

DOWNTOWN DOUGLAS DESIGN CHARRETTE



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

Center for Community Design and Preservation
College of Environment and Design

SPRING 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN (CED)

<http://ced.uga.edu/>

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It has been our pleasure to work on this project. Thank you to our CED students for volunteering their time and talent to put their studies into practice and give back to Georgia communities. We are grateful to the City of Douglas and the Community Foundation of Central Georgia for sponsoring this service-learning opportunity.

Most importantly, thank you to the citizens of Douglas and over 20 stakeholders who took part in the community input session. Your feedback was invaluable to the charrette team’s work and will assist local leaders in prioritizing the preservation of the town’s historic character and future development. Thank you for your commitment to such an important civic planning process.

WHAT IS A CHARRETTE?

A design charrette is a multi-day workshop that brings designers and locals together to focus on a particular planning problem and arrive at a collaborative solution. The goal of this charrette is to revitalize the downtown area, enhance corridors that lead into the city, and showcase revitalization potential for appropriate new construction to attract investors.



PHASES OF THE CHARRETTE

PHASE I

The Center for Community Design and Preservation (CCDP) staff worked with a local representatives to identify stakeholders and user groups, set goals, develop base maps, research historical photographs, gather previous plans and studies, and plan for Phase II.

The staff worked to secure maps and data for the site, review and assess comprehensive plans and studies, and talked with locals about the history of Douglas.

Once CCDP set goals to address key issues, they reviewed case studies of successful cities that had faced similar issues to guide the initial brainstorming process. Staff also created marketing materials to be used throughout the charrette and advertise the charrette to UGA students.

PHASE II

A multi-day work session was held in the community to inform the charrette team of relevant issues, begin with visioning ideas for community improvement, and create community buy-in through direct participation in the design ideas.

The first workday began with a tour of Douglas given by Dave Hughes, head of the Douglas Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Following the tour, the charrette team engaged an invited group of community leaders in an interactive mapping exercise. Through this exercise, these community stakeholders identified “fixers” (areas of improvement), and “keepers” (areas of pride) within the DDA boundary.

Afterwards, the charrette team divided into groups to explore the distinctive design challenges and potential solutions.

PHASE III

The team continued working during the following two days, ending with a presentation of design solutions, case study research, and other thoughtful design recommendations.

This presentation was shared with stakeholders who attended the interactive mapping session. After the charrette, CCDP refined the presentation to share via YouTube accompanied by an online survey. Shared via Douglas’s social media channels, the public was invited to give feedback on these concepts, prioritize ideas, and provide additional insights.

This feedback will be included in a separate document for use by local leaders as planning decisions progress.

INTRODUCTION

The Douglas Downtown Development Authority (DDA) sought conceptual design solutions and consensus building to provide a vision for the future of their community. With a jurisdiction area that encompasses the entire 2.5-mile stretch of Downtown and includes commercial and residential areas, the DDA aimed to achieve Douglas's potential for the entire in-town community.

Despite building occupancy in Downtown being around 90% and investors pursuing second-story loft developments and entertainment venues, the city is facing several challenges, including disinvestment due to absentee ownership and neglect, lack of affordable housing options, and declining strip mall developments. To address these issues, additional focus is needed on revitalizing the downtown area, enhancing corridors that lead into the city, and showcasing revitalization potential for appropriate new construction to attract investors.

GOALS

The Center for Community Design and Preservation (CCDP) conducted a design charrette for the Douglas Downtown Development Authority to bring designers (CED students) and locals together to envision plans for the future.

The goals of this charrette were:

1. to help the community move forward in their decision-making by creating citizen buy-in and an illustrated vision of solutions that address Downtown revitalization, corridor enhancement, and housing opportunities, and
2. to give CED students the opportunity to apply their skills to a community project, work closely with a client, and learn participatory design techniques.



PROCESS

The Downtown Development Authority of Douglas requested assistance in creating a cohesive vision that addressed revitalization potential, corridor enhancements, and infill housing.

The weekend began with a tour of the downtown area and its commercial gateways followed by a community input session attended by 30 local stakeholders.

The students then facilitated a mapping analysis that asked locals what elements of downtown were worth keeping and which needed fixing. Also, residents were asked to imagine that they were returning to Douglas after 10 years and to describe what they hoped to see.

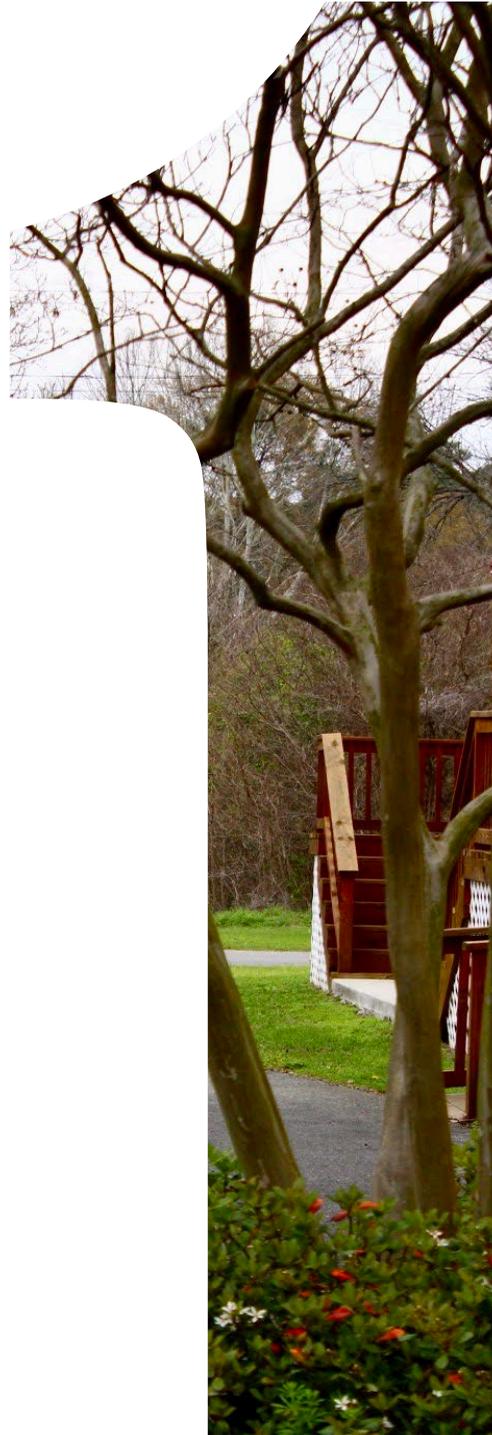
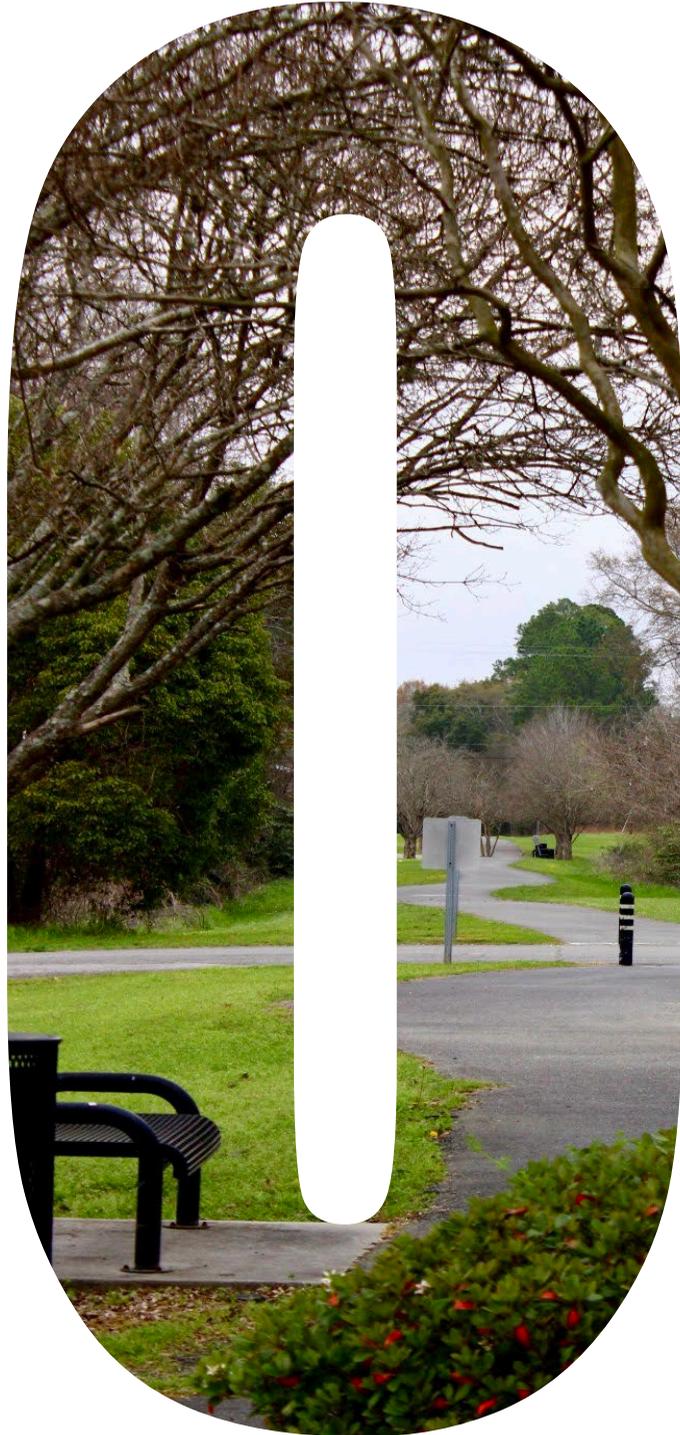


After the stakeholder feedback, the charrette team began to coalesce the information gathered into broad categories of need: Greenspace & Greenways, Entertainment & Placemaking, Streetscape & Circulation, Preservation & Housing, and a special focus on the Carver District.

CCDP Director and charrette facilitator Jennifer Lewis asked each student group to determine a handful of big ideas to be broken down into small wins achievable through strategies like “tactical urbanism”, which are short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions to catalyze long-term change.

Concepts included using vacant lots for gathering spaces, temporarily closing streets or parking spots to allow for outdoor seating and nightlife, incorporating container plantings to beautify the downtown, fostering an interest in upper-story living through tours, and prioritizing plaza seating over a few parking spaces.





GREEN TEAM

*Tommy Chambers, Alexis Eiche, Inghis Filbern,
Julia Rothermel, and Madison Smrz*

The following section focuses on vacant lots that have the potential for greenspace within the central downtown district. The team explored the Douglas Trail as a connecting artery and aimed to propose a vision for a community event space downtown that includes a park, parking deck, and apartment housing in the area.

ANALYSIS

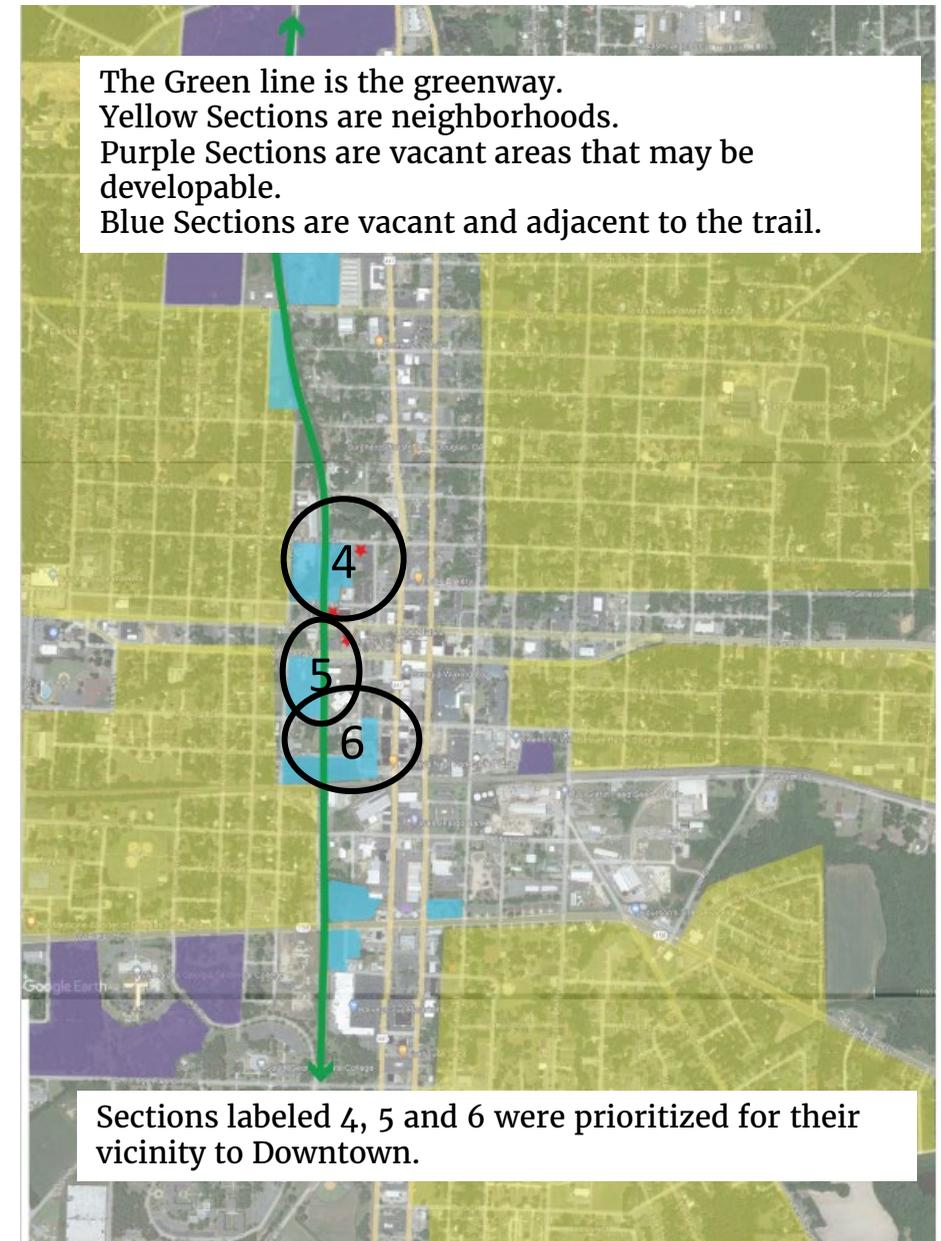
Green Team

We Heard:

Douglas lacks a central square, or community gathering place like many Downtowns have. Community members want to repurpose unused lots downtown, specifically along the Douglas Trail, into a place for events and socializing.

We Observed:

An analysis of vacant and underused parcels along the Douglas Trail revealed that certain areas have more potential for redevelopment than others. Some vacant sites are contaminated. Private landowners may not be willing to sell their land. But others could more easily be adaptable by adding plantings, shade trees, lighting, and parking to better utilize vacant spaces.



