



# OPELIKA ROAD CORRIDOR PLAN

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT: SCOPE OF WORK

## SCOPE OF WORK EXPLANATION

The following “Project Understanding” and “Project Approach” constitute the Scope of Work for the Opelika Road Corridor Plan as referenced in Article 1, paragraph 1.2 of the Opelika Road Corridor Plan Professional Services Agreement. They are derived from the original proposal submitted by Design Workshop in response to the Opelika Road Corridor Plan RFP but have been updated in response to dialogue between staff and the consultant team.

### PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

The concept of Great Streets or Complete Streets is based upon the principle that a successful built environment is dependent upon the quality of the public realm and the businesses, institutions and residences that are adjacent to it. By creating complete streets and corridors, surrounding neighborhoods and retail districts can be revitalized economically, environmentally socially, and aesthetically. By providing multi-modal transportation options for all segments of the population, as well as community amenities, these corridors can build social and economic capital. Complete Streets must provide for a balance between pedestrians, motorists, transit, commercial uses, and parking, and serve as focal points and places for public life. They must provide stages for the public interaction of the local community, provide residents with a sense of pride of place, and provide for improved aesthetics including opportunities for public art. They may also have a profound fiscal impact on a community by promoting private development and investment and providing a positive return on public investment. Importantly, robust corridors not only provide outstanding public spaces for residents but also enhance the viability of local retailers and commerce in local communities. Transit ridership is an important factor of Complete Streets and is driven largely by residential units within easy walking distance of transit and the quality of the experience of accessing transit. The creation of Great Streets requires the guiding hand of skilled professionals as well as the input of local citizens, officials, and business owners who will interact with and support these environments every day.

Aesthetic and economic decline along the Opelika Road Corridor due to changing retail patterns such as decline and consolidation of the U.S. auto industry and the development of retail to serve the interstate have created a desire among city leaders to focus on the revitalization and redevelopment of the Opelika Road into a mixed-use corridor as part of the Corridor Development strategies outlined in the CompPlan 2030. Design Workshop has defined the ingredients for successful communities that included consideration of four essential attributes: Environment, Community, Aesthetics, and Economics. Every project that we pursue is focused on achieving the highest level of performance in each of these categories. Our gauge of success involves a ‘quadruple bottom-line’ assessment that includes ongoing measurement and evaluation of metrics during design and after implementation. We call this process Legacy Design and firmly believe it expresses solutions for truly sustainable ideas.

Through measurement, we have proved that Legacy Design will result in significant economic, social, environmental and aesthetic value for the places we plan and design. The Opelika Road Corridor Plan has great potential to deliver both near and long-term value to the Auburn area at large. The opportunity to lead this effort to the highest outcome relies on several strengths of our firm: 1) proven benefits of Legacy Design to achieve sustaining value, 2) deep experience in leading all aspects of streetscape, transit-oriented development and land planning projects from design through implementation, including public participation and consensus building, 3) commitment to planning, design and managing for financial feasibility and accountability, 4) extensive nationwide experience in working with natural and cultural systems to support the creation of unique communities and corridors; and 5) extensive experience with private sector real estate development, and the ability to address adjacent land use issues beyond the boundaries of the street right of way.

While our team will address all of the planning frameworks underlying Legacy Design as outlined above, we will tailor our recommendations for the Opelika Road Corridor to create a plan that addresses the improvements that the corridor will need over the next 10 to 20 years in order to facilitate continued redevelopment. We will clearly create recommendations that will be achievable and will create momentum for the ongoing improvements of the Corridor and how it relates to the city and the region.

### PROJECT APPROACH

This scope incorporates design processes and methods that build from the team’s vast experience with corridor planning and design including tested and proprietary methods for sustainable Complete Streets design and public outreach.

#### TASK 1 – PROJECT STARTUP

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##### Task 1.1: Kick-off meeting

Our team will meet with the City of Auburn staff to finalize the schedule for the project as well as goals and expectations for the effort. The kick-off meeting will outline the corridor vision, goals and objectives to achieve a ‘quadruple bottom line’ as outlined in Task 3.4. We will identify critical success factors and goals for the Corridor Plan to achieve. We will also finalize plans for meetings or workshops and additional elements of the community participation strategy. Within this site visit our team will

also identify stakeholders, many of which we will hold initial meetings with as a start to Task 2.4. If the City has not yet finalized a Project Steering Committee, we will address this within our stakeholder identification process. Lastly, this meeting will provide the opportunity to identify data needs and availability, and gather initial site data for the site analysis Task 3.1.

