

City of Elberton  
Urban Redevelopment Plan

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The City of Elberton, incorporated in 1803, is the seat of Elbert County in Northeast Georgia. The city is located approximately 33 miles east of Athens-Clarke County, and approximately 110 miles east of the City of Atlanta. The discovery of granite deposits and opening of Elberton’s first commercial granite quarry in 1882 put the city on the map, shaping its economy through the 20<sup>th</sup> century and to the present day. Between the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census counts, however, the City of Elberton, along with the rest of Elbert County, experienced a decrease in population accompanied by disinvestment. The purpose of this Urban Redevelopment Plan is to develop a strategy for stimulating economic and housing activity in key areas of the city.

### Legislative Authority

The “Urban Redevelopment Act” (O.C.G.A. §36-61-1) was adopted by the Georgia state legislature in 1955, and has since been amended several times. The Act enables local governments to access broad powers to redevelop blighted or threatened areas of the community. To access the redevelopment powers allowable under the Act, a local government must undergo the following process:

- Develop a draft Urban Redevelopment Plan
- Hold a public hearing
- Pass a resolution adopting the Urban Redevelopment Plan and designating the Urban Redevelopment Agency responsible for implementation

### Demographic Profile

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the population for the City of Elberton was 4,653. The most recent American Community Survey (ACS) data identified the median age within the city as 42.1 years old; nearly one-quarter (24%) of the population is over 60 years old.<sup>1</sup> Citywide racial and ethnic group allocation is presented in the following table.

<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>% of Population</b>
Black/African American	2,065	44.4
White/Caucasian	2,359	50.7
Asian	47	1.0
Hispanic or Latino Origin	271	5.8
Other	116	2.5

*Source: 2010 U.S. Census*

### Urban Redevelopment Area

The urban redevelopment area boundary was established by local stakeholders as the sum of five distinct sub-area neighborhoods within the City of Elberton.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B for a list of URP Stakeholder Committee members and meeting documentation.

<b>Sub-Area</b>	<b>Number of Parcels</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>% of City Acreage</b>
College Avenue	117	65.38	2.2
Downtown Elberton	138	41.27	1.4
Eastside	280	81.85	2.7
McIntosh-Thomas	112	47.60	1.6
Southside	180	82.06	2.8

*Source: City of Elberton*

Of the City's total 2,984 acres, the urban redevelopment area comprises 318 (827 parcels), or 10.7%.

The strategies and initiatives outlined in this 2012 Elberton Urban Redevelopment Plan are consistent with the goals and policies identified in the 2004 Joint Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Partial Update to the Comprehensive Plan.

## II. REDEVELOPMENT NEED

In this section, redevelopment need across the City of Elberton and within the urban redevelopment area is examined through an analysis of blight indicators in three categories: Households and Housing, Business, and Regulatory Actions. Following this, the identified sub-area neighborhoods are described in detail, to include vision statements developed by the Stakeholder Committee.

### Households and Housing

The following information provides a snapshot of citywide household finance characteristics.

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS		
	<b>Elberton</b>	<b>Georgia</b>
Median Household Income	\$27,692	\$49,347
Per Capita Income	\$17,762	\$25,134
Percent Unemployed	10.2	8.8
Percent Below Poverty Level (Past 12 Months)	31.7	15.7

*Source: Selected Economic Characteristics, 2006-2010 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

In order to evaluate the existing housing situation within the URP area, the Stakeholder Committee combined visual survey methodology, tax parcel data, and utility information to determine housing conditions, tenure (renters and owners), and vacancies.<sup>3</sup> The committee agreed upon the following classifications for determining housing conditions:

- **Standard:** All residential structures, or the premises or portions thereof, which appear without inspection to meet the basic design and construction standards outlined in the International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings (with Georgia amendments). Structures in need of general maintenance, such as painting or minor aesthetic repairs, are not considered substandard.
- **Substandard:** All residential structures, or the premises or portions thereof, which show clear violations of the International Residential Code for One- and Two-Family Dwellings (with Georgia amendments) but are still habitable.
- **Dilapidated:** All residential structures, or the premises or portions thereof, in or on which conditions exist to the extent that the health or safety of the occupants, of the occupants of neighboring structures, or the public is endangered due to inadequate maintenance, obsolescence, or abandonment are declared unfit for human habitation.

