NASHVILLE design charrette

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
What is a Charrette?

Charrette is a French word that translates "little cart." At the leading architecture school of the 19th century, the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, students would be assigned a tough design problem to work out under pressure of time. They'd continue sketching as fast as they could, even as little carts (charrettes) carried their drawing boards away to be judged and graded. Today, "charrette" has come to describe the rapid, intensive, and creative work session, usually lasting a week or more, in which a design team focuses on a particular design problem and arrives at a collaborative solution. Charrettes are product-oriented. The public charrette is fast becoming a preferred way to face the planning challenges confronting American cities.

A charrette is an intensive, multi-disciplinary planning process. It is designed to facilitate an open discussion between all of the stakeholders of a given development project, including architects, community groups, developers and neighbors. A charrette is usually a short process, from 3 days to 2 weeks long, resulting in a clear, detailed, realistic vision for development.

There are three main parts to a charrette:

- Exploration and Issue Identification: Stakeholders and design professionals meet to explore the area (e.g., building, site, neighborhood) and discuss issues that the stakeholders feel are important to the development.
- Design: Design professionals create a few different schematic images to represent numerous design solutions that take into consideration the issues that the stakeholders discussed in step one.
- Call to Action / Implementation Plan: A development document summarizes the vision and is adopted by stakeholders as a guide for present and future developments. The process is based upon stakeholder participation and includes numerous options for stakeholders to offer their input and comment on designs and how the proposed designs address the community issues.
This project was completed at the request of the Better Hometown Committee, specifically the design committee. City Council Representative Connie Perry contacted The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design to conduct a mini-design charrette for the downtown square in Nashville. The charrette produced conceptual improvement plans for the historic core of the city.

The overall goal is to provide an alternative to insensitive designs that do not respect the rich history and unique character of Nashville, while keeping buildings in viable use for both business owners and citizens. Improving the look of the courthouse square will go a long way in promoting downtown development and tourism. The city of Nashville has an important and meaningful history that must be respected and protected throughout the built environment.

The University of Georgia would like to thank the elected officials, community leaders and the citizens of Nashville and Berrien County for their input and foresight in making this study possible and for implementing the recommendations that emerge from it.

Both elected officials and private citizens have expressed an interest in creating a heart to their city. With the foundation that has already been laid, wisdom, and a willingness to engage in long-term planning, this goal can be achieved. A concerted effort to guide growth will result in a city that takes pride in its past and has hope in its future.

The design team brings the vision for Nashville, the real work will be up to the people of Nashville. Remember, this mini-charrette focuses only on the courthouse square and two buildings just off the square. By no means is it a complete vision for all of Nashville. The design team highly recommends that a full-blown charrette be conducted in the future, using this charrette as its foundation.
The Nashville Experience

Nashville, county seat of Berrien County, was traditionally the place to go. Many long-time residents of Berrien County told the charrette team about Saturday trips into town to shop, eat, and just "hang out." Today Nashville lacks something that once drew people into town. The premise that Nashville is a destination with something to offer should guide growth today, without obliterating the features that brought growth to the region in the first place. Many historic photos of Nashville were provided to the design team; these photos, which depicted a lively and vibrant town, were the source and foundation for the design team’s recommendations.

The goals set forth by the design team can be achieved through a new and updated physical planning process, a new policy related to aesthetics and a system of management practices that will keep Nashville unique rather than just another commercial strip along a Georgia highway. Component pieces of this improved land use and planning framework are explained as issues and recommendations.

The charrette started with a community input session.
The information gathering phase of the charrette started with a rousing community feedback session and is summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What you told us that was bad about Nashville</th>
<th>…And what you liked</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No vision for downtown</td>
<td>Very safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough green space</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much demolition</td>
<td>Good schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough businesses</td>
<td>Good library</td>
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<tr>
<td>No theme for downtown</td>
<td>Peaceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough property owner participation</td>
<td>Comfortable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant lot where theater was</td>
<td>Welcoming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No nice restaurants</td>
<td>Courthouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of community involvement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Festivals need to be revived</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Issues and Recommendations

1. Bury Utility Lines
2. Overlay Zoning and Design Review Districts
3. Design Guidelines
4. Streetscape Issues
5. Demolition

1. BURY UTILITY LINES
Moving the existing overhead utility lines underground is more visually unifying and creates a less disjointed, chaotic and confusing environment. No overhead utility lines allows for planting of additional trees without creating the future problem of interference from branches leading to poor pruning and unsightliness. The power lines did not appear overnight and their removal will not happen quickly either. It is a major coordinated effort on the part of city officials, the utilities, business persons, residents and property owners. Information from the American Planning Association (http://www.planning.org/) and Scenic America (http://www.scenic.org/) can help you pursue this task.

