

Greenspace

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on the development and activation of underutilized or under-capitalized amenities or public spaces; however, this strategy is more robust than flowerbeds and alley ways. This strategy, when highly executed, will consider how to incorporate more greenery into the existing built environment, the sustainability of public spaces and the programming of greenspaces. Consideration should also be given to how greenspaces interact with the central business district, as well as the diversity and inclusivity of use and of user experience.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Parks, recreation, nature, scale, experimentation, community scale, installations, enhance environment, lifestyle, health and wellness, environmental infrastructure, water runoff, bioswales, storm water, transportation corridors, user experience, planning, programming, intergovernmental coordination, public venues, maintenance, diversity in use and users, funding and sustainability.

“ Attractive landscaping, seating, lighting and sculpture alone will not make things happen, but it does provide a backdrop for the important elements and gives a sense of place and identity to set the stage for a transformation.”

– *Real Estate Review, 2008
Greenville, SC*

PROS

- This strategy catalyzes private investment and development.
- This strategy develops community gathering spaces.
- Greenspaces can be used to enhance and connect infrastructure.
- Greenspaces can attract new audiences.
- Greenspaces can add value to existing projects.

CONS

- Greenspaces require money to build and time to grow.
- It can be challenging to get financial support.
- This strategy can be a hard sell to certain audiences.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Programming of the space can make it or break it.
- There will be maintenance and programming costs after the development of the space.
- The success of this strategy is dependent on multi-partner buy-in.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What need will this strategy address?
- What is your primary goal?
- How much support will the city and residents give to this strategy?
- What would your funding streams be for design, build-out and programming?
- What enhancements do existing greenspaces need?

Savannah, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Incentivize developers who want to participate in greenscape developments (i.e. facade easements, property trades and alley way improvements).
- Incorporate wayfinding signage around existing greenspaces, directing patrons to shops, restaurants and amenities.
- Partner with neighboring businesses to utilize greenspaces for private use or as an added amenity.
- Encourage businesses to improve their own looks with the installation of their own planters and softscapes.
- Incentivize health-oriented businesses to utilize the spaces for programming and activities (e.g. a yoga studio, gym and health food shop).
- Encourage restaurants to develop picnic or brown bag meals for people to dine and unwind in public space.
- Establish a land bank to allow you to acquire property more easily for development/redevelopment.

DESIGN

- Consider greenspace additions during all design and infrastructure improvements.
- Build the space to be multi-functional and include infrastructure to provide needed resources: power, water and waste management.
- Design a greenspace that has visual markers with buffer zones to keep people safe and to ease the transition between pedestrians and traffic.
- Include interactive design elements to engage people within the spaces. Examples include swings, playground equipment, a chessboard and large-scale board games.
- Utilize native and pollinator-attracting plants in landscape design.
- Consider how permeable pavers, a rain garden or other green infrastructure could enhance the area's aesthetics while still addressing specific needs.
- Install trashcans, benches, water fountains, lighting or shade to enhance the usability of existing greenspaces.
- Consider public or rotating public art installations to anchor the space.
- Connect downtown with community wide greenspaces via sidewalks, walking trails or bike paths.

PROMOTIONS

- Activate pop-up parks.
- Publicize planning efforts to drive excitement for space activation.
- Create a public information campaign to share statistics and numbers on the benefit and impact of developing and utilizing greenspaces.
- Install plaques that speak to the history of the space and the downtown.
- Use spaces as an opportunity to reinforce the downtown's brand.
- Develop a promotional piece to illustrate step counts from amenities to businesses and back.
- Create a promotional video highlighting different ways to utilize spaces downtown.
- Buy cheap and fun toys to provide quick, easy and fun family activities in existing spaces, such as Frisbee, hula hoops, Connect 4, beach balls, bubbles and chalk.
- Activate greenspaces through programming, music, concerts, plays and other activities.

ORGANIZATION

- Create policies that guide what greenspace looks like in parking lots, infill developments and sidewalk improvements.
- Develop an application that encourages greenspaces as additional public venues.
- Implement or develop an open container district or "zones" that allow alcohol within these spaces.
- Add capital improvement projects to SPLOST.
- Conduct a strategic planning session to develop potential spaces to be utilized, needs to be met, funding partners and programming opportunities.
- Utilize a design services company to develop conceptual drawings for how a space could be utilized to help sell the vision.
- Start a farmers' market to utilize public spaces.
- Adopt a tree ordinance.

PARTNERS

Local government

Local parks and recreation departments

Health minded organizations

Civic clubs

Educational institutions

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Project for Public Spaces

Carl Vinson Institute of Government

Archway Partnership

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Georgia Dept of Economic Development

Local art councils

Keep America Beautiful

Garden clubs

Your existing downtown businesses

Georgia botanical gardens

Georgia Council for the Arts