



Community Building in East Macon: It Takes a Village

A Report and Framework for Neighborhood Building in
East Macon's Fort Hawkins - Mill Hill Area

February 2018

macon **arts** alliance

Introduction and Project Background



The East Macon-Mill Hill Initiative set out a resident and partner-led planning process. It involved creative placemaking strategies building on existing community assets with a commitment to equitable development. The effort included strategic redevelopment of physical assets along with social and civic relationships to become Mill Hill: East Macon Arts Village. Its goal is to increase economic opportunity and reduce blight in East Macon’s Fort Hawkins neighborhood.

Partners included Macon Arts Alliance, Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority, Family Investment Center, and many community stakeholders. The Initiative is a key component of the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority’s Urban Core Master Plan (the Macon Action Plan). From 2015 to 2017 the Initiative utilized extensive neighborhood-based events and engagement activities, artist-led

projects, participatory planning activities, rehabilitation of vacant residential properties and early work on the long-dormant community center. In addition to activating new partnerships among neighborhood stakeholders and fostering leadership development among neighborhood residents, the process resulted in a shared vision and plans for near-term programming of the Community Art Center.



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Story of Community

Some 17,000 years of human history are recognized in Macon centered at the Ocmulgee National Monument adjacent to East Macon/Fort Hawkins neighborhoods. Artifacts and significant sites of Mississippian culture are preserved within the Monument. In more recent centuries, the area was significant to the Muskogee Creek Nation as a center of deerskin trade and most important as sacred ancient grounds. The area became the site of Fort Hawkins in 1806, under the direction of Thomas Jefferson, and is now known as the birthplace of Macon.

Considered the city’s first neighborhood from the 1870s to the 1970s, the area was a mill village with residents employed at Bibb Manufacturing Company. The company constructed homes, amenities, and had a social worker on site in what was then called “Macon Village No. 1.” (The mill was Bibb Mill No. 1) As manufacturing declined, the mill closed, residents left. Disinvestment followed. The Bibb Mill auditorium (still standing)

was built in 1920 to meet some of the social and recreational needs of workers. Macon now serves as the unofficial capitol of Middle Georgia, a region supported by educational institutions, agriculture, military installations, transportation, and healthcare. The region has escaped many of the positive benefits and negative effects of growth that have shaped the Atlanta region. In terms of overall population and level of economic activity, the area has remained stable over many decades. Despite this regional trend, Macon slowly lost population, with many middle-income residents moving out of town to suburban areas. Many old-line industry job sources have vanished, including those lost through the transformation of large-scale agriculture to mechanized processes and the loss of textile and other industrial jobs. These forces were particularly devastating to members of the African American community, who now disproportionately struggle to find economic opportunity and educational avenues. Because of the ensuing low-wealth

conditions of the people who live in them, many older “working class” neighborhoods of Macon have suffered from years of disinvestment. They also typically lack local jobs, commercial establishments, and community facilities. East Macon is challenged in these ways, and suffers from physical isolation given its separation from downtown by the Ocmulgee River and Interstate 16 and other highways. Beginning in the 1960s as the mill declined, large parts of Fort Hawkins residential areas were cleared for development of the Centreplex Coliseum, the Coliseum Medical Center, and a large hotel. Expansion of Emory Highway resulted in termination of Main Street and reduction in traffic through this once-vital corridor. Similarly, widening of Coliseum Drive on the west complicated access to medical services and employment. As an important real and symbolic action, a traffic light and pedestrian crossing was installed at Clinton Street and Coliseum Drive in 2017.

Building on Previous Planning

Culminating in early 2015, the Macon Action Plan identified a proposed Arts Village in East Macon as a location of strategic importance to the city. As a site for near-term investment, the Arts Village was devised as a stabilization strategy. The Arts Village and Clinton Street Gateway connecting downtown with the Ocmulgee Monument ensure the neighborhood will be connected to

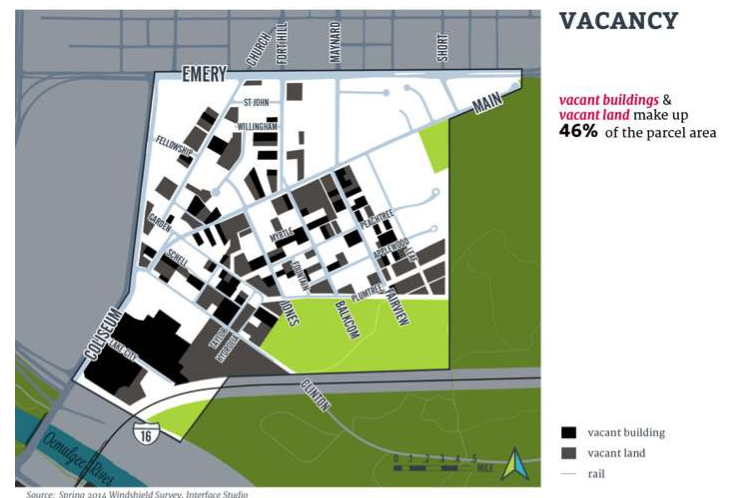
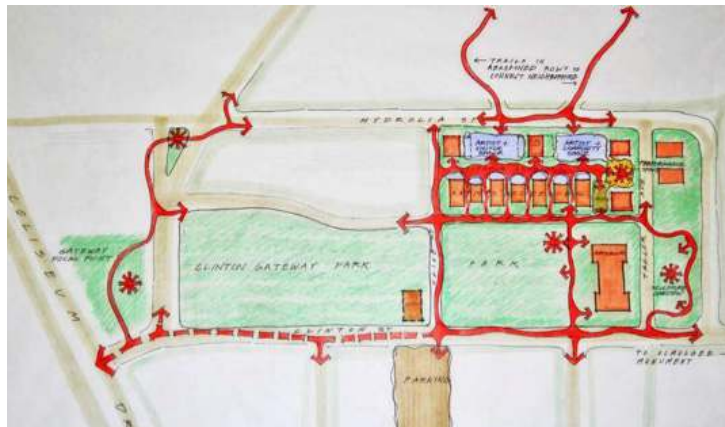
other key locations, thus positioning it to build positive momentum for East Macon.