### *Task 1 Deliverables:*

- Project schedule, team directory and work plan
- Memorandum outlining the goals and critical success factors for the project
- Memorandum outlining anticipated stakeholder involvement process
- Meeting minutes from the kick-off meeting

## **TASK 2 – ONGOING COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH**

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The consultant team will base its recommendations on a thorough understanding of what people value – or don't – about the corridor; how those values can be expressed in built forms; and what changes people believe would influence life in this area for the better. The community process for this project will take an inclusive and cumulative approach that blends active community engagement and practical, effective use of resources. The consultant team believes that the public participation process should increase community strength and provide the information planners need to develop workable concepts for implementation. A successful public involvement program must both inform and gain input.

Community engagement will involve a full range of stakeholders, including Community-Based organizations like the bicycle committee, local residents and neighborhood groups, government officials, representatives from the business and development community, and property owners and employers along and near Opelika Road. Small group meetings will be held with the business owners in the form of representative groups including the many restaurant and food stores, banks (Wells Fargo, First Federal, RBC), gas stations (Texaco, Exxon), and retail stores (Auburn Furniture, Wholesale Mattress Center, O'Reilly, Napa, CVS, etc.) Other separate group meetings might include schools and churches on and near the corridor study area as well as special interest or subject experts groups such as the Auburn and Opelika Tourism Bureau, Auburn University and appropriate railroad interests. Outreach will also extend to major residential neighborhoods that border the corridor such as Creekside. The Project

Steering Committee will represent a cross-section of community interests and concerns.

We suggest a number of methods to engage the stakeholders and anticipate communicating with the community via a project website and through the local media.

It is anticipated that the consultant team will visit Auburn three (3) times for three separate charrettes. However, local team members may utilize their location to meet with various stakeholders to analyze issues on-site. 21 person-trips to Auburn are anticipated. One Design Workshop staff will be at the initial kick off meeting, two each at each of the charettes, and one at the final presentation. A minimum of one Haddock and Company and two Foresite staff members will also be present at each charette. Other meetings by Haddock and Foresite may also be scheduled as needed.

### **Task 2.1: Conduct charrettes to solicit public involvement and consensus building, and refine concepts to incorporate into the plan.**

Our team proposes three charrettes. The Design Workshop team will be in Auburn for three days during each of these periods. We would anticipate having a series of meetings with stakeholders during this period, as well, as setting up with a central location and working directly on the plan while in town. Interested stakeholders and the general public can feel free to participate over the course of this three day period. In addition, one evening during this period there would be a public meeting which would envision active public engagement as follows:

#### *Charrette 1: Initial Visioning and Information Gathering*

After the Project Steering Committee has been formed and the stakeholder analysis is complete, our team will meet with these various entities to further understand the issues and vision for the corridor. This input will directly inform the format of the charrette; specifically the key pad polling questions in which participants will be asked questions and answers are displayed instantly for the group. This will help the public better understand the collective vision and issues of their neighbors. The charrette will also provide participants the opportunity to envision the future of the corridor by first understanding the existing conditions and trends – which will be presented – followed by a 'chip game' exercise in which citizens will place 'chips' or land uses where they would like to see them. This game will be constrained by the findings of the market analysis and appropriate regulations

and densities (existing or future regulations – to be determined with city staff). The chip game will inform the alternatives to be reviewed in next charrette. An informal on-line survey will be conducted after the charrette to solicit the input of citizens and stakeholders that were unable to attend.

### *Charrette 2: Plan Alternatives*

This charrette will begin with an open house format in which participants can review existing conditions and analysis information, learn the input from the previous charrette and input sessions, and review the plan alternatives which resulted from the input to date. This open house format will be followed with a series of key pad polling questions, both confirming the vision and goals set to date while also reviewing in detail the corridor plan alternatives. This goal of this session is a clear preferred plan, with clear changes delineated. If necessary, the group can then break into small groups to discuss the alternatives, while our team’s facilitation experts will work towards consensus. Again, an on-line survey and information will provide a platform for those unable to attend the session an opportunity to participate.