2. OVERLAY ZONING AND DESIGN REVIEW DISTRICTS
Overlay zoning is a flexible zoning technique that allows a municipality to:

- protect certain areas;
- encourage certain types of development; and
- discourage certain types of development.

These three functions of overlay zoning are not exclusive. In fact, a municipality can choose to establish an overlay zone to do any one or more of the three. Overlay zoning is not a technique that operates alone. In fact, overlay zoning offers tremendous flexibility to municipalities by incorporating many other flexible zoning keep available.

An overlay zone is defined as "a mapped overlay district superimposed on one or more established zoning districts [which] may be used to impose supplemental restrictions on uses in these districts, permit uses otherwise disallowed, or implement some form of density bonus or incentive bonus program." Some commentators suggest that "overlay zones" are synonymous with "floating zones." However, overlay zones are distinct from floating zones because of several features, the most significant of which is that overlay zones are mapped, and floating zones are not mapped.

The term overlay zoning derives its name from being drawn on tracing, mylar, or other translucent paper which was then placed or 'laid over' the official zoning map. As this description helps illustrate, an overlay zone simply supplements the underlying land use zone with additional requirements or incentives while leaving underlying zoning regulations in place. A parcel within the overlay zone will thus be simultaneously subject to two sets of zoning regulations: the underlying and the overlay zoning requirements.

Overlay zone boundaries are also not restricted by the underlying zoning districts' boundaries. An overlay zone may or may not encompass the entire underlying zoning district. Likewise, an overlay zone can cover more than one zoning district, or even portions of several underlying zoning districts. Overlay zones or districts have been used successfully to protect many different kinds of resources. They primarily deal with areas that are already zoned in a specific land use category. The way that
overlays are usually used is to create design controls and aesthetic improvement programs. In Georgia, the primary use is for protecting historic areas. The protection comes through the creation of a design review board, often called the Historic Preservation Commission. Property owners must comply with design guidelines and are required to gain approval from the Commission before material changes in appearance can be undertaken. Generally, this means that property owners who propose activity that would require a building permit, must first get a Certificate of Appropriateness from the preservation commission. In some cases overlay districts may be non-regulatory and/or incentive based. The voluntary overlays usually have advisory design guidelines and depend on the willingness of the property owner to "do the right thing." They can be effective because many property owners have good intentions and want to assist in the protection of the special area. They fail when property owners do not respect the character of the area and have plans that are radically different than those suggested in the guidelines. Incentive-based systems rely on ways to encourage property owners by granting them special privileges or financial assistance to follow the guidelines. In Georgia, downtown façade loan and grant districts are the most common. For regulatory overlays it is important to have an appointed board of review. This board functions in a way that is similar to planning commissions and zoning review boards. The right of citizens to be heard is highly regarded in these programs and a system of fairness and avoidance of appearing capricious is maintained. For non-regulatory overlays, the board is less critical and reviews can be done by committees or local government staff persons. In both cases however, citizens should consult their city attorney for assistance in setting up overlay districts.

The process for maintaining visual
character in overlay districts can be summarized this way. If the appearance of a particular place or proposed development does not relate to the adjacent areas, you have three options: 1) hide it from view, usually by screening with plant materials; 2) make the development blend in with the surrounding area, by addressing architectural compatibility issues; 3) deny the development through a regulatory process by not granting permission to proceed.

