

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

INTRODUCTION

History of Cuthbert and Randolph County

Randolph County was created in 1828 from a portion of Lee County. Georgia's 75th county was named for John Randolph of Virginia, a Republican Congressman and a descendent of Pocahontas.

Randolph's first county seat was Lumpkin. The City of Lumpkin today is located in Stewart County. In 1830 Stewart County was created from a portion of Randolph and Lumpkin became the county seat. Cuthbert became the county seat for Randolph County in the same year.

Cuthbert was named for Colonel John Alfred Cuthbert, editor, congressman, and judge. The City was incorporated on December 26, 1831 and remains the county seat of Randolph County.

Assets of Cuthbert and Randolph County



Andrew College

Cuthbert is home to Andrew College, a private Methodist college that was the second in the nation to grant degrees to women. This college served as a Confederate hospital during the Civil War.

In Cuthbert's Greenwood Cemetery are the graves of twenty-four Confederate soldiers who died at Hood Hospital. These soldiers are commemorated with a life-sized full figure marble sculpture of a confederate soldier.

One of the first pecan trees brought to Georgia from Texas was planted in Cuthbert. The tree eventually became known as the "mother of the Georgia pecan industry" in honor of its great age and size.

Grier's Cave in Randolph County is a huge underground limestone cavern that was first discovered via an entrance of less than three feet.

Cuthbert and Randolph County are the home of various famous athletes including Rosie Grier and Pat Summerall as well as the birthplace of jazz legend Fletcher Henderson.

Downtown Development

The City of Cuthbert has twenty-five (25) buildings in its downtown with an 8% vacancy rate. There are a variety of businesses including a hardware store, tea parlor, library, gift shop/coffee shop, government offices, restaurants, and other retail stores. The majority of downtown has had façade renovations; however, there are some buildings which still need façade improvements. The city has received funding from the Department of Transportation for a downtown street improvement project. Currently the project is in the design phase and will rehabilitate sidewalks around the square and the courthouse as well as making the sidewalks handicap accessible.

The downtown area falls into the Census Block Groups of 1324399021001 and 132439902002. The Redevelopment Plan covers three additional Census Block Groups: 132439902003, 132439902004, and 132439902005 which are residential and commercial areas. All of these areas meet the requirements for a Redevelopment Area as well as an Opportunity Zone. (see attached maps).

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

CONSISTENCY WITH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Randolph County and the Cities of Cuthbert and Shellman adopted their Comprehensive Plan in May of 1993. The latest short term work plan update was submitted in October of 2008. The following goals and objectives included in the plan are consistent with the Redevelopment Plan:

Goal: Promote and maintain a stable economic environment for the cities and the county

Objective: Support and encourage the growth of existing businesses and industry in the county and each city.

Policies: Support the establishment of tourist related businesses such as antique shops, novelty shops and restaurants in downtown Cuthbert and Shellman.

Goal: Promote safe, adequate and affordable housing and maintain and enhance existing residential areas for family centered living.

Objective: Conserve existing housing stock insofar as practical through rehabilitation and improvement of substandard housing units that are suitable for repair.

Policies: Encourage owners of substandard housing units to improve their properties through use of every available means, including providing public technical assistance and seeking public financial support.

Policies: Adopt and enforce county and city building and housing codes in implementing a enforcement program to support housing improvements.

Policies: Rehabilitate all structurally sound, but otherwise substandard housing units to meet the newly adopted building and housing code requirements.

Objective: Protect residents and investors from significant hazards to life, health and property.

Policies: Require construction practices designed to minimize soil erosion and sedimentation, including requirements for re-vegetation during and following construction.

Policies: Promote decent and affordable housing.

Goal: Maintain an efficient and reliable local and thorough accessibility system.

Objective: Improve and extent the street and highway system to promote safe, efficient and well maintained access to property in the city and on through routes for local and regional travelers.

