



Draft Plan Presentation

**Downtown Revitalization
Planning Project**

**Wetumpka, Alabama
March 3, 2014**

Meeting Agenda

➤ Background Information

- Project Overview
- Public Input to Date
- Planning Principles

➤ Draft Plan Presentation

➤ Public Discussion

➤ Next Steps



Project Overview

STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES:

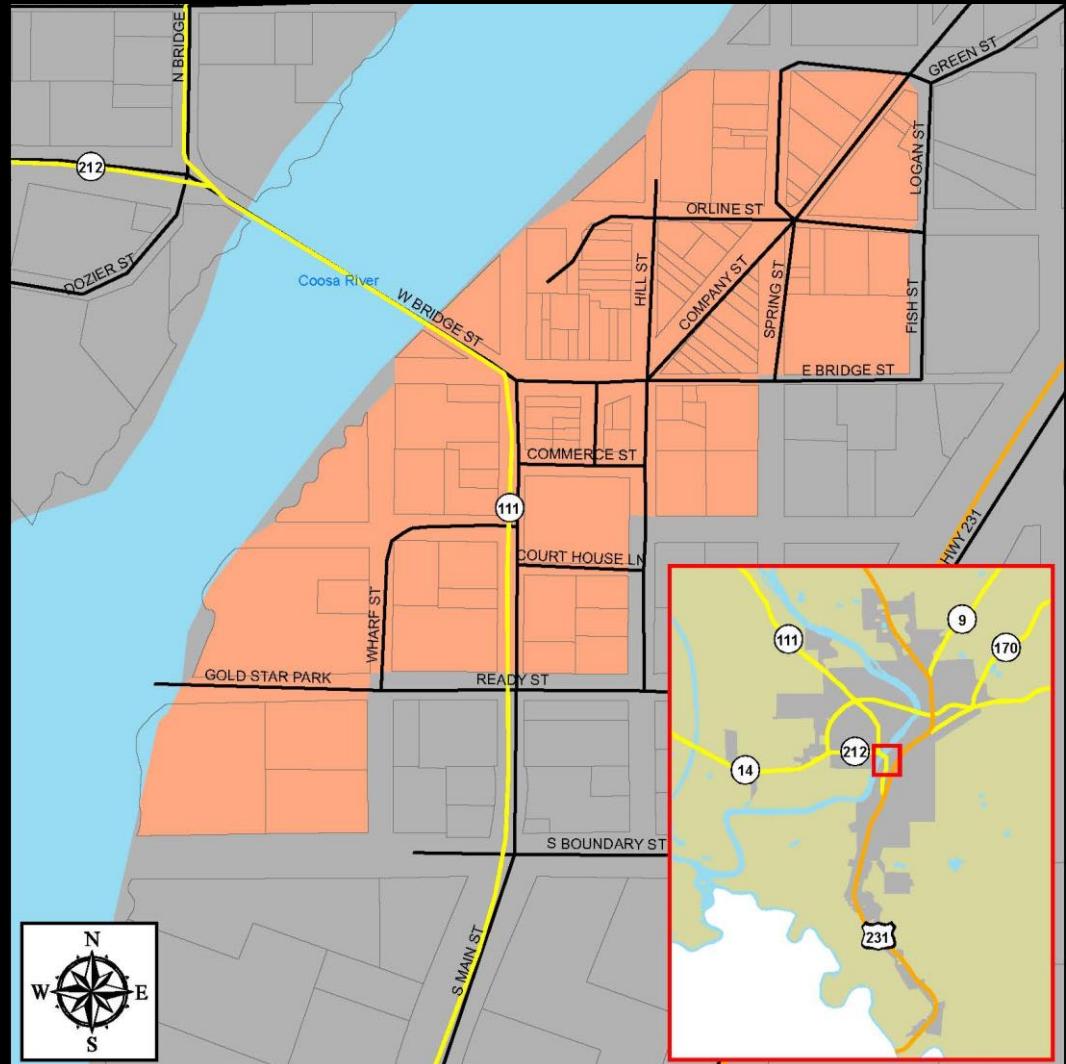
N – Green Street

S – S. Boundary Street ROW

E – Varies

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

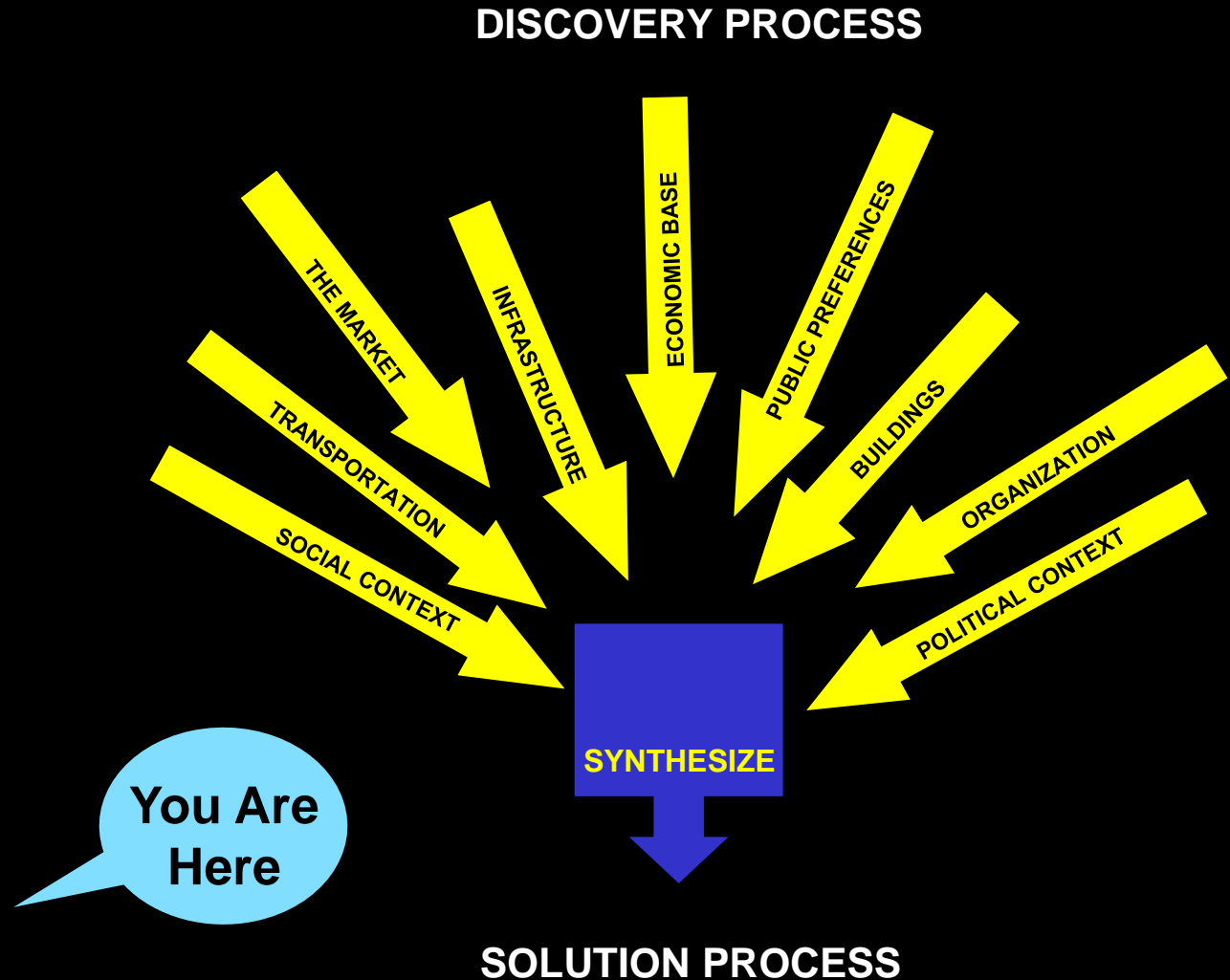
W – Coosa River



Project Overview

KEY STEPS:

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



Project Overview: Key Findings

- **Organizations**
- **Physical Characteristics**
River/floodplains, topography, streets, building footprints, urban design, architecture, transportation, parking,
- **Uses, Ownership & Economy**
Land uses, property ownership, market potentials
- **Public Policy**
Zoning, historic district
- **Historic Development**



Aerial photo map – one of many existing conditions maps.

