Archway Partnership Project
Americus-Sumter County Listening Session Report
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for the
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at the
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Introduction
The Rees Park Economic Development Center hosted Americus and Sumter County community leaders to discuss issues relevant to their partnership with the University of Georgia. The Archway Partnership is a joint venture between Public Service and Outreach and Cooperative Extension at UGA and the local governments of the counties where Archway is located. Current partnerships exist with Moultrie/Colquitt County, Washington County, Clayton County and Brunswick-Glynn County.

The Archway Partnership Project delivers the full range of university resources to cities and counties facing significant issues, especially those related to growth. Archway provides access to subject matter, programs and resources not traditionally addressed by Cooperative Extension’s core program areas or Public Service and Outreach units. It implements priorities identified by communities, in meetings such as this one, by providing a single access point to UGA and other University System of Georgia institutions. Archway also provides an arena for faculty and successful business people to serve as both teachers and learners, and opportunities to engage students in active roles addressing community needs. The Archway partners collaborate with local community entities as well as state government entities on a sustained, long-term basis to create solutions to community problems.

In an attempt to get at issues confronting Americus and Sumter County, facilitators from across UGA led discussions of 3 questions by small groups of participants. The following report presents the results of the session. The first section presents a summary of the discussion results, and an appendix contains the results captured by facilitators as well as a transcription of individual written comments. Results have not been edited except for spelling corrections.

Discussion Summary

What are the trends, forces and factors that will impact the community your organization, agency, etc.? Think in terms of increasing, decreasing or cyclical trends.

The economy is worsening in Americus-Sumter County as it is elsewhere in the state, and fuel prices are rising. Manufacturing jobs are disappearing. Service industry jobs are increasing, but they don't pay as well as manufacturing jobs. Tourism is suffering, although the SAM Shortline train has brought in more tourists. Decreases in taxes leading to decreases in state funds for retraining the workforce also makes the area less desirable to industries with higher-paying jobs.

The educated middle class population is migrating out to surrounding counties. The Hispanic population is increasing as is the proportion of the working poor. The population is aging, but there is a potential to attract retirees.

Health care is suffering due to the damage to the hospital. There are fewer doctors and nurses, and services have been scaled back or dropped.

The migration of the educated middle class is due in part to people seeking other schools for their children. Those left are not as involved in the schools. The dropout rate is high and increasing. In contrast to the problems in the k-12 school system, the post-secondary schools in the county are doing well. Georgia Southwestern and Southwest Georgia Tech are both growing.
Based on the trends, forces and factors that you identified, what are the specific things that need to be done in order to adapt to the change? (Start with a verb.)

Improve education by hiring more teachers and paying them better, except those whose children go to school out of the county. Increase partnerships with businesses, churches, and higher education institutions. Increase the vocational curriculum; teach parenting, personal finance and budgeting, as well as the history of the community. Provide after school classes in math, English, and character building, and GED classes at night and on weekends.

Inventory economic development assets and build on those: e.g., exploit the agricultural base and current tourism efforts (expand the ethanol plant, develop agro-tourism activities, allow Sunday sales of liquor, create meeting facilities, etc.). Do not focus exclusively on tourism, but also recruit industries that match the skills being taught at the technical college. Approach economic development from a regional perspective; develop regional partnerships to recruit business and industry.

Sell the community to itself and to outsiders. Publish positive information about the schools in the media, inform the community about activities and assets, such as the excursion train downtown, and capitalize on Lake Blackshear. Improve communication between county and city government, between agencies and the public and between businesses and schools for better workforce preparedness.

Develop a comprehensive plan that addresses poverty, education, economic development, health care and the hospital, marketing, and housing, and that creates a vision and mission for the community. Physically rebuild community: redevelop blighted areas and the Highway 19 corridor. Add parking downtown. Build a community/civic center and expand the recreation center. Work with developers or create a co-op to build affordable housing. Rebuild the hospital in order to recruit physicians and medical professionals.

What are the opportunities, assets, etc. that we need to be aware of that would assist our work in Americus-Sumter County?

The rich history of the area is an economic development tool. Andersonville and the Jimmy Carter Historic Site bring tourists from around the world who can stay to visit more locally known attractions, such as the Rylander Theatre, the Windsor Hotel, and the SAM Shortline Excursion Train. The Rylander and Windsor also help make downtown a beautiful place and complement other historic neighborhoods such as Rees Park, where the old school has been rebuilt as the Rees Park Economic Development Center.

Habitat for Humanity is probably the most well-known of the faith-based organizations that are assets to Americus and Sumter County. Although its mission is philanthropic, it also functions as a tourist attraction, drawing visitors to the community. Other organizations that contribute to the economic development of the area include the Tourism Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Authority.

Lake Blackshear provides recreational opportunities for residents and is another draw for visitors to the area. The golf course there is one of three in the vicinity. Other recreational assets include the low cost of the recreation and parks department and the strong high school athletic program. The area also hosts a number of events: Black Family Reunions, Taste of Sumter, Griffin Bell Quail Hunt, Peanut Festival, Pecan Festival, and Dogwood Festival.

Americus-Sumter County is home to two institutions of higher education: Georgia Southwestern University and South Georgia Technical College. SGTC partners with local high schools to develop the
area's workforce. There are extracurricular programs, such as 4-H and mentoring programs, and Educare Learning Center provides preschool education.

The people of Americus and Sumter County are assets. They have diverse talents and skills. They are friendly, caring, hospitable, and strong. They volunteer and are community oriented. Their good work ethic and common desire to make improvements results in cooperative governments with a progressive mayor, excellent sheriff, and a strong Commission team. The city and county leadership is diverse. A strong history of leadership is continuing with a younger generation eager to take leadership positions.

The strong entrepreneurial spirit of the people and current economic conditions provide a lot of potential for the area. There is an unemployed workforce willing to work, vacant buildings and land ready for occupation, and the expectation of a rebuilt hospital. The transportation network is in place, with an airport, railroads and a 4-lane alternative to I-75.
Appendix A

Table Responses
What are the trends, forces and factors that will impact the community, your organization, agency, etc. (increasing, decreasing, or cyclical)?

Trends

Economy

- Real estate: needs more jobs, lost jobs
- Loss of manufacturing jobs and farming jobs due to globalization.
- Loss of high income jobs
- Major job and industry loss
- Loss of businesses/jobs because of economic downturns
- Declining job opportunity for college graduates. Kids can't come back and can't retain the ones who would stay.
- Continuing loss of manufacturing jobs, loss of stimulation of economy
- Professional job opportunities decreasing
- Decreasing manufacturing employment, increasing service, but lower wages
- Decline in manufacturing jobs
- Brain drain due to lack of adequate opportunity
- Decrease in jobs; loss of largest employer
- Decreasing manufacturing base.
- Chain stores are increasing. Decline in locally owned businesses. Impact is money leaves county. Lower paying jobs result. Lose local financial support for local activities and civic organizations.
- Increasing need for gap training and life-long learning programs, especially for those that have lost their manufacturing jobs for long periods of time.
- Uneducated workforce coupled with plant closing and shrinking state funds have compounding effect
- Life skills or nontraditional educational programs have not kept pace with needs.
- Loss of industry due to dropout rate—not able to attract businesses with decent salaries. Education level of school is low. Can't attract industry.
- Rising fuel costs
- Rising fuel cost
- Gas prices and economy are perpetuating our problems of poverty
- Increasing fuel prices
- Decrease in tax base
- Shrinking state budget
- Increase concern about tax revenues.
- Public housing has a negative economic impact on current tax base
- 10-15% budget cuts to tourism
- Decline in passenger count—train tourism
- Tourism stagnating
• Increase in tourism with the Sam Shortline train
• Declining economy plus tornado compounding effect
• Value of agriculture land being lost to out-of-state owners

Population
• Upper middle class counties drawing upper income away
• College graduates don't return.
• Housing growth: middle to upper end is moving out of city, staying in county; losing population to Schley Co. due to better schools. Exodus of families. Challenge to retain tax base.
• Migration of many educated professional types from the community
• Rising Latino population
• Increasing Hispanic minority in community: impact in schools and community; bilingual capacity at question; can't afford to ignore. Ignore would disrupt school system, lose if not full range of services. Impacts k-12 and higher ed. Question of allowing non-access?
• Increase in Hispanic population
• Increase in Hispanic population (permanent residents).
• Increasing indigent population, numbers of working poor
• Increasing population of uneducated individuals who are trapped in the cycle of poverty
• Increasing births to unwed mothers.
• Increase in single parent households
• Increasing homeless population
• Growing underclass and illiteracy
• Increasing potential to attract retirees
• Increasing aging population.
• Aging population/retirement community

Health care
• Doctors leaving, difficulty recruiting
• Nurse shortage
• Decreasing medical footprint
• Changing expectations of medics, fewer medical doctors; OB patients forced to go out of town
• Decreasing quality of health care due to departure of physicians
• Decrease in medical professionals and services.
• Loss of health care and services, uncertainty of whether can afford to rebuild regional hospital.
• Decreasing number of medical professionals due to tornado.
• Decrease in medical professionals
• Decrease in the general wellness of the population.
• Decreasing health care due to hospital
• Better training for health care workers as well as more workers
• Lower teen pregnancy rates
Education

- Growth of GSW and South Georgia Technical
- College population increasing. (enrollment)
- Increase in enrollment at Technical College
- Growing enrollment at college and technical college
- Increase student population at South Georgia Tech & GA Southwestern
- Trend of continuous growth at GA Southwestern: dollars to the community, work force opportunities,
- Trend of white parents choosing private and neighboring public schools
- Quality students and families leaving the district
- Increase in white flight from public school system
- Education levels are low and dropout rate is high and trending upward despite efforts to address.
- Decrease in retention of teachers in public school system
- Decreasing involvement in schools due to apathy.

Crime

- Increasing drug use and crime (property)
- Increasing crime among youth
- Increase in violent crime
- Increase in gang population
- Increase in "education" level of gang members to avoid detection

Communication

- Decreasing interaction between cultures and races.
- Perceived decrease in cooperation between county government officials and key businesses.
- Increasing collaboration/communication between city and county governments
- Progressive collaboration between GA Southwestern, and South GA Tech is happening.
- Decrease in collaboration between agencies that offer social services

Youth

- Decreasing options for activities for those ages 13-18
- Decreasing after-school programs
- Decreasing attractions for young people to return to the county.

