


PlanFirst Program Application - May 15, 2017

Introduction: The Department of Community Affairs' PlanFirst program rewards local governments that clearly demonstrate success with implementing their local comprehensive plan. To apply for PlanFirst designation, a local government must have Qualified Local Government certification and be current on required reporting to DCA. (To check status of both, please visit <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp>).

A multi-agency review panel will evaluate a number of indicators of community success with plan implementation to select communities for this designation. All of these indicators are equally important, but size of the community is taken into consideration in the evaluation so that communities of various sizes are equally competitive for PlanFirst designation.

Instructions: Please answer all the following questions thoroughly, attaching additional pages where necessary, so that the reviewers have sufficient information to measure the success of your comprehensive plan implementation. Supporting documents might include: news articles, legal ads, lists of attendees, letters of support or other evidence of local involvement and commitment to successful plan implementation activities in your community. *Total application length, including supporting information and support letters, must not exceed 20 pages. Text areas will expand as needed.*

Applicant government	CITY OF THOMASVILLE
Mailing address	Post Office Box 1540 Thomasville, GA 31799
Telephone	(229) 227-4118
Email	brianh@thomasville.org
Contact person; title	Brian Herrmann City Planner
Application prepared by	Eve Geyer Project Manager
I, the undersigned authorized representative of the applicant, certify that to the best of my knowledge the information in this application is true and correct.	
Name of authorized official signing; title	Gregory Hobbs Mayor
Date	May 14, 2017
Signature	

PRE-REQUISITES

A. (1) We have a consistent record of maintaining our Qualified Local Government status **and** submitting required reports to DCA, including the current Report of Local Government Finances. (To check status, please visit <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp>).

QLG status:	<u>yes</u>	no
Local government reports:	<u>yes</u>	no

A. (2) We have attained the Minimum Standard for performance as called for in our regional commission's regional comprehensive plan.

<u>yes</u>	no
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For each of the following indicators, fully explain how your community addresses this indicator; identifying specific examples and resulting local successes. (Each indicator will be scored 1, 3 or 5 points, except indicators j. and t. which may score up to 10 points.) Add exhibits and examples as needed to tell your story.

INDICATOR: GOALS

B. The Goals (or Vision) section of our comprehensive plan is supported by the community and its leadership. How?

- The goals of our Comprehensive Plan center on preservation of the city's historic character while encouraging private sector growth, advancement in technology, public safety, recreational opportunities, and environmental sustainability. These goals are supported by the City Council, City staff, and citizens who are active participants in the planning process.
- Planning has always been at the forefront, allowing Thomasville to represent the best of Southern urbanism and hospitality with the lavishness of the resort lifestyle. During the late 1800s, Thomasville served as the terminus for the railroad, providing direct access to the north and becoming known as the "Winter Resort of the South." Downtown and surrounding traditional neighborhoods were constructed. Vast plantations on the outskirts of town brought economic investment and ensured a compact and flourishing city. Still today, the community works hard to guard and preserve the area's long-standing tradition of cultural and economic diversity. Just as it took great planning to create Thomasville in the 19th century, it takes great planning to protect that history while moving the city into the 21st century.
- In 1998, the City of Thomasville was the first city in Georgia to receive the Great American Main Street City Award; has earned accreditation from Main Street America as a Georgia Exceptional Main Street; and was named one of a dozen top places to visit in the USA by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1999. This year we celebrated our 96th Rose Show and Festival and will hold our 31st Annual Victorian Christmas on the bricks in the heart of our downtown. Also, an additional 475 promotional events were held in the downtown area.
- The Thomasville Main Street Downtown Development Program began in 1981. Since then, more than \$87 million has been reinvested in both private and public improvements. Overall,

the program has experienced a net gain of 285 new businesses and more than 1,000 new jobs.

- In 2016, our Visitor's Center assisted over 9,200 people for weddings, reunions, and sporting events bringing an estimated \$17 million in direct spending to the area. Visitor expenditures have also steadily grown over the last six years with a nearly 30% growth from 2009 to 2015.

C. The Goals are both ambitious and achievable for the community. Please give examples of some ambitious yet achievable Goals included in your comprehensive plan.

- The City of Thomasville believes in setting goals that are both ambitious and attainable. We are a city of around 18,000 and pride ourselves in offering big city amenities with small town appeal. The Community has been fortunate to achieve numerous successes not only in accordance with our Comprehensive Plan goals but also out of the necessity to move our community forward. We are deep in the heart of South Georgia and began our own cable, internet, and phone service when no other internet providers would support the area.
- The City of Thomasville has a good track record of successfully completing projects identified in our Comprehensive Plan Short Term Work Program (see section E for specific project details) and managing State and Federal money efficiently and effectively. City Staff will continue to be "an innovative organization exceeding community expectations" – our Vision Statement – while working with the community to ensure economic development, community vitality, and preservation of our natural and cultural resources.
- One of our more significant goals under Economic Development was to address the significant underperforming properties within the City. The Land Bank Authority acquires, assembles, and stabilizes tax delinquent and vacant properties for redevelopment. In particular, the Land Bank was a critical part in acquiring and assembling parcels within the Victoria Park which have subsequently been sold to a developer for redevelopment.