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**

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



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.**

Caveats to Draft Plan

Please Keep in Mind:

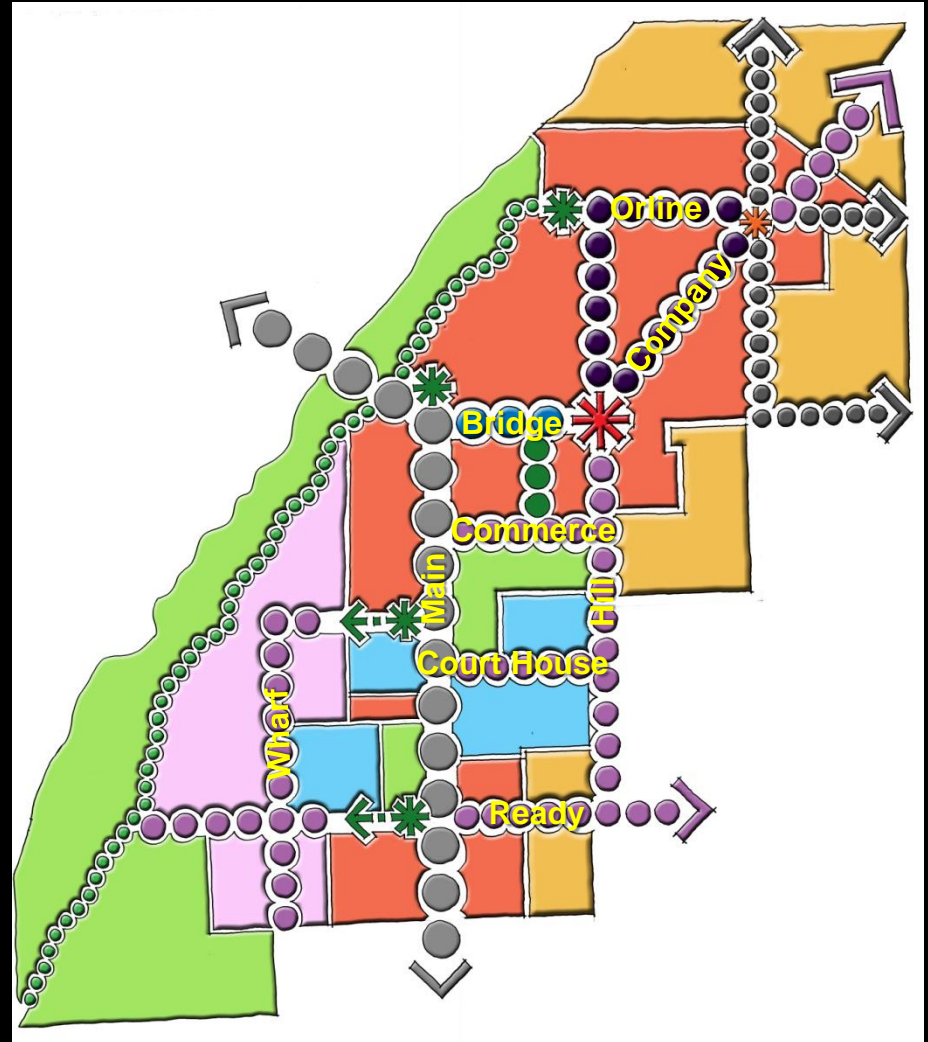
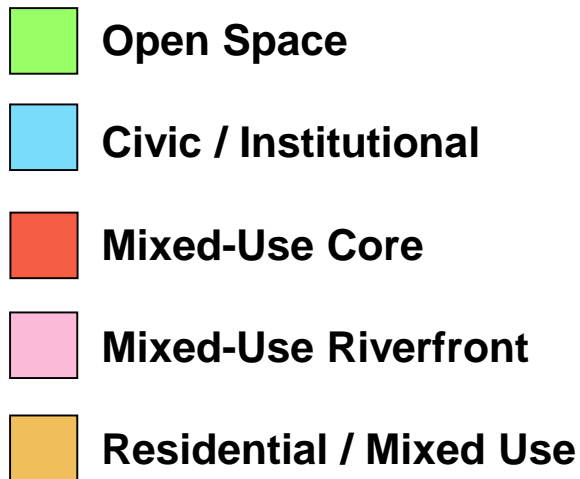
- **This is our last presentation of the Plan, but we can still make revisions to the document based upon your input today.**
- **The draft plan document addresses more issues and contains more detail than we can convey in our presentation.**
- **While some ideas in the plan can be implemented in the 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



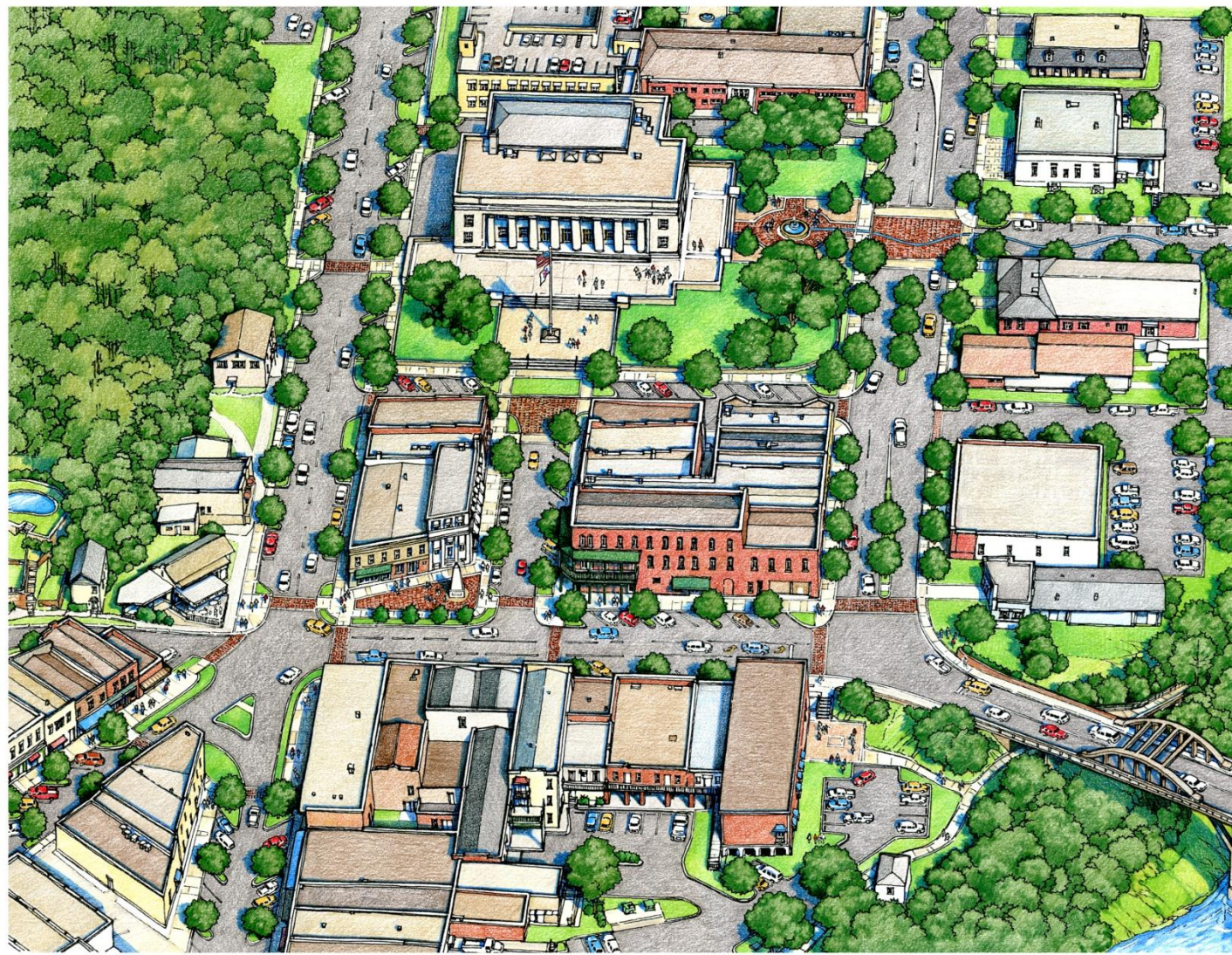
Master Plan: Study Area Overview

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



Master Plan: Study Area Overview





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 & Orline Streets** (more on proposed roundabout later....)
- **Intersection of Main & Ready Streets** - signage and architectural element



Company, Spring & Orline



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
(except snap-on muntins in 2nd fl. windows)

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.
- Cornice: Should be added back to restore original appearance.
- Balcony Potential: Addition would provide an amenity and take building back to its historic appearance.