During 2015, Macon Arts Alliance facilitated a Sustainable Design and Development workshop with assistance from the Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Agency, US Environmental Protection Agency, and the White House Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. The plan resulted in strategies for an arts village,

community arts center, enhanced connection at Coliseum Drive, and a linear park along Clinton Street to serve as a gateway to the Ocmulgee Monument. Initial public investment was committed to acquire and rehab residential properties and stabilize the community center structure.

Further development of the Arts Village concept and a larger creative placemaking project led to funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Knight Foundation, and other sources to begin work on the Arts Village and broader community building work in the Fort Hawkins - Mill Hill area.

The work described in this report focuses on resident engagement, community organizing, economic opportunity, strategic public realm physical improvements, and launching the Community Art Center.



Activities Undertaken (2015 - 2017)



Macon Arts Alliance built on the 2015 Sustainable Design and Development Workshop by engaging local residents and community leaders in shaping and building a coalition to guide cultural activities and revitalization in East Macon's Fort Hawkins neighborhood and to build on the social fabric in the neighborhood. Activities included:

Listening and Community Building

- Roving Listener Project – during 2015 and 2016 a team of 19 collected dozens of stories, publishing those of 11 residents and one church in a 2016 booklet distributed throughout the neighborhood.

- Community dinners and periodic community meetings hosted by Roving Listeners and Macon Arts Alliance in conjunction with the Macon-Bibb Housing Authority Family Investment Center.
- Community celebrations and block parties included hot dog cookouts for local families and a larger March- April 2017 two-day celebration and multi-venue series of events.
- Ongoing networking and dialog with neighbors and community partners through a project steering committee.
- Neighborhood-based youth contributed to community events and celebrations through paid opportunities.
- One-on-one interviews and asset mapping uncovered a surprising amount of artistry and creative spirit and entrepreneurial activity in the neighborhood.
- Neighborhood cleanup events involved neighborhood youth led by resident activist Waynardo Curtis; activities resulted in segregating recyclable materials for use by local artists.
- Multiple structured planning activities addressed physical and infrastructure improvements to the neighborhood involving residents in multiple creative ways.



EAST MACON PLACE STATION



Tell Us Your Story!

We want to hear your memories of this East Macon neighborhood. We also want to hear what you like and dislike about his place today. We also want to hear about what you'd like to see in the future here.

1. Pickup a color coded postcard depending on the kind of story you'd like to share and write your story on the card.
2. Place the numbered sticker to the map where your story took place or in the location you want to see change in the future.
3. Place your postcard in the storage box.



OUR PAST

OUR PRESENT

OUR FUTURE

Creative and Cultural

- Creative entrepreneur development activities included a workshop, funding and technical assistance services for East Macon entrepreneurs in partnership with Mercer University's Co- Starter program.
- Multiple artist projects were sponsored including:
 - Photographer and filmmaker Nik Nerburn spent eight months interacting with residents of all ages and producing photo

exhibits and a short film.

- Visual artist Christopher Logan in residence for eight months taught workshops and led a variety of neighborhood arts projects. Some activities and workshops included: collaborative painting for the neighborhood cleanup; East Macon entrepreneurs workshop; studio open houses; creative wayfinding arts project; creativity through literacy; kids summer crafts; painting from poetry.
- Portraits & Poetry: An 8-Week

Journey of Self-Exploration Through Painting and Writing with Yvonne Gabriel in cooperation with the Family Investment Center. Completed portraits displayed at the Macon Arts Gallery.

- Artists Jamie L. Adams and Bryan M. Beck led crafting workshops in molten glass. Workshops focused on the artistic process and discovery rather than the final product, teaching teamwork and collaboration as well as focus and imagination.

- Blade Davis of the PLoiraine artist guild, a third generation torched copper artist and candlemaker, led four workshops with the Family Investment Center where participants made hand-poured therapeutic soy candles and torched copper jewelry.
 - In partnership with Redeeming Hope Center of Awakening Fires Ministry a Fall 2017 Block Party featured games and activities, food, live music, and fun. The event included blowing unique glass art, copper working, and jewelry making. Steven Valentine hosted a rap battle with \$200 prize and neighborhood talent showcase.
- Live music included Rufus and the Bluebirds, DNA Music Group, the Westside High School Marching Band, and DTG Rap Group.

Housing & Physical Improvements

- Rehabilitation of abandoned properties on Schell Avenue at the crest of the hill above the Bibb Mill site and community center includes 14 houses that have been identified and slated for rehab. Two completed homes hosted artists during 2017, artists who left their distinct impression on the neighborhood. Two



- more houses were ready for occupancy by the end of 2017.
- Formation of a community land trust to stabilize property values and livability.
 - Visible progress for neighborhood improvement included stabilization and rehabilitation work, investing over \$1.6 million in the former Bibb Mill community center. Once complete, the community arts center will host performing, visual, and culinary arts exhibitions and instruction, serving as the centerpiece of the Mill Hill: East Macon Arts Village.
 - Partnered with Macon-Bibb Urban Development Authority to re-purpose vacant and abandoned properties towards the creation of a linear park along Clinton Street at the foot of Mill Hill, and adjacent to the community center to provide a neighborhood park and green corridor for entry to the Ocmulgee National Monument.
 - Collaboration with Ocmulgee National Monument to design and commission a new gateway to the park lands on Clinton Street.

