

# BEYOND PRESERVATION

**The 25 Year Impact of the  
Historic Macon Foundation**

Completed by PlaceEconomics  
for the Historic Macon Foundation  
February 2022



PlaceEconomics





## Fire Hall #4

Tradesmen rehabilitate the old fire station into HMF's new office.



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# Key Findings

The pages that follow tell the story of the economic, social, and environmental impact that the Historic Macon Foundation (HMF) has had in Macon, particularly in the three study neighborhoods of Beall's Hill, Huguenin Heights, and Tattnell Square Heights. Here are some highlights of those findings:



Since 1997 HMF has completed **98 development projects** in the three neighborhoods representing an **investment of more than \$12 million.**



The average square foot value of residential properties in those three neighborhoods has increased from **\$43.76 in 2008 to \$61.53 in 2021.**



That difference in property values means an **additional \$271,00 in property taxes** for local government each year.

Since 1997, neighborhood purchasing power has increased from \$16.8 million to nearly \$23.8 million.

The total value of residential properties in the study area has grown from \$37.5 million in 2008 to \$58.8 million today.

Mercer University, in conjunction with the Knight Foundation, has provided \$1.4 million in down payment assistance to 87 Mercer faculty and staff to purchase homes in the area. Fifty-five percent of those purchases were of HMF projects.

Through rehabilitations and consulting work with tax credit applications, HMF has been involved in most of the historic tax credit projects in Macon. HMF has completed nearly \$150 million in tax credit projects over the last 10 years.

Macon's historic tax credit activity is second in Georgia only to Savannah and has had significantly more projects than the much larger Atlanta. Over the last decade Macon project using the federal historic tax credit have created an average of 35.4 jobs each year representing annual labor income of \$1.3 million. Additionally, another \$394,000 has been generated by those projects for indirect and induced workers in Macon/Bibb County.

Within the state of Georgia, Macon's historic tax credit activity is second only to Savannah. Macon has seen significantly more projects than larger cities, including Atlanta.





Between the start of the Great Recession in 2008 and 2020, the **residential foreclosure rate was 33% lower** in the study neighborhoods than in the rest of Macon.



Between 2000 and 2020 the overall population of both Macon and the three study neighborhoods lost population. At the block level, however, **blocks that have seen HMF investment have increased in population.**



HMF rehab projects have diverted materials from landfills. The 64 houses that HMF rehabilitated saved **6,800 tons of material from going into the landfill.**

Those projects have generated an additional \$1.1 million for indirect and induced workers in Macon-Bibb County.

Between 2000 and 2020 the number of occupied units in the three study neighborhoods has increased from 520 to 587 while the number of vacant units decreased from 145 to 127.

Population density in the three neighborhoods is higher than the rest of urban Macon, with a density of six people per acre compared to four for the rest of the city.

There has been a decrease in the Black population in the study areas over the past 20 years, which can in part be attributed to the redevelopment of the Hope VI project which replaced the Oglethorpe Homes public housing complex.

While nearly half of the population (47.1%) of Macon-Bibb County lives in neighborhoods that are more than 80% Black or more than 80% White, the population in the three study neighborhoods is 45.6% Black, 45.0% White, and 9.4% other, making it one of the most racially and economically integrated areas in Georgia.

In both Walkscores and Bikescores, all three of the study neighborhoods score significantly higher than the rest of Macon.

In the study neighborhoods, 36% of workers commute less than ten minutes, compared to only 14% in the rest of Macon.

HMF's rehabilitation strategy has helped avoid 1.18 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.





**Beall's Hill**  
1388 Calhoun Street



# Introduction

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The work of the Historic Macon Foundation has never been centered on saving historic landmarks, but rather on the connection between preservation, housing, and neighborhood revitalization.

For the last thirty-five years PlaceEconomics has worked with hundreds of non-profit historic preservation groups in all fifty states. One could count on one hand the local preservation organizations who have had the entrepreneurial mindset, the willingness to take risks, and the consistent, persistent commitment to historic preservation at the neighborhood level as does the Historic Macon Foundation (HMF). There are many great organizations who advocate for historic preservation, who provide educational programs, who offer small grants. What distinguishes the Historic Macon Foundation is that they don't just talk about historic preservation, they do historic preservation.

HMF has become both a national leader and a role model for their hands-on, activist approach to preservation-based neighborhood revitalization.

For a preservation organization, HMF takes a non-traditional approach. The organization's work has never been centered on saving historic landmarks, but rather, it focuses on the connection between preservation, housing, and neighborhood revitalization. For more than three decades, HMF has moved beyond the "education and advocacy" role to become an effective developer doing historic rehabilitation and high-quality new infill construction. By focusing at the neighborhood level, HMF is able to identify projects that will help stabilize entire neighborhoods, from rehabilitating vacant housing stock, to investing in street

improvements, and even constructing new housing on vacant lots.

Since 1964, Historic Macon Foundation has purchased, rehabilitated and sold over 140 historic buildings throughout Macon and has become a national example of how to sensitively and successfully leverage partnerships and funding in service of neighborhood revitalization. This report examines HMF's work in three key neighborhoods: Huguenin Heights, where they began working in 1994; Tattnell Square Heights, where they started in 2000; and Beall's Hill, their most recent area of focus.

The impact of historic preservation programs can be measured economically, but the full story of HMF's success should be explained in more than just numbers. By both analyzing numerical data and hearing from local stakeholders and community residents, this study has drawn from qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the impact of HMF's efforts. As HMF closes out their work in Beall's Hill, the time is right to assess the social, economic, and environmental impact of their work—not just in Beall's Hill, but in all the neighborhoods where they have undertaken comprehensive revitalization efforts.

**The number of organizations doing work like the Historic Macon Foundation could be counted on one hand. The scale, quality, and commitment over time are almost unparalleled.**



# Measures of Success



## COMPLETION

Moving project activities block-by-block until the entire neighborhood is complete

- Since 1997, Historic Macon Foundation has made targeted investments in 30 blocks across Huguenin Heights, Tattnall Square Heights, and Beall's Hill.
- Over those 25 years, Historic Macon Foundation has added an average of 1 new block to their portfolio each year.
- Each project block has seen an average of 3 investments from Historic Macon Foundation.



## UPGRADE THE APPEARANCE OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Ensuring 75% or more of the housing is code-compliant

- In 2022, 84% of properties in the study neighborhoods had a property condition of good or average according to the Bibb County Assessor's records, compared to 70% of properties in the rest of Macon.
- By neighborhood, Huguenin Heights had 92% of properties in good or average condition, Tattnall Square Heights had 91%, and Beall's Hill had 81%.



## HOMEOWNERSHIP

Achieve homeownership rate of at least 50%

- Mercer University, in collaboration with the Knight Foundation, has provided more than \$1.4 million in down payment assistance to 87 homeowners, 78 of which have been in Huguenin Heights, Tattnall Square Heights, or Beall's Hill.



## **DIVERSITY**

### Maintain neighborhood diversity

- Population has remained stable in blocks where Historic Macon Foundation has made investments, whereas population has been lost the rest of the neighborhoods.
- In 2022, 46% of the population living in the study neighborhoods was Black and 45% was White. It is almost statistically impossible that a neighborhood be more diverse. These are among the most thoroughly integrated neighborhoods in the country.
- While Black population has been lost across the study neighborhoods, it was not lost from blocks where the Historic Macon Foundation made their investments. 65% of Black population loss occurred in the blocks where public housing was replaced by mixed-income housing. Another 15% was lost on blocks where HMF made no investments.



## **NATIONAL MODEL**

### Creating a national model for Neighborhood Revitalization Partnerships

- Historic Macon Foundation and its partners are national leaders in historic preservation-based neighborhood revitalization. There are no more than a handful of local preservation organizations in the country that have the sustained record of success on multiple levels as has HMF.
- The strength the model is: 1) the diversity of tools; 2) the breadth of partnerships; 3) a targeted geography; 4) direct investment in both rental and owner occupied housing and in both single and multi-family; 5) enthusiasm for appropriate infill; 6) expertise in the use of historic tax credits to benefit projects of their own and by others.
- There are dozens of excellent local preservation organizations who focus on education and advocacy, but the Historic Macon Foundation has decades of success moving beyond talking about preservation to doing preservation.
- In February of 2018, Historic Macon Foundation, the Knight Foundation, and the 1772 foundation partnered to host a Revolving Loan Summit that brought over 100 participants from 23 states. The summit showcased Historic Macon Foundation's use of diverse tools and the strength of their many partnerships. The Revolving Loan Summit highlighted the national reputation of Historic Macon Foundation as a leader in historic preservation and neighborhood revitalization.



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# Organizational Timeline

Historic Macon Foundation (HMF), as it is now known, formed in 2003 when the Middle Georgia Historical Society and the Macon Heritage Foundation merged their missions and activities to create a more efficient and unified regional voice for historic preservation. Founded in 1964, the Middle Georgia Historical Society served as a regional advocate for preservation. The Macon Heritage Foundation was established in 1975 jointly by the InTown Neighborhood Association and Middle Georgia Historical Society to handle bricks and mortar preservation projects. Though the Historic Macon Foundation has only existed in its current iteration since 2003, it builds upon the work and continues to advance the mission of its predecessor organizations. For simplicity's sake, when generally discussing work carried out in the three study neighborhoods, we will refer to these predecessor organizations as Historic Macon Foundation or HMF.

## **1964**

Middle Georgia Historical Society is formed.

## **1976**

Macon Heritage Foundation is established specifically to purchase and rehabilitate historic properties. Shortly after their formation, the group establishes a revolving fund using a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

## **1989**

Macon Heritage developed a public-private partnership with the local housing authority and the city community development department to rehabilitate housing in historic districts for low- to moderate-income residents.

## **1994**

Macon Heritage Foundation began work in Huguenin Heights, a moderate-income neighborhood bordering Mercer University's main campus, with support from the National Trust. Between 1994 and 2001, MHF rehabilitated 15 homes in the neighborhood.

## **1997**

The first major project in Huguenin Heights is complete.

## **2000**

Macon Heritage Foundation begins working in Tattnell Square Heights.

## **2001**

The Georgia Trust awarded its Excellence in Rehabilitation award to MHF for the organization's work in Huguenin Heights. Macon was awarded a HOPE VI grant, which was in part used to demolish the Oglethorpe Homes public housing project and replace it with new mixed-income housing, which became Tattnell Place.

## **2003**

The Historic Macon Foundation is formed, merging the missions and activities of the Middle Georgia Historical Society and the Macon Heritage Foundation.

## **2004**

Tyler's Place, Macon's first dog park, opened in Tattnell Square Heights. \$76,000 was given in trust to Historic Macon to maintain and improve the dog park.

## **2007**

HMF embarks on a public-private partnership with the Knight Foundation, Mercer University, Macon-Bibb County government, and the Macon Housing Authority and shifts focus to revitalizing thirty-two blocks of Beall's Hill within the College Hill Corridor. Knight makes its largest investment in Beall's Hill by granting HMF \$700,000 "to advance the revitalization of Macon's linchpin Beall's Hill neighborhood by creating a revolving loan fund and development incentives managed by the Historic Macon Foundation."

## **2009**

The Knight Foundation makes a \$2 million investment to establish the College Hill Alliance.

## **2014**

The Knight Foundation grants HMF a \$1.2 million Program Related Investment (PRI) loan and a \$1.7 million grant to establish a revolving loan fund for home improvements. This round of funding expanded the Facade Loan Program and created the Energy Efficiency Loan Program. Mercer University committed to \$400,000 in down payment assistance for Mercer employees to be matched by the Knight Foundation.

## **2016**

The Knight Foundation grants HMF \$50,000 for the Neighborhood Incubator program, "To promote broad-based resident engagement by supporting Historic Macon's Neighborhood Incubator that will provide programming to strengthen and build neighborhood associations throughout Macon, as part of an effort to create stronger neighborhoods with a more unified voice."

## **2018**

HMF receives the Trustees' Award for Organizational Excellence from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

## **2020**

HMF embarks on a new strategic plan that includes a "Road Map for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility." Recognizing that the current composition of their staff does not reflect the community they serve, the organization pledges to be more intentional about ensuring that their work reflects the whole community.

## **2021**

The Knight Foundation doubles funding received by HMF and NewTown Macon from the American Rescue Plan Act. The \$1.2 million will go towards building new rental units and renovating existing ones, increasing the stock of affordable quality rental housing in Beall's Hill.



## Success in “Unprecedented Times”

The past year and a half has posed widespread and massive challenges at the individual and organizational levels. The global COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic crisis threw many non-profits for a loop. From struggling to maintain payroll and retain staff, limitations around organizing in-person events, persistent supply chain issues, and a seemingly endless list of urgent causes competing for resources and funding, smaller nonprofits have had to be especially nimble and adaptable. Despite these hurdles, in 2021 Historic Macon Foundation has accomplished meaningful work thanks to the support of members, partners, volunteers, and supporters, including:

- Earmarking \$1.2 million for the construction of 12 affordable rental units in Beall’s Hill, and the creation of a rental housing revolving fund;
- A successful summer membership drive that drew 101 new members;
- Moving towards the completion of a renovated Fire Hall No. 4, which will serve as the organization’s new headquarters;
- Beginning a new tool library program through which the community can borrow tools free of charge;
- Developing a summer apprenticeship program to boost the skilled trades presence in Macon;
- Holding eight summer workshops for homeowners that cover basic knowledge to take on simple home repairs;
- Added two new sites to the list of Macon’s Fading Five;
- Revived Sidney’s Salons, a series of lectures and talks in honor of poet Sidney Lanier;
- Recognized standout community preservation work through the 2021 Preservation Awards



**Beall's Hill**  
Affordable  
Rental Housing

**Trades  
Apprentices**  
Chamille Blount,  
Liam Purvis,  
Mason Garret, and  
Charleston Reed  
Purvis (Carpenter in  
Residence)





# HISTORIC MACON FOUNDATION

338 POPLAR



HMF Staff and Members

## Historic Macon Foundation

A nonprofit that operates like a business.

The word "sustainability" is usually used in relation to the environment. But the National Council of Nonprofits notes that "... sustainability is commonly used to describe a nonprofit that is able to sustain itself over the long term, perpetuating its ability to fulfill its mission." Since 30% of nonprofits fail within the first 10 years, sustainability is a critical concept. The Historic Macon Foundation meets that definition of sustainability and is able to exist sustainably by operating like a

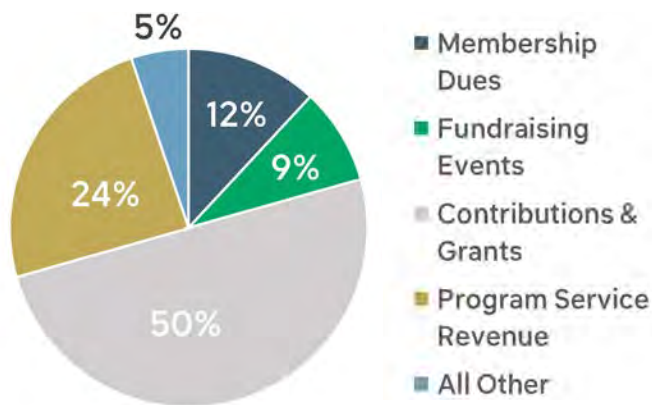
business. A business (hopefully) has profits and makes dividend distribution to its owners. As a nonprofit HMF cannot distribute its earnings and, any time revenues are greater than costs, must keep excess earnings within the organization. Those limitations do not mean HMF can't apply good business principles. Their success was recognized in 2018, when HMF received the Trustees' Award for Organization Excellence from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

# A Look at Historic Macon Foundation's Finances

As part of this analysis, HMF's tax returns from 2007 through 2019 were examined. This "accountant's perspective" revealed the principles that guide HMF to both meet its mission today, and sustain itself to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

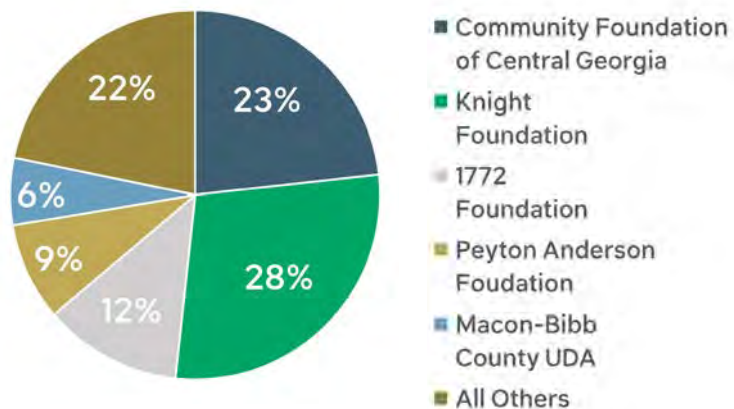
## SOURCE OF REVENUE 2007-2019

First, HMF relies on a diverse funding base. Over the past thirteen years, roughly half of the organization's revenues came from grants, gifts, and donations; twenty percent from membership dues and fundraising events; just short of a quarter from program service revenue; and five percent from everything else.



## SOURCES OF CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONATIONS, 2011-2019

While half of HMF's revenue has come from contributions and grants, there is considerable diversity in that category. The Knight Foundation and the Community Foundation of Central Georgia have been the largest donors over the period, both of which have made investments in HMF nearly every year. The 1772 Foundation (which focuses on providing resources for historic property revolving funds) and the Peyton Anderson Foundation have also been significant donors, supplying multi-year contributions. Through the Mill Hill neighborhood revitalization, Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority has also provided significant funding.



**It is the ongoing success of HMF's programs that have led the donors to provide ongoing support.**

It is also noteworthy that nearly a quarter of annual revenues come from program service revenues. This demonstrates the entrepreneurial nature of HMF and provides an income stream to support both programs and operations and to serve as internally generated funds to leverage donated funds.



