



VALDOSTA DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.



Valdosta
Main Street



The planning team would like to congratulate the City of Valdosta on the anniversary of its sesquicentennial.

December 7, 2010



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta represents eight months of work by the City of Valdosta, local residents, property owners, business owners and a Planning Team comprised of Urban Collage Inc., Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering Inc. The Planning Team and City wish to thank all those who devoted their time, leadership, vision and ideas to this effort for the betterment of the City of Valdosta.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL:

Honorable John J. Fretti, Mayor
James Wright, District 1
Deidra White, District 2
Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, District 3
Alvin Payton, Mayor Pro Tem, District 4
Timothy (Tim) H. Carroll, District 5
Robert Yost, District 6
Ben Norton, Councilman At-Large
John Eunice, Former City Councilman At-Large

CITY STAFF:

Larry Hanson, City Manager
Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager
Rebecca Shirley, Former Main Street Manager
Ellen Hill, Program Coordinator
Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Von Shipman, Former City Engineer

STEERING COMMITTEE:

Honorable John J. Fretti, Mayor
Deidra White, City Council District 2
Larry Hanson, City Manager
Mara Register, Assistant to the City Manager
Matt Martin, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Howard Dasher, Central Valdosta Development Authority
Sue Cox, Central Valdosta Development Authority
Pat Sullivan, Downtown Valdosta Business Association
Tyra Howard, Valdosta-Lowndes Tourism Authority
Mary Gooding, Valdosta State University
Kevin King, Developer
Jason Davenport, Lowndes County Planning

PLANNING TEAM:

Robert Begle, Urban Collage, Inc.
Stanford Harvey, Urban Collage, Inc.
John Skach, AIA, AICP, Urban Collage, Inc.
Matthew Cherry, Urban Collage, Inc.
Niti Gajjar, Urban Collage, Inc.

Ken Bleakly, Bleakly Advisory Group
Jonathan Gelber, Bleakly Advisory Group

Rick Hall, Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.
DeWayne Carver, Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Valdosta Downtown Master Plan process included a series of three public workshops where community members were asked to provide input into the plan, including establishing a vision for the future of downtown, assisting the Planning Team in developing concepts for future improvements, and prioritizing project initiatives. The following list includes those who signed-in and participated in one or more of the public workshops. The original sign-in sheets from three public meetings can be found in the Appendix.

Adrenis Hooks	Dale Eger	John Deming	Pat Sullivan
Adzian Taylor	Daniel Davis	John Quarterman	Paul Arambula
Akhter Chaudhary	Daniel Story	Kara Ramos	Paul Burgess
Albert Slone	Danny Parkinson	Keith Lee	Rekasa Deen
Alex Thomas	David Richards	Ken Rickett	Robyne Bunce
Alexandra Arzayus	Dawn Castro	Kevin King	Ron Borders
Alvin Payton	Dean Rexroth	Lee Henderson	Scott James
Amanda Borath	Diedra White	Lindsay Crosby	Shirley Marshall
Amette Crosby	Dixie Haller	Manny Cortez	Stan White
Artie Marshall	Donald Davis	Mara Register	Stanley Cox
Baha Zeidan	Ed Foster	Marcela Paredes	Sue Cox
Barbara Byrd	Eldred Hunter	Marcela Tobar	Susan Mullis
Betty Anderson	Emily Foster	Mark Johnson	Tara Nichols
Betty Williams	Fay Hyatt	Mary Bryant	Thomas Haller
Bill Eger	Garner Stephans	Matt Hart	Tim Carroll
Brandon Bartlet	Gerald Johnson	Matt Martin	Trent Coggins
Brian Antoine	Geraldine Green	Melissa Coleman	Tyler Moore
Brittney Foster	Gretchen Quarterman	Michael Jetter	Tyson Barrett
Buddy Walker	Gwendolyn Cloud	Mike Lee	Velma Willie
Celine Gladwin	Harris Willie	Mikki Hudson	Von Shipman
Claude Howard	Herbert Williams	Myra Anderson	Wanda Hunter
Clay Lee	Janice Young	Nate Wright	Wendy Kerstetter
Clifford Lane	Jason Davenport	Nicholas White	Xavier McGilberry
Corey Hull	Jeanne Griner	Nikki Forman	Yuri Trejo
Cory Ewing	Jeremiah Loom	Oliver Anderson	Zach Wilson
Courtney Ruttinger	Jerry Hyatt	Oliver Barrett	



TABLE OF CONTENTS

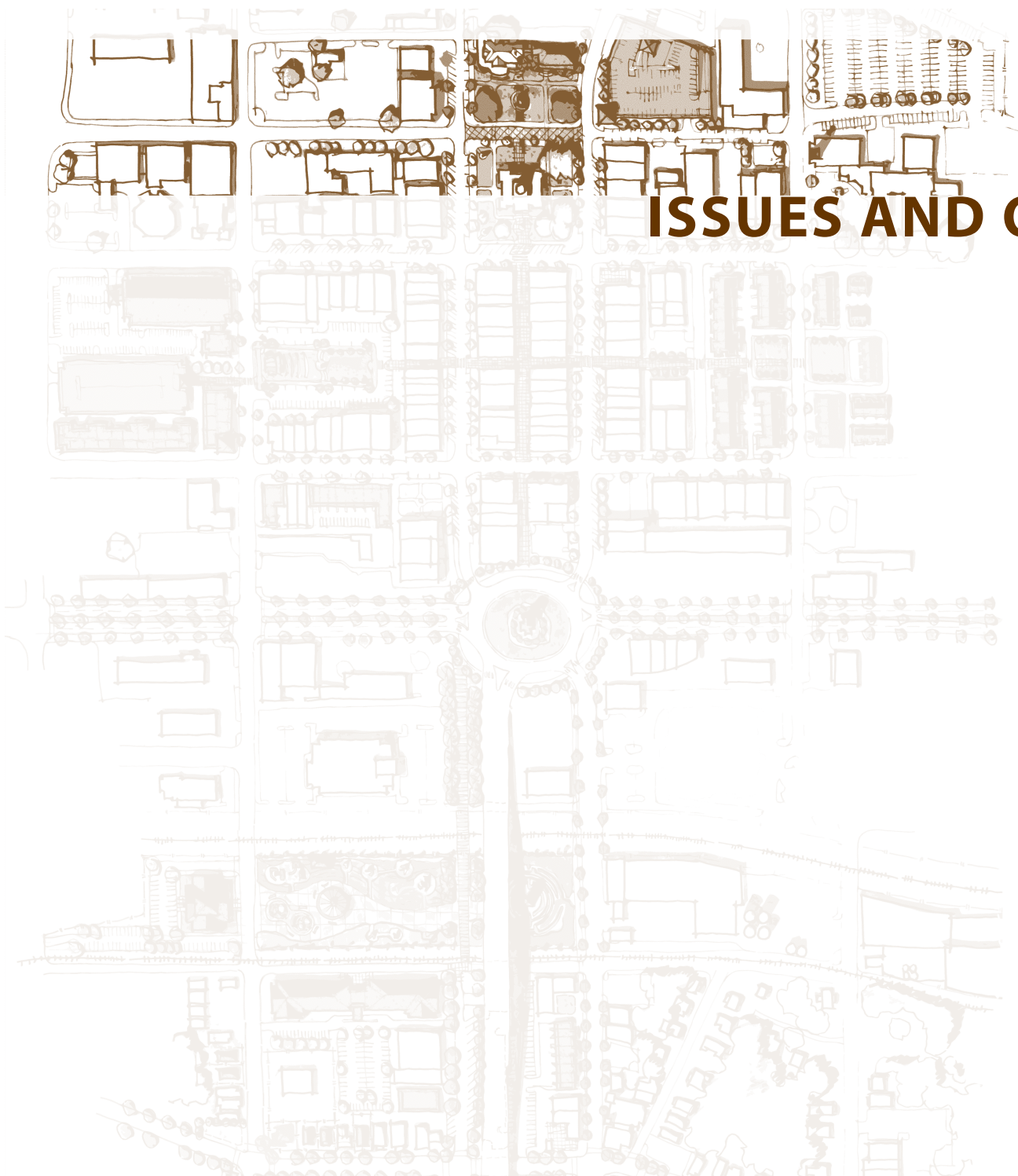
PREFACE	1		
PART 1: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES		PART 3: LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	
1.1 Existing Physical Conditions	3	3.1 Development Horizon	38
Neighborhood Context	3	3.2 Short-Term (Catalyst) Projects	40
Downtown Context	5	Lee Street Village	42
Tracing Downtown's Evolution	6	Toombs West	45
Downtown's Urban Morphology	8	South Ashley Renaissance	48
Downtown Today	9	The Courthouse Square	51
Historic Building Uses	10	The Central Core	52
Existing Land Use	11	3.3 Long-term Development Projects	53
Existing Zoning	12		
Property Ownership	13	PART 4: OPEN SPACE AND MOBILITY PROJECTS	
Publicly Owned Land	14	4.1 Open Space Projects	56
Major Businesses	15	Courthouse Square Restoration / Expansion	57
1.2 Transportation Overview		Central Alley	58
Circulation Network	16	Lee Square	59
Parking	17	Toombs Plaza	60
Traffic Operations	18	Olympic Park	62
Semi-Truck Circulation	19	4.2 Mobility Projects	64
Walkability Index	20	Complete Streets	65
1.3 Demographic / Market Overview		Streetscapes / Pedestrian Improvements	69
Downtown Valdosta Market Areas	21	Street Reconfigurations	70
Key Demographic Trends	21	Pettersen-Ashley Roundabout	71
Real Estate Market	23	Multi-use Trail	71
1.4 Issues and Opportunities		Parking Facilities	72
Susceptibility to Change	25		
Development Opportunities	26	PART 5: ACTION PLAN	
PART 2: THE DOWNTOWN VISION		5.1 Implementation Overview	73
2.1 Community Engagement	27	5.2 Implementation Matrix	74
Process Highlights	27	5.3 Implementation Priorities	87
2.2 Goals and Priorities	32	5.3 Programs and Policies	89
2.3 Urban Design Strategies	34		
2.4 Plan Frameworks	36	PART 6: APPENDIX	94





PART 1

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



PREFACE



Landmarks, Present and Past

Valdosta was founded in 1860 when the Lowndes County seat moved five miles to take advantage of the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad. Its name comes from Governor George Troup's estate Val D'Osta which in turn was named for the Valle d'Aosta in northern Italy. It is a lyrical name, in harmony in the romantic Deep South landscape and fitting to the gem of South Georgia. Valdosta transcends its wiregrass surroundings in the red tiles and Spanish-revival architecture of the old buildings at Valdosta State University; in Frank Milburn's Lowndes County Courthouse and its Parisian overtones; in its palmettos and live oaks, and in its vibrant downtown. Valdosta is a special place - timeless and magical.

The Downtown Valdosta Master Plan is an initiative sponsored by the Central Valdosta Development Authority (CVDA) and the City of Valdosta to establish a vision for downtown sustainability and growth over the next twenty years, and a work program to achieve that vision in a realistic and equitable way. Much effort has been put into improving the historic core of Valdosta and investing in local business, both by city leadership and individuals committed to downtown. The master plan will build on this foundation by recommending strategies to address problems in the core, strengthen what has been accomplished, and expand and diversify downtown to keep it central to Valdosta and the region.



Valdosta State University



Fairview Historic District



PREFACE



Downtown's Mobility Evolution

The goal of this report is to provide the reader with a situational perspective of downtown Valdosta and is the result of several months of field observation, data analysis, stakeholder interviews, and team dialogue. The report serves as the basis for the visioning phase of the master plan process and can be valuable in understanding the essence of downtown, even for those who are not available to take part in the public events.

The report covers several aspects of downtown – its physical form, its demographics, its market strengths and weaknesses, its relationship to its surroundings – and includes an overview of the most pressing issues it faces as heard through the voices of its stakeholders. The physical analysis examines multiple elements of downtown's urban form and utilizes both current and historical information to present a picture of downtown change over time. Similarly, the market summary uses historic as well as current data from multiple sources to establish its conclusions.

Cities are not static; and while every attempt has been made to capture all of downtown's dimensions there may be attributes or projects that have gone unrecognized. Moreover, some of the analysis is subjective and a product of the intuition and experience of the planning team. The reader should be encouraged to treat this as a live document and engage the visioning to ensure the most responsive plan possible.

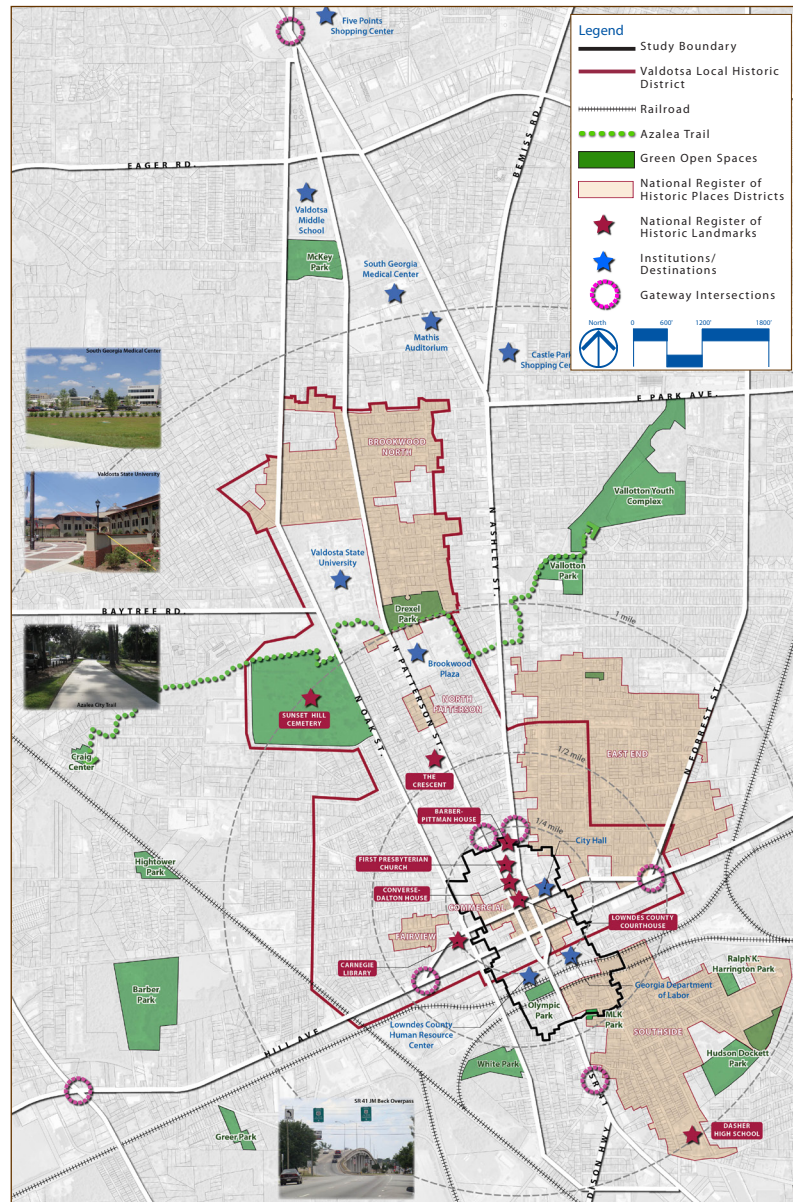


First Fridays

Art After Dark



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Neighborhood Context Map

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Like so many other Georgia cities, the limits of Valdosta were once described by a one-mile radius struck from the historic county courthouse. Downtown was the anchor of the city and the place where regional and interstate highways and railroads converged. It was surrounded by neighborhoods on all sides which depended on its commercial enterprises for jobs, goods and services.

As postwar growth occurred this circle enlarged and shifted to the north. Today, the center of the city can be considered as the corridor bounded by Ashley and Patterson, with Five Points marking the north and downtown at the south. Still, downtown is very much the symbolic heart of the city and the physical center of the city's peripheral bypass, Inner Perimeter Road, leaving ample room for growth to the south. And, while new neighborhoods have offset the center of gravity, downtown still enjoys an intimate relationship with older residential districts that have maintained their rich housing stock fairly well. Downtown is also within walking distance of Valdosta State University; and VSU's expansion plans push the main campus south to the area around University Center, bringing it even closer to downtown.



Azalea Trail



Valdosta State University



North Ashley Street



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Martin Luther King Memorial Park



Converse-Dalton House

There are four historic neighborhoods surrounding downtown: West Side / Fairview to the west, East End to the east, North Patterson to the north, and Southside / Pinevale to the south. All four contain National Historic Register districts; and Fairview, North Patterson and portions of East End contain examples of high style residential architecture or large and ornate vernacular house types. The Southside historic district has more modest housing but is significant for its role in African-American history. Of all the neighborhoods, only Southside / Pinevale has significant overlap with the study area.

The neighborhoods are an underutilized asset to downtown in that they have significant potential to provide a critical mass of residents and customers to support the growth of downtown business, but the many vacant properties and dilapidated or distressed buildings create pockets of blight which discourages investment. In addition, the neighborhoods are separated from downtown by large commercial or light industrial properties, surface parking, urban renewal land, or arterial roadways. Some of these issues have been identified and addressed by neighborhood revitalization plans completed for West Side, Southside and Pinevale.

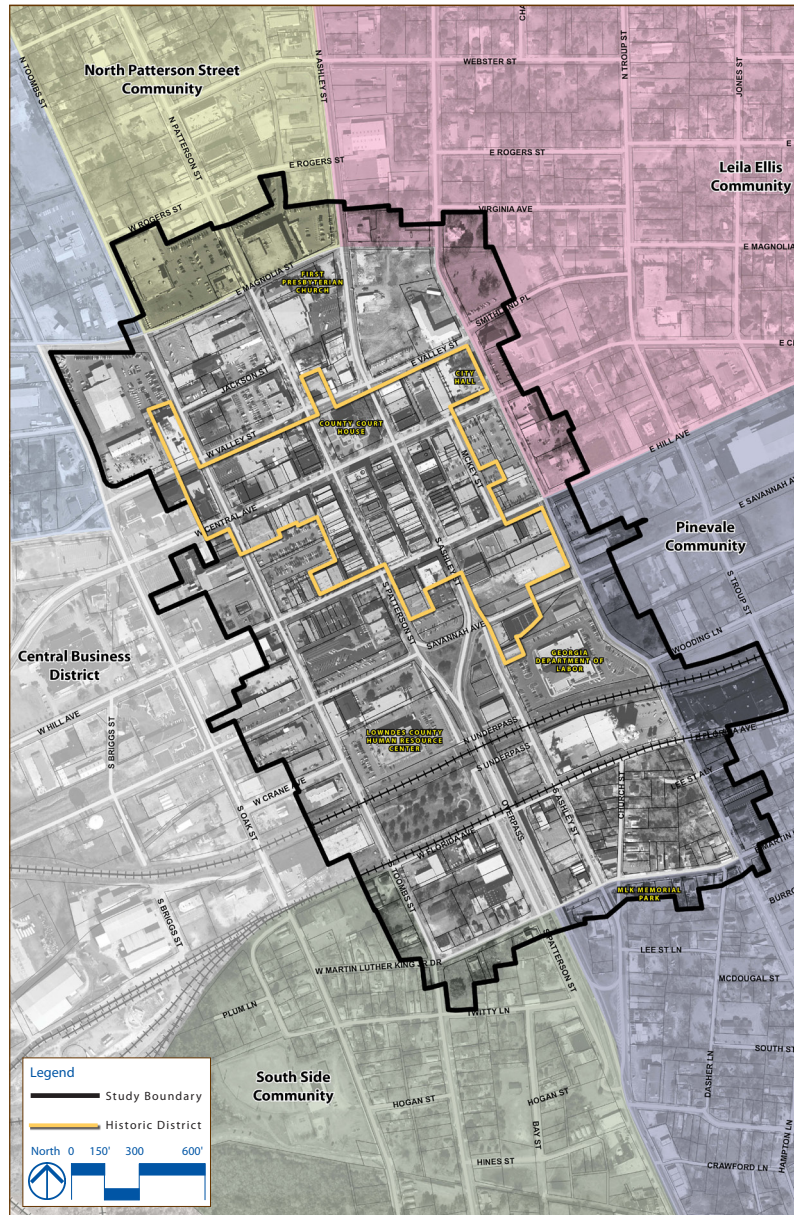
The city also has plans to improve several gateways that mark entries into downtown, based primarily on road intersections or traffic movements. Two are especially significant in that they link downtown with the one-way redirection of Hill and Central avenues. In addition the city has begun improvements on the Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive corridor which was at one time a major location for African-American businesses. The gateways and the MLK project hint at the possible boundaries of an expanded downtown where currently transitional land uses dominate.



Smith Park from the East



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Existing Context Map

DOWNTOWN CONTEXT

The master plan study area is 135 acres in size and matches the CVDA jurisdictional boundary – roughly Rodgers Street on the north, Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive on the south, Lee Street on the east, and Toombs Street on the west. It overlaps slightly with four surrounding neighborhoods although there is little residential development to speak of in these margins. The study area is also roughly divided in half by Hill Avenue. The four blocks to the north contain most of the historic district and active pedestrian oriented mixed-use; while the portion to the south is dominated by transportation infrastructure, large governmental buildings and light manufacturing.

Downtown Valdosta is part of the Central Business District neighborhood revitalization area which extends to the west along Hill Avenue, the main access from Interstate 75 which is just over two miles away. The study area is also within the recently-adopted Urban Redevelopment Area and is designated as both an Enterprise Zone and an Opportunity Zone. Three state highways cross the area: Highways 84 and 221 (Hill Avenue / Central Avenue) and Highway 41 (Patterson Street / Ashley Street).



Ashley Street

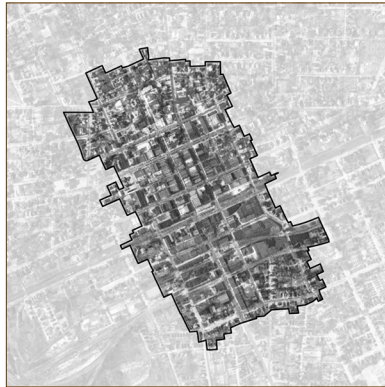


Patterson Street

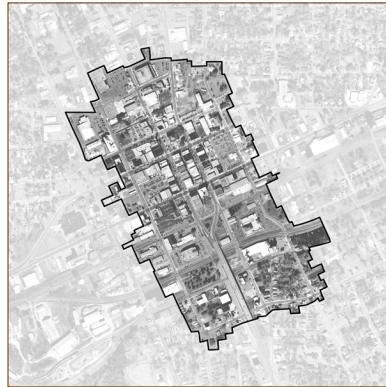


EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

1943



2008



Aerial Photograph



Street Network



Railroad Facilities

TRACING DOWNTOWN'S EVOLUTION

Documenting the changes a city goes through over time can help reveal its essence today and expose fundamental differences – and potential inequities – in the way public infrastructure, land use and the natural environment have been treated. The series of analytical diagrams described below show some of the transitions that have contributed to downtown Valdosta's current physical form. Each of these "layers" is indicative of the shift that has occurred as the automobile has become a more dominant force in the landscape.

Photographic Basis

Two aerial photographs are the basis for the analysis – one from 1943 (top left), and one from 2008 (top right). It is widely accepted that American town planning was at its zenith just before World War II, with traditional city form based on the needs of pedestrians preeminent but showing signs of growing innovation in transportation systems like the streetcar, trucked freight, and the personal automobile. Compared at roughly the same scale, these two photographs contain elements that can be highlighted to track sixty years of physical evolution.

Street Network

The first layer compares the street network over time, with changes visible in the diagram on the right. Most streets have remained in their historic alignments; but there are areas where streets have been eliminated (top left, and lower right) or added in the case of the railroad overpass. Several streets have also been converted to one-way operation judging from historic photographs compared against current patterns. These are indicated with arrows in the diagram.

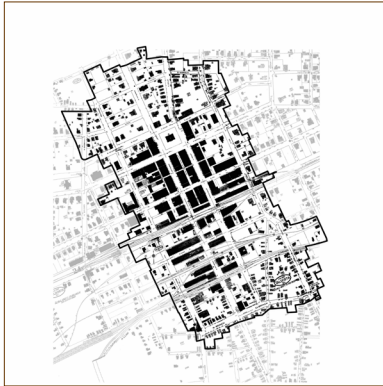
Railroad Facilities

The railroad played a major part in Valdosta's development with the city hosting five different roads and their facilities at the industry's mid-century apex. The diagram on the left shows the thick zone of railroad-related elements between Hill Street on the north and Branch Street (Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive) on the south. These included the actual tracks plus buildings such as freight and passenger stations, warehouses, railroad hotels, and small factories or shops. Most of these have vanished, with only two lines and a few industrial buildings remaining.



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

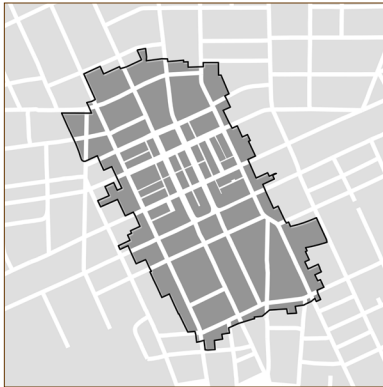
1943



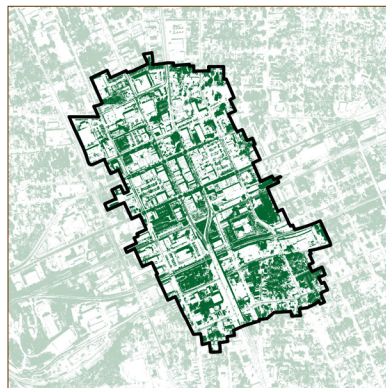
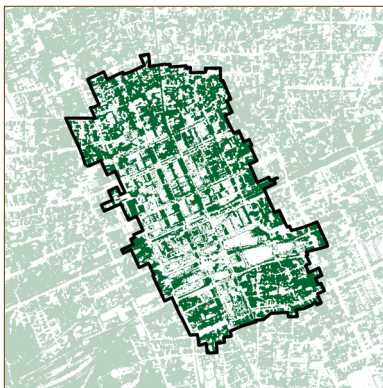
2008



Building Fabric



Block System



Land Cover

Building Fabric

Similar to the railroad, major erosion in the built fabric has occurred over time with only the core historic district and a small portion of the Southside neighborhood retaining the dense pattern of development prevalent in the earlier aerial. Peripheral areas, especially on the north, have transitioned from small buildings at regular intervals along the streets to large buildings isolated in space. The railroad zone is also mostly absent of buildings. It is obvious that this pattern has continued beyond the study area boundary particularly to the east and west.

Block System

The block system is the inverse of the street network and shows the same changes and consolidations from street removal. Two extremes are visible in the diagrams however. First, the tight network of alleys in the core has been mostly maintained and today is a defining characteristic of downtown. Second, the block system south of the railroad has been significantly compromised by the construction of the overpass and its approaches.

Land Cover

The final diagram illustrates the change in the natural landscape. Green areas indicate tree canopy, vegetation, and other natural features while white areas indicate hard surfaces like buildings and pavement. It is clear how much of the natural environment has been lost on the north side of downtown due to building construction and pavement. Conversely, some areas in the railroad zone have gained vegetation from track removal, demolitions, and lack of development. These trends have extended into the surroundings much like the building analysis.



1885 Aerial View



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



DOWNTOWN'S URBAN MORPHOLOGY

The historical comparison and direct observation suggest an urban morphology of “bands”, or slices of downtown that have evolved differently and have different issues and priorities. Four bands cover the study area and surroundings – one centered on the Hill-Central corridor, one covering the railroad rights-of-way, and two corresponding to the neighborhoods to the north and south – and each should have plan strategies tailored to their issues. The Hill-Central band represents the dynamic and thriving center of Valdosta where the key issues to address are preservation and extension of the strong historic context, business retention and growth, and seaming to the neighborhoods at either end. Conversely, the Railroad band is a no-man’s land of parking and infrastructure where the key issues are establishing an identity compatible with the core, diversifying employment beyond public-sector jobs, and turning the overpass into a design asset. The neighborhoods are essential to downtown’s sustainability but have issues like eroding physical form, shrinking housing stock and strip commercial encroachment.



The Hill-Central Band



The Railroad Band



The Neighborhoods



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



DOWNTOWN TODAY

The diagrams and observations on urban form and morphology provide a glimpse into how downtown has evolved over seventy years. Fieldwork and data collection bring the picture into clearer focus. What has emerged is an image of downtown where extreme shifts have occurred around a small but well-preserved and vital core, with stable but frail neighborhoods around the periphery.

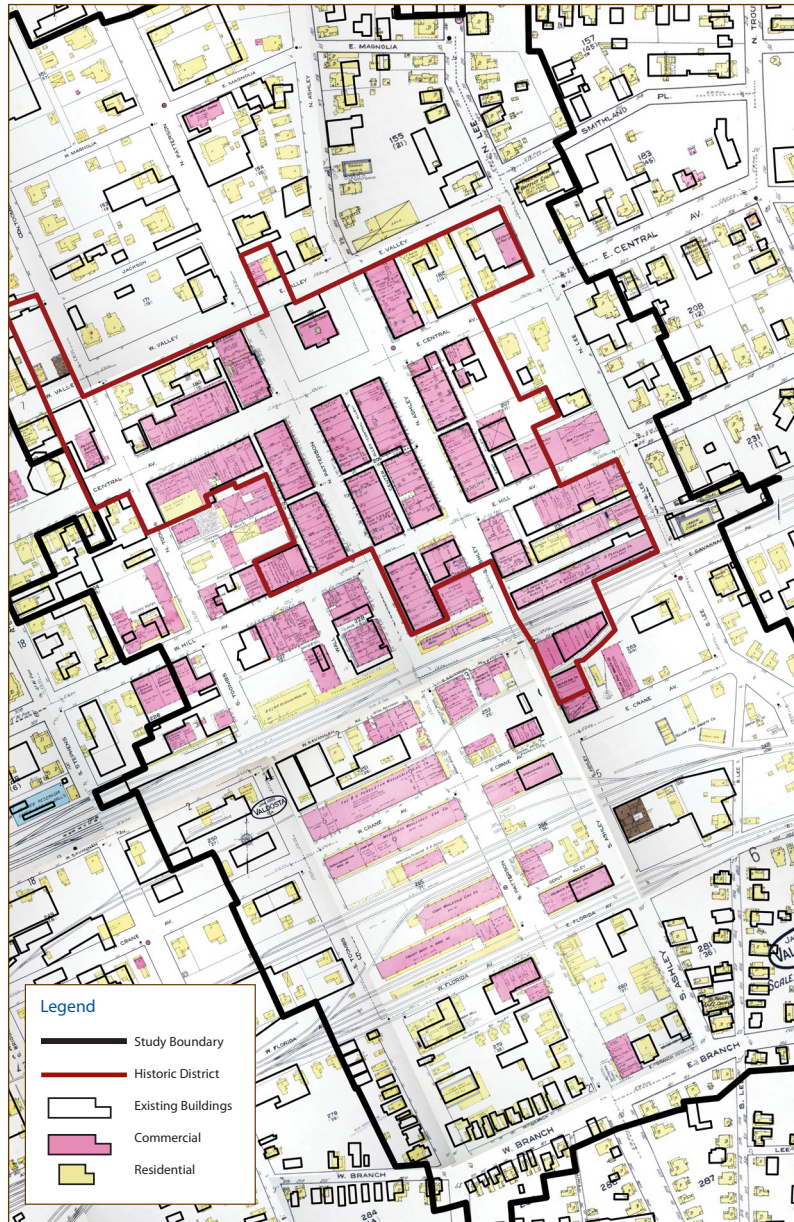
The figure to the left illustrates the rough extents of the areas. The tan field represents the part of downtown in transition, where there is no clear urban identity and where land is neither so valuable as to guarantee its intense coverage in buildings nor so committed to a certain use as to render it static. Unlike the historic core in orange, it is open to larger, bolder planning moves to give it form of equal quality – interventions approaching the scale of the railroad overpass that has driven much of the area's physical character. Conversely, the neighborhoods and the historic core are places where incremental and small-scale improvements are most appropriate, and planning moves more nuanced and targeted.



West Hill Avenue with streetscape improvements at right



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Sanborn Map, 1939

HISTORIC BUILDING USES

Insurance underwriting maps produced by the Sanborn Company are valuable tools in historic documentation for cultural studies and environmental assessments. Produced and updated from the 1880s through the 1950s, they capture the growth of cities and the changes in use in a particularly detailed and engaging way.

Individual Sanborn maps from the 1930s were combined to get a glimpse into Valdosta's downtown when the railroads were still very much a factor in daily life. Overlaid on the Sanborn composite are the outlines of buildings that are present today. The color yellow generally indicates residential building use, while pink signifies commercial buildings. Street rights-of-way and rail lines are also shown in the map, and in many cases the individual companies or building names are included.

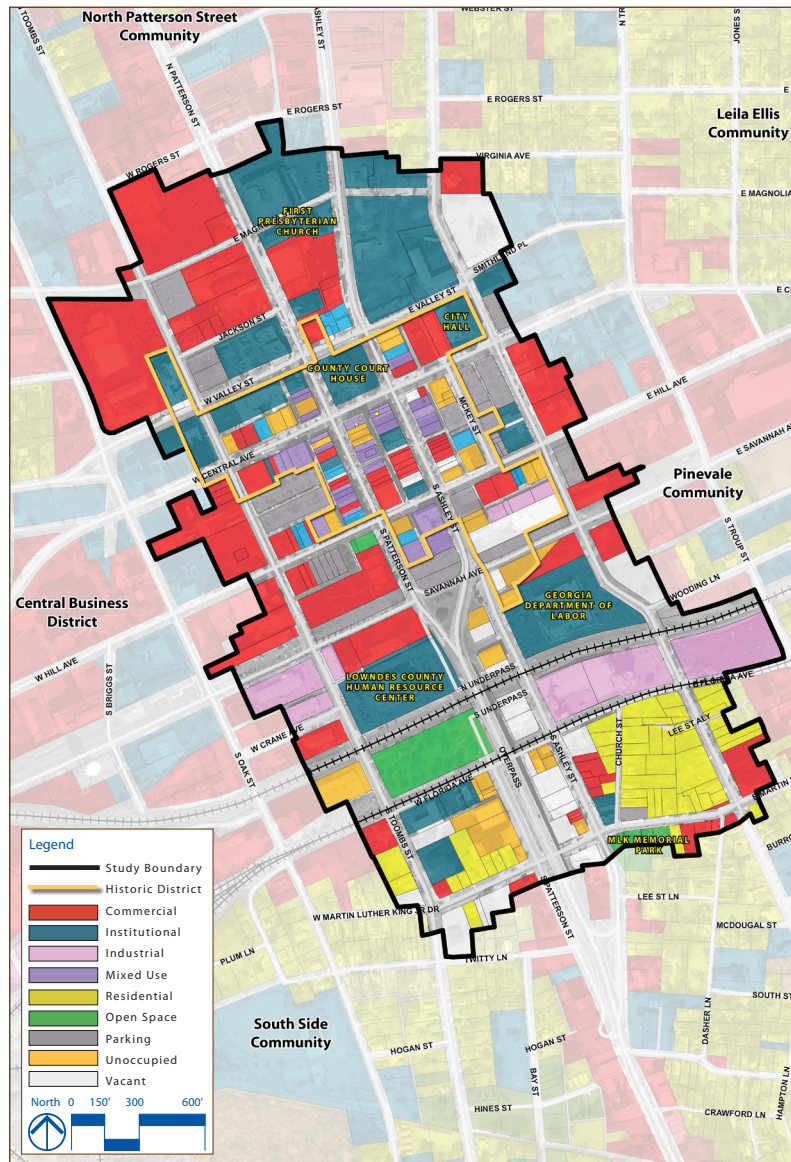
As a refinement of the building analysis above it is clear how much things have changed around the central core. Not only have buildings been eliminated, but residential uses – once plentiful and penetrating even the commercial downtown blocks – have been displaced by commercial and institutional expansion. It is also striking how many buildings that might have been considered landmarks – the railway stations, the Valdes and Patterson hotels, the Strickland Building, the old city hall, the fire station - are gone. Even Wall Street has been eliminated. This underscores the significance of the buildings that have been preserved and are now contributing factors to downtown's character.



Valdes Hotel and Old City Hall



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Existing Land Use, May 2010

EXISTING LAND USE

Today's land uses are markedly different from those in the past captured in the Sanborn maps. With the exception of the mixed-use buildings in the downtown core (2% of study area by acreage) and the single-family areas of Southside (5.5%), most other land uses are products of auto dominance, the regional highway system, government consolidation, and retail competition from other places in the city.

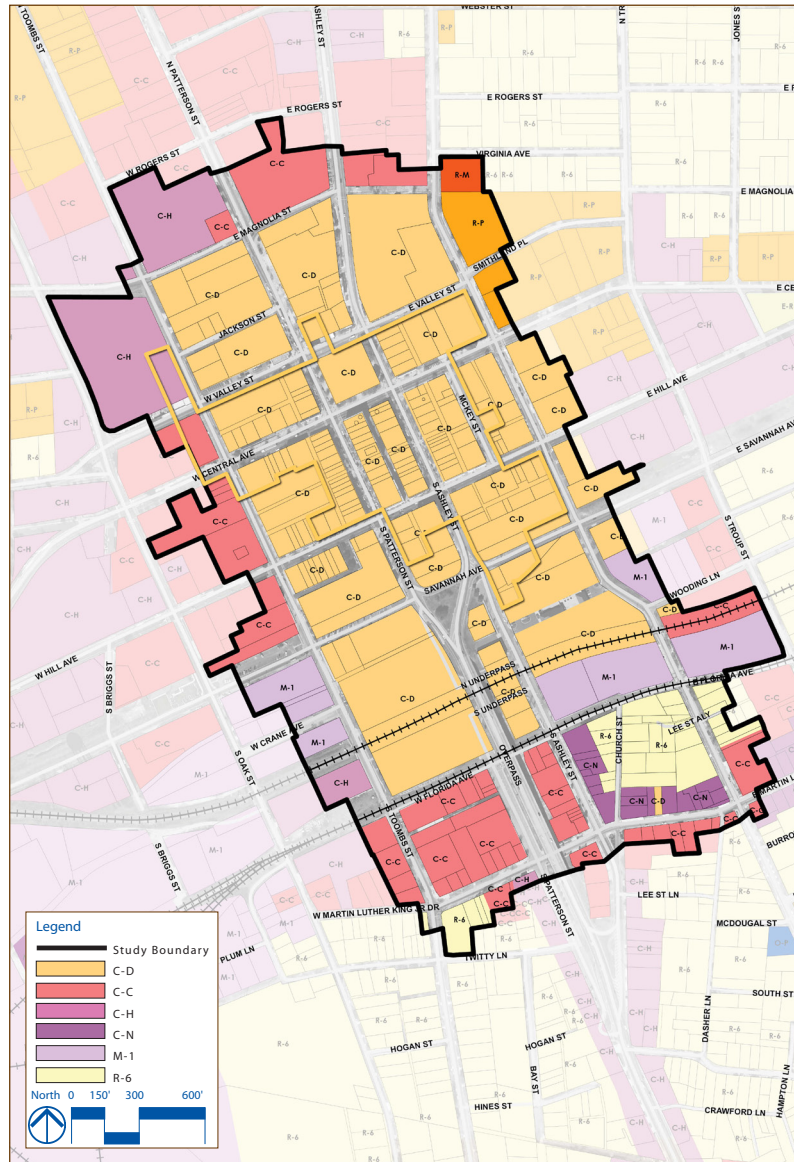
By far the most striking land use trend is the expansion of governmental facilities. Institutional uses constitute 17% of the study area, the bulk of which is due to Lowndes County. The construction of the new Judicial & Administrative Complex and annex dominate the north; while the county Human Resource Center and the Georgia Department of Labor anchor the district south of Savannah Avenue. Other major governmental uses include the historic county courthouse, the county administration center, the city hall and annex, and the post office / federal building. Additional church property, the regional planning offices, the city's municipal courts, and the police department lie just outside the study area boundary.

Single-use commercial occupies slightly more of downtown at 22%, though much of this is attributable to the land-intensive nature of businesses like Langdale Ford. Most other major commercial uses have dedicated parking lots which inflates the percentage, though this is balanced somewhat by smaller commercial businesses like Miller Hardware which rely on municipal parking for their customers. Like the institutions, commercial uses extend outside the boundary with strip retail along Hill and North Ashley, and the offices and presses of the Valdosta Daily Times.

Surface parking (5%), vacant land / unoccupied buildings (9%) and light industrial (South Georgia Pecan Company, 5%) round out the land use picture. Open space is fairly limited at 2%, with Olympic Park and a portion of the King Memorial Park as the study area's only major green amenities – though the courthouse square functions in a similar way. Notably missing from downtown are multifamily residential (with the mixed-use exception of the Ashley House apartments) and cultural or arts-related uses beyond the Dosta Theater.



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Existing Zoning

EXISTING ZONING

Downtown zoning presents a different picture than the land use pattern would suggest. Most of downtown is zoned C-D (Downtown Commercial) which despite its commercial nature and mission to “enhance and protect shopping facilities in the central business district of the city” is a true mixed-use district allowing most all residential uses by right or special exception. In addition, there are no major bulk and setback requirements, consistent with the formal envelope of traditional buildings. The only significant limiting factor is a residential density cap at twelve units per acre which might preclude more intense residential projects. The C-D district is associated by definition with the CVDA boundary and could be expanded if desired. Its existence is a mark of the commitment to preserving the historic appearance and function of downtown.

Other zoning classifications in the study are fairly standard, however, and potentially at odds with the C-D district. The C-H (Highway Commercial) and C-C (Community Commercial) districts are essentially two variations of intense, auto-oriented (strip) commercial with the major difference being the scale of the setback and the amount of traffic generation. Neither use permits residential. The fourth commercial district, C-N (Neighborhood Commercial) does allow residential but at a smaller scale that is consistent with its local orientation. It is appropriate for its Southside location in that it covers the existing retail and office buildings that comprised the historic commercial district of the neighborhood; but its setback requirements do not reflect the buildings’ traditional relationship to Ashley Street. It could also be negatively affected by some of the larger uses allowed in the adjacent C-C district. Since one goal of this study is to expand downtown to make it more sustainable while transitioning to the surrounding neighborhoods in a gradual way, existing zoning adjacent to the C-D district should be evaluated against the parameters of potential redevelopment, and adjusted or replaced as needed.

The remaining districts – R-P, R-6 and M-1 – are fragments of larger areas or holdovers from a previous era. R-P is compatible with C-D in that it respects existing historic residential structures but allows the flexibility to re-purpose them with offices and small businesses. R-6 is confined to Southside and an area of older homes behind St. Paul’s AME church. M-1 is limited to the South Georgia Pecan Company, the one manufacturing use remaining in what used to be the railroad zone. It contributes to the historical narrative and tourism appeal of downtown; but in the abstract the uses and dimensional regulations of the M-1 district are incompatible with downtown.



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Occupancy on Ground Floor (above), upper floors (below)

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

The downtown core area primarily contains mixed-use buildings with a variety of different uses on various floors. Most of the buildings are two to three stories tall joined at shared common walls in a compact, traditional way. To situate the market analysis of downtown, it is important to understand occupancy in the prime retail district where land values are generally higher and where major public investments have been made in the last decade. Therefore, each built parcel within the study area between Valley Street and Savannah Avenue was visually surveyed for signs of occupancy and evidence of habitation or commercial use.

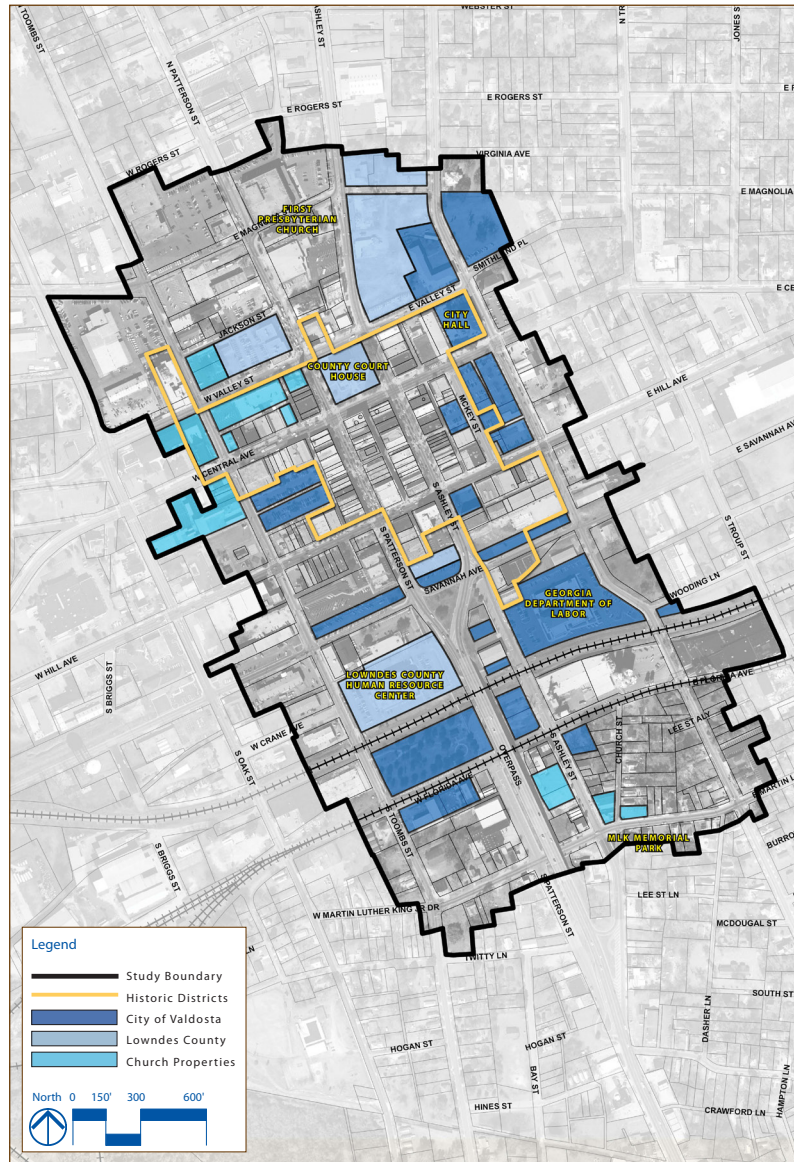
The resulting maps show that most of the buildings have occupied ground or upper floors, but some buildings in key locations are unoccupied or underutilized. Out of total 124 buildings in the surveyed area, there are 24 buildings with unoccupied ground floors and 20 buildings with unoccupied upper floors. This makes a total of approximately 213,000 square feet of unoccupied space. Many of the buildings require some level of renovation in order to be habitable for residential or retail use, which may be problematic for property owners without adequate funds. In addition, the historic county courthouse is only partially occupied with offices on the ground floor, which will soon move to the new county Judicial & Administrative Complex.



Storefronts are largely occupied, with some exceptions



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



Public / Institutional Ownership

PUBLICLY-OWNED LAND

The property ownership varies across the study area. There are several ownership groupings that stand out in two maps – public institutions and private ownership. The first category includes city, county and church-owned properties, scattered over the downtown area. The City of Valdosta owns 13.3 acres, out of which four acres are designated for public parking. The other city-owned properties are occupied by the City Hall, City Hall Annex and Olympic Park. Lowndes County owns 9.4 acres occupying the courthouse, the new Judicial & Administrative Complex, and the Human Resource building. Many parcels at key locations in downtown are owned by churches (4.8 acres). Some of these parcels are underutilized and have great potential for redevelopment.



