

NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan



479 Cherry Street | Macon, GA 31201
www.newtownmacon.com

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION	3
II. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ANALYSIS	4
Data Collection	4
Strengths.....	4
Anchor Properties	5
Concentrations of Businesses and Services.....	11
Downtown: A Common Vision	18
Stakeholder Projects	19
Gaps and Opportunities	24
III. NEWTOWN MACON FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN	26
Advocacy and Engagement Role	26
Target Areas.....	26
Increasing Residents	32
Growing Businesses/Jobs.....	36
Creating a Sense of Place	38
APPENDIX A: Implementation Executive Summary.....	44
APPENDIX B: Downtown Stakeholders Overview	50
APPENDIX C: Implementation Strategies Overview Chart.....	58
APPENDIX D: Donor Feedback/Focus Group Results	60

I. INTRODUCTION

"NewTown will concentrate resources to add residents, businesses and activity in a block-by-block approach to transform Downtown."

- NewTown Macon-

NewTown Macon is a non-profit, public-private partnership designed to implement the community's vision of a comprehensive, coordinated, and continuous plan for revitalizing Downtown Macon. NewTown Macon expresses the belief that Macon's Central Business District is the *heart of activity and celebrates Macon's unique history and culture*. NewTown has identified three primary focus areas: residents, jobs, and sense of place, with its primary focus for the next few years being to increase the rental housing stock and residents within Downtown. The organization's goal is to balance return on investment to financial supporters and project success while being a catalyst for investment and advocacy on broad public concerns.

In January 2012, NewTown Macon engaged the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC) to assist with the development of a NewTown Macon Strategic Action Plan. This Plan is a comprehensive, strategic plan to help guide NewTown Macon's efforts for Downtown revitalization and development over the next five years (2012-2017). Specifically, NewTown Macon requested that the MGRC:

- Conduct an Analysis of the Central Business District to identify strengths and anchors as well as gaps and opportunities.
- Create an Interactive Web-Based Map that can be utilized by NewTown and Downtown stakeholders for marketing and planning purposes.
- Develop a Strategic Action Plan for NewTown that complements the efforts of other Downtown stakeholders and clearly aligns with NewTown's primary focus areas.

To accomplish this, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission reviewed existing Downtown planning documents, met with Downtown stakeholder organizations and collected data about the Central Business District. The results of the data gathering and analysis are contained in Section II. Section III contains the detailed Strategic Action Plan including goals, strategies, and implementation measures for NewTown Macon over the next five years. The goals, strategies, and implementation measures are outlined in summary format in Appendix A. As a reference, the missions, goals, and objectives of Downtown stakeholder organizations are described in Appendix B. An overview chart of the implementation strategies organized by NewTown focus areas is provided in Appendix C. Focus group meetings were held to obtain stakeholder input on this plan; lists of these direct comments are located in Appendix D.

II. CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT ANALYSIS

Data Collection

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission conducted a block-by-block, building-by-building, field survey of each parcel located within the Central Business District (CBD). The Central Business District is roughly bounded by Riverside Drive between Spring Street and MLK, to Oglethorpe between Spring Street and MLK. This boundary crosses I-75 and also includes the Macon Centreplex between Coliseum Drive and Second Street to Coliseum Court. Data was collected regarding whether or not the building or lot was occupied or vacant and the type of activity the parcel was used for, e.g. retail, restaurant, institutional, office/professional.

Utilizing the data collected during the field survey, Middle Georgia Regional Commission staff developed an interactive web-based Central Business District map tool and added data layers relevant for the redevelopment and revitalization of Downtown Macon. These layers include:

- Properties Owned by NewTown Macon
- Properties Owned by Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority
- Main Street Macon Program Areas
- Tax Allocation Districts
- Opportunity Zones
- Existing Land Use

As more data becomes available and relevant to Downtown, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission will update the map at the request of NewTown Macon. This web-based map will be vital to NewTown and other Downtown stakeholders over the course of the next five years and provides an excellent starting point to determine the success of Downtown revitalization efforts and to track changes over time.

Strengths

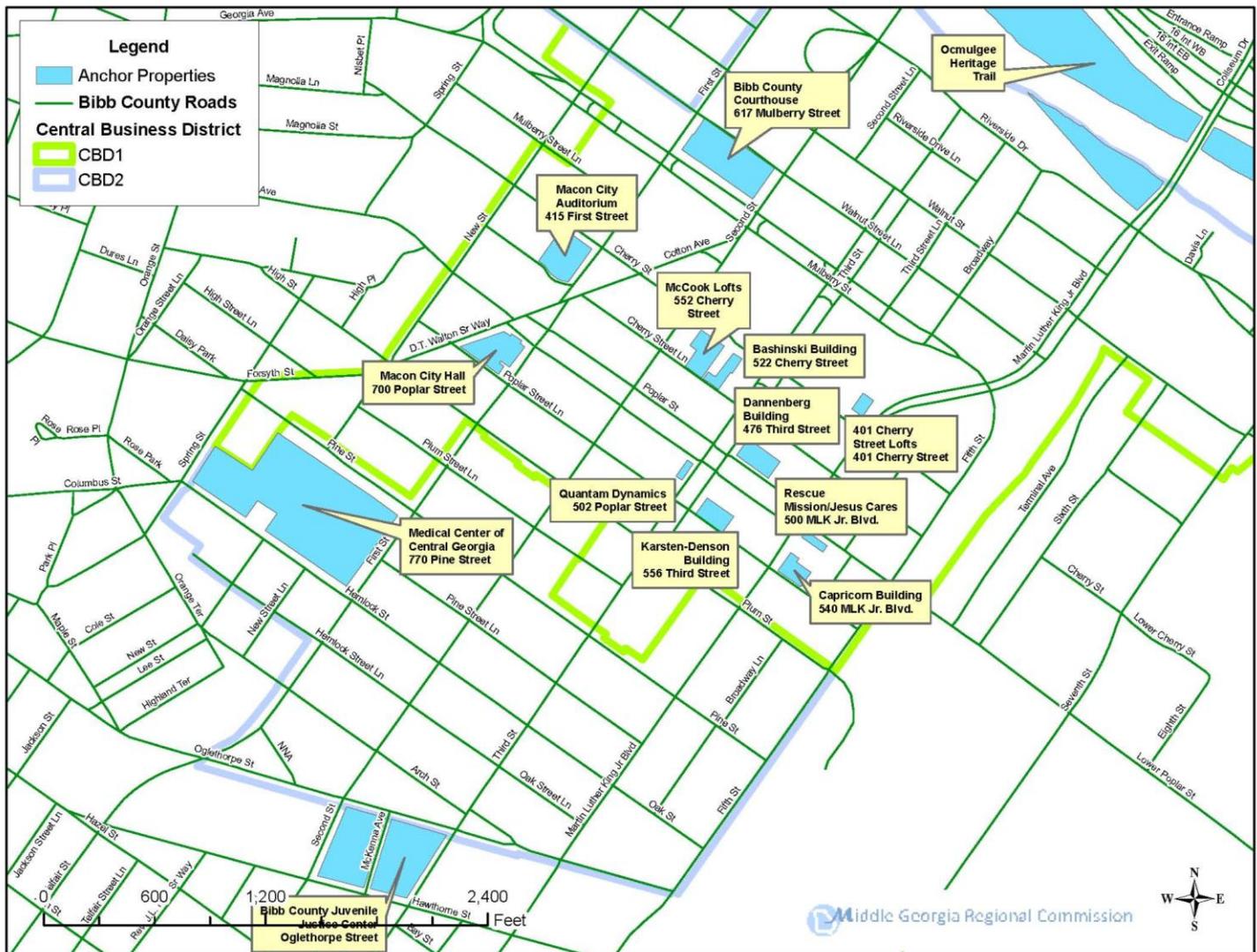
The areas identified as having the greatest strength were segments of Downtown that provided a diverse array of services and contained mostly occupied buildings. These areas are portions of Downtown that see the most activity and include locations such as Mulberry Street between First and MLK, Cherry Street between Second and MLK, and Cotton Avenue. These blocks contain the greatest number of occupied buildings in Downtown, and also experience the most foot traffic, both during the business day (8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) and after 5:00 p.m. These

NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

areas contain a number of lunch dining options and professional buildings, particularly Cherry Street between Third and MLK, which contains restaurants that are open for dinner and a majority of the bars located in Downtown.

Anchor Properties

In understanding current areas of strength in Downtown, key anchor properties were also identified. Anchor properties help define a block or an area and are critical to the livelihood of Downtown whether for employment, tourism, or redevelopment purposes. Vacant anchor properties are buildings that, if preserved and redeveloped, could change the overall aesthetics and vitality of a block or street within Downtown. The identified anchor properties are included in the map below:





a. Bibb County Courthouse

The Bibb County Courthouse is located in the heart of Downtown. The Courthouse has been identified as an anchor property because of its prominence Downtown and the high volume of employees and visitors to it each day. This Downtown destination is also in close proximity to a number of Downtown restaurants, businesses, and entertainment facilities.

b. Macon City Hall / Macon City Auditorium

Both of these historically significant structures, Macon City Hall and Macon City Auditorium, are prominently situated facing each other across Rosa Parks Square. As a functioning government building, City Hall attracts a number of visitors daily to Downtown. The City Auditorium hosts special events and primarily attracts visitors during the evening and on weekends, making the two buildings key anchor properties within Downtown.





c. Medical Center of Central Georgia (MCCG)

The Medical Center of Central Georgia serves as an anchor property because of its large presence within Downtown. MCCG is the second largest hospital in the State of Georgia with a 637-bed facility and serves as the largest employer in Bibb County with over 4,000 employees. According to MCCG, the hospital serves nearly 750,000 individuals across central and south Georgia, and brings a large base of employees and patients to Downtown Macon.



d. Former Macon Rescue Mission (Jesus Cares Building)

The four-story former Macon Rescue Mission is slated for redevelopment as residential loft housing. This building has been identified as an anchor property because of its location at the intersection of MLK and Poplar. Redevelopment of this area is crucial in further revitalizing a part of Downtown that is lacking activity.



e. Capricorn Buildings on MLK

NewTown Macon's current plan for the Capricorn Buildings and the surrounding area is to redevelop for residential, retail, and entertainment uses. The

Capricorn and Former Rescue Mission Buildings are separated by a vacant lot which is set to be the location of a new amphitheater. Revitalizing both structures would provide a tangible connection between the restaurants, museums, theatres, and other activities Downtown with the Medical Center. Particularly, as the Plum/Poplar area should be a focus area for redevelopment, this property serves to anchor those streets.



f. **Dannenberg Building**

The Dannenberg Building is an anchor property for Downtown because of its size and location. This former department store is located at Third and Poplar and is slated to be redeveloped into 69 lofts and three retail spaces in 2012. It is crucial that the Downtown stakeholder organizations attract restaurants, retail, and other amenities to support this anchor property and give life to a currently vacant area of Downtown.

g. **Bashinski Property**

The Bashinski Building is located at 522 Cherry and is currently owned by Georgia-Orange Partners, LLC. This vacant property is adjacent to the popular restaurant, Market City Café, and is in need of a façade update and redevelopment. Located in a very popular portion of Downtown, the redevelopment of this building would greatly impact the revitalization of an otherwise nearly vacant block of Downtown.



h. McCook Lofts

Currently owned by Harlan Forest, LLC, this location at 552 Cherry Street is a highly visible and heavily traveled part of Downtown. The building comprises the largest vacant building in the block of Cherry Street between Second and Third Streets. While no plans for redevelopment are known, the building is ideally situated for mixed-use development, and its rehabilitation would significantly benefit Downtown Macon.



i. Ocmulgee Heritage Trail

The Ocmulgee River is one of Macon's most critical and valuable natural resources. The Ocmulgee Heritage Trail runs alongside the river and serves as an anchor in Downtown Macon because of the variety of services it provides and the variety of individuals it attracts. The trail not only provides a designated area to walk, jog, and bike, but also provides boat ramps

and areas for fishing, as well as playground and picnic areas. Future Plans for the trail include a connection with Amerson River Park. Residents generally utilize the trail during the week; but on weekends, visitors from across Middle Georgia come to the trail for outdoor recreation.

j. Bibb County Juvenile Justice Center

Situated just outside the Central Business District, Bibb County's new Juvenile Justice Center will serve as an anchor property in the far south portion of Downtown when construction is complete. Not only will the new facility bring more jobs to Downtown, but it will also help to support the other public safety facilities in this area such as the Bibb County Law Enforcement Center and the Macon-Bibb County Fire Department headquarters.

k. Karsten-Denson Building

Located at Third Street and Poplar Street Lane, the Karsten-Denson Building is a former hardware store owned by Napa Investments, LLC. The redevelopment of this building will draw attention to an area of Downtown in great need of revitalization, and will help to make the connection between the entertainment and restaurant venues with many of the current revitalization projects Downtown.



l. 401 Cherry Street Lofts

Twenty (20) new loft apartments will be located at 401 Cherry Street and will be available to rent starting in July 2012. This building will be a mixed-use development and will contain office and restaurant space on the ground level.

m. Former Park Hotel, Quantum Dynamics Building

The former Park Hotel located at 502 Poplar Street has been purchased by Quantum Dynamics, a contracting firm with the Department of Defense. They have relocated from Fairfax, Virginia and are looking to host their Southeastern Operations Center in this location.



