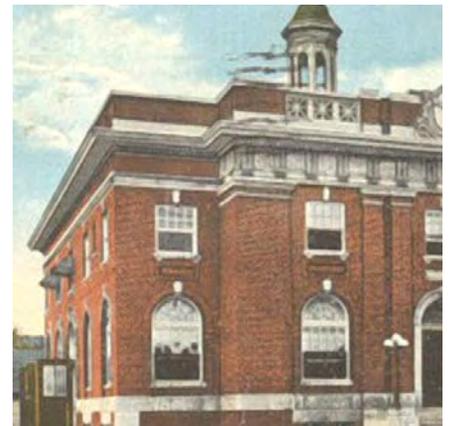
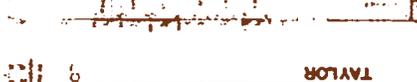
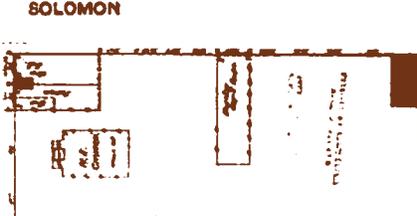
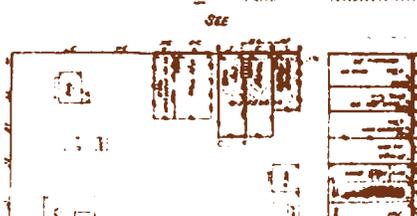
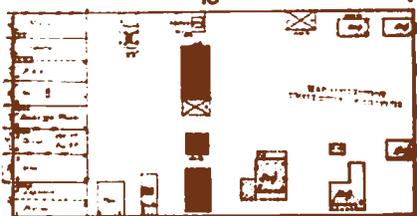
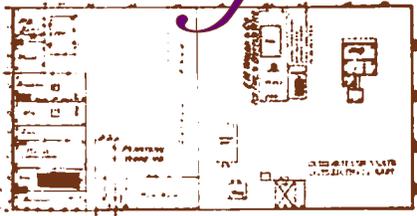
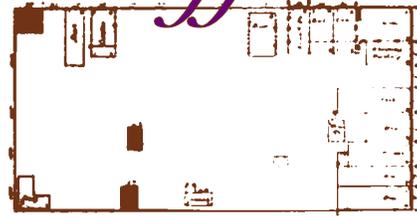


# Griffin, Georgia

## Downtown Redevelopment Plan



Prepared for The City of Griffin  
by Urban Collage, Inc.  
in association with  
Basile Baumann Prost & Associates, Inc.

# Credits and Acknowledgements

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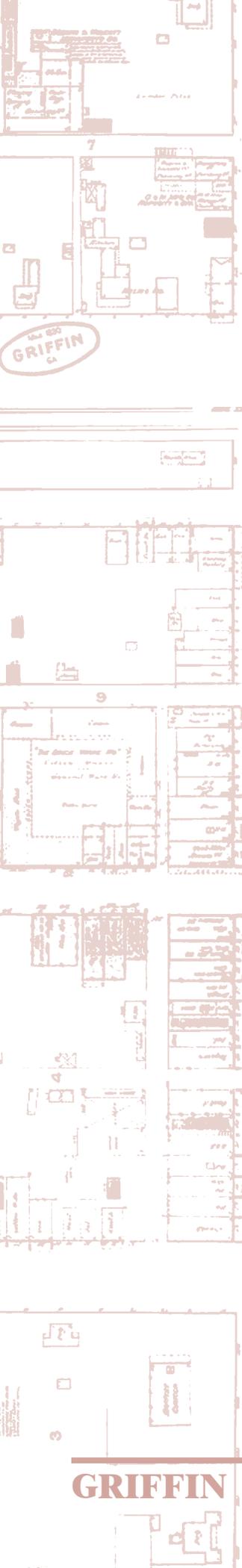
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# PART 1 - Redevelopment Plan Overview

## 1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Downtown Griffin is a place unique in the Atlanta metro region and in the state of Georgia. Founded to compete with Atlanta, it has preserved grand elements of a fine and aspiring city – broad boulevards, dignified public buildings, and elegant architecture – while much of historic Atlanta has vanished. This competition has also fostered a reluctance to acknowledge Atlanta’s proximity and growth; and while Griffin prospered as a center of textile manufacturing, the collapse of the domestic industry in the face of global production hit the city hard.

This redevelopment plan acknowledges both the physical decline that was the result of deindustrialization, and the significant resources and hopeful future the city can celebrate. The plan’s boundaries contains city hall, the Spalding County Courthouse, state and federal facilities, professional offices that serve these municipal functions, and new small businesses that have committed themselves to the improvement of Downtown – a solid foundation for any revitalization initiative. Likewise, the expansion of the nearby University of Georgia’s Experiment Station campus, and the major residential developments being built to the north will impact downtown in profound and positive ways. This plan, therefore, is a vision and a tool for downtown’s renaissance as a regional destination, an economic success story, and a jewel of Georgia.

*Downtown Griffin is poised for a renaissance*

Figure 1:  
Postcard view of  
Solomon Street  
looking east



## 1.2 EXISTENCE OF PLAN

This Griffin Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan Shall Constitute an Urban Redevelopment Plan of the City of Griffin, Georgia (the “City” or the “City of Griffin”) within the meaning of Chapter 61 Title 36 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated entitled the “Urban Redevelopment Law”, as Amended (The “Urban Redevelopment Law”).

## 1.3 PLAN CONSISTENCY

This Griffin Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan conforms to the general plan for the City as a whole, known as the “Comprehensive Plan for the City of Griffin, Georgia”.

Figure 2:  
Historic mixed-use  
building on Hill Street

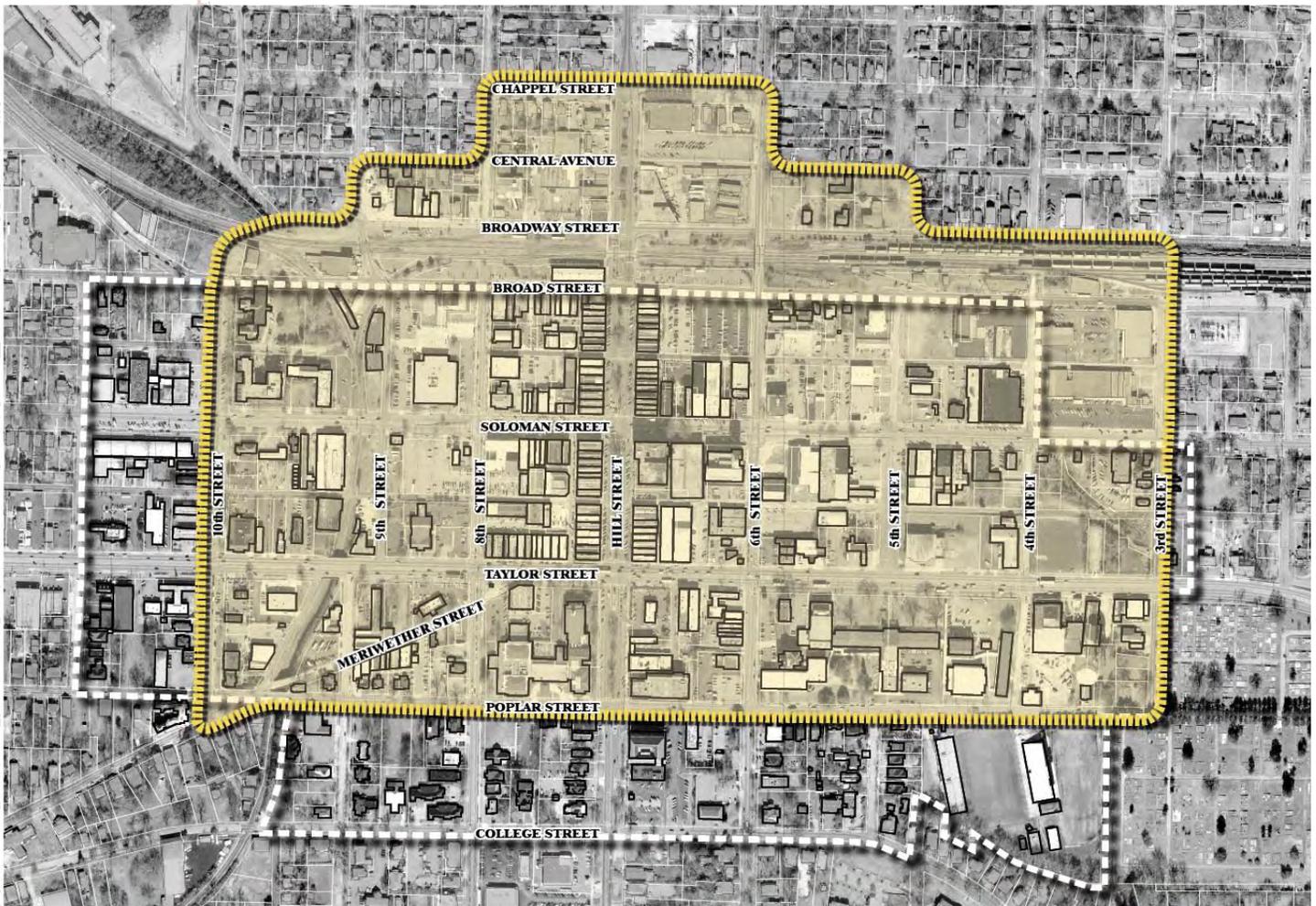


## 1.4 URBAN REDEVELOPMENT AREA (URA) BOUNDARIES

It is critically important that before redevelopment powers can be granted implement this plan, physical and demographic conditions within the proposed Urban Redevelopment Area (URA) must be objectively assessed to determine the level of “blight and distress”. The Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the City did by resolution determine certain property located in the City and more particularly described below (and on Figure 3) to be a “slum area” within the meaning of 36-61-2 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated and did designate such property as appropriate for an urban redevelopment project. Such property more particularly described below (and on Figure 3) is the “Urban Redevelopment Area” (hereinafter referred to as the “Griffin Downtown URA”) for purposes of this Griffin Downtown Urban Redevelopment Plan:

*The area generally bounded by Chappel Street, Central Avenue and Broadway Street on the north; 3rd Street and small portions of 5th Street and 6th Street on the east; Poplar Street and a small portion of Meriwether Street on the south; and 10th Street and small portions of 8th Street and 9th Street on the west (Figure 3 below).*

Figure 3:  
URA boundaries



Redevelopment Area Boundary  
Central Business District

**Downtown Redevelopment Area**  
October 2007  
**GRIFFIN, GEORGIA**  
Downtown Redevelopment Planning



## PART 2 - Goals & Objectives

Throughout the Downtown Redevelopment Plan effort, the planning team met with many area stakeholders and city staff and researched various previous planning studies to build upon past efforts and bring together local concerns. What follows is a brief synopsis of common themes that emerged through such efforts.

### 2.1 STAKEHOLDER ISSUES

The Planning Team conducted one-on-one interview with many stakeholders from Griffin, including:

Jewel Walker-Harps, NAACP  
Bonnie Pfrogner, Chamber of Commerce  
Sande Cropsey, Griffin Main Street/Downtown Development Authority  
Robin Nance, Downtown Development Authority  
Doug Holberg, City Commissioner at-large  
Martha McDaniel, Griffin Main Street Board  
Doug Krepps, Citizen

Figure 4:  
Hill and Solomon  
intersection, looking  
northwest



There were many common issues and themes from these interviews, including:

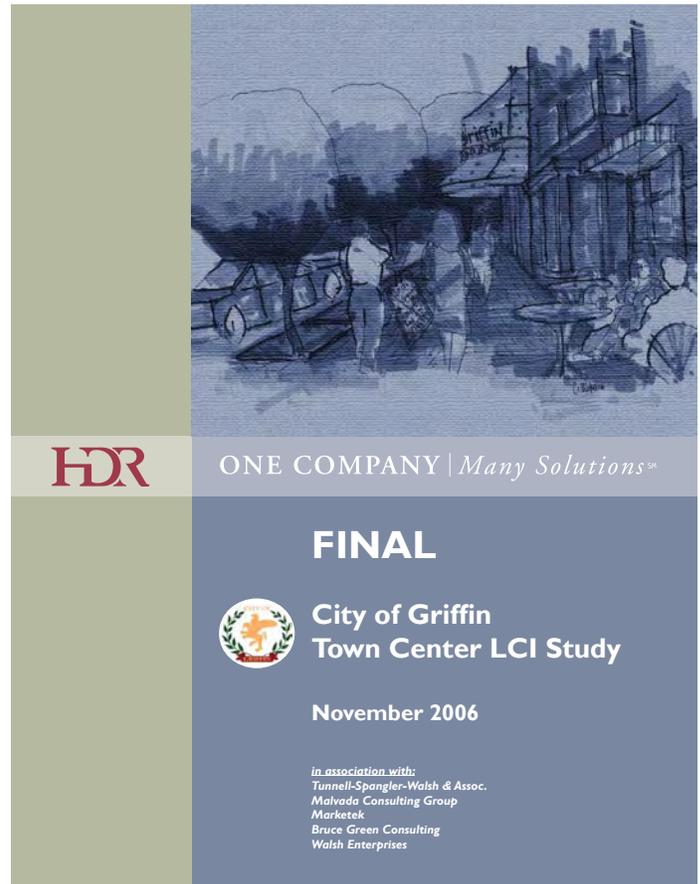
- Attracting new businesses, sustaining them and encouraging them to stay open has been a HUGE issue
- Gateways and approach roads to Downtown Griffin are extremely important, and are generally in need of improvement
- Freight through-traffic on Taylor Street is a major issue
- The coming presence of Sun City Peachtree (a forthcoming Del Webb development) and the expansion of the nearby UGA satellite campus are going to have a significant impact on Downtown
- No presence of business incubator is unfortunate
- The local government is in support of the proposed commuter rail line
- Lack of public open space is a big issue
- Artistic groups in Downtown Griffin are an asset
- Lack of commitment and follow-through by local developers has been unfortunate
- Area north of the railroad tracks must be improved to ensure long-term sustainability of Downtown

## 2.2 LCI GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study for Downtown Griffin, which was sponsored by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), was completed in November 2006. LCI efforts are generally performed on existing and emerging employment centers, town centers and corridors in order to direct development towards areas with existing infrastructure that will benefit the Metro Atlanta Region by minimizing sprawling land use patterns. Although the overall LCI Program has its own overarching goals, the Griffin LCI Study developed its own goals specific to the study area. These include:

- **Improve pedestrian connections and safety**
- **Plan for a future transit/commuter rail station**
- **Address current and future parking needs**
- **Increase housing choices**
- **Plan for mixed-use development**
- **Promote economic development**
- **Enhance Griffin's identity and sense of place**

To access more information on the Livable Centers Initiative or view the Griffin LCI Report, visit [www.atlantaregional.com](http://www.atlantaregional.com), follow links to "Land Use", then "Livable Centers Initiative."



## 2.3 ADDITIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This process builds upon the goals developed during the LCI Study and provides more specificity regarding future development potential, public improvements and accompanying financial strategies within the downtown area. A refined set of goals and objectives for this effort include:

- Provide a framework for potential financing, phasing and implementation of future growth;
- Develop realistic conceptual plans for sustainable development projects;
- Identify opportunities for open space and other public investments;
- Target specific areas to accommodate future housing;
- Prioritize and explore programmatic options for historic preservation targets

Figure 5:  
Dominant Downtown  
Vacancies



Figure 6:  
Plentiful Historic  
Rehabilitation  
Opportunities



## PART 3 - Issues & Opportunities

The inventory of existing conditions contains an assessment of the physical conditions for all properties within the project area based on the following categories: land use, building condition, building occupancy, and zoning. Additionally, two maps are provided highlighting major property ownership and development opportunities within the study area. The existing conditions analysis also extends to public space, with qualitative assessments made on the circulation and open space networks.

Existing conditions in Downtown Griffin were evaluated by compiling information into an extensive GIS database. The planning team conducted a walking survey of all buildings and parcels within the study area; land use, building conditions and building occupancy were determined/validated through this survey. The overall goal was to identify blocks of land conducive for redevelopment and buildings eligible for rehabilitation; the walking survey provides a good basis for understanding the overall property condition in the neighborhood, and consequently future development and redevelopment opportunities. In addition, it provides the legal framework for reconfirming the area's status as containing 'slum and blight' as defined by official State of Georgia urban redevelopment legislation.

Figure 7:  
Historic City Hall,  
currently vacant

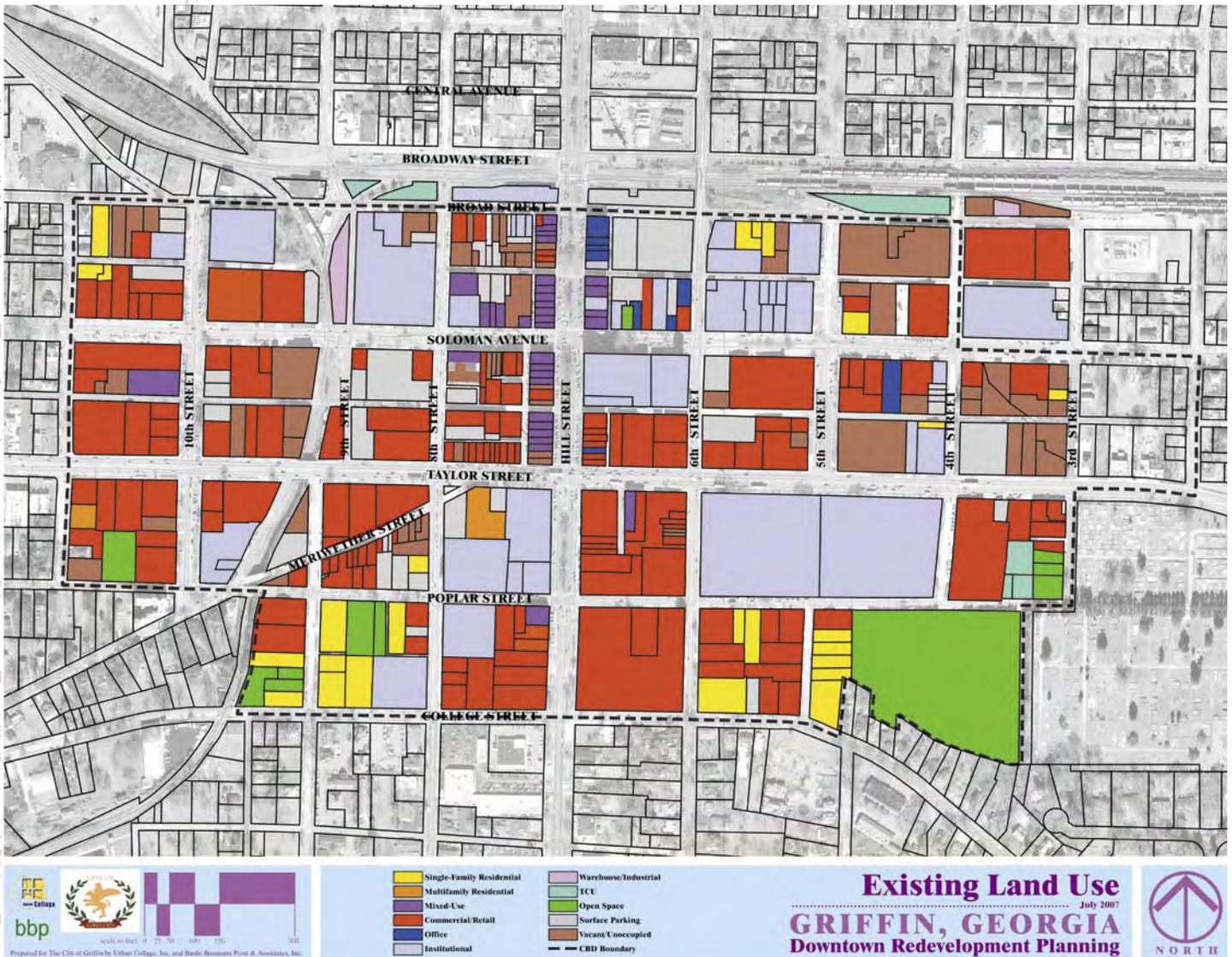


### 3.1 EXISTING LAND USE

Downtown is the historic commercial center of Griffin. As residents and businesses have moved out of downtown over time, the predominant land use of commercial has been significantly offset by vacant land, surface parking and a smattering of institutional uses. Hill Street, the “main street” in Downtown Griffin, acts as the “mixed-use corridor” for the core downtown area. This street is lined with historic, 2-story mixed-use buildings. Generally, the ground floor in such buildings is retail, although currently many of these buildings exhibit vacancies on upper floors. There are a number of institutional uses including the current City Hall, the historic City Hall property, half a dozen churches and the historic Griffin High School Campus (south side of Taylor Street). For open space in downtown, there is the large median on Hill Street, a small courtyard on Solomon Street, a few scattered lawns and the high school stadium. That said, there is actually a major shortage of usable public open space in Downtown Griffin.

*There is a major shortage of usable public open space in Downtown Griffin*

Figure 8:  
Existing Land Use



### 3.2 EXISTING ZONING

Downtown Griffin’s existing zoning districts only fall into a handful of categories. The predominant zoning category is CBD (Central Business District), shown below in brown. A few of the peripheral categories include LDR (Low-Density Residential) - below in yellow, MDR (Medium Density Residential) - in green, PCD (Planned Commercial Development) - in red, INST (Institutional) - in blue, and IND (Industrial) - in purple.

The intent of the CBD designation is to “promote and encourage the development and protect the viability of the downtown commercial area of the city.” Furthermore, “these regulations are also intended to reduce traffic congestion, provide adequate off-street parking and avoid the development of “strip” type business areas capable of adversely affecting the basic commercial and office character of the district.” The major advantage to the existing CBD zoning is that it will likely accommodate all proposed redevelopment within the core downtown area without being modified. However, it may be necessary to rezone some areas north of and adjacent to the railroad tracks per redevelopment plan recommendations. For instance, currently the blocks facing Hill Street north of the tracks are zoned PCD, which does not accommodate potential mixed-use redevelopment that may include residential. It may also be appropriate to designate currently-zoned industrial land flanking the railroad line to greenspace per potential redevelopment plans.

Figure 9:  
Existing Zoning



CBD	PCD
HDR-A	PID
Institutional	PRD
LDR-B	CBD Boundary
MDR	

**Existing Zoning**  
GRiffin, GEORGIA  
Downtown Redevelopment Planning  
July 2007



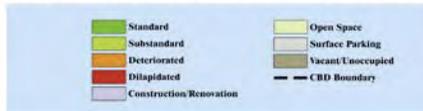
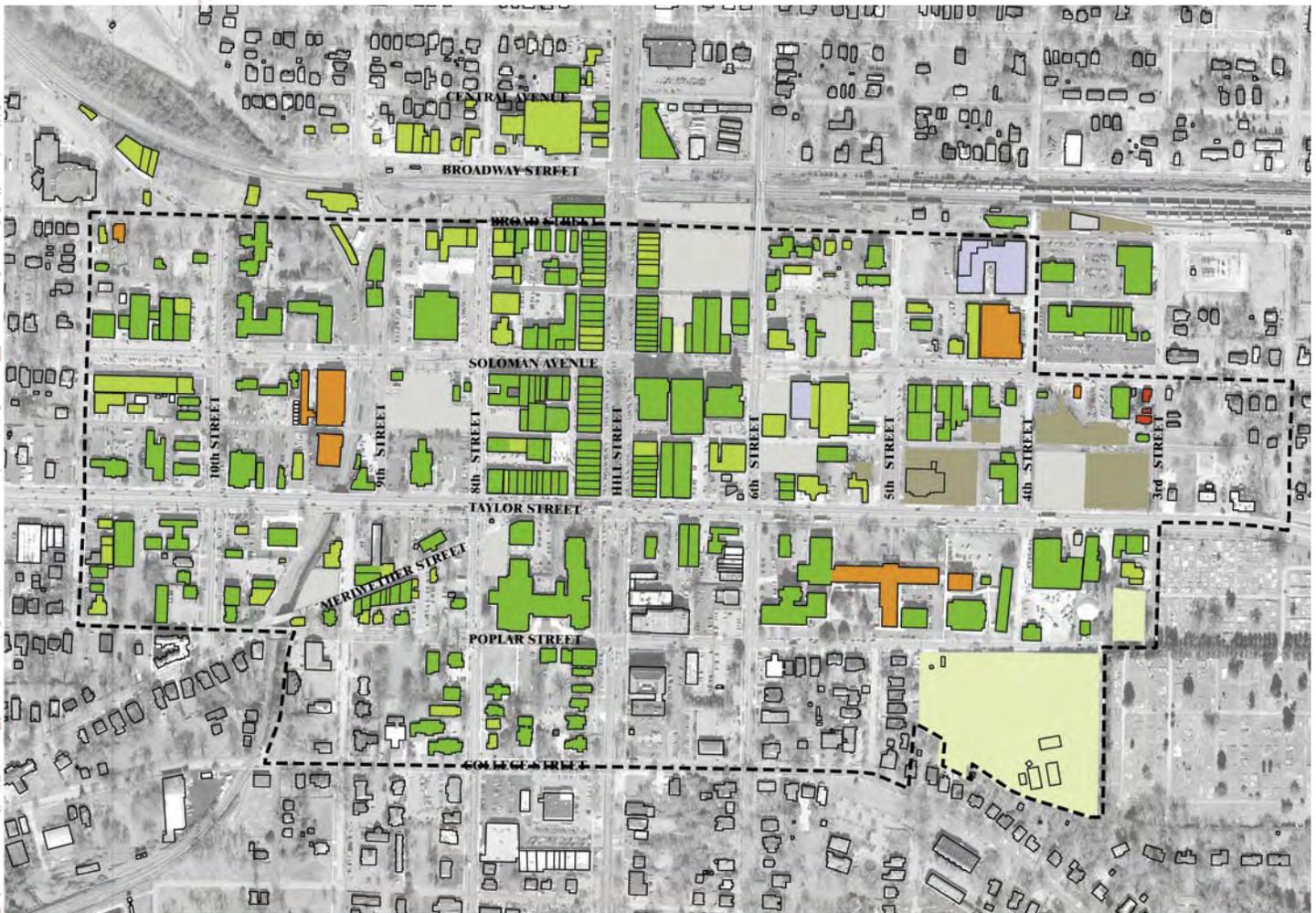
### 3.3 EXISTING BUILDING CONDITIONS

As part of this study, the planning team conducted a walking survey of building conditions within the historic downtown area. As referenced on the map below, there are several categories: *Standard* refers to a structure that is in relatively sound condition or requires only very minor repairs such as painting or facade/window cleaning. *Substandard* refers to a structure that requires some level of basic repair, but is structurally sound. In most cases, a “Substandard” structure requires “minor” rehabilitation and in many cases, only requires a modest monetary investment. *Deteriorated* structures typically require major repairs including a new roof, significant replacement of siding materials or major replacement of the foundation. In most cases, a deteriorated structure requires significant monetary investment. A dilapidated structure generally represents an obvious health and safety hazard. In most instances, the cost of repairing the structure is equal to or greater than replacing it. Unless there is significant historic value, demolition of these structures should be considered.

