

# Hiawassee, Georgia

DOWNTOWN STRATEGIC PLAN 2018



Carl Vinson  
Institute of Government  
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

# CREDITS

Liz Ordiales, Mayor  
Annaka Woodruff, Appalachian Regional Commission  
Patrick Larson, Georgia Mountain Regional Commission  
Ronnie Phillips, Chairperson Convention Visitors Bureau  
Cliff Bradshaw, Towns County Commissioner  
Paul Smith, Chief of Police  
Josh Alexander, Chairperson Building & Planning Committee  
Alex Kairney, Building & Planning Commission  
Bonnie Kendrick, City Clerk  
Amy Barrett, City Council Member  
Darren Berrong, Superintendent of Schools  
Candace Lee, Chamber of Commerce  
Noel Turner, Towns County Civic Association  
Danny Burch, Local Business Owner  
Jerry Taylor, Historian  
Jason Edwards, Deputy Historian  
Dan Paris, Local Business Owner  
Charles Nicholson, Resident  
Grace Howard, Hamilton Gardens

Melanie Hughes, South State Bank  
Gerald Gutenstein, Lake Chatuge Rotary Club  
Herbert Bruce, Towns County Lions Club & Local Business Owner  
Bruce Olsen, Local Businesses Owner  
Bill Pierson, Local Businesses Owner  
Jesse Cook, City of Hiawassee infrastructure  
Daniel Frizzell, Blue Ridge Mountain EMC  
Callie Moore, Hiawassee Watershed Coalition  
Don Baker, Engineering Management Inc  
Shane Giles, Georgia Dept of Transportation  
Kemmy Garrett, Tennessee Valley Authority  
Lynn Mcpeak, Local Businesses Owner  
Ryan Snow, Local Businesses Owner  
Lindie Wright, Local Businesses Owner  
Christine Romero, Local Businesses Owner  
Linda Pallone, Local Businesses Owner  
Tamela Shiver, Local Business Owner  
Bob Anderson, Local Business Owner  
Ron Lambright, Local Business Owner

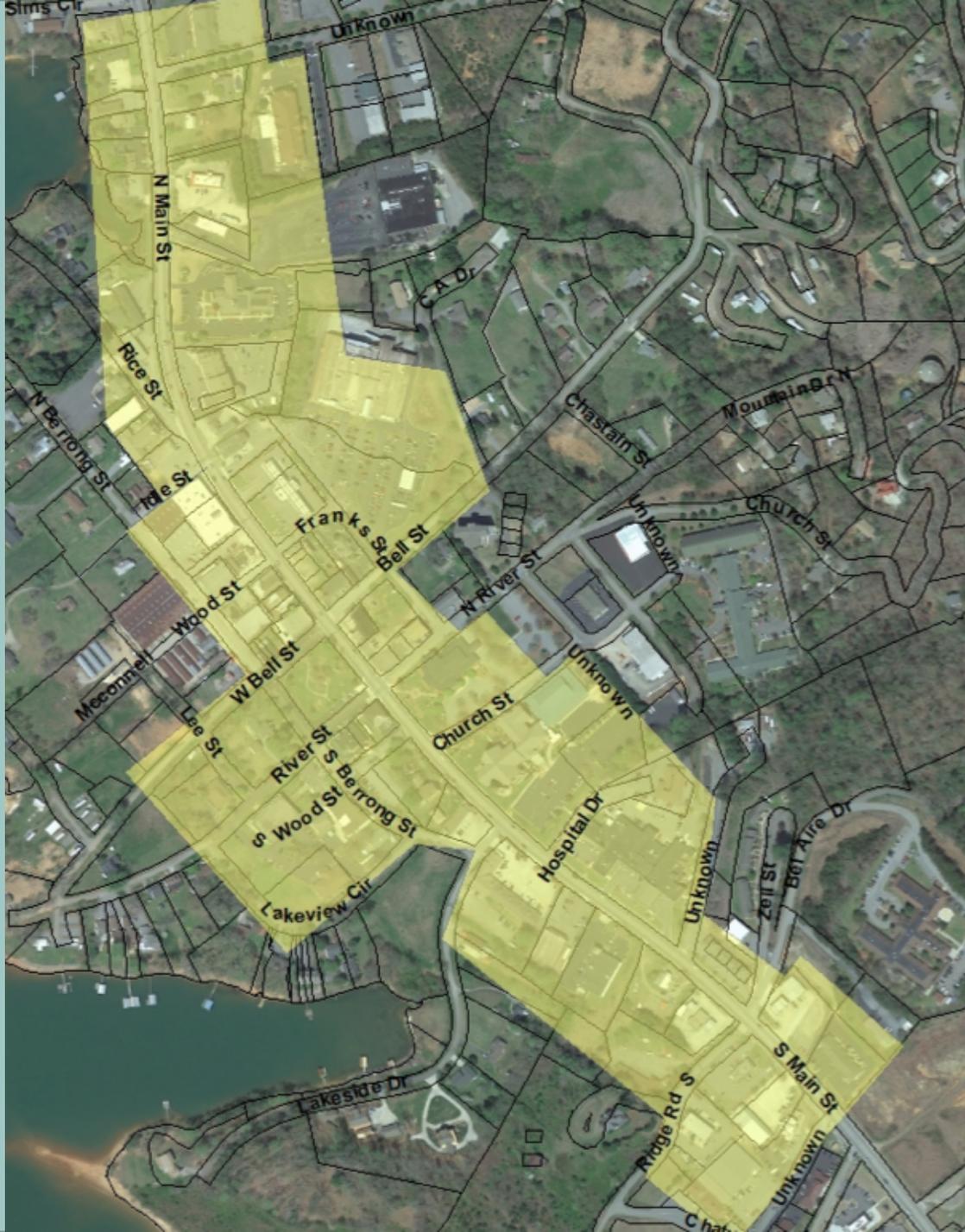
## UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CARL VINSON INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT

Ted Baggett, Associate Director  
Harry Hayes, Senior Public Service Associate  
Jessica Varsa, Public Service Assistant  
Daniel Shinkle, Landscape and Urban Designer  
T. Clark Stancil, Landscape and Urban Designer  
Allison Cape, Graphic Designer  
Elizabeth Solomon, Graduate Assistant



# The Project

# STUDY AREA



# THE PROCESS



- > Stakeholder involvement
- > Steering committee engagement
- > Stakeholder interviews and focus groups
- > Town hall
- > Public input and plan review

# STEERING COMMITTEE GROUPS

Downtown Business Owners

City of Hiawassee

Young Harris

Towns County

State Officials

Real Estate Professionals

Civic Groups



# WHAT'S WORKING WELL?

- > Strong sense of community, small town feel
- > Town square
- > Location and natural amenities

# WHAT NEEDS ATTENTION?



- > Beautification
- > Address vacant buildings and lots
- > Traffic and transportation
- > Business mix and business promotion

# PRIORITY AREAS

QUALITY OF LIFE



COMMUNITY IDENTITY



HISTORIC TOWN CENTER REVITALIZATION



TOWN SQUARE



ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



TRANSPORTATION





PRIORITY AREA I  
QUALITY OF LIFE

# Quality of Life ACTION ITEMS



EVENTS	
Goal <b>1</b>	<p>&gt; <i>Balance needs of tourists with year-round residents by pursuing activities and events that serve both groups by planning and hosting more events in town</i></p>
<p><b>Timeline:</b> Short Term, 2019-2020</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> City Economic Development Director</p>
<p><b>Partners:</b> Chamber, Georgia Mountain Fair Grounds, County, Business Owners, Civic Organizations (Rotary, Lions Club)</p>	<p><b>Funding:</b> Local businesses, self funding, user fees</p>
<p><b>Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host Fall Affair on the Square (mid-September)</li> <li>• Continue to host Light Up Hiawassee (December 1)</li> <li>• Explore possibilities of more events in October</li> <li>• Market events through Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>	

Quality of Life  
**ACTION ITEMS**

2. Create trails at Mayor's Park
3. Connect Lloyd's Landing with Mayor's Park
4. Create a children's water feature at Lloyd's Landing



*Splash pad examples*

Quality of Life  
**ACTION ITEMS**



*Proposed water access point*

5. Create water access point at Fire Station 1

6. Build support for improved water quality in Lake Chatuge



PRIORITY AREA 2  
COMMUNITY IDENTITY



Community Identity  
**POSSIBILITIES +  
OPTIONS**

> Existing and historic buildings help define the aesthetic character of the community



# Community Identity

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



BEFORE

Goal  
7

## PUBLIC ART

> Create public art by placing murals or art throughout town in partnership with Young Harris College Art Department and local artists

**Timeline:** Long Term, 2020-2023

**Lead:** City Economic Development Director

**Partners:** Mural Society, Young Harris College, local artists

**Funding:** Self-funded, Hotel-Motel Tax, franchise fee

### Steps

- Identify key players
- Create a theme
- Develop a project plan
- Institute project

Community Identity

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



PROPOSED

Community Identity  
**POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS**



