Redevelopment Plan for Rylander Park and Lenny’s Market
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Rylander Park and Lenny’s Farmers Market are great community spaces in Sumter County. The Americus Downtown Development Authority (DDA) manages and regularly hosts events in these spaces. The DDA commissioned the Archway Partnership to produce a redevelopment plan in order to optimize the use of the spaces. Specifically of interest was creating larger, usable areas to increase appeal to tourists and citizens working and visiting the areas.

UGA’s College of Environment and Design graduate students developed the plan using input from Americus citizens and nearby businesses. One of the students, Mario Cambardella, described the process. “Our first step in the design challenge was to distill the comments from the community members into feasible design solutions. After creating our designs we returned to Americus to show our deliverables. These designs were vetted by the community through a public comment session and produced suggested changes. We returned once more with our final products that the community embraced. The Archway process is beneficial to the community and also the student. Through service learning we were able to learn and grow as young planning design professionals and assist one of Georgia's great communities.”

According to Angie Singletary, Director of Downtown Development for the city, “The success of the Rylander Park and Lenny’s Market project was due to the combined efforts of our community’s involvement along with the guidance of the UGA Archway Partnership. Through these collaborative efforts, we were able to redevelop and create a public space to provide a connection between the Rylander Theatre, Rylander Park, civic lots, and Lenny’s Farmer’s Market.”

The City of Americus has already obligated funds for project implementation along with assistance from Agrium Wholesale. Agrium Wholesale is an Americus-based producer and supplier of nitrogen, phosphate, potash, and sulphate-based products for agricultural and industrial customers around the world. This company has donated $26,020 through their community-based program, Growing Together, to match the city’s commitment.

Betty Scott, the Americus Growing Together Ambassador, said “Agrium participates actively in the communities in which we operate by providing support, helping those in need, and working in partnership with others to build stronger communities. I connected with Barbara Grogan, the Sumter Archway Professional, to help me find a worthwhile project that would have something in common with agriculture. She had just the perfect match for me with the Park and Market project and she put me in touch with Angie Singletary of the DDA. The Growing Together program made a quick decision on this project due to the excellent proposal sent in by the city with the help of Archway.”

After the implementation of the project, Angie described the results. “The impact of this project has been visible through numerous community events such as the Downtown Christmas Open House, Arts in the Park, the Chamber of Commerce Sumter Scarecrow Festival, and The Georgia Theatre Conference. It is refreshing to see people of all ages benefiting from this newly created gathering space. Downtown Americus has never been more inviting.”

Advancing Community Priorities: The implementation of this redevelopment plan for Rylander Park and Lenny’s Farmers Market will boost the economic activity of Americus. Creating more optimal spaces for the community will bring more citizens to this downtown area for events as well as on a daily basis. The partnership between the DDA, Agrium Wholesale, and the Archway Partnership has brought this plan into a reality.