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

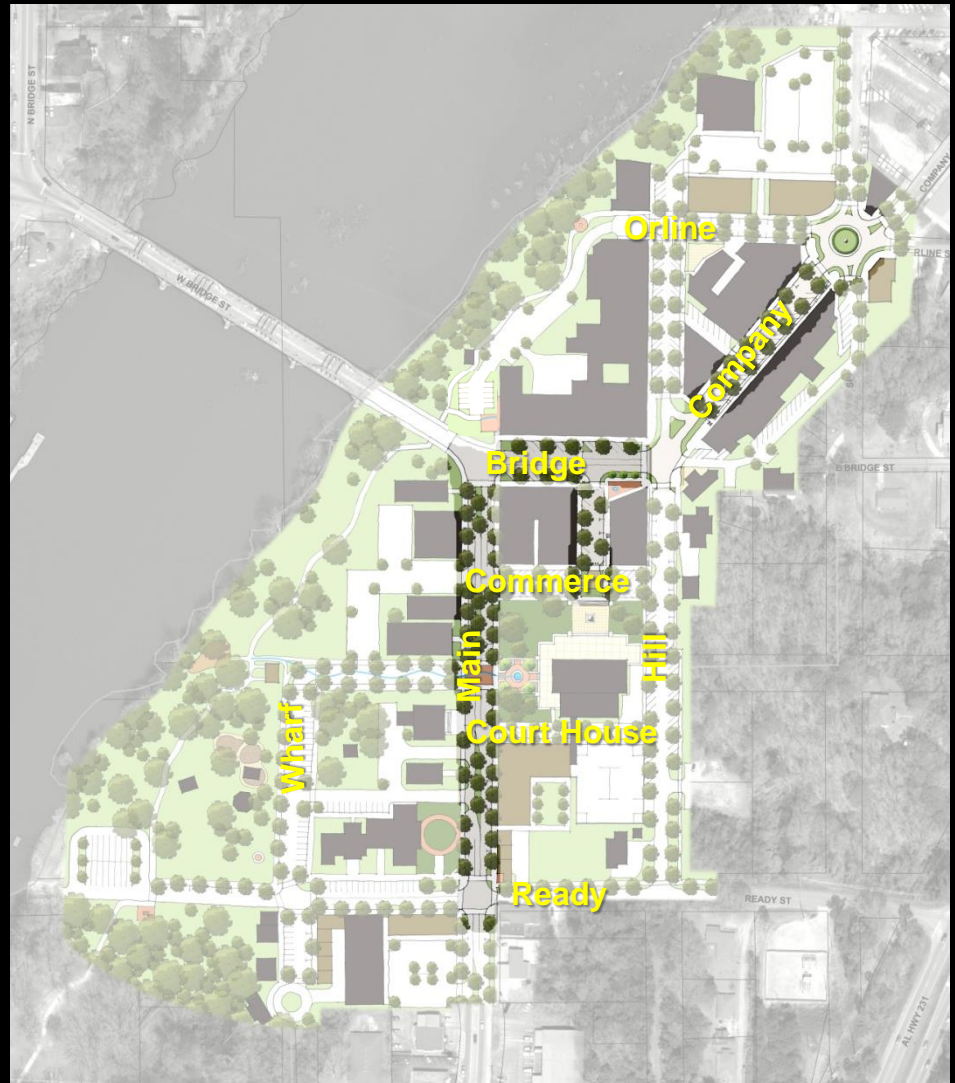
- **Conform with historic development patterns – scale, setbacks, massing, openings, materials, etc. (more on design guidelines later)**



