

DOWNTOWN BRUNSWICK

WORK PLAN



THE DOWNTOWN BRUNSWICK WORK PLAN

DESIGN

Maintenance

ART IN VACANT STOREFRONTS: Brunswick's many vacant downtown buildings should be seen as opportunities for local artists. Establishing a process that allows artists to creatively adapt vacant buildings as art projects could draw visitors downtown and promote vacant properties to investors.



BEFORE: One of many vacant storefronts along Norwich Street, this neglected commercial building holds potential for redevelopment.

AFTER: The rendering shows a night view of the building with artful colored lighting installed in the windows. This effect could be accomplished with colored paper and string lights to impart an economical stained glass effect. Because attracting businesses here will take time, lighting buildings along Norwich at night could be a short-term solution to make the street more active and inviting.

Safety

DOWNTOWN LIGHTING: Public input participants frequently expressed the perception that downtown is not safe after dark. Well-lit streets send the message that downtown is safe and open for business after 5:00. Whether these lights are traditional fixed poles or more creative string lighting, the city should work to bring more lighting downtown and better visibility to back streets and parking lots. The city and DDA should work with Georgia Power to provide improved lighting.

DOWNTOWN LIGHTING: STRING LIGHTS: To address the perception of downtown safety, Brunswick should work to creatively increase downtown lighting. Across downtown's dark alleys and squares, string lights or similar creative, inexpensive lighting options could inject some atmosphere and enhance Brunswick's laid-back, artistic vibe.

LIGHTING DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS: Building on the demand for lighting improvements downtown, the DDA could consider working with downtown property owners to creatively illuminate downtown storefronts. Outlining the buildings of downtown merchants with attractive string lighting could create a charming downtown experience and encourage evening shopping, dining, and activity downtown.

NEWCASTLE STRING LIGHTS: These historical buildings on Newcastle Street provide a first impression for visitors entering downtown. Awnings here are tattered and missing, leaving only bare metal awning frames to greet visitors. Although this stretch of Newcastle is otherwise active and well maintained, these awnings make downtown look vacant and uncared for.



DOWNTOWN LIGHTING, STRING LIGHTS: This rendering shows blue string lights hanging over one of downtown's back streets. The string lights make the space more inviting and perhaps also increase the feeling of safety on this street.



NEWCASTLE STREET STRING LIGHTS: As seen in other areas of downtown, icicle-style string lights have been mounted to the awning frame. These could be left up year round until new fabric awnings can be purchased and installed.

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Gateways & Signage

HIP WAYFINDING: As the Gateway to the Golden Isles, Brunswick's roads host thousands of visitors en route to St. Simons, Jekyll, and Sea Island. Particularly at key intersections like Gloucester and Highway 17, using hip signage to guide visitors and new residents downtown could help the city share in the benefits of this tourist traffic.

GATEWAY / CORRIDOR REDEVELOPMENT ON GLOUCESTER STREET, NORWICH STREET, AND BAY STREET:

Major access corridors into downtown provide a first impression for potential visitors and investors. Too often motorists along all three key corridors leading into downtown Brunswick are greeted by vacant properties, unattractive surface parking lots, and tired commercial buildings. Planting street trees, removing unnecessary curb cuts, installing rain gardens and planted buffers, promoting façade grants and rehabilitation, and making related improvements along these key corridors would all would work to improve quality of life for local citizens and encourage a welcoming experience for visitors.

GLOUCESTER STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS: Stretching from busy Glynn Avenue (Highway 17) to Mary Ross Waterfront Park, Gloucester Street serves as a key downtown corridor and the primary point of entry for downtown visitors. The city, DDA, Georgia Department of Transportation, and local stakeholders should work together to develop a phased approach to improving this critical corridor. Improving Gloucester by planting trees, enhancing pedestrian accommodations, improving and screening parking lots, removing unused or underutilized paving, and more could help to encourage investment and create a sense of arrival downtown.

GATEWAYS: GLYNN AVENUE AND GLOUCESTER: The intersection of Glynn Avenue (US Highway 17) and Gloucester Street is the primary gateway for visitors to downtown Brunswick. Recent improvements here have upgraded the look of this critical gateway. The city should use this gateway as a model for additional key gateways including the intersection of Bay Street (Highway 341) and Newcastle entering downtown.

