



Concept Plan Presentation

**Downtown Revitalization
Planning Project**

**Wetumpka, Alabama
November 7, 2013**

Concept Plan: Wetumpka Downtown Revitalization Planning Project

Meeting Agenda

➤ Background Information

- Project Overview
- Key Findings Summary
- Public Input to Date
- Planning Principles

➤ Concept Plan Presentation

➤ Public Discussion

➤ Next Steps



Project Overview

STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES:

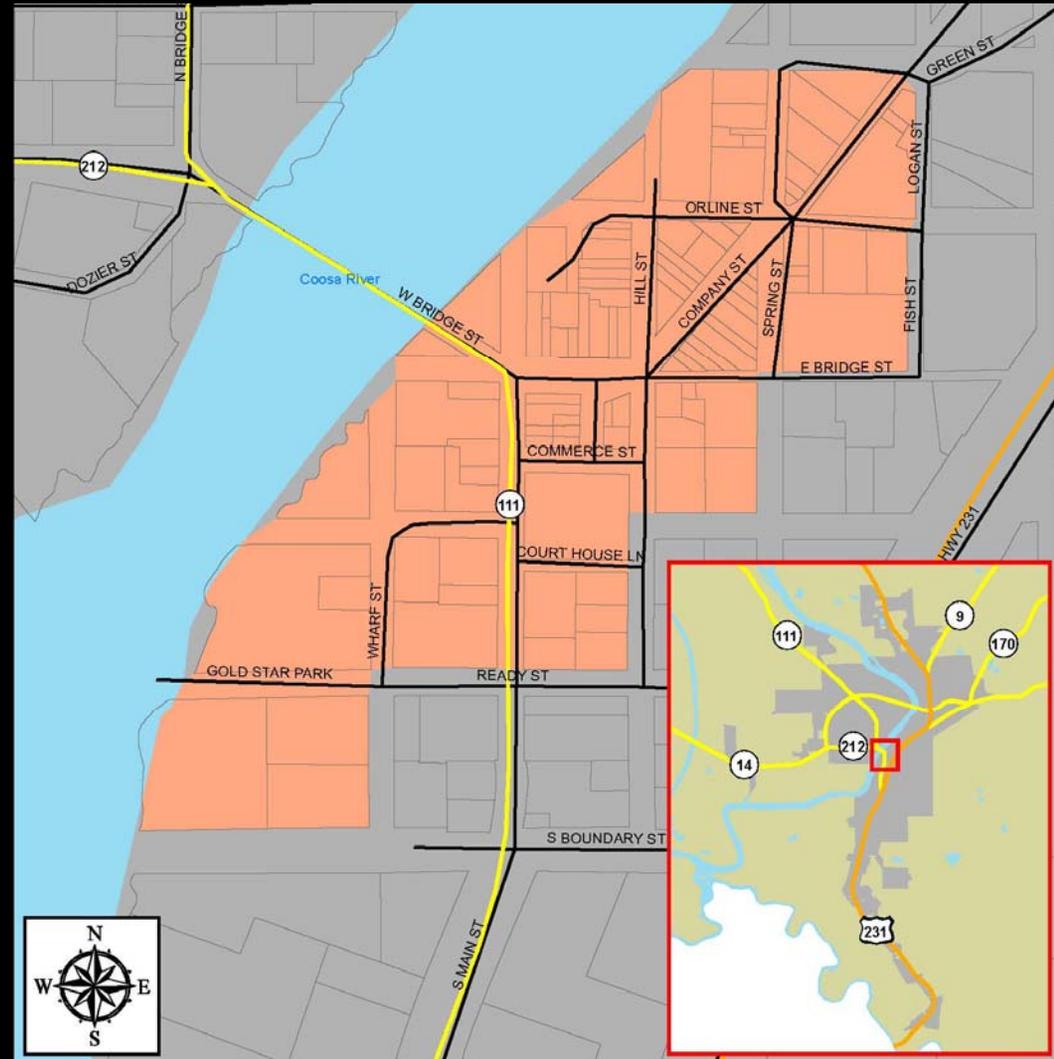
N – Green Street

S – S. Boundary Street ROW

E – Varies

- Fish/Logan Street
- Spring Street
- Hill Street
- Warf Street

W – Coosa River



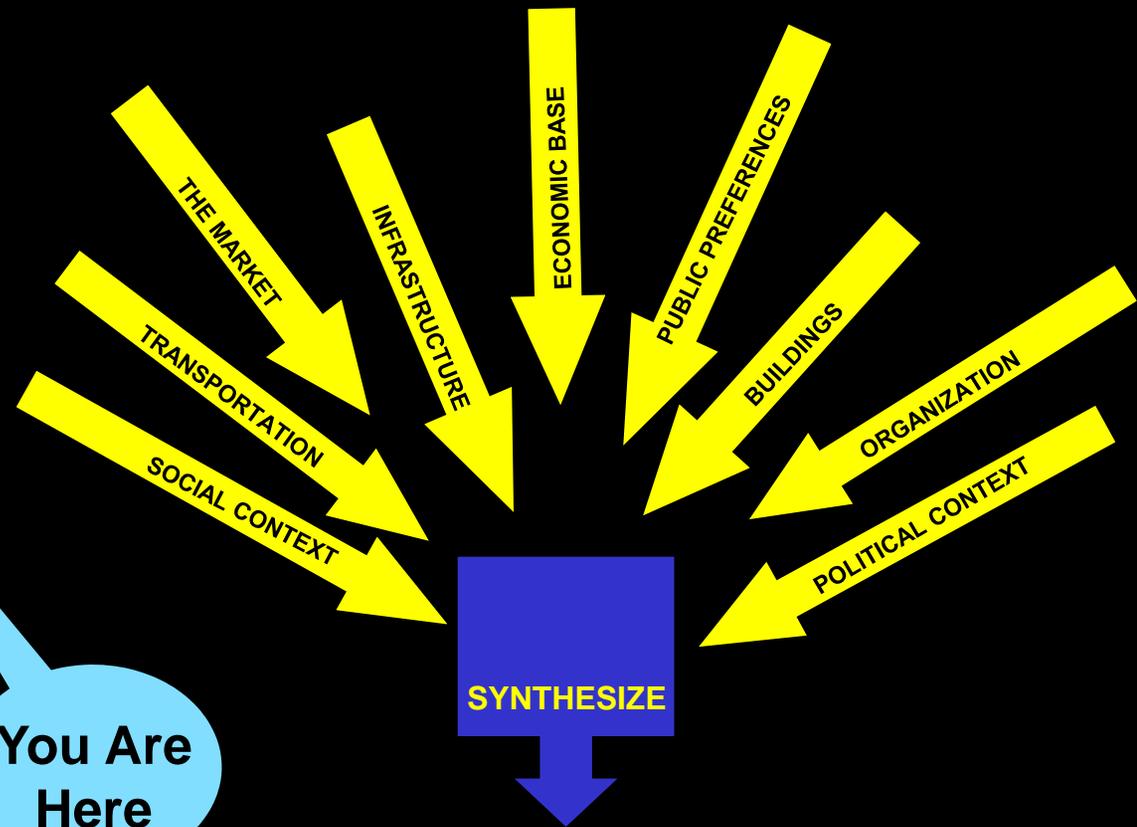
Project Overview

KEY STEPS:

