

District Three - East End

The presence of aging commercial uses and vacant land, and the superb access offered by Morrison Moore Parkway and East Main Street combine to make the East End district the largest redevelopment opportunity in the city. Uniquely positioned to expand the retail choices available to residents and provide affordable housing with all the benefits of living close to the Public Square, East End can accommodate the growth that is inevitable with the development form desired by the community, reducing growth pressure on the historic core as an added benefit. The character of the district should be influenced by the design patterns of the core, but should not replicate them; instead, it should acknowledge traditional building practice but incorporate materials less prevalent in the core such as brick, decorative metal, and cement-fiber siding.

The district is well-suited to standard redevelopment economics and practice, and breaks down into several project types in suitable locations. Along East Main, new three- to four-story mixed-use buildings with concealed parking and private courtyards add condominium units and affordable apartments to the city’s inventory, while providing ground-floor space at the Stephens Street intersection for specialty restaurants and service retail. Adjacent to the east, a new community retail center takes advantage of its bypass frontage to double the amount of large-footprint retail space in the district. Multistory office mixed-use is concentrated along Memorial Drive, and several new or renovated community buildings become a civic and cultural complex at the districts’s western edge.

Open space strategies focus on streetscape improvements to create public space corridors, and adding pocket parks in strategic locations along these corridors to multiply their benefits.

Figure 3.22: Olde Cannery Arts Center

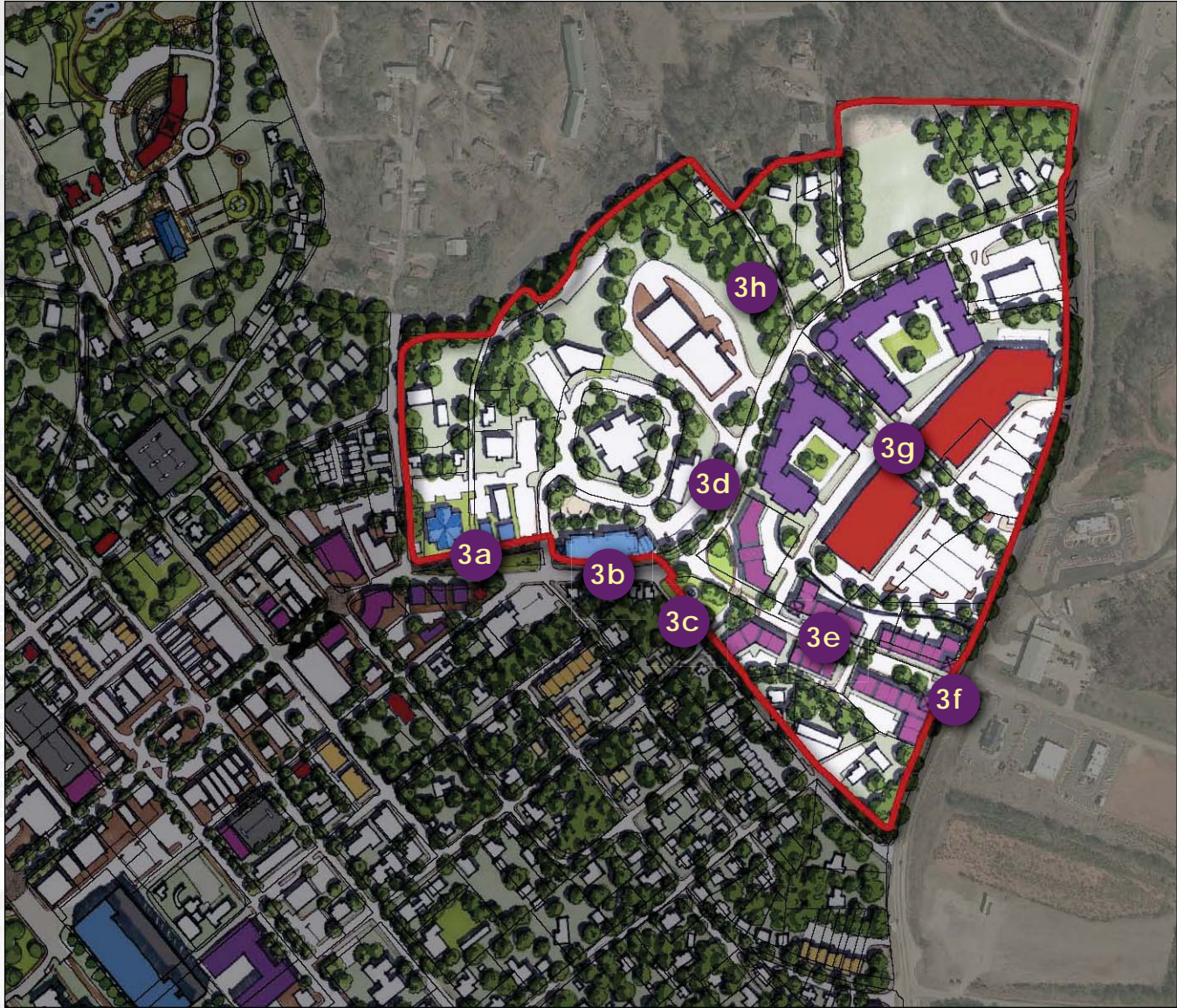


- 3a cannery expansion / artpark
- 3b future library
- 3c memorial gateway
- 3d east main streetscape
- 3e east end business district
- 3f memorial drive streetscape
- 3g greenbriar redevelopment
- 3h stephens street pocket park

Linkages to larger parks are provided by greenway trails paralleling Morrison Moore Parkway. Future public park space in the district could be provided by a redesign of the former county courthouse grounds.