Other trends

- Increased traffic with Hwy 19
- Tornado has caused community to come together in urgent way but not sustaining
- Decreasing number of role models and core of leadership within the community (decreasing number/base of volunteers).
- Cost of living and families having to make tough decisions
Other forces and factors

Transportation and infrastructure
- Infrastructure: roads, water, sewer capacity
- Letting other counties pipe in water instead of using city supplied water
- Infrastructure within city limits is limited, makes growth difficult
- Modernization with roads and infrastructure
- Planned four-laning, transportation issues
- Transportation needs: calls daily about bus systems
- Mass transit is being used and resources to manage additional load is a burden
- Lack of transportation options (e.g., public transit, opportunities to carpool)
- Lack of public transportation
- Lack of intra-county transportation
- Traffic access air and vehicle

Education
- Dropout rates before 12 graduation
- School system costs to fuel cost
- Racial divide in k-12 education. Public schools 80% minority. Huge private school 98% white
- Negative perception of public schools
- Education: low graduation rates - test scores
- High drop out rate
- High drop out rate
- Losing great number of human resources. Dropout rate of African-American males after 10th grade is high—crime, drugs
- Technical schools and colleges train but the jobs are here to retain the employees

Recreation
- Lack of activities for college students
- Lack of recreational amenities for college students
- Lack of recreational opportunities for youth
- Lack of diversity in activities offered in community
- Needed more public exercise places
- Entertainment opportunities for students
- Lack of recreational opportunities, shopping, dining esp for college age

Housing
- Sumter County housing issue: medium price in decent area for working couples with one more children—too substandard
- Need for clean affordable public housing
- Demand for additional housing, residential construction
- Need first home buyers in 65k to 70k and end up buying substandard
• Homes are too expensive or substandard
• Habitat for Humanity foreclosure on homes affects our economy

Health care
• Lack of medical care
• Availability of health care can't meet the needs of underserved
• Lack of doctors and other medical professionals
• Lack of medical facilities to support medical practitioners
• Lingering anxiety about hospital esp. with aging health care needs
• Wellness programs

Jobs
• Lack of jobs available in community
• Lack of non-service-related jobs
• Lack of employment for skilled (technical) and college-educated individuals

Workforce
• Lack of workforce and skilled labor
• Workforce development
• Lack of skilled workforce despite institutions of higher education

Other
• Ability to better market community assets
• Tornado has given the community opportunity to upgrade facilities like this one
• Generational poverty
• Generational poverty
• Greater race relations
• Racism, racism, racism
• Community involvement is desired but unwilling to provide resources and mentoring
• Lack of parental involvement at school, church,
• Citizen apathy and lack of communication
• Need more people moving in that are professionals to take care of people
• Lack of quality of childcare
• Youth flight
• Negative perception of the community at large by media
• Crime rate and teen pregnancy
• Latino population entering school
• Lack of employment/guidance for ex-offenders
• Preparedness for aging population
• Lack of open space (land) for annexation
• Low levels of "younger" leadership
• Consolidation of public services
• DEFACS can't keep up with cases and not as aggressive b/c of limited resources
• Mismatch between old and young on how community should progress  
• Lack of supervision of students in after-school activities  
• Unattractive entrance and exit corridors into Americus  
• High single-parent households  
• Inaction of supply/demand of oil market (citizens are paying too high fuel prices)  
• Lack of respect for community and environment (e.g. littering/pollution)  
• Lack of internship opportunities  
• Lack of strategic planning!!!  
• Collaboration between educational systems  
• Very poor capacity for customer service in this community

Based on the trends, etc. that you identified, what are the specific things that need to be done in order to adapt to the change? (Start with a verb.)

Education

• Increase number of teachers, reduce student/teacher ratio; increase parapros.  
• Don't hire teachers in our school system whose children go to other county schools  
• Increase local salary supplements for teachers to help retain and recruit teachers.  
• Recruit and retain leaders in leading school system with expertise in generational poverty  
• Churches/state agencies/schools need to get more involved in helping parents get involved in their child's education  
• Link faith-based organizations and other volunteer orgs. with schools or educational programs.  
• Encourage adopt a school programs by organizations, churches & business  
• Continue partnership with GSW and SGTC  
• Continue to explore opportunity for collaborations between 2 colleges–key. Access to services; access to college  
• Work with So. GA Tech and schools to enroll high school students in technical courses. Increase technical course offerings in high and middle  
• Continue expansion of collaborative partnership between schools and higher education  
• Further enhance and expedite partnerships between educational institutions GSW and SGT (will support job training, education, "college town").  
• Provide after school programs–math, English and character building  
• Implement evening/weekend GED classes  
• Teach history of community in early education setting  
• Offer training in parenting  
• Focus on developing parenting skills in community  
• Create educational programs on personal finance and budgeting  
• Educate current workforce and implement job training and life skills programs in high schools (make everyone "job-ready").
• Implement vocational training at junior high school and high school level in order to encourage students to graduate—use resources of technical college—don't invent something new.
• AIDS awareness courses
• Stop social promotion in schools
• Force neighboring counties to stay within their legal limits of accepting out-of-county students
• Increase number of mentors in our public schools
• More charter schools with flexibility for teachers; less emphasis on testing
• Integrate more bilingual courses into college curriculum and get teacher training and certification
• Encourage parental involvement in schools
• Make educational opportunities available for all.
• Reward students for academic success
• Improve and promote public education
• Find a way to increase education level
• Obtain funding to embrace growth in colleges
• Encourage state legislators to put more funding in education
• Train public school faculty and administrators to be good advocates for public education
• Develop programs to prevent dropout rate
• Become fearless in applying school policies to counter discipline issues. Develop and implement teacher retention programs. Encourage parental involvement in the schools.
• Improve public school outcomes, retention, performance, increase perception of quality
• Develop initiatives around public education system to keep children from moving to surrounding county schools
• Instill desire to learn in kids
• Change curriculum and some staffing at schools to reflect new demographics and new realities
• Create attitude of HS diploma (not just GED)

**Improve the economy**

• Continue expansion of ethanol plant production without subsidies
• Improve efforts to increase tourism by using agriculture as asset: agro-tourism. Agriculture base would attract people to see farms and products
• Change Sunday liquor sales laws
• Need to exploit our ag base more effectively
• Create convention opportunities—need more facilities with meeting space
• Develop new activities to attract tourists
• Look at other options besides tourism to help solve problems (perhaps focused too much on this)—need to give incentives to employers to locate here
• Do not take just any industries (strategically look and build an employment base)
• Identify all of our economic development assets
• Train employees to have positive attitude (e.g., soft skills)
• Develop community-wide customer service training to support tourism and regional trade
• Expand and enhance current economic dev efforts to attract retirement housing
• Develop regional partnerships to attract industry early
• Approach economic development on a regional basis
• Become more informed about economic development opportunities available at the state level, national trends
• Hard to get out of the poverty cycle and need more ideas and businesses to help employ folks
• Improve job opportunities/recruit employers/manufacturing
• Get citizens to spend retail dollars locally
• Pursue high tech industries to complement military bases
• Actively pursue business recruitment, replace lost jobs
• Need service and retail jobs to grow–but will be competing locally–accept this
• Grow business from current population
• Encourage residents to support local merchants
• Offer incentives to employers to locate here
• Develop a program with existing businesses to offer temporary employment to ex-offenders to determine their willingness to become contributing members of society
• Establish a priority to attracting industry to serve our most unemployed
• Support the agriculture industry in Sumter County
• Look at eye to future (SGA TECH GRADS) to match new industries–coordinated effort with colleges and true needs for companies–surveys don't seem to be analyzed and used
• Create business incentives to attract more businesses.
• Get specific to tell industries what new technical skills are being trained for in the colleges and tech schools

**Promote the area**

• Educate community on what is available already, ex: excursion train downtown
• Improve public imagine of community and school system–improve marketing for "pride in community"
• Create positive articles in news media
• Show public schools in a positive light
• Sell the community–educate everyone on assets. promote positives, accomplishments, famous people, historical venues,
• Identify and market existing assets to promote the county.
• Encourage local media to show community in positive light
• Promote successes in public school system
• Change perceptions of our public schools to new residents
• Increase positive reporting in media–currently focus on negative events only
• Send positive articles to news media (editorials)
• Increase cooperation/coordination between community and newspaper to report positive events
• Thank media when publishing something positive
• Market educational programs to the target population that needs them the most.
• Public education: print articles with positive data on public schools; increase mentors; speak positively about public education; encourage community to go into the schools to observe; coordinate efforts of supportive agencies so that all are working for common goals.
• Needed liaison person for city, county, community, historic, arts, education, university, technical. These assets need to be pulled together
• Capitalize on proximity to Lake Blackshear
• Enhance cooperative marketing of tourism and historical programs

**Plan**
• Create a master plan for downtown development
• Prioritize our goals in community (long term and short term)
• Define who we are as a community and become proactive to needs in a coordinated effort
• Develop 5-, 10-, 15-year master plan, make it attainable but plan
• Develop a community growth plan, plan for measure and accountability
• Bring in new brain power to planning, community processes
• Explore ideas from community models, aspirational communities
• Develop a plan to attract young people back to the community including educational opportunities for their children, recreation, and long-term job and career opportunities.
• Combined land use plan for county and city.
• Plan effective for transportation issues, move truck traffic out of downtown area to make it more pedestrian friendly
• Revamp community culture to include commonly understood community vision and mission.
• Create a housing plan to deal with public housing issues, develop plans for alternatives
• Re-evaluate how our public entities are spending our money—great programs are under funded, poor projects are over funded
• Proactive: each organization and company needs to be more proactive in their own strategic planning
• Comprehensive marketing plan for tourism, retirement community, regional trade and community resources
• Develop a new marketing plan for all the great things Americus has to offer

**Improve health care**
• Need more care for elderly and retirement
• Need health care specialists
• Upper end health care to appeal to retirees
• Need state of the art healthcare facility
• Improve health care facilities on fast track
• Rebuild hospital to facilitate physician recruitment between now and fall of 2010.
• Move forward with hospital planning, we are held up
• Address healthcare facilities/services shortage
• Rebuild independent Sumter Regional Hospital.
• Develop medical office facilities to help with recruitment.
• Build hospital quickly
• Use physician's assistants to lower cost of medical care
• Get the damn hospital rebuilt
• Need hospital facility and staff
More transparency with building hospital and all of health care

Transport
- Need to complete 4-lane Hwy 19
- Improve highway to 4-lane–attract industry and create jobs.
- Build an access corridor for the recreation dept. from town
- Pursue public transportation county-wide
- Develop public transportation to access education opportunity GED students can't get to programs.
- Create intra-city transportation
- Deposit people from train into downtown
- Attract a local airport carrier.
- Need transportation infrastructure to support new industry

Communicate
- Improve communication between county and city government.
- Educate the public about positive things that are happening
- Increase communication between businesses and schools for better workforce preparedness.
- Put resources and incentives behind enabling collaboration between community agencies–leverage our resources
- Agencies need to be more transparent, communicate with public, build trust
- Develop a community communications rubric
- Tailor advertising of college activities to everyone in community to increase attendance

Build
- Physically rebuild community
- Increase downtown parking
- Redevelop Hwy 19 corridor
- Redevelop blighted areas
- Build a community/civic center.
- Complete Felder street curbing/sidewalk, make it pedestrian/bike friendly
- Co-op to construct an upgraded affordable housing
- Coordinate with developers to build affordable housing
- Expand recreation facilities. Pool facility is needed at Sports Land; dev. transportation

Serve those in need
- Implement community service requirement for students
- Increase local resources to better deliver social services and increase awareness.
- Unify community services
- Need Social Security office and social service industries to hire people
- Develop a centralized process/ facility including religious, agency & government programs to help the individuals in need
• Give people opportunity to be paid jobs for public service projects to build community service
• People who need help should also provide needed services in return for assistance (without being odious)

Support youth
• Make more funds available for recreational activities for Boys and Girls Club, etc.
• Develop and implement plan to expand recreational opportunities for youth
• Develop a co-ed recreation program for teenagers
• Instill hope in youth that do not get direction and support from parents.
• Use community projects as training opportunities for youth skills development

Develop leaders
• Develop community leadership academy
• Increase leadership in minority community to share ideas/planning
• Continue develop youth leadership courses/classes
• Offer more leadership possibilities to larger number of youth through internships, mentoring, collaboration of agencies
• Need leadership training for young adults
• Provide more leadership opportunities for youth. Give them ownership in the community.

