

April 1, 2016

MEMO

TO: Brian Herrmann, City of Thomasville

FROM: Steve Auterman, LRK

RE: Thomasville Downtown Strategic Plan Recommendations



This memo identifies key catalytic projects, planning areas and redevelopment opportunities which, when combined, create a strategic approach to the continued revitalization of Downtown Thomasville. The following items are keyed and illustrated on maps of Downtown, attached.

Planned Public Improvements or Public/Private Projects (P)

Several catalytic and major public building projects are envisioned in Downtown Thomasville. These are anchor investments by the community that should drive increased numbers of visitors to Thomasville, add patronage to downtown businesses, and strengthen the community’s core by increasing the vibrancy Downtown. The manner in which these places are linked together, connected to other downtown destinations, and the experience people have coming to/leaving these facilities will shape the image of Thomasville to many visitors.



P1) Thomasville Event Center

P1. Thomasville Event, Visitors and Nature Center

50,000-60,000 sq.ft. event center (banquet hall, meeting rooms, visitors information center, and nature center)



P2) Hotel and Parking Garage

P2. Hotel and Parking Garage

5 story hotel with 3-story garage, approx. 125 rooms and 300 parking spaces, on city-owned property



P3) Amphitheater

P3. Amphitheater

Covered stage with open seating for up to 500, with accompanying restroom facility and entry from Jackson Street via pedestrian way.

P4. EMS Building

New County Emergency Management Services (EMS) dispatch facility.

Current/Potential Capital Improvement Projects (C)

The following are smaller public infrastructure or improvement projects that are often part of a city's 5-year Capital Improvement Program budget. These comprise of new facilities or replacement of existing infrastructure in the public realm.

C1. McLean Avenue Extension

Completed. Repaving and extension of McLean Avenue eastward between Event Center site and Harvey's, sidewalk extended to Hansell Street.

C2. Paradise Park Sidewalk Extension

Provision for a new 5 ft. sidewalk along S. Dawson Street in the park.

C3. Stevens Street Closure/Trail

Rebuild S. Stevens Street between W. Jackson Street and S. Remington Avenue behind the Amphitheater in conjunction with construction of facility and addition of multi-use trail.

C4. Stevens Street Sidewalk

Expanded sidewalk trail along S. Stevens Street between W. Jackson Street and W. Monroe Street.

C5. Amphitheater Multi-use Trail

Extension of trail from Victoria Place to W. Jackson Street, through church parking lot/adjacent to Thomasville Landmarks Inc. building, and to the south side of the Amphitheater site.

C6. Creekside Trail Alternative Alignment

Alternative trail alignment that follows creek along public property between Lester Street and Fletcher Street to S. Stevens Street, linking to the multi-use trail at the Amphitheater.

C7. Paradise Park Improvements

Improvements to Paradise Park to host entertainment vents up to 1,000 people, plus playground, parking, and restroom improvements according to a Paradise Park Master Plan (see S5).



C1) McLean Avenue Extension



C2) Paradise Park Sidewalk Extension



C3) Stevens Street



C5) Amphitheater Multi-use Trail



C7) Paradise Park Improvements

C16. Wayfinding Signage, Public Art & Gateway Monuments

New gateway signage, public art or other monuments that signify “you’ve arrived” to visitors into the Downtown area from several directions of approach. Possible locations for Gateway Signage or Art include highly visible street corners like Smith Avenue and Broad Street, Broad Street south of the railroad, Remington Street at Seward Street, W. Jackson Street at Victoria Place, and S. Madison Street at W. Monroe Street.



C16) Gateway Signage and Art

C17. Off-site parking for Event Center/Overflow

Target the grassy area off S. Dawson Street south of Smith Avenue for overflow parking for the Event Center and large events in Paradise Park.

C18. Parking Lot Enclosure Walls/Landscape

Incorporate improved low walls, landscaping or other devices to help screen the appearance of parked cars otherwise plainly visible to motorists and pedestrians. By utilizing these modest screening measures the public realm of the street becomes better defined, attractive and comfortable. Concentrate on high-visibility locations such as Smith Avenue between Broad Street and S. Madison Street, S. Madison Street, S. Crawford Street, and around Harvey’s adjacent to the proposed Event Center.



C16) Wayfinding Signage, Art, Gateways

C19. Enhanced Pedestrian Crosswalks

Apply high-visibility crosswalk treatments to major intersections Downtown that have minimal striping today. Options include white zebra-stripe (continental) or ladder painted crosswalks, or brick-patterned red thermoplastic applications. Concentrate on intersections along Smith Avenue, Remington Avenue, Jackson Street, Jefferson Street, Crawford Street, and Madison Street, within the pedestrian core of Downtown.



C18) Parking Lot Enclosure



C18) Parking Lot Enclosure



C19) Pedestrian Crosswalks

Studies and Small Area Plans (S)

The following are studies and plans that have been or should be conducted.

S1. Creative District Plan Infill Development (insert plan and recommendations)

Completed in 2014, the Creative District Plan guides investment in commercial and residential properties south of Downtown.



S1) Creative District Plan

S2. Downtown Parking Study

Completed in 2015, Florida State University conducted a study of available parking and its utilization in the core of the Downtown area.