D. The Goals steer local decision-making on a continuous basis. Please tell us how and provide specific examples.

- The City of Thomasville utilizes its Comprehensive Plan as a guide for making sound planning decisions that impact the community's growth. It is considered in every budget cycle, land use decision, capital project priority list, CDBG application, CHIP administration, SPLOST referendum, and other growth and development decisions. The city also as an Airport Master Plan that is submitted to DOT and FAA as a planning tool for funding of projects. Projects are included in the city budget. There is also a Landfill Master Plan that is reviewed every year and submitted to the State in order to meet federal operational requirements and budget for funding of improvements and maintenance.
- We review every potential change to our zoning ordinance and provide text amendments in keeping with the context of consistency with the planned use as set forth in our Future Development map. For example, we wrote a text amendment to add a new type of affordable housing called an additional dwelling unit.
- CDBG and other grant applications consider the comprehensive plan and its list of projects. Five new homes are being built for low income families with a 2016 CHIP grant.

E. Consistent progress is being made at achieving the Goals. Please explain, and if possible, include examples of this progress.

- The City of Thomasville continues to implement its Comprehensive Plan with updates provided at relevant intervals throughout the year to our various committees; as input to our Annual Report; as updates to the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent and City Council; and as required by our SPLOST referendum.
- Several of the projects listed in the 2013 Short Term Work Program have been completed or are underway. Examples are provided below and are also reflected in sections J and T.

Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New entrance signs at all parks (7) • New automated lighting, playground equipment, covered dugouts, pickleball court, and tennis courts at Remington Park (a county-wide used park) • New playground equipment at Flipper Park • Currently planning for new playground equipment at MacIntyre Park • New basketball netting and lighting at Varnedoe Park • Installation of message boards
Cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly paved roads in older portions of the cemetery • Landscaped and cleaned up historic Jewish cemetery • New gate at historic Flipper Cemetery • Preservation efforts at the 1864 Civil War Prison Site
Technology Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded high definition broadcasting services • Developed mobile app for our utility billing system • Constructed a new network operations center and parking lot • Addition of video on demand services to CNS • Addition of SCADA capability to all facilities
Public Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle purchasing plan – 5 to 10 new squad cars each year • 2 new automated messaging boards • 2 new license plate readers for Police Department • Newly designated Fire Marshall (first ever in Thomasville) • Currently upgrading fire training rescue tower and training grounds • Community engagement events to include public safety awareness training with local churches, DARE program, and kids program on fire safety
Water Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaced multiple high efficiency pump • 95% complete with automated meter reader (AMR) installation • Procured a Meter Data Management System
Sewer Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed system evaluation/system rehabilitation • Replaced multiple lift stations; combined lift stations 5 & 6 • Wastewater Treatment Facility \$9 Million Upgrade
Civil Engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed paving of all dirt streets • Completed sidewalk repair of prioritized trip hazards • Renovation to historic engineering building • Completed construction of 2 miles of multi-use trail • Design underway for additional 5 miles of multi-use trail
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened a Housing & Resource Center to assist with on-going efforts to create safe, livable neighborhoods • In 2015, named by <i>USA Today</i>, <u>In your wildest dreams: Nine of America's top sporting destinations.</u> • In 2015, the Planning Department won a state award for promoting homeownership through innovative strategies.

INDICATOR: LEADERSHIP

F. We have effective planning staff or another suitable arrangement for handling community planning matters. Please tell us about your staff or suitable arrangement, including, if you wish, any degrees or certifications.

- The City's planning staff consists mainly of the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent, Assistant City Manager/City Engineer, Engineering Staff, City Planner, Chief Building Official, Zoning Administer, City Attorney, Assistant Utilities Superintendent, and Public Works Director.
- The City Manager/Utilities Superintendent is responsible to the City Council for the administration of all City affairs and in general, oversees daily operations and provides oversight for comprehensive planning and community development.
- The Assistant City Manager/City Engineer is a Georgia registered Professional Engineer (P.E.) and advises and assists the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent in all engineering matters including developing and managing capital improvement projects for safe, efficient operation of the city. Departments that report to the Assistant City Manager/City Engineer are Planning, Public Works (to include Stormwater Management, Landscape, Cemetery, Fleet Services, Golf Course, and Cemetery), Engineering, Airport, and Operations (Gas, Water, Sewer, Water Treatment Plant, and Wastewater Treatment Plant). Additionally, the City Engineer oversees the application of funds received from the CDBG Program and GEFA loans.
- The Engineering Department includes two professional engineers, one engineer, one project manager, four engineering technicians, one GIS analyst, and one GIS technician who oversee development projects, map existing utilities, and plan future utility replacement and extension projects.
- The Planning Department consists of the City Planner, a Neighborhood Planner, and Urban Planner – all LEED certified – that work not only to enforce zoning requirements but to develop land use plans and programs to help create better neighborhoods, communities, spur economic growth, and improve physical spaces. Additionally, the Planning Department oversees the administration of funds received from the CHIP Grant Program – received grants in 2012 and 2016.
- The Chief Building Official oversees the City's Code Enforcement, Zoning Administration, building permitting process, Architectural Review and Zoning Appeals Board, Tree and Landscape Board, and Historic Preservation Board.
- The Assistant Utilities Superintendent advises and assists the City Manager/Utilities Superintendent in matters pertaining to electric utilities; cable, telephony, and internet (commercial and residential) services; and information technology as well as to the Assistant City Manager/City Engineer for capital projects and commercial development.

