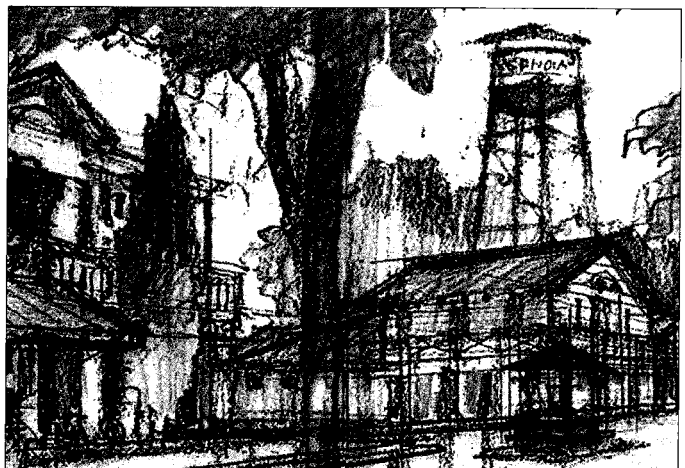




Workshop ③

Senoia

Blueprints for successful communities





The Senoia Community Design Workshop

**results of a community design
workshop for the city of Senoia,
Georgia**

**A component of The Blueprints for
Successful Communities Initiative
of The Georgia Conservancy in
Partnership with:**

**The Interprofessional Community
Design Collaborative and,
The Georgia Tech Urban
Design Workshop**

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Ellen Keys of The Georgia Conservancy at the Senoia Workshop

The Blueprints Initiative

Over the last decade, growth and development have diversified and strengthened Georgia's economy, but at a significant risk to Georgia's environment. The good news for Georgia is that all across the state builders, developers, bankers, environmentalists and government officials are realizing that the way we have treated and used land over the last century cannot sustain our region in the coming century. For that reason, in 1995, the Georgia Conservancy formed a unique partnership comprised of the Urban Land Institute, the Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association, Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, American Institute of Architects, and American Society of Landscape Architects to foster public education and facilitate a process for creating successful communities in Georgia.

To further this effort the Successful Communities Partners have joined with the Urban Design Workshop of the Georgia Tech College of Architecture and the Interprofessional Community Design Collaborative to conduct a series of workshops in selected communities in the Atlanta region to address specific development issues in those communities which may be prototypical for the region in general. The workshops also serve to integrate the Successful Communities Principles which have been established as a result of this initiative.

The Senoia Community Design Workshop is the third of many workshops planned. The Georgia Conservancy and its partners have concluded that this effort, combined with continued public education, will result in communities across Georgia which are economically strong, environmentally sound and socially progressive.

Successful Communities Principles

Successful Communities:

- work together to produce a high quality of life that they want to sustain;
- work to create regional strategies for transportation, land use and economic growth;
- understand that sustainable community design is based on the effect of the built environment on the natural environment, aesthetics, scale, history and culture;
- promote efficient use of existing infrastructure, energy, water and land;
- incorporate compact integrated land uses which bring people closer to work, to school and shopping and safeguard undeveloped lands for agriculture, greenspace and recreation
- provide transportation options so that each member of the community has access to goods, services and recreation
- are designed to be safe, healthy, economically strong, environmentally sound and inclusive.

The Conservancy believes that these principles apply to all communities, from those on the edge of urbanizing regions facing problems of managing rapid growth and change, to inner city neighborhoods facing problems of outmigration, economic disinvestment and deteriorating housing stock and infrastructure.

Senoia and Coweta County

The City of Senoia is a unique historic railroad town of 1,000 population with nearly intact 19th century architecture and urban landscape. It is located in the southeast corner of Coweta County on the rapidly advancing southwest suburban edge of Metropolitan Atlanta, with approximately half of its population now made up of commuters to Atlanta. Senoia has begun to experience the effects of this growth, with a population expected to double in this part of the county over the next 20 years, an end-of-the-line stop on one of the region's proposed commuter rail lines and the annexation of several recent subdivisions.

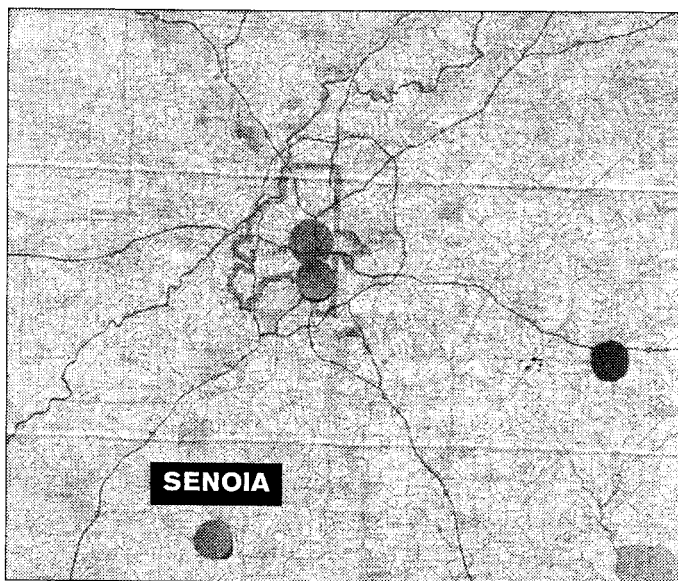
The purpose of this Workshop was to evaluate the impact of these inevitable changes and to recommend ways that Senoia can proactively manage this growth to both preserve one of Georgia's historic treasures and improve the quality of life at the same time. Motivated by the sense that to do nothing will inevitably lead to a deterioration of their quality of life, Senoia has instead decided to take charge of its own future.

