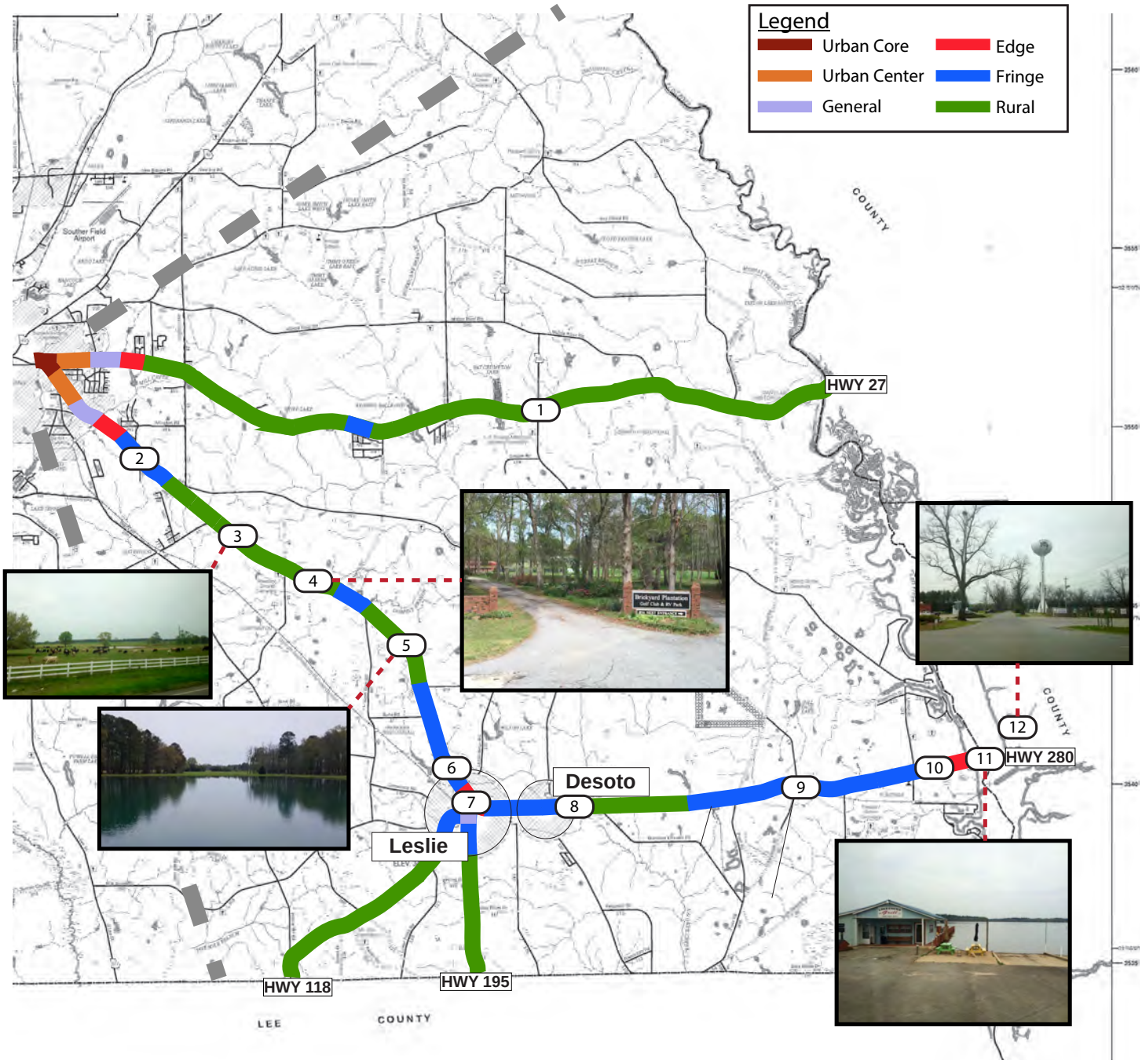
Lake Blackshear and ponds.
Marina.
Booger Bottom.
Highway to Interstate.
Dogwood trees.
Recreation.
Scenic pecan orchards.
Cemetery.
Historic farms.
Historic communities.
Potential in Leslie, but dilapidating.
Georgia Rural Telephone Museum.
Leslie swimming pool.
Sam Shortline Railway.
Dirt roads.