G. We have an active planning commission or similar body to steer local planning decisions. Please provide information about your commission or similar body; for instance, number of members, meeting schedule, local affiliations, etc. The City has several active Commissions and Boards that steer local planning decisions in many areas. They are:

- The Planning and Zoning Commission: This Commission was created to enable the City of Thomasville to overcome problems in which public input is advisable; to engage in orderly planning for the wise conservation of historic and natural resources; and for the growth of business enterprises providing new or expanded job opportunities throughout the community.

The Board meets on a monthly basis – first Monday of each month – and hears items such as rezoning requests, special use permit requests, and amendments to the zoning ordinance. The Board makes recommendations to the City Council on matters concerning final plat approval, annexation of property into the city limits, street/alley closures, street name changes, and rezoning requests. The Board is involved in the consideration of all future development map amendments, zoning map amendments, and zoning and development code amendments. The Board is responsible for the oversight of several Steering Committees. These Steering Committees are tasked with making recommendations regarding location, design, phasing, policies, and community outreach for designated Planning Initiatives and Capital Improvement Projects. The Board consists of nine members, each serving a four-year term.

- The Architectural Review and Zoning Appeals Board: This Board is responsible for administering the distribution of façade grants which are available through the Main Street Program. They are committed to historic preservation and the overall appearance of the downtown Thomasville area. The Board meets the second Wednesday of each month and consists of five members, each serving a three-year term.
- The Historic Preservation Board: This Board is responsible for establishing the designation of historic properties or districts, issuing Certificates of Appropriateness for property owners within these designated districts, and providing for an appeals process to the Thomasville Historic Preservation Ordinance. The Board meets the second Tuesday of each month and consists of seven members, each serving a three-year term. The members are limited to two consecutive terms and consist of one architectural representative, one construction representative, one real estate representative, one related discipline, and three citizens.
- The Tree and Landscape Board: The purpose of this Board is to educate the public as to the economic and aesthetic benefits of trees and landscaping to the City of Thomasville and its citizens on both publicly and privately owned property. This Board promotes the care, fertilization, protection, and other measures desirable for the health and growth of existing trees in City rights-of-way. The Board meets as needed and consists of eight members, each serving a two-year term.
- The Airport Advisory Board: This Board is responsible for making recommendations to the City Council on matters of operations, safety, and policy that affect the commercial and private users of the Thomasville Regional Airport. This Board assists in insuring concerns of airport users are communicated to the City and likewise that information regarding City plans and programs are disseminated among all commercial and private users. The Board meets as needed and consists of six members. These members each serve a four-year term, are limited to two consecutive terms, and consist of two locally elected officials, 2 commercial airport users, and two hangar lessors.
- The Destination Thomasville Tourism Authority: The purpose of this Board is to increase area tourism and tourist dollars while providing a quality tourist experience. The Board meets quarterly and consists of seven members. These members each serve a four-year term and consists of the Mayor, Chairman of the Thomasville/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, four appointed by the City Council, two owners/operators/managers of tourism related businesses, two citizens, and one appointed by Thomas County.
- The Downtown Development Authority: They are responsible for promoting the economic development in the Thomasville downtown business district. Meetings are held the second Thursday of every-other month and consists of seven members (business owners or downtown residents), each serving a four-year term.
- Payroll Development Authority: They are charged with expanding and developing industry in the City of Thomasville and Thomas County. Meetings are held the fourth Monday of each month and consists of five members, each serving a three-year term. Members include the

Mayor (or designee), the Thomas County Commission Chairman, the Thomasville/Thomas County Chamber of Commerce Board Chairman, and two local banking representatives.

- The Thomasville Main Street Advisory Board: The Main Street organization espouses "Downtown Economic Development within the context of Historic Preservation." The Main Street Program follows the "Four Point Approach" of Design, Organization, Promotion, and Economic Restructuring, which work together to build a sustainable and complete community revitalization effort. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month and consists of nine members – 3 members serve a one year term, 3 members serve a two year term, and three members serve a three year term.
- The Thomasville-Thomas County Land Bank Authority Board: The Land Bank Authority is an intergovernmental agency organized under Georgia state law. This Authority permits cities and counties to acquire problem properties in order to foster the public purpose of returning property, which is nonrevenue generating and nontax producing, to an effective utilization status in order to provide housing, new industry, and jobs. It seeks to transfer properties back to responsible ownership and productive use in accordance with local land use goals and priorities for community revitalization. The Board meets the first Wednesday of each month and consists of five members – two City Council members, two County Commissioners, and one at-large member.
- The Thomasville-Thomas County Recreation Advisory Board: The Board is focused on ensuring that the leisure needs of the entire community are addressed and met. This Board conducts studies and provides recommendations to the City Council on leisure activities, programs, and improvements on short and long-range needs of the citizens in the Thomasville area. Recommendations are made by this Board to the City Council on budget appropriations for programs and park facilities. The Board meets monthly and consists of ten members, each serving a three-year term. Member make up is four representatives appointed by the City of Thomasville, three representatives appointed by Thomas County, two representatives appointed by the majority of small town Mayors, and one representative appointed by the YMCA Board.

H. We have a regular local plan effectiveness evaluation process (such as annual planning retreats of elected leadership). Please provide information about the most recent.