### Business

The tables below indicate the business activity occurring throughout the City and within the URP Area during the three-year period of 2009-2011. Though few commercial building permits were issued within the URP Area during this period, the total number and proportion of new business licenses issued within the URP Area increased. Of the total 18 new business licenses issued within the URP Area between 2009 and 2011, 16 (approximately 89%) were in Downtown Elberton.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for a Housing Conditions and Tenure map.

NEW BUSINESS LICENSES, 2009-2011		
Year	# of Licenses	# in URP Area
2009	15	5
2010	16	6
2011	10	7

Source: City of Elberton

NON-RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS, 2009-2011			
Year	# of Permits	Total Value of Permits	# in URP Area
2009	14	\$1,452,001	5
2010	7	\$5,426,400	0
2011	11	\$2,100,510	2

Source: City of Elberton

### Regulatory Actions

CRIMES BY TYPE										
Year	Violent Crime	Murder	Forcible Rape	Robbery	Aggravated Assault	Property Crime	Burglary	Larceny	Motor Vehicle Theft	Arson
2009	44	0	2	7	35	507	125	373	9	0
2010	37	0	2	6	29	489	134	347	8	0

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Criminal Justice Information Services Uniform Crime Report<sup>4</sup>

The Elberton Police Department has allocated most of the city land area into eight (8) zones for reporting purposes. These zones are designated as follows:

Zone 1	Central Business District
Zone 2	Northeast
Zone 3	Northwest
Zone 4	Southwest
Zone 5	Southeast
Zone 6	Mount Campbell
Zone 7	Auld
Zone 8	Mattox

While these zone boundaries do not exactly mirror URP sub-area boundaries, there is significant overlap of Zones 1 and 2 with Downtown Elberton, Zones 2 and 6 with the Eastside neighborhood, Zone 5 with the McIntosh-Thomas neighborhood, Zones 4, 7, and 8 with the Southside neighborhood, and Zone 3

<sup>4</sup> Comprehensive UCR data for 2011 by City will not be released until September 2012.

with the College Avenue Commercial Area. Zone 2 consistently contained the highest number of both arrests and reported incidents over the three-year period of 2009-2011.<sup>5</sup>

ARRESTS AND REPORTED INCIDENTS, 2009-2011		
	<b>Arrests (All Zones)</b>	<b>Incidents Reports (All Zones)</b>
2009	2,882	2,714
2010	2,823	2,717
2011	2,771	2,511

*Source: Elberton Police Department*

The table below represents number of properties cited for code violations by the City Marshal in 2009, 2010, and 2011, including the number of properties that were cited more than once in the corresponding calendar year.

CODE ENFORCEMENT CITATIONS, 2009-2011		
	<b>Total Properties Cited</b>	<b>Properties with Multiple Citations</b>
2009	55	4
2010	74	2
2011	51	6

*Source: City of Elberton*

Within the URP area, six properties were cited in both 2009 and 2010; three of these are located in the College Avenue Commercial Area, and three are located in the McIntosh-Thomas neighborhood. Five properties within the URP area were cited in both 2010 and 2011: two in McIntosh-Thomas, two in the Southside neighborhood, and one in the Eastside neighborhood. Three properties within the URP area were cited at least once each year over the three-year period: two in the Southside and one in the Eastside.<sup>6</sup>

### Commercial Neighborhoods

#### **College Avenue Commercial Area**

This neighborhood was formerly residential, but due to road-widening and zoning it is now a commercial area in transition. This sub-area is situated along Highway 17/72, and serves as the entryway into the city from Athens to the west. Many of the houses that are still intact are rundown. Small parcel sizes may present challenges to commercial development.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix D for a breakdown of arrests and incidents reported by Zone.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix D for a list of properties cited for code violations for 2009, 2010, and 2011.



Assets	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• State highway</li> <li>• Visibility – gateway into town</li> <li>• Granite Museum</li> <li>• Civic Center</li> <li>• Medical Center</li> <li>• Magnolia Estates (independent &amp; assisted living community)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-conforming residential rental properties</li> <li>• Vacancies</li> <li>• Empty lots</li> <li>• Maintenance issues</li> <li>• Small lot sizes</li> <li>• Litter</li> </ul>

The predominant existing land use in College Avenue is residential, with the balance being largely used for commercial purposes. When the first city zoning ordinance was adopted in 1962, this area was zoned for General Business (B-2). Therefore, the 70 existing residential parcels are considered nonconforming land uses. Most of the parcels in this area are smaller than one acre; the average size is 0.55 acres, with the largest parcel being approximately 4 acres.