- The Mill Hill/East Macon Arts Village Project began in 2015 to:
- Honor and celebrate the long history, many inhabitants, and assets of this unique and important place in North America.
 - Expand social and economic connections among residents and with institutional stakeholders.
 - Build beneficial and meaningful physical connections for the community with all of Macon and to Ocmulgee National Park and its visitors.
 - Encourage investment compatible with housing, employment, social, and other needs of current and new residents of the neighborhood.
 - Protect current residents and smaller-scale businesses from adverse effects of institutional expansion or other outside investment.
 - Work in ways compatible with the Macon-Bibb Comprehensive Plan and other area plans to the benefit of the community.

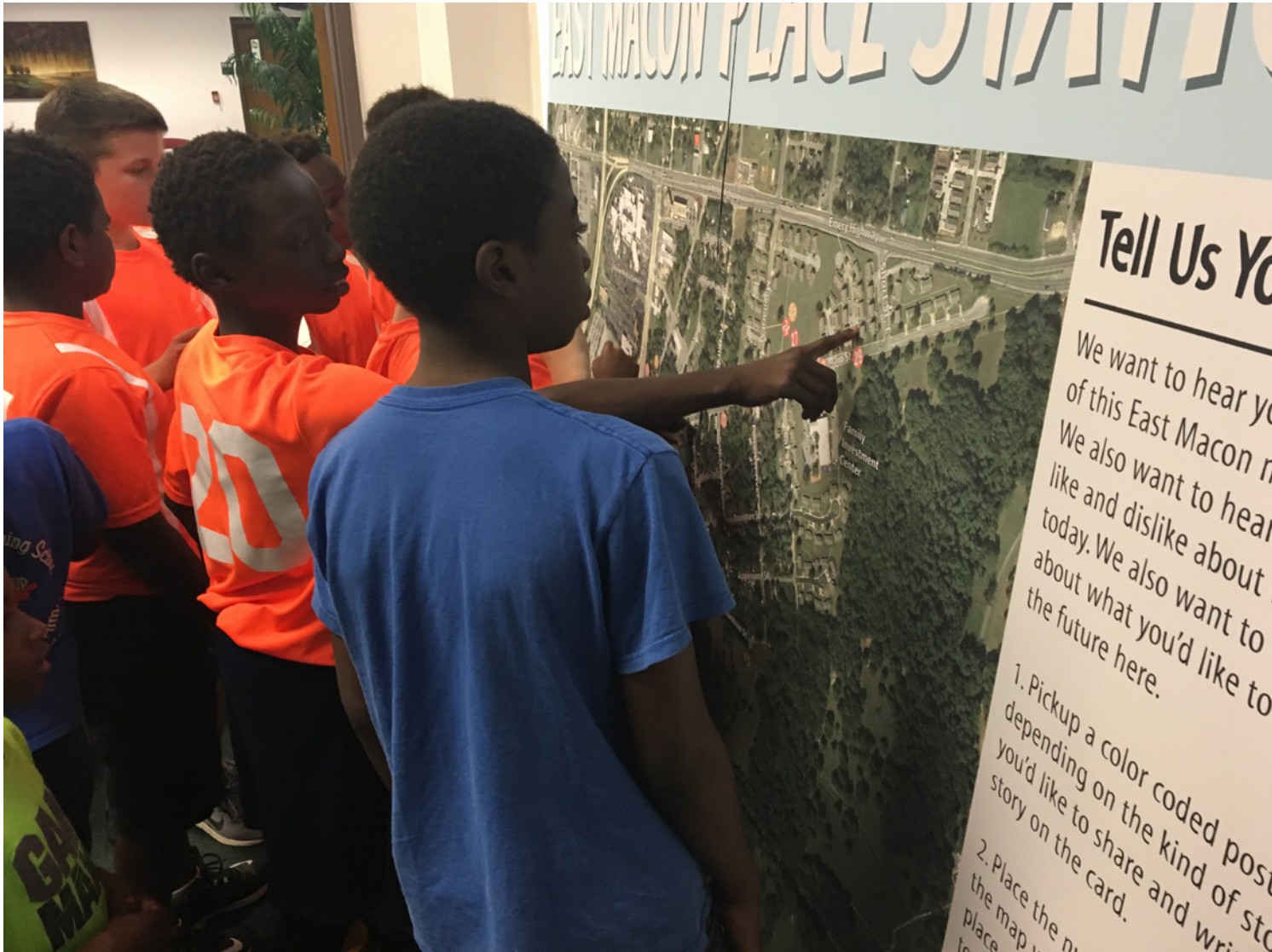


Future Framework



Vision and Goals

The Fort Hawkins/Mill Hill area of East Macon serves as an exemplary community development and creative placemaking project through which residents, institutional stakeholders, and local and federal government bring together their collective visions, energies, and resources to overcome profound challenges. These include poverty, substandard housing conditions, disinvestment and abandonment, redevelopment errors that physically isolated the community, and encroachment by infrastructure and development that hampered the viability of a coherent neighborhood.