- The City Manager/Utilities Superintendent manages and administers our plan effectiveness and implementation evaluation process. He sets the agenda and activities needed to carry out the projects envisioned in the plan and policies set by the City Council. He meets with the City Department Heads every month to plan and review operational and project activities. He also reports status and progress often to the City Council on an informal basis. Formal reporting and evaluation takes place on a monthly basis at City Council meetings and workshops in addition to updating our community partners.
- The City Manager/Utilities Superintendent and City Council attend an annual off-site retreat in the spring before our budget cycle begins to review and discuss the annual capital projects list and budget; city issues and opportunities; and community concerns and input.

I. All local officials (both elected and appointed) involved in local planning processes have recently attended training in how to use the plan effectively. Please list who attended, which trainings and the date(s) attended. These trainings may include those from Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the Community Planning Institute, GMA or ACCG land use or planning classes, and similar courses.


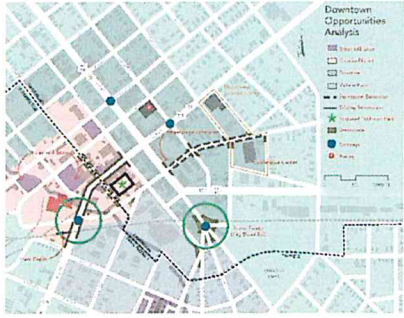
- Mayor Hobbs, Mayor Pro-tem Sims, and Council Member Scott most recently attended the GMA Mayor’s Day in 2016 and 2017. Our City Council have also completed the following training related to the planning process sponsored by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government:




CITY COUNCIL	TRAINING	DATE/CREDITS
Mayor Greg Hobbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly Elected Officials Training • DDA Basic Training • Environmental Sustainability • Making Citizen Engagement Work in Our Communities • Open Meetings/Open Records • Community & Media Relations • Economic Development • Public Policy Development & Implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb 2010/6 hours • Jun 2011/6 hours • Jan 2017/6 hours • Jan 2011/6 hours • Sep 2012/6 hours • Jan 2016/6 hours • Nov 2012/6 hours • Jun 2016/3 hours
Mayor Pro-tem Don Sims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly Elected Officials Training • Changing Demographics and Best Practices • Open Meetings/Open Records • Public Policy Development & Implementation • Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mar 2014/6 hours • Jun 2016/3 hours • Aug 2014/6 hours • Jun 2015/3 hours • Jun 2015/6 hours
Council Member Max Beverly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly Elected Officials Training • Retreats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb 2006/6 hours • 2006 & 2012
Council Member Jay Flowers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly Elected Officials Training • Housing • Critical Issues: Bike Friendly Community • Open Meetings/Open Records 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb 2012/6 hours • Apr 2012/6 hours • Jun 2016/3 hours • Sep 2012/6 hours
Council Member Terry Scott	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newly Elected Officials Training • Economics of Education • Public Policy Development & Implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb 2017/6 hours • Jun 2016/3 hours • Jun 2016/3 hours

- The Engineering staff regularly attends trainings and workshops sponsored by the GDOT, Federal Highway Administration, and American Society of Civil Engineers. Training within the last five years includes Stream Corridor Restoration (14 hours), Georgia Floodplain Management (4.5 hours), and “Artists and Engineers: Are We Really THAT Different and Why Can’t We All Just Get Along” (1 hour course on Public Art).
- The Planning staff regularly attends trainings and workshops sponsored by the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU). Recent training includes CNU 24 (The Transforming City) in 2016 and CNU 25 (Building Places People Love) in 2017. The City Planner’s paper on suburban sprawl was presented at the CNU 24 conference as part of the session on Suburban Sprawl Retrofit.
- The Public Works staff are members of the American Public Works Association and regularly attend trainings and workshops sponsored by the American Public Works Association. Recent training includes the Certificate of Public Works Management completed by our Assistant Public Works Director and Cemetery Administrator.
- The Code Enforcement Officer regularly attends training through the International Code Council and in 2016 completed a written exam to be certified as an ICC/AACE Property Maintenance and Housing Inspector and received 6 CEUs from the Carl Vison Institute on “Promoting Community Support for Code Enforcement Programs” (153 CEUs since 2011 on a variety of topics).

J. Provide up to ten of your best recent examples where the plan steered a key local decision, with pertinent plan references (attach additional sheets as needed). Please explain the connection between the comprehensive plan and the decision(s) made.