Conditions/Tenure Concerns:

- Substandard residential units: 2 owner-occupied, 1 renter-occupied
- 1 commercial vacancy
- 2 residential vacancies
- 24 vacant lots

**VISION STATEMENT**

The College Avenue Commercial Area is home to successful new businesses, and serves as a welcoming gateway to the City of Elberton.

**Downtown Elberton**

This neighborhood consists of a retail area with shopping, restaurants, churches, the Elbert County Courthouse, the Elbert County Chamber of Commerce, the Elbert Theatre, Elbert County Jail and the Granite Bowl (the Elbert County Comprehensive High School football stadium). There are numerous store vacancies. The Downtown area is host to a lot of community events such as festivals and concerts. It is assisted by the Downtown Development Authority through the Main Street Elberton program.





Assets	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic buildings</li> <li>• Traditional town square layout</li> <li>• Streetscaping (walkable)</li> <li>• County administrative offices</li> <li>• Publicly-owned property</li> <li>• Broadband capability (Wi-Fi)</li> <li>• Elbert Theatre</li> <li>• Large churches</li> <li>• Rock Gym Transportation Enhancement (TE) project underway</li> <li>• High school football stadium</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large vacant hotel</li> <li>• Jail located downtown</li> <li>• Commercial vacancies</li> <li>• More service-oriented businesses than retail</li> <li>• Litter</li> </ul>

The predominant existing land use in Downtown Elberton is commercial; other uses are largely public or institutional, such as the Elbert County office building and several churches. The primary zoning classification is Central Business District (CBD), and a handful of parcels are zoned as General Business (B-2). The average parcel size is 0.3 acres, and the largest parcel, owned by the United Methodist Church, is 3 acres.

The central core of Downtown Elberton has been designated locally as an historic district and is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Historic Preservation Design Guidelines were developed by the Elberton Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for this district, and approved by City Council in September 2009. Property owners are required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the HPC prior to making alterations to the exterior of a building within this district.

Main Street Elberton has developed a Façade Grant and Low-Interest Loan Program to assist property owners within the Downtown Commercial District with exterior improvements that are compliant with the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. In the past year, five businesses have received assistance through this program. Property owners within the National Register district may also qualify for state property tax abatement and a 20% federal tax credit for rehabilitation activities that follow the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation.

In April 2012, the City of Elberton purchased the vacant Samuel Elbert Hotel for \$200,000 using Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds designated for downtown development.

Conditions/Tenure Concerns:

- 22 commercial vacancies
  - 4 substandard
  - 3 dilapidated
- Substandard residential units: 1 renter-occupied
- 30 vacant lots

**VISION STATEMENT**

Downtown Elberton is home to thriving boutique retail businesses, restaurants, and family-oriented entertainment opportunities surrounding an historic town square. A bustling nightlife, area-wide Wi-Fi availability, and loft living options attract new visitors and residents.

Residential Neighborhoods

**Eastside**

Also referred to as the Blackwell neighborhood, the Eastside residential area includes several churches, a school and a community center. Residents have expressed concern about drugs and other illegal activities.



<b>Assets</b>	<b>Issues</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blackwell Elementary</li> <li>• Blackwell Community Center</li> <li>• Burke Street Recreation Center</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Eastside Neighborhood Watch (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacancies</li> <li>• Drug activity</li> <li>• Abandoned school</li> <li>• Property maintenance issues</li> <li>• Some substandard housing</li> </ul>

The predominant existing land use in the Eastside sub-area is residential. The most recent zoning ordinance identifies 76 of the total 280 parcels as Multi-Family Residential (R-2) and 112 as Single Family Residential (R-1B). The remaining 84 parcels were rezoned to Neighborhood Business (B-1) from residential use in 1989, and are therefore nonconforming. The average parcel size in this neighborhood is 0.29 acres. The largest parcel, at 6.4 acres, is owned by Elbert County.