District circulation strategies revolve around increasing mobility through sidewalks and bike lanes associated with the streetscapes, and pedestrian connections from Mechanic Street to Memorial Drive. A new local street network is recommended as part of the redevelopment of Greenbriar Plaza and adjacent sites. Parking needs of the district are addressed by parallel and perpendicular street parking on East Main and Memorial; improvements to existing parking at the county facilities; and major parking lots and decks associated with new development.

Figure 3.23: East End District





The strong growth pressure on the city can be concentrated in the East End district, with more residential and commercial market to spare. Given the proximity to Mechanicsville and the large redevelopment parcels, future housing should factor in affordability and the student population. New retail should strive for a diversity of products, with attention to basic household goods and services that are needed by the surrounding neighborhoods. A higher-end grocery should be targeted and would be a welcome addition for residents. New offices should cater to professionals and small businesses that support the nearby municipal functions. The proposed projects could provide approximately 150,000 to 200,000 square feet of new commercial space in the district, as well as 150 to 200 new housing units.

**Cannery Expansion / Artpark**

The new emphasis on East and West Main as the five-block “heart” of downtown puts a different perspective on the Olde Cannery Arts Center and the historic Lumpkin County Jail. These two buildings are local landmarks and represent the commitment of the community to preserving the past and investing in the city’s cultural future, but they are diminished in symbolic importance by their somewhat obscure sites and unremarkable surroundings. Yet, they occupy roughly the same position and relationship to the Old Courthouse on the east as does Price Hall at NGCSU on the west. This unique circumstance, and the presence of both an underutilized Enota Street and a grassy shoulder on East Main that widens to about 80’ on the east, suggest a much greater role for this offbeat area in the future.

In its new incarnation as an “Artpark” (Figure 3.24), Enota Street and the triangular open space are combined to become a landscaped cultural plaza that foregrounds an expanded and enlivened visual arts center. Enota Street would be closed to vehicles, reduced in width by about one-half, and repaved with brick to become a grand pedestrian walkway fronting the historic buildings. The grassy area would be terraced and improved with decorative plantings. A first phase Olde Cannery expansion would utilize space in the historic Jail; and in the future a new arts center building could be constructed on the adjacent block to the west. Parking would be provided on current surface lots behind the jail and in the existing county complex. These improvements could be combined with a new library or other civic building at Courthouse Hill to form a new “cultural arts campus” for the city, anchoring the east end of Main Street.



**Future Library**

The Lumpkin County facilities occupying Courthouse Hill are vital to the success of East End; but even though the 1965 County Courthouse building is an interesting example of modern architecture and its grounds are beautifully landscaped, the balance of the Hill is an informal collection of buildings and parking lots. Given that the county is constructing a new municipal complex on Morrison Moore Parkway, the Hill should, over time, be reorganized and improved to solidify its design relationship to downtown and become more accessible as a major public space. The first step in this process is the construction of a new library building at the eastern end of the “Artpark” described above. The library would be on multiple levels, with entries provided at the Veteran’s Memorial on the Hill and at the end of the pedestrian walk in the Artpark. The building could also be designed as a LEED (energy-efficient) structure, with a south-facing glass wall following the curve of East Main providing daylight to a large reading room, and stacks built into the slope of the

Figure 3.24: Old Cannery “Artpark” from West



Hill. Parking would be shared with the other county functions, reducing the need for more impervious surface. The wooden bungalows that currently occupy a portion of the site could be relocated to vacant land along nearby Alma Street.

**Memorial Gateway / East End Park**

The intersection of Memorial Drive and East Main Street is essentially the center of East End, and the point where East End’s business district and “Main Street” begins. To mark this gateway, a new pocket park should be carved out of redevelopment parcels on the north and south sides of Memorial. The south parcel, forming a tapered block with Mechanic Street, would contain the bulk of this new East End Park and feature a decorative fountain, seating, and a pedestrian stairway leading to Martin Street and the Mechanicsville neighborhood (Figure 3.25). The park would continue across Memorial on to the current Wachovia Bank property, and form a semi-circular plaza on axis with East Main. The plaza’s design would integrate with a new multistory building to replace the branch bank. The intersection itself should be signalized and improved with pedestrian crosswalks and streetscaping.

**East Main Streetscape**

East Main Street becomes East End’s residential row as it proceeds north from the Memorial Drive intersection. Because it is a vital pedestrian link to the Public Square, it should have streetscape improvements along its entire length. These improvements would include parallel parking both sides where possible; a minimum 5’ planting strip; a minimum 6’ sidewalk; and an approximately 10’ supplemental zone at new buildings which are three or more stories in height.

**East End Business District**

Scattered strip commercial buildings line Memorial Drive and many are becoming obsolete. With East End accommodating much of downtown’s commercial and mixed-use residential growth, Memorial Drive is well-placed to become the new professional office corridor of the city – particularly because it stretches between the existing county facilities on the west and

*Figure 3.25: Artpark, Library and East End Park*



the new county complex on the east. Future redevelopment should feature two- to three-story buildings pulled up to the sidewalk, with ground-floor retail and upper floor offices. Limited parking could be provided to the rear of the buildings, with shared parking in the adjacent Greenbriar redevelopment and in a head-in format on Memorial Drive. The design character of this development should resemble traditional brick commercial architecture like the Meaders Building or the Price Building on the Public Square, with simplified details to reflect contemporary aesthetic currents (Figure 3.26). Assuming an equal distribution of two-story and three-story buildings, the redevelopment illustrated would provide about 102,000 square feet of retail space and 205,000 square feet of office.

