



CITY OF FAIRBURN

# Creative Placemaking Strategy

prepared by



Atlanta Regional Commission

APRIL 2019

# Acknowledgements

## *Special thanks to:*

Mayor Elizabeth Carr-Hurst  
Mayor Pro-Tem Linda J. Davis  
Alex Heath, City Council  
Pat Pallend, City Council  
Hattie Portis-Jones, City Council  
Ulysses Smallwood, City Council  
James Whitmore, City Council

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## *Special thanks to:*

Armando's  
Oz Pizza  
Southside Theatre Guild

## Funding Acknowledgement

The Atlanta Regional Commission is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county Atlanta region. Since 1947, ARC and its predecessor agencies have helped focus the region's leadership, attention and resources on critical issues. The Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) helps cities, counties and non-profit organizations find solutions to land use and transportation planning issues. The CDAP program dedicates resources on an annual basis and works in partnership with external agencies looking to tackle similar issues. This study was prepared with funds provided by the Atlanta Regional Commission and the City of Fairburn.

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CHAPTER 1

# Introduction



# Creative Placemaking Strategy

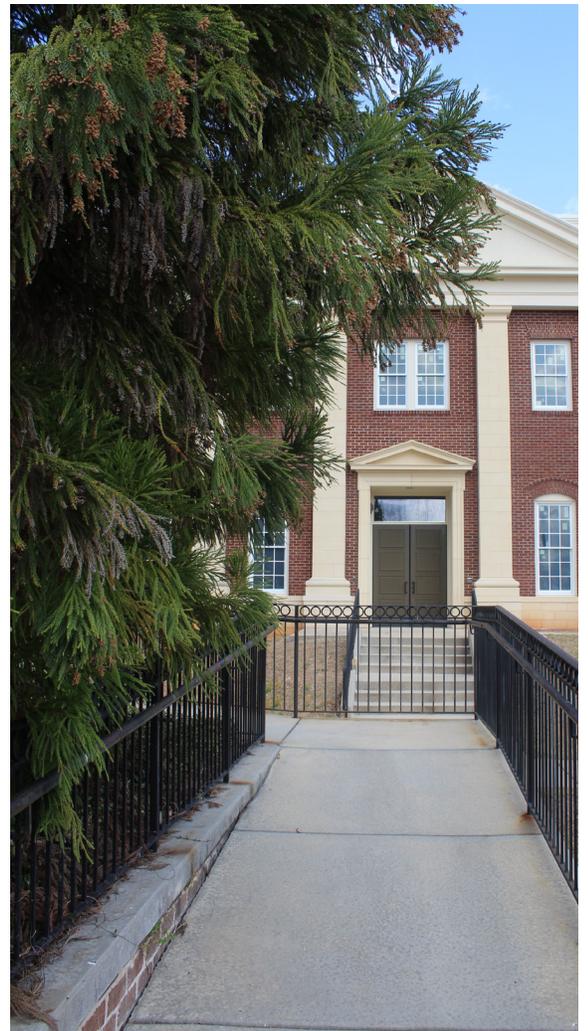
## BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

In 2018, the City of Fairburn worked with the Atlanta Regional Commission to craft a Creative Placemaking Strategy. This strategy acts as a unified plan for creative placemaking initiatives in Fairburn, and includes a review of communities in the metro region with similar plans as well as an outline of priority projects based on community feedback. Throughout the process, a Steering Committee provided direction and feedback, and a range of public engagement opportunities allowed for comments from the community. Home to a variety of arts and culture organizations and events, such as the Southside Theatre Guild, Georgia Renaissance Festival, Fairburn Fall Festival, South Fulton Studios, and Georgia Military College and Brenau University campuses, Fairburn is well-positioned to embrace its standing as an arts community.

In 2015, the City of Fairburn updated its Comprehensive Plan. Several of the goals outlined in the plan necessitated a Creative Placemaking Strategy. The vision stated in the Comprehensive Plan is for Fairburn to be an economically thriving community and a desired destination for residents and visitors of all ages by:

- Having a diverse and growing population
- Having a residential base that support the community's needs for housing for all stages in life
- Attracting, retaining, and growing both small and large businesses that offer good jobs
- Having an attractive and vibrant downtown
- Offering recreational opportunities that fit the community's needs

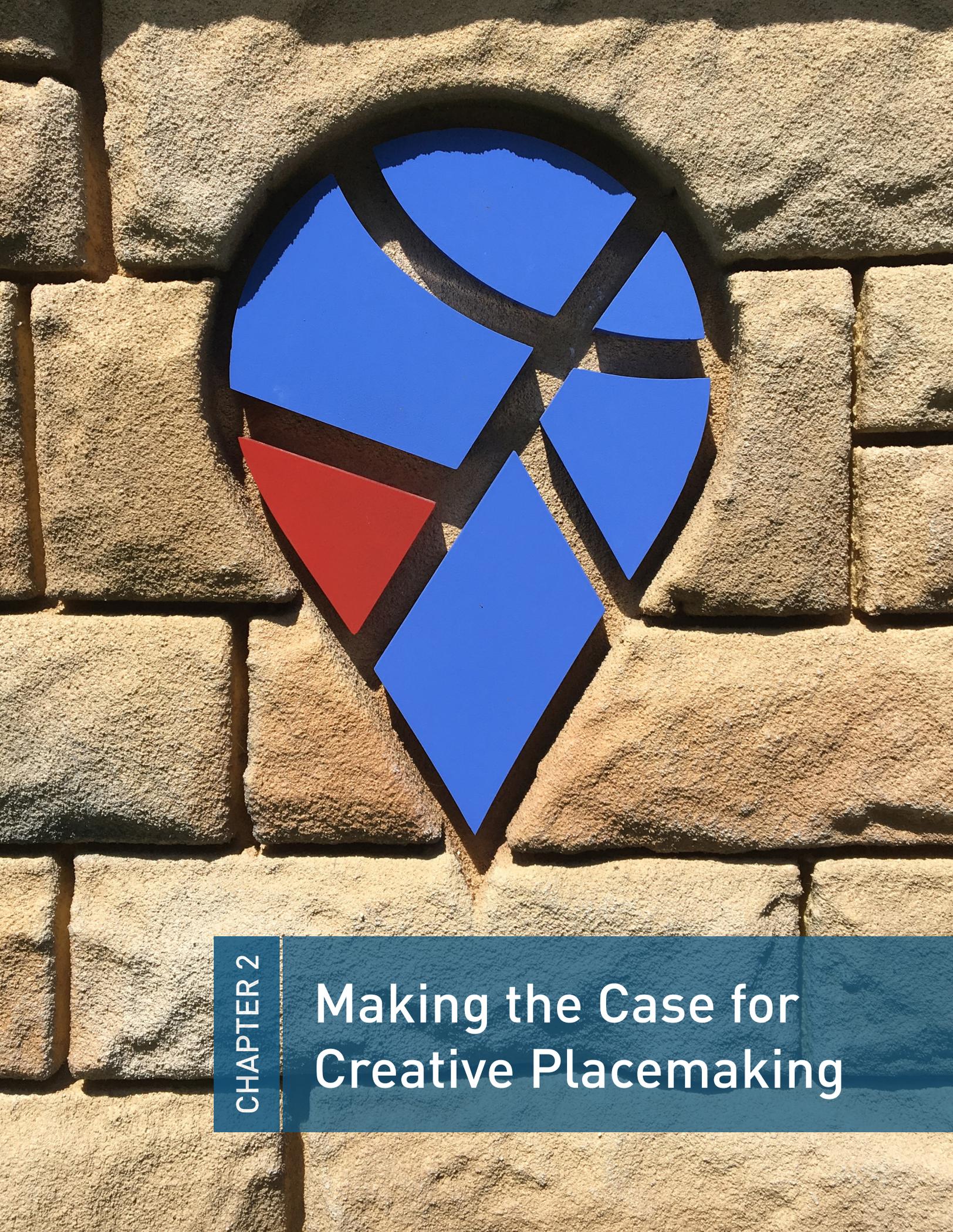
In particular, the City hopes to revitalize downtown Fairburn and attract people and businesses to the area. Implementing creative placemaking strategies by investing in arts and culture will help to address this overarching goal of ensuring economic vitality and creating a vibrant downtown.



# PROCESS

Phase	Task	2018						2019				
		July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	
Project Initiation	MOA signed between applicant and ARC	Staff collaboration										
	Develop public outreach strategy	Plan development										
	Form steering committee	Steering committee										
	Project kick-off meeting with staff	Staff collaboration										
Existing Conditions and Best Practices Analysis	Field work		Plan development									
	Steering committee #1			Steering committee								
	Department heads meeting			Staff collaboration								
	Existing conditions research			Plan development	Plan development	Plan development						
	Public engagement at Fairburn Fall Festival				Public engagement							
	Steering committee #2					Plan development						
Visioning and Preliminary	Public engagement at Southside Theatre Guild						Public engagement					
	Public engagement at Lightning meeting						Public engagement					
	Steering committee #3							Steering committee				
	Recommendations development						Plan development	Plan development				
Plan Preparation	Draft Plan							Plan development	Plan development	Plan development		
	Department heads meeting									Staff collaboration		
	Public engagement at Oz Pizza									Public engagement		
	Distribution and review of draft plan with staff									Staff collaboration	Staff collaboration	
	Plan revisions											Plan development
Plan Adoption	Public hearing											Plan development
	Final plan											Plan development
	Plan adoption											Plan development

- Steering committee 
- Public engagement 
- Staff collaboration 
- Plan development 

A close-up photograph of a stone wall with a circular opening. Inside the opening, there is a geometric design composed of several blue and red shapes. The design includes a large blue shape on the left, a red triangle at the bottom left, and several other blue shapes on the right and bottom. The stone wall is made of light-colored, textured blocks.

CHAPTER 2

# Making the Case for Creative Placemaking

## WHAT IS CREATIVE PLACEMAKING?

“Creative placemaking is when artists, arts organizations, and community development practitioners deliberately integrate arts and culture into community revitalization work – placing arts at the table with land use, transportation, economic development, education, housing, infrastructure, and public safety strategies.”

- National Endowment for the Arts

Creative placemaking aims to activate underutilized public and private spaces, enhance the visual appeal of existing structures and streetscapes, improve local economies, and bring communities together. Traditional public art, such as murals or sculptures, is included in creative placemaking, but the term covers much more. The process of identifying community assets and using those to create vibrant, welcoming spaces for everyone to enjoy is key.



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# WHY ARTS & CULTURE?

## COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Creates or enhances community identity, particularly when the community is involved throughout the process.
- Establishes a sense of place in areas that are part of the community's every day experiences.
- Improves public safety due to increased use of public spaces such as streets and plazas.
- Improves environmental quality, housing choices, and transportation options.
- Increases collaboration between a variety of stakeholders, including local governments, nonprofit organizations, and businesses.
- Acts as a platform for discussing the history of a community, which is sometimes a contentious topic but is vital for understanding community character and engaging the public.



## ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Attracts visitors and encourages residents to become patrons of local artists and venues.
- Ensures that money is spent in the local economy.
- Creates jobs in construction, retail, and arts and cultural production.
- Involves reusing vacant spaces, which generates revenue from property and sales taxes while also improving the visual appearance of a space.
- Attracts new residents and businesses who want to move to vibrant areas where there is an existing concentration of creativity.



“Projects should both attract visitors and serve the local community. We need the economic development side of public art. But as a resident I want to enjoy it too. I want to see beauty too. I want to show off my city.”

- Fairburn resident



CHAPTER 3

# Existing Conditions

# HISTORY OF FAIRBURN



By the 1870s, Fairburn had become home to a number of stores, hotels, a printing press and weekly local newspaper, multiple factories, a private school, and multiple churches.



305 people lived in Fairburn when the population was counted for the first time in 1870.



The City of Fairburn was founded in 1833 along the railroad south of Atlanta. The first town boundary was set as a 600-yard radius from the railroad depot.



Fairburn was chosen as the county seat for Campbell County. The Campbell County Courthouse (seen on the cover of Chapter 3) is one of the City's two nationally registered historic sites.



By 1884 the population had reached 700, which is often attributed to the quality of schools in Fairburn.



In 1911, the Fairburn Railway and Electric Company began passenger service from Fairburn to the existing streetcar in College Park.



After a decline in population due to the Great Depression and a struggling local agriculture economy, the population once again began to grow in 1940. This growth continued throughout the 20th century.



