

2025 Workplan

<p>Transformation Strategy 1: Develop Downtown Swainsboro as a destination for family-friendly entertainment.</p>			
<p>Why? The Downtown Development Authority is looking to develop downtown into a retail and entertainment district, which will be anchored by the Barbara & Tobe Karrh Community Arts Center. Establishing downtown as a center for family entertainment will support local businesses, drive economic development, tourism, and strengthen student life for students at local colleges.</p>			
<p>Goal 1</p>	<p>Goal 2</p>	<p>Goal 3</p>	<p>Goal 4</p>
<p>Develop the Barbara & Tobe Karrh Community Arts Center including the renovation and preservation of the Karrh Center Theater.</p>	<p>Engage more community members in the activities of the DDA.</p>	<p>Develop and maintain community activities that utilize and promote downtown Swainsboro's unique assets, while providing entertainment and encouraging community spirit.</p>	
<p>Repeat Annual Responsibilities</p>			
<p>Organize Easter Eggstravaganza Support Pine Tree Festival Organize Christmas Parade Organize and sponsor Freedom Fest Concert & Vendors in conjunction with the Swainsboro Jaycees Red, Wet, & Blue parade and Firework show. Organize Fall Festival Organize the Back-to-School Touch-A-Truck</p>			

<p>TS1 Goal 1: Continue the development of the Barbara & Tobe Karrh Community Arts Center by completing the renovation of the theater portion of the center, while preserving as much of its historic character as possible and transforming it into a fully functional venue for movies, live performances, and community events.</p>	<p>Define Success: Success will be achieved by completing the final phase of the Barbara & Tobe Karrh Community Arts Center—restoring the historic Karrh Center Theater into a fully functional venue for first-run movies, live performances, and community events. This revitalized space will preserve as much of the building's original character as possible while enhancing and expanding the offerings of the Community Arts Center, which already includes the operational Kalmanson Gallery.</p>
<p>Partners: Emanuel Coalition for Cultural & Economic Development, City of Swainsboro, Emanuel County Commissioners, Emanuel Arts Council, Chamber of Commerce</p>	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Continue working with architects and contractors to complete the renovation phase of the theater.	Mayor Bennett	Melissa Kirby	06/25	In Progress	\$1,500,000
2. Complete the installation of the equipment funded by the FY 2025 Georgia Council for the Arts Community Facilities grant.	Ken Warnock	Melissa Kirby	05/25	Completed	\$150,000
3. Provide updates on the Karrh Community Arts Center Facebook page to show the progress at the theater.		Melissa Kirby	08/25	In Progress	\$0
4. Review and update theater website	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
5. Develop an operational plan for the theater	Mayor Bennett	Melissa Kirby	06/25	Completed	\$0
6. Identify and apply for grants to support Karrh Center project		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
7. Maintain support of the Karrh Center project by presenting progress presentations to local civic groups.		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
8. Plan a Theater Event for Donors	Kristin Hall	Melissa Kirby	08/25	In Progress	\$5,000
				Total	\$1,655,000

<p>TS1 Goal 2: Engage more community members in activities of the DDA</p>	<p>Define Success: Increased volunteer and participant base, more diverse group of volunteers and participants</p>
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Partners: City of Swainsboro, Chamber of Commerce, Emanuel Arts Council, East Georgia State College, Southeastern Technical College, Board of Education