**Memorial Drive Streetscape**

Memorial Drive is currently a two-lane collector road with random curbs and swaled shoulders, punctuated by multiple access breaks and no defined character other than a low-density highway commercial strip. It is mandatory that it be reconfigured as a proper urban street if it is to have a catalytic effect on redevelopment of its commercial uses. The streetscape proposes retaining the two lanes of traffic, and expanding the right-of-way to include head-in parking similar to East Main; a minimum 5’ planting / furniture zone with regularly-spaced tree wells and decorative lighting; and a minimum 12’ sidewalk that provides areas for outdoor dining.

**Greenbriar Plaza Redevelopment**

The single most important redevelopment opportunity in the city is the aging Greenbriar Plaza shopping center and the stand-alone big-box buildings behind it facing the bypass. When combined with the large vacant parcel to the north, the redevelopment area totals about 16 acres – but redevelopment is not without its obstacles. The vacant site would require significant re-grading to provide a platform for development. Acquisition of the

*Figure 3.26: Design Character, Memorial Drive*







Figure 3.27: East End Aerial View



operating properties could also be challenging to a master developer. Nevertheless, benefits outweigh disadvantages when factoring in frontage on two main thoroughfares that guarantees excellent access and visibility; curb cuts that are already provided on a GDOT road; and about half the site that could be easily cleared with minimal grading. The opportunity to build both needed affordable housing and welcome basic commercial in one large package is another strong case for redevelopment. Therefore, the redevelopment proposal shows the site roughly divided in half, with the western portion as residential mixed-use and the eastern as mainstream large-format commercial (Figure 3.27).

The mixed-use element consists of two three- to four-story courtyard buildings, pulled up to the East Main right-of-way and holding a limited amount of ground-floor retail at the Stephens Street intersection. The buildings are heavily articulated to reduce their visual mass, and could be designed in the spirit of long-vanished old hotels like that at Porter Springs to the north. The sloping site allows concealed parking beneath the buildings, accessed by an extension of Stephens Street which also connects to the adjacent retail. The mixed-use buildings could provide about 49,300 square feet of retail or restaurant space, and 150 to 200 housing units.

The commercial element features two large-footprint buildings divided by the Stephens Street extension, with about 165 parking spaces easily access from Morrison Moore Parkway. The buildings provide about 130,000 square feet of retail space – 90,000 in the north, and 40,000 in the south - which is capable of handling a grocery like an updated and expanded J&J Food Store or a Trader Joe’s or a smaller Publix in addition to several other retail slots. The buildings might be designed to use materials and forms that suggest the district’s proximity to the city’s mining past, like the stamp-mill influenced Program Center at Camp Glisson, or the industrial silhouettes of the Old Mill District in Bend, Oregon (Figure 3.28). Provision should be made in the development to include a multiuse trail along Morrison More, ideally 12’ wide and shaded by continuous tree cover.

Figure 3.28: Old Mill District Retail, Bend OR



**Stephens Street Pocket Park**

Stephens Street intersects East Main at the center of the major new East End mixed-use residential development. This key location is ideal for a small new pocket park that could be built to take advantage of an adjacent forested area. The pocket park could also be the first phase of a future long-term greenway trail connection to points north and west, such as the reservoir. The future greenway could use any number of street alignments in the north to make its connections.



Figure 3.29: Reading Room, Swarthmore College



District Four - Highlands

North Grove Street is the spine of the Highlands district; and even though it curves east to meet Highway 19 about three miles north of downtown, it gives the impression from East Main that it heads directly into the mountains until terminating in the folds of the Blue Ridge. The district is also characterized by rolling topography and forest on its northern edge. This intimacy with the highland landscape drives both the district name and the attitude toward future development, particularly on large projects along North Grove.

The land use and development strategy for the Highlands revolves around two street corridors – North Grove and Hawkins. On North Grove, the strategy focuses on the preservation and rehabilitation of the historic Hillcrest / McKinney House as a new office or administrative center, and the conversion of a large steeply-sloping vacant tract to an active use such as a conference center. On Hawkins, a combination of existing buildings, vacant land and redevelopment targets provides the chance to support commercial activities in the Public Square as well as build back some of the context that has been lost over time.

Like the Historic Neighborhood district to the east, the Highlands open space strategy relies on the natural environment and is associated with both the Hillcrest / McKkinney project and the development of the large vacant parcel that can add to the district’s inventory, as can a small open space related to the redevelopment of the Park Street School. Greenways and multiuse trails along Wimpy Mill Road and Hawkins Street establish connections to the larger open space framework in downtown.

The strategy for circulation improvements in the Highlands is a mix of streetscapes on key corridors like North Grove, North Meaders, Hawkins, and Johnson Street, combined with

Figure 3.30: Dahlonega and the Blue Ridge



- 4a north grove streetscape
- 4b hillcrest / mckinney redevelopment
- 4c highlands conference center
- 4d west side trail
- 4e park street school site
- 4f meaders / jones streetscape
- 4g mustering ground project
- 4h hawkins street hospitality

the trails described above. Municipal or shared parking facilities are proposed at the Hillcrest project / conference center, and the redevelopment of the rental townhouses on the Mustering Ground site.

The market framework concentrates on the demand for diverse and distinguished hospitality and meeting space, with the main driver being a potential conference center that can address the needs of the College as well as bridge the gap between retreats like Brasstown Valley and more urban facilities in metro Atlanta. Additional market potential for smaller inns could be accommodated in existing historic buildings or new structures in good locations. There is also demand for housing near the

Figure 3.31: Highlands District





Public Square, which plays into the land use strategy for sites along or near Hawkins Street. Overall, the hospitality projects could add approximately 100 to 150 new lodging units with 20,000 to 40,000 square feet of conference space, while the residential projects could contribute about 30 lofts and townhouses.

