

# Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update

January, 2017

Hotels

Entertainment

Commercial

Placemaking

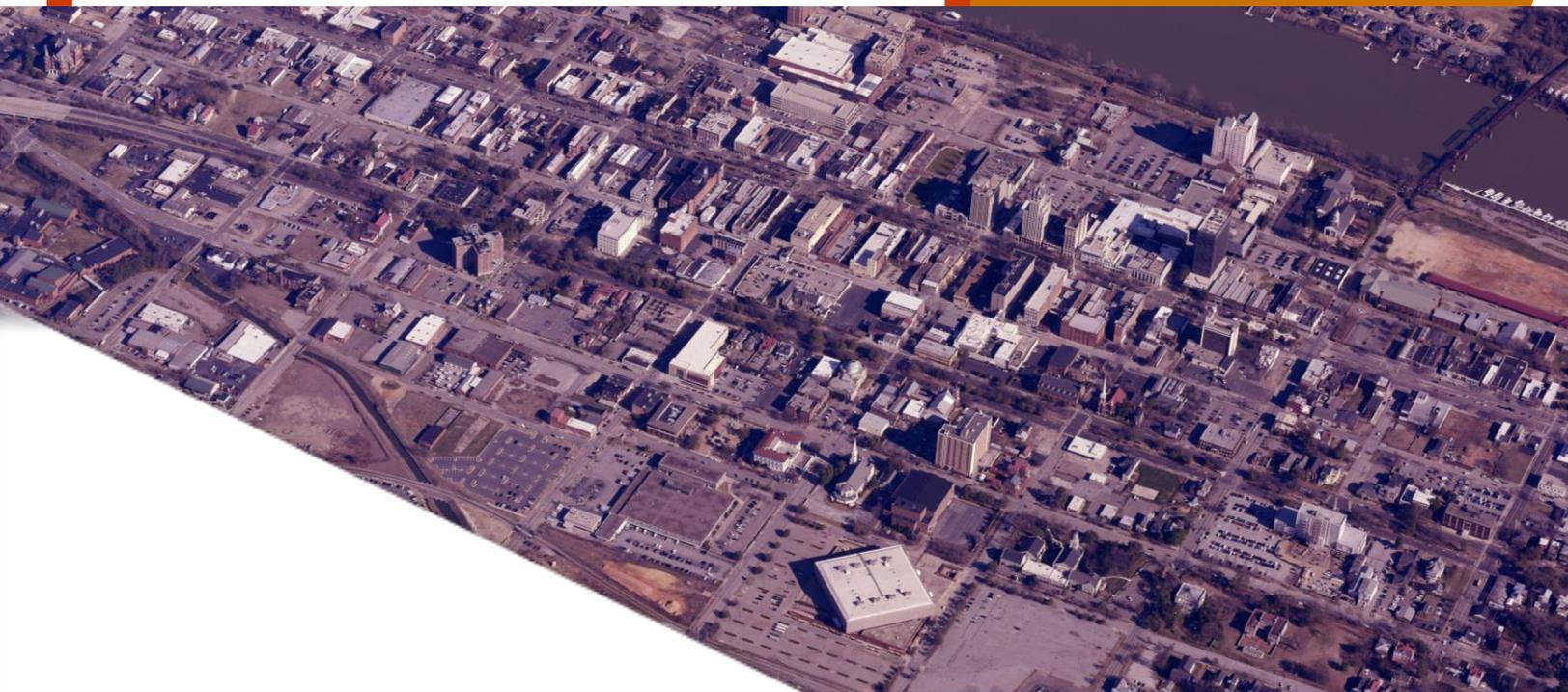


Public Art

Verwalk

Residential

Retail



Prepared By:

Augusta Planning and  
Development Department

Melanie Wilson, Director

Festivals

Innovation

Jobs

Office

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# A Note to Readers

Envision Augusta what our great city and its downtown can become. This review period is just the beginning of a process that is designed to establish a framework from which a unifying vision emerges to guide new growth and development for the downtown and the city of Augusta. The tools and initiatives mentioned are the results of work and aspirations of residents, business owners and city leadership that conceive this plan as possible. Public and partner participation, the next step in ultimately implementing ideas, planning and development concepts, are crucial to realizing a written plan that is reflective of all interested in a vibrant downtown that is lively and innovative in the way life and growth is planned and lived.

The geographic information system (GIS) maps, provided within this plan, are created as visual aids to spatially display local buildings and property to show plans of investment and the relationship to existing and future populations, jobs and regional economic growth. The maps are for illustrative purposes only and are subject to change.

This version of the plan is a technical report written to include market analysis, key findings, and recommendations that are to be the foundation for the Downtown Redevelopment Plan. Some parts of the document, such as the market analysis located in the Appendix are subject to change due to regional economics.

#### Next Goals:

- Secure Public Participation
- Ratify Plan Update as Complete and Implementable
- Work with Public and Private Partners to Establish Development Benchmarks

So, allow this data and information to spark your creativity and thoughts of a downtown that captures your imagination and provides the structure for realizing a vibrant downtown for all of Augusta Richmond County and the surrounding region.

## List of Acronyms

ASDA	Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda
CBD	Central Business District
TAD	Tax Allocation District
DRA	Downtown Redevelopment Area
SPI	Spending Potential Index

# Executive Summary

## *Introduction*

The importance of downtown Augusta to the region can be seen in the social and economic fabric of the urban neighborhoods through the passion that is on display within the residents, business owners, as well as in the visitors that come to the city. This Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update is a realistic view of the transformation that has led to the current status and lay the groundwork for how planning and zoning position downtown Augusta for future growth and redevelopment. Questions of value and investment are addressed to reinforce and validate the successful areas of downtown and how they can be improved upon. It can be identified within the different plans that have been described. In addition, those geographic areas that are the weakest, the Plan Update describes development decisions by the municipality to serve as a catalyst for redevelopment.

## *Augusta's Downtown Redevelopment Area*

By way of a historical review, downtown Augusta, like most downtowns experienced neglect and abandonment due to urban sprawl which involved an out-migration to the suburbs. The attention that the suburbs received left the city core with declining residents and economics including businesses and therefore jobs. Today, there is a resurgence of interest in downtown living, which contributes toward plans for revitalization and the policies that are developed and used on the state and local levels.

The Tax Allocation District (TAD) is Georgia's version of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). As a public finance tool, the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Law gives local governments the authority to sell bonds to finance infrastructure improvements within a TAD. The bonds are secured by a tax allocation increment which is the increase in property tax revenues resulting from redevelopment activities. This allows local government to capture tax revenues within a specific area and use those funds for improvement projects within that area.

In 2008, downtown Augusta was listed within one of the areas that the proposed Augusta Redevelopment Area and Tax Allocation District #1 included to attract private investment into communities that were described as urban and "historically rich – yet economically marginal." The Geographic Boundaries and the Grounds for Exercise of Redevelopment Powers were information required pursuant to the "Redevelopment Powers Law" found in the Official Code of Georgia, Title 36, Chapter 44. The 1985 Redevelopment Powers Law was amended in 2009.

In 2010, the Board of Commissioners of Augusta, Georgia exercised its "urban redevelopment powers" through the activation of the Urban Redevelopment Agency pursuant to Georgia's Urban Redevelopment Law, found in the Official Code of Georgia, Title 36, Chapter 61. The Laney Walker and Bethlehem area was formed as an urban redevelopment plan under the Georgia Redevelopment Powers Act (Section 36-61-7 of the Official Code of Georgia). It was written to provide a vision and guide for redevelopment of properties located in an area that contained physical and socioeconomic indicators of blight and a plan to eliminate them.

In 2013, the consolidated Augusta-Richmond County government continued interest in furthering its plans for strategic economic development with goals of stabilizing the physical community, developing more open space and parks, attracting mixed use development and improving mobility, access and linkages. As a step toward achieving these goals, the Augusta Commission designated six areas described as “urban redevelopment areas” to be the catalyst for revitalizing the downtown. (See Table 1 for list and improvements.) Located in the downtown area, all six areas were adopted within the Augusta Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan.

The plan was last updated in 2013 with the boundary being the Savannah River in the north, Gordon Highway and Fourth Street in the east, Walton Way and D’Antignac Street to the south, and Chafee Avenue to the west. The Augusta Commission, through The Westobou Vision: Augusta/North Augusta 2009 Master Plan, selected specific sites for redevelopment in this Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA). This plan update provides information on these sites, since the plan was last updated in 2013. Redevelopment details are presented in the plan and appendix. A socioeconomic profile is also provided in this plan update and a market analysis in the appendix.

**Table 1: Augusta Downtown Redevelopment Areas**

Site	Improvements
“Old Depot” site	Attract private investors to site, potential mixed use development, currently approved for temporary parking lot
Public Library	Being renovated for Augusta Judicial Circuit Public Defender Office
600 Broad Street	Renovated for incubator, Augusta Regional Collaboration Corporation, local artists and other tenants
Municipal Building Complex	Newly renovated housing most municipal departments, includes construction of new Information Technology Building
Port Royal Site	High rise condominium with retail and office spaces recently renovated for Unisys and other retail, medical, and restaurant opportunities
Coliseum Complex	Internal renovations done in 2012, additional improvements funded through SPLOST VII

*Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department*

Since the plan’s approval and subsequent updates, some sites have been redeveloped while others are being renovated.

- Completed: 600 Broad Street, Municipal Building Complex, and Port Royal Site
- In-Process: Coliseum Complex, “Old Depot” site, and Public Library

Downtown’s social, economic and market conditions have changed since 2008. A ten-year socioeconomic analysis is done from 2010 to 2020, determining how the area has grown, and will continue to do so. An independent market analysis, conducted by the Augusta Planning and Development Department, is used to evaluate the area’s economic vitality. Geographic Information System, ESRI Community Analyst, and variety of data sources were used to analyze both the socioeconomic and market data.

## *Socioeconomic Profile*

The socioeconomic analysis focuses on the Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA), which is based on the previous boundary set in the 2013 Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan. The Augusta Planning Commission requested that the DRA be expanded to include areas beyond the original downtown and Central Business District (CBD) areas. Harrisburg, Laney Walker, and Olde Town neighborhoods were added to further the discussion and to reflect the boundaries of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) that already included those areas. (See Appendix A for Original Expanded DRA Boundary.) The extended boundary of the Downtown Development Authority, approved by the Augusta Commission, includes a wider area, therefore after further examination by Augusta Planning and Development staff, the expanded DRA boundary has been edited to include Harrisburg and Olde Town neighborhoods. The socioeconomic analysis does not take into consideration North Augusta, SC.

With an expanded downtown boundary of the downtown and the CBD to include Harrisburg and Olde Town, the estimated key socioeconomic indicators are as follows:

- 2.66 - Square Miles
- 7,438 - Population
- \$22,334 - Median household income
- 110 - New housing units
- 23,080 - Total jobs
- \$85,093 - Median home value (owner occupied units)

Key US Census and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010-2014 of DRA demographic, and Infogroup Esri Community Analyst business summary and employment, household, property value and other socioeconomic findings include:

- 2010 – 2015, A 2% increase in population compared to a county-wide 0.6%.
- 2010 – 2014, A 74% renter occupancy and a 26% owner occupancy.
- 2010 – 2014, A \$22,334 median household income compared to \$37,704 county-wide.
- 2010 – 2014, Higher percentage of 60 and older at 21% compared to 17.3% county-wide.
- 2016 – 23,080 employees in DRA, primarily 11,460 or (49.7%) in health services.
- 2010 – 2014, approximately 70% of population has high school diploma or higher.
- 2010 – 2014, Median home value estimate is \$85,093 compared to \$100,400 countywide.

## *Zoning and Land Use Compatibility*

There are zoning and land use compatibility measures that have been added to the plan. These measures address what makes a community a special place with Place Making, covering issues of parking, districts covering Land Use Compatibility, Existing Zoning Districts and Overlays, Downtown Design Guidelines, Overlay District, and the Levee. The Parking section has three subsections that elaborate on the following:

- Downtown Parking Best Practices
- Future of Downtown Redevelopment Area Parking
- A Downtown Circulator

Currently, only a small portion of downtown remains as a TAD. The DRA boundary is flexible and may change at the County's discretion. The Plan Update provides a brief summary of these implementation tools to address the potential impact on the downtown. It also illustrates the levee and how developers can use it as an asset for future projects.

### ***Other Downtown Development & Design Guidelines Considerations***

A list of plans, projects, and programs have been implemented in downtown Augusta and are incorporated in this update. They include:

- The Westobou Vision: Augusta/North Augusta 2009 Master Plan
  - Convert west downtown into a Medical/Health Science District.
  - Convert central downtown into Marbury Village District.
  - Convert east downtown into Westobou Crossing & Higher/Education/Civic District.
- Revitalizing the Garden City: Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda 2010
  - Convert downtown into Market Creation areas.
  - Completely implement the Westobou Master Plan.
- Walkability and Age – Friendly Streets: Opportunities to Transform Augusta's Built Environment.
  - Conduct detail walking audit of all downtown streets.
- Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) Long Range Transportation Plan: Transportation Vision 2040.
  - Continue implementing transportation projects in downtown through Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
  - Continue implementing ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- Augusta Georgia Downtown Design Guidelines.
  - Continue protecting downtown's history through Design Guidelines and Historic Preservation Commission.

### ***Market Analysis***

The market analysis presents the area's economic strengths and weaknesses based on primary, secondary, and tertiary markets. The primary market is 1-square mile, typically considered as a local traveler market. Secondary market is 3-square miles and is described as a commute traveler market. Tertiary market is 6-square miles used for a regional traveler market. A detailed explanation of these market areas, the methodology, and findings are provided in Appendix C (page 71). DRA's secondary and tertiary markets involve portions of North Augusta, SC. Highlights include:

- 2015, Over 3,500 people employed in secondary market.
- 2015, Average home value over \$150,000 in primary and secondary markets.
- 2015, 76% renter occupied housing units vs 13% owner occupied in primary market.
- 2015 – 2020, A 10% estimated increase in average household income in primary market.
- 2015, Over \$45 million retail sales in primary market, \$180 million in secondary.
- 2015 – 2020, There is a 2.11% per capita annual growth rate in secondary market.

## ***Future Private Redevelopment Projects and Investment***

With renewed focus on downtown Augusta from private developers, the potential for economic transformation is evident in public and private development initiatives. Given the investments and newly merged Augusta University campuses, the state's support for economic development, and a metropolitan support for the arts, history and culture of Augusta-Richmond County, the downtown is expected to benefit from a community redevelopment vision, recent improvements including private and public projects. Over \$215,000,000 of SPLOST VII projects are identified, of which, many are located within the Downtown Redevelopment Area.

Specific seven (7) corridors within the downtown are in the hands of Cooper and Carry, a design firm located in Atlanta, Georgia. They were chosen to look at the public right-of-way of 7 roads within the downtown to address areas between building face to building face. Having engaged the public, they have studied pedestrian flow, bike paths, and the use of golf carts for the visitor market. Recommendations will include the aesthetics of the street that will also address turning lanes.

## ***Implementation Tools***

There are four basic categories of tools associated with timely implementation of developed strategies. These tools must be able to be the difference maker in affecting change concerning downtown redevelopment. Timing is crucial to the implementation launch. A few of the categories of tools were mentioned as part of the Implementation Strategy. They are: 1.) Assemblage of property; 2.) Redevelopment powers; 3.) Fiscal incentives; and 4.) Access to Federal funding and/or incentives. The following are a few of the programs mentioned: Tax Allocation District (TAD), Enterprise Zones, Opportunity Zones, Amendment 65, and Transportation Investment Act (TIA).

## ***Implementation Strategy***

The Implementation Strategy is intended to identify goals and strategies needed to bring recommendations into fruition. This Strategy and the directives it provides builds off an Implementation Strategy Matrix (see section 7-7) of specific strategies and steps needed to achieve goals, and complete project ideas formulated as part of the overall Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The strategy matrix is structured to include six (6) guiding elements of the Redevelopment Plan, namely organization, parking, economic development, land use, public realm, and cultural resources. Actions specifically associated with organization are addressed in the next section. In the Matrix, goals and strategies are related back to the elements developed in part from public input as outlined in section 5.1, to help ensure goals, strategies, and projects align with the community's vision for downtown Augusta.

Augusta possesses the will to make projects work.

- Augusta-Richmond County profile in Georgia Trend, August 2012

# 1 Introduction

Downtown Augusta is uniquely positioned to experience significant growth and development. Locally owned restaurants, museums, nightlife and boutique shops are doing well. With a plethora of popular attractions that give residents, workers, and visitors choices to explore and learn new opportunities for dining and entertainment, there are also chances to explore and learn Augusta's history. Although, there are visions of grandeur, for the downtown, development issues seem to diminish its potential for growth. In spite of challenges that exist, it is clear that city leadership, downtown residents, business and property owners, those that have invested in the success of downtown have a passion and an idea of vibrancy for downtown Augusta.

From the Riverwalk to Walton Way and from Gordon Highway to the Medical District, significant developments in recent years have helped to define certain districts and neighborhoods within the downtown. The establishment of activity centers has provided the foundation and a level of success that few downtowns of Augusta's size have experienced. However, recent and projected socioeconomic indicators along with other development data reveal the need for downtown revitalization. Given the size of downtown Augusta, the vacant buildings and land that reflect unproductive space on the ground floors and upper stories of existing buildings on Broad Street, for example, are opportunities for residential and commercial growth. In fact, the downtown landscape is positioned for a variety of new and rehab commercial and mix use developments to capitalize on its unique Savannah River activities, southern hospitality venues, community involvement with downtown parks, green and open spaces.

Urban growth and development are based on several factors that converge to reveal economic revitalization that are based on downtown Augusta's assets. Downtown property and business owners along with their customers, clients, residents and employees that support them have proven their resolve to reinvigorate their actions and creativity to envision and work toward a bright and vibrant downtown for themselves and all people living within the region including those that visit downtown Augusta for its special events, conventions and attractions.

Major employers including the military installation, hospitals, large corporations, and universities bring innovation, technology, academia and industry which result in jobs and an entrepreneurial spirit to the city of Augusta and the region. This downtown redevelopment plan update hopefully gives a guide to realizing the collective goals gathered through a recent public review process and recent years through a market analysis, identified strategies and goals as well as the recommended development patterns, concepts and ideas. It is more than a study but also a tool for implementation.

## 1.1 Background and Purpose

The primary purpose of this plan document is to provide an update to the Augusta Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan that was prepared for and adopted by the Augusta-Richmond County Commission in November, 2013 pursuant to the amended Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. 36-61). The Augusta Commission voted to exercise the powers conferred upon it by the Urban Redevelopment Law by resolution dated March 16, 2010. The Commission also designated its first redevelopment area, the Laney-Walker Bethlehem Urban Redevelopment Area that same day. It was in 2013 that six (6) redevelopment areas (as listed in table 1 above) to be the significant start of Downtown revitalization, as the Downtown area's land uses were described as "virtually unchanged from those described in the *Augusta-Richmond County 2004 Comprehensive Development Plan*." Land uses were also described as disconnected, difficult to access, and underdeveloped.

Although there are three (3) of the six (6) redevelopment areas/sites that have been completed with multimillion dollar rehabilitation to the structures, the Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA) as a whole still present a significant number of buildings or structures, with dilapidation, deterioration, age, vacancy, or obsolescence, inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces; or existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or a combination of such conditions. As such, the persistence of these conditions substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality or county, retards the provisions of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use.

A potential secondary purpose of an Urban Redevelopment Plan is the allowance of local jurisdictions to designate a Tax Allocation District (TAD) through the Redevelopment Powers Law (O.C.G.A. 36-44-1). This law has set procedures and a narrower focus than the Urban Redevelopment Law, including and not limited to:

- Tax revenues collected within a TAD are used specifically for the designated area.
- Termination or dissolution of a TAD occurs when redevelopment is completed.
- TAD in Georgia functions as Tax Increment Financing.

### *O.C.G.A. 36-44-2. Legislative findings and purpose:*

It is found and declared that economically and socially depressed areas exist within counties and municipalities of this state and that these areas contribute to or cause unemployment, limit the tax resources of counties and municipalities, and create a greater demand for governmental services and, in general, have a deleterious effect upon the public health, safety, morals, and welfare. It is, therefore, in the public interest that such areas be redeveloped to the maximum extent practicable to improve economic and social conditions therein in order to abate or eliminate such deleterious effects. To encourage such redevelopment, it is essential that the counties and municipalities of this state have additional powers to form a more effective partnership with private enterprise to overcome economic limitations that have previously impeded or prohibited redevelopment of such areas. It is the purpose of this chapter, therefore,

to grant such additional powers to the counties and municipalities of this state, and it is the intention of the General Assembly that this chapter be liberally construed to carry out such purpose.

In addition, the intent is to:

1. Provide greater control over the characteristics of development where higher development standards can effectively enhance the City's image as a desirable place to construct and rehabilitate residential, mix use, commercial real estate.
2. Provide citizens, existing landowners, and potential developers and investors with details associated with the direction Augusta-Richmond County is going with respect to its vision for downtown redevelopment.
3. Provide a market analysis that identifies measurements of economic distress and growth potential within its boundaries so that assets can be converted to downtown revitalization and sustainability.
4. Provide greater opportunity for public input and participation in the process of identifying the community's vision within the downtown and provide a plan to incorporate realistic ideas. Implementation plays a significant role in identifying roles, public and private partnerships, and resources needed to support redevelopment of the downtown area.

## **1.2 Downtown Historic Properties - 2013**

Downtown Augusta's place in American history is evident in its multiple national and local historic districts and properties, at last count, approaching 6,200 properties.

The Augusta Planning Commission, during this draft process, requested that the DRA be expanded to include periphery neighborhoods. The city's downtown central business district encompasses the rise and fall and rebirth of the city's development history. Two of the three areas designated as local historic districts by the Augusta Commission are located within this area: Downtown and Olde Town. Additionally, several of the city's National Register Historic Districts and properties are located, partially or wholly, within this area, including the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area/Historic Augusta Canal and Industrial District and the Augusta Downtown Historic District.

Most of the properties of the proposed Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA) fall within the city's downtown historic district: the parcels on the block bounded by Gordon Highway, Watkins Street, and Walton Way and Fourth Street are non-contributing properties within the Olde Town Historic District.

These areas contain many architecturally and historically significant structures targeted for preservation. In November, 2012, Historic Augusta presented its Preservation Award to the Red Star Building at 531 James Brown Blvd. (saved from near collapse), the Wier/Stewart building at 982 Broad Street (now occupied by small creative companies) and the Henry-Cohen House at 9920 Greene St. (formerly condemned).

If public funds are used to alter any historic property within the Augusta DRA, such alterations will follow relevant federal, state and local guidelines and requirements. Only properties subject to design review are those located in local historic districts.

### 1.3 Downtown Urban Redevelopment Areas - 2013

The Augusta-Richmond County government, dedicated housing and community nonprofits, and leading business groups like Augusta Tomorrow, recognize that Augusta's future redevelopment must link to its historic, architectural past with twenty-first century improvements in order to attract investment. To achieve this vision, the Augusta Commission designated six "Urban Redevelopment Areas" as important starting points to revitalizing downtown. Several sites have been identified as specific projects in the Westobou Vision: Augusta/North Augusta 2009 Master Plan. These sites include:

- Municipal Building complex
- 600 Broad Street
- "Old Depot" site
- Port Royal site
- Coliseum complex (James Brown Arena and Bell Auditorium)
- Former main library site

The Municipal Building Complex is a 6.46 acres' site bounded by Greene, Telfair, Fifth and Sixth Streets. The Augusta Richmond County Municipal Building, number of small satellite buildings owned by Augusta, and two privately owned parcels are located here. One building is for the city's new Information Technology center. Construction of the Municipal Building was completed in 1957 and serves as the location of most of the county governmental offices.



*Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department*

The Municipal Building was once the judiciary for Richmond County, prior to completion of the Augusta-Richmond County Judicial Center and John H. Ruffin, Jr. Courthouse in 2011. The county acquired several smaller buildings in the block and uses them for additional office space. The Complex, as a whole, has been infused with millions in renovations. As the visible embodiment of the government, the municipal building renovation creates a vibrant downtown area.



*Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department*

The 600 Broad Street was constructed in the mid 1970s and designed by noted architect, I. M. Pei. The property is approximately 0.3 acres and once housed the Chamber of Commerce for many years. The building has been renovated and now houses local artists, and the Augusta Regional Collaboration, a business incubator. The building is no longer an impediment to redevelopment efforts in the lower Broad Street.

The "Old Depot" site was previously owned by a City pension plan and is often referred to as the Pension Property. Augusta acquired the 6.27-acre tract in 2005 and began remediating it. Although vacant, except for the train depot which is in need of repair, the site is a key component of downtown revitalization.



*Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department*



*Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department*

Port Royal site is a mixed use residential and commercial property which opened in 1991. The commercial portion closed within a few years of opening, and was repurposed later as the National Science Center's Fort Discovery exhibition center and museum, which included a 250-seat theater. Since Fort Discovery closed in late 2010, the commercial portion has been renovated and is now home to Unisys Corporation. The 1.740-acre property anchors the Riverwalk and is an important barometer of downtown viability. Additional improvements include a mixture of private offices and public spaces.

The Coliseum Complex is 19.23 acres and is comprised of the James Brown Arena (formerly known as the Augusta- Richmond County Civic Center), the William B. Bell Auditorium and the associated parking lots. The James Brown Arena is a 14,500 sq. ft. exhibit hall opening into the 23,000 sq. ft. arena floor. The arena seats 8,500 people. The exhibit hall opened in 1974 and the arena opened in 1980. The Bell Auditorium opened in 1940 and seats 2,690. In 2010 bonds were issued to fund much needed capital improvements. The Complex is a key entertainment venue for the Augusta area but faces competition from a number of other entertainment and exhibition spaces in the area.



*Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department*

The former Main Library site is at the intersection of Greene and James Brown Boulevard. The international style structure housed the offices of the East Central Georgia Regional Library and served Augusta's main library. The building has remained vacant since the library and offices were located to the current Telfair Street building in 2010. The building is currently being renovated as the new Public Defender office. The building is located on one of Augusta's most scenic thoroughfares. Current renovations of the 1.4-acre site including two contiguous parcels for the Public Defender office.



*Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department*

## 2 Augusta's Downtown Redevelopment Area

Downtown Augusta's mix of land uses reflects its history as an urban riverfront center, whose growth has fanned out to suburban and semi-rural areas. The area's land uses and this plan remain consistent with the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. These uses include residential neighborhoods of varying ages, a central business district, a concentration of public facilities and higher education institutions, commercial buildings in shopping centers and on individual sites, and industrial scattered sites. They are connected by the original street grid pattern established by the city's founder, James Oglethorpe. In many cases, residential, commercial and industrial uses are in close proximity to one another, reflecting development that was occupied prior to adopting a zoning ordinance.

As Augusta grew away from downtown during its rampant sprawl growth period, its population followed, leaving the central business district in distress. The consolidated Augusta-Richmond County government and key departments worked in concert with its citizens, business and civic association creating planning documents and executing strategic economic development incentives successfully reversing this disinvestment. All guided by Downtown's vision as set in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.

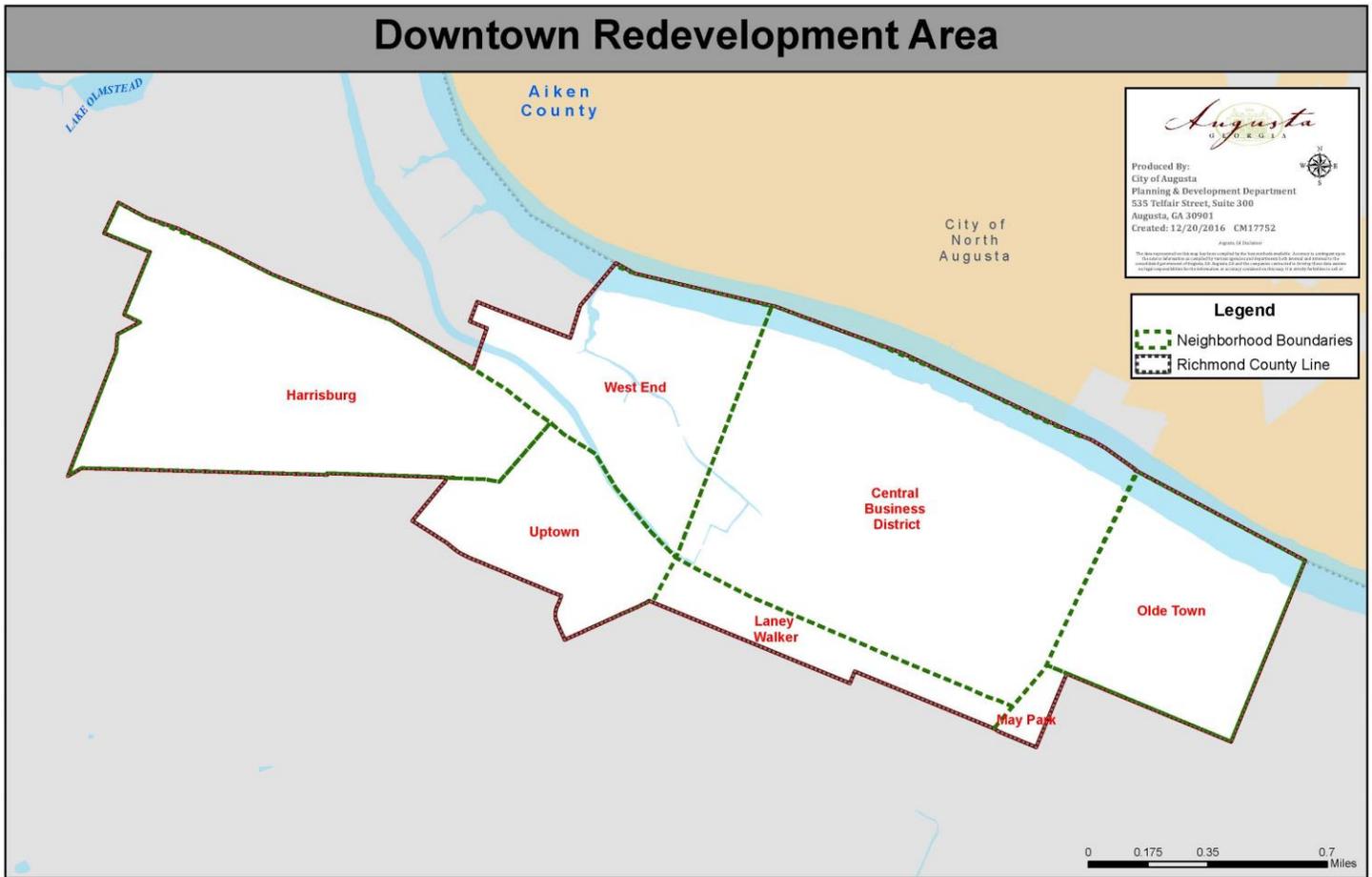
#### Downtown Vision

*Downtown Augusta will maintain and enhance its historic character and unique mix of land uses. Downtown will continue to reflect the predominant characteristics of a historic central business district, while at the same time adapting to the changing environment around it. Underutilized parcels will be redeveloped in a manner consistent with the overall vision for downtown and with respect for existing development patterns and the historic architecture in the area. Redevelopment will include new medium and high density housing, additional commercial and office development, new civic and institutional facilities and shopping and entertainment facilities. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings will be a key component. New development will respect the scale, massing, architecture and other design elements of the existing historic structures.*

In support of this effort, according to the November, 2013 Augusta Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan, the Augusta Commission proposed the creation of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan (the "Plan"), which included "two initial projects to begin implementation of the Plan: The Municipal Building Renovation Project and the Port Royal Commercial Renovation Project." In order to successfully complete these projects, a clear understanding of the areas current and future land uses, along with socioeconomic trends, were identified.

