

# **2014 Young GameChangers**

## **Gateway Gang**

### *Gateway Improvement Proposals for the City of Dublin, GA*

#### **“Gateway Gang” Team Members**

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## **Executive Summary**

**W**hile Laurens County is located on I-16 with several exits, it lacks welcoming gateways into the community and a cohesive signage program to help visitors find their way to the city of Dublin. How might Laurens County improve its community gateways and signage while creating an appealing brand?

Dublin's downtown and Interstate Interchange (Exit 51) are undergoing tremendous improvements, and the need to grow a strong connection between travelers of the I-16 corridor and the attractions of Dublin's downtown is vital to business retention and growth. With the recent state designation of the Visitor's Center at Exit 51 as a Regional Visitor's Information Center, travelers are encouraged to visit downtown and destinations across Laurens County.

Despite this enhancement, Dublin's main gateway lacks the visual appeal offered by its vibrant downtown area. Continuity and coordination among the city, county, state, volunteer organizations, and other authorities is needed to make the connection from the gateways into the heart of the city, due to the physical distance that separates downtown and the interstate.

The Gateway Gang recommends using Visit Dublin's existing branding campaign to coordinate the redesign of Dublin's Motor Vehicle, Non-Motor Vehicle, and Virtual gateways. The Gang has identified Interstate 16's Exit 51 as Dublin's main motor vehicle gateway, and suggests developing this and subsequent motor vehicle gateways in four phases. Due to Dublin's proximity to State Bicycle Route 40, which runs from Columbus to Savannah (with Dublin at its center), the accessibility of non-motor vehicle gateways is also a key component to successfully attracting and retaining visitors.

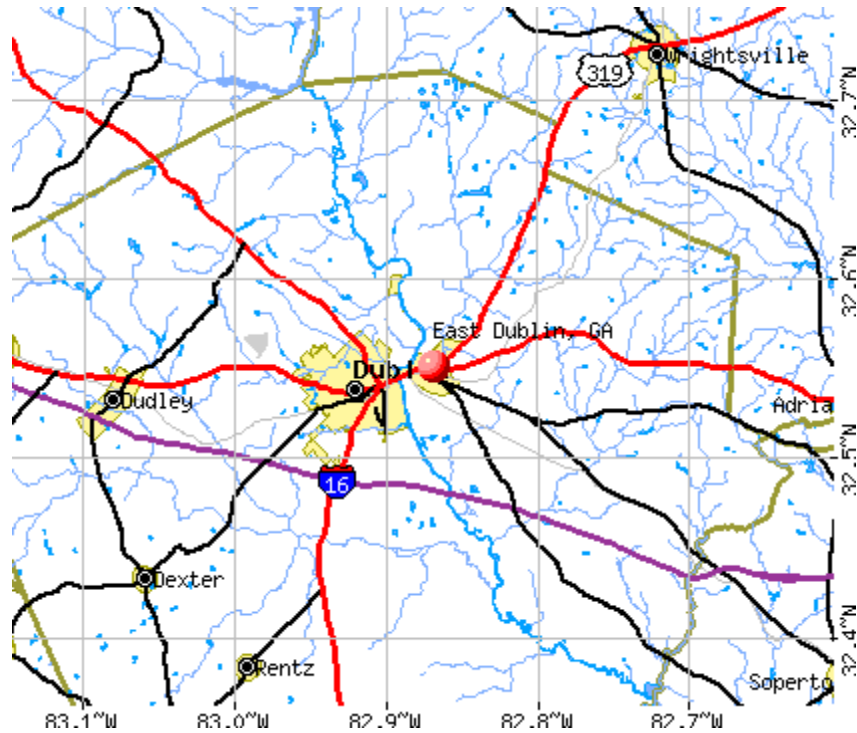
With an estimated 150,000 cyclist utilizing SBR 40 annually, Dublin could capitalize on this segment of tourist traffic by creating bike-friendly conditions in three phases, with a relatively small initial financial investment. Along with enhancing Dublin's motorized and non-motorized gateways, coordinating a consistent, attractive, and informative virtual gateway serves to attract, educate, and notify potential visitors of Dublin's activities, attractions, and development.

Using Visit Dublin's "Ahead of the Curve" brand coordinates a variety of messaging from the areas key stakeholders to include Laurens County, the City of Dublin, key volunteer organizations, and other important authorities. Using this unified brand across a variety of mediums in coordination with recommended enhancements will entice visitors to stay, interact with, and become a part of the community.

## The Problem

While Laurens County is located on I-16 with several exits, it lacks welcoming gateways into the community and a cohesive signage program to help visitors find their way to the city of Dublin.

