



Downtown Cornelia



2018—2019 Strategic plan

Commissioned by the Cornelia Downtown
Development Authority and Main Street Program
Prepared and Submitted by *Georgia Downtowns*



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Introduction



706.973.7362

www.GeorgiaDowntowns.com

GeorgiaDowntowns@gmail.com

P.O. Box 1417 Dahlonega, GA

Georgia Downtowns was thoroughly delighted to return to Cornelia this year to guide the board in the creation of a new strategic plan. Cornelia's Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program Board is on the forefront among Georgia Downtown Development Authority and Main Street boards in its commitment to strategic planning. *Georgia Downtowns* applauds Cornelia, and we appreciate the opportunity to assist with the creation of your Strategic Plan for 2018-2019.

Cornelia's DDA/Main Street board is a great group of enthusiastic community members and leaders who have a compelling vision for its business district. It takes tremendous effort and dedication to transform a downtown, and this board is committed to working with the stakeholders and partners to bring greater and more sustainable economic prosperity to the downtown district.

We applaud your energy, commitment, and vision, and we thank you for the opportunity to serve.

—Joel Cordle, Principal

"To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects – both shorter and longer-term activities that add up to meaningful change."

- National Main Street

A new model for planning

The National Main Street Program is using a "refreshed" model for planning and implementing downtown work. The new Main Street Approach is not radically different, but does have a more cohesive focus, using "Transformation Strategies" (Figure 1), as a way to focus more on measurable results from high-impact economic development and less emphasis on festivals and large promotional events. It also stresses public input, because a downtown needs a shared community vision. In addition, this new planning model moves away from the "silo" approach to the Four Points of Main Street (Design, Promotion, Organization, and Economic Vitality). Instead, programs are encouraged to ensure that all four of these points are integrated throughout a project, so they will lead to the achievement of an identified "Transformation Strategy," which is an overarching vision for creating long-lasting and powerful change to downtown.

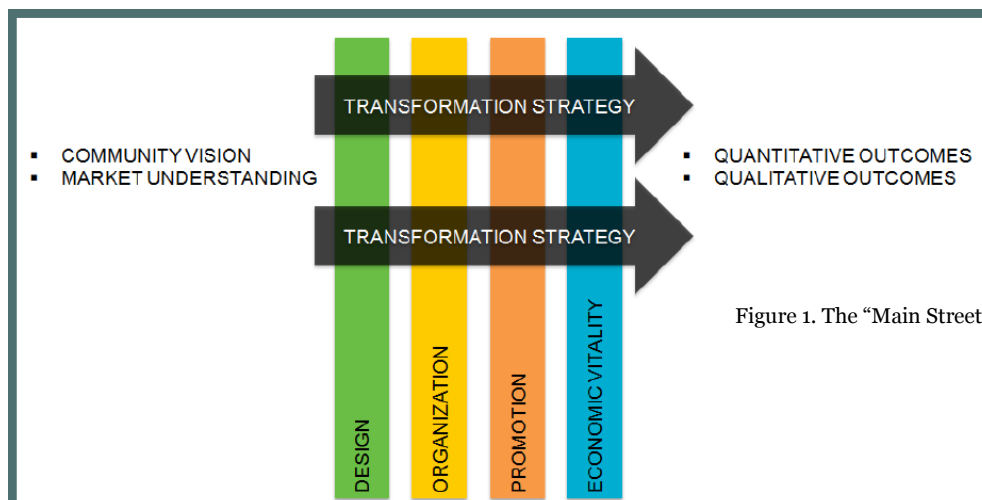


Figure 1. The "Main Street Refresh" Model



The Cornelia Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program Board Retreat

Thank You

We appreciate the time and talent of our partners. Specifically, we thank:

- * Jessie Owensby, Director
Cornelia Downtown Development
Authority and Main Street Program
- * Dee Anderson, Manager
City of Cornelia
- * Attendees, Board of Directors
Cornelia Downtown Development
Authority and Main Street Program:
 - * Heath Barrett (incoming DDA chair)
 - * Brentt Cody
 - * Matt Cathey
 - * Lindsey Holt (incoming member)
 - * Brian Horton (outgoing DDA chair)
 - * Melany Ward (incoming treasurer)
- * Robert Gutowski, Inspector
City of Cornelia
- * Kirby Glaze, Consultant, 4PM
- * Steve Watson, 4PM

The process for planning

The Cornelia Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program Board held its annual strategic planning retreat on Thursday, November 9, 2017 (8am to 1pm) at the Sweet Acres Farm Winery.

Retreat planning

The 2018 planning retreat is the second consecutive year in which *Georgia Downtowns* has partnered with Downtown Cornelia. Sequential annual planning allows partners to better gauge the office's and board's progress, challenges, and opportunities.

