

Creating Vibrant Rural Places: Strategies for Downtown Success

Strengthening local identity

Boosting economic vitality

Fostering healthier communities

Connecting to natural, historic, and cultural assets



Boyd Austin, *Executive Director*

Northwest Georgia

Georgia Mountains

Atlanta Regional Commission

Northeast Georgia

Central Savannah River Area

Three Rivers

Middle Georgia

Heart of Georgia

River Valley

Southwest Georgia

Southern Georgia

Coastal

1 - City of Cartersville Master Plan

2 - Chickamauga Battlefield Connector Plan

3 - Lankford Corner in Cedartown

4 - Tallapoosa Downtown Master Plan

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Downtown Master Plan Update,

Cartersville, Georgia

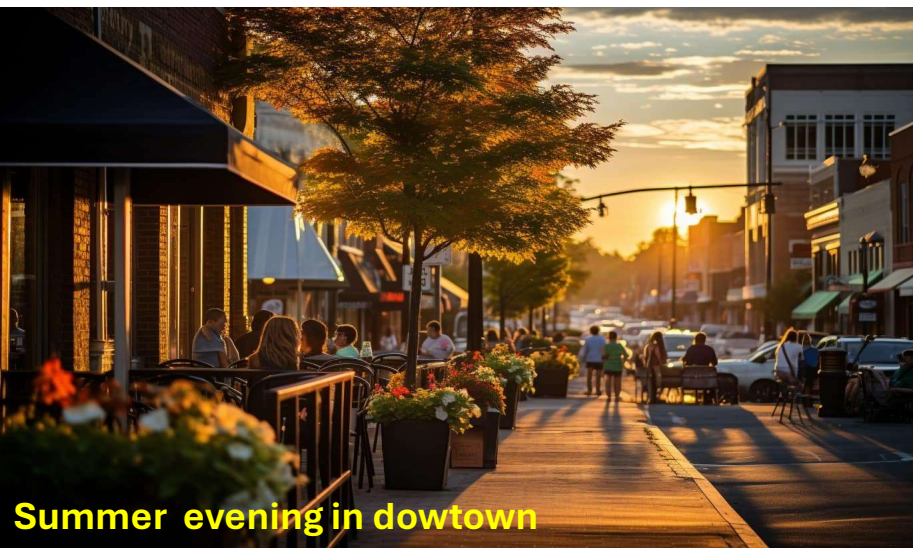
- Georgia Exceptional Main Street Community (highest level)
- Blueprint to direct growth, investment, tourism, and development in the downtown area
- Aims to take advantage of Cartersville's unique features—Etowah Indian Mounds, Civil War battle sites, Lake Allatoona, Red Top Mountain State Park, 3 Smithsonian-affiliated museums (Booth Western Art, Tellus Science, & Savoy Automotive), multi-use trails, and Etowah River Blueway
- ARC's goal of "preserving and investing in the Region's local, cultural heritage and natural assets."
- \$95,000 project; 50/50 split between ARC and Cartersville DDA

An aerial photograph of a town, likely in the South, showing a mix of historic and modern buildings. A prominent red star is placed on a large, multi-story brick building with a flat roof, situated near a parking lot and a road. The town is surrounded by dense green trees, and a church with a tall steeple is visible in the background. The overall scene is a typical small-town landscape.





Cartersville Aerial View



Summer evening in downtown



**Booth Western
Art Museum**



Etowah Indian Mounds



Etowah River



Downtown Cartersville

Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park

This is the nation's oldest and largest battlefield park. Created in 1890, and composed of more than 9,000 acres, more than 1.5 million visitors come to “the Gettysburg of the South” each year. The City of Chickamauga wants to draw a portion of those to downtown.



BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA.

Battlefield Connector Multi-Use Trail.

Chickamauga



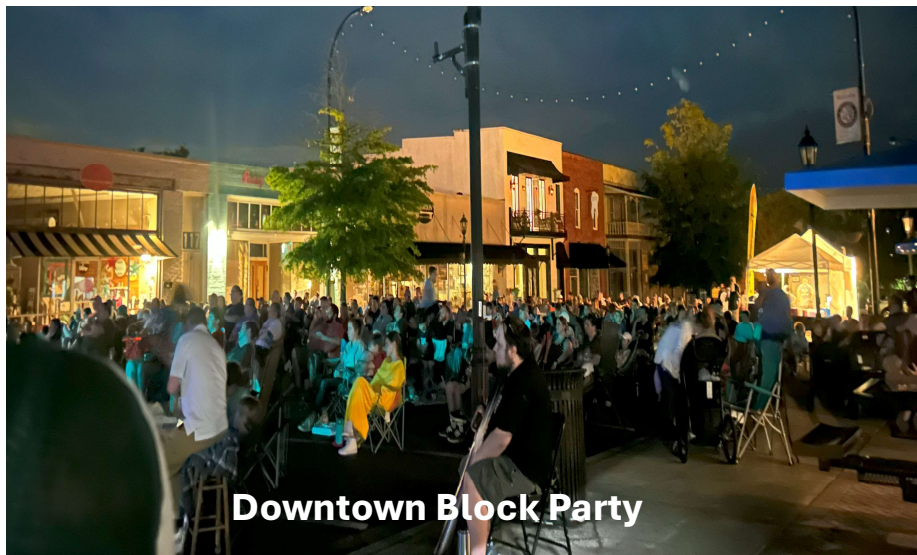
The City's Revitalization Strategic Vision Plan (RSVP) stated that the City "has the potential to grow as a heritage tourism destination," and that it must "target tourist rail and Battlefield visitors." It further asserted that connectivity with the Battlefield is a "game-changing way to ensure the long-term economic health and vitality of downtown."

