



WRITTEN REPORT FINAL
RECOMMENDATIONS

MILLEDGEVILLE FALL 2017



MESSAGE FROM GEORGIAFORWARD

GeorgiaForward has a successful track record of bringing people together who do not normally interact to creatively solve problems. For the past five months, 50 of Georgia's best and brightest young professionals from across the state have been working on developing big idea recommendations for some of Milledgeville/Baldwin County's most pressing challenges. These emerging state leaders are from a variety of professional sectors and different regions of Georgia.

This group of dynamic young people came to Milledgeville/Baldwin County in August for an immersive, two-day work session to learn the history, challenges, and potential of this community. They were assigned to challenge groups that focused on one of four issues that affect the overall community. These revolved around branding and signage, retirees, economic development, and support of the public school system. These Young Gamechangers researched, brainstormed, held focus groups, and explored a myriad of ideas to move the Baldwin County community forward in these areas. After holding a midpoint meeting with community leaders, they

continued to develop their ideas into the Final Recommendations that are found in this report.

This program would not be possible without the support of the community, sponsors, steering committee, and volunteers. A special thank you to the Fall 2017 Steering Committee: Angie Martin, President and CEO of the Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce; Hank Griffeth, Milledgeville City Planner; and Matt Poyner, Executive Director of the Development Authority of the City of Milledgeville and Baldwin County. We would also like to thank the Young Gamechanger alumni who helped with the internal feedback and development of these ideas: Angela Allen, Carrie Barnes, Ebony Johnson, Betsy McGriff, Cole Posey, and Breezy Straton.

For more information about our organization, visit georgiaforward.org.

Kris Vaughn
Executive Director
GeorgiaForward



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTIONS

1

I Saw the Sign

Page 3

2

Seasoned Saints

Page 27

3

Milly Rising

Page 47

4

The Scholars

Page 75

SECTION

1



I SAW THE SIGN

CHALLENGE QUESTION

With Milledgeville/Baldwin County's central location and gateways created by major traffic thoroughfares, in what ways can the community improve its entrance points through the creation and incorporation of a unique brand image?

THE TEAM

Jewel Anderson

Nonprofit Consultant
JNA Publications LLC
Lithonia, GA

Ashley Bacon

Executive Director
Keep Milledgeville Baldwin Beautiful
Milledgeville, GA

David Denison

Project Manager
Georgia EMC
Atlanta, GA

Sharah Denton

News Liaison/Creative Writer
www.valdostatoday.com
Denton Consulting
Valdosta, GA

Tanya Fountain

Administrative Assistant
Georgia Military College
Milledgeville, GA

Brittany Johnson

Director of Public Affairs
Georgia College & State University
Macon, GA

Justin Jones

Co-Owner
J.C. Grant Company
Milledgeville, GA

Alex Leahy

Program Officer
Community Foundation of Central Georgia
Byron, GA

Ian McMullen

Attorney
Waddell & Associates, LLC
Milledgeville, GA

Terica Scott

Communications Officer
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Atlanta, GA

Mandy Stella

Executive Assistant to Mayor
City of Warner Robins
Warner Robins, GA

Anna Strickland

Archway Professional
UGA Archway Partnership
Hartwell, GA

Paige Sullivan

Marketing Manager
Central Atlanta Progress
Atlanta, GA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With its central location and direct access to major gateways, corridors, and thoroughfares, Milledgeville/Baldwin County is poised to engage Georgia's travelers with the ultimate Milledgeville/Baldwin experience. Appreciating the breadth of tourism's economic impact in Milledgeville/Baldwin requires an understanding of both the regional and local statistics.

Regionally, Baldwin County is 1 of 19 counties in the Historic Heartland Region, the most central of the Georgia Department of Economic Development's 9 tourism regions. According to a comprehensive report compiled in 2016 by D.K. Shifflet & Associates, Ltd., there were an estimated 9.18 million person-stays (includes day-trips of over 50 miles one-way and overnight trips) in the Heartland Region, ranking it 3rd of the 9 regions in 2015.

Regarding the purpose of the visits, leisure travel represented 70%, with 11% being vacation and 59% being non-vacation; the remaining 30% of the visits were directly related to business. The average length of the stay was 1.43 days (overnight and days) and 2.91 nights (overnight only). Furthermore, the average distance traveled by these visitors was 145 miles, and 98% of the visitors traveled by automobile (D.K. Shifflet & Associates, 2016).

Locally, the Georgia Department of Economic Development reported that in 2015, tourism generated \$85 million in revenue in Baldwin County, an increase from \$83 million the previous year. The department reports that visitor spending accounted for \$3.4 million in state and \$2.5 million in local tax revenue in Baldwin County, which equates to an additional \$370 in revenue per household for 2015 (Union Recorder, 2017).

Tourism is not only a revenue generator in Milledgeville/Baldwin County, but it is a major employer as well. According to Jane Sowell, executive director of the Milledgeville/Baldwin Convention & Visitors Bureau, tourism supports 770 jobs locally from hotels, restaurants, and other attractions (Union Recorder, 2017).

In an effort to further elevate Milledgeville/Baldwin County's status as a key player in the tourism game, 13 Gamechangers, calling themselves the "I Saw the Sign" group, were charged with recommending solutions to help the community improve its entrance points through the creation and incorporation of a unique brand image.

All three suggested ideas are intended to foster feelings of belonging, inclusivity, and connection with all who experience the magic of Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Milledgeville was strategically chosen as the fourth capital of Georgia because of its central location and access to springs. Currently, Milledgeville/Baldwin County continues to be a hub for activity and prosperity with easy access to US Highway 441, I-20, and I-16.

With its convenient location, attractive amenities, and intriguing history, enticing intentional tourists and casual passersby to visit the Old Capital has been key in supporting the local economy. With that being said, what are deemed as incredible assets to the community are also seen as areas for improvement.

In the community's application for the Fall 2017 *GeorgiaForward* Young Gamechangers Program, local leaders expressed that "Our challenge is our lack of branding Milledgeville/Baldwin County as a unique and vibrant place to be, particularly due to the lack of interesting and eye-catching signage when entering Milledgeville/Baldwin County and throughout the area." After research and consultation with local leaders, the "I Saw the Sign" group proposed three main ideas for implementation.

First, "A Sense of Welcome for All" was created with the intent to embrace the Southern hospitality that Milledgeville/Baldwin County is known for, regionally. In conjunction with a unified and comprehensive signage system, the project would create a more holistic and inclusive branding of Milledgeville/Baldwin County in its entirety, ultimately guiding visitors downtown. Second, "Expand the Brand" encourages an expansion of the existing "Capitals, Columns & Culture" to target a broader audience, both demographically and in relation to interests. Third, the intent of "Get Here Stay Here" is to implement creative placemaking beyond the entrances and into the county's interior.

It is our belief that the ideas proposed in this document will further amplify the important economic role that tourism plays not only in Milledgeville/Baldwin County, but in the Heartland Region as well.

BIG IDEA 1

**A SENSE OF WELCOME
FOR ALL**



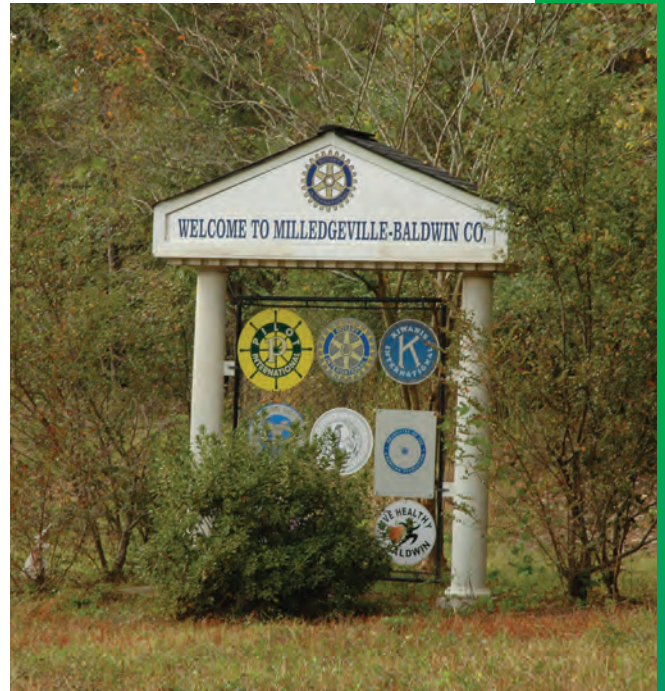
OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION

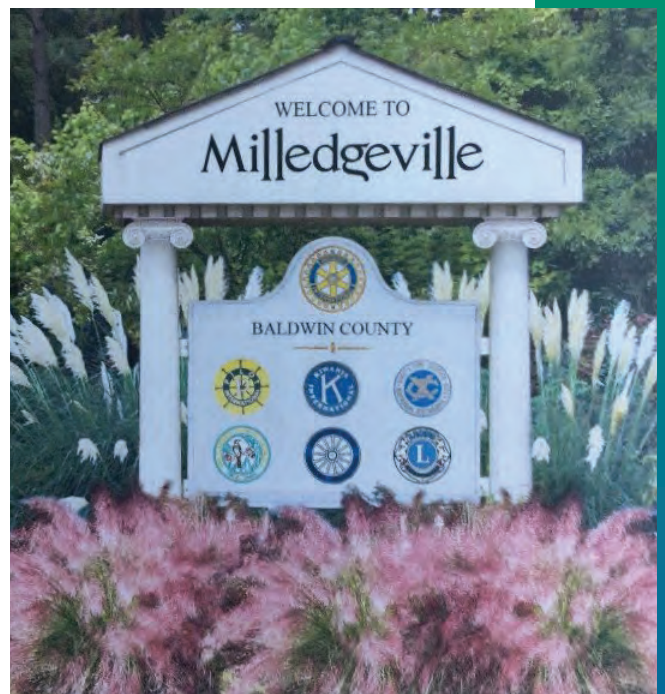
The goal of this project is to reconnect Milledgeville/Baldwin County's many "sub-communities" by improving and investing in the entry points to Milledgeville/Baldwin County, and by improving the thoroughfares that lead drivers into downtown Milledgeville. This is arguably the focal destination of the community, as it boasts the historic Downtown and the colleges. This, in conjunction with a unified and comprehensive signage system, will create a more holistic and inclusive branding of Milledgeville/Baldwin County in its entirety, as well as strengthen and revitalize all neighborhoods in the community.

SCOPE

1. First and foremost, the county and city need to create new and/or replace existing gateway signage throughout the main corridors and thoroughfares with eye-catching, attractive signage that is true to the community's brand.
 - a. According to the City of Milledgeville, gateway signs are currently installed along Sparta Highway, along 441 near the decommissioned Georgia Power plant on Lake Sinclair and along 441 by the Midway School, on Highway 22 by Triumph Aerostructures, on South Wayne Street, and on Highway 49. The current design is pictured above, next to a rendering of a suggested update to the design.
 - b. We recommend the community move away from the current sign design altogether toward a refreshed, eye-catching gateway design to create an opportunity to "re-introduce" the community to passers-through and residents alike.



Current Milledgeville Gateway Signage



Current Proposed Signage Update

c. Creative gateway signage could emulate some of the community's key icons and destinations, such as the Old Capital Museum, Georgia Military College's archway, GCSU columns, Andalusia, the lake, the river, etc. (see grid to the right) with existing "Milledgeville" font.

- We commend the community for being inspired by the neighboring community of Eatonton-Putnam County, which has leveraged its unique connection to Joel Chandler Harris and the Uncle Remus folktales to uniquely brand their gateways.
- In that vein, we encourage the community to think even more outside the box about what branded gateways could look like. A prime example would be that of Baltimore, MD, designed by Post Typography.
- Example Milledgeville Sign: Signage at the Oconee River Bridge which incorporates the existing "Milledgeville" font with background scenes of the Old Capitol Building and the Oconee River Greenway.
- Example Milledgeville Sign: Highway 441 North coming from Eatonton - signage would consist of same "Milledgeville" font scheme with background images of the Georgia College pergola and Lake Sinclair.
- Example Milledgeville Sign: Highway 22 from Macon - signage consisting of "Milledgeville" font scheme with background of "Old Governor's Mansion" and Walter B. Williams Park (i.e. sports scenes).

d. Successful implementation will likely hinge upon strong partnerships and funding. We recommend the community formulate a steering committee comprised of relevant governmental, nonprofit, and private entities to oversee this process, from exploration of ideas and recruiting a consultant to securing funding and implementation.



2. Secondly, to reconnect the areas of the community that are currently disjointed due to the economic and social realities of the city and county, we recommend that community stakeholders invest in a comprehensive wayfinding signage system that extends to all parts of the community.
 - a. *This comprehensive signage system should emulate the brand established in the gateway signs and have a unified look and feel.*
 - b. *The wayfinding signage system should point people to existing nodes of activity within the community, including Downtown, the 441 commercial corridor, the Oconee Greenway, the lake, and major tourist destinations of interest (Andalusia, the Old Governor's Mansion, GMC, and GCSU, for example).*
 - c. *The signage system should educate visitors on all that the community has to offer and include the "South Side" neighborhood points of interest.*
 - d. *A great example to emulate could be Savannah, GA's Visitor Mobility Plan and Wayfinding Program, which included the debut of new monument gateway signs in 2013 (pictured), in addition to a larger wayfinding signage system.*
 - e. *Based on community feedback from interviews conducted by this Gamechanger theme, we recommend this signage system be complemented by appropriate printed marketing materials, such as rack cards and community guides, that are strategically placed at vehicular and pedestrian thoroughfares throughout the community.*



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

Gather community leaders and private sector stakeholders together for a series of listening sessions to determine gateway signage locations and destinations to be listed on wayfinding signage. Included in these listening sessions should be the civic organizations that have previously funded current gateway signs.

MEDIUM TERM

Circulate an RFP to procure services of a consulting team to make wayfinding signage system recommendations, including locations, destinations, and design of both wayfinding and monument/gateway signage.

LONG TERM

Within both the short and medium-term timeframes, stakeholders and community leaders should formulate an official wayfinding program steering committee to steward this process. This committee should have relevant subcommittees to oversee tasks such as design, maintenance, and funding. It will be crucial to secure sustainable funding sources (see below) to see project implementation and sign installation to completion and maintain the program after installation.

BUDGET

Entry Points	
Idea exploration and listening sessions	\$5,000
Consultant to design signs	\$10,000
Installation and fabrication of signs	\$250,000
Landscaping and beautification at entry points	\$500,000
Maintenance	\$10,000
Comprehensive Wayfinding Signage System	
Signs	\$20,000
Rack cards	\$10,000
Community guides	\$10,000
Maintenance	\$10,000
Total	\$825,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Georgia Department of Transportation REBC Grant Program
- Local higher post-secondary institutions (Georgia Military College, Georgia College, and Central Georgia Technical College)
- Civic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, United Way, Young Professionals of Milledgeville/ Baldwin County, Benevolent Lodge #3 Local Masons Lodge, Lions Club, Shriners, Historical Society, etc.)
- Oconee Greenway Authority
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority
- Southern Company-Georgia Power
- City and county governments
- Local businesses monetary donations
- Private donations
- Local businesses to execute the project through donations of materials, labor, services, etc.

PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- Georgia DOT
- City of Milledgeville Government
- Baldwin County Government
- Oconee Greenway Authority
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Cities Foundation
- Georgia Municipal Association
- Middle Georgia Regional Commission
- Local Civic Organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Higher Learning Organizations
- Local businesses and contractors
- Georgia Power
- Keep Milledgeville Beautiful
- Public Library

EXPECTED IMPACT

Businesses and municipalities have realized that well-oriented people are calmer, happier, and more likely to spend money (and plan return visits) than people who are lost. Investing in a good wayfinding system can have real financial rewards. It also improves access to a community by attracting and directing motorists to the town's center, as well as to the attractions, venues, and services once they are in the community. It also enhances the experience of visitors and residents, enabling them to arrive at their destination safely, find the services they need or want, and leave with a positive perception of the community. Lastly, visitation can be boosted by attracting more tourist spending, creating an opportunity to facilitate positive experiences and potentially experience repeat visitation.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

A measure of success would be renewed sense of connection among the community expressed by the residents, leadership, and visitors inspired by the comprehensive community branding and signage.



BIG IDEA 2

EXPAND THE BRAND



MEET ME
in Milly

OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Expand Milledgeville's current brand to reach new audiences by highlighting the community's quality of life amenities to appeal to a broader range of demographics.

SCOPE

1. Milledgeville's current brand, "Capitals, Columns & Culture," is long-established, has received a noteworthy amount of investment on the part of the community, and successfully engages its target audience.
2. We feel, however, that the brand could benefit from an expansion that targets a broader audience, both demographically and in relation to interests.
 - a. *According to the Milledgeville/Baldwin Convention & Visitors Bureau, the current brand resonates especially with those 55 and older. We feel that there are opportunities to reach audiences beyond the current target to bring even more people to this exceptional community.*
 - b. *The current brand does a great job of speaking to Milledgeville's storied past and places of historic significance, but we heard from many community members that there is more to be said about Milledgeville's quality of life assets that "Capitals, Columns & Culture" doesn't currently capture.*
 - c. *We recommend keeping the current font and color palette of the brand but suggest exploring new tagline options and working to incorporate different kinds of imagery related to Milledgeville, particularly imagery that speaks to the community's numerous quality of life assets, like outdoor recreation (lake, river, parks, greenway, etc.). An example could be moving from "Capitals, Columns & Culture" to something like "A Capital Experience."*



d. Ultimately, we feel the community would benefit from hiring a consulting firm to reevaluate the brand as it stands and make recommendations for a “brand refresh” that does not require the community to invest an unreasonable amount of money in a new marketing campaign. A refreshed brand could give the community the flexibility to target different audiences, depending on the context (ad placement, digital marketing, billboards, etc.).

