



College Hill Corridor Initiative
Macon, GA
Applied for by Nadia Osman c/o College Hill Alliance



2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name _____ Location _____ City _____ State _____

Owner _____

Project Use(s) _____

Project Size _____ Total Development Cost _____

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) _____

Date Initiated _____ Percent Completed by December 1, 2014 _____

Project Completion Date (if appropriate) _____ Project Website (if appropriate) _____

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates _____

Application submitted by:

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Telephone () _____ Fax () _____

E-mail _____ Website (if appropriate) _____

Perspective Sheets:

Organization _____ Name _____ E-mail _____

Public Agencies _____

Architect/Designer _____

Developer _____

Professional Consultant _____

Community Group _____

Other _____

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Direct Mailing | Direct Email | Previous Selection Committee member | Other (please specify) |
| Online Notice | Previous RBA entrant | Professional Organization | _____ |
| | Social Media | Bruner/Loeb Forum | |

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2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT
AT-A-GLANCE



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

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This sheet, the Project Data sheet, and the representative photo will be sent to the Committee in advance as the *Project Overview*.

Project Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

1. Give a brief overview of the project. Approximately 500 words.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.) Approximately 500 words.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project? Approximately 500 words.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project? Approximately 500 words.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate. Approximately 400 words.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable. Approximately 400 words.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings? Approximately 400 words.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE



PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

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Signature _____ **Date** _____

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
DEVELOPER
PERSPECTIVE



DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

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Signature _____ Date _____

1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement. Approximately 400 words.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project? Approximately 400 words.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used? Approximately 400 words.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project? Approximately 400 words.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name	Lakey Boyd, AICP, CECd	Title	Principal
Organization	Re:Posit Strategies	Telephone	(404) 310-1399
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Signature ? 	Date	12/9/14
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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

I started working with College Hill Alliance during their second phase. My work focuses on entrepreneurial development and small business assistance. There has been much success around "live" and "play" with College Hill, but there were still challenges around "work" as a successful component of community. As we unpacked the data and conducted a myriad of interviews, we found deep-rooted economic issues in Macon -- low wealth, low educational attainment, non-diverse and static job base, and little innovation. In the interviews, we determined small business owners are not entrepreneurial in mindset and are not building their own capacity. Further, we found that small businesses are hungry for more connectivity to each other, as are the area college and university students desiring more connectivity to local businesses. As these findings were formulated, it became clear that the economy will have to be rebuilt from the inside out, and that there are real gaps in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Macon today. Once findings were clear, our role shifted to recommendations and strategies, including defining partnerships, timeframes, and level of effort. As potential partners were approached, the constraints on local capacity and resources came into focus. At that point in the process, the College Hill Alliance did what it has done repeatedly during its existence, it stepped up to the plate to fill the gaps needed to improve the community. As the client made that determination, our role shifted again towards program development and implementation assistance. We have started broadening relationship building efforts, piloting entrepreneur/small business/maker programs, and raising awareness of the critical role small business plays in economic structure, local economic development, and long-term community sustainability.

2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The College Hill Alliance has been a game changer for Macon. Its impact ranges from quality of life to community improvements to altering cultural beliefs around what can actually be achieved. College Hill Alliance had a strong and impressive track record when I started working with them. There had already been the impact of reinvestment through both residential redevelopment and infrastructure enhancements. The impact of community bonds and identity had been achieved through events and programming. The impact of successful placemaking had been started and a legacy created of a strong anchor and branding. These impacts all lend themselves towards some kind of measurement. However, in my experience, College Hill Alliance has achieved what I consider to be one of the most important aspects of successful community and economic development -- impacting the community's mindset and belief in itself. Frequently, this impact is not highly valued or is underrated, largely because it is not easily measured or assessed. But, I can report, as someone with deep experience in this industry, that this kind of impact has been achieved by College Hill Alliance. There is a can do attitude, a how instead of why not series of questions, and a push towards comparing their efforts with the best instead of what was done locally yesterday. This is a significant divergence of mindset from the greater community, though leadership has become bought in and that legacy is emerging. Specific to the work I have been doing with College Hill Alliance around entrepreneur and small business assistance, it is still early, but the impacts are becoming evident. The value and relevance of small businesses are making it onto the radar of the more traditional economic development organizations. They are including College Hill Alliance in potential programming discussions, a task force has been formed to better understand needs and coordinate assistance, and stronger outreach has started directly from these organizations to small business. At the other end of the spectrum, the creation of Macon Made has started to identify, strengthen, and connect local makers and manufacturers to each other and their local customers. It is also beginning to build the Macon brand outside of the region as products are exported. An unexpected, but welcomed, impact has also been its elevation to an immediate identifier and increase in civic pride, from residents to businesses to local college students.

3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession? Approximately 400 words.

In the work I do with communities through the southeast, College Hill Alliance is really the ideal for implementation – a dedicated mission-driven organization with dedicated funds and a capable and nimble team on the ground every day. Over time, the approach of keeping their head down, doing the work that needed to be done, putting community first, and actually delivering success and measurable results has begun to influence the greater community. The lessons of consistency, being a team player, and staying focused are of high value and impact. In my experience, often the focus of effort and funding is on the plan development, and little is left for the implementation. In the case of College Hill, there was a healthy budget for plan development. Community outreach was a key tenant and priority, and continues to be. An implementation organization was created, along with a continued formal role for community members. Over the course of implementation, another lesson that College Hill Alliance has proven to be true is the need for adaptation and flexibility. Implementation is incremental and messy. While the mission and vision must remain in focus, the process has to be flexible to ensure relevance over time. These are all lessons that would be instructive to my fellow economic development professionals and city planners.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

The successes and positives of College Hill Alliance are:

- Creation of champion implementation organization;
- Dedicated funding through partnerships;
- Small team of diverse professionals;
- Flexible and adaptive response model;
- Mission-driven with focus;
- Thought leader;
- Consistency;
- Will to be convener and conduit;
- Not concerned about getting credit;
- Deliver results;
- Raise expectations;
- Create identity;
- Build relationships;
- Broaden partnerships; and
- Outcome orientation.

The challenges for College Hill Alliance are:

- Staying true to mission as needs and asks continue;
- Retaining focus;
- Creating and expanding capacity as legacy;
- Bridging gap in understanding with potential partner organizations on collaboration versus competition;
- Breaking down barriers based on status quo;
- Remaining convener instead of “doer,” as appropriate;
- Pivoting into “doer” position, as appropriate;
- Maintaining and broadening partnerships;
- Continuing need to deepen expertise as more gaps are identified;
- Discovering real partners with capacity; and
- Ever increasing expectations of performance.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

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Signature _____ **Date** _____

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? Approximately 400 words.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Approximately 400 words.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how? Approximately 400 words.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through? Approximately 400 words.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE



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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name	Ethiel Garlington	Title	Executive Director
Organization	Historic Macon Foundation & Historic Hills & Heights Development Corp	Telephone	(478) 742-5084
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Signature		Date	12/9/14
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1. What role did you or your company play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement. Approximately 400 words.

From the early stages of the College Hill Corridor, Historic Macon Foundation (HMF) has played an active role. Founded in 1964, this organization has worked to fulfill our mission to, "revitalize our community by preserving architecture and sharing history." Most of our neighborhood revitalization work since the 1980s has been in the geographic boundaries of the College Hill Corridor. In fact, our organization has built or rehabilitated over 150 houses in the Corridor and pumped millions of dollars in to the neighborhoods. To that end we've served as lead developer in the Corridor.

Our investments in these projects have resulted in over \$10 million in construction investments, creating 2,000+ jobs for local workers. The properties rehabilitated through our programs have added in excess of \$9.5 million to our local tax base. Crime has plummeted 80% while homeownership rates in the Corridor best the national average. We have saved 20,000 tons of debris from the landfill by saving these homes. Most importantly, these homes create neighborhoods with a quality of life that does not exist anywhere else in Middle Georgia. Owners of these home can walk to amenities like coffee shops, pizza places, book store, Mercer University's sports, drama and music programs, six city parks, including our dog park, and Alexander II Elementary School.

Since January 2012, HMF has assumed the management of the Historic Hills and Heights Development Corporation (HHHDC). The Corporation is comprised of the Mayor of Macon, the President of Mercer University, and the Executive Director of the Macon Housing Authority. This entity has played a key role in galvanizing support from the key stakeholders in Beall's Hill, which is our target neighborhood in the Corridor.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project? Approximately 400 words.

Since the late 1970s our organization has taken a "house by house, street by street, neighborhood by neighborhood" approach to community development. As a result, our resources are targeted to one finite area at a time, which means that it's challenging to dedicate resources to "spot properties" in other areas of the community. As an organization we've weighed the cost benefit analysis and have determined that we can have a greater long term impact if we continue tackling one neighborhood at a time.

Additionally, we are sensitive to ramifications of our development work in these neighborhoods. Beall's Hill is Macon's most diverse neighborhood. Not only are the residents from various racial backgrounds, there is also a wide range in economics. We see these attributes as assets to the neighborhood and find that new residents are seeking these characteristics. That being said, we do not want our efforts to drive out long term residents. To that end we have researched tax abatement legislation for senior citizens and we maintain a strong working relationship with the Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association (BHNA) to be sure our work respects their interests. Staff members of HMF have purchased, rehabilitated, and reside in houses in the neighborhood.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used? Approximately 400 words.

HMF's annual operating budget is about \$550,000, but our annual real estate development budget typically ranges from \$1-2M. Over the years, we've funded our development in myriad ways. In the early years we were awarded a loan from the National Trust for Historic Preservation that we used to buy and rehabilitate historic homes. We then parlayed those funds to a "revolving loan fund model" that allowed us to raise more money for the fund that was paid back when projects sold.

Our revolving loan fund is nationally recognized as an innovative approach to funding real estate development.

Building on past success, in 2007 HMF was awarded \$700,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. Again, the funds were established to revolve and successfully completed 22 homes, more than double the number promised in the original grant application. In 2012 the grant was closed out and work began to attract another investment from Knight Foundation. In August 2014, a \$3 million investment was announced. These funds will continue being invested on real estate development projects in Beall's Hill, continue funding our facade loan and energy loan program, and match Mercer University's funds for the Down Payment Assistance program. The investment is part grant and part loan, which is unique in our field. Deemed a "program related investment" by the Internal Revenue Service and a "groan" to everyone else, the creative funding model again shows HMF as a national leader in community development efforts.

In addition to these funds, Historic Hills and Heights Development Corporation has served as a crucial pool of funds for real estate development. Again, set up in a revolving fund model, HMF applies for and borrows funds from HHHDC to be used on specific projects. The pool of funds is supported by the three member entities, City-County government, Mercer University, and Macon Housing Authority. Each member pays \$67,500 in annual dues. Currently, HMF owes \$368,000 to HHHDC for three Victorian houses that were moved and rehabilitated. Once these houses sell, the proceeds will be used to pay back the no interest loan from HHHDC.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of the project? Approximately 400 words.

Frankly, the most successful aspects of the project have been the compounding effects of revitalizing neighborhoods. By promoting homeownership and providing quality, affordable housing options, we've seen an influx of new residents in the historic neighborhoods of Macon. The vitality of these in town neighborhoods are critical to the long term success of Macon.

The only unsuccessful aspect of the project has been lack of quality private developers in Beall's Hill. Private investment is crucial to the long term success of the neighborhood stabilization since HMF and HHHDC cannot do all the projects in the 32 block neighborhood. That being said, during the housing boom we saw a few opportunistic developers who did not build quality products and did not respect the neighborhood. Out of four private developers only one still works in the community.

We anticipate private developers will return to the neighborhood as our work continues and as the housing market continues to improve. Learning from our past experience, we plan to work closer with these developers to ensure their work will enhance the neighborhood and be a successful business venture. After all, we need them to succeed so they will continue reinvesting the historic neighborhoods.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	Alex Morrison	Title	Executive Director
Organization	Macon Bibb County Urban Development Authority	Telephone	(478) 955-1595
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Fax	(478) 751-7390	E-mail	amorrison@maconbibb.us

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Signature		Date	12-9-14
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1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? Approximately 400 words.

