



# The 3R's of Economic Development

Presented By Connie Tabor  
Community Development Director  
City of Toccoa



# The Chocolate Personality Test



# Introduction

## Toccoa, Georgia

Nestled at the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Toccoa has a population of about 9,100 people. The heart of Toccoa is the Downtown District, also known as Main Street Toccoa.

Main Street Toccoa strives to create a downtown that houses a diverse selection of restaurant, retail, and professional businesses, all within an atmosphere that is safe, beautiful, and walkable.

- Located 90 miles Northeast of Atlanta and 60 miles South of Greenville.
- Toccoa is in Stephens County and the County Seat.

Revitalization

# Downtown Mall

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The most significant economic development project is the removal of the covered mall.

Completed in 1970 with Urban Renewal funds, the mall suffered decline as businesses left to locate on the main highway corridor.

In 2007-08, the concrete covered canopies were removed and the street opened to vehicular traffic. Downtown was returned to its historic look.

# Downtown Design Evolution



Doyle Street is the  
Main Street of  
Downtown



1970-2006  
Downtown Mall



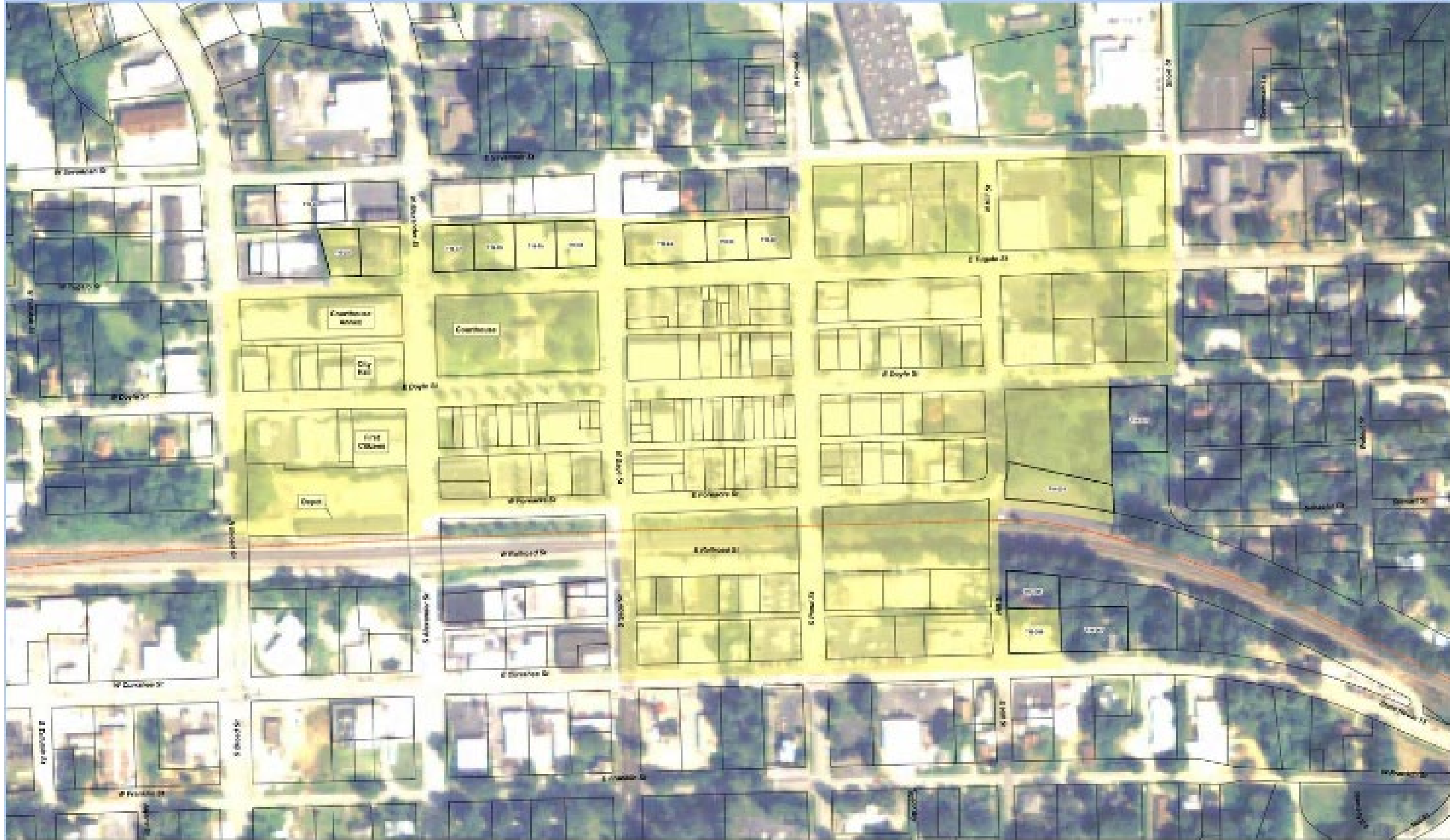
2008  
Doyle Street  
Re-opened and  
Canopies Removed