At present, 25% of downtown buildings are vacant, and another 7% are underutilized.

This 5,000 LF multi-use pathway will connect the Chickamauga Battlefield to historic downtown Chickamauga. The National Military Park attracts more than 1,500,000 visitors each year, yet few of those make their way into the historic downtown. This will provide a clear path between the two. It will also allow tourist on daily excursion trains to access the Battlefield

This connector will create easy access between the two areas on City-owned property. The project will include way-finding signage

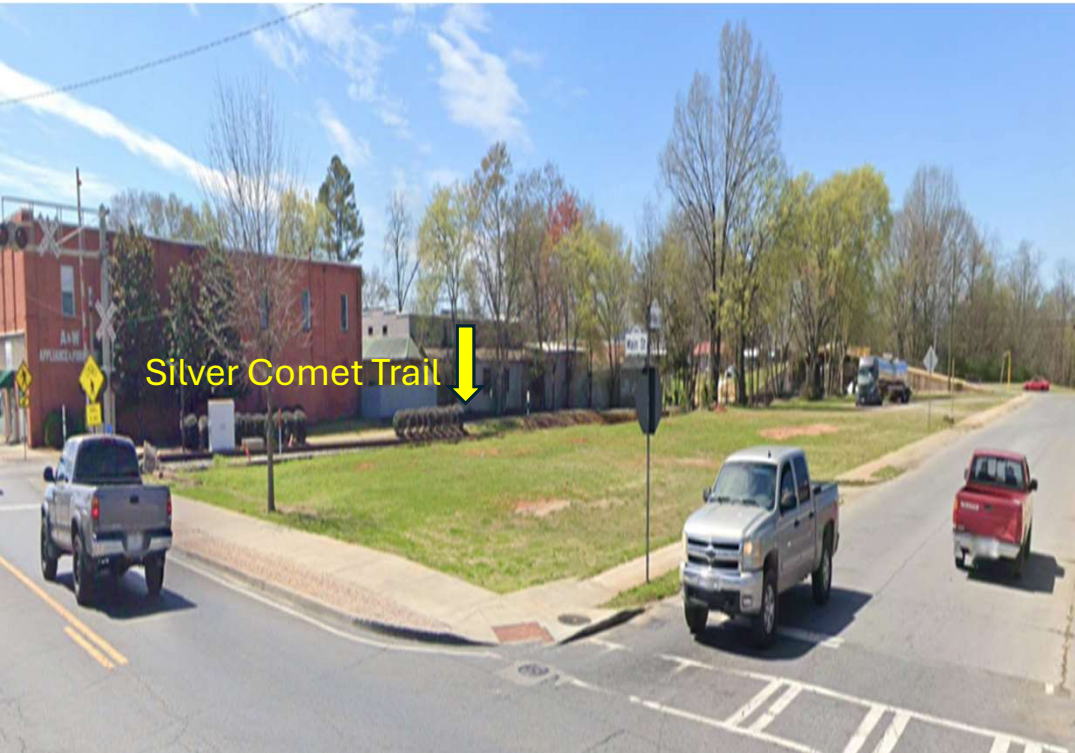
ARC \$434,141 Local \$434,141



Lankford Corner at the Silver Comet Trail, *Cedartown, Georgia*

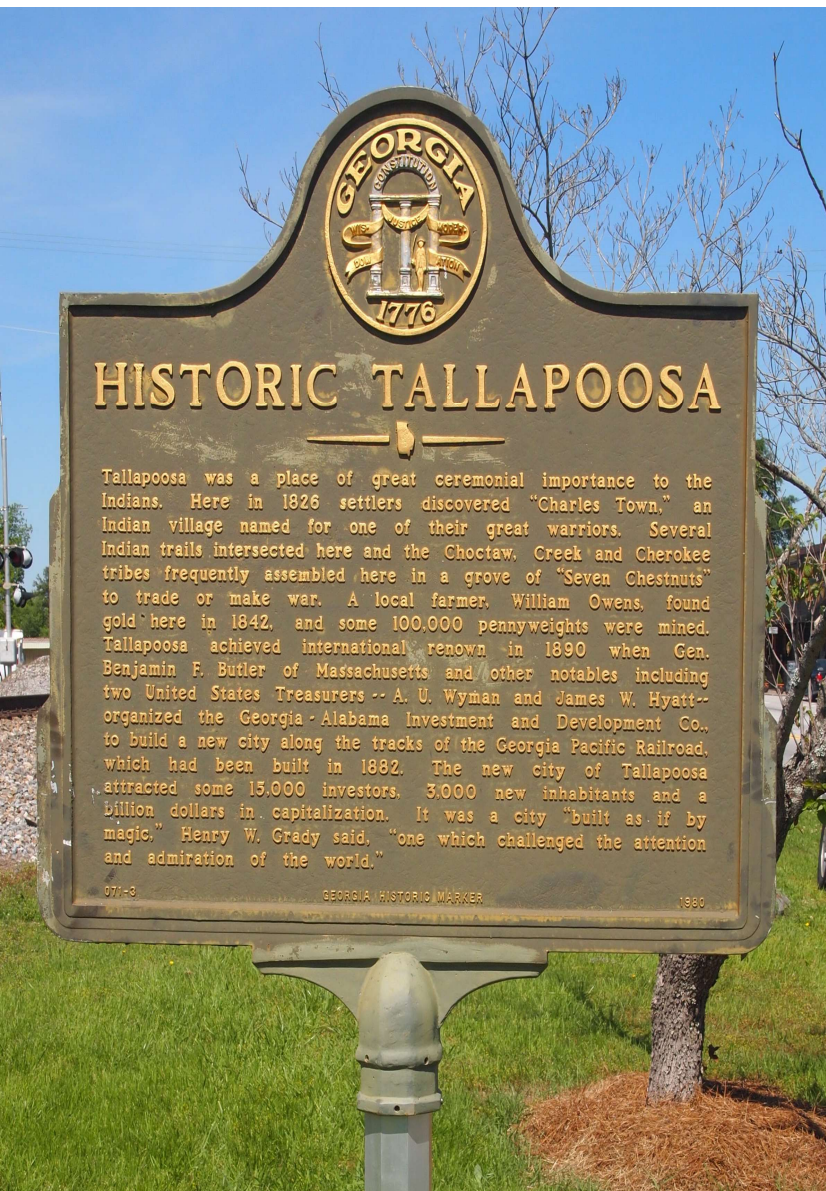
- Revitalize and anchor the southern entrance to the city
- Multi-purpose gathering space on 1 acre of property deeded to the city by a local couple
- Bridges the connection between the downtown district and the Silver Comet Trail
- 5,500 s.f. **event center, public restrooms** for SCT users and downtown patrons, entertainment pavilion, outdoor gathering space, and food truck parking
- It also includes a garden included on Georgia's *Rosalind Carter Butterfly Trail*
- **\$1.84 million** project; \$750,000 (40.85%) funded by ARC

Lankford Corner Before & After



Downtown Master Plan, *Tallapoosa, Georgia*

- **Economic Development**—commercial vacancy rate of 45%; focus on redevelopment of unsuitable uses, undeveloped/underutilized properties; attract target uses/businesses
 - **Transportation**—pedestrian connectivity in a town bisected by a railroad and two state highways
 - **Public Spaces** (new & existing)—Cultural Arts Center update & renovation; Dub Denman water trail on the Tallapoosa River; City-owned golf course; multiple parks
 - **Tourism**--drawing people from I-20 into downtown; promote festivals & events; Possum Drop; Dogwood Festival
 - **Marketing/Branding**—a new identity, fresh & recognizable
- \$80,000**; 50/50 split between ARC and City of Tallapoosa