Streets

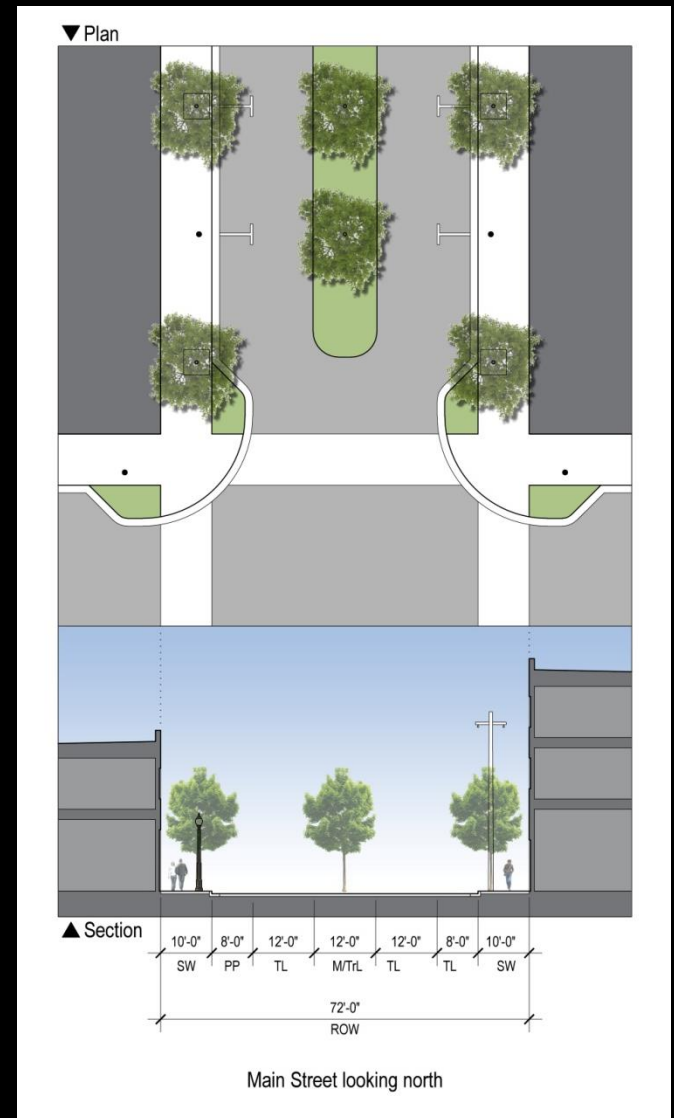
Key Streets

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



Streets: Main

Main Street: Bridge to Ready



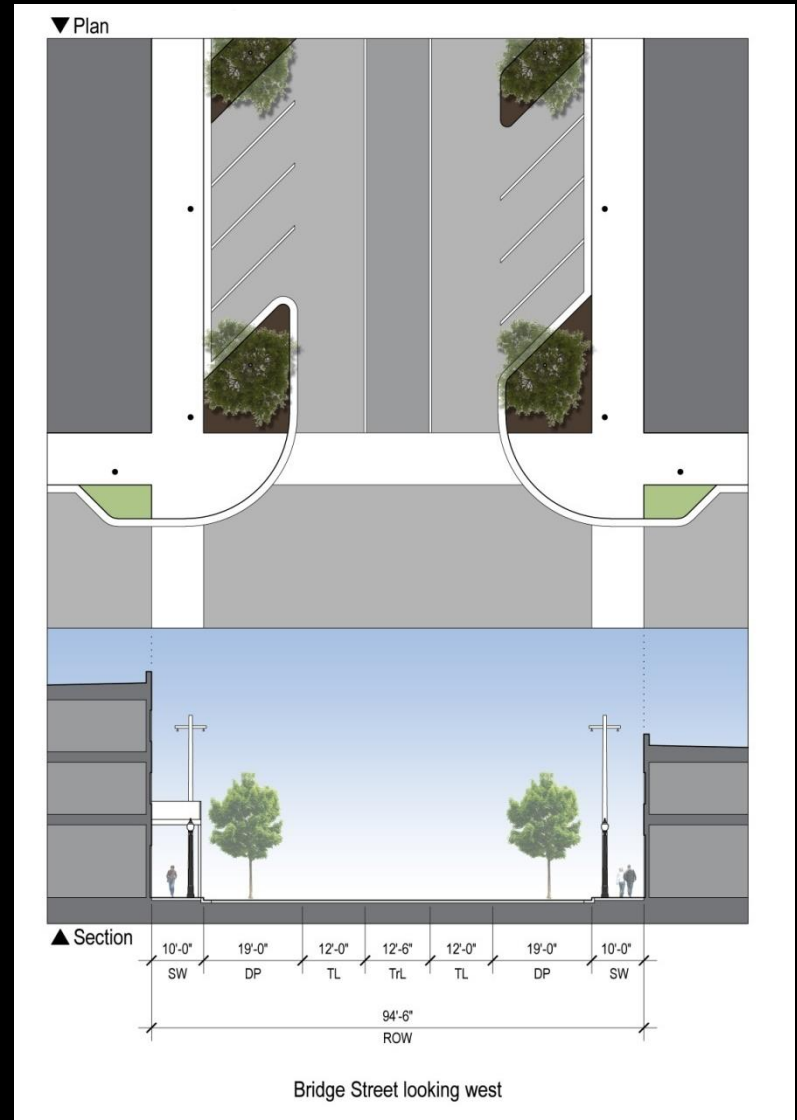
Streets: Main

Main Street: Bridge to Ready



Streets: Bridge

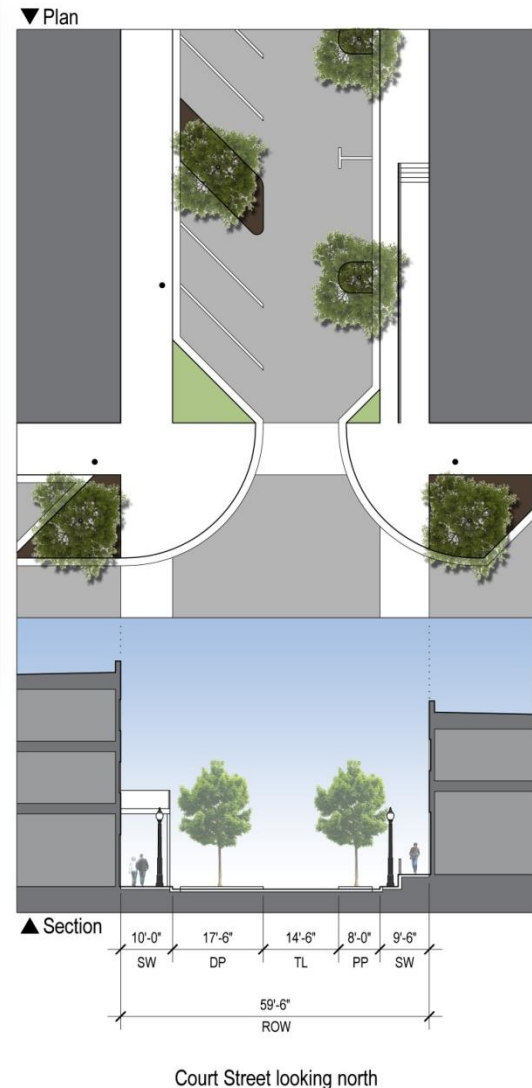
Bridge Street: Main to Hill



Streets: Court

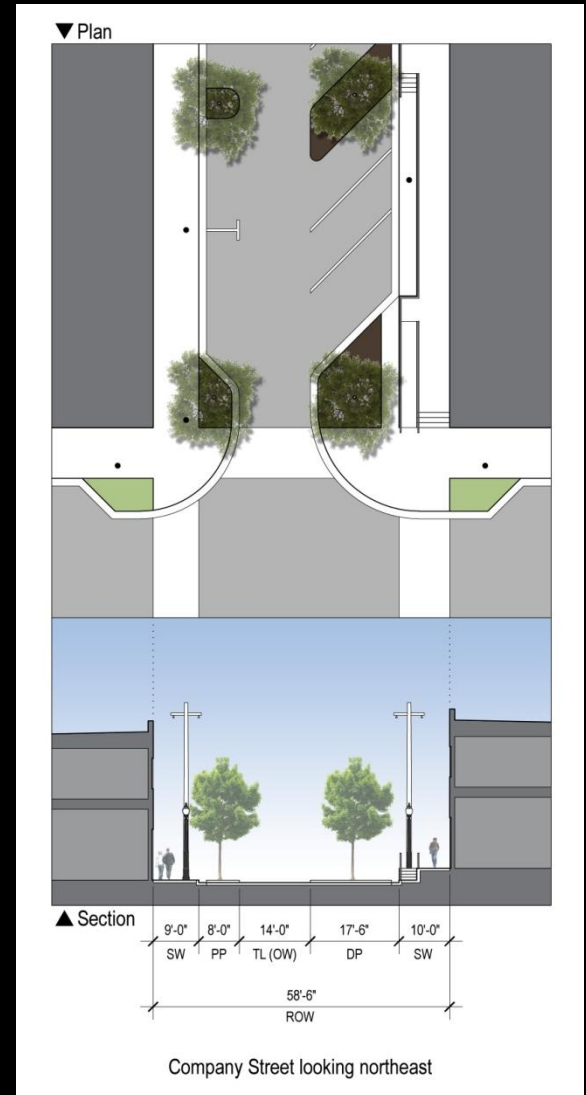
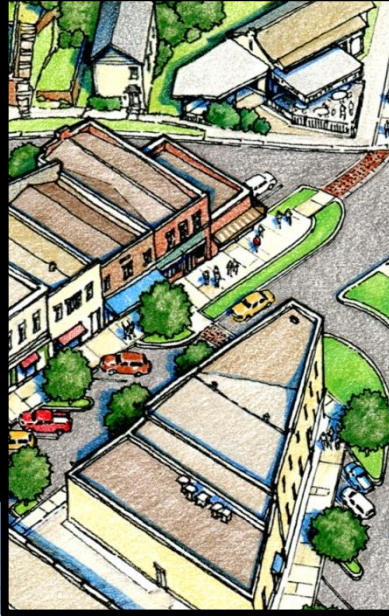
Court Street: Commerce to Bridge

- Consider using scored concrete for street paving for stronger pedestrian character