# Impact of Mall Removal



- Retained and expanded 40 small businesses
- \$3.5 M private investment
- 15 FT new jobs, 29 PT new jobs
- 54 FT jobs, 35PT jobs retained
- Over 80% of properties attached to concrete covered walkways underwent building renovations
- Over 80 storefronts renovated since 2007

# Design Guidelines



## City of Toccoa

### Historic Commercial District

Map Prepared by  
 Georgia International Regional  
 Development Center  
 Columbia, Maryland  
 11/27/2007





# Downtown Toccoa

The City of Toccoa's Downtown Development Authority (DDA) also institutes a competitive façade grant program for those businesses wanting to restore their historic façade.





# Facade Grant Program



## Currahee Movement Collective

Home to Five Health & Fitness Businesses

# Restored Downtown

There is no evidence of downtown  
ever being a covered mall.

1980s: 2 downtown events

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2023: 272 downtown events  
40 events sponsored by  
Main Street Toccoa



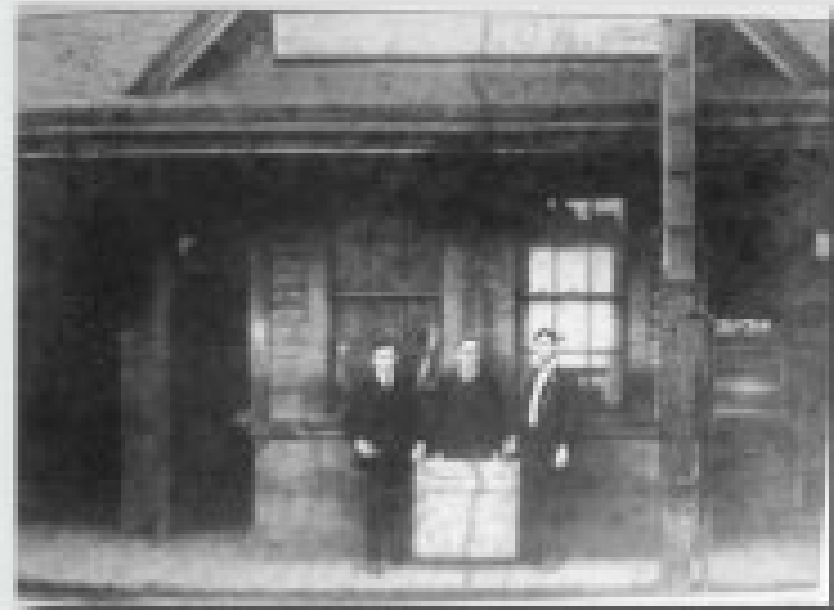


# Toccoa Train Depot

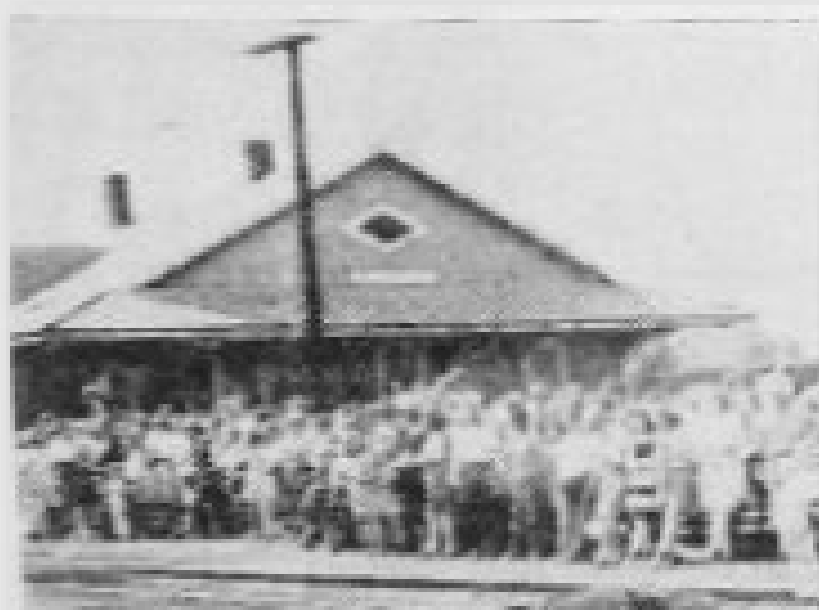
Another important economic development project is the Historic Train Depot, which serves as home to:

- Amtrak Station
- Toccoa-Stephens County Chamber of Commerce
- Toccoa Welcome Center
- Stephens County Historical Society and Museum...
- ..And the world-famous Currahee Military Museum!

# Toccoa Train Depot Through the Years



**August 1895-** Toccoa Founders Dr. Oliver Doyle, B.Y. Sage & Thomas Alexander pose in front of the Toccoa Train Depot.



**April 1945-** Toccoa residents pay tribute to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt as his funeral train passes through Toccoa.



**2004-** Toccoa Train Depot before renovation in 2005



## Present Day

Toccoa Train Depot after historical renovation by Bowen & Watson, Inc. & Carter Watkins Associates.

At the recommendation of the State Historic Preservation Division, the focus of architectural design was reminiscent of how the train depot looked in the 1940s.



*Photo Credit: City of Toccoa  
& Stephens County Georgia History Club*

# Depot Restoration

The Historic Train Depot now serves as the gateway to Downtown Toccoa and a hub of activity!



# Amtrak Platform Restoration





AMTRAK  
Toccoa, GA

AMTRAK  
Toccoa, GA

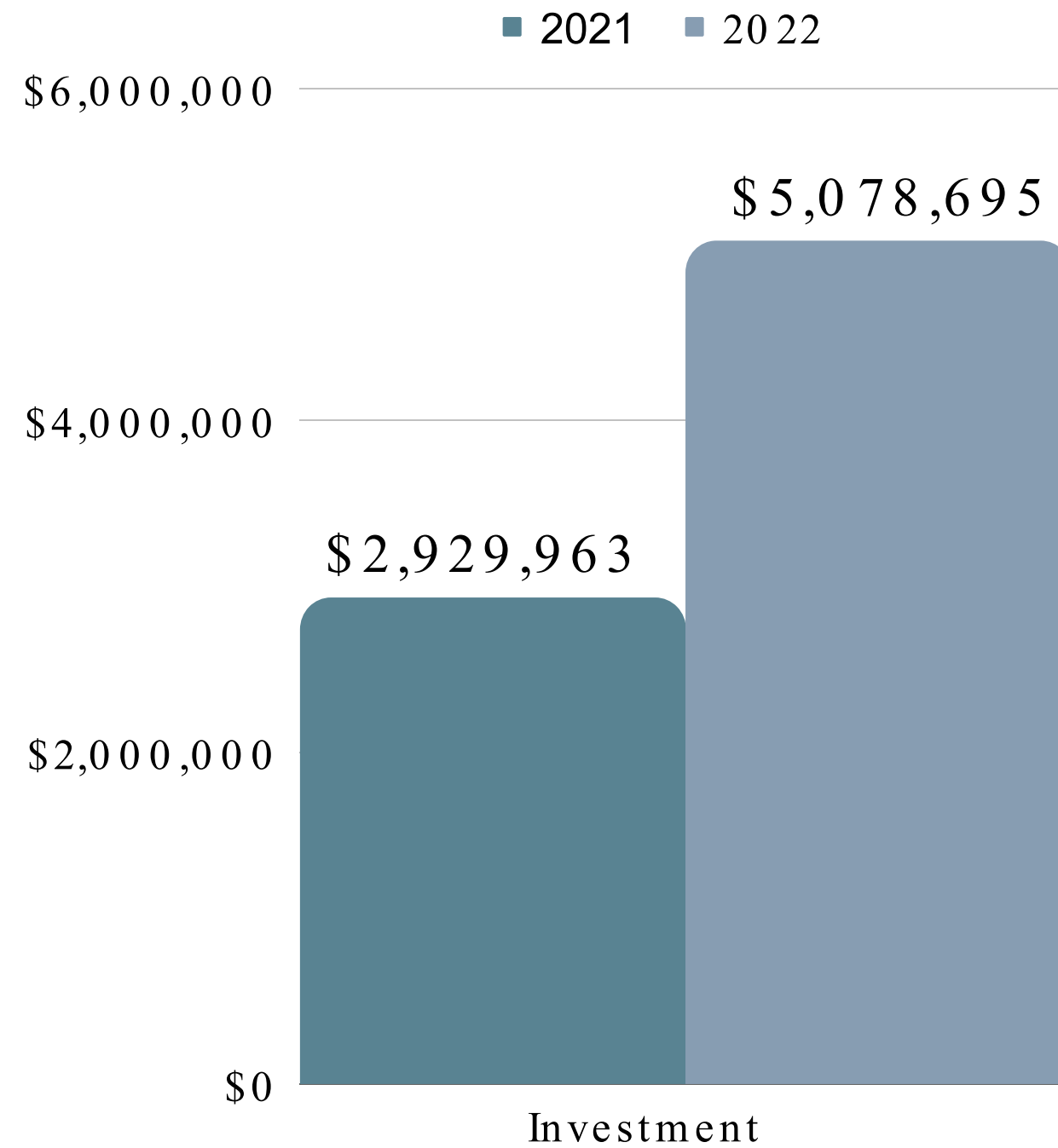


# Viewing Platform



Resilience

# GROWTH + INVESTMENT



73%

INCREASED PRIVATE &  
PUBLIC INVESTMENT  
FROM 2021-2022

# Historic Ritz Theatre

## *Grants have funded:*

- Conditions Assessment and Preservation Plan
- HVAC, life safety
- Restoration of original Art Deco Modern façade
- Marquee
- State-of-the-art sound system
- Balcony, Basement, and Plaza Upgrades



# Ritz Theatre Renovations



1959

Fred T. McLendon built 36 theaters across Georgia. Of those only 2 remain, the Ritz and Buckhead Theatre.



1990s - 2014

The Ritz was "modernized" and renamed the Schaefer Center. It was owned by the Currahee Arts Council.



2014 - Today

The Arts Council deeded the Ritz to the City of Toccoa for \$1.

# Historic Ritz Theatre



- Opened as a 500 seat single-screen movie theater.
- Became a performing arts venue, under the Currahee Arts Council.
- Installed a brick veneer over the stucco façade.
- Arts Council donated it to the City.
- Now on the National & Georgia Registers of Historic Places.
- 142 Events in 2022 with an 85% increase in attendance from 2021.
- New Addition will enhance the theater experience.

## The Ritz Annex: coming Fall 2024



# Downtown Improvements

A downtown serves as the center of business and culture.

Streetscape and greenspace projects improve accessibility, beauty, and wayfinding.

Main Street Toccoa downtown map, found in November 2022's Living on Main Street.