### *Charrette 3: Preferred Plan Presentation and Implementation Strategies*

The day of the charrette will begin with a work session to review the alternatives with the Project Steering Committee and key stakeholders. This is an informal meeting in which these stakeholders would touch base with the design team during the work session to represent the findings and viewpoints of various stakeholder groups. This charrette will again begin with an open house format to give participants a chance to understand work to date. A presentation will follow in which our team will explain the process to date – clearly identifying how and why various recommendations have been made. Key pad polling will confirm the preferred plan and identify any issues, challenges or modifications necessary. A presentation on implementation strategies will follow.

Design Workshop has received many awards for our public involvement processes, which are specifically tailored to the culture and needs of each community. Our team of certified and experienced facilitators are prepared to provide the know-how and means to engage the general public as well as relevant audiences. We understand how important it is to listen, gain an understanding, and come to a consensus about the opportunities that exist for recreation development. From a community standpoint, citizens need to feel

that their fingerprints can be found in the resulting plan. From an administrative standpoint, the plan needs to have sufficient buy-in so that community leaders can feel confident that the conclusions from the public process will gain the political support required for implementation.

This task will involve information gathering from entities and agencies not directly involved with the project but with a keen interest in this corridor. The consultant team will work with the Project Steering Committee to define and confirm the various stakeholder groups from the community at the outset of the project. We anticipate meetings with the Alabama Department of Transportation;e City of Auburn subject experts; Auburn-Opelika MPO, Auburn Chamber of Commerce, Tiger Transit and Lee-Russell Public Transit, Auburn University, local utility companies, and other agencies as identified by the Project Steering Committee and the consultant team. The initial stakeholder outreach will also involve representatives from the business and development communities. We will develop a summary report regarding the charrettes and identify critical information and issues generated from these sessions. Prior to this initial charrette the Design Workshop Team will collect and prepare all base data and information, (Task 3.1). Task 1 includes an on-site meeting in which in addition to the kick-off meeting agenda items, our team will also begin Task 3.1 collecting on-site data, measurements and photography. This will simply make the budget more efficient – taking advantage of the site visit.

At all charrettes, the Design Workshop team will employ the use of MetroQuest and MindMixer technology to help facilitate online input and collaboration from the community and to gain input from the community concerning various design and planning alternatives presented during the project. We will use “keypad polling”, both in person and via the project website, to gain input from the public concerning goals for the study, input regarding various alternatives, and input concerning implementation questions for the redevelopment plan. Our team will prepare display materials, presentations, and handouts using easy to understand graphics and text. Our expertise is presenting information in such a way that large amounts of technical data can be absorbed and understood quickly by the average citizen.

## DIGITAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES

### METROQUEST AND MINDMIXER:

**The Challenge:** Communities around the country have attempted to utilize online technologies in recent years to create more robust public engagement processes and increase participation in design and planning projects. Many municipalities and agencies conduct well orchestrated public meetings or open houses with well-produced content and significant facilitation support, only to attract a limited audience, often with the same participants attending each meeting. Many people use social media and other digital technologies for communicating and exchanging information, it is a growing expectation that community members are able participate in public planning projects through digital technologies.

Although social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter have helped to increase participation and discourse, the use of these resources requires significant time to monitor and maintain project information. Tailoring Facebook and Twitter to the context of a particular planning or design project also presents challenges.

**The Solution:** To more seamlessly and efficiently encourage online participation in the design and planning process, Design Workshop utilizes MindMixer and MetroQuest online engagement software to supplement public outreach strategies. Depending on the nature of the project and input from client groups, we use these technologies to help drive increased citizen participation and meaningful feedback, beyond public meetings, e-mail lists, fliers, and other traditional methods.

We use both software suites to educate the public about a project and associated issues. We have used MetroQuest to gather input from the public directly concerning planning and design alternatives and to inform the public about the trade-offs associated with different alternatives. We have used MindMixer to help stimulate more robust online dialogues and sharing of ideas as projects progress.

**One Example:** In the St Louis area, we are using both MindMixer and MetroQuest to gather input from the entire bi-state metropolitan area concerning the future of transit-oriented development (TOD) around the light rail system and design ideas for particular light rail stops. We are using MindMixer technology to facilitate region-wide learning and discourse concerning the future of TOD. We are using the MetroQuest technology, both online and through an iPad application, to gather input from the public (including underserved populations) concerning their preferences and trade-offs between alternatives.