Conditions/Tenure Concerns:

- Dilapidated residential units: 1 owner-occupied
- Substandard residential units: 3 owner-occupied, 6 renter-occupied
- 1 occupied dilapidated commercial property
- 2 commercial vacancies
  - 1 dilapidated
- 69 residential vacancies
  - 11 dilapidated
  - 24 substandard
- 56 vacant lots

**McIntosh-Thomas**

This formerly majority owner-occupied neighborhood now contains an increasing number of renter-occupied units. Rental houses tend to be more rundown, and without adequate attention, the neighborhood may trend toward further decline. Residents in this area live close enough to the square to easily walk downtown.



Assets	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic homes and churches</li> <li>• Quiet</li> <li>• Safe</li> <li>• Walking traffic</li> <li>• Southside Neighborhood Watch (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some substandard housing</li> <li>• Property maintenance issues</li> </ul>

The predominant existing land use in the McIntosh-Thomas sub-area is residential. This neighborhood is largely comprised of single family homes; of the 104 residential parcels, only 20 are zoned as Multi-Family Residential (R-2). The average parcel size is 0.42 acres, and the largest parcel (2.9 acres) is a private residence.

A majority of the parcels in the McIntosh-Thomas neighborhood lie within either a locally-designated historic district (Residential Area 2) or a National Register historic district (Elberton Residential Historic District); most are situated in both. Historic Preservation Design Guidelines were developed by the HPC

for residential districts, and approved by City Council in September 2009. Property owners are required to obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the HPC prior to making alterations to the exterior of a building within this district.

Conditions/Tenure Concerns:

- Dilapidated residential units: 1 owner-occupied
- Substandard residential units: 3 owner-occupied, 2 renter-occupied
- 14 residential vacancies
  - 6 substandard
- 4 vacant lots

**Southside**

This neighborhood is a mix of owner-occupied and renter-occupied units. South Oliver Street is an area in transition; housing conditions worsen as distance from the square increases. Drugs and other illegal activities are concerns for area residents.



Assets	Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjacent to city park with walking path</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Southside Neighborhood Watch (active)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vacancies</li> <li>• Drug activity</li> <li>• Dilapidation</li> <li>• Rental housing prevalent</li> <li>• Property maintenance issues</li> </ul>

The predominant existing land use in the Southside sub-area is residential. Of the 144 parcels zoned as residential, 82 are zoned as Multi-Family Residential (R-2). Thirty-six properties currently in residential use are zoned for either General Business (B-2) or Neighborhood Business (B-1); these properties are therefore nonconforming uses. The average parcel size in this neighborhood is 0.46 acres. The largest parcel is 7.6 acres, and is owned by the Elberton Housing Authority.

Conditions/Tenure Concerns:

- Substandard residential units: 13 renter-occupied
- 1 occupied dilapidated commercial property

- 2 vacant dilapidated commercial properties
- 21 residential vacancies
  - 6 substandard
- 27 vacant lots

Though each somewhat different in character, the URP stakeholder committee identified a common vision for the three residential neighborhoods.

VISION STATEMENT

The Eastside, McIntosh-Thomas, and Southside neighborhoods offer safety, stability, and a high quality of life to existing and prospective residents. Those living in these areas benefit from proximity to community facilities and the amenities in Downtown Elberton.

### III. LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The following section identifies existing growth management tools used by the City of Elberton, and outlines land use and development objectives for the URP area.

#### Existing Development Management Tools

##### *Zoning*

As aforementioned, the City of Elberton adopted its first zoning ordinance in 1962. The official Zoning Map was most recently updated in January 2011.

##### *Design Guidelines*

The Elberton Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) developed design guidelines for the city's locally-designated historic districts in 2009, two of which overlap the URP area.

Design guidelines were also created for the Central Business District Zone, but were never adopted.

##### *Nonconforming Uses*

According to the Elberton Code of Ordinances (Chapter 22, Article 2, Division 4), nonconforming uses are allowed to continue so long as:

- Unsafe structures may be restored to a safe condition
- Structural improvements made by the owner do not exceed 50% of the value of the building (not including repairs required by law or interior remodeling)
- The nonconforming use is not extended to include additional buildings or land unless a variance is granted
- Nonconforming structures destroyed through no fault of the owner are reconstructed and restored to the same use within 12 months of damage occurring
- The nonconforming use has not been discontinued for a continuous period of six months

##### *Substandard and Dilapidated Structures*

The Buildings and Building Regulations section of the city's Code of Ordinances (Chapter 8, Article 8) outlines procedures for determining whether a dwelling, building, or structure is considered a nuisance. This section of the Code of Ordinances also designates the city Building Inspector as the public officer with powers to investigate conditions, enter premises for the purpose of making inspections (in such a manner to cause the least possible inconvenience to the owner), make determinations regarding classification as an alleged nuisance, and to delegate such functions and powers to other officers as necessary.