The Downtown Redevelopment Area is estimated to be 2.66 square miles with 1,700 acres that include five (5) neighborhoods: The Central Business District (CBD), Olde Town, Uptown, West End, and Harrisburg (See Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA) map below). To the north is the Savannah River, in the west is Hickman Road/Milledge Road, the southern border is R.A. Dent Blvd/Dantignac Street/Taylor Street, and the eastern border is Fourth Street/East Boundary Street.

**Figure 1: Downtown Redevelopment Area**



## 2.1 Redevelopment Criteria within URA

The downtown mix of improved and unimproved properties may not meet the criteria of an Urban Redevelopment Area (URA). However, the Urban Redevelopment Area may include properties in the Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA). The law requires an Urban Redevelopment Plan for the target area to address “pockets of blight” by activating plans which could include acquisition, rehabilitation or demolition, construction or reconstruction of public spaces, and preparing land for redevelopment. The main criteria set by the Urban Redevelopment Law (O.C.G.A. § 36-61-2) is local jurisdiction designating a geographic area as a “pocket of blight.”

“Pocket of blight clearance and redevelopment” may include:

- Acquisition of a pocket of blight or portion thereof;
- Rehabilitation or demolition and removal of buildings and improvements;

- Installation, construction, or reconstruction of streets, utilities, parks, playgrounds, and other improvements necessary for carrying out in the area the urban redevelopment provisions; and
- Making the land available for development or redevelopment by private enterprise or public agencies, including sale, initial leasing, or retention by the municipality or county itself, at its fair value for uses in accordance with the urban redevelopment plan.

In addition, Augusta’s downtown has some unique development constraints that negatively impact the geographic area:

- A levee prevents direct access from the downtown to the Savannah River;
- Rail lines bisect Downtown and run through historic areas;
- An expressway and busy thoroughfares carrying heavy traffic volumes creates a psychological barrier between downtown and adjacent neighborhoods, limiting expansion;
- Numerous underutilized and abandoned properties and vacant storefronts;
- Multiple ownership is a barrier to assembling larger parcels for redevelopment; and
- Large areas of empty surface parking and underused land.

Within the expanded Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA), there are 43 condemned properties that are slated for demolition and 20 vacant open code violations according to Code Enforcement that are neglected properties (See Downtown Redevelopment Area – Blighted Properties map below). The DRA – Vacant Property map indicates that there are 921 vacant parcels within the DRA. These are potential development areas that are vacant and without a built structure.

Without visible signs of future development, crime is often identified in connection with vacant structures and areas where property owners have not properly maintained their properties. As urban development progresses into the outer areas of the CBD, environmental design becomes crucial to mitigating crime from the core through urban periphery. From 2013 – 2015 within the DRA, there has been reports of 959 property crime reports and 1,391 reports of violent crime. Efforts to mitigate crime will have to increase to create sustainable urban communities.

This plan offers local government the opportunity to identify important projects in the area that would otherwise not receive private investment. It serves to improve the immediate downtown area and have positive influence on surrounding neighborhoods. Specific properties and areas in the DRA have successfully been improved while others continue to be revitalized, since the plan was last updated in 2013.

Figure 2: Downtown Redevelopment Area - Blighted Properties

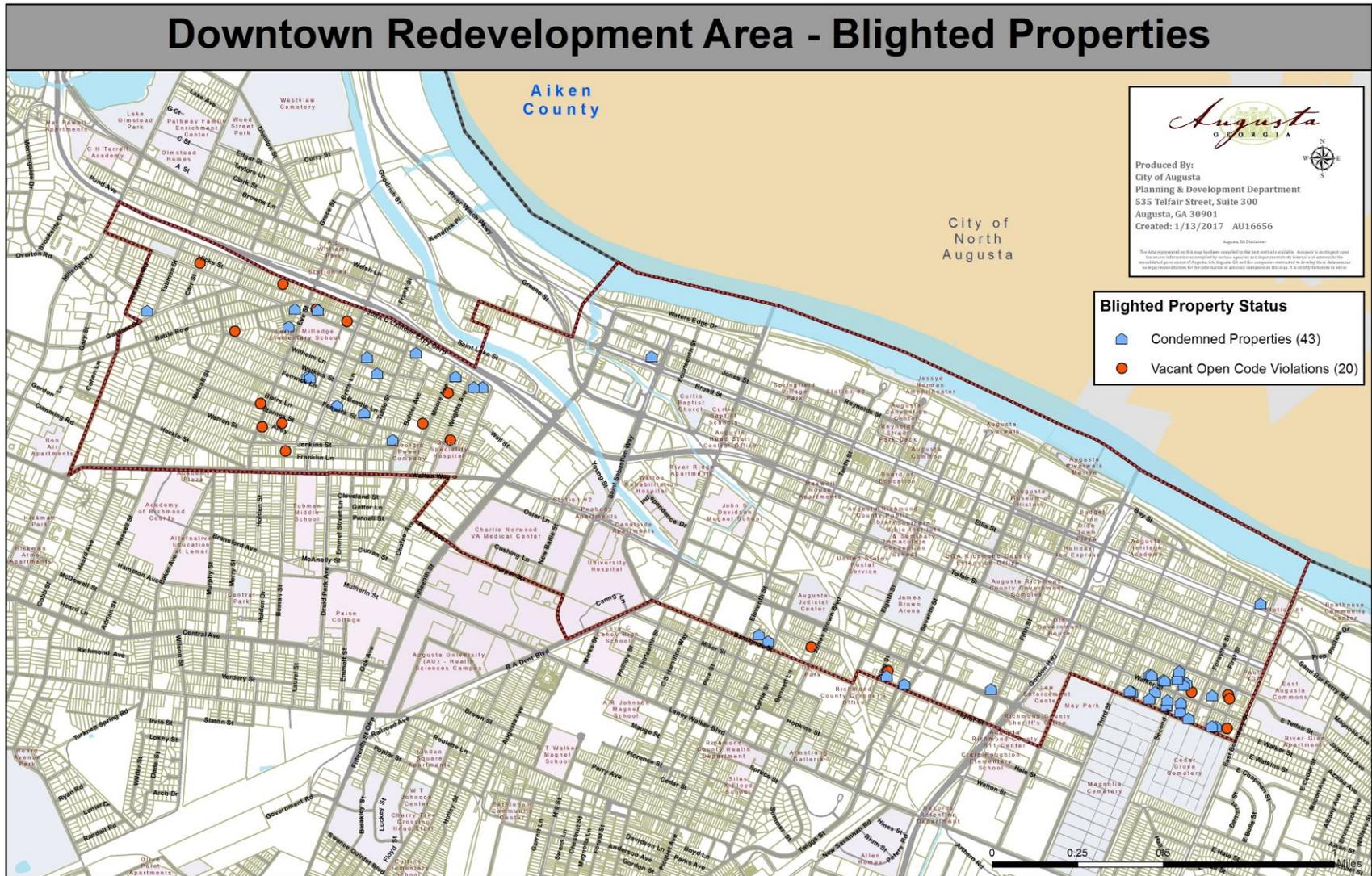
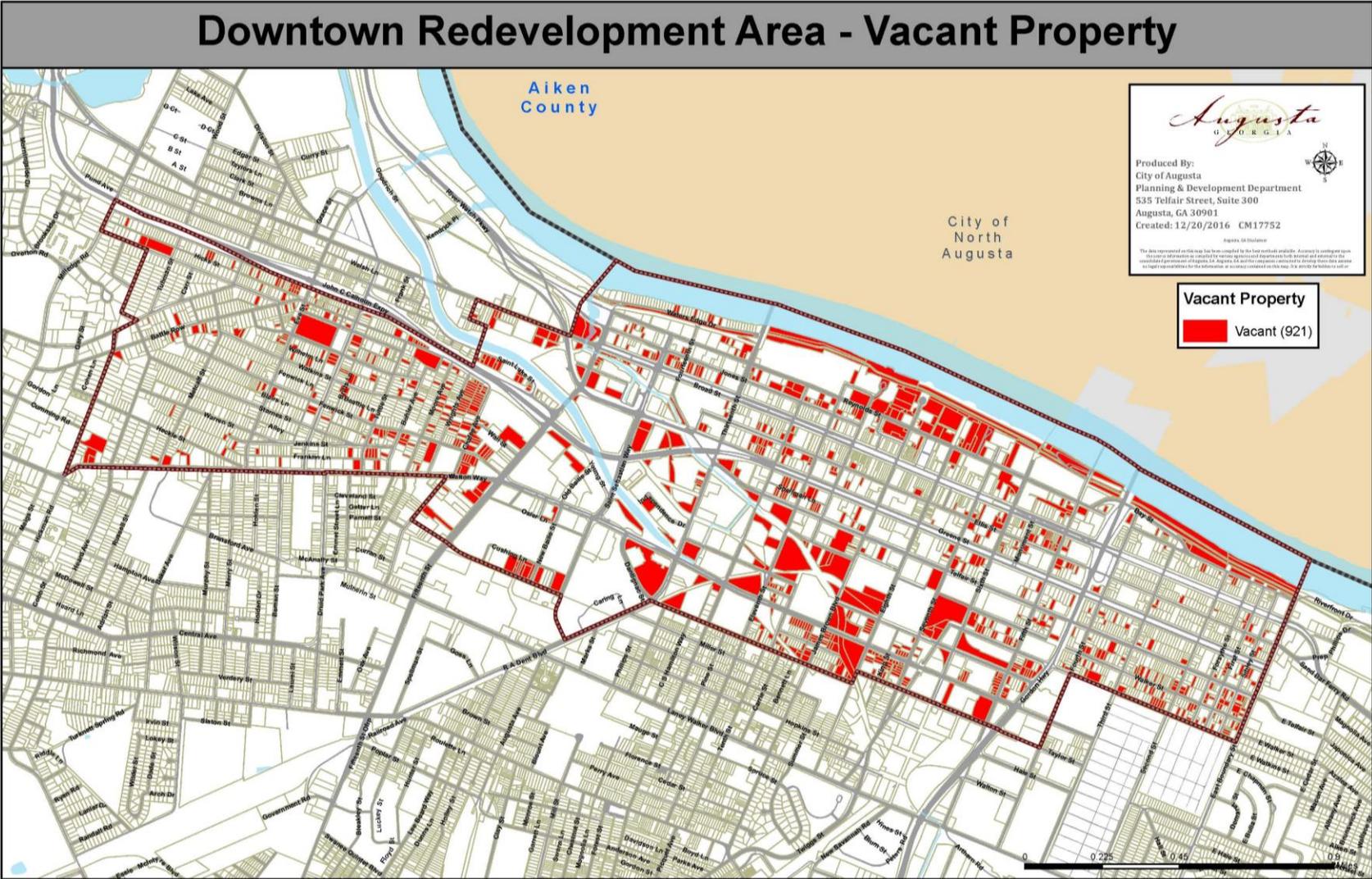


Figure 3: Vacant Property





### **2.1.1 Municipal Building - Project Update**

The Augusta Richmond County Municipal Building previously housed a significant portion of The County's judiciary and administrative offices. Since the construction of a new courthouse, the Municipal Building now houses various County government agencies, including offices of the Mayor, Commission, Administrator and Clerk, meeting rooms, voting and registrar, planning and zoning, marshals, finance, procurement, and others. The Law Department, Engineering and Information Technology are located on the same block, but in different buildings.

The Municipal Building is a 125,641 square foot nine-story building built in 1957. The building structure is cast-in-place reinforced concrete and clad in marble. The roof is modified bitumen. In 2008, the windows, exterior caulking and roof were replaced. There are also three wood-framed buildings with red-brick veneers and asphalt shingle roofs on the site. These three buildings house the Engineering Department. The Button Gwinnett Building is an approximately 2,236 square foot two-story building and houses the Engineering Department's Administration Division. The Telfair Building is approximately 2,329 square feet and houses the Traffic Engineering Division and the third building is an approximately 6,404 square foot building, currently housing the Law Department.

All buildings are being updated, made safe and secure while improving the delivery of government services. The Municipal Building is essentially complete. There is remaining work to be done to the ancillary buildings within the complex.

The Municipal Building renovation project renewed, and expanded the buildings on the site, and included one new building for Information Technology. The work on the old courthouse building included new public and meeting spaces not requiring secured access for advance voting and community meetings and serves as a new building entrance, consisting of an approximately 126,000 square foot addition renovation space, new Commission chambers, additional office space, elevator improvements including an elevator tower addition, smoke evacuation areas, and other safety and mechanical replacements and other improvements. Partial demolition and rebuilding were required in order to make the needed improvements.

The Municipal Building Project cost was approximately \$40,500,000 and financed with approximately \$8,884,000 of SPLOST VI proceeds of, approximately \$5,665,000 were proceeds from the 2010 SPLOST Bonds, and \$26,500,000 revenue bonds issued and sold by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). All monies were based on current costs. Augusta-Richmond County secured the revenue bonds through an intergovernmental contract with the URA to provide services associated with the Municipal Building project. The bonds have an approximate 20-year term. The bonds will be satisfied from the SPLOST VII proceeds, recently authorized by the voters. Building title and improvements are transferred to the URA so the project could proceed and has reverted back to the County.

The project conformed to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and requires no changes in zoning, land use, maximum density and other building requirements. The County Commission performed all necessary duties to complete the project.

The building was renovated in accordance with the Public Works Law and provided for private enterprise participation to the extent feasible.

### **2.1.2 Port Royal - Project Update**

The Port Royal renovation renewed and repurposed two commercial floors of the Port Royal building, approximately fifty percent is leased to Unisys Corporation.

The Project involved the retrofit of 120,000 sf in to Class-A Office space for Unisys Corporation. Also included in the project is office space for the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), a precinct for the Sherriff's department, restaurant space and the renovation of an existing 250 seat theater. In addition, the project includes a public riverfront art gallery, 8,000 sq. ft. of restaurant space, and renovated the existing 250 seat theater for local performance groups. When renovations are completed, the Port Royal building will add nearly 700 jobs and add nearly 100 new jobs. As Port Royal is an anchor to the Riverwalk, the site's availability is of a major importance to downtown. It brings nearly 700 additional people into the central business district and onto the Riverwalk, increases safety and stimulates the downtown economy. The project conforms to the 2008 Comprehensive Plan, and requires no changes in zoning land use, maximum density and other building requirements. The DDA issued the bonds for the parking deck and those bonds have been retired.

### **2.1.3 Depot Site - Project Update**

The Depot Site project provides temporary parking for employees and visitors to the renovated Port Royal building and other parts of downtown. The Augusta Economic Development Authority (AEDA) controls the site through a long term lease. A temporary parking lot has been approved for the site. AEDA is seeking to obtain a grant in the amount of \$150,000 to cover construction of a temporary (gravel) parking lot of the Depot Property for employees of Unisys Corporation to park their cars.

The Depot site requires no changes in zoning, land use, maximum density or other building requirements but needs to be approved by the Riverfront Review Board and the Historic Preservation Commission.

The City of Augusta and Downtown Development Authority are working together to bring a mix use project for Commission approval to the property. The site is adjacent to a railroad line with an existing station. The station requires an estimated \$6.8 million in renovations and expansion. A site inspection was conducted on the station to determine what will be required to bring the building back to life.

#### 2.1.4 Depot Station Renovation and Upgrade

Certain improvements must be completed to fully use the Depot Site. These include:

- Base Level Renovations/Upgrades \$400,000
  - Stabilize masonry structure, railing and opening
  - Provide limited electrical service for lighting and ventilation
  - Provide accessible restrooms and entry for limited staff
  - Replace wooden flooring at west end
- Level One: \$150,000
  - Upgrade electrical
  - Greater emphasis on securing exterior and providing security alarm
- Level Two: \$250,000
  - Provide multiple accessible entrances and restrooms
- Level Three \$2,000,000
  - Upgraded electrical service and common area
  - Life Safety Upgrades and Paving
- Level Four \$4,000,000
  - Life safety upgrades, additional restrooms, kitchen spaces

While those projects listed above are vital to downtown’s redevelopment, other projects have been successfully implemented. These additional projects also contribute to DRA’s revitalization and are presented in the following chapter.

## 2.2 Socioeconomic Data Profile

DRA’s socioeconomic character presents the need for downtown revitalization. It is one of four designated TADs in the city. TAD #1 was first adopted by resolution on October 7, 2008, and later amended on May 5, 2009, and December 7, 2010. It was terminated in December 2013, a month after the plan was last updated. Downtown continues to improve including its socioeconomic trends but at a slower pace than anticipated.

The DRA extends beyond the Central Business District (CBD). The CBD is bound by 13<sup>th</sup> Street in the West, Walton Way in South, 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in the East, and the Savannah River in the north. The boundary of the DRA includes Harrisburg and Olde Town and is carried forward into this socioeconomic analysis. The plan and its TAD are based on a set geography. Although TAD bonds can be issued, Augusta has not issued any but instead has used a “pay go” system for reimbursing developers’ redevelopment costs. DRA socioeconomic character has changed since 2010, due to successful revitalization efforts. TAD #4 was developed to promote the Holiday Inn Express project and the 15<sup>th</sup> Street corridor. TAD #4 is not scheduled to terminate upon reimbursement to the Holiday Inn Express project developer but can be terminated by the vote of the Augusta Commission. A map of TAD #4 in relationship to DRA is provided in the appendix.

### 2.2.1 Socioeconomic Data Analysis

The socioeconomic makeup of residents in the expanded Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA) is not unlike downtowns throughout the United States. The downtown continues to be a large attractor of jobs that are predominantly reflective of the educational services and healthcare industry combined with an estimated 54% located within the DRA. Arts, entertainment, and recreation (1.1%), and accommodation and food services jobs (6.2%) combined are estimated to be over 7%. There are an estimated 7,438 residents within the expanded DRA that are civilians employed population 16 years and over. The largest percentage of jobs are in Health Care and Social Assistance sector (49.7%). Secondly, the Administration and Support, Waste management and Remediation sector consist of 14.5%. The majority of the daytime population estimated at 68% use vehicles to commute to work with almost 13% walk, 12% carpool, 3.2% use a taxicab, motorcycle, or other means, 2.3% use public transportation, and almost 2% use a bicycle.

**Table 2: Means of Transportation to Work**

Table 2 - Means of Transportation to Work	DRA (#)	DRA (%)	Augusta-Richmond	Georgia
Drove alone	1,494	68.1%	81.4%	79.5%
Carpooled	264	12.0%	10.4%	10.4%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	51	2.3%	1.5%	2.1%
Walked	273	12.5%	3.7%	1.6%
Bicycle	32	1.5%	0.4%	0.2%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	71	3.2%	0.9%	1.4%
Worked at home	8	0.4%	1.8%	4.8%

**Table 3: Housing and Population Estimates**

Table 3 - Housing and Population Estimates (In-House Analysis)	DRA (#)	DRA (%)	Augusta-Richmond	Georgia
2010 Population	7,263		200,549	9,687,653
Estimated Population 2015	7,438		201,793	10,214,860
Population Increase % 2010-2015	2%		0.6%	5.4%
Total Housing Units 2010	3,851		86,331	4,088,801
<sup>1</sup> New Units Constructed 2010-2015 (Certificates of Occupancy)	110		3,152	
<sup>1</sup> Total Housing Units 2015	3,961		87,612	4,182,110
Estimated Occupied Housing Units 2015	3276.3		71,156	3,656,407

*US Census Bureau, Decennial Census and American Community Survey 2015 1-Year Estimates for County and State*

<sup>1</sup> Neighborhood number based on In-House Analysis using Certificates of Occupancy data

Census and American Community Survey estimates indicate an estimated 2% growth in population for the expanded downtown area, from 2010 to 2015. Indications of a population increase is reflected with 110 new residential units added to the downtown from 2010 to 2015. This estimate does not take into consideration other residential building alterations that could also increase population.

**Table 4: Education (Age 25+)**

Table 4 - Education (Age 25+)	DRA (#)	DRA (%)	Augusta-Richmond	Georgia
Population 25 Years and Over	4,464		128,220	6,410,416
Less than High School	1,343	30.1%	16.3%	15.0%
High School	1,324	29.7%	31.5%	28.6%
Some College / AA Degree	1,095	24.5%	31.8%	28.1%
Bachelor's Degree	451	10.1%	13.0%	17.9%
Graduate or professional degree	251	5.6%	7.4%	10.4%
High School or Higher	3,121	69.9%	83.7%	85.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	702	15.7%	20.4%	28.3%

*US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates*

There are more residents that have less than a high school education as compared to the county and state. Interestingly, however, there is a higher percentage of those that have a high school education that is comparable to the county and state with percentages that are very close. In addition, the highest percentage category for DRA residents is Bachelor's Degree or Higher with 70%. Compared to other neighborhoods within the county, that is not only comparable to county and state percentages, but also amongst the highest.

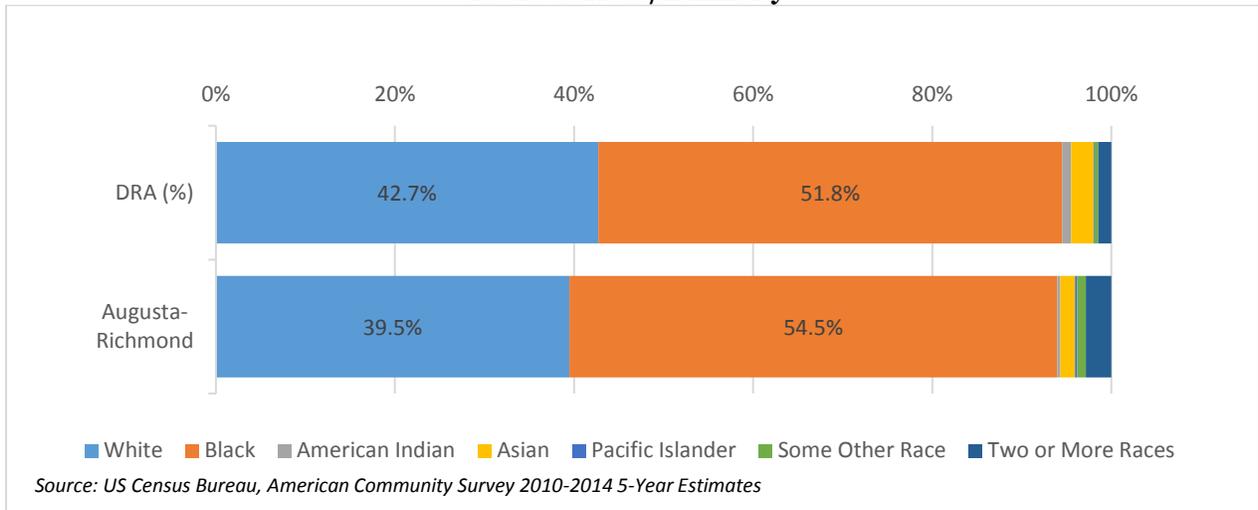
**Table 5: Median Household Income**

Table 5 - Income	DRA (#)	DRA (%)	Augusta-Richmond	Georgia
Median Household Income	\$22,334		\$37,704	\$49,342
Per Capita Income	\$16,549		\$20,549	\$25,427
Poverty	2,276	40.0%	25.4%	18.5%
Civilian Unemployed	2,226	15.5%	13.0%	10.8%

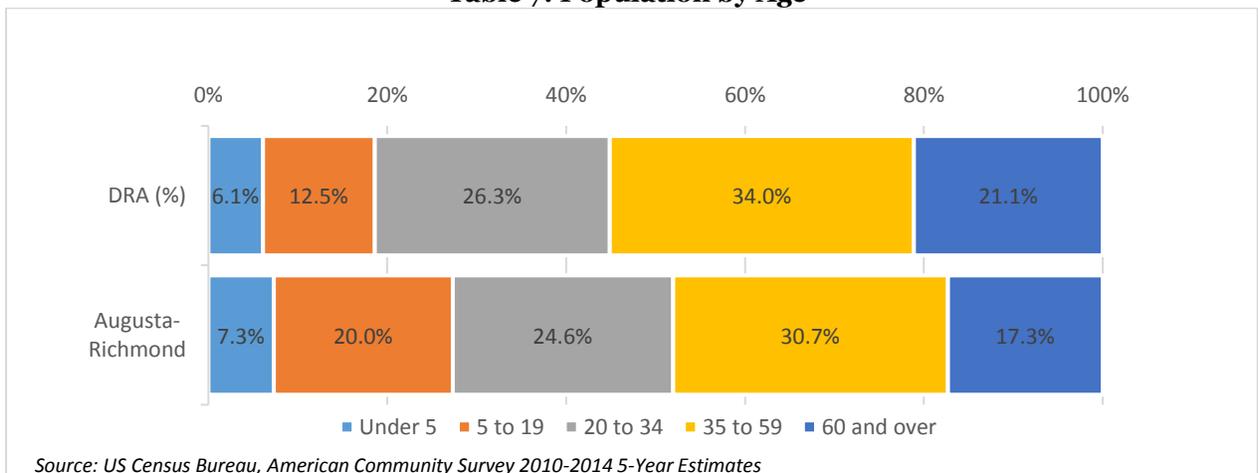
*US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates*

The median household income is \$22,334 in the expanded DRA, compared to county-wide is \$37,704. One reason for the difference is from those living alone instead of in family households, limiting the income to one person. Many of the residents near the CBD are in the older age bracket and possibly live on a fixed income after retirement. Most of the DRA residents are high school graduates or have an equivalent. Residents of the DRA who are employed (either in or outside area) are predominantly in the service industry, especially in education services and health care and social assistance as well as arts/entertainment, accommodation and food service employment.

**Table 6: Race/Ethnicity**



**Table 7: Population by Age**



The median age is 40, which is slightly higher than Augusta with a median age of 33, leading many to believe downtown is attracting an older population with roughly 34% being 35 to 59 and younger population with 26.3% are ages 20 to 34. The St. John’s Tower and Peabody Apartments are two high rises apartments for the elderly. Others, such as Maxwell House Apartments also have a high percentage of elderly. The recent development of Canalside Apartments and Enterprise Mills as well as the loft conversions on Broad Street are yet others that are attracting a younger population due to the Augusta Medical District, Augusta University, and Fort Gordon Cyber Command expansion.

**Table 8: Housing Tenure**

Table 8 - Housing Tenure	DRA (#)	DRA (%)	Augusta-Richmond	Georgia
Housing Units	3,828		86,703	4,114,496
Occupied Housing Units	2,795		38,235	2,272,001
Owner Occupied Housing Units	728	26.0%	53.3%	64.2%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	2,067	74.0%	46.7%	35.8%
Vacant Housing Units	1,033	27.0%	17.2%	13.9%
Households Without an Available Vehicle	823	29.4%	9.9%	6.9%
Median Home Value (Owner Occupied Units)	\$85,093		\$100,400	\$148,000
Median Monthly Housing Cost - Owner	\$702		\$855	\$1,078
Median Gross Rent - Renter	\$602		\$785	\$874

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

The downtown residential population is composed primarily of renters with 74% comprised of families in the DRA and 46.7% county-wide. This leads to an average household size of 1.69 people compared to 2.68 for Augusta (See Demographic Summary below). These numbers are expected as many of the residential properties in the area are apartment style units and single family homes. Military personnel, university students, and other migrating populations rent property and move as their situation dictates.

**Table 9: Demographic Summary**

Table 9 - Demographic Summary	DRA (#)	DRA (%)	Augusta-Richmond	Georgia
<sup>1</sup> 2010 Population	7,263		200,549	9,687,653
Population 2010-2014 Estimate	6,007		201,244	9,907,756
Households (Occupied Units)	2,795		71,776	3,540,690
Families	850	30.4%	60.7%	68.0%
Average Household Size	1.69		2.68	2.72
Average Family Size	3.76		3.51	3.32
Median Age	40.1		33.3	35.8
Area (Square Miles)	2.66		324	57,513
Persons per square mile	2,261.2		620.5	172.3
Persons per acre	3.53		0.97	0.27

US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates

<sup>1</sup>US Census Bureau, Decennial Census 2000 & 2010

The higher density of jobs and housing within the DRA, along with a supporting transit system and pedestrian infrastructure, provide a greater potential for residents to commute using alternative modes of transportation. The DRA experiences a higher share of biking, walking, and public transportation for commuting than Augusta as a whole. As stated above, an estimated 23,080 jobs are within the expanded DRA. The major hospitals and medical facilities in the DRA employ a large percentage with 11,460 jobs. The Health Care & Social Assistance sector provides 49.7% of the total employment (see DRA Employment table below).

**Table 10: Downtown Redevelopment Area Employment 2014**

Data from Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) All Jobs, 2014  
Allocation done using OnTheMap website

All jobs by NAICS	DRA (#)	DRA (%)	Augusta-Richmond	Georgia
<b>Total number of jobs</b>	<b>23,080</b>		<b>97,324</b>	<b>3,972,841</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0	0.0%	0.2%	0.6%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
Utilities	52	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%
Construction	342	1.5%	4.2%	3.9%
Manufacturing	406	1.8%	7.2%	9.3%
Wholesale Trade	283	1.2%	3.0%	5.4%
Retail Trade	434	1.9%	10.2%	11.6%
Transportation and Warehousing	130	0.6%	2.0%	4.7%
Information	511	2.2%	2.2%	2.8%
Finance and Insurance	393	1.7%	1.9%	4.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	58	0.3%	1.1%	1.5%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,500	6.5%	5.1%	6.4%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	116	0.5%	0.6%	1.7%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	3,354	14.5%	8.2%	7.5%
Educational Services	992	4.3%	12.7%	9.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	11,460	49.7%	21.0%	12.1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	261	1.1%	1.6%	1.1%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,431	6.2%	10.7%	9.6%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	727	3.1%	3.0%	2.5%
Public Administration	630	2.7%	4.9%	4.9%
<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>23,080</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### 2.3 Downtown Augusta - Current and Future Land Use

Current and future redevelopment opportunities in downtown focus on a unique mix of uses. Redevelopment policies and investments emphasize the strengths and sustainable uses in the area. They include residential, commercial, entertainment, cultural and recreational development. Such mixed use supports economically vibrant live-work-play communities connected by improved roadways and waterways.