PLAN	DESCRIPTION	PLAN REFERENCE(S)
1. Trailhead & Creative Arts District (now known as "The Bottom")	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomasville residents and community leaders gathered to develop a new Creative District to embrace the geographic context of our land, express our rich cultural heritage, leverage the energy of the New South trend, increase economic opportunity, revitalize the historic area, and bring our creative community resources together. • This planning effort resulted directly in the construction of an amphitheater; trailhead; branding and wayfinding program; consolidation of utility lines; and text amendment for allowance of food trucks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Economic Development Policy 2.2:</i> Promote and support commercial revitalization in the downtown areas that provide services and retail opportunities that serve both the local buying market and tourists. • <i>Community Facilities Policy 4.2:</i> Connect city parks via a bicycle/pedestrian route that provides a continuous network between parks.
2. Multi-use Trail Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thomasville community leaders and active advocates conceived a plan to implement a trail system to connect the city's historic districts and neighborhoods to existing parks and economic development centers. • The trail will pass through a variety of environments as it courses through various locales and spaces. From tree-lined city streets to natural woodland paths, the user will experience the best of Thomasville's rich heritage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Community Facilities Policy 4.2:</i> Connect city parks via a bicycle/pedestrian route that provides a continuous network between parks.
3. Gateways Urban Redevelopment Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This plan resulted in an initial concept for improvements to our West Jackson Corridor which is the first view of Thomasville that travelers from Tallahassee and south see. It will beautify the area, create an identity, and facilitate economic reinvestment along West Jackson Street. • Planning began with a "mini-charrette" with City staff, City Council, and representatives from Main Street, and then a public engagement event was held to solicit input from the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Economic Development Policy 2.2:</i> Promote and support commercial revitalization in the downtown areas that provide services and retail opportunities that serve both the local buying market and tourists. • <i>Housing Policy 1.4:</i> Provide signage and plantings as visual cues and focal points to help visitors and residents distinguish areas from one another.
4. GIS Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The GIS Program has expanded to support the Planning, Zoning, Building, and Engineering departments in understanding patterns in economic and housing developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>STWP:</i> Maintain and enhance Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capabilities and personnel for additional planning and regulatory functions.

<p>5. Historic Cemetery Preservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each year, grave restoration and identification is conducted at our historic cemeteries in partnership with local partners and with cadaver dogs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Natural and Cultural Resources Policy 1.1:</i> Protect historic resources through local designation, regulation, partnership, and recognition programs. <i>Natural and Cultural Resources Policy 2.2:</i> Identify, seek and encourage the use of State and Federal preservation incentive programs.
<p>6. Event Center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thomasville community leaders bought property in 2013 to answer the community need to have more event space in order to accommodate the various events downtown to include the Antique Show, Rose Show, and Center of the Arts events. In 2016, we held a charrette to gather community feedback that would create a space to leverage connections to downtown, address gaps that impact the users' experience (adequate parking was identified), and be mindful of future development opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Economic Development Policy 2.5:</i> Conduct a study of Downtown Thomasville that includes an analysis of the city's zoning, parking availability, traffic management, façade grants, event sponsoring, and other changes that will make the city more attractive to tourists and improve quality of life for residents. <i>Economic Development Policy 2.8:</i> Develop facilities and adopt a marketing initiative for attracting small conferences. 
<p>7. Code Audit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Code Audit was conducted to thoroughly analyze and review the existing ordinances to identify inconsistencies, drawbacks, legal concerns, outdated standards, and organizational issues; recommend how to best address the previous items; and develop a template for restructuring the current standards into a Unified Development Ordinance. We then plan to draft a new Unified Development Ordinance as part of the 2018 Comprehensive Plan process or immediately following. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>STWP:</i> Prepare and adopt a comprehensive revision of the city's zoning ordinance and official zoning map.

<p>8. Victoria Park Urban Re-development Area (URA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This URA resulted in the creation of another opportunity zone, construction of habitat homes, and ability to save historic homes in partnership with our Landmarks organization and Williams Family Foundation of Georgia. <p>‘Opportunity’ application approved <i>City council opts to go ahead with VPURA</i></p> <p><small>By Teresa Williams teresa.williams@gafnews.com</small></p> <p><small>THOMASVILLE — The City of Thomasville is moving forward with opportunities to pursue an economic development tool and a grant to construct a resource center for local housing.</small></p>  <p><small>CAMPBELL</small></p> <p><small>The Thomasville City Council, at its Aug. 22 meeting, held a public hearing and then unanimously approved a resolution to submit an application to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for an Opportunity Zone designation for the Victoria Place Urban Redevelopment Area, or VPURA. City Planner Lee Gastain said Friday the application is ready.</small></p> <p><small>“Now that we have received all of the appropriate signatures on the appropriate documents the application is ready and will be submitted on Monday,” he said.</small></p> <p><small>Upon approval by the GDCA, the designation will allow for businesses with the Victoria Place Urban Redevelopment Area or those that move within the area over the next 10 years to receive a Georgia Job Tax Credit of \$3,500 per employee per year.</small></p> <p><small>Please see ZONE, page 2A</small></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Economic Development Policy 2.1:</i> Promote historic preservation as a principal economic development tool. <i>Economic Development Policy 3.3:</i> Continue to maintain an ongoing public/private partnership to preserve/protect historic resources and identified historic areas. <i>Housing Policy 1.3:</i> Support and expand continued efforts to preserve historic neighborhoods and structures in Thomasville. <i>Natural and Cultural Resources Policy 1.1:</i> Protect historic resources through local designation, regulation, partnership, and recognition programs.
<p>9. City Park Upgrades</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City Planner and Recreation Board developed a plan to identify improvements at our community and neighborhood parks. The different parks are all at different levels of needed upgrades. Planning has resulted in the purchase of new playground equipment at the smaller parks. Public engagement events/ charrettes were held at two of our large neighborhood parks where the community was thoroughly part of the visioning and planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Community Facilities Policy 4.1:</i> Prepare a long-range master plan for parks and recreation facilities. <i>Community Facilities Policy 4.3:</i> Establish Level of Service standards for parks and recreation facilities. 
<p>10. Victoria Place Overlay District</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The creation of the Victoria Place Overlay District resulted in a form based code in that area to promote preservation, infill development, and revitalization throughout the city in its traditional communities and upon individual blocks and lots. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Housing Goal 1:</i> Preserve and enhance the distinct identities and historic character of existing neighborhoods and structures and encourage the development of new neighborhoods that possess a unique identity through attractive design of public places, proximity to schools, parks, and community festivals and events.

