Augusta Development Agenda

Report 1 - Findings To Date

"Finding Opportunities

For A More

Sustainable

Augusta"

A Shared Vision

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Preface

This report is about finding Opportunities to bring Augusta Together

After more than four months into this planning process and after speaking with many people about their city, one thing is clear: **Augustans like Augusta**. They like its mild climate, its history, its access to the out of doors. They like the uncrowded roads that let them whisk from place to place. They like the affordability of the housing stock.

But they know it should be better. There are air pollution issues; deteriorating neighborhoods; lost greenspace, stagnant population and economic growth compared to the region and the state.

Some of the very things that attract people to Augusta, undermine its ability to reach its full potential. Two of these: a highway system that spreads things out and the resulting sprawl into cheap land has stifled opportunity to create comfortable settings that have a genuine "sense of place", settings where people want to linger and to invest in over the years.

This ad-hoc development pattern makes it difficult to concentrate the city's further development in a way that is in the long term best interest of the city and its citizens. The purpose of this plan is to pause, refocus and to set an agenda for the next two decades that establishes clear priorities for public investment and attracts private participation.

shields DESIGN
Architecture
Planning
Urban Design

Report 1- Findings to Date is a compilation of data collections, public workshops, input and advice of the Agenda's Advisory Task Force, discussions with many officials and private citizens, and the master planning team's own observations. This information collected thus far gives the team direction in pursuing an innovative and achievable Development Agenda for all of Augusta.

Findings Report

Introduction

The City of Augusta, in collaboration with shieldsDESIGN LLC, is creating a Development Agenda for the entirety of the City of Augusta. This interim report sets forth the findings of the first two phases of this planning effort: Data Collection, Project Start up and Collection of Initial Concepts. Most importantly, this report recommends both a specific approach for moving forward and key development projects on which to focus city policy over the next two decades.

Overall Goals and Objectives

The City of Augusta wishes to create an agenda to guide its physical development and governmental decision-making for the next two decades. The agenda includes all of Augusta and makes recommendations for an integrated and coordinated approach that is in the best interests of the entire City.

This agenda will improve the quality of life for all and will transform the City into a national model for the nation.

Three over arching goals of the Westobou Vision, the 2009 urban area plan are directly applicable to those of the larger city, i.e. to become:

- A Green And Sustainable "Garden City",
- A place of Education and Innovation,
- A vibrant Place to Live, Work and Play

This agenda will set priorities for projects that have the program, the locational advantage and the champions to set the pace for accomplishing these goals.

Purpose of this Findings Report

This initial Findings Report lays the base to guide further investigations in developing this plan. It is the result of a four month effort on the part of the community and the planning team.

This document summarizes the existing conditions in all of Augusta, which is bounded generally by the Savannah River, Burke and Columbia County. Five core elements of Augusta's fabric, identified at the outset of the process:

- Overall Economic Condition
- Gateways and Corridors
- Open Space
- Neighborhoods
- Community Services

This is done for each of seven geographic character areas identified in the recently completed 2008 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Augusta.

More importantly, this effort has been about finding opportunity. These occur

both City-wide and within individual character areas, and are identified in this report. This report sets initial priorities for those projects felt most important to meeting the City goals. The intent is that these top priorities opportunities, will be examined in further detail, become the focus of initial implementation and also be prototypical examples for other parts of the City.

Activities to Date

This effort began with a series of one-on-one meetings with the Augusta Commissioners to determine its purpose and scope, as well as to identify key individuals in the private sector who could help determine the intent of this work.

In early summer, each of the Commissioners was invited to lead the team on a tour of their respective districts. They pointed out issues and opportunities they wanted addressed in the course of this work. This, along with follow-up discussion with most, has been of immeasurable assistance in organizing this work.

An Advisory Task Force of more than fifty members of the community, including one appointed by each of the Commissioners has met four times to date. This working group is led by Dr. Terry Elam, President of Augusta Tech,

Two, well-attended public workshops have been held and a series of "we believe…" statements have been developed to guide the building of the Agenda.

The area covered by this plan is large. The team has logged over a thousand miles getting familiar with the various parts of the city and better understanding each part.

The team has invited senior faculty from Georgia Tech to publicly review work as it progresses. The first of these was an all day session in late September with many Task Force members and several Commissioners in attendance.

Agenda Approach

Over the past decade, the City has undertaken several relevant studies which upon which to build this agenda.

Augusta within the Southeastern region of the United States

These include, most recently, the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Westobou Vision, which focused on the city's urban core. As with the Westobou Vision, the Augusta Development Agenda is "Attribute-Based", i.e. it capitalizes on the natural, historic, social and cultural resources of the area; identifies settings and connections; and builds on the city's individual market/ business successes.

The process is based on the assumption that the people of Augusta know their city best. Thus, by reaching out to all corners of the community, both direction and "Champions" will be found to see the various projects to realization.

The agenda recognizes that there are may be more opportunities, than can be implemented over the next two decades, or can be reasonably analyzed within the scope of this work. The agenda focuses on example projects, which meet five specific criteria:

1. They have a reasonable chance of being realized within this 20 year time frame,

2. Their realization would best support the agenda's over arching Goals and Objectives,

3. They are so located that they support each other and establish a synergy that people can see and can support,

4. They are prototypical examples that can be applied in other parts of the City, as opportunity arises.

5. "Champion" can be found to lead their development and successful implementation,

Schedule to Complete

Following approval of the Findings Report and the directions set, the team will begin its work on refinement of key projects and encompassing a draft agenda. This task will require and estimated four months, until the end of February 2010, with at least two interim reviews in Augusta.

Following approval by the Advisory Task Force of the Draft Report, a final report will be developed. This final task will require and estimated five months, with a near final report ready for review in June 2010 and the Final Report and Presentation in late July. As with the draft plan, two review sessions will be held with the City and the Advisory Task Force during this period.

Image Caption

The Augusta Region
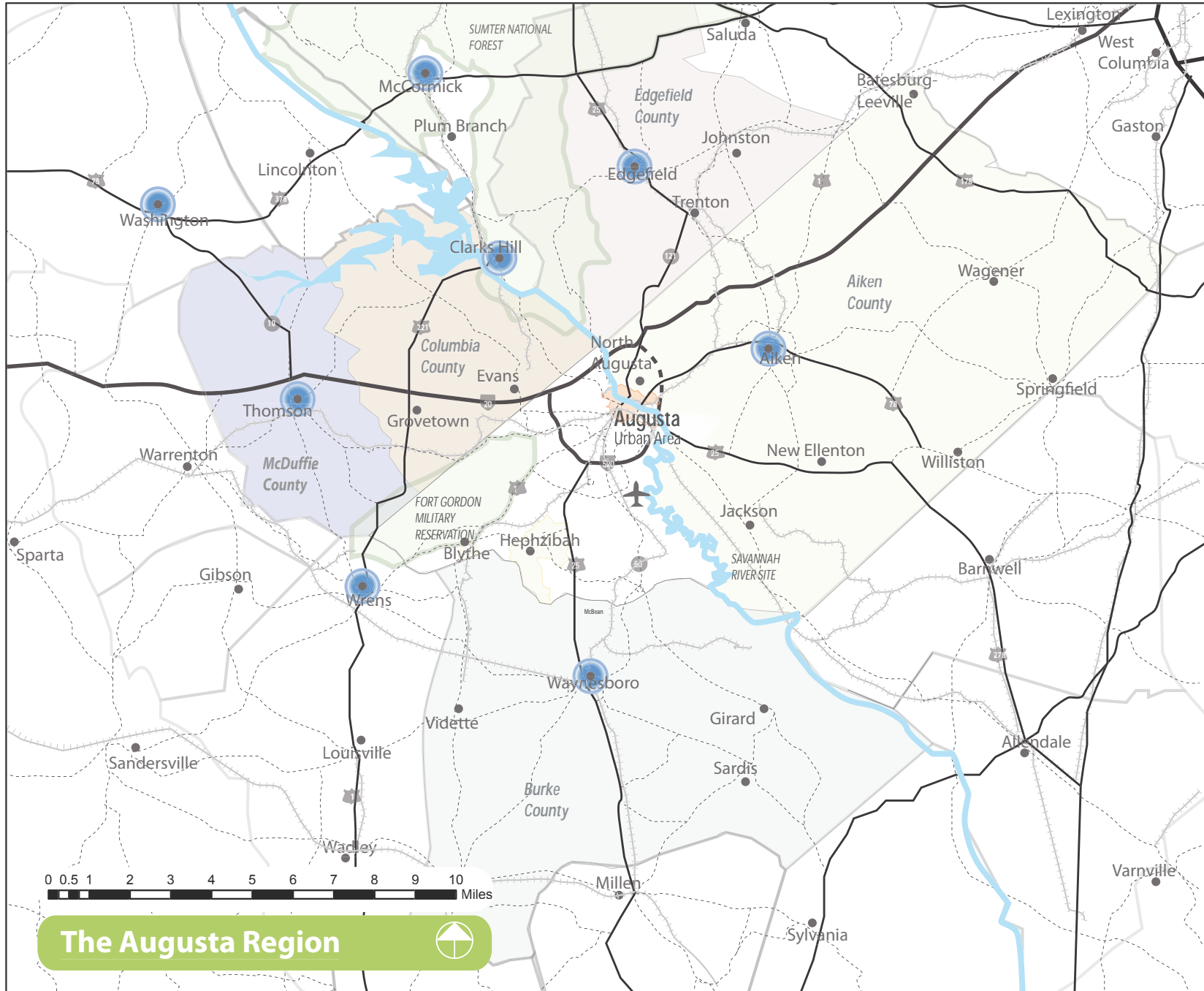
Figure 1. Augusta's Immediate Regional Context

Senior Faculty from Georgia Tech School of Architecture at a recent well attended review of work to date.

Organization of this report

This report is organized into four sections, plus Appendices:

Introduction

Lays out the Overall goals and objectives of this Agenda; the purpose of this Findings Report; activities to date; agenda approach; the schedule and organization of this Findings Report.

Description of Core Elements

These are the Topic Areas identified and discussed in the two Public Workshops, and include:

- Overall Economic Development
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Gateways and Corridors
- Open Space
- Community Services

We'd like to change the names of two of the Character Areas:

South Augusta to Augusta Midlands

South Richmond to Augusta Farms

The City's Physical Character Areas

Provides and brief description of each of the seven character areas identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and identifies, by Core Element, key issues and opportunities in each.

Conclusions for Going Forward

A major outcome of this effort is to create something that has a larger purpose that people will support and contribute to. The Findings Report will identify:

- Augusta's Past and Present
- Description of the Agenda's Core Building Blocks
- Augusta's Physical Character Areas
- Going Forward
- Appendices

Legend:

- Belair
- Augusta Midlands
- West Augusta
- Old City
- East Augusta
- Fort Gordon
- Augusta Farms
- Blythe / Hephzibah

1 Commissioner Districts

Character Areas

Figure 2. Character Areas + Commissioner Districts
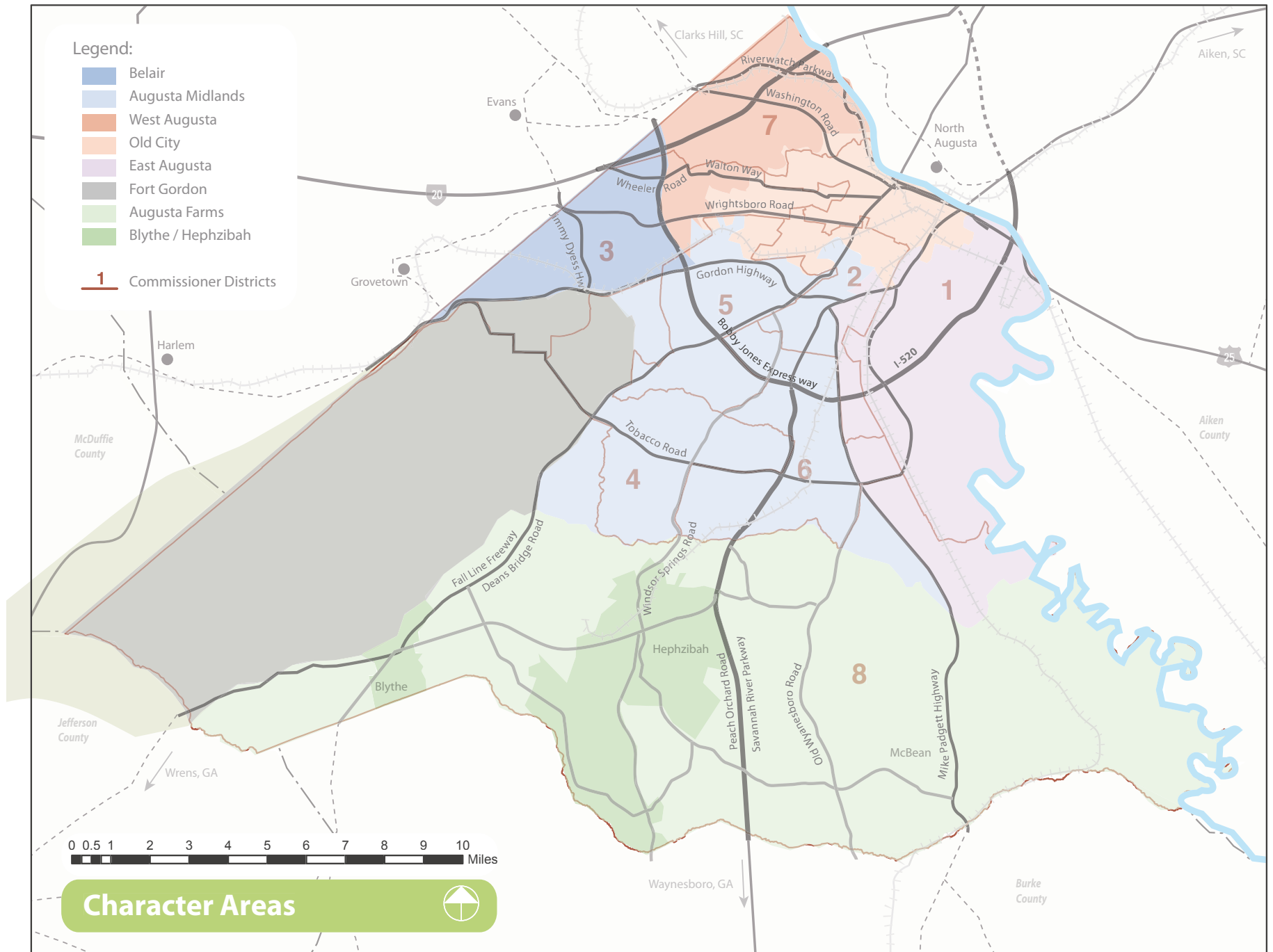
A Brief Look at Augusta: Past and Present

The history of Augusta has not only been one of typical growth and evolution, but also of reinvention as city and county have merged into one.

It is time to step back and re-examine where they each are, how we got here, explore the full potential of this city, and consider how we might begin to work together to realize these new directions.

The Land

Augusta lies in the heart of the Southeastern US, on the Georgia/ South Carolina line, two hours due east of Atlanta. Formed by the Savannah River, the Fall Line runs through her and the resulting river shoals were a important for Native Americans in Pre-Columbian times.

The city was sited here because this was the end of navigable water coming up from Savannah and because the river shoals were gathering place and a natural crossing point for local tribes. Thus this site was strategic, from both a military and a trade point of view.

Augusta is big, having gone through a recent consolidation of the city and the county. Roughly triangular in shape, she is more than thirty miles on each side. River lowlands on the east give way to rolling hills to the west. From north to south the landform is a series and hills and valleys, with creeks running west to east emptying into swampland and eventually the Savannah.

Soils vary significantly across the land. The best farmland in Augusta is found in the southwestern part of the city around the independent communities of Blythe and Hephzibah.

Aerial image of the Historic Canal in Harrisburg

The People

Adventurers, entrepreneurs, farmers, laborers, immigrant servants and slaves settled Augusta. It is a border town, often at odds with its neighbors across the Savannah in South Carolina.

Augusta traditionally was a mix of city dwellers in the historic city (Old City) and individual family settlements and communities in the rural areas of what was once Richmond County. This City/ County organization led to a sense of isolation and distrust between city and rural communities, which must be overcome.

Today the two parts, i.e. City/County are moving together. The rural areas are quickly becoming bed-room communities, with extensive subdivision development, mostly in an unplanned and ad-hoc manner.

Within the past two decades the City has become an African American majority, and there is an emerging Asian and Hispanic presence. For the most part, these groups continue to live in self imposed and economically imposed segregated communities with in the city.

With Fort Gordon, the Medical College of Georgia and the Savannah River Site, Augusta enjoys a high percentage of well-educated professionals. However, the City lags its metropolitan region and the state in both the overall level of education of its populous.

Most who live here, like it very much. Many of the retiring military from Fort Gordon express a desire to stay here, if there are job opportunities. Families with the means to live anywhere else in the world elect to stay and contribute to this area. Outside professionals, lured by the Medical College, the Savannah River Site and other institutions build their lives here and enjoy it very much.

Caption

Governance

James Oglethorpe's strong, military leadership founded the City and set its direction. As settlement in Georgia expanded westward, for a brief time, Augusta was the capitol. The Civil War brought a Reconstruction government and eventually Jim Crow laws, enforced until the mid 1950's. During this period, separate city and county governments emerged. For more than a century there was little interaction between the two.

In the 1960's the City of Augusta came under federal mandate due to its position on integration. Government was reorganized, with redistricting imposed to insure adequate representation for African Americans.

In 1996, the people of Augusta voted to consolidate the City and County governments and the City Charter was abandoned. In the process Hephzibah and Blythe, two communities in the south of Richmond County became independent municipalities within the county.

Today, Augusta is governed by a weak Mayor, a City Administrator and a Board of Commissioners with districts shaped to assure equal Black and White representation. Department Heads answer directly to the Commissioners. There is no active redevelopment agency within the city government, and most planning and implementation is done through an ad-hoc system of state authorities, the regional transportation planning agency and private initiatives.

Continued mistrust, though improving, and the lack of the institutional capability to provide coordinated, planning and implementation presents a challenge to insuring that future planning and development are carried out in thoughtful, efficient, integrated and sustainable fashion.

Economic Development

James Oglethorpe founded Augusta at the end of navigable waters of the Savannah as a military and trading post. She developed into a farming town and a shipping point for cotton from upriver. She was the state's capitol for a short time, then after a period of stagnation, in 1846, built its canal system and became a thriving industrial city. In the early 20th century, before Florida began to develop, Augusta and its region became a major recreation destination, particularly for wealthy northerners interested in horses and golf. The Medical College of Georgia started here in the 1800's.

Augusta was always the regional center. The major retail started on Broad Street, but soon there were small settlements, Bath, Blythe, Hephzibah, McBean, Summerville and others scattered around the county. After the mid-1940's retail followed highway development and sprawl into the South and West Augusta character areas and more recently into Belair.

Post WWII, Augusta has benefited greatly from its proximity to the water resource of the Savannah River, with development of the so called Miracle Mile, at industrial

Industry in East Augusta

The Sibley Mill and Powder Works Chimney in the Old City area

manufacturers, and the Savannah River Site in particular. Camp Gordon evolved into Fort Gordon and it is by far the area's largest employer, followed by the area's strong health sciences industry.

Today, there are over 500,000 people living in the six county metropolitan area, with approximately 40% of them in Augusta. By 2030 regional population is forecasted to be over 650,000, however Augusta's share is expected to drop to 34% by 2030. Growth is projected to be modest at best.

Augusta's incomes are well below both its region and state, as are housing prices. As manufacturing jobs decline, they are being replaced by jobs in the service, health care, energy and defense sectors. The housing market remains strong. Within the past 2 years, nearly 2500 homes have been purchased at a median cost of $99,000

Despite low-income levels overall, coupled with a low number of undergraduate and graduate students in the area, there is a strong professional base, due largely to the health sciences and technology concentration found here. This professional resource base suggests potential for expansion of both the technology and the

higher education industries.

Augusta has all the attributes to make it a major tourist destination. Given its climate; historic buildings; the river, creeks, ponds, canals; and its sports and arts heritage and reputation, with the Masters Tournament and James Brown topping the list, Augusta is poised to become a significant visitor and convention destination.

Transportation

Augusta was a river town. Augusta was a railroad town. Augusta was on the main north south highway, US 1, but is now off the main north/south interstate corridors.

Today, Augusta is emerging from a time of expansive roadway construction. These projects are mostly roadway and bridge projects that improve the function of the road network within the city.

Some of the recent, major transportation undertakings include:

- Completion of a new passenger terminal at Augusta Regional Airport at Bush Field.

- Near completion of Interstate 520, Palmetto Parkway, which will open up a new entrance to Augusta and downtown on the east side.

- Widening of Interstate 20 through the city and building the fly-over intersection at Interstate 520, Bobby Jones Expressway, providing an improved entrance to Augusta via the other end of

Interstate 520 construction

I-520.

- Extension of Saint Sebastian Way north to Broad and Reynolds Streets and extension of Greene Street west to Riverwatch Parkway, providing a congestion-relieving access to and from the medical area and an overpass over the CSX Railroad west of the Central Business District.

- Completion of the Fall Line Freeway west toward Macon, via U.S. 1, Deans Bridge Road.

- Completion of the Savannah River Parkway south toward Savannah, via U.S. 25, Peach Orchard Road.

Future projects for the area identified thus far include:

- Major roadway upgrades on Windsor Springs Road and along the southern section of Fifteenth Street.

- Extension of the Fall Line Parkway from Augusta, through Macon to Columbus, Georgia to Birmingham.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan recognized the imperatives of dealing with resources management, pollution and climate change demand reconsideration of this pattern Some options are summarized below:

- Identify areas where higher-density, mixed-use development would be appropriate and develop the applicable regulations.

- Promote or require more street and sidewalk interconnections between neighborhoods.

- • Promote the use of a grid or modified grid street pattern in new subdivisions

- Implement projects in the ARTS Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plan that create a general network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the city."

The Westobou Vision, the recently completed urban area plan, called for a comprehensive review of transportation projects recommended in the course of that work.

Downtown Bus Terminal

Greenspace System

Oglethorpe laid out Augusta's street grid with open space in mind. Broad Street, still the acclaimed widest street in the country was originally 300 feet wide and was a true multi-use space. Open farmland came up to the city edges. People used the riverbank, for both work and leisure purposes. Eventually, green medians were laid out along the major downtown streets, Broad and Greene. In the 1800's, the First Level Canal was a popular recreation venue, with boats cruising from the boat basin near the present St. Sebastian corridor all the way up the canal's 10 mile length to the head gates. There, a park of sorts, included a dance pavilion, BBQ shed and screened in picnic area.

As Summerville developed, wide, well-landscaped streets with planted medians were laid out, including Central and Henry Streets. As Augusta became a tourist destination around the turn of the century, a number of golf course were developed including the famed Augusta National Golf Club.

As in most cities, public parks developed haphazardly, some by the mill enterprises, such as Chaffee Park, others by the city. Lake Olmstead was a popular picnicking and boating destination. Augusta's first organized baseball park was downtown, adjacent the canal and Fifteenth Street. Over the years, smaller parks were scattered throughout the neighborhoods, The largest of the older neighborhood parks, Pendleton Park is now financed through a trust.

The city's best developed and most highly used parks today include the Augusta Common, the Riverwalk and Diamond Lakes. The Savannah River has become a major recreational open space element and the Savannah River Bluffs park near Bush Field is popular for many.

The Augusta Canal Heritage Area has developed the former canal town path into a multi-use corridor and is building an extensive new trail between the river and the canal, and through the Laney Walker neighborhood. Plans are afoot to create an extensive bikeway using the existing levee for downtown to the Savannah River Bluffs Dam and Park the along Butler Creek, perhaps as far a Fort Gordon.

Oglethorpe's grid and Broad Street's green median

Extending these efforts into developing an interconnected system of paths and parkways for Augusta should be a major priority.

Land Preservation is another facet of building a greenspace strategy for Augusta. Along the river, and its creeks there are extensive tracts of undeveloped and underdeveloped land that should be protected and preserved. The farmland in the southern third of Augusta offers an important cultural landscape that is not only productive, but also provide important habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna.

The Central Savannah River Land Trust in conjunction with the City are the most active contributors to preserving these landscapes.

Augusta farms

Building Stronger Neighborhoods

Augusta's first settlements were around the fort located at what is today St. Paul's church on Reynolds Street and along the Savannah River and various trading routes. During the Industrial Revolution, the advent of rail travel and textile manufacturing sparked further development and expansion around the downtown area. Augusta annexed nearby Summerville and the unincorporated areas of Forest Hills and Highland Park in the early twentieth century, acquiring a blend of newer and older housing stock.

While urban development flourished in the city, the rest of Richmond County remained largely agrarian. Until the 1940s, most residential development was centered in small, incorporated towns throughout the county, such as Bath, Blythe, Mt. Eton, and Hephzibah. Following World War II, suburban development exploded throughout the county and continues today.

At present, about 30,000 acres of Augusta is devoted to residential land use. The prevalent type of residential

unit, an estimated 62.2% in 2007, is detached single-family housing. Duplexes, apartments, manufactured homes, and group quarters comprise the rest of the city's housing stock. According to the American Community Housing Survey's 2007 estimates, 53% of the housing units in Augusta were built between 1940 and 1979 and 31% were built between 1980 and 1999, mostly in affordable, middle class subdivisions.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan projects 13,000 additional housing units will be constructed by 2030, mostly in Augusta Midlands. Although detached single-family units will continue to dominate the market, the Plan identifies an increased demand for attached and semi-detached units on small lots, attributable to an aging population and growth in empty-nester and one-person households.

Some major housing and development initiatives currently underway are:

- Revitalization of the Laney Walker/ Bethlehem neighborhoods aimed at stabilizing the residential and commercial zones while celebrating historical and cultural significance. Five new homes on Holley Street have already been constructed for this project, and others were in the works.

- City application for Neighborhood Stabilization Program II funds to restart the Village at Goshen development. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is expected to announce applicants selected to receive grants in December, 2009.

- The redevelopment of Underwood Homes and the possible collaboration with the adjacent Marion Homes redevelopment and the rest of Sand Bar Ferry Village.

- The proactive efforts in Harrisburg to revitalize that area and to make it safer for its residents.

Urban core neighborhoods

Traditional housing within Old City

New development in Laney Walker

Public Services

Public Services are instrumental components for the day-to-day operation of a modern city. Apart from fulfilling basic needs, they are also crucially instrumental for urban growth and progress.

Public Services in Augusta include:

- Public Safety Services such as the Richmond County Sheriff's Office; 19 Fire Protection stations serving Augusta and Blythe; EMS; Animal Control

- The Richmond County Board of Education which operates 60 public schools including 3 magnet schools

- The Department of Parks and Recreation which manages 64 city facilities

- Utilities, including Potable water distribution, wastewater treatment, and storm water management systems Solid waste management, as well as electrical and telephone service.

- Public facilities including Libraries, museums, community centers and human service centers

- Civic and Communal facilities including the James Brown Arena, the Imperial Theatre, the River Walk, Phinizy Swamp Nature Park, etc.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan indicates city-wide consistency with the current Delivery Service Strategies as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The Plan also states that enhancements may be necessary as part of the 2008 Service Delivery Strategy Update.

The water works and sewerage system of Augusta has probably never been in better condition to serve existing customers and to support growth for the future.

The location, capacity and future expansion of these utility systems will be major factors in governing where future growth will occur and what its character and density will be.

Description of the Agenda's Core Building Blocks

A number of Key Building Blocks were identified in the Public Workshops, through a special series of Topic Area Discussions.

Work to date suggests that the Agenda for the City and for each of its Character Areas be built on five key considerations, or Topic Areas, with targeted recommendations for each, including:

- Overall Economic Development
- Gateways and Corridors Enhancement
- Open Space Expansion and Preservation
- Neighborhood Revitalization
- Community Services Delivery

These are the building blocks for the Augusta Development Agenda. Each is described in further detail below and in the following section, applied through specific, recommended projects.

Overall Economic Development

Augusta's economic base is sound and diverse, with a high potential for expansion. Going forward, the goal is equality through city-wide collaboration.

Within the broader Augusta Development Agenda, the overall economic development agenda is rooted on three themes that came out of the public workshops:

1. We believe that Augusta can build a more potent economy based on technology, high tech manufacturing, medical facilities, and education.

2. We believe that Augusta has the climate, natural resources, history, and heritage to become a major tourist destination, regional cultural and entertainment center, and attractive retirement destination.

3. We believe that Augusta can revitalize its older neighborhoods through targeted development of mixed-use centers at key intersections.

Each of these three themes is translated into a series of site-specific activities aimed at creating transformable change in the future direction of the overall Augusta economy and in the economies of its many neighborhoods.

Augusta's Economic Foundation

Augusta is the center of a metropolitan region that includes six counties in two states. Long the center of commerce, the city now shares that role with massive 'Big Box" and strip development which is occurring throughout the region, but in Columbia and Aiken counties and along I-20 and I-520 in particular.

Residential construction remains a significant part of the Augusta economy, particularly for affordable sub-division development away from its core in an expanding suburban ring. The water resource of the Savannah River has made Augusta an attractive manufacturing and development site since mid-nineteeth century.

Today, the big forces driving Augusta's economy are Fort Gordon, the city's health sciences industry, and the history and tradition of the downtown core as the region's center for sports and cultural venues, drinking, dining and entertainment. The city's workforce is well prepared to fill jobs in the technology based service industry.

Medical College of Georgia

PRIORITY ONE: Building on the City's Attributes for Economic Development

In keeping with the input from the public sessions, moving forward, three categories of economic initiatives have been identified on which to focus:

- Technology, Health Sciences, and Education;

- Tourism, Culture, and Entertainment;

- Neighborhood Revitalization, focusing on Mixed-Use Centers development in key locations near or within existing neighborhoods.

Each is described further below.

1. Technology, Health Sciences, and Education

Key opportunities exist to build a more potent Augusta economy based on technology, higher education, and medical facilities emphasizing high tech manufacturing, research and development, and education. The increased student, faculty, and researcher presence at these centers and institutions can become economic engines for exciting mixed business-residential hubs in many of the character areas.

The Technology, Medical, and Education Agenda should include elements designed to support the evolution of the Augusta and Greater Augusta industry mix into a growing, sustainable 21st Century economy. This can also help Augusta's neighborhoods share in this sustainable prosperity through targeted investments in education, employment, and health care services infrastructure at nodes that encourage mutually reinforcing development.

