



cityofthomasville

annual report 2015

A 15-mile recreational trail is underway in Thomasville. The ribbon of concrete will connect people, schools, neighborhoods, businesses and parks. This annual report will travel the route with you, and along the way we will highlight 2015 community achievements.

One stop on our trail, MacIntyre Park, was the subject of a ten-week interdisciplinary project among some of the city's fifth graders. This report honors their creative thinking and discovery.

January, 2016

Open just about any economic development magazine reporting growth trends for America's cities and you will surely find predictions from experts about more compact, walkable and amenity-laden living and working environments.

Our community trail is a great example of such a lifestyle amenity. You just have to consider for a moment the synergy that a one-mile track around Cherokee Lake has fostered to know that the trail will change the contour of our community and its interactions. The trail creates a tangible link connecting residences, schools, leisure opportunities and the workplace in a way we have never done before.

Making a place to call home is really at the core of all the city's vision and operations. From planning, engineering, public works, public safety, customer and technical services, downtown development to utilities, everything we do as an organization fosters quality of life and opportunity for our citizens.

City council and staff, citizen organizations and creative young minds like our 5th graders will continue to make Thomasville one of the great cities of Georgia.

As always, we thank you for the honor of serving you.

Steve Sykes
City Manager



Thank you for listening to us, and thinking about what we have said. I was the little red head boy doing Park entrances community impact.

City fifth graders crafted plans and made presentations to city staff and elected officials.



the trail begins here

The emerging Thomasville community trail will be a great connector in ways we have yet to imagine. It will promote new ways to think about moving around our city, to explore our community either on foot or bicycle, to get to work or to go to school, to shop or find a playground without getting in a car. It mirrors a growing trend among many U.S cities to create environments that encourage less driving and more walking in our daily lives.

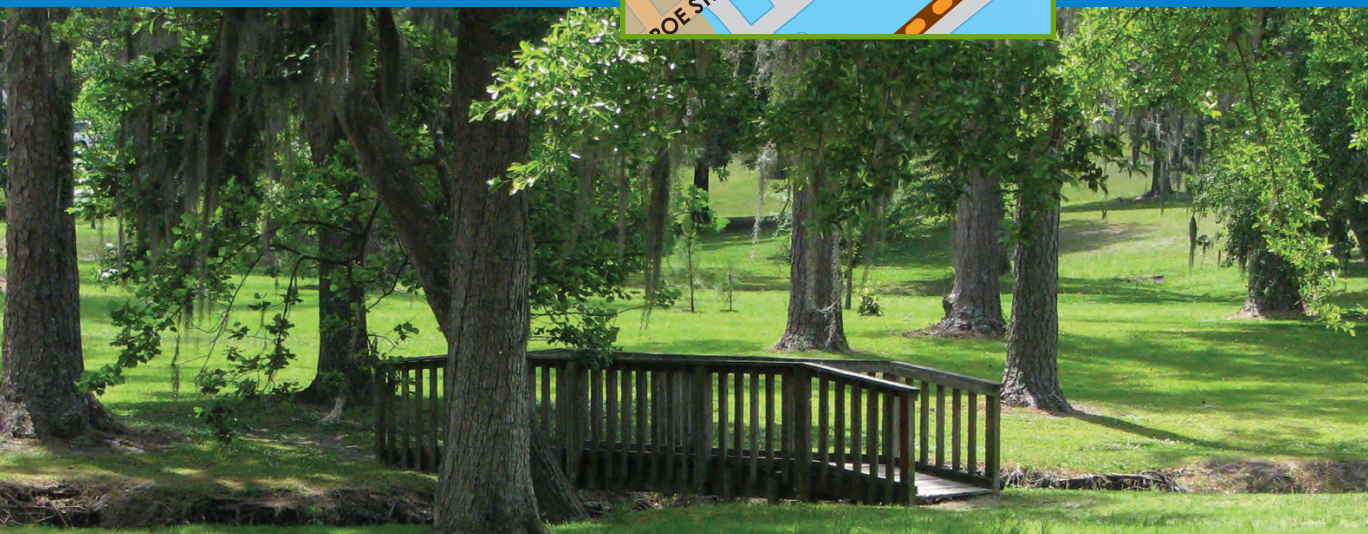
Our trail begins in a part of town that is in already a renaissance of live, work and play. Looking south from Madison Street, the trailhead begins off Madison Street, near shops, restaurants, an artist studio, an antique mecca and just steps from Jackson Street merchants, the Victoria Park neighborhood and the blossoming creative district.