In the 1920s and 1930s, Fairburn lost much of the industry that had come to the area in the 19th century. The train to College Park stopped running, and Fairburn lost the designation of county seat when Campbell County was merged with Fulton County.

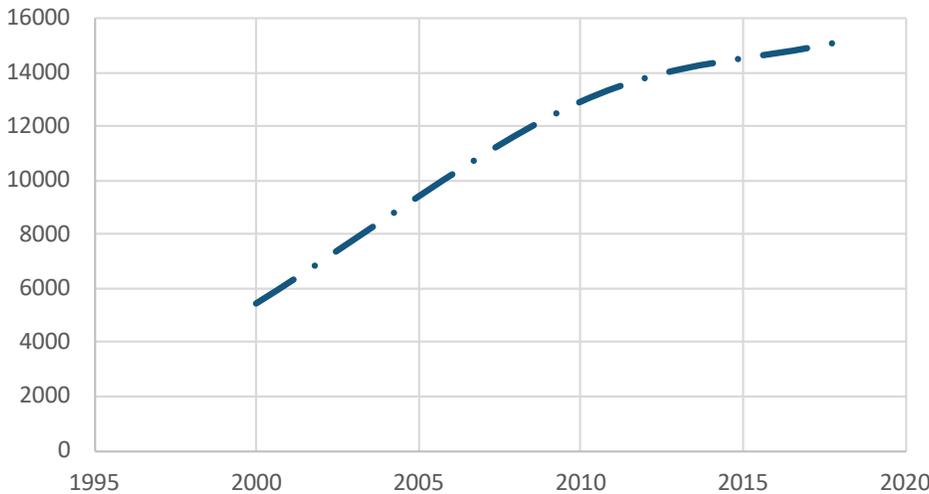


The buildings that form the historic downtown seen today were constructed in the early 20th century. This is the City's second nationally registered historic site.

# DEMOGRAPHIC & ECONOMIC PROFILE

The demographic and economic summary of Fairburn provides key information for the community while also informing recommendations outlined in Chapter 6 in order to address the needs of the current population. The following pages highlight in particular the rapid change in population size and race distribution over the past two decades.

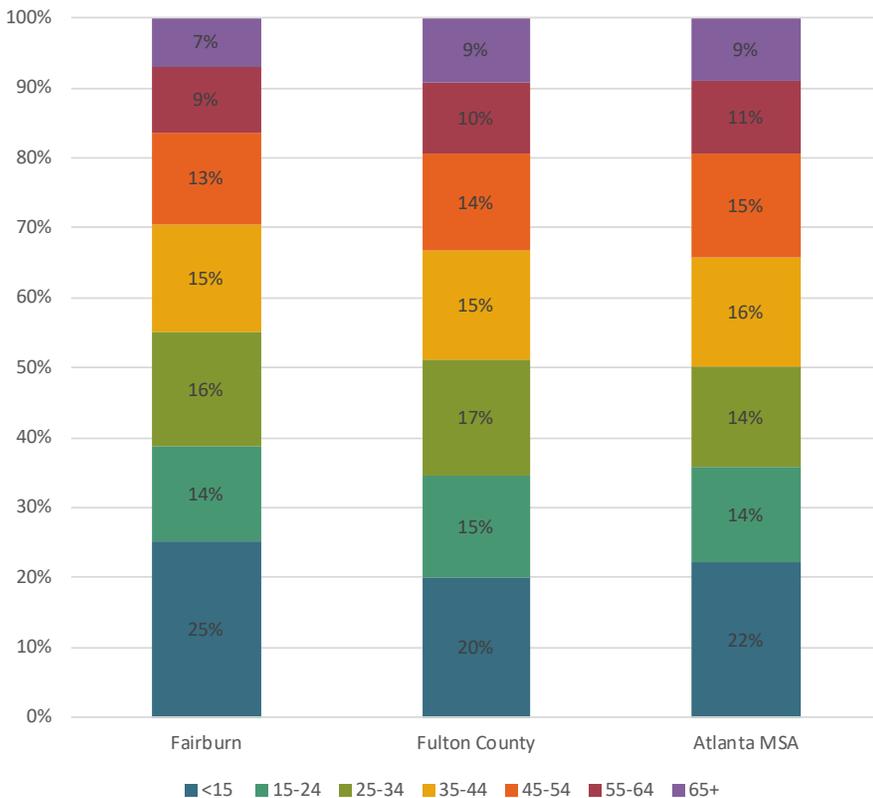
## POPULATION GROWTH



Between 2000 and 2018, the population of Fairburn nearly tripled, growing from 5,464 to 15,184. This growth has slowed in more recent years; the most significant growth was seen between 2000 and 2010.

Source: US Census (2010), American Communities Survey (2012-2016).

## COMPARATE AGE DISTRIBUTION



## 2017 MEDIAN AGE

City of Fairburn **32.3**

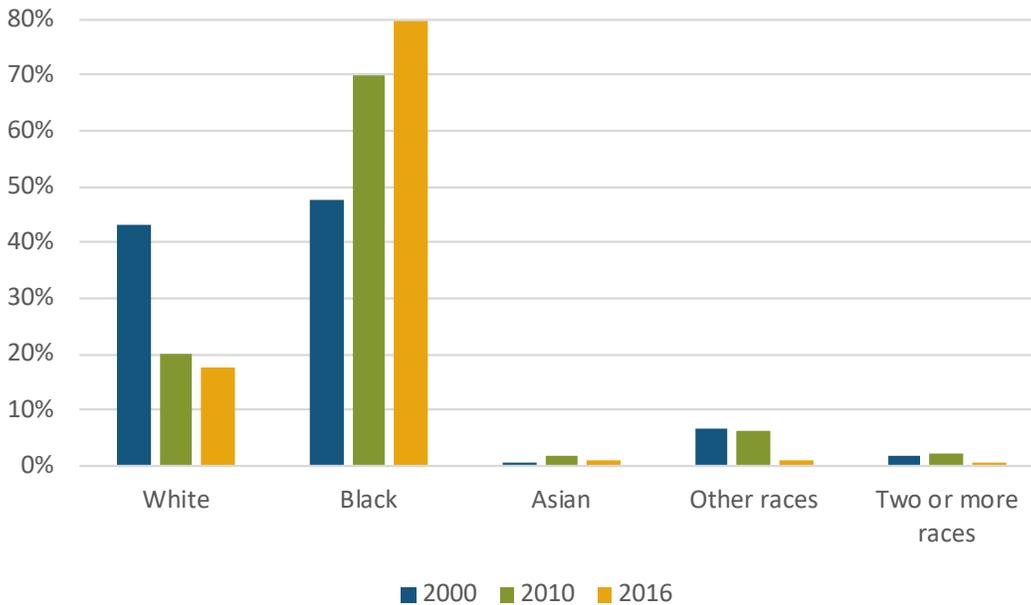
Fulton County **35.2**

Atlanta MSA **36.1**

According to the 2010 Census, the City of Fairburn is younger than Fulton County and the Atlanta MSA, with nearly 40% of the population under the age of 25 and just 16% of residents over the age of 55.

Source: US Census (2010), American Communities Survey (2012-2016).

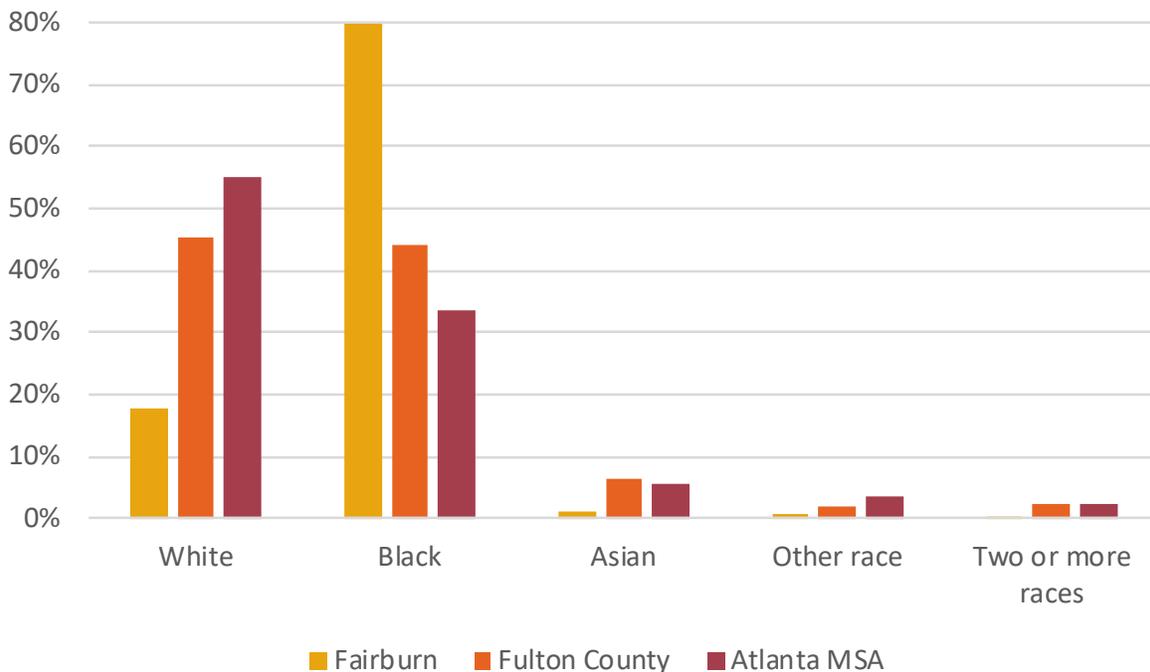
## FAIRBURN RACE DISTRIBUTION



In 2000, the White and Black populations of Fairburn each accounted for around 45% of the general population. However, in the past 20 years, the Black population has grown to 80%, while the White population now accounts for less than 20% of the general population.

Source: US Census (2010), American Communities Survey (2012-2016).