## HISTORIC DOWNTOWN TOCCOA WALKING GUIDE



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PUERTO NUEVO MEXICAN &amp; SEAFOOD</li> <li>STEPHENS COUNTY FARMERS MARKET</li> <li>COUNTRY HEARTH INN</li> <li>VFW POST 4346 RESTAURANT</li> <li>DIAMOND STUDIOS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. POST OFFICE</li> <li>TOCCOA-STEPHENS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LIFESPINGS MEDIA</li> <li>AFTER HOUR DESIGNS</li> <li>TUGALO STATION EVENT CENTER</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHEAR DESIGNS</li> <li>MAGIC OVEN</li> <li>[ASH+LING] BOOKSELLERS</li> <li>R &amp; R PRIME</li> <li>JUST RIGHT CATERING</li> <li>THE STUDIO</li> <li>GEORGIA KANGAROOS</li> <li>CURRAHEE WOMEN'S WELLNESS</li> <li>LONGEVITY BARRE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HISTORIC RITZ THEATRE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SIMMONS-BOND INN BED &amp; BREAKFAST</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CORNERSTONE MARKET</li> <li>MOUNTAIN COVE POTTERY</li> <li>LIVING ROOM ROASTERS</li> <li>X-FACTOR GRILL</li> <li>STAR STYLES</li> <li>CROZIER COLLECTIVE GALLERY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ANGEL OAK HOME</li> <li>DOWNTOWN FLOWERS</li> <li>THE CHATTEL SHOP</li> <li>PHYLLIS' HAIRWORKS</li> <li>GAIL'S INFINITY HAIR SALON</li> <li>DEPARTMENT OF DRIVER SERVICES</li> <li>LINDA'S PLACE AT THE REBEL</li> <li>TWICE BUT NICE</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STEPHENS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY</li> <li>CURRAHEE MILITARY MUSEUM &amp; GIFT SHOP</li> <li>CHAMBER OF COMMERCE</li> <li>TOCCOA AMTRAK STATION &amp; WELCOME CENTER</li> <li>RAILWAY VIEWING PLATFORM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DETAILS SALON 73</li> <li>TOCCOA RECORD</li> <li>VENUE AT THE STAR THEATER</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHERWIN-WILLIAMS PAINTS</li> <li>SIGNS + WONDERS</li> <li>CHRISTIAN BOUTIQUE</li> <li>CHINA LIN RESTAURANT</li> <li>DOMINO'S PIZZA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IONOSPHERE TRAVEL</li> <li>SOUTHERN ROOTS SALON</li> <li>R&amp;R TERMINAL</li> <li>SPA &amp; SALON ANASTASIA</li> <li>PUBLIC RESTROOMS</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SHIRLEY'S SOLE FOOD CAFE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CK MORGAN &amp; COMPANY</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>THREADS SPORTS</li> <li>TROUP'S STUDIO &amp; GOLD CROWN HALLMARK</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COINS, CURRENCY, &amp; COLLECTIBLES</li> </ul>