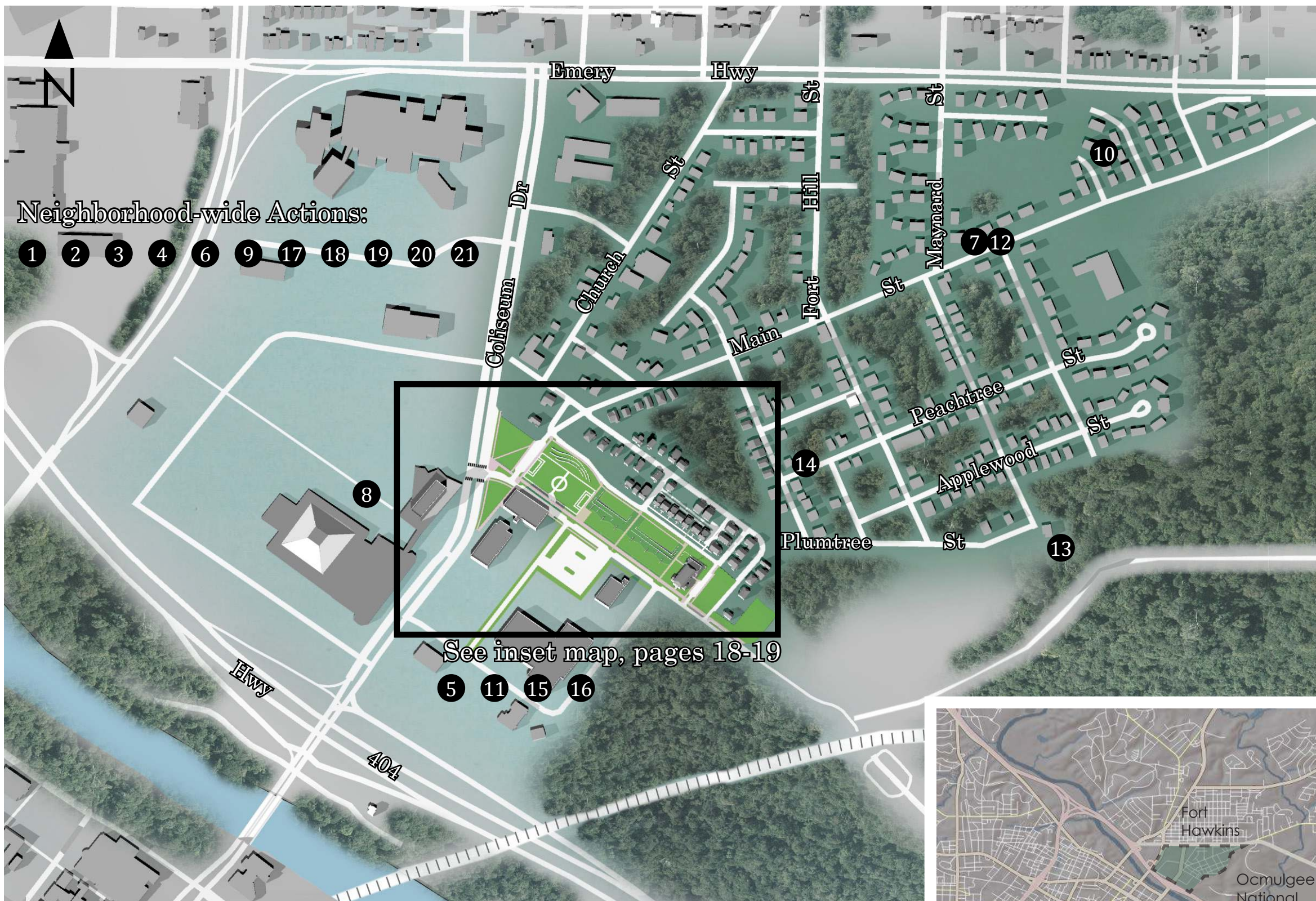


The Mill Hill Community Arts Center will be restored, complete with a teaching kitchen for culinary arts training and to host community events. The land surrounding the Arts Center will become a neighborhood park connecting local assets. The park will serve as a gateway and connector; a space for artists, residents, and visitors to share; and will be a programmable space for arts-based community building activities. Adjacent to the park and Arts Village, vacant and/or deteriorated mill houses will continue to be renovated as live/work housing. Artists and creative entrepreneurs will be encouraged to live, create, and sell work from their homes to visitors. They will also be able to engage the Arts Center and park to produce programming and connect with residents and visitors.

The four-part Future Framework includes:

- Neighborhood Organizing
- Housing, Local Economy, and Development
- Public Realm Projects
- Mill Hill Community Arts Center





Neighborhood-wide Actions:

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Neighborhood Organizing

- 1 Weave Community Social Fabric
- 2 Foster Civic Empowerment
- 3 Build on Resident-Institution Relationships
- 4 Engage in Ongoing Planning and Problem-Solving

Housing, Local Economy, and Development

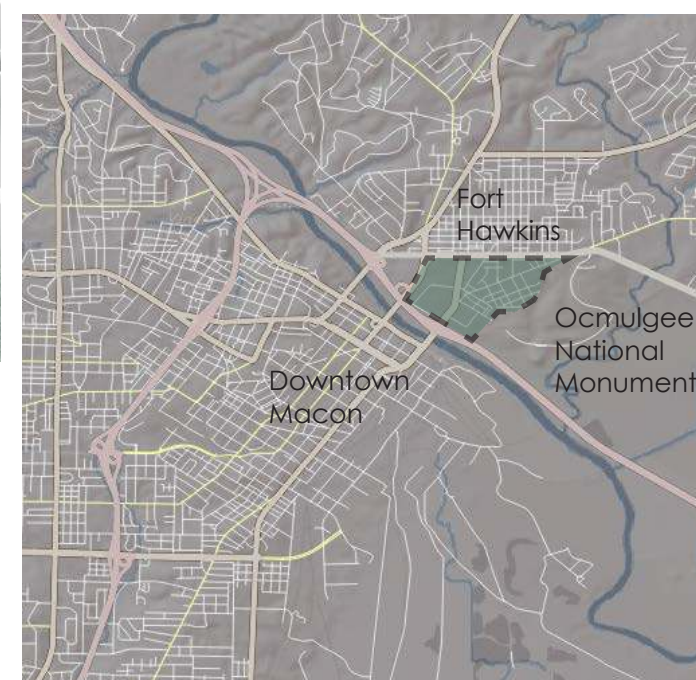
- 5 Redevelopment guidelines along new park
- 6 Housing Choice Diversification Study
- 7 Main Street Entrepreneurship and Vitality
- 8 Macon CentrePlex Land Use Study
- 9 Neighborhood Pattern Book
- 10 Davis Homes/Family Investment Center: Next Generation
- 11 Village Block and Land Trust