### NEGATIVE

Dirt roads.
Speed traps.
Sign to Leslie/Desoto City Hall is not obvious.
Under-developed communities.
Downtown Desoto.

## Corridor Transect Map

Zone 3: Leslie and Desoto




### SIGNIFICANT POINTS:

1. Leslie directional sign needed at intersection.
2. Need sign directing people to Georgia Rural Telephone Museum.
3. Rural views (photo opp).
4. Brickyard Golf Course and RV Park location is attractive.
5. Water views and photo opp location.
6. New entry sign for Leslie needed.
7. Need new Georgia Rural Telephone Museum sign in Downtown.
8. Need new entry sign for Desoto.
9. Need Lake Blackshear confidence marker.
10. Need Lake Blackshear entry sign.
11. Marina area at Lake Blackshear has a lot of commercial potential.
12. Crisp Co. takes better advantage of the lake industry + tourism through signs.

# Analysis

Hwy. 280 predictably transitions from "edge" development to "fringe" from Americus to Leslie. It then becomes very rural, the agricultural landscape interrupted only once by the Brickyard Golf Course and RV Park, which has an attractive entrance, clear signs and beautiful views.

The approach into Leslie is indicated by large-acreage residences transitioning to clustered agricultural buildings. A city limits sign is installed ¾ of a mile before the turn to town at Bailey St, but the turn itself is obscured by sign clutter and a business's display of "handi-houses" at the roadside. Therefore travelers are likely continue on Hwy. 280 and miss the direct approach into town and the telephone museum.