How might Laurens County improve its community gateways and signage while creating an appealing brand?



## Enhancing Dublin's Gateways

Dublin is nestled comfortably among I-16, 441, 257, 19, and US-80. The city's location is filled with potential and offers opportunities for the municipality to capture visitor interest, lead them off the interstate, and into the city. To do so we believe it is imperative to enhance and in some ways redesign Dublin's existing gateways. Our recommendation leans on Dublin's existing branding campaign to coordinate the redesign of Dublin's Motor Vehicle, Non-Motor Vehicle, Public Art and Virtual gateways. These recommendations are presented as three **Big Ideas**.

## **Big Idea #1**

### **Motor Vehicle Gateways**

#### **Background**

Georgia Interstate 16 runs from Macon to Savannah, Georgia, a distance of about 160 miles, with approximately 20,000 vehicles per day (or 7.3 million per year) utilizing the thoroughfare. Dublin is one of the few stopping points along the center of I-16 with multiple exits, and accessibility to a major municipality. There are four exits ranging from mile 49 to mile 58 that are marked for Dublin. The most frequented by visitors is exit 51, which is also State highway 441. State highway 441 is utilized by approximately 15,000 vehicles per day or 5.5 million per year, and is less than 4 miles from the heart of downtown Dublin.

Even with downtown so near, most travelers do not venture far from the various exits upon entering the city. In an effort to address this issue, leadership has made significant efforts to encourage more travellers on I-16 to stop in Dublin. These efforts include the creation of a Welcome Center situated at exit 51, a recently established dog park located near the Welcome Center, and the installation of new strategically placed signage. The Dublin-Laurens Welcome Center has approximately 7,800 visitors per year. However, driving traffic away from the exit and towards downtown has proven difficult.

#### **Phase I (July 2015-July 2017)**

To capitalize on the current activity at exit 51, we recommend the incorporation of Visit Dublin's "Dublin, ahead of the curve" brand into signage and infrastructure. At the center of this recommendation, is the installation of "DUBLIN" signage on the 441 overpass, similar to this sign used in Orlando, FL:



Photo credit: <http://orlandorelocation.com/>

The proposed signage would utilize the same font/type as the existing "Ahead of the Curve" branding, and would require installation on both the East and West bound lanes. To fully exploit the concept, we recommend illuminating the proposed signage to attract the 3.5 million annual travelers (20,000 daily) who frequent I-16 at night.

In addition to adding signage to the overpass, we recommend branding exit ramps, medians, and green space through flowers and shrubbery to add “curb/curve appeal” to Dublin’s gateways. The green space branding would expand on Dublin’s existing example used on the City Hall lawn and further brand Dublin’s exits/entry points.



Photo credit: Visit Dublin



Photo credit: Google images

The beautification and branding projects recommended in phase one should be relatively inexpensive, and many current funding streams exist to assist with similar projects such as the GDOT GATEway grant program. The GATEway Grant Program exists to help communities in their efforts to beautify roadsides along state routes. The funds may only be used for plants and their installation along state routes in Georgia. Any organization, local government, or state agency may apply for grants of up to \$50,000 for landscaping in the state right-of-way that displays the right-of-way in an attractive fashion and promotes pride in Georgia.

The overpass sign does not fall under fundable activities by any state or federal transportation grant programs and would most likely require public/private partnerships to fund. Other communities that have embarked on similar projects have been creative in terms of using SPLOST dollars, a special city savings account, or public and private bonds to help cover such costs.

## Phase II (July 2017 - July 2019)

Phase one of our suggestion to enhance motorized vehicle gateways catches the attention of travelers and passersby. The challenge then becomes encouraging visitors to make their way from the exit into downtown. We recommend installing decorative light posts (to include banner signs) along key intersections of 441. Such posts already exist downtown so the project would expand outward from downtown along 441 to I-16. These posts have multiple benefits: 1) additional lighting closer to the ground, provides a feeling of comfort and safety 2) provides a focal point for beautification at key intersections 3) provides useful or interesting information for travelers 4) installation done well, can create an easy to follow pathway and reference point for travelers unfamiliar with the area.



Photo credit: Downtown Dublin Development Authority

Banner signs attached to the light posts are interchangeable and would allow the city to brand the area, share information, and/or advertise special events.

Possible content includes:

- Parking information
- Distance from downtown and/or interstate (depending on direction)
- Dublin: Ahead of the Curve
- Thanks for visiting
- Come back to see us
- St. Patrick's Day and other local festivals



Funding sources for this project would include the General Fund, tourism grants, or public/private partnerships.