Streets: Company

Company Street: Hill to Online



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**

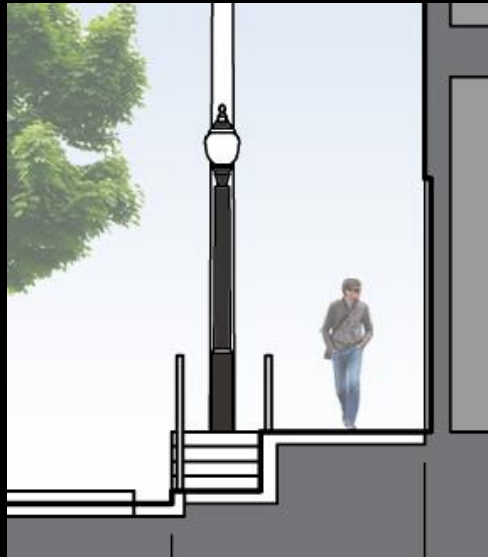


Sample street tree planters: Northport, AL

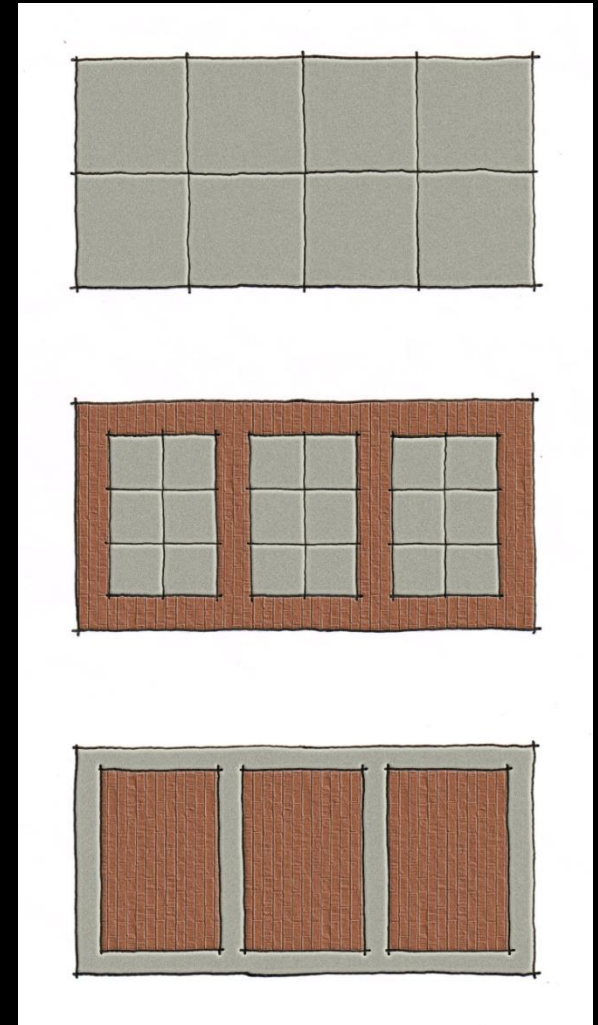
Streetscapes: Grade Changes & Paving

Streets to Address for Grade Change:

- **Court Street**
 - east side
- **Company Street**
 - southeast side



Sample grade change treatment: Opelika, AL



Sidewalk Paving Options

Streetscapes: Furnishings

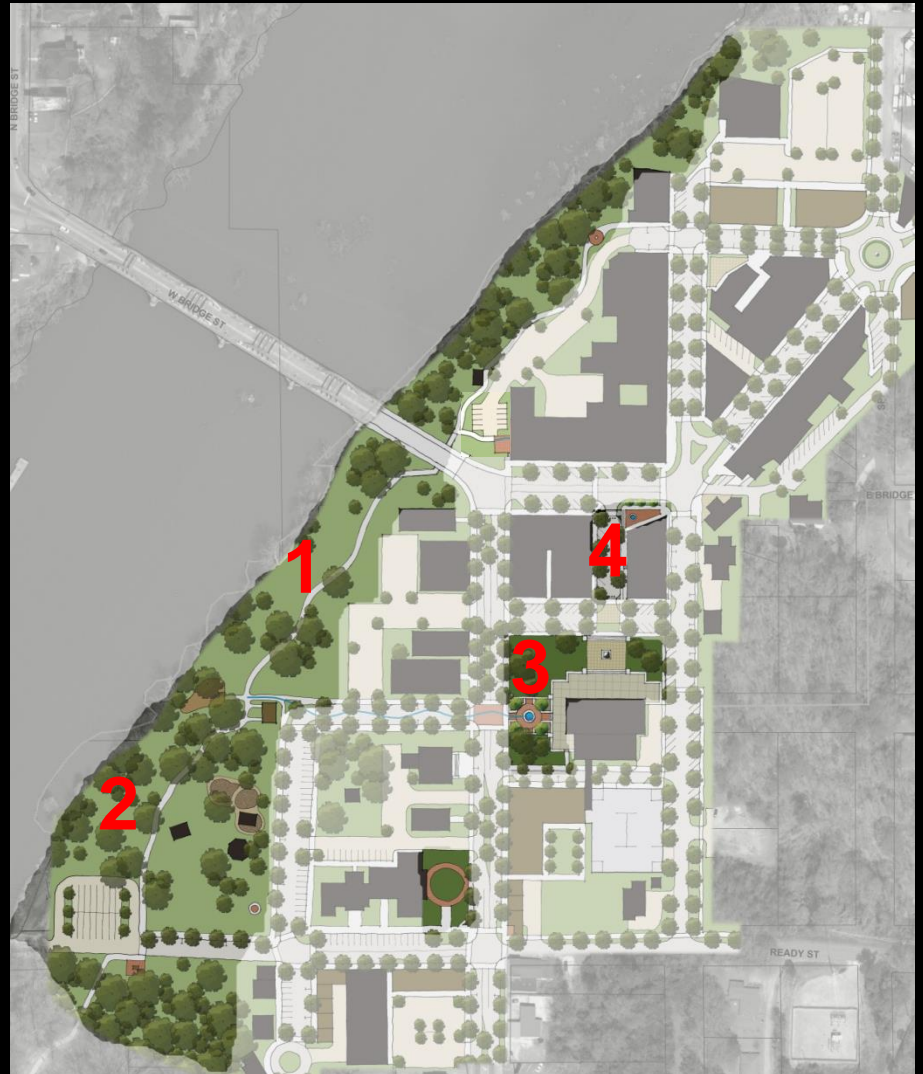
“Proposed” styles are not specific, but convey the proposed general character.



Public Spaces

Key Public Spaces

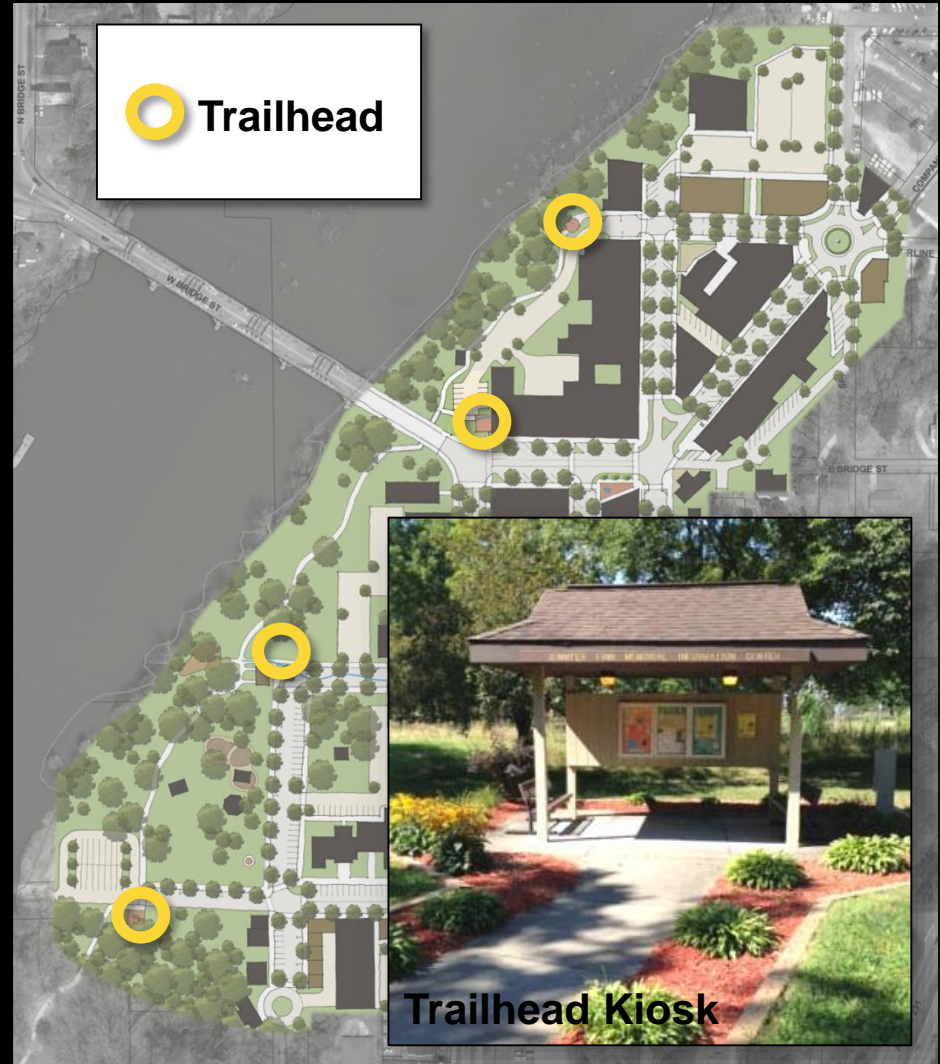
- 1) Riverwalk
- 2) Gold Star Park
- 3) Courthouse Plaza & Lawn
- 4) Court Street