S2) Downtown Parking Study

S3. Event Center Market Study and Programming

Currently in progress, a market and programming study is being conducted regarding the market potential and space programming needs for the proposed Event Center.



S3) Event Center Market/Feasibility Study

S4. Jackson Street Gateway Corridor Study

Currently in progress, W. Jackson Street Corridor Study looks at the traffic, parking and land uses along W. Jackson Street approaching Downtown.



S4) Jackson Street Corridor Study

S5. MacIntyre and Paradise Park Master Plans

Proposed, master plans for MacIntyre Park and Paradise Park would guide investment in the park including play areas, an entertainment area, natural areas, parking, and access by pedestrians and bicyclists.



S5) Paradise Park Master Plan

S6. Wayfinding Study

To aid visitors in navigating Thomasville, a Wayfinding Study should be conducted to support item C16 which identifies the type and locations for gateway signage, directional signage, monument markers and other improvements that would guide visitors to the various destinations in the community.

S7. Unified Development Code

Pursue development of a Unified Development Code (combined Zoning, Subdivision, Landscape, Signage, Stormwater, Historic District regulations and Design Standards) by 2018, beginning in the first year (2016) with determining scope, and approach, and informing the public and decision-makers about code development best practices.

Potential Private Investment/ Redevelopment Sites (R)

Several sites within Downtown Thomasville are in various stages of redevelopment, or are sites worthy for consideration.

R1. Jackson Street Redevelopment Site East

Redevelopment of current IGA retail location and adjacent site on the east side of W. Jackson Street between Bartow Street and Victoria Place. Possible development includes retail and/or residential uses.

R2. IGA Site Redevelopment, Jackson Street Redevelopment west

Redevelopment of vacant lot and strip shopping center with gas station on the west side of W. Jackson Street between Bartow Street and Victoria Place. Redevelopment would be anchored by relocated IGA grocery with the building anchoring the northern part of the site terminating the view from Victoria Place. Any drive-thru window for the site should be accessed from Fleming Street.

R3. Oak Street Event Venue

Renovation of a vacant brick building on Oak Street between W. Washington Street and W. Jefferson Street into a wedding and small event venue.

R4. Bracey Lumber Site Redevelopment

The site of the former Bracey Lumber Co. is available for redevelopment, with the oldest brick building (southeast on the site) most appropriate for reuse.

R5. Plaza Restaurant Site

The Plaza Restaurant is currently for sale, and could become a potential redevelopment site to either redevelop or renovate the restaurant building. The ancillary building should be redeveloped and replaced with a new building along Smith Avenue. The large parking area should be reconfigured to serve the redeveloped site as well as provide better located access to Smith Avenue and Remington Street.

R6. Harvey's Site (next to Event Center)

When the Event Center is complete, the site of Harvey's becomes an important site to the visitors approach to and experience of the Event Center. If redeveloped, any new buildings should be located close to the corner of S. Dawson Street and Smith Avenue, and proper signage should



R1) Jackson Street Redevelopment



R2) IGA Site Redevelopment



R3) Oak Street Event Venue



R4) Bracey Lumber Site



R5) Plaza Restaurant Site



R6) Harvey's Site



R7) Victoria Place



R7) Victoria Place



R10) Infill Buildings (Smith/Broad)



R10) Infill Buildings (Crawford/Remington)

be incorporated directing people to the Event Center along S. Dawson Street. The rear of the site and service areas should properly screen from view from guests at the Event Center.

R7. Victoria Place Redevelopment

The Victoria Place infill residential project has resulted in several new homes built adjacent to Downtown, among the few that have been built in many years. Continued construction along Victoria Place and Lester Street will result in new residential housing stock within a short distance of Downtown.

R8. Infill Buildings next to Amphitheater

Several vacant lots are situated around or near the proposed Amphitheater site along S. Stevens Street. These represent potential development opportunities for small retail, commercial, office or residential uses that would help enclose the performance venue site as well as fill gaps in the urban fabric along Remington Street and W. Jackson Street.

R9. Baptist Church Entry

Planned. A new entry and drop-off area is planned for the Baptist Church at the corner of E. Jefferson Street and S. Crawford Street, helping to address the corner which is currently a small parking lot.

R10. Infill Buildings along S. Crawford Street

Additional infill building sites along S. Crawford Street at the Smith Avenue corner, and at two corners at Remington Avenue, represent opportunities to convert vacant lots, exposed parking lots, or underutilized properties into gap-filling corner developments. By filling in the corners of S. Crawford Street/Smith Avenue and S. Crawford Street/Remington Avenue, S. Crawford Street becomes less of a back street to Broad Street and becomes more of a complete urban street. In this manner Crawford Street becomes an integral part of the Downtown experience for motorists and pedestrians, especially those walking from the proposed Event Center (P1) and Hotel (P2), and a more viable commercial street rather than the back street shortcut locals treat it to be. Likewise, an infill building of some sort is needed at the southwest corner of Smith Avenue and S. Broad Street, giving visitors approaching westbound from Smith Avenue an appropriate visual back-stop when arriving at Broad Street.

R11. Creative District Redevelopment Sites

Numerous sites for infill buildings or redevelopment sites were identified in the Creative District Plan. Locations such as the Powell Warehouse and others present opportunities for street-facing development that helps create a cohesive district adjacent to Downtown.