GATEWAYS: HOWARD COFFIN FENCING: Located at the busy corner of Golden Isles Parkway (US-17) and Gloucester Street, the large fence at Howard Coffin Park could be converted into an attractive gateway into the city. Working with local artists, the city could consider developing a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a large-scale art installation along the fence. The existing fencing could be used as a canvas to promote Brunswick's wealth of arts and culture and invite visitors downtown.

GATEWAYS: METHODIST HUT ON GLOUCESTER: Located along the busy Gloucester corridor, the large historical Quonset hut warehouse owned by the First United Methodist Church of Brunswick holds great potential as a future market space downtown. In the short term, the city could discuss options with the church to beautify and repair the building. Bringing in local artists to rejuvenate the façade could create a local landmark and beautify this major gateway into the city.

HOWARD COFFIN FENCING

BEFORE: Located at the busy intersection of US 17 and Gloucester, this large fence at Howard Coffin Park is the first thing seen by many visitors entering downtown.



AFTER: Using chain link put-in cups or other chain link art to beautify this fence could create a gateway opportunity for the city.

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DEVELOPMENT

BEFORE: Located at the busy intersection of Gloucester Street and US 17 across from Howard Coffin Park, the fenced site to the center-right holds great potential for a premier housing development.



AFTER: This after image shows the same area transformed by a major mixed-use housing development that takes advantage of the site's close proximity to the Marshes of Glynn and the islands. New plantings provide shade for pedestrians, screen obtrusive views, and transform Gloucester into an attractive gateway into downtown.



STREETSCAPING

BEFORE: Approaching downtown along Gloucester Street, this corridor could benefit from more shade and enhanced pedestrian accommodations to both attract pedestrian activity and invite visitors to explore downtown.



AFTER: Extending downtown streetscaping at crosswalks and new plantings along Gloucester create a consistent look and improve conditions for pedestrians. Natchez crape myrtles repeat the planting palette used in downtown medians and introduce shade without interfering with overhead utility lines.

THE DOWNTOWN BRUNSWICK WORK PLAN DESIGN

STREETSCAPING

BEFORE: Gloucester Street suffers from a lack of shade and could benefit from enhanced pedestrian infrastructure.

BEFORE: Downtown streetscaping elements have been extended throughout the corridor. Natchez crape myrtles planted beneath utility lines provide shade and beautify the corridor.





AFTER

BEFORE: Many older commercial strips along Gloucester feature oversized parking lots with many more spaces than necessary. If acquired, these excess spaces could become planting strips for large street trees, reintroducing large shade trees to this corridor.

AFTER: Here underutilized spaces at the far end of the parking lot have been transformed into a wide planting bed for handsome Laurel Oak street trees. This bed could be used as a rain garden to collect stormwater from the large surface parking lot. Excess curb cuts have been removed and planted with Natchez crape myrtles.



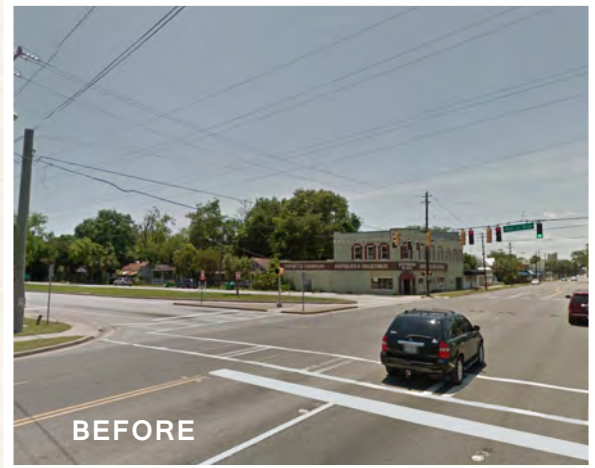
BEFORE

THE DOWNTOWN BRUNSWICK WORK PLAN

DESIGN

STREETSCAPING

BEFORE: The intersection of Gloucester and Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard marks the unofficial entry into downtown Brunswick. Currently this intersection in particular suffers from the excessive width of unvarying asphalt pavement and the absence of shade. Unlike elsewhere in town, here MLK's generous median is unplanted, creating a harsh and unwelcoming environment for pedestrians.