Concentrations of Businesses and Services

Downtown is a hub of activity during the business day. To support the employees and visitors to such places of business, there are restaurants and specialty shops within walking distance. Downtown Macon, like most cities, contains concentrations of businesses and services, where similar type land uses are found and support each other.

Proximity to core local government operations such as the Bibb County Courthouse, Macon City Hall, and the Bibb County Law Enforcement Center, and a wide variety of financial institutions also contributes to the daily influx of people. These and other concentrations of services and amenities are outlined below in greater detail on the following pages.

NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

Arts and Entertainment venues such as the Terminal Station, Sports Hall of Fame, Children's Museum, Douglass Theater, Cox Capitol Theatre, Theatre Macon, Grand Opera House, City Auditorium, and the under-construction Tubman Museum are concentrated between First Street, Poplar Street, Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Walnut Street.

With eleven (11) art venues, twenty-two (22) restaurants and bars, and fifty-one (51) retail establishments, this area contains a greater concentration of arts and entertainment venues than any other area in Downtown. This can be seen in the map below:



NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

As of January 2012, approximately 41 percent, or 110, of the 267 parcels were vacant in this 14-block area. Of the vacant parcels, there are a total of 78 vacant buildings, 21 vacant lots used for parking, and 7 vacant parcels of land. The large number of vacant buildings within this area provides great opportunity for redevelopment. The vacant parcels are highlighted on the map below:



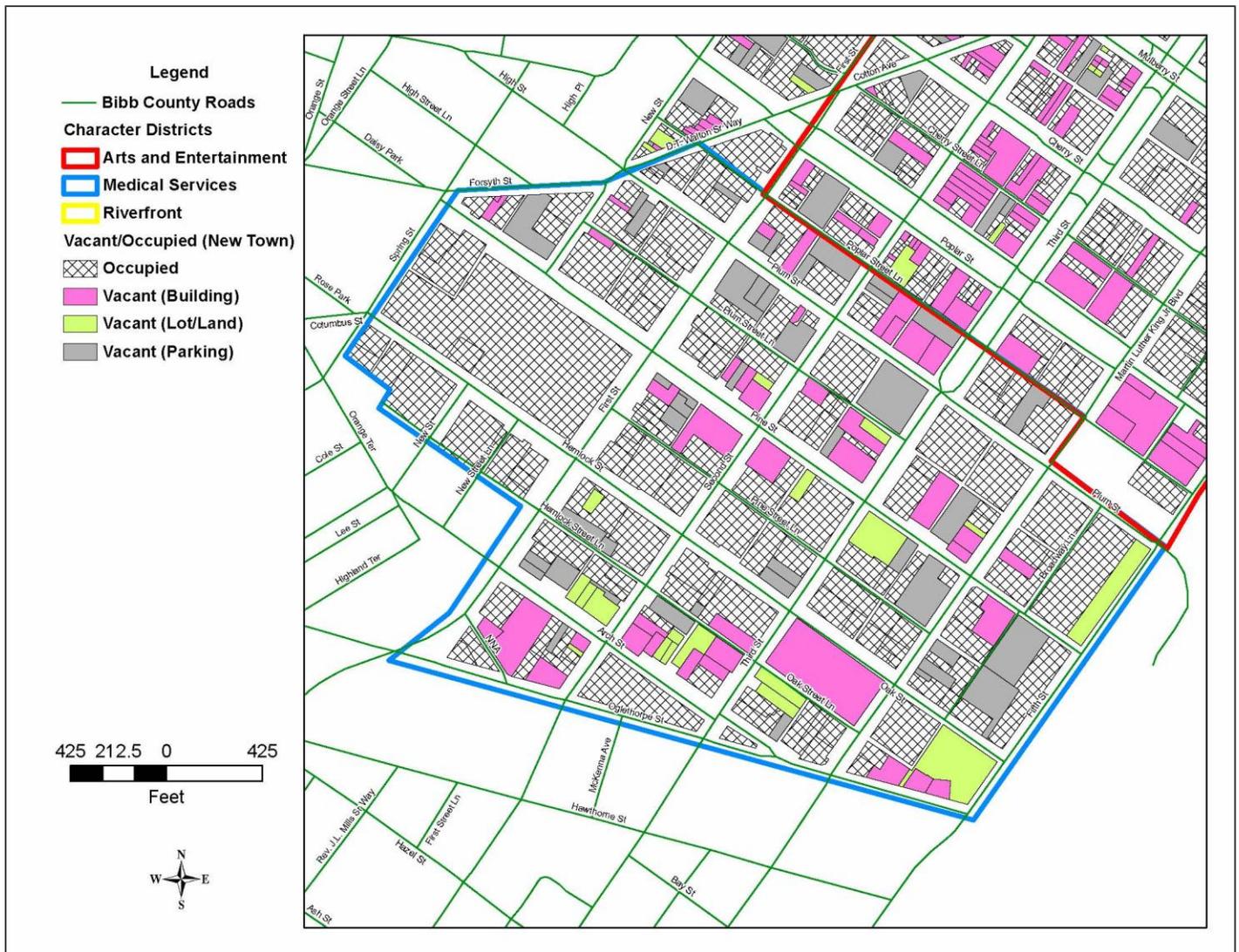
NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

The presence of the Medical Center of Central Georgia as an anchor in Downtown draws related medical professional offices and services and comprises an area roughly bound by Spring Street, Oglethorpe Street, MLK, and Plum Street. This area has the greatest concentration of office and professional buildings with seventy-two (72) structures, as outlined in the map below. Because of the large concentration of such services, this area has a large influx of people during the day with individuals from across the Middle Georgia region coming to Macon for many of their health needs.



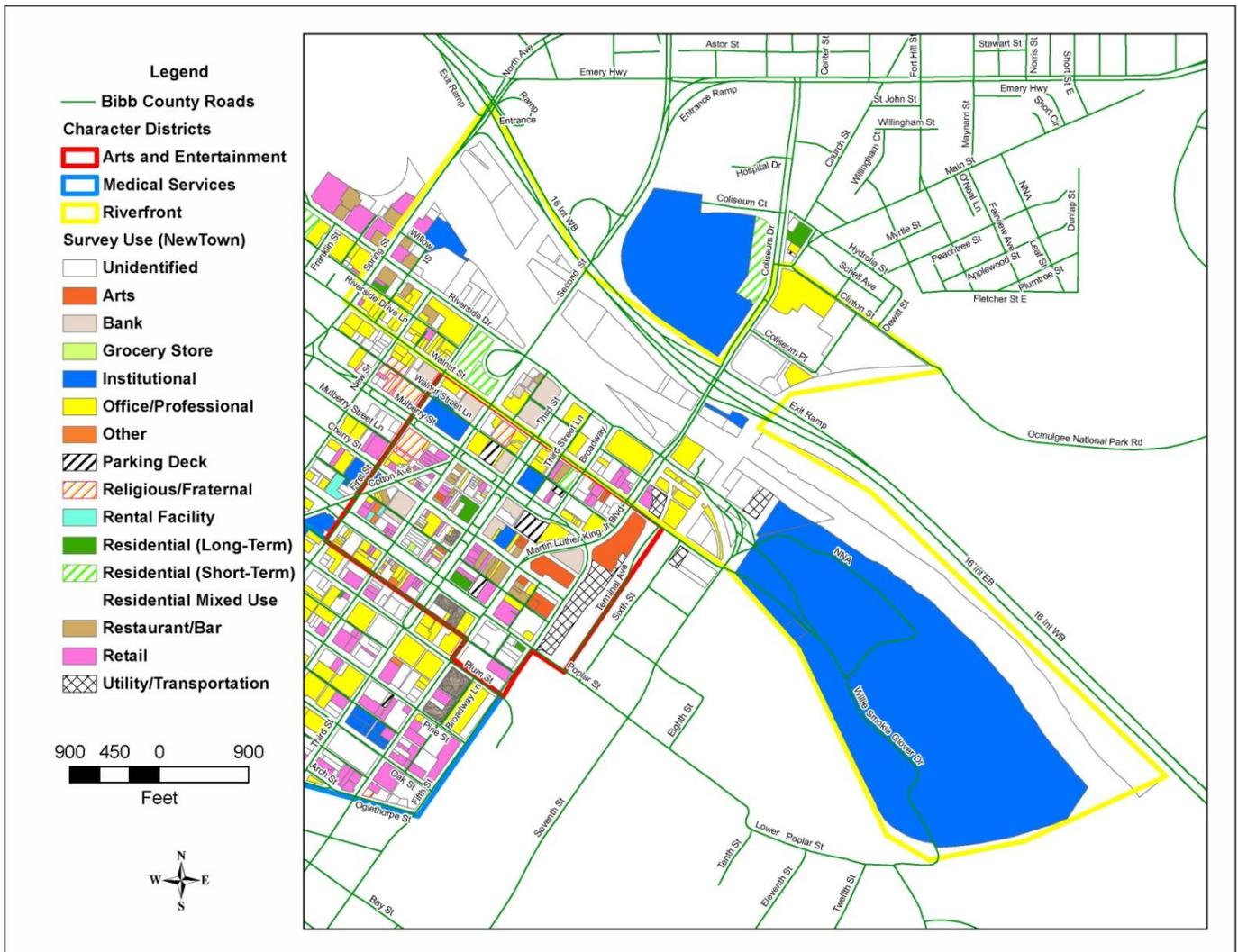
NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

As of January 2012, approximately 42 percent, or 100, of the 236 parcels were vacant in this 17-block area. Of the vacant parcels, there are a total of 39 vacant buildings, 43 vacant lots used for parking, and 18 vacant parcels of land. The number of vacant buildings and vacant parcels of land provides the Medical Center and other medical services the room to grow, as well as providing supportive services a place to locate. The vacant parcels are highlighted on the map below:



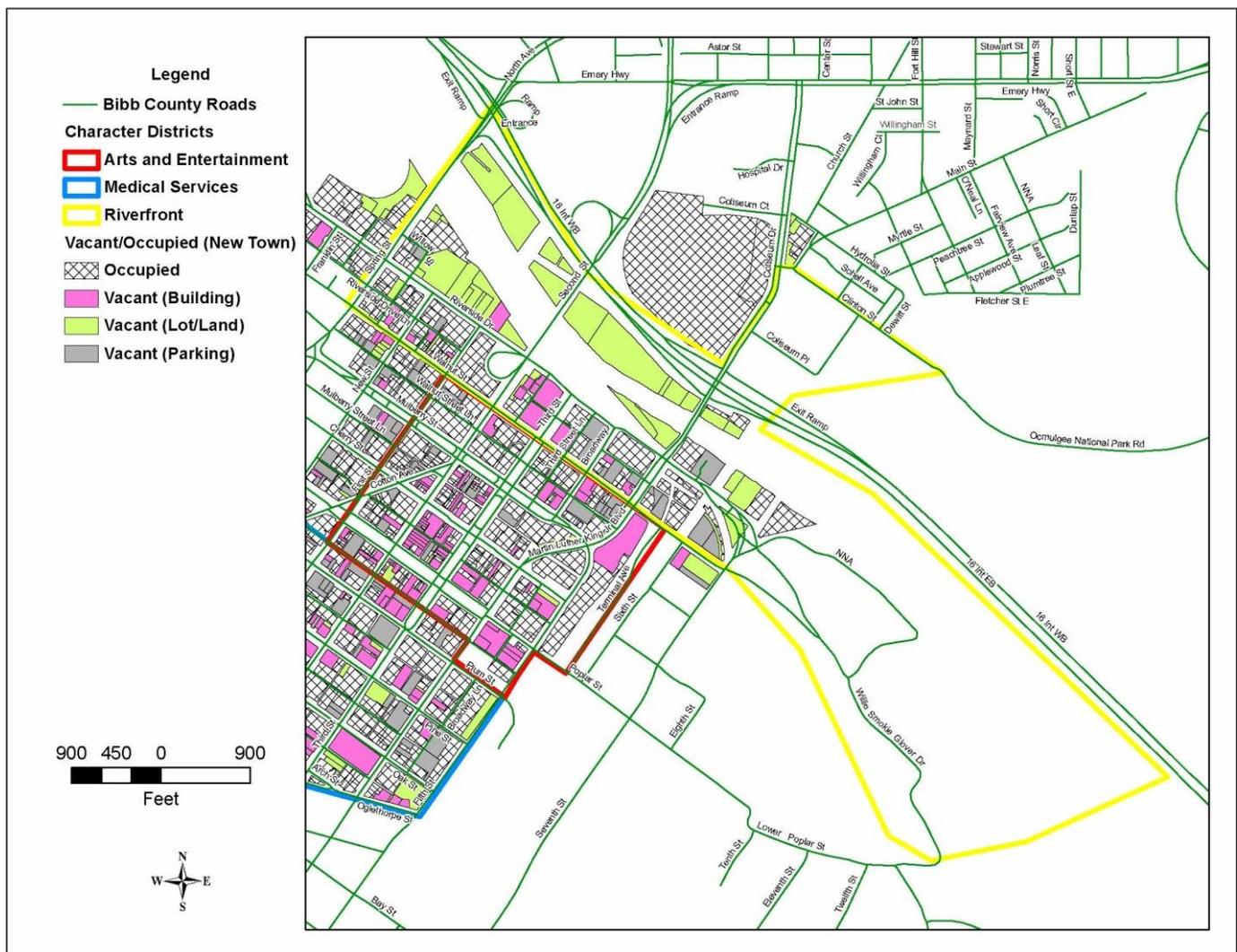
NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

The Riverfront Area, outlined in the map below, is aligned along Spring Street, Riverside Drive, Walnut Street and Central City Park. Alongside portions of the river, NewTown has already created a heritage trail connecting Downtown Macon with the Amerson River Park and in the future will connect the trail to the Ocmulgee National Monument.



NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

As of January 2012, of the 101 parcels within this area, 30 percent, or 31, contain an office or professional building. The Riverfront area contains the greatest number of vacant parcels of the three areas identified within Downtown. Of those 101 parcels, 55 percent are vacant. There are an estimated 15 vacant buildings, 29 vacant parcels of land, and 10 vacant parcels used for parking. The Ocmulgee Heritage Trail comprises most of the vacant land within the Riverfront Area, as well as the planned development, Renaissance on the River, which comprises 10-12 acres. The Renaissance on the River development is planned to contain upscale living arrangements, office space, retail, and other commercial uses. Having such a large concentration of vacant land provides opportunity to expand outdoor recreation along the Ocmulgee River. Vacant parcels of land are highlighted in green on the map below:



Downtown: A Common Vision

In 2006, Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission completed its 2030 Shared Visions Comprehensive Plan for the City of Macon and Bibb County, which was developed through a very public process of involving community leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of Macon and Bibb County, Georgia. The Comprehensive Plan outlines a specific vision, objectives, and future development direction for Macon. The Plan also recommends the following *Principle Quality Community Objectives* that will be pursued during the development of Downtown Macon:

- The importance of Downtown Macon and its surrounding urban core must be maintained and promoted as the heart of Macon/Bibb County as well as the region.
- New development must be encouraged in Downtown Macon and should include a healthy mix of office, residential, specialty retail, and entertainment.
- Existing Downtown structures should be preserved and reused in their historical context. Redevelopment of vacant buildings and properties should be encouraged.
- The surrounding traditional urban neighborhoods should be preserved and maintained as viable residential areas and be recognized as a key element in the redevelopment of the Downtown core.
- The pedestrian areas and parks within the Downtown/Urban core serve as key elements to the Downtown quality of life and should be preserved and maintained as such.
- A range of mobility alternatives must be provided and encouraged for the residents and employees of Bibb County within the Downtown/Urban Core.
- Develop implementation and financing strategies such as tax incentives and Business Improvement Districts to assist in attracting and maintaining viable Downtown development.

Vision 2030 provides the basis for all projects and initiatives in Downtown Macon and relates to all goals and strategies of the various stakeholder organizations working toward Macon's

redevelopment and revitalization. Having a common vision is imperative to ensure that NewTown Macon and the other Downtown stakeholder organizations are working towards the same goal.

Stakeholder Projects

NewTown Macon is one of many stakeholder organizations working to enhance and support Downtown Macon. As part of the analysis conducted by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the following Downtown stakeholders were engaged: Bibb County, City of Macon Economic and Community Development, Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, Macon Arts Alliance, College Hill Alliance, Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning Commission, Historic Macon Foundation, Main Street Macon, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, and Development Authority of Bibb County. This section summarizes the various projects and initiatives of downtown stakeholders. As a reference, a summary of each organization's mission and focus areas are provided in Appendix B.

City of Macon Second Street Project

Stakeholder: City of Macon Economic and Community Development Department (ECD)

The Second Street Project is an initiative of the City of Macon to improve the Second Street Corridor. This streetscape project will enhance Downtown by improving and connecting the Coliseum through Downtown to Mercer University. This project also has a public transit component and is currently in the planning stages. CHA, an Atlanta-based firm, has been selected as the project consultants and has kicked off a year-long Master Planning process for both the Second Street TAD area and the entire Second Street Project area. The planning process includes an extensive public input process and a multi-modal analysis and also provides the City of Macon with a market analysis and an evaluation of the City's Second Street Tax Allocation District.

City of Macon Façade Improvement Loan Program

Stakeholder: City of Macon Economic and Community Development Department (ECD)

Currently inactive, this program was previously operated as a 50/50 loan program with a seven-year repayment at a low interest rate to make façade improvements to Downtown buildings. The City of Macon Economic and Community Development Department and City attorneys are reviewing program requirements for potential re-instatement.

Macon-Bibb County Revolving Loan Fund

Stakeholder: Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority

Upon completion of the Dannenberg project, the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority will operate a Revolving Loan Fund program designed to provide gap financing to private developers who invest in the community. The guidelines for the Revolving Loan Fund are under development by the City of Macon, Bibb County, and the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority.

Small Business Accelerator/Incubator

Stakeholder: Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority

Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, in partnership with College Hill Alliance and NewTown, will implement a small business incubator to support Downtown Development. The Small Business Incubator will assist in the redevelopment of Downtown by allowing current entrepreneurs to develop their ideas for opening a small business. The incubator will help these individuals develop a business plan and teach them other skills to bring their idea for a business to fruition. The small business incubator will also showcase current business ideas within the City of Macon and allow Downtown stakeholders to realize the talent that already exists within their own community. At this time, Downtown has one active incubator building, 567 Cherry Street, which is operating at capacity.

Intelligent Community Designation

Stakeholder: Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority

The Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, in cooperation with Main Street Macon, NewTown, and the Economic and Community Development Department, is pursuing the Intelligent Community Designation. A competitive nomination program created by the Intelligent Communities Forum, the program's intent is to identify the most advanced communities providing broadband support and access to technology to its businesses and citizens. Receiving Intelligent Community Designation will provide a national platform for Macon to undertake advanced business recruitment and retention efforts.

Streetscape Master Plan

Stakeholder: Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority

With the Second Street Master Plan underway, Downtown stakeholders desire to see the same level of investment along other streets in Downtown. The Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority intends to pursue the completion of a Streetscape Master Plan. The Master Plan document will include engineering plans for parks, parking, and all hardscape features and should also incorporate landscaping, signage, and lighting plans. The Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority intends for the Plan to be fully developed to allow for implementation upon formal adoption and receipt of funding.

One-Stop Shop for Development

Stakeholder: Main Street Macon

One of Main Street Macon's primary objectives is to develop a one-stop shop for small businesses. The most important thing to business recruitment is creating a business-friendly climate in the public sector to make it easy to get a business license, permits, and planning and zoning information.

Downtown Macon Business Recruitment Package

Stakeholder: Main Street Macon

Main Street Macon, in coordination with the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority and NewTown, will develop a business recruitment package to guide 'how to start a business in Downtown' and provide information such as: incentives to locate in Downtown (opportunity zone, enterprise zone, historic preservation tax incentives); available properties; how to navigate the permitting/codes process; utility providers, etc.

Entrepreneur Fair

Stakeholder: Main Street Macon

With Main Street Macon as the lead, the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority and NewTown Macon intend to hold an annual event to which capital investors would be invited to meet with small business owners who are looking for individuals to take their ideas to the next level. The Entrepreneur Fair may be a long-term solution to the momentum, which

was begun through the Macon Mogul initiative. This program is specific to college-level individuals.

Historic Macon Façade Loan Program

Stakeholder: Historic Macon

Historic Macon operates a Downtown Façade Revolving Loan Program which is available to property owners for exterior building improvements such as paint, landscaping, roofing, porch repair, shade trees, window repair, and lighting. Funded through a \$30,000 grant from The 1772 Foundation, the program loans \$5,000 to \$10,000 to property owners on a revolving basis. A 20 percent match is required, with five-year repayments and 2 percent interest.

Historic Macon Façade Covenant

Stakeholder: Historic Macon

As a means of ensuring the continued preservation and maintenance of rehabilitated Downtown buildings, NewTown and Historic Macon will partner to establish façade covenants that will be held and monitored by Historic Macon. Historic Macon will have the legal authority to review physical changes and monitor the condition of the building exterior front. Placing covenants on the deed of a historic rehabilitated building ensures that the integrity of the building's façade is protected, even if the property is sold.

Historic Macon Owner-Occupied Loft Development Program

Stakeholder: Historic Macon

Beginning in fall 2012, Historic Macon Foundation will begin to implement its new loft program, which will create approximately four-to-five owner-occupied lofts per year and possibly one owner-occupied storefront in Downtown Macon.

Ovations365.org

Stakeholder: Macon Arts Alliance

In spring 2012, the Macon Arts Alliance will launch Ovations 365.org, a local spin-off from the national ARTSopolis endeavor. This is an interactive community calendar that will be the go-to website for community events within a 60-mile radius of Macon from McDonough to Vienna, Dublin to Thomaston, and also includes the Georgia Lake Country – Eatonton, Madison, and Milledgeville.

Public Art Promotion

Stakeholder: Macon Arts Alliance

The Macon Arts Alliance will be working to enhance gateways, entrances, alleyways, streetscapes, and public places throughout Downtown. This broad scope of enhanced public art will require ongoing communication and coordination with all stakeholder organizations. One initiative the Macon Arts Alliance intends to determine is the feasibility of establishing a 'graffiti artists' program. In coordination with the community court systems and Juvenile Justice Center, the Macon Arts Alliance envisions the establishment of a community service initiative whereby building taggers would perform their community service under the supervision of the Macon Arts Executive Director. The community service assignment would be to create wall murals in designated areas of Downtown, allowing the youths to channel their creative energy into a constructive, meaningful program with multiple beneficiaries.

KITE Initiative

Stakeholder: College Hill Alliance

Established in 2011, the KITE Initiative (Knowledge, Information, Technology, Entrepreneurship) is a new project of the College Hill Alliance and Mercer University to develop and sustain an environment within the community to grow job opportunities and bring substantive business tenants back into Downtown. Beyond the partnership between College Hill Alliance and Mercer, other partners will be necessary to the success of this initiative including the Medical Center of Central Georgia, NewTown, Main Street Macon, and the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority.

Pine Street Streetscape

Stakeholder: Medical Center of Central Georgia

As previously mentioned, the Medical Center of Central Georgia has a large presence within Downtown. The Medical Center believes strongly in investing in and supporting the community in which it serves. Currently, the Medical Center is implementing a streetscape project that will enhance the aesthetics and increase the safety of the Pine Street area. This funding was secured through a DOT Transportation Enhancement Grant.

Destination Marketing

Stakeholder: Macon-Bibb Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB)

The CVB is the “destination marketing” organization for Macon and Bibb County. It works to develop the community in a way that caters to travel and tourism and, in turn, boosts the local economy. The CVB helps coordinate conferences and tours to Macon and plays an important role in promoting Downtown Macon. The CVB is an important partner for other Downtown stakeholders and should be kept informed of the newest attractions and initiatives as they market to visitors.

Gaps and Opportunities

After analyzing the data, identifying the various concentration areas within Downtown, and reviewing the Downtown initiatives, gaps in services and amenities began to appear. Gaps have been defined as a break in the flow of services and amenities being provided to residents, employees, and visitors in Downtown. Gaps can be a vacant block or area where no or few services are being provided, or it can be a service or amenity that is lacking throughout the area. Understanding where there is a break in the flow of services being provided creates great opportunities for NewTown to facilitate and coordinate redevelopment and revitalization efforts within those areas.

For example, the area in and around Poplar and Pine, between Second and Third Streets, contains more vacant buildings than occupied. Of the 16 parcels located in this area, 70 percent, or 11, are vacant. This area makes a crucial connection between the Arts and Entertainment Area and the Medical Services Area, which both serve as areas of great strength within the Downtown. The high concentration of vacant parcels creates a large gap in services for those employees and visitors of the Medical Center and also for residents of Downtown.

