



FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DALTON/WHITFIELD COUNTY

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JOINT
DEVELOPMENT
AUTHORITY



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MESSAGE FROM GEORGIAFORWARD

GeorgiaForward has been bringing together statewide thought leaders to talk about the future of Georgia since 2010. From these conversations, the leadership action program Young Gamechangers was born, and after nine successful programs across the state, the work of Young Gamechangers has had over a \$22 million impact on the state of Georgia. We are proud to work with companies, governments, nonprofits, institutes of higher learning, and other business and civic leaders to grapple with their community's most persistent challenges.

Since early in 2022, 47 of Georgia's best and brightest have been working in Dalton/Whitfield County to develop big idea recommendations to some of this community's problems. The Young Gamechangers, young professionals between the ages of 25 and 40 from a variety of sectors across the state, were divided into four groups to work on the four challenge questions crafted by the community steering committee.

The group met in Dalton four times over the course of the eight-month program and worked for countless hours to learn, research, collaborate, and

reflect on the "game changing" ideas they developed. The recommendations that follow are the result of next generation Georgia leaders thinking outside of the box to creatively solve problems in Dalton/Whitfield County. This product would not be possible without the invitation to bring Young Gamechangers to Dalton/Whitfield County by community leadership, the guidance of the local steering committee, the enthusiasm of the class, the willingness of local leaders to be open and honest, the engagement of our Young Gamechangers alumni, and the support of our sponsors.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in making the 2022 Young Gamechangers program possible. GeorgiaForward is excited to see which recommendations most resonate with the community and which will be implemented first! We look forward to a continued partnership as these ideas come to life.

Sadie Krawczyk
Managing Director
GeorgiaForward



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SECTION

1



RECLAIMING THE CROWN

CHALLENGE QUESTION

The City of Dalton is devoting considerable resources to create a more vibrant community that attracts people (and/or especially families) to live, work, and play here. How can Dalton-Whitfield County improve its ability to support neighborhood-based redevelopment in blighted or distressed areas?

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THREE BIG IDEAS:

To address the concerns posed by this Challenge Question, the Redevelopment Team, "Reclaiming the Crown," has developed three big ideas to help revitalize the Crown Mill Village neighborhood north of downtown Dalton, a historic area full of untapped potential. This begins with the construction of a new greenway, the "Mill-Line," to connect downtown with the Crown Mill and north to Haig Mill Park, which will act as a catalyst for redevelopment in the neighborhood. Next, City-led strategies should be implemented to guide the redevelopment through specific incentives and regulations intended to produce a cohesive neighborhood style attractive to discerning residents. Finally, strategies focused on nonprofit intervention should be utilized to adopt site and neighborhood-specific projects currently unconsidered by the private sector, which will provide successful examples of appropriate new construction for other developers/ community members to follow. Implemented in succession, these strategies should produce the desired outcome of revitalizing Crown Mill Village and the entire North Dalton area into a desirable neighborhood for both current and future residents.

¹A focus on the North Dalton/Crown Mill area was requested by the City of Dalton for the scope of this project.



BIG IDEA 1

STRATEGIC GATEWAY
(MILL-LINE) PLAN
FOCUSED ON CATALYZING
REDEVELOPMENT



DESCRIPTION

Greenway infrastructure, “rails to trails,” and other trail and transit projects are being used by communities all over the country to catalyze redevelopment. These projects attract new private investment, residents, and jobs, while providing a better quality of life for existing residents. Dalton has already identified the development of its greenway as a key strategic initiative to drive desired outcomes for the City. In examining the existing plan, we look to provide critical recommendations for a more comprehensive greenway strategy. These recommendations will ensure the City’s investment maximizes its goals for new housing, jobs, and the redevelopment of critical sites along the “Mill-Line.”

Initially, greenway projects were envisioned as purely health and wellness initiatives. What has been discovered, as demonstrated by projects like the nearby Atlanta BeltLine, is that greenways can act as major drivers of commercialization, redevelopment, job attraction, and new housing, while also providing major health and wellness benefits for the community. The recommendations outlined below will help Dalton attract people who want to walk, dine, shop, and live all within a few steps of their residence. With playable art and placemaking efforts, branded wayfinding, and spur trails to navigate the entirety of North Dalton from downtown, these recommendations should drive positive outcomes in the city for generations to come.

The aforementioned Atlanta BeltLine has used approximately seven miles of trail construction to drive an estimated \$8B in private real estate development; nearly 3,000 units of workforce

housing as part of tens of thousands of total new housing units; and more than 20,000 new jobs - all within about a half mile of the trail corridor. Similarly, Dalton’s Mill-Line should have the dual purpose of driving both economic and quality of life outcomes for current and future residents.

The recommendations for Dalton’s Mill-Line focus on three categories: 1) enhancing connectivity along the corridor at points critical for driving redevelopment activity, 2) enhancing the user experience to drive increased usership and project acceptance by the community and greater Dalton region, and 3) maintaining the legacy of the project for decades to come, which is critical to the long-term impact and benefits of the infrastructure.



SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

The Dalton Mill-Line plan should be enhanced to support both quality of life and redevelopment activity throughout the area. This will require expanding the corridor to a 2.7-mile mainline trail that connects key assets from Dalton's historic downtown to the Crown Mill Village, Mount Rachel, Mill Creek, and finally Haig Mill Lake Park. It should also include the development of additional spur trails that will increase connectivity and usership. Enhancing the user experience will require strategies around security, walkability and bikeability, and making the greenway a destination through placemaking and wayfinding efforts. Once the investment has been made, it is also critical for the City to have a strong maintenance plan and an earned revenue strategy in place to support its legacy. By enhancing the plan's connectivity, user experience, and long-term viability, Dalton will be able to achieve its strategic goals around redevelopment.

Downtown Dalton has seen significant revitalization efforts, especially in the last few years. We encourage the City to utilize the greenway corridor to support this revitalization spread into North Dalton. With the mainline route beginning on Hamilton Street at the northern boundary of downtown, users will be guided across the railroad tracks to Five Points, then along Chattanooga Avenue toward Crown Mill Village. From the Mill, the mainline will intersect the already-completed spur to Mount Rachel, then continue north by way

of Mill Creek to Haig Mill Lake Park. Additional proposed spur trails include connections to Hamilton Medical Center (possibly through the historic pedestrian tunnel located under the railroad pictured below), an extension following the original route of Chattanooga Avenue behind Hamilton House through Historical Society grounds, and an extension of the path to continue on Chattanooga Avenue up through the North Park Drive area to connect at Haig Mill Park. A connection to the hospital is especially important, and the new sidewalk project planned for Thornton Avenue could be a critical part of the spur trail between the hospital and downtown. It would also provide pedestrian access between the hospital and Crown Mill Village, which would suddenly become a highly attractive neighborhood for doctors and nurses, as well as between the hospital and downtown.

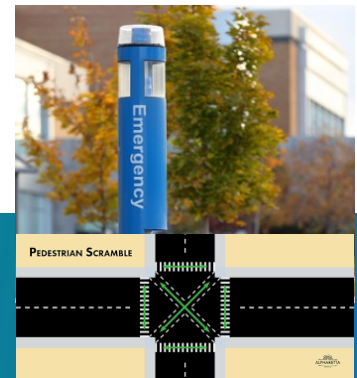
We recommend the City's revised greenway plan focus on an enhanced user experience that promotes security, walk- and bike-ability, and placemaking efforts. We recommend a security plan for the greenway so that residents know the greenway is a safe place to go and any misconceptions of safety issues are avoided. This could include hiring off-duty police officers to provide bike patrol, pursuing a US Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grant, and/or installing security cameras and call boxes along the corridor.



Current state



Example of using public art to revitalize a corridor through a tunnel



We also recommend a Complete Streets and Sidewalk study be conducted for the route to identify intersections and other areas that could hinder the user experience. This would provide a project list that could be tackled over the next decade through SPLOST (Special-Purpose Local-Option Sales Tax) dollars or other public grant opportunities. Particularly major intersection crossings/pedestrian scrambles, mid-block crossings, and railroad crossings would be the highest priority for consideration. There are great examples in other communities of treatments at major intersections that could be considered including midblock scrambles (needed at Tyler Street and Chattanooga Avenue) and mid-block crossings with hawk signals (needed to cross Chattanooga Avenue to Mount Rachel spur) that should be considered for key areas along the greenway.

Douglas County is currently engaging CSX on the issue of greenways crossing railroad tracks, specifically how grading can be improved to provide a safer and smoother user experience for cyclists and pedestrians (see contact information in the Resources section). Dalton should use this as a model to address the greenway crossing between downtown and Five Points, which is critical for drawing users onto the trail from downtown.

To specifically promote bike-ability on the Mill-Line, shared bike stations would be a great addition to the corridor. Town Center and Cumberland Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in Cobb County are having good success with a Bikeshare provider Tandem Mobility. The provider typically takes on a majority of the upfront infrastructure and maintenance costs of the bikeshare program through a public-private partnership.

Finally, we recommend a placemaking/public art strategy be implemented for the greenway that includes playable art to support the parks and recreation department goals around family programming. The Abernathy Greenway in Sandy Springs is a great example of linear playable art that could be positioned along the corridor. Critical opportunity sites for murals, placemaking, and playable art include Five Points, the storage facility between Five Points and the Tyler & Chattanooga intersection, the corner of Tyler Street and Chattanooga Avenue, the Shriner's Parking Lot, the Mill, Columbia Recycling (fence mural), and the North Park Drive commercial area. A strong wayfinding plan that is tied to the Mill-Line brand is critical for increasing the user experience as well. The Silver Comet Trail has a full signage package that was developed, which provides a good model for the types of opportunities that should be implemented along the corridor and can be referenced in the resource section.



Annual programming efforts to drive users onto the greenway will also be critical to further support an increase in usership. A market that happens once a week between downtown, Crown Mill Village, and Haig Mill Lake Park could bring the community out on a regular basis to enjoy the greenway, weekly bike tours that stop at each destination, or fitness opportunities that are trail-adjacent (photo features a massive group yoga class on the Atlanta BeltLine).

Special local, regional, or even national events at Mount Rachel for trail running or that use the greenway in general could also be a major catalyst for commerce for the City. The Dalton Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Creative Arts Guild could be critical partners for the implementation of wayfinding, branding, programming, and placemaking efforts along the greenway that will drive a better user experience, foster community engagement, and increase the outcomes related to redevelopment along the greenway. According to Blue Zones, “Walkable communities are healthier and more economical, but they also offer so much more—they are more diverse, resilient, sustainable, friendlier, and greener. These in-demand neighborhoods draw people from all income brackets and research shows that people who live in these types of neighborhoods and communities are healthier and happier.” (“What is Walkability”).

Finally, we recommend that the City’s revised greenway plan consider long-term maintenance, programming, and revenue generation to

support the long-term viability of the greenway. Maintenance for greenway infrastructure can often be unaccounted for after the initial capital investment. It is vital that the City budget for these expenditures but also work to identify creative solutions to support the ongoing maintenance and legacy of the project. This could include an annual fundraising dinner or other revenue generating programs through a partner like Keep Dalton-Whitfield County Beautiful, or leasing City-owned land/buildings to drive unencumbered dollars for maintenance. “Adopt-A-Mile/ Adopt-A-Block” programs alongside other volunteer clean-up efforts can also play a critical role in the ongoing maintenance of Dalton’s greenway investment. Further, the Atlanta BeltLine has invested in conduit infrastructure as they have built out their trail system. With Dalton’s strong experience in utilities, this could be a natural fit for additional revenue generation. We recommend a possible conversation with eX2 for exploration purposes and additional information is in the resources section.

This enhanced greenway scope that focuses on increased connectivity, user experience, and legacy will drive major outcomes for resident retention, resident attraction, housing development, job/business recruitment, small business support, and other positive benefits for the City and the North Dalton area.



TIMELINE & ACTION STEPS

TIMELINE:

Using the current mapping for the proposed greenway that begins in North Dalton, an adjacent corridor opportunity assessment would need to be done over the next twelve months. This would identify any redevelopment opportunities along the route. We would include an examination of the feasibility of a connection pedestrian/bike path through the Old Hwy 41 Bridge. Land acquisitions that can be made in the first year are also critical. A branding, placemaking, and marketing strategy would need to be created within that timeframe as well. The greenway could then be broken into segments for design and construction. Once design is complete, grounded in a robust community engagement process, then trail construction could take anywhere from 18 to 24 months.

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES:

> Start with a focus on connecting Downtown to Crown Mill Village via a paved biking/walking path from Five Points to Crown Mill so that residents and visitors can easily travel between the two entertainment interest points. Beautify the Five Points area and incentivize redevelopment of that intersection which supports a Dalton Live Work Play lifestyle, i.e., coffee shop, bike rentals.

- > Add trail signage/wayfinding starting in Downtown, pointing to the Dalton “Mill-Line”
- > Install Gateway signage when approaching Crown Mill Village from the South.
- > Consider adding lighting/cameras during construction, police call buttons for trail safety, especially for those who may want to use the greenway at night.
- > Invite artists to paint Dalton-themed, diversity-embracing murals on publicly owned spaces along the corridor. Also, work with critical sites that are privately-owned to beautify the route. These sites could include Five Points, the Shriner’s Parking Lot, the storage facility near the intersection of Tyler Street and Chattanooga Avenue, the Mill, Columbia Recycling (fence mural), the North Park Drive commercial area, and all of the tunnels along the route. For examples, see Marietta’s Elizabeth Porter Project, the City of Atlanta’s John Lewis Project, and the Atlanta BeltLine’s Art on the BeltLine (pictured).



MEDIUM-TERM PRIORITIES:

- > Focus on timely completion of the connection between Crown Mill Village and Haig Mill Lake Park. Consider paving the entire path with lighting, cameras, and police call buttons for trail safety.
- > Pursue City land acquisition of the plot across the street from Crown Mill Village to develop a small storm water retention fountain and park with a playground, to encourage interactions between the diverse residents of Crown Mill Village and create a community gathering space. The small Crown Mill Park could be used for regular activation events such as farmers markets, makers markets, or community festivals. (Photo above showcases the stormwater solution utilized at Old Fourth Ward Park adjacent to the Atlanta BeltLine to aid in the area's flooding issues.)
- > Work with the Creative Arts Guild on programming and activation of the greenway.



LONG-TERM PRIORITIES:

- > Complete the spur trail to Hamilton Medical Center and additional spur trails.
- > Incentivize mixed-use development of vacant or rarely used commercial properties adjacent to the Greenway as described in the City-led and nonprofit strategy sections discussed further in the report.

BUDGET

Item	Cost	Frequency
Design for Enhanced Connectivity Elements to the Dalton Greenway	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	One-time expense
Construction of Enhanced Connectivity Elements to the Dalton Greenway	\$3.5 million to \$5 million	One-time expense
Complete Street Study and Design	\$500,000	One-time expense
Wayfinding Plan, Design, and Implementation	\$250,000	One-time expense; ongoing maintenance
Bikeshare Program	Public-Private Partnership - Recommend up-front investment by third party	Could generate revenue once initial investment is recovered by third party
Safety Program	Partnership with Dalton Police Department; ~\$300,000 per year for two dedicated officers; security cameras and data collection - \$10,000	One-time expense; ongoing maintenance
Public Art and Activation Programming	\$100,000	Annual expense; revenue generating to support ongoing activations
Maintenance of the Greenway	\$250,000	Annually
Land Acquisition	\$500,000	One-time expense

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

FEDERAL FUNDING – Federal Infrastructure Grants through the EDA and Tourism Funding or the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) allocations

- > Department of Justice - COPS grants to support public safety planning
- > <https://cops.usdoj.gov/grants>

STATE FUNDING – Transportation Alternatives Program and Tourism Funding –

<https://www.dot.ga.gov/InvestSmart/Funding/Pages/TAP.aspx>

<https://www.exploregeorgia.org/explore-georgia-awards-tourism-project-grants-to-communities-across-georgia>

- > Department of Natural Resources Grants:
<https://gadnr.org/gosp>
<https://gadnr.org/RTP>

SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICTS

- > A new Tax Allocation District, as outlined in the following City-Led strategies section, could be used to fund the greenway project, spur trails, and trail-adjacent development site opportunities to drive additional outcomes including housing.

- > Other potential tools could include a Community Improvement District (CID) or a Special Service District (SSD)
- > Any of these tools would need to be bonded against early on to ensure necessary funds to complete the project and get ahead of real estate price escalation.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT

Ask the philanthropic and corporate community to match the amount of funds that the Tax Allocation District will generate.

Tie their support to programmatic and community outcomes that the greenway will help achieve including affordable housing, community engagement, anti-residential displacement efforts, etc.

EARNED REVENUE

Annual events, leasing greenway adjacent land for commercial purposes such as leasing land for restaurant patios, small business kiosks, or other retail/commercial activities

PARTNERSHIPS / RESOURCES

Many potential partners are listed throughout this section with more details about how they can support the advancement of this strategy. A full list of potential partners is below:

ATLANTA BELTLINE AND OTHER REGIONAL TRAIL PROJECTS ACROSS THE STATE

Small City example, Hickory, NC - <https://www.hickorync.gov/riverwalk-information>

PATH FOUNDATION

Silver Comet Trail Wayfinding Package - <https://alissafoss12.myportfolio.com/the-City-of-powder-springs-georgia-wayfinding>

CSX

Work through example from Douglas County mentioned above to facilitate a better crossing of the greenway at downtown approaching Five Points

SOUTHERN OFF-ROAD BICYCLE ASSOCIATION (SORBA)

<https://sorba.org/>

BIKESHARE

Tandem Mobility and a partnership with Cobb County through their Cumberland and Town Center CIDs for expansion - <https://www.tandem-mobility.com/>

CREATIVE ARTS GUILD

A partnership to curate public art along the greenway, engaging local artists for murals and other temporary and permanent art opportunities, examples Abernathy Greenway in Sandy Springs - <https://www.exploregeorgia.org/sandy-springs/outdoors-nature/fall-color/playable-art-park-at-abernathy-greenway-linear-park>

GREENWAY ADJACENT UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTY OWNERS

Shriners Building, Columbia Recycling, and Storage Facility for an arts and beautification opportunity

TRAIL RUNNING GROUPS AND EVENTS

Seek partnerships within this community to attract an annual major event like the national Ragnar Relay (long distance running race) to Dalton <https://www.runragnar.com/>

DOWNTOWN DALTON DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY / THE MILL / DALTON PARKS & REC

Meeting regularly to identify programmatic collaboration opportunities to get people from Haig Mill to Downtown

CONDUIT AND FIBER REVENUE

Recommend a conversation with eX2 Technology Atlanta BeltLine Conduit project <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bca39b7e5f7d141a959814f/t/60b90896833814232be7c00b/1622739096070/ABI+Overview.pdf>

IMPACT

Once the full scope of greenway enhancements are established, it would be good to engage a firm to do an economic impact study, of the initial plans and the enhanced plans, to show the business case for the program from a jobs, housing, and private investment perspective. Similar projects have stimulated hundreds to tens of thousands of new jobs from smaller projects in smaller communities like Hickory, NC to the Atlanta BeltLine, one of the largest redevelopment projects in the country. The projects are helping their communities ensure that housing developments can get necessary financing, and they are attracting new residents to their respective areas because of the catalytic effect that the greenway provides the community.

Based on the Mill-Line's success, the impact could exacerbate affordability within the community. It will be critical to ensure necessary policies and programs are available (see the Nonprofit strategies section of this report) to mitigate residential and commercial displacement. A project goal should be focused on current residents and small, local businesses having the opportunity to grow and tap into the economic engine that the new infrastructure will provide.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

By looking at the economic impacts modeled by the project's implementation, jobs, housing, and private investment goals could be included as part of the Tax Allocation District legislation. Progress towards these goals could be reported on regularly to the community. This investment should be a major driver towards attracting people to Dalton and driving redevelopment of greenway-adjacent sites to house them. Health outcomes should be benchmarked and measured to highlight the community benefits of the trail.

Potential metrics to measure success could include:

- > Jobs created within a ½ mile of the greenway
- > Housing created within a ½ mile of the greenway (total vs. affordable/workforce units)
- > Private investment and development within a ½ mile of the greenway
- > Acres of greenspace created
- > Artists supported through art along the greenway
- > Health outcomes



BIG IDEA 2

CITY-LED REDEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES



DESCRIPTION

In unison with construction of the “Mill-Line,” which will act as the catalyst for redevelopment in North Dalton, it is important for the City to enact appropriate incentives and regulations to guide that redevelopment. These include the creation of an Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA), to provide funding and oversight similar to a Downtown Development Authority; the establishment of a State Opportunity Zone, which functions in the absence of a Federal Opportunity Zone; the rehabilitation of the City-owned Crown Mill General Store at 700 Chattanooga Avenue; the formation of a Crown Mill Village Historic District; the formation of a North Dalton Residential Overlay District; and the creation of a new Tax Allocation District (TAD) in the North Dalton and Crown Mill Village Historic District area.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Instead of expanding the territory of the Downtown Dalton Development Authority (DDDA), which is not equipped to oversee a mostly residential area, the City should create an Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA) to support redevelopment efforts in the neighborhood. The creation of such an entity first requires a redevelopment plan. A URA can generate bonds and oversee redevelopment projects, like nonprofit development corporations explained later in this report. The creation of a URA also coincides well with the creation of a State Opportunity Zone mentioned below.

The formation of a URA would create a body to oversee all redevelopment activities in the specified area (see proposed State Opportunity Zone map below). If any funding is required to assist with the development or redevelopment of a project, the entity can issue bonds and act, essentially, in the way DDDA functions for downtown.

Formulated under parameters established by O.C.G.A. TITLE 36 Chapter 61 (OCGA TITLE 36 Chapter 61), the focus area of North Dalton’s URA should coincide with the State Opportunity Zone borders proposed later in this report. Ideally, the URA board should consist of an elected official from the City, stakeholders who reside in or have an interest in the area, and a staff liaison to provide administration. The process of formation could take approximately six months, depending on application turnaround from the State of Georgia. It should be considered and decided upon by the City Council before staff proceeds with the process.

Further info can be found at Brunswick URA.
www.brunswickga.org/bc-ura

After its formation, a URA should be relatively inexpensive to operate, as its board members are unpaid volunteers, and it incurs no operating costs other than staff time. A conservative estimate shows the administrative cost to be \$6,500 per year. This estimate is based on an average of eight hours’ staff

time per pay period for an employee with a salary of \$65,000 per year. This would require the use of a current FTE. See the example breakdown below:

Hourly Rate (\$65k/Year)	Staff Hours/ Pay Period	# Of Pay Periods	Frequency
\$31.25	8	26	\$71,500

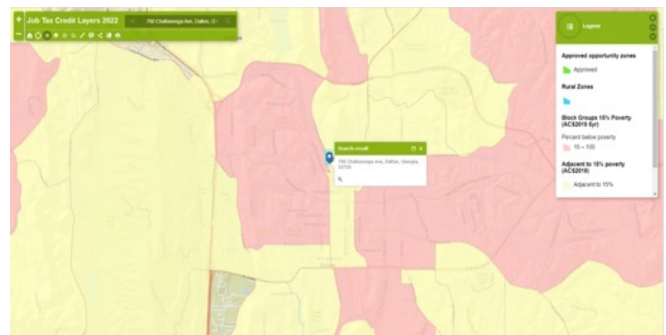
STATE OPPORTUNITY ZONE

State Opportunity Zones are created through Georgia’s Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Broadly, the opportunity zone offers a tax incentive for new and existing employers operating within the zone for each new job created. The business simply must certify with the overseeing entity (could be the City, URA, or other designee) that they created a certain number of new jobs.

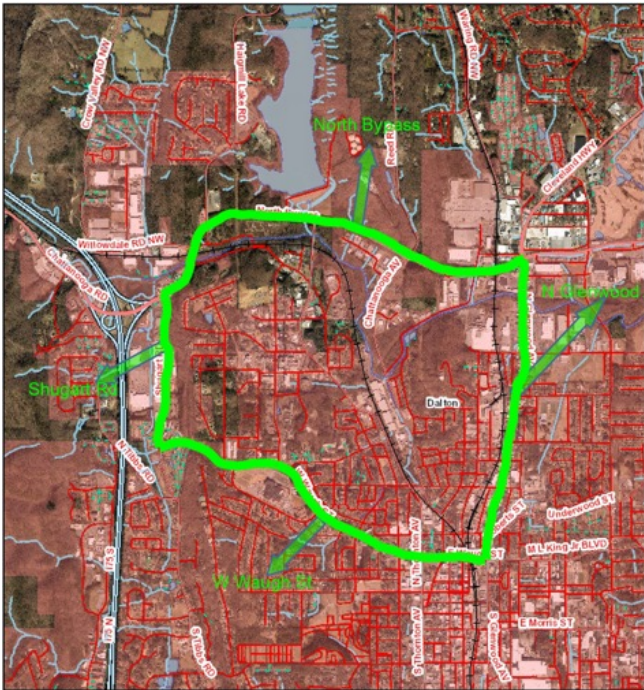
More specifically, local governments which undertake redevelopment and revitalization efforts in certain older commercial and industrial areas can now qualify those areas for the State’s maximum job tax credit of \$3,500 per job. The incentive, which is available for new and existing businesses that create two or more jobs, is a Job Tax Credit which can be taken against the business’s Georgia income tax liability and payroll withholding tax. The credit is available for areas designated by DCA as a “State Opportunity Zone.” DCA will consider designations for areas that are within or adjacent to a census block group with 15% or greater poverty where an enterprise zone or urban redevelopment plan exists. Using 700 Chattanooga Avenue as a reference, it appears the whole focus area fits into either “15% Poverty” or “Adjacent to 15% Poverty” categories.

