

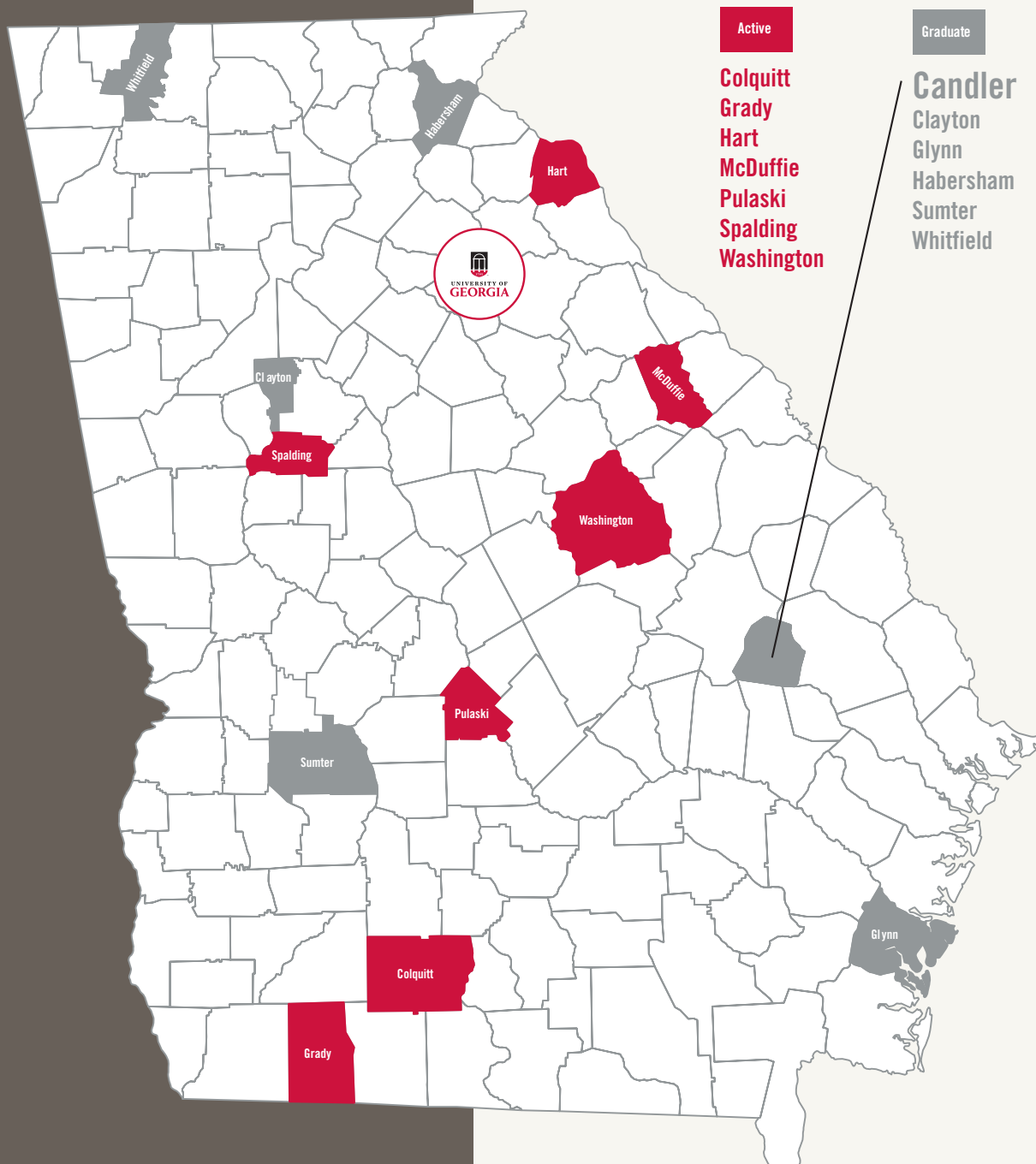
Metter– Candler County

2013–2018



Archway Partnership
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Archway Partnership Communities





Message from the Director

In 2013, the Archway Partnership and key leaders in Metter-Candler County launched a five-year initiative to address pressing community issues and prepare for opportunities in the future. Under the leadership of an Executive Committee chaired by Dustin Durden and Steven Snell and comprised of funding organizations representing the local city, county government, education, and business and industry, the community formed a unique and successful community partnership targeting economic development, leadership, recreational activities, community image, healthcare, and education.