- 1.0 Background Research & Analysis
- 2.0 Charrette & Concept Plan
- 3.0 Draft Plan Preparation
- 4.0 Plan Presentation & Revisions

You Are Here

DISCOVERY PROCESS



SOLUTION PROCESS

Public Input to Date

Identification of Challenges & Opportunities

Public Kick-Off Meeting
August 2, 2013

OPPORTUNITIES

- Lots of plans
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Leveraging the river and crater to bring in more visitors
- State recently passed legislation offering incentives for historic building rehabilitations
- Local tax incentives are in place
- Leveraging the park

CHALLENGES

- Poor cell phone service
- Lack of funding
- Creating an organization to incentivize businesses locating downtown
- Focusing on local businesses instead of chains
- Better communication with the City on this project
- Better communication in general
- Achieving street details that are timeless
- Getting owners to invest in their buildings

Public Input to Date

Identification of Model Downtowns

- **Madison, Georgia**
- **Hartselle, Alabama**
- **Fairhope, Alabama**
(continuity of leadership)
- **Sylacauga, Alabama**
(streetscapes and public spaces)
- **Florence, Alabama**
(walkable and outdoor dining)
- **Athens, Georgia**

Planning Principles

- 1) **Preserve and enhance historic and natural resources – especially the river.**
- 2) **Land uses should be diverse and physically integrated - horizontally and vertically.**
- 3) **Buildings should have a human scale.**
- 4) **Downtown’s architectural past should be respected.**
- 5) **Provide inter-connected streets that are pedestrian-friendly (“complete”).**
- 6) **Streetscapes should be attractive, safe and interesting.**
- 7) **Accommodate parking without degrading downtown’s appearance/function.**
- 8) **Provide a generous amount of public space in a variety of forms (events).**
- 9) **Offer a variety of downtown housing alternatives - by types and cost.**
- 10) **Provide a rich mixture of shopping, dining, entertainment, etc.**
- 11) **Offer a variety of civic, cultural, educational and recreational opportunities.**
- 12) **Create an environment that will allow businesses to succeed.**

Public Input to Date

Charrette Public Workshop: November 4, 2013

- 1) Split up into teams of 8-10 people (one team per table)
- 2) Each team was provided a base map for the study area, supporting info., and colored markers
- 3) Each team developed a plan for the study area
- 4) We reconvened and each team presented their plan



Public Input to Date

Charrette Public Workshop: November 4, 2013

KEY IDEAS

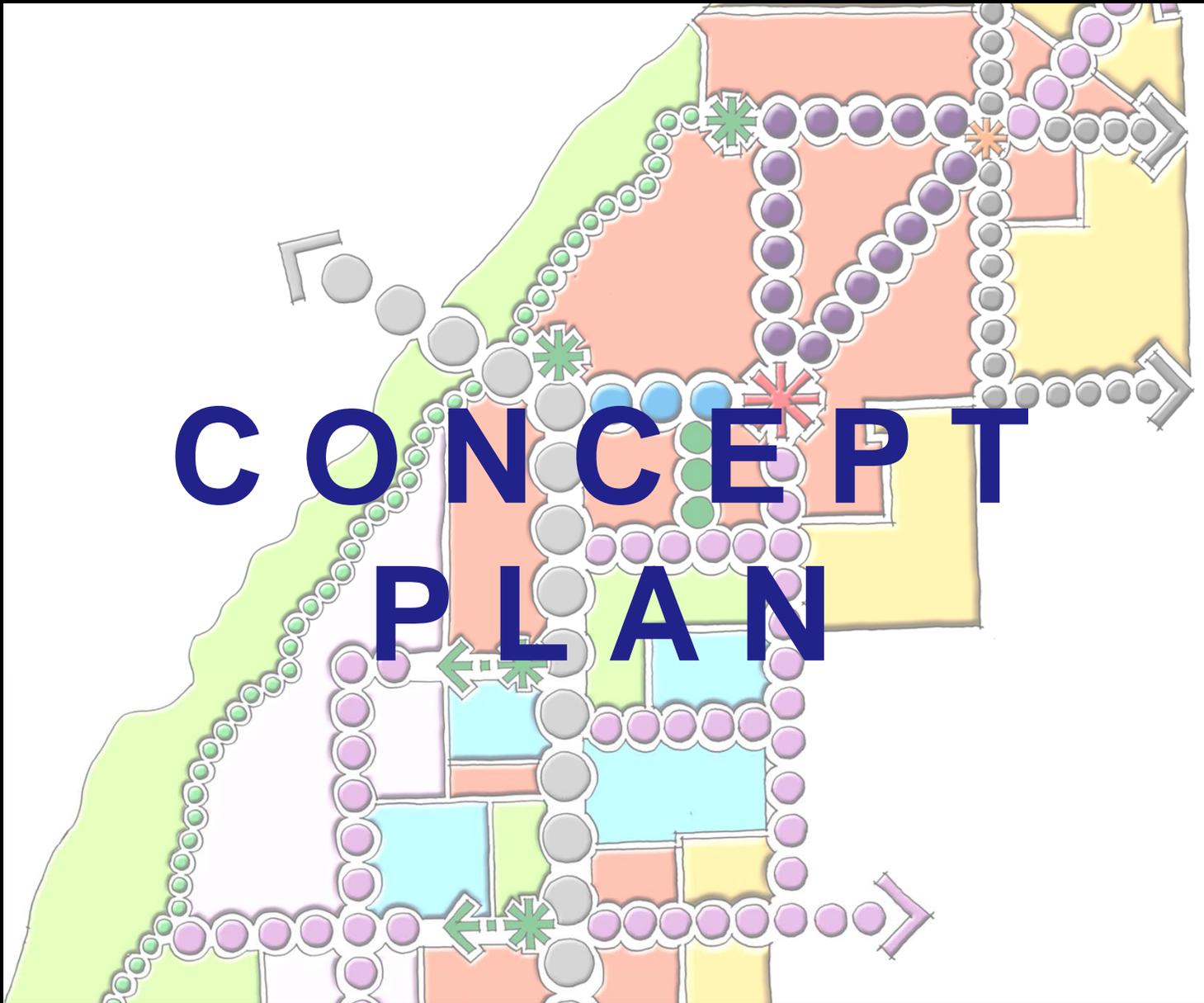
- Roundabouts at key intersections
- Riverfront amphitheatre
- Farmers market / antique mall
- Riverfront restaurants
- Extend greenway to Ft. Toulouse
- Preserve historic buildings
- New housing (upper floors & new bldgs.)
- Redeveloped streetscapes
- More retail and dining options



Caveats to Concept Plan

Please Keep in Mind:

- **This presentation is our first stab at the Concept Plan – it will expand and evolve as we do more work and receive public input.**
- **The ultimate plan document will address more issues and contain more detail than we can convey in our presentation.**
- **While some ideas in the plan can be implemented in the near future, others may have a 10 or 20 year time horizon.**
- **There are no “linchpin” ideas in the plan that cannot be altered or eliminated if that is the consensus.**
- **There will be plenty of time at the end of our presentation for discussion.**