There are only a few instances of deteriorated structures and only one or two instances of dilapidated structures in Downtown Griffin. The vast majority of downtown buildings are in good condition, falling into the standard and, occasionally, substandard categories.

*Downtown buildings are generally in good condition*

Figure 10:  
Existing Building Condition



**Existing Building Conditions**  
July 2007  
**GRIFFIN, GEORGIA**  
Downtown Redevelopment Planning

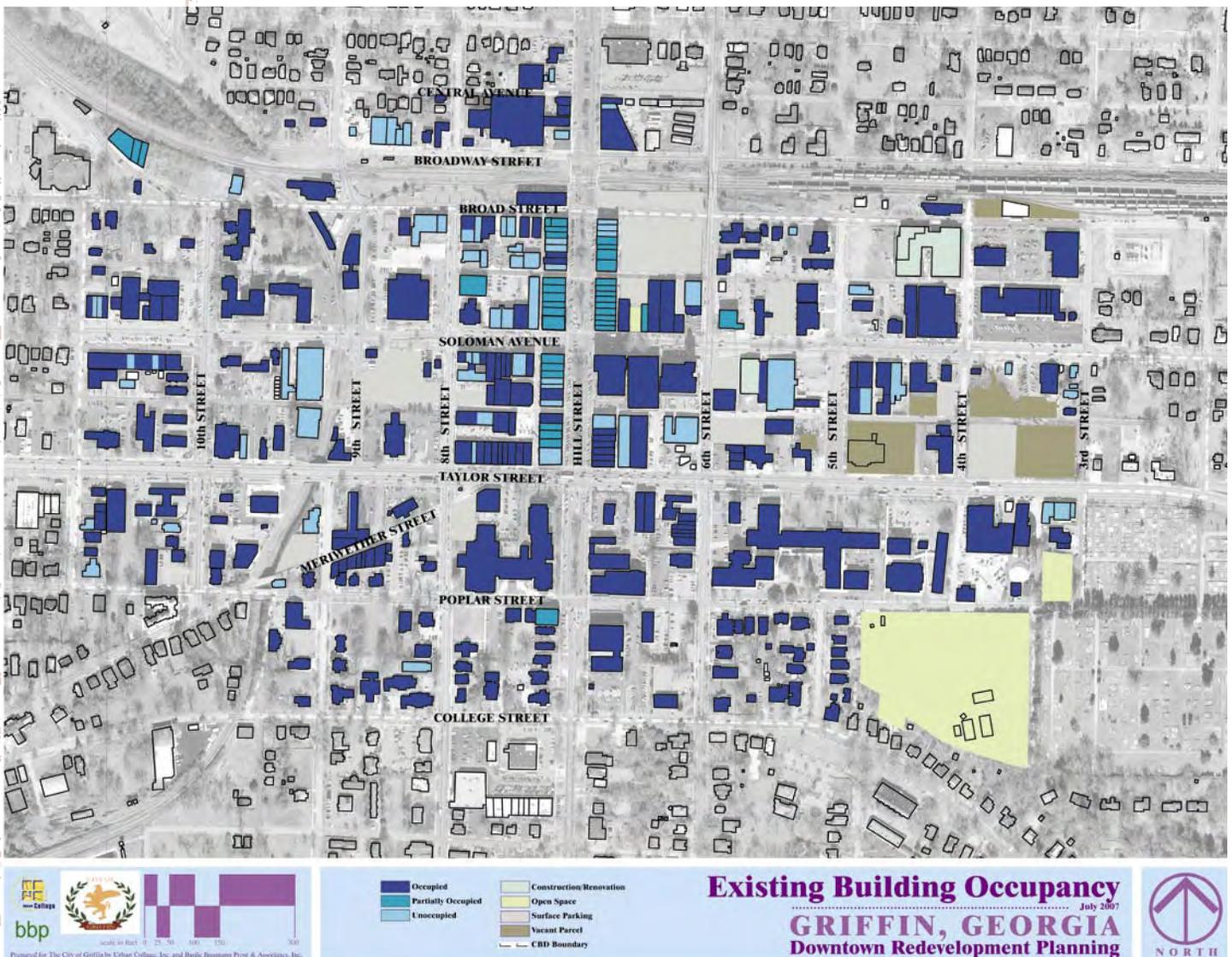


### 3.4 EXISTING BUILDING OCCUPANCY

As part of a walking survey, the planning team created an inventory of building occupancy within downtown. The three main categories are *Occupied*, *Unoccupied* and *Partially-Occupied*. Shown in Figure 11 below, a good portion of downtown buildings are occupied. Along Hill Street, however, there is a significant amount of vacancy, partially in ground-floor retail spaces and mostly in upper-floors of such buildings. Overall, there are very few fully-occupied mixed-use buildings in downtown.

It should also be noted that just because a significant amount of downtown structures are occupied does not mean that the uses within such structures automatically contribute positively to the health and vitality of Downtown Griffin.

Figure 11:  
Existing Building  
Occupancy



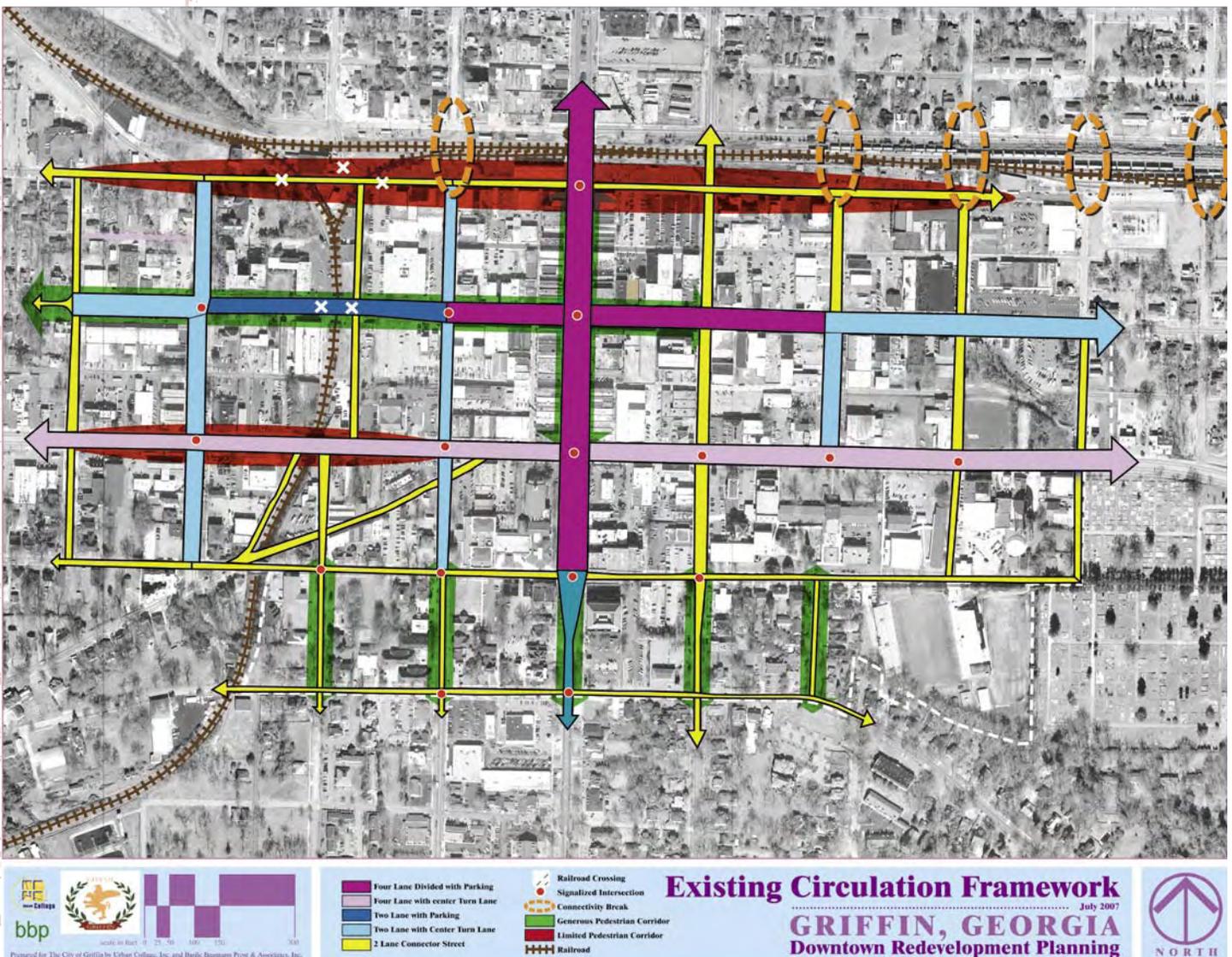
### 3.5 EXISTING CIRCULATION FRAMEWORK

One of the defining characteristics of Downtown Griffin is its street grid. While many new developments around the country struggle to establish grids on suburban “greenfields” and former industrial sites, Griffin has been fortunate to have such a network since its founding. This system of primary and secondary streets allows residences, businesses and institutions to be linked together with great connectivity and access.

The diagram below illustrates the vehicular and pedestrian movements in and around Downtown Griffin. The corridors with the highest auto capacity are Hill Street, Solomon Street and Taylor Street (in pink and magenta below). Two (2)-lane Connector Streets (shown in yellow) provide secondary connections within the grid. Corridors such as Solomon Street and Hill Street are the most conducive to pedestrian movement due to wide sidewalks, street lighting, shade trees and street furniture (see translucent green arrows below). The presence of the railroad tracks north of and parallel to Broad Street cause a series of connectivity breaks at 8th, 5th, 4th and 3rd Streets (see dashed orange rings below). Because of these breaks, both pedestrian and automobile movement over the tracks are funneled to the at-grade crossing on Hill Street and the historic bridge at 6th Street.

*Downtown has the advantage of a walkable street network*

Figure 12: Circulation Framework



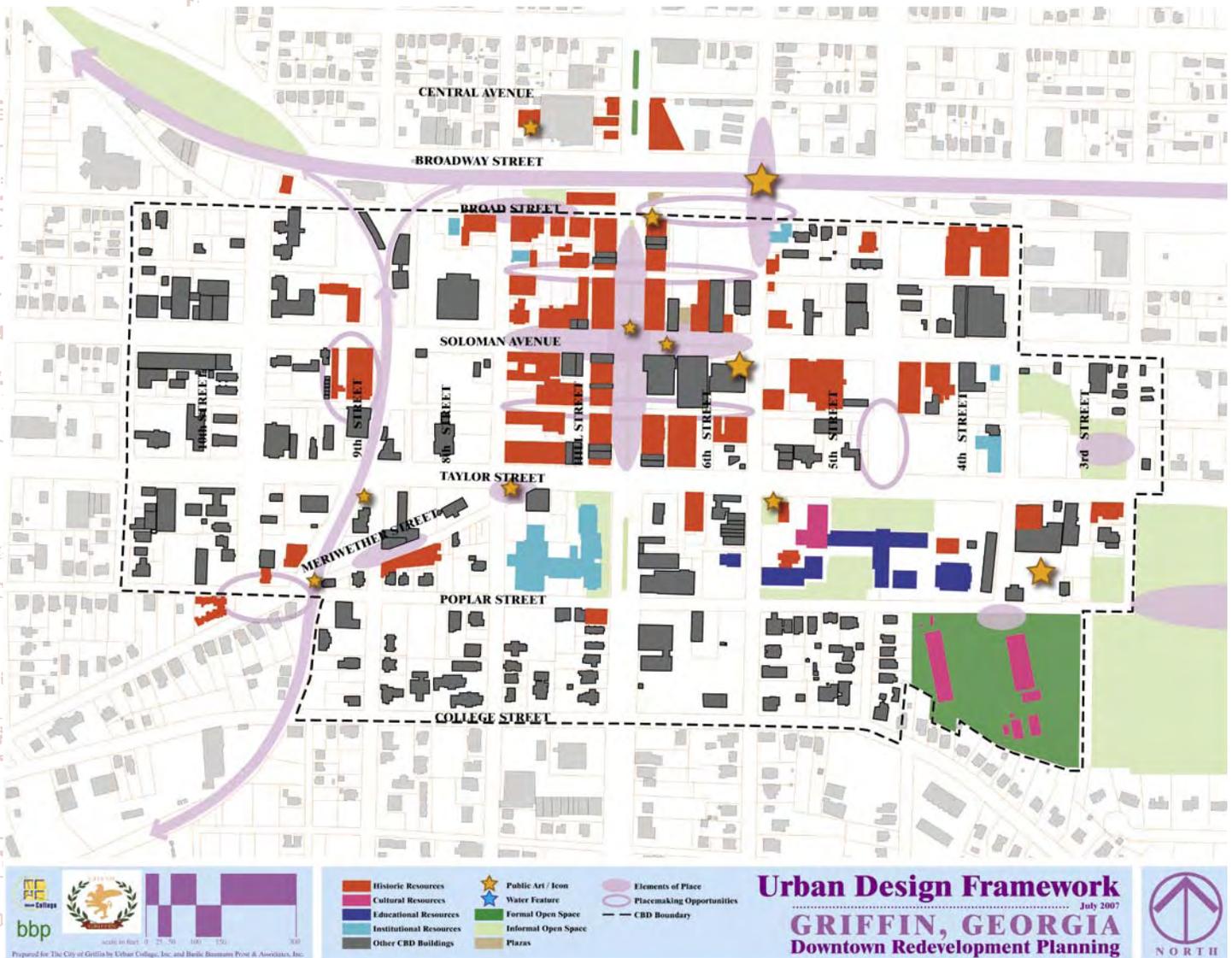
### 3.6 URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

Although somewhat subjective, the Urban Design Framework analysis (Figure 13) is helpful in understanding many of the more intangible aspects of Downtown Griffin. “Elements of Place”, shown below in pink, include historic markers, artistic statements, signage and public spaces that act as icons and add to the uniqueness of downtown. Gold stars denote public art, cultural resources are shown in magenta, institutional resources in light blue, and educational resources in dark blue.

*Downtown is distinguished by many historic buildings*

One of the most striking things about Downtown Griffin is the large concentration of historic buildings (shown in red below). The quantity of historic structures centralized in the downtown core area roughly near the intersection of Hill Street and Solomon Street is exceptional, and should be leveraged for downtown redevelopment.

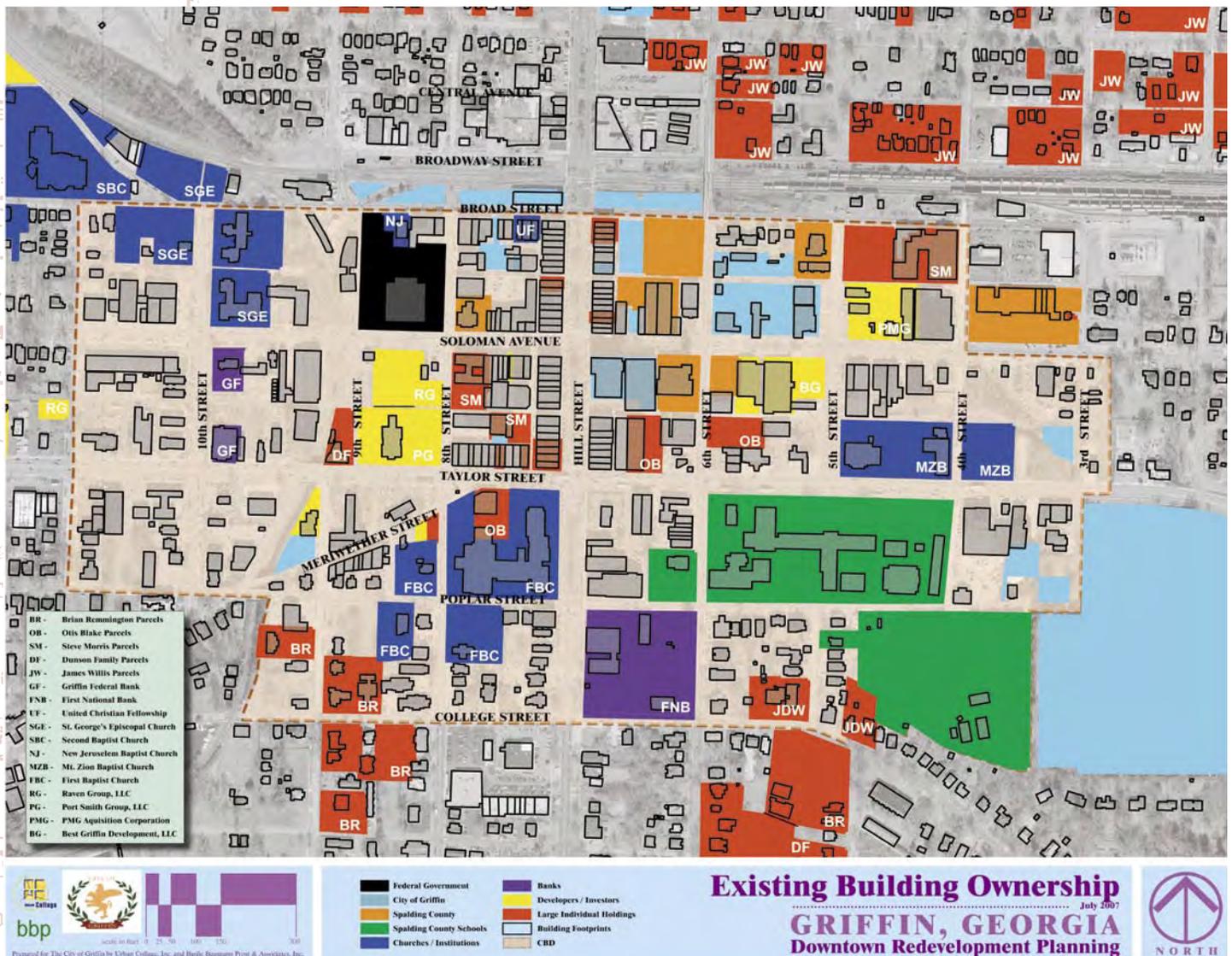
Figure 13:  
Urban Design Framework



### 3.7 SIGNIFICANT PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

As illustrated in Figure 14, the vast majority of Downtown parcels are owned by Institutional and Governmental entities. Among them are First Baptist Church (FBC), St. George's Episcopal Church (SGE), Mt. Zion Baptist Church (MZB), Spalding County Schools (in green), City of Griffin (light blue), Spalding County (orange) and the Federal Government (in black). Several private land owners also control significant amounts of property, including investment partnerships like the Raven Group, Port Smith Group and PMG Acquisition Corporation. A much broader list of property owners exists at the historic retail area along Hill Street as well as the single-family neighborhoods immediately adjacent to downtown.

Figure 14:  
Property Ownership

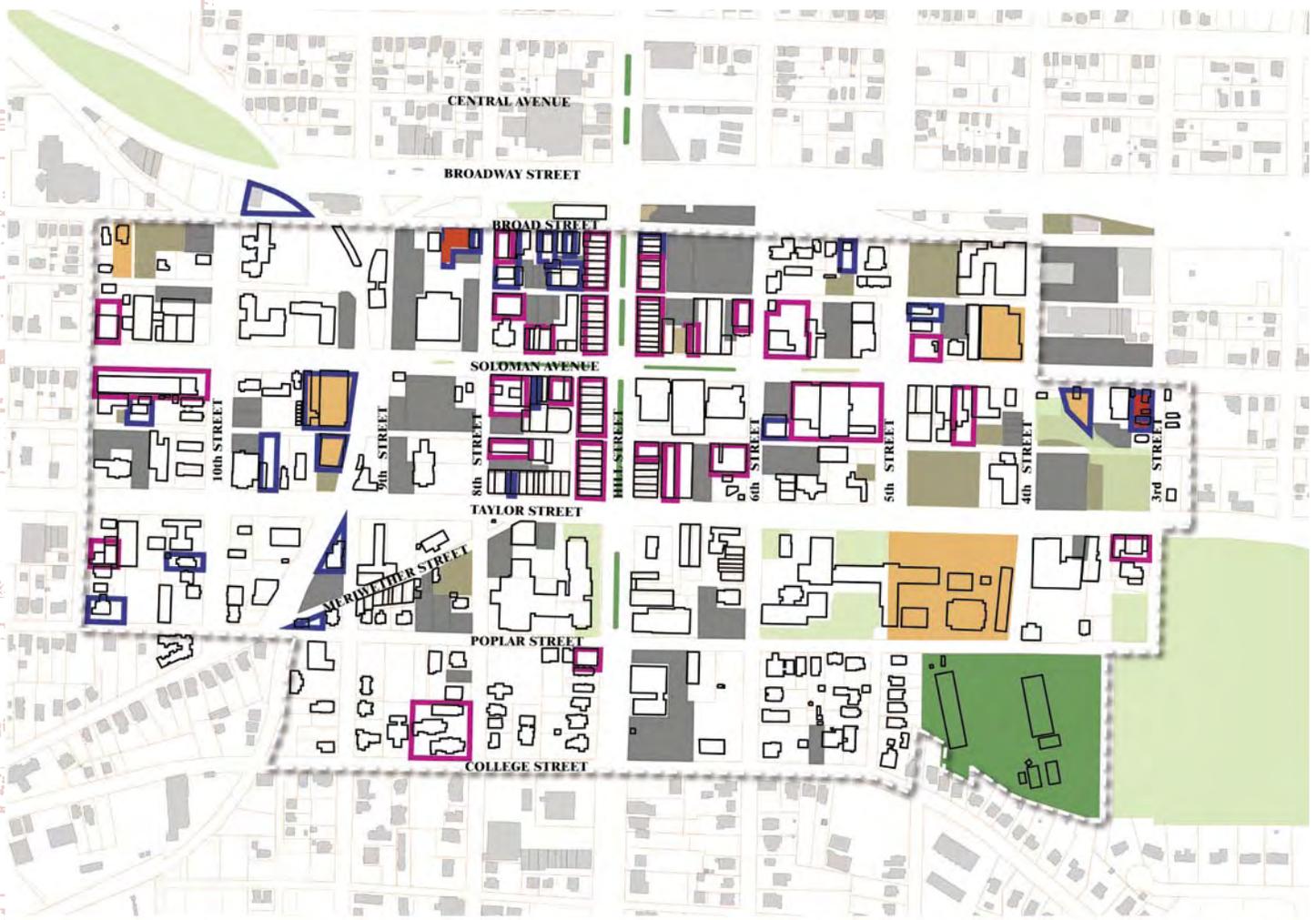


### 3.8 DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Although it is perhaps a disadvantage that the “core area” in Downtown Griffin currently includes a large amount of partially-occupied buildings and vacant land, it could be an asset when it comes to accommodating future long-term development. There is significant revitalization opportunity immediately on Hill Street, where historic 2- and 3-story mixed-use buildings contain mostly vacant upper floors. These floors would ideally be suited for future residential redevelopment or renovation. Similarly, there exists a major surplus of historic buildings for potential renovation within a 5-minute walk of Hill Street.

Illustrated by the grey areas on the Figure 15 below, there are also a significant number of large vacant or underutilized parcels within the core downtown area that are, at least physically, ready for new development. A few of the more notable examples include the east side of the block bordered by Hill, 6th, Solomon and Broad; the surface parking lots south of the Post Office, and the areas around the historic city hall. There are also many potential long-term redevelopment opportunities including the current Kentucky Fried Chicken and Burger King sites, the Meriwether Street retail area, and sites along 4th Street.

Figure 15:  
Development  
Opportunities



- Dilapidated Building Condition
- Deteriorated Building Condition
- Unoccupied Properties
- Partially-Occupied Properties
- Vacant Parcels
- Surface Parking
- Formal Open Space
- Informal Open Space
- CBD Boundary

**Development Opportunities**  
July 2007  
**GRIFFIN, GEORGIA**  
Downtown Redevelopment Planning



### 3.9 FINDINGS OF NECESSITY (SLUM AND BLIGHT)

The State of Georgia’s urban redevelopment legislation requires proof of slum and blight in order to validate a redevelopment plan such as this one. There are many planning indicators of slum and blight in a neighborhood or downtown, including building structural deficiencies, building deterioration, conflicting land uses or circulation patterns, infrastructure disrepair, vacant land, unoccupied buildings, tax delinquency, adverse economic and social conditions, and overall poor environmental conditions. While some of these issues do not apply in Downtown Griffin, several do.