- This refresh could potentially include a greater focus on the “Meet Me in Milly” and #ILoveMilly campaigns, which the community currently uses as taglines on an occasional basis. We think much could be built upon this, especially in terms of the positive emotions it evokes and the younger audience it speaks to. As the CVB notes, many of Milledgeville’s college-aged and Millennial residents fondly refer to the community as “Milly.”



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

Gather all community branding stakeholders for listening sessions to discuss the current brand, including its successes, limitations, and what it leaves out. These sessions should include the CVB, the Main Street organization, the Development Authority, the Chamber of Commerce, the city, and county.

MEDIUM TERM

Procure the best possible consulting team to evaluate the current brand and provide concrete recommendations for how the brand can be refreshed and re-expressed in all marketing efforts. This team can help distill a competitive brand platform as the foundation on which everything can be built.

LONG TERM

Slowly move away from “Capitals, Columns & Culture,” especially in high-cost marketing initiatives. Leverage the current blue and green color palette to incorporate quality of life and outdoor recreation into the Milledgeville story.

BUDGET

Brand Expansion	
Consultant to evaluate refresh	\$15,000
Marketing materials and advertising campaign	\$50,000
“Meet Me in Milly” advertising campaign	\$20,000
I Love Milly campaign	\$20,000
Brand relaunch event	\$10,000
Brand relaunch promotional products	\$5,000
Total	\$120,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- City and county governments
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Milledgeville Main Street Downtown Development Authority
- Development Authority of the City of Milledgeville and Baldwin County
- Chamber of Commerce
- Knight Foundation Fund for Milledgeville of the Community Foundation of Central Georgia
- Community Foundation of Central Georgia - Nonprofit Grant Program (requires a nonprofit to spearhead this application)
- Good Neighbor Citizenship Company Grant

PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- Georgia DOT
- City of Milledgeville Government
- Baldwin County Government
- Oconee Greenway Authority
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Cities Foundation
- Georgia Municipal Association
- Middle Georgia Regional Commission
- Local Civic Organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Higher Learning Organizations
- Local businesses and contractors
- Georgia Power
- Oconee Greenway Authority
- Keep Milledgeville Beautiful
- Public Library

EXPECTED IMPACT

This project can positively shift the perception of the city and county among external and internal constituents. Implementing a new brand will solve the current issues with the existing branding elements that many people feel have a difficult to remember tagline and outdated image. One potential impact is to improve the perceptions of the unfavorable stereotypes associated with the city and community and make it more appealing to residents and visitors.

Additionally, the project will create a common vision for the future of the community and its potential, led by key stakeholders such as the CVB, Chamber, Main Street and Development Authority. Further, the brand will stimulate and attract local, regional, and potentially global awareness if used consistently. This will lead to improved stakeholder income, profit margins, and tax revenues. It will increase the ability to attract, recruit, and retain talented people and enhance civic pride.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

It would be a success to reach new audiences through this effort and revitalize the city and community as measured by increased morale among citizens and improved perceptions of the unfavorable stereotypes associated with the city and community, making it more appealing to residents and visitors.



BIG IDEA 3

GET HERE, STAY HERE



OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Create an increased sense of community by capitalizing on branding opportunities and investing in corridor improvements beyond gateway signage to the county and city. This recommendation will extend the sense of arrival and make the good first impression last longer by improving approaches within the county boundaries. Milledgeville has the opportunity to use many mediums for this type of placemaking. We recommend that the city and county create a program to use blank canvases to enhance the beauty that naturally exists. This could be through the use of water towers, power boxes, traffic boxes, empty walls, and more. These branding opportunities, placemaking efforts, and tactical urbanism efforts would be developed based on community listening sessions and community artwork submissions.

SCOPE

In addition to capitalizing on the crucial branding opportunity of gateway signage which serves as the first impression of a community and creates a sense of welcome for those passing through, we recommend the community use opportunities beyond the gateways to improve the experience of Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

1. Corridor Improvements

- a. We recommend that the community focus on reinvesting in key corridors to reduce blight and reinvigorate landscaping to improve the passenger experience, much in the same way the Development Authority made median improvements along the industrial corridor. Corridors that lead drivers northward from the Central State Hospital site should be prioritized, as should the 441 commercial corridor leading into Downtown.*
- b. How it's done elsewhere: A great example of a corridor beautification program that*

we think Milledgeville/Baldwin could benefit from emulating is the Augusta Gateway and Corridor Beautification Initiative, which has strategically enhanced four major corridors in the community via a partnership between the City, the CVB, the Georgia DOT, local businesses, and concerned citizens.

2. Creative Placemaking

- a. According to Project for Public Spaces, "With community-based participation at its center, an effective Placemaking process capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well-being."*
- b. We thus recommend that the community engage in listening sessions and surveys to identify key areas in the community to experiment with tactical urbanism installations and programming.*
- c. This could include improvements to community parks, unique and site-specific artistic installations in currently empty/blighted areas (see Dashboard's Ground Floor project, pictured), and temporary activations on the Central State Hospital campus.*
- d. How it's done elsewhere: Indianapolis has a great creative placemaking initiative underway. It's based along their riverfront. Called "[FLOW: Can You See the River?](#)" This city-wide public art project reveals how the ordinary activities of citizens affect the health and future of the White River water system. Milledgeville could take a similar approach along the Oconee River and among the different neighborhoods of the city and county.*
- e. Another example is Erie County, NY, where they developed a [public art initiative](#). Its goal is to create spaces of dialogue where diverse communities have the ability to socially engage, actively respond, and cooperatively produce great public art that is capable of empowering individuals and creating stronger neighborhoods.*

3. Blank Canvases

- a. We recommend the community utilize blank canvases, like water towers, sides of buildings, utility boxes, and crosswalks, to express Milledgeville/Baldwin's brand and showcase local talent.
- b. Based on the wealth of knowledge that already exists in Milledgeville, we recommend partnering with local artists, Georgia College's Art Department, Georgia Military College's Art Department, as well as local schools' art programs.
- c. How it's done elsewhere: In the Brooklyn neighborhood of Dumbo, underpasses, which can have a negative connotation, have been transformed into beautiful, inviting, safe spaces by adding murals. Dumpsters on Parade in Huntington Beach, CA takes trash dumpsters and turns them into works of art as part of a beautification project. These approaches could also be utilized in Milledgeville/Baldwin County to create a sense of place, help with branding, and create a more inviting environment.



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

The city and county should create an inventory of locations that would be appropriate for tactical urbanism and creative placemaking interventions. With that list and a list of possible projects they should engage residents in listening sessions and conduct community surveys to identify potential reinvestment opportunities. This could be done with the help of a firm like 8-80 Cities Foundation, who has a model for engaging community in redevelopment projects.

MEDIUM TERM

Develop a strategic plan for corridor improvements by commissioning a consultant team that can lay the framework for tactics, construction, landscaping, and weekly maintenance. Engage community organizations and educational institutions to “adopt” blank canvases and community spaces for improvement, whether it’s a mural, program, or small improvement project.

LONG TERM

As described in the Augusta Gateway and Corridor Beautification Initiative, “While completing these transformations has been rewarding and received a lot of positive feedback from the general public, construction was the easy part; the hard part is the on-going maintenance required to ensure the continued beauty of the corridors and return on this investment.” We thus propose that in the long term a permanent advisory board of key community stakeholders, both public and private, be formed to oversee the continued maintenance and expansion of a community corridor initiative.

BUDGET

The corridor improvements, creative placemaking, and blank canvases are estimated to cost about \$500,000. Costs for Improvement of approaches from main thoroughfares through landscaping have yet to be determined.

Corridor Improvements	
Landscaping	\$250,000
Creative Placemaking	
Tactical urbanism	\$50,000
Existing park improvements	\$500,000
Information kiosks	\$25,000-\$75,000
Parklet program	\$50,000
Blank Canvases	
Blank canvas art program	\$200,000
Total	\$1,125,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Businesses that would benefit from signage (Downtown, lake, southside, etc.)
- Knight Foundation Fund for Milledgeville of the Community Foundation of Central Georgia
- Local higher post-secondary institutions (Georgia Military College, Georgia College, and Central Georgia Technical College), with students possibly contributing to labor
- Civic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, United Way, Young Professionals of Milledgeville/Baldwin County, Benevolent Lodge #3 local Masons Lodge, Lions Club, Shriners, Historical Society, etc.)
- Allied Arts
- Local artists to donate time and talents
- Oconee Greenway Authority
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority
- City and county governments
- Private donations

PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- Georgia DOT
- City of Milledgeville Government
- Baldwin County Government
- Oconee Greenway Authority
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Cities Foundation
- Georgia Municipal Association
- Middle Georgia Regional Commission
- Local Civic Organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
- Higher Learning Organizations
- Local businesses and contractors
- Georgia Power
- Oconee Greenway Authority
- Keep Milledgeville Beautiful
- Twin Lakes Library System
- Project for Public Spaces

EXPECTED IMPACT

Through these efforts, Milledgeville will see an increase in tourist traffic as well as an increase in community engagement. Residents and tourists will be better oriented due to the information kiosks and, in turn, will be more likely to invest money and time in the community. These projects will improve access to the community by attracting and directing motorists to downtown, as well as to area attractions, venues, and services once they are in the community. It also enhances the experience of visitors and residents as it will enable them to arrive at their destination safely, find the services they need or want, and leave with a positive perception of the community. This beautification effort will increase residents' sense of pride in the community and improve the way they talk about the community, externally. According to the American Library Association, creative placemaking "has led to the popularity of pop-up approaches for both government, non-profit, and business organizations. While pop-ups can create an art space in an otherwise underutilized area, they may not always fulfill the community goals of creative-placemaking – even as they provide a valuable option to test ideas and provide proof of potential."

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Success can be measured by counting the number of people engaged in these efforts by attending a community meeting, submitting a proposal for art, or visiting an attraction that is highlighted through these efforts. Long-term success could be measured through the number of tourists who visit the community as well as new business development. The intangible measure of success will be an increased sense of pride in the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our team would like to acknowledge the Milledgeville/Baldwin County partners who have assisted in our research, planning, and guidance to reach our final recommendations. We are grateful to the following community members for their time, wisdom, and generosity:

- Bill Masee, Baldwin County Sheriff
- Jill Robbins, Vice President of Human Resources, Georgia Military College
- Dr. Jim Lidstone, Live Healthy Baldwin and Rails to Trails
- Gary Thrower, Mayor of Milledgeville
- Barry Jarrett, City of Milledgeville City Manager
- Bill McNair, Board Chair of the Milledgeville Convention and Visitors Bureau and Director of the Baldwin County Recreation Department
- Angie Martin, CEO, Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce
- Johnny Grant, Director of Community Engagement and Economic Development, Georgia College & former State Senator
- Mike Couch, Executive Director, Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority
- Matt Poyner, Executive Director, Development Authority
- Tommy Cook, Owner of Advanced Airspace and former Milledgeville Young Professionals Chair
- Pastor Tony Fraley, Vaughn Chapel Baptist Church and local community activist
- Hank Griffeth, City of Milledgeville City Planner
- Walter Reynolds, Milledgeville City Councilman
- Tom Drew, Owner of T-Bones Nursery and local community activist
- Jane Sowell, Director of the Milledgeville Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Rebekah Snider, Georgia Department of Economic Development Tourism Manager for Historic Heartland
- Lauren Goebel, CEO of Goebel Media
- Frank Baugh, City Engineer
- Wil Petty, Editor of Baldwin Bulletin
- Erin Andrews, Advertising Director, The Union-Recorder
- Leah Gillett, Chief of Creative Operations, Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce

CITATIONS & RESOURCES

- Blankenship, Grant. "It's jobs versus history as Central State tug of war unfolds." *Georgia Public Broadcasting*, 28 Oct. 2016. Web.
- *Case Study: Baltimore Welcome Signs*. Maryland: Post Typography, 2016.
- *City of Soldotna Downtown Improvement Plan*. Alaska: City of Soldotna, 2015. Print.
- "Community Enhancements." City of Savannah, www.savannahga.gov. Accessed October 2017.
- "Creative Placemaking." American Library Association, www.ala.org. Accessed November 2017.
- Eslinger, Jeffrey. Year-End 2015 Georgia Tourism Region Visitor Profile. 2016 D. K. Shifflet & Associates, Ltd. Accessed November 2017.
- Fallstrom, Jerry. "Lake considers 'gateway' signs to provide welcoming vibe." *Orlando Sentinel*, 28 June 2015. Web.
- "Gateway and Corridor Beautification Initiative." Augusta, Georgia Government, www.augustaga.gov. Accessed October 2017.
- Hillier Environmental Graphics Studio. "New Directions: Branding Spaces with Graphics." *ArchNewsNow*, 24 June 2004. Web.
- *Historic Savannah Wayfinding Program: Design Development*. Pennsylvania: RMJM Hillier, 2009. Print.
- "History." *Milledgeville/Baldwin Community Guide*, p. 7. Accessed November 2017.
- Milledgeville, GA. Milledgeville City Hall, www.milledgevillega.us. Accessed August 2017.
- Monroe, Doug. "Asylum: Inside Central State Hospital, once the world's largest mental institution." *Atlanta Magazine*, 18 Feb. 2015. Web.
- "Placemaking 101." Project for Public Spaces, www.pps.org. Accessed September 2017.
- *Redevelopment Potential of the Central State Hospital Property: A Strategic Analysis*. Georgia:
 - The Counselors of Real Estate Consulting Corps, 2014. Print.
 - "Report: Tourism generates \$85M in Baldwin County." *Union Recorder*, 21 Mar. 2017. Web.
 - Simmons, Kenna. "Drawn to Downtown." *Georgia Trend*, Aug. 2017. Web.
- *Urban Wayfinding Planning and Implementation Manual*. The Signage Foundation and International Sign Association, 2013.
- *Visit Milledgeville*. Milledgeville/Baldwin County Convention & Visitors Bureau, www.visitmilledgeville.org. Accessed August 2017.
- "What to do in Historic Heartland, Georgia | Tourism & Travel Information." Georgia Department of Economic Development, www.exploregeorgia.org. Accessed 3 Nov. 2017.



SECTION

2



SEASONED SAINTS

CHALLENGE QUESTION

How can Milledgeville/Baldwin County incorporate and engage their growing retirement community and, in turn, provide an exceptional quality of life and the necessary resources to retain them?

THE TEAM

Drew Barwick

Solar Sales Consultant
Solar Tyme USA
Columbus, GA

Brittany Bullock

HDCI Program Specialist
Georgia Dept. of Economic Development
Atlanta, GA

Carolyn Dallas

Field Representative
Congressman Jody Hice
Milledgeville, GA

Kate Hogan

Director of Economic Development
City of Centerville
Centerville, GA

Karen Judd

Communications Specialist
AECOM
Atlanta, GA

Keith Lee

Professor
Georgia College
Milledgeville, GA

Geoffrey Loften

Program Coordinator
UGA Small Business Development Center
Atlanta, GA

Maggie Milner

Volunteer Supervisor
Ocmulgee CASA
Milledgeville, GA

Crystal Mullins

Financial Advisor
Edward Jones
Milledgeville, GA

Madi Shields

Research Analyst
Metro Atlanta Chamber
Atlanta, GA

Kyria Williams

Assistant to the HR Director
Spalding County Parks, HR Department
Griffin, GA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the designation of the City of Milledgeville by the American Association of Retirement Communities as an AARC community in 2015, Milledgeville/Baldwin County is undoubtedly showing a focus on attracting and retaining a growing retirement population. It is not surprising that Milledgeville/Baldwin County is quickly gaining favor among retirees considering it is a rural town full of rich history, natural attractions such as Lake Sinclair, the Oconee River and Selma Irwyn Trails, a growing and vibrant downtown housing many local small businesses, and a thriving higher education community. Though the desire for a lively community for active retirees is present, the Milledgeville/Baldwin County community at large has identified a few key concerns that need to be addressed so that the efforts for growth can be maximized. After listening to these concerns, we were able to develop three leading recommendations to enhance the growing retirement population's needs.

First, with the aid of community stakeholders and the investment of a private developer, we envision Milledgeville/Baldwin County becoming home to an active lifestyle community with upscale comfortable living, easy access to cultural events, and unending opportunities for social engagement. Tucked away less than four miles from downtown and nestled amongst extensive outdoor recreational opportunities, riverfront property on the Central State Hospital campus is promised and primed to be developed into a world-class retirement community. While similar communities do exist, Milledgeville/Baldwin County can capitalize on its position as home to Georgia's premier liberal arts college. By partnering with the developer and taking advantage of Amendment 23 (allowing those over 62 to enroll tuition-free in classes), Georgia College & State University could create the

state's first institute of lifelong learning. From formal education to peer-led learning, this community would ensure retirees could remain curious and intellectually challenged throughout retirement. Engaging the mind, body, and heart, this community will forge the new standard of living for Milledgeville/Baldwin County retirees.

Secondly, life needs to be brought back into the existing senior center. This center can become a hub for the community at large by expanding services to include exercise and nutritional classes, stimulating intellectual conversations, local travel trips, and volunteer opportunities within the area. There is a need to bring the senior center into the twenty first century by updating their current technology. Utilizing resources such as grants, along with public funding, will allow for staff and programming growth. This will accommodate an increase towards full capacity of the current senior center, with the vision to build afresh a community center focused on retirees.