Douglas Trail Site Analysis

BIG IDEAS

Central Gathering Space

The block that includes the police station and a large vacant parcel (at right) may be ideal for redevelopment as a central gathering space. This block is already being discussed by local government leaders for a future use. It is centrally located in town and is bisected by the Douglas Trail. The team used this site to:

- Establish a central community gathering space with a lawn for entertainment
- Connect the trail to smaller pocket parks/parking lots
- Improve the Downtown experience



The Atlanta Beltline (left) is a big-city example that small towns can learn from for how to activate abandoned land for a new public use.

BIG IDEAS

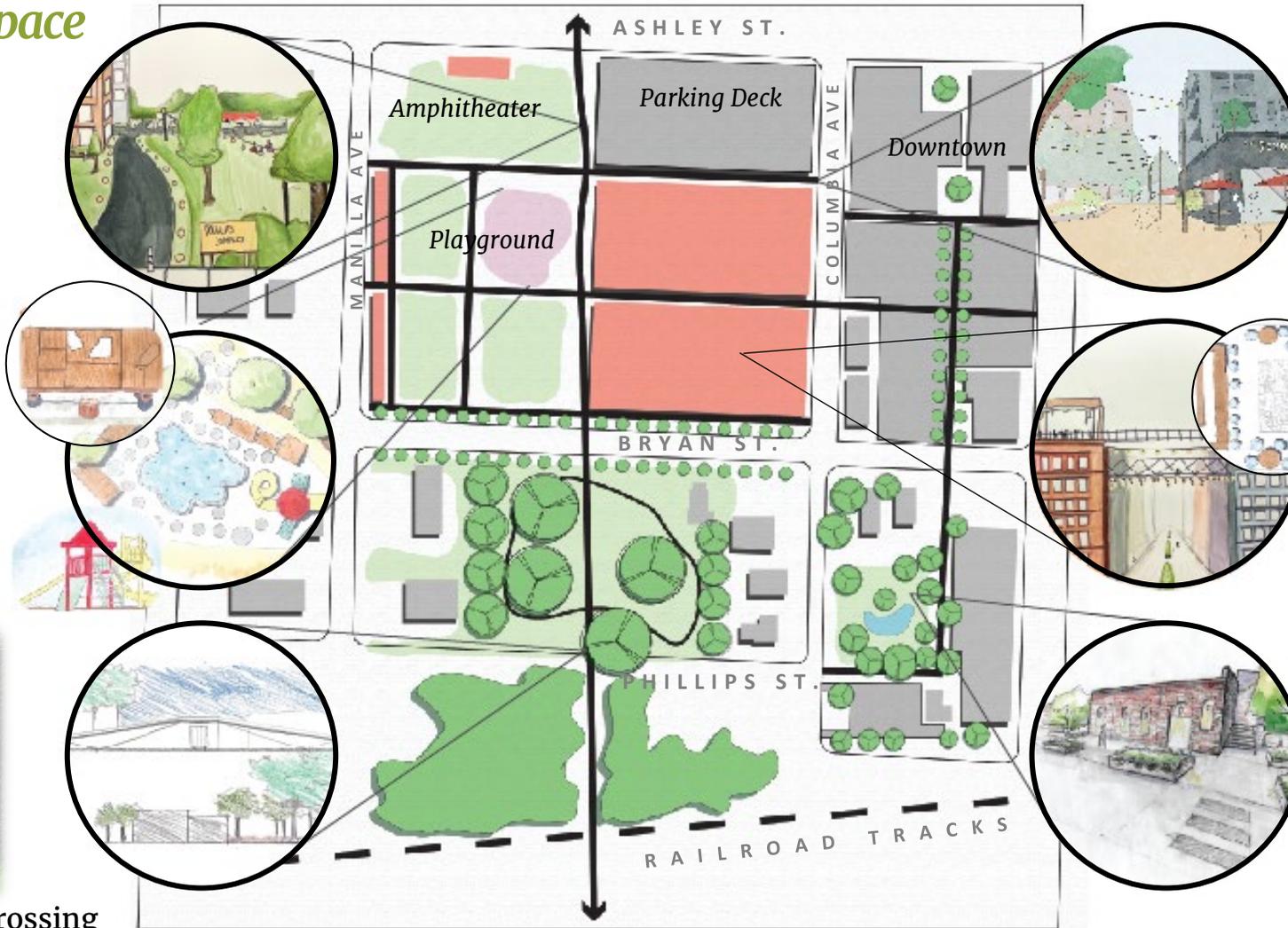
Central Gathering Space

An amphitheater is a great way to activate a space and bring people together. This can be programmed to have specific events or be a general area for people of all ages to gather and socialize.

A playground would add a much-needed children's amenity. The design of the playground is inspired by trains and railcars.



A bridge is suggested for crossing the railroad because of desire lines (above) observed across the railroad tracks.



The rendering here visualizes what the parking deck might look like when integrated into its Downtown storefront surroundings.

This rendering shows 5-on-1 style apartments to add housing downtown. Amenities have been added to the rooftop that can enhance nightlife in the Downtown.

This rendering shows seating and planting beds added within the Downtown.

Redevelopment of the Police Station block into a central gathering space with infill housing, small parking deck, and connections to town.

CASE STUDIES

Central Gathering Space

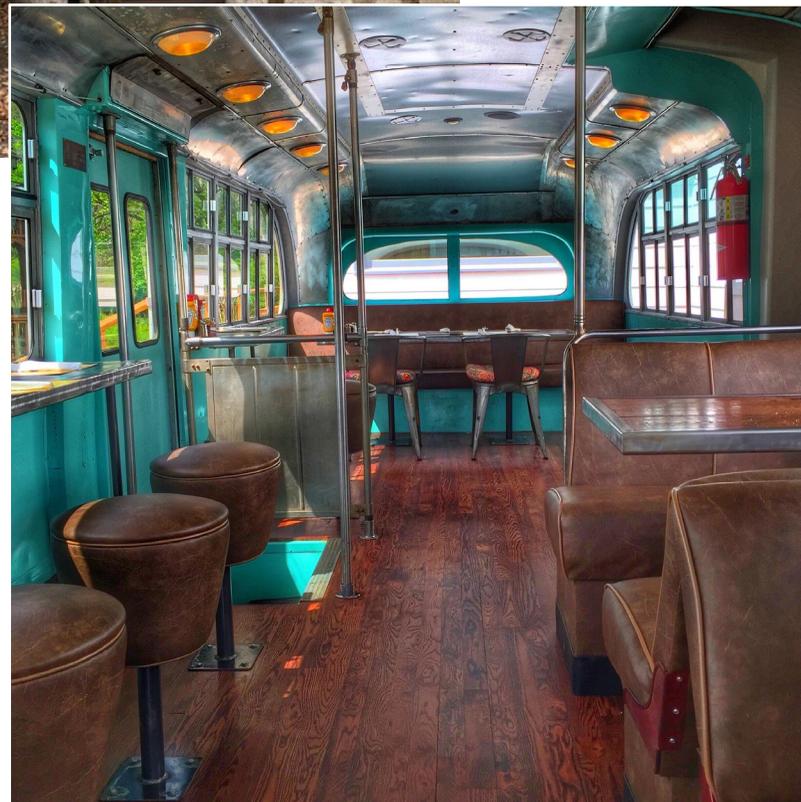
Ball Ground Burger Bus: *Ball Ground, GA*

This case study exemplifies how an old bus (or a train car, in Douglas's case) can be used as an amenity to provide food or another little shop.

It is an idea that we can foresee happening at the Museum Heritage Station where the red train car already stands with a deck and tables for visitors.



Photos of the exterior and interior of the bus.



CASE STUDIES

Central Gathering Space

Jazz in the Park

Cathedral Square Park: Milwaukee, WI



*Cathedral
Square Park,
Milwaukee WI*



This example was used to develop the central community gathering space. The gathering space includes open lawn space for seating, a semi-permanent stage/amphitheater structure, a children's play area, and space for food tents/trucks. While there are numerous outdoor amphitheaters, this one is distinct in that it includes a children's playground.

SMALL WINS

Central Gathering Space

To take these big ideas for a central gathering space and achieve short-term results, consider starting with a smaller site, like the area between the Boys and Girls Club and the Heritage Station Museum.

The benefits of this site as a central gathering space include:

- Mature tree canopy for shaded trails
- Open space for lawn play and events
- Located long the Douglas Trail
- Centrally located in Downtown
- Adjacent public parking lot
- Connects two existing assets that would benefit from enhancements



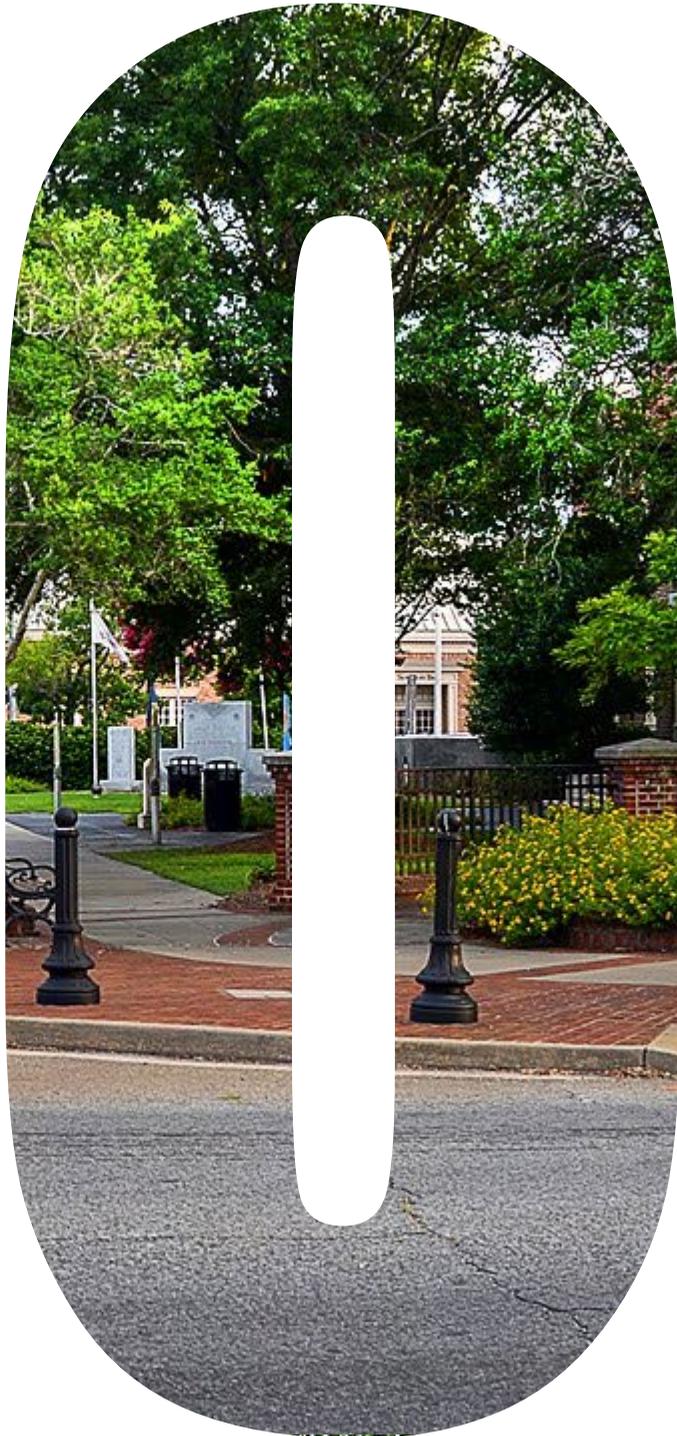
SMALL WINS

Central Gathering Space

This plan shows the proposed ideas for the lot between the Heritage Station Museum and the Boys and Girls Club. It includes connections that would allow the kids to utilize the greenway and adds basketball courts to provide an outdoor recreation opportunity.

The historic buildings near the Heritage Station Museum are shown as a restaurant or snack bar. The site includes added connectivity via trails that circulate within the greenspace and connect to Downtown.





GREENWAY ENHANCEMENT AND PLAZA DESIGN

Brock Corbin, Erin Ideker, and Treasa McHugh

This section explores improvements that are necessary to enhance the greenway. Additionally, the team will discuss the establishment of a downtown plaza that serves the Martin Centre and the businesses surrounding it.

ANALYSIS

Greenway Enhancement

We Heard:

The connections between the college, downtown, and residential areas are very valuable but are not promoted. The greenway is an amazing asset, but it is underutilized by the general public. Douglas lacks small parks and seating areas Downtown.

We Observed:

There are several small parcels Downtown that could be utilized as pocket parks. The greenway could be enhanced by adding:

- Additional plantings for shade
- Public restrooms
- Water stations
- Lighting
- Seating



Perspective rendering of Greenway Trail (Brock Corbin)

BIG IDEAS

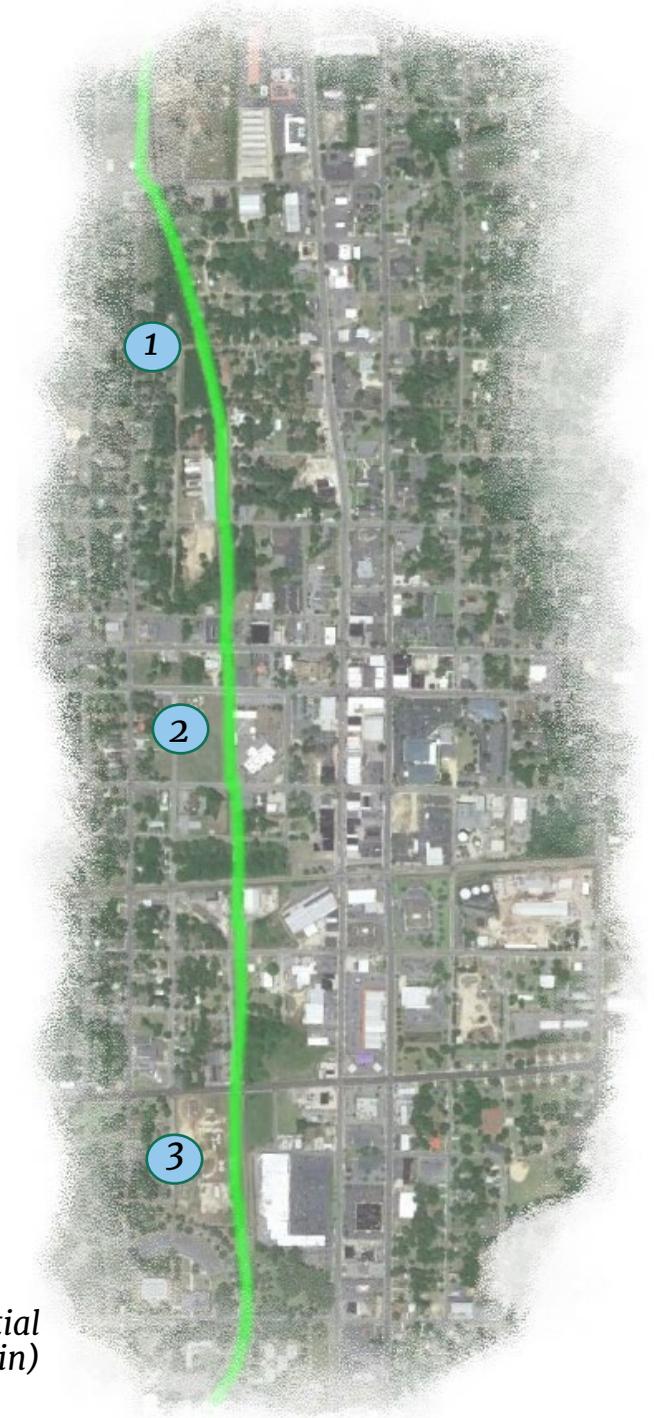
Greenway Enhancement | Bike Share Program

Conversations with stakeholders indicated that residents would be interested in a bike share program. This would allow for residents to use the greenway as a mode of transit from one area to another and would be quicker than walking.