Personally, I was one of the students who began the College Hill project in 2007 at Mercer University. This work completely changed the course of my life and led me to pursue work in the realm of economic and community development. The work at that time was highly conceptual, but established in the concrete notion that a community can bring itself back if it works together with institutions. We framed a concept and built a coalition of support that ultimately led to the creation of the College Hill Corridor Commission which is the community base for the success of the project. From there, the master plan was developed and successfully implemented.

That work led me to come back to Macon after graduate school and work in economic development. I immediately rejoined the Commission and began to find ways to partner with College Hill Alliance to further improve the community. As a commission member, I was very engaged in vetting ideas and prioritizing projects. A major role we played was analyzing and recommending the funding of projects through the innovative Knight Neighborhood Challenge program which engaged citizens to solve their own issues in build the community. We also took on the challenge of updating the master plan, and at times, implemented grants and projects ourselves.

The beauty of the project is that no one was not invited to the table and could choose the level on involvement that suited them best. I was able to work to many different stakeholders to bring about change and do so in a very deep and meaningful way.

The UDA recently took on a effort to build on the success of College Hill and create a master plan for the entire urban core of Macon, taking cues from College Hill's process. We have created new funding mechanisms that will help businesses get started in the corridor and all of the urban core.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Approximately 400 words.

At the beginning, the major issue that had to be overcome was trust. Mercer University and the neighborhood surrounding it did not have the best relationship, creating a stark town and gown divide. Furthermore, students felt unsafe and disconnected from the community in which they lived, maintaining a retreat to campus or driving far away for leisure activities. Neither side of the argument felt that there was a common, best interest that could be found. By reaching out, listening, and building consensus, this issue was mooted and both the university and community synched up to achieve the results necessary to attract and retain talented young people.

One of the issues that found common ground was finding funding to improve the public realm around the corridor. This meant applying for grants to rehab Tattnell Square Park and College St., it meant finding developers willing to build and populate Mercer Village, it meant having neighbors band together to fix blighted or overgrown properties. All partners stepped up in a big way to beautify the neighborhood.

The auxiliary benefit of these improvements was addressing a shared concern around safety. Naysayers at the beginning doomed the project because of the perception of crime in the park and the Beall's Hill neighborhood. Through investments in the park and the housing stock in Beall's Hill, the community came alive with people willing to walk and live in the corridor. Such improvements turned the tide on the crime conversation as it is no longer the dominant narrative.

Finally, a concern the community had was that Macon has a track record of not implementing the plans it makes. People perceived potential everywhere without action following. By using early implementation and a broad base of community support, the College Hill plan came alive immediately and grew on itself as time went on. It has become a model for us all to aspire towards.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how? Approximately 400 words.

When I was in school, there were no places to eat, shop, and spend leisure time within reasonable walking distance to campus, all of this has changed. When I was in school, students felt like they were not a part of the community that surrounded them, now students are creating events and jobs in a our community before they graduate. When I was in school, no one used Tattnall Square park for leisure, now it is the source of pride for hundreds of community members and the gathering place for a handful of annual festivals. At the time, no one walked, biked, ran, or traversed the area from downtown to campus with any frequency and now it seems somehow preternatural.

All of these are signs that but for this project, this bold College Hill experiment, the Macon of today would be unrecognizable. This is a place that went from a place people couldn't wait to leave to being a place that people yearn for reasons to stay. Mercer's enrollment is up, jobs are up, private investment is up... all things that would not have happened with natural market forces. College Hill made the right interventions to galvanize a community to create a sense of place that is inspiring and that is what attracts people to it. We can all see the role we can play to make the Urban Core better and we are.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through? Approximately 400 words.

The project had the perfect action to make it implementable. It built public support in a way that it never existed in this town before. This started from the very beginning of the process as stays with it today. Its hard to say that I would change anything, but it is easy to say that I wish we had known some of the lessons learned prior to the start.

For instance, we did not anticipate the quick rise in property values that happened as a result of the work of College Hill and Historic Macon, so it would have been good to identify and support long time property owners on fixed incomes at the outset instead of helping on the back end when the situation arose. We have made this note are working to use tools to support this individuals in future projects.

Another lesson that we would like to have known was the need to educate and convene conversations on public realm projects, such a public art, sidewalk improvements, and park usage. An understanding of public life at the outset of the project might have led to broader consensus and earlier implementation of public art projects and improvements. These actions greatly improve public involvement and attachment and we learned that later in the process.

The success that this project has been makes it hard, however, to say that something should have changed because the College Hill project is a work of art in itself and its hard to say that it could have been better with other actions. We have something beautiful here and we still have some blank canvas to work with.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER
PERSPECTIVE



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Name **Andrew Silver** Title **Chair**

Organization **Friends of Tattnall Square Park** Telephone **(478) 301-2562**

Address **1147 Adams Street** City/State/ZIP **Macon, GA 31201**

Fax () E-mail **silver_a@mercer.edu**

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Signature  Date **December 9, 2014**

1. What role did you play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

My wife and I moved with our three year old son into the College Hill Corridor thanks to the presence of the College Hill Alliance. Friends of ours, including Jessica Walden, were enthusing about the vibe of the neighborhood, so we made the move to the Huguenin Heights neighborhood. In 2009, the Alliance began talking with neighbors and city partners about a master plan, and, after having observed the park for a few years, I gathered with other neighbors and became involved in the design of Tattnall Square Park. We formed Friends of Tattnall Square Park and began to try to implement the College Hill Alliance led Tattnall Square Park Master Plan. We were all rookies in the field of advocacy, and the approachable and knowledgeable College Hill Alliance team quickly became our mentors and friends. They organized the press conference for our first KNC grant which saw 200 new trees planted in the park, and that beautifully orchestrated press conference resulted in our first private donation of an additional \$6,000 worth of trees in areas of the park we couldn't cover in our grant. The Alliance helped us for three years navigate some very fraught and historically dangerous waters with the park's various constituencies. My role as Chair has meant that for the last three years I've spent thousands of hours in the park for construction meetings, political meetings, park-user survey work, and volunteer events from painting to planting to mulching to garbage pick-up. Chairing has been the equivalent of an onerous but delightful part-time job. In the years since I've chaired the organization, we've raised \$700,000, earned Historic Macon's inaugural Thad E. Murphey Chair's Choice Award for the most significant preservation project of the year in Macon-Bibb, and were honored with City Parks Alliance's Frontline Park award for providing an inspiring example of "urban park excellence, innovation, and stewardship across the country." In the meantime, I've tried to build relationships with park-goers through the active use of social media, from Facebook and Twitter to Instagram and Vine. As Chair of the Board of Directors of Friends of Tattnall Square Park, I've made sure that we've met every month to discuss projects and gain approval from both the Board and our city partners, and I've tried to build strong alliances with local arborists, landscape architects, gardeners, businesses, non-profits, and student groups, along with traditional constituencies from the tennis community, Parks & Recreation, and the Macon-Bibb Commission. I've also worked to increase our own mentoring of "Friends" groups like Coleman Hill Revival and Friends of Washington Park, which have followed our example and begun to care for other parks in the city. Recently, we've begun working closely with two East Macon groups--Friends of Rosa Jackson Park and Friends of East Macon Park--to help them navigate their new non-profit journey. None of this would have happened without the College Hill Alliance providing us crucial mentoring from the very beginning.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The greatest impact that our project has had has been the joining together of diverse communities to accomplish a goal for the larger community--a goal that had eluded Macon for 100 years since the park's last restoration. We worked through our various issues; we listened to each other's passions; we found funding; we volunteered until we dropped; and we moved together for the greater good. In their book on The Highline, Joshua David and Robert Hammond talk about how at some point in the unlikely process that led to the creation of the Highline, the park became a symbol for what New York City could accomplish. Because our partnership brought beautiful results for the city, the park has emerged as a symbol of rebirth, of Macon's potential, of what a city can do together to make a difference if we just roll up our sleeves and don't give up until we see our dreams realized. Those who had lost faith in the capacity of our city to change have regained some of that faith; those who had seen a park used by traditionally ignored constituencies fall into disrepair have regained their belief that someone cares for spaces they frequent; those who have grown old with the park have regained their faith that their history will be preserved for future generations. "My sincere appreciation to ALL involved in this labor of civic pride, love, and farsightedness to enhance Tattnall Square Park to the extent that it may be, again, a venue to be savored by man," one elderly man wrote: "an awesome accomplishment that will be enjoyed by generations to come." Another wrote, "I can't get over the outstanding transformation that has taken place recently. I've lived in Macon since birth with the exception of the 4 years in the military. Macon and Bibb County owes a huge debt of gratitude to all those organizations and individuals that helped bring this all together." This is a project that has empowered neighbors, has brought neighbors together with neighbors, citizens together with their city government, and private donors to public spaces. It has brought a social space back to this diverse area, making it possible for all citizens to come together in a natural setting to share public space. In 1883, someone wrote into the paper asking a series of questions about the park: "Tattnall will be the centre of all this population. Will they be indifferent to the square? Will they not cherish it? Will they not embellish it with trees and shrubbery and fountains, and lakes and walks and drives and grass and flowers? Will not the children and their mothers, the invalids, the old and the young flock here every day for a breath of fresh air, a sight of green grass and exemption from the noise and dust and bustle of the business portions of the city. . . will not all the great gatherings of the people find 'elbow room' in Tattnall?" After 100 years of decline, Macon began to realize this vision of all people finding elbow room in the park.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

I knew before we had our first Friends of Tattall Square Park meeting that parks are lightning rods for people's passions and that people's passions would pit them against one another in the park's restoration. I'd come from an anti-trafficking movement, and I can't even recall one time when our Board disagreed with each other, though we had obstacles to overcome in the city. The truly remarkable thing about this project was the way neighbors came together with neighbors, citizens with the city, constituencies with other constituencies to do the hard scrabble work of compromise in this park restoration. Some of those compromises took years to work out. When we first got started, someone associated with the Master Plan told us, "you might as well toss this plan in the sewer--this city will never do a thing in the park." He especially warned against taking on the "third rail" of the tennis center cutting off an entire section of the park. There were many times during the three plus years of working on this project that I thought he had a good point. The tennis center occupying a broad swath of the park had long been an epicenter of resentment on behalf of those valuing green space. The Master Plan tried to thread the needle between so-called "active" and "passive" uses by removing two tennis courts, constructing a new building all the way against the courts, and restoring an important diagonal path in the park. We quickly found resistance on many fronts to the plan. First, the tennis pro resisted the removal of two of twelve courts. We met with the Chair of the County Commission, Sam Hart, along with the Recreation Director and our city partners, and we haggled for an hour about those courts. When the Recreation Director tried to preserve everything in the tennis center, I unrolled the College Hill Alliance led plan, and I told the Chair that we at least wanted the two courts removed. Over the protest of the Recreation Director, they were removed, making possible our next battles over the tennis building placement and the parking lot removal. We at FOTS began reaching out to the tennis pro, and we worked for months to come up with a compromise plan for the construction of a new building. Because the Master Plan took away important gathering places in back of the tennis building, we hired an architect to draw a two story building that both FOTS and the tennis pro and the tennis community agreed would suit their needs. When the Mayor opposed that plan, it was a painful process of compromise, but we managed once again to bridge the distance between constituencies and work closely with the tennis pro to design a new path and remove the old parking lot. We've emerged from the process with the tennis community and the park community closer than ever, each appreciating what the other brings to the public space. We've had to work through issues involving driving in the park, service roads, trash pick-up, park rentals, among many others. We approach each issue with passion and with a spirit of compromise. We can be passionate about our visions, and we can, at the end of the day we reconcile and come together with a compromise vision that makes us all feel good about serving the community and continuing to work together in the future. There has been no better peace broker in this process than the College Hill Alliance.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