## Transect Map

Zone 3: Leslie and Desoto

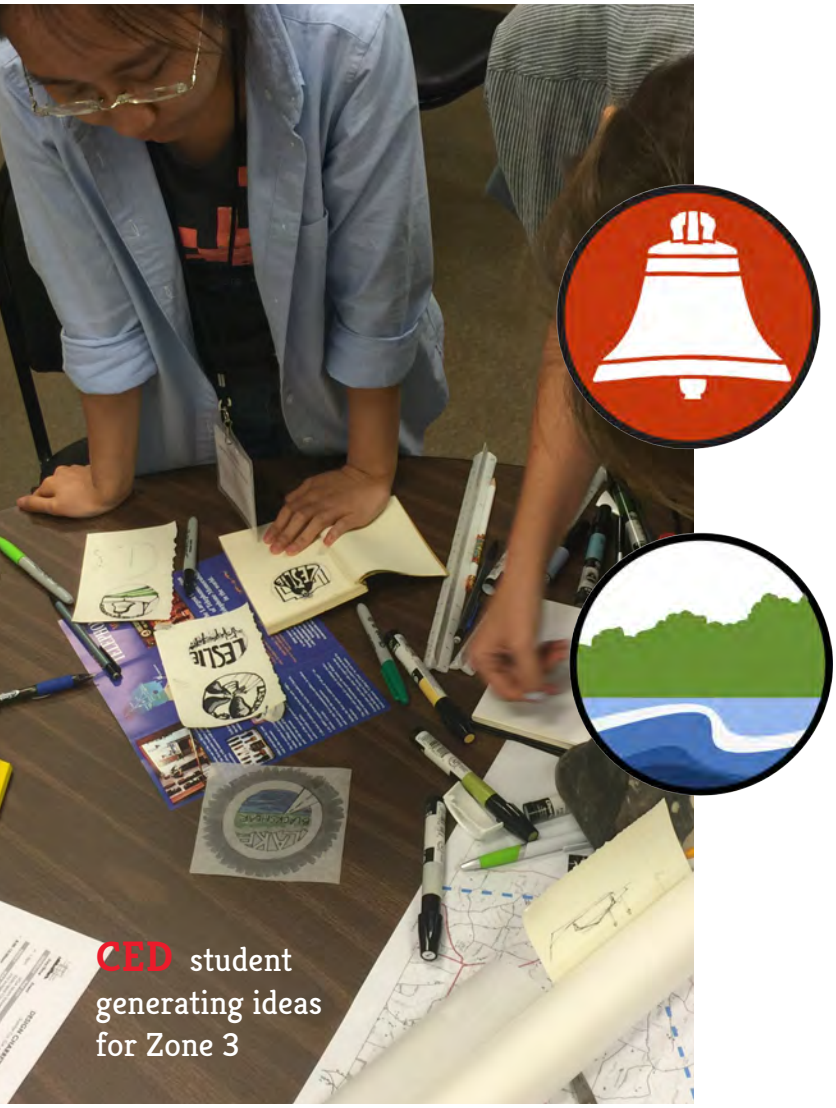
**Legend**

- Urban Core
- Urban Center
- General
- Edge
- Fringe
- Rural

**SIGNIFICANT POINTS:**

1. Rural Telephone museum is an asset that should be used to represent Leslie.
2. Entry sign to Leslie is too small and hidden.
3. Downtown has an array of interesting architecture.
4. Beautiful cemetery but lacking signs and an edge.
5. Leslie and Desoto have water towers that make for great arrival signs.
6. Lots of dilapidated buildings in Desoto - an eyesore, but opportunity for investment.

CED student generating ideas for Zone 3



CED student generating ideas for Zone 3

## Graphic Identity

The Georgia Rural Telephone Museum is a well-known asset for Leslie, which the city would be wise to capitalize on as its brand. The museum has several old bells in its collection – harkening back to the well-recognized logo of the Southern Bell Telephone & Telegraph Company. Therefore, it is fitting that the icon associated with Leslie be a bell. Gateway signs should follow the rural entry sign standards suggested by the new graphic identity for the county. The stylized bell logo should be repeated for other civic locations, such as city hall and parks.

A new logo for Lake Blackshear represents the natural beauty of the water's edge, and its branding is a first step towards advertising the resources that are there and capitalizing on them. A logo for Desoto should be developed after local revitalization efforts create a visitor experience.

Welcome to
Leslie
Home of the Georgia Rural Telephone Museum

Welcome to
Lake Blackshear

*Current*

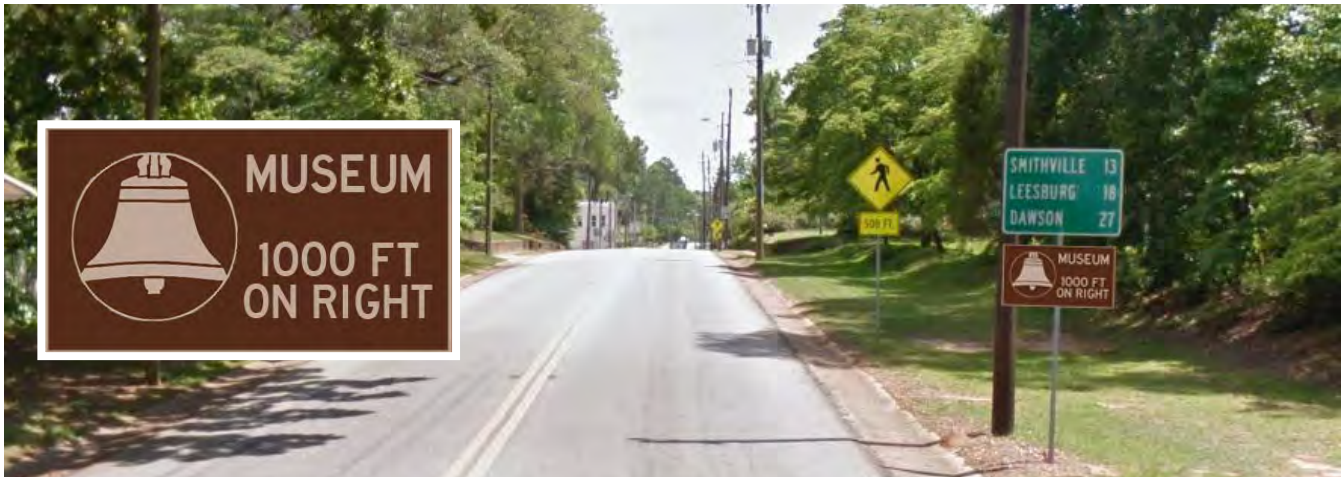
ZONE 3: LESLIE

# Recommendations

## Entry Sign

The current entry sign for Leslie, located in the fork in the road between Hwy. 280 and Bailey St., is too small to be visible and has become crowded by plantings on either side. A larger sign incorporating the bell logo is shown in this same location with increased visibility. An arrow pointing right would further indicate that the central business district is accessed off Hwy. 280.

*Proposed Entry sign*




*Proposed*

## Confidence Marker

After turning onto Bailey St., a simple confidence marker would give travelers an estimate of when they will reach the Georgia Rural Telephone Museum, arguably the primary destination in Leslie.