The proposed bike rental program would have three stations connecting the north end of downtown (1), historic district (2), and the college (3).

This will increase interest for college students to travel to the downtown historic district from campus, which was frequently mentioned as a goal.

Diagram depicting potential rental bike hubs (Brock Corbin)



CASE STUDIES

Greenway Enhancement

“Book-a-Bike” program in Athens, Glouster, The Plains, Nelsonville, and Chauncey, Ohio:
Made possible by grant funds and local donations, this program allows library cardholders to borrow bicycles for free.

Bikeshare source: <https://betterbikeshare.org/2019/11/13/a-look-into-bike-share-in-rural-communities/>



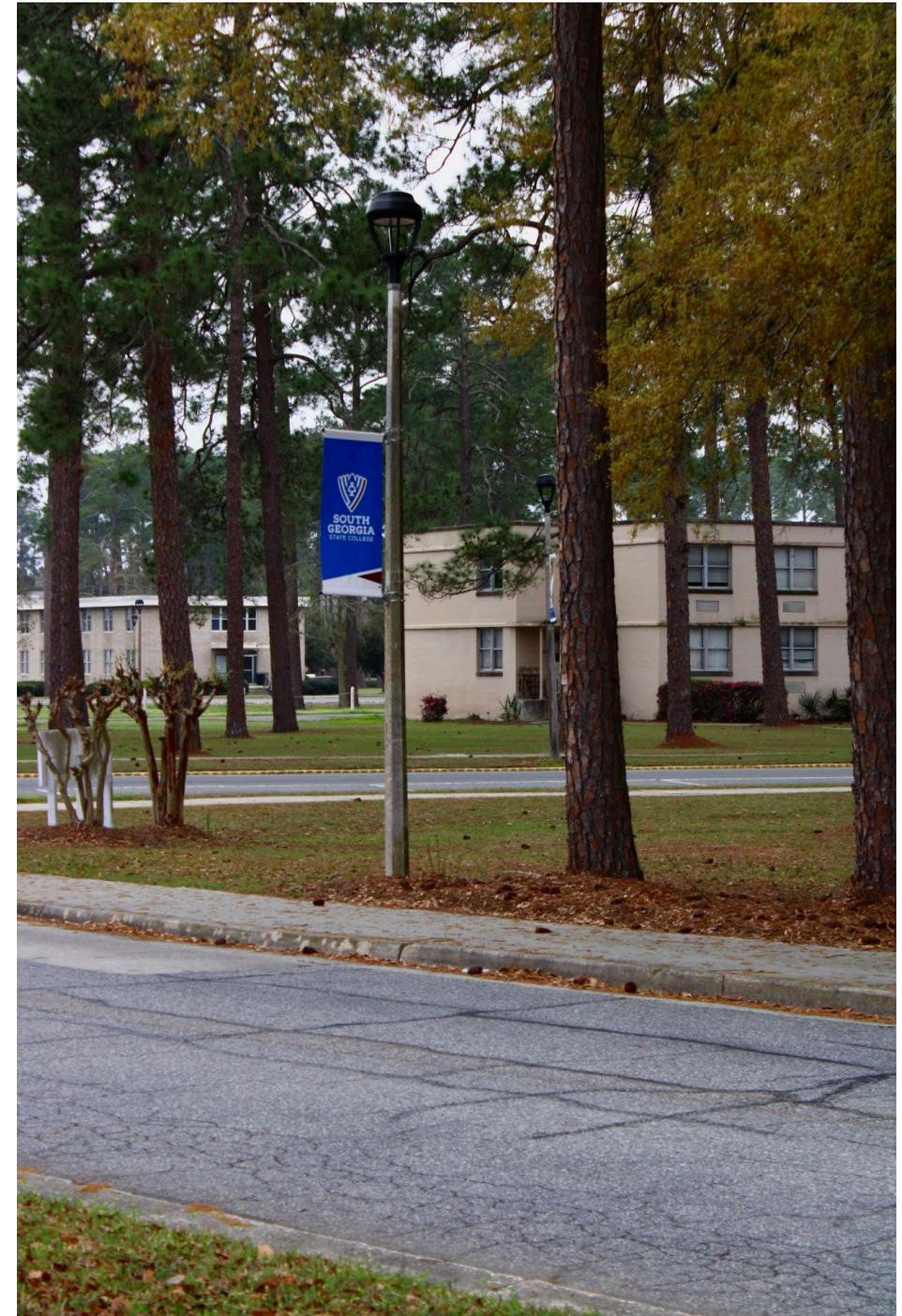
Bike share station

SMALL WINS

Greenway Enhancement | Bike Share Program

Some small wins regarding the bike share program include:

- Starting a bike share program by partnering with South Georgia State College with a small investment of inexpensive bicycles painted in college colors
- Bike repair stations along the greenway and within the Downtown Historic District



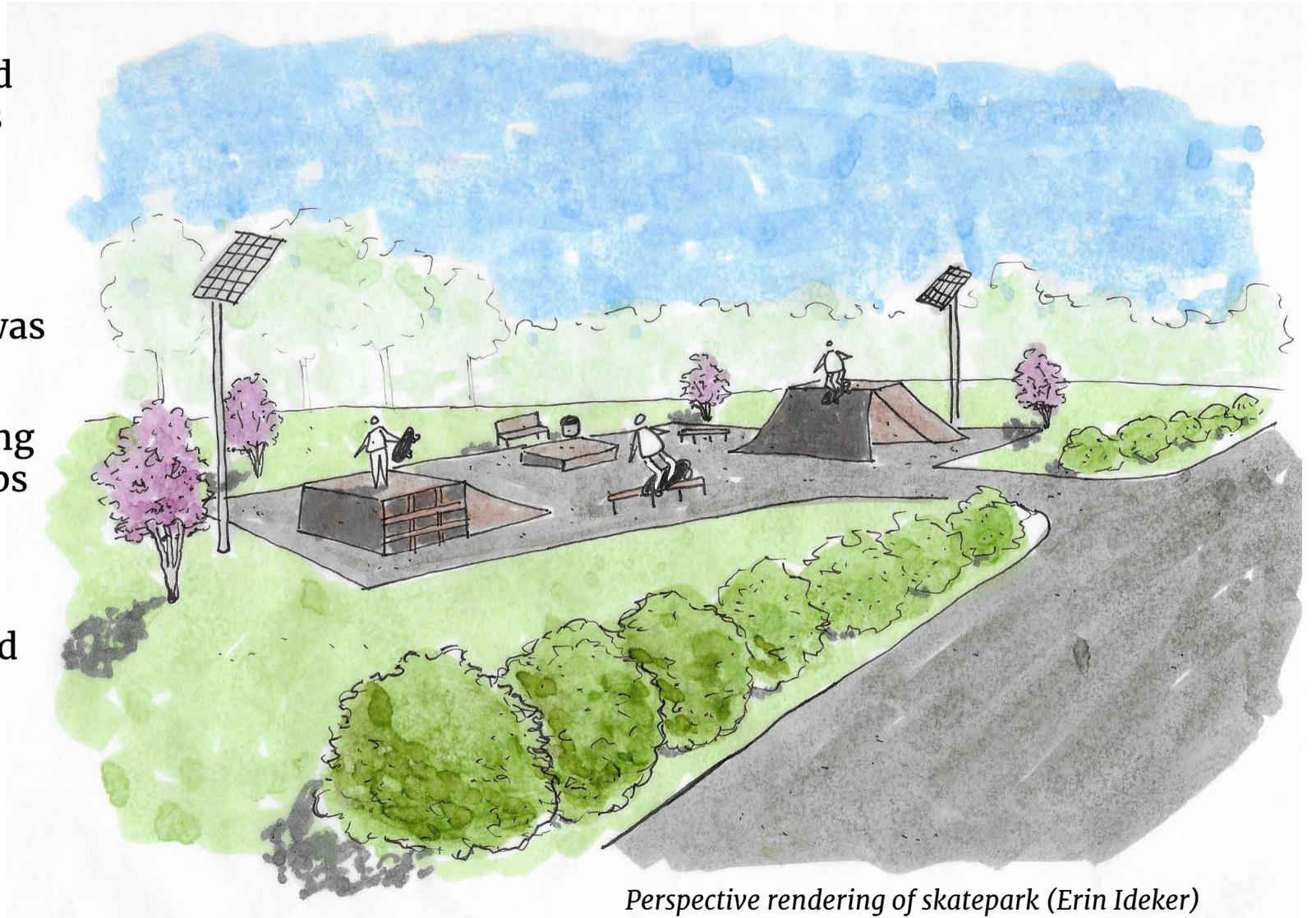
BIG IDEAS

Greenway Enhancement | Skatepark

Conversations with stakeholders helped the team learn that Atkinson Plaza was once designed as a public seating area, but skateboarders found the infrastructure enticing for practicing tricks. This caused damage to some of the walls and benches, so the seating was removed for everybody.

Rather than abandon the idea of creating a plaza that everyone can enjoy, perhaps designate places for skateboarding adjacent to the greenway. This would:

- Eliminate damage to property caused by skaters
- Provide a safe place for youth recreation
- Further activate the greenway



Perspective rendering of skatepark (Erin Ideker)

CASE STUDIES

Greenway Enhancement | Skatepark



No Skating sign in the plaza



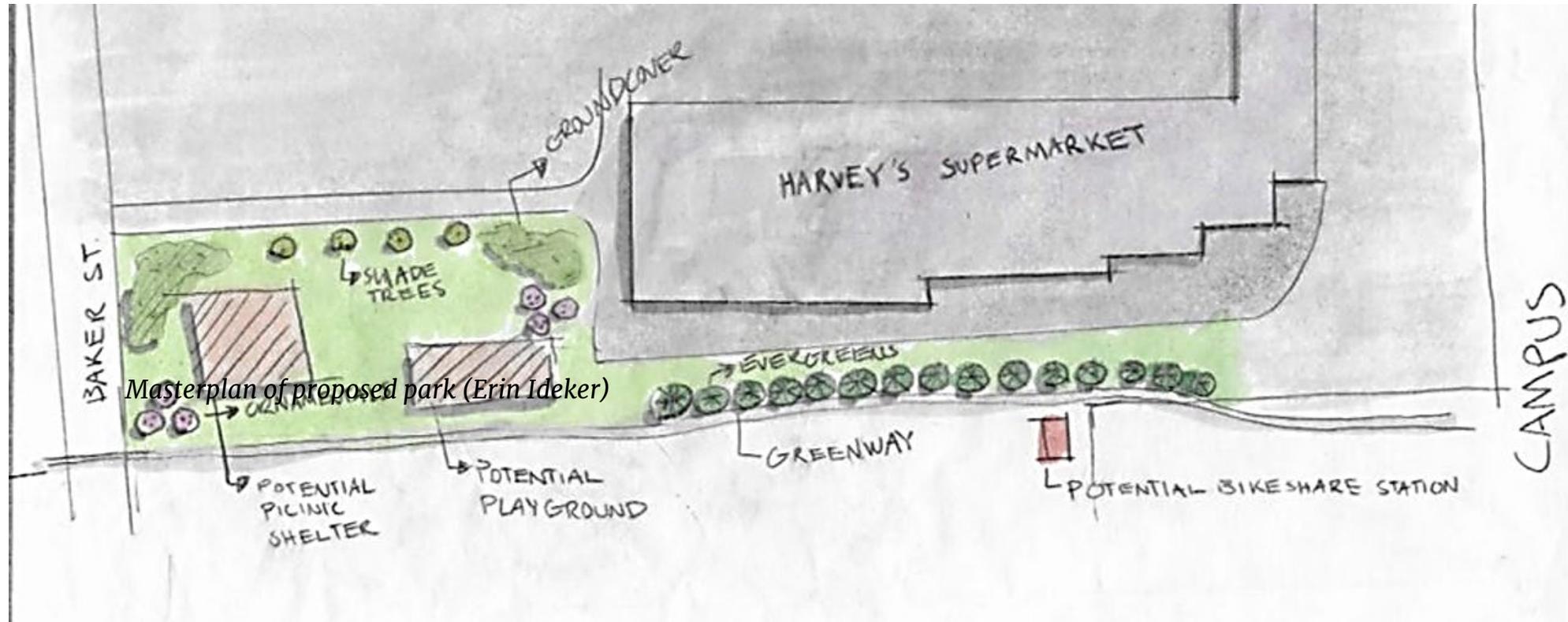
The Skatepark Project

The Skatepark Project
Provides resources, solutions, and grants to fund skateparks in underserved communities. The project also highlights ways temporary skateparks can be made using found objects.