### MINDMIXER



*Example of the use of MindMixer technology for a comprehensive plan project in Burbank, CA to share information and create an understanding of the process.*

### METROQUEST



*MetroQuest interactive iPad technology used in a St. Louis engagement process to gather input on preferences and trade-offs.*

### **Task 2.2: Schedule and promote/advertise charrettes through a multi-media campaign (including use of newspaper and radio) and through the Project Steering Committee and other stakeholders.**

In addition to meetings and charrettes, information can be provided to the public through a website link to project materials, information provided through the City's e-notifier system and "open line," media announcements in Opelika-Auburn News, the Auburn Villager and the Auburn Plainsman, TV press with WSFA and flyers, newsletters or mailers. Effective stakeholder engagement programs combine these traditional outreach tools with innovative approaches. These may include the use of online technology, such as surveys/questionnaires, mapping, and social media. The DW team will develop graphic materials, however the budget does not accommodate postage or collation of mailed materials.

Revitalization of the corridor must also consider market perceptions and the presentation of opportunities of the corridor to potential shoppers and residents. The study effort will include an analysis of the benefits of rebranding and perhaps even renaming the street to differentiate it from the section in Opelika.

### **Task 2.3: Conduct Project Steering Committee meetings to ensure community and stakeholder participation throughout the project, including document.**

Our team will meet with the PSC during each trip to Auburn. The Project Steering Committee should represent a cross-section of community interests and concerns. The committee will be identified with the City of Auburn, and may include representation from, ALDOT, City of Opelika, Auburn-Opelika MPO, Auburn and Opelika Chamber of Commerce, Tiger Transit and Lee-Russell Public Transit, Auburn and Opelika Tourism Bureau, Auburn's Downtown Merchants Association, representation from the local chapter of the National Association of Home Builders, Lee County Association of Realtors, other representatives from the business and development community, and property owners and employers along and near Opelika Road. The final members will be determined by the City.

### **Task 2.4: Conduct one-on-one interviews with a sampling of stakeholders to receive feedback on the needs of the target area and to the plans as they are developed.**

The consultant team will conduct up to 10 intensive interviews (in person or over the phone) with individuals or small groups of property owners, brokers, base administrators, economic development experts and other

key stakeholders in the planning area. As a deliverable of this task, the consultant team will prepare a memorandum summarizing the stakeholder feedback concerning market conditions, development opportunities, and potential barriers to redevelopment. The memorandum will outline broad themes in order to set the stage for more detailed market analysis work while preserving the confidentiality of individual key stakeholders. Grassroots participation such as brownbag sessions and one-on-one interviews are also vital, particularly to address any cultural, economic, or other barriers. These meetings will begin at the project kick-off trip and continue throughout the charrette process.

Task 2.5: Conduct surveys (online and print) for general public input as well as to measure the public's reaction to the process and adjust the planning process as necessary.

Design Workshop will draft questions to be used for the online and print survey. Our use of MetroQuest and MindMixer technology will ensure a clear and easily accessed survey. The budget does not accommodate the administration of the print survey, however we recommend the use of existing methods of outreach such as the City's 'open line.'

The vision we will help citizens articulate will be one that is logical, implementable, and makes the highest and best use of the community's resources to provide the maximum benefit to the future of the corridor and the surrounding community. Community members will hear their voices reflected and see their ideas evidenced in the Opelika Road Corridor Plan that results.

In addition, the team will use Visual Preference Surveys, incorporating photos, sketches and simulations of potential visions for the corridor, to gain input about the appearance of the study area and potential design ideas for the Opelika Road Corridor. Visual Preference Surveys provide local stakeholders the opportunity to identify specific design elements and the preferred visual character. The surveys use pictures from the corridor, the surrounding area and other comparable corridors that may serve as examples for the future of the Opelika Road Corridor. This survey and keypad polling will also be administered in an on-line format for a wider outreach.

### **Task 2.6: Conduct meetings with stakeholder focus groups as needed.**

The Consultant team will conduct up to three meetings with stakeholder focus groups in order to better understand their specific concerns and ideas for the Corridor. These meetings will be held either during the charrette sessions.