*The billboard outside of the Georgia Rural Telephone Museum has begun to discolor in the sunlight.*

*Existing*

## Temporary signs

The Dogwood Antique Festival in March is advertised with temporary signs located throughout town. Additionally, signs for the Civic Center, which hosts the festival, and other key public buildings should be considered.

*Proposed*

## Letterboard for News and Events

The town letterboard for news and events serves as a positive small town asset, but its deterioration warrants an updated sign. The same letterboard design could be applied to a wooden sign fashioned after the design for the entry to town.

## Water towers

Water towers can be seen from a far distance and traditionally showcase the name of the town they serve. Leslie and Desoto's water tower lettering should be maintained, as they serve as wayfinding tools.

## Eyesores

Downtown has two vacant buildings gutted by fire. One, on a prominent corner of downtown, has aging caution tape that presents a negative image for the city. Steps to address downtown buildings should include stabilization of any part of a building actively deteriorating or exposed to rain and water

*See Preservation Brief No. 31 - Mothballing Historic Buildings, National Park Service. https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/31-mothballing.htm*

ZONE 3: DESOTO

# Recommendations

Desoto's declining condition offers limited opportunities for visitors. However, Sassy A's Restaurant is an exception and is a good role model for future investment. A civic effort to clean up the park across from the restaurant would perpetuate positive improvements.

The historic downtown needs a local champion to ensure revitalization. Desoto can take lessons from other towns in Georgia that have used their downtowns as film locations to encourage building stabilization and improvements.

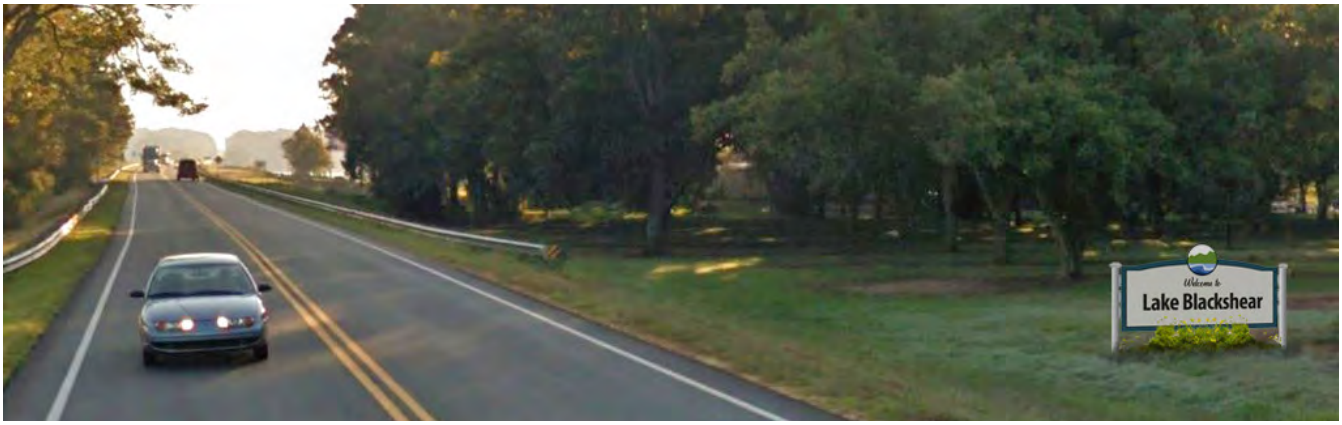
# Recommendations

Lake Blackshear is a 20-mile lake marking the southeastern corner of Sumter County, created by the damming of the Flint River in 1930. Crisp County has Veterans State Park and the Lake Blackshear Resort and Golf Club on the opposite shore, but Sumter County has little development to capitalize on the tourism opportunities at the water.

Hwy. 27 has adequate signs for Andersonville and Plains on the approach to Sumter County from the east, but no signs for the Rural Telephone Museum in Leslie. Other GDOT signs direct travelers to Desoto via Hwy. 195 but not to Leslie, which is the larger draw. Replacing the GDOT signs with tourist-oriented signs will comprehensively address wayfinding to the county's smaller, equally interesting destinations.

## Take advantage of current assets

A large boat-shaped building, "sunk" into the ground is unique and marks the arrival to the lake on Highway 280. However, it visually obstructs other attractions – the marina, a boat launch, a restaurant, and a ski shop. The property should be improved visually in the short term. Future use for the building can either contribute or distract from Sumter's identity.