Skatepark Project Grants:
<https://skatepark.org/the-skatepark-project-grants/>

BIG IDEAS

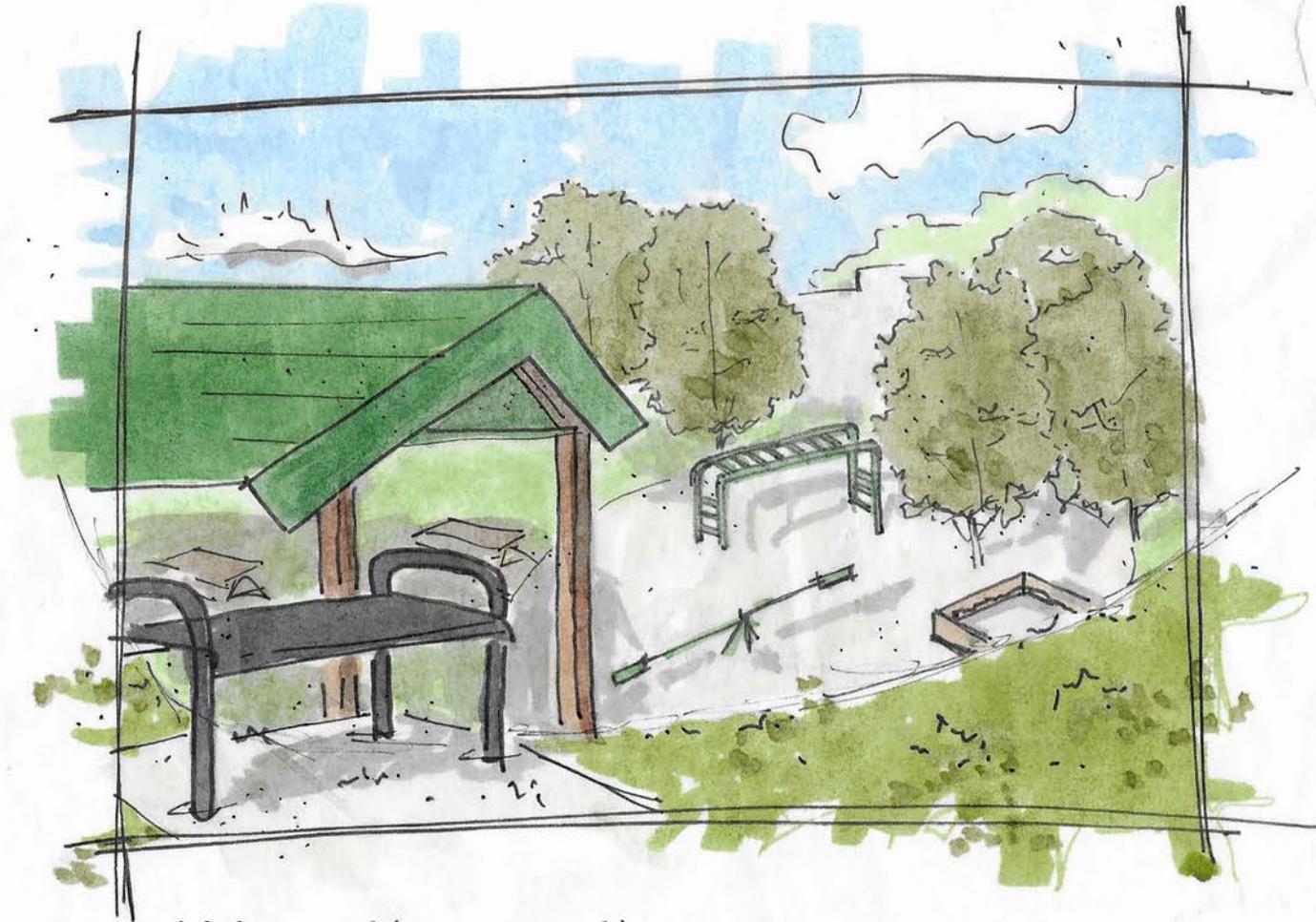
Greenway Enhancement | Harvey's Supermarket Park



The small grassy lot behind Harvey's Supermarket has the potential to be used as a pocket park. Located along the greenway and next to the grocery store and South GA State's campus, it could be used as a picnic space. A playground would be a nice amenity to have at this site.

BIG IDEAS

Greenway Enhancement | Harvey's Supermarket Park



Potential playground (Treasa McHugh)



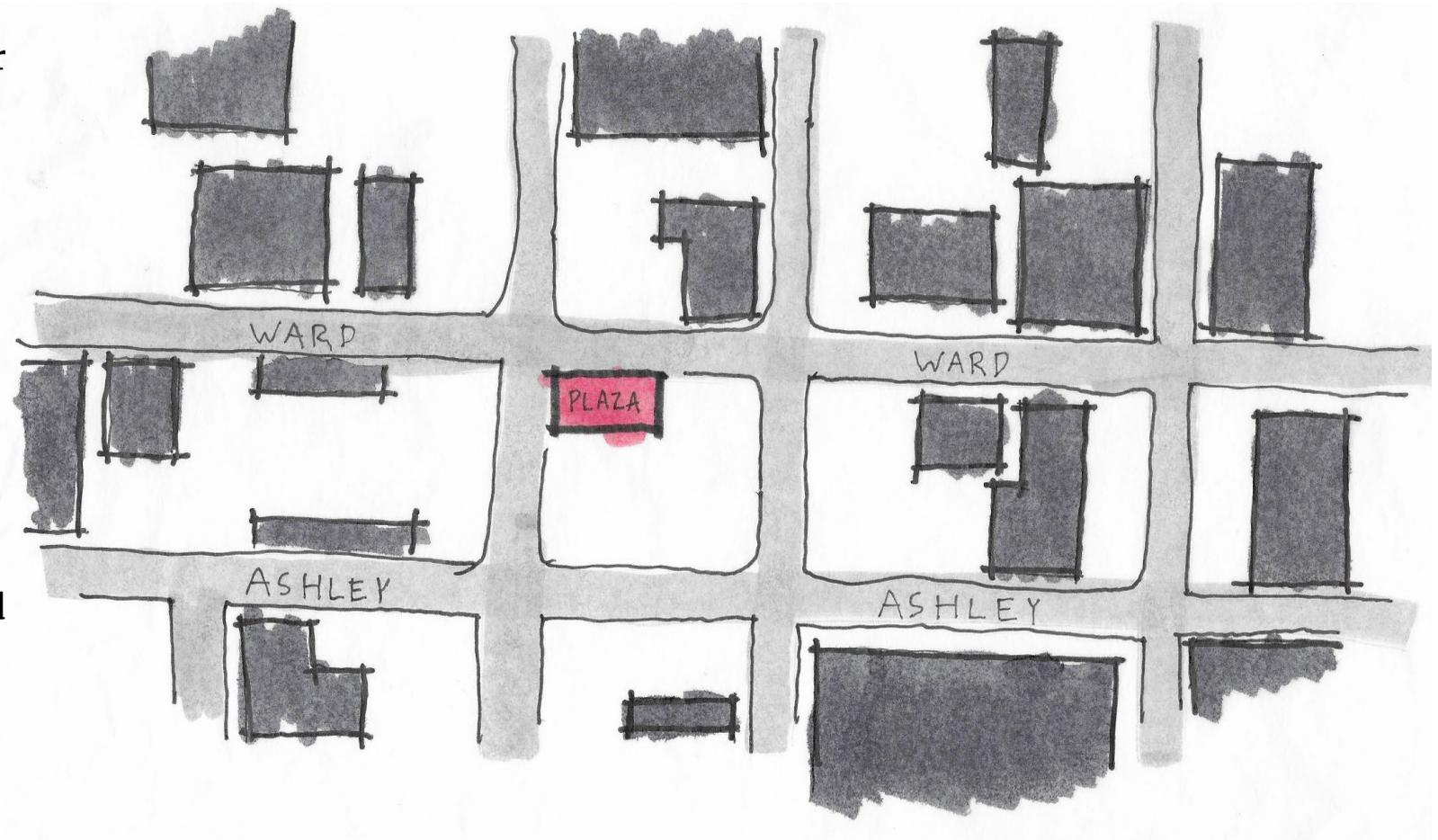
Perspective depicting amenities along trail (Treasa McHugh)

ANALYSIS

Plaza Design | Parking Inventory

The parking analysis map below shows (in grey) all the open, paved areas in the center of downtown that are dedicated to parking (besides on-street parking). Atkinson Plaza is located in the center of downtown with infrastructure to serve as a small public square but has 8 parking spots that take up a significant amount of room. If these 8 spots for cars were removed, the Plaza could serve as the regular, central gathering spot the public is requesting.

However, the Plaza has become a key loading and staging area for performances at the Martin Centre, which has contributed significantly to the revitalization of Downtown. Ideas for how Atkinson Plaza can once again become a public gathering space are shown below, but creative sharing or accommodations for performances should be explored further.



Inventory of existing parking shown in grey (Brock Corbin)

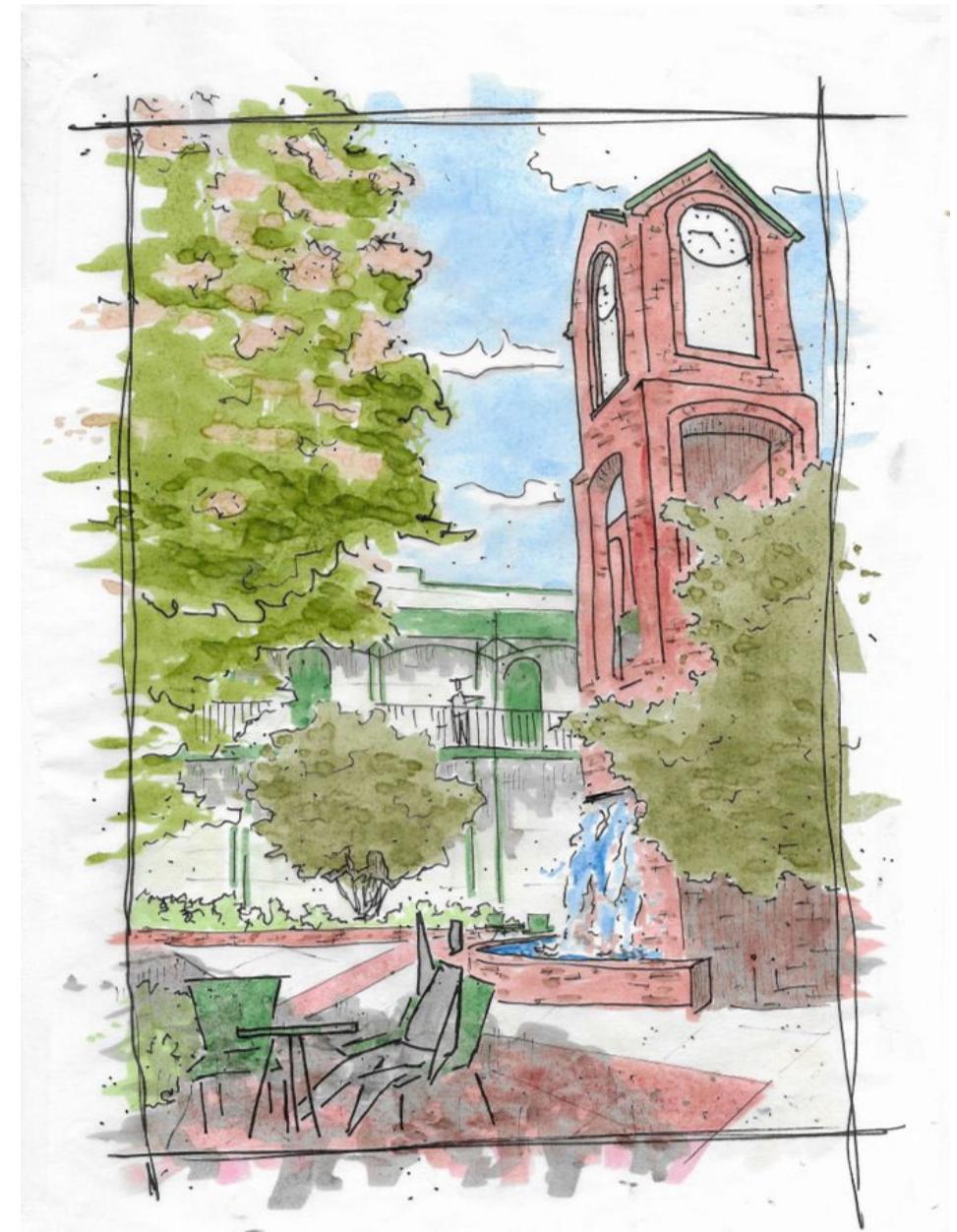
BIG IDEAS

Plaza Design

- Eliminate parking and add seating and tables
- Screen road noise with trees
- Choose street furniture and tree planters that are easily portable/removable in order to accommodate Martin Centre performer access



Plan view of proposed Atkinson Plaza design (Erin Ideker)



Perspective rendering of Atkinson Plaza (Teresa McHugh)

BIG IDEAS

Plaza Design



Perspective rendering of proposed Atkinson Plaza (Tresa McHugh)

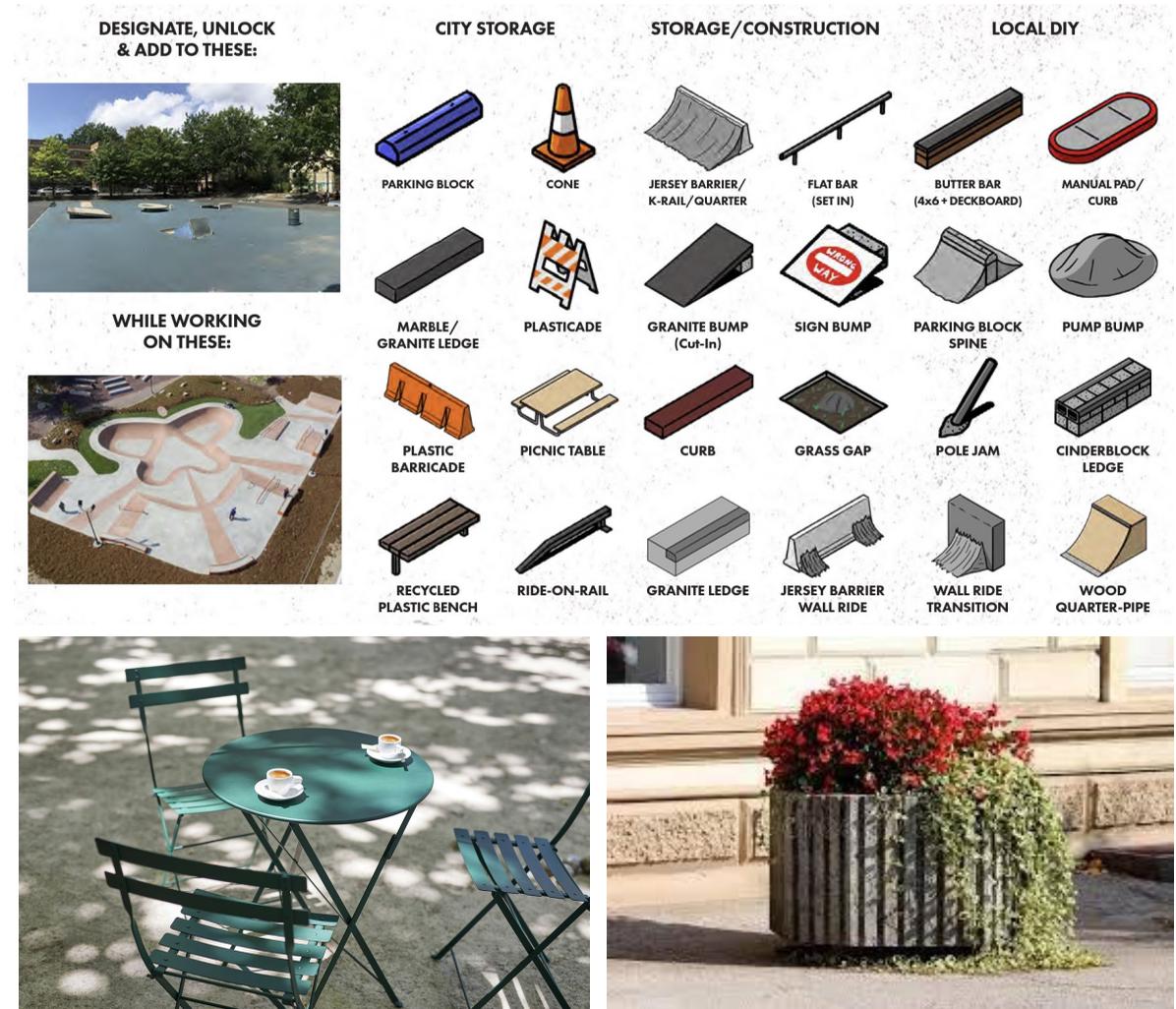


Digital rendering of proposed Atkinson Plaza (Brock Corbin)