Change the culture
• Create a college-town atmosphere: live music, boutiques, coffee shops
• Change culture to robust college town
• Enforce litter laws and public good laws
• Develop more activities for college students, restaurants, nightclubs, bars, more youth oriented
• Build more of a college town atmosphere.

Consolidate
• Merge city and county government services
• Consolidate city and county government.
• Create charter commission to study consolidation of city and county government
• Continue to encourage relationships with adjacent counties to share resources

Create events
• Increase events such as "Taste of Sumter"
• Hire an event coordinator for community activities
• Promote more community-wide functions.
• Bring back the Airshows

Improve race relations
• Examine racial tensions
• Develop and implement cultural diversity initiative.
• Improve race relations

**Recreate**

• Create adult recreation programs
• Consider recreation as an investment not expenditure
• Need to leverage facility at Lake Blackshear with Americus

**Other**

• Explore alternative funding sources for community improvement strategies
• Provide larger recycling bins
• Expand recycling program
• Develop more astronomy-friendly neighborhoods—re-evaluate streetlights—market Americus to star lovers
• Clean town up, increase government services
• Coordinate fundraising efforts to reduce duplication/donor exhaustion especially as community rebuilds after tornado
• Print vital statistics and economic indicator in paper on a regular basis
• Enforcing laws already on the books
• Implement a placement agency model to encourage students to return home after graduation
• Population should support local taxes
• Have total involvement by entire community
• Encourage community involvement (get out more...)
• Involve resources in economic development, colleges, local businesses, representatives
• Understanding cause and effect of all opportunities and concerns
• Change our own expectations, we don’t dream big enough
• Involve ourselves in areas where we have a passion
• Invite more people to Sumter County
• Stop blaming others—the buck stops here
• Be open to using experiences of others
• Bite the bullet—we can’t always have our way
• Look out, not in
• Recognize real potential of Sumter County
• Service college student and retiree bases
• Change the low-income cycle—this makes up half of our population. Changes must be made
• Do not be afraid of something new and different
• Bridge gap between high-/low-income populations: include middle-class at decision-making tables
• Provide ways to get more people involved
• Build process that treats the cause not the symptoms of poverty
• Increase accountability of parents—reduce teen pregnancy rates; educate about drop out results,
• Expand attendance at university events
• Stop infighting of traditional institutions (demonstrate by example)
• Educate community re: problems and how to handle (before leaving the community—help out)
• People who are affected by community challenges need to be heard.
• Develop our citizens then develop our community.
• Develop local environmental programs.
• Understand our agricultural resources

What are the opportunities, assets, etc. that we need to be aware of that would assist our work in Americus-Sumter County?

**Historic preservation**

• Rylander Theatre
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• Windsor Hotel
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• Windsor Hotel
• Sam Shortline Excursion Train and Thomas the Train event
• SAM Shortline
• SAM shortline
• Significant historic district
• Large Historical district
• Two national historic sites, neighborhoods
• Two national historic sites
• Two national parks
• Former President living in our county.
• President Carter/Plains
• Jimmy Carter Historic Site
• Carters and Judge Griffin Bell and their legacy
• Tourist attractions: Andersonville, Jimmy Carter home/farm, telephone museum, SAM Shortline
• Sumter Historic Trust–Lee Council House
• Rich and diverse history that needs to be promoted in story form
• Rich history is an economic development tool
• Great historic assets
• Political history
• Large historical districts and rich history lots of VIPs
• Historic Preservation
• Andersonville
• Andersonville
• Charles Lindbergh solo flight in Americus.
• Rees Park
• Rees Park Economic Development Center
• Rees Park, EDC

Organizations
• Economic Development Authority
• PDA has resources available to aid in economic growth.
• Local and joint development authority
• Tourism council and Chamber of Commerce
• Americus Employer Committee
• Habitat for Humanity
• Habitat for Humanity
• Millard Fuller and the Fuller Center for Housing
• Habitat for Humanity
• The Fuller Center
• Habitat for Humanity's recognition, influence, and draw of individuals to the community.
• New Horizons
• Koinonia Farm
• Churches involved in the community
• Sumter area ministerial association
• Numerous faith-based organizations
• Strong and interdenominational religious community
• Religious groups work together for social services
• Strong network of churches
• Sumter Players Community Theatre
• County Extension programs
• Boys and Girls Clubs
• Boys/Girls club
• Vibrant Boys and Girls Clubs and Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.
• Community involvement in boards
• Regional '911' authority
• Visions for Sumter

Education
• GSW & South Georgia Tech
• GSW and So GA Tech
• GSW
• SGTC
• SGTC
• South GA Tech and GSW
• GSW and South GA Tech
• Colleges and technical schools
• Higher education presence in the community is an asset
• 2 higher education institutions
• CE thru GA SW
• SGTC Work Ready Program
• South Georgia Technical able to provide instruction to workforce for many/most positions in manufacturing
• Adult literacy programs: GED and improving literacy
• Financial Management classes through Cooperative Extension
• Sumter Co. mentoring partnership
• HS just upgraded vocational facility with South Georgia Tech
• 4-H program in our schools
• 2 high schools
• Mentoring programs–performance learning center
• Educare Learning Center
• Wide range of public education opportunities–flexible to meet individual needs.
• Strong educational system
• University-teaching community
• Good public library system
• Dedicated, caring teachers who adapt to changing demographics and state standards
• Great partnership between schools, technical college, and GSWU
• LEAP program

Recreation
• Lake Blackshear
• Lake Blackshear
• Lake Blackshear
• Lake Blackshear/Flint River recreation opportunities
• Parks and recreation
• Good recreation
• Our low-cost recreation dept.
• Black Family Reunions
• Black Family Reunions
• Black Family Reunions
• Griffin Bell Quail Hunt
• Taste of Sumter event
• Andersonville Fair & Pecan festival
• Peanut Festival in Plains
• Dogwood festival, Andersonville fair, peanut festival in Plains
• Three golf courses
• Golf courses
• Strong athletic tradition in High School
• Strong athletic tradition
• GSWU athletics are now DII
- Great arts programs - attract industry
- Diverse recreational & cultural opportunities

**Attitude**
- Can do spirit
- Attitude of hospitality in culture is an asset
- People care about each other, rally when needed
- Good people with good work ethic
- Friendly people
- Common desire to make improvements
- Sumter Board of Education is open to change
- Community interest (engaged people - look at the room)
- Willingness of community to work together in time of need
- Strong sense of volunteerism in community
- Strong work ethic
- Sense of community, has attributes that many are seeking in a safe welcoming place to live
- Close knit community
- Community population is good, down-to-earth
- Strong religious, faith-based community
- Not a litigious community
- Charitable, altruistic bent among population, very giving and willing to volunteer
- Southern Hospitality
- Attitudes for college has improved
- Community oriented.
- Strong entrepreneurial spirit here

**Government**
- Good relationship between city and county governments
- Mayor Barry Blount
- Several regional offices for state government
- Access to state and national elected officials
- Cooperative governments
- Service consolidation
- Excellent sheriff
- Great collaboration between city and county government
- Progressive Mayor
- Room for expansion and ability to extend services with county-city partnership
- Assets are politicians
- State Department of Community Affairs
- Great elected officials
- Reasonably run city government
- GIS Department
- City and county governments promoting economic development together
• Strong Commission Team
• City: honorary council member program
• Pretty good law enforcement

**Economic potential**
• Lots of empty buildings
• Vacant buildings available could be used for other uses (like this Center).
• Existing buildings to retrofit and make into what people need
• Available industrial tract site
• Existing industrial sites and additional land for further expansion
• Opportunity for well-trained workforce
• Good market potential due to population base.
• Willing work force–high unemployment rate
• Good place to develop retirement communities
• Redevelopment after storm
• New hospital...one day
• Hospital
• Rebuilding medical community from scratch
• State database of industries looking to relocate
• Abundance of national and international contacts if properly utilized
• Increasing retail trade options
• State-wide market and visibility

**Transportation**
• Airport
• Underused asset is airport–great facility–great way to recruit industries (amuf of airplanes?)
• Local airport with 6,000-foot runway and ISL system
• Airport.
• Airport
• Local airport
• Good freight rail access
• Railroad System
• Railroad
• Easy access to major hwy arteries–advertise Alt to 75
• US 19 widening
• Hwy 19 being 4-laned
• Four-laning of Highway 19
• 4-lane highway

**Leadership**
• Great leadership in public and higher education
• Leadership in community
• Strong community leadership
• History of strong leadership
• Industry leaders are working very hard
• Good leadership
• Strong leadership willing to try things like the Archway Project
• Diversity among city and county leadership
• Approachable leadership
• New leadership with new ideas and timing is good
• Younger generation who is eager to take leadership positions
• Local youth and adult leadership programs (many offered through the Chamber of Commerce)

Retirement
• Facilities for the elderly
• Excellent retirement and assisted living environment
• Retirement communities
• Retirement community supported by Magnolia Manor
• Magnolia Manor
• Sumter Retirement Village in Plains
• Services for elderly
• Lillian Carter Nursing Center
• Magnolia Manor
• Sumter Retirement Village in Plains
• Services for elderly
• Lillian Carter Nursing Center
• The Village at Southridge
• The Village at Southridge

Natural resources
• Good climate
• Great weather (minus the recent tornado)
• Abundant water resources
• Water
• Abundant water resources
• Water resources
• Attractive landscape
• Land is readily available
• Natural resources, timber, bauxite, water would be forces that bring jobs and money to community. Aquifers are excellent.