### Phase III (July 2019 - July 2021)

In addition to enhancing the existing main gateway of 441, we recommend the development of additional gateways. Suggested areas in order of priority include:

- Hwy 441 Bypass & Hwy 80
- I-16 & Hwy 257
- Hwy 441 Bypass & Business 441 (Old 441)
- Hwy 80 at Oconee River
- I-16 & Hwy 19

These new gateways would require an expansion on the recommended lighting and signage program as appropriate, along with the addition of lamppost at each intersection. Information would vary for northbound and southbound traffic, and could be used as a source of revenue and/or advertising. Additional gateways would also incorporate information regarding existing historical structures, or structures of local interest such as the proposed riverwalk, public art or fountains, and historic buildings.



Photo credit: [www.tampabay.com](http://www.tampabay.com)

Here's one example of incorporating already existing historic pillars into a gateway design. Funding sources would be the same as for Phase 2 or could possibly be incorporated with funding streams for related projects as (such as public art, the riverwalk, or the proposed redevelopment of the Highway 80 bridge).

### Phase IV (July 2021 - July 2026)

Signage and beautification are an important component to encouraging travelers to stop in Dublin. When exiting I-16 headed down 441, the highway leading in to downtown is five lanes wide. There are two lanes of traffic in each direction to include a turn lane. We recommend replacing the turn lane with a grass median. This enhancement assists in making the area more attractive and provides a convenient place to locate signs of interest for tourists, or light posts

should the city choose to extend them into this corridor. This enhancement also has the added benefit of making the road safer for bikers and pedestrian traffic.



(<http://www.signalscv.com/section/36/article/116306/>)

Possible funding sources for such a project would include Federal and State programs such as the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), the Surface Transportation Program (STP), or the Transportation Investment Act (TIA).

#### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of proposed Big Idea #1

*Strengths:* Great potential for impact, benefits citizens as well as visitors.

*Weaknesses:* Parts of the proposal are expensive and require federal, state, and/or local funding. The overall recommendation could take 10-20 years to fully realize.

*Opportunities:* City/County government work well together, T-SPLOST and other funding is currently available, possibilities to weave together multiple projects and funding streams for greater impact.

*Threats:* Multifaceted project with many moving parts - community could lose interest before completion, competing priorities, DOT regulations.

#### References for Big Idea #1

- Existing signage locations were provided courtesy of Keep Dublin-Laurens Beautiful and the garden clubs.
- Visitor center information provided by Visit Dublin.
- Traffic counts provided by GDOT website STARS program.



## **Big Idea #2**

### **Non-Motorized Vehicle Gateways**

#### **(US-80/GA-19 Bikeway, US 441)**

#### **Background**

Nationwide, interest in “adventure travel,” outdoor activities, and bicycle touring, are growing. Georgia’s climate, geography, and rich history are ideal for attracting affluent, low-impact bicycle tourists. Dublin currently features a bikeable street grid and a bicycle-friendly topography. Aside from a handful of downtown bike racks, however, the city lacks any meaningful bicycle accommodations such as bike lanes or multi-use paths.

The primary opportunity for bicycle tourism is the development and promotion of State Bicycle Route 40 (SBR 40), which runs from Columbus, through the center of Dublin (US 80/GA 19/GA 29/ Bellevue Ave), on to Savannah. SBR 40 is part of the Georgia DOT’s state bicycle route system, a statewide network of roadways designated as preferred routes for inter-city and long-distance bicycling. Several of these routes have already been identified with wayfinding signage and some feature bicycle accommodations, including bike lanes and bikeable shoulders. SBR 40 currently does not feature any such signage or facilities and is therefore a “hidden” bicycle route.

SBR 40 connects the cities of Columbus and Savannah, with Dublin positioned as the halfway point between these popular destinations. The trip from Columbus to Dublin is approximately 140 miles (2-3 days by bike), while the trip from Dublin to Savannah is approximately 120 miles (2-3 days by bike). The total trip would take 5-6 days for the typical touring cyclist, which would include an overnight stay in the city of Dublin. Many cross-country bicycle tourists already start or end their journeys in Savannah. An attractive, well-promoted route through Dublin would ensure that their itinerary would include SBR 40 and a visit to Dublin.

