

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following section contains a list of potential issues and opportunities for further study and consideration. This list will be modified based on technical analysis and stakeholder input received during preparation of the *Community Agenda* section of the Comprehensive Plan. The original list of issues and opportunities was obtained using stakeholder feedback obtained at several workshops held in the Spring 2008, concurrent with the drafting of the *Community Assessment* document. This feedback is part of the public involvement process and is not meant to be taken as official policy, nor do these public comments necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the City of Statesboro, including its staff and elected officials.



The Issues and Opportunities are categorized according to eight community elements, derived from the DCA Standards, as well as general “Quality of Life” issues that might not be reflected in any of the other categories:

- I. POPULATION CHANGE**
- II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
- III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**
- IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES**
- V. HOUSING**
- VI. LAND USE**
- VII. TRANSPORTATION**
- VIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**
- IX. QUALITY OF LIFE**

The following Issues & Opportunities were identified by the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and members of the community. These Issues & Opportunities do not necessarily reflect majority opinion and will be further evaluated during the development of the *Community Agenda*.

I. POPULATION CHANGE

- Demographic trends show continuous population growth through 2030 (at least a 50% increase over 2000 numbers)
- Student population at Georgia Southern University (GSU) is expected to increase
- GSU will require all freshman to be housed on campus

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Address lack of “major” grocery store, chain stores, department stores
- Vacant commercial spaces and storefronts are a problem
- More grocery stores are needed
- Not enough high-wage jobs in the city
- Consider development opportunities for infill properties
- More coordination needed between GSU, Ogeechee Technical Institute, and local industries regarding workforce training
- Enhance workforce training and continuing education options to include: literacy, technical writing and computer applications
- Revitalize/redevelop the remaining land at former hospital site (currently vacant land)
- More collaboration needed between city and GSU (ex: information technology facilities and infrastructure, entrepreneur support)
- Business attraction and expansion activities do not seem to be meeting their potential
- Significant amount of population without secondary degrees
- Median household income and per capita income very low
- Make more industrial, office and commercial land available in city
- Clean/green industries should be encouraged
- Development Authority (or similar entity) should concentrate on City of Statesboro, not just as a subset of the county or downtown only
- More businesses are needed that cater to youth and provide alternatives to alcohol/drug use and other delinquency (ex.: renovate bowling alley; youth-oriented restaurant, such as “The Varsity” in Atlanta but with healthier food)

III. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

- Preserve undeveloped forest and agriculture lands within the city wherever possible
- Consider alternative approaches to stormwater drainage and retention based on contemporary best management practices (BMPs)
- Reuse former hospital property as public park
- Provide more youth-oriented parks/playgrounds
- Provide more picnic tables and trees in parks
- Prevent wetlands from being filled (too many wetlands are being developed, causing runoff into neighboring properties)
- Historic character of the downtown district needs to be formally recognized and protected
- Protect integrity of historic neighborhoods by creating overlay districts that restrict certain uses that are incompatible with existing ones and that protect historic architecture while ensuring new architecture is compatible
- Preserve wooded areas and create walking paths, wherever possible
- Promote appreciation of nature and outdoor exercise in our city parks and wooded areas
- Strengthen tree ordinance to protect existing trees and to reduce and/or eliminate clear-cutting on development sites
- Retain and/or plant more trees in parking lots and around new buildings
- Plant new shade trees along all city rights-of-way, wherever space allows; do this in concert with sidewalk expansion
- Require existing trees to be preserved wherever possible
- Link bicycle paths in the city and county with GSU campus
- Provide a park for pets (i.e., dog park)

IV. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

- Provide more sidewalks and pedestrian facilities needed throughout city
- Provide more bicycle lanes and facilities needed throughout city
- Implement curbside recycling program
- Consider youth employment services and placement programs
- Police department is excellent; build upon existing strengths
- Coordinate with county to expand water and sewer along all major roadways
- Recycling drop-off program is efficient and convenient; consider adding more recycling options to current facilities
- Consider implementing “pay as you throw” program for garbage to reward recycling
- Better coordination efforts needed between city and county regarding public safety, recreation (city parks), and infrastructure planning
- Luetta Moore Park and recreation facilities need modernization and other improvements

- Renovate swimming pool facilities on Zetterower Avenue, to provide recreation for children and families without transportation