New restaurants and retail Downtown within the Poplar and Plum area would provide additional services in close proximity to the Medical Services Area. Currently, there is a large gap in these amenities as most restaurants and retail stores are generally located in the Arts and Entertainment Area along Cherry and Mulberry with many vacant buildings until one reaches the Medical Services Area. By increasing the number of residential housing units in this area, the Downtown stakeholder organizations must also work to attract businesses that support the residents. Not only is there a gap in retail and restaurants in the Poplar/Plum Street area, there is also no grocery store or general merchandise store.

In addition to the Poplar/Plum area, which requires redevelopment attention, there are smaller areas in Downtown where revitalization efforts are needed in the near term. These areas are organized in order of priority:

1. The Block of Third Street between Cherry and Poplar Streets.

This block includes two anchor properties, the Dannenberg Building and the Bashinski Building, and lies in the heart of the proposed Arts and Entertainment Area. This block has a vacancy rate of 46 percent, but serves as an ideal location to focus efforts to increase residents, create and grow businesses, and further develop a sense of place. This block is also part of the Second Street Corridor project area.

2. The Block of Second Street between Cherry and Poplar Streets.

This block includes one anchor property, the McCook Lofts at 552 Cherry Street, and is within the Second Street Corridor project area. Of the three areas listed, this block has the highest concentration of vacant buildings, with 80 percent being unoccupied. This provides great opportunity for redevelopment in a highly visible and high-traffic area of Downtown.

3. Four Blocks of Third Street between Poplar and Pine Streets.

These four blocks contain a high percentage of unoccupied parcels (buildings, land, and parking lots), with nearly 70 percent vacant. Redevelopment efforts should be focused within this area to help bridge the gap in services and amenities lacking between the arts and entertainment and the medical services concentration areas. This area is adjacent to the block of Third Street between Cherry and Poplar mentioned above and contains the Dannenberg Building. The Dannenberg Loft project should serve as an incentive to revitalize this area and bring services that will support the residents of the proposed 69 lofts.

III. NEWTOWN MACON FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

Since its inception, NewTown Macon's three focus areas for redeveloping Downtown have been: Increasing Residents, Growing Businesses/Jobs, and Creating a Sense of Place. For the next five years (2012-2017), these areas continue to provide the framework for NewTown's work.

Aimed at leveraging existing Downtown strengths and assets, the Strategic Plan focuses on how NewTown can utilize existing redevelopment tools and marry them with new tools that NewTown Macon will either develop itself or support other organizations in establishing. To assist NewTown in documenting its progress and achievements, recommended implementation measures are included for each of the three focus areas. In addition, to increase the impact of NewTown and other organizations in changing the face of Downtown, a new approach to Downtown redevelopment is outlined--Target Areas. NewTown is also uniquely positioned to advocate for Downtown Macon; this strategic plan outlines new advocacy opportunities for NewTown over the next five years.

NewTown Macon's Advocacy and Engagement Role

Advocacy for Downtown Macon is one of NewTown's most influential roles in achieving a vibrant Downtown. NewTown can help to educate both the public and political leaders on issues affecting the community, helping to bring both parties to an informed decision. Some of the key issues NewTown is currently supporting include:

- Passenger Rail between Macon and Atlanta (in partnership with MATS and Georgians for Passenger Rail)
- City/County Consolidation
- Sustainability of the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame
- Transportation Investment Act (TIA) – Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce has lead role, with NewTown supporting

Additional Advocacy Opportunity: Ocmulgee Blueway

NewTown's ability to focus on broader political issues and support regional initiatives will be essential to the implementation of a new initiative: the Ocmulgee Blueway. A regional effort to establish the Ocmulgee Blueway between Bibb County/Macon and Telfair County/Lumber City (the confluence of the Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Altamaha Rivers) is underway. Currently,

due to lack of boat landings between the Spring Street Landing in Bibb County and Knowles Landing in Houston County, it is difficult for paddlers to travel the portion of the Ocmulgee River between Bibb and Houston Counties. Increased public outreach, education, and advocacy for the project may enable both local and regional leaders to coordinate on implementation activities, which enhance connectivity.

The Blueway Initiative can and will build upon local successes, such as Amerson River Park and the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, and provide a vehicle to market the entire river as a recreational resource. It will be an additional tourism attraction to market locally. It will be essential for this initiative to have a local advocate, and NewTown is the ideal organization to take on the advocacy role for the Ocmulgee Blueway in Macon/Bibb County.

Additional Advocacy Opportunity: Education

Currently, Georgia College and State University operates a campus in the heart of Downtown Macon on Cherry Street. NewTown should undertake an advocacy role to encourage additional graduate and continuing education opportunities in Downtown. Specifically, NewTown should promote adaptive reuse of the former Georgia Music Hall of Fame building for educational purposes such as housing the Mercer School of Medicine. Advocacy efforts should also include coordination with Fort Valley State University and Macon State College to encourage both institutions to locate branches in Downtown Macon. NewTown's educational advocacy work also extends to the Bibb County Public School System and efforts to establish a Downtown technology school. The influx of students from additional educational opportunities will complement NewTown's goals to increase residents and launch new businesses and restaurants.

Additional Engagement Opportunity: Long-Range Planning

Meaningful planning initiatives and advocacy are inextricably related since strong local leadership both promotes good planning and ensures the implementation of those plans. The following urban planning initiatives, guided by Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning, are critical to the future vision and development of Downtown Macon and will necessitate the involvement by all stakeholder organizations as well as community citizens. During the next five-year period, Macon will go through several community-wide planning initiatives:

- **Macon-Bibb Comprehensive Plan.** Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission will be completing a full update to the document to encompass a 20-year planning period from 2017 through 2037 and ensure its local adoption prior to the October 31, 2017 deadline.

- **Long-Range Transportation Plan.** MATS and the Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission will be completing a full update of the Plan in 2013 to cover a planning period of 20 years.

NewTown should be fully engaged in the development of these plans, which will guide the future of Macon for the next 20 years.

New Approach to Downtown Redevelopment: Target Areas

Concentrating on defined areas of Downtown will build momentum, leverage resources and lead to greater success. Further, implementing projects within specific Target Areas will encompass all of NewTown's three primary focus areas: increasing residents, growing business and jobs, and creating a sense of place.

To the greatest extent possible, NewTown Macon should utilize the implementation tools outlined in the three focus areas below within the selected Target Area. NewTown Macon needs to balance this focused approach with flexibility to act when opportunities are presented that further overall Downtown revitalization goals whether they are inside or outside the target areas. Depending on the projects identified in the Target Area, it is possible that NewTown may be working in all three areas simultaneously. For example, NewTown could be marketing a building in one area while operating its Transitional Property Fund in another.

To enhance Target Area implementation success, pro-formas, façade renderings, and other project specifications should be assembled for specific buildings' marketing and development purposes. A limited focus of accomplishing three-to-five projects per year in a specific block or area of Downtown would allow for the concentration of both financial and staff time resources, creating redevelopment synergy in a targeted area of Downtown. An additional implementation measure includes marketing the Target Area or Anchor Properties through a reverse Request for Proposal (RFP) process, meaning the Downtown stakeholder organizations seek out developers with building, uses, pro-formas, and façade renderings already in place. Ongoing coordination and partnership between NewTown, Main Street Macon, Historic Macon, and the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority will be essential to the success of this initiative.

After completing the redevelopment of the three initial Target Areas, NewTown and the other stakeholder organizations should move on to other areas of Downtown. Given the ever-changing nature of the economy and private development, NewTown should undertake an

evaluation of existing strengths, current initiatives, property vacancies, and redevelopment opportunities when selecting future target areas.

Based on the analysis conducted by Middle Georgia Regional Commission and input from Downtown stakeholders, the initial Target Areas in order of priority are:

1. The Block of Cherry Street and Poplar Street between Second Street and Third Street.

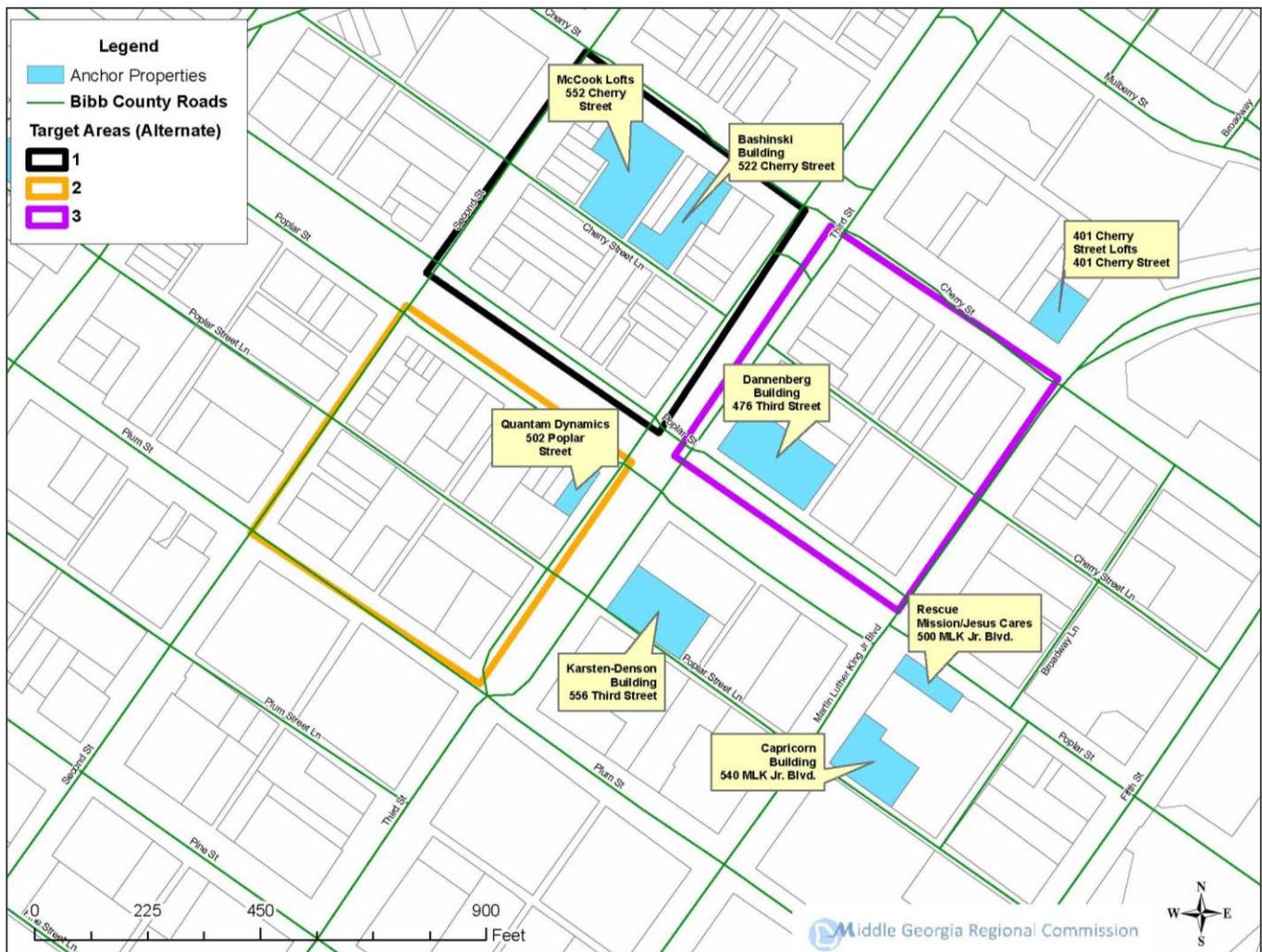
In addition to being part of the Second Street Corridor project area, this block includes two anchor properties--the McCook Lofts and the Bashinski Building.

2. The Block of Poplar Street and Plum Street between Second Street and Third Street.

This block includes one anchor property, the former Park Hotel owned by Quantum Dynamics at 502 Poplar Street, and is within the Second Street Corridor project area.

3. The Block of Cherry Street and Poplar Street between Third Street and MLK.

This area is adjacent to Target Area 1 and contains the Dannenberg Lofts Project and is bordered by Poplar Street Park and Third Street Park.



The three Target Areas were selected as priorities because they are all located near areas of strength in Downtown, contain or are adjacent to key anchor property projects, and have a high percentage of vacant buildings. A breakdown of the number of parcels, parcels with vacant buildings, and vacant building percentages within each target area is illustrated on the chart below.