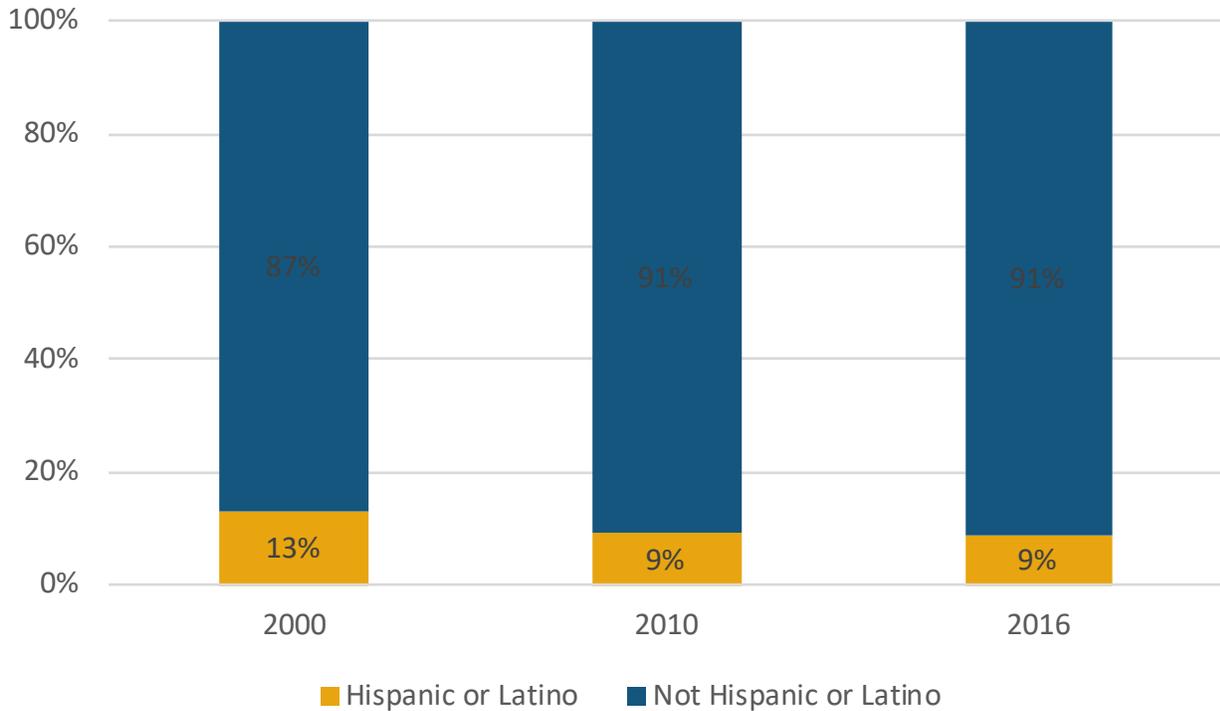
## COMPARATIVE RACE DISTRIBUTION



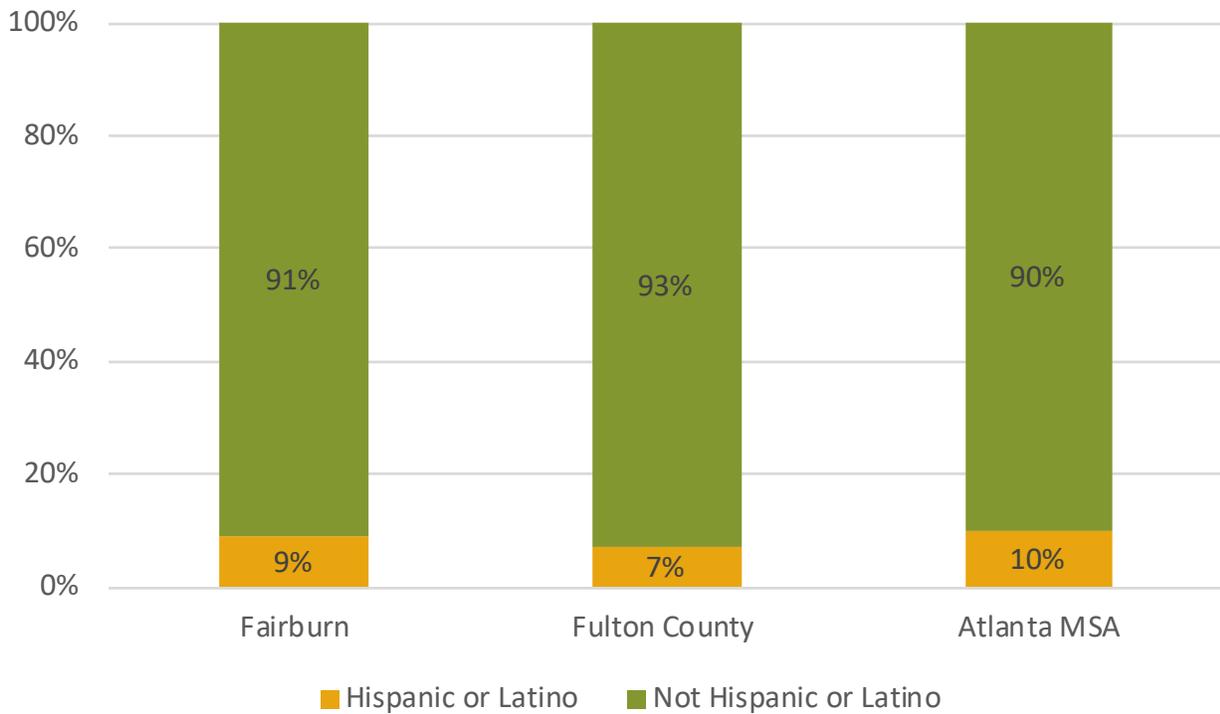
Compared to Fulton County and the Atlanta MSA, the City of Fairburn has a significantly greater percentage of Black individuals. All other races account for a smaller percentage of the population in Fairburn than they do in Fulton County or the Atlanta MSA.

Source: US Census (2010), American Communities Survey (2012-2016).

### FAIRBURN ETHNICITY DISTRIBUTION



### COMPARATIVE ETHNICITY DISTRIBUTION



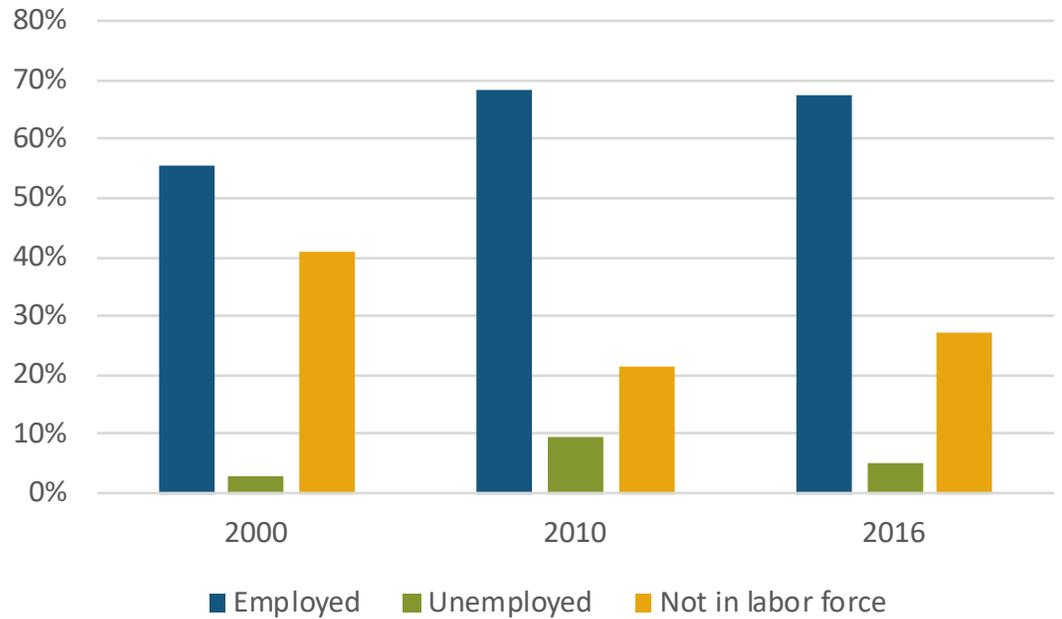
The Hispanic population in Fairburn has decreased from 13% to 9% of the overall population since 2000. Fairburn and the Atlanta MSA had similar Hispanic populations, while Fulton County had a slightly lower percentage of Hispanic residents in 2016.

Source: US Census (2010), American Communities Survey (2012-2016).

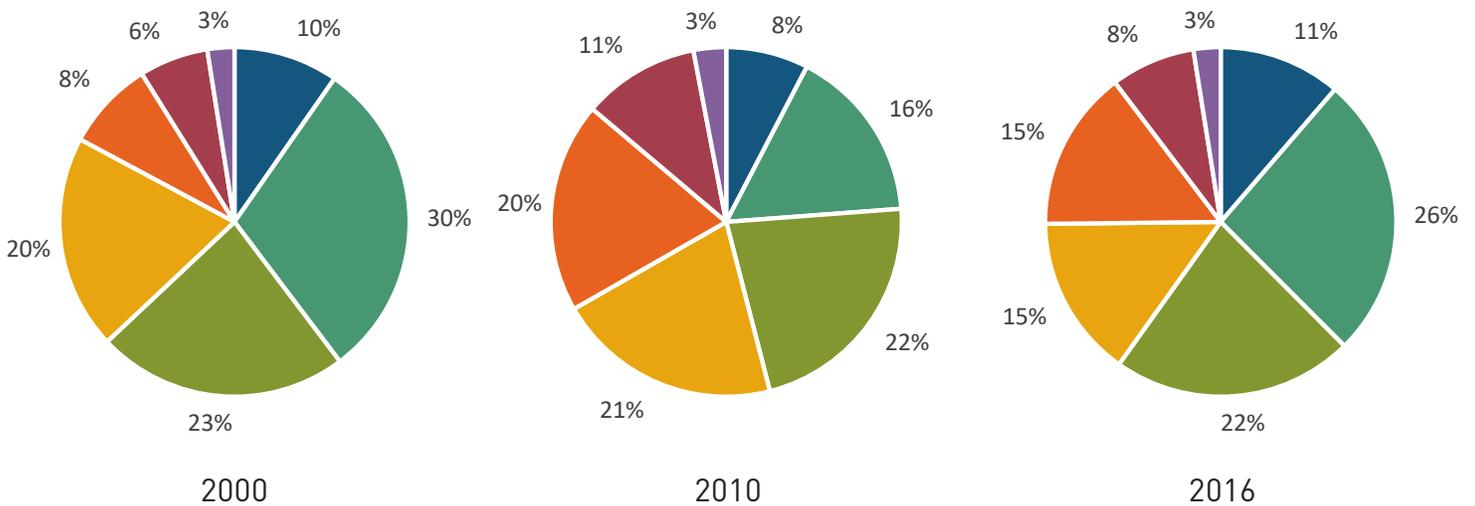
Over the past nearly 20 years, the unemployment rate in Fairburn has grown by approximately 2%. However, the percentage of residents who are employed grew by over 10%, while the percentage of residents in the labor force decreased by nearly 15%.

Source: US Census (2010), American Communities Survey (2012-2016).

### EMPLOYMENT



### MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

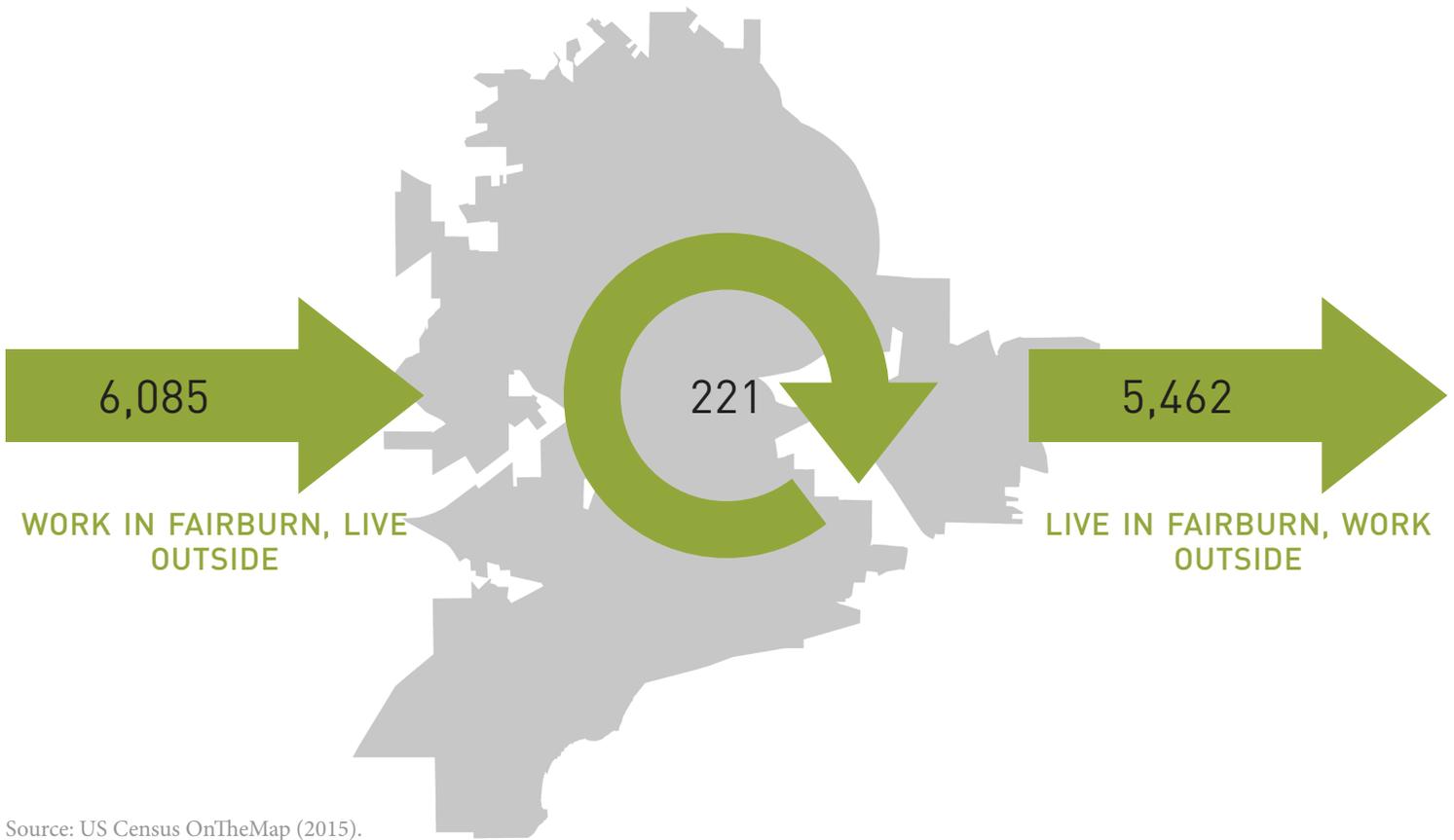


- Less than \$15,000
- \$15,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$149,999
- More than \$150,000

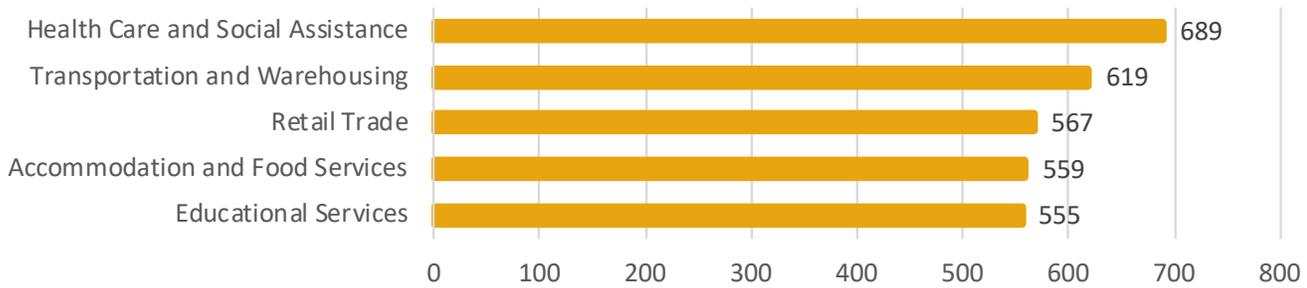
In 2000, nearly 75% of Fairburn residents made less than \$75,000 a year. In 2016, closer to 60% fell into that category, while those making between \$75,000 and \$150,000 increased.