Lastly, and potentially one of the more direct needs of Milledgeville/Baldwin County, as with most rural communities, would be the need to create a collective transportation system. Partnering local churches with the city and county could afford citizens a collective transport option on the infrequently used church buses. Participating churches could serve as local transportation stations. Possible future development on this initiative could involve Georgia College buses and vans from apartment complexes. Further serving to interconnect Milledgeville/Baldwin County citizens with their communities will be pedestrian and biker pathways laid out on City right-of-ways to connect Milledgeville's retail complex in the north and Central State Hospital campus with downtown Milledgeville.

INTRODUCTION

Milledgeville/Baldwin County is looking to grow the resources already present in the community and seek new opportunities to provide an exceptional quality of life for their residents. With varying levels of assisted and retired living in Milledgeville/Baldwin, there lacks a unified retiree community than many seniors were interested in during our conversations.

The Seasoned Saints received significant feedback from different groups within the community, including the Dirt Diggers from Lockerly Arboretum, retired County Commissioners and Council People, and even existing businesses catering to the target retiree population. This insight allowed us to see a clear lack in the sense of community between seniors. While churches had senior groups that were very active, there was no singular identifier for quality of life for these residents.

Our conversations led us to the conclusion that there were other communities surrounding Milledgeville that were doing things 'right' when it came to engaging their retirement communities. In order to better understand the communication between these communities and their retired populations, Seasoned Saints enlisted the help of a Georgia College Marketing student. This student completed her practicum by conducting a full-scale communication audit on Milledgeville/Baldwin County, Dublin/Laurens County, and Gainesville/Hall County. In her findings, she found little to no communication was occurring for the retirees in Milledgeville/Baldwin, indicating that even the smallest change in the way of communication could have a huge impact for retirees. Dublin/Laurens County has great outreach through recreation for their seniors. Mirroring this idea, the Seasoned Saints began formulating the Senior Center idea. Observing these communities helped show effective ways of engagement for retirees and led us to our big ideas:

1. Learning, Retiring, Relaxing
2. Senior Engagement Center
3. Save me a seat, Milledgeville!

BIG IDEA 1

LEARNING, RETIRING, RELAXING



OVERVIEW

Privately developed senior communities have become an ideal retirement environment for many middle and upper-income retirees. While these developments can be found in large metropolitan areas, it has become increasingly more prevalent to establish retirement enclaves in smaller cities, often bringing more jobs to all levels of workers and greater economic prosperity to the community at large. Milledgeville/Baldwin County has the ability to host a private development similar to that of Del Webb at Lake Oconee or Cresswind at Lake Lanier, but will need to capitalize on the points of parity that make the community unique (e.g. its institutes of higher education). By leveraging a partnership with Georgia College, Milledgeville/Baldwin County could become home to not just a traditional retirement development full of much-needed retiree housing options and amenities, but a community where retirees can engage in lifelong learning through both academic curriculum and organized peer-to-peer learning. We envision a safe community where retirees never ache for opportunities to enrich their bodies, satiate their curiosity, or build new friendships.

However, and while this idea already has enthusiastic support from existing area retirees, we also believe that Milledgeville/Baldwin County must take significant steps to make the community an attractive investment for the right developer. Our scope will include the steps we suggest Milledgeville/Baldwin County take to create a more retirement-friendly community, market itself as such, and, ultimately, attract an investor to transform this recommendation into reality within the next ten years. Our plan hinges on Georgia College's willingness to participate in this public-private partnership and Milledgeville/Baldwin County's willingness to hire and fully-cooperate with the suggestions and path laid out by a private firm. While this plan requires up-front capital to hire a firm, potential

funds to ameliorate community weaknesses from a developer perspective, and long-term funding to support the implementation and maintenance of the lifelong learning element, these expenses can be easily justified in the effort to help Milledgeville/Baldwin County retirees maintain an outstanding quality of life while simultaneously bringing economic growth to the community (Hamilton 2010, 26).

A number of community stakeholders have expressed and affirmed their commitment to the successful development of a retirement community. Dr. Steve Dorman, President of Georgia College, is willing to pledge the institution's support and interest in developing lifelong learning opportunities for the future community. Dr. Dorman has extensive experience with Oak Hammock at the University of Florida and their Institute for Learning in Retirement and understands the needs and opportunities of such a community. Mike Couch, Executive Director of Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority, has also expressed willingness to make riverfront property available on the old Central State Hospital property for the development of a community. These two commitments, in addition to both the city and the county's unwavering support, are vital pieces to the successful attraction and construction of a private development.

Considering the strong interest of community stakeholders and the current retiree population, the missing catalyst of this development is a champion willing to make the connection with a developer and advocate for Milledgeville/Baldwin County fit for a retirement community. This champion will facilitate conversations and streamline efforts to make this development a success.



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

The total estimated project duration is approximately four to eight years, from the point of inception to the construction of the development and implementation of the learning program.

SHORT RANGE

- Create an advisory council comprised of delegates from Milledgeville/Baldwin County, Georgia College, and the local retiree population to identify, and, ultimately, guide a private firm to navigate research, marketing, and the recruitment of a developer. (2 months)
- Hire a community liaison to coordinate between the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority, Milledgeville/Baldwin County, Georgia College, and the private developer.

- Work with Georgia College to build an initial programmatic concept of a lifelong learning partnership, budget, and Milledgeville/Baldwin County resource contributions. (3 months)
- Secure acquisition of the Central State Hospital property for development site. (4 months)

MID RANGE

- Private firm to recruit developer(s). (6 months)
- Finalize developer selection. (3 months)

LONG RANGE

- Construction of the private development (2-4 years) concurrently with the following:
- Assisting the developer with marketing Milledgeville/Baldwin County as a retirement-friendly community.
- Developing and implementing the retiree learning partnership with Georgia College via the liaison.
- Securing any related financial/tax statuses that would separate the learning aspect from the for-profit developer's operations.

BUDGET

Hiring of community liaison	\$25,000/ part time; \$40,000/full time (annual)
Identification and hiring of private firm to facilitate plan	\$89,000 - \$127,400 (one-time)
Total	\$114,000 - \$167,400

EXPECTED IMPACT

- Retain current retirees and entice those soon entering retirement to stay in the community
- Attract retirees to the community from outside Milledgeville/Baldwin County to create a critical mass of retirees
- Engage the retiree population by providing academic and peer-led educational programming and mentorship opportunities to local students
- Provide the opportunity for a high quality of life for area retirees in a private development that allows seniors to be active, engaged, and safe

POTENTIAL FUNDING

- Kolter Homes
- Minto Communities
- Department of Community Affairs Employment Incentive Program
- Economic Development Assistance Programs Application

- City/County
- City/County Development Authority
- Fall Line Regional Development Authority

OPPORTUNITIES

By attracting a private developer to invest in building and maintaining a retirement community at Central State Hospital, Milledgeville/Baldwin County will be able to provide the growing retirement community the opportunity to age in a place with exceptional quality of life. Not only would a private development allow the aging population to remain in the area, it also has the potential to attract retirees to the community from outside Milledgeville/Baldwin County, thus creating a critical mass of retirees. The development's partnership with Georgia College engages the retiree population by providing academic and peer-led educational programming, as well as mentorship opportunities to local students. The pairing of a private development with academic programming and mentoring opportunities creates opportunities for seniors to be active, engaged, and safe in the Milledgeville/Baldwin County community.

Measures of success could include:

- Retention and growth of retiree age population (American Community Survey)
- Occupancy rates in private development
- Participation and other metrics for the partnership program (mentors, classes taken, etc.) to measure the level of engagement between Georgia College & the retirement community
- Increase in the number of retirees staying in and moving to Milledgeville/Baldwin County (a baseline would need to be established)

RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Convention and Visitors Bureau CVB
- Georgia College
- Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority CSHRA

BIG IDEA 2

SENIOR ENGAGEMENT CENTER



OVERVIEW

Senior centers are often publicly funded endeavors that receive little-to-no attention due to the nature of public budgeting and finance. For example, as expressed by county officials in our initial meeting, the local senior center needs some attention. In a recently approved special-purpose local-option sales tax (SPLOST) referendum, there were \$50,000 set aside for the current senior center to allow for upgrades and renovations. This project will unfold over the next six years as sales tax revenues become available, and if they fall short, this project could see less funding. Therefore, it may be in the best interest of county officials and stakeholders to begin developing plans for a partnership to ensure timely completion of the project. The senior center is currently managed by Overview, Inc., an organization which aims to “identify problems, provide services, and operate programs in an effort to enable elderly and economically disadvantaged citizens to achieve self-sufficiency.” Unfortunately, this is too narrow as we envision a community center that serves retirees from all socioeconomic backgrounds.

The current center can only provide services for 25 people due to staffing resources and regulations, which are well below the building’s capacity of 65. When asked about demand, the current director said that she often has to turn retirees away because they reach their 25 person limit rather quickly. This indicates that there is a real, immediate need in the community to provide for better services that can be managed by hiring additional personnel.

Furthermore, the lack of transportation infrastructure prevents retirees from traveling away from the site, as Overview, Inc. only allows them one trip per month. The director said that there was a time when they were able to travel to high school plays and musical programs, but cuts to their transportation have left them without a way to transport retirees safely. This opens up the possibility of partnering with both local colleges as well as the local school board to ascertain if it would be feasible for them to offer their resources once or twice per month each (resulting in 3-6 trips per month) to allow retirees the joy of taking in events provided to the greater Milledgeville/Baldwin County community.

Lastly, a senior center needs to provide more than basic arts and crafts and gardening to the local retiree community; it needs to be a place for living! Through partnering with local resources, like Navicent Health Baldwin, Georgia College, and Georgia Military College, the new and improved senior center can not only provide invigorating exercise tailored to retirees, stimulating conversations about history and the arts, and a central location for day trips, but also open up to the community at large to allow for intergenerational networking. This big idea can help utilize existing resources in the community and establish an exceptional quality of life for seniors.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

The total estimated project duration is approximately three years, from the point of the first focus group to the grand opening of an upgraded and renovated senior center.

SHORT RANGE

- Hire a program coordinator to act as a single point of contact for programming at the senior center.
- Conduct focus groups to gather feedback and investors identified/committed.
- Provide a marketing/awareness plan for the senior center by creating a website, updating Facebook, and updating the online search engine for the senior center.
- Provide increased transportation at the senior center that would include more than one trip a month.
- Increase involvement in the community by engaging the seniors in the community through more trips to local events, shopping, field trips, etc.
- Grow the center to full capacity (currently 65) by hiring additional personnel.
- Prepare to expand to a larger capacity for future growth, which would include expansion/renovation to the current senior center.
- Secure a Municipal Bond to fund improvements to the senior center.

MID RANGE

- Begin upgrades and renovations. Improvements will include, but are not limited to: raised garden beds, open community room for senior exercise classes, an art studio, new computers, and an extra vehicle to transport members to events in the community.
- Hire director and other necessary staff to begin planning programs/events.





LONG RANGE

- Complete renovations and upgrades.

BUDGET

Staffing and program needs would cost approximately \$250,000 annually. Half of this budget will be for staff salary and the other half will be used for program needs and maintenance.

Annual salaries for staff	
Supervisor	\$40,000
Office assistant	\$25,000
Office assistant (PT)	\$10,000
Nutrition program supervisor	\$35,000
Nutrition office assistant	\$15,000
Total	\$125,000

EXPECTED IMPACT

- Provide a better quality of life for seniors
- Increase senior involvement
- Increase retention of seniors in Milledgeville/Baldwin County
- Create awareness through better marketing
- Increase to age in place for seniors rather than having seniors enter institution

POTENTIAL FUNDING

- Municipal government via SPLOST and/or other tax revenue
- Middle Georgia Regional Commission
- Grants (e.g., United Way and AARP Foundation Grants)
- Donations/Annual fundraisers (such as a Bunco event or golf tournament) for programs

OPPORTUNITIES

- Increased visitors in the senior center
- Increased programming at senior center
- Extension of hours
- Tie the senior center back into the community
- Increased staff

RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Lowe’s
- Local Nursery
- United Way of Central Georgia
- Other non-profit agencies
- Georgia Military College/Georgia College (to transport seniors to their arts and cultural events)
- Volunteers
- Middle Georgia Regional Commission

BIG IDEA 3

**SAVE ME A SEAT,
MILLEDGEVILLE!**



OVERVIEW

The lack of transportation is a large issue in many cities around the nation, but the problem is more significant in rural America. In these areas, there is an insufficient demand for a transportation system to run on regularly scheduled routes. Milledgeville/Baldwin County has an opportunity to utilize existing collective transportation systems to better serve the local population as a whole and the retiree population with transportation alternatives. This initiative involves coordinating collective transport vehicles from different entities to serve a public good through cooperative relationships. There is also demand for pedestrian and bike routes along the north and south corridors in Milledgeville. The existing corridors, north along North Columbia Street/Hwy 441 and south along Hwy 112 to Central State Hospital, are only traversed by motor vehicles. They are not pedestrian or bike-friendly. The City of Milledgeville and Baldwin County should work together in developing a Strategic Sidewalk Plan with a third party and begin implementation to create better connectivity for active seniors and other pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

We have two recommendations that address the issue of transportation from a broad, multi-modal scope using existing infrastructure:

- Organize a cooperative transportation system by expansion of existing transportation systems with underutilized resources.
- Development and implementation of the Strategic Sidewalk Plan.

First, a cooperative transportation system would make use of underutilized vehicles that already exist in the Milledgeville/Baldwin County area to provide collective transportation services to everyone, including seniors. Examples of entities in Milledgeville with vans and buses are

churches, schools, and apartment complexes. The collective transport system will ensure people in Milledgeville/Baldwin County have a resource to utilize for traveling within the community that serves not only the retiree population and Senior Engagement Center clients, but also often overlooked audiences that have limited or no self-transport options. These audiences include workers and parents in need of transportation to and from schools for teacher meetings and events (as indicated by the Young Gamechanger group focusing on Education in Milledgeville/Baldwin County).

This cooperative system will most readily begin through churches. Churches are spread out around the county and are proximal to residential areas. The demographics of the neighborhoods nearby and the churches' congregations will give an indication of whether riders would be most in need of transportation services to schools, the senior center, or the industrial complex, for example. Targeted promotions can be delivered to the neighborhoods around the churches. Initiation of the system can include routes that focus on these separate niches through applicable churches. Word-of-mouth will initially be the primary driver of this system. The churches without vans can be proximal collection points for transport by participating vans. Minimal fares may be considered for transportation services to compensate the drivers for their time and allow for maintenance of the vehicles. It would also ensure reliability through accountability. Churches can write this fare off as a donation. Reverend David Luke, Flipper Chapel AME Church, believes there will be a significant amount of support from at least eight churches with respect to making their vans available for use within a public transportation system.



Reverend Luke is also willing to help organize the church van community transit system.

Next, focus should be given to other transportation systems, like that of Georgia College. Further insight on allowing the utilization of their buses by Milledgeville citizens may be gained through studying the relationship of the University of Georgia's bus system with Athens citizens and Athens Transit. There is no charge for Athens-Clarke County residents to ride the university's buses. Athens' transit system, in turn, allows students to ride for free with the presentation of a student ID. This is common with many cities home to universities and their transportation systems. Whether there is a small fee associated with riding or if the cost of this transportation network is subsidized through a partnership between the college and Milledgeville/Baldwin County, this is an extremely important step to providing an exceptional quality of life.

For the second part of addressing connectivity in Milledgeville/Baldwin County, we suggest investing in a Strategic Sidewalk Plan to address pedestrian and bicycle traffic for retirees and others in the Milledgeville/Baldwin community. Sidewalks do exist on City right-of-ways that can

serve to connect many areas in Milledgeville but need to be expanded from north to south and from the new Senior Engagement Center (Big Idea #2) to the private retirement development (Big Idea #1). The need has been expressed for a pedestrian and bike-friendly route to get from central Milledgeville to the retail complex on North Columbia Street.

There are other opportunities in Milledgeville for connectivity. For example, connecting the Harrisburg community to central Milledgeville will be an important piece for a comprehensive transportation network. As of now, these sidewalks would be difficult to follow to reach these destinations. We propose using a third-party firm to develop a comprehensive Strategic Sidewalk Plan that is based off data and feasibility of existing roads and sidewalks. There is also an opportunity to install signage along existing segments of sidewalk to help guide pedestrians and cyclists to reach areas of the city they would normally need a vehicle to get to.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

The total estimated project duration is approximately two years, from the point of the first meeting to implementation of the cooperative system and strategic sidewalk and trails plan.

SHORT RANGE

- Assemble a planning committee for the collective transportation system, including local church pastors, potential drivers, colleges and universities, and city and county representatives to include identifying transportation routes, drivers, and a marketing plan.
- Begin coordinating the Strategic Sidewalk Plan with a third party for needs like grocery stores in the downtown area and connecting the renovated Senior Center and Private Senior Development.

MID RANGE

- Collect routes that have been developed by the committee and analyze them to see how the cooperative network can be broadened. For example, at certain times of the day, specific niches of riders can gather at the church closest to them and the van from one or two churches can ride from church to church collecting these riders with a common destination.
- Soft Roll-Out for Church Van Transportation Network: Churches will serve as transportation hubs, utilizing their 4-15 passenger vans for collective transportation routes serving nearby populations. Collect data on church location, time of day, and destination. Collect data on developing routes and their density per time of day and day of week for future analysis.
- Repair existing sidewalks and begin adding any needed segments of sidewalk to the Strategic Sidewalk Plan.

