

# Analysis of Strengths and Weaknesses





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The student planning group summarized the existing strengths and weaknesses in Colquitt from analysis of the Existing Conditions and the results from the Community Visioning Workshops. The following findings guided the decisions for the planning initiatives recommended in the Sustainability Plan.

## **STRENGTHS**

### **Regional Location and Accessibility**

There is a potentially captive audience poised to consume Colquitt's goods and services, due to the fact that the City offers quick access to U.S. Highway 27, State Road 45, and State Road 91, and is located approximately 1 hour away from mid-size cities in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia.

A freight rail corridor runs along the City's eastern boundary that could be readily converted to passenger service, thereby enhancing Colquitt's accessibility.

### **Compact Urban Form**

The existing grid road network provides extensive connectivity and maximizes the opportunity for pedestrian and bicycling throughout the community.

The street network and Central town square provide the community with the structure of a compact core that offers significant opportunity for enhancement.

Vacant buildings and parcels are available for infill development.

## The Arts

The Colquitt-Miller County Arts Council and *Swamp Gravy* are catalysts for the growth of Colquitt's burgeoning arts and entertainment industry.

## Municipal Commitment

In recent years, the City has made a serious commitment to improving the quality of life in Colquitt by providing funds and obtaining grants for needed infrastructure and community facility improvements, including:

- New wastewater treatment plant
- New potable water well and water tower
- New consolidated K-12 school
- Town Square façade improvements
- Sidewalk funding
- Recent Housing Conditions study

## Small Town Character

Some buildings around the historic town square have undergone renovation. This activity is revitalizing the downtown square.

The agricultural edge limits development, thereby enhancing community peace and quiet relative to nearby big cities, such as Bainbridge, Tallahassee, and Albany.

## WEAKNESSES

### Physical and Social Deterioration

The population of Colquitt is declining, while the State of Georgia continues to grow in population.

Aside from the town square, the public realm throughout the community is ignored or deteriorated.

Litter-strewn streets and vacant, abandoned, or dilapidated properties project a physical manifestation of community apathy and lack of pride.

### No Shared Community Identity

Disparities within the community include:

- **Age:** The largest population group consists of persons over the age of 65, while the smallest population group consists of persons between the ages of 20-24. The needs of the elderly are different than those of the rest of the community.
- **Race:** The population is evenly divided with 56% African Americans and 44% Whites.
- **Income :** 23% of Colquitt's households earn less than \$10,000 annually.
- **Employment:** There is a lack of decent jobs for those without means.
- **Spatial:** Many of the lower-income residential areas contain homes that are dilapidated beyond rehabilitation. These same neighborhoods lack any sort of comprehensible pedestrian facilities and provide very little in terms of forging healthy and sustainable neighborhoods.

### Lack of Transportation Options within the Public Realm

- Inadequate pedestrian connectivity (i.e., a limited number of sidewalks in poor condition and dangerous ditches line too many roads) severely limits transportation opportunities and increases demand on automobiles.
- Dangerous intersections inhibit transportation choices.
- No alternative transportation (i.e., a public bus system, on-demand transportation) options exist.
- No bike paths exist.

**Short-Term Mindset of Urban Design Implications: There is no urban design cohesiveness**

For example:

- The courthouse is not architecturally sensitive to the surrounding built form of the town square.
- Triple-tiered parking around the town square is excessive and detracts from its appearance.
- The town square needs more usable green space.
- The new K-12 school, located in the northeast, is not easily accessible to all residents.

**Lack of Community Activities and Economic Development**

- Colquitt does not have sufficient activities/opportunities to capture the dedication of its youth.
- Colquitt does not have sufficient activities/opportunities to harness and channel the energy generated by *Swamp Gravy*.
- Additional activities/attractions would enhance the quality of experience for both residents and visitors.
- A lack of retail stores, restaurants, specialty shops, etc. limits local economic return.
- There is a lack of recreational activities (i.e., movies, bowling alley, skate park).
- Colquitt needs more economic development opportunities.
- Colquitt needs jobs that provide a livable wage.
- There is a lack of industrial diversity.