Source: US Census (2010), American Communities Survey (2012-2016).

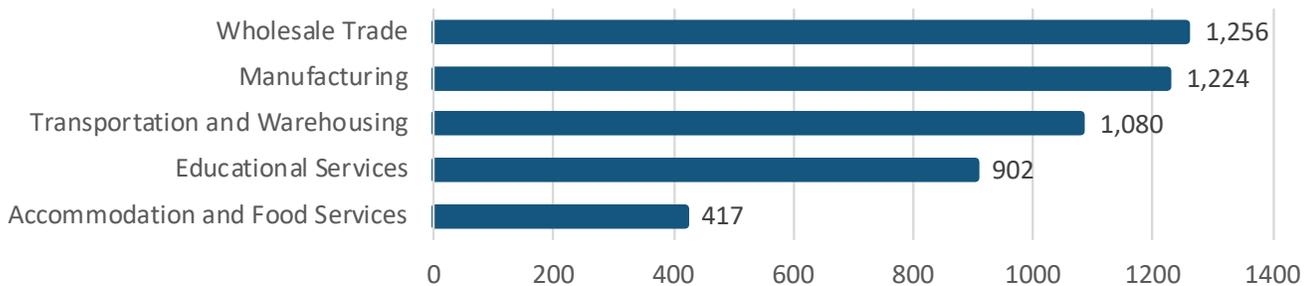
## HOW MANY PEOPLE LIVE AND WORK IN FAIRBURN?



## TOP 5 INDUSTRIES FOR FAIRBURN RESIDENTS



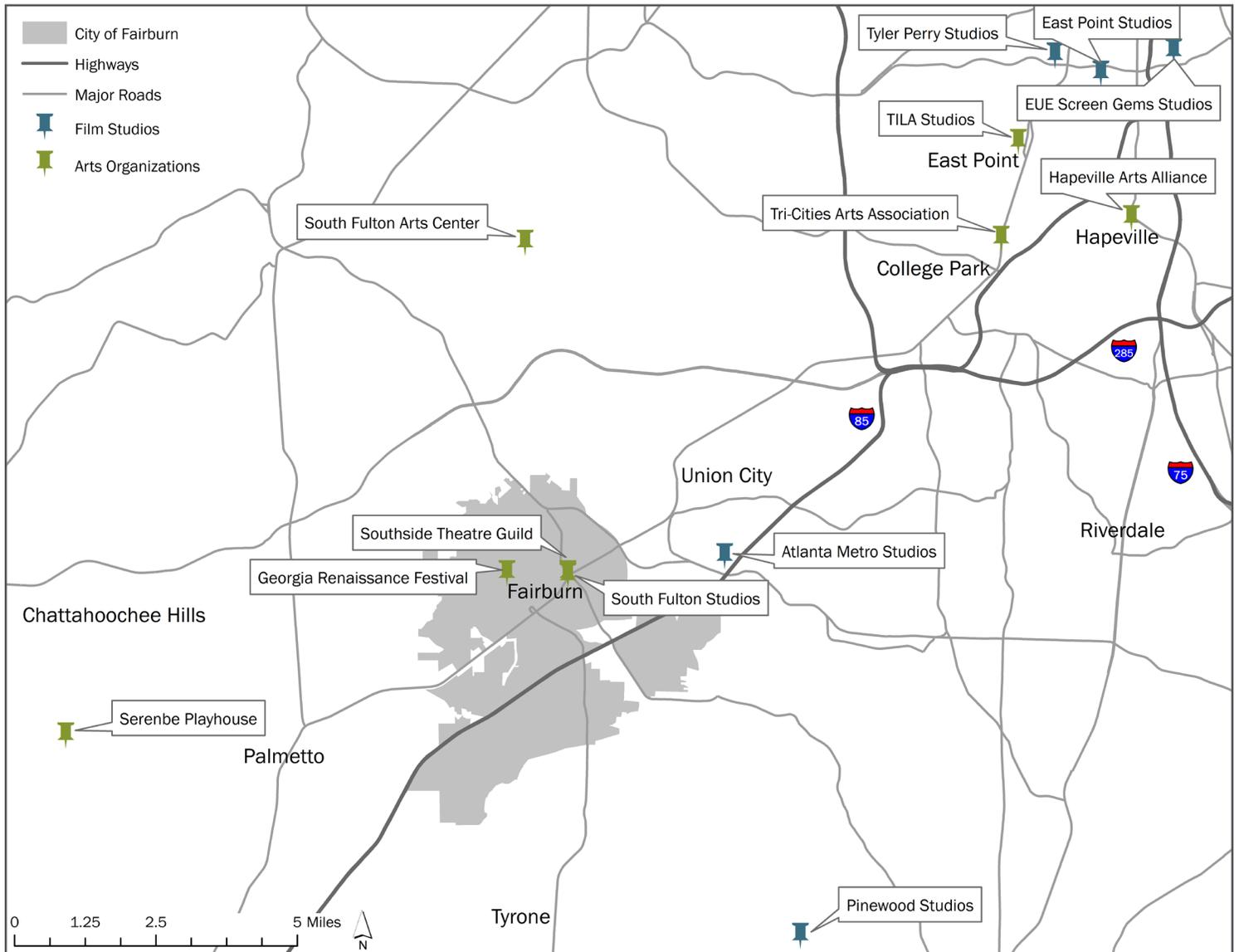
## TOP 5 INDUSTRIES FOR JOBS IN FAIRBURN



Source: US Census OnTheMap (2015).

## NEARBY ARTS & CULTURE ORGANIZATIONS

Throughout this process, a number of arts and culture organizations in and around Fairburn were identified. While Hapeville and the surrounding area is known for the arts, there are few organizations south of the Tri-Cities area, allowing Fairburn to become an arts destination. Film studios are also included on the map below, as Fairburn hopes to continue to attract more filming to the area, particularly on sites such as the Renaissance Festival.



## **ATLANTA TRI-CITIES ARTS ASSOCIATION**

The purpose of the Atlanta Tri-Cities Arts Association is to establish a world-class community of creative artists and their installations in the Atlanta Tri-Cities area. By providing programming and support for artists, the organization helps local communities and drives economic growth.

## **FULTON COUNTY ARTS & CULTURE**

The Fulton County Arts Council was established by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners in 1979 to work with the Department of Arts & Culture to provide funding and services for arts nonprofit organizations and programs. Fulton County Arts & Culture oversees five arts centers throughout the County, one of which is located in South Fulton.

## **GEORGIA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL**

Over eight weekends every year in the late spring and summer, 32 acres next to Duncan Park in Fairburn transforms into the Georgia Renaissance Festival, transporting visitors to 16th-century England. The festival offers craft shops, performances, and food & drinks.

## **HAPEVILLE ARTS ALLIANCE**

The mission of the Hapeville Arts Alliance is to bring quality art exhibitions and performances to the City of Hapeville and the larger South Fulton County community and to assist and support local artists. The Arts Alliance works cooperatively with all arts and civic groups to build audiences and participation in the arts.

## **SERENBE PLAYHOUSE**

Founded in 2009 under the Serenbe Institute for Art, Culture, & the Environment, the Serenbe Playhouse is committed to producing bold new works and reinvented classics that connect art, nature, and community. Using theater as an educational tool for both artists and audiences, Serenbe Playhouse focuses on assistance to schools and youth organizations in underserved areas.

## **SOUTH FULTON STUDIOS**

South Fulton Studios Performing Arts School, located in downtown Fairburn, offers a range of performing arts programming and education. The studio collaborates with artists, organizations, schools, and the community to encourage the creation, appreciation, and understanding of the arts.

## **SOUTHSIDE THEATRE GUILD**

Founded in 1973, the Southside Theatre Guild aims to benefit the surrounding communities through entertainment and education. In 45 years of operation, more than 1,700 performances have taken place in the former movie theater in downtown Fairburn.

## **TILA STUDIOS**

TILA Studios is a co-working and community space for black women artists located in downtown East Point. The space includes a working studio and gallery space for artists to showcase their work.

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## EXISTING PLANS & STUDIES

In recent years, the City of Fairburn has undertaken a number of planning efforts, all of which inform the Creative Placemaking Strategy.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The vision from the City of Fairburn's 2015 Comprehensive Plan is for the City to be an economically thriving community and a desired destination for residents and visitors of all ages. The goals listed in the plan include increasing activity and improving quality of development in downtown, preserving and improving passive greenspace throughout the City, incorporating art into gateway & wayfinding infrastructure, encouraging appropriate housing development in downtown, ensuring pedestrian and bicycle-friendly environments throughout the City, and improving the City's image to attract visitors.

### URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

According to Fairburn's 2013 Urban Redevelopment Plan, the majority of disinvestment and redevelopment opportunities are focused around downtown, where the City has experienced a decrease in real estate values and an increase in vacancy rates. The plan highlights improved pedestrian infrastructure, preservation of historic buildings, and enhanced signage as key land use objectives.

### BRANDPRINT REPORT

In 2015, the City of Fairburn completed the BrandPrint Report, which defines a unique brand for the City. The report highlights opportunities such as improving walkability in

downtown, establishing Fairburn as a higher education destination, taking advantage of Fairburn's history, utilizing the grounds of the Renaissance Festival throughout the year, and embracing the local film industry.