	Total Number of Parcels	Total Parcels with Buildings	Parcels with Vacant Buildings	% of Parcels with Buildings That Are Vacant
Target Area 1	32	29	20	69.0%
Target Area 2	30	26	13	50.0%
Target Area 3	16	16	4	25.0%



Implementation Steps:

- a. *Secure agreement from Downtown stakeholders on target areas.*
- b. *Develop target area strategy including roles and responsibilities for projects and programs. The strategy may include:*
 - *Collecting baseline data on occupied/vacant square footage.*
 - *Cataloguing existing residential and commercial uses and property ownership.*
 - *Determining highest and best uses for properties within the target area(s) as well as barriers to redevelopment and how these barriers could be removed.*
 - *Determining the appropriate retail/tenant mix.*
- c. *Compile a benefits package to entice businesses, entrepreneurs, and investors to locate and/or redevelop a building in the Target Area. (The package may include: bond/equity*

funds, opportunity zone business incentives, historic preservation tax incentives, façade grants, reduced utility connection fees, assistance with start-up costs, etc.)

- d. Convene Quarterly Stakeholder Meetings to facilitate discussion of projects, initiatives, new development tools, and other involvement that contributes to the redevelopment of Downtown Macon.*
- e. Review conditions annually in the Target Areas to determine changes in conditions.*
- f. Update the interactive map layers on a periodic basis as conditions change.*

Outcome Measure:

- a. Establish specific goals to measure success in each target area. These goals could include increasing occupied square footage by certain percentage and adding 'x' number of residential units, etc.*

NewTown Focus: Increasing Residents

It is recommended that NewTown continue its efforts to increase the number of residents in Downtown Macon. NewTown will assume the lead role in coordinating the development of rental housing; however, the Historic Macon Foundation will be a key partner in its efforts to create owner-occupied housing. NewTown's efforts should be guided by two goals:

1. Increasing the housing stock to meet the demand, and
2. Marketing Downtown to potential residents.

Goal 1: Increasing Housing Stock to Meet Demand

In 2008, NewTown commissioned Zimmerman/Volk to conduct a Downtown Housing Market Analysis to better understand the market potential for rental housing. The 2008 study determined that Downtown could support 168 rental units. In July 2011, NewTown Macon had Zimmerman/Volk Associates, Inc. update the report, and the findings indicate an increased level of demand for Downtown living. The 2011 update indicated that the Downtown market can support the addition of 235 housing units per year, an increase of 24 percent. While there are a variety of tools that can be deployed to support this goal, the following are most closely aligned with the resources of NewTown Macon.

Strategy 1.1: Predevelopment Consultation Team. A Predevelopment Consultation Team currently exists on an ad hoc basis to support Downtown redevelopment. NewTown should create an official Predevelopment Consultation Team and establish a formalized process that can be marketed as a service available to potential developers. NewTown will be the team leader coordinating with the property owner or developer and assisting in securing design services, bond funding, and traditional financing; Historic Macon Foundation undertaking pro forma development and Historic Tax Credit application assistance; and, where appropriate, the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority providing bond funding, temporary property ownership, and Georgia Cities Loan assistance.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Execute a Memorandum of Understanding / Memorandum of Agreement between Predevelopment Consultation Team partners that outline roles, responsibilities, data collection, and reporting.*
- b. Develop a marketing plan to promote the services to developers, property owners, real estate agents, financial intuitions.*
- c. Collect data on the number of each type of service offered through the Predevelopment Consultation Team on a periodic basis.*

Strategy 1.2: Transitional Property Fund. Due to the number of vacant properties in various states of decline, NewTown should establish a Transitional Property Fund to stabilize property it acquires, either through direct purchase or by donation, in order to facilitate redevelopment. Stabilization may include, but is not limited to, the following activities: securing the property against vandals and weather, façade improvements to enhance the marketability of the property, façade renderings, and graffiti removal. The ultimate program goal is to place acquired properties back into active use as residential or multi-use buildings; therefore, it is recommended that the properties only remain in NewTown's inventory for a maximum of two years or NewTown works to transfer title to the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority to reduce the carrying costs of the project.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Establish a funding goal for the Transitional Properties Fund.*
- b. Review existing inventory of NewTown properties to establish priority properties for stabilization and identify properties that may be eligible for transfers to other Downtown stakeholders.*

- c. Coordinate with Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority and other Downtown stakeholders on future property acquisitions to create a redevelopment strategy for all properties.*
- d. Stabilize selected priority properties once funding is secured.*
- e. Incorporate activities of the Transitional Properties Fund into the database of NewTown properties and report to the NewTown Board on a periodic basis.*
- f. Establish a mechanism to track how and where the Transitional Properties Fund is utilized once funding goal is obtained.*

Strategy 1.3: Bargain Sales. Bargain Sales are a redevelopment tool where anchor properties could be acquired by NewTown Macon, Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, Historic Macon Foundation or other Downtown stakeholders in order to repurpose the building or property. Bargain sales benefit the owners of property and substantially reduce redevelopment costs.

Implementation Step:

- a. Collect and report data on the number of bargain sales and relevant project information.*

Strategy 1.4: Equity Financing. In March 2012, the Development Authority of Bibb County will issue \$5 million in bond funds to provide equity needed for residential projects. The fund, once established, will be managed by NewTown Macon and will provide gap financing for residential development in Downtown. In addition to the projects identified in the Bond Issue, there are additional equity needs where NewTown Macon may be able to match a private equity investor and project to achieve redevelopment in Downtown.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Secure \$5 million in bond financing through the Development Authority of Bibb County.*
- b. Determine amount of additional private financing needed and work to raise this capital for equity infusions into Downtown projects.*
- c. Establish criteria for the careful selection of projects to support.*

Goal 1 Outcome Measure:

- a. *Facilitate the construction of 100-125 residential rental units over the next five years.*

Goal 2: Marketing to Potential Residents

Increasing the number of residential units available Downtown is only one part of the **Increasing Residents** focus area. NewTown Macon must also play a large role in marketing Downtown living to potential residents. It is able to provide access to this information in the following two ways:

Strategy 2.1: LiveDowntownMacon.com. NewTown markets Downtown Macon as a great place to live and maintains an inventory of available rental properties through the LiveDowntownMacon.com website. The website contains details about the living space, as well as pictures, and the contact name of the owner. At this time, NewTown is working to completely overhaul the website's functionality to increase its usability by the public. The College Hill Alliance is also working to establish a website regarding available residential rental opportunities within the corridor and Downtown Macon.

As both College Hill and NewTown are working to meet the same goal of actively marketing Downtown living and increasing residents, it is recommended that both organizations work together to combine their efforts and expertise to create a single Downtown living website. Another key partner of this initiative is Historic Macon Foundation. Additionally, efforts to promote Downtown living to regional, state, and national markets should also be coordinated through the Gateway Initiative (see below: Sense of Place).

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Collect and report data on the number of hits to the LiveDowntownMacon.com website.*
- b. *Increase number of links between LiveDowntownMacon.com and Downtown stakeholders, real estate listings, City of Macon, and Bibb County.*
- c. *Conduct a survey of Downtown residential property owners/managers to determine needs for marketing assistance and revise the website as appropriate.*
- d. *Study the feasibility of being the Primary Leasing Agent for all Downtown residential rental properties. In its feasibility study, NewTown needs to consider time and*

staffing requirements, associated costs (other than staff salaries), achieving buy-in from rental property owners, and potential legal issues.

- e. Establish a methodology to track residential rental occupancy rates. Determine a baseline measure in Year 1. Explore options to capture this information via the LiveDowntownMacon website.*
- f. Create a marketing plan to drive traffic to website in target markets as identified in Volk study.*

Goal 2 Outcome Measures:

- a. Maintain 85-90% occupancy rate in existing residential rental units.*
- b. Achieve an 85% occupancy rate within two years of completion for new residential units.*

NewTown Focus: Growing Businesses/Jobs

The urban center of a community is a great place for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and creative industries to locate and thrive. To fully develop the central business district, Downtown Macon stakeholder organizations should provide for and foster a business-friendly climate and undertake active, intentional recruitment of new businesses and entrepreneurs to support and grow existing businesses. Based upon the findings of ESRI Business Analyst Market Potential Report performed for the Central Business District, there are a number of different types of businesses that should be actively pursued to locate in Downtown including grocery merchandise, boutique hotel, shoe store, bookstore, home furnishings/new furniture store, stationery and gift store, and a general store/convenience store type business.

NewTown will operate in a supporting capacity to both recruit and retain with a primary focus on providing financial incentives. Main Street Macon should be the lead organization in creating a business-friendly climate in coordination with the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, which should be the lead on recruitment. NewTown's efforts should be guided by two goals:

1. Creating a Business-Friendly Climate
2. Conducting an Active and Intentional Recruitment of Businesses and Fostering Entrepreneurs

Goal 1: Conducting an Active and Intentional Recruitment of Businesses and Fostering Entrepreneurs

NewTown will be a key partner for business recruitment/development efforts particularly in supporting the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority's initiative to establish a Downtown business incubator and Main Street Macon's development of an annual Entrepreneur Fair. In addition to supporting the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority's and Main Street Macon's initiatives, NewTown should implement the following:

Strategy 1.1: Business Incentive Fund. NewTown's goal is to raise approximately \$800,000 – \$1,000,000 over the next five years to support this new incentive program. NewTown will use the funding to incentivize the most needed businesses to locate in strategic sites such as anchor properties or Target Areas.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Raise \$800,000 – \$1,000,000 within five years for the Business Incentive Fund.*
- b. *Establish specific parameters for the businesses to meet in exchange for receiving the monetary incentives.*
- c. *Use incentives and employ a reverse RFP or Macon Mogul strategy to secure desirable tenants based on target area goals.*

Strategy 1.2: In-House Design Services. Façade rendering design services are available for a small fee through Main Street Macon, which coordinates with a graphic designer with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Office of Downtown Development. While this is an outstanding service provided through Main Street Macon, with the number of potential rehabilitation projects in Downtown, the community would benefit from NewTown Macon being able to offer a façade improvement rendering service locally, resulting in quicker turnaround times, greater flexibility, and broader scope of services. Providing a visual rendering of how a building could look post-rehabilitation will enhance marketing capabilities for Target Area projects and for properties NewTown stabilizes then sells through its Transitional Property Fund.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Determine most appropriate funding mechanism for In-house design service. (i.e. Are the services fee-based, paid for through the Transitional Property fund, or do grant funds need to be sought to support this service?)*

- b. *Implement the In-house design services, either through a subcontractor, intern, or by hiring a new staff person, in efforts to create usable interior spaces for businesses and improving facades to create attractive storefronts.*
- c. *Collect data and periodically report on the number of façade renderings produced.*

Strategy 1.3: Macon Workforce Development and Chamber of Commerce. The Macon Workforce Development focuses on coordinating with employers to assist in finding skilled employees. This service currently falls under the City of Macon, but in March 2012 the organization began transitioning to an independent non-profit organization. This organization will be able to work with new businesses looking to locate in Downtown, as well as other parts of the City, to identify the talent or skill sets needed, and to match those qualified with potential employers. NewTown, along with the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, should coordinate with Workforce Development on a regular basis, especially when business prospects are considering locating in Downtown. NewTown should lead efforts for Downtown stakeholders, including Main Street Macon and the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, to coordinate with the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce in locating and incentivizing businesses in Downtown. As the lead organization for business in Bibb County, the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce offers members assistance, promotion, discounts, and networking opportunities.

Implementation Step:

- a. *Increase collaboration with Macon Workforce Development.*
- b. *Coordinate with Chamber and Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to establish special incentives for new businesses that locate in Downtown.*

Goal 1 Outcome Measure:

- a. *Increase occupancy rates for commercial space in the target areas by 25% in five years.*

Goal 2: Creating a Business-Friendly Climate

NewTown has an integral role in advancing Downtown Macon's business-friendly climate. NewTown should provide leadership for the following strategies aimed at advancing Downtown as a desirable place for businesses to operate:

Strategy 2.1: No Wrong Door. The establishment of a No Wrong Door mentality will allow all stakeholder organizations to provide potential business owners with the Business Recruitment package. All business prospects will be able to obtain the same comprehensive information about 'starting a business Downtown' from any Downtown stakeholder organization. The 'No Wrong Door' mentality complements the Predevelopment Consultation Team process between NewTown, Historic Macon, and the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Assist Main Street Macon and the Macon-Bibb Urban Development Authority in completing the Business Recruitment Package.*
- b. *Provide the Business Recruitment Package in hardcopy and in electronic format on the NewTown website, and at all other Downtown stakeholders' offices, including, but not limited to: Main Street Macon/Macon Department of Economic and Community Development; Macon-Bibb Urban Development Authority; Macon-Bibb Convention and Visitors Bureau; Historic Macon Foundation; College Hill Alliance; Planning and Zoning; City of Macon; Bibb County; Macon Arts Alliance.*
- c. *Advocate for improvements to permitting, licensing, and inspection and fees that support business-friendly goals.*

NewTown Focus: Creating a Sense of Place

Establishing Downtown Macon as having a unique character, separate from that of the City as a whole, helps to create definition and provides an attractive environment for residents and visitors alike. Creating a sense of place can be accomplished in three ways: enhancing the built environment; promoting things to do; and informing the public. Place-making efforts in Downtown will be largely successful due to the partnership between NewTown Macon, Main Street Macon, and the Macon Arts Alliance. Both NewTown and Main Street Macon have the tools and skills to enhance the built environment, whereas the Macon Arts Alliance has the ability to inform and bring more of an awareness of Downtown activity through its Ovarions 365 calendar. NewTown Macon also has the avenues and ability to support many of the local festivals and Downtown events that occur throughout the year. NewTown's efforts should be guided by two goals:

1. Enhancing the Built Environment
2. Promotion / Advocacy

Goal 1: Enhancing the Built Environment

Strategy 1.1: Identify Anchor Properties Targeted for Redevelopment. NewTown Macon, through its tools and resources, has a vital role to play in the rehabilitation and redevelopment of key anchor properties in Downtown. Below are selected anchor properties where NewTown can lead, support, or advocate for the redevelopment opportunity.

