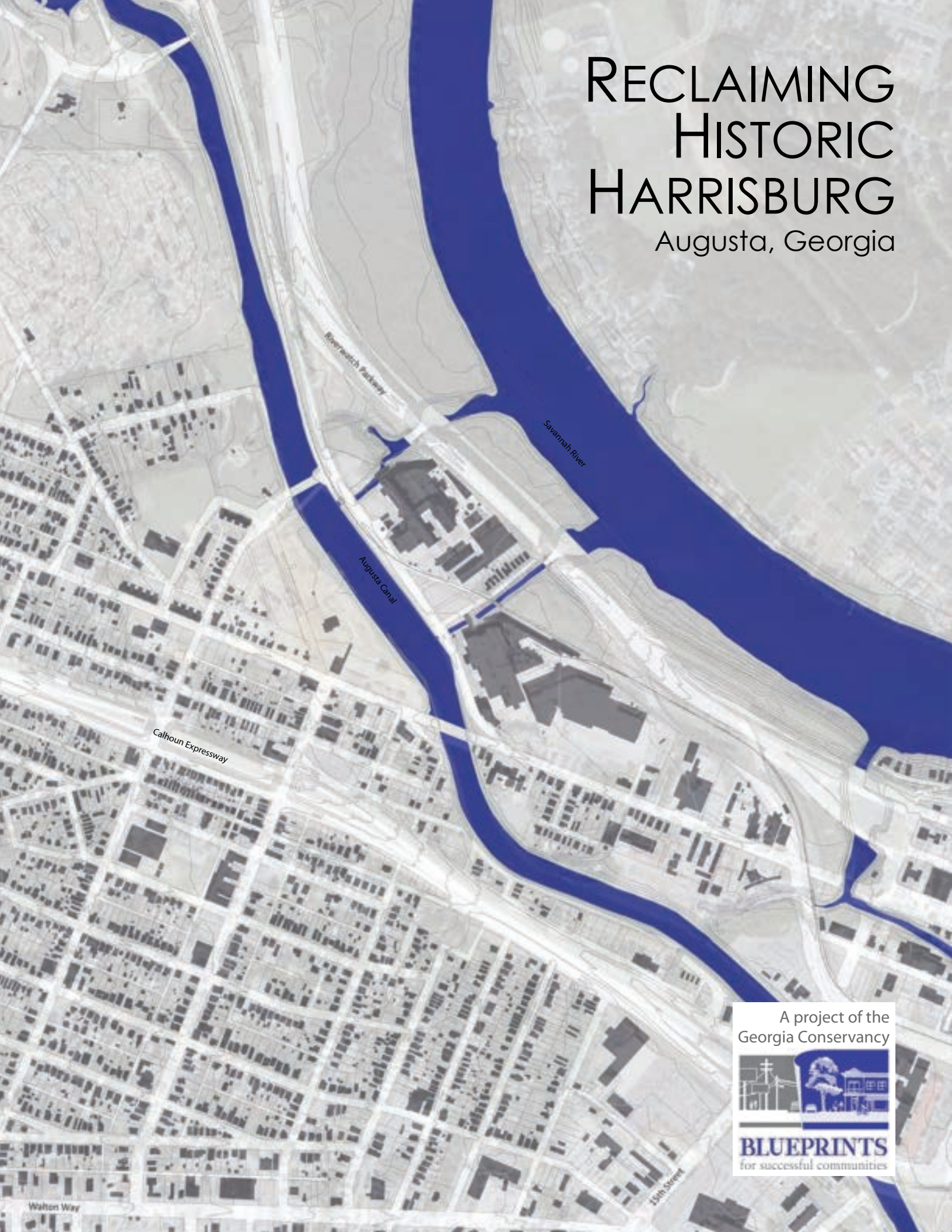
Reclaiming Historic Harrisburg

Augusta, Georgia



A project of the Georgia Conservancy

BLUEPRINTS for successful communities

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BLUEPRINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

Blueprints for Successful Communities is a 15-year old sustainable community design program of the Georgia Conservancy. *Blueprints* uses a community-based approach to sustainable planning and design. It is unique in that it involves key stakeholders – including citizens, businesses, agency and institutional representatives, and elected and appointed officials – throughout the entire planning process of redeveloping a community to better incorporate and focus on natural resource protection, green space accessibility, sustainable land use, and live-work connectivity. The *Blueprints* process is one of the most highly respected planning processes in our state because of its inclusiveness, transparency and technical quality.

In 2010, *Blueprints* and Augusta leaders explored opportunities to apply the *Blueprints* process to an appropriate neighborhood in Augusta-Richmond County. The Harrisburg community was identified as a neighborhood on the verge of significant change and its core framework of small lots and blocks with extant alleys seemed an appropriate setting to apply the sustainability principles of *Blueprints*. In discussions with local leadership it became clear that stakeholders wanted a community plan that identified neighborhood investment opportunities, building on the momentum of the under-construction Kroc Center and John Milledge Elementary School as well as opportunities for recreational use and development along the Augusta Canal. Community leaders also desired a plan that identified positive redevelopment concepts for the John C. Calhoun Expressway and the Broad Street corridor. *Blueprints* solicited the assistance of Professor Richard Dagenhart with Georgia Tech's College of Architecture and Master of Science in Urban Design Program as well as a group of graduate students (studio) under his direction to address these requested focus areas.

Through a stakeholder-driven process the *Blueprints* Team (composed of *Blueprints* staff, Professor Richard Dagenhart and the Georgia Tech graduate urban design studio) conducted a series of community workshops and presentations, collected information and maps, conducted data collection within the community and performed resident and business interviews to develop a set of draft recommendations for consideration by stakeholders. These recommendations were supported by the community and form the basis of this report.

1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Harrisburg, which is located northwest of downtown Augusta, is bordered roughly by the Savannah River to the north, 15th Street to the east, Walton Way to the south, and Milledge Road to the west (refer to Figure 1.2a). In the beginning of January, 2011, the Harrisburg community joined with the Georgia Conservancy's *Blueprints for Successful Communities* to create a community master plan, emphasizing neighborhood investment opportunities, major corridor improvements, better connectivity to the Augusta Canal, alternatives for the John C. Calhoun Expressway and formation of a neighborhood identity; this report is the result of that collaboration.

Harrisburg is a 200 year old historic mill village neighborhood. This neighborhood is home to two large historic and architecturally significant textile mill buildings - the Sibley Mill and the King Mill. Both mills

Figure 1.2a: Harrisburg Study Area

closed their doors in the early 2000s and were purchased by the Augusta Canal Authority, the government-appointed body that has jurisdiction over the Augusta Canal National Heritage Area. The Sibley Mill is currently being evaluated for environmental remediation needs and future plans call for redevelopment. The King Mill has been leased to Ohio-based Standard Textile and remains in operation as a textile manufacturer.