## HMF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

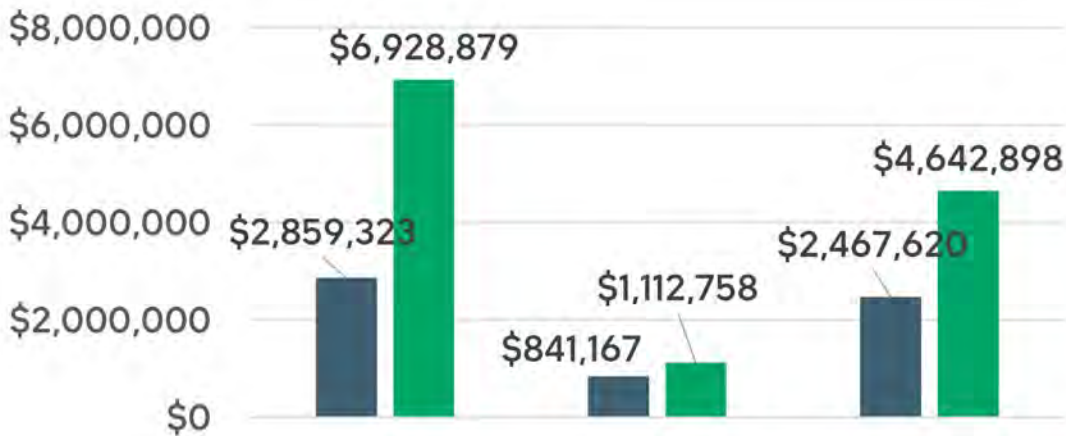
Any bank looking at the financial statement of a potential borrower is going to consider the relationship between total assets and total liabilities. A business that has a very high share of liabilities as compared to assets may be considered "over leveraged" and could be considered a higher lending risk. HMF is the type of prudent borrower that a lending institution likes as a customer - one with a high ratio of assets to liabilities. On average over the past 13 years, HMF's assets were nearly four times its debt.



It should also be noted that much of the debt of the Historic Macon Foundation is relatively short-term. The foundation borrows money for rehabilitation or new construction projects and when that property is sold the money is repaid or reinvested in another project.

## FINANCIAL STRENGTH OF HMF

HMF's business-like approach is also revealed in the growth of both revenues and assets over recent years. Between 2007 and 2019 Total Assets have grown from just under \$3 million to nearly \$7 million. Net Assets have increased from around \$2.5 million to more than \$4.5 million, and the organization's endowment has increased from \$840,000 to more than \$1.1 million. The good management, demonstrated successes, and diverse funding base have helped ensure that the growth in resources allow the Historic Macon Foundation to continue their mission into the future.







### **Fading Five**

HMF staff with new buyers of the endangered TJ Ware House. The buyers bought the Beall's Hill house as-is and invested over \$500k in their new home.





**Beall's Hill**

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# A Neighborhood Approach

The Historic Macon Foundation takes a block-by-block approach to neighborhood revitalization.

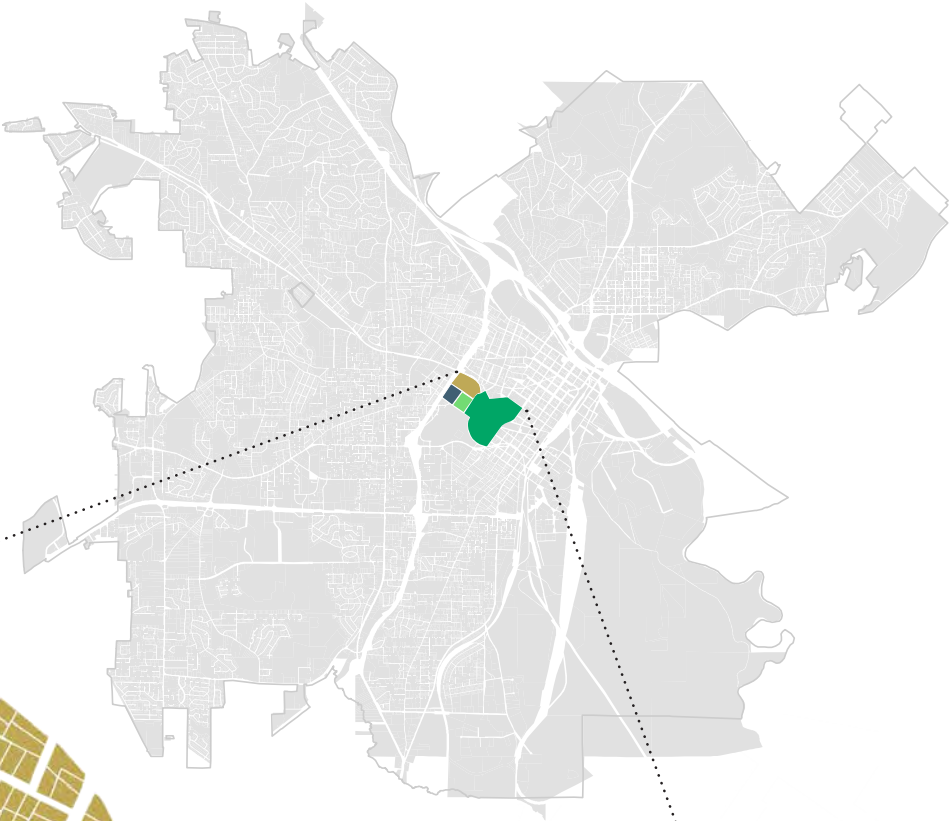
Since the mid-1990s, Historic Macon has made strategic investments with private funds to revitalize entire neighborhoods, not just one house at a time, but block by block. Working holistically and focusing on one neighborhood at a time has proven to be an approach that supports sustainable and diverse neighborhoods. When possible, existing historic structures are rehabbed to meet the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. On empty lots, Historic Macon builds new houses, guided by design standards that ensure that they fit in and complement the existing architecture.

There is a wide variety of housing types within these three tight-knit neighborhoods. Huguenin Heights is characterized by larger, two-story Queen Anne style houses, Tattnell

Square Heights features smaller Victorian vernacular cottages, and Beall's Hill is known for its mix of modest single family houses, shotguns, duplexes, and apartment buildings. Neighborhoods that offer a mix of housing units by size, age, and residential type foster demographic and economic diversity, which is one of HMF's goals.

This study assesses the impact of HMF's work across three distinct neighborhoods over varying time frames, each historic and each suffering from varying levels of disinvestment.

**Methodology Note:**  
This analysis compares patterns within the three study areas to patterns within the 2010 City of Macon Boundaries, despite the Macon-Bibb County consolidation in 2014. This creates a more fair comparison between the study areas and the rest of urban Macon. Therefore, any reference to the "rest of Macon" references the 2010 city boundaries (See methodology).



- Study Neighborhoods**
- Huguenin Heights
  - Tattnall Square Heights
  - Beall's Hill



# Huguenin Heights

## Description:

Huguenin Heights is one of the earliest subdivisions in Macon, developed by Edward Huguenin between 1880 and 1920. The neighborhood sits next to Mercer University's campus and within the Intown Historic District. Bounded by Tattall Square Park, I-75, Oglethorpe Street, and Coleman Avenue, the neighborhood features two-story Queen Anne houses averaging 2,300 square feet, most of which were built in the late 1800's.

## HMF Involvement:

Begun in 1994, Huguenin Heights was the first neighborhood revitalization project undertaken by Macon Heritage Foundation. Through the project, a total of 16 houses were restored for single-family owners. The objectives of the project were to restore the neighborhood to predominantly owner-occupied residential status. Mercer University also began offering a Down Payment Assistance program for faculty and staff to purchase properties in the neighborhood, at Macon Heritage Foundation's recommendation.

## Historic Macon Foundation Projects



## Huguenin Heights Quick Facts

	Number	Amount
2020 Total Population	151	—
2020 Number of Households	82	—
HMF Development Properties	16	\$1,916,544
Low Interest Loans	9	\$65,000
Down Payment Assistance	14	\$133,809
Historic Tax Credit Projects	5	\$685,661



**1605 Rembert Ave**  
 Rehabilitated: 2007  
 Mercer Down Payment Assistance: 2007

# Tattnall Square Heights

## Description:

Tattnall Square Heights sits adjacent to Tattnall Square Park and is bounded by Adams Street, the Central of Georgia Railroad, College Street, and Oglethorpe Street. Developed between 1890 and 1925, the area was the focus of Macon Heritage Foundation's second neighborhood revitalization project.

## HMF Involvement:

HMF focused on revitalization in Tattnall Square Heights between 2000 and 2007. Throughout their involvement, HMF developed 28 properties, supported preservation through low interest loan and down payment assistance programs. HMF rehabilitated 16 homes and developed 11 sensitive infill projects. In 2004, HMF was given an endowment for Tyler's Place, Macon's first off leash dog park in Tattnall Square Heights, which has become a treasured neighborhood asset.

## Historic Macon Foundation Projects



### Tattnall Square Heights Quick Facts

	Number	Amount
2020 Total Population	152	—
2020 Number of Households	58	—
HMF Development Properties	28	\$3,019,411
Low Interest Loans	5	\$41,667
Down Payment Assistance	12	\$114,070
Historic Tax Credit Projects	1	\$270,133



**1407 Chestnut St**  
 Rehabilitated: 2003  
 Mercer Down Payment Assistance: 2003



# Beall's Hill

## Description:

The Victorian-era Beall's Hill is one of Macon's oldest neighborhoods and sits within close walking distance of Mercer University, downtown shopping, restaurants, and museums. It is bounded by Mercer University and Tattnall Square Park to the southwest; College Street and Appleton Avenue to the northwest; Arch and 1st Street to the northeast; and the intersection of Edgewood Avenue and Telfair Street to the southeast. Beall's Hill has the most diverse housing stock of the three study neighborhoods, ranging from a mixed-income apartment development, modest single family homes, worker's housing, and shotgun homes.

## HMF Involvement:

HMF's work in Beall's Hill began in 2007 in the form of a public-private partnership with the Knight Foundation, Mercer University, Macon-Bibb County government, and the Macon Housing Authority with the goal to revitalize thirty-two blocks of the neighborhood. HMF has leveraged the investments of these partners using market-rate revolving funds, low interest facade loans, and down payment assistance programs. HMF's work followed a \$19 million HOPE IV in 1998 grant to replace the Oglethorpe Homes housing development with the mixed-income Tattnall Place and a commitment by the City of Macon, Mercer University and the Macon Housing Authority to revitalize the neighborhood.



**1407 Jackson St**  
Rehabilitated: 2020  
Mercer Down Payment  
Assistance: 2020

<b>Beall's Hill Quick Facts</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Amount</b>
2020 Total Population	960	—
2020 Number of Households	447	—
HMF Development Properties	52	\$8,102,070
Low Interest Loans	24	\$196,667
Down Payment Assistance	52	\$979,120
Historic Tax Credit Projects	20	\$6,538,705

# Historic Macon Foundation Projects





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# Stronger Together

## A look at the Historic Macon Foundation's Partners

Partnerships have been central to HMF's success. In fact, the story of historic preservation in Macon is built on partnerships. One of the earliest acts of the Macon Heritage Foundation (HMF's predecessor) was to seek support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation to establish a revolving loan program. This partnership with the Trust helped Macon Heritage initiate their housing rehabilitation program.

Building on that successful effort, Macon Heritage approached Mercer University to look for ways to work together in Huguenin Heights, the university's next-door neighborhood, beginning a partnership that continues today. Mercer has provided both grants and loans to HMF. Early on, the Historic Macon Foundation built other partnerships, with BB&T to offer homeowner loans; with the Peyton Anderson Foundation to develop a model home to showcase the neighborhood; with Brown and Williamson to provide home repairs; and with local paint and roofing companies to provide supplies for their rehab work.

While these partnerships played an important role in Macon Heritage's growth, the continued support of the Knight Foundation has accelerated the pace and scale of their redevelopment work. With this increased capacity to ramp up development, it soon became necessary to establish a new organization with a specific focus on real estate development, and in 2003, the Historic Macon Foundation arose from that need.

Unlike many foundations that limit their role to seed grants, the Knight Foundation has been a sustaining partner for HMF through their continued support of the Down Payment Assistance Program, revolving fund, and other initiatives through substantial grants and loans. Knight's support has allowed HMF to expand their real estate capacity and carry out critical work, particularly within Beall's Hill.

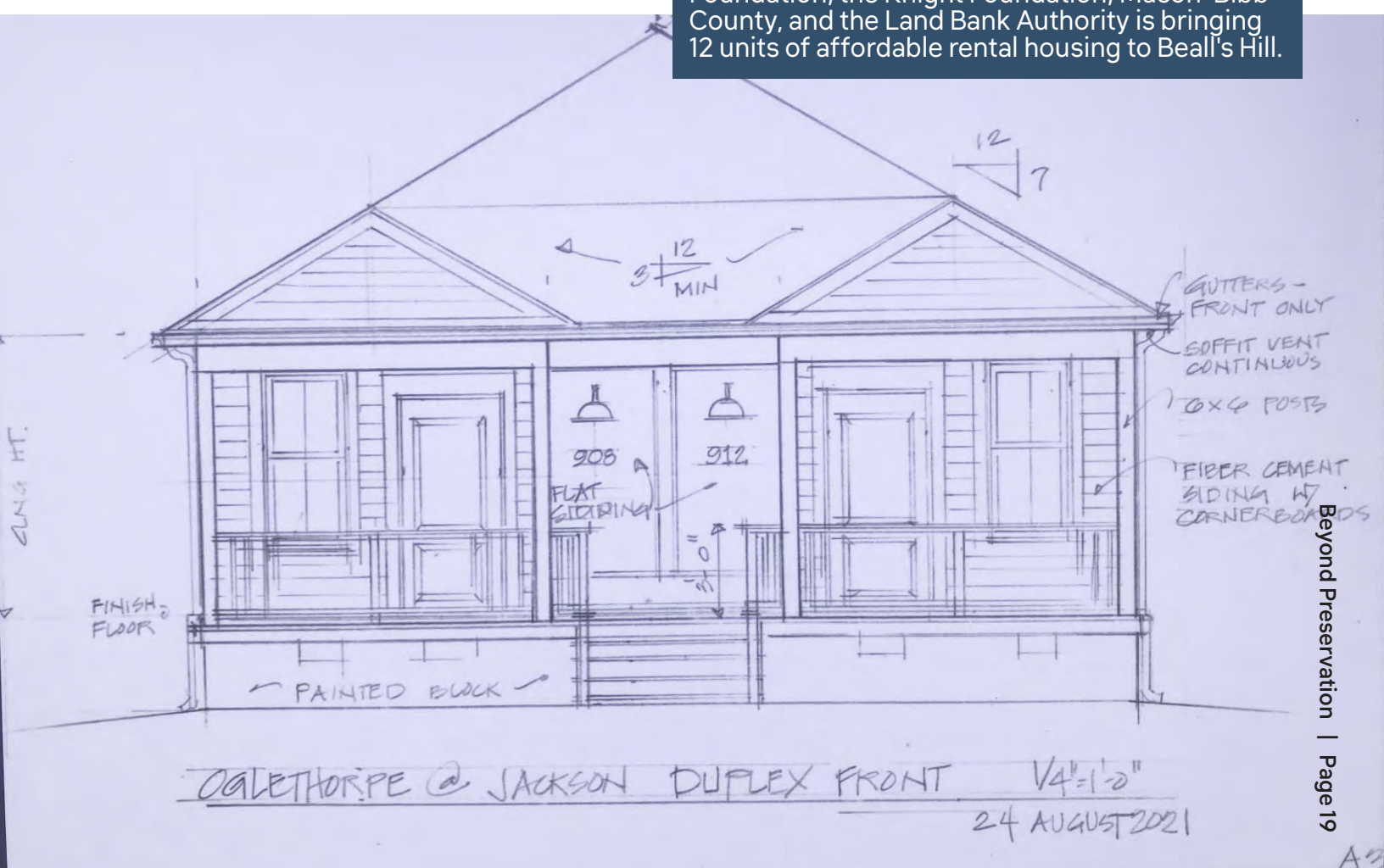
Over the past decades, Historic Macon Foundation has continued to build other partnerships to expand their capacity and reach. They have partnered with the City in many initiatives such as working with the Housing Authority on housing rehab and with the Economic and Community Development Department on low income down payment assistance, stabilization grants, and roofing grants. And they frequently partner with the Macon-Bibb County Land Bank Authority who helps them with targeted acquisition to clear property titles and put property back on the market.

These partnerships have been integral to HMF's success. Whether one-time and project-specific or long-term and sustaining, all have contributed to the enhanced livability of Huguenin Heights, Tattnell Square Heights, and Beall's Hill.





A partnership between the Historic Macon Foundation, the Knight Foundation, Macon-Bibb County, and the Land Bank Authority is bringing 12 units of affordable rental housing to Beall's Hill.





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# A Diverse Toolkit

Historic Macon Foundation has creatively used a variety of tools to advance its work. Over the decades, they have taken an iterative approach, learning and adapting from their experiences in each neighborhood—adjusting tools, developing new ones, and cultivating partnerships. The results include measurable successes and visible improvements: increased population and decreased vacancy, properties put back on the tax roll, new infill housing, improved amenities, and the activation of previously vacant lots achieved through a variety of programs and initiatives including low-interest loan programs, down payment assistance, revolving funds, and more. Below is a partial list of these tools, some of which will be explained in greater detail later in this report.

## **HMF Real Estate Development & Revolving Fund**

The success of HMF's real estate work over the past 40 years has been in large part due to their use of revolving funds. The model has typically involved raising philanthropic capital to fund the rehabilitation or construction of single family residences. HMF has completed more than 150 projects using this model, which originated with a \$450,000 National Trust for Historic Preservation loan to rehabilitate three houses in Huguenin Heights. That initial \$450,000 was later "revolved" to fund the rehabilitation of 15 houses.