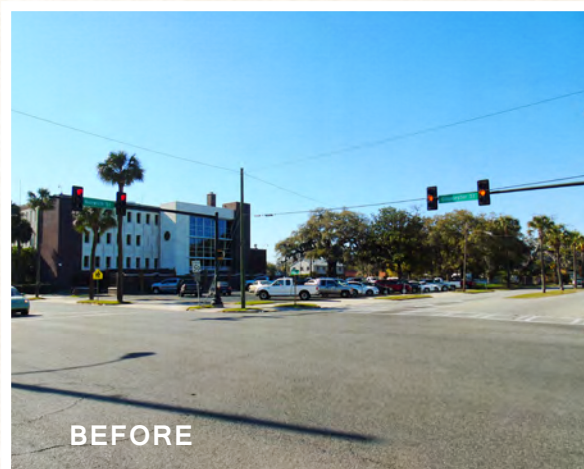


AFTER: Removing excessive asphalt and planting medians with understory trees and large oaks where possible reintroduces shade to this key intersection and improves the experience of pedestrians and visitors. Extending downtown streetscaping elements and artistic signage on existing poles creates a sense of arrival downtown.

BEFORE: At the intersection of Norwich and Gloucester Street, the parking lot of the Frank M. Scarlett Federal Building occupies a prominent site downtown. Following recent improvements and a reconfiguration of parking, existing curb cuts along Norwich Street at right have been rendered unnecessary. While overhead utility lines have been removed from this point on to the terminus at Gloucester, no shade trees offer refuge for pedestrians on sunny days.



AFTER: By planting currently superfluous paved areas, now this corner serves as a welcoming gateway to the downtown core. Underutilized asphalt has been taken up in sections and replaced with large canopy oaks and crape myrtles, shading pedestrians, treating stormwater, and slowing traffic while creating a sense of arrival downtown. Unused asphalt spaces in front of the Federal Building parking lot have been removed and landscaped.



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STREETSCAPING

BEFORE: Approaching the intersection of Egmont Street, Gloucester Street becomes increasingly dense and urban. Despite this change in form, excessive travel lanes, wide asphalt paving, and the lack of traffic calming devices mean that many drivers speed through this increasingly populated corridor.



AFTER: This image shows the same view adjacent to the Frank M. Scarlett Federal Building. Underutilized asphalt has been taken up in sections and replaced with plantings of Asian jasmine and large canopy oaks, shading pedestrians, treating stormwater, and slowing traffic while creating a sense of arrival downtown. Parallel spaces in front of the Federal Building have been removed for security concerns.



STREETSCAPING

BEFORE: Approaching Richmond Street, Gloucester remains an overly wide, sunbaked corridor. While attractive, the palms shown here provide almost no shade for pedestrians and surrounding buildings.

AFTER: This rendering shows the same view with large canopy oak street trees and plantings installed in formerly unused or underutilized paved areas.



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STREETSCAPING

BEFORE: The intersection of Newcastle and Gloucester Street lies at the very heart of downtown Brunswick. Here as elsewhere, excessive paving and the absence of shade limit pedestrian activity in the hot summer months.

AFTER: By selectively removing corner parking spots and replacing them with landscaped rain gardens with large shade trees, this stretch of Gloucester is more accommodating to year-round pedestrian activity.



STREETSCAPING

BEFORE: While featuring attractive paving and a beautiful facility, Gloucester Street outside of the Brunswick Glynn County Public Library currently lacks shade. Wide, unvarying asphalt paving offers little appeal for visitors.



AFTER: This stretch of Gloucester has been enhanced with landscaped rain gardens and large shade trees following selective removal of parking and underutilized asphalt. The downtown streetscaping palette has been extended here to enhance pedestrian safety and the overall appearance of the corridor.

GATEWAYS: HIGHWAY 341 AT NEWCASTLE AND BAY STREET

The intersection of Highway 341 with Newcastle Street near Brunswick's waterfront is a major gateway into downtown. Mirroring the new gateway improvements at Golden Isles Parkway, the city should work to beautify this key entry point and help direct visitors downtown.