Improved road connections, sidewalks, bike paths and greenways better connect neighbors and businesses. This transforms a number of disconnected, difficult-to-access and underdeveloped land uses into attractive, economically reinvigorated, pedestrian and visitor friendly communities. Current and future residents, employees, and visitors in Augusta's urban core are

better connected and the downtown better served for the entire county. Once the transformation takes place, attractive places in terms of urban design can take root.

With readopting the Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update, the DRA will have the opportunity to continue with expanding its economic base, as proposed by the community and numerous planning efforts through a coordinated partnership of city departments, the Downtown Development Authority and public/private stakeholders. This updated plan documents the socioeconomic trends and projections in the DRA, along with a six square mile market analysis (Market Analysis is found in the Appendix). This information highlights the changes in Augusta's downtown environment.

## ***2.4 Existing Zoning and Overlay Districts***

DRA projects conform to all zoning classifications for downtown Augusta's central business district and the riverfront as described in the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

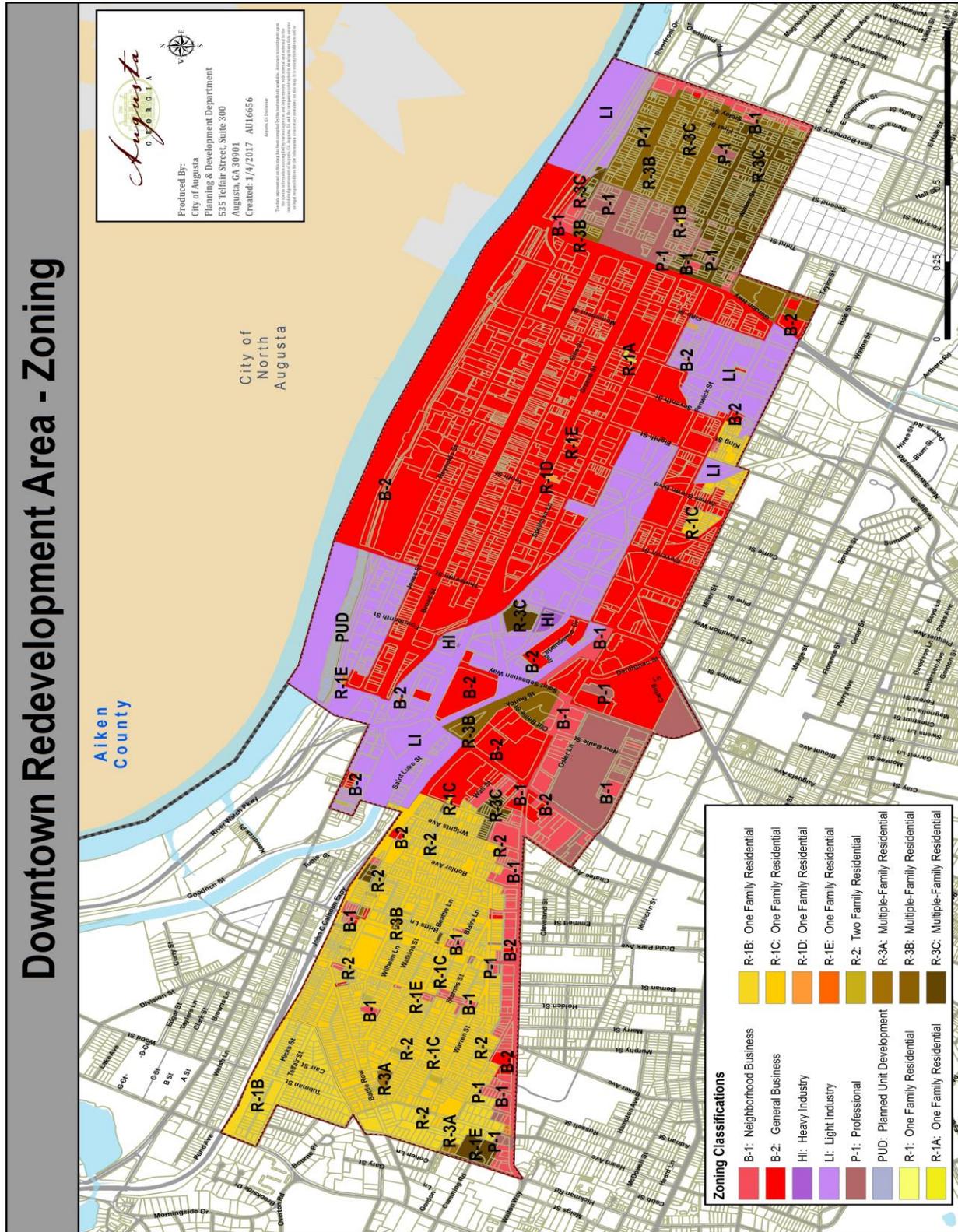
The zoning districts are compatible with the Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA), which include:

- Residential Districts
- Professional Districts
- Business Districts
- Industrial Districts
- Special Districts, including Planned Development Riverfront Zone
- Savannah River Corridor Protection District

DRA is subject to the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and Downtown Design Guidelines. Information from both regulations is incorporated into staff reports presented to Historic Preservation Commission and Planning Commission, for their recommendations to the Augusta-Richmond County Commission. DRA existing zoning districts consist of the following: Residential District Classifications: R-1, R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-1D, R-1E (One-Family Residential) Zone; R-MH (Manufactured Home Residential) Zone, R-2 (Two-Family Residential), R-3A, R-3B, R-3C (Multiple-Family Residential) Zone; PUD (Planned Unit Development) Zone; Professional District Classification: P-1 (Professional) Zone; Business District Classifications including B-1 (Neighborhood Business) Zone, B-2 (General Business) Zone; Industrial District Classifications: LI (Light Industry) Zone, HI (Heavy Industry) Zone.

The predominate zone covering the CBD primarily is the B-2 Zone including B-1 Zones located closest to the periphery of the CBD and the residential neighborhoods. The B-2 Zone is the most intense or liberal zone for commercial activity with the Light Industrial being the next level. It has no maximum building area at the same time offering more options for development. It may be less likely the need to rezone certain areas within the CBD. B-2 accommodates mixed use developments that require a larger floor area ratio.

Figure 5: Zoning Map



### 2.4.1 Overlay District

Section 25-E of the Augusta-Richmond County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance regulates Overlay Zoning practices.

Overlay zoning is an established method of creating special zoning districts placed over existing base zoning. The purpose of overlay zoning is to provide additional protection and/or guidance for specific areas through regulations and/or incentives that are applied in addition to the base zoning requirements.

Overlay districts are tools for implementing plans by protecting critical areas like groundwater recharge, floodplains, or prime farmland. They are also used to protect neighborhood character, commercial districts, and corridors. They guide development more carefully than base zoning by identifying future urban zones and mixed use areas, and they protect critical impact zones such as airports from encroachment.

Overlay districts are implemented through zoning text and map amendments. They are added to section 25-E. Specific criteria must be met in order to craft a “Downtown Overlay District”. These criteria include:

- a) The area must be of contiguous geography and it must be characterized by some significant common element, be it environmental sensitivity, period of development, neighborhood character, future development potential, or something similar; and
- b) The full text of the proposed additional requirements for the proposed overlay district must be provided at the time of the application for designation. Such additional requirements must be reasonable to facilitate the intent and purpose of the designation as well as the goals, objectives, intent and purpose of the Comprehensive Plan and other pertinent plans adopted by the City of Augusta.; and
- c) The benefits of the proposed additional regulations to the public health, safety, and welfare shall be sufficiently documented to clearly indicate that they are more significant than the sum of potential effects.

The Laney Walker/Bethlehem Neighborhood, overlay district “W4” was adopted July 2011. This overlay district applies only use restrictions in the neighborhood, atop standard zoning district regulations. In order to craft a thorough Downtown Overlay District, the public must be actively engaged to help determine its boundaries and regulations to ensure no detrimental impacts are resulting due to the designation.

Section 25-A of the Augusta-Richmond County Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance provides additional design and development standards regarding planned development on the riverfront – PDR (PLANNED DEVELOPMENT RIVERFRONT) ZONE.

Statement of Intent: Recognizing the value of the Savannah Riverfront as an economic, historic, recreational, and visual resource of tremendous value to the citizens of Augusta and surrounding area and further recognizing it as an area of critical and sensitive environmental concern, it is the intent of this section to provide for the orderly and aesthetic development or redevelopment of the lands adjoining the Savannah River by:

- (a) Creating a special Riverfront Development Review Board comprised of persons with an interest or expertise in the orderly development of this resource.
- (b) Limiting land uses to those which will provide the best utilization of the benefits afforded by a riverfront location.
- (c) Insuring that the regulations applicable to the riverfront will be responsive to the dictates of the development economy at a given time.
- (d) Setting forth sufficient design and development standards and criteria to provide for maximum public benefit from the further development of the riverfront area through a mixture of land uses, the provision and maintenance of public access, elimination or mitigation of negative environmental impact from development, aesthetic controls, and the beneficial coordination of residential, recreational, and commercial utilization of the riverfront lands.

The Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance continues in this section with a description of the District Boundaries, the Riverfront Development Review Board, permitted uses, and development standards and requirements.

The Development Standards and Requirements section covers:

- (a) Yard and Setback Requirements - There shall be no minimum lot size, side or rear setback, percentage of lot coverage or lot width, provided, however, that measures are taken to provide reasonable visual and acoustical privacy for dwelling units and that no building or structure shall be constructed so as to encroach within the designated flood way of the Savannah River.
- (b) Public Access - Application for approval of development in the PDR zone shall include provisions for public access from a publicly- owned or maintained roadway to that portion of the property designated as and defined by the 100-Year Floodplain limit line under an Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance to Prevent Damage from Floods; To Regulate Land Uses in the Flood Plain, and for Other Purposes."
- (c) Building Design and Site Planning Standards - The following special building design and site planning standards shall apply in the PDR Zone.
  - 1. All development in the PDR zone shall comply with an Ordinance entitled "An Ordinance to Prevent Damage from Floods; To Regulate Land Uses in the Flood Plain, and for Other Purposes" and approval of development plans under the provisions of this section shall not constitute approval under other applicable codes and ordinances.
  - 2. No fencing along the exterior property lines of any development in the PDR zone shall be permitted unless the proposed fence is integrated completely with the design of the buildings, i.e. similar in materials, design, and detailing. Developers are required to

fence or screen off-street parking and loading areas from view from public roadways utilizing a four (4) foot fence, screen, or landscaped earthen berm.

3. All construction in a PDR zone shall be of the following materials: brick, stucco, poured-in-place architectural concrete, exposed aggregate pre cast panels, and wood siding where appropriate and permitted by codes. Unacceptable construction materials include metal siding, concrete block, and high maintenance finishes such as paint on concrete block. Exceptions to the provisions of this subsection may be granted for additions or modifications to existing buildings, or for construction on the same parcel and in close proximity to existing buildings. Exceptions may be granted only in the case of hardship where it is determined that the aesthetics of the surrounding area would not be adversely affected.

4. All mechanical equipment and service areas shall be screened from view from adjacent roads and pedestrian ways, other structures, and the Levee by structures or devices integral to the architecture of the building. Wherever practicable, all utility systems in the development shall be underground.

5. Preservation of existing trees on-site is required. Applications for approval of development plans in the PDR Zone shall show the location and type of all existing trees having a diameter measurement of ten (10) inches measured at a height of four (4) feet above ground level and shall indicate which of these trees are to be retained. Removal of trees of that size or larger is prohibited except where necessary to allow construction of buildings; needed for street rights-of-way, walkways, and ancillary structures such as patios; the tree is diseased, injured, or otherwise may pose an unsafe visibility or sight distance; or unduly restricts the economic use of the property. Where it is necessary to remove existing trees, the developer is required to replace them with planting elsewhere on-site.

6. All development proposed for the PDR zone will be reviewed for its impact on or utilization of historic and potentially historic structures. Developers are encouraged to coordinate adaptive renovation and use of existing structures with the appropriate local agencies or organizations having an interest in historic preservation.

## 3 Zoning and Land Use Compatibility

The downtown redevelopment plan consists of six distinct areas totaling approximately 34.96 acres (Municipal Building Complex - 6.46 acres; Old Library Complex – 1.4 acres; Depot Site - 6.27 acres; 600 Broad Street - 0.30 acres; Coliseum Complex - 19.23 acres; Port Royal Site - 1.30 acres) classified for zoning and land use as described in the Augusta-Richmond County 2008 Comprehensive Plan. The following are measures described to address the subareas of the downtown and ideas and/or best practices to assist stakeholders with making downtown Augusta great to live, work, and play. The following concepts are provided to offer possible enhancements toward that end.

### 3.1 Land Use Compatibility

Current and future plans for the DRA conform to the mix of uses described in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Land Use chapter. Appropriate land uses are consistent with recommended development patterns, including:

- Low-Density Residential
- High-Density Residential
- Professional Office
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public Institutions
- Transportation, Communications, and Utilities
- Parks, Recreation, and Conservation
- Mixed Use

In addition, the DRA boundaries fall within one of the relatively new character areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Each of the proposed uses is based on special characteristics Augusta's elected officials and citizens have found are important to preserve or enhance downtown. It's challenging development patterns and issues require special attention. The area's character is in the proposed Augusta DRA and its current land uses are described in the Preliminary Character Areas in Augusta, as follows:

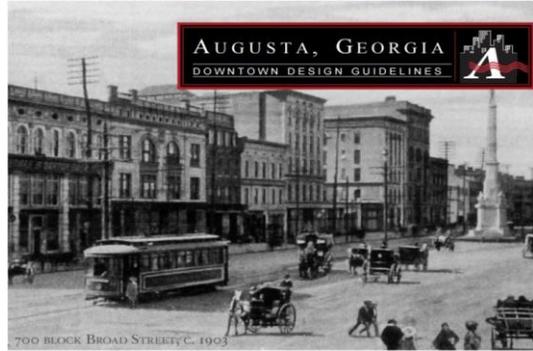
*Downtown Augusta is where the city was founded and first developed. Downtown has the major characteristics of a traditional central business district; including a wide variety of land uses (retail, office, cultural, entertainment, financial, government, open space, industrial and institutional), high level of access for vehicles, pedestrians and transit, a mix of architectural styles, medium to high density residential development, and commercial buildings with no front or side setbacks.*

Over two dozen downtown properties are listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. Much of downtown is within the boundaries of a National Register Historic District and/or

a local historic district. Downtown Augusta borders the Savannah River and is bisected by part of the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area.

### 3.2 Downtown Design Guidelines

Downtown Augusta physical characteristics are also governed by Downtown Design Guidelines. It subjects properties in local historic district to design review when changes are proposed to the building exterior. The Downtown Design Guidelines provide variety of design options. The following are some of the physical characteristics regulated by Downtown Design Guidelines. The downtown district is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This allows property owners to apply for federal tax credits for rehabilitation and local tax abatement. The Design Guideline is used to help preserve DRA’s physical history in regards to the following elements ([Table 11](#)).



**Table 11: Downtown Design Guidelines**

Design Guideline Elements				
Building Forms and Types	Complexity of Form	Site Behind Building	Placement	Orientation
Architectural Styles	Directional Expression	Rears of Buildings	Sign Sizes	Height, Width and Scale
Building Materials and Sizes	Roof Form and Material	Architectural Details and Decoration	Lettering Styles	Traffic Signals and Utilities
Setback	Character-Defining Elements	Doors and Porches	Lettering Size	Public Signs
Spacing and Orientation	Doors and Windows	Roof and Cornice	Fountains, Sculpture and Public Art	Street Trees and Landscaping
Parking Lots	Porches and Balconies	Site Lighting	Lighting	Paving and Curbs
Driveways	Storefronts	Mothballing	Maintenance	Street Furniture
Colors	Foundation	Additions	Types	Street Lights
Fences and Walls	Cornices	Synthetic Siding	Massing	Awning Signs
Undeveloped Lots	Materials and Textures	Paint Preparation	Materials	Parks and Open Space

Downtown Design Guidelines are limited to a specific boundary within the DRA. The DRA boundary map shows where the guidelines are implemented in relationship to the redevelopment area.

### 3.2.1 Augusta Downtown Historic District

The downtown currently has two types of historic districts. The local historic district is a designation enacted by the Augusta Commission, the governing body of the community. This local designation includes a design review process administered by the Augusta-Richmond County Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) that property owners must go through before undertaking work on the exterior of their property. The downtown district was also nominated to the National Register of Historic Places by the Historic Preservation Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to recognize its significance to the history of the community, state and nation. This district supersedes two former National Register districts: Broad Street and Greene Street. These designations allow property owners to apply for federal tax credits for rehabilitation and local tax abatement subject to various regulations. Downtown Augusta remains the heart of the community.

### 3.2.2 The Levee

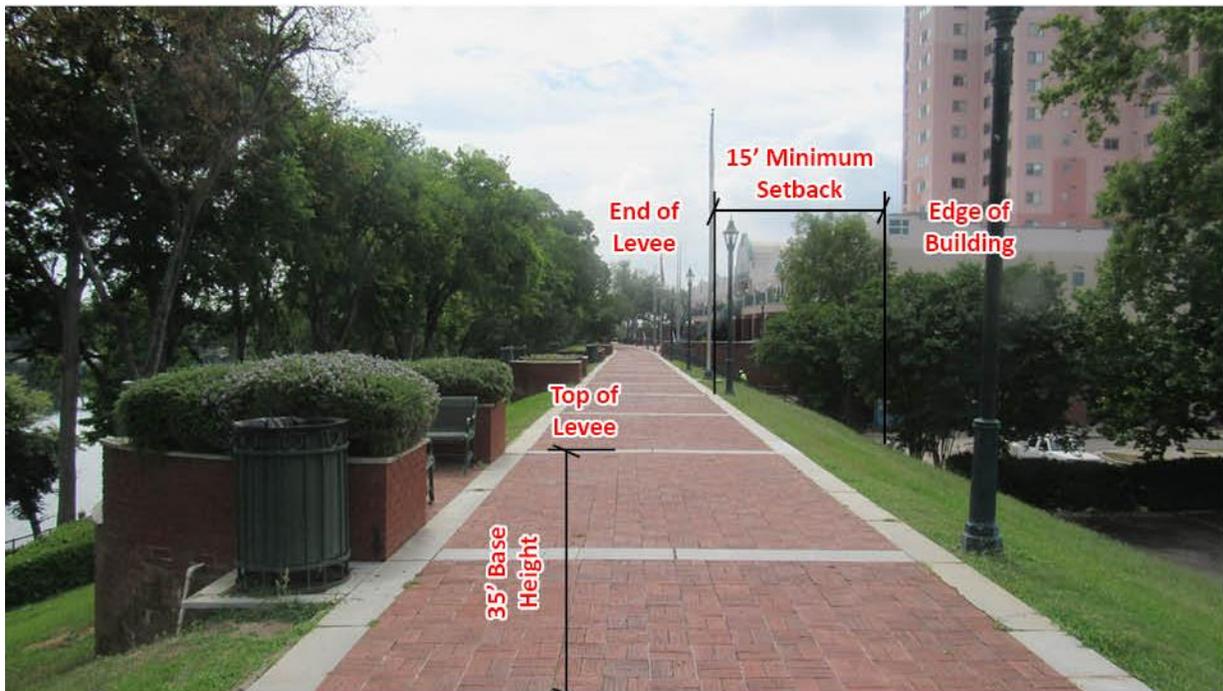
The levee serves as a critical natural barrier for the Savannah River and is an integral part of Downtown. The Levee serves as a riverwalk for pedestrians and tourists. It extends from 10<sup>th</sup> street in Downtown Augusta to Lock and Dam Park, south of Phinizy Swamp Natural Park. The Levee height ranges from 20' at Lock and Dam Park to 35' in Downtown Augusta. Buildings range from mid to high rise.

**Figure 6: Riverwalk Downtown Augusta**



The U.S. Army Core of Engineers constructed the levee to protect the Savannah River from flooding the DRA. It has become a scenic Riverwalk connecting people and buildings to the river. This man-made environmental barrier is an asset to downtown redevelopment. The illustration below shows how developers can use it to link their development to the Savannah River.

**Figure 7: Minimum Height and Setback**



Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department

Augusta Engineering Department strongly recommends new buildings be constructed 15' minimum setback away from the levee and is supported by independent foundations. This is required for emergency response, flood management, utility service and erosion control. All buildings must be built three (3') above base flood elevation and in accordance with the Flood Damage Ordinance. Retaining walls are permitted; they must allow sufficient drainage through weep holes and meet soil erosion and sediment control regulations. Parking decks are permitted and can rise to the height of the levee (35' or 3 decks) prior to other uses built atop it. There is currently no maximum building height. These regulations are reflected in the Zoning Ordinance.

### 3.2.3 Place Making

To expand on the previously mentioned draft report prepared by the WALC Institute documenting livability and walkability in Augusta, “*place making*” is among other “key factors that must be addressed to make Augusta even more livable.” Various communities have achieved success at restoring historic functions of main streets thereby impacting the entire downtown using “organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring,” according to a Project for Public Spaces (PPS) article, “Placemaking Main Street into a Destination Downtown.” Elements that serve to create a better sense of place are evident in downtown communities that are well connected, sustainable, and socioeconomically healthy.

The built natural environments are areas that do not have problems with attracting people such as the Augusta Common for special events and the levee to provide Riverwalk activities including

hotels, museums, restaurants, and convention center. They are also opportunities to evaluate underperforming pedestrian ways that have various links to Broad Street and other areas within the downtown. By identifying Downtown Augusta’s assets, community stakeholders can identify liabilities that keep certain corridors from being developed. Being equipped with information such as travel patterns, cyclists, pedestrian and vehicular counts will point toward solutions of connectivity thereby expanding access points and distributing pedestrian flow in other areas of the downtown. The PPS article addressed this note of attracting people by providing lots of things to do through identifying the “highest opportunity places” and figuring out “how to make substantive physical and social connections between existing places, how to strategically create new places, and how to harness the energy that can be generated through building a network of destinations.”

Great streets are considered public spaces and are recognized for the value they provide. As mentioned earlier within the Age-Friendly Community – Active Living Workshop section, a Walking Audit was done to gather information concerning issues that affect Broad Street for example. The issues noted are the same issues pedestrians notice on a daily basis. The PPS article recommended, “Walking and street audits can also be conducted to diagnose places along Main Street and create a wish list of desired future change.” By conducting these walking audits on a consistent basis, community stakeholders can be unified in identifying possible visible solutions of what appropriate changes to the “street, sidewalk, or building wall” can look like. The pictures below depict an example of what the Walkable and Livable Community (WALC) Institute identified as a possible transformation that can take place when envisioning tools are used to reflect a more pedestrian-friendly community, slower car speeds, and an improved sense of place.



**The Present** — Photo by the WALC Institute



**The Possibilities** — Photovision by the WALC Institute and TDC Design Studio

By treating streets as public spaces, more attributes of what makes a street great can be recognized by all those that use the street to connect to other great places within the downtown and beyond. By linking communities for ease of travel for all travelers and their chosen modes of transportation, public streets are not only “Complete Streets,” but also “Great Streets” because of the capacity to build livable “communities of all sizes together.”



Creating great gathering places while advancing local economies are historical ways downtowns and cities have grown with centers of commerce. Transportation investments help to support this broader vision of streets. The way people use the downtown is for engaging economic, social, and cultural reasons that change over time that also allow new urban design elements and new land use experiences that contribute toward making places enjoyable and with favorable memories.

A possible area that can be looked at closer with respect to travel investments and converting streets into public spaces is working to implement gateway and beautification standards along with sidewalk improvements. These beautification improvements include landscaping, wayfinding signage, public art and visitor product development. The City of Augusta named the Augusta Convention & Visitors Bureau (ACVB) as the managing organization of the installed sign system which consist of over 300 signs across the city, 60% located in the downtown.

Public art development is also on the horizon for downtown Augusta to expand on the existing art works through the draft of a master plan for the region. The Greater Augusta Arts Council in cooperation with other stakeholders are considering a variety of installations, sculptures, collections along with the traditional special events and festivals. These and other improvements convey a message of welcome on the part of Augusta-Richmond County. Public and private partners work together on these initiatives to strengthen the impact of public art on Augusta's communities.

The closest gateways to downtown Augusta are those that are located along the Savannah River and the South Carolina border including the 13<sup>th</sup> Street, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, and Gordon Hwy corridors. Recommended initiatives to establish great streets as public spaces as identified by the PPS article include street designs for appropriate speeds and community plans that incorporates envisioned places they want to support.

“Designing road projects to fit community contexts can help increase developable land, create open space, and reconnect communities to their neighbors, a waterfront, or a park.”  
– Project for Public Spaces Article

Beyond having access to downtown, connections also describe the need to communicate to established and newer residents, employees and visitors that receive and respond to information about certain amenities the downtown offers. Interactive abilities through the use of the latest Internet technologies allow the most cost effective way of reaching the most people. Self-guided walking tours, special events, and dedicated downtown development staff are examples of opportunities to attract people and promote the downtown brand to a diverse number of users including locals and visitors alike.

Parks, green spaces, entertainment, and recreation facilities are significant pockets where people gather or access downtown Augusta. The bike and pedestrian path along the Augusta Canal and the Savannah River are a few of the major downtown sites of everyday leisure and enjoyment. Local aesthetics and developments in downtown offer opportunities to explore meaningful urban landscape that undergird the creation of place making.



Times Square in New York City evolved and grew to its current capacity of more than 300,000 pedestrians each day partly because of locals interested in coming to watch people. While Augusta cannot be compared to New York's density and size, the environment in which creativity is cultivated and encouraged can be analyzed to establish creative expression that reveals how people interact with urban design and the built environment. The next question of concern when discussing the attraction of people to the downtown is, "Where are people going to park?" The next session covers this issue by providing a bit of history, showing how other cities addressed it, and covering a public transit idea.

### 3.2.4 Parking

In a 2005 Parking Study authorized by the Downtown Development Authority and conducted by Carl Walker Parking Consultants, there are a total of 13,942 parking spaces in downtown, east of 13<sup>th</sup> street. This analysis was based on a block-by-block inventory of on-street and off-street parking. The study also states that only 51% of total on-street parking was occupied while 37% total off-street parking was occupied. On-street parking is heavily used because it provides the most convenience, this is why it is the city's most valuable parking asset. Furthermore, it is not strictly regulated.



In 2014, the Downtown Development Authority hired Robinson Management Consulting to facilitate public meetings to garner further input on parking management in the downtown core.

They also concluded downtown parking is not strictly regulated as appropriate resources are not allocated to do so. Some people park in excess of 6-7 hours in 2-hour parking zones, knowing overstay fines are maxed at \$20. Downtown Development Authority has proposed a parking management plan for downtown. The plan seeks to implement the following:

- State-of-the-art on-street parking meter system in Broad Street Corridor generally defined as the areas between 5th street to 13th street bounded by Reynolds Street to the north and Ellis Street to the south.
- Enforcement will be Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., excluding federal holidays.
- Fees will be \$1.00 per hour with 2-hour limit for all parallel parking spaces and 4-hour limit in median areas along Broad street.
- Residential permits will be issued for on-street parking for certain evening hours and overnight.
- Long-term monthly parking options will be made available for downtown employees and regular commuters.
- All proceeds from program will go towards improving downtown signage, streets, alleys, sidewalks, street lighting, and landscaping.
- Program is funded through private sector investment; the associated parking meters and required capital will not be funded by the tax payer.

This plan was done with the public through community forums held at the August Public Library and Marbury Center on December 9, 2014. Other suggestions made by the consultants and public audience include:

- Enforce current time limits
- Leverage Richmond County Board of Education and Augusta Marriott parking decks.
- Building a parking deck off of Broad Street (possible with SPLOST infrastructure funding).
- Conduct a public awareness campaign to educate the public on the program.

Cities like Decatur, Savannah, and Atlanta do a combination of education, enforcement and metered parking for their urban core areas. Rome Downtown Development Authority in Rome, Georgia is the parking authority for the city's downtown parking services, with their own fine structure for each subsequent offense and varying circumstances. They have recently launched a "we validate" campaign to increase parking options in downtown.

#### **3.2.4.1 Downtown Parking Best Practices**

American Planning Association published a Planning Service Advisory Essential Information Package (EIP) titled Parking Solutions, documenting best parking practices across America. This EIP covers important parking issues including: Parking Management

- Shared Parking
- Parking In-Lieu Fees
- Parking Requirement Reduction and Exemptions



- Downtown District Special Parking Requirements
- Green Parking Lot Design
- Permeable Pavement
- Bicycle Parking

Cities across America have addressed parking issues through a combination of regulations, administration, and enforcement measures. Downtown Scottsdale, Arizona institutes parking in-lieu fees, underground parking structures and shared parking, while cities like Austin, Texas reduces – and sometimes – exempts parking requirements in downtown. Downtown Augusta is currently a combination of on and off-street parking, parking lots and decks, all regulated by the County Zoning Ordinance enforcing strict parking requirements based on use. Proper downtown redevelopment occurs when parking evolves through a combination of strategies as recommended by the EIP.

Augusta Planning and Development Department staff recently studied parking practices in six major cities in the southeast. These cities include:

- Columbia and Greenville, SC
- Greensborough and Winston-Salem, NC
- Nashville and Chattanooga, TN

All of these cities have an ordinance that completely exempts off-street parking requirements for development in their Central Business District/Downtown. Historic sites and structures along with their rehabilitation and reuse are equally exempt. This exemption is extended to their overlay practices which do not incorporate any additional parking requirements. These major cities also incorporate strict enforcement of parking violations, metered parking, shared and timed parking, and other effective parking management practices, making exemptions feasible in their zoning ordinance.