2. Tourism, Culture, and Entertainment

Augusta's climate, natural resources, history, and heritage can support the city a major tourist destination. It was one in the first parts of the 20th century, new and expanded attractions clustered near current arts/culture and sports anchors will create the synergies necessary for major economic spill overs in lodging and dining. One of these tourist clusters will include expanded

Legend:

- ⊙ Priority One Projects
- ○ Other Project Possibilities
- Old City
- Fort Gordon
- Industrial Area
- Rural Area
- Post WWII Suburban Development
- Creekways
- ✳ Key Destination
- ✳ Major Greenspace

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

Augusta National

Lake Olmsted

Columbia County

Grovetown

Augusta State

Medical Area

Augusta Mall

Wrightsboro Road

Harlem

Fort Gordon

McDuffie County

Aiken County

Bush Field   Savannah River Bluffs Park

Diamond Lakes

Jefferson County

Wrens, GA

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Miles

Economic Development
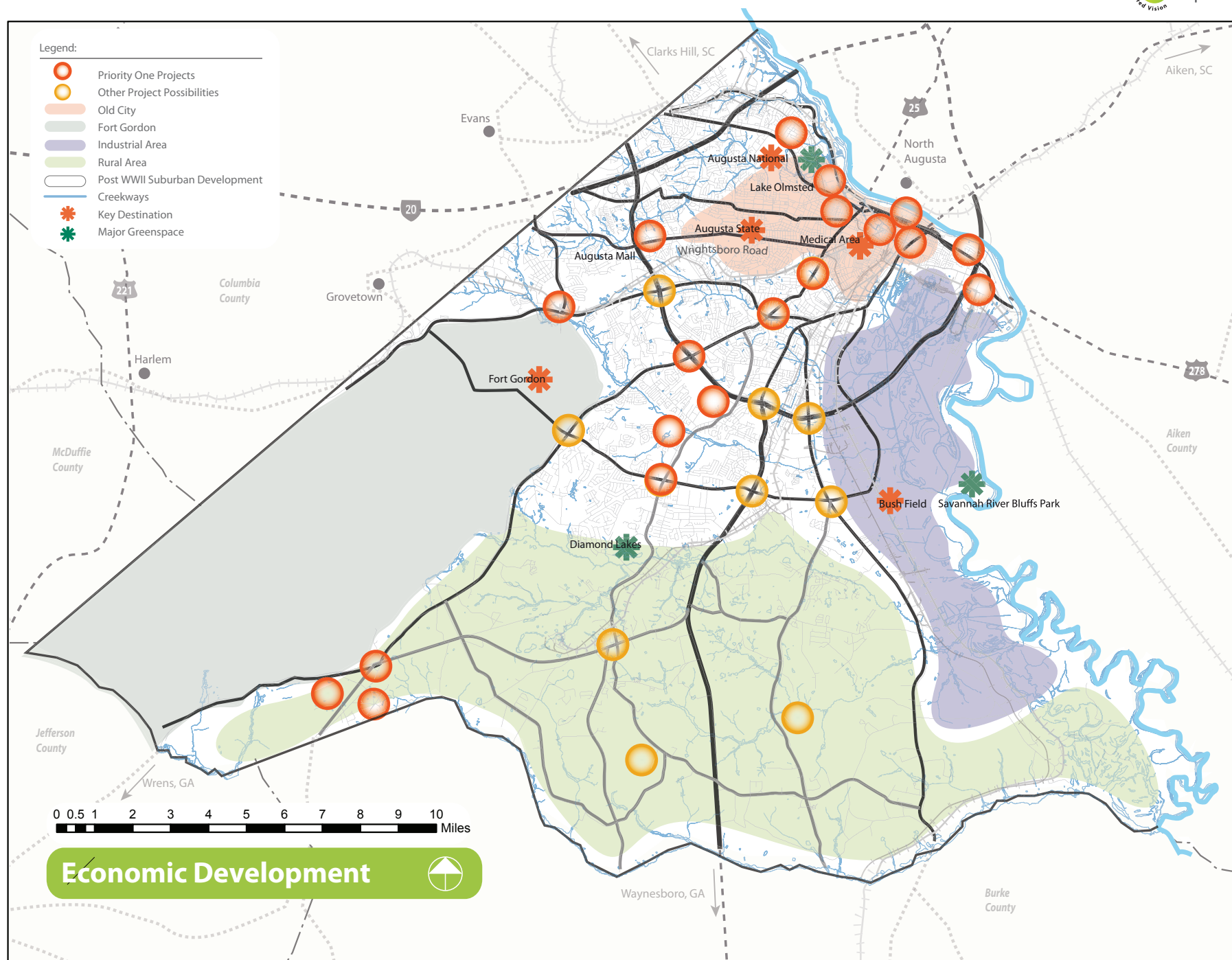
Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

Figure 3. Economic Development Map

riverside development with restaurants, water taxis, and riverfront access between 5th and 13th Streets. An added benefit of this tourism and cultural focus will be increased interest in Augusta as a retirement destination. The world wide fame of the Masters Golf Tournament and Augusta's native son, James Brown and the overall high reputation of the local arts scene provide significant opportunity for the City.

Statue of James Brown in Downtown

3. Neighborhood Revitalization and new Mixed-Use Centers

Many of Augusta's older neighborhoods, traditional and early suburban, have become anonymous areas, spread across the land, with no community focus or a sense of place attributable to them. In addition to programs aimed at revitalizing the existing stock, these neighborhoods can benefit through targeted new development of denser, mixed-use centers at key intersections, within or abutting them.

These rejuvenated hubs will be organized around expanded retail, governmental, and/or community service clusters. Coordinated programs of residential rehabilitation, infill housing, and denser residential development patterns will support these expanded services and create high-quality, walkable communities that can be further supported by regional transit improvements concentrated at these hubs.

Specific opportunities identified to date are scattered throughout the City and in the seven Character Areas, which form the organizing framework for this Findings effort. These potential opportunities are

catalogued and described in the summaries of each Physical Character Area set forth in the next section.

Gateways and Corridor Enhancement

Transportation ideas received the highest number of votes of any topic at the first public meeting, with strong interest in developing improved an street system and alternatives to the automobile, such as improved bus transit, dedicated bicycle ways, and a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

The first two public workshops made clear that the citizens of Augusta are concerned about the function of the road network to move traffic and to support economic development, as well as the appearance of the city as viewed from the travelled ways. These themes were reinforced in the second workshop, where transportation-related ideas emerged not just from the Gateways and Corridors topic area, but also from all of the other topic areas. The following statements summarized priority goals of the participants:

1. We believe in realizing the "Garden City" concept through a layered treatment approach dependent on road corridor type.

2. We believe that a network of mixed use parkways should link key destinations throughout Augusta through multiple means (car, bike, bus).

3. We believe in further reinforcing these mixed-use parkways by developing prototype communities at key nodes along them.

We believe these goals are best accomplished using Context Sensitive Solution techniques for planning and design.

Context Sensitive Solutions

The concept of designing major urban thoroughfares (arterial routes and collector) according to the context in which they are located is an emerging practice that is on a national level by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Congress on New Urbanism, Federal Highway Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency. On a state level, the Georgia Department of Transportation has espoused the new design approach and published a manual of practice on the subject. The stage is thus set, and the opportunity exists for Augusta to be the laboratory where these new design approaches can be demonstrated at a real life scale.

Augusta's Key Transportation Systems

While there is a natural focus on Augusta's major roadways, the Augusta Development Agenda must consider the full range of transporting people and goods to and through Augusta. The transportation systems of Augusta are well described from in the Augusta-Richmond County Comprehensive Plan. Discussions focus on observations and findings related to the function of these systems and their relevance in defining the Augusta Development Agenda. Each system is briefly discussed below:

Highway Connections, Arterials and Local Streets

Augusta has good regional highway connections in an east-west direction via Interstate 20 toward both Atlanta and Columbia. It lacks a north-south interstate route, which would provide direct connection to and from the port of Savannah on the south, and north to Interstate 85 and beyond. Such a route would provide a traffic relieving alternative route around the Atlanta area for through traffic.

Commercial arterial roadways come into the downtown area from all directions. In many areas they are over built, poorly landscaped and lined with marginal commercial uses, unregulated signage and imposing utility poles.

Many of the local streets, particularly in the outlying subdivisions have no gutters and only minimal sidewalks and most often no street trees.

Aviation

Augusta has two airports, which are important gateways into the city: The Augusta Regional Airport at Bush Field, southeast of the city, provides commercial and charter services for passengers, air cargo, and military pilot training facilities. Daniel Field, located within the urban area on Highland Avenue, serves charter flights, pilot training and other general aviation functions.

Rail Transportation

Passenger rail service in no longer available in Augusta at present. Freight service is provided by two carriers, Norfolk Southern Railway Company and CSX Transportation, Inc.

Public Transit

Augusta Public Transit operates ten routes within the city providing service in most areas Monday through Saturday, with a peak fleet of 13 buses. Routes are mostly radial to and from a central Transfer Facility on Broad Street west of Fifteenth Street.

Future Alternative Modes

In addition to the modes mentioned above, Augusta has a unique opportunity to build on its being home to two of the world's leading low-speed, electrical vehicles manufacturer's, Club Car and EZ-Go. A strategy is possible to develop and harness this expertise, both for private and public transport. Key Augusta roadways could be reconfigured to facilitate implementation of such an initiative.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

There are very few bicycle lanes, routes or bikeways in the city that can be used as alternative modes of transportation. Bikeways have been in the planning stages since 1994, and the current ARTS Long-Range Transportation Plan shows thirty-five corridors as potential routes for either dedicated or road-sharing bike routes
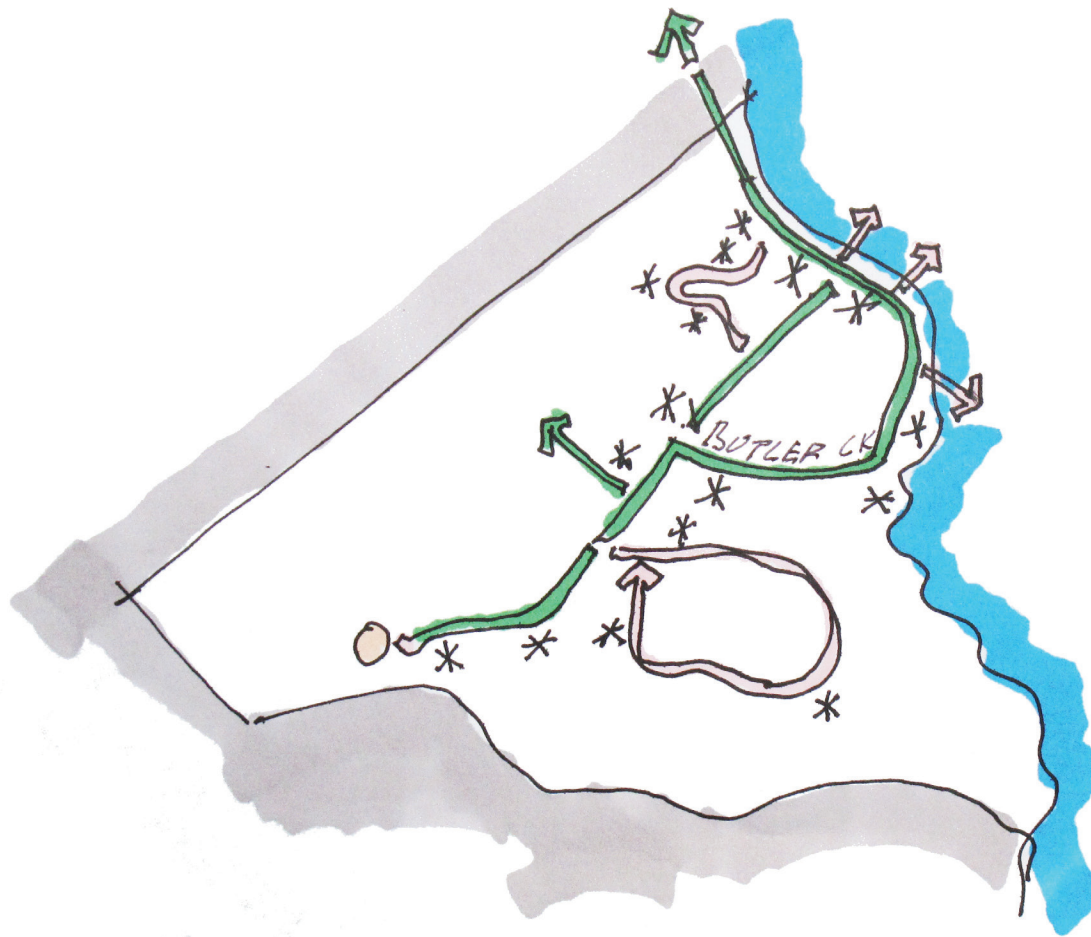
Figure 4. Potential bike trials and connections in Augusta

Of these various transportation systems, it's the Highway Connections, Arterials and Local Streets that contribute the most to the look and feel of Augusta. They serve the most people and they have the most impact in that they are the framework over which the fabric of the City is laid.

PRIORITY ONE: A Context Sensitive Roadway System Strategy for Augusta

The goal is to make Augusta a model of Context Sensitive Solution for the rest of the state and the nation. Within this model, a multi-pronged approach to roadway development and management is recommended, that considers three critical aspects of the Augusta roadway system:

1. Moving Traffic – how efficiently the road system facilitates moving people from place to place across the city and to individual destinations along the road frontages.

2. Establishing a Good Impression - the view from the road is the scene as it appears to a driver at city gateways that create a positive first impression.

3. Economic Vitality – of the land uses of parcels that front the roadway.

These organizing elements of roadway planning and design derive from and build upon the Context Sensitive Solution Solutions initiative of the Georgia Department of Transportation. Each is discussed in turn below.

1. Traffic Moving Function

Most travel in the city is by automobiles that travel along a system of roads that has evolved over the history of the growth of the city. Some of the best routes extend around the central city rather than into it, like the circumferential route, Bobby Jones Expressway. Fort Gordon Highway was the first such route, built to connect the former World War II army camp as it transitioned to the more permanent Fort Gordon. Rural roads beyond Gordon Highway were melded into it, with the effect of diverting traffic from the historical routes that formerly extended straight into what was then the entire city. Thus the Augusta Development Agenda should:

Improve Connections to and from the South

There are very few direct connections from the south part of Augusta to what we now think of as downtown, so that Augusta lacks a good thoroughfare to provide north-south continuity. By contrast, during that same historical period of city growth, other

parts of the town were not cut off by new circumferential highway construction and the radial routes to the west, north, and east were maintained intact.

Maintain reasonable Level of Service (LOS)

Augusta roadway system is a network of interstates, highways, commercial arterial routes, and local streets, classified according to the Georgia Department of Transportation's system,.

The traffic carrying capacities of all of these route types in Augusta are generally acceptable, corresponding typically to Level of Service (LOS) C or better. For the urban arterials, this means that the traffic volumes are between 50% and 70% of the capacity of the road, and that the average travel speeds are about 22 to 28 miles at the peak hour.

There are surprisingly few areas where congestion is worse than LOS-C. Generally these are isolated places near employment destinations, such as Fort Gordon and the medical area, in highly urbanized areas and shopping districts, near interstate highway interchanges, and along the major north-south routes extending south of Bobby Jones Expressway, Interstate 520.

Diminish Train/Motor Vehicle conflicts in the Urban Core

The three railroad lines crisscrossing the downtown impede the ability of the downtown core to grow, thus impacting the region as a whole. Short of relocating these movements out of town, the practical solution is to find more ways for grade-separated crossings between downtown retail/office core and nearby major destinations, such as the medical campus, the new judiciary complex, and development to the south. Two such links, one from the new St. Sabastian Way and the other at 10th Street have been identified in the Urban Area Plan- The Westobou Vision. The soon to be completed Riverwatch/Greene Street connection will also help.

Trains often disrupt traffic in the downtown area

2. The View from the Road

Many of Augusta's roads are ugly, and people know it. The results of the two public workshops held in this planning process thus far made clear that the citizens of Augusta are concerned about the appearance of the city as viewed from the travelled ways.

The plan will explore ways of improving the view from the road along commercial corridors and at gateways, through better landscaping, more attractive sign control, shielded lighting, and better urban design considerations for development and/or redevelopment on the abutting parcels. At least six new Initiatives have thus far been identified for further study:

Establish a Georgia State Gateways Program

A new statewide initiative built on the premise that the motorists first impression of Georgia is very important. Gateway cities could enhance the function of welcoming people to Georgia by giving visitors, tourists and thru-travellers a good first impression of the state. They would be encouraged to promote the regional, as well as state-wide attractions. In exchange, the state would fully landscape and maintain the gateway entrances (highway interchanges and corridors into the Gateway City) to a high standard, as well as provide state of art signage system. This would occur at each interstate entry into the state, i.e. I-85, from Alabama-Columbus/La Grange and from South Carolina- Lavonia; I-75, from Florida-Valdosta and from Tennessee- Dalton; I-95 from South Carolina- Savannah and from Florida- St.Mary's/ Brunswick; I-20, from Alabama- Tallapoosa/ Bremen/ Carrolton and from South Carolina-Augusta/Evans; I-16- from Florida- Savannah and the future Fall Line Parkway: Columbus to Augusta/ Evans

This state wide program could disburse tourism and enhancement dollars to the further reaches of the state, providing direct regional benefit, while giving a memorable first impression of Georgia.

Create Garden City Parkways

Designation of select parkways linking key destinations and targeting them for both roadway and streetscape improvement in conformance with stricter parkway standards. A Farms to City Parkway, perhaps the most exciting of these would be along the north / south corridor from the Burke County line to downtown

In addition to better landscape treatments, these areas would have bicycle and pedestrian pathways and well designated crosswalks. Trolley type shuttle service should be considered along in-town segments of the Farm to City Parkway and the Westobou Parkway.

Improve Urban Arterial Corridors

These are existing arterial roadways in need of both public streetscaping as well as better landscape and signage controls and clean-up procedures. These areas would also have safe areas for pedestrians to cross.

Preserve Rural Arterial and Secondary Corridors

The southern part of Augusta is the setting for a rich cultural landscape of rolling farmland, pasture and forest. These are slowly being impacted by spot development which is not in keeping with the area's rural character. Guidelines should be developed

to insure that they remain attractive corridors through this rural landscape.

Upgrade Local Streets

Sidewalks, curbs, lighting and above all street tree plantings are important parts of the neighborhood fabric in both the traditional city neighborhoods, and the city's many subdivisions.

Emphasize the Garden City's Beauty Spots

These are the special places to slow down and enjoy the view, whether its an open pasture or a distant view of the Powder Works chimney. These are the memories that motorists carry of Augusta.
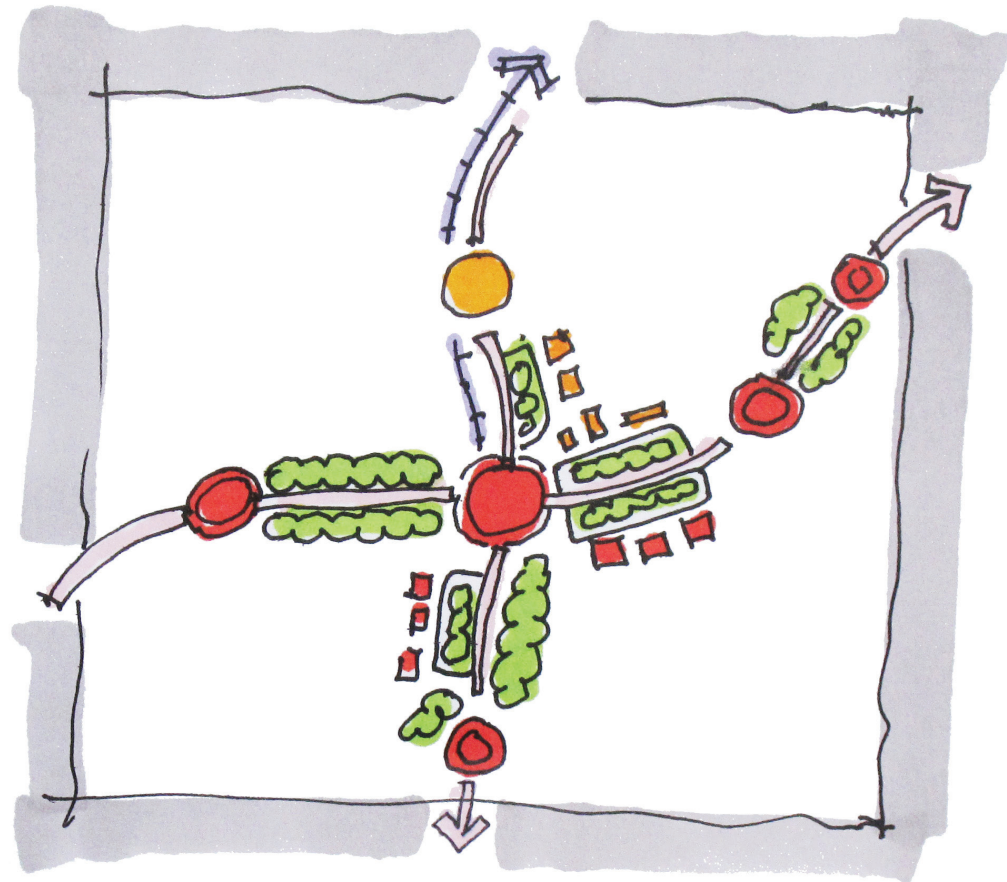

Figure 5. "Hubs and Links" diagram for arterial connections throughout Augusta

3. Economic Vitality of Commercial Corridors

Automobile oriented commercial development lines many of Augusta's roadway corridors. New development at the margin of the city has attracted many of the national retail stores to new locations, leaving the old locations vying for smaller and local business tenants who often do not need the large spaces that are available.

Areas of parking once required by regulation are larger than needed to support the new uses, leading to the possibility of parking reductions and infill development. This development might take many forms as discussed elsewhere in this report, but from a transportation point of view, the opportunity exists to take advantage of the existing roadway infrastructure, and improving the frontage with landscaping, trees, more attractive signs, and new infill construction brought forward toward the public right of way.

New clustered development can be encouraged to occur at key intersections in a mixed-use urban design form, which can be supported by pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes of transportation, in addition to the automobile. A number of these Nodes have been identified including:

Concentrate on National Retailer Sites

While Augusta has a number of major highway interchanges with its two existing interstate corridors, I-20 and I-520, economic forecasts predict that the market will support major new big-box style development in only one additional location. Initial review of possible locations suggest that the I-520/ Peach Orchard Road intersection holds high potential. Second, the focus should be on insuring the accessibility and vitality of the Augusta Mall and the Wrightsboro Road corridor. Other interchanges will host typical highway oriented uses such as gas stations, fast foods and related services. The I-520/ Sand Bar Ferry intersections will become a key area as this circumferential is completed. Design and landscaping standards for these must be developed and aggressively enforced at these "first impression" locations.

Rezone Arterial Commercial Corridors

Initial findings suggest that a "Nodes and Linkages" strategy would be appropriate to development of sustainable, future land-use patterns along roadway corridors in Augusta. This strategy clusters denser, mixed use development around
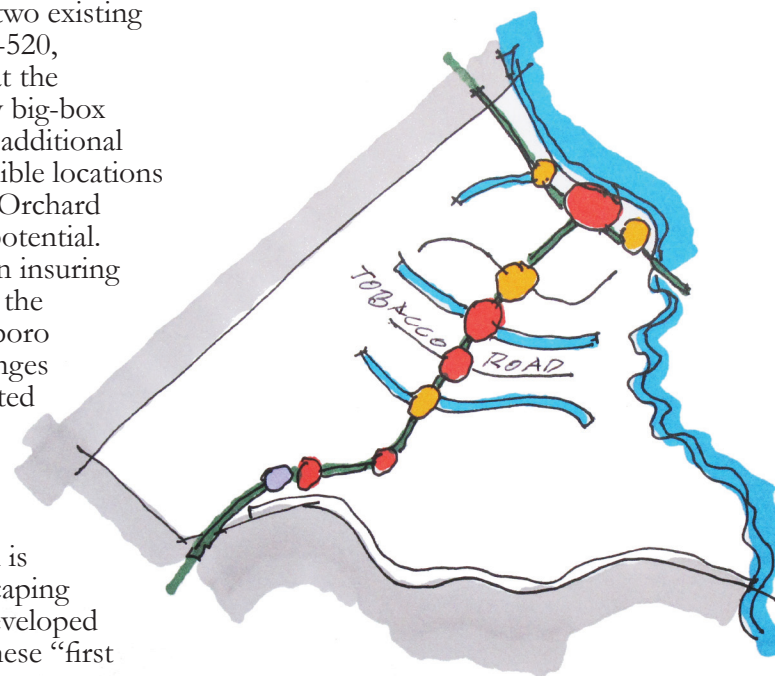
Figure 6. Potential "Farm to City" Parkway connecting rural, suburban, and urban areas of Augusta

Legend:

+−−+−−+	Rail Road
──	Bus Route
●●●●	Proposed Parkways
──	Interstates
──	Urban Arterials
──	Rural Arterials
──	Rivers / Creeks

Transportation System Corridors
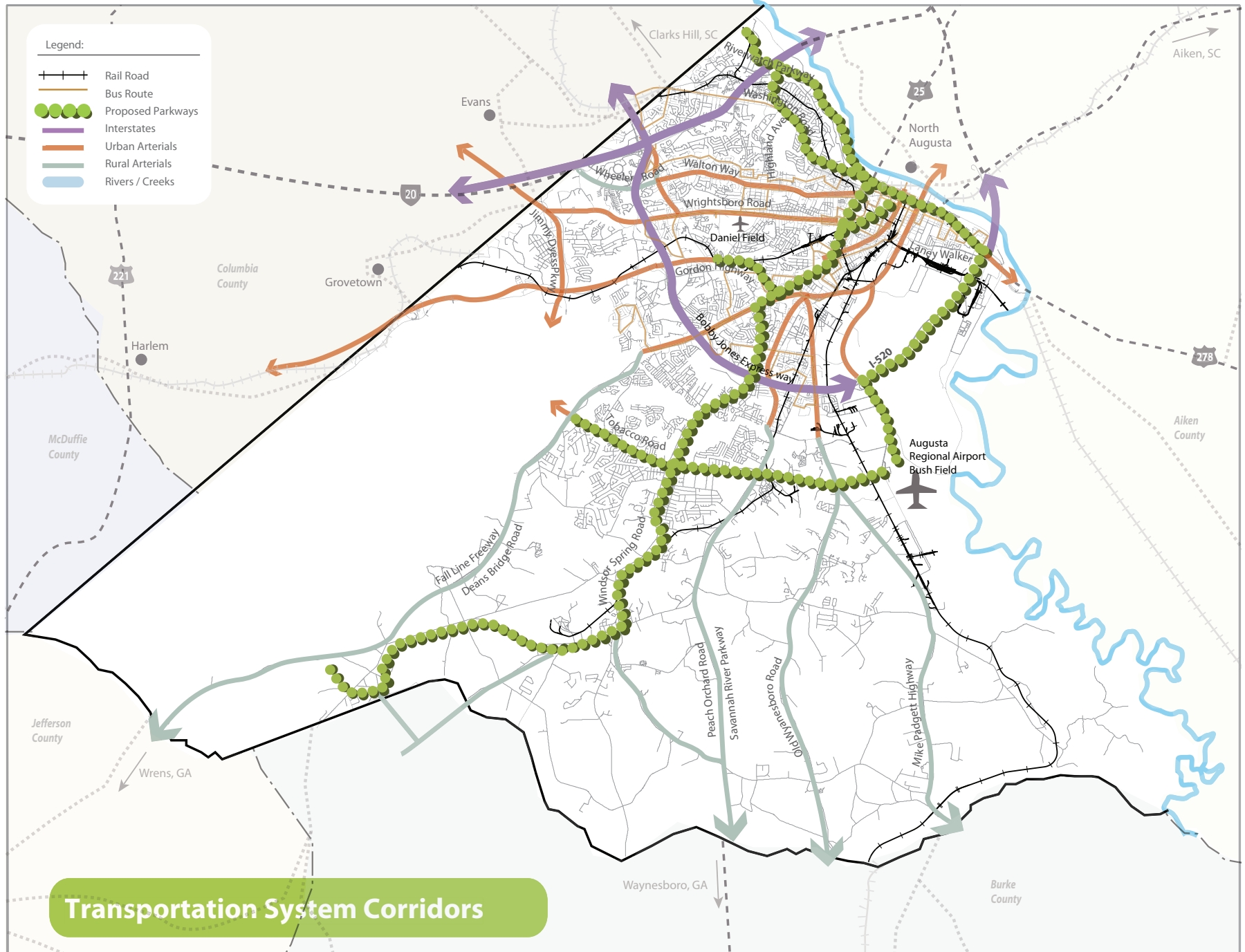
Figure 7. Augusta's Overall Transportation Map

key intersections and reserves the area between for larger office park/ residential community/ or open space uses, thus reducing curb cuts and the overwhelming sense of sprawl of marginal uses that is prevalent today. Several locations for these nodes have been identified and include:

- Sand Bar Ferry Village/I-520, noted in the Westobou Vision

- Tobacco Road and Windsor Springs

- Deans Bridge and Gordon Highway

Rethink Use of Existing Roads/ Streets/ Bridges

Several corridors have already been identified in this study, as well as in the Westobou Vision plan for the urban area, whose purpose should be fully re-considered. Ideas generated to date include:

- The Gordon Highway conversion to multipurpose parkway

- The establishment of key segments of Rte 88/Windsor Springs Road/ Richmond Hills Road/Deans Bridge Road/ Milledgeville road /15th Street as

a Farm to City Scenic Roadway

- Conversion of the Fifth Street bridge to serve either cross-river vehicle connections at Westobou Crossing (with a new pedestrian/bike bridge on rebuilt abutments), or conversion of the Fifth Street bridge to event/ pedestrian/ bicycle/ service use only.

- Removal of the elevated portion of the J. C. Calhoun expressway, with a new

surface road to the heart of the medical area and the remaining right of way converted to a major bicycle/pedestrian corridor to downtown.