New signs marking the entry to Lake Blackshear should follow the county's graphic identity program.

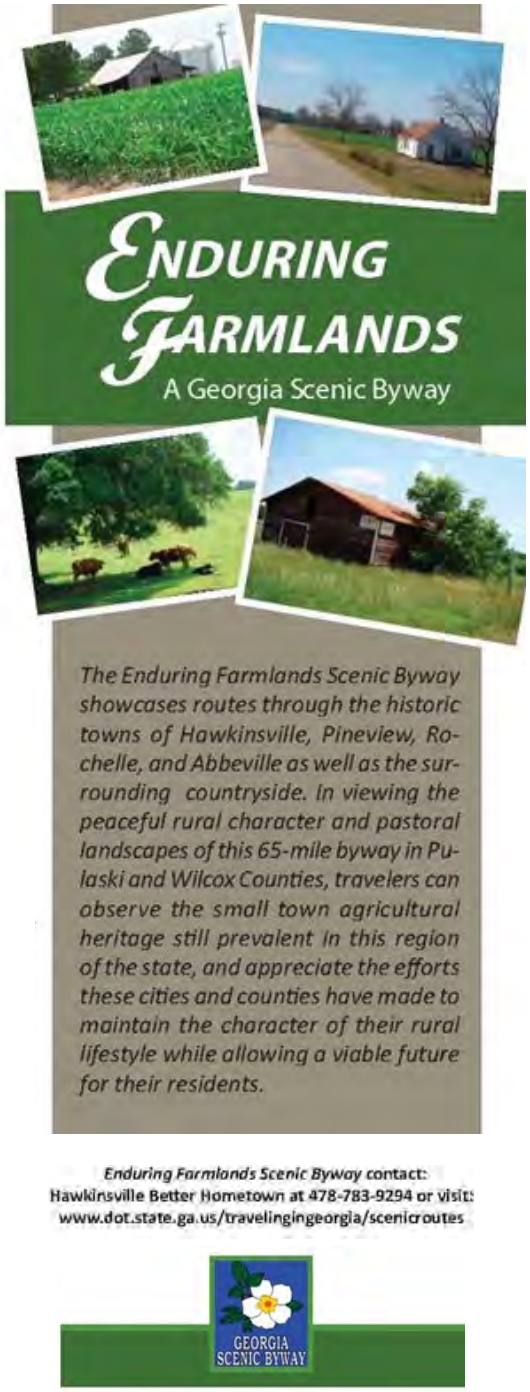
# Best Practices for Corridor Enhancement and Wayfinding

## Scenic Byways

A Scenic Byway is a road having one or more of six "intrinsic qualities": archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic. The National Scenic Byways Program (NSBP) was established by Congress in 1991 as a way to protect the nation's scenic, but less-traveled roads and as a way to promote tourism and economic development. The program is run by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In the state of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) administers the Georgia Scenic Byway program. The state program is run similar to the national program, with the same intrinsic values being listed as criteria for selection. The Georgia Scenic Byways Program offers a step-by-step designation guide that helps those seeking designation through the process.
In addition to meeting at least one of the six intrinsic qualities, the corridor must also have regional significance and strong community support. A Corridor Management Plan (CMP) must be developed in concert with the GDOT, Regional Planning Commissions and other local agencies, and is an opportunity for regional tourism partnerships to connect rural communities and counties with resources. CMPs include view-shed management, inventories of assets, and a monitoring plan, and address litter and illegal dumping issues. Developing a work program – short and long-term action items – as part of a CMP provides a good planning structure for a county-wide coalition dedicated to heritage tourism. Sumter County should pursue a Scenic Byways designation, as the roadways clearly exhibit scenic, cultural, and historic qualities, and likely archaeological as well. Because Sumter County includes the home of President Jimmy Carter (a National Park Service site) and the town of Andersonville (adjacent to another National Historic Site), it is reasonable to assume the area would be a good candidate for a national designation. Pursuing a scenic byway designation will allow Sumter County to come together and pull all of the resources in the various communities into a streamlined effort to maximize their potential, as is desired with the request for a wayfinding plan and graphic identity. Having a Scenic Byway designation could heighten efforts to reduce sign clutter and improve wayfinding signs, as well as attract tourists and land a worthy recognition of inherent beauty. Georgia currently has one nationally designated byway – Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway – and fifteen state designated scenic byways.