I'm a realist, but I can't offhand think of the least successful aspects of this project. I suppose the least successful aspect is also the most successful aspect of the project: we didn't get everything we wanted to see accomplished in the Master Plan. But we worked hard, found a third way (or a fourth or fifth way) forward, consulted our landscape architects, and came up with a solution that, we think, is even more beautiful and more functional than the initial Master Plan. And the process has made us all feel that we co-wrote the plan, rather than having it foisted upon us. It has taken a great deal of time and effort, but our debates, our passions for what we do, and our determination to be humane to one another has seen us emerge from this process with stronger and deeper friendships than ever. We really feel like family after what we've all worked to accomplish, and all of us take great pride in the final product. But perhaps the most important success of our group has been to take a city that had little idea what a "Friends of" group was, a city that had a top-down, heavy-handed, distant approach to neighbors wanting to invest in parks, and we've turned that city into a place enormously receptive to neighbors advocating and volunteering for their parks. Because of our efforts, and because of the College Hill Alliance's leadership beyond the park, we have seen new parks groups formed across the city, neighbors newly engaged with public spaces and with each other, and city government actively championing partnerships between community and their government. Our work hasn't ended here. We hope to continue to mentor and encourage other parks groups across the city. Because the process of forming these organizations and working with city government manages to activate once fatalistic citizens like me, to bring neighbors together with neighbors, and all of us closer to nature, to play, to recreation. This is the beginning of something new and exciting in Macon. And none of it--not one moment of all of these three years of hard and incredibly productive work--could have happened had the College Hill Alliance not started something amazing in the Corridor and had they not stuck around to mentor us all the way through the process of community building and place making.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER
PERSPECTIVE



Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Name	Mark Vanderhoek	Title	Board Chair and Founder
Organization	Macon Roots	Telephone	(478) 318-7202
Address	1290 College Street	City/State/ZIP	Macon, GA 31201
Fax ()		E-mail	maconroots@gmail.com

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Signature	Date	12/9/14
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1. What role did you play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

I was a part of Mercer University's Marketing Communications Department when for more than 7 years, and did most of the media outreach for the College Hill Corridor Initiative when it was first proposed by students at the University, as well as many of the announcements for subsequent grants and projects the initiative attracted. I also founded the Beall's Hill Community Garden at Centenary and later, Macon Roots, an organization that works on sustainable agriculture and community garden projects throughout the city. One the signature projects of our nonprofit has been the Mulberry Market, a downtown farmers market. The market moved to Tattnell Square Park in the College Hill Corridor this year. Three years ago, I moved to Beall's Hill using down payment assistance provided to Mercer employees to move the neighborhood.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The College Hill Corridor Initiative has completely transformed the neighborhood and the city. The more than \$100 million in public and private investment has changed the streets and parks, as well as created many new buildings. It has also sparked new investment in housing, helping to add residents on homes where once there were only empty lots. The initiative and the Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant program has leveraged talented people in our community to create projects and events that have added to the vibrancy of the neighborhood. The College Hill Corridor Initiative has built the ideas in our neighborhood that were once only "what ifs" into beautiful realities. Where once there were parking lots and abandoned stores, we now have restaurants and stores that cater to the neighborhood. We have a walkable and vibrant area where the neighbors of all races, creeds and income levels can gather, live, work and play. Without this initiative, there would be almost none of the neighborhood renewal and revitalization that has so far taken place in Beall's Hill. We would not have slid backwards, but there would certainly not be the forward momentum we have today in this area without the College Hill Corridor Initiative.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

I think that in order to make the Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant program manageable, the program was designed not to allow grantees to seek funding for salaries to manage programs. While this allowed for a more streamlined approach and an almost effortless grant process, even for individuals, it made the long term success of some projects less clear.

This effected some of the projects I worked on directly and would have made them more sustainable long term.

Overall, I think this effort has been successful and it will be successful over the long haul.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

Not only did this project create major changes in the amenities, infrastructure and physical housing and retail stock of the corridor, it created a brand for the entire area. The events and unified look created awareness of College Hill and attracted shoppers, home buyers and event-goers to the area to experience it.

In short, College Hill created a positive impact by creating a positive project in a city that has been rocked by the economic shifts in the world economy. It changed the tone of the debate about the future of the city by providing a counter point to the naysayers who said the city's best days were behind it. On the downside, there has not been as much economic development yet in terms of direct job creation in the corridor to sustain the program long term. While the College Hill Alliance has taken this on recently, in order to grow economic development at the same pace as the other gains in housing and infrastructure, the job creation piece should have been launched at the beginning. In the long run, this may slow economic development within the Corridor, however, the positive impacts of the Corridor to the city as a whole mean that it is a attractive place to do business. Therefore, long term, the overall economic impact may not be reduced substantially.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER
PERSPECTIVE



OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

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Signature _____ **Date** _____

1. What role did you play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

2012

2014

REPORT TO THE
COMMUNITY



THE BASICS
CONNECTION
THE VIBE
ENVIRONMENT
THE LOOK

The College Hill Icon



It's as simple as an orange and black square with four circles. But inside that insignia is a swirl of ideas put into action, connecting at each intersection and proud public engagement at its core.

So what inspired the symbol of the College Hill Corridor, a historic two-square-mile of neighborhoods in Macon, Georgia, that began to appear even before there was a community-driven master plan? The answer can be found along segments of original sidewalks discovered in the area.



MARVANN BATES

Once upon a time in the city of Macon, in the late 1800s, it was the duty of homeowners to install and maintain sidewalks along their property. In the handwritten city ordinance J-401 from October of 1887, the mayor and city council established that throughout the Corridor and Downtown, "Property owners shall cause to be put down by said first-day of June, hard, burned brick pavements, of the width of five feet to be equidistant from the property abutting on such sidewalks and curbstones." Homeowners that did not comply with the ordinance were fined \$5 per day until the sidewalks were laid, thrown in the stockade, or had to pay off the expense by working in the Public Works Department.

Among a popular choice of sidewalk bricks were a series of gridded circles and squares that increased tread and prevented slippage. Josh Rogers, the first hire of the College Hill Corridor Commission at its early inception, said the College Hill logo was modeled on the concentric circle bricks found throughout the Corridor. "The actual swirl in the logo came from a petroglyph from local indigenous pottery so it tied together Macon's pre-history with the Victorian brick," he said. Although this design wasn't unique just to Macon and was likely mass-produced and shipped throughout the country, the Corridor, especially along College Street, remains the place where this original city infrastructure can still be found.

Little did these private home owners know that by complying with this 19th Century ordinance, they would inspire such an important symbol of community over a century later along the same road.

2007 College Hill student project at Mercer University takes place and the College Hill Corridor Commission, an all-volunteer group of community members, is formed to spearhead the College Hill Corridor neighborhood revitalization effort.

2008 The **John S. and James L. Knight Foundation** issues a **\$250,000** grant to initiate community-driven planning of the effort. ■ Ingleside Village Pizza at Montpelier becomes the first retailer in Mercer Village, the newly revitalized neighborhood retail node in the Corridor. Jittery Joe's and Francar's Wings soon follow.

2009 After a series of community meetings and public input, the College Hill Corridor Master Plan is published. ■ The Knight Foundation grants **\$2 million** to Mercer University to form the College Hill Alliance full-time staff and **\$3 million** to the Community Foundation of Central Georgia to establish the Knight Neighborhood Challenge grants, to fund the best ideas from the community to implement in the Corridor.

2010 The public-private partnership of Historic Hills & Heights, comprised of the City of Macon, the College Hill Alliance, Historic Macon Foundation, Macon Housing Authority and Mercer University, with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, is formalized to redevelop area neighborhoods with "hills"

or "heights" in their title, starting with the Corridor's Beall's Hill neighborhood. During the National Preservation Conference in November, it is revealed that the partnership has put together the nation's most active revolving fund.

2011 113 students move into the Lofts at Mercer Village, a **\$10 million mixed-used development** comprised of three floors of student housing above four retailers – Barnes & Noble/Mercer University Bookstore, Designer Tan, Fountain of Juice and Margaritas at Mercer Village. ■ Over 16,320 people have attended Corridor events organized by the College Hill Alliance. ■ The Knight Neighborhood Challenge has awarded **68 grants totaling \$1,078,032** to local residents and organizations to fund innovative ideas for the Corridor.



When I moved to Macon 10 years ago,

I was impressed by the potential I saw in my new home. Little did I know I was going to play a role in moving that potential into reality through involvement with the College Hill Corridor. I first heard of the College Hill project through one of the original Mercer students who helped develop the proposal as part of a class project. From there, I attended meetings, gave my input, joined committees, applied for grants and joined the all-volunteer College Hill Corridor Commission. And now, here I am as the co-chair of the College Hill Corridor Commission. This report has given me a chance to look back — not just how I have been involved, but to soak in all that has changed in that short time and how this area of Macon has been transformed.

From my front porch, I can witness the excitement of the Magnolia Street Soapbox Derby and hear the live performances from Second Sunday in Washington Park. The unique architecture of the historic homes in my neighborhood can be appreciated at night because of the Lights on Macon project. When I walk my dogs, I see the new trashcans in Corridor parks, each with a unique quote. As I drive to work, I pass the directional signs that tell residents and

visitors alike how to get around the Corridor. On my days off, I linger in Tattnell Square Park and admire the over 200 newly planted trees. While I am proud to witness all the physical changes that have been brought to the Corridor, I am more proud of my friends, neighbors, students and colleagues that have made these successes possible. They came up with ideas, did the research, wrote the grants, called the meetings, chatted with experts, and made amazing things happen to make our community a better place.

How about you? Are you ready to roll your up your sleeves and get to work? Are you ready to get involved and turn potential into reality?

Find out more about joining the College Hill Corridor Commission by sending us a message at info@collegehillmacon.com. Or come out to a public meeting and have your voice heard. Or apply for a Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant and make a difference in your community that you, too, can be proud to call home. After all, the College Hill Corridor is more than a location. It's a movement that's made Macon a better place to live, work and play.

Heather Bowman-Cutway

Co-chair, College Hill Corridor Commission

2012 The Lofts at Mercer Village Phase II is developed with an additional three stories of student housing in Mercer Village and becomes home to the Center for Collaborative Journalism, a unique partnership between Mercer University, The Telegraph and Georgia Public Broadcasting that has students, faculty and veteran journalists working together in a joint newsroom and engaging with the community. ■ The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation announces **an additional grant of \$2.6 million** to continue the College Hill Alliance's successful work in promoting a sense of place for the Corridor that connects Mercer University with the city's downtown.