To summarize the parameters of the program:

- > Maximum Job Tax Credit allowed is \$3,500 per job created
- > Lowest job creation threshold is two jobs
- > Use of Job Tax Credits against 100 percent of Georgia income tax liability and withholding tax is allowed
- > Provides for businesses of any nature to qualify, not just defined as “business enterprise”
- > Opportunity Zone can be established through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs



Proposed Opportunity Zone Target Area:



Southern border: W. Waugh Street

Western border: Shugart Road

Northern border: North Bypass

Eastern border: N Glenwood Ave

This encapsulates our target area, including much of the current industrial businesses and vacant properties that could be possible sites for new employers.

The process for designation could take approximately six months, depending on the application turnaround from the City and the

processing of the application by the State of Georgia. It should be considered and decided upon by the City Council before staff proceeds with the process. Once approved by the State, the opportunity zone will remain effective for 10 years. During that time, current and prospective employers can take advantage of the program.

CROWN MILL GENERAL STORE

The Crown Mill General Store was built about 1888 to service the needs of millworkers living in the surrounding mill village. After it closed as a general store, it was used as a woodshop and art gallery, among other things, before it was donated to the City of Dalton. It is currently vacant and in a state of disrepair. The structure should be renovated to house a neighborhood commercial use such as coffee shop/bakery.



NORTH DALTON RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT

Because the Crown Mill Historic District is small in area, another type of overlay district is necessary to cover the remainder of North Dalton. This new overlay district should focus on residential development and help guide redevelopment of the area. Dalton has a commercial overlay district currently, but not a residential overlay district. (See <https://www.whitfieldcountyga.com/eng/ZgDocs/DaltonGatewayCorridorOverlayDistReg.pdf>.)

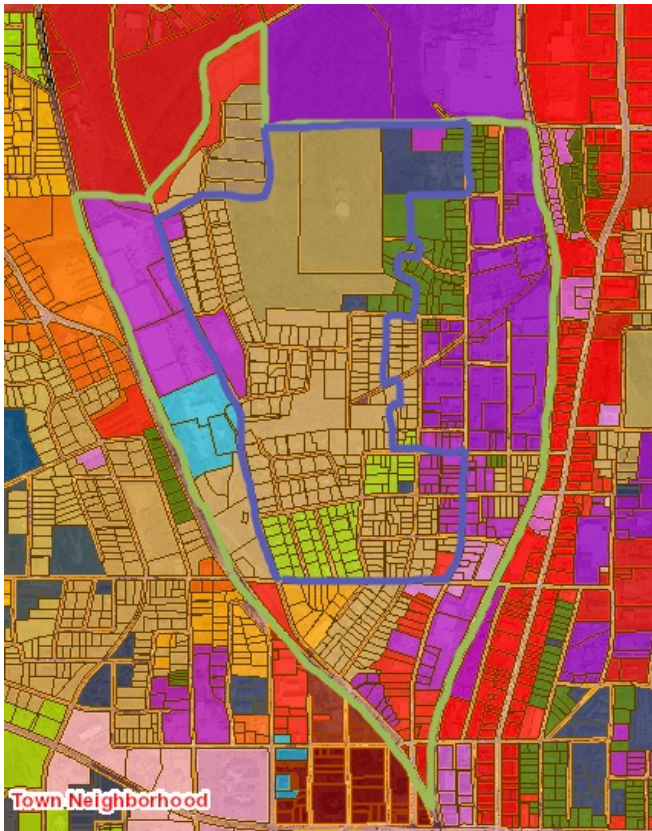
The residential overlay district is recommended to cover the entirety of the Crown Mill Village/North Dalton area. It should encourage development of a cohesive style in keeping with the neighborhood's character, but without certain preservation requirements critical for maintaining historic districts. There are three main types of overlay districts, but the main focus is the Design Review Board:

- 1) Design Review Boards
 - a) Either a board reviews plans prior to issuance of construction permits to ensure overlay design standards are met, or;
 - b) A board reviews only variance requests for design standards;
- 2) A Points System (a development would have to meet a certain number of points to proceed without a variance, where certain architectural features would give points while others could deduct points); and

- 3) Permissive/Restrictive (the overlay either allows or restricts different kinds of development that would normally be allowed in its zoning category).

As Dalton has previously used the Design Review Board type of overlay district that only reviews variances, it is suggested a similar type of overlay be used for the new residential overlay district. As part of the recommendations, the Design Review Board used for the currently existing Commercial Overlay District can also be used for this proposed residential district. Additionally, it is also suggested that the proposed residential overlay district be split into two tiers (similar to DeKalb County's Scottdale overlay (See https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/users/user3566/27-3.36_DIVISION_36._SCOTSDALE_OVERLAY%20as%20of%202-20-19.pdf). The first tier would include the areas closest to properties zoned industrial, listed as industrial as a future land use, or near a railroad, and would allow for a higher density than the rest of the district while also having more soundproofing requirements. The second tier would cover the rest of the target area and allow for a slightly higher density than currently allowed, but not as much as the first tier. The higher density bonus of both tiers is to reward developers for meeting the overly standards. A possible map of the overlay district is below and is based off the future land use GIS map:

(If within the Blue outlined area, the density would be lower. If within the green lined area and outside the blue lined area, the density would be higher. Note: The lines were drawn based off of the future land use map. Map is shown on the next page.)



NORTH DALTON TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT

The City of Dalton has redevelopment powers, which were enacted in 2014 by HB1102, and has established a redevelopment area. The intent of this being to carry out community redevelopment, to create tax allocation districts, to issue tax allocation bonds among other items. From there, the City initiated five Tax Allocation Districts (TADs), one of which was dissolved in 2016. The Redevelopment Area includes the North Dalton area, adjacent to the Crown Mill, but there has been no TAD created

for that district. The City should move forward with a TAD in the north Dalton area before any redevelopment occurs in order to take advantage of the funds that will be produced as a result of the increased property taxes after redevelopment.

A Tax Allocation District (TAD), also known as Tax Increment Financing, uses the increase in property tax revenue in a certain district to pay for variety of projects including, but not limited to, property acquisition for redevelopment, completion of transportation and mobility projects, including trail projects, beautification projects, and other general development in the area. The money can be used for pay-as-you-go projects, or can be bonded against to get money upfront for larger projects. The City of Dalton has four active TADs currently but should also initiate a TAD for the North Dalton area adjacent to the Crown Mill.

TAD #1 – Downtown (2015) – 521 parcels – 228 acres

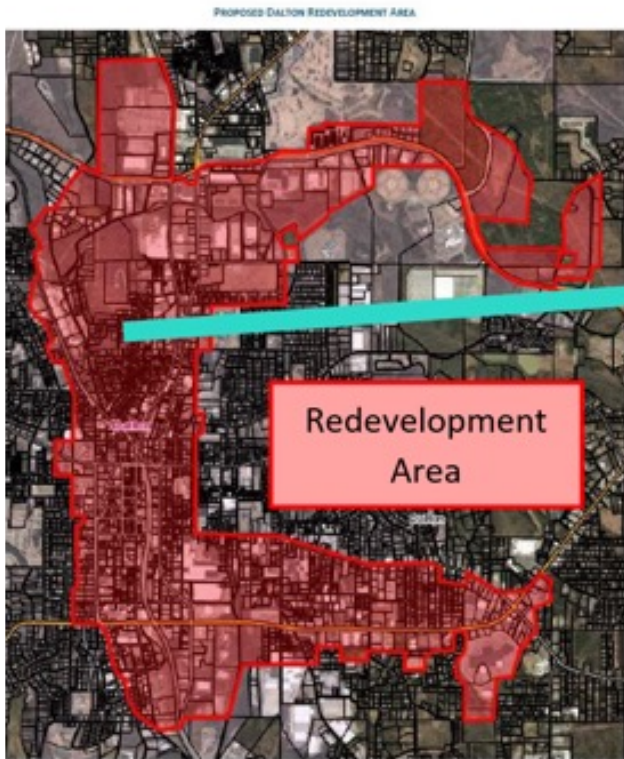
TAD #2 – Dissolved (2016) East Walnut Avenue Corridor (2015) – 93 parcels – 210.65 acres

TAD #3 – East Walnut Avenue Corridor (2016) – 94 parcels – 210.6 acres

TAD #4 – North Bypass near Heritage Point Park (2020) – 16 parcels – 203.2 acres

TAD #5 – West Walnut Avenue Corridor (2020) – 79 properties – 137.6 acres

Proposed TAD #6 – North Dalton Area (2022) – 363.3 acres



FOOTNOTE: Please note that any City of Dalton elected official, City employee or anyone on a board, commission or redevelopment agency would need to disclose any property interest they have in the proposed district and not vote on anything dealing with the proposed district. They also cannot acquire any voluntary interest in the district once it is in place. See OCGA 36-44-21.

ACTION STEPS / TIMELINE

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES:

- > **Create Urban Redevelopment Agency (URA)**
- > **Create State Opportunity Zone**
 - > Walk the area with the DCA representative and local economic representative to show them properties in the area that would meet the definition. This would help make the case for designation.
- > **Incentivize, if needed by passing on renovation costs to tenant on a delayed schedule or reduced rent in initial 3-years or other measures**
- > **Establish Crown Mill Village Historic District**
 - > For the Historic District, have the City Council take up the recommended historic district and hold the required public hearing. This would include mailing the appropriate letters to property owners and running ads in the local newspaper (See Dalton Code of Ordinances Chapter 58). Due to the fact the HPC has already made a recommendation, this could be completed within a few months.
- > **Explore North Dalton Residential Overlay District**
 - > For the Overlay District, there would need to be consensus of the City Council on whether to have such a district. It would also be suggested to involve community outreach in the decision

as the overlay would guide development within the Crown Mill District if passed. If there is consensus, then development of proposed allowed/encouraged features/designs and restricted/discouraged features/designs would need to be done along with the decision about what kind of overlay (Board, Points or Permissive/Restrictive) would be used. As noted in the scope of initiative, it is suggested that the currently existing Design Review Board be used for this proposed overlay.

> **Explore the creation of a new TAD for North Dalton**

- > The City of Dalton should meet with the County Commissioners and School Board members to discuss a partnership on this TAD. If an agreement can be made, an Intergovernmental Agreement should be signed by all parties.

MEDIUM-TERM PRIORITIES:

> **Fund Rehabilitation of Crown Mill General Store**

- > The project could be put out for bid through an RFP/Q process by the City of Dalton. If funds need to be acquired, the newly created URA could bond out the funding and private funds could be acquired through the partners already listed and/or sought after by the flooring companies.

> **Send Residential Overlay Recommendation to NWGRC for drafting of ordinance**

> This would involve working with the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and would likely take a few months. After development of the proposed ordinance, it would need to go through three public hearings (one before the Unified Planning Commission and two readings before the Dalton City Council). This would add additional months to the process. Once the City of Dalton moves to pass the recommendation after the second reading, the overlay district would go into effect. If the City decides to create a board rather than use the existing Design Review Board, additional time may be necessary to find people to serve on the board prior to the passage of the ordinance.

> **Form new TAD for North Dalton**

> Since the City of Dalton already has redevelopment powers (enacted 2014 by HB1102), and has established a redevelopment area, the first step would be to apply to the State Revenue Commissioner for a determination of the property tax increment base for the district, then appropriate projects for redevelopment should be identified (including those identified in the Mill-Line idea) and work towards getting a tax revenue bond for the identified projects should begin.

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES:

> **Use TAD to fund redevelopment projects in North Dalton**

> The City should begin its improvements to the North Dalton area. The TAD could be used to fund a combination of City-led projects including, but not limited to: Greenway infrastructure, underground utilities, road improvements, sidewalks, parking, signage, and streetscape.

> **Rehabilitate Crown Mill General Store**

> This would be a long-range option that would either take place during the construction of the new greenway trail or during the later phases of the trail's construction. Construction on these types of projects have typically lasted 18-24 months. Luckily, the City owns the property and the structure is sound.

BUDGET

Item	Cost	Frequency
Urban Redevelopment Plan		
URA Admin Cost	\$6,500	Annual expense
State Opportunity Zone		
Staff Time for processing applications (about 10 hours per year)	\$312.50 (assuming salary of \$65,000 per year of applicable staff person)	Annual expense
Crown Mill General Store		
Building Rehabilitation Costs	Approx. \$300,000	One-time expense
Crown Mill Village Historic District		
Mailing Costs [Figures obtained from Dalton City Administrator Andrew Parker]	\$150 plus staff time	One-time expense
Public Hearing and required legal advertisement [Figures obtained from Dalton City Administrator Andrew Parker]	\$150 plus staff time	One-time expense
North Dalton Residential Overlay District		
Mailing Costs [Figures obtained from Dalton City Administrator Andrew Parker]	\$150 plus staff time	One-time expense
Public Hearing and required legal advertisement [Figures obtained from Dalton City Administrator Andrew Parker]	\$450 (\$150 per each instance; 3 public hearings required) plus staff time	One-time expense

STATE OPPORTUNITY ZONES

Staff hours to oversee the opportunity zone are very small. Once active, it essentially only entails filling out employment verification forms. More specifically, signing off on the fact that the applicant is still operating within the City limits and is an active business. This can be done utilizing GIS, not even going into the field. Once signed, it is returned back to the applicant who coordinates with the State of Georgia to submit their form.

At maximum, it would take approximately 15 minutes to verify, sign, and return the verification form to the applicant. In a VERY busy City opportunity zone, it could take ten staff hours in one calendar year. That would be 20 applications processed. For a staff person making \$65,000 this would equate to an administrative cost of \$312.50 annually.

CROWN MILL GENERAL STORE

Projected costs for rehabilitating the building come to \$300,000. This number could change depending on the chosen tenant's specifications, but the structure appears to be sound and was recently given a new roof.

CROWN MILL VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Approximately \$300. (\$150 for ads for public hearing; \$150 for mailing costs) [Figures obtained from Dalton City Administrator Andrew Parker] plus staff time.

NORTH DALTON RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT

Approximately \$600. (\$150 per ad/public hearing (3 public hearings); \$150 for mailing costs) [Figures obtained from Dalton City Administrator Andrew Parker] plus staff time at the City, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission and Unified Planning Commission. Dalton and the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) have a service contract whereby NWGRC will craft all zoning ordinances for Dalton as part of the contract; the contract costs around \$40,000 per year. If the Georgia Conservancy is used as a partner, an additional \$7,000 - \$10,000 would be needed for the budget for their program.

TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT (TAD)

The Tax Allocation District funds itself. For a predetermined length of time, any growth in property tax revenue, or the increment, is given to the Redevelopment Agency for improvement projects in the district. Therefore, the City is forgoing this additional revenue for the City's General Fund. For a TAD in the City of Dalton, it is possible for Whitfield County and Dalton Public Schools to partner in the TAD and forgo their increment for this district for a set period. The City, County, and School System would continue to receive the property tax revenue they received before the TAD was established (hence why a base property tax amount is established with the State Revenue Commissioner at the onset of the TAD). If all three entities partner together for this TAD, the amount of funds available for redevelopment is substantially greater.

ANNUAL INCREMENT FOR EVERY \$25M IN REDEVELOPMENT

Entity	Millage Rate, net
City	2.208
County	7.312
City Schools	8.665
Total	18.185

Entity	
City	\$22,080
County	\$73,120
City Schools	\$86,650
Total	\$181,850

In this partnership scenario, for every \$25,000,000 increase to property values in the TAD, there will be \$181,850 available every year for improvements. If only the City participates, then the amount available for improvements is only \$22,080 per year. Without the partnership between the City, County, and Schools, the TAD produces only a fraction (12%) of what it could otherwise.

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

GENERAL FUND (Urban Redevelopment Plan, State Opportunity Zone, Crown Mill General Store, Crown Mill Village Historic District, North Dalton Residential Overlay District)

PROJECTED TAD FUNDS

FUTURE SPLOST FUNDS

PARTNERSHIPS / RESOURCES

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
(Urban Redevelopment Plan, State Opportunity Zone)

CURRENT AND POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS WITHIN THE PROPOSED AREA (State Opportunity Zone)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (Crown Mill Village Historic District)

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
(North Dalton Residential Overlay District)

UNIFIED PLANNING COMMISSION (North Dalton Residential Overlay District)

GEORGIA CONSERVANCY (they have performed similar reviews of residential areas to help design appropriate zoning and other guidelines and would cost around \$7,000 to \$10,000 if the City goes down this route) (North Dalton Residential Overlay District)

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY (TAD)

WHITFIELD COUNTY (TAD)

DALTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS (TAD)

GEORGIA CONSERVANCY: <https://www.georgiaconservancy.org/blueprints/communities> (see <https://www.georgiaconservancy.org/blueprints/calumet> for one example of a residential redevelopment)

DEKALB COUNTY TIERED SCOTSDALE OVERLAY DISTRICT ORDINANCE: https://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/sites/default/files/users/user3566/27-3.36_DIVISION_36._SCOTSDALE_OVERLAY%20as%20of%2020-20-19.pdf

MARIETTA INFILL OVERLAY DISTRICT ORDINANCE: <https://www.mariettaga.gov/DocumentCenter/View/352/Zoning-Ordinance---Division-71211---Residential-Infill-Development-Overlay-District-PDF?bidId=>

IMPACT

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN:

The impact of the URA is tied to its use. If utilized correctly, the potential impact of the URA is massive. It can be a funding source for major redevelopment projects. If not utilized in that way, its potential impact still exists, just not on such a high scale. If not utilized to float bonds, the URA can act as an oversight committee to evaluate the potential effectiveness of redevelopment activities within its service area.

STATE OPPORTUNITY ZONE:

With the establishment of tax credits per new job, it would be expected to incentivize current and potential employers to expand the workforce within the area. It also can be a tool that should attract startup employers into the area, since it can help reduce costs.

CROWN MILL GENERAL STORE:

A dessert shop along the newly established Greenway trail provides an opportunity for a cultural experience for patrons along the trail. It also provides an opportunity for Dalton to celebrate its history, as its patrons enjoy the new amenities that have been created. It would also serve as a unique amenity to add to its inventory within the tourism industry. Given its nature, a free museum exhibit would not generate revenue. However, it would provide a unique experience and add to the historic nature of the area and add to the user's experience on the Greenway trail.

CROWN MILL VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT:

The protection of the historic homes on Chattanooga Ave will be a cultural asset for the City for the future.

CROWN MILL RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT:

The allowed extra density should encourage development within the area, especially in conjunction with the greenway development and other redevelopment strategies. The architectural requirements and material limitations should also keep the look and feel of the Crown Mill area as redevelopment continues as a result of the extra density and other strategies. This extra development and look should help increase the values of the area, which should also help the proposed TAD gain funds to pay off any revenue / redevelopment bonds and provide funding for any appropriate redevelopment projects.

TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT (TAD):

As redevelopment occurs in the North Dalton area, the increment growth in the property tax revenue will allow the City to make aesthetic and infrastructure improvements in the area, which will inspire more improvements in the area. These efforts of the City, combined with redevelopment efforts of other stakeholders, will lead to a community that is thriving for current and future residents.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN:

Measures of success for the URA include projects that it can assist with financing and ensuring that the type of redevelopment projects within its service area align with the community's and elected officials' expectations.

STATE OPPORTUNITY ZONE:

A successful opportunity zone will bring new jobs and act as a tool to attract new employers into the area.

CROWN MILL GENERAL STORE:

Success would create an active commercial spot for the neighborhood and trail users that adds to their experience and quality of life.

CROWN MILL VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT:

Upkeep of the Historic Properties and increased value of those properties and the surrounding area.

CROWN MILL RESIDENTIAL OVERLAY DISTRICT:

As redevelopment of the residential properties in the area continues, the buildings following the architectural requirements and generally having a similar look and feel that matches the history of the area as well as the increase of property values generally across the district would be the most important measure of success.

TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT (TAD):

This TAD will be successful if the area redevelops quickly, but with quality projects that cause a halo effect. Secondly, the TAD will be successful if the City is able to partner with the County and the School system in order to have more funding for improvements in the area. Lastly, the TAD will also be successful if the City is successful in using the funds to improve the aesthetic and infrastructure in the area.





BIG IDEA 3

NONPROFIT STRATEGIES FOR REDEVELOPMENT



DESCRIPTION

In communities across the country, nonprofit development corporations have been used to revitalize blighted areas and reinvigorate private investment. Nearby examples include Chattanooga’s River City Development Corporation, which was responsible for the transformation of that City’s riverfront after decades of disinvestment, as well as Macon’s Historic Macon Foundation, which revitalized its historic downtown-adjacent neighborhoods by rehabilitating one single-family home at a time. The approach involves pooling resources to invest in areas neglected by the private sector, which lifts property values and attracts new, organic growth from other stakeholders.

Two nonprofit development corporations currently exist in Dalton and Whitfield County: the Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corporation (DWCDC), and the Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC). Founded in 2002, the DWCDC has historically been involved in issues related to affordable housing, including Permanent Supportive Housing for homeless individuals, and housing counseling services for first-time homebuyers or homeowners in danger of foreclosure. Founded by the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce in 2020, the FCDC has not initiated any programs yet, but has the potential to harbor many of the suggested projects below.

COMMUNITY-LED STRATEGIES

We want to ensure that revitalization efforts are culturally appropriate, knowledgeable, and understanding for individuals who currently live, work and play in the Crown Mill area. A key element of achieving this objective is to involve community organizations which can assist in the implementation and effectiveness of anti-displacement strategies and site-specific work. This area may be particularly sensitive to displacement as there are many low-income individuals, including a high percentage of renters, who are non-English speakers and unlikely to be well-connected to community and/or

governmental leaders. Therefore, it is crucial that the neighborhood has a voice to respond and address issues, ideas, and strategies proposed by others.

Community Navigators



To respect the diverse population currently residing within the neighborhood, we would like to see the application of community navigators under the new department housing the Director of Community Engagement (See Community Engagement Idea #2). This idea is expected to be implemented in the budget year 2023-2024. The community navigator positions should be hired in 2024 or 2025 to give the director ample time to facilitate community action planning.

Community Navigators can be paid through a grant program or City funds, including ARPA. Below is an example of how formalizing work via the department of Welcoming Atlanta did during the pandemic: "Welcoming Atlanta developed a Community Navigators program and hired 15 community navigators to work 20-25 hours per week at \$15 per hour (dependent on available funds). Each navigator focused on connecting Atlantans to the services and resources they needed, ranging from eviction defense to vaccinations to health programs, and credit building loans and financial literacy training and resources". (Tobocman)

Programming similar to this initiative has been successfully implemented within Dalton but came to an end with the closure of the Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership. The Promotoras de Salud program partnered with community members and residents to host programming, provide translation services, ensure people could visit doctors, and much more. Although this specific initiative is not healthcare focused as with the Promotoras, the programmatic aspects that connect citizens to needed resources are similar. Engaging these staff

under the new director position (mentioned in the Dalton Unidos proposal) would be ideal as it is City-led, driven by the community, and has proven to be of need within the community. Grants may be requested from the Small Business Administration as seen with Invest Atlanta Board. They have previously accepted a \$250,000 grant enabling the Georgia Micro Enterprise Network to establish their Community Navigator Pilot Program (Invest Atlanta).

Additionally, the Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corporation's housing counselor can work with affected households to find improved housing options, which could include affordable apartments or prequalification for a mortgage. The construction of new low-rise buildings in the neighborhood as outlined in this proposal, a percentage of which should be dedicated to low-income families, should ensure that no current resident is displaced by rising property values associated with gentrification. The housing counselor will help each household determine the best course of action and develop a plan for achieving their goals.

Facade Grants

Facade Grants should be implemented in order to assist homeowners in making repairs to their homes they may not be able to afford. Georgia's anti-gratuities laws prohibit local governments from providing facade grants to improve residential properties, but the FCDC could establish a facade grant program modeled after the DDDA program (described below) using private funds.