Location
• Great base for tourists because of centralized location
• Location
• Location
• Close proximity to interstate
• Retirement destination for baby boomers—many assets (like Chapel Hill)
• Location near Lake Blackshear and Plains
• Good relative proximity to beaches, Atlanta metro, Alabama metro areas
• Proximity to employment, entertainment, and medical venues
• Close to Plains

People
• Leonard Pope, Dan Reeves, Chan Gailey, Victor Green
• Artistic talents in local population, skilled retirees; they just need to be leveraged
• Number and diversity of population: arts, academics, business, faith-based organizations, medical/healthcare professionals
• Diversified population for a town this size
• People
• Excellent people.
• Strength of the people—willing, come together
• Accessibility to Pres. Carter and first lady
• Good name recognition of Sumter County citizens....Jimmy Carter, Griffin Bell

Tourism
• Strong tourism base
• Good tourism infrastructure - excursion train, full time director of tourism
• Tourism & Arts
• Tourism efforts
• Bed and breakfasts
• Heart of Georgia Rail Line

Agriculture
• Cooperative Extension: 4-H, Family & Consumer Sciences, Agriculture
• Agriculture and aquifer
• Rich agricultural community
• New Agricultural Center

Partnerships
• Partnerships: GSW, SGTC, Rylander Theatre, GAP Agency, Friends
• Archway Partnership Program
• Improved relations between city of Americus and GSW
• Corporate partnership
• Great cooperation between institutions

Downtown
• Beautiful downtown areas (shops, etc.)
• Downtown
• Pretty healthy downtown facilities (hotels, food, etc)
• Beautiful downtown

Housing
• Nice neighborhoods with affordable housing
• Existing available affordable housing
• Modest housing cost—low property taxes and utilities cost

Misc.
• Interesting architecture
• Cost of living relatively low
• Good news media / supportive outlets.
• Great community in which to raise a family...highly marketable asset
• Improved public facilities and infrastructure through SPLOST
• New and remodeled businesses are assets
• New courthouse.
• Future one-stop shop
• Youth programs
• Generally peaceful
• Perception of low crime rate
• Convenience
• Quality of life
Appendix B

Individual Written Responses
What are the trends, forces and factors that will impact the community your organization, agency, etc.? Think in terms of increasing, decreasing or cyclical trends.

- Increasing tourism?
- Increasing enrollment at GSW/SGTC
- Decreasing hospital
- Decreasing MDs
- Decreasing jobs (industry)
- Decreasing: smaller middle class
- Cyclical housing market
- Need to increase industry
- Losing great human resource
- Funding for after school programs for children—emphasis on math and English
- Dropout rate for African American males more than 60%
- Impact of crime and drugs
- Loss of industry
- GSW enrollment
- SCTC enrollment
- Healthcare challenges:
  - Loss of physicians and services
  - Loss of nurses
  - Unknowns concerning rebuilding of permanent Sumter Regional Hospital
- Sumter County School System vs. Schley County School System: exodus of students from Sumter Co. schools to Schley Co.
- Expansion of Highway 19
- Chain stores, restaurants, hotel:
  - Lowe's
  - Ruby Tuesday
  - Hotel chains
  - Quiznos
- Declining middle class
- Declining number of locally owned businesses
- Fewer employment opportunities for college graduates
- Decrease in industrial jobs/presence
- Stagnate population
- Increased growth in technical college
- Stagnate growth in GSW
- Decrease in public/private school population (more students go out of the county)
- Loss of jobs due to economic downslide
- Dropout rates
- Infrastructure: water/sewer
- Roads
• Hospital, medical industry
• Job opportunities: **loss of manufacturing**
• Racial divide in k-12
• Hispanic population increase
• Natural resources
• Growth of SGTC and GSW
• K-12 education system: a basically divided community
• Educated young people leaving and not returning
• Increasing prices (rapidly) without comparable wage increases
• General U.S. economic slow-down
• Rising and high cost of fuel
• Loss of manufacturing jobs in Americus
• Relatively low high school graduation rate
• High-end housing growth moving out of city and county
• Uncertainty of regional hospital status
• Increasing growth of Hispanics in communities
• Decreasing number of businesses and industries
• Progressing collaboration between our 2 institutions in our community
• Community individual involvement: decreasing
• Support/volunteer of non-profit agency: decreasing
• Demand of time on volunteer base: spread thin?
• Apathy: increasing
• Demand for services from both government and non-profits: increasing?
• Retention of youth and moving into leadership roles: job/career opportunity
• Changing economy, stocks, housing, oil
• Education level of workforce, now and future
• Medical resources available, then and now and future
• Job availability for existing population, for future population, from prospective industries
• Leadership whether good or bad
• People of leadership and their commitment to our community
• Loss of manufacturing jobs
• Loss of medical professionals: middle income tax base
• Energy costs: more general
• Education: but signs point toward improvement in this area
• Transportation: regional
• Education on all levels will impact our community. We have two institutions of higher learning, but we have to begin to educate our citizens on access to our system. Our community's employment rate, attraction of industry and small businesses will increase as a result of the education of citizens. Educating our citizens on all levels including parenting skills, financial management, literacy.
• Biggest force is the outcome of our community hospital
• Loss of physicians impacts local economy, disposable income
• Tourism plays big part in bringing in **new dollars**
• The impact of globalization: loss of jobs, both manufacturing and farm; the importance of education to overcome loss of jobs; GSW SGT and SRH help anchor the community
• Economy: decreasing? Cyclical?
• Aging population increasing: what impact on the healthcare system?
• Tourism: increasing (but influenced by fuel prices)
• Education: are 2 systems necessary?
• Illiteracy rate: impacts everything
• Loss of manufacturing jobs and agricultural jobs due to globalization
• Jobs
• Education
• Recreation
• Community collaboration
• Government leadership
• Health care
• Church (leadership)
• Clubs and organizations
• Youth flight: jobs
• More involvement in the community with our youth
• More jobs
• Crime
• More doctors
• Young people moving away after high school
• Plant closings
• Jobs (new)
• Health care
• Unified community services
• Decreasing population, particularly youth
• Increasing Hispanic population
• Move of the economic base from the area
• Increase in corporate farms and change of crop production
• Gap between racial groups in trust, economics, education
• Aging population
• Medical: lack of and increased costs
• Tax (property) increases
• Affordable housing: not enough houses/apartments
• Good paying jobs other than service jobs
• Youth flight
• Youth high school dropout rate
• Lack of jobs available in community for labor force
• Declining economic base due to loss of medical community
• Plus:
  o GSW
  o SCTC
  o Low cost of living
• Caring people
• Historical values: Andersonville, Plains

• Problems:
  o Slow economy
  o Distrust of leadership
  o Uncertainty of hospital
  o Lack of unity
  o Lack of focus on real issues
  o Lack of infrastructure