The following chart shows how different review systems might work:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Advocacy Program</th>
<th>Advisory Process</th>
<th>Incentive Program</th>
<th>Regulated District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Assistance</td>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>Needed</td>
<td>Required</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start-up costs</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System Maintenance</td>
<td>Not required</td>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>Needed</td>
<td>Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Costs</td>
<td>High Cost</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High Cost</td>
<td>Moderate Cost</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Advocacy Program** - Guidelines are promoted for voluntary use by a public service organization or non-profit.
- **Advisory Process** - Property owners are required to listen to a critique of their plans, but are not required to comply with the recommendations.
- **Incentive Program** - Special loans, grants or other financial tool offered to owners who will comply with the guidelines.
- **Regulated District** - Review and compliance are required by ordinance or in some cases by covenant.
3. DESIGN GUIDELINES
If Nashville implements a design review program, a clear, easy to follow and consistent set of design guidelines will be invaluable. Design guidelines, especially for new construction, will encourage compatibility, a unified appearance and a rebirth of the character that once was Nashville. The changes will take place over time as buildings are introduced. The new "look" will be an alternative to typical sprawling development and the "phony-colony" look of some buildings on the square. A design review district should encompass all the areas that are visible from the roadway and extend into newly developed land.

Typical guidelines contain provisions for a wide variety of proposed changes. Nashville's design review program for the courthouse square district should encompass the following changes at minimum:

a. NEW CONSTRUCTION

- New construction should compliment the character of both the built and natural environments
- New construction should be compatible with existing structures in terms of:
  - Materials
  - Setback
  - Height
  - Scale
  - Mass
  - Footprint

b. PARKING
Sufficient parking already exists in Nashville. The parking map (above) shows where existing parking is located. **AVOID DEMOLISHING ANY EXISTING BUILDINGS, ESPECIALLY FOR PARKING!**

- Any new parking should be confined to the rear of new businesses
- All surface parking lots (and any other large expanse of paved areas) should be screened with appropriate vegetation
c. SIGNS
Signage, like parking, is essential to any business. Signs attract pedestrian and vehicular traffic and can add charm and character to streets.
- Building and sign materials should be compatible.
- Neon or interior lit signs should be avoided.
- Avoid moveable or portable signs.
- Signage should be placed in appropriate locations on buildings.
- Any kind or size of billboard should be strictly prohibited.

d. LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS
Lack of greenery contributes much to the unattractive look of the area.
- Avoid disturbing existing trees, especially mature trees.
- Mature trees in the area should be protected.
- Native plants should be used.

4. STREETSCAPE ISSUES

STREET TREES
A standardized menu of landscape improvements along corridors from which owners, the city, and developers can choose will begin to create a consistent appearance. The use of large canopy shade trees along the streets will help to mitigate the negative effects of the roads by creating a sense of enclosure. Georgia Department of Transportation regulations require that a minimum 75% of all plant materials should be species native to the region.

MEDIAN PLANTINGS
Establishing median strips will create a safe environment for drivers and provides additional space for vegetation such as palms and native grasses. Repetition of design elements will insure that residents and visitors are able to identify the core of Nashville. The median is also a safety feature for pedestrians.

TREE ORDINANCE
A tree ordinance will help preserve the existing trees in Nashville. Keeping good control on the removal of all large trees will avoid bad mistakes that take decades to rectify. The attentive management of vegetation, like trees, will insure that design goals are met. Landscape planning, like other issues, requires the ability to be forward thinking.
5. DEMOLITION

Nashville must stop unnecessary demolition and demolition by neglect. City treasures, like the old theater, are now lost forever. The city is poised to lose another gem, the old tobacco auction house, which is among the oldest in the state of Georgia and has local, state, and national significance. Every effort should be made to save this building and put it to a new use. There are many uses that would be suited for this building, including a skating rink, museum space, or a civic theater/auditorium. The demolition of this building will mean the irreplaceable loss of a Georgia landmark. This building, with time and effort, can become a jewel in Nashville's crown. The first step toward protecting this resource is to get it listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See the list of funding sources for potential resources for the tobacco house.