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DESIGN

Completing the Gap

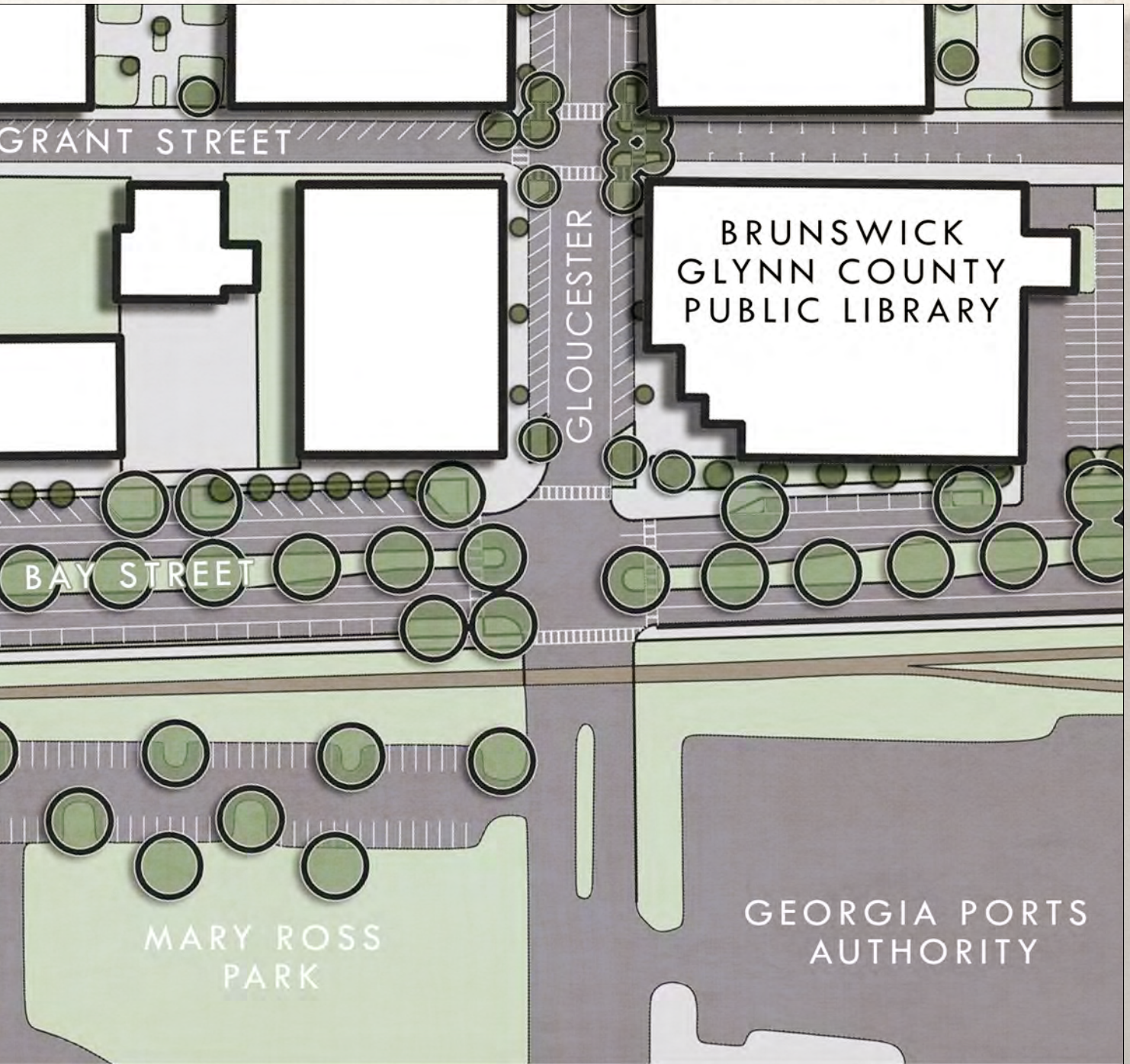
DOWNTOWN STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS: In various locations downtown, many streets could benefit from enhanced lighting and other infrastructure improvements. The city, the DDA, and other stakeholders could together develop a strategy to identify target areas and improve streetscapes throughout downtown.

NINETY-NINE LIBERTY TREES: During the World War II war effort, local shipbuilders in Brunswick produced 99 “Liberty Ships” vital to transporting cargo and supporting Allied forces abroad. To commemorate the 75th anniversary of VJ Day in 2020, the city could work with the Glynn Academy’s 4H Program and the US Forestry Service to plant 99 “Liberty Trees” at Mary Ross Waterfront Park and throughout downtown. These trees could stand for generations as living memorials to the sacrifice of American troops and Brunswick’s important role in victory.

