Destination Oconee Recommendations

DESTINATION OCONEE ACTION COMMITTEE

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OCONEE COUNTY

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"Almost nobody travels willingly from sameness to sameness and repetition to repetition, even if the physical effort required is trivial."

- JANE JACOBS, *THE DEATH AND LIFE OF GREAT AMERICAN CITIES*

Recommendations

\# 3 – Conduct Street Audits in Downtowns

#4 – Adopt a Downtown Overlay Ordinance for Westminster, Walhalla and Seneca
- ◦ Adopt can also be read as 'amend'

Framework of Thought

Guiding Principles:
◦ Economic Growth/Diversity
◦ Natural Resources
◦ Quality of Life

Vision – Why?

Geographic/Spatial Component – Where?

Qualitative and Quantitative Components – What?

Destination Oconee Recommendations – How?

Alignment:
◦ Aligning your vision, goals and policy should inform decisions regarding allocation of funding and direct policy development

Vision

A vision must be established first to ensure alignment can be achieved as policies, programs and funding are built around the vision.

Having a vision provides a standard or 'test' for a community to benchmark decisions
◦ Does this action/program fall within the vision and steps necessary to make the vision a reality?

Conduct Street Audits in Downtowns

In short, a street audit allows a community to:
- Take an inventory of who it is – what shops are where, who owns what, what is for sale, what is tax revenue like, etc…
- Take an inventory of amenities – seating, trash cans, lighting, walkability, parking, etc…
- Evaluate Opportunities for Exchange:
  - This is where Sense of Place is made
    - Can people meet, share, converse, relax – live life in the public realm instead of the private realm (home)?
    - Does downtown cultivate this?

Conducted by using the following:
- Photographs
- Stakeholder meetings
- Walking tours

Results should be incorporated as policy proposals that align with vision
- Example – ugly trash cans so city buys better designs bins

Must precede the creation of a Downtown Overlay because an audit will allow the community to better understand what an overlay should address.

Adopt Downtown Overlay

In short, an overlay is a tool by which a community outlines an area on a map to better align focus and efforts in two ways:

- Regulating the built environment
  - Uses
  - Density
  - Design – Pass a Design Review Committee Ordinance – Destination Oconee Recommendation
  - Signage – Adopt a more detailed City and County Signage Ordinance – Destination Oconee Recommendation
- Revitalization Program Implementation
  - City investment
  - Façade Grants
  - Tourism Dollars – events, concerts, etc…

Community identifies downtown on a map.

Ordinances, programs and funding are built around the vision and applied within the newly identified downtown.

Walhalla – Early Case Study

Vision

Geographic / Spatial Component

Street Audit

"streetscape has improved the safety of pedestrians, traffic has slowed"

"not bike friendly at all, more pedestrian friendly"

"sidewalks are big and wide, but are bare"
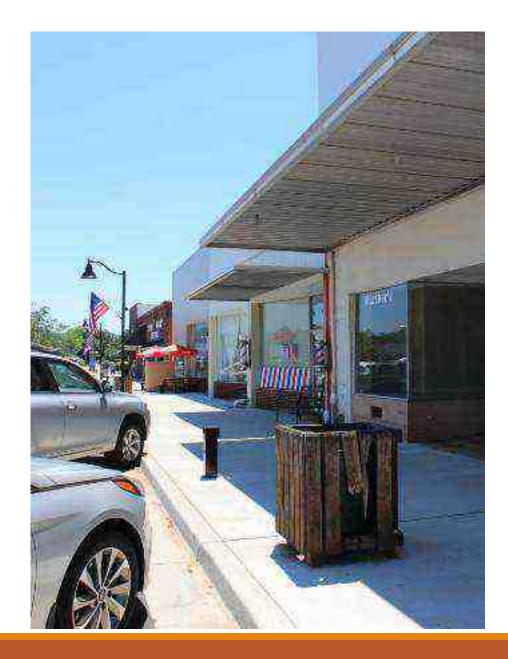
Adequate shade? "not yet"

"definitely need new trash cans"

"need more" benches

Are storefronts attractive? "majority are not"

"signage should be uniform"