## **Facade Loans**

HMF provides a few different types of low-interest loans that help property owners fund necessary maintenance and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The facade loan program is designed to help property owners fix or repair anything on their property visible from the right of way. Loans are made in \$5k or \$10k increments and since the program began \$445k has been committed and loaned.

## **Energy Efficiency Loans**

The Energy Efficiency loan program was developed in 2014 with funding from the Knight Foundation. The program is modeled on the facade loan program and expands the low-interest loans to cover energy efficiency upgrades. Qualifying projects may include the installation of solar panels, HVAC upgrades, new energy efficient appliances, improved insulation, and more.

## **Neighborhood Incubator**

Neighborhood Incubator is an initiative that encompasses a range of programming, such as Neighborhood Leadership Institute, Neighborhood Small Grant Project, and Neighborhood Council. Its mission is to promote broad-based resident engagement by working with individual neighborhoods. It was spurred by a \$50,000 grant from the Knight Foundation and has continued to provide valuable skills and resources for neighborhood leaders to strengthen their neighborhoods through community engagement.

## **Fading Five**

Macon's Fading Five started in 2015 as an annual endangered buildings list and has successfully saved two properties in Beall's Hill. The Fading Five initiative also has a revolving fund that was seeded by \$250k from the 1772 Foundation and \$250k from the Community Foundation of Central Georgia.

## **Down Payment Assistance (DPA)**

The Down Payment Assistance program began as a partnership between Macon Heritage and Mercer University as part of HMF's work in Huguenin Heights. Since then, the program expanded to include Tattnell Square Heights, Beall's Hill, and the broader College Hill Corridor. The program requires that homes purchased using DPA funds be rehabbed in accordance with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, or be a newly constructed home. The program is supported by Mercer University and the Knight Foundation.

### **Historic Tax Credit Consulting**

HMF has been offering sound tax credit consultation in Georgia since the program started. Today the work comprises HMF's consulting business under the umbrella of Historic Macon Community Investments, LLC. The arm has completed 134 projects and has 45 active projects, which constitute about 736,000 rehabilitated square footage over 350 housing units.

### **General Contracting**

Historic Macon Rehabs, LLC is the general contracting arm of HMF since securing a Qualifying Agent in 2016. The company's staff includes a Director of Construction and a Carpenter in Residence with a crew of subcontractors. Since its formation, Historic Macon Rehabs has completed 9 single family rehab projects, one new single family house, and is set to build 6 duplexes in Beall's Hill by next year as part of the new affordable housing revolving fund.

### **Buy and Hold Rental Housing**

Starting in 2014 HMF has acquired and rehabilitated 15 residential rental units and has an internal goal to nearly triple that amount. The investments help stabilize neighborhood real estate and allow HMF to control rent rates in perpetuity.

### **Improving Amenities and Other Neighborhood Initiatives**

HMF invests in neighborhood amenities, improvements, and other assets that enhance quality of life for neighborhood residents. Over the past several years they have built Macon's first dog park, started a shade tree nursery, improved pedestrian safety, helped families afford home repairs and maintenance through Christmas in April, given new homeowners bikes through Bikes for Beall's Hill, and started a neighborhood tool library.

### **Other neighborhood initiatives:**

- **Pedestrian safety** – HMF worked with Macon-Bibb County, Bike Walk Macon, and Historic Hills and Heights Development Corporation, to improve pedestrian safety in Beall's Hill. Together, they added sidewalks, designated on-street parking, and improved lighting. HMF also added painted crosswalks and speed awareness signs to select streets identified by neighborhood residents.
- **Property assemblage** – For two years, HMF worked with a donor to assemble over 20 parcels on the edge of the Tattnell Square Heights neighborhood that were previously derelict.
- **Trees** – Funding from the Knight Foundation allowed HMF to secure trees and start the Beall's Hill Tree Nursery, which supplied trees to neighbors at a minimal cost. In 2021 HMF worked to plant over 50 trees in Beall's Hill.
- **Bikes for Beall's Hill** – Over six years HMF has given 40 bikes away in the Beall's Hill neighborhood through Bikes for Beall's Hill. With seed money from a Richard and Julia Moe Grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, HMF can give bikes to anyone purchasing an HMF property in the neighborhood. If the buyer already has bikes, the two bikes can be donated to a local bike share program.
- **Deconstruction** – Rather than send material to the landfill, HMF works to deconstruct houses that simply can't be rehabilitated, saving and reusing as much as possible.
- **Tool Library** – In 2021, HMF opened a tool library that will give any Macon-Bibb resident access to borrow tools to assist with home projects at no cost. Through the library HMF will also provide training workshops that introduce attendees to different skills, from basics on how to use common tools, to more specialized work like refinishing doors and windows.



# Economic Impacts of Historic Macon Foundation's Direct Investments

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The Historic Macon Foundation's strategic, incremental, and holistic approach to neighborhood revitalization has created value and stability.

The Historic Macon Foundation's neighborhood development work stands out as both unique and effective. Very few preservation nonprofits do what they do, at the scale that they do, as well as they do. HMF's goal is to stabilize neighborhoods: making them safer, attracting amenities, and providing housing at various price points. Their commitment to a neighborhood approach is all about considering neighborhoods holistically by making strategic investments, offering financial support, and improving amenities and public safety.

## Historic Macon Foundation Projects

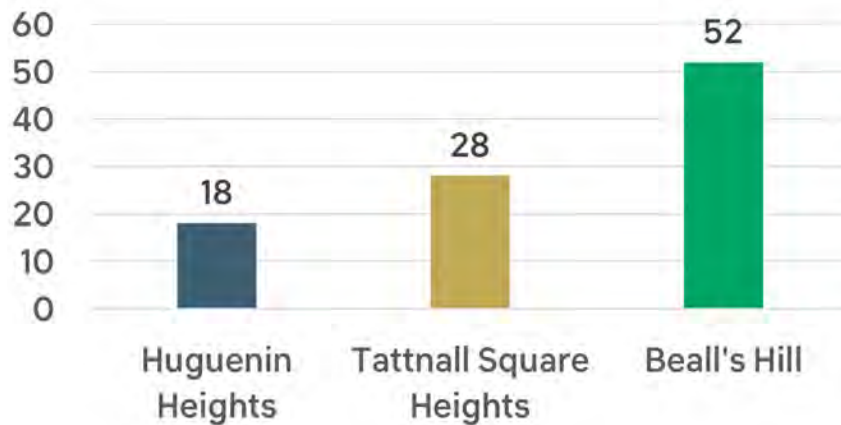
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### NUMBER OF PROJECTS

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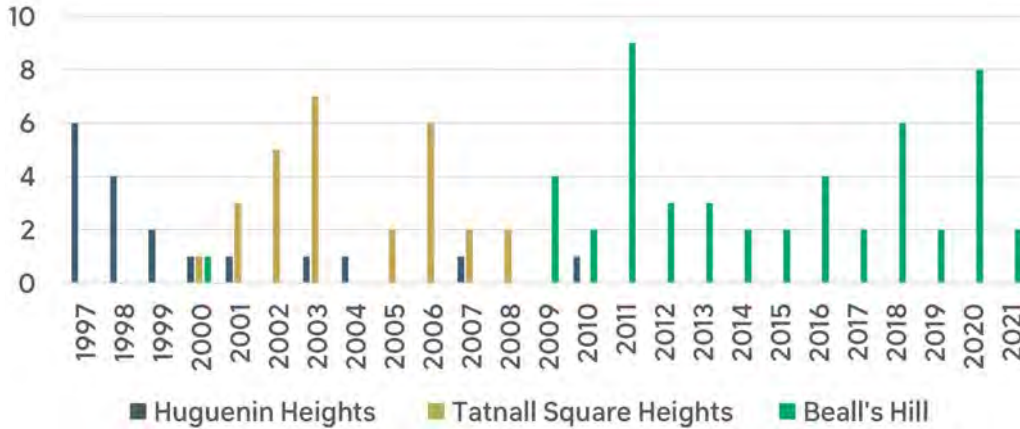
Since 1997, Historic Macon Foundation has completed 98 development projects in the three study neighborhoods, totaling over \$12 million dollars in investment.





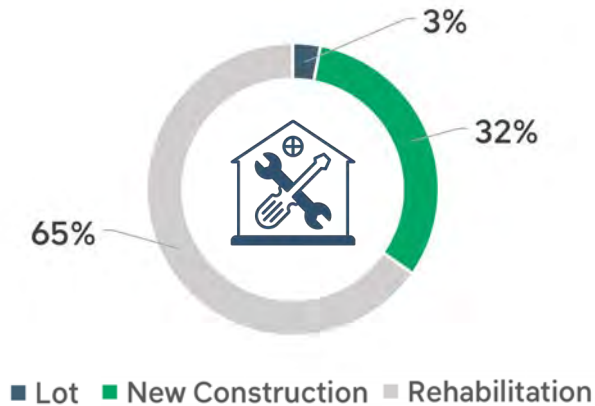
## PROJECTS BY YEAR

HMF’s neighborhood development work in the three study neighborhoods spans three decades, beginning in Huguenin Heights in 1994 (which saw its first project in 1997), Tattnall Square Heights in 2000, and Beall’s Hill in 2007 (which saw its first project in 2009). In each, they have made strategic and concentrated investments in properties that are negatively affecting the values of those around them.



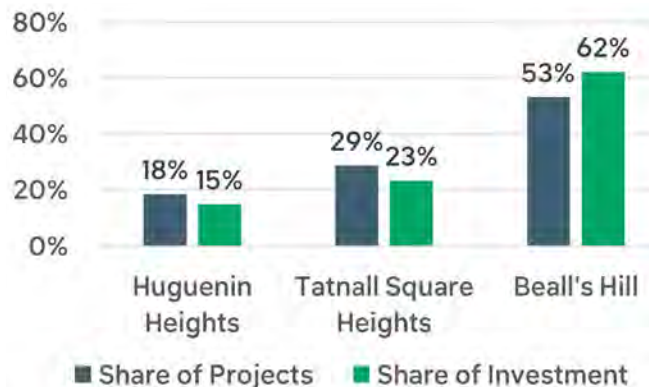
## PROJECTS BY TYPE

HMF does not take a purist approach to preservation. While the goal is generally preservation, sometimes conditions call for a more pragmatic approach that incorporates new infill and allows for selective demolition. These decisions are made strategically with the aim of advancing neighborhood health overall. Consequently, not all of HMF’s projects have been historic rehabilitation. Thirty-two percent of projects have been sensitively designed new construction infill.



## SHARE OF PROJECTS AND INVESTMENT BY NEIGHBORHOOD

During the time HMF has been involved in the three study neighborhoods, the majority of projects, 53%, and the majority of investment, 62%, has taken place in Beall’s Hill. This is in part because Beall’s Hill is substantially larger than Huguenin Heights and Tattnall Square Heights, but also because HMF’s sole focus on Beall’s Hill since 2007 has coincided with the expansion of their operation overall.

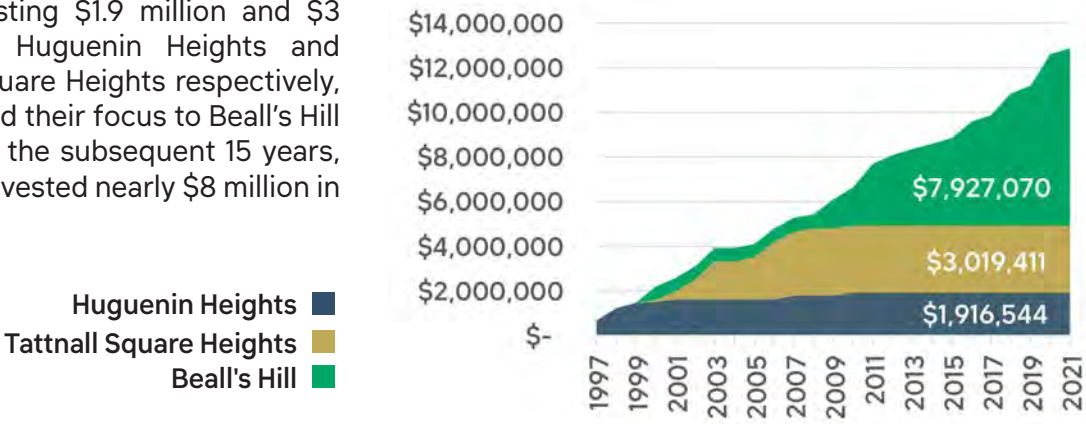




**Beall's Hill**  
1065, 1035, and 1029  
Oglethorpe Street

## CUMULATIVE PROJECT INVESTMENT

After investing \$1.9 million and \$3 million in Huguenin Heights and Tattnell Square Heights respectively, HMF shifted their focus to Beall's Hill in 2007. In the subsequent 15 years, HMF has invested nearly \$8 million in Beall's Hill.



The graphs above illustrate how HMF has refined and scaled their development model over time. Huguenin Heights, the focus of HMF's first neighborhood revitalization effort, is the smallest neighborhood by area and started with the most stable homeownership levels and highest property values of the three study neighborhoods. Therefore, fewer projects and less investment were required to reach target goals. HMF continued to fine-tune their neighborhood model in Tattnell Square Heights, upping the number of projects and investment. Beall's Hill has been the organization's largest undertaking, both in terms of area, vacancy rates, and the overall number of buildings in need of investment.



# A Return on Investment for the Community

The donations of the Historic Macon Foundation's funders, members, and partners have created real returns for the community.

Most donors want their contribution to have an impact, but all the better if the amount they give can leverage additional dollars and further expand the donation's reach. Some donors look to their Return on Investment, not measured by direct financial returns to themselves, but the overall economic benefits that result from their investment.

In HMF's case, where multiple donors are providing both loans and grants that together fund and match a range of programs, it can be challenging to precisely measure direct dollar-for-dollar impact. What is possible, however, is to show a typical example of the ripple effect of a donor's investment and the returns on that investment.

## Community ROI Hypothetical

Imagine a block in Beall's Hill with 12 houses, three of which have been sitting vacant and abandoned for years. Those other houses should have a market value of \$80,000 each but are suffering a 9% reduction in value because of the abandoned houses (see "Impact of Vacancy" later in this report). The Historic Macon Foundation acquires the properties, rehabilitates them, and sells them for \$140,000 each. Here are the consequences of that investment:



Donor gives HMF \$231,000 toward the project:



HMF borrows an additional \$189,000 to acquire and rehabilitate the properties.



**During the rehabilitation process:**



2.2 full time equivalent direct jobs are created (i.e. 1 Job = 1 worker for the entire year) in Macon/Bibb County



1.6 full time equivalent indirect and induced jobs are created in Macon/Bibb County



Labor income to the direct jobs is \$95.91



Labor income to the indirect and induced jobs is \$74,835



Taxes paid to local government (City/County/School District/Special Districts) is \$9,787

# Final ROI

So what was the Return on Investment that the donor got for its \$231,000 grant?



## Additional Impacts:



Recovery of value lost to other houses in the block \$64,600



Present value to local government of additional taxes from rehabilitated houses (10 years of tax receipts, discounted at 6%) = \$30,204



Present value to local government of additional taxes from increased value of the rest of the block = \$7,242



Extra public services no longer required = \$9,000



Landfill cost savings, \$10,439 as a result of rehabilitating rather than razing.



A new homeowner in the neighborhood = priceless.



\$170,752 in labor income



\$64,600 in recovered property values nearby



\$47,233 in local tax revenues



\$10,439 in landfill costs



\$9,000 in extra public services



\$420,000 in rehabilitated historic houses



## \$722,024

### Total Return on Investment

\$3.12 return for every \$1.00 invested



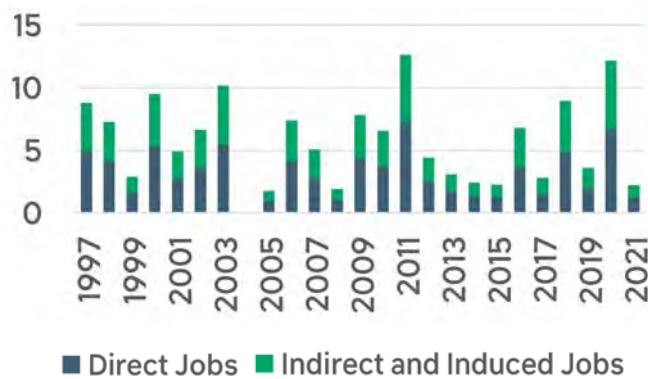
# Jobs and Labor Income

The impact of the Historic Macon Foundation goes beyond saving historic properties to producing real economic benefits measured in jobs and income.

The rehabilitation and new construction work in the Beall’s Hill, Huguenin Heights, and Tattnall Square Heights haven’t just saved historic properties and provided homes for Macon citizens. That work has also created jobs, generated paychecks, and provided much needed tax revenues for local governments.

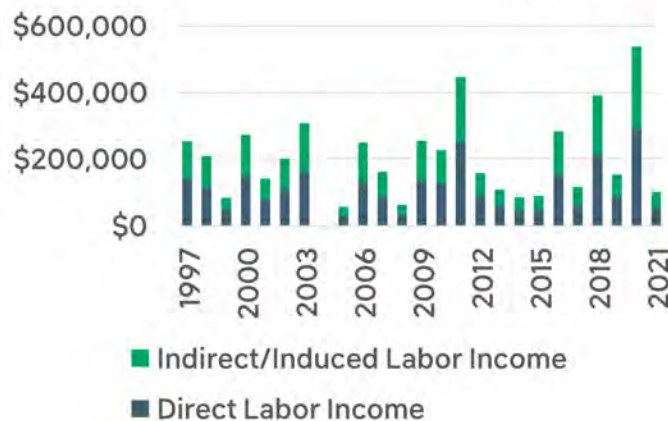
## JOBS FROM HMF PROJECTS

For nearly 25 years, the development work in these three neighborhoods has created on average 3.2 direct jobs and an additional 2.5 indirect and induced jobs for Macon area residents.<sup>1</sup>



## LABOR INCOME FROM HMF PROJECTS

These aren’t just jobs, but good jobs. Since 1997 on average there has been an average of \$106,672 in direct labor income and an additional \$91,066 in indirect and induced labor income stemming from these projects.