- Recreating the original multi-purpose aspect of Broad Street, starting with the Westobou Vision recommendations for Marbury Village, i.e. Broad Street, from 10th to 13th Streets.
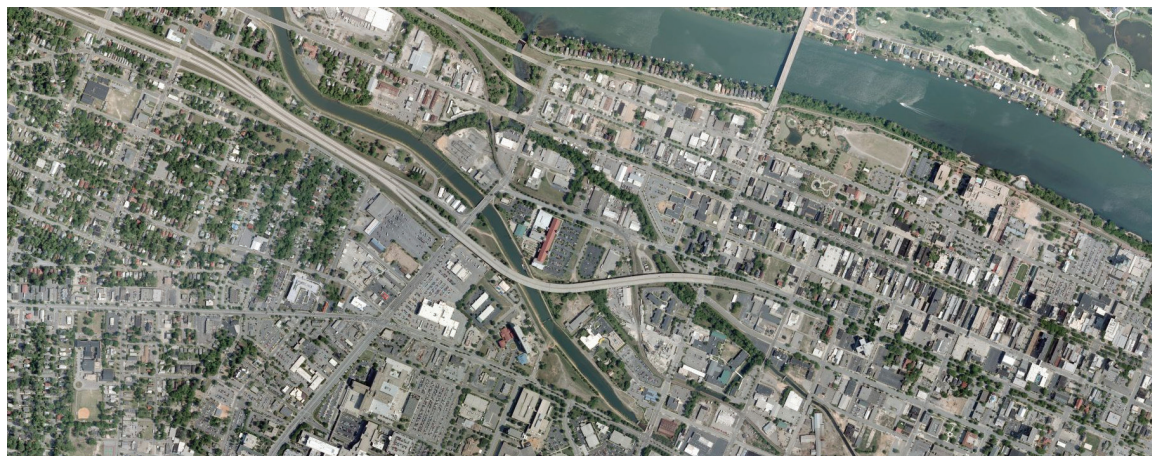
The JC Calhoun flyover is a blight on the historic area and a detriment to the comprehensive redevelopment of the St. Sebastian Health Sciences District

Other Important Transportation Initiatives

While the public workshop response centered on Augusta's roadways and particularly her Gateways and major corridors, several other movement options must be a part of the city's agenda going forward. Simply noted, at a minimum, these include:

Connections to Augusta

Build on its Aviation Facilities

Bush Field is a well-developed and well-managed regional airport, serving primarily Augusta, Aiken and the immediate surroundings. It has runway and services capacity to serve a larger market. There is available land in the area to develop aviation related businesses. As the much larger airports in Atlanta and Columbia, become over crowded, Augusta should establish itself as a secondary hub of other airlines.

Rethink Rail

Augusta has a freight service system which is important to its manufacturing economy and which should remain, and ways found to mitigate its negative impacts on the downtown. Get Augusta on the list.

Augusta once had thriving passenger service to the rest of the nation. The imperatives of growth in Atlanta, economic opportunity and climate change may offer the opportunity for passenger rail service, particularly to Athens and Atlanta could again be come a reality, and this Plan should encourage it.

Movement within Augusta

Improve Public Transit

Augusta has a skeleton bus system, that is insufficient to attract the rider-ship needed to have an impact on the city's present auto-dependent condition. On consequence of this is that many Augustan's do not have convenient access to jobs and services. The Downtown Development Authority is presently studying feasibility of a light rail system in the urban core.

Develop a Central Transportation Center Downtown

Assuming growth in the medical area and the downtown core, a central transportation facility, was proposed in the Westobou Vision for the area bounded by 10th, 13th, Telfair and Walton Way. Such a complex in this location could accommodate commuter parking, trolley, bus, taxis, jitney services, bike/pedestrian ways and even a future inter-city passenger rail service between Augusta and Atlanta. This center could also serve as both a community and movement link across the tracks in this area.

Extend and enhance Bicycle and Pedestrian Pathways

As noted earlier, the current ARTS Long-Range Transportation Plan shows thirty-five corridors as potential routes for either dedicated or road-sharing bike routes. These planned routes could form the backbone of an alternate system of transportation for practical commuter travel and recreational uses alike. The Agenda will expand and refine the existing proposals into an integrated city-wide system.

Greenspace System

"Our responsibility is to retain what we treasure…"

-Frederick Steiner, The Living Landscape

The first two public workshops made clear that the citizens of Augusta are concerned about creating a highly connected network of trails for active recreational uses, particularly around Butler and Rocky Creeks. The function of the trail network would range from simple neighborhood amenities to more intense uses such as mountain bike trails.

The workshops also brought up the repeated desire to demonstrate how Augusta could continue to attract new markets and preserve land at the same time. This, coupled with an increased look at economic realities of land preservation, suggests an integrated green infrastructure approach to land conservation.

The Importance of Land Preservation

In addition to its recreational and leisure uses, the green space organizations of Augusta and their respective roles are described in Chapter 8 of the Augusta-Richmond County Comprehensive Plan. The discussion here will be limited to findings on the function of the systems.

While there are numerous reasons for preserving open space, the main benefits fall into four general categories: environmental (protecting groundwater, wildlife habitat, etc.); agricultural (preserving farming industries and communities); aesthetic (preserving rural character and scenic beauty); and managing growth.

The goal in openspace preservation and greenspace management is to create an interconnected network of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, greenways, parks, and working farms to maintain ecological processes, sustain air and water resources and contribute to the health and quality of life for Augusta.

A high quality green infrastructure network would incorporate the plans of the organizations and programs mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan and build upon them to create a natural life support system.

Types of Greenspace

Natural Areas

These have remained largely undisturbed by human contact. In Augusta, this includes the Phinizy Swamp Nature Preserve, the Xenthanol River Tract, most of City's southern creekways, and it's eastern wetlands Much of the land within the upper reachers of the Augusta Canal Heritage Area would fall in this category.

Open Spaces

These are defined as traditionally undeveloped land, but with some active human interaction. Regional parks such as Diamond Lakes; larger city parks such as Lake Olmsted or the Augusta Common, and smaller neighborhood parks.
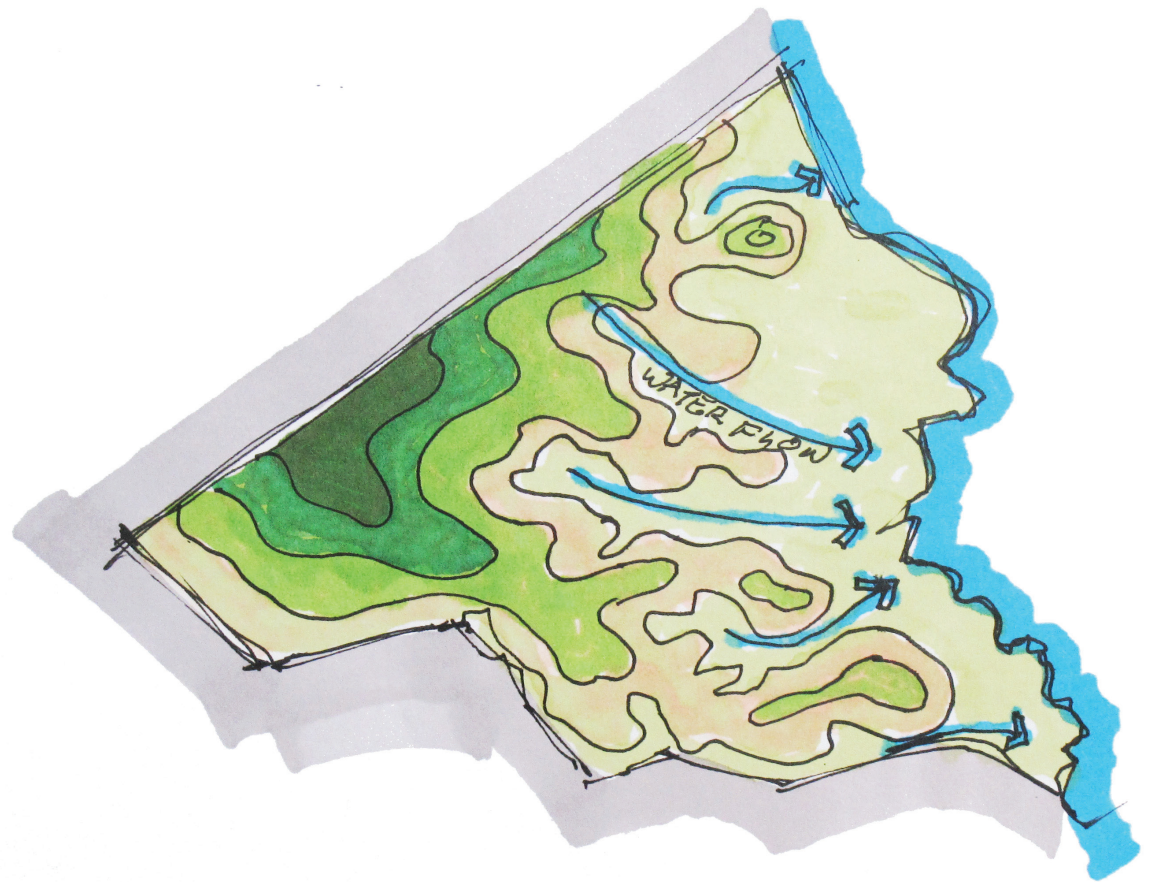

Figure 8. Topography and watershed flow in Augusta

Greenways

These are corridors of protected open space that is used for conservation or recreational purposes. In Augusta, this might be the trails up to the Head gates and the proposed Butler Creek trail system.

Green Infrastructure Principles

One of the primary goals for a green infrastructure plan is to create a base framework for strategic, long-term land use policy. In order to make the most of future investments, whatever they may be, it makes economic sense to plan for green infrastructure even before traditional infrastructure decisions are made. This consideration allows conservation values to not only coexist with land development and growth management, but to maximize limited resources.

- Build off the Augusta's unique geography and natural history
- Emphasize environmental, social, and economic importance of greenspace
- Inspire decision makers to make greenspace a priority for the community

- Promote neighborhood connections to natural resources
- Encourage the re-greening of suburbs / urban areas and their roadway corridors to make them more desirable places to live.

Benefits

Healthy ecosystems provide free infrastructure 'services' to cities, including: water filtration, groundwater recharging, storm water control, air purification, nutrient recycling, crop pollination, and soil enrichment.

In terms of land values, parcels located adjacent to quality open space have a higher return on investment. In more rural areas, farm land actually creates a higher net valuation for the city than does the sprawling suburban development that stretches the city's finite resources further and further out into the county. Also, increased opportunities for outdoor recreation and improved health are two of the major social benefits of creating a green infrastructure plan.

PRIORITY ONE: A Green Infrastructure Approach for Augusta

The goal is to make Augusta a model of green infrastructure for the rest of the state and the nation. Within this model, a multi pronged approach to land preservation, development and growth management is recommended, that considers four critical aspects and contributions for Augusta's natural systems.

1. Bringing back the Garden City concept would make Augusta more beautiful.
2. Greenway Accessibility Improvements are instrumental in increasing the connectivity within the city.
3. Cultural Landscape Preservation is all about maintaining the historic Augusta scene to create a sense of legacy.
4. Conservation Design Developments are an environmentally sensitive tool for development.

Legend:

- ⭕ Potential Development Node
- ▬ Public Land to be considered for Greenspace Protection
- ▬ Existing Greenspace
- ▬ Potential Land Preservation area
- •••• Potential Parkway
- ▬ River / Creek
- ▬ Wetland
- ◼ College / University
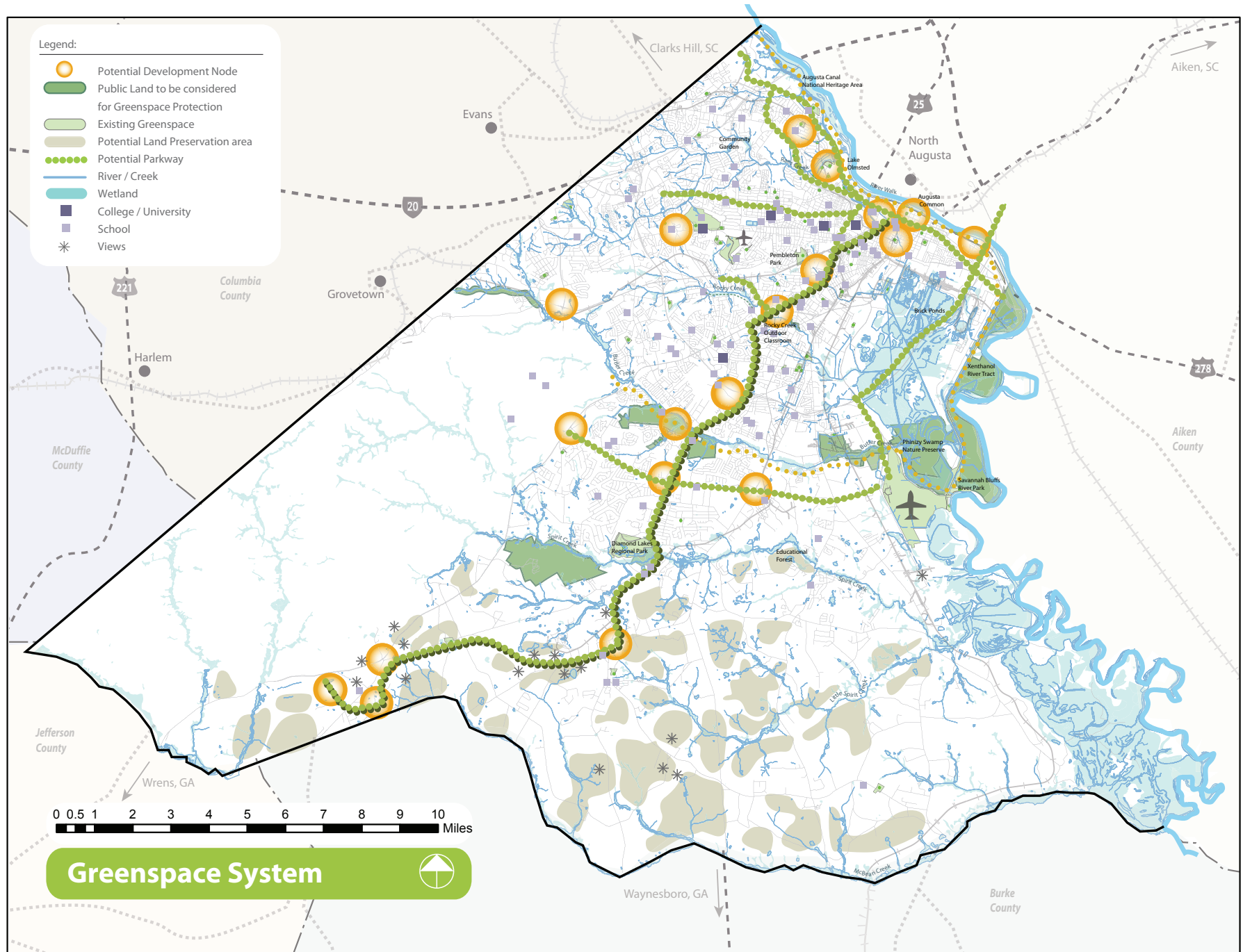- ◻ School
- ✳ Views

Greenspace System

Figure 9. Augusta's Overall Greenspace System Map

These organizing elements of green infrastructure planning and design derive from the national green infrastructure movement that is regionally supported by the Atlanta Regional Commission. Each is discussed in further detail below:

1. Augusta as the "Garden City"

We believe in bringing back the Garden city concept as a point of pride for the city and a measure with which to increase Augusta's quality of life. To us, the Garden City is realized through the preservation and enhancement of historic sites, scenic byways, and highly connected and integrated green spaces. This underlying theme for Augusta will be important to attracting new industry, promoting tourism, and maintaining Augusta's natural resources.

2. Augusta's Greenway Accessibility Improvements

As heard in the community workshops, connections between work, home, and school locations via trails is a resource the neighborhoods value. The Development Agenda, in accordance with the PATH

Augusta once prided itself on being the Garden City

Foundation preliminary assessment, proposes a continuous greenbelt of trails around the most developed part of the city based on the levee system, the Savannah River, and Butler Creek.

3. Cultural Landscape Preservation

Augusta was founded on a solid agricultural base. The Southern Cultivator was the state's best farm journal by the 1850s. The area was a pioneer of scientific research in livestock breeding, apple orchards, and vegetable cultures. Even a promising grape-wine operation developed. Industrialization made steady, significant progress to build up Augusta's reputation and stature within the region as a cotton king. Today, strip malls and subdivisions eat away at this historic landscape.

Specific to Augusta, preserving land in the southern portion of the county can contain growth and direct development towards areas already served by traditional infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, etc). Maintaining floodplains can benefit the entire McBean and Little Spirit watersheds by reducing flood damage. Historic agricultural based tourism occurs around

"Our natural environment should be preserved for future generations by the dedicated actions of those in the present."

Drive to a barn near Blythe

preserved woodlots and farmhouse fields. And the local economy is stabilized through a viable agricultural base.

In the past, communities have reaped these benefits "free of charge," thanks to the owners of said farmlands. Yet as development pressures and land values have increased, the quantity of undeveloped land has shrunk. As a result, communities that recognized the importance of farmland and open space are working to preserve them.

Develop Learning-Farms

Driving around the southern parts of the county, the farms of Blythe and Hepzibah in particular stand out as a testament to days gone by. Beautiful apple and pecan orchards, baby cattle around a drinking pond and rows and rows of cabbage are all threatened by the generic development methods that lack consideration for the preservation of this historic resource. Augusta should build upon its rural history, potentially creating a prototype 'learning farm' institute. Subdivision regulations should be amended to encourage low impact, conservation developments supplemented by low impact development

public works standards. These alone can retain 50-60% of farm land, as rolled into a development strategy.

Scenic Corridor Designation

This type of overlay zone protects scenic views by requiring land uses to complement rather than detract from the scenic experience. An official designation would allow the planning department to trigger a design review for all new structures within the district. In addition, it would create development setbacks, roadway buffers, landscaping plans, and utility entrenchments on all property within 1000ft of the road.

Agricultural Protection Zoning

Its been found that non-agricultural uses, when next to farmland, can affect how a farm can be operated. New development can make daily farming operations difficult and sometimes dangerous. New residents may not understand basic farming needs, such as manure handling. As a result, farmers are forced to contend with increased nuisance complaints by neighbors who object to slow moving

vehicles on roadways, noise, dust and late hours of operation. This speeds the conversion of agricultural land to suburban uses. Traditional land use regulations are generally not conducive to protecting farmland. In many rural areas, these methods have allowed the rapid development of single family homes on large lots, which create land fragmentation and higher property values (beyond its agricultural worth) on remaining farmland.

Numerous studies across the nation show that farmland, forests, and open space generates more in taxes than it costs to service. The sprawling residential development that typically replaces open spaces costs more in services than it earns in tax revenue. Therefore, it frequently makes economic sense to purchase and preserve open space than it does to allow it to be developed.

The goal of Agricultural Protection Zoning is to designate areas where agriculture is encouraged, and conflicts between uses are minimized. Particularly of benefit, these areas can be combined with transfer of development rights for farmers looking to preserve the land while still retaining the option to sell.

4. Promoting Quality Development Practices

Land conservation makes neighborhoods better places to live. It protects water quality, preserves rural character, provides recreational areas, protects home values and reduces costs of municipal services. One particular tool to use in moving communities along the path of conservation are conservation-design developments. These regulations incentivize developers to concentrate homes on a small portion of the developable land, leaving a large part of the site in its natural state. Greenways and trails are created throughout the site.

A Hub + Link Strategy for Augusta

Overall, green infrastructure focuses on preserving and restoring the ecological functions of our environment. The goal is to create an interactive system that better supports the natural environment than disjointed and isolated chunks of habitat. This can be done through a strategic system of "hubs" and "links".

"Hubs"

- Regional parks (like Diamond Lakes)
- Sustainably run agricultural land
- Preserved forests
- Wetlands (like Phinizy Swamp)
- Smaller, neighborhood parks (like Pembleton)
- Civic spaces (like the Common)
- Historic resource sites
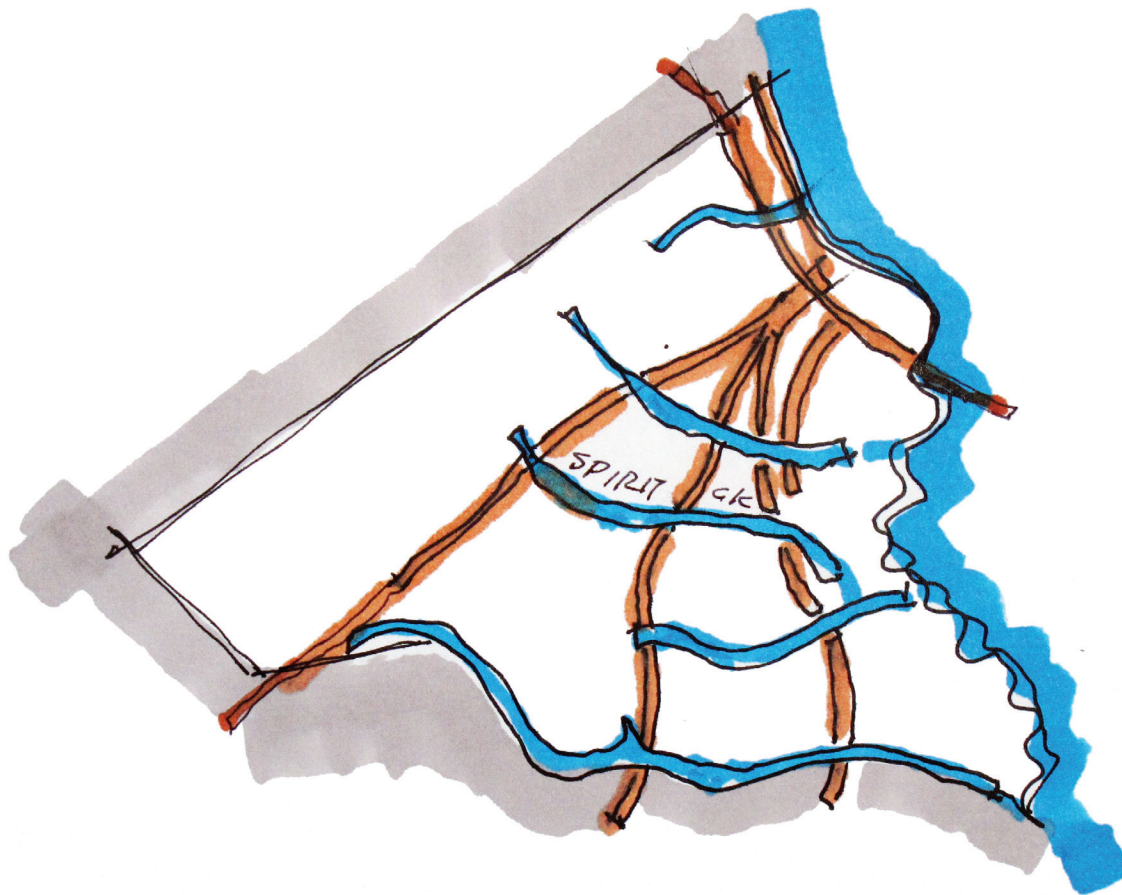
Figure 10. Roadway and Creekway intersections create opportunities for increasing neighborhood greenspace accessibility, a key factor in quality of life.

"Links"

- Publicly accessible greenway paths along waterways (rivers, creeks, and lakes)

- Transportation rights-of-way, including designated bike lanes, storm water swales, and rail road buffers

- Green neighborhoods and property stewardship (increasing tree cover and improving landscaping to improve aesthetics and property values and overall health)

- Countywide trail system (brings trails to where people live, completes an emerald necklace around the county, facilitates connections to centers of shopping / employment)

Connecting these hubs and links will provide a green framework within which thoughtful development occurs supported by the economic, social, and environmental benefits of green space.

Building Stronger Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are the core fabric with which the City is built. This is where we live.

The first two public workshops made clear that Augusta citizens are concerned about residential neighborhoods' appearance, connectivity, and community. Participant comments covered the full range of Augusta's neighborhood densities, from **rural** Augusta Farms around Blythe and Hephzibah to the **suburban** area along Gordon Hwy and Tobacco Road to the **urban** core around downtown and the Savannah River. Specific objectives for each density were identified:

We Believe

1. We believe in stabilizing existing single-family neighborhoods by encouraging infill housing, productive re-use of vacant property, strategic demolition.

2. We believe in focusing public investment in order to encourage clustered village centers that combine walkability, convenience, and community.

3. We believe in reinforcing the rural character of the area south of Tobacco Road through new residential "lifestyle" developments aimed at attracting new markets.

Augusta's Key Neighborhood Types

Throughout Augusta, there is an extensive quilt of individual neighborhoods, each with its own character, its issues, and its opportunities. They serve all income levels and household types. Certain neighborhood types are generally characteristic of each density level and have been identified as:

Existing Near-in Neighborhoods (The Urban Core)

In and around the original city, these traditional neighborhoods are typically laid out in urban grid fashion with smaller lots and minimal street frontage. They range from modest mill worker housing,

to bungalows, to stately town houses along Greene Street, to the large houses and mansions of Summerville. Many blocks are homogenous, but in others small houses stand alongside larger ones. Some areas, such as Summerville, are well maintained and others are nearly abandoned. Overall, these neighborhoods, no matter how modest, retain a certain charm and character thanks to their urban grid configuration, their older architectural styles and the presence of established tree plantings and welcome shade.

Subdivisions (Suburban)

Post-war development in Augusta developed successive arcs of car-oriented subdivision development expanding out into cheaper land away from the city center. While the older subdivisions suffer from housing layouts that no longer meet today's market demands, they often have attractive, mature landscapes. Newer subdivisions are filled with larger houses with more modern feature amenities but are virtual sun-baked wastelands, devoid of trees and sparsely planted. Moreover, unlike the traditional urban core neighborhoods, theses subdivisions are isolated from one

Hammonds Ferry in North Augusta provides a good example of a better approach to neighborhood development

another, often with a single road in and out. Ultimately, these neighborhoods are very inflexible and entirely dependent on the automobile. Modular parks and manufactured housing communities fall under this category and have their own issues.

Roadside Parcels (Rural)

Along rural roads typically, these are not really neighborhoods, but a collection of individual houses fronting the road with driveways to the street. These range from simple cottages to farm houses and larger homes. These homes usually have the largest street frontage and lot size.

Multifamily Developments

There are a number of apartment complexes sprinkled throughout Augusta. Their various configurations include commercial buildings, mill conversions, reconfigured houses, public housing projects, and garden apartments set within the outlying suburbs.

PRIORITY ONE: A Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategy for Augusta

Since the advent of the automobile, the trend has been toward transit-oriented subdivision isolation and land consuming sprawl. It has long been established that this is a very inefficient way to grow, however, until the past decade, the market has offered few alternatives.

New Directions

The Augusta Agenda proposes an alternative approach, which stresses more walkable and less automobile-dependent neighborhoods. These would be denser places with smaller lots, greater proximity to services and amenities, and with more intense landscaping than found in the typical Augusta new subdivision. To the extent possible, these would be infill neighborhoods, located on vacant or under-utilized close-in parcels or at key intersections. Most development would occur north of Tobacco Road

Projects would follow "best practices" concepts in urban planning and architecture including energy efficient LEED certifiable construction; smart growth and "new urbanism" strategies which advocate tightly knit mixed-use, mixed-income developments centered around community services and transit, having a strong sense of place through building character, creation of active and well defined open space and landscape treatments.

Potential Priority Locations

Several locations for such a development focus have been identified, ranging from a hamlet in the south to a new village center (imagine Washington, Georgia) along Tobacco Road, Sand Bar Ferry Road or Dyess Parkway. Along Spirit Creek, a conservation oriented life-style community may be appropriate. Extensive residential development could be a component of even larger scaled mixed-use development on under-utilized land at the intersection of Deans Bridge Road and the Gordon Highway. The 2009 Urban Area Plan, The Westobou Vision, recommends several large residential developments in the downtown, along the river and the canal.

Legend:

- ⬤ Potential Mixed Use Residential
- ▬ High Density Residential
- ▬ Low Density Residential
- ▬ Rural Residential

- •••• Potential Parkway
- ▬ Creekways

- ◼ College / University
- ◻ School

Building Better Neighborhoods
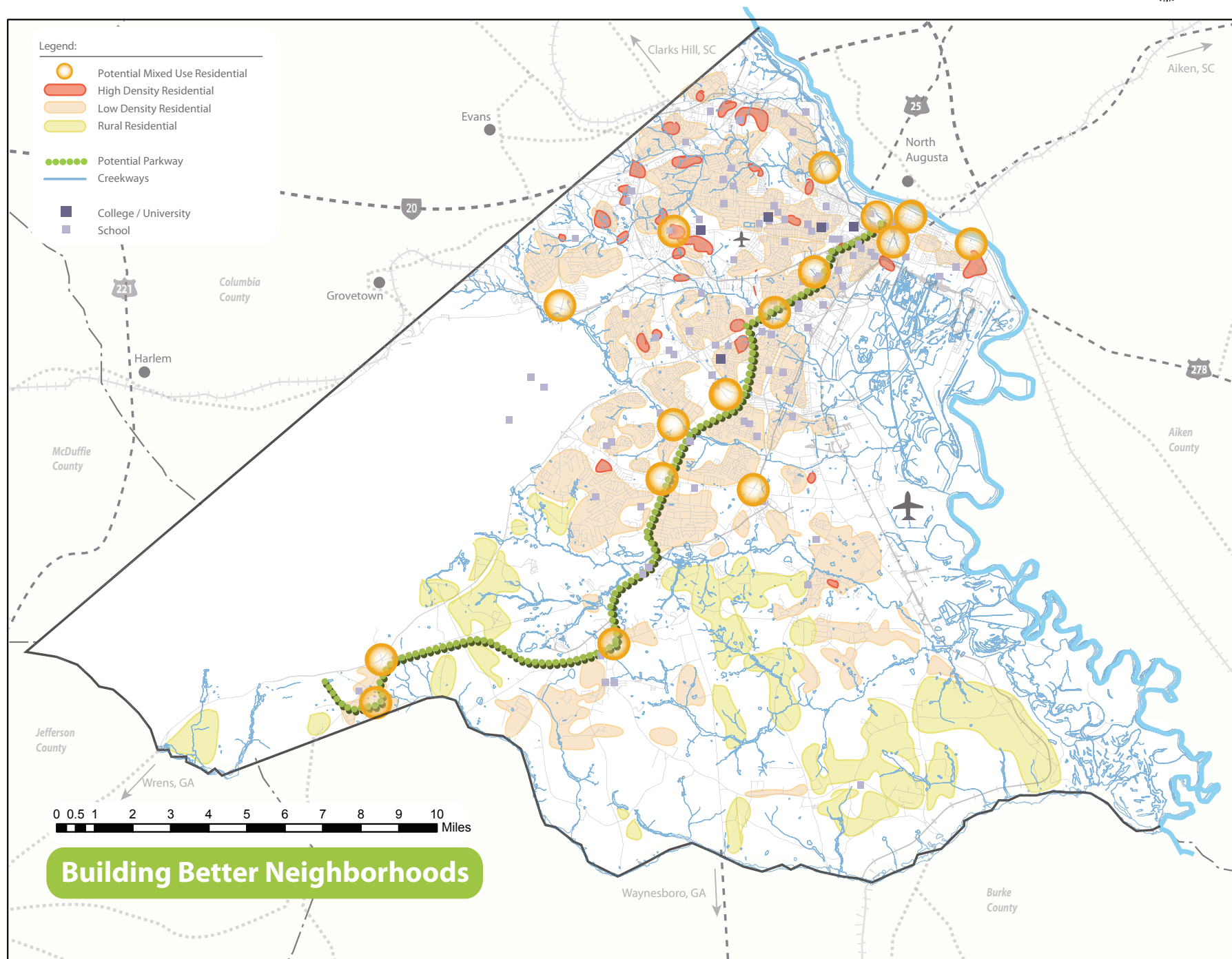
Figure 11. Character Areas map

Integrated Community Public Services

Community Service planning can either lead or follow the City's development, we prefer it lead!