Public Realm Projects

- 12 Main Street 'Complete Street' Project
- 13 Ocmulgee Connection
- 14 'Peachtree Stroll' Project
- 15 Village Block Commons
- 16 New Park Programming and Maintenance

Mill Hill Community Arts Center

- 17 Build on Existing Activities
- 18 Foster Creative Entrepreneurs
- 19 Celebrate Neighborhood Stories
- 20 Support Neighborhood Planning and Organizing
- 21 Provide Tools of the Trade



Neighborhood Organizing

Continuing to build community social fabric, resident empowerment, and resident-institution relationships in East Macon/Fort Hawkins neighborhoods is important ongoing work. This includes regular organized activities that engage people in the evolving vision and challenges in the community.

1 Weave Community Social Fabric

- a. Coordinate with Historic Macon Foundation and/or Shalom Zones to continue neighborhood organizing.
- b. Support neighborhood-originated and relevant programming at the Community Arts Center.
- c. Continue anti-displacement and neighborhood character preservation work such as a (public and/or private) housing assistance and maintenance fund for current homeowners.

2 Foster Civic Empowerment

- a. Conduct a community-based process for naming the new park.
- b. Continue incremental reinvestment and rehabilitation of homes in cooperation with existing residents.
- c. Build on the Community Land Trust as a tool for property cost stabilization.

3 Build on Resident-Institution Relationships

- a. Continue a volunteer committee to steer community building and placemaking efforts.
- b. Dedicate 14 homes to artists, creative entrepreneurs, and other home-based businesses.
- c. Conduct events with residents and nearby institutions including job fairs, medical and other service information, and other activities. These should build face-to-face relationships and bring institutional workers into the neighborhood and provide opportunities for residents to visit and learn about nearby institutions.

4 Engage in Ongoing Planning and Problem-Solving

- a. Continue convening information and listening sessions at different locations in the neighborhood and encourage resident involvement.
- b. Write a neighborhood-wide form-based code to encourage new investment within a framework that protects current and historic built character.
- c. Explore formation of a community development corporation or other



- non-profit model dedicated to the holistic success of the neighborhood. This organization might:
- Undertake anti-displacement efforts.
- Promote redevelopment of declining sites or empty sites.
- Support micro level economic development and jobs development.
- Protect neighborhood built character.
- Review and renew neighborhood plan every five years.

Housing, Local Economy, and Development

5 Redevelopment guidelines along new park (including properties south of Clinton Street and Bibb Mill site) –

The Bibb Mill site is a valuable redevelopment opportunity, and represents one of the largest opportunity sites close to Downtown. There have been many visions for it. There are several technical issues that present obstacles to redevelopment, but are surmountable with an appropriate

- (higher) density of development. The recent downtown master plan and the Macon Bibb planning and zoning include a comprehensive framework for development of the site. New development should take into account several guidelines to enhance the park and existing neighborhood fabric to the north:
- a. Ground level facades of all new buildings facing Clinton Street should address the park with primary frontages (public to private relationships from building to street). The park is an important part of the connection from downtown to Ocmulgee, and any new development should address the park in a respectful and stately manner.
- b. Specific building frontage typologies facing the park should include human scaled details and doors. Storefronts, office fronts, dooryards, stoops and porches will be considered appropriate and should be the predominant ground level condition. Garage door entries, blank walls, or dumpsters, will not be appropriate and should not be allowed.
- c. Green spaces within any new development should be connected visually and for pedestrians, extending the experience of the historic neighborhood and park towards the river.
- d. New public streets or private lanes should also connect all the



- way to Clinton to establish an open ‘complete street’ from the park toward the river.
- e. Trail connections (either off-street or on-street) should be made to Clinton and through the site.
- f. Heights should be limited to no more than four stories for a depth of 60’ along Clinton, stepping back to taller heights after that. This will preserve an appropriate scale along the park that does not cast long shadows northward over the park or overpower the single-family character of the neighborhood north of the park.

6 Housing Choice Diversification Study

The birthplace of Macon has seen several layers of development in its history. It is important that Mill Hill/Fort Hawkins find ways to offer housing choices that add to the mix of mostly old single family

homes. Aging population trends and workforce housing needs nearby foreshadow that there will be a market in the neighborhood for current and new residents to buy or rent new homes in an array of formats. The strategy to increase housing choices is also in accordance with Macon-Bibb Comprehensive Plan that calls for an increase in housing choices throughout Macon. To this end, a market research analysis that includes opportunity site identification, perhaps sponsored by employers with workforce housing study, should be conducted to understand ways to diversify and increase both for-rent and ownership housing choices within the neighborhood. New developments that attempt to broaden the mix of incomes and unit sizes should be promoted and incentivized.