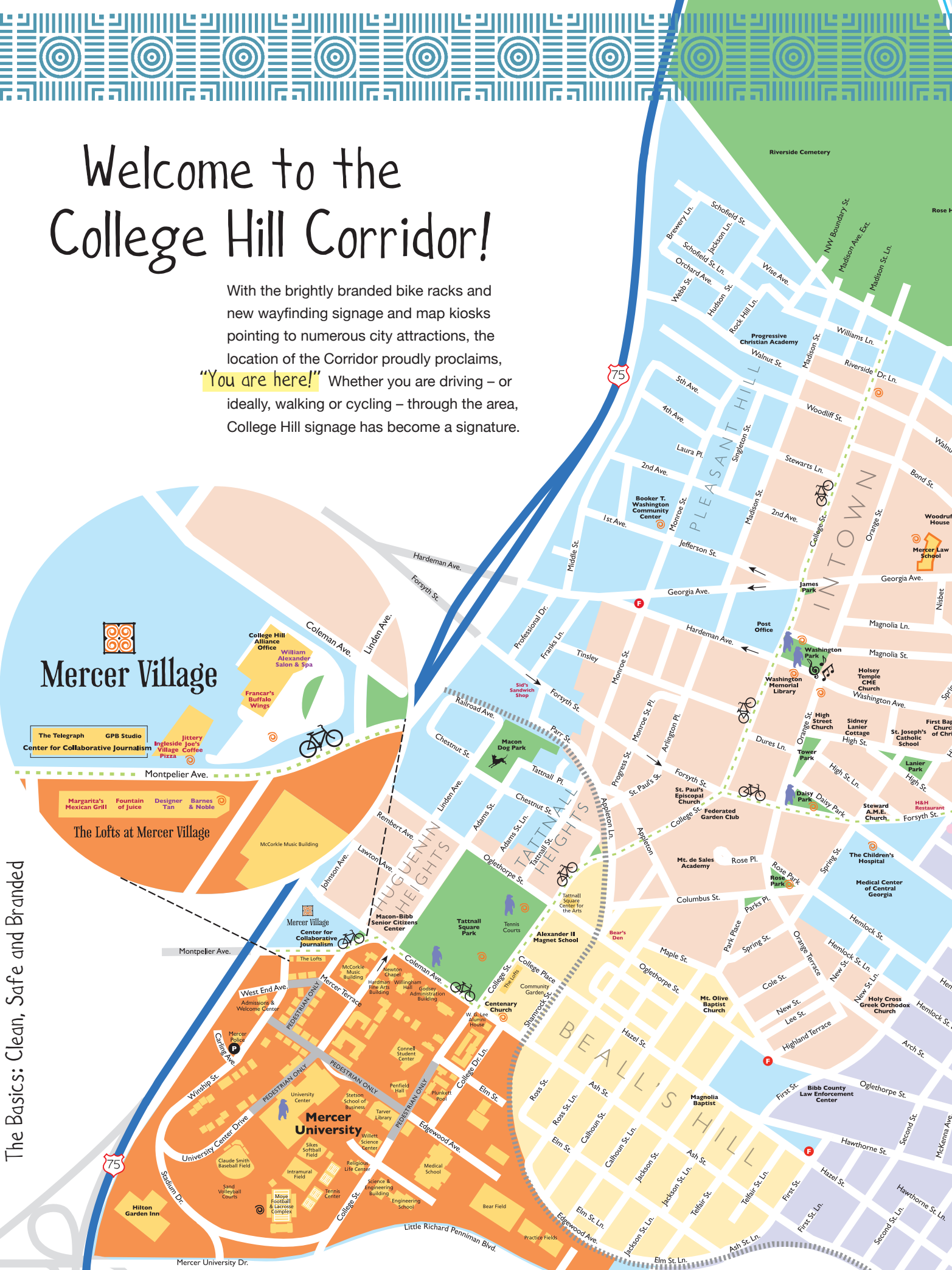
2013 The College Hill Alliance receives a Gold and Silver Excellence in Economic Development Award from the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) recognizing the efforts to recruit and retain businesses and foster neighborhood revitalization in Macon, Georgia's College Hill Corridor. By now, **over \$78.4 million in public and private investment** has been leveraged in the College Hill Corridor. ■ The Community Foundation of Central Georgia has awarded **111 Knight Neighborhood Challenge (KNC) grants totaling \$2,119,081**. The College Hill Corridor Commission will vote on an additional 30 grant requests totaling \$1,336,283 in early 2014.

2014 The block of College Street between Oglethorpe Street and Coleman Avenue will undergo a dramatic transformation, anchored by the Tattnell Square Center for the Arts, a new community arts center and home to Mercer Theatre. ■ The Lofts Phase III will be ready for residents in the summer. The Lofts at College (Phase IV) begins construction on its mixed-use residential and retail project that will include **room for several new businesses** at one of the Corridor's most prominent gateways. ■ The College Hill Master Plan will be updated according to community feedback. ■ And the final round of Knight Neighborhood Challenge grants will be rewarded.

Welcome to the College Hill Corridor!

With the brightly branded bike racks and new wayfinding signage and map kiosks pointing to numerous city attractions, the location of the Corridor proudly proclaims, "You are here!" Whether you are driving – or ideally, walking or cycling – through the area, College Hill signage has become a signature.

The Basics: Clean, Safe and Branded



Mercer Village

- The Telegraph
- GPB Studio
- Center for Collaborative Journalism
- Ingleside Joe's Village Coffee
- Jittery
- Francar's Buffalo Wings
- William Alexander Salon & Spa

The Lofts at Mercer Village

- Margarita's Mexican Grill
- Fountain of Juice
- Designer Tan
- Barnes & Noble



Mercer University Dr.



MARYANN BATES



CATILIN BRANNON



KEN KRAKOW

The series of directional signs were paid for through a Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant, which continues to accept applications for funding ideas through the Community Foundation of Central Georgia. This same grant was responsible for the new, artisan-crafted Washington Park sign (built with actual stones from the park!) at the corner of Washington Avenue and College Street and a series of pedestrian-friendly map kiosks throughout the Corridor. It will also assist with new monumental signage at Tattnell Square Park. All of the designs and locations were determined with community input at one of the Corridor's many public meetings before being turned into a reality that visitors and locals enjoy today.

College Hill Receives Global Recognition

In October 2013, the College Hill Alliance received a Gold Excellence in Economic Development Award recognizing the efforts to recruit and retain businesses and foster neighborhood revitalization in Macon, Georgia's, College Hill Corridor. The award, given by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), was in the Real Estate Redevelopment & Reuse category for populations between 25,000 to 200,000 and highlighted the success of Mercer Village, an area once filled with vacant, dilapidated buildings that was transformed into a vibrant, residential and retail destination.

The honor was presented at an awards ceremony during the IEDC Annual Conference held in Philadelphia. In addition to the Gold Award, the Alliance received a Silver Award from IEDC in the category of Neighborhood Development Initiatives, recognizing the partnership and dedication of the City of Macon, Mercer University and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to reinvigorate Macon's College Hill Corridor.

PHOTOS BY MARYANN BATES



1

"The Excellence in Economic Development Awards recognize the College Hill Alliance as being one of the leading organizations in the industry for innovation, creativity and successful strategies."
 — IEDC chair Paul Krutko



2

1. Mercer Village is an anchor mixed-used development with student lofts and local businesses just off campus in the College Hill Corridor. The area was once filled with vacant, dilapidated buildings and now plays host to vibrant events and community block parties.

2. Brent and Andrea Meyer took advantage of Mercer University's Down Payment Assistance program available to university employees who want to live in the College Hill Corridor. They completely restored their 1896 Huguennin Heights home that was neglected and uninhabited for almost seven years and were awarded a 2013 Residential Preservation Award from Historic Macon for restoring their property to its previous splendor. Brent is now president of the neighborhood's recently revived association. Pictured is Brent and Andrea with daughter Maddie in front of their home.

3. Aaron & Yosi Zaritzky have lived in Beall's Hill since 2006 and are actively engaged with the neighborhood. Aaron is currently president of the neighborhood association and has worked diligently to assist with a tax study funded by the Knight Neighborhood Challenge. Pictured are Aaron and Yosi with daughters Sophia and Camila.

4. Lesley and Doug Clarke made the decision to move from Monroe County to the College Hill Corridor and are in the process of restoring their 1885 home at the corner of Adams at Oglethorpe Streets. Pictured are Lesley and children Sam and Paige and dog Sally in front of their work in progress.



4

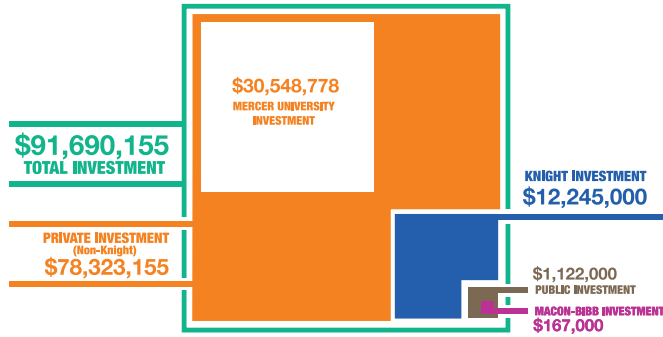


3

"There is finally a feeling of electricity, excitement, and forward progress in Macon. We wanted to be part of that. What better way than to restore a piece of Macon's history?" —Lesley Clarke

WHAT 1 BIG IDEA LEVERAGED IN 2-SQUARE MILES*

*Investment in the Corridor from 2009-2013



Newly Rehabbed
Commercial Spaces

\$1,658,900



Mercer Village

\$18,000,000

“By engaging the community, building partnerships, and focusing efforts in a specific area, the College Hill Corridor is successfully revitalizing a neighborhood and having a positive impact on all of Macon-Bibb.” — Mayor Robert Reichert

Non-Knight Funded
Real Estate Investments
\$18,052,085



\$63,392

Special Event
Sponsorship
Investments

121

Jobs Created



Community Activism
& Engagement

298

Volunteer Hours
per Month



College Hill's Proven Growth

A recent study conducted by the Center for Economic Analysis in Middle Georgia State College's School of Business found that efforts by the College Hill Corridor, residents, and partners are having a significant impact on the entire community.

Among the findings:

From 2002-2011, property taxes paid in the College Hill Corridor increased more than they did in the City of Macon or Bibb County over the same period.

Property tax revenue within the College Hill Corridor increased at almost double the rate of Bibb County.

Property tax income increased 57% in College Hill versus 30% for Bibb County as a whole.

From 2002 to 2011, total property tax income increased by nearly \$1,000,000 annually within College Hill alone.

Much of this increase was due to rehabilitation of abandoned houses and construction on empty land, meaning crime was reduced, blight was eliminated, and taxpayers saved money by avoiding demolition.

Property tax increases from downtown and InTown areas are especially important for City, County, and School Board coffers because it's a double win: costs are reduced while revenue increases.

The College Hill VIBE

One of the most recognized successes of the College Hill Corridor is the vibe created by the many pulsating, thriving events held within the area and open to all. From the Mardi Gras parade in Mercer Village to a community kazoo sing-along at Second Sunday to the triumphant return of Mercer Football and the tailgating that tagged along, the Corridor has the event calendar covered.

The Magnolia Street Soapbox Derby, organized and operated by a group of dedicated neighborhood volunteers, held the race in spite of April showers in 2013 and still had over 20 entries and hundreds lined up along Magnolia Street, umbrellas poised, for the downhill action.

Second Sunday's attendance continues to swell. The free concerts now average over 1,200 people per show and continue to showcase a mix of local and regional artists. Local artists this season included the Grapevine Band, Travis Denning Band, the Dubshack Band and Big Mike & the

Booty Papas. Regionally, Second Sunday welcomed Atlanta's Yacht Rock Schooner, Nashville's Stevens Layne, NYC's Sophia Bastian, and South Carolina's "Kazooie" Rick Hubbard.

Closing out this year's series was the one and only Percy Sledge and his band the Blues Masters, who are based out of Macon. Over 5,000 people attended the free concert headlined by the legendary soul singer last October.

Mercer Village, the neighborhood residential and retail destination across from Mercer's north campus, continues to host block parties celebrating the seasons.

The year 2013 included the first-ever Mardi Gras event, complete with Krewe parade and New Orleans-style cuisine from all of the Village restaurants. Christmas in the Corridor, the annual holiday event, celebrated with over 2,000 participants.

Among the free festivities were horse and carriage rides, s'mores roasting, caroling and a giant snow slide and snow play area.

MARYANN BATES



Football Tailgating in Mercer Village

MARYANN BATES



The Grapevine Band at Second Sunday



MERCER UNIVERSITY

Krewe Parades at Mardi Gras in Mercer Village



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Christmas Carriage Rides in the Corridor



MARYANN BATES

Percy Sledge and the Blues Masters at Second Sunday



MARYANN BATES

The Return of Mercer Football and the Bear Walk



The Magnolia Street Soapbox Derby

Music Ambassadors: Macon

Mercer Village also participated in the newly launched **Music Ambassadors: Macon** program. Funded by a Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant applied for by Center for Collaborative Journalism's Director Tim Regan-Porter, who previously served as founding publisher of *Paste* magazine, Music Ambassadors brings nationally renowned musicians to play in unique, intimate settings in the Corridor and acquaint them with Macon's legendary music history and all that city currently offers artists.