Grants are available from the Downtown Dalton Development Authority for the renovation of exterior facades. Funds can be used for renovations performed on an exterior facade including attached sign mountings that are not exclusive to the business, awnings, paint, brick repointing,

brick cleaning, window repair or replacement, removal of covering materials to expose transoms. Reimbursements are made for one-half (1/2) of the total project cost up to \$5,000. There is a maximum of \$5,000 per property every five (5) years.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

The primary objective of the nonprofit strategies is to enable existing community organizations to take ownership of specific projects, guide the scope and

direction of those specific projects, and facilitate meaningful conversations with those currently living in the community.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE



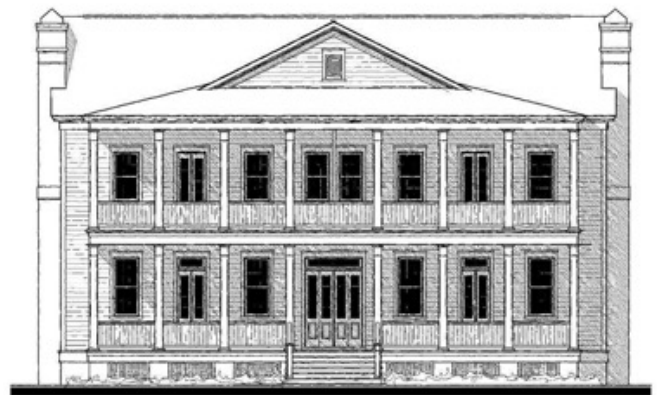
the property, tear it down in partnership with the City of Dalton, and replace it with a residential quadplex compatible with the neighborhood's style.

Georgia's Department of Community Affairs (DCA) awards CHIP grants each year to city and county governments, public housing authorities, and nonprofit organizations for the purpose of providing safe, decent, and affordable housing to eligible homebuyers. The grants provide up to \$600,000 for the construction of single-family homes, which are then sold to qualified low-income homebuyers at an affordable price.

414 CHATTANOOGA AVENUE

414 Chattanooga Avenue is the only industrial building on the street between downtown and Crown Mill. The building is currently used for storage, and its owners have indicated they are interested in selling it.

The Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corporation (DWCDC) should use a Community Home Investment Program (CHIP) Grant to purchase



Because DCA considers single-family homes to include condominiums in buildings with four units or less, construction of a four-unit building would qualify for the grant and make best use of the lot's space. The building depicted below would match the scale of the lot, the style of the neighborhood, and provide comparable sales for units in a condominium building.

A major benefit of CHIP grants is their ability to be converted into revolving funds. Revolving funds use seed money to initiate a succession of new construction and/or rehabilitation projects over an extended period. In the case of a CHIP grant, the initial \$600,000 would be used to construct the quadplex above. Its units would be sold, and the proceeds from those sales would be used to immediately develop another property in the neighborhood. In this way, the \$600,000 can be used over and over again to remove blight from the neighborhood while providing attractive, affordable housing to qualified buyers.

When evaluating who should receive a CHIP grant, DCA considers cash and in-kind contributions promised by partnering organizations. For a higher likelihood of success, the City of Dalton should offer the in-kind contributions of demolishing the existing structure and paving of the new building's sidewalks and parking lot. Cash could also be promised to the project by other community nonprofits, knowing that cash will ultimately establish a revolving fund to spearhead ongoing neighborhood revitalization.

814-898 NORTH HAMILTON STREET



814-898 North Hamilton Street is a gravel parking lot owned by Shaw Industries. The approximately 3-acre parcel is a prime location in North Dalton's commercial district and is currently underutilized as storage for tractor trailers.

We propose that Shaw Industries donate this lot to the Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC) to be used for construction of a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) apartment building of approximately 75 units. This apartment building would serve as a good example of new downtown-style residential development, and provide high-quality, affordable apartments to workers who need to live within walking distance of the factories abutting the neighborhood.

Established by the Tax Reform Act of 1986, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits provide developers with tax credits to subsidize new construction projects for rent to low-income households. Because the tax credits fund a significant portion of the developer's construction costs, the application process is highly competitive, and many developers are constantly seeking new projects with community support.

The Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) is a three-year program administered by the Department of Community Affairs and the University of Georgia, with the aim of helping communities around the state meet their housing and neighborhood revitalization needs. Dalton has a GICH team which has already completed the program, and which continues to meet and advocate for housing projects in the community.



Dalton's GICH team has the ability to award a letter of support to one LIHTC project each year, which provides coveted points in the tax credit's competitive application process. Dalton's GICH team should award its letter of support to this project, in conjunction with the promised transfer of land from the FCDC to the developer. These specific partnerships increase the likelihood of the tax credit being awarded, which will provide high-quality affordable housing for workers displaced by rising property values in the neighborhood.

26.30 ACRES ON THE NORTH BYPASS – PARCEL NUMBER 12-145-09-000



This 26.3-acre property has been owned by The John Willis Mashburn Charitable Trust since at least 2018. It is zoned R-2 and is part of unincorporated Whitfield County. The property is currently undeveloped, uncleared, and unutilized.

With a prime location between the North Bypass and proposed greenway, which places the property within walking distance of Haig Mill Lake, the Mill, and downtown Dalton, this property is an ideal location for a medium to high-density residential development. A luxury multi-family housing complex would be easy to market because of its position on the greenway, increase the population density of the area, and lead to more businesses opening to serve new residents. Along with the Hammond Creek multi-family development currently under construction, also located on the North Bypass, a development of this site would encourage more growth and development in this growing part of the county.

To make this project feasible, there would need to be interest from a developer and a source of capital

funding. The site across the street is currently for sale and there is some indication that there may be an interest by the owners in selling the subject property. A developer could partner with a nonprofit such as Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corporation which could assist in securing funding. The property would need to be rezoned and cleared to make this proposal a reality.

514 CHATTANOOGA AVENUE (SHRINERS BUILDING)



Currently, this .86-acre property is owned by the Shrine Club Dalton District, which has owned the property since 1969. The Shriners operate their club out of the building, which is incongruent with the surrounding neighborhood. It is zoned Transitional Residential.

The property would be better utilized as single-family residential housing, divided into three or four residential lots by reconnecting Metcalf and Alice streets, which were disconnected when the building was constructed. If the building were closed and demolished, then either single or multi-family residences could be built which would also increase the density of the area. The Shriners Club

could be relocated to an area more conducive to their purposes and allow this area to transition to a purely residential use. The Shriners Club should be approached to gauge the feasibility of moving to the recently vacated VFW Club building, which would allow this site to be redeveloped in a more suitable way.

501 NORTH HAMILTON STREET



501 North Hamilton Street is a commercial building on the corner of Hamilton and Tyler streets, the gateway to the North Dalton commercial district. Originally a grocery store, it was converted into a funeral home before closing and falling into disrepair.

With a highly visible location at the entrance of what could become a trendy expansion of downtown, like North Shore in Chattanooga or Block 79 on Dalton's eastside, this lot has the potential to catalyze growth in the North Dalton area with a new downtown-style, mixed-use development. Because of the building's former use as a funeral home, it should be torn down utilizing the City of Dalton's demolition services for blighted property owners. The building should be replaced with a two- or three-story mixed-use structure, with retail space on street level and high-quality residential apartments above.

If needed by the property owner, support in funding should be provided by the Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC), which should offer philanthropic or other funds in exchange for a rate of return lower than purely for-profit investors are likely to accept.



Revenue	
Apartments	\$15,300 per month (\$2 per sq/ft, 850) 1700 = \$15,300 per month
Retail Space	\$6,000 per month (\$1,200 per location/ 4 locations)
	Total Estimate: \$21,300 Per Month/ \$255,600 per year

Item	Costs
Demolition	Estimated: \$151,425
Architectural Design	Estimated: \$30,000
Permits	Estimated: \$6,000+
Building Costs	Estimated: \$3,800,000
	Total Estimate: \$3,987,425

LOCAL NONPROFITS (DWDC, FCDC)

Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corporation (DWDC)

- > Initiate discussions with the owners of certain site-specific initiatives identified below
- > Apply for CHIP and other grants
- > Use awarded funds to redevelop site-specific projects

Flooring Capital Development Corporation (FCDC)

- > Fundraise publicly and privately
- > Discuss implementing facade grant program, with process for businesses and individuals to apply
- > Work to revitalize site specific items mentioned below

TIMELINE

SHORT

- > 414 Chattanooga Ave site specific initiatives
- > Facade Grant Implementation
- > Apply for funding for Community Navigators

MIDDLE

- > 814-898 North Hamilton Street
- > 501 N Hamilton 12-200-24-000
- > FCDC Interactions
- > Create Training: Façade
- > Offer Training: maintenance, facade etc.
- > Dalton-Whitfield Community Development Corporation Interactions

LONG

- > Hire Community Navigators
- > 26.30 Acres on North Bypass Parcel Number 12-145-09-000
- > 514 Chattanooga Avenue (Shriners Parking Lot)

BUDGET

Item	Costs
COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS	
Accounting Services	\$7,200
Salaries and Wages	\$100,760.40
Events	\$2,000
Travel	\$500
401 HAMILTON	
Redevelopment	\$750,000- \$2 Million
501 HAMILTON	
Redevelopment	\$3 Million - \$4 Million
701 CHATTANOOGA AVE	
Development	\$750,000
Franchise	\$600,000 (provided by potential owner)
FAÇADE	
Grants for individuals	\$25,000 annually
Grants for businesses	\$50,000 annually
Training and Training development	\$ 10,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

CHIP GRANT FOR 414 CHATTANOOGA AVENUE

ARPA FUNDS FOR COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS

GRANT FOCUSED PROJECTS FOR COMMUNITY NAVIGATOR SUSTAINABILITY (SBA)

PRIVATE FUNDING FOR SITE SPECIFIC INITIATIVES.

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT generated through the nonprofits to support matching funds or redevelopment of site-specific initiatives

PARTNERSHIPS / RESOURCES

Founded by the City of Dalton and Whitfield County in 2002, the **DALTON-WHITFIELD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** serves to connect residents of Northwest Georgia with safe and affordable housing. Whether homeless, in need of temporary assistance, or looking to buy a home, it assists all residents in navigating a wide range of housing issues. This group would provide housing counseling and assistance to individuals looking for housing within the neighborhood.

THE FLOORING CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION is a rather new nonprofit focused on the redevelopment of blighted areas around Dalton. Within the scope of this proposal, the FCDC should assist with implementation of the facade grant program, as well as site-specific proposals detailed below.

IMPACT / MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Initiating a strategic and community-led initiative focused on the residents affected by the Mill-Line will allow displaced individual access to low-income housing options,

> Number of successful sites revitalized

> Number of agreements with local nonprofits (FCDC, DWCDC, CLILA)

> Implementation of community navigator programming

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SECTION

2



DALTON UNITED/UNIDOS

CHALLENGE QUESTION

A significant percentage of our residents do not feel empowered or feel that their voices are being heard. Dalton is a very diverse community, where 50.8%* of the population is Hispanic or Latino. Unfortunately, the majority of our Hispanic residents don't feel welcomed or included in the community. This reluctance is evident across all cultures, occupations, and socio-economic levels. How can we engage all sectors of the community to bring everyone to the table?

*data source: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=1600000US1321380>

OUR TEAM

Amanda Brown

Executive Director of the Creative Arts Guild, Dalton, GA

Aprille Moore

Deputy Sheriff Captain
Fulton County, GA

Carolyn Gibson

Public Information Officer
Habersham County, GA

Gabrielle Rogers

Director of Marketing, Growing Leaders
DeKalb County, GA

Gita Harden

Senior Credit Manager
Shaw Industries, Inc, Dalton, GA

Hasco Craver

Assistant City Manager
City of Newnan

John Minor

Attorney at the Minor Agency
Dalton, GA

Luzmila Sanchez

Owner of the Sanchez Agency
Dalton, GA

Marisa Kelley

President of Dalton-Whitfield NAACP
Dalton, GA

Ross Burger

COO of Southern Backing
Chatsworth, GA

Tara Pearson

Director of Customer Service
Thomasville, GA

THE BIG THREE

Margaret J. Wheatley said, "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." Community engagement takes a strategic approach to the relationships, communication, and interactions between community members and an organization(s) to influence outcomes for both positively. To address the residents of Dalton's concerns, team Dalton United | Unidos created three strategies to increase and impact the community and civic engagement. Utilizing drivers such as conversations, education, and collaboration amongst Whitfield County's residents, community leaders, government officials, and business owners. To accomplish these visions, all contributors will articulate a range of community outcomes that need to be addressed in local community engagement efforts through thought-out programs and led by a joint engagement playbook.

Recently, the City of Dalton came together with several local Hispanic business leaders to discuss new ways to create engagement between the local government and the Latino citizens throughout the community. "This is an initiative to engage the Hispanic community and allow them to serve as an advisory group to the city," said City Administrator Andrew Parker. "Since the city's population is close to 50% Hispanic now... we wanted to create an actionable step to engage the Hispanic community so that we've got real-time feedback from them on issues they need to have a stake in," stated Parker.

The Hispanic business leaders all agree that "bridging that gap and having a solid foundation for the things that are to come," said Zab Mendez, "is the core of the kickoff meeting concerning everyone's involvement in establishing increased community engagement on all fronts. Many citizens believe this is an area that has been lacking but is very enthusiastically optimistic that an opportunity has presented itself, where, as Mendez stated, "people see that we're here for you, and it's an opportunity for them to get engaged and be on some of these committees where we need to hear their voice as well." (City)

Dalton United | Unidos recommends the following to reduce barriers to engagement and strengthen community and civic engagement.

- First, incorporate a key position housed within the local government authority that will manifest an engagement playbook using THE BIG THREE to map out the best resolution Dalton will take to address the Hispanic citizens' concerns by uniting everyone in Whitfield County.
- Next, establish a 12-month program focusing on diversity, unity, and equity throughout the community and its partnerships to continue education. It will also drive more participation from all locals to increase engagement.
- Third, establish a committee to continue educating the community for a more diverse Dalton that focuses on the critical concerns of the Hispanic and all of Dalton's citizens.





BIG IDEA 1

BRIDGING THE GAP A COMMUNITY PLAN



DESCRIPTION

Across Georgia, many local governments are committing to advancing equity through engagement. For example, the City of Atlanta partnered with students and researchers from Georgia Tech to develop a community engagement playbook for the city. This playbook is what they considered the best practices for implementing effective and impactful civic engagement projects across different issues. The envisioned outcome of the playbook is to "increase the capacities of both community associations and service providers to collaborate to achieve authentic and impactful change that represents the needs of Atlantans. Written as a collection of resources, the playbook contains a variety of practices and strategies that can be picked up in part or whole depending on who's involved, community needs, and availability of time and resources." (Georgia Tech, 2018)

The City of Dalton has dedicated itself to unearthing resources that will help create a dynamic engagement program. To best serve this goal, we propose partnering with local organizations such as Whitfield County, the Coalition of Latino Americans (CLILA), Dalton State College, Dalton-Whitfield Joint Development Authority, and Believe Greater Dalton to develop the road map to success. As proper engagement programs and practices evolve, incorporating a Director of Community, Cultural Engagement, and Inclusion amongst the city staff to manage the agendas should be initiated.

Some of the outcomes of this position could be:

- > Putting into action the guidelines outlined in the City of Dalton-Whitfield County engagement manuscript.
- > Drive improved decision-making by government officials, community members, and all that represents Dalton to help identify unintentional blind spots and biases to increase civil activities and event turnout throughout the community
- > Act as a liaison to increase community trust in local government by offering more options for

community members to be seen and heard as well as to understand local government initiatives better

- > Act as a liaison to increase trust between community members by offering citizens more opportunities to interact with one another
- > Establish increased community awareness about existing and upcoming local resources and opportunities.

Whitfield County is home to a broad variety of residents, including non-English speaking residents and populations from many racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Many jurisdictions actively work to celebrate their multi-ethnic heritage and ensure that diverse communities are well-represented in policy discussions; the Director of Community, Cultural Engagement, and Inclusion would support this work.

A more complex definition of inclusive communities includes elements such as helping people thrive by encouraging civility, combating racism, welcoming and celebrating diversity, and promoting safe and affordable housing. It also encompasses the enabling

of participation in community services and local government, supporting fairness in access to justice and services, reducing violence, supporting social justice, encouraging awareness and understanding of opportunities/limitations, making residents aware of human rights commissions, and working for a more sustainable community for all residents. These values and principles will be the director's primary objective for equitable engagement and inclusion practices for the community of Dalton.

With the creation of the position, the City of Dalton will welcome its first Director of Community Engagement. The Director will support Dalton's commitment to inclusive excellence by coordinating and providing programming to the Dalton community, especially around racial equity and social justice issues. The successful candidate will be a critical partner and ally to those with various identities and life experiences, such as race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.



SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

Community engagement is imperative in communities such as Dalton. Many citizens are unaware of their community's numerous resources and avenues. As an advocate and strong voice for Dalton's community, the person chosen for this key position will promote sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants – including decision-makers. This will increase acceptance of decisions and community commitment to outcomes as local knowledge from diverse groups shapes and creates inclusive, effective solutions.

The City of Dalton relies on the cooperation and participation of all community members and organizations to encompass what it means to be a great place to live, work, and play! For example, Dalton State College's SAVE (Students Advocating for Volunteer Efforts) program is a group of "students committed to creating and hosting programs designed to identify and address social issues locally, nationally, and globally." Through recruiting, training, and connecting student volunteers to local agencies in need, the focus is on volunteer initiatives that will create and maintain community engagement at Dalton State College.

The Director of Community Engagement will provide strategy, leadership, and vision for the city of Dalton's development to respond successfully to the engagement needs and goals of the city. The director will work closely with all customer-facing city departments and local civic organizations to deepen community relationships and strengthen ongoing community projects. This key position will be responsible for planning, organizing, facilitating, and directing the community-based engagement activities for the City of Dalton. This employee will act as the main point of contact between school leaders, policymakers, and community organizations and will manage and lead the Community Engagement and Organizing team. The Director will be responsible for acting as the lead strategist for community organizing and engagement, assisting in effective decision-making and programmatic planning. This role will aid in developing marketing programs, cultural arts programming, grant programs, advocacy, revenue development, and cultural facilities to stabilize and encourage growth and engagement with Dalton's cultural community. For example, creating partnerships with organizations like the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO) to initiate voter registration events for the Hispanic community in Dalton. Additionally, the liaison will be responsible for leveraging existing resources and bringing additional financial resources to support initiatives related to employability and workforce development that are not supported by general funds.





The job description below details the requirements for the candidate to successfully perform the Director of Community Engagement's duties.

WORK EXPERIENCE

- > 5-7 years of work experience; track record of effectively leading a team; ability to point to specific examples of having developed and operationalized community-based strategies.
- > Bilingual preferred but not required.
- > Experience in community organizing and organizing models is preferred.
- > Unwavering commitment to family-centered programs and data-driven program evaluation.
- > Excellence in organizational management with the ability to build relationships, develop high-performing teams, and set and achieve strategic objectives.
- > Past success working with communities, with the ability to cultivate and establish new relationships.

- > Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage a wide range of stakeholders and cultures.
- > Strong written and verbal communication skills, a persuasive and passionate communicator with excellent interpersonal and multidisciplinary project skills.
- > Action-oriented, entrepreneurial, adaptable, community-centered, and innovative approach to organizing and community engagement.
- > Ability to collaborate effectively with diverse groups; and
- > Passion, idealism, integrity, positive attitude, mission-driven, and self-directed.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- > Develop, monitor, and lead a city-wide community engagement strategy and plan for the city.
- > Create and implement annual organization engagement goals to deepen engagement within local neighborhoods.
- > Develop, track, and manage relationships with a broad base of constituents (including faith-based institutions, public officials, local government agencies, social service agencies, business owners, and school leaders).
- > Manage the Community Engagement and Organizing team to implement the community engagement strategy and plan for the city.
- > Develop and implement programs and materials to promote the image and awareness of Dalton as culturally inclusive.

- > Prioritize issues affecting Dalton's cultural growth and forge partnerships to address them with corporate entities, community organizations, and other non-profit organizations.
- > Assess and prioritize city efforts to support cultural facilities and infrastructure needs.
- > City government liaison with the community and other organizations.
- > Work with staff to provide high-level strategic planning regarding resource development and cultural affairs initiatives in creating and implementing strategic plans for the programs.



POSSIBLE PROGRAMMING

Community engagement is both a process and an outcome. This entails how we do things, ensuring that communities have a say in decision-making, what we want to achieve, community building, or involvement. The three all-encompassing objectives for the Community, Cultural Engagement, and Inclusion Director are:

1. Decision-making provides communities opportunities to contribute to improved decision-making.
2. Relationship development involves building new relationships and/or improving existing relationships with or within communities
3. Capacity which builds on community strengths so that communities and individuals can enhance their ability to influence their physical, social, natural, economic, and cultural environments” (Stuart, 2016)

Honing the need that Dalton has, the model recommended programs are as follows:

- > Annual voter registration & increased participation initiatives
- > Community Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Balance training
- > Cultural-Heritage Pop-Up Educational Exhibits
- > Hispanic Small Business Venture grant programs
- > Employee Paid Time Off grants for eligible Employers
- > Impoverished neighborhood revitalization programs
- > Financial & Economic Literacy programs

RECOMMENDED STEPS & TIMELINE

SHORT-TERM

GETTING THE KNOW, BEFORE YOU GO

Planning and Preparation. Starting now, the key is to develop a community-led research and design process to build the engagement manuscript with input from residents, community associations, City department staff, and service providers. Together, a set of guiding principles and concrete initiatives that will facilitate genuine and inclusive engagement for all stakeholders of Dalton can be identified.

To begin the development of Dalton's engagement manuscript, action guides are used to help and support all stakeholders in understanding the initiative of increasing community engagement and the roadmap to its success while building partnerships with local groups and service providers. Since Dalton has kicked off these efforts by inviting Georgia Forward's- Young Gamechangers cohort in with the help of Believe Greater Dalton's steering committee, this committee can help facilitate a city-wide meeting and then begin establishing a board that can take this torch and keeps the flame burning. Once the selection is made, the advisory board will learn and apply information utilizing citizens, leaders, and organizations that generate new options and rigorously evaluate community engagement activities for effectiveness. They must be clear and open about the process and goals and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, views, and ideas expressed to the community members while ensuring each engagement effort has real potential to make a difference and that participants are aware of that potential.

Examples of such actions are:

- > Recruiting New Members
- > Creating an Action Plan
- > Action Planning Checklist
- > Creating a Stakeholder Interest Map
- > Forming an Alliance or Partnership
- > Storytelling
- > Creating an Outreach Plan
- > Creating a Memorandum of Understanding

MID-TERM

DEVELOP THE STORY

It is imperative that after you gain insightful information from the community and its leaders, to focus on creating inclusive and equitable programs with a broad reach through education, sound doctrine, and clear and defined strategies for bridging gaps. Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the process's design, organization, and convening serve a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.

Equitably incorporate diverse people, voices, ideas, and information to lay the groundwork for quality outcomes and democratic legitimacy. For many local governments, the pathway toward advancing equity

begins with training and facilitated conversations for staff and elected officials. This training helps build a common vocabulary and understanding of race equity concepts across the organization. Many types of diversity and racial equity training are offered by consultants and consulting organizations. Meeting with community members, leaders, and city officials to conduct a needs assessment that will clearly define initial training is necessary to educate community members about who they live, work, and play with.



Continue collaboration and shared purpose. Support and encourage participants, the City of Dalton, community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good by implementing the agreed-upon programs to enhance community engagement. Then, conduct an assessment after year one to determine the success of the current programs in place. Discussions of the possibility of exploring new ideas unconstrained by predetermined assumptions may be necessary.

LONG-TERM IT'S ONLY JUST BEGUN

Continuing to create a sustained engagement culture within the community of Dalton. Promoting a culture of participation with programs and institutions that support ongoing quality community engagement using strategic marketing is vital to the initiative's success. While this takes place and success is validated, now, the city can present to the council the need for someone to continue leading a much-desired directive of change with the possibility of growth in the future.