The resulting collaboration utilized resources from multiple colleges and schools at the University of Georgia, numerous public service and outreach units, including the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development, Carl Vinson Institute of Government, and Small Business Development Center, and several state agencies.

Ultimately, the Metter-Candler Archway Partnership completed 75 projects covering five priority target issues.

In five years, the Metter-Candler Archway Partnership provided real-world learning experiences to 154 UGA undergraduate and graduate students, connected 84 faculty researchers with critical local challenges, utilized the expertise of state agency staff for growth and development, and involved hundreds of citizens who gave of their time and talent for a better Metter-Candler community today and for generations to come.

Congratulations on your graduation from the Archway Partnership!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Gordon'.

Rob Gordon, Director

75
PROJECTS

13
COLLEGE/UNIT
PARTNERSHIPS

154
STUDENT
CONNECTIONS

84
FACULTY
COLLABORATIONS

\$484,579
TOTAL VALUE OF PROJECTS

2013



COMMUNITY HOLDS LISTENING SESSIONS AND DETERMINES PRIORITIES

In July 2013, Metter-Candler became the Archway Partnership's eleventh community. The Candler Archway Executive Committee held two listening sessions that month to help identify community priority issues. In addition to the 150 listening session participants from the community, the meeting featured facilitators from the University of Georgia. Community members represented a broad cross-section of community groups. Attendees discussed a range of issues, including education, economic development, recreation opportunities, and community image.

In September 2013, members of the Executive Committee came together to interpret the results of the listening sessions and use that information to inform and organize a plan of work for the committee.

The priority areas identified at that time were:

- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
- COMMUNITY IMAGE
- HEALTHCARE
- EDUCATION





2014



NEWLY DESIGNED ENTRYWAY SIGNAGE

For nearly a year, the Community Branding and Beautification Issue Work Group partnered with students from UGA's College of Environment and Design to design entryway signage for the City of Metter, including the welcome center off I-16. These signs serve as the official welcome on behalf of the City of Metter, so their overall design and placement were critically important. The final designs, completed by two Master of Landscape Architecture students, resulted in a modern rendition of the original signposts erected following World War II. The project also included a planting plan for the area surrounding the signs, way-finding signage throughout the city, and historic signage where appropriate. All signs featured the town's slogan and dogwood flower, incorporating the community-wide branding theme and image—a critical element of the project. The goal of the signs was to draw tourists from I-16 into downtown Metter. The signs were constructed in early 2016.

COMPREHENSIVE BRANDING

The City of Metter, Candler County, and the Metter-Candler Chamber of Commerce worked with Dr. Elizabeth Davis of UGA's English Department to analyze the community's messaging and web presence. As part of a "Writing for the Web" course, 40 undergraduate students (over two semesters) made content recommendations to a web portal that would serve as an online gateway to the city, county, Chamber of Commerce, and the Industrial Development Authority. The students also developed a strategy for managing various social media platforms. The community's slogan - "Everything's Better in Metter" - was integrated throughout their recommendations, ultimately unifying the community's efforts to enhance their image and streamline their messaging and visual brand. The finalized website was launched in October 2015.

RECREATION LISTENING SESSION

A unique outcome of the Metter-Candler listening sessions was the focus on enhancing recreational activities across the community. Two recreation-specific listening sessions were held to better understand the needs and aspirations of the community with regard to its recreational amenities and programming. Over 30 people attended the sessions, and the information gathered from the discussions was used to update and organize the recreation department's master plan. In addition, students from UGA's School of Public and International Affairs provided best practices on by-law creation for the Recreation Advisory Board, and a wage study was conducted for hiring a recreation director. A critical result of the listening sessions was the reorganization of the recreation department within the Candler County government structure.

JAYCEE PARK REVITALIZATION

In an effort to revitalize a neighborhood park that was over 40 years old, the City of Metter partnered with students from UGA's College of Environment and Design (CED) to create a new design for the park. CED Graduate students conducted a playground design charrette to facilitate public engagement for the park revitalization. The charrette resulted in a design that featured new, larger play structures, a covered pavilion, and a dedicated multi-use greenspace. To help fund the structure, members of the Recreation Issue Work Group applied for a community-built playground grant. The application was successful, and the City of Metter Jaycee Park was awarded \$15,000 from KaBoom! and Dr. Pepper/7Up to be used for the purchase of new equipment. The playground was successfully built and finalized during a volunteer-driven build day in 2015.