Although the buildings within Downtown are generally in good shape, the number of vacant or partially-occupied buildings is significant. Very few of the buildings on Hill Street - Griffin’s primary downtown street - are fully occupied. Vacant land is significant throughout downtown as well. Fast-food restaurants, highway strip commercial, large surface parking lots, and other suburban building forms have encroached on downtown over the last thirty or forty years - in many cases along downtown’s principal streets and adjacent to historic buildings. These developments have significantly deteriorated the overall quality of life in the area, producing an abundance of impervious paved surfaces, a significant deficiency in open space, and an overall increase in Griffin’s “heat island.” These developments have been detrimental to encouraging alternative forms of transportation beyond the automobile, discouraging pedestrian and bicycle mobility from harsh sidewalk conditions and excessive curb cuts. And, although the grid increases connectivity, the railroad line immediately north of downtown significantly hinders north-south traffic and frustrated physical interaction between downtown and the Spalding Heights neighborhood to the north. Population in Downtown Griffin has remained stagnant while the population in the city has grown.

Given this, eight Findings of Necessity specifically apply to Downtown Griffin and support the need for the creation of a URA. These are summarized below, and illustrated where applicable in Figure 16:

**Low Real Estate Values / Tax Assessment Growth:** Considering the fact that the area is the downtown core of a medium-sized city in the Atlanta metro area, a county seat, and an LCI, real estate values have not appreciated comparable to other similar metro downtowns. Land in Downtown Griffin is roughly valued at \$370,000 per acre, while land in a similar metro county seat such as Lawrenceville run upwards of \$500,000 per acre. Growth in the value of downtown from new construction has been very limited, with less than ten building permits issued for downtown in the last five years.

**Obsolescent Buildings:** Several important buildings in downtown are functionally obsolete and require major physical upgrades to return them to productive use. Among the notable examples are the Taylor Street School, the Sam Bailey Building, the Hotel Spalding, the Griffin Banking Company building, and the Old City Hall. These buildings are crucial to downtown’s integrity and identity, but in their layout or condition are liabilities to private sector investment.

**Visual Blight:** The blocks to either side of the Hill Street frontage are dominated by large surface parking lots, deteriorated or missing sidewalks, excessive curb cuts, and exposed and distracting electric utility lines. Barbed security fencing is prominent in some locations as well. Taylor Street is a high-volume traffic corridor and has strip commercial uses, especially to the west, that are in some cases poorly-maintained and contrast with the historic Hill Street corridor.

**High Commercial Vacancies / Underutilized Buildings:** Approximately 40% of the buildings in the URA are unoccupied or partially-occupied. Many are underutilized given their context, especially the office uses that dominate the prime pedestrian retail frontage along Hill Street.

**Low Commercial Rental Rates:** Downtown rents are significantly lower than other

*Downtown needs major quality-of-life enhancements*

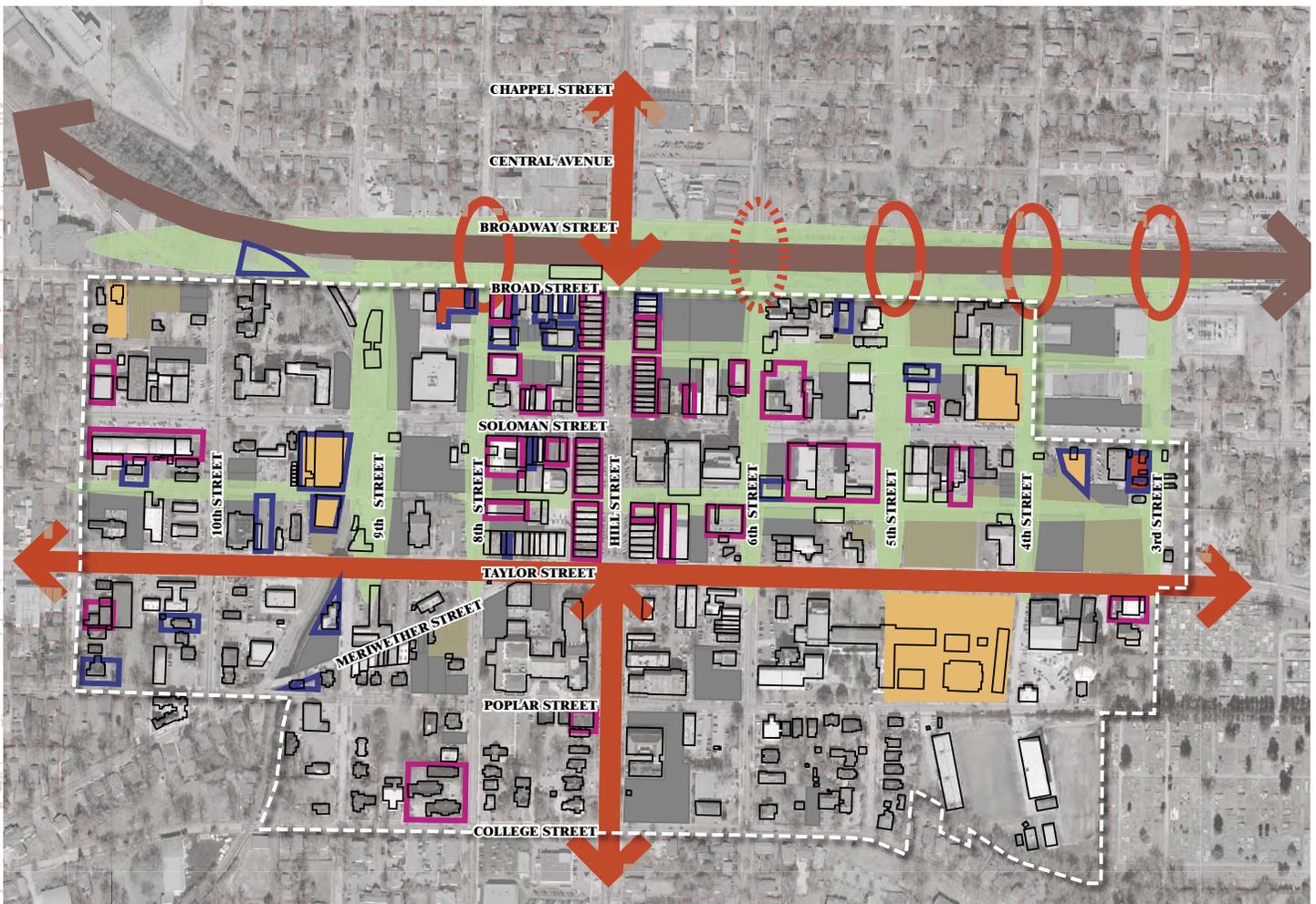
commercial areas of Griffin, and strikingly lower than Atlanta metro averages. Commercial rents average between \$7 to \$9 per square foot downtown, while other areas of the city see rents between \$23 and \$25 per square foot. Metro Atlanta rents can in some comparable locations run upwards of \$18 per square foot.

**Poverty Threshold:** According to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the entire URA is within an economically “less developed area” that contains two or more census block groups with 20% or greater poverty. An illustration of this can be found on the DCA website at <http://www.rdis.org/website/poverty/viewer.htm>

**Substandard Infrastructure:** Substandard infrastructure conditions are the norm beyond the core area one block to either side of Hill Street. These conditions include sidewalks in poor repair, lack of street trees, lack of pedestrian lighting, lack of crosswalks, lack of adequate public open space, and absence of directional signage.

**General Environmental Conditions:** The majority of the URA is not conducive to private sector investment in major housing and retail developments, especially due to the depressed economic conditions of downtown and the widespread lack of quality-of-life enhancements. Several existing uses have the potential for environmental contamination, including the active railroad corridor. In general, the downtown environment is harsh, even though portions have been revitalized and have overcome the difficulties listed above.

Figure 16:  
Findings Of  
Necessity



bbp  
  
 Prepared for The City of Griffin by Urban Collage, Inc. and Basile Baumann Probst & Associates, Inc.

Central Business District	Vehicular Thoroughfares
Deteriorated Properties	Railroad Corridor
Dilapidated Properties	Connectivity Breaks
Partially-Occupied Buildings	Poor Pedestrian Environments
Unoccupied Buildings	
Surface Parking	

**Findings Of Necessity**  
 GRIFFIN, GEORGIA  
 Downtown Redevelopment Planning  
 October 2007



## PART 4 - Future Land Use Plan

The following pages represent the Future Land Use vision for Downtown Griffin. The majority of these recommendations are in keeping with the 2006 Griffin LCI Plan.

### 4.1 REDEVELOPMENT AREA THEMES

A successful redevelopment plan is contingent upon capturing overarching redevelopment “themes” and incorporating those ideas into future development plans and programs. This usually involves capitalizing on an area’s existing strengths, icons and symbols. The following are possible themes that could, in one form or another, manifest themselves into future improvements throughout Downtown Griffin.

#### 4.1.1 HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Perhaps the most obvious redevelopment theme for Griffin has to do with preserving downtown’s abundance of historic resources. This would likely take many different forms, including making landmarks such as the Historic City Hall, the old Griffin High School site and the Hotel Spalding building focal points within Downtown. This would also mean capitalizing on Griffin’s industrial/railroad past by accentuating the area’s old textile mills, shipping warehouses and even the rail line itself. Physically, such areas could be rehabilitated as lofts, mixed-use districts or open spaces. Symbolically, such efforts would serve to bridge the old with the new while combining a unique historic aesthetic with the efficiency of contemporary building methods.

Figure 17:  
Griffin Welcome  
Center



#### 4.1.2 SENIORS / CULTURE

A theme of catering to Senior Citizens is especially appropriate considering planned senior developments nearby such as Sun City Peachtree (a Del Webb project). As noted on page 30 (Historic City Hall redevelopment), current development trends in senior independent-living communities favor either a location near a traditional urban mix of uses, or including a mixed-use component in new projects. Given that the conventional residential market is limited in downtown, that seniors represent the best new market possibility for housing demand and that a mixed-use product is common among senior / affordable developers, the city should strongly consider pursuing this theme with future developments in Downtown.

#### 4.1.3 UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA / STUDENT LIFE

The University of Georgia's nearby satellite Agriculture School has plans to expand its facilities to include other fields of study. With this comes an opportunity to take advantage of an increased student/academic presence in Downtown Griffin. One way in which potential redevelopment themes could be manifested is in programmatic and commercial interests such as coffee shops, cafes and bars. Given the commuter-only campus, however, the main challenge to attracting student life will likely be access and mobility to, from and between Downtown Griffin and the campus in nearby Experiment, GA (over a mile away).

Figure 18:  
Dedication plaque,  
6th Street Bridge



## 4.2 LAND USE OBJECTIVES

Overall, future land uses should nurture retail on Hill Street, given the existing infrastructure, historic buildings and surplus of retail spaces. Similar retail uses within the Downtown area not located on Hill Street should be kept to a minimum - at least in the short term - so as not to compete with these historic retail spaces. Public open space is an ideal accompanying use for this nurtured retail on Hill Street and will positively contribute to the sustainability of downtown businesses in the long-term. The incorporation of housing is critical within the downtown in order to reduce short-distance vehicle trips and to provide a critical mass of users to sustain burgeoning downtown businesses.

Development opportunities such as rehabilitated historic buildings, surface parking lots and strip retail areas should look to providing office, institutional and, most importantly, housing within the Downtown. Not only is there currently a significant market for loft-style housing within the Metro Atlanta region, but Downtown Griffin has an incomparably large stock of existing historic buildings that are ideal for this type of use. Additionally, senior housing, condominiums and townhomes are appropriate for the area (see Catalytic Project A for an example). Future office can capitalize on being in close proximity to existing office such as the Dovedown area just west of the downtown core. Future institutional should ideally use existing historic buildings in order to maintain close proximity to one another and to set positive examples for reuse of other historic structures in the private sector. Parking should be hidden - either behind buildings or in future parking structures - to maximize pedestrian amenities and focus on historic aesthetic of downtown. Strip commercial/retail uses, freestanding fast food restaurants and new surface parking lots should not be permitted within the historic downtown area.

*Similar retail uses within the Downtown area not located on Hill Street should be kept to a minimum (at least in the short term) so as not to compete with these historic retail spaces.*

Figure 19:  
The Dovedown project  
- exemplary historic  
building renovation

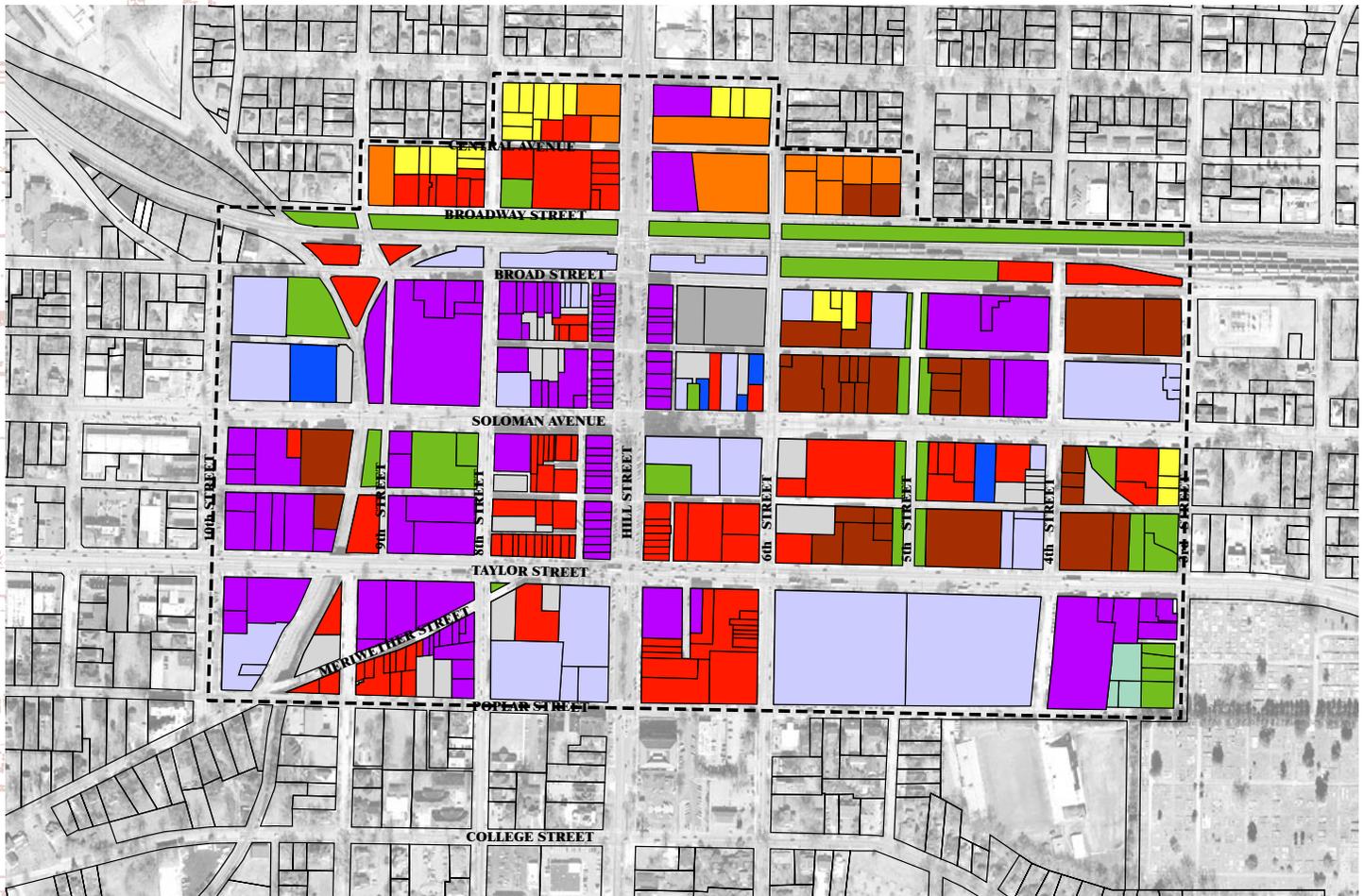


### 4.3 PROPOSED LAND USE PLAN

The map below provides a rough framework for Future Land Uses within the Downtown area. It should also be noted that the accompanying Illustrative Plan (Fig. 63) provides a more detailed overview of specific building uses, conceptual development forms and future site planning.

The historic 2-3 buildings with ground-floor retail on Hill Street are shown as Mixed-Use (future office and residential above retail). Existing 1-story retail and current City Hall uses on the east side of Hill Street between Soloman Ave and Taylor Street are shown as simply commercial and institutional. The long-term retail area on Meriwether Street is shown as mixed-use. Future development adjacent to the proposed greenspace on Soloman Avenue is proposed as mixed-use. Potential housing sites such as the historic City Hall area (Catalytic Project A), the existing Sock Shoppe area and blocks adjacent to the proposed 5th Street greenway are shown as 2-4 story multifamily housing. The envisioned long-term entertainment area north of the railroad is shown as commercial with rehabilitated lofts and new townhomes adjacent (serving as buffers between existing single-family). Proposed institutional uses are shown at the historic Griffin High School site, the historic post office and along the railroad adjacent to the visitor's center. Existing institutional uses are maintained throughout downtown including current City Hall and several churches.

Figure 20:  
Future Land Use Plan



bbp  
Prepared for The City of Griffin by Urban Collage, Inc. and Basie Basumann Probst & Associates, Inc.

Single-Family Residential	Institutional
Low-Density Residential	ICU
Multifamily Residential	Open Space
Mixed-Use	Surface Parking
Commercial/Retail	Structured Parking
Office	Proposed TAD Boundary

**Future Land Use**  
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Downtown Redevelopment Planning



## PART 5 - Redevelopment Plan Elements

Part 5 contains the heart of the plan for improving Downtown Griffin. In particular, Part 5 focuses in on the future land use strategy that is drawn from six (6) short-term and ten (10) long-term projects, plus eleven (11) public improvement projects, to build a downtown that is brimming with vitality, economically sustainable, and utilizes the best and most unique aspects the city has to offer.

Griffin was founded to rival Atlanta, and this ambition is present in the original plat of the city, with repetitive blocks and wide streets similar in spirit to the 1811 Commissioners' Plan for New York. This repetition is both an asset and a liability - an asset in that it gives ample room for development and is ideally suited to the dimensions of modern construction, but a liability in the absence of a strong hierarchy of urban spaces that otherwise give a city its unique identity. The Redevelopment Plan recognizes both these conditions; and with careful attention to subtle details in the platting of downtown as well as physical characteristics that have evolved to be "uniquely Griffin", has provided enough of a design layering that civic landmarks become new destinations, and open spaces and streets the glue that holds together the land use districts recommended by the LCI study.

*The repetitive blocks are both an asset and a liability*

Figure 21:  
Sanborn Map showing regular block structure



## 5.1 KEY DESIGN ELEMENTS

While downtown is fortunate to have rights-of-way generous enough to support impressive landscaped medians, the regularity of downtown's grid plan works to the disadvantage of creating an open space network that provides crucial park space at strategic locations. With the exception of the green spaces at the Taylor Street School (see Project 3 below) there are extremely few parks or plazas downtown, and no single location where the Griffin community can gather to celebrate. The Plan works to overcome this situation by carving new open spaces out of the uniform blocks, much like the DDA has done with the plaza occupying the shell of a former movie theater (Figure xx).

Still, while formal urban space is lacking downtown, there are many opportunities to expand and enhance Griffin's character through its plentiful historic buildings and structures that are rare elsewhere in the state. For example, the beautiful and notable Sixth Street Bridge is a Griffin icon, complete with warning signs that, with their slightly comical message (Fig. 22 below), have become ingrained in the memories of visitors. Equally important is the ironwork balcony on the building at 8th and Broad, or the corner column of the Opera House, or the Hill Street clock, or the old film-processing kiosk on Meriwether Street. All of these and more are part of what makes Griffin special, and part of the Plan's design strategy.

*Griffin's unique identity lies in unexpected places*

Figure 22:  
Warning sign for 6th  
Street Bridge



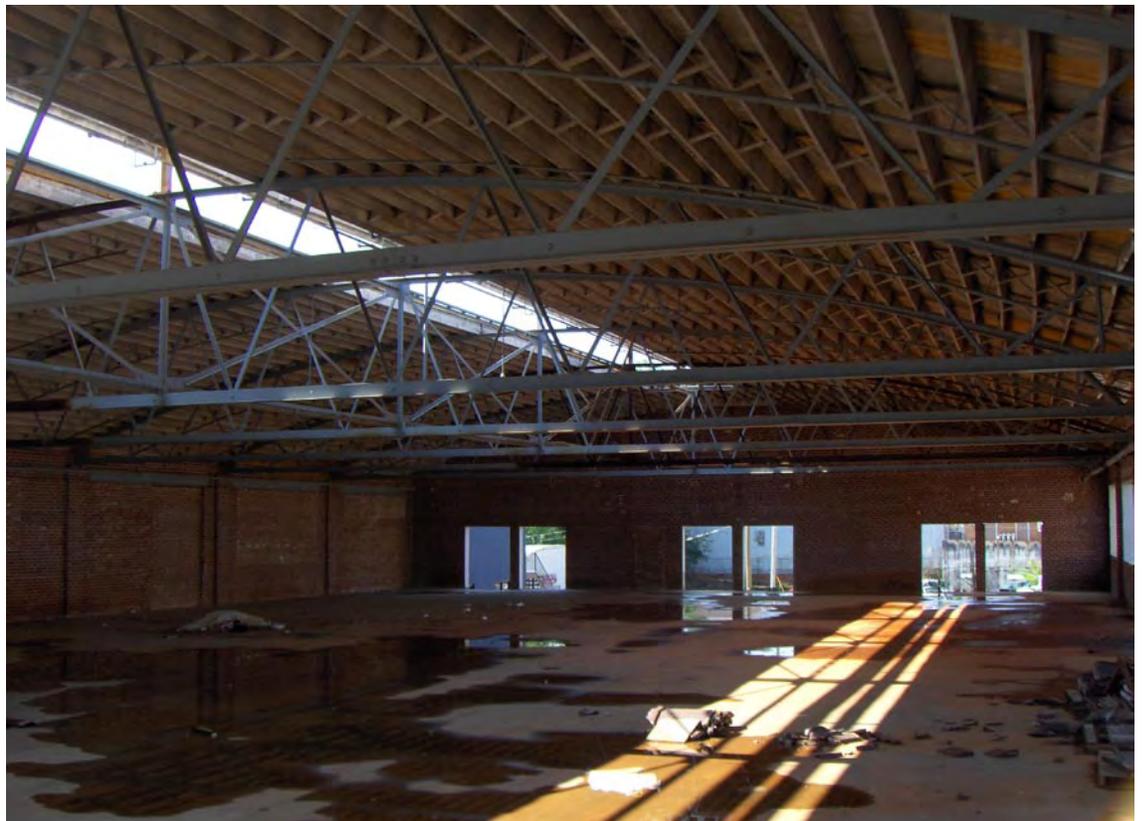
## 5.2 REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Redevelopment of key sites is essential to the long-term success of downtown Griffin. These sites and their projects – some real, some hypothetical - are described and illustrated on the pages that follow. There are several criteria that play into the choice of these projects including building vacancy, site underutilization, market forces, and property owner’s interests. Stakeholder issues and ideas as well as historic significance have been factored into the design strategy of each project. In each case, demolition of existing structures has been minimized to the extent feasible to preserve the exceptional historic fabric of the city.

The first six (6) projects are considered to be short-term or ‘catalytic’ because they are either in progress or have substantial financial commitments made to them, and their completion will in all likelihood trigger additional revitalization and private sector investment in their surroundings. Economic feasibility and impacts for several of these catalytic projects are discussed in Appendix I. The second ten (10) projects are – with some exceptions - longer-term, mostly hypothetical, and need public sector investment or champions (or both) to be realized. Several of these long-term projects would have radical positive effects on downtown, but because of their scale require focused and concerted efforts to implement. Both the short-term and long-term projects are financially enhanced by the related public improvements projects discussed in the subsequent narrative.

While it is intended that most, if not all, of these projects be developed without the use of significant official urban redevelopment powers, they should nonetheless be considered as eligible official urban redevelopment projects. As such, the development quantities described herein – at least for the catalytic projects - should be taken as the official ‘redevelopment re-use controls’ (with a 10% margin of deviation).