Take, for example, the City of Decatur, Georgia, which developed a strategic plan called the Better Together initiative. Decatur took a year working on a community-wide visioning process that included conversations across differences and a community engagement outreach component designed to include all residents, especially those who might not feel welcome at the table. As many as 800 citizens participated in one of the largest community engagement initiatives that had taken place in the city in years! This resulted in the development of the Better Together Community Plan. This plan includes a plethora of action items for individuals, organizations, and local government to undertake, individually and collaboratively, around focusing on:

- Expanding community participation and engagement
- Prioritizing racially-just community policing
- Ensuring the availability of diverse and affordable housing options

-
- > Cultivating a welcoming and inclusive environment
 - > Maximizing the use of public spaces
 - > Facilitating low-cost transportation options

Once the plan was accepted by Decatur's commission, 15 members were selected to serve on a newly created advisory board which included a high school student! Now, one of those advisory board members, Linda Harris, is the chief of civic engagement, education & communication for the city of Decatur, Georgia. She was the project manager for the Better Together Initiative and is now a staff liaison to the Better Together Advisory Board. (Harris, 2017)



BUDGET

BUDGET				
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4
Community Events <i>Estimated 1% of citizens @ \$50 each for 2 major events annually</i>	\$35,000.00	\$36,050.00	\$37,131.50	\$38,245.45
Community Focus Groups <i>Estimated 1% of citizens @ \$40 each for 3 focus group meetings annually</i>	\$41,640.00	\$42,889.20	\$44,175.88	\$45,501.16
Promo Materials/General Supplies	\$8,000.000	\$8,240.00	\$8,487.20	\$8,741.82
Recruitment				\$5,000.00
Director of CE Salary				\$79,500.00
Additional Benefits				\$20,000.00
	\$84,640.00	\$87,179.20	\$89,794.58	\$196,988.43

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

COALITION OF LATINO LEADERS (CLILA)

Coalition of Latino Leaders (CLILA) could underwrite these costs by having each industry represented in Dalton provide an agreed-upon dollar amount to assist the City of Dalton in funding an additional full-time position line item in their budget.

CITY OF DALTON GENERAL FUND

PROPERTY TAX REVENUE

SALES TAX REVENUE

THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

BELIEVE GREATER DALTON

Steering Committee volunteers

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

COALITION OF LATINO LEADERS (CLILA)

WHITFIELD COUNTY

DALTON-WHITFIELD JOINT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY,

LATINO AMERICAN ASSOCIATION (LAA)

GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF LATINO ELECTED OFFICIALS (GALEO)

DALTON STATE COLLEGE

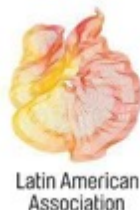
GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION (GMA)

GEORGIA TECH

CITY OF ATLANTA

CITY OF DECATUR



EXPECTED IMPACT

Creating this position for the community of Dalton will help bridge a gap that has been ongoing for far too long. The Latino community will be able to have an advocate that is dedicated to them and see that the City of Dalton is determined to eliminate the language and division barrier in our communities. By doing so, the impact expected will help develop and establish long-term trust with the assistance of our director between our community and the city. An increase in community engagement is expected as the director becomes intertwined in our existing and/or new community events and organizations and devotes themselves to building relationships with leaders and the public.

The position will bring awareness and the opportunity for direct and indirect communication between our city and all diverse communities, allowing everyone to be heard and involved in many different aspects. As the Director of Community

Engagement, Cultural Engagement, and Inclusion enhances trust, a sense of “Dalton Pride” will form. More families and young graduates/professionals will be retained, allowing them to continue to have and expand a great multi-ethnic, multi-generational community in the city of Dalton. Therefore, creating not just economic growth but, most importantly, unity!

Other areas of impact anticipated to increase in our Hispanic engagement/participation:

- > Voting
- > Board Members
- > City Employees
- > Community Events (Hispanic & non-Hispanic)
- > Business Chamber Members

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Success will be measured by the advisory board, the Director of Community, Cultural Engagement and Inclusion, the City of Dalton Human Resource department, and community organizations by surveying the participation of our Hispanic community, including a comparison of previous, post, and future involvement in events, chamber members, Latino American Association, voter turnout rates compared to previous years, the Coalition of Latino Leaders, and all other stakeholders.

This survey will export more in-depth information concerning the community's health (how well it is performing). Insight into the following key metrics will help determine the usefulness of the director's positions.

1. Program engagement growth rate
2. Community member churn rate
3. How effective the board and the director's campaigns & programs are.
4. Most active members and member-led subgroups in your community

Using this data to track community engagement via metrics associated with things like the retention rate of community members and stakeholders willing to return (over time) or new engagement contributors indicates that they feel connected with the community and are interested in adding value and content traction. "By digging into more than just vanity metrics (numbers that make you look good outwardly, but that don't help you understand community performance or inform future community-growth strategies), you move into a realm of engagement depth. With engagement depth, you get to look at more revealing and useful metrics like how many long-term community members you have; who responds to community surveys with positive (or constructive) feedback; who refers your community to others." (Mobilize)



BIG IDEA 2

IN D.U.E. TIME:
DIVERSITY, UNITY, AND EQUITY



DESCRIPTION

In D.U.E. Time is a 12-month program that will focus on diversity, unity, and equity. Believe Greater Dalton will hire a consultant that specializes in facilitating DEI training and fierce, open, and productive conversations around these topics. While local volunteer resources may be available to lead this consulting role, we really feel that having someone specifically trained in this capacity - potentially not from the community of Dalton, would be the best option - so the leader of this year of work comes to Dalton with fresh eyes, without personal opinions or relationships that might affect the process.

A minimum of 12 community members will be chosen to participate in this program. The selection process will include an open house, an interview, and finally, a nomination. This group should be culturally and socioeconomically diverse, and each member should be committed to full attendance and participation in order to be selected. There will be a selection committee led by the Unity initiative of Believe Greater Dalton and including the hired consultant.

Once the group is selected, the program will be launched. Each month the group will travel to various locations in our community and be given a theme for the day. The curriculum will be developed through a collaborative effort between the hired consultant and the Unity committee with the intention of creating consistency in community engagement and participation, and expressing how unity for all ethnicities is critical to the City of Dalton. These gatherings will offer a vehicle for fierce and important conversations as well as opportunities to learn from and with each other. Each session will end with a shared meal.

In addition to the minimum of 12 people selected, Believe Greater Dalton and the Creative Arts Guild, as the community's arts partner, will work together to hire a playwright artist-in-residence to be a part of the group and participate alongside everyone else in the program, but whose responsibility will

be to document the stories and the issues shared. Ultimately the goal is to create a play that has vignettes or a series of stories gathered and lessons learned through the process and conversations of each session. At the beginning of each session, the playwright will present the writings that they created after the previous meeting and perhaps have a couple of the members do a reading. This opening to the session will serve as a recap of the session prior and will also give the group an opportunity to "workshop" the scene/monologue/dialogue/vignette and provide feedback and responses to the works being created. At the end of the 12-month program, the playwright, in collaboration with the group, will have a performance art piece that can use the stories and experiences from the group to invite conversations and, ultimately, social change in our community. Once the work is completed, there will be a public performance offered with a talkback following. The created performance work can also go on tour to local churches, businesses, education facilities, etc. to allow the conversations and topics explored to be shared and hopefully have a larger impact on the community. Each performance will have a talkback session after, led either by the consultant (at least for the first public performance, the consultant should be present) or one of the group members that participated in the year-long In D.U.E. Time program.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

Dalton's In D.U.E. Time will feature a group of 12 culturally, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse community members and business leaders who will meet monthly for 12 months to have themed discussions and share a meal. Themes will focus on areas such as immigration, stereotypes, differences, commonalities, etc. These monthly meetings and this program will be held at a variety of businesses, community gathering spaces, and possibly even a few personal homes of individuals in the group or others in the community and led by a hired consultant that is experienced in these kinds of discussions. While Dalton may have people within its own community that could lead this process, we feel it is imperative that this is a highly trained and experienced outside resource and a neutral party with no preexisting relationships and feelings about the Dalton community.



An experienced playwright will be hired to work and participate with the cohort as a member of the group and will take the stories shared during the

monthly gatherings and create small vignettes that will be acted out before each month's discussion. Feedback from the group will be given and adjustments will be made to the script as needed/desired. At the end of the 12 months, the playwright will compile all stories from the cohort and create a one-act play/storytelling for social change that will open for the community at large in addition to being marketed as a training/discussion starter for businesses and groups. After each show, there will be a moderated talk back.

It is highly recommended that Community Heart and Soul is considered as an element of this process for maximum community impact. Community Heart and Soul and its "Imagine, Connect, Plan, and Act" process could also be considered in collaboration with the Destination Dalton group of Young Gamechangers as the stories gathered could support both civic engagement and community pride/storytelling/marketing. <https://www.communityheartandsoul.org>

In D.U.E. Time applications will be open to every member of the community and a minimum of 12 will be selected to participate in the first cohort. This could potentially be a program that graduated classes annually modeled around other leadership programs with a focus on community unity. The action steps below list how these participants are identified and invited.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS & TIMELINE

1. GATHER THE TEAM THAT WILL LEAD THE PROGRAM DESIGN AND APPLICANT SELECTION PROCESS

- a. Believe Greater Dalton's Unity committee will select and hire a consultant
- b. Work with the Creative Arts Guild to source a playwright artist-in-residence
- c. Gather community members that should inform this process and who might be able to participate in panels for each session

2. SESSION PLANNING

- a. Pick a date, time, and location for each month
- b. Select a theme that will be discussed for each dinner. As a reference for selecting themes, it is recommended that the consultant and the planning committee review the results of the needs assessment conducted by the Educate for a More Diverse Dalton group.
- c. Select speakers for the discussion and determine the educational outcomes

3. GATHER THE FIRST COHORT/CLASS FOR IN D.U.E. TIME

- a. Host-Open House/Interest meeting for all community members, and business leaders who are interested in participation. It may take a few different meetings/sessions to truly get the word out. Include a variety of locations in

order to support the diversity desired for the most successful group.

- b. Open nominating process for people of influence to recommend community members, business leaders, stakeholders, etc. Nominated parties will then have to voice personal interest and fill out an application.
- c. Conduct outreach to neighborhood residents to inform them about the program and involve them in the effort.
 - i. Door-to-door conversations
 - ii. Residential Infographics
 - iii. Social Media Posts
 - iv. Partnership Marketing
 - v. Church announcements, service clubs, schools, probation officers

4. MAKE FINAL SELECTIONS FOR THE FIRST CLASS OF IN D.U.E. TIME

- a. Review applications and make selections for those applicants that will progress to enter the interview process
- b. Hold interviews that will be led by the Unity committee of Believe Greater Dalton to get to know the applicants and to understand what issues are important to them.

-
5. **CONDUCT THE YEAR OF IN D.U.E. TIME PROGRAMMING**
 6. **CONCLUDE WITH CELEBRATION AND PUBLIC PERFORMANCE OF ONE-ACT PLAY**
 7. **TAKE THE ONE-ACT PLAY ON A COMMUNITY TOUR. COLLABORATE WITH THE DESTINATION DALTON GROUP TO USE THIS ONE-ACT TO**

TELL THE STORY OF DALTON. See Colquitt, Georgia's Swamp Gravy for reference. <https://www.exploregeorgia.org/colquitt/arts-culture/performing-arts/swamp-gravy>

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE FINAL PERFORMANCE

1. **POTENTIAL PORTABLE SOUND STAGING/ ENTERTAINMENT AREA**
2. **CONVENIENT PARKING AVAILABLE**
3. **ADEQUATE LIGHTING**
4. **PROPER SEATING OF ATTENDEES**
5. **ROOM FOR FOOD AND WAIT STAFF**
6. **VENUE TO BE WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE**

SAMPLE PROGRAM TIMELINE

OCTOBER 1, 2022

- > Believe Greater Dalton's Unity Committee selects and hires a consultant
- > Creative Arts Guild helps to advise a selection process for a playwright in residence



NOVEMBER 20, 2022

- > Send back the final action plan of the program, and calendar of events based on the recommendations.
- > Mass market 1st annual In D.U.E. Time for optimum participation and diversity.

OCTOBER 15, 2022

- > Begin recruitment efforts for community leaders and volunteers for the selection committee through open house/information sessions and nomination.

DECEMBER 1, 2022

- > Make final sections for the first-class members of In D.U.E. Time

NOVEMBER 1, 2022

- > Believe Greater Dalton works with community needs assessment created by the Educate for a More Diverse Dalton group to gain feedback from the community on issues, programs, and educational needs, to discuss at the dinners.
- > Begin creating the vision and goals and validating the action plan for In D.U.E. Time based on the feedback of the planning team and community.

JANUARY 20 - DECEMBER 20, 2023

- > Hold monthly dinners.

JANUARY 20, 2024

- > Finalize the One-Act and Plan Public Performance and Community Tour

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

COALITION OF LATINO LEADERS (CLILA)

LATINO AMERICAN ASSOCIATION (LAA)

BELIEVE GREATER DALTON

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

THE CITY OF DALTON

CREATIVE ARTS GUILD

LOCAL BUSINESSES/CIVIC CLUBS

ANNUAL ESTIMATED BUDGET

Dinners	\$3,000.00
Consultant	\$12,000.00
Materials	\$1,200.00
Playwright	\$7,200.00
Traveling Production	Sponsorship of \$1,200 for each performance to cover the cost of actors (estimated 6 people) and minimal stage/script setup - Sponsorship could come from a business who has asked the group to come and perform or a community sponsor
Misc.	\$2,500.00
TOTAL	\$27,100.00

EXPECTED IMPACT & MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The goals of this initiative are to have various members of the community come together and have meaningful discussions, in order to educate the members of Greater Dalton on diversity, unity, and equity, to share the lessons learned with our greater community through theatrical performance and community discussions, and - in the long term - help community members understand and respect

each other and ultimately unite. The measure of success for In D.U.E. Time will be seen in more civic engagement and participation from the Latinx community, as well as more diversity, unity, and equity naturally represented and demonstrated at community events, and other civic engagement opportunities.



BIG IDEA 3

EDUCATE FOR A DIVERSE DALTON

SHARING TO GROW TOGETHER



OVERVIEW

Dalton's history as the "floor covering capital" of the world is tied to certain industry skill sets and the laborers trained to manage the process of producing floor coverings globally. A labor shortage in the industry in the 1980s led to increased immigration to fill this labor void (Patton, Randall L., Carpet Capitol, 1999). Much of the labor shortage was filled by Hispanic/Latino persons. Thereafter, the Hispanic/Latino population has been steadily increasing as a percentage of the population from the late 1980s to today.

The story of Dalton, then, is also largely a story of the Hispanic/Latino community in Dalton. While this large influx of Hispanic/Latino immigrants into Dalton proved crucial to the success of the carpet industry, some residents were less than hospitable to the influx of laborers and their families.

In April 2022, a panel of Hispanic and Latino community leaders met with a select group of Young Gamechangers to more fully describe the identified barriers to civic engagement. These community members described a community of persons that remains under-represented among the City of Dalton's elected and appointed offices, as well as the Whitfield County School System, and numerous private non-profit and civic clubs/organizations.

Subsequent conversations with Hispanic and Latino community leaders pointed to the efficacy and the need for a Steering Committee composed of stakeholders from across the community to identify issues within the Hispanic/Latino community, which would then seek solutions to these issues. The steering committee will include prominent representation from the Hispanic/Latino community and will also include current and relevant community groups. Bringing together a variety of organizations and individuals will result in fresh conversations, the

fruits of which will invigorate civic engagement and involvement within the Hispanic/Latino community, as individuals see other people they know serving on the committee, and as community concerns are addressed.

With over 200 Hispanic and Latino businesses in Dalton, and with Hispanic and Latino individuals comprising over half of the population of Dalton, it is past time for the Hispanic and Latino residents to become more civically engaged. By being positioned alongside the community business, educational, and social structures, since the panel will include representation from among those entities, the Hispanic and Latino community will gain a direct voice in identifying and remedying pertinent concerns.



DESCRIPTION

Utilizing the existing infrastructure put in place through the Believe Greater Dalton initiative to bolster "Community Pride," team Dalton United | Unidos believes that the development of a committee that is focused on issues and concerns within the Hispanic and Latino community will positively affect the Hispanic and Latino community members. This will concurrently increase representation by members of the Hispanic/Latino population within numerous locally elected and appointed organizations, including but not limited to city councils, boards, commissions, and authorities.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

The Educate for a Diverse Dalton program will work to identify members of the community that recognize the benefit of and has a certain interest in increasing the engagement of Hispanic/Latino persons. Supporters of the program will undertake a logical process, which may include the following:

1. Clearly identify the challenges and opportunities.
2. Determine the key audiences.
3. Determine what those audiences currently know or perceive.
4. Determine how each audience receives information.
5. Establish measurable objectives for each audience.
6. Define key messages for each audience that showcase that everyone is welcome here.
7. Determine the communication activities to deliver those messages.
8. Decide what resources are necessary to complete each activity.
9. Establish a timeline and responsible party for each activity.
10. Evaluate whether the objectives have been met.

ACTION STEPS/ TIMELINE

SHORT TERM

- > Identify a steering committee of volunteers and paid staff (Believe Better Dalton, City of Dalton, etc.) willing to organize the partnership, document activities, and solicit members/partners.
- > Members of the Educate for a Diverse Dalton program may include:
 - > Business Community
 - > Non-profit Sector
 - > Local Governments
 - > Chamber of Commerce
 - > Civic Clubs
 - > Faith-based Institutions
 - > Public and Private Schools
 - > Area colleges and universities and student organizations
 - > Athletic Organizations (i.e., minor league soccer, etc.)
- > Develop a regular meeting schedule with an appointed leadership structure to include a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary/Treasurer.
- > Gather data for future use in targeted campaigns. Opportunities for education and advocacy may differ for different persons and data sets.
 - > Population
 - > Housing
 - > Race/Ethnicity
 - > Foreign-Born Population
 - > Crime Statistics
 - > Age
 - > Citizenship
 - > Employment

- > Income
- > Poverty
- > Education
- > Property Value
- > Homeownership
- > Transportation
- > Health
- > Others

- > Identify potential funding partners.
 - > City of Dalton
 - > Whitfield County
 - > Chamber of Commerce
 - > Believe Greater Dalton
 - > Private Industry
 - > Non-Profit (i.e., Catholic Charities, etc.)
 - > Dalton State College
 - > Creative Arts Guild

MID-TERM

Identify and categorize needs.

After speaking with members of the community, there will likely be a wide range of opinions and feedback to sort through. To help make sense of the varying comments and thoughts, the group should take the time to identify and categorize the information that was shared.

Perceived needs. A perceived need is what an individual feels their needs are. Generally, these are opinions and concerns, though it is important not to dismiss them out of hand. For instance, an individual might perceive their central need to be safe in their community, but they may have

yet to think through the causes of those safety concerns and how they could be resolved. Does their community need more police funding? A neighborhood watch program? More homeless center services?

Expressed needs. If an individual has voiced a need prior to the assessment, it is known as an expressed need. For example, if someone puts in a complaint to the city about potholes and poor street conditions, there will be a record of that need existing that can be helpful in the future.

Absolute needs. Absolute needs are essentials necessary for basic survival such as food, shelter, and clean water. Given their importance, if it is found the community has an absolute need, it should likely become a priority.

Relative needs. There are some needs that are not technically necessary for survival but are still considered essential. For instance, the community may be able to function without a library, but a lack of one can cause significant problems for community members who rely on its free resources for educational and professional purposes.

While it is worthwhile to consider the needs of individual community members, the group will likely also realize that there are some issues the organization will be better equipped to address than others.

Assess the partnership's capacity to address the identified needs.

It is important to note that with limited resources, the partnership will need to prioritize certain needs. Considering the partnership's available resources, as well as the desired solution the need requires, there typically exists three solution types:

Policy change. Policy changes are laws that dictate community members' behavior. Seeking a policy change will require the partnership to influence legislators to change or repeal a law or implement a new one.

Systems change. A systems change is a more thorough rearrangement of the community that fundamentally changes the current status quo. For example, today it is the status quo to not litter, whereas several decades ago this was not the case. System changes can often be brought about by a policy change.

Environmental change. Environmental changes are often the most complex as they involve changing physical, social, or economic factors in the community. A physical change often involves creating or removing a physical structure, social changes target current patterns of behavior, and economic changes create financial incentives to behave a certain way.

Determining which of these solutions is the most achievable for the Educate for a Diverse Dalton campaign will depend on the specific issue, the partnership's approach to it, and the current available resources.



Take a book, leave a book: Free Pop-Up Community Libraries

LONG TERM

1. CREATE OUTREACH MATERIALS

Creating a compelling message. Whether the issue only impacts a few people or is something the entire community experiences, the messages must work to get as many people invested in the campaign as possible. This may be accomplished by creating a message that is focused, clearly explained, and relevant.

Providing accessible educational materials.

Often, members of the community may be aware of or even impacted by an issue, but don't know the details behind it. Ensure that the partnership has a variety of educational resources available that can provide information on what the issue is, why addressing it is important, and why the plan for addressing it is the best course of action.

Presenting immediate next steps. After engaging with a message from the partnership, what action(s) should community members take? Whenever a message is created to rally support, include an actionable next step at the end. This can be to get in touch with an elected official, subscribe to an organization's mailing list, attend an event or even just share a post on social media to raise awareness.

2. INITIATE COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION EFFORTS

Initiate and plan for community mobilization efforts. Bolstering "community pride" within Latino communities will require authentic, consistent, and purposeful engagement. In planning for these mobilization efforts it is important to consider the unique interests and challenges of this community and design customized strategies to reach them.

ANNUAL ESTIMATED BUDGET

Advertising such as Television and Radio	\$5,000.00
Publications and Mailings	\$10,000.00
Print Ads	\$5,000.00
Online and social media	\$1,500.00
Special Events	\$5,000.00
Misc.	\$2,500.00
TOTAL	\$29,000.00

FUNDING SOURCES

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CITY OF DALTON

BUSINESS COMMUNITY

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

UNITED WAY

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS,
COLLEGES, AND UNIVERSITIES**

**WHITFIELD COUNTY FAMILY
CONNECTION**

EXPECTED IMPACT

By educating members of the Dalton community about local, state, and federal immigration policies and programs, it can be expected that the community will begin to see increased engagement in the following ways:

INCREASED PARTICIPATION BY HISPANIC COMMUNITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- > Elected offices (i.e., City Council, County Commission, Board of Education, etc.)
- > Appointed offices (i.e., Planning Commission, Downtown Development Authority, etc.)

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- > Chamber of Commerce (i.e., board and committee appointments)

- > Industry Groups (i.e., Business Network International, etc.)

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

- > Volunteer boards (i.e., United Way, Boys & Girls Club, etc.)

INCREASED PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC GROUPS

- > Rotary Club
- > Kiwanis Club
- > Pilot Club
- > Others

INCREASED VOTER TURNOUT

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Improved perception of the community's acceptance of Hispanic/Latino persons measured through the data collected by the Educate for a Diverse Dalton partnership, as described herein.

Annual focus group interviews with identified stakeholder groups, either involved or uninvolved with the partnership and campaign, will supplement the quantitative data gathered and analyzed by the group.

The Dalton and Whitfield County citizenry, and the various institutions that encompass the "community," including public, business, civic, educational, and non-profit sectors will recognize the value and enroll members of the Hispanic/Latino population within the fabric of what makes the City of Dalton a wonderful place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Team Dalton United | Unidos and the 2022 cohort of Young Gamechangers would like to thank and acknowledge the following that helped bring this year's BIG IDEAS to the City of Dalton.

Georgia Forward

Georgia Municipal Association (GMA)

- > Cindy Eidson
- > Sadie Krawczyk

Carrie Barnes, Georgia EMC

Kat Cannella, Coldwell Banker

Young Gamechangers Community Engagement Panel Participants:

- > Jackie Killings, Co-Chair
- > Viviana Ramirez, Co-Chair
- > Manuel Meza
- > Fernando Paniagua
- > Tom Pinson
- > Tyree Goodlett
- > Eunice Miranda
- > Jaime Rangel
- > Purvi Patel
- > Beth Morrison

Dalton-Whitfield County's Host Committee for their support and guidance:

- > David Aft, President, Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia
- > Jason Mock, President & CEO, Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- > Allyson Coker, Project Manager, Believe Greater Dalton

- > Jevin Jensen, Chairman, Whitfield County Board of Commissioners
- > Jackie Killings, President & Co-Founder, K & M Technologies
- > Zab Mendez, Senior Vice President, North Georgia National Bank
- > Andrew Parker, City Administrator, City of Dalton
- > Viviana Ramirez, Owner and Developer, Block 79
- > Chris Shiflett, Chairman, SPLOST Project Committee

Dalton-Whitfield County community members for their guidance:

- > America Gruner, Founder and President at Coalicion de Lideres Latinos INC (CLILA)
- > Jose Morales, CLILA



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SECTION

3



THE DALTON BELIEVERS

CHALLENGE QUESTION

In 2019, 70% of Dalton-Whitfield County's K-12 students were considered Economically Disadvantaged. How can the community better support this student population to improve educational outcomes and give them the tools they need to succeed?

OUR TEAM

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Preface

INTRODUCTION

Dalton/Whitfield County is a community rich in creativity, collaboration, resources, non-profits, industry, invested neighbors, community care, diversity, big ideas, and helping hands. As with many communities, Dalton/Whitfield County has areas in which strategic alignment of stakeholders and resources can benefit those who are disadvantaged, particularly K-12 students. Many of Dalton/Whitfield County's community members live in poverty and experience subsequent socio-economic issues that impact students' ability to achieve necessary outcomes and obtain access to the tools to help them succeed. The socio-economic issues affecting families also impact students' ability to achieve strong educational outcomes and access to community resources.

The Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) Whole Child model affirms that for students to reach their full potential, schools and communities must "acknowledge and address non-academic factors that impact academic outcomes while expanding learning opportunities" (Georgia Insights, n.d.). Specifically, the GaDOE Whole Child model addresses five key tenets of educating the whole child - Healthy, Safe, Engaged, Supported, and Challenged. The Young Gamechangers Education Team's work and recommendations have been guided by a scaled-up version of this framework designed to address the whole family. We believe that if Dalton/Whitfield County is to truly address the issue of improving learning outcomes for the 70% of its student population identified as economically disadvantaged, the community must address the needs of not only students but of their families and the greater cycle of poverty many families find themselves unable to escape.

Economically disadvantaged students experience issues of accessibility to resources, education, and career readiness-related activities, often limiting their ability to achieve at a higher level. Parents across Dalton/Whitfield County's two school systems often experience a disconnect from each other and from the community and resources made available by their children's schools. With input from all members of the Young Gamechangers program, the Dalton Believers have developed three key strategies based on the needs and gaps identified by various community stakeholders. Our three key strategies, structured by near-term, mid-term, and long-term

action steps, will increase the opportunity for economically disadvantaged students to leverage the strengths, resources, and contributions of all Dalton/Whitfield County's community members. These actions will allow those assets to flow more freely wherever they are most needed, ensuring more equitable access to resources needed for academic and professional success for all students. These three ideas are designed to allow the community more significant opportunities to rally around our school systems, which are often stretched thin to manage crises blocking students' pathways to academic success.

Our team interviewed local educators, community members, business and industry representatives, and service providers. Their commentary provided a general consensus on these three critical needs for moving towards that vision. These three ideas expand and build upon efforts that have already begun locally. They call on the Dalton/Whitfield community to direct its resources into some of its best efforts so far: to grow those efforts and invest in three actions Daltonians are already championing and supporting. They are about equitable accessibility, enacting our best practical plans to fill significant gaps identified by our community, and taking a proactive, whole family approach to the needs of Dalton/Whitfield County's disadvantaged students. What makes a dream become a reality for those students is developing a well-built and sustainable platform for success based on addressing the gaps recognized by their community via strategic ideas that are deliverable and relevant.

The Dalton Believer's three ideas address the challenges identified by individuals representing many public and private sectors, including education, business and industry, economic development, locally elected officials, residents, and other community stakeholders. The recommendations leverage existing assets, expand existing partnerships, and strategically align resources and funding streams, strengthening Dalton/Whitfield County's ability to support their future talent pipeline and the next generation of residents by addressing the barriers that face their most affected student population.

SUMMARY

The Dalton Believers were tasked with addressing how the community can support the large population of Dalton/Whitfield County's K-12 students who are economically disadvantaged while improving educational outcomes and providing students with the tools to succeed, both academically and professionally. Interviews with a wide range of key local stakeholders led the team to identify three strategic ideas to address the posed challenge:

- > First, there is an immediate need to strengthen the relationship between existing industry and the K-12 education system, promote local career opportunities, and enhance career readiness activities geared toward targeted student populations through robust strategic workforce development initiatives driven by a Workforce Development Director.
- > Second, there is an opportunity to build on the already-established work of the Dalton Neighborhood Initiative, a collaborative,

community project that's seen wide-ranging support and investment from all corners of the local economy. The idea expands this model across the entire county, establishing additional, strategically located Neighborhood Opportunity Centers (NOCs) throughout Dalton/Whitfield County, creating one-stop shops for access to programming, resources, and student support.

- > Third, there is an opportunity to address a prominent barrier that impacts students' ability to access much-needed resources: transportation.

Dalton/Whitfield County, enriched with industry and strong partnerships, is positioned to develop a stronger workforce pipeline by supporting its disadvantaged student populations, generating accessibility to significant local needs, such as transportation and community resources, and becoming a best practice example for other communities who are addressing similar challenges and socioeconomic issues.





BIG IDEA 1

ELEVATE GREATER DALTON:
IMPROVING STUDENT OUTCOMES AND
OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH A STRATEGIC WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



OVERVIEW

“Elevate Greater Dalton” is a robust, holistic, and comprehensive local workforce development initiative driven by a Workforce Development Director. Within the initiative, three pillars have been developed to grow and sustain the workforce development efforts of the community. Those three pillars are a high school leadership program designed for sophomores and juniors, an educator externship program (improving student outcomes and opportunities through a workforce development lens), and “Northwest Georgia Ready” - a K-12 focused workforce development campaign.

The “Elevate Greater Dalton” initiative, managed by a Workforce Development Director, addresses the need to develop the future talent pipeline of the community, particularly students that are entering the workforce directly after graduation, which is a high percentage of Dalton/Whitfield County graduates. With a significant portion of

those graduates being economically disadvantaged, a targeted approach to exposing such students to local career and post-secondary options is crucial to their success both academically and professionally. The initiative also drives the community’s ability to support the workforce needs of new and existing industries.



Courtesy Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce



Courtesy of Dalton Public Schools



Courtesy of Whitfield County Schools



SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

Dalton/Whitfield County lacks a “tip of the spear” for workforce development in the community. The Dalton/Whitfield County region has several organizations that have workforce development functions. Still, this committee could not identify an individual or organization who is the primary point of contact for workforce development in the County and is primarily responsible for implementing the workforce development work plan, ensuring that all the stakeholders and involved parties are all cohesively working together toward a unified mission, vision, and goals.

Multiple entities are sharing the workforce development practices within the community: Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority, Dalton Public Schools, Whitfield County Schools, Dalton State College, Georgia Northwestern Technical College, and various business and industry partners, including Shaw Industries, Hamilton Medical Center, Mohawk Industries, and others. The “Elevate Greater Dalton” initiative encourages the hiring of a Workforce Development Director, creating an externship program for local educators that focuses on local labor market needs and opportunities for disadvantaged students, implementing a strategic Youth Leadership program, and a career readiness campaign geared toward students entering the workforce post-graduation.

A Workforce Development Director position would ensure that local workforce development efforts would be streamlined, equitable, and accessible for all students. Disadvantaged students will be served by enhanced career readiness and post-secondary opportunities through the efforts of the Workforce

Development Director. Strategic alignment of partnerships will assist with more student exposure to local career opportunities and enable existing industries to address student perceptions of local careers, specifically manufacturing. The Workforce Development Director position would oversee the “Elevate Greater Dalton” initiatives.



Courtesy of Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce

The duties of the Workforce Development Director include, but are not limited to:

- Serve as the Greater Dalton area’s liaison for workforce development. This position plans, implements, and directs workforce development activities within the Greater Dalton area.
- Build strategic partnerships to support local workforce development efforts with business and industry, education, community members, local elected officials, and other key stakeholders.

-
- > Support alignment between education and critical local and regional labor market needs.
 - > Work closely with the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs at both local school districts to support pathway alignment to local workforce needs.
 - > Participate on committees and boards that support workforce development efforts.
 - > Support alignment between K-12 and local post-secondary partners through dual enrollment and workforce development-related opportunities.
 - > Works closely with business and industry and economic development partners to support identifying and addressing local labor market needs.
 - > Oversee the Elevate Greater Dalton Youth Leadership and Educator Externship programs.
 - > Manage and implement the “Northwest Georgia Ready” campaign.
 - > Supports and participates with Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce events, campaigns, and initiatives as needed.
 - > Manage a budget and materials.

For this position to be successful, it should be housed in the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce due to the existing relationships and activities the Chamber maintains in the local community.

When hiring for the position, at a minimum, the candidate should have three to five years of experience building stakeholder partnerships and one to three years of experience with workforce development initiatives. The candidate should have a robust knowledge of CTAE K-12 pathways and how to build talent pipelines from K-12 to post-secondary (articulation/dual-enrollment).

“ELEVATE GREATER DALTON” PROGRAMS

The “Elevate Greater Dalton” initiative contains a three-phase project connected to both school systems in the area, Dalton Public Schools and Whitfield County Schools, that proposes the following components: “Connect Greater Dalton,” an educator externship program; “Project MOTION,” a youth leadership program; and “Northwest Georgia Ready,” a K-12 focused career readiness and opportunities campaign.

“CONNECT GREATER DALTON” EDUCATOR EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This program proposes a week-long educator externship program designed and implemented by the Workforce Development Director. Externship experiences enable education partners to experience business and industry, local workforce needs, and their community. The experiences translate to the classroom and school systems as teachers and administrators can cultivate programs, events, and curricula based on their experiential learning opportunities. Meetings for the program could be held at the Junior Achievement building, Chamber facilities, Creative Arts Guild building, or the Convention Center.

The initial recommendation is for the externship to take place during the summer to avoid the additional expense of substitute teachers for the school system. The Workforce Development Director and stakeholders should develop an application process for educators who want to participate. The program should be open to K-12 educators, administrators, and counselors from both school systems. Like other educator externship programs from around the state, participants

should receive a stipend for participating during the summer. The initial group should be limited to 10-12 participants to maximize the first round of the program, to grow the program annually. Participants must develop a portfolio and identify deliverables from the experience that translate to student exposure/opportunities.

A proposed outline of the week-long experience is below:

Day One:

Orientation Day

- > Program Overview
- > Leadership Development Activity
- > Bus tour of Dalton/Whitfield County, including socio-economically disadvantaged areas as identified by the school system and city/county

Days Two- Four:

- > Days two and three should be an experience with local industry partners. Preferably, more than one industry sector should be represented throughout these experiences. For example, the program may visit manufacturing partners on day two, followed by healthcare partners on day three. Experience should be hands-on as safety permits, with the participants being able to experience a global view of the company and its operations. Interaction with recent graduates from the local school systems would benefit the participants. A report out at the end of each day should be a requirement.

-
- > Day four should be an experience with city and county government, including Dalton Utilities, elected officials, community groups, and civic organizations.

Day Five:

- > Graduation ceremony for participants
- > Report by participants to key stakeholders about their experiences

All participant portfolios should be shared with the Workforce Development Director, who should track implementation. Portfolios should consist of photographs and deliverables that the participant plans to implement in the classroom or within their scope of work. Additional portfolio details should be developed based on feedback from the key stakeholders supporting the program. Participating educators should invite the Director and other key stakeholders to visit their classroom when implementing their deliverables.

“PROJECT MOTION” - YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

“Project MOTION” is a year-long school program open to sophomores and juniors, free for participants, open to all students, and developed with strategic indicators and promotion strategies that encourage economically disadvantaged students to participate. Disadvantaged students often miss out on traditional Youth Leadership

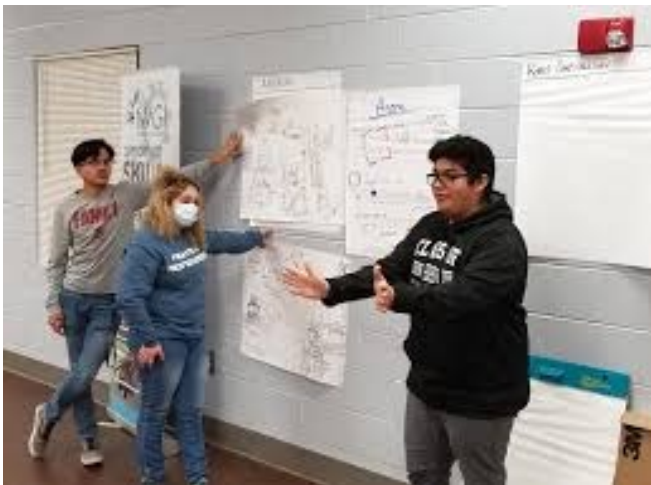
programs due to cost or the program’s framework being targeted to the highest achieving students. By revitalizing traditional frameworks for youth leadership programs, “Project MOTION” ensures that all students have access.

The goal of “Project MOTION” is to engage Dalton/Whitfield County sophomores and juniors throughout a school year by exposing students to a variety of experiences: participatory (active and ongoing), interactive (employer and training driven), and community (interest-driven/social developmental). “Project MOTION” is moving students from provisional to promise.

Working with the Dalton Public and Whitfield County school systems, the Workforce Development Director would develop key indicators for the students the program wishes to attract. School system counselors, CTAE Program Directors, Work-Based Learning Coordinators, and other leaders would identify and encourage the students to apply for the leadership program. The program’s goal would be to expose participants to local industries, community assets, civic engagement opportunities, post-secondary options, and leadership/employability skill training. Key indicators should be adapted to be inclusive of student achievement, not just high-performing students. While grades, attendance, Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO) involvement, and CTAE pathway participation should be considered, relying on the educators and administrators from both school systems on the ground level to target applicants would support the accessibility of the program. Applicants would apply in the spring as sophomores and juniors.

The program would consist of five sessions within the school year:

- > Leadership/Employability Skill Training
- > Community Engagement Project (community service)
- > Tour of local industry partners and presentations by post-secondary partners
- > Stakeholder Experience with local resources, community programs, etc.
- > Graduation Ceremony



Courtesy of Whitfield County Schools

“NORTHWEST GEORGIA READY”

“Northwest Georgia Ready” is a proposed digital campaign to bring awareness to K-12 students about local labor market opportunities. The Workforce Development Director would develop and manage the “Northwest Georgia Ready” program. The program will be developed with the target audience of students in mind, emphasizing social media platforms. Utilizing existing social media platforms (Tik Tok, FaceBook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram), the campaign would highlight and develop some of the following content:

- > Spotlight the “Connect Greater Dalton” externship and “Project MOTION” programs and participants
- > Success stories from graduating seniors
- > Local community resources and events
- > Internship and externship opportunities
- > Local career opportunities (industry, city, county, healthcare)
- > City and county news
- > Post-secondary partner information/experiences

Due to the social media and marketing components, the Workforce Development Director could rely on interns from local post-secondary partners to support the required efforts of the campaign. This structure will cut costs, cultivate sustainability, and improve the efficiency of the campaign.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS/TIMELINE

NEAR TERM

Beginning no later than the first quarter of 2023, funding should be identified to support and develop the job description for the Workforce Development Director position. Candidate selection will take place by Summer 2023. It should be noted that if an existing Chamber employee transitions to a workforce development focus, this could expedite the timeline, cut costs, and advance program delivery.

MID-TERM

Once hired, no later than Summer 2023, the Workforce Development Director would begin building partnerships to meet the duties and requirements of the position and lay the groundwork for implementing the “Elevate Greater Dalton” initiatives. The Workforce Development Director should begin implementing the early stages of the “Northwest Georgia Ready” campaign by the Fall of 2023.

LONG TERM

Applications for both the “Connect Greater Dalton” Educator Externship Program and “Project MOTION” Youth Leadership Program should be developed and implemented in the Spring of 2024. The first round of externships would be in Summer 2024, with the initial cohort of sophomore and junior students participating in the first “Project MOTION” class starting in Fall 2024.

Suppose a Workforce Development Director position is filled expediently. In that case, the initiatives outlined in the “Elevate Greater Dalton” workforce plan may be implemented much earlier than the timeline suggests.

ANNUAL ESTIMATED BUDGET

Item	Budget
Workforce Development Director: Salary	\$70,000 - \$85,000 <i>*This cost may be offset by directing the scope of a current Chamber employee to workforce development*</i>
Workforce Development Director: General Expenses	\$10,000 annually
"Project MOTION" Youth Leadership Program	\$5,000 annually <i>Meals, travel, and materials for participants.</i>
"Connect Greater Dalton" Educator Externship Program	\$5,000 annually <i>Stipend for participants- \$100.00 a day for five days for 10 participants. Five educators from both Dalton Public Schools and Whitfield County Schools.</i>
"Northwest Georgia Ready" Campaign Funding	\$25,000
Total Budget	\$115,000-130,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

Various funding sources can support this idea. The Workforce Development Director's salary and expenses can be provided by the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Stephani Womack, employed by the Chamber as Director of Education Partnerships, may be able to expand her role and responsibilities to include this workforce development initiative, offsetting costs for a new position. However, it is recommended that workforce development become a priority due to the impact and need for strategic workforce development drivers in the Dalton/Whitfield County area. Thus, it may require a full-time position dedicated to workforce development. If funds are unavailable, a capital or seed campaign is an option to fund the position. However, a permanent funding source should be explored. The City of Dalton, Whitfield County, business and industry, and the Board of Education may be willing to share the salary and benefits due to the need for the position.

Local sponsorships from Chamber members may also offset the costs of the "Project MOTION" and "Connect Greater Dalton" programs. Both school boards should be engaged in these projects and may be funding sources for the programs going into the next budget cycle. Many activities and event spaces related to both programs may be free

of charge due to the scope of the programs. The budgets for "Project MOTION" and "Connect Greater Dalton" are intended to encourage growth and scaling of the programs year to year. Partnerships are strategic and necessary to offset costs for the Chamber.

Potential sources of funding include:

- > Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- > Dalton Public Schools
- > Whitfield County Schools
- > Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority
- > City of Dalton
- > Whitfield County
- > Local non-profits
- > Business and industry partners
- > Georgia Power community grants

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

A variety of partnerships are available within the community that would help this initiative and its various components be successful. Potential partners include:

- > Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- > Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority
- > Dalton Public Schools
- > Whitfield County Schools
- > Junior Achievement
- > iWORKS
- > Georgia Northwestern Technical College
- > Dalton State College
- > Latin American Association
- > Coalición de Líderes Latinos (CLILA)
- > Local business and industry partners
- > Hamilton Medical Center
- > Local faith-based organizations

Examples of existing externship programs:

- > Connect Newton - Newton County, Georgia
- > L.I.F.T. - Troup County, Georgia
- > Walton Works - Walton County, Georgia
- > GA Cities - Workforce Development Toolkit

Examples of programs similar to “Project MOTION”:

- > Project Purpose - Bartow and Colquitt County, Georgia
- > Youth Leadership Hall - Hall County, Georgia
- > Connected Youth Leadership Program - Fulton County, Georgia

EXPECTED IMPACT

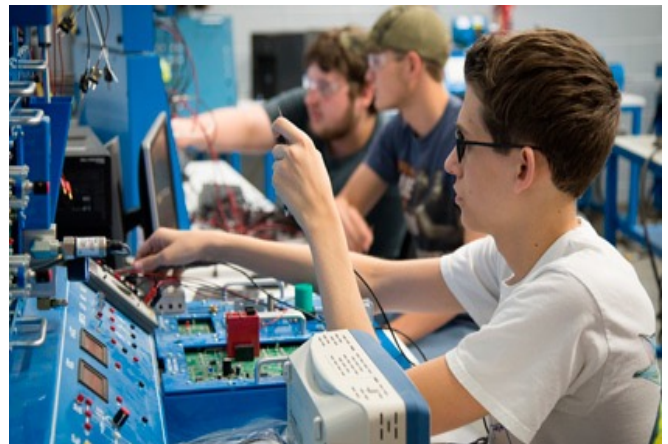
The Workforce Development Director position provides a strategic focus on increasing the knowledge of CTAE pathways, local career and academic opportunities, and a platform for success for economically disadvantaged students. Economically disadvantaged students equipped with relevant post-graduation information and resources are more likely to experience academic and professional success. A strategically developed and cultivated talent pipeline will ensure that local labor market needs are met, and students will be more

equipped to enter the real world after graduation. Educators with industry and community-related experiences are also better equipped to deliver classroom content and experiences that enable students to cultivate positive growth and find their path to post-graduation success and quality of life improvements for their families.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

- > Monitor graduation rates and post-graduation employment of students considered economically disadvantaged
- > Track employment and post-secondary pursuits of "Project MOTION" graduates
- > Key performance indicators for participating students should be developed by the Workforce Development Director, in partnership with the school systems, to track post-graduation pursuits.
- > Monitor classroom deliverables for educators who participated in the Connect Greater Dalton educator externship program
- > A community workforce development strategy that measures success, impact, and includes tracking methods should be developed.

- > A five-year strategic workforce development plan could be developed, with both school systems participating. The strategy should build off the programs initiated and proposed in this idea, growing in scope and impact.



Courtesy of Whitfield County Schools



BIG IDEA 2

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY CENTERS



OVERVIEW

In his book, Schools Cannot Do It Alone, public school critic-turned-champion Jamie Vollmer notes that to improve educational outcomes for students, we must also address the needs and cultures of the greater communities in which schools are situated. Thankfully, this sentiment has already been acknowledged and acted upon in the Dalton/Whitfield County community by the Dalton Neighborhood Initiative (DNI), a partnership originally comprising the Northwest Georgia Healthcare Partnership, Dalton Public Schools, First Baptist Church, Rock Bridge Community Church, Believe Greater Dalton, and other community organizations. Inspired by the Harlem Children's Zone founded by Geoffrey Canada, the overarching goal of the DNI as it exists today is to provide families, and their children from birth to age eight, with services and resources that increase their capacity for success in school and life. To date, the DNI has created two community resource centers for local families' use: the Roan Resource Center, which opened in Spring 2019, and the Beechland Resource Center, which opened in Spring 2021. Programming at these centers has expanded over time to include summer camps, informational sessions about health and medical care, and assistance in developing young children's basic literacy and numeracy skills. Resources such as books and school supplies have also been made available free of charge.

At present, the DNI has established centers in two of Dalton/Whitfield County's 19 total elementary school attendance zones (6 in Dalton Public Schools, 13 in Whitfield County Schools), both of which are in the Dalton Public Schools district. Funding for these centers has been pieced together from several sources, many of which have been made available through federal and state funds awarded specifically to Dalton Public Schools. If the greater Dalton/Whitfield County community is to truly address the issues faced by the 70%+ of its students identified as economically disadvantaged, we believe opportunities such as those created by the work of the DNI must be made available to all residents, not just those who live in a singular school district's attendance zone.

Our vision is to continue the needed work the DNI began by building on this already successful model in a meaningful and sustainable way, connecting people with the many resources and programs that already exist in the community. We propose to accomplish this by establishing a Neighborhood

Opportunity Center (NOC) in close proximity to each elementary school neighborhood in the Dalton Public and Whitfield County school districts. The purpose of establishing multiple NOCs across Dalton and Whitfield County would be to create a more complete, equitable, and needs-based avenue of permanent access to programming and resources aimed at supporting the specific needs of the children and families who live in each unique area of the community. This neighborhood-based model would allow for the consolidation of resources into one centralized location in proximity to each elementary school zone, the smallest geographic unit of measure within a school system, which could potentially alleviate many transportation, language, and cost barriers experienced by other programs.

The offerings of each NOC will be collaboratively selected and designed by its stakeholders, including the NOC Program Director (see Scope of Initiative below for further description), community volunteers, district- and school-level personnel including administrators, teachers, and staff, and,

most importantly, the families and students who live in the NOC's neighborhood. This collaboration is a cornerstone of the NOC initiative, as the needs of families living in a more remote area of Whitfield County, such as that of the Cohutta Elementary School attendance zone, for example, are almost assuredly quite different from the needs of families living in a more centralized location such as the City Park Elementary attendance zone in downtown Dalton. Programming at each NOC will be selected based specifically on the unique needs of the pocket of the greater Dalton/Whitfield community it serves, made known through surveys and conversations with families living in the neighborhood. Finally, the offerings of each NOC will be organized around the initiative's five foundational pillars: Healthy, Safe, Engaged, Supported, and Challenged. These pillars, scaled up from the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) Whole Child Framework to address the needs of whole families, will serve as the overarching framework for the design, implementation, and assessment of all NOC activities.

Believe Greater Dalton, the strategic plan for the Dalton/Whitfield County community and driving force behind the work of the Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce, has been entwined with the work of the DNI since its inception. Believe Greater Dalton's Education Steering Committee is a unique collaboration of partners from both school systems, local business and industry, the Chamber, nonprofits, Dalton State College, Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC), and more. In the words of Jason Mock, Chamber President and CEO, "Believe is the Chamber, and the Chamber is Believe." As such, we feel that Believe Greater Dalton is the most appropriate entity to officially "own" the NOC initiative and house it at the Chamber. This assessment is underscored by the

desire to have administrative responsibility for this initiative taken on by an organization affiliated with both Dalton Public Schools and Whitfield County Schools equally so that the work will have a broader opportunity for bipartisan buy-in and support, as well as implementation in neighborhoods served by either of the two school systems. The ultimate goal of the NOC initiative is for every city and county elementary school zone to have its own unique Neighborhood Opportunity Center reflective of the character and culture of the neighborhood it serves.