Prior to this year's retreat, *Georgia Downtowns* regularly conferred with Jessie Owensby, Director of the Cornelia Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program, to discuss planning needs and goals.

To assist the project, *Georgia Downtowns* also designed and collected results from a leadership survey (Appendix D). These results were presented at the retreat, along with last year's strategic plan and recommendations.

Retreat

Georgia Downtowns facilitated Downtown Cornelia's planning retreat, using its own model for creating vision, action, and results. *Georgia Downtowns* also used the Main Street Refresh model, an effective method for organizing the plan and agenda (Appendix A). This year marks Cornelia's second year for employing this model. It is one of the first in the state and the country to use this approach to planning.

Downtown report

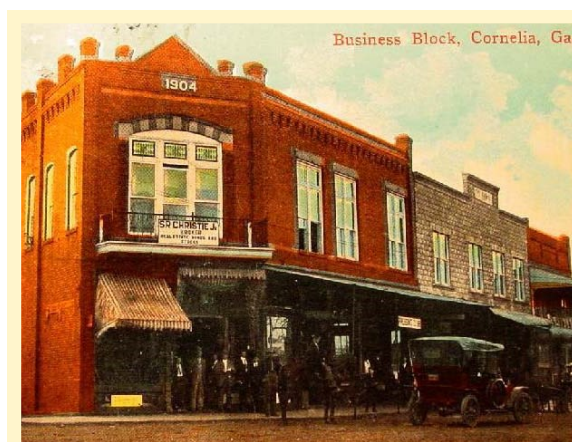
Jessie Owensby presented a recap of 2017 activities, events, and projects and the status of other pertinent city projects. (Appendices B and F). She then introduced Joel Cordle and Alice Sampson to the group (Appendix C).

2023 Vision

Joel presented an overview of the day, then led the discussion of the group's shared vision of 2023 Downtown Cornelia. The group then listed characteristics of a successful downtown:

In 2013, people are downtown and shopping, dining, walking, exploring, and playing. They are enjoying

Continued...



The process for planning (...continued)

The Athenian Oath

We will never bring disgrace on this our City by an act of dishonesty or cowardice.

We will fight for the ideals and Sacred Things of the City both alone and with many.

We will revere and obey the City's laws, and will do our best to incite a like reverence and respect in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught.

We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public's sense of civic duty.

Thus, in all these ways, we will transmit this City not only, not less, but greater and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.

- National League of Cities

Everyone deserves access to a vibrant downtown or neighborhood commercial district – a place that provides for broad economic opportunity, is rich in character, and features inviting public spaces that make residents and visitors feel that they belong.

-Patrice Frey, President
National Main Street Center



Vision continued...

an environment that is fun, family-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, and safe. Downtown Cornelia is the community's "yard."

It is where downtown residents, groups of friends, students, retirees, tourists, professionals, and multiple families enjoy downtown amenities, such as Uber services, the splash pad, and multiple museums, while contributing to the economic development.

Downtown Cornelia is embracing change that advances the community in a positive direction.

Priority projects

Next, the group discussed:

- Rationale for the new or "refreshed" model for Main Street planning (See page 2), which emphasizes transformation strategies, work that is high impact and long-lasting;
- Leadership Survey data (Appendix A); and
- The last year's strategic plan and recommendations (Appendix F).*

Using the survey results and other information, the group set about listing priorities for the plan. Representatives from the consultant firm, 4 PM, joined the discussion. They updated the group on the current Bank Building and Hodges Street District projects. After considerable discussion the board elected to table Priority Three (which focused on the Hodges Street District) until issues

related to property management and availability are addressed.

Transformation strategy

The emerged vision for Downtown Cornelia and identified priorities for the future are exciting and will create high-impact, long-lasting results; they are *transformative*. To this end, Georgia Downtowns recommends the following transformation strategy: *Downtown Becomes the Center for Business and Living*

Priority goals, objectives, and milestones

Priority Goal One

Redevelop the Bank Building

Priority Objective

100% Complete by December 31, 2019

Milestone

Certificate of Occupancy for Each Space

Priority Goal Two

Implement Plan for Apple Tree Alley

Priority Objective

100% Complete by December 31, 2018

Milestone

Signed leases or sales contracts

Priority Goal Three

Revitalize Buildings for Living and Business

Priority Objective

Tabled until November 2018

**For purposes of this report, the Work Plan is provided in the Appendices; a more comprehensive report—similar to this document, is also available.*



Review of Current and Potential Events (Appendix E)

Partner Events that should bring high return on investment

- Run Bum Tours (research feasibility)
- Bike Ride Across Georgia
- Veteran’s Jamboree
- Annual Awards Ceremony (scale back?)
- Christmas in the Park and Parade
- Food and Wine Festival and Fundraiser (merger of Apple Blossom Festival with BBQ)
- Big Red Apple Festival
- Trick or Treat (Cornelia Merchants)

The process for planning (...continued)

The plan

Retreat participants were focused. They were able to use the 2017 work plan, leadership survey data, the director’s report, and the group visioning process to identify goals that are high-impact, complex, and *transformative*.