**North Grove Streetscape**

North Grove is a crucial pedestrian link to the major projects in the northwest corner of the study area; and as it is the main street of the Highlands District, North Grove Street deserves special attention. It also needs to continue to function as a vehicular artery to points north and west. Fortunately, it has a wide right-of-way and sidewalks in several spots. The gravel shoulder should be replaced with curb-and-gutter so that the overall cartway dimension is reduced slightly. Any additional space can be given over to the pedestrian environment, which should be consistent on both sides. Sidewalks should comply with GDOT requirements and should have a planting strip at the curb to accommodate ornamental trees, signage, and lighting. A tree species that has symbolic connections to the mountains could be chosen to reinforce the district character. Because of the traffic volume, on-street parking is not recommended for North Grove.

**Hillcrest / McKinney Redevelopment Project**

The city has made a visible commitment to preserving and invigorating Dahlonega’s heritage by purchasing the Hillcrest/McKinney House as a possible site for a new city hall complex. The existing building has a commanding presence at the top of a small hill terminating Johnson Street; and its architecture, though compromised by vinyl siding, false shutters and modern windows, is still monumental and impressive. The house in its current configuration contains approximately 3,000 square feet. Whether rehabilitated and expanded for a new city hall, or otherwise improved for speculative office space or administrative functions connected to North Georgia College, repositioning the Hillcrest property is essential to the

*Figure 3.32: Hillcrest/McKinney House*



success of North Grove and the Highlands district. Approximately 15,000 to 20,000 square feet of space can be accommodated comfortably in a renovated and enlarged facility with dedicated parking and room for landscaped grounds.

The conceptual site plan (Figure 3.33) shows the existing house and a new expansion or annex to the rear with a side entry plaza utilizing the present drive and parking lot. Additional parking spaces are provided behind the annex. In this arrangement, the annex could contain functions that require conventional office environments with capacity for systems furniture, low-energy lighting and air conditioning, and raised floor power and data distribution systems; while the house - restored to its original condition – would provide a setting for more symbolic uses like executive suites, meeting rooms, or legislative chambers. The front lawn of the property should also be improved in its new role as formal open space, preserving the existing mature trees and landscape features like the grape arbor. The redevelopment project could also link to the adjacent property depending on its future use, with the possibility of shared parking and access to Wimpy Mill Road.

**Highlands Conference Center**

The desire for a major new conference facility has been raised in stakeholder interviews, Core Team meetings, and in the city’s 2025 Comprehensive Plan. It is also a cornerstone of the market strategy for retaining and increasing tourism. Unlike Brasstown Valley or the conference facility at Amicalola Falls State Park, a downtown conference center could offer

*Figure 3.33: Hillcrest project / Conference Center Complex*





the feel of a mountain environment combined with the charm and attractions of the Public Square and the sophistication of the university, all within walking distance – a combination unlike anything else in the state. The conference center could be sited in a number of locations depending on program and development partnerships; the plan proposes it in the Highlands District because of the thematic connection, mountain views, available land, and excellent access.

Figure 3.34 shows the conference center and related grounds on several parcels near the Hillcrest/McKinney property, including a vacant kudzu-covered site that slopes steeply as a “gulch” to Wimpy Mill Road. The conference center building is oriented to take advantage of the mountain views, and is accessed by an existing public street connecting to North Grove. The building itself could resemble the large mountain lodges built in the early 1900s, with a wooden superstructure containing the rooms and common areas placed on a rustic stone base holding the conference space. Ample parking could be provided in a

surface lot as well as in a deck built into the slope beneath the conference building. The gulch that marks the vacant site is transformed into a series of terraced gardens. Depending on program, the complex could incorporate adjacent buildings as remote guest cottages. These historic homes, currently rental housing, have striking architecture and rustic stone construction that link them visually to the design of the main building (Figure 2.8c).

**West Side Trail**

A key component of the open space network for downtown is the West Side greenway / multiuse trail, which links together existing and proposed parks in the study area as well as parks and community facilities further afield. North of North Grove Street the trail follows Wimpy Mill Road to the reservoir, running along the road to the east. The trail would be approximately 12’ wide and would run in a greenway that could split from the right-of-way at Yahoola Creek. The east side of Wimpy Mill is generally favorable to a greenway, with sufficient width and few intervening properties. At North Grove, the trail would

shift over to the north side of Hawkins Street and utilize either the existing on-street parking bay or a portion of the bay and the existing sidewalk. Hawkins Street is a candidate for conversion to two-way traffic and would likely lose its on-street parking to provide sufficient room for the travel lanes and the trail, which could be reduced to 10’ wide. The trail would run west until just past the Baptist Church parking lot, where it would link to another greenway running through the University Heights linear park.

**North Park Street School Site**

The 2.5-acre site of the Dahlonega Graded School is a significant redevelopment opportunity for downtown because of its relatively large size, city ownership, and proximity to the Public Square and Hancock Park. The site is vacant except for a small 1950s annex building that was connected to the now-demolished school by a canopied walkway (still present - see Figure 3.35a). It is also terraced into two roughly flat sections – an upper one which holds the annex and parking, and a smaller lower one. The annex is currently being leased by North Georgia College for studio space. Depending on city priorities and market conditions, the site could be improved in a number of different ways in the future. Local arts groups are flourishing and seeking additional space, which could be accommodated at the

Park Street School site. Another option is to dispose of the site for single-family housing, which could be a mixture of townhouses on the upper portion of the site, and detached homes on the lower. A third option could be loft condominium housing using a renovated annex and a new building reconstructed in the image of the old school (Figure 3.35a). Since the current lease provides a bit of breathing



Figure 3.34: Conference Center Concept



room for redevelopment plans, the city should re-assess the property after a space needs analysis for the new city hall is complete, and ideally after a cultural facilities plan is created that takes into consideration the future of the Holly Theater, local arts groups and the instructional needs of North Georgia College.