The improvement plan for Nashville is an intimidating process when seen as a whole. When the projects are phased over time, it becomes more manageable. The charrette team feels that the improvements will augment many of the existing projects that are already underway in the city. As time goes on the entire package of community improvements will prove to be a strong economic engine for small town success. The problems that many people have identified did not occur over night; likewise the solutions to those problems will not occur overnight. Most community failures result from multiple factors and extenuating circumstances. Therefore, there is rarely a "one size fits all" solution. Community collaboration, detailed work plans and aggressive funding strategies will move the "fix" along a steady path toward success.
Incentives and tools for completing the projects in Nashville should make use of many of the smart growth or balanced growth tools widely used today. These include business improvement districts, Community Improvement Districts, Conservation Easements, Development Impact Fees, Historic Preservation, Municipal Taxation Districts, Tax Increment Financing, Transfer of Development Rights, Flexible Zoning Codes, and streetscape/façade grant or loan programs.

1. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS  
(Refer to OCGA 36-43-1)
This is a tool to create a district to improve economic conditions for businesses. The incentive to create a BID is that it segregates funds for purposes designated in the plan. It is created by a petition within the designated area. The petition must include the following:

a. Names of 51% of the taxpayers listed on the digest for the area outlined OR taxpayers who own 51% of the assessed property (both real and personal) within the area. Residential property is not excluded from millage assessment. There is a five-year sunset, but it can be renewed by the same process

b. A plan for the area, which includes:
   i. A map and description of the boundaries of the district;
   ii. A description of the supplemental services (including but not limited to advertising, promotions, sanitation, security, and business recruitment and development);
   iii. The proposed maximum millage (1 to 3 mills) to be levied and/or the percentage of business license surcharge;
   iv. Budget (for years 1-5);
   v. Timeframe for carrying out the plan;
   vi. Optional - design guidelines or rehabilitation standards.

2. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
(Refer to: Georgia Constitution Article IX, Section 7)
This is a tool to create a special taxing district created to pay for exceptional infrastructure needs. The incentive for creating a CID is that the governing body will utilize the increase in property tax revenues to pay off the bonds that financed the public improvements, such as:

a. Street/road construction and maintenance;

b. Parks and recreation facilities;

c. Storm water and sewage collection and disposal systems;

d. Water development, storage, treatment, purification and distribution facilities;

e. Public transportation;

f. Terminal and dock facilities;

g. Parking facilities

A CID requires a local act of the General Assembly and a resolution of the applicable City and County consenting to the creation of the CID and written consent by a majority of the owners of real property within the CID and consent of the owners within the CID who constitute at least 75% by value of all real property which will be subject to taxes, fees and assessments. The governing body is designated by the Legislature and may be a City, County, or administrative body which shall include representation of each county and city within the CID. Property used for residential, agricultural or forestry purposes may not be assessed. Assessments cannot exceed 2.5% of the assessed value of the real property, i.e. 25 mills. Bonded debt is permitted but such debt may not be considered an obligation of the State of any other government other than the CID.

3. CONSERVATION EASEMENTS  
(Refer to: OCGA 44-10-1)
Conservation easements are for the protection of the natural and built environments. Easements reduce
the tax assessment of a property and function as a charitable contribution for IRS purposes. Conservation easements protect and preserve open space, natural and man-made sites, such as:

- Historic sites
- Architectural sites
- Archaeological sites
- Cultural sites

An easement is granted by the property owner to a governmental body or a charitable corporation. The easement would require that the sites' natural, historical, architectural, archaeological, or cultural significance be maintained.

4. DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES (Refer to: OCGA 36-71-1)
This is a tool to provide proportionate shares of improvement costs incurred by local government because of new development. The incentive for the city is that the developer participates in payment for costs of services incurred because of new development. Impact fees may be used for capital costs for:

- Water supply production, treatment, and distribution facilities;
- Waster-water collection, treatment, and disposal facilities;
- Roads, streets, and bridges, including rights-of-way, traffic signals, landscaping, and any local components of State or Federal highways;
- Storm-water collection, retention, detention, treatment, and disposal facilities, flood control facilities, and bank and shore protection and enhancement improvements;
- Parks, open space, and recreation areas and related facilities;
- Public safety facilities, including police, fire, emergency medical, and rescue facilities;
- Libraries and related facilities

Fees are assessed at the time of development by ordinance. Fees are proportionate shares of the cost for services provided in geographically definable service areas. Fees are earmarked for payment of those costs of services.