# Downtown Signage







## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DOWNTOWN LIVING

- 29 Downtown Apartments
- 10 Apartments under construction
- 396 Listings for Stephens County between VRBO + Airbnb





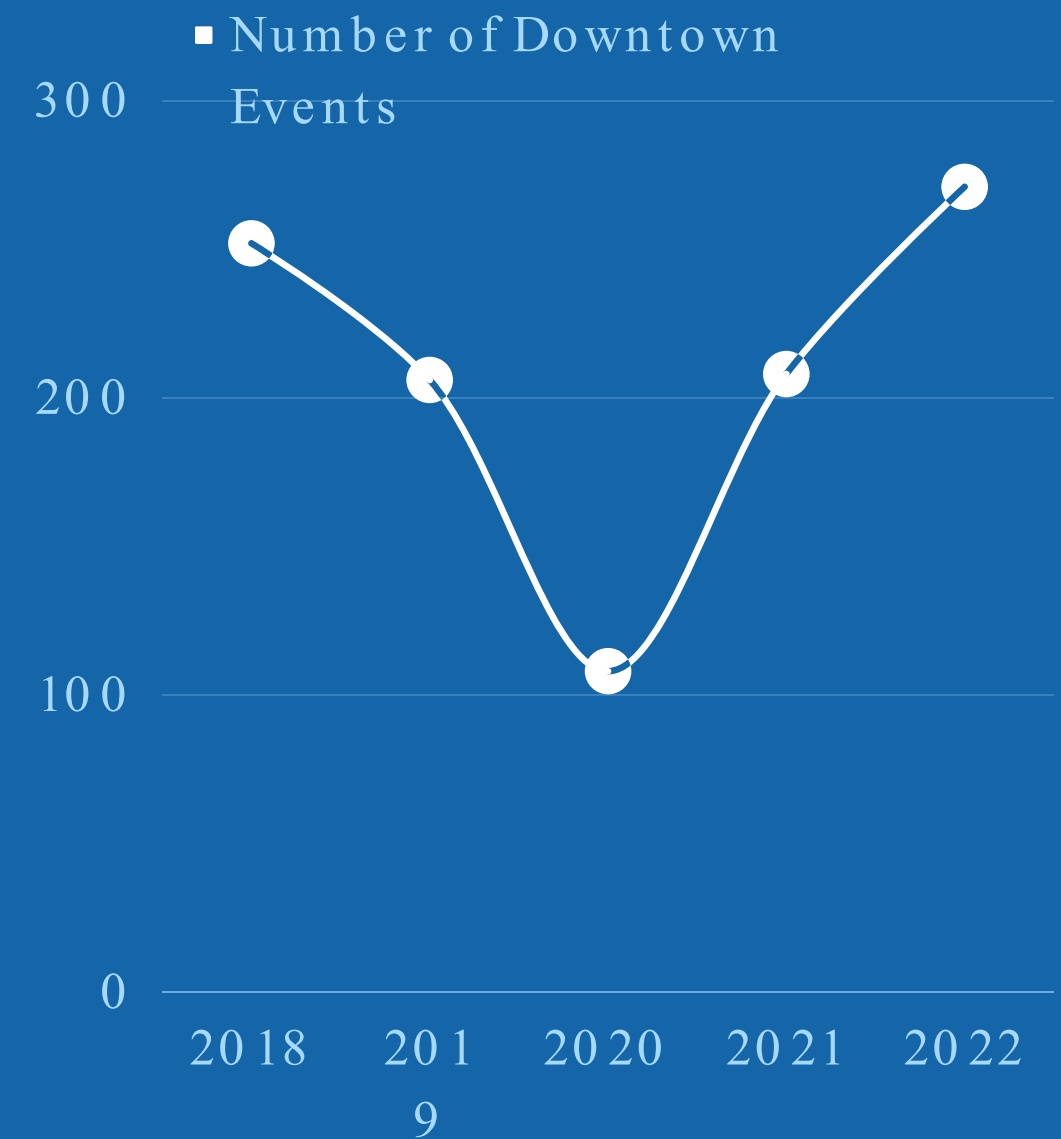
# Main Street 2022 Events Review

**271** DOWNTOWN  
EVENTS

with **67,785**

IN ATTENDANCE

*...that's higher than  
the pre-pandemic  
average!*



# Entertainment District

*Setting the Pulse for Our Community*



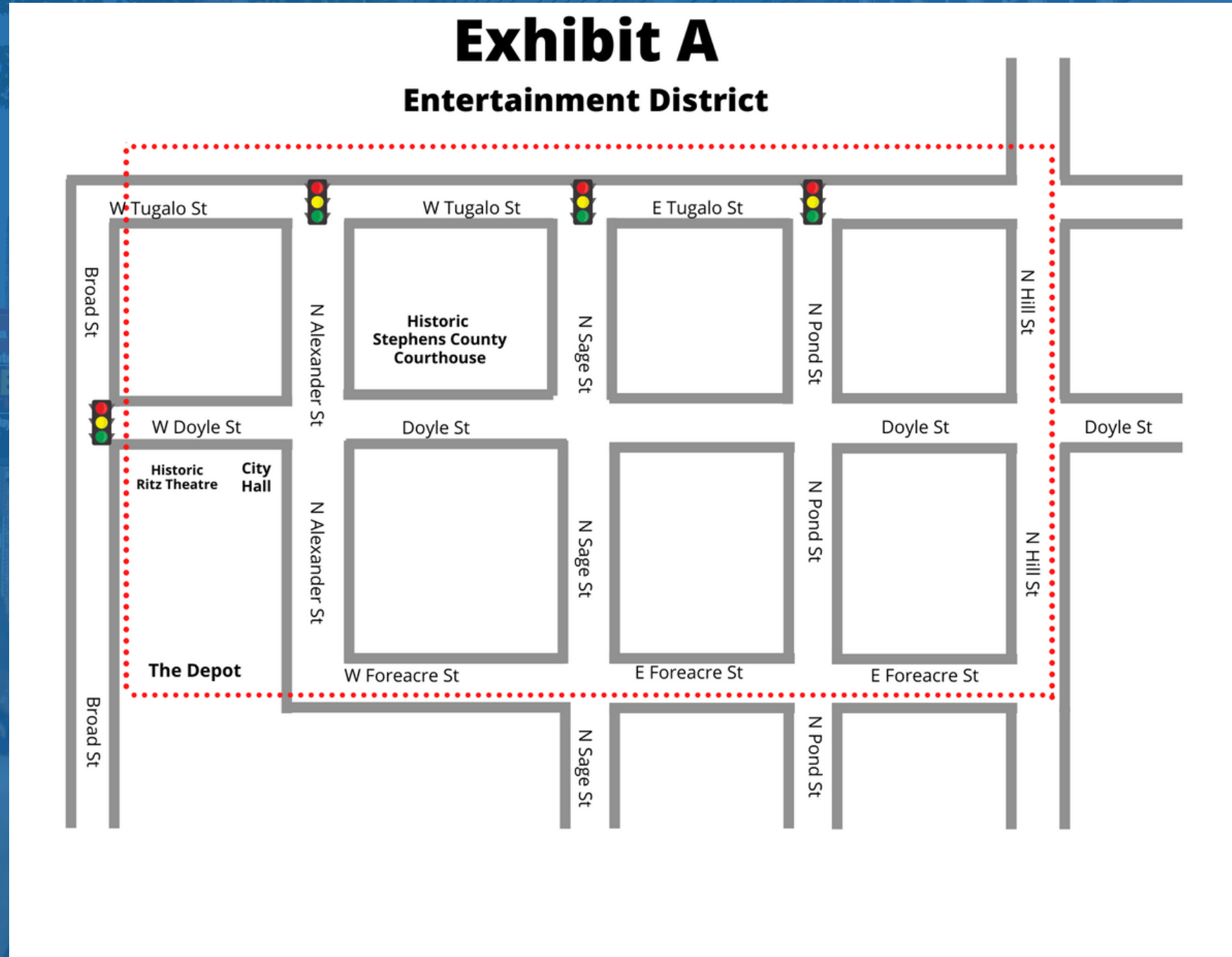
# Entertainment District

*Setting the Pulse for Our Community*

- An overlay commonly found in the historic downtown or central business district
- Allows for certain privileges within the boundaries of the overlay
- Restaurants may sell alcoholic beverages in a clear, dated, plastic 16-oz cup
