



NEWTOWNMACON

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2022-2027

STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

“We completed 80% of the things we set out to do, a whole lot of other things that we didn’t even have in the plan, and by every measure, we have a stronger, more valuable, more vibrant, more diverse, and more successful downtown than we did in 2016...”

JOSH ROGERS, PRESIDENT & CEO

NewTown Macon, Inc. was founded in 1996 by a broad partnership of public and private leaders to revitalize downtown Macon. The Peyton Anderson Foundation provided the inspiration for these leaders to commit substantial time and resources to reverse the decline of downtown Macon.

From the beginning, NewTown has taken on seemingly impossible challenges. Chief among these are revitalizing a downtown that was “dead” and developing a system of trails and parks along a neglected and abandoned river. NewTown has made significant strides in tackling these challenges and continues to evolve to solve new community problems. Between 2017 and 2022, the last strategic plan cycle, NewTown substantially completed strategic plan goals while growing to seize new opportunities.

To leverage the resources to tackle existing and new challenges, NewTown operates on a campaign model. Every five years, NewTown develops a new strategic action plan and

proposes a set of goals to our public and private partners. NewTown’s partners make commitments to help us accomplish those goals, many times in the form of a commitment to donate a set amount each year over the five years of the campaign, known as a pledge. NewTown’s most recent capital campaign matured in 2022, requiring the organization to plan for a new strategic plan to inspire a new five-year campaign.

To accomplish this task, NewTown Macon’s Board of Directors formulated the new strategic action plan to launch on July 1, 2022 and guide NewTown’s efforts through June 30, 2027. This plan projects the most ambitious vision for downtown Macon over the next five years, matching strategies to resources to ensure that downtown revitalization continues to accelerate.



STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



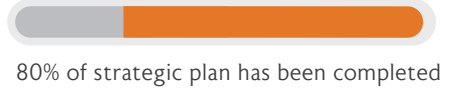
20



20 tasks completed
3 partially completed
2 not completed



80%



GROWING JOBS



81%



storefront occupancy in target blocks

GOAL: 80% storefront occupancy
STATUS: Succeeded



\$8.1M



leveraged into start-ups

GOAL: \$5M STATUS: Succeeded

ONE
MACON

Joined One Macon Economic
Development Committee



GOAL: Support economic development partners
STATUS: Succeeded



107



Commercial Property
Finder Listings

GOAL: Track office occupancy & rates
STATUS: Partial Success

8 streetscapes
rehabilitated

GOAL: Increase walkability
STATUS: Succeeded



203 pieces of moveable
furniture
75 events in
downtown parks



GOAL: Activate public space
STATUS: Succeeded

CREATING A
SENSE OF PLACE3 Poplar Street median
parks renovated

GOAL: Implement "Poplar Yards"
concept from MAP
STATUS: Succeeded



1 BID implemented

GOAL: Implement & manage a
Business Improvement District
STATUS: Succeeded

2 plaza
demonstrations
completed

GOAL: Engage in tactical urbanism
STATUS: Succeeded

INCREASING RESIDENTS



678

lofts in downtown



GOAL: 1000 lofts STATUS: Incomplete



28



owner-occupied condos

GOAL: Incubate for-sale condos
STATUS: Succeeded



2



updated housing market studies

GOAL: Complete an updated market analysis
STATUS: Succeeded



97%



loft occupancy

GOAL: Achieve and sustain 85% loft occupancy
STATUS: Succeeded



OCMULGEE HERITAGE TRAIL

✓ **2**  connections complete

GOAL: Connect OHT to downtown
STATUS: Succeeded

✓ **6**  events held on OHT

GOAL: Leverage the river
STATUS: Succeeded

✓ **1**  bridge completed

GOAL: Connect neighborhoods to OHT
STATUS: Succeeded

✓ **8**  new signs

GOAL: Increase visibility of OHT
STATUS: Succeeded

ADVOCATING FOR PROGRESS

✓ **1**  National Historical Park designation

GOAL: Support the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative
STATUS: Succeeded