Snow at Christmas in the Corridor

MERCER UNIVERSITY



Big Wheel Race at the Magnolia Street Soapbox Derby

MARYANN BATES



Arrested Development's Speech Performs at a House Party on Arlington Place



The mission of the program is to make national musicians ambassadors of the city in order to build on its legacy of groundbreaking creativity. It also showcases Downtown Macon and the College Hill Corridor and the safe, inviting, affordable, creative and livable spaces that they offer. Musicians are invited to play a house concert in a historic home in the College Hill Corridor, play a lunchtime show in Mercer Village and are treated to private tours of the city, VIP accommodations and promotion in multiple outlets in the region. Partners in this project include the Center for Collaborative Journalism, Georgia Public Broadcasting, the College Hill Alliance and Historic Macon.

The Vibe: College Town Cool



MARYANN BATES



Heaven Beatbox Performs to a Living Room Audience



PHOTOS BY MARYANN BATES

What is the Knight Neighborhood Challenge?

For the last five years, the Knight Neighborhood Challenge program, administered through the Community Foundation of Central Georgia, has granted funds to organizations and individuals for the most creative, transformational ideas for the Corridor. So far, **111 KNC grants have been awarded, totaling \$2,119,081.** The grants have ranged from events like composting workshops and an evening Science Café to long-term projects like bike sharrows, park improvements and public art installations.

This innovative grant program, which relies on input from the College Hill Corridor Commission, has made the Corridor neighborhoods unlike anywhere else in the country. The effort has successfully gotten people involved in College Hill through an array of civic and cultural projects that enhance the soul of the community. **The next deadline — and the final phase for this program — is June 30, 2014.** More information on applying for a Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant can be found at cfcga.org/knc.



Alex II school children assisted community leaders with Tattnell Square Park's massive tree planting.

Tattnell Square Park RENAISSANCE

Envisioned as “The City Within a Park,” the city founders laid out Macon with wide avenues and squares and two commons, and required property owners to plant shade trees on the front of their lots through an ordinance. The first shade trees were planted in 1826 and contributed to the City’s reputation as luxuriantly green. It was with that history in mind that in the late fall of 2012, over **200 new trees** were planted in Tattnell Square Park. Funded by a \$32,950 grant from the Knight Neighborhood Challenge and private donations, this massive tree-planting was the largest the park had experienced since 1915.

This also coordinated with the unveiling of an extensive pavilion landscaping makeover, also funded by the Knight Neighborhood Challenge, and is part of the overall Tattnell Square Park Master Plan devised from community input starting in early 2011.

Since the inception of the park’s transformational plan, new leadership emerged from those efforts. The all-volunteer Friends of Tattnell Square Park, made-up of College Hill neighbors, green space advocates and community members, continues to drive the efforts transforming the park. Most recently, installation has begun on monumental signage for the park, which includes new park entrances. The second phase of this work will coincide with roundabout construction and the Transportation Enhancement grant improvements along College Street.

Knight Neighborhood Challenge Grants in Action!



New trash receptacles in Corridor parks contain literary quotes. New bike sharrows continue to be installed on Corridor roads to encourage cycling and sharing the road.



MERCER UNIVERSITY

The Environment: A City within a Park



College Hill Master Plan's rendering of College Street enhancements

College Street ENHANCEMENTS

The improvements along the block of College Street bordering Tattnell Square Park is a beautification project in the making since the inception of the College Hill Master Plan. The projected date of completion is August 2014 with the goal of creating a seamless connection between the new Tattnell Square Center for the Arts, Lofts Phase III, Alex II Magnet School and the park. It will increase pedestrian safety by providing greater opportunity to walk, as well as slow street traffic and provide improved lighting to the area.

Mercer University is supporting the revitalization of the former Tattnell Square Presbyterian Church to create the new **Tattnell Square Center for the Arts** with help from a \$425,000 ArtPlace America grant. The proposed center will serve as a community theatre and arts venue, as well as home to the University's Theatre Department. The church property was donated to Mercer in 2010 by the Flint River Presbytery and will be completed by November 2014.

The Connection: Cooling the Streets



Architect's rendering of Tattnell Square Center for the Arts transformation

More Park Improvements

Tattnell Square Park is not the only park getting a make-over led by the community. The Triple Triangle Park, which consists of Daisy Park, Tower Park and High Street (Lanier) Park, is in the early stages of its master planning process, funded by a Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant. After several public meetings, Macon-Bibb County Parks & Recreation will soon reveal plans to improve the parks' landscape, functionality and accessibility to the community and return them to a green-space centerpiece of the historic residential area.

Plans for Coleman Hill's improvement are also well-underway. With a finished plan driven by local residents and funding from the Knight Neighborhood Challenge, the revived Coleman Hill will see new trees, a walking trail and a **60-foot in-ground slide**, promising outdoor fun for all ages.

Bridget Wright and her family enjoyed their backyard slide so much, she envisioned an outdoor slide down Coleman Hill park. She received a KNC grant to turn her vision into a reality and now plans are well underway for the park's slide installation.



MARYANN BATES



Joseph Egloff, Macon Maker of Grass-Fed, Humanely Raised Beef



Natasha Phillips, Macon Maker of Baked Goods and Healthy Lunch Options



Y-O Lattimore, Macon Maker of Poetry

Making Macon Makers

In the fall 2013, the College Hill Alliance launched an open call for people in Macon to join the “Maker Movement,” a growing national network of artisans, craftsmen, small business entrepreneurs and innovators building new, locally-driven economies. ■ Through a survey found on maconmaker.com, the Alliance is collecting the stories of makers who live and work inside Macon. ■ The Maker Movement is the approximately 135 million adults — 57% of the American population ages 18 and up — who employ their creative skills in craft activities, such as making clothing, jewelry, baked goods or art. ■ Locally, over 200 Macon Makers have taken the survey with the majority asking for more networking opportunities. ■ Examples of makers range from computer programmers to wood workers and run the gamut of arts and crafts to engineering and technology. ■ The College Hill Alliance is seeking Macon Makers as part of its expanded focus to boost entrepreneurship and attract homegrown businesses to Macon’s Downtown and College Hill Corridor. ■ The call for Macon Makers remains open to all.



Jason Frost, Macon Maker of Graphic Design and Screen Printing

Become part of the effort. Visit maconmaker.com and claim your creative spot.



Nicole Moore, Macon Maker of Gardens



Carl Fambro, Macon Maker of Chicken Wings and Sauces



Gary Wall, Macon Maker of Prosthetics



Margaret O'Neal, Macon Maker of Natural Dog Biscuits



Nathan Edmondson, Macon Maker of Comics and Screenplays



Pilar Wilder, Macon Maker of Dance

PHOTOS BY MARYANN BATES

So, what's next for the Corridor?

The College Hill Alliance has been charged with developing a climate and culture that keeps the creative class in business. A climate ripe for entrepreneurship, a culture rich enough to support the ideas and a business movement that inspires makers from all sectors are just part of the plan the office is currently developing.

How do we keep up the momentum and achieve sustainability for generations to come? The answer lies in the Corridor's original mission: to attract and retain the best and the brightest.

to Attract and Retain the Best and Brightest!

College Hill Alliance's Entrepreneurship Plan Overview

OUR PRIORITIES

- Support a community of risk-takers.
- Keep college graduates in the Macon area.
- Enhance a culture where entrepreneurs and creatives thrive.



FOSTERING
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
CREATING A CULTURE
OF INNOVATION

OUR PROCESS

We intend to leverage local input about ideas and insights, learn from national best practices, and use new and creative thinking to craft solutions for Macon.

☒ October & November 2013

FOCUS: **Gaining Input**
METHOD: **Targeted Surveys & Focus Groups**

☒ December 2013

FOCUS: **Developing Ideas**
METHOD: **Plan Framework**

☒ January 2014

FOCUS: **Continued Input**
METHOD: **Focus Groups**

☐ February 2014

FOCUS: **Refining Ideas**
METHOD: **Draft Plan**

☐ March 2014

FOCUS: **Continued Input & Prioritize Ideas**
METHOD: **Community Meeting**

☐ April 2014

FOCUS: **Finalize Ideas**
METHOD: **Master Plan Updated to Include Jobs**

☐ Fall 2014

FOCUS: **Economic Development Culture Change**
METHOD: **Final Plans Announced with Economic Development Partners**

OUR BELIEFS

- Community development is economic development.
- Improving Macon's quality of life and wealth creation starts at the urban core.
- Macon's business culture must inspire ideas, create opportunities, embrace risk, and support collaboration.
- Makers, artists, and other creatives are a crucial building block of a strong sense of community and significant factor in enhancing quality of life.

We Want Your Input!

Community feedback helps us understand the needs of makers, start-ups and small businesses.

Check out CollegeHillMacon.com to get involved or contact us at info@collegehillmacon.com

Where Are They Now?

They were four Mercer University students working on their Senior Capstone project when they had the idea for the creation of the College Hill Corridor, an overall plan to make Macon a more attractive place to live with a focus on retaining the existing talent and attracting new residents and businesses. Veronica Allen, Kimberly Humphries, Matt Wetherington and Alex Morrison, under the guidance of Dr. Peter Brown, made up “Team Creative Macon 2007” that began the research, support and vision that launched the College Hill Corridor movement as we know it today.

Veronica Allen McClendon and Alex Morrison continue to contribute their talents to the community they now call home. Veronica is founding partner with Toussaint McClendon Law, a firm specializes in matters concerning children, including education, juvenile delinquency, child custody and parental rights. Her office is located in Washington Commons, with a prime view of the progress of the College Hill Corridor.

Alex is the executive director of the Macon Bibb County Urban Development Authority and Assistant Director of Economic Development for the Macon-Bibb County Economic and Community Development Department. He works on initiatives to support business and property development in the urban core of Macon and assist in the administration of broad development and housing initiatives in the city.



Alex Morrison and Veronica Allen McClendon outside Veronica's law firm's office in Washington Commons, a recently renovated commercial office space property in the Corridor.

The Future of the College Hill Corridor

It's been less than five years since the College Hill Corridor Master Plan was put in motion, but the changes to the urban and social fabric of the two-square miles of historic neighborhoods are evident. However, the work isn't over. Interface Studio, the urban planning firm working with the College Hill effort since the original planning process, has returned to Macon to update the Master Plan. **Whether you were there from the beginning or new to the community, your feedback is wanted to keep the College Hill Corridor momentum moving forward.**

A series of community meetings resumed in early 2014 to seek community feedback on an updated Master Plan. What do you want to see? What do you want to do? Where is there work to be done? Bring your ideas, dreams and vision to this opportunity for community engagement, a signature of the College Hill way.

PHOTOS BY MARYANN BATES

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The Future is **YOU** in the Corridor.

After evaluating the progress of the original Master Plan, Interface devised a feedback form on remaining opportunities not yet implemented from the original plan. If you would like to contribute to the continued change of the College Hill Corridor, your input is wanted! Here are ways to get involved:

1. **Fill out the form** and return it to the College Hill Alliance office.

2. **Attend the next community meeting** at 6 p.m. on **February 5, 2014** in the Presidents Dining Room found in the University Center at Mercer University or the final meeting on **April 9, 2014** at 6 p.m. at the Cox Capitol Theatre.

3. **Share your ideas** on the community survey or Idea Map (yourcorridor.com) both accessible through collegehill-macon.com.