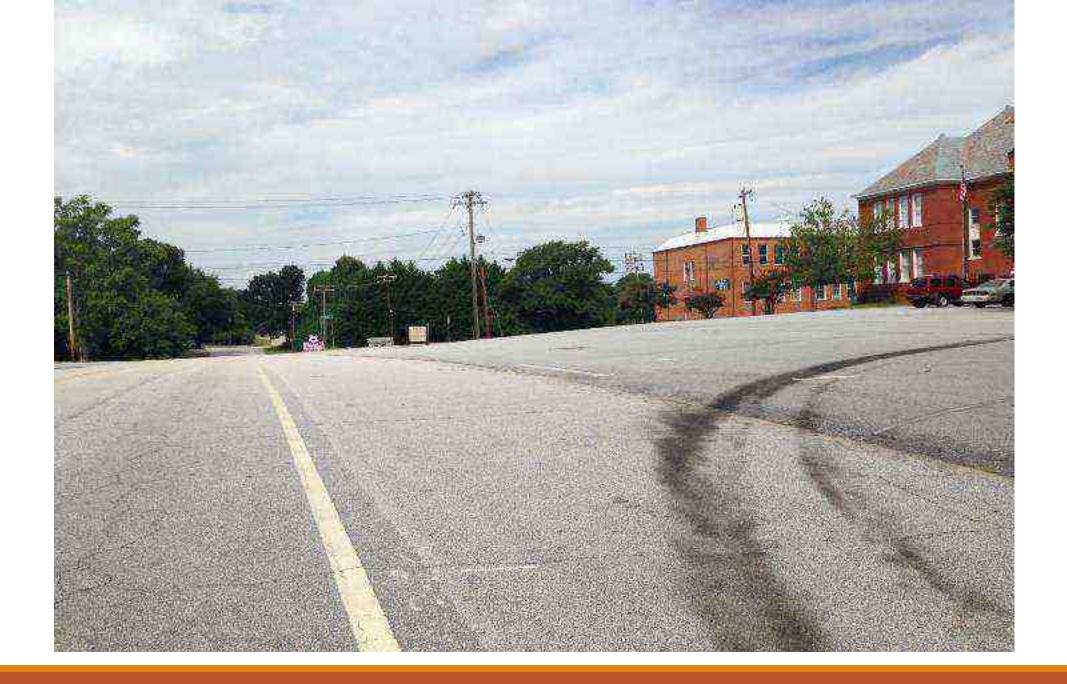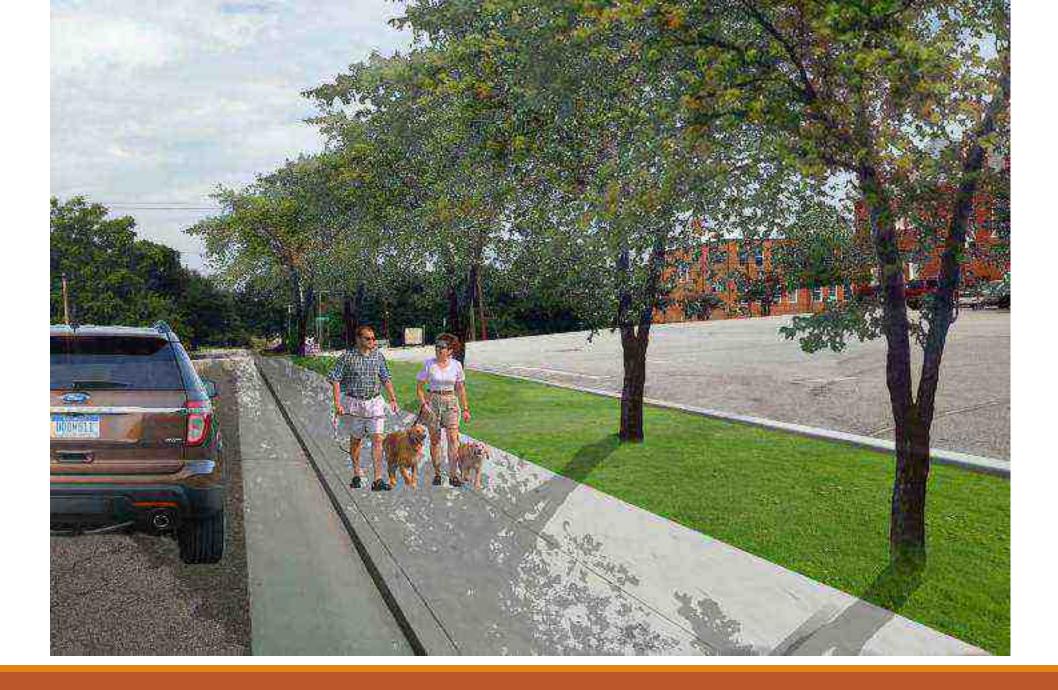Are there places to gather and socialize? "didn't see much"