LONG RANGE

- By the two year mark there should be an inaugural route that is celebrated throughout the community through a ribbon cutting and local officials actually taking the transportation route themselves. Media needs to be alerted for this so there can be maximization of informing the public.
- Install bus-stops at designated locations in the cooperative transportation system.
- By the two-year mark, the Strategic Sidewalk Trails should be adopted by both city council and county commissioners in order to show intergovernmental cooperation and dedication to connectivity.

BUDGET

Estimated annual vehicle maintenance costs	\$1,500 per vehicle (4-5 vehicles initially, ramping up to 9-12 in the long range)
Advertising for the bus routes	\$10,000
The Sidewalk Strategic Plan	\$80,000 for a third-party study and signage along the pathways indicated by the finalized plan
Total	\$100,000 in initial start-up and operational expenses

EXPECTED IMPACT

- A cooperative transportation network allows for retirees to have the independence and freedom of public transportation
- Coordinating this initiative through churches will allow more community interaction in nearby neighborhoods which will bring more support to the churches
- The connectivity of sidewalk routes would appeal to the active retiree looking to avoid parking issues downtown, enjoy the riverfront, or enjoy a nice walk to get groceries
- Connecting the renovated senior center and private retirement development at Central State Hospital by sidewalk routes will ensure high attendance for the senior center and an active lifestyle is maintained by retirees in the community
- Attendance at school and work will improve

POTENTIAL FUNDING

- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
- Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
- The Community Foundation of Central Georgia
- Sponsorships through businesses on route of trails north
- Support from the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority for trails south
- Department of Community Affairs
- Department of Natural Resources
- EDGE Program (OneGeorgia)
- Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG)
- Economic Development Agencies
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) / Tax Allocation Districts (TAD)
- GDOT Local Funding
- The Robert W. Woodruff Foundation
- Community Development Block Grant
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Funding Opportunities
- Middle Georgia Regional Commission

OPPORTUNITIES

- Creation of a committee for planning the collective transportation network
- The implementation of a collective transportation network
- Subsequent measurement of ridership within the transportation network to ensure successful increase in quality of life for senior residents in Milledgeville/Baldwin County
- Better access to healthcare
- Increased sales at businesses in retail complex
- Increased foot traffic to retail complex on North Highway 441
- Increased foot traffic to developments on Central State Hospital campus coming from downtown

RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Reverend David Luke of Flipper Chapel African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church of Milledgeville and Chaplain for Georgia Military College
- Other local churches
- Georgia College
- Apartment complexes
- Hank Griffeth, Milledgeville City Planner
- Ernie Smith (Geographic Information System), feasibility study for sidewalks and routes
- Businesses and retail complex on North Highway 441
- Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority
- Businesses in downtown Milledgeville



CITATIONS & RESOURCES

Hamilton, Karen L. "Effects of Retirement Communities on Local Job and Wage Growth." February 04, 2010. Accessed September 27, 2017. doi:10.1177/0891242409357340.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Seasoned Saints would like to thank all the Milledgeville/Baldwin County residents, staff, leaders, and partners that provided invaluable insight and guidance though the process of creating these recommendations.

- > Linda G. Bailey, TMP - Milledgeville/Baldwin County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- > Frank Baugh - City of Milledgeville
- > W. Michael Couch - Central State Hospital Redevelopment Authority
- > Henry R. Craig - Baldwin County Board of Commissioners
- > Tom Glover - Bike Walk Baldwin
- > Mervin Graham - City of Milledgeville
- > Johnny Grant - Georgia College
- > Hank Griffeth - City of Milledgeville
- > Sammy Hall - Baldwin County Board of Commissioners
- > Sally Holmes - Old Capital Museum
- > Sabrina A. Holsey - Baldwin Senior Center
- > Barry Jarrett - City of Milledgeville
- > Sherrill Jones
- > Jim Lidstone, Ed.D. - Georgia College
- > Reverend David Luke - Georgia Military College & Flipper Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church
- > Dick Mueller
- > Marian Robinson
- > Lauren Sims - Fellowship Home at Meriwether
- > Greg Tyson - Georgia Power
- > John H. Westmoreland - Baldwin County Board of Commissioners
- > Amy Wright, Ph.D. - Old Capital Museum
- > Jeannie Zipperer - Georgia Military College

SECTION

3



MILLY RISING

CHALLENGE QUESTION

How can the community realign and refocus Milledgeville/
Baldwin County to become the booming economic driver it
once was while diversifying its employment sectors?

THE TEAM

Kim Adams

Director, Global Diversity and Inclusion
Cox Automotive, Inc.
Brookhaven, GA

Kat Cannella

Assistant Director
Leadership Institute at Columbus State
University
Columbus, GA

Bridget Daniel

Account Executive
Real Floors
Butts County, GA

Hugh Darnley

Director of Economic Development
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
Dublin, GA

Heather Evans

Assistant Director
Atlanta CareerRise
Greater Atlanta, GA

Mary Kathryn Griffin

Director
Claxton-Evans County Economic Development
Authority
Claxton, GA

John Jackson

Maintenance Manager
Georgia College & State University
Milledgeville, GA

Kara Lassiter

Membership Development Director
Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of
Commerce
Milledgeville, GA

Clay McElheny

Engineering and AP Physics Instructor/PLTW
Coordinator
Lake Oconee Academy
Baldwin County, GA

Elizabeth McMahon

Member Engagement Manager
Cobb Chamber of Commerce
Smyrna, GA

David Nuckolls

Global Account Manager, Marketing and
Operations
Georgia Department of Economic Development
Newnan, GA

Andrew Strickland

Flight Paramedic
Air Evac Lifeteam
Milledgeville, GA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Natural assets and central locality for serving the state of Georgia are the foundations of Milledgeville/Baldwin County. Originally designed to be the fourth capital city in 1803, the natural springs and central location made Milledgeville ideal. The economic growth from serving as the state's capital was followed by an economic downturn when the capital moved to Atlanta in 1868, where it remains today. Similarly, the area received another large economic boost as home to the world's largest mental health institute at the state-operated Central State Hospital. Though the hospital's influence is long-running and identity-forming for the area, over time, legislators eventually redirected much of those resources elsewhere in the state.

Fortunately, Milledgeville is still rich in assets upon which to build. Many people hope for the return of Central State Hospital to its former glory as the world's foremost mental health and rehabilitation institution. While the hospital may never again reach the peak of its historical successes as a medical facility, there is room to reimagine and repurpose the sprawling 2,000-acre campus as a thriving economic hub.

Hailed as an education destination, Milledgeville/Baldwin County is home to Georgia College & State University, Georgia Military College, and Central Georgia Technical College. The community has also successfully attracted many employers and entrepreneurs who are heavily invested in the community, and there is still much opportunity for high-demand industries to invest in the region as the city/county is well positioned for logistical trade routes.

However, higher education institutions and employers across our nation see a gap in the talent pipeline between credentials and degrees earned and skills needed from industry. This pervasive trend is evident in Milledgeville/Baldwin County as well. As workforce skill gaps

persist, communities that intentionally reinvest in available human capital, rather than focusing solely on attracting outside talent, often see a greater return through rapid economic growth.

How can we facilitate this investment in people, retain the talent that currently lives, works, and plays in Milledgeville/Baldwin County, and attract new capital investment? It starts with enhancing community and bringing people together to share and enjoy the bountiful natural assets and rich history of the area while also sharing in the regional prosperity. Milledgeville/Baldwin County boasts Lake Sinclair, the Oconee River, and ample forests and wildlife. These natural resources are still diamonds in the rough, waiting to be polished so that all can appreciate their beauty.

Historically, with such large public investment elsewhere in Milledgeville/Baldwin, it is easy to recognize why these resources have been convenient assets rather than economic drivers. With no indication of another large state injection on the horizon, it is time Milledgeville/Baldwin County reminded the state what initially attracted all of Georgia to its community while also capitalizing on its proud history.

Extensive economic development efforts by community leaders are evident and all the expected traditional economic development instruments are in place. Potential industrial sites are available and marketed. Infrastructure improvements are available as needed and in progress for recruitment. Relevant authorities are using all the resources budgeted. State partnerships are leveraged. There is little we could recommend in the realm of traditional economic development opportunities. We therefore suggest the following big ideas, meant to highlight the central location and natural assets that originally attracted the whole of Georgia to Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

INTRODUCTION

Milledgeville/Baldwin County tasked our group with identifying an avenue forward to realign and refocus the community to become the booming economic driver it once was while diversifying its employment sectors.

Conversations with Milledgeville and Baldwin County community leaders led to discovering over a decade of thorough studies and planning documents. All the resources and economic drivers are in place. The tireless work of the public development authorities is matched by the enthusiasm of existing private sector investors. Provided the amount of resources and effort already afforded to identifying and implementing specific economic development projects and industry recruitment, the goal of these recommendations is not to provide another report of possible industry recruitment efforts or infrastructure improvements; the community is aware of these opportunities. This report aims to realign and refocus the efforts of the community to augment the existing plans, provide an economic climate for their adoption, hasten their implementation, and lead to greater economic diversity in Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

A recurring theme identified by the group in meeting with community leaders was the fractured nature of the community. There is a perception of having different economic communities: the lake community, the college-devoted downtown, the Midway-Hardwick community, and the retail sector. A lack of community and belonging among the various economic areas is hindering economic diversity, community development, and new growth.

The three “Big Ideas” listed below aim to create common spaces where all community members feel welcome to congregate and visitors will

consider a lively destination. The ideas provided rely on the belief that community participation and engagement leads to collaboration, innovation, and a higher quality of life for all residents. Private investment soon follows wherever people gather together. As investment flows into and around these common spaces, Milledgeville/Baldwin County will find itself not only a lake community, a retirement destination, a college town, or the former host of the world’s largest mental health institution, but a thriving economic engine in Middle Georgia, able to boast a diverse economy with something for everyone.

- Streetscape to Greenspace: Bringing Baldwin Downtown
- Creating Community at Central State Hospital
- Connecting and Leveraging the Natural Assets

Drawing families and retirees downtown will diversify and increase foot traffic to the most economically dense area of the County. Attracting the lake community and college students to the Central State Hospital campus will provide incentive for private investment in the most economically challenged area. Providing everyone ease of access to the natural resources of the community will drive community development and economic investment in the lake, river, and undeveloped or underdeveloped areas. Through these avenues, we hope to restitch and reinforce the fabric of Milledgeville/Baldwin County, bringing disparate parts of the community together, creating a rich quality of life, and boasting opportunity and prosperity for all.

BIG IDEA 1

**STREETSCAPE TO
GREENSPACE:
BRINGING BALDWIN
DOWNTOWN**



OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Milledgeville/Baldwin County is a micropolitan area in which many workers commute from surrounding areas, but continue to live and play in one of the surrounding counties. In addition, once students graduate from the local colleges, they move back to their hometowns; frequently the Atlanta area. Our goal is to find an avenue to improve quality of life, encouraging professionals, college students, and retirees to live, work, and play in Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

The concept of the streetscape to greenspace idea is to create an environment in downtown Milledgeville where all residents with different backgrounds, ages, and interests, can come together and form a sense of community. This space would be pedestrian-only, where you can hear musicians on the sidewalks, eat under a canopy, play in the splash pad, relax in a pocket park, and shop at the local retail spots. Bike paths will be created so that you can easily ride to the Oconee River Greenway or to Central State Hospital grounds, enabling better connections to different segments of town.

SCOPE

Creating a pedestrian-only greenspace from the intersection of Hancock Street and Wayne Street to the intersection of Hancock Street and Clark Street, as well as a portion of Wayne Street.



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

1. Approval from Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to reroute the state road (Hancock St., Highway 49) to another location.
 - a. *Conduct and provide to GDOT a feasibility study breaking down cost estimates and any design mock-ups.*
2. Get the support of elected officials, downtown store owners, and residents.

SHORT TERM

- Establish a strategic planning and implementation committee.
- Hold community forums to assess the desires of the Milledgeville/Baldwin County community concerning the design of the green space.

MEDIUM TERM

- Announce the Streetscape to Greenspace design competition.
- Secure the required funding to complete the project.
- Secure the required permits necessary to reroute traffic and utilities.
- Allow the community to provide feedback on the submitted designs.
- Select the final winner of the design competition.

LONG TERM

- Make the conversion from Streetscape to Greenspace.
- Attract festivals, farmers' markets, concerts, and more.

BUDGET

Creation of the Greenspace	\$4 million
Splash Pad	\$250,000
Total	\$4,250,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Knight Foundation grants
- National Main Street Program grants
- City of Milledgeville Government
- Baldwin County Government
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Georgia College & State University
- Non-profit organizations that focus on this open street/pedestrian only street concept
- Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) via GDOT
- Roadside Enhancement and Beautification Council (REBC) Grant via GDOT

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- City of Milledgeville
- Georgia College & State University
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce
- Milledgeville Main Street
- Chamber and Development Authority
- Local downtown businesses
- GDOT
- Carl Vinson Institute of Government (University of Georgia)

EXPECTED IMPACT

The anticipated impact will create a vibrant downtown where people of various backgrounds and ages see Milledgeville/Baldwin County as a great place to raise families and to live, work, and play. This new green space will be an area that connects the different sectors of the community and creates a welcoming environment for all. Expanding the perception from a location primarily for college students to an area in which all citizens and visitors feel welcome will result in increased foot traffic and economic diversity.

Success will be demonstrated in the short term by the growth of downtown retail and restaurants, increased numbers of events, and the increased volume of residents through all hours of the day. Long-term success would be measured by the expansion of the downtown footprint due to new businesses opening, higher numbers of students staying in the area beyond graduation, employees currently working in Milledgeville/Baldwin County moving to live and raise their families closer to work, new job creation, and new industries moving to the area.



BIG IDEA 2

**CREATING COMMUNITY AT
CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL**



OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION

Serving as the state's fourth Capital and home to Central State Hospital (CSH), at one point the largest mental health facility in the world, Milledgeville was once a booming economic driver in Georgia. The 1960's saw great economic growth in the service and goods-producing industries. Shortly after, the nationwide deinstitutionalization of mental hospitals and the closure of local major manufacturing plants resulted in a plummeting employment rate and an economic downward spiral. In 2012, the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority was established to plan, repurpose, revitalize, and redevelop the historic campus at Central State.

With the support of local leaders and the community, the Central State Hospital grounds can support the dynamic community with room to grow. Over the years, the employees, patients, and visitors of Central State Hospital viewed the area as its own community, which, given the acreage and amount of buildings, it could be. While many plans have been created, including the initial Rosser study in 2008 (Rosser International), this proposal envisions a need to rethink and recreate this concept of community, once again, into a new place at Central State. Placemaking is a trend found more recently in economic development, and there's no better location to create a place than Central State.

SCOPE

Our long-term strategy for the Central State Hospital property is to create a new, mixed-use community destination that would include housing, shopping, and healthcare options. Inspired by the Serenbe community just south of Atlanta, this proposal reimagines the CSH

property from a long-range perspective as an opportunity for growth, inspired by community and human capital rather than primarily industry recruitment. This proposal includes concurrent revitalization goals for both the area surrounding CSH, particularly blighted properties, and the actual property at the CSH grounds. This vision can be best summarized as a bullseye – start outside and grow into, and from within, the CSH property by building services and support around CSH and south Milledgeville.

This scope addresses the need for a revitalization effort in south Milledgeville that would provide a location for people from all over the community, but particularly on the south side, a destination to live, work, socialize, and collaborate. This effort would create a shared space for community leadership collaboration in the region where it is needed most.

This proposal is ambitious and will require partnerships between education, industry, and community leaders immediately surrounding CSH, including the Local Redevelopment Authority. A successful effort will better connect residents to opportunities for occupational skill development and, ultimately, to bring more jobs back to the region. There is an opportunity for pursuing simultaneous growth strategies, as outlined below, in workforce development, community development, and industrial recruitment, all while intentionally tackling poverty in a region facing some of the highest poverty levels within our state.



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

1. Get people out there! First, find easy opportunities to host events on the property to give people in the community a reason to go back to the Central State Hospital campus. Examples include community farmers' markets, monthly or quarterly Market Day activities, and using the Pecan Grove as an outdoor venue space. Create signage and establish new entrances on the newly completed Fall Line Freeway (SR 540) that are attractive and inviting.
2. Through the existing Local Redevelopment Authority, establish partnerships with key local leaders and potential investors that could select sites for development, take input from the surrounding community, and develop new concepts for the property.
3. Design and create spaces that provide opportunities to grow business investments on the CSH campus. Advocate for local growth, launch free services, market more, and continue to build a case for funding. In addition, slowly build incubator resources instead of an all-at-once major investment.
4. Establish and maintain a mixed-use, mixed-income, Serenbe-style community within CSH grounds.