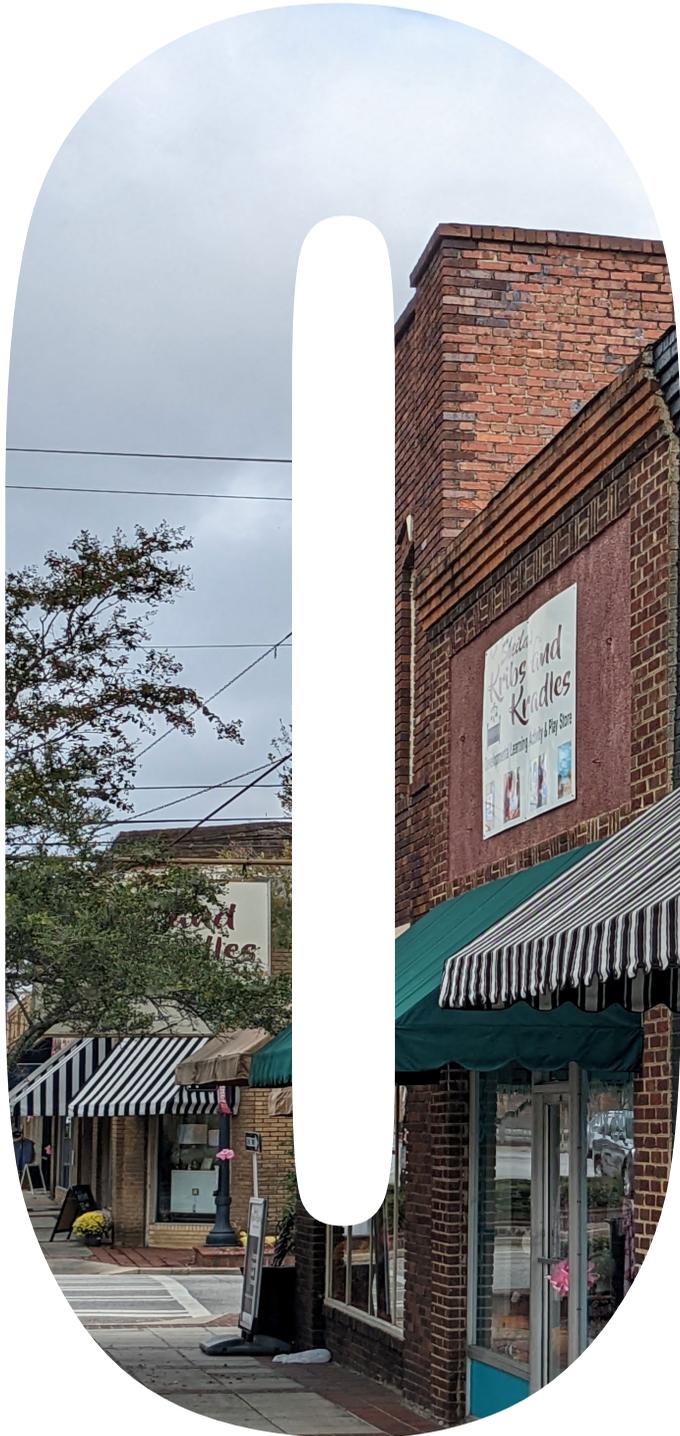
SMALL WINS

Greenway Enhancement and Plaza Design

- Create a temporary skatepark along the Greenway using recycled/found materials
- Temporarily close the parking lot in Atkinson Plaza to test the appeal of an outdoor gathering place with comfortable amenities:
 - Place seating in public areas (bistro tables and benches)
 - Install potted plants in Atkinson Plaza
 - Create shade with umbrellas at tables to ensure the space is inviting for dining, coffee, conversation and lingering.



Tactical Urbanism Examples



STREETSCAPES

Sarah Adams and Clare Smith

This section will explore circulation in central downtown and enhancing the streets and sidewalk experience. The team focuses on identifying areas that lack shade trees, outdoor seating, and pedestrian-friendly zones. The aim of this section is to provide insight into how central downtown can be made more functional and comfortable for pedestrians.

ANALYSIS

Streetscapes

We heard:

Local stakeholders share their desire for the following:

- Aesthetics
- Walkability
- Shade trees/enhanced streetscapes
- Consistency throughout central downtown

We observed:

- A lack of shade and outdoor seating areas
- Large sidewalks that allow for generous streetscape improvements
- Wide streets with light traffic
- Restaurants, cafes, and stores with open doors, wanting to take advantage of the streetscape at a pedestrian scale
- Places like Johnny's Pizza have created well-utilized outdoor seating



Johnny's Pizza Outdoor Seating



Wide sidewalks along Ashley St.

BIG IDEAS

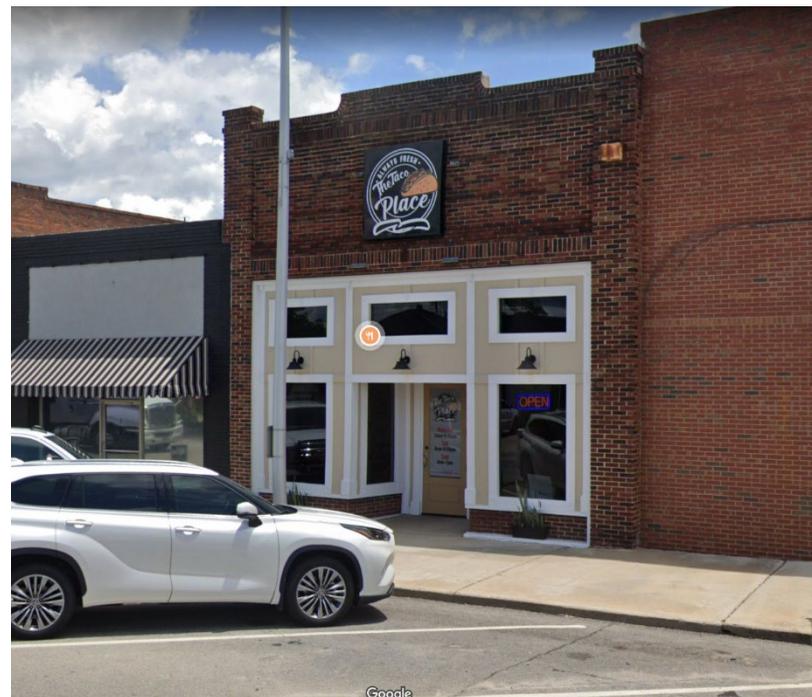
Streetscapes

Take advantage of wide sidewalks, generous rights-of-way, and low-trafficked blocks to create people-centered spaces with shade trees and outdoor seating.

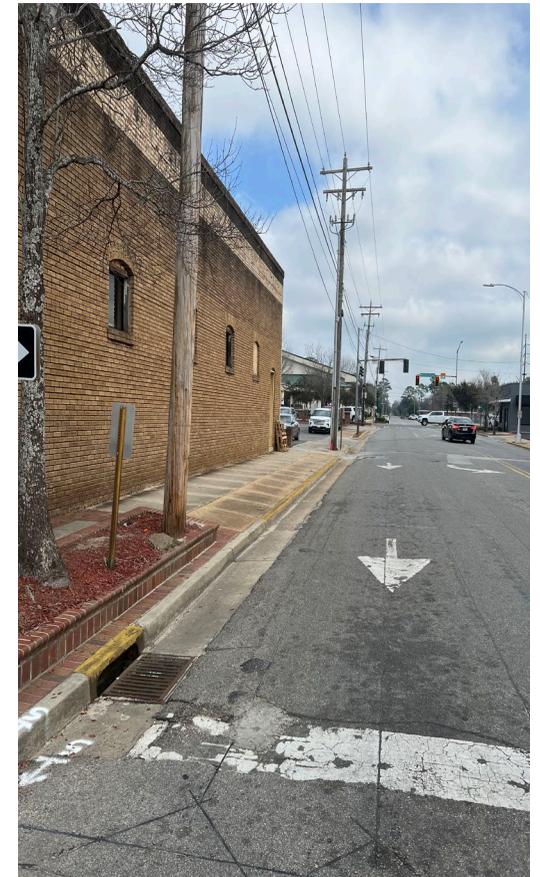
This would allow for comfortable and inviting streetscapes that provide shade, outdoor dining, and incentivize walking through downtown.



Existing conditions on Ashley St.



Existing conditions on Peterson St.



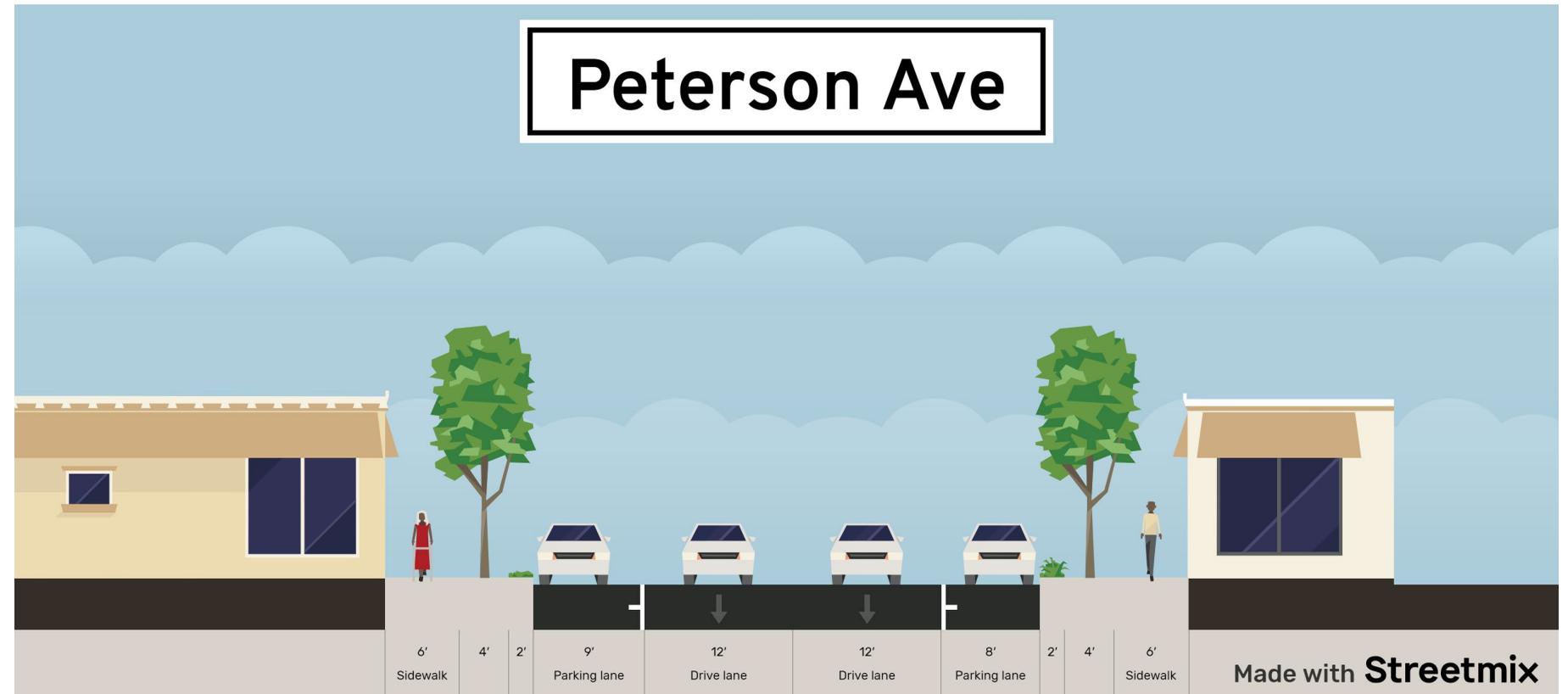
Existing conditions on Bryan St.

BIG IDEAS

Streetscapes

Shade trees along main circulation routes like Peterson and Madison Ave are sorely needed to make walking Downtown pleasant.

There appears to be enough right-of-way to include two travel lanes, on-street parking, a planted buffer, and sidewalks.



Section of Peterson Ave. Rendered by Clare Smith

Given the large undertaking that a streetscape plan entails, the team explored options to enhance walkability in the short term.

CASE STUDY

Street closures for outdoor dining

College Avenue in Athens, GA



<https://athenspoliticsnerd.com/college-square-to-stay-closed-to-cars/>

College Avenue in Athens, GA

The 100 block of College Avenue was closed during the 2020 Covid pandemic in hopes of providing more outdoor seating for struggling restaurants and safe gathering spaces for the public. With the support of a majority of adjacent business owners, the county invested in sturdy picnic tables of various sizes and umbrellas for shade.

The impact was very positive, and the temporary shutdown of College Ave was made permanent in 2021.

Although the Athens population is much larger than Douglas, attempting to implement something similar could provide the same positive impact and achieve many local goals.