Figure 23:  
Downtown adaptive  
reuse

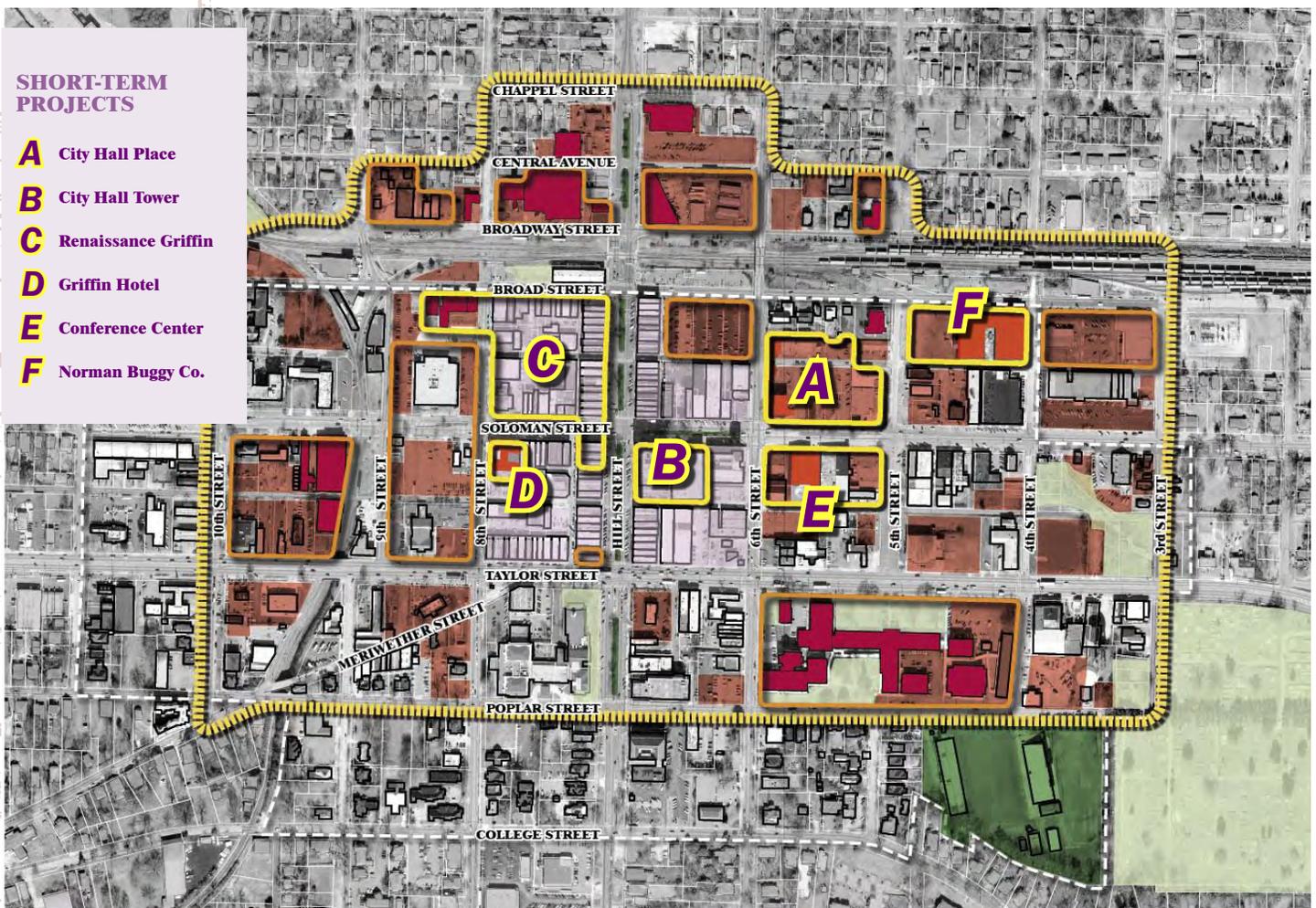


### 5.2.1 SHORT-TERM (CATALYTIC) PROJECTS

The projects described on the following pages describe six (6) “catalytic projects”, chosen on the basis of intended or planned development activity or significant investment made toward repositioning property. While different in scope, scale and use, each catalytic project has the capacity to effect physical or economic changes in the immediate surroundings, and potentially in downtown as a whole. The catalytic projects should also have a relatively short timeline, with implementation inside of five (5) years. They form the backbone of the URP.

Every catalytic project description includes a brief summary of its economic considerations to gauge whether the project is feasible on its own, or whether implementation is dependent on a subsidy to cover funding gaps – something that could be potentially addressed by a TAD.

Figure 24:  
Short-Term  
Redevelopment  
Projects



**SHORT-TERM PROJECTS**

- A** City Hall Place
- B** City Hall Tower
- C** Renaissance Griffin
- D** Griffin Hotel
- E** Conference Center
- F** Norman Buggy Co.

**Redevelopment Project Areas**  
September 2007  
**GRIFFIN, GEORGIA**  
Downtown Redevelopment Planning



### 5.2.1.1 City Hall Place (Old City Hall Site)

Two (2) redevelopment options are possible for the 6th and Solomon area, both including adaptive reuse / preservation for the historic structures along 6th Street. In the low-density proposal, for-sale townhouses line East Slaton and the Solomon Street frontage. An existing parking structure serves the townhouses to the north of Slaton, allowing a more compact townhouse footprint to maximize the available site. South of Slaton, the townhouses are deeper to provide the same living area but with tuck-under parking. A common green space internal to the block gives these townhouses an additional amenity. The three existing municipal buildings are renovated for commercial space, limited retail, and/or restaurants.

The second redevelopment option proposes retaining the townhouses along Slaton as described above, but includes a two-story multifamily “podium” building with approximately 50 units over an at-grade secured parking lot with +/-85 dedicated spaces. The eastern portion of the at-grade parking is cut into the sloping site and partially concealed from Solomon Street, while the 5th Street frontage gives the impression of a three-story building with parking on the first level. In this option, the historic Old City Hall is renovated as for-sale lofts with a first-floor restaurant. Dedicated parking for the lofts is provided in the podium building, while a small number of spaces accessed from 6th Street are available for the retail uses. The smaller historic buildings at 6th and Slaton are renovated as described above.

Both redevelopment options draw their character from the powerful visual presence of the Old City Hall and the smaller historic buildings, and both have reconceived East Slaton as a very walkable, very urban townhouse or rowhouse street that is usually only found in much

Figure 25:  
Catalytic Project A -  
City Hall Place



larger cities. In the second option, the character of Solomon Street preserves the continuous urban street edge found in the blocks to the west; and the three-story elevation along 5th Street frames a new landscaped mall or linear park that runs from Broad Street to the Taylor Street cultural center. The first option is more domestic in scale, emphasizes individual townhouse units, and does not wrap around to 5th Street.

### Project Economic Profile

Project A has many advantages that factor into its feasibility – a good location near the heart of downtown, valuable historic buildings, and public ownership. Both redevelopment options are built on housing, which is the most realistic land use given Griffin’s sluggish commercial market, as well as the most desired from a policy perspective. With the assumption that the city would underwrite the land cost either through deferred payment or a TAD subsidy, Option B is financially feasible with a 13.6% IRR. Option A, the lower-density solution, performs marginally at 8% and would require a higher level of development subsidy to be considered. Another source of development capital could be connected to the historic city hall, which is eligible for a federal rehabilitation tax credit of 20% of preservation costs, as well as a state tax credit for up to \$5,000. A similar state program, an 8.5-year tax-abatement for certified projects, is available as an option, although it is incompatible with a TAD. A third funding possibility is related to the Georgia Heritage Grant Program, which offers matching grants for up to \$40,000 for preservation development projects on a competitive basis. With this option, the city could submit or support an application for the stabilization or reconstruction of the roof of the old city hall, effectively providing another development subsidy.

It should be noted that there has been recently renewed interest by the Spalding County Housing Authority in the purchase of the city hall site for senior housing. Current development trends in senior independent-living communities favor either a location near a traditional urban mix of uses, or including a mixed-use component in new projects. Given that the conventional residential market is limited in downtown, that seniors represent the best new market possibility for housing demand, that a mixed-use product is common among senior / affordable developers, and that the Authority offer is both significant and serious, the city should strongly consider pursuing this option with the Authority and their development team.

Figure 26:  
Sacramento Street  
senior mixed-use -  
Berkeley, CA



### 5.2.1.2 One Griffin Center

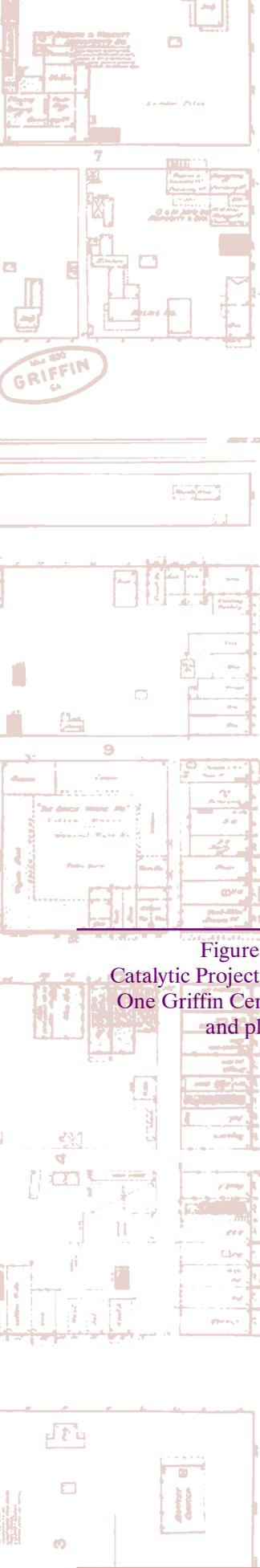
One Griffin Center’s location, size and parking make it a suitable for many different uses – the highly visible city hall that it is today, but also an excellent office property or an academic building. Its capacity to satisfy different uses is its strength; and while its main drawback is visual – the rather stark and monolithic appearance it provides to a very textured and historic Hill Street – it nevertheless is an anchor for downtown. If the long-term goal is for the city to remain in the building, then it should be identified clearly as city hall by façade improvements and signage.

As a longer-term strategy to improve the building’s street presence, the one-story wing extending south to Bank Street – formerly a Wachovia branch bank but now being occupied by customer-intensive city uses - could be vacated and demolished to create a plaza. Or, if city functions were desired to remain in the highly accessible street-level location, the wing could be redesigned and reconstructed to be an architecturally striking pavilion while providing some of the needed plaza space. An example of this type of treatment is the General Service Administration’s plaza improvements at the Russell Federal Building in Atlanta. A strict Modernist building with a dreary plaza, the complex has been enlivened by the addition of a highly sculptural entry pavilion, and the plaza has been much improved with landscaping. A similar design application in a new development in London is shown in Figure 27. In the case of One Griffin Center, a new pavilion could act as the symbol of city hall and downtown revitalization.

Figure 27:  
Community housing  
pavilion in London

*INSET: Solomon Street  
Looking East*





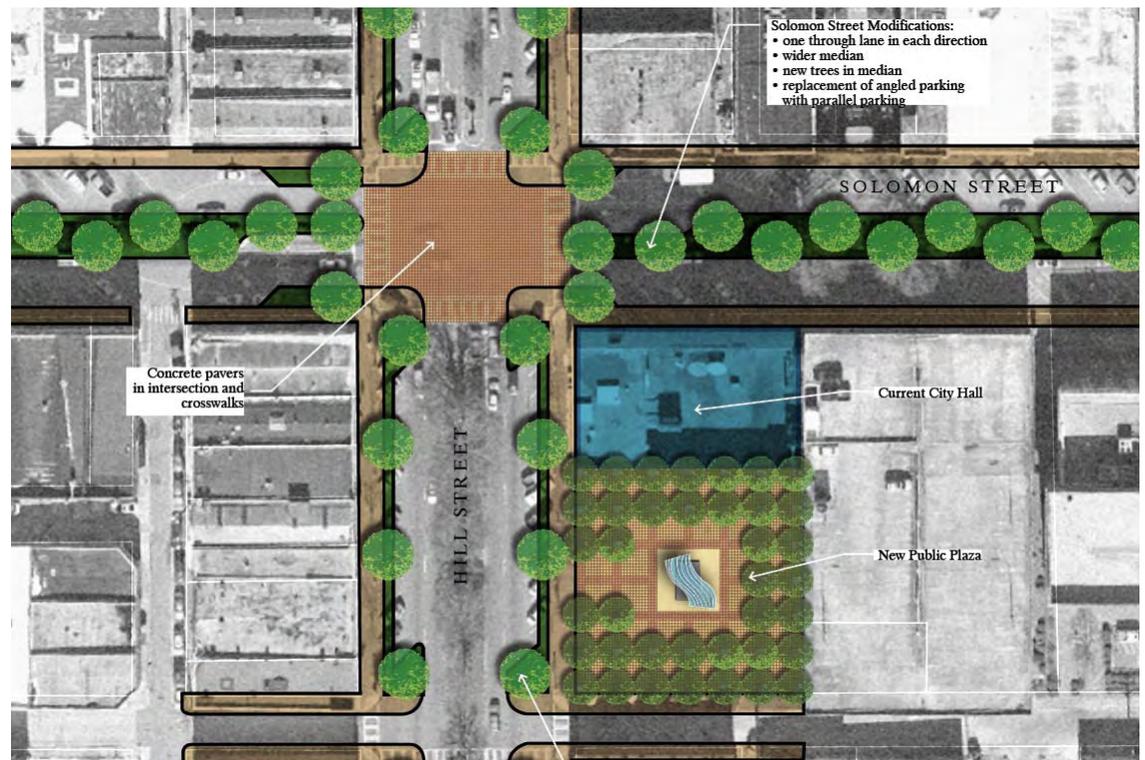
One Griffin Center is also connected to the Hill / Solomon intersection, where the LCI study recommended creating “Griffin Square”. While the symbolic importance of the intersection is undisputed, the actual occupation of this space for public use is somewhat limited to a few times each year at best. With the provision of the plaza at the building’s south wing, smaller events that might not warrant closing both streets to traffic could still take place, while larger events would have the benefit of two focal areas that are tied together by design. According to historic postcards, the intersection contained a large obelisk-type monument that was probably removed for traffic concerns. Similar hardscape treatment and lighting between the intersection and the plaza could unite the two spaces into one composition, with the sculptural pavilion acting as the reconstituted monument symbolizing Griffin’s future instead of its past.

### Project Economic Profile

One Griffin Center is an excellent commercial property in the heart of downtown, and a superlative facility for city hall. That said, of the 70,000 square feet in the building, the city utilizes about 52% over five floors; while existing tenants lease about 18% of the total space - leaving approximately 30% of the building vacant. The city’s space usage per floor varies from an entire floor to as little as 5%. Current lease rates average about \$7 per square foot.

Because the financial futures of One Griffin Center and the old city hall site are intertwined, it is recommended that the city undertake a programming / space needs analysis to determine both future requirements - short-term and long-term - to find the best strategy for optimizing the use of One Griffin Center while offering the maximum amount of leasable space to the market. Similarly, the city should strive to increase lease rates to between \$12 and \$13 per square foot – a reasonable market rate for downtown. This may require some base building improvements or limited tenant fit-up, which could be part of the space needs analysis. The short-term goal should be maximizing both the city’s efficient use of space and the amount of revenue generated from leases.

Figure 28:  
Catalytic Project B -  
One Griffin Center  
and plaza



### 5.2.1.3 Renaissance Griffin

Renaissance Griffin is a local initiative that is attempting to revitalize a roughly three-block area along Hill and Broad streets (or about one-third of the historic building stock in downtown). Renaissance Griffin's strategy basically consists of six steps:

1. **Option** should include as many properties as possible in the revitalization area;
2. **Attract** as many investors as needed to purchase and rehab the buildings, based on the number of options secured;
3. **Improve** and renovate the buildings to bring them up to high-value market standards;
4. **Recruit** top-tier businesses to lease the revitalized space, which would be timed to come on line with the UGA campus expansion and the completion of the Sun City Peachtree and Heron Bay developments;
5. **Distribute** annual revenues from the net rental cash flow to the investment group; and
6. **Liquidate** the assets in ten years or earlier if downtown revitalization has accelerated.

In physical terms, Renaissance Griffin can be thought of as a conventional master-developer project, with a major difference in that it deals with incremental land acquisition and historic preservation. It is also extremely similar to a redevelopment project that would be undertaken

Figure 29:  
Catalytic Project C -  
Renaissance Griffin



by a municipal development authority, particularly given its broader mission of downtown revitalization. The types of potential tenants – luxury goods and services targeted at a mature demographic – are not represented currently in downtown, but could be profitable if downtown marketing efforts are successful at promoting the city to active seniors. The risk is that enough initial capital is unavailable to secure and rehabilitate properties, and that the target market does not materialize.

Because Renaissance Griffin is a private-sector revitalization project on a public scale, it is an important catalytic project and should be supported by the city, especially since one of the most significant long-term projects – Griffin Green – is adjacent. Many of the buildings in the project area are notable for their historic merit and their architecture, especially the building at 8th and Broad shown in Figure xx. Renaissance Griffin should therefore stress historic preservation as a major facet of its branding strategy. Likewise, the pedestrian environments of Slaton and Hill streets should be improved as described in Section 5.3 to support the project.

### Project Economic Profile

Given that the categories of target businesses reflect to some degree retail “leakage” out of downtown, it is probable that enough retail market exists to make the project feasible. The drawbacks include assembling enough initial capital, overcoming the unknown costs inherent in historic preservation work, and positioning the properties to be competitive in the marketplace. Nevertheless, the “no debt” structure of the project minimizes financial risk – as it also guarantees no determined outcome for the city. For this reason, the city should consider acting as a partner in the project, possibly by offering façade grants, assuming responsibility for the streetscape improvements, assisting with marketing, and other associated support functions.

Figure 30:  
Renaissance Griffin  
key project



### 5.2.1.4 Griffin Hotel

The Griffin Hotel is a historic landmark located across Solomon Street from the Old Post Office. It is in the process of being renovated into 40 large suites – half the number of units in the original hotel. A popular restaurant, Slices, occupies a ground floor storefront space and provides visibility and momentum to the project. As in the adjacent Renaissance Griffin project, historic authenticity should be the project’s theme. The renovation should follow the original design of the hotel as closely as possible, including removing the inappropriate paint at the main entry, replacing the windows with compatible 1/1 units, recreating accurately the fine-grained mullion pattern of the original storefront transom windows, and reconstructing the historic cornice. Historically-inspired neon signage would also be appropriate for this use.

### Project Economic Profile

Given the right level of restoration and finish as well as a comparable amenities package the Griffin Hotel would be locally competitive, particularly with the lack of availability of higher-end boutique suites. Feasibility would be enhanced further with the completion of the proposed conference center two blocks away, even considering the possibility of another hotel in the conference center development. The expansion of UGA’s nearby Griffin Campus will add another potential source of customers. Like Renaissance Griffin, the city should support this project through streetscapes and preservation grants as well as working to insure the development of the conference center.

Figure 31:  
Catalytic Project D -  
Griffin Hotel



### 5.2.1.5 Griffin Conference Center

Despite the lack of available development information regarding the proposed conference center in the block immediately east of the county courthouse, the project was included in this section because it has evidence of ongoing adaptive reuse work (Figures xx) and because it is vitally important to the future of downtown. Ideally, the conference center would include restaurant and hospitality uses as well as events space, and would reuse the major historic buildings on the site including those on 6th Street and the one currently under renovation.

#### Project Economic Profile

Further development details are needed to assess the economic feasibility of this project.

Figure 32:  
Conference Center  
building rehabilitation



Figure 33:  
Catalytic Project E -  
Griffin Conference  
Center



### 5.2.1.6 Norman Buggy Company

Currently under construction, the Norman Buggy Company project is a classic adaptive reuse loft-style development of a warehouse facility on Broad between 4th and 5th streets. The project will contain fifty-five apartments ranging in size from 900 to 1,200 square feet. The existing building occupies roughly half the site. It is proposed that an additional multifamily project of approximately 24 units (or 25,000 square feet) be developed on the western portion of the site, along with secured surface parking.

#### Project Economic Profile

Market demand for units in Project F is currently limited, although the situation may change with the UGA campus expansion. Most loft residential demand in Griffin will come from the redistribution of housing preferences within the city – but this assumes a critical mass of both new residential and retail is developed downtown. For this reason, it is essential that the adjacent Catalytic Project One be moved forward to build market security, as is the implementation of the 5th Street Mall project described in Section 5.3.

Figure 34:  
Catalytic Project F -  
mill courtyard



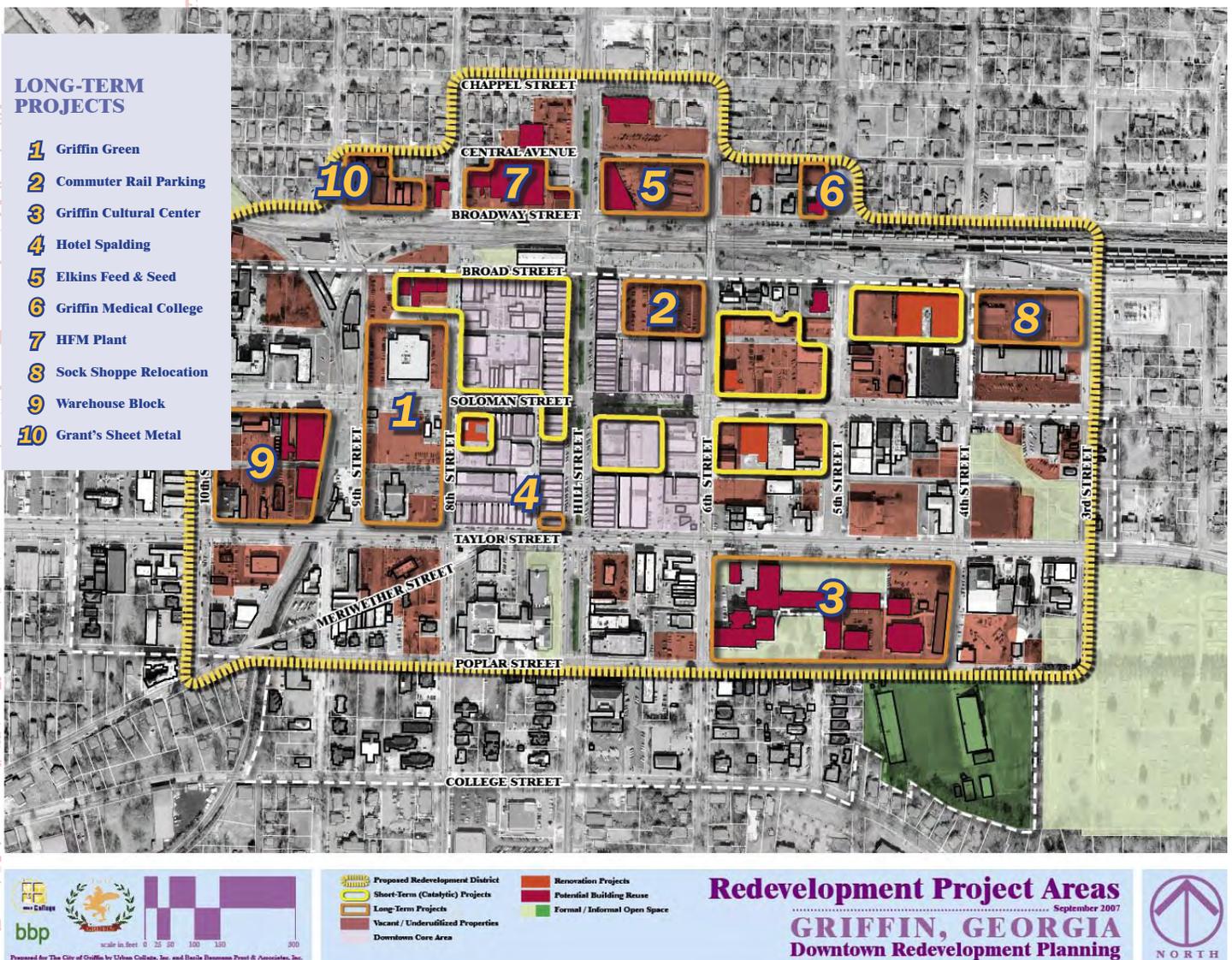
Figure 35:  
Catalytic Project F



## 5.2.2 LONG-TERM PROJECTS

Long-term redevelopment projects are generally more hypothetical in nature than the catalytic projects, and in some cases more ambitious. They were selected on the basis of LCI recommendations, or involve property that is severely underutilized or for sale. Fittingly, the timelines of these projects varies from five to twenty-five years depending on their complexity and market conditions. Some projects are also dependant on forces partially or entirely outside the city's control, although no project is so reliant on one program element that it could not be adapted to suit the needs of other users. The long-term projects also reflect the plan's goal of equalizing economic development throughout the TAD area, especially north of the railroad. While many additional redevelopment opportunities are indicated in brown in Figure xx below, the long-term projects differ in that they should be given priority status and financial or organizational support.