### *Task 2 Deliverables:*

- Meeting agendas
- Promotional materials
- Presentation materials as necessary for the charrettes and other meetings (boards, etc.)
- Meeting notes from charrettes, one-on-one interviews, PSC and other meetings
- Draft survey
- Survey summary results from Metro Quest and Mindmixer or survey monkey

### **TASK 3 – CONCEPTUAL ELEMENTS**

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#### **Task 3.1: Existing Conditions Analysis**

We will review and summarize all necessary existing planning and design documents in order to understand potential opportunities and constraints for the study area and how previous studies relate to the desire to create a Corridor Plan for Opelika Road. Applicable documents include the Comp Plan 2030, the 2035 MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, and other applicable improvement plans for areas along Opelika Road including the previous planning efforts for Opelika Road done by the city and Auburn University.

We will perform an existing conditions analysis, including a site visit. The existing conditions analysis will include maps and diagrams of the following information:

- Existing land use and zoning including Easements, setbacks, right of ways
- Land ownership patterns
- Building Vacancy
- Development Potential (based on existing lot size/ accessibility and zoning)
- Property Values
- Approved and proposed projects, including any Existing and planned civic/entertainment uses in the area (because they have significant demands for circulation and parking at peak periods in the area)
- Transportation facilities, circulation and access (sidewalks and street widths, parking areas, bicycle access, curb cut locations, transit routes and amenities)
- Performing and under-performing land uses along the corridor
- Parks, public uses and open spaces; historic cultural resources

- Existing streetscape amenities (including benches, public art, ADA accommodations)
- Regional building types and architectural heritage
- Important site amenities and public spaces, and view and scenic opportunities
- Access to utilities and infrastructure
- Topography
- Drainage
- Vegetation/Tree Canopy
- Views
- Utilities, or future utility possibilities
- Right-of-way and lane widths
- Crash locations
- Circulation and access
- Planning regulations
- Sensitive environmental features
- Important amenities along or near the corridor

*Note:* This proposal assumes that City staff can assist with the provision of traffic count information in order to maximize budget resources for other planning activities or for construction of improvements. The proposal also assumes that the City will provide available accident (crash) data, information concerning existing levels of service, and current conditions and performance of traffic signals and signal spacing.

#### **Task 3.2: Prepare a Market Analysis of the area focusing on existing and projected business trends, area economics, and other factors**

The consultant team will perform a comprehensive market study and economic analysis of the Opelika Road corridor in order to examine existing conditions and to identify opportunities for future development. As the planning effort progresses, the consultant team will draw from the findings of the market and economic analysis in creating preliminary and final alternatives for land use and development strategies that will help drive the Opelika Road Corridor's continued redevelopment and revitalization.

#### **Task 3.2.a – Background Review and Tour**

The market and economic analysts on the consultant team will tour the Opelika Road Corridor and the surrounding area to gain an understanding of the physical connections and how the corridor connects surrounding communities. The tour will also serve to identify preliminary candidates for opportunity sites, including sites of vacant or underutilized properties where development would likely have the most catalytic

impacts. The consultant team will review relevant existing studies and findings relative to the local real estate and development market. The market and economic analysts will participate in key stakeholder meetings, particularly with real estate brokers, economic development officials, and major property owners, in order to understand the corridor's development history and factors which have hindered redevelopment. These meetings will also shed light on perceptions of the corridor's strengths and weaknesses relative to other commercial areas.

### **Task 3.2.b – Existing Conditions and Market Opportunity Analysis**

For this task, the consultant team will prepare an economic base and market opportunity analysis for residential (for-sale and rental), office, and commercial uses. The overview will profile current and potential future market trends, including demographic and population trends, as well as local and regional real estate market conditions. In particular, the analysis will consider Auburn's future growth the potential to attract new development to the Opelika Road Corridor. The analysis will assess the competitive position of the area compared to other commercial locations, particularly those adjacent to Interstate 85 where new development has clustered in recent years. Based on this analysis, the consultant team will formulate recommendations for product types that can, a) leverage existing strengths, b) increase employment and population density along the corridor, c) offer a diversified mix of uses that provide for balanced travel flows, and d) are compatible with proposed transportation-related improvements. This task will utilize the available data from the Auburn Interactive Growth Model as a starting point.

### **Task 3.2.c – Preparation of Draft and Final Market Study**

The consultant team will prepare a draft market study, focusing on existing and projected business trends, area economics and other factors, for presentation to the Steering Committee and key stakeholders. After one round of consolidated edits and comments, the consultant team will revise the draft and prepare a final market study. The study will culminate with series of recommendations, including: 1) identification of possible redevelopment sites; 2) the market feasibility of various product types; 3) realistic expectations regarding development timing; and 4) conditions that need to be in place to stimulate redevelopment. The final draft will reflect close coordination across all members of the consultant team in order to integrate transportation, land use and market feasibility analyses.