The closing of the mills played a large part in the economic downturn in the Harrisburg community. Many homeowners have left the neighborhood and renter occupied homes now comprise approximately 65% of the housing stock. This has left the Harrisburg neighborhood with deteriorating housing, abandoned homes, and vacant lots. Public safety has also become a major concern in recent years, with Harrisburg violent crime rates rising above the average violent crime rates of Augusta-Richmond County.

Connectivity issues are also abundant. The Calhoun Expressway, an elevated freeway built in the 1970s, slices through the neighborhood, interrupting the original street grid and dividing this community in half. Further, the major corridors that do connect Harrisburg to the larger Augusta community, Walton Way and Broad Street, have become auto-centric corridors, riddled with empty lots, abandoned buildings, and strip retail.

Harrisburg, however, is ripe with opportunity. The neighborhood's remaining historic street network provides the community with a walkable and sustainable framework. Much of the historic housing stock is repairable or well maintained, providing a unique neighborhood character with its distinct architecture. The Augusta Canal, which runs through the community, is recognized as a National Heritage Area and has great potential to provide recreation and economic opportunities to the community.

Additionally, this area has seen public and non-profit reinvestment in recent years with the construction of the Kroc Center and John Milledge Elementary School. The Kroc Center, a 100,000 square foot community center funded by the Salvation Army's Ray and Joan Kroc Corps, was completed in August of 2011. The Center includes a 400-seat theater, a worship hall, a community center, fitness and aquatics center, a senior citizen lounge, classrooms, social services facilities and programming for all age groups. John Milledge Elementary School, located centrally in Harrisburg, was under-construction when this report was being written.

To address these issues and build on Harrisburg's assets and opportunities, this report focuses on five major improvement areas: Neighborhood Identity, Neighborhood Revitalization, Broad Street Enhancements, Augusta Canal Connectivity, and Calhoun Expressway Improvements. Each of the associated recommendations is made with the goal of improving public safety and livability within Harrisburg, while fostering its sustainable character.

Strategies for improving Harrisburg's neighborhood identity include clarifying the neighborhood's self image and its image to others. The aim should be to identify, unite, and make homeowners visible to outsiders using neighborhood banners and neighborhood watch signs; and to create an annual, unique Harrisburg event, such as a neighborhood festival or parade.

The neighborhood revitalization strategy proposes investment in the neighborhood at a lot-by-lot and a block-by-block scale, as well as at three specific redevelopment areas: 1) on the blocks surrounding the new John Milledge Elementary School site; 2) on the existing Kroger shopping center site and the adjacent blocks; and 3) along Walton Way.

Enhancement strategies focused along Broad Street include: improving pedestrian crossings and street lights; adjusting land use regulations to allow for uses that can reinvigorate the once lively historic character of Broad Street; and redesigning the streetscape to allow for parallel parking, street trees, lights, and intersection improvements, as appropriate to support the land use changes.

Investment strategies pertaining to the Augusta Canal focus on connecting the Canal to the surrounding community and improving the trail system along this waterway; as well as re-aligning and re-using land parcels to better interact with and address the Canal.

Solutions proposed for the Calhoun Expressway include reducing traffic lanes on the elevated freeway to provide a multi-use trail for pedestrians and cyclists or, alternatively, bringing the Expressway down to grade and improving the streetscape design to integrate with the community.

It is crucial that the Harrisburg community gain the support of, and build partnerships and consensus with allied organizations in order to implement the strategies recommended within this report. Partner organizations can provide vital expertise and resources to aid in implementation.

The concerns and community supported recommendations captured in the *Blueprints* report reflect the input of the stakeholders and participants at the time of the *Blueprints* planning process. As with any significant community project, each recommendation

should be revisited as implementation opportunities arise to verify that the recommendation is still supported and appropriate for the community. Over the life of the *Blueprints* report, it is likely that a community's population, development/redevelopment pressure, traffic patterns, local leadership, and economic activity will change. Such changes may result in a shift in recommendation priorities for implementation, may render a recommendation no longer applicable, or may result in a change in a community's needs or wishes. This is expected and part of the normal cycle of change in a community. However, it is important that future community leadership respect the stakeholder effort and community support that resulted in this *Blueprints* report.

1.3 PARTNERSHIPS

The following diagram identifies the partner organizations that the Harrisburg neighborhood should work with in order to implement the recommendations as discussed in the remainder of this report (refer to Figure 1.3a). More specific information on partner organizations can be found in Section 9.0: Recommendations.