Roan Resource Center, courtesy of Dalton Neighborhood Initiative Facebook page

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

The NOC project will bring together neighborhood residents, schools, faith-based communities, city and county government, and industry partners to outfit and establish existing structures to house each center. This effort will be led by the Education Steering Committee of the Believe Greater Dalton project within the Chamber of Commerce, with direction and implementation managed by a Program Director. The Program Director will be responsible for organizing the creation of one center at a time, hiring new staff to run each center as the program expands throughout the community, and engaging teachers as leaders in programming and design. Although the Program Director position should be housed in the Chamber, there are multiple options to fund the position besides the Chamber shouldering the total cost of a new full-time employee. As outlined in funding sources later in this document, the position could be funded in combination between several entities such as the Board of Education and the City of Dalton and/or the public library system. The Education Steering Committee should explore and engage partners to establish concrete, long-term funding for the position.

Each NOC will be created in partnership with its neighborhood residents to ensure that the programs brought to that neighborhood are responsive to that neighborhood's unique needs. To request design direction from each neighborhood, the Program Director will work with residents - adults and youth - and the school to determine needs based on the Whole Family Framework. This framework will ask residents and personnel within the zone's schools to identify community needs to empower families to be Healthy, Safe, Engaged, Supported, and Challenged.

The proposed core values of this program are:

- > Those established by the Dalton Neighborhood Initiative: Collaboration, Cultural Awareness, Empathy, Innovation, Respectful Relationships, and Results-Driven Partnership.
- > Reciprocal sharing of resources between neighborhoods and the rest of the community.
- > Recognizing the resources that are present in each community.
- > Community members identify their own needs and feel ownership for contributing to their community.
- > Building a community where everyone is at the table with a voice can contribute to the community.
- > Accessibility.

NOCs could house any number of programs already existing in the community, including but not limited to:

- > Parenting classes
- > Prenatal parenting classes
- > Strengthening Communities classes
- > Mental health pop-up clinics and referral services for children and adults
- > Healthy Families

-
- > Parents as Teachers
 - > Transportation support
 - > Medical care
 - > Tutoring and homework help
 - > Youth development and leadership programs
 - > ESL programs
 - > College readiness classes
 - > STEM programs
 - > Outreach by local employers
 - > Outreach by Dalton State and GNTC
 - > Immigration assistance
 - > Essential needs assistance (food, utilities, housing resources)
 - > Career pathway guidance
 - > Financial aid for higher education classes
 - > Family mentorship for new-to-country families
 - > Tuition assistance programs

- > Childcare assistance for parenting teens
- > Dental care

In addition to aligning with the Whole Family framework mentioned previously, these offerings also address the six key focus areas identified by the Education Partnership of Believe Greater Dalton. These areas include Kindergarten Readiness, Early Grades Reading, Middle Grades Math, High School Graduation, Post-Secondary Enrollment, and Post-Secondary Completion.



*Antioch Elementary School classroom,
courtesy of AES Facebook page*

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS/TIMELINE

NEAR TERM (YEAR 1)

- > Young Gamechangers team members will assist the Believe Greater Dalton/Greater Dalton Chamber team in applying for a 3-year Spencer Foundation grant to establish the project, which will provide resources for personnel, programming, building renovation, and qualitative research to monitor the project's progress and impact.
- > The Chamber will utilize the job description provided to create and fill the NOC Program Director position within the Chamber's Believe Greater Dalton initiative. However, an alternative could be a partnership between the City of Dalton and the Dalton Public School System to share costs for the position.

MID-TERM (YEARS 2-3)

- > The Program Director will coordinate community and neighborhood-based efforts to design and establish each school zone's NOC, building upon the work of and collaborating with the Dalton Neighborhood Initiative, and overseen by the Believe Greater Dalton Education Steering Committee. The Young Gamechangers team suggests beginning with the neighborhood surrounding Valley Point Elementary. The creation of each new center, mirroring the two already established, will depend on the work of volunteers, neighborhood residents, and supporting agencies. As we've seen in the Roan and Beechland Centers founding, involvement and personal investment from neighbors and volunteers is at the heart of starting these thriving neighborhood hubs.

LONG TERM (YEARS 4-5)

- > The Program Director will be responsible for identifying the neighborhoods to determine the order of future NOC sites. The exact guidelines for identification will be determined collaboratively by relevant stakeholders but may include a school/neighborhood's physical location, Free/Reduced Lunch or Title I status, access to existing resources, and/or neighborhood members' desire for a center in their local community. The Program Director will also be responsible for securing additional funding to support the program long-term and appointing or hiring additional personnel to manage each center as the program grows.
- > Young Gamechangers team members, in collaboration with Dalton State College, will collect data to determine the project's outcomes and impact and report findings to the community. Team members and the Chamber will conduct a public awareness campaign to garner community support for NOCs coming to their neighborhoods.



Eastside Elementary School students, courtesy of EES Facebook page

ESTIMATED BUDGET

Item	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5	5-yr Total
<i>Program Director</i>	\$45,000	\$94,090	\$99,819	\$238,909
<i>Renovations</i>	\$20,000	TBD	TBD	\$20,000
Part-Time Staff	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$75,000
Educational Programming	\$3,500	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$17,500
Supplies and Printing	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$7,000	\$14,000
Cell Phone	\$600	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$3,000
Marketing	\$3,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$17,000
Total	\$89,100	\$144,290	\$152,019	\$385,409

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- > The City of Dalton
- > Whitfield County
- > Dalton Public Schools
- > Whitfield County Schools
- > Georgia Northwestern Technical College
- > Dalton State College
- > Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- > ESPLOST Funds
- > Northwest Georgia Community Foundation
- > Federal and/or State Grants
- > Spencer Foundation Research Grant
- > Private donations from local businesses and/or individuals

It is possible for the Director position to be funded in partnership between multiple agencies, such as the Boards of Education sharing the cost and benefits, a combination of one of the Boards of Education and the City of Dalton, etc.

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCES

- > The City of Dalton
- > Whitfield County
- > Education Partnership of Believe Greater Dalton
- > Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- > Dalton Public Schools
- > Whitfield County Schools
- > Junior Achievement
- > Georgia Northwestern Technical College
- > Dalton State College
- > Latin American Association
- > Coalición de Líderes Latinos (CLILA)
- > Local business and industry partners
- > Hamilton Medical Center
- > Local faith-based organizations
- > Preface

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The impact of the NOCs presence is unlimited; however, the Education Steering Committee should establish specific metrics and key performance indicators. The programs being offered would address needs across various areas for economically disadvantaged students. The NOC Program Director can track program participation and partner with the local Boards of Education to crosswalk participation in offered programs to student outcomes and achievements. Specifically, we recommend the measure of each NOC's success should be assessed via the six outcomes listed below. The methods by which these outcomes will be assessed cannot be determined at this point as the work, and subsequent assessment of each NOC will be determined locally and collaboratively by that NOC's community members. However, we recommend that stakeholder surveys be conducted regularly to ensure needs are being appropriately addressed within the local community.

OUTCOME 1: The Center assists in providing families with access to resources, information, and educational opportunities regarding medical care and healthy lifestyle practices.

OUTCOME 2: The Center assists in providing families with resources to create, increase, and/or maintain the physical and emotional safety of all environments in which they are engaged.

OUTCOME 3: The Center assists in providing families with ongoing opportunities to be actively engaged in the community, and a sense of belonging and inclusion is intentionally fostered.

OUTCOME 4: The Center assists in providing families with access to targeted support mediated and delivered by qualified, caring organizations and community members.

OUTCOME 5: The Center assists in providing families with appropriate, accessible, needs-based learning opportunities that provide them with the tools necessary for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

OUTCOME 6: The Center seeks to strengthen the development of program participants through education, cultivation, and encouragement, enabling positive growth and quality of life improvements.



2022 graduates of Southeast High, courtesy of Southeast Whitfield High School Facebook page

JOB DESCRIPTION

NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITY CENTER (NOC) PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Purpose: Responsible for creating neighborhood opportunity centers that are responsive to neighborhood needs. The Program Director will work with stakeholders to determine needs based on the Georgia Department of Education's Whole Child Framework, scaled to provide a Whole Family Framework.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES

Learning Opportunities

- > Facilitates or organizes workshops, classes, and activities for parents and provides materials and necessary resources to families.
- > Communicates with stakeholders to determine community needs and shares updates on best practices in areas of need.
- > Manages and monitors any subcontracts with service providers responsible for coordinating the implementation of activities. Manages and develops memorandum of understanding/ agreement with providers.

Decision Making

- > Promotes shared decision-making opportunities by involving community members in the planning and budgeting of activities.
- > Develops, analyzes, and distributes the results of stakeholder surveys.
- > Maintains records of all opportunity center activities, reports, data, surveys, program

evaluations, and communications.

- > Coordinates the fiscal management and reporting responsibilities, including quarterly and annual budget reports for each opportunity center.
- > Hires new staff as needed to support new opportunity centers.
- > Community Support
- > Maintains ongoing relationships with community organizations that provide services and resources in support of resource center programs.
- > Engage volunteers in learning opportunities and relevant training.
- > Promotes a family-friendly climate and maintains an inviting and welcoming Neighborhood Opportunity Center for visiting families.

Qualifications/Requirements

- > 3-5 years of experience in case management, community outreach, or education.
- > Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Required by the Position
- > A strong commitment to providing support and resources for educational and holistic family outcomes.
- > Working knowledge of local resources.
- > Demonstrated ability to engage multiple stakeholders and communicate effectively with people of diverse backgrounds.
- > Demonstrated strong organizational skills with experience prioritizing projects.
- > Strong aptitude for working in a collaborative setting on multiple projects or programs.



BIG IDEA 3

PEACOCK TRANSIT



OVERVIEW

Children that grow up in poor neighborhoods have a significantly reduced chance of graduating from high school (Wodtke, Harding, & Elwert, 2011). Georgia's economically disadvantaged students—students whose family income is below average—are roughly four times more likely not to meet 3rd-grade reading standards and four times more likely to not meet the 8th-grade math standards as well (Atlanta Regional Commission, 2014). Theoretically, every public school student receives the same education and resources as their peers. This raises the question of where does this discrepancy stem from? One could conclude that it must be a problem outside of our classrooms that leads to our economically disadvantaged students' lack of academic success.

To best address the needs of our students within the Greater Dalton area, we must address the child as a whole, and beyond that, the family as a whole. Meeting student needs must be done not only within the classroom and school but outside as well. The Georgia Department of Education's Whole Child Model has five tenets that must be met for children to reach their full potential. The Whole Child Model states that a child must be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.).

These five aspects of a child's wellbeing run parallel to the needs of the family as a whole. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Whole School, Community, and Child model (WSCC) acknowledges the connection between student success and their setting. The WSCC model is student-centered and emphasizes the role of the community in supporting the school and the connections between health and academic achievement (CDC Healthy Schools, 2022). A child's ability to thrive can be fostered or limited by the child's family. To satisfy the five aspects of a child's support, we must acknowledge that many come directly from their family units. If a family lacks basic needs such as food or clean drinking water, a child may not flourish. If a family is not properly supported by their community, neither is the child. Therefore, to adequately meet the child's needs, we must meet the needs of the family unit as a whole.

Upon exploration of how best to meet the needs of our community's families, a commonly recurring roadblock arises within our underrepresented communities. This roadblock is transportation, or lack thereof. When discussing transportation obstacles, we often think of access to a vehicle to travel to and from employment—without a consistent cash flow into the household, many needs are jeopardized. However, when considering the family as a whole unit, transportation holds much greater importance in a family's access to the five pillars of growth. Families need readily available access to a grocery store and medical services. Not only does the student require access to health services, but so does the student's family unit. Beyond basic needs, our students require opportunities to learn, grow and prosper, as do their families—a notion heavily supported by decades of academic and sociological research. As stated by McCombs, Whitaker, and Yoo (2017) in a recent report published by the Wallace Foundation, out-of-school academic programs can demonstrably improve educational outcomes. The Greater Dalton area boasts several programs that offer these opportunities (e.g., community events, literacy programs, faith-based activities). However, these events are only typically available to those with the necessary transportation. Therefore, these programs are unable to meet the needs of all Daltonians.

Further, while an increasingly large number of on-campus programs have been launched to further support students outside of their regular school day, many of these same students still face transportation-centric barriers to participation. Both Whitfield County Schools and Dalton Public Schools offer a great variety of opportunities for their students after school, including athletic competitions, presentations in the arts, and community involvement groups. There are also many post-secondary events such as tuition assistance application help, college and job fairs, and service clubs that provide students with important information about their future careers and options after high school. Many of these events are presented during the school day to encourage student attendance; therefore, students must relay the information to their families. The responsibility is then on the families to reliably make their way to these events, and again we are back to a transportation barrier for the family as a whole.

It is no secret that one of the most critical aspects of guardian-teacher collaboration is regular communication between teachers and families. These meetings are immensely beneficial for our students, but unfortunately have seen low family attendance within the Greater Dalton community. Since COVID, the use of virtual meetings has been crucial in being able to collaborate while maintaining distance. It is essential to acknowledge that virtual meetings have helped bridge the communication gap between all business sectors and have been helpful in the education sector. Nevertheless, despite the convenience of virtual meetings, the fact remains that guardian-teacher relationships are best served through in-person discussion, reinforcing the trust and communication needed

for both groups to work together for the benefit of the students.

On the whole, the Greater Dalton area remains limited regarding transportation options. There are several taxi agencies available—the cost varies given the distance and time spent on the route. Within the last few years, rideshare options have become more available in Dalton, but are still limited. A quick search on Uphail (www.uphail.com) shows that the minimum fare for one way starts at \$5.30. As we all know, the cost can quickly jump based on the time of day, the distance of travel, and the number of drivers available in a given area. There are also other fees associated with ride-sharing services (e.g., Lyft or Uber), such as cancellation fees and additional fees based on the vehicle size needed to accommodate more riders. Ride-sharing and taxis are expensive options, without feasibility of realistic long-term, habitual usage. If we calculate the previously mentioned \$5.30 one-way fare to and from work for a typical five-day work week, the estimated cost is at a minimum \$53 a week. This does not include additional trips for errands such as doctor's appointments, grocery shopping, or attendance at school-related events. The only other option the City of Dalton offers is the Dalton Trolley, which is free of charge but only runs from hotels on Exit 333 of I-75 to the downtown area on Friday and Saturday nights.

The most notable transportation resource the City of Dalton currently has is the Whitfield County Transit Service. Transportation to any location in Whitfield County is only \$4 per pass or \$30 for ten passes. As it currently operates, a 48-hour advance notice is needed to schedule a ride, which is detrimental to the ease of service and the number

of patrons served. According to Whitfield County Transit policy, riders should be ready 30 minutes ahead of the scheduled pick-up time. If the rider is not prepared upon bus arrival, the driver will wait five minutes before the client is scheduled as a no-show, and the ride is canceled. The Transit Service currently owns ten functioning buses that can each hold a small number of patrons. Of these ten buses, only five operate daily, servicing an average of sixty people a day. Most of the citizens serviced on a daily basis are elderly and/or individuals with special needs traveling to or from Cross Plains, Bridgeway Day Treatment, Highland River Health, or the Dalton Whitfield Senior Center. These stops constitute contracted pick-ups, given they are scheduled weekly and do not require scheduling on behalf of the rider.

The number of patrons has naturally dwindled since the COVID-19 pandemic. This has also resulted in difficulty of hiring and maintaining new drivers. Pre-pandemic, the Whitfield County Transit Service had one driver for each of their ten buses and was servicing an average of 126 riders a day. Since 2020, the numbers for both drivers and patrons has been cut in half since.

The current transit system is funded by Chapter 53 Section 5311 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Rural Formula Grant. This grant is allocated based on the rural population being less than 50,000. There are other grants and opportunities that Whitfield County can and does apply for when necessary (Transit Feasibility Studies, Infrastructure Improvement Grants, Freight Studies, etc.). However, the funding from these grants is not solely disbursed to the transportation system. Based on the information received from Jacob Bearden, the Coordinator of Greater Dalton Metropolitan

Planning Organization, there is a population shift in Dalton's near future that will allow funding to come from the FTA 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Grant. To qualify for this grant, the population needs to be above 50,000. The shift from an FTA 5311 Grant to an FTA 5307 Grant will allow for an expansion of Dalton/Whitfield County's current transit system and would allow for a fixed route system versus the current system of demand/response. While conducting research and interviews, we found that because the city and the public school system both receive federal grants, there are limitations in the collaboration between the public transit system and school-sanctioned events. There are cost-effective and easily implemented solutions to Greater Dalton's transportation issues discussed in this proposal, all of which center on utilizing our existing systems to encourage usage and better serve the citizens. Our long-term proposal based on this notion would be to strategically place bus stops within walking distance of schools and key places in the community. This will allow students and their families to have access to opportunities and improve transportation solutions within the community.



SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

Currently, there is a chasm between economically disadvantaged students and their ability to access opportunities for growth outside of the classroom. Parents and guardians often lack the means and/or time to transport their child(ren) to and from these opportunities, such as community sports leagues, performing arts programs, and leadership and volunteer opportunities. Research has shown the importance that participating in after-school activities has on students' attendance, educational outcomes, and social-emotional learning (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2022).

Our vision, then, is to systematically enhance and build on Dalton/Whitfield County's current transit options and infrastructure—laying the groundwork for a future in which no child or family ever has to worry about having reliable access to the Greater Dalton area's vibrant array of community activities and support systems. Expanding the current transportation service would better serve the community's students and bridge the gap between at-risk youth. Opportunities proven to increase graduation rates and support success should

be a top priority. Expanding and investing in the current transit system would be an investment in our students, their success, and our community's future. Though the shift is necessary, given the cost and complexity of the conversion, Greater Dalton will need to find a more immediate solution for our community. There are a series of more attainable and cost-effective changes we can make within our community to address the needs of the people, utilizing our preexisting resources.



RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS/TIMELINE

NEAR TERM (IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION POSSIBLE)

Upon meeting with the Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the head of the Whitfield County Transit Service, there was discussion concerning the lack of usage after the pandemic. In 2021, the Whitfield County Transit Service was used for 15,657 trips, compared to 33,009 trips in 2019, an approximate 53% reduction in usage. A number of buses are not being utilized because there are not enough patrons calling to request transportation. This does not represent a lack of need by Dalton citizens, but rather a lack of citizens' comfort and/or awareness of system availability.

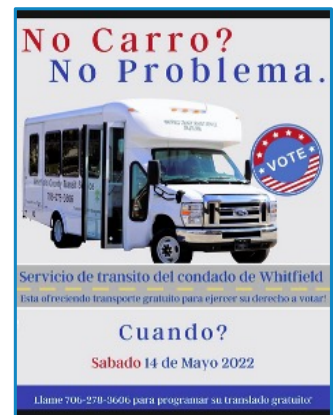
The Whitfield County Transit Service could be connecting families with more resources within the community. It could be bridging the gap between healthcare, groceries, employment, extracurriculars, etc., which would have a substantial impact on the child in terms of addressing the whole child's needs. This problem can be addressed using the following cost-effective and easily applied models.

Marketing:

To encourage our community members to utilize the Whitfield County Transit Service (WCTS), we must first reach a larger audience by marketing this service to the people who need it. Classically, we look to newspapers as the primary form of relaying information to a given audience. Dalton/Whitfield County has two primary newspapers that cater to the local community—the Daily Citizen and La Voz de Dalton. While these are valuable tools in reaching the community, there is room for improvement

regarding the current promotion of public transportation. An effective social media campaign would bring greater awareness to the public transportation services available and promote its usage within the community. A relatively easy and cost-effective way to do this would be for WCTS to establish their own social media pages that will allow their information to be shared. Digame News, a social media agency that prides itself in promoting Hispanic achievements and providing quality information to the Spanish-speaking community, would be a crucial part of effective marketing. Sending direct communication through the school systems, from students to their parents, would ensure that families with children are given information related to the transportation services available and its benefits. Naturally, all communication would be delivered in English and Spanish.

After meeting organizations in the community that serve Dalton's nearly 50% Hispanic population - Coalición de Lideres Latinos (CLILA) and the Latin American Association (LLA) - it was communicated that a majority of Greater Dalton's Hispanic population does not trust governmental services



and therefore avoids utilizing the Whitfield County Transit Service. To foster trust and encourage utilization within this group, Whitfield County Transit Service could partner with these Hispanic-serving organizations on a marketing campaign—communicating how to use public transportation and relaying information regarding associated benefits. Though Dalton’s Hispanic population has unique hurdles to be addressed when encouraging riders to utilize the service, this same strategy could be implemented in social service organizations and non-profit organizations, such as City of Refuge, United Way, and Dalton’s Greater Works.

Providing these community organizations with free passes to ride the public transit would be a powerful incentive. Passes would be distributed to the people who would use them, from organizations they trust. The passes would be accompanied by an informational handout in both English and Spanish, giving step-by-step instructions on how to schedule and utilize the service—including the 48-hour notice needed to schedule the pick-up.

This strategy of providing free passes to encourage future use would be relatively open-ended regarding the cost to Greater Dalton. A suggested amount would be 2,000-2,500 passes, or \$8,000-\$10,000 worth of passes. This cost could be subsidized by local industries whose employees could benefit from the service or charitable organizations focusing on needy families.

Connecting with Community Programs:

There are a plethora of educational opportunities for students K-12 within Dalton/Whitfield County, as well as their families outside the school system.

Coalición de Líderes Latinos (CLILA) and Latin American Association (LAA) offer homework clubs, free applications for Federal Student Aid, English classes, legal counsel, and classes to prepare for American citizenship. Dalton State College offers FAFSA nights, family nights, and campus tours. Dalton Parks & Recreation has recreational sports leagues, summer sports camps, and has several facilities that encourage sports, fitness, digital learning, literacy, and nutrition. The Mack Gaston Community Center has multiple outdoor and indoor amenities to encourage healthy socialization and exercise. The Northwest Georgia Regional Library System offers a variety of events, both after school and during the summer, to encourage student reading, STEM learning, and computer literacy. These opportunities are unavailable to the students and their families without the necessary means of transportation.

A viable method for presenting these opportunities to larger groups of citizens and bringing the Whitfield County Transit Service to the community’s attention would be having the Whitfield County Transit Service reach out to community organizations with informational handouts (digital and paper). To ensure there is more open communication, community organizations should also be encouraged to contact WCTS with the date and time of these events. With this new line of communication, WCTS would be able to ensure they have the necessary resources available to service these upcoming events.

Beyond communication between these entities, community organizations would be encouraged to add distinct mention of the transit service on all activity advertisements throughout the community. Flyers, social media posts, and newspaper articles

would all briefly mention available transportation through the WCTS—providing a phone number as well as the price of a ride. This would encourage better participation in community events and usage of our transit system.

Assuming that these new relationships would result in two additional bus routes each month, at \$564 per route, this would result in a roughly \$12,000/ year budget, funded through the WCTS.

MID-TERM (1-2 YEARS)

Our focus is improving our existing transportation system and to guide its evolution; however, reaching deeper solutions to Dalton/Whitfield County's transportation challenges will take time and resources that will require collaboration between entities. We propose the following:

Bus Driver Training:

The nation is experiencing a severe shortage in bus drivers, post pandemic. In July 2022, an article published by Bloomberg reported that 71% of transit organizations have reported cutting or delaying service because of worker shortages (Woodhouse, 2022). Dalton/Whitfield County is not immune to this shortage, as the lack of riders has been the only contributing factor in keeping five of the ten operational buses owned by WCTS parked. The head of the Whitfield County Transit Service, Diane Franklin, has communicated a dire difficulty finding drivers to operate our buses. The candidates found to operate these buses must hold a P endorsement—a certification needed to operate

a vehicle that seats sixteen or more people. Given there is no in-house training program available to WCTS, they are forced to bring in outside instructors for \$200 a lesson, even if there is only one willing student. These future employees would sit through an eight hour class, mainly focused on large commercial vehicle operations. This in-depth training process does not focus on rider safety, nor is it taught by someone who is familiar with the intricacies of transporting people. All of this training is done in the hopes that the future employee wants part time employment for minimal pay.

Needless to say, this process is only exacerbating an already persistent shortage. However, Whitfield County Schools has all the resources necessary to train these drivers. They employ licensed instructors who have experience leading classes in earning this endorsement, as well as a space to conduct training focused on rider safety. A concern articulated by both WCTS and Whitfield County Schools is that the lack of individuals interested in undergoing this training, and as such the two groups may inadvertently poach potential employees from one another as new drivers are trained. With support and collaboration among the leaders from these two groups, a shared vision and mission to increase the licensed bus driver pool in Dalton/Whitfield County could be enacted, which in our estimation would only help to provide expanded access to local residents and driver jobs to those interested.

Feasibility Study:

Throughout numerous conversations with Whitfield County transit officials, repeated reference has been made to historical feasibility studies conducted

over the years, the purpose of which was to assist with top-down planning for larger-scale transit services to maintain pace with population growth. Historically, these studies were broad-in-scope and shared-in-cost, with state and federal funds covering 80% of the cost, while Whitfield County contributed a 20% local share. The most recent study was conducted in 2012—over ten years ago.