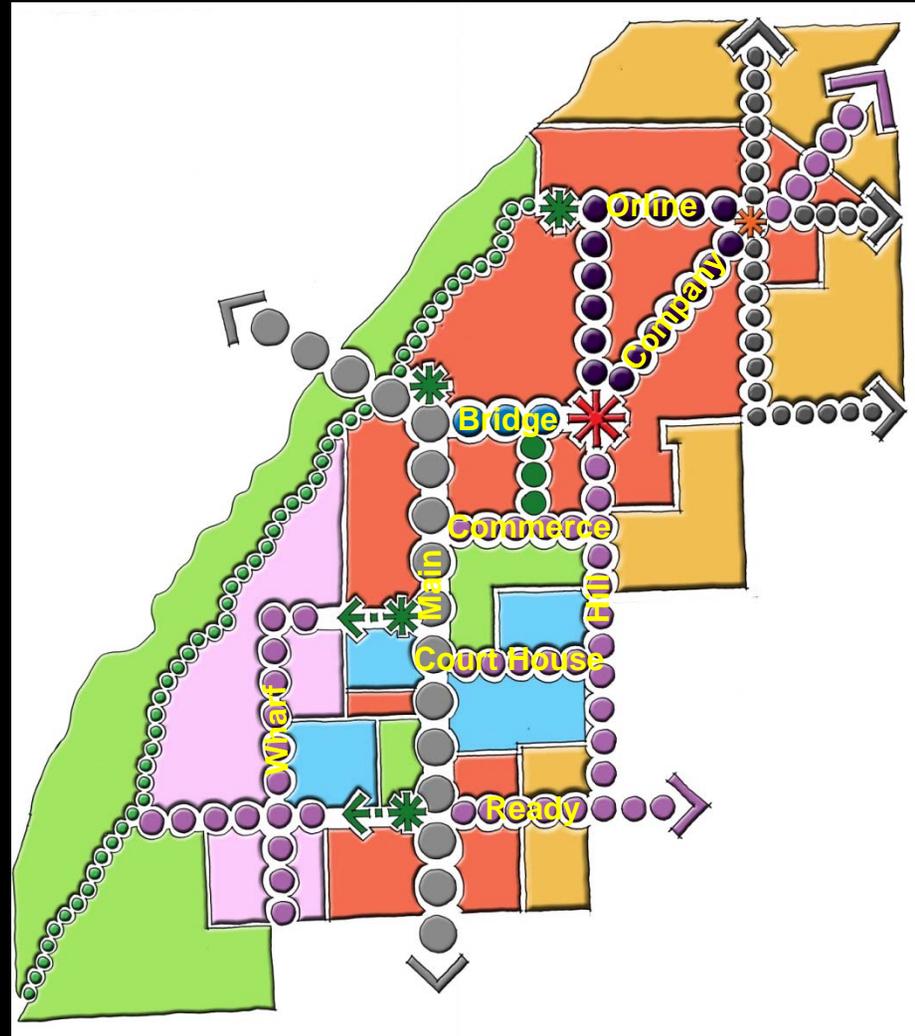


Master Plan: Study Area Overview

Character Areas

- Land Use
- Form
- Character

-  Open Space
-  Civic / Institutional
-  Mixed-Use Core
-  Mixed-Use Riverfront
-  Residential / Mixed Use



Master Plan: Study Area Overview

Key Physical Planning Concepts

- Stronger connections from downtown to the riverfront
- Street intersection improvements
- Street redesigns
- Enhancement of Courthouse public space
- Rehabilitation of historic buildings
- Compatible infill buildings



Downtown Gateways

Bridge Over the Coosa

- **Clean concrete and paint railing** (already painted, but faded)
- **Banners on light poles**
- **Illuminate the bridge** (iconic) – ALDOT approval



Downtown Gateways

Other Gateways

- **Intersection of Company, Spring & Orlene Streets** (more on this in “Intersections” portion....)
- **Intersection of Main & Ready Streets** - signage and architectural element



Company, Spring & Orlene



Historic Buildings

Establish a Program for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

- Important issue to the public
- Historic buildings define downtown's "brand" and differentiate it in the market from competing commercial and mixed use areas
- A preservation program should be established by the City to include:
 - Local historic district
 - Preservation ordinance and guidelines
 - Design review commission

More on this topic later in the "Implementation" portion

Historic Buildings

Sample Potential Improvements:

- Reopening doors & windows
- Removing inappropriate canopies
- Removing non-original façade cladding
- Providing more appropriate signage (scale, materials and placement)

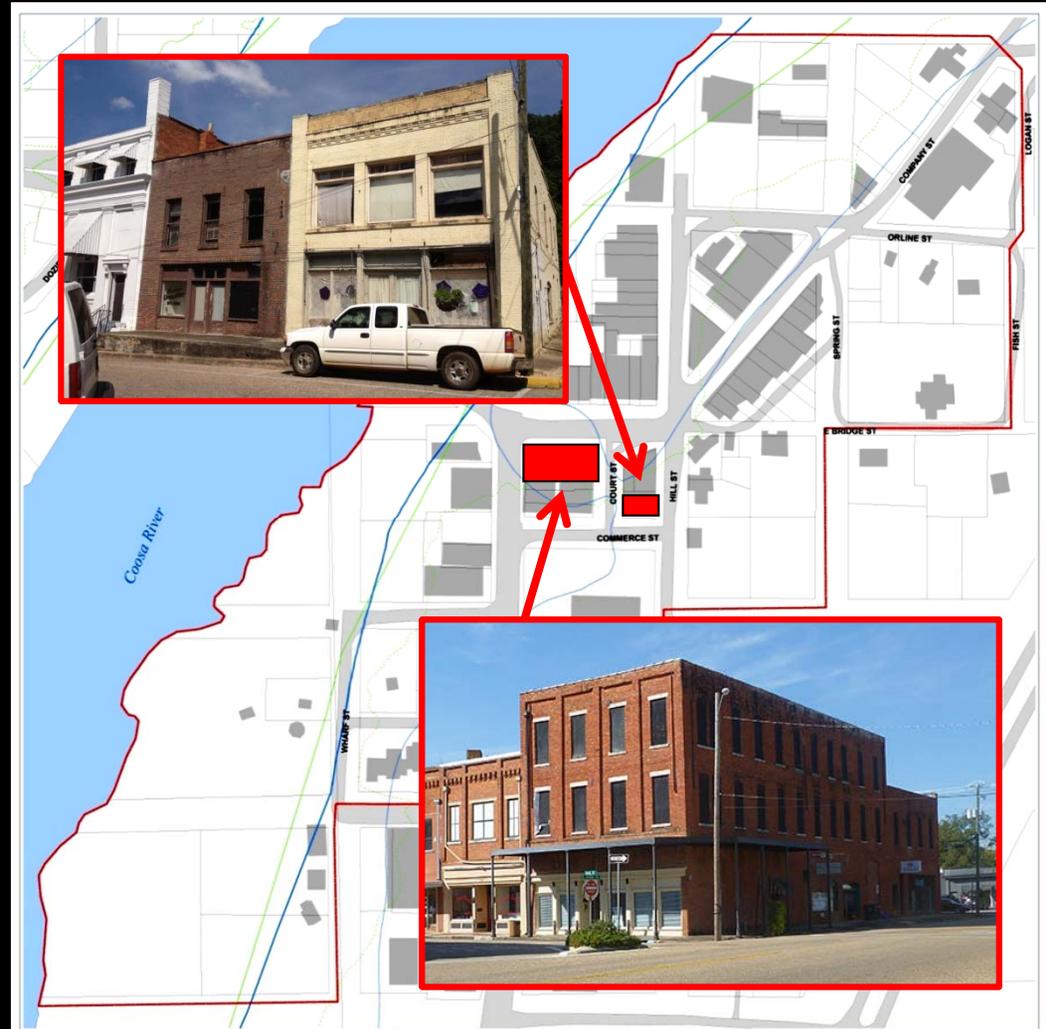


Positive model for storefront design

Historic Buildings

Highest Priority Buildings:

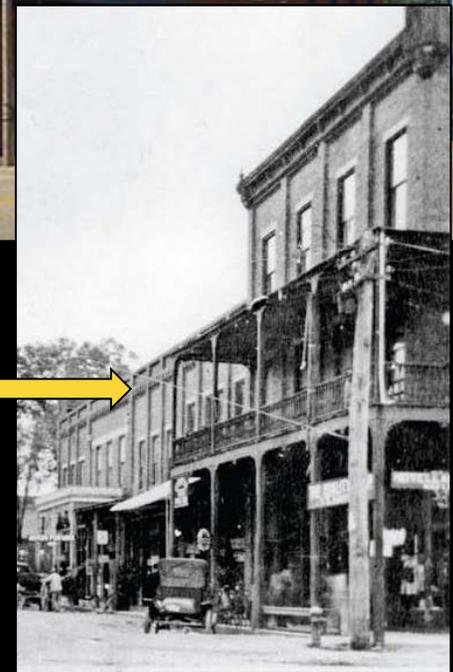
- Chamber Buildings: two buildings behind the Chamber - critical to framing Court Street and reinforcing historic character (efforts already under way)
- Hotel: highly visible (fronts Main, Bridge and Court Streets)



Historic Buildings

Former Hotel:

- 2012 Market Study: Downtown can support 20-30 “boutique inn” rooms.
- Tax Credits: Developers could benefit from federal and state tax credits for historic rehab.
- Balcony Potential: Addition would provide an amenity and take building back to its historic appearance.



Historic Buildings

Former Hotel:

“Before” and “after” hotel example: Bryan, Texas

- One of 22 buildings that benefited from façade grants within two years of their downtown master plan’s adoption.
- Ground floor still needed restoration (at time of photo).

Before



After



New Infill Buildings

Locations

- **Most vacant lots fronting key streets should be infilled**
- **Corners are particularly important**
- **Coaches' property – if site redevelops, create a street presence while retaining river views (see concept at right)**



New Infill Buildings

Design

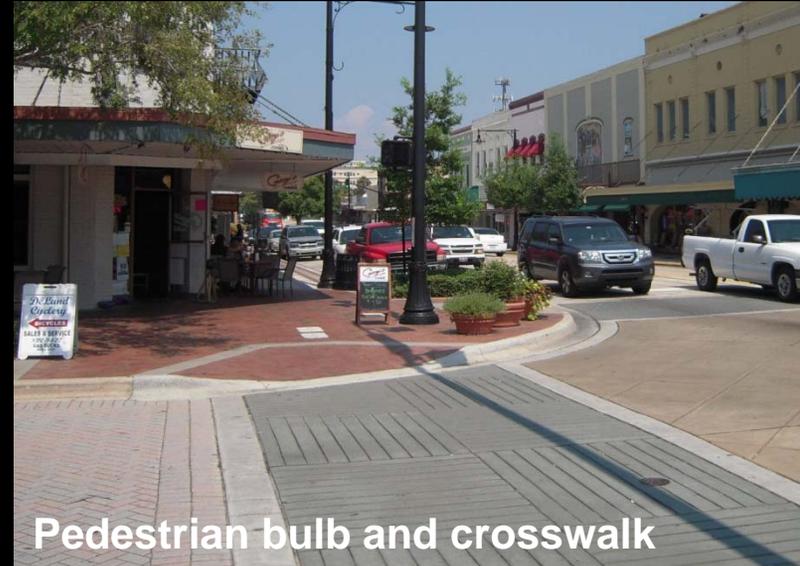
- **Conform with historic development patterns, but avoid exact facsimiles of historic buildings** (more on design guidelines later)



Street Intersections: General

Key Issue: Need to increase safety for pedestrians

- **Pedestrian bulbs** - will protect end parked vehicle and decrease street crossing distance.
- **Tighter curb radii** - will slow down turning movements for traffic calming.
- **Crosswalks** - will delineate where pedestrians cross and calm traffic (drivers feel crosswalks under tires).
- **Pedestrian crossing signals** - will clarify safe times to cross streets.



Street Intersections: Bridge, Hill & Company

Key Issue: Need to provide clearer routing for vehicles, safety for pedestrians, and visual prominence.

- **Considered a traffic circle, but insufficient ROW space.**
- **Alternative:**
 - Provide special paving design within the intersection.
 - Enhance corners with pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks.
 - Extend pedestrian space in front of Chamber (iconic statement – art, etc.)

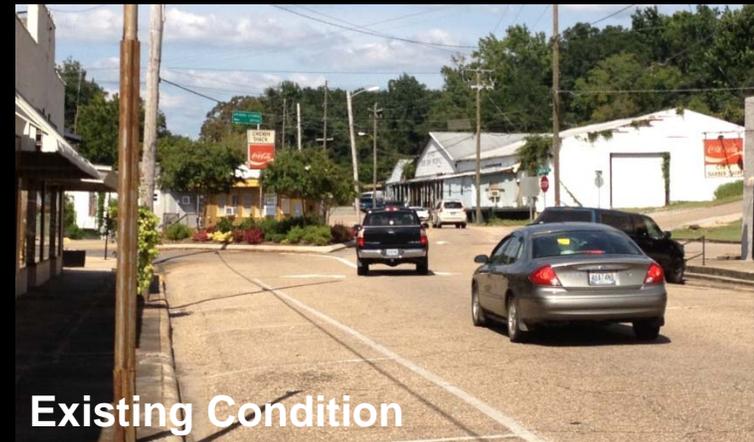


Street Intersections: Spring, Orline & Company

Key Issue: Need to provide greater definition for drivers and a sense of arrival to Downtown.

ROUNABOUT:

- Will “clean up” intersection by providing better definition of traffic flow for drivers.
- Provide a gateway landmark to orient visitors (roundabout could be designed to make a strong visual statement – public art, etc.).