<sup>1</sup> A direct job represents a person working on the project. 1 job could be two people each working for six months. Two jobs could be one person working for two years. And indirect job is a job (or part of a job) created through demand for goods and services required to complete the project. A salesperson at the lumber yard selling materials to the project would be an indirect job. An induced job is one stemming from the household spending of labor income.

## Historic Macon Rehabs

HMF's in-house construction team



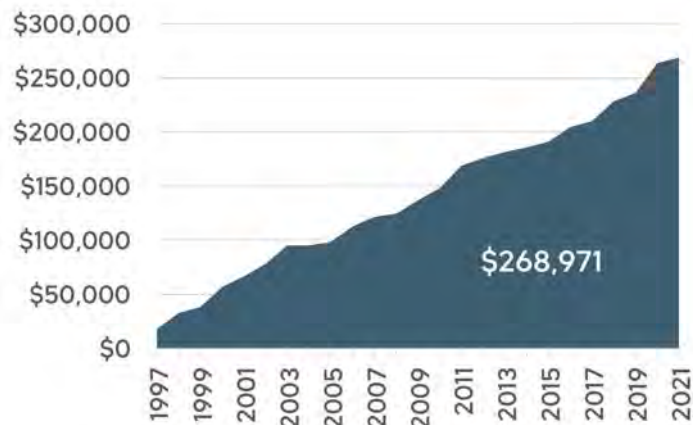
A “direct job” is a job that is created by the project. In the case of historic rehabilitation that would include a carpenter, plumber, electrician, etc.

“Indirect jobs” are not created by the project, but are supported by it. In this case, the sales person at the lumberyard, or the truck driver that delivered materials to the job site are good examples of indirect jobs.

An “induced” job is a job that is supported by employees’ own spending on goods and services with wages earned through direct and indirect jobs.

## CUMULATIVE LOCAL TAXES GENERATED FROM HMF PROJECTS

When there is economic activity there is usually tax revenue generated. Local governments have also benefited from these projects, not just after the work is done and new property tax revenues are received, but even during the construction phase. Since 1997 these project have generated in excess of a quarter million dollars in local government tax revenues during the construction phase.





# Neighborhood Reinvestment

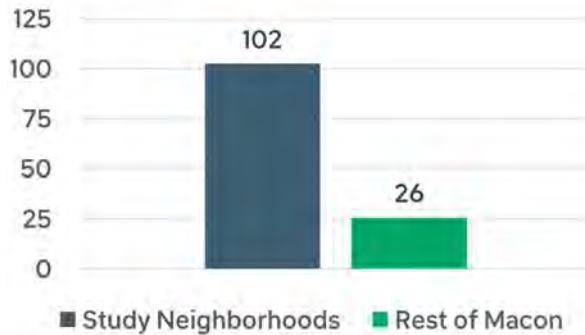
## Reinvestment spurs reinvestment.

One homeowner making even minor repairs to her house frequently results in her neighbor doing the same. This ripple effect is accelerated when there is an ongoing effort to rehabilitate vacant houses, support facade work on occupied houses, and build new houses on vacant lots as the HMF has done in the three study neighborhoods for nearly 25 years. Beall's Hill, Tattnall Square Heights, and Huguenin Heights make up less than 1% of the land area of the City of Macon, but over the last two and a half decades have drawn a disproportionate share of building activity.

To understand the pattern of building activity this study looked at all the building permits issued by Macon-Bibb-County from 1997 through 2021. Eliminated from the analysis were permits for signs, billboards, canopies, fences, decks, pools, communication/utility towers, mobile, occupancy permits, and conditional use permits. So that the data could be easily understood, the comparison was the number of permits issued for every 10 acres over the study period.

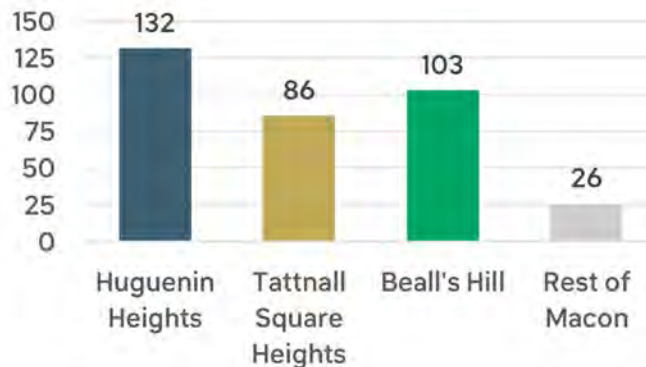
## BUILDING PERMITS PER 10 ACRES (1997-2021)

Here is what was found: for every 10 acres in the study neighborhoods, an average of 102 building permits were issued, as opposed to just 26 permits for the same area in the rest of the city. On average, permit activity is 4x greater in the study neighborhoods.



## BUILDING PERMITS PER 10 ACRES BY NEIGHBORHOOD (1997-2021)

When considered individually, each of the study areas has seen a greater concentration of building permit activity per 10 acres than the rest of the city. A building permit represents an investment in a property but also an indicator of confidence in the future of the neighborhood. The work of the Historic Macon Foundation, its partners, and particularly the property owners in these three neighborhoods, have expressed their confidence with their investments for nearly 25 years.



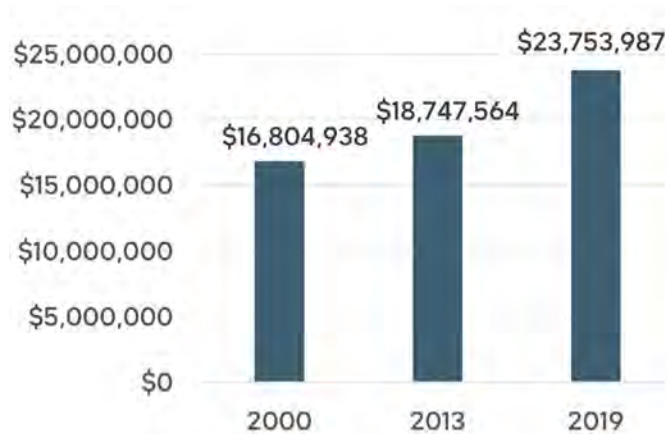
# Purchasing Power

Investment in a neighborhood increases local purchasing power, which benefits businesses and increases commercial building investment.

When neighborhoods see a reduction in vacancy and an increase in renovated properties, infill construction, and new residents, there tends to be one reliable outcome: an increase in buying power at the neighborhood level. This means that there are new opportunities for start-up businesses, business expansion, and commercial building investment. It also means that residents who have previously lived in a "desert" without needed goods and services within walking distance, begin to see businesses emerge that meet those needs.

## NEIGHBORHOOD BUYING POWER

That has certainly happened in Beall's Hill, Huguenin Heights, and Tattnell Square Heights in recent years. In 2000 the total buying power of the residents of those neighborhoods was slightly less than \$17 million per year. Nineteen years later, despite an overall decline in the number of people living in the neighborhoods, the buying power has increased to more than \$23.5 million. That means the opportunity for businesses to meet neighborhood needs and generate the jobs that those businesses represent.<sup>2</sup>



**An increase in purchasing power means that there are new opportunities for start-up businesses, business expansion, and commercial building investment.**



<sup>2</sup> Consumer Expenditure Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics

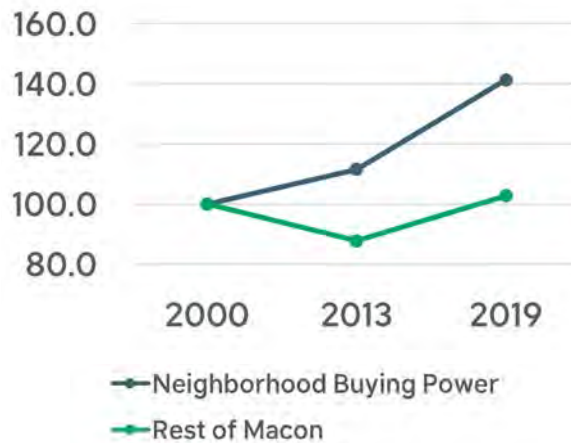


## GROWTH IN BUYING POWER STUDY AREA VS REST OF CITY (2000=100)

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But is that growth in buying power just a function of inflation? Did everywhere see that kind of growth over those two decades? To better understand the significance of this economic growth, this study indexed the 2000 buying power of each of the three subject neighborhoods and of the City of Macon as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

For this study the buying power of the neighborhoods under analysis and the rest of the City of Macon were estimated. That amount was assigned a value of 100 and change was measured from that base. In simplest terms, if the buying power increased by 10 percent, the index would move to 110. Conversely if buying power decreased 10 percent, the index would drop to 90. As can be seen in the graph, in 2019 (the last year of available data) the buying power in the neighborhoods under study reached slightly more than 140, representing a 40 percent increase. In the same year, the Rest of Macon barely surpassed 100. In fact, in the thirteen years between 2000 and 2013, the overall buying power for the



Rest of Macon decreased by more than 10 percent, only increasing in the last six years. Rising incomes and a growing population will both increase buying power. The growing economic strength of these neighborhoods is evidenced in this growth in buying power.

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<sup>3</sup> Indexing is a way of measuring economic data over a number of years, often on a comparative basis. Examples of indexes are the Consumer Price Index which measures inflation and the Dow Jones Average, which measures the stock prices of 30 of the largest companies.

# Property Values

The work of the Historic Macon Foundation has improved property values and generated increased property tax revenue.

For most Macon families their primary financial asset is their home. While it is most valued as a place to live, a home may also be a long-term investment. For those who in the past have been systematically precluded from wealth-building through homeownership, increasing home values may be an opportunity to build a family asset and grow generational wealth that can be passed on.

**The total value of residential properties in the study area has grown from \$37.5 million in 2008 to \$58.8 million today.**

For this study, an analysis was made of the average per-square-foot value of single family homes in the study neighborhoods. The change in that value over time was then compared with the rest of Macon. It is important to note that this measurement does not solely reflect the market driven appreciation of properties. Average square foot value would also be affected by: 1) improvements to a property; 2) new construction in an area; and 3) demolition of lower value properties. But all three of those activities took place both in the neighborhoods being studied and in the rest of Macon.

## AVERAGE VALUE PER SQFT - MACON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY

At the beginning of the time period (2008) the average square foot value of a home in the study area was \$43.76 per square foot as compared with \$45.00 per square foot for the rest of Macon. By 2021, the average value in the study neighborhoods had risen to \$61.58 per square foot while the rest of Macon had dropped to \$42.45. What happened over those 13 years? As can be seen in the chart at right, while values in the rest of Macon took a jump between 2008 and 2009, then the impact of the Great Recession began affecting Macon property values. While the Great Recession was officially over in 2009, it had a lasting adverse effect on property



values in many parts of the country, including Macon. The rest of Macon saw annual declines in average value every year through 2017. In 2018 values began increasing again, a pattern that has continued. Even so, values in the rest of Macon have not recovered. The average square foot value of a home in the rest of Macon in 2021 was still slightly lower than it was in 2008.



In the study neighborhoods, however, a different pattern emerged. Even through the depths of the recession, average property values continued to increase. Why was this pattern different? Houses were being rehabilitated by HMF and by individual owners. New construction took place, increasing average values. Mercer University provided down payment assistance to

faculty and staff who bought homes in the neighborhoods. This concentrated pattern of investment and reinvestment in Beall’s Hill, Huguenin Heights, and Tattnell Square Heights buffered those neighborhoods from some of the worst impacts of the 2008 economic crash, and property values kept increasing despite the Recession.

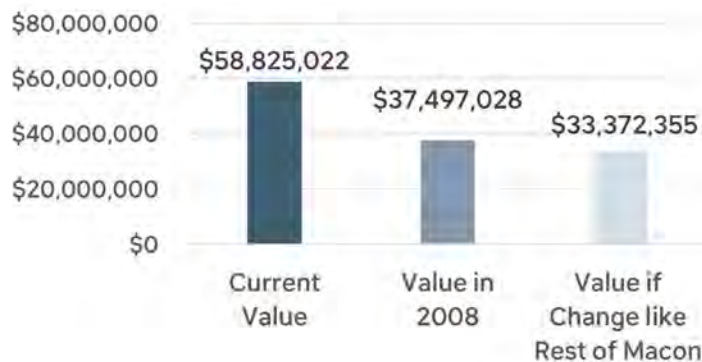
## Property Tax Implications

The biggest beneficiaries of increasing property values are property owners. But owners aren’t the only ones who benefit. Local government is a beneficiary as well. Nearly 40% of the revenues received by the Macon-Bibb County government are from

property taxes as are around 35% of the revenues received by the Bibb County School District. It is those revenues that pay for parks, for fixing streets, and paying teachers. As property values go up, so does revenue.

### VALUE OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES IN STUDY AREA

Increased value in the three neighborhoods under study has generated additional revenues for local governments. In 2008 the total value of single-family homes in the area was about \$37.5 million. By 2021 the aggregate value of those houses was almost \$59 million, providing an additional \$271,000 to local governments this year.



But had values in those neighborhoods declined at the rate of the rest of Macon, the total value today would be just over \$33 million, rather than the \$59 million. That would have meant decidedly fewer property tax dollars for local government and

either reduced services or higher taxes for everyone. Homeowners in Beall’s Hill, Huguenin Heights, and Tattnell Square Heights have certainly benefited from the increased value of their homes. But through their property taxes, they have shared this value enhancement with the rest of Macon.





**972 Maple Street (developed in 2009) and 1212 Ross Street (developed in 2011) were each developed in the aftermath of the Recession, at a time when the construction industry had slowed nationally.**

1212 Ross Street



972 Maple St



# Related Programs

Property development is only one tool in the Historic Macon Foundation's toolkit—low interest loans, down payment assistance, and tax credit consulting fill out the toolkit.

Historic Macon Foundation has created a number of funding mechanisms to support building repair and rehabilitation. Funding for these programs has come primarily from their revolving fund initiative. A revolving fund is so named because the money revolves through the account. Loans are made and once repaid, money is available to be loaned again to new customers. With support from the Knight Foundation, HMF has created several programs that draw from the revolving fund to help homeowners. These small loan programs have often been the catalyst for additional investment in the neighborhood.

**Historic Macon Foundation has had zero defaults on low interest loans provided.**

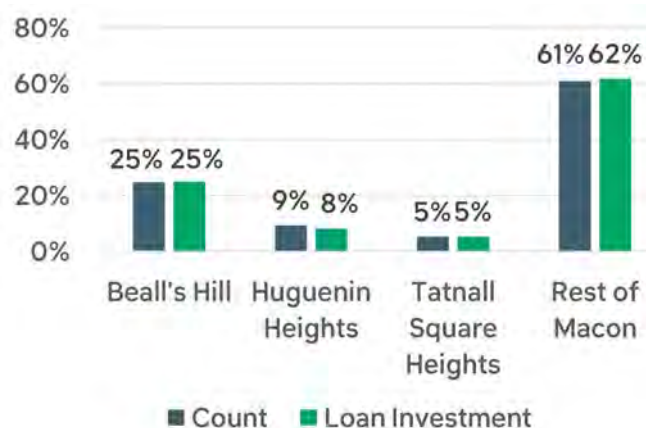
## Low Interest Loans

Historic Macon Foundation offers low interest loans for owners with buildings within historic districts to help address routine maintenance and energy efficiency improvements. HMF's Facade Improvement Loans help building owners make critical repairs to historic buildings within Macon's historic districts. Common examples of work funded by a facade loan include exterior painting, new roof installation, permanent landscaping,

professional design service fees, and tax credit consulting fees. The Energy Efficiency Loan Program was created to enhance the energy efficiency of historic buildings within the College Hill Corridor. Eligible expenses include HVAC upgrades, Building Performance Institute (BPI) assessment, duct sealing, attic insulation, shade trees, and tankless gas water heaters.