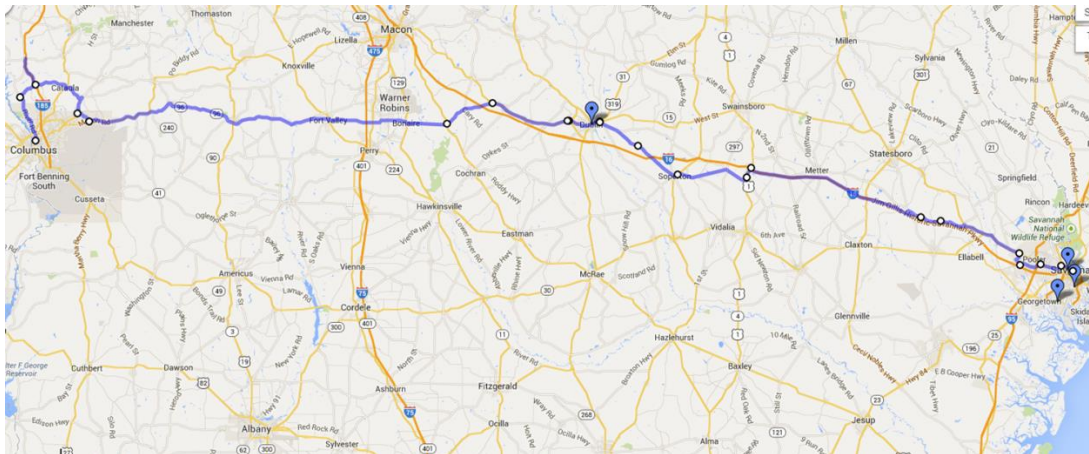


Image credit: Google Maps

## Transportation Planning in the Dublin Area

Regional transportation planning efforts are coordinated by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC). HOGARC produced a “Regional Plan” in May of 2013, which notes that “there is ... significant potential to improve transportation infrastructure and access through the T-SPLOST...[and] development of bicycle and other multi-use trails.”

The 2005 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Bike-Ped Plan adds the following notes about SBR 40:

“State Bike Route 40 is called the Trans-Georgia Route and traverses the state in an east-west direction between Savannah and Columbus. It is the only one of the 14 designated state bike routes located within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. In western Laurens County at its border with Wilkinson County, State Bike Route 40 begins on U.S. Highway 80 and continues to the City of Dublin. In Dublin, State Bike Route 40 transitions to State Highway Route 29 and follows it to the City of Soperton. In Soperton, State Bike Route 40 changes to follow State Highway Route 46 and continues on this route to the City of Metter, and on through to the Candler County/Bulloch County line. State Bike Route 40 is within the Region for a distance of about 85 miles. This includes mileage through Laurens (34.9 miles), Treutlen (19.7), Emanuel (12.5), and Candler (17.8) counties.

**Bicyclists have noted that the U.S. 80 portion in Laurens County, in particular, is not conducive to safe bicycling.** Facilities and signing along the route are limited. Even though Georgia State Bike Route 40 is a designated state bicycle route, it does not necessarily have paved shoulders or other facilities.”

Efforts to create more attractive gateways into downtown Dublin should focus on redesign and improvement of both traditional motorized gateways (e.g. US 441, I-16 exits) as well as comprehensive improvements to the underutilized but promising SBR 40 corridor for non-motorized tourists.

### Phase I: July 2015 – July 2016

To enhance the SBR 40 corridor we recommend the installation of wayfinding signage along Bellevue Ave/US 80 indicating that the route is designated as State Bike Route 40, along with mileage or distance-to-destination signage directing touring cyclists to desired destinations (e.g. downtown Dublin, Greenway\*, restaurants, lodging, etc.).

We also recommend additional installations to include shared lane markings (“sharrows”) on narrower segments of the in-town route where the addition of bike lanes are not feasible {due to available right of way (ROW)}, “Share the Road” + ”Bicycles Allowed Full Use of Lane” signs in conjunction with shared lane markings, and ten additional bicycle parking spaces, including on-street bike corrals, at desired destinations (e.g. downtown Dublin, Greenway\*, restaurants, lodging, etc.).

| Item                              | Estimated Cost | Qty | Total      |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----|------------|
| Signage                           | \$150.00       | 10  | \$1,500.00 |
| Shared lane markings (“sharrows”) | \$200.00       | 10  | \$2,000.00 |
| Bicycle parking                   | \$400.00       | 10  | \$4,000.00 |
|                                   |                |     | \$7,500.00 |

### Potential Funding Sources

Local: General Fund, TSPLOST

State/Federal: STP, HSIP

Other: Tourism Grants



Photo credits: Google Maps Streetview, Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, City of Decatur