PROPOSED

8. Create gateway signage at city entry points

9. Continue discussion of annexation of Mayor's Park

# Community Identity POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

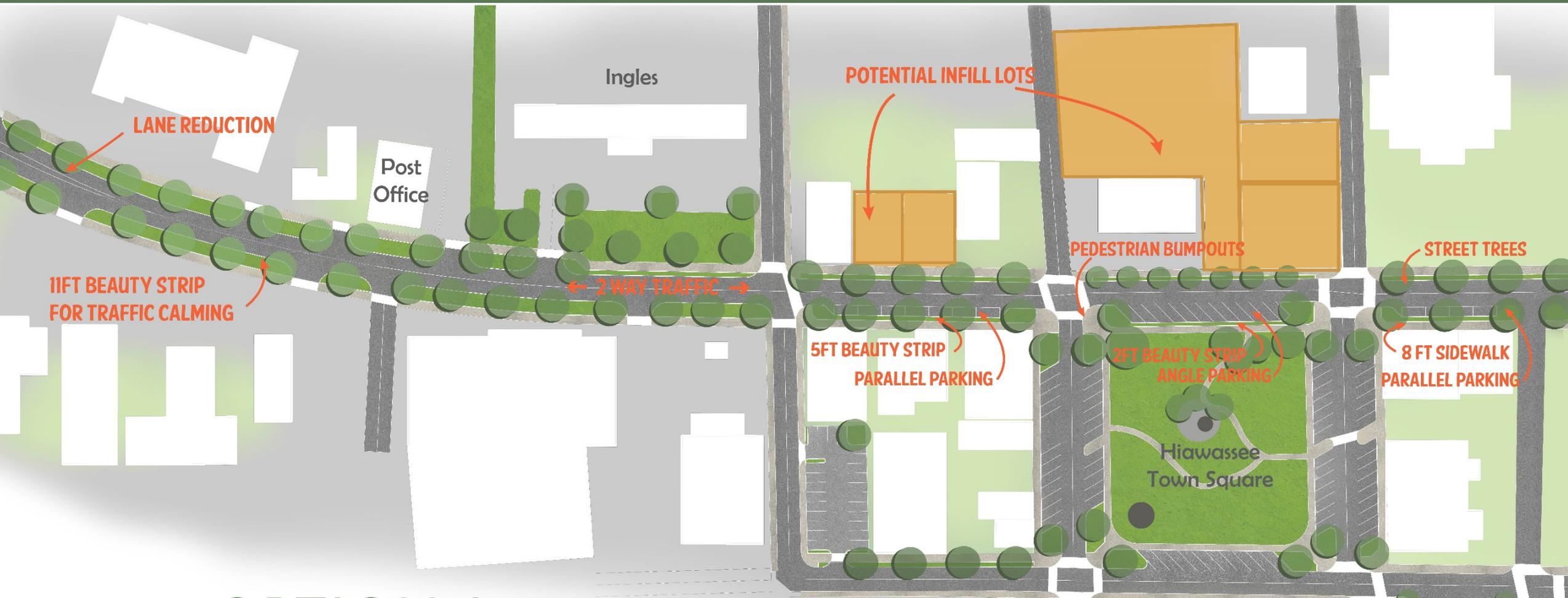


HIAWASSEE HISTORY	
<p>Goal</p> <p><b>10</b></p>	<p>&gt; Promote history of Hiawassee through preserving Old Rock Jail, Stone House, Old Log Cabins, Berrong property, and remaining piece of Unicoi Highway located at current Lloyd's Landing</p>
<p><b>Timeline:</b> Long Term, 2021-2023</p>	<p><b>Lead:</b> Towns County Historical Society</p>
<p><b>Partners:</b> City, Georgia Mountain Regional Commission</p>	<p><b>Funding:</b> Historic preservation grants, Georgia DNR grants</p>
<p><b>Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist with marketing efforts</li> <li>• Encourage historic preservation where appropriate</li> <li>• Create directional signage located on Town Square indicating location of historic properties</li> </ul>	



PRIORITY AREA 3  
HISTORIC TOWN CENTER  
REVITALIZATION

# Historic Town Center Revitalization POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



## OPTION 1

Parallel and on-street parking

# Historic Town Center Revitalization

## POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



**OPTION 2**  
Medians

# Streetscape

## PALETTE



Historic Town Center Revitalization  
**POSSIBILITIES +  
OPTIONS**

11. Create a unified look  
throughout Downtown

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

12. Create a Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

13. Hire a DDA director and identify funding for position

14. Pursue Main Street designation for Downtown Hiawasse

# Historic Town Center Revitalization

## POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



15. Develop directional signage in key locations

Including wayfinding signage throughout the Town Center would assist visitors in finding historic attractions, retail locations, and parking.