Police Sub-station in empty shopping center

Comments from the public workshops centered on the belief that for Augusta to realize it's goals as a successful vehicle for tourism, culture, recreation, technology and higher education, it must first be a great place to live 12 months out of the year.

Workshop input led to three objectives:

1.   We believe in promoting compact, mixed-use communities by locating new public services; like schools, libraries, and administrative offices; into their development.

2.   We believe in planning transportation services in coordination with new cluster development to increase the viability of public transit.

3.   We believe in limiting sewer expansion to areas where intensive development is being encouraged.

Priority One- Using Public Services as a Development Tool

Working towards improving overall quality of life and making Augusta better place to live 12 months out of the year, Public Services improvements should focus on three crucial issues:

1. Program Management
2. Infrastructure and Utility Management
3. Administrative Management

1. Program Management

Development of specific public programs across the city should methodically facilitate and reinforce the priorities of the Agenda's "building blocks."

Development of cultural and recreational facilities should coincide with entertainment and tourism plans under economic development, the lifestyle communities proposed under neighborhood development, and the proposed greenway system. Community centers, schools, and libraries across the

city should be strategically placed to enliven neighborhoods and accommodate connectivity.

2. Infrastructure and Utility Management

Expansion, maintenance, and management of city-wide infrastructure and utilities should be pursued judiciously to facilitate the Agenda's economic development goals, accent the gateway and corridor improvements, accommodate the Green Infrastructure, and incentivize the Better Neighborhood initiatives.

Roadway Connections

To the extent possible, road and pathway connections between existing subdivisions and to new developments should be built. This would dramatically impact trip distances, provide easier access to schools and other services and reduce community isolation.

Water

The water works system of Augusta has

probably never been in better condition to serve existing customers and to support growth for the future. A major capital improvement program has been undertaken with a number of significant works completed or nearly so, including: expansion of the Augusta Highland Avenue Water Treatment Plant; construction of a new raw water pumping station and intake on the Augusta Canal, with associated canal improvements and the new Max Hicks Water Treatment Plant on Tobacco Road with its appurtenant raw water intake in the Savannah River.

Sewer

Likewise, much has been done in recent years to improve sewage infrastructure, including, expansion of the James Messerly Wastewater Treatment Plant, that provides wastewater treatment capacity for the urban and suburban parts of the city, south to the Spirit Creek drainage basin: construction of the new Spirit Creek Pumping Station, near the southernmost reaches of the sewerage system, providing sewer service for the Spirit Creek drainage basin; assuming the operation of the water and sewer systems at Fort Gordon, with associated system

upgrades and expansions.

3. Administrative Management

The operation and enhancement of Augusta services should respond to the initiatives laid out in this Agenda to ensure continued improvement and development.

Such enhancements include adding police substations; systematic enforcement of existing statues and ordinances regarding neighborhoods and residency; improved public transportation routes; better connectivity and street section standards in new developments; and improved communication between residents, local government, and developers.

A word of caution…

It is important to note that as with roadway development, the location, capacity and future expansion of the utility systems will be major factors in governing where future growth will occur and what its character and density will be.

Augusta's Physical Character Areas

The Comprehensive Plan has accurately categorized Augusta into its distinct, geographic areas on which lay an innovative Development Agenda, tailored to each area.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan organized Augusta into seven, character-defining planning sub-areas all of which incorporate a number of existing neighborhoods, henceforth called Augusta's Character Areas. These will be used as a key organizing element of this Development Agenda. Starting with a city-wide overview, each Character area will be described generally, followed by a summation of Findings for each with regard to opportunities in each of the Agenda's Core Building Blocks:

- Economic Development
- Gateways and Corridors
- Green Space
- Neighborhood Development
- Community Services

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

WEST AUGUSTA

OLD CITY

20

Columbia County

BELAIR

Grovetown

EAST AUGUSTA

Harlem

25

FORT GORDON

SOUTH AUGUSTA

McDuffie County

Aiken County

Hephzibah

SOUTH RICHMOND

Blythe

Jefferson County

McBean

Wrens, GA

0 0.5 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Miles

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County
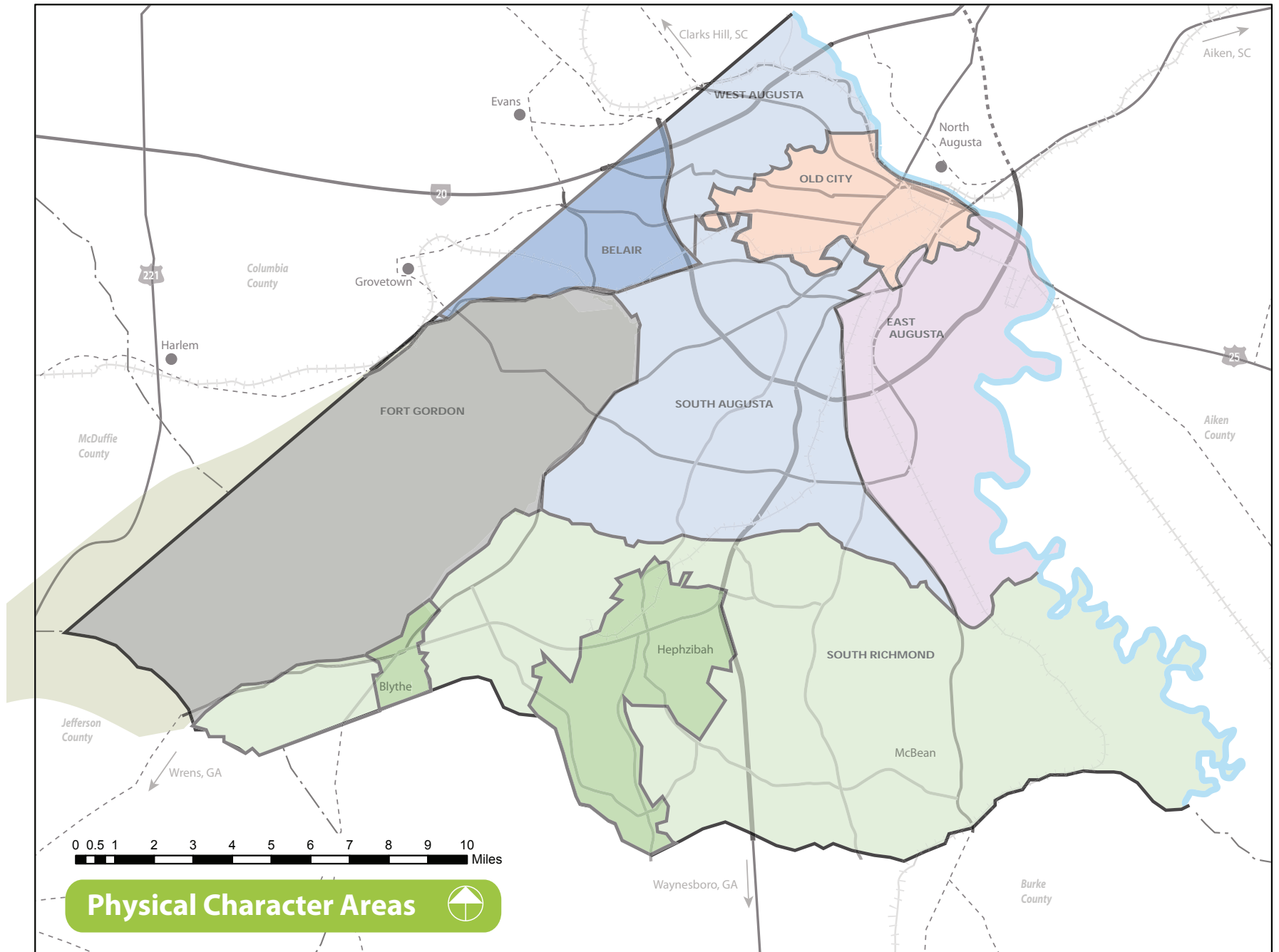
Physical Character Areas

Figure 12. Character Areas map

Old City

Augusta first developed in this area and, generally speaking, this is the City as it existed prior to the Second World War. This area contains the traditional downtown, the seat of urban commerce, culture and government. The major medical institutions cluster around the medical College of Georgia in this area. It lies beside the Savannah River and the nationally significant Augusta Canal system spreads out across her lowlands. Most of Augusta's historic buildings are found in the downtown and in surrounding, traditional, in-town neighborhoods of Olde Town, Laney Walker, Bethlehem, Summerville and Harrisburg.

The Old City area is home to three of Augusta's four primary colleges: The Medical College of Georgia, Augusta State University and Paine College, as well as a number of smaller post-secondary educational institutions.

Much of this area was the subject of an urban area plan, the 2009 Westobou Vision, which laid out a series of 'market projects' and initiatives to catalyze redevelopment of the downtown core, the canal districts and surrounding historic neighborhoods

Economic Development Agenda for the Old City

The Old City Character Area was the subject of much of the work in 2008 that produced Augusta Tomorrow urban area plan, The Westobou Vision. Several key elements of that plan are recognized as important contributors to this Augusta Development Agenda and are incorporated in this current effort.

Old City includes Augusta's Downtown, its medical and medical education complex, as well as a broad array of neighborhoods. 20% of Augusta's population resides in Old City. Since 2000, efforts at residential revitalization have sought to maintain the population base while replacing and rehabilitating deteriorated housing stock. The area has a comparatively high proportion of renters (four renters for every three homeowners). The area also includes a very diverse population base with a high concentration of elderly (one-sixth of the population) but also a highly

educated population with more than one in four adults a college graduate. In total, however, the area is comparatively less affluent, with estimated median household of 2010 at $27,000.

Priority Opportunities

As seen below, a number of conceptual programs for a number of key projects, with significant potential for the Old City were recommended and analyzed in the Westobou Vision, including:

- St. Sebastian Health Sciences Park
- Old City College Campus
- Westobou Arts Center
- Downtown Baseball Stadium
- Marbury Village
- Harrisburg Canal Village
- Dyess Park Canal Village
- Canal Park Neighborhood

In addition, the following projects have been identified for future study:

James Brown Heritage Attraction

Expanding the Augusta Museum's current James Brown exhibition into a major heritage attraction would highlight the story of Brown's rise to worldwide fame. This attraction, honoring the significance of Brown's horn-driven funk music, will provide visitors with the experience of his evolution as a singer, composer, and performer and his remarkable legacy in the music world.

Open-Air Riverfront Music/Entertainment Esplanade

Creating a Riverfront focus for music and entertainment will enliven the Downtown and draw tourists and regional markets to restaurants and other Downtown attractions. This entertainment focus will encourage a variety of markets to seek housing choices in the Old City area.

A Major New Educational Presence

Building on an earlier idea, as was discussed as part of the Westobou Vision, it is reemphasized that a downtown

James Brown is a popular stop on Broad Street

undergraduate college campus could provide a basis for revitalization of selected portions of Old City. This facility might involve a relocation of an existing college needing growth, but more likely will require collaboration among current Augusta institutions (Augusta Tech; Augusta State) and larger statewide entities such as the University of Georgia or Georgia Tech. This facility, in conjunction with expansion of Augusta State at its current site, would seek to alleviate the deficit of 5,900 undergraduate slots identified above. One possibility for initiating such a downtown campus would be a 2 + 2 model, with Augusta Tech providing the first two years of education and a junior/senior campus being developed by UGA or Georgia Tech.

In addition, a number of residential and mixed use residential projects have been identified. These are described further in the Building Better Neighborhoods as discussed next.

Building Better Neighborhoods Agenda for the Old City

With well-established and generally compact residential, commercial, and educational zones, the Old City has little room for new developments. Most of the opportunities are repairs to the older housing stock and infill development, although there are some opportunities for densification and lifestyle development.

Priority Opportunities

In addition to the projects proposed in the Westobou Vision urban area plan, several new initiatives have been identified.

Sand Hills and Turpin Hill

The ongoing programs in Laney Walker, Bethlehem and Harrisburg should be expanded into these two distressed neighborhoods. Many families would benefit from housing repairs, strategic demolition, and infill on vacant or under utilized parcels.

Community Redevelopment project underway

Upper Broad Street

This stretch of Broad, between Milledge Road and Crawford Avenue, is an area that could be targeted for densification and focused mixed-use development. The area is ideally situated close to the canal, historic mill structures, Chaffee Park Julian Smith Park, the proposed Kroc Center and is accessible from both downtown and West Augusta.

Public Services

A critical public service initiative in the Old City should be to bury the power lines and relocate the power substations that mar significant areas like the Butt Memorial Bridge, the Enterprise Mill, the new Judicial Center, and historic Olde Town. Furthermore, a relocated and upgraded bus terminal in the Old City could be more accessible and facilitate routs to areas of Augusta not currently serviced by public transportation. Provisions for water taxis on the river would reinforce the Agenda's economic goals.

Lake Olmsted Lifestyle Recreation Village

The relocation of the Ballpark to Downtown will provide a development site benefiting from adjacency to both the River and Lake Olmsted. This offers the potential for development of a neighborhood with near access to downtown employment and services, but also the potential to be oriented to an active recreation lifestyle.

The gazebo overlooking Lake Olmsted

Gateways and Corridors

The Old City lies next to the river and three key crossings presently exist which link the city to its South Carolina neighbor.

Priority Opportunities

The initial opportunities for establishing specific transportation Garden City gateways, corridors and beauty spots in the Old City character area of Augusta include the following:

Georgia Gateway[s]

- Fort Gordon Highway (US Highway 1)
- Thirteenth Street (US Highway 25 Business)

Garden City Gateways

- Fifth Street and the bridge
- Daniel Field

Garden City Corridors

- The Westobou Parkway – Sand Bar Ferry Road/Broad Street/Washington Road
- Laney Walker Boulevard
- Fifteenth Street
- Walton Way, from 15th to Heard Street and from 10th to East Boundary
- Riverwatch Parkway
- Highland Avenue/Berckmans Road
- Wrightsboro Road (west of Highland Avenue)

Garden City Beauty Spots

- Riverwatch Parkway at Fifteenth Street and selected view spots
- Greene Street Median
- Augusta Canal Crossings, most notably the Butt Bridge
- Lake Olmsted, particularly along Broad Street and Milledgeville Road
- Augusta River Walk
- Augusta Common

Greenspace System

The Old City character area is defined on the east primarily by the Savannah River and touches Raes Creek on the north. The major greenspace here centers around the Historic Canal District and the River Walk, as well as the highest concentration of pocket neighborhood parks in the county. As far as land use intensity goes, the Old City is primarily developed with the highest density of residential land uses.

Primary Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for expanding the green infrastructure's hub and link system including:

Hubs:

Lake Olmsted is a consistently under utilized resource in the area. A lifestyle / recreational village concept that heavily integrated ideas of a sustainable community and focused on creating a mutually thriving environment between humans and nature would create a dynamic, living entity.

Pendleton King Park is a 64-acre bird

sanctuary and recreational frisbee course with great topographic diversity in pine forests, sand ridges and marshes. A series of nature trails meander through the lower part of the park.

Other hubs that could be further expanded and connected to neighborhoods and other community spaces:

- Chafee Park
- The Augusta Common
- Dyess Park

Proposed Westobou Vision Projects:
- Augusta Canal Park
- Sand Bar Ferry
- Dyess Park
- Regional River Park
- Westobou Arts Center Plaza Boat Basin

Links:

The Levee currently has a well worn trail at its top. This should be maintained and further enhanced through connection with the Historic Canal Area and Downtown

Looking back to Broad Street from the top of the levee

Petersburg boat tour on the first level canal

River Walk.

Adding trails, bicycle paths and walkways in general would add extensively to the community's transportation network, especially in the denser in-town neighborhoods around Lake Aumond. Pride of place is an important component of increased quality of life. By focusing on the preservation and restoration of ecological functions of the creeks and other natural areas, parks and greenways can enhance the aesthetics and functionality of the community.

Other links that could be further expanded and connected to neighborhoods and other community spaces:

- Augusta Canal Bikeway System
- Riverwalk
- Connections and proposed paths from the Westobou Vision Plan

Going forward in the Old City …

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward. Most of these were identifed and developed at a concept level in the Westabou Vision Urban Area plan.

Legend:

▬	Redevelopment Opportunity
▮▮▮▮	Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●●	Proposed Parkway
▬▬▬	Improved Arterial
▬ ▬ ▬	Potential Roadway
◁	Scenic Viewshed

Downtown Potential Initiatives

a. St. Sebastian Medical Complex

b. Potential Transportation Center / Arena

c. Downtown Ball Park

d. Westobou Arts Center

e. Westobou Crossing

f. Harrisburg Canal Village

g. Lake Olmsted Village

OLD CITY

Figure 13. Potential Downtown Projects

West Augusta

Significant growth and development came to this area after the Second World War. The area exhibits the national trend of suburban development of the past 60 years, with auto-oriented, strip commercial along the arterials and new subdivision styled neighborhoods, predominantly single family homes, spreading through the area.

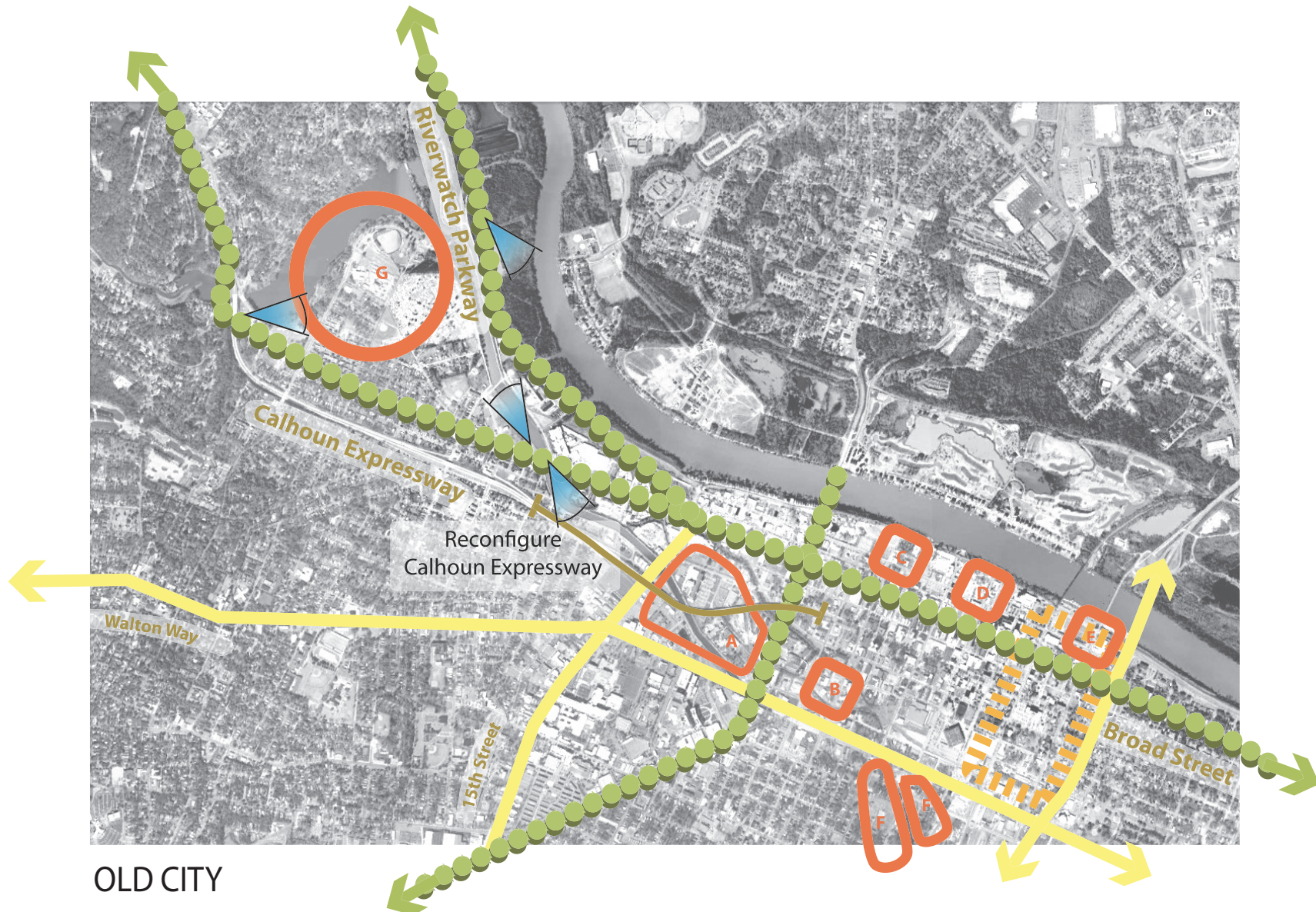Regional and " Large Box" shopping centers, national chain fast food, gas stations, as well as more than a dozen fairly recent economy hotels, are located proximate to Interstate I-20. This area is bounded to the west by I-520, with the region's most successful shopping Center, The Augusta Mall is located at its intersection with Wrightsboro Road.

This area is bounded to the west by I-520, with the region's most successful shopping Center, The Augusta Mall is located at its intersection with Wrightsboro Road.

Washington Road, a strategically located, strip commercial arterial roadway, is a "character defining" corridor for not only this area, but also Augusta as a whole. Riverwatch Parkway provides a clean, uncluttered route to downtown from I-20

through West Augusta. Walton Way is a pleasant arterial street through Summerville to downtown and the medical area.

One large heavy industry, the Martin-Marietta rock quarry is located in the upper north of this area. The Savannah River and the main feeder channel for the Augusta Canal run along her northerly boundary. Raes Creek bisects this area, which is home to the Augusta National Golf Club.

Amen Corner at the National
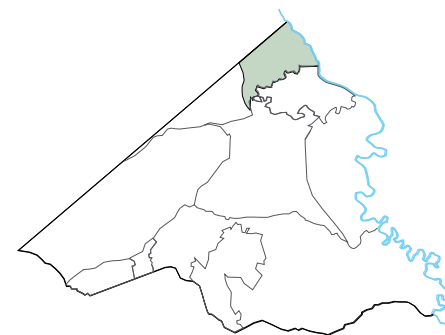
Economic Development Agenda for West Augusta

Economically, West Augusta is a well-established area which, nonetheless, has also continued to grow modestly during the last decade. Approximately 10% of all new Augusta housing units have been constructed in this Character Area. The area includes a highly educated population and a strong mix of owner-occupied and rental units. We estimate modest housing unit and population growth during the decade, resulting in an estimated population for 2010 of 15,400. The area is Augusta's second most affluent, with estimated median household income for 2010 at $52,800.

West Augusta's housing market continues to exhibit its traditional strength. In the past two years alone, owner-occupants have purchased 550 housing units in West Augusta at the highest prices of any area in Augusta. Home prices have typically run from $65,000 to $340,000 with a median sales price of $123,000.

Priority Opportunities

Augusta State University Expansion

Augusta State has decided to expand its campus into West Augusta along Wrightsboro Road. With significant amounts of under-utilized land in the area, coupled with the significance of this artery and the location of several prominent sports facilities in this area, there is opportunity here

The Master's Experience

A major economic opportunity in West Augusta builds on the fact that West Augusta is home of the world famous Augusta National Golf Course and its annual Masters Tournament. The city should approach the Augusta Nationals Golf Course officials to explore ways in which they might work collaborating to mutual benefit of both.

In addition, a number of residential and mixed use residential projects have been identified. These are described further in the Building Better Neighborhoods as discussed next.

Building Better Neighborhoods Agenda for West Augusta

Since it's crisscrossed by a diversity of commercial arterials, "Big Box" centers, and well-established suburban development with good street sections, West Augusta would benefit from neighborhood maintenance as well as focused, Smart Growth Development.

Priority Opportunities

Davis Road/Pleasant Home Area

A dense, mixed-use, walkable, sustainably constructed urban center could be centered at the Davis Road and Pleasant Home Road intersection. The site is close to two existing commercial centers and is accessible from I-20, I-520, and Washington Road.

Wrightsboro/Jackson Area

Another possible urban center could be

on Wrightsboro Road where Jackson Road turns into North Leg Road.   Three corners of the intersection are occupied by marginally successful shopping centers that could be re-appropriated. The site is also adjacent to a post office, a library, and an elementary school. Furthermore, the cluster could be developed in conjunction with Augusta State's planned Wrightsboro Road expansion and targeted at faculty and students.

Surrey Center Area

This center already offers a variety of retail, restaurants, bars, and cafes. Additional economic engines and housing development in addition to improved walkability along Wheeler Road and Berkman's Road could enhance the area into an even more vibrant urban village.

Gateways and Corridors

West Augusta, with I-20 running through it, has several of the most important entries into the city. It offers several opportunities, particularly along the River Watch Parkway, to establish memorable Augusta Beauty Spots.

Potential Opportunities

Many opportunities for establishing specific transportation Garden City gateways, corridors and beauty spots in the West Augusta City character area of Augusta are listed below:

Georgia Gateway[s]

- Interstate 20 from Savannah River to Washington Road Including Riverwatch Parkway and Washington Road Intersections

Garden City Gateways

- Washington Road
- Riverwatch Parkway
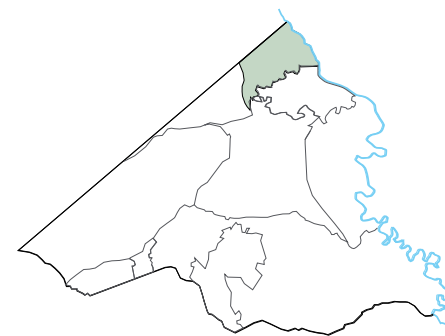
Garden City Corridors

- Riverwatch Parkway
- Washington Road
- Wheeler Road
- Berckmans Road
- Alexander Drive
- Furys Ferry Road

Garden City Beauty Spots

- Walton Way at Jackson Road
- River Watch, views to the river, the canal, mills, and Confederate Powder Works tower

Greenspace System

The West Augusta character area is defined on the east primarily by the Augusta Canal Heritage Area and touches Raes Creek on the south. The major greenspace here centers around the Historic Canal District and the Augusta National Golf Course, as well as the Raes Creek Community Garden. As far as land use intensity goes, the West Augusta is home to many traditionally connected and stable single family neighborhoods.

Potential Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for expanding the green infrastructure's hub and link system including:

Hubs:

Augusta Canal Head Gates, while actually located in Columbia County but owned by the City of Augusta is an important recreational resource for the City. Canoers and kayakers can access the canal from any number of flow points along the banks. Hiking, biking and paddling are all popular recreational activities along the

towpath once used to pull canal boats. The trail system here also connects to the Downtown River Walk.

The upper reaches of Raes Creek have been widely protected through fee simple
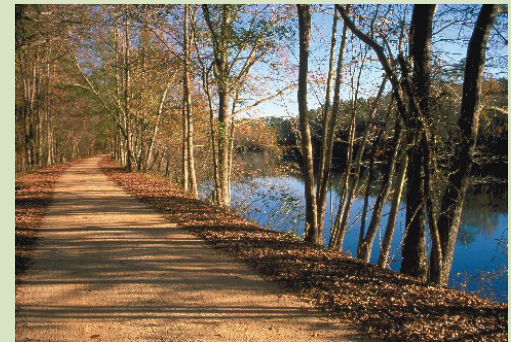
Image caption

Along the Augusta Canal Tow Path

ownership. This process has slowed deterioration, but it would be wise to continue to look for other regulatory and acquisition methods for protection.

Links:

The largest amount of commercial development expansion is occurring in West Augusta. Therefore, green infrastructure here will depend largely on Low Impact Development standards and increased landscaping requirements for existing businesses.

Going forward in West Augusta …

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.
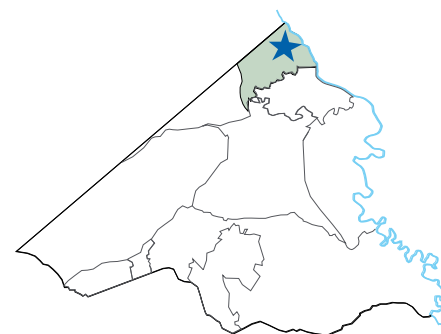
Legend:

— Redevelopment Opportunity
▮▮▮▮ Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●● Proposed Parkway
▬ Improved Arterial
▬ ▬ ▬ Potential Roadway
◣ Scenic Viewshed

West Augusta Area Potential Iniatives

- This is an important gateway for Augusta and its attractions.