Information on the byways and pursuing designation is available at www.dot.ga.gov/DS/Travel/Scenic

Case Study

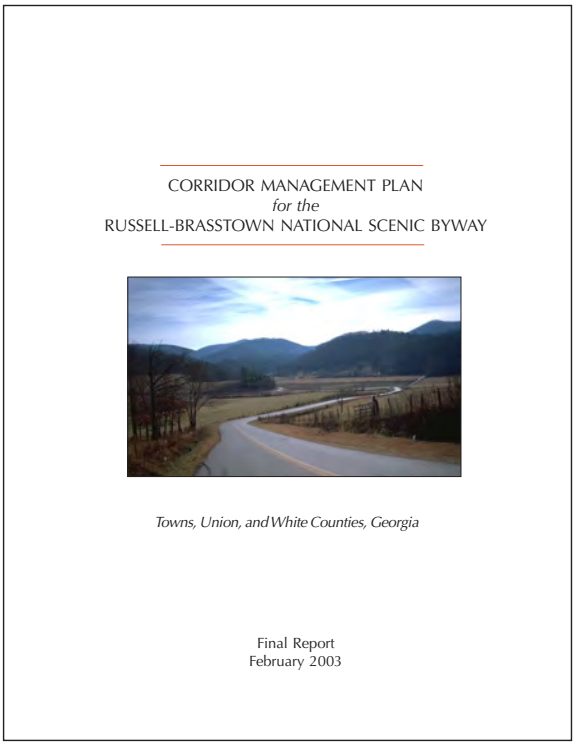



Enduring Farmlands Scenic Byway
Corridor Management Plan
http://www.dot.ga.gov/DriveSmart/Travel/Documents/enduring_farmlands_cmp.pdf

# Enduring Farmlands Scenic Byway – Pulaski and Wilcox County, Georgia

Pulaski and Wilcox County's "Enduring Farmlands" was designated as a Georgia Scenic Byway in 2010. The byway runs through Hawkinsville, Pineview, Rochelle, and Abbeville for 65 miles whereby travelers can view the small town agricultural heritage that is still around today. In pursuing the designation, the applicants highlighted the area's scenic qualities, historic qualities, cultural qualities, archaeological qualities and recreational qualities. Several highways are lined with pecan groves, horse and cattle pastures, and agricultural fields that allow travelers to view the active farming of corn, cotton, peanuts, and soybeans, as well as farmsteads and vernacular architecture. Two farms in Wilcox County are recognized by Georgia's Centennial Farm Program. The Hawkinsville Harness Horse Facility is a unique regional draw, and there is a festival and multiple events in each community. Pulaski and Wilcox counties are in historically Creek Indian territory and the entire area has archaeological potential, specifically along the Ocmulgee River. Historic resources include the Hawkinsville Commercial and Industrial Historic District, the Rochelle National Register Historic District, and many vernacular historic residential, agricultural, and religious structures.
The transportation goals addressed in the plan are to maintain the rural character of roadways, to promote and maintain roadway safety, to encourage and promote multi-modal usage (bike, pedestrian, equestrian), and to promote and enforce litter and debris control along the byway. Other goals included awareness and recognition of agricultural heritage, increase visitation, preserve and protect the natural, cultural, and historic resources along the byway, and to utilize the byway as a tourism attractor.

## Case Study



CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN
*for the*
RUSSELL-BRASSTOWN NATIONAL SCENIC BYWAY