Valdosta City Hall



New Judicial & Administrative Complex



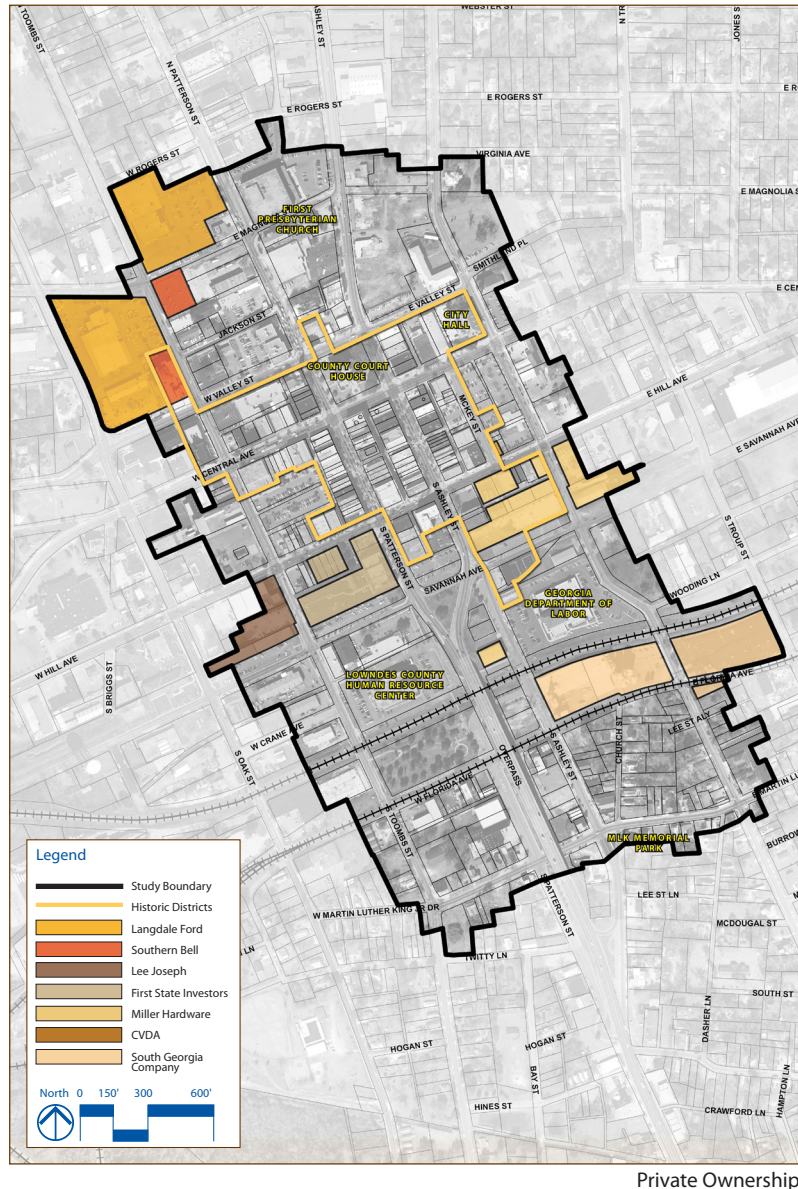
First United Methodist Church



City-Owned Parking Lot on Savannah Avenue



EXISTING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS



MAJOR BUSINESSES

The majority of private ownership and key businesses in downtown are located north of Savannah Avenue. Two large parcels (7.7 acres) at the northwest corner of the study area are owned by Langdale Ford. The western parcel is used for new car sales, and the northern parcel is Langdale's used-car dealership and auto service center. Miller Hardware is one of the oldest businesses in downtown occupying three acres of land at different locations on Hill Avenue and Lee Street. The long parcel between Ashley Street and Lee Street contains a light industrial building with a large, underutilized parcel to the south. In conjunction with the municipal parking on Savannah Avenue, this land is a prime redevelopment opportunity. The other private ownership in this part of the study area include Lee Office Equipment Company, Southern Bell, and Bank of America. These commercial uses draw customers and employees from surrounding communities.

The only industrial use in the study area is the South Georgia Pecan Company, which is located between two railroad tracks on two parcels comprising 4.5 acres of land. Currently, this is the only active use along the railroad within the limits of the study area offering employment opportunities and generating revenues for the city.



South Georgia Pecan Company



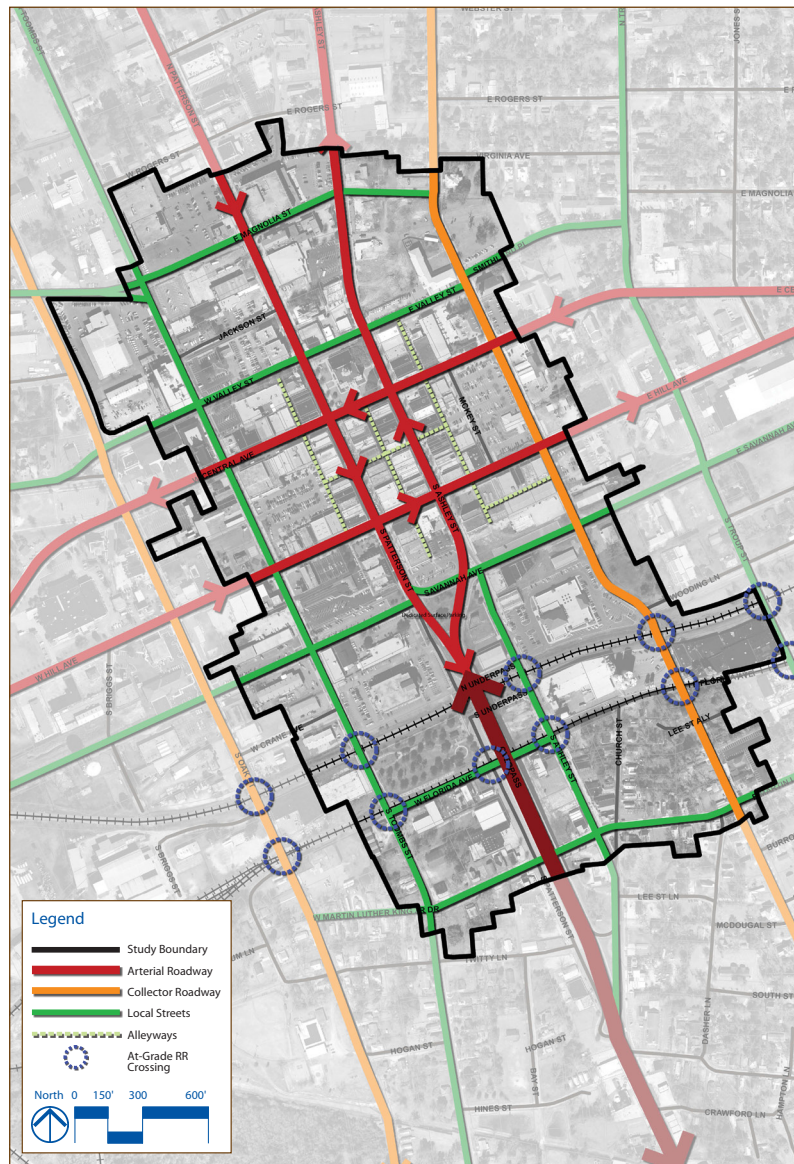
Lee Office Equipment Company



Savannah Avenue Frontage



TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



Existing Circulation Network

CIRCULATION NETWORK

The study area circumscribes a tight street network creating well-connected, walkable blocks of 300' by 350' forming the central core of downtown centered on the courthouse. It is evident from the map that the street hierarchy provides ample north-south and east-west linkages. The street system is dominated by two sets of one way pairs – the Patterson Street / Ashley Street couplet northbound and southbound as part of U.S. 41; and the Hill Avenue / Central Avenue couplet eastbound and westbound as part of U.S. 84. Other than these primary arterial streets, traffic moves smoothly in all directions vis-à-vis a grid of minor and local streets that extend to the surrounding residential neighborhoods, providing superior connectivity.

One of the more dominant transportation facilities is an overpass on U.S. 41 south of Savannah Avenue that was constructed by the Georgia DOT in the mid-1990s. While offering north-south access unencumbered by railroad traffic, the overpass also disrupted the fundamental street network and development pattern in the southern part of the study area. The Patterson / Ashley one-way couplet merging into U.S. 41 near Savannah Avenue creates a confusing traffic intersection; and there are no pedestrian facilities on either the overpass or the approaches. In addition, nine active at-grade railroad crossings provide alternatives to the overpass.

An interesting counterpoint to the overpass is the alley system in the downtown commercial core, which has been partially converted to pedestrian use and provides a unique and walkable urban experience.



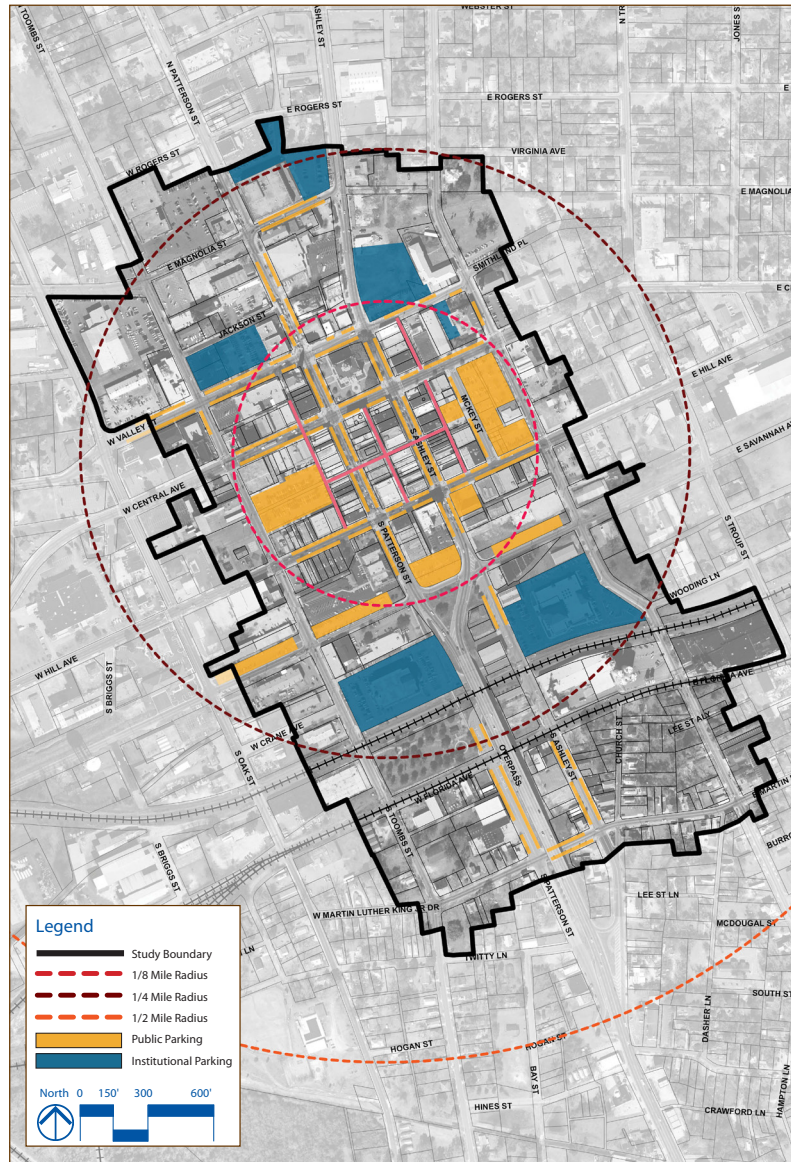
Overpass Approach



Bennie's Alley



TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



Parking Resources

PARKING

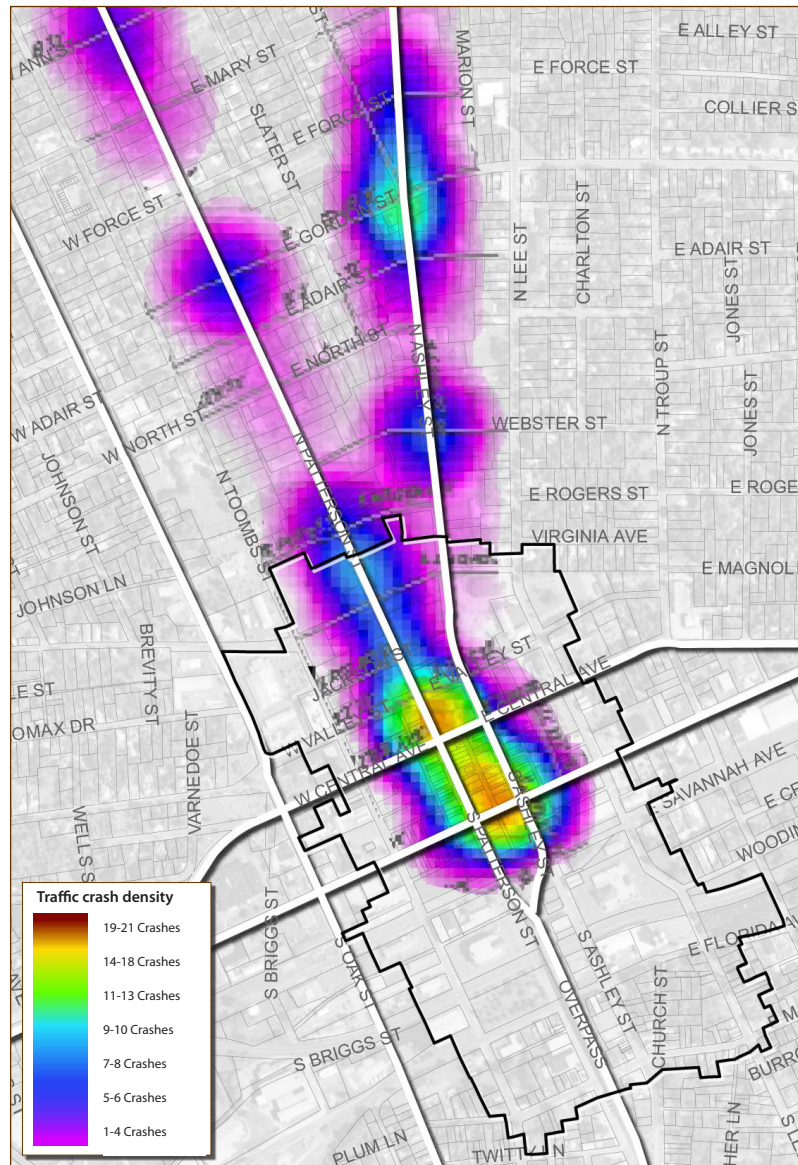
One of the issues heard repeatedly over the course of Phase 1 was downtown's perceived lack of parking or difficult or inconvenient parking access. While on-street parking is present on most downtown streets, angled head-in parking was once a part of the Patterson and Ashley cross-sections and is remembered by many downtown stakeholders. Yet between on-street parallel spaces and municipal lots, public parking is provided in amounts greater than most cities the size of Valdosta. The map shows the locations of general public parking and other parking associated with municipal functions. Over 900 spaces are included in the general public inventory, at less than a quarter-mile from the center of downtown. Additional municipal and private lots increase this number significantly. The two major downtown lots – McKey and Toombs – flank Bennie's Alley and are only a short distance away from most of downtown's shops and restaurants. This suggests that quantity may be less of an issue than parking format, location or access.



Parking Variety



TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



2004 Crash History on Ashley and Patterson (City of Valdosta)

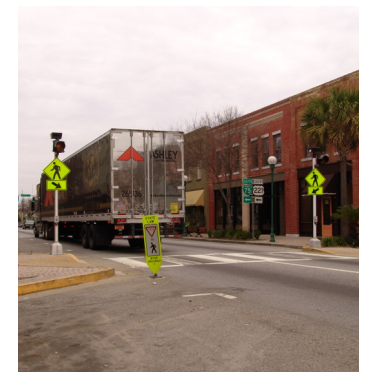
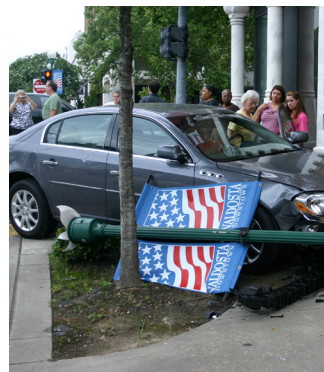
TRAFFIC OPERATIONS

Traffic Signal System

Ashley, Patterson, Central and Hill are US highways (US 41 north-south and US 84 east-west) acting as a transportation hub for the region. Due to this reason, efficient through traffic movement is the highest priority in the downtown area. Higher speeds (between 25 mph and 35 mph) were observed in downtown, a likely result of signal timing alignment during cycling, which provides traffic with an uninterrupted run of green lights. One issue related to the traffic signalization is the number of crashes occurring at the intersection of Patterson and Ashley with Central. According to the City's crash study, these crashes tend to be high-energy and are not uncommon. In 2004, there were a total of 58 crashes in the downtown area.

Travel Speeds on Ashley, Patterson, Central and Hill

During evening hours the traffic speed measured along these streets is up to 35 mph due to an “all green” signal timing situation. Due to the higher speeds, mid-block pedestrian crossings have been installed incorporating high visibility markings and pedestrian-activated lighting. Speed management is essential to ensure a more walkable environment and to reduce the number of crashes. The likelihood of pedestrian fatalities increases when speeds increase from 20 mph to 30 mph. Therefore, the top speeds associated with these streets (as opposed to the average speeds or 85th percentile speeds) need to be lower than 30 mph, and preferably no more than 25 mph.



TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



Patterson Street, 1950s



Truck Traffic conflicting with pedestrian movement

SEMI-TRUCK CIRCULATION

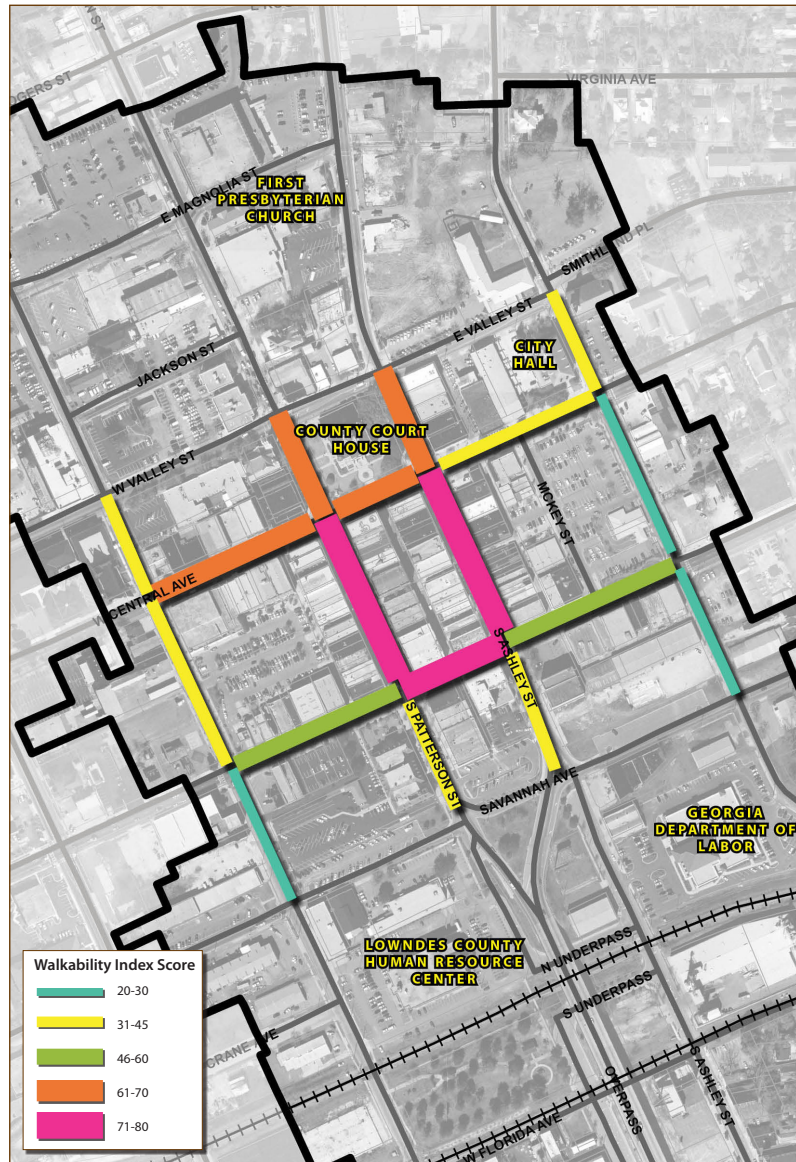
Today, the one-way pairs of Ashley-Patterson (US 41) and Hill-Central (US 84) are used by semi-tractor trailer trucks for regional access. In addition, these large trucks need to access buildings in the downtown proper to deliver goods to shops. The presence of the trucks affects the design of the downtown streets in several ways.

First, using trucks as the governing standard for roadway design requires larger geometries (greater curb radii and wider lane widths) than would be required for a street without heavy truck traffic. A street optimized for truck movements with these generous designs standards results in a faster street for automobile traffic. For instance, automobiles can operate quite well and with managed speeds on 9' and 10' travel lanes, but semi-trucks need 11' or 12' travel lanes, which result in faster automobile speeds.

Second, trucks need to use the entire width of the street for turning movements, which would result in significant lane encroachment on a two-way street. The one-way streets provide this space without conflicting with oncoming traffic. However, heavy turning movements of large vehicles can make an area seem uninviting or troublesome to potential customers, clients and shoppers in a walkable location.



TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



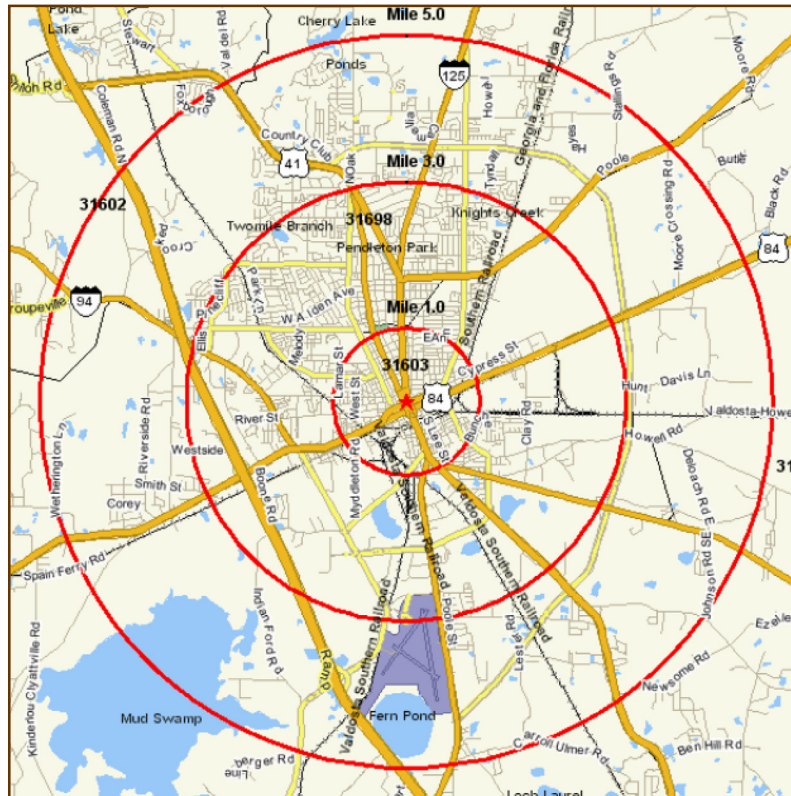
Walkability Index Map

WALKABILITY INDEX

The Walkability Index (WIndex) is a measurement of relative levels of walkability using easily-measured and readily available data for a street, such as street widths, number of doors and businesses and vehicle travel speeds. The WIndex results in a score from 0 to 100, with 100 being the highest possible category (i.e. great walkability). Patterson scored 55, which is considered Moderately Walkable. A few relatively minor improvements could be made to increase the WIndex score to 70 – Very Walkable, including adding bicycle parking, adjusting the on-street parking arrangements and increasing the diversity of land uses on this block. In general, however, addressing the larger issues of travel speeds and semi-truck circulation will provide the greatest improvements in walkability, building on the excellent work that has already been completed on the downtown street system.



DEMOGRAPHIC/MARKET OVERVIEW



Downtown Valdosta, with 1, 3, and 5-Mile Radii

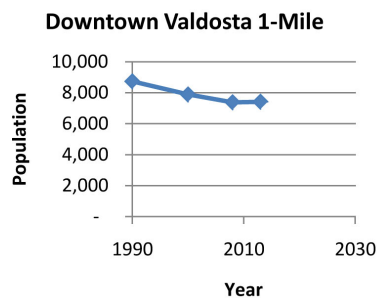
DOWNTOWN VALDOSTA MARKET AREAS

Demographic data in this report has generally been collected for three geographic areas:

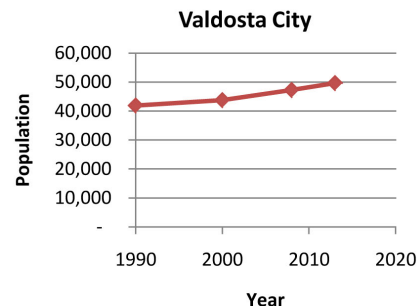
- **Downtown Valdosta 1-mile radius**, subsequently referred to as the downtown area which includes all properties located within a one-mile radius of the Lowndes County Courthouse at the intersection of Patterson Street and Hill Street, including the entire Central Valdosta Development Authority area.
- **City of Valdosta 3-miles radius**
- **The Valdosta Metro Area 5-miles radius**, consisting of the Valdosta Core-Based Statistical Area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau which includes Lowndes, Echols, Lanier and Brooks Counties. Metropolitan areas are geographic entities with populations of 50,000 or more people, defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for use by Federal statistical agencies in collecting, tabulating, and publishing Federal statistics. Each metro area consists of one or more counties and includes the counties containing the core urban area, as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the urban core. (Source: US Census Bureau)

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- **Valdosta dominates the region**—Valdosta is by far the largest and most dominant city in the region. The city's 47,000 residents represent 36% of the four-county metropolitan region. Valdosta is the home to an estimated 3,039 firms or business establishments with over 40,000 employees.
- **Singles dominate downtown Valdosta**—the most typical household type found in the downtown market area is singles living alone, representing 35% of all households, compared to 30% for the city and 26% for the metro area. The downtown area also has lower percentages of married couples with children, representing 12% of households, compared to 22% for the City and 26% for the metro area.



Population Change, 1990-2014



Source: Claritas



DEMOGRAPHIC/MARKET OVERVIEW

Household Income, 2009			
	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
2009 Avg. HH Income	\$25,417	\$50,542	\$51,120
2009 Median HH Income	\$16,913	\$33,838	\$38,395
2009 Per Capita Income	\$10,057	\$20,034	\$19,777

Source: Claritas

Housing Tenure, 2009			
	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
Owner-Occupied	35.2%	48.1%	65.0%
Renter-Occupied	64.8%	51.9%	35.0%

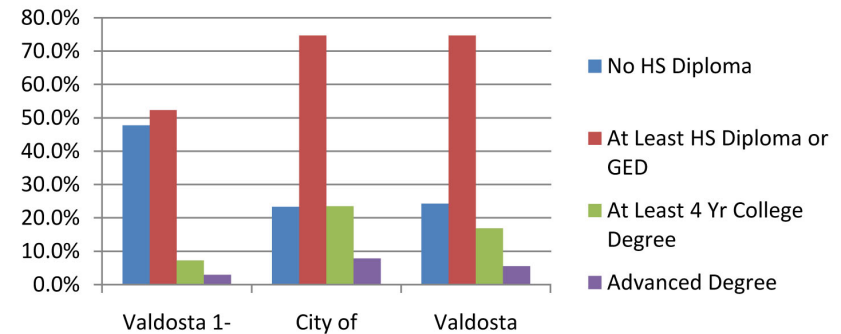
Source: Claritas

Downtown Valdosta, Industry by No. of Employees, 2009			
Business Description	Establishments	Employees	Per Establishment
Agriculture	8	17	2
Mining	2	24	12
Construction	29	540	19
Manufacturing	35	797	23
Transportation, Communications/ Public Utilities	17	360	21
Wholesale Trade	31	445	14
Retail	161	1,299	8
Finance	64	317	5
Service	331	2,037	6
Public Administration	108	2,418	22
Total	786	8,254	11

Source: Claritas

- Incomes and education levels are significantly more modest downtown**—the median household income in the downtown area is \$25,417, roughly half of the city-wide median of \$50,542. Among adult downtown residents, 52% have a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 75% for both the city and metro area; seven percent of downtown residents have a 4-year college degree, compared to 24% in the city and 17% in the metro area.

Educational Attainment



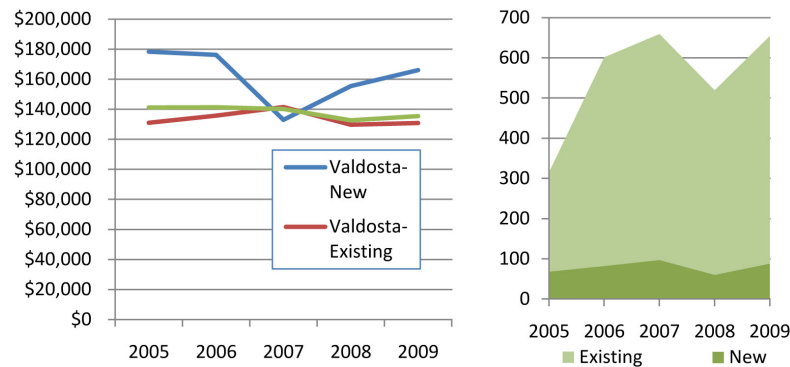
Source: Claritas

- Most downtown residents rent their home**—two-thirds of downtown residents rent their home, while half of city residents rent and only one third of metro area residents rent.
- Downtown-area homes are older and more modest than average**—the estimated 2009 median home value in the downtown area was \$50,526, less than half of the city median value of \$116,283 or the metro area median value of \$108,659. The median age of homes in the downtown area is over 52 years old, significantly higher than the median age of housing of 32 years in the city and the 26 years metro area. The downtown area is a long-established residential area anchored by a historic district, with 70% of homes built prior to 1960.
- Government and small companies dominate downtown Valdosta's businesses**—downtown Valdosta is the home to an estimated 786 businesses, with approximately 8,200 jobs, representing 20% of the city's total jobs. In the downtown area, the largest employment sector is public administration, representing 29% percent of all downtown jobs, with over 2,400 employees. downtown businesses tend to be smaller, with an average of 6.6 jobs per establishment, compared to 12.3 jobs per establishment citywide.



DEMOGRAPHIC/MARKET OVERVIEW

Valdosta City-wide Home Sale Average Prices and Sale Volumes, 2005-2009



Source: South Georgia Board Of Realtors MLS with the special assistance of Mike Hill Real Estate, BAG

Downtown Valdosta Estimated Real Estate Inventory, All Space				
All Space	Total SF	Occupied SF	Vacant SF	Unclassified SF
Commercial	530,676	437,639	15,137	77,900
Industrial	40,921	40,921	-	-
Institutional	344,590	274,041	36,267	34,282
Mixed Use	237,286	222,117	15,169	-
Office	279,092	71,040	121,675	86,377
Residential	251	-	-	251
Unoccupied	203,435	70,909	127,462	5,064
Grand Total	1,636,251	1,116,667	315,710	203,874
% of Total	100%	68%	19%	12%
% of Classified*		100%	28%	18%

*"% of Classified" refers to the buildings surveyed in the downtown core for occupancy, see Building Occupancy Map in Part 1

Source: BAG, Site-survey by Urban Collage, Lowndes County tax Assessor, City of Valdosta GIS

REAL ESTATE MARKET

- Valdosta side-stepped the national real estate crash**—The residential real estate collapse which has severely impacted home sale prices and volumes throughout the United States seems to have touched lightly on Valdosta. While the average home sale price in Georgia has fallen 25% from 2006 to 2010, the average new home price in Valdosta in 2009 was \$166,500, just 6% below the 2005 peak of \$178,270. Statewide sales of new and existing homes have fallen by half since the peak of the real estate market, yet sales volumes in the City of Valdosta have remained more-or-less constant over the same period.
- Downtown homes tend to sell at lower prices than homes towards the north of Valdosta**—Average 2009 sale prices are highest in the northwest quadrant, at \$179,629, followed by the northeast quadrant at \$125,956. Average 2009 home sale prices in the two southern quadrants, which include the downtown study area, were significantly lower, averaging approximately \$70,000.
- The downtown core has apartments, but no condos or townhomes**—there are reported to be 100 residential units, 63 of which are in a single subsidized assisted-living building (Ashley House), with the remaining 37 units in recently converted commercial buildings. Of those 37 units, four are occupied by the building's owner and 33 are market-rate apartments. Interest in condominiums and urban-style home ownership concepts were beginning to gain in momentum in Valdosta during 2006 and 2007, but the collapse of real estate and credit markets in the Fall of 2008 prevented any projects from moving forward.
- Downtown Valdosta's real estate inventory includes nearly 1.6 million SF of space**—530,000 SF is commercial space, 237,000 SF of mixed-use space which includes a significant additional allotment of commercial space, typically on the ground floor. Institutional uses, consisting of churches, libraries, and non-office government buildings represent an estimated 345,000 SF. Dedicated office space represents less than 300,000 SF.
- As much as 43% of downtown's real estate is currently unoccupied**—A significant portion of the downtown core's real estate inventory is situated in historic buildings, where ongoing, time-consuming and frequently unpredictable restoration projects add considerable uncertainty to any estimates of vacancy rates.



DEMOGRAPHIC/MARKET OVERVIEW

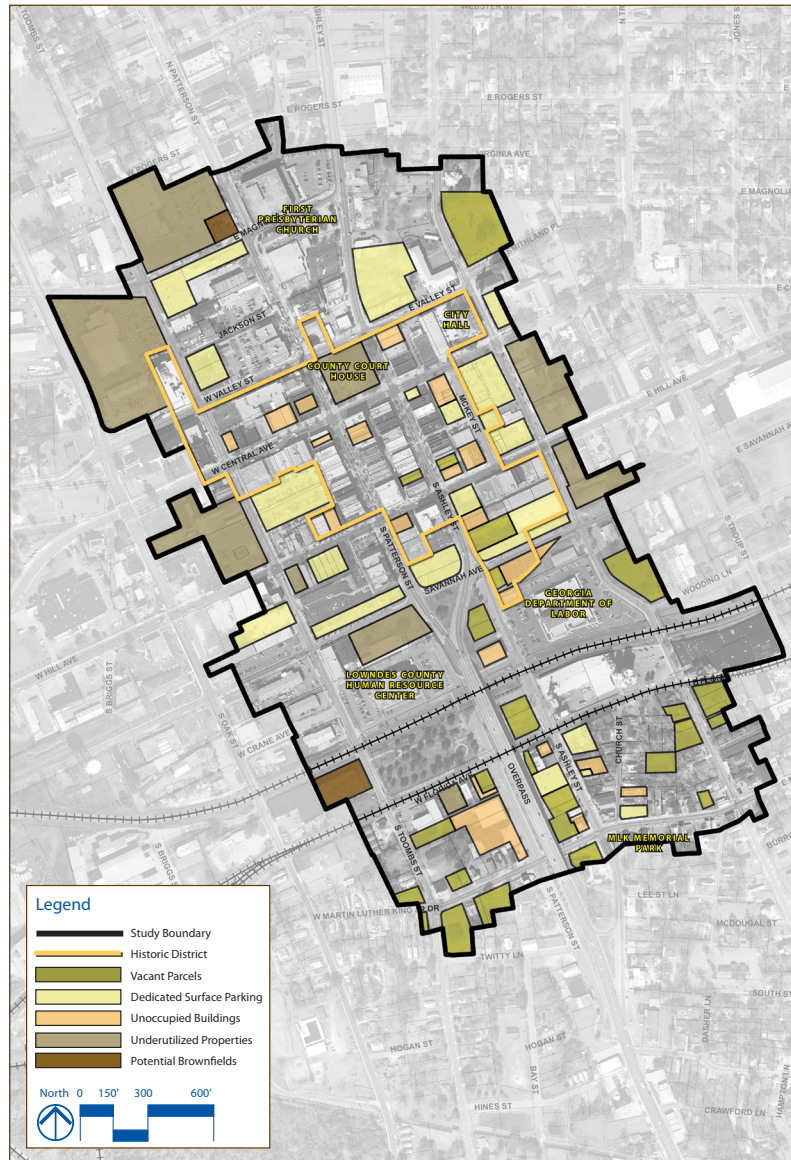
Valdosta Shopping Centers			
Valdosta Mall Retail Cluster			
Center Name	Leasable Area (SF)	Center Type	Distance from Downtown
Valdosta Mall	501,344	Regional	3 Mi. W
Lowe's Shopping Center	175,396	Community	3 Mi. W
Valdosta Mall Corners	172,955	Community	2 Mi. W
Promenade Shopping Plaza	59,575	Neighborhood	2 Mi. W
Bay Tree Shopping Center	30,000	Neighborhood	2 Mi. NW
Barclay Square	16,800	Neighborhood	3 Mi. W
Total:	956,070		
Five Points Retail Cluster			
Five Points Shopping Center	289,000	Community	3 Mi. N
Castle Park Shopping Center	102,056	Community	2 Mi. N
Perimeter Oaks	34,700	Neighborhood	4 Mi. N
Total:	425,756		

Source: Claritas, BAG

- **Valdosta's retail market is dominated by two concentrations of shopping space in centers**—the Valdosta Mall includes nearly 1,000,000 SF of retail space, including an enclosed regional mall of 500,000 SF. This area is the site of the bulk of the region's retail activity, and includes a large selection of major national retailers, grocery stores, hotels and chain restaurants. The Five Points area has two major older shopping centers, totaling 425,000 SF of retail space.
- **Downtown Valdosta has a small, thriving retail district but no broad-based retailers**—this retail district is a combination of small, independent stores, boutiques and independently-owned mid-sized regional stores, including several hardware stores and furniture stores. The bulk of downtown residents' consumer spending tends to be spent outside the downtown area, as downtown has no shopping centers, national franchise stores, department stores, or supermarkets.
- **Valdosta's offices tend to be located primarily in small owner-occupied spaces**—these are most typically in converted single family residences or user-owned stand-alone buildings. Most of Valdosta's professional offices tend to be located along the Patterson Street corridor north of downtown. The vast majority of office space in Valdosta is owned by the end-user; leased office space is rare.



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Susceptibility to Change Map

SUSCEPTIBILITY TO CHANGE

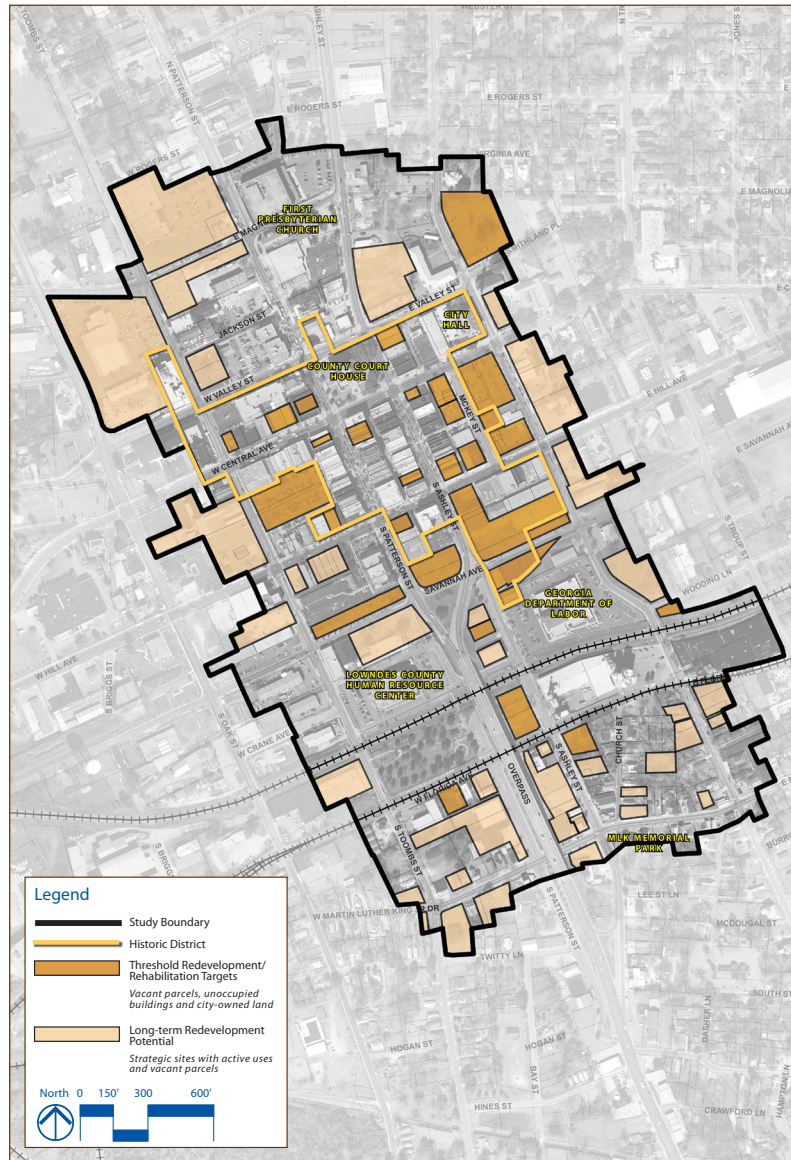
Downtown Valdosta has persevered for 150 years and has managed to hold on to much of its early history in built form. Yet it continues to evolve as the new Lowndes County Judicial & Administrative Complex takes its place in the urban landscape, as pocket parks are built along Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, and as people fill the streets for First Fridays. Like death and taxes, the only sure thing in planning is change.

Many places in downtown are susceptible to change for a variety of reasons and at a variety of scales. Economic conditions have stalled some renovation projects leaving buildings vacant and facades unfinished. Other buildings have been on the market or pending restoration and may regain momentum as the economy improves. Still other buildings have been unoccupied for many years due to physical distress or blighted surroundings and need change to reclaim their neighborhoods. Shown in tan on the map, these properties are scattered throughout downtown and on the near south. Combined with existing vacant parcels they constitute a formidable stock of infill opportunities in over half of the study area.

On the other end of the spectrum, many large properties are also prone to change given the right circumstances. The most common of these are parcels that could be considered underutilized – i.e. more than half their land area given over to pavement or undeveloped, or containing structures with only a small portion of their interiors active. Shown in light brown, they correspond to many of the commercial uses on the periphery of the study area. Surface parking is another potential source of change similar to underutilized land. Public ownership of municipal lots makes them especially favorable candidates because of the absence of acquisition issues. Brownfields, though minor in downtown, are a third avenue for change. These three categories dominate the northern half of the study area and provide around twenty acres of land that could transition now or at some time in the near future.



ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Development Opportunity Map

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Most of the properties included in the susceptibility map can be also viewed as opportunities for incremental development or major catalytic redevelopment that can drive the vision for downtown forward. There are two categories of these opportunities: threshold redevelopment targets, and long-term redevelopment sites.

Threshold redevelopment targets are places where there are few physical limitations on property evolving to more intense or active uses. These include vacant parcels, unoccupied buildings or underutilized land in public ownership. Mostly concentrated in the historic core, they represent generally smaller infill sites that have an effect on their immediate surroundings, though there are some exceptions where larger projects could be undertaken. Threshold targets call for more tactical planning and fine-grained approaches; and while too small to individually have a major effect on downtown can nevertheless be critical in supporting small business and investments made in building renovations. Cumulatively they can also be a force in area revitalization.

Long-term redevelopment opportunities include properties that have existing active uses or are in areas with little near-term market potential. Their limitations make them candidates for more strategic planning, and bold approaches reflective of their size. Long-term sites could be locations for catalytic projects or for area-wide revitalizations involving multiple parcels. Some sites could be combined with adjacent threshold targets to create larger opportunities. Because long-term sites are generally on the periphery of the study area, they require public investment to make them feasible.



Threshold Target



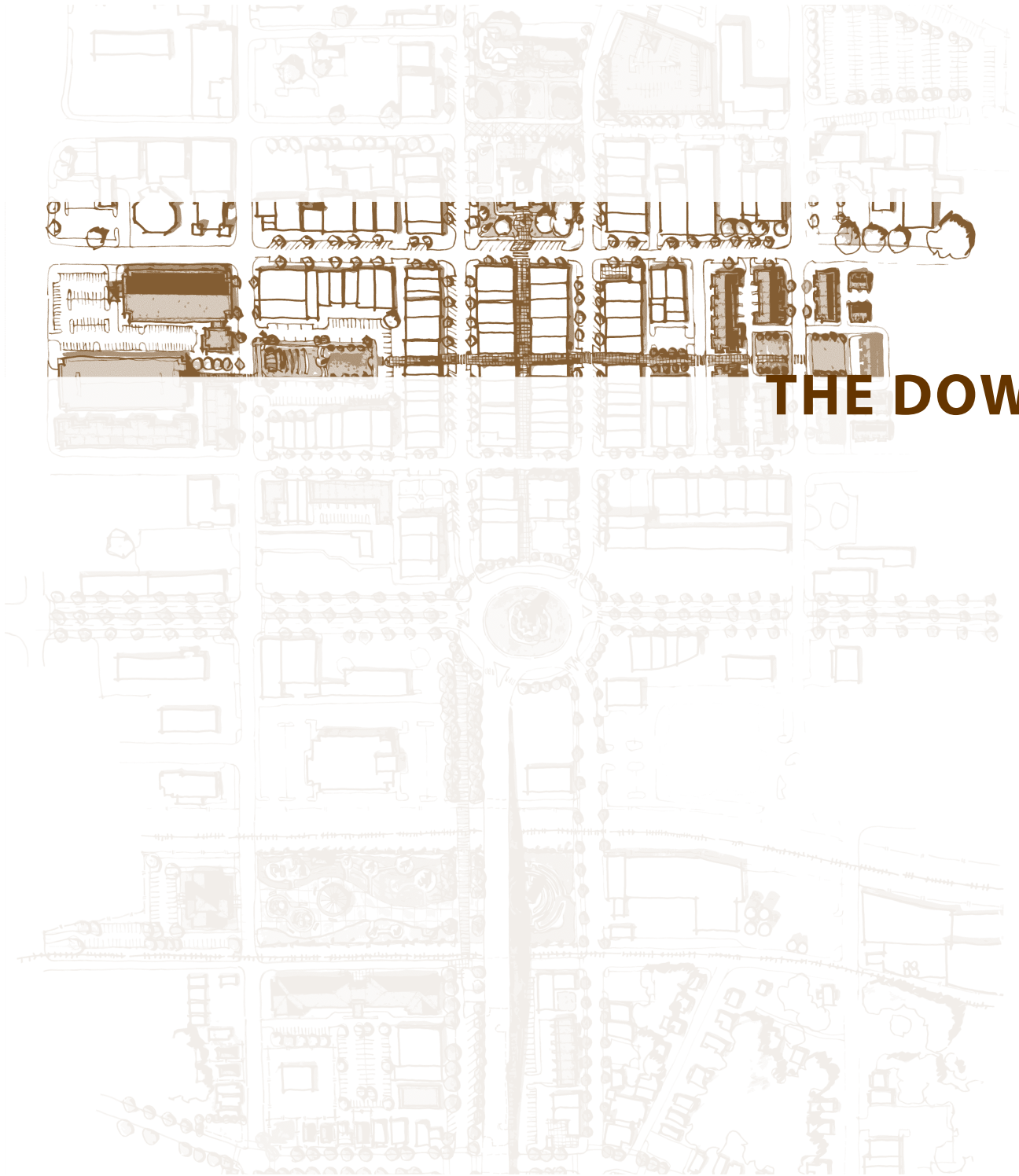
Long-Term Opportunity





PART 2

THE DOWNTOWN VISION



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



2.1 Steering Committee Kick-off Meeting



2.2 Final Town Hall Meeting

PROCESS HIGHLIGHTS

The investments the business community and the city have made in downtown Valdosta over the last fifteen years have made it a regional destination and a Main Street success story. In this context, a broad program of stakeholder input was absolutely essential to crafting a vision for future improvements, and ensuring popular support for implementation. This program utilized many different public participation methods at every stage of the planning process to provide an opportunity for community leaders and stakeholders to convey meaningful input into the plan's development. Some of the highlights of the input process include:

Steering Committee Meetings – regular discussions to review findings, discuss priorities and preview events. The steering committee was representative of a cross-section of downtown interests and included key city leadership and staff, CVDA and DVBA board members, local developers and business owners, and officials with Lowndes County, Valdosta State University, and the Tourism Authority.