Moving into the detailed planning stage, *Georgia Downtowns* facilitated discussion and recorded the steps that participants identified for project goals.

Next, using the meeting input, *Georgia Downtowns* developed a strategic work plan (see Strategic Work Plan, page 6), using the new Georgia Main Street and Office for Development *Work Plan* template. To complete the report, Cornelia staff will assign budget and funding sources.

Congratulations!

This is Cornelia’s second strategic work plan organized under the new and “refreshed” Main Street Approach. Cornelia is among a few cities in the state and the nation to undertake this positive initiative.

Main Streets across the nation will be fully implementing this model by the end of 2018.

Cornelia is leading the way for the Main Street network!

Work plan recommendations

In addition to organizing and reporting actions identified by meeting participants, *Georgia Downtowns* offers a set of additional recommendations in a comprehensive list (see page 13).



4PM Consultants speak with members of the board

Downtown Cornelia

2018

Work Plan

(Pullout Section)

Downtown Cornelia Strategic Work Plan Review Form		
2018 Annual Work Plan		
Vision Statement	<p>In 2023, Downtown Cornelia is a center of activity and economic development. Residents and visitors of all ages and cultures are choosing to live, shop, and work downtown. All of its storefronts are occupied with a diverse array of businesses that are open day and night. There are plenty of options for exciting downtown living. People are downtown and shopping, dining, walking, exploring, and playing. They are enjoying an environment that is fun, family-oriented, pedestrian-friendly, and safe. Downtown Cornelia is the community's "yard." It is where downtown residents, groups of friends, students, retirees, tourists, professionals, and families enjoy downtown amenities, such as Uber services, the splash pad, and multiple museums, while contributing to the economy. Downtown Cornelia is embracing change that advances the community in a positive direction.</p>	
Mission Statement	<p>To continue developing a vibrant commercial base centered on tourism and retail growth, while maintaining the peace and tranquility of our small town charm.</p>	
Transformation (implementation) Strategies		
Transformation (implementation) Strategy #1:		
Downtown Becomes the Center for Business and Living		
Top Priorities for Year 2018		
Status:	Goal(priority) #1	
	Goal(priority) #2	
Achieved	Redevelop the Bank Building	
In Progress	Implement Plan for Apple Tree Alley	
Stalled		
Comments on Goal/Priority Status		

Transformation (Implementation) Strategy	
Downtown Becomes the Center for Business and Living	
Priority Goal:	Redevelop the Bank Building
Priority Objective:	100% Complete by December 31, 2019
Milestone:	

Certificate of Occupancy for Each Space						
Status	Task	Responsible Party	Time Line	Budget	Partners and Resources	Four Points
	Identify the process for ranking and submit applications for available funding	4 PM Consultants Jessie Owensby	11/30/2017 - 02/28/2018		Angela Steedley, ARC, DCA, GA Cities Foundation	Organization Economic Vitality
	Obtain letters of commitment	4 PM Consultants Jessie Owensby	11/30/2017 - 02/28/2018		Angela Steedley, ARC. DCA, GA Cities Foundation	Organization Economic Vitality
	Decide on whether to engage a historic preservation consultant or use GMRC	4 PM Consultants, Brentt Cody, Joshua Barrett	11/30/2017 - 02/28/2018		City of Cornelia GMRC	Organizatin
	Complete and submit historic District application	4 PM Consultants Jessie Owensby	12/1/2017 - 01/15/2018		Historic preservation consultant	Organization Economic Vitality
	Complete and submit tax credit documents	4 PM Consultants Jessie Owensby	12/1/2017 - 01/15/2018		Historic preservation consultant	Organization Economic Vitality
	Use the RFQ process to engage an architectural firm and get renderings	4 PM Consultants, Brentt Cody, Dee Anderson, Heath Barrett	11/30/2017 - 02/28/2018		City of Cornelia	Organization Design
	Use the RFQ process to contract with construction company	4 PM Consultants, Brentt Cody, Dee Anderson, Heath Barret	Present - 09/30/2018		City of Cornelia	Organization
	Obtain determination of historic preservation eligibility (research archives, Facebook, videos)	4 PM Consultants, Brentt Cody, Joshua Barrett	Present - 05/1/2018		Historic preservation consultant	Organization Design
	Use the RFQ process to identify and engage a local lender or lenders	Brian Horton Dee Anderson	Present - 02/28/2018		City of Cornelia	Organization