*Towns, Union, and White Counties, Georgia*

Final Report
February 2003

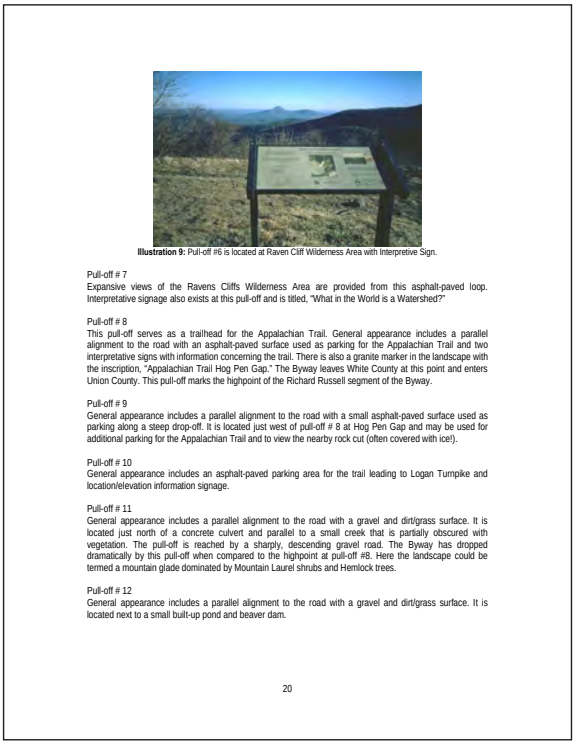


**Illustration 9:** Pull-off #6 is located at Raven Cliff Wilderness Area with Interpretive Sign.

Pull-off # 7
Expansive views of the Ravens Cliffs Wilderness Area are provided from this asphalt-paved loop. Interpretative signage also exists at this pull-off and is titled, "What in the World is a Watershed?"

Pull-off # 8
This pull-off serves as a trailhead for the Appalachian Trail. General appearance includes a parallel alignment to the road with an asphalt-paved surface used as parking for the Appalachian Trail and two interpretative signs with information concerning the trail. There is also a granite marker in the landscape with the inscription, "Appalachian Trail Hog Pen Gap." The Byway leaves White County at this point and enters Union County. This pull-off marks the highpoint of the Richard Russell segment of the Byway.

Pull-off # 9
General appearance includes a parallel alignment to the road with a small asphalt-paved surface used as parking along a steep drop-off. It is located just west of pull-off # 8 at Hog Pen Gap and may be used for additional parking for the Appalachian Trail and to view the nearby rock cut (often covered with ice!).

Pull-off # 10
General appearance includes an asphalt-paved parking area for the trail leading to Logan Turnpike and location/elevation information signage.

Pull-off # 11
General appearance includes a parallel alignment to the road with a gravel and dirt/grass surface. It is located just north of a concrete culvert and parallel to a small creek that is partially obscured with vegetation. The pull-off is reached by a sharply, descending gravel road. The Byway has dropped dramatically by this pull-off when compared to the highpoint at pull-off #8. Here the landscape could be termed a mountain glade dominated by Mountain Laurel shrubs and Hemlock trees.

Pull-off # 12
General appearance includes a parallel alignment to the road with a gravel and dirt/grass surface. It is located next to a small built-up pond and beaver dam.

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Russell-Brasstown National Scenic Byway
Corridor Management Plan
http://www.dot.ga.gov/DriveSmart/Travel/Documents/russell_brasstown_cmp.pdf

# The Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway – White, Towns and Union County, GA

The Russell-Brasstown Scenic Byway is currently the only state byway with national recognition. Much of Russell-Brasstown's intrinsic qualities came from recreational, historic and archaeological, cultural, and scenic attractions. The Byway is 40.6 miles, the majority within the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. It runs through the Appalachian Trail and several state parks and includes Brasstown Bald, the highest natural point in the state of Georgia. Multiple museums and historic sites, festivals and events exist in each of the counties and towns along the byway, including the Georgia Mountain Fair in Hiawassee and Oktoberfest in Helen. The Unicoi Turnpike was established in early 1800s and follows an ancient Indian trail that was part of the Trail of Tears. Lastly, as anyone who has been to the north Georgia mountains knows, the viewsheds along the curving mountain roads are breathtaking. The goals for the corridor were to expand opportunities for people to experience the natural and cultural history of the region; to support projects and initiatives to protect livability and expand economic activity through the promotion of nature and culture; and to promote a safe and pleasant experience for all users of the byway. A large portion of the plan focuses on the recreational and scenic qualities of the area, with efforts focused on parking and pull-off areas along the route.

# INSTAGRAM

## Using Instagram to Market Sumter County

By exploring Sumter County's major roadways and multiple historic sites and regional attractions, the students were able to play the role of tourist and were charged with finding what was interesting, beautiful, and engaging as well as what was confusing, hard to find, or completely missed. The team shared their experiences on Instagram with the hashtag #sumtercountyga, which was only sparsely populated with pictures at the time. Instagram proved to be a good fit for a new campaign to celebrate all the qualities of the county, whether beautiful, quirky, patriotic, rural, small town, famous, or solemn.