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
TS1 Goal 3: Develop and maintain or strengthen relationships with local businesses that utilize and promote downtown Swainsboro's unique assets, while providing entertainment and encouraging community spirit.	Nick Robertson	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
1. Develop and maintain or strengthen relationships with local businesses that utilize and promote downtown Swainsboro's unique assets, while providing entertainment and encouraging community spirit.	Nick Robertson	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
2. Boost social media efforts	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$500
Partners: Downtown Businesses, Downtown Property Owners, City of Swainsboro, Recreation Dept., Police Dept., Fire Dept.					
3. Develop a citizen engagement and volunteer recruitment process.	Kristin Hall	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$0
4. Meet & Greet with the DDA board members & staff	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	09/25	In Progress	\$500
Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Spring Holiday Retail Event	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	04/25	Completed	\$300
5.					\$0
2. Christmas Open House Holiday Retail Event	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	11/25	Completed	\$500
6.					\$0
3. Fall Festival Event	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	10/25	Completed	\$200
4. Christmas Parade	Kristin Hall	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$1,000
5. Host a series of three concert events downtown.		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Postponed	\$9,000
6. Work with the local Jaycees to host their 3 rd Annual Freedom Fest Downtown.		Melissa Kirby	07/25	Completed	\$2,700
7. Back to School Touch A Truck Event	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	08/25	Completed	\$1,000
8. Tasks 1-7 are ongoing annual projects.					\$500
9. Holiday Market / Taste of Emanuel	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	04/26	In Progress	\$500
10. Drive-In Movies to Promote Theater		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Canceled	\$3,000
				Total	\$17,700

TS1 Goal 4:	Define Success:
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Partners:

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1.					\$0
2.					\$0
3.					\$0
4.					\$0
5.					\$0
6.					\$0
7.					\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$0

Transformation Strategy 2: Enhance the appeal, history, and unique characteristics of Downtown Swainsboro through architecture, landscape, and other design improvements

Why? Preserve downtown’s historic assets and use them to help tell the story of the community. How a place looks and feels has a great bearing on how happy people are there, how involved they are in the community, and it sets the tone for the rest of the community.

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4
Maintain seasonal decorations downtown	Review the effectiveness of the façade grant program and continue to promote it to downtown businesses.	Conduct a walking audit of downtown to address concerns of the walkability, cleanliness, and unsightly and nuisance properties of downtown.	<i>Develop a plan to install murals in downtown areas.</i>

Repeat Annual Responsibilities
 Maintain downtown flowers and plantings
 Decorate the Square for various seasons and holidays

TS2 Goal 1: Maintain seasonal decorations downtown	Define Success: Ensure downtown is decorated for key seasons/holidays
Partners: City of Swainsboro, Clearwater Solutions, Design/Decoration Committee	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Maintain Wagon on the Square	Kristin Hall	Melissa Kirby Willie Butler	12/25	Ongoing	\$1,000
2. Add new Christmas decorations (Christmas lights, wreaths, garland, and new packages.)	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	11/25	In Progress	\$6,000
3. Replace real flowers in hanging baskets with fake flowers.	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Postponed	\$3,000
4. Replace 110 Welcome Banners & 110 Christmas Banners		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Completed	\$10,000
5.					\$0
6.					\$0
7.					\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$20,000

TS2 Goal 2: Review the effectiveness of the façade grant program and continue to promote it to downtown businesses.	Define Success: Multiple businesses and property owners apply for façade grants and refresh their properties
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Partners: City of Swainsboro, Business Owners, Property Owners

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Promote the program to business and property owners	Kristin Hall	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$2,000
2. Review the effectiveness of the façade grant and make recommendations to the board on how to make the grant more effective while preserving the historic characteristics of downtown.	Anna Gambrell Sara Young	Melissa Kirby	01/25	In Progress	\$0
3.					\$0
4.					\$0
5.					\$0
6.					\$0
7.					\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$2,000

TS2 Goal 3: Annual Review of Downtown	Define Success: A clean, safe, and attractive downtown.
Partners: City of Swainsboro, Clearwater Solutions, Emanuel County Commissioners, Chamber of Commerce, Property Owners, Business Owners, Keep Emanuel Beautiful	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Identify any safety issues	Nick Robertson	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
2. Identify any unsightly and/or nuisance properties	Nick Robertson	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
3. Promote and partner with Keep Emanuel Beautiful to improve the cleanliness of downtown		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
4. Organize data collected from the walking audit and present findings to the appropriate responsible parties.	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	01/26	In Progress	\$0
5. Work with code enforcement to address the unsightly and nuisance properties	Nick Robertson	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
6.					\$0
7.					\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$0

TS2 Goal 4: Install vibrant, locally inspired murals throughout Downtown Swainsboro to attract visitors, enhance the visual appeal of the area, and celebrate the community’s unique identity and culture.	Define Success: The mural installation project will be considered successful when it visibly enhances the aesthetic of Downtown Swainsboro, increases foot traffic and engagement, and fosters community pride and visitor
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interest.