One-On-One Stakeholder Interviews – candid exchanges about downtown issues and desires held over multiple days. Over twenty interviews were conducted in a confidential environment where subjects ranged from intergovernmental relations, to economic development, to historic preservation and capital projects, to transportation. The interviews provided the team with early thoughts and ideas to debate with the greater public.

Public Workshops – several hands-on events to build excitement and harness stakeholder creativity. The planning team received important opinions from the wider Valdosta community through two Town Hall meetings at the Dosta Playhouse and one multi-day design “Charrette”. These events gave the team insights into what business owners, residents and other stakeholders felt were the highest priority for the master plan and framed up a vision for downtown improvements.

Online Survey – a digital version of the “Valdosta Compass” made available for several months over the Internet. One hundred and eighty respondents voiced their preferences, extending the reach of the planning process and providing for input at a greater level of convenience.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



2.3 High-Ranking Compass Images

The Downtown Valdosta Compass

In order to identify preferences and priorities for the master plan and establish a general direction to follow, the planning team prepared a visual character and short-answer survey featuring over ninety images of development, public space and identity to probe what stakeholders considered appropriate and desirable for the future of downtown. A hard-copy version of the survey was administered at the kick-off Town Hall meeting, with a shorter interactive version posted online shortly thereafter. In all, over 200 responses were compiled, with the online version generating almost 250 interested visitors and approximately 180 completed responses over a two-month period. While there were modest differences between the responses of the participants at the public meeting and general public vis-à-vis the online survey, the survey results generally showed strong community preference toward the following:

Development Character

There was a strong preference for a traditional mixed-use “Main Street” limited to three to four stories in height. There was also an interest in compact, urban-style townhomes as a way to increase residential presence and homeownership. Low-scoring images included strip commercial development and stripped-down architectural styles.

Open Space Character

Survey respondents recognized the shortage of public parks in downtown and expressed through their top selections a strong desire for variety of open spaces. They validated Bennie’s Alley and live oak trees as important landscape elements, and showed clear preferences for fountains and other water features; outdoor performance spaces; farmers markets and festival events; walkable streets; and low-impact or “green” improvements.

Identity

The highest-scoring images were those that are familiar icons or reinforced existing downtown spaces – the historic courthouse, a streetscape, azaleas, and traditional benches and lighting. Respondents also liked decorative metal elements like balconies that could complement existing historic buildings. There was an inclination toward historically-influenced signage and fixtures rather than modern and quirky.

Full survey results can be found in the Appendix.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Design Charrette

The second public event was the centerpiece of the process: a multi-day “charrette” or extended workshop held between August 10th and 17th, 2010. Approximately sixty participants representing a range of downtown stakeholders participated in the event. The first workshop held at the City Hall Annex on August 10th included intense, hands-on exercises covering key issues in two parts: the first part to outline frameworks for streetscapes, open space, circulation, and a Southside “big project” or theme; and the second part to identify priority catalyst development sites and mock up the desired development density with appropriately-sized wooden blocks. The table discussions were lively and varied; but some clear consensus points emerged,



2.4 The Downtown Valdosta Charrette

including new streetscapes on North Patterson and South Ashley; new parks on the east and west sides of downtown; widespread two-way street conversions; an improved truck routing; and a Southside cultural attraction. The participants also envisioned targeted catalyst developments on key sites on the east, west and south; and, and long-term redevelopment of Langdale Ford. Based on the results, the planning team worked over several days to prepare a draft vision plan for downtown illustrating new development and public improvement projects; and a series of photo simulations (before and after) and aerial perspectives to communicate the character of important public spaces and streetscapes. The final workshop was held at St. Pauls AME Church on August 17th to share the vision plan, answer questions, and get feedback.



GOALS AND PRIORITIES

DEVELOPMENT		TRANSPORTATION		HISTORIC RESOURCES
COMPETITION WITH FIVE POINTS 5	HOTEL FOR VSU FAMILIES, TOURISTS 4	EXCESSIVE TRUCK TRAFFIC 10	UNFRIENDLY PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT 3	MORE BUILDING FLEXIBILITY 7
MORE DOWNTOWN OFFICES 2	FOCUS ON SOUTHERN DOWNTOWN 2	INADEQUATE WAYFINDING SIGNAGE 3	ONE-WAY PAIRS ENCOURAGE SPEEDING 2	FUNDS FOR BUILDING RENOVATION 2
BETTER DOWNTOWN SERVICES 2	AREAS OF PHYSICAL BLIGHT 2	POOR DOWNTOWN-VSU CONNECTION 2	PARALLEL PARKING DIFFICULT FOR SOME 2	PROTECT HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS 2
LIMITED LOFT RENTALS 2	HIGH ASKING PRICES FOR REALTY 1	LIMITED PARKING SUPPLY 1	TRAFFIC TOO FAST 1	NEW USE FOR HISTORIC COURTHOUSE 2
MORE DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL 1	INCLUDE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS IN STUDY 0	VIADUCT COMPROMISES WALKABILITY 0	LACK OF MOBILITY OPTIONS / BIKE TRAILS 0	MORE ADAPTIVE REUSE 0
MANY LARGE UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES 0	STALLED RENOVATION PROJECTS 0	MINIMAL PARKING FOR TOURIST COACHES 0	PARKING ACCESSIBILITY PROBLEM 0	
		PARKING DECKS NEEDED 0	NO DEDICATED CUSTOMER PARKING 0	


ISSUES MATRIX
Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

2.5 Priority Issues

GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Based on the detailed input received from downtown stakeholders during the kick-off Town Hall meeting and the charrette, the planning team laid out the following goals and objectives as a guide to developing the public improvements program and the priority catalyst developments.

Land Use / Development Goals:

- Provide more housing downtown
- Encourage rehabilitation of vacant buildings and stalled renovations
- Resolve the future of the courthouse
- Need for a cultural anchor / more cultural facilities

Circulation Goals:

- Balance the needs of local and regional networks
- Address problems associated with truck traffic and vehicle speeds
- Explore ways to make parking more visible, safe and accessible

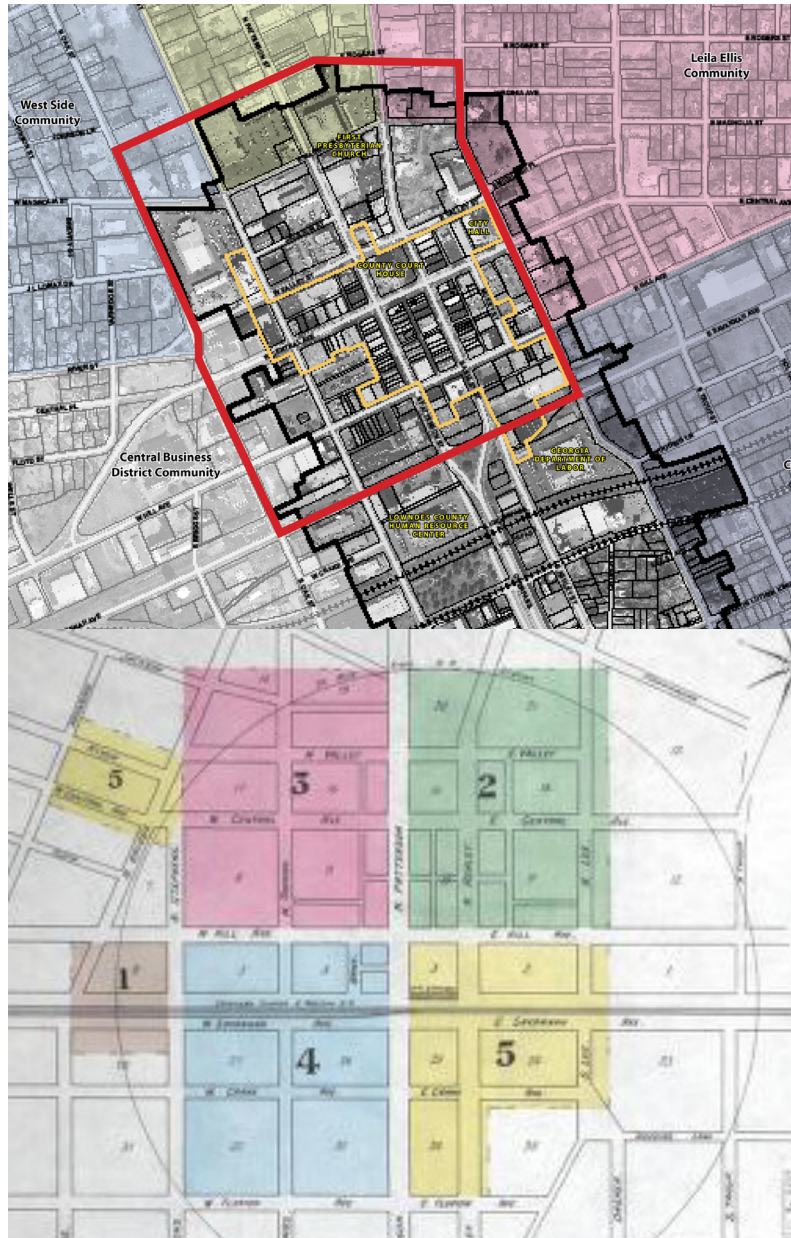
Open Space Goals:

- Increase downtown park space in harmony with the existing urban environment
- Provide a diversity of passive open spaces (pocket parks, performance areas)
- Include water features in park improvements

In addition to the goals above, stakeholders expressed a desire for a sense of renewed partnership with the city based on a mutual commitment to downtown, recognizing that compromises would be likely on both sides. As an illustration, stakeholders felt it was important for the city to clearly define a program of downtown investments and follow through with implementation; while city administrators hoped that downtown stakeholders would understand and appreciate the challenges of working with limited financial resources while ensuring equitable and fiscally responsible investments.



GOALS AND PRIORITIES



2.6 Downtown's cognitive and historic boundaries

Stakeholders also identified a need for comprehensive marketing strategies in order to improve and strengthen downtown's economic competitiveness at both local and regional levels. This could be advanced through the following considerations:

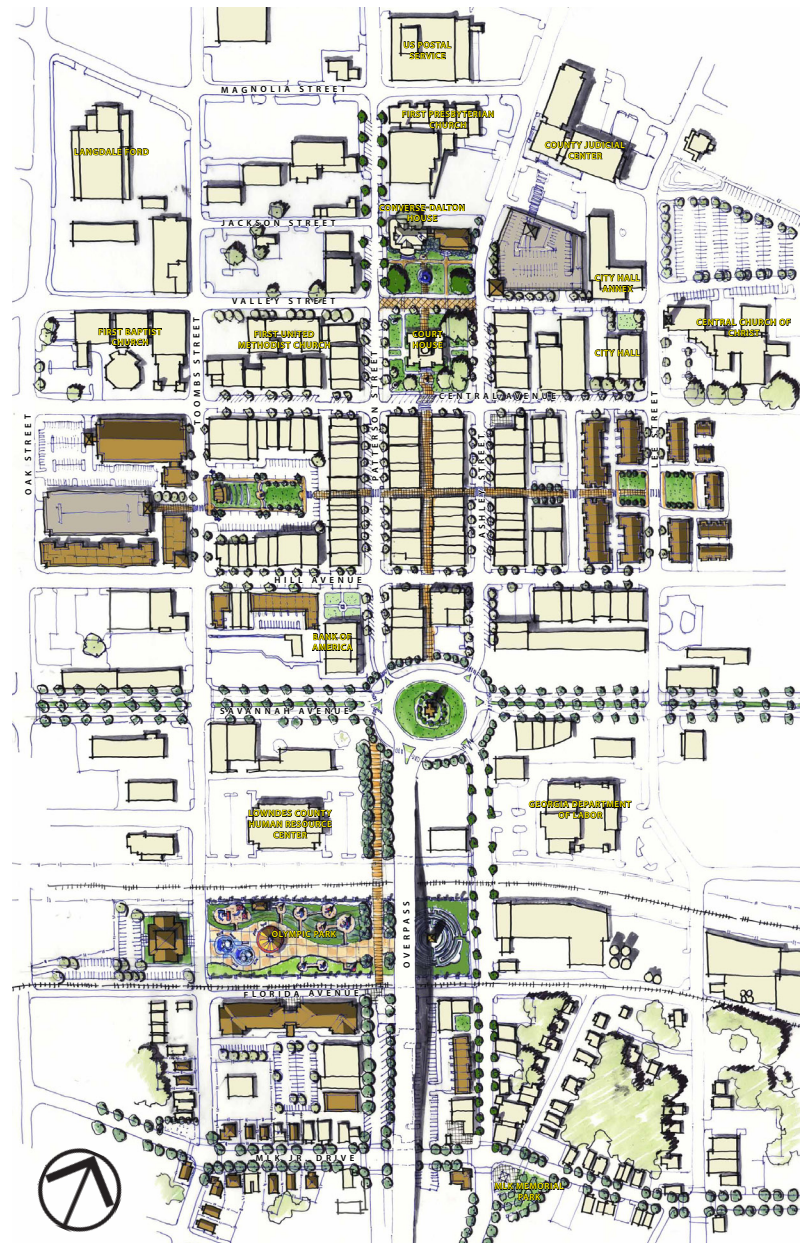
- Establishing better connections with Valdosta State University
- Establishing a VSU presence downtown
- Asserting downtown's importance to community high-tech recruiting efforts

One interesting observation relates to stakeholders' perception of the boundaries of downtown, which are limited to the historic core and the immediate surrounding blocks (Figure 2.6). Valdosta has always been an anomaly among Georgia courthouse towns, since the Lowndes county seat was moved to this location because of the influence of the railroad. Early plats of the downtown show this equilibrium, with its form defined more by the cross axis of Patterson Street and Hill Avenue, and less by regular blocks surrounding a courthouse square. With the abandonment of rail-related uses and development trending north toward VSU, stakeholders appear to have adopted the courthouse as the center of gravity of downtown. The master plan therefore makes a deliberate attempt to re-center downtown around the courthouse, while respecting the original subdivision pattern by providing a foundation for public improvements and economic investment in the old railroad corridor.

Based on the goals and objectives listed above, the workshop consensus points, and the development opportunities identified in the existing conditions analysis, key properties in strategic locations were identified as candidates for near-term catalyst development projects to renew economic momentum in the core. These projects, and companion open space and circulation projects to improve the network that links them together, are the basis of the master plan's urban design for downtown. Longer-term projects on the periphery are also needed to bind downtown to its surrounding neighborhoods; but are the subject of a future study.



URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES



2.7 The Downtown Valdosta Vision Plan

URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES

The urban design strategies at the heart of the Valdosta Downtown Master Plan are a direct outgrowth of public consensus, and team synthesis of issues and opportunities. The vision plan resulting from these strategies builds on the existing public space framework and strong sense of place created by alley reclamation and streetscape improvements done by the City and the CVDA. Listed below, the strategies strive to harmonize with the existing built environment and take advantage of assets such as the unique alley network, the landmark courthouse, downtown's historic character and street grid, and the streetscape.

Respecting downtown's traditional grid

The most important, fundamental urban design strategy is to recognize the existing formal grid pattern of downtown and strengthen or expand on it as needed. The vision plan does this by proposing four development projects at the four cardinal points (north, south, east, west) of the alley system. Each project interacts with the existing street grid to create dynamic new public spaces just beyond the limits of the vibrant core.

Completing the courthouse square

The courthouse is the most recognizable building downtown, and it occupies the center of a perfect square. It is surrounded on three sides by pristine historic buildings; but its north side is fragmented by small, irregular structures and surface parking. This strategy completes the square by replacing the existing buildings with a new park, almost doubling the size of the square and opening the elegant south elevation of the Converse-Dalton House to view. Expanding the historic house with an addition to the east, and developing the existing county parking lot with a multistory building would further define the park edge.

Expanding the alley network

Valdosta has invested much in reclaiming its alley system as public space with pavers, lighting, and art. In the process the city has given downtown a mark of uniqueness and distinction. This strategy extends Bennie's Alley to the east and west to reach new plazas at Lee and Toombs streets; and proposes a similar treatment to Central Alley to create a new north-south axis that links the courthouse with new destinations south of Hill Avenue, and adds new uses like outdoor dining.



URBAN DESIGN STRATEGIES



2.8 Central Alley looking south



2.9 Ashley-Patterson overpass

Untying the transportation knot

Downtown's interconnected street network provides excellent mobility, compromised only by the one-way restrictions. However, the act of replacing South Patterson Street with a rail overpass designed to highway standards has created a confusing and dangerous confluence of streets at Savannah Avenue. Reworking this transportation knot as a free-flowing roundabout provides for safer pedestrian crossing points as well as better multidirectional access for Savannah, which could be redesigned as a parkway to handle east-west truck traffic and supply a strong design statement where little formal order exists. The roundabout also facilitates the two-way conversion of Ashley and Patterson, slowing down traffic for pedestrian safety and better parking accessibility. Moreover, the roundabout creates a gateway to downtown creating a visual connection to the historic courthouse by terminating the axis of Central Alley.

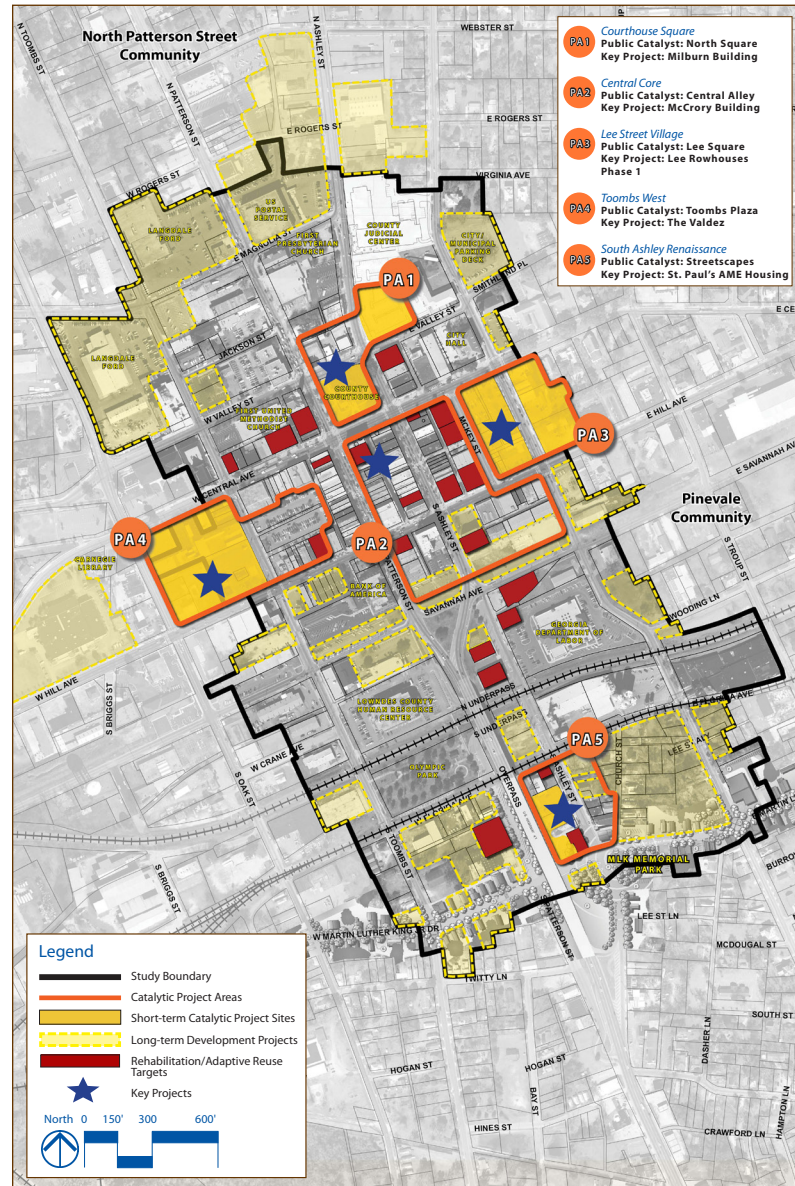
Connecting to Southside

The final strategy strives to bring equity and balance to the master plan by proposing improvements to the rail corridor and areas south, creating a destination and linking to the historic core with better connections. The vision plan proposes converting a portion of South Patterson Street to a multiuse pedestrian path that extends the existing streetscape south to an expanded and revitalized Olympic Park. Restored buildings and new development south of the park would help improve the condition and character of South Patterson and South Ashley and bring quality to the South side equivalent to that of the downtown core.

The urban design strategies and vision plan are pivotal in translating the community vision into reality. They define specific projects that create positive public spaces and are feasible from a funding and market perspective, but not so ambitious as to make implementation difficult or unlikely. The projects are knitted together by three layered frameworks – development, open space, and mobility – that together constitute the full master plan and implementation program.



PLAN FRAMEWORKS



2.10 Development Framework Plan

PLAN FRAMEWORKS

Development Framework Plan

The development framework plan focuses on target development areas as a means to quantify and prioritize implementation. It also structures the vision plan components and frames up short-term and long-term projects for public and private investment.

Of the five project areas in the framework plan, four are located in the downtown core and one on the Southside. These areas include short-term (four to five years) catalyst development projects that could be initiated by the city or the CVDA in early stages and implemented by private developers or institutions as primary sources of funding.

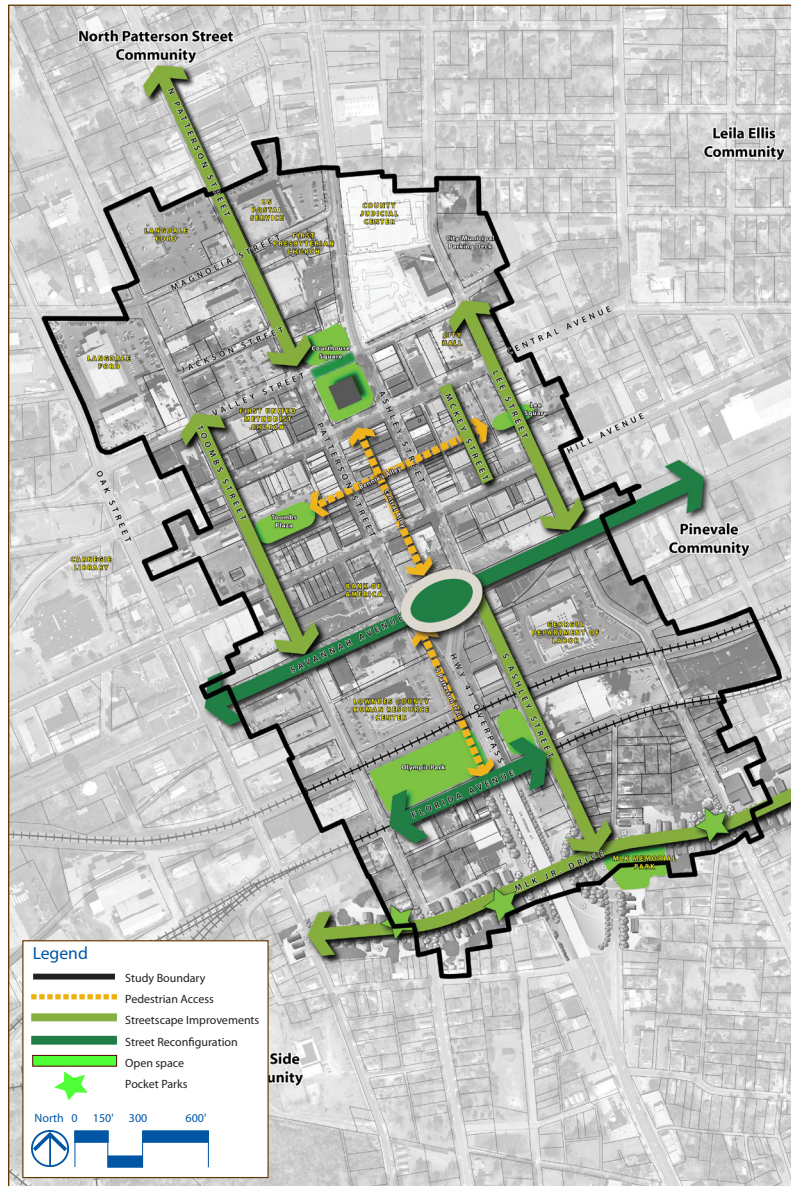
The short-term catalyst project sites are priority properties for a number of reasons, such as favorable ownership (city, county or institutional); underutilized land (vacant or inappropriate uses in strategic locations); existing uses in transition, or future expansions (courthouse); or projects planned or underway. They are suitable for new development or redevelopment that is compatible with the existing uses in the downtown core – ideally mixed-use, but also dedicated residential or institutional uses. These catalyst projects could be integrated into the existing character and fabric of the historic core in order to expand downtown programmatically and to make it more sustainable. Individual catalyst projects are discussed in greater detail in Part 3.

In addition to the catalyst projects, there are a number of historic buildings in downtown that could be renovated and rehabilitated. Most of these properties are unoccupied due to their condition, and need some form of repair. They have great potential as adaptive reuse projects for retail, office and residential uses. These buildings are very important in meeting future market demand while keeping downtown historically integrated and compact.

Finally, long-term development areas in and around the study area are essential for future economic stability and sustainability. These areas could be developed in the next fifteen- to twenty-year period depending on market demand and land availability.



PLAN FRAMEWORKS



2.11 Open Space Framework Plan

Open Space Framework Plan

Downtown's open space framework consists of two global strategies: introducing new streetscapes at key locations to connect the existing network to a broader context, in order to create a more walkable environment throughout the study area; and adding a variety of open spaces across downtown to expand the inventory of parks and plazas and provide more diversity and choice for residents and visitors. The framework plan exploits the formal street grid to inscribe public spaces that are treated as destinations, supporting community needs.

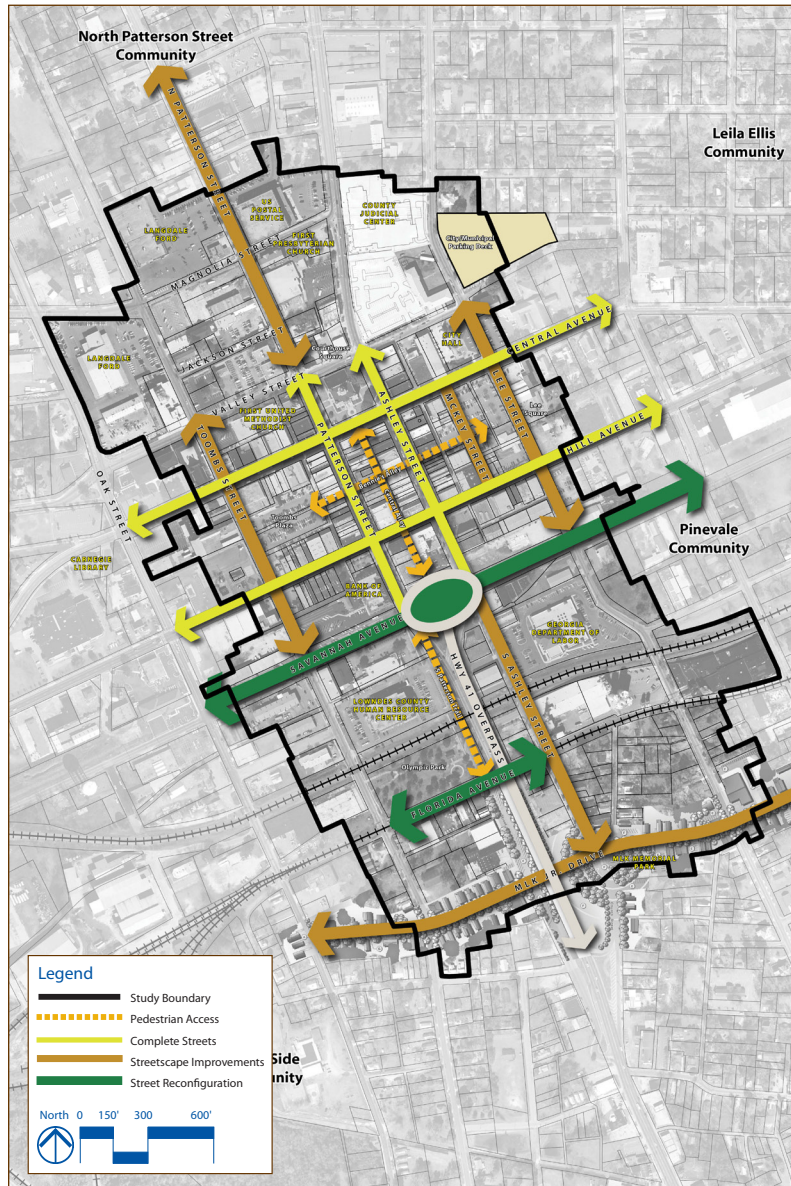
In addition to the above strategies, the open space framework plan strives to maximize existing resources through the following actions:

- Expanding the alley network
- Revitalizing the Courthouse Square
- Repositioning municipal parking into active uses
- Expanding and intensifying Olympic Park
- Building on the work done to improve the MLK, Jr. Corridor

One of the most significant open space projects is a hybrid of a park and a street. The Savannah Avenue corridor was once the location of several terminal tracks of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. It is now occupied by a very minor street and several underutilized municipal parking lots. As discussed above, the corridor has the potential to be reimagined as a parkway or boulevard much like Oglethorpe Avenue in Savannah or Richmond's Monument Avenue, providing an elegant edge to the historic core and a unique seam to Southside. A new roundabout on axis with Central Alley could have the dual function of a landmark green space mirroring the Courthouse Square, and a traffic solution to a complex intersection of one-way pairs and overpass approaches.



PLAN FRAMEWORKS



2.12 Mobility Framework Plan

Mobility Framework Plan

A dense, well-connected street grid is essential to facilitating multiple ways to link origins and destinations. The mobility framework plan does this by improving and expanding the existing street network, and balancing vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow in an efficient and safe manner. The plan also extends the good precedent the city has set with the core area streetscapes, stretching them to the north and south and reproducing them one block to the east and west. Since financial resources are limited, however, the framework plan includes only those projects that are the highest priority in terms of building essential connections, leveraging other investments, or catalyzing new development.

The mobility framework plan is based on the following strategies:

Complete Streets: The concept of “Complete Streets” refers to urban thoroughfares that incorporate sidewalks, vehicle and bicycle lanes, parking, transit amenities, and safe crossings to make them accessible and functional for all users. Important streets to “Complete” in downtown include Patterson, Ashley, Hill and Central. Improvements consist of modifying on-street parking from parallel to reverse-angled to increase safety and functionality, decreasing vehicle speeds and allowing for bike use; and converting one-way operation to two-way over time.

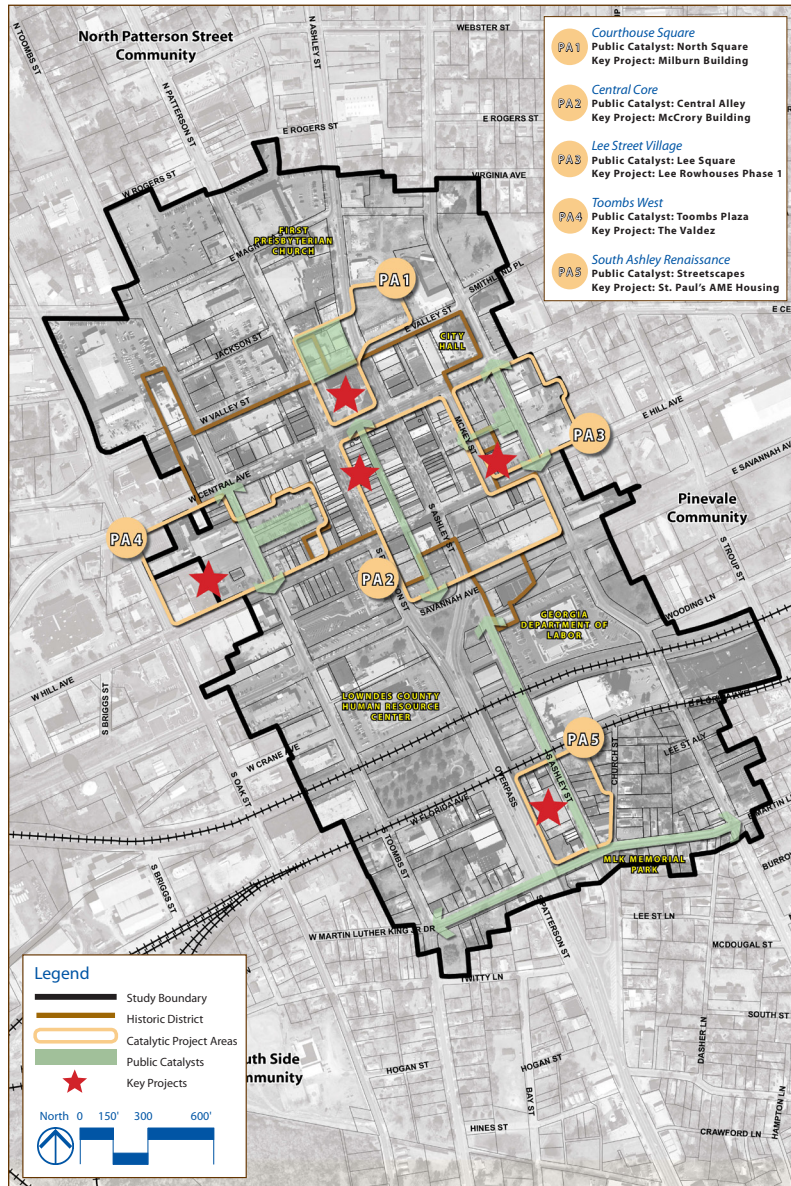
Streetscape Improvements: The plan expands the existing streetscape network to key streets for better connectivity throughout downtown. Priority streets include North Patterson, South Ashley, Toombs, Lee, McKey, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive.

Street Reconfigurations: Over the long term, all streets in downtown should be studied for conversion back to two-way operation. In the short term, Central Avenue is reconfigured to a partial two-way section, and Savannah Avenue reconstructed as a two-way boulevard capable of handling truck dimensions. A new roundabout at the Patterson / Ashley / Savannah confluence would help route traffic in a smooth and efficient manner. The plan also upgrades Florida Avenue to a proper urban street.

Pedestrian Access: Proposed physical improvements to Central Alley for north-south access and expansion to Bennie’s Alley for east-west access; a new multiuse trail along the South Patterson alignment for a pedestrian connection to Olympic Park and points south.



PLAN FRAMEWORKS



2.13 Redevelopment Focus Areas

Redevelopment Focus Areas

The master plan study area contains five development focus areas, each with a combination of public space and redevelopment projects, which could stimulate additional revitalization in and around downtown. The focus area land use and development projects would ideally be undertaken by the private sector; while the open space and mobility projects could be a part of the city's capital improvements program.

1. Courthouse Square: includes the historic courthouse, Valley Street, parcels fronting Valley Street to the north, the Converse-Dalton House, and the surface parking lot of the Lowndes County Judicial & Administrative Complex. The public space project is the Courthouse Square and north expansion, and the key development project is the rehabilitation of the courthouse building.

2. Central Core: includes the heart of historic core between Ashley Street and Patterson Street, along with the blocks to the east of Ashley and some Savannah Avenue frontage. The public space project is Central Alley and the key development projects are several historic rehabilitations, including the McCrory Building.

3. Lee Street Village: includes the McKey Street parking lot and commercial or vacant parcels fronting Lee Street. The public space project is Lee Square (an urban plaza split by Lee Street) and the key development project is the Lee Village urban townhomes.

4. Toombs West: includes the Toombs Street parking lot and underutilized properties in the block west of Toombs Street. The public space project is the Toombs Plaza multipurpose performance space, and the key development projects are the residential mixed-use building and parking deck on the site of the old Hotel Valdez; the adaptive reuse of the Cranford Building; and the First Baptist Family Life Center.

5. South Ashley Renaissance: includes parcels on both sides of South Ashley Street between the CSX railroad and MLK, Jr. Drive. The public space project is the MLK, Jr. Drive corridor improvements, and the key development project is the affordable housing complex for seniors.

These catalyst projects constitute the major components of the final development plan, and their design and implementation details are discussed in Parts 3 and 4.





PART 3

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

DEVELOPMENT HORIZON



3.1 Vivid Lifestyle in Valdosta

DEVELOPMENT HORIZON

Throughout the master planning process, the project team has been working towards strategies to maximize downtown Valdosta's economic potential. These strategies strengthen market conditions in the downtown area through physical improvements, financing and funding mechanisms, and administrative and management solutions. The project team has also identified specific catalyst redevelopment projects which have the potential to stimulate overall downtown economic growth through targeted public investment, subsidy, and support. This section provides recommendations to further those goals, as well as detailing specific catalyst projects.

Improving Overall Market Conditions

There are three critical recommendations for the improvement of downtown's overall market conditions. These recommendations align themselves with the master plan goals discussed above, as well as enabling city leaders to set the framework for a revitalized downtown core.

The most important long-range goal must be to diversify the mix of land uses in the downtown area, considered as the historic courthouse square and surroundings northward into several blocks of mixed commercial development. Over time this commercial core has been overshadowed by a shift towards automobile-oriented land-uses and suburbanization, exemplified by the shift of population and Valdosta's retail and activity center from the downtown core to the Valdosta Mall area northwest of downtown. As a result, vacancies have increased and rents have declined in the older commercial spaces. The key ingredient is to increase downtown's commercial viability by diversifying land uses to stimulate round-the-clock activity, and to provide a steady stream of customers for downtown businesses.

- ***Encourage the development of more residential uses within the downtown core:*** Over the next three to five years, there will be a respectable demand for townhomes, small-scale condominiums, rental apartments and senior housing within downtown, and its development should be encouraged on current commercial sites as both a way to reduce the inventory of retail space and as a way to increase the level of local demand for retail and business services. Over time this will greatly add to the health of the area.



DEVELOPMENT HORIZON



3.2 Art Festival on North Patterson Street

- ***Encourage the creation of office and institutional uses in downtown to reinforce the importance of the city's core:*** The city should support the efforts of local developers to expand office inventory in the downtown area which could appeal to the mix of professional firms, small businesses, governmental agencies, and entrepreneurs or start-ups.
- ***Create a network of public investments to reinforce the unique character of the study area:*** In order to provide a sense of momentum and new investment, it will be essential to make strategic public improvements such as small green spaces, sidewalks and streetscape improvements, intersection improvements, and enhanced signage. This improved infrastructure will become the connective tissue that unites and strengthens initial redevelopment sites.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



3.3 Aerial View of the Downtown

SHORT-TERM (CATALYST) PROJECTS

As part of this process the planning team, in collaboration with the steering committee and other involved stakeholders, has identified five catalyst projects with three suitable for a more detailed pro forma analysis. These projects, consisting primarily of public investments (such as parks and transportation projects) and real estate development projects, are believed to have the potential to catalyze economic growth and redevelopment in the downtown core, producing a net benefit against any potential public resources put into them. These projects exemplify Valdosta's potential to improve downtown's marketability, to demonstrate the public sector's commitment to supporting business and real estate activity downtown, and to catalyze recruitment and economic development efforts.

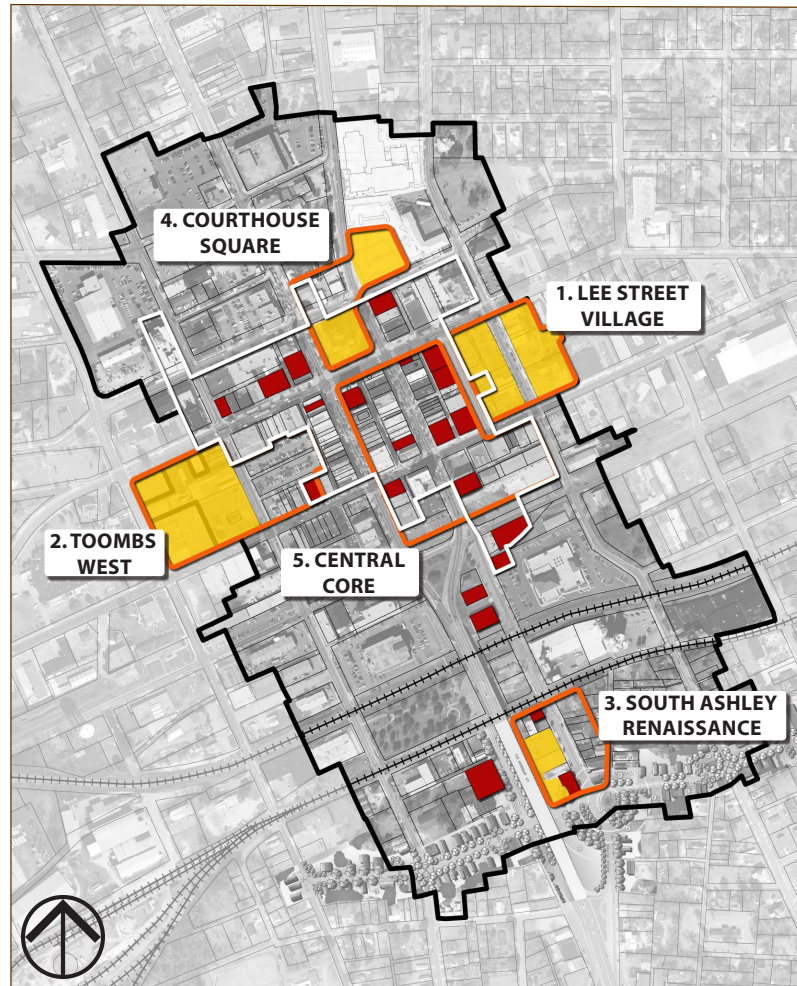
In order for downtown Valdosta to retain a competitive advantage while moving through the process towards designating where to devote resources, it is crucial that plans be developed for two or more catalyst sites. If the city demonstrates that it has committed to any single site before securing any necessary property or rights-of way, then the city will place itself at a significant negotiating disadvantage.

Approach to Catalyst Projects

The catalyst projects are based on the market trends identified in Part 1, as well as land use and zoning considerations. In order to determine the economic feasibility of each concept, the total market value of each development concept was estimated at build out. From the market value the estimated maximum land contribution was determined for the development prototype (estimated at 15% of total market value for typical projects, or 10% if significant additional infrastructure, such as a parking deck, is needed). This maximum land contribution is then used as the basis for a target land value, to determine if the prototype development will support land costs sufficient to acquire the site for the estimated purchase price. This is the analysis that a property owner will do to determine if they can afford to redevelop the site themselves, or sell to a third party. This land value target can be used as a framework to evaluate potential subsidy strategies.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



3.4 Short-Term Catalyst Projects

Based on the data presented previously, the following assumptions regarding value were used in the analysis.

- The redevelopment of the entire downtown study area will take many years and substantial public and private funding to implement. It is important to begin by identifying a set of projects that can serve as initial catalysts for the process. Focusing on several key sites rather than the entire redevelopment area is desirable for several reasons. First, getting investment going on several initial sites is generally easier than across a large project area which requires major commitments by large-scale developers and overcoming many financial challenges.
- The catalyst projects can provide an important initial sense of momentum towards the implementation of the broader redevelopment plan.
- If strategic public incentives are needed to support redevelopment as is likely in Valdosta, the amount of funding for catalyst sites will be more manageable and affordable than attempting to make the level of investment needed to stimulate the entire redevelopment area. The experience of other Georgia cities has shown these early public investments can stimulate increased investment by the private sector.

Presented below is a financial analysis of the development potential of three catalyst projects which have been identified in the redevelopment planning process. The purpose of this analysis is to define what the financial parameters are that would define the proposed developments, and determine if incentives would be required to achieve the desired project outcomes. For each of the catalyst projects a description of the project is presented, along with a summary financial analysis of its cost and its value based on market-tested sales prices or rent levels in downtown Valdosta. From this analysis it was possible to determine whether each of the catalyst projects would be financially viable in the real estate investment market or would require some level of subsidy to achieve financial viability.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



3.5 Lee Street Village Proposed Redevelopment, Aerial Key with Existing Development

Project 1: Lee Street Village

Lee Street Village is envisioned as an infill townhome project built on 1.69 acres of city-owned land, and 1.28 acres of land on the east side of Lee Street which would need to be acquired from private owners. The project would be built in two phases with Phase I occurring on the land owned by the city and Phase II on the land to be acquired. A total of 44 townhomes could be developed with 22 in Phase I and 22 in Phase II. The units would range from 1,800 to 1,900 square feet in size and would sell for between \$230,000 and \$250,000 per unit.

The goal of the project is to increase the number of residents living in downtown Valdosta and enliven the adjacent area by replacing the city parking lot with homeowners with a stake in downtown's future. It would also leverage the city's current property to stimulate residential development and continue that development in a second phase on the other side of Lee Street as the market for residential development in downtown strengthens.

The approach to developing the Lee Street Village would be for the city to relocate the current customer service operations located in the south portion of the McKey Street parking lot, and make the lot available for development through a developer RFP process. The private developer would be responsible for creating and selling the units in accordance with the approved site plan and agreement with the city.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

Lee Street Townhomes	Phase 1	Phase 2
Lot Size(Acres)	1.69	1.28
Units	22	20
Units/Acre	13.0	15.7
Unit Size (SF)	1,800	1,900
Total SF	39,600	38,000
Cost/SF	\$ 115	\$ 120
Cost/Unit	\$ 207,000	\$ 228,000
Common Amenities	Plaza	Plaza
Common Amenities	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000
Total Dev. Cost	\$ 4,654,000	\$ 4,660,000
Land Contribution-Total (15%)	\$ 698,100	\$ 699,000
Land Contribution/Acre (15%)	\$ 412,340	\$ 547,437
Unit Sale Price	\$ 230,000	\$ 250,000
Total Value	\$ 5,060,000	\$ 5,000,000

Source: Bleakly Advisory Group

The table shows a summary pro forma of the two phases of Lee Street Village. The project would have an estimated value at build out of \$10.06 million and a total development cost of just over \$9.3 million. Based on the proposed densities and potential selling prices for the townhome units, the estimated maximum price that can be paid for the land would be approximately \$400,000- \$425,000 per acre for the city owned property and \$525,000 to \$550,000 per acre for the parcels east of Lee Street (assuming the existing structures are removed by the seller prior to sale).