Upon determination that a dwelling, building, or structure is a nuisance, the public officer files a complaint containing a statement of action to abate the alleged nuisance. The owner is notified through a summons to a hearing to be held between 15-45 days from the date of the complaint. The court then determines whether the dwelling, building, or structure should be repaired or demolished.

### Objectives

The land use and development objectives identified by the URP stakeholder committee were grouped into commercial and residential categories, as many similarities exist within the different types of sub-areas within each.

#### *Commercial Sub-Areas*

- Increase attractiveness
- Encourage and enable commercial development and redevelopment

#### *Residential Sub-Areas*

- Bring sub-standard and dilapidated properties to standard condition
- Preserve historically residential neighborhoods

## IV. ACTION PLAN

The City of Elberton will serve as the implementing agency of the Urban Redevelopment Plan. To this end, the City assumes responsibility for carrying out the following tasks.

### Strengthen Development Management Toolkit

The “development management toolkit” is defined for this purpose as a set of policies, plans, ordinances that help shape how development takes place within the City. The Stakeholder Committee identified several actions that would serve to strengthen this toolkit and thus encourage desired redevelopment of the sub-area neighborhoods.

#### *Zoning*

In order to maintain the Eastside sub-area as residential over the long-term, the City will consider the re-zoning of a majority of the nonconforming B-1 (Neighborhood Business) parcels to either the R-1 or R-2 (Single-Family) residential classification. This should not cause major inconvenience or disturbance to the neighborhood, as most of these parcels are already in residential use and have been so since before zoning was first adopted by the City in the early 1960s.

If there is a change to a nonconforming parcel significant enough (e.g. structure demolition) to result in a zoning classification change per the Code of Ordinances, the City will ensure that its parcel database is updated in a timely fashion.

The Code of Ordinances (Chapter 22, Article 2, Division 7) allows for the creation of overlay districts in residential areas, named Planned Developments, that are defined geographically through a formal approval process by the Mayor and Council. The City will consider an amendment to this Division of the Code of Ordinances to allow for the creation of an overlay district in commercial areas, specifically for use in the College Avenue and Downtown Elberton sub-areas. Development of an overlay district in these commercial neighborhoods would allow for the creation of design guidelines on top of the underlying zoning for the purpose of increasing attractiveness.

#### *Design Guidelines*

The City will work toward the final revision and subsequent adoption of the draft design guidelines for the Central Business District, as depicted on the urban redevelopment area map in Appendix A. The adopted guidelines should include recommendations for streetscape enhancements with sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, and greenspace. Should an overlay district be approved for commercial areas, the City will also develop design guidelines for the College Avenue sub-area. Because Elberton has been designated as a Certified Local Government (CLG) by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division (HPD), the City may be eligible for grant funding to develop these design guidelines.



### *Code Enforcement*

The City will consider adopting a Property Maintenance Code to more stringently address structural and property blight, including excessive litter and unkempt vegetation. In addition, the city will continue to actively enforce the existing Code of Ordinances.

### *Administrative*

The City will develop and maintain a real estate database for vacant properties for sale in the Downtown Elberton and College Avenue commercial areas, to include the following:

- Parcel number(s) and specifications
- Asking price
- Owner/Agent contact information
- Transportation and utility requirements/provisions
- Availability of lease option and/or alternative financing with owner

Regularly updating this database will ensure that City staff is knowledgeable about the properties available within the URP area. The City can then collaborate with the Elbert County Economic Development Authority to develop a marketing strategy for these commercial neighborhoods.

### Rehabilitate Structures

City staff identified several sub-standard and several dilapidated structures within the residential sub-areas, as depicted on the Housing Conditions and Tenure Map in Appendix A. The City of Elberton will address these negative conditions by applying for grant funding to rehabilitate sub-standard properties. In addition, the City will consider demolishing residential structures which are dilapidated beyond repair and pose threats to the health and safety of area residents.

As the new owner of the Samuel Elbert Hotel in Downtown Elberton, the City will lead the effort to rehabilitate this historic structure and bring it back to active use. This process will begin with the solicitation of proposals from area firms to develop a combined architectural and market feasibility study for possible uses.