Exempting parking requirements in downtown Augusta is not possible due to the following factors:

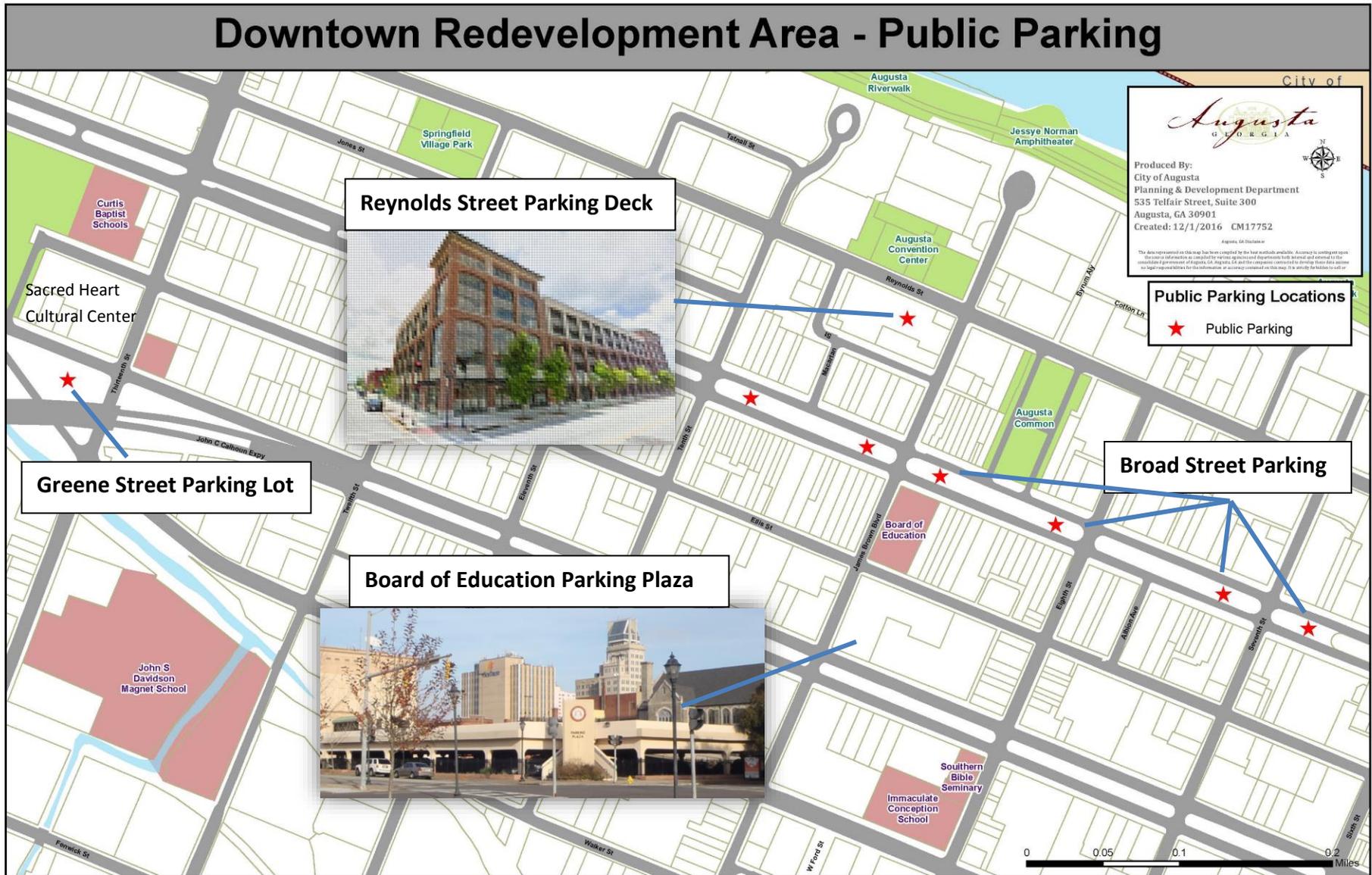
- Augusta Zoning Ordinance sets strict parking requirements for all uses, including those in Central Business District.<sup>1</sup>
- Downtown residents, employees and business owners want strict enforcement and/or dedicated parking for themselves.
- Bicycle parking – Section 4-8-4 was recently added, including short and long term space requirements.

Exempting parking requirements may result in increasing a demand that is perceived to have already been overwhelmed by the limited supply.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 4-3(c)

Figure 8: Downtown Redevelopment Area – Public Parking



### **3.2.4.2 Future of DRA Parking**

Downtown Development Authority continues to address parking in the DRA focusing on management and enforcement. Their efforts have lead others to publicly voice their recommendations for parking in DRA. In an Augusta Chronicle article following the December 9<sup>th</sup> 2014 public meeting, Mr. Bryan Haltermann, president of Haltermann Partners Inc. Downtown Developers, reflected the public’s support for strict enforcement of the city’ two-hour parking ordinance. “If the two-hour limit was enforced, downtown would have the beginning of a parking management plan”<sup>2</sup>. The city must take a more active role in parking enforcement.

Some municipalities seeking to eliminate parking requirements do so by introducing alternatives to effectively manage on and off-street parking demand, such as:

- On-street time limits. On-street time limits or parking meters (with revenue devoted to downtown improvements) are effective tools to prioritize the most attractive curb spaces for customers, and ensure that these are not occupied by all-day employee parking.
- Residential permit parking zones. Residential permit parking controls prioritize curb spaces for residents in neighborhoods. Rather than having separate parking for each development, all uses share a common pool. This can be passed into law in lieu of other requirements.
- In lieu parking fees. The city can charge and collect a transportation impact fee in lieu of requiring developers to provide off-street parking on site. The fees can be used to build shared public off-street parking or for other transportation improvements.

Solutions like parking meters and residential permit parking zones have been debated in Augusta before and part of Downtown Development Authority’s Parking Management Plan. However, such administration and enforcement have not been realized in Augusta. If the city seeks to eliminate parking requirements in downtown, the city must adopt and institute its own Parking Management Plan and commit appropriate resources to implement it.

### **3.2.4.3 A Downtown Circulator**

Several cities have sought to provide solutions to parking shortages within downtowns or downtown sub-areas such as Rochester, NY; Raleigh, NC; Chattanooga, TN; and Downtown Bethesda, MD. One promising recommendation is the implementation of a “shuttle” or “circulator” to connect underutilized and new parking facilities within and adjacent to downtown with major downtown destinations. The circulator would also help to balance out the existing

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<sup>2</sup> Haltermann, Bryan “The way forward on downtown parking is clear, and twofold”, Augusta Chronicle, December 16, 2014

supply, while improving overall downtown utilization. This could address developer and business tenant concerns about parking as well.

Reducing traffic congestion and emissions would assist the city with any “environmental sustainability initiatives” according to the City of Rochester Center City Circulator Study. By maximizing the use of the existing parking supply and changing consumer behavior with reduced vehicle trips within the downtown, the circulator could contribute to promote economic development. By conducting a feasibility study identification of the following can be made:

- Best Practices
- Unique Goals
- Operating Costs
- Frequency Possibilities
- Funding Options
- Bike/Walk Incentives



Specific areas within the DRA can benefit from a circulator to provide a convenient and sustainable way to move daily commuters, tourists, and visitors within the downtown efficiently, economically, and safely. Attention to certain areas within downtowns can also be done with consistent land use plans and the use of overlay districts as a tool to address alternative land development requirements and manage development in particular areas.

Ellis Street, a subject of some focus, is a corridor that has activity centers that could potentially support the establishment of a circulator stop. With 2-lane traffic moving east and west from 15<sup>th</sup> Street on the west side of the DRA to East Boundary Street and located one block south of Broad Street, parking areas within or near the CBD could be established to serve commuters. Ellis Street has been the focus of several public meetings and discussions that include an area described as the back side of residential and commercial buildings fronting Broad Street. The issues identified are related to the lack of lighting, back street parking, and pedestrians feeling unsafe at night. Land development requirements for Ellis Street could include additional lighting, landscaping and urban design treatments including double fronts and façade improvements that could address the public realm and assist pedestrians with feeling safer to use sidewalks after parking their vehicles nearby or potentially using a circulator to get closer to their destination.



Ellis Street Near Tenth Street Looking East

### **3.3 Other Downtown Development & Design Guidelines Considerations**

Since the adoption of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan, with the exception of the Augusta-Richmond County Target Area Master Plan, other plans have been crafted advancing their vision, goals and objectives. These plans include:

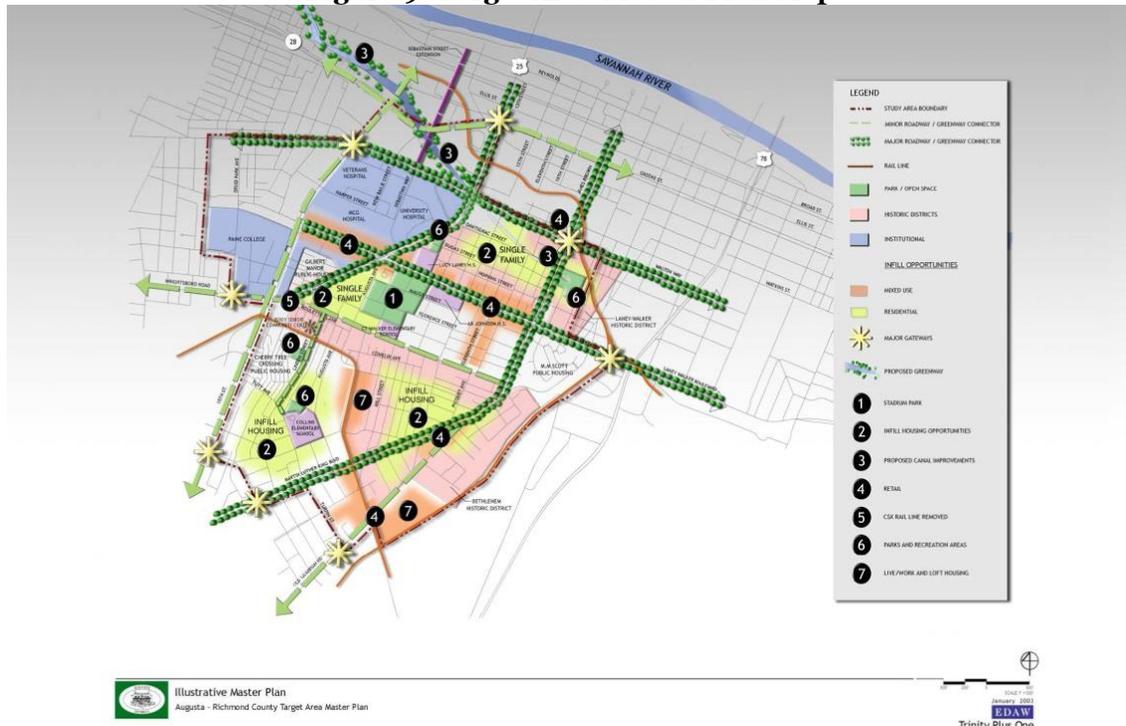
- Augusta-Richmond County Target Area Master Plan.
- The Westobou Vision: Augusta/North Augusta 2009 Master Plan.
- Revitalizing the Garden City: Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda 2010.
- Walkability and Age-Friendly Streets: Opportunities to Transform Augusta’s Built Environment.
- Augusta Regional Transportation Study Long Range Transportation Plan 2040.

Each plan is described below, highlighting the downtown area.

#### **3.3.1 Augusta-Richmond County Target Area Master Plan**

Developed by EDAW/Trinity Plus One Consultants, this plan proposed the County government develop public-private partnerships with major employers including state and federal agencies, Augusta University, the Georgia Medical Center Authority, Paine College, the Augusta Housing Authority, the Richmond County Board of Education and others, to ensure redevelopment strategies succeed for close-in neighborhoods, the Central Business District and other nearby areas (*Figure 15*).

**Figure 9: Target Area Master Plan Map**



Projects proposed in the Target Area Master Plan lay the framework for future redevelopment in these areas. They include infill housing, mixed-use developments, with multi-family housing and retail, canal improvements, park and recreation areas, and the removal of CSX lines that run through the area. The plan recommends a major gateway at the intersection of 15<sup>th</sup> Street and Greene Street, while all other recommendations are outside the DRA.

### 3.3.2 The Westobou Vision: Augusta/North Augusta 2009 Master Plan

In 2009, the Augusta Commission and the North Augusta City Council endorsed this Master Plan to guide the economic development initiatives of both cities towards a sustainable future. The boundary of “The Westobou Vision” includes the traditional downtowns of North Augusta and Augusta and surrounding neighborhoods. Downtown and the Medical/Health Sciences District are the two primary focus areas in the plan. Augusta Tomorrow is working with stakeholders and government to help implement the plan.

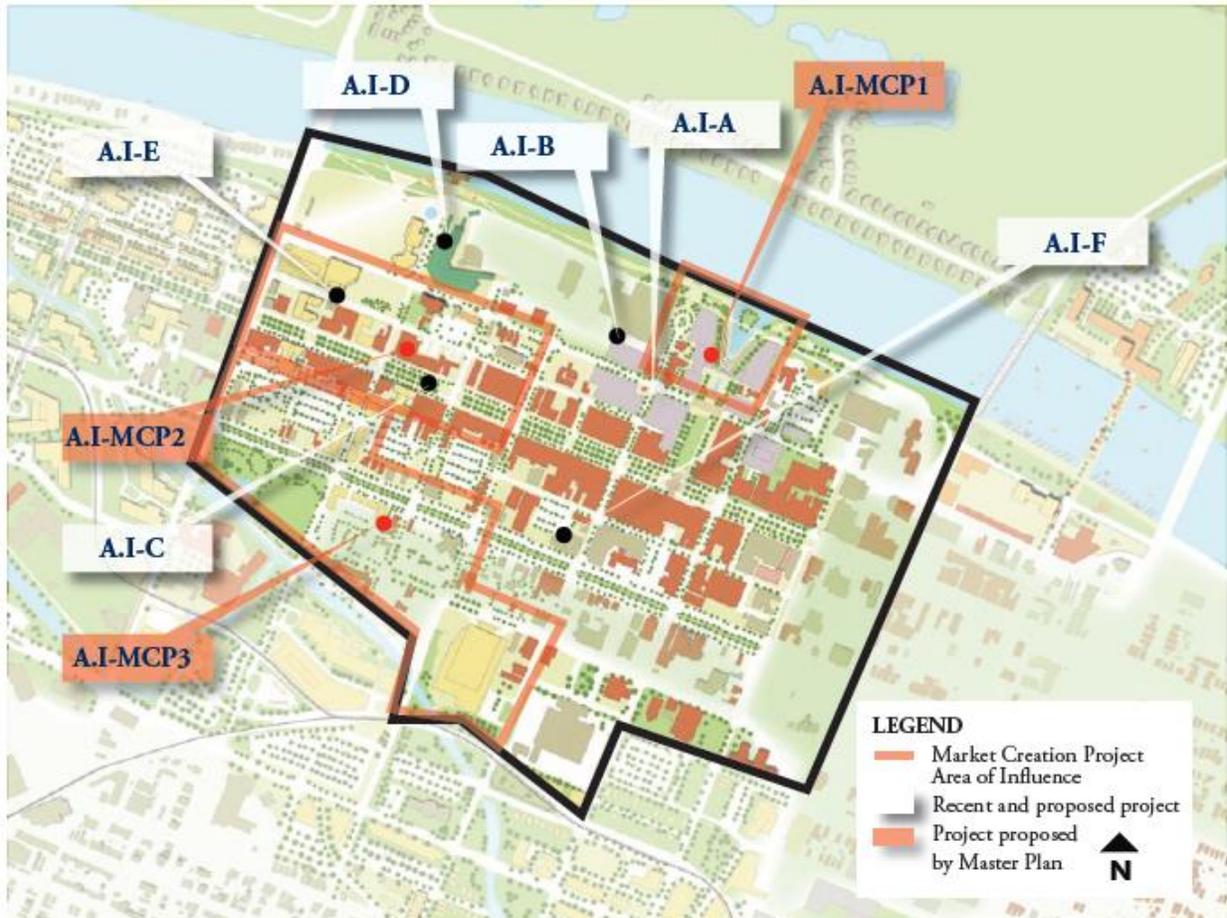
This plan updated an earlier City Center Master Plan produced by Augusta Tomorrow, an association of business and civic leaders whose mission is "To serve the community at large by planning, promoting, and implementing the development of Augusta with particular emphasis on the city center."

**Figure 10: The Westobou Vision Map**



In the plan, ICON Architecture defines the study area, looks at recent developments and summarizes both downtown attributes and obstacles to revitalization. It proposed redevelopment focus areas and potential strategies, initiatives, projects and next steps. Several of the findings in this plan were reported in the original Urban Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

The Westobou Vision: Augusta/North Augusta 2009 Master Plan recommends the following projects for the DRA.



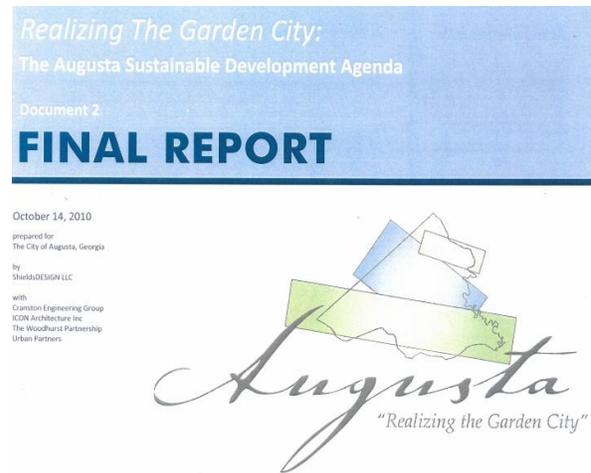
- TEE Center (A.1-A) - A trade, exhibit, and event center at Reynolds and 9<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Proposed mid-rise hotel complex (A.I-B) - A proposed hotel complex is currently in the planning and permitting stages on Reynolds and 9<sup>th</sup> Street, adjacent the Augusta Common.
- The White's Building Reuse (A.I-C) - The conversion of the former J.B. White's Department Store to a new ground level retail mini mall and residential condominiums on the upper floors will contribute to the urban scene along Broad Street.
- The Westobou Arts Center (A.I-MCP1)
- Marbury Village (A.I-MCP2)
- Augusta Canal Park Neighborhood (A.I-MCP3)

### 3.3.3 Revitalizing the Garden City: Augusta Sustainable Development Agenda (ASDA) 2010

In 2010, this plan set the sustainable agenda for Augusta’s future, establishing clear public investment priorities and attracted private participation. The Westobou Vision is referenced in this plan for downtown redevelopment potential.

This plan is a countywide urban design plan, dividing the County into three distinct areas: Urban, Suburban, and Rural. The document is a set of specific projects and policies, when implemented, will have a dramatic impact on the County and its people. Key goals are:

- Increasing economic activity and vitality,
- Protect and enhance the environment,
- Reinforce livable communities and neighborhoods and
- Create effective and attractive regional linkages.



Specific objectives include strategic action corridors, site specific projects by type, and other initiatives.

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities Initiative provided \$75 million in grants nationwide based on “Livability Principles”. The grant sought to:

- Revitalize Augusta’s corridors through Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS).
- Designate overlay zoning districts for priority projects encouraging quality development.
- Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Design to create walkable communities.
- Improve owner and renter occupied housing.
- Link neighborhoods to schools and jobs, recreation and other community amenities.

The ASDA lists the following recommendations in DRA:

1. Designate areas for clustered development around major intersections and creating hamlets, villages, and neighborhoods with density and design guidelines.
2. Integrate greenways into subdivision design to increase quality of life.
3. Support downtown development.
4. Create the Augusta Civic Realty Trust, a private sector entity with critical financial capability and development skills that can serve as a “front end” catalyst for difficult projects.
5. Five-year implementation work plan.

ASDA represents the County’s first step into “new urbanism” and “smart growth.” This initiative uses various smart growth principles and applies them to Richmond County. ASDA elements for the Redevelopment area include Augusta Way (15<sup>th</sup> Street), Westobou Trace, Riverwatch Parkway and Urban Neighborhood Revitalization.

Corridor Sustainability Improvements include:

1. Augusta Way – 15<sup>th</sup> Street from downtown Riverwalk to Rocky Creek through the Priority Development District. Three ASDA projects included are: Oates Creek Neighborhood Revitalization, Southgate Urban Village, and Rocky Creek Regional Mixed-Use.
2. Westobou Trace – Washington Road from Augusta National Golf Club through Broad Street and Sand Bar Ferry to I-520 and extending south to Doug Barnard Parkway ending at Tobacco Road. Projects include Upper Broad Street and Sand Bar Ferry Identity Gateway.
3. Riverwatch Parkway – Starting west of I-20 and continuing east to Green Street all the way to Seventh Street, includes the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area.
4. Urban Neighborhood Revitalization – Upper Broad Street and Historic Harrisburg – shopping at intersections, high-rise, market-rate residential condominium, mix of apartments, townhomes and renovated single-family residential.

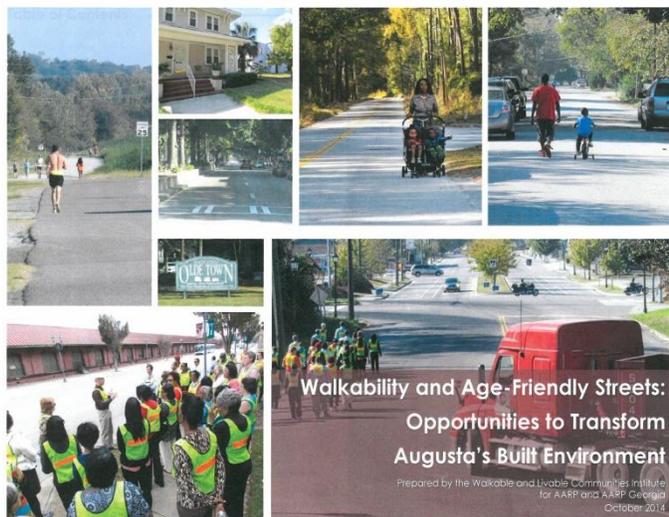
### 3.3.4 Walkability and Age-Friendly Streets: Opportunities to Transform Augusta’s Built Environment

The Walkable and Livable Community (WALC) Institute was hired by Georgia AARP to evaluate Augusta’s built environment, focusing on walkability and livability, in regard to city’s Age-Friendly Community designation. A draft report was prepared by the WALC Institute documenting livability and walkability in Augusta, focusing particularly on the Ole Towne neighborhood, Broad Street, Milledgeville Road and Bayvale Elementary School area.

### 3.3.5 Age-Friendly Community - Active Living Workshop:

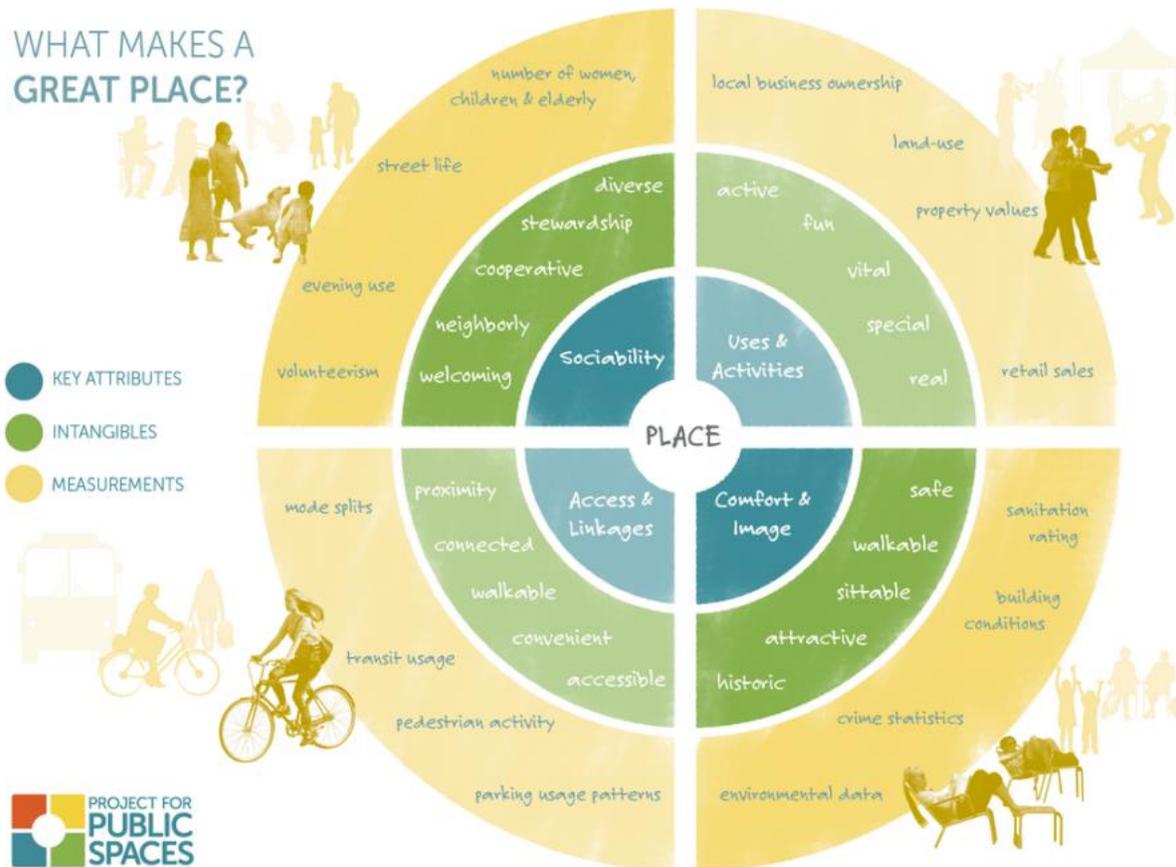
Welcome and Introductions were conducted by Karen Cooper, Associate State Director of Georgia AARP. Also introduced was then Mayor of Augusta Deke Copenhaver, Augusta Commissioner William (Bill) Lockett, WALC – Ian Lockwood and Kelly Morphy. The audience consisted of community stakeholders, members of AARP, senior citizens, retired college professors, church leaders, members of local community organizations, and government officials.

As part of the workshop, participants did a Walking Audit of a one-mile stretch of Broad Street from the Boathouse through the Old Towne neighborhood. Issues such as poor lighting, unsafe walking conditions, excessive wide streets, historic ambiance, heavy freight truck traffic, barriers, and trees in the “public realm”, new building design, and access to riverfront were identified as key factors that must be addressed to make Augusta even more livable.



1. Livability and Accessibility – Access to all modes of travel including pedestrian, biking and public transit.
2. Complete Streets – adapt streets so that they are safe, accessible and provide mobility for all users, not only vehicles.
3. Place Making – creating places that people find user friendly, safe, and provide a focal point for community events.
4. Traffic Safety – safe streets and places.

This report is focused on enhancing walkability and livability in Augusta. Recommendations by WALC and the AARP’s Livable Communities are important informational sources, along with the toolkit provided in the WALC report appendix. Some of the suggested recommendations are relatively easy to implement. They provide a strong sense of community awareness and focus on infrastructure improvements that will serve residents throughout their life.

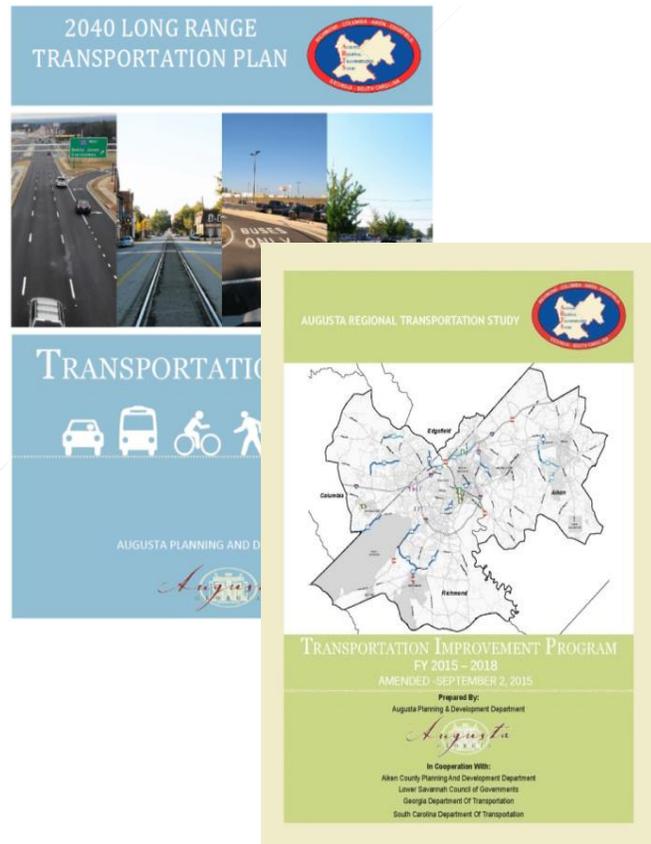


There are existing areas in Augusta where some of the recommendations are already in place and/or being implemented, which will enhance walkability and livability, and can be extended to revitalize other areas.

### 3.4 Augusta Regional Transportation Study Long Range Transportation Plan 2040

The regional Metropolitan Planning Organization adopted its 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan in September 2015. The plan was created through an extensive public participation process that included a strong support for pedestrian and bicycle improvements throughout the region. The plan is currently implemented through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This includes a list of bicycle and pedestrian projects, such as:

- 15<sup>th</sup> Street Bike Lane from John C Calhoun Expressway to Broad Street
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street Shared lane marking from Broad Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street
- 5<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge Multiuse Path from Riverwalk Marina to Jefferson Davis Highway
- 4<sup>th</sup> Street Shared lane markings from Laney Walker Boulevard to Broad Street
- \$15,000,000 lump sum for Georgia portion of MPO for bicycle and pedestrian projects



TIP projects in DRA include:

- Broad Street Improvements (Washington Road to Sand Bar Ferry Road)
- Broad Street over Hawks Gully (Bridge Repair and Restoration)
- Greene Street Improvements from 13th Street to East Boundary Street
- Riverwatch Parkway (15th Street to County Line)
- SR 4 / 15th Street Pedestrian Improvements – Calhoun Expressway. to Central Avenue
- Telfair Street Improvements (15th Street to East Boundary Street)
- 5th Street - Laney Walker Boulevard to Reynolds Street
- 5th Street Bridge (Bridge Repair and Restoration)
- James Brown Boulevard Reconstruction
- 6th Street (Laney Walker Boulevard to Reynolds Street)
- 15th Street over Augusta Canal (Bridge Repair and Restoration)
- 13th Street (RA Dent to Reynolds Street)
- 11th Street over the Augusta Canal (Bridge Repair and Restoration)

All the plans presented in this update are implemented through public and private development along with the appropriate zoning and land use regulations explained in the next chapter.

## 4 Future Private Redevelopment Projects and Investment

Downtown Augusta has the potential for a sustainable transformation in the future, given the newly merged Augusta University campuses, the state's support for economic development that expand home-grown businesses, and a metro population that increasingly supports the arts, history and culture of Georgia's third-largest city.

On the drawing board is an estimated \$316 million or more in redevelopment dreams and plans (waiting to break ground, others having done so already) for major investments in the downtown area. These proposed developments are dependent on the various areas' physical environment and public infrastructure sufficient to support them.

### 4.1 Community Vision for the Augusta DRA

The 2008 Comprehensive Plan Community Agenda was developed to "guide the city's future and serve as the basis for policy decisions of the city's elected and appointed leaders and staff." Local redevelopment decisions must be consistent with the recommendations found in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan. These recommendations include downtown's community vision.