The city may wish to consider discounting the cost of the city-owned site as an incentive to get development momentum moving in downtown. The proposed design assumes that the required parking for the townhomes will occur on site with no separate provision for additional parking required. It may be advisable to allow Phase I to be further divided in two phases of 11 units each, which would increase the financial viability of the project with local lenders and allow the city to phase in the removal of the off-street parking on the site.



3.6 Potential Future Development Character of Lee Street Village



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



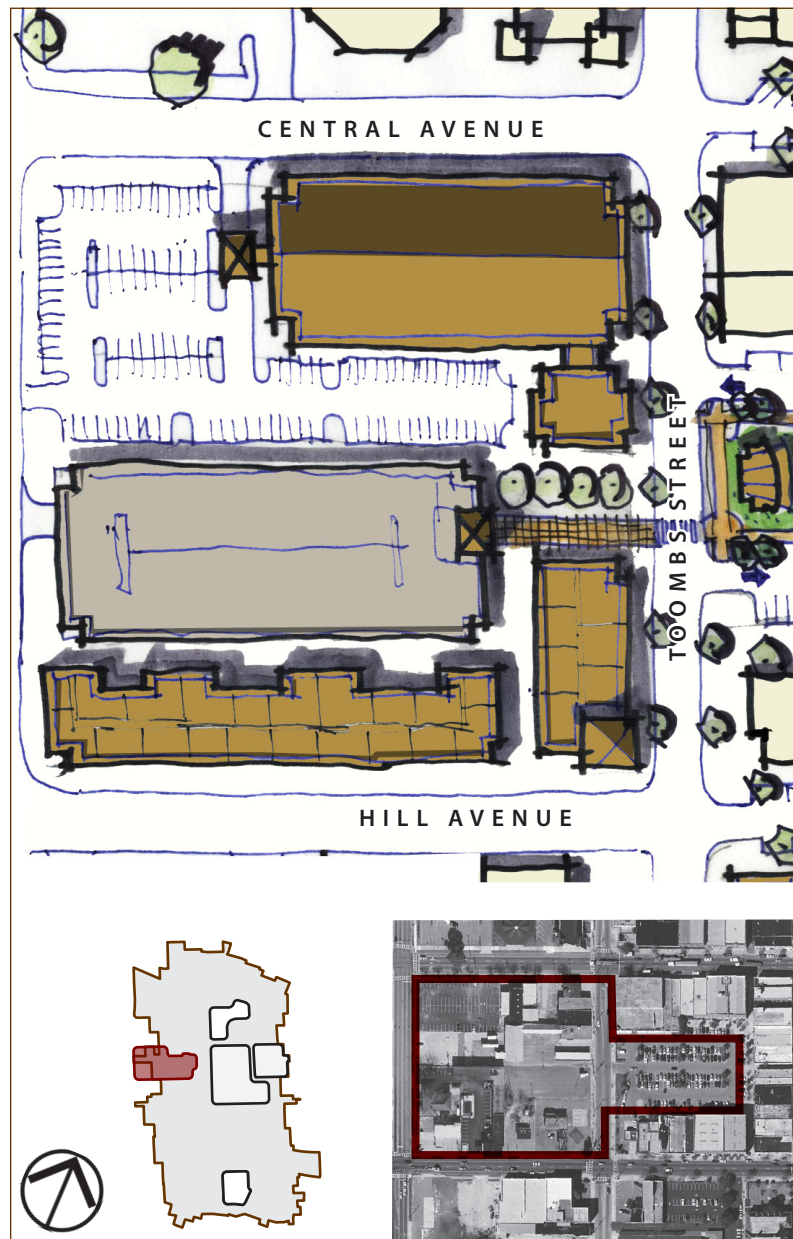
3.7 North Lee Street - Before (looking north towards City Hall/Central Church of Christ)



3.8 North Lee Street - After



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



3.9 Toombs West Proposed Redevelopment, Aerial Key with Existing Development

Project 2: Toombs West

A second key redevelopment catalyst site is the Toombs West block immediately to the west of the Toombs Street parking lot and the current terminus of Bennie's Alley. The goal of the redevelopment of Toombs West is to provide a western edge to Toombs Street Plaza, a unique public space occupying the central portion of the parking lot and linking to Bennie's Alley. The Toombs West block would be redeveloped as either a rental or condominium structure with an adjacent parking deck which would service the needs of the residents of the project and provide additional parking to replace the spaces which were lost in the creation of the adjacent plaza. The overall goal of the project is to get more residents living in downtown which will stimulate additional street life accompanied by an increased demand for the goods and services available in downtown.

Two alternative developments were considered for the site, one as rental apartments and the other as condominiums. Both would be built as a four-story structure. The rental configuration assumes a total of 100 units and 10,000 square feet of ground floor space for either retail or office uses. The apartments would be a mix of one- and two-bedroom units renting for an average of \$900 per month. A parking space in the deck would be provided for each of the units, as well as additional spaces for overflow and general public use. Under the condominium option, the building would contain 80 one- and two-bedroom units as well as the 10,000 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor. There would be 1.5 structured parking spaces for each of the units, and an additional 60 spaces for overflow or public parking. The summary pro forma for the two development options are on the following pages.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

Toombs Street Mixed-Use	As Apartments	
	Lot Size(Acres)	2.10
Residential	Units	100
	Units/Acre	47.7
	Avg Unit Size (SF)	1,000
	Total SF	100,000
	Cost/SF	\$90
	Cost/Unit	\$90,000
	Total Res Cost	\$9,000,000
Commercial	Space (SF)	10,000
	Cost/SF	\$ 90
	Total Com. Cost	\$ 900,000
Sub Total	Total Dev Costs	\$9,900,000
Amenities	Amenities	Pkg Deck-200 Sp
	Amenities Cost	\$3,200,000
Total	Total Dev. Cost	\$12,200,000
Land Contribution	Land Contrib.-Total (10%)	\$ 1,220,000
	Land Contrib./Acre (10%)	\$582,072.29
Income	Res. Sale Price	\$900
	Res Total Value	\$1,015,200
	Com. Rent/SF/Yr	\$ 12
	Com Income (10% Vac)	\$108,000
	Less Op Costs (28%)	\$(314,496)
	Net Income/Yr	\$ 808,716
Value	Total Value Res + Com	\$11,553,086

Source: Bleakly Advisory Group

- Apartment Option**--As shown in the pro forma analysis to the left, the apartment option would have a total development cost of approximately \$9.9 million and the parking deck costs would be approximately \$3.2 million, for a total project cost of \$13.1 million. Based on a potential land contribution of 10%, the project would support an estimated land cost of approximately \$575,000 to \$600,000 per acre for the site. The analysis shows that at completion the project's value would be less than its development cost, indicating that without some form of incentive it would not be financially viable. This is due to the substantial construction costs associated with the density of units on the site and the level of rents which can be achieved in downtown. The substantial price of the parking deck is also a major cost associated with redevelopment of this site. If the city wanted to proceed with this option and the land could be acquired for the price indicated, potential TAD funds generated by the project could be committed to offset a substantial portion of the structured parking. This would allow the project to achieve financial feasibility.



3.10 Potential Future Character of Toombs West Mixed-Use Development



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

Toombs Street Mixed-Use	As Condominium	
	Lot Size(Acres)	2.10
Residential	Units	80
	Units/Acre	38.2
	Avg Unit Size (SF)	1,250
	Total SF	100,000
	Cost/SF	\$110
	Cost/Unit	\$137,500
	Total Res Cost	\$11,000,000
Commercial	Space (SF)	10,000
	Cost/SF	\$ 90
	Total Com. Cost	\$ 900,000
Sub Total	Total Dev Costs	\$11,900,000
Amenities	Amenities	Pkg Deck-180 Sp
	Amenities Cost	\$2,880,000
Total	Total Dev. Cost	\$13,880,000
Land Contribution	Land Contrib.-Total (10%)	\$ 1,388,000
	Land Contrib./Acre (10%)	\$662,226.51
Income	Res. Sale Price	\$180,000
	Res Total Value	\$14,400,000
	Com. Rent/SF/Yr	\$ 12
	Com Income (10% Vac)	\$108,000
	Less Op Costs (28%)	\$(30,240)
	Net Income/Yr	\$ 77,760
	Com Value (7.0% Cap)	\$ 1,110,857
Value	Total Value Res + Com	\$15,510,857

Source: Bleakly Advisory Group

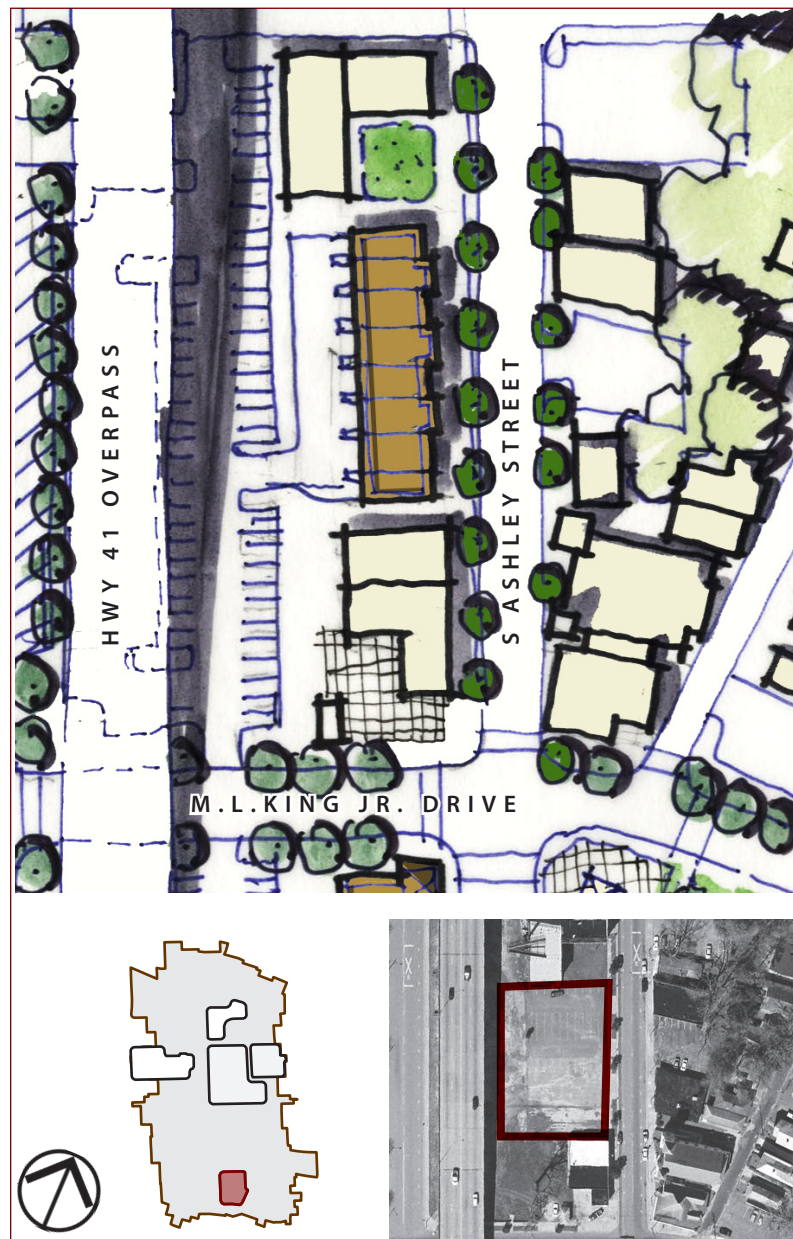
- **Condominium Option**—the development of the project as condominiums would provide a higher potential return and minimize the level of subsidy required for its development. As shown in the analysis, the development costs for the condominium units and commercial space would be approximately \$11.9 million and the smaller parking deck would be \$2.9 million, for a total construction cost of \$13.9 million. Based on this construction cost it is estimated that the project could pay up to \$650,000 to \$675,000 per acre for the site. The project would be marginally feasible based on an assumed average sales price of \$180,000 per unit. If a higher unit price could be achieved the financial feasibility would increase. As before, to support the creation of this catalyst project the city may wish to provide TAD assistance to offset a portion of the cost of creating the structured parking. This would significantly improve the financial feasibility of the project during the critical early phases of implementation of the redevelopment strategy. Given the lack of development history in creating condominiums in downtown, this incentive would be additionally important.



3.11 Potential Future Character of Toombs West Mixed-Use Development



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



3.12 South Ashley Proposed Redevelopment, Aerial Key with Existing Development

Project 3: South Ashley Renaissance

The goal of this catalyst project is twofold. First, it will help trigger redevelopment activity in the southern portion of downtown - an area that has been defined as one of the key pieces of the master plan. Second, it will provide a greater range of residential housing alternatives for senior citizens who are long term residents of the area. The approach for this catalyst project is to create an affordable senior housing project on land that is owned by Saint Pauls AME Church.

As currently conceived, the catalyst project would consist of 49 senior housing apartments constructed in a four-story structure on church-owned property on Ashley Street. The senior housing would be built as 41 one-bedroom units and 8 two-bedroom units designed for independent living, with common areas for residents to gather and participate in group activities and socialize with their friends. The units would include a bedroom, living area, kitchen and bathroom and would average 720 square feet for the one bedroom units and 1,080 square feet for the two bedroom units.

The plan assumes that Saint Pauls AME Church either contributes the land as an equity stake in a development partnership which would construct and operate the project, or sell the land to a developer to construct and operate the project. The development would likely pursue the use of low-income housing tax credits available from the State of Georgia to subsidize the creation of mixed-income senior housing in the state.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



3.13 South Ashley Street - Before (from MLK, Jr. Drive looking north towards downtown)



3.14 South Ashley Street - After



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

	Lot Size(Acres)	0.70
Residential	Units	49
	Units/Acre	70
	Avg. Unit Size (SF)	1,060
	Total SF	51,940
	Cost/SF	\$ 80
	Cost/Unit	\$ 84,800
	TotalCost	\$ 4,155,200
Net	Net Dev. Cost	\$ 4,155,200
Total	Tax Credit (4%)	\$(166,208)
	Total Dev. Cost	\$ 3,988,992
Income	Res Rent/Unit/Mo	\$ 750
	Gross Res Income/Yr (6% Vac.)	\$ 414,540
	Less Op Costs (28%)	\$(116,071)
	Net Income/Yr	\$ 299,219
Value	Value @7.0% Cap	\$ 4,274,554

Source: Bleakly Advisory Group

As shown in the pro forma analysis to the left, the project would have a total development cost of approximately \$4.5 million. It assumes an average rent level of \$750 per month per unit, which is consistent with industry trends. Based on the analysis, the project could pay a maximum of \$375,000 to \$400,000 for the site for development. Given that the value of the project at \$4.2 million would provide a return of 7% above construction costs, this project would benefit from the provision of a TAD incentive to defray some of the infrastructure and site development costs. And as mentioned, the church could contribute the site to the project in return for participation in its development. A more detailed financial analysis may indicate other options for development cost savings and the full impact of the tax credits on the viability of the project.

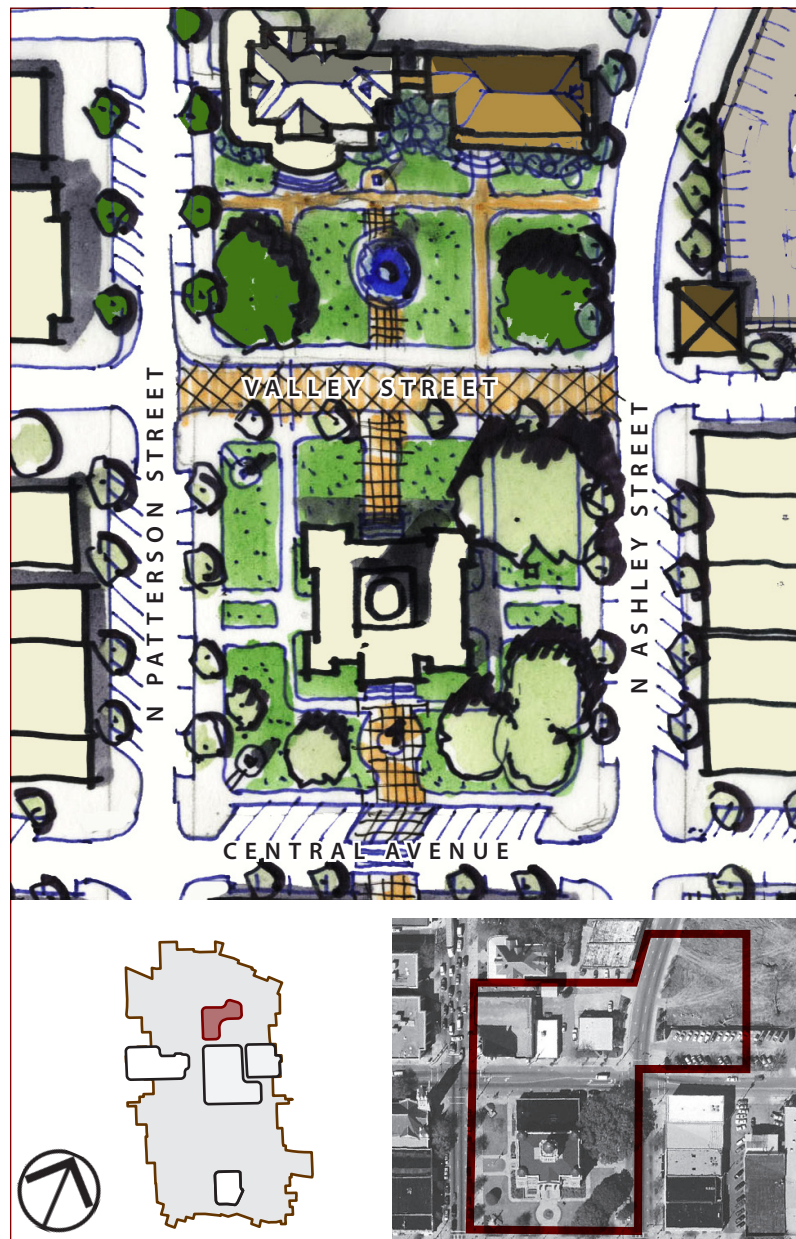
It is recommended that, if the city and Saint Pauls AME Church wish to pursue this catalyst development, they solicit interest from experienced senior housing developers either to partner with the church on the development, or acquire the site for the project.



3.15 Potential Future Development Character of South Ashley Renaissance



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



3.16 The Courthouse Square Proposed Redevelopment, Aerial Key with Existing Development

Project 4: The Courthouse Square

As the centerpiece of downtown Valdosta, the historic County Courthouse is a vital piece of the urban fabric. It is crucial to downtown's economic future that this building remains active and vital. While the building is county-owned, it is clearly in the best interest of the city to take an active role in finding new uses for this space. The planning team has identified Valdosta State University as an important potential tenant, likely to benefit from both the downtown location and the unique configuration of the building. The city should reach out to Lowndes County and VSU to begin discussions of an arrangement which would benefit all three parties by bringing an active tenant to the courthouse building, providing a downtown presence for the University, ensuring that the building is restored and maintained, and potentially providing a revenue stream. Similar joint ventures have worked to benefit all parties in other cities: Brunswick, Georgia partnered with Glynn County to pledge SPLOST revenue to restore the historic Customs House, which subsequently became the City Hall. Many universities maintain downtown extension buildings, used primarily for adult education, training, lectures, and outreach. The city should take a leadership role in brokering an agreement between the County and VSU to create such a partnership to ensure appropriate reuse of this landmark structure.



SHORT-TERM PROJECTS



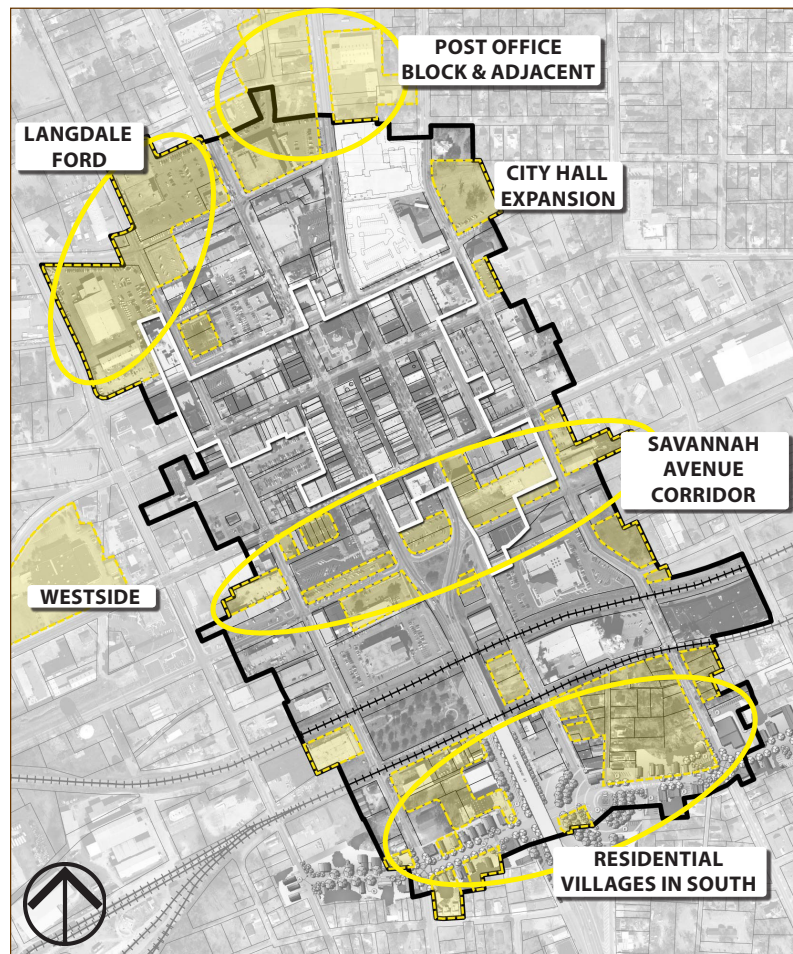
3.17 The Central Core Proposed Redevelopment, Aerial Key with Existing Development

Project 5: The Central Core

The charm and character of downtown Valdosta's buildings and public spaces is one of the city's most valuable assets - one that has taken over a century to develop and that can never be reproduced. If properly nurtured and supported, the central core can be leveraged as an economic development tool, both directly, through tourism and retail sales, and indirectly through civic identity and pride. City leadership should ensure that the preservation and restoration of the buildings that make up the historic downtown core remains feasible and competitive, in terms of risk and cost, with new suburban development. The city should conduct an assessment of current incentives, subsidies, and regulatory practices regarding historic properties, in order to create cohesive, streamlined procedures to facilitate and encourage the restoration and preservation of historic structures in the city core.



LONG-TERM PROJECTS



3.18 Long-Term Projects

LONG-TERM PROJECTS

Long-term projects are also a critical piece of the master plan, though they require comparable long-term efforts and persistence. Most of these projects are located on key parcels around the downtown core to foster better connections with the surrounding neighborhoods in the future. These properties are unlikely to redevelop in the short term because they are privately owned with active uses; they may require consolidation of parcels with high land values; and there is limited market demand and financial resources to cover more than the essential core areas. However, they can likely be developed in the next fifteen- to twenty-year period if market demand continues to grow.

Langdale Ford and Surroundings

Two of the largest parcels in downtown (7.7 acres) are on the northwest side of the study area and are owned by Langdale Ford, an existing active business. These parcels occupy a key location on Toombs Street, midway between VSU and downtown core. In the near future Langdale Ford will remain in operation as it serves the needs of local customers, but over time could redevelop depending on the market and ownership dynamics.

During the charrette workshop, participants recommended (among other suggestions) redevelopment of Langdale Ford as a downtown campus for VSU, perhaps with student housing and an academic facility. Examples of similar projects in Georgia include Columbus State University's Schwob School of Music, and Georgia Tech's Technology Square. Redevelopment along these lines could establish a superlative connection with VSU and downtown, attracting students which in turn could support downtown's economy. The project would also act as a northern gateway to downtown.



3.19 Potential Character of Langdale Ford Redevelopment



LONG-TERM PROJECTS



3.20 Potential Mixed-Use Development on Post Office / North Block



3.21 Potential Southside Neighborhood Infill

Post Office / North Block

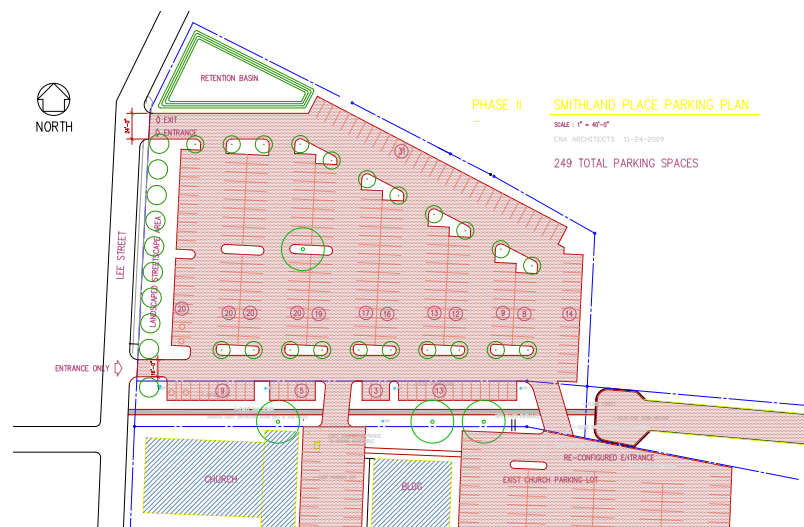
In last two decades development has been directed north of downtown, and there is the potential for this trend to continue. The recent construction of the Lowndes County Judicial & Administrative Complex and the city's plans for a municipal parking facility on Lee Street has contributed to the momentum. North Ashley Street is an underutilized and rundown retail corridor, prime for redevelopment; and the one of the most opportune locations for a longer-term catalyst project is the federal postal / office building and adjacent parcels to the north containing auto repair shops and other small strip retail in poor condition. Potential future development on this block should be mixed-use residential or office, though it requires purchase and consolidation of several parcels.

Southside Neighborhood

The cognitive map most stakeholders have of downtown (see Figure 2.6) excludes the area south of Savannah Avenue, even though the CVDA's jurisdiction extends down to MLK, Jr. Drive. Part of this is due to the void created by the railroad, and part due to limited development and vacant land. Future residential infill along MLK, Jr. Drive and catalyst projects along Ashley Street and Florida Avenue will help this area become an urban neighborhood over time, with a downtown address but an identity preserving its distinctive origins. An exceptional opportunity to create a compact, single-family "urban village" exists in the block east of Church Street. Vacant parcels, dead-end streets and plentiful land at the center of the block could all be combined, re-subdivided and developed to yield more homes than is currently possible. This small-lot pattern has been used successfully around the region and helps stabilize and reverse neighborhood decline without drastically changing density.



LONG-TERM PROJECTS



3.22 Future Municipal Parking Lot on East of Lee Street



3.23 Potential Character of Savannah Avenue

City Hall Expansion

The city has a plan in place for a municipal / staff parking facility on the vacant parcel north of the Central Avenue Church of Christ, with a surface lot as the first phase and a deck as a later phase. The city also had the foresight to negotiate with the church for a right of first refusal on purchase of their property should they decide to relocate. At some point the city will outgrow its current space, and the church property is a logical place for an expansion or relocation, provided the church's plans would facilitate such a move. In anticipation, the city should undertake a space needs programming exercise that would map departmental growth and the respective facilities implications for the next twenty to twenty-five years. In the event that the outcome leads to a plan to relocate the annex functions, the building could be combined with the adjacent parking lot to the west to create an outstanding opportunity for a major catalyst project fronting the expanded Courthouse Square.

Other Long-Term Opportunities

In addition to projects discussed above, there are other redevelopment opportunities in vacant and underutilized properties inside the CVDA boundary, as well as in adjacent areas. Some were identified and discussed during the charrette. In particular, to the west of the study area, the building housing the presses of the Valdosta Daily Times occupies a large parcel at a highly-visible, key location. If the operations of the newspaper point toward relocating, downsizing or abandoning print media, the site should be redeveloped to restructure the Central-Hill split (particularly if the streets are converted to two-way operation), to expand the Carnegie Library site, and to drive the possible creation of a new West Side park on the block containing the existing First Baptist overflow parking. Such a park would provide a new focus for what might be a new urban neighborhood, and would act as a gracious entry to the Fairview historic district. Similarly, there are many dilapidated buildings and vacant sites along Savannah Avenue which will have strong redevelopment potential once the narrow street and flanking parking lots are transformed into a grand boulevard in the future.

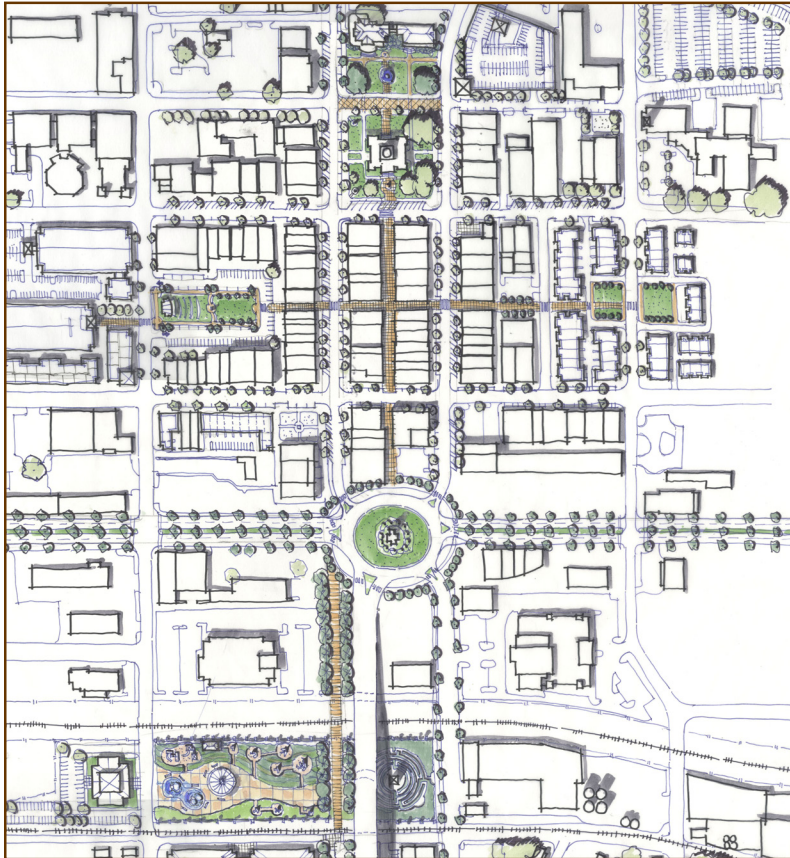




PART 4

OPEN SPACE AND MOBILITY PROJECTS

PUBLIC SPACES



The essence of downtown Valdosta's character is achieved through the fusion of two basic ingredients: the architectural quality and urban demeanor of private development; and the richness and variety of public spaces and buildings. While private development is to some degree unpredictable though tempered by guidelines and regulations, public space can be shaped to give form to community ideals and priorities, and can lead development in establishing a sense of place where little exists.

Public spaces – parks, plazas, and streets – are also where communion between citizens occurs, and values are expressed and shared. They are where a city goes for enrichment and rejuvenation. They are open to all, and therefore must be accessible to all.

The open space and mobility projects described in the following pages are designed to do several things. First, they recognize the efforts the city has put forth to not only improve the public environments that people regularly occupy, but to do so in a manner that complements and extends Valdosta's unique urban patterns. Second, they provide landscapes of quality and diversity to engage users, and strive to balance the needs and desires of multiple audiences. And third, they work integrally with surrounding redevelopment to promote private investment and expand downtown's boundaries in an incremental way.



4.1 The uniqueness that is Valdosta



OPEN SPACE PROJECTS



Courthouse Square Restoration / Expansion

There are two National Register historic buildings in the study area - the iconic Lowndes County Courthouse and the Converse-Dalton House. There is great potential to expand the existing landscaped square around the courthouse and create a signature open space with edges defined by historic building facades. In its current configuration, the green space on three sides of the courthouse is unable to accommodate large gatherings during festivals; and the major streets on the east, west and south limit spill-over activities that commonly occur with larger events. To resolve this issue, the 1950s annex building north of the courthouse could be demolished once county functions move to the new Judicial Center. Replacing the annex with new landscaping and plaza space would give better exposure to the courthouse north facade from Valley Street. Along with closing the square, the existing park space should be improved with historically-compatible landscaping and street furniture that respects the character and period of the courthouse.

The courthouse square also has the potential to expand further north, bridging Valley Street to encompass territory up to the Converse-Dalton House. This could be accomplished by securing and demolishing the few buildings on the north frontage of Valley Street, opening up the south flank of the Converse-Dalton House (suitably restored) to view and creating a larger gathering space that might contain a water feature as a focal point. Additional space could be provided by converting Valley Street to a part-time pedestrian plaza with unit paving and removable bollards. This expansion area, roughly equating to the size of the existing square, would almost double the space. The new central square, framed by two landmark buildings, could be used for outdoor performances, festivals, and other cultural events. It is an opportunity to become a destination for residents and visitors on par with Savannah.



4.2 Existing Annex Building



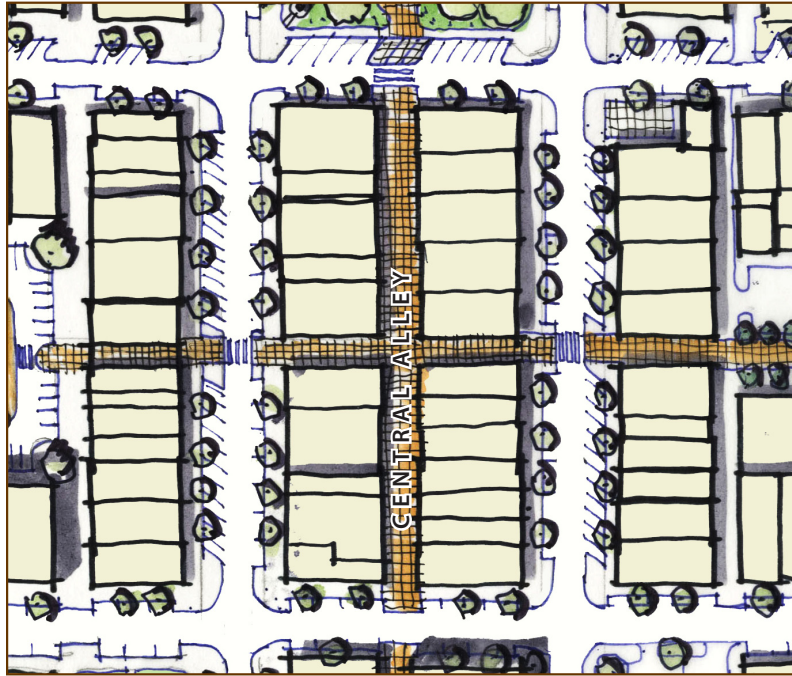
4.3 Future Valley Street Plaza



4.4 Future character of Courthouse Square



OPEN SPACE PROJECTS



Central Alley

One of the most distinguishing features of Downtown Valdosta is the unique system of alleys that have been converted from service to pedestrian spaces. Like most old downtowns, alleys provided critical back-of-house utility to businesses; but over time they became less necessary as the nature of business changed. The city had the insight to realize the value of reclaiming the east-west alley as a pedestrian connection between two peripheral parking areas; and with improvements, Bennie's Alley was born.

Validated by public opinion, the pedestrian alleys resonate with the spirit of downtown – fun, edgy, and highly urban. However, Central Alley – the north-south component – remains as a service corridor, even though its axial view of the historic courthouse is one of the most memorable vistas in the city. The alley is wider than most at approximately 35'; but has asphalt paving, limited lighting, and a centralized trash compactor that discourages pedestrian use.

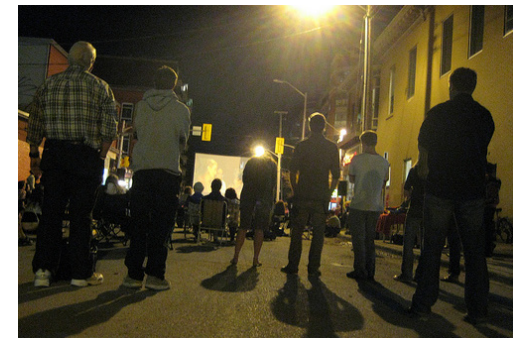
To complete the alley network and provide a key connection between the courthouse square and points south, Central Alley should be upgraded to the standard of Bennie's Alley, beginning with the relocation of the trash compactor to the rear of a vacant infill lot at 102 North Ashley Street. As an early phase of improvement, the city could install temporary power and lighting and host a weekend film festival or other regular event to showcase the space, engage downtown retailers in outdoor merchandising, and get the community excited about the potential for future improvements. Later phases could include upgraded paving, decorative lighting, outdoor dining spaces, and architectural ironwork or balconies evoking the character of places like Exchange Alley in the Vieux Carré of New Orleans.



4.5 Central Alley, After (looking north toward courthouse)



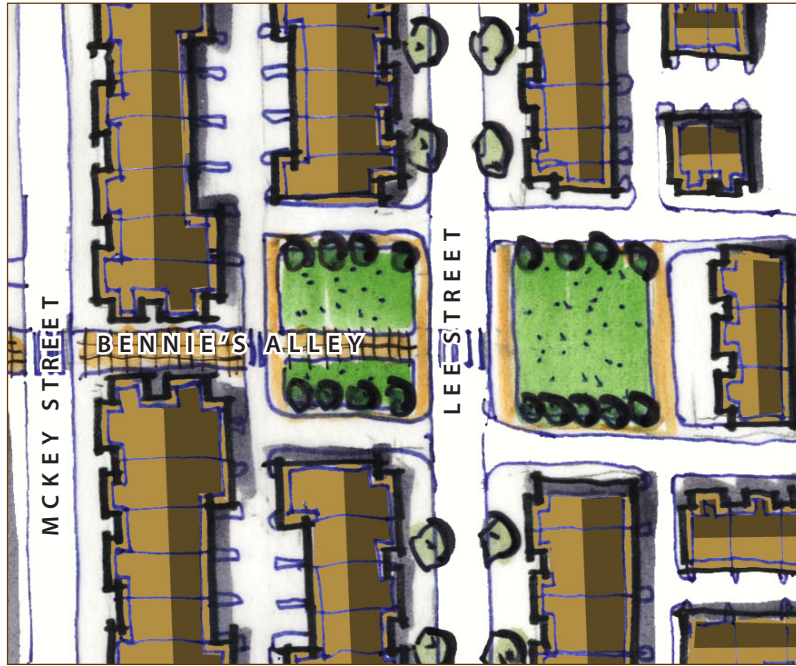
4.6 Central Alley - Before



4.7 Potential Film Festival in Central Alley



OPEN SPACE PROJECTS



Lee Square

As discussed in Part 3, Lee Square is an integral part of the Lee Street Village catalyst development project. It is essential to providing an elegant eastern termination to Bennie's Alley, and defining the character of the surrounding residential buildings. Lee Street Village has two phases – a first phase on the municipal parking lot west of Lee Street; and a second phase on private land east of Lee Street. Lee Square could also be split into pieces, with the phased construction of the western plaza providing an economic stimulus and a design cue to private development. The eastern half could be subsequently built by the city, or could be part of a master development and deeded to the city as a park.

Lee Square is unlike other public spaces in downtown in that it is quite enclosed and bisected by a public street. It is also complicated by having to accommodate the existing customer service facility in the short term. Since this is a key early-action project, the city could split the western half into two phases to allow time to relocate customer service, possibly combining it with a similar county function elsewhere. The northern half of the square could be built on the existing municipal parking lot, preserving a peripheral drive for future townhouse access and constructing an extension to Bennie's Alley. The second phase would be an easy replication to the south once the land is cleared. The third and final phase would be the reproduction across Lee Street.

Before park construction, the city could host temporary events such as an arts festival or crafts market in the McKey Street lot, to raise the project's profile. Once the surrounding development is built, the square could take on more multipurpose functions depending on its final design. Inclusion of an active recreational element such as a bocce court (Figure 4.8) could provide the basis for more consistent active use.



4.8 Potential Character of Lee Square



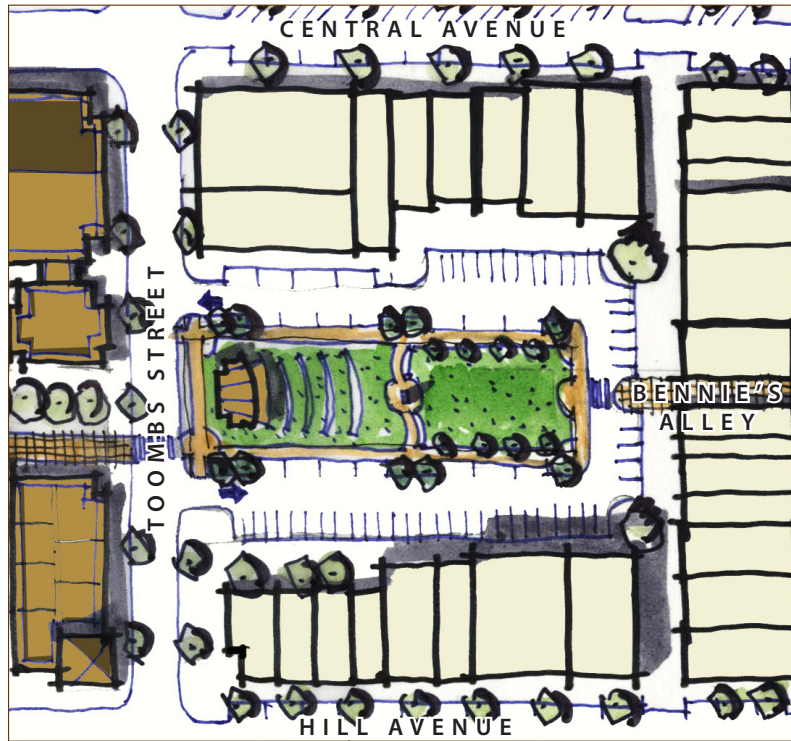
4.9 Art Festival on McKey Street



4.10 Lee Square Plaza Activity



OPEN SPACE PROJECTS



Toombs Plaza

Similar to Lee Square, Toombs Plaza is the western termination for Bennie's Alley, occupying a portion of the existing Toombs Street parking lot. Even though the lot is heavily used, it is also improved as a pedestrian space around its edges; and the presence of outdoor dining areas, landscaping, and multistory historic warehouses give it a character not unlike Savannah's City Market. It is spacious enough to reclaim the center four parking aisles as a multi-functional plaza space, while preserving the peripheral parking for dedicated residential use.

Toombs Street Plaza is a key catalyst to realizing more intense mixed-use development on the block immediately to the west; but transitioning out the central parking without affecting business is of paramount importance. In the short term, the city should stress the replacement parking available on the adjacent First Baptist Church property, which is under an existing lease agreement. A longer-term solution would be constructing a parking deck shared with new development as a public-private venture. The peripheral sidewalks would link to an improved Toombs Street, providing a necessary connection to the mixed-use block. While an early action might be several temporary performances in the parking aisles to gauge public response and identify potential issues, the ultimate build-out could include the central plaza; multilevel galleries on the warehouse facades; and pervious paving and other retrofits to "green" the remaining parking.



4.11 Potential Character of Toombs Plaza



OPEN SPACE PROJECTS



4.12 Toombs Plaza Aerial View



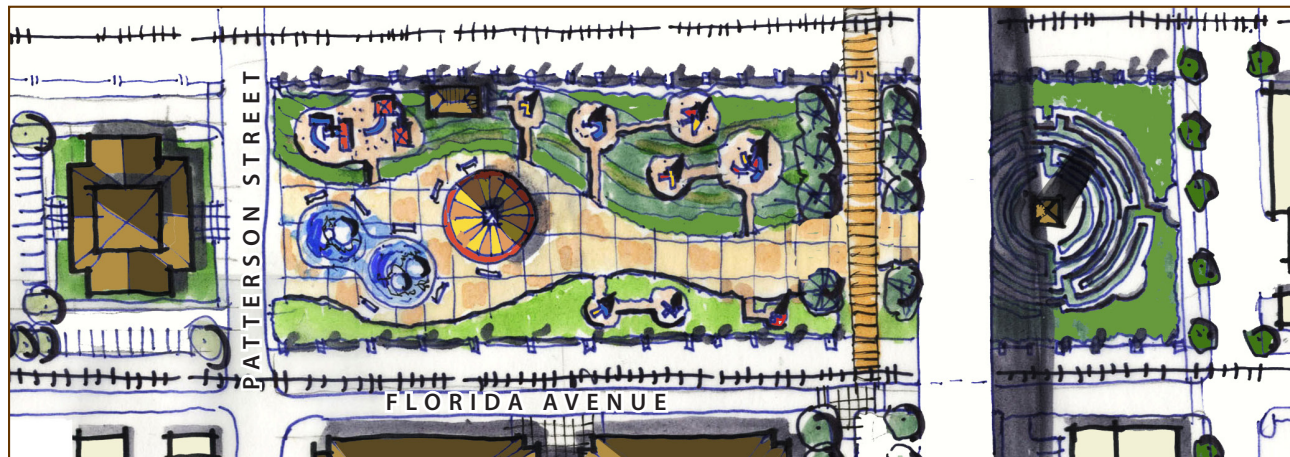
OPEN SPACE PROJECTS



Olympic Park

Olympic Park is currently the only major open space in the study area. At approximately 2.8 acres, it is a sizeable space for a historic downtown, but is compromised by its location between two railroad tracks and adjacent to the overpass. It is also largely unprogrammed, and is a missed opportunity to improve the physical condition of the Southside and stimulate future redevelopment and renovation in the area. The park needs better access and an expanded program to attract more people, to eventually stretch the mental boundary of downtown to the south.

Despite its shortcomings, the park is still recognized as an essential downtown element and has broad support for design changes and refinements to create a family destination. One possible strategy is to reconceive it as fitness or “wellness” park, with various “stations” to appeal to different age groups. These stations might include children’s play structures, a splash pad, meditation gardens, a walking trail, and other elements to encourage healthy living. In addition to improving the existing site, the park could be expanded to the east and west. The eastern expansion would reclaim vacant city land and eliminate the South Underpass to connect to South Ashley Street. This area could be developed with community garden plots or a vertical garden maze, injecting healthy diet into the park program. On the west, an existing brownfield site could be acquired to accommodate a future multipurpose / fitness facility or other community building, with rainy-day features like a climbing wall or gym.



4.13 Olympic Park, Activated

Finally, pedestrian access to downtown could be enhanced by constructing a multiuse trail on the alignment of South Patterson Street; formalizing Florida Avenue with pavement and sidewalks; and improving the streetscape of South Ashley Street. These public investments would go a long way toward incentivizing redevelopment on key sites, such as the St. Paul’s Renaissance catalyst project and potential new housing fronting Florida Avenue.