SMALL WINS

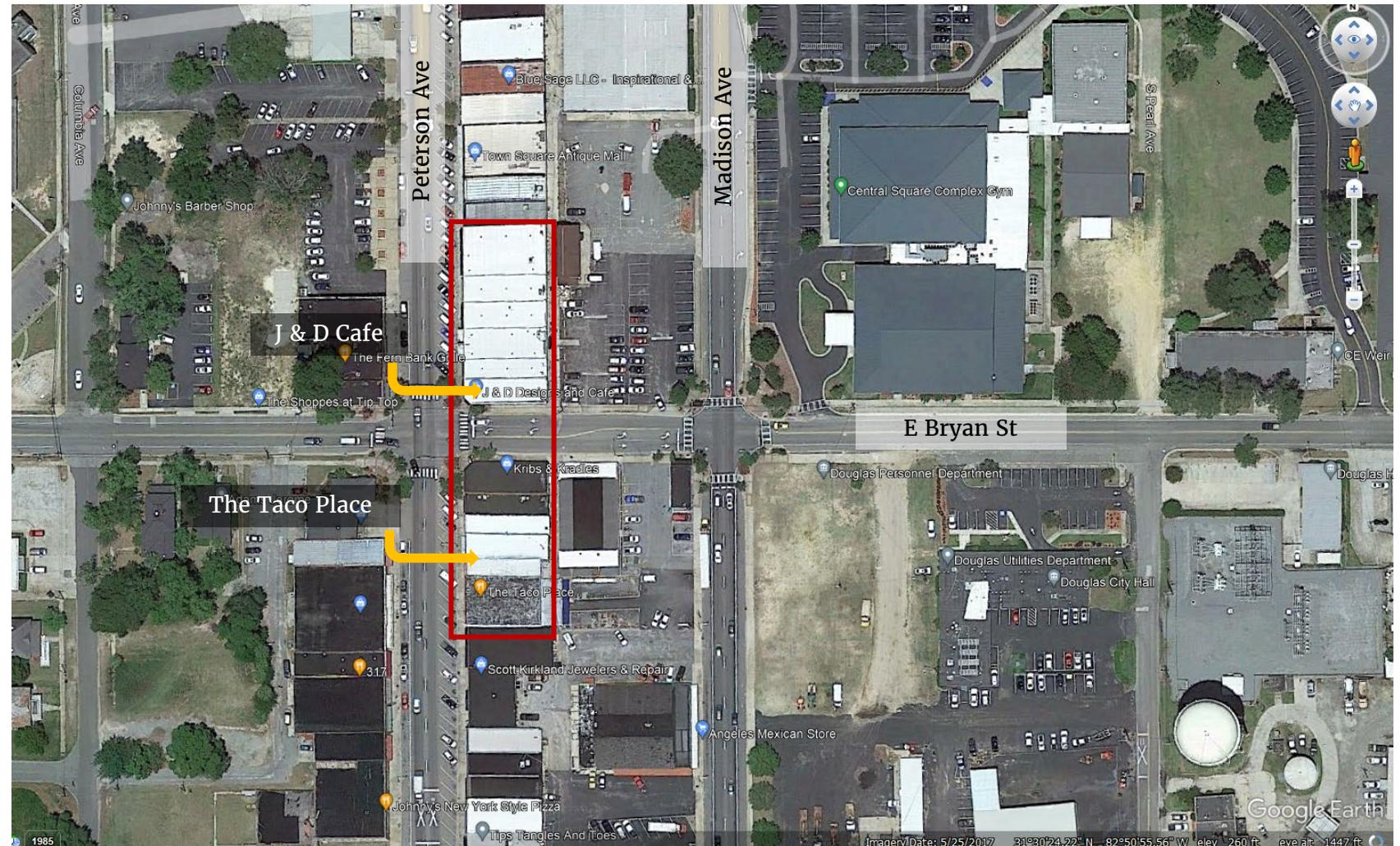
Streetscapes

Areas of focus:

- Bryan St. In central downtown, adjacent to J&D café
- Businesses along Peterson Avenue like The Taco Place

Small wins:

- Pedestrian dedicated areas with outdoor seating
- Shade trees and streetscape that improve pedestrian experience and incentivize walking



Aerial photo of focus areas

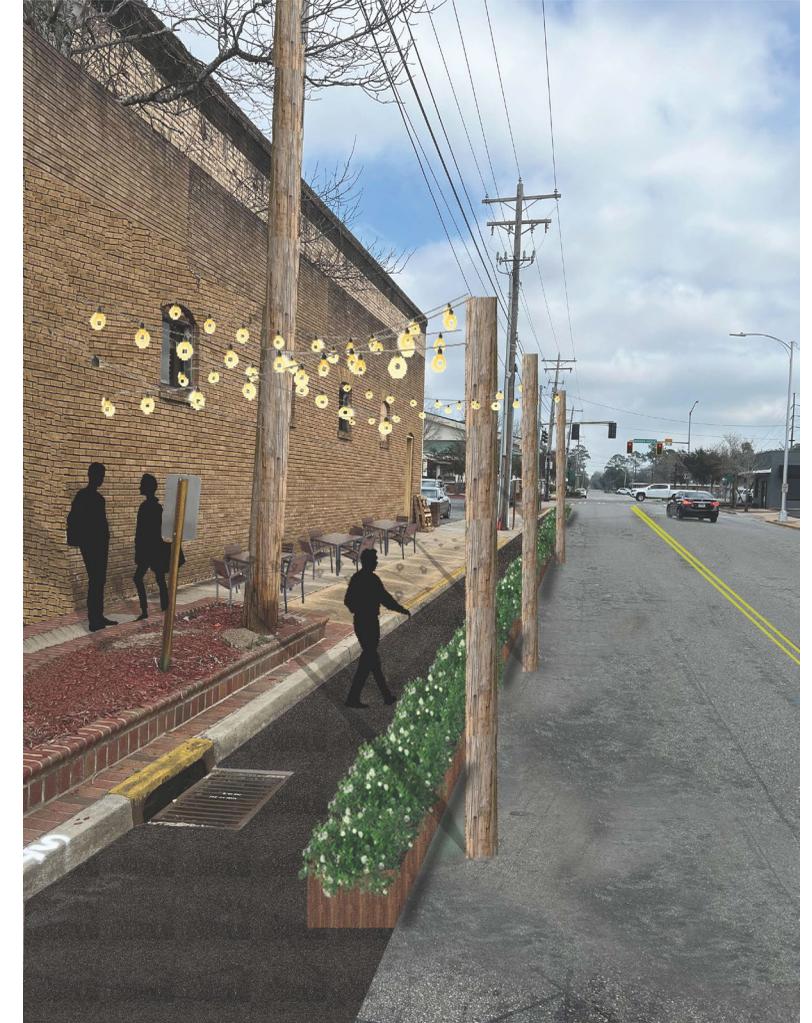
SMALL WINS

Streetscapes | Bryan St. Renovations

These are the Bryan St. renovations.

Changes made:

- Central Lane closed and pushed adjacent to J&D café
- Tables added to sidewalk to allow outdoor seating at J&D
- Vegetative buffer placed between pedestrian circulation and vehicular circulation
- Lighting placed overhead to encourage nightlife and create a more appealing pedestrian experience
- Like College Ave, could be temporary to test its success before making permanent installments



Before and after perspective of Bryan St. by Clare Smith

SMALL WINS

Streetscapes | Bryan St. Renovations

Visible:

- Wrap around seating for J&D Café
- Pedestrian walkway
- Light canopy over pedestrian walk and seating
- Two-way Vehicular circulation on Bryan St.



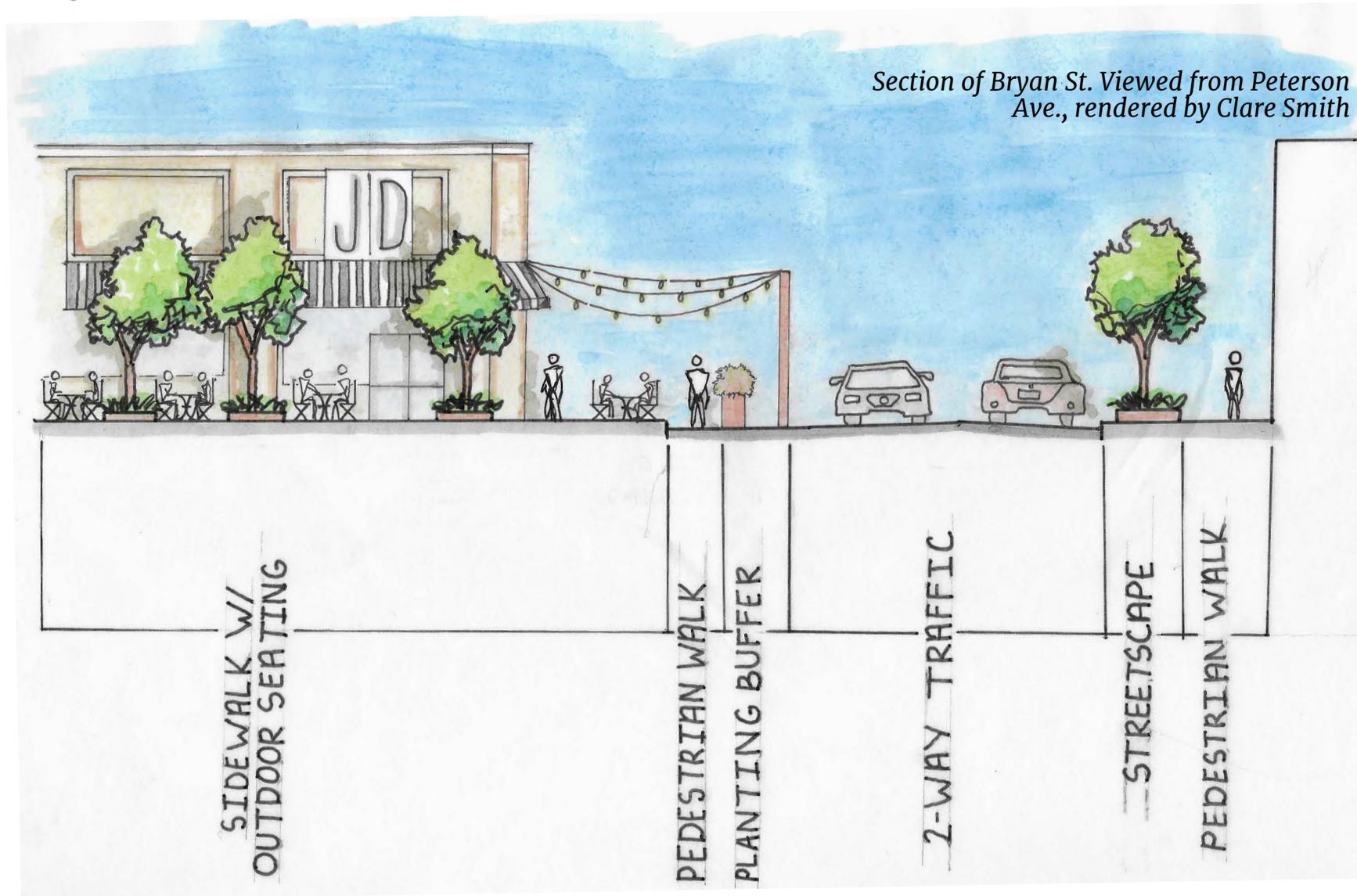
Perspective of J&D café, Viewed from Peterson Ave., rendered by Sarah Adams



Section of Bryan St. Viewed from Peterson Ave., rendered by Clare Smith

SMALL WINS

Streetscapes | Bryan St. Renovations



SMALL WINS

Streetscapes | Outdoor Seating Areas

Areas of focus:

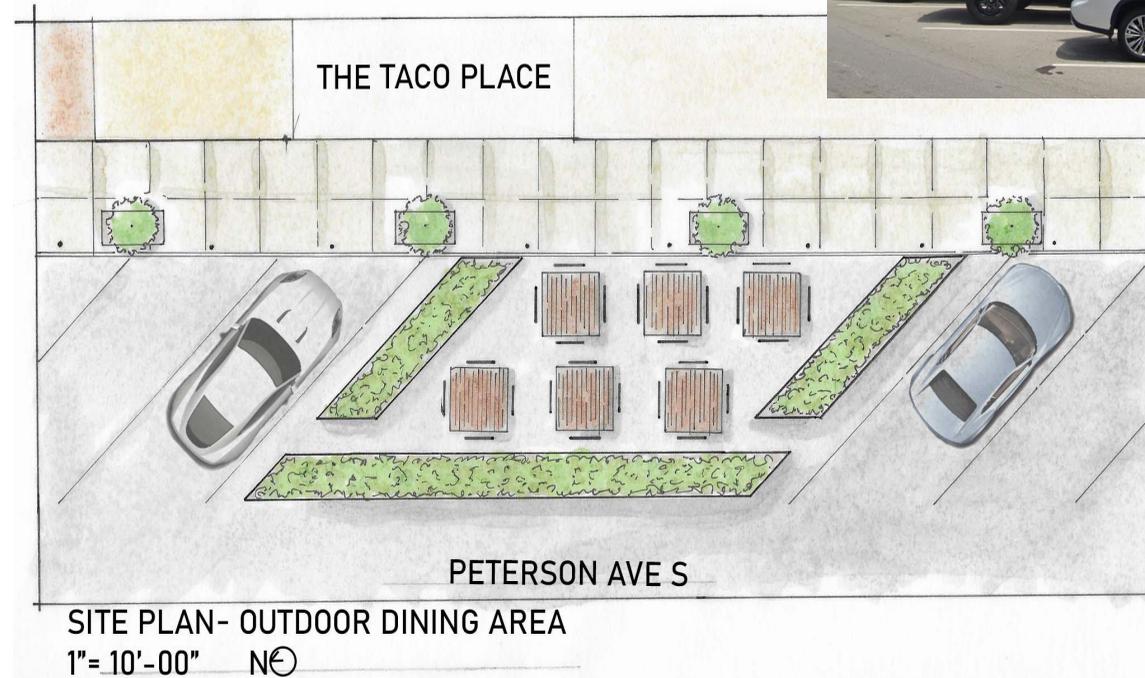
- South Peterson Avenue- The Taco Place
- Other businesses along Peterson Avenue/throughout downtown

Small wins:

- Encourage pedestrian activity and circulation
- Shade trees and streetscape that improve pedestrian experience and incentivize walking



The Taco Place Now



Site Plan of Outdoor Seating Ideas rendered by Sarah Adams

SMALL WINS

Streetscapes | Outdoor Area Inspiration





CARVER DISTRICT

Ezra Lewis, Lauren Prokop, and Molly Williams

The team recognizes the rich history and culture of the Carver District and aims to replicate the preservation and investment efforts observed in the Douglas Historic District. Additionally, this section aims to provide infrastructure to support existing neighborhood traditions and foster new community engagement opportunities.

ANALYSIS

Carver District

We heard:

- George Washington carver shopping center is known locally as “the Block”. The Block has always been an important gathering space for the Black community. The shopping center buildings are in decline, but property owners are exploring rehabilitation options.
- The former equalization school is now a freshman campus for all 9th graders in Douglas.
- Roundtree Center Park is an active and well-loved recreation area.

We observed:

- The Block currently has one active business, a restaurant called “Taste of Georgia”. The shopping center has newly paved parking lot but would benefit from shade and outdoor seating at the restaurant, as has been recommended for Downtown.
- There is barbed wire around the freshman campus. It is not welcoming and makes the neighborhood appear unsafe.
- The Rosenwald School is an important part of our nation's history and deserves a more active use for the community.
- Additional greenspace is needed throughout this sector of town.