2015



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RETREAT

In early 2015, the Candler Executive Committee met to revisit their Archway Partnership work plan and reflect on successes and potential challenges moving forward. Noteworthy successes identified at the retreat included a unified community branding strategy, the community web portal, refurbishment of Jaycee Park, and GRAD certification for the local industrial park along I-16. The retreat also led to updated priority areas: Leadership, Recreation, Community Development, Education, and Healthcare.

METTER MOVES

The Metter Moves concept was created by blending several focus areas: community beautification and branding, recreation, and health and wellness. The initial project involved the cohesive mapping and promotion of several existing walking trails within the City of Metter. The trails—Downtown, Historic, and Bloomin’—were highlighted, and important features and attractions along the route were identified on the maps. Additionally, a student from UGA’s College of Public Health created promotional materials for residents and visitors to increase awareness of the opportunities to exercise in and around the community. The student also provided an assessment of the health and wellness opportunities available in the community and created a Community Wellness Program Proposal and community-wide health resource directory.

TELEHEALTH SUCCESS

In the newly constructed K-8 school in Metter-Candler County, the nurses’ areas were built to include telehealth capabilities with the hope of eventually offering telehealth services. Over the years, various school administrators and staff worked to identify resources

for the recently established telehealth program in Metter’s schools. An initial grant for \$30,000 from the Georgia Partnership for Telehealth helped pave the way for future opportunities, including a partnership with Tift Regional Hospital which agreed to pay the monthly \$500 connection fee, resulting in tangible savings for the school system.

Additionally, students from UGA’s Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication visited the clinic and worked to create informational marketing materials aimed at parents and staff, sharing success stories of previous students, and encouraging use of the telehealth clinic.

121/129 CONNECTOR DESIGN

Students from UGA’s College of Engineering and Terry College of Business worked with the Candler Archway Partnership to identify potential routes for a new road to relieve traffic congestion and attract potential businesses. Undergraduate engineering students provided a design of the road, utility and stormwater management plans, and a construction-cost analysis. They also incorporated the commercial business recommendations provided by Terry graduate students into the overall engineering plan. “The fact that this is a real-life project for these students is priceless to us,” said Jamie Riggs, previous president and executive director of the Metter-Candler Chamber of Commerce. “Not only are we getting services we would not be able to afford otherwise, but we are also building important relationships with these future experts in their fields.”



"What we learned together and what I learned from my students about their experiences growing up will stick with me forever", said Grady College faculty member Maria Len-Ríos of her experience working in Metter. "I enjoyed getting to do something in a Georgia community with our campus partners and offer our students a unique learning opportunity learning skills for generations to comes."

**Maria Len-Ríos, GRADY
COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBER**



2016



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM SITE DESIGN

An issue work group made up of parents, teachers, and school administrators worked diligently to create a multi-phased outdoor space to address run-off issues, add shade and visual interest to the space, and increase STEM curriculum and experiential learning opportunities for students. The impressive design featured a garden area, pollinators, xeriscapes, cisterns, a weather station, and ADA-accessible elevated beds. The group was able to secure \$4,000 in grants and private donations. *See quote on next page.*

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Candler County Hospital collaborated with the Archway Partnership, J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development, and College of Public Health to complete their community-wide health-needs assessment. Through surveys, focus groups, and interviews, faculty from the University of Georgia collected information that was used to complete the survey requirements and strategically address the health needs of the community. The hospital also worked to create an outreach committee that would oversee the implementation of the strategic plan. Other outcomes included the opening of a new exercise facility at the hospital (opened to the public) and new educational opportunities provided free of charge to the community.

BIKE-LANE AND SIDEWALK ASSESSMENT

A community-wide assessment was completed on behalf of the City of Metter and Candler County to understand the status of their sidewalks and bike lanes. The report, completed by graduate student Kiley Aguar in UGA's Master of Landscape Architecture program, provided a detailed map highlighting the status of both lanes while also suggesting potential routes for enhancing connectivity. Aguar also provided a list of potential funding sources for aiding in implementation of the project.

New Priority Areas:

- LEADERSHIP
- RECREATION
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- EDUCATION
- HEALTHCARE



"This garden has the possibility to set Candler County apart from other schools in the state of Georgia. This garden is an educational tool with the capacity to teach lifelong learning skills for generations to come."