Street Intersections: Spring, Orline & Company



Parking: On-Street

Key Issue: Long-term parkers (employees) parking on-street

- **Parking management will be critical as the downtown revitalizes.**
- **Need to limit on-street parking to 2-3 hours.**
- **Management does not require parking meters, but does require people to conduct enforcement.**



Parking: Off-Street

Key Issue: Need to provide wayfinding and parking lot enhancements

- **Provide signage directing drivers to parking lots**
- **Enhance the interior of parking lots:**
 - Parking stall delineation (paint striping)
 - Interior landscaping (shade trees)
 - Lighting
- **Enhance the periphery of parking lots:**
 - Screening with landscaping, fencing, and/or walls



Streets

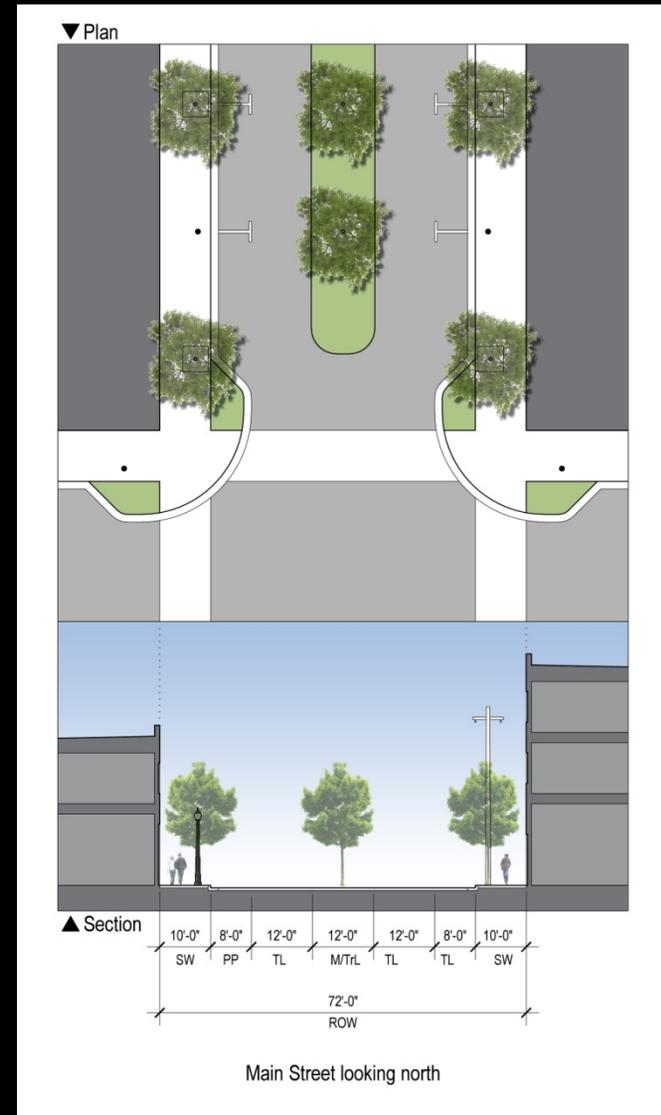
Key Streets

- Main Street
- Bridge Street
- Commerce Street
- Court Street
- Court House Lane
- Hill Street
- Company Street
- Spring Street



Streets: Main

Main Street: Bridge to Ready



Streets: Main

Main Street:
Bridge to Ready



Streets: Bridge

Bridge Street: Main to Hill



Streets: Court

Court Street: Commerce to Bridge



Streets: Company

Company Street: Hill to Orlin



Streetscapes: General

Streetscape Objectives

- **Easy ped. and handicapped access**
- **Shade and shelter from the weather**
- **Attractive appearance**
- **Reinforcement of historic character**



Commerce Street Design

Proposed Streetscape Elements

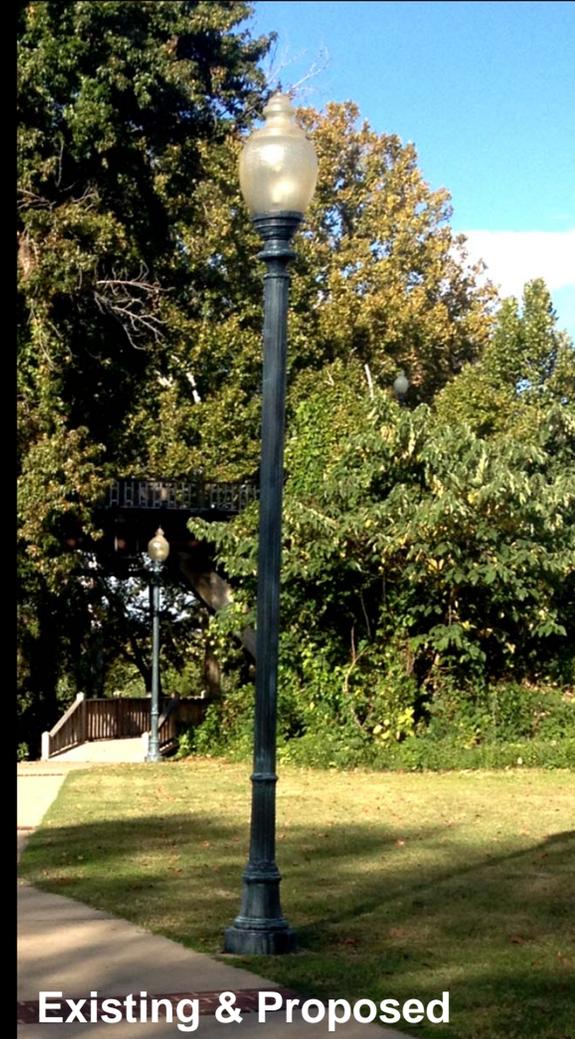
- **Pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks at intersections**
(addressed previously)
- **Pavement combining brick and concrete**
- **Street tree planters**



Sample street tree planters: Northport, AL

Streetscapes: Furnishings

“Proposed” styles are not specific, but convey the proposed general character.



Public Spaces

Key Public Spaces

- 1) Riverwalk
- 2) Gold Star Park
- 3) Courthouse Plaza & Lawn
- 4) Court Street



Public Spaces

Riverwalk:

- **Enhance Access near Bridge** - create a trailhead (informational kiosk, lighting, signage, etc.)
- **Extend to Ft. Toulouse** - with the current design



Public Spaces

Gold Star Park:

- **Extend better street access from the east**
- **Improve existing facilities** (bathrooms, etc.)
- **Add features to make it more user-friendly and appealing** (more seating, etc.)
- **Amphitheatre is planned for south of study area** (per 2012 plan)



Public Spaces

Courthouse Plaza & Lawn

- **Redesign lawn for greater use and aesthetics**
 - Expand the west side plaza
 - Provide seating and fountain



Public Spaces



Concept Plan: Wetumpka Downtown Revitalization Planning Project

Public Spaces

Court Street

- Natural extension of the Courthouse plaza space
- Enhanced streetscape
- Close only for events /occasions (bollards)