Phase II: July 2016 – July 2019

We also recommend the installation of 12' paved multi-use paths alongside Bellevue Ave. During routine scheduled resurfacing work on Bellevue Ave (and other appropriate routes), we recommend a reconfiguration of lane widths to allow for the installation of bicycle facilities, in the following order of priority:

- o Buffered bike lanes
- o Bike lanes
- o Bikable shoulders
- o Painted intersection treatments such as bike boxes

We also recommend the development, design, and construction of a bicycle tourist pocket park in or near downtown Dublin featuring:

- o Sheltered bike parking
- o Restrooms
- o Water fountain
- o Mobile bicycle repair stand
- o Bicycle supplies and snack vending
- o Camp sites/overnight shelter, if appropriate

| Item                                       | Estimated Cost             | Qty       | Total               |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| <b>12' multi-use path</b>                  | <b>\$650,000/mile**</b>    | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$650,000.00</b> |
| <b>Buffered bike lanes/bike lanes*</b>     | <b>\$500</b>               | <b>10</b> | <b>\$5,000.00</b>   |
| <b>Bikable shoulders*</b>                  | <b>\$0 additional cost</b> |           | <b>\$0</b>          |
| <b>Intersection treatments</b>             | <b>\$750</b>               | <b>4</b>  | <b>\$3,000.00</b>   |
| <b>Pocket Park: sheltered bike parking</b> | <b>\$1000</b>              | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$1,000.00</b>   |
| <b>Pocket Park: restroom</b>               | <b>\$30,000</b>            | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$30,000.00</b>  |
| <b>Pocket Park: water fountain</b>         | <b>\$600.00</b>            | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$600.00</b>     |
| <b>Pocket Park: mobile repair stand</b>    | <b>\$1,200.00</b>          | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$1,200.00</b>   |
| <b>Pocket Park: vending</b>                | <b>\$4,500.00</b>          | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$4,500.00</b>   |
| <b>Pocket Park: overnight shelter</b>      | <b>\$10,000</b>            | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$10,000.00</b>  |
|                                            |                            |           | <b>\$705,300.00</b> |

## Potential Funding Sources

Local: General Fund, TSPLOST, Public/Private Partnerships

State/Federal: STP, HSIP, RTP, State Tourism Grants







Photo credits: Walton Wellness, UGA  
Office of Sustainability, Bikeovernights.org

### Phase III: July 2016 – July 2020

- Partner with GDOT, surrounding counties, and the MPOs from Columbus and Savannah to plan and prioritize bicycle facilities and signage along remainder of SBR 40
- With the Georgia Department of Economic Development and stakeholders from Columbus, Fort Valley, and Savannah, host an official, supported spring/fall bicycle tour of SBR 40
- Continue improving bicycle safety and access along entire route as opportunities present themselves, e.g.
  - o Routine re-surfacing projects
  - o Reconstruction
  - o Bridge replacement

| Item                                                                                        | Estimated Cost             | Qty       | Total                 |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Reconstruction of roadway to allow for inclusion of bikable shoulder or 5' bike lane</b> | <b>\$130,000.00/mile**</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>\$1,300,000.00</b> |
| <b>Routine resurfacing</b>                                                                  | <b>\$0 additional cost</b> | <b>20</b> | <b>\$0.00</b>         |
| <b>Bridge replacement</b>                                                                   | <b>\$3,500,000.00**</b>    | <b>1</b>  | <b>\$3,500,000.00</b> |
|                                                                                             |                            |           | <b>\$4,800,000.00</b> |