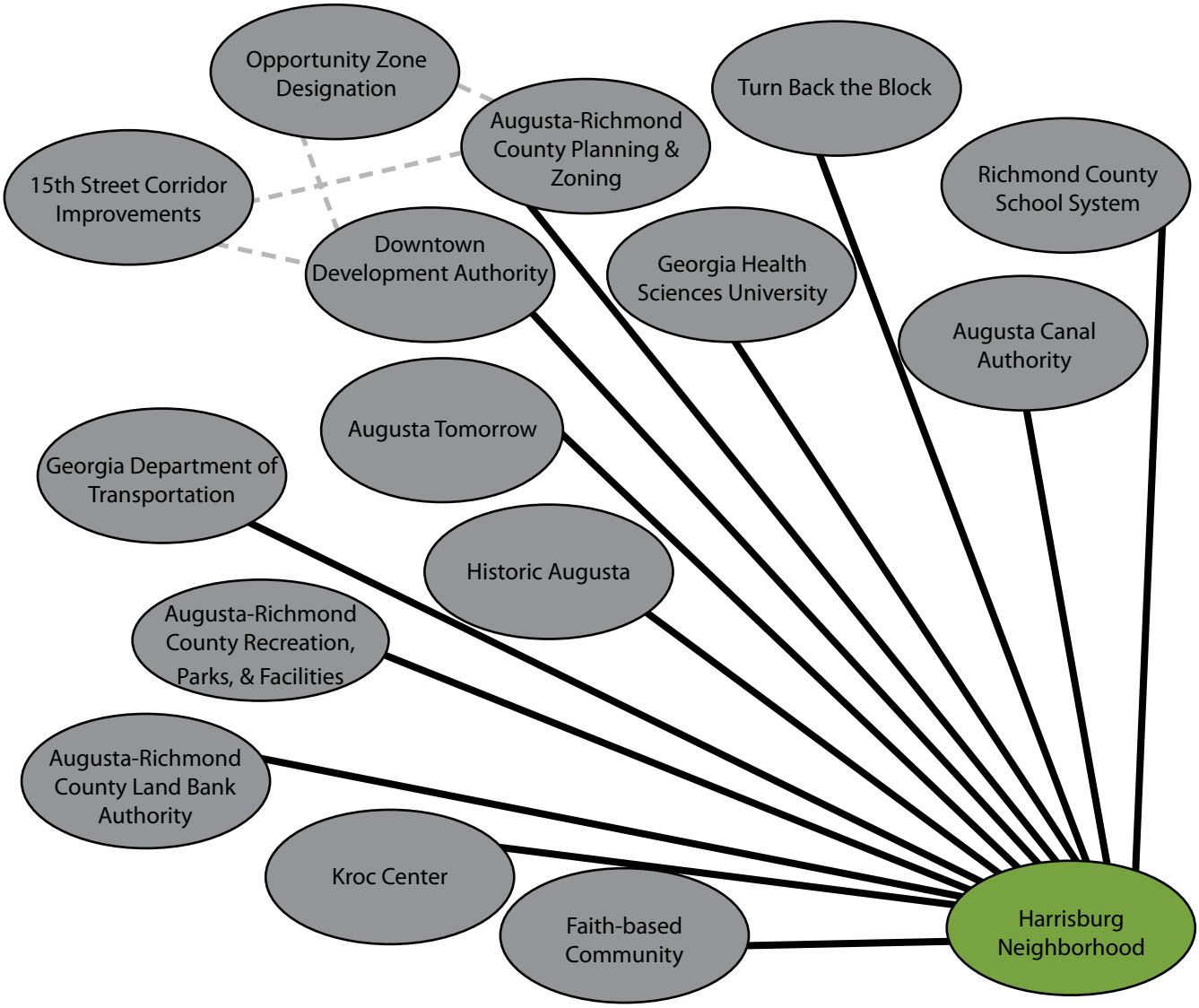

Figure 1.3a: Implementation Partners

Coke

The Process

2.0 THE PROCESS

Figure 2.0a: Workshop 1

The *Blueprints* process was directed and managed by the Georgia Conservancy, in close coordination with Augusta leadership. Technical support for the project was provided by Professor Richard Dagenhart of Georgia Tech's College of Architecture, with a spring 2011 Urban Design Studio, made up of graduate students studying urban design. The process relied heavily on participation and input from community stakeholders through a series of public workshops, discussed in more detail in Section 2.1. Final recommendations, found within this report, reflect, as best possible, the consensus of community participants, as well as professional judgment of the *Blueprints* Team - Georgia Conservancy Growth Management staff, Professor Dagenhart and participating graduate students.

The Harrisburg *Blueprints for Successful Communities* began in the fall of 2010 with data collection, stakeholder identification, and project preparation. From January to May of 2011, the community planning and stakeholder involvement work occurred, coinciding with the semester calendar of Georgia Tech. From May to November of 2011, the Georgia Conservancy compiled, edited and added to the urban design studio's work to create this final report.

The City of Augusta, Augusta-Richmond County, Augusta Tomorrow, the Augusta Canal Authority, and other groups have invested in master plans and targeted area plans in past years. These previous plans were studied and utilized, as appropriate, in developing specific recommendations for Harrisburg. The intent of this project is to fill voids in other plans that have taken a broader approach to this community, while respecting the stakeholder-supported and best professional judgment recommendations of these previous efforts.

2.1 WORKSHOPS

Throughout the Harrisburg *Blueprints* process three community workshops were facilitated, directed and managed by the Georgia Conservancy, with presentations and participation from the Georgia Tech Urban Design Studio. The intent of these workshops was to engage stakeholders in the process; identify the strengths, challenges, and opportunities of the neighborhood; and collect stakeholder input as recommendations were drafted. Refer to Figures 2.0a to 2.0h for images from each workshop.

2.1.1 WORKSHOP 1

The *Blueprints* Team hosted the kick-off workshop at St. Luke United Methodist Church on February 5, 2011. During this initial workshop the *Blueprints* Team explained the *Blueprints* process and presented their initial findings and understandings of the Harrisburg community. The stakeholders were then divided into work groups to discuss the strengths, challenges and opportunities of the Harrisburg neighborhood. Each group reported their findings to the larger group and common topics were discovered. Strengths were determined to include: social capital, the Harrisburg community garden, the strong street framework, and the rich history of the neighborhood. Opportunities were seen in the historic and architecturally significant housing stock, the under construction Kroc Center, the under construction John

Figure 2.0b: Workshop 1 - Commissioner Matt Aiken

Figure 2.0e: Workshop 2

Figure 2.0c: Workshop 1

Figure 2.0f: Workshop 2

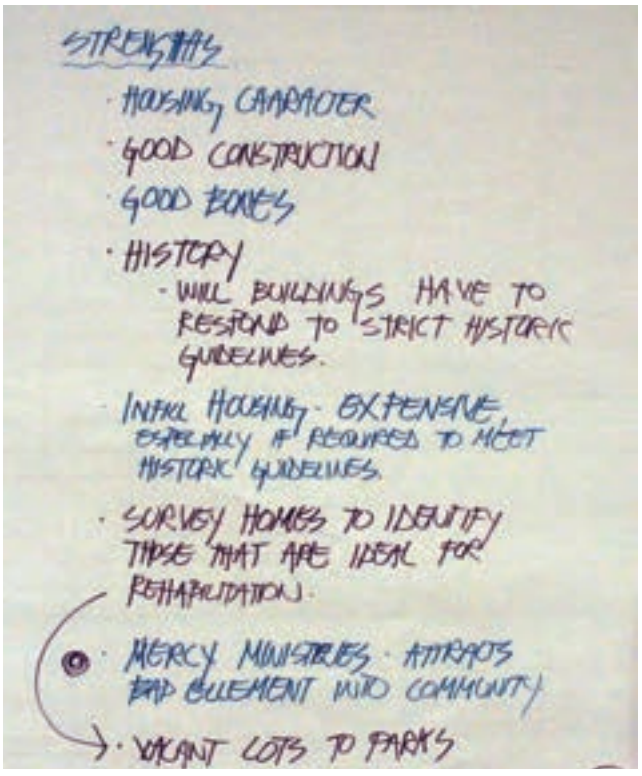

Figure 2.0d: Workshop 1 - Strengths

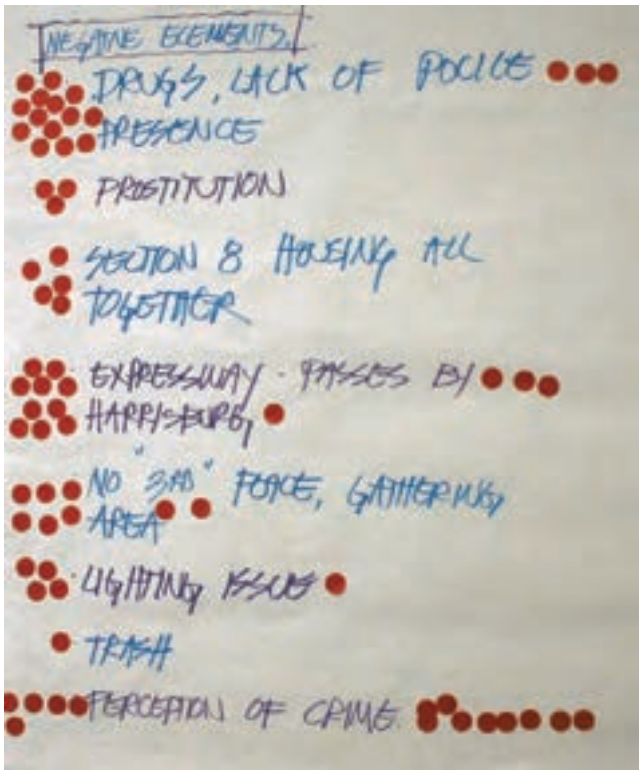

Figure 2.0g: Workshop 1 - Challenges

Milledge Elementary School, and the Augusta Canal. Challenges were concluded as: public safety and crime, lack of neighborhood investment, poor connectivity, auto-centric commercial corridors, and an undefined neighborhood identity.