Public Spaces

Riverwalk:

- **Enhance Access near Bridge** - create a trailhead (informational kiosk, lighting, signage, etc.)
- **Extend to Ft. Toulouse / Ft. Jackson** - 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

Courthouse Plaza & Lawn



Public Spaces

Court Street

- **Natural extension of the Courthouse plaza space**
- **New streetscape / scored concrete street**
- **Close only for events /occasions (bollards)**



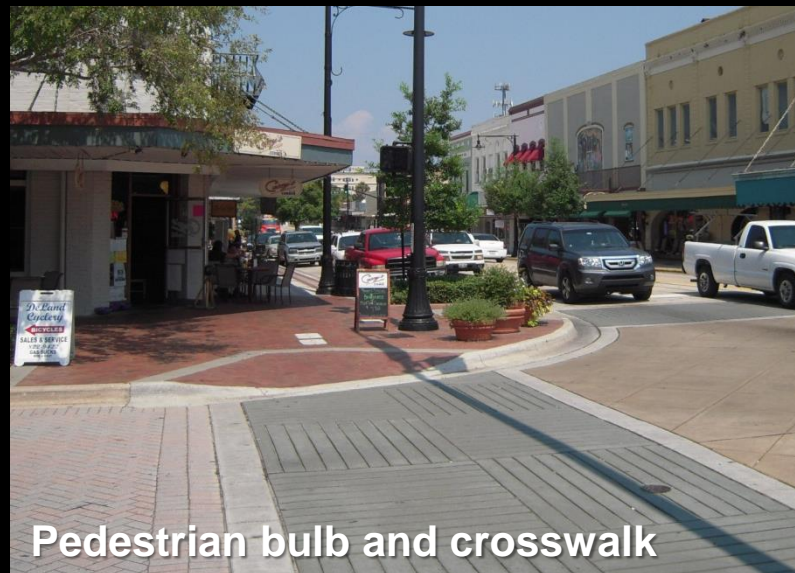
Public Spaces



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 (optional).
 - Enhance corners with pedestrian bulbs and crosswalks.
 - Extend pedestrian space in front of Chamber (iconic statement – obelisk)



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.
- Will 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

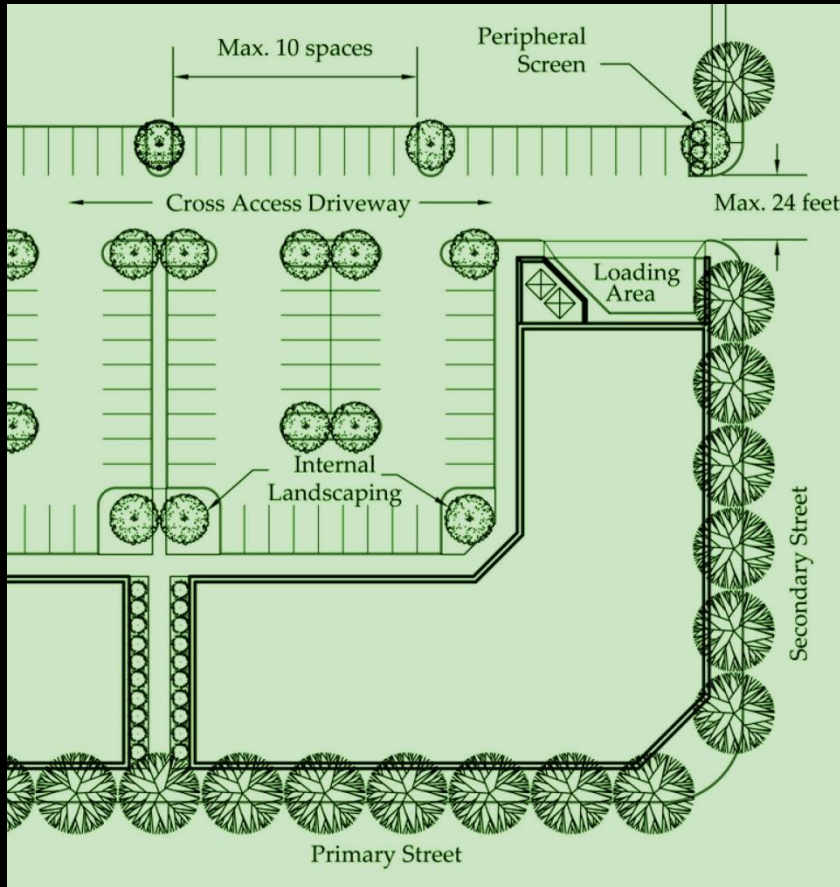
- **Provide signage directing drivers to parking lots**
- **Enhance the interior of parking lots:**
 - Parking stall delineation (paint striping)
 - Interior landscaping (shade trees)
 - Lighting
- **Enhance the periphery of parking lots:**
 - Screening with landscaping, fencing, and/or walls



Positive Example

Parking: Off-Street

Parking Lot Design & Garage



Sample Parking Lot Design

*Location
makes
garage
design
less
critical
than on
a key
street*



Sample Parking Garage



ECONOMIC & MARKET-BASED STRATEGIES

Economic Strategy

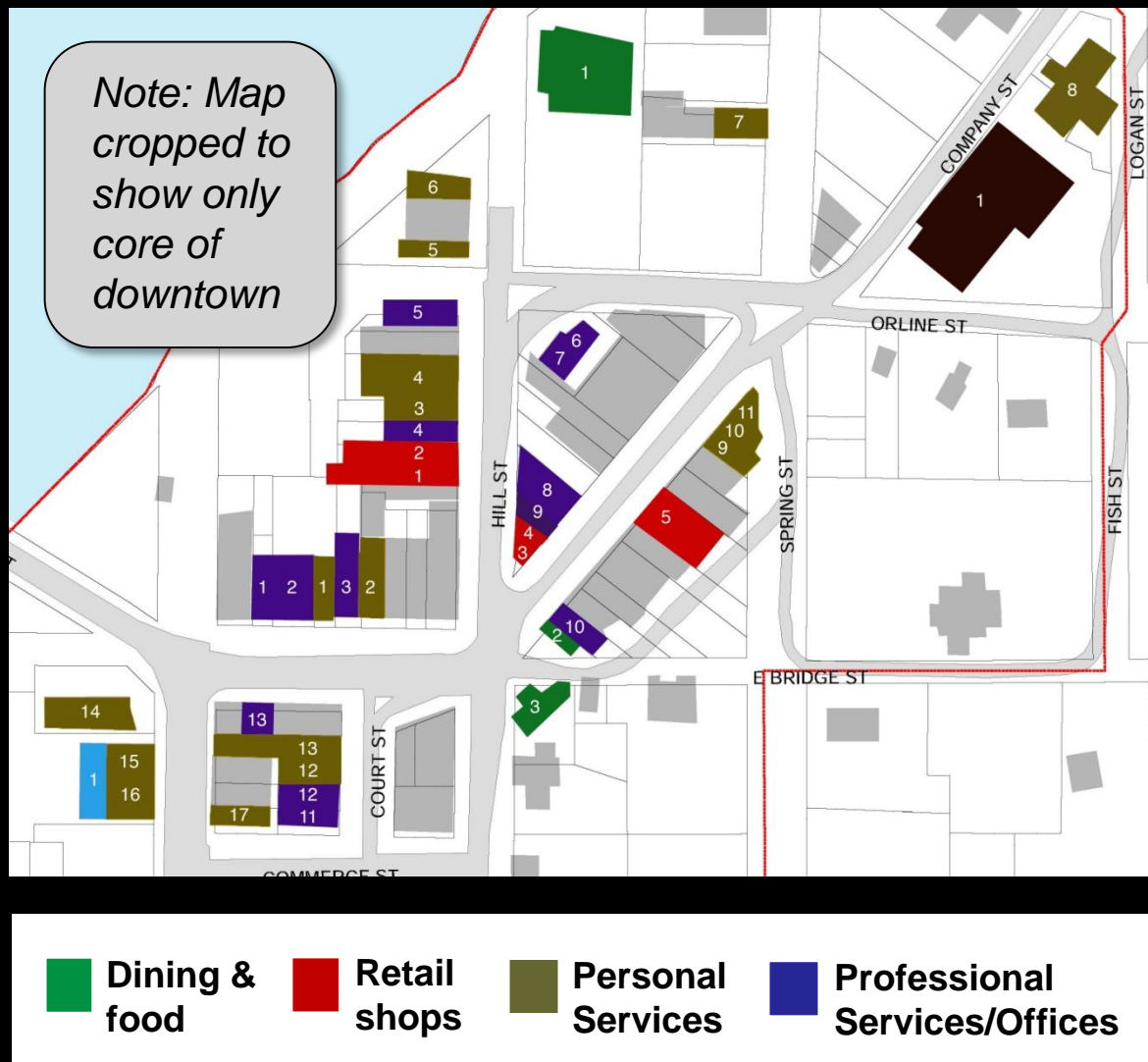
“Potentials” per the 2012 Plan – “targeted” demand levels