### Potential Funding Sources

Local: General Fund, TSPLOST  
State/Federal: STP, HSIP



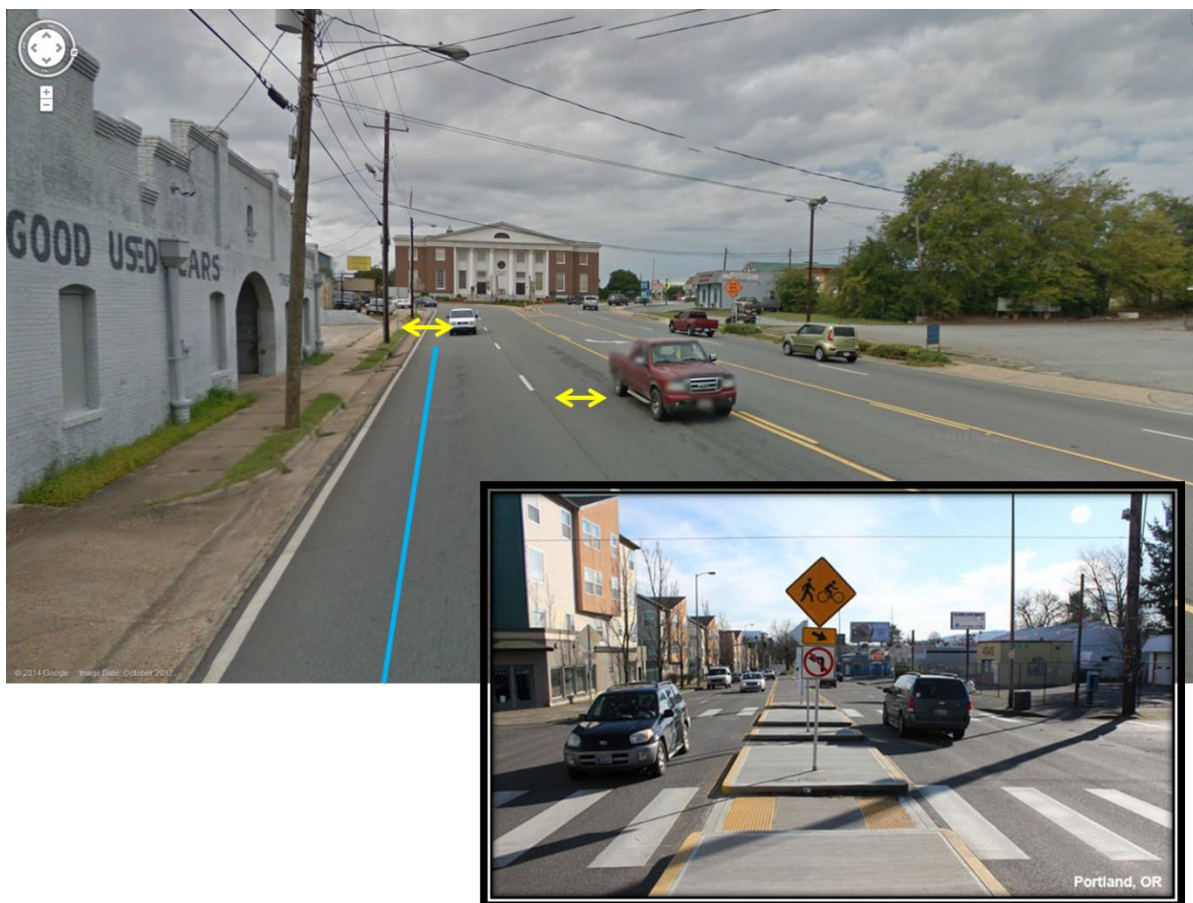




Photo credits: Google Maps Streeview, Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, nacto.org, Georgia Bikes, Inc.

*\* Should the proposed riverside Greenway project be completed?*

*\*\* This is an estimated total cost and does not reflect an amount that would be borne by the City of Dublin or Laurens County. Replacement of the US 80 bridge over the Oconee River would almost certainly utilize 90% state/federal funds.*

**Approximate Total Cost to Implement Non-Motorized Gateway Improvements: \$5.5 million**

### Riverwalk

Along with making Dublin a bike friendly community and connecting pedestrian traffic at the defined commercial area of I-16/441 to downtown, developing the existing river walk enhances non-motorized vehicle access to key sectors of the city. A fully developed Riverwalk also allows easier pedestrian and non-motorized vehicular and boat access along the Oconee River to expand Laurens County's outdoor and recreational trails as a key tourism offering, which transforms the Oconee into a major tourism gateway into downtown Dublin.

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of proposed Big Idea #2

*Strengths:* Great potential for economic impact, with additional health and quality of life benefits for local citizens.

*Weaknesses:* Bridge replacements, in particular, require some local funding, but are contingent on federal and/or state funding, project could take 10-20 years to fully realize.

*Opportunities:* City/County government work well together, T-SPLOST and other funding is currently available, possibilities to weave together multiple projects and funding streams for greater impact.

*Threats:* Complicated project that requires regional coordination for success - community could lose interest before completion, other regions in the south may complete attractive bicycle touring destinations first.

#### References for Big Idea #2

- Georgia Bikes
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Georgia Department of Economic Development - Tourism Division
- DuBose Porter
- Downtown Dublin Development Authority

### **Big Idea #3**

## **Expanding Virtual Gateways**

### **(Incorporating Public Art and Cultural Planning)**

#### **Expanding “Brand Dublin”**

Dublin is a vibrant city that perfectly blends the past with the present and the rural with the sophisticated, creating a community primed to capitalize on its bustling potential. The existing Visit Dublin branding campaign *Dublin, Ahead of the Curve* sits as the catalyst to revolutionizing the community’s brand image and serves as the conduit for implementing the proposed gateway enhancements.