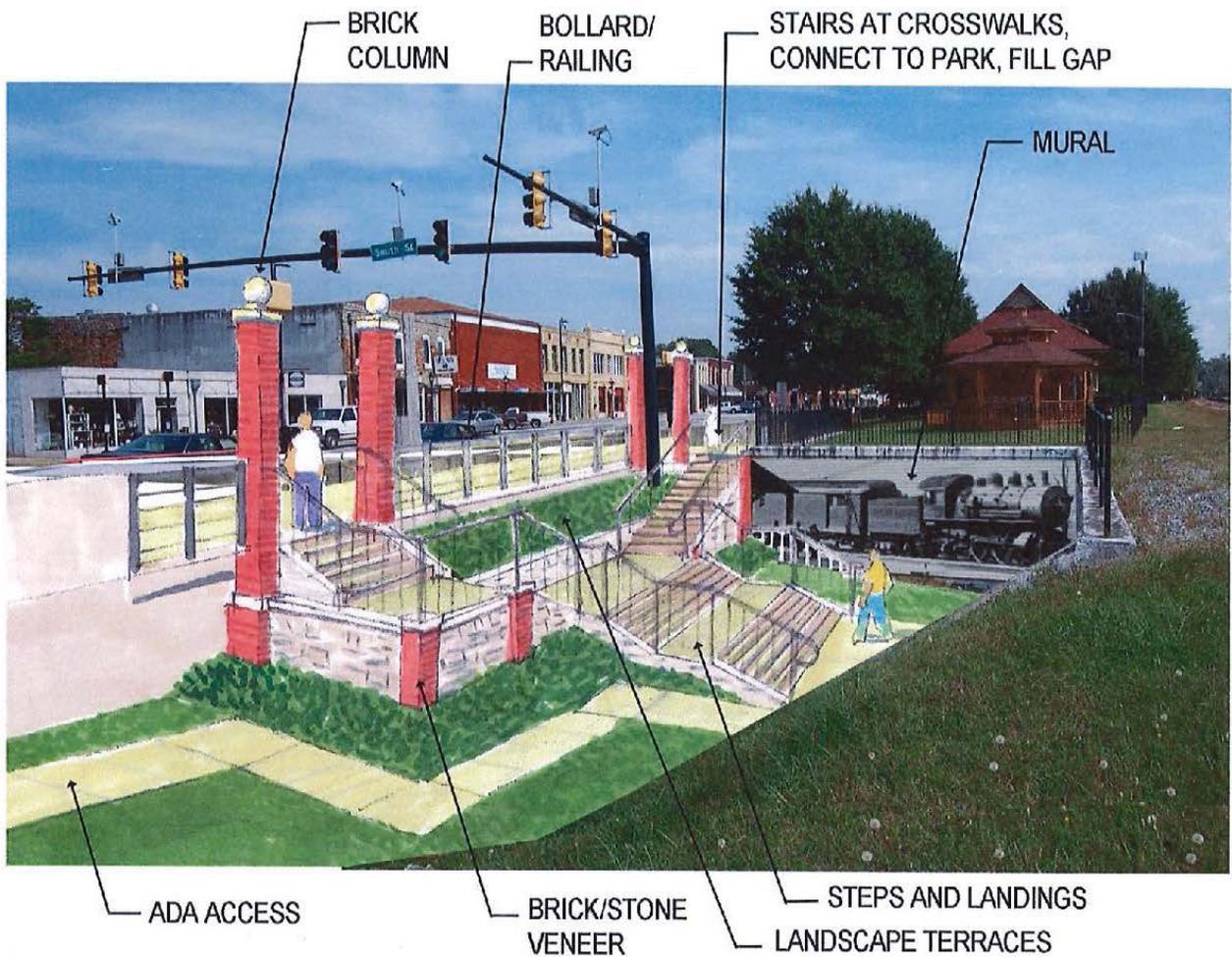
### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Economic Development Strategy lays out the following goals:

- Foster the attraction and recruitment of new businesses. Through marketing and business-friendly public policies and regulations, attract and recruit desired industry sectors.
- Promote the growth and expansion of existing businesses. Create a nurturing business environment supporting existing businesses that seek to improve, expand, and grow.
- Acquire real estate for business attraction and development opportunities. Identify strategic real estate properties in order to expedite development opportunities in desired locations in the City.
- Develop public infrastructure. Invest in public infrastructure as a means to induce private development and to improve the City's physical environment.
- Develop a talented and qualified workforce. Collaborate with education institutions and workforce development providers to prepare local residents for new jobs and career opportunities.
- Improve City living through community development. Promote the City's brand and identity. Develop activities, programs, and spaces that will highlight Fairburn's quality of life.

## LCI STUDY

In 2008, the City of Fairburn was awarded a grant through the Atlanta Regional Commission's Livable Centers Initiative to study the revitalization of the historic downtown. The study lists a mixture of uses, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly infrastructure, greenspace and connectivity, and preservation of Fairburn's history as key steps toward creating a thriving town center. Particular areas for development opportunities highlighted in the plan include any vacant or City-owned land in and around the historic downtown. The plan also reiterates recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan regarding the Downtown Historic District, which focus on appropriate mixed use development and walkable connectivity throughout downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods.



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## NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the above review of recent plans for the City of Fairburn as well as community input gathered throughout the process, below is a summary of key needs and opportunities. These statements highlight ways in which creative placemaking can be combined with other initiatives to revitalize downtown Fairburn.

### NEEDS

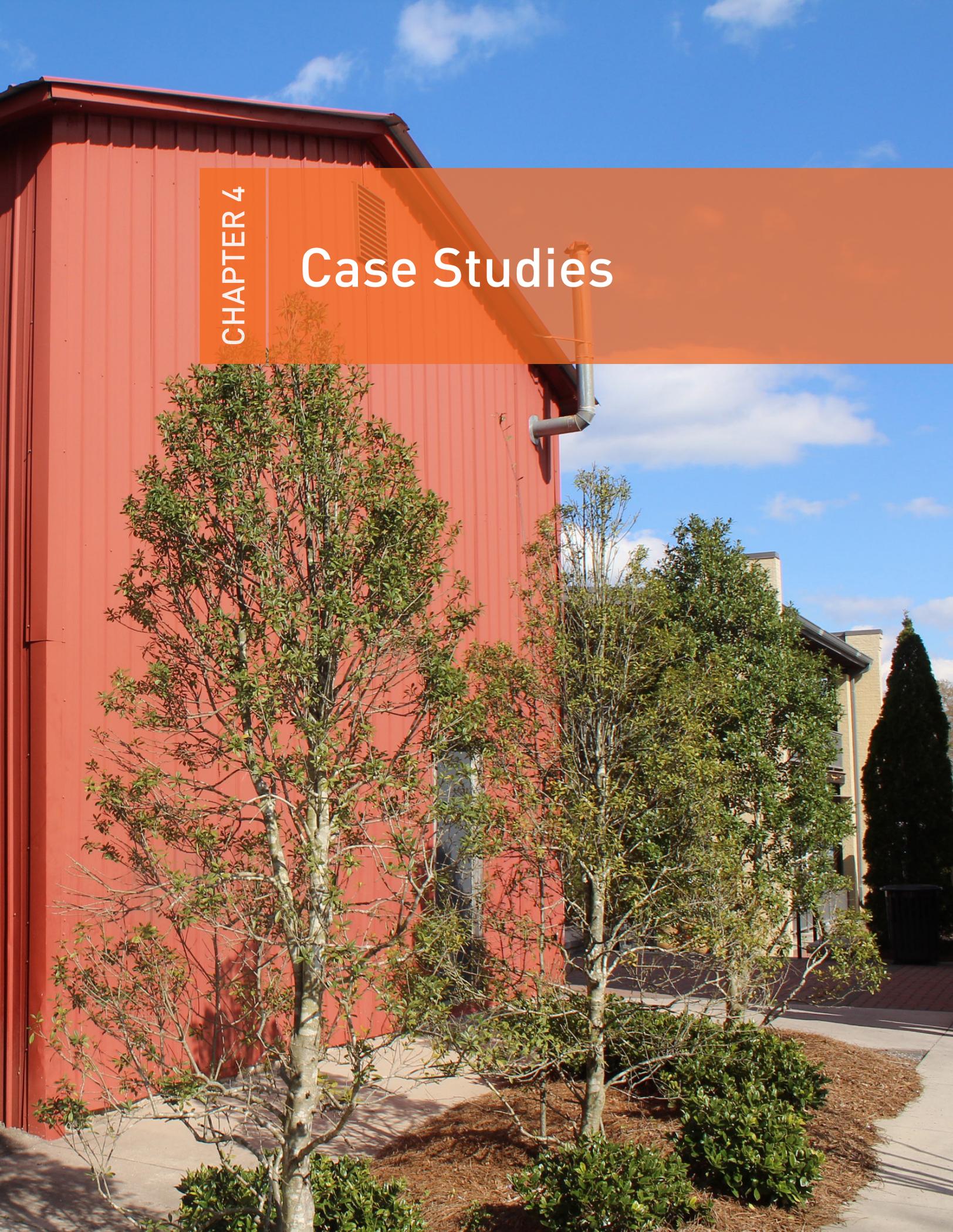
- Preserve existing and increase greenspace throughout the City. Greenspace can attract both visitors and new residents, and creates space for community activities and events in addition to regular recreation.
- Attract shops and restaurants that will cater to the needs of Fairburn residents and encourage visitors by implementing business-friendly policies. This adds vibrancy and activity in downtown, making it a place residents and visitors want to spend time and explore.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the City, particularly in downtown and near schools. In addition to improving general quality of life, better bicycle and pedestrian facilities allow residents and visitors to get to and around downtown without a car, also increasing vibrancy.
- Install signage that will act as wayfinding for visitors while also branding the City. Signage can be an opportunity for public art, but also allows Fairburn to enhance and promote community character.
- Ensure that local capacity can address the recommendations for creative placemaking initiatives in Fairburn.

### OPPORTUNITIES

- There is strong public support for economic development initiatives as well as improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- The existing historic buildings in downtown Fairburn contribute to the small-town atmosphere. Because residents strongly value their City's unique history, downtown can be utilized to enhance the character of the community by telling the stories of Fairburn.
- Fairburn has both educational institutions and arts organizations that attract visitors and residents to the area.
- There are significant vacant buildings and undeveloped parcels throughout the City, which could provide opportunities for art galleries and studios, event space, or educational uses related to the arts.
- Downtown Fairburn has spaces to host events, festivals, and performances.
- Fairburn and its surroundings are home to a growing film industry.

CHAPTER 4

# Case Studies



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## CASE STUDIES

Many communities across the region have invested in arts and culture, often creating a formal arts master plan as a guide for this investment. In this chapter, seven communities in metro Atlanta serve as case studies for different approaches to arts and culture. The communities below mostly do not specifically address creative placemaking, which is a broader goal than public art alone, but can still act as a resource as the City of Fairburn continues to plan for and implement the strategies described in this report.

### FULTON COUNTY

In the fall of 2018, Fulton County released a Request for Proposals to complete a Public Art Master Plan for the County. The plan will establish where the Department of Arts and Culture fits in the arts and culture realm given the prevalence of cities within Fulton County. The Department will continue to act as a resource for cities, providing grant funding and support for local initiatives. As of April 2019, the planning process was underway.

### HAPEVILLE

The City of Hapeville is known across the region as an arts destination. Despite not having a formal public arts plan, the City has undertaken a number of public art projects over the past 15 years, such as the “Sharing Our Stories” project to celebrate the history of the community by sharing stories of residents. Other significant initiatives include the public art Bench Project, the temporary “ Things Are Taking Off” program, and the Hapeville Arts Mural Program. Each project listed here required coordination between a range of partners, including the Hapeville Arts Alliance, the Main Street Board, the Hapeville Design Committee, the Hapeville Association of Tourism and Trade, City staff, and local businesses, artists, and schools.

### NEWNAN

The Newnan-Coweta Art Association (NCAA) facilitates the arts and culture programs and events in Newnan. Many NCAA members offer classes and workshops for all ages, and the organization supports local schools and students. A scholarship program set up by NCAA helps students in high school pursue art in college. Additionally, NCAA offers opportunities for local artists to showcase their work at three main events each year - the Labor Day Arts & Crafts Festival, the NCAA Juried Art Show, and the Christmas Arts & Crafts Market.

## PEACHTREE CORNERS

City of Peachtree Corners Arts & Culture Master Plan Goals: Improved sense of community, community identity and branding, improved education, economic development growth, and improved physical and mental health of the community.

Key Strategies: Encouraging creative placemaking, functional art, walkability improvements, arts market analysis, and movie studios and production

Funding Sources:

- SPLOST funds
- Hotel/motel taxes
- 1% of development fee for the arts
- Event ticket sales and fundraising
- Private sponsors
- Arts grants
- Tax allocation districts

## DULUTH

Duluth Defined Goals: Guide the City as they design public spaces and infrastructure, members of the business community as they provide jobs and services, and members of the real estate community as they provide places to live.

Key Public Engagement: Residents were asked “Who is Duluth?” through a series of events and online surveys. Responses came in the form of phrases, essays, pictures, stories, songs, and artwork.

Funding Sources:

- Local, state, and federal grants
- Corporate partnerships
- Fundraising events and campaigns



cityof  
**Suwanee**  
PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN



## SUWANEE

City of Suwanee Public Art Master Plan Goals: Support the vision of Suwanee as a friendly, forward-thinking place with a strong sense of community by encouraging art that is engaging, memorable, and brings change to the City.

Key Success: SculpTour is a temporary sculpture exhibit which has resulted in some permanent additions to the City's collection of public art as well as a rotating set of works on display.