Economic Strategy

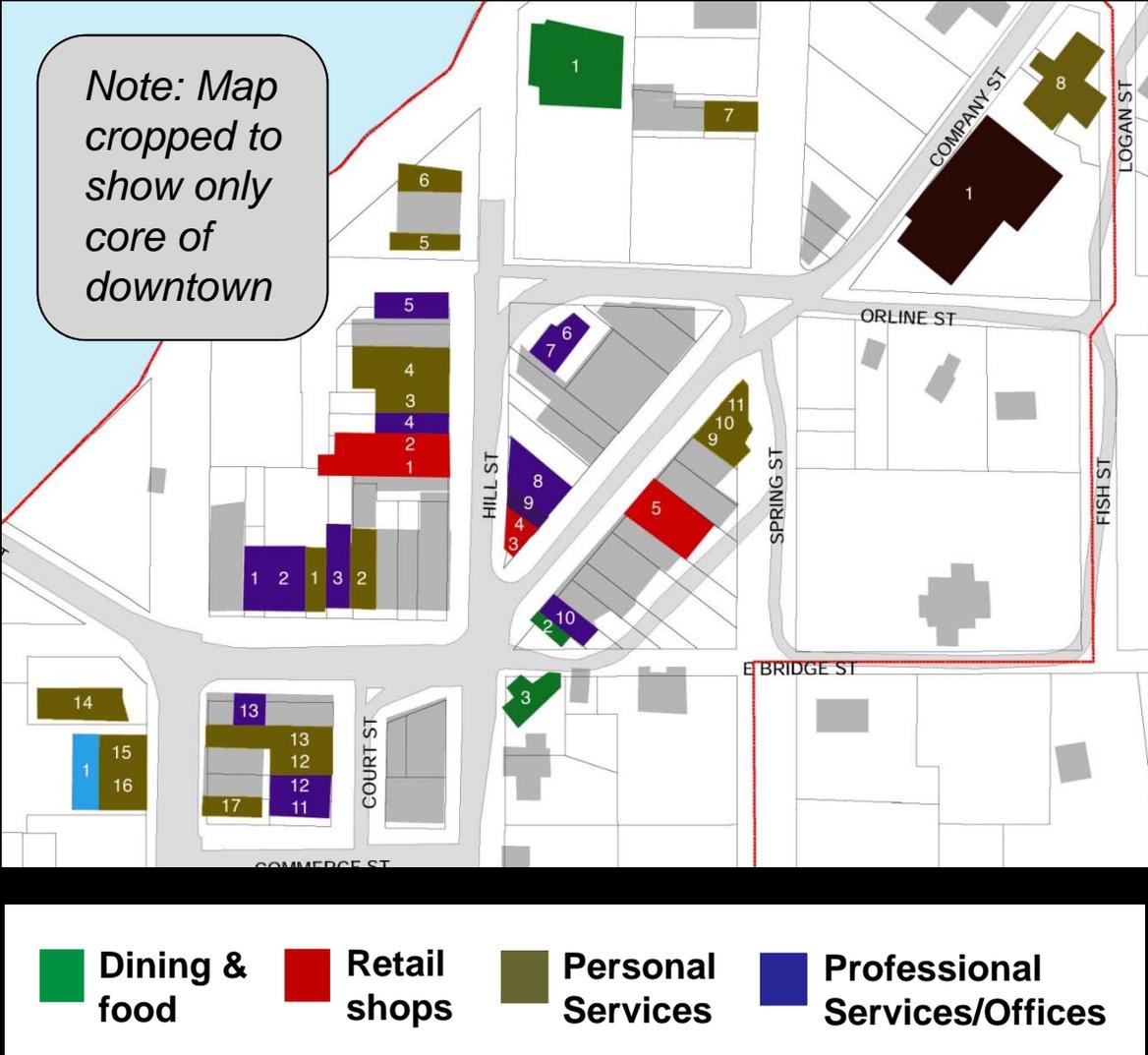
“Potentials” per the 2012 Plan – “targeted” demand levels

- **Limited-Service Hotel:** 70 - 120 rooms
(support civic center / 285 rooms built at casino hotel)
 - **Boutique Inn:** 20 - 30 rooms
 - **Professional Office:** 30,000 - 50,000 SF
 - **General Retail & Restaurants:** 25,000 - 35,000 SF
 - **Market-Rate Residential:** 75 - 150 units
-
- Numbers generated before the announced casino expansion
 - Development costs vs rental rates require public incentives

Economic Strategy

Existing Businesses

- **3 dining/food businesses**
(Coach's, bakery, coffee shop)
- **6 retail shops**
- **17 personal services**
(salons/barbers, health clubs, medical, etc.)
- **14 professional offices/services**
(legal, insurance)

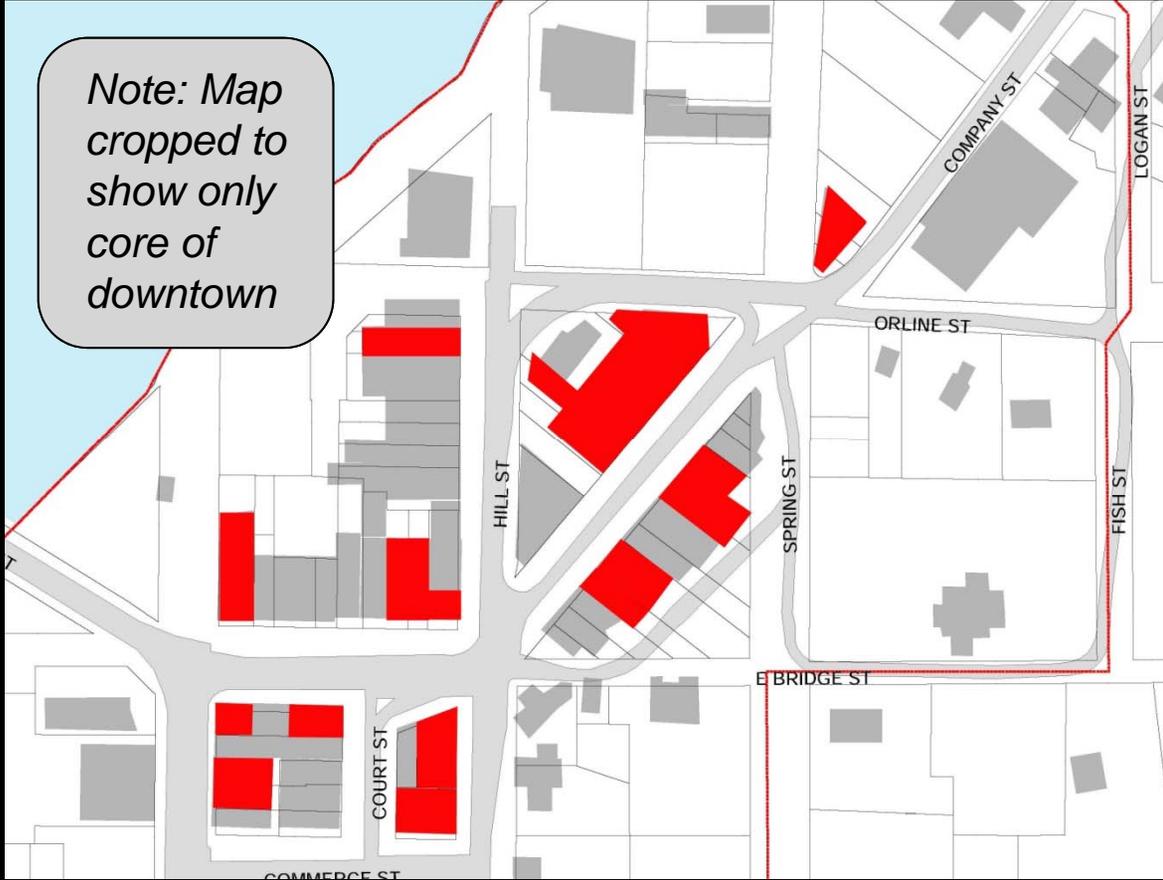


Economic Strategy

Existing Key Vacancies

Concentrations:

- North of Commerce
- South of Orline
- East of Main
- West of Spring



 Key Ground Floor Vacancies

Economic Strategy

Potential Tenants to Recruit: Based on City's 2012 market analysis, existing tenant mix, what works in other downtowns

- **Restaurants** - could benefit from all types (white tablecloth, ethnic, barbeque, meat-n-three, ice cream / frozen yogurt, micro-brewery, etc.)
- **Retail** - clothing (men's, women's, children's), antiques, hobby/crafts, rocks (Crater theme) other specialty retail not found on Rt. 231
- **Personal Services** - avoid services already heavily represented downtown (salons/barbers, health clubs, etc.)
- **Offices / Professional** – encourage locating on upper floors

Target for recruitment locally and regionally-owned businesses in other parts of Wetumpka or communities in the region.