### **Task 3.3: Prepare a Transportation Study which includes a Circulation, Traffic and Parking Assessment considering both local and regional context.**

We will conduct an analysis of transportation patterns in the study corridor, for the following:

- **Auto Circulation** – Traffic counts will be used along with an assessment of the street hierarchy and access patterns to define the existing functions of Opelika Road (through traffic versus local access), key traffic generators, parking utilization patterns, and key access routes. Existing Level Of Service and queue spillback conditions will be assessed. Consideration will also be given to the existing and the potential road section of Opelika Road needed to balance the traffic demand with the creation of a vibrant mixed use environment. If at all possible, we suggest that the City collect the data before the spring semester ends.
- **Transit Circulation** – Existing Tiger Transit and Lee-Russell Public Transit along and crossing the study corridor will be inventoried. Ridership boarding/alighting will be summarized. Operational issues will be assessed, such as traffic delays and difficulty entering/existing bus stops. We will identify and describe all existing, planned, and proposed transit services that operate or could operate to, from, and within the communities along Opelika Road. For all transit providers, we will describe the services and facilities, ridership, operating costs, and other relevant characteristics. Connectivity to other transit systems and key transfer points within the study area will also be noted.
- **Pedestrian Circulation** – Pedestrian trip generators (land uses, transit stops, parking areas) will be inventoried. Over the course of a series of weekdays, counts and observations will be made of pedestrian activity. Barriers to pedestrian travel and overall pedestrian conditions (interface with traffic, compatibility of adjacent land uses and building facades) will be inventoried.
- **Bicycle Circulation** – Trip generators (land uses, transit stops, parks) will be inventoried. Over the course of a weekday, counts and observations will be made on a route-by-route basis. Barriers to bicycle travel and overall bicycle conditions (interface with traffic, compatibility of adjacent land uses, available parking) will be inventoried.
- **Parking** – Existing parking conditions and patterns will be surveyed. The existing parking

ratios required under current zoning will also be evaluated with the goal of establishing a “park once” district along the corridor.

### **Task 3.4: Develop Corridor Vision: Define corridor goals and objectives**

The term “sustainable development” has gained prominence throughout society over the last decade, but the term has many meanings. As the communities along the Opelika Road Corridor approach the process of redeveloping the area over the next few decades, the Design Workshop team proposes that the process move forward by addressing sustainability in terms of the key drivers of Economics, Community, Art or Aesthetics, and Environment. Future generations will evaluate the success of the revitalization of Opelika Road not only in terms of the financial and economic benefits produced for local municipalities, but also in terms of the benefits tied to community assets, artistic or aesthetic beauty and quality, and environmental quality and preservation of environmental resources. This task will be a continuation of the goals and objectives discussion at the kick-off meeting.

The Design Workshop team has identified the following possible drivers of sustainability in each of the key areas of Economics, Environment, Community, and Art or Aesthetics.

#### *Economics*

- Localization (e.g., reliance on locally-supplied food, businesses, water)
- Employment opportunities at “family” or “living” wage
- Jobs/housing balance
- Minimal retail leakage
- Economic diversity

#### *Environment*

- Green stormwater management
- Water conservation
- Energy efficiency/independence, particularly as it relates to lighting
- Night sky protection
- Air quality

#### *Community*

- Public transit

- Walkability, bicycle access
- Diverse residential offerings
- Demographic diversity
- Social justice
- Recreation opportunities
- Cultural/spiritual opportunities

#### *Art/Aesthetics*

- Iconic nature of public art
- Historic preservation
- Quality of design (landscape and architecture)
- Opportunities for artistic expression

The Opelika Road Corridor Plan must match the breadth and depth of these sustainability goals and support them in order to deliver the maximum return to the local communities. Therefore, economic development and revitalization strategies for the Opelika Road Corridor will go beyond standard approaches that focus on real estate market analyses, absorption rates, and other conventional measurements of success. The Opelika Road Corridor Plan will address sustainability strategies tied to Economics, Environment, Community, and Art or Aesthetics and tie these strategies to land use and infrastructure recommendations for the corridor. The creation of a Sustainability Strategy will follow the larger planning effort for the Opelika Road Corridor Plan in parallel.