**Vision for Downtown:** *"Downtown Augusta will maintain and enhance its historic character and unique mix of land uses. Downtown will continue to reflect the predominant characteristics of a historic central business district, while at the same time adapting to the changing environment around it. Underutilized parcels will be redeveloped in a manner consistent with the overall vision for downtown and with respect for existing development patterns and the historic architecture in the area. Redevelopment will include new medium and high-density housing, additional commercial and office development, new civic and institutional facilities and shopping and entertainment facilities. Adaptive reuse of historic buildings will be a key component. New development will respect the scale, massing, architecture and other design elements of the existing historic structures."*

Recommended development patterns in DRA include:

- New residential, commercial, and institutional development built in accordance with established design guidelines, with respect to historic character and traditional development patterns of downtown;
- Medium and high-density housing in new and existing buildings, including office, retail, and service development;
- Enhanced arts, entertainment and sports facilities;
- Stronger physical connections between the riverfront and downtown;
- Public infrastructure (public buildings, streets, landscaping, parks, sidewalks, etc.) that support and complement other development;
- Attractive gateways to the city supplemented by a coordinated way finding signage; and
- Transportation system that accommodates all modes of travel and is accessible to all.

Public and private development projects in line with the downtown vision and recommended development patterns are listed below.

## 4.2 Recent Improvement Initiatives

### Private Projects:

- Sutherland Mill (medical condos/offices)
- J.B White's Building (residential and retail)
- Augusta Convention Center
- Holiday Inn Express
- Hotel Development (potential between Augusta Common and James Brown Blvd and to Broad Street)
- Housing Redevelopment discussion/plans near the Lamar Building

### Public Projects:

- St. Sebastian/Greene Street Extension Project \$30.3 million Improvement/ Extension
- Convention Center - Trade, Exhibit and Event Center (TEE Center) - About 120,000 square feet. \$20 million in SPLOST funds and 22 million in bonds issued by the Coliseum Authority
- Laney-Walker/Bethlehem Redevelopment
- Augusta Judicial Center & John H. Ruffin, Jr. Courthouse
- Headquarters Library for the East Central Georgia Regional Library System
- Augusta University, the new College of Dental Medicine building, a certified LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver building and recognized as 2011 Best Higher Education/Research project by ENR Southeast magazine, and the J. Harold Harrison, M.D. Education commons building held its groundbreaking November 28, 2012

On August 18, 2015, Augusta-Richmond County Commission approved Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (SPLOST) with list of public projects. Many of the projects listed below ([Table 13](#)) are located in the DRA and include those listed in this plan. A few months later on November 3, 2015, the voters of Richmond County approved SPLOST 7.

Augusta Recreation, Parks & Facilities completed its Master Plan and on May 4, 2016, the Augusta Commission received an updated report from their consultants regarding the plan. The report presentation included recommendations derived from surveys, park inspections, stakeholder meetings, staff and other input. The Augusta Common (2.07 acres), within the DRA, has been identified as one of the parks earmarked for possible improvements and expansion. Improved signage for restroom locations, added security system and cameras, and a secondary exit for park administration are being considered. There are current discussions to expand the park both to the north toward the Levee and to the south toward Ellis Street.

Also located within the DRA are two contiguous city-owned properties located at 401 Walton Way and 406 Watkins Street. The City of Augusta has initiated plans to prepare this 6-acre site for redevelopment which may require demolition of the former jail property to attract private

investment for a potential mixed-use retail development including market rate apartments.

These projects will reinvigorate the DRA and surrounding neighborhoods. Other projects have been identified in different plans, all promoting urban redevelopment. Specific seven corridors within the downtown are in the hands of Cooper and Carry, a design firm located in Atlanta, Georgia. They were chosen to look at the public right-of-way of these roads within the downtown to address areas between building face to building face. Having engaged the public in the process, they have studied pedestrian flow, bike paths, nearby parking and the use of golf carts for the visitor market.

**Table 12: SPLOST VII Project List**

SPLOST VII Project List				
<b>Public Safety</b>		\$ 45,500,000	<b>General Government</b>	\$ 11,000,000
911	Fire Department		Information Technology	
Fleet			Administration	
Information Technology			Debt Service	
Sheriff	Marshal		<b>Infrastructure and Facilities</b>	\$ 122,650,000
Marshal			Road, Resurfacing, and Traffic	
<b>Quality of Life</b>			\$ 28,000,000	
Recreation and Parks	Administrator/Gateway Beautification	Planning and Development		
Canal Authority		Government Facilities		
Coliseum Authority		Municipal Building Complex		
Downtown Development Authority	Public Facilities	Economic Development		
Augusta Public Transit	<b>Other Governments</b>			
		Blythe		\$ 1,900,000
		Hephzibah	\$ 6,500,000	
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 215,550,000</b>	

## 5 Public Involvement

The Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA) has the perfect opportunity to be revitalized. The public has recently been engaged during the study of the Downtown Concept Plan conducted by Cooper Carry, a design firm based in Atlanta, Georgia. They are addressing seven (7) downtown streets with a project focus on engineering and aesthetics, in an effort to define the area's "Public Realm." These right-of-way conceptual designs and recommendations will address bike parking locations and bike lanes on Broad Street, pedestrian flow, and golf cart usage for the visitor market. They will also look at the removal of turning lanes which have an impact on green space in the downtown.

### 5.1 Public Comments on Issues and Opportunities

The Draft Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update document was made available for public review, via the city's website. In addition, there were 2 scheduled public review meetings to secure public input concerning the document and to hear possible issues and ideas. Presented for comment were highlights of socioeconomic data on downtown population and housing trends, average household and per capita income levels, predominate age groups, housing renter and owner-occupied percentages, as well as property values and employment numbers in the Downtown Redevelopment Area.

A Public Comment Matrix was prepared of written comments submitted to the Augusta Planning and Development Department. It is available for review in Appendix D. The following represent some of the highlights of the written and verbal comments received throughout the public review period from September 12-26, 2016 including meetings scheduled on September 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Comments, concerns and ideas included:

- **Parking:** Devise and implement a Parking Management Plan and the creation of a parking authority with citation capabilities. Parking management is essential to the success of downtown's economic success and to keeping its central-city urban design form. The goal of parking management should not really be to exempt downtown properties from parking requirements; instead, parking regulation and supply mechanisms should be in place to support the full utilization of historic and other existing buildings for economically beneficial uses throughout the downtown. Downtown parking regulations should be relaxed; otherwise, the downtown buildings and properties will either continue to suffer from underutilization, or the downtown area will ultimately change into a suburban development form of underutilized parking lots and thus lose its distinctive, *walkable* character. There is a need to return to 2-hour parking to Broad Street, an expansion of paid parking and an education of parking parameters for the populace are also needed. Related to Ellis Street and back street parking, people feel unsafe using them at night; Ellis Street with some lighting, landscaping and urban design treatments will make that area feel a lot safer to use; better orientation and designated parking location for food trucks. Cooper Carry under a proposed concept will add 70 parking spaces and analyzing parking duration on Broad Street; drafted a study on where parking is underutilized.

- **Circulator:** As presented in this plan, downtown circulator is a great idea. It should be implemented as part of or a companion to a comprehensive parking and circulation plan. Can be explored to address parking and connectivity with the medical district and a 2 to 3-mile radius so that people can take advantage of downtown assets during their lunch break. Possible partnership with the private sector can be formed. Management entity would have to be identified.
- **Connectivity:** Link important places in the area such as the Savannah River (Riverwalk) for more involvement, Augusta Common for more entertainment, and other popular attractions with improved lighting, getting there safely via more, established networks for pedestrians, bike lanes/stations. Better gateway maintenance on and near the Calhoun Expressway and trash maintenance and tagging removal along established routes. All parks connected by trails and connected to neighborhoods. Better orient trash pickup locations.
- **Recreation:** A strong desire to increase green space or expand Augusta Common toward river or toward Ellis Street; more entertainment. Augusta Recreation and Parks Department recently completed a master plan; additional review is needed.
- **Savannah River:** Idea of a riverfront restaurant (to be reached by water) along with more involvement with and planning for the Riverwalk. An education for the public on the “can and can’t do” on the levee. Riverwalk, because of its uniqueness, should be embraced more in planning efforts.
- **Public Realm:** Would like to see a plaza with no parking just for pedestrians that would connect Miller & Imperial Theatres where events would be in open spaces. It was noted in the text that Cooper Carry is currently preparing a study for the public right away (building face to building face) along 7 streets in the downtown addressing specifically pedestrian flow, bike plan & golf cart usage to view historic sites for the visitor’s market. Ellis and Jones Street with some lighting, landscaping and urban design treatments will make areas feel a lot safer to use. A comparison was made to Aiken’s downtown where their buildings have double fronts to create inviting corridors on both side of retail buildings. Downtown Augusta needs to become more pedestrian/bicycle friendly.
- **Cultural Resources:** It was mentioned about seating and public art and how the Arts Council, who is currently working on a master plan for public art, how that gets integrated and tied together with Way Finding so there is a cohesive statement and understanding of what is going on in downtown. Augusta could host an event like Atlanta Streets Alive, maybe, on the Sunday of the arts festival, to keep security costs down, that would bring additional folks to downtown.

## 6 Funding Sources and Incentives

There are various tools to use in making sure strategic change takes place concerning downtown redevelopment. Timing in response to market conditions is crucial to kicking off the launch of the plan and to address different scales and project circumstances. A few of the strategies included in the Implementation Strategy are the following categories of tools:

1. Assemblage of property
2. Redevelopment powers
3. Fiscal Incentives
4. Access to Federal Funding/Incentives

Here are a few of the incentives that are on the books that are available as part of the State of Georgia and Richmond County: Tax Allocation District, Enterprise Zones, Opportunity Zones and Amendment 65.

Augusta offers various types of incentives to encourage revitalization of distressed communities under provisions of the Official Code of Georgia and the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. These incentives are available for businesses that are located within the Tax Allocation District, (O.C.G.A. 36-44-8), Enterprise Zones (O.C.G.A. 36-88) and Opportunity Zones (D.C.A. rules 110-24-1).

**Tax Allocation District (TAD)** – Augusta’s Tax Allocation District (TAD) was adopted on May 5, 2009 pursuant to voter approval in November 2006. Beginning in 2009 incremental tax revenue collected in the district has gone into a fund to supplement funding by public and private sources for public improvements that spur private redevelopment activity. Tax exempt bonds may be issued to pay for infrastructure and other eligible redevelopment costs in partnership with private developers. This investment will generate new jobs and new sales tax revenue and it will provide a positive mix of new and redeveloped living, office, shopping, public use and recreational facilities on properties within the TAD that are currently undeveloped.

Tax Allocation Districts are Georgia’s version of tax increment financing, which allows a local government to capture tax revenues attributable to increases in property values within a prescribed development area and use those revenues for neighborhood improvement projects.

**Enterprise Zones (EZ)** – Enterprise Zones are designated geographical areas which suffer from disinvestment, underdeveloped, and general economic distress. In an effort to encourage revitalization in these distressed communities, Georgia law permits cities to create districts where ad valorem taxes are abated for up to 10 years and other incentives are provided to private employers who create five or more new jobs.

**Opportunity Zones (OZ)** – Opportunity Zones, similar to Enterprise Zones, are designated geographic areas which suffer from economic distress. In order for an area to be designated as an OZ, under the DCA rules the area first has to be an Enterprise Zone or have an Urban Redevelopment Plan in place pursuant to the DCA website.

Opportunity Zone Tax Credit Incentives:

- the maximum Job Tax Credit allowed under law - \$3,500 per job created
- the lowest job creation threshold of any job tax credit program - 2 jobs
- use of Job Tax Credits against 100 percent of Georgia income tax liability and withholding tax
- provides for businesses of any nature to qualify, not just a defined "business enterprise"

**Amendment 65** (City of Augusta): All capital improvements of each new commercial or business establishment located in the City of Augusta shall be exempt from all ad valorem taxes, except taxes to retire bonded debt, levied by the City of Augusta for a period of five (5) years after completion of the improvement if the improvements have a fair market value of \$100,000 or more. Each addition to the capital improvements of an existing commercial or business establishment located in the City of Augusta shall be exempt from all ad valorem taxes, except taxes to retire bonded debt, levied by the City of Augusta for a period of five years after completion of the additional improvements if the additional improvements have a fair market value of \$100,000 or more. The value of each establishment in excess of the amount exempted by this paragraph shall remain subject to taxation. As used in this paragraph, the term "capital improvements" includes buildings, machinery, equipment and fixtures, but does not include land or inventory. This paragraph shall in no way affect any state, county or school taxes.

**The Transportation Investment Act of 2010 (TIA)**, which is also known unofficially as TSPLOST) provides a legal mechanism in which regions throughout Georgia have the ability to impose a 1% sales tax to fund transportation improvements within their region. Collection of TIA funds began on January 1, 2013. Funds are collected by the Georgia Department of Revenue (DoR). DoR will collect and enforce the special district transportation sales and use tax for the use and benefit of the Special District imposing the special district transportation sales and use tax. Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission (GSFIC) will disburse the proceeds of the special district transportation sales and use tax as soon as practicable after collection. GSFIC will transfer the 25% distributions for the local government allocations monthly. Funds for building projects were first distributed in early Spring 2013.



## 7 Implementation Strategy

The Implementation Strategy is intended to identify goals and strategies needed to bring recommendations into fruition. This Strategy and the directives it provides builds off an Implementation Strategy Matrix (see Section 7-7) of specific strategies and steps needed to achieve goals, and complete project ideas formulated as part of the overall Downtown Redevelopment Plan. The strategy and matrix are structured around six (6) guiding elements of the Redevelopment Plan, namely organization, parking, economic development, land use, the public realm, and cultural resources. Actions specifically associated with organization are addressed in the next section. In the Matrix, goals and strategies are related back to the elements developed in part from public input starting with Section 7.1, to help ensure goals, strategies, and projects align with the community’s vision for downtown Augusta.

Time duration for some of the actions outlined can take place over a 10 to 15-year period. The Matrix highlights projects and the characterized timeline associated with each one. This is to reflect the timing of the market conditions, efforts to attract developer interest, and possible funding cycles. The development timeline will vary and be dependent upon such factors as unforeseen development interests and how the public responds to that development. For example, if a developer expresses interest in the “Old Depot” Site located near the Riverwalk, that potential project will garner top priority. The steps needed to evaluate the developer and/or proposal will determine suitability and priority status.

The success of the implementation strategies will depend on the public/private partnerships that are developed among all downtown stakeholders. The guiding elements mentioned earlier are included within the Implementation Strategy Matrix. Project management strategies and best practices will be incorporated within the discussions among the stakeholders as they proceed with the prescribed implementation measures.

### 7.1 Organization

#### 7.1.1 Stakeholder Adoption and Management of Implementation Process

Choosing the most effective and appropriate legal entity to oversee redevelopment, according to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, is one of the crucial decisions needed for the successful implementation of a redevelopment area plan. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 36-61-17, there are four basic entities that can assume development powers described therein:

- The local governing body can itself exercise urban redevelopment powers
- A county or city can establish and delegate powers to a new urban redevelopment agency
- A housing authority can be designated as the redevelopment entity
- Municipalities may delegate redevelopment powers to a new or preexisting downtown development authority

#### 7.1.2 Maintain Active Oversight of the Development of the DRA

On April 1, 2010, the Board of Commissioners of Augusta, Georgia by resolution activated the Urban Redevelopment Agency and authorized the Agency to exercise Augusta's "urban

redevelopment powers" as defined under and provided in Georgia's Urban Redevelopment Law, O.C.G.A. Section 36-61-1, et seq.

The Urban Redevelopment Agency of Augusta is prepared to assist, collaborate and work on permitted projects with other governmental agencies and authorities, such as the Downtown Development Authority of Augusta-Richmond County and the Development Authority of Richmond County, non-profit companies and agencies such as the Augusta Regional Collaboration Corporation, and the private sector.

## 7.2 Parking

### 7.2.1 Public Review Comments

As mentioned within this document, there has been considerable comments about parking problems both perceived and documented by private consultants, from property owners, merchants, and the general public within public forums. Parking management and enforcement have been the consistent recommendations.

There have been public review meetings and submitted written comments concerning the parking challenges in downtown Augusta. The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has had a key role in addressing the issues of downtown parking, having contracted private consultants to gather pertinent data, produce a couple of studies, and proposed solutions. One of the report recommendations included, "management of on-street parking policies and restrictions should be examined by the City." Given the complexity of the problem, it is important that an overarching management entity is identified and empowered to address the parking dilemma, therefore, the idea of establishing a public parking entity (including authority or nonprofit corporation) or a public parking management program that could potentially assist the DDA with implementation of a Parking Management Plan. The City can potentially outsource management of public parking services.

Issues to explore with further exploration through the implementation process by stakeholders could include:

- Addressing the role of parking as a whole
- Its integration with current and future transportation systems including the current Wayfinding System
- Pay structures
- Zoning regulations
- Monitoring and enforcement
- Balancing supply and demand, and possibly
- Financing of new facilities, (dependent on decided structure of program by the city)

The chosen entity's purpose would be to regulate, operate, monitor, fund and acquire or construct parking facilities if demand warrants it. It would work with the business and medical

communities, other stakeholders, such as downtown property owners and coordinate with the Augusta Public Transit and the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS).

### 7.3 Redevelopment Opportunities

To reach vibrancy, implementation of the strategies will require sustained private investment in the buildings and sites within the DRA. Corridors including Reynolds Street, Broad Street, Ellis Street, Greene Street, and Telfair Street along with the numbered streets that run north to south from the Savannah River to Walton Way, will require private and public partnerships and with state and/or federal governments to overcome economic and physical challenges associated with the adaptive reuse of the properties. In many cases, as mentioned in this Plan Update, the buildings are older properties located within the National Register Historic Districts and the Downtown local historic district.

It is anticipated that a few structures located on Broad Street and other parts of the DRA that are historic and architecturally significant, will require partnerships to plan and finance improvements while meeting the historic rehabilitation standards. There are a number of buildings that are listed *available*, as reported by the DDA, and several are vacant, such as the J.C. Penny building and the old Woolworth building. Along with vacant storefronts, identifying structures that are likely to be targeted for substantial reinvestment in rehabilitation and/or new construction, implementation tools are needed as part of a package to offset some of the costs. By calling attention to key opportunities, such as the ongoing rehabilitation of the Miller Theatre, and others within the DRA, will boost confidence levels on the part of other owners and developers to make investments necessary to ensure economic success. Once it is known that there are financial rewards associated with a downtown redevelopment project, a development momentum is likely to spread to other areas of the DRA.

### 7.4 Land Use

A first impression of Broad Street is a dining, entertainment and special retail center for visitors to the city, those that work downtown and for residents. There are many uses that are not clearly defined with themes that are not well integrated in their economic and social functions. Bringing life back to lower Broad Street and along the side streets will require land uses that cater to various markets. Significant synergies are needed to give pedestrians a reason to explore further into other areas of the downtown. While there are hotels on Augusta's main street that are located on lower Broad near 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, there are future plans for more. It was recently announced that hotel development will be constructed near Reynolds and 9<sup>th</sup> Street. A second hotel is planned for the 1200 block of Broad Street. An increase in the number of hotel rooms is an indicator of the growing market for conventions. As growth continues to serve the tourism and hospitality sector, it will become increasingly important to continue diversification of Augusta's downtown economy with a balance of other land use needs. Facilitation of planned growth for competing land uses will be the next step in reflecting the desired community-friendly character of the downtown.

## 7.5 Public Realm

Establishing a strong sense of place, requires infrastructure and urban design treatments that convey a pedestrian-friendly environment in corridors that lead to and from the Riverwalk, along Broad Street, and those streets within the Downtown Redevelopment Area that parallel Broad Street. Identifying and addressing impediments and underperforming pedestrian and bike paths will require pedestrian counts to determine organic flow of pedestrians.

## 7.6 Cultural Resources

Cultural facilities are great resources for adults, youth, and children. A downtown location for performing arts centers, museums, historic sites and buildings, and others are known to become better staples in the downtown community and its city location. Creating and providing strategies to strengthen cultural resources provide creative energy for individuals and families. This creativity is seen in the artwork that is located in galleries and museums, as well as in the built environment of downtown Augusta. The Arts Council Master Plan is identified as a potential resource during the implementation phase of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update. It will look to solidify the arts within the downtown community among other areas of the county. The Implementation Strategy Matrix, the next section, goes into detail the proposed goals and strategies along with potential partners that could collaborate together in realizing improvements in downtown Augusta.

## List of Matrix Acronyms

AEDA	Augusta Economic Development Authority
AHCDD	Augusta Housing and Community Development Department
APDD	Augusta Planning and Development Department
APT	Augusta Public Transit
ARPD	Augusta Recreation and Parks Department
ARC	Augusta Regional Collaboration
AU	Augusta University
CBD	Central Business District
CSRA	Central Savannah River Area
CVB	Convention and Visitors Bureau
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
DRA	Downtown Redevelopment Area
EOA	Economic Opportunity Authority
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
L RTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
TAD	Tax Allocation District
URA	Urban Redevelopment Agency

## 7.7 Implementation Strategy Matrix

ID	Goal/Strategy	Partners	Timeline	Implementation Steps
<b>Organization</b>				
1	<p><b>Goal:</b> Choose appropriate plan implementation structure, Maintain active oversight of the development of the Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRA) as established in study</p>	Administrator, APDD, AHCDD, DDA	2017, Ongoing	
	<p><b>Strategy 1.</b> Establish an Augusta Downtown Redevelopment Oversight Committee with stakeholders specifically concerned with redevelopment in study area to:</p> <p>a.) Carry forward measures and recommendations developed through the plan and public process;</p> <p>b.) Act as the community liaison;</p> <p>c.) Help ensure community buy-in for projects within DRA</p>	DDA; Chamber, Augusta Tomorrow, ARC; Public at large; residents; interested stakeholders	Ongoing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Confirm participants (members)</li> <li>2. Establish action steps toward communications and regularity of meetings</li> <li>3. Prepare and implement plan measures</li> </ol>
<b>Parking</b>				
2	<p><b>Goal:</b> Discuss implementation of parking improvement plan and/or possible creation of a Public Parking Authority or entity with certain capabilities: self-sufficiency, collection of fees (and fines), issue bonds; allocation of fund options</p>	Administrator, DDA, APDD , Downtown property owners	2017	
	<p><b>Strategy 1.</b> Devise and implement a Parking Management Plan that incorporates decisions of a comprehensive parking and circulation plan that includes:</p>	APDD, Cooper Carry, Augusta Tomorrow, CVB, Engineering,	2017-2018	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite expert speakers, address needs;</li> <li>2. Review existing policies; previous parking studies, &amp; public comments;</li> </ol>

## 7.7 Implementation Strategy Matrix

ID	Goal/Strategy	Partners	Timeline	Implementation Steps
	a.) On-street and off-street parking, b.) The goal of parking regulations c.) Adopt revised parking ordinance d.) Pay structure e.) Location of parking facilities f.) Appearance g.) Zoning regulations	Downtown property owners		3. Develop comprehensive parking solutions 4. Address future parking needs 5. Evaluate option to reduce demand for parking by incenting other transportation options i.e. a circulator 6. Address loading issues, and evaluate shared parking options 7. Address underutilized parking decks 8. Establish public relations measures for education purposes
	<b>Strategy 2.</b> Evaluate Circulator concept to provide easy access to parking areas, offices, shopping, and restaurants and government buildings as part of comprehensive parking and circulation plan a.) Identify a Circulator advisory committee b.) Identify best practices; pros and cons; proposed costs c.) Paid parking parameters & Free parking in downtown	APT, MCG, DDA & board members, APDD, private sector experts, downtown resident(s)	2017	1. Obtain research on data, traffic counts, activity centers, etc. 2. Location of potential stops and routes based upon data 3. Identify its pros and cons including projected hard and soft costs
	<b>Strategy 3.</b> Evaluate and improve connectivity throughout the DRA including existing Gateway Enhancements, maintenance and Wayfinding System in downtown, to identify a better, safer network for all users and abilities regardless of chosen transportation mode	CVB, Wheel Movement, Cooper Carry, Engineering, ARPD, Downtown surrounding neighborhood associations	2017, Ongoing	1. Establish public outreach initiatives to educate the business community and public-at-large on completed locations and areas of focus, particularly as Cooper Carry's work is completed

## 7.7 Implementation Strategy Matrix

ID	Goal/Strategy	Partners	Timeline	Implementation Steps
	a.) Identify and improve connections to the Riverwalk, Medical District, surrounding neighborhoods to the DRA b.) Identify areas within corridors and near parking decks that need lighting, landscaping, and other urban design treatments c.) Identify costs and funding sources d.) Address these issues pertaining to Ellis Street in CBD			
<b>Redevelopment Opportunities</b>				
3	<b>Goal:</b> With the use of implementation tools and incentives toward the successful adaptive reuse of strategic properties, create a spiral effect of redevelopment projects that will convey the potential economic rewards to other owners, developers and investors	DDA, AEDA, Augusta University, Developers, Downtown property owners	2017-2037	1. Establish an attraction and retention strategy that involves several stakeholders to participate in the informative meetings with potential owners/developers 2. Develop a schedule that includes 2 partners
	<b>Strategy 1.</b> Identify a total list of redevelopment opportunities including rehabilitation and new construction projects	DDA	2017	Coordination is needed to ensure participation with lead partner
	<b>Strategy 2.</b> Develop a comprehensive database of implementation tools and investment incentives including all federal, state and local financial programs to provide solutions to:	AEDA, DDA, AHCCD, Historic Augusta	2017	

## 7.7 Implementation Strategy Matrix

ID	Goal/Strategy	Partners	Timeline	Implementation Steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) Site assembly challenges such as fragmented ownership, blighted conditions and possible various expectations of value</li> <li>b.) Fiscal incentive challenges of extraordinary costs of redevelopment, historic preservation, and rehabilitation</li> <li>c.) Project debt and equity financing to increase availability to developers and business owners</li> </ul>			
	<b>Strategy 3.</b> Offer more residential choices for market populations that are interested in living in a downtown environment	AHCD, MCG, DDA, Homebuilders Association, Realtors, Association	2017 -2022	1. Work with developer to inform the general populace of downtown residential living as projects become available
	<b>Strategy 4.</b> Attract developers for mixed use projects within the DRA including sites mentioned within the Plan Update such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a.) "Old Depot" Site,</li> <li>b.) Former Jail Site on Walton Way,</li> <li>c.) Identification of other sites</li> </ul>	AEDA, DDA, Private Sector	2017-2037	
<b>Land Use</b>				
4	<b>Goal:</b> Expand and Upgrade Retail	DDA, AHCD	Ongoing	
	<b>Strategy 1.</b> Expand URA boundary to include Olde Town & Harrisburg neighborhoods to facilitate more community revitalization and home ownership efforts	AEDA, DDA, APDD, Olde Town & Harrisburg Neighborhood Associations	2017	1. Follow normal coordination protocol for marketing using a variety of media

## 7.7 Implementation Strategy Matrix

ID	Goal/Strategy	Partners	Timeline	Implementation Steps
	<b>Strategy 2.</b> Develop enhancement of Retail Recruitment Strategy to fill in vacancies on Broad Street and arterial streets	DDA, Augusta Tomorrow	Ongoing	
	<b>Strategy 3.</b> Establish costs estimates associated with rehabilitation of older buildings	AHCD, Engineering, Housing Private Sector	2017-2018	
	<b>Strategy 4.</b> Create building regulations that will offer incentives to building owners with ground floor retail, restaurant and service uses to retrofit their buildings with <i>double fronts</i> on Ellis Street and Jones Street	AEDA, Engineering, Housing Private Sector, APDD	2017-2018	
5	<b>Goal:</b> Encourage moderate and high-density residential, market rate and affordable developments within the DRA	AHCD, APDD, Turn Back the Block, CSRA EOA, Private Sector	2017-2022	1. Identify any research on residential developments and possible efforts to include mixed incomes
	<b>Strategy 1.</b> Further define an Urban Entertainment District and its potential to increase and attract downtown residential living, further development options to increase	Augusta Regional Collaboration (ARC), DDA, APDD	2018	
	<b>Strategy 2.</b> identify impediments to market penetration	DDA, AEDA, Private Sector	2017-2018	
<b>Public Realm</b>				
6	<b>Goal:</b> Establishing strong sense of place to undergird public right-a-ways, walkability	APDD, DDA, Cooper Carry, Engineering, CVB,	2017-2018	1. Due to the work of Cooper Carry in this area is ongoing, efforts should be made to include all partners on its progress

## 7.7 Implementation Strategy Matrix

ID	Goal/Strategy	Partners	Timeline	Implementation Steps
		Utilities Dept., Historic Augusta, HPC		
	<b>Strategy 1.</b> Identify impediments, underperforming pedestrian ways/corridors		Ongoing	
	<b>Strategy 2.</b> Address Design Guidelines			
7	<b>Goal:</b> Reconnect to the River	DDA, ARPD, Augusta Tomorrow, ARPD	Ongoing	1. Follow normal coordination protocol of meetings and marketing
	<b>Strategy 1.</b> Renovation of Riverwalk, i.e. security cameras, lighting	DDA, Sheriff's Dept.		
	<b>Strategy 2.</b> Explore adding land uses accessible by river			
8	<b>Goal:</b> Cultivate pedestrian and bike culture with resources needed to enhance downtown use	APDD, LRTP, Bike Organizations	Ongoing	1. Follow normal coordination protocol of programming and marketing
<b>Cultural Resources</b>				
9	<b>Goal:</b> Integrate Arts Council Master Plan with Downtown Plan	Arts Council, DDA, APDD	2017-2018	1. Establish meeting schedule to begin collaborative effort
	<b>Strategy 1.</b> Coordinate efforts to identify implementation measures including plans, challenges and costs			
	<b>Strategy 2.</b> Determine measures of how organization can be strengthened and the types of resources needed			