- **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)

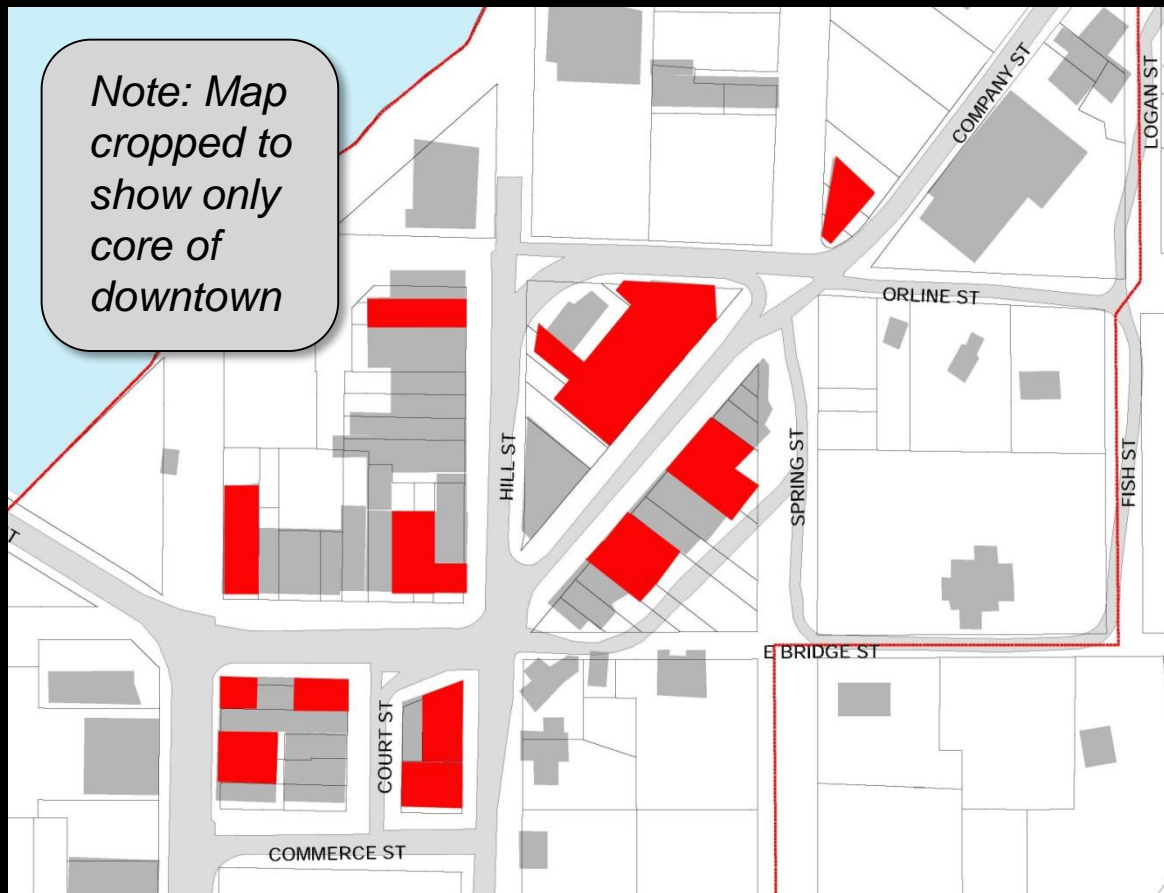


Economic Strategy

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/gems (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 to facilitate an on-going dialogue with existing owners.**

Business Recruitment

- **Establish a business recruitment team.**
- **Create a marketing package 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 – pass resolutions with that intent (exception: 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)
- **Forts Toulouse/Jackson** – support “Friends of the Forts” to fund improvements, maintenance & interpretation.



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

Economic Strategy

Leverage Area Attractions: Impact Crater

Despite 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

Employ Centralized Retail Management (CRM).

- Standardized days and hours of operation.
- “Opening day standards” of customer service
- Create and utilize a downtown logo.
- Coordinate joint advertising.



Behave like a suburban shopping mall.


DOWNTOWN MARKET

FIND US DOWNTOWN
and at downtownfairbanks.com

<p>River City CAFE & ESPRESSO 10% off drink of your choice! Just across the street from the Downtown Market on 2nd Ave., with full espresso menu and hot/cold ice cream made right here in Fairbanks!</p>	<p>Lavelle's Half-Price Appetizers, 4-9PM 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.</p>
<p>ARTS Free greeting card with purchase! Visit our fine art gallery in the Co-Op Plaza on 2nd Ave., featuring pottery, jewelry, woodwork, watercolor, affordable gifts, colorful puppets, and wildlife photography.</p>	<p>VitalityQuest Hold a Sled Dog Puppy! Just a few steps from the Market in the log cabin, we have posters, and will be stuffed animals, t-shirts, and small baggies for men annual 1000-mile sled dog race to or from Whitehorse, YT.</p>
<p>Big River We have fishing licenses! Start your trip with us, and visit Fairbanks to source for Garments, fly fishing gear, durable outdoor clothing, and hunting equipment on 2nd Ave. Open later!</p>	<p>Big Daddy's 20% off any slider from 4-9PM! The northernmost outdoor BBQ, Big Daddy's has been featured on the Food Network and serves up the best BBQ in town. Join us during our after the Market for a beer without our signature Nels and a cool Alaskan beer.</p>
<p>SUNRISE Buy One Drink, Get One Free Walk up to the top of just north of Chena River on 11th Street, you'll find our light blue coffee stand with a live-oak menu and the best breakfast in town.</p>	<p>GLORY PUTT ALASKA One Free Game of Mini-Golf! A few blocks down Cushman street, you'll find us in the Geller's building. Wind down the couple rounds of indoor mini-golf. A fun, family-friendly activity to end your day!</p>
<p>BIG-I Alaskan beer on tap! Get licenses for Chena and Iditarod in Fairbanks, visible from the Market. This is where the locals go, and we would love to help you explore Alaska this summer. Find us just up the Riverwalk in the Morris Thompson Center!</p>	<p>SADLER'S Free layaway with AK ID! The Interior's source for fine furnishings, we're south of the Plaza on Cushman Street. Come and see our newest line for both indoor and outdoor use!</p>
<p>ALASKA CENTERS Explore the Interior with Us! We help Fairbanks and visitors navigate the public land system of Alaska, and have maps and brochures to help you explore Alaska this summer. Find us just up the Riverwalk in the Morris Thompson Center!</p>	<p>FAIR BANKS Need info? Visit Us! Follow the Riverwalk into the Morris Thompson Center, and find the friendly staff of Golden Heart Ambassadors to answer your questions about Fairbanks!</p>

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





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).