INDICATOR: PARTICIPATION

K. Our comprehensive plan was prepared with multiple community input opportunities. Please provide information about these opportunities, including, if available, dates, agendas, other meeting materials.

- The City of Thomasville partnered with Thomas County for the development of our 2005-2015 Comprehensive Plan. We also worked with a third party to develop a Community Participation Plan to ensure that we created as many opportunities for citizens to work collaboratively and provide input to shape their community. A seven phased approach over a two-year period was used to schedule and gather appropriate input.

Phase 1: Project Set Up	Aug 2005
Phase 2: Community Assessment	Sep 2005 – Jan 2006
Phase 3: Community Participation Plan	Jan – Feb 2006
Phase 4: Public Presentations & Submittals	Mar – Nov 2006
Citizen Advisory Panel Kick-Off Meeting	Mar – Apr 2006
Public Presentations of Community Assessment & Participation Program	Apr – Jun 2006
Confirm Community Assessment Assumptions	Jul – Aug 2006
Public Hearing #1 for Community Assessment & Participation Program	Aug – Sep 2006
Submit Community Assessment & Participation Program to SWGRDC	Oct 2006
Phase 5: Visioning and Goal Setting	Dec 2006
Phase 6: Community Agenda	Jan – Jun 2007
Develop Future Development Map & Supporting Narrative	Jan – Feb 2007
Community Design Workshops	Mar 2007
Refine Future Development Map & Supporting Narrative	Apr 2007
Draft Community Agenda	May 2007
Submit Working Draft of Community Agenda to County & City	May 2007
Public Presentation(s) of Community Agenda	Jun 2007
Revisions to Community Agenda	Jun 2007
Submit Revised Community Agenda to County & City	Jun 2007
Phase 7: Plan Review and Adoption	Jun – Nov 2007
Public Hearing #2 for Community Agenda	Jun – Jul 2007
Final Revisions to Community Agenda	Jul 2007
Submit Community Agenda to SWGRDC for Review	Aug 2007
Adoption of Community Agenda – Comprehensive Plan	Nov 2007

- Our outreach efforts to ensure the most public engagement included internet postings; surveys and questionnaires; and information brochures with follow-up information provided via our internet, local newspaper, TV, and City Council workshops/meetings.

L. The community input received during plan preparation influenced the content of the plan. How?

- Community input received during plan preparation did influence the content of the plan. One specific concern was the confined land area in the city that could impact economic development. Using SPLOST money, the City of Thomasville developed the Red Hills Business Park a couple of miles outside of city limits by partnering with Thomas County and the Payroll Development Authority to spur more commercial economic growth.
- Another specific concern voiced by the community was how to provide employment opportunities when there was a lack of completely paved roads. The city has been using

SPLOST and LMIG money to address this concern and just this year has finished paving the last dirt road.

M. Our steering committee that guided development of the plan included local leaders and elected officials. Please provide a list of steering committee members and their local affiliations.

- The Administration Committee included the below members, and their major administrative tasks were to review and provide comments on consultant work products, recommend members for other supporting committees, provide guidance for addressing political issues, and promote the planning process to the citizens of the city and county.

Mike Stephenson	Thomas County	Thomas County Manager
Johnny L. Reichert	Thomas County	Chief Inspector
Donna McKinney	Thomas County	Asst. Zoning Administrator/Office Manager
Elaine Mayes	Thomas County	Thomas County Commissioner
Neil Fleckenstein	Tall Timbers Research Station	Red Hills Planner
Sharlene Celaya	City of Thomasville	Executive Director, Main Street
Kha Thomas	City of Thomasville	Senior Assistant City Manager/Employee and Community Services
Duane Treadon	City of Thomasville	Neighborhood/Housing Development Administrator

- We also formed a Citizen Advisory Panel (CAP) to analyze, prioritize, and balance community issues. They reacted to concepts and draft documents from the consultant, assisted in developing the future land use plans for the city, acted as a sounding board for the consultant, and proposed balanced positions to resolve conflicting points of view. Panel members were from the American Legion, Archbold Hospital, Flowers Bakery, Heritage Foundation, Jack Hadley Black History Memorabilia, Inc., Kiwanis Club, Lake Riverside Subdivision, Local Churches, Masonic Lodges, Ministerial Association, Minority Business and Professional Association, Recreation Board, Rotary Club, Southwest GA Technical College, Thomas University, Thomasville-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce, Thomasville City Schools, Thomasville Housing Authority, and Thomasville Businesses and Merchants.

N. We have an active, ongoing, outreach process for soliciting input on planning matters from a broad spectrum of the community, including non-traditional populations, and the resulting input is listened to by community leaders. Describe this process. How do you engage the stakeholders? Have partnerships been developed because of the planning process? This outreach process includes activities such as:

- We do have an active, ongoing, outreach process for soliciting input on planning matters from a broad spectrum of the community, including non-traditional populations, and resulting input is listened to by community leaders.
- The Council members hold periodic town hall meetings in their voting areas to provide project update and receive public input.
- The City encourages public input at all of our public meetings and has dedicated time on the agenda to hear public input on any issue or concern.
- We hold public engagement meetings for planning initiatives and projects that would impact a community. We have recently held these for Event Center planning, W. Jackson Street improvements, CDBG application input, MacIntyre Park improvements, Weston Park improvements, and character designation in "The Bottom."