2.1.2 WORKSHOP 2

The *Blueprints* Team utilized the outcome of the discussions from the first workshop to create draft recommendations that addressed the issues and desires voiced by the stakeholders. These draft recommendations were then presented at the second workshop, which was held at the Bible Deliverance Temple Fellowship Hall on March 11, 2011. The recommendations presented at this workshop included: 1) Recommendations for creating a neighborhood identity with the use of neighborhood banners and signs; 2) Focusing neighborhood investment on the blocks that connect the new John Milledge Elementary School to the new Kroc Center. This area has many lots in need of redevelopment and the blocks create an important connection between these two new neighborhood amenities; 3) Streetscape and land use improvements along Broad Street; 4) Implementation of a new multi-purpose street system along the Augusta Canal; and 5) Four Calhoun Expressway alternatives, three of which bring the freeway down to grade and one that reduces lanes to accommodate a trail system on the existing elevated infrastructure. Each of these recommendations was made with the intention of improving public safety and quality of life in Harrisburg while fostering its sustainable character.

After the presentation of these draft recommendations, stakeholders were divided into small groups to provide their feedback. The stakeholder input received at this workshop led to the revision of the proposed recommendations into strategies that more clearly adhered to the community's desires.

2.1.3 WORKSHOP 3

The final workshop was conducted on April 30, 2011 at the Bible Deliverance Temple gymnasium. At this meeting, the *Blueprints* Team presented final recommendations to the Harrisburg community, answered questions and took note of any community concerns regarding the presented recommendations. These final recommendations, with stakeholder concerns addressed, are detailed in the following report sections.

2.2 NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

As discussed in 2.1.1 Workshop 1, stakeholder input at the first community workshop, in addition to research by the *Blueprints* Team, identified the following four primary neighborhood challenges: public safety and crime, lack of neighborhood investment, poor connectivity within the community and to its surroundings, and inadequately designed commercial corridors.

Public safety was found to be one of the greatest challenges for the Harrisburg community. Stakeholders expressed concern with a lack of police presence, drug activity, prostitution, and violent crime in their streets. The *Blueprints* Team's research determined that violent crime in Harrisburg is greater than that of Augusta's average and higher than rates found in Atlanta. Average rates per 1,000 population include: 14.4 in Harrisburg, 10.8 in Augusta, and 11.5 in Atlanta.[2.1]

Stakeholders were also concerned with the lack of neighborhood investment in their community. They attributed some of this to the perception of crime which is keeping new business and home owners from moving

Figure 2.0h: Workshop 3

into and investing in Harrisburg. This has led to a low homeownership rate, with approximately 65% of homes renter-occupied (refer to Figure 3.1b). Uninvolved landlords have led to poor housing conditions and in some cases abandonment.

Poor connectivity in Harrisburg was also acknowledged by stakeholders and noted by the *Blueprints* Team. The John C. Calhoun Expressway cuts the neighborhood in half, disconnecting residents in the southern portion from amenities in the north, such as the Augusta Canal, the Sibley and King Mills, the West View Cemetery, Lake Olmstead, Julian Smith Park, and the Kroc Center. The Calhoun Expressway also carries travelers over Harrisburg, allowing potential visitors and investors to bypass and ignore the neighborhood on their way into or out of downtown Augusta.

The commercial corridors in Harrisburg are also seen as a challenge. Broad Street has a rich history in regards to the historical development of Harrisburg, being the founding street in Harrisburg and an extension of the first street built in Augusta by founder James Oglethorpe, and is the main connection from the community to downtown. Over time, however, this corridor has lost its vitality and is now peppered with empty lots and abandoned buildings. Pedestrian amenities along this street, such as street trees, lights, and crosswalks, have been neglected to accommodate the automobile. Similarly, Walton Way and 15th Street have become generic, auto-centric corridors filled with fast food and strip malls.

Issues and Strategies

3.0 ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

3.1 OVERARCHING ISSUES

The *Blueprints* Team identified three major issues within the greater Augusta area that directly and indirectly have an effect on the neighborhood issues, detailed in Section 2.2. These overarching issues include the economy, the real estate market, and Harrisburg's neighborhood identity. The solutions to regional economic and real estate challenges are well beyond the reach of this report. There are some real estate and economic development strategies that will be recommended in the remainder of this report, but recovery of the economy and the real estate market will have to occur in their own time. Neighborhood identity issues, on the other hand, have a greater ability to be resolved with implementation of the strategies discussed within this report. It will be necessary to implement both top-down (general economic and real estate market revitalization) and ground-up (neighborhood identity) strategies to address Harrisburg's challenges and provide long-term stability for this community.

3.1.1 ECONOMY

The current economic climate has affected the entire nation – the national unemployment rate is high at 9.1%.[3.1] The economy in Augusta-Richmond County, however, is not as dire. The local economy is growing with jobs moving into the region.[3.2] Augusta-Richmond County benefits from diverse employment opportunities at the Georgia Health Sciences University, a number of major hospital and related health care facilities, and Fort Gordon. According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey (ACS), the educational services, health care and social assistance industry makes up 26% of jobs, with retail trade following at 13%. Unemployment in Augusta-Richmond County is lower than the national average at 5.3%. While jobs are available and the overall economy is growing, income is lower in Augusta-Richmond County at $36,823 median household income than the national average at $51,425 median household income. Education levels are slightly lower in Augusta-Richmond County than that of the national average as well, with 20% of Augustans over 25 years of age holding a bachelor degree or higher, compared to 27.5% in the U.S. The young professional, 25 to 34 age cohort, makes up a significant percentage of Augusta-Richmond County's population at 14.5%, indicating that some college graduates are remaining or moving to the area.[3.3]

While this report did not focus on economic redevelopment, it is recommended that Augusta-Richmond County further study its employment and educational strengths and weaknesses, in planning for economic growth. Maintaining a mix of employment opportunities while diversifying workforce training should be a priority. Additionally, providing higher paying job opportunities for college educated professionals could help raise income levels throughout the County, which would help boost the local economy and increase tax revenue for the region. Addressing these economic issues while working to resolve Harrisburg's challenges, will help create a livable, intown community attractive to a variety of homeowners, residents and businesses.