✓ **540**  parking meters installed

GOAL: Implement a parking management system
STATUS: Succeeded

✓ **3**  new bike lanes installed downtown

GOAL: Increase bicycle access
STATUS: Partial Success

✓ **0**  passenger rail connections

GOAL: Pursue passenger rail connections from Macon to ATL
STATUS: Incomplete

SUSTAINING GROWTH

✓ **\$9.5M** pledges and assets in Godsey Initiatives Fund



GOAL: Raise \$10M for Godsey Initiatives Fund
STATUS: Partial Success

✓ **\$1M**  surplus in bond fund

GOAL: Reverse \$500K projected loss of bond fund
STATUS: Succeeded

✓ **\$13M**  in Program Related Investments

GOAL: \$10M in Program Related Investments
STATUS: Succeeded

✓ **\$11.7M**  booked for Capital Campaign

GOAL: Raise \$6.5M to complete capital campaign
STATUS: Succeeded

MISSION & VISION

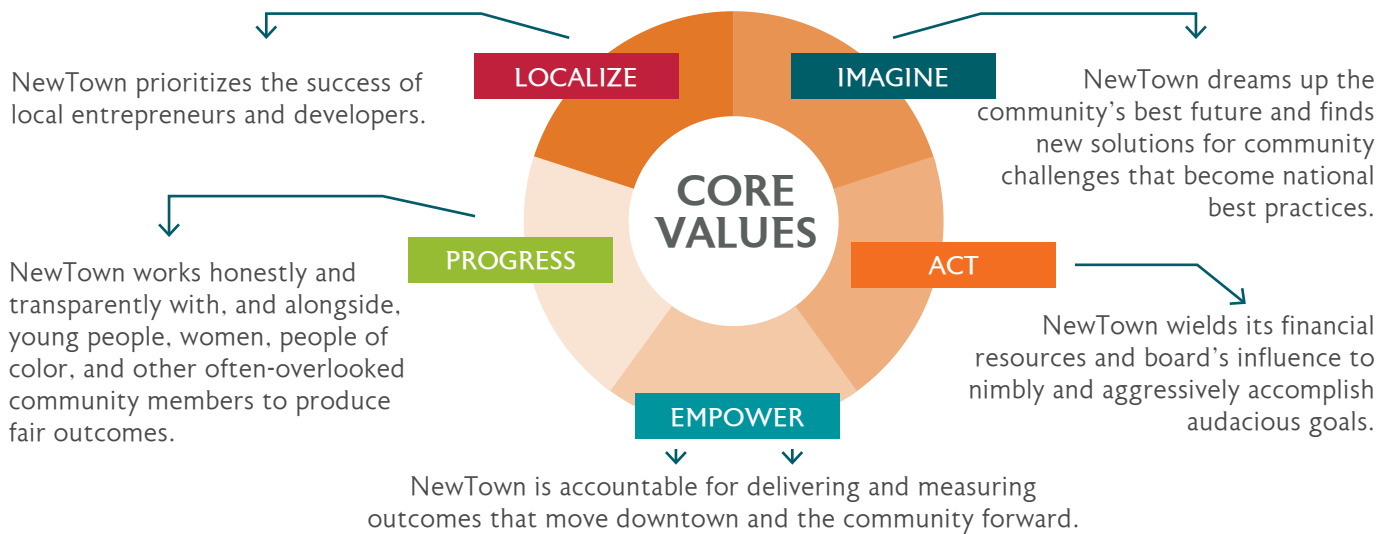
MISSION

To attract, leverage and invest in self-sustaining transformation.