Figure 36:  
Long-Term  
Redevelopment  
Projects

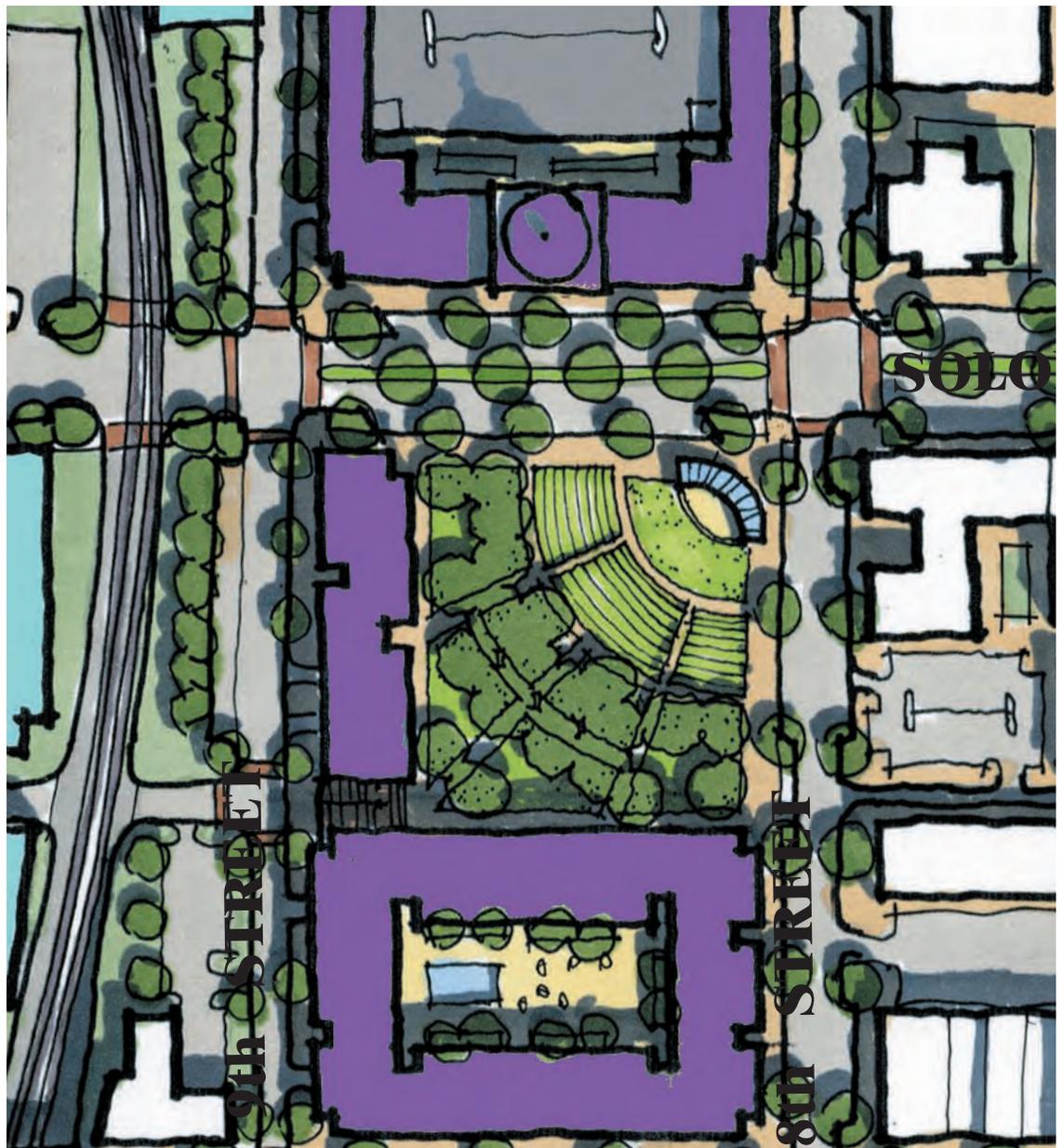


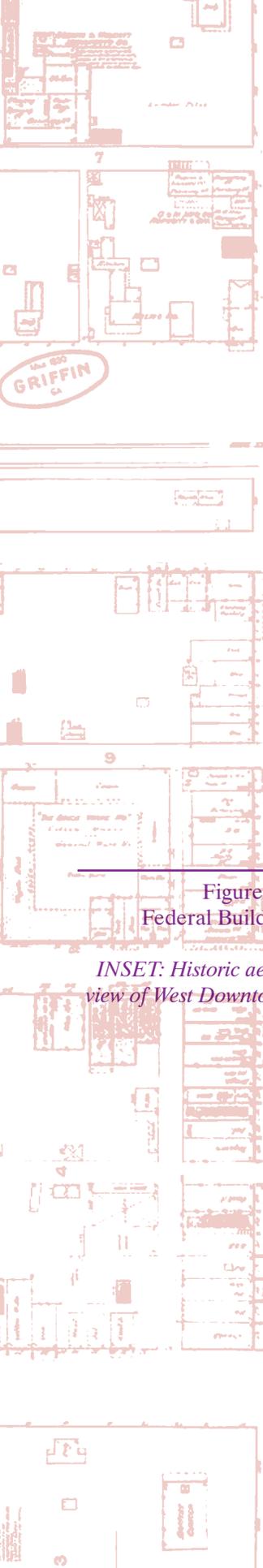
### 5.2.2.1 Griffin Green

Encouraged by the LCI program, cities in the Atlanta metro region are discovering the economic and social benefits of constructing town squares or greens ringed by mixed-use development, often with new civic buildings in prominent locations. While space is limited to retrofit downtown Griffin with such an arrangement, there is substantial underutilized land on the west side along Solomon Street that such an improvement could be possible.

The idea behind the Griffin Green involves creating a town center park in the parcels containing surface parking between 8th, Solomon, 9th, and Taylor Streets. The park is framed on the 8th and 9th Street sides by new residential development, and by new mixed-use along Taylor Street. It is open to Solomon Street and the existing post office building to the north. The concept plan illustrates one possible design, which is similar in form and program to that of Suwanee, GA's new park. It includes a small amphitheatre with lawns and other passive greenspaces adjacent to it. The design takes advantage of the drop in grade from east to

Figure 37:  
Griffin Green





west, allowing the park to be relatively flat while accommodating 1 level of structured parking under a large portion of the site (accessed from the 9th Street side). The Solomon Street median and streetscape treatment extends west enough to include the front of the Green, but is modified so that the hardscape design used in the Green is extended across Solomon to engage the front elevation of the post office building.

The second key component of the Green is the post office itself. As it stands, the modernist site plan of the post office is at odds with the design principles of traditional urbanism, but the peripheral parking could be improved with landscaping and provides functionally enough spaces without overwhelming the site. Likewise, the architecture of the building has a civic presence, and the facility could be expanded vertically to give it more dominance along the street. Part of the design strength of the ensemble comes from the impression that the solid block of the post office has been slid out of the Green, leaving room for the park space. However, to fully realize the type of town center being built elsewhere in the region, it is recommended in the long term that the postal function be relocated to a new facility where truck access is easier, and that the existing building either be improved or rebuilt with a municipal use tied to the city - ideally as a new City Hall if One Griffin Center becomes too valuable as a fixed asset or if the city's space needs change.

The Griffin Green and mixed-use municipal center not only create an identifiable center to the downtown, but would support the goals and program of Renaissance Griffin (see below) and catalyze further redevelopment in the blocks to the east, west and south. The post office function could be reinstated in a limited way in the historic 1920s Post Office Building at the northeast corner of Soloman and 8th.

Figure 38:  
Federal Building

*INSET: Historic aerial view of West Downtown*



### 5.2.2.2 Commuter Rail Parking

The LCI study identified three possible locations for the proposed Atlanta-Macon commuter rail station and parking facility, including two at Hill Street and one at the Thomaston Mill. Of the three, only the Hill / Broad corner combines a key downtown location with a prime parking site. Project 2 provides this future parking on the large surface lot owned by Spalding County, which currently serves both the city and the various county functions in the immediate vicinity. Long-term redevelopment of this lot into multilevel deck parking could supply upwards of 110 spaces on each level, with two-story storefront retail, office or restaurant space wrapping the sides exposed to Broad, 6th, and Slaton. Assuming a six-level deck with this storefront shell space, Project 2 could add 12,000 square feet of downtown commercial space with room for at least 600 cars. Funding sources could include GDOT, Spalding County and the city with enough parking to serve commuters, municipal functions, and downtown businesses.

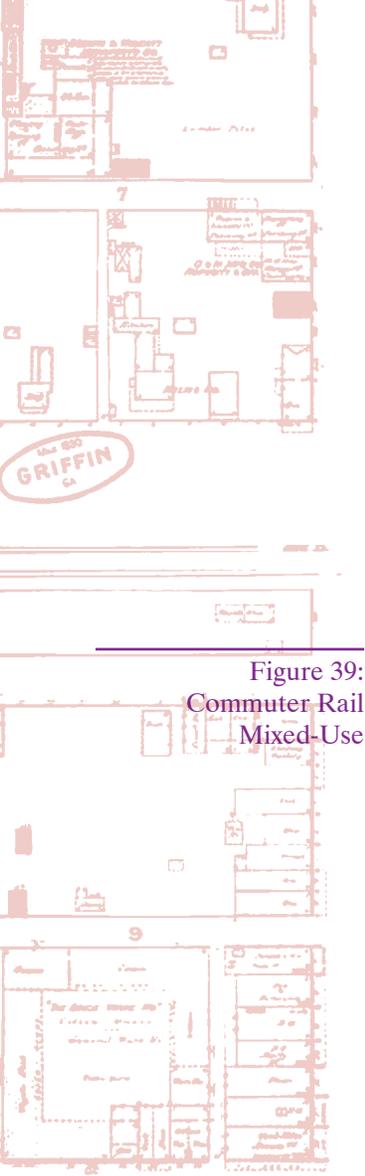


Figure 39:  
Commuter Rail  
Mixed-Use

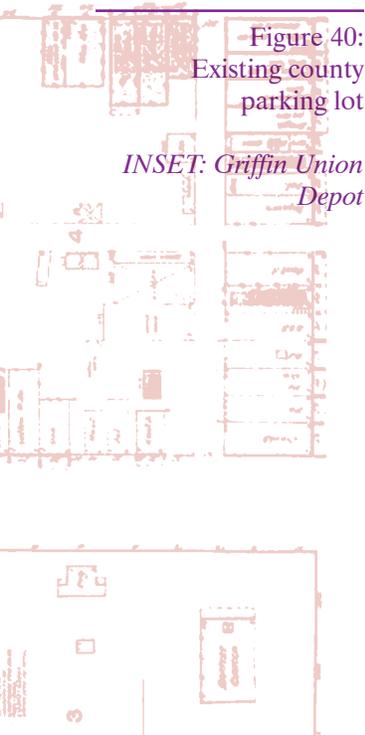
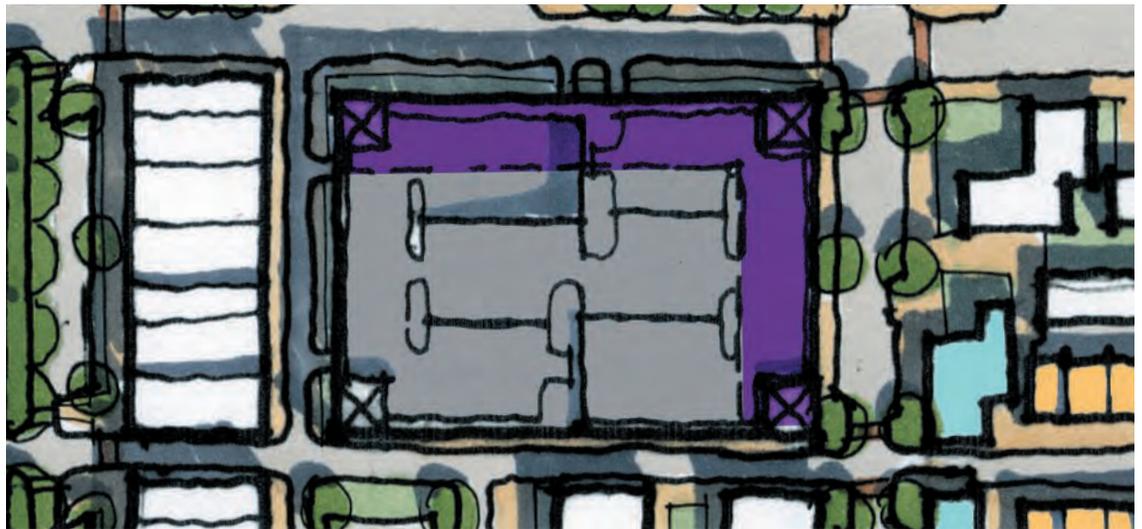


Figure 40:  
Existing county  
parking lot

*INSET: Griffin Union  
Depot*



### 5.2.2.3 Griffin Cultural Center

Some of the most important historic buildings in downtown Griffin are concentrated within a two-block area at the south end of 5th Street on the grounds of the Taylor Street Middle School. Especially significant are these National Register properties:

- **The Sam Bailey Building** – a two-story brick Italianate structure built in 1870 as the Griffin Male Institute, a private school for boys. The oldest public school building in the city, it became part of the city school system in 1883;
- **The Old High School** – built around 1890 in a Late-Victorian style, it features a three-story tower that dominates the school grounds;
- **The Hawkes Free Children’s Library** – a brick-and-limestone classical revival building designed by the noteworthy Atlanta architect Neel Reid, it was completed in 1916 as the first (and only) philanthropic project by industrialist Albert Hawkes.

In addition to these, mid-century designs like the Griffin Auditorium and the middle school itself provide a contrast to the older resources; while the stone gateposts of the athletic field to the south add a historic landscape element to the complex.

The LCI study recognized the unique historic situation and cultural value of this site by recommending that upon the planned relocation of the county school function, the site be improved as a public park and cultural center. Project 3 builds on this idea with renovations of most building, selective demolitions, consolidated parking, and new landscape design terminating the proposed 5th Street Mall (or linear park) described in the following sections. Some existing functions like the auditorium, the gymnasium, and the library could remain,

Figure 41:  
Taylor Street School  
Property

INSET: Griffin High  
School campus



while other cultural uses – art studios / galleries, black box/ community theater, local history or other museum, children’s activity spaces – could be retrofitted into the restored historic buildings or built new.

The postcard view of the high school complex (Inset, Figure 41) at its pinnacle in the 1950s provides a vision for how the site could be redesigned to take advantage of its unique qualities. Demolition of portions of the middle school building and the small annex to the south, as well as the surface parking lots adjacent to the Bailey Building, could provide enough space to have significant parks to the north and south. Additional demolition to the south of the auditorium building, in combination with a new building approximating the footprint of the 1940s High School (#5 in view), could create a smaller park or plaza that would showcase the Victorian building. Another new facility could be constructed at the corner of Taylor and 4th to enclose the north lawn and enhance the design of the Bailey Building. Parking for the complex could be accommodated in a new deck north of Taylor at 4th or 5th street.

Figure 42:  
Griffin  
Cultural  
Center



### 5.2.2.4 Hotel Spalding

The former Hotel Spalding (or Griffin Professional Building) is an excellent opportunity to increase the residential core of downtown by retrofitting as apartments or condominiums with ground-floor retail space. The five-story building, currently on the market, is a good example of 1920s commercial architecture, and anchors the south end of the historic downtown as well as acts as a gateway to the district. It has a superb location one block from both Griffin Green (Project 1) and the Cultural Center (Project 3). While limited parking presents a difficulty for residential reuse, some dedicated parking could be provided behind the building or in the city hall deck. Alternatively, if the market improves from the expansion of the UGA campus, the project could be recast as a small hotel or student housing.

Figure 43:  
Hotel Spalding and  
surroundings



Figure 44:  
Existing building with  
Taylor Street

*INSET: Hotel Spalding  
and War Memorial*



### 5.2.2.5 Akins Feed & Seed

Project 5 is an LCI recommendation for the long-term future of the current feed store. While it is a stable business that contributes to the retail diversity of downtown, the Hill Street location and adjacency to the potential commuter rail station makes the land extremely valuable as a residential or mixed-use project. The site could easily accommodate twenty-five new townhouses with tuck-under parking, as well as 15-20 loft apartments or condos and a small amount of retail or restaurant space in the renovated historic buildings along Hill. Given the need to extend downtown (and the unique character of Hill – see Fig 46 inset) north of the railroad and introduce ownership opportunities into an area that is dominated by rental properties, Project 5 deserves priority consideration in the long-term implementation work plan.

Figure 45:  
Akins Feed & Seed



Figure 46:  
Akins Feed & Seed

*INSET: Hill Street  
looking north from  
railroad*



### 5.2.2.6 Griffin Medical College

The landmark Griffin Medical College building is the only pre-civil war educational structure remaining in Griffin. The house, built in the 1850s, was converted to college use in 1859 but changed to the Goddard Hotel in 1873. After remaining as a hotel through the first decades of the 1900s, it was remodeled and expanded into apartments. The adjacent house was built in the 1870s; together the structures are the oldest along the railroad frontage and highly valuable to the downtown context. Because of its historic architecture and details, favorable plan and large lot, it is recommended that the long-term strategy be to convert the property to a premium inn or boutique hotel with the smaller house as an annex, with the potential for 12,000 square feet of hospitality space. The location adjacent to the potential 5th Street Mall / Greenway and the relocated (pedestrian) truss bridges as well as the proximity to an entertainment district on West Broadway further supports the hospitality program.

Figure 47:  
Griffin Medical  
College

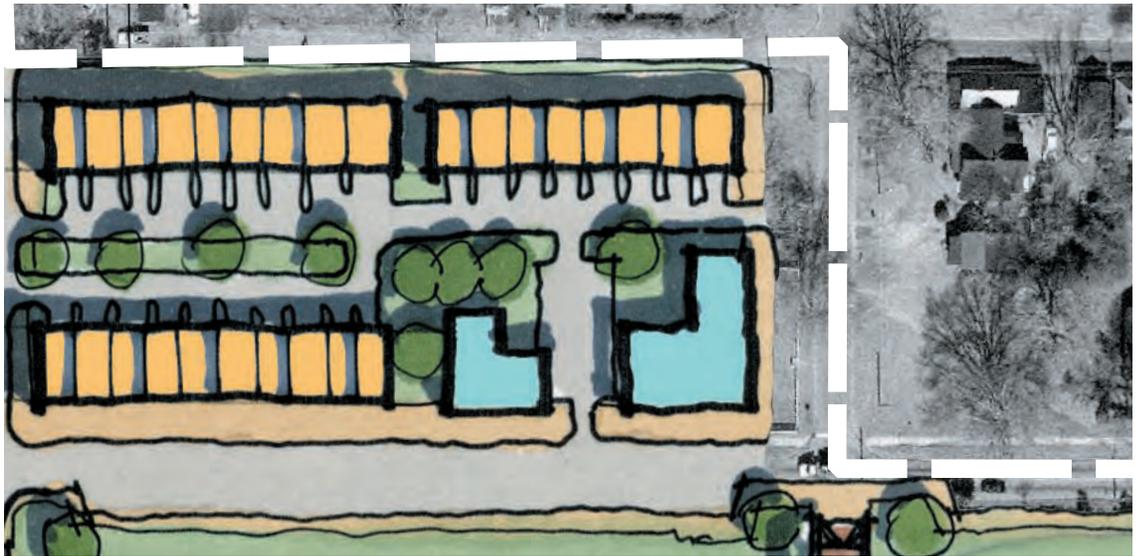


Figure 48:  
Griffin Medical  
College building



### 5.2.2.7 HFM Plant

Like the Akins Feed & Seed redevelopment, Project 7 is an agriculturally-related use that occupies a key location in the downtown. The four-story mill plant dominates the railroad frontage west of Hill Street, but is cluttered at street level with loading docks and metal sheds. A large single-story brick warehouse occupies most of the Central Avenue side but has few openings on to the street. The structure contributes to the railroad landscape with its industrial vernacular and could be adaptively reused as loft residential; however the proximity of future lofts at Thomaston Mills and the prospect of capturing the new UGA student market suggest an entertainment or themed restaurant use, possibly in combination with a live music venue. Parking could be accommodated along Broadway or in a portion of the building, as well as in the adjacent block to the north. While the LCI recommended creating an entertainment district along Solomon Street between 8th and Hill, relocating this district north to Central Avenue would align better with the smaller pedestrian scale of the street and potentially link directly to the Thomaston Mill project and its park and greenway trail.

Figure 49:  
Mill Tower Block



Figure 50:  
HFM Plant



### 5.2.2.8 Sock Shoppe Relocation

Project 8 is an LCI recommendation supporting the creation of a residential district east of 6th Street. Relocating the Sock Shoppe would make available one full block for redevelopment as multifamily residential, with the potential for xxx units over xx,xxx square feet of space, further contributing to the critical mass of residential initiated with catalytic projects A and F. The LCI also noted that a new Hill Street location for the Sock Shoppe would strengthen downtown retail; however there are limited sites large enough to provide the space and parking needed without demolition of buildings in the core historic district. Two possible relocation sites could be the redevelopment of the Kentucky Fried Chicken store at the southeast corner of Hill and Taylor, or the existing Porter Company building at Hill and Chappel Street providing that property is vacated as well. Alternatively, the Sock Shoppe could find space in a renovated Thomaston Mill, which although not directly on Hill Street nevertheless has good exposure to Experiment Street and could be designed as a true “textile warehouse outlet”.

Figure 51:  
Sock Shoppe block

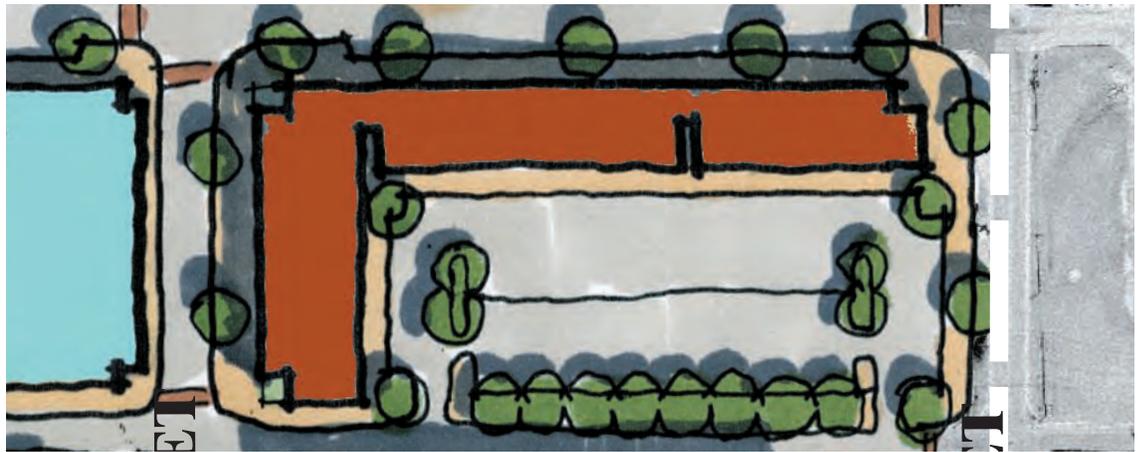
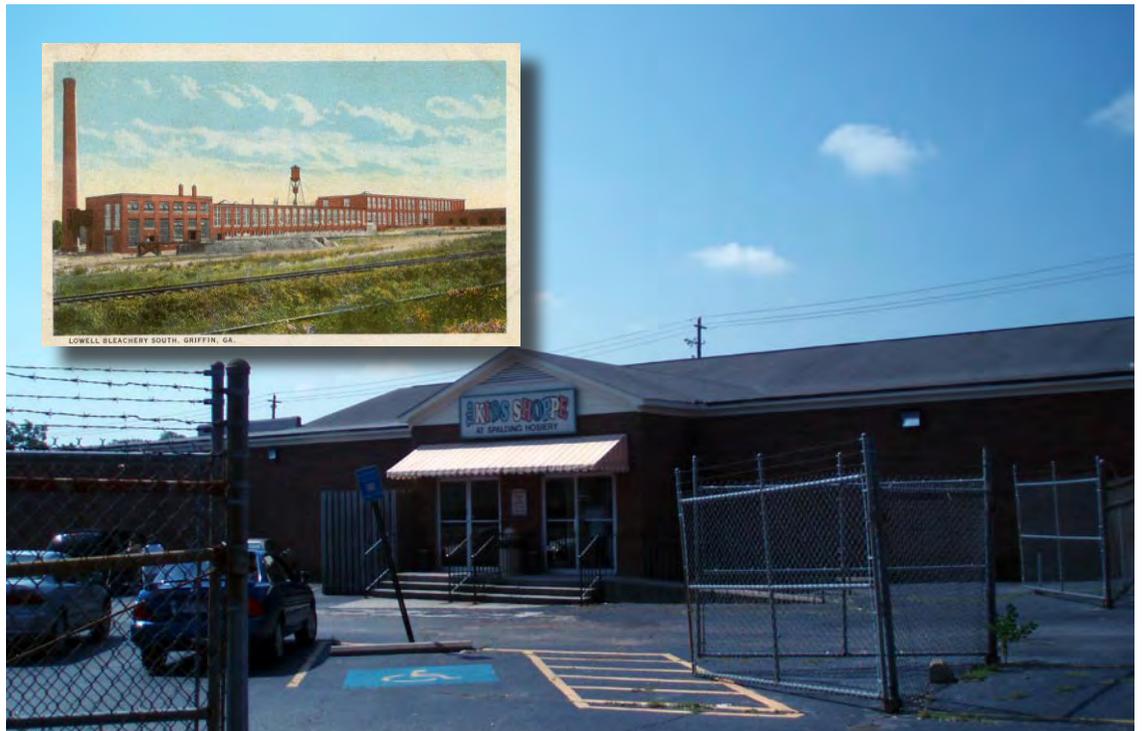


Figure 52:  
Existing retail store  
*INSET: Typical Griffin  
mill complex*



### 5.2.2.9 Grocery Warehouse Block

Project 9 is a two-block redevelopment anchored by the adaptive reuse of a former grocery warehouse complex as multifamily residential. The property, currently for sale, is directly across Solomon Street from the successful Dovedown development, itself a warehouse renovation. Most of the remaining existing uses on the block are low-density strip commercial such as a car wash and a fast food restaurant. The Project 9 buildout could ultimately provide 70,000 square feet of mixed-use residential/office with 30,000 square feet of storefront or historic mill retail. The location near Griffin Green could be considered a premium.