Partner Involvement			
Agency Name	Primary Contact	Level of Commitment	Synopsis of Activity
The Steedley Firm	Angela Steedley		
Appalachian Regional Commission	Annaka Woodruff		
Georgia Mountain Regional Commission	Joe Rothwell		
4PM Consultants	Kirby Glaze		
Georgia Power	Rope Roberts		
Georgia Cities Foundation	Perry Hiott		
DCA DDRLF	Cherie Bennett		
Habersham Economic Development Council	Brian Horton		

Priority Two						
Transformation (implementation) Strategy:						
Downtown Becomes the Center for Business and Living						
Priority Goal:						
Implement Plan for Apple Tree Alley						
Priority Objective:						
100% Complete by December 31. 2018						
Milestone:						
Signed leases or sales contracts						
Status	Task	Responsible Party	Time Line	Budget	Partners and Resources	Four Points
	Plan, design, and bury cable	Dee Anderson City Engineers	Present - 12/31/2018		City of Cornelia	Design Organization
	Identify and acquire funding for implementation	Amanda Chosewood Jessie Owensby Dee Anderson	Present - 1/31/2018		Georgia Mtn Reg Com Appalachian Reg Com USDA	Economic Vitality Organization
	Promote rendering of plan to the public via website, events, and public spaces	Jessie Owensby Board members	Present - 12/31/2018		Community organizations	Promotion Design
	Acquire Cantrell lot for parking expansion	Brian Horton Dee Anderson	Present - 3/1/2018		City of Cornelia	Economic Vitality Organization Design
	Plan and celebrate the completion of the plan	Lindsey Holt Melany Ward Jessie Owensby	Present - 11/1/2018		City of Cornelia	Promotion
Agency Name		Primary Contact	Level of Commitment	Synopsis of Activity:		
The Steedley Firm		Angela Steedley				
Appalachian Regional Commission		Annaka Woodruff				
Georgia Mountain Regional Commission		Patrick Larson				
Georgia Power		Rope Roberts				
Habersham Economic Development Council		Brian Horton				
USDA		Sonny Perdue				

Main Street Cornelia Program Monthly Meeting

Date

AGENDA

I. Approve previous month's meeting minutes - ACTION ITEM (5 minutes) – Board Chair

II. Approve financial report – ACTION ITEM (5 minutes) – Board Chair or Treasurer

III. 2017-2018 Strategic Plan Projects

Restore Bank Building– (action items, tasks, reports) (10-15 minutes) – Brentt Cody, Project Leader

Implement Apple Tree Alley – (action items, tasks, reports) (10-15 minutes) – Heath Barrett, Project Leader

IV. Staff Report (15 minutes) - Director

V. Announcements from Partner Agencies

City of Cornelia (5 minutes)

Habersham Economic Development Council (2 minutes)

Historic Preservation Commission (2 minutes)

VI. Other or New Business

VII. Adjourn

ITEMS FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

Upcoming Events

Upcoming Meetings

End of Work Plan pullout section

Recommendations

Georgia Downtowns highly respects the planning process and the sanctity of the participant-driven visioning process; identifying critical priority issues in a short amount of time is exciting, but difficult work. As facilitators, we seek to move the discussion along, but not drive the process. Our goal is to ensure that everyone is comfortable, engaged, and inspired. This is *your* plan.

Sharing our expertise with clients in a collaborative spirit is part of our mission. During the retreat and in review, we identified specific recommendations that we present as an extension to our service to Cornelia Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program. We present these professional recommendations as a special value-added service.



Alone we are smart, but together we are brilliant.

- Stephen Anderson

INTRODUCTION

We applaud board members on taking responsibility for leading the action plans of the priorities and goals in this new strategic plan.

Director Jessie Owensby provided an exciting recap of downtown successes from 2017. The Cornelia Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program's economic impact during that time has been very impressive. It is evident that there is a strong business climate resulting from good partnerships between the board and staff, city leadership, business and property owners.

COMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Downtown Cornelia has made great progress in creating public spaces that are attractive and pedestrian friendly, through streetscaping, landscaping, banners, cleaning and good maintenance.

Visitors and locals can clearly see that local leadership is actively engaged in improving conditions for businesses and customers.

Special events have been successful in bringing people into downtown, getting them acquainted with existing businesses, and feeling excited about downtown's opportunities for economic revitalization.

There clearly is a shared positive energy among existing businesses, the DDA/Main Street Program, and the City. The stage seems to be set for a new phase of achievement and success. The DDA/Main Street board's 2018 strategic plan focuses on two critical projects to catalyze the next phase of success. *Georgia Downtowns* predicts that those two projects will lead to numerous other private investments in the near future. We look forward to assisting with the 2019-2020 strategic plan. When that time comes, we will share many

recommendations that are specific to business development and reaching that next level of achievement.