SHORT TERM

1. Working alongside the Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority, convene for a unified Milledgeville and Baldwin County economic and workforce partnership between community members and citizens.
 - a. *To strengthen neighborhoods and guide development surrounding CSH, achieve buy in from established, recommended institutional partners to drive the vision, support implementation of this timeline, and sustain activities proposed.*
2. Prioritize beautification and entertainment to simply attract people to CSH grounds.
 - a. *Beautify corridors around and at CSH, especially the corridor for the old south side entrance, via local environmental group partners, such as Keep Baldwin Beautiful, as facilitator of volunteer projects. The site's primary access point, two miles from downtown, needs new landscape efforts and will require major redevelopment efforts to make attractive.*
 - b. *Move or add a Farmers' Market from downtown to the CSH Pecan Grove and host it there consistently so that there are ample opportunities for local artisans to flourish. In conjunction, establish an on-site community garden maintained by volunteers (see how this grows in Middle Term goals).*
 - c. *Improve entryways by creating signage (via marketing interns, if possible) and establishing a new entrance from the Fall Line Freeway that presents an alternative gateway to the CSH property so that visitors bypass currently used buildings. CSH is limited by not having a direct interstate highway access point. The completion of the Fall Line Freeway opens the CSH site up to a new southern entrance that would allow not only visitors, but businesses as well to easily reach areas like Augusta and Columbus using the Fall Line Freeway.*

3. Conduct environmental studies (if this has not already happened) to identify areas that would hinder development activities (i.e. burial grounds, waste, wetlands, etc.).
 - a. *Identify and map strategic locations and buildings around and at CSH to:*
 - House retail space, which can also be on a smaller scale (i.e. apartments above retail space, similar to downtown, or even tiny house/creative design structures, as this would further draw interest to CSH). Unused CSH properties could also be used to house veterans or refugees, for example.
 - Identify cost-effective locations at CSH that can hold all phases of career center and incubator growth (see details below). Consider spacing needs and feasibility for later phasing in-house industry occupational training partnerships onsite, such as an agricultural-focused model including a co-packing facility. Agriculture is merely one example, as there are also opportunities for partnering with other industries highlighted, such as high water users (i.e. incoming microbreweries).
 - b. *Identify and demolish old buildings that are no longer occupiable or useful. Keep only buildings that are needed to tell the CSH story and are architecturally significant – these are primarily located around the Pecan Grove.*
 - Speak to local code enforcement officers to learn about the process of condemning dangerous buildings and the likelihood of the city or county waiving/altering tipping fees for the demolished buildings.
 - Begin to establish construction connections and training opportunities utilizing onsite projects (see career center/incubator related items).
 - One primary barrier to making initiatives successful is lack of funding. Work to obtain state operating budget funds to start taking some of the buildings down to reduce liability issues.
 - c. *Build on outdoor resources.*
 - Amphitheatre for festivals, music, concert series, movies on the green, sunset on the green, and more. People noted they wanted to see more festivals (First Friday to Deep Roots), but there isn't one central location for community socialization/collaboration (this idea may currently be in development).
 - Connecting trails, natural assets (see Big idea 3), and dog park.
 - Playground for families.
4. Primarily via volunteers, provide initial, basic, community-based mentoring, career development, and entrepreneurial resources in and around CSH. Start by linking established services (i.e. local faith-based career coaching providers) under one roof at CSH with the future vision of a larger career center and partner onsite incubator (see Middle Term goals). This type of community facility and events such as job fairs should be neutral and open to all.
 - a. *Build/remodel the physical locations to fit the needs and opportunities determined by feasibility studies mentioned above.*
 - b. *Gather resources from partners, funders, and donors (i.e. computers, printers, etc.) that visitors can use for free in location.*
 - c. *Market now via suggested volunteers and canvassers in target service areas around CSH and begin to market downtown using student volunteers. One reason Digital Bridges had limited success is the lack of appropriate marketing, which left many confused about services offered.*
 - d. *Using existing facilities, start hosting regular job fairs and mentoring services around and at CSH now. Invite anyone who is hiring or needs a job or training, such as local employers, schools, and citizens to volunteer and/or utilize services.*



MEDIUM TERM

- 1.** Continue to grow partnerships.
 - a.** *Work with partners to encourage development along major trade routes to further spur industry growth while continuing to diversify local “homegrown” talent pools.*
 - b.** *Push for “infill development” or similar incentives around hub/center. (See business placement goals below.)*
- 2.** Help put together a better, asset-focused marketing package for developers and realtors, etc. to continue to draw outside interest. Continue to prioritize beautification and entertainment on CSH grounds.
 - a.** *Host community supported agriculture initiatives around and at CSH based on earlier feasibility analysis. Establish agricultural connection/training to incubator at CSH (see career center/incubator timeline). Consider bee farm as part of this goal.*
 - b.** *Entice business owners to locate new stores and restaurants around and at CSH. There are many jobs on the campus still, such as Bostik Nursing Home, the Veteran’s Administration, etc.*
 - c.** *Attract the workforce that is currently there with retail.*
 - Establish retail, food service connection, and training to career center training/incubator at CSH (see career center/incubator related items).
 - Attract a brewery to relocate or add a location to the grounds (see Big Idea 3). Establish connection/training to career center training/incubator at CSH (see career center/incubator related items).

3. Further enhance career development and entrepreneurial resources and connections in and around CSH by slowly moving away from volunteer reliance; hire an initial small but mighty support staff, recruit interns, and continue to engage lead volunteers to play active roles in growing the mission.
 - a. *Launch full career development center and business incubator, offering professional-quality (accredited, if possible), free job search/career coaching services, including basic to advanced computer literacy (job applications, Office Suite, etc). Provide satellite GED courses onsite if possible.*
 - b. *Educate community on career pathways. Provide clear, easy to understand information and visuals on viable career pathways and industries existing in and around the community. Get college students to help with this (data, marketing, design-friendly).*
 - c. *Soft launch onsite incubator services at free or reduced cost (for now). Start identifying and coaching businesses most likely to succeed; accumulate success stories for grant funding and marketing.*

LONG TERM

1. Enhance existing museum at CSH to become a stronger historical beacon of what this community used to be. This facility could be staffed with local volunteers or retirees from Central State Hospital.
2. Pursue food service, healthcare, film, etc. related contracts to continue utilizing CSH buildings still good for use. Highlight healthcare services and pop-up clinics. Try to draw in urgent care, substance abuse, and obesity clinics or camps. Establish healthcare connection/training to career center training/incubator at CSH (see career center/incubator related items).
3. Consider adding a partner incubator location downtown that could embrace college community and industry diversification in that region and create opportunities for linking new minds and partners across the community (see intern and bus route idea above).
4. In the career center and incubator, strive to form high-demand, sector-based, employer-led partnerships with educational and workforce providers. Regularly identify best fits for in-house training options and develop bids for training provider services, modeled based on best practices for curriculum design and program delivery in communities served. Could create a statewide training niche in certain sectors/employment fields onsite at CSH.
5. Support new Serenbe-like housing development and incorporate Seasoned Saints' idea for private residential development location.
6. Develop shared best practices, case studies, etc. to share with neighboring communities/counties and spark further development/partnerships.

BUDGET

SHORT TERM

1. Beautification of the south side corridor - \$350,000 - \$500,000 per roadway. Grants are available here for this type of effort. May be able to save money via volunteer partnerships with partners listed.
2. Career center/incubator - \$1-2 million
 - a. Location options - Lease an existing building (<\$24,000 annually) or could purchase a facility for <\$300,000.
 - b. Utility cost - \$3,500 annually
 - c. Staff - \$110,500 annually - assumes the cost of two full-time employees. Breaks down as the following:
 - Manager/Director - \$50,000 salary + assumed 30% fringe rate (health insurance, retirement, etc.) incurred for a total of \$65,000
 - Associate - \$35,000 salary + assumed 30% fringe rate (health insurance, retirement, etc.) for a total of \$45,500
 - d. Equipment cost - \$10,400
 - Office desks (2 @ \$1,000 a piece, including chairs) total = \$2,000
 - Office Computers (2 @ \$1,200, including annual licenses for basic software) = \$2,400
 - Meeting space equipment - tables (4 @ \$750 = \$3,000), chairs (12 @ \$250 = \$3,000) = \$6,000
3. **Move Farmer's Market** - little to no cost as vendors help cover the cost of setup here. Don't anticipate any additional cost at this time (vendors pay a \$10 rental fee at the current market, so costs would likely offset).
4. **Amphitheater costs** - between \$75,000 and \$150,000, depending on the size and features. Assuming room for up to 2,000 attendees at this estimate.
 - a. Stage - \$15,000-20,000, depending on materials (concrete, wood, mix, etc.)

- b. Stage Roof - \$10,000-15,000, depending on size
- c. Audio/Visual Equipment - \$30,000 if purchased, negotiable if using a vendor (cost would be factored to event ticket sales for recuperation)
- d. Grading for terraces, benches, etc. - \$15,000-30,000, depending on the amount of work
5. **Playground** - \$30,000
6. **Dog Park amenities** - \$1,000

Total Short Term Cost Estimates	Approximately \$600,000 (if building is purchased); \$340,000 if not
---------------------------------	--

MEDIUM TERM

1. Site marketing - \$50,000 - signage, ad placements, real estate listings and promotions, etc.
2. Basic site prep as needed \$50,000 - \$250,000 - grading, environmental testing - if already in place, cost can be reduced.
3. Entry/exit point paving - \$750,000 - \$1.5M - this would be used for turn lanes and acceleration lanes into/out of a property.
4. Other anticipated costs here would be tax abatements given up by CSH or surrounding area and the loss of tax revenue to the city/county (depending on jurisdiction) over the course of the abatement.

Total Medium Term Cost Estimates	Approximately \$1.75M
----------------------------------	-----------------------

LONG TERM - MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT OF CSH PROPERTY

Total Long Term Cost Estimates	TBD
--------------------------------	-----

A project like Serenbe resulted in a \$2 billion investment and became a significant economic driver for the nearby community. As an estimate, we imagine somewhere from \$150 million - \$1 billion. The cost saving, to us, is that a lot of infrastructure - water, sewer, electricity, etc. - is already in place.

We believe a phased in approach (Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3) would work best. Phase 1 could focus on development around the Pecan Grove - Powell Building, Jones Buildings, Auditorium, and Gymnasium (since these already have tenants - i.e. GMC), etc. Phases 2 and 3 would build out from there.

Total Budget	\$2,350,000 - \$1,000,000,000
---------------------	--------------------------------------

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Private investments
- State and local government (tax incentives)
- Knight Foundation grants
- U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration
- Local Industry Capital Campaign – "Vision Milledgeville 2020"
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Funds
- Angel investor(s) paired with something that generates revenue
- Small Business Administration (SBA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Housing grants, i.e. Housing and Urban Development (HUD), USDA, etc. (maybe microgrants)
- Major foundation funders, like Annie E. Casey Foundation
- U.S. Department of Human Services (DHS)/ Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)

- Corporation for National and Community Service AmeriCorps
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division grants
- United Way of Central Georgia
- Local Community Foundation
- OneGeorgia grants

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

Lead integrating partner:

- To be determined. Must be able to manage funding paperwork.

Investors:

- Requires a healthy diversity in types of investors so ownership is balanced.

Quality of life community liaisons:

- Community members
- Faith-based community
 - *Pastors here regularly associate and there are at least three key church leaders engaged in politics. Churches are highly effective for communicating with community and regularly provide basic community supports such as food and mentoring, which can also occur at or around CSH.*
 - *Retirees*
 - *Historical societies*
 - *Greenway Board*
 - *United Way of Central Georgia*

Major Institutions:

- Georgia College & State University
 - *Make use of sweat equity from major classes that use internships/practicum as part of the curriculum; provide marketing interns to help do outreach; partner with Give Center for volunteers. Consider altering bus system to extend to CSH to provide transportation for students interning on southside-focused projects.*
 - *Offer CSH-based satellite classes in high-demand, professional-level career fields.*
 - *Provide feeder groups of budding entrepreneurs since a lack of consistent flow and focus on building capacity partially led to downfall of Digital Bridges model.*

- Georgia Military College
 - *Potential lead partner for CSH career development resource coordination due to CSH property stake and emphasis on soft skill/character development. GMC has a unique relationship with the community and state, which would likely draw more interest and increase recruitment rates in the area as well.*
 - *Provide feeder groups of budding entrepreneurs (see above comments on Digital Bridges model).*
- Central Georgia Technical College
 - *Offer CSH-based satellite GED classes and middle skills-level occupational training.*
 - *Provide feeder groups of budding entrepreneurs (see above comments on Digital Bridges model).*
- Central State Hospital
 - *Provide space and potentially administrative support.*
- Local high schools
 - *Establish programmatic partnerships as well as volunteer partnerships. Baldwin College and Career Academy has a program pushing to entrepreneurial training-perhaps a CSH-based training could be valuable.*

Entrepreneurs, business leaders, and professional networks:

- Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce
- Local employers
 - *Teach CSH-based workshops, champion career center and incubator initiatives, serve as a funding source for training programs.*
- Downtown Business Association
 - *May provide insight on other creative ways to market CSH-focused activities in an effort to stimulate local economy. Invite downtown businesses to participate as employer partners as well.*
- Industry Associations

Workforce/economic development:

- Department of Labor & WIOA One Stop
- Non-profits such as Goodwill Career Center
- Regional commissions
- Development authorities
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Central State Hospital Local Redevelopment Authority

Social and civic networks:

- Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Developers
- Housing Authority
 - *Outreach, events, and more*
- Keep Baldwin Beautiful
 - *For beautification volunteers and funding connections*
- Community partners and centers
 - *Conduct marketing via info sessions about programs, resources/supportive services (childcare, health enrollment, food pantries, etc.), events, etc.*
- Frank Pedergast - Baldwin Lofts in downtown Milledgeville

State level:

- State/government relationships
- Georgia Initiative for Community Housing
- Department of Community Affairs
- Georgia Commute Options



EXPECTED IMPACT

Incorporating a multi-phase approach will give jolts of economic growth into Baldwin County. Establishing areas around CSH and phasing into CSH is a natural fit to its current infrastructure and capability to attract investors on its own. The expected impact is long-term growth with short-term successes that the community supports. This plan, while in phases, will require continuous modifications and corrections as it progresses.

Impacting and retaining many young professionals is expected and needed to promote employment and economic growth in the community. Having young professionals and students retained from local education institutions would encourage small businesses to take an active role in reversing the current economic trend in Milledgeville and expanding its business footprint towards the south. This will enhance community loyalty by providing opportunities for entrepreneurial career paths and assist in growing the economic base from within.

This plan's economic impact will be measured through its community development. Enhancing Milledgeville's capacity of community will produce long-term economic benefits for the area. By incorporating broader, long-term, community development goals, Milledgeville's success will be measured by change. The willingness to embrace change and assume risk is vital for adapting to shifts in social and economic conditions, which is currently needed.

BIG IDEA 3

**CONNECTING
AND LEVERAGING
NATURAL ASSETS**



OVERVIEW

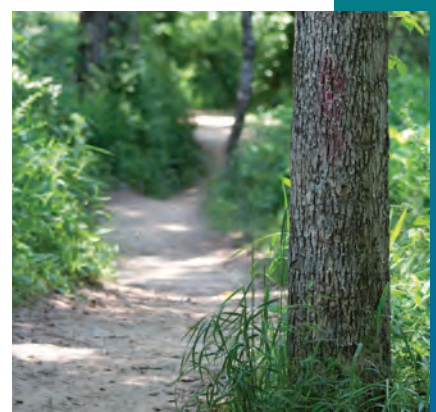
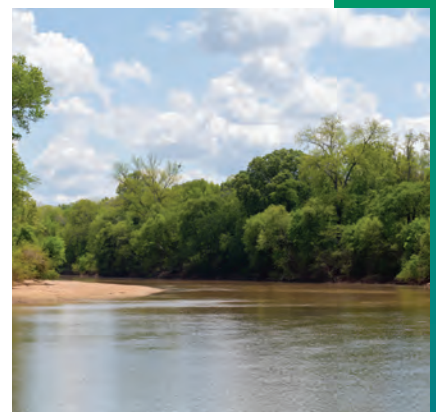
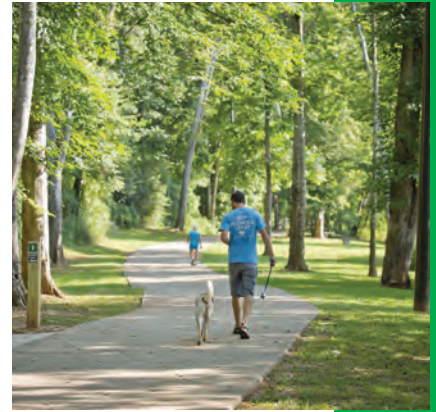
DESCRIPTION

Milledgeville/Baldwin County is rich in natural resources with great opportunities to capitalize on community engagement and tourism. These assets are currently disjointed and are not all easily accessible to the public. The economic impact of Lake Sinclair and the recent success of the Oconee River Greenway provide a glimpse into the possibilities available by connecting the community to the Oconee River, Bertram Forest, Berry Farm Conservation Area, and the miles of existing (but poorly or entirely unmarked) hiking and biking trails. We propose not only connecting the natural assets to each other, but also better connecting them to the community to create a shared Milledgeville/Baldwin County experience and a story that all citizens and visitors can embrace. We have to be able to tell this shared story in such a way that all stakeholders become de facto advocates, thereby enabling Milledgeville/Baldwin County to more effectively entice new and existing businesses to invest in the community (Renn).

Ultimately, it is about quality of life - the citizens should have an opportunity to have shared space, shared resources, and create a unique culture that visitors want to experience for themselves. Natural assets like the river, lake, and forest trails, and the recreational opportunities they provide, can bring people together, no matter what background or walk of life they come from. Everybody - every resident, every visitor - can get behind a richer, more robust quality of life that draws inspiration from the gifts that nature offers. Higher quality of life is positively correlated with economic development in terms of attracting and retaining businesses in a community (Thompson). By taking care to leverage these natural assets more effectively, we can make a positive impact in revving up the economic engine of Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

SCOPE

The natural assets available in Milledgeville/Baldwin County include Lake Sinclair, the Oconee River, Oconee River Greenway, Bertram Wildlife Management Area, Berry Farm Conservation Area, existing biking and hiking trails, and the people of Milledgeville. The goal of this idea is developing the existing assets, connecting them, adding access points, and marketing them to build community and enhance the quality of life for Milledgeville/Baldwin County residents while increasing attractiveness and engagement opportunities for visitors.



RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

- Support the designation of the Oconee River as a Water Trail - longest unencumbered stretch of river in the southeast, with free-flowing access all the way to the Atlantic Ocean.
- Identify existing inventory of trails, public access points, scenic views, and Baldwin County Recreation programs.
- List all opportunities on Baldwin County Recreation Department website, in addition to department-provided programs.
- Create a social media presence for Baldwin County Recreation Department, currently absent, and leverage free advertising for all recreation opportunities; must be an active and massive marketing effort that is well-managed.
- Create a map and brochure of all public and private outdoor and recreation opportunities.
- Define and identify existing outdoor recreation and lifestyle private businesses for growth data tracking. Estimate current local economic impact and update annually.

MEDIUM TERM

- Improve/create public access to Sinclair Lake - this includes a small beach area, picnic area with a pavilion and barbeques, swimming area, playground, etc.
- Improve/add biking and hiking trails, especially in Oconee River Greenway, Bertram Wildlife Management Area, Central State Hospital, and Berry Farm Conservation Area.
- Install signage for trail heads (bike, hike, walk, paddle) and key community entry points.
- Create an annual community event for trail cleanup and improvements; partner with schools, colleges, and other interested parties to engage the community.

- Add gazebos/pavilions/benches for scenic points; designate as photo opportunities with #ScenicMilly ads/markers.
- Increase social media presence of Baldwin County Recreation Department with paid advertising to increase awareness of recreational opportunities.
- Purchase traditional media advertising on radio and television.
- Offer recreation tours.
- Develop an Outdoor Milledgeville-Baldwin County app with map, geo-locating tools, sunset/sunrise times, calendar of events, weather, emergency contact information, etc.

LONG TERM

- Expand and connect existing trails where small gaps between different trails are identified and can be connected.
- Implement a Rails-to-Trails program.
- Create a walkable/bikeable corridor along Greene Street to connect downtown greenspace project directly to Oconee River Greenway.
- Collaborate with existing landowners along river to promote private development in cohesion with public vision.
- Sell excess water capacity (water with permits already held by the city/county) to entrepreneurs wanting to start businesses such as a water bottling company, a microbrewery, etc.
- Offer a bus/transportation route to enable citizens to access these recreational resources more easily, and/or take the rec activities to the people instead of taking the people to the rec activities.

BUDGET

Brochure	\$1,500
Lake Sinclair beach and pavilion	\$300,000
Trails improvements/connection	One trail/year @ \$100,000 each
Scenic lookout	\$15,000-\$60,000
Advertising	\$10,000/year
App development	\$50,000
Total	\$521,500 - \$1,500,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- Private investments
 - *Possibly have local outdoor and related lifestyle companies sponsor the mapping and/or creation of a brochure through advertising in the brochure; use the same method with future app creation.*
 - *Designation as a water trail is already underway and privately driven.*
- Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) - Hotel/motel tax revenue
- Entrepreneurs
- Local businesses
- Conservation tax credits
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources Trails Program
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources Land & Water Conservation Fund
- U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Business Development grant
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS & RESOURCES

- GA Power
- City of Milledgeville
- Baldwin County
- Baldwin County Recreation Department
- Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce
- Milledgeville Main Street
- Central State Hospital Redevelopment Authority
- Georgia College & State University
- Georgia Military College
- Central Georgia Technical College
- Local outdoors businesses
- Keep Milledgeville & Baldwin County Beautiful
- Rails to Trails/Live Healthy Baldwin County coordinator
- Boy Scouts of America
- Carl Vinson Institute of Government (University of Georgia)
- GA Department of Natural Resources
- GA Department of Natural Resources/Bertram Forest Wildlife Management Area
- USDA
- USDOT
- Z97.7 FM

EXPECTED IMPACT

The impact anticipated through connecting

the community with the natural resources of Milledgeville/Baldwin County is aimed at quality of life as well as economic diversification. Success implementing these initiatives will increase local usage of waterways for recreational and social activities. This will bring the broader Milledgeville community together and foster a sense of pride of ownership and collective responsibility. Community engagement with the natural resources will lead to increased private investment and new businesses, fostering economic diversity. As the demand for outdoor opportunities is recognized, private investment will follow in outdoor recreation, family entertainment, water sports, equipment rentals and repair, restaurants, and boutique waterfront shops.

Success can be measured for this idea through tracking growth in resident usage, tourism, an increased number of new outdoor-related businesses, increased business and housing development around the lake and river, and business diversity studies.



CITATIONS & RESOURCES

- “Baldwin County, GA.” *Data USA*, datausa.io/profile/geo/baldwin-county-ga/#economy. Accessed October 2017.
- “Baldwin County, Milledgeville Representatives Discuss Joint Comprehensive Plan.” *The Baldwin Bulletin*. 28 July 2017. <https://www.bbnews.today/content/baldwin-county-milledgeville-representatives-discuss-joint-comprehensive-plan>.
- “Contact | Be the Solution.” *Georgia Commute Options*, gacommuteroptions.com/Be-the-Solution/Contact. Accessed October 2017.
- “Every City Should Have a Law of Two Words.” *Livable Cities*. Knight Foundation, knightfoundation.org/features/livable-cities/.
- “Featherbone Communiversity Academy.” *Brenau University*, www.brenau.edu/education/featherbone-academy/. Accessed October 2017.
- “Georgia Cyber Innovation and Training Center.” *Cyber Institute*, cyber.augusta.edu/georgia/. Accessed October 2017.
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Office of Economic Development. “Infill Development Program.” *Infill Development Program*. www.dca.state.ga.us/intra_nonpub/toolkit/guides/infildevtprog.pdf.
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Office of Economic Development. “Joint Comprehensive Plan for Baldwin County and City of Milledgeville.” <https://www.dca.ga.gov/largefiles/OPQG/2006/BaldwinCo.MilledgevilleCi.CAg.pdf>. November 2006.
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Office of Economic Development. “Market Feasibility Analysis, Baldwin Park Apartments, Milledgeville, Baldwin County, Georgia.” *DCA Project Number 08-049*. http://dca.state.ga.us/housing/HousingDevelopment/programs/downloads/OAHGORAMarketStudies2008/Baldwin_Park_Study_52208.pdf.
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Office of Economic Development. *Official Opportunity Zone Map for Milledgeville*, <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/developmenttools/programs/downloads/MilledgevilleOZ.pdf>.
- Georgia Department of Economic Development. *Tax Credits*, <http://www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/tax-credits/>. Accessed October 2017.
- “Georgia Partnerships for Excellence in Education.” <http://www.gpee.org/>. Accessed October 2017.
- “Georgia STEAM Asset Map.” *Georgia STEAM Asset Map*, www.gasteammap.org/. Accessed October 2017.
- “Industry Focus.” *Development Authority of the City of Milledgeville Baldwin County*, developmilledgeville.com/site-selection-services/opportunity-zone/. Accessed October 2017.
- “Labor Draw Area - Labor & Workforce.” *Macon Economic Development Commission*, www.maconworks.com/labor-draw-area.cms. Accessed October 2017.
- “Micro Business Incubator (MBI).” *Micro Business Incubator (MBI) | University of Hartford*, hartford.edu/publicpurpose/upperalbany/programs.aspx. Accessed October 2017.

- Middle Georgia Regional Commission, *Baldwin 20/20 Community Committee*. "Baldwin County Transit Assessment." Baldwin County Transit Assessment, 2010. Accessed October 2017.
- "Milledgeville Career Center." *Georgia Department of Economic Development*, www.georgia.org/competitive-advantages/workforce-division/wia-career-centers/location/milledgeville-career-center/. Accessed October 2017.
- "Milledgeville." *Department of Labor*, dol.georgia.gov/location/milledgeville. Accessed October 2017.
- OneGeorgia Authority. <http://www.onegeorgia.org/>. Accessed October 2017.
- Renn, Aaron M. "Making the Link Between Quality of Life and Economic Development." *Urbanophile.com*, 30 Aug. 2013, www.urbanophile.com/2013/08/30/making-the-link-between-quality-of-life-and-economic-development/.
- Rosen, Karen. "Milledgeville/Baldwin County: Ready for Industry." *Georgia Trend*. November 2013.
- Rosser International. State of Georgia Baldwin County Campus Master Plan. [Executive Summary]. Rosser International. 31 Oct. 2008. developcsh.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Rosser-Executive-Summary.pdf.
- "Soul of the Community Study on Milledgeville." *Knight Foundation*, knightfoundation.org/sotc/findings/milledgeville/. Accessed October 2017.
- "Technology Services." *Middle Georgia Regional Commission*, www.middlegeorgiarc.org/technology-services/. Accessed October 2017.
- Thomson, Susan C. "Community Profile: Area Plays Up Quality-of-Life Issues As Another Economic Development Tool." *Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis*, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 15 Aug. 2016, www.stlouisfed.org/publications/regional-economist/april-2013/area-plays-up-qualityoflife-issues-as-another-economic-development-tool.
- U.S. Census Bureau, *2000 Census of Population and Housing, Summary Population and Housing Characteristics*, PHC-1-12, Georgia. Washington DC, 2002.
- Waits, Mary Jo. "Guidelines for Building an Innovation Hub." Fort Ord Reuse Authority, Fort Ord Reuse Authority, http://www.fora.org/Reports/Colloq/Panel_2_MaryJoWaits_121213.pdf. Accessed October 2017.
- "Youth ChalleNge Academy Suitable to Central State Campus." Union Recorder. 1 December 2014. http://www.unionrecorder.com/news/youth-challenge-academy-suitable-to-central-state-campus/article_c39c621c-797b-11e4-898c-c74ac99b4149.html.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tommy Cook

Former Director and Program Manager, Digital Bridges
Membership Manager
Eatonton-Putnam Chamber of Commerce

Mike Couch

Executive Director
Central State Hospital Redevelopment Authority

Cheryl Crumbley

Commercial Loan Officer, Small Business Development Dept. Manager
Magnolia State Bank

Dr. Renée J. Fontenot

Professor - Marketing, J. Whitney Bunting College of Business
Georgia College & State University

Johnny Grant

Director of Community Engagement and Economic Development
Georgia College & State University

Adam Heagy

Co-Owner/Manager
Ocone Outfitters

Dr. Jim Lidstone

Director, Live Healthy Baldwin
Professor - Public Health, School of Health and Human Performance
Georgia College & State University

Bill McNair

Recreation Director
Baldwin County Parks and Recreation

Matt Poyner

Executive Director
Development Authority of Milledgeville/Baldwin County

Natalie Stowe

CTAE Director
Baldwin County Schools

Jim Wolfgang

Chair
Baldwin Co./Milledgeville, GA Airport Advisory Committee

Ethel Wynn

DOL Career Center Manager
Department of Labor

Amy Varnum

Business Service Specialist/Grant Writer
Middle Georgia Consortium, Inc.

SECTION

4



THE SCHOLARS

CHALLENGE QUESTION

In what ways can the citizens of Milledgeville/Baldwin County publicly and positively support and promote the public school system, thus strengthening the opinion of our future workforce and its economic impact on the community?

THE SCHOLARS

Hali Babb

Office Coordinator
Northrim Investments
Milledgeville, GA

Dorie Bacon

Executive Director
Screven County Development Authority
Sylvania, GA

Kate Channell

Director
Marketing & Media
College of Business
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, GA

Tray Deadwyler

Director of Social Innovation
Think For Good, Inc.
Atlanta, GA

Whitney Gibbs

Business Operations
The Coca-Cola Company's Marketing & Digital
Services
Atlanta, GA

Stephen Houser

Director
Twin Lakes Library System
Milledgeville, GA

Ashley Kanak

Assistant Director of Annual Giving
Georgia College
Milledgeville, GA

Beatriz Lleras

Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator
Dublin-Laurens County Development Authority
Dublin, GA

Abby McCann

Coordinator of Teaching and Learning
Purpose Built Schools
Atlanta, GA

Harrison Parker

Project Manager
Sheridan Construction
Macon, GA

Christopher Purdy

School Turnaround Liaison
Atlanta Public Schools
Atlanta, GA

Carlee Schulte

Executive Director
Milledgeville Main Street/ Downtown
Development Authority
Milledgeville, GA

Justin Wright

Lead Pastor
Centerville Community Church/Councilman-
Elect, Post 2/City of Centerville
Centerville, GA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Milledgeville/Baldwin County offers a unique mix of history, education, recreation, events, and more, all in the heart of Georgia. Boasting an abundance of educational opportunities, both public and private, Milledgeville/Baldwin County residents and children have education at their fingertips. However, while analyzing our challenge question, we discovered a lack of support for the public school system. There are issues with poverty, transportation, race relations, and evidence that public education may not be valued by all community members. There seems to be a perception problem that has transpired over the past 20+ years that the public school system has yet to overcome.

Despite the climate, Baldwin County Schools have shown significant improvement in just a short time. The Baldwin County School Board leaders are working to create a world-class educational system by fostering a climate that ensures students achieve at high levels in order to be successful in their community and as they enter life post-graduation. Graduation rates have increased from 66% to 88.8% in the past four years, 8.25% above the state average (Baldwin County Schools).

The challenge question asks how the citizens can support and promote the public school system, thus strengthening the opinion of our future workforce and its economic impact on the community. The connection between the citizen's support and economic impact are key components to this question. It is important to engage the citizens by creating relationships between the school system, students, parents, and staff alike, with the purpose of shifting mindsets and spreading the school's success stories in a way that garners support. Our three ideas involve citizen engagement, targeted messaging campaigns, and creating citizen champions to promote the success of the public school system.

Big Idea One, ***I Am Baldwin County Schools***, focuses on refining the public relations and marketing messages through the involvement of community stakeholders in new messaging campaigns. The campaign focuses on success among current students, recent graduates, and mentorship programs that partner students with business leaders, thus converting them to advocates through internships, summer work, and community service programs.

Build Your Future in Baldwin is The Scholars' Big Idea Two. This idea creates a broad, county-wide campaign to convince current citizens, potential employers, and future industries that Baldwin County is the "education destination" in Central Georgia. The educational opportunities in Milledgeville/Baldwin County are vast - public and private K-12, traditional university, junior college, technical college, and military college. By promoting all aspects of education in Baldwin County, the focus will shift to the excellent educational opportunities throughout the community.

Our third Big Idea utilizes a coalition of citizens to ***Advocate for a Better Baldwin***. This idea differs from the I am Baldwin County idea in that it is a strategic, grassroots effort to spread positive messages by empowering local community members to vocally support and promote the Baldwin County School System. This idea will amplify the positive stories coming from the Baldwin County Schools through a credible third party.

As the Baldwin County School System is publicly promoted through our three Big Ideas, The Scholars team believes positive momentum will systematically occur, thus strengthening the opinion of the future workforce and providing a positive impact on the economic development in Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

INTRODUCTION

Milledgeville is the county seat of Baldwin County with a population of 45,720 at the last census (United States Census Bureau) with a poverty rate of 26%. The Baldwin County School System serves more than 5,400 students with 86% qualifying and receiving free school lunch.

Although the socio-economic issues pose barriers to improved education, our challenge question deals with engaging citizens to publicly and positively support and promote the public school system. Our research has shown that, by connecting with the public, school leaders can identify the perception of the schools (Resnick, Bryant 161). Utilizing networks and programs to engage the community can work to reach individuals and businesses that the school system would not normally be able to reach directly.

Currently, the mission of the Baldwin County School System is “to educate students who will graduate from high school with the knowledge, skills and values to be college and/or career ready in order to be contributing members of a global society.” The vision is to “empower students through a positive, culturally responsive and stimulating environment, where students will recognize and achieve their fullest potential” (Baldwin County Schools). These goals require community engagement to change perceptions and garner positive, public promotion from citizens.

The Scholars received insight from the Baldwin County School System’s relatively new hire, Byron Wellman II, about his role as School and Community Relations Coordinator. The mission of his department is to “promote the day-to-day activities of our district and give our stakeholders a unique look inside our classrooms” (Baldwin County Schools).

Research shows that schools with a great support system thrive compared to those without it (Meador). Our three ideas will leverage a variety of tactics to get the entire community to see the improvements and, in turn, positively and publicly promote the school system. The role a public school system plays in a community is important. Having allies to promote the schools will play an important part in the quality of life and overall economic vibrancy of an area through the influence of taxes, property values, and whether or not a business chooses to locate in or leave a community (Resnick, Bryant 161). As stated in an article about the importance of community involvement in schools, “The bottom line: Family and community engagement is a vital part of a truly successful school. But it rarely just happens – it must be intentionally designed” (O’Brien 3).

Our Big Ideas:

1. I Am Baldwin County Schools
2. Build Your Future in Baldwin
3. Advocate for a Better Baldwin

BIG IDEA 1

**I AM BALDWIN
COUNTY SCHOOLS**



OVERVIEW

Our recommendation is to refine the public relations and marketing messages around Baldwin County Schools (BCS) through a new messaging campaign focused on the success of Baldwin High School's graduates and their contribution to the community and beyond.

We also believe that these graduates and business leaders can play a significant role in improving the bonds of the community through mentoring and civic engagement programs.