• Significant increase in the indigent/working poor. This manifests itself in overcrowding in the ER and uninsured admission in general.
• A noticeable flattening of the real estate market, and a concurrent stall in investment value
• GSW and SGTC growing will help our slow economy
• Education dropout rate will hurt our community
• Bring non-traditional business to our community
• Health care opportunities
• Population growth: flat
• Secondary education system: AYP
• Transportation corridors: Highway 19, 280, 49
• Baby boomers increasing
• Health care opportunities
• Housing: public and private
• More industry
• Heath care: uncertain of status of hospital
• Job opportunities
• Single parent, teenage parent
• Land options
• Healthcare decreasing
• University and technical college increasing
• Challenging demographics decreasing
• Higher paying jobs decreasing
• Service sector increasing
• Crime rate cyclical
• Young leadership
• Welcoming of outsiders cyclical
• Loss of manufacturing jobs/addition of manufacturing jobs
• Growth of Hispanic population
• Loss of Habitat for Humanity
• Growth of GSW and South Georgia Technical College
• Completion of Highway 19 project
• Relative change in influence decreasing, Democrats and/or Republicans: SW Georgia fares better when Democrats in power!
• Increased cost of living including healthcare, fuel prices, and education
• Increased population of low income residents
• Decreased housing availability
• Decreased services and resources from city/county government
• Real estate cycles
• Shrinking state budgets are having and adverse effect on many areas. My chief concern is
  with the Sam Shortline Excursion Train. Rising fuel costs are also having a negative impact.
  We believe our passenger count is also shrinking as a result.
• Job losses
• High dropout rate, undereducated workforce
• Leadership
• Community commitment
• Decline of agriculture as a means of livelihood for large portions of the population
• Loss of manufacturing jobs
• Growth of college
• Abandonment of Sumter County public schools by white middle-class families
• New retirement community (adding to population)
• Rise in leadership (younger members)
• Education
• US 19 4-lane
• Trends and need for alternative fuels produced regionally throughout communities; possible
  increase in economy through agricultural community
• Lack of trained workforce
• Lack of medical care
• Jobs
• Nothing to do: children, adults
• Quality child care
• Transportation options
• Industry leaving town, but no new "big business" to replace what's gone
• Nothing to do: nothing to attract college students to attend GSW, nothing to keep current
  students in town on weekends
• GSW enrollment, finally increasing for 08-09, stagnant for past several years
• Lots of good intentions with no follow through—apathy
• The economy: decreasing
• Race: ongoing
• Jobs (lack of): ongoing
• School dropouts: ongoing
• Infrastructure
• Inaction of supply and demand as market factors are not at work in the oil crisis
• The negative impact or view of the public school system either through media or word of
  mouth
• The dropout rate and the way it is calculated and how it is explained to public
• Things for college students to do
• Racism
• Lack of community and environment
• Transportation
• Public education
• Unemployment increasing
• Generational poverty
• Caring educators
• Building a state-of-the-art medical facility
• Positive communication with the community. This community receives a lot of negative "feedback" through our local media, by word of mouth and possibly other sources. This type of feedback has a negative impact on the entire community and causes citizens to have a feeling of discouragement. The community should focus more on positive feedback.
• Public education, k-12, college and university, good, but need continual improvements in all areas
• Workforce [training] for the skilled and unskilled
• Community relationship good; however, much improvement in many areas need addressing
• Better infrastructure (city/county agreement on streets)
• Lack of space for annexation
• Population: cyclical
• Economic development: increasing
• Hospital needs to be rebuilt: ?
• Public school system: increasing
• Crime: increasing
• Drugs: increasing
• Not enough jobs, activities for young people
• Loss of businesses due to downturn in the economy: loss of jobs; loss of population due to loss of jobs
• Problems faced by the public education system: dropout rate/graduation rate
• Negative publicity about education and community at large
• Factories
• Housing (public and affordable)
• Pay increase (minimum wage increase)
• Poverty
• Taxes increase
• Millage rate
• Insurance
• Jobs
• Increase law enforcement (more community base)
• Juvenile activities (bowling, skating rink, movie theater) lower crime
• Better roads
• Clergy involvement with community (united stance)
• Child care for single mothers
• Decreasing school enrollment in public and private schools
• Lack of new industry coming into county to grow and replace industries leaving Sumter County
• Gas prices and economy hurting many already dealing with economic problems
• Dropout rate in Sumter County
• Hospital not got back to level before tornado and no real plan yet
• Industry loss/need
• Health care
• Social issues
• Americus-Sumter County is not attractive to industry: lack of skilled workers, poor public education
• Increasing population
• Jobs decreasing
• Crime rate increasing
• School system decreasing in popularity
• Ratio of white/black/Hispanic
• Single parents
• Teen recreation: bowling, skating, etc.
• Health care
• Dropout rate, drugs, gangs
• Nothing to do for college students
• Crime increasing
• Gang activity increasing
• City revenues decreasing/city expenditures increasing: cyclical
• Aging population increasing
• Single family moms increasing
• Health care decreasing (SRH, doctors)
• Public school system decreasing in effectiveness
• White flight increasing
• Number of living wage-paying positions decreasing
• Number of jobs decreasing
• Number of GSW and SGTC students increasing
• Increase in prison population
• Lack of meaningful employment for ex-offenders
• Jobs
• Population growth
• Health care
• Housing
• Governments working together
• Community organizations working together
• Unemployment/benefits
• Education
• Industries
• Tourism
• Lack of activities
• Lack of health care
• Education (in public schools)
• Better working relationship with city and county government
• Positive:
  o Expansion of both South Georgia Tech and Georgia Southwestern
  o Good working relationship of city and county governments
  o Attitudes in all areas of government and civic groups is generally toward
development in Americus
  o Quality of life is a great asset in luring both retired people and companies looking to
expand
• Negative: the entrance corridors into Americus don't "look" very inviting
• Improving educational opportunities, but large portion of population uneducated—remaining
in poverty
• Excellent opportunities in local college and university system to grow the community and
create options for local students
• Expansion of road system
• City and county with rich historic traditions
• Increased number of students at SGTC and GSW
  o Both are expecting record student numbers this fall
  o Both have, in my opinion, very nice looking campuses
  o Both have as a major goal increased attendance
  o Both mean increased growth in the community
• Possibly low support for GSW
  o Low percentage of "locals" giving $100
  o Locals complained about lack of effort by GSW to keep local community involved
• Economy
• Transportation
• Need for education
• Population growth
• Further development of this area of the state
• Negative
  o Number of people living below poverty level due primarily to a lack of education
  o Unemployable workforce
  o Breakdown of family unit
• Positive
  o Increase in number of students attending GSW and SGTC
• Improved education for all youth
• Economic development: jobs to attract young people to stay or come back to our community
• Transportation
• Competitive wages/economic growth (decreased)
• Healthcare/medical facility (decreased)
• Community divide (increased)
• Education value (recognition)
• Highly skilled jobs, needs to increase
• Influence interest of young people
• Attractions to city
• Manufacturing
• Larger company
• Latino population coming into the schools
• Senior citizens
• Need for health care for baby boomers
• Workers for health care
• Obesity epidemic (children, etc.)
• DFCS: increase in cases, unable to handle it, not enough manpower
• Low graduation rates
• Property taxes
• Health care services
• GSW/SGTC growth
• Retiree growth
• Decreasing tax base, greater tax burden for the taxpayer
• Decreased funds to support necessary and essential community programs
• Much tougher to land relocating potential businesses
• Decrease in the ability of the taxpayer to reinvest for job expansion
• Economy: gas prices/decreased tourism (short-term)
• Growth in university and technical college
• Growth in housing
• Tax base/sales tax increasing
• Tourism increasing
• Dropout rate decreasing
• Test scores decreasing
• Manufacturing decreasing
• Health care community decreasing
• Better training of service personnel
• Transportation needs attention
• Better relationship among entities
• Continue to improve on education
• Exercise programs and places
• Trends: decreasing medical footprint
• Forces: rural payer mix
• Factors: changing expectations of medics, fewer MDs, Ob patients forced to go out of town
• Secondary education opportunities
• Attraction to young people to return home and pursue careers here
• Financial investment in Americus, especially from parties not presently from here
• Identification and utilization of true assets
• Increasing college population
• Increasing subsidized housing needs
• Increasing unemployment rate
• Increasing business and industry prospects
• Increasing elderly population
• Decreasing manufacturing base
- Decreasing affordable housing
- Decreasing employment opportunities
- Decreasing medical professionals/services
- Decreasing large employers
- Increasing GSW and tech school enrollment
- No change in entertainment options for young people
- Increase in 4-lane highways
- Increase in "brand" stores that visitors recognize
- Decrease in attractiveness of parks, common areas
- Decrease in cooperation between county government officials and key businesses (SRH)
- Funding
- Health care
- Education
- Economic development
- Transportation
- Out-of-wedlock births/birth rates
- Hispanic population increase
- Health care: the lack of quality health care; medical professionals have left the community
- Economy: major employers (more than minimum wage income)
- Population: decreasing due to health care and economy
- Education (public)
- Increasing: doctors, nurses
- Decreasing: jobs
- Nursing workforce and nursing faculty shortage
- Increased Hispanic population
- Decreased employment opportunities
- Increased aging population
- Increased number of retirees relocating
- Increased number of tourists visiting community
- Becoming more of a regional trade center
- Increased need to consolidate government services, city-county, to reduce cost and work more efficiently
- Improved race relations; still needs work
- Slow improvements to education—high school
- Improved relationship: GSW/SGTC
- High juvenile crime rate
- Loss of industry (jobs) impacts spendable income, which impacts parks and recreation programs, because families may choose to purchase necessities rather than extracurricular activities: cyclical.
- Trend is to target upper socio-economic groups that can afford higher user fees. Our focus here in previous years has targeted lower socio-economic groups.
- Loss of major business in the community has affected every aspect of this community, education in particular.
• Entertainment in community is lacking; not enough things for people to do: food, exercise activities
• The forces are part of all the problems that occur from the trends in crime that focus on our community. We have no more crime in our county than other counties our size. We work very hard to improve in all areas. Loss of jobs and industry.
• Loss of business and industry
• Lack of strong public education k-12 system
• Need better job opportunities for young adults
• Need to better utilize assets of GSW and SGTC
• Need to capitalize on assets of retired population community (Magnolia Manor)
• Need to restore health care facilities—permanent hospital
• High fuel costs
• Public school system impacts (decreasing): low graduate AYP
• SGTC workforce development (increasing)
• GSW (increasing)
• Population flat
• Very few new industries
• Hospital rebuilding
• Loss of industry
• Lack of jobs to keep graduates here or for those to come back to after graduating elsewhere
• Enrollment going up for SGTC and GSW
• Rising fuel costs
• Companies closing
• New companies coming to area
• Increase in students at colleges
• Sufficient workforce for new businesses
• Rising cost of fuel
• Lack of steady jobs with benefits
• The promotion of higher functioning jobs and trades
• Ready access to education that is here; case in point, aviation
• Continued rebuilding after tornado
• Manufacturing facilities closing
• Education perception
• Need for permanent hospital/health care facilities
• Community perception—internal/external
• Access: Highway 19 4-laning
• Population
• Economy
• Trained/educated workforce
• High dropout rate
• School system
• Economic development
• Highway system/roads
• Loss of doctors, permanent hospital
• Losing jobs
• Industry exiting
• Vacant buildings
• GSW and SGTC working together—cooperation
• Transportation: 4-lane highway N/S, U.S. 19
• Future of SRH/exiting of doctors
• 274.8m rev 2005 arts-Atlanta; 167m household income/27m state/local; decreasing arts funding in schools; indicator—low need for arts when just he opp.: 1) 274m rev Atlanta GA trend, 2) arts—comm. revitalization
• Increased employment in the area
• Lower interest rates will keep housing stable. Higher rates will be detrimental
• Showcase Lake Blackshear better
• GSW continuing education for retirees
• More events aimed towards college students to keep them in the community on the weekends
• More programs for children ages 3–5
• How to reconnect the disconnected

Based on the trends, forces and factors that you identified, what are the specific things that need to be done in order to adapt to the change? (Start with a verb.)