VISION

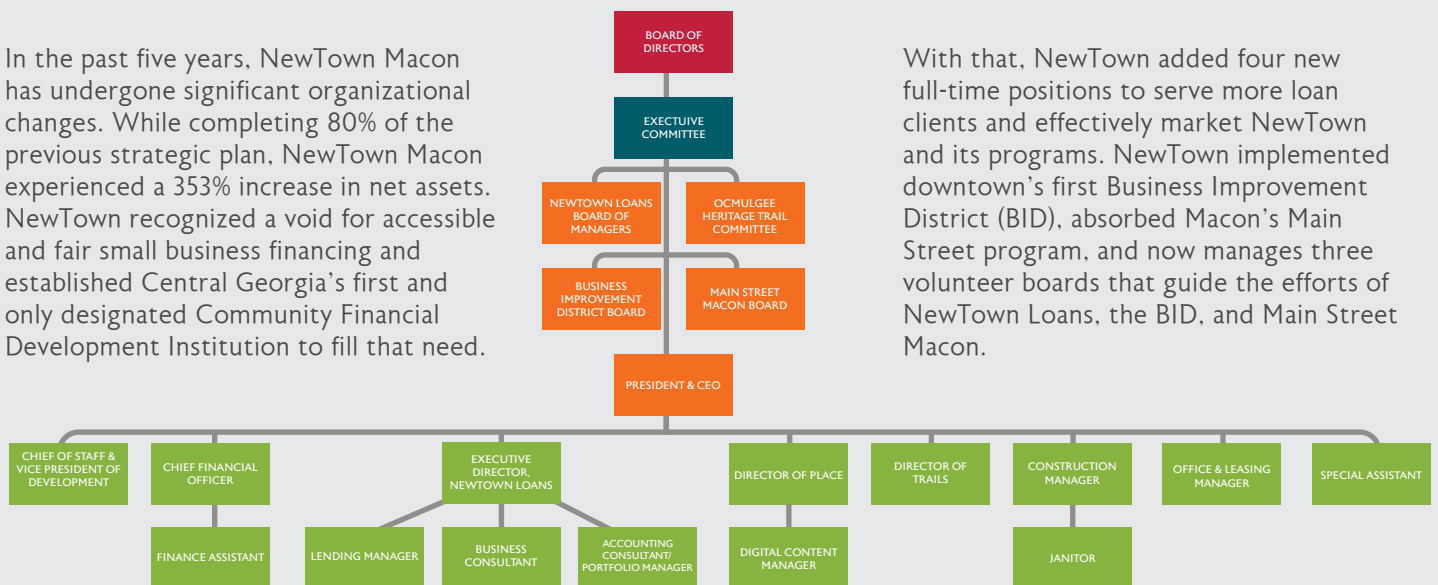
A vibrant and authentic city experience unparalleled in the South.

Unlike the mission and vision, the board of directors determined the company's core values needed updating to better dictate NewTown's work and vision for the future. The board developed and adopted the following core values during its 2021 retreat.



In the past five years, NewTown Macon has undergone significant organizational changes. While completing 80% of the previous strategic plan, NewTown Macon experienced a 353% increase in net assets. NewTown recognized a void for accessible and fair small business financing and established Central Georgia's first and only designated Community Financial Development Institution to fill that need.

With that, NewTown added four new full-time positions to serve more loan clients and effectively market NewTown and its programs. NewTown implemented downtown's first Business Improvement District (BID), absorbed Macon's Main Street program, and now manages three volunteer boards that guide the efforts of NewTown Loans, the BID, and Main Street Macon.



ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

DIRECTORS' ASSESSMENT

"NewTown was founded, in part, to do things that nobody else would do. And sometimes we have to remind ourselves that we're here to take risks that others won't take."

PRESIDENT BILL UNDERWOOD
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Strong leadership: NewTown has the most influential board in Macon and a hardworking and capable staff.
- NewTown has strong support from the philanthropic community and ample resources to fulfill its mission.
- NewTown leads the way in small business development with our lending capital and training resources.
- Organizational structure allows the company to be nimble and flexible so that it can manage change.
- NewTown has a track record of imagining and achieving the impossible because the board and staff are willing to take risks.
- NewTown is committed to growth and has a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of life in Macon.
- Board and staff have credibility in the community and are seen as economic development experts.
- NewTown is a successful facilitator, partner, and communicator and works to bring the community together to solve problems.
- The organization has successful programs and great branding.
- NewTown is inclusive, diverse, and empowers young leaders

WEAKNESSES

- The geographic focus on downtown is limiting and the boundaries of the organization's focus area are unclear.
- Downtown does not have a comfortable pedestrian experience and log trucks on MLK contribute to the discomfort.
- The Ocmulgee Heritage Trail is unusable because of interstate construction and there is not clear communication about the trail's future.
- The public does not understand what NewTown Macon does and there is a lack of public awareness of NewTown.
- Managing organizational change and growth while maintaining the organization's culture is a challenge.
- Young staff may be difficult to retain.
- The board should improve diverse representation.
- Abandoned hotel on First Street hinders development.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Scale, translate, and expand revitalization efforts outside of downtown Macon.
- Become a resource to help outside organizations expand our existing programs.
- There is a tremendous demand for NewTown's "product."
- More people are relocating to smaller cities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The abandoned hotel on First Street could be a development or in-fill opportunity.
- Higher education offerings can be leveraged more.