Former Rosenwald Building



Dividing fencing between school

BIG IDEAS

Carver District

Community Engagement

- Create a space for gathering and events
- Public Art opportunities
- Implementation of community garden at school

Beautification

- Reduce heat island
- Make the area more friendly (school and shopping)
- Make it a place that people care to take care of

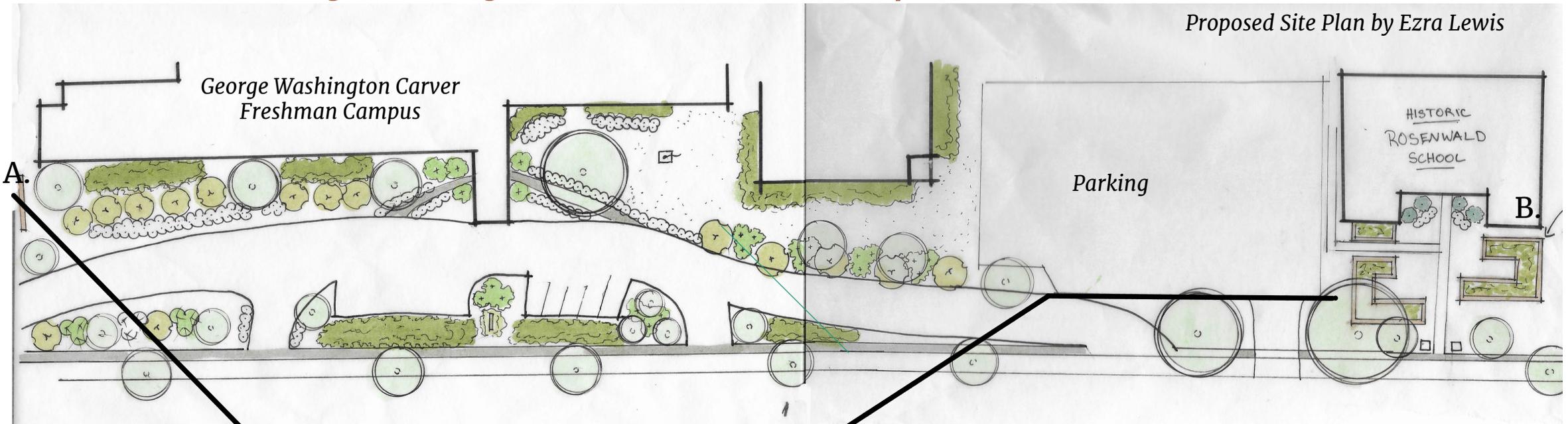
Culture

- Celebration of the Rosenwald School
- Better Signage for GWC Shopping and Rosenwald School
- Enhancing the cultural traditions of the area



BIG IDEAS

Carver District | George Washington Carver Freshman Campus



A. Proposed Public Art



B. Proposed Community Garden

Goals:

- Reduce heat island effect for students in George Washington Carver Freshman Campus through new plantings
- Proposed community garden
- Provide opportunities for engagement

BIG IDEAS

Carver District | Post Office Park

Another big idea from the team is a park in the large, shady block beside the Post Office at the corner of S. Madison and E. Baker Streets.

The goals of this proposed park plan are to:

- provide a greenspace connection between The Block and the Downtown area,
- provide space for patrons of the nearby Farmers Market, and
- utilize an already beautiful but underused parcel as needed public greenspace.

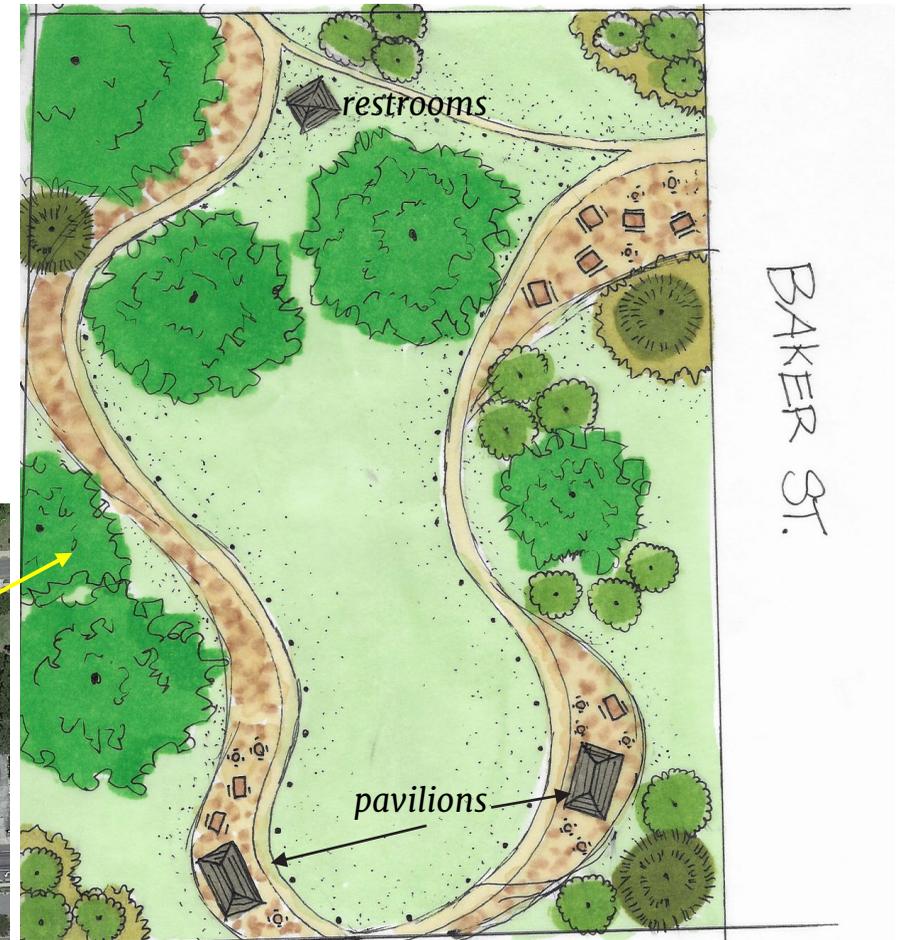
The plan of the potential park is shown below. In this plan, large shade trees are retained, and a walking path loop is laid within the perimeter. Mulched areas along the path and under the trees are shown to include picnic pavilions and benches throughout, along with flowering shrubs to add seasonal color.



BIG IDEAS

Carver District | Post Office Park

Goals: To provide a greenspace connection from The Block area closer the downtown area, to provide space for patrons of the farmers market, and to allow for large open lawn as well as pavilions for gatherings.

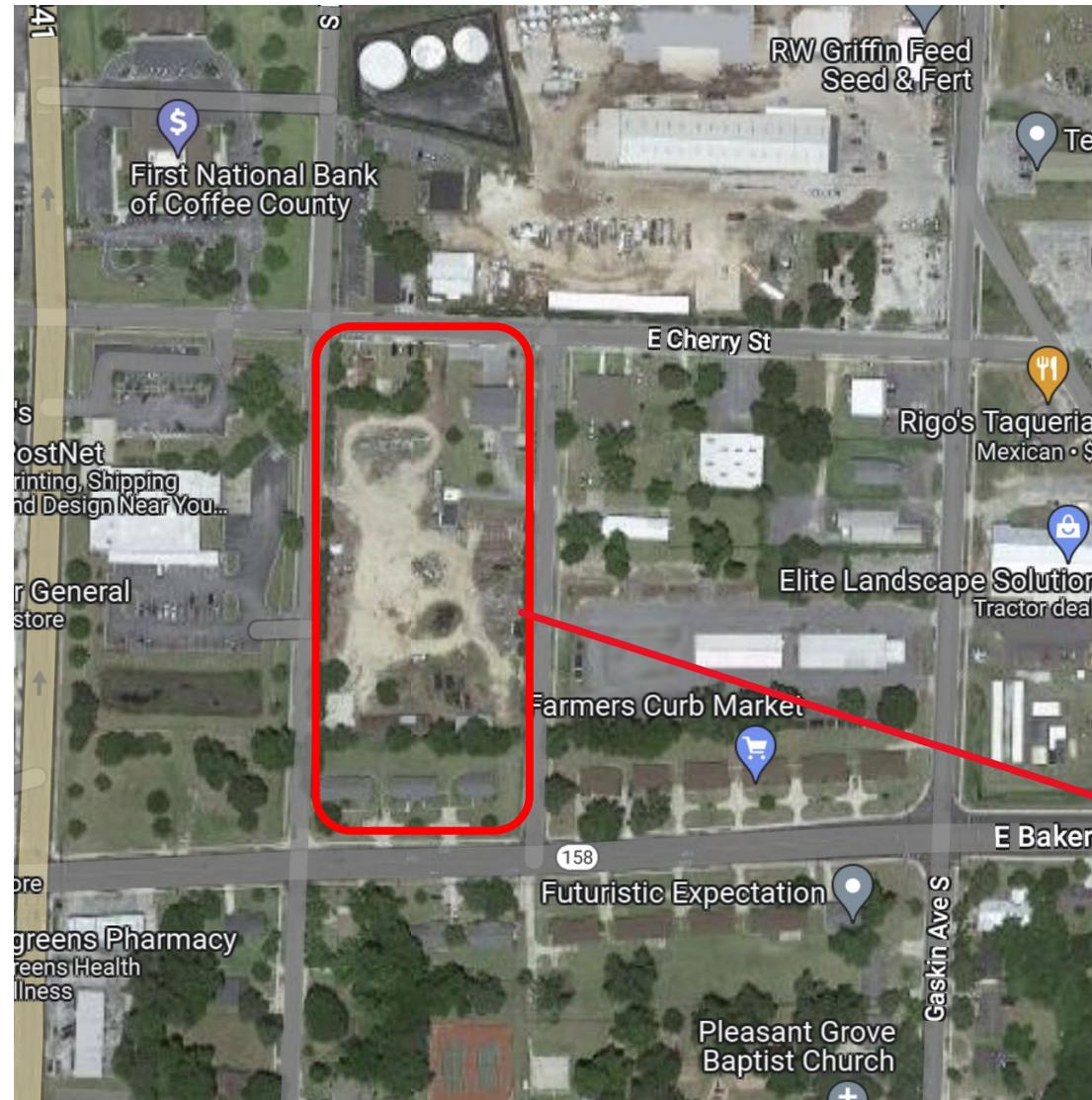


Plan view rendering of Post Office Park by Molly Williams

SMALL WINS

Carver District | Pop-Up Plaza

Small wins from the team include testing out a gathering area in the neighborhood that improves by creating a pop-up plaza at 670 S. Pearl Ave behind the Fire Department.



Location: 670 S. Pearl Ave
Douglas Fire Dept. Back Lot

SMALL WINS

Carver District | Pop-Up Plaza

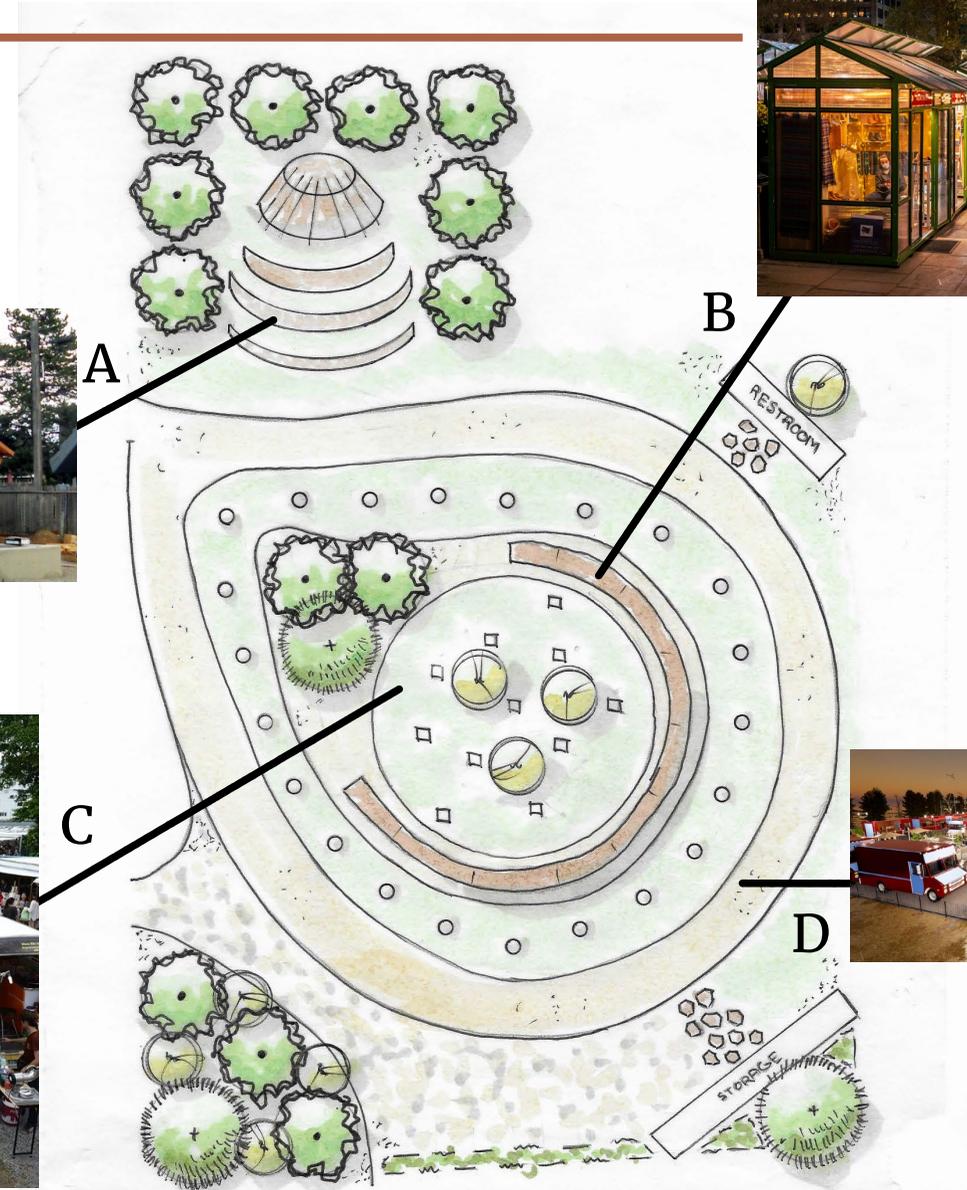
The plan for the park is shown at right. The park has labels that show:

A: Stage for community performances - Emphasis on public gathering

B: Pop Up Shops - Owners can come and have their own space; people can walk around the center ring to shop

C: Movable Pallet Seating

D: Food Trucks - Outer ring of plaza. Owners can come and park their trucks while people walk around and sit at the tables



Plan View Rendering of Pop-Up Plaza by Lauren Prokop



PRESERVATION IN CHARACTER AREAS

*Amy Andrews, Jennifer Lewis, Olivia Rothstein, and
Shelby Stamback*

Downtown Douglas should capitalize on the opportunity for unique loft housing. Ongoing efforts to restore its buildings to the original character and allowing for loft living would increase activity downtown day and night.

Continuing preservation efforts into the north and south gateways into town will allow for a cohesive appearance throughout the DDA sections and encourage more investment in areas experiencing property degradation.

ANALYSIS

Preservation in Character Areas

We Heard:

- Douglas has many rehabilitation success stories, including the Martin Centre theater (fan favorite), Union Bank Company building, and the Heritage Station Museum.
- More historic buildings in the DDA boundary need to be better maintained and rehabilitated.
- Housing options are needed Downtown, including short-term rentals and long-term options.
- The motels on the north side of town are problematic due to perceived crime and unkempt appearance.
- Decatur, Macon, Thomasville, Madison, Moultrie, Brunswick, and Athens have qualities Douglas aspires to have – walkable, dining and entertainment, beautiful public spaces.