Funding Sources:

- Private donations
- Business sponsorships
- 1% of development fee for the arts
- Encourage developers to incorporate art into their projects

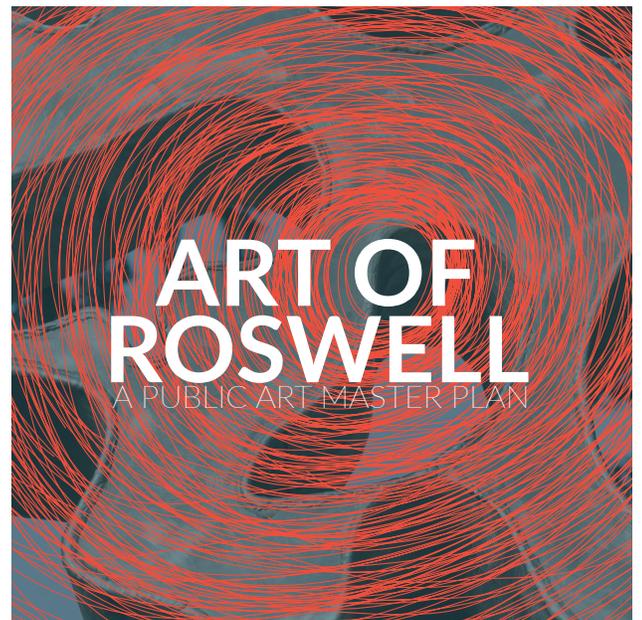
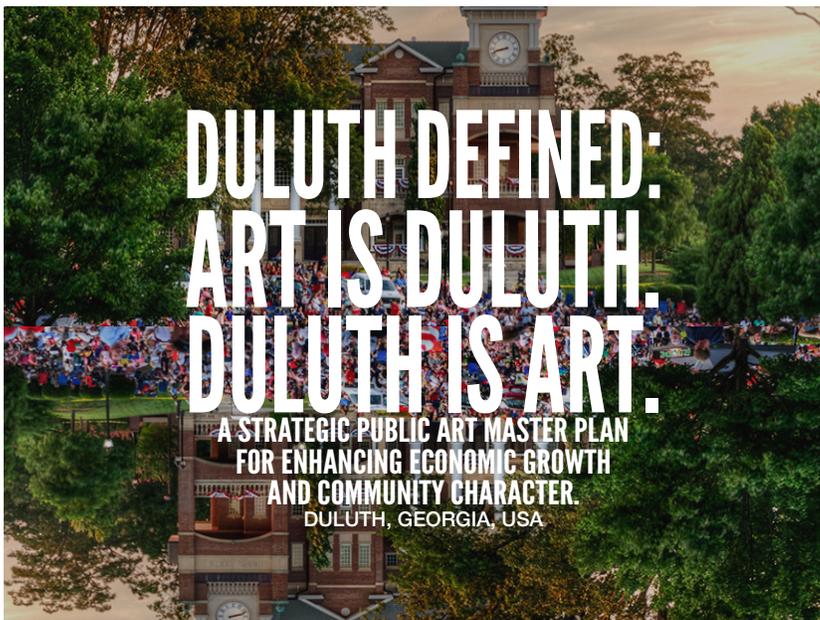
## ROSWELL

Art of Roswell Goals: Developing a public art program that is unique to Roswell, encouraging public participation and collaboration, and driving economic prosperity, social cohesion, and capital through investment in public art.

Key Player: The Roswell Arts Fund is an existing nonprofit which will continue to play a leadership role in implementation through community outreach and fundraising.

Funding Sources:

- 1% of development fee for the arts
- Allocation of General Fund for the arts
- Arts grants



CHAPTER 5

# Community Engagement

**STAGE DOOR  
ACTORS'  
ENTRANCE**

# COMMUNITY

## STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee was made up of Fairburn residents, business owners, artists, and City staff.

- The first meeting in September 2018 provided an opportunity for members to discuss Fairburn’s assets and the value of arts and culture. Some key assets identified include events such as the Fall Festival, the walkable downtown, access to greenspace, and the unique character and history of the City.
- The second meeting was organized as an ARC Civic Dinner, which allowed attendees to talk with a smaller group over dinner. The discussion focused on recent arts and culture experiences in the region, the importance of the arts, and hopes for Fairburn and the arts. Highlights from this discussion include a strong desire to preserve and display Fairburn’s history, to better utilize public spaces downtown such as the stage and courtyard and underpass, and to use art as an educational tool and for storytelling.

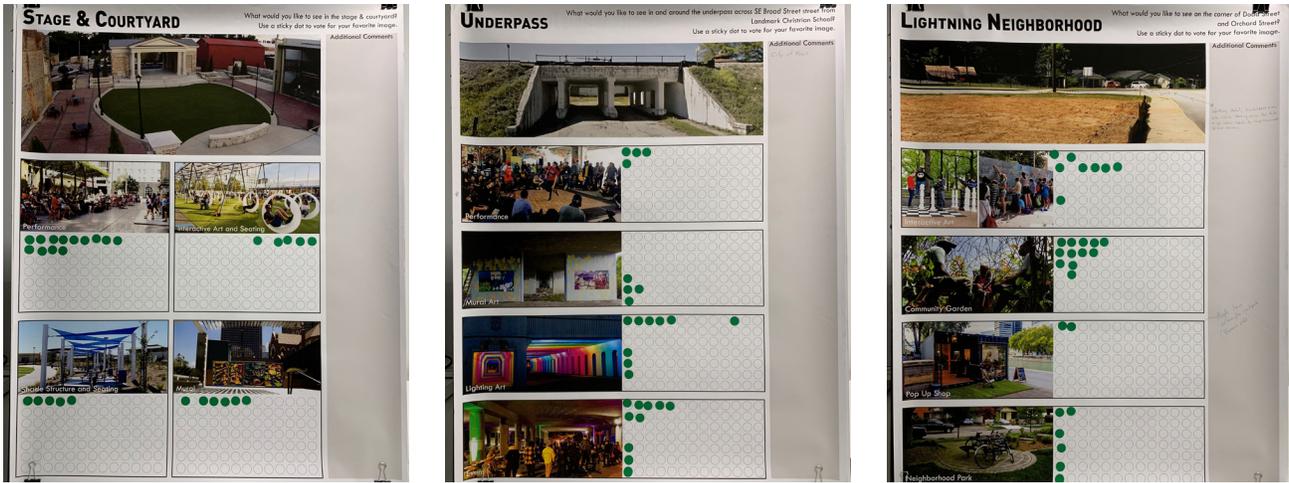


- The third meeting was held in the Southside Theatre Guild building in January 2019. This meeting began with a walking tour of the three priority sites in downtown - the underpass, stage and courtyard, and the alley. At each location, members were asked what elements they would like to see there. This information, along with a follow-up survey, was used to create the renderings for these sites.

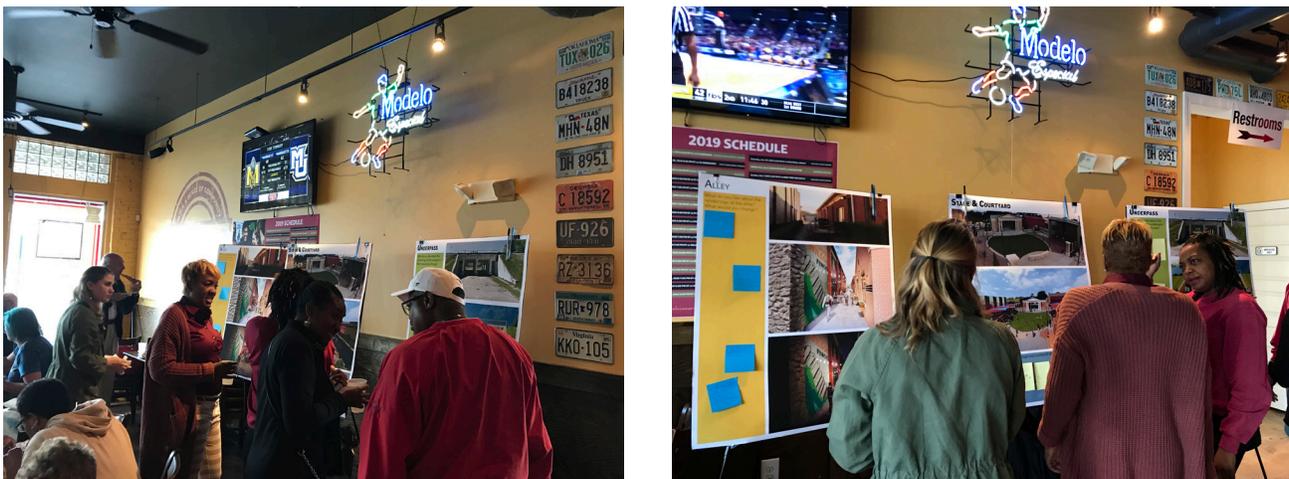
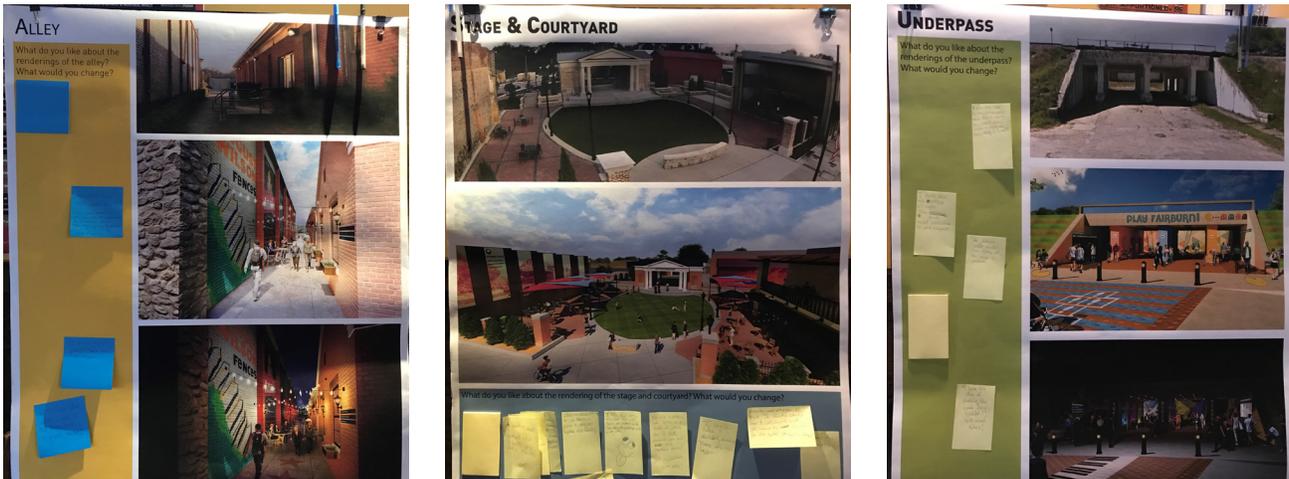




- Visual preference survey boards were also taken to a meeting for the Lightning Community Plan to gain input on the Lightning, underpass, and stage and courtyard sites in particular. Neighborhood residents indicated support for a use of that site that would act as a community space, such as a community garden.



- Once drafts of the renderings for the three priority sites had been completed, the boards below were set up for an evening at Oz Pizza in downtown Fairburn. Feedback from the public on all renderings was overwhelmingly positive.



