



# *South Rome*

Quality Growth Resource Team Report  
February 25 - March 1, 2002

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# Georgia Quality Growth Partnership

The Georgia Quality Growth Partnership (GQGP) is a collaboration among diverse public and private entities that seeks to provide local governments and citizens with the tools and knowledge to transform the way we define, create, and sustain high quality Georgia communities. The primary purpose of the GQGP is to facilitate local government implementation of quality growth approaches by:

- Disseminating objective information on the various approaches.
- Developing tools for implementing these approaches.
- Sharing of best practices learned from other places, times, and cultures.
- Promoting acceptance of quality growth by the general public and community leaders.



Founded in March 2000, the GQGP has grown to more than thirty organizations, each contributing time, in kind services, or financial resources to fostering Partnership efforts.

Community Resource Team visits and final presentation reports are coordinated and produced by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The electronic version of this publication (PDF) may be found online at: [www.dca.state.ga.us/publications/southrome.html](http://www.dca.state.ga.us/publications/southrome.html)

CDs are available upon request.

Contact: Julie Brown  
jbrown@dca.state.ga.us  
phone: 404.679.0614

# Meet the Resource Team

## **Bill Darley**

State Coordinator of LOCI & FaciliTech  
Georgia Institute of Technology

## **Joddie Gray**

Planning Department Manager  
ARCADIS

## **Lucie Griggs**

Executive Director  
Cool Communities

## **Bryan Hager**

Executive Director  
Georgia Sierra Club

## **David Howerin**

Planning Director  
Coosa Valley RDC

## **Lucy Jenkins**

Principal  
Jenkins Planning, Ltd.

## **Bruce Jennings**

Principal  
Jennings & King Architects

## **Brad Jones**

Landscape Architect  
Franzman-Davis & Associates

## **Alyssa Lee**

GPA Student Representative  
Georgia Institute of Technology

## **Jim Summerbell**

Senior Planner  
Jordan, Jones & Goulding, Inc.

## **Christopher Walsh**

Eastern Region Discipline Leader  
Jacobs Advance Planning

## **Alycen Whiddon**

Principal  
Tunnell-Spangler & Associates

## **Facilitators**

### **Steve Dempsey**

Senior Public Service Associate  
The University of Georgia  
Carl Vinson Institute of Government

### **Jan Coyne**

Public Service Assistant  
The University of Georgia  
Carl Vinson Institute of Government

## **Georgia Department of Community Affairs Staff**

### **Jim Frederick**

Director  
Office of Growth Management

### **Chrissy Marlowe**

Growth Management Specialist  
Office of Growth Management

### **Julie Brown**

Growth Management Assistant  
Office of Growth Management

### **Leamon Scott**

Regional Representative, Region 1  
Office of Regional Services

### **Nancy Johnston**

Resource Coordinator, Region 1  
Office of Regional Services

### **Adriane Wood**

Regional Representative, Region 6  
Office of Regional Services

### **Jim Crowdis**

Regional Representative, Region 9  
Office of Regional Services

### **Kent Kirbow**

Marketing Manager  
Office of Single Family Housing

### **Sue Tilden**

Planner  
Office of Coordinated Planning

### **Dave Totten**

Senior GIS Specialist  
Office of Decision Support

### **Martha Reimann**

Community Development Coordinator  
Office of Downtown & Community Services

### **Cindy Eidson**

Downtown Programs Manager  
Office of Downtown & Community Services

### **Carmine Fischetti**

Design Assistant  
Office of Downtown & Community Services

### **Lauren Dean Colunga**

Design Intern  
Office of Downtown & Community Services



*Introduction*

# Introduction

The Quality Growth Resource Team for the South Rome Area was brought together in February, 2002 through a collaboration with the City of Rome, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and the Georgia Quality Growth Partnership, a statewide coalition of government agencies, universities, non-profits, and business groups working to provide technical assistance on “smart growth” issues to Georgia communities. The resource team focused their study on a project area that included the entirety of South Rome, bounded by the Etowah and Coosa River to the north and west, Rome city limits to the south, and the Norfolk-Southern railroad line to the east.

The multidisciplinary team was made up of specialists in city planning, real estate development, urban design, historic preservation, architecture, resource conservation, and housing. Team members were chosen with the area’s particular concerns in mind, which were initially defined in a meeting with the local officials held weeks in advance of the actual team visit.