O. We have active advocates for plan implementation (such as activist citizens, organizations or neighborhood groups) that are listened to by community leaders. These groups include:

- American Legion
- Archbold Hospital
- Dewey City Neighborhood Watch
- Douglass High School Alumni Association
- Flowers Bakery
- Heritage Foundation
- Jack Hadley Black History Memorabilia, Inc.
- Kiwanis Club
- Landmarks
- Local Churches such as 1st Missionary Baptist Church
- Masonic Lodges
- Ministerial Association
- Minority Business and Professional Association
- Neighborhood Associations
- Recreation Board
- Rotary Club
- Southern Regional Technical College
- Thomas University
- Thomasville-Thomas County Chamber of Commerce
- Thomasville Center for the Arts
- Thomasville City Schools and Board of Education
- Thomasville Housing Authority
- Thomasville Businesses and Merchants
- Thomasville YMCA

INDICATOR: IMPLEMENTATION

P. The Work Program section of our comprehensive plan consists primarily of specific action items that make it clear exactly what we intend to do to implement the plan. Please give examples of measureable action items included in your work program(s).

- Our Work Program does primarily consist of specific action items that make it clear for our city departments and community to implement.
- Specific examples are:
 - 1) Pave parking lot at Technical Services department
 - 2) Complete sidewalk on Fletcher and Wright Streets
 - 3) Replace four vehicles for the Technical Services department
 - 4) Map our drainage assets
 - 5) Build new elevated tank

Q. Our Work Program action items clearly address local needs or goals identified in the plan. These local needs or goals are aligned with work program activities. For example:

- Our Work Program action items do clearly address local needs or goals identified in the plan. One example of this is our project/activity to develop a “map and data base of vacant lands and infill development opportunities.” This is reflected throughout our Comprehensive Plan and specifically addresses the need to “maintain and enhance Geographic Information Systems (GIS) capabilities and personnel for additional planning regulatory functions.” Information about vacant lands and infill development opportunities is constantly being updated and has specifically contributed so successful designation of opportunity zones, application of CDBG money, and application of CHIP grant money.

R. We have a good track record of accomplishing most of the action items included in past plan Work Programs. Our Report of Accomplishments very specifically shows our level of accomplishment, such as:

- The City of Thomasville emphasizes the need for planning, and the planning process continues throughout project completion when the plan becomes a reality.
- For the 2008-2012 STWP, we identified 30 items, completed 25, and have 5 in-progress (these are long-term or large projects).
- For the 2013-2017 STWP, we identified 40 items, completed 35, dropped 1 for an alternative project, and have 5 in-progress (these are long-term or large projects).

S. Our local capital budget is consistent with, and is designed to implement, the comprehensive plan. Please explain the connections between your budget and your work program.

- The City’s capital budget process is the primary mechanism by which the visions and goals of the Comprehensive plan are realized. The capital budget is reviewed and adjusted each fiscal year to provide the necessary funds toward completion of capital goals and projects. We do remain flexible to amend the work program to be responsive to other project opportunities that are in keeping with the goals of the plan.
- Additionally, we aggressively utilize grants and loans to help implement our projects. In the past we have received LMIG funds, GEFA loans, CDBG funds, CHIP funds, and most recently have received a monetary award from Citizens’ Institute for Rural Design (CIRD) to

assist in planning efforts on storm water management challenges at our MacIntyre Park, as well as revitalization efforts.

T. Provide up to ten of your best recent examples of important projects carried out as a result of the plan, with the specific plan references (attach additional sheets as needed). Please explain how these activities were a result of the plan or the planning process. Consider including photographs, newspaper articles or other exhibits to elaborate on these projects.

<p>1. Amphitheater and Trailhead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the 2013-2018 STWP • Supports policies 1.5, 3.2, 3.3, and 4.2 under Community Facilities in our Comprehensive Plan • Construction of an amphitheater with green space, public restrooms, and trailhead was completed in April 2017. Trail signage, bike racks, and a bike fix-it station have been identified and will be installed within 3 months. • An ad-hoc community engagement community along with several city staff departments brought this plan to life. 	
<p>2. Thomasville Community Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the 2013-2018 STWP • Supports policy 4.2 under Community Facilities in our Comprehensive Plan • Portions of Phase I, II, III, and V are complete or under contract totaling 1.74 miles. • Completion of Phase I, II, and III expected within the next 2 years with a goal of total completion by of the 14 mile loop by the end of 2021. • Pictured is our City Planner and son on a portion of the trail behind the Thomasville High School. 	
<p>3. Red Hills Business Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the 2013-2018 STWP • Supports policy 1.1 under Economic Development – Joint County/City and policy 1.1 under Economic Development in our Comprehensive Plan. • 2012 SPLOST funded roadway, drainage, and sewer construction of Phase 1 of a PDA owned 290 acre business park. 27 lots averaging four acres are now available. 	