4. Let the College Hill Alliance **bring the Idea Map** to your public space or event.



Weigh in on Established Ideas

(not yet implemented) from the ORIGINAL PLAN

KEEP IT
(still relevant)



FORGET IT
(no longer needed)



PRIORITIZE IT
(choose top 3)



The Basics: Clean, Safe & Branded *Ideas that have not yet been implemented*

- Form a College Hill Corridor Business Improvement District (BID)
- Launch a yard lighting initiative to brighten the Corridor at night
- Install emergency call boxes

The Vibe: College Town Cool *Ideas that have not yet been implemented*

- Repurpose vacant storefronts for temporary gallery space
- Build affordable live/work space for artists
- Offer Student Night discounts at cultural spots
- Offer Bear Cards to neighbors to give them access to Mercer amenities

The Connection: Cooling the Streets *Ideas that have not yet been implemented*

- Integrate bike boxes at intersections to make safe space for cyclists
- Develop a bikes-for-cars program offering students/employees a free or discounted bike if they opt not to bring a car to campus
- Strengthen bicycle advocacy
- Launch a Pedi-Cabs program to help people get around
- Add bike parking at neighborhood schools
- Expand the bike network
- Make it safer and more popular for kids to walk to school
- Explore car sharing (ex. ZipCar)
- Charge for on-campus parking permits
- Provide cash or other incentives for people who carpool or do not drive to work
- Add left-turn lanes where possible to increase safety
- Add pedestrian count-down signals at all signalized intersections

The Environment: A City within a Park *Ideas that have not yet been implemented*

- Upgrade retention walls as living (green) walls
- Integrate stormwater management techniques with landscape/streetscape improvements
- Re-design Daisy Park
- Make church entry plazas more park-like
- Introduce exercise equipment along trails
- Make Riverside Drive more pedestrian friendly

The Look: Macon's Historic & Urban Center *Ideas that have not yet been implemented*

- Improve the Senior Center
- Redevelop the Post Office Annex site

Additional comments or ideas
for the College Hill Corridor?

Connect with College Hill



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Middle Georgia Clean Cities Coalition

Jim Thomas
Macon-Bibb County Planning and Zoning Commission

Melanie Vaughn
InTown Macon Resident

Jessica Walden
College Hill Alliance

Julia Wood
Community Foundation of Central Georgia

Aaron Zaritzky
Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association

2009

College Hill

2011

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



THE COLLEGE HILL CORRIDOR

It's more than a location. It's a grassroots movement that has transformed a neighborhood and is strengthening our city.

The idea behind the College Hill initiative began with Mercer students seeking to revitalize the area by connecting campus to downtown Macon. The City of Macon and Mercer then took up the cause, leading to the creation of the **College Hill Corridor Commission**. The Commission soon attracted a \$250,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to facilitate the creation of the College Hill Corridor Master Plan.

The Master Plan was the result of nearly a year of discussions and forums at sites throughout the Corridor, from houses to churches, on walking tours and at Mercer. Ideas from these public meetings were compiled by Philadelphia's Interface Studio and developed into a plan that focuses on enhancing the Corridor as an ideal place to live, work, and play.

"The inclusive planning process, which brought the neighborhood together, involving and investing them in the project, has been key to the success of this project," said Sarah Gerwig-Moore, co-chair of the College Hill Corridor Commission. *"The Master Plan doesn't belong to just Mercer or the city—it's the entire community's plan."*

Knight Foundation then granted \$5 million to further the College Hill initiative. Mercer received \$2 million for the three-year operation of the **College Hill Alliance** and \$3 million was awarded to the Community Foundation of Central Georgia for the implementation of the **Knight Neighborhood Challenge**—a grant program that funds innovative ideas from local residents aimed at reshaping the unique area between Mercer and downtown Macon.

The College Hill Corridor Commission continues today as an advisory board for the area, while the College Hill Alliance is the administrative arm responsible for implementation of Master Plan



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College Hill residents review the Master Plan. (left to right) Rogers Willoughby, Nadia Osman, Reshanda Walker, Chuck Boulware, Stacey Harwell

recommendations and guided by a nine-member steering committee. The mission of the Alliance is to foster neighborhood revitalization in the Corridor through business recruitment and retention, lifestyle enhancement, and by catalyzing commercial and residential real estate development that strengthens the historic character of College Hill.

During the Alliance's first two years of operation, both public and private investment have been attracted to the Corridor, including more than \$22 million in private investment and a \$1 million federal grant to renovate Tattnell Square Park.

Mercer President William D. Underwood said, "I would give the effort an A-plus so far. I think it's the single most successful thing going in Macon right now."

We at the College Hill Alliance thank you—the Macon and Middle Georgia community—for your partnership in furthering this initiative and realize your energy and creativity have helped make this endeavor a success. Though the grant cycle ends next year for our operation, we continue to take steps to ensure there is lasting change in the Corridor, while seeking funding and partners to keep the momentum going.



College Hill Recap

- 2007** College Hill student project at Mercer University takes place.
College Hill Corridor Commission is formed.
- 2008** **\$250,000** Planning grant issued by John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.
- 2009** College Hill Corridor Master Plan is published.

Knight Foundation grants **\$2 million** to Mercer University to form the College Hill Alliance and **\$3 million** to Community Foundation of Central Georgia to establish the Knight Neighborhood Challenge.

- October 2011** **College Hill Alliance** has catalyzed... **\$19,940,000** in commercial investment in the Corridor, **\$2,034,052** in residential investment in the Corridor, and **\$1,374,518** to improve Tattnell Square Park.

And, has coordinated **41** College Hill events attracting **16,320** attendees, creating **1,091** volunteer hours, and generating **\$28,362** in sponsorships.

Knight Neighborhood Challenge has awarded **68** grants totaling **\$1,078,032** to local residents and organizations to fund innovative ideas for the Corridor.



Having great places to live is one of the cornerstones of the College Hill Corridor Master Plan, and a major focus of the College Hill Alliance.

To reignite residential revitalization, the Alliance helped to create the Historic Hills & Heights Corporation, an organization designed to redevelop area neighborhoods with “hills” or “heights” in their title, starting with Beall’s Hill. This public-private partnership consists of the City of Macon, College Hill Alliance, Historic Macon Foundation, Macon Housing Authority, and Mercer University, as well as funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

The mission of Historic Hills & Heights, for which the Alliance acts as program coordinator, is to produce sustainable neighborhoods with well-built housing for a variety of incomes and lifestyles. The organization leverages resources from each of its member partners and has created a revolving fund of nearly \$1 million to revitalize Corridor neighborhoods. During the National Preservation Conference in November 2010, it was revealed that Historic Hills & Heights has put together the nation’s most active revolving fund. John Hiscox, executive director of the Macon Housing Authority, spoke highly of this model. “The Alliance serves as the catalyst, helping to keep the pot well-stirred,” Hiscox said. “The revolving fund serves as a conduit for resources and is an effective, cost efficient means to use funds in the neighborhood.”

The goals of the project in Beall’s Hill include construction and rehabilitation of 15 to 20 single-family homes each year in the \$75,000 to \$200,000 range. Counter to recent national real estate trends, the market for houses in Beall’s Hill has been robust. Currently, all homes have sold at or above asking price, with the average sale price of \$131,250 and an average of only six days on the market.



Josh Rogers, Executive Director, Historic Macon Foundation

“The Historic Hills & Heights partnership has transformed our program,” said Josh Rogers, executive director of Historic Macon. “Before any of this started, we thought two rehabs a year would be our model. Now that the College Hill Alliance has taken a more active role, we’re closing in on building 20 homes per year. That has a tremendous impact on our work and it also accelerates the pace of change in the neighborhood, helping to ensure that it develops in a stable manner.”

The partners help to spur demand in the Beall’s Hill neighborhood by offering down payment assistance programs for buyers. The City of Macon offers incentives for moderate-income homebuyers and Mercer, in conjunction with the Knight Foundation, offers down payment assistance to employees who purchase homes in the area.



NEAL CARPENTER

LIVE

Amy Abel-Kiker and Chris Kiker, Beall's Hill homeowners



MARY-FRANCES BURT

Homes in Tatnall Square Heights

Amy Abel-Kiker and her husband Chris Kiker both graduated from Mercer and now own a newly renovated home in Beall's Hill, thanks in part to the university's down payment assistance program. They witnessed the beginnings of the College Hill Corridor initiative as students and saw the transformation of the neighborhoods around campus accelerate since its inception.

"It's amazing how much Beall's Hill is growing. It's by far the fastest selling market in Macon," Amy said. "It feels pretty incredible to be on the brink of something so cool. We're going to look back 10 years from now and be able to say we were a part of it."

Revitalization of the neighborhood hinged on engagement from the Beall's Hill residents themselves. "The strength of our neighborhood association helped provide stability before and after the formation of Historic Hills & Heights," said Aaron Zaritzky. Zaritzky moved to the neighborhood five years ago, when many private developers were building in the area, but development stopped with the collapse in the real estate market. "It was really tough for awhile, and the association had to step in to be the voice for the neighborhood," Zaritzky said. "It was a lot of work, but we were able to get many of the needs in the community addressed, and we've built up credibility for the association with both new residents and those who have been here for 30 years." With the Alliance in place, the work of the neighborhood association still includes advocacy for the area, but it is able to focus on other efforts as well, including community block parties and the Beall's Hill Community Garden.

The Beall's Hill neighborhood, which is based on the New Urbanism model of creating a mixed-income, mixed-use community that is walkable, with easy access to parks and schools as well as retail shops and restaurants, will serve as a model for the revitalization of other Corridor neighborhoods.

The vision for the College Hill Corridor, is to transform the vacant buildings in the Corridor into thriving businesses. That goal has been fully realized within a critical location of College Hill —Mercer Village.

WORK

Once a collection of empty, aging buildings across from Mercer University's campus, the Village is now a thriving retail destination filled with new businesses as well as new residents. This fall, 113 Mercer students moved in to the recently completed Lofts at Mercer Village, a mixed-used building with three floors of student housing above four retailers—Barnes & Noble/Mercer University Bookstore, Designer Tan, Fountain of Juice and Margaritas at Mercer Village.

The Lofts retailers join four other pioneering Mercer Village merchants—Rodeo Beach Outfitters, Francar's Buffalo Wings, Jittery Joe's Coffee and Ingleside Village Pizza. The Village, which is also home to the local Georgia Public Broadcasting studios, acts as a critical link between the University and surrounding neighborhoods and has become a vibrant streetscape.

The vibe around Mercer Village created an environment that lured Rodeo Beach Outfitters from the online world into a brick-and-mortar location. "We could have stayed online, but we really wanted to be a part of a community," said co-owner J.J. Hobbs.

"We chose Mercer Village for its potential. We think it's the place to be and it has the most growth in Macon. With the students and professionals in the area, it's a young, active crowd."

Natasha Phillips, owner of Fountain of Juice, expanded to a second location in the Lofts at Mercer Village over the summer. "I like being a part of the revitalization of the area and being affiliated with Mercer is a really big draw," Phillips said. "Mercer Village feels very urban, like some of the neighborhoods in Atlanta."

One of the Alliance's major goals is business recruitment and retention. With that in mind, the College Hill Alliance launched Shoplocalmacon.com in November 2010. The website is a free marketing tool for area businesses that hosts business listings, articles written about the retailers, coupons and an events calendar.



Natasha Phillips, Fountain of Juice

Shoplocalmacon.com is more than a website. It's a movement designed to encourage people to shop at locally owned establishments and patron local talent. By choosing to shop local, the entire community benefits from the creation of new jobs and support of existing ones. Although Shoplocalmacon.com is currently maintained by the College Hill Alliance, a permanent home for the site is being sought.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation launched its own project to support local retailers in the fall of 2010—Macon Money. This "serious game" was designed to connect residents to one another and to the businesses within the Corridor and downtown Macon. Locals received a game piece marked with three symbols that had to be matched with another game piece containing the same symbols. Players were encouraged to use social media, forums and designated meet-up events to find their identical game piece. Once a match was made, participants could exchange their game pieces and receive up to \$100 in Macon Money—a local currency redeemable at participating businesses throughout the Corridor and downtown.



Alex Morrison, Urban Development Authority

MARYANN BATES

“Knight funded this as a complementary strategy to continue to build the community,” said Beverly Blake, Knight Foundation’s program director for Macon. “We did it to bring together people who otherwise would never have met one another and support local business at the same time.”

In all, the game gave away \$65,000 in Macon Money bills, which were graced by the image of Macon’s own Otis Redding. The impact on the business community was significant. “As residents started playing, they began to try different restaurants and shops, spending more than their amount of Macon Money,” said Mechel McKinley, the local project manager for Macon Money.