The team spent a week in the project area. The visit began with a facilitated meeting involving a broad cross section of community representatives, designed to give the team members a deeper understanding of development issues and needs of the South Rome area. During the week the team toured the project area by bus, visited historic buildings, spoke with local officials, reviewed local ordinances, conducted field surveys, prepared schematic design solutions, and formulated policy recommendations. The visit culminated with a final presentation to the public on Friday, March 1<sup>st</sup>. The team’s recommendations were then passed to DCA staff for formatting into this final report.

The Resource Team would like to thank the City of Rome’s staff, elected officials, and citizens for making us feel so welcome in the area. The ideas and solutions proposed here are only a beginning – intended to stimulate interest in redeveloping the South Rome area so that residents may enjoy living in a vibrant and beautiful neighborhood.



*Observations*

# Observations


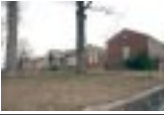





- Although the City of Rome has clearly invested significant resources and effort in South Rome, there is still much to be done. Most of the area has the appearance of a neglected backwater of the city. Poverty, poorly maintained structures, and disinvestment are readily apparent throughout the area.
- There is a real (or at least perceived) problem with crime in the South Rome area. This was mentioned as a concern by many area residents, and may be contributing to disinvestment in the area.
- Much of the South Rome area is either located in a floodplain or is Darlington School owned property. This limits the potential for substantial new development in the area. (*see illustration 2*)
- The Resource Team identified eight distinct neighborhoods in South Rome, as noted below (*see illustration 1 for boundaries*):

Neighborhood	Current Characteristics	Community Identity & Architectural Character	Neighborhood Focal Nodes
<b>Central South Rome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• substandard housing, particularly rental property</li> <li>• lower income residents</li> <li>• deteriorating housing stock</li> <li>• owner-led neighborhood association</li> <li>• unpaved streets</li> <li>• older (1930's) water/ sewer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cottage scale/single story</li> <li>• single family homes on small lots</li> <li>• active street life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anna K. Davie School grounds &amp; Parks Hoke Park</li> <li>• Churches</li> <li>• lake at Porter and Cotton Streets</li> </ul>
<b>Coosa CC/Virginia Circle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• upper income residents</li> <li>• private country club</li> <li>• large, well-maintained homes</li> <li>• fenced-off from neighboring low-income area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• moderate sized lots, mixed styles</li> <li>• extensive yard landscaping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myrtle Hill Cemetery</li> <li>• Coosa Country Club</li> </ul>
<b>Etowah Terrace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• historic houses (some of oldest in South Rome)</li> <li>• very transitory, multi-ethnic population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• board &amp; batten single-family dwellings</li> <li>• small Queen Annes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myrtle Hill Cemetery</li> <li>• greenspace toward Etowah River and Silver Creek</li> </ul>



Neighborhood	Current Characteristics	Community Identity & Architectural Character	Neighborhood Focal Nodes
<b>Mt. Aventine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gentrifying residential area</li> <li>• largely owner occupied</li> <li>• real estate sales activity</li> <li>• active neighborhood association</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large single-family homes</li> <li>• Queen Anne style homes</li> <li>• scattering of other building types</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• panoramic city views</li> </ul>
<b>South Rome Commons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• culturally/ethnically diverse</li> <li>• many deteriorated structures</li> <li>• marginal businesses</li> <li>• a few large Queen Anne homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• variety of uncoordinated building styles and sizes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Y” intersection of South Broad/East Main</li> </ul>
<b>Anchor Duck Mill Village</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deteriorated single-family housing</li> <li>• lower income/mostly rentals</li> <li>• some houses located in floodplain</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• traditional mill house style</li> <li>• tightly knit mill village with rear alleys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• former mill building</li> <li>• intersection of Cave Spring/East Main</li> </ul>
<b>Black Bluff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stable traditional residential</li> <li>• City sewage treatment facility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• large lot residential mixed styles</li> <li>• rural feeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• greenspace along river</li> </ul>
<b>Darlington Village</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• primarily industrial warehousing area</li> <li>• some vacant land and underutilized</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• variety of uncoordinated building styles and sizes</li> <li>• generally unattractive views along Darlington Drive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• intersection of Cave Spring Road/Darlington Drive</li> </ul>

- The Resource Team identified several prominent buildings in South Rome that present significant redevelopment opportunities, as noted below:

Structure	Neighborhood Location	Architectural Characteristics	Possible Reuse Opportunities
<b>Historic Buildings at Charles Graves Bridge</b> 	Etowah Terrace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traditional brick one &amp; two story buildings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restaurant with outdoor dining</li> <li>small retail shops</li> </ul>
<b>Flat Iron Building</b> 	South Rome Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>three story brick</li> <li>triangular building layout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>retail</li> <li>service</li> <li>community cultural museum</li> </ul>
<b>East Main School</b> 	South Rome Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traditional brick school building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>senior center</li> <li>recreation center</li> <li>satellite education center (arts, tech)</li> </ul>
<b>Former Mill Building</b> 	Anchor Duck Mill Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>loft-style industrial building</li> <li>extensive vacant land surrounding area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>neighborhood business incubator</li> <li>recreation center</li> <li>flea market</li> </ul>
<b>Cottonseed Oil Building</b> 	Anchor Duck Mill Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>industrial building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>commercial brownfield redevelopment</li> <li>warehousing</li> </ul>
<b>McCall Hospital Apartments</b> 	Central South Rome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traditional two-story brick building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>renovated apartments</li> </ul>
<b>Old Firehouse</b> 	Central South Rome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>traditional brick firehouse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>retail</li> <li>service</li> <li>community meeting hall</li> </ul>
<b>“Three painted ladies”</b> 	South Rome Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>large frame Queen Annes on large lots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>professional offices</li> <li>restaurant</li> <li>antique shops</li> <li>multifamily condominiums</li> </ul>
<b>Black Bluff Road trailer park</b>	Black Bluff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mostly condemned mobile homes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recreational access to river</li> </ul>

- Single-family detached homes are the predominant type of housing within the South Rome area, but there are multi-unit rental houses, and small apartment complexes mixed into the neighborhoods.
- The majority of single-family homes in the area appear to be in excess of 50 years old. There are many substandard properties interspersed within the neighborhoods and much of the housing is in need of major repairs. Several of the substandard properties have been removed leaving vacant lots available for infill housing.
- Multi-family housing units throughout the South Rome area are generally in disrepair, indicating a lack of landlord concern and fueling general neighborhood opposition to more multi-family housing being located in the area.
- With the exception of a few neighborhoods (see table above) South Rome appears to be progressively transitioning to residential rental, slowly losing its appeal for home ownership. The average age of homeowners has increased in South Rome, as younger to middle-aged people are not buying in the area – possibly because of a perception of crime and other problems. The depressed housing market locks existing homeowners in their residences. They will have difficulty selling their homes for anywhere near the cost of buying newer homes elsewhere in Rome. The lack of middle-aged homeowners deprives the area of the primary source of “energy” needed to sustain community organizations.
- There is little provision for children in the South Rome area, further exacerbating the neighborhood’s inability to attract new younger to middle-aged homeowners (with children):
  - Lack of sidewalks makes it difficult for children to walk to school.
  - There is a lack of recreation facilities for children.
  - There is a lack of unstructured free play activities and opportunities for children.
- The primary arterial corridor in the South Rome area is South Broad to East Main Street to Cave Spring Street. This corridor connects historic downtown Rome to the Darlington School Main Campus area. Secondary corridors include:
  - Black Bluff Road, providing an alternate north/south connection through the study area
  - 12<sup>th</sup> Street, a major east-west connection to SR 27.
  - Darlington Drive, also providing a connection to SR 27.
- Both 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Darlington Drive have at grade railroad crossings. These create traffic problems during the frequent train crossings, and add to the inaccessibility of the South Rome area. They also present a safety issue for pedestrians (particularly children) crossing the rail tracks.
- Without any major increase in development to increase traffic (due to the limited land available for new development, and the fact that current residents do not want high density commercial or residential infill development), road widenings should not be necessary in South Rome. The only exception may be South Broad and East Main streets, which may need to be widened to no more than three lanes as this corridor revitalizes.
- The connectivity of the internal street network is varied. The South Rome area was developed in the late 1800s with a linear grid pattern. However, subsequent developments were more suburban in nature and were disconnected from the original street network. Topography also hinders connectivity.

- Two bus transit lines serve the study area: Route A and Route B. Buses come approximately every 39-43 minutes. There are few bus shelters. Routes A and B are both rather circuitous, causing long ride times to reach ultimate destinations.
- The Rome-Floyd Ped-Ways seek to link major destinations in Rome through an alternative transportation network of pedestrian and bike trails. There is currently only one of these trails serving South Rome. This trail has no linkage to the eastern section of South Rome and it lacks signage and amenities, which may limit its usage.
- There is a wealth of historic structures scattered throughout South Rome. The area currently has three National Register districts: South Broad Street; Mt. Aventine; Myrtle Hill Cemetery. None of these districts has oversight by the local historic preservation commission.