CHAPTER 6

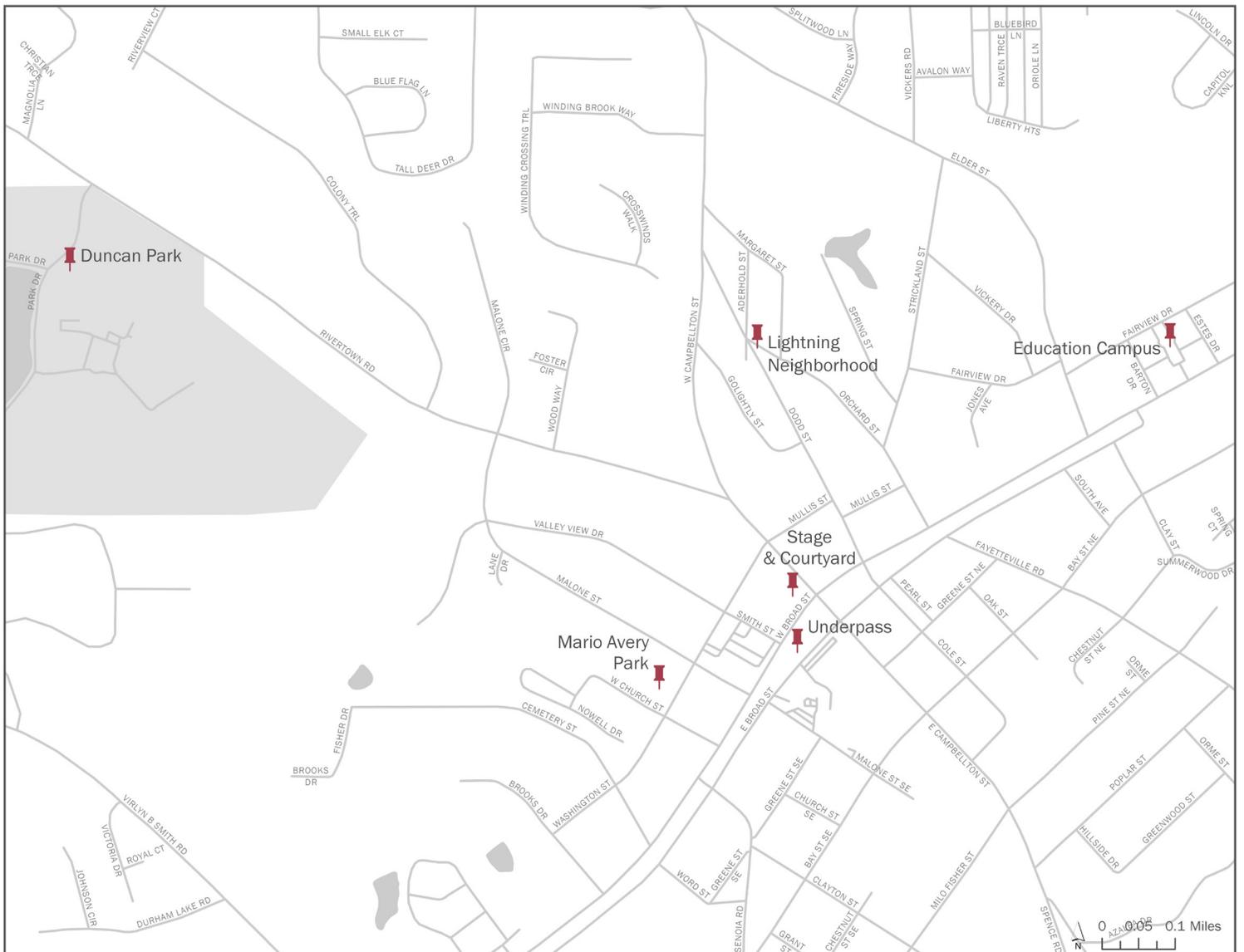
# Recommendations

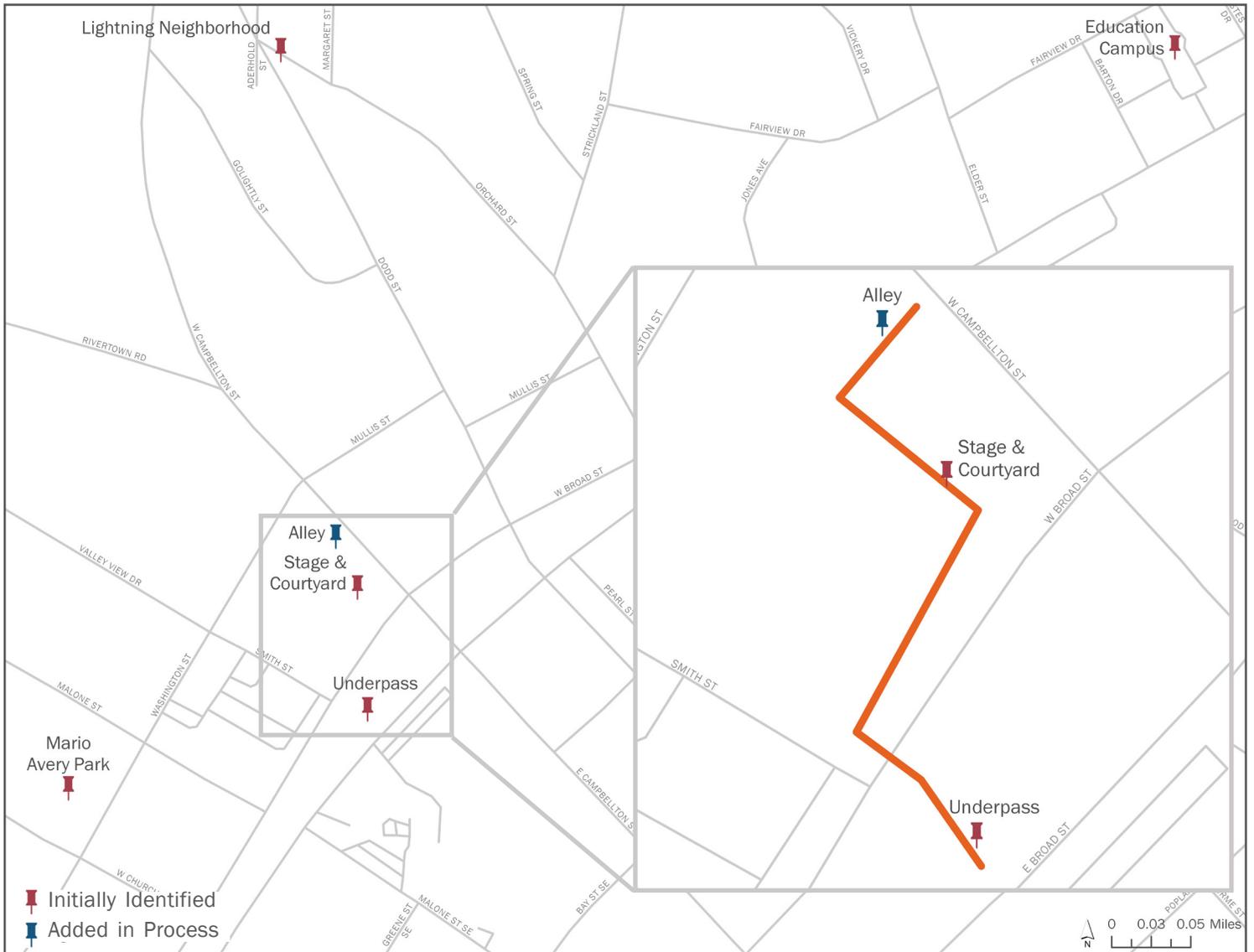


# PROJECT IDEAS

The recommendations detailed here are a reflection of discussions with elected officials, City staff, the steering committee, residents, and arts patrons in Fairburn. This is a preliminary list of sites and recommendations, and any initiatives undertaken will require additional community conversations. ARC staff is able to assist with the facilitation of follow-up discussions and coordination with potential partners.

The following map shows the six sites initially identified by the City as potential locations for public art. Duncan Park functions well as a recreational facility and is a great asset for Fairburn, but did not become one of the final six sites, which are concentrated closer to downtown in order to aid the City's goal of revitalizing downtown.





Above is a map of the final recommended sites, which are discussed in more detail on the following pages. The alley between the Southside Theatre Guild and the municipal court building was identified in this process as an additional underutilized space in downtown with potential for creative placemaking. The stage and courtyard, underpass, and alley have been identified as priority sites, in part due to their location and connection to one another. As seen in the inset map above, these three sites can create a clear path that draws people into the historic downtown. Creating a path through these three priority sites is visible in the community and already has some amount of dedicated resources and programming. The education campus, Mario Avery Park, and the site in the Lightning neighborhood can be revisited in a second phase of this process.

Implementing projects on any of these sites will help accomplish the City's goal of revitalizing downtown Fairburn by making it a place residents and visitors alike want to spend time and patronize local businesses. Focusing on the historic downtown allows Fairburn to incorporate the City's past in revitalization efforts, bringing the community together in a space that is open and welcoming to all.

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## KEY NEXT STEPS

- Reconvene the steering committee as the Fairburn Arts Council. The Arts Council represents the community and works with City staff to plan and execute events and initiatives. Members also advocate for arts and culture in Fairburn.
- Identify any key missing members of the Arts Council. Interested representatives from local arts and culture organizations, schools, and businesses should be included.
- Hold meetings with the Arts Council and potential partners to discuss priority projects and strategize how to move forward. Representatives from one or more cities around the region with strong public art and creative placemaking programs, such as those listed in Chapter 4, should also be included in a meeting to learn more about their processes for successful implementation.
- The Arts Council should create action plans for each of the three priority sites. This process will involve gaining input from the community and obtaining funding.
- The City should determine the need for and role of the Fairburn Art and Architecture Advisory Committee.
- The City should consider hiring or contracting a staff member to focus on the arts. If this is not a possibility, the City can identify existing staff to devote time to the arts. This staff member should oversee the Arts Council and coordinate all activities among City staff from various departments, while acting as liaison between the Arts Council, City Council, and the public.

# STAGE & COURTYARD

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



## RENDERING



## STAGE & COURTYARD

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### BACKGROUND

The stage and courtyard is the most visible of the three priority sites, but existing uses do not utilize this space to its fullest potential. Current uses include a weekly summer farmers' market, some concerts, festivals, and wedding and graduation photographs. In order to better utilize this public space, the recommendations on the following page were discussed by the steering committee, staff, and the public.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Additional shading is a top priority at this site. The exposed courtyard with no shading is a deterrent to potential users in warm weather months. This need provides an opportunity to create public art that acts as a shade structure.
- Another issue often noted in discussions with the community is the lack of pedestrian scale amenities, such as furniture, interactive art, play structures, and lighting, which would make the space more inviting.



- Feedback from the community suggested more programming on the stage to showcase local performers and attract both visitors and residents to the space. A number of local organizations and schools, such as the Southside Theatre Guild, South Fulton Studios, Renaissance Festival, Georgia Military College, Brenau University, Landmark Christian Academy, and other local schools, could provide some of this programming at low cost to the City.

- The stage and courtyard has a number of blank walls surrounding the space, which could provide opportunities for murals to help activate the space. The content and location of potential murals would require further community conversations.



## KEY PARTNERS: SOUTHSIDE THEATRE GUILD & GEORGIA RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

The Southside Theatre Guild is an ideal partner for programming the stage and courtyard, particularly given its location on the north corner of the courtyard. In order to both promote shows at the theater and to activate the space, the Southside Theatre Guild should consider performing here in the days leading up to a new performance. The performances should not necessarily be full-length or involve too much set up, but shorter scenes may draw in people from the community who might not otherwise attend a show. As seen in the rendering above, the Southside Theatre Guild should also use the blank walls on its buildings for murals or other art, which can also make the space more lively and inviting.

The Georgia Renaissance Festival, which takes place next to Duncan Park, should also consider hosting performances before the festival officially begins each spring. Much like the Southside Theatre Guild performances, these can be short and simple, but should activate the stage and courtyard by drawing in people to watch. They may also encourage the local community to attend the festival itself.

Any other local performing arts group or ensemble from Fairburn schools should also have the opportunity to perform at the stage and courtyard. Any performances that take place there may be coordinated either with a larger event taking place, such as the Fairburn Fall Festival, or with other smaller performances or events at some of the other sites, which would help to draw people along the path created by the three priority sites.



# UNDERPASS

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



# UNDERPASS

## RENDERINGS



# UNDERPASS

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## BACKGROUND

In 2009, the City of Fairburn received funding through ARC's Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) to plan an improved streetscape on Broad Street in downtown. Part of this study identified the underpass across the street from Landmark Christian Academy, which is not accessible to vehicles, as a potential pedestrian crossing from SE Broad Street to SW Broad Street.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The renderings on the following page show some ideas of what could come to this space given the infrastructure improvements of the LCI. These are not specific plans, but rather suggest what the future of this site might look like depending on further community conversations. The elements included in the renderings came from conversations with both the steering committee and the public.

- In order to allow this space to be a safe and comfortable connection to downtown Fairburn for pedestrians, lighting is key. It makes the space inviting at any time, and encourages pedestrian use of this connection.
- Another way to facilitate the use of this as a pedestrian connection is through signage that highlights key destinations in either side of the underpass. Wayfinding signage could point towards restaurants, shops, City facilities, or schools.

- Seating encourages residents and visitors alike to spend time in this space. This offers an opportunity for functional or interactive art, such as the swings seen in the daytime rendering.
- The blank walls of the underpass in its current condition could be painted by local professional artists. Alternatively, students from local schools and colleges, which would engage younger Fairburn residents in this process and allow them to feel ownership of the space.
- Much like the stage and courtyard, this space could be used for performances that showcase local talent and draw residents and visitors to the area. Programming of the space is key, and could be coordinated with other events or performances in Fairburn.
- As part of the LCI work, stairs will be added to connect this lower street with Broad Street on the other side of the underpass. These stairs also offer an opportunity for murals or creative signage.
- Potential partners for this site include Dashboard, Fulton County Arts & Culture, local schools, and Savannah College of Art and Design.