Recommendations

Administrative

- ◆ The new work plan will need a completed "budget" column, one that contains estimated expenses and income (if any) for each action step.
- ◆ It is critical to collect community input and market data prior to preparing the 2019 strategic plan. 360 data can be a portion of this. Other sources are the "On the Map" data, comprehensive plan data, and town hall meeting data.* Consumer demand and priorities from these sources are essential to development of the board's goals and to decisions by prospective new and expanded businesses.

Economic Vitality

- ◆ Would the Holts buy the nearest Higgins building and lease it to a complementary business?

Continued...



* *Georgia Downtowns* can assist you with this project.



Recommendations (...continued)



Economic Vitality (...continued)

- ◆ Downtown businesses and the community would benefit from a theatre/performing arts center/concert facility. These have a strong impact on area businesses such as restaurants and lodging. One of the existing vacant spaces could be converted into a performance space.

Marketing and Promoting Retail Shopping, Dining, Lodging

- ◆ Your “5 museum campaign” is excellent. Next, decide which local businesses can qualify as “destination businesses.” Identify those and work with the Tourism Office and those businesses on cooperative promotion efforts. For example, for restaurants you might focus on Bigg Daddy’s, Fenders, Whistle Top, or another, while folding in the other downtown businesses as a unit. *“While you’re in town to dine at Bigg Daddy’s you can also enjoy shopping at our 75 retail stores, or spend the night at one of our 50 lodging facilities. Have breakfast at Fenders and enjoy visiting our 5 local museums.”* These campaigns focus on specific business types plus value-added additional things to enjoy. You can also think of the campaign as a menu of “itineraries” for visitors and locals to do.
- ◆ Use special events as opportunities to promote DDA/Main Street projects and economic initiatives such as downtown living and vacant spaces for business startups or expansions. Strategically customize all special events and festivals to support the economic development priority goals of the board. Targeted vacant buildings could be venues presented during special events to allow potential buyers and renters to see the spaces as opportunities for their business plans.
- ◆ For advertising and promotional purposes, create a portfolio of your best photographs and video of iconic, intimate downtown scenes. Show active people enjoying downtown’s special places, shopping, dining, and celebrating. Great photos and videos are essential for marketing downtown via the website, Facebook, Instagram, print media, and newsletters. We recommend holding a downtown photography contest focusing specifically on buildings, architecture, assets, active people, and events. Use the best photos to promote downtown. This could also be a Historic Preservation Month activity.



Go, Downtown Cornelia!



APPENDICES

Welcome

Retreat Overview

The Vision: Downtown Cornelia in 2023

- Painting the picture
- Main Street Model
- Leadership Survey Summary
- 2017 Main Street and DDA Strategic Plan

The Plan

- Priority Goals
- Priority Objectives
- Milestones
- Action Steps
- Assignments
- Start and Complete Dates
- Resources

Existing Projects and Programs

- Supporting activities and events
- Calendar
- Adjustments
- Assignments

Review

- The Vision
- Next Steps

Adjourn

Cornelia Main Street & Downtown Development Authority

The purpose of the DDA is to stimulate and sustain economic development in downtown Cornelia

- by encouraging cooperation and building leadership;
- by advancing a positive image of downtown and promoting it as an exciting place to live, shop, and invest;
- by sustaining and improving the appearance of downtown; and
- by strengthening and expanding the economic base of downtown.

The DDA serves non-profit and public purposes and is an institution of purely public charity.

Thank you for your hard work and attention!

DDA Retreat

I want to thank the board for being so active this year, for doing everything I asked, for being willing to put in the time, and especially to Brian, who hung out with me more this year than he ever signed up for... which may be why he's leaving. Just kidding. I think.

Some of the things that we accomplished this year as a team were:

- Separating the façade grant and creating a new sign grant, which gives our businesses more money. We've given out two sign grants and two façade grants
- We worked to strengthen the relationship with our businesses owners, and in doing so, have recruited some new and great volunteers to help us with our events like Chrystal Coker, Melany Ward, Alex Childers, Christy Bowen, and Lindsey Holt
- Shear Perfection and her Landlord Don Higgins finished her salon expansion this year and it looks fabulous. She's very happy with it, and thank God because she and her partner are both pregnant and I don't want to be on their bad sides....
- We managed to create an inventory of Downtown buildings and are currently keeping that up to date as far as vacancies and ownership changes
- The city completed the demolition of the three eyesores that were full of asbestos and mold at the corner of the downtown district to start construction on the new municipal complex
- We hired a part time employee to manage the train museum and also to open Chenocetah Tower on the weekends. Both of those have been very successful ventures. We also opened the gift shop and welcome center inside the museum
- The city also managed to get the Habersham Historical Society and Regional African American Museums open every Saturday
- Phase one of the Level Grove Sidewalk project is almost done
- We worked with a grant writer to see if we can find some more funding for our Appletree Alley Streetscape project and we are still working on that.
- We hired 4PM to manage the Bank building redevelopment and get something going in that building, which the commissioners are very happy to see. That is an ongoing project, and I would like to thank 4PM very much for taking the time to come up here and be at this retreat. Brentt has been a phenomenal resource and volunteer to help with this project and I'm grateful for his willingness and expertise.
- The city built a permanent restroom at the splash pad and got rid of the porti-potties
- And hands down the biggest and best accomplishment of the year was on May 17th, when Big Daddys opened the door to customers and haven't looked back since. That was a huge undertaking, with a ton of work involved. Thanks to Brian's persistence and annoyingness, Nathan and Lindsey finally agreed to buy the building and open a second location. Brian and I spent hours, days, weeks, months working on that project together.

Joel Cordle

Principal, Georgia Downtowns

Senior Downtown Development Professional



As the founder and principal partner of *Georgia Downtowns*, **Joel Cordle** provides professional planning and economic development services to governments and their agencies seeking to revitalize downtowns.

In its first year, his firm has worked with Main Street cities across the state, including Americus, Calhoun, Canton, Clarkesville, Cornelia, Dahlonega, Hampton, Millen, Monroe, Richland, Washington, and Valdosta.

Prior to founding *Georgia Downtowns*, Joel served 32 years in Main Street management and economic development, city government, and cultural arts program management. He served ten years as the Executive Director of the Downtown Development Authority and Main Street Program for the City of Dahlonega, receiving the 2016 *Great American Main Street Award* from the National Main Street Center and the 2010 *Award for Excellence in Downtown Development* from the Georgia Downtown Association.

Before joining the City of Dahlonega staff, Joel served four years as a regional downtown representative for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, where he provided Main Street support to 35 cities throughout the north Georgia region. For 16 years, he was the Arts Division Administrator for Athens-Clarke County Government.

Joel is a Past President of the Georgia Downtown Association. He recently moderated a panel on Downtown Living, at the 2017 Georgia Downtown Association Conference in Columbus, Georgia.

Joel lives in downtown Dahlonega, where he plays upright bass, mandolin, and guitar in the Crooked Mile band and serves as a founding member on the board of the Georgia Pick & Bow Traditional Music School, a children's community music program.



Alice Sampson

Partner, Georgia Downtowns



Alice Sampson has been with Georgia Downtowns since its beginning. She is a former professor at the University of North Georgia (UNG) where she served 15 years as professor, director, and associate dean. For ten of her 15 years, she was the founding director of the Georgia Appalachian Studies Center, a community engagement center. Alice also served the university's president as the project manager for the *REED Initiative*, a yearlong series of community meetings that focused on economic development.

Alice earned her Ph.D. in Education from the University of Georgia. She is a professionally trained meeting facilitator and process planner. She is also a skilled grant writer and administrator, having secured and managed over two dozen awards, totaling more than a million dollars.

She recently presented on Downtown Website Design, at the 2017 Georgia Downtown Association Conference in Columbus, Georgia.

Alice currently lives in downtown Dahlonega, where she serves as a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, runs her Little Free Library for kids, and studies downtowns in Georgia.



Downtown Cornelia Leadership Survey

What is Downtown Cornelia's strongest economic asset?

- The existing businesses that are committed to being downtown. Most could have relocated but have stayed in downtown.
- Our service industries because they provide people to support other businesses
- Vacant spaces – opportunity for change and growth
- Jessie
- Large inventory of buildings of various size

What is Downtown Cornelia's greatest area of economic need?

- Infill of existing building with mix of commercial/residential/civic opportunities.
- Retail shops. We have adequate restaurants and services but no retail
- Fill empty spaces with businesses fitting the future appetite of the city
- Revitalization of buildings downtown
- Need more businesses that are open during the evenings and weekends.

Please rank the following district descriptions, ranking highest the best fit for Cornelia

- Arts 4.00
- Retail 3.80
- Tech start-up 3.67
- Entertainment 3.17
- Downtown living 2.60
- Dining 2.40

What are the two greatest opportunities the Cornelia Main Street and DDA should consider as top priorities?

- Revitalization of Bank building
- Rehab and revitalization of the old bank building
- New Business
- Renovation of the bank building
- Revitalizing older buildings
- Parking area(s) for downtown residents and merchants.
- Feeding off of the success of *Big Daddy's* to help occupy vacant buildings
- Night life
- Condemnation of old candle factory
- Bringing the right businesses to Downtown

What is the greatest strength of your board and organization?