DESCRIPTION

Create a comprehensive public relations and marketing campaign to augment the efforts already underway through the BCS Strategic Communications Plan. Tactics include auditing current practices through focus groups and polls, capturing compelling data, including graduation rate, job placement, awards, etc., to highlight strengths of public school programs; creating space for community stakeholders to influence and lead communication strategies; and designing a new campaign around a streamlined/consistent message to leverage across multiple platforms and venues such as social media, neighborhood/community canvassing, video advertising, event planning, and earned media opportunities through local news.

The best way to promote a service is to show its success. Baldwin County Schools are no different. Baldwin County graduates are leaders in the Milledgeville/Baldwin County community and across the state, and it is a story worth telling.

SCOPE

The ***I Am Baldwin County Schools*** campaign will provide a vehicle to promote the success of the schools through a myriad of opportunities with a cohesive message of success through

public education. ***I Am Baldwin County Schools*** can later be extended to ***I Am Baldwin County Business***, or ***I Am Baldwin County***, in general.

1. National Service

Baldwin County Schools will leverage national service as an avenue for engaging the local citizenry in their public schools. The Corporation for National and Community Service has funding opportunities and resources to support local Senior Corps programs such as the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) and Foster Grandparents. Senior Corps programs provide opportunities for individuals age 55 and over to remain active as role models, mentors, and friends to youth in their communities. Additionally, BCS is currently served by AmeriCorps Members in grades K-8 through the local Communities in Schools program. Previously, all six schools were established service locations for AmeriCorps programming via Georgia College's GIVE Center and HandsOn Milledgeville. Both programs enable the community's greatest asset, its people, to personally invest their knowledge, experience, time, and care in the betterment of Baldwin County Schools.

2. Marketing/Public Relations Campaign

Different than the current public relations campaign, which focuses entirely on successes among current students and recent graduates, this campaign would add an additional focus on previous graduates age 25 and older. Alumni that received technical certificates and/or secured a skilled job after graduation within the community will be featured in success stories. Tactics include partnering with community newspapers, news stations, publications, and other media outlets, including social media, to share the stories in the community.

This public relations/marketing campaign will broadcast the success of the public schools in producing work-ready students, demonstrating the value of the public schools in enhancing the local economy, and providing a personal and relatable message through real student success stories.

3. Mentorship Program

Mentorships benefit both participants and partners. In our model, mentors will be recruited from the local business community to mentor high school seniors. In addition to the benefits to students' developmental growth, business leaders will gain a better understanding of the product of public schools, converting them to advocates for the public school system.

By partnering with the Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce to provide a mentorship program for students, it will create a pipeline for internships, summer employment, and new opportunities for engagement among disparate stakeholders. Therefore, the program provides broader awareness of the school system to a variety of individuals and groups within the community.

- Senior Internship Program
 - *Short-term program (five week or six week internship in the spring before graduation) in which senior students shadow and work with local business owners in career fields that interest them. This program allows local businesses to see potential employees, allows students to determine where their interests lie, and places Baldwin County students in the community, thus raising the awareness of the success of the Baldwin County educational system.*
- Summer Work Program
 - *Summer program in which Baldwin High School helps set up students with jobs in the local community. It allows students to earn summertime money and helps the visibility of Baldwin County students in the community.*
- Community Service Program
 - *A program that begins freshman year of high school and ends senior year, where students are required to serve a certain amount of community service hours at local, pre-approved, non-profit organizations. This promotes the unity between the community and the school while placing students from Baldwin County High School in front of community leaders and citizens.*

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

- Review strategic communications plan for BCS to determine areas of strength/traction (ex: social media presence) and areas of growth.
- Conduct focus groups and online surveys of current BCS families and members of the greater Baldwin County community to illuminate efficacy of current communication strategies, such as preferences for means of communication, memorable marketing from recent years, etc.
- Analyze past returns on specific strategies within the Strategic Communications Plan, such as primary audience being targeted vs. primary audience actually receiving the message.



- Partner with the Baldwin County BoE PR Department to shoot an ***I Am Baldwin County Schools*** flip card video (“*Cue Cards Birthday Surprise*”). This promo piece is very low cost and will be generic enough that Baldwin County Schools could use it to positively promote the school whether the big idea is implemented or not. The BoE has already shot some well-produced video content. These would be on par with the work they have already completed.

MEDIUM TERM

- Design new marketing campaign: ***I Am Baldwin County Schools***. **Consider soft launch of campaign at BHS graduation ceremony (videos and merchandise that feature graduating seniors).*
- Capture and share short video clips of current students, parents, teachers, administrators, coaches, and volunteers to “put faces to the institution,” and highlight diversity/talent/accomplishments.
 - *Consider building a student ambassador program at each school site through which students develop leadership and communication skills by promoting their schools to visitors and the broader community.*
- Develop canvassing campaign:
 - *Identify local business partners to display “I Am Baldwin County Schools” signs/window stickers/ etc. in their establishments.*
 - *Print and disseminate “I Am Baldwin County Schools” bumper stickers/car magnets to parents/ school staff (with new BCS logo).*
- Launch social media (Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/SnapChat) campaign allowing community members to contribute to marketing by sharing photos to #IamBCS.
- Recruit action team to design and order swag items.
- Distribute marketing items at school, sporting events, and community events.
 - *Leverage student ambassador program to staff these events.*
- As part of graduation ceremonies, produce street signs featuring Baldwin County graduates for lamp posts in downtown Milledgeville, raising the profile of the local public schools.
- Gather additional success metrics beyond test scores to strengthen messaging around school system success. Examples include level of parent involvement, number of National



Board Certified teachers, academic growth resulting from specific curriculum/programming, number of students who participate in the fine arts program for their entire BCS careers, number of students participating in the College and Career Academy, etc.

- *Identify areas of strength to promote through various communications platforms.*
- *Identify areas lacking data and create plan for securing.*

LONG TERM

- Plan/execute formal launch of new campaign.
- Consider coinciding launch of campaign with back-to-school festivities.
- Implement new marketing campaign.
- Maintain regular meeting schedule of task force to support implementation.
- Conduct mid-year evaluation of implementation plan and make revisions as needed.

BUDGET

Start-up costs	\$30,000
(Annually) Merchandise for canvassing campaign	\$30,000
Total	\$60,000

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

- Local business partners/sponsors
- Baldwin County Family Connection

- Community Foundation of Central Georgia, Inc.'s Knight Fund for Milledgeville
- Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce
- Municipal Government
- Milledgeville/Baldwin Development Authority
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Blank Foundation
- United Way
- State and Federal Departments of Education
- AT&T grants

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS/RESOURCES

- Local business partners/sponsors
- Milledgeville-Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce

EXPECTED IMPACT

Improve the perception of the public school system through community involvement and service, thus showing the importance and value of strong public school education and graduates.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- Increase in number of partners/sponsors from within the local community, year over year.
- *I Am Baldwin County Schools* signs/stickers/ etc. visible across town.

BIG IDEA 2

**BUILD YOUR FUTURE
IN BALDWIN**





OVERVIEW

Create a broad, county-wide campaign to convince current citizens, potential employers, and future industries that Baldwin County is the education destination in central Georgia. Whatever future you envision, you can Build Your Future in Baldwin.

DESCRIPTION

Baldwin County has excellent educational options. If you are a current citizen of Baldwin County, every opportunity is available for you to pursue the career you want. If you are a business owner, you can feel confident that establishing your business in Baldwin will not only provide excellent educational opportunities for your children, your employees, and the families of your employees, but the educational environment has led to a ready and able workforce that is prepared to facilitate the growth and success of your business.

SCOPE

Build Your Future in Baldwin promotes all aspects of education in Baldwin County, including public, private, traditional university, and technical school. This campaign shifts the focus from institutions competing with one another to one where all institutions meet different educational needs to the benefit of the citizens and community. It draws a straight line between the advantages of living in an “Education Destination” for current citizens and future business owners and industry.

1. Business Plan Competition

Create an annual business plan competition for student entrepreneurs. In conjunction with the Baldwin College and Career Academy, this competition would fund the ideas of sophomore and junior student entrepreneurs, and possibly seventh and eighth grade students, depending upon the middle school curriculum. The competition would spur a spirit of entrepreneurship, hopefully growing private-sector employment.

After soliciting investment from local investors, student entrepreneurs would submit business ideas. The top five ideas in each classification of high school and middle school would be selected by a panel of judges and compete for a share of the prize money. Winning ideas would then receive training on starting and running a business.

See program suggestion below about creating a downtown storefront. The business plan competition winner could host a booth/kiosk to try their business, if desired, during First Friday celebrations or another specified date/time for a semester.

Note: The program can be modeled after the Young Entrepreneurs program run by the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce.

Contact:
Nadia Osman, Greater Macon Chamber
Workforce & Business Development Manager/
YEA Director
478-621-2026 | nosman@maconchamber.com

2. Storefront

Create a downtown storefront business to be owned and operated by the school system and partially managed and fully staffed by students. Funded by local investment and grants, the school system would lease a downtown storefront to be managed (under adult supervision) and staffed by students. This business would be determined through

market research assistance provided by local universities but could take the form of a grocery market (in partnership with local farmers), a donut shop, or an art gallery.

This program would serve as a public face for the school system, promoting its positive impact on the community through positive customer service interactions in the planned business, thus increasing the positive perception for community members and visitors. It would also be instructive for students to learn all aspects of running a storefront, including customer service, management, accounting, human resources, marketing, and financial skills.

3. Partnerships with industries for Baldwin College and Career Academy

By partnering with current industries in Milledgeville/Baldwin County, the Baldwin College and Career Academy can better support their needs through students completing internships, thereby strengthening the workforce within the community. This will allow for workforce/industry/business development to be involved with the high school and its students which will create a tangible presence and connection to the school system throughout the community.

Industry leaders will collaborate with teachers and administrators at Baldwin College and Career Academy to design real-world experiences for students within their industry of interest. These internships will give students the opportunity to apply the skills they are learning at school within the actual work environments in Baldwin County. This kind of individualized, project-based, experiential learning will help students hone the skills they need to be competitive in the workforce and allow local industries to promote their businesses to the future workforce.

EDUCATION IN MILLEDGEVILLE / BALDWIN COUNTY

SCHOOL DISTRICT RANKING

**153
OUT OF
179
IN GEORGIA**

- Number of schools: 6
- Elementary schools: 4
- Middle schools: 1
- High schools: 1
- Number of school districts: 1
- Full-time teachers: 402
- Average Student-Teacher ratio: 13.55
- Total Number of Students: 5,559
- American Indian/Alaska Native: 7
- Asian: 60
- Hispanic: 92
- Black: 3,533
- White: 1,625
- Hawaiian Native/Pacific Islander: 0
- 2 or more races: 130

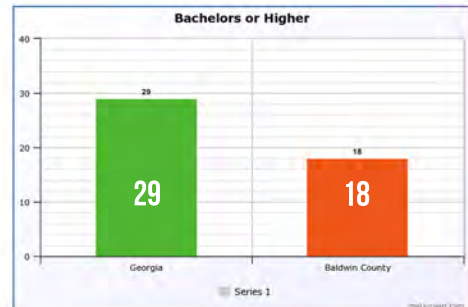
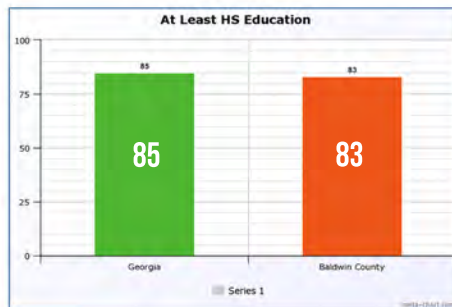
PRIVATE SCHOOLS

- ✓ There are 3 private schools in Baldwin County, GA, serving 803 students.
- ✓ Minority enrollment is 9% of the student body, and the student-teacher ratio is 18:1.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- ✓ There are 6 public schools in Baldwin County, GA, serving 5,559 students.
- ✓ Baldwin County, GA public schools have a diversity score of 0.45, which is higher than the Georgia average of 0.41.
- ✓ Minority enrollment is 72% (majority Black) and the student-teacher ratio is 17:1.

DROP-OUT RATE = 17 %



HIGHER EDUCATION

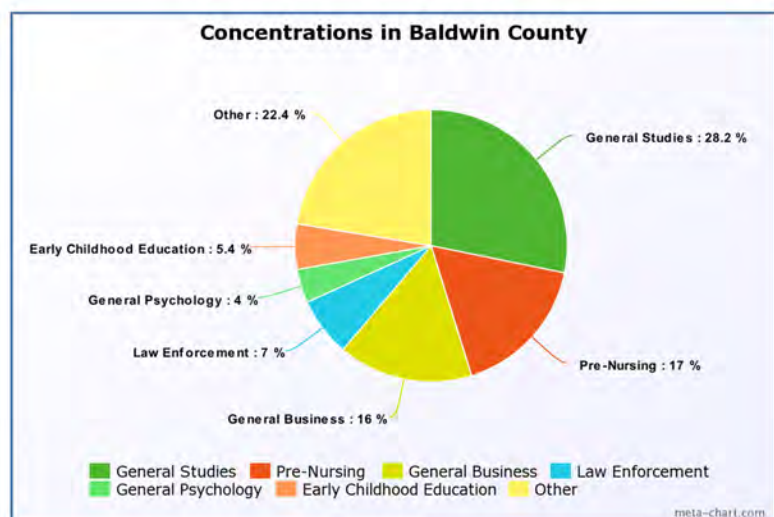
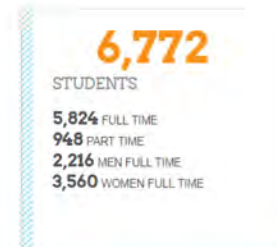
CENTRAL GEORGIA TECHNICAL COLLEGE



GEORGIA MILITARY COLLEGE



GEORGIA COLLEGE



BUILD — YOUR — FUTURE — IN — BALDWIN

GROUP A

Current Milledgeville/Baldwin
County Citizens

Big Idea: No matter where you see
your future, you can build it through the
excellent educational options in Baldwin.

College Prep

Workforce Development

Secondary Education





GROUP B

Potential Business Owners
and Employment Creators

Big Idea: For potential employers or job creators, the excellent educational opportunities in Milledgeville/Baldwin County provide two distinct benefits:

A well-trained and enthusiastic workforce that is prepared for jobs in a variety of fields

Excellent education options for the children of business owners and for the families of current employees moving to the area

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

- Identify community partners to support and promote the “Education Destination” campaign, ***Build Your Future in Baldwin.***
- Identify key statistics and data points to promote each educational opportunity.
 - *Areas of focus*
 - Baldwin BoE – Pre-K
 - Baldwin BoE – Grade School
 - Baldwin BoE – Middle and High School
 - Fine Arts; Career, Technical and Agriculture Education (CTAE)
 - Career Academy; Dual Enrollment; AP Options
 - Georgia College & State University
 - Georgia Military College
 - Central Georgia Technical College
 - *Potential statistics and data points*
 - Graduation rate
 - Number of students pursuing post-secondary education
 - Number of board certified teachers
 - Number of extracurricular clubs, organizations, and teams
 - Percentage of students participating in extracurricular activities
 - Parent attendance at conferences and PTA
 - Student performance distinctions
 - State-mandated standardized test distinctions
 - AP course offerings
 - AP course average test score
 - Student-teacher ratio
 - Georgia Climate Survey data
 - Number of Special Education teachers
 - Number of dual (multi) certified instructional staff
 - Number of students who graduate with academic scholarships
 - Average length of staff tenure

- Percentage of degrees/majors graduated
- Number of military/veteran graduates/students

MEDIUM TERM

- Identify vendors and targets for this campaign.
 - *Inside Baldwin County*
 - *Outside Baldwin County*
- Determine which organization(s) would be the best vehicle to champion and deliver this campaign.
 - *Recommendations for Implementation:*
 - This effort may be best managed by an outside agency, such as the Chamber, taking it on as a project. They could identify several chamber members who would take it on as a committee and then invite the community partners mentioned above. We recommend that whatever organization is tasked with running the committee/campaign seek outside guidance from organizations who facilitate these efforts in other communities.
 - Partner Recommendation: Great Promise Partnership (GPP)
 - GPP specializes in shepherding a cadre of students, many from difficult backgrounds, through high school and into the workforce. They specialize in the workforce development aspect of this project.
 - **Contact:** Great Promise Partnership
Mike Beatty, President and CEO
mike@gpppartnership.org

LONG TERM

- Delineate an appropriate marketing campaign.
- Acquire sponsors and funding for marketing campaign.
- Launch marketing campaign.