## Appendix A. Maps

Downtown Land Use Map

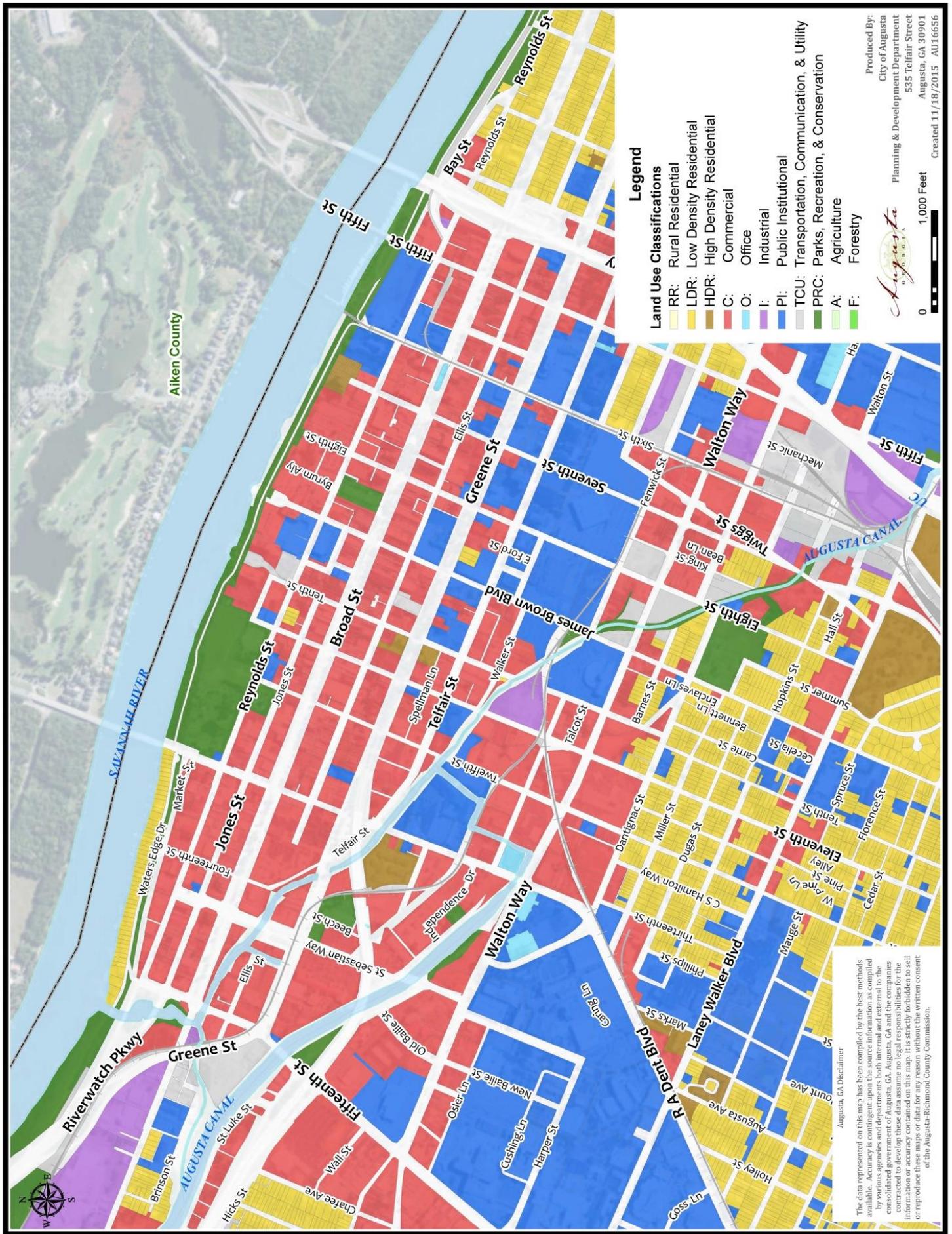
Future Development Map

Primary Character Area Map

Richmond County Land Use Map

Tax Allocation District (TAD) 4

Original Expanded DRA Boundary

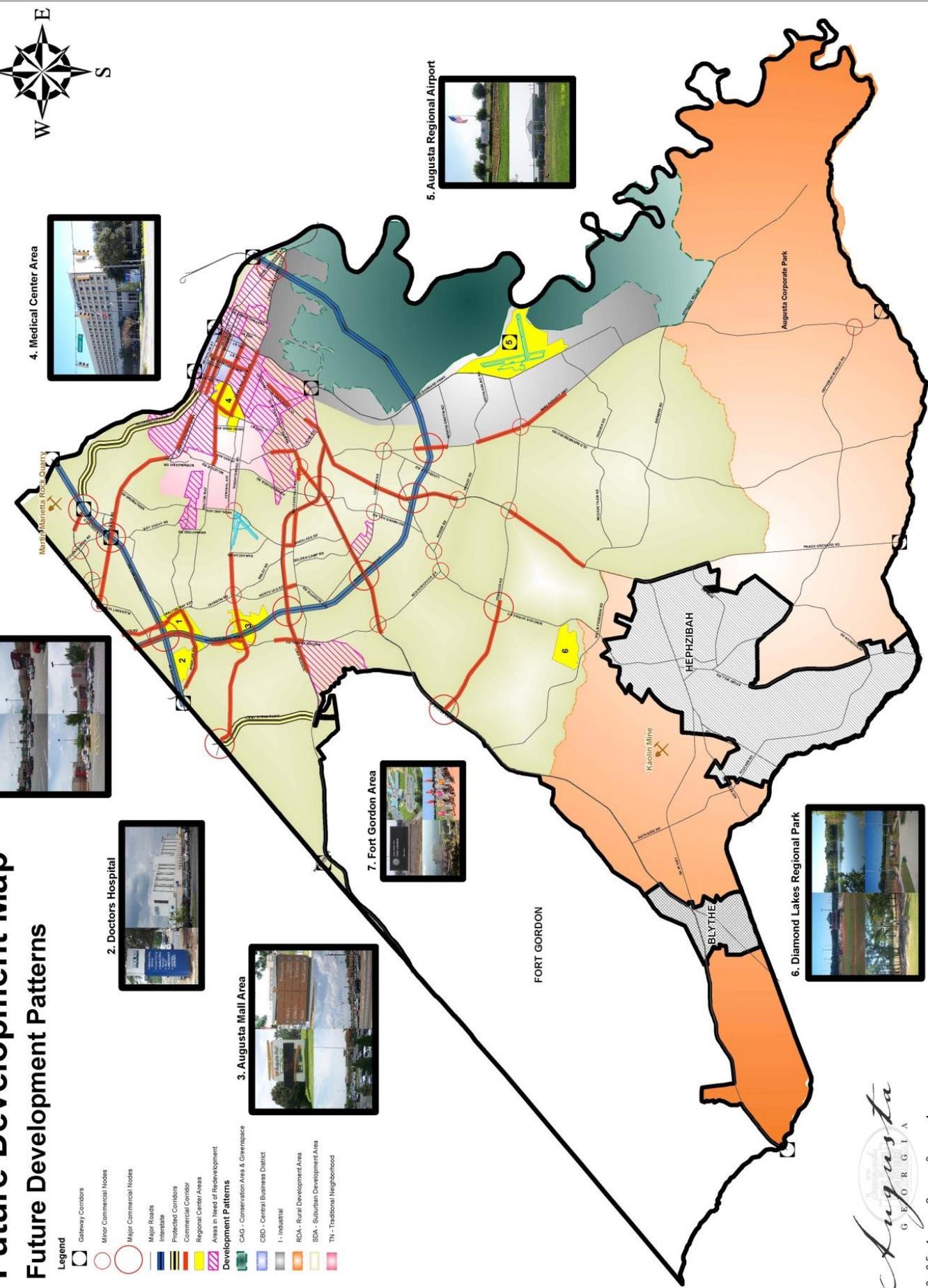


# Future Development Map

## Future Development Patterns

### Legend

- Gateway Corridors
  - Minor Commercial Nodes
  - Major Commercial Nodes
  - Major Roads
  - Interstate
  - Protected Corridors
  - Commercial Corridor
  - Regional Center Areas
  - Areas in Need of Redevelopment
- ### Development Patterns
- CAG - Conservation Area & Greenspace
  - CBD - Central Business District
  - I - Industrial
  - RDA - Rural Development Area
  - SDA - Suburban Development Area
  - TN - Traditional Neighborhood



1. Augusta Exchange



2. Doctors Hospital



3. Augusta Mall Area



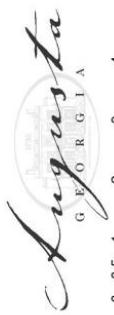
7. Fort Gordon Area



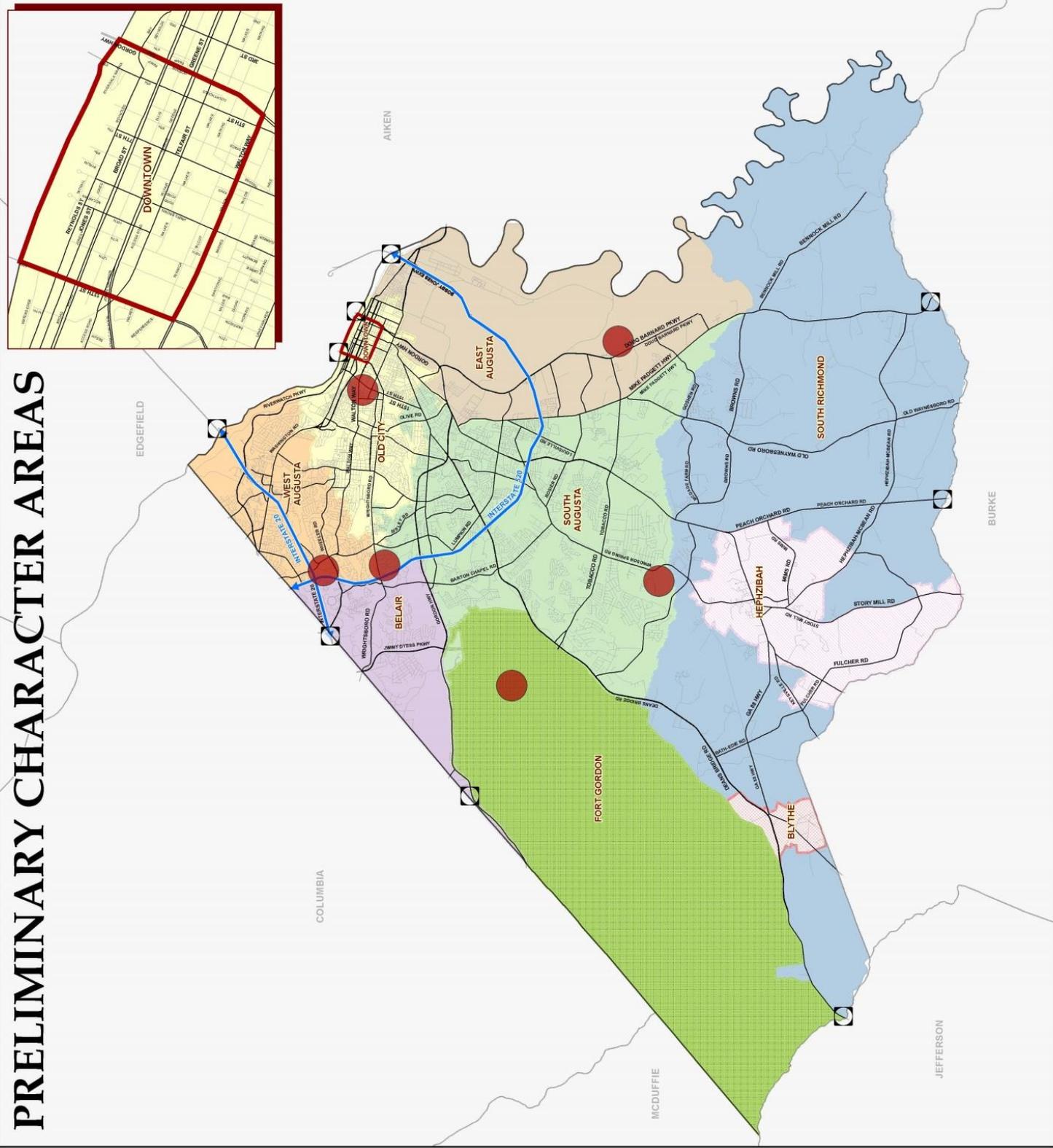
5. Augusta Regional Airport



6. Diamond Lakes Regional Park



# PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS



## PRELIMINARY CHARACTER AREAS



Projection: StatePlane  
Zone: 3057  
Units: Feet



### Legend

- GATEWAY CORRIDOR
- REGIONAL CENTER
- MAJOR ROADS
- AUGUSTA
- BELAIR
- BLYTHE
- DOWNTOWN
- EAST AUGUSTA
- FORT GORDON
- HEPHZIBAH
- OLD CITY
- SOUTH AUGUSTA
- SOUTH RICHMOND
- WEST AUGUSTA

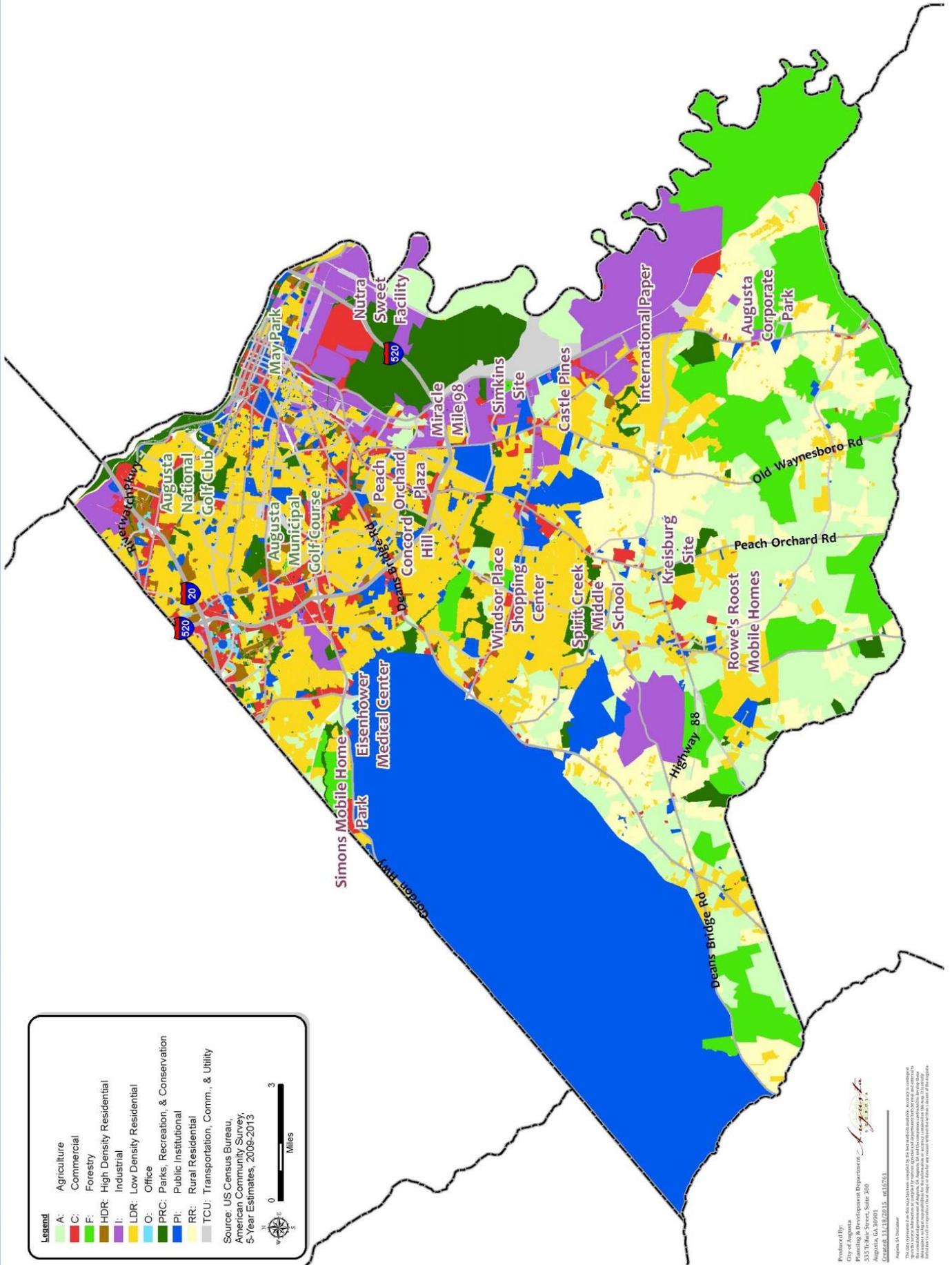
Augusta, GA Disclaimer

The data represented on this map has been compiled by the best methods available. Accuracy is contingent upon the source information as compiled by various agencies and departments both internal and external to the consolidated government of Augusta, GA. Augusta, GA and the companies contracted to develop these data assume no legal responsibilities for the information or accuracy contained on this map. It is strictly forbidden to sell or reproduce these maps or data for any reason without the written consent of the Augusta-Richmond County Commission.



Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission  
525 Telfair Street  
Augusta, GA 30901  
www.augustaga.gov  
December 2007

# Augusta-Richmond County Land Use Map



**Legend**

- A: Agriculture
- C: Commercial
- F: Forestry
- HDR: High Density Residential
- I: Industrial
- LDR: Low Density Residential
- O: Office
- PRC: Parks, Recreation, & Conservation
- PI: Public Institutional
- RR: Rural Residential
- TCU: Transportation, Comm., & Utility

Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2009-2013

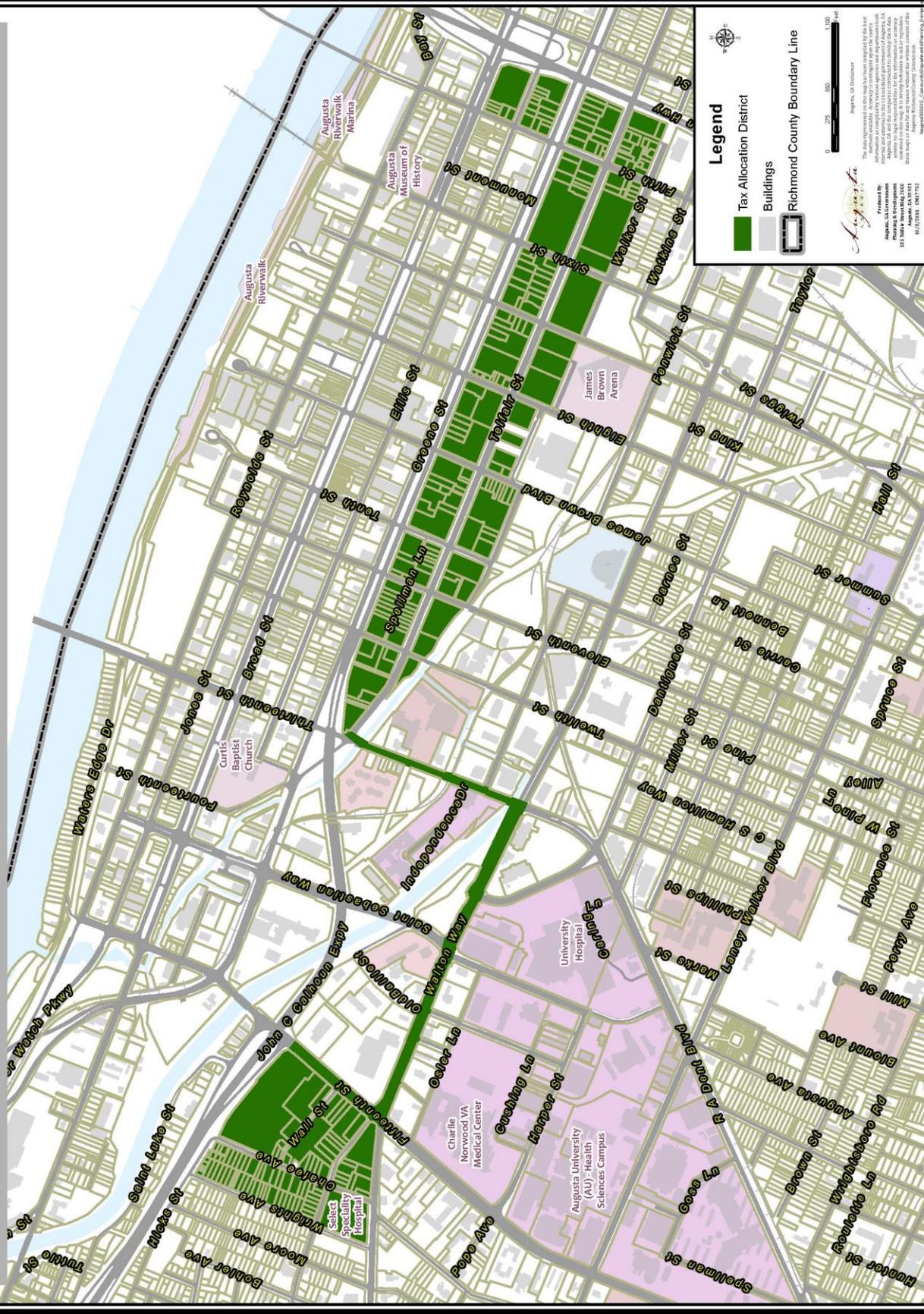
0 1 2 3 Miles

Produced By:  
 City of Augusta  
 Planning & Economic Development Department  
 533 York St., Suite 200  
 Augusta, GA 30901  
 Contact: 706.725.1113 ext. 15731

*Augusta*

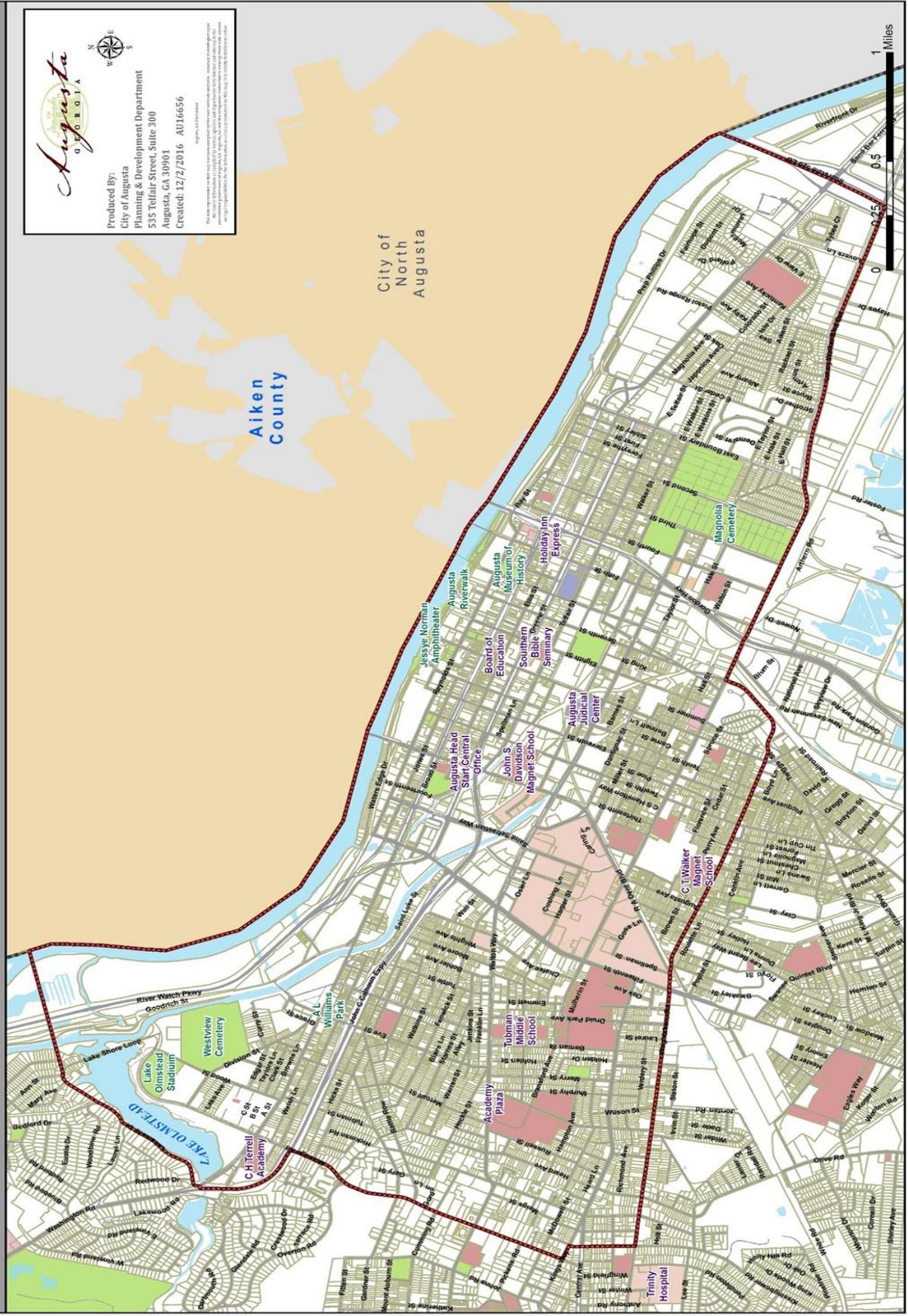
The data represented on this map has been compiled by the City of Augusta and is subject to change without notice. The City of Augusta and its Planning & Economic Development Department are not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map. The City of Augusta and its Planning & Economic Development Department are not responsible for any damages or losses resulting from the use of this map.

# Tax Allocation District - 4



Original Expanded DRA Boundary

# Downtown Redevelopment Area - Expanded Boundary



# Appendix B. Augusta Mayor and Commission

**Mayor Hardie Davis, Jr.**

**Augusta-Richmond County Commission:**

District 1 - William Fennoy

District 2 - Dennis Williams

District 3 - Mary Davis

District 4 - Sammie Sias

District 5 - Andrew Jefferson

District 6 - Ben Hasan

District 7 - Sean Frantom

District 8 - Wayne Guilfoyle

District 9 - Marion Williams

District 10 - Grady Smith

## Appendix C. DRA Market Analysis

Market analysis is a very effective tool for development; it evaluates unique economic characteristics of a given community, its surrounding, and regional influences. It is a standard practice with real estate and development companies. While each company may have specialized analytical practices, certain components are standards throughout the practice. A detail methodology and market analysis, demonstrating DRA's economic potential is provided below.

### *Methodology*

A typical real estate market report analyzes the immediate area's socioeconomic profile, target/market areas, competition, project sales and revenue potential. Each component uses a variety of data sources. The following is a list of data sources used to compile the DRA Market Analysis:

- U.S. Census
- American Community Survey
- Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Bureau of Economic Analysis
- ESRI Community Analyst
- Retail Strategies Inc.
- Augusta Planning and Development Department
- Dun & Bradstreet

The Socioeconomic Profile in chapter 1 presents some of the data from these sources, data limited to the DRA. Another analysis is based on target/market areas, in and around the DRA. These target/market areas are divided into three categories:

1. Primary (Local) – One square mile consisting of people and businesses whose residence is in the DRA.
2. Secondary (Commute) – Three square miles consisting of people and businesses whose destination is the DRA, including portions of North Augusta, SC.
3. Tertiary (Regional) – Six square miles consisting of people and businesses who travel to and from the DRA, including portions of North Augusta and Aiken County, SC and Columbia County, SC.

Retail Strategies from Birmingham Alabama recently conducted a market analysis of Downtown Augusta<sup>3</sup> using a similar methodology. They reported the 2013 population and its projection to 2018. They also reported the average household and disposable income (*Table C-1*). Retail Strategies' market analysis and the research presented in this chapter demonstrate DRA's growing economic potential.

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<sup>3</sup> Market Research and Strategic Plan, Retail Strategies, March 2014

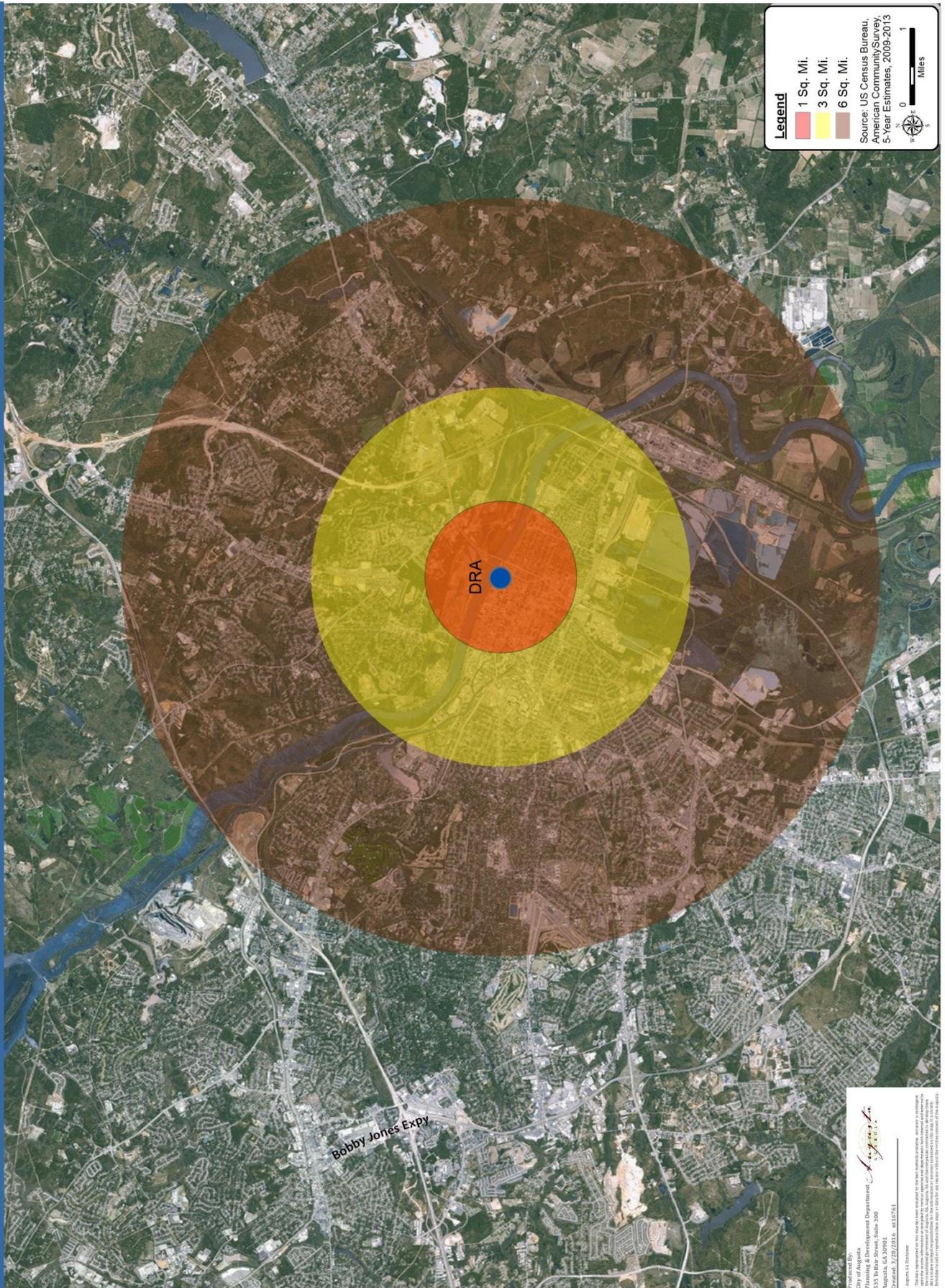
**Table C-1: Retail Strategies Market Analysis**

	2013 Population	2018 Projected Population	Average Household Income	Average Disposable Income
3 Mile Radius	43,835	44,651	\$ 38,343	\$ 31,513
5 Mile Radius	97,219	99,660	\$ 46,381	\$ 37,636
5 Minute Drive Time	11,557	11,644	\$ 30,686	\$ 25,628
10 Minute Drive Time	66,996	68,571	\$ 41,597	\$ 34,108

*Source: Retail Strategies, Birmingham, AL.*

The following updated DRA market analysis presents numerous opportunities that will attract new businesses, residents and services. These opportunities include capturing portions of the North Augusta and South Augusta markets. The DRA Market Analysis figure below shows the extent of the three market areas, all of which capture portions of these areas. Competitive analysis and extrapolated projections are outside the scope of this market analysis.