The Whitfield County transit officials with whom we spoke are in unanimous agreement that the current needs of Dalton/Whitfield County's population, particularly non-native English speakers and the families of that 70% of students collectively identified as economically disadvantaged, remain insufficiently met by existing public transit options and the “deploy-as-needed” transit system that has been utilized to date. Further, concerns around a slow return to pre-pandemic levels of utilization and fixed costs relative to the absolute numbers of riders persist, leading some citizens to view the existing transit system as an unprofitable public assistance project built for a Dalton that has long since evolved beyond needing its services. We believe that this latter view may inadvertently bring negative consequences to the broader Dalton region, both educationally and economically. Therefore, we may be failing to appropriately appreciate the interconnected and compounding disadvantages that have to this point prevented more widespread adoption of transit services by individuals who may benefit the most from its expansion. Interviews with Whitfield County leaders and transit experts have illuminated a comparative mismatch between intention, efficacy, and profitability.

We view continued investment in transit-based solutions as a key pillar in any broad-based solution to better serve Dalton and Whitfield County's economically disadvantaged student population. A renewed feasibility study as an immediately actionable, politically popular, and low-cost step to reimagine a brighter and more inter-connected future for every Daltonian. As previously mentioned, the prior feasibility study was conducted over ten years ago and surveyed a largely different Dalton than exists today. Nevertheless, it produced a variety of still-salient recommendations, including preliminary plans for a hub-and-spoke fixed route transit system that could serve a more populated and diverse Dalton with more significant needs.

As Dalton's population continues to evolve, county transit officials along with the Young Gamechangers Education Team collectively believe that the time is right to update this feasibility study and, in so doing, plot out a more unified path for Dalton's future, and subsequently the future of its students. At current demographic growth rates, officials believe that the region will soon be eligible for increased federal funding in the form of Section 5307 funds, unlocking additional state and federal assistance to help capitalize on the costs of potential expansion. Moreover, the results of the last ten years have shown that additional innovation is needed to revitalize the stagnant transportation system and ensure that, as a public service, it truly meets the needs of the region's economically disadvantaged population.

Commencing a feasibility study would not lock officials into a long-term commitment or costly expense. Initial estimates peg the cost of a refreshed

study at around \$200,000 in total - with only 20% (or \$40,000) of that cost expected to be borne by Whitfield County. Officials expect state grantmaking bodies to be receptive to the proposal in light of the region's rapid change and growth potential. At the same time, preliminary conversations with elected officials and business leaders in the community have also illustrated a latent appetite for enhanced transit options, especially if they were customized to provide service to-and-from workplaces and high-density living areas. Further, due to variances in state and municipal budgeting practices, the \$40,000 of costs borne by Whitfield County could be appropriated and recognized over two fiscal years, meaning that for an incremental \$20,000 a year, a feasibility study could be commissioned that would intrinsically bring disparate stakeholders within Dalton/Whitfield County together to forge an official and high-quality consensus on how best to serve the needs of economically disadvantaged families and students for years to come. To further mitigate costs for local authorities, foundational and corporate sponsorship could also be solicited from stakeholders with a significant interest in shaping the outcome of transit development region-wide.

Finally, conducting a feasibility study now, rather than waiting for additional population growth, also appears to be the fiscally responsible thing to do for local officials by responding to a proven community need in a visible way that will produce a high return on investment roadmap for future initiatives in the region. A year's investment in a long-term plan has, in this case, the potential to yield exponential benefits down the line: truly meeting families and

economically disadvantaged students "where they are" in a way that will help fuel positive social and educational outcomes in the future.

LONG TERM (TRANSIT EXPANSION INCLUDING FIXED ROUTES, 2+ YEARS)

The feasibility study would provide the community with optimal bus routes to service the largest portion of the community, with respect to cost and time. Transportation that works for Dalton/Whitfield County would benefit public health, the economy, fuel consumption, air pollution, and traffic. The regular bus routes would benefit the community as a whole, but these effects would assuredly aid in the success of our disadvantaged students. They would be able to participate in extracurricular activities, outside agency homework groups, arts and music classes, etc. Our bus routes would ensure community members have access to health care, community opportunity centers, high-traffic areas for employment and shopping, and factories. The exact and optimal locations of these stops would be calculated by our feasibility study.

However, to ensure student needs are being met, we would focus much of our attention on connecting students with educational opportunities outside the school day. The budget for the proposed implementation of a bus system serving routes would be highly dependent on time, frequency, capacity, and need. The feasibility study mentioned above would help to determine many of these aspects and give a more accurate estimate of the cost to the community.

ESTIMATED BUDGET

Item	Budget
Complimentary Bus Passes for Local Residents	\$10,000
Extra Routes for Community Activity	\$12,000
Feasibility Study	\$40,000
Total	\$62,000

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

- > State and federal grants (already existing, capacity for enhanced funding through population growth, no new effort required)
- > Corporations - through sponsorships and marketing opportunities, cost-sharing could be

implemented and spread out across various private sector actors. Further funding could be obtained by bringing key corporate stakeholders to the table early in the planning/feasibility study process.

LIKELY PARTNERSHIP AND RESOURCES

- > Dalton Public Schools
- > Whitfield County Schools
- > Large private sector employers
- > Coalición de Líderes Latinos (CLILA)
- > Latin American Association
- > Whitfield County Transit Authority
- > Digame News
- > Daily Citizen News

- > Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- > Believe Greater Dalton
- > City of Refuge
- > United Way

Overwhelmingly positive preliminary conversations have been initiated with the above constituent groups to gauge support levels and initial interest in an expanded Dalton/Whitfield transit system.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

The appetite for enhanced utilization of transit options in economically disadvantaged and underserved communities remains high - both in the governmental and citizen universes. Key stakeholders, including transit officials, elected leaders, and individuals representing local corporations, are in strong agreement that additional investment in transportation would provide benefits to families and students in economically disadvantaged situations. Stakeholders openly support proposals similar in substance, if not in scope, to the near- and mid-term proposals presented.

The near-term initiatives would yield high to near-certain success, which would be apparent in the increased usage, usability, profitability, and community relationship with the existing transportation program. WCTS already tracks the profit and usage. The feasibility study will intrinsically measure the likelihood of success for the long-term proposal, and it will provide ample room for community input, feedback, and buy-in through the public comment process.

In the mid to long-term, success could be further measured in various ways - ranging from qualitative levels of community engagement in existing activities to the ongoing profitability and usage rates for the transportation system at large.

Moreover, from an educational perspective, success could be measured by comparing community and family engagement rates in relatively underutilized activities (e.g., parent-teacher conferences, extracurricular activities requiring extrinsic transportation)

Enhancing the availability of and accessibility to these services for all of Dalton's citizens to best serve the development of the "whole child" is a fundamental component of the Peacock Transit mission and ultimate vision.



Courtesy of Daltonga.gov

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Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordinator

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Executive Director, Dalton-Whitfield County Joint Development Authority

Brian Cooksey

Director of Workforce Development, Shaw Industries Group, Inc.

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SECTION

4



DESTINATION DALTON

CHALLENGE QUESTION

How do we leverage the uniqueness of our multicultural community, convenient location on I-75, outdoor recreational amenities, and natural beauty of the Northwest Georgia mountains to market Dalton as a destination for visitors, new residents, and businesses?

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Chelsea Tucker

Georgia Power Company

Kayla Cooper

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Leah Poole

Liberty County Chamber & CVB

DESTINATION DALTON

The Community Champions team was faced with a challenge question aimed to address the disconnect, both cultural and otherwise. How can Dalton & Whitfield County leverage the uniqueness of our multicultural community, convenient location on I-75, outdoor recreational amenities and natural beauty of the Northwest Georgia mountains to market Dalton as a destination for visitors, new residents and businesses?

Through interviews and meetings with community organizations, business owners and involved stakeholders, as well as through group discussion, the Community Champions team landed on three unique ideas to address this challenge question:

1. A Community Identity initiative that will bridge gaps and bring the community together through intentional storytelling, wayfinding, and a cohesive committee—all leading to building a proud group of Dalton/Whitfield County champions.
2. Improved placemaking and connectivity to drive residents and visitors to Block79, the train car, and more of Dalton's current (and future) unique amenities.
3. Establishing the Peacock Alley sports complex with retailers and restaurants, which will create opportunity for entrepreneurship, new visitors, and community engagement.



BIG IDEA 1

EMBRACING AND ENHANCING
COMMUNITY IDENTITY BY
WRITING YOUR OWN CHAPTER OF
THE DALTON STORY



DESCRIPTION

The travel sector is an integral part of the Georgia economy. Visitors generate significant economic benefits to households, businesses, and government alike, and represent a critical driver of Georgia's future. How critical? Tourism represents 2.4% of Georgia's economy and supports 3.4% of all jobs in the state. That's a \$53.73 Billion total economic impact, bringing 152.2 million visitors to the state. By monitoring the visitor economy in Dalton/Whitfield County, policymakers can make informed decisions regarding the funding and prioritization of the development of tourism in Dalton/Whitfield County. They can also carefully monitor its successes and future needs. By establishing a baseline of economic impacts, the industry can track its progress over time.

Cohesive marketing can promote community, provide a welcoming sense of place and invite others to visit, all while being nearly invisible. When executed well, the target audience can become your best grassroots Community Champions. Residents can sell visitors on the area and build a group of ambassadors that organically brand and garner support for the community and its unique culture. However, in Dalton and Whitfield County's current state of widely-varied marketing initiatives, internal stakeholders appear to be divided and external audiences may be confused. The Convention & Visitors Bureau, Whitfield County, City of Dalton, Dalton/Whitfield County Board of Education, Dalton Downtown Development Authority and Dalton Joint Economic Development Authority, arts organizations, and Hispanic organizations appear to have marketing strategies and projects that they do not share with each other—and processes and standards that are not cohesive from one entity to the next. Based on discussion with local community stakeholders from entities such as the City of Dalton, Whitfield County and Believe Greater Dalton, the impression that these stakeholders have is that there are individual silos created that do not build off one another or help in an overall and cohesive effort or message. There are overarching themes such as “not being on the same page,” “prioritizing individualized visions and missions,” and “apprehension that doing something different will not be supported by others.”

The current environment, as identified by key stakeholders and various other interviewees, is not optimal for collaboration. A paradigm shift must take place to set some of the onus of attracting visitors (day trip or otherwise) on Daltonians, as well as giving residents a broad spectrum understanding of what tourism can do for their individual bottom line. According to Explore Georgia, current statistics state that in 2020 each resident of Dalton received \$235.40 in tax abatement courtesy of tourism. This includes not only hotel/motel tax, but restaurant spending, retail, etc. that collect the Local Option Sales Tax, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax, Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax and Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax.)



On the basis of tourism and incoming dollars, out of its 17 county region, Dalton is #6 in total spent by visitors (per Explore Georgia). Breaking down the spending by Lodging, Transportation, Recreation and Retail, Dalton rates #7 in Lodging, #4 in Transportation, #5 in Recreation, and #5 in Retail. People are coming to Dalton—and for much more than overnight visits.

With a common goal identified by an initial countywide retreat of the various organizations mentioned above, strategies like those referenced below can be developed for community-wide planning in which all stakeholders participate. From the conversations the Community Champions team had with each entity and numerous interviews with community stakeholders, the current model does not appear to be working to meet the overall collective goals.

Defining the story within the community with cohesive marketing and language will have a high impact and increase the sense of community and place. This marketing could not only help the community leaders meet their goals, it could also increase the sense of community pride and the perception of the public about what the local government and entities are accomplishing, bringing more transparency to those strategies and creating synergy. This does not mean that individual organizations will be sharing the same information over and over; rather, they will brand that information as their own and find where it fits with their individual missions and visions.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

Because this idea has so many facets, the scope is very broad. Dalton/Whitfield County will have to re-create the way they tell the story of their individual entity to those within their entity, to the community and to visitors. A recurring theme from discussions with Daltonians was a desire to highlight the uniqueness and distinguish the individual strengths of each “ingredient that mixes together to create the delicious Daltonian Cake.” Therefore, the scope and intent does not include changing these individualized goals; rather, it involves identifying those goals as a body, communicating those goals as widely as possible, and then marketing using those goals as cohesively as they can.

While we were unable to access current marketing plans for each entity, the major gap appears to be an entity to market to locals to broaden their understanding of Dalton’s amenities. Dalton has already done the hard work by creating Believe Greater Dalton with their six strategies clearly outlined and a framework in place. Now it is time to activate those strategies in a bigger way. The original five year plan called for a branding campaign, unified marketing and resetting Dalton marketing with a baseline starting point to create engagement and unity. Specific tactics and clearly identified outcomes and markers of success are outlined in subsequent steps.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

FOR NEW BUSINESSES

Marketing should be a cohesive effort on the part of the Chamber, Joint Development Authority, CVB, Downtown Development Authority and the local business community. With organizations working on their “own” projects, there is no central point or place to help people know where to look for information. We suggest working with an organization like Nextsite, a commercial development advisory firm specializing in identifying and connecting opportunities to developers, tenant reps and end-users to affect positive change in communities across the US, which we understand Dalton/Whitfield County are currently in the process of, to drill down into what Dalton needs, wants and has the chance of securing—using them to create that brand strategy, but also to work on recruiting.

FOR VISITORS

The Tourism Product Development Team provided the blueprint for this in their November 2020 report: “In a marketing textbook you would start with the market you want to attract; then develop product and experiences and create the most effective communications to reach your target market. In reality, destinations already have products, experiences and existing visitors.”

For Dalton, the answer to “who is your market” seems to be all over the place, so step one is to identify who the target visitor is. We were told that no day-trippers would come because, “there’s nothing to do in Dalton.” Hotel occupancy is at 80% currently, so that leaves about 300 room nights unaccounted for if overnight visitation is their goal.

If the target market is overnight stays, not sports related, then why would they come? Dalton must find their “why” and build their marketing around that as a community.

In interviews and conversations, stakeholders seemed to have varying marketing plans with no central focus. If it was an “ABC” event, then the “XYZ” organization did the marketing, and so on. “They handle that” was another frequent comment we heard. In reality, “they” was a different organization each time. The Tourism Product Development Team report also identified two key issues:

- 1.) Many destinations don't see the unique tourism experience they have to offer.
- 2.) Tourism managers can be so focused on the product that they forget the consumer.

Dalton/Whitfield County has the blueprint for success in this area as defined by their Tourism Resource Team visit and the extensive community work done by Believe Greater Dalton, the community and leaders need to execute the plans provided.

FOR NEW RESIDENTS

Housing is needed for new residents. To attract those new residents, Dalton has to get its REALTORS®, hospital, school system and local industry and business community on board to “sell Dalton,” not just sell houses and apartments. Dalton wants to attract people who become a part of the community and add value, which takes time. No organization we spoke to was certain if the

Board of Education had a public relations person – that is important because for Dalton to be one cohesive community their leaders and those in leadership roles must know each other. We heard several times that various organizations have a communications person but not someone actively promoting the community because they're doing crisis communication and just handling things as they come with no proactive marketing plan.

Other smaller but still crucial ideas include:

COMMUNITY TOURS

Inviting local REALTORS® to a tour that highlights assets in the community and educates real estate agents on amenities that they may not be aware of to help them better communicate all of Dalton's gems to prospective buyers. This is an opportunity to highlight the diversity in the community, the arts, the breweries, and downtown areas that are attractive to younger professionals. This is also an opportunity for the different city organizations (Chamber, Downtown Development Authority, Parks & Rec, etc.) to work together so the messaging to prospective residents is consistent and has everyone's input.

Beyond REALTORS®, this tour could cater to educators, advanced photography students, military spouses, or anyone that Dalton wants to feel more comfortable within the community, who then becomes a Dalton Community Champion.

BEST PRACTICES

Rediscover the power of blogging and/or a podcast. The last blog on the Visit Dalton page was January 2021. This could be huge for their storytelling initiative. A name mentioned in our meetings as a possible Daltonian who can collect/archive these stories was Pam Partain.

Host a monthly or bi-monthly meeting for area Public Information Officers (PIO)/marketing personnel to make sure that everyone is on the same page. This was also a constant message in our interviews with existing marketing professionals in Dalton, specifically that a lot of them do not know each other, they do not know if XYZ entity even has a PIO, they have no idea what XYZ entity is pushing out, etc. This would help bridge that gap.



WRITE YOUR OWN CHAPTER OF THE DALTON STORY

The opportunity exists for every entity to write their own individualized Chapter of the Dalton Story, keeping in mind that it is all an important part of the same book. Believe Greater Dalton representatives even have a tagline that could serve as the Dalton Story title: “Start, Dream, Thrive!”

This initiative could be used in a variety of ways, not only in the literal sense with each organization writing its chapter, but also figuratively by expanding on the Latino Culture of storytelling and word of mouth communication. For example, the Board of Education could write what they are promoting for the year (graduation rate, top student achievements, etc.). This idea creates a “blueprint” that allows each organization to create their own content and advocate their own visions/missions, while simultaneously supporting a cohesive sense of community for Dalton. This can also be used to leverage the Believe Greater Dalton storytelling success as a way to continue recognizing the Community Heroes.

This concept of creating and utilizing a “story map,” per interviews with Whitfield County officials, is an initiative that is already being used to get community participation, as opposed to the traditional technical data powerpoints that may not capture the community’s attention. Take a map of Whitfield County and plot out where iconic moments have happened. One important theme to remember is that each community within Whitfield County is unique and has its own identity that it is proud to highlight. As stated by a Whitfield County official, who is also a native Daltonian, “there is truly

something for everyone, and that only remains true by maintaining each community’s identity.” This could include recording the oral history of Dalton, either via collaboration with the local college or Georgia Public Broadcasting, or both.

It is also important to engage each community, as we were told, in order to “ask permission” by ensuring that an opportunity is provided to have everyone’s voice be heard. This in turn will strengthen support for the idea and officials will have more community buy-in.

There will also need to be a component that creates and explores the idea of video compilations or “activation stations” at existing Dalton events where social media stations can be set up to get the “man on the street” reasons why people love Dalton. This one idea could provide content for months, if not longer. Dalton/Whitfield County should be sure that the storytelling is bilingual and representative of the diversity of their community. Contact should be made with the Latino community’s news outlets to create partnerships and discuss potential coverage and participation at these existing and new Dalton events.

The use of social media could also increase the likelihood of success and community participation. Whitfield County has gained success and positive feedback from the use of creating “Insta-grammable Moments” and Facebook Live broadcasts in recent months. Whitfield County has a Public Information Officer who has new and creative ideas that should be explored more fully to be more inclusive and address potential cultural and language barriers.

The success of this idea will require officials and

internal stakeholders to actually “bridge the gap by walking the bridge,” and seek input from under-represented Daltonians by meeting people out in the community at various events. Examples include visiting local parks, community centers, and events to engage Daltonians in discussion regarding their thoughts and perspectives on “their community.” If there are certain festivals or restaurants that are popular, have internal stakeholders visit to get diverse opinions and support from those Daltonians that may not participate in other more formal settings, such as public hearings, etc. In order to recruit other Daltonians to also be Community Champions that express their Dalton pride, efforts will need to be made to “meet the people where they are.”

COMMUNITY-WIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

Gathering Dalton’s various organizations, to include but not be limited to: (JDA, DDDA, Chamber, hospital, education, etc.) and governmental entities (City of Dalton and Whitfield County) in one space at one scheduled time to:

1. Discuss their goals for the next year, the next 5 years, and the next 10 years.
2. Get to know each other in a slightly informal setting with an outside facilitator.
3. Cohesively identify community issues and discuss possible solutions, taking three top issues for the next year with actionable steps, deadlines, and a task force.

This is also a great opportunity to bring in youth leaders and stakeholders from the Latino community so that everyone has a voice in shaping the future. This scheduled event would be held outside of the community for one to two days. Some communities also plan strategic leadership visits while they are in a neighboring community for their retreat. It is not necessarily a retreat, but a chance to visit another similar community that has overcome comparable problems and try to share ideas and collaborate with one another.

These ideas play into the consistent community branding idea and involve finding a way to reach not just the upper middle class and affluent, but also those working class folks and small business owners that help make Dalton such a special place. Many locals didn’t seem to realize that a lot of what Dalton does in town is free. People have a misguided perception of what the city does and who oversees bringing what to town. Transparency in who does what, how, and when is important. This starts with having a unified community identity that everyone can get behind and push out. That identity can be something as simple as “choose kindness” or “Dalton Proud.” It sounds simple, but it will be crucial in “rebranding” Dalton.

TIMELINE

There are steps for this that can begin immediately, such as contacting the stakeholders to begin the planning of the retreat. This will be an ongoing effort to ensure that the chapters of the Dalton Story continue to be written and new information is added. Once goals are identified and agreed upon, set follow-up opportunities to check in and make sure that the ultimate goal of telling the Dalton Story is being achieved. The first step is the Community-wide Strategic Planning Retreat. All of the other smaller ideas will spin out from this larger meeting.

Months 1-3: Coordinate Date for Retreat

Months 4-7: Plan Retreat

Months 8-11: Execute Retreat

Months 12-14: Dalton Communications Professionals Begin Bi-Monthly Meetin

BUDGET

Retreat Expenses	
Hotel	\$200-\$600/per person depending on length of stay & hotel chosen
Food	\$200-\$300 per person depending on length of stay
Facilitator	\$4000
Materials	\$150/per person
Travel Costs	\$150-\$250/per person depending on location

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

It has not been our experience based on conversations with community leaders and stakeholders that Dalton has a lack of funding. We were told that they are in fact consistently rolling back their millage rate. It seems that their available resources are able to fit the current need. However, they should definitely explore cost sharing between involved entities to alleviate the need for one entity to pay for all proposed ideas. Marketing especially

will be by entity as we are not proposing that they market together, we are proposing that they cross market and do so cohesively. Available funding is possible from Explore Georgia and their Tourism Product Development Funding when it rolls around for submissions. Dalton could potentially access America Rescue Plans Act Funds as well that have been designated for tourism.

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS

The “who” in this instance should be a task force of all the major players:

- > Dalton Chamber
- > Dalton CVB
- > Joint Development Authority
- > City of Dalton
- > Whitfield Parks & Rec
- > Board of Education
- > Hospital
- > Whitfield County

This body will elect Co-Chairs for the initiative, but it will take effort, collaboration, and actual work from all of them to brainstorm ideas to address known challenges and change the current view so that each of the entities work toward the collective goal, not a single silo or individualized vision. This will also require involvement from various segments of the community and diverse/inclusive ideas on strategy and setting priorities.

University of Georgia, Carl Vinson Institute, Georgia Power, Private Facilitator: Facilitator for countywide retreat to specifically work on collaborative leadership and building momentum.

RESOURCES

- > Georgia EMC
- > Dalton Chamber of Commerce
- > Dalton Convention & Visitors Bureau
- > Joint Development Authority
- > Cities who do these things well (Athens or Monroe), no sense in reinventing the wheel
- > Georgia Department of Economic Development, Tourism Division.
- > Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
- > Georgia Association of Convention and Visitor Bureaus

EXPECTED IMPACT

- > Increase in community pride and sense of place among Daltonians.
- > Increase in tourism expenditures outside of just hotel/motel tax.
- > The creation of possible award winning content just by unifying and telling Dalton's story.
- > Creation of a sense of belonging and cohesion among Daltonians.

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

Increase in the direct impacts of tourism expenditures by at least 20% as reported by the state of Georgia, Explore Georgia specifically. We would expect to review the 2023 report after implementation of best practices is in place for at least one year.