Implementation: Public Policy

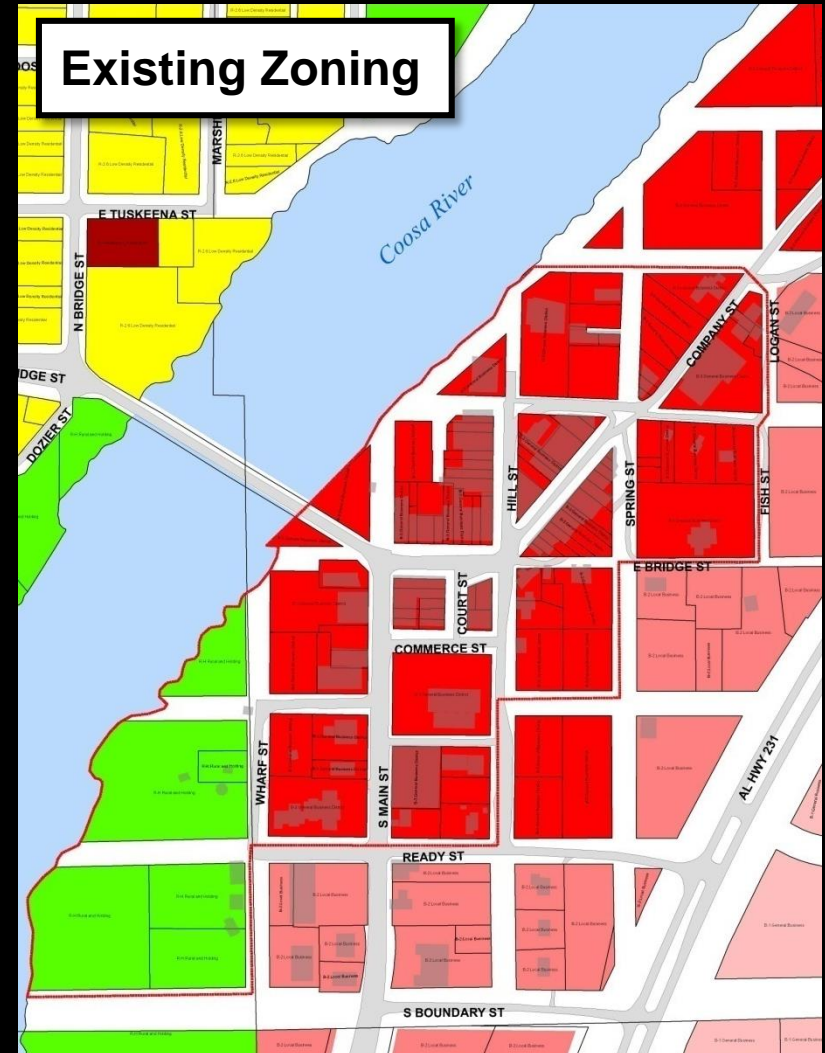
Zoning

Revise zoning to:

- Insure desired uses are permitted and easy to approve (housing, etc.)
- Avoid nuisance uses better served on highways (gas stations allowed)
- Revisit boundaries of B-3 – area north of Green Street should be relatively high-density housing

WETUMPKA ZONING DISTRICTS

	B-1:General Business
	B-2:Local Business
	B-3:General Business District
	B-4:Business Conservation
	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 a 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

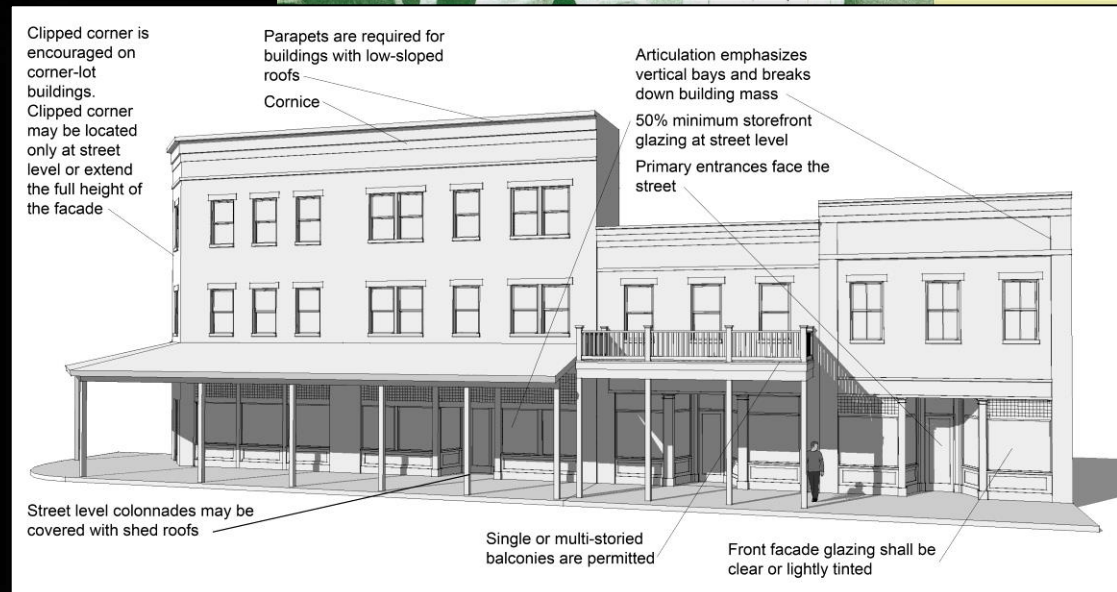
Design Guidelines:

- 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



Implementation: Matrix & Map

No.	Recommendation	Page #	Responsible Party	Time-Frame
A. Physical Plan				
A-1	Street Intersection Improvements - four locations along Main, E. Commerce, Bridge & Company	31-33	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
A-2	Key Street & Streetscape Improvements - Main, Bridge, Court & Company	34-41	City	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
A-3	Public Space Improvements - Goldstar Park & trail, Court House, Court St. & new plaza	42-45	City & County	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
A-4	Development of New Off-Street Parking - parking lots and County garage	46-48	City, County & Private Sector	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)
A-5	Gateways Development - Bridge, South Main Street & Company Street	49-50	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
A-6	Rehabilitate Key Historic Buildings - Court Street buildings, former hotel & former theatre	51-52, 60	Chamber, City & Private Sector	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
A-7	Develop New Infill Buildings - including County building at Main & Courthouse Lane	53-55	Private Sector & County	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)
B. Economic & Market-Based Strategies				
B-1	Business Development - retention, expansion & recruitment (based on optimal tenant mix)	59	Downtown Organization	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-2	Branding, Marketing & Promotion	61-65	Downtown Organization	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-3	Leverage Area Attractions - Coosa River, casino, Forts Toulouse/Jackson, impact crater	66-67	Downtown Organization & Others	Near Term (Yr. 1)
B-4	Maintain Downtown as an Institutional Center - local governments and other institutions	68	Downtown Organization & local gov'ts	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C. Implementation				
C-1	Establish a Downtown Organization - leverage existing entities and individuals	69	Downtown Organization, Chamber & City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-2	Revise the B-3 Zoning - amend the specific provisions and decrease the area designated	70-71	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-3	Establish a Historic Preservation Program - ordinance, district, commission, guidelines	71-72	City & Alabama Historical Commission	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-4	Establish a Parking Management Program - on-street time limitations and enforcement	72	City & Downtown Organization	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
C-5	Promote Existing Financial Incentives - federal and state historic rehab. investment tax credit	73	Downtown Organization	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-6	Develop New Financial Incentives - property tax abatement, façade grants/loans, fee waivers	73	City & Downtown Organization	Mid Term (Yrs. 2-3)
C-7	Formally Adopt this Plan - City Council should pass a resolution as official public policy	74	City	Near Term (Yr. 1)
C-8	Update this Plan in the Future - revisit at least every five years	74	City & Downtown Organization	Long Term (Yrs. 4-5)

Implementation: Matrix & Map

IMPLEMENTATION MAP & MATRIX

Page 76 features a plan Implementation Matrix that summarizes the key recommendations of this plan, as follows:

Subject Category

The matrix has organized the key plan ideas into the following three subject categories:

- A. Physical Plan (see map at right)
- B. Economic & Market-Based Strategies
- C. Implementation

Alphanumeric Designation

Each subject category has been assigned a sequential letter and each plan recommendation has been given a sequential number. The category letter and recommendation number are combined for an alphanumeric designation for easy reference.

Page Number

This column indicates the plan page numbers that explain the recommendation in detail.

Responsible Party

This column indicates the recommended party (or parties) to spearhead implementation in order of their level of responsibility.

Time-Frame

This section sequences implementation into Near Term (Year 1), Mid Term (Years 2-3) and Long Term (Years 4-5) categories.



Discussion