The campaign combines the logo with vivid, emotion-evoking photography that creates a “picture yourself there” response that allows interstate travelers to connect the image of the familiar interstate signage with the surprisingly unexpected attractions and destinations throughout Dublin and Laurens County.



Photo credit: Visit Dublin

We recommend building upon Visit Dublin’s existing branding campaign, and codifying Dublin’s virtual gateways, brand efforts, and messaging throughout all virtual access points. We also recommend tying these virtual efforts to existing cultural planning efforts incorporating Dublin’s uniqueness to include public art. This coordination not only enhances awareness, but ensures accessibility to target markets and increases overnight and long-term stays. Dublin’s existing coordinated virtual gateways include:

#### Sites developed by Visit Dublin

- Visit Dublin GA: <http://visitdublinga.com/>
- River Bend WMA: <http://www.riverbendwma.com/>
- Beaverdam WMA: <http://www.beaverdamwma.com/>
- Dublin Carnegie: <http://www.dublincarnegie.com/>
- Retire Dublin GA: <http://www.retiredublinga.com>
- Old Post Office: <http://www.oldpostofficedublin.com>
- St. Patrick’s Festival: <http://stpatricksdublinga.com>



Sites developed in partnership with the Downtown Development Authority:

- Market on Madison: <http://www.marketonmadison.com>
- Fred Roberts: <http://www.dublinfredroberts.com>

In addition to the coordination and development of websites, these gateways also include digital and social media outlets devoted to promoting existing and newly developed attractions and destinations in Laurens County, and it is recommended to develop a strong YouTube, TripAdvisor, and Pinterest identity as well as future social media offerings.

Current branding materials visually and verbally portray Dublin as an active community where business booms, big things happen and things are always “Ahead of the Curve.” Through the creation of a cohesive marketing campaign highlighting available gateways and offerings, Dublin will establish succinct messaging that positively impacts the traveler’s existing image of Dublin and encourages more than the arbitrary interstate stop.

Restoring existing murals or other artwork of an iconic Dublin scene or building, and highlighting these efforts in real time, adds a one of a kind tourist attraction unlike any other in the region. Dublin’s murals are currently in less than ideal condition:



Photo credit: Visit Dublin



Example of a maintained mural; Photo credit: [www.visitflorida.com](http://www.visitflorida.com)



Source: Pittsburgh, PA Tourism



Source: Pittsburgh Arts Council ([www.pittsburghartscouncil.org](http://www.pittsburghartscouncil.org))



### Short Term Goal

We recommend the establishment of a designated local arts agency (LAA) for Dublin and Laurens County- LAAs may be established by resolution of the municipality at no cost. The local government can support its local arts agency at less than 10% of the proposed organizations overall budget, although the organization is qualified to apply for grant money on behalf of the city and/or county. A local arts agency may also be a governmental agency, like an Office of Cultural Affairs. A department such as this would need at least one staff member, so the budget would have to support that staff member and programs.

Local arts agencies can be 501(c)3 non-profits or governmental agencies. LAAs develop and support artists, arts organizations, and public art in a community with services, financial support, resources, and planning. More information on Local Arts Agencies can be found at these links:

- National Endowment for the Arts: <http://arts.gov/artistic-fields/local-arts-agencies>
- Americans for the Arts, Local Arts Network: <http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/local-arts-network>
- List of Local Arts Agencies in Georgia: <http://artsgeorgia.net/wp/directory/local-arts-agency-directory>

### Long Term Goal

We recommend the creation of a Cultural Master Plan for Dublin Laurens County. Developing this plan requires the development of community assessments to determine the existing number of artists, amount of public art, and number of arts organizations in Dublin and Laurens County. Using information attained from assessments and incorporating Dublin's future goals, the city can develop strategic goals for artist development, arts organization development, and a public art master plan with the overall goal of creating and maintaining an existing yet underutilized attraction.

A cultural master plan should be a component of, or directly tied to, the Local Arts Agency's strategic plan, containing plans and funding goals for public art restoration, a sustainable maintenance plan, and strategic development of new public art. The plan would highlight art in public spaces or cultural happenings that occur in public spaces, such as temporary installations of public art, performances, or festivals. Current trends in the arts have shown that temporary installations can be catalyst for the reactivation of unused or under-used public/commercial space.

