On Wednesday, October 10, the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Partnership Executive Committee hosted the Housing Authority of the City of Dalton (HACD) at its monthly meeting. Scott Painter, Executive Director of the Dalton Housing Authority, explained that the HACD is a local community housing authority whose mission is to provide quality and affordable housing to low income families and over time bolster them into home ownership. Mr. Painter shared that the HACD currently operates 565 units, 350 of which need to be demolished and reconstructed. He shared that the HACD got a new board in 2010 and, with the help of Ed Goodwin and Associates and Penrose Properties, developed a new strategic plan in 2011. The new plan focuses on redeveloping affordable housing in Dalton with new and modern neighborhoods. The transformation plan has two phases. Phase one focuses on building 72 new apartments for the senior residents in the community and phase two focuses on building housing units for families in the community. The HACD’s strategy is to begin new housing construction in 2014 and to develop and implement a home ownership program in the future. The project will cost about $10 million. Funds for this project will be provided through a mix of city funding, bonds, private financing and equity, project based vouchers provided by HUD, and potential tax credits.

To supplement their local efforts, the HACD is leading an effort for the community to participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) program. GICH, a partnership formed between the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA), the University of Georgia and select communities, provides participating communities with technical assistance and resources to support community housing. Communities that are selected to participate in GICH commit to a three year training program. In 2005 through 2008, Whitfield County participated and graduated from the GICH program. However, since 2008, local leadership and boards have changed and HACD believes it is in Dalton-Whitfield’s best interest to go through the GICH program again. GICH will make its initial site visit to the Dalton-Whitfield community on October 29, 2012, from 10:30 to 11:30 am at City Hall.
Archway Executive Committee Seeks to Further UGA-Generated Plans on Lakeshore Park and Threadmill Lake; Considers Long-Term Storm Water Management Plan

Over the past year, UGA College of Environment and Design Masters student Rachel Johnson worked closely with the Dalton-Whitfield community to develop extensive plans for the redesign of a Lakeshore Park, a community park located near an elementary school; Threadmill Lake, a former lake with a breached dam that could serve a storm water function; and the neighboring community. Rachel presented her work to the Dalton-Whitfield Archway Executive Committee in September, sparking energetic dialogue and a request for more information on the project from local leaders. On Wednesday, October 10, Dalton State College professor John Lugthart and Dalton Utilities Senior Vice President of Watershed Services Mark Marlowe spoke to the Executive Committee about the feasibility of the Lakeshore Park and Threadmill Lake plans.

City Manager Ty Ross reported that the Dalton Parks and Recreation Department (DP&R), who is responsible for the oversight and management of Lakeshore Park, has informally divided the plans for the park into three Phases: Phase I focuses on revitalizing a soccer field; Phase II focuses on adding new tennis courts; and Phase III focuses on the wetlands and the lake in the south end of the park. Phases I and II are incorporated into DP&R’s capital improvement wish list over the next five years because they can be economic drivers (bring in sporting events, etc.). Phase III’s completion will likely depend on outside funding. All projects will be a stretch in this current economic environment.

Professor Lugthart, who was responsible for convening the citizen group that informed Rachel’s renderings of Lakeshore Park, noted that there is a grant opportunity with the Conasauga River Alliance for some improvements on the south end of Lakeshore Park. He said that $10,000 to $40,000 is available in grant funding if the community can secure a 1 to 1 match with local funders. He further noted that the grant will require at least five community partners, which he believes have already been identified through the Archway process.

Mark Marlowe spoke to the Executive Committee about the community’s long-term storm water management plans and the importance of Threadmill Lake to those plans. Mr. Marlowe shared that in 2008, the City of Dalton gave Dalton Utilities responsibility for managing storm water. He noted that fifty plus years of development without adequate storm water management has resulted in significant property damage and water quality issues. Mr. Marlowe shared that the Threadmill Lake area represents one of two areas in the community that needs the most work. He explained that
Threadmill Lake previously served as an informal storm water facility; however, several years ago the government told the home owners’ association (HOA) that owns the lake that they either had to breach the dam or pay millions of dollars to improve it. The HOA destroyed the dam at a $50k expense and, consequently, the area does not have an adequate storm water facility. Mr. Marlowe asked Rachel Johnson to draw some concepts to demonstrate how the restored lake could serve the dual purpose of serving as a storm water management facility and valuable community amenity. He noted that it will take at least $2.5 million to return the lake to functionality, but the long-term consequences of not restoring the lake into a watershed will be much more costly.