# Downtown Redevelopment Area Market Analysis



Augusta, GA  
City of Augusta  
Planning & Development Department  
535 Bulfinch Street, Suite 300  
Augusta, GA 30901  
Phone: 706.725.1111  
Fax: 706.725.1111  
www.augusta-georgia.gov

This document is the property of the City of Augusta. It is to be used for the purposes stated and is not to be distributed, copied, or otherwise used without the express written permission of the City of Augusta. If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact the Planning & Development Department at 706.725.1111.

This Market Analysis follows standard practice used by Retail Strategies and describes key findings using excel, GIS and ESRI Community Analyst tools to evaluate DRA’s primary, secondary, and tertiary target/market areas’ economic integrity. The process used to arrive at the recent findings consist of:

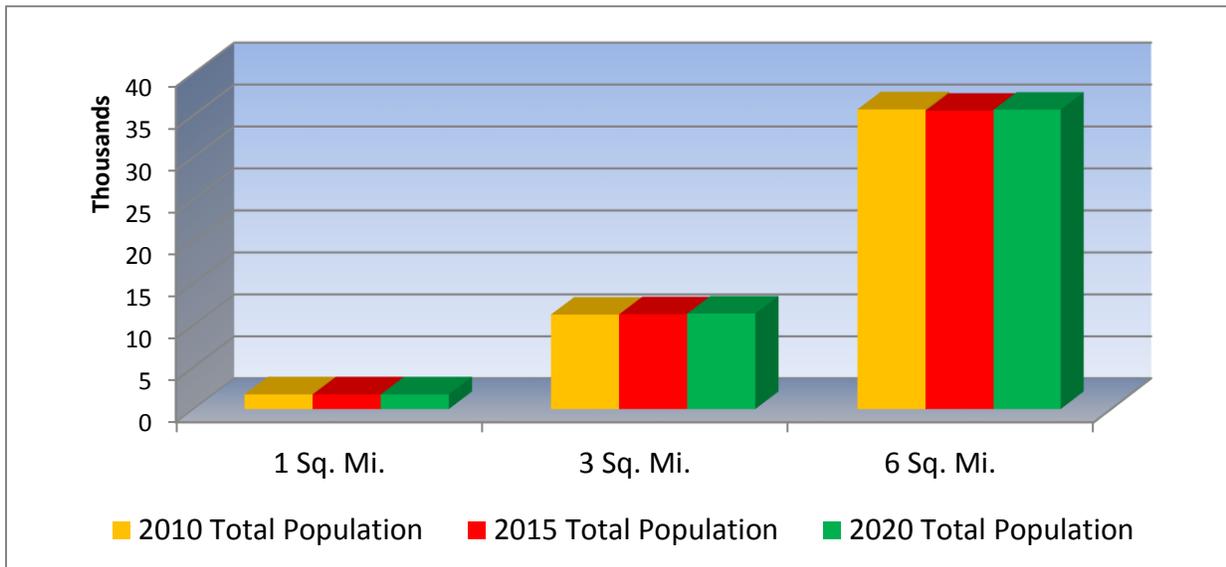
1. Data pulled from all data sources listed on page 17 using Community Analysis.
2. GIS used to generate map of target/market areas and confirm data attribute table associated with the data.
3. Attribute table extracted to excel and converted to graphs presenting the target/market areas.

This methodology resulted in a detail analysis of all three market areas. While the socioeconomic analysis focuses on the DRA boundary, the market analysis takes portions of North Augusta and the region into consideration. The results are described below.

### **Market Analysis Update**

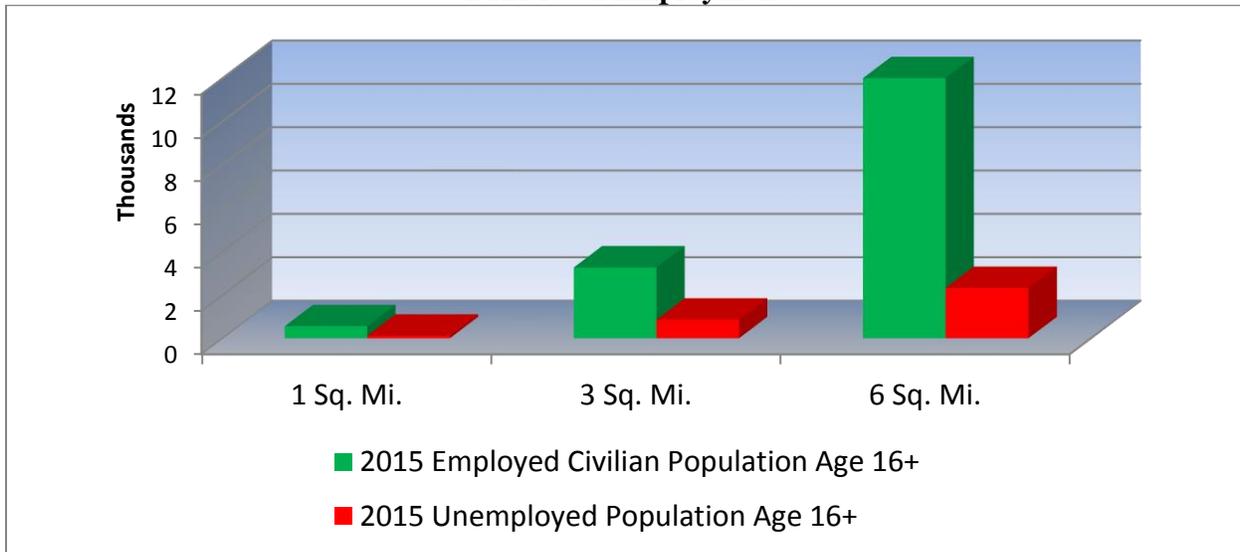
The socioeconomic analysis profiles the DRA. This market analysis describes the financial nature and its impact on the surrounding area. Population and employment potential for all three market areas are described in the DRA Total Population and Total Employment figures below. New residential development (e.g. JB Whites building) attracts and retains new downtown residents. Benefits of a strong market include, renovating historic buildings and other commercial properties, creating new jobs, increasing property values, and attracting more residents and businesses.

**DRA Total Population**



Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department, ESRI Community Analyst

### DRA Total Employment

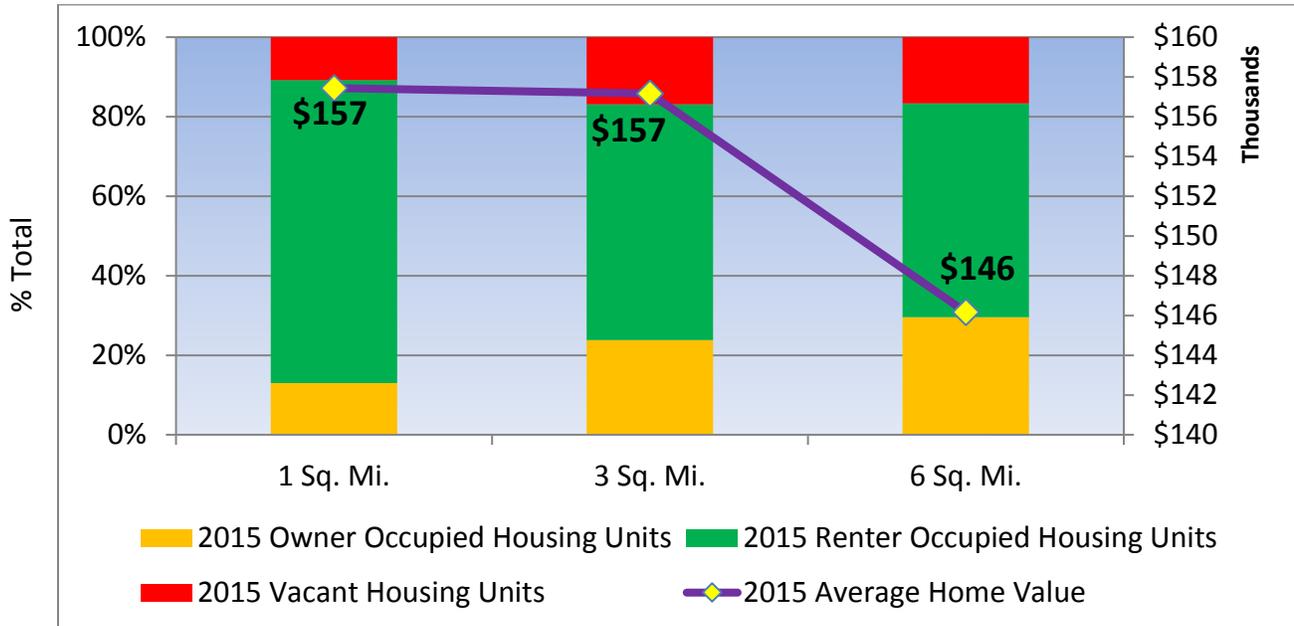


Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department, ESRI Community Analyst

Downtown Augusta has a high unemployment rate but lower than other market areas. DRA unemployment rates in primary area is 17.5% while secondary is 20.8%. The DRA Occupancy and Property Value figure indicates DRA property values and occupancy. The same holds true for occupancy rates. More people in the DRA rent than own.

Property value on the other hand is different. Over 80% of the residents, within a six (6) square mile, are renters. An estimated 10% of the DRA's residential units are vacant and available for immediate occupancy. As DRA property values increase, surrounding real estate markets will too. Primary real estate markets have a direct relationship to secondary markets. The Depot site and Port Royal are ideal locations for mixed-use development, especially residential and commercial uses, within a historic context. Most of Port Royal building is used as condominiums and occupied by Unisys Corporation.

### DRA Occupancy and Property Value



Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department, ESRI Community Analyst

Properties like the Marriott Convention Center, Riverfront Condominiums (Port Royal Building), and the weekly farmer’s market held every Saturday (From January through November) are proven successes of DRA’s market potential. Residents, visitors, tourist, and business travelers take full advantage of the mixed-use opportunities in downtown Augusta. The following is a brief list of properties available in DRA.

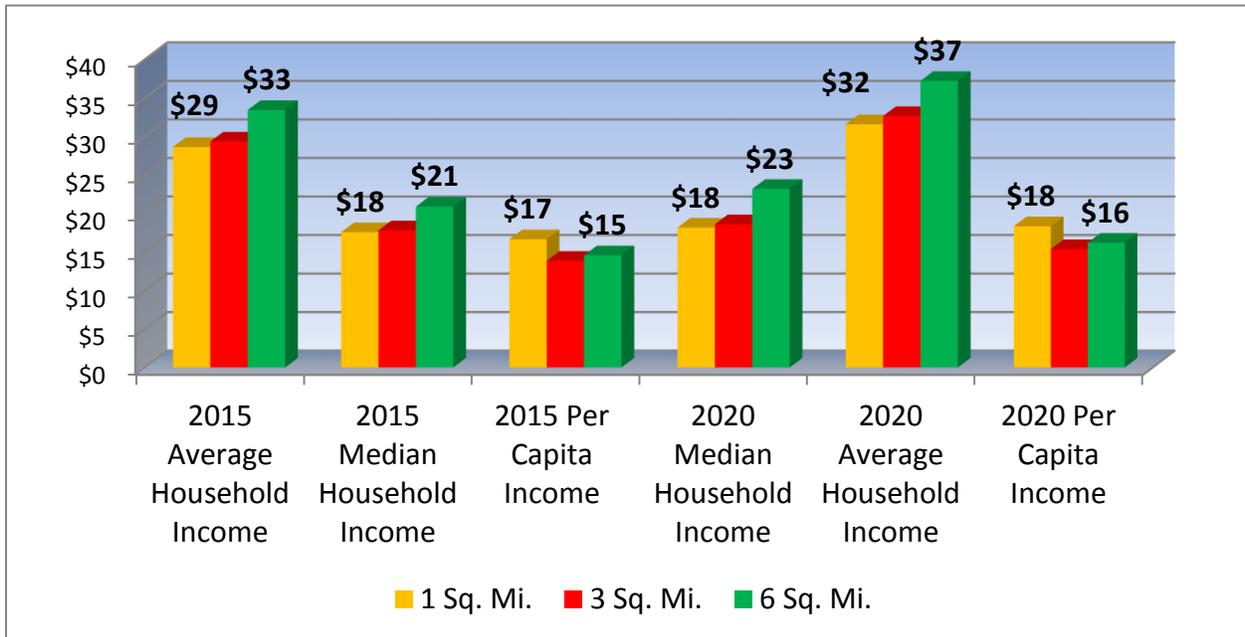
#### DRA Available Properties

List	Address	List	Address
Medical Center Bank	1424 Walton Way	Parking lot	726 Broad Street
Retail Space	1283 Broad Street	The Long Building	305/307 8th street
Restaurant Site	1253 Broad Street	Artist Row District	1046 Broad Street
Artist Row District	1018 Broad Street	Artist Row District	1024 Broad Street
JB White Building	936 Broad Street	Kress Building	914 Broad Street
Augusta Riverfront Center	1 10th Street	Apartments	208 4th Street
Green Building	1019 Broad Street	Apartments	303 Green Street
List	Address	List	Address
Merry Land Building	702 Broad Street	Homes	1107 Green Street
Union Savings Bank Bldg.	771 Broad Street	Homes	411 Watkins

Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department, Downtown Development Authority

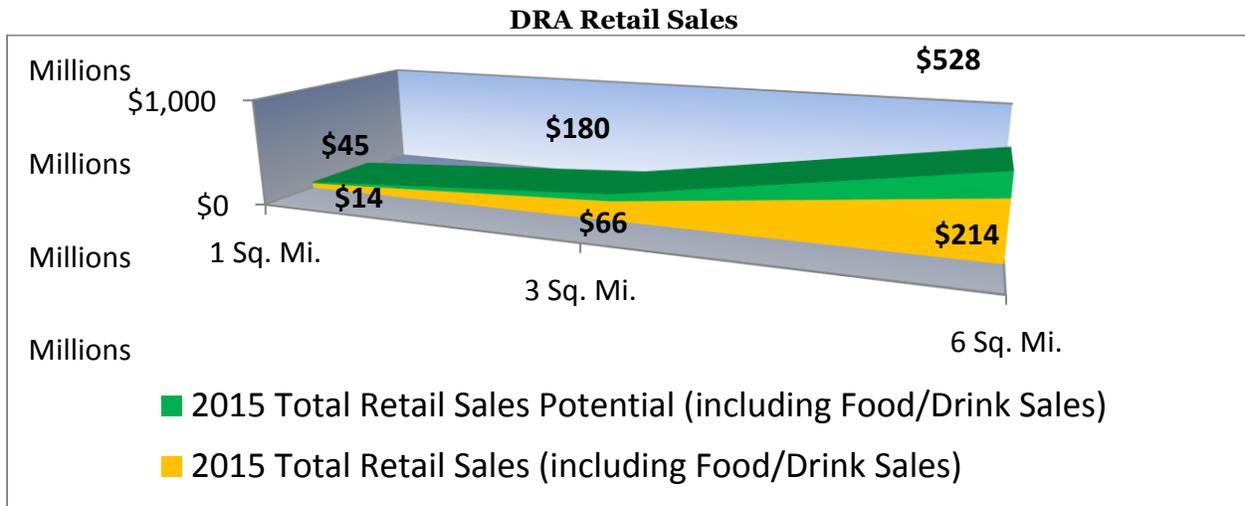
As new businesses are attracted to these available properties, income levels in these market areas will continue to increase. In 2015, average household income in the primary market was estimated at \$25,598 (\$16,639 per capita), according to ESRI Community Analyst. This will change by 2020. ESRI Community Analysis reports average household income increasing to \$31,559 (\$18,328 per capita) for the DRA primary market area as indicated below in DRA Income Levels figure. This again indicates a higher inflation rate than the national average. As income levels increase, so too could retail sales and services.

**DRA Income Levels**  
(In Thousands of Dollars)



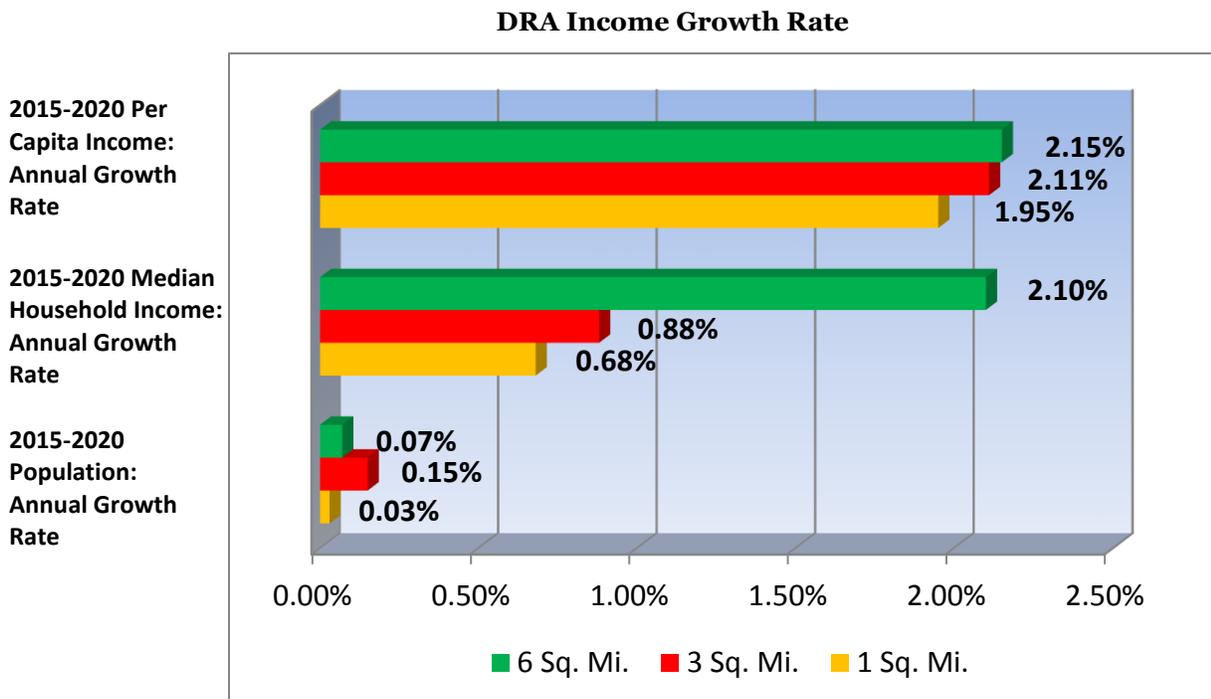
Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department, ESRI Community Analyst

Retail sales in the DRA may triple as more businesses are attracted to the area and people earning more money. Total retail sales (with leakage) is estimated at over \$14 million, with the potential (without leakage) to exceed \$45 million. This includes food and drink sales. Retail sales potential triple in the secondary market from \$66 million to \$180 million (*DRA Retail Sales*) in 2015; this indicates a positive growth rate.



Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department, ESRI Community Analyst

Annual growth rates from 2015 to 2020 are projected to increase as downtown becomes more developed. The DRA Income Growth Rate figure below shows the three growth rates in all market levels. While the DRA population growth rate may be only .03%, median household income annual growth rate is .68% and per capita annual growth rate is triple at 1.95% in the primary market. Secondary market is relatively proportional with: .88% median household income annual growth rate and 2.11% per capita annual growth rate. The DRA growth potential continues to rise, providing for more economic opportunities.



Source: Augusta Planning and Development Department, ESRI Community Analyst

# Appendix D. Public Review Process

As advertised in the  
*Augusta Chronicle*  
on  
Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>

## City of Augusta PUBLIC REVIEW MEETING NOTICE

The public is invited to review and comment on the Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update that will guide new growth and development for downtown Augusta.

ACTIVITIES / LOCATIONS	DATES / TIMES
Document posted online	September 6, 2016
15-day Public Review and Comment	September 12 – 26, 2016
Public Review Meeting – Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, 936 Broad Street, Suite 107 Augusta, GA 30901	Wednesday, September 14, 2016 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.
Public Review Meeting – Linda Beazley Community Room, 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor 535 Telfair Street, Augusta, GA 30901	Thursday, September 15, 2016 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language may contact the Planning and Development Department for assistance.

The Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update is available online to review at  
<http://www.augustaga.gov/290/Planning-and-Development>.

The public may submit comments during the 15-day period to Augusta Planning and Development Department, 535 Telfair Street, Suite 300, Augusta, GA 30901 or by email to [Planning\\_Commission@augustaga.gov](mailto:Planning_Commission@augustaga.gov). For more information, call 706-821-1796.

As advertised in the  
*El Augustino*  
 on  
 Friday, August 26<sup>th</sup>



**Ciudad de Augusta**

**Notificación de Reunión de Revisión Pública**

El público está invitado a revisar y comentar sobre el Plan de Re-desarrollo de Downtown, un plan escrito que conduzca a fortalecimiento de renovación para Downtown Augusta

**Lugar de actividades**

**Fechas y horario**

Documentos publicados en línea	6 de Septiembre de 2016
Revisión pública de 15 días	12 al 26 de Septiembre de 2016
Reunión de revisión pública Downtown Development Authority of Augusta, 936 Broad Street, Suite 107 Augusta, GA 30901	Miércoles, 14 de septiembre de 2016 12:00 p.m. a 2:00 p.m.
Reunión de revisión pública Linda Beazley Community Room, 1st Floor 535 Telfair Street, Augusta, GA 30901	jueves, 15 de septiembre de 2016 4:00 a 6:00 p.m.

Personas con necesidades especiales relacionadas a acceso para discapacitados deben comunicarse the Augusta Planning and Development Department at (706) 821-1796 durante horas laborables de lunes a viernes, excepto días feriados.

El Plan de Re-desarrollo de Downtown, puede ser visto en el Augusta Planning and Development Department home page en <http://www.augustaga.gov/290/Planning-and-Development>. Para más información, llama al 706-821-1796.

El público puede someter sus comentarios durante un periodo de 15 días y enviarlos a "Planning and Development Department, 535 Telfair Street, Suite 300, Augusta, GA 30901 o por e-mail a [planning\\_commission@augusta.gov](mailto:planning_commission@augusta.gov) Para más información llame al 706-821-1796

## Augusta Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update

### Written Public Comment Matrix

October 2016

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
1.	Jim Plunkett		As an initial observation, I am not sure if this is to serve as a modification of the urban redevelopment plan (URP) adopted in 2013 or if this is an update of a Downtown Redevelopment Plan previously adopted by the Commission under some law other than the Urban Redevelopment Law. While the document seems to follow the general outline of the existing URP, the change in the name of the plan and the discussion of TADs seem to indicate this is not intended to be a modification of the URP. If it is a modification, then 36-61-7 will need to be followed.	Understood as advisement.	No
2.	Jim Plunkett		The powers under the Urban Redevelopment Law were not exercised until 2010. At that time the Laney Walker/Bethlehem area was designated as an urban redevelopment area and the required URP was adopted.	Clarified in the revised version.	Yes
3.	Tim Shroer		Table 1: TAD Sites and Improvements – None of these projects were funded using a TAD. “Old Depot” site, 600 Broad Street, Port Royal Site are not in TAD 4.	Clarified in the revised version. Changed title to Augusta Downtown Redevelopment Areas.	Yes
4.	Jim Plunkett		The executive summary explains the concept of increment financing. It then seems to infer that several sites in the DRA were redeveloped through the use of TADs. None of the projects listed were benefited by a TAD.	Removed listed site references inferring or related to sites and the use or benefited by a TAD.	Yes
5.	Margaret Woodard		Executive Summary – Under socioeconomic profile, please look at total number of employees.	The 671 employees reference was clarified to indicate those that reside in the DRA.	Yes

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
6.	Jim Plunkett		In regards to Table 1, none of the projects other than the Municipal building are in a TAD.	Clarified already.	Yes
7.	Jim Plunkett		If DRA is being used synonymously with an urban redevelopment area and URP, then depending on the level of modification, the requirements of 36-61-7 must be followed.	Understood advisement.	No
8.	Tim Shroer		TAD 1 was larger than just downtown.	Understood	No
9.	Jim Plunkett		Section 2.2. The boundaries of the original TAD were substantially larger than the CBD as it ran from West Augusta near I-20 to Hephzibah. The description of TAD 1 expiring in Section 2.2 is incorrect, TAD 1 was terminated. Also, while TAD bonds can be issued, thus far Augusta has not issued any TAD bonds but instead has used a “pay go” system for reimbursing developers’ redevelopment costs.	Made clarification related to the expiration of TAD 1 being amended and then terminated within that section. Explanation of the “pay go” system was added as well.	Yes
10.	Tim Shroer		2.2 Socioeconomic Profile – (1&2 p; pg. 3) TAD 1 was terminated and TAD 4 was created. No; Bonds are an option, but not the sole purpose; Bonds have not been issued.	Clarified.	Yes
11.	Jim Plunkett		Figure 1 is incorrect as to TAD 1 (before termination). This figure shows what was proposed as TAD 4.	Changed to reflect DRA boundary and in the title.	Yes
12.	Jim Plunkett		TAD 4 is not scheduled to terminate upon the reimbursement to the HIX developer (but can be terminated at that point by the vote of the Commission). TAD 4 is also available for infra structure and to aid in the redevelopment of the old bus maintenance facility area (Walton Way at 15th Street).	Clarified and added in that section.	Yes
13.	Tim Shroer		TAD 4 was developed to promote the Holiday Inn Express project and the 15 <sup>th</sup> Street corridor area around the Kroger. It has not been determined that the TAD will expire when the HIX project has been reimbursed.	Clarified and added.	Yes

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
14.	Jim Plunkett		If the DRA is the same as the urban redevelopment areas located in the CBD, Figure 2 is incorrect. This figure shows what was proposed as an urban redevelopment area.	Figure 2 reflects the boundaries of the DRA the basis for the socioeconomic analysis.	No
15.	Jim Plunkett		Through much of the document DRA is used and I am not sure what that designation means.	That's the area based upon the established URA.	No
16.	Margaret Woodard		Section 3.2, pg. 22 Available properties – Delete Green Building	Green reflects 2015 Renter Occupied Housing Units in the Figure 11: DRA Occupancy and Property Value	No
17.	Jim Plunkett		Section 4.1. The URA, not the DDA, issued the bonds for the renovations. There is a typo as to the age of the building. I don't believe the bonds have been called as of yet. The campus has been re-conveyed to Augusta.	Clarified and made corrections on the URA and year of construction.	Yes
18.	Margaret Woodard		Pg. 26, last paragraph – Bonds were issued by the URA	Made correction.	Yes
19.	Tim Shroer		Section 4.1 1956 was used on page 14.	Made correction.	Yes
20.	Margaret Woodard		Page 27, Port Royal - The project involved the retrofit of 120,000 sf in to Class A Office space for Unisys Corporation. Also included in the project is office space for the DDA, a precinct for the Sherriff's department, restaurant space and the renovation of an existing 250 seat theater; Delete :retain 400 jobs; Will add nearly 700 jobs; Change 500 to 700; Last sentence: I believe the Augusta Economic Development Authority issued bonds for equipment; (The DDA issued the bonds for the parking deck and those bonds have been retired)	Made all corrections and used the edits.	Yes

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
21.	Tim Shroer		Reference to the Municipal Building renovation has been complete and most of the department have moved in. – Strike most; NO!! Print is still ongoing. Urban Redevelopment Agency to replace multiple mention of Downtown Development Authority on pages 26 & 27. Proposed edits: bought and; also strike “were callable” with “will be” on page 26. Also strike “was” and replace “has” and strike upon satisfaction of the bonds.	All corrected edits were made in reference to the Municipal Building and ancillary buildings in the complex. Removed reference to “most of the departments have moved in.”	Yes
22.	Tim Shroer		Section 4.2 No bonds were issued by the DDA.	Corrected.	Yes
23.	Tim Shroer		Section 4.3 The Augusta Economic Development Authority controls this site through a long-term lease.	Added.	Yes
24.	Jim Plunkett		Section 4.3. I am not sure if the entity to issue the bonds has been identified. There are a number of issues that go into making that decision. If the DRA is the same as the urban redevelopment area/URP, is it necessary to go into a discussion of what the County and DDA are doing to develop the property? The URP addresses what the URA is tasked to do. The URP is not an exclusive method of redeveloping the site – rather it is the framework under which the URA can operate.	Understood.	No
25.	Margaret Woodard		Page 28, Depot Site - The City of Augusta and Downtown Development Authority are working together to bring a mixed –use project for Commission approval to the property. Delete: there are no other plans for the site...	Made corrections as recommended.	Yes
26.	Margaret Woodard		Page 30 - Top of page hotel development add at end of sentence and to the Broad Street Corridor.	Provided the addition as prescribed.	Yes
27.	Tim Shroer		Section 5.2 (Public Projects – second bullet point – at the end add, “and 22 million in bonds issued by the Coliseum Authority.”	Added additional information.	Yes
28.	Jim Plunkett		Section 5.2. I believe the TEE Center is being rebranded as the Convention Center. Also the total amount of the project is understated. The investment was approximately \$40-42 million.	With the addition the total is assumed. Original text did not indicate total.	No
29.	Margaret Woodard		Page 42 - In 2014, the DDA hired Robinson Management Consulting to facilitate public meetings to garner further input on parking management in the downtown core.	Made edits as indicated.	Yes

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
30.	Tom Robertson		pp. 43-45. 7.2 Parking - The plan should strongly recommend devising, implementing a Parking Management Plan. It is essential to the success of downtown's economic success and to keeping its central-city urban design form. The goal of parking management should not really be to exempt downtown properties from parking requirements; instead, parking regulation and supply mechanisms should be in place to support the full utilization of historic and other existing buildings for economically beneficial uses throughout the downtown.	Recommendations understood and briefly reviewed.	No
31.	Tom Robertson		As a result, off-street parking requirements could and should be reduced far below the suburban ratios (perhaps at 30% to 50% of the typical suburban standards) or even eliminated in certain designated areas, so that the urban form of downtown is not only preserved, but also planned for in the future.	Noted as advisements.	No
32.	Tom Robertson		Downtown parking regulations should be relaxed; otherwise, the downtown buildings and properties will either continue to suffer from underutilization, or the downtown area will ultimately change into a suburban development form of underutilized parking lots and thus lose its distinctive, walkable character.	Noted as advisements.	No
33.	Tom Robertson		Ref: pg. 44 - Therefore, the plan should not say that "exempting parking requirements in downtown Augusta is not possible. . ." Rather, it should say what factors need to be changed to enable parking requirements to be reduced to make change possible, so that downtown can remain and look like a real downtown.	Noted as advisements.	No
34.	Tom Robertson		(Public parking facilities will continue to be needed to accommodate growth. Additional revenue sources to fund public parking could include a per-space impact fee or a special services district downtown.)	Noted as advisements.	No