Improved Connections to Augusta Canal Heritage Area

Encourage "State Gateway" Improvements

Potential Collaboration with Augusta National Golf Course

Improved Commercial Node

I-520

Westobou Parkway

Riverwatch Parkway

Potential Redevelopment / Lifestyle Village
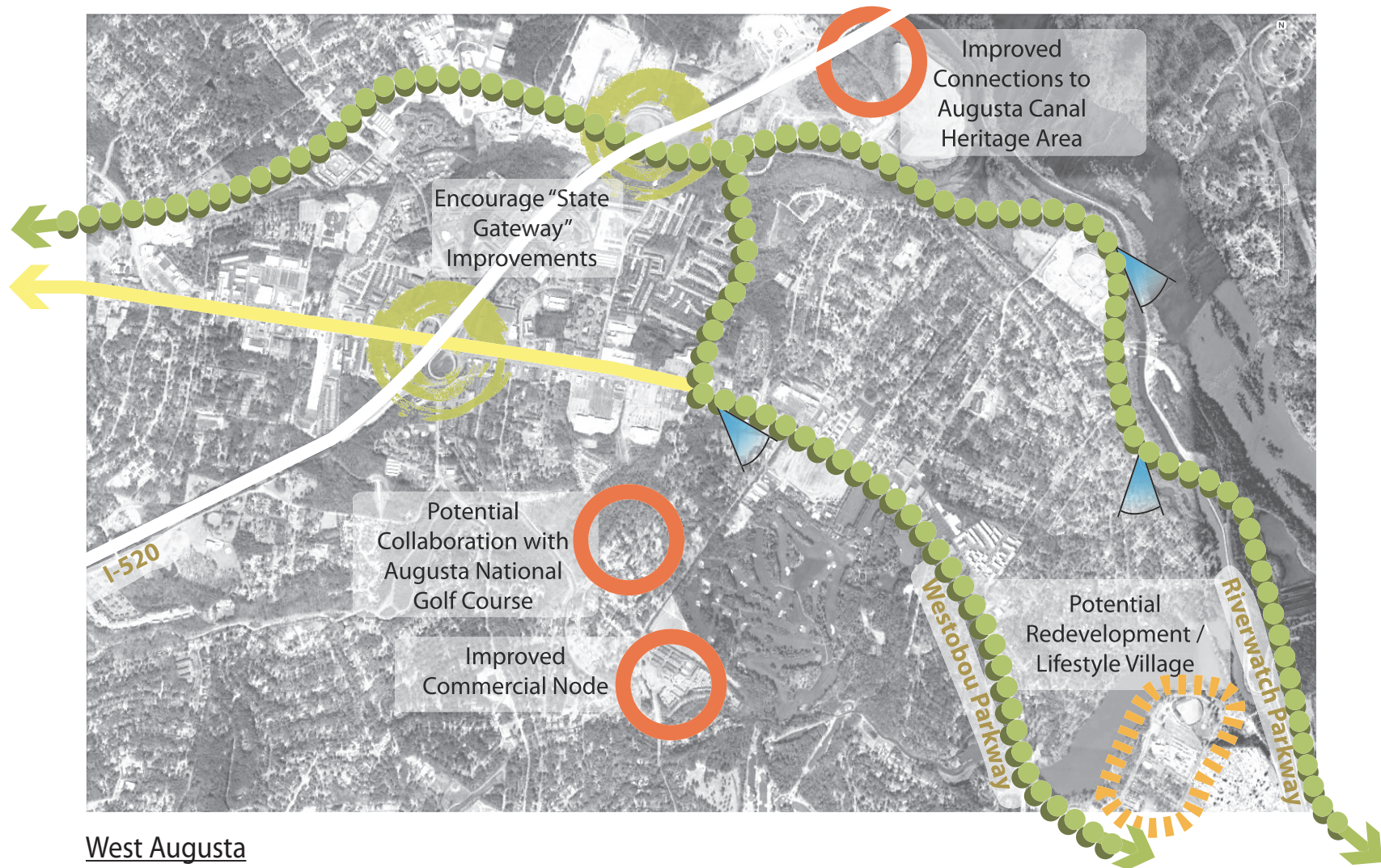
West Augusta

Figure 14. Potential West Augusta Projects

Belair

Belair lies west of I-520 and is bounded on the west by Columbia County and on the south by Fort Gordon.

Belair has been an area of strong residential growth in Augusta since 2000, with approximately 37% of all new Augusta housing units being constructed in this Character Area. The area includes a highly educated population and a strong mix of owner-occupied and rental units. We estimate housing unit and population growth in the area of 50% during the decade, resulting in an estimated population for 2010 of 12,000. The area is also Augusta's most affluent, with estimated median household of 2010 at $56,500.

This area reflects the trends of neighboring Columbia County.

Economic Development Agenda for Belair

Belair has been an area of strong residential growth in Augusta since 2000, with approximately 37% of all new Augusta housing units being constructed in this Character District. The area includes a highly educated population and a strong mix of owner-occupied and rental units. We estimate housing unit and population growth in the area of 50% during the decade, resulting in an estimated population for 2010 of 12,000. The area is also Augusta's most affluent, with estimated median household income for 2010 at $56,500.

Priority Opportunities

In addition to continued residential infill and commercial development oriented to the major thoroughfares, one major new development opportunity, the Jimmie Dyess / Wrightsboro Road Village Node has been identified in the Belair area. It is described in the Building Better Neighborhoods on the following page.
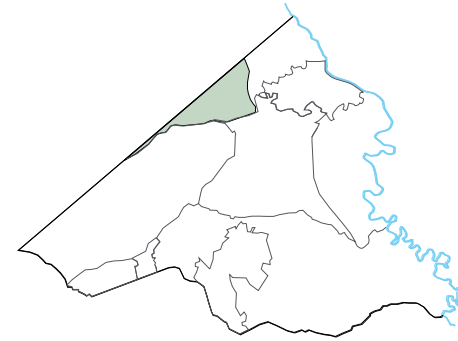
Price point hits the bulls eye

Building Better Neighborhoods Agenda for Belair

Since it is the unique position of having significant recent and projected housing growth, Belair could benefit from improvements to existing neighborhoods, strategic new development, and land conservation.

Priority Opportunities

Jimmie Dyess/Wrightsboro Village Node

Jimmie Dyess Parkway provides a major connection between Ft. Gordon and I-20 and on to the popular residential communities in Columbia County. A strategy targeted toward development of a quality mixed-use center adjacent to the key intersections of Powell, Jimmie Dyess, and Wrightsboro Road would be positioned to compete for new residential development. This hub would integrate residential, retail, and community service uses to create a high-quality, walkable community.

Market support for this development would come from its location as a unique center-based product in the Belair area already demonstrating strong housing development potential. In the past two years alone, owner-occupants have purchased 135 housing units in the Belair area at a median sales price of $122,000. The typical range of sales prices is $57,000 to $240,000.

Other opportunities

Such a new neighborhood should follow New Urbanism and Smart Growth principles and work towards a LEED certification. Specifically, new homes should be sited in close proximity to existing neighborhoods and linked to existing amenities such as Doctor's Hospital and the Augusta Mall.

Additionally, the 2008 Comprehensive Plan calls for a continued general transition of the area from rural residential to urban mixed-use along with neighborhood and open space preservation.

Recent suburban neighborhoods could become a case study for remediating less-than-ideal development practices. Connectivity to corridors and adjacent

Recent new Belair subdivision devoid of landscaping and scale
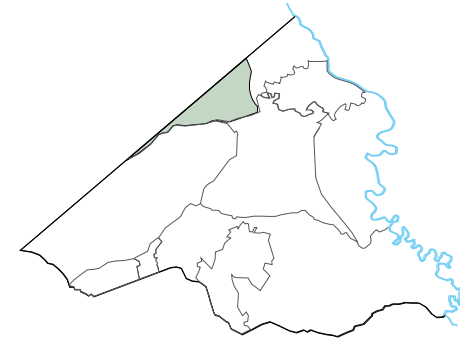
developments could be improved, along with street sections, landscaping, and addition of passive open space and community centers.

Public service initiatives in Belair should expand public transit to existing and, as required, new neighborhoods. Additionally, wastewater service should be confined to the area north and east of the present railroad right-of-way to minimize impact on relatively undisturbed land and encourage more sustainable development closer to existing developments. Expansion of medical services and offices is also called for under the Comprehensive Plan.

Gateways and Corridors

This fast growing area is bounded by Fort Gordon to the south and I-520 to the east and readily accessible, via the Jimmie Dyess Parkway, to I-20 and the services of Columbia County.

Priority Opportunities

The initial opportunities for establishing specific transportation Garden City gateways, corridors and beauty spots in the Belair character area of Augusta include the following:

Georgia Gateway[s]

- Interstate 20 at Wheeler Road

Garden City Gateways

- Jimmy Dyess Parkway
- Fort Gordon Highway

Garden City Corridors

- Fort Gordon Highway
- Jimmy Dyess Parkway
- Wrightsboro Road
- Furys Ferry Road

Good examples of well landscaped gateways are found in neighboring North Augusta

Greenspace System

The Belair character area contains the upper reaches of both Rocky and Butler creeks. Although there are a few, scattered neighborhood parks, the area remains largely under served. The development patterns here are among the most intense in Augusta, as the area has been the fastest growing part of the city for the past decade. As such, this area stands to benefit the most from the re-greening of the roadways and an increased investment in community parks.

However, as growth pressure increases, so do preservation opportunities multiply through an increase in available tactics. For example, a Special Assessment District could be created as a self-financing entity that would raise funds directly from the community who served to benefit from the increase in parks and outdoor recreational access. This in turn provides a sense of ownership and responsibility towards the parks at a pace the community is

comfortable with and further enhances the idea of Augusta as the Garden City.

Several opportunities exist for expanding the green infrastructure's hub and link system including:

Priority Opportunities

Links:

The upper reaches of Raes Creek is a repetitive flood plain area and should be protected as it provides water filtration, groundwater recharge, storm water control and soil enrichment.

Belair would also be a key receiving area for Mitigation Land Banking taking place elsewhere in the county. Mitigation banking is the restoration and enhancement of wetlands for the compensation of unavoidable wetland losses elsewhere. This is often the best option when development violations have already occurred.

Going forward in Belair…

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.
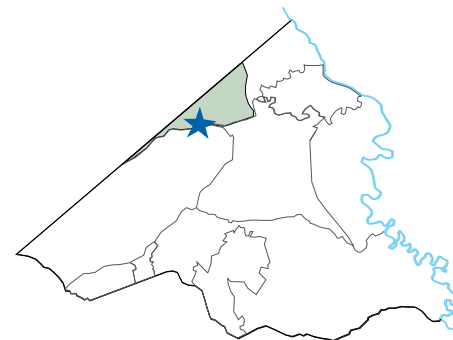
Legend:

▬	Redevelopment Opportunity
▮▮▮▮	Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●●	Proposed Parkway
▬	Improved Arterial
▬ ▬ ▬	Potential Roadway
◁	Scenic Viewshed

Jimmie Dyess Area Potential Iniatives

- Wrightsboro Road, west of the Augusta Mall, is another important Augusta corridor now under development pressure.

I-520

Jimmie Dyess Parkway

Examine development potential of key properties near Fort Gordon gate

Gordon Highway

Promote coordinated Development Plan for National Science Center

Belair
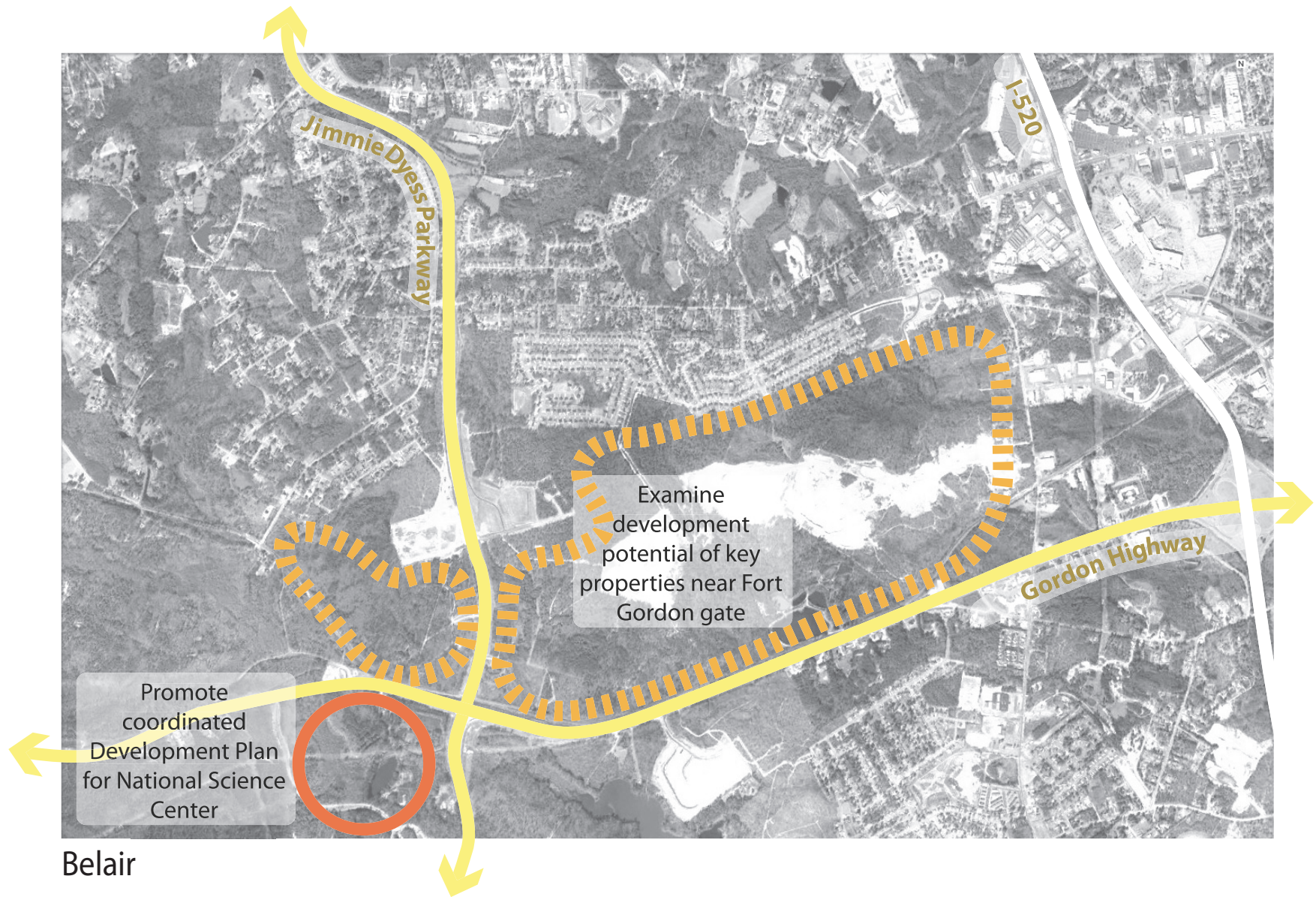
Figure 15. Potential Protypical Projects around Jimmie Dyess

Augusta Midlands

This central area of Augusta developed steadily throughout the 20th Century. This is a big area, with many faces. In many ways, it is the heart of Augusta today. The area begins at the base of the "hill", on which Summerville is situated. In a flowing series of ridges and valleys, she rolls down to Rocky Creek, then climbs southward over a low ridge and down to Butler Creek. From there she climbs again the ridge on which the famous Tobacco Road was laid out in the late 18th century and down again to Spirit Creek, the outward edge of municipal sewer line expansion.

Sprawl has taken its toll. One can trace the pattern of her rings of ever expanding subdivisions, from Wrightsboro Road to south of Tobacco Road. Much of this expansion is the result of growth at Fort Gordon, and indeed the construction of the Gordon Highway, however, most appears due to the availability of cheap land, on which developers could provide successive generations of Augustan's its most affordable new housing. As a result, the area has little neighborhood fabric of note, though there are many strong and active communities in the area. The overall development pattern is a patchwork of modest traditional neighborhoods and disconnected subdivisions.

Growth in the northern part of this area is slow, due in part to availability of cheap, undeveloped "greenfield" parcels to the south. The area is designed to be car dependent, yet many area residents do not have cars and thus lack mobility and consequently, choice of goods and services.

Major arterial roadways run through this area, including, north/south links to downtown via Deans Bridge Road (US 1) and Peach Orchard Road (GA 25). In the 1950's, the Gordon Highway was cut through this area, creating a link between Fort Gordon and the downtown and, perhaps more importantly, the Savannah River Site. These highways, over time, became lined with auto-oriented, strip commercial enterprises, ranging from fast food, to auto dealerships to business catering to everyday military personnel needs, to small and large strip shopping centers.

One regional mall, the Regency Mall, failed after several years of operation. As happened in many other parts of the country, these commercial arterial highways sections were never designed or managed with aesthetics, pedestrian ease of movement or any other criteria, other than rapid auto-movement, in mind. The problem is recognized, but efforts to correct the situation have been minimal to date, with the best results coming from volunteer efforts to date.

The construction of I-520 through this area, has effectively killed the market on older arterial corridors for large scale retail enterprise, except at their interchanges with I-520. The commercial strips that once served auto traffic primarily, now depend on local walk-in trade to keep them in business. I-520 has also had the effect of making these older arterial corridors, especially the Gordon highway, significantly overbuilt.

Augusta Tech, a highly regarded, regional community college, is centrally located in this area. It is a dynamic institution and can become an important part of any redevelopment plans for the area.

There are few non-auto dependent, recreational opportunities within this area, however most are hard to reach and considered by many residents as unsafe.

Economic Development Agenda for Augusta Midlands

Augusta Midlands is Augusta's most populous area, with 44% of the entire population of the City. The area has also seen the strongest growth during the past decade, with approximately 39% of all new Augusta housing units have been constructed here, primarily along Tobacco Road. The area includes a reasonably well-educated population and nearly twice as many owner-occupied housing units as rentals. We estimate housing unit and population growth during the decade of about 5%, resulting in an estimated population for 2010 of 91,700. The area's estimated median household income for 2010 is $35,500.

Market support for residential development in Augusta Midlands will come from the extremely active market found there. In the past two years alone, owner-occupants have purchased 956 housing units in Augusta Midlands at a diverse array of prices typically running from $25,000 to $150,000 and with a median sales price of $85,000.

Minimal landscaping and unattractive signage are common place throughout the Augusta Midlands

Project Opportunities

- Establish Community Health Care Services Hub at Gordon Hwy and Deans Bridge Road

- Create Magnet High School Anchor at Gordon Highway and Deans Bridge Road

- Continued Growth of Augusta Tech with Anchor Presence on Deans Bridge Road

- Outdoor Recreation Trails and Events

- Gordon Highway / Deans Bridge Community Service Mixed Use Center

- Peach Orchard / I-520 Retail Development Center

Windsor Springs / Tobacco Road Community Village

- Infill neighborhood at Olive Road and Fifteenth Street Corridor

This school can become an anchor for major neighborhood redevelopment.

Ad-hoc solution do not attain maximum results in neighborhood development

Building Better Neighborhoods Agenda for Augusta Midlands

Augusta Midlands is similar to the Belair character area in that the diverse landscape and geography suggest a broad range of development opportunities. As one of the largest study areas, Augusta Midlands could benefit from existing neighborhood revitalization and enhancement, development of concentrated urban villages, lifestyle developments targeted at specific markets, land conservation, and myriad public service improvements.

Priority Opportunities

Diamond Lakes Lifestyle Villages

Diamond Lakes is a regional facility that was a cooperative effort between the Recreation and Parks Department and the East Central Regional Library. These two city services, with the addition of others, create a prime area for a series of active lifestyle oriented neighborhoods.

Windsor Spring Village

In addition to the clustered mixed-use development and magnet school anchor proposed at Deans Bridge Road and Gordon Highway, a new town center at the intersection of Windsor Spring Road and Tobacco Road should be a high priority for Augusta. This would be larger and more meticulously defined than the urban villages identified in other character areas; more like having an identifiable town such as Washington, Georgia along Tobacco Road.

This new town center should have a well-crafted and intentional sense of place as defined by Architecture, civic space, and landscaping. Besides commercial, dining, and entertainment programs, the new town center should offer public services such as a post office and Department of Motor Vehicles office.

Even though there would be some topographical challenges, this important crossroads is ideal for an ambitious urban development. There is direct access to Fort Gordon and points west, East Augusta, the Old City, and Augusta Farms. There are already commercial anchors nearby. The site is close to Deer Chase, Jamestown, and Meadowbrook, and Windsor Spring elementary schools. Furthermore, adjacent land is available on three corners.

The new town center at Windsor Spring and Tobacco Road should be an early prototype project for other mixed-use development clusters called for elsewhere throughout the city. A well-executed, attractive, New Urbanist development could serve as a case study, not only for Augusta, but also for the state and the rest of the country.

Butler Creek Conservation Life Style Neighborhood

Large swaths of undeveloped land lie adjacent Butler Creek and the proposed Butler Creek Greenway. A large, well planned residential community, oriented to the creekway linear park and with trails connecting it to the Windsor Springs town center could also connect existing subdivisions into a large new Augusta community.

Historic Windsor Spring Farm

Commercial strips on Tobacco Road are offer the opportunity for towncenter development

Deans Bridge/Gordon Highway Intersection

While the Regency Mall remains a high priority for redevelopment, the shopping centers on the north side of the Gordon highway may present a better venue for new development as a mixed use retail/residential neighborhood that could truly change the image of this middle part of Augusta.

The areas along Rocky Creek and Butler creek could serve as "spines" for linear residential developments oriented towards active outdoor recreation lifestyles. Working with Green Infrastructure agenda, these developments could be situated to take full advantage of a city-wide park and trail system for cycling, jogging, and hiking.

Infill mixed-use Opportunities

Wilkinson Gardens and the area along Olive Road are established neighborhoods with housing stock in various states of disrepair. Infill development in association with adjacent economic drivers could help strengthen these areas.

Further lifestyle developments geared towards active outdoor recreation could be focused around Diamond Lakes. Additionally, these developments could tie into the proposed parkways through Augusta Midlands as described under Gateways and Corridors.

Public Services

Additional public service initiatives to improve the quality of life in Augusta Midlands could include additional police substations and increasing frequency and scope of public transportation. Perhaps most importantly, a moratorium on wastewater expansion south of Tobacco Road should be implemented. This conscientious decision would facilitate the Green Infrastructure priorities of conservation development in the southern part of the city, would encourage denser Smart Growth development closer to existing neighborhoods and amenities, and would establish a more approximate and accessible consumer base for the Economic Development goals.

Augusta Midlands Transportation Improvement Opportunities

Augusta Midlands lies in the geographic heart of the City of Augusta. I-520 and several major arterials crisscross the area. A number of major destinations, including downtown, Fort Gordon, the airport and the Augusta mall along its borders. Given its central location, findings to date suggest a number of innovative new developments in this area.

Priority Opportunities

Context Sensitive Roadway Planning and Design

Many opportunities exist for Context Sensitive Solutions in this area, including:

Along I-520

Focus on inviting signage, creating attractive, well planted interchanges and providing access to future development of

a regional "national chain" retail complex at or near the Peach Orchard Road interchange.

On the Urban Arterial Corridors

These existing arterial roadways need public streetscaping as well as better property landscape and signage controls and clean-up procedures. These areas would also have safe areas for pedestrians to cross. Corridors in Augusta Midlands include:

- Deans Bridge Road- (from Tobacco Road to the Gordon Highway)

- Peach Orchard Roads- (from Tobacco Road to the Gordon Highway)

- The Gordon Highway, West- (from I 520 to the Jimmy Dyess Parkway)

A New Farm-to-City Scenic Parkway

Establish a coordinated north-south scenic parkway from the rural areas in the south of the city into downtown, a New Urbanism ""Slice of Augusta"" that celebrates and interprets the city's heritage. The segment through Augusta Midlands includes Windsor Springs Road from

Diamond Lakes to Richmond Hills Road/ Richmond Hills road to Deans bridge Road, then north on Deans Bridge to Fifteenth Street toward downtown.

Other Garden City Corridors

Avenues and Boulevards are designed to offer a pleasant and stress free route from one place to another. They set a positive image for both the corridor through which they pass and the nodes they connect. In addition to the Farm-to-City Scenic Parkway described above, two other existing corridors in Augusta Midlands should be considered for this designation and treatment:

- Tobacco Road- This is the 'front drive' to Fort Gordon for most people arriving from out of state. This aerial also serves as an important east-west connector for non-military residents. This road should be a showcase.

- Gordon Highway, from Peach Orchard Road to I-520- Within the past few years, I-520 has become the principal circumferential corridor for the region.

Just way too many lanes for today's needs on the Gordon Highway

A parkway connection in this area would connect to the Farm-to-City parkway at Deans Bridge Road and with Peach Orchard Road, the designated Savannah River Parkway.

The combination of three parkways, Savannah River, Gordon and Farm-to City converging in the South Gate/ Regency area could transform the image and the potential of this area.

Public Transit

As growth occurs at designated nodes, bus routes can expand their service. One can imagine an eventual light rail or trolley line to the South Gate/Regency area with community services to the south and Fort Gordon.

Greenspace System

The Augusta Midlands character area is defined on the north primarily by Rocky Creek, and the south, by Spirit Creek. Two major greenspace features are found here, the Rocky Creek outdoor classroom and the Diamond Lakes Regional Park, as well as a series of smaller neighborhood parks. As far as land use intensity goes, Augusta Midlands showcases a range of intensities from fairly rural development patterns in the south to the heavily suburbanized north.

This variation in land use intensities showcases how the area has been vulnerable to generic patterns of sprawl. Development Impact Fees, such as mentioned in the Belair Character Area, and Subdivision Exactions can be used to dedicate land set for development towards public use in the way of parks, recreational areas and trails. At no cost to the local government, this regulation aims to reduce the tendency toward "cookie-cutter" subdivisions while reducing the strain on the local transportation network.

Also, Augusta Midlands would be the most likely place to realize Conservation

Design Developments as mentioned in the Greenspace System Core Element Introduction.

Priority Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for expanding the green infrastructure's hub and link system including:

Directed Infill Development

Directing infill development to areas most suitable, can strategically set aside land for creating new parks and open spaces. Most of Augusta Midlands has already been developed. However, unlike the more northern areas of the county, there is still a great development opportunity. We would like any new subdivisions here to follow conservation design guidelines to maintain the natural character of the area. This would ensure that any open space created would be linked into a continuous band that looped around the new subdivisions and reconnected to preexisting greenways. For example, Gracewood, when redeveloped,

Newly created conservation land along Butler Creek

should include a large amount of open space as it backs up into Spirit Creek. And any South Gate / Regency Mall redevelopment should link to the Rocky Creek outdoor classroom and preserve.

Butler Creek

Several big parcels abut this area and can be developed into lifestyle communities focused on a creek recreation corridor as well as walking and biking trails to the Windsor Spring / Tobacco Road Town Center.

Rights of Way Utilization

Several proposed parkways cross Augusta Midlands. These would include designated bike lanes, storm water swales, and sidewalks, further adding to the opportunity for linking greenspaces. Low impact development standards should be used when creating new streets and infrastructure patterns.

Neighborhood Trails

The natural meandering of the county's

creeks are a phenomenal resource for the county and a quality of life enhancer for those that live nearby. The Development Agenda plans to capitalize on the creekways by encouraging the design of communities with a high level of recreational trail access.

Rocky Creek is located in one of the more urbanized districts of Augusta. It's a medium sized and relatively fast flowing that backs up to many apartment communities and residences. The Central Savannah River Land Trust owns 15.5 acres of the creek and its surrounding forest buffer under conservation. They have also recently established a trail system that hosts outdoor education events through the Knox Foundation. This system could be expanded to the many schools that are near the waterway.

Butler Creek is also located near neighborhoods. The Central Savannah River Land Trust and the City of Augusta own properties along the creek, creating an almost entirely connected greenway. In order to fill the gaps not able to be assembled under conservation easements, a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) system would be recommended.

Going forward in Augusta Midlands…

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.

Three sub areas are identified in Augusta Midlands:

> *1. Windsor Springs*
>
> *2. Augusta Tech neighborhood*
>
> *3. South Gate redevelopment area*
>
> *4. Augusta Mall / Wrightsboro Road area*

Legend:

▬▬▬	Redevelopment Opportunity
▮▮▮▮	Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●●	Proposed Parkway
▬▬▬	Improved Arterial
▭ ▭ ▭	Potential Roadway
◁	Scenic Viewshed

Other Potential Windsor Spring Initiatives

- Connect existing subdivisions to each other and to town center

- Develop parkland from Windsor Spring town center to Tobacco Road Elementary

- Protect and enhance historic homes along Windsor Spring Road

Windsor Spring Town Center

Figure 16. Potential Protypical Projects around Windsor Spring Road

Around Augusta Tech …

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.

The city of Augusta has extensive tracts of land on either side of I-520 in this area. This includes land currently used for bus parking and storage which will be redeveloped into a magnet technical high school with connections to the Augusta Tech campus.