**Meaders / Jones Streetscape**

North Park Street and Jones Street combine to form the most direct pedestrian route between the Public Square and the Hillcrest / McKinney redevelopment project, as well as the potential location of the downtown conference center. North Park is also a key pedestrian connection to the school site and festival area discussed above. For these reasons, a consistent package of sidewalk improvements, landscaping and wayfinding signage should be implemented to encourage pedestrians to walk between the Square and these community and commercial uses. On North Park, existing sidewalks can be supplemented with street trees and lighting, and new sidewalks installed where absent. Jones Street requires sidewalks and furnishings on both sides, as well as curb-and-gutter to replace the existing swales.

*Figure 3.35a,b: Historic North Park Street School, Mountain Inn*



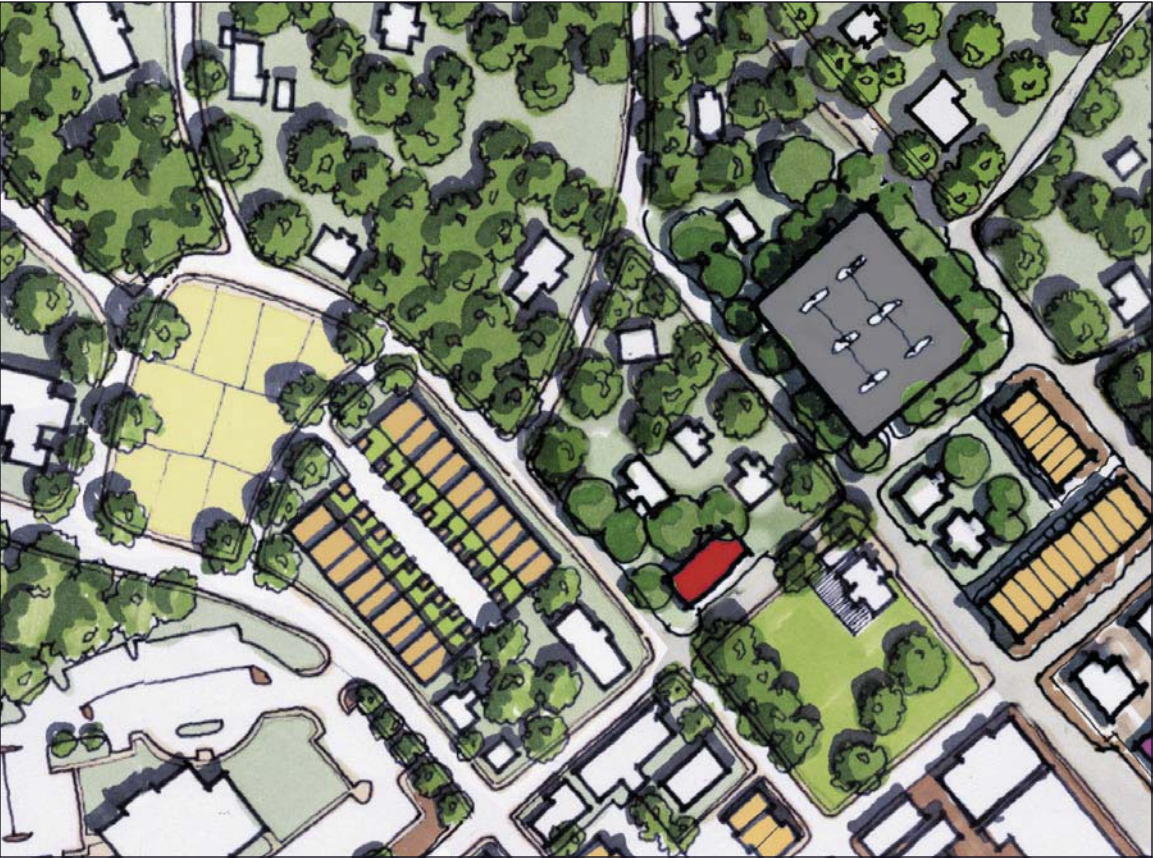
**Mustering Ground Project**

The Civil War Mustering Ground is a historic site located on the north side of Hawkins Street between North Meaders and North Grove. It was an open field where troops were called up for the Civil War, and is commemorated by a state Historic Commission marker on North Grove. The current rental townhouses were built in the 1980s. The site occupies almost an entire downtown block and is positioned on the edge of the Public Square district near two of the potential city hall sites, making it highly strategic for municipal parking. While the existing use is viable and in good condition, the long-term use of the site could be intensified by redevelopment as a residential condo building combined with additional parking capacity to address the municipal program. The lower floors – the parking component - could be partially recessed into the sloping topography to minimize exposure; while the upper floors could be terraced back to provide outdoor living space with superlative views of the mountains and downtown. A “green” roof would recall the presence of the Mustering Ground as well as provide common space for residents.

**Hawkins Street Hospitality**

A set of stone stairs, two gateposts and low wall are all that remains of the Mountain Inn or Zimmer’s Lodge (Figure 3.35b) that once was a commanding presence over Hawkins Street and Hancock Park. Though the Mountain Inn is long gone, most of its site is vacant and could be redeveloped as a smaller, more intimate hotel or inn that complements the small scale and forms of the nearby Littlefield Cottage and Storehouse. The grand but neglected J. D. Higgins House at 74 North Grove could also be renovated and repositioned as a historic inn, adding diversity to Dahlonega’s lodging inventory and reinforcing the landmark aspects of the Hawkins Street corridor.

*Figure 3.36: Hawkins Street Projects*





# District Five - University Heights

In addition to the City’s history and heritage, another unique characteristic that sets Dahlonega apart from other places is its rolling topography. This is seen prominently in the study area’s western portion. The University Heights district extends from West Morrison Moore Parkway in the south up to Happy Hollow Road in the north. It includes all the land north of the NGCSU campus and extends to West Main Street, College Lane and North Chestatee Street to the east, stopping just short of the City’s historic downtown core. The land in this area lies vastly undeveloped and is heavily forested. There is a perennial stream flowing parallel to Happy Hollow Road, toward the north of the district. The slopes of the land are steep making this the largest obstacle to overcome for the future development of this area.