• Help increase economic development in high tech jobs
• Provide more jobs
• There is a need for a collaboration of the many assets that are already available, yet are a secret to many of the populated groups of the county.
• Loss of industry:
  o Identify reasons why industry closed/relocated. Make changes where there is opportunity—utilize resources.
  o Support/encourage existing industry to maintain and grow
  o Collaborate with neighbor counties
• Enrollment at SGTC/GSW: identify needed resources and build/help implement more restaurants, entertainment venues
• Sumter Co. schools vs. Schley Co. schools—exodus of students: create incentives for Sumter Co. residents sending children to Sumter Co. schools—e.g., decreased taxes (property) or healthcare incentives
• Create jobs within the county landfill through recycling to help eliminate property tax revenue
• Look for areas you can operate in the process
• Be willing to make personal adjustments to find best results
• Be collective with daily information gather
• Enforce existing guidelines as outlined by an organization such as DFACS and do not deviate
• Continue educational partnership programs
• Allow educators to have more disciplinary influence in the schools and hold parents more accountable for themselves and their children and not blame "the System".
• Implement discipline in schools: work from youth up; they can do it; start in kindergarten
• Educate local population as to what is going on through media, both public and private; involve churches.
• Pitch in; whole community to solve goals
• Rebuild hospital
• Develop lifestyle education system
• Create additional after-school programs
• Develop programs to link faith-based organizations and education programs
• Market education programs, specifically to those who are lacking
• Educate current workforce and implement specific job-ready programs in local schools
• Develop physician office complexes for potential physicians
• Complete construction of new hospital and rebuild medical community: planned for Fall 2010
• Complete and continue to build partnership between GSW and SGT; education, job training; market as college town
• Support tourism
• Encourage parents to support public schools
• Consolidate city/county government: cut cost, cut levels
• Hold town hall meets to get word out
• Hold parents more accountable for children's minor action
• Decide fate of hospital; announce our plan soon in hopes of recruiting new physicians
• Find ways to involve parents to gain interest in what their kids are doing
• Rebuild permanent hospital to recruit more physicians to improve overall community quality of life.
• Educate young people **before** they get pregnant
• Encourage new business appealing to college students
• Everyone has to work together in the community
• Our leaders in the government need to be more concerned about the needs of the citizens, rather than themselves
• We must work together
• We must [be] committed to a goal
• We include the lower (poorer) people in our next meeting?
• Bring jobs to the community
• Support education strongly
• Collaboration between government agents (city, county)
• Unify community (race relations)
• Increase graduation rate
• Recruit good teachers
• Improve teacher salaries to increase retention of highly qualified teachers and recruiting of young graduates
• Recruit high tech companies that provide competitive salaries and good benefits
• Correlate GSE/tech school curriculum/classes to reflect what the above (high tech) companies are looking for in skills and abilities and education
• Prepare good strategic plan for future recruiting of medical professionals and services
• Develop education system supported by all in the community
• Adoption of schools by local organizations, businesses, churches
• Develop central facility for support systems for those needing help—developing a data base to track progress toward self-sufficiency
• Recruit more PAs to support doctors
• Develop an initiative to attract blue collar industries that make something that will add to community pride
• Put resources/incentives behind enabling collaboration between community agencies; leverage our resources
• Implement vocational training at junior high school level in order to encourage students to graduate—use resources of technical college
• Use community projects as training opportunities for youth
• Provide after-school programs that specialize in math, English, character-building
• Offer more bilingual courses in college curriculum for teacher training and certification
• Continue to explore opportunities for collaborative initiatives between GSW and SGTC
• Intensify economic development efforts to attract industry/manufacturing jobs. Do we need to change our approach? Success thus far has been mediocre.
• Expand-enhance current economic development efforts by attracting "retirement" housing to help local economic conditions using current economic development authority or other resource. Expand economic development efforts to include all community assets in prospecting. Look out of the "box".
• Improve efforts to increase tourism by using one of our assets: agriculture. "Agri-tourism"
• Develop community-wide fundraising effort to assist in raising funds for new regional hospital
• Place emphasis on early identification and special attention to programs for youth in at-risk situations
• Organize a consolidated tutoring program for k-12
• Engage youth early in educational courses that interest them
• Increase technical programs in high school—add to middle schools
• Offer more leadership activities to a larger number of youth
• Educate public more often on healthcare changes
• Increase teachers and reduce pupil to teacher ration
• Increase paraprofessionals to reduce teacher work load
• Develop charter schools
• Recruit skilled MDs/nurses/specialists
• Build a hospital quickly
• Enrollment at GSW/SGTC: develop more activities for students (restaurants, bars, music/nightclubs, more youth-oriented things)
• Add water/sewer, etc. to county areas that are undeveloped
• Address the crime in certain areas
• Obtain funding to help GSW/SGTC grow with new programs, buildings, etc.
• Limit the amount of low income housing which brings (sometimes) crime, dropout rate, unwed mothers, etc.
• Throw out old habits that no longer work
• Explore ideas from other communities that have been successful
• Develop a timeline for the future: 5 yr, 10 yr, 20 yr, 50 yr. "Dream big"; choose to be a leader
• Give our youth a chance to come home and raise their families
• Grow the infrastructure to the point that we are ready when growth happens
• Stop being afraid of change
• No longer cater to the 20% of "takers" in our community and focus on the 80% of "givers"
• Change our expectations
• Develop community leadership academy
• Develop community commercial network
• Develop community marketing plan
• Develop community recreation complex
• Develop resource library (EDS)
• Identify other community models for
• Identify community support program for public assistance
• Make decision ASAP on hospital so it can get off the fence and we can move forward
• Work together to provide recreational facility for youth—write grants
• Change curriculum and perhaps staff in school to reflect new demographics
• Become informed about ec. opp. available in state or region
• Get new blood and leadership in b of d at all levels
• Support local tech and U where they need it
• Provide tutors, mentors where needed
• Become more tolerant and open-minded about the outer world
• Use brain power of new people of skills and experiences
• Admit limit and stop the propaganda—time to get real
• Inform the public and become more transparent
• To reduce indigent population, generate jobs in service sector
• To increase "stay here" 30-somethings, generate jobs and lifestyle amenities
• To prevent "go back" professionals, develop formal welcome programs that actively absorb high value "come here" into the community to allow roots to go down—these are the potential entrepreneurs
• Determine a short and long term strategy around the hospital and the health care infrastructure
• Create a master plan for public housing and how to severely reduce it and its effect on its residents
• Change the culture from small quaint city on the hill to a robust college town
• Reroute main traffic around the downtown and create an inviting look for locals, students and tourists
• Subsidize GSW
• Develop the area around S Western with entertainment area bringing community and students together
• Create more unified recruitment mechanism for attracting new business
• Get new hospital!
• Change Sunday liquor sales laws
• Develop community television station (channel 16?)
• Co-op to construct an upgraded affordable housing stock
• Recruit for college and technical colleges; with the growth of GA's population, this should not be a problem. While the increase of admissions is basically up to the schools themselves (as well as recruitment of faculty and staff) the community can and should do some things to make itself more attractive. These could include clean-up (streets and sidewalks and parks), redevelopment of blighted areas, particularly in central locations of city.
• Reduce entitlement programs
• Increase public service programs, i.e. public works for goods and services received
• Reduce interference in classrooms and allow teachers to teach
• Enforce all laws as written:
  o Noise nuisances
  o Animal control (leash laws)
  o Loitering
  o Codes
• Merge county and city government
• Increase employment by helping small business
• Incentives to employers to locate manufacturing and retail
• PDA to increase incentives
• Improve public image of community and school system
• Recruit and retain education leaders who have expertise dealing with students from generational poverty
• Cooperatively market all of the counties attractions to increase tourism
• Improve communication and coordination between tourism entities
• Work on building low to moderate income housing
• Start up public transportation to be effective
• Start the hospital rebuild
• Repair the public education system
• Need community-wide customer friendly training for service industry to support tourism and regional trade
• Create comprehensive marketing plan with emphasis on:
  o Tourism: Plains—Jimmy Carter; Andersonville history; Leslie Telephone Museum
  o Retirement community
  o Regional trade
  o Community resources for ...
  o Economic development
• Need charter commission formed to study consolidating city/county governments
• Promote Highway 19
• Promote tourism
• Support public school
• Fast track new hospital
• Redevelop Highway 19 corridor
• Promote community quality of life
• Improve and promote public education
• Build on higher education opportunities
• Recruit new industry
• Develop needed resources to help curb crime
• Work closer with schools to help kids stay in school
• Work closer with civic clubs to promote education
• Improve job opportunities
• Improve health care
• Improve and promote public education
• Encourage governmental leaders to consider recreation as an investment rather than an expenditure and fund it to an acceptable level
• Force neighboring counties to stay within their legal limits of accepting "out of county" students
• Promote and market the positive aspects of the community rather than the negative
• Develop parental group for k-12 schools
• Encourage local media to spotlight community in positive light
• Rebuild hospital and recruit doctors
• Lure larger corporate employers