On the grounds with the trailhead will be a community amphitheatre, a new gathering space for small live performances and events.

The route runs directly through the nearby Victoria Park, a model for neighborhood revitalization within the historic Fletcher area. Fletcher at the turn of century was home to Fletcher Institute, a school attended by students from miles around, long before public schools were chartered.

This area is also a hub for City of Thomasville operations at Victoria Place. In 2015, critical system network improvements were completed to ensure the personal data of over 20,000 customers remains secure. This year we also continued to implement new technologies for metering and other utility infrastructure that ultimately will give customers more information about how they use utilities. Consumers can then better manage those resources in a manner that fits lifestyle and household budgets.





pathway to our parks

Over its 15-mile course, the trail will touch six of the 11 major city parks. Paradise, Cherokee, MacIntyre, Northside, Flipper and Weston all offer respites along the journey. Cherokee Lake, one of the most popular city park, finds runners, walkers, and parents with baby strollers exercising on a mile-long walking path around the lake. All of these spaces serve thousands of residents and visitors annually for private parties, weddings, special events, festivals and simply enjoyable days in the park.

In 2015, the city installed 30 new signs to provide a fresh look to our park entrances and provide park visitors easy visibility for wayfinding. A storm water management initiative around Cherokee Lake ensures proper handling of water run-off in the area. Remington Park continues to be a central sports complex for our youth programs. The 2012 SPLOST-funded lighting improvements heightened the quality and safety of our park. In 2015, \$500,000 improved lighting on six sports fields.

The next phase of planning for the trail includes a leg to connect with Remington Park because of its key role in Thomasville recreation.

Attention to green spaces has a long history in Thomasville. It's in our DNA. Turn of the century visitors traveled here to escape northern winters and enjoy the out-of-doors, temperate climate and pine-scented forests. Our native longleaf pines are the hallmark of Thomasville and the entire Red Hills region.