The number of parcels within this district is few, each one covering a large area. While most of these are zoned for single family residential, those closer to the bypass allow for townhouses and duplexes while those immediately north of the college campus are zoned for multi-family housing. A Planned Unit Development district is located between the multi-family housing, close to Vickery Drive, and serves as a transition between the low density residential area and the extended historic core. This is developed with townhouses and would turn into a redevelopment opportunity when the property starts aging with the passage of time. The largest parcel covering 16-acres is currently vacant and offers an opportunity for future development. The remaining large parcels varying between 3-acres and 11-acres in size have single residential units built on them and are therefore underutilized. While all of them are occupied, most are in standard condition and require only minimal

Figure 3.37: Campus Space - Agnes Scott College



- 5a performing arts corridor
- 5b forest park
- 5c university heights neighborhood
- 5d faculty village
- 5e west side trail
- 5f university heights town center

repairs but those closer to the bypass have been neglected and require more attention and care. These large parcels also offer good redevelopment opportunities.

Land use strategies within the district aim to intensify residential development through the redevelopment of the large parcels of land. The intent is to design and build a sustainable neighborhood along the steep contours of the properties. A mixed-use development with opportunities for commercial uses is planned along West Morrison Moore Parkway and across from the future university development of Radar Ridge that lies south of the parkway. Proximity to the university campus is taken advantage of by providing a residential village around Vickery Drive

Figure 3.38: University Heights District





to serve the student and faculty population. The creation of these neighborhoods within this district increases the housing stock within the downtown area of the City. They offer a different variety in housing types than that provided by the neighborhoods within the East End district of the study area. The district provides an opportunity to experience in-town living, close to the heart of the City that includes accessibility to amenities and community facilities within walking distance and at the same time allows for the experience of living in a suburban type of neighborhood setting. As in the rest of the City, this district too takes into consideration the preservation of historic properties like the Vickery House along West Main Street, and aims to showcase these structures by being sensitive with the placement and design of the surrounding new residences. The Dahlonega Baptist Church is also part of this district and is an important institutional building that caters to the community. This building utilizes part of a large parcel of land the balance of which can be used as park space for the community.

Considering that this district has the most amount of undeveloped, forested land, it becomes crucial to maintain as much of the tree cover as possible. The requirements for open space are met through various strategies. The primary one involves the creation of a linear park with an amenities center along the stream and through the University Heights neighborhood. This would include the addition of a trail that is part of the City's trail network that helps to increase connectivity between the various districts. Additional pocket parks are created at separate locations internal to the neighborhood development. A new community amphitheatre is planned at the intersection of Hawkins and Church streets, the intent of which is to enhance and anchor the performing arts corridor.

For the most part, a new roadway system would be required when developing the neighborhoods. This network, provided as part of the private-sector development, would

Figure 3.39: University Heights Neighborhood Character



serve in connecting the residential areas to the City's downtown, to the NGCSU campus and to other surrounding neighborhoods that lie just outside the study area. These streets would meet the requirements for pedestrian use, with sufficient stop sign, crosswalks, landscaping, street furniture and street lights. North Chestatee Street that forms one edge of the district would also benefit from improved streetscaping so as to complete visual and physical links to the core. All new development needs to take into consideration parking strategies and while individual residential units cater to their individual needs, parking requirements for the amphitheatre would be met by sharing space with the church's existing parking facilities. This would optimize the use of the land dedicated for parking and would prevent additional land from being razed to create unsightly parking lots. The same could be achieved if multi-family housing around Vickery Drive is targeted toward the university students.

Market trends for Dahlonega indicate a strong market for residential development and part of this is captured by the University Heights district. This neighborhood has an ideal environment to sustain an upscale, sustainable neighborhood whose biggest draws would be the undulating topography and the proximity to downtown Dahlonega. This proximity would also help support a community facility like the amphitheatre that would be easily accessible to the residents of these neighborhoods and to the tourists who frequent the historic square. The market would also support limited opportunities for retail along West Morrison Moore Parkway. These would primarily cater to the needs of the neighborhood population rather than serve as regional destination retail. Under the proposed design, the market potential would include the development of 100-120 single family detached units, 60-80 single family attached townhouses, 150-200 multi-family units and 30,000-50,000 square feet of commercial space.

Figure 3.40: University Heights Neighborhood Center





**Performing Arts Corridor**

While the Cannery Arts Center with its expansion and Artpark forms the visual arts corridor along East Main Street, the performing arts corridor starts at the Holly Theatre along West Main Street, goes further west to the grand entrance lawn of the NGCSU campus and Price Hall, and then turns north on to Church Street to end at the proposed amphitheatre that lies along Hawkins Street. This amphitheatre is the focus of one end of the corridor and is ideally situated in proximity to neighborhoods and parking facilities so as to serve the local community as well as the visitors to the city. It helps to expand the public square as it becomes an additional attraction that draws people to it which in turn also increases the importance of the Hawkins Street Historic District and the uses within it. The development of this corridor would not only involve the construction of the amphitheatre but would also require streetscaping to be carried out along West Main and Church streets. This would incorporate sidewalks along both sides of the streets, with landscaping, street furniture, lights and relevant signage. This amphitheatre is proposed to blend in with the natural topography and character of the area. The tiers are laid out with manicured grass and granite curbs that radiate out from a central stage. The theatre is buffered from surrounding areas by existing trees. It shares parking space with the Dahlonega Baptist Church and also connects to Forest Park and the city’s trail system through the open space offered along the back of the amphitheatre.