• Enhance transportation public private and infrastructure
• Instill desire to learn in our kids
• Inspire hope in our communities
• Hawk our community
• Increase marketing of community (ed, business, tourism)
• Strengthen collaboration between higher education facilities
• Redesign health care system to provide affordable, accessible, and acceptable care
• Recruit highly qualified health care professionals
• Improve education system
• Market Americus as a college town
• Improve health care facilities
• Improve k-12 education system
• Increase job opportunities
• Encourage business and industry to locate in Americus
• Grow businesses from current population
• Continue to increase enrollment at GSW and SGTC
• Continue to promote partnership between city, county, GSW and SGTC
• Promote positive of community (GSW, SGTC, Magnolia Manor)
• Educate the lower income citizens in basic reading, writing, and math (GED)
• Educate citizens on personal finance and budgeting (due to bankruptcies, repos, etc.)
• Educate on how to live within means and plan for retirement
• Keep general public informed on what the changes are and how the change/improvement impacts the citizens
• Recruit more industry
• Hospital must be rebuilt
• Retention of industries
• Improve the education system (k-12)
• Recruit more employers
• Rebuild new hospital
• Support educational effort (public schools)
• Build new restaurants, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities
• Spend more money on city and county marketing in the southeast U. S.
• Spend on medical field—need more doctors
• Offer parent training
• Promote new business—job opportunities
• Preach customer service
• Improve and promote public education
• Ensure ethanol production plant in Sumter County is completed if it is a viable production facility that can be operated without government support (without subsidies)
• Educate the community about the positive things happening
• Encourage others to get involved in community activities that help to build better relations
• Print positive articles in the newspapers that depict good things happening in the community
• Train employees to demonstrate positive attitudes
• Send positive articles
• Congratulate the newspaper when positive articles are written
• Need to have churches, state agencies and schools find way to get non-involved parents involved with child's education
• Need to encourage students to get HS diploma not GED; make HS diploma more important
• Get community to understand need to have students in public education
• Develop an educational program to get more accurate information to everyone as a whole
• Develop a plan to get all agencies involved and to do away with overlapping services
• Work with all race, ethnic, age groups, etc. to have better understanding and better communications
• Make educational opportunities available to all that need it
• Retain and develop a medical community to grow and expand
• Change ordinances so that annexation can be achieved
• Develop plan for city and county to work harder and smarter to provide adequate streets, roads, and infrastructure for all citizens
• Develop and implement plan to expand recreation for youth and young adults
• Encourage school administration and board members to be good advocates for local PE
• Create jobs
• Spend more money locally
• Bring in private entities
• Fundraiser
• Provide attractive programs to educate parents in ways to assist their child
• Train teachers in characteristics and responses to students of generational poverty
• Provide additional opportunities/entertainment for young adults
• Encourage and teach young children to recycle
• Educate the population about environmental issues affecting Sumter County
• Provide larger recycling bins—recycle glass and cardboard, too
• Educational institutions (university, technical college, and public schools) should continue and expand cooperation and coordination
• Support local taxes
• Provide more in-depth training for child care providers
• Bring in new industry. Provide job opportunities.
• Address medical health care shortage in timely manner
• Public education: print positive data; increase mentors; increase community involvement
• Speak positively about community. Take the time to consider solutions and offer them rather than complain about problems.
• Develop programs to improve success rate of school children to counteract or head off what becomes a dropout problem
• Involve yourself in areas of your passion
• Work on all entities working on the same page
• Public education
  o Print articles that have positive data from public school
  o Increase mentors
  o Speak positively about public education
  o Encourage community to go into the schools to observe
  o Coordinate efforts of supportive agencies so that all are working for common goals
• Offer incentives for business and industry to start in Americus
• Explore entertainment options (movies, bowling, restaurants, bars)
• Asses and rank city needs (transportation, tourism, etc.) to determine budget allocations— determine what is most important
• Promote local schools (ALL—Sumter County, GSW, SGTC)
• Prioritize goals of community and develop strategies to read each goal (strategic planning?). Small steps will take you a long way, but only if you have a goal in mind.
• Do not be afraid of NEW and DIFFERENT
• Provide transportation for folks
• Develop parent support groups
• Establish unity among churches, school, to become a caring community
• Pay better salaries
• Each person examine their racial ideas and activities
• Begin to develop at least temporary employment for ex-offenders that will give some indication of their willingness or non-willingness to make an honest living by working on a meaningful for an adequate period of time; this employment may lead to permanent employment or, at least, it will develop a record of employment that can be used as reference.
• Implement strict rules for leaders of the community to have their children attend public schools
• Expect more from leaders
• Have concerts, parties, live entertainment
• Review and evaluate our school systems and leaders of our school system
• Create a vibrant downtown—establish a college town atmosphere
• Establish strong, focused leadership in the public school system
• Build a hospital that will meet needs of area
• Accept who we are and quit talking about differences—focus on needs
• Be proactive
• Develop a strategic plan
• Educating the community about the good things that are here that other communities would love to have
• Encourage young students to develop a respect for their community by teaching them more about their wonderful county
• Develop E. D. plan; monitor plan for success
• Build hospital that provides community services
• Develop teenage recreation program: boys and girls
• Work with developers to build affordable housing
• Assess what college students want as far as "something to do"
• Bring in jobs of any kind
• Build skating rink, bowling alley, etc.
• Master plan for downtown
• Recreation for teenagers and adults
• School system leaders need to listen to what the community is saying
• Work together
• Bring in more health professors
• People need to get along
• Lack of respect for others
• Bring in more shops and eating places
• Offer more antique, gift shops for tourists
• Our shops downtown need to be open on weekends and evenings
• Give full community support to growth of GSW and SGTC. Find ways to enhance their ability to draw students
• Work with planning and zoning, as well as property owners, to maintain our entry corridors
• More parents involved in the educational process
• More funds available for youth programs, such as Boys and Girls Club, recreation programs, etc.
• Market community
• Reverse the negative
• Accentuate the positive
• Draw more upwardly mobile people here
• Invest in more rail, astronomy neighborhoods
• Make Habitat an active community force
• Turn Americus into the education capitol of GA
• Provide money for youth up front for them to not get in the prison system. It cost less to educate them to pay to put them in prison.
• Identify al economic development assets
• Find opportunities for citizens to participate in community projects
• Develop new activities to attract tourist traffic
• Donate money and effort by local individuals and organizations to GSW
• Volunteer to make Americus-Sumter County more beautiful
• Publicize the great things (especially higher education) to people who may visit
• Delete programs offered that do not create more value than programs we cannot fund
• Find a way to increase the level of education among our citizens, young and old
• Build a new hospital
• Promote regional economic development
• Consolidate resources based upon community need
• Build leadership in minority community
• Target development toward college-age kids
• Promote Americus as "college town"
• Increase number of mentors in school system
• Rebuild hospital
• Reward students for academic success
• Promote successes in public schools
• Agencies need to be more proactive
• Better parent training (adult programs)
• Combine city and county government
• Small businesses need to increase
• Bite the bullet! We can't always have our way.
• Understanding cause and effect of all concerns—total involvement by the community.
• Take responsibility for action—or lack thereof
• Stop blaming others
• Be open to using experiences of others
• Each representative proactive
• Understand cause and effects
• Recruiting medical professionals
• Provide county income supplements for educators
• Attract/pursue major employers (industry)
• Increase community involvement in public school system
• Rebuild an independent SRH
• Attract jobs
• Support growth of entertainment options for young people
• Grow GSW and SGT
• Pursue "brand" name businesses
• Improve local theater
• Ensure completion of 4-laning 19 and 280
• Create community characteristics which attract and keep our young people, educational opportunities for their children, recreational opportunities and long-term job and career opportunities
• Identify and promote existing assets that are meaningful and potentially useful to community-wide activities
• Plan more collaborative community functions
• Involve high school students in workforce preparation (internships)
• Increase discussion/awareness of what our community has to offer
• Build young leaders who are actively involved in community decisions/activities
• Businesses communicate more of what specific skills are needed to help prepare/train workforce (highly skilled labor force)
• Entice businesses to come to our area
• Build civic center/community center
• Bring airport carrier to area
• Create business incentive through tax break
• Law enforcement awareness of stereotype
• Work to create more of a "college town" atmosphere
• Cooperation between governments
• Communication
• Build
• Attract business
• Market the community
• Joint effort
• Build community engagement
• Collaboration of social agencies/government
• Chamber position—social services
• Support of public education: time, money, energy
• Draw more deeply from our people resources—issue public invitations form community forums
• Our history is rich and diverse—put it out there more publicly in story form
• Market educational opportunity
• Create master plan for development
• Merge some facility into one
• Positive attitudes bring positive responses
• Positive business recruitment from all job sectors
• Work more closely with city and county government. Best decisions for all.