Design Workshop believes that “what gets measured will achieve success”. To this end, we will identify and measure key metrics in each of the planning categories of Economics, Environment, Community and Art that will guide the planning effort for the Opelika Road Corridor. At the beginning of this effort, we will identify key metrics and examine how the corridor and the surrounding area currently performs for the particular metric. For example, one of the requirements of the Corridor Plan may be to create a 100% increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The metrics process will involve designating “benchmarks” and goals for the metric, in this example doubling pedestrian and bicycle traffic. This information will guide the design team as it creates concepts for redevelopment and revitalization along the corridor. Then, as the Opelika Road Corridor changes over the coming years, the community will be able to measure the success of the planning effort against these metrics. The metrics process does not create strict goals governing the design of the Corridor but instead guides designers to focus on particular planning issues affecting Opelika Road.

At the beginning of the project, the Design Workshop team will conduct an internal work session to identify the current condition of the corridor study area for each of the metrics identified for analysis. Following the initial metrics analysis section, Design Workshop will identify benchmarks or goals for the Opelika Road Corridor Plan for each metric.

As the Design Workshop team proceeds through development of alternatives and preferred plans for the Opelika Road Corridor, we will conduct an analysis of these plans in terms of their achievement of goals tied to the metrics goals identified. We will provide information concerning this analysis as the plan evolves in the form of memorandums to the PSC, as well as updates to graphics and illustrations.

*Deliverables:*

- Maps, tables, and illustrations concerning the key metrics for the project for use during stakeholder meetings and charrettes.
- Text, graphics, etc. for inclusion in the final Opelika Road Corridor Plan document outlining the metrics analysis process and the success of the project in achieving these goals.

### **Task 3.5: Develop Land Use Alternatives**

Following the initial charrettes and public meeting, the consultant team's transportation planners and engineers will continue to analyze the conceptual land use options and potential redevelopment projects for the Opelika Road Corridor Plan in terms of the anticipated build-out of development along Opelika Road, and future traffic capacity issues. The consultant team will develop three land use alternatives for the corridor that will illustrate the following:

- Preferred land use patterns
- Recommended densities
- Overall landscape, environmental, and aesthetic themes and improvements
- Public open space and other amenities
- Accommodations for parking
- Recommendations concerning parcels to be acquired and existing buildings to be replaced or rehabilitated (by the private or public sector) along the Opelika Road Corridor.

*Deliverables:*

- Drawings and illustrations at 1"=400'.

### **Task 3.6: Develop Transportation and Traffic Improvement Alternatives**

As part of this task, the consultant team will create a draft access management plan and transportation alternatives for the entire Opelika Road Corridor. This process will involve coordination and ongoing discussion with the City and property owners along the Opelika Road Corridor. This task will summarize and incorporate the improvements identified in the 2035 Transportation Plan. Corridor-level analysis will be done for each alternative but detailed intersection-level LOS will be done for the preferred alternative.

*Deliverables:*

- Access management plan at 1"=400'
- Transportation Alternatives at 1"=400'
- Memorandums as necessary outlining future transportation performance and potential transportation improvements

### **Task 3.7: Prepare a Preferred Conceptual Streetscape Design and Recommended Improvements**

Following input from the City of Auburn and the community, the consultant team will move forward with development of a preferred streetscape plan for the Opelika Road study area. As part of this process, the consultant team will document the information gained from the initial charrettes and public input, and advance the design ideas. The consultant team will then work with city staff to refine and advance the preferred conceptual streetscape design.

The design will illustrate the following:

- Accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Pavement, crosswalk and other materials recommendations
- Site furnishing recommendations
- Planting recommendations
- Stormwater treatments
- Gateway or nodal treatments

The Design Workshop team will recommend potential stormwater solutions and environmental initiatives. Possible stormwater solutions may include the use of bioswales, porous pavement, curbless gutters, and other innovative stormwater techniques. The team will

ensure that the final plan for the Opelika Road Corridor will work functionally from a stormwater planning perspective and will recommend improvements in the preferred redevelopment plan for the corridor. Design Workshop has completed award-winning form-based codes. We understand that the completion of the Corridor Plan should easily transition into a potential form-based codification with minimal effort.