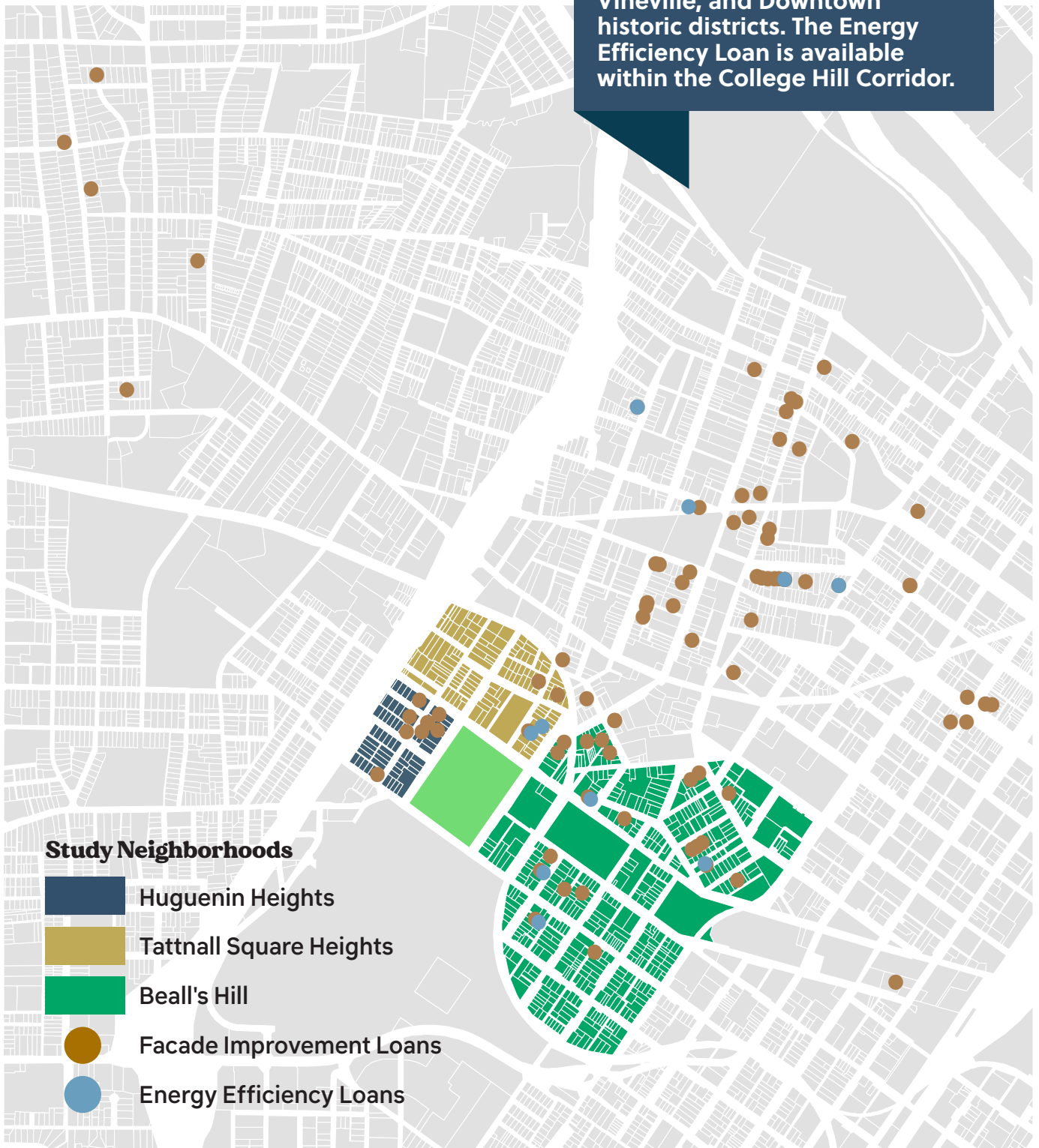
### SHARE OF LOW INTEREST LOANS BY STUDY AREA

Overall, 97 low interest loans have been given, 90% of which were Facade Improvement Loans. Thirty-nine percent of these low-interest loans have been distributed within the three study neighborhoods. Overall, nearly \$792,000 has been distributed over the history of these two programs, 38% of which has been allocated to buildings within the study neighborhoods.



## Low Interest Loans

The Historic Macon Foundation's Facade Improvement Loan Program is available to residents in the College Hill, Vineville, and Downtown historic districts. The Energy Efficiency Loan is available within the College Hill Corridor.





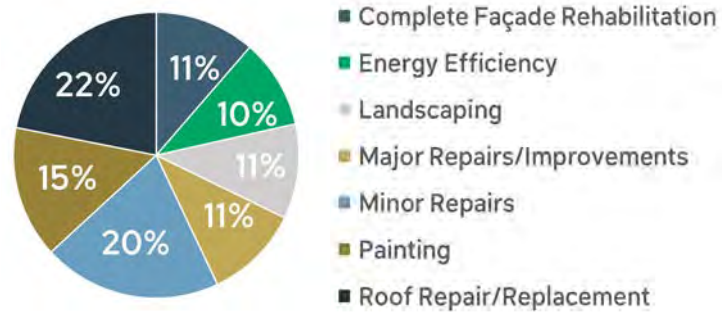
## CUMULATIVE LOW INTEREST LOANS

Over the last ten years, Historic Macon has given \$791,667 in low interest loans. Forty percent of that total has been invested in the study areas. With a revolving fund, when loans are gradually repaid that money is available to provide resources for another project.



## LOW INTEREST LOANS BY PURPOSE

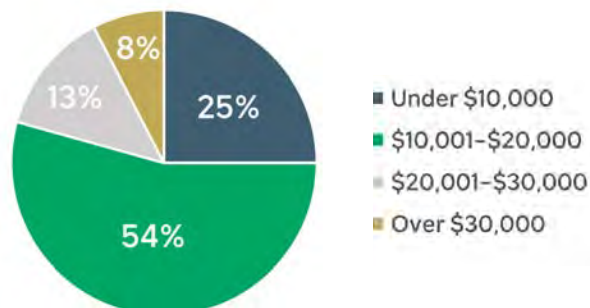
Facade loans can be a meaningful source of funding for owners in need of critical maintenance work. Close to half (43%) of loans were used for significant repairs: 23% for roof repair/replacement; 9% percent for complete facade rehabilitation; and 11% for major repairs or improvements. When it comes to ensuring the longevity of historic buildings, maintenance is critical. Roof repairs, in particular, are one of the most important and expensive repairs and can drastically improve quality of life for inhabitants. Other major repairs, like removing and replacing rotten siding, columns, porches, or windows constitute quality of life improvements that



not only add to the building's longevity, but address issues that can be linked to health and safety. Minor repairs accounted for 20% of all loans made. Such repairs like, siding replacement or window repair, can help maintain the building and ensure that issues don't go untreated and lead to more significant damage or deterioration later.

## LOW INTEREST LOANS BY TOTAL PROJECT COST

The majority of HMF's low interest loans (79%) were granted for projects under \$20,000. Thirteen percent funded projects between \$20,001 and \$30,000, and just 8% funded projects totaling over \$30,000.



Small projects of \$20,000 or less can help homeowners perform essential maintenance and address critical issues before they snowball into larger problems. Often these loans mean the difference between a homeowner proactively undertaking a small project or deciding to defer important maintenance. The data suggests this is true: for projects under \$10,000, the loan made up an average of 72% of the total project cost. For projects between \$10,001 and \$20,000, the loan amount made up 68% of the total project costs. Since these loans made up such a large share of the total project cost, these projects would likely not have happened without access to these low interest loans.



**1211 Ross Street received a \$10,000 facade improvement loan in 2011 to repaint the exterior, add decorative landscaping, and create a working vegetable garden.**

For projects costing \$20,000 and above, the loan amount generally makes up a smaller share of total project costs. For these types of projects, the loans present easy access to attractive finance options to undertake more significant—and expensive—improvements. With a low 20% matching requirement, these loans provide owners with access to capital for relatively low upfront cash.



Photo credit: Zillow

## LEVERAGE PER \$1 LOANED BY PROJECT SIZE

While the loan amount makes up a very large share of total project costs in smaller projects, the amount of private investment leveraged is much greater in larger projects. On average, for every \$1 given in low interest loans, an additional \$0.88 cents is invested by the property owner. However, the larger the total project cost, the larger this increment investment is. On average, for every \$1 loaned to a small project, an additional \$.43 in private investment is made. However, for every \$1 loaned to a large project, an additional \$3.48 in private investment is made.





# Down Payment Assistance

Mercer University, in collaboration with the Knight Foundation, has provided more than \$1.4 million in down payment assistance to 87 homeowners in Macon's neighborhoods. Full-time Mercer University employees qualify for the program, which provides 17% of the purchase price up to \$20,000 for homes above \$77,500 in Beall's Hill.

Recipients commit to live in the homes for a minimum of five years after purchase. Seventy percent of funds provided through the Mercer Down Payment Assistance Program (DPA) have been granted to buyers purchasing properties in Beall's Hill. All HMF homes in Beall's Hill are eligible for Mercer's down payment assistance program and many faculty decide to take advantage of a home within walking distance of downtown and the University.

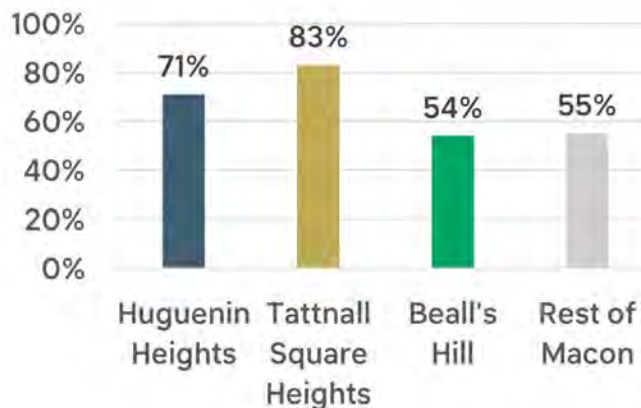
## DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY NEIGHBORHOOD

Most of the DPA money from Mercer and Knight has gone to home buyers purchasing within the three study neighborhoods, in total nearly \$1,227,000 in assistance. Of that, the majority of funds in each neighborhood have gone towards the purchase of HMF projects.

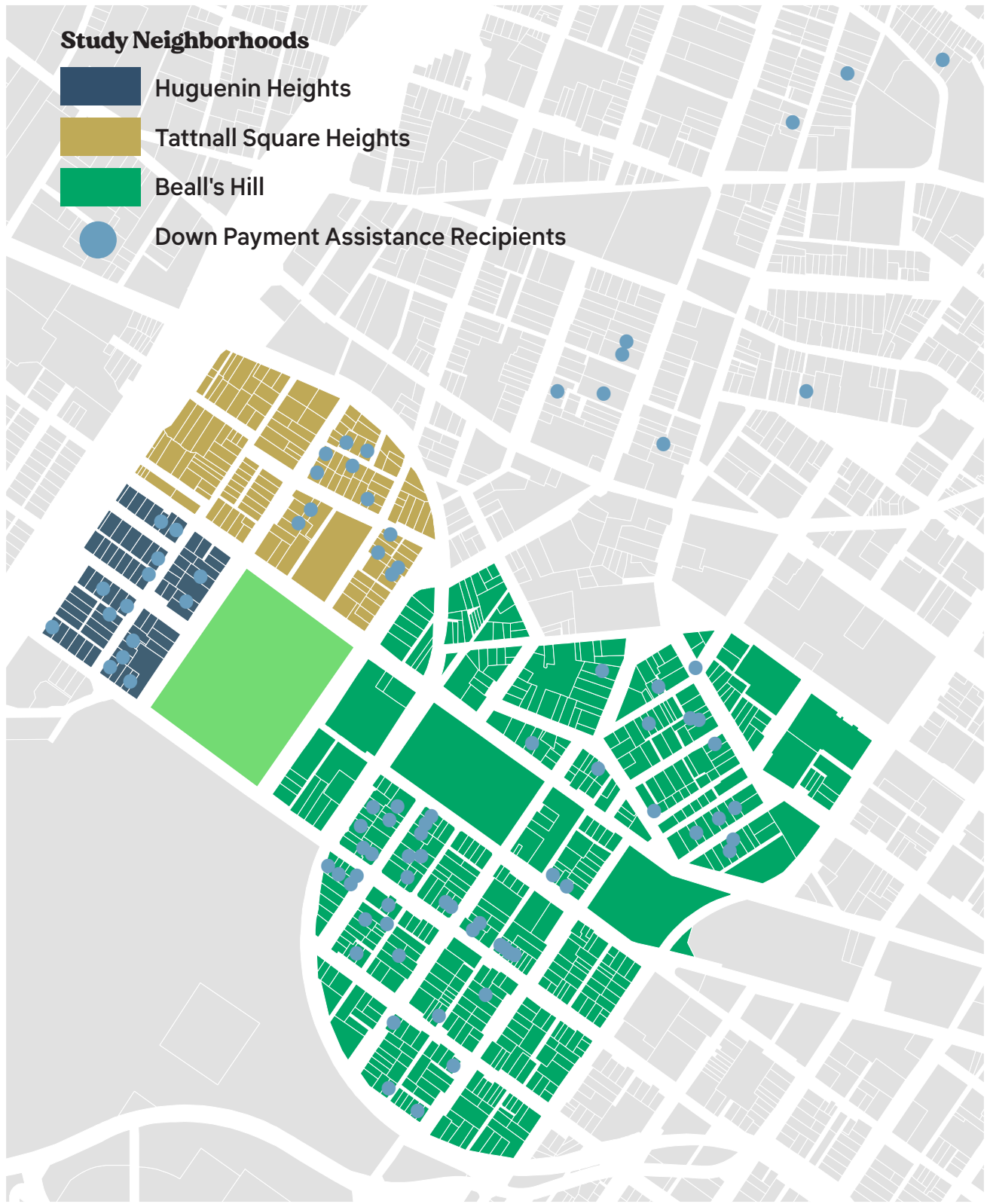


## SHARE OF DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE USED ON HMF PROPERTIES

While HMF-developed properties only comprise 13% of parcels in all three study neighborhoods, 55% percent of all Down Payment Assistance grants have been used to purchase HMF-rehabilitated homes in those neighborhoods. While the majority of participants in the program chose to purchase homes that had been rehabilitated by HMF, 45% are purchasing properties that haven't seen direct HMF investment, a testament to the catalytic impact of HMF's work.



## Down Payment Assistance Recipients







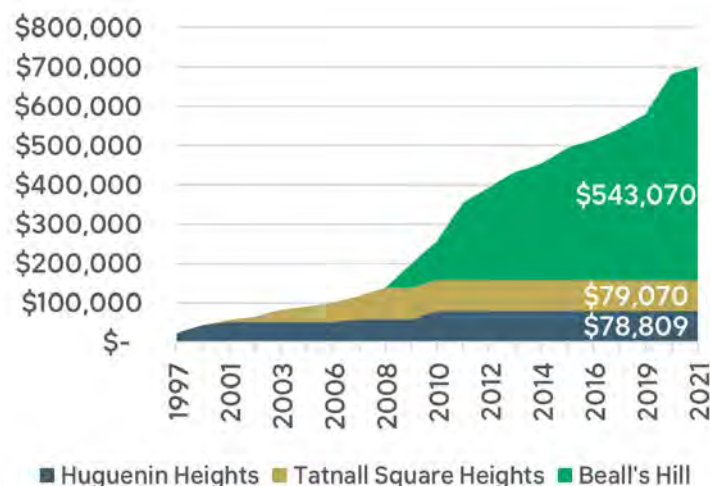
## Tattnall Square Center for the Arts

Rehabilitated in 2013

Photo credit: Mercer University

## DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE TO BUYERS OF HMF PROPERTIES

Buyers of HMF properties have benefited from Mercer’s Down Payment Assistance program since 1997. From 1997 to 2021, Mercer and Knight have granted over \$700,000 in down payment assistance to buyers purchasing HMF properties in the three study neighborhoods. Initially, DPA investments were focused in Huguenin Heights and Tattnall Square Heights. After partnering with the Knight Foundation in 2007, the DPA program ramped up investment in Beall’s Hill.



Overlapping incentives like the Down Payment Assistance program and low-interest loan programs alongside HMF’s targeted investment in amenities and redevelopment help create momentum in neighborhoods, offering support to current homeowners while attracting new ones.

## **Mercer University – An Exceptional Community Partner**

President William Underwood describes Mercer University's involvement in Beall's Hill as enlightened self-interest: "You can't have a thriving university in a decaying city." Josh Rogers, Executive Director at NewTown Macon, said "Mercer's investment in the neighborhoods and downtown has helped them thrive when many universities are failing." Mercer's partnership with the Historic Macon Foundation and the Knight foundation has enabled the University to recruit and retain talented faculty, while also bringing one of Macon's first neighborhoods back to life.

Mercer has been a steady, long-time partner. In 1998, the University partnered with the City of Macon and the Macon Housing Authority to invest in the long-term revitalization of Beall's Hill. Since 1996, Mercer has provided a down-payment assistance program to full-time faculty and staff to purchase homes in the neighborhoods surrounding its campus. Thanks to matching funds from the Knight Foundation, the Down Payment Assistance program expanded in 2008 to include the entire Intown Macon historic district. In 2014, Mercer University pledged \$400,000 to the fund for new homeowners in Beall's Hill.

Underwood says that the University and its partners wanted to avoid gentrifying the neighborhood, and so they worked with long term homeowners who were concerned about the safety. Rather than build a wall around the University and turn its back on the challenges the surrounding neighborhoods were facing, Mercer has improved the connections between the neighborhoods and the campus by building a pedestrian bridge in Beall's Hill. The commitment of Mercer and other partners in Beall's Hill helped secure \$2 million in blight bonds for streetscape improvements, sidewalks, and lighting, which improves the safety and quality of life for new residents and long term homeowners.

President Underwood is a champion of the federal and state historic tax credit programs, as he has seen the impact that investments in preservation have had for the University and the city as a whole. In 2013, Mercer began the redevelopment of the Tattnell Square Presbyterian Church into the Tattnell Square Center for the Arts, a community performing arts venue as well as a home for the University's theater department. The church was donated to the University in 2010, but a \$425,000 ArtPlace America grant from the Knight Foundation helped bring the project to life.

Mercer doesn't only work with Huguenin Heights, Tattnell Square Heights, and Beall's Hill. They have been deeply involved in Pleasant Hill through cemetery clean ups, a community garden, and participating in neighborhood discussions around the widening of 1-75. In 2007, the College Hill Alliance began with Mercer students' senior capstone project to revitalize the corridor between Mercer's campus and downtown. The City of Macon and Mercer University then took up the cause by forming the College Hill Corridor Commission—a group that worked in partnership with the Knight Foundation to create the College Hill Corridor Master Plan. This one mile corridor mixed-use development now serves as a campus and neighborhood hub.

Mercer University is a model for town-gown relations. Their campus is open and welcomes the community and their students to reach out to embrace all that Macon has to offer. Mercer has been a long-time partner with the local government, Historic Macon and its surrounding neighborhoods working to improve the quality of life for all.