**Forest Park**

Forest Park is one of the answers to the city’s desire for more community open space. It is a linear park proposed parallel to the perennial stream that runs through the University Heights district, close to Happy Hollow Road. This neighborhood and community amenity is designed to follow and preserve the existing topography and the trees. The trees also

*Figure 3.41: Church Street Amphitheater*



form a buffer from the surrounding single family residences. A relatively flat portion of land is available to build an amenity’s center for the community with a pool and tennis courts and it would form a visual connection with the linear pocket park proposed for the faculty and student housing. This park is very accessible not only to the surrounding residents but also to the rest of the city through the West Side Trail that runs through the park and connects to the rest of the city.

**University Heights Neighborhood**

The development of this neighborhood offers increased housing options for residents to live close to the city’s historic downtown and at the same time enjoy the seclusion offered by the natural environment. This area is characterized by steep contours and these will play an important role in the number and layout of the housing units. Current market projections see 100 to 120 single family units being built, but a careful study of the geography is required to determine this feasibility. The neighborhood is envisioned to set an example of upscale housing that unites with ecologically sound sustainable principles in the area. Preservation of the topography is valued and houses and streets are designed to follow the contour lines which could result in a unique architecture for this area that involves the use of stilts. Houses would be laid out on a network of streets that connect to surrounding neighborhoods and the downtown thus encouraging walking and instilling a sense of community through increased opportunities for interaction. The units themselves would be built to meet standards set by LEED or the Earth Craft Housing Program and would involve the use of resource efficient building materials and systems, they would incorporate water conservation into the design and the units would be energy efficient, making use of the environment to their advantage. The neighborhood, a combination of single family units and townhouses would be an extension of the Hawkins Street historic neighborhood on the east. Single family lots would continue the character of Happy Hollow Road while

*Figure 3.42: Linear Forest Park*





townhouses would serve as a transition between the single family units and the university village as well as between the heavy trafficked bypass. The neighborhood would also be served by a series of pocket parks and by streets that have been streetscaped and are safe for pedestrians to walk along.

**Faculty Village**

The faculty village is located around Vickery Drive within the University Heights neighborhood and serves as a transition between the university campus on the south. This proposed development will be a possibility only when the present properties that provide housing for the students deteriorate with time. Some of Dahlonge’s historic buildings lie along West Main Street, close to Vickery Drive and the importance of their preservation and that of their surroundings is identified through the proposed single family, faculty oriented housing that surrounds them so as to continue the maintenance of the existing character. Townhouses closer to Forest Park also provide faculty with housing options while the central multi-family housing units are ideal for the student population. By targeting this housing for university uses, there is an option to reduce parking spaces and hence encourage the conservation of open space and trees. Internal open spaces are provided by linear quad spaces that align with Forest Park and its amenity’s center which is accessible to these residents. The street network through this area is well laid out so as to connect to the surrounding neighborhoods, the campus and with downtown Dahlonge.

**West Side Trail**

This trail is located within the University Heights neighborhood and it runs along the entire length of Forest Park. It forms one part of a city-wide trail system and connects to the trail along Hawkins Street that extends through downtown and connects to Hancock Park on

*Figure 3.43: Greenway Trail*



the east. On the west, the trail turns south along one of the new neighborhood streets and connects to West Morrison Moore Parkway where it joins with the trail that runs along the bypass. This trail network gives the community an alternative way to move around the city without having to use automobiles.

**University Heights Town Center**

This development is located immediately west of the university and along West Morrison Moore Parkway whose heavy traffic flow is appropriate for profitable commercial uses. This town center is a mixed use development of commercial and residential uses in buildings that are two to three stories tall. It is the entrance to the University Heights neighborhood from the bypass and this gateway is characterized by a central open space around which the buildings are placed. Parking is made available along the rear of the buildings and the development is screened from the university by trees. The retail services cater to neighborhood requirements including the Radar Ridge development that is proposed across the bypass. Additional exposure to the property is offered by the proximity of the city’s trail network.

*Figure 3.44: Town Center, Vermillion Village, Huntersville NC*





# District Six - North Georgia College

North Georgia College and State University has been a stately counterpart to downtown Dahlonega since it was founded in 1873. With an enrollment goal of 6,000 students in the near future, it is major contributor to Dahlonega’s economy; and its military traditions are part of the cultural identity of the city. The campus is a good neighbor to the Public Square, with few “town and gown” issues to color the relationship between the city and the College. Yet, the campus is expanding, and the delicate balance between town and gown must be aggressively maintained so that both the College and the city can prosper equally.

The character of the campus is conveyed through a few landmark buildings and public spaces. Foremost is the historic entry lawn and gate, which is shaded by old oaks and slopes gently up to Price Hall. The lawn is not intended to be occupied as a park, but as the signature formal landscape within a few blocks of the Public Square, it feels one with the city and gives it a sense of timelessness and dignity that belies its modest size. The lawn also acts as a foreground to Price Hall, the oldest building on campus and the architectural equivalent to the historic Lumpkin County Courthouse. The gold-clad steeple of Price Hall is visible from many points around the city, and is especially striking against the backdrop of the Blue Ridge when viewed from the east. The fact that it shares the distinction of Dahlonega gilding only with the State Capital in Atlanta adds to its mystique. The ceremonial Drill Field and the historic buildings framing it solidify the image of the campus as a classic university environment, on par with some of the cloistered spaces of old Ivy League schools.