Figure 53:  
Grocery Warehouse  
block

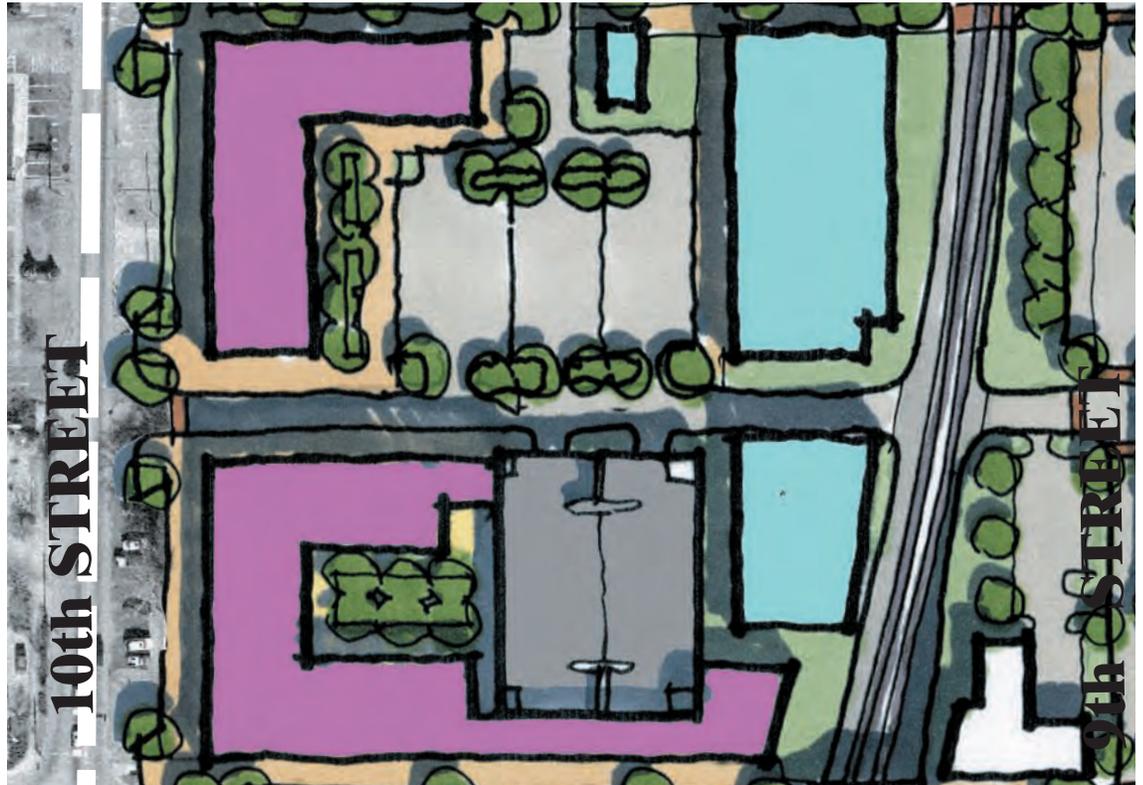


Figure 54:  
Main Warehouse  
building

*INSET: Dovedown  
development*



### 5.2.2.10 Grant's Sheet Metal

Project 10 is important because it is the last piece in the redevelopment of the railroad frontage between 5th Street and the Thomaston Mill, and the first project north of the tracks along the improved 9th Street corridor. The property is currently for sale, with only the Sunshine Grocery at 8th Street as an active business. Redevelopment potential is limited to the south half of the block due to the single-family homes along Central Avenue however; without acquiring the balance of the block, future development of the site consists of renovation of the existing buildings for commercial or lofts, or construction of 10 new townhouses.

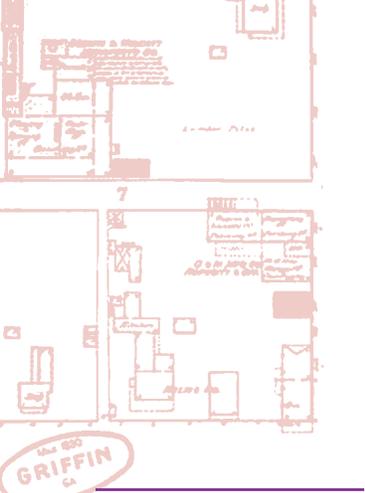


Figure 55:  
9th & Broadway block

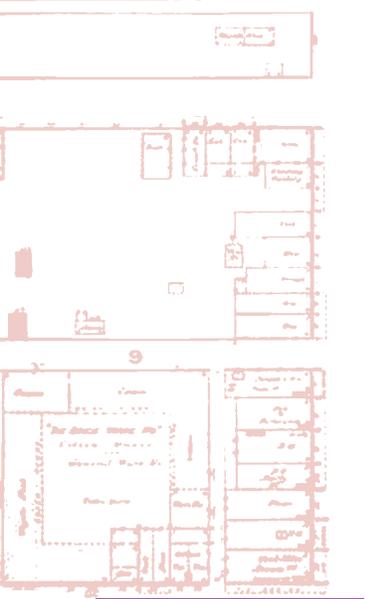


Figure 56:  
Grant's Sheet Metal

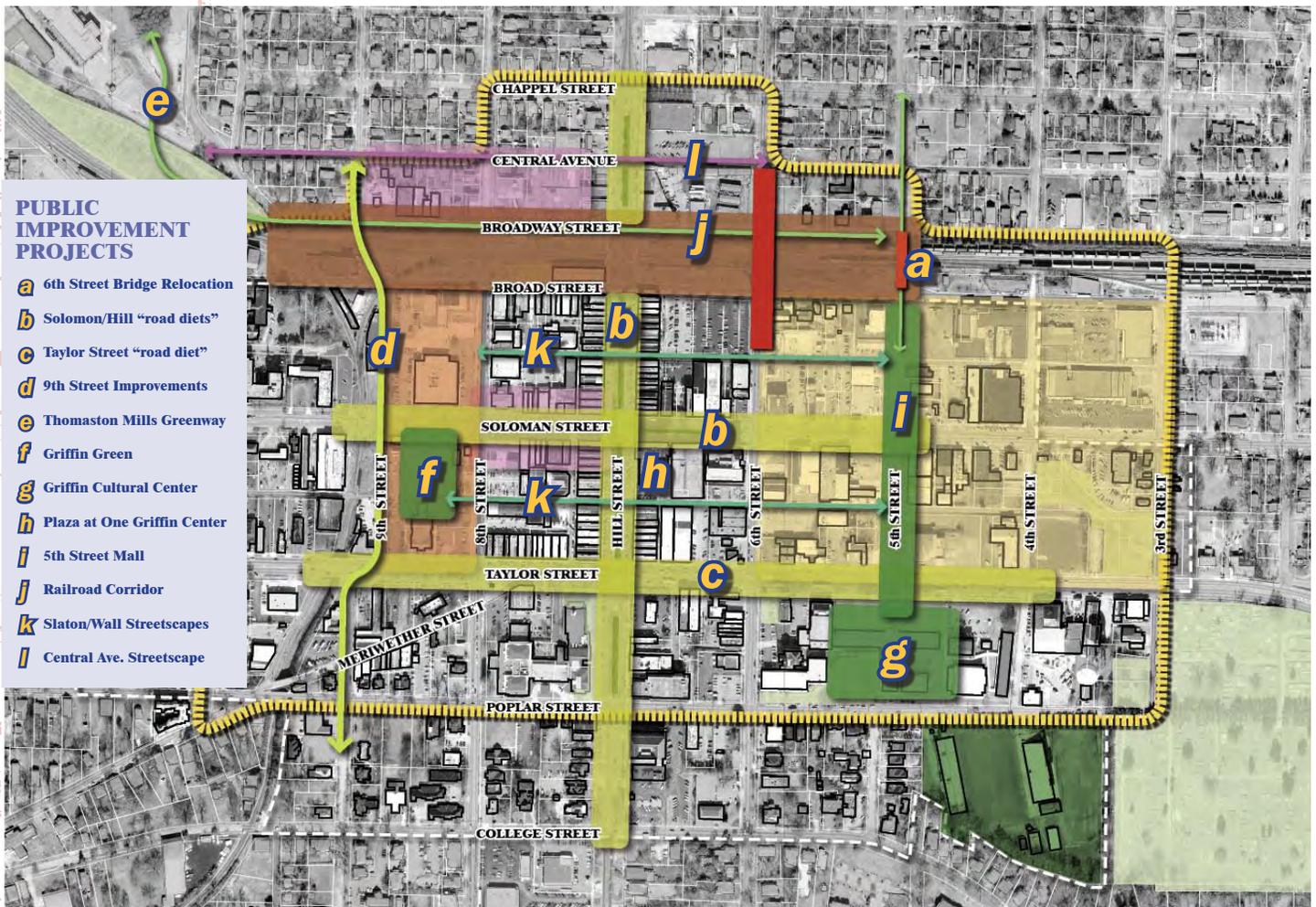


### 5.3 PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS PLAN

The following public improvements are meant to provide the aforementioned catalytic and long-term redevelopment projects with a connective framework to existing goods, services and other downtown destinations. The majority of these projects target improvements to pedestrian zones, although several include the establishment of improved automobile and bicycle connections over the railroad tracks and throughout downtown. Many of these projects were introduced as part of the recent Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Study. Collectively, these projects seek to bring a heightened sense of safety between the pedestrian and the automobile while establishing much-needed public open space throughout Downtown Griffin.

The map below and accompanying key (at left) indicate the locations and extents of the public improvements that are explained on the following pages.

Figure 57:  
Public Improvement  
Projects Map



bbp  
scale in feet: 0 25 50 100 200  
Prepared for The City of Griffin by Urban College, Inc. and Jenie Beaman Frost & Associates, Inc.

Proposed Redevelopment District  
 Residential District  
 Mixed-Use District  
 Entertainment District  
 New Open Space Elements

Major Streetscapes  
 "Image" Corridor  
 Bridge Projects  
 Pedestrian Corridors / Trails

**Public Improvements Plan**  
 October 2007  
**GRIFFIN, GEORGIA**  
 Downtown Redevelopment Planning



## 5.3.1 TRANSPORTATION / CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

### 5.3.1.1 - 6th Street Bridge/Relocation

Not only does 6th Street currently provide the only grade-separated corridor in downtown, but the existing (historic) railroad bridge is scheduled to be replaced by GDOT. With the new bridge, through traffic levels are anticipated to increase as more vehicles take advantage of the improved automobile crossing at 6th Street. Taken from the LCI Study, “Relocate the existing 6th Street through-truss bridges as a pedestrian-only bridge. The appropriate location has not been determined but it could serve as a pedestrian bridge over the railroad at 5th Street, creating a new pedestrian crossing, or be incorporated into the proposed multi-use trail system.” This study furthers a potential link made by this bridge by proposing a pedestrian mall along 5th Street (see project 5.3.2.4).

A similar project can be found in Chattanooga, TN, where the historic Walnut Street Bridge was relocated to a more appropriate crossing and retrofit as a pedestrian-only passing.

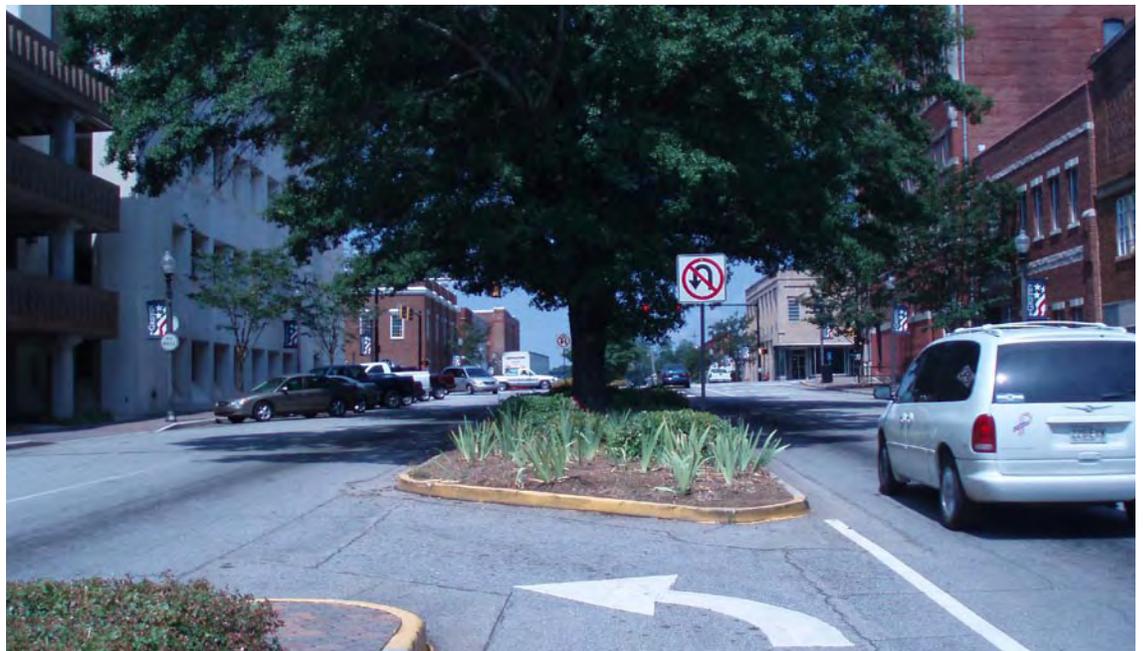
### 5.3.1.2 - Solomon Street/Hill Street “road diets”

Both projects taken from the recent LCI Study:

Regarding Soloman Avenue, “To reinforce the retail activity on Solomon Street, the cross section between 9th Street and 5th Street is changed to be one lane in each direction, separated by a landscaped median. Parallel parking is provided on both sides of the through lane. Sidewalks are widened where required. Turning movements need to be analyzed to determine if turn lanes are required at the intersections. Solomon Street between Hill Street and 8th Street can be closed occasionally for street festivals in support of the new Entertainment District.” (*note changing Soloman from having 45-degree parking to parallel parking*).

Regarding Hill Street, “With the relocation of SR 155 traffic to McDonough Road, Hill Street traffic becomes primarily local traffic. The lessened traffic levels allow the street to be redesigned to support increased pedestrian activity. Within the core area of downtown

Figure 58:  
Solomon Street,  
looking west towards  
Hill Street



between Taylor Street and Broad Street, the asphalt is removed and the roadway cross section is changed to be one lane in each direction of the landscaped median, with parallel parking on each side of the median and widened sidewalks. North of Tinsley Street to Georgia Avenue, the roadway transitions back to a two-lane cross section without a median. Wider sidewalks are provided at their existing locations to encourage pedestrian connections to the revitalized Northside Elementary site and the proposed Kelsey Multi-use Trail.”

### 5.3.1.3 - Taylor Street “road diet”

“Sidewalks in the downtown core between 9th Street and 4th Street should be widened within the existing curb line. If the southern bypass (T-2) is not constructed, the Taylor Street improvements are not recommended for implementation.”

### 5.3.1.4 - 9th Street Improvements

As the LCI study suggested, “9th Street provides a continuous corridor between Dobbins Mill Road north of Griffin to the Griffin City Park and Golf Course. This street can function as an alternative to Hill Street for travel to the north with appropriate improvements between Georgia Avenue and Oak Street.” Further, it was suggested to “widen and infill sidewalks along 9th Street from Georgia Avenue at the Thomaston Mills Park to the City Park and Golf Course.”

### 5.3.1.5 - Thomaston Mills Greenway Trail

Taken from the LCI study: “The existing Thomaston Mills Village Park is an under-used county facility on the northwest side of downtown. A rudimentary trail exists from the playground area to the adjacent creek and to Turner Street. This trail can be improved and extended along the creek right-of-way to the mill redevelopment project. From the mill, the trail would parallel West Broadway Street to Hill Street and the rest of the downtown area. A feasibility study should be conducted to determine the requirements to construct a 10-foot wide multiuse trail within the floodplain of the creek. This trail will connect the northwest area neighborhoods with the county park, and the mill redevelopment with both the park and the downtown area.

Figure 59:  
Median on Hill Street



## 5.3.2 PARKS & OPEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

### 5.3.2.1 - Griffin Green

One of the overwhelming comments conveyed to the study team by various stakeholders in BOTH this study effort as well as the LCI study was the lack of public greenspace in the downtown. As alluded to within the catalytic projects section, the block bounded by Solomon, Taylor, 8th and 9th Streets presents itself as an ideal location for a potential greenspace. This area benefits from its immediate adjacency to Hill Street (one block west), current vacancy (mostly surface parking), few property owners (three total CONFIRM) and grade change (allows subsurface parking). As shown in the illustrative plan, an amphitheatre could be incorporated with passive greenspace into such a park (similar to Suwanee, GA's new town center greenspace). The western-sloping topography would allow the park to be flat on the top, but built on a parking "shelf", thus hiding unsightly parking and providing for a greenspace that could be used for a variety of activities. Over time, the park could also act as an amenity/selling point for future mixed-use and residential development fronting it (see Illustrative Plan.)

### 5.3.2.2 - Griffin Cultural Center

This is the site of the Historic Griffin High School. Given the layout and forms of the historic buildings on this site, it could be ideal for a cultural center - possibly also combined with future governmental/institutional uses. The amount of existing greenspace and large trees on site are a significant advantage to also re-envisioning the area as a significant public greenspace. Such a space could tie in to the proposed 5th Street Mall and could serve to programmatically tie in with future cultural uses.

Figure 60:  
Potential greenspace at  
Griffin Cultural Center



### 5.3.2.3 - One Griffin Center Plaza

As indicated in Catalytic Project B (5.2.1.2), this project represents a longer-term strategy to improve the current city hall building's street presence. The one-story wing extending south to Bank Street – formerly a Wachovia branch bank but now being occupied by customer-intensive city uses - could be vacated and demolished to create a plaza. Or, if city functions were desired to remain in the highly accessible street-level location, the wing could be redesigned and reconstructed to be an architecturally striking pavilion while providing some of the needed plaza space. In the case of One Griffin Center, a new pavilion could act as the symbol of city hall and downtown revitalization. It also serves to fulfill a similar recommendation from the recent LCI study - “Griffin Square” proposed at the Hill/Solomon intersection. In contrast, One Griffin Center Plaza could accommodate smaller, more frequent events without closing off traffic at the city's key intersection.

### 5.3.2.4 - 5th Street Mall

The potential of 5th Street's conversion into a “mall” is due to several factors: 1) the street's cross section is currently extremely wide (almost 100 feet); 2) adjacent blocks are ripe for redevelopment, which would allow private developers to negotiate extending streetscape/curb lines; 3) the proposed Griffin Cultural Center and accompanying greenspace would be the southern terminus; and 4) the pedestrian corridor could be extended northward via the relocated 6th Street bridge (see 5.3.1.1). This mall, which is alluded to in Catalytic Project A, could accommodate heavy pedestrian/bicycle traffic, allow for significant wide sidewalks, large trees, seating areas and even pocket parks in key locations - all without encroaching onto public property.

Figure 61:  
Existing wide right-of-  
way at Fifth Street



### 5.3.3 STREETSCAPES

#### 5.3.3.1 - Railroad Corridor

The “left over” land immediately adjacent to the railroad corridor provides an opportunity to introduce much-needed greenspace in the form of a generous streetscape project. Parking, “bulb-outs”, shade trees, seating areas, lighting and art are all opportunities here. It may even be appropriate to have design competitions for “railroad-themed” sculpture or other art that tie into such improvements while maintaining the railroad history of the area.

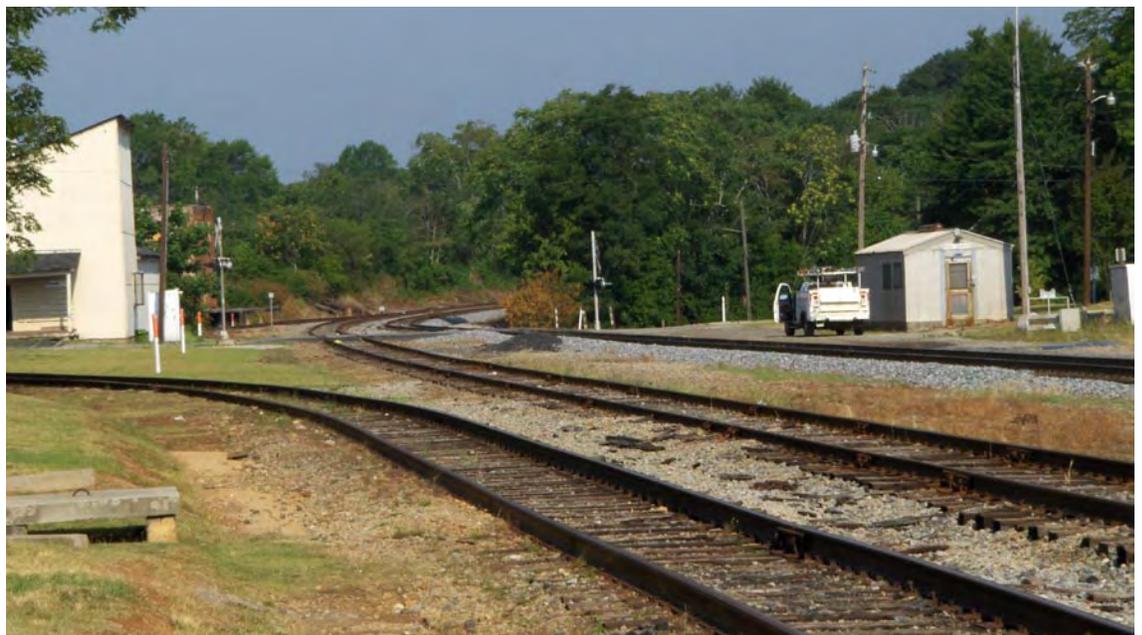
#### 5.3.3.2 - Slaton/Wall Streetscapes

Although both of these streets are narrow and are probably not good candidates for street trees and wider sidewalks, it is possible (and needed) to incorporate new pedestrian/street lighting. Given the handful of artisan shops and other commercial establishments on these streets, unique forms of signage and awnings would be appropriate for the areas.

#### 5.3.3.1 - Central Avenue Streetscape

Although long-term, this narrow street/alley just to the north side of the railroad tracks presents a unique opportunity to provide pedestrian amenities that link with future housing, mixed-use and potential entertainment uses. Per long-term project 5.2.2.7, several of the historic structures along Broadway are envisioned as rehabilitated lofts, live-work or commercial buildings. Both the four-story mill plant and Atkins warehouse could be adaptively reused as loft residential; however the proximity of future lofts at Thomaston Mills and the prospect of capturing the new UGA student market suggest an entertainment or themed restaurant use, possibly in combination with a live music venue. While the LCI recommended creating an entertainment district along Solomon Street between 8th and Hill, relocating this district north to Central Avenue would align better with the smaller pedestrian scale of the street and potentially link directly to the Thomaston Mill project and its park and greenway trail. With this in mind, a streetscape along Central Avenue would link such entertainment establishments and future housing via this narrow, low-traveled street.

Figure 62:  
The rail corridor today

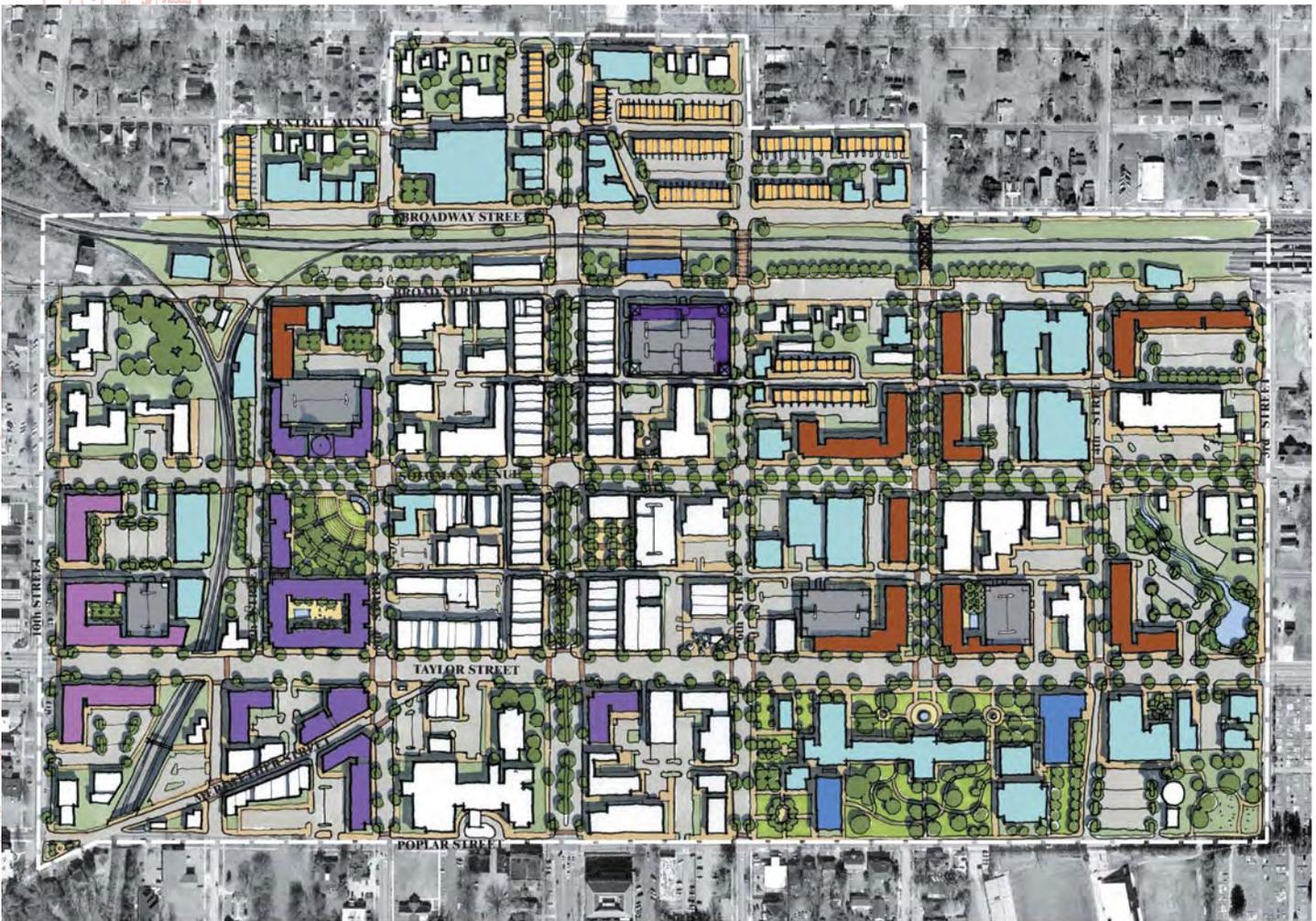


## 5.4 URA ILLUSTRATIVE PLAN

The following Illustrative Plan takes the Future Land Use plan to the next level by showing conceptually how specific land uses would physically work within the landscape of Downtown. Building colors on the plan represent that structure's specific land use (see accompanying legend). Uncolored buildings represent existing and/or unchanged buildings. Although the prior short term/catalytic and long-term project sections describe the majority of the vision shown here, this diagram serves to bring those projects into context with one another.