OPEN SPACE PROJECTS



4.14 West Florida Avenue and Olympic Park - Before



4.15 West Florida Avenue and Olympic Park - After



MOBILITY PROJECTS



MOBILITY PROJECTS

The other half of the public space equation involves streets, sidewalks and other elements fostering downtown mobility. Building on the analysis of downtown's circulation system, thoroughfare designs, and safety concerns contained in Part 1, the following narrative outlines the recommended mobility projects that support the master plan vision. This is achieved through appropriately scaled and designed street sections, refined circulation patterns, and operational improvements. The basic issues the mobility projects address include:

- Enhancing the walkable design of the downtown street system
- Improving the functioning of the traffic signal system
- Managing travel speeds on Ashley, Patterson, Hill and Central
- Mitigating the effects of truck circulation
- Balancing one-way versus two-way traffic patterns
- Increasing accessibility to parking

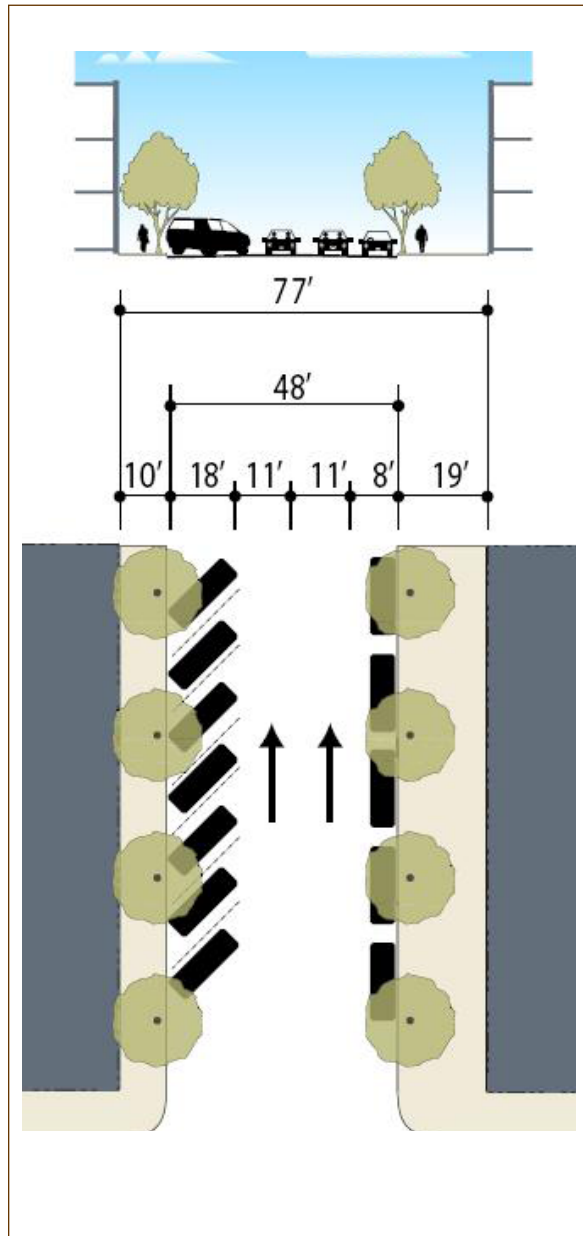


4.16 Pedestrian Alley and Street Grid System

The master plan is a long-range vision, but requires immediate, intermediate, and long-range implementation actions to achieve more mobility freedom and coordination. The short-term projects below can be accomplished quickly, as they require only city approval and, in most cases, are simply a matter of repainting and re-signing a street. Medium-range projects are technically possible within five years, but in some instances require additional county or state action. Long-term projects are capital-intensive and will likely require funding through state and federal processes, which mean a five-year minimum delay in most cases. Note that medium-range and long-range projects may, in some instances, be completed sooner if other funding is identified. For instance, some modifications to state roads can be completed ahead of the state's funding process, if non-state funds can be made available. In this case, only state cooperation and permission are required for the project to proceed.



MOBILITY PROJECTS



4.17 Ashley / Patterson proposed redesign

Complete Streets

These projects are intended to provide speed management and additional parking in the downtown area.

Patterson / Ashley Restructuring - Recommended Improvements: Patterson Street and Ashley Street from Valley to Savannah. Add reverse angle parking to one side of the street, narrowing travel lanes from 12' to 11'. The proposed section is shown in Figure 4.17. In the long term, Patterson and Ashley should be returned to two-way operation, but this will require additional street network connections as the blocks to the north are redeveloped, as well as modifications at the railroad bridge. The two-way operation modification is therefore not detailed in this plan.

Ashley and Patterson are key commercial streets and represent the heart of the walkable downtown area. Stakeholder input from the interviews and workshops noted uncomfortably high vehicle speeds on these streets, an observation supported by planning team direct observation and by the presence of the flashing pedestrian signals between Central and Hill. In addition, stakeholders requested more on-street parking in the downtown area. This recommendation will provide slightly narrower travel lanes, which will help manage speeds and add parking spaces by converting from parallel parking to reverse-angle parking on one side of the street.

Reverse angle parking is a new configuration for Valdosta, though it has been used successfully in many other cities. The plan recommends that it be phased in, perhaps starting with a lower-volume street such as McKey Street, and that it first be used on Patterson adjacent to the Court House.

As Patterson and Ashley are federal highways, permission must be obtained from GDOT for this modification.



4.18 Existing Patterson Street - one way, parallel parking



4.19 Reverse-Angled Parking



MOBILITY PROJECTS



Central Avenue Two-Way - Recommended Improvements: Central Avenue from Oak to Troup. Convert the southern-most westbound lane on Central from Oak to Troup to an eastbound lane; add on-street parking.

As noted in Part 1, a serious crash problem exists along Patterson Street at its intersections with Central and Hill. The problem is a result of several factors, including the high speeds on Central (which is three one-way westbound lanes) and signal timing anomalies on Patterson. In addition, stakeholder feedback indicated a strong interest in returning as many one-way streets to two-way operation as possible. As shown in Figure 4.21, Central is already a two-lane street east of Troup and west of Oak; the only three-lane section is through the heart of downtown. Returning one lane to eastbound operation should have minimal impacts on overall capacity of Central, but will have significant benefits for circulation and speed management. The addition of on-street parking will increase the supply of parking in the downtown area, and also provide speed management on this street. The proposed new sections for Central are shown in Figures 4.24, 4.25, and 4.26.



4.20 Existing Central Avenue



4.21: Central Avenue lane configuration



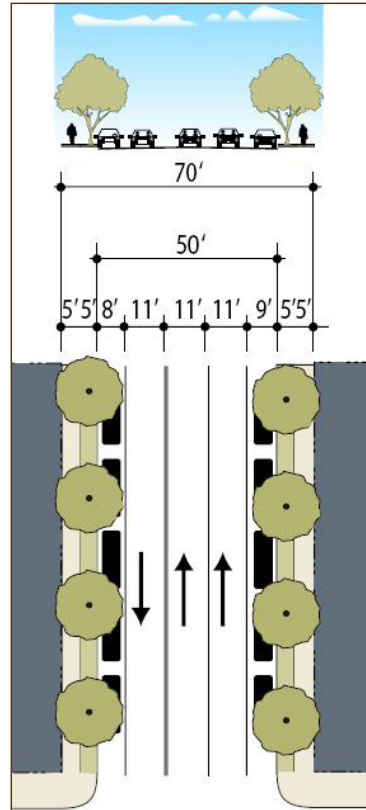
MOBILITY PROJECTS



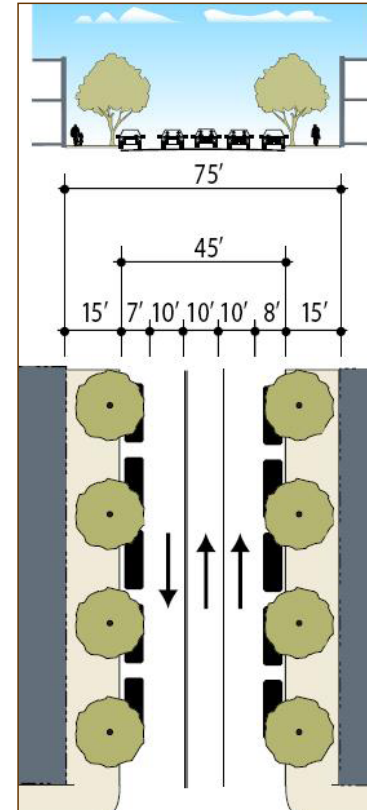
4.22 Central Avenue before



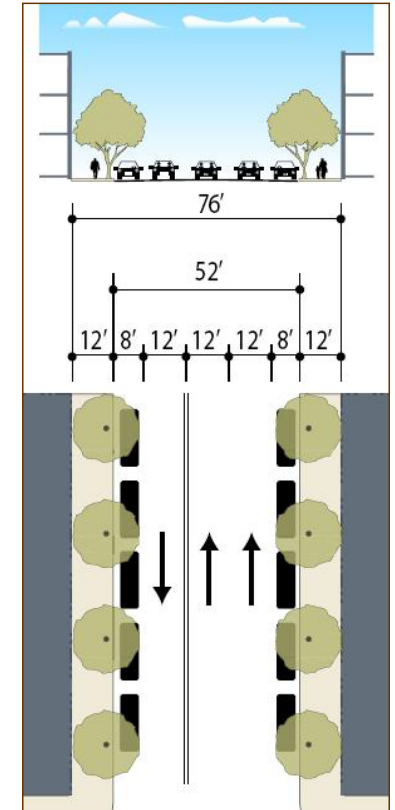
4.23 Central Avenue after - two-way, parallel parking



4.24 Central Ave Troup to Lee - Proposed



4.25 Central Avenue Lee to Ashley - Proposed

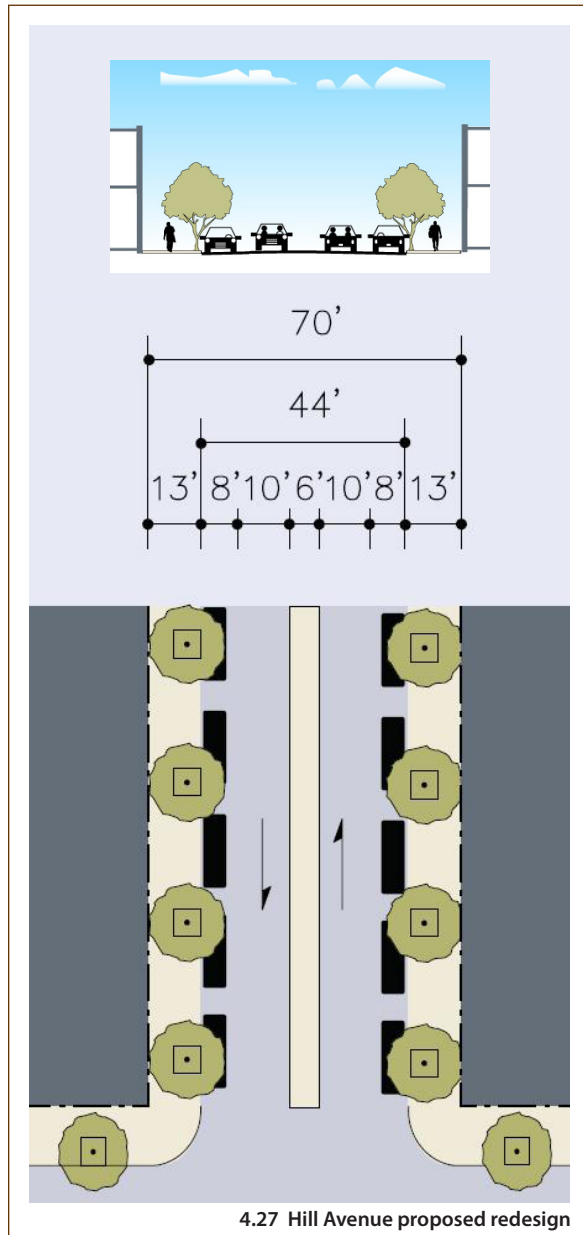


4.26: Central Avenue Ashley to Oak - Proposed

Most of the cost of improvements would cover the installation of new and/or upgraded traffic signals. The project does not require any reconstruction of streets or curbs, but will require new painting, signage, and traffic signalization. A traffic operations analysis will be required, and cooperation and permission must be obtained from GDOT for modifications to this highway.



MOBILITY PROJECTS



Hill Avenue Road Diet - Recommended Improvements: Hill Avenue from Oak to Toombs. Add on-street parking on both sides, and eventually convert to two-way operation with a safety strip.

This extends the “urban” section of Hill Avenue from Oak to Toombs, in support of the land use goal of increased intensity of the Toombs block. In time, Hill Avenue should be two-way, as is proposed for Central Avenue, but this is not recommended until the Savannah Avenue four-lane boulevard (see below) is accomplished. The proposed two-way section keeps the existing curb lines, but adds a flush median / safety strip in the center (Figure 4.28).

Costs are relatively minor, consisting of restriping Hill Avenue between Oak and Toombs. This project does not require any street or curb reconstruction, but permission must be obtained from GDOT, due to Hill Avenue’s designation as a federal highway.



4.28 Hill Avenue - Proposed



4.29 Hill Avenue - Existing



MOBILITY PROJECTS



4.30 South Ashley Street



4.31 Toombs Street



4.32 Lee Street

Streetscapes / Pedestrian Improvements

The city has done an outstanding job with streetscape improvements in the central core. Yet there are many streets in the surrounding areas that still lack even basic pedestrian amenities (Figures 4.30 to 4.32). The projects below will extend the core's walkable streets by adding sidewalk improvements, street trees, and in some cases on-street parking to selected thoroughfares.

North Patterson Street Improvements: *Gordon to Magnolia - add street trees and other improvements to extend the existing Patterson streetscape north.*

This is the two-directional portion of Patterson Street. The project will add street trees to match the configuration downtown, providing greater visual connectivity to Valdosta State University.

South Ashley Street Improvements: *Savannah to MLK, Jr. Drive – add street trees and other improvements to match the MLK, Jr. Drive streetscape design. Include signal at Ashley and Savannah intersection; eventually connect to roundabout.*

This portion of Ashley Street provides a direct connection across the railroad tracks to the area south of downtown. The MLK Corridor has been identified for further attention and redevelopment, and the Ashley Street connection will provide a logical flow between this activity center and the downtown.

Toombs Street Improvements: *Savannah to Valley - add parallel parking and trees in tree wells on both sides.*

The master plan identifies Toombs Street as an edge condition ripe for redevelopment. These modifications will convert Toombs into a walkable thoroughfare suitable to support the land use vision for the underutilized blocks.

Lee Street Improvements: *Savannah to Valley - add parallel parking, trees, and sidewalks both sides.*

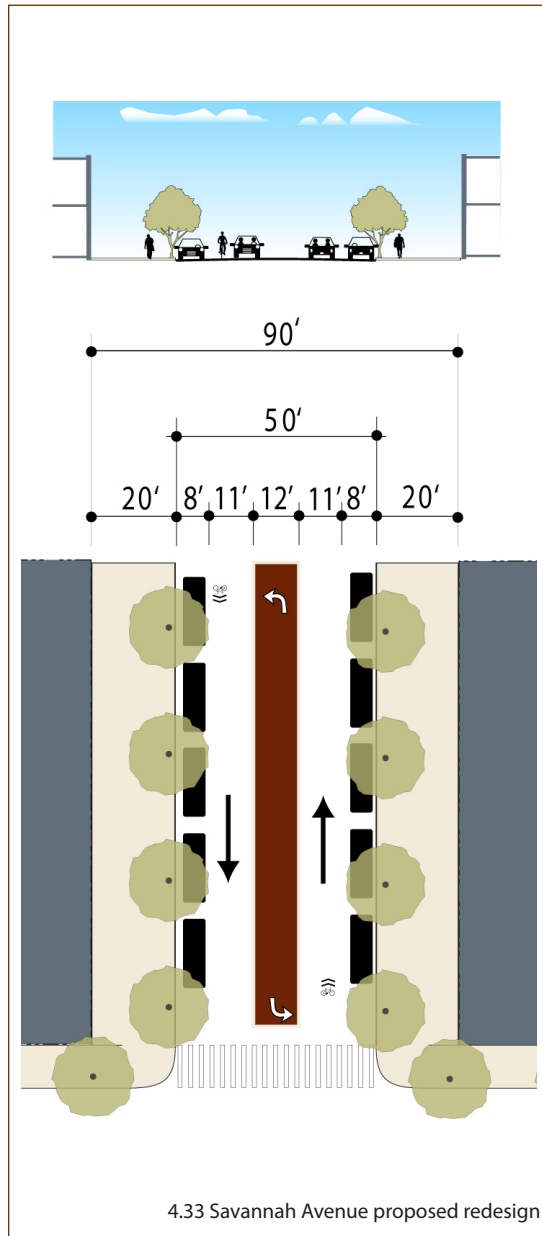
Lee Street is an edge condition, identified in the plan for the next stage of downtown development. These modifications will convert Lee into a walkable thoroughfare to support the land use vision. The addition of sidewalks makes this project more intensive and costly than the other streetscape projects.

McKey Street Improvements: *Central to Hill - convert existing on-street parking to reverse-angle parking; add street trees.*

McKey is a low-volume street that can serve as an appropriate test site for reverse angle parking. As part of the plan to urbanize Lee Street, McKey is also an extension of the walkable design of Ashley Street.



MOBILITY PROJECTS



Street Reconfigurations

The projects described above respect, for the most part, the existing curb lines on downtown Valdosta's streets. This makes the projects less expensive to design and build, and provides a shorter timeframe for implementation. The projects below are much larger in scale, however, and will require extensive additional analysis, design, and reconstruction. They are longer-term projects that will ultimately provide a higher level of mobility and walkability to the entire downtown area, which offsets their additional cost and design requirements.

Savannah Avenue Parkway - Recommended Improvements: Savannah Avenue from Forrest Street to Oak Street - convert to 3 lane section, and add sidewalks, street trees and park landscaping on both side.

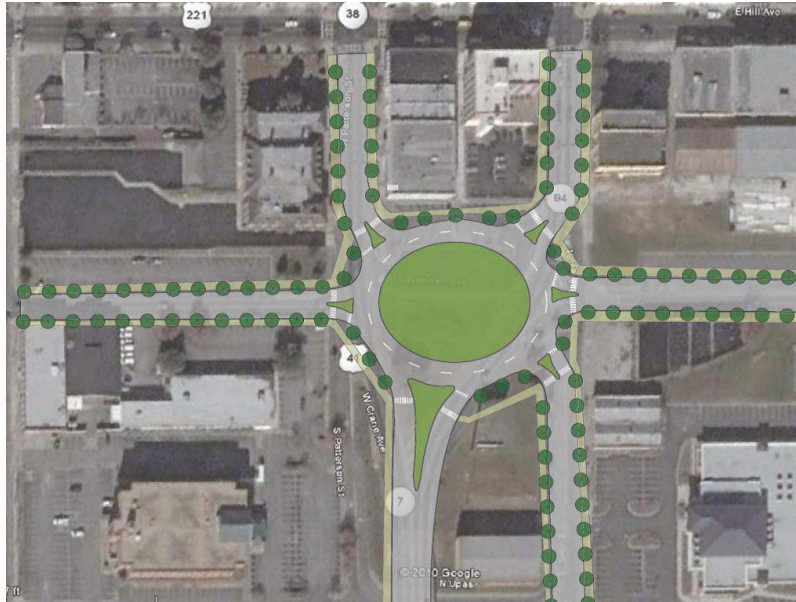
To completely transform the one-way pairs at Hill and Central, additional capacity must be provided on a parallel street, which can then be re-designated as Highway 84. Savannah Avenue has adequate right-of-way width and close proximity to Central and Hill to serve as the parallel route. Currently, Savannah is a two-lane street. The proposed redesign, shown in Figure 4.33, is a three-lane street, with appropriate lane width for large trucks and flanking landscaping to establish its new character as a parkway. Once Savannah is widened and re-designated, Hill and Central can be returned to two-way operation. The additional truck-sized lanes on Savannah would allow Central – proposed above as a 2/1 two-way street - to become a 1/1 street (one lane in each direction), and the additional lane width could be reconfigured into new on-street parking. The proposed Savannah redesign is a “growable” street, initially with on-street parking, one travel lane, and a flush median/safety strip. If traffic volumes require more capacity in the future, the on-street parking could be removed and safety strip narrowed to provide an additional travel lane.

Florida Avenue Reconstruction - Recommended Improvements: Florida Avenue from Toombs to Ashley - reconstruct with curb and gutter, new paving, on-street parking, street trees, and sidewalk on one side.

The master plan calls for redevelopment of Olympic Park as a public gathering place and for the urbanization of the area just south of the railroad tracks. Historically, this was a thriving community center, with shops, services, and housing; but the urban fabric has deteriorated over the years - likely due, in part, to the divisive effect of the overpass. Florida Avenue fronts directly on Olympic Park and is the first avenue south of the tracks. To support the land use vision for the plan, Florida Avenue should be reconstructed from its current condition (an unpaved road) to an urban street.



MOBILITY PROJECTS



4.34 Proposed Patterson-Ashley Roundabout

Patterson-Ashley Roundabout - Recommended Improvements: Patterson, Ashley, Savannah at the north end of the overpass - reconstruct as two-lane roundabout.

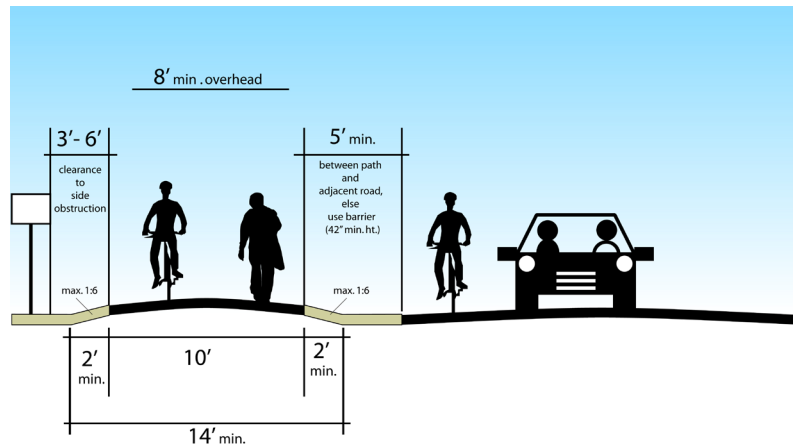
The current “wishbone” configuration of Ashley and Patterson at the north end of the overpass serves well for the movement of vehicles (at relatively high speeds, in excess of 30 mph), but presents a significant barrier for pedestrian movement. In addition, Savannah Avenue is bisected by the overpass, hampering east-west connectivity and circulation in the downtown. As part of the plan to re-designate Savannah Avenue as the new Highway 84, this disconnect must be repaired. A two-lane roundabout is recommended as the best option, based on the ability of the roundabout to tie together several different streets and maintain walkable, managed vehicle speeds. A schematic design is shown in Figure 4.34.

The roundabout is a long-term solution, and would require several intermediate steps. A thorough traffic operations study is needed to evaluate the roundabout, compared to a signalized intersection, to determine the optimal design parameters. The actual design of the roundabout can then be produced, followed by construction.

Additional Pedestrian Improvements

South Patterson Promenade - Recommended Improvements: South Patterson Street from Savannah to Florida - construct a multiuse path along the former Patterson Street right-of-way.

Multiuse trails are generally at odds with a downtown context, but in some cases they are appropriate. For downtown Valdosta, a short multiuse trail is recommended to connect two segments of Patterson Street severed by the north railroad track, using the existing Patterson Street right-of-way which is currently occupied by North and South Overpass (Patterson has been re-routed onto the overpass). This path, designed as a formal “promenade”, would provide a strong connection to Olympic Park, as well as a key pedestrian connection between the north and south sides of the tracks. The recommended section is shown in Figure 4.35.



4.35 South Patterson Promenade



MOBILITY PROJECTS



4.36 On-street Parking on North Patterson Street



4.37 Landscaped Surface Parking Lot

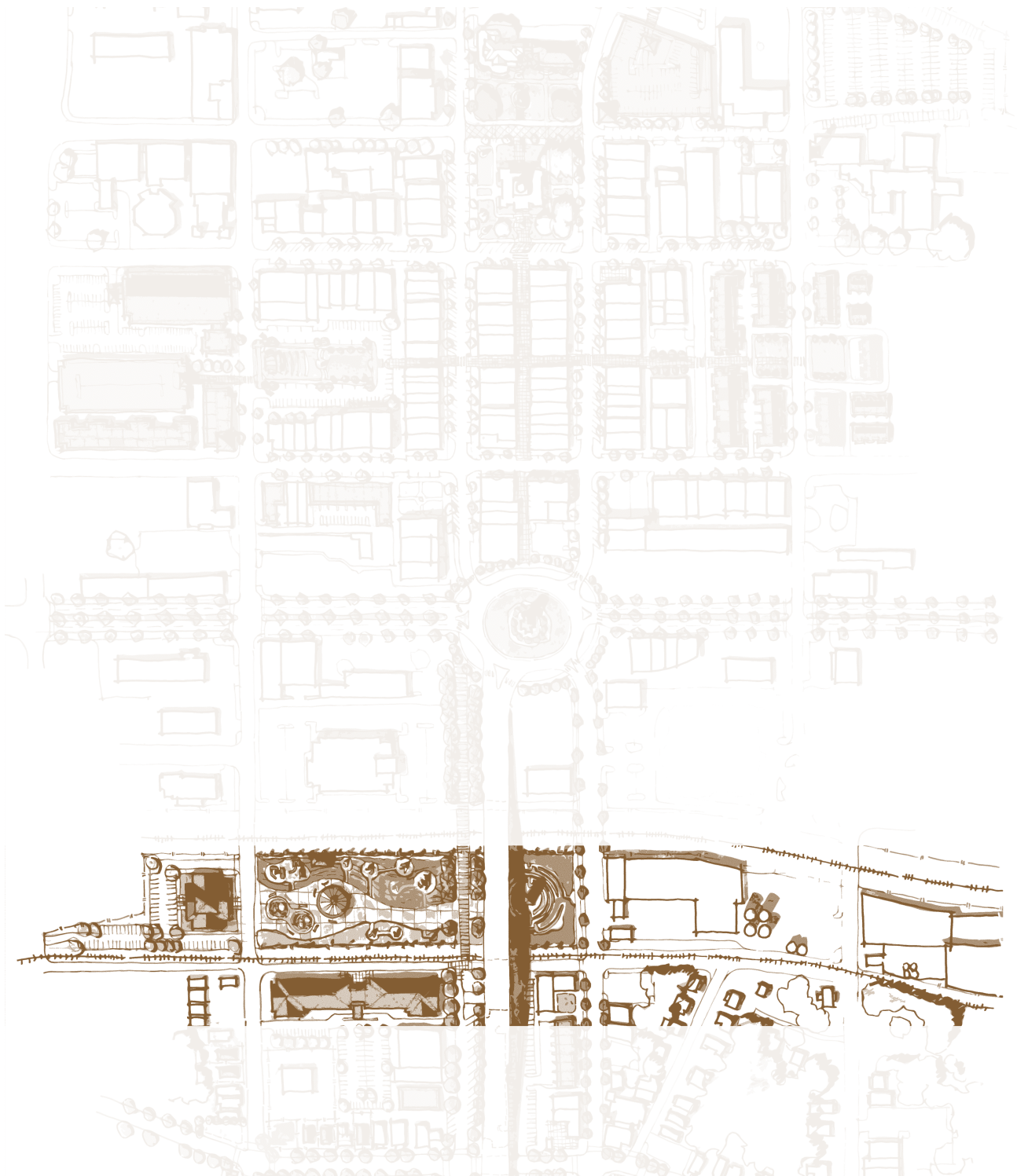
Parking Facilities

In an urban context such as downtown Valdosta, on-street parking is the preferred parking option. On-street parking provides an immediate message to motorists that a shop is “open for business”; that customers are expected and desired, and that pedestrians can be expected. According to retail specialists, an on-street parking space is worth up to \$200,000 in annual sales. In addition, on-street parking helps manage traffic speeds and produces people walking on the sidewalks, providing both a safe location for walking, and actual pedestrians. Valdosta has made good use of on-street parking spaces, but access to many of these spaces is hampered by the one-way traffic flow on some streets. The plan addresses this in great detail.

While many smaller shops may generate demand for just a few parking spaces, the demand for employee parking as well as larger retail and restaurant uses can exceed the capacity of on-street parking. Off-street parking is a vital element of any downtown plan to accommodate this demand. The Valdosta Plan calls for a new off-street parking lot on the Central Avenue Church of Christ parcel. Ideally, this lot would be shielded from direct street view by liner buildings along the block perimeter and accessed via a lane or alley. This lot will provide parking capacity for increased development intensity along and east of Lee Street.

In addition to having convenient and accessible parking locations, customers and visitors to the downtown must have a comprehensible access system. The current one-way street arrangement is confusing and frustrating to visitors, and occasionally regular downtown travelers. It interferes with the ability to actually reach a destination, once the destination is identified. Ultimately removing the one-way system will permit more effective way-finding; the Valdosta Plan begins this process by returning Central to two-way operation, and lays the groundwork for eventually modifying the remaining one-way streets.





PART 5

ACTION PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW



5.1 The Courthouse Square

IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW

The implementation plan contained in the following pages represents a framework for incremental action that can advance the vision for Downtown Valdosta described in the proceeding pages. In order to fully realize this vision, however, several underlying implementation principles should be followed. These principles are shaped by a philosophy that protects and respects the community's common goals; encourages new development and redevelopment appropriate to downtown's historic context; builds a strong partnership between downtown stakeholders and city administration; and balances resources for the most sustainable and equitable advancement for downtown and the city as a whole.

Implementation Principle #1: A Targeted and Phased Approach

Given the demands on public resources, public sector efforts / funds should be timed and combined where practical in order to have the most visible result. The early-action items listed on page 85 are designed to provide visible success and generate excitement with modest investments.

Implementation Principle #2: Leveraging Private Sector Investment

When public resources and tools are brought to the table, they should always seek to maximize the leveraging of private sector investment dollars. The catalyst projects in Part 3 are based on this ideal.

Implementation Principle #3: Creation of Long Term Sustainability

Redevelopment efforts and associated public improvements should be carefully phased over a period of 10-20 years so as to not overrun market demand, and to minimize the fiscal exposure of scarce public sector resources.

Implementation Principle #4: Continuing the policy of inclusive planning

The city has made a commitment to involving stakeholders in any major decision affecting downtown, witnessed by this master plan process. They should continue this wise policy as the plan moves forward into implementation, and faces the need for adjustments and additional planning as is the case with any long-term effort.



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
------------	---------------------	--------------	----------------	------------------	------------------

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

The following table proposes implementation steps and responsibilities to advance the catalyst projects described in Part 3.

D1: Courthouse Square					
D1.1	Historic Courthouse restoration and repositioning	Study costs and options regarding adaptive reuse of the historic courthouse building	Task Force (County, City, others)	N/A	N/A
		Develop proposal jointly with the county to locate a VSU school or other facility in the building to act as a major activity generator	County / City	N/A	N/A
		Complete the improvements to the Courthouse Square (refer to Public Space section, Courthouse Square)	County, City	See below	County, City
		Rehabilitate the building to accommodate the new use	County, City, VSU	TBD, dependent on use	Bonds
D1.2	Courthouse Square edge infill / redevelopment	Secure property on north side of Valley Street and clear land for new park expansion (refer to Public Space section, Courthouse Square)	City, CVDA	See below	TAD
		Work with Junior Service League to undertake facade improvements to Converse-Dalton House south elevation	Main Street, Junior Service League, Heritage Foundation, VHPC*	\$50,000	Junior Service League, Heritage Foundation, HPD (state)
		Explore ways to support an expansion of the Converse-Dalton House to the east to finish framing the park	City, CVDA, Junior Service League, VHPC	\$1,000,000-\$1,500,000	Junior Service League, CVDA

* Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
		Redevelop surface lot at northeast corner of Ashley and Valley, as active use with potential structured parking for courthouse	County, City, CVDA	TBD, dependent on use	County, Private
D2: Lee Street Village					
D2.1	Lee Village Phase 1 urban town-house square	Prepare strategy for relocating city Customer Service building	City, County	N/A	N/A
		Determine a sale price for city land, and issue a development RFP	City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Review developer proposals and select a development partner	City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Determine level of TAD funding to support project (if needed)	City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Enter into agreement with selected developer	City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Relocate parking and Customer Service operation, and construct pocket park (refer to Public Space section, Lee Square)	City, County	TBD	City, County
		Construct Phase 1 project	Private	~\$5,000,000	Private
D2.2	Lee Village Phase 2 urban town-house square	Work with existing property owners on east side on Lee Street to develop land acquisition strategy	Private, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Brownfield study for the redevelopment parcels	City	TBD	N/A
		Determine level of TAD funding to support project (if needed)	City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Complete Phase 2 public improvements and construct project	Private, CVDA	~\$6,000,000	Private, TAD



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
D3: Toombs West					
D3.1	Family Life Center for First Baptist Church	Work with First Baptist on master plan for Toombs block, and assist as needed in relocating existing social services to historic hospital	City, CVDA, First Baptist Church	TBD	First Baptist, CVDA, Main Street
		Negotiate property options / aquisition and land assembly with existing property owners reflecting Family Life Center master plan	City, CVDA, First Baptist Church, property owners	N/A	N/A
D3.2	Toombs West residential mixed-use	Issue RFP to developers interested in constructing mixed-use / multifamily housing on site	City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Review proposals and select preferred development partner	City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Provide TAD committment for infrastructure and structured parking costs	City, CVDA	\$2.3 to \$3.5 million	TAD
		Enter into development agreement with preferred developer and construct project	Private	~\$12,000,000	Private
D4: South Ashley Renaissance					
D4.1	St. Paul AME Housing senior living center	Work with St. Paul AME and (other area churches as appropriate) to develop conceptual program	St. Paul AME / partners, City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Prepare developer RFP to solicit level of interest in partnership	St. Paul AME / partners, City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Evaluate RFPs and select preferred development proposal	St. Paul AME / partners, City, CVDA	N/A	N/A



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
		Create development agreement for project	Development team, City, CVDA	N/A	N/A
		Seek tax credit and other assistance for project as needed, and construct project	Development team	~\$4,300,000	Institutional, LIHTC, Private
D4.2	South Ashley Preservation storefront commercial / institutional	Support historic renovations of existing storefront buildings for adaptive reuse	Main Street, CVDA, property owners	TBD	Grants, TAD
		Work with QuOLA to continue rehabilitation of historic Liberty Theater block	Main Street, CVDA, QuOLA	TBD	Grants, TAD
D5: Central Core					
D5.1	Core Area Mixed-Use adaptive reuse / preservation projects	Work with existing property owners to develop proformas and financing strategies	CVDA, Main Street, property owners	N/A	N/A
		Review codes / regulations to determine any disincentives to historic preservation projects, and correct	City / Main Street, property owners	N/A	N/A
		Support adaptive reuse projects with gap funding as needed	CVDA, Main Street	TBD	Grants, TAD, state low-interest loans
D6: Long-Term Projects					
D6.1	Langdale Ford potential VSU academic village	Continue to explore potential for future academic village (student housing, academic facilities, hotel) with VSU and Landgale Ford ownership	City, CVDA, Langdale Ford, VSU	TBD	TBD
D6.2	Post Office Block mixed-use redevelopment	Work with USPS and adjacent landowners to determine future plans and interest in large-scale redevelopment partnerships	City, CVDA, USPS, property owners	TBD	TBD



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

<i>Project ID</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Approximate Cost</i>	<i>Possible Funding</i>
D6.3	Southside Neighborhood urban single-family infill / redevelopment	Support residential infill projects and land assembly to stabilize and increase housing in existing neighborhood	City, CVDA, institutions, non-profit developers (Habitat, others), property owners	TBD	TBD
D6.4	City Hall Expansion onto Central Avenue Church of Christ site	Conduct facilities programming to determine future administrative space needs, and continue dialogue with Central Avenue Church of Christ on relocation plans, development timeline, exercising first right of refusal	City, consultant team, Central Avenue Church of Christ	TBD	TBD

PUBLIC SPACE PROJECTS

The following table proposes implementation steps and responsibilities to advance the public space projects described in Part 4.

<i>Project ID</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Approximate Cost</i>	<i>Possible Funding</i>
PSG: General Projects					
PSG.1	Bennie's Alley enhancements	Work with the public art commission to explore art and water enhancements to Bennie's Alley	City / LVAC**	\$100,000	City / CVDA
PSG.2	Downtown Visitors Trail interpretive markers	Develop an interpretive signage program with a downtown visitor orientation kiosk near Bank of America parking	City, CVDA	\$80,000	BID / City

** Lowndes-Valdosta Arts Commission



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
PS1: Courthouse Square					
PS1.1	Square Restoration of historic landscape	Demolish 1950s annex and repair remaining facade as part of building renovation	County	\$500,000	SPLOST allocation
		Explore building a small performance plaza on the footprint of the annex, and restore the balance of the landscaping	County, City	\$90,000 (\$15 / square foot)	County, future SPLOST
PS1.2	North Expansion of courthouse square park space	Discuss plan with existing property owners and the Historic Preservation Commission to determine feasibility	City / Main Street	Staff time	City / future SPLOST / TAD
		Resolve real estate strategy / funding mechanism and acquire property	City, CVDA	\$600,000	TAD
		Narrow and reconstruct Valley Street between Ashley and Patterson as a special events plaza with pavers and removable bollards	City, CVDA	\$250,000 (\$1,000 / linear foot)	TAD
		Design and construct park expansion to harmonize with historic square	City, CVDA	\$300,000	TEA21, future SPLOST, TAD
	Converse-Dalton House historic restoration and expansion	Work with Junior Service League to undertake facade improvements and potential expansion to Converse-Dalton House (refer to Land Use / Development section, Courthouse Square)	City / Main Street, Junior Service League, HPC	See above	Junior Service League, Main Street
PS2: Central Alley					
PS2.1	Phase 1 Repositioning between Central and Hill	Secure development rights to vacant lot at 102 North Ashley	City, CVDA	\$15,600	CVDA



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
		Relocate trash compactor to rear of vacant lot (coordinate with businesses and city public works / sanitation)	City, CVDA	\$50,000	Enterprise Fund, BID
		Install continuous overhead light strings and power outlets at intermittent locations	City, CVDA, Main Street	\$20,000	Enterprise Fund, BID
		Install permanent improvements (pavers, lighting) to match existing standard at Bennie's Alley but with provisions for occasional vehicular passage	City, CVDA	\$93,000 (\$200 / linear foot)	TAD
PS2.2	Phase 2 Repositioning between Hill and Savannah	Relocate trash dumpster to the parking lot south of the Daniel Ashley House (coordinate with Ashley House owner / management)	City, CVDA, Ashley House	\$10,000	BID, Enterprise Funds
		Install wall-mounted lighting at intermittent locations on existing buildings facing the alley (coordinate with businesses)	City, CVDA	\$20,000	TAD
		Install pavers to match existing standard at Bennie's Alley	City, CVDA	\$31,500 (\$150 / linear foot)	TAD
		Provide electrical service to edge of adjacent parking lot (Savannah Avenue) for temporary events	Main Street	\$5,000	BID
PS3: Lee Square					
PS3.1	Lee Square Phase 1 pocket park	Shift municipal parking operations to Central Avenue Church of Christ parcel (build surface lot)	City	\$400,000	City



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

<i>Project ID</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Approximate Cost</i>	<i>Possible Funding</i>
		Close north half of lot and install pocket park and peripheral drive	City, CVDA	\$72,000 (\$8 / square foot)	CVDA, future SPLOST
		Extend Bennie's Alley to connect with pocket park and install sidewalk along McKey to Central	City, CVDA	\$82,500 (\$150 / linear foot)	CVDA, future SPLOST
PS3.2	Lee Square Phase 2 pocket park	Relocate existing Customer Service operation (possibly combining with county facility)	City / County	TBD	City, County
		Monitor parking use on remaining lot, and explore temporary parking at corner parcels east of Lee at Hill if needed	City, CVDA	Depends on need	CVDA
		Clear remaining site and complete pocket park and peripheral drive	City, CVDA	\$72,000 (\$8 / square foot)	CVDA
PS3.3	Lee Square Phase 3 residential square	Work with developer to reserve / improve land for east half of Lee Square (refer to Land Use / Development section, Lee Street Village)	CVDA, Private	\$77,000 (\$8 / square foot)	Private, Federal (Brownfield)
PS4: Toombs Plaza					
PS4.1	Toombs "Green Zone" alley extensions / green retrofits	Extend pedestrian alley improvements to Toombs Street on north and south sides of lot by expanding existing sidewalk widths where feasible	City / Main Street, CVDA	\$130,400 (\$200 / linear foot)	City, CVDA
		Redesign / retrofit peripheral landscaping to subtropical palette (palms, flowering shrubs)	City / Main Street, CVDA	\$100,000	City, CVDA



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
		Establish standards for multilevel exterior “galleries” and investigate ways to assist property owners in construction	City / Main Street, CVDA	Staff time	Main Street, CVDA
		Explore ways to retrofit peripheral parking spaces to green standards (pervious paving, rain gardens)	City, CVDA	\$300,000	Future SPLOST
PS4.2	Toombs Plaza outdoor performance space / festival space	Provide signage indicating Toombs replacement parking on Baptist Church lot, and encourage similar use by business owners / employees	Main Street / City	Minimal	Main Street
		Extend electric power to western set of parking islands	City, Georgia Power	\$10,000	City, Georgia Power
		Plan and conduct temporary concert series in central space to gauge public support, staging / resident issues	Main Street / CVDA, DVBA	TBD	Main Street / CVDA, DVBA
		Investigate ways to use future plaza as sustainable stormwater control facility	City	Staff time	City
		Design and construct “green” performance plaza (include Wi-Fi to expand usability)	Main Street / CVDA / City	\$100,000	CVDA
		Install streetscaping along Toombs Street (refer to Mobility section)	City / CVDA	\$10,000	Future SPLOST
PS5: Olympic Park					
PS5.1	Wellness Park master planning / programming	Undertake park programming / conceptual design effort (include community workshop)	Main Street / CVDA / VLPRA*** / arts community	TBD	Main Street / CVDA, VLPRA

*** Valdosta-Lowndes Parks and Recreation Authority



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

<i>Project ID</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Approximate Cost</i>	<i>Possible Funding</i>
PS5.2	Park East edible landscape	Abandon and demolish existing street (South Underpass) but maintain utilities	City	\$6,000	City
		Grade as needed and improve entire parcel for temporary community gardens	City, VLPRA, local nonprofits, volunteers	\$10,000	City, VLPRA, local nonprofits
		Work with arts and garden communities to design and construct permanent edible landscape	City, CVDA, VLPRA, local nonprofits	Staff time	CVDA, VLPRA, state / federal grants, TAD
		Commission local artist to design and construct watchtower / focal art installation	CVDA, LVAC	\$250,000	TAD, Private fundraising
PS5.3	Park Central outdoor wellness / activity landscape	Assess existing park to determine tree removal areas to make space for children's activity areas	City, VLPRA	Staff time	VLPRA
		Plan and conduct fundraising drive, kid's "charrette" and community hands-on event to design and build children's playground "treehouse" structure	City, CVDA, VLPRA, local community	\$50,000	CVDA, VLPRA, private donations, volunteer labor
		Conduct fundraising to gauge public interest in splash pad	VLPRA, City, CVDA	\$50,000	VLPRA, CVDA, private donations
		Complete park landscape / amenity improvements	VLPRA, City, CVDA	\$1,000,000 (\$10 / square foot)	VLPRA, TAD
PS5.4	Park West multipurpose fitness center	Pursue land donation offer of brownfield parcel	City	Staff time	City



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

Project ID	Project Description	Action Items	Responsibility	Approximate Cost	Possible Funding
		Conduct Phase I and Phase II assessment, and remediate as needed to non-residential standards	City	Depends on level of contamination	Federal grant, City
		Grade and pave parcel for temporary parking lot	City	\$25,000	City
		Program, design and construct multipurpose wellness facility	VLPR / CVDA	\$1,500,000	VLPR, TAD

MOBILITY / CIRCULATION PROJECTS

The following table proposes implementation steps and responsibilities to advance the mobility projects described in Part 4.

MG: General Projects					
<i>MG1</i>	Downtown Signals timing study / recalibration	Rework signal timing to avoid accidental cycling synchronization resulting in speeding	City, GDOT	\$50,000	City
CS: Complete Streets					
<i>MCS1</i>	McKey Street between Central and Hill	Install reverse-angled parking (along with streetscape improvements) on west side of street as test block	City	\$5,000	City
<i>MCS2</i>	Patterson Street between Valley and Savannah	Install reverse-angled parking test block at courthouse using "traffic rodeo"; complete balance of Patterson	City, GDOT	\$5,000	City, GDOT
<i>MCS3</i>	Ashley Street between Valley and Savannah	Add reverse-angled parking	City, GDOT	\$5,000	City, GDOT
<i>MCS4</i>	Central Avenue between Oak and Lee	Convert to two-way operation (or convert one travel lane to parking)	GDOT	\$500,000	GDOT



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

<i>Project ID</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Approximate Cost</i>	<i>Possible Funding</i>
MCS5	Hill Avenue between Toombs and Patterson	Add / improve on-street parking on both sides	GDOT	\$2,000	GDOT
SS: Streetscapes					
MSS1	North Patterson Street between Gordon and Magnolia	Add street trees and pedestrian improvements	City	\$650,000	TEA21, future SPLOST
MSS2	South Ashley Street between Savannah and MLK Jr. Drive	Tie with signal to Ashley and Savannah; connect to roundabout	City, CVDA	Part of MSR3 cost	Future SPLOST, TAD
MSS3	Toombs Street between Valley and Savannah	Add parallel parking and trees in tree-wells on both sides	City, CVDA	\$440,000 (\$200 / linear foot)	Future SPLOST, TAD
MSS4	Lee Street between Valley and Savannah	Add parallel parking, trees and sidewalks on both sides	City, CVDA	\$440,000 (\$200 / linear foot)	Future SPLOST, TAD
MSS5	McKey Street between Central and Lee	Convert existing on-street parking to reverse-angle parking; add street trees	City, CVDA	\$92,000 (\$200 / linear foot)	Future SPLOST, TAD
SR: Street Reconfigurations					
MSR1	Savannah Avenue between Forrest Street and Oak	Convert to 3 lane section, add sidewalks, street trees	City / GDOT	\$7,000,000-\$9,000,000	GDOT, future SPLOST
MSR2	Florida Avenue between Toombs and Ashley	Install paving, pedestrian improvements, and railroad barrier	City, CSX	\$800,000	Future SPLOST, TAD
MSR3	Patterson-Ashley Roundabout at Savannah and overpass	Prepare planning and operations analysis	City	\$30,000	General, future SPLOST



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX *continued*

<i>Project ID</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Action Items</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Approximate Cost</i>	<i>Possible Funding</i>
		Prepare engineering design and construct roundabout	GDOT	\$3,200,000	GDOT
MT: Multiuse Trails					
MMT1	South Patterson Promenade between Savannah and Florida	Design and construct landscape multiuse trail as linear connection through Olympic Park	City	\$70,000	Future SPLOST, TAD

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING

The following table contains additional items to promote ongoing economic development and encourage effective marketing.