- Patrons may enjoy their beverage on public sidewalks and inside the storefronts of other businesses within the boundaries of the Entertainment District
- Utilized as a downtown development tool to encourage business recruitment, and retention
- Various regulations, commonly found in a city's alcohol ordinance, govern the safety of an Entertainment District

# Entertainment District

*Setting the Pulse for Our Community*



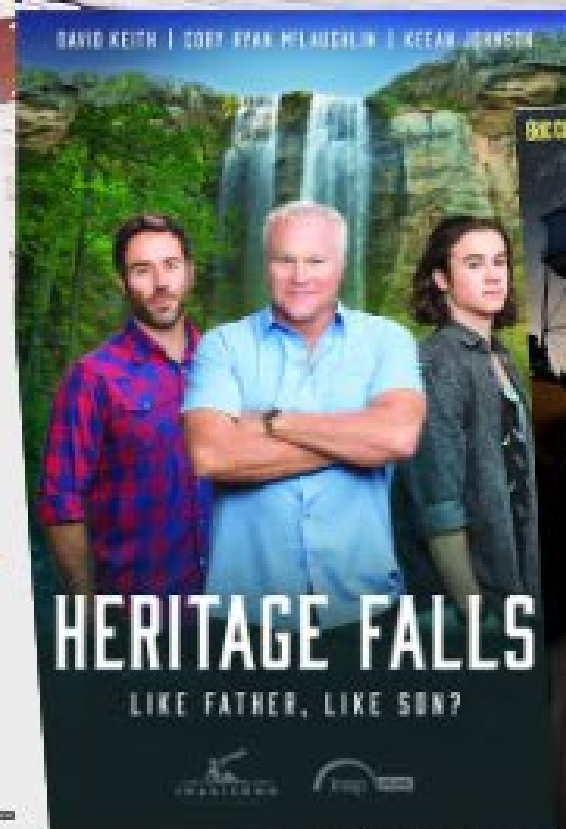


# Tugalo Street Greenspace

Coming Summer 2024

# Relationships

# FILMED ON LOCATION IN TOCCOA, GA



TAKE  
SCENE  
ECTOR



# Tourism Assets

Many tourism resources define Toccoa, including several that fall out of the downtown boundaries.



# TOURISM ASSETS

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# TOURISM ASSETS



Currahee  
Vineyard



# TOURISM ASSETS

Currahee Mountain

# Currahee Vineyards' view of Currahee Mountain



# TOURISM ASSETS

Currahee Club





# TOURISM ASSETS

Traveler's Rest

# TOURISM ASSETS

Camp Toccoa







# TOURISM ASSETS Toccoa Falls

# TOURISM ASSETS

## Lake Toccoa



# TOURISM ASSETS

The Links,  
a 9-Hole Golf Course at Lake Toccoa



# Paul Anderson Park

TOURISM ASSETS



# TOURISM ASSETS

Ida Cox  
Music  
Series





## Organization “Mr. Goodbar”

Develop a strategy to establish a low interest loan pool for downtown businesses



## Promotions “Milk Chocolate”

Develop a new event to attract downtown patrons



## Economic Development/Vitality “Special Dark”

Create a special incentive package for brewery recruitment



## Design “Krackel”

Create a brief summary of a streetscape improvement for a hypothetical underdeveloped downtown street

# Break Out Session



# Contact Information



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