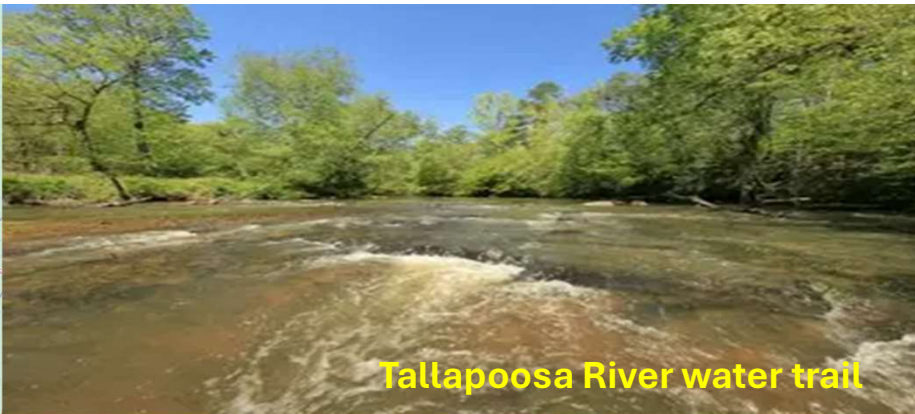
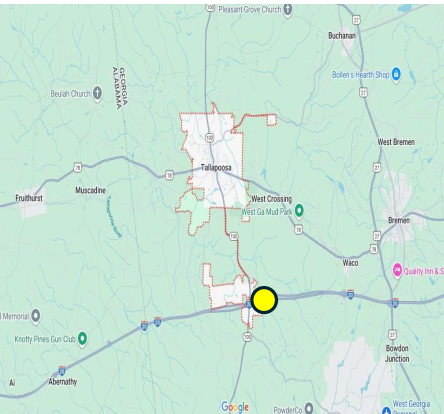


Like many cities, Tallapoosa was built along the railroad by the Georgia-Alabama Investment & Development Co. Fifteen thousand investors invested almost \$1 billion in the city. It had 3,000 new inhabitants.

It was a city “built as if by magic, one which challenged the attention and admiration of the world.”—Henry W. Grady.

Unfortunately, when I-20 was constructed, the traffic moving between Atlanta and Birmingham took the new route. The train tracks that created it, and the state highway that had been its main artery, have now become an impediment to pedestrian access and connectivity.

Tallapoosa wants the magic to happen again.



Tallapoosa River water trail



NYE Possum Drop



East & West Side of Downtown Bisected by State Highway 100 & a major rail line



Cuyler St./Pentz St. Corridor Improvement, *Dalton, Georgia*

The connection links Gateway Park, which serves as an entrance to the historic city center, and Burr Performing Arts Park, which hosts large events.

It improves pedestrian and ADA mobility, improves access for disadvantaged neighborhoods, and extends the downtown aesthetic.

\$2 million project; Congressionally-directed funds and state funds.



Pentz and Cuyler Street Corridor Improvement Plan



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Perrow Park Redevelopment Project, Phase I

Jasper, Georgia

- Jasper is known as “The First Mountain City” due to its elevation, and its position as the gateway to the Blue Ridge Mountains
- This project will extend downtown by providing open space and public amenities on a 3.10-acre parcel owned by the city on the south end of downtown Jasper
- Phase I will include site preparation and construction of 975-seat amphitheater and public restrooms
- Phases 2 & 3 will add an overlook plaza for small gatherings, a splashpad, a food truck area with seating, and a water feature that provides stormwater detention
- \$2.057 million project; ARC contributed \$1 million and the City used SPLOST and general funds for remainder.



Current usage

Tooga Theater Renovation, Phase II

Summerville, GA

Multi-Phase Project to create an anchor to draw visitors to downtown and spur economic development.

It will be a multi-purpose space to show movies, host meetings and events, and provide community gathering space.

ARC funded 70% of the acquisition cost of the building and the restoration of the marquee

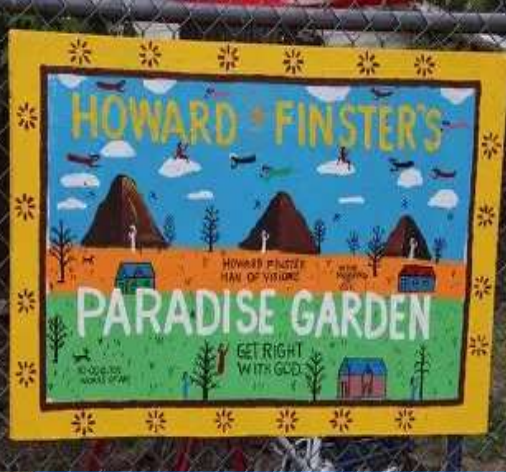
Phase II will be a \$1.4 million project (ARC 70%) to renovate the ticket booth, exterior entrance and lower level, as well as replace the roof over the fly gallery and building systems (HVAC, plumbing, electrical).

The City will generate income from facility rentals and leasing office space.



Tooga Theater Renovation, Phase II

Summerville, GA



Summerville Train Table



“It takes a generation (20 years) to get where you want to be.”—Doug Griffiths







Former auto dealership, vacant for at least 10 years.



Dallas Melt Yard, Brew Pub & Restaurant, Opening in mid-2026



\$80 million investment:
 -Fee simple townhomes
 -multi-family
 -office
 -retail

\$100,000s in
 -Property tax city, county, schools
 -Sales & alcohol taxes
 -Business & Alcohol licenses





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