### Other Actions

At this time, the City does not anticipate acquiring additional parcels within the URP area.

The City of Elberton does not foresee the need to place additional covenants or restrictions on any specific properties within the URP area boundary.

Should the relocation of residents be deemed necessary, the City of Elberton will comply with all applicable requirements as outlined in the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970.

### Plan to Leverage Private Resources for Redevelopment

The Stakeholder Committee identified the following as opportunities for the City of Elberton to leverage private and public funding in the implementation of this plan.

### *Opportunity Zone Designation*

Upon adoption of this plan, the City of Elberton will prepare an application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for designation of opportunity zones for the Downtown Elberton and College Avenue sub-areas within the URP area boundary. Both sub-areas meet the threshold criteria outlined for opportunity zones in the Rules of Department of Community Affairs 110-24, Opportunity Zone Job Tax Credit Program.<sup>7</sup> Designation of these two sub-areas would enable employers therein to take advantage of a \$3,500 enhanced job tax credit per eligible new job created (as defined in O.C.G.A. § 48-7-40.1(e)), at a job creation threshold of at least two jobs.<sup>8</sup>

### *Revitalization Area Strategy Designation*

Utilizing the data gathered during the URP planning process, the City of Elberton will consider making application to DCA for designation of a Revitalization Area. The Revitalization Area Strategy (RAS) program complements the State Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program by encouraging planning for community development. Within the URP area boundary, the entire College Avenue and Eastside sub-areas and portions of the Downtown Elberton and Southside sub-areas meet the RAS threshold requirement.<sup>9</sup> Projects within designated RAS areas are eligible to receive up to 20 bonus points on CDBG applications.<sup>10</sup>

### *Georgia Initiative for Community Housing*

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) is facilitated through a partnership between DCA, the Georgia Municipal Association, and the University of Georgia's Housing and Demographics Research Center. Cities and counties may apply to participate in the three-year GICH program, during which time a community housing team attends facilitated retreats and develops and implements a housing plan to address needs and reach housing goals. Technical assistance is provided to designated communities by program partners and sponsors.<sup>11</sup> Among other things, this program may prove very useful in determining how best to develop downtown living options in Elberton.

### *Financial Incentives for Historic Preservation*

The Georgia HPD office is available to work with the City of Elberton in applying for both state and federal historic preservation tax credits to encourage appropriate redevelopment of historic properties through the provision of financial incentives. For income-producing properties, the City and property owners may apply for both the Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) and the State Income Tax Credit for Rehabilitated Historic Property. In addition, both income-producing property owners and

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix A for a map of Census Block Groups within Elberton with poverty rates of at least 15% created using the DCA online mapping tool.

<sup>8</sup> Information on Opportunity Zones retrieved on May 29, 2012 from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs website at <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/economic/DevelopmentTools/programs/documents/OZRegulationSoS.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix A for a map of Census Block Groups within Elberton with poverty rates of at least 20% created using the DCA online mapping tool.

<sup>10</sup> Information on Revitalization Area Strategies retrieved on May 29, 2012 from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs website at <http://www.dca.ga.gov/communities/CDBG/programs/CDBGremitApproval.asp>.

<sup>11</sup> Information on GICH retrieved on May 29, 2012 from the UGA Housing and Demographics Research Center website at <http://www.fcs.uga.edu/hace/hdrc/gich.html>.

residential property owners may apply for the State Preferential Property Tax Assessment for Rehabilitated Historic Property, which freezes county property taxes for an eight-year period.<sup>12</sup>

### Grant Sources

The following state and federal agencies administer grant funding that may be relevant to the implementation of the City of Elberton Urban Redevelopment Plan.

#### *Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)*

DCA manages the State's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, through which communities may apply for funding to complete housing, infrastructure, community facility, and economic development projects that meet specified low- to moderate-income threshold requirements. This funding is allocated into four sub-programs: Annual Competition, Employment Incentive Program (EIP), Redevelopment Fund (RDF), and Immediate Threat and Danger (ITAD).<sup>13</sup>

The One Georgia program is a State funding program that offers grants and loans for projects that will encourage and enable economic development and job creation and retention.

DCA also manages the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF), in place to assist local governments with implementing capital projects in traditional downtown areas and adjacent historic neighborhoods.