Economic Strategy

Business Development Strategy:

Business Retention & Expansion

- **Sponsor regular informal events that facilitate a regular dialogue with existing business owners.**

Business Recruitment

- **Establish a business recruitment team.**
- **A marketing package should be created to tout the merits of operating a business in Downtown Wetumpka and highlight available building space.**
- **Conduct occasional business recruitment fairs.**



Economic Strategy

Financial Incentives:

- Promote the availability of existing incentives and tools for downtown revitalization (state & federal tax credits, etc.).
- Develop new incentives for downtown revitalization:
 - Property tax abatement program for building rehabilitation and infill development
 - Façade grants and/or low-interest loans for approved rehabilitations
 - Waiver of fees for permitting for certain development types (downtown residential)



Economic Strategy

Maintain Downtown as an Institutional Center

- Encourage the City and County governments to keep all operations Downtown (except incompatible uses, such as public works equipment yards, etc.).
- Encourage other institutional uses compatible with the Downtown to remain or locate in Downtown Wetumpka.



Economic Strategy

Leverage Area Attractions: Wetumpka is unusual in having such a strong package of attractions.

- **River** – continue to promote kayaking and related businesses and target them to the Downtown area.
- **Casino** – discourage the expansion of goods and services that compete with Downtown (dining, retail, entertainment)
- **Fort Toulouse** – support “Friends of the Forts” to fund site improvements, maintenance and interpretation.



Rear of former kayak rental business (fronts Main and backs onto river)

Economic Strategy

Leverage Area Attractions: Impact Crater

Despite past efforts for the proposed interpretive center site on Rt. 231, consider locating it Downtown.

Access to observation deck at the rim:

- Shuttle buses up Bald Knob Rd.
- Hiking up gas line easement



Marketing & Promotion Strategy

Make Downtown Wetumpka the community's primary special event venue (to leverage economic spin-off).

- Continue to hold existing special events in the Downtown (Mardi Gras Parade, WHS Homecoming Parade, COTC Decorations Contest, etc.).
- Identify local events currently held outside of Downtown that might be moved to the Downtown (Brown Bag Concerts, Scary Movie Night, components of Craterfest, etc.)
- Explore the initiation of new events in Downtown Wetumpka on the Courthouse Plaza/Lawn and/or Court Street (theatrical performances, jazz, etc.).

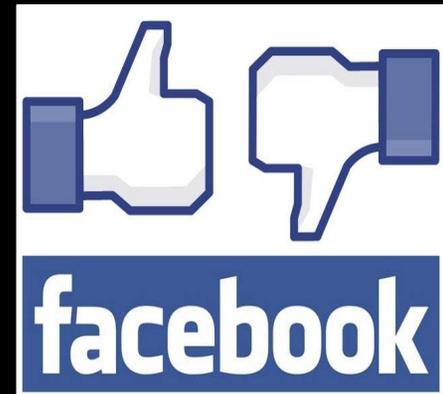


Marketing & Promotion Strategy

Utilize telecommunications effectively to market Downtown Wetumpka.

- Create a Downtown website to promote the area and keep the public aware (events, newsworthy topics, existing businesses, and opportunities to be involved with the proposed Downtown organization, etc.).
- Utilize various forms of social media to promote Downtown Wetumpka.

**Different (but related) issue:
Need to fix cell service Downtown**



Marketing & Promotion Strategy

Organize joint advertising among Downtown's businesses.

- Advertise in local newspapers and other print and electronic media.
- Promote Downtown in general.
- Identifying individual businesses that would help fund the advertisement.

FIND US DOWNTOWN
and at downtownfairbanks.com

FAIRBANKS
COMMUNITY SERVICES

River City CAFE & ESPRESSO 10% off drinks your choice! Just across the street from the Downtown Market on 2nd Ave, with full espresso menu and Hotelle ice cream made right here in Fairbanks!	Lavelle's Half-Pint Appetizers, 4-8PM The closest restaurant to the Downtown Market, find us just across the street at the Market. We specialize in Alaskan entrees. Outdoor seating and the largest wine cellar in the Interior.
ARTS Free greeting card with purchase! Visit our fine art gallery in the Co-Op Plaza on 2nd Ave, featuring pottery, jewelry, woodwork, artwork for affordable gifts, colorful puppets, and vintage photography.	Yukon Quest Hot & Sted Dog Puppy! Just a few steps from the Market in the dog cabin, we have positive, adoptable stuffed animals, toys, and small leashes for men annual 1000-mile sled dog race to or from Whitehorse, YT.
Big River's We have fishing licenses! Start your trip with us, and visit Fairbanks' source for Carhartts, fly fishing gear, durable outdoor clothing, and hunting equipment on 2nd Ave. Open late!	20% off any sliders in 4-8PM! The northernmost southern BBQ, Big Daddy's has been featured on the Food Network and named up the best slow-roasted BBQ in town. Join us during or after the Market for sliders with our signature hot and a cool Alaskan beer!
SUNRISE Buy One Drink, Get One Free Walk-ups welcome! Just north of Chena River on 4th Ave. Sweet, you'll find our bright yellow coffee stand with live-cash menu and the finest breakfast in town.	GLW POTT ALASKA One Free Game of Mini-Go!! A be a block down Cushman street, you'll find us in the Gable's building. Wind down the couple rounds of indoor mini-go! A fun, family-friendly activity to end your day!
BTA-I Alaskan beer on tap! Step across the Chena and visit the oldest bar in Fairbanks, visible from the Market. This is where the locals go, and we would love to have other ways! Sit back and relax with an Alaskan beer.	SADLES Free layaway with AK ID! The interior source for the furnishings, we're south of the Plaza on Cushman Street. Come and see our newest lines for both indoor and outdoor use!
ALASKA CENTERS Explore the Interior with Us! We help Fairbanks residents and visitors navigate the public land system of Alaska, and have maps and travel tips to help you explore Alaska this summer. Find us just up the Riverwalk in the Morris Thompson Center!	FAIRBANKS Need info? Visit Us! Follow the Riverwalk to the Morris Thompson Center, and find a friendly staff of Golden Heart Ambassadors to answer your questions about our Fairbanks!

Implementation: Organization

Main Street Four Point Approach

- Organization
 - Design
 - Economic Restructuring
 - Marketing & Promotion
-
- Hire a paid staff person to manage the proposed Downtown organization.
 - Establish multiple issue-based committees within the organization.
 - Consider pursuing certification from the State Main Street Program if and when it regains full strength (funding).