Amy Koth, **TEACHER AND MEMBER OF THE ISSUE WORK GROUP**



2017



WORKFORCE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In an effort to address workforce development, the Candler Archway Partnership created a Workforce Issue Work Group in 2015 comprised of local business leaders, members of the Archway Executive Committee, higher education officials, local educators, and interested community stakeholders. The group met throughout 2016, and leaders from the group were tasked with interviewing several notable businesses in the county to determine their workforce development needs and ascertain what skills were lacking from their current workforce and applicant pools. They asked questions regarding how Southeastern Technical College (STC) could bolster their program offerings to cater to the workforce needs of local industry.

A review of best practices of connecting a school system with local industries was shared from across the state of Georgia. A list of potential recommendations was included for developing solutions to address workforce and industry needs, including creating a Workforce Development Council comprised of local business leaders, officials from the school district, representatives from higher education institutions, and other key stakeholders; instituting internship and apprenticeship programs for high school students in businesses of willing partners; introducing soft skills into the education curriculum; and strengthening the pipeline between the school system and local employers.

MAKING THE SHADE GRANT

In 2015, the Archway Partnership connected Master of Landscape Architecture student Kiley Aguar with a group comprised of teachers, parents, and administrators who had the goal of transforming Metter Elementary School's outdoor space with new trees, educational signage, interactive plant beds, and learning stations.

The final result was a successfully executed design plan and grant application which provided the school with the \$5,000 Making the Shade grant to purchase shade trees for the playground. On previous site visits, a Georgia Forestry Commission representative had noted that the playground equipment reached temperatures of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, making the importance of shade trees fully tangible. Candler County citizens and local students grabbed their shovels and worked all day to plant 37 trees at the newly built Metter Elementary School playground. The finished product was the result of two years of planning between community leaders and the Archway Partnership: a vibrant space plan for an outdoor classroom and pollinator garden that will serve the K-8 facility for years to come.

"I had fun being part of planting day...Overall, it was a rewarding experience to say the least, and I think that's my favorite part of being involved with the Archway Partnership: feeling like your hard work can improve a place and/or the quality of someone else's life."

Kiley Aguar

COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENT AND
DESIGN GRADUATE STUDENT



DOWNTOWN HISTORIC STRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

Two graduate students from UGA's College of Environment and Design's Master of Historic Preservation department worked for months to inventory and collect data on roughly 120 historic structures in downtown Metter. The goal of the survey was to inventory the historic commercial and landmark resources in and around the commercial core. For the purposes of this survey, "historic" was defined as any resource that was at least forty years old. This definition created a ten-year buffer around the general fifty-year threshold for properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, allowing time for research and preparation of any subsequent National Register nominations. The final 300-page Historic Preservation Assessment was presented to the City of Metter and the local Archway Executive Committee and will be used by the community for a variety of projects moving forward.

COUNTY WAGE COMPARISON/COMPENSATION STUDY

The Candler County Board of Commissioners contracted with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government to update the county's job descriptions and personnel guides and complete a wage study for the identified job classifications. At the time, the county had 81 full-time employees and 55 part-time employees. The final report included 37 new position descriptions for each job in Candler County. The Institute of Government also developed a compensation plan for Candler County's consideration, as well as an implementation guide.



2018



COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

In 2018, the community identified “poverty and crime” as a new priority area for their Archway Partnership work plan. They focused on identifying local resources in the community that could be of assistance to people in need across Metter-Candler County. Sessions were organized by Archway to bring together local non-profits, service providers, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and the school system to identify resources that needed to be included in the final resource guide. After the meetings, a comprehensive list was created and organized into sections including Medical Services, Child and Youth Services, Food Security, and Churches. The Candler County Resource Guide was printed and shared among organizations across the community and also published on an online platform.

VISITORS TO METTER

Since 2013, approximately 200 students have visited Metter-Candler County as a result of the Archway Partnership’s work with other partners both on campus and locally. Annually, students from the Public Service and Outreach Student Scholars program and Leadership UGA visited Metter, exposing them to rural Georgia and providing them with an opportunity to see a community that they may not have otherwise visited. Local partners from the Candler Archway Executive Committee always participated, sharing their experience as an Archway Partnership community along with lessons on leadership and collaboration. These experiences provided students with a tangible look into rural Georgia, giving students insights into their own life experiences and potential areas of work for their future.