COMPLETE STREETS ORDINANCE: Complete Streets programs take into account all users to create pleasant and safe environments for pedestrians, bikers, and motorists. The city should continue working with the Public Works Department and local engineers to develop a Complete Streets ordinance for the city.

CONNECTING DOWNTOWN AND THE RIVER: Separated from downtown by four lanes of Bay Street and the railroad, Brunswick’s riverfront is among the city’s most neglected assets. To better connect downtown with the untapped potential of Brunswick’s waterfront, the city must develop safe and attractive pedestrian connections across Bay Street. Instituting a streetscaping program here—including wide planted medians, traffic calming elements, plenty of shade, sidewalks, and safe crosswalks—is essential for Brunswick to attract desired development and realize the potential of the waterfront.





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BAY STREET IMPROVEMENTS

BEFORE: Bay Street's excessive width and lack of shade deter pedestrians and disconnect downtown Brunswick from Mary Ross Park and the city's waterfront.

AFTER: By installing new sidewalks, plantings, and street trees, Bay Street now connects visually to the remainder of downtown while serving as an attractive gateway into the city. This rendering imagines vacant warehouse spaces along Bay Street transformed into active local businesses, downtown lofts, and thriving restaurants and bars.



BEFORE



DESIGN

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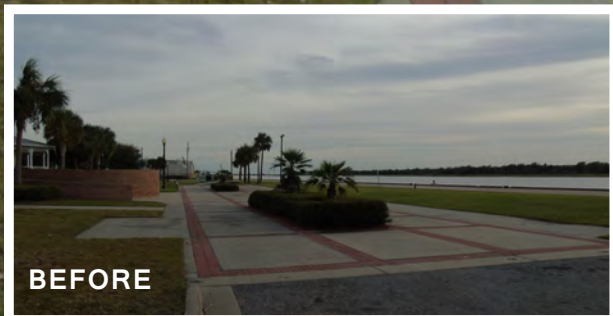
DESIGN

Creating a Destination

MARY ROSS PARK IMPROVEMENTS: While the city has an ambitious \$15 million plan for Mary Ross Park, many inexpensive short-term improvements could drastically enhance the experience and allure of the park. Investing in shade trees and movable seating, improving restroom facilities, adding a playground, installing fish cleaning stations and a volleyball court, and programming the park with more music and events could help build momentum for major improvements.

BEFORE: The paving patterns, landscaping, and overall design principles currently employed at Mary Ross Waterfront Park are the strength of this public space. The infrastructure and amenities present are an excellent start, but the space needs activity. Some basic 'phase II' additions can help complete designs that have been started and further the functionality of the space.

AFTER: The addition of live oak shade trees, artistic benches, lounge chairs, string lights, and a food cart could turn a barren sidewalk into a family-friendly promenade. These additions encourage residents to enjoy Brunswick's premier amenity, the water. Providing places to sit in the shade helps residents escape the heat, while better enjoying the birds, the breezes, and the views.



BEFORE

MARY ROSS PARK MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

BEFORE: Outdoor xylophones are a fantastic park amenity and can provide a fun environment for children. However, the mallets used to play these instruments are missing. This once fun-filled structure now lies empty and purposeless.

AFTER: Bring back the mallets, and bring back the fun! Parks are made for playing, and providing quality play spaces for the youth of Brunswick is of prime importance to the quality of life downtown.



THE DOWNTOWN BRUNSWICK WORK PLAN DESIGN

MARY ROSS PARK RESTROOMS

BEFORE: The restrooms at Mary Ross need a little sprucing up. The facilities are unmarked, could benefit from improved maintenance, and are not very welcoming for visitors. They don't especially reflect Brunswick's unique character either.

AFTER: A can of paint, some reclaimed wood, and a touch of creativity could transform this restroom into a welcoming facility that fits into Brunswick's coastal atmosphere. Pirate-themed restroom plaques encourage further creative responses to the everyday challenges the city faces.





MARY ROSS PARK PLAYGROUND

BEFORE: This wide open field at Mary Ross Park is great for kids to play games from football to Frisbee. However, with no playground, children do not see this space as a place for play. The lack of trees and seating also make the place inhospitable for mothers with small children, or for anyone seeking a place to relax on a hot day.