Downtown Development Overlay

Walhalla has created a Downtown Development Corporation, the WDDC has been tasked with recommending how to implement revitalization efforts.

- Downtown area has been identified
- Currently researching and developing development standards
- Currently developing the following programs:
  - Façade grants
  - Low interest loans
  - Economic development partnerships
  - Annual Small Biz competition
  - Fast Track Permitting
  - Incentives:
    - Infrastructure costs
    - Zoning

What does this look like?

Evolution of Mindset

What does this mean?

Creative thinking must become the norm. "Because we have always done things that way" is no longer acceptable.

Take the lead and develop concept drawings and ideas for how buildings could be used.

Get out in front of those who have the resources to develop in order to share the story of your community and pitch ideas.

Actively and continually engage property owners on how properties can be better positioned within the market.

Return on Investment

Mill House Impact

TIMELINE

'07 Façade Grant

'08 Assessed Value
- $42,000

'09 Purchased
- $80,000

'09 Renovations

'11 Assessed Value
- $116,700

CITY PROPERTY TAX

'07 - $976

'08 - $1,129

'09 – $1,120

'11 - $2,989

'14 - $3,055

Questions?

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Destination Oconee Recommendations

Task Name	Status	Start Date	End Date	Partners	Q4 2015			Q1 2016			Q2 2016			Q3 2016			Q4 2016		
					Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
– Identify a person or organization to oversee the implementation of "Destination Oconee"	Complete																		
Hire Project Manager	Complete	12/15/15	03/21/16	CC				▬▬▬ Hire Project Manager											
Action Committee created	Complete	01/05/16	01/05/16	CC				Action Committee created											
– Support the development of Sanctuary Pointe Resort and the SC Great Outdoor Center at Exit 1	Complete																		
Letter of support provided	Complete	01/15/16	01/15/16	OEA				Letter of support provided											
– Conduct Street Audits in Downtowns	In Progress																		
Complete assessment	In Progress	06/01/16		Cities, Chamber, DDC, Merchants, OEA										Complete assessment					
– Walhalla																			
– Action Committee walking tour	Complete	06/10/16	06/10/16	DO Committee										Action Committee walking tour					
Feedback and action plans	In Progress	06/15/16	09/30/16	DDC, City, PC, OEA										▬▬▬▬▬ Feedback and action p				
Westminster																			
Seneca																			
– Create inventory				Cities, Chamber, DDC, Merchants, OEA															
Walhalla	In Progress	06/01/16	08/01/16	Chamber										▬▬▬ Walhalla				
Westminster																			
Seneca																			
– Adopt a Downtown Overlay Ordinance for Westminster, Seneca and Walhalla	In Progress			Cities, Chamber, DDC, Merchants															
– Create Downtown Development Corp																			
Walhalla	In Progress	04/19/16	06/30/16	DDC, City of Walhalla								▬▬▬ Walhalla						
Westminster	Complete																		