Policies: Provide for the safe, efficient movement of people, goods and services in and around the City of Cuthbert.

Goal: Maintain an efficient, safe and reliable public water system.

Objective: Provide a safe and environmentally sound water supply for the citizens of Cuthbert.

Policies: Upgrade the existing water system lines.

Goal: Maintain an efficient, safe and reliable public sewer system.

Objective: Provide a safe and environmentally sound sewer system for the citizens of Cuthbert.

Policies: Upgrade the existing sewer lines.

Goal: Provide for and maintain an efficient, reliable and environmentally sound solid waste program.

Objective: Provide for an environmentally sound and reliable waste program.

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

BOUNDARIES OF REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The attached map illustrates the boundaries of the Redevelopment Area. GIS points are as follows:

NW Corner: Long -84.800377, Lat 31.774141
NE Corner: -84.781149, 31.773153
SW Corner: -84.800536, 31.761866
SE Corners: -84.781373, 31.765499
-84.78641, 31.76551
-84.789859, 31.766959
-84.790682, 31.761485

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population – According to the 2000 Census, the population of Cuthbert in 1980 was 4340 which is a 30% decline over the past twenty (20) years. From 1990-2000 the population has remained steady at 1730 persons.

Unemployment/Job Loss - The following table compares the historical and current unemployment rates for Randolph County and the State of Georgia. Unemployment information for the City of Cuthbert was unavailable.

Year	Randolph County	State of Georgia
2005	7.3	5.2
2006	6.2	4.6
2007	6.3	4.4
October 2008	9.4	7.0

Source: Georgia Department of Labor

Cuthbert has suffered from drastic job losses in the past ten (10) years with no new businesses created or expanded to absorb these employees. In March of 1998 there were 251 job losses announced. Four of these companies were manufacturing with the others being in health care and a restaurant. In February of 2002 Columbia Forrest Products laid off 100 employees. In January 2003 Burgin Lumber Company closed which cost 60 persons their jobs. In January 2004 the remaining 104 employees lost their jobs at Columbia Forrest Products when the company finally closed its doors. This is a total of 515 jobs, almost half of the total population of Cuthbert, lost in a ten (10) year period with very few jobs created to replace those losses. Many of those employees who have lost their jobs have quit applying at the Department of Labor because they have lost hope of every finding employment. These are the “hidden” unemployed.

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

Per Capita Income –

The following table gives data on per capita income in 1999 dollars by Census Block Group in Cuthbert. These block groups are included in the Redevelopment Area.

Block Group 1, Census Tract 9902	Block Group 2, Census Tract 9902	Block Group 3, Census Tract 9902	Block Group 4, Census Tract 9902	Block Group 5, Census Tract 9902
\$13,973	\$8,907	\$14,133	\$7,144	\$13,023
66% of State PCI	42% of State PCI	67% of State PCI	34% of State PCI	62% of State PCI

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

The per capita income (PCI) of the State of Georgia is \$21,154. Each of these block groups has a substantially lower per capita income than the rest of the state and in some cases is more than 50% lower.

Crime Rate – The Cuthbert Police Chief states in his support letter that the crime rate is 60% higher in the Redevelopment Area than in the rest of the city.

Retail Sales – In 2007 Randolph County had Annual Retail Sales of \$46,038. There are only 28 counties in Georgia with lower Annual Retail Sales. (data only available at the county level) This lack of retail sales adversely impacts both the local government and local businesses.