AFTER: A pirate-themed playground and sandpit encourage outdoor play, while shade trees and seating encourage new mothers, baby sitters, and those looking to relax mid-day to spend time in the park. These additions also pay homage to Brunswick's coastal heritage, and encourage locals to enjoy the waterfront. String lights, artistic benches, and a variety of movable seating allow residents to make the park their own. This level of ownership and use breeds public support for the city and future projects Brunswick undertakes. It also encourages young families to move in downtown.

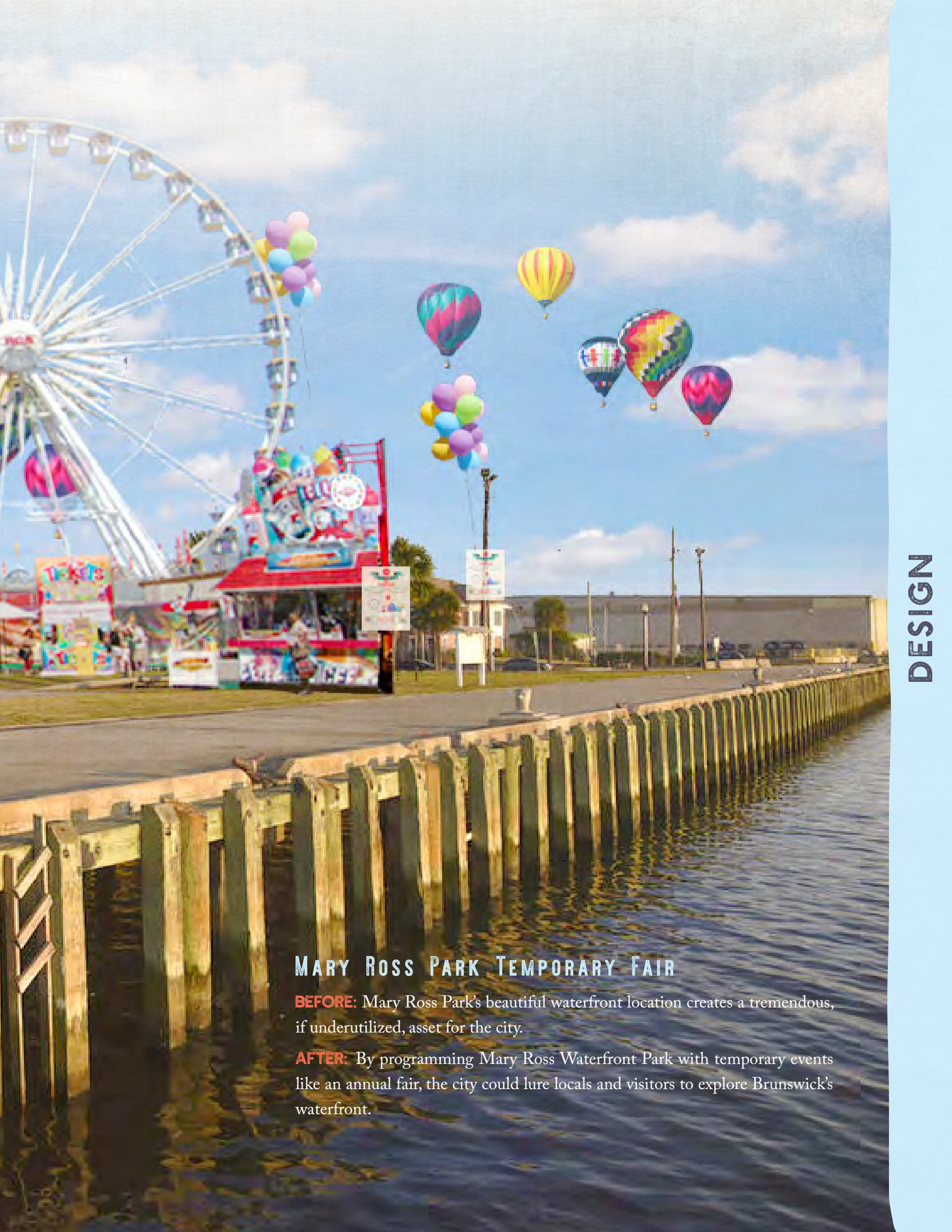


BEFORE

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BEFORE



MARY ROSS PARK TEMPORARY FAIR

BEFORE: Mary Ross Park's beautiful waterfront location creates a tremendous, if underutilized, asset for the city.