## SPRING

Plant Sale



Flea Market



Flower Market

Food Truck Corral



Old Car Show



Art Festival



Visits with Santa



## WINTER

Christmas tree lot



Light Display

Hay Maze



## FALL

Pumpkin Patch



Fall Festival



*From empty lot to...*



Historic Town Center Revitalization

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

16. Identify temporary use for the empty lot next to Eller's Tire and Service

# PRIORITY AREA 4 TOWN SQUARE

HIWASSEE  
TOWN SQUARE

WELCOME TO HIWASSEE  
TOWN SQUARE  
WELCOME TO HIWASSEE  
TOWN SQUARE  
WELCOME TO HIWASSEE  
TOWN SQUARE

BLUE STAR  
MEMORIAL

A tribute to the Armed Forces  
that have defended the  
United States of America

DEDICATED BY THE TOWN OF HIWASSEE  
ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

DEDICATED BY THE TOWN OF HIWASSEE  
ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001



# Town Center POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



BEFORE

## STREETScape OPTIONS

Goal  
**17**

> Improve crosswalks, sidewalks, bumpouts, street trees, and traffic calming to beautify Town Square while improving its overall safety and accessibility to strengthen its identity as a focal point for the city and increase the “sense of arrival” to downtown

**Timeline:** Short term, 2019-2020

**Lead:** City Administration

**Partners:** DOT, Business Owners

**Funding:** Franchise fees, Hotel-Motel Tax, grants

### Steps

- Initiate process
- Identify financing
- Talk to DOT
- Designate a project manager



PROPOSED

This building has a unique midcentury style that could be highlighted with a few minor updates. The enhanced streetscape additions of an expanded beauty strip complement the business.

Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



PROPOSED



BEFORE

Minor façade updates can improve aesthetics and build community character

Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



BEFORE

Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



PROPOSED

Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

18. Implement design features to further accommodate events





PROPOSED

Town Center

POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

18. Implement design features to further accommodate events





PROPOSED

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

Town Center

Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

18. Implement design features to further accommodate events





PROPOSED

Town Center

POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

# Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



Goal  
**19**

## BUILDING PRESERVATION

> *Preserve historic character while pursuing vacant building rehabilitation and new development adjacent to Town Square*

**Timeline:** Long term, 2020-2023

**Lead:** City Economic Development Director

**Partners:** Historical Society, Georgia Mountain Regional Commission, DOT, property owners, Planning and Building Expansion Committee

**Funding:** Georgia Cities Foundation, GMA, DCA

### Steps

- Develop a project plan for implementation
- Identify financing



Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

PROPOSED

# Town Center

## POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



PROPOSED

### INFILL OPTION I: “MOUNTAIN STYLE”

This infill option emphasizes natural materials and a rustic aesthetic. Greater setbacks could allow for sidewalk restaurant seating but could possibly be less inviting to pedestrians.

Town Center

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



PROPOSED

## INFILL OPTION 2: “CLASSIC DOWNTOWN”

This infill option references classic historic downtown buildings. Features include zero-lot-line setbacks and pedestrian scale businesses with mixed-use capability.

A brick building with a stone base and a sign for Anderson Financial Services and Raymond James. The sign features a logo with a green leaf and the text "ANDERSON FINANCIAL SERVICES" and "RAYMOND JAMES".

ANDERSON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES  
RAYMOND JAMES

A two-story brick building with a sign for ELCO Energy Performance. The sign is white with black text and is mounted above a window. The building has a dark roof and a small awning over the entrance.

ELCO Energy Performance

A brick building with a sign for Victoria's Attic. The sign is white with black text and is mounted above a large window. The building has a dark roof and a small awning over the entrance.

VICTORIA'S ATTIC

PRIORITY AREA 5  
ECONOMIC AND  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

# ACTION ITEMS



20. Continue to discuss the alcohol ordinance

21. Identify gaps in the broadband network and funding to extend it

Economic and Workforce Development  
**ACTION ITEMS**

22. Support efforts to create a small business incubator

23. Investigate ways to develop a new workforce and attract retirees



# PRIORITY AREA 6 TRANSPORTATION



# Transportation POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



Currently, crosswalks are limited downtown. Few visual indicators exist to slow vehicle speeds, posing a safety risk for pedestrians.

# OPTION 1: PLANTED MEDIAN



PROPOSED

POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

Transportation

# OPTION 2: ANGLED PARKING



PROPOSED

Transportation  
POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

# OPTION 3: PARALLEL PARKING



PROPOSED

Transportation

POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS

Transportation

# POSSIBILITIES + OPTIONS



25. Increase traffic flow by implementing a left-turn signal at McDonald's

26. Continue sidewalk improvement and pedestrian access

*Thank you!*



**TREE CITY USA**  
Arbor Day Foundation