7 Main Street Entrepreneurship and Vitality

Main Street was a commercial corridor connecting Fort Hawkins to downtown. Traffic was diverted, Main Street was discontinued at Emery Highway, and the uses have reverted to a neighborhood scale, where they exist. Neighborhood retail has struggled during the decline of purchasing power in recent decades and diversion of traffic from Main Street. Existing commercial businesses should be supported and encouraged to thrive. Along Main Street, eventually a careful new range of commercial services or workplaces should be allowed that serve the neighborhood. However, new commercial spaces should be limited in size (floor area), should face Main Street, and should include small spaces that allow for micro-sized businesses to start up and incubate as they grow. A pilot program should be considered in the neighborhood that serves the needs of creative business entrepreneurs and how to get them the technical and financial skills, support, and infrastructure to start out.

8 Macon CentrePlex Land Use Study

This site should be studied by Urban Development Authority to identify the mix and parameters for mixed-

use development that would be more supportive to the Hospital, downtown, the neighborhood, and Ocmulgee National Monument. Any study should begin with the core assumption that surface parking is an underutilization of land, and should be eventually displaced by structured parking facilities and public transit. This is an investment financed through the public-private phased development of land uses that can provide new tax base for the region and new job opportunities for Macon residents.

9 Neighborhood Pattern Book

Though many of the shotgun houses, bungalow types, and old mansions found in the neighborhood are dilapidated, they remain a testament to sound design, having stood for decades as viable homes for a range of family types and incomes. To preserve the unique and valuable character of the neighborhood as it exists today, and ahead of any new investments nearby or within the neighborhood, a pattern book should be developed documenting the successful architectural details that should be emulated in new structures and maintained during rehabilitation. Such a pattern book should include stories of the people that lived in the homes, as a chance to document the unique mix of culture and built form.

10 Davis Homes/Family Investment Center: Next Generation

The Family Investment Center (FIC) is a resource center open to the community providing an array of programming within a limited amount of space. Davis Homes constitutes an intergenerational community of neighbors living in a range of smaller homes that form the northeast anchor of the neighborhood at the ‘end’ of old Main Street. Managed by Macon Housing Authority, Davis Homes serves an important role in creating a kid-friendly community that supports investment in youth and families. FIC is located at the center.

On-site agency partners include: Central GA Tech College, Eckerd/Paxen Learning Services, Primecare Home Care, Motivating Youth Foundation, Phillips Performing Arts, Middle GA Informer, Family Counseling Center, Mercer University EOC, and NAACP. Other agency partners (i.e. Macon Arts Alliance Mill Hill team, GA Legal Services, UGA Extension Services, NAACP, Amerigroup, Wellcare, AARP, Retired Teachers Association, Retired Veterans group, etc.) conduct workshops and/or schedule meetings on a regular basis. Awakening Fire Ministry, located just a few blocks away, conducts soccer practice/games on

the open greens of Davis Homes for neighborhood youth.

Macon Housing Authority’s Resident Initiatives staff is on-site and provides resource referrals. They coordinate monthly workshops and programs (i.e. Mom’s Morning Chat, Girl Scouts, computer classes, health fairs, job fairs, stress management, etc.). The center is also a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) site. Mill Hill, the East Macon Shalom Zone, and other groups hold open community forums. Davis Homes holds town hall meetings.

The long-range vision for FIC is to continue offering programs and services in education, employment, self-sufficiency, computer literacy, homeownership, health/wellness, financial literacy, performing arts, youth and adult career development, etc.

New investments in the Community Arts Center and new park are inextricably linked to the success of FIC. Investments and activities that programmatically and physically link these neighborhood anchors will improve the future of both facilities and strengthen the neighborhood.

- Next Steps for FIC:
- a. Work with the Community Arts Center to augment existing arts and community building programming now at FIC.
 - b. Renovate FIC to better fit the needs of programs and events.
 - c. Develop and install coordinated informational signage for community information and neighborhood history at FIC and the Community Arts Center
 - d. Continue partnerships that bridge the digital divide.
 - e. Support investment in athletic fields that facilitate community-building programs.
 - f. Explore infill housing types in Davis Homes and surrounding neighborhood to diversify current choices and address young families and life-cycle/aging population needs.
 - g. Invest in programming that offers life skills and support to individuals such as tax assistance, small business development/ entrepreneurship skills, creative talent development, life-long learning, leadership, etc.
 - h. Support investments in community building and event programming inside the building and in the neighborhood.

11 Village Block

Sixteen parcels along Schell Avenue and Hydrolia Street are slated for redevelopment and use by artists



and creative entrepreneurs. Known as the Village Block, it includes 14 proposed rehabbed and new build homes and artist workspace where artists will live, work, and take full advantage of the adjacent Community Art Center. Homes are being rehabbed in partnership with the Urban Development Authority to fit the affordability standards of the neighborhood with special incentives offered to artists looking to purchase a home.

The Macon Urban Land Trust was also established to help protect the block from speculative developers by holding title to the land on which each house sits. The Trust’s board is made up of project stakeholders and will transition to homeowners upon sale of each house.

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Public Realm Projects

12 Main Street ‘Complete Street’ Project

Following principles outlined in Macon-Bibb Comprehensive Plan and Macon Action Plan, a project should be implemented that reviews and renews the basic functions of Main Street from Coliseum Drive to the end at Emery Highway. These improvements should include investments such as:

- 1. Better bus stops
- 2. Pedestrian-oriented lighting
- 3. Shade trees
- 4. Sidewalk upgrades

- 5. Bike safety
- 6. Parking
- 7. Pedestrian crossings
- 8. Storm water runoff

13 Ocmulgee Connection

The proximity of assets including the Village Block and Community Arts Center to the Ocmulgee National Monument is no accident. The Monument is currently one of Macon’s most visited tourist attractions and extensive efforts have been under way for more than five years to have the site designated Georgia’s first National Park. Additionally, there is a pedestrian entrance to the Monument on Clinton St. which many would like to see as the main entrance due to

it accessibility from Downtown. Enhancing access to the monument while protecting the residential nature of the neighborhood was a catalyst for the Mill Hill initiative.