3.1.2 REAL ESTATE MARKET

Today's real estate market is a challenge affecting communities across the country. According to the National Association of Realtors, existing home sales in the U.S. are down 15.3% in May of 2011 from May of 2010. Property values are also dropping, as evidenced in the National Association of Realtors' statistics showing a 4.6% drop in the median sales price of homes from May of 2010 to May of 2011. Comparing median sales prices from May of 2008 to May 2011, the drop is even

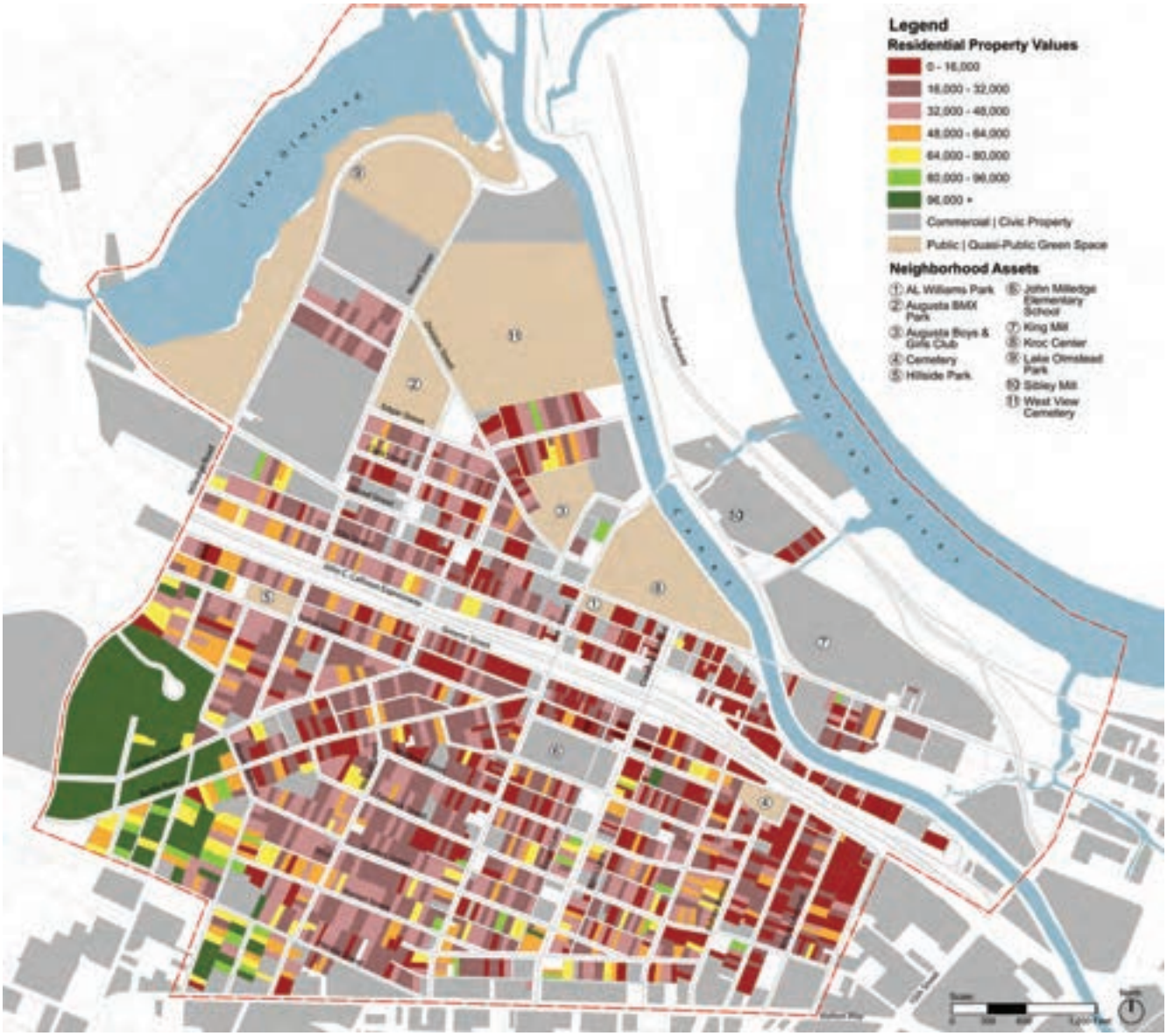

Figure 3.1a Residential Property Values

more drastic at a decrease of 18%.[3.4] Property values in Augusta and Harrisburg, however, are much lower than the national average. According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, the median property value in Augusta-Richmond County is $97,900, 47% less than the national median of $185,400.[3.5] Harrisburg property values are even lower still, with the median property value at less than $32,000 (Refer to Figure 3.1a).

The number of renter-occupied housing units in Augusta-Richmond County is greater than the national average, with 42.8% Augustans renting, compared to 33.1% of the nation.[3.6] This number is even higher in Harrisburg with roughly 65% renter occupancy (refer to Figure 3.1b). In comparison to other neighborhoods in Augusta and Atlanta, Harrisburg renter-occupancy is still considered very high. In Summerville, Augusta and in the Atlanta neighborhoods of Cabbagetown, Inman Park and Virginia-Highland, renter occupancy is around 50% of the occupied housing units, with the highest percentage in Virginia-Highland at 57%. Virginia-Highland, unlike Harrisburg, is known for a well maintained housing stock

Figure 3.1b Renter and Owner Occupied Property

and a much higher median property value, at $341,300.[3.7] Similar to Harrisburg though, it is a historic neighborhood with a walkable street network and a variety of historic single family homes. With similarities in framework and renter-occupancy rates, what is it then that makes Harrisburg's property values so much lower?

To answer this question we need to look at how many multi-family housing structures each neighborhood hosts. In Virginia-Highland 36.1% of housing structures have five or more units and 44.8% are single family/one-unit homes. In Harrisburg less than 1% of the housing structures, excluding the public housing development, have five or more units.[3.8] So while Harrisburg has a much higher percentage of renters than Virginia-Highland, they have a much lower number of multi-unit housing structures. Harrisburg renters, in general, occupy single family or one-unit residences. The renters in Virginia-Highland, on the other hand, more commonly occupy multi-unit structures.