\*Also see 11"x17" foldout of Illustrative Plan on following page for more detailed view

Figure 63:  
Illustrative Plan



- |                               |                                |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Existing Building             | Mixed Use - Residential/Office |
| Rehabilitation/Adaptive Reuse | Mixed Use - Residential/Retail |
| Townhomes                     | Institutional                  |
| Multifamily Residential       | Potential TAD Boundary         |

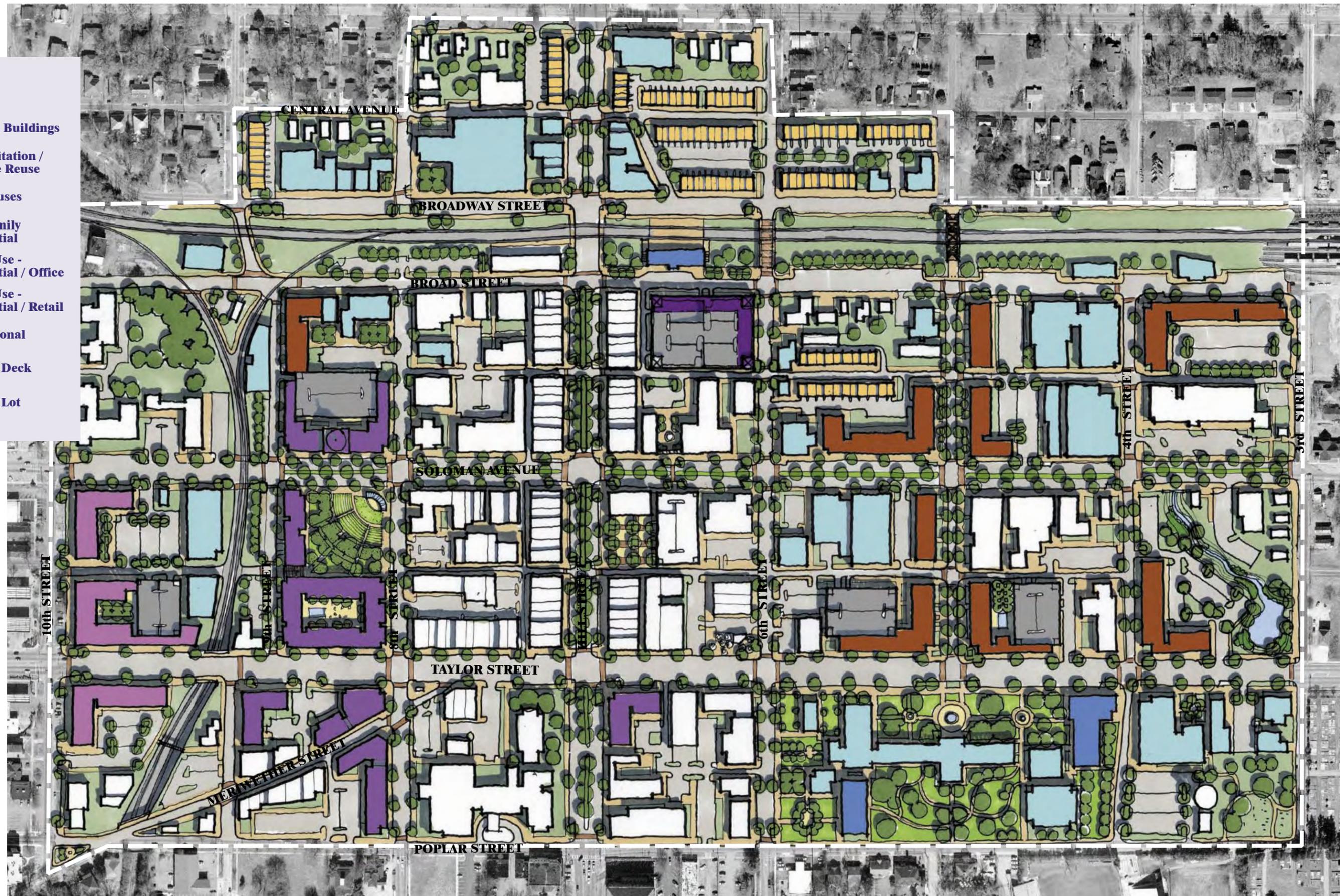
**Illustrative Plan**  
OCTOBER 2007  
**GRiffin, GEORGIA**  
Downtown Redevelopment Planning



bbp  
Prepared for the City of Griffin by Urban Cottage, Inc. and Earth Business Print & Associates, Inc.

# LEGEND

- Existing Buildings
- Rehabilitation / Adaptive Reuse
- Townhouses
- Multifamily Residential
- Mixed-Use - Residential / Office
- Mixed-Use - Residential / Retail
- Institutional
- Parking Deck
- Parking Lot



## PART 6 - Implementation & Investment Strategy

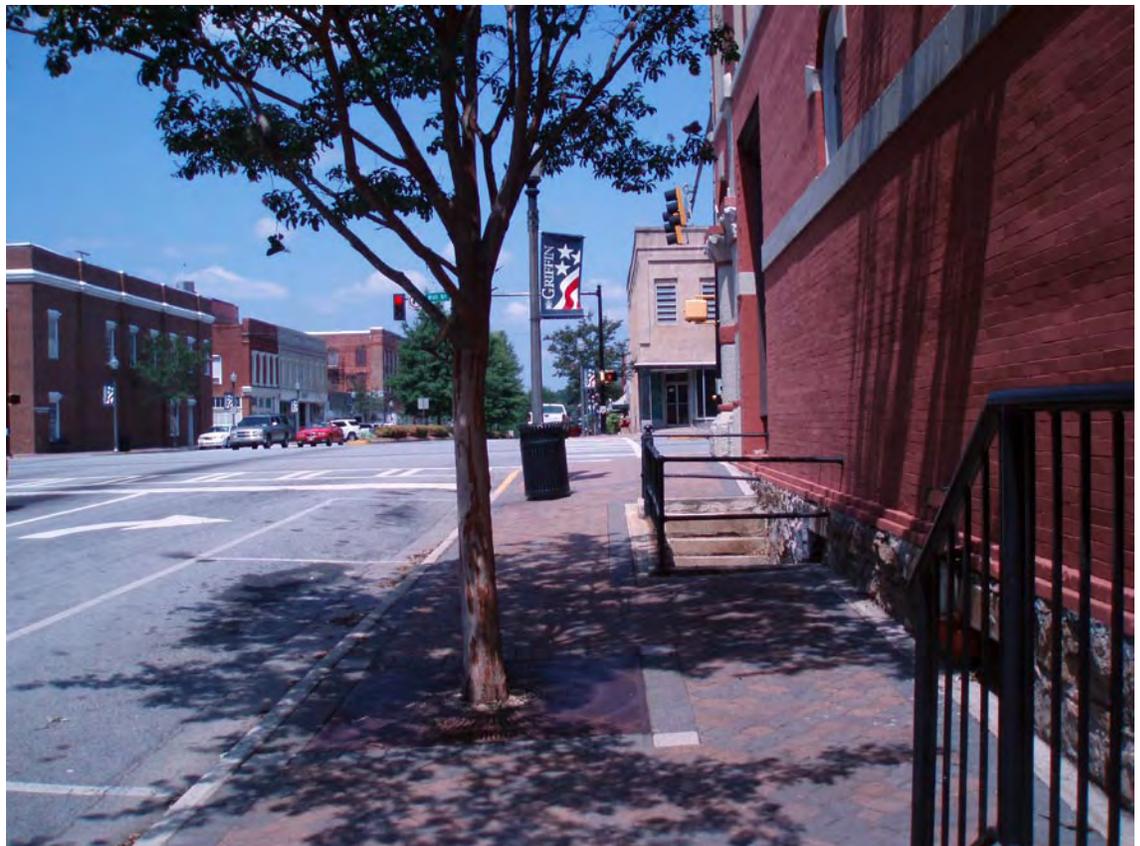
The previous sections have defined a more detailed vision for the future development and continued revitalization of Downtown Griffin. Key “catalytic projects”, both near-term and longer-term, have been identified, totaling an investment of almost \$250 million. The accomplishment of this grand vision and, at some level, each individual catalytic project, will take sustained and concentrated effort by several parties.

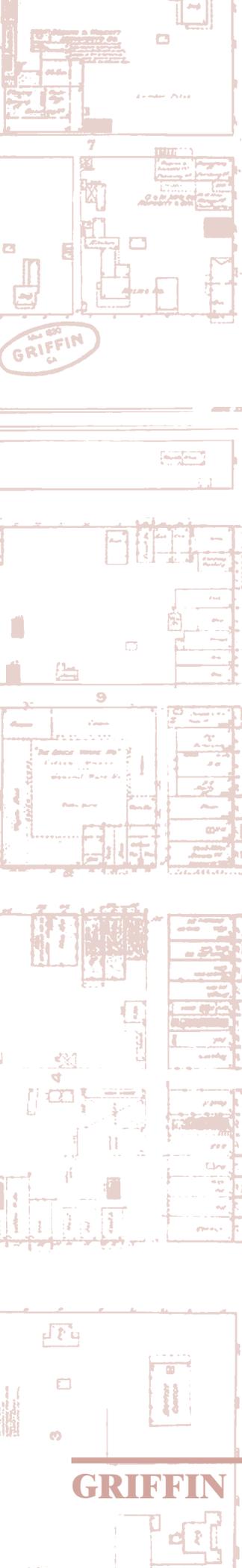
The projects as identified are consistent with the goals, objectives and community input from the recent Livable Centers Initiative. The general vision defined there has been refined with architectural and urban design details and, just as importantly, a test of market feasibility. At some level, success breeds success and market forces can accelerate very quickly, but at this present moment in time a primary objective must be demonstrating a changing market by accomplishing some smaller, but significant early actions and developments. These can include marketing and promotion, public/private partnerships and the investment of public infrastructure, particularly enhanced streetscapes, parks and open space that signify a commitment to quality development.

This section lays out recommendations for policies, tools and next steps as Griffin continues the momentum of recent planning and development efforts and seeks to create a model of a dynamic and sustainable downtown core.

*Implementation depends on a flexible but progressive strategy*

Figure 64:  
Solomon Street  
streetscape





## 6.1 IMPLEMENTATION PRINCIPLES

Implementation success over a long-term redevelopment strategy will rely on several principles:

- 1) **Show Early Success** - public and private sector perception about Downtown Griffin becomes reality at some point. Therefore, plan for key early, inexpensive actions, including clean-up efforts, marketing brochures, events and programming and small-scale physical improvement projects that will demonstrate a tangible continuation of the planning momentum to date.
- 2) **Concentrate Efforts** - one of the most tempting strategies is to attempt to catalyze change in multiple locations at one time. Given the complexity and likely need to coordinate public/private partnerships for most projects, efforts should target smaller geographies around the early catalytic projects. Making a difference in a small two or three-block area will be sustainable. As one area is complete, move to the next.
- 3) **Communicate** – implementation efforts will need consistent periodic communication tools and ongoing mechanisms for structured community input as projects evolve.
- 4) **Leverage Funds** - the City of Griffin and other public sector partners cannot accomplish the projects by themselves. They must leverage limited local funds with state and federal funding and to instigate private sector developments.
- 5) **Promote Social Equity** – accelerating redevelopment efforts must be balanced with an understanding of the economic and social impact of new development. Policies should mitigate displacement and supportive services and programs that support economic participation of affected residents and businesses should be pursued.
- 6) **Widen the Net** – the LCI and recent attention provide an opportunity to make the larger Atlanta metro area aware of potential opportunities in Downtown Griffin. Utilize these programs and smart growth organizations like the Urban Land Institute and the Livable Communities Coalition to attract outside interest.
- 7) **Be Unique** – Downtown Griffin has a unique history and resultant building stock that reflects the culture and conditions that shaped the city. New development should complement and exploit this identity and create unique places not found elsewhere.
- 8) **Make It Easy** – create regulatory enhancements and tools that minimize complexity and shorten the timeframe for the private sector to make investment in Downtown Griffin.

## 6.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The major parties in accomplishing the recommendation of the Downtown Development Plan include the City and DDA. It may be wise to develop a written Memorandum of Understanding for each party's primary responsibility and to establish a "Green Light Team" of key leadership to meet regularly to address emerging issues.

***The City of Griffin*** – the City must take primary responsibility for efforts of regulatory improvements, code enforcement, securing grants and implementing public improvements of streets, streetscapes and open space.

***Downtown Development Authority*** – the DDA can be a powerful tool for accomplishing public/private partnership through bonding capacity, property acquisition and administration of many financial incentives, including a Tax Allocation District (TAD). In addition, it can provide a dedicated organization to marketing and promotion of development opportunities.

Figure 65:  
"If You Hit This Sign..."  
A local landmark can  
be simple



## 6.3 IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

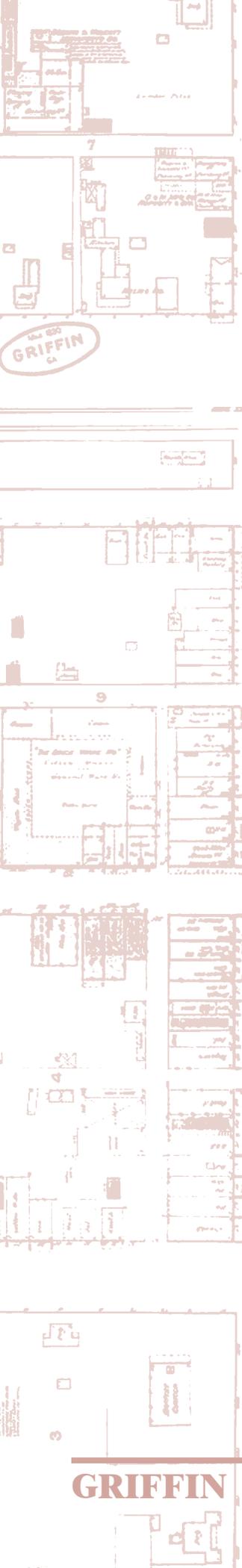
Timely implementation depends on a wide variety of tools that can be strategically applied as needed to address different scales and project circumstances. The most powerful tools can be collected under four general categories:

- 1) **Land Control** – one of the most effective tools for redevelopment is public control of property. This is the basis for two of the early catalytic projects, but additional land acquisition in key areas should be considered.
- 2) **Redevelopment Powers** - the recent plans provide the basis for aggressive public efforts for code enforcement, policing, and acquisition efforts if necessary. They can also provide the ability to pursue financing mechanisms, such as tax-exempt bonds, particularly for early projects.
- 3) **Federal Funding** – LCI implementation funds and other federal programs, particularly those devoted to “congestion mitigation” and “mobility”, while competitive, provide a significant leverage to local funds for public improvements, particularly transportation improvements of roads and pedestrian/bicycle projects.
- 4) **Financial Incentives** – a variety of state assistance, tax breaks and other economic credits, including historic preservation, can be targeted to identified projects. One of the most powerful tools, however, would be the creation of a Tax Allocation District (TAD) that would create local funds for feasible public/private projects. A conceptual analysis of a TAD’s feasibility is included as Appendix B.

### Four powerful categories of tools

Figure 66:  
Griffin Welcome  
Center





### **6.3.1 IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUMENTS / DURATION**

Several implementation instruments are discussed below, and their durations vary according to administrative policy, statute, or technical limitations. Generally, most instruments are valid for more than one year, with programs administered through DCA varying from a three-year duration for a CDBG Revitalization Area to ten years for an Opportunity Zone. The typical duration of a Tax-Allocation District is twenty-five years, while BIDs and CIDs can continue indefinitely as long as their members agree to the need. Development regulations such as zoning or design guidelines are unaffected by the URP, although discretion in enforcement is allowed to the implementing entity. Likewise, deed restrictions generally apply in perpetuity, although limits can be imposed if needed or desired, following legal review.

### **6.3.2 TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT**

A Tax Allocation District (TAD), also known as a tax increment-financing district, is a local financial tool used to redevelop urban areas. It gives cities and counties additional powers to form partnerships with private enterprises without having to create new or increased taxes for the community.

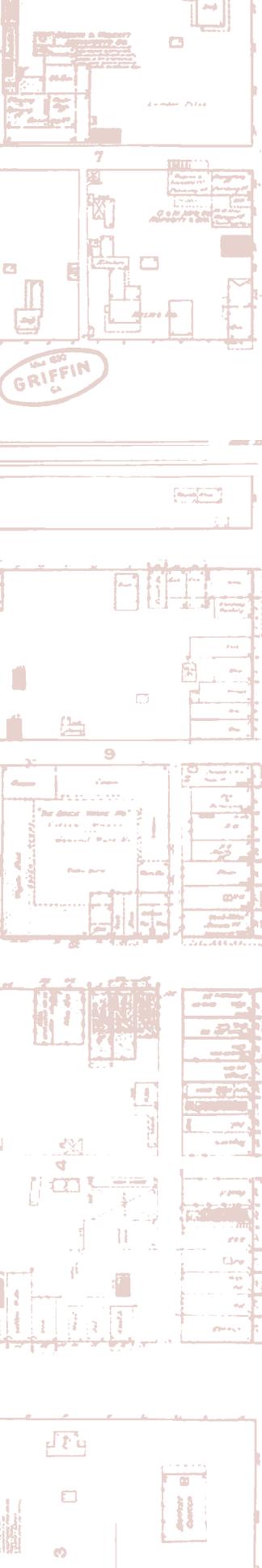
TADs allows cities to create special districts and to make public improvements within those districts that will generate private-sector development. During the development period, the tax base is frozen at the pre-development level. Property taxes continue to be paid, but taxes derived from increases in assessed values (the tax increment) resulting from new development either go into a special fund created to retire bonds issued to originate the development, or leverage future growth in the district.

A tax allocation district is created by the adoption of a plan for redevelopment and a TAD plan. The assessed value of the property within the district is then determined according to the last tax roll and represents the ‘original’ (pre-redevelopment) assessed value of the tax increment district. Each of the taxing jurisdictions (municipality, county, school district, and special taxing jurisdiction) continues to receive its share of the taxes collected on the assessed valuation that represents the original assessed value, just as though the district had never been created and there had been no change in the assessed valuation of the area. When the original assessed value of the district has been certified, the municipality may begin the redevelopment and the tax increment financing process. The tax freeze lasts for a defined period of time, as set forth in the redevelopment plan. At the end of that period, taxing jurisdictions finally enjoy the benefit of increased property values.

Creation of a TAD for Downtown Griffin is highly recommended as a way to leverage private investment for the public improvements program discussed in Section 5.3. While not specifically addressing the provisions of the Redevelopment Powers Act (O.C.G.A. 36-44-1), this Urban Redevelopment Plan include many aspects that could potentially satisfy the statutory criteria for the creation of a TAD, including the tax increment analysis provided in Appendix II.

### **6.3.3 CDBG REVITALIZATION STRATEGY AREA**

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) have long been a major source of funding for projects and program targeted at neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and job creation. They are administered federally through the Department of Housing and Urban Development and on a state level through the Department of Community Affairs.



Like many HUD grants, CDBGs are awarded on a competitive basis; and although the grant amount are generally small compared to the cost of downtown redevelopment they are nonetheless helpful in plan implementation where resources are scarce.

Recently, DCA initiated a new program to recognize communities that are using multiple tools to realize community revitalization objectives, under the assumption that leveraging CDBG with other funds promotes better utilization of the limited grants. This “Revitalization Area Strategy” (RAS) affords benefits to communities that meet the RAS criteria, allowing them to apply for funds every year, to receive bonus points toward their applications, and to obtain line item approval of limited funds for specific site planning and remediation. Bonus points are awarded on the basis of having in place an adopted Urban Redevelopment Plan, having multiple redevelopment tools such as TADs or CIDs in effect, demonstrating investment partnerships, and collaborating with local stakeholders.

An RAS is created by the approval of DCA and is valid for three years. For the RAS designation an area must include census block groups that contain 20% poverty. The area application must include an assessment of economic conditions and have a robust public participatory program that meets DCA standards. Given that the Downtown Griffin URA and the larger URA that was previously created satisfy most, if not all, of the DCA criteria, it is recommended that the city take action toward the establishment of an RAS. An exploratory meeting with DCA representatives is encouraged to determine the feasibility of the RAS.

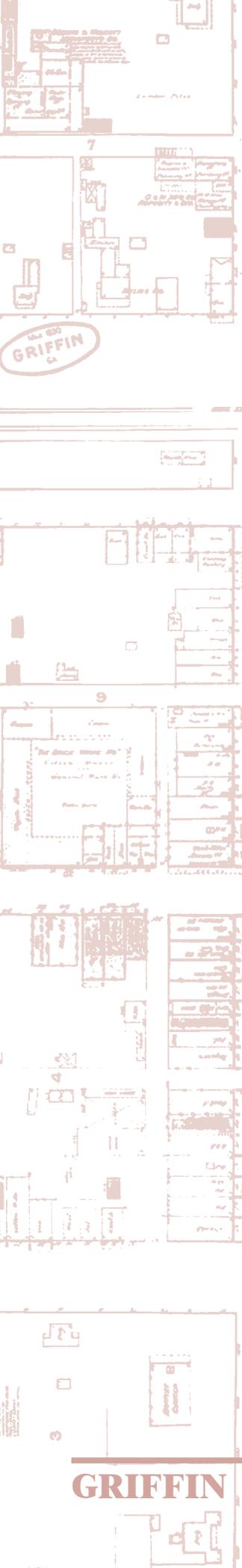
### **6.3.4 ENTERPRISE ZONE / OPPORTUNITY ZONE**

Enterprise Zones and Opportunity Zones are powerful tools for stimulating investment and business development in downtown and should be pursued. In particular, Opportunity Zones are very useful in providing incentives for job creation, freeing up TAD funds to be spent on vital public improvements. Since an Opportunity Zone can be thought of as a very focused Enterprise Zone, it requires the creation of the latter – a legislative action - prior to the OZ designation by DCA. However, property tax abatement included in Empowerment Zone incentives is at odds with the concept of a TAD. If the TAD is pursued, Empowerment Zone benefits are likely to be limited within the TAD area. Discussion with DCA of the feasibility of overlapping Empowerment Zones, Opportunity Zones and TADs is highly recommended before any action is taken.

#### **6.3.4.1 Enterprise Zone**

Enterprise Zones utilize tax and other business incentives to spur business and job growth in specific locations in the community. Usually established by a federal or state government, development incentives offered can include wage credits, work opportunity tax credits, low-cost loans, tax deductions, and exclusion from capital gains. The incentives are designed to attract investment to areas which have suffered economic loss and where business is reluctant to invest.

The Community Reinvestment Act may also serve as a unique opportunity to spur business. In 1977, Congress enacted the Community Reinvestment Act to encourage federally insured banks and thrifts to meet the credit needs of their entire community, including low and moderate income residents. While this program was originally designed for inner cities and poor rural areas, there are ways other jurisdictions have used this legislation to its advantage. Sacramento County in California established a county based program to spur bank investment through its Linked Deposits Program. The program rewards banks for their involvement



in providing charitable donations, banking services, and credit to county low and moderate income neighborhoods. The bank's reward is the direct placement of public deposits from the county's pooled investment fund with a banks. Innovative motivational tools involving county resources and area banks may provide additional incentive to spur investment in Downtown Griffin.

#### 6.3.4.2 Opportunity Zone

Based on job creation, the Opportunity Zone allows for up to five years Georgia income tax credit. The 'Job Tax Credit' program established by the Georgia Business Expansion and Support Act provides a tax credit on Georgia income taxes for eligible businesses that create new jobs in counties or less developed census tract areas. The program establishes eligible tax credits for Georgia's county's based on a tiered structure with four tiers total. Tier 4 holds the counties with the least amount of 'less-developed' census tracts, while Tier 1 holds counties with the greatest amount of 'less-developed' tracts.

The Georgia Business Expansion and Support Act also provides other tax credits of potential benefit to Georgia's counties. This legislation further offers a tax credit for companies that establish or relocate their headquarters to Georgia. The tax credit against liability is \$2,500 annually per new full time job or \$5,000 if the average wage of the new job is 200% of the average wage in the county where the job is created. While the tax credit does not vary by the tiered structure, eligibility does.