Legend:

— Redevelopment Opportunity
| | | | Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●● Proposed Parkway
— Improved Arterial
- - - Potential Roadway
▷ Scenic Viewshed

Other Augusta Tech Neighborhood Potential Initiatives

- Develop "Farm to City" Parkway segment through this area
- Examine the potential for connections to adjacent historic properties
- Upgrade front main entry to campus from Deans Bridge Road
- Augusta Tech connection to Lumpkin Road

I-520

Develop an Augusta Tech / magnet highschool

Deans Bridge Road

Richmond Hil Rd

Improved Retail Node

Lumpkin Road

Investigate potential Big Box, regional retail site on I-520

Historic Property

Bobby Jones Expressway

Augusta Tech Sub-Area

Figure 17. Potential Protypical Projects around Augusta Tech
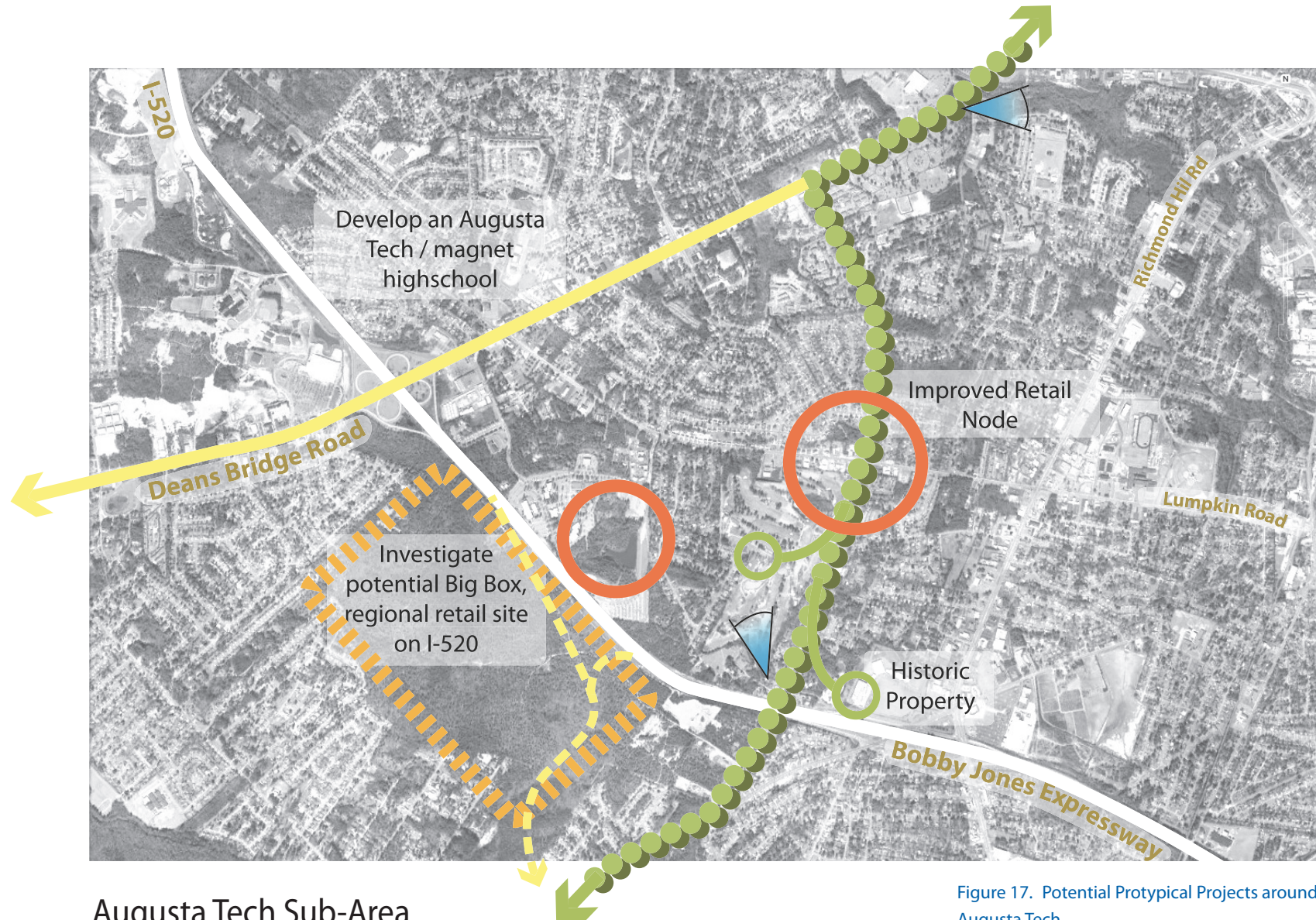
In the South Gate area…

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.

This is a long forgotten area that should be developed comprehensively, particularly for the areas around:

> *1. Deans Bridge Road / Gordon Highway including the Regency Mall, the South Gate neighborhood and the southside of the Gordon Highway along Rocky Creek.*
>
> *2. The area around Olive Road and the Josey Highschool as a dense infill residential neighborhood.*

Legend:

▬▬▬	Redevelopment Opportunity
▮▮▮▮	Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●●	Proposed Parkway
▬ ▬ ▬	Improved Arterial
▬ ▬ ▬	Potential Roadway
◢	Scenic Viewshed

Other Area Potential Initiatives

1. Pendleton Park Renovation

2. Possible widening of railroad underpass

3. South Gate to Downtown Trolly corridor

Infill Neighborhood

South Gate Redevelopment Area

Regency Mall Redevelopment Area

Potential Trolley Corridor
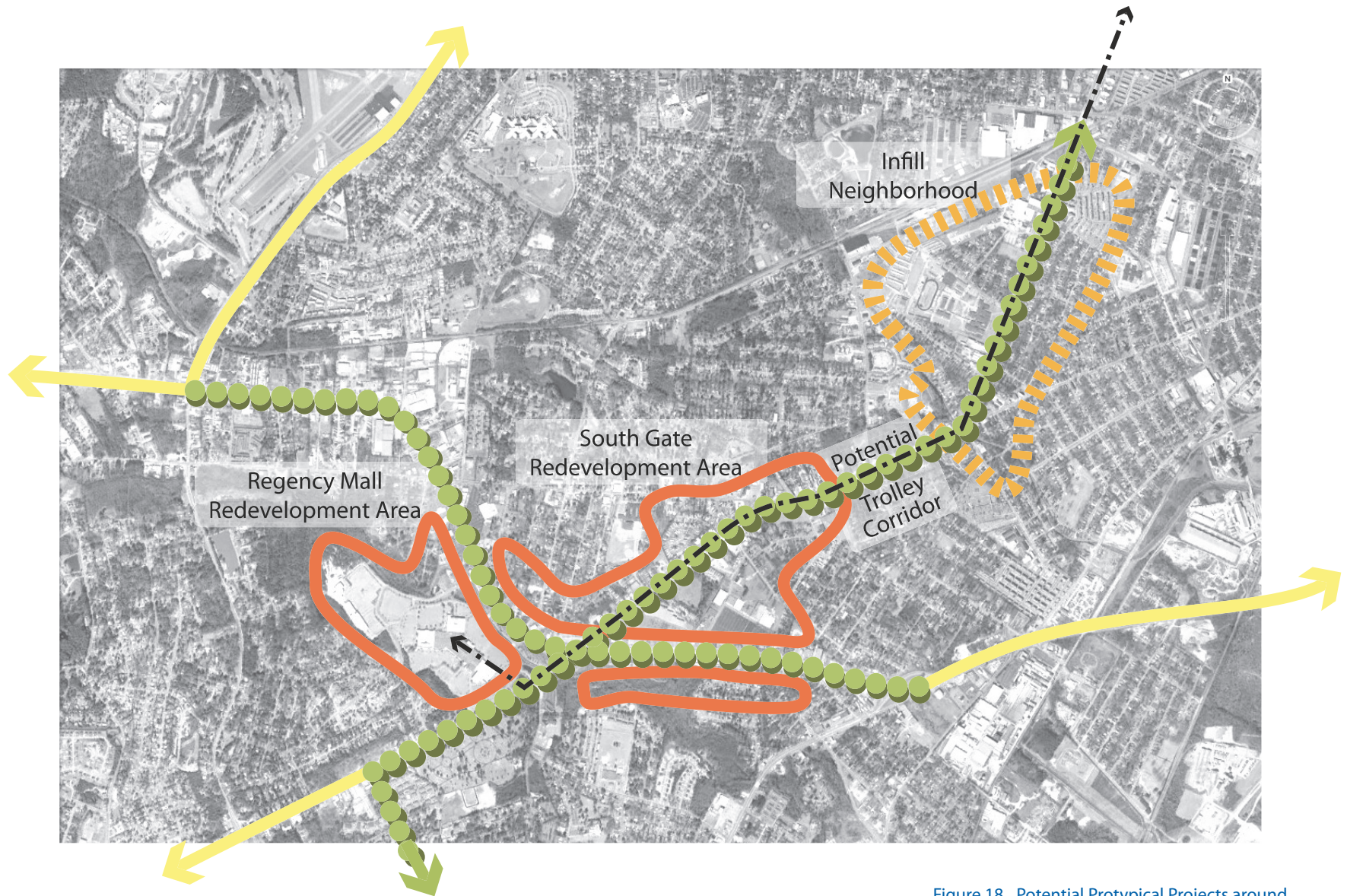
South Gate Area

Figure 18. Potential Protypical Projects around Augusta Tech

Around Augusta Mall...

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.

Augusta State University is aggressively developing its campus expansion in this area. This will provide opportunities for healthy economic development along the entirity of Wrightsboro Road.

Legend:

▬▬▬	Redevelopment Opportunity
▐▐▐▐	Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●●	Proposed Parkway
▬ ▬ ▬	Improved Arterial
▬ ▬ ▬	Potential Roadway
◣	Scenic Viewshed

Other Area Potential Initiatives

- Promote Wheeler Road Gateway Improvements

- Promote Wrightsboro Road West Improvements
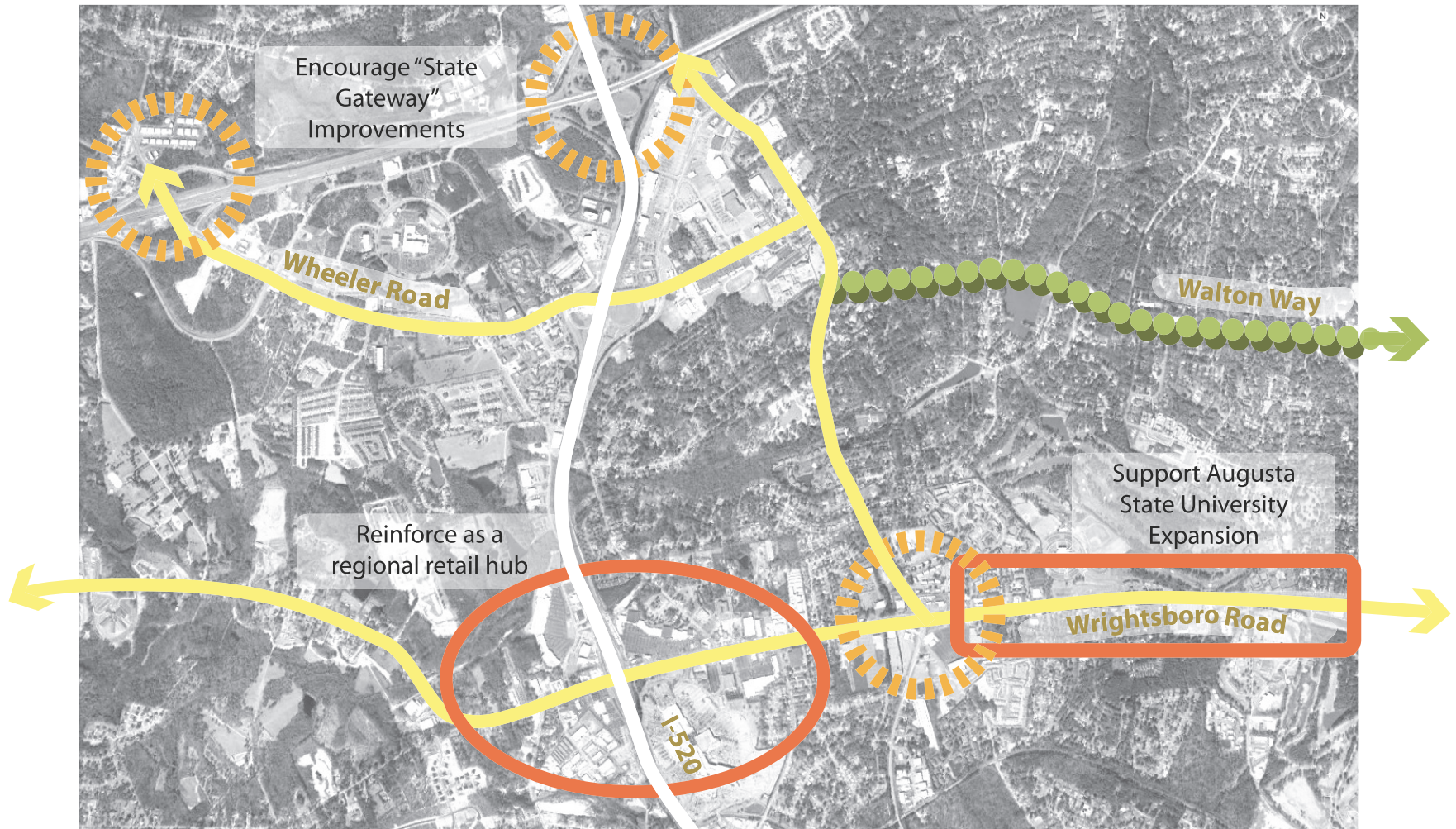
Augusta Mall / Wrightsboro Road

Figure 19. Potential Projects near Augusta Mall

Labels within figure:

Encourage "State Gateway" Improvements

Wheeler Road

Walton Way

Support Augusta State University Expansion

Reinforce as a regional retail hub

Wrightsboro Road

I-520

East Augusta

East Augusta occupies the low-lying eastern portion of the City. It is generally bounded by the Savannah River to the east and railroad lies to the west. The area contained significant wetland areas, including the Phinizy Swamp, a large areas of brick ponds, from which clay has been removed for manufacturing purposes. A flood levee runs through much of this area, with a flood plain where agriculture is the only use on its riverside. The riverfront and the Phinizy Swamp are very significant natural features and important wildlife habitat, both locally and as part of their location along important 'flyways' for migrating birds.

Most of Augusta's traditional industrial and manufacturing businesses are located here. Augusta's so-called "Miracle Mile" of manufacturing plants are found east of the downtown, proximate to the Savannah River and ready access to a plentiful and stable water source for both intake and discharge above the Savannah Bluffs Lock and Dam. Significant newer manufacturing facilities are found further south. This area is well served by freight rail, with large marshalling and switching yards in the area.

Bush Field, the City's main airport is located in the middle of this area. This facility can accommodate large jets, is served locally by Delta and US Air commuter services. There appears to be existing capacity to grow significantly in the future. There is ample undeveloped, or under utilized land in the area to accommodate a large amount of airport-related growth.

Economic Development Agenda

East Augusta is home to much of Augusta's industrial infrastructure as well as environmentally interesting areas and riverfront communities. Housing and population have remained stable during the past decade, with little growth. The area has roughly equal portions of homeowners and renters and comparatively low levels of educational attainment. The area is comparatively less affluent, with estimated median household of 2010 at $25,900.

Priority Opportunities

Technology-Based Manufacturing Development

Augusta is well-placed to capture growth in high-tech manufacturing due to four factors: (1) the core of knowledge available for technological innovation based on the location of the Medical College of Georgia (biotech) and Ft. Gordon (information/electronics) in the area; (2) the specialized
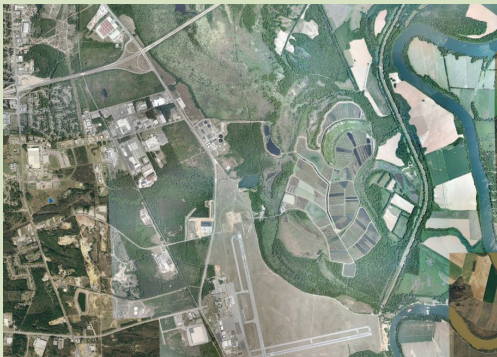
workforce skill base available from students and former employees of these educational and military institutions; (3) the comparatively low cost of production in the Augusta area; and (4) Augusta's advantageous and event-secure climate.

Outdoor Recreation at Phinizy Swamp & Borrow Pits

Augusta can further evolve into a major location for outdoor recreation tourism through expanded trails and unique micro-environments. These resources, beyond their contributions to tourism, will also benefit the community by adding to the outdoor recreation quality of life that sets Augusta apart as a place to live and work.

Inter-regional Transportation Linkages

Improved inter-regional transportation linkages with expanded direct air service at Bush Field and strengthened highway connections to Savannah, Greenville, and Macon/Columbus will enhance Augusta's attraction as a place to visit for sports, cultural, heritage, and eco-tourism.

I-520 Interchange at Sand Bar Ferry / Laney Walker Roads

With the completion of I-520 to I-20, this area will become the first point of contact for significant auto oriented retail services. Proper planning, layout design and landscaping / signage regulations are critical.

One major new residential development is found along Sand Bar Ferry Road and is described in the following section on Building Stronger Neighborhoods.

Phinizy Swamp

Augusta Regional Airport, Bush Field

Building Stronger Neighborhoods

Industry, wetlands, limited access, and minimal utility service severely limit development opportunities in East Augusta. Most efforts will be along the boarders of Augusta Midlands and the Old City and involve existing neighborhood stabilization and infill development .

Priority Opportunities

The far western part of Olde Town is home to aging housing stock that would benefit from maintenance and possible historical preservation initiatives.

Sand Bar Ferry Riverside Gateway Node

Creating a Sand Bar Ferry Village of housing and retail to replace distressed housing complexes will upgrade housing opportunities in the neighborhood. The quality of life in this community will be enhanced with a proposed Savannah River park offering camping and multi-recreational uses and a Sand Bar Ferry Park that can be used for fairgrounds, stables, organic farming and organized sports. This $100-150 million development will strengthen East Augusta at the key city gateway at I-520 and Sand Bar Ferry Road.

Residential development will build off the current modest homeownership activity where, in the past two years, owner-occupants have purchased only 16 housing units in the East Augusta area at a median sales price of $51,000. The typical range of sales prices has been $15,000 to $93,000.

Hyde Park Neighborhood

Hyde Park is a very isolated neighborhood cut off from the city by the Gordon Highway, wetlands, and industrial uses. Its location makes it difficult and expensive to provide adequate public services. Many of the buildings are abandoned. In our opinion, the city should consider relocating Hyde Park residents from this deteriorated setting to other developments in the city, either at Sand Bar Ferry, or some other location as they come online.

With the completion of I-520, this area will experience pressure to become another auto-oriented development area.

With the completion of I-520 to I-20, this area becomes an important gateway node

Gateways and Corridors

Many travelers first enter Augusta via I-520 and more significantly through the airport. Major links to Savannah and Charleston run through this area.

Potential Opportunities

The initial opportunities for establishing specific transportation Garden City gateways, corridors and beauty spots in the East Augusta City character area of Augusta include the following:

Georgia Gateway[s]
- Bobby Jones Expressway (I-520)
- Sand Bar Ferry Road (GA 28)

Garden City Gateways
- Augusta Regional Airport at Bush Field

Garden City Corridors
- Westobou Parkway (from Bush Field along Doug Barnard/I-520/Sand Bar Ferry Road)

- Laney Walker Boulevard
- Doug Barnard Parkway (I-520 to Fort Gordon Highway)
- Fort Gordon Highway (Peach Orchard Road to Savannah River)

Garden City Beauty Spots
- Fort Gordon Highway at Walton Way
- Fort Gordon Highway at Doug Barnard Parkway

Greenspace System

The East Augusta character area is defined by the extensive wetlands that make up the Savannah River watershed. In fact, a large portion of East Augusta falls within the 100 year floodplains.

The major greenspace features here are the Phinizy Swamp Nature Preserve and the Savannah River Bluffs Park. Most of the land uses are industrial, save a few neighborhoods disconnected from the Old City by rail roads and the building of Interstate 520. Also important is the Levee system and the potential for a trail along its crest.

The wetlands found here are primarily environmentally critical in terms of water recharge and reclamation for the Savannah River. These lands should be protected to the fullest extent of federal, state and local law. When this is not possible, and lands worthy of protection will be lost, Mitigation Land Banking should be used when similar compensation can not be achieved at the development site or would not be as environmentally beneficial. This offers Augusta flexibility in land use decisions and enables the potential protection of larger land areas rather than scattered, small tracts.

Potential Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for expanding the green infrastructure's hub and link system including:

Potential Hubs:

The proposed Sand Bar Ferry Regional Park with its riverfront, levee, and multi-use areas on Sand Bar Ferry Road presents a very significant opportunity to reposition this part of Augusta.

The Industrial Landscape

The industrial landscape here is both a beautiful and functional component of Augusta's economy. When viewed from areas of higher elevation, the steam stacks invoke an era gone by and remind Augusta of its cotton mill past. This should be preserved, if and when outside pressure ever necessitated it, through a scenic corridor designation.

The Xethanol River Tract provides a crucial buffer between Augusta's industries and the Savannah River

Augustas Industrial Miracle Mile

Gordon Highway Borrow Pits

Similarly, the large borrow pits on either side of the Gordon Highway offer the opportunity for recreational use and establishment of an Augusta Beauty Spot.

The Xethanol River Tract

The Xethanol River Tract is a piece of land that the Central Savannah River Land Trust is working to preserve with local landowners, farmers, and business to ensure that it remains wild for generations to come. The attainment of this parcel should be used as a model for future public / private partnerships as an effective means of acquiring funding or other assistance from the local industrial community. Increased sources of information, technical assistance and funding potential are unveiled with each new partnership.

Potential Links:

The Levee might contain a bike path along the top to connect the future Butler Creek trail and the Downtown River Walk.

The Merryland Brick Ponds would make an excellent location for an extension of the Levee trails system into a series of outdoor biking and recreation trails. These should also connect to the Phinizy Swamp.
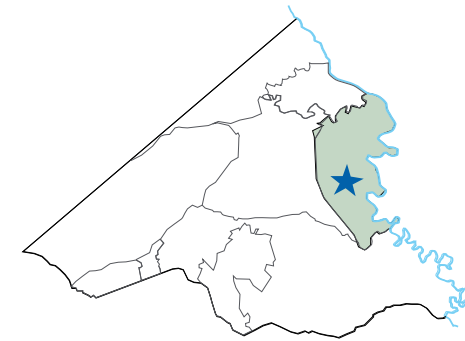
Going forward in East Augusta …

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.

East Augusta is a blend of industrial uses and sensitive natural areas. Future development in this area must consider the ecologically fragile nature of this environment.

Legend:

▬▬▬	Redevelopment Opportunity
▐▐▐▐	Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●●	Proposed Parkway
▬▬▬	Improved Arterial
▬ ▬ ▬	Potential Roadway
◁	Scenic Viewshed

Other Potential East Augusta Iniatives

- Develop openspace connections via Levee and Butler Creek to Savannah River Bluffs Dam and to Phinizy Swamp Nature Center.

- Develop Sand Bar Ferry Road as part of the Westobou Parkway

- Develop Laney Walker Boulevard as an auto-oriented service arterial to Laney Walker and the Medical Area.

- Develop Sand Bar Ferry Village and Sand Bar Ferry Park.

- Consider a business park oriented to Bush Field
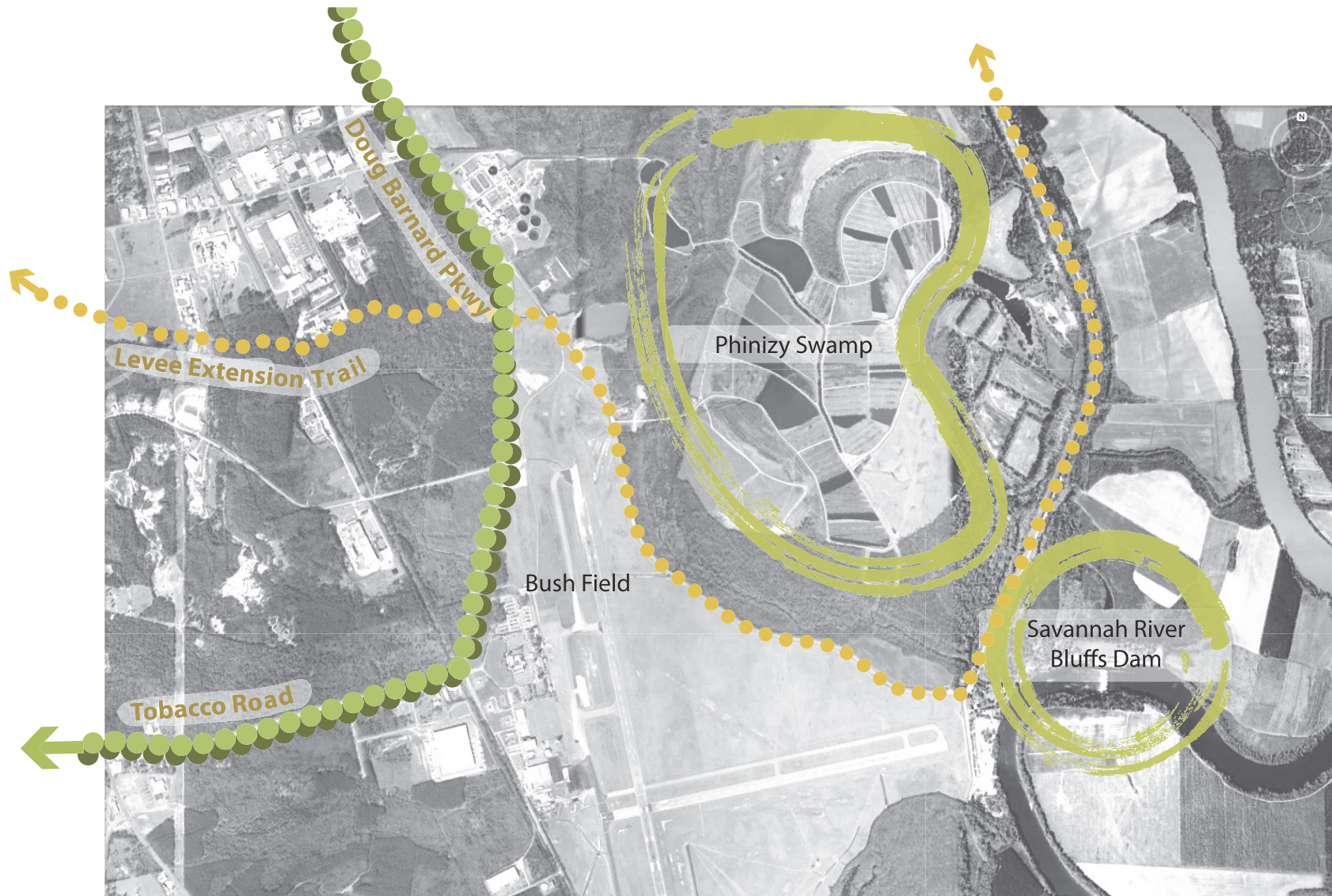
East Augusta

Figure 20. Potential Continuation of Levee Extension Trail into Butler Creek

Augusta Farms

This is the southernmost part of Augusta, primarily rural, farmland, containing the small village centers of Bath, Blythe, Hephzibah, and McBean. This area occupies nearly one third of Augusta, and until the recent City/ County consolidation, was exclusively under County governance. As the consolidation vote approached, residents in and around the Blythe and Hephzibah communities organized to form their own municipalities. This area is approximately 25 miles in length, east to west, and 10 miles wide, from north to south. This southern-most area is bounded on the west by Fort Gordon, to the south by Burke County, and on the east by the Savannah River. To the north, Spirit Creek separates this area from the rest of the City.

The area is essentially rural in nature, with much of the land in large parcels in excess of 200 acres. It has a combination of cultivated land, pasture, pecan and fruit orchards, pine plantations and unclaimed forest and scrubland. Three creeks run east to west across this area. Spirit Creek, Little Creek and McBean Creek, and many large undeveloped parcels abut these water bodies. Other significant land uses in this area include the Cailin Mine and the city's active land fill.

The best agricultural soils are found in the area in the southwestern part of the area, on the higher ground, generally between Fort Gordon and Peach Orchard Road. There are a number of large active farms offering attractive views from roads, large and small criss-crossing this area. Of these, the Aldridge Farm on Deans Bridge Road is perhaps the finest example. A systematic drive through and aerial photo examination suggests that a significant cultural landscape, based on its agrarian theme, is found here.

All four villages are more than 100 years old, however, none are part of any historic district. While there are a number of attractive older buildings that would likely be eligible, much of the original historic fabric has been destroyed, rendering overall eligibility questionable. Recently constructed public buildings make no attempt, in their siting or design; to knit their communities back together. Most new residences are single-family dwellings, arranged in frontage lots along former farm roads, or in slowly developing subdivisions.

Along US-1

Economic Development for Augusta Farms

The area is essentially rural in nature, with much of the land in large parcels in excess of 200 acres. It has a combination of cultivated land, pasture, pecan and fruit orchards, pine plantations and unclaimed forest and scrubland. Three creeks run east to west across this area. Spirit Creek, Little Creek and McBean Creek, and many large undeveloped parcels abut these water bodies. Other significant land uses in this area include the Cailin Mine and the city's active land fill.

The best agricultural soils are found in the area in the southwestern part of the area, on the higher ground, generally between Fort Gordon and Peach Orchard Road. There are a number of large active farms offering attractive views from roads, large and small criss-crossing this area. Of these, the Aldridge Farm on Deans Bridge Road is perhaps the finest example. A systematic drive through and aerial photo examination suggests that a significant cultural landscape, based on its agrarian theme, is found here.

There are four villages in the area that are more than 100 years old, however, none are part of any historic district. While there are a number of attractive older buildings that would likely be eligible, much of the original historic fabric has been destroyed, rendering overall eligibility questionable.

Recently constructed public buildings make no attempt, in their siting or design; to knit their communities back together. Most new residences are single-family dwellings, arranged in frontage lots along former farm roads, or in slowly developing subdivisions.

Except for a few convenience stores, typically associated with gas stations, the area is dramatically under served by retail establishments. The market for homes in Augusta Farms has been accelerating during the past decade. In the past two years alone, owner-occupants have purchased 260 housing units in Augusta Farms at a diverse array of prices typically running from $20,000 to $225,000 and with a median sales price of $95,000.

An Augusta farm near Blythe

Priority Opportunities

Agricultural Learning Center

A few of Augusta's best remaining farms lie in this area. One such farm, is over 100 acres of extraordinarily attractive land, currently for sale, which could become a learning center for farming and ecology. It could also be a productive farm, focusing on organic farming techniques and local produce.

Augusta Farms Village

There appears to be adequate land around the US-1 / Route 88 Intersection to consider development at an agricultural "hamlet" having direct access to US 1 motorists. The uses programmed for this area should consider the US Army's Common Use Buffer (ACUB) guidelines, given that the land is in proximity to Fort Gordon.

An Augusta farm near Blythe

A Word About Blythe

Blythe has remained a largely rural area with a small service node. The area has a strong history of home ownership. We estimate housing and population growth in this area to be very modest during the past decade with only two new units constructed in the first seven years of the decade. The area is also comparatively affluent, with estimated median household of 2010 at $47,100.

Blythe's quaint and attractive village center commercial buildings are all vacant. New houses or roads leading to the center follow guidelines encouraging vernacular interpretations to repair from historic fabric. It's not too late for a solid set of development programs and initiatives to be written that would make Blythe one of the most attractive and desirable places to live in Georgia.

A Word About Hephzibah

Hephzibah has remained a largely rural area with a compact community village. The area has a strong history of home ownership. Housing development since 2000 has been very limited with only 18 new units being constructed during the first seven years of the decade. The area is also comparatively affluent, with estimated median household of 2010 at $47,700.

Infill housing opportunities exist to repair torn historic fabric. An urban design plan should be developed for the intersection of Route 88 and Windsor Spring Road to restore unique rural character.