What are the opportunities, assets, etc. that we need to be aware of that would assist our work in Americus-Sumter County?

• Agriculture
• Significant historic district and 2 national historic sites
• Two institutions of higher education: GSW, Georgia Southwestern University; SGTC, South Georgia Technical College
• Current leadership of county school system
• Well-run city government
• Regional hospital, when it comes to fruition
• Aquifer
• Former President Carter
• Habitat for Humanity
• Lake Blackshear
• Rail system
• Vibrant downtown
• Golf courses
• Religious/church community
• Excellent tourism infrastructure: 2 national historic sites, excursion train, full-time tourism
director, Habitat's Global Village, historic homes/businesses
• Number of faith-based organizations
• One news media both paper/radio
• Dedicated city/county employees
• Diversity of population
• Proximity to work/medical/entertainment/tourism attractions
• Tourism: ____ more than motel/hotel tax—sales tax
• Infrastructure for new industry/jobs
• Partnership with GSW/South GA Tech College
• Facilities for aging population
• Nice meeting facilities
• GSW and SGTC
• Respect for historical aspect of community
• 2 national parks
• Southern hospitality potential
• Famous people such as Jimmy Carter, Griffin Bell
• Location re: GA coast and FL coast
• "Small town" atmosphere
• Talented people: artists, writers, dancers, musicians, actors, etc.; businesses and academics
• A daily newspaper that does publish the good news accurately
• Retirement community
• There are some good, strong leaders in education, business and industry
• We have people; some just don't want to do anything to improve themselves or their
situations
• We have schools, buildings, educators; what can we do to keep them here?
• We have existing structures laying waste because organizations would rather build new,
wasting tax dollars
• Hwy 19 expansion may bring more tourism
• Yes, we have good media i.e. print and radio, but print need much improvement that
showcases we are an educated community.
• Faith-based organizations are good, but there are so many of them seeking support for their
programs the community can't support them all.
• Retirement options
• Historical areas of education and importance
• SGT/GSW for educating
• Business growth in sales and service
• Population increase
• Community support groups
• SGT/GSW
• Have mentor programs
• Leadership programs through Chamber: youth and adult
• Great recreation programs—all age groups
• Strong faith-based community
• Pecan festival
• Faith-based community
• Education community
• We have the opportunity for healthcare growth
• Georgia Department of Labor
• Population
• South Georgia Technical College, and land
• GSW
• Available industrial sites
• 911 system
• Historical venues in the city and county
• Adult literacy programs: focus on GED and improving literacy rates
• SCMP: focus on providing mentors for students in grades 3-9, the PLC, and the Early College Program
• Accessibility to a former President and First Lady
• 2 higher-education institutions
• GSW and SGTC teamwork
• Retirement community
• Airport
• Close to interstate
• Cost of living
• Downtown
• South Georgia Technical College
• Georgia Southwestern State University
• Downtown Americus
• Historic neighborhoods/Lee Street—historic homes
• Magnolia Manor
• New/remodeled businesses are attractive: Winn Dixie, Harveys, Regional Eye Center, Lowe's, Ruby Tuesday, hotels (280), city park, banks accelerated
• Lake Blackshear/retreat activities
• Sumter Regional Hospital...in the future
• GSW
• SGTC
• Magnolia Manor
• Historic downtown
• Relatively low cost of living
• HFHI
• GSW
• South GA Tech School
• Windsor Hotel
• Rylander Theatre
- Parks and Recreation Authority
- Historical venues (Andersonville, Plains, Southerfield)
- GSW
- SGTC
- Lake Blackshear recreational areas (Crisp County has definitely benefited from this)
- Parks and Recreation Dept.
- Hospitable attitudes
- The Carters
- Judge Griffin Bell
- Strong community leadership
- Strong representation in the state legislature
- A history of strong influence in other parts of the state and country
- Water
- Pat's Place
- GSW/SGTC—2 great choices
- Roads to everywhere
- Access to cities with advantage of small community
- Lots of empty buildings
- Lots of under-employed people that could be put to work beautifying community (with proper public financing)
- Lots of community-minded people who are being under-utilized (mention altruistic personalities at Habitat)
- Lots of under-sold amenities like the Rylander plays, etc.
- GSW and SGTC
- Strong religious culture
- National parks
- Creative people
- Overall safe place to raise children
- Beautiful homes and historic areas
- Beautiful campus: GSW; clean, well-maintained campus: SGTC
- Located near 75, Gulf, ATL, Calloway Gardens (centrally located); 3 hrs from mountains
- Several beautiful lakes in the area
- People
- GSW/SGTC
- Andersonville/Plains
- Low cost of living
- Centrally located
- Great community for families: strong core values, safety
- Vibrant downtown
- Community spirit
- Low incidents of major crimes
- Golf courses (4)
- GSW/SGTC
• Windsor
• Rylander Theatre
• Habitat/Fuller Center
• National parks
• History of area (rich)
• Water
• Land
• Work ethic
• Recreation
• Lake Blackshear
• Hwy 19
• Downtown
• Famous citizens: Carter, Bell, athletes
• National/international contribution
• Two great choices: GSW and Tech
• Talented people at all levels; use them and don't turn them off—strong new bodies
• Rylander
• Some nationally know figures: Carter and Judge Bell
• Don't frighten new people away by pushing religiosity and righteousness too far—be open to others' ways of thinking
• Proximity to other areas: Augusta, beaches
• Boards seek to be more proactive and not see it as vacuous honor
• South GA Tech and GA Southwestern
• Windsor Hotel
• Rylander Theatre
• Lot of history
• People: many individuals go over and beyond to promote Sumter County
• Sumter County and surrounding counties have golf courses that attract people
• Lake Blackshear: water recreation
• Andersonville
• Historical society
• SCBE
• SCC
• GSWU
• SCTC
• ACC
• Good school system
• Airport
• Technical college and university
• Tourism
• Habitat for Humanity
• Andersonville National Cemetery
• Rylander
• Early College
• Carter Center
• Geographical location
• Municipal facilities
• Community arts program
• Temporary hospital
• Recreational facilities
• Central (geographic) location
• Tourism opportunities
• Rylander and Windsor
• Clean environment, no polluting plants
• Water basin
• University and tech college
• Habitat
• Farming—promote agri-tourism
• Rylander
• Windsor
• SGTC—Work Ready
• Include art-related information in PDA packages
• Dept. of Community Affairs
• Access state database of industries looking to relocate
• Attractive historic district with National Register sites
• 2 institutions of higher education working together
• Enthusiastic, seasoned politicians (home-grown with local interests)
• Room (physical) for expansion and development
• Workforce professionals with corporate backgrounds
• Existing buildings which can be retrofitted
• Highway 19—alt. to I-75
• Downtown area
• People
• GSW and SGT
• 2 great schools (SGT and GSW)
• Room for industry growth
• Potential to expand city services throughout county
• Cost of living is relatively low
• 2 national parks
• Almost complete 4-lane highway and potential 2nd
• Large historic downtown and residential districts
• Rich history: Habitat, 39th President, former U.S. Attorney General
• South GA Tech, GSW
• Successful tourist train, one national park site in the county and one in the neighboring county
• Windsor Hotel
- Rylander Theatre
- Infrastructure for retirement destination for baby boomers:
  - University and tech college
  - Medical facility, state of the art
  - Magnolia Manor
  - Recreation opportunities: golf, water, etc.
  - Seasons
  - National parks
  - Housing market
  - Southland Ridge
- Airport
- GSW
- South GA Tech
- Recreation department
- Open warehousing facility
- Approachable leadership
- Golf course
- Affordable property: land and houses
- Everything is convenient in Americus—congestion is not an issue
- Lake Blackshear
- GSW and SGTC collaboration
- Proximity to larger population bases: Florida and North GA, as well as Macon, Columbus, Albany
- Great climate for retirees
- Attractive downtown and historic district (could be improved, though)
- GSW and SGTC collaboration
- History of community
- Community desire to grow
- Affordable higher education compared to other colleges/universities
- Quality of life
- Good life
- Friendly people
- GSW
- SGTC
- Magnolia Manor Retirement Center
- Can-do spirit of many people
- Small community atmosphere
- Rylander Theatre
- Habitat for Humanity—Fuller Center
- Presidential Pathway
- Andersonville—POW Museum
- Community desire to grow
- Lake Blackshear
- Quality of life
• GSW
• SGTC
• Medical community
• Small community atmosphere; quality of life
• Churches involved in communities
• Rylander Theatre
• Tourism in this area
• SGTC economic development work
• Fuller Center Habitat for Humanity
• Magnolia Manor
• UGA expertise
• Recreation department
• Regional offices for state government
• SGTC and GSW partnership
• Small community atmosphere
• Tourism—Lake Blackshear
• Racial issues
• Community desire to grow
• Regional offices for state officials
• Good leadership
• Superb higher education opportunities: GSW and South GA Technical College
• Friendly people
• Facilities that could attract entertainment: GSW Storm Dome
• Attractive landscape
• Improved relations between GSW and Americus
• Rich history
• Cost of living
• Good leadership
• Climate
• Rees Park building
• Vital downtown
• Weather
• City and county government promoting ED!
• Golf courses
• GSW and SGTC
• City fire department
• Windsor/Rylander
• Lake Blackshear
• Very active DOL!
• NASA lab
• Youth programs: BSA, GSA, CAP, Brown Trust
• Jimmy Carter, Griffin Bell
• Corporate partnerships: Lowe's, Habitat, Fuller Center
• SGT
• GSW
• Rees Park Economic Development Center
• Payroll Development Authority
• Joint Development Authorities: Schley-Sumter Macon, Sumter Crisp
• City and county working together
• City and county working closely with Payroll Development Authority
• Parks and Recreation Department—good staff...need more!
• Sheriff's Department—do a lot of good...understaffed!
• Both educational institutions (GSW/SGTC)—excellent educational opportunities
• Sumter County Regional Park is a great asset but underused
• Quality of life
• South GA Tech, GSW
• History of strong leadership
• Redevelopment after tornado
• 2 national historic sites
• Great climate (golf 10 months/year)
• 2 higher education institutions: GSW/SGTC
• 2 national historic sites
• friendly community
• historic preservation
• Windsor Hotel/Rylander
• Excursion train
• Desire to improve community
• Habitat for Humanity
• Rees Park facility
• Community pride
• Location near major air transportation
• Local airport (6,000 ft. runway with ILS)
• Lake Blackshear
• Rylander
• Windsor
• Primary and elementary school
• Downtown shopping area—expand hours of operation
• Higher education: Georgia Southwestern, South Georgia Tech
• National Parks
• Golf courses
• U.S. 19 widening and four lane
• Bypass around South GA Tech College/eliminate trucks through town
• Downtown development
• Rees Park Center for Economic Development
• National parks (3) tourism
• 2 institutions of higher learning
• New agricultural center
• Rylander Theatre
• Habitat for Humanity
• Habitat for Humanity
• University
• College
• Cultural Center, Center for Economic Development
• Educare Learning Center—quality childcare center
• New Horizons
• National parks
• Recreation department
• Visions for Sumter; seeing through library
• GSW
• South GA Tech
• Plenty of vacant spaces/undeveloped land that can be used for business growth
• People who took time to attend this Archway meeting
• Downtown
• Storm Dome at GSW—great venue
• LEAP mentor program
• Windsor Hotel
• Habitat for Humanity headquarters
• Rylander Theatre
• 2 4-year universities/colleges
• Good superintendent of schools
• Good college presidents
• Good people
• Lake Blackshear—great recreational opportunity 20 minutes away
• Jimmy Carter historic site
• Andersonville historic site
• 2 institutions of higher learning
• Great resources: Lake Blackshear, Andersonville, Carter historic site, Southerfield Airport
• Young people willing to take on leadership roles
• Educational facilities and opportunities: public school and post secondary
• Recreational program
• County Extension programs
• Public library
• Public school system
• Windsor Hotel
• Rylander Theatre
• Public college and university
• City/county working relationship
• Habitat/Fuller Center
• 2 national parks
• Telephone Museum
• Strong history in sports
• Strong tourism and Chamber
• Agricultural resources
• Great historian/elected state leadership
• Sumter Players community theater group
• Rylander Theatre
• Windsor Hotel
• Sam Shortline
• Nice downtown
• Everything located in town and outskirts is convenient!
• Bed and breakfast facilities—nice
• 2 national parks
• GSWU
• SGTC
• Magnolia Manor
• Excellent facilities in public and higher ed.
• 2 higher learning institutions
• Positive relationship between city and county
• Diversity in community (city government)
• Higher education
• Tourism
• Agriculture resources
• Low cost recreation department
• Georgia Southwestern State University and South Georgia Technical College collaborations
• Tourist attractions
• Strong sense of volunteerism and community participation
• Wonderful governmental relationship
• Ability to work together
• Commissioners that are willing to develop the county to the next level
• Positive attitude
• College
• University
• Future one-stop shop
• Council members
• We need to be aware of existing industry that may be willing to hire ex-offenders, at least on a trial basis
• Existing available and affordable housing
• Rees Park Economic Development Center
• GSW and SGTC
• Excursion train
• Rylander
• Windsor Hotel
• City/county relationship
• GIS department
• Plains/Jimmy Carter
• Lake Blackshear
• Regional E911
• Taste of Sumter
• Rees Park
• Location—tourism
• Water resources/sewer
• People
• GSW
• SGTC
• Rylander
• That the governments work together
• Rees Park school
• SAM excursion train
• GIS department
• Thomas the Train
• Postsecondary educational facilities
• Historic preservation
• Tourism/tourist attractions
• Multiple faith-based organizations
• Expansion of major highway
• GSW
• SGT
• Plan to 4-lane 19 and 280
• Historic structures (Windsor/Rylander)
• New courthouse
• Leadership willing to try this and other new approaches
• 2 national parks
• Beautiful downtown
• Public school sports: parental/community support
• County law enforcement very community-oriented
• GSW/SGTC building and expanding (buildings and students)
• Community loyalty among people 40+ years old
• Regional offices for state government agencies: GBI, DFCS
• Educational opportunities to promote high school graduation and life-long learning
• City, county, BOE monthly meetings
• Boys & Girls Clubs for after school
• Boy and Girl Scouts
• Interim hospital
• Youth leadership
• Chamber
• Lake
• President and Mrs. Carter still in the community
• Two great opportunities for higher learning
• World known leaders (Jimmy Carter, Miller Fuller)
• Fuller Center
• Andersonville
• Habitat
• Koinier farm
• Airport—Lindberg flight
• GSW
• SGTC
• Airport
• Industrial parks
• 4-lane Highway 19
• Rees Park Economic Development Center
• The people/citizens
• Tourist attractions: Andersonville, Plains
• Well-maintained downtown
• Public school system
• Excellent supply of inexpensive water
• A technical school and a 4-year college
• An excellent retirement assisted care environment
• Name recognition of Sumter Countians: Jimmy Carter, Dan Reeves, etc.
• Modest housing costs, utility rates and taxes
• Historical community
• Improving highway access
• Good freight rail access
• Existing space downtown to accommodate business
• Industrial park space and land for further development
• Strong college and university assets
• SHT-Lee Council House
• GSW campus
• Rylander
• Rees Park
• Cemetery
• Hotel (Windsor)
• Nice neighborhoods with affordable housing
• Historic district
• Golf course
• Blackshear Resort
• Room to grow
• GSW and SGTC
• Cooperative governments
• Overall recreational and cultural opportunities
• New hospital (when complete)
• Windsor Hotel
• Rylander Theatre
• Tourist attractions
• Magnolia Manor
• People
• Recreational opportunities
  o Golf
  o Fishing
  o Hunting
• Cultural activities—Sumter Players
• Low crime rate
• Higher educational facilities: GA SW and South GA Tech
• Nature
• Small town feel
• Community spirit
• University
• Technical college
• Vocational college
• GSW university
• Public/private schools
• State of the art economic development center
• New agricultural center
• Plans for new recreation additions
• Rylander Theatre
• Work Ready program
• Willing workforce with high unemployment rate
• South GA Tech able to provide instruction to workforce for many/most positions in manufacturing
• Rebuilding medical community from scratch
• Southern hospitality
• Rylander
• Windsor Hotel
• President Carter/Plains
• GSW and SGTC
• Andersonville
• Water system
• Highway 19
• Airport
• Habitat
• RxR
• Hospital
• Partnerships: GSW, SGTC, Rylander Theatre
• GAP Agency
• Friends
• Conference/meeting place—Rylander Theatre
• Destination opportunity—tourism
• University teaching community
• Cooperative Extension
• Technical college
• Rees Park Economic Development Center
• Leaders that come from Sumter
• Tourism and arts
• Service consolidation
• Griffin Bell Quail Hunt
• Downtown
• Historic preservation
• Progressive mayor
• Cooperative Extension
• 4-H program
• PDA
• New agricultural center
• Bringing all service organizations under one roof at Tog Shop
• Sumter Retirement Village
• Quality of life!