401 Cherry Street Lofts (401 Cherry Street)

In July 2012, apartments will be available to rent at 401 Cherry Street. In addition to the twenty (20) new lofts being created, the building will also contain office and restaurant space on the ground level.

Bashinski Building (522 Cherry Street)

There are no known plans for the redevelopment of the Bashinski Building by the current owners, Georgia-Orange, LLC. NewTown should contact the owners and offer technical assistance regarding different options for future redevelopment. If the owner decides to redevelop the building, NewTown should work closely with them to promote the use of available tax incentives and loan programs.

Bibb County Juvenile Justice Center (Oglethorpe Street, between Second and Third Streets)

In 2012, the Bibb County Board of Commissioners will commence construction of the new Bibb County Juvenile Justice Center. NewTown should market the area surrounding the project to developers for additional redevelopment and infill opportunities such as new restaurants and professional space.

Capricorn Project (540 MLK, Jr. Boulevard)

NewTown Macon plans to develop an amphitheater on MLK between the Capricorn building (owned by NewTown) and the Rescue Mission building within the next five years. Long-term plans for this multi-faceted initiative involve NewTown's creation of an interactive music museum and recording studio, outdoor amphitheatre, and approximately ten loft-style rental housing units.

Dannenberg Building (476 Third Street)

This project is a priority because of the number of residences that could be added in a key area of downtown. NewTown constructed a parking deck on adjacent land to provide off-street parking for future residents.

Georgia Music Hall of Fame (250 MLK, Jr. Boulevard)

In 2011, the State of Georgia closed the Georgia Music Hall of Fame, a large strategically located building in Downtown. NewTown and other Downtown stakeholders should pursue the active re-use of this valuable asset.

McCook Lofts (552 Cherry Street)

NewTown can provide technical assistance to the owner to help decide future development plans. If the owner decides to redevelop the building, NewTown should work closely with them to promote the use of available tax incentives and loan programs.

Ocmulgee Heritage Trail (Multiple Locations)

The Ocmulgee Heritage Trail and Amerson River Park utilize one of Macon's greatest attributes, the Ocmulgee River. NewTown will continue its efforts to market, manage, and raise funds to support existing trail facilities and to facilitate construction of trail extension projects.

Quantum Dynamics (Former Park Hotel, 502 Poplar Street)

The former Park Hotel is owned by Quantum Dynamics, a contracting firm with the Department of Defense. The building is under construction with an indeterminate completion date; however, the ultimate goal is for this location to serve as the company's Southeastern Operations Center.

Rescue Mission (Former Jesus Cares Building, 500 MLK, Jr. Boulevard)

The building is currently slated for rehabilitation into approximately 23 loft-style apartments by a private developer. NewTown will provide marketing support for the apartments via the LiveDowntownMacon.com website and should explore other ways to facilitate this project.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Collect data and monitor project implementation specifically related to NewTown Macon's involvement and private investment leveraged.*
- b. Secure funding and restore Capricorn Studios and construct the amphitheater component of the project.*
- c. Market/manage Ocmulgee Heritage Trail and Amerson River Park and continue to provide fundraising events to support Trail/Park operations and extensions.*

Goal 2: Promoting Activity

NewTown Macon should actively promote and market Downtown to residents and visitors (as potential future residents), which will in turn support the businesses and events in Macon.

Strategy 2.1: Establishing Marketing Districts. To enhance NewTown's efforts to create a Sense of Place in Downtown Macon, it is recommended that NewTown establish three districts to aid in marketing Downtown as a destination. The composition of these districts is based on the analysis of concentrations of businesses and services outlined above on pages 9-15.

These recommended districts have concentrations of similar types of businesses and services, and active marketing of these districts may help in locating complementary business. Creating these districts as destinations is intended to be an additional tool for marketing and development purposes and does not provide for any additional tax incentives or incur additional zoning restrictions or permitting processes. NewTown should take the lead on advocating for the creation of the districts' marketing initiative and should coordinate closely with the CVB in promoting Downtown and Main Street Macon with business retention/development in these districts.

The **Arts/Entertainment District**, bounded by First Street, Mulberry Street, Martin Luther King Boulevard, and Walnut Street, includes the majority of restaurants, theatres, and boutiques in Downtown. In addition, most of Macon's festivals and events occur in the Arts and Entertainment District. A sub-area known as the *Museum District* would be located around the Terminal Station, Sports Hall of Fame, Children's Museum, and under construction Tubman Museum. The District also includes a number of anchor properties, including the Capricorn, Dannenberg, McCook Lofts at 552 Cherry Street, Rescue Mission (Jesus Cares), and local government buildings.

The **Riverfront District**, aligned along Spring Street, Riverside Drive, Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, and Walnut Street, is a mixture of office buildings and recreational resources, such as the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail. Upon completion, the Renaissance on the River project will bring a hotel, restaurants, offices, and upscale loft-style condominiums overlooking the Ocmulgee River to this District.

The **Medical Services District**, roughly bound by Spring Street, Oglethorpe Street, Fifth Street, and Plum Street, includes the Medical Center of Central Georgia hospital and associated medical professional buildings. This District should be marketed to both employees and visitors as well as to those businesses such as restaurants and shops that can provide additional services to people visiting the District.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Create buy-in from Downtown business, residents, visitors, and stakeholder organizations for creation of the marketing districts.*

- b. *Work with Downtown stakeholders, specifically the CVB and Main Street Macon, to establish a specific brand/logo for each district.*
- c. *Distribute brand/logo to all potential users (i.e. make available on NewTown website for download.)*
- d. *Encourage activities that support each district and track number of outreach/promotional activities held in each district.*

Strategy 2.2: Community Events/Conventions. A wide variety of festivals and Downtown events are presented throughout the year in Downtown Macon by different organizations that promote Macon's unique culture and history. The following Downtown festivals are all hosted by different organizations: Cherry Blossom Festival (KMBBC), Bragg Jam, Big Bird Bash (The Hummingbird), Macon Film Festival (MaGa), Fired Works (Macon Arts Alliance), Macon Beer Festival (Main Street Macon), and the weekly Friday Fest (NewTown). In partnership with CVB and Main Street Macon, NewTown will promote the Arts and Entertainment District as the hub of Downtown activity.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Promote events and activities at Amerson River Park and along the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, as well as those held in Downtown.*
- b. *Track and maintain attendance records for NewTown-sponsored events.*

Strategy 2.3: Gateway Initiative. The Gateway Initiative is a partnership among over 30 organizations with an interest in helping bring creative activity to Downtown and promoting the *It's Hotter Here Macon* brand on a regional and national platform. The Gateway website functions as portal to all Downtown organizations, providing a first stop for those companies, individuals, and organizations interested in finding out more about Macon. In addition to the website, the Gateway Initiative has three focus project areas: Macon Music, Macon Mogul, and Macon Shorts.

APPENDIX A

Implementation Executive Summary

NewTown Macon's Advocacy and Engagement Role

Advocacy for Downtown Macon is one of NewTown's most influential roles in achieving a vibrant Downtown. NewTown can help educate both the public and political leaders on issues affecting the community, helping to bring both parties to an informed decision. Some of the key issues NewTown will advocate in support of include:

- Passenger Rail between Macon and Atlanta (in partnership with MATS and Georgians for Passenger Rail)
- City/County Consolidation
- Sustainability of the Georgia Sports Hall of Fame
- Transportation Investment Act (TIA) – Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce has lead role with NewTown supporting
- Ocmulgee Blueway
- Education Facilities in Downtown
- Comprehensive Plan
- Long-Range Transportation Plan

In addition to the large-scale initiatives mentioned above, NewTown will also advocate for smaller, more specific projects in each of its focus areas, such as streetscape improvements, parking solutions/perceptions, shuttles to bring traffic to the heart of Downtown, improvements to code enforcement. NewTown will also work to empower businesses to become advocates for Downtown and will engage Regional Stakeholders in revitalizing the heart of Middle Georgia.

New Approach to Downtown Redevelopment: Target Areas

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Secure agreement from Downtown stakeholders on target areas.*
- b. *Develop target area strategy including roles and responsibilities for projects and programs. The strategy may include:*
 - *Collecting baseline data on occupied/vacant square footage.*
 - *Cataloguing existing residential and commercial uses and property ownership.*

- *Determining highest and best uses for properties within the target area(s) as well as barriers to redevelopment and how these barriers could be removed.*
 - *Determining the appropriate retail/tenant mix.*
- c. *Compile a benefits package to entice businesses, entrepreneurs and investors to locate and/or redevelop a building in the Target Area. (The package may include: bond/equity funds, opportunity zone business incentives, historic preservation tax incentives, façade grants, reduced utility connection fees, assistance with start-up costs, etc.)*
- d. *Convene Quarterly Stakeholder Meetings to facilitate discussion of projects, initiatives, new development tools, and other involvement that contributes to the redevelopment of Downtown Macon.*
- e. *Review conditions annually in the Target Areas to determine changes in conditions.*
- f. *Update the interactive map layers on a periodic basis as conditions change.*

Outcome Measure:

- a. *Establish specific goals to measure success in each target area. These goals could include increasing occupied square footage by certain percentage and adding 'x' number of residential units, etc.*

NewTown Focus: Increasing Residents

Goal 1: Increasing Housing Stock to Meet Demand

Strategy 1.1: Predevelopment Consultation Team.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Execute a Memorandum of Understanding / Memorandum of Agreement between Predevelopment Consultation Team partners that outline roles, responsibilities, data collection, and reporting.*
- b. *Develop a marketing plan to promote the services to developers, property owners, real estate agents, financial intuitions.*
- c. *Collect data on the number of each type of service offered through the Predevelopment Consultation Team on a periodic basis.*

Strategy 1.2: Transitional Property Fund.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Establish a funding goal for the Transitional Properties Fund.*
- b. *Review existing inventory of NewTown properties to establish priority properties for stabilization and identify properties that may be eligible for transfers to other Downtown stakeholders.*

- c. Coordinate with Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority and other Downtown stakeholders on future property acquisitions to create a redevelopment strategy for all properties.*
- d. Stabilize selected priority properties once funding is secured.*
- e. Incorporate activities of the Transitional Properties Fund into the database of NewTown properties and report to the NewTown Board on a periodic basis.*
- f. Establish a mechanism to track how and where the Transitional Properties Fund is utilized once funding goal is obtained.*

Strategy 1.3: Bargain Sales.

Implementation Step:

- a. Collect and report data on the number of bargain sales and relevant project information.*

Strategy 1.4: Equity Financing.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Secure \$5 million in bond financing through the Development Authority of Bibb County.*
- b. Determine amount of additional private financing needed and work to raise this capital to for equity infusions into Downtown projects*
- c. Establish criteria for the careful selection of projects to support.*

Goal 1 Outcome Measure:

- a. Facilitate the construction of 100-125 residential rental units over the next five years.*

Goal 2: Marketing to Potential Residents

Strategy 2.1. LiveDowntownMacon.com.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Collect and report data on the number of hits to the LiveDowntownMacon.com website.*
- b. Increase number of links between LiveDowntownMacon.com and Downtown stakeholders, real estate listings, City of Macon, and Bibb County.*
- c. Conduct a survey of Downtown residential property owners/managers to determine needs for marketing assistance and revise the website as appropriate.*
- d. Study the feasibility of being the Primary Leasing Agent for all Downtown residential rental properties. In its feasibility study, NewTown needs to consider time and staffing requirements, associated costs (other than*

staff salaries), achieving buy-in from rental property owners, and potential legal issues.

- e. Establish a methodology to track residential rental occupancy rates/determine a baseline measure in Year 1. Explore options to capture this information via the LiveDowntownMacon website.*
- f. Create a marketing plan to drive traffic to website in target markets as identified in Volk study.*

Goal 2 Outcome Measures:

- a. Maintain 85-90% occupancy rate in existing residential rental units.*
- b. Achieve an 85% occupancy rate within two years of completion for new residential units.*

NewTown Focus: Growing Businesses/Jobs

Goal 1: Conducting an Active and Intentional Recruitment of Businesses and Fostering Entrepreneurs.