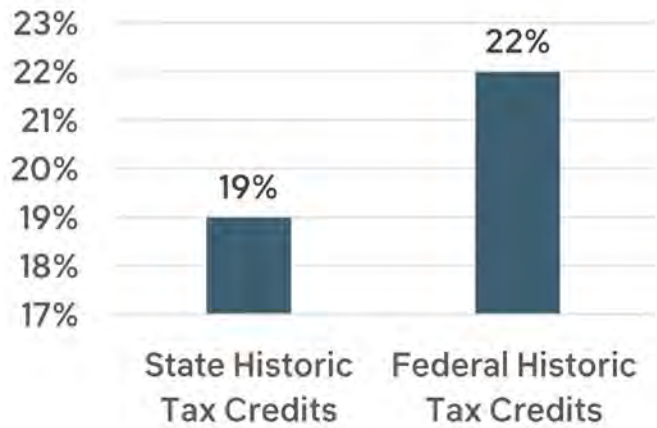
# Historic Tax Credits

The Federal Historic Tax Credit for Rehabilitation, a 20% credit against federal income tax liability, has been transforming communities across the country for 30 years. Georgia has a State Income Tax Credit Program for Rehabilitated Historic Properties, which allows eligible participants to apply for a state income tax credit equaling 25% of qualifying rehabilitation expenses capped at \$100,000 for a personal residence, and \$300,000, \$5 million or \$10 million for all other properties.

**Historic Macon Foundation does more historic tax credit work than anyone in the state. With over \$150 million in total project costs consulted on, no other organization or consultant in the state is as experienced in historic tax credits.**

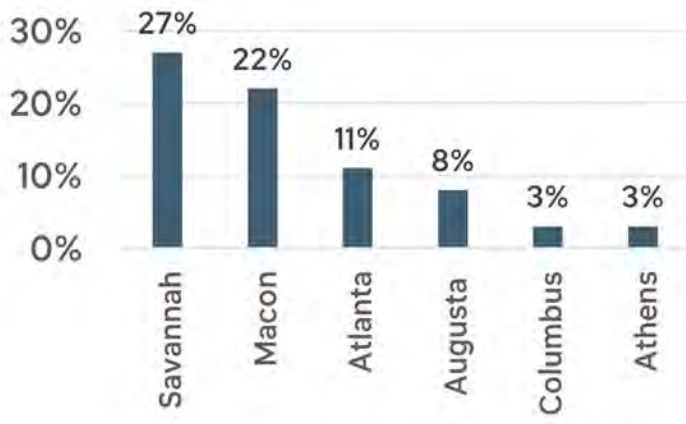
## SHARE OF GEORGIA STATE AND FEDERAL HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROJECTS IN MACON (2010-2020)

Historic Macon Foundation has taken a unique role in promoting, consulting, and syndicating historic tax credits throughout Macon. Their work has made Macon a leader among Georgia cities in tax credit activity. Over the past 10 years, 19% of all state tax credit projects have taken place in Macon and 22% of all federal tax credit projects in Georgia took place in Macon.



## SHARE OF GEORGIA FEDERAL HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROJECTS (2010-2020)

The great work of the Historic Macon Foundation has made Macon a leader within Georgia, surpassed only by Savannah in federal tax credit activity.

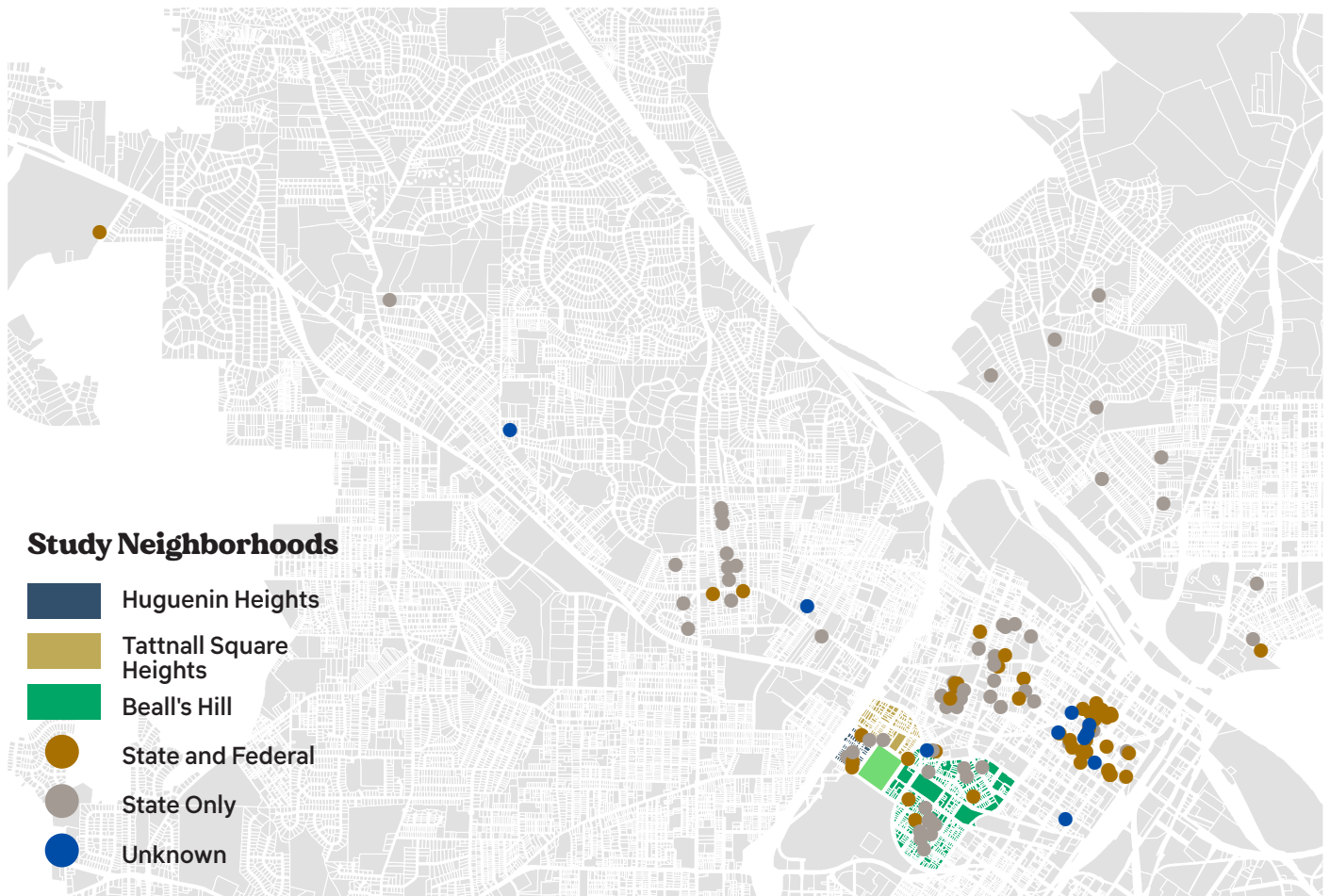


Though a relatively small share of tax credit projects occurred in the study areas (21% of all projects), the high level of activity within Macon overall is largely attributable to the sophisticated tax credit consulting offered by Historic Macon. For many owners of both residential and commercial properties, using a tax credit is often a once in a lifetime event, and the learning curve on the first project can be very steep. HMF's tax credit consulting work not only advances the mission of the Historic Macon Foundation, it also adds another source of revenue for operations that is almost unique among non-profit preservation organizations. For income producing projects, tax credits are often "syndicated" meaning that outside investors put their money into the historic

renovation project in exchange for a share of the tax credit. The experience and expertise of HMF in both state and local tax credits has meant that investors have confidence that the planning and paperwork are done right and that investing in historic preservation can make sense.

These projects have done more than rehabilitate buildings, they have created jobs and income. The Historic Macon Foundation was not directly involved in every one of these projects (although certainly most of them) but the tax credit coordinator for the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office "credited the numbers [of tax credit projects] to innovative use of the tax credits by the Historic Macon Foundation and its staff."

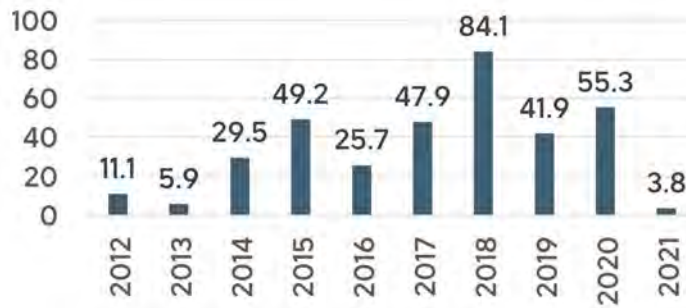
## Historic Tax Credits





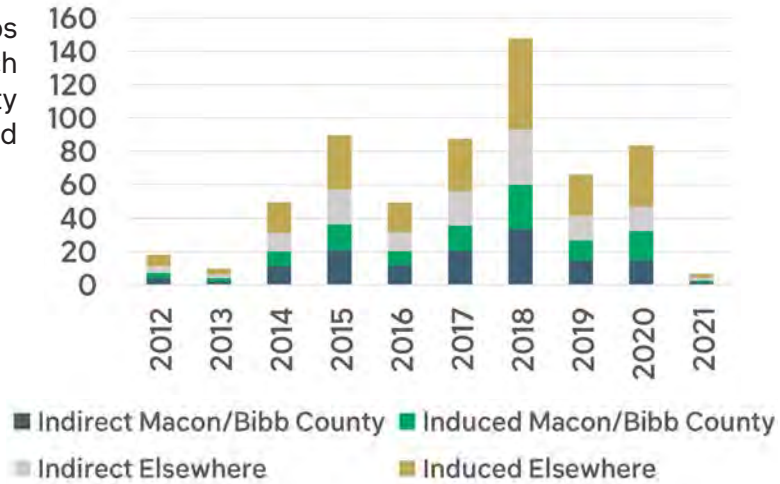
## DIRECT JOBS FROM HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROJECTS

Tax credit projects throughout Macon have created jobs and incomes locally as well as elsewhere. Virtually all direct jobs in historic rehabilitation projects are local jobs. Since 2012 an average of 35.4 direct jobs have been created through projects in Macon using the historic tax credit.<sup>4</sup>



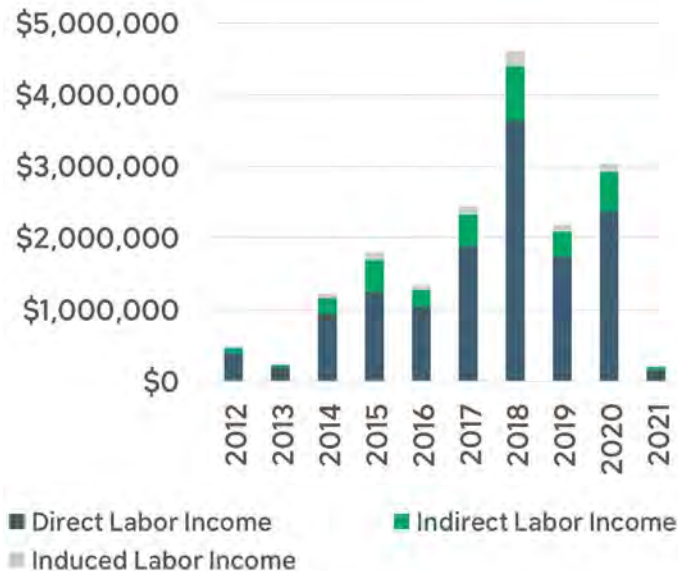
## INDIRECT AND INDUCED JOBS FROM HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROJECTS - MACON-BIBB COUNTY AND ELSEWHERE

In addition indirect and induced jobs have been generated, 40% of which have been in Macon-Bibb County and the rest elsewhere in Georgia and through the country.



## MACON-BIBB COUNTY LABOR INCOME FROM HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROJECTS

On average each year since 2012, tax credit projects have created \$1.3 million in paychecks to direct workers on those jobs and another \$394,000 in labor income for indirect and induced workers. Another \$2.5 million in indirect and induced wages went to workers elsewhere.



<sup>4</sup> This was done using the IMPLAN Input-Output model. IMPLAN is the industry standard for Input-Output modeling. Based on user data, the model generates numbers of direct, indirect, and induced jobs, the labor income those jobs represent, proprietor's income and other measures. A "job" is one full time equivalent job for one year.





**State HTC Project**  
881 Orange Terrace - Beall's Hill



**State and Federal HTC Project**  
968 New Street - Beall's Hill



# Housing Market Analysis

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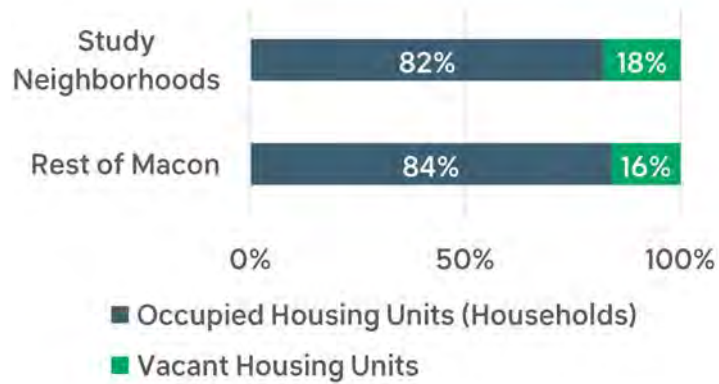
The work of the Historic Macon Foundation is stabilizing the housing market.

Many factors contribute to a neighborhood's stability. Historic Macon has focused their efforts on three: vacancy, building condition, and home ownership. HMF understood that if they could reduce vacancies, improve the condition of the houses, and enhance ownership, neighborhood stability and market conditions would improve.

# Occupancy

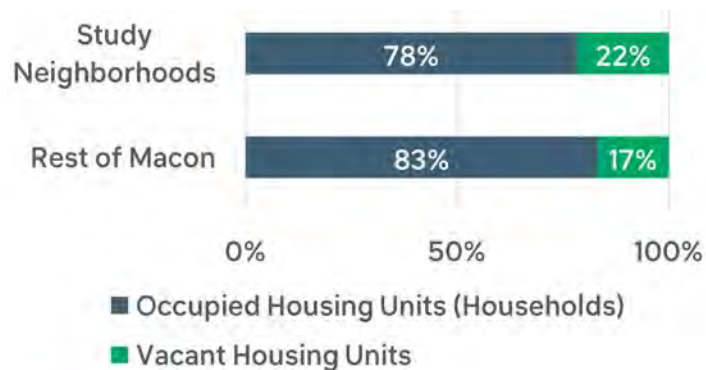
## RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY (2020)

Overall, 84% of the housing units in Macon are occupied, while 16% are vacant. The study neighborhoods largely mirror this trend, where 82% of housing units are occupied and just 18% are vacant.



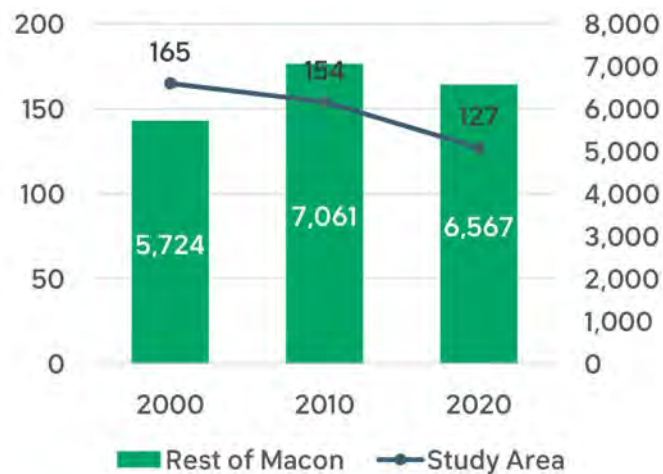
## RESIDENTIAL OCCUPANCY (2010)

However, that wasn't always the case. In 2010, only 78% of housing units were occupied within the study neighborhoods. The work of HMF and their partners has played a significant role in reducing vacancy in Beall's Hill, Huguenin Heights, and Tattnell Square Heights over time.



## NUMBER OF VACANT HOUSING UNITS

Over the last 20 years, Macon has seen a 14% increase in its residential vacancy rate. However, over that same period, the study neighborhoods have seen a decrease in vacancy rates. Between 2000 and 2020, there was a 23% decrease in vacant residential units in the three study areas. In the rest of the city, there was a 15% increase in vacancy during that same period.





# The Impact of Vacancy

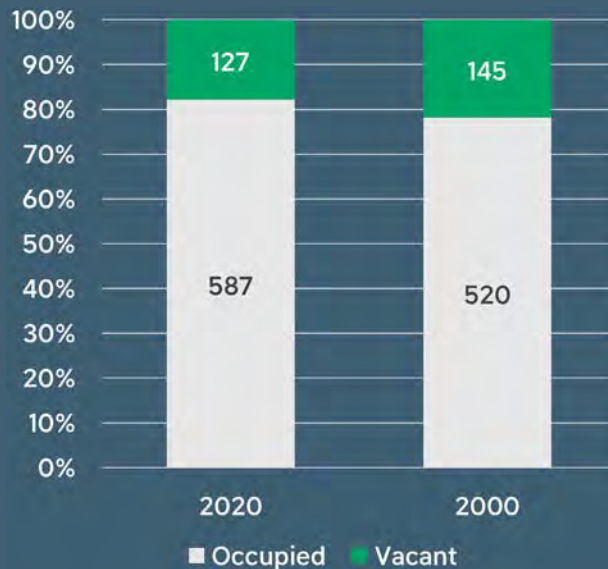
Why does vacancy matter? A vacant property is damaging in at least four ways. First, a vacant property provides neither a place for the owner to live or an opportunity to generate rental income. Second, the property itself is a victim of vacancy. The most effective form of housing preservation is occupancy. When a property is vacant, headaches such as leaky roofs, broken windows, and dripping faucets, which start out as relatively minor issues, become major problems. The longer a minor problem is left unattended the more expensive the ultimate resolution becomes. Demolition by neglect is a major cause of loss of housing. When nearly everywhere has an affordable housing challenge, virtually every house lost through demolition is a loss of a potential affordable housing unit.

But the cost of vacancy is not confined to the lot lines of the property. The values of nearby properties are adversely affected. Studies have shown that a property within 500 feet of a vacant or abandoned house suffers a 9% to 15% negative impact on its value. Further, the longer a house sits vacant the greater the loss of value to nearby houses. Also, the more vacant and abandoned houses in one block the greater the loss in value of the remaining houses.

