



1. Study Area



Study Area

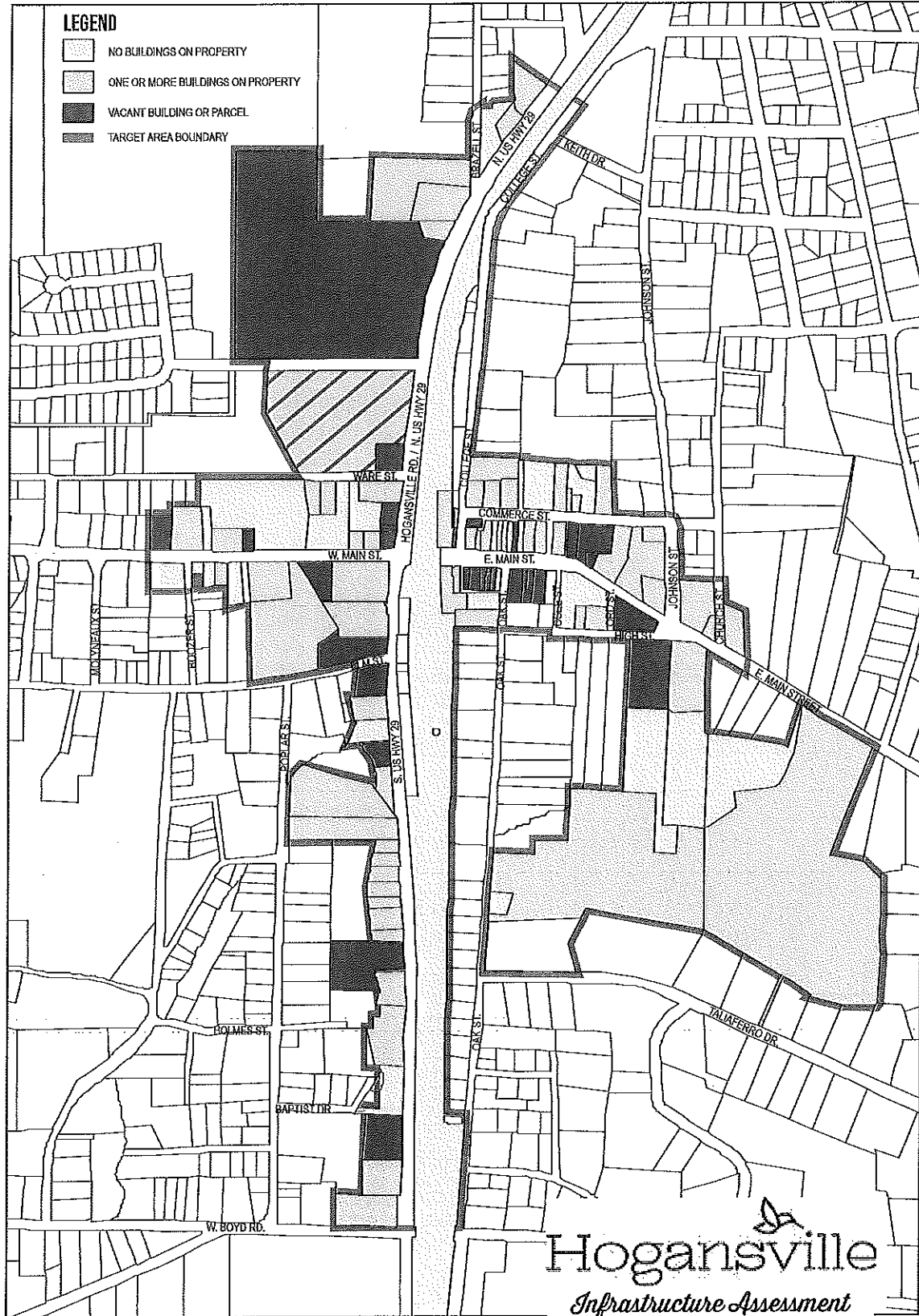
Project Overview

In 2017, Georgia Conservancy was approached by the City of Hogansville Downtown Development Authority (DDA) with the request to assist in a community revitalization vision as one part of a multi-phased effort to support neighborhood residents and stabilize the community. Georgia Conservancy reached out to partners at Canvas Planning and Village Green Consultants to assist in the urban design, planning, and market analysis work. The process, developed in concert with DDA leadership, included in-person stakeholder interviews, presence at the annual Hummingbird Festival, two public forums, and team meetings to identify a community-supported future vision for a revitalized downtown Hogansville.