Strategy 1.1: Business Incentive Fund.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Raise \$800,000 – \$1,000,000 within five years for the Business Incentive Fund.*
- b. Establish specific parameters for the businesses to meet in exchange for receiving the monetary incentives.*
- c. Use incentives and employ a reverse RFP or Macon Mogul strategy to secure desirable tenants based on target area goals.*

Strategy 1.2: In-House Design Services.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Determine most appropriate funding mechanism for In-house design service (i.e. are the services fee-based, paid for through the Transitional Property fund, or do grant funds need to be sought to support this service).*
- b. Implement the In-house design services, either through a subcontractor, intern, or by hiring a new staff person, in efforts to create usable interior spaces for businesses and improving facades to create attractive storefronts.*
- c. Collect data and periodically report on the number of façade renderings produced.*

Strategy 1.3: Macon Workforce Development and Chamber of Commerce.

Implementation Step:

- a. Increase collaboration with Macon Workforce Development.*

- b. Coordinate with Chamber and Macon Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to establish special incentives for new businesses that locate in Downtown.*

Goal 1 Outcome Measure:

- a. Increase occupancy rates for commercial space in the target areas by 25% in five years.*

Goal 2: Creating a Business-Friendly Climate

Strategy 2.1: 'No Wrong Door.'

Implementation Steps:

- a. Assist Main Street Macon and the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority in completing the Business Recruitment Package.*
- b. Provide the Business Recruitment Package in hardcopy and in electronic format on the NewTown website, and at all other Downtown stakeholders' offices, including, but not limited to, Main Street Macon/Macon Department of Economic and Community Development; Macon-Bibb Urban Development Authority; Macon-Bibb Convention and Visitors Bureau; Historic Macon Foundation; College Hill Alliance; Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning; City of Macon; Bibb County; Macon Arts Alliance.*
- c. Advocate for improvements to permitting, licensing, and inspection and fees that support business-friendly goals.*

NewTown Focus: Creating a Sense of Place

Goal 1: Enhancing the Built Environment

Strategy .1: Identify Anchor Properties Targeted for Redevelopment

Implementation Steps:

- a. Collect data and monitor project implementation specifically related to NewTown Macon's involvement and private investment leveraged.*
- b. Secure funding and restore Capricorn Studios and construct the amphitheater component of the project.*
- c. Market/manage Ocmulgee Heritage Trail and Amerson River Park and continue to provide fundraising events to support Trail/Park operations and extensions.*

Goal 2: Promoting Activity

Strategy 2.1: Establishing Marketing Districts.

Implementation Steps:

- a. Create buy-in from Downtown business, residents, visitors, and stakeholder organizations for creation of the marketing districts.*

- b. *Work with Downtown stakeholders, specifically the CVB and Main Street Macon, to establish a specific brand/logo for each district.*
- c. *Distribute brand/logo to all potential users (i.e. make available on NewTown website for download).*
- d. *Encourage activities that support each district and track number of outreach/promotional activities held in each district.*

Strategy 2.2: Community Events/Conventions.

Implementation Steps:

- a. *Promote events and activities at Amerson River Park and along the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail as well as those held in Downtown.*
- b. *Track and maintain attendance records for NewTown-sponsored events.*

Strategy 2.3: Gateway Initiative.

APPENDIX B

Downtown Stakeholders Overview

This section provides more detailed information on the missions and purposes of the Downtown stakeholder organizations for persons who may not be familiar with any of the organizations referenced in this report.

Bibb County

The mission of the Bibb County Board of Commissioners is to exercise the powers, duties, and responsibilities vested in and imposed upon it as the duly constituted governing authority of Bibb County.

Bibb County's scope of work has a more overarching reach than Downtown Macon. Many of the County's projects and initiatives extend throughout the County and provide residents with services necessary for everyday life. They rely on organizations such as NewTown Macon, the Macon Arts Alliance, and Historic Macon, which have a more specialized mission to carry out the activities of Downtown. The County serves as a necessary Downtown partner because of the large presence of the Courthouse in Downtown, as well as the political power it possesses.

The Bibb County Commissioners have established five goals that guide their service to the County. One of these goals states that the Commissioners will *establish policies and continue funding for those basic services that are in the best interest of Bibb County, as well as approve funding for those programs that the people desire and are willing to finance.* As a county, Bibb has access to many revenue sources that many of the other Downtown stakeholders do not. These include state and federal grants, as well as taxpayer money through the issuance of a SPLOST. Currently, the County is working on one large project Downtown, the construction of the County's new Juvenile Justice Center.

College Hill Alliance

The mission of the Alliance is to assist the community in creating positive change to the Corridor's physical and social fabric. The staff of the College Hill Alliance works to foster neighborhood revitalization; improve public spaces and infrastructure for multimodal transportation; and catalyze private investment and real estate (commercial and residential) development that strengthens the historic and residential character of the College Hill Corridor.

The College Hill Alliance is not a project-driven organization; rather it seeks to meet the ultimate goals in its five focus areas as outlined below. While the College Hill Master Plan identifies specific projects that could help meet the goals, these projects serve more as a guide than a concrete initiative. The Alliance promotes itself as the 'vehicle' which leverages existing organizations and creates new leadership within the community to assume ownership of projects and initiatives that advance change with the Corridor. The Alliance undertakes some project-specific initiatives; however, its primary role is to identify and engage partner organizations that have the operational capacity to implement initiatives.

At this time, the Alliance is nearing the end of its three-year funding period and is compiling a grant extension application to embark on College Hill 2.0. In addition to expanding the College Hill Corridor initiative to a larger area of the Macon community, the eventual goal for the Alliance is to step aside and allow the empowered community groups to sustain the growth and development of the Corridor.

College Hill's five main areas of focus are:

1. The Basics: Clean, Safe and Branded
2. The Connection: Cooling the Streets
3. The Environment: A City within a Park
4. The Look: Macon's Urban and Historic Center
5. The Vibe: College Town Cool

In cooperation with Mercer University, the College Hill Alliance has embarked on a new initiative, launched mid-2011, known as the **KITE Alliance** (Knowledge, Information, Technology, Entrepreneurship). The mission of the KITE Alliance is to:

Establish College Hill and Downtown Macon as the center of an economic development culture shaped by Knowledge, Innovation and Technology available in the academic, business and government resources of Middle Georgia, and driven by a commitment to Entrepreneurship from within the community.

As with the College Hill Corridor initiative, the KITE Alliance has three overarching goals that it is working to achieve:

1. Establish KITE Alliance as a network of economic development organizations actively engaged in cultivating and implementing collaborative business partnerships linking the technology, capital, and know-how available in Middle Georgia to leverage entrepreneurial talent and accelerate the development of knowledge-based local companies.

2. Utilize the academic and research capacity of Mercer University to create new ideas for commercialization, encourage and support entrepreneurship, and develop collaborative relationships with technology-based companies.
3. Attract and create technological business investment in the College Hill Corridor and Downtown Macon and foster new and emerging local entrepreneurial companies, especially those offering technical, higher paying jobs.

Development Authority of Bibb County

The Development Authority of Bibb County is a public corporation which has been created pursuant to the Development Authorities Law of the State of Georgia. The function of the Authority includes the implementation of various project types involving the issuance of revenue bonds. Projects include, but are not limited to, manufacturing, industrial, convention and sports facilities, hotels, educational facilities, assisted living, and nursing home facilities. The Authority acts to carry out any project that it deems to be good for the public within its powers. Projects may be located in incorporated and unincorporated Bibb County. General affairs of the Authority are conducted by a Board of Directors that meets on an as-needed basis depending on the level of project activity. All meetings are open to the public. In 2012, the Development Authority of Bibb County signed a lease agreement with the State of Georgia for three years and is partnering with NewTown Macon to manage the Sports Hall of Fame.

Economic and Community Development Department, City of Macon

The mission of the City of Macon Economic and Community Development Department is to stimulate economic vitality by strengthening neighborhoods, building partnerships, and fostering public and private investments in the community.

The Economic and Community Development Department (ECD) is an arm of the City of Macon, and like Bibb County, ECD has a much broader focus area than just Downtown. However, many of the programs it supports have a large impact on the revitalization and development of Downtown. ECD believes that the successful revitalization of a community involves the coordination of three key components. These include the physical development of a community, its social programs and partnerships with outside programs, and capital that can be used to leverage its efforts. One of the major programs ECD operates is within its Neighborhood Division whose goal is *to develop a viable urban community through the provision of decent housing, a suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities principally for low and moderate-income individuals* (Five-Year Strategic Plan, May 2010). The majority of ECD's housing efforts occur beyond the Central Business District, but through CDBG-Disaster program funding, the City is providing a loan to a private developer to

redevelop the former Dannenberg Building into 69 Downtown lofts and three (3) retail spaces. Because the project funding involves CDBG assistance, a percentage of these lofts must be designated for low and moderate-income households.

One of ECD's most recent and largest projects is the Second Street Master Plan. The vision for this area is to take an ill-designed, auto-centric road with vacant lots, empty buildings, and uninspiring vistas into a multi-modal boulevard that embraces the design concepts of sustainability, complete streets, and livable communities. In addition, this plan will also address potential solutions in mass transit with the main focus being to transport individuals from the Coliseum and Convention Center, to the CBD, to the Medical Center, Mercer University, and other key locations around Macon. Although in its infancy, this plan has the potential to provide much needed changes to Downtown Macon, spurring further development and revitalization.

ECD also operates many programs through its Development Division that directly support efforts in Downtown. The focus of this division is *to revitalize blighted urban areas and to promote economic development by stimulating private investment and job creation*. These programs include the following:

- Façade Improvement Loan Program
- Small Business Development Loan Program which provides fixed-rate, below-market gap financing for small businesses located in the City of Macon
- Opportunity Zones
- Tax Allocation Districts
- Second Street Master Plan
- Multi-modal Analysis
- Brownfields Assessment Program

Main Street Macon

The mission of Main Street Macon is to bring life and business to Downtown through collaboration. It envisions a revitalized Downtown Macon that is our region's commercial and cultural center - maximizing social and economic opportunities for a diverse population and preserving the neighborhood's historic urban identity.

Main Street Macon is committed to the economic development and revitalization of the Central Business District of Downtown Macon. Designated in September 2011, Macon is one of two Urban Main Street communities in the State of Georgia. Main Street Macon is a branch of the City's Economic and Community Development Department. The Main Street program is a

comprehensive approach to Downtown development that seeks to bring all stakeholders together for a common purpose. The program is organized around four points—**organization, design, promotion,** and **economic restructuring**. Each point has its own committee of stakeholders which ensures that each point is accounted for by the Main Street Macon program.

The **Organization** Committee is all about building partnerships with stakeholders in Macon's Central Business District. The Organization Committee meets quarterly with its partner organizations: NewTown Macon; the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority; Keep Macon/Bibb Beautiful and The Cherry Blossom Festival; Macon Arts Alliance; Historic Macon; the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce; the Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitors Bureau; the Departments of Economic and Community Development, Central Services, Engineering, and Inspections and Fees; and the Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission. The short-term goal for the Organization Committee, along with its partner organizations, is to develop a one-stop-shop for businesses whereby all information a business will need to get started will be incorporated into one document.

The goal of the **Promotions** Committee is to build a positive image of Downtown to encourage consumers and investors alike to invest in the district. Current and future focus of the Promotions Committee is to improve safety perceptions of Downtown, implement the nearly complete signage program, manage the ShopLocalMacon.com website, and continue cross-promotion of all Downtown festivals and events. As with all Main Street projects, coordination with its partner organizations such as Macon Arts Alliance and NewTown will be essential components of all the Promotions Committee's efforts.

The **Design** Committee is tasked with helping Downtown put her best foot forward and to always make a good first impression. The Design Committee oversees the Adopt-A-Sidewalk program and assists the City of Macon with commercial code enforcement.

The **Economic Restructuring** Committee aims to retain and expand existing businesses while at the same time attracting new and diverse businesses to provide Downtown with a solid economic footprint. The Economic Restructuring Committee recently completed an Existing Industry Profile and is working with NewTown and the Urban Development Authority to create a Business Recruitment package to assist new businesses that wish to open in Downtown.

Historic Macon Foundation

The Mission of the Historic Macon Foundation is to advocate for Macon's historic and architectural heritage, to facilitate preservation efforts in our community, and to educate and inspire appreciation for our unique city. Its vision is to lead Middle Georgia as the premier preservation organization.