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
35.	Tom Robertson		Ref: pg. 45. 7.2.3 A Downtown Circulator A downtown circulator is a great idea. It should be implemented as a part of or a companion to a comprehensive parking and circulation plan.	Included this enhancement and discussion within the Public Involvement and Implementation Strategy sections.	Yes
36.	Tom Robertson		pp. 47-48. 7.5 Downtown Design Guidelines - There are four main problem areas that need to be resolved if the downtown design guidelines are to be really effective. (There may be other rules that are at minor variance which might need to be considered as well.) 1. Driveway - Current regulations of the Georgia Department of Transportation for new driveway accesses on state roads require deceleration lanes and other suburban requirements that will have a character-destroying effect on the downtown fabric over time. 2. Setbacks - The setback regulations of the Augusta-Richmond County Zoning Ordinance are not consistent with the recommendations of the Guidelines. 3. Detention Storm water detention ponds would be required for infill development in the downtown; unless it can be proven that the site is or was paved or developed with buildings previously.	Noted as advisements.	No
37.	Tom Robertson		pg. 50; 7.6 Overlay District - Is there not another overlay district, the PDR (Planned Development Riverfront) Zone, Special District Classification, Section 25-A of the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, with additional design and development standards?	The PDR was listed. However, more was added to the Overlay District chapter.	Yes
38.	Tom Robertson		pp. 51-52; 7.7 The Levee - Figure 19. I think the 15-foot setback should be measured from the landside toe of the levee (or actually the retaining wall in this picture), instead of the top of the levee bank. On page 52, fifth line. I recommend that language be added so that it is revised to read as follows: “... they must allow sufficient drainage through weep holes, unless retaining water, in which case they must be designed to withstand full water pressure. In any case, they must meet soil erosion and sediment control regulations.”	Noted as advisement.	No
39.	Jim Plunkett		Appendix A – the TAD 4 Map is incorrect.	Replaced with correct map.	Yes
40.	Tim Shroer		TAD 4 is contiguous.	Replaced with correct map.	Yes

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
41.	Tim Shroer		Appendix E. Municipal Building Complex, pg. 62. Last 2 bullet points: Not part of the Municipal Building Complex project.	Made and noted corrections.	Yes
42.	Linda Antopolsky		Augusta needs to become more pedestrian/ bicycle friendly. Greenville did it; we can do it! Examples given: bike the Swamp Rabbit trail; the city was packed with visitors--all ethnic backgrounds, all ages, walking, biking, strolling, lounging by the river....no festival or special occasion... all parks connected by trails and connected to neighborhoods...all the way to Mountain Rest, SC.	Noted as advisement.	No
43.	Linda Antopolsky		In addition, if Augusta could host an event like Atlanta Streets Alive, maybe, on the Sunday of the arts festival, to keep security costs down, that would bring additional folks to downtown. Once you get folks to feeling comfortable downtown, more will come. Atlanta Streets Alive closes a section of the streets and encourages pedestrians, bicyclists, skateboarders, etc. into the streets of downtown. Those streets in Atlanta are closed once a month and encourage residents to get out and be active. Please google. I would love to see Augusta do something like this. I would even be willing to help if volunteers are needed. The PATH Foundation of Georgia also coordinates with areas to help bring pedestrian paths into reality. And it may be a source of funding.	Idea; present concept for local bicycle coalition to adopt in connection with Recreation and Parks	No
44.	Anonymous Resident		Maintain historic character while adapting to changing environment around it. Riverfront restaurant – to be reached by water or boat.	Noted as advisement.	No

#	Commenter	Type	Comment	Response	Revision Requirement
45.	Anonymous Resident		Safety is #1 concern; James Brown Arena: renovate especially bathrooms; don't make it too big; if moved relocate in downtown; Bell Auditorium: renovate again bathrooms; love the intimate setting; keep charm; broad Street: old buildings ugly site; keep downtown small town feeling; Keep charm expand to attract residents; make downtown a place to live for everyone!!	Noted as advisement.	No
46.	Anonymous Resident		Attract more of the 67% residents; Look at Aiken's downtown. What role does Augusta National play in downtown area? In Augusta other than the masters?? Make Augusta what it can be! Don't want to live in Columbia County.	Noted as advisements.	No

## **Augusta Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update – Public Review Meetings (Drop in Session #1)**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 14, 2016  
**Location:** Downtown Development Authority  
936 Broad Street, Suite 107,  
Augusta, GA 30901  
**Time:** 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

### **Meeting Summary**

Director Melanie Wilson started the meeting by giving a brief overview of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan process by also indicating that the Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update is a draft document and that the purpose of the meeting is to hear from those who were in attendance and from the general public. An Augusta Planning and Development staff person, Warren Richard Jr. was present to highlight socioeconomic data on downtown population and housing, average household and per capita income, predominate age groups, housing renter and owner-occupied percentages, as well as property values and employment in the Downtown Redevelopment Area. After that, there was a public comment period, when those in attendance were asked to give input in response to the plan. Some of the comments mentioned did not reflect the purview of the Planning and Development Department.

### **Questions, Comments and Discussion Items**

Comments and discussion points from attendees and staff members:

Paid parking would address issues of parking for merchants and visitors.

- We are still having difficulty with addressing issues of parking such as the lack of management, the need to return to 2-hour parking to Broad Street, an expansion of paid parking that will address issue for merchants and visitors and an education of parking parameters for the populace. Few people are aware of free parking in the downtown.

#### **Discussion Points:**

- There is a need for more lighting on Ellis Street near the Richmond County Board of Education parking deck.
- We need a better trash management plan that covers the location of trash cans etc.
- Gateway maintenance on and near the Calhoun Expressway
- As partners become more involved in the implementation of the plan, potential costs will be identified.
- An education of the public on the “can and can’t do” on the levee.
- The Riverwalk needs to be embraced more in the plan due to its uniqueness

- Tagging / graffiti in the downtown needs a coordinated effort with the appropriate authorities.
- Include the possibility of including Old Town within the boundaries of the downtown
- Lighting improved on all sidewalks
- Increase bike stations
- Better orient food truck vendors with designated space and locations near the Commons.
- More involvement with the Riverwalk
- More entertainment at the Commons
- Look at expanding TAD boundaries
- Increase green space and bike lanes

Additional Comments:

- The document indicated that there are 671 employees in the downtown. That number seems very low.
- Staff Comment: We will relook at that to make sure we are using the appropriate number and the correct description that is accurate.
- Lack of options for the parking of food truck vendors.
- Staff comment: Parking also is an issue for the trucks because of their space requirements.

**Augusta Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update – Public Review Meetings  
(Drop in Session #2)**

**Date:** Thursday, September 15, 2016  
**Location:** 535 Telfair Street  
 Linda Beazley Meeting Room, 1<sup>st</sup> floor  
 Augusta, GA 30901  
**Time:** 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

**Meeting Summary**

Director Melanie Wilson started the meeting by giving a brief overview of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan process by also indicating that the Downtown Redevelopment Plan Update is not a finished document and that the purpose of the meeting is to hear from those who were in attendance and the general public to cover items that may have been missed. An Augusta Planning and Development staff person, Warren Richard Jr. was present to highlight geographic boundaries using the maps on-hand and socioeconomic data on downtown population and housing, average household and per capita income, predominate age groups, housing renter and

owner-occupied percentages, as well as property values and employment in the Downtown Redevelopment Area. After that, there was a public comment period, when those in attendance were asked to give input in response to the plan. Some of the comments mentioned did not reflect the purview of the Planning and Development Department.

### **Questions, Comments and Discussion Items** (from attendees and staff members)

**Staff Question:** What would you like to see to make downtown Augusta vibrant?

#### **Responses:**

- Would like to see a plaza with no parking just for pedestrians that would connect Miller & Imperial Theatres where events would be in open spaces, no parking no cars.
- Staff Comment: Circulator, van or shuttle system, will be further explored to address needs of parking and connectivity to the medical district and some other areas that are within a 2-3-mile radius to take advantage of downtown assets, possible partnership with private vendor, or in partnership with Public Transit to get to places quickly being mindful that riders maybe using the circulator during their lunch break and needing to get back to work. Additional detail such as developing a list of business locations and the population centers to identify possible stops.
- Need more spaces for parking to address patrons of downtown theatres. Complaints have been made by those that were late in attending the shows as they were late due to looking for places to park.
- Staff Comment: Development of an Implementation Matrix to look at some of the plans as there are underutilized parking decks due to feelings of being unsafe. Related to Ellis Street and back street parking, people feel unsafe using them at night. Working with Cooper Cary on some of the urban design components including lighting to help create a sense of safety. Distribution of people without isolated pockets will be looked at.

**Question:** Is the Board of Education parking deck used for public parking?

**Answer:** Staff of the Board of Education use the parking deck Monday – Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. After those times and on weekends parking can be used by the public.

#### **Discussion Points:**

- Staff Comment: A way-finding system is important so that locations are known and answer the question whether the public can use existing parking decks. Outreach will be important to identify where parking decks exist.
- Outdoor seating, as part of an open plaza, for people to socialize before and after theatre events possibly with temporary tent-like structure to protect from high temperatures in Augusta. APDD will look further into that.
- Staff Comment: Railroad train passing through the downtown with high-sounding horn; APDD does not have control over that but something that will be noted as an issue. There are no cross gates so the blowing of the horn is a necessity. It could be a part of the

Implementation Matrix and could be mentioned as an issue as this issue is not controlled by APDD.

- Aiken downtown has addressed the issue of parking in their downtown redevelopment plan. Their secondary streets give access to their businesses as easily as from the main street. Respondent invited people to go look at it. Also mentioned the cost to build high rise parking was \$25,000 per space. APDD's response was that it was cheaper.
- Augusta Commission took a group to Savannah to look at how they operate parking. Savannah has parking meters and a Parking Authority that manages the system. It also has a department that handles citations, going to court, and collection of funds. Identify other partners that can participate. Parking stickers are used in Savannah as they can be sold but issues for that still exist. The parking issue has to be dealt with aggressively due to its impact on retailers in the downtown. Hopefully Augusta can learn from Savannah. Additional discussion needs to be done with addressing parking policies in place but implementation is what is needed.
- Staff Comment: As development takes place we will need to address parking that is off street. New residential is using on street. Same parking spaces are being counted. The Parking Authority Director in Savannah can be invited to come to Augusta and possibly the Charleston Director and other areas with high traffic tourist counts to come and talk about additional strategies to improve parking in Augusta.
- Staff Comment: Food trucks has a parking component associated with it in terms of where they can park. We will delve a little more on the issue of parking within the document.
- Staff Comment: In terms of appealing a ticket, that has not been dealt with as it relates to the existing parking policies. There is a need to have further discussions and figure out how that can be implemented in Augusta including possibly the Sheriff's Office collecting funds, other authorities that would issue tickets/citations as we do need to deal with the parking issue.
- Staff Comment: As development takes place, on street parking needs to be provided that is off street. New developments are using existing on street parking and those spaces in many cases are being double or triple counted in terms of available spaces. APDD is looking at that; it doesn't mean anything will be changed.
- Extend the Commons toward Ellis Street (great if also toward the Riverwalk); tear down the Kress Building which is an eyesore. Give the James Brown stature a better background when visitors come to take pictures. It would extend the Commons and give access to parking on Ellis Street (parking garage and on the street). Maybe the city can buy it and turn it into an extended Commons. We need more parking downtown; also to use the Wells Fargo Building for parking on the weekend.
- Staff Comment: Need advertising of parking in the city that is free. Make sure to get with departments to make sure we have that up on the website.
- With additional 200 apartments tentatively planned for downtown, without additional parking it would create disorder; development in Savannah goes beyond the main street.

CBD boundaries are not all of downtown; there are discussions about pushing the boundaries out. There are more parking decks in Savannah than there are in Augusta. Maybe parking revenue bonds have to be issued to build more parking decks, but elected officials would have to address at some point. Currently, we have to use what we have to offset some of the parking needs and conducting the promotion of existing parking as part of an education to the public. Ellis Street with some lighting, landscaping and urban design treatments will make that area feel a lot safer to use. The Cranston firm who did the Park Plan may have covered recommendations that included extending the Commons toward Ellis Street. APDD will look at that plan and any other newer plans that made recommendations of that nature.

- Staff Comment: The suggested Implementation Matrix will cover a timeline strategic to know who are the players, partners/ go forward with implementing versus having an idea and not do anything.

**Question:** Has anyone looked at moving people back and forward throughout the community to the downtown without them having to bring their cars, shuttle in from Columbia County, having descent cabs that are reliable, public transportation non-stop shuttle service throughout the evenings on the weekend so that people can have convenience, consistently and safely?

**Answer:** A circulator hits multiple areas; most communities use them when there are parking problems. People will drive to outlining areas when they know that a circulator will pick them up in 5 minutes or so, they will use it. If there isn't that predictability they will not use it. We have a new Transit Division Director who is excited about proving additional routes, activity and synergy. This is probably a good business model for someone who decides to start a route. Competition exists, why couldn't this be a model to get people from Columbia County to downtown Augusta? If there are enough parking decks it is a lot easier to create synergy to move people around, even if those parking areas are not in the CBD. One of the challenges in Augusta is everybody has parking problems including Augusta University. It's a community-wide issue for the areas located within a 4-5-mile radius of the CBD that we need a candid conversation to solve it. A circulator is favored if we can partner with AU to get people from there to downtown; that's important. Find a way to get the private sector to get them involved in providing those services to get people throughout Augusta, that would be great. It's difficult because of the need to have multiple spots.

Discussion Points:

- Convention and Visitors Bureau brings 15-25 groups to Augusta for their annual meetings and added on to their convention facilities, spent 40 million dollars. The circulator could

be something that the CVB could tout to these perspective folks to come and see Augusta, we will help them get around. With the news of Augusta becoming the Army security focus for the U.S., we are going to be forced to do some things. In addition to the circulator, I suggest we have volunteers and give them green jackets that say welcome to Augusta, Georgia. Work Broad Street and help people find parking and downtown friendly.

- Staff Comment: One of the things we have in the document and will expand a little more (Cooper Carry is also looking at it in more detail) is having a way finding system. Due to the lack of knowledge concerning free parking decks of those in the room, is problematic due to the need of knowing where they are located and how to get to them.
- Staff Comment: In terms of the circulator, different entities can manage the circulator like the CVB or a Downtown Development District/Authority. In some communities, they are the ones that run the circulator because they can create that partnership with the transit agency. We will look at all of those options options when we come back out with the document.

**Question:** Do they still have the trolley that circulate Broad Street on First Fridays; it is excellent and free perhaps they can extend over to the Department of Education parking deck?

**Answer:** Yes, they still do that. That is a great idea. Partnerships could be made as the City cannot do this by itself. As partnerships are great opportunities for entrepreneurship so that things can get done of what is needed in the community. Hopefully the document will provide opportunities for people to confirm there is a real need so that people can make investments toward them.

Discussion Points:

- There have been advertisements, in connection with special events downtown like Arts in the Heart, where parking is available at The Depot site and a trolley can bring people to the event.
- Staff Comment: That is helpful to address some of the needs. The document speaks of high density development and how to get more people downtown and the mix of people. When you look at the data, there is a flat line of growth for the downtown. That is not the case due to the people that are looking to move downtown but there are not a lot of choices of places where they want to reside. The second part of that is the parking. The parking is not all of it; the other piece is having good quality housing stock and choice. Hopefully that will come when we see the activity that is happening in that area. The circulator and parking is a challenge and a problem.
- I am curious about seating and bike racks and public art and how the Arts Council, who is currently working on a master plan for public art, how that gets integrated because that

can be tied together with the Way Finding so there is a cohesive statement and understanding that this is downtown and this is what is going on here.

- Staff Comment: In order to get people to come downtown; the plan is not an operations document, but hopefully talking about land uses and some other things to create synergy to invite people to come downtown to live, work and open businesses in this general area. The Parks and Recreation's plan deals with the Riverwalk and the Commons, those are plazas that are not developed. There must be an overlay.
- You want these things to mesh and not just to operate independently.
- Staff Comment: That is what the document will ultimately do by looking at the other plans. They are mentioned so that people can understand that we have acknowledged them. There are multiple plans out there and they are being worked on. The goal is to have those documents at the end so that there is an identified partner and a table to look at. There are multiple ways of implementing these strategies. It can be implemented through the Downtown Development Authority (DDA), Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA), a Housing and Community Development (HCD), or an urban renewal authority by creating some synergy with the Land Bank to get properties that can be redeveloped. APDD will have a recommended set of strategies for implementation so that there is one document to look at. It is known that these things in the plan needs to be done, improved and funded.

**Question:** What is the schedule for when all of these various plans come together?

**Answer:** Today is the last day in getting some public input. We will go back over the next few weeks and incorporate what we have heard and start to pull together a draft implementation schedule and post it. In the next thirty (30) days we will be back out with something that has more detail. I like going through a process that I get feedback of priorities from people in the community versus coming out with something that is finished. We now have the Parks and Recreation Plan. Several of their facilities are located within the downtown area. It will give us a chance to see what the status for the Arts Council Master Plan so that we can pull some ideas and recommendations from that document and incorporate within this plan so that they are part of the partnership and team. My goal is to have something that we can talk about how you can implement possible funding options. This is an area planning type document instead of a framework. It's a framework looking at all of the plans not just one, incorporating new ideas based on what we hear in the community.

Discussion Points:

- Representing some of the businesses downtown in looking at some of their financials, the number one complaint we get from the downtown business owners is souls across their

threshold from Sunday night through Thursday night. Friday and Saturday night are good. They need traffic rest of the week. The property controlled by the Board of Regents and the state to construct buildings on that property so that we can get the growth from the University over to the river to create bodies downtown during the week, stay downtown and go the Imperial Theatre. I think we will see a tremendous difference in the business financials with a 15% tweak in their sales would do during the nonevent times. The number one opportunity for these small businesses is to create the vibrancy and the cool factor, we have to generate traffic down here. As untapped resources, that property has been sitting vacant for too long. We need to get buildings built on that property.

- Staff Comment: I don't disagree; it is something we don't control. That's a challenge. It might be something that we would have to write a letter to the Board of Regents to inquire about further development there. There has been some discussion about a variety of projects, but nothing has moved forward. A partner still has to be identified for development. Some funds they could not spend money on with regard to redevelopment from the University standpoint. We could end up with nice housing and no parking.
- With regard to exceptions in our policies, on the Farmhaus Burgers they put 6 loft apartments on top two stories of the property and on Ellis the same thing. We are trying to relax our local programs to allow lease hold buildout of that unused space that is above the business trying to attract business.
- Staff Comment: In doing that that contributes toward the parking issue. Yes, it's one of the things I promote a lot is how to deal with the first floor store fronts and housing and offices on the floors above. I'm glad you offer funding for those that want to do that type of project. The restaurant time frames are something we don't control; it is a valid point. When a conference is here, people need to have a place to go to eat when a conference is in the downtown area.

City of Augusta  
**PUBLIC REVIEW MEETING**  
 Drop in Session  
 Downtown Development Authority of Augusta  
 936 Broad Street, Suite 107  
 Augusta, GA 30901  
 Wednesday, September 14, 2016  
 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

PLEASE PRINT

Name	City, County, State	Phone	Email
1. Christopher Meliker	Augusta, Richmond GA	903-462-3878	—
2. Mimielle Goin	Augusta, Richmond	706-821-1799	—
3. Margaret Woodard	DDA	706-722-8000	
4. Roxanne Walters	DDA	706-722-8000	
5. Warren Richard	APDD	706-828-7165	
6. Seylance Scott Jr	DDA	704-722-8000	
7. Rick Neuroglia	DDA	706-664-8228	
8. David Hutchinson	DDA	706-524-2112	
9. Michael Holaband	Aug. Chron.	706-823-3232	
10. Sue Parr	Chamber of Com.	706-821-1300	
11. Melanie Wilson	APDD	706-821-1796	
12. Brendon Cunningham	APDD	"	
13. Camille Price	Aug. Tomorrow	706-722-9100	
14. Susa McCord	" Chronicle	(229) 291-1945	
15. Lindsay Tuman	WRPN	706-399-1487	

16. Ben Harrison Blenchard + Calhoun 706-831-7395
17. Maat Cook Sherman + Henstreet 706-267-0107
18. Cameron Nixon DDA 706-722-8000
19. Ted Rhinehart City of Augusta 706-821-2504
20. \_\_\_\_\_
21. \_\_\_\_\_
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City of Augusta  
**PUBLIC REVIEW MEETING**  
 Drop in Session  
 Augusta-Richmond County  
 535 Telfair Street  
 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Linda Beazley Meeting Room  
 Augusta, GA 30901  
 Thursday, September 15, 2016  
 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

PLEASE PRINT

Name	City, County, State	Phone	Email
1. DAVID C. PENIX	Augusta, GA		dpenix@davidcopenix.com
2. Marsha Cole	Augusta, GA		marsha.cole@bellsouth.net
3. Tom HUBBARD	EVANS, GA		INFO@TOMHUB.COM
4. Phil Caldwell	2901 Grand St Augusta		pcaldwell77@comcast.net
5. Sean Fonten			
6. Nancy Glaver	Augusta Museum of History		nmh@augusta-museum.org
7. Carol Taylor	Augusta, GA		
8. Andy Ackerson	Montezuma, GA		andy.ackerson@montezumagov.com
9. Brian Mirshak	Augusta, GA		brian@mirshaksmith.com
10. Julie A. Parker			
11. Terry Beal			
12. Bob Prescott	Housing + Community		rtrescott@augustaga.gov
13. Tom Robertson	Augusta, GA 30904	706-722-1588	ttr@robertson.com
14. Anna Fields	Augusta, GA	706-722-1588	anna@robertson.com
15. Randy Griffin, President, CSFA Business Lending	3626 Walden Way East Augusta, GA 30909		

City of Augusta  
**PUBLIC REVIEW MEETING**  
 Drop in Session  
 Augusta-Richmond County  
 535 Telfair Street  
 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Linda Beazley Meeting Room  
 Augusta, GA 30901  
 Thursday, September 15, 2016  
 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

PLEASE PRINT

Name	City, County, State	Phone	Email
1. CHRIS BOOKER	AUGUSTA RICHMOND	706-951-2482	AUGUSTAGIA@GMAIL.COM
2. JOHN CHAPPEL	ARC	706-306-1357	—
3. A.M. BRITTON			
4. Andrew Uhler	APD		
5. Warren Richard	APDD	706-828-7165	
6.			
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## Appendix E. References and Resources

Augusta-Richmond County Board of Assessors and Tax Commissioner's offices

Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission. Augusta-Richmond County Comprehensive Plan 2008. <http://www.augustaga.gov/319/Comprehensive-Plan>

Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission. Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance of (Amended August 2015) <http://www.augustaga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6091>

Augusta-Richmond County Planning Commission. Various maps and plans: <http://www.augustaga.gov/524/Maps>

Georgia Department of Revenue, <http://dor.georgia.gov/>

## Appendix F. Tax Parcel ID Numbers

Municipal Building Complex		Old Library Complex	
047-1-259-00-0	4.54	047-1-192-00-0	0.06
047-1-260-00-0	0.23	047-1-193-00-0	0.22
047-1-261-00-0	0.12	04 7-1-194-00-0	1.12
047-1-262-00-0	0.13		
047-1-263-00-0	0.27	Depot Site	
047-1-265-00-0	0.41	047-2-003-00-0	6.27
047-1-266-00-0	0.22		
047-1-267-00-0	0.45	600 Broad Street	
047-1-268-00-0	0.30	047-1-304-00-0	0.30
Coliseum Complex		Port Royal	
047-1-291-00-0	1.26	037-3-200-00-0	1.30
047-1-292-00-0	1.20	037-3-203-00-0	0.44
047-1-300-02-0	10.16		
047-1-301-00-0	5.14		
047-3-019-00-0	0.11		
047-3-020-00-0	0.38		
047-3-020-01-0	0.06		
047-3-021-00-0	0.50		
047-3-022-00-0	0.42		

## Appendix G. Project Area Status

Downtown Redevelopment Areas			
Project Nodes			Progress Updates
<b>1. Municipal Building Complex</b>			<p>The Municipal Building Renovations and Modernization Project (\$40+ million) includes the new Linda Beazley Community Room; new elevator tower features open lobbies with windows; the addition front Telfair Street and established as a new main entrance for the building; the renovations to the existing building include a total renovation of all nine floors (approx. 125,945 sq. ft.); and the new Commission Chambers.</p> <p>The scope of the project was modified to include the new Information Technology Building and renovations to the Engineering buildings located adjacent to the Municipal Building. IT staff moved into the new building in May 2015.</p> <p>The Augusta Commission voted to demolish the old IT Building in June 2015. Remediation took place in June-July 2015, and the actual demolition of the old structure began in July 2015.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Congregation Children of Israel Synagogue (525 Telfair Street) – On June 2015 the Augusta Commission voted to save two historic buildings on the government campus. Historic Augusta and Jack Steinberg assumed maintenance and other expenses on the buildings for five years as the museum plan develops. Steinberg partnered with Historic Augusta to formulate a plan to restore both properties which will be used as Augusta Historic Jewish Museum. The project has five years to succeed or the property reverts to city control.</li> </ul>
Address	Parcel	Acres	
535 Telfair St	047-1-259-00-0	4.54	
Bldg. 3000	047-1-268-00-0	0.30	
Bldg. 4000	047-1-265-00-0	0.41	
Bldg. 5000	047-1-263-00-0	0.27	
513 Telfair St	047-1-262-00-0	0.13	
521 Telfair St	047-1-261-00-0	0.12	
525 Telfair St	047-1-260-00-0	0.23	
*510 Greene St	047-1-267-00-0	0.45	
*502 Greene St	047-1-266-00-0	0.22	
<b>Total</b>		<b>6.67</b>	
Note: *Privately owned parcels.			
<b>2. 600 Broad Street</b>			<p>On April 2015 the building opened doors as downtown incubator. The building presently has five tenants, consists of arts groups.</p>
Address	Parcel	Acres	
600 Broad St	047-1-304-00-0	0.30	
<b>Total</b>		<b>0.30</b>	
<b>3. "Old Depot" Site</b>			<p>In 2011 the City of Augusta installed a new roof on the train depot structure to attract developments.</p> <p>Previously the Watermark development (also written into the downtown Augusta-North Augusta Master Plan) fell through because the recession. The Watermark was a \$100 million plan to build a 150-room hotel, a 62,000-square-foot office building, 100 condos and a four-story parking garage, and turn the renovated Reynolds Street train depot into retail space.</p>
Address	Parcel	Acres	
511 Reynolds St	047-2-003-00-0	6.27	

## Downtown Redevelopment Areas

Project Nodes			Progress Updates
<b>Total</b>		6.27	
<b>4. Port Royal Site</b>			<p>Discovery Plaza is a 120,000 (approximate) sq. ft., two-story space located within the Port Royal building. The property is part of a mixed-use, high-rise development. The eighteen-story development is estimated to have been constructed in 1990 and consists of condominiums on the upper floors (approximately 56 units) and retail space and garage parking on the lower levels.</p> <p>Originally, the building was constructed and operated as a shopping mall. The Shoppes of Port Royal mall operated from 1991-1994 and then became a children's science exhibition center and museum, The National Science Center's Fort Discovery. In 2010, Fort Discovery closed permanently when the National Science Center relocated to Washington D.C. The space sat vacant until Unisys moved in on September 2015.</p> <p>The property is under new ownership and is undergoing repair and renovation work to improve the building space for new office and business use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• March 2015 Unisys signed lease contract to occupy the space and officially moved into the building on September 2015. Unisys presently occupies the space as call desk IT support. The company is expected to employ up to 700 workers by 2019.</li> <li>• Future tenants will consist of medical building operation; restaurant operators (i.e. coffee, sandwich, and pizza shop).</li> </ul>
Address	Parcel	Acres	
1 Seventh St	037-3-200-00-0	1.30	
<b>Total</b>	037-3-203-00-0	<b>1.74</b>	
<b>5. Coliseum Complex</b>			<p>Augusta-Richmond County Coliseum Authority requested \$15 million in the city's SPLOST 7 (under the Category Quality of Life) to help fund upgrades for aged and outdated James Brown Arena, including possible new multipurpose area with a seating capacity of approximately 9,000 for concerts, sporting events, community events, meetings, futurity, and other events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator Recommendation: \$6 million</li> <li>• The Augusta-Richmond County Coliseum Authority commissioned AECOM Technical Services to conduct the Augusta arena study.</li> <li>• The study recommends a new arena with 10,000 seats, 14 luxury suites, 500 club seats, and 20,000 sq. ft. of meeting or exhibition space and tenant offices. The size of the new facility is approximately 250,000 sq. ft. and expected to cost between</li> </ul>
Address	Parcel	Acres	
712 Telfair St	047-1-291-00-0	1.26	
501 Seventh St	047-1-292-00-0	1.20	
601 Seventh St	047-1-300-02-0	10.16	
630 Seventh St	047-1-301-00-0	5.14	
	047-3-022-00-0	0.42	
	047-3-019-00-0	0.11	

## Downtown Redevelopment Areas

Project Nodes			Progress Updates
652 Seventh St	047-3-020-00-0	0.38	<p>\$90 million and \$110 million. The existing structure, the James Brown Arena is approximately 35-year-old and contains 8,500-seat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are discussions that a new arena should remain downtown, although an exact location is undecided.</li> </ul>
	047-3-020-01-0	0.06	
*640 Seventh St	047-3-021-00-0	0.50	
<b>Total</b>		<b>19.23</b>	
<p>Note: *Previously listed as 635 Twiggs St. Staff verified address with Information Technology Department and new address was assigned.</p>			
6. Former Main Library Site			<p>On December 2014 the City of Augusta acquired an adjacent property with street address 916 Greene Street to facilitate the repurposing of the former Augusta Library as the new headquarters and customer service office for Augusta Utilities. It appears the Augusta Public Defender's Office might occupy the space instead.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May 2015 – Renovation project start (4.6 million).</li> <li>November 2015 – Phase 1 completion, which include removing second-floor marble panels to add windows.</li> </ul>
Address	Parcel	Acres	
902 Greene St	047-1-194-00-0	1.12	
*909 Telfair St	047-1-192-00-0	0.06	
*425 James Brown Blvd	047-1-193-00-0	0.22	
	047-1-195-00-0	0.32	
**916 Greene St			
<b>Total</b>		<b>1.72</b>	
<p>Note: *Structure(s) on property has been demolished. **Parcels were not originally included in the Downtown Redevelopment Areas.</p>			