A project area was determined to encompass the commercial core of downtown Hogansville, including the historic downtown buildings along East and West Main Street and the car-oriented retail developments along Highway 29. Within the Study Area, there are 62 commercial buildings with approximately 421,000 square feet of commercial space. Roughly 31% of this commercial space is currently vacant. Hogansville contains several historic districts, two of which include the downtown study area: Hogansville Local Historic District and the East Main Street - Johnson Street National Register District.

This master plan and market study effort complements recent City initiatives including the Royal Theater Master Plan, inclusion in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (Troup County and its member cities), implementation of SPLOST funding and a trails plan, as well as the Downtown Development Authority's 2014 Strategy document. These planning efforts have been considered as part of the planning process and resulting recommendations complement or reiterate recommendations found in the above documents.

Over an approximately 8-month process, the team conducted site visits, interviewed key stakeholders, coordinated with the city and DDA, held two public forums/community meetings, analyzed neighborhood information in GIS, and reviewed previous planning documents. The discussions, findings, and results of that process are detailed in the following pages.



Study Area Maps



Hogansville
Downtown Study Area: Assets

TARGET AREA BOUNDARY

Study Area

Hogansville History

Hogansville was established as a cotton plantation in the late 1830s by William Hogan. In the 1840s Mr. Hogan granted 150 feet of right of way to the Atlanta-West Point Railroad – in lieu of the usual 100 feet – to entice A&W to build a rail depot here, at the juncture of its north-south line and the east-west road to Augusta that is now SR 100. Although Mr. Hogan was not interested in forming a city here, a community formed anyway when the rail depot was built, and the city incorporated in 1870. The rail line is still active, although the depot no longer serves its original use.

Hogansville thrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The city became a regional agricultural center, with a cotton mill, a mill village and large cotton warehouse on West Main. The Grand Hotel was constructed during this time, along with several new businesses, including the Hogansville Opera House (no longer extant) that attracted locals as well as visitors who arrive by train.

During this time the city also had a substantial African-American community including several prominent property owners, a funeral director and the city's postmaster. Black builders and carpenters built many of the fine homes still standing in the town today, as well as commercial and residential areas west of US 29.

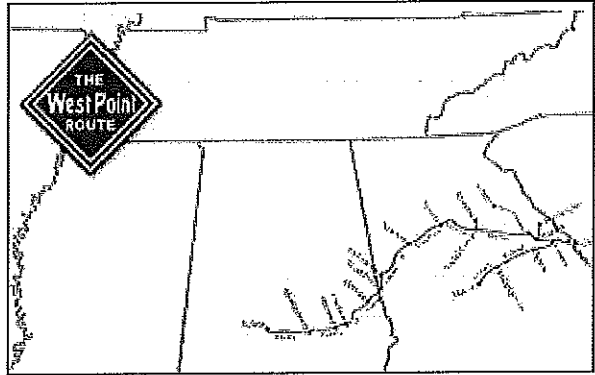
The cotton mill maintained a strong presence throughout the first half of the 20th century. In 1931 the property was sold to U.S. Rubber, and the mill's Asbeston Plant secured several big contracts during World War II, helping bring Hogansville back from the Great Depression. The community's Royal Theater was constructed in 1937 with 800 seats, and became one of the largest theaters between Atlanta and Columbus.

In the 1950s and 1960s the City's economy began to decline as Hogansville found itself competing with newer, nearby cities and the greater Atlanta area. Highway 29 travels right through Hogansville, and was the primary route south during the growth of the interstate in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Completion of Interstate 85 bypassed the city and visitors no longer travel through Hogansville.

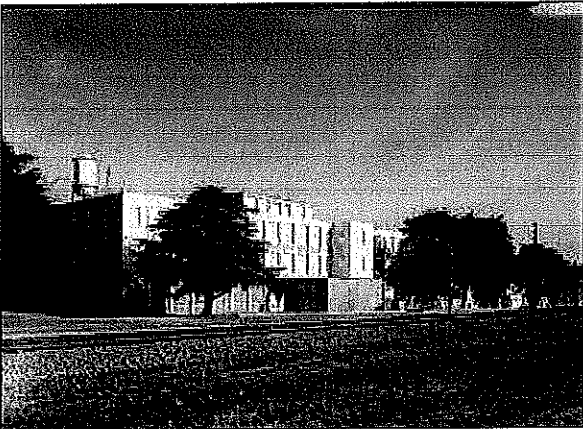
Despite economic decline, Hogansville has long been known as the "City of Friendly People." The city offers rural charm, quiet living and a slow-paced, low-crime environment. The community's desire to improve itself, led by progressive leadership, remains unabated.