The Historic Macon Foundation's primary focus is on neighborhood revitalization; however, the organization does undertake a few initiatives in Downtown including its small Façade Loan Fund and its Downtown lofts initiative, which is scheduled to begin in fall 2012. Historic Macon provides a number of services to the community which Downtown property owners can take advantage of including: façade renderings and advisement on historic property redevelopment, including tax incentives and Design Review and Planning and Zoning approvals.

Macon Arts Alliance

The mission of the Macon Arts Alliance is to foster and support the advancement of the arts and culture in Central Georgia. We are working to create an environment where arts and culture thrive and Central Georgia is recognized as an unparalleled cultural destination.

The Macon Arts Alliance seeks to promote economic development of the creative industries in Middle Georgia and improve public art within the Macon community. Its most notable recent project is the establishment of Ovation365.org, an interactive community calendar showcasing events for a 60-mile radius from Macon, from McDonough to Vienna, Dublin to Thomaston, and also includes the Georgia Lake Country – Eatonton, Madison, and Milledgeville.

The stated values of the Macon Arts Alliance provide a comprehensive overview of the initiatives the organization is involved with in Macon and the greater Central Georgia region:

- The interconnection of the arts and culture to life in Central Georgia.
- Visibility and support for the traditional and evolving arts and culture in Macon and Central Georgia.
- Arts education and lifelong learning.
- An arts environment that includes private, commercial, public, and community-based organizations.
- Advocacy for public and private arts funding and accessibility to the arts.

Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau

The mission of the Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau is to market Macon and Bibb County regionally, domestically, and internationally to both groups and individuals, in order to enhance the economy and increase employment.

The Macon-Bibb County Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) is the destination marketing organization of Macon and Bibb County. It is specifically charged with representing Macon and assisting in the long-term development of the community through travel and tourism. The CVB serves as the key to the City and is a resource for conventions, meetings, tours and visitors alike. They assist with meeting preparation and encourage both business travelers and visitors to visit local attractions.

The CVB's current efforts are guided by its *FY 2011-2012 Sales and Marketing Plan*. It seeks to increase the economic impact from tourism in Macon and Bibb County by:

- Maintaining a strong and proactive focus on convention sales and group tour sales and partnerships with hotel sales teams;
- Communicating new and existing opportunities to drive sales and build attendance at hotels, museums, attractions, restaurants and retail outlets through collaborative packaging and referrals;
- Utilizing technology to improve the marketing efforts of tourism partners in reaching visitors; and
- Providing additional education to assist partners in using CVB services, tourism industry research, and other resources to enhance business opportunities.

Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission

The joint Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission was created in 1952 and has the authority to adopt and administer zoning regulations and an official zoning map and set platting standards. Planning and Zoning also has the power to administer and enforce the regulations as provided in local city/county codes and ordinances. The Planning and Zoning Commission has provided assistance to the College Hill Corridor project providing oversight for the development of a future land use plan, zoning code update, and development of new design guidelines/review process to enhance and preserve the established residential neighborhoods and guide new development within the Corridor. Another responsibility of the Planning and Zoning Commission is to provide oversight to the Macon Area Transportation Study (MATS), which was established in 1964. Planning and Zoning Commission's staff, along with the MATS Policy Committee, has the primary responsibility for carrying out the Unified Planning Work Program, Long-Range Transportation Plan, and the Transportation Improvement Program. In

in addition to undertaking the required 2013 update of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, MATS will be providing essential support to the Second Street Project with the truck route component. The Planning and Zoning Commission will also be undertaking a full update to the Vision 2030 Comprehensive Plan which is due in 2017.

Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority

The mission of the Urban Development Authority is to increase the economic development impact on Downtown.

The Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority (UDA) is a constitutionally created authority charged with fostering economic development in Downtown. The UDA is unique in that it has been given the power to buy and sell bonds, as well as buy and sell real estate, and by state law is exempt from ad valorem taxes. This power creates an important implementation tool for the Downtown stakeholders. The UDA will soon be managing a revolving loan fund available for uses such as Downtown revitalization and economic development. It is also in the process of developing new recruitment strategies for retail and businesses Downtown, creating a Downtown business inventory, and buying strategic properties Downtown.

One of the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority's largest projects is the Renaissance on the River initiative. This project is located within the Riverside Tax Allocation District and will bring new development along Macon's greatest natural asset, the Ocmulgee River. The current plan for this development is to provide upscale living options, as well as commercial space for professional offices, restaurants, retail and a hotel.

APPENDIX C

Implementation Strategies Overview Chart

NewTown Macon's Strategic Action Plan

Implementation Strategies Overview

RESIDENTIAL

GOAL 1: INCREASE HOUSING STOCK

Predevelopment Consultation Team

Transitional Property Fund

Bargain Sales

Equity Fund

Revolving Loan Fund

Owner-Occupied Lofts

Façade Loan Program

Façade Covenants

GOAL 2: MARKET TO POTENTIAL RESIDENTS

LiveDowntownMacon.com

Central Point of Contact

SENSE OF PLACE

GOAL 1: ENHANCE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Anchor Properties Project Support

Second Street Project

Streetscape Master Plan

Public Art

GOAL 2: PROMOTION/ADVOCACY

Establish Marketing Districts

Promote & Provide Community Events/Conventions

Gateway Initiative

Community Events Calendar

BUSINESSES / JOBS

GOAL 1: BUSINESS-FRIENDLY CLIMATE

"No Wrong Door" Mentality

Coordination with Chamber

One-Stop Shop for Development

GOAL 2: ACTIVE BUSINESS RECRUITMENT/FOSTERING

Business Incentive Fund

In-House Design Services

Business Incentives

Small Business Incubator

Downtown Recruitment

Business Recruitment Package

Entrepreneur Fair

KITE Initiative

GOAL 3: SUPPORT/GROW EXISTING BUSINESS

Intelligent Community Designation

PROJECT LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

- NewTown Macon
- College Hill Alliance
- Historic Macon Foundation
- Main Street Macon
- Urban Development Authority
- City of Macon Economic/Community Dev.
- Macon Arts Alliance

APPENDIX D

Donor Feedback/Focus Group Results

This section provides an overview of the feedback received from NewTown Donors at meetings facilitated by NewTown Staff held on March 28th, April 3rd and April 10th. Results from two Focus Group meetings held on March 29th and April 4th are also outlined below. The Focus Group meetings were facilitated by the *Macon Millennials*, a new group started by NewTown in early 2012, consisting of young adults who are not necessarily affiliated with a corporation or small business but are committed to seeing Downtown flourish.

Note: The following are direct comments (only edited for spelling, grammar and duplication) and may not represent the views and opinions of NewTown or the MGRC.

Feedback on Strategic Plan from Donors

What Are The Best Things Going on in Downtown Now?

- NewTown
- Increased activity
- College Hill Corridor
- Medical Center – support growth of medical industry
- Mercer
- Culture & history, music history
- Entertainment offerings
- Emphasis on regaining momentum with individuals living in the Downtown area
- Variety of stakeholders
- Outdoor cafes – more needed
- Heart of the region
- Trail and being able to have recreation Downtown
- First Friday/Friday Fest
- Architecture
- Students, attracting a younger generation
- A Mayor who is pro-Downtown
- Trolley
- Increased momentum and support
- Churches
- Theatres
- Daybreak organization to provide day shelter for homeless

What Should Be Changed?

- Improve store facades, increase “presentability” of businesses
- Lack of retail presence especially in catering to men and children’s clothing needs

What Should Be Changed? (cont.)

- High vacancy rate
- Poplar Mart, Day Reporting Center (at Second and Poplar) and other less desirable businesses
- Increase presence of police on foot
- Decrease number of panhandlers
- Lack of educational opportunities in CBD – SCAD model in Savannah
- Move railroad to east side of river
- Impact of I-75 interchange construction on OHT
- Finish Tubman
- Negative perceptions especially of parking and safety
- Bus routes/times for those living close to Downtown are not reasonable
- Parking
- Improve streetscapes; don't use movable stones – used to break windows
- Commercial spaces too large for most retail
- Improve aesthetic look of Poplar Street
- Eliminate the racial divide between Cherry & Poplar Streets
- Improve sidewalks
- Make large buildings have front and backside storefronts to lessen s.f. for retail
- Could a grant fund be established along with the equity fund that would pay the fees that an enterprise zone would abate since there is an issue in getting all the services waived/reduced?

In the next five years, I would like to see Downtown....

- More lofts
- Become a destination as opposed to a means to an end
- No panhandlers
- Increased day and night activity
- Transit between surrounding areas, Intown and Downtown
- A grocery store and other services (Laundromat)
- Georgia College having increased impact on Downtown businesses
- Improved perceptions of Downtown
- Cohesive streetscapes and more greenscapes
- Shuttle from Medical Center to heart of Downtown
- Take advantage of “flight” from suburbs back Downtown
- More pedestrian-friendly
- Included as part of Intown Neighborhood Association to elevate our neighborhood status

NewTown should....

- Stay involved in the immediate Downtown area
- Stay focused and don't get diverted to other projects outside (other than OHT)
- Focus on specific projects and finish them
- Like focus on concentrated areas that may show the greatest impact
- Recruit businesses, be liaison for entrepreneurs
- Advocate that Downtown is important throughout the region
- Develop solutions for vacant blocks
- Ensure advocacy is directly related to NewTown initiatives
- Use available resources to purchase unsightly properties and provide incentives to redevelop these
- Examine property ownership and work to remove barriers
- Advocacy should include improvements to code enforcement
- Communicate with and coordinate all Downtown partners
- Engage in joint projects with partners (i.e. City)
- Charge for management of programs (Sports Hall, etc)
- Have welcome packets at hospitals, etc.
- Consider the impact of consolidation on Downtown and the possibility of moving some projects to government (OHT) as well as improvement of others (permitting)
- Broaden engagement in Downtown revitalization to include regional stakeholders
- Empower businesses to advocate for Downtown and support other Downtown businesses
- Be the liaison between property owners and potential tenants
- Take options on properties targeted for redevelopment
- Improve the façade of the building then package incentives to attract investment
- Utilize the media to promote Downtown
- Coordinate efforts with Second Street project
- Make retention of financial and legal services a priority
- Work with utilities to provide incentives such as free connections, etc.
- Coordinate with the USGBC on a green building initiative for Target Area 1 making that a national model for sustainable historic districts

NewTown should not...

- Get spread too thin
- Venture out too far
- Dilute resources
- Focus on problems that have no solution
- Become more political than its original purpose of fostering development
- Take on too much – specialize in what you do best

How do you feel about the direction discussed?

On a 1-9 scale (1-3 is Missed the Mark, 7-9 is Right on Track):

- 10 individuals rated NTM 7
- 10 individuals rated NTM 8
- 2 individuals rated NTM 9
- No scores lower than 7

Focus Group Results

I. Topics Discussed

A. Interactive map

1. Anchor buildings
2. Opportunity zones
3. 2nd street project
4. Target areas
5. Potential uses for Bashinski building

II. Ideas Generated

A. What do people enjoy most about Downtown?

1. Restaurants
2. Bars
3. Spaces for nightlife
4. River walk and other scenic areas
5. Convenient layout (conducive to good traffic flow)
6. Unique retail stores
7. Convenient banking

B. Block by block approach to developing Downtown: Where should focus be?

1. Bashinski building
2. Cherry Street
3. Center of Downtown
4. Poplar Street (good area for improvement/growth)
5. Put up a sign about upcoming/potential businesses/wanted signs in vacant store fronts

C. If you could put any business/concept Downtown what would it be?

1. Movie theatre
2. Hard rock cafe
3. Chain restaurant
4. Youth centered entertainment

5. Partnerships to strengthen children's museum
6. Wall where graffiti type art is allowed
7. Wine shop
8. Business with multi-cultural appeal
9. International food festival
10. Art supply store
11. H&M

D. Other Suggestions:

1. More places for teens to hang out
2. Turn empty lots into greenspaces
3. Don't ever give up on the Dempsey
4. SCAD in Downtown
5. More art sculptures
6. Boats on the river
7. Create center for emerging writers
8. Make sure there is housing for artists who make \$200/wk working at restaurants
9. Don't ignore the people who are always Downtown trying to make things happen
10. Involve people from all walks of life in NewTown's mission
11. Keep Downtown open past 6 p.m.
12. Renovate Central City Park to draw more tourists
13. Better lighting on streets outside of Cherry
14. Create a coordinated business development plan
15. Don't make decisions without public input
16. Keep mix of rental and owner-occupied housing
17. Update the Gibbs plan
18. Don't increase the boundaries of Downtown before the inventory of vacant buildings is greatly reduced

E. How did you feel about the direction discussed?

On a 1 to 9 scale (1 is Missed the Mark, 9 Right on Track):

1. 1 rated 4
2. 1 rated 5
3. 2 rated 6
4. 3 rated 7
5. 3 rated 8
6. 5 rated 9