



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.

MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL:

Honorable Gary McCullough, Mayor
Bill Scott
Gerald Lord
Guy Laboa
Michael Clemons
Sam Norton
Terry Peters

CITY STAFF:

Bill Lewis, City Manager
Chris Head, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Joel Cordle, Downtown Development Authority Director
Rebecca Shirley, Intern
Ricky Stewart, Special Projects Manager
Ryan Arnold, Intern

CORE TEAM:

Dana LaChance
Gary McCullough
Guy LaBoa
Jeff Davis
Jimmy Faulkner
Mac McConnell
Robin Glass
Susan Newell

Douglas Parks
Glenn Melvin
Hal Williams
Jay Stone
Joyce Westmoreland
Mary Owens
Sam Norton
Tony Owens

PLANNING TEAM:

Robert Begle, Urban Collage, Inc.
Eric Bosman, AICP, Urban Collage, Inc.
Matthew Cherry, Urban Collage, Inc.
Niti Gajjar, Urban Collage, Inc.
Jessie Lawrence, Urban Collage, Inc.
Amy Gore, Bleakly Advisory Group
Richard Rohrer, PBS&J

John Skach, AIA, AICP, Urban Collage, Inc.
Kadambari Badami, Urban Collage, Inc.
Stephen Busch, Urban Collage, Inc.
Blue Marshall, Urban Collage, Inc.
Ken Bleakly, Bleakly Advisory Group
William Eviston, RLA, PBS&J

Public Participation

The Dahlonega 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 Dahlonega, 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.

Adrien Benoit
Alice Sampson
Amy Forrest
Amy Strickland
Andrea Woody
Andy Cason
Andy Digger
Angelia Wilson
Art Agnew
Barry Friedman
Betty Murray
Beverley Thompson
Bill Boggs
Bill Cason
Bob Cenna
Brad Faulkner
Brett Malone
Brian Baker
Bruce Abraham
Bruce Dickman
Butch Wilkins
Butch Williams
Charlotte Braunstein
Chris Jones
Chris Parker
Chris Welch
Chuck Robertson
Clarence Huhman
Coleen Green
Connie Cenna
Dan Noland
Dana Garcia
Diane Schermerhorn
Diane Stephenson
Don Trice
Donna Logan
Doug Sherrill
Duncan McGuire
Echo Mills
Ed Willis
Emily Bush
Emily Lewy
Freddy Welch
Gale Smith
Gary Powers
Gary Sullivan

Gayle Jones
Geoffrey Kridel
George Brink
George Brown
George Thompson
Gerald Lewy
Ginny Watt
Glynn Rogers
Herbert Endres
Jane O’Gorman
Jay Stone
Jeffrey Barbic
Jeremy Cape
Jessica Dietz
Jim Kinnard
Joe Kelenfy
Joe Smith
John Webb
Julia Foltz
Kaleigh Lowe
Kathy Yankus
Katie Edwards
Kay Lord
Kelli Rogers
Kevin Burris
Kevin Lawson
Kirk Lindquist
Kitty Craven
Laurelanne Hackinson
Leah Ratzel
Lillian Agnew
Linda Mills
Lisa Cason
Lori Ann Robertson
Marilyn Mason
Mark Shearer
Marshall Jones
Martha Jewett
Mary Lou Conner
Matt Aiken
Meagan Darnell
Michael Callaha
Mike Davis
Milly Calleder
Nick Wyatt
Olivia Trotter

Pat Canarro
Pat Kleinhans
Paul Hoffman
Paul Woody
Quentin Woomer
Rachel Wilkerson
Ramon Johnson
Ray Cox
Rebecca Davis
Rob Jones
Robert Bridger
Robert Mason
Roger Braunstein
Ron Larson
Sallie Sorohan
Sam McCluskey
Sam Snead
Sara White
Sarah Lee Thumb
Scott Hardman
Scott Riley
Sharon Kridel
Sharon Plant
Sharon Thomas
Sharon Thomason
Sheila Richardson
Sheri Smith
Stefani Logsdon
Stephanie Mangorn
Stephen Mullins
Stephen Ratzel
Sue Mattison
Tanya Kinnard
Teddy Dumont
Terrie Ellerbee
Thomas Scanlin
Tim Ragland
Tommy Folger
Vernon Bowdish
Vic Dover
Vicki Stouffer
Virginia Sturm
Woodrow Parks



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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.