CONDITIONS WITHIN THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA

Downtown

1. **Parking –** The majority of parking in downtown Cuthbert is on the square. There are 43 parking places. The only parking available off the square is behind city hall by the jail.
2. **Slum and Blight near downtown –** Only two blocks from downtown there are vacant warehouse buildings. Also there are high crime neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. These neighborhoods are part of the Redevelopment Area.
3. **Business Attraction/Retention –** There are several well established businesses in downtown; however, new businesses find it difficult to survive beyond the first year.
4. **Vacant Properties –** There are two (2) vacant properties on the square and less than one block away there is a shopping strip with only one unit occupied. The *Popeye's* restaurant has been closed since April of 2008. Recently the roof of the drive-through collapsed which makes this property more difficult to market.
5. **Infrastructure Problems -** Water leaks are a problem along the city streets in Cuthbert, especially in downtown due to the deteriorated water lines. The leaks waste water, decrease the appeal of downtown, and constantly costs the city money in repair expenses. A sewer main on Gordon Street also needs to be replaced and there are also several areas with street and drainage problems. Attached is a map detailing locations with infrastructure problems.

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

Residential

1. Slum and blight - There are 110 of properties considered substandard and 64 of properties considered dilapidated. Of these the city has identified 11 properties upon which to concentrate redevelopment efforts.
2. Infrastructure Problems – Currently there is a FY07 CDBG in the McDonald Woods area of the Redevelopment Area providing water, sewer, street and drainage improvements. This project will alleviate some of the street and drainage problems in the area as well as make improvements to the existing water system; however, additional improvements are needed. There are no sidewalks in the residential area of the Redevelopment Area. There is limited street lighting. There is a park in the area; but it needs to be refurbished.
3. Connectivity/Access – There are four (4) dead-end streets in the Redevelopment Area which need cul-de-sacs or to be made through streets to improve access by public safety vehicles as well as garbage trucks. Dixie Alley originally ended at Dawson Street; however, part of the dirt road has become over grown and is now only usable as a foot path. The city has title to this property and could pave the area which is now non-accessible to vehicles.

Other Areas

1. Commercial – There is no landscaping and beautification efforts have been limited. There are only a few shops that would appeal to a tourist or visitor to Andrew College. A Transportation Enhancement Grant has been awarded to the city for sidewalk improvements along the downtown square.
2. Infrastructure Problems – There continue to be water, sewer, street and drainage problems throughout the Redevelopment Area. See attached map.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

1. The City of Cuthbert does not propose to change the existing land uses within the Redevelopment Area; therefore, this plan will not conflict with either the current or future land use objectives. Attached are copies of the current and future land use maps.
2. Zoning – Attached is a current zoning map for the City of Cuthbert. Any changes to zoning will follow the adopted zoning ordinance for the City of Cuthbert. At this time, there are no anticipated zoning changes.

ACQUISITION PLAN

There are 781 pieces of property in the Redevelopment Area. Of these 110 are substandard, 64 are dilapidated and 607 are standard.

Description of Parcels to be Acquired

1. The following eleven (11) properties have been identified for acquisition, demolition and future development of infill housing. These properties will be purchased at fair market value established through county tax assessor and/or appraisal. . Because all of the properties are vacant, no relocation will be necessary. Three (3) lots have vacant trailers which will be demolished. Seven (7) lots have dilapidated stick built housing which will be demolished. One (1) lot is vacant but requires clean-up.

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan



16 Dixie Alley



22 Dixie Alley



24 Dixie Alley

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan



32 Dixie Alley



34 Dixie Alley



101 King Street

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan



83 King Street



73 King Street



Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

7 Center Street



101 King Street



52 King Street

1. Future Structures to Rehabilitated – There are a total of 110 substandard properties which could be rehabilitated. In this phase of the plan, twenty-five (25) structures are identified as possible rehabilitation projects. No acquisition will be necessary. Homes will be rehabilitated with no relocation of residents necessary.