ANALYSIS

Preservation in Character Areas

We Observed:

- There are a large number of structures with historic integrity: 62 Contributing buildings, structures, and objects
- The downtown is inactive at night due to lack of residents and entertainment/dining options.
- The attractive architectural characteristics of some key historic buildings are disguised by false fronts.
- There are multiple empty or underused parcels with infill potential.
- There are historic buildings north and south of the central historic district which can be adaptively reused: e.g., gas stations.
- The mid-century motels on the north side have rehabilitation potential but are also meeting an affordable housing need unavailable elsewhere.



BIG IDEAS

Preservation in Character Areas

- Take advantage of the upper stories of Downtown buildings and available tax incentives to create housing options in the historic district.
- Target key historic buildings in the central district and the north and south gateways for impactful rehabilitation projects.
- Incorporate features and components of Douglas' history to create a cohesive narrative to be used throughout the DDA area.
- Create and enhance the affordable housing stock in Douglas



BIG IDEAS

Preservation in Character Areas

Target key historic buildings in the central district and the north and south gateways for impactful rehabilitation projects.

- The central district has traditional two-story buildings that are not reaching their full potential.
- The gateways have later, auto-centric developments that also have historic interest.



North Gateway



Central District



South Gateway



Your Cleaners – Decatur, GA



Xaio Bao Biscuit – Charleston, SC

CASE STUDY

Rehabbed “Ice Box” Gas Stations

These rehabilitations show the reuse of early 20th century “ice box” style gas stations reimaged as new uses, including a laundromat and burger joint in Decatur GA and a brunch restaurant in Charleston SC.

There are several vacant gas stations in this same style located in the northern gateway of the DDA that could serve as various new businesses.

The DDA should consider promoting rehabilitation of existing building rather than demolition of interesting buildings and continuing the sprawl south of town.

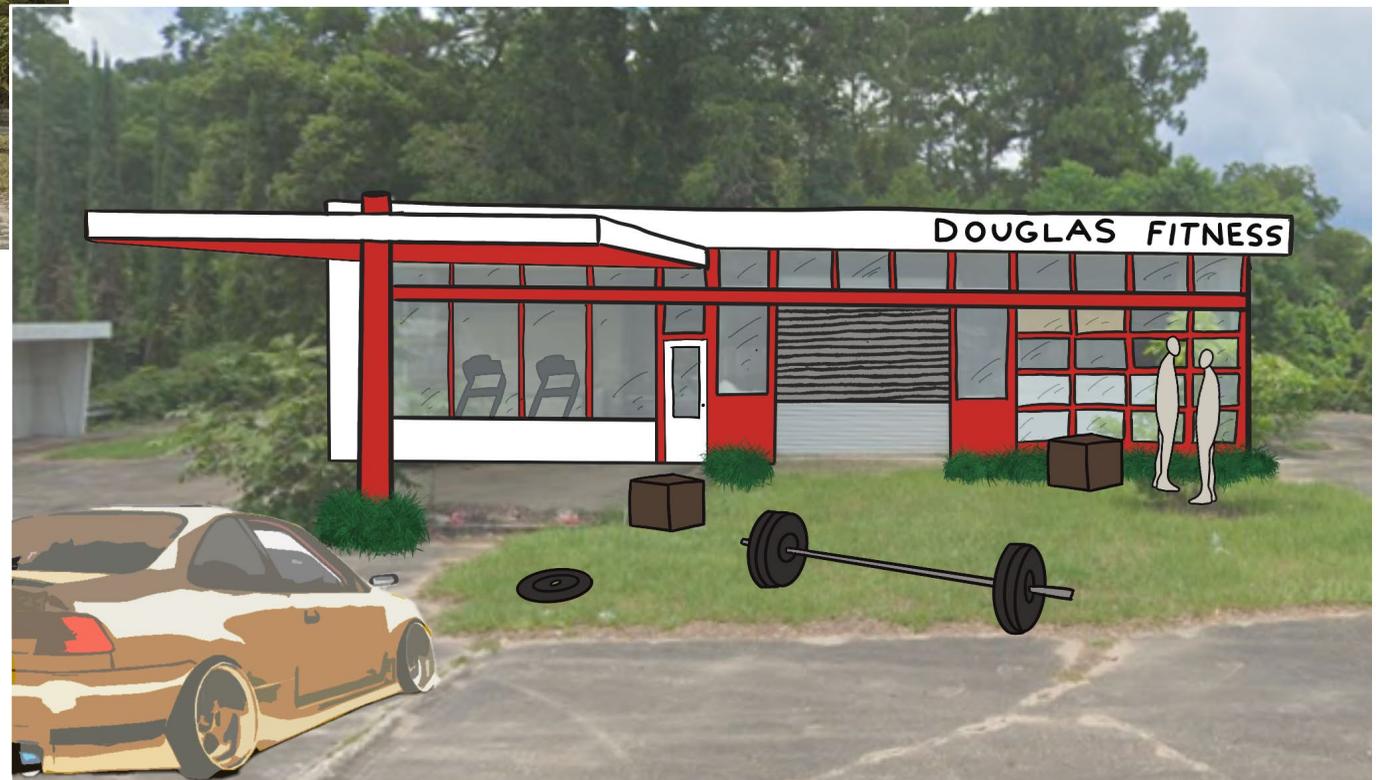
BIG IDEAS

Preservation in Character Areas



Existing

This historic gas station located at 404 N Peterson Ave (formerly Spivey Auto Sales) is shown reimaged as a fitness center.



Rendering by Olivia Rothstein

BIG IDEAS

Bordeaux Building

Bordeaux Building Now



Take advantage of the upper stories of Downtown buildings and available tax incentives to create housing options in the historic district.

Historic building in Downtown's central core have available state and federal historic preservation tax credits and RURAL zone incentives.

The Bordeaux Building has one of the largest second-floors available for redevelopment as downtown living. Located across from the Martin Centre, it is prime real estate for individuals interested in staying overnight to see a show or residing in the heart of the Downtown's entertainment area.



Let historic photographs be the guide in realizing the potential of historic buildings.



Bordeaux Building Preservation Rendering by Shelby Stamback



CASE STUDY

Rehabbed Pure Oil Gas Stations

Douglas has a unique example of a Pure Oil gas station located in the southern corridor of the DDA boundary, currently the Deep South Fuel Center.

When automobiles and gas stations became part of our built environment, gas companies favored this residential-like style as a way to appeal to potential customers. This architectural style is called Tudor Revival, which was popular between 1920-1940 and is based on an English cottage.

These Pure Oil gas stations in Hartwell and Hahira have been restored to their original historic character and rehabilitated for new uses.



A Pure Oil gas station turned boutique in Hahira, GA



Former Pure Oil gas station in Hartwell, GA

Existing



BIG IDEAS

Rehabbed Pure Oil Gas Station

By retaining the existing architectural features of the gas station and adding landscape plantings to soften the surrounding concrete, this site could be adapted to a new use such as a restaurant or brewpub. This could activate the DDA area in a unique way by providing indoor-outdoor dining and a desired entertainment destination.



Proposed Rehabilitation by Shelby Stamback

BIG IDEAS

Preservation and Housing

The motels on the north side of town could be rehabilitated as boutique hotels. However, they are currently serving a need for affordable housing.

If the former motels are deemed unsightly, code enforcement could be used to maintain community standards. But removing the motels will not solve the societal problem at hand, which is poor neighbors in need of a social safety net.

- Shelter is a basic human need, and hardest to come by for those with the least access to resources.
- Government, non-profits, and faith-based services often join forces to address pathways to better mental and physical health, employment, and housing.
- New partnerships should coalesce in Douglas to find solutions.

The following ideas show the potential for reuse of the motels and additional avenues for affordable housing, which has been identified as a need.



OYO Motel on N Peterson Avenue has attractive landscaping and a pool in front, typical of a mid-century motor court.

Thunderbird Inn, Savannah GA



Sunset Motel, Brevard NC



CASE STUDIES

Mid-Century Motels

If the community desires the motels to become something more attractive and profitable, there are many examples of hip, boutique hotels that have embraced the kitschy qualities of these mid-century lodges, known for balconies, mature plantings, and front yard pools. Two successful examples nearby are the Thunderbird Inn in Savannah, GA, and the Sunset Motel in Brevard, NC.

The rehabilitation of Douglas's motor courts could serve a need for lodging within walking distance of the Downtown Historic District.

However, a suitable alternative for long-term rentals at an affordable price point should be developed to offset the loss of housing that a conversion could bring.

<https://tinyurl.com/WAPOroadsidemotels>

BIG IDEAS

Preservation and Housing

New apartments could be located on vacant parcels along the corridors.

- Infill outside of the central historic district could have a blending of commercial and residential elements. Buildings should be directly accessible from the sidewalk and have street trees.
- Athens Housing Authority and Columbia Residential partnered to create this multi-family housing (at right) that includes affordable and voucher units in addition to market-rate units.

<https://www.columbiare.com/senior-apartments-athens-ga/columbia-brookside-senior-residences/>



Columbia Residential Housing in Athens, GA

BIG IDEAS

Preservation and Housing

New housing should look like adjacent historic houses, whether they are single- or multi-family on the inside.

- Habitat for Humanity in Hartwell is *building new single-family houses*

<https://www.harthat.org/> and Historic Macon is building duplexes in historic neighborhoods.

- Land Trusts and other non-profits **rehabilitate historic properties** using Community Development Block Grant funding combined with home ownership classes that stabilize neighborhoods and keeps them affordable.

<https://athenslandtrust.org/our-work/affordable-housing/>



Hands On Athens... Serve to Preserve!

Clockwise L to R: Gaskin Ave, Macon, Athens, and Hartwell

SMALL WINS

Preservation in Character Areas

Create a buzz about historic properties through unique programming in order to attract potential investors.

- Historic Tours
 - Upstairs, Downtown tour of rehabbed and not-yet-rehabbed upper stories
 - Tour of homes in Gaskin District
 - Food and walking history tours
- Educational Markers
 - Temporary signage telling the story of different areas throughout the DDA
 - Old photos in the windows of buildings showcasing their former appearance.

9 THE ICE HOUSE
 CIRCA 1923
 FOR SALE OR RENT: Contact owner
 CURRENT USE: Vacant
 Built in 1923, the Ice House was Sandersville's first and only ice production plant. The building was purchased by McGinnis Leathers in 2005.
 OWNER: McGinnis Leathers
 mcginnisleathers@hotmail.com, (706) 247-3245

11 THE NEWMAN-BELL HOUSE
 CIRCA 1890
 FOR SALE \$120,000
 CURRENT USE: Vacant
 Built in 1890 by Isidore Newman and his wife Lula Newman. Three families have enjoyed this beautiful home since the Newmans: the Bells (1963-1989), the Thieles (1989-2004) and the Brights (2004-2014). The Brights began renovations on the home, but due to illness, were unable to complete renovations. The home was taken over by the Geo. D. Warthen Bank which currently owns the home.
 REALTOR: Beverly Bell Webb
 beverly@tandcrealestate.com, (478) 232-8830

10 THE POWER BUILDING
 CIRCA 1905
 FOR SALE OR RENT: Contact owner
 CURRENT USE: Vacant
 The city constructed the Electric Light Plant and Pump House circa 1905 to serve the City of Sandersville, its businesses and residents with electricity. The City of Sandersville/ Downtown Development Authority of Sandersville sold the building to McGinnis Leathers in December of 2009.
 OWNER: McGinnis Leathers
 mcginnisleathers@hotmail.com, (706) 247-3245

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UPSTAIRS, DOWNTOWN TOUR SANDERSVILLE georgia
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2016, 1:00 - 7:00PM SELF-GUIDED TOUR
 Washington County Chamber of Commerce

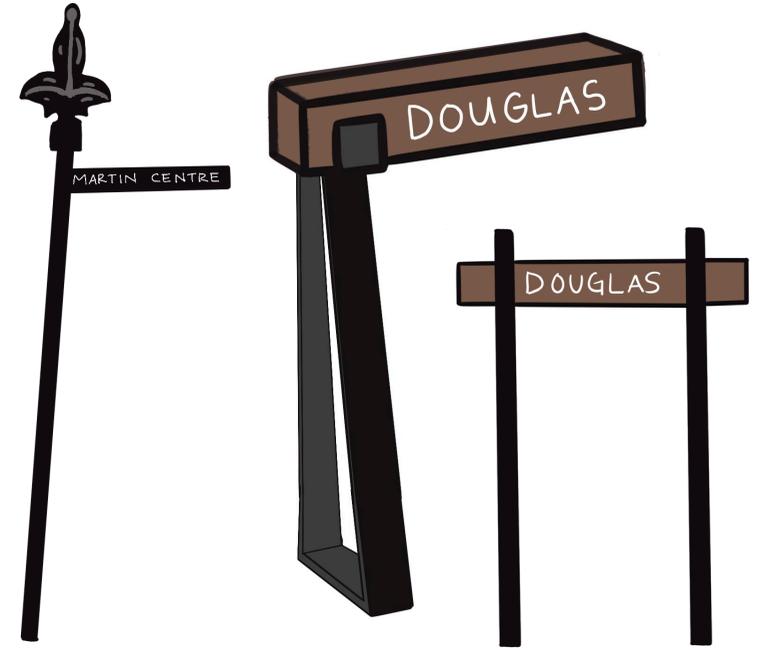
Sandersville, GA's Upstairs, Downtown tour brochure

SMALL WINS

Preservation in Character Areas

Use a unified signage design to signify districts that is reflective of local history.

- Use a cohesive narrative that can be incorporated throughout the DDA
- Details from historic buildings or railroad elements could be used as a brand (at right).



Create a housing coalition and visit other communities using successful affordable housing programs, such as:

- Habitat for Humanity chapters
- Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)
- Community Land Trusts
- Faith-based and youth-led home improvement efforts



CONCLUSION

By working with stakeholders to identify issues within the Downtown area, the UGA charrette team blended what they heard with their own observations to focus on solutions that could be approached incrementally. This approach can preserve Douglas's unique character and create opportunities for all businesses and residents to thrive. In summary, consider prioritizing efforts from these small wins:

- Develop greenspace around the Station Museum and Boys and Girls Club.
- Partner with South Georgia State College on a small fleet of shared bicycles.
- Temporarily close Atkinson Plaza to cars and

install cafe tables, chairs, potted plants and string lights to test interest in plaza seating.

- Allow restaurants to take over parking spaces and wide rights-of-way to create outdoor dining opportunities.
- Create a "pop-up plaza" for vendors and food trucks beside the Farmers Market.
- Host an Upstairs-Downtown tour of current lofts and vacant upper stories.
- Place old photos in the windows of buildings to showcase their former appearance.
- Create a housing coalition and visit other communities that are tackling affordable housing.



Center for Community Design and Preservation

College of Environment + Design

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Downtown Douglas Design Charrette Report, 2023

UGA Center for Community Design and Preservation: <http://ced.uga.edu/pso>

UGA College of Environment and Design: <http://ced.uga.edu>