V. HOUSING

- Better enforcement of zoning ordinances needed in residential neighborhoods (ex.: too many people living and parking at some properties)
- Provide more affordable housing options for low-income families
- Address dilapidated rental properties in residential neighborhoods (ex.: Pittman Park neighborhood has many rental units and is becoming increasingly blighted)
- Strengthen nuisance abatement (garbage, dilapidated buildings, etc) and code enforcement in all residential neighborhoods
- Address concerns over too many college students and rental properties in residential areas
- Remove dilapidated houses in residential neighborhoods (ex.: Gordon, Lafayette Street, West Main Street)
- Address concerns over the perceived surplus of rental units within the city
- Address garbage and other items deposited in front of rental properties as students move in and out of units
- Current zoning does not promote mixed uses
- Allow and encourage mixed units in appropriate neighborhoods and redeveloped areas
- Provide more housing options downtown
- Provide more mixed use (opportunities to live, work, shop, dine, and play)
- What will happen to apartments and rental properties as GSU builds more dorms?
- Downtown neighborhoods seem to be declining
- Create and implement plan for revitalization and infill of downtown and surrounding neighborhoods
- Encourage diversity of SES within neighborhoods
- Beautify and revitalize distressed and blighted areas (ex.: Blich Street / MLK Blvd. neighborhoods)
- Encourage integration and promote psychological well-being of all residents

VI. LAND USE

- Consider traffic calming measures, such as replacing “suicide lane” (turn lane) with planted medians
- Address proliferation of PUDs with housing only
- Address lack of mixed use in PUDs
- PUDs have no apparent pattern and lack of planning

- New residential development tends not to tie into street pattern of surrounding neighborhoods
- More public swimming pools
- More bicycle lanes (wide roads = opportunity)
- “Commercial creep” into downtown residential neighborhoods causes unattractive breaks in building flow and appearance
- More housing in central business district
- More mixed use
- Complete and extend existing sidewalks and create new sidewalks
- Enhance pedestrian connectivity
- Plantings along roadways and in medians increases “charm factor” and reduces the “highway factor”
- More land zoned industrial/office/commercial

VII. TRANSPORTATION

- Public transportation needed
- More crosswalks
- More pedestrian signage
- Install sidewalks on Gentilly Road
- Address commercial truck traffic through town and enforce speed limits
- Bicycle trail not felt to be safe
- GSU campus is now closed to thru-traffic between Fair Road and Hwy 301, creating more traffic along Fair Road; need cooperation between city and GSU to alleviate congestion
- Residential streets (ex.: Savannah Avenue) have become high traffic “speed zones” through town
- Install more curb cuts to accommodate bicycle, stroller and wheelchair access to sidewalks
- Improve landscape maintenance along sidewalks (e.g., trim shrubs)
- Connect neighborhoods with bicycle paths along major roads
- Ensure safe routes – pedestrian and bicycle – to all city schools
- Better enforcement of crosswalk laws and pedestrian rights-of-way
- Install planted medians in turn lanes for beautification and traffic calming
- By-pass is nearly obsolete and is not yet finished
- No direct way to go from shopping mall area to college without driving through residential neighborhoods

- Consider installing turn arrows at east and west traffic signals on East Main Street and Zetterower Avenue
- Recent road improvements seem to only serve new development (i.e., Tillman Park, High School expansion)
- Curb cuts and ingress/egress on Hwy 301 and Fair Road at bypass are too close to the bypass intersection
- Reduce number of ingress and egress points along bypass; require property owners to share an entrance and exit
- More sidewalks
- More bicycle storage facilities
- More bicycle access to local business (e.g., GSU and residential neighborhoods)

VIII. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

- Better cooperation and coordination between city and county on planning issues
- Consider consolidating city and county governments
- Better cooperation and coordination between city and county on public safety
- Better cooperation and coordination between city and county on recreation
- Some agencies and groups are not coordinating with each other
- Greenway proposed by Recreation Department needs support of both City Council and County Commission
- Better coordination between city and Board of Education regarding siting of new schools
- Establish code enforcement officers whose sole responsibility is to enforce property maintenance ordinances

IX. QUALITY OF LIFE

- How do we reward student excellence?
- More sidewalks
- Improved access to fresh produce (markets, grocery stores)
- Improve homeless/mental health services
- Address food security and access, especially for families with hungry children
- More options for family entertainment
- Increase support for charter school
- Improve community healthcare
- Address drug use and youth gangs
- More alternative education options
- Health and obesity concerns can be addressed by improving opportunities to walk within the community

- More active-use parks in walking distance to residential neighborhoods
- More adult day care options for seniors
- Address the city's homeless population
- Increase cultural (art, dance, music) and education opportunities for children and adults