As efforts continue to make the Corridor an ideal place to live, work and play, the College Hill Alliance has begun a new initiative, dubbed the **KITE Alliance**, designed to recruit and retain talented young professionals and high-tech businesses. With Mercer University as a primary partner, the Alliance created this demonstration project to catalyze the growth of College Hill and downtown Macon as hubs for economic development, linking the community’s resources, specifically the **Knowledge, Innovation, Technology and Entrepreneurship** of academic, business and government entities in Middle Georgia.

The goals of the KITE Alliance center around establishing a network of economic development organizations that promote the creation of local entrepreneurial companies that offer technical, higher paying jobs. The project also seeks to utilize the academic and research capacity of Mercer University, creating new ideas for commercialization and building relationships with technology-based companies.

Alex Morrison, one of the four Mercer students who helped launch the College Hill Corridor initiative, is now taking part in the effort as the new executive director of the Urban Development Authority. He sees fostering jobs from within the community as an essential part of Macon’s future success.

Morrison said, “To keep the best and the brightest in our community, we have to create the jobs that will allow them to stay here.”



Rodeo Beach Outfitters
(left to right) Leah Parris, J.J. Hobbs, Susan Hampton

MARYANN BATES

PLAY



College Hill residents prepare to take on the Soapbox Derby. (left to right) Koryn Young, DJ Shawty Slim, Dan Zook, Tyler Woodall, Shane Woodall

Enhancing the opportunity for people to play in the Corridor is a prominent feature of the College Hill Corridor Master Plan.

Mike Collins, an area resident, can trace his band's origin and most of its recent success to "playing" in the Corridor. His band, Back City Woods, was formed on the front porch of a College Hill home and has since developed a regional following, playing at venues across the Southeast. "I guess we are the quintessential Corridor band," Collins said. "It wasn't intentional, but it's worked out. We started here, cut two records down the street, and now we've played Second Sunday."

The Alliance's signature event, Second Sunday, is now in its third year. The free outdoor concert series takes place monthly in the Corridor at Washington Park, a beautiful pocket park with waterworks. The event's diverse crowd averages 600 people and can swell to 1,300. Though the College Hill Alliance currently runs the event, it also works with sponsors to develop the financial sustainability of Second Sunday and is now in search of a community partner to take on the event.

The annual Magnolia Street Soapbox Derby has also become a highlight on the Corridor calendar. The derby represents a model that the College Hill Alliance strives to implement with all of its programs. Though the Soapbox Derby began as an Alliance project in its first year, Magnolia Street residents, with the help of a Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant, coordinated the event's second installment.

"The derby is right outside our front door, so we have a vested interest in making it a success," said Dan Zook, one of the Magnolia Street residents who now runs the event.

"We realized to make the event bigger it needed to have community ownership. So, we worked on the grant and with the Alliance to take over the derby and, this year, we had more than 50 volunteers help make the event a success and over 1,300 people in attendance."

The College Hill Alliance partners with another local organization, the Macon Film Festival (MaGa), for Big Screen Movie Nights. These free outdoor movie screenings take place in Tattnall Square Park, located beside Mercer University's campus, after sunset. The Alliance owns the screen equipment and MaGa, thanks in part to a Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant,

installed "sharrow" bike lanes along the Corridor from Mercer Village to City Hall. The sharrows are a series of roadway markings and signage that promote awareness of cyclists to vehicular traffic.

"The Master Plan originally called for bike lanes, but the area wasn't quite ready for that. We hope the sharrows will build demand from the community

PLAY



Big Screen Movie Night at Tattnall Square Park



Bike racks are found throughout the Corridor and downtown.

purchases the rights to show each film. "The partnership has worked out well," said Tabitha Walker, MaGa board president. "Not only have we created a cool event for the area, we are also able to connect with the Macon community throughout the year outside the annual festival."

In keeping with the alliterative tradition of the Corridor, Mercer Village merchants host a Third Thursday party in the Village each month. They close the street running through Mercer Village for the event and offer live music, outdoor games and merchant discounts. "We want to make Mercer Village a destination for local residents and students," said Carl Fambro, owner of Francar's Buffalo Wings. "That's why we've made Third Thursday an event for everyone. We have different activities throughout the year, including a variety of performing artists, contests, and deals on food, drinks and retail."

Physical spaces are also an important part of playing in the Corridor. Among the priorities of the College Hill Corridor Master Plan is "cooling the streets" by creating a progressive cycling and pedestrian-friendly community. Last year, the City of Macon, in conjunction with the College Hill Alliance,

so bike lanes can be installed in the future," said Bill Causey, manager of engineering for the City of Macon and interim co-chair of the College Hill Corridor Commission.

"Sharrows are a great way to encourage more cyclists to ride on urban streets and alert drivers to be aware of those cyclists."

The centerpiece of playing in the Corridor is Tattnall Square Park, a historic 16-acre park used throughout the year for passive recreation and active festivals. The park is in need of renovations, however, and is included in the College Hill Corridor Master Plan. The Alliance was awarded a \$94,518 Knight Neighborhood Challenge grant in February 2011 to develop a master plan for improvements to the park and, working alongside a College Hill Corridor Commission task force, has held multiple public meetings about the project and finalized a concept for the park. The final plan will best represent the community's vision for Tattnall Square Park and contain pricing for each piece of the renovation so the city and the Alliance can seek multiple funding sources for its implementation.

PLAY

With the park only a few steps away from Mercer's campus, students are excited about the upgrades. "We already use the park for events," said Kaleigh Manson, a junior at the university. "Once it is redeveloped though, there will be even more reasons for students to frequent the area."

The first grant aimed at revitalizing Tattnell Square Park was awarded to the City of Macon in June 2011 by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The \$1 million grant, along with a match from Mercer, will fund improvements to the park along College Street, including a retaining wall, three elevated crosswalks and the addition of a bike lane and new sidewalk. These renovations will greatly benefit Alexander II Magnet School, which is located across from the park. "This will truly be an enhancement for Alexander II and its children as they cross to and from Tattnell Square Park," said Macon Mayor Robert Reichert.

"The improvements will increase the utilization of the park, improving the streets and enhancing the connection between Mercer and downtown Macon, which is what we're all about."



Sharrows welcome cyclists to the Corridor.



JuBee and the Morning After perform at September's Second Sunday in Washington Park.



Macon Arts Alliance with the Trail of Bears. (left to right) Jim Coleman, Cindy Hill, Heatherly Darnell

What does a community do with a challenge? In the case of the Knight Neighborhood Challenge, Macon has risen to it.

Established by a five-year, \$3 million grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to the Community Foundation of Central Georgia, the Knight Neighborhood Challenge provides funding for the best ideas in the College Hill Corridor. The Challenge funds innovative projects that brand College Hill with a sense of place, spruce up its parks and public spaces and enhance the arts and entertainment scene. So far, the program has enabled members of the Corridor community to put their most creative ideas into action.

“Seeing the empowerment of the community has been one of the greatest rewards as a grantmaker,” said Kathryn Dennis, president of the Community Foundation. *“The Knight Neighborhood Challenge allows people to dream and then gives them access to resources to make that dream a reality.”*

The Knight Neighborhood Challenge supports new ideas for improvements to the area, large and small, from individuals and organizations. To date, more than \$1 million has been awarded to 68

recipients of Challenge funds, leaving the grant program with nearly \$2 million to fund more inventive projects.

The grant reviewers look for projects that support at least one of the five major goal areas of the College Hill Corridor Master Plan. So far, the Knight Neighborhood Challenge has awarded 19 grants relating to the goals of the **Basics**, 23 grants to promote the **Vibe**, six grants to enhance the **Connection**, 15 grants to protect the **Environment**, and five grants to preserve the **Look**.

The Basics

Facade Squad is a nonprofit group of volunteers that works to clean up Macon by doing everything from mowing vacant lots to painting buildings. Appropriately enough, the group won a Challenge grant for the Basics goal area, which focuses on making the Corridor clean, safe and branded. The group will use \$6,200 to give the former Milady Cleaners Building, which sits empty in a prime location on College Street, a face-lift. The grant will pay for a new paint job, landscaping, and a mural on the side of the building painted by local residents.

“The project is leveraging volunteers to transform a stark white building into a colorful landmark in the Corridor,” said Kevin Berry, Façade Squad board member. “The grant will give us the opportunity to be creative with the project, taking it beyond what we might otherwise have been able to do, and make the building an asset to the community.”

The Vibe

The Knight Neighborhood Challenge has funded many new and existing events in the Corridor, each fulfilling the goals of the Vibe, which encourages cool events and free activities in the Corridor.

One existing festival received Challenge funding and moved its events into the Corridor. The Tubman African American Museum received \$15,000 to help it fund its Pan African Festival, moving it from Central City Park to Tattnell Square Park. The change of venue enabled the Tubman to connect with new audiences.

“By having the festival in Tattnell Square Park, in the middle of a neighborhood, we were able to attract a more diverse cross section of the community,” said Anita Ponder, director of education at the Tubman Museum. “Hosting the event in the Corridor really raised the community’s awareness of it.”

The Connection

Matching art with a bit of Mercer University school spirit, the Macon Arts Alliance received a \$15,000 grant for the Trail of Bears, a set of fiberglass bear statues painted by local artists using Corridor and Macon-related themes.

The grant is a part of the Connection goal area, which encourages cycling and pedestrian efforts to cool the streets and promotes multi-modal transportation. The Connection is also designed to link Mercer to the community and to downtown. The bears will help do this by serving as a permanent walking and biking gallery along the Corridor, from campus to downtown.

“Mercer’s continued role in our community has never been better, particularly with the addition of the College Hill Alliance,” said Cindy Hill, former director of communications at Macon Arts Alliance. “Mercer is such a gem for our community. It’s culturally important, architecturally important, geographically important, and economically important to this community.”



Dr. Heather Bowman Cutway



Pan African Festival in Tattnell Square Park

The Environment

The environment is another essential ingredient for creating a welcoming atmosphere in Macon. The Environment goal area of the College Hill Corridor Master Plan focuses on promoting greenspace and eco-conscious initiatives.

One Corridor resident has had a particular impact in this area. Dr. Heather Bowman Cutway is a biology professor at Mercer and holds a Ph.D. in ecology. She's turned her interest in the environment into Knight Neighborhood Challenge grants that have given the Corridor an eco-conscious flavor.

Dr. Bowman Cutway has received two grants for Composting in the Corridor workshops. During these workshops, attendees learn how to turn what would otherwise be trash into a valuable addition to their home gardens and receive free supplies to aid them in composting. Dr. Bowman Cutway also received two grants to plant trees in the Corridor. Oglethorpe Re-leaf, the first grant, focused on replenishing the tree canopy along Oglethorpe Street, while Corridor Re-leaf, the second, broader grant, aimed to plant young trees throughout multiple streets in the Corridor.

"If you have a good idea, there are small bits of money available to get it off the ground," Dr. Bowman Cutway said. *"That way, if you see one of those little problems in your neighborhood, and you think, 'Hey, that wouldn't be too hard to fix,' you have a platform to get it started. Otherwise, it's just a problem that stays a problem."*

The Look

One creative and exciting program that has taken off through grants awarded by the Knight Neighborhood Challenge has been the Historic Macon Foundation Façade Loan Program. Historic Macon has now received two Challenge grants, totaling \$145,000, for a revolving low interest loan program to spruce up homes in the Corridor. The program is a successful example of the Look portion of the Master Plan, which includes promoting residential and business developments that restore, maintain and sustain the area as Macon's urban and historic center.

"The grants have helped Macon's safest neighborhoods look the part," said Josh Rogers, executive director of Historic Macon. "Factually, College Hill is part of the safest neighborhood in Macon, but the perception can be different," he said. "When someone gets out of their car and sees buildings in disrepair, they don't see a safe neighborhood. These loans are helping to ensure College Hill continues to look its best by encouraging people to keep their homes in good condition."

The low interest loans are awarded to homeowners in the Corridor for improvement projects to beautify the exterior of their home. Given in increments of \$5,000 or \$10,000, with a 20 percent homeowner match, the loans have been very successful at leveraging resources to revitalize a number of homes in College Hill.