Task Name	Status	Start Date	End Date	Partners	Timeline (Q4 2015 – Q4 2016)
Seneca					
− Identify downtown boundaries					
Walhalla	In Progress	05/04/16	06/30/16	DDC, City of Walhalla	May–Jun bar: Walhalla
Westminster					
Seneca					
− Develop Design Standards					
Walhalla	In Progress	05/04/16		DDC, City of Walhalla	May: Walhalla
Westminster					
Seneca (2009 review guidelines)					
Develop Façade Improvement Programs				OEA, Cities, DDC	
Adopt Business Incentive Plans				OEA	
− Conduct a Condition Assessment of the public access, structures and signage at lakes, waterfalls, rivers, scenic vistas and other key natural attractions	Not Started	10/03/16	10/28/16	PRT, CVB, OEA	Oct bar: Conduct a Con
Identify public access locations		10/03/16		PRT, CVB, OEA	Oct: Identify public access
Identify short term/long term and Capital needs at each location					
Determine ownership/parties involved					
− Develop a plan for improving public access and experiences at lakes, waterfalls, scenic vistas and other natural resources	Not Started	10/17/16		PRT, CVB, OEA	Oct: Develop a plan for
Prioritize sites into categories of immediate need, 3 year plan, 5 year plan, 10 year plan					
− Create a 3-year Action Plan for Managing Growth	In Progress			PC	
Draft a basic framework for growth management action plan				Planning staff	
− Adopt a Scenic Overlay Ordinance for Cherokee Foothills National Scenic Byway	In Progress	05/02/16		PC	May: Adopt a Scenic Overlay Ordinance for Cherokee Foothills Natio
Designation exists	Complete				

Task Name	Status	Start Date	End Date	Partners	Q4 2015			Q1 2016			Q2 2016			Q3 2016			Q4 2016		
					Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Create draft ordinances	In Progress			Planning staff															
Review proposed scope of work necessary to proceed	In Progress	05/10/16		Planning Staff, PC									Review proposed scope of work necessary to proceed						
Pass a Design Review Committee Ordinance	In Progress			PC															
Define "Appalachian Rustic Elegance"	In Progress	05/16/16		PC									Define "Appalachian Rustic Elegance"						
Create formal Design Review Committee				PC, Cities															
Adopt a more detailed County and City Signage Ordinance	In Progress			PC, Cities															
Review current sign ordinances	In Progress			Planning Staff															
Draft improvements to current ordinance				Planning staff, City staff															
Review by Planning Commission																			
Execute all marketing recommendations outlined in this plan	In Progress			Cities, Chamber, CVB, PRT, OEA															
Destination Oconee logo created	Complete	01/01/16	01/01/16					Destination Oconee logo created											
Gateway Signage grant	In Progress	01/01/16	09/30/16	PRT, CVB, OEA, PC													Gateway Signage gra		
Notice to proceed	Complete	05/18/16	05/18/16										Notice to proceed						
Design Specs	In Progress	06/03/16	07/25/16	OEA									Design Specs						
Public bid process		08/01/16	08/08/16	OEA										Public bid process					
Installation		08/15/16	09/30/16												Installation				
Develop Wayfinding signage plan	In Progress	04/15/16	09/30/16	OEA, PRT, PC, CVB													Develop Wayfinding si		
Driving tour - signage location	Complete	06/01/16	06/02/16	OEA, PCT									Driving tour - signage location						
Mapping of proposed signage - DOT approval - final plan	In Progress	06/03/16	09/30/16	OEA, PRT, PC, CVB									Mapping of proposed s						
Create social media campaign		07/01/16		OEA										Create social media campaign					
Design interactive photo booth kiosks		07/01/16	07/29/16	OEA										Design interactive photo booth kiosks					
Identify locations		07/07/16	07/29/16	OEA, PRT, CVB										Identify locations					
Build and install kiosks		07/18/16	08/05/16	OEA, PRT										Build and install kiosks					
Develop a County-wide Shop Local Program		07/01/16	12/30/16	OEA															
Continue target based marketing																			

Task Name	Status	Start Date	End Date	Partners	Q4 2015			Q1 2016			Q2 2016			Q3 2016			Q4 2016		
					Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
⊟ Identify sources and commit funding to support tourism projects	Not Started	11/01/16	12/20/16	DO Committee, Cities, CVB, PRT, OEA															
List all available funding options for consideration																			
Explore County-wide Hospitality Tax																			
Present priority list and funding options to CC		12/15/16	12/20/16	OEA															
⊟ Key:																			
PRT - Parks Recreation & Tourism																			
CVB - Convention Visitors Bureau																			
OEA - Oconee Economic Alliance																			
PC - Planning Commission																			
DDC - Downtown Development Corporations																			
CC - County Council																			