Partners: City of Swainsboro, Keep Emanuel Beautiful, Property Owners, Business Owners, Chamber of Commerce, Emanuel County Commissioners

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Identify potential mural locations (public and private buildings downtown) and obtain permission from property owners.	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	03/25	Ongoing	\$0
2. Decide on a mural theme (Swainsboro history, community pride, nature, arts)	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	08/25	Completed	\$0
3. Gather community input via surveys, meetings, or social media polls	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	05/25	Completed	\$0
4. Build partnerships with local organizations (Emanuel Arts Council, Emanuel Artist Guild, Keep Emanuel Beautiful)		Melissa Kirby	05/25	Ongoing	\$0
5. Create a project budget (artist fees, supplies, lifts, sealing, marketing) & Explore Funding options.		Melissa Kirby	09/25	Completed	\$0
6. Wall preparation and installation of mural.	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	11/25	Completed	\$7,500
7. Document progress and promote murals online via social media.		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Completed	\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$7,500

Transformation Strategy 3: Establish partnerships to enhance the activities and impact of the DDA

Why? In a small town like Swainsboro, it is increasingly important to work with multiple organizations and establish partnerships to meet common goals.

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4
Strengthen relationships with local schools	Host quarterly meetings of downtown business owners and explore the possibility of a merchants' association or other networking organizations	Continuing support of the Emanuel Arts Council	Strengthen relationships with community partners, volunteers, and board members.

Repeat Annual Responsibilities

Fall Festival
 Christmas Parade
 Freedom Fest Concert
 Pine Tree Festival
 Present programs for local organizational meetings (such as Rotary, Kiwanis, Exchange Club, etc.)

TS3 Goal 1: Strengthen relationships with local schools.	Define Success: Increase student involvement in downtown events.
Partners: Emanuel Co. Board of Education, East Georgia State College, Southeastern Technical College	

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Boost social media presence		Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$100
2. Host an event in partnership with a local college to appeal to students	Anna Gambrell Sara Young	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$0
3. Develop High School & College Leadership Program	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$0
4.					\$0
5.					\$0
6.					\$0
7.					\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$0

TS3 Goal 2: Host quarterly meetings of downtown business owners and explore possibility of merchants' association or other networking organizations.	Define Success: Seeing business owners come together to develop and execute their ideals. Develop merchants' associations to help boost retail activities and increase networking.
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Partners: City of Swainsboro, Downtown Business Owners		Define Success: A thriving, successful arts center to attract visitors to the downtown area.			
TS3 Goal 3: Continue support of the Emanuel Arts Council					
Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
Partners: City of Swainsboro, Emanuel Arts Council, and activities and gain retailer input	Shaye Davis	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
2. Offer educational opportunities for downtown business owners	Mayor Bennett Board Member	Melissa Kirby Staff	12/25	In Progress	\$0
Task	Responsible	Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Boost social media presence	Ken Warnock	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
4.					
2. Provide and maintain a space at the Karrh Community Arts Center to house the Emanuel Arts Council	Mayor Bennett	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
5					
3. Promote and partner with the Emanuel Arts Council to provide art events at the center.	Sara Young	Melissa Kirby	12/25	Ongoing	\$0
6:					\$0
5:					\$0
6.					\$0
8.					\$0
7.				Total	\$0
					\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$0

TS3 Goal 4: Strengthen relationships with community partners, volunteers, and board members through a successfully trained DDA board.

Define Success: A successfully trained board working with community partners, volunteers, and other board members to promote the continued success of Main Street Approach in our community.

Partners: City of Swainsboro, Chamber of Commerce

Task	Board Member Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Develop a DDA board manual containing all pertinent information regarding DDA.	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$0
2. Develop new board member onboard training	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$0
3. Create a new board member recruitment process.	Anna Gambrell	Melissa Kirby	12/25	In Progress	\$0
4.					\$0
5.					\$0
6.					\$0
7.					\$0
8.					\$0
				Total	\$0