#### *Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)*

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) is a multi-state regional economic development agency. The region includes all or parts of the 13 states following the spine of the Appalachian Mountains. Elbert County is one of four ARC counties in Northeast Georgia. The agency provides funding to projects that address one or more of the goals identified in its strategic plan. Program areas include asset-based development, infrastructure, education and training, energy, entrepreneurship and business development, and tourism development, among others.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Economic Development Administration (EDA)*

The mission of the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting innovation and competitiveness. The agency predominantly provides funding for infrastructure improvements that enable communities to create and retain private sector jobs.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Information on federal and state historic preservation financial incentives retrieved on June 25, 2012 from the HPD website at <http://georgiashpo.org/incentives/tax>.

<sup>13</sup> Information on CDBG retrieved on May 29, 2012 from the DCA website at <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/communities/CDBG/index.asp>.

<sup>14</sup> Information on ARC funding programs retrieved on May 29, 2012 from the ARC website at <http://www.arc.gov/index.asp>.

<sup>15</sup> Information on EDA funding priorities and opportunities retrieved on May 29, 2012 from the EDA website at <http://www.eda.gov/>.

*United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD)*

The Rural Development division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA-RD) facilitates loan and grant programs and technical assistance to support the development of housing and community facilities and promote economic development.<sup>16</sup>

**Implementation Schedule**

The City of Elberton will seek adoption of this plan by the Mayor and Council in August 2012. The following tables, organized into two main categories, depict a five-year implementation schedule, from fall 2012 through fall 2016.

<i>DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Partners</b>
Rezone non-conforming commercial parcels in the Eastside sub-area	2012-2013	Staff time	N/A	City Marshal, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA)
Amend Code of Ordinances to allow overlay districts in commercial areas	2012-2013	Staff time	N/A	City Manager, City Marshal, DDA, Planning Commission, ZBA
Develop and adopt design guidelines for Downtown Elberton	2013-2014	Staff time and/or grant matching funds (\$3,000-5,000)	City, HPD Historic Preservation Fund Grant	City Manager, City Marshal, DDA, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)
Develop and adopt design guidelines for College Avenue Commercial Area	2013-2014	Staff time and/or grant matching funds (\$3,000-5,000)	City, HPD Historic Preservation Fund Grant	City Manager, City Marshal, Planning Commission
Develop and adopt a Property Maintenance Code	2013-2014	Staff time	N/A	City Manager, City Marshal, DDA, Planning Commission, ZBA
Develop and maintain a real estate database for vacant commercial properties	2013-2014, Ongoing	Staff time	City	City Manager, DDA, Elbert County Economic Development
Update parcel database regularly	Ongoing	Staff time and/or annual NEGRC maintenance fee	N/A	City Marshal, Planning Commission, ZBA, NEGRC

<sup>16</sup> Information on USDA-RD programs and opportunities retrieved on May 29, 2012 from the USDA-RD website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html>.

<i>STRUCTURAL REHABILITATION</i>				
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Partners</b>
Apply for GICH Program	Fall 2012 or 2013	Staff time	City	City Staff, DDA, Housing Authority, NEGRC
Rehabilitate sub-standard residential units	2013-2016	Varied, to include grant application fees and local match	CDBG, USDA-RD, HPD, City, Residents	City Staff, Residents, NEGRC, DCA, USDA
Demolish dilapidated residential units where necessary	2013-2016	Varied	CDBG, City, Residents	City Staff, Residents, NEGRC, DCA
Rehabilitate Samuel Elbert Hotel and solicit tenant	Ongoing	Varied, to include grant application fees and local match	CDBG, DDRLF, ARC, USDA-RD, HPD, City	City Staff, DDA, HPC, Elbert County Economic Development, NEGRC, DCA, HPD, ARC, USDA

## V. APPENDICES

### A. Maps

1. Urban Redevelopment Area
2. Housing Conditions and Tenure
3. 15% Poverty Census Block Groups
4. 20% Poverty Census Block Groups

### B. URP Stakeholder Committee

- a. Meeting agendas
- b. Sign-in sheets

### C. Citizen Participation Documentation

- a. Public hearing
  - i. Newspaper advertisement
  - ii. Agenda
  - iii. Sign-in sheet

### D. Supporting Documents

### E. URP Finding of Necessity & Adoption Resolution

- a. Attorney certification letter stating resolution adopted in accordance with the law & public hearing requirements