### Funding Sources for Public Art

Local and supplemental funding is essential to sustain and maintain public art. It is important to maintain what already exists before creating new public art. Resources for best practices and funding sources for public art include the following:

- Americans for the Arts Public Art Network: <http://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/public-art-network>

- Georgia Council for the Arts Grants: <http://www.gaarts.org/grant-funding/apply-for-a-grant/available-funding>

### Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of proposed Big Idea #3

*Strengths:* This proposed idea can be the anchor or community involvement, festivals, and events. It can allow you to highlight local talent, while bringing in big names that will draw crowds. This idea will certainly add to the beautification of the city. Plant murals are beneficial to the environment and require less skills as painting.

*Weaknesses:* If structures that are targeted for this idea are not currently owned by the city, proceeding with require an agreement with property owners. Artistic talent can be expensive and requires much consideration. The city will need to weigh the cost of the artist with the production of a masterful piece.

*Opportunities:* Dublin is surrounded by large rural areas which focus on farming. In addition to growing flowers and plants, Dublin should consider planting locations where local farmers can provide an exhibit garden. The opportunity exists to include surrounding communities in events happening in Dublin.

*Threats:* Single and personal interest can derail this idea. Dublin will need to make sure the interest transverse all racial and economic boundaries.

### References for Big Idea #3

- Visit Dublin
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Georgia Department of Economic Development - Economic Impact Calculator

## **Logistics/ Intergovernmental Cooperation**

To successfully implement these recommendations, a high level of intergovernmental and community collaboration is required. This cooperation is almost impossible considering the multiple governmental jurisdictions that a person must enter while traveling from I-16 to Downtown Dublin. To facilitate these activities we recommend:

### **Developing A Unified Community Enhancement Policy**

Create a coordinated city and county policy that encourages and enforces the maintenance of the main gateway's appearance. The policy requires new business to maintain a certain level of beautification and upkeep as designated by the local government entities. Existing businesses can be given a grandfather exception or be required to comply within a certain number of year.

### **Foster Community Engagement In Beautification Efforts**

Create city/county funded activities that create public engagement, rewarding both business and private property owners for beautification efforts (e.g. Annual best kept property award). These activities encourage and support partnerships with public sector and nonprofit organizations such as the existing garden and rotary clubs. It also encourages the creation of new businesses and community organizations. These organizations also foster new activities and revenue generators such as annual arts competitions and community funded festivals.

## **Evaluating Effectiveness**

The overall success of these recommendations can be measured by the following:

- Increased traffic flow to downtown Dublin and Laurens County
- Increased existing business revenues and customer base
- Decrease in business turnover with increased business recruitment and retention
- Increased tax base
- Increased sales tax revenue
- Increased home sales and construction
- Increased new business development and construction
- Increased volunteer base
- Increased population, with special note on the 55 and over market
- Increased tourism activity
  - Hotel/Motel tax revenue
  - Traffic counts at Visitors Center
  - Event attendance and participation (vendor, media, sponsors, and tourist)
  - Requests for information
  - Website traffic
  - Social media growth
  - Development of existing assets
  - Development of new markets and niches
  - Increased retail, dining, and leisure business development

## **Stakeholders**

City of Dublin

Laurens County

Downtown Dublin Development Authority

Dublin Laurens Tourism

Keep Dublin-Laurens Beautiful

Garden Club

Public Interest Community

The Business Community

Laurens County Educational System

Georgia Department of Transportation

## **First Stakeholders Meeting Attendees**

George Roussell - City Manager

Jackie Durden - Garden Club

Patsy Baker - Keep Dublin-Laurens Beautiful

Will Curry - Curry Companies

Troy Windham

Lori Hennesy - GDEcD

## **Second Stakeholders Meeting Attendees**

Ken Padgett - GDOT

Randy Jackson - Chamber of Commerce

Mrs. Tyre - Garden Club

Jerry Davis - City Council

Julie Driger - City Council

Jeff Davis - Visit Dublin

Joshua Kight - Downtown Dublin Development Authority

## **Other Resources**

[http://www.advocacyadvance.org/site\\_images/content/Atlanta\\_funding\\_profile\\_Final.pdf](http://www.advocacyadvance.org/site_images/content/Atlanta_funding_profile_Final.pdf)

<http://www.atlantaregional.com/transportation/financing-transportation>

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2011/>

[http://georgiabikes.org/files/Costs\\_for\\_Pedestrian\\_and\\_Bicycle\\_Improvements\\_2013.pdf](http://georgiabikes.org/files/Costs_for_Pedestrian_and_Bicycle_Improvements_2013.pdf)

<http://www.dot.ga.gov/doingbusiness/PoliciesManuals/roads/DesignPolicy/GDOT-DPM-Chap09.pdf>