Finally, local taxpayers – even those who don't live anywhere near the high vacancy neighborhood – bear additional costs because of vacant and abandoned housing. One study[1] focused specifically on the impact of vacancy on local budgets. The analysis compared the demand on public services in neighborhoods with vacant and abandoned housing with similar neighborhoods where vacancy wasn't an issue. The departments that had to devote additional time and money in the neighborhoods with vacancies included: police (38% more calls); fire (11% more calls); emergency response (9% more calls); building code violations, (72% more calls); weed violations (166% more calls); housing violations (63% more calls); graffiti violations (100% more calls); sanitation violations (47% more calls). This additional workload on public resources inherently means either other areas get fewer services, or taxes must be raised on everyone to pay for the higher services required to meet needs in neighborhoods with high levels of vacancy. Various studies indicate the increased cost in providing public services is between \$3,000 and \$7,000 per vacant house.

## CHANGE IN OCCUPANCY (2000-2020)

Much of HMF's work has focused on addressing vacant properties in Beall's Hill, Huguenin Heights, and Tattnell Square Heights. That persistent, concentrated effort has certainly paid off. Between 2000 and 2020, the number of vacant units in those neighborhoods has fallen from 145 to 127 while the number of occupied units has increased from 520 to 587. Why did the number of occupied housing units increase more than the number of vacant units declined? Because of the parallel efforts of HMF and others to build new housing units within the neighborhoods.



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# Foreclosures

In December 2007, the United States, and much of the rest of the world, faced the beginning of the financial event that would become known as the Great Recession. At the core of the recession was the real estate crisis. Millions of Americans lost their most valuable asset: their home. This loss was not just a financial one. People forced out by foreclosures lost their neighborhoods, connections to nearby friends, and often

their sense of family stability. Not since the Great Depression of the 1930s were so many families disrupted and their well being put in jeopardy.

Macon was certainly not exempt from this crisis. Over the 13-year period between 2008 and 2020, more than 1 in 7 households in Macon lost their property through foreclosure.

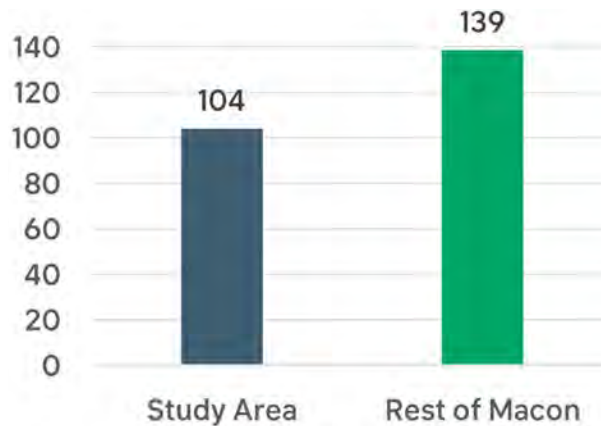
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## FORECLOSURES PER 1000 RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES (2008-2020)

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The story was different, however, in the three neighborhoods, where foreclosure rates were nearly a third lower. This in spite of the fact that many homeowners in the area have very modest incomes. Since the beginning of the Great Recession, 138.5 of every 1,000 single family homes in Macon faced foreclosure. This compares to just over 100 per thousand in the study area.

There are, no doubt, multiple reasons for this measurable difference in foreclosure rates. But among those reasons has to be the consistent commitment to and reinvestment in



the neighborhood throughout the real estate crisis by Historic Macon Foundation, Mercer University, the City of Macon, and other partners who helped fund HMF's activities.







## Leveraging Federal Funds for Affordable Housing

In March, 2021 Congress passed and President Biden signed the \$1.9 Trillion American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Numbers that large are virtually impossible to conceptualize, but the amount represents \$5,828 for every person in the United States. Almost 20% of this money (\$326 Billion) was channeled to state and local governments – a once in three generations infusion of cash into states, counties, cities, and towns.

This represents a tremendous opportunity to strategically leverage funds towards projects that will have a lasting positive impact and invest in long-term assets from which future generations can benefit while simultaneously addressing pressing current needs. And that's exactly what the Macon-Bibb County, The Knight Foundation, and the Historic Macon Foundation did when they committed to use ARPA funding to build new affordable rental units in Beall's Hill. HMF put the \$600,000 of ARPA funding allocated to them by Macon-Bibb County towards the effort, which was

matched by longtime supporters, the Knight Foundation. In total, the \$1.2 million will allow the organization to build 12 to 16 units in duplexes on a vacant block of land in Beall's Hill.

Not only does this project address an urgent critical need for affordable housing, but it represents an investment in long-term assets and leverages public dollars with cash from a non-public source. Drawing on HMF's development experience ensures that the units will be designed and developed in a manner that works with the existing neighborhood context and it will create local jobs for local workers.

This is exactly the type of capital investment that will have the greatest impact into the future and it is precisely HMF's history of working through partnerships to smartly and strategically leveraging investment that set it up to seize this monumental opportunity.



**Methodology Note:**

This analysis compares patterns within the three study areas to patterns within the 2010 City of Macon Boundaries, despite the Macon-Bibb County consolidation in 2013. This creates a more fair comparison between the study areas—which are largely urban—and the rest of urban Macon. Therefore, any reference to the "rest of Macon" references the 2010 city boundaries. These numbers will differ from that of the larger Macon-Bibb County (see methodology).

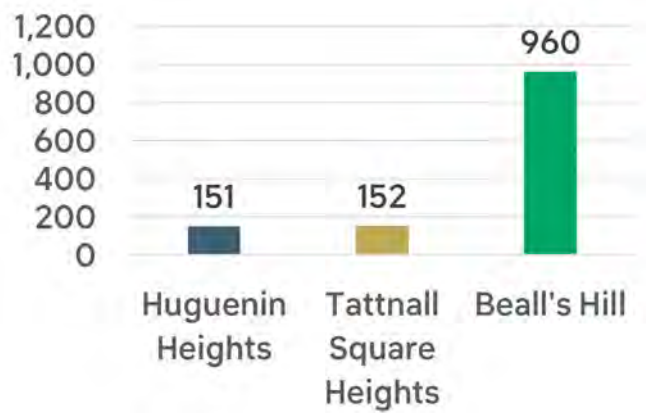
# Demographic Analysis

The reinvestment by the Historic Macon Foundation and its partners is increasing the population in these neighborhoods while maintaining diversity.

Macon, like many cities in Middle Georgia, is a majority Black city, with 69% of Macon residents identifying Black in the 2020 census. Historically, it has suffered from extensive redlining, housing segregation, and seen a high percentage of concentrated poverty, which is defined as census tracts where more than 40% of the population is living in poverty. Prior to HMF's involvement, the three study neighborhoods generally reflected these conditions.

## TOTAL POPULATION

There are 1,263 people living within the study neighborhoods. The largest and most populous is Beall's Hill, with 960 residents. The population in the study areas has fluctuated over the past 20 years due to outside factors, including the loss of large public housing complexes and population loss overall, making it difficult to quantify and attribute smaller population gains over that period of time.



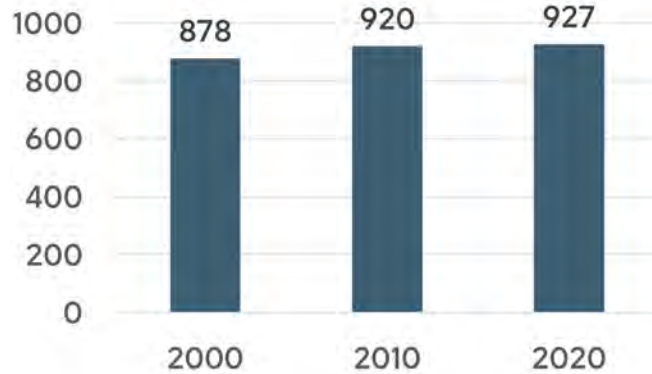
## POPULATION CHANGE IN STUDY NEIGHBORHOODS (2000-2020)

Overall, Macon's population has declined by 10% since 2000 within the former city boundaries. Population trends in the three study neighborhoods do not follow the same trajectory. Since 2010, following HMF's initial involvement, the population in Beall's Hill and Huguenin Heights has increased, while the population in Tattnell Square Heights has decreased.<sup>5</sup>



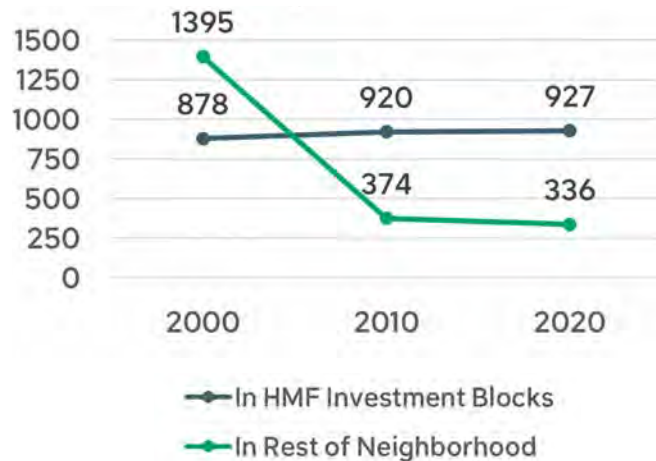
## POPULATION IN HMF INVESTMENT BLOCKS (2000-2020)

When considered at the block level, however, HMF's involvement appears to be a stabilizing force in all three neighborhoods. Within the study area, HMF has either made a loan, provided a great, rehabilitated a house, or built a new dwelling in 27 Census Blocks. These are referred to as HMF investment blocks. As shown in the graph below, blocks that are home to HMF projects have grown and have not lost population like the rest of the city.



## POPULATION IN STUDY AREA - HMF INVESTMENT BLOCKS VS REST OF NEIGHBORHOOD

When block level population within the study area is considered, the HMF Investment Blocks have been a stabilizing factor as compared with blocks within the area but in which there was no HMF investment.



<sup>5</sup> The loss of population in Tattnell Square Heights may be attributable to a large-scale demolition project.



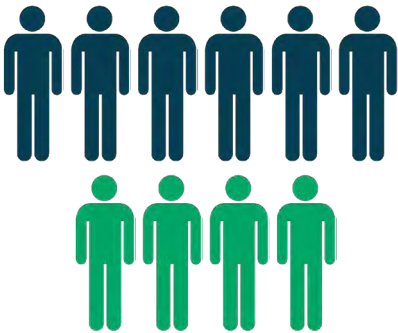


**Beall's Hill**

In older neighborhoods lot sizes and house sizes are often smaller, and they usually contain a greater variety of housing types, which can provide more housing options at varying price points. In addition to providing a variety of housing types, there are a number of ways in which population density contributes to neighborhood vitality. Denser communities tend to offer shorter commutes, proximity to transit and other public amenities, and make better use of existing infrastructure.

### POPULATION DENSITY

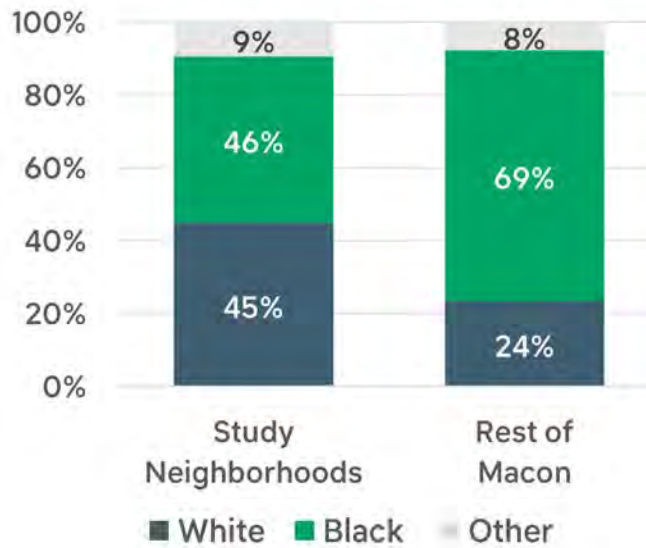
Older neighborhoods tend to be denser than newer ones, and that is true of the three study neighborhoods. Combined, the study areas have a population density of 6 people per acre, compared to 4 people per acre in the rest of the city. The population density of the three study neighborhoods combined are 1.5 times as dense as the rest of Macon.



■ Study Neighborhoods   ■ Rest of Macon

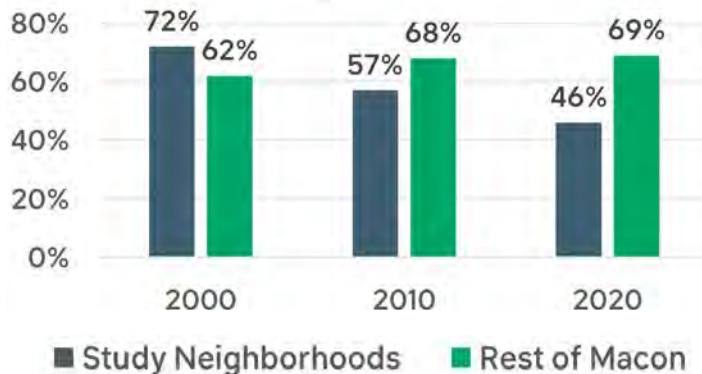
## RACIAL DISTRIBUTION (2020)

Overall, residents in the study neighborhoods are 45% white, 46% Black, and 9% categorize themselves as other. While the three study neighborhoods are racially diverse, they do not reflect the racial demographics of the rest of the city, which is 69% Black.



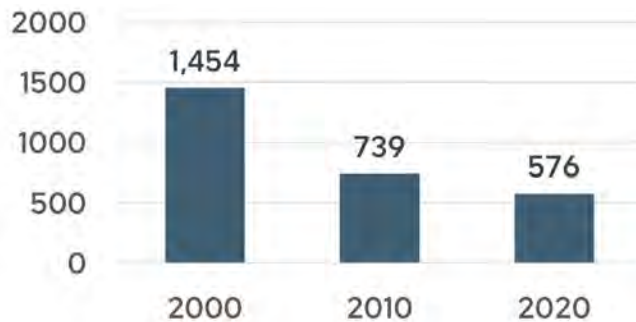
## BLACK POPULATION IN STUDY NEIGHBORHOODS AS A SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATION (2000-2020)

Over the past 20 years, the Black population in the three study neighborhoods has steadily decreased. This is likely due to a variety of factors, including trends of population loss across inner Macon, the replacement of the 188-unit Oglethorpe Homes with the 97-unit Tattnall Place, and the compounding effects of blight elimination programs spearheaded in the mid-2000s and streamlined tax-foreclosure programs run by the county.



## TOTAL BLACK POPULATION IN STUDY NEIGHBORHOODS (2000-2020)

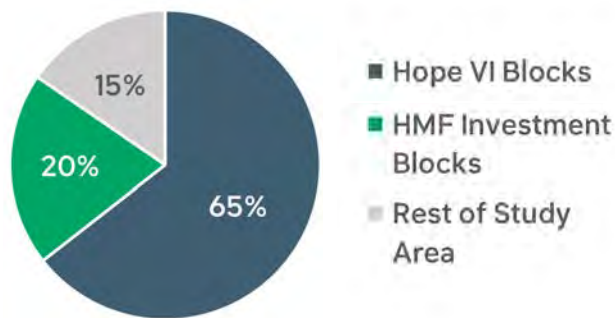
It's important to note that this change in share is not simply a result of more white population moving in. The total number of Black individuals living in these neighborhoods has decreased over time.





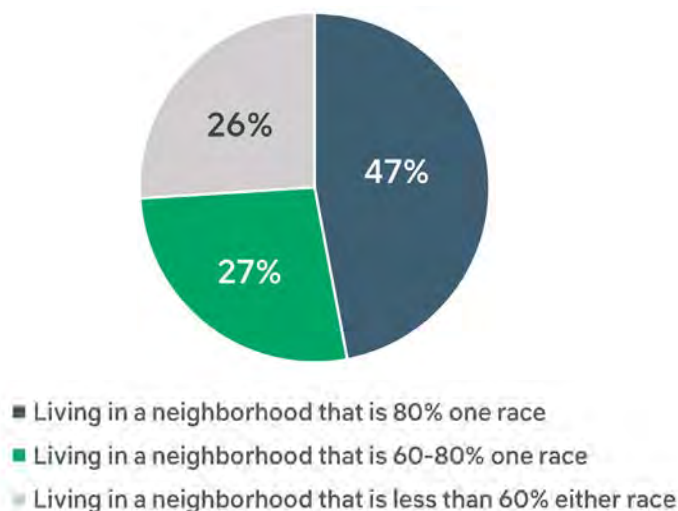
## SHARE OF BLACK POPULATION LOSS

However, it is also important to note that the neighborhoods' Black population did not primarily depart from the blocks where HMF made investments. Nearly two-thirds of the Black population decline in the three neighborhoods was from the census blocks where the Hope VI project replaced public housing.<sup>6</sup>



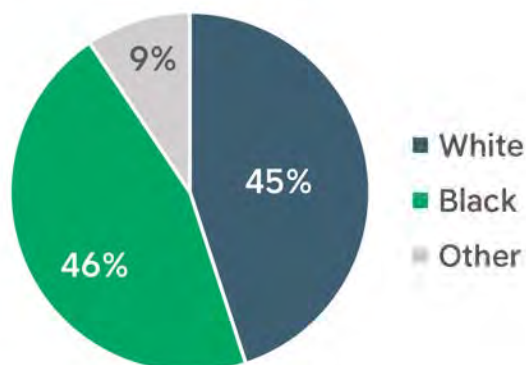
## WHERE MACON-BIBB COUNTY RESIDENTS LIVE

Diversity at the neighborhood level is important. But most residents of Macon-Bibb County do not live in racially diverse neighborhoods. Nearly half (47.1%) of the population lives in a block group that is 80% or more one race. Another 27% live in neighborhoods where either the Black or White population is between 60% and 80%. Less than a quarter live in neighborhoods with a relative numerical parity between the two White and Black population.