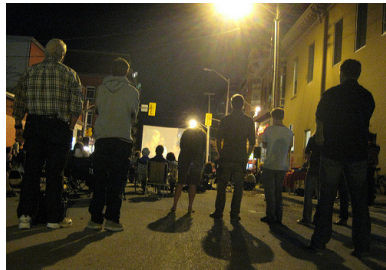
ED: Economic Development					
ED1	Main Street program support	Continue to support and promote the Main Street program	City, BID	TBD	BID
ED2	Downtown TAD Phase 1	Pass TAD authorizing legislation	City, State Legislature	TBD	City
ED3	Downtown TAD Phase 2	Prepare TAD redevelopment plan, and gain necessary approvals	City, CVDA	\$12,000-\$15,0000	City, DCA Grant
DM: Downtown Marketing					
DM1	Downtown Events programming	Continue Brown Bag lunch concerts and other events, and expand to weekends	Main Street / CVDA / DVBA	TBD	Main Street / CVDA / DVBA
DM2	VSU survey / events	Conduct VSU student survey, and structure events accordingly	Main Street / CVDA, VSU	TBD	Main Street / VSU
DM3	Master Broker real estate clearing-house	Retain master broker to maintain inventory stats, seek tenants	BID	TBD	BID



IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES



5.2 Future Courthouse Square



5.3 Future Central Alley



5.4 Future Lee Street Plaza



5.5 Future Toombs Street Plaza



5.6 Future Olympic Park

Top Ten Projects

In today's difficult economic times, the city's financial resources for capital improvement funding are limited. However, it is necessary to establish some level of momentum to generate optimism and excitement over plan implementation, as well as to move forward, however incrementally, each of the catalyst projects. Fortunately, some progress can be achieved which does not depend on major financial investments by the city. Listed below are the "Top Ten" priority implementation actions that constitute relatively modest investments by the city and / or CVDA, to make visible the plan recommendations across the study area.

1. *Courthouse Square*

- Demolish 1950s annex building
- Construct the activities plaza on north of courthouse / Valley Street
- Continue and expand "Open House" events programming

2. *Central Alley*

- Relocate trash compactor to rear of vacant lot
- Install overhead light strings and power outlets
- Host summer film festival with local restaurants as concessions

3. *The Lee Street Plaza*

- Shift municipal parking and relocate existing customer service facility
- Close north half of lot and install pocket park and peripheral drive
- Host temporary art festival similar to "Art After Dark"

4. *The Toombs Street Plaza*

- Relocate parking in central plaza area
- Install power hookup
- Temporary concert / event series in central space

5. *Olympic Park East*

- Abandon / demolish existing street
- Improve the parcel for temporary community gardens
- Hold regular farmer's markets



IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES



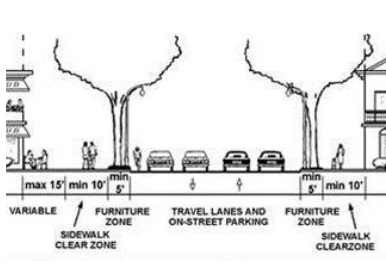
5.7 Future Olympic Park



5.8 Future McKey Street



5.9 Future Central Avenue



5.10 Future Patterson Streetscape

6. Olympic Park West

- Selectively remove trees to make space for activity areas
- Playground "Charrette" for kids
- Hold jungle gym "barnraising"

7. McKey Street Parking

- Replace existing parallel parking with reverse-angle as test case
- Future phases on Patterson, Ashley

8. Central Avenue two-way

- Reverse south lane to eastbound
- Aids in parking access, reduces speed, enhances safety

9. Patterson Streetscape

- Apply for grant funding for North Patterson Streetscape
- Design and build

10. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive Streetscape

- Phase 1 construction start January 2011
- Phase 2 completion by end of 2011



5.11 MLK, Jr. Corridor Plan and MLK Memorial Park



PROGRAMS AND POLICIES



5.12 Central Avenue Corridor



5.13 Atlantic Station, Atlanta: TAD-based redevelopment

POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

The specific projects and recommendations detailed in the previous sections are a large, but not the only, program component of the master plan. There are several policies that could be reviewed or established to help support downtown's long-term sustainability as well as advance the catalyst projects. The policies and related actions touch on funding strategies, regulatory improvements, and marketing. They should be treated as a parallel track to the physical improvements in implementing the master plan vision.

Tax Allocation District

The analysis of the sample catalyst projects indicates that most of the redevelopment options could be made economically viable with a moderate level of public subsidy. This subsidy could be used to incentivize projects that complement the city's redevelopment goals, perhaps by underwriting land acquisition costs or through direct subsidy of necessary project elements such as parking facilities, site preparation, infrastructure or public open space. A promising potential funding source for this subsidy would be a Tax Allocation District (TAD), which generates funding support underwritten by the potential future economic benefits generated by the project.

- The Creation of a TAD in downtown Valdosta would be an ideal application of this public financing technique, since the area meets all of the state criteria for formation of a district and there appears to be strong market potential in the study area over the next decade to stimulate significant private investment. A TAD would be an appropriate incentive to support the redevelopment process because it would bridge the gap between the current value of the land in the corridor and the cost of redevelopment, given the scale and intensity of development that is appropriate for the selected properties.
- Without a TAD incentive in place the redevelopment process would have to either be delayed until the current land uses go into severe economic decline and their prices drop accordingly, or allow redevelopment at heights and densities that would not be compatible with the master plan vision for the downtown area.



PROGRAMS AND POLICIES



5.14 Central Alley

- The city should begin the TAD planning and authorization process immediately or as soon as possible, in order to have enabling legislation in place to introduce to a legislative session in the near future. For example, beginning the process immediately would be essential to make a 2011 timeline. If more time is needed for analysis and outreach, the timeline should be calibrated for a 2012 introduction. Assuming an aggressive timeframe would allow crucial planning and political groundwork necessary for a successful TAD process while real estate activity is slowed by the recession, leaving the city prepared to act quickly once the market begins to return.
- The TAD district could be used to both support project specific redevelopments on the identified catalyst sites and to generate funds to pay for general infrastructure improvements within the broader redevelopment area.

Opportunity Zone / Tax Credits

The city has already created an Opportunity Zone as authorized by the State of Georgia. The Opportunity Zone provides a \$3,500 per employee tax credit against Georgia taxes for up to five years to companies for locating two or more employees in the Zone. Unlike the earlier Enterprise Zone program, there are no restrictions on the types of jobs created, so retail and hospitality employment qualifies for the tax credit in an Opportunity Zone. This program can be a major benefit to new employers but is not well known and will require outreach by the city and the Main Street office to make prospects aware of this special incentive.

Central Valdosta Development Authority (CVDA)

The main purpose of the CVDA is to provide operational funding for the Main Street program and other projects to maintain and improve character of the downtown area. There are two primary sources of funding for CVDA – the Business Improvement District (BID) and the Community Improvement District (CID). BID members are committed to providing funding at a 5 mil rate per year. The CID, conversely, was created specifically to implement the downtown streetscape project, funded by an additional 5 mil levy. The current CID is expiring in 2012. Based on long-term improvement in the economy, renewing the CID in the future may provide an opportunity to supplement other funding sources for capital improvements beneficial to downtown. However, BID funds will remain available to provide additional future funding for implementation of the redevelopment agenda detailed in the plan.



PROGRAMS AND POLICIES



5.15 The Administrative & Judicial Complex



5.16 Mixed-Use Development

SPLOST

The city and county have worked cooperatively on the operation of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) to fund a wide range of civic projects. At the time of the reauthorization of the next SPLOST in 2013 it would be appropriate to consider a number of the downtown initiatives for future SPLOST funding since they would not only benefit downtown Valdosta but also the county in general by increasing the appeal of the area to tourists and visitors. This would be consistent with the prior use of SPLOST funding in the city and county.

Zoning Ordinance Review

As discussed in Part 1, downtown's core zoning district – C-D Downtown Commercial – allows mixed-use development and works well in keeping new construction compatible with the historic core's unique character and scale. However, parcels at the fringe of the CVDA area and beyond are mostly auto-oriented commercial, prohibitive of residential and with dimensional and parking standards incompatible with the form of the dense core. The city should undertake a review of these districts with an eye toward bringing them more in line with the core's regulatory envelope, particularly since two of the proposed residential catalyst projects are located in one of these districts. Moreover, since the allowable residential density in the C-D district may be lower than the density associated with the catalyst projects, the city may also examine increasing the density cap in this outer zone while preserving the formal controls tuned to the core's historic profile.



PROGRAMS AND POLICIES



5.17 Spring “flowers” at city hall



5.18 Retail space for sale in downtown Valdosta

DOWNTOWN MARKETING

As important as the physical improvements to the downtown area are, equally important is creating a strong marketing program that can take advantage of existing efforts while adding strategies tailored to address and advance downtown. The primary vehicle for this is Main Street, where there is an established format that includes the DVBA and others as key partners. However, Main Street may wish to refine their web presence to stress the general destination aspect of downtown over other more, specific functions such as property brokerage and historical background. Additional recommendations are listed below.

Downtown Branding

A key element in promoting all downtown has to offer is to create a distinctive brand and marketing plan that can bridge the entire area to tie together the various businesses and property ownerships into a cohesive plan and identity. Downtown Valdosta’s community leaders are already well ahead of the curve in regards to the physical manifestations of this concept, such as streetscapes, gateways and signage; and the recent “City Without Limits” campaign has been widely accepted and embedded in most marketing documents. However, there is still an opportunity for additional organizational strategies, particularly focusing on downtown, that make use of the existing messaging umbrella while adding specifics relating to downtown merchants and events. A social media presence is also an important tool that Main Street has used successfully during the master plan process. This should be continued and advanced, with regular reviews of graphic identity and web content to stay on the leading edge of technology and internet culture.

Master Broker

The Central Valdosta Development Authority should consider retaining a carefully-selected and qualified master broker to market downtown’s commercial real estate opportunities at the regional and national level. A master broker could share the story of downtown’s economic potential, character, and architectural and cultural resources with potential retailers and retail brokers, potentially generating new tenants and businesses. This individual would best be compensated through the use of a retainer and a commission split with any local broker who leases a property based on a lead generated by the master broker. The master broker could also:



PROGRAMS AND POLICIES



5.19 Enhancing the downtown experience

- Prepare a package of current demographics and retail potential to distribute to retail prospects;
- Target the types of retailers that realistically fit Valdosta's objectives;
- Network with developers, brokers and trade groups experienced with the type of retail that fits your objectives, for example, ICSC, Urban Land Institute, Atlanta Restaurant Association, etc.; and
- Reinforce the linkages between downtown, regional residents and the Valdosta State University Community. The economic prosperity of downtown Valdosta depends on its ability to draw customers from Valdosta and the region. It should also offer greater potential linkages to the Valdosta State community as a place to live, shop and engage. Downtown's future depends on its ability to attract market-wide demand for its unique mix of shops, restaurants and activities and unique lifestyle.



CONCLUSION



5.20 Honoring the past

As this process concludes serendipitously with the city's sesquicentennial celebration, it is easy to look back and reflect how downtown Valdosta has changed and grown during its one hundred and fifty years of existence. It has faced challenges and prevailed; and will do so in the future thanks to a combination of tenacity, innovation, and sense of stewardship.

The city, the CVDA and many private citizens have nurtured the development of downtown's unique character through exemplary historic preservation projects, prudent public investments, and one of the finest streetscape improvement programs in the state. Downtown's high-quality amenities and offerings, style, and sense of place have made it a destination for visitors from across the region and beyond. This formula should serve it well into the next century. Yet there is work to be done, particularly in addressing transitional areas that complicate better connections to the surrounding neighborhoods.

As this master plan moves forward into implementation, the city should hold true to the principle of balance that has defined this process. While the plan document has recommended key development and public space projects to support and expand the downtown in a sensitive manner, it is by no means conclusive. Changing conditions will inevitably demand recalibration, and rough patches are sure to lie ahead. Still, the spirit that has driven this process will undoubtedly rise to the occasion, as downtown's citizens and elected leaders chart a course using this plan as a point of departure.





PART 6

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1, TOWN HALL KICK-OFF MEETING: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia Kick-Off Town Hall Meeting

June 10, 2010
5.30 PM to 7.30 PM



Dosta Playhouse

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
MIKE LEE	MLEE@LEEASSOC.NET	247-1040
Sue Cox	Catherine@bellsouth.net	316-0569
MANNY CORREZ	manny04@yahoo.com	(770)633 4110
Kerry King	kking@ksquared4.com	229-560-0211
Fay Hyatt	hyattbuck@aol.com	229-255-1387
JERRY HYATT	" "	" "
Jason Narenport	jnarenport@lowndescounty.com	671-2419
Oliver Burratt	management@sublime-salon.com	
Michael Jetter	mjetter1@hotmail.com	253-8310
Myra Anderson + Homer Anderson	myraAnders@aol.com	219-0168
Brian Antoine	BJSrAntoine@msn.com	232-9068
Amette Crosby	crosby12@bellsouth.net	5608800cell
Stan White	stanleywhite@me.com	228-247-6809
Paul Arambula	paarambu@valdosta.edu	229-247-4358
Tara Nichols	tnichols@valdostachamber.com	229-563-8187
Donald Davis	donalddavis@hotmail.com	247-4780



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia Kick-Off Town Hall Meeting

June 10, 2010
5.30 PM to 7.30 PM



Dosta Playhouse

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
DEAN REXNOTH	DREXNOTH@IPGARCHITECTS.COM	229.242.3557
Lee Henderson	lhenderson@blackcraze.com	229-444-2772
Tyson Barrett	tysonbarrett@bellsouth.net	
John & Gretchen Quarlesman	Land@Quarlesman.org	242-0102
Cory Ewing	cweg8@aol.com	903-392-6097
Dale Thomas Teger	ggperiwinkle@bellsouth.net	229 247 7444
Bill Teger	weger@bellsouth.net	11
Jeanne Trini	jog-ethel@yaho.com	229-242-8204
John Deming		
MATT HART	MHART@IPGARCHITECTS.COM	242-3557
SUSAN Mullis	theflowergallery@bellsouth.net	242-100
Scott James	scottjames29@hotmail.com	259 9301
Edgar Rabe		229-242-6633
Charles W.iss	thebistroval@bellsouth.net	412 2783
Pat Sullivan	psullivan@clifford.net	229-244-9178
AKHTER CHAUDHARY	DOWN TOWN Market.	



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia Kick-Off Town Hall Meeting

June 10, 2010
5.30 PM to 7.30 PM



Dosta Playhouse

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
Brandon Bartlett	brandonmbartlett@yahoo.com	834-9371
Mikki Hudson	mikki@jessieeatsandtreats.com	247-4670
Garner Stephens	specialoccasionselive.com	829-242-9933
Celine Gladwin	cgladwin@bfbavintexts.com	229-244-1492
ALBERT SLONE	aslone@bellsouth.net	229-460-4123
Ken McEahy	Ken@blaguard.com	404-845-3500
TRANT COGNETT	trantc@bellsouth.net	259-0525
Buddy Walker		241-0119
Stanley Cox	Covington, 304 North	242-2261
Nicholas White	ctk@whitebellpyth.net	242-6948
Wes Sewell	Wes@WesSewellPhotography.com	561-5080
Xavier McGilberry	eKlass99@yahoo.com	245-9928
Honora Stephenson Jr (Clip)		794-3661
Dawn Castro	dawn.castro@gafnews.com	



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



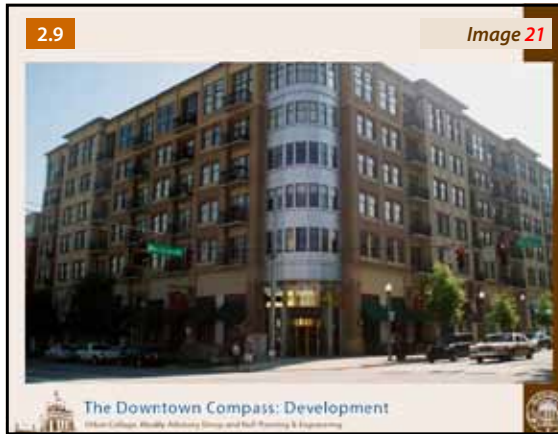
APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



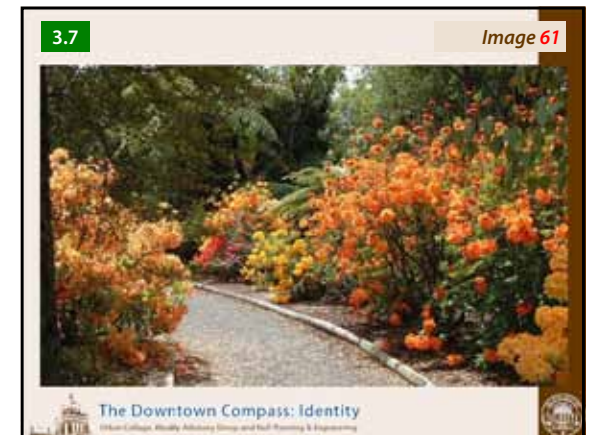
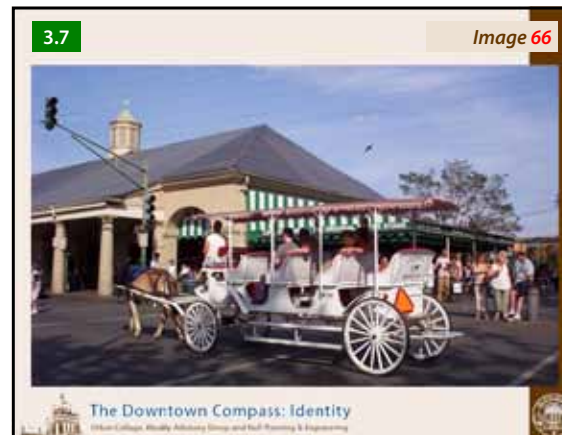
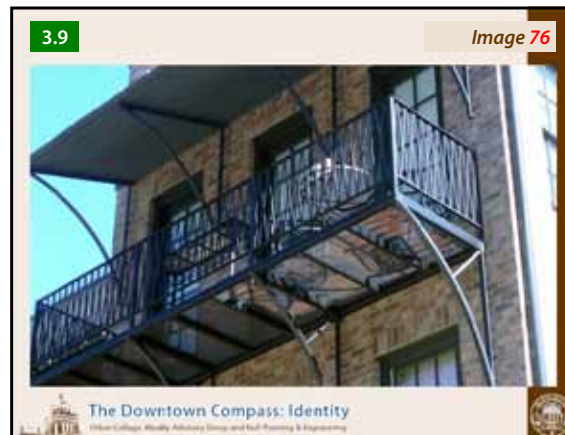
APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



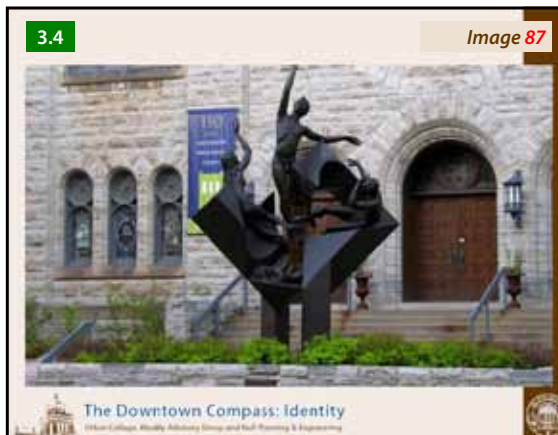
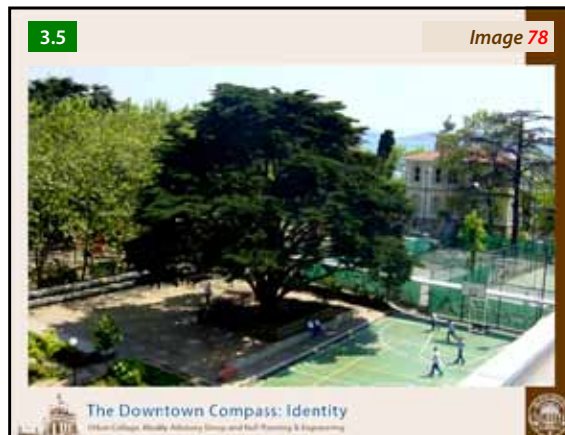
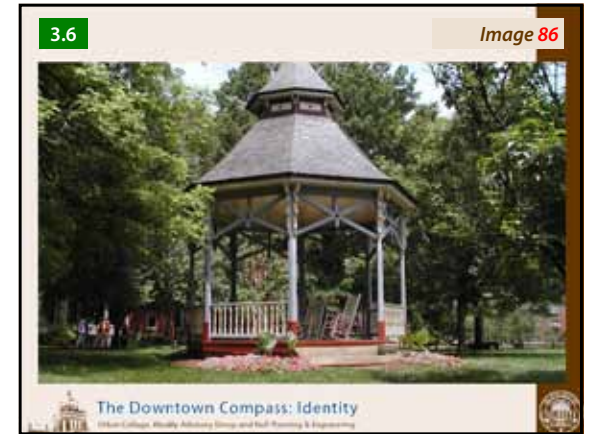
APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



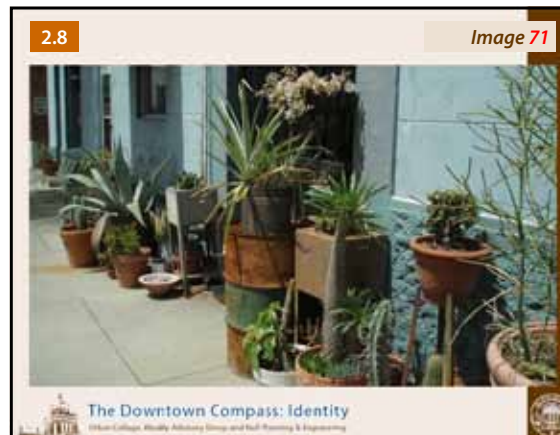
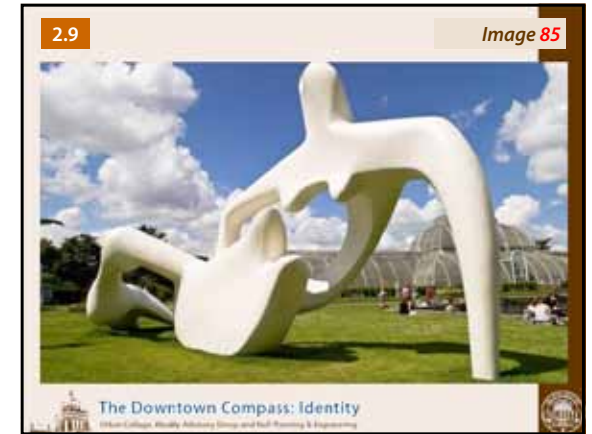
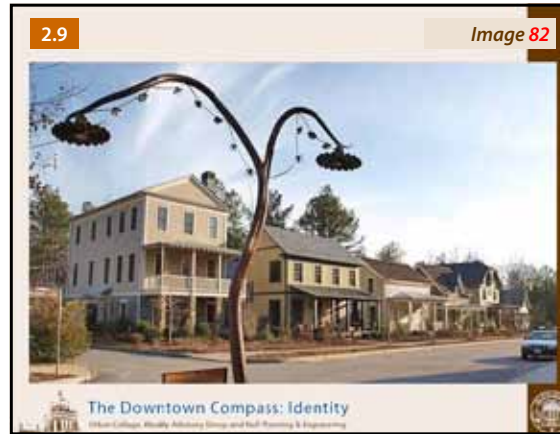
APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



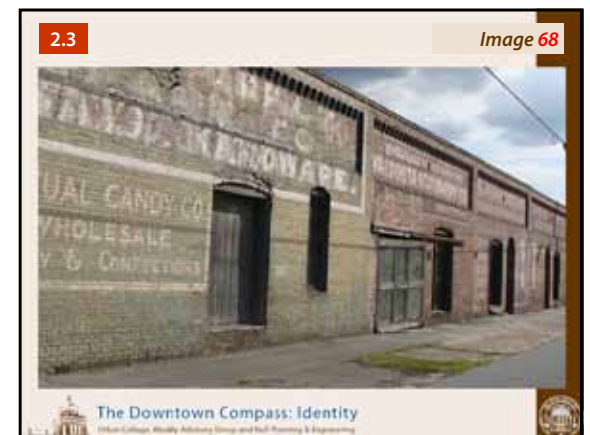
APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



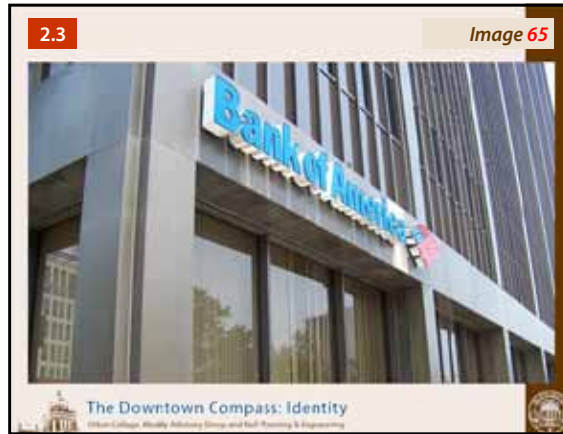
APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS

Valdosta Downtown Master Plan - Compass Results

Total 41 responses at the Town Hall Kick-off Meeting

Questions	Options	Score
1. What boundaries do you think of when you think of downtown?		
	North	Post Office/Magnolia St.
	South	Savannah Ave/Overpass
	East	Lee St.
	West	Oak St.
2. What types of new development are most appropriate in downtown?		
	"Main Street"-type infill buildings (ground-floor office or retail)	3.9
	Mixed-use developments (housing and stores)	3.6
	Office buildings	3.3
	Conventional / convenience retail (grocery store, drugstore / pharmacy)	3.2
	Townhouses and duplexes	3.0
	Multifamily residential developments (apartments, senior housing)	2.6
	Big-box retail (Target, Home Depot / Lowes, Best Buy)	1.4
3. What types of commercial uses are most needed in downtown?		
	Music store / bookstore	3.9
	Ice cream shop	3.8
	Coffee shop	3.7
	Boutiques	3.6
	Sit-down restaurants	3.6
	Professional offices	3.5
	Galleries	3.4
	Pubs / bars / nightlife	3.4
	Clothing / accessories store	3.4
	Hobby store / toy store	3.3
	Delis / sandwich shops	3.3
	Grocery store	3.2
	Sporting goods store / bike shop	3.1
	Gift store / florist	3.0
	Medical offices	3.0
	Drugstore / pharmacy	2.9
	Electronics store	2.9
	Gardening store	2.7
	Home furnishing store	2.5
	Fast food restaurants	2.0
	Dry cleaners / laundry	1.9
4. What types of new housing are most appropriate in and around downtown?		
	Condominiums	3.2
	Townhouses	3.1
	Lofts	2.6
	Multifamily apartments	2.5
	Senior housing	2.5
	Dormitory-style (student) housing	2.4
	Semi-detached homes (duplexes, triplexes)	2.2
	Stand-alone single family homes	1.9

5. What institutions are most appropriate for downtown to complement what we already have?

Cultural arts center	3.6
Museum	3.6
Library / media center	3.4
Recreation center	2.8
Schools / continuing education	2.6
Senior center	2.5
Daycare / child care centers	2.5

6. What types of parks / open space amenities are most needed in downtown?

Small "pocket" parks	3.9
Walking / biking trails	3.7
Performance space / amphitheater	3.6
Decorative fountain / water feature	3.4
Urban plazas	3.3
Sculpture garden	3.0
Urban community garden	2.9
Interactive fountain / splash pad	2.9
Playgrounds	2.9
Large formal parks	2.5
Active recreation areas (ball fields, tennis courts)	2.1
Swimming pool	1.6

7. What are the most important traffic and transportation issues in downtown?

Truck traffic	3.9
Traffic speed	3.6
Pedestrian safety / sidewalk conditions	3.5
Streetscape comfort / appearance	3.4
Wayfinding / signage	3.4
One-way streets / connectivity	3.3
Traffic congestion	3.3
Parking supply / location	3.2
Traffic safety / crashes	3.1
Parking difficulty	3.0
Street / road maintenance	2.7

8. What, if anything, is most needed to improve parking in and around downtown?

Better security in existing lots	3.2
Parking deck	3.0
More on-street parking	2.9
More parking lots	2.4
Parking meters	1.3

9. When is parking most needed?

Daytime or evenings? During special events? Other times?	Events
--	--------

10. If you could change one thing about the downtown transportation system, what would it be?

Remove / divert / reroute truck traffic
Trolley / Bus system / Bicycle lanes
Alternative route for US 84 and 41
Angular parking



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: COMPASS RESULTS

11. What one thing should we definitely keep intact in the downtown transportation system?

One way pairs
On-street parking

12. What is the biggest safety issue in downtown, related to streets and transportation?

Truck traffic
traffic speed

13. What events or tasks bring you downtown? Why do you come downtown?

Live, work, pray, dine
First Fridays, Brown Bag, Art & Music, Art after Dark
Business meetings

14. What do you like most about downtown?

Urban feel, culture, character, comfortable, ambience, diversity
Historic buildings, restaurants, art

15. What needs to change about downtown?

Flow of traffic, re-route truck traffic, more parking
Restore / refurbish / rehab historic buildings
More mixed use, event venues, diversity (activities, people)
Marketing (bring more people and businesses downtown)

16. What activities could be added to make downtown livelier and more attractive to you?

More events	3.5
More shops	3.5
More parks / outdoor gathering spaces	3.0
More restaurants	3.0
More homes	2.5

17. Based on the list below, which items should be the highest priority for improvement?

Address underutilized property	3.7
Address vacant buildings	3.7
General appearance	3.0
More / better shops	2.9
Road improvements (curbs, bike lanes, etc.)	2.8
Wayfinding and signage	2.8
Traffic operations / signals / enforcement	2.8
Parks and open space	2.8
Walkability improvements	2.7
Parking	2.5
More / better housing	2.4

18. What is the biggest obstacle or barrier to implementing improvements in downtown?

Economy
Limited funding resources
Truck traffic
Public awareness
Marketing

19. Tell us about yourself.

live in downtown	7	17%
work in downtown	18	44%
shop in downtown	24	59%
own a property in downtown	11	27%

20. Number of years you have lived in Valdosta (circle one):

0-2 Years	2	5%
3-5 years	7	17%
5-10 years	5	12%
10-20 years	6	15%
Over 20 years	12	29%

21. Your Age (circle one):

under 21	1	2%
21-35	5	12%
36-50	9	22%
51-65	13	32%
Over 65	7	17%

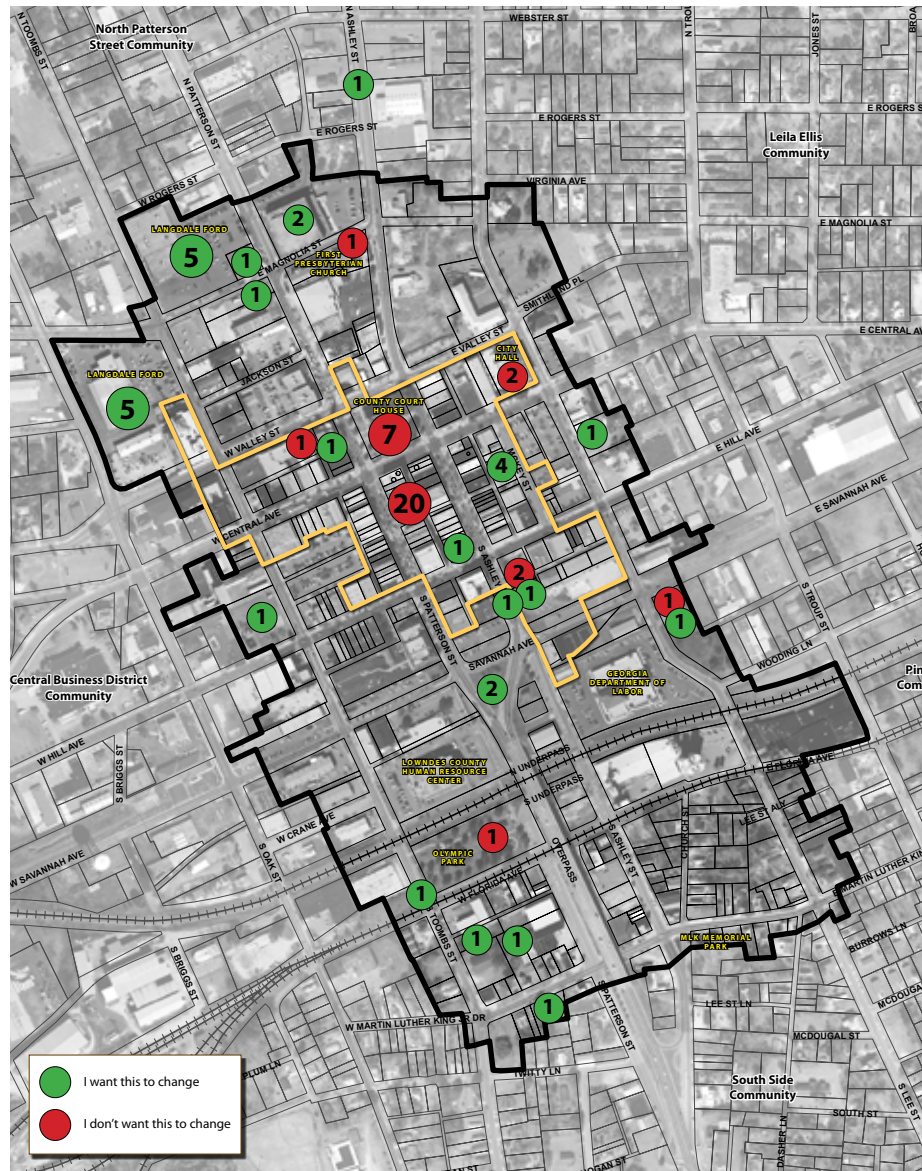
22. How far do you drive to work or school on a regular day (circle one)?

Less than 5 miles	19	46%
5-10 miles	8	20%
10-20 miles	5	12%
20-30 miles	2	5%
More than 30 miles	1	2%

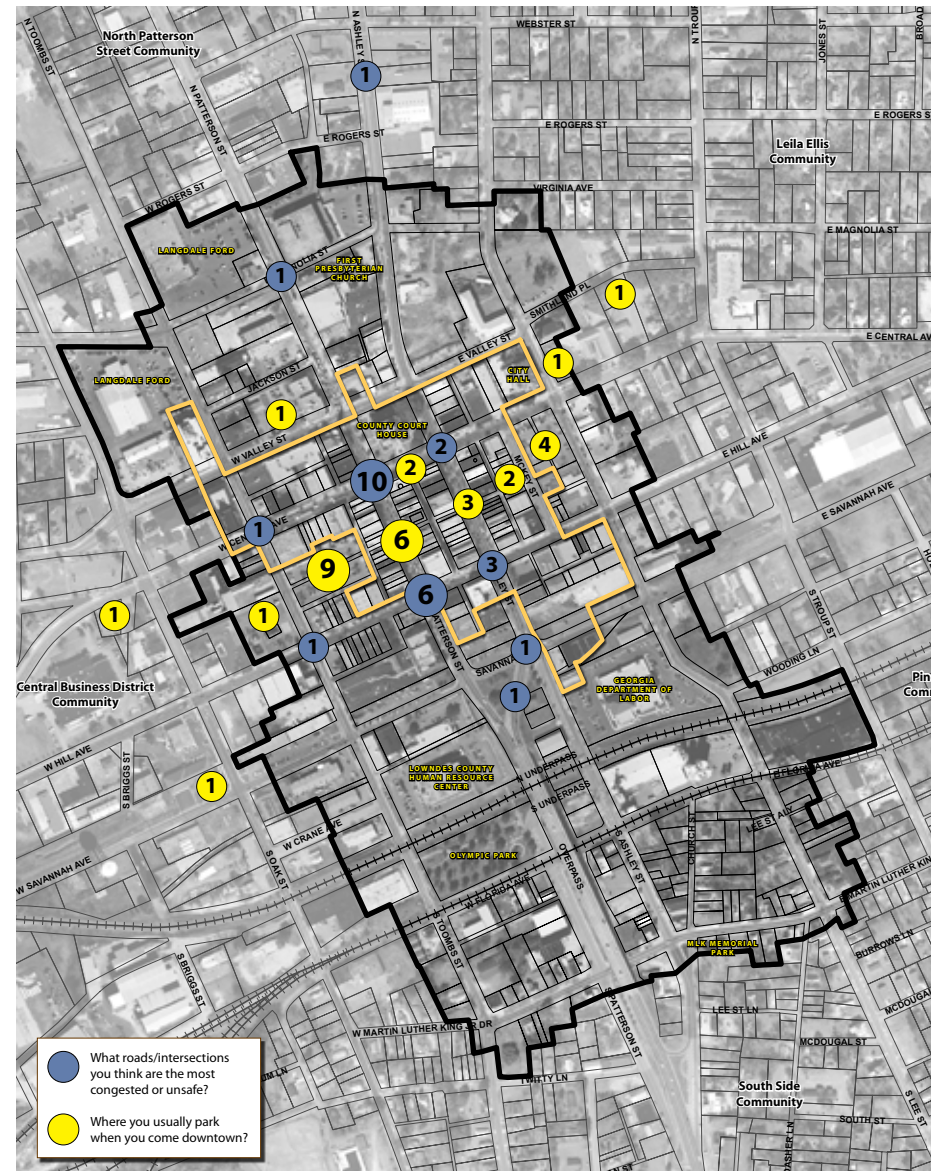


APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: RESULTS OF PLANNING STATIONS



Planning Station #1: Change or No Change



Planning Station #2: Transportation Hot Spots



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #1: RESULTS OF PLANNING STATIONS

DEVELOPMENT		TRANSPORTATION		HISTORIC RESOURCES	COMMUNITY FACILITIES		ECONOMICS / MARKET	
COMPETITION WITH FIVE POINTS	HOTEL FOR VSU FAMILIES, TOURISTS	EXCESSIVE TRUCK TRAFFIC	UNFRIENDLY PEDESTRIAN ENVIRONMENT	MORE BUILDING CODE FLEXIBILITY	ADDRESS SERVICE ALLEYS / DUMPSTERS	DOT CONFLICT WITH STREETS FESTIVALS	CAPTURE STUDENT MARKET	HISTORIC / TOURISM MARKETING
5	4	10	3	7	4	2	4	4
MORE DOWNTOWN OFFICES	FOCUS ON SOUTHERN DOWNTOWN	INADEQUATE WAYFINDING SIGNAGE	ONE-WAY PAIRS ENCOURAGE SPEEDING	FUNDS FOR BUILDING RENOVATION	FEW ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS	NO MAJOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY VENUE	CONNECTIVITY & VISIBILITY FROM I-75	TOURISTS UNAWARE OF FIRST FRIDAYS
2	2	3	2	2	2	2	3	2
BETTER DOWNTOWN SERVICES	AREAS OF PHYSICAL BLIGHT	POOR DOWNTOWN-VSU CONNECTION	PARALLEL PARKING DIFFICULT FOR SOME	PROTECT HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS	PLACE FOR FARMER'S MARKET	OLYMPIC PARK UNDERUTILIZED	BETTER MARKETING OF REGIONAL GOODS	PERCEPTION OF DOWNTOWN CRIME
2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
LIMITED LOFT RENTALS	HIGH ASKING PRICES FOR PROPERTY	LIMITED PARKING SUPPLY	TRAFFIC TOO FAST	NEW USE FOR HISTORIC COURTHOUSE?	LACK OF DOWNTOWN GREENSPACE	FEW ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES AND SENIORS	VALDOSTA AIRPORT UNDERUTILIZED	DOWNTOWN CULTURAL FACILITY
2	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	1
MORE DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL	INCLUDE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS IN STUDY	VIADUCT COMPROMISES WALKABILITY	LACK OF MOBILITY OPTIONS / BIKE TRAILS	MORE ADAPTIVE REUSE	FEW OPTIONS FOR DOWNTOWN RESIDENTS	DOG PARK A MISSED OPPORTUNITY	DOWNTOWN DISINCENTIVES: CID COSTS: 1-75	
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
MANY LARGE UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES	STALLED RENOVATION PROJECTS	MINIMAL PARKING FOR TOURIST COACHES	PARKING ACCESSIBILITY PROBLEM					
0	0	0	0					
		PARKING DECKS NEEDED	NO DEDICATED CUSTOMER PARKING					
		0	0					

Planning Station #3: Issues Matrix



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia Charrette Workshop Public Meeting

August 10, 2010
6.30 PM to 8.30 PM

City Hall Annex



NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
Deidra A. White	deidrawhite@me.com	229-269-5016
Thomas Haller	Thomas.Haller@ncsl.com	229-247-5081
Dipin Haller	same	
Corey Hull	chull@sgrc.us	229-333-5277
Brittney Foster	bfoster@packagingcorp.com	229-559-2390
Nikki Forman	nforman@valdostacity.com	229-671-3615
Keith Lee	keith@leeforcouncil.com	229.392.6726
Tyler Moore	tyler@leeforcouncil.com	478.397-7177
Avin Payton	APayton@valdostacity.com	229-297-0526
Tim Carroll	tcarrill@valdostacity.com	244-0928 (w)
Kevin King	kking@ksquared4.com	229-560-0711
Matt Martin	pza@valdostacity.com	229-259-3563
Eldred Hunter	WEEKZ Hunter@AOL.com	229-293-9350
Melissa B. Coleman	fpcmelissa@hotmail.com	(229)460-1707
Alexandra Arayas	aarayas@valdostacity.com	229-560-9334
MANNY CORTEZ	mannyCORTEZ ART@YAHOO.COM	(970)633 4110



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia Charrette Workshop Public Meeting

August 10, 2010
6.30 PM to 8.30 PM

City Hall Annex



NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
Mary Bryant		333-0423-306
Marcela Paredes		706 294 1055
Marcela Tobar		706 294 1088
VON SHIPMAN		229-259-3530
PAT Sullivan		
KEN RICKET	KEN@ERA-ARCHITECTS.COM	1-229-242-3556
Celine Gladin	cgladin@bhamilarchitects.com	229 244 1492



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia Charrette Workshop Public Meeting #2

August 17, 2010
5.30 PM to 7.30 PM



St. Paul's AME Church

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
Tom Hallen	Thomas.Hallen@mchtl.com	229-247-5081
Frank Wilson		
Kevin King	king@ksguard4.com	229-560-0711
Betty Anderson		229-242-6598
Gwendolyn Cloud	gdcloud@yahoo.com	229-242-4214
Seraldine Green		229-241-7734
Ron Borders	Ron@RonBorders.com	354-622
Anna Reyster		
Deborah A. Sumner	deborahs22@yahoo.com	229-242-3087
Jaqueline Marshall	depry@bellsouth.net	229-244-4266
Joan Nathan Davis	joan@valdosta	229-742-3227
Herbert Williams	herb280@bellsouth.net	242-6581
Clifford Lee	cliffordlee@msn.com	561-3980
Janice W Young	Younginga2@aol.com	229-242-1124
Mary Ann		561-5985
Hebye Rhyne	bostongbf@gmail.com	251-8686
Mary Bryon	507-Clark St	333-0420



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia Charrette Workshop Public Meeting #2

August 17, 2010
5.30 PM to 7.30 PM



NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
David F. Richards III	909-Williamsburg Dr.	229-244-8065
Gerald Johnson	JohnGerald	(229) 559-1270
Mark L. Johnson	Mark51j@yahoo.com	(229) 588-6111
Claude Howard	257-0352	
Ed Foster	821 Bethune St	(229) 244-9187
Will & Harris & Velma	revharrisvalde@yahoo.com	229-794-9419
Ruth K. Council	822 Bunche Dr.	242-2718
Clay Hunt	4563 OS Hwy 84E Naylor	316-11 242-3582
Barbara Byrd	313 E. ML King Dr	Valdosta 244-8340
Artie M. Marshall	901 Bunche St Valdosta Ga 31601	229-247-2237
Betty Williams	814 Bunche Dr Valdosta, GA 31601	Octet@yahoo.com 229-244-4808
Joshua Dean	921 Bunche St Valdosta 31601	229-244-1664
Amanda Brown	825 Bunche Drive	229-242-8227
Scotter O'Neil	scot@chivei.asacng.com	
Emily Foster	efoster@valdostacity.com	259-3303
ALBERT SLONE	aslone1@bellouth.net	229-460-4123
Dixie Haller	Thomas.Haller@MCHSI.com	229 247 508




APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP

Frameworks 1: Walkability


- **Challenge:** *Downtown has a great walkable core, but what streets still need pedestrian improvements?*
- **As a group...**
 - Circle the streets you think most need walkability improvements
 - Make sure your streets connect to downtown's existing streetscape
 - Use the green ribbon to locate your highest priority streetscape



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

Frameworks 1: Walkability


- **Task:** *Circle the streets that most need walkability improvements*
- **The results**
 - Primary streets beyond the core (North Patterson; Ashley north, south)
 - Peripheral streets (Toombs, Lee)
 - Hill, including core
 - Savannah at overpass approach



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

Frameworks 1: Walkability


- **Task:** *Identify priority streetscapes with the ribbon*
- **The results**
 - North Patterson
 - South Ashley
 - North Ashley
 - Central Street



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

The Priority Streetscapes

- **North Patterson**
 - Extends downtown toward VSU
- **South Ashley**
 - Connects core to MLK plaza, future streetscape
- **Longer-term targets**
 - Toombs, Lee: encourages east-west growth
 - North Ashley: stimulates corridor revitalization, but needs plan



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP

Frameworks Exercise 2: Public Space

- **Challenge:** *Bennie's Alley and the Dosta are icons, but are there other signature spaces and places to make?*
- **As a group...**
 - Find locations on the map for new signature public space (two minimum; use green paper or markers) - and if you can...
 - Use the pictures to illustrate your spaces (cut and paste)
 - Use the stars to indicate new or expanded amenities (two max)

Red Star: Museum, Theater, Cinema
 Silver Star: Outdoor Amphitheater
 Blue Star: Fountain
 Green Star: Garden, Farmer's Market

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
 Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

Frameworks Exercise 2: Public Space

- **Task:** *Find locations for new signature public spaces*
- **The results**
 - Lawn around the historic courthouse
 - Central (north-south) Alley
 - Toombs Street / McKey Street parking lots
 - Olympic Park
 - Other peripheral sites

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
 Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

Frameworks Exercise 2: Public Space

- **Task:** *Use the stars to indicate desired amenities*
- **The results**
 - Events /cultural space in historic courthouse
 - Outdoor performance areas in Toombs lot, Olympic Park
 - Farmer's market south of Savannah
 - Water features at various locations

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
 Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

The Public Space Framework

- **Strategy 1:** Expand the alley network
- **Strategy 2:** Formalize the courthouse square
- **Strategy 3:** Create new plazas on Toombs and McKey parking lots
- **Strategy 4:** Rework South Patterson into pedestrian esplanade
- **Strategy 5:** Expand / intensify Olympic Park

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
 Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

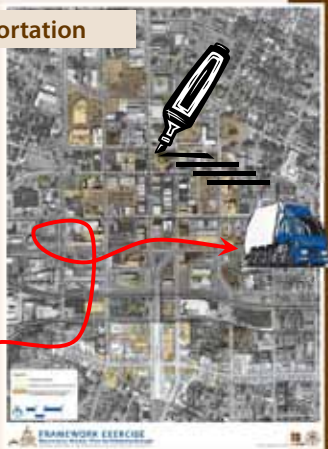


APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP

Frameworks Exercise 3: Transportation


- **Challenge:** *Downtown has a fine street grid, but how would you fix the traffic and parking?*
- **As a group...**
 - Discuss the one-way streets. Would you change them? Where?
 - How would you handle through traffic, especially trucks?
 - Would you change any parking? How?
 - Use the markers to show your changes on the map



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

Frameworks Exercise 3: Transportation


- **Task:** *Discuss the one-way streets. Would you change them? Where?*
- **The results**
 - Convert all one-way streets to two-way operation
 - Pay special attention to key intersections



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

Frameworks Exercise 3: Transportation


- **Task:** *How should truck traffic be accommodated?*
- **The results**
 - Reorient east-west traffic to a location south of Hill (ideally Savannah Avenue)
 - Route north-south trucks to the west (ideally Oak Street)



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

The Transportation Framework

- **Downtown's key "Complete Streets"**
 - One-way to two-way conversions
 - Reverse-angled parking on one side, parallel opposite
 - Bulb out modifications to improve left turns



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.




APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #2, CHARRETTE WORKSHOP

Frameworks Exercise 4: South Downtown

- **Challenge:** *The view is great from the overpass, but could the railroad corridor be something more?*
- **As a group...**
 - Talk about the area south of Savannah Avenue – what are its problems? Opportunities?
 - Can you picture a new identity for it? What is it?
 - What's the one big project you'd like to see happen there over the next 20 years? (write it on the gold seal)


Your Idea Here



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.

Frameworks Exercise 4: South Downtown

- **Task:** *What one big project should happen there in the next 20 years?*
- **The results**
 - Recreational amenities (pool, play areas)
 - Downtown library
 - Revitalize the block west of Patterson



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia
Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #3, DRAFT TOWN HALL MEETING: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia

Draft Town Hall Meeting

October 13, 2010

5.30 PM to 7.30 PM

Dosta Playhouse



NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
Paul Burgess	CHIEF.PAUL.Burgess@GMAIL.COM	247-8226
Shirley Marshall	shengemm@yahoo.com	386-832-7272
Wendy Kerstetter	wjkerstetter@valdosta.edu	(229)506-1600
LINDSAY CROSBY	LINDSAY.CROSBY.JR@GMAIL.COM	829-563-2567
Paul Arambula	paarambu@valdosta.edu	229-247-4358
Mara Register	register@valdostacity.com	229-259-5571
Adrenis Hooks	adhooks@valdosta.edu	770-906-1208
NATE WRIGHT	NWRIGHT6@GMAIL.COM	678-765-7552
Kara Ramos		
DANNY PARKINSON	VLDDANNY@AOL.COM	229 232 4294
ReKasa Deen	rdeen@valdostachamber.com	229-247-8100
Bahar Zeidan	bzeidan@azaleahealth.com	229-444-6169
Dr L. W. Wms		242-3102
Mike & Jane	mikedonw@msk-law.com	242-0314
KEVIN King	kking@ksquared9.com	560-0711



APPENDIX

PUBLIC MEETING #3, DRAFT TOWN HALL MEETING: SIGN-IN SHEETS

SIGN-IN SHEET

Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia

Draft Town Hall Meeting

October 13, 2010
5.30 PM to 7.30 PM

Dosta Playhouse



NAME	EMAIL	PHONE #
Sherri Burgess	idraft4you@aol.com	247-8226
Daniel Storey	drstorey@valdosta.edu	229-263-1566
Clay Clay Lee	acL414@mchsi.com	229-506-0831
Adrian Taylor	tayl0859@bellsouth.net	229-251-9566
Wanda Hunter	whunter@gocats.org	229-293-9550
Alex Thomas	wthomas@valdosta.edu	229-881-1529
Courtney Ruttinger	Cruttinger@valdostachamber.com	229-247-8100
Donald Davis	donalddavis@hotmail.com	229-242-3894
Quincy White		
Robt. Sullivan		
ALBERT SLONE		
Alexandra Arzayus	aarzayus@valdostacity.com	
Robyn Bunce	rbunce@valdosta.edu	
Yuri Trejo	ytrejo@valdosta.edu	229 977 1078



APPENDIX

DETAILED MARKET REPORT



Downtown Master Plan for Valdosta, Georgia

Prepared by Urban Collage, Inc. with Bleakly Advisory Group and Hall Planning & Engineering, Inc.



Downtown Valdosta

Strategic Development and Marketing Master Plan

Market Analysis

DRAFT

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	1
1.1. Key Demographic Trends.....	2
1.2. Real Estate Market Key Findings.....	2
1.3. Summary of Future Demand.....	4
1.4. Summary of Future Demand.....	4
2. Introduction.....	6
3. Demographic Characteristics	10
3.1. Population Characteristics.....	10
3.2. Household Characteristics	14
3.3. Business & Employment Characteristics.....	18
3.4. Business establishments and employment.....	18
3.5. Key Demographic Trends.....	21
4. Real estate Market Trends.....	22
4.1. Building Permits	22
4.2. Residential Market Conditions:	24
4.3. Downtown Residential Market Conditions and Trends	29
4.4. Commercial Market Trends.....	30
4.5. Real Estate Market Trends Key Findings	35
5. Future Real Estate Demand	37
5.1. Residential Demand.....	37
5.2. Retail Demand.....	39
5.3. Office Demand.....	42
5.4. Summary of Future Demand.....	43

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the **Downtown Valdosta Strategic Development and Marketing Master Plan**, this Market Analysis report provides an inventory and assessment of real estate and demographic trends affecting development patterns in Downtown Valdosta, Georgia. This analysis will provide the framework for the consulting team's recommendations regarding projects, investments, policies and strategies designed to enhance Downtown Valdosta's vitality. The report includes the following:

- **Demographic Characteristics-** The first section will provide an overview of the population, households and housing stock in the Downtown Valdosta area, as defined by a one-mile radius centered on the Courthouse, the city of Valdosta, and the Valdosta Core-Based Statistical Area (CSA, henceforth to be referred to as the "Valdosta Metro Area").
- **Real Estate Market Characteristics-** The second section includes an analysis of the current inventory and recent market trends for residential and commercial uses within, and adjacent to, the Valdosta Downtown study area.
- **Future Real Estate Demand-** The third section of the report presents a forecast of the area's future development capacity based on the above data and analysis.

This study was prepared by Bleakly Advisory Group, Inc. working as a sub-consultant to Urban Collage, the lead consultant in the preparation of the **Downtown Valdosta Strategic Development and Marketing Master Plan**.

Study Area

This market analysis report is concentrated on the **Valdosta Downtown Core**, as defined by the Central Valdosta Development Authority Boundary. This area includes properties contained within, and facing, the rectangle defined by Toombs Street on the west, Magnolia Street on the north, Lee Street on the east, and Martin Luther King, JR. Drive on the south. Downtown Valdosta is the business and institutional center of the City of Valdosta, Lowndes County, and the Valdosta Metro Area, as well as a broad, multi-county trade area.

Demographic data in this report has generally been collected for three geographic areas:

- **Downtown Valdosta 1-mile radius,**
- **City of Valdosta**
- **The Valdosta Metro Area,**

1.1. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- **Valdosta dominates the region**—Valdosta is by far the largest and most dominant city in the region. The city's 47,000 residents represent 36% of the four-county metropolitan region. Valdosta is the home to an estimated 3,039 firms or business establishments with over 40,000 employees.
- **Singles dominate Downtown Valdosta**—The most typical household type found in the Downtown market area is singles living alone, representing 35% of all households, compared to 30% for the city and 26% for the metro area. The Downtown area also has lower percentages of married couples with children, representing 12% of households, compared to 22% for the City and 26% for the metro area.
- **Incomes and education levels are significantly more modest Downtown**—The median household income in the Downtown area is \$25,417, roughly half of the City-wide median of \$50,542. Among adult Downtown residents, 52% have a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 75% for both the city and metro area; seven percent of Downtown residents have a 4-year college degree, compared to 24% in the city and 17% in the metro area.
- **Most Downtown residents rent their home**—Two-thirds of Downtown residents rent their home, while half of city residents rent and only one third of metro area residents rent.
- **Downtown-area homes are older and more modest than average**—The estimated 2009 median home value in the Downtown area was \$50,526, less than half of the city median value of \$116,283 or the Metro area median value of \$108,659. The median age of homes in the Downtown area is over 52 years old, significantly higher than the median age of housing of 32 years in the City and the 26 years Metro area. The Downtown area is a long-established residential area anchored by a historic district, with 70% of homes built prior to 1960.
- **Government and small companies dominate Downtown Valdosta's businesses**—Downtown Valdosta is the home to an estimated 786 businesses, with approximately 8,200 jobs, representing 20% of the City of Valdosta's total jobs. In the Downtown area, the largest employment sector is public administration, representing 29% percent of all Downtown jobs, with over 2,400 employees. Downtown businesses tend to be smaller, with an average of 6.6 jobs per establishment, compared to 12.3 jobs per establishment citywide.

1.2. REAL ESTATE MARKET KEY FINDINGS

- **Valdosta side-stepped the national real estate crash**—The residential real estate collapse which has severely impacted home sale prices and volumes

throughout the United States seems to have touched lightly on Valdosta. While the average home sale price in Georgia has fallen 25% from 2006 to 2010, the average new home price in Valdosta in 2009 was \$166,500, just 6% below the 2005 peak of \$178,270. Statewide sales of new and existing homes have fallen by half since the peak of the real estate market, yet sales volumes in the City of Valdosta have remained more-or-less constant over the same period.

- **Downtown Homes tend to sell at lower prices than homes towards the north of Valdosta**—Average 2009 sale prices are highest in the northwest quadrant, at \$179,629, followed by the northeast quadrant at \$125,956. Average 2009 home sale prices in the two southern quadrants, which include the Downtown study area, were significantly lower, averaging approximately \$70,000.
- **The Downtown Core has apartments, but no condos or townhomes**—there are reported to be 100 residential units, 63 of which are in a single subsidized assisted-living building (Ashley House), with the remaining 37 units in recently converted commercial buildings. Of those 37 units, four are occupied by the building's owner and 33 are market-rate apartments. Interest in condominiums and urban-style home ownership concepts were beginning to gain in momentum in Valdosta during 2006 and 2007, but the collapse of real estate and credit markets in the Fall of 2008 prevented any projects from moving forward.
- **Downtown Valdosta's real estate inventory includes nearly 1.6 million SF of space**—530,000 SF is commercial space, 237,000 SF of mixed-use space which includes a significant additional allotment of commercial space, typically on the ground floor. Institutional uses, consisting of churches, libraries, and non-office government buildings represent an estimated 345,000 SF. Dedicated office space represents less than 300,000 SF.
- **As much as 43% of Downtown's real estate is currently unoccupied**—A significant portion of the Downtown core's real estate inventory is situated in historic buildings, where ongoing, time-consuming and frequently unpredictable restoration projects add considerable uncertainty to any estimates of vacancy rates.
- **Valdosta's retail market is dominated by two concentrations of shopping space in centers**—The Valdosta Mall includes nearly 1,000,000 SF of retail space, including an enclosed regional mall of 500,000 SF. This area is the site of the bulk of the region's retail activity, and includes a large selection of major national retailers, grocery stores, hotels and chain restaurants. The Five-Points area has two major older shopping centers, totaling 425,000 SF of retail space.
- **Downtown Valdosta has a small, thriving retail district but no broad-based retailers**—This retail district is a combination of small, independent stores, boutiques and independently-owned mid-sized regional stores, including

several hardware stores and furniture stores. The bulk of Downtown residents' consumer spending tends to be spent outside the Downtown area as Downtown has no shopping centers, national franchise stores, department stores, or supermarkets.

- **Valdosta's offices tend to be located primarily in small owner-occupied spaces**—These are most typically in converted single family residences or user-owned stand-alone buildings. Most of Valdosta's professional offices tend to be located along the Oak Street corridor north of Downtown. The vast majority of office space in Valdosta is owned by the end-user; leased office space is rare.

1.3. SUMMARY OF FUTURE DEMAND

1.4. SUMMARY OF FUTURE DEMAND

Residential – Downtown faces a serious challenge as it competes to attract a share of these residents: Downtown's urban living options must appeal to a large pool of potential residents who are currently living in suburban or semi-suburban locations and single-family houses. For many these households, a decision to commit to Downtown living constitutes not only a change of location, but a change of lifestyle.

If Downtown Valdosta creates an appealing residential product that can be successfully marketed to this potential audience, the Downtown Core can expect to see the following demand for residential units over the next ten years:

- **Owner-Occupied Housing Demand**— Based on an analysis of the of housing demand discussed above, over the 2010-2020 period there will be annual demand for 46 owner units in the Downtown area, or 460 owner-occupied units over the ten year period.
- **Renter-Occupied Housing Demand**— The demand for rental housing in the study area is estimated to be 158 units annually over the next ten years, or 1,580 total units.

Retail— Demand for retail space in Downtown Valdosta will be generated by both regional household growth and increased capture of existing demand that is currently going to retail establishments outside the Downtown area. The combination of these four sources represents \$53 million in potential additional spending resulting from population growth and increased demand for Downtown retail goods and services. This translates to an estimated annual demand of 94,000 SF of retail space. If that demand is absorbed incrementally over ten years, it represents an annual demand of approximately 9,400 SF of new retail space Downtown annually.

Office—Valdosta is projected to add approximately 3,600 office-related jobs between 2010-2020, generating potential demand for 388,000 square feet of additional office space in the City of Valdosta. Assuming that the Downtown Core captures 20% of

service employment office growth, 30% of general office growth and 80% of Public Administration office growth, the Downtown Core could have potential demand for nearly 194,000 square feet of office space over the ten year period, or 19,000 SF per year.

1-1 Downtown Valdosta Potential Future Demand Summary 2010-2020

	City of Valdosta	Downtown Capture Rate	Total Downtown SF, 2010-2020	Annual Downtown SF
Residential Units				
Owner-Occupied	1,250	10%	460	46
Renter-Occupied	1318	20%	1,580	158
Commercial S.F.				
Retail		10-40%	94,000	9,400
Office/Professional	388,000	20%-80%	194,000	19,000

Source: BAG

2. INTRODUCTION

As part of the **Downtown Valdosta Strategic Development and Marketing Master Plan**, this Market Analysis report provides an inventory and assessment of real estate and demographic trends affecting development patterns in Downtown Valdosta, Georgia. This analysis will provide the framework for the consulting team's recommendations regarding projects, investments, policies and strategies designed to enhance Downtown Valdosta's vitality. The report includes the following:

- **Demographic Characteristics**- The first section will provide an overview of the population, households and housing stock in the Downtown Valdosta area, as defined by a one-mile radius centered on the Courthouse, the city of Valdosta, and the Valdosta Core-Based Statistical Area (CSA, henceforth to be referred to as the "Valdosta Metro Area").
- **Real Estate Market Characteristics**- The second section includes an analysis of the current inventory and recent market trends for residential and commercial uses within, and adjacent to, the Valdosta Downtown study area.
- **Future Real Estate Demand**- The third section of the report presents a forecast of the area's future development capacity based on the above data and analysis.

This study was prepared by Bleakly Advisory Group, Inc. working as a sub-consultant to Urban Collage, the lead consultant in the preparation of the **Downtown Valdosta Strategic Development and Marketing Master Plan**.

Study Area

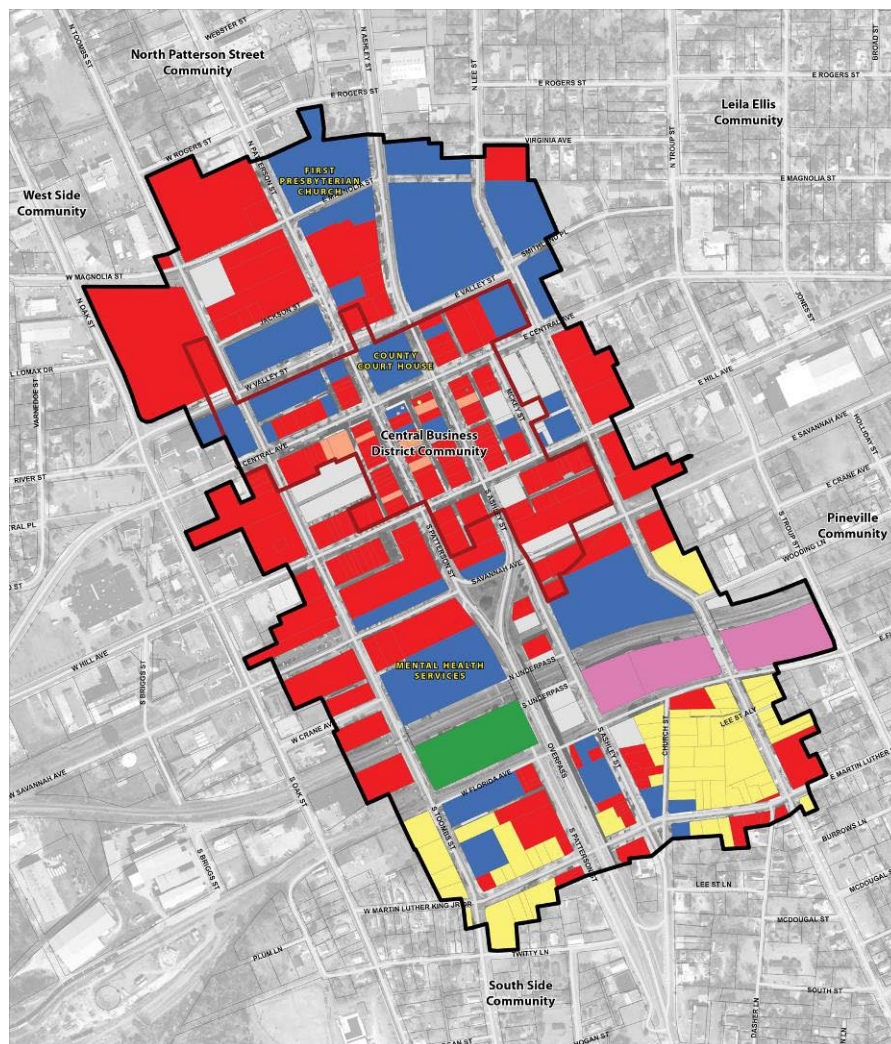
This market analysis report is concentrated on the **Valdosta Downtown Core**, as defined by the Central Valdosta Development Authority Boundary. This area includes properties contained within, and facing, the rectangle defined by Toombs Street on the west, Magnolia Street on the north, Lee Street on the east, and Martin Luther King, JR. Drive on the south. Downtown Valdosta is the business and institutional center of the City of Valdosta, Lowndes County, and the Valdosta Metro Area, as well as a broad, multi-county trade area.

Demographic data in this report has generally been collected for three geographic areas:

- **Downtown Valdosta 1-mile radius**, subsequently referred to as the **Downtown area** which includes all properties located within a one-mile radius of the Lowndes County Courthouse at the intersection of Patterson Street and Hill Street, including the entire Central Valdosta Development Authority area.
- **City of Valdosta**

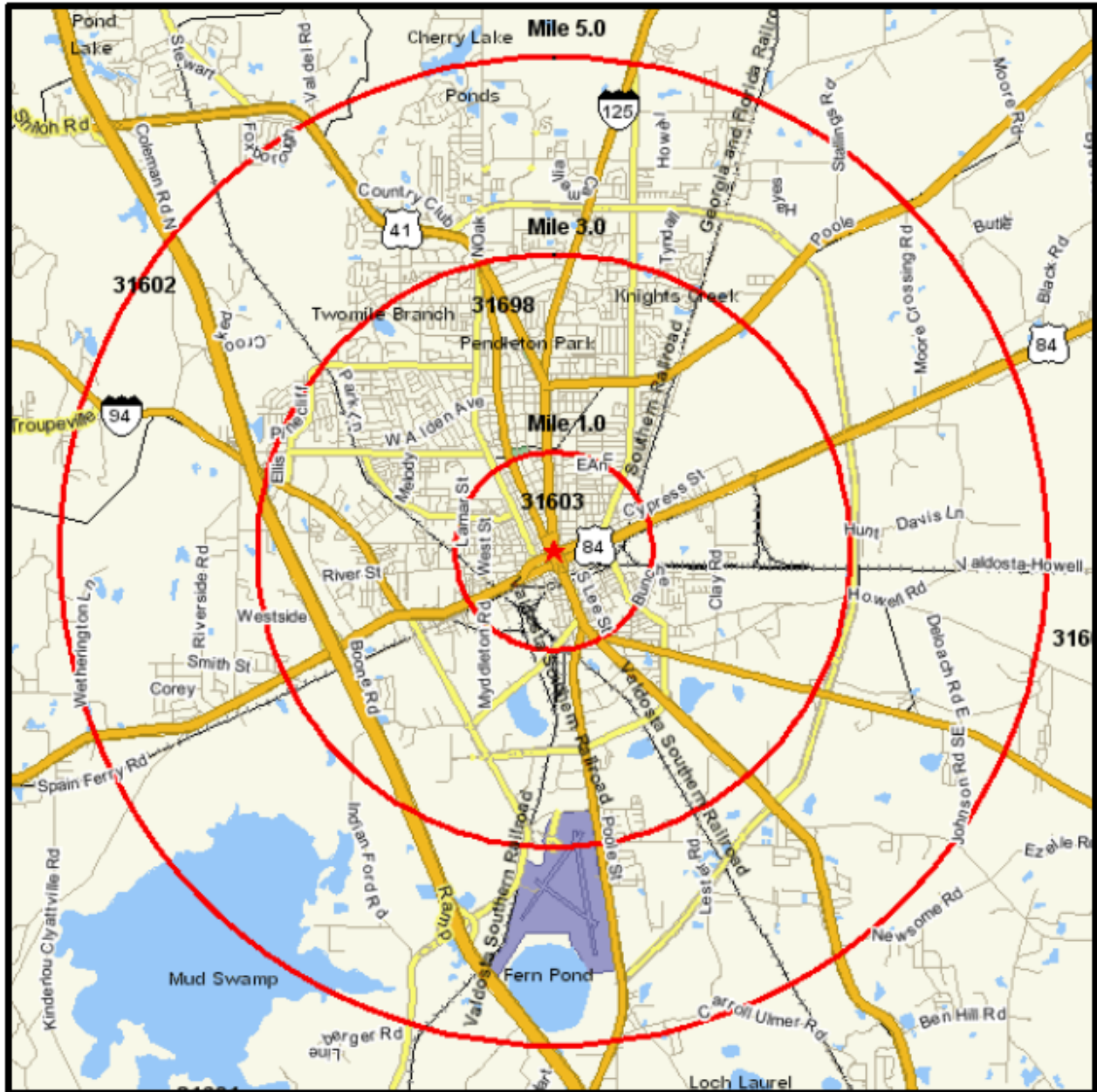
- **The Valdosta Metro Area**, consisting of the Valdosta Core-Based Statistical Area as defined by the US Census Bureau which includes Lowndes, Echols, Lanier and Brooks Counties. Metropolitan areas are geographic entities with populations of 50,000 or more people, defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for use by Federal statistical agencies in collecting, tabulating, and publishing Federal statistics. Each metro area consists of one or more counties and includes the counties containing the core urban area, as well as any adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration (as measured by commuting to work) with the urban core. (Source: US Census Bureau)

Figure 2-1 Downtown Valdosta (CDVA Boundary)



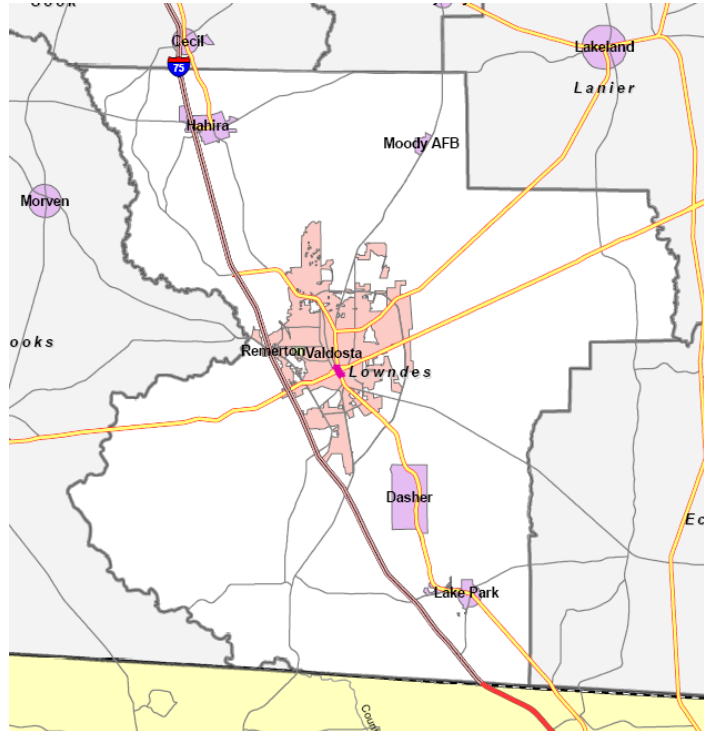
Source: BAG, Urban Collage

Figure 2-2 Downtown Valdosta, with 1, 3, and 5-Mile Radii



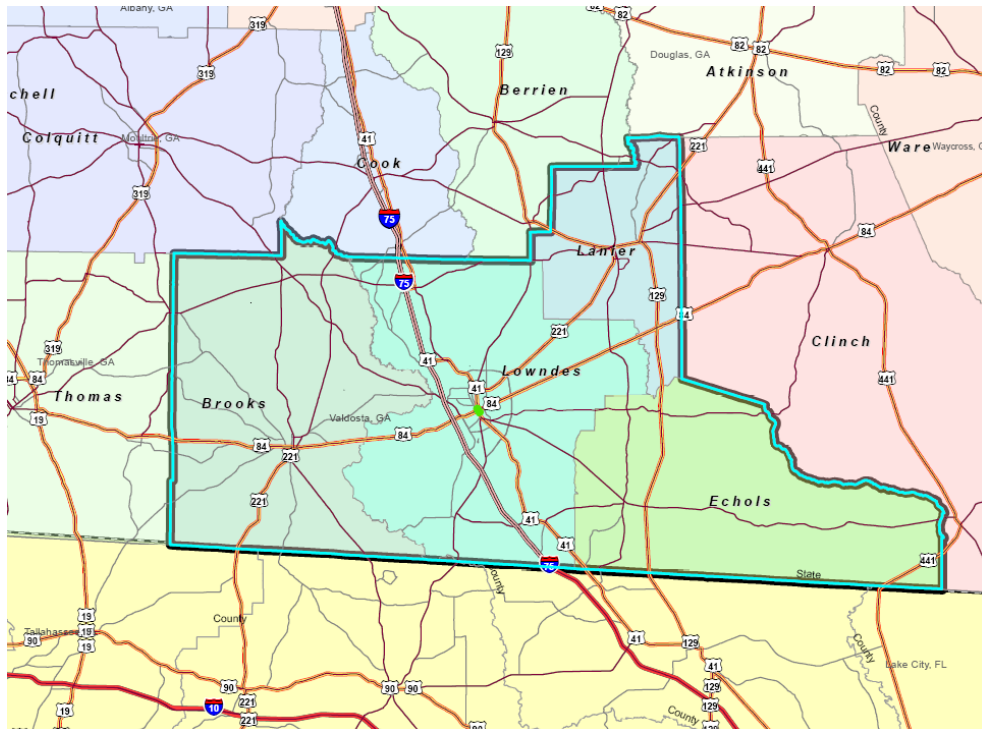
Source: BAG, Urban Collage

Figure 2-3 Downtown Valdosta, City of Valdosta, and Lowndes County



Source: BAG

Figure 2-4 Valdosta, Core Based Statistical Area



Source: BAG

3. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section describes the population living in Downtown Valdosta and its larger market area. It includes an analysis of population growth, race and ethnicity, age distribution, and educational attainment. The data comes from the 2000 United States Census and Claritas, a nationally recognized socio-economic and demographic information source.

3.1. POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

3.1.1. POPULATION

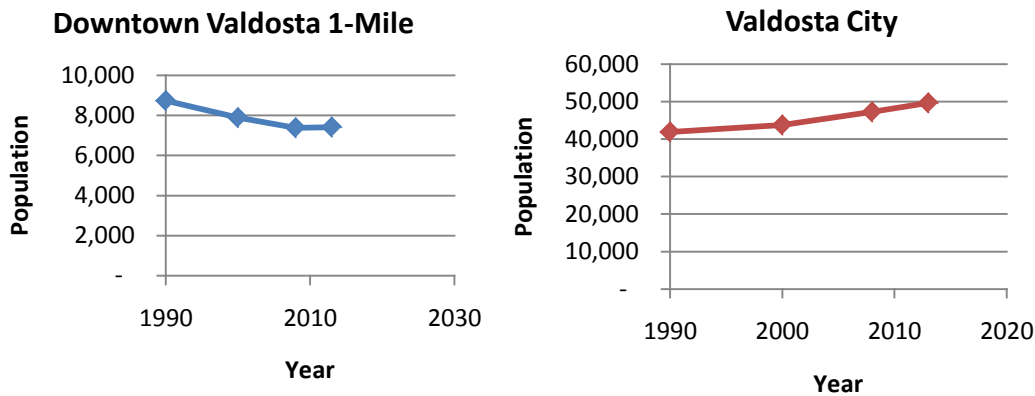
There are an estimated 7,375 people living in the Downtown area as of 2009, down 15% since 1990, but slightly above 2000 levels. The city-wide population is 47,223, showing modest annual growth of roughly 1% since 2000. The city's population is projected to continue to grow by 1% annually to 49,600 by 2014.

This Downtown area represents 16% of the city's total residential population, while the City of Valdosta, the region's dominant city represents 36% of the four-county metro area's total residential population of 132,801.

3-1 Population Growth History and Projections			
Population 1990-2014	Valdosta 1-mile	City of Valdosta	Valdosta MSA
1990 Census	8,726	41,878	99,244
2000 Census	7,880	43,724	119,560
2009 Estimate	7,375	47,223	132,801
2014 Projection	7,410	49,628	141,223
Growth 1990-2000	-1.0%	0.4%	1.9%
Growth 2000-2009	-0.7%	0.9%	1.2%
Growth 2009-2014	0.1%	1.0%	1.2%

Source: Claritas

3-2 Population Change, 1990-2014



Source: Claritas

3.1.2. RACE AND ETHNICITY

Valdosta, and its four-county metro area, has considerable racial diversity, yet little ethnic diversity.

- According to 2009 Claritas estimates, 83% of the Downtown area's residents identify themselves as Black or African-American, as compared to 50% for the residents of the city, and 33% for the Valdosta Metro Area.
- Just 2.6% of residents in the Downtown area identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino, similar to the City of Valdosta's 2.5%, but lower than the Metro area's 4.0%.

3-3 Race by Classification and Hispanic/Latino Origin. 2009

	Downtown Valdosta		City of Valdosta		Valdosta MSA	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
2009 Est. Total Population	7,375		47,223		132,801	
White	1,093	14.8%	21,559	45.7%	82,323	62.0%
Black /African Amer.	6,107	82.8%	23,609	50.0%	43,770	33.0%
Other	101	1.40%	1326	2.80%	4,583	3.40%
Two or More Races	74	1.0%	729	1.5%	2,125	1.6%
2009 Hispanic or Latino by Origin*						
Not Hispanic or Latino		97.4%		97.5%		96.0%
Hispanic or Latino:		2.6%		2.5%		4.0%

Source: Claritas

3.1.3. AGE DISTRIBUTION

Residents of Downtown and the City of Valdosta tend to be somewhat younger than the Metro area's population at large:

- The median age in the Downtown area is 29.3 years, slightly younger than city median at 29.8 years, and 3 years younger than the Metro area median age.
- The elderly are not a significant component of the Downtown population. An estimated 11% of residents are over 65 across all three areas.

3-4 Age Distribution			
Age Category	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta MSA
Under 18	32%	27%	26%
18 to 34	26%	31%	29%
34 to 49	17%	17%	20%
50 to 64	14%	14%	15%
65 and up	11%	11%	11%
Median Age	29.3	29.8	32.3

Source: Claritas

3.1.4. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

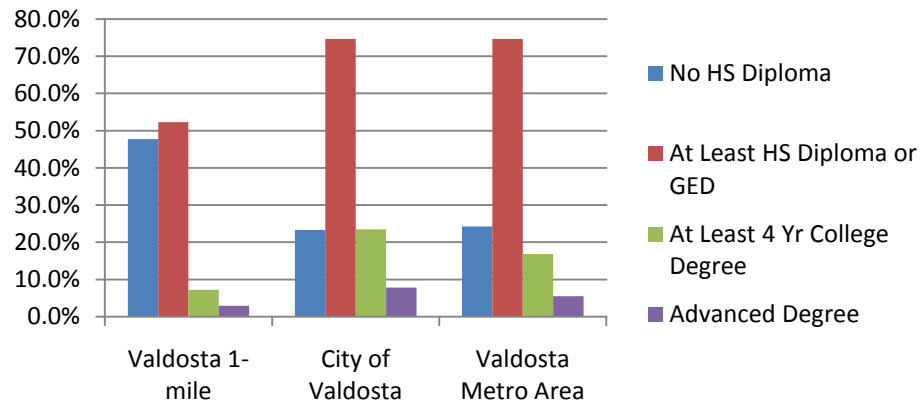
The residents of the Downtown market area have educational attainment levels that are significantly more modest than the City or Metro area.

- Among Downtown area residents over the age of 25, 52% have a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 75% for both the city and metro area.
- Among Downtown area residents over the age of 25, seven percent have a 4-year college degree, compared to 24% for city and 17% for the metro area.

3-5 Educational Attainment, 2009			
2009 Est. Pop. Age 25+ by Educational Attainment*	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
No HS Diploma	47.7%	23.3%	24.3%
HS Diploma or GED	52.3%	74.7%	74.6%
4 Yr College Degree or more	7.2%	23.5%	16.8%

Source: Claritas

3-6 Educational Attainment



Source: Claritas

3.2. HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

3.2.1. HOUSEHOLD GROWTH

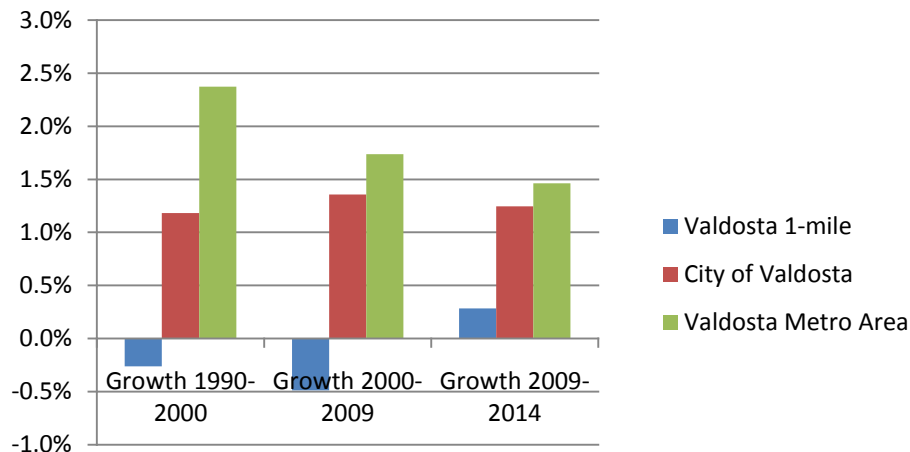
The Downtown area had an estimated 2,897 households in 2009, and that number is expected to remain essentially stable over the next five years assuming the continuation of current land-use and housing patterns. The City of Valdosta is expected to add over 1,100 households over the next five years, corresponding to an annual growth rate of 1.2%

3-7 Households and Household Growth 1990-2014

	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
1990 Census	3,096	14,928	34,484
2000 Census	3,015	16,692	42,666
2009 Estimate	2,897	18,504	48,596
2014 Projection	2,938	19,656	52,152
Annual Growth 1990-2000	-0.3%	1.2%	2.4%
Annual Growth 2000-2009	-0.5%	1.4%	1.7%
Annual Growth 2009-2014	0.3%	1.2%	1.5%

Source: Claritas

3-8 Household Growth 1990-2014



Source: Claritas

3.2.2. HOUSEHOLD SIZE AND COMPOSITION

The average household size is consistent across all three geographies, at an average of 2.4 to 2.5 people per housing unit.

The most typical household's type found in the Downtown market area is singles living alone, representing 35% of all households, compared to 30% for the city and 26% for the Metro area. The Downtown area also has lower percentages of married couples with children, representing 12% of households, compared to 22% for the City and 26% for the Metro area.

3-9 Household Type, 2009			
	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
Single Living Alone	34.9%	30.2%	25.5%
Married with Children	11.7%	21.6%	26.1%
Married, No Children	9.9%	17.1%	23.7%
1-Parent W/ Children	20.3%	13.6%	11.5%
Other Family Household	15.7%	8.6%	7.8%
Non-Family Household	7.6%	8.8%	5.4%

Source: Claritas

3.2.3. HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household income in the Downtown area is \$16,913, roughly half of the City-wide median of \$33,838

3-10 Household Income, 2009			
	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
2009 Avg. HH Income	\$25,417	\$50,542	\$51,120
2009 Median HH Income	\$16,913	\$33,838	\$38,395
2009 Per Capita Income	\$10,057	\$20,034	\$19,777

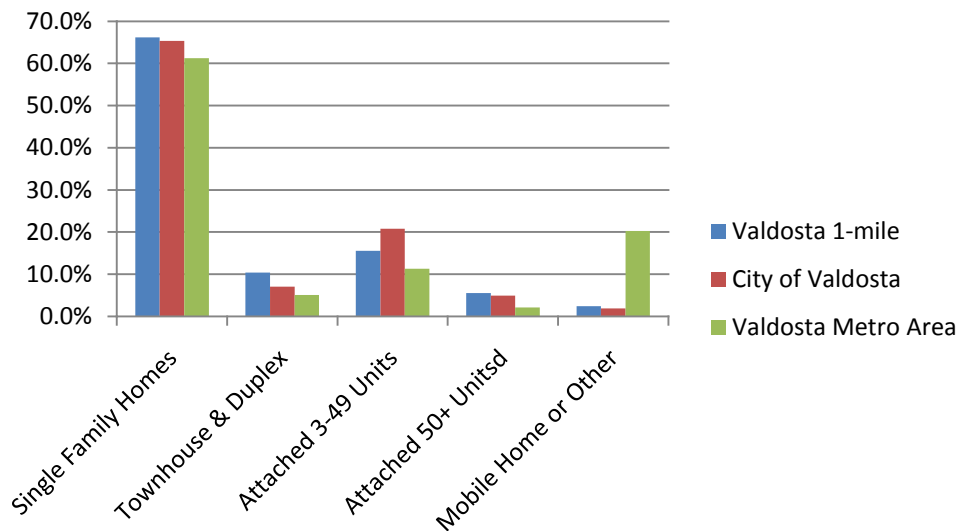
Source: Claritas

In the Downtown area, 76% of households earn less than \$35,000 per year, and only 2.5% (or 73 households), earn over \$100,000. This is significantly different from the City, where 52% of households earn less than \$35,000 and 11%, or 2,085 households, earn over \$100,000 annually.

3.2.4. HOUSING TYPE AND TENURE

Single family detached houses account for approximately two-thirds of housing stock across all three geographies. Duplexes and apartment represent most of the remaining stock in the Downtown area and the City, while mobile homes represent over 20% of the housing stock in the Metro Area. The bulk of the apartments in the area are in smaller apartment complexes with less than 50 units.

3-11 Housing Type, 2009



Source: Claritas

In terms of tenure preference, a high percentage, two-thirds, of Downtown residents rent their home, while half of city residents rent and only one third of metro area residents rent.

3-12 Housing Tenure, 2009

	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
Owner-Occupied	35.2%	48.1%	65.0%
Renter-Occupied	64.8%	51.9%	35.0%

Source: Claritas

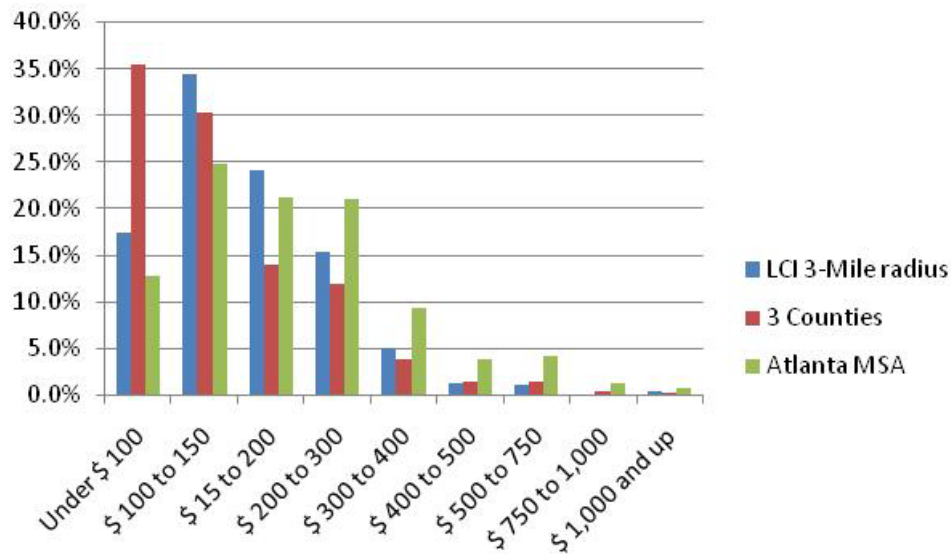
3.2.5. HOUSING AGE AND VALUES

The median age of homes in the Downtown area is over 52 years old, significantly higher than the median age of housing of 32 years in the City and the 26 years Metro

area. The Downtown area is a long-established residential area anchored by a historic district, with 70% of homes built prior to 1960.

Owner-occupied home values in the Downtown area tend to be significantly lower than those in the City or Metro area. The estimated 2009 median home value in the Downtown area was \$50,526, less than half of the City median value of \$116,283 or the Metro-area median value of \$108,659.

3-13 Distribution of Owner Occupied Home Values, 2009



Source: Claritas

No homes in the Downtown area were reported to have a value over \$300,000, as compared to 8% in the City of Valdosta.

3-14 Estimated Home Values, 2009

	Downtown Valdosta	City of Valdosta	Valdosta Metro Area
Less than \$20,000	14.1%	2.9%	4.7%
\$20,000 - \$39,999	24.2%	5.5%	8.9%
\$40,000 - \$59,999	22.2%	8.8%	10.3%
\$60,000 - \$79,999	14.7%	10.8%	10.2%
\$80,000 - \$99,999	8.0%	12.7%	11.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	8.8%	28.3%	27.8%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	3.6%	11.2%	11.8%
\$200,000 - \$299,999	4.3%	11.9%	9.6%
\$300,000 - \$499,999	0.0%	5.0%	4.1%
\$500,000 and up	0.0%	2.9%	1.6%
Median Value	\$ 50,526	\$116,283	\$ 108,659

Source: Claritas

3.3. BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS.

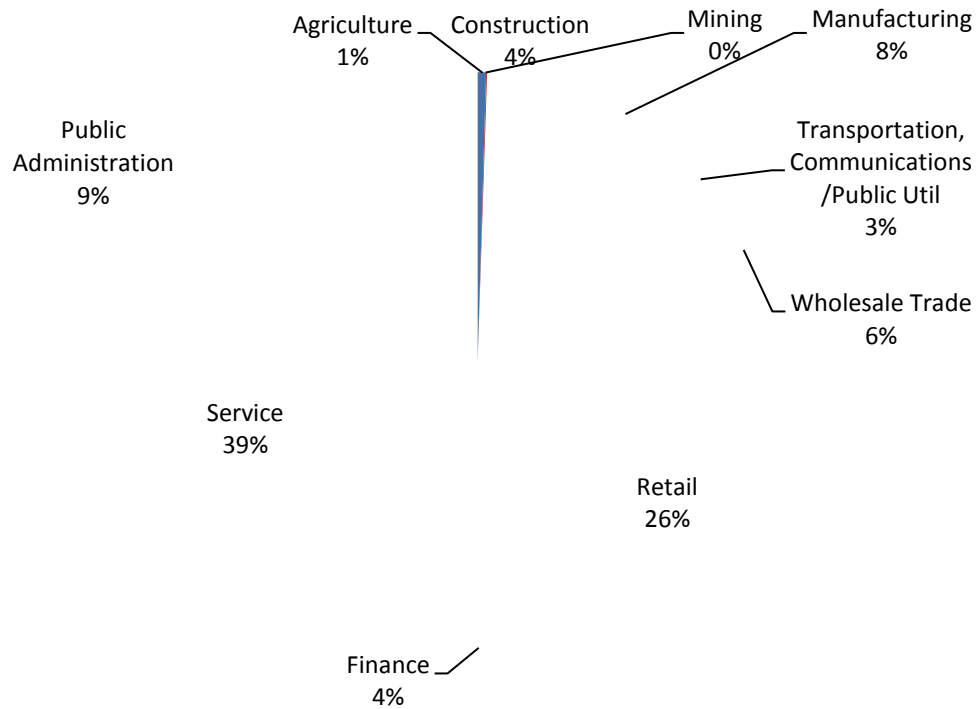
Employment patterns and trends in the local area workforce are essential indicators of economic growth and vitality in the Downtown area and the City of Valdosta. Not only do local businesses use goods and services in the local economy, but their employees spend money that they have earned during the workday in the local area, generating revenue for and sustaining local businesses. This section focuses on the employment base and daytime workforce of Downtown Valdosta.

3.4. BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

According to Claritas, in 2009, the City of Valdosta is the home to an estimated 3,039 firms or business establishments with over 40,000 employees, an average of 13 employees per establishment. The largest employment sector is services, representing over 1,200 establishments and 39% of all jobs, followed by retail with over 700 establishments and 26% of jobs, and by the public administration sector with 176 establishments and 9% of the city's jobs.

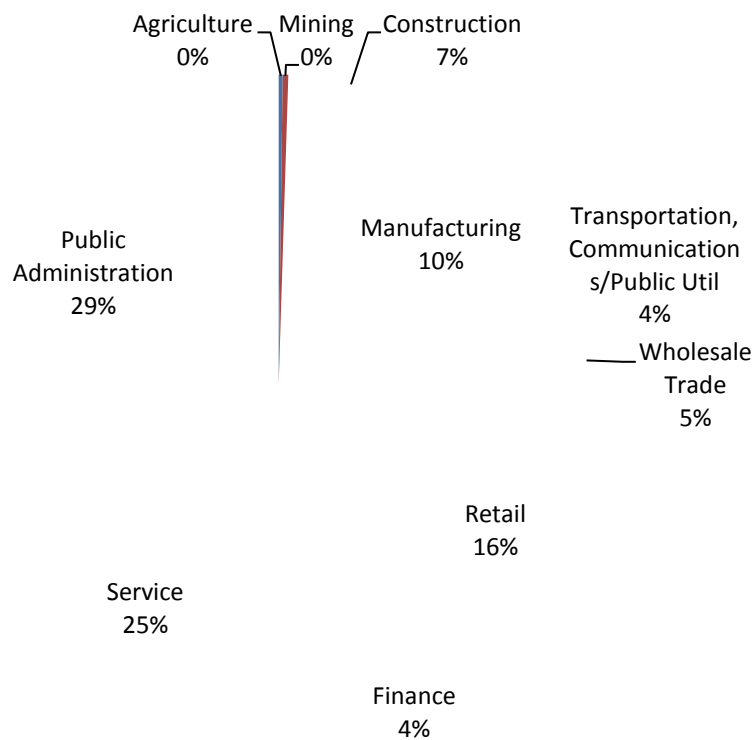
Downtown Valdosta is the home to an estimated 786 businesses, with approximately 8,200 jobs, representing 20% of the City of Valdosta's total jobs. In the Downtown area, the largest employment sector is public administration, representing 29% percent of all Downtown jobs, with over 2,400 employees. Both the city and county seats of government, administrative offices, and judicial facilities are located in the Downtown core, as well as a large post office, the county mental health office, and the State labor departments. Many of the Downtown area's remaining jobs are in the retail, finance and service sectors, which are typically very small companies. In the Downtown area, the retail, finance and service sectors represent a combined 3,600 jobs in approximately 550 establishments. Downtown businesses tend to be smaller, with an average of 6.6 jobs per establishment, compared to 12.3 jobs per establishment city-wide. This reflects the dominance of small "mom-and-pop" type establishments in the Downtown core, while large retail establishments, franchises and nationally-branded establishments tend to be located in the mall area or closer to the I-75 corridor.