William Hogan and family;
image via Troup County Archives



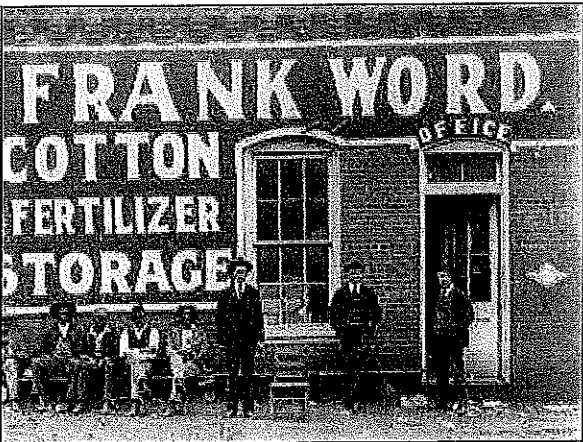
The West Point Route: Augusta to Selma;
image via American-Rails.com



Hogansville Cottonmill; image via Loc Haer



Unique Atlanta to Hogansville Railroad connection:
New restaurants in Reynoldstown neighborhood;
image via Zagat Atlanta



Historic African American Population in Hogansville;
image via Troup County Archives



The Historic Grand Hotel with original turret;
image via Pioneer Group

Study Area

Community Assets

TOWER TRAIL

The Tower Trail takes its name from an early 1900s water tower located near the current Hogansville Elementary School. The tower was never part of the city's water system but used by the Hines Cannery until the plant closed in the 1950s. The tower became defunct, until the Downtown Development Authority conceived a walking trail around the old tower. Three Phases were planned for the tower, and two of those are completed: removal of overgrowth, installation of signage, and the trail construction from Oak Street to the tower/school. Phase Three will connect the trail to downtown, and provide for renovations to the historic amphitheater nearby (underway).

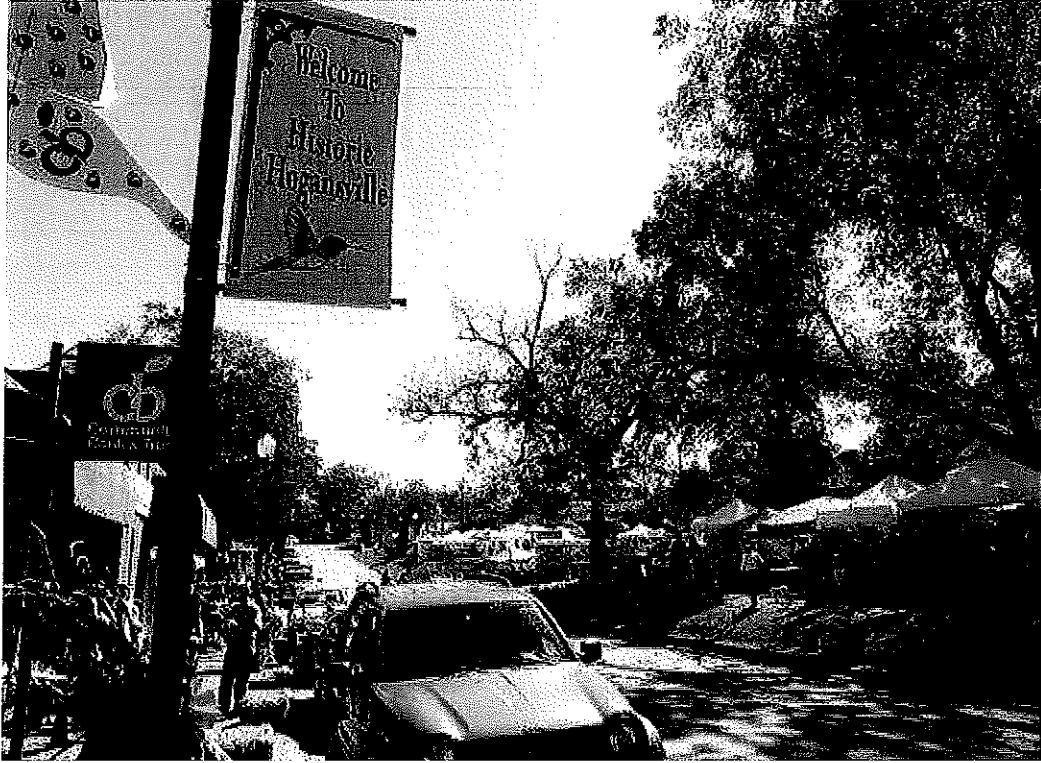
The Tower Trail is a much-loved, in-town trail that is currently meeting many resident and visitor needs. Support of, and expansion of, the trail features prominently in this study's recommendations. Formal non-vehicular connectivity between the Tower Trail and the recently installed Johnson Street playground create a longer recreation opportunity as well as important safe alternative transportation options for residents, while creating increased activity potential downtown.