Figure 3.1c Housing Conditions

Housing Condition U: 11%
Undeveloped Land

Housing Condition 1: 4%
Structurally damaged

Housing Condition 2: 18%
Moderate to severe damage

Housing Condition 3: 37%, Some maintenance

Housing Condition 4: 30%, Good condition

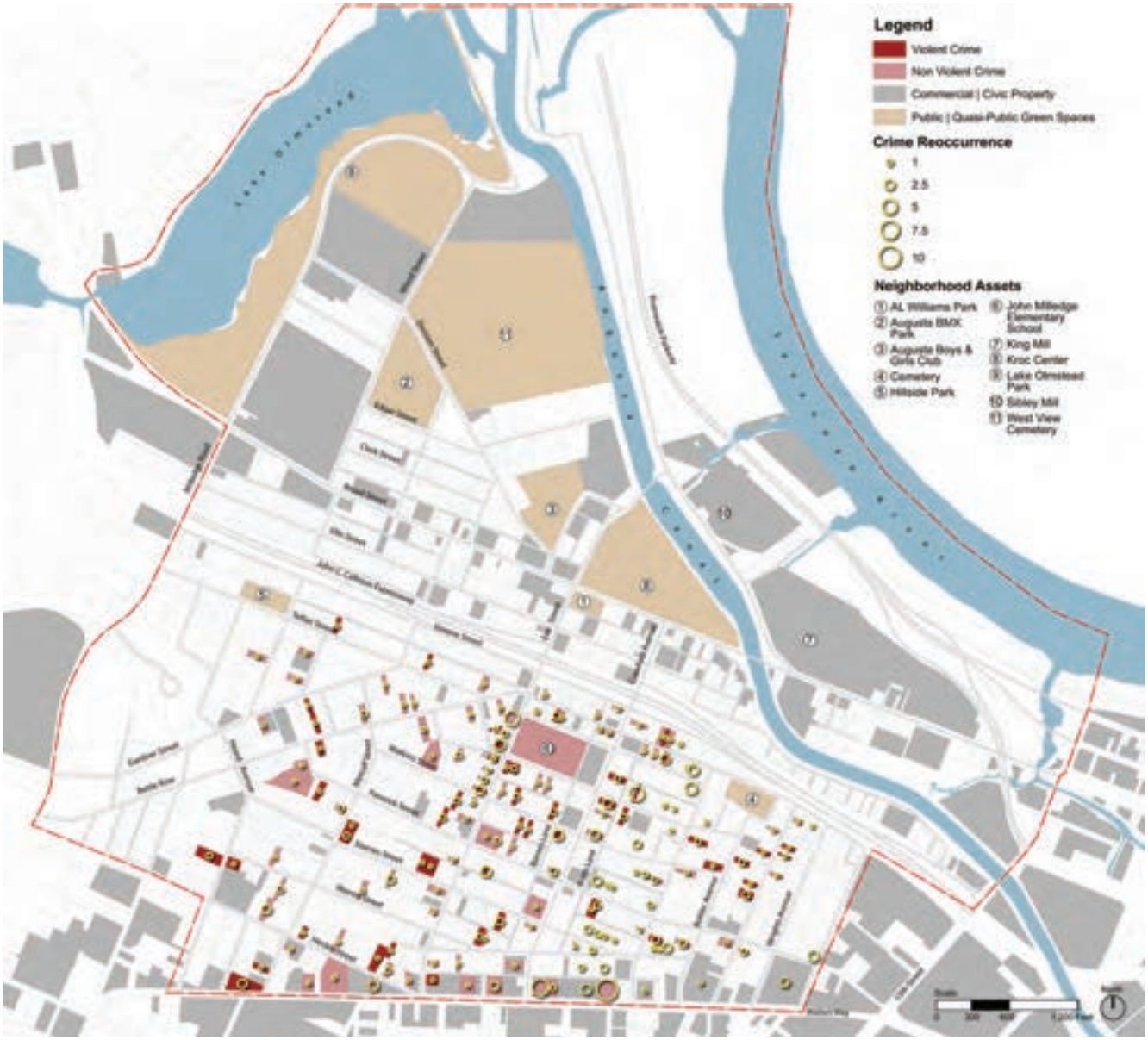

Figure 3.1d Crime

This housing situation can help explain the property value differences between Virginia-Highland and Harrisburg. Multi-unit housing structures are commonly maintained by a property management company, while upkeep of single-unit housing structures is the responsibility of the individual property owner. In Harrisburg, many of these property owners live outside of the neighborhood and are not consistent with upkeep of their homes. The maintenance of the property then falls into the hands of the renter, who has little incentive to maintain. With the fate of so many homes in Harrisburg at the hands of the renter, the condition of the housing stock has deteriorated – nearly 1/3 of the housing stock is in poor condition (refer to Figure 3.1c), contributing to the lower than average Augusta property values. In Virginia-Highland this issue is avoided by allowing renters to occupy multi-unit structures where a property management team keeps the property in good condition and single-unit homes are occupied more commonly by property owners, who have a greater incentive to properly maintain their homes.

Including more multi-unit structures in appropriate locations in Harrisburg that do not damage the existing quality of the housing stock, and encouraging more owner-occupied homes, could have a positive affect on the upkeep and housing conditions of Harrisburg. Immediately addressing maintenance requirements, enforcement, and penalties comprehensively across Augusta-Richmond County, would have a noticeable impact on property values throughout the County, including Harrisburg.

The poor visual condition of housing and the general lack of incentive for renters to invest and care for the neighborhood have also had an effect on the crime rates in Harrisburg. Violent crime rates are higher in Harrisburg than that of Augusta-Richmond County, with Harrisburg's violent crime at 14.4/1,000 people and Augusta-Richmond County at 10.8/1,000 people.[3.9] Refer to Figure 3.1d. A formal partnership amongst homeowners, concerned residents, the Harrisburg-West End Neighborhood Association, the Harrisburg Community Council, and the Augusta-Richmond County Sheriff's Department is an important first step to better combat crime with neighborhood-based policing. Additional strategies to address crime are discussed in Section 3.2.

While the real estate market will need to recover on its own with the help of larger influences beyond the scope of this report, some steps can be taken to help improve housing conditions and property values in Harrisburg. One of the first steps would be to evaluate existing density requirements in Harrisburg and determine where multi-unit residential properties can be located. This will encourage rental properties to be maintained by property management companies and, as the market improves, single-unit residences can be sold to homeowners. Allowing for multi-unit buildings will continue to attract a variety of residents, contributing to economic stability. Additional strategies to improve housing conditions and property values are discussed in Section 3.2.

3.1.3 NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Neighborhood identity has become a major barrier to revitalizing Harrisburg. The neighborhood's identity has become associated with poor housing conditions and high crime. Communication with partnering organizations is absent and neighborhood initiatives have fallen short without outside support. Partner organizations are vital to implementing and maintaining many of the recommendations listed in this report. In order to get these potential partners on board, Harrisburg needs to clarify what the neighborhood is and what its vision is for the future. The Harrisburg community needs to convince partner organizations of the rich history that makes Harrisburg so unique, the many amenities the neighborhood has to offer, and the many opportunities that, if utilized and implemented correctly, could turn this neighborhood into a vibrant and vital part of Augusta.