The first Workshop session centered on the question: Where is Senoia? By that is meant what is the perceived size of Senoia as a community? There are, in fact, three Senoias:

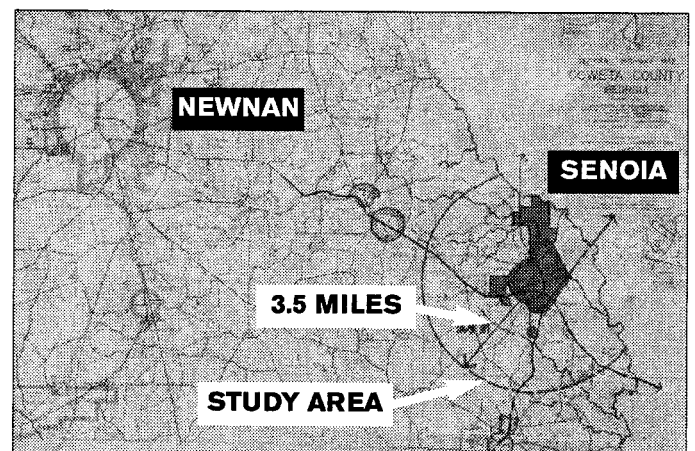
1. The historic core of the City, defined by the very visible limits of its 19th century street grid and architecture.
2. The City limits, a political boundary, which now includes annexed subdivisions and the Twin Lakes Planned Unit Development, is visually more or less defined by the current limits of existing development.

3. A perceived larger community of about 3.5 miles radius, which is defined more by community social ties and institutions, rather than by visual boundaries. In particular, this "Senoia" includes Eastside Elementary School, which is part of the Coweta County school system, and lies outside of the City limits. For purposes of the Workshop, this larger community constitutes the Senoia Study Area.

The Senoia Study Area is characterized by land that is suitable for both agricultural and urban development. This potential conflict of uses will need to be mitigated by strong policies and ordinances from Coweta County, particularly if farmland is to be preserved in light of the stronger economic returns offered by development. The County's current zoning ordinance favors very low density suburban sprawl without public utilities which neither protects farmland nor encourages more sustainable forms of development. The City of Senoia must work closely with the County to create an environment conducive to growth that is both economically and environmentally sustainable, not only within the City limits but throughout the Study Area as well.



Senoia in the Metro Atlanta Region



Senoia in Coweta County

ASSETS AND PROBLEMS

The Workshop Steering Committee was asked to describe the assets and problems of their community to help inform discussions on solutions and recommendations for the City:

Community Assets

A. Quality of Life

- Quiet neighborhoods
- Family atmosphere
- Sense of community
- People know your name
- “Affordable” or moderately priced housing

B. Security/Safety

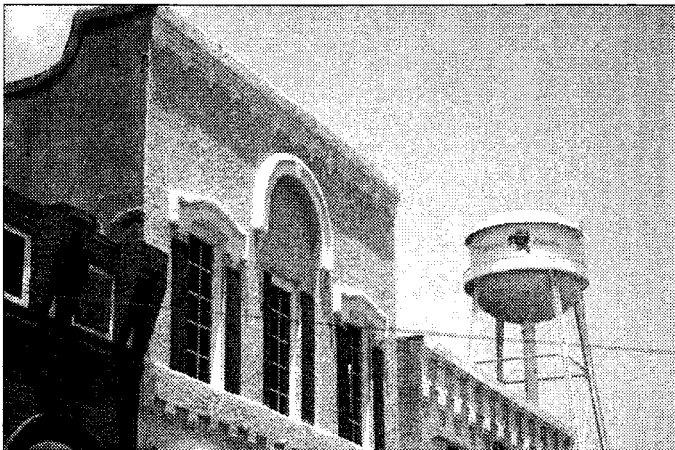
- Sense of safety
- Low crime
- Knowing your neighbors

C. Physical Characteristics

- Architectural design
- Historic character
- Small town atmosphere
- Accessibility
- Museum

D. Livability

- Low traffic
- Areas for walking



Historic Main Street

Community Weaknesses

A. Absence of Physical Quality

- Lack of cleanliness and upkeep (litter)
- Lack of landscaping (beautification), shade and seating in the downtown
- Inconsistent architecture
- Vacant buildings downtown
- Vacant lots in the historic district
- Varied architectural housing styles
- Unattractive retail and housing along Highway 16
- Overhead utilities
- Lack of identity and sense of place outside local population

B. Insufficient Infrastructure

- Lack of sidewalks
- Lack of gateway
- Inadequate signage

C. Missing Public Controls

- Lack of architectural guidelines
- Lack of tree and signage ordinances
- Lack of good development codes
- Lack of land preservation tools
- Lack of comprehensive plan
- Lack of enforcement
- Lack of community communication and participation

D. Missing Services

- Downtown businesses
- Water and sewer
- Grocery
- Childcare facilities



Historic Residential Street