HISTORIC AMPHITHEATER

In the 1920s and 1930s, Hogansville benefitted from many of the Roosevelt Administration programs following the Great Depression. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) helped to build the gymnasium and tennis courts at the school on Main Street, and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the Hogansville Amphitheater using stone from a nearby rock quarry. It was recently renovated and has hosted many local events, and is anticipated to be further utilized with the addition of restrooms and a concession stand.

CITY PARKS

Three parks in Hogansville are maintained by the Troup County Parks and Recreation Department. This includes Granger Park (next to the new library), the Splash Pad Park in the West End neighborhood, and the square right off Main Street which holds many of the vendors at the Hummingbird Festival. Some of the most loved and successful downtowns, regardless of population size, have a significant green, civic space. The park space in downtown presents opportunities to become a more aesthetic and integral piece of public space for the historic downtown.



Hummingbird Festival on Main; image via Laurie Rowe Communications



Study Area

Community Assets (continued.)

SIDEWALKS & TRAFFIC

Generally, the downtown and commercial areas of Hogansville have sidewalks present, though some maintenance and repairs are needed. Through stakeholder and citizen interviews the team learned that many residents walk in the streets on a regular basis for exercise, often in a loop that connects the Tower Trail to the Elementary School and never all the way to downtown despite its proximity. Safety issues for pedestrians specifically exist in crossing the railroad as well as crossing East Main Street near the railroad.

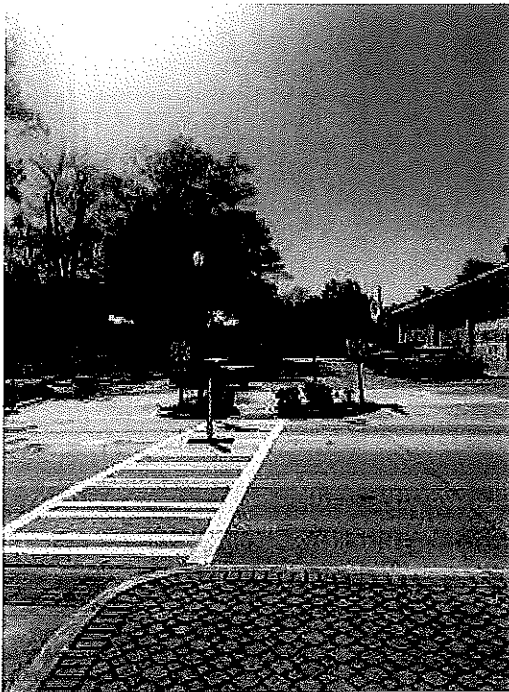
While traffic in the downtown is not present, issues exist with semi-trucks that use the East Main Street to Highway 29 connection to bypass weigh stations along the interstate. The scale of downtown is not an appropriate location for these trucks who do not obey the speed limit and are not able to stop quickly for a pedestrian.

PARKING

Hogansville has sufficient on-street parking that supports current businesses and contributes to the historic feel of downtown. During major events like the Hummingbird Festival, there is a DDA-owned lot that fills up just behind Main Street, the Elementary School lot is available, and there are shuttles for folks that park slightly further away at the strip mall off Highway 29. For a town of this size, there is ample parking for day to day needs, and the city has pursued appropriate shared-use alternatives for the events that draw larger crowds. Parking is not a challenge for the community and is not anticipated to be a future challenge. Further, this study recommends that on-street parking continue to be utilized as downtown businesses increase and that no additional lots be sought, as parking lots can actually be detrimental to a downtown's character and function.