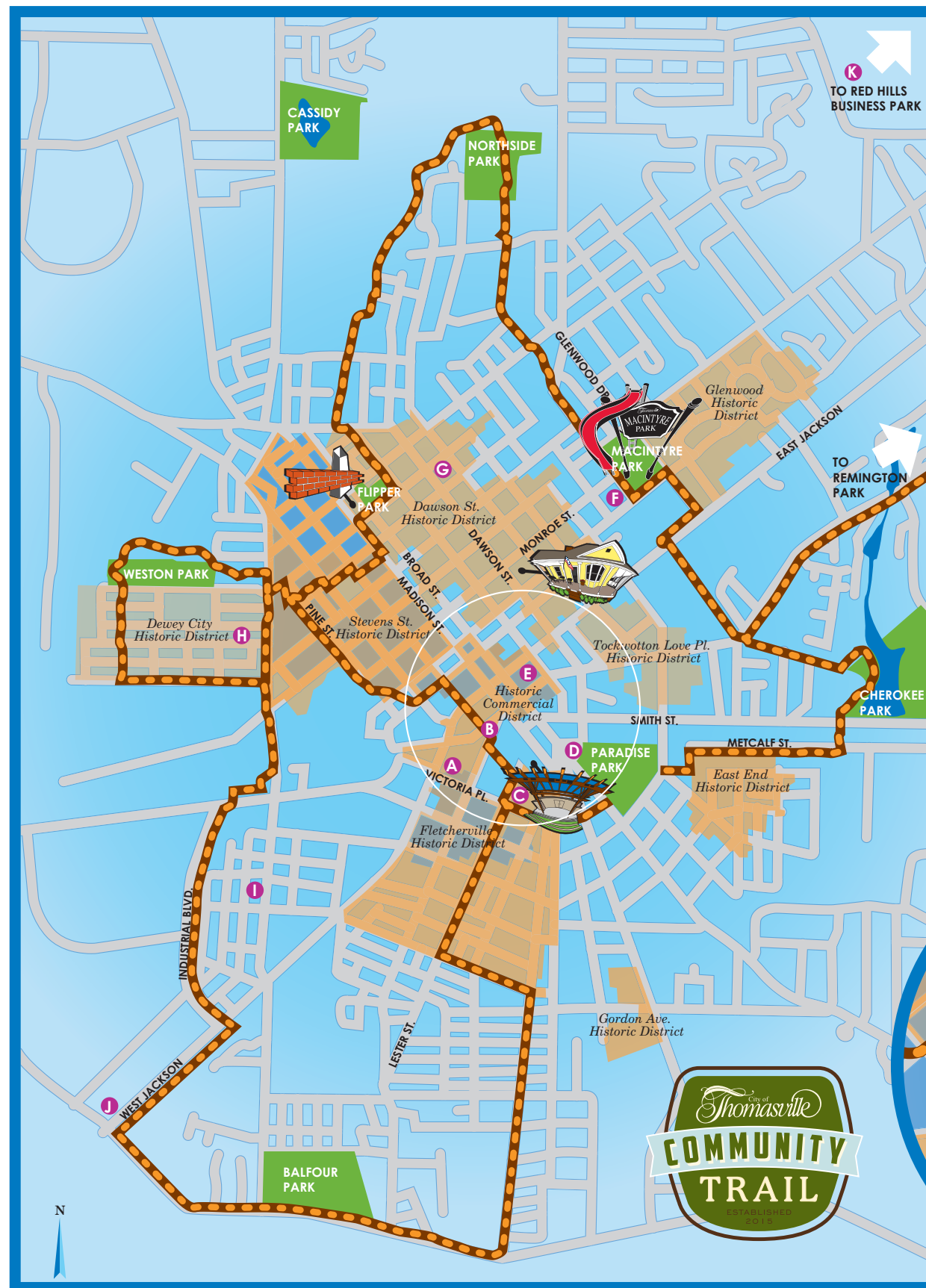
historic landmarks and neighborhoods

Thomasville has 10 districts within its confines that are all nationally recognized for their historic character. Dawson Street District is a great example of homes built at the turn of the 20th century. The 1890s home on 222 N. Dawson Street with its columns and wrap-around porch was chosen by HGTV to showcase its facelift on national television. Numerous homes on this thoroughfare were built circa 1900 as winter homes for wealthy northerners. At least four pre-Civil War homes remain on North Dawson Street; the Ephraim Ponder, the Hardaway, the Stevens-Butler and the Eaton Houses.

In 2015, city-led efforts removed 27 unsalvageable homes to improve the aesthetics of neighborhoods, reduce crime opportunities and encourage new construction for future homeowners. Thomasville Landmarks regularly partners with our Historic Preservation Commission to keep safe our historic structures. The Dewey City District, home to the Jack Hadley Black History Museum and remnants of an 1864 Civil War temporary prison camp, is the most recently designated historic district. A new fence and gate secures the resting place for Henry O. Flipper, the first Black graduate of West Point and invites history buffs to explore the cemetery.

In 2015, the city completed its 5th year of administering a no interest loan program for our homeowners to purchase energy efficient home appliances. In the coming months, you will have at your fingertips, tools, including a mobile App, to manage your utility accounts. New technology will allow you to access account information and pay bills directly from your smart phone.





A conceptual rendering of the projected route.

CITY POINTS OF INTEREST

- A** City Administration Building
111 Victoria Place
- B** City Recycling Center
300 Remington Avenue
- C** Housing & Resource Center
125 Lester Street
- D** Chamber of Commerce
401 S. Broad Street
- E** Visitor Center/Municipal Auditorium/Council Chambers
144 E. Jackson Street
- F** Thomasville Center for the Arts
600 E. Washington Street
- G** Thomas County Museum of History
725 N. Dawson Street
- H** Jack Hadley Black History Museum
214 Alexander Street
- I** Thomasville Industrial Park
- J** CNG Refuel Station
1330 W. Jackson Street
- K** Red Hills Business Park
14320 N. US Highway 319