5. HISTORIC PRESERVATION (refer to: OCGA 44-10-20, OCGA 48-5-7.2 and Federal legislation related to historic properties)

Historic preservation is already playing a strong role in Georgia. Local historic preservation ordinances, listing in the National Register of Historic Places, developing heritage tourism plans, and managing existing historic properties should continue to be expanded where appropriate. This tool provides proactive protection to historically, architecturally, and/or archaeologically significant sites, structures, buildings, objects, or districts. This tool can provide incentives for property owners through State and Federal tax incentives.

6. MUNICIPAL TAXATION DISTRICTS (Refer to: OCGA 48-8-81; Georgia Constitution Article 9, Section 2, paragraph 6)
This tool creates a special district to assess fees, assessments or taxes for provision of services. It works by creating special districts within which fees, assessments and taxes are levied and collected and used to pay wholly or partially the cost of providing, constructing, and maintaining local government services within such districts. These districts are created by general law or by ordinance or resolution.

7. TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (Refer to: OCGA 36-44-1)
This is a method to finance redevelopment of a geographically definable district. This program

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authorizes issuance of bonds for redevelopment on the basis of pledging increased tax value from redevelopment within the district. A redevelopment plan must be created and the local government must hold a public hearing to discuss the plan. No more than 45 days later, the local government must hold a second meeting to approve, amend, or reject the plan. The plan is then adopted by resolution. The tax commissioner must certify the tax allocation increment base. General funds of tax allocation increments from the district are pledged to the district until all bonds and redevelopment costs are paid. This is not considered a general pledge of credit for tax purposes. The future value of the pledge is the basis for the bonds. This does not go against the general taxing authority of the government.

8. TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (Refer to OCGA 36-66A-1)
This is a tool to transfer the right to develop property form one property owner to another. This method provides a means to transfer development rights while leaving "sending property" unchanged. Development rights such as increased density and floor area are transferred to another property. Notice and hearing provisions must be met before the transfer occurs. The local government must adopt an ordinance. Upon transfer, development rights are severed from sending property. Notice of severance is recorded and is binding on future owners. The local government or individuals may purchase development rights and hold them or re-sell them. This method reduces the valuation of the sending property and provides greater development rights to the receiving property. This tool can be used in Nashville to promote development in desired areas, while minimizing development in sensitive areas.

9. FLEXIBLE ZONING CODES
This is a means to address site and/or district specific issues by including sections in the zoning ordinance that provide flexibility for issues such as parking, setback, landscaping, tree preservation, and street/sidewalk requirements. These sections may be drafted in terms of "in lieu of" (instead of), or may be a waiver. Flexible zoning codes allow distinctive characteristics of sites to be maintained and can provide for infill, non-conforming lots, and planned developments.

10. FAÇADE/STREETSCAPE GRANTS
These grant programs are used across Georgia by Downtown Development Authorities, Main Street and Better Hometown Committees, and Historic Preservation Commissions. The local government or other group provides grant and/or loan funds (often on a matching basis) to property owners to improve and/or repair building facades and streetscapes. Work done with the loan/grant funds must be done in accordance with established design guidelines.
Other resources for good growth include:

**Department of Community Affairs, Region 11 Office**

DCA has a Regional Representative and a Resource Coordinator in each of the eleven regions outside of metro-Atlanta. These regional offices serve local governments and community and economic development partners by assisting in the creation and implementation of rural development strategies, including the revitalization of downtowns and the development of rural workforce housing; providing a broad range of technical assistance services to local governments and development organizations in meeting operational needs and opportunities; facilitating multi-governmental initiatives and implementation of local and regional comprehensive plans.

**Contact DCA Region 11 Office,**
404 North Peterson Avenue, Douglas, Georgia 31533, Scott Purvis, Regional Representative, 229.389.4195, spurvis@dca.state.ga.us, or Kelly Fulsom-Lane, Resource Coordinator, 229.389.4197, kfulsoml@dca.state.ga.us

**Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism, Region 11**

DITTs regional offices are staffed by an Economic Development Representative and a Planning and Workforce Development Representative. These representatives work with the regional advisory councils and other partners in the region to collaborate and facilitate the creation of a state economic development strategy with a focus on workforce development; act as an information source for business and industry on the types of programs and activities available from state and private organizations; and establish and implement an industry call program to help address business and industry needs with a focus on business with special needs. Contact Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism, Region 11 Office, 404 North Peterson Avenue, Douglas, Georgia 31533, Sandy Newman, Regional Project Manager, 229.389.4191, Kitty Sikes, Tourism Representative, 912.262.2341, Michelle Nelson, Regional Marketing Manager, 229.389.4193.