HUMMINGBIRD FESTIVAL

The Hummingbird Festival is a 20+ year old tradition, and is the principal fund-raising vehicle for the Hogansville Charitable Trust, a 501(c)3 Georgia non-profit corporation whose stated purpose is the renovation, preservation and improvement of historic and municipal properties in and around the City of Hogansville. The Festival has raised in excess of \$400,000 for this purpose, and has leveraged these funds with matching grants and leveraged over \$3,000,000 in improvements for the City.



Study Area

Building Inventory

FORMER LIBRARY - A

The former library location on East Main Street has several potential future uses that could anchor downtown on this end of the Main Street corridor and serve to augment revitalization efforts. The building's location as a prominent entry point to downtown, proximity to the downtown park, and existing parking establish it as an asset. The 2014 City Short Term Work Plan had included an item regarding moving City Hall into the old library space downtown, but it was deemed too small for their needs and the library still sits vacant.

This property is currently under control of the City and it should remain so for the time being, while other revitalization efforts are a focus. Should the building become a significant financial burden on the City in the interim, then consideration could be given to selling the property. However, as the building could serve as a trail head, visitor's center or other government or civic use, it is unwise at this time to lose control of the gateway, identity, and service opportunities this location could provide.

FORMER PNC BANK - B

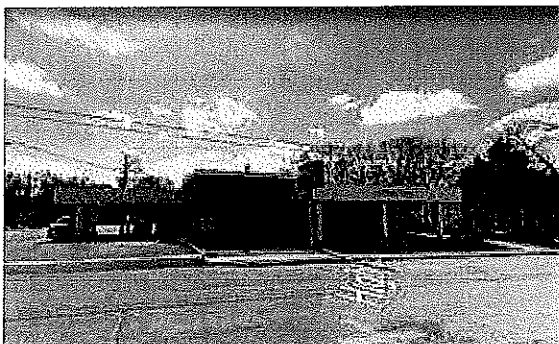
The closed PNC bank building on High Street is likewise a strategically located building that could house a variety of uses supportive of downtown revitalization in the future. Should this location house a future civic or government use, then thought as to its connection to the Tower Trail should be prominent in the building's site planning and parking plans. Treatment of this building and its grounds in a way that highlights and supports the Trail are critical.

THE GRAND HOTEL - C

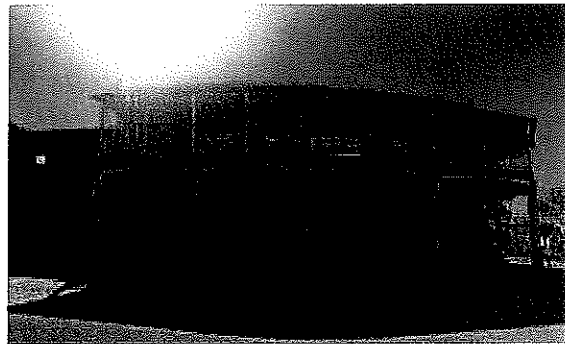
Built in the late 1800s and restored as a bed and breakfast, the Grand Hotel has been unoccupied for several years. It has a tea room attached and used to house a popular restaurant for downtown. Its significant presence on Main Street connects it with the character of downtown and is attractive to visitors, despite its lack of use. The building is currently for sale.



A (image via thrl.org)



B (image via Google StreetView)



C

Study Area

Building Inventory

THE ROYAL THEATER - D

The Royal Theater was built over 81 years ago, a movie theater with significant capacity. It officially opened in 1937 and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. The theater eventually closed, and in 1983 there were discussions of turning the theater into city hall – which was approved in 1984, and has been the site of city hall for the past 30 years. However, the city is running out of space and needs to determine whether additional renovations should be made to the theater, or if their offices should relocate.