## KEY PARTNERS: LOCAL SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITIES

Due to its location, Landmark Christian Academy should be a strong partner for work done at the underpass. Students and faculty may be a part of the planning process to determine which recommendations are undertaken and what the lighting, signage, and art might look like. There is also an opportunity for students to be involved in creating some of the murals. This could also be extended to other local schools as well as students from Brenau University and Georgia Military College. For example, this might take the form of a class focused on creating murals or an installation, or could involve a competition for students to submit their designs. Allowing members of the community, particularly young people, to be involved in creating art can help to give them a sense of ownership over and personal investment in the space.



# ALLEY

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



# ALLEY

## RENDERINGS



# ALLEY

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## BACKGROUND

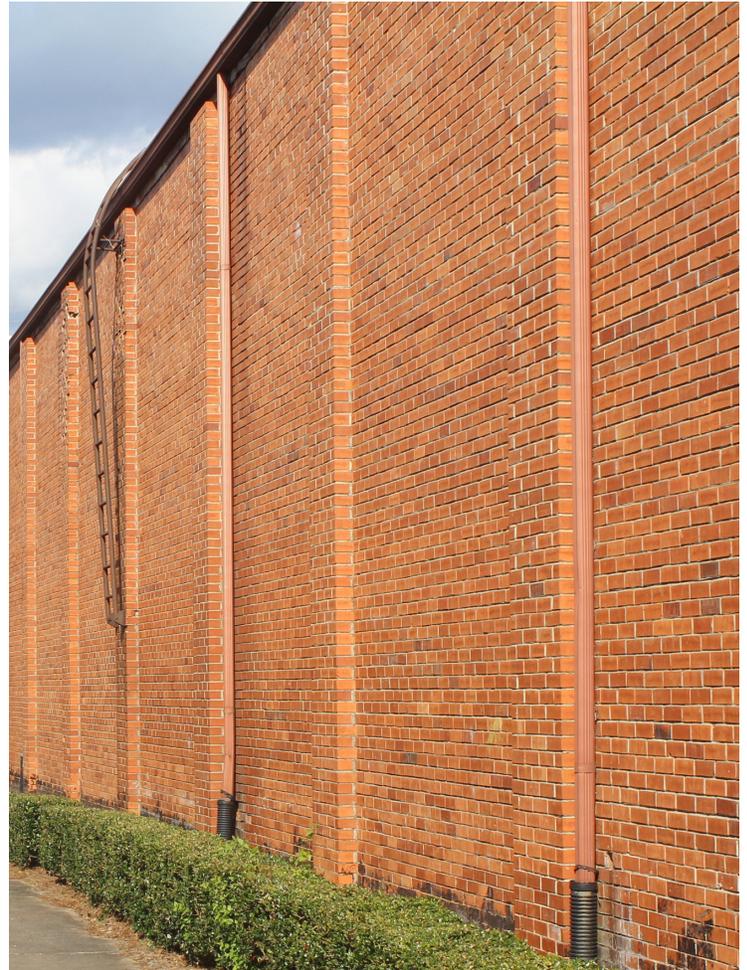
The space between the Southside Theatre Guild (pictured above on the left) and the municipal court building (on the right) leads from the parking lot behind Broad Street onto Campbellton Street, and is typically trafficked by pedestrians throughout the day and into the evening. The alley has been prioritized due to its high visibility in downtown Fairburn and the existing support for creative placemaking initiatives from the Southside Theatre Guild and the City itself.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on community feedback on the alley, some key recommendations are listed below.

- Because of its proximity to the theater, the alley often gets used at night, whether by patrons attending a show or by performers walking to and from rehearsal. While there are lights along the wall of the court building, they are not attractive or inviting. Conversations with the community indicated interest in having warmer lighting on this site. Stringed lights, for example, could offer a more welcoming alternative to the existing lighting.
- The brick walls on either side of the alley are currently blank, and offer opportunities for murals or temporary art installations. The Southside Theatre Guild building has “panels” that could be used to delineate between a number of artworks.

- The alley could be further utilized not only as a passageway but also as an event space. Particularly before and after shows at the Southside Theatre Guild, with the addition of lighting and art, the space could be used to host patrons of the theater. At other times, events in this space may be coordinated with other programming in downtown, such as performances at the stage and courtyard. In order to create more space in the alley for events, the community should look at how to better situate the ADA ramp into the municipal court building as well as the hedge along the Southside Theatre Guild building.



## KEY PARTNER: SOUTHSIDE THEATRE GUILD

The Southside Theatre Guild is a key partner in a number of recommended projects. Due to the historic nature of the building, the organization could benefit from applying to grant programs that fund needed infrastructure improvements for historic theaters. In particular, the Fox Theatre Institute has provided funding to many smaller theaters throughout the region. In order to remain an integral part of the Fairburn community, the Southside Theatre Guild should apply for such grants that will give funding for infrastructure improvements, which might be combined with some of the recommendations for the alley, such as the removal of the hedges to create space for events and the addition of murals on the wall. In addition to murals in the alley, a number of blank walls on buildings owned by the Southside Theatre Guild offer opportunities for public art. Some face the street, while others face the stage and courtyard area. Murals can help to activate the space and make it attractive and inviting, while also showcasing local artists. As an anchor arts organization in the Fairburn community, the Southside Theatre Guild can be a key actor in planning and implementing the projects recommended here.



# LIGHTNING NEIGHBORHOOD

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## BACKGROUND

This site, located at the corner of Orchard Street and Dodd Street, is in the Lightning neighborhood near downtown Fairburn. The Lightning Community Plan is currently underway. Next steps for this site should take into consideration the recommendations when the plan is complete.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The community expressed a strong interest in telling the story of this neighborhood at the site. In order to determine what the community would like to see in this space and how to achieve that, further conversations with the neighborhood are needed.

Residents of this neighborhood are primarily interested in passive uses of the site. One idea discussed with residents was a community

garden or small park. As four garden beds were recently added to the site (see photo below), this is a project that could be expanded.

Potential partners for this site include ARC, local artists, and Fairburn schools. ARC offers assistance with planning and implementing community gardens through programs such as the Community Development Assistance Program and the Orchard Project.



# MARIO AVERY PARK

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## BACKGROUND

This park, located next to City Hall, is currently a passive space near downtown Fairburn. Mario Avery Park is not highly programmed, and offers a significant amount of open greenspace for the community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Suggestions that came out of conversations with Fairburn residents include the expansion of existing gardens or continuation of the passive recreational uses. As this site is not located as

close to downtown as the three priority sites, uses here might be less intense and should be coordinated with plans for the sites downtown.

There was some discussion around the idea of using this site for the City's additional needs, which currently occupy the building downtown next to the Southside Theatre Guild. If the City no longer needed that building, the downtown space could be used for gallery, retail, or arts education space. Any plans for this site would require further discussions in the community and with City staff.



# FAIRBURN EDUCATION CAMPUS

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## BACKGROUND

The Fairburn Education Campus houses both a Georgia Military College and Brenau University location, and is located approximately half a mile from downtown. The buildings on the campus are owned by the City, and some currently have unused space.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In an effort to expand existing arts programs at both colleges, these spaces could be used as gallery and/or studio space. Empty buildings could also host events related to arts and culture that focus on students from the colleges as well as local schools. There were discussions about involving professors and students from the colleges in some of the art planned throughout

the City, such as murals, signal boxes, and temporary installations. This could be incorporated into courses or occur on a volunteer basis.

In conversations with the Fairburn community, it was brought up that bicyclists often use Roosevelt Highway, or Broad Street, as they bike south of Atlanta. Discussion surrounded the potential of becoming a “Bicycle Friendly Community.” There is currently not much to incentivize bicyclists to stop in Fairburn, but one of the empty buildings on the Education Campus could be used as a gathering spot before, during, or after a ride. Amenities such as restrooms, seating, and the opportunity to purchase food and water could be incorporated into this site.



## ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

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In addition to the sites identified by the City, a number of other potential projects were discussed throughout the process. These suggestions are described below, with examples from other communities and estimated costs.

### SIGNAL BOX MURALS

Several cities around the region have recently created programs to paint the signal boxes in their downtown. This is a relatively low-cost, simple way to add color to and improve the aesthetic of infrastructure that often goes unnoticed. The City of Decatur (pictured to the right) was one of the first in the region to hire local artists to paint the downtown signal boxes, and is a good example for Fairburn.



### TRANSMISSION TOWER ART

Southeast of downtown Fairburn, there are a series of older, mostly unused transmission towers. Often overlooked, these towers may provide an opportunity to add character to the city through art, with sufficient attention paid to safety. They could become unique local landmarks and help Fairburn stand out as a community that values arts and culture. Most notably, this has been done in Essen, Germany (pictured to the left).

## MURAL PROGRAM

There are many blank walls throughout downtown Fairburn such as the one pictured here, which offers an opportunity to establish a mural program. The City should begin by creating an inventory of all visible private and public blank walls. The City of Hapeville is well-known in the region for their mural program, and the City of Woodstock recently completed a large mural (pictured below) with substantial community involvement, and both would be good examples for Fairburn.



## CREATIVE CROSSWALKS

Painted crosswalks offer a number of benefits, such as added vibrancy downtown and increased visibility of pedestrians to drivers. While this may not be possible on Georgia Department of Transportation roads, painting crosswalks where the white stripes are visible (as in the example above) on roads owned by the City is a simple and cost-effective way to improve safety and create art in visible spaces.

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## **PARTNERSHIPS & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

The key in implementing any of the projects discussed in this plan is the creation of an arts council. A group of committed members of the community is needed to sustain these efforts. The arts council should organize events, identify ongoing priority projects based on community feedback, support local artists, and assist Fairburn staff with the implementation of projects. Two crucial roles the arts council might play are in creating and maintaining valuable partnerships and obtaining funding to implement projects. Below is a list of potential partnerships and funding opportunities for an arts council.

### **PERCENT FOR THE ARTS**

An increasingly popular choice for arts funding, a percent for the arts ordinance can be tailored to any community. The ordinance can apply to projects funded by the City and by private developers, or one or the other, and is typically between .5% and 2% of the project budget. The way in which this money is used also varies. It can be used to create a new piece of art in the fabric of the infrastructure itself, or a separate artwork not directly attached. Some communities allow a developer to donate the money to an arts council or arts fund instead of incorporating art into the project. Another approach involves incentivizing the percent for the arts, rather than mandating it, through greater floor-area-ratios or increased building height limits, for example.

### **FUNDRAISING EVENTS**

An arts council can coordinate events such as festivals, artists' markets, and art competitions to engage the community, make use of public spaces, showcase the work of local artists, and raise money.

### **CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS**

Creating partnerships with businesses, whether local to Fairburn or a corporation with an interest in the arts, can help to ensure sustained funding.

### **PRIVATE DONATIONS**

In some cases, private donations - which can take the form of financial contributions, works of art, or an individual's time - can help an arts council coordinate and manage programs and events.

## **NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS GRANTS**

Our Town is the National Endowment for the Arts' creative placemaking grant program. These grants support projects that integrate arts, culture, and design into economic, physical, and/or social initiatives to strengthen communities. Art Works grants are offered by the NEA to fund specific projects that celebrate creativity and cultural heritage, invite mutual respect for differing beliefs and values, and enrich humanity.

## **GEORGIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS GRANTS**

Both Vibrant Communities and Project grants are available through the Georgia Council for the Arts, and support single art projects or a series of related projects such as exhibits, productions, workshops, or an artist residency. Non-profit organizations and local governments, as well as educational institutions, are eligible to apply for these grants.

## **GEORGIA HUMANITIES GRANTS**

Georgia Humanities awards grants to non-profit cultural, civic, and educational institutions for projects that bring a range of people together for education and discussion on a topic.

## **FULTON COUNTY ARTS & CULTURE**

Fulton County Arts and Culture provides funding and services to local nonprofits and arts initiatives with a particular focus on ensuring all citizens' access to the arts. The Department runs various programs, including a mobile art center (Art Van) to help reach communities outside of the existing six Arts Centers, which can be rented for events across the County.

## **FOX THEATRE INSTITUTE**

The Fox Theatre Institute Preservation Grant Program offers funding for historic theatres in Georgia with the goal of increasing cultural and/or economic impact for the community. Awardees will receive operations expertise through seminars and professional development opportunities in addition to funding.

## **DASHBOARD**

Dashboard is an organization based in Atlanta working to bring art and design to non-traditional and under-utilized spaces. Recently, the group has organized annual gallery crawls in Hapeville and a temporary installation on Buford Highway called BuHi Lights.