Creating a sustainable program that pulls from existing community resources is the goal behind the Knight Neighborhood Challenge. With three more years and almost \$2 million left in the Challenge, Kathryn Dennis is excited to see more innovative ideas from the community aimed at making the Corridor an even better place to live, work and play. "I've been so impressed by the creativity of these projects. I'm looking forward to seeing what the community brings us over the next few years," Dennis said. "Our next deadline is December 31, 2011. I encourage everyone to spend time looking over the Master Plan and then send us their great ideas."

Though College Hill Alliance will continue for another year, the future of the initiative is in the hands of the community. As it was at the beginning, the Corridor will continue as a grassroots effort.



College Hill residents and visitors enjoy sidewalk dining in Mercer Village.

“It’s up to the community to decide what the future holds for College Hill,” said Beverly Blake, Macon program director for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. “We’ve nurtured the initiative and helped launch new programs.

Now it’s in the hands of the residents to keep the momentum going and I have every confidence that they will,” Blake said. “Knight Foundation is open to learn about new innovative ideas that will move College Hill and Macon forward.”

In the final year of its grant, the College Hill Alliance will focus on the sustainability of programs that began under its tenure, turning over programs that can be successful in the hands of community

partners. “The Alliance will also continue assessing and developing the partnerships necessary for the continued success of Macon,” Madison said. “Though the discussion remains open and we hope to apply for another round of funding from Knight Foundation, we have always operated with the idea that we might only have three years.”

The KITE initiative will continue to grow, with a focus on building a unified economic development strategy for College Hill, downtown and the entire Macon area. “The pieces are in place from the perspective of creating a cool place for people to live, but to make College Hill successful long-term, we have to look at what attaches people to their community,” said Patrick Madison, executive director of the College Hill Alliance. “In order to attach people to the area, especially at the beginning of their career, we have to provide well-paying, knowledge-based jobs.

The future of College Hill is the people—it is you and your friends and neighbors. What began with an idea became a plan with community input and later became a success with community support. We continue to need your help and encourage you to get involved: volunteer, join your neighborhood association or neighborhood watch, attend events in the Corridor, patronize local businesses, go to a Mercer University sporting event, performance or lecture on campus. The possibilities are nearly limitless. And, just as importantly, help us by serving as an ambassador for College Hill. There is a lot going on in the Corridor and with your help there will be for a long time to come.



College Hill Corridor Commission

Andrew Blascovich - **Co-Chair**
City of Macon - Mayor's Office

Sarah Gerwig-Moore - **Co-Chair**
Mercer University - School of Law Faculty

Bill Causey - **Interim Co-Chair**
City of Macon Engineering Department

Veronica Allen
College Hill Student Project Member

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*Macon-Bibb County
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Heather Bowman Cutway
Mercer University Faculty

Dale 'Doc' Dougherty
*City of Macon Parks
and Recreation Department*

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Macon Arts Alliance

Carl Fambro
Franca's Buffalo Wings - Corridor Business

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Historic Macon Foundation

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Beall's Hill Neighborhood Association

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Ideal for young professionals.



Photo: Mary-Frances 2011

Nestled in Macon's historic district, the College Hill Corridor is a destination for culture, business, and quality living. With affordable housing, free community events, and a dedication to linking entrepreneurial talent with the area's technological resources, the Corridor is where you want to be.

College Hill Corridor

LIVE [WORK] PLAY

Macon, Ga.

To learn more about life in the Corridor, visit CollegeHillMacon.com



College Hill *Refresh*

an *update** of our **Master Plan**
for the **College Hill Corridor**

August 2014

Progress Report: Summary of Implementation Efforts & Successes

The original College Hill Corridor Master Plan organized the recommendations into five themes, and much progress has been made making recommendations become reality:

1) *The Basics: Clean, Safe & Branded*

In the original Master Plan, the goals of The Basics were to improve cleanliness and increase safety throughout College Hill, and thus improve public perceptions about the area. Beyond clean and safe streets, The Basics called for a recognizable brand for the Corridor that capitalizes on local history, vibe, and diversity.

Overall, College Hill receives an A for The Basics, for great work on initiatives to make the Corridor cleaner, safer, and better branded. Only two of The Basics recommendations in the original plan did not move forward – all 13 of the others did! A sample of your collective successes includes:

- **CLEAN:** The Corridor welcomed composting, new recycling bins, and artful trash bins adorned with literary quotes and quotes from local school children.
- **SAFE:** The Alliance boosted coordination with Mercer Police Department and the Macon-Bibb Sheriff's Department, the police provided support for Neighborhood Watch, neighbors agreed to leave their porch lights on to better light the neighborhood, and trolleys provided safe rides back to campus after evenings in Downtown.
- **BRANDED:** The now famous College Hill swirls are everywhere – on tote bags, on new wayfinding signs and banners, on bike racks – and new web-sites broadcast cultural events and area amenities, including Ovations365.com.

theme
one

The Basics:

Clean, Safe & Branded



College Hill

REPORT CARD

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENTS
BASICS	A	great work
CLEAN	A	visible changes
SAFE	B+	invisible changes in attitudes (no more “Mercer Bubble”) progress, but more to do
BRANDED	A+	you are EVERYWHERE!
INCOMPLETE		Improvement District; Emergency Call Boxes

2) *The Vibe: College Town Cool*

The original intent of The Vibe was to make College Hill the center of creative expression in the region, infusing streets and structures with events, arts, and culture that would bring people together, build community, and generate excitement and positive energy about the changes taking place in the Corridor among Mercer students, faculty, and staff and residents, alike.


Outstanding work by all! College Hill receives an A++ in implementing and innovating ideas under The Vibe: A+ for Arts & Events and A+ for Community Building. Again, as a community you brought nearly all of the recommendations proposed under The Vibe to fruition, and even better, you invented and ran with ideas of your own. A sample of your collective successes includes:

- **ARTS & EVENTS:** The Corridor welcomed murals and bear statues to the local landscape, new events that have become beloved traditions such as the Magnolia Street Soapbox Derby and the Second Sunday Concert Series, festivals in Mercer Village, and more recently football and tailgating, Little Free Libraries, and the soon to open Tattnall Square Center for the Arts!
- **TOWN/GOWN:** College Hill has also made great strides in strengthening the town-gown relationship since the original plan. Mercer expanded service learning projects and classes, brought sports and music for all to enjoy, and hosted special events and promotions designed to get students to explore Downtown, such as the Bike the Corridor Scavenger Hunt, the Downtown Get-Around, Shop-LocalMacon.com, Reunion Zero, and internships through Paint the Town Orange.

theme
two

The Vibe:

College Town Cool



College Hill

REPORT CARD

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENTS
VIBE	A++	you should write the textbook!
EVENTS	A+	early wins, powerful impact
COMMUNITY BUILDING	A+	this is what people LOVE about life in the Corridor
INCOMPLETE		... specifics became less relevant as you charted your own course

3) *The Connection: Cooling the Streets*


The goals of The Connection in the first Master Plan were to “cool the streets,” slowing traffic so that streets and sidewalks could become safer and more efficient for pedestrians and bicyclists. The Connection also emphasized the need to build a culture of walking and biking among people who live, work, and play in the Corridor, animating a more vibrant street life and supporting a healthier and more livable community.

Public realm projects are time intensive and expensive; under The Connection, College Hill receives an A for effort and a P for patience required. Throughout the community, people see evidence of progress in making the streets safer for pedestrians and efforts to make space for cyclists. With the roundabout and street improvements at College and Oglethorpe Streets under construction, it is clear that this work is ongoing.

- **PEDESTRIANS:** People who live, work, worship, learn, and play in the Corridor now enjoy new raised crosswalks at Mercer Village, pedestrian improvements to Pine Street in front of the Medical Center of Central Georgia, and smaller embellishments best observed when on foot, such as the expansion of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail through Riverside Cemetery. New crosswalks and sidewalks at Tattнал Square Park are also underway.
- **BIKES:** Implementing the bicycle recommendations met both success and frustration. The Corridor now has “sharrows” marking shared bike lanes and bicycle racks. Mercer’s Bear Bikes program, bicycle education, and discounts offered by area businesses to cyclists were steps to building a more robust bicycle culture, and that culture will be needed to advocate for and advance the bicycle recommendations still on the table.

theme
three

The Connection: Cooling the Streets



College Hill REPORT CARD

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENTS
CONNECTION	A	A for effort, P for patience required!
PEDS	A	everyone agrees, big progress!
BIKES	B+	progress, yes, but more to do...
STREETS	I	these things take time, LOTS of time
INCOMPLETE		better bike infrastructure & advocacy; College Street improvements coming soon!

4) *The Environment: A City within a Park*


In the original Master Plan, the section on The Environment focuses on the Corridor’s parks and tree canopy. With the goals of replanting, reseeding, and reinvesting in green spaces that flourish for all to enjoy, The Environment’s recommendations served to reinforce Macon’s history as a “City within a Park,” defined by a lush local landscape and network of natural open spaces.

Again, outstanding work by all, and the Friends of Tattnell Square Park in particular! College Hill receives an A for WOW and an E for all the energy that went into planning, plantings, and leadership to effect such transformative change. Like the public realm recommendations under The Connection, some of The Environment recommendations have been slower to move forward, but the progress is visible, beautiful, and still unfolding. A sample of your collective successes includes:

- **TREES:** Friends of Tattnell Square Park planted more than 200 new trees throughout the park, the Corridor has a Tree Ordinance in progress, and more than 100 new street trees line Oglethorpe and College Streets. The Corridor has grown greener!
- **PARKS:** Tattnell Square Park has undergone wonderful community-driven transformations, and changes continue to unfold in keeping with the park’s own master plan. The park has new seating areas, an improved playground and refreshed gazebo, and will soon have new art and arches at all four corners, which invite visitors to explore the restored historic path network and new fountain at the center of the park. Macon Dog Park has new agility equipment and landscaping, and Daisy Park has a re-design plan, though it has yet to be implemented. New trail connections will better link Riverside Cemetery with the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail in years to come.

theme
four

*The Environment:
City within a Park*


College Hill
REPORT CARD

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENTS
ENVIRONMENT	A	A for WOW, E for energy planning, planting, leadership...
TREES	A	big strides for the urban forest
PARKS	A+	WOW
TRAILS	I	like streets, these things take time
INCOMPLETE	stormwater management initiatives; plan implementation; trail connections	

5) *The Look: Macon's Historic & Urban Center*

The goals of The Look in the first Master Plan focused on development and filling in gaps in the urban fabric to infuse the Corridor with a greater range of uses and activity. The Look was also about balance – respecting the area's historic character and beautiful architecture, while introducing new housing and commercial services to serve existing and future residents.

High marks again! College Hill receives an A+ for the major transformations achieved. The community has grown in a sustainable way to welcome new buildings, housing, and businesses, and only one recommendation from the original Master Plan was left unfinished. A sample of your collective successes includes:

- DEVELOPMENT:** Two phases of the Lofts at Mercer Village, with another in progress and additional rental housing being built behind the Post Office at The Lofts at College Hill, new businesses and restaurants in Mercer Village, and the addition of a dental office and pharmacy set an impressive pace for commercial infill and development in the Corridor in the first five years following the original Master Plan. Design guidelines and a zoning update for the Corridor are in progress.
- SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY:** To ensure that the Corridor remains a place people where want to live, work, and play, the College Hill Alliance has been hard at work on small business attraction, and Historic Hills & Heights, through Historic Macon, has introduced new homes for a mix of incomes – as well as green homes for those who choose to live more lightly on planet Earth.

Congratulations, College Hill! You've tackled every element of the plan and progressed leaps and bounds throughout the Corridor, which brings us to ... what next?!

theme
five

The Look:

Macon's Urban & Historic Center



College Hill REPORT CARD

SUBJECT	GRADE	COMMENTS
LOOK	A+	major transformation!
DEVELOPMENT	A+	LOFTS, LOFTS, LOFTS, Mercer Village, pharmacy
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY	A+	small business attraction, green buildings, homes for a mix of incomes...
INCOMPLETE		improvements to Senior Center