The land use and development strategy is dependent on the outcome of the campus master plan process that is about to begin. From the perspective of the recommendations of this

Figure 3.45: Price Hall and Historic Entry Lawn



- 6a historic entry improvements
- 6b recdec
- 6c library technology center
- 6d future convocation center
- 6e west main streetscape
- 6f west campus quad
- 6g morrison moore multiuse trail
- 6h campus master plan

master plan, however, the campus plan should take into consideration the intensification of the South Chestatee frontage with multistory buildings that have “below-grade” parking and pedestrian access from the street frontage. Building an access street parallel to South Chestatee behind these future buildings is a goal of the university, and would be beneficial for the city in terms of reducing traffic and providing another route to the Rec Dec. The campus plan should also consider the implications of the University Heights district plan, especially the idea of a faculty village and square and its connections to the upper quad. Finally, the West Main corridor should be reinforced as the ceremonial axis of the College, with utmost emphasis on preservation and restoration of historic buildings.

Figure 3.46: College District





Open space strategies are more limited, but revolve mainly around landscape enhancements to the entry lawn, gateway treatments at West Main and Morrison Moore Parkway, and the internal quads that may be part of the expansion plan. It is important, however, to consider the entry lawn as part of the series of signature open spaces along East and West Main that include the grounds of the Old Courthouse, the Artpark, and the East End Gateway.

Likewise, circulation will be a subject of the campus plan process, but attention should be paid to designing a streetscape along West Main that blends with the proportions, materials and details of those elsewhere in downtown. The plan should also be coordinated with the streetscape recommended for South Chestate Street. The greenway trail paralleling Morrison Moore Parkway is an important multimodal route between the south end of University Heights and the districts north of campus; it can also be a major pedestrian route for internal campus connectivity and should be represented in the campus plan. Finally, the network of new streets extending the west campus into University Heights should be explored as part of the design of the upper quad area, especially since linkages to Happy Hollow Road are a campus goal.

Retail and housing are the two market growth areas associated with the university, although there is limited room to accommodate this on the immediate campus. The university intends to build enough student housing over the next five to ten years to meet the demands of a target population of 6,000 - some on sites in the southern portion of the campus, and some on a new development on Radar Ridge. The university is also interested in diversifying the Radar Ridge housing program to possibly include single-family detached homes or townhouses for alumni. Faculty housing is also needed, and has been discussed as part of the Univesity Heights district. The campus plan process should consider the implications of the market analysis included in this study; once complete, the city should also evaluate the market and development implications of the campus master plan on the downtown area.

Figure 3.47: Campus Entry Lawn Improvement Schematic Plan



### Historic Entry Lawn Improvements

The College is in the process of planning landscape improvements to the historic entry lawn that would accommodate access drives for the RecDec west entry and deliveries to the Hoag Student Center. The conceptual plan, shown in Figure 3.3, relocates the 1950s brick gateway to make room for the access drives and a wide median, while preserving the existing building at the end of West Main Street.

### Rec Dec

The new \$24 million Recreation Building and Parking Deck (Figure 3.48) is the latest addition to NGCSU's impressive facilities program. The Rec Dec is a multiuse structure that contains a three-level parking deck as a base, topped by a 57,000 square foot recreation building that will contain basketball courts and an indoor track. The parking deck will provide 586 spaces with evening and weekend pay-per-use availability for the general public. The building is scheduled to open in the fall of 2008.

### Library Technology Center

This building is one of the new additions to the campus program. Built close to the campus edge toward South Chestatee Street, this \$24 million building is located in proximity to the existing Stewart Library. It is scheduled to open in the summer of 2008. This modern, three storied glass and brick building is three times the size of the current library and will house additional library facilities along with state-of-the-art educational technology services.

Figure 3.48: Rec Dec Concept Drawing





**Future Convocation Center**

Future campus plans call for the construction of a major convocation center in the vicinity of the existing Alumni Center. The Convocation Center would have vehicular access from Alumni Drive and Morrison Moore Parkway, and would utilize the surface parking lots south of the Alumni Center as parking and building area. The conceptual plan and siting of the building will be included in the campus master plan effort.

**West Main Streetscape**

Just as East Main is the central artery of East End, so is West Main the major symbolic avenue of the campus. Lined with landmark historic buildings, West Main is a superb and stately street over portions of its route; although it lacks design consistency from end to end. The proposed West Main streetscape would blend pedestrian elements elsewhere in downtown with materials and details evocative of the campus and its architecture. Sidewalks should be a minimum of 6’ wide, with minimum 8’ planting strip with regularly-spaced shade trees. On-street parking should be provided where feasible. Sidewalk detailing should include brick pavers, and interpretive signage or plaques discussing the history of the campus and its buildings at appropriate places. The streetscape improvements should also include gateway signage and landscaping at the Morrison Moore Parkway intersection.

**West Campus Quad**

This formal open space creates a celebratory access and connection between the Sanford Residence Hall and the Health and Natural Science Building just off of West Main Street. Future plans for the campus envision this quad to be surrounded by additional institutional buildings. This green space lies on axis with the drill field on the east and should also provide a connection to the faculty village located in the University Heights District on the west.

*Figure 3.49: New Campus Library Construction Photo*



**Morrison Moore Multiuse Trail**

This portion of the trail is part of the city’s larger trail network. It runs along West Morrison Moore Parkway connecting to the expansion of Madeline Anthony Park at the South Chestatee gateway on the east and meets West Main Street at the city’s western gateway on the west.

**Campus Master Plan**

North Georgia College is currently undertaking a comprehensive master plan process for the entire campus. The College was a participant in this effort, and several of their initiatives are represented in this plan. While the campus master plan will undoubtedly add another dimension to the downtown master plan, every attempt should be made to coordinate the two and ensure that recommendations do not conflict but instead create opportunities for further partnerships between the College and the city. Particular attention should be given to the South Chestatee corridor and the west campus interface with University Heights.

*Figure 3.50: Upper Quad / Faculty Village Connection*