Increase in community awareness as determined by an increase in participation of local events

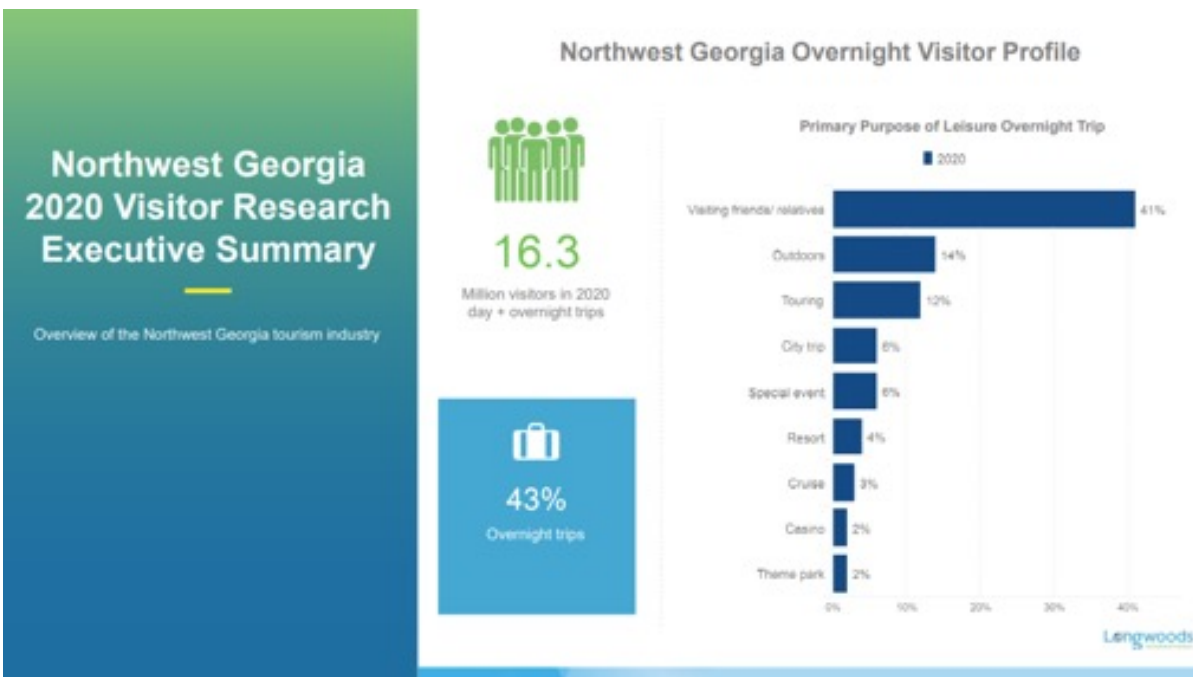
measured using best practices. The most common technique for counting crowds at protests and rallies is Jacobs' Method, named for its inventor, Herbert Jacobs. Jacobs' Method involves dividing the area occupied by a crowd into sections, determining an average number of people in each section, and multiplying by the number of sections occupied.

NORTHWEST GEORGIA – VISITOR SPENDING

Amounts in millions of current dollars	Lodging*	Food and beverage	Recreation	Retail	Transport**	Total	Growth rate
Region Total	\$290.8	\$371.8	\$126.1	\$241.2	\$225.0	\$1,254.9	-8.4%
County							
Bartow County	\$35.7	\$56.7	\$20.2	\$27.3	\$39.5	\$179.5	-14.5%
Carroll County	\$18.5	\$42.7	\$12.8	\$20.8	\$28.0	\$122.8	-11.6%
Catoosa County	\$9.1	\$18.1	\$6.0	\$12.1	\$8.8	\$54.0	-20.5%
Chattooga County	\$2.1	\$3.1	\$0.8	\$2.9	\$1.3	\$10.3	9.1%
Cherokee County	\$18.3	\$43.0	\$19.6	\$33.5	\$27.1	\$141.4	-12.8%
Dade County	\$2.6	\$2.8	\$0.8	\$1.5	\$3.1	\$10.9	3.5%
Fannin County	\$84.4	\$36.4	\$7.1	\$29.5	\$13.9	\$171.3	18.0%
Floyd County	\$18.3	\$37.6	\$12.4	\$22.6	\$18.3	\$109.3	-9.0%
Gilmer County	\$42.0	\$21.1	\$4.6	\$16.0	\$9.6	\$93.3	5.1%
Gordon County	\$12.1	\$21.8	\$8.0	\$14.1	\$16.0	\$72.0	-14.8%
Haralson County	\$2.1	\$4.6	\$2.0	\$4.7	\$4.9	\$18.3	-17.4%
Murray County	\$2.9	\$6.7	\$2.9	\$2.3	\$3.7	\$18.5	-4.8%
Paulding County	\$5.6	\$19.6	\$8.4	\$16.5	\$13.3	\$63.4	-8.8%
Pickens County	\$11.3	\$8.4	\$1.7	\$6.2	\$4.7	\$32.3	4.6%
Polk County	\$2.6	\$7.0	\$2.3	\$6.4	\$5.2	\$23.5	-5.0%
Walker County	\$5.8	\$7.2	\$3.8	\$6.9	\$3.8	\$27.4	7.9%
Whitfield County	\$17.4	\$34.9	\$12.7	\$17.9	\$23.8	\$106.7	-24.1%

* Lodging spending includes 2nd home valuation

** Transport includes local and air transportation





Of respondents were very satisfied with their overall trip experience in Northwest Georgia



41% of overnight travelers planned their trips **2 months** or less in advance

Top sources for trip planning information:



2.1 nights
Average length of stay



Average party size was **3.3** people

Reason for travel:



Top feeder states for visitors:

- 1 Georgia
- 2 Florida
- 3 South Carolina
- 4 New York
- 5 California



Langwoods

*Marketable trips are those influenced by marketing efforts.

Activity groupings for overnight trips to Northwest Georgia:



Business Activities
30%



Cultural Activities
43%



Entertainment
59%



Outdoor Activities
66%



Sporting Activities
27%

Langwoods



BIG IDEA 2

DESTINATION DOWNTOWN DALTON



OVERVIEW

Our second idea was born around the concept that a city's downtown is its heartbeat and should be a gathering place that truly showcases the individual community. For the near-term, we are proposing a food experience program for Dalton to leverage the uniqueness of their multicultural community, as well as a medium-term plan to connect the Train Depot to the city-owned rail car, creating a gathering place for both train tourism enthusiasts and community members alike. Our long-term vision for downtown centers around the redevelopment of the parking deck next to Burr Park that was previously used as both parking and a covered event space in case of rain before recently being deemed hazardous and scheduled for demolition. We propose a new structure that still allows for parking, but also allows for more engagement and connectivity for tourists, residents, and businesses.

DESCRIPTION

We recommend that the community implement a "Taco Trail" program that includes local businesses in downtown, Block79, and throughout Dalton, as many of the authentic taco restaurants are not technically located downtown. A trail passport would allow users to visit each participating restaurant and have their passport virtually "stamped." There would be rewards along the way as you visit and support each establishment, including the Downtown Dalton Development Authority's (DDDA's) existing Downtown Dollars (vouchers to be used at participating locations which are fully reimbursed to the business by the DDDA), a free taco from participating businesses, and ultimately culminating in a Taco Wall of Champions if you complete the whole passport. Even if a restaurant does not currently offer tacos, we believe this would be a good opportunity for restaurants to add even just one specialty taco to their menu. For example,



a breakfast restaurant could add a breakfast taco, or a dessert place could offer a waffle cone taco shell with ice cream inside and chocolate sauce as the taco toppings. We believe these creative tacos could be turned into a downtown competition of "Whose Taco Reigns Supreme?" in the early stages of marketing to gain traction and community engagement in advance of implementing the Trail.

The intent of this program is to introduce tourists (including targeting the day tripper market, which according to our CVB member, they are not currently marketing to) to the amazing Latinx food available in Dalton. This will create more awareness about Dalton's multicultural environment, as well as increase current residents' support of their local businesses and bring customers to these businesses all week long instead of just on the weekends. We also propose extending the open-container policy to include the Block79 area. However, discussions between the DDDA and the Block79



business owners have already begun, so if this area is annexed into the Downtown District, the open-container zone will automatically extend to their businesses and they will not need to pursue a special exception.

We also propose that there be an expansion of the deck at the freight depot that would connect it to the Crescent City train car. This would expand the observation deck and cafe tables would be placed on the front side of the new deck in front of the train car. Renovations inside the train would allow for local beer taps and a wine and dessert bar (no liquor given current regulations), themed much like an old luxury passenger train car. The car would contract with local bakers to serve their goods; it could also be the go to spot for "Georgia Grown" or Georgia made items. If a customer enjoys one of the beers from a local brewery tap, that would encourage them to walk a block or two and support that establishment directly.

Downtown Dalton, Georgia is a train watching enthusiast hotspot with 40 to 45 trains passing through on an average day. Dalton is one of the only places in Georgia where the CSX and Norfolk Southern Railway cross each other at grade (on the same level ground, not over or under). Our suggested upgrades to this specific city-owned rail car and train depot would provide train watchers with improved amenities, encourage longer stays now that they have a spot to sit and enjoy a beverage, purchase Dalton-made products, and learn about other available activities at the visitor's center in the train depot. However, we do also envision this as a space for local residents to gather over drinks and support locally-sourced goods. This is where we hope the intersection of tourism and local community champions leads to potential new residents.

Lastly, we propose that a multi-use parking deck be built in place of the deck that is in the process of being torn down. While parking is still needed in the area next to Burr Park, we propose that the new structure include retail on bottom, the same 125 parking spots (2 levels), and an observation deck on top with a pedestrian bridge over the rails, creating much needed connectivity to both sides of the track. The bridge would be created in the same peacock style that is already in the community's long-term plan for the two highway overpasses. This bridge now creates an "instagrammable" place or moment for anything from train watchers to local prom or graduation photos. The retail space on the bottom creates an opportunity for entrepreneurship and additional tax base for the City in a space that was previously only generating revenue from parking.

The clearance on the first level of parking would remain high enough to utilize as an alternative space for events during inclement weather, while each level would still connect to the proper level of the Landmark building. One corner of the

observation deck could be roped-off as a special VIP area for Burr Park concerts, or to be booked for special occasions. This proposed increased height in the parking structure would also now mean that visitors to the observation deck would be able to enjoy the picturesque scenery of North Georgia. The observation level would have plants, benches and sitting areas for train watchers, or for any Daltonian to enjoy their lunch break, sit and enjoy a coffee, or to read a good book in the sun. The proposed parking deck will also free up spaces that are currently being used on Hamilton street for customer use, and for extra, high-quality event space in downtown.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

The scope of this initiative is limited to Dalton's downtown and the adjacent areas of Block79, and Glenwood Avenue. Our goal with these downtown initiatives is to increase the volume of visitors for both residents and tourists to the downtown area to

support local businesses. We also want to support new entrepreneurs and create opportunities through the addition of incremental retail space.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

For the Taco Trail, we recommend the first action steps be: (1) a meeting of proposed partners, (2) have the Chamber poll the restaurants to gauge interest and get them signed up, and (3) the partners should engage a third-party destination experience engine, such as Bandwango (www.bandwango.com), so users can sign up via email or text with no need to download a new app on their phones. The emails and texts should be offered in both English and Spanish to make sure it is inclusive of the entire community.

We believe the train car needs to start with discussions between the City (train car owner), the Chamber, and the Dalton Innovation Accelerator (DIA) to discuss the initial possibility of having an individual entrepreneur involved in creating the business. The next step would be to identify the City's proposed lease terms, so that the process can then lead to attracting a potential lessee. Once this entrepreneur is identified, next steps would include engaging the Cherokee Pizza & Brewing Company and Dalton Brewing Company for the bar/local taps

component of the business idea, as well as exploring additional contracts with local dessert providers to this space so that no heating element/kitchen space needs to be developed in the train car. Any grease trap or heating element would change the code for this space, which is not currently allowed in Dalton.

The action steps for the parking deck redevelopment would be to start by engaging a preliminary conceptual engineering design, which is already underway. The next step would be to hold a meeting with the City and the DDDA to discuss funding options, no matter the ultimate parking design. This type of project qualifies for SPLOST dollars, so the hope is that these discussions could utilize funding that is readily available, avoiding delay due to the need for additional funds. It will be an important step once the parking structure design is selected to determine the leasing process for retail spaces and begin securing tenants during construction.

TIMELINE

For the Taco Trail, we imagine this would be on a three-month timeline in the initial stages to establish participating businesses, print materials, and begin marketing. The partners would market for the Taco Trail prior to each annual kick-off, during the annual Latin Food Festival each October, and going into the final month of completion for each year's trail end. For the train car, there would be upfront capital costs associated with renovating the train car and the cost of putting in a wooden deck, so we envision the timeline once an investor/entrepreneur is found to be 12-18 months. Given the permitting, bidding, and structural design elements of the parking deck redevelopment, the projected timeline would be two to three years minimum to completion.

FOR THE TACO TRAIL:

- > **Months 1-3:** Establish participating businesses, research digital 3rd party platform and make selection
- > **Months 4-6:** Print materials, begin advertising, host taco competition amongst participating establishments to gain community interest, and launch program
- > **Months 7-12:** Measure engagement in the program via the digital insights platform

FOR THE TRAIN CAR:

- > **Months 1-3:** Identify interested entrepreneurs
- > **Months 4-12:** Entrepreneurial investment in renovating the train car for their business idea, while simultaneously reaching out to vendors to sell their products; the City and the CVB work over this same time period to construct the deck connecting the train car to the depot

FOR THE PARKING STRUCTURE REDEVELOPMENT:

- > **Months 1-6:** Work with engineering firms to determine a viable structure for the site and explore funding sources
- > **Months 7-24:** Construction of the structure while finding businesses to lock in leases before construction is finished

BUDGET

The train car has already been completely emptied, so the costs to complete would include finished flooring, an interior bar and tap installation, and furnishings (including product displays). We believe the upfront cost by the entrepreneur who decides to lease this space will depend on the decision to start with base level up to the higher end of luxury furnishings as in the Mt. Hood Brewing bar cart referenced below in 'Resources' as an example project. This project would also involve the cost of a deck to connect to the train depot. The deck benefits the train depot and the City of Dalton, the

lessor, so we believe these costs could be shared amongst the different organizations.

According to Fixr.com, the national average cost for a 150,000 square foot above ground parking deck is \$9.75 million. However, when adding in retail on bottom at a cost of \$150 per square foot, an observation deck at a cost of \$25,000 for pedestrian benches, picnic tables and greenspace, and a pedestrian bridge across the tracks starting at \$1.5 million, this estimate quickly increases.

Taco Trail advertising & 3rd party digital platform	\$6,000 yr 1/\$1,500 yrs 2+
Train car renovation & deck construction	\$100K - \$250K (renovation) & \$20,000 (deck and cafe tables)
Parking structure construction including retail, two levels of parking and an observation deck with a pedestrian bridge	\$15 - \$20 million

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

We believe the Taco Trail could possibly be funded through the existing DDDA, CVB, and Chamber budgets once the costs are shared. It may take time to find a local entrepreneur for the train car, so the hope is grants would be made available to make the venture less cost-prohibitive, or the City could waive

the first three months of the lease to help alleviate the upfront cost of start-up. We propose the City take ownership of the parking deck and use SPLOST dollars for this multi-million dollar development, then lease retail space to business owners.

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS

FOR THE TACO TRAIL:

- > Dalton's DDA, the CVB, the Chamber, Block79, and local restaurant owners wanting to participate in the Taco Trail

FOR THE TRAIN CAR:

- > The City of Dalton (train car and train depot owner), the DDA, the CVB, Dalton Brewing Company, Cherokee Brewing & Pizza Company, other local businesses, the Dalton Innovation Accelerator (DIA), and the Chamber
- > This project may require an individual entrepreneur leasing the space from the City and then contracting with both local breweries to supply their product, as well as a more regional winery for the wine taps, and also local bakeries/ dessert shops.

FOR THE PARKING STRUCTURE REDEVELOPMENT:

- > The City of Dalton (proposed owner), the DDA, the Chamber, the DIA, and the across-the tracks redevelopment of Manly Jail Works (one restaurant already coming)

RESOURCES

The City of Dalton, the DDDA, the CVB, the Chamber and Believe Greater Dalton will be key resources for all 3 elements of this downtown idea.

FOR THE TACO TRAIL:

- > Viviana Ramirez, business owner and spokesperson for the Block79 hispanic-owned businesses
- > Kansas City CVB runs their Taco Trail and uses Bandwango third-party experience for the text and email portion of this program

FOR THE TRAIN CAR:

- > The DIA, Georgia Northwestern Technical College (GNTC), and Alex Contreras, the leader of Grupo

Founders, an Argentinian organization that helps startups and entrepreneurs, held a 10-week business incubator program from April to June 2022 for Hispanic and Latinx entrepreneurs in Dalton. This program may be a good starting point/resource to find any interested entrepreneurs for the train car.

FOR THE PARKING STRUCTURE REDEVELOPMENT:

- > Georgia Power's Community and Economic Development engineering team for conceptual design, drone footage, and mock-up (free service)

EXPECTED IMPACT

- > The Taco Trail will lead to more cross-cultural interactions and local business support.
- > The train deck expansion and new business will solve a long overdue problem the city has faced with having the train car downtown. It can become a destination instead of just a standing fixture in town. It will generate revenue and hopefully be a profitable endeavor for someone willing to start the business aspect of the idea.
- > The parking deck redevelopment will bring a fresh face directly next to Burr Park. The retail spaces are creating more opportunities for local entrepreneurs, and the observation deck draws train-watching tourism, but also acts as a community gathering place for summer concerts, daytime lunches, and special occasion photo opportunities.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Success for the Taco Trail will be measured by increased sales at each restaurant, check-ins from the third-party text engine, as well as tracking the increase of customers on weekdays versus weekends and the increase in participation after specific advertising campaigns throughout the year. The train car's success will be measured by the business's revenue stream, as well as the increase

of train watchers' "heads-in-beds" by the CVB, and increased foot traffic to downtown businesses, especially considering the train car's location in the open-container district. The City will be able to measure the lease dollars collected from the retail businesses of the parking deck, as well as the parking lease, and the total vehicle counts increasing in downtown Dalton.



BIG IDEA 3

PEACOCK ALLEY ATHLETICS

(SPORTS-ORIENTED MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT)



OVERVIEW

We propose that Dalton seek to construct a sports-oriented mixed-use development with retail, restaurants and bars, and sports fields that can be easily converted to host a variety of sports, creating an opportunity for entrepreneurs, bringing new visitors, and spurring community engagement. This complex would seek to host not just youth sports tournaments, but also host and support amateur sports teams, such as the Savannah Bananas. The mixed-use component of this complex creates a gathering place for the community and brings revenue to the development on non-game days.

Executives of existing and planned mixed-use developments that are sports-oriented believe we will see more of these facilities moving forward “because of their unique offerings and historic connection to their communities... Over the past 20 years, many sports-anchored mixed-use developments have been viewed as economic drivers that add to their communities’ urban core, while enhancing civic life and creating jobs.”

DESCRIPTION

Success in marketing Dalton as a place for new businesses, visitors, and new residents would strongly correlate with Dalton’s ability to project positivity and community by building off its already established camaraderie in sport and outdoor activity. Dalton is now known as “Soccer Town U.S.A.” according to the recent news article published by The New York Times. We propose to build upon this reputation and make Dalton one of the state’s premier tournament hosts. In turn, businesses and new residents would want to be a part of the initiative and encourage community engagement.

We are proposing a Dalton-version of The Battery (<https://batteryatl.com>) sports and mixed-use complex in Atlanta, containing at least 8 FIFA-size soccer fields with retail, restaurants, and living space in close proximity to Downtown, the bypass, and existing parks and residences. This space would be utilized by multiple sports such as soccer, lacrosse, football, cricket, and more. With this amount of space, Dalton could host state and national sports teams for tournaments and practices. This development could also function as a practice space

for teams in the 2026 World Cup. It would include bathrooms, but only stadium seating for one field. Spectators would bring their own lawn chairs for the remaining fields, so as to allow more open space for other sports throughout the year. Chain restaurants and stores could set up shop to ensure use of the facility/complex on non-game/practice days. The living space above retail would also help to address Dalton’s issue with a lack of housing stock, and create the opportunity to live, work, play all in one walkable area.

We suggest utilizing the current Dalton Fairgrounds (31 acres) for initial exploration. This flat piece of land is ideally located, unused most of the year, and could be leased from the owners in lieu of purchasing outright to reduce the upfront financial investment. Our team reached out to Harold Brooker for information, since he sits on the Fair Association Board to get more information on the land. Our secondary suggestion is the land in North Dalton near Hammond Creek & Heritage Point. Though, this land would need to be re-zoned to accommodate such a complex.

SCOPE OF INITIATIVE

> Establishing Dalton as a sports destination will increase visitors, new businesses and new residents, paired with explosive growth in community engagement and activity. Dalton's reputation and Peacock Alley Athletic development will bring in more visibility to established local businesses and appeal to prospects. As businesses become more visible,

their customer bases become larger. By connecting this complex with what's already happening in Downtown Dalton and all the outdoor recreation/parks, it will serve as a driving force in positioning Dalton as an incredible place to live, work, and play.

RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

SHORT-TERM

- > Research leasing options from the Fairgrounds.
- > A feasibility study to determine the number of retail spaces, restaurants and apartments that would be economic for the size of this market.

MID-TERM

- > Find an architect and start written and design plans.
- > Market and grow the amateur sports teams in Dalton.
- > Start a \$2 million fundraising campaign with Dalton Parks & Rec.

LONG-TERM

- > Walking trails from parks to complex.
- > National chain restaurants/stores lease space.
- > State & National tournaments booked years out.
- > World Cup team practices in Dalton in 2026.

TIMELINE

We believe this would take at least three to five years to complete.

POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES

The cost per square foot of a mid-rise commercial development in the southern U.S. according to Levelset is \$474 to \$569. We propose that phase 1 of the facility be 75,000 sq ft. so a rough estimate of \$37.5 million for the retail, living, restaurant, and parking component of the structure. Additional

funds will be needed to complete the actual sports fields, but we estimate this cost to be lower at around \$2 million.

Private Developer/Investor, Fundraising, Bond Issue, or SPLOST funds.

LIKELY PARTNERSHIPS

- > Parks & Recreation
- > Visitors Bureau
- > Downtown Dalton Development Authority
- > Local industry
- > Opportunity for private business to become a part of the space and encourage local visitation, create opportunity for multi-family housing, and identify a neighborhood of Dalton

RESOURCES

- > In July 2022, the Board of Commissioner meeting voted for Westside Park to have a FIFA Turf soccer field added from the SPLOST Fund. It will be lined for Soccer, Football & Lacrosse.
- > Point of Contact for Soccer Leagues: USL (United State Soccer League) Chris Boyajian-Sr. Director of Facilities & Real Estate. 813-804-3220 or chris.boyajian@uslsoccer.com
- > Astor Park in Columbus, Ohio: <https://www.columbusnavigator.com/astor-park-columbus/>
- > Examples of Soccer themed private business that would be attracted to the area: <https://cincosoccer.com> & <https://fast5soccer.com> & <https://www.decatursoccer.com/>

EXPECTED IMPACT

According to the CVB, many sports, like soccer, will not host their tournaments in Dalton because of a lack of enough fields in one location. Therefore, though Dalton was recently named “SoccerTown USA” by the New York Times, its local teams have to travel to other parts of the state to compete. This complex is an opportunity to bring more visitors, businesses, and residents to Dalton. Once the

visitors come, the businesses will come, and once the businesses come, the residents will come. Like LakePoint Sporting Community in Cartersville, we believe that this complex would position Dalton as the destination for traveling teams across the Southeast which would, in turn, generate revenue in the Dalton community and bring in new clientele to local hotels and small businesses.

MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Success will be reflected in the number of regularly scheduled sporting events, diversity of the types of sports played, and filling the event venue to 50% capacity for the event (on average the Chattanooga Redwolves stadium is filled to 50% capacity). With proper marketing locally, across the state, and regionally more people and teams will become

aware of what Dalton has to offer. Additionally, increased housing developments, business presence, and the longevity of existing businesses will serve as success indicators.



Example of a Multi-use park: Decatur, AL

Example of how we could use the North Georgia FairGrounds Property:

Proposed Multisport Complex "Peacock Alley"



Proposed Multisport Complex "Peacock Alley"



CITATIONS & RESOURCES

New York Times' Soccer Town U.S.A. article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/14/sports/soccer/dalton-ga-high-school-rivalry.html>

Estimating crowd size:

<https://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/science/how-do-you-estimate-crowd-size>

Economic Impact of Tourism in Georgia 2020:

prepared for Explore Georgia by Tourism Economics

Kansas City Taco Trail (photo source):

<https://www.visitkansascityks.com/taco-trail/?locale=en>

Third-party destination experience engine used by Kansas City CVB:

Bandwango (www.bandwango.com)

Dalton Hispanic and Latino Entrepreneur Incubator program:

<https://www.chattanooga.com/2022/3/28/446089/Registration-Open-For-Region-s-First.aspx>

Mt. Hood Brewing renovated train car (photo source):

<https://www.wweek.com/bars/2018/09/11/mt-hood-brewing-converted-two-old-train-cars-into-a-bar-at-the-east-end-of-tilikum-crossing/>

Manly Jailworks Development:

https://www.dailycitizen.news/news/local_news/carpenter-buys-manly-jail-works-building-plans-new-restaurant-at-site/article_dc89b707-7c18-5170-a5c6-e8f15d296f5f.html

Georgia Power Community and Economic Development - Strategic Solutions:

<https://www.selectgeorgia.com/services/view-services/>

Peacock Alley history:

<https://www.appalachianhistory.net/2017/05/world-capital-chenille-bedspreads.html>

Future of sports-oriented mixed-use facilities:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/losangeles/news/2020/04/14/the-future-of-sports-oriented-mixed-use.html>

Levelset commercial development estimates:

<https://www.levelset.com/blog/commercial-construction-cost-per-square-foot/>

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Nathan Kirkman

Owner and developer, Crown Mill
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