- They are only as good (strong) as what they get done.
- Business savvy and willingness to take risks to make things happen
- Variety of connections and skill sets. All are invested in the community.
- Growth and development
- Its board members. It is a good cross section of age, gender and expertise
- Our members and board are truly investing into the City of Cornelia.

What are the two greatest opportunities your board and organization should consider as top priorities?

- More constructive input from citizens to define priorities. These boards exist to serve the citizens of Cornelia and need to focus their time, energy and resources on what the citizens want.
- Need more volunteer participation at city events.
- Volunteer time; focus time.
- Ethnic diversity. We have made little to no headway in attracting members that reflect the makeup of Cornelia (i.e. Laotian, Hispanic, African-American, etc...)
- Feedback from the Community.

Please share additional questions, ideas, or concerns you may have

- No response

Cornelia Work Plan Priorities

If Downtown Cornelia tackled only two work plan items in the next year, what should they be? (Please identify items that are beyond the important day-to-day administrative work that staff accomplishes)

- Bank building
- Bank Building
- Bank building renovation
- Look into more entertainment options and venues
- Apple Tree alley
- Apple Tree Alley renovation
- New Business Growth
- Business recruitment
- Creating more living opportunities

Potential Partners

- Habersham County Chamber of Commerce
- Habersham County
- Habersham Partnership for Growth/EDC
- Cornelia Business Association
- Chamber
- GA Dept. of Community Affairs
- City(s) of Clarkesville/Demorest/Baldwin
- Cornelia Hospitality & Tourism Board

2017 Events

The following events were either hosted by the City of Cornelia, or the City of Cornelia helped coordinate

1. Annual Awards Ceremony (First week of February)
2. Assault on Mount Currahee (Last week of February)
3. Tacky Prom (scheduled for weekend of Valentine's Day but got canceled... twice)
4. Apple Blossom BBQ Competition (Third week of April)
5. Veteran's Jamboree (Second week of May)
6. Screening of "Memories of a Mountain Shortline" (Historic Preservation month- third week of May)
7. National Day of Prayer at the Depot (First week of May)
8. Big Red Apple Festival (First week of October- will be in September next year)
9. Business After Hours (Last week of October)
10. Downtown Trick or Treat (Last day of October)
11. 4th Ward BBQ (second weekend in November) *somehow got roped into this even though it was a CDBG thing that doesn't involve me
12. Downtown Movie Night "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (First week of December)
13. Christmas in the Park (second weekend of December) *three days long

2018 Additions

(meaning, we need to take some other things off the list)

1. Summer Concert
2. Habersham County Christmas Parade
3. Habersham County Birthday Party
4. Possible Food and Wine Festival

STRATEGIC WORK PLAN Transformation Strategy REDEVELOP VACANT BANK BUILDING							
Project Goal: repair and sell or develop the vacant bank building, creating a catalyst for new downtown investment							Start Date: 11/2016 Completion Date: 04/2018 Milestone: Groundbreaking
Action Step (tasks to be determined by Staff and Board)	Assigned	Main Street Point	Due Date	Partners & Resources	Budget		
Choose consultant and appoint project manager	Brentt and Brian	Organization	January, 2017	Consultant bidders City of Cornelia	Done! DDA chose 4PM to help manage this project		
Determine use(s) of the building, name project, and develop concept plan and drawings	Brentt and Brian	Design Organization	January, 2017	Consultant and Georgia Main Street Design Office	Project 1900- have a first draft of best uses- currently working on concepts		
Assess and set scope of work	Brentt and Brian	Organization	January, 2017	Consultant	Done! Just got cost proposal and scope of work in our hands!		
Determine return on investment goals	Brentt and Brian	Economic Vitality	January, 2017	Consultant	Done! 4PM came and met with realtors, business owners and determined ROI vs. Cost		
Clean-up	Brentt, Don, and Jessie	Design	January, 2017	Contractor	Not started. Hasn't been necessary yet		
Break ground on construction	Jessie	Promotion	April, 2018	Habersham Chamber of Commerce; local business association	As of now, this is on schedule to be more like June of 2018		

STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

Transformation Strategy

DOWNTOWN LIVING

Project Goal: expand and promote a variety of downtown living opportunities						
Action Step (tasks to be determined by Staff and Board)	Assigned	Main Street Point	Due Date	Partners & Resources	Budget	
DDA acquire additional buildings to create synergy and begin renovations	Brentt and Brian	Organization Design	June, 2017	City of Cornelia	Not Started- Since we were unable to negotiate with Higgins, we weren't able to acquire new buildings	Start Date: <u>11/2016</u> Completion Date: <u>01/2020</u> Milestone: 20 more viable downtown units
Create and market an inventory of existing apartments	Don and Jessie	Promotion Economic Vitality	February, 2017	Don Higgins and Norton Agency	The apartments have been shared, but need to be updated on a monthly basis or there is no point	
Redevelop Apple Tree Alley	Dee and Don	Design Organization	November, 2017	Georgia Power, City, and Higgins	In progress- we are currently working with grant writer to find funds to help pay for it	
Find capital	Brian	Economic Vitality	February, 2017	City of Cornelia	could get loans if needed	
Create inventory of potential "living" spaces, such as empty buildings, vacant lots, and infill spaces, to develop downtown living for single, family, or multi-family use	Dee, Don, and Jessie	Economic Vitality	March, 2017	City of Cornelia Mike Beechum	Not Started- Unfortunately, we have just all been too busy to actually sit down and go over this.	
Reduce lot size	Dee	Organization	March, 2017	City of Cornelia	In Progress- Public hearings	
Seek developers and construction firms to create new or rehabbed single, family, and multi-family downtown living	Dee and City	Organization Economic Vitality	March, 2017	Inventory of Potential Downtown Living Spaces	no longer applicable	

STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

Transformation Strategy

REVITALIZE HODGES STREET

<p>Project Goal: revitalize Hodges Street for new retail and dining businesses on street level and residential spaces in upper floors. This revitalization will involve supporting business expansions and start-ups, with new incentive rates for licensing and permitting, and by offering state low-interest loan programs.</p>		<p>Start Date: <u>11/2016</u> Completion Date: <u>4/2018</u> Milestone: Groundbreaking</p>			
Action Step (tasks to be determined by Staff and Board)	Assigned	Main Street Point	Due Date	Partners & Resources	Budget
Upgrade exteriors and interiors of buildings, creating "shells" for future businesses to customize	Unassigned	Organization Design Economic Vitality	Repairs and renovations are contingent on purchase or lease	Property owners, façade grants, low-interest loans Future business owners City of Cornelia	Not started. Unfortunately, the DDA could not work out a deal to help lease or revitalize these buildings. We are still looking at options
Redevelop Apple Tree Alley by putting power underground; Give city engineer access to assess new service for interiors	Dee and Don	Organization Design	November, 2017	Georgia Power, City, and Higgins and other owners	In progress- We are working with the Steedley firm to secure grant funds to help pay for project. The project was estimated at 625K
Work with property owners to market business spaces	Jessie	Promotion Organization	November, 2016	Higgins and other owners	Not working- Despite the efforts of the city fire marshal, economic developer, DDA, and building inspector, we have not been able to help business owners lease their vacant properties- need new idea
Acquire buildings and/or the block, through lease agreements or purchase	Brentt and Brian	Organization Economic Vitality	June, 2017	Higgins and other owners	After months and months of negotiation and due diligence, the DDA was unable to acquire buildings from Higgins

STRATEGIC WORK PLAN

Transformation Strategy

MAINTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Project Goal: We will strive for excellence in ongoing administration and programming. We will work together to promote downtown's economic development projects and opportunities and promote downtown's assets and unique sense of place. All promotion activities will appeal to local residents and visitors and will seek to attract new economic investment.

Start Date: 11/2016
 Completion Date: 12/2017
 Milestone: Reported to DDA Board monthly

Action Step (tasks to be determined by Staff and Board)	Assigned	Main Street	Due Date	Partners & Resources	Status
Streamline events production and systemize volunteer network	Jessie	Organization	March, 2017	Tourism Board Business Association	DONE!
Explore funding for projects	Brian	Organization	May 2017	Local banks, GA DCA, GMA, GMRC, ARC	In Progress. 4 PM is working on this
Attract two new businesses	Brian and Don	Promotion Economic Vitality	December 2017	Inventories, promotional items, website	Done! Ninth District, Christwalk, Sparhard MMA
Cooperate with Higgins to attract, retain, and expand businesses	Brenttt and Don	Organization Economic Vitality	June, 2017	Higgins; other owners	In progress- DDA is working to help do something with the vacant buildings
Designate downtown as a Historic District	Dee	Organization, Design Economic Vitality Promotion	March, 2018	GMRC	In progress- Joe Rothwell from GMRC has been working on this with 4PM. Almost ready to submit
Increase the activity of the Business Assn	Jessie	Organization Promotion	March, 2017	Downtown Merchants	Many new businesses have become more involved with events and cooperation
Review/update Cornelia's alcohol ordinance	Matt	Organization	February, 2018	City of Cornelia	Done! We have revamped the ordinance twice this year! 25% ratios and wine tasting and brew-pubs are allowed.