14 ‘Peachtree Stroll’ Project

Parallel to Main Street runs Peachtree Street, a quiet and walkable neighborhood street that runs from Davis Homes to the Community Arts Center adjacent to the new park. With some work and creative programming, it can be strengthened as the key connector for kids, residents and families from end to end. Ways to cultivate this connector include:

- a. Complete accessible sidewalk connections from Peachtree,

- through property easements, to Family Investment Center.
- b. Complete accessible walking connections from the easement off of Jones to the ravine, across the ravine to Hydrolia (via bridge and/or landscaped path), to and through the Village Block, to Schell and the Community Arts Center in the new park.
- c. Complete a unified walkable ‘stroll-scape’ that creatively adorns Peachtree with benches, lighting, public art, soft pedestrian scale lighting, accessible walk, and interpretive features that tell the story of the neighborhood.
- d. Launch an annual neighborhood wide block party celebrating the neighborhood that stretches from the Family Investment Center along Peachtree to the Community Arts Center and the park.

15 Village Block Commons

Within the Village Block is an alley and open space that comprises the Village Commons. This area is primarily designated for artist workspace for work that is better done outdoors. The area can also be used for outdoor artist expos and marketplace events where artists can open their studio spaces that are integral to each home rehab.

16 New Park Programming and Maintenance

- a. The community based master



- plan for the park between Clinton and Schell Streets will be implemented in the coming years and present a major improvement to livability in the neighborhood. The range of spaces planned present new active and passive recreational and community gathering opportunities.
- b. Ongoing efforts to include park users and neighbors in programming of the spaces will be

- critical to its continued use: Coordination with the Community Art Center and FIC will also be critical.
- c. Maintenance of the park should meet the standards of other major parks in Macon.
- d. As the confluence of so many formation stories of Macon, interpretive opportunities should be planned and implemented along with future improvements.



Mill Hill Community Art Center

Purpose and Mission

The purpose of the Mill Hill Community Art Center is to serve residents of East Macon and others who visit for activities that build a positive sense of community identity, foster relationship-building, and provide opportunities for personal and professional development. As a center of activity and a symbolic amenity, it should empower and enhance the lives of East Macon residents through self-expression, social engagement, and economic opportunity. *Its recommended mission is to build community cohesion in the East Macon - Fort Hawkins neighborhoods by fostering creative and cultural expression.*



Goals

- Provide welcoming space for area residents and visitors to learn, create, and celebrate.
- Serve as a beacon for the resilient spirit of East Macon and the Fort Hawkins neighborhoods.
- Support inquiry, exchange, and celebration by East Macon residents.
- Attract and produce motivational and educational arts, culture, and historic programs and activities.

Character/Positioning in the Community

While appearing to the outside observer as a hub of creative arts and cultural activity, residents of the Fort Hawkins-East Macon

neighborhoods should feel the Community Art Center is a focal point of their community; a place to go not only for creative and cultural activities, but for connecting with neighbors and for important events in their lives – from birthdays to marriages to memorial services. A successful community arts center serves multiple roles but, in essence, establishes profound meaning for its community.

The center’s cultural programming schedule should appeal to a wide range of people of all ages and ethnicities. This begins with young people who feel it is a welcoming, safe, and nurturing space. Residents with creative interests of all levels of achievement should find support and a network for information and opportunity. Professional artists from far and wide come for inspiration and creative nourishment as well as for work opportunities and to interact with peers. Service providers and educators find a welcoming space to bring people together. Community organizers, political leaders, and planners should see the Art Center as neutral ground where the widest mix of residents feel comfortable.

Programming Strategy/ Partners

17 Build on Existing Activities

The Community Art Center must rely heavily on existing activities in the immediate area to meet its goals and to fill out a robust and locally relevant schedule of activities. Youth performing arts through Phillips Performing Arts and visual arts programs through Peach Place currently in residence at the Family Investment Center would like to locate some activities and expand into the Community Art Center. Other programs held at Family Investment Center offering physical and social support activities – from jazzercise and yoga to the mothers’ support group – can relocate and/or conduct expanded activities here. Resident artists in the Mill Hill Arts Village will be expected to contribute meaningful, engaging activities appealing to different age groups and creative interests. In addition, utilizing the space for social and private event rentals can generate income and maintain an active space for the neighborhood.

18 Foster Creative Entrepreneurs

A Culinary Arts and Professional Development Program utilizing the commercial kitchen in collaboration with a local career development entity such as Goodwill can fill a middle ground between the culture and creativity of food along with



career and economic development opportunities for East Macon residents. In addition to providing direct learning opportunities, other local food growers and producers may use the facility for preparation and packaging of locally made food products.

Residents of the Mill Hill Arts Village need space to practice, work, sell, and develop their creative and enterprises. Their work will contribute to programming the Community Art Center while engaging neighbors and building on their own practice.

Support of East Macon residents in Co-Starters, an enterprise development partnership with Mercer University enables a wide mix of creative people in East Macon to develop activities and

products that will also contribute to the Community Art Center. This could lead to an eventual creative incubator space on Main Street. See #7 above.

19 Celebrate Neighborhood Stories

Establish an interactive community history space and program within the center with the goal of engaging residents to tell the unfolding story of East Macon. This builds on the Roving Listeners Project and engages people to recognize and reconcile the many layers of history in the neighborhood. Youth performing arts and visual arts activities could contribute to this program. This should be an opportunity for learning, creativity, and cultural exchange that represents a unique, evolving expression of the character of East

Macon. The history space/program could also be part of the experience of people traveling from downtown to the Ocmulgee Monument.