The development of a neighborhood identity for Harrisburg has also been interrupted by many physical barriers. The Augusta Canal, the John C. Calhoun Expressway, and the neighborhood's major corridors – Broad Street, Walton Way, and 15th Street - disconnect the community not only from itself, but also from the larger framework of Augusta. The Augusta Canal is an underutilized and inaccessible amenity from which the greater Augusta community could benefit. The Calhoun Expressway divides the community in half and allows potential visitors to drive right over Harrisburg on their way into or out of downtown. The major corridors have become generic commercial streets, which provide no

clue to the history, the amenities, or the opportunities that lie within the Harrisburg community.

Establishing a positive neighborhood identity for Harrisburg is vital to gaining support from outside partners. These partner organizations have the resources, expertise, and additional strength of numbers to help implement the many recommendations found within this report. Once a neighborhood identity is created and shared, it needs to be reflected and evident to outsiders. The Augusta Canal needs to be more accessible and visible to visitors; the Calhoun Expressway needs to be redesigned to better fit in to the neighborhood context; and the major corridors need to be reinvented to better reflect the character and vision of the Harrisburg community. Such achievements would not only benefit Harrisburg, but would also strengthen Augusta-Richmond County. This point can not be over-emphasized.

3.2 OVERALL STRATEGIES FOR HARRISBURG

The following paragraphs outline strategies to help address Harrisburg's challenges in regards to economic hardship, the deteriorated real estate market, and neighborhood identity issues. While the real estate market and the economy will have to recover on their own with the help of actions beyond the scope of this report, the following neighborhood-level strategies can help improve the current state of Harrisburg and set it on a path for long-term stability and greater prosperity. Detailed analysis and recommendations are presented in the remainder of this report.

3.2.1 APPROACH TO REDEVELOPMENT - NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE

The current economic state has left little city, state, or federal funds to help improve the deteriorated housing market in Augusta. Through the following strategies, the Harrisburg residents and partner organizations can take critical steps to improve the real estate conditions in their community.

CONNECT WITH PARTNERING ORGANIZATIONS

Partnering with allied organizations is fundamental to making any change, as their support, expertise, and resources are vital. A list of these partner organizations and the implementation projects that they would be most able to help execute can be found in Section 9.0 Recommendations.

CREATE A NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Simultaneous to connecting with partner organizations is the neighborhood's need to create a clear identity and a narrative to describe itself. This neighborhood narrative can then be used to better communicate with partners on the goals and desires of the Harrisburg community. Also part of defining the neighborhood identity is identifying those individuals who are invested in Harrisburg, easily defined as homeowners, and creating banners and neighborhood watch signs to be placed on their homes. These watch signs in concurrence with a neighborhood watch organization can begin to deter crime by putting a face on those who live in Harrisburg. These strategies are further described in Section 4.0 Neighborhood Identity.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Housing and neighborhood revitalization efforts, as recommended in this report, take two forms. One, the small-scale neighborhood based strategies, which

include lot-by-lot and block-by-block strategies. And, two, the large-scaled catalytic redevelopment efforts, which utilize lot-by-lot and block-by-block strategies at a grander scale.

Small lot-by-lot strategies can become the first implementation step for residents to redevelop, reuse, and beautify vacant and/or abandoned lots. This includes demolition of abandoned and irrepairable homes and cleaning up of empty lots. Slightly larger block-by-block strategies can simultaneously be tackled, to revitalize neighborhood blocks that are littered with properties that are abandoned or in poor condition. Block-by-block strategies include streetscape improvements and redevelopments of entire blocks, as appropriate. It is crucial to establish ownership of the neighborhood by its residents, not its criminals or its distressing times, by making an initial positive impact through lot-by-lot and block-by-block strategies. These initiatives will help build momentum to implement the larger physical improvement projects, described in the paragraph below.

Larger catalytic redevelopment projects are just as important to the revitalization of Harrisburg and need to be initiated in tandem with lot-by-lot and block-by-block strategies. Catalytic redevelopment projects include the redevelopment of the blocks surrounding the John Milledge Elementary School, the redevelopment of the Kroger site and adjacent blocks, and the redevelopment of the Walton Way corridor. These three redevelopment projects will require the Harrisburg neighborhood to work closely with partner organizations in order to implement. These strategies are described further in Section 5.0 Housing and Neighborhood.

3.2.1 APPROACH TO REDEVELOPMENT - LARGER SCALE

Larger, more extensive projects, such as Broad Street, Augusta Canal, and Calhoun Expressway redevelopments, can be tackled after smaller steps have begun. These more extensive projects focus on improving physical connections to better tie the community together and to better connect the neighborhood to the greater framework of Augusta.

BROAD STREET

Broad Street redevelopment focuses on streetscape and land use improvements to make a more usable, walkable environment and to increase economic development potentials along this corridor. Broad Street strategies are further described in Section 6.0.

AUGUSTA CANAL

Augusta Canal strategies focus on trail improvements and street connectivity to make the Canal more accessible and usable as an amenity to Harrisburg and the greater Augusta community. These strategies are further described in Section 7.0.

CALHOUN EXPRESSWAY

Calhoun Expressway redevelopment focuses on alternative designs for the expressway that will allow it to integrate into the fabric of the Harrisburg community while still serving as a connection to downtown Augusta. Calhoun Expressway strategies are further described in Section 8.0.

Neighborhood Identity

4.0 NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

In order to form a clear neighborhood identity for Harrisburg, three major activities are recommended. First, a clear neighborhood narrative is needed to explain to outside partners and potential homeowners what Harrisburg is and what its future holds. Second, Harrisburg homeowners need to be made visible, with neighborhood banners and signs, to show outsiders and visitors what a strong support system Harrisburg has. Third, it is recommended that Harrisburg residents create a neighborhood event, such as a festival or parade, that will invite outsiders in to celebrate Harrisburg's unique history and discover this Augusta gem.

4.1 NEIGHBORHOOD NARRATIVE

A clear neighborhood narrative is vital in communicating to potential partner organizations and individuals about Harrisburg, its goals and visions for the future, and the importance of implementing this vision. Harrisburg's narrative should describe the history and development of the neighborhood. Important to this history is the Sibley and King mills, the surrounding mill village and historic housing stock (dating from the early 1800s through the 1920s), Broad Street's historic connection as an extension of downtown Augusta, the Ezekiel Harris House, and the Augusta Canal. The narrative should be posted to the Harrisburg-West End Neighborhood Association's website with historic maps and photos to support its claims. A neighborhood logo should draw on this narrative, to exemplify this new neighborhood identity. The narrative and logo can be utilized in additional marketing material as needed. Additionally this website could include a listing of community events; links to websites of area amenities and partners; and public safety information.