Annually, multiple student groups visited Metter to expose them to rural Georgia and provide them with an opportunity to see a community that they may not have otherwise visited.

FINE ARTS PARTNERSHIP

The Fine Arts Partnership was an idea that stemmed from administrators within the Metter-Candler County School System and others from across the community with the goal of revitalizing the arts community in Candler County. The Archway Partnership facilitated initial conversations that included representatives from across the community as well as resources from within Metter-Candler County and the Averitt Center for the Arts in Statesboro. The result was the creation of the Candler County Arts Council that meets monthly and has hosted events, including local performances, concerts in the park, and an innovative Agriculture Arts Festival.



Candler County Local Resources

Archway Partnership,
Candler County Family Connection,
and Communities in Schools
collaborated to create this guide



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City of Metter Departments & Services
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Pharmacies
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Family Services
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Veteran Services
Adult & Elderly Care Services
- PAGE 7** Nursing Homes & Retirement Communities
Mental Health Services
Developmental Disability Services
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Addiction Recovery
Emergency Support Services
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Utility & Services Providers
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Affordable & Low-Income Housing
Banking Institutions
Institutions of Higher Education
Philanthropic Organization
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- PAGE 12** Miscellaneous Resources & Services

NURSING HOMES & RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

- Azalea Health & Rehabilitation**
ADDRESS: 300 Cedar St
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-5703
- Candler County LTC LLC Nursing Home**
ADDRESS: 300 Cedar St
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-5704
- Cedar Plantation Assisted Living**
ADDRESS: 46637 GA Highway-46
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-4700
- Grace Gardens**
ADDRESS: 30 S College St
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-3033
- NextStep Care**
ADDRESS: 10 S Broad St
Buller, GA 30006
PHONE: (888) 763-2420
- Orchard Manor**
ADDRESS: 1321 Palaski School Rd
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-2633
- Pleasantview Nursing Center**
ADDRESS: 475 Washington St
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-2668
- Source Care Management**
ADDRESS: 58 S E Broad St
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-7640

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Candler Counseling Center**
Services offered include outpatient counseling and mental health services to children ages six through adulthood. The center will provide assessments to determine needs, offer psychological testing, group therapy, group skills training for children, behavior management for ADHD, and link parents to other community support services.
ADDRESS: 737 S Lewis St
Metter, GA 30439
PHONE: (912) 685-3317
- PineLand Mental Health Services**
PineLand BHID services to public, not-for-profit community based organization that helps children, adolescents, adults and seniors who have mental illness, developmental disabilities and addiction challenges to live more full and productive lives.
PineLand BHID
P.O. Box 745
Statesboro, GA 30459
PHONE: (912) 764-6909
- PineLand Mental Health Services Locations**
Buller: Candler High Hope
ADDRESS: 213 Simmons Rd
Statesboro, GA 30458
PHONE: (912) 489-8711
- Candler C&A Day**
ADDRESS: 98 N Zettosower Ave
Statesboro, GA 30458
PHONE: (912) 764-9868
- Family Support Services**
An array of goods and services aimed at providing families with individualized support services and/or goods needed to continue the care of a family member with developmental disabilities residing in the family home. Family Support Services is not a crisis program. These services are provided to families with the goal of preventing crises that can result in the need for out-of-home placements or higher intensity services.
CONTACT: Ty Stanfield
Family Support Coordinator
(912) 681-1837
- John's Place**
PHONE: (912) 764-6129
- DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES**
- Babies Can't Wait Program**
To help children with special needs to ensure that each young child with developmental disabilities achieves his or her maximum developmental potential. Children birth to age three who have serious developmental delays or disabilities. There are no financial requirements. Candler County Schools will assist you with a referral to this program.
CONTACT: Dawn Miller, (912) 682-9673
- Medicaid Waiver Programs for Students with Developmental Disabilities**
A waiver is money that can pay for services for people with developmental disabilities. There are different types of waivers depending upon the need of each individual. It is important to apply very early as the waiting lists are generally long. You may contact the Department of Developmental Disabilities for more information on waivers at 1-800-348-3503, (912) 303-1649, or call Jiny Farthum, parent liaison at (912) 685-5711, ext. 0562.

*Thank you to the
Executive Committee and
our Funding Partners*

City of Metter

Candler County

Metter-Candler Chamber of Commerce

Candler County Industrial Authority

Metter-Candler Board of Education



Archway Partnership
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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