4. Airport Runway Extension

- Included in 2013-2018 STWP
- Supports all policies under Economic Development and Community Facilities in our Comprehensive Plan.
- Construction to extend one of our runways was necessary to support growth at the airport and allow bigger planes to fly in and out.



5. Airport Hangar Addition

- Included in 2013-2018 STWP
- Supports all policies under Economic Development and Community Facilities in our Comprehensive Plan.
- Construction of a new hangar was necessary to support growth at the airport and provide appropriate space for airplane storage.



6. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Program




- Included in the 2013-2018 STWP
- Supports all policies under Natural and Cultural Resources in our Comprehensive Plan.
- This project was initiated to offer an alternative fueling option during a time when gas prices were extraordinarily high. A CNG fast fill and slow fill station were constructed and city vehicles identified to be converted to increase efficiencies and reduce our carbon footprint.
- There are 54 CNG vehicles in our fleet with new purchases being converted as appropriate.
- This project was completed in 2016 and has moved into an operational/maintenance phase.
- The Municipal Gas Authority named this the 2012 Project of the Year.



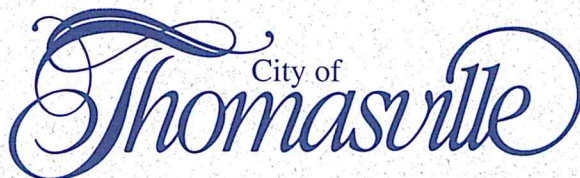
7. Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades

- Included in the 2012-2018 STWP
- This upgrade supports all policies under Natural and Cultural Resources and Land Use in our Comprehensive Plan.
- This large improvement project included infrastructure improvements and upgrades to the deep bed sand filter, final clarifier, digester covers, trickling filter, and draft tube mixer.
- Pictured is a new trickling filter.



<p>8. Sidewalk Master Plan (2012-2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the 2013-2017 STWP • Supports policies 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 under Transportation in our Comprehensive Plan. • Completed the rehabilitation of 1,521,102 feet of existing sidewalk inventory • Constructed 2,850 feet of new sidewalk. • Removed 8,852 sidewalk trip hazards. • All crossings and curbs were made ADA compliant. 	
<p>9. Downtown Brick Street Exposure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the 2013-2017 STWP • Supports policies 2.3, 2.3, and 2.4 under Economic Development; policies under Natural and Cultural Resources pertaining to historic areas/structures; and policy 1.2 under Land use in our Comprehensive Plan. • We have exposed the last of our downtown bricks that we can. They were originally laid in the 1950s. • Twenty-two angled parking spaces were striped, along Remington Avenue adding a net 13 parking spaces to the downtown inventory. • All crossing and curbs were made ADA compliant. • Pictured are before and after pictures of the brick exposure on Remington Avenue. 	
<p>10. Paving of all Dirt Roads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in the 2013-2017 STWP • Supports policy 1.1 under Support and Expand Existing Businesses within the City; policy 2.3 under Strengthen the tourism industry in Downtown Thomasville; policy 1.1 under Public Safety; and policies 2.1 and 2.2 under Transportation in our Comprehensive Plan. • Most recently, with 2012 SPLOST money, the city paved 7,125 feet of dirt streets, completing the goal of paving all dirt streets in Thomasville. • To the right are before and after pictures of a road that runs behind the planned future site of our Events Center. 	

Please attach additional sheets as needed to tell your story. Application should not exceed 20 pages. Application may be electronically transmitted or printed, scanned and emailed to adriane.wood@dca.ga.gov . For more information, contact Adriane Wood.



P.O. Box 1540 • Thomasville, GA 31799 • 229-227-7001 • www.thomasville.org

May 10, 2017

PlanFirst Program
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
60 Executive Park South, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30329-223

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing this letter to show our enthusiastic support of the City of Thomasville's application for designation as a PlanFirst Community by the Department of Community Affairs.

The City of Thomasville has always been considered a progressive community that boasts of zero property taxes and the ability to expand utilities so that we can continue to maintain a vibrant and family friendly place to live, do business, and visit. This is only accomplished by thoughtfully planning in the present for the future in a collaborative fashion that includes citizens, city staff, business owners, entrepreneurs, and cultural and historic preservation advocates.

We believe our city greatly benefits from the collaborative efforts that have brought about projects that spurred economic development, promoted healthy living, revitalized neighborhoods, and promoted tourism. We participated in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan Development process and have been contacted to participate in the next Comprehensive Plan development. We have also participated in the charrette process for redevelopment of two neighborhood parks – one near our middle school and one in a historic African-American community – and have participated in the visioning for our beloved area known as "The Bottom." Finally, we continue to collaborate with the City into the design and construction phases with civic projects, particularly the Thomasville Community Trail project and our Corridor Improvements projects.

The City of Thomasville truly is a perfect candidate for the PlanFirst designation, and we highly encourage your selection of them. We are so thankful to our community, the leaders, and volunteers who continue to plan for our better tomorrow.

Mark D. Lowe, VP of Planning & Marketing
Archbold Memorial Hospital

James "Jack" Hadley, Owner/Curator
Jack Hadley Black History Museum

Michelle Arwood, Executive Director
Thomasville Center for the Arts

Sabrina Boykins-Everett, Superintendent
Thomasville City School System

Greer Cox, Branch Director
Butler-Mason YMCA & Youth Center

Mary Lawrence Lang, Development Director
Thomasville Landmarks Inc.