Trailhead amphitheatre
Stevens Street



222 N. Dawson Street
Queen Ann cottage
HGTV showcase



Flipper Cemetery
Madison & Jerger Streets



Downtown business
shopping & restaurants



Bike rack
Remington Ave. & Broad Street



business districts

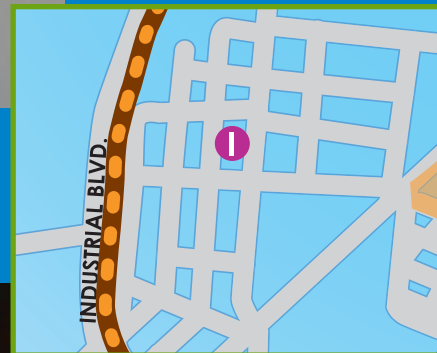
An afternoon bike ride on the trail will skirt our award-winning downtown shopping district as well as industrial and commercial business districts. Off Jackson Street along Industrial Boulevard the trail passes warehouses, distribution centers and small manufacturers. This area is one of three core Thomasville business districts. In other parts of town, Plantation Oak Industrial Park is home to 13 businesses and Red Hills Business Park on Highway 319 features a recently constructed water tank as it readies to serve new business.

Almost 20 percent of our workforce over the age of 16 works in manufacturing, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing. Service industries are other major employers with 21 percent of the workforce in retail, food services, arts and entertainment. Jackson Street, a major commercial corridor, contributes to the city economic engine with over 342 businesses and almost 3,000 employees providing products and services within the city limits.

In 2015, the Georgia Municipal Association and the Georgia Council for the Arts recognized Thomasville as one of five communities leveraging the arts for economic development. The recognition is for the collaborative effort on the development of the creative district on West Jackson Street.

When you look at economic development, you've really got to differentiate yourself as a community to attract outside businesses. The arts is one of the things that we use to distinguish ourselves from the cities we're up against when a company is looking to move to a certain area.

Max Beverly, Mayor, Thomasville



kilowatt-hours/electricity sold
508,203,536

Customer Call Center
162,215 inquiries

Tons of waste to landfill
97,118

Police calls/assists
133,100

This year we added
435 Internet customers

Airport Take-off/Landings
10,330

0% interest loans
 for energy efficient
 home improvements
\$1.6 Million
 since 2010

customers

Electric **15,435**
 Gas **3,198**
 Water **10,657**
 Solid Waste **16,295**

Residential Internet Speeds (megabits per second)
 3 Mbps 6Mbps 15 Mbps 35 Mbps 50 Mbps 110 Mbps 150 Mbps
 new service options



Responses
 Fire & Rescue calls **908**
 Medical calls **3,746**

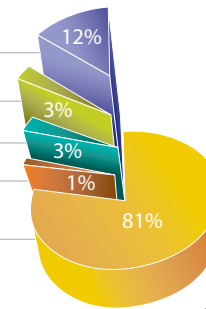
Gallons of water pumped
 daily from city wells
3,553,700



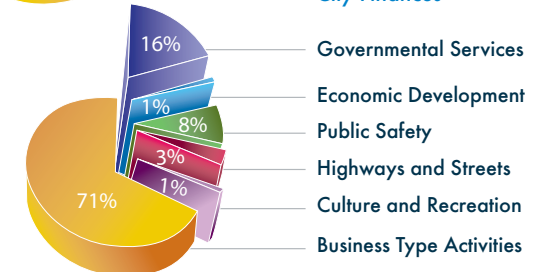
In April, Wanda Thomas was honored by the city fire & rescue team with our first Citizen Award for her actions in assisting neighbors during a fire.

Revenue Sources City Finances

Charges for Governmental Services
 Grants, Investments & Other Income
 Sales Tax
 Business Taxes and Other Fees
 Charges for Utilities/Business Type Activities



Expenditures City Finances



vtpsvw g' v:l
\$2,668,173
 of that

Red Hills Business Park
\$769,299

community trail
\$835,299

remainder on streets,
 sidewalks, recreation

Recycled Electronics
9 tons
 Recycled Cardboard,
 plastic & paper
1,534 tons

Downtown Public/Private
 Improvements
\$1,881,343

population
 households
 median age
 median income
 source: census.gov

18,700
7,500
39
\$31,240

AVD
 :15 **zero** com-
 pared to a statewide
 average per person
 of **\$298.57**

Data excludes Thomasville City School Tax. The City collects these taxes on the school board's behalf.

City finance data is 2014 fiscal year.

Infographic data is 3rd quarter calendar year data annualized for 2015.

Statewide comparisons source: the GA Local Government Financial Highlight Report by the GA Department of Community Affairs.

2015 Thomasville Accolades

August, 2015 - named by *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, Seven Charming Places to Visit Now

August, 2015 - named by *USA Today*, In your wildest dreams: Nine of America's top sporting destinations.