*Deliverable:*

- Illustrations, diagrams and simulations of the preferred conceptual streetscape design
- Memorandums as necessary outlining future stormwater and environmental sustainability

**Task 3.8: Based on the various studies conducted above and the recommendations of the PSC and other target area stakeholders, develop a draft land use and transportation plan for the target area.**

The DRAFT transportation plan (and subsequent FINAL plan) will be the culmination of all of the 3.x transportation tasks. The Design Workshop team will present refinements to the alternative plans for the Opelika Road Corridor to the PSC. We will also conduct a one day work session to review the alternatives with the Project Steering Committee and stakeholders. Given the number of people involved during the initial round of community outreach, it would be impractical to invite all of them to the work session. Instead, selected representatives (one or two individuals) from the key stakeholder groups (such as merchants, neighborhood groups, etc.) would touch base with the design team during the work session to represent the findings and viewpoints of various stakeholder groups. In addition, we will conduct an open forum at the end of the day for the general public to view the design team’s progress to date and offer input or voice their concerns.

Following the work session and open house, the consultant team will use the feedback gained as it works toward completion of the redevelopment plan for the corridor. We will refine the selected alternative plan for the Opelika Road Corridor Plan and in order to develop a draft land use and transportation plan for the target area. Task 3.8 is a collective effort to ensure all input to date is considered, changes to the preferred recommendations are completed and a final corridor redevelopment plan is completed. The table of contents for the plan may be:

1. Project Introduction
  - Intent and scope
  - Project Steering Committee
2. Corridor Vision
  - Goals and Objectives
3. Existing Conditions and Trends
  - Land Analysis
  - Market Study
  - Transportation Study
  - Metrics
4. Stakeholder and Public Input
  - One-on-one Interviews
  - Focus Groups
  - On-line surveys and input
  - Charrettes 1-3
5. Land Use Plan Alternatives
6. Transportation and Traffic Improvement Alternatives
7. Conceptual Streetscape Plan
8. Implementation and Funding

*Deliverables:*

- Draft land use and transportation plan

**Task 3.9: Develop a Funding Strategy**

9. Develop basic preliminary cost estimates for recommended improvements.
 

A preliminary cost estimate will be prepared of the proposed redevelopment plan recommendations dividing the cost of improvements by segment of the study area.
10. Identify potential funding sources for recommended improvements, and recommend strategy for obtaining funding.
 

Recommendations will be made regarding a proposed funding strategy for improvements to the corridor. This work may include, but is not limited to:

  - Privately-financed models of infrastructure development based upon real estate valuation increases modeled from the market analysis.
  - Public financing alternatives, such as tax increment financing, that would be underwritten by the market analysis but justified by a Fiscal Impact Model, that will forecast the impact of the proposed corridor improvements and real estate land use investments over a 20-year period to the applicable jurisdictions.

The consultant team will draw from a range of revitalization tools to prepare a preliminary strategy for community review. A key element for successful corridor redevelopment is the ability to provide public subsidies. Public financing will address gaps that currently preclude redevelopment. A central goal in the program will be to leverage funds to benefit as many sites as possible. Additionally, the strategy will include other initiatives and actions that will support redevelopment of the corridor. We will outline realistic and achievable tools to make improvements to the Opelika Road Corridor a reality.

- Financial Incentives – Public financing tools, such as TIF, business improvement districts, public investment fees, and others that will enable the city to direct proceeds from development into revitalization projects.
  - Joint Public/Private Development Opportunities – Use of publicly owned land, contribution of the land and/or low-cost financing to make the development feasible for private developers.
  - Public Investment -- Capital projects (e.g., streetscape improvements, parks, or other community facilities) or operations and maintenance efforts that may improve the attractiveness and marketability of a corridor segment.
  - Property Assembly -- Public acquisition and assembly of parcels to create an attractive and efficient development site.
  - Regulatory Changes -- Alterations to zoning (including creation of overlay districts), design guidelines, parking ratios, or other regulations that may improve project feasibility to enable the desired development.
11. Recommend strategy for obtaining funding.

*Deliverables:*

- Summary memorandum outlining recommended funding strategy necessary to implement infrastructure and related improvements along the Opelika Road Corridor.

**Task 3.10: Present these recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council.**

The consultant team, along with City staff and the PSC, will present the corridor improvement recommendations to City Council.

*Deliverables:*

- Power point presentation and supporting drawings to illustrate the Final Corridor Design Plan