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SUMTER
georgia

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# Conclusion

Wayfinding should be a carefully developed and fully integrated system. It does not help when one partner breaks away from the system and "does their own thing." Therefore, many localities create a carrot and stick strategy for bringing business owners and multiple municipalities into sync. The creation of a small incentive program for assisting businesses to redesign and update their signs to accommodate the new wayfinding principles should operate hand-in-hand with a fully enforced and consistently applied system of laws, codes and ordinances when incentives alone will not work.

**A TYPICAL FRAMEWORK** for implementing a successful system for signs and information might follow these simple steps. This charrette assessment begins that process and allows you to leap ahead of other communities who may still be reluctant to recognize that there is a problem at all.

## FIRST STEPS

1. Form a steering committee /wayfinding champion.
2. Identify a project director.
3. Define the parameters of the projects.
4. Establish project boundaries.
5. Identify key stakeholders for engagement in the process.
6. Engage a design consultant.
7. Kick-off project with consultants and stakeholders.

## STRATEGIES for that committee must include these steps:

1. Engage with DOT at the very beginning.
2. Involve stakeholders via workshops and presentations.
3. Establish an understanding that all decisions are made in the best interest of the project.
4. Benchmark comparable projects.
5. Design options decisions.
6. Engage a design consultant.
7. Kick-off project with consultants and stakeholders.

## FUNCTIONAL considerations:

1. Location of sign(s).
2. Legibility / Messaging.
3. Engineering requirements.
4. Project schedule.
5. Implementation.
6. Flexibility.
7. Maintenance & Management.
8. Sustainability of the system.

shop in SUMTER
MADE IN SUMTER
shop in SUMTER

PLAINS
TRADING POST
OPEN
OPEN
OPEN
CARTER
DISCOUNT
BOOKS
POLITICAL
BUTTONS
SALE
PLAINS
GA.

While Sumter County would ultimately benefit from the type of professional level analysis and synthesis that an environmental graphic firm would provide, it is our hope that the charrette will introduce the benefits of a cohesive identity and suggestions for unified graphics and corridor improvements.

As one student said, “Our goal was not only to help people find what they’re looking for; but to help people find what they don’t know is there.”

## SUMTER COUNTY CHARRETTE – STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANTS

### UGA ARCHWAY PARTNERSHIP

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary Alice Applegate | Sumter County Archway Partnership |
| Sharon Liggett | UGA Archway Partnership |

### SUMTER COUNTY

| | |
|---|---|
| Mary Beth Bass | One Sumter Economic Development Foundation |
| Barbara Grogan | Americus Sumter Payroll Development Authority / Chamber |
| Bill Twomey | Sumter County Board of Commissioners |

### ANDERSONVILLE

| | |
|---|---|
| Jenny Crisp | Andersonville Guild |
| Sandra T. Smith | Andersonville Trail Association |

### AMERICUS

| | |
|---|---|
| Barry Blount | Mayor, City of Americus |
| Beverly Butcher | Americus Sumter GIS |
| Josh Roth | Planning and Inspection, City of Americus |
| Steve Short | Americus Welcome Center / Americus-Sumter Tourism Council |
| Qaijuan Willis | Americus Main Street |

### PLAINS

| | |
|---|---|
| Kim C. Fuller | Friends of the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site |
| Boze Godwin | Mayor, City of Plains |
| Barbara Judy | Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, NPS |
| Ruth Sanders | Plains Better Hometown Program |
| Penny Smith | Georgia Visitor Information Center, Plains GA |

### HIGHER EDUCATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Su Ann Bird | South Georgia Technical College |
| Jason Collins | Georgia Southwestern State University |
| Dr. Charles Patterson | Interim President, Georgia Southwestern State University |
| Stephen Snyder | Georgia Southwestern State University |

### STATE AGENCIES

| | |
|---|---|
| Chance Baxley | Georgia Department of Transportation |
| Jo Childers | Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Region 8 |
| Gerald Mixon | River Valley Regional Commission |
| Patrick Weaver | Georgia Department of Transportation |
| Holly Winner | Georgia Department of Economic Development |

### CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES

| | |
|---|---|
| Dylan Colter | Citizen |
| Joni Woolf | Americus Times Recorder |
| Carey Wooten | UGA parent and dinner host! |
| Marshall Wooten | Lowe's |

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Archway Partnership
Center for Community Design and Preservation
College of Environment and Design