Identified individually

- a. 497 Andrew Street
- b. 501 Andrew Street
- c. 526 Andrew Street
- d. 563 Andrew Street
- e. 466 College Street
- f. 530 College Street
- g. 33 Hill Street
- h. 50 Hill Street
- i. 68 Hill Street
- j. 258 Hood Street
- k. 304 Hood Street
- l. 330 Hood Street
- m. 374 Hood Street
- n. 432 Hood Street

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

- o. 57 Key Street
- p. 95 Key Street
- q. 148 Key Street
- r. 148 Key Street
- s. 234 Key Street
- t. 30 Kiddo Street
- u. 87 Kiddo Street
- v. 92 Kiddo Street
- w. 97 Kiddo Street
- x. 114 Kiddo Street
- y. 137 Kiddo Street

IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

The city will use various methods to encourage redevelopment in the area. The Cuthbert City Council will serve as the Redevelopment Agency. The prime method of encouraging redevelopment will be use of the city's Code Enforcement division. The City of Cuthbert contracts with Randolph County to provide Code Enforcement services. This person serves as the Code Enforcer for Randolph County, the City of Cuthbert and the City of Shellman. Currently the Code Enforcer has been identifying properties which do not meet city or state codes. These code enforcement efforts by the City of Cuthbert will continue and be expanded with the tools provided by the Urban Redevelopment Plan, Enterprise Zone, and the Opportunity Zone.

For commercial properties, the city's Revolving Loan Fund as well as other loan funds will be marketed to downtown business owners as well as prospective property owners. These loan funds have an interest rate which is below market rate. An Enterprise Zone will be created for the entire redevelopment area. This will freeze municipal ad valorem property taxes, excluding property taxes imposed by school districts, that would otherwise be levied on the qualifying business and service enterprises over a 10 year period. Property owners which invest in redevelopment of their property and buildings will be provided with this freeze. This same property tax freeze will be made available to residential property tax owners.

The city has determined that the entire Urban Redevelopment area will fit within the newly designated Enterprise Zone. This causes the entire designated area to become an Opportunity Zone which allows businesses located in this area to obtain enhanced Job Tax Credits. These credits allow businesses to create two (2) full-time jobs in any sector which offer health insurance, to qualify for the Job Tax Credits. Job Tax Credits can be earned for up to five (5) years and unused tax credits can roll over for up to ten (10) years. Unused tax credits can be used against the state portion of the company's withholding tax. Currently businesses in the City of Cuthbert must create five (5) full time jobs to be eligible for Job Tax Credits.

The city will apply for Community Development Block Grant and Community Home Investment Program funds to begin a housing rehabilitation program in the redevelopment area. The city will apply for designation of the Redevelopment Area as an Opportunity Zone which will allow smaller businesses to utilize job tax credits and also allow the city to apply more frequently for grants.

COLLABORATION

- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - The City of Cuthbert has worked with USDA in the past using their Rural Business Enterprise Grant to create and recapitalize a Revolving Loan Fund as well as constructing accel/decel lanes for the county's largest business. The city will also have access to the Section 504 loan and grant program to fund repairs necessary to adequately improve living conditions. The Section 502 program will allow financing of a new home.
- Southwest Georgia Housing Development Corporation – The Southwest Georgia Housing Development Corporation has a strong presence in Cuthbert managing 122 public housing units as well as owning and operating The Willows Assisted Living

Cuthbert Redevelopment Plan

Community and the Millennium Center, a twenty unit facility designed to provide supportive services to addicted heads of households. The Southwest Georgia Housing Development Corporation has pledged to work with the city in finding suitable tenants for rental property and they will also manage any rental property that is created through redevelopment. When the bond market has stabilized, the SWGHDC will assist in financing construction of infill housing and rehabilitation of existing structures.

- First State Bank of Randolph County – First State Bank of Randolph County will use their Community Reinvestment dollars to work with homeowners to finance a portion of the cost of rehabilitating their homes.
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) – The City of Cuthbert will apply for Community Development Block Grant and Community Housing Investment Program funds from DCA to partially fund acquisition, clean-up, and rehabilitation costs. Funds will also be used for infrastructure improvements in the Redevelopment Area. (See attached excerpt from the Department of Community Affairs website)
- Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center (RDC) – The RDC staff will assist in grant preparation and administration as well as finding additional sources of funding.