As a result of Mr. Marlowe’s presentation, the Executive Committee acknowledged that the community will ultimately have to address its storm water management issues. Without adequate storm water management, water quality goes down which results in higher water bills for property owners. In addition, significant property damage will continue to occur with each major storm. Currently, there is no mechanism for paying for significant storm water management in the community. The Executive Committee agreed to consider this issue further in the future.

Community Continues To Develop Plans for an Arts and Culture Council

On September 12, 2012, the Dalton-Whitfield Arts and Culture Task Force convened for the second time to discuss the potential for an arts and culture council in the community. The Task Force was formed in August at behest of the Archway Partnership Executive Committee following a presentation by UGA Masters in Public Administration student Megan Miller about the utility of successful arts and culture councils. Megan’s research revealed that most successful organizations focus on using arts and culture as an economic development tool. Megan urged the Executive Committee to consider forming a task force to explore the need for, goals of, and the sustainability of an arts and culture council more closely.

At the September meeting, the task force considered several ideas including:

- Partnering with Dalton State College’s international student organization that contains students from 41 different countries. This group could provide rich cultural diversity and may be able to help the community host international festivals in the future;
- Using the outdoor space at Lakeshore Park as a potential performing arts venue;
- Building community confidence, communication, and vision for an arts and culture council;
- Working with the Joint Development Authority to determine how arts can be helpful for economic development;
- Further exploring the desires of the community for the arts;
• Focusing on using the strengths this community has in the arts so they can be used for economic development (e.g., attracting bus tours to take advantage of our downtown arts and culture amenities.)

The arts and culture task force will continue to meet and determine what will be beneficial to an arts and culture council in the Dalton-Whitfield community.

**Community health engagement**

Archway is part of a team working with Taylor Regional Hospital and Georgia Southern University’s Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health to complete a mandatory assessment of community health engagement for the IRS. The needs assessment and focus groups recently conducted by UGA’s College of Public Health will be utilized, and the Pulaski County Archway Partnership Community Health Issue Work Group will work with Georgia Southern to survey the community and construct a community health engagement plan with the hospital. The first community engagement meeting took place August 31, and the work with Georgia Southern is scheduled to last until June, 2013.

**Community Health Assessment Interviews – Sumter County Schools Personnel**

In collaboration with the Sumter County Health Department and Sumter County Board of Public Health, Sumter Archway Partnership is conducting a community health assessment. Several sectors of the public health community have been designated as key informant groups, and individuals from each are being interviewed through one-on-one and focus group settings.

Recently, a focus group was held with staff from Sumter County Schools. Participants included school nurses, social workers and counselors from each of the public schools.

Community health needs that are witnessed on a daily basis in the schools were identified. These included nutrition needs, transportation needs, resources for students and families, and health related education in general. Participants discussed limitations due to various rules and regulations within the settings they work, as well as avenues to possibly tackle family related needs.

The input shared and gathered will be added to the community-wide health assessment which is currently being undertaken by Sumter Archway Partnership.

**Community Health Assessments**

Archway Partnership is working in collaboration with community partners including the Sumter County Health Department, Sumter County Board of Public Health, and Georgia Southern to conduct mandated community health assessments beginning in September and October in the Archway Partnership communities of Washington, Sumter, and Pulaski Counties. The Community Health Needs
Assessment (CHNA) is required for private and nonprofit hospitals to maintain 501(c) 3 tax exempt status as a result of the Patient Protection and Affordable care Act (ACA) starting in 2012. Several sectors of the public health community have been designated as key informant groups, and individuals from each are being interviewed through one-on-one and focus group settings.