THREATS

- The lack of a highly qualified workforce and staffing challenges for downtown's hospitality businesses.
- Actual crime and perceptions of crime downtown dissuade some patrons.
- Disgruntled citizens and negativity from populations that feel excluded from downtown, particularly the Black community.
- Homelessness.
- Failing to renew and extend the Business Improvement District would be detrimental.
- City Hall could be diverted from downtown.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

“As long as NewTown keeps its imagination, its creativity, NewTown is going to continue to be a force. We should never become focused on what we have achieved. Do not become encumbered by yesterday’s successes -imagine tomorrow’s promise.”

DR. KIRBY GODSEY

GROWING JOBS

GOAL	MEASURE
Supercharge locally-owned small business creation by investing in promising entrepreneurs and good ideas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Originate and close \$2.5 million in small business loans
Guide the market so entrepreneurs make smart and sustainable investments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission and publish a fresh commercial market analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Track the number and types of net jobs created
Reach full occupancy among the storefronts in the heart of downtown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Achieve 90% occupancy in NewTown’s three target blocks
Create a racially integrated future for building and business ownership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase the net number of black-owned businesses downtown to 53 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Increase the proportion of black-owned businesses from 18% to 30%
Sustain the Macon magic by ensuring locally-owned and family-operated businesses are not displaced by revitalization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Convert at least 20 renting entrepreneurs into real estate owners in downtown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Launch an incubator to lower the costs of entering the downtown market <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landbank vulnerable parcels and buildings, especially through partnerships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Update zoning codes to encourage and protect local investors

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

INCREASING RESIDENTS

GOAL	MEASURE
Provide capital for local developers to seize market opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Originate and close \$20 million in real estate loans
Meet the surging demand for additional residential units	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Produce at least 600 more loft units in the urban core with at least 350 of those delivered in the Central Business District (CBD) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustain or increase rental rates <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain or increase 85% occupancy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create at least 500 beds in the CBD
Guide the market so developers make smart and sustainable investments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commission and publish a fresh residential market analysis
Awaken the potential of vacant land to spread the revitalization of downtown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Break ground on new construction on the riverfront assemblage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete construction of a mixed-use building behind City Hall



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

CREATING A SENSE OF PLACE

GOAL	MEASURE
Improve cleanliness, safety, courtesy, and appearances within downtown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Renew and expand the Business Improvement District (BID) for another term
Spark the growth of tourism as a major economic driver in downtown	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deliver at least 200 new hotel rooms in at least two new hotels to the market
Fulfill the vision for the original Ocmulgee Heritage Trail (OHT) master plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete the construction of the connector trail from Riverside Cemetery to Amerson River Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete the improvements to the Clinton St. entrance to the National Historical Park
Set the vision for the next 25 years of the OHT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Create and secure approval for a new OHT master plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gain SPLOST support for the OHT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance sustainable transportation solutions throughout the Urban Core
Achieve statewide recognition for downtown's revitalization	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Build a recognizable and genuine Macon brand that is distinctive and unique on a national scale <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secure elevation to Georgia's Exceptional Main Streets (GEMS)



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

SUSTAINING GROWTH

GOAL	MEASURE
Secure capital to fuel lending programs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acquire at least \$15 million of loan capital that can be redeployed through our lending efforts
Achieve self-sustainability within NewTown Loans	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiently increase loan volume and margin while controlling administrative expenses so that loan income exceeds operating expenses within the CDFI
Secure the resources that NewTown needs to complete the strategic plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Raise at least \$15 million in a new capital campaign from 2022-2027
Prove pioneering uses, save unique structures, and use partnerships to enable creative developments	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expand NewTown's owned and co-owned investment property portfolio to at least 100 residential units



GOALS & OBJECTIVES

ADVOCATING FOR PROGRESS

GOAL	MEASURE
Advance Ocmulgee Mounds to National Park status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Support ONPPI to secure the elevation of Ocmulgee Mounds to Georgia's first National Park ✓ Initiate an application for Ocmulgee Mounds as a UNESCO World Heritage Site
Pursue passenger rail options from Macon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Advocate for passenger rail connections from Macon to other cities
Strategically grow the borders of NewTown's service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Expand impact to the entire Urban Core of Macon
Launch a public relations program to raise awareness for problem properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create a listing for strategic properties that elevates these properties to their highest and best uses





NEWTOWNMACON

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