In writing the narrative, consider neighborhood websites that express their history and identity well, such as:

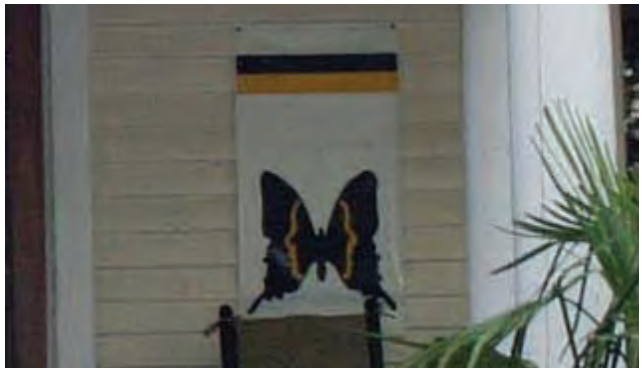

Figure 4.2a Neighborhood Flag Examples - Inman Park and Kirkwood, Atlanta

Inman Park, Atlanta: www.inmanpark.org

Virginia Highland, Atlanta: www.virginiahighland.com

Compton Heights, St. Louis: www.chnba.org/index.html

4.2 HOMEOWNERS' INVOLVEMENT

Another important step in creating a neighborhood identity is to recognize those individuals in the community who have invested in Harrisburg and care about making it a better place to live. To create an alliance of these

Figure 4.2b Neighborhood Watch Example - Inman Park, Atlanta

individuals and to visibly show outsiders the valuable support system Harrisburg has in its residents, it is recommended to implement three strategies: First, create neighborhood banners to place on homes; second, create a neighborhood watch organization complete with signs for participating homes; and third, implement lot-by-lot and block-by-block strategies.

The neighborhood banner could utilize the Harrisburg logo, or a version of it, and be hung outside on owner-occupied homes throughout the neighborhood. Figure 4.2a shows example images of neighborhood banners found in the Inman Park and Kirkwood neighborhoods of Atlanta. Many neighborhoods throughout the U.S. have utilized this approach to visually identify neighborhoods and those residents who care about and have invested in the community.

A second step in creating awareness of Harrisburg homeowners is to create a neighborhood watch organization. The Harrisburg-West End Neighborhood Association has already teamed up with Augusta Crime Stoppers to create a neighborhood watch in Harrisburg. It is recommended that additional advertisement of this organization be sought to increase enrollment/ participation and that participants continue to utilize advice from and attend training programs with the Augusta Crime Stoppers organization. To further support Harrisburg's neighborhood watch program, neighborhood watch signs should be created for members to place in their front yard. These signs can include the Harrisburg logo, text indicating they are a member of the neighborhood watch and the property's street number, which will allow police officers to find the home more easily if there is an emergency. These signs also identify those residents who care for Harrisburg and are working to make it a safer place to live, ultimately having a part in deterring crime by showing criminals that Harrisburg residents care. Please refer to Figure 4.2b for an example of a neighborhood watch sign in the Inman Park neighborhood of Atlanta.

The third recommendation for creating a neighborhood identity is to begin implementing lot-by-lot and block-by-block strategies. With these strategies, neighbors can begin working together to implement small tactics that will help give their block and, ultimately, the neighborhood a unique character, attracting potential investors and homeowners into the neighborhood.

Lot-by-lot strategies include demolishing abandoned, irreparable homes and cleaning up empty lots. Once vacant or abandoned lots are cleared, these spaces can be repurposed and provide an amenity to the community. Lots can become sunflower fields, playgrounds, or community gardens. These lot-by-lot strategies can help create awareness of the Harrisburg neighborhood and draw investors and future property owners into the community. Further, such an approach removes visual blight and structures that may be used for criminal activity. It must be acknowledged that these lot beautification projects may be temporary, as future property owners

Figure 4.2c Example of differing streetscape designs - Virgil Avenue, Atlanta

Figure 4.2d Examples of differing streetscape designs - Virgil Avenue, Atlanta

Figure 4.2e Example of planting similar tree along the street - Dixie Avenue, Atlanta

may purchase the lot to redevelop. It is recommended that property owners work with the Augusta-Richmond County Recreation, Parks and Facilities Department and other partner organizations to determine where public parks or playgrounds could be implemented as permanent reuse options. Please refer to Section 5.0 Neighborhood Revitalization for more examples and information.

Block-by-block strategies allow a group of neighbors to work together and create a unique character for their street. This approach focuses redesign and implementation efforts on the streetscape. Examples include planting the same flower or placing the same street decoration along an entire block; alternatively, each property owner could decorate the space between the curb and the sidewalk differently – such as flower beds in front of one home, trees in front of another, and vegetables or shrubs at a third (refer to Figures 4.2c and 4.2d). Strategies can also focus on larger streetscape improvements such as planting a specific street tree on the block or putting in unique sidewalk pavers (refer to Figure 4.2e). As with the lot-by-lot approach, block-by-block strategies can attract investors and new homeowners into the neighborhood by creating visual appeal, a clear element of the care and presence of established homeownership. Please refer to Section 5.0 Neighborhood Revitalization for more examples and information on block-by-block strategies.

4.3 NEIGHBORHOOD ACTIVITIES

Another method to draw visitors, potential investors, and new homeowners into Harrisburg is to host neighborhood festivals and parades. These events can allow outsiders to learn more about the history of the neighborhood, experience the unique amenities that Harrisburg has to offer, and meet the homeowners who care for and work hard to create a better Harrisburg.

A Harrisburg neighborhood festival should include information, via a website and other marketing material, on the history of how and why the festival began, which could be added to over time as the festival becomes an annual event. Examples of festival activities include: a tour of homes, highlighting some of Harrisburg's restored historic homes; a community garden tour, sharing history and information on the garden; a tour of the Sibley and King Mills, discussing the history and future plans for the Mills; and an Augusta Canal parade. The Canal parade could take place along the banks of the canal or on boats moving through the water, taking advantage of the future boat put-in locations at Lake Olmstead Park and the Kroc Center.

In organizing a neighborhood festival, Harrisburg residents should research other neighborhoods that have created their own unique festival to celebrate the place they call home, such as:

Inman Park Festival, Atlanta:
http://inmanparkfestival.org
Cabbagetown Stomp and Chomp, Atlanta:
http://www.chompandstomp.com/
Reynoldstown Wheelbarrow Festival, Atlanta:
http://www.wheelbarrowfestival.com/
Virginia-Highland Summerfest, Atlanta:
http://www.vahi.org/summerfest.html
Lindbergh LaVista Corridor Coalition's Taste and Tour of Cheshire Bridge, Atlanta:
http://www.tasteandtourofcheshirebridge.com
Chattanooga River Rocks Festival:
http://www.riverrockschattanooga.com/
Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade:
http://www.christmasboatparade.com/