Building Stronger Neighborhoods

In association with the land conservation and agrarian preservation objectives, neighborhood development in Augusta Farms should be extremely limited.

Priority Opportunities

Blythe Village Node

A carefully controlled program of rehabilitation and in-fill development can evolve the modest and scattered hamlet at the center of Blythe into a quality village with sufficient market to support a limited array of retailing and services to meet the needs of the Blythe community. This modest expansion will enhance the unique character of Blythe.

Market support for this limited residential development would be in keeping with the current pace of the housing market in Blythe. In the past two years, owner-occupants have purchased 14 housing units in the Blythe area at a median sales price of $122,000. The typical range of sales prices is $84,000 to $185,000.

A good interpretation of a rural house vernacular

Hephzibah Village Node

A carefully controlled program of rehabilitation and in-fill development can upgrade the quality and range of development within the current Hephzibah village center to create a community with sufficient market to support a broader array of retailing and services to meet the needs of the Hephzibah community. This modest expansion will enhance the largely rural character of Hephzibah and may provide the potential mechanism to preserve farmland and open space through transfer of development rights programs that benefit property owners and the broader Hephzibah community.

Market support for limited residential development would be in keeping with the current pace of the housing market in Hephzibah. The demand for housing in Hephzibah, however, is strong. In the past two years alone, owner-occupants have purchased 60 housing units in the Hephzibah area at a median sales price of $117,000. The typical range of sales prices is $60,000 to $235,000.

The intersection of Route-88 and Windsor Spring could become a village center

Gateways and Corridors

People arriving in Augusta from Florida and points south and west get their first impression of Augusta as they cross the Burke County line into the city.

Priority Opportunities

The initial opportunities for establishing specific transportation Garden City gateways, corridors and beauty spots in the Augusta Farms (Augusta Farms) character area of Augusta include:

Garden City Gateways

- Deans Bridge Road
- Peach Orchard Road
- Mike Padgett Highway

Garden City Corridors

- The Farm to City Parkway (US 1/GA 88/Windsor Spring Road)
- The Fall Line Freeway (Deans Bridge

Prestine farm land creates beautiful views from the road

Greenspace System

The Augusta Farms character area is defined by Spirit Creek to the North and McBean Creek to the south. The major greenspace features here are the Spirit Creek Educational Forest and the exceptional, historic farms of Blythe and Hephzibah.

Several methods could be employed here to encourage the preservation of forest and farm land. On the regulatory side, Large Lot Zoning should be instated to preserve rural character and open space. However, the lot minimums should be set to at least 20 acres or more to ensure efficient development protection.

Potential Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for expanding the green infrastructure's hub and link system including:

Potential Hubs:

Of primary importance would be the preservation of the agricultural landscape. The state of Georgia's number one industry is agriculture, and Richmond County is no different. Farming in Augusta is a key part of its history. Historic drives and scenic corridors that reflect this history should be preserved. Blythe and Hepzibah in particular have some beautiful farmlands that would be a shame to loose to generic patterns of development. Augusta should build upon its rural history.

An "Old East Georgia Farm Experience" could be an overview of a sustainable lifestyle farm, introducing new generations to the labors of love of a generation past. It could include community activities and educational workshops such as vegetarian cooking demonstrations, straw bale bundling, antique tractor pulls, and apple picking.

Spirit Creek

A significant portion of land has been acquired along Spirit Creek by the Central Savannah River Land Trust. This should be connected with other conserved areas along the creek way as well as Diamond Lakes and its surrounding communities.

Potential Links:

Scenic Corridor designation along rural roadways.

Spirit Creek conservation Easements

As one of the least developed upon creek systems in Augusta, the area is highly vulnerable to development and subsequent environmental degradation. Conversely, the land values here are among the lowest in the county, setting the stage for multiple acquisition opportunities.

Going forward in Augusta Farms...

A number of key projects have been identified for each of the Agenda's "Building Blocks". These are summarized in the following opportunities diagram and will be further examined as the work moves forward.

The area in and around Blythe is a very significant cultural landscape which the city should protect, enhance, and interpret.

Legend:

▬▬▬	Redevelopment Opportunity
▮▮▮▮	Potential New Development Opportunity
●●●●	Proposed Parkway
▬▬▬	Improved Arterial
▬ ▬ ▬	Potential Roadway
◤	Scenic Viewshed

Potential Augusta Farms Iniatives

- Protect the viewshed from the road along US 1 and Route 88

- Protect natural habitats throughout

- Develop farmland preservation enhancement and interpretation program

- Hepzibah Village Center Improvements

US-88

Potential new
village center
development

Deans Bridge

Develop a Heritage
Demonstration Farm

Revitalize the Blythe
Farm Village Center
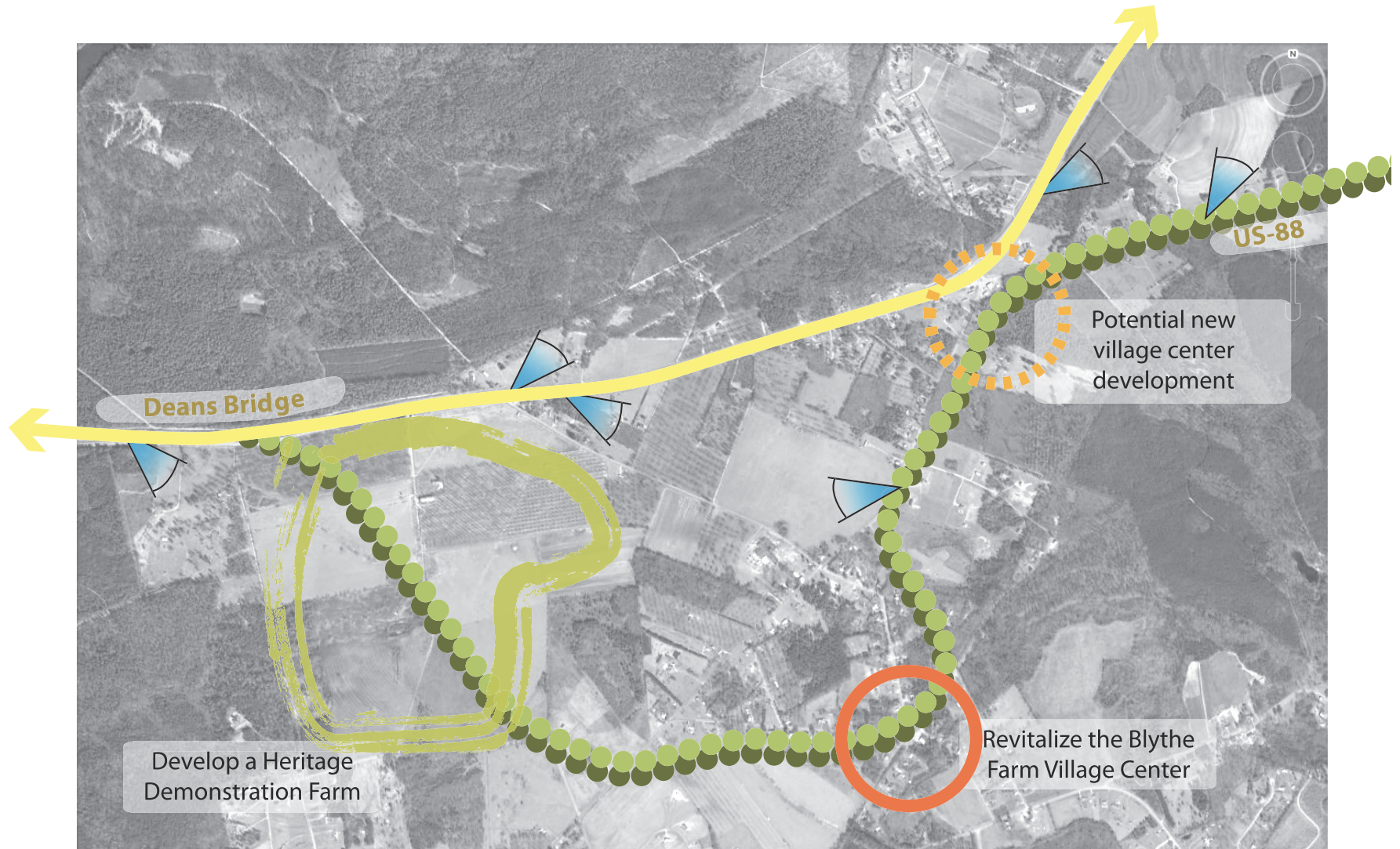
Augusta Farms

Figure 21. Potential Protypical Projects around Blythe

Fort Gordon

While Fort Gordon is not included in the planning scope of the Augusta Development Agenda, growth of programs, facilities and the work force are having, and will continue to have, a significant impact on Augusta's future.

Economic Development Agenda

Ft. Gordon is Augusta's largest employer; equally importantly, its role in technology development and training provides one of the key intellectual bases for the new Augusta economy. Residents of Ft. Gordon are young, well-educated, and have comparatively high incomes for the Augusta area.

Building Stronger Neighborhoods

Although on-post housing is outside the scope of the Agenda, the enormity of people associated with Fort Gordon has a bearing on housing in Augusta. As neighborhoods and urban villages are developed in Character Areas adjacent to the Fort, a market share of military personnel and civilian staff should be considered. As employees may range from singles to families, the proposed mix of housing types and adjacencies to retail, service, and schools could accommodate a wide array of Fort Gordon workers. The same residential developments should also anticipate military retirees that elect to stay in the area and consider facilities and public services for senior housing and accommodations.

Gateways and Corridors

It is important to recall that more people come and go from the gates at Fort Gordon than any other place in the city. For many of them, their trip off the base presents them with their most lasting image of the city. It is important that impression be a good one. Improvements on Tobacco Road, the Gordon Highway and the Jimmie Dyess Parkway offer multiple opportunities to establish the positive image that will be carried throughout the region and indeed the nation.

Greenspace System

The Fort Gordon character area is defined by extensive amounts of forested land. The environmental impacts of military operations are monitored at the national level. The based perimeter is secured and public access is limited to a few controlled gates.

Priority Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for expanding the green infrastructure's hub and link system including:

Potential Hubs:

There are a number of significant outdoor recreational facilities on post, and while mostly reserved for military base families, occassionally they are open for general public use.

Potential Links:
Several creeks run into the Fort. Butler Creek, which runs along the northern perimeter, with property security procedures in palce, could provide a bicycle

pedestrian link inot the planned, broader Augusta trial system.

Going forward with Fort Gordon…

The Key is to continue to develope strong relationships and to build connections and opportunities, both physical and programmatic, to the mutal benefit of the Fort and the City.

Going Forward

For too long, decisions regarding the future form and make-up of the City have been made in isolation and with little regard to their consequences on the whole. This work aims to instill a sense of a larger purpose around which all parts of Augusta can rally. One of our most significant Findings to date is the fact that many in Augusta also want this, to happen.

Elements of a Core Agenda

This document identifies a number of ideas for programs and initiatives that can be applied across the City in coordinated fashion. Together, they form the basic under-pinnings of a core Development Agenda for the City of Augusta. In conclusion, these strategies include:

A Focused Economic Development Initiative that:

a. Further develops the Health Sciences/ High Tech/ Sustainability sectors

b. Makes Augusta a bigger Tourism/ Culture/Entertainment Destination

c. Establishes of a greater higher education presence downtown

d. Revitalizes through an infill program that includes clustered mixed-use centers.

A City-wide Green Infrastructure Program that:

a. Makes Environmental Sustainability a Cornerstone of future decision-making

b. Assures Resource protection (Water, open space, historic resources)

Legend:
- Potential Residential Development
- Potential Commercial Development
- Potential Institutional Development
- Gateway Intersection Beautification
- Creek Corridor
- Parkways
- Interstates
- Urban Arterials
- Rural Arterials
- Rivers / Creeks
- Views

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

Grovetown

Harlem

McDuffie County

FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION

Aiken County

Jefferson County

Wrens, GA

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

0 0.5 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Miles

Potential Augusta Projects

c. Reclaims Augusta as the Garden City throughout, with an interconnected system of both public and private spaces

d. Promotes Densification and Land Preservation and Conservation

e. Encourages stabilization and enhancement of agricultural heritage through:

- "Feeder" Tree Planations and Urban Farming
- Agricultural learning experience
- Development of locally grown produce programs
- Emphasis on organic farming

A "Context Sensitive" Roadway Planning and Design Approach that:

a. Develops guidelines and outlines regulations for different roadway attributes depending on their surroundings,

b. Creates a network of parkways linking existing key destinations

c. Build a "best image" corridor, which becomes the City's 'identity spine', linking the farm to the city along an improved traffic route.

d. Promotes Alternative Transportation (Public Transit, Electric vehicle capital, Bikeways and pathways).

A Neighborhood Development Agenda that:

a. Promotes and expands existing city neighborhood improvement programs, improvement assistance programs, provides significant public way improvements; gives public safety and regulatory enforcement high priority

b. Promotes sustainability by building connections between existing isolated subdivisions to reduce car trips and providing energy conservation improvements, including tree shading programs,

c. Discourages further sprawl and identifies future development opportunities for greener, more sustainable development.

d. Uses the siting of public services as an amenity and catalyst for more compact and denser development

e. Improved Subdivision Regulations:

- Both design standards and the design process play an important part in conserving community resources.

- First steps would include adopting subdivision codes which require detailed site surveys and analyses identifying the special features of each property, and introduce a simple methodology showing how to lay out new development so that the majority of those special features will be permanently protected in designated conservation areas or preserves.

- At the end of the day, conservation design developments form an integral part of a community-wide greenspace network and improved quality of life standards for neighborhoods.

Putting it Together

Augusta is a big place and opportunities for improvement are found in each Character Area. These are site-specific projects, which can have a great effect on the growth and development of the city over the next two decades. Many of these projects are similar in program. The Agenda identifies these, but it must also set priorities based on where limited time and resources should focus, 1) to have the best result and 2) to set the best example for other similar areas in the city.

URBAN
SUBURBAN
RURAL
INDUSTRIAL-
FORT GORDON
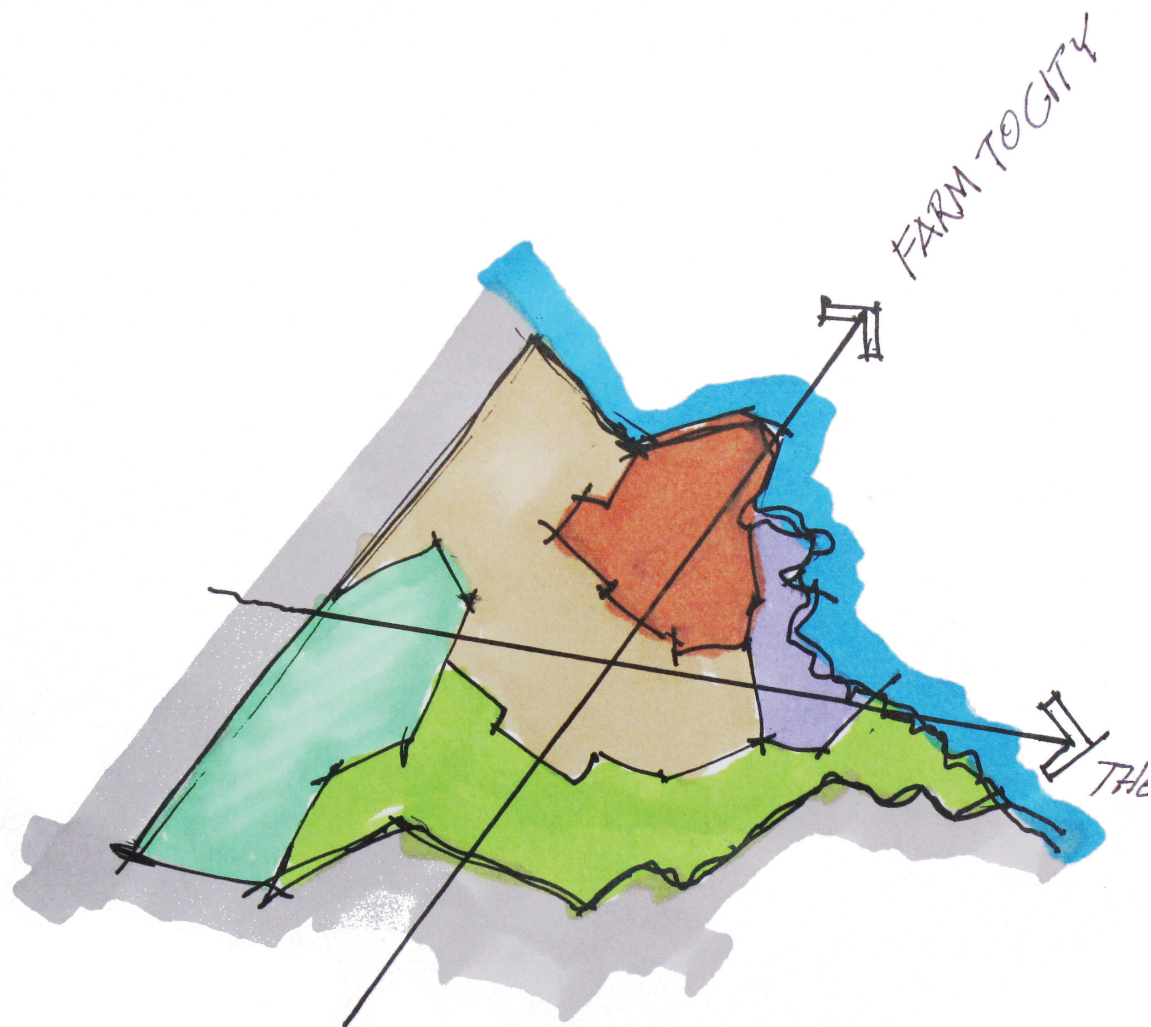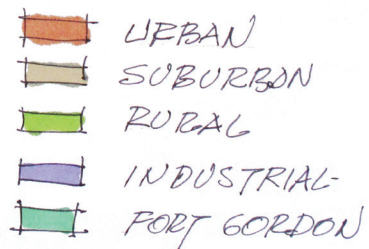
Figure 22. Slice of Augusta underlying framework diagram

The Heritage Spine and The "Slice of Augusta" as an organizing Framework for the Agenda

Even life long residents of Augusta find it difficult to find a pathway through the city that clearly presents a sense of all that is best of Augusta and her stories.

Planning issues, opportunities and subsequent recommendations differ, depending where a particular site is located on a gradient that ranges from Rural Undeveloped to Urban Core. The Congress on New Urbanism has authored a "Best Practices" approach to planning, design and development across this so-called development transect, which we are calling a "**Slice of Augusta**".

Through field visits and historic research, a south to north swath of the city has been identified which include both a rich story telling, heritage road and Augusta's version of the Congress of New Urbanism's Development "Slice of Augusta". Both high priority projects and prototypical projects are found within this band, which literally begins where US-1 crosses the Burke County line, runs up US-1, Rte 88, Windsor Springs Road Richmond Hills, Deans Ridge Road, MLK Boulevard,

and Fifteenth Street, onto Broad Street and into downtown. This swath crosses rural, suburban, near-in and downtown core neighborhoods. It contains some of the city's most precious natural, farm and historic resources. A number of closely connected prototypical sites have been identified along its length. It passes through areas long neglected and in desperate need.

It is a very good place to focus the city's attention over the next two decades. Build out the 'Slice of Augusta" and this will be a very successful plan.

Other Unique Opportunities

While the focus of the plan will be on coordinated development of the "Slice of Augusta", of course the Agenda must also speak to those unique opportunities found that lie outside the "Slice of Augusta". Projects and initiatives identified to date include:

- Additional parkways with the city

- Design and regulatory guidelines for Augusta's other urban and rural arteries, following Georgia DOT's Context

Sensitive Planning and Design approach.

- The full development of the Levee/ butler Creek Linear Park from downtown to Fort Gordon

- Westobou Crossing joint with North Augusta

- Canal-side neighborhood Developments in Laney Walker and Harrisburg,

- Potential Collaboration with the Augusta National Golf Club on both parkway development and a destination attraction in their area.

- Insuring the health and long term viability of the Augusta Mall and the surrounding area

- Supporting development of Augusta State Expansion along Wrightsboro Road.

- Development of the East End, including the Sand Bar Ferry Park and Village Development, as well as a planned, new auto service commercial zone at the new I-520 interchange.

- Multi-modal Transportation Center with possible new Arena complex on Tenth

Street.

• Development around the Fort Gordon Gates.

A Word about Utilities

The Westobou Vision urban area plan identified power lines as a major deterrent to attractive development within the urban core and particularly along the historic Augusta Canal and in the area of the Butt Memorial Bridge. Distribution lines along Broad, particularly in front of Chaffee Park, the Ezekiel Harris House and the proposed Kroc Center should be buried.

This same recommendation holds for proposed parkway rights of way and creeks and streams as well. This region is host to major nuclear generation operations, serving the entire south, and should not have to suffer the consequences of this intrusion.

Organizing the "Slice of Augusta"

The "Farm to City" parkway runs along existing roadways. Guidelines will be developed to insure the preservation to the extent possible of the significant historic landscapes and built fabric. Farmland to Urban Core. Planned roadway improvements will be modified and future plans will be designed to create a continuous parkway, with dedicated multipurpose lanes. Key Prototypical projects along this parkway include:

In the Augusta Farms Area

This area has the best soils in the city and the most attractive farms and pasture lands. Potential prototypical projects include:

- A Demonstration Farm
- Blythe Core Restoration
- A new farm village at US-1 and Rte 88
- Rte 88/Windsor Spring Road crossroads center
- Diamond Lakes Village

In the Central Area

This is an area of isolated subdivisions, strip commercial, abandoned shopping center and dilapidated near end housing. Potential prototypical projects include:

- Updated Regency Mall Concept Plan, based on prior and recent studies, including adjacent land along Rocky Creek
- Repositioning Strategy for the Dean Bridge/Gordon highway north-side area, i.e. Kmart/South Gate and the abutting neighborhood along Deans Bridge Road
- Street calming along Gordon highway to allow safe crossings for pedestrians
- Olive Road Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, focusing on available land and properties taken during the Fifteenth Street Segment of the Farm-to-City Parkway.

In Augusta Old City

This is the pre-World War II city. Projects lying along the "Slice of Augusta" for this area were identified in the Westobou Vision urban area plan and include:

- The St Sebastian Medical District, including removing the fly over, reprogramming the right of way as a multipurpose path and constructing a Jump ramp to mitigate surface train movements.
- Augusta Canal neighborhood, including a large new central park for Augusta
- Marbury Village, which turns the 10th to 13th Street portion of Broad Street into an active urban village
- Downtown Baseball Stadium, a multi-use, year round facility, in a mixed-use residential/retail complex with a riverfront park connecting to the Riverwalk
- Westobou Arts District, including the historic Imperial and Miller Theaters and featuring a new river-side Westobou Arts Center, housing the Morris Museum and a state of the art performance center for the Symphony of Augusta and national companies.

PROTOTYPE PROJECT AREAS:

Westobou Vision Market Creation Projects

Fifteenth Street / Olive Road

Gordon Highway / Deans Bridge

Augusta Tech / I-520

Butler Creek

Windsor Spring Village on Tobacco Road

Diamond Lakes

Hephzibah Village Center

The "Farm to City" Parkway

Blythe Area Initiatives

OLD CITY
Wrightsboro Rd to the River

AUGUSTA MIDLANDS
Spirit Creek to Wrightsboro Rd

AUGUSTA FARMS
Burke County to Spirit Creek

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

McDuffie County

Harlem

Columbia County

Grovetown

FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION

Aiken County

Jefferson County

Wrens, GA

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Miles

A Slice of Augusta

Initial Thoughts on Implementation

A key aspect of realizing this Plan is to have broad public support that will insist on its implementation and who are willing to help fund this effort through whatever means necessary. As with the market creation projects set forth in the Westobou Vision, each of the projects identified in this broader effort will need its "Champions". Otherwise, it will die on the vine.

By focusing effort on specific projects, primarily along the "Farm to City" Parkway, We establish a core set of projects that do not favor one part of the Augusta community over the other. In addition, we have identified unique projects in other parts of the city, which when made a part of this approach, provides for all corners of the city. It is critical that projects go forth in all sectors simultaneously.

Ultimately, the plan will have a major focus on roadway improvements that act as catalyst to revitalization of the area. This will require close coordination between all interest groups and extensive cooperation with Georgia Department of Transportation (GA DOT). Of the issues discussed by the public thus far, after certain market creation projects downtown, the aesthetic enhancement of Gateways and Corridors is most important to the community. A citizen's group has already taken this on and are developing improvement projects.

As was pointed out in the Westobou Vision, these projects, once conceptualized, do not create, develop and get built by themselves. Even once "Champions" are identified, staff, and funding support are essential to bringing the ideas through programming, design, approvals, financing and construction. Volunteers cannot do it alone. This is City building. Rome had dedicated individuals, lots of them, but they still needed full time management and lots of it.

Next Steps

Program Development is our next step. Assuming positive response and approval of the Findings of this report concerning direction of the Agenda, work will begin on fleshing out the individual ideas. These will form the substance of the final report and will be presented to the public for comment, review and redirection as needed in late February/early March.

Following that presentation and review, the final Augusta Development Agenda will be presented in late July/early August, with final review and comment prior in late June.

Preparations should begin as soon as possible for insuring that this Plan become a useful guide for implementing the designated projects. This includes not only finding the "Champions" early, but also building public support and creating the staff management capability to carry them forward in the manner that the city wants to see done.

This will take a decade or more of devoted effort by many people. Other places do it, so let's get on with it.

Appendices

1. Reference Maps

The Comprehensive Plan has analyzed Augusta by its physical features, on which we lay an innovative Development Agenda, tailored to this unique background.

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan laid out a guide for a long-term planning program for the City of Augusta. They used Geographic Information Systems to create city-wide overview maps that assist in finding the opportunities in each of the Physical Character Areas. These will be used as a key reference during this Development Agenda:

- Zoning
- Land Use
- Sewer / Waste Water
- Roads / Railroads
- Parcels
- Natural Resources
- 20' Contours

Physical Character Areas

Clarks Hill, SC

WEST AUGUSTA

Evans

North Augusta

OLD CITY

BELAIR

Columbia County

Grovetown

EAST AUGUSTA

Harlem

FORT GORDON

SOUTH AUGUSTA

McDuffie County

Aiken County

Jefferson County

Hephzibah

SOUTH RICHMOND

Blythe

McBean

Wrens, GA

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Miles

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

Aiken, SC

A	Agricultural
B-1	Neighborhood Business
B-2	General Business
HI	Heavy Industry
LI	Light Industry
P-1	Professional
PUD	Planned Unit Development
R-1	One Family Residential
R-2	Two Family Residential
R-3	Multiple Family Residential
R-MH	Manufactured Homes Residential

Clarks Hill, SC
Aiken, SC
Evans
North Augusta
Columbia County
Grovetown
Harlem
McDuffie County
FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION
Aiken County
Hephzibah
Blythe
Jefferson County
McBean
Wrens, GA
Waynesboro, GA
Burke County

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Miles

Zoning

Legend:

- UNKNOWN - 1008
- AGRICULTURAL - 144
- COMMERCIAL - 3624
- INDUSTRIAL - 903
- LOW DENS RESIDENTIAL - 61813
- RURAL RESIDENTIAL - 3257
- HIGH DENS RESIDENTIAL - 3309
- OFFICE - 354
- PUBLIC INSTITUTIONAL - 1145
- TRANSPORTATION/COMMUNICATION
- FORESTRY - 95
- PARKS/REC/CONSERVATION - 100
- UNDEVELOPED/UNUSED - 1176

Land Use

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

20

221

Columbia County

Grovetown

Harlem

25

McDuffie County

Aiken County

James B. Messerly WPCP

FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION

Spririt Creek WPCP

Jefferson County

Hephzibah

Blythe

McBean

Wrens, GA

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Miles

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

Sewer / Wastewater

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

20

Columbia County

221

Grovetown

25

Harlem

Aiken County

McDuffie County

FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION

Hephzibah

Blythe

Jefferson County

McBean

Wrens, GA

0 0.5 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Miles

Roads + Rail

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

AUGUSTA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

For the City of Augusta, GA

shieldsDESIGN
Architecture
Planning
Urban Design

With:
Cranston Engineering Group   Urban Partners
The Woodhurst Partnership   ICON Architecture Inc

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

Columbia County

Grovetown

Harlem

McDuffie County

FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION

Aiken County

Hephzibah

Blythe

Jefferson County

McBean

Wrens, GA

Burke County

Waynesboro, GA

0 0.5 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10
Miles

Parcel Map

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

20

Columbia County

221

Grovetown

Harlem

25

McDuffie County

Aiken County

FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION

Hephzibah

Blythe

McBean

Jefferson County

Wrens, GA

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Miles

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

20' Contours

Legend:
- Canal Features
- Parks
- Trails
- Rivers / Streams
- Public Land to be considered for Greenspace Protection
- Lakes / Ponds
- Park Parcels
- Wetlands

Clarks Hill, SC

Aiken, SC

Evans

North Augusta

Grovetown

Columbia County

Harlem

McDuffie County

FORT GORDON MILITARY RESERVATION

Aiken County

Hephzibah

Blythe

Jefferson County

McBean

Wrens, GA

Waynesboro, GA

Burke County

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Miles

Natural Resources

II. Economic Overview

This memorandum identifies the economic and socioeconomic conditions that could impact the stability and growht of Augusta. Economic and social factors impact Augusta at a macro (Georgia state or South Eastern region) and a micro (Old City or Augusta Midlands) level.