December 2015 - *USA Today Travel* chose a photo of Thomasville to represent Georgia in its section, Idyllic America: Picturesque Towns in Each State

Did you know?

"Georgia has all the raw material needed to become a global destination for tourists who enjoy bicycling," said Brent Buice, executive director of statewide bicycle advocacy group Georgia Bikes.

Tall Timbers Research Station and Land Conservancy reported in its Red Hills Economic Impact Study that the hunting properties in Thomas County produce a \$67,000,000 + economic impact, the largest among the six counties comprising the Red Hills Region.

Check out the Thomasville tourism story as told through the state's tourism initiative. The video will be shown at the new visitor center at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport upon its opening. <http://www.exploregeorgia.org/video/plantation-trace-region-video>.

Thomasville's Planning Department won a state award for promoting homeownership through innovative strategies. The Housing and Resource Center, pictured on the facing page, offers resources on financing and local programs assisting qualifying homeowners.



2015 City Council
left to right
top row:
Greg Hobbs, District 1
Jay Flowers, District 2
David Lewis, District 1

bottom row:
Don Sims, At Large
Max Beverly, District 2

Wells, front
Rhodes, third step



2011 City Council
left to right
top row:
Greg Hobbs
Jay Flowers

bottom row:
Roy Campbell
Max Beverly
David Lewis

Wells seated

The structure that became the Housing and Resource Center was moved from Victoria Place to its current location at 125 Lester Street in 2011. Its renovation was funded by a Community Development Block Grant.

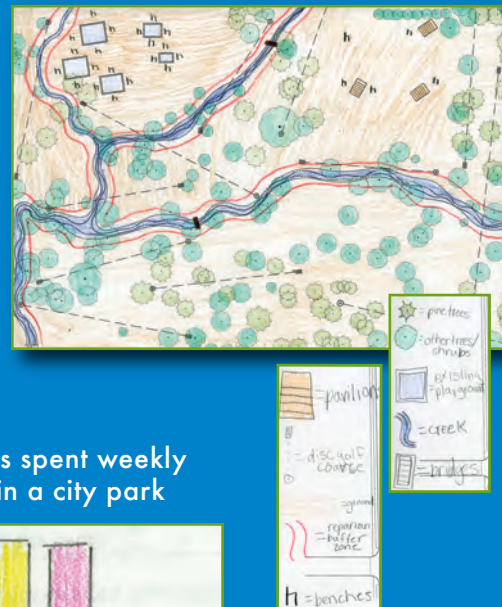


Students from the Thomasville City Schools' Enriching Gifted and Talented Students program studied the needs of MacIntyre Park. The fifth graders conducted peer surveys, interviewed stakeholders and community experts and presented a park improvement plan to city officials.

The students focused on park entrances, pavilions, benches, creek bank protection, playground areas and walkways.

The work of these students will likely be the groundwork for a 2016 comprehensive plan for MacIntyre Park.

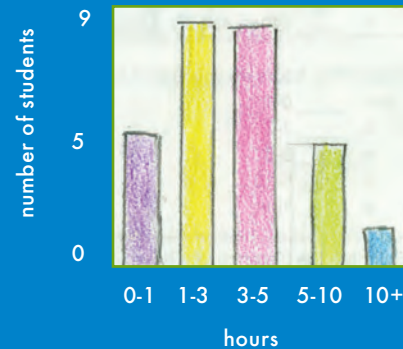
Park Design



The Team

Mason Beckham	Garrett Ledford
Ali Bellamy	Teresa Magbalon
Ashley Brennan	Sadie Norman
Kellie Brewer	Layne Oldham
Demi Brooks	Drew Parker
Sam Carter	Colin Renfroe
Ben Castillo	Will Roberts
Austin Chastain	John Murphy Singletary
Carson Cochran	Brian Sumler
Sydney Deutsch	Jocelyn Watson
Clark Finger	Gabe Duncan
Ellie Griffin	Ka'Maya Haywood
Valley Hayes	Javon Pittman
Patrick Hicks	Alexis Tillman

Hours spent weekly in a city park



Katie Chastain, Design Thinking Teacher
 Jamie Gammel, Science and Social Studies
 Dawn Hunnewell, English
 Amber Niswonger, Math