**Georgia Cities Foundation**

GCF offers below market rate loans to cities in Georgia who are requesting financial assistance in their efforts to revitalize and enhance their downtowns. The mission of the Foundation is to serve as a partner and facilitator in funding capital projects, technical assistance and training. The goal of the Foundation is to promote economically sustainable projects and build partnerships in order to help ensure the long-term health and economic vitality of the community. Eligible projects must be supported and sustained by other development initiatives in the downtown area such as streetscape and façade improvement projects and development or redevelopment of buildings in the downtown area or central business district. Contact Georgia Municipal Association, Georgia Cities Foundation, 201 Pryor St., SW, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303, Greg Fender or Linda Wilkes, 888.488.4462.

**Local Development Fund**

This fund, administered by the Department of Community Affairs, grants funds for community improvement activities of local governments in Georgia. Contact DCA, 60 Executive Park South, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329, Cynthia Easley, ceasley@dca.state.ga.us

**OneGeorgia Equity Fund Program**

OneGeorgia Authority makes grants and loans to finance activities that will assist in preparation for economic development. Eligible projects include traditional economic development projects including, but not limited to, water and sewer projects, road, rail
and airport improvements and industrial parks as well as workforce development projects, technology development or tourism development proposals. Special consideration is given to projects of regional significance. Contact OneGeorgia Authority, 1202 B Hillcrest Parkway, Dublin, Georgia, 31021, Nancy Cobb, acting director.

Preservation Services Fund

This fund is administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation for preservation planning and preservation education and outreach activities, such as hiring a professional preservation architect or landscape architect to produce historic structures reports or landscape master plans; hiring a preservation planner to produce design guidelines for a historic district, hiring an organizational development consultant to facilitate a strategic planning retreat for a preservation non-profit board. Applicants must be members of the National Trust Forum (visit www.ntph.org to join). Contact Southern Office, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 456 King Street, Charleston, South Carolina, 29403, 843.722.8552, soro@nthp.org

Certified Local Government Program

Certified Local Governments are eligible for design and technical assistance as well as Historic Preservation Fund grants. Any local government that has passed a historic preservation ordinance that meets the requirements outlined in the Georgia Historic Preservation Act is eligible to apply for CLG status. Contact Christine Laughlin, University of Georgia, College of Environment & Design, Office of Public Service and Outreach, 325 S. Lumpkin St., Athens, Georgia 30602-1861, 706.583.8047, laughlin@arches.uga.edu

Rehabilitated Historic State Property Tax Assessment Freeze

This program is designed to encourage rehabilitation of both residential and commercial historic buildings that might otherwise be neglected. Rehabilitated buildings not only increase property values for owners, but eventually increase tax revenues for local governments. The law provides the owner of the historic property which has undergone substantial rehabilitation an eight-year freeze on the property tax assessments. In the ninth year, the assessment increases by 50% of the difference between the recorded first year value and the current fair market value. The tenth year, it is restored to current fair market value. To be eligible, the property must be listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a district. Contact Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, 156 Trinity Ave, SW, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303, Martha Gravely, Tax incentives Coordinator, 404.651.5566, martha_gravely@mail.dnr.state.ga.us

Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC)

Tax credits are available for certain expenses incurred in connection with rehabilitation of an older building. RITCs are available to owners and certain long-term renters of income-producing properties. Historic buildings are eligible for a 20% credit and non-historic buildings are eligible for a 10% credit. Buildings must listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and the project must meet the substantial rehabilitation test. All work must be done according to the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation. Contact Historic Preservation Division, Department of Natural Resources, 156 Trinity Ave, SW, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303, Martha Gravely, Tax incentives Coordinator, 404.651.5566, martha_gravely@mail.dnr.state.ga.us