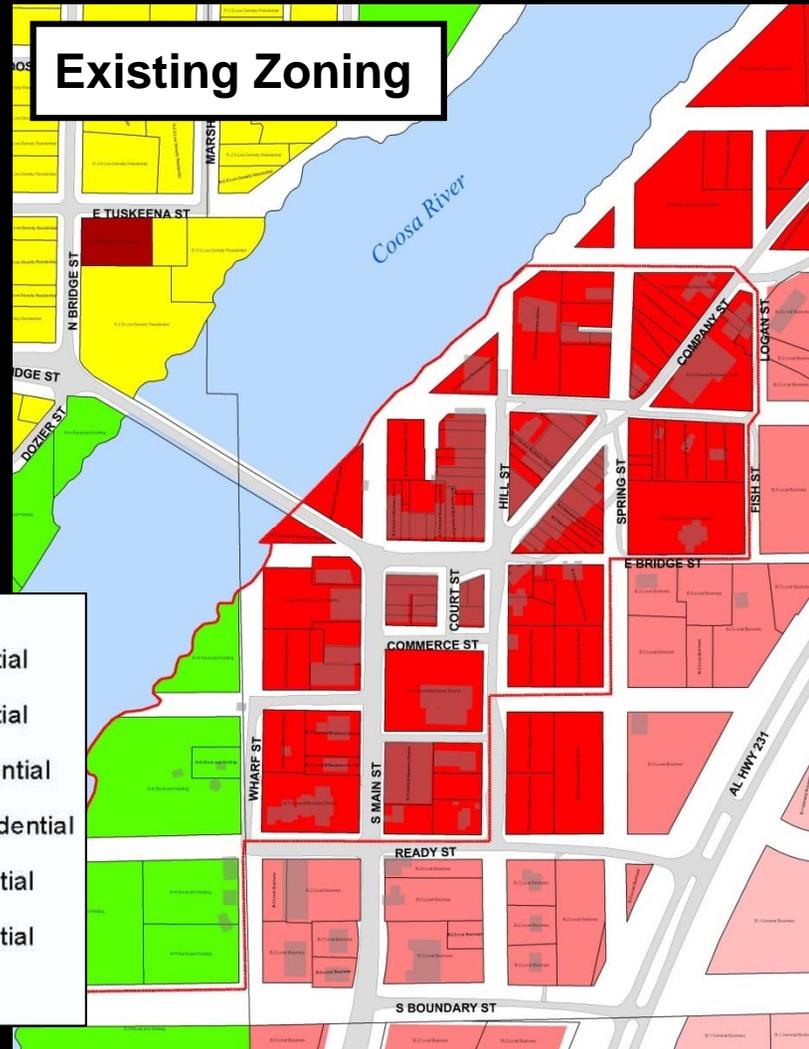
Main Street
NATIONAL TRUST FOR
HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

Implementation: Public Policy

Zoning

We will review zoning to:

- Insure desired uses are permitted and easy to approve
- Avoid nuisance uses better served on highways
- Revisit boundaries of B-3



WETUMPKA ZONING DISTRICTS

	B-1:General Business		R-1:Low Density Residential
	B-2:Local Business		R-2:Low Density Residential
	B-3:General Business District		R-2.6:Low Density Residential
	B-4:Business Conservation		R-3:Medium Density Residential
			R-4:High Density Residential
			R-5:High Density Residential
			R-H:Rural and Holding

Implementation: Public Policy

Establish a formal historic preservation program to protect the design integrity and character of Downtown Wetumpka.

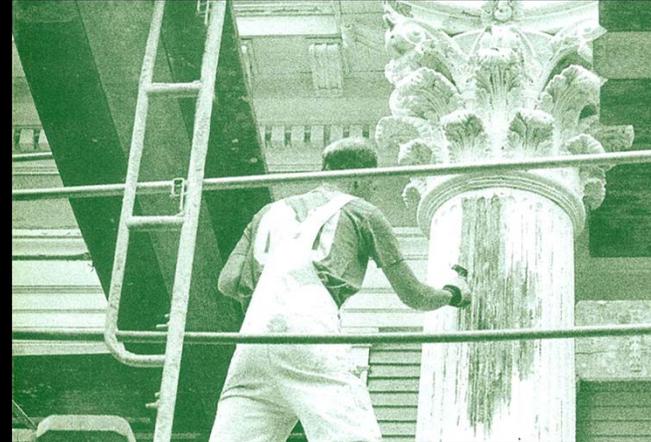
- **Adopt a preservation ordinance and design guidelines.**
- **Designate a historic district and establish design review body to implement the proposed ordinance and guidelines.**
- **Pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) status to validate the program and to become eligible for State grants.**



Implementation: Public Policy

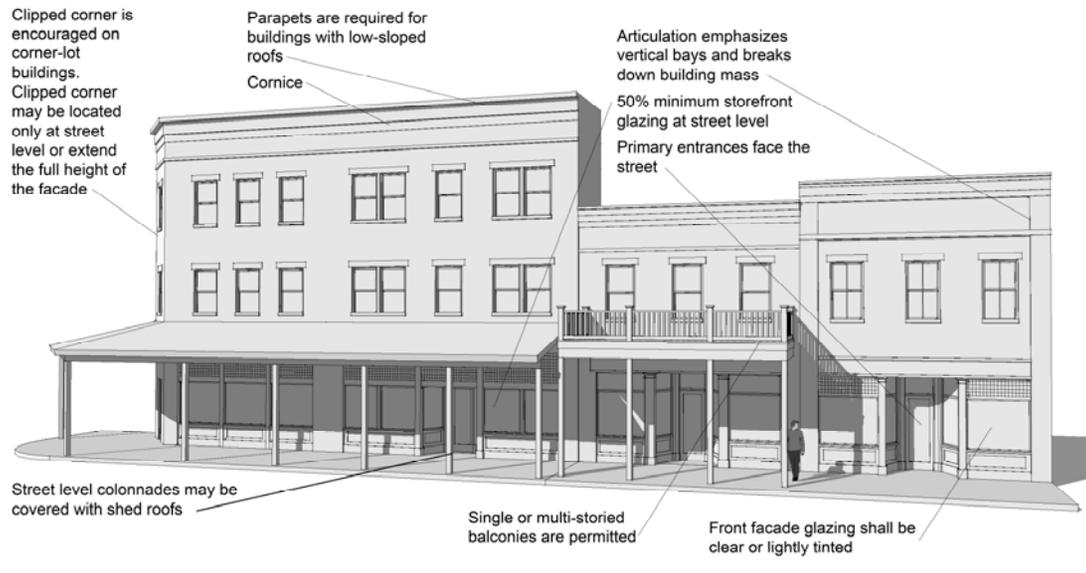
Design Guidelines:

- Should be based on the federal standards (broad).
- Should be detailed and tailored to adequately address the Downtown Historic District



The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation &

Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings



Discussion

Key Physical Planning Concepts

- Stronger connects from downtown to the riverfront
- Street intersection improvements
- Street redesigns
- Enhancement of Courthouse public space
- Rehabilitation of historic buildings
- Compatible infill buildings



Wrap Up / Next Steps

Workshop Wrap Up:

Final thoughts / comments?

Next Steps:

3.0 Draft Plan Preparation

**4.0 Plan Presentation
& Revisions**