20 Support Neighborhood Planning and Organizing

Continue to foster participation in community planning, design, and development focusing on the Clinton Street Park, streetscaping/ infrastructure development on Main Street, as well as other residential streets and community entryways. This builds on earlier engagement processes and recognizes that community planning and capacity-building are ongoing. See #4 above.

Document community design and buildings to develop a pattern book that highlights vernacular Fort Hawkins/Mill Hill architecture. This participatory community project

led by an artist/architecture team should include youth and others to sketch homes and other buildings while learning about design and architecture. See #9 above.

21 Provide Tools of the Trade

Equip and provide a Tech Toolshed, within the center for artists and creatives looking for resources that might be financially out of reach. To complement the emerging creative village and to support creative entrepreneurs in the neighborhood, the Toolshed will provide resources that enhance the quality of work created here. It will offer access to technology and tools of the creative trades in a collaborative workspace/ laboratory or colab. Artists can borrow things ranging from saws to software while getting a hand and advice from neighbors and peers. This space will be equipped

with wifi and flexible computer workstations with Creative Cloud access and other software, film and projection equipment, a large format printer, a high-resolution scanner, as well as more traditional tools.

Management & Operations

Macon Arts Alliance should staff and program the center during its inaugural years with funds raised for and income earned from the operation. An advisory council made up of a majority of East Macon residents and organizational stakeholders should be formed to advise MAA staff on broad matters related to program strategies, general welcoming appearance, and “personality” of the center. This advisory group should stay arms-length from active programming

entities and specific program choices to avoid conflict of interest.

Daily operations should be invested in a center director who works closely with the MAA executive director and has support of other MAA staff including public relations and accounting. While the center remains part of the overall MAA financial operations, revenues and expenses should be clearly separated, including estimates of indirect costs, so all income and expense of the operation is transparent and clearly understood.

Sample Financial Pro Forma

A simplified start-up year budget reflected here requires funds for personnel, programming, facility

maintenance, and administrative costs. Funds need to be raised and earned from a variety of sources. Each year, revenues should be expanded and costs adjusted as needed.

Start-up Year 2018	Revenues
Foundations	\$70,000
Corporations	\$7,000
Government	\$25,000
Individual and events	\$7,250
Earned income	\$13,500
Total Income	\$122,750
	Expenses
Program management personnel	\$ 83,950
Contracted administrative	\$3,600
Artist fees/honoraria	\$11,000
Program services and support	\$8,300
Physical plant costs	\$7,500
Marketing and communications	\$3,000
Administrative costs	\$5,400
Total Expenses	\$122,750



Acknowledgements



Mill Hill Steering Committee

Rev. James Baker, Homeowner
Jan Beeland, Executive Director,
Macon Arts Alliance
Mike Boggs, CEO, Regency Hospital
Stephen Daugherty, CEO, Coliseum
Health System
Brian Martin, Macon Centerplex
Karen Middleton, Chief of Resident
Initiatives, Macon Housing Authority
Alex Morrison, Executive Director of
the UDA
Lynn Murphy, Program Director for
Macon, Knight Foundation
Gwen Phillips, Owner of Phillips
Performing Arts Studio
David Quackenbush, Macon Marriott
City Center
Katie Powers, Board President of
Macon Arts Alliance
Karla Redding-Andrews, Otis Redding
Foundation
Robert Reichert, Mayor of Macon-
Bibb County
Chris Sheridan, Chair of the UDA

Artistic Advisory Committee

Jeff Bruce, Director of Exhibitions at
Tubman African American Museum
Luke Buffenmyer, Professor of Art,
Mercer University
Craig Coleman, Professor of Art,
Mercer University
Alexis Gregg, Ceramic Artist,
Assistant Professor of Studio Art at
Wesleyan College
Megan McNaught, Gallery Curator,
Macon Arts Alliance

Community Members and Artists

Jamie L. Adams, Blazing Paddles
Studio
Bryan M. Beck, Blazing Paddles
Studio
Kya Card, musician

Jason Carr, Awakening Fire Ministries
Community Guilds Ste(a)m Truck
Waynardo Curtis
Blade Davis, PLoraine
DNA Music Group
DTG Rap Group
Candice Emerson, photographer
Yvonne Gabriel
Jonathan Harwell-Dye, Macon Arts
Alliance
Stacey Harwell-Dye, Macon Roving
Listeners
Shirlynn Kelly, Awakening Fire Ministries
Y-O Latimore and Jessica Mack of
Gourmet Goody Box
Christopher Logan
Rudy Mendez
Nik Nerburn
Michael Philips, Historic Macon
Foundation
Phillips Performing Arts
Rufus & the Blubirds
Chris Smith, photographer
Jason Tomley, Awakening Fire
Ministries
Roderick Woodford

Macon-Bibb Housing Authority, Family Investment Center

Karen Middleton
Rhonda Miller
and all staff!

Macon-Bibb Urban Development Authority: East Macon Committee

Chris Sheridan, Chair of the UDA
Alex Morrison, Executive Director of
the UDA
Shannon Fickling, UDA
Kay Gerhardt, UDA
Loretta Thomas, Realtor, UDA

Funders, Partners, and Material Contributors

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Foundation
Macon-Bibb Urban Development
Authority
Peyton Anderson Foundation
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Dunwoody Beeland Architects
Ampersand Artist Guild
Joe Allen, Gary Bechtel, Ed Defore,
Mallory Jones, III, Elaine Lucas, Larry
Schlesinger, Al Tillman, Macon-Bibb
County Commission



Creative Community Builders

Creative Community
Builders was honored
to have been engaged
to work with the
community during this period of
time.



Tom Borrup, Principal
Carrie Christensen
Peter Musty
Peter Truax
Harry Waters Jr.