#### 6.3.5 OTHER PROGRAMS

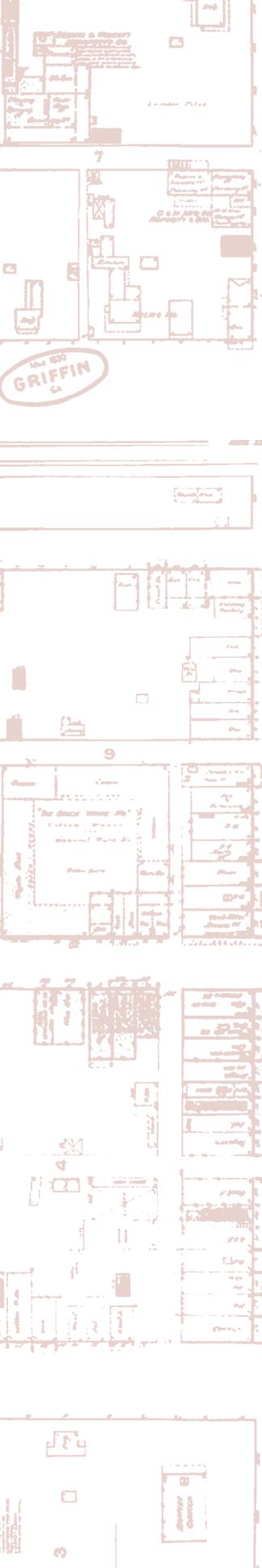
Several other programs offer additional funding mechanisms for implementation of the Redevelopment Plan, as well as ensuring the continuing growth and economic well-being of downtown.

##### 6.3.5.1 Business / Community Improvement Districts

An improvement district is a unique district created to make improvements to a given area. Typically, there are two types of improvement districts, business and community. A Business Improvement District (BID) is a public-private partnership in which business owners concur among themselves to pay into the district for returned services which they also agree upon, such as maintenance, development and promotion of their commercial district. On the other hand, a Community Improvement District (CID) follows the same concept with property owner's whose returned services concentrate more on drainage, sidewalks, and the overall maintenance and image of a community. Given that the success of a BID or CID depends on the capacity and willingness for business to submit to an additional tax, it is recommended that this be a longer-term option for downtown.

##### 6.3.5.2 Micro-Enterprise Programs

Micro-enterprise programs reflect the notion that for some low income people, access to technical training and small amounts of capital can help them start small businesses. Two-thirds of businesses in the U.S. start with less than \$10,000 in capital, usually from family sources. However, for minorities, women and low income entrepreneurs, access to family capital is limited. These entrepreneurs often are considered too risky for regular banks. Small business and self-employment can help address the mismatch between workers in many inner cities and depressed rural areas and job opportunities in distant suburbs. Small businesses



support local services and provide a sense of community – building social capital as well as economic and physical infrastructure. For immigrant groups, self employment has provided an important way to enter the local community.

Attention to micro-enterprise as an economic development strategy got its start in developing countries and the model of micro-credit has been replicated widely throughout the world including in low income inner city and rural areas in the US. While micro-enterprises in the developing world can be quite small, the American Enterprise Organization (the trade association of micro-enterprise groups in the US) defines a micro-enterprise as a business with five or fewer employees and which requires less than \$25,000 in start up capital and lacks access to the traditional commercial banking sector.

Micro-enterprise programs recognize that fledging entrepreneurs need more than credit. Training and technical assistance are key components of these programs (how to develop a business plan, assessing entrepreneurial readiness), as well as efforts to enhance access to markets through joint marketing, participation in trade shows and incubators. Emphasis is also given to asset development, both financial (understanding banking and savings principles, insurance and tax law) and social (networks, support groups, understanding of local economic and political structures).

### 6.3.5.3 Bank Participation in Community Development

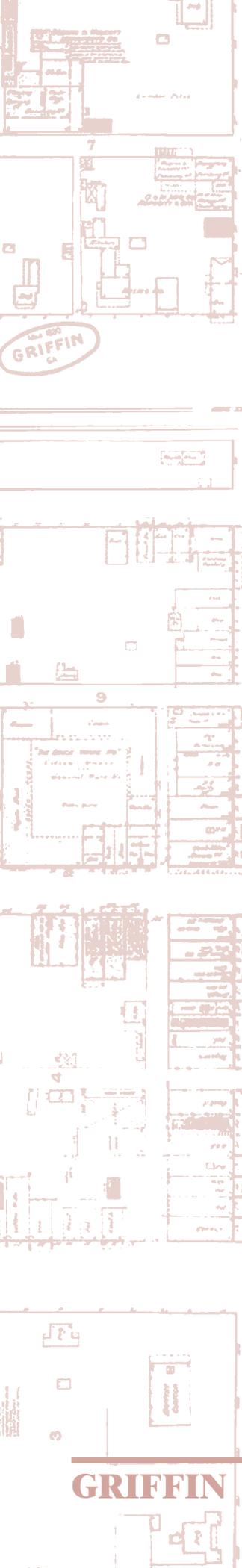
Capital is critical for economic development, especially in distressed areas where conventional lending is limited. Many local governments operate their own community development loan funds, using them to recycle Community Development Block Grant monies or other federal and state subsidiaries. Such funds can be critical in providing seed financing for main street revitalization programs, micro-enterprise programs or other local small business development.

One of the earliest community development loan programs was established by the Economic Development Administration in 1975. Today there are thousands of community development loan funds. They receive support from private foundations, private banks (as part of meeting Community Reinvestment Act obligations), and from state and federal government programs such as the Small Business Administration, U.S.D.A. and H.U.D. Most of these funds are set up as revolving loan programs to ensure program sustainability. These loan funds are an important source of credit for small businesses unable to obtain credit from commercial lenders (National Association of Development Organizations).

Loan funds can be sponsored directly by local government or by other civic organizations or financial institutions. These programs usually receive their capital from government or foundation grants and use it to create a revolving loan fund for affordable housing, small business development or construction of community facilities. Loan funds do not have to be directly affiliated with banks or credit unions but will often work closely with private bank partners in marketing loan products, reviewing credit worthiness and structuring deals.

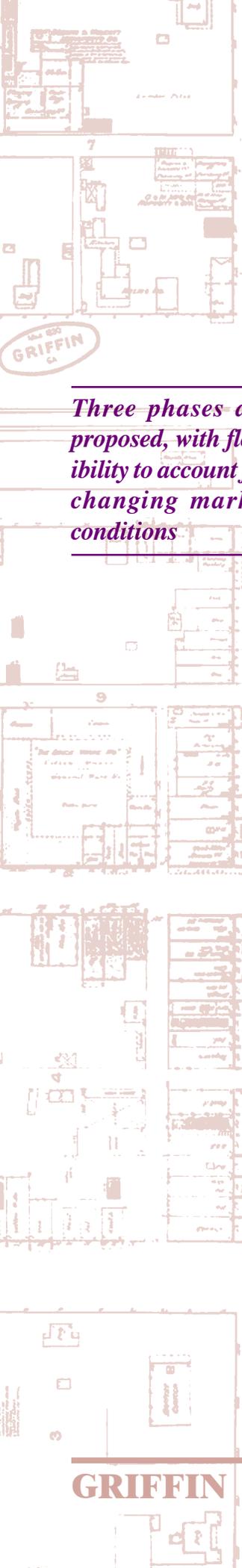
### 6.3.5.4 Bond Allocation Programs

For businesses and individuals seeking long-term, low-interest rate financing for manufacturing or residential development, tax-exempt financing is available both at the state and local level. The Department of Community Affairs is responsible for implementing a system for allocating the use of private-activity bonds, as permitted by federal law, in order to further the



economic development and to further the provision of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing in the state. The Bond Allocation Program authorizes Georgia to use up to \$80 per capita a year, or some \$706 million for eligible projects.

Projects covered by this program include traditional industrial development bonds (IDB) for manufacturing concerns, and mortgage revenue bonds (MRB) for single family mortgages, to bonds for multi-family housing development. Economic development projects are required to commit to create, or retain, one job for every \$125,000 of financing. In turn, mortgage revenue bonds are also held to minimum requirements. A minimum number of units in multifamily housing projects must be made available for low- and moderate-income families while single-family proposals must demonstrate the ability to turn allocations into cost-effective mortgages for first-time low and moderate income home buyers. To receive an allocation under this program, a local issuing authority (potentially the DDA) must approve the project, hold a public hearing, and have local government approval and general financing in place.



## 6.4 ACTION PLAN

The table included (Fig 67, pp. 69-70) identifies all key projects included in the Downtown Development Plan. A focus is given on projects that can be accomplished in the first five years.

### 6.4.1 PHASING PLAN

The major parties in accomplishing the recommendation of the Downtown Development Plan has described two categories of catalytic projects, with the notion that short-term projects be implemented within the first five to eight years after adoption. Plan phasing is not prescribed because of the uncertainty of the market, although for the purposes of the TAD analysis three phases of approximately eight years each are proposed, to determine the timing of increments. Long-term catalytic projects are assumed to generally occur in the second eight-year phase, while other projects not specifically described in the text are reserved for the final eight years (see Appendix B for short-, mid- and long-term assignments). Even with the flexible phasing, however, it is essential that at least some redevelopment and public space projects be completed in the first phase to build implementation momentum. Ideally, projects that are predicated on publicly-controlled land (Old City Hall, One Griffin Center) be given the highest implementation priority. Public space projects that have high catalytic potential (Griffin Green, Fifth Street Mall, some streetscapes) should be targeted for the second phase at the latest if at all feasible, to take full advantage of their transformative effect in the third phase.

*Three phases are proposed, with flexibility to account for changing market conditions*

### 6.4.2 PROPERTY ACQUISITION PLAN

By virtue of the State of Georgia enabling urban redevelopment legislation, this URP serves as a formal instrument for mobilizing proactive urban redevelopment processes, among them the important power of public acquisition of real property to effectuate plan initiatives. However, the use of direct public property acquisition is intended to be minimal, targeted toward public space projects that are essential to realizing the complete vision for downtown. It is fully expected that necessary property assembly (or equity arrangements) for the bulk of redevelopment will be initiated and conducted by private-sector interests and possibly supported by future TAD resources where justified, with this tool as a last-resort measure. Several specific recommended policies and procedures for the responsible use of this power are listed below. The location of possible acquisition sites corresponds to the Redevelopment Project Areas shown in Figures 24 and 36 in Part 5.

#### 6.4.2.1 Acquisition Criteria

The following conditions represent criteria under which property may be eligible for public acquisition.

- Sites occupied by abandoned, dilapidated structures, which are unsafe and detrimental to the surrounding environment.
- Vacant or underutilized sites that reflect patterns of impaired development, economic disinvestment and/or detrimental site uses. Sites classified as vacant or underutilized include those with vacant structures; sites without permanent building improvements; sites used for open storage; or sites with other non-intensive uses such as surface parking lots.

Figure 67:  
ACTION PLAN

	Name	Description	Improvement Type	Area	Costs	Year
<b>REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS</b>						
<b>CATALYTIC PROJECTS</b>						
A	Old City Hall Site					
		Townhomes	Proposed	40,000	\$4,000,000.00	2015
		Multi-Family	Rehab/Proposed	90,000	\$11,400,000.00	2015
		Commercial	Rehab	6,500	\$715,000.00	2015
B	One Griffin Center	Institutional	Existing	50,000		
		Parking Deck	Existing			
C	Renaissance Griffin					
		Mixed-Use (comm/res)	Rehab	23,000	\$2,760,000.00	2015
		Commercial / Retail	Rehab	5,000	\$550,000.00	2015
		Commercial / Retail	Existing	162,000		
D	Griffin Hotel					
		Commercial / Retail	Existing	16,000		
E	Conference Center					
		Commercial	Rehab	35,000	\$3,850,000.00	2015
		Multi-Family	Proposed	25,000	\$3,250,000.00	2023
F	Norman Buggy Co.					
		Multi-Family	Proposed	34,000	\$4,420,000.00	2023
		Mixed-Use (comm/res)	Rehab	20,000	\$2,400,000.00	2015
<b>LONG-TERM PROJECTS</b>						
1	Griffin Green					
		Mixed-Use (retail/res)	Proposed	246,000	\$34,440,000.00	2031
		Parking Deck	Proposed	150,000	\$9,000,000.00	2031
2	Commuter Rail Parking					
		Retail	Proposed	16,000	\$2,400,000.00	2023
		Parking Deck	Proposed	160,000	\$9,600,000.00	2023
3	Griffin Cultural Center					
		Institutional	Rehab/Proposed	185,000	\$18,300,000.00	2023
4	Hotel Spalding					
		Commercial / Retail	Existing	25,000		
5	Akins Feed & Seed					
		Townhomes	Proposed	50,000	\$5,000,000.00	2031
		Mixed-Use (retail/res)	Rehab	30,000	\$3,600,000.00	2031
6	Griffin Medical College					
		Townhomes	Proposed	6,000	\$600,000.00	2031
		Multi-Family	Rehab	10,000	\$1,200,000.00	2023
7	HFM Plant					
		Commercial / Retail	Rehab	53,000	\$5,830,000.00	2031
8	Sock Shoppe Location					
		Multi-Family	Proposed	50,000	\$6,500,000.00	2031

9	Grocery Warehouse Block					
		Mixed-Use (comm/res)	Rehab/Proposed	100,000	\$6,900,000.00	2031
		Parking Deck	Proposed	55,000	\$3,300,000.00	2031
10	Grant's Sheet Metal					
		Townhomes	Proposed	20,000	\$2,000,000.00	2031
		Single Family	Existing	3,000		
		Commercial / Retail	Rehab	24,000	\$2,640,000.00	2023

## PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

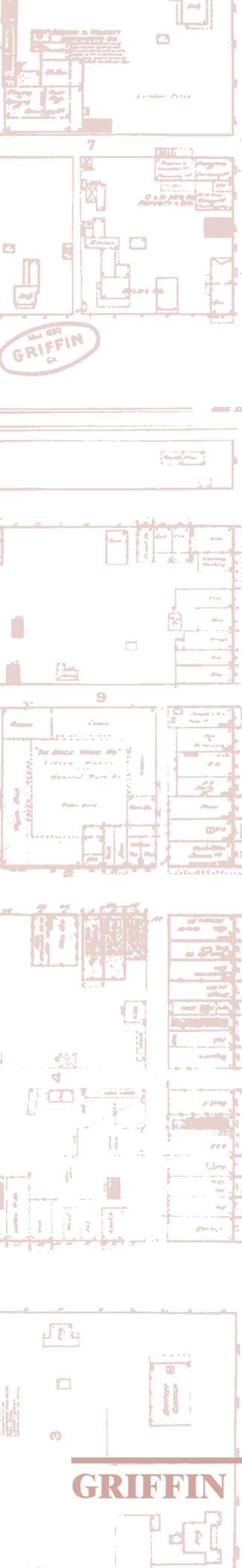
### OPEN SPACE PROJECTS

1	Cultural Center	New landscape design and improvements to enhance cultural facilities	Open Space	180,000	\$3,600,000.00	2023
2	Griffin Green	"Town Center" park / plaza with amphitheatre, fountains	Open Space	58,000	\$2,875,000.00	2023
3	5th Street Mall	Linear park with pedestrian trail, connected to relocated pedestrian truss bridge over railroad	Open Space	1,200 lf	\$1,800,000.00	2015

### ADDITIONAL PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS

a	6th Street Bridge	New GDOT project	Transportation	n/a	n/a	n/a
b	5th Bridge Relocation	Historic truss as pedestrian overpass			\$1,000,000.00	2015
c	Railroad Corridor Improvements (9th to 5th)	Parking facilities, streetscaping, branding	Streetscape / Landscape	2,000 lf	\$500,000.00	2023
d	Hill Street Improvements (Broadway to Poplar)	Road diet with sidewalk widening	Streetscape	1,500 lf	\$1,500,000.00	2015
e	Solomon Street Improvements (9th to 4th)	New / improved median, sidewalks	Streetscape	2,300	\$2,300,000.00	2015
f	Taylor Street Improvements (10th to 3rd)	Road diet and streetscape	Streetscape	3,400 lf	\$2,720,000.00	2023
g	Slaton / Wall Streetscapes	"Themed" pedestrian improvements	Streetscape	4,400 lf	\$2,200,000.00	2031
h	9th Street Improvements (Poplar to Broadway)	Upgraded street, new streetscape	Streetscape	1,700 lf	\$1,700,000.00	2031
i	Central Street Streetscape	"Themed" pedestrian improvements	Streetscape	1,400 lf	\$700,000.00	2031
j	Mill Multiuse Trail	New greenway trail	Streetscape / Landscape	(per LCI)	\$575,000.00	2015

\*\*streetscape numbers in Linear Feet



- Properties required for implementing critically-needed public buildings; parks and plazas; and traffic/pedestrian circulation and infrastructure improvements.
- Non-intensively developed, obsolescent, or underutilized commercial or light industrial sites which contribute to traffic, land use, and environmental impacts on surrounding residential areas and which offer logical opportunities for conversion to more appropriate uses.
- Sites exhibiting severe and persistent tax delinquencies, overdue utility bills or excessive property liens.
- Sites and structures of significant historical, cultural, or architectural distinction which reflect conditions of physical deterioration, vacancy or underutilization, or inappropriate uses (i.e., conditions which can be remedied through high-priority preservation and adaptive reuse programs).
- Substandard or deteriorated structures that are candidates for cost-effective rehabilitation through acquisition and reinvestment by alternative owners.
- Sites that fail to comply with the Future Land Use Plan or represent a significant physical deterrent to developing a larger, critical-mass project.

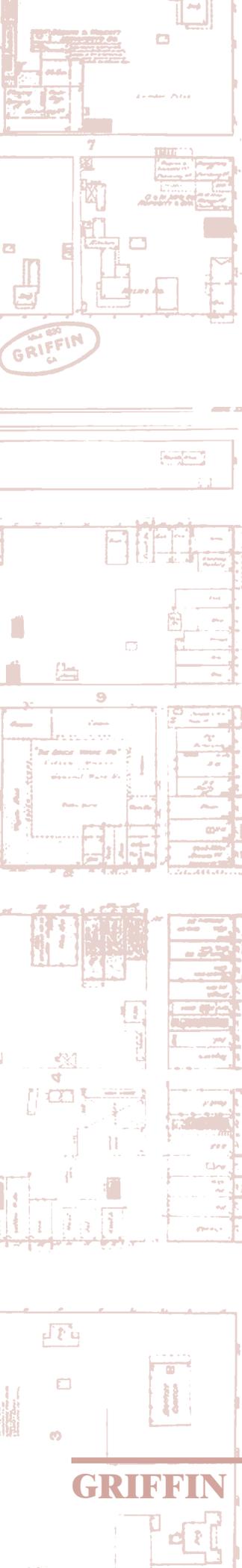
#### 6.4.2.2 Guidelines For Acquisition

As a matter of policy, this Urban Redevelopment Plan calls for careful control of local government costs and risks associated with front-end property acquisition and initiation of project development. A key strategy will be to involve the sharing of front-end land assembly and project initiation responsibilities with pre-qualified private redevelopment teams approved by the City and/or the primary URP implementing entity. Increased participation by current property owners, community-based organizations, private investors, and business operators during the initial stages of redevelopment can provide a greater economic stake for the community and improve social responsibility for redevelopment outcomes. At the same time, publicly-financed redevelopment front-end costs will be reduced along with fewer short-term losses of tax revenues during acquisition, relocation, and site preparation phases.

The policy of shared responsibility for acquisition and project initiation grants the City the authority to control future site reuses and design qualities within targeted redevelopment sites as outlined in this URP. The City retains the power to coordinate the provision of appropriate economic incentives for redevelopers and tenants, regardless of how the property is assembled. This policy also calls for the City to act as the land acquisition and disposition agency of last resort, where essential property redevelopment cannot be achieved through other parties. All property acquisition activities conducted by the City should directly correspond to community-based priorities and be reviewed by appropriate community-based organizations at all times.

#### 6.4.3 PROPERTY DISPOSITION PLAN

As with the Acquisition Plan, the concept of official urban redevelopment disposition is intended to be minimal; although all properties contained within the Redevelopment Projects maps (Figures 24 and 36) shall be eligible for public acquisition and disposition as enabled by authority of the State of Georgia urban redevelopment legislation. The disposition of publicly-acquired property and the allocation of redevelopment rights are subject to provisions of Georgia's redevelopment statutes under which this plan is enabled;



policy and procedural guidelines for the conduct of property disposition and controls will be formulated and administered by the City and/or the designated implementation entity. Such policies and procedures must be directed toward protecting the interests of the general public and the Downtown Griffin community as well as encouraging and promoting high-quality private development through a variety of coordinated incentives. The goals of the property disposition/re-use process are to effect desirable land use changes; preserve and adaptively reuse historic structures; provide open space and other public amenities; deliver economic opportunity and housing benefits for the community; capture fiscal benefits for taxpayers; and assure design excellence in all rehabilitation and construction activity.

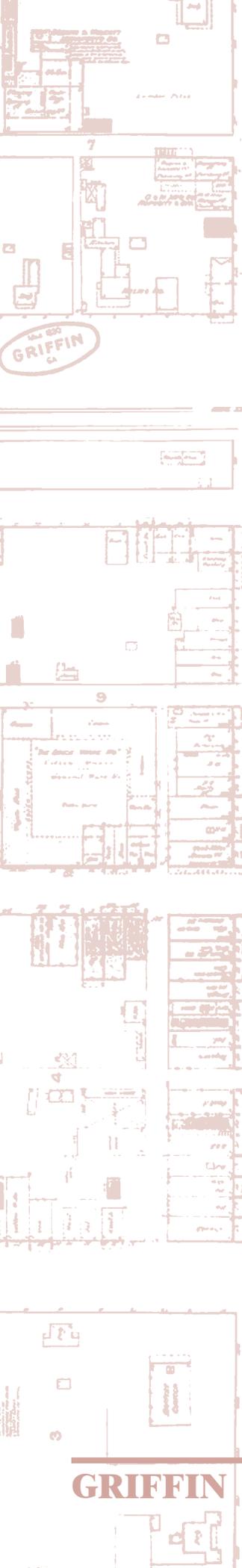
#### **6.4.4 RELOCATION**

The boundaries of the URP were chosen to avoid existing residential areas wherever possible, and therefore residential relocation is anticipated to be minimal, if needed at all. Nevertheless, there are several redevelopment projects which, to achieve the goals of the plan in terms of development density and land use, may require relocation of existing commercial uses. As discussed above in the acquisition and disposition plans, it is hoped that all property acquisition and/or parcel assemblage that is necessary to implement the plan can be accomplished through traditional private market mechanisms with official urban redevelopment powers used only as a last resort. However, it is critical to understand that, to the extent that it becomes necessary, any publicly-assisted property acquisition of an occupied structure will require the obligation to provide all necessary and due relocation assistance. In this regard, all relocation benefit standards and procedures will fully comply in spirit and in material with all current federal administration guidelines and regulations, including the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1973. While these federal benefits typically outpace local and state policies, commitment to these higher levels will protect access to federal funding resources.

#### **6.5 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

The regulatory changes recommended by the LCI are likewise advocated by this URP, and which consists of expanding the mixed-use Central Business District category to cover the URP area north of the railroad; adopting the state's Alternative Fire Code for Historic Buildings; and establishing downtown design standards either by overlay or text amendment. An additional recommended regulatory change is the establishment of a National Register historic district which could dovetail with the provisions of future design standards. Both the design guidelines and the historic district have had preliminary work performed; which should be reviewed by the URP implementation entity as well as the City for possible combination. Given the valuable historic resources on which the URP depends, a landmark district with strong preservation-based regulatory language could be carved out of the larger CBD district, with design guidelines tailored to the nuances of the building inventory. If the dedicated landmark district is not feasible in the near-term, then the design guidelines should incorporate aspects of historic preservation as well as provisions acknowledging the historic context.

While not regulatory, deed restrictions also provide a way to control the shape of redevelopment in the future. Deed restrictions are voluntary, so their best chance of early application lies in property owned by the city, and more specifically the old city hall site. The most important condition that could be addressed by a deed restriction is the reservation of a strip of public right-of-way on the east frontage, to align with the expanded Fifth Street right-of-way to the south; this would reserve the space to implement the linear park that is essential to the revitalization of the East Side. Other deed restrictions on the city hall site might focus on



keeping adequate right-of-way for a streetscape on Slaton, or specifying the location of curb cuts, or mandating preservation of the historic buildings as indicated by the site development plan shown in Figure 25.

## 6.6 DURATION AND MODIFICATION OF CONTROLS

All of the redevelopment plan controls as described in this plan shall expire, and no longer be in force or effect 20 years after the formal adoption date of this plan by the Board of City Commissioners.

Until all of the saleable and buildable properties in the target area that are eventually acquired by the City have been disposed of, the controls may be amended or variances granted, provided that such changes do not impact the value of specific projects already completed without prior consent of owners or lessees of the impacted projects.

After all of the saleable and buildable property in the area owned by the City has been disposed of, the City shall file a certificate to that effect. Thereafter, upon the written request of the owner of any property, variances from the controls may be granted by the City with respect to such property in such manner as the Mayor and Board of Commissioners may prescribe.

The Mayor and Board of Commissioners shall promulgate the terms and procedures under which variances from the controls may be considered and permitted, as well as procedures for amendments to this Urban Redevelopment Plan. Major modifications shall require formal amendments to be approved by the Board of Commissioners. Minor amendments that do not cause any substantial alteration of the plan may be accomplished administratively through written action of the Mayor of the City of Griffin.