3-15 City of Valdosta, Establishments by Number of Employees, 2009



Source: Claritas

3-16 Downtown Valdosta, Establishments by Number of Employees, 2009



Source: Claritas

3-17 City of Valdosta, Industry by Number of Employees, 2009

Business Description	Establishments	Employees	Per Establishment
Agriculture	52	189	4
Mining	2	24	12
Construction	172	1,691	10
Manufacturing	137	3,196	23
Transportation, Communications/Public Util	92	1,296	14
Wholesale Trade	126	2,446	19
Retail	718	10,547	15
Finance	291	1,744	6
Service	1,273	15,688	12
Public Administration	176	3,717	21
Total	3,039	40,538	13

Source: Claritas

3-18 Downtown Valdosta, Industry by Number of Employees, 2009

Business Description	Establishments	Employees	Per Establishment
Agriculture	8	17	2
Mining	2	24	12
Construction	29	540	19
Manufacturing	35	797	23
Transportation, Communications/Public Util	17	360	21
Wholesale Trade	31	445	14
Retail	161	1,299	8
Finance	64	317	5
Service	331	2,037	6
Public Administration	108	2,418	22
Total	786	8,254	11

Source: Claritas

3.5. KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- **Valdosta dominates the Region**—Valdosta is by far the largest and most dominant city in the region. The city's 47,000 residents represent 36% of the four-county metropolitan region. Valdosta is the home to an estimated 3,039 firms or business establishments with over 40,000 employees.
- **Singles dominate Downtown Valdosta**—The most typical household type found in the Downtown market area is singles living alone, representing 35% of all households, compared to 30% for the city and 26% for the Metro area. The Downtown area also has lower percentages of married couples with children, representing 12% of households, compared to 22% for the City and 26% for the Metro area.
- **Incomes and Education Levels are significantly more modest Downtown**—The average household income in the Downtown area is \$25,417, roughly half of the City-wide average of \$50,542. Among adult Downtown residents 52% have a high school diploma or equivalent, compared to 75% for both the city and metro area; 7% percent of Downtown residents have a 4-year college degree, compared to 24% for city and 17% for the metro area.
- **Most Downtown residents rent their home**—Two-thirds of Downtown residents rent their home, while half of city residents rent and only one third of metro area residents rent.
- **Downtown-area homes are older and more modest than average**—The estimated 2009 median home value in the Downtown area was \$50,526, less than half of the City median value of \$116,283 or the Metro-area median value of \$108,659. The median age of homes in the Downtown area is over 52 years old, significantly higher than the median age of housing of 32 years in the City and the 26 years Metro area. The Downtown area is a long-established residential area anchored by a historic district, with 70% of homes built prior to 1960.
- **Government and small companies dominate Downtown Valdosta's businesses**—Downtown Valdosta is the home to an estimated 786 businesses, with approximately 8,200 jobs, representing 20% of the City of Valdosta's total jobs. In the Downtown area, the largest employment sector is public administration, representing 29% percent of all Downtown jobs, with over 2,400 employees. Downtown businesses tend to be smaller, with an average of 6.6 jobs per establishment, compared to 12.3 jobs per establishment city-wide.

4. REAL ESTATE MARKET TRENDS

In this section the performance of the Valdosta real estate market is examined in terms of several key land uses: residential, retail, office, and industrial. The purpose of this section is to present an overview of the study area's real estate market to serve as the basis of project growth and redevelopment potential in order to inform transportation and land use decisions within the study area.

4-1 2009 Est. Housing Units by Units in Structure

	Valdosta Downtown Core		Downtown Valdosta		City of Valdosta		Valdosta Metro Area	
Single Family Homes	-	0.0%	2,510	66.1%	14,093	65.3%	34,250	61.2%
Townhouse & Duplex	-	0.0%	395	10.4%	1,523	7.1%	2,854	5.1%
Attached 3-49 Units	37	37.0%	589	15.5%	4,493	20.8%	6,303	11.3%
Attached 50+ Units	63	63.0%	211	5.6%	1,064	4.9%	1,175	2.1%
Mobile Home or Other	-	0.0%	91	2.4%	408	1.9%	11,339	20.3%
Total	100	100.0%	3,796	100.0%	21,581	100.0%	55,921	100.0%

Source: Claritas, BAG

4.1. BUILDING PERMITS

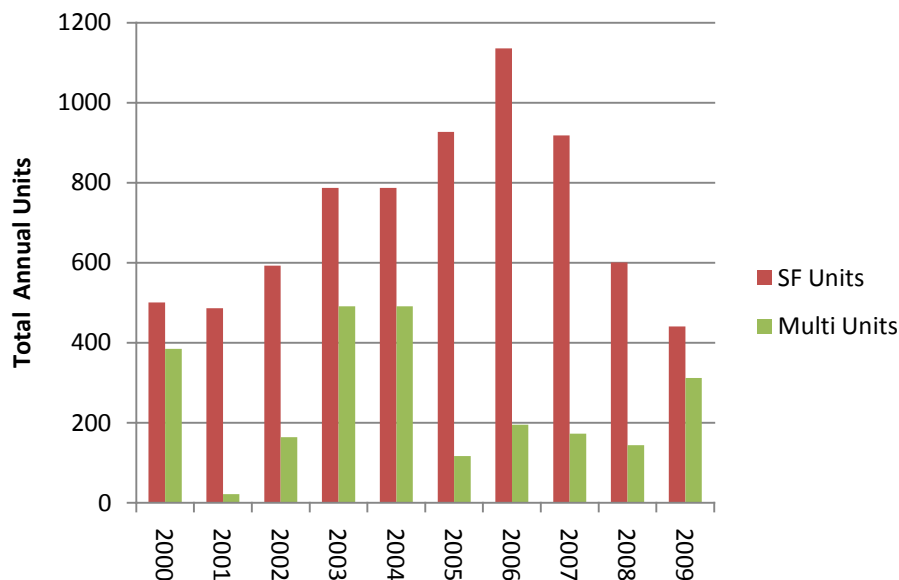
From 2001 to the peak of the market in 2006, local residential building permits nearly doubled, from 508 units in 2001 to 1,331 units in 2006. Since 2006, the number of building permits has declined by 45%, to 753 units. Single-family building permits predominate in Lowndes County, accounting for 74% of units built since 2000. During the peak years of the last real estate boom, 2005-2008, 85% of building permits in Lowndes County were for single-family residences.

4-2 Residential Building Permits, Lowndes County 2000-2009

Year	Single-Family Units	Single-Family Total Const. Value	Multi-Family Bldgs	Multi-Family Units	Multi-Family Total Const. Value	Total Units	Total Value
2000	501	\$38,813,487	16	385	\$7,259,767	886	\$46,073,254
2001	486	\$50,066,278	2	22	\$439,962	508	\$50,506,240
2002	593	\$67,562,414	20	164	\$5,438,934	757	\$73,001,348
2003	787	\$102,162,813	48	491	\$24,220,274	1278	\$126,383,087
2004	787	\$102,162,813	48	491	\$24,220,274	1278	\$126,383,087
2005	927	\$118,167,103	28	117	\$8,958,146	1044	\$127,125,249
2006	1136	\$133,414,856	35	195	\$13,306,651	1331	\$146,721,507
2007	918	\$103,118,396	38	173	\$13,782,704	1091	\$116,901,100
2008	601	\$67,778,082	18	144	\$5,721,640	745	\$73,499,722
2009	441	\$43,242,184	17	312	\$19,657,459	753	\$62,899,643

Source: US Census

4-3 Building Permits, Lowndes County, 2000-2009



Source: US Census, 2000

Multi-family housing development, previously only a small portion of new development in Lowndes County, has gained a significantly larger market share of residential construction as single-family development has eased. In 2009, multi-family construction represented 43% of all new units, compared to only 11% in 2005.

Due to the significant overhang of un-built single family lot inventory and anticipated continued slowness in the absorption of new units, it is unlikely that the residential

market will return to normal levels of absorption and development in the immediate future.

4.2. RESIDENTIAL MARKET CONDITIONS:

4.2.1. CITY-WIDE HOME SALE PRICES AND VOLUMES

An analysis of home sales data from the South Georgia Board of Realtors, in the city of Valdosta suggests that the residential real estate collapse which has severely impacted home sale prices and volumes throughout the United States seems to have touched lightly on Valdosta. While the average home sale price in Georgia has fallen 25% from 2006 to 2010, the average new home price in Valdosta in 2009 was \$166,500, just 6% below the 2005 peak of \$178,270.

Statewide sales of new and existing homes have fallen by half since the peak of the real estate market, yet sales volumes in the City of Valdosta have remained more-or-less constant over the same period. For example, 654 homes were sold in Valdosta in 2009, up from 519 sales in 2008, and roughly equal to the 2006 peak of 659 units. Field surveys and local real estate professionals indicate that the vast majority of homes sold are detached single family units. While some attached townhomes can be found in Remerton, there are very few to be found in Valdosta. Condominiums are rare in Valdosta as well.

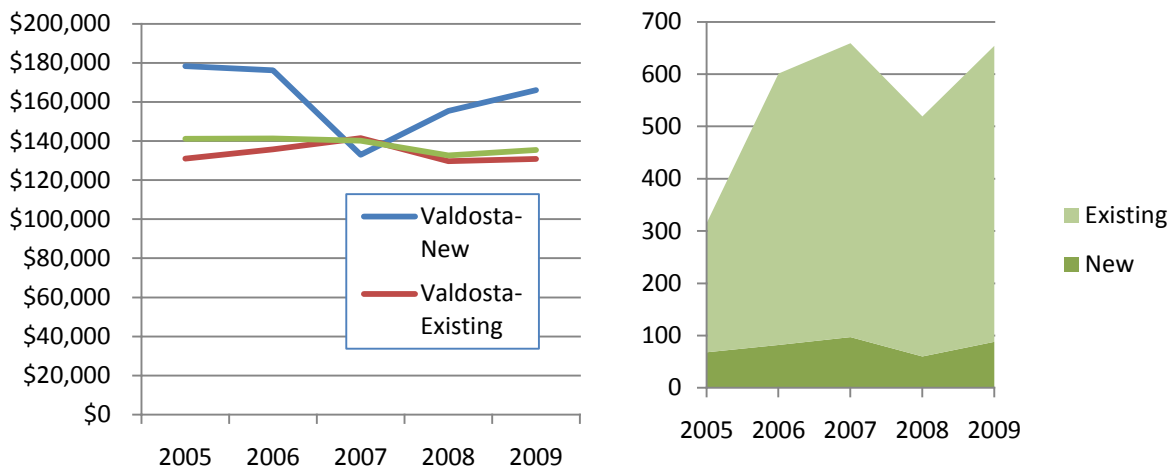
In 2009, new homes represented 13% of homes sold in Valdosta, consistent with levels in 2006-2008, but somewhat lower than the 22% of new homes sold in 2005. New homes tend to command a premium of 20% to 30% over average prices of existing homes, although in 2007, average new home prices were actually 6% less than existing home prices, most likely attributable to a wave of construction of lower-cost starter homes.

4-4: City of Valdosta Home Sales by Year, New vs. Existing Homes

	Avg. Sale Price	New Home Premium	# of Sales	% of Homes New
2005 All Homes	\$141,160		315	
Existing Homes	\$130,943		247	
New homes	\$178,273	36%	68	22%
2006	\$141,320		601	
Existing Homes	\$135,807		519	
New homes	\$176,217	30%	82	14%
2007	\$140,227		659	
Existing Homes	\$141,481		562	
New homes	\$132,963	-6%	97	15%
2008	\$132,645		519	
Existing Homes	\$129,665		459	
New homes	\$155,442	20%	60	12%
2009	\$135,507		654	
Existing Homes	\$130,758		566	
New homes	\$166,046	27%	88	13%

Source: South Georgia Board Of Realtors MLS with the special assistance of Mike Hill Real Estate, BAG

4-5: Valdosta City-wide Home Sale Average Prices and Sale Volumes, 2005-2009



Source: South Georgia Board Of Realtors MLS with the special assistance of Mike Hill Real Estate, BAG

4-6: Georgia Statewide Home Sales Volumes by Year



Source: Zillow.com

4.2.2. GEOGRAPHIC VARIATIONS IN VALDOSTA HOME SALES

The South Georgia Board of Realtors divides the City of Valdosta into four areas, divided from north to south by Baytree St. and from east to west by Oak Street.

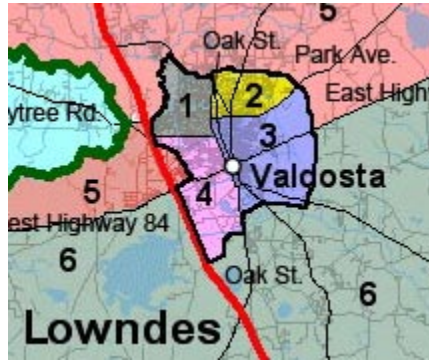
- 1) Northwest Valdosta
- 2) Northeast Valdosta
- 3) East Valdosta, including the eastern half of the Study Area
- 4) West Valdosta, including the western half of the Study Area.

The Downtown area is evenly split between zones 3 and 4.

Home Sale Data from the South Georgia Board Realtors shows that there are distinct variations in average home sale prices depending on neighborhood. Homes in the southern quadrants of the City, which includes Downtown Valdosta, tend to be priced significantly lower than homes in the northern two quadrants.

Average 2009 sale prices are highest in the Northwest quadrant, at \$179,629, followed by the northeast quadrant at \$125,956. Average 2009 home sale prices in the two southern quadrants, which include the Downtown study area, were significantly lower, averaging approximately \$70,000.

4-7: Map of South Georgia Board of Realtors Subareas

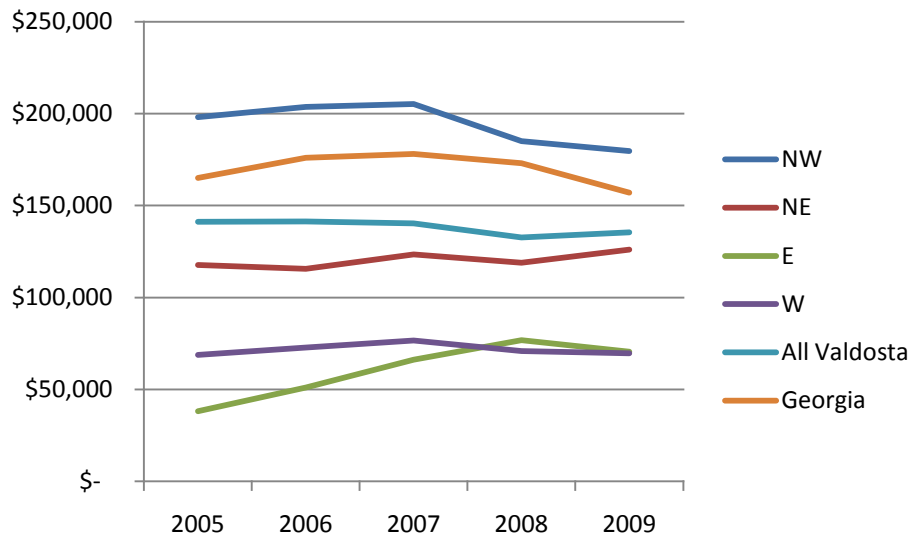


Source: South Georgia Board Of Realtors MLS

4-8: City of Valdosta Home Sales by year, 2005-2009					
Subarea	1-NW	2 NE	3-E	4-W	Total
2005					
Avg Sale Price	\$198,037	\$117,723	\$38,145	\$68,869	\$141,160
Number of Sales	123	146	18	24	315
2006					
Avg Sale Price	\$203,642	\$115,665	\$51,051	\$72,780	\$141,320
Number of Sales	221	305	41	33	601
2007					
Avg Sale Price	\$205,202	\$123,457	\$66,116	\$76,662	\$140,227
Number of Sales	202	355	75	26	659
2008					
Avg Sale Price	\$184,992	\$118,903	\$76,853	\$70,832	\$132,645
Number of Sales	160	280	59	20	519
2009					
Avg Sale Price	\$179,629	\$125,956	\$70,526	\$69,733	\$135,507
Number of Sales	220	334	76	24	654
Total					
Avg Sale Price	\$194,311	\$120,883	\$65,549	\$71,953	\$138,018
Number of Sales	926	1,420	269	127	2,748

Source: South Georgia Board Of Realtors MLS with the special assistance of Mike Hill Real Estate, BAG

4-9: City of Valdosta Average Home Sale Prices by Year and Area, 2005-2009



Source: South Georgia Board Of Realtors MLS with the special assistance of Mike Hill Real Estate, Zillow.com, BAG

4.2.3. CITY-WIDE MULTI- FAMILY RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE CONDITIONS

Apartment complexes in Valdosta are most heavily concentrated to the north and west of the University area, 2 to 3 miles north of the Downtown core. These apartment complexes cater to the largely transient populations of Valdosta State University and Moody Air Force Base. There is a large concentration of older apartment complexes in the town of Remerton, to the east of the University, with several more recent apartment complexes to the north and west of the University.

Valdosta's apartment complexes offer a range of rents and amenities, with some older student-oriented apartments offering 1-bedroom apartments for less than \$500/month and two-bedroom units from \$550 to \$600 a month. Class A apartments with newer construction and amenities tend to rent one-bedroom units between \$675 to \$725 per month and two bedroom units from \$725 to \$800 per month.

Since 2000, Lowndes County has issued building permits for fewer than 2,500 multi-family units in the entire county, averaging fewer than 250 units annually.

4-10: Sample of Existing Apartment Complexes Near Downtown

Apartment	Location	Units	Distance from Downtown
Woodstone Apartments	1503 E Park Avenue	300	2.7 Miles
Rents:	1 BR	\$479	
	2 BR	\$540-\$595	
	3 BR	\$699	
Tremont Village	Bemiss & Pineview	179	2.5 Miles
Rents	1 BR	\$685	
	2 BR	\$735	
	3 BR	\$815	
Residences at 5 Points	Ashley St	364	3.1 Miles
Rents	1 BR	\$715	
	2 BR	\$925	
	3 BR	\$1,075-\$1,115	

Source: BAG

A major new Class-A garden apartment community, to be called The Residences at Five-Points, has been proposed adjacent to the Five-Points Shopping Center and is scheduled for opening in late 2010. This facility will offer 364 units at a significantly higher price-point than most area apartments, ranging from \$775 per month for a 1-bedroom unit to \$1,115 per month for a large 3-bedroom unit. This complex is currently reported to be 15% pre-leased.

4.3. DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL MARKET CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

According to Claritas, as of 2009, there are approximately 2,500 housing units in the Downtown area, two-thirds of which are detached single family residences, with most of the remainder in duplexes or small apartment complexes, which generally tend to be outside of the Downtown Study Area boundary.

4.3.1. DOWNTOWN FOR-SALE HOUSING

At this time, there are no for-sale condominium residential units in Downtown. Stakeholder interviews indicate that interest in condominiums and urban-style home ownership concepts were beginning to gain in momentum in Valdosta during 2006 and 2007, but the collapse of real estate and credit markets in fall of 2008 prevented any projects from moving forward. Several developers in Valdosta and nearby Thomasville report strong potential demand for condominium and loft units Downtown. A hotel in Thomasville which underwent redevelopment as a condominium project in 2007, gives an indication of the potential market response to such a development in Valdosta's Downtown. Most of the Thomasville project's 30 units were pre-sold before completion of construction, at prices ranging from the mid-

\$200,000s to as high as \$500,000 for two bedroom units. Currently, many of these units are on the market with asking prices between \$220,000 and \$280,000, with very little sales activity. Several developers and property owners in Valdosta report similar pre-development demand for condo product prior to the real estate collapse.

As the impact of the Great Recession on the housing market recedes, local developers anticipate that there will be a return of demand for condominiums in Downtown Valdosta. The availability of end-user financing at reasonable terms will be key to satisfying future demand for for-sale housing units Downtown.

4.3.2. DOWNTOWN RENTAL HOUSING

The Downtown Valdosta Core has a reported 100 apartments, 63 of which are in a single assisted living facility, with the remaining 37 being renovated lofts in converted Downtown buildings. With the exception of two buildings with five and eight rental units each, the remainder of the units is distributed throughout the Downtown core, with fewer than four units per buildings. Downtown apartments tend to be one-bedroom loft-style apartments, typically consisting of 500-750 SF in the upper floors of historic commercial buildings. Nearly all units are walk-up, without elevators. Some of these units are inhabited by the owners of the buildings, while the rest are available as monthly rentals, typically at \$750-\$850/month.

Ashley House apartments, a privately-owned assisted living facility at the intersection of Hill Street and Ashley Street, has 63 rental units which rent for an average of \$650/month, mostly subsidized by assorted State and Federal housing programs.

Claritas reports that there are approximately 800 apartment units within the Downtown area, most of which are in small complexes of fewer than 49 units. Within the Downtown core there are currently no typical apartment buildings.

4.4. COMMERCIAL MARKET TRENDS

4.4.1. DOWNTOWN VALDOSTA COMMERCIAL SPACE INVENTORY

Planning team members conducted a survey of approximately 88% of all buildings in the portion of the study area north of the railroad tracks of the Downtown Core, classifying the current use of all building space. This data was further analyzed using aerial photography, tax records, and GIS analysis to develop an estimate of the Downtown Core's real estate inventory by land use.

The planning team estimates that there is currently nearly 1.6 million SF of space within the Downtown Study Area north of the railroad tracks. Of that space, 1.0 million SF is at the ground floor level, with the remaining 600,000 SF in upper floors. Approximately 315,000, or 28% of the Downtown space surveyed, is currently vacant or unoccupied, however it is difficult to gauge how much of that space is currently occupiable and currently being marketed for lease or sale, how much is currently in need of renovation or currently undergoing renovation, and how much is derelict.

Of ground-floor space, currently 316,000 SF, or 43% of the space surveyed is currently unoccupied.

The largest category of Downtown real estate surveyed is commercial space, representing 530,000 SF of space, or nearly a third of the total inventory, an additional 237,000 SF of mixed-use space includes a significant additional allotment of commercial space, typically on the ground floor. The mixed-use category also includes 100 residential units that were catalogued, all on upper floors of commercial buildings.

Institutional uses, consisting of churches, libraries, and non-office government buildings make up significant portion of the Downtown real estate, with an estimated 345,000 SF.

Dedicated office space represents less than 300,000 SF, with the bulk of the dedicated office space in just three government buildings. A much larger share of Valdosta's office space tends to locate in adapted commercial and residential spaces, making it difficult to develop a clear estimate of the total existing inventory of office space.

Industrial uses make up only an estimated 41,000 SF of Downtown space.

An estimated 200,000 SF of buildings, primarily single-story buildings at the periphery of the Downtown area were not surveyed. In general these buildings tend to have lower occupancy rates than those buildings that were surveyed.

Downtown Valdosta's commercial real estate inventory is difficult to quantify due to the prevalence of historic re-use and non-traditional uses. While typical real estate markets have a distinct difference between office, retail, industrial, and residential space, the unique nature of Downtown Valdosta's historic core causes the distinctions between office, retail, industrial, and residential space to be blurred, as space is frequently adapted from one use to another. A significant portion of the Downtown core's real estate inventory is situated in historic buildings, where ongoing, time-consuming and frequently unpredictable restoration projects add considerable uncertainty to any estimates of vacancy rates.

4-11 Downtown Valdosta Estimated Real Estate Inventory, All Space

All Space	Total SF	Occupied SF	Vacant SF	Unclassified SF
Commercial	530,676	437,639	15,137	77,900
Industrial	40,921	40,921	-	-
Institutional	344,590	274,041	36,267	34,282
Mixed Use	237,286	222,117	15,169	-
Office	279,092	71,040	121,675	86,377
Residential	251	-	-	251
Unoccupied	203,435	70,909	127,462	5,064
Grand Total	1,636,251	1,116,667	315,710	203,874
% of Total	100%	68%	19%	12%
% of Classified		100%	28%	18%

Source: BAG, Urban Collage, Lowndes County tax Assessor, City of Valdosta GIS

4-12 Downtown Valdosta Estimated Real Estate Inventory, Ground Floor Space

Ground Floor Only	Total Ground Floor SF	Occupied Ground Floor SF	Vacant Ground Floor SF	Unclassified Ground Floor SF
Commercial	423,430	344,060	15,137	77,900
Industrial	40,921	40,921	-	-
Institutional	209,566	163,195	36,267	34,282
Mixed Use	89,476	88,171	15,169	-
Office	137,549	46,261	121,675	86,377
Residential	251	-	-	251
Unoccupied	134,915	45,056	127,462	5,064
Grand Total	1,036,108	727,664	315,710	203,874
% of Total	100%	70%	30%	20%
% of Classified		100%	43%	28%

Source: BAG, Urban Collage, Lowndes County tax Assessor, City of Valdosta GIS

4.4.2. RETAIL TRENDS

The Valdosta metropolitan area's retail market is dominated by two concentrations of shopping space in large centers:

The Valdosta Mall area, two-to-three miles west of Downtown, includes nearly 1,000,000 SF of retail space, including the enclosed regional mall of approximately 500,000 SF. This area is the site of the bulk of the region's retail activity, and includes a large selection of major national retailers, grocery stores, hotels and chain restaurants.

The Five-Points area, two-to four miles north of town, is the site of Valdosta's oldest shopping centers, developed in the 1950s and 1960s, once dominant, but surpassed by a shift towards the Valdosta Mall area since the 1980s. This area contains two

major shopping centers and a total of approximately 425,000 SF of retail space. These centers are anchored by a Wal-Mart and several discount and dollar stores.

Non-anchor commercial space in newer shopping centers near the Valdosta Mall area tends lease between \$11.00 to \$14.00 per SF, with some newer retail centers commanding rents up to \$18.00 per SF.

4-13 Valdosta Shopping Centers

Valdosta Mall Retail Cluster

Center Name	Year Open	Leasable Area (SF)	Stores	Center Type	Distance from Downtown
Valdosta Mall	1983	501,344	68	Regional	3 Mi. W
Lowe's Shopping Center	NA	175,396	2	Community	3 Mi. W
Valdosta Mall Corners	NA	172,955	10	Community	2 Mi. W
Promenade Shopping Plaza	1982	59,575	NA	Neighborhood	2 Mi. W
Bay Tree Shopping Center	NA	30,000	NA	Neighborhood	2 Mi. NW
Barclay Square	1990	16,800	NA	Neighborhood	3 Mi. W
Total:		956,070			

Five Points Retail Cluster

Center Name	Year Open	Leasable Area (SF)	Stores	Center Type	Distance from Downtown
Five Points Retail Cluster					
Five Points Shopping Center	1967	289,000	23	Community	3 Mi. N
Castle Park Shopping Center	1954	102,056	20	Community	2 Mi. N
Perimeter Oaks	1998	34,700	13	Neighborhood	4 Mi. N
Total:		425,756			

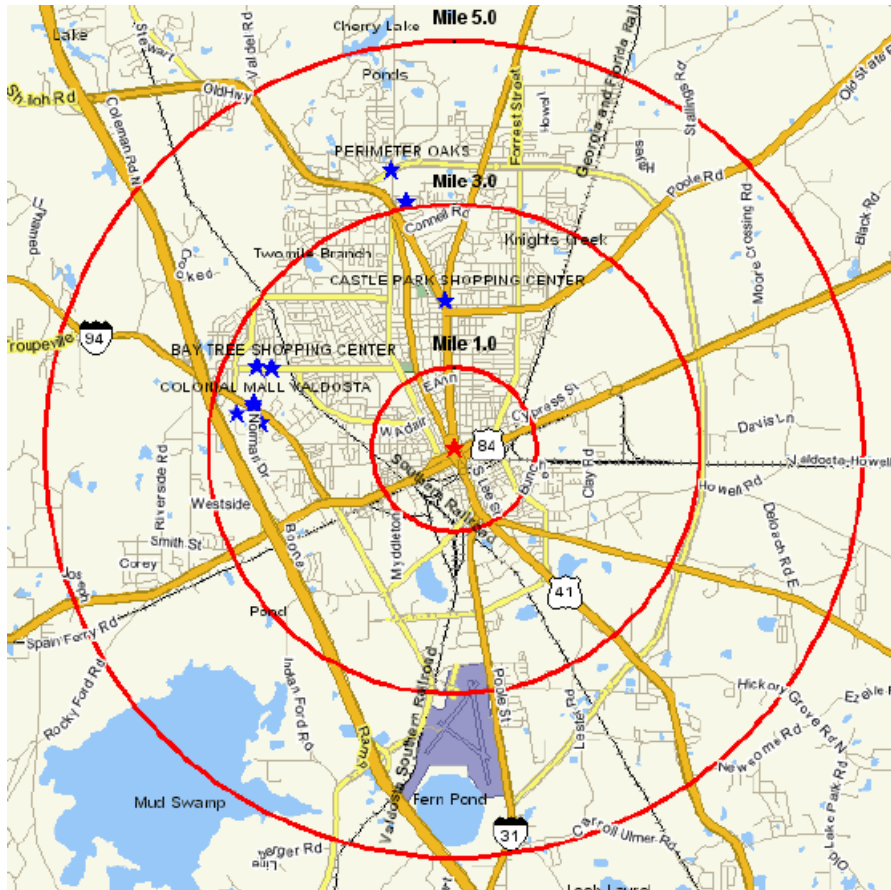
Source: Claritas, BAG

Downtown Valdosta has a small, thriving retail district concentrated in several blocks adjacent to, and south of, the Courthouse. This retail district is a combination of small, independent stores, boutiques and independently-owned mid-sized regional stores, including several hardware stores and furniture stores.

The Downtown area is currently has no broad-based retailers, resulting in the bulk of the Downtown residents' consumer spending tends to be spent outside the Downtown area, as Downtown Valdosta has no shopping centers, national franchise stores, department stores, or supermarkets.

Rehabilitated ground-floor retail space in historic Downtown buildings generally rents between \$7.00 and \$10.00 per square foot. Freestanding stores in good condition can command rents up to \$14.00/SF.

4-14 Valdosta Shopping Centers



Source: Claritas

4.4.1. OFFICE TRENDS

Most of Valdosta's professional offices tend to be located along the Oak Street corridor north of Downtown. Medical offices tend to be clustered further north on Hill Street, near the South Georgia Medical Center. As professional firms in Valdosta tend to be small, averaging between six and twelve people, these offices are located primarily in small owner-occupied spaces, most typically in converted single family residences or user-owned stand-alone buildings.

Governmental services at the local, county and State level tend to be located in Downtown Valdosta, mostly public buildings, however a small portion in of government offices are housed in leased private commercial space.

The vast majority of office space in Valdosta is owned by the end-user, leaving only a small portion as leased space which is found in a wide variety of building types, with small, single-story buildings being the most common. Office space in Valdosta tends to lease for \$8.00 to \$11.00 per SF.

Downtown Valdosta's office market is dominated by governmental services. Much of the private-sector office space in the Downtown, core tends to be located in

adapted commercial building, often on the upper floors of commercial buildings with retail on the ground floor.

4.5. REAL ESTATE MARKET TRENDS KEY FINDINGS

Valdosta has mostly side-stepped the national real estate crash—The residential real estate collapse which has severely impacted home sale prices and volumes throughout the United States seems to have touched lightly on Valdosta. While the average home sale price in Georgia has fallen 25% from 2006 to 2010, the average new home price in Valdosta in 2009 was \$166,500, just 6% below the 2005 peak of \$178,270. Statewide sales of new and existing homes have fallen by half since the peak of the real estate market, yet sales volumes in the City of Valdosta have remained more-or-less constant over the same period.

Downtown Homes tend to sell at lower prices than homes towards the North of Valdosta—Average 2009 sale prices are highest in the Northwest quadrant, at \$179,629, followed by the northeast quadrant at \$125,956. Average 2009 home sale prices in the two southern quadrants, which include the Downtown study area, were significantly lower, averaging approximately \$70,000.

The Downtown Core has apartments, but no Condos or Townhomes—There are reported to be 100 residential units, 63 of which are in a single subsidized assisted-living building (Ashley House), with the remaining 37 units in recently converted commercial buildings. Of those 37 units, four are occupied by the building's owner and 33 are market-rate apartments. Interest in condominiums and urban-style home ownership concepts were beginning to gain in momentum in Valdosta during 2006 and 2007, but the collapse of real estate and credit markets in fall of 2008 prevented any projects from moving forward.

Downtown Valdosta's real estate inventory includes nearly 1.6 million SF of space—530,000 SF is commercial space, 237,000 SF of mixed-use space which includes a significant additional allotment of commercial space, typically on the ground floor. Institutional uses, consisting of churches, libraries, and non-office government buildings represent an estimated 345,000 sf. Dedicated office space represents less than 300,000 SF.

As much as 43% of Downtown's real estate is currently unoccupied—A significant portion of the Downtown core's real estate inventory is situated in historic buildings, where ongoing, time-consuming and frequently unpredictable restoration projects add considerable uncertainty to any estimates of vacancy rates.

Valdosta's retail market is dominated by two concentrations of shopping centers—The Valdosta Mall includes nearly 1,000,000 SF of retail space, including an enclosed regional mall of 500,000 SF. This area is the site of the bulk of the region's retail activity, and includes a large selection of major national retailers, grocery stores, hotels and chain restaurants. The Five-Points area has two major older shopping centers and a total of 425,000 SF of retail space.

Downtown Valdosta has a small thriving retail district but no broad-based retailers—

This retail district is a combination of small, independent stores, boutiques and independently-owned mid-sized regional stores, including several hardware stores and furniture stores. The bulk of Downtown residents' consumer spending tends to be spent outside the Downtown area as Downtown has no shopping centers, national franchise stores, department stores, or supermarkets.

Valdosta's offices tend to be located primarily in small owner-occupied spaces—

These are most typically in converted single family residences or user-owned stand-alone buildings. Most of Valdosta's professional offices tend to be located along the Oak Street corridor north of Downtown. The vast majority of office space in Valdosta is owned by the end-user; leased office space is rare.

5. FUTURE REAL ESTATE DEMAND

An important component to potential redevelopment in the Downtown Core is a forecast of future real estate demand. Over the next 10 years, the employment and residential demographics will change in the City area as modest growth continues, generating demand for new housing, office and retail development, as well as demand for new commercial development to meet the needs of new residents and employees in the study area. This section discusses the additional real estate demand generated from anticipated residential and employment growth in the study area.

5.1. RESIDENTIAL DEMAND

This section of the market report discusses the level and character of housing demand in the Valdosta, specifically in relation to the Downtown Core. The demand analysis is based on an assessment of current conditions and projected growth in the City and Metro area. The key data derived for this analysis is presented in the following table. The analysis focuses on housing demand derived from two main sources

1. **Demand from Citywide and Metro-Area Growth—** Over the next ten years, the City of Valdosta is projected to add over 18,000 new households, and the remainder of the County is expected to add 37,000 households. The Downtown Core will be competing for its share of these new households.
2. **Turnover in Households—** Every year a significant number of households, both renters and owners move for a variety of reasons, such as: changes in income status, changes in marital status, job-related factors and lifestyle preferences. The study area will be competing for its share of these turnover-related moves.

Downtown faces a serious challenge as it competes to attract a share of these residents: Downtown's urban living options must appeal to a large pool of potential residents who are currently living in suburban or semi-suburban locations and single-family houses. For many these households, a decision to commit to Downtown living constitutes not only a change of location, but a change of lifestyle.

If Downtown Valdosta creates an appealing residential product that can be successfully marketed to this potential audience, , the Downtown Core can expect to see the following demand for residential units over the next ten years:

- **Owner-Occupied Housing Demand—** Based on an analysis of the of housing demand discussed above, over the 2010-2020 period there will be annual demand for 46 owner units in the Downtown area, or 460 owner-occupied units over the ten year period.
- **Renter-Occupied Housing Demand—** The demand for rental housing in the study area is estimated to be 158 units annually over the next ten years, or 1,580 total units.

5-1 Residential Demand in Downtown Valdosta 2010-2020

I. Estimated Housing Demand Due to Growth	Valdosta	Lowndes County*	Total
Households 2010	18,504	37,439	
CAGR households 2009-2014	1.2%	1.5%	
New Households 2010 (County is Net City)	2,344	3,666	
Estimated percentage owner occupied	48.0%	61.7%	
Estimated percentage renter occupied	52.0%	38.3%	
Estimated Owner Demand 2010-2020	1,125	2,261	
Estimated Renter Demand 2010-2020	1,219	1,406	
Downtown Valdosta Area Capture Rate	20%	5%	
Annual Owner Demand --Downtown	23	11	34
Annual Renter Demand- Downtown	24	7	31
II. Estimated Demand Due to Turnover			
Total occupied housing units	18,504	37,439	
Total owner occupied housing units	8,882	23,085	
% of owners who moved in previous year	11%	11%	
Annual Owner Turnover	977	2,539	
Annual turnover owner to owner (47%)	459	1,193	
Annual turnover owner to renter (53%)	518	1,346	
Total renter occupied housing units	9,622	14,354	
% of renters who moved in previous year	21%	15%	
Annual Renter Turnover	2,021	2,153	
Annual turnover renter to owner (21%)	424	452	
Annual turnover renter to renter (79%)	1,596	1,701	
Annual Owner Demand due to Turnover	884	1,646	
Annual Renter Demand due to Turnover	2,114	3,047	
Downtown Owner Capture Rate	2.5%	0.5%	
Downtown Renter Capture Rate	5.0%	1.0%	
Annual Turnover Demand for Owner Housing	22	8	30
Annual Turnover Demand for Rental Housing	106	30	136
Total Demand			
Owner			
I. Annual demand from household growth 2010-2020	11	5	
II. Annual demand from turnover of existing units	22	8	
Total annual demand for owner housing	33	13	46
Renter			
I. Annual demand from household growth 2010-2020	12	3	
II. Annual demand from turnover of existing units	106	30	
III. Other demand @ 5%	5	2	
Total annual demand for rental housing	123	35	158

Sources: U.S. Census American Housing Survey, Claritas, Bleakly Advisory Group

* County total is net of city population contained within.

5.2. RETAIL DEMAND

Demand for retail space in Downtown Valdosta will be generated by both regional household growth and increased capture of existing demand that is currently going to retail establishments outside the Downtown area.

Demand from Household Growth—Between 2010 and 2020, new households in the Valdosta Metro area will generate approximately \$168 million in additional retail sales, which could support approximately 830,000 SF of new retail space over the ten-year period. While of that spending will occur outside of the Downtown area, an effective and coherent Downtown retail strategy can attract a considerable portion of that retail activity to the Downtown Core. Assuming that Downtown Valdosta attracts 10% of regional spending, 20% of citywide spending, and 40% of Downtown resident's spending, this will create additional demand of 107,000 square feet of retail space in the Downtown Core over the next ten years, or 11,000 square feet annually.

Demand from Increased Capture— If Downtown Valdosta increases its retail competitiveness through various strategies as a result of this study, the result will be increased retail spending in the Downtown area, particularly from three key populations: Valdosta State University students, tourists, and workers both in and near Downtown.

- **Students—** According to a 2009 study by the Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP) and UGA Terry College of Business¹, VSU's approximately 11,000 students spend an estimated \$55 million on goods and services other than rent and transportation each year. If Downtown Valdosta were able to attract just 15% of that spending by targeting the University community, combined with increased linkages between Downtown and the University, the result would be \$8 million of additional Downtown spending annually, enough to support 30,000 SF of new retail space.
- **Tourists—** If the Downtown area were able to increase its visibility and desirability to tourists and capture an additional 15% of current estimated regional tourist spending each year, that would generate an additional \$1.8 million in spending, enough to support 6,500 SF of new retail space annually.
- **Workers—** Downtown Valdosta currently has 8,200 workers in the Downtown area, and many more immediately north of Downtown town in the Ashley and Oak Street Corridors, including VSU's staff of 3,000. Those workers spend an estimated \$160 million annually on personal and business retail spending. If Downtown could attract an additional 10% of Downtown workers retail spending, and attract just 5% of the spending of workers just outside of Downtown, that would represent \$14 million dollars of additional Downtown retail spending, enough to support 48,000 SF of retail space annually.

¹ Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP)/UGA Terry College of Business: "The Economic Impact of University System of Georgia Institutions on their Regional Economies in FY 2008", March 2009

Total Retail Demand— The combination of these four sources represents \$53 million in potential additional spending resulting from population growth and increased demand for Downtown retail goods and services. This translates to an estimated demand of 94,000 SF of retail space. If this demand is absorbed incrementally over ten years, it represents an annual demand of approximately 9,400 SF of new retail space Downtown annually.

5-2 2010-2020 Retail Space Demand Forecasts

1. Retail Spending from Population Growth:

	Downtown	City	Metro Area
2009 HH	2,897	15,607	30,092
Growth Rate	0.30%	1.20%	1.50%
2020 Fcst HH	2,985	17,584	34,923
New HH/10/Yrs	88	1,977	4,831
Spending/HH	\$22,720	\$32,273	\$34,822
New Spending	\$2,001,497	\$61,810,568	\$168,224,282
Downtown Capture rate	40%	20%	10%
Downtown Spending	\$800,599	\$12,362,114	\$16,822,428
Avg Sales/SF of Retail	\$280	\$280	\$280
New Retail Demand (SF)	2,859	44,150	60,080
Total Pop Growth Retail Demand-10 Years	107,090		
Total Pop Growth Retail Demand-Annual	10,709		

2. Valdosta State Univ Student Retail Demand

Student Population	10,888.00		
Est Total Student Retail Spending	\$137,182,656		
Spending/Student	\$12,599.44		
Discretionary Spending	\$5,039.77	40%	
Total Spending	\$54,873,062.40		
Downtown Capture Rate	15%		
Captured Student Retail Demand	\$8,230,959.36		
Avg Sales/SF of Retail	\$280		
Student Annual Retail Demand (SF)	29,396		

3. Tourist Spending

Annual Tourists	50,000		
Spending/Tourist	\$180		
Total Spending	\$9,000,000		
Downtown Capture Rate	20%		
Total Spending Increase	\$1,800,000		
Avg Sales/SF of Retail	\$280		
Tourist Annual Retail Demand (SF)	6,429		

3 .Worker Spending

	Downtown	Near Downtown	
Workers	8200	5000	
Annual Spending	\$1,250	1250	
Total Spending	\$102,500,000	\$62,500,000	
Downtown Capture	10%	5%	
Downtown Spending	\$10,250,000	\$3,125,000	
Avg Sales/SF of Retail	\$280	\$281	Total
Annual Worker Retail Demand (SF)	36,607	11,121	47,728

3. Total Annual Retail Demand

Total, all categories	94,262		
------------------------------	---------------	--	--

Source: Claritas, BAG, Intellectual Capital Partnership Program (ICAPP)/UGA Terry College of Business: "The Economic Impact of University System of Georgia Institutions on their Regional Economies in FY 2008", March 2009

5.3. OFFICE DEMAND

Demand for additional office space will be driven by both direct employment growth in the Valdosta area, as well as shifts in land use patterns and office space inventory over the next 10 years.

Valdosta's office market is unique, in that the vast majority of office space is located in small owner-occupied spaces, most typically in converted single family residences or stand-alone buildings. This occupancy pattern is distinct in many ways from the typical urban office market, in which office space is typically leased in larger shared office buildings in such a way that office space becomes a commodity which ebbs and flows, reacting relatively quickly to changes in supply and demand.

This office space configuration makes it difficult to forecast the future demand for office space for several reasons:

- The supply of potential office space varies, as additional existing residential buildings and retail space can easily be converted to office space to meet demand, unless limited by zoning, land use, and permitting restrictions.
- Potential demand from the turnover of commercial leases is significantly reduced;
- Any newly constructed Downtown office space would need to be supported not only increased demand for space, but also by a shift in real estate demand trends.

Using a traditional approach, using job growth forecasts to forecast the demand for office jobs, the City of Valdosta is projected to add approximately 3,600 office-related jobs between 2010-2020. Office jobs are considered to be jobs in sectors that traditionally use office space, shown in the table below. Based on a ratio of 300 square feet of office space per employee, overall office-related employment growth over the next 10 years will generate potential demand for 388,000 square feet of additional office space in the City of Valdosta. Based on 2009 employment statistics, the Downtown Core tends to attract a certain percentage of jobs in each sector. Assuming that the Downtown Core captures 20% of service employment office growth, 30% of general office growth and 80% of Public Administration office growth, the Downtown Core could have potential demand for nearly 194,000 square feet of office space over the ten year period, or 19,000 SF per year.

5-3 2010-2020 Office Demand Forecasts,

	City Office Jobs 2010	Growth 1010- 2020	New Office Jobs 2010- 2020	Growth in Office Demand (SF)	Downtown Area Capture Rate	Downtown New Office Demand (SF)
Transportation, Communication and Utilities*	1,296	1.50%	208	12,484	30%	3,745
Finance, Insurance and Real Estate	1,744	1.50%	280	83,995	30%	25,198
Services **	15,688	1.50%	2,519	113,335	20%	22,667
Public Administration**	3,717	1.50%	597	179,019	80%	143,215
Total	22,445		3,603	388,833		194,826

Source: Claritas, BAG, Bleakly Advisory Group

* 20% of TCU-Employment is considered office-related.

**15% of Service Employment is considered office-related

5.4. SUMMARY OF FUTURE DEMAND

Residential – Downtown faces a serious challenge as it competes to attract a share of these residents: Downtown’s urban living options must appeal to a large pool of potential residents who are currently living in suburban or semi-suburban locations and single-family houses. For many these households, a decision to commit to Downtown living constitutes not only a change of location, but a change of lifestyle.

If Downtown Valdosta creates an appealing residential product that can be successfully marketed to this potential audience, , the Downtown Core can expect to see the following demand for residential units over the next ten years:

- **Owner-Occupied Housing Demand**— Based on an analysis of the of housing demand discussed above, over the 2010-2020 period there will be annual demand for 46 owner units in the Downtown area, or 460 owner-occupied units over the ten year period.
- **Renter-Occupied Housing Demand**— The demand for rental housing in the study area is estimated to be 158 units annually over the next ten years, or 1,580 total units.

Retail– Demand for retail space in Downtown Valdosta will be generated by both regional household growth and increased capture of existing demand that is currently going to retail establishments outside the Downtown area. The combination of these four sources represents \$53 million in potential additional

spending resulting from population growth and increased demand for Downtown retail goods and services. This translates to an estimated annual demand of 94,000 SF of retail space. If that demand is absorbed incrementally over ten years, it represents an annual demand of approximately 9,400 SF of new retail space Downtown annually.

Office—Valdosta is projected to add approximately 3,600 office-related jobs between 2010-2020, generating potential demand for 388,000 square feet of additional office space in the City of Valdosta. Assuming that the Downtown Core captures 20% of service employment office growth, 30% of general office growth and 80% of Public Administration office growth, the Downtown Core could have potential demand for nearly 194,000 square feet of office space over the ten year period, or 19,000 SF per year.

5-4 Downtown Valdosta Potential Future Demand Summary 2010-2020

	City of Valdosta	Downtown Capture Rate	Total Downtown SF, 2010-2020	Annual Downtown SF
Residential Units				
Owner-Occupied	1,250	10%	460	46
Renter-Occupied	1318	20%	1,580	158
Commercial S.F.				
Retail		10-40%	94,000	9,400
Office/Professional	388,000	20%-80%	194,000	19,000

Source: BAG