BUDGET FOR BUILD YOUR FUTURE IN BALDWIN

Television and radio	\$30,000
Publications and mailings	\$20,000
Print ads	\$15,000
Online and social media	\$20,000
Billboards	\$20,000
Special events	\$30,000
Miscellaneous expenses	\$10,000
Total	\$145,000

BUDGET FOR BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

(Raised annually) Investment Fund	\$50,000
Prize money for winning business plan provided by a local bank partner	\$5,000
Business Plan Pitch Competition event expenses (promotion, paying for emcee, etc.)	\$2,000
Total	\$57,000

150 Volunteer hours from university/college programs

BUDGET FOR STOREFRONT

Renovation costs	\$25,000 - \$100,000
Annual lease costs	\$12,000 - \$15,000
(Initial investment) Operation and maintenance	\$15,000
Total	\$52,000

Approximately \$5,000/year will be required for subsequent years

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR BUILD YOUR FUTURE IN BALDWIN

- Community Foundation of Central Georgia, Inc.'s Knight Fund for Milledgeville
- Milledgeville/Baldwin County Chamber – Keystone Investors
- Municipal government
- Milledgeville/Baldwin Development Authority
- Colleges – Georgia College & State University, Central Georgia Technical College, and Georgia Military College

- Local business investors
- Local financial institutions
- Local media organizations
- Non-profit grants

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS/RESOURCES

- Milledgeville/Baldwin County Chamber
- Municipal government
- Milledgeville/Baldwin Development Authority
- Baldwin County BoE (especially the new PR Department)
- Great Promise Partnership
- Colleges – Georgia College & State University, Central Georgia Technical College, and Georgia Military College
- John Milledge Academy
- Baldwin County Family Connection
- Communities in Schools
- Milledgeville/Baldwin Convention and Visitors Bureau

EXPECTED IMPACT

Create a positive image of all educational opportunities in Milledgeville/Baldwin County, thereby increasing the number of Milledgeville/Baldwin County residents who positively support and promote education in Milledgeville/Baldwin County and remain in the community after graduation to become contributing members to the local economy. These changes simultaneously demonstrate to potential new industries that Milledgeville/Baldwin County is an excellent location for their business due to the ready, well-trained, and locally-invested workforce, as well as educational opportunities for their families.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Current citizens, newcomers to Milledgeville/Baldwin County, and potential new job creators recognize the value and variety of excellent educational options (public, private, liberal arts, technical education, etc.) in Milledgeville/Baldwin County. Increased enrollment at all levels leads to a broad and prepared workforce, improved economic development, and increased job availability within Milledgeville/Baldwin County.

BIG IDEA 3

**ADVOCATE FOR A
BETTER BALDWIN**





OVERVIEW

Our recommendation is to empower the local community members that quietly support the schools to support the schools more vocally. This can be done by providing peer support and the resources and information they need to be vocal and spread the positive messages needed to change the perception of the public schools.

DESCRIPTION

Throughout our conversations with Milledgeville/Baldwin County citizens and leaders, we heard the following consistent themes:

- The school system has improved during Dr. Noris Price's, superintendent of BCS, leadership.
- The community's perception of the schools has not improved as much as the schools have improved under Dr. Price's leadership.
- Most of the misperceptions of the schools come from informal communications channels, such as social media and in-person conversations in informal settings.
- The School Board is doing a better job communicating their successes, but they are not reaching people in informal communications channels.
- Through research on effective communications, we know that unaffiliated, well-informed individuals have more credibility and can do more to change minds.

SCOPE

The ***Advocate for a Better Baldwin*** campaign will work to identify school system supporters and arm them with the positive messages they need to change the opinion of the school system with detractors in informal communications settings. These school system supporters become a coalition of people who amplify the positive stories emerging from the Baldwin County Schools while providing credibility from a third party. This program disseminates positive messages about the public schools through multiple media platforms and raises the overall perception of the educational system. This grassroots campaign empowers community members to have an interest in creating a positive community image for one of their greatest assets, the public school system.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

- Identify a steering committee of volunteers willing to organize the coalition, document members, and disseminate positive stories provided by the Baldwin County Board of Education.
 - a. Members will include community stakeholders, business owners, school district alumni, district administrators, teachers, parents (representatives from all school levels), and students.*
 - b. Define steering committee responsibilities and decision-making power.*
- Identify partners in **Advocate for a Better Baldwin** that will provide coalition volunteers and commit to amplifying positive school messaging.
- Identify communications channels and helpful resources. Answer the question: what materials are needed by the coalition to combat the negative perception about the schools? Suggestions include eNewsletters, Facebook/Instagram posts, telephone trees, and providing the bi-annual school report.

MEDIUM TERM

- Document individual coalition members. This list will be used to disseminate positive news stories that members can amplify.
- Set up preferred communication channels.
- Identify meeting routines and other cadences that provide the support the members need to stay informed and involved.
- Review activities completed at the end of each quarter, documenting successes and opportunities for improvement.



LONG TERM

- Formulate a plan to build on successes using data obtained in the quarterly review.
- Continue activities to engage coalition members and recruit new members to convey the positive messages/stories coming out of the public school system.

BUDGET

The messaging for this idea is already being created by the Baldwin County School Systems PR coordinator. The message is being amplified by local volunteers through unofficial communications sources, such as Facebook and in-person conversations.

This Big Idea requires limited funding beyond the annual salary of the Baldwin County School Systems' PR coordinator which is already supported by BCS' annual budget. Given the importance of this role to **Advocate for a Better Baldwin**, additional funding would need to be secured in the event that BCS' administrative structure changes.

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS/RESOURCES

- Baldwin County Public Schools Foundation
- Baldwin County School PTAs
- Communities in Schools

- Milledgeville/Baldwin Young Professionals
- Milledgeville Rotary Club
- Milledgeville Exchange Club
- Gifted and Talented Association of Baldwin
- City of Milledgeville (Facebook Page)
- Baldwin County Chamber of Commerce
- Milledgeville Mamas (Facebook Group)
- Additional messaging provided through the **I Am Baldwin County Schools** campaign and the **Build Your Future in Baldwin** campaign will also be used by coalition members in this effort.

EXPECTED IMPACT

By empowering individuals to spread the positive message of improvements in the public schools, we can expect to see a grassroots shift in the perception of schools which could have long-range impacts on the viability of the schools in the future and their capacity to attract new residents and businesses to Baldwin County's growing economy.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Improved perception of local schools measured through ad hoc and anecdotal communications, to include utilizing focus groups throughout the year to receive feedback from various members of the community, otherwise not engaged in the coalition of positive supporters.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Scholars would like to thank the entire Milledgeville/Baldwin County community and GeorgiaForward for their tremendous insight, feedback, and support. We would especially like to thank the following local leaders for extending their hospitality to us:

- Natacha Ansley Business owner and community volunteer
- Janet Caven Coordinator at Baldwin County Family Connection
- Lyn Chandler Retired Baldwin High School Principal, Board of Education Board Member
- Dana Davis Vice President of Satellite Operations at Central Georgia Technical College
- Renee Fontenot Professor of Marketing at Georgia College
- Bridget Ivey Site Coordinator for Communities in Schools
- Angie Martin President & CEO of Milledgeville/Baldwin County Chamber
- Celes Mason Community Services Coordinator at Georgia Military College
- Stephanie McClure Professor of Sociology at Georgia College
- Harold Mock Director of Leadership Programs at Georgia College
- Jan Morgan Program Manager for Communities in Schools
- Matt Poyner Director of Milledgeville/Baldwin County Development Authority
- Dr. Noris Price Superintendent of Baldwin County Schools
- Kendall Stiles Senior Director for Community Engagement at Georgia College
- Gina Towner Part-Time Faculty of World Languages and Cultures at Georgia College
- Jackie Turner Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Central Georgia Technical College
- Kris Vaughn Executive Director of GeorgiaForward and Young Gamechangers
- Dr. Robert Veto Head of School at Stratford Academy
- Byron Wellman, II Baldwin County School and Community Relations Coordinator
- Reviewers of our deliverables who provided thorough feedback throughout the program.

APPENDIX

MENTOR PROGRAM EXAMPLE

Senior Projects Packet 2017-2018

Note: The following information was provided by the administration of Stratford Academy in Macon, Georgia. There are a number of additional documents outlining the program, and the administration of Stratford is willing to partner with and advise Baldwin County Schools if this idea is implemented.

I. Introduction

At its core, the Senior Project requires our seniors to step out of their comfort zones and to enter the “real world” by setting up and pursuing activities away from the Stratford campus during May of the

senior year. It's a way of recognizing the changing needs of these young men and women while at the same time helping to ease their transition into independence before they officially leave for college.

The term "Senior Project" covers a wide variety of educational experiences; if students can dream it up and can find a way to make it happen, we will consider it as an option for them to undertake during their project. Although the majority of the work for Senior Projects takes place during second semester, the project actually begins at the end of November; it is not uncommon for students to begin dreaming about what they'd like to do (shadow a doctor, spend time in court, write their own stage play and perform it, learn to sculpt chocolate, go to Nashville to work with a record company...) long before we actually start.

The Senior Project requires students to demonstrate maturity, responsibility, and self-motivation in a way that is much different from the expectations they've been held to in the classroom, though the goal is for students to use what they've learned during their time at Stratford to help them navigate this experience. Each project will be an independent, student-developed, student-driven, in-depth educational experience culminating in a formal presentation to an evaluation committee.

Successful completion of the Senior Project is a requirement for graduation.

II. Overview

In order to pass Senior Projects, students must meet or exceed all of the following criteria:

1. Participating in work on your project with your mentor each of the three weeks, for a MINIMUM total of 91 hours (most students exceed this number). See page nine for further details regarding the minimum number of hours you must work each week and what counts towards this total.
2. An overall point total of no less than 80 points in Phase One.
3. An overall point total of no less than 80 points in Phase Two. This is separate from Phase One.
4. A polished presentation which meets or exceeds the minimum fifteen-minute time limit and includes all required materials.

"I Have Read the Packet" Form	30-Nov	5 points
Dream Sheet	7-Dec	5 points
Preliminary Proposal	11-Jan	15 points
Guardian Consent Form	11-Jan	5 points
Mentor Participation Agreement	8-Feb	10 points
All Contact Information logged into link on portal	15-Feb	5 points
Research Report	1-Mar	20 points
Second Meeting Form AND Signed Research Paper	22-Mar	10 points
Blog Set Up with First Blog Post	12-Apr	10 points
Final Calendar SIGNED by Mentor	27-Apr	15 points
Begin Senior Projects	30-April	
Oral Presentations at Stratford	May 17 – May 25	

V. I Have Read the Packet Form (November 30)

The signed, initialed, and dated "I Have Read the Packet" form is essentially a contract. Though it lists the major points about which you need to be aware and requires you to initial next to each, it obviously does not cover all of the rules to which you are required to adhere. This form states that you have, in fact, actually read through the packet and understand the requirements, responsibilities, and due dates and acknowledge that you are bound by these expectations. You will be held to these standards throughout the project.

VI. Dream Sheet (December 7)

This form asks you to write down several ideas you are considering pursuing. Your list can be as detailed as writing down the specific people you've already thought about working with and the jobs you'll be doing with them, or it can be broader, listing areas of study you'd like to pursue and the "dream" ideas you'd like to try to make happen since this is essentially a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This is not your final approval sheet. The goal is to get you thinking about your interests, how you might begin to pursue them, whom you'll need to contact, and what might be feasible given scheduling and time constraints.

VII. Preliminary Proposal Form (January 11)

The purpose of the Preliminary Project Proposal form is for you to provide a fairly specific idea to the Senior Projects Directors of what type of educational experience you wish to pursue. Explain to us in some detail what it is you're planning to do and with whom you're planning to work. If your proposal is denied (for example, your proposal is unclear, it seems dangerous or illegal, or it is something such as sleeping for three weeks straight which isn't an actual project), you will need to either restructure your proposal or submit a new one, and you will lose two points for having to resubmit. You will hear from us if there is a problem. If you don't hear anything, assume no news is good news and you have been approved to move forward.

A warning: sometimes mentors back out of the project or become unable to work with our students. If that happens through no fault of your own, you will NOT lose points, but you WILL be required to resubmit any necessary paperwork, and we will adjust some of the deadlines for you so that you can get caught back up.

Special permission is required for out of town projects. Permission will only be granted for very rare opportunities you can't get here in Macon, and you must meet the grade and behavior criteria before you will be allowed to go.

VIII. Guardian Consent Form (ALSO January 11)

By signing this form, your parents/guardians are agreeing to allow you to participate in the internship you are proposing. If you must change projects for any reason, you must submit a new Guardian Consent Form.

IX. Mentor Participation Agreement (February 8)

You are required to have a face-to-face meeting with your mentor so that they may sign the Mentor Participation Agreement form agreeing to work with you during the three weeks of the project. If you have more than one mentor, you will need to have each sign a separate form. At this meeting, you will accomplish two goals: deciding on a topic for your research paper AND listing the specific duties you and your mentor think you'll be performing or hope you'll be able to perform. A note about your research topic: try to keep it narrow. Something broad like "small businesses" is awfully tough to condense into a thousand words. You will bring a copy of this research paper with you for your mentor to review during your next meeting.

X. Mentor Contact Information Logged into Spreadsheet (February 15)

Enter all contact information into the link in your Resources folder by 3:50 on this date. You must include an address for the business, a contact phone number, and an email address

for your Mentor. This information must be correct and valid; we need to be able to contact your mentor periodically.

XI. Research Report (March 1)

Your research report (NOT AN ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER) is designed to give you some background information to help you prepare for your project. It should also reflect correct usage of the research skills you've already learned in your classes at Stratford. The same standards that would apply to any paper written for an academic class also apply to this research paper – a correctly formatted Works Cited page, correctly cited in-text citations, and correct grammar / usage / mechanics. You must pass ALL THREE PARTS in order to pass the paper. If you must rewrite even one portion of the paper, you will lose two points. REMINDER: English teachers grade these.

XII. Second Mentor Meeting Form AND Signed Research Report (March 22)

The purpose of your second meeting is to show your mentor the research report that you wrote and discuss what you learned. Make sure that your mentor knows that you will want him or her to read the essay and talk to you about it while you are there. In other words, this meeting will take some time, and it must be a face to face meeting. If you schedule a meeting at the last minute, your mentor might not be able to talk with you about your report. When your meeting is over, have the mentor complete the Second Meeting Form and sign the essay on the first page. You will turn both of those in, stapled, to the box outside Mrs. Fleming's door by 3:50 p.m.

XIV. Blog Setup and First Blog Post Entered (April 12)

The instructions for this are on the portal under Resources. Your first post will describe your project – with whom you are working and what you hope to achieve. Your PoC will leave a comment so that you know you've set things up correctly. If you haven't, they will contact you directly to have you revise. BE SURE TO EDIT. These blogs will be public. Seriously – emails go out to the entire Stratford community encouraging them to view your work. They should be well written, or you will have to rewrite and thus lose points.

XIII. Final Calendar, Signed by Your Mentor (April 27)

PART TWO: THE THREE WEEKS WORKING ON THE PROJECT

I. Points

Daily Journal Entries (13 total) 4 pts each = 52 points

- Well-written
- Minimum 200 words
- Accurate time total
- Includes detailed description of activities and insights

Keeping Calendar on Blog Updated 2 pts each = 26 points

- 13 total checks
- Note any changes from the final calendar submitted in April
- Update at the beginning of the week or day in which there are changes so we know how to find you easily

Mentor Comments on Your Blog (five total) 4 pts each = 20 points

II. Daily Blog Postings

Your daily blog posts serve as a log of each day's activities. They are not only a way for us to keep track of your actions but also a way for you to look back on your project in preparation for making your Final Presentation. In addition, it is a way for the entire Stratford community to keep up with what you're doing (so it must be written well).

Topics to Address in Your Entries:

- What specific things happened each day? What did you see and get to do?
- Who did you meet with and what did you talk with them about?
- What did you learn?
- How did you feel about the activities you're doing? Is the project what you hoped or expected?
- What is the plan for tomorrow?

PART THREE: THE PRESENTATION

I. Who Will Be There? The evaluation committee present at your oral presentation may include the following people:

- The Directors of Senior Projects
- The Headmaster or Other Administrators
- Your Point of Contact Teacher
- Other Stratford Academy Faculty

We encourage you to invite:

- Your Mentor
- Guardians / Other Family
- Homeroom Advisor
- Favorite teachers
- Fellow students

II. The Details of the Presentation

1. Design your presentation to give the audience a sense of what happened during the project and how you grew from having experienced it. Think about what kinds of questions your audience might have and answer them in your presentation. Present the information in such a way that the "regular person" can understand what

you're talking about. In other words, think about what you'd want to hear if you were the audience. Also, be prepared to define any unique terminology, and don't rely too heavily on jargon during your presentation.

CITATIONS

- Baldwin County Schools. Baldwin County School District Office, 2016, www.baldwincountyschools.org. Accessed 13 Oct. 2017.
- "Cue Cards Birthday Surprise" YouTube, uploaded by BellaBloomZ, 25 Sept. 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhLdWWzlymY>.
- Meador, Derrick. "Strategies for Promoting School Support throughout your Community." ThoughtCo, 18 Dec. 2016, www.thoughtco.com/promoting-school-support-throughout-community-3194438. Accessed 5 Oct. 2017.
- O'Brien, Anne. "The Importance of Community Involvement in Schools." Edutopia, 21 Mar. 2012, www.edutopia.org/blog/community-parent-involvement-essential-anne-obrien. Accessed 5 Oct. 2017.
- Resnick, Michael A. & Bryant, Anne. L. "School Boards and the power of the public." Education and the Making of a Democratic People, edited by John I. Goodlad, Routledge, 2008, pp. 161.
- United States Census Bureau. American Fact Finder. United States Census Bureau, 2017, factfinder.census.gov. Accessed 27 Oct. 2017.

THANK YOU

THANK YOU TO THE SPONSORS OF THE FALL 2017 YOUNG GAMECHANGER CLASS



A Member of the ClubCorp Family



*Baldwin County
Georgia*



Milledgeville-Baldwin County
CHAMBER



Leslie Outdoor Advertising



Simply Southern Barn



Young *Gamechangers*

a GeorgiaForward  program

84 WALTON STREET
NORTHWEST #500
ATLANTA, GA 30303

GEORGIAFORWARD.ORG