Population & Growth

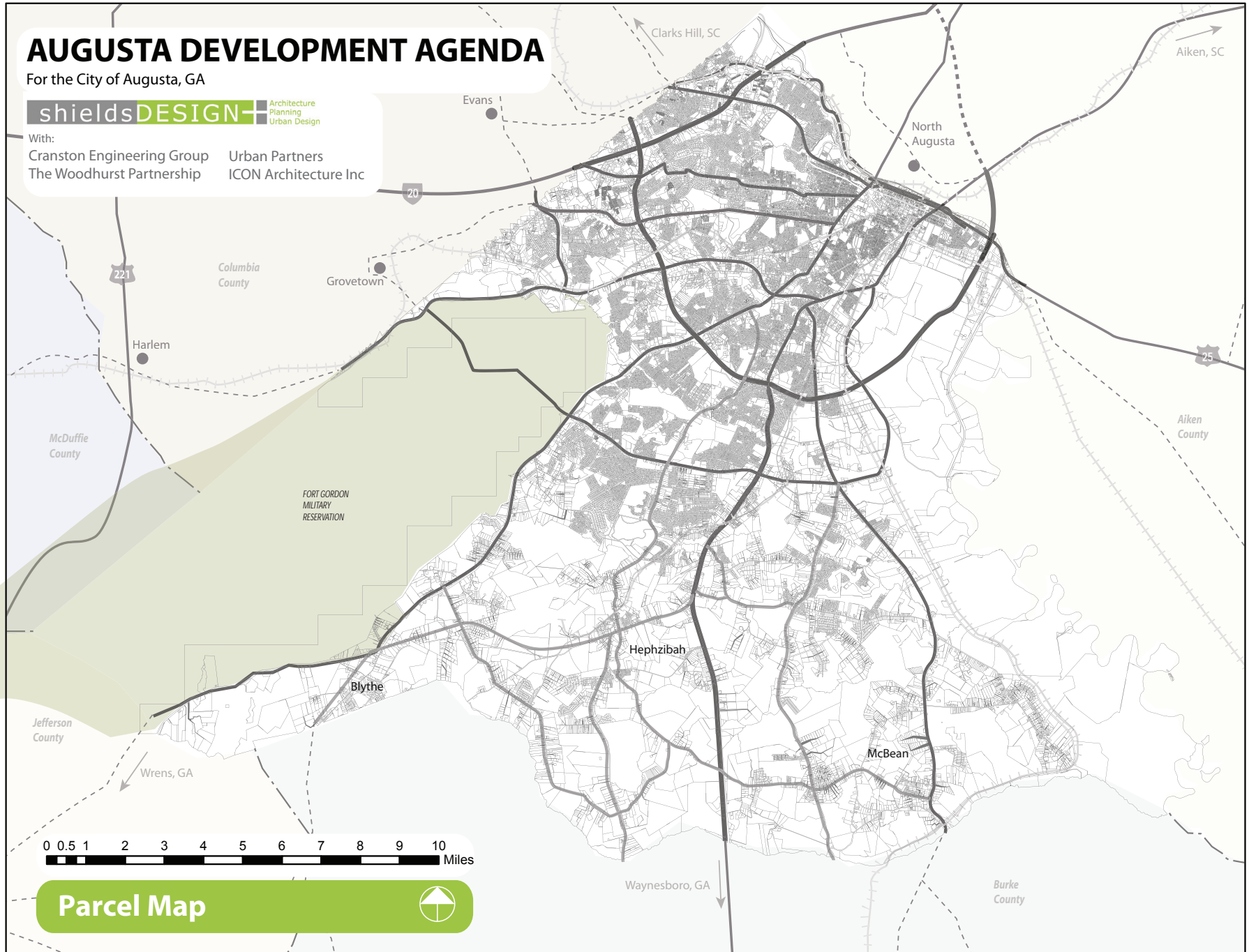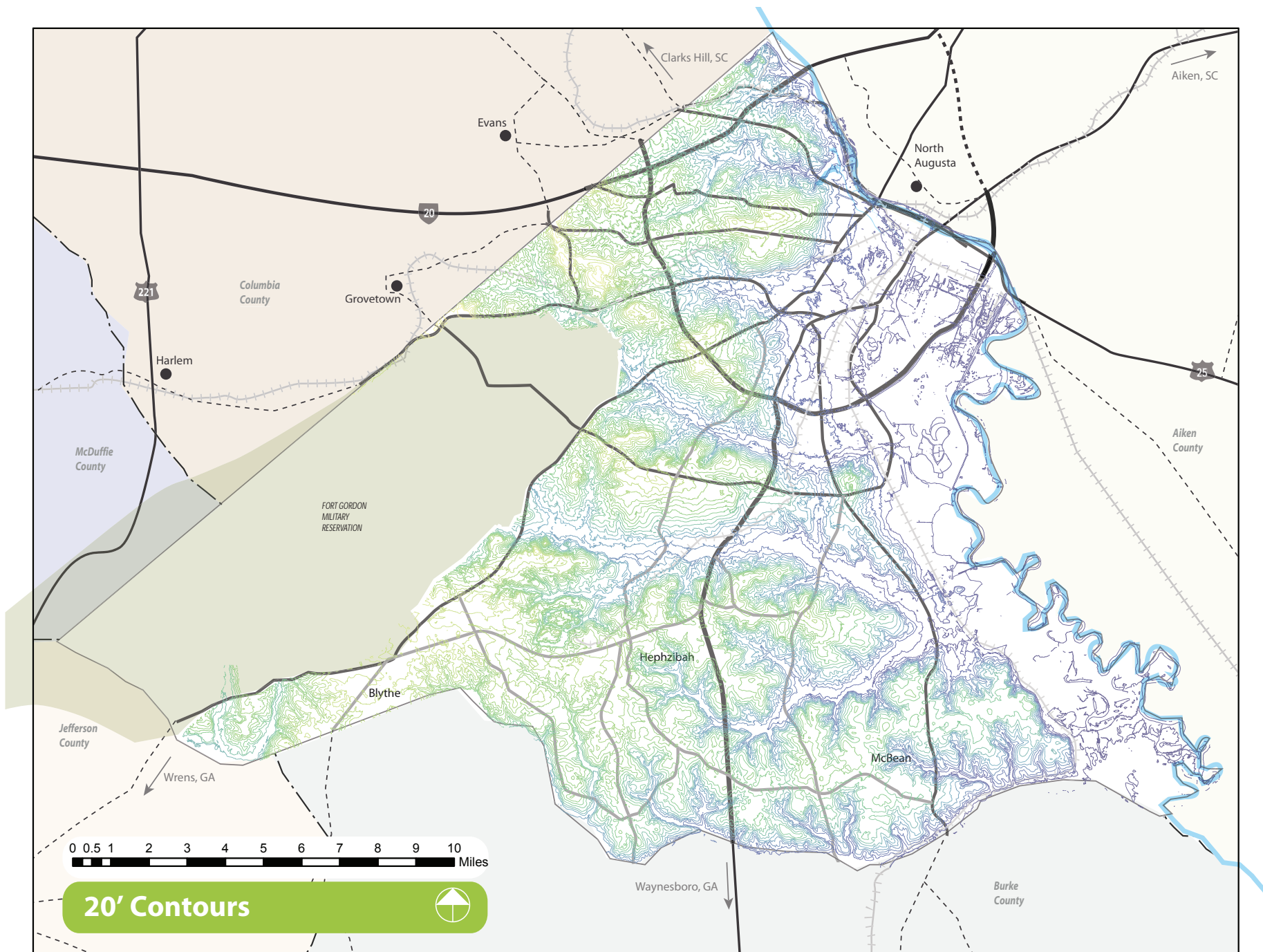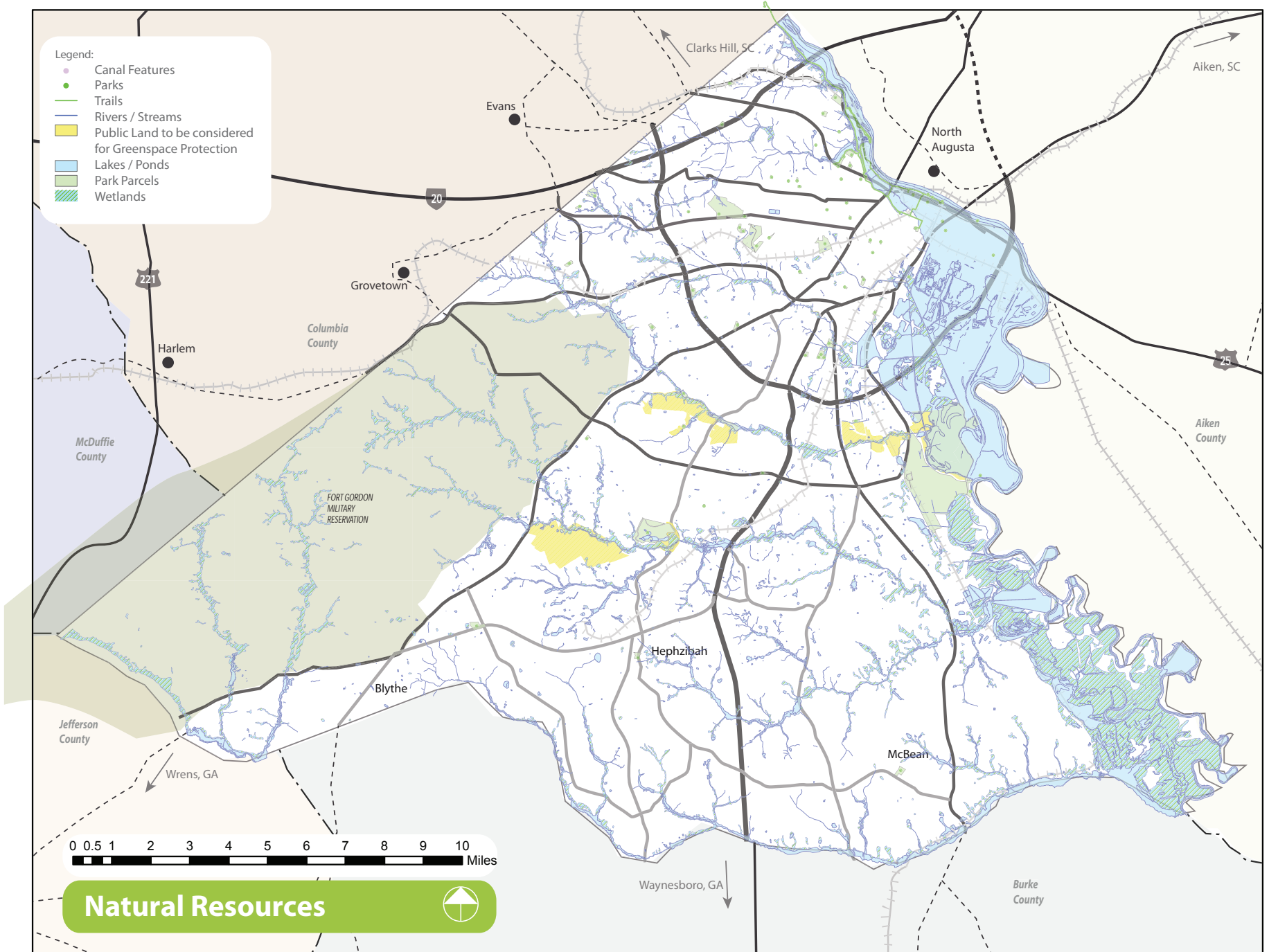The population of the six-county Augusta SMSA stood at 500,000 for the 2000 census. 40% of this population resided in Richmond County, while approximately one-third was located in the two South Carolina counties of Aiken and Edgefield, and the remaining quarter was located in the three suburban/rural Georgia counties (see Table 1).

	2000	2010(p)	2020(p)	2030(p)
Augusta MSA	500,326	544,440	596,100	653,560
Richmond County	199,775	202,476	209,521	219,913
Augusta	195,182	197,292	204,157	214,283
Richmond County Alt.	199,775	204,186	222,375	237,209

Source: Augusta Comprehensive Plan; Alternate: Upper Ogeechee Water Planning

Table 1: Augusta Population Forecasts

The population forecasts used in the Augusta Comprehensive Plan anticipate overall regional growth of 44,000 between 2000 and 2010 and total population growth from 2000 to 2030 of more than 150,000 (31% increase). Only 20,000 of this population growth is anticipated to occur within Richmond County by 2030. An alternative population forecast prepared for the Upper Ogeechee Water Planning area anticipates similar overall regional growth through 2030, but forecasts population growth in Richmond County of approximately 37,000 people. Based on these growth forecasts, Augusta's share of the region's population is expected to decline from 40% in 2000 to 34% to 36% by 2030.

However, as shown on Table 2, residential building activity in Augusta was strong through

the decade, up until the crisis in national housing markets set in. More than 5,400 housing units were added in Augusta during the first seven years of the decade. This was balanced in part by the demolition of nearly 800 units. Based on typical household sizes for Augusta, these new housing units would support a population growth of 11,000 to 12,000. This suggest that population forecasts for the county may be understated. For purposes of this Development Agenda effort, we are assuming that Augusta/Richmond County population in 2010 will be approximately 211,000 people.

Single Family Units		Multi-Family Units	
Year	Units	Year	Units
2000	483	2000	42
2001	548	2001	196
2002	565	2002	349
2003	664	2003	224
2004	829	2004	2
2005	604	2005	89
2006	815	2006	0

Table 2: Augusta Building Permits 2000-2006

Income, Employment & Industry Mix

Table 3 identifies the comparatively low incomes in the Augusta SMSA and Richmond County, with overall SMSA incomes 13% below Georgia averages and Richmond County incomes 19% below the state. These lower incomes in part reflect the comparatively low cost of living in Augusta. The 2000 census reported that median home value for Augusta SMSA was 27% below the national average and median rent was 24% below the nation.

Single Family Units		Multi-Family Units	
Year	Units	Year	Units
2000	483	2000	42
2001	548	2001	196
2002	565	2002	349
2003	664	2003	224
2004	829	2004	2
2005	604	2005	89
2006	815	2006	0

Table 3: Augusta Per Capita Income

 Lower than average cost of living and incomes, coupled with reputedly high levels of worker productivity, helps maintain Augusta's competitiveness in manufacturing industries and, recently, has been reflected in substantial growth of customer service information centers (see Table 4). Nonetheless, manufacturing employment in Augusta has not been immune from worldwide trends. During the strong 2000 to 2006 economic period, manufacturing employment in Augusta SMSA dropped by 20% (largely due to capital investment that increased worker productivity)—a pattern similar to the national drop of 17% in manufacturing employment during that period. As a result, Augusta's employment mix evolved by 2008 to emphasize health care, retail trade, and lodging and dining.

Single Family Units		Multi-Family Units	
Year	Units	Year	Units
2000	483	2000	42
2001	548	2001	196
2002	565	2002	349
2003	664	2003	224
2004	829	2004	2
2005	604	2005	89
2006	815	2006	0

Table 4: Augusta Employment Mix 2008

This pattern is further reflected in the list of Augusta's major employers (see Table 5), with significant emphasis on the high-tech activities at Ft. Gordon and on the education and health care sectors.

Single Family Units		Multi-Family Units	
Year	Units	Year	Units
2000	483	2000	42
2001	548	2001	196
2002	565	2002	349
2003	664	2003	224
2004	829	2004	2
2005	604	2005	89
2006	815	2006	0

Table 5: Major Augusta Employers

Overall regional employment is comparatively concentrated within Augusta, but there are a variety of important employers in the other five counties, including major manufacturers—Kimberly Clark, Bridgestone, Club Car—and a major concentration of the nuclear power industry in and near Savannah River site. A recent survey of eight regional nuclear employers by Booz Allen Hamilton indicates that employment in this sector is expected top grow from 9,000 currently to as much as 13,000 in the next five years.

Despite the comparatively low income levels, Augusta's emphasis on technical, health care, and educational services yields a workforce with higher concentrations of jobs in professional and related occupations than nationally or in Georgia (see Table 6). Between 21% and 22% of employed persons in Augusta work in professional occupations.

Single Family Units		Multi-Family Units	
Year	Units	Year	Units
2000	483	2000	42
2001	548	2001	196
2002	565	2002	349
2003	664	2003	224
2004	829	2004	2
2005	604	2005	89
2006	815	2006	0

Table 6: Professional Occupation Employees 2000

The growth of new housing opportunities in the suburbs and rural areas and the higher reputation of Columbia County schools compared to those in Richmond County would suggest that these professionals would be concentrated in the suburbs. However, this is not the case with professionals constituting 21.12% of all employed persons living in Augusta compared to 21.79% in the suburbs. We can conclude that various niche segments of professionals find Augusta an attractive housing choice.

The strong professional base in Augusta also comes despite a comparatively low number of undergraduates in four-year colleges and graduate students in the area. Based on the estimated 544,400 population of the SMSA, the area would expect to be home to nearly 6,000 more undergraduates (in four-year colleges and universities) and 2,200 more graduate students than is currently the case (see Table 7). This suggests the strong potential for the expansion of current colleges and universities and/or the additional of other institutions.

Single Family Units		Multi-Family Units	
Year	Units	Year	Units
2000	483	2000	42
2001	548	2001	196
2002	565	2002	349
2003	664	2003	224
2004	829	2004	2
2005	604	2005	89
2006	815	2006	0

Table 7: Higher Education Enrollment Potential 2010

Tourism & Visitation

The tourism industry provides another important economic potential for Augusta, building on the major Masters Tournament anchor and the growing heritage market associated with the music and career of James Brown.

Currently the Augusta Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) reports that more than 1.5 million people visit Augusta annually generating tourist expenditures greater than $366 million and accounting for more than 5,000 jobs. These visitors support the nearly 8,500 hotel rooms located within the Greater Augusta area (see Table 8). 85% of these hotels rooms are located within 15 miles of Downtown Augusta.

Single Family Units		Multi-Family Units	
Year	Units	Year	Units
2000	483	2000	42
2001	548	2001	196
2002	565	2002	349
2003	664	2003	224
2004	829	2004	2
2005	604	2005	89
2006	815	2006	0

Table 8: Greater Augusta Hotel Supply 2009

This hotel supply is heavily weighted toward the more modestly priced Mid-Range and Economy hotel products. 96 of 106 properties with five-sixths of the hotel room supply are classified in these categories. Hotel occupancy, moreover, has declined with the economic downturn. ACVB reports that average hotel occupancy in the first quarter of 2009 was down to 51.5% from 57.2% in 2008 and that aggregate hotel revenue had declined by nearly 5%.

Augusta is also evolving into a major location for outdoor recreation tourism, in part through the efforts of the Augusta Sports Council. The city hosted the inaugural ESi

Ironman 70.3 triathlon on September 27, 2009, with more than 3,400 competitors. This placed the Augusta event, in its infancy, as the second largest Ironman 70.3 race in the world.

In an additional entry into the world of high-profile outdoor recreation, Augusta will host the 2010 International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) World Summit in May, which is expected to be the largest in IMBA's history.

Housing Markets

Housing markets have been very active in Augusta during the last decade. As noted above, more than 5,400 housing units were added in Augusta during the first seven years of the decade, though this was balanced in part by the demolition of nearly 800 units. South Augusta saw the strongest residential growth, with approximately 39% of all new Augusta housing units being constructed there. This was followed closely by Belair with 37% of new housing. South Richmond (13% of new housing units) and West Augusta (10%) also grew substantially.

Sales of new and existing homes have also been strong, especially for owner-occupied housing. We have identified 2,445 homes purchased by owner-occupants in Augusta in the past 24 months. The median sales price of these homes was $99,000. 90% of home sales were in the price range from $25,000 to $259,000.

III. Greenspace System Strategy

This memorandum provides insight and intial thoughts on promoting a more sustainable approach to development. This refers to both the development of an integrated greensapce network of 'hubs' and 'links' and codifying low impact, sustainable building practices.

Moving Forward on Green Infrastructure

Although the barriers to preservation can seem large, the power behind any comprehensive greenspace program lies in wrangling together a strong visioning document, backed up with a strong set of land development regulations, and the insight to strategically leverage opportunity as it presents itself. This all happens through the coordinated efforts of many individuals and institutions.

The entire program will need to be aggressive in its goals. It will need to be prepared for the opportunities that will come along by creating an inventory and tracking system of potential greenspace parcels. It will need an ambitious plan with a comprehensive community outreach program. And it will need a higher level of inter-governmental organization to promote and implement the vision.

Greenspace should be considered in routine governmental procedures such as:

- Rezoning review
- New development review
- Public Works applications

The goal being to bring greenspace up for automatic consideration during routing governmental procedures. While it is important to have a public outreach component to educate people of all ages and station in life about the benefits of and sacrifices for quality open space, it is even more important to change the surrounding regulatory systems to create a simple process that incentives environmentally sensitive choices over standard development practices. We should make powerful defaults that do the 'right thing', because organizations often have a difficult time with changing their defaults.

Process for creating "Development

Principles"

Deciding where to encourage development and where to protect natural resources is a difficult issue that cities have to balance. Particularly engaged in this issue should be the building community, the land trust, and the city.

These groups should come together in a structured series of meetings to create a recommended list of development principles that support green infrastructure planning. These include regulations typically found in public work standards, subdivision regulations, storm water management and zoning.

This process would be a monumental step towards the promotion of environmentally sensitive development in Augusta-Richmond County through code, policy, and regulatory updates. The discussion itself would generate new ideas about development practices within the county and foster better communication and relationships amongst the city, community associations, environmental groups, and the development groups.

The expected outcome of the process would be a list of regulatory recommendations to be voted into city legislation by the Commissioners encompassing the following topics:

Subdivision Regulations

- Residential street widths, create a subdivision roads matrix table
- Street and block length restrictions
- Right of way widths (encourage design flexibility to allow for various methods of movement, accessibility, and storm water inflow)
- Promote bio-retention islands and storm water treatment in roads and paving materials
- Open Space design (make Conservation Design Developments the 'default option')
- Appropriate lot development with setbacks and frontage dimensions
- Sidewalks (develop biking and walking plan for neighborhoods and schools)
- Encourage permeable surfaces / rooftop harvesting
- Open Space Management through Home Owners Associations

Zoning

- Make natural resource management a clear priority
- Enforce landscaping requirements (tree conservation and planting) at each change in property ownership
- Strengthen stream buffers and public accessibility provisions
- Establish Transferable Development Rights within the city
- Establish density bonuses and conservation design development ordinances

Public Works Standards

- Storm water management and aquifer protection
- Reduce existing pollution loads through Low Impact Development regulations
- Develop incentive programs

There are two sides to creating an integrated greenspace system. One is a passive strategy of preventing further damage through increasing development regulations as mentioned on the prior page. Two, is an active strategy of creating quality open spaces through planned conservation measures by an active leadership structure.

Process for creating "Green Infrastructure" plan

In the interim, in order to start identifying existing and potential "hubs" and "links", before a permanent Green Space City Coordinator has been appointed, a committee should develop a plan for a county wide greenway system. City staff from Planning, Parks and Rec, Police and Public Works should work with a cross section of citizens including neighborhood leaders, hotel / tourism managers, environmental planners, and developers to discuss and design a strategic plan outlining goals and strategies for the protection of greenspace and its public accessibility.

The first priority should be to work with the PATH Foundation and the Land Trust in creating a map that locates all the properties that meet the definitions of potentially protected greenspace. Evaluation criteria should be developed for prioritizing sites throughout the county for protection. And policies should be implemented to promote the creation of greenspace. This group should work with the 'Development Principles' process to review current tools and research tools used elsewhere, to evaluate the full extent of what is possible for the County.

The expected outcome of the process would be to integrate the conservation plan into local government operations encompassing the following areas:

Potential Methods to be Discussed
- Acquisition Methods: All land does not need to be publicly owned, however, tittle acquisition is often the bet method to ensure that lands are protected in perpetuity.
- Regulatory Methods: Effective land use controls should encourage developers to contribute to land conservation programs by prescribing what the community wants and offering rewards for meeting goals.
- Incentive Programs rely on voluntary land owner involvement and avoid controversial property rights issues
- Funding: Preserving land in perpetuity requires strong partnerships and multiple sources of funding.

IV. Context Sensitive Solutions

The technical memorandum discusses Context Sensitive Solutions as an enabling strategy to build a greener, better Augusta.

A Framework for Road and Street Design

The road system can be visualized as a network of mixed-use avenues and boulevards that link key destinations throughout Augusta. These routes will be reinforced by the development of prototype communities at key nodes along them. The concept will be enhanced by layering on a "Garden City" treatment of targeted gateways, corridors, and beauty spots. Special strategies will be explored for the main entrances into the State of Georgia and Augusta from South Carolina.

Context Sensitive Solutions

The concept of designing major urban thoroughfares (arterial routes and collector) according to the context in which they are located is an emerging practice that is being studied and formulated on a national level by the Institute of Transportation Engineers, the Congress on New Urbanism, Federal Highway Administration, and the Environmental Protection Agency. On a state level, the Georgia Department of Transportation has espoused the new design approach and published a manual of practice on the subject that includes in its purpose statement, Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is an important part of future planning and design projects in Georgia, and our goal is that GDOT will be among the transportation leaders in the exchange of CSS ideas and concepts." The stage is thus set, and the opportunity exists for Augusta to be the laboratory where these new design approaches can be demonstrated at a real life scale.

Context Sensitive Solutions balance the competing needs of diverse stakeholders beginning in the earliest stages of road project development; provides flexibility in applying design standards to produce a facility that is useful to all users regardless of the mode of travel they choose; and incorporates aesthetics as an integral part of the design. CSS considers community objectives, stakeholder priorities, land uses, and abutting activities to establish the urban design context (either existing or desired). This context zone is then considered along with the traffic-moving functional classification to determine a thoroughfare

type.

Aesthetic treatments are included as a part of the plans throughout the design process. But, while aesthetics are considered integral to all context sensitive street design processes, there are different degrees of landscaping and street furnishings that may layered on to the design based on community priorities.

Functional Classifications

The roadway system of Augusta is a network of interstates, highways, commercial arterial routes, and local streets. From a functional point of view, these routes are classified according to the Georgia Department of Transportation's system, as follows:

Functional Class

- Urban Interstate Principal Arterial
- Urban Freeways and Expressways
- Urban Principal Arterial
- Urban Minor Arterial

Context Zone Characteristics		
Context Zone	Distinguishing Characteristics	General Character
C-1 Natural	Natural landscape	Natural features
C-2 Rural	Agricultural with scattered development	Agricultural activity and natural features
C-3 Suburban	Primarily single family residential with walkable development pattern and pedestrian facilities, dominant landscape character	Detached buildings with landscaped yards
C-4 General Urban	Mix of housing types including attached units, with a range of commercial and civic activity at the neighborhood and community scale	Predominantly detached buildings, balance between landscape and buildings, presence of pedestrians
C-5 Urban Center	Attached housing types such as townhouses and apartments mixed with retail, workplace and civic activities at the community or sub-regional scale.	Predominantly attached buildings landscaping within the public right of way substantial pedestrian activity
C-6 Urban Core	Highest-intensity areas in sub-region or region, with high-density residential and workplace uses, entertainment, civic and cultural uses	Attached buildings forming sense of enclosure and continuous street wall landscaping within the public right of way, highest pedestrian and transit activity
Districts	To be designated and described locally, districts are areas that are single-use or multi-use with low-density development pattern. These may be large facilities such as airports, business parks and industrial areas.	

* General descriptions and characteristics of the full range of Context Zones. This report focuses on urban zones (C-3 through C-6).

Thoroughfare Types

The development agenda concentrates on thoroughfares that serve existing urban and suburban areas and those that will likely undergo future development within the time horizon of the Plan, specifically those within Context Zones C-3 through C-6. The types of thoroughfares are organized by a classifying system that governs the design criteria of the thoroughfare and along with the surrounding context is used to determine the physical configuration of the traveled way, intersections, and the roadside.

The major categories are called boulevards, avenues, and streets.

- Highway – a two-lane or larger roadway with ditch sections to accommodate regional and local traffic at higher speeds.

- Boulevard – a divided thoroughfare with curbs that serve a mix of regional and local traffic and accommodate the most important transit routes.

- Avenue – a curbed road of up to four lanes, with or without a median, that serves a mix of regional and local traffic.

- Street – generally a two-lane curbed road that serves predominantly local traffic.

Applying Context Sensitive Solutions in Augusta

The concept of using context zones, thoroughfare types, and functional classifications to develop the design proportions and details of a roadway will lead to more attractive designs that support activities along the way. As the intensity of adjacent land uses increases, the roadside accommodates greater diversity of functions and the thoroughfare design changes to support the entirety of activities.

Therefore, to determine the design criteria for a given road, a new process is followed. First the Functional Classification is determined from the Functional Classification Map maintained by the ARTS metropolitan transportation planning organization. The Context Zone is selected by consulting this Development Agenda, the Comprehensive Plan, other area plans, zoning codes, historic district maps, and future land use plans; considering pedestrian and transit activity; studying context characteristics

Urban Thoroughfare Design Characteristics									
Urban	Number of Through Lanes	Design Speed (mph)	Operating Speed (mph)	Intersection Spacing	Transit Service Emphasis	Median	Curb Parking	Bicycle Facilities	Freight Mvmt.
Boulevard	4 to 6	35-40	30-35	660 to 1,320 feet	Express and Local	Required	Optional	Bike Lanes or Parallel Route	Regional Truck Route
Multiway Boulevard	4 to 6	30-40 (20 in access roadway)	25-35	660 to 1,320 feet (400 to 600 feet for access lanes)	Express and Local	Required	Yes on access roadway		Regional Route / Local deliveries only on access roadway
Avenue	2 to 4	30-35	25-30	300 to 660 feet	Local	Optional	Yes		Local Truck Route
Street	2	30	25	300 to 600 feet	Local	Optional	Yes		Local Deliveries Only

beyond the thoroughfare, including adjoining neighborhoods and districts; and discovering community goals and objectives. The Thoroughfare Type is then selected that best accommodates these criteria for desired level of urban qualities, such as compactness, degree of mixed land uses, transit, freight, bicycles, parking, walkability, etc. The aesthetic goals of the city are then overlaid based on a major system of designated Garden City Gateway locations and Garden City Corridors, and a lesser sprinkling of specific Garden City Beauty Spots to produce, over time, a distinctive Augusta Streetscape system.

Encouraging Supportive Adjoining Development

This context sensitive street system covers the public portion of Augusta's gateways and corridors. Add on to this system some improved treatments for abutting development, (based on enhancing the present street yard, landscaping, and signage criteria), and the "View from the Road" will be greatly improved. The Development Agenda will explore these types of enhancements that will help achieve the desired results.

Augusta Development Agenda
A Potential Way of Visualization/Organization/Prioritization
Augusta Gateways and Corridors

Functional Classification	Interstate	Freeway/Expressway/Parkway	Highway	Boulevard	Avenue	Street	Rural Road	Alley/Rear Lane
Principal Arterial		■	■	■	■			
Minor Arterial			■	■	■	■	■	
Collector					■	■	■	
Local						■	■	■

Beautification Overlay Designations: "Garden City" Corridors
                                              "Garden City" Gateways
                                              "Garden City" Beauty Spots

The Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) relationship between functional classification and thoroughfare type, with beautification overlays.

Source: Adapted from Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares, www.ite.org, Fact Sheet 4.