

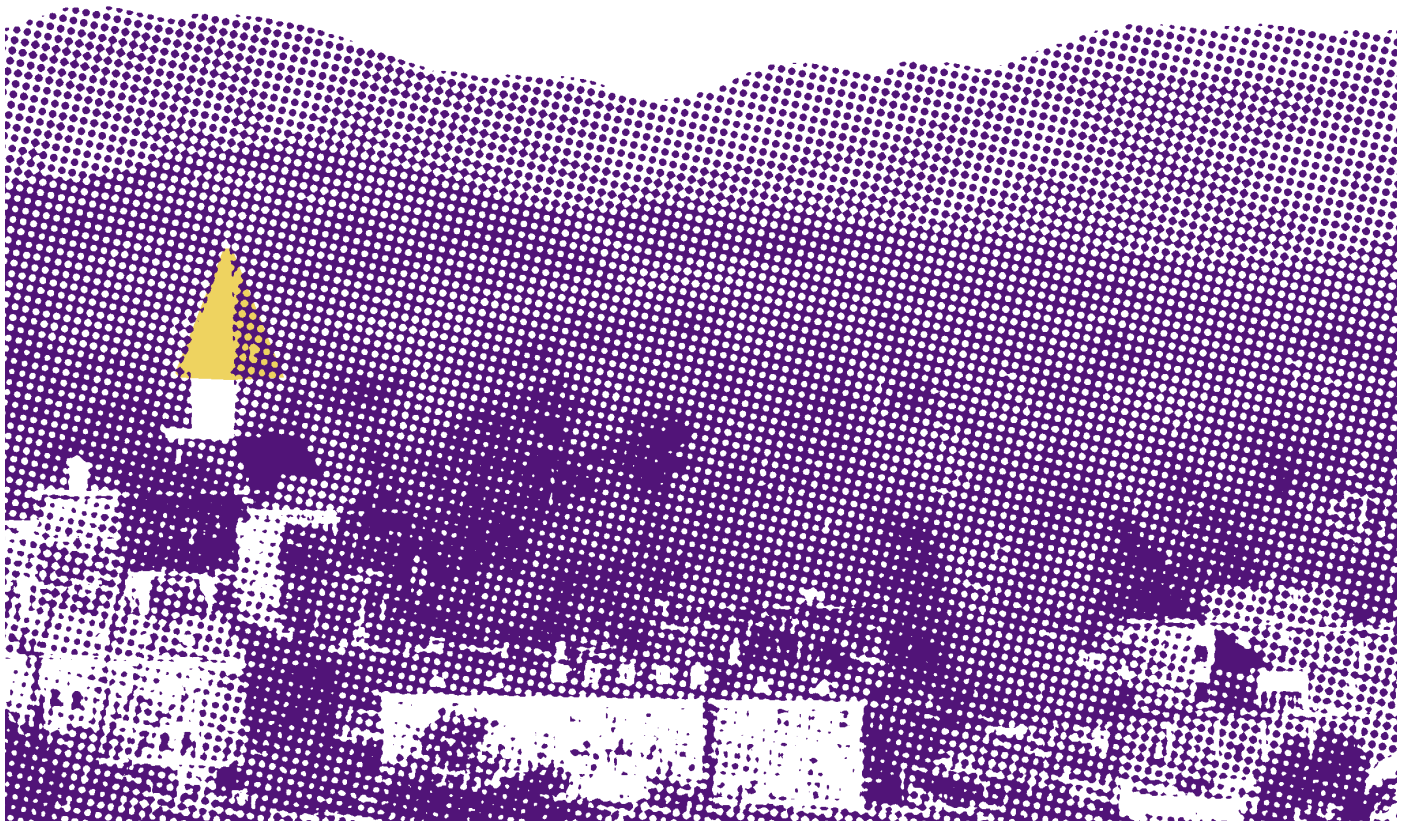
DAHLONEGA DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN



Prepared for the City of Dahlonega and
the Downtown Development Authority
by Urban Collage, Inc. in association
with PBS&J and Bleakly Advisory Group



AUGUST, 2008



Acknowledgements

The Dahlonega Downtown Master Plan represents eight months of work by the City of Dahlonega, local residents, property owners, business owners and a Planning Team comprised of Urban Collage Inc., Bleakly Advisory Group and PBS&J. The Planning Team and City wish to thank all those who devoted their time, leadership, vision and ideas to this effort for the betterment of the City of Dahlonega.

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Public Participation

The Dahlongega Downtown Master Plan process included a series of three public workshops where community members were asked to provide input into the plan including establishing a vision for the future of Dahlongega, assisting the Planning Team in developing concepts for future improvements and prioritizing project initiatives. The following list includes all of those who signed-in and participated in one or more of the public workshops.

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Preface

The City of Dahlonega, nestled at the foothills of the Northeast Georgia Mountains, is a charming, historic city. Located at the north end of GA-400, Dahlonega is home to approximately 4,030 residents and is the county seat of Lumpkin County.

The name “Dahlonega” was derived from “Taloniga” or “Daloniga”, a Cherokee word for “yellow money” or gold and the city was so christened in 1883. Dahlonega catapulted into a successful town when it became the site of the first gold rush in the country. Gold mines dotted the landscape and a United States Branch Mint was built to function between 1838 and 1861. Price Memorial Hall now stands in its location as part of the North Georgia College and State University which was founded in 1873.

Now, Dahlonega is golden in more ways than one. Along with the mint and gold mines, the historic courthouse museum is a popular day-trip destination for families who want to experience the feeling of a “49er” without traveling to California. Culinary adventures broaden the appeal, from the down-home atmosphere of the Smith House to the growing sophistication of the surrounding Wine Country. The city’s Public Square, with multistory businesses and services organized around a landmark historic structure, is the envy of those who aspire to have quaint and active town centers. Occupied shops, restaurants and offices attract a myriad of patrons walking about the square on brick sidewalks accented by antique lighting. Any way you look at it, downtown Dahlonega is a mountain gem and the gold standard in regional attractions.

While Dahlonega’s Public Square thrives as a tourist destination and has tremendous appeal, the desired sustainability and future vitality of Downtown Dahlonega hinges on maintaining proper balances. How can a City manage and accommodate new growth yet preserve and retain the history and character that makes it distinctive? How can local needs and business opportunities co-mingle and thrive among tourist destinations and resources? How can the needs to tourists, students and local residents be met to create a viable year-round activity center? This plan addresses these questions in a visionary approach where it acknowledges that the surrounding environment and setting of the City plays an important role in molding and forming the future of the city. This document provides a summary of the existing physical and economic conditions within the city, the plan concepts and recommendations and an implementation plan that highlights the most important initiatives to implement in the plan.