AFTER: By programming Mary Ross Waterfront Park with temporary events like an annual fair, the city could lure locals and visitors to explore Brunswick's waterfront.

THE DOWNTOWN BRUNSWICK WORK PLAN DESIGN

MARY ROSS PARK OVERLOOK

BEFORE: With an ample public gazebo and wrap-around porch, the building at the center of Mary Ross Park provides an architecturally striking focal point for the park. The tower also offers a great view of the waterfront, surrounding marshes, and downtown. However, the structure remains underutilized. Some simple additions could encourage better uses for this community amenity.



BEFORE



AFTER

AFTER: Adding festoon lighting around the structure and the rest of the park makes this structure more inviting, especially in the evening hours. Opening the overlook tower to visitors and actively encouraging public use of the facility highlights the potential of this community asset and could help make the park an active part of everyday life downtown.

MARY ROSS PARK, SPLASH PAD

BEFORE: With funds already being allocated toward improvements including a splash pad at Mary Ross Waterfront Park, this wonderful amenity will have features in place to create a community destination. However, the location proposed for a splash pad in the recent Mary Ross Waterfront Park Master Plan would require the costly and unnecessary demolition and rebuilding of several areas of the park.



AFTER: This rendering illustrates how a splash pad could be integrated into the existing landscape of the park, without necessitating major changes or demolition. This design preserves the cohesive feel of the park by integrating new and exciting amenities within the park's existing layout. The addition of trees and seating options provide economical comfort and a shaded refuge for parents and caregivers.

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QUEEN SQUARE REVITALIZATION

Long devoted to the people of Brunswick and home to Old City Hall, Queen Square ranks high among Brunswick's most cherished and heavily trafficked Signature Squares. Having recently completed the first phase of improvements to the square, the city and Public Works Department should continue working with Signature Squares to fund and implement phases two and three of the project.

BEFORE: Home of Brunswick's historic City Hall, Queen Square is among the city's original squares planned by followers of James Oglethorpe. While portions of the square have undergone recent renovations, this section directly across from Old City Hall could be better programmed to invite activity.



AFTER: With improved landscaping, elevated maintenance, and relaxing movable hammocks, Queen Square now offers respite for downtown visitors. Murals honor the history of the square as the former home of Brunswick's Queen Square Firehouse and the adjacent Coca-Cola bottling plant.

LINK THE COASTAL GEORGIA GREENWAY TO DOWNTOWN:

Proposed along Glynn Avenue (US Highway 17), the 155-mile Coastal Georgia Greenway trail would link Georgia's six coastal counties and connect to South Carolina and Florida. If fully implemented, the Greenway could serve as a major attraction and potential economic development generator for Brunswick and the Golden Isles. While downtown is currently bypassed by the Greenway's projected path, Mary Ross Waterfront Park at the far end of Gloucester rests less than a mile and a half from the proposed trail. The city should work hard to develop spur paths and multi-use trails off of the Greenway to connect downtown with this amazing potential asset.



SEA MONSTER BIKE RACK ART: Pairing this blank wall with a bike rack presents a wonderful opportunity to express Brunswick's character creatively. Rather than simply drop a typical bike rack here, local artists could be commissioned to develop something more creative. Industrial metal pipe bike racks are becoming more commonplace. Creating a mythical sea creature out of industrial pipes would add flare and interest to a utilitarian object. This empty wall could be transformed into a useful and attractive space that builds on Brunswick's unique coastal character.

LINK THE COASTAL GEORGIA GREENWAY TO DOWNTOWN: MASTER TRAIL PLAN

With assistance from the PATH Foundation, Brunswick is in the process of developing a Master Trail Plan to link downtown with the Coastal Georgia Greenway trail. The city should continue working with PATH, planning bike trails, and seeking funding to develop the city as a destination for bicyclists.



Business Development

OGLETHORPE BLOCK ARCHITECT

Attracting development to the former site of the Oglethorpe Hotel has long been a goal for Brunswick officials. Many plans currently exist for the site, and commercial developers have expressed an interest in developing this key downtown property. The city should continue working with the Urban Redevelopment Authority and other stakeholders to review and rank existing proposals and choose an architect for the project.