Rural Business Enterprise Grants

Administered through the US Department of Agriculture, these grants are available for public bodies and private non-profit corporations. Eligible projects include acquiring and developing land and the construction of buildings, plants, equipment, access streets and roads, parking areas; fees and professional services, technical assistance; and establishment of a revolving loan fund. Contact...
USDA Baxley Area Office, 605 S. Main Street, Building E, PO Box 30, Baxley, Georgia, 31513, Ricky P. Sweat, 912.367.3603, ricky.sweat@ga.usda.gov

University of Georgia Business Outreach Services

UGA's BOS staff work to provide a wide range of educational opportunities to small business owners, potential entrepreneurs, and community leadership organizations which support efforts to create, sustain and/or expand business ventures. These educational opportunities are delivered through direct business consulting, business training classes, and applied research studies. Contact University of Georgia, Business Outreach Services, SBDC, 2037 Chicopee Complex, Athens, Georgia, 30602, Bill Russell, 706.583.8046, russellb@sbdc.uga.edu

Georgia Heritage Grants

These grants are available to assist local governments with the rehabilitation of Georgia Register listed properties. Development and pre-development grants are available. Contact Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 156 Trinity Ave. SW, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303, Cherie B. Bennett, Grants Coordinator, 404.651.5181, cherie_bennett@mail.dnr.state.ga.us.

Transportation Enhancement (TE) Program

This program makes available grants for twelve categories of transportation enhancement activities. A 20% local match is required for all grants. Contact Georgia Department of Transportation, Planning Division, No. 2 Capitol Square, Atlanta, Georgia 30334, Marta Rossen, 404.657.5226

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The LWCF provides matching grants for acquisition of real property and development of facilities for general purpose outdoor recreation. The local match is 50%. Contact Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Parks, Recreations and Historic Sites Division, 205 Butler Street, SE, Suite 1352, Atlanta, Georgia, 30303, Antoinette Norfleet, 404.656.3830.
Existing Northside facades
Northside facades with improvements

Recommendations: Remove false facades, open windows, clean and repair brick as necessary, replace signage with more compatible styles and locations, return traditional commercial storefronts on first floor

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Existing Northeast parking lot

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Northeast parking lot with improvements

Recommendations: plant native trees and shrubs to screen surface lot
Existing Eastside facades
Eastside facades with improvements
Recommendations: Remove false facades, open windows, clean and repair brick as necessary, replace signage with more compatible styles and locations, return traditional commercial storefronts.
Existing Eastside facades

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Eastside facades with improvements
Recommendations: remove false facades, replace signage with more appropriate materials and locations, open windows (on China Garden)
Existing Southside facades and vacant lot
Southside facades with improvements
Recommendations: return more traditional commercial/storefronts, utilize more appropriate signage, awnings, and paint colors to improve facades

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Vacant lot with infill park

Recommendations: Add structure to front of lot to maintain rhythm of street, add plantings along walls to soften the space, add recreation facilities
Existing Southside facades

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Southside facades with improvements

Recommendations: remove inappropriate facades on first floor, open windows, clean and repair brick as necessary, return to traditional commercial/storefronts on first floor, replace signage with more compatible styles and locations, add appropriate awnings
Existing McLamb Building

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
McLamb Building with improvements
Recommendations: open windows, return to traditional commercial/storefront on 1st floor, clean and repair brick as necessary, replace signage with more compatible materials and locations
Existing Westside facades

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Westside facades with improvements
Recommendations: open windows, remove false facades, return to traditional commercial/storefront on 1st floor, clean and repair brick as necessary, replace signage with more compatible materials and locations, utilize appropriate awnings
Existing Westside facades
Westside facades with appropriate improvements

Recommendations: remove false facade, replace awnings with more appropriate versions, open windows, return to traditional commercial/storefront on 1st floor, clean and repair brick as necessary, replace signage with more compatible styles and locations.

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Existing intersection of Northwest corner

Charrette conducted by The University of Georgia, College of Environment and Design, May 2002
Intersection with streetscape improvements

Recommendations: improve crosswalks for pedestrian safety, add bollards for increased vehicular and pedestrian safety, add plantings where appropriate, re-open gas station.