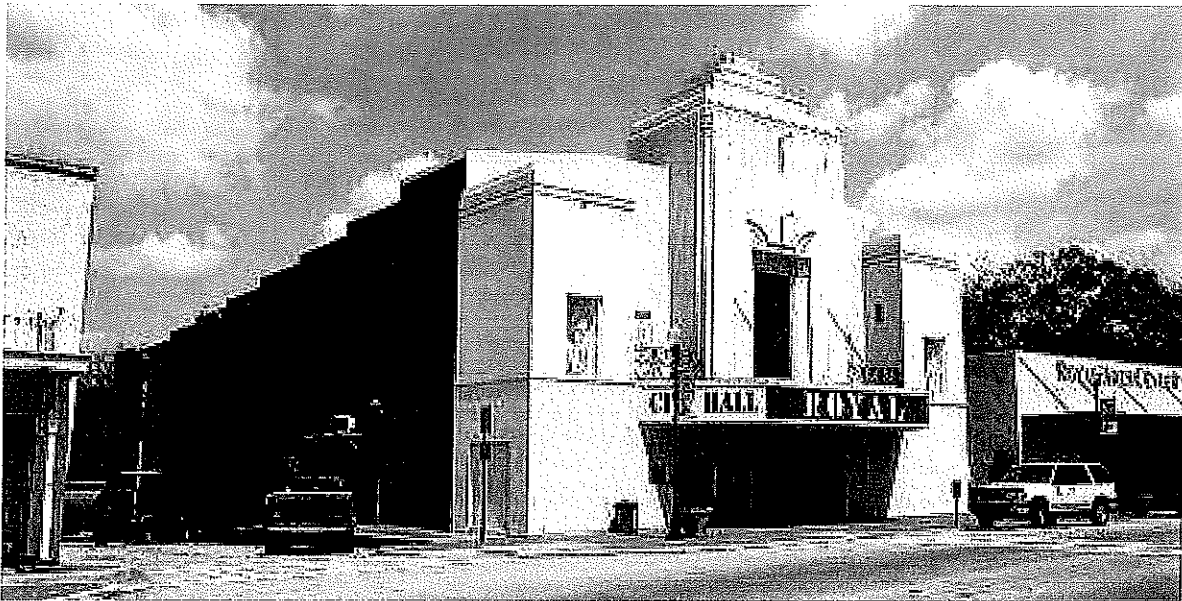
To aid with this decision-making, the City of Hogansville is funding the Theater Plan from dedicated SPLOST funds and a Fox Theatre Institute grant. The study is being conducted by Carter-Watkins Associates from Monroe, Georgia. The firm is tasked with exploring three alternatives for the Theater: 1) continue to accommodate a growing staff at City Hall, but bringing it up to code, 2) how it can be revived to become an arts/entertainment venue again, 3) some combination of City Hall and an arts/entertainment space. **As of the publication of this master plan, City Council had not yet selected a future option for the Theater and, therefore, greater detail of the architect's report was unavailable to include.**

THE RAILROAD DEPOT - E

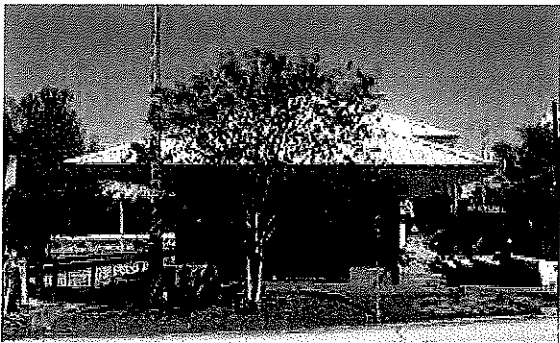
The railroad depot was bought in 2016 by the Pioneer Group, who have since put in the Station Coffeehouse, along with the Great Southern Public House and extra meeting space, all needed dining/drinking destinations for the city. Folks drive from LaGrange, Peachtree City, Newnan, and other surrounding areas to visit the historic depot. The group has capitalized on this attraction and during the summer months, hosts a regular market festival showcasing local artists and makers.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS ON MAIN STREET

Hogansville's downtown has many built features critical to maintaining its competitive advantage as a quaint and walkable downtown. There are several buildings that contribute to the charm and attractive character of the city. Further, while small, the walkable size and connected nature of the several downtown blocks should be protected. These buildings' uses and interior could and should be modernized to accommodate current business and downtown residential needs, but no significant changes are necessary to building exteriors. Of the 108 tax parcels in the proposed Rural Zone, there are 95 buildings, a significant portion of which are over 50 years old, some even over 100 years old.



D



E



F