## RACIAL DISTRIBUTION IN STUDY NEIGHBORHOODS

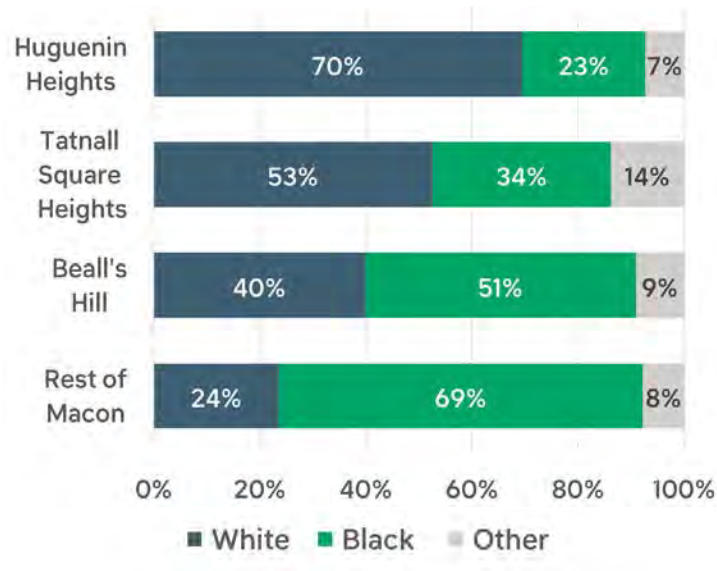
Taken together the three neighborhoods that are part of this study fall into the third category of meaningfully integrated neighborhoods. There is almost an exact spread between the number of Black and the number of White residents.



<sup>6</sup> The smallest available census geography is the census block, which usually looks like a typical city block bounded on all sides by streets. Within Beall's Hill, the former Oglethorpe Homes/future Hope VI project formed a discreet census block that could be compared over time. Therefore, PlaceEconomics could compare demographic patterns within the study neighborhoods, and found that a large share of the black population decrease came from the Hope VI blocks, not blocks where HMF made investments.

## RACIAL DISTRIBUTION IN STUDY NEIGHBORHOODS

However, Beall's Hill in particular is an exception to that county wide trend. Of the study neighborhoods, Beall's Hill most closely reflects the rest of the city, with 51% of its residents identifying as Black. It is also significant as one of the most integrated neighborhoods in the city.



## Neighborhood Revitalization: An Evolving Story

While neighborhood redevelopment has positive impacts, it can also cause or accelerate displacement and impact affordability. Many U.S. cities, neighborhoods, and their residents have been negatively impacted by racism, disinvestment, and segregation as sanctioned through policies like urban renewal, redlining, lending discrimination, and the construction, neglect, and subsequent destruction of public housing. All of these factors have impacted Macon, which was found by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition to be the most redlined city in America.<sup>7</sup>

Over the past few decades, scholars and the public have come to view "revitalization" projects with a more critical lens, and many want to see honest assessments of its positive and negative long-term impacts on residents.

While HMF's earlier efforts focused more narrowly on homeownership and growing the number of owner-occupied households in neighborhoods, the organization has recently been drawing attention to the importance of affordable rental housing. HMF is currently working with the Knight Foundation and Macon-Bibb County to develop permanently affordable rental housing in Beall's Hill. This renewed focus comes from an understanding of a larger need for housing options in Beall's Hill as well as a countywide need for quality, affordable rental housing. Developing permanently affordable rental housing is an important part of maintaining the diversity of Beall's Hill into the future.

<sup>7</sup> <https://ncrc.org/how-1930s-discrimination-shaped-inequality-in-todays-cities/>



# Social Impact Analysis

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A neighborhood's success is measured in more than property values.

Is it safe? Is it walkable? Is it close to amenities like parks, libraries, schools, shops? Is it available and affordable to a cross section of the city's residents? The social value of a neighborhood is measured in each of these ways, and more. The work of Historic Macon and its partners has enhanced Huguenin Heights, Tattnall Square Heights, and Beall's Hill neighborhoods socially as well as economically by making them more walkable, by improving their connectivity to places of importance, and by attending to their affordability.

For example, to improve pedestrian safety, in partnership with Macon-Bibb County, Bike Walk Macon, and Historic Hills and Heights Development Corporation, HMF added sidewalks, designated on street parking, and post top lights to Beall's Hill. Additionally, HMF added painted crosswalks and speed awareness signs on Oglethorpe St at the behest of the residents. As one resident said, "I love the sidewalks and being able to walk downtown, to the library and parks, and my kids can walk to school."

# Walkability

Walkable cities can benefit residents' health, are better for the environment, improve economic well being and encourage us to interact with the people and places around us. Good walkability is defined by the ease with which residents are able to navigate neighborhoods and cities on foot. Pedestrian amenities like narrow streets, sidewalks, shade, footpaths, crosswalks, lighting, and accessibility can greatly contribute to walkability.

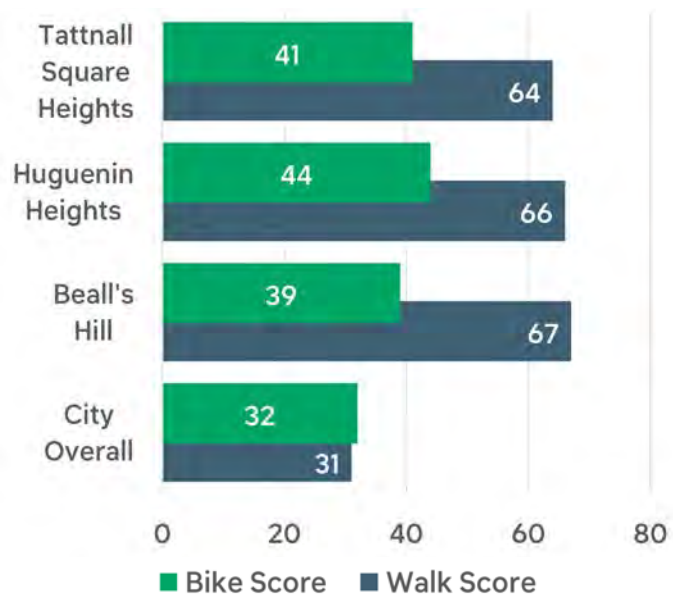
Older neighborhoods were designed with walkability in mind. Residents in neighborhoods built more than a century ago tend to walk more and enjoy the associated health benefits. There are a number of reasons why older neighborhoods are often more walkable than newer ones: they tend to be denser, closer to transit and shopping, and near downtowns and other areas of activity.

The Walk Score rating system defines walkability as follows:

- **90–100 Walker's Paradise:**  
Daily errands do not require a car
- **70–89 Very Walkable:**  
Most errands can be accomplished on foot
- **50–69 Somewhat Walkable:**  
Some errands can be accomplished on foot
- **25–49 Car-Dependent:**  
Most errands require a car
- **0–24 Very Car-Dependent:**  
Almost all errands require a car

## WALK SCORE AND BIKE SCORE

Macon was issued a Walk Score of 31, and a Bike Score of 32. Overall it is a relatively car-dependent city, but the study neighborhoods are demonstrably more accessible, earning an average Walk Score of 66 and a Bike Score of 41.





**Macon Arts Alliance**  
Photo credit: World Orgs



**Washington Street Library**  
Photo credit: Macon Telegraph



## Proximity

Being near public spaces, restaurants, universities, museums, and other services can have big implications for quality of life. Other benefits of proximity include efficient use of existing infrastructure and better environmental sustainability. Older neighborhoods—particularly those built before the widespread use of cars—tend to have been designed with proximity in mind.

### CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Historic landmarks, sites, museums, districts and other attractions make culture more accessible to citizens. They also provide important learning opportunities for children, students, and retirees enhancing their understanding of history and events, art and architecture, while offering a more tangible way to learn about place, past, and community. The proximity of the Study Neighborhoods to sites of art, culture, and social capital compared to the city overall are striking:



**58% of study neighborhood residents live within walking distance of a library,** compared to 12% of residents in the rest of Macon.



**30% of study neighborhood residents live within walking distance of a museum,** compared to 5% of residents in the rest of Macon.





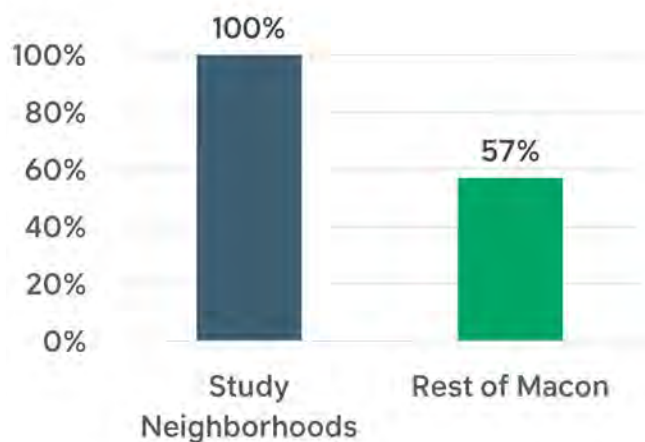
**Tattnell Square Park**

Photo credit: Macon-Bibb County

## SHARE OF RESIDENTS WITHIN A 10 MINUTE WALK OF A PARK

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Three percent of Macon’s land area is used for parks and recreation and 1% of that park land is located in historic districts. Of the three study neighborhoods’ total 216 acres, 3% is used for parks. Though it lies outside official neighborhood boundaries, all three study neighborhoods border a large 16.5 acre park and 100% of study neighborhood residents are within walking distance of a park. Only 57% of residents in the rest of Macon are within easy walking distance of a park.





# Environmental Impact Analysis

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By redeveloping older properties, the Historic Macon Foundation is keeping valuable materials out of the landfill and preserving embodied carbon.

There is an increased recognition today about the need for our communities to be more sustainable and resilient. Can we reduce our carbon footprint while still maintaining a high quality of life? There are several metrics that can be assessed that might help answer that question for Macon's historic neighborhoods, including embodied carbon, embodied energy, and avoided landfill.

## TREE CANOPY

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It has been noted that trees are one of Earth's greatest carbon sinks. The tree canopy found throughout a community, or specifically in certain areas of a community, can be measured for its carbon capture capacity. There is insufficient data at this time to measure tree coverage at the neighborhood scale. However maps from the United States Forest Service do show that Macon-Bibb County does have a need for greater tree planting across all neighborhoods.

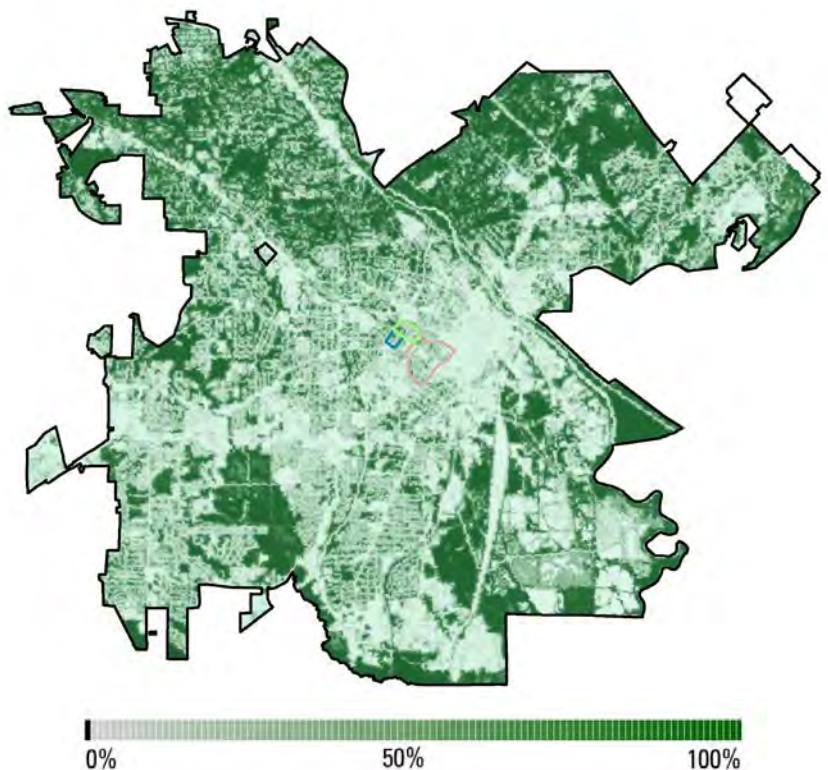
HMF, in partnership with the 1772 Foundation and the Trust for Public Land, recently created a Saving Places Index, "identifying significant places for preservation, conservation, and recreation in Macon-Bibb County." One of the community members' top priorities is conserving the existing tree canopy.

The study neighborhoods were overlaid onto images showing variations in Tree Canopy Cover from the United States Forest Service.<sup>8</sup> Using multi-spectral Landsat imagery, as well as other land and ancillary information, the dataset assigns a tree canopy cover estimate for each pixel (cell) across the selected area. Pixels range in value from 0% tree cover to 100% tree cover. The darker clusters of cells show areas where estimated tree canopy cover is high and the lighter areas show where it is low. Upon examination, cells in the study areas contain low to moderate levels of tree cover, with the majority of areas having less than 50% tree cover.

For neighborhoods that have historically suffered disinvestment, tree planting and maintenance lags that in wealthier neighborhoods. Sometimes trees are lost due to age, weather, or especially during new construction. When they are, tree planting programs can help replace lost trees and fill gaps where trees are needed. Historic Macon, with a Knight Foundation Neighborhood Challenge grant, established a neighborhood tree nursery and has been an advocate for tree planting and replacement. When one rehabs a property, trees are rarely lost, unlike during new construction projects. This initiative is consistent with the community's recognition of the importance of trees and tree canopy.

### Tree Canopy Coverage

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<sup>8</sup> NLCDS Tree Canopy Cover (TCC) CONUS 2016 USF, generated by the United States Forest Service (USFS). The USFS derives tree canopy cover from multi-spectral Landsat imagery and other available ground and ancillary information. The most recent TCC product suite, TCC 2016, was released in 2019 and is maintained by the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium (MRLC). <https://www.mrlc.gov/data/nlcd-2016-usfs-tree-canopy-cover-conus> and <https://data.fs.usda.gov/geodata/rastergateway/treecanopycover/#table1>





**Rental Conversion**  
North Highlands

## EMBODIED CARBON, EMBODIED ENERGY, AND LESSENERD LANDFILL IMPACT

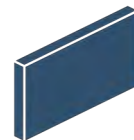
HMF is committed to keeping recyclable materials out of the landfill—a goal that is particularly relevant in light of the recent closure of Bibb County’s landfill last summer. With Macon’s nearest landfills running out of space, every bit of waste that is diverted helps. Construction waste is a major landfill contributor and rehabilitating existing buildings versus demolishing helps keep usable material in use and out of the landfill. Overall HMF has rehabilitated 64 houses in the three study neighborhoods. Here are estimates of how much material HMF has kept out of the landfill from those projects alone:



**567,000**  
bricks



**3.3 million**  
**pounds**  
of concrete/  
asphalt



**236,000**  
**pounds**  
of drywall



**437,000**  
**board feet**  
of lumber



**354,000**  
**pounds**  
of metal



**6,800 tons**  
of construction  
and demolition  
debris





## Georgia Artisan and Deconstruction

Georgia Artisan is a Macon-based furniture maker that uses reclaimed wood and craftsmen from the Middle Georgia region. The business began as a hobby when its founder, Andrew Eck, started making coffee tables out of old wood pallets while attending Mercer University. Eck hired Georgia Artisan's first employees in 2016 and quickly grew due to product demand. Within a year, Georgia Artisan was outselling what it could produce. When the business grew so large that raw materials were difficult to source, Eck struck upon an idea: deconstructing homes slated for demolition and reusing the wood components in his furniture making venture.

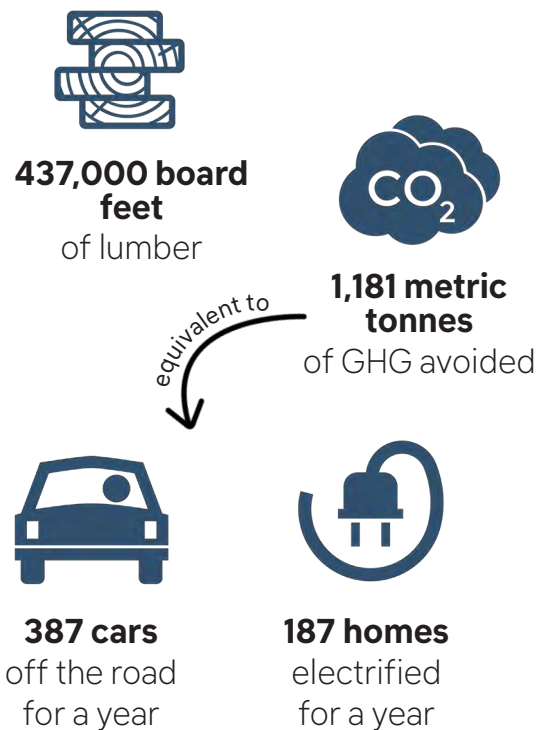
Since 2016, Eck's demolition team, Blight Busters, have deconstructed 12 homes. "We are able to reuse around 90% of the wood in the homes, and we can often sell the other

materials to other contractors or neighbors." The Historic Macon Foundation has recently become a buyer of Blight Busters reclaimed materials. Eck said his favorite part of the process is the human element: "Demolition is jarring but deconstruction is slower. It gives neighbors time to ask questions and think about what comes next." The other side of the human element is that Eck and his team provide jobs and training. Many of the people that Georgia Artisan and Blight Busters hire have no formal training in deconstruction or carpentry, but they are able to train up in his workshop. Workers may start by de-nailing the boards pulled from a deconstructed house--an essential task that does not require any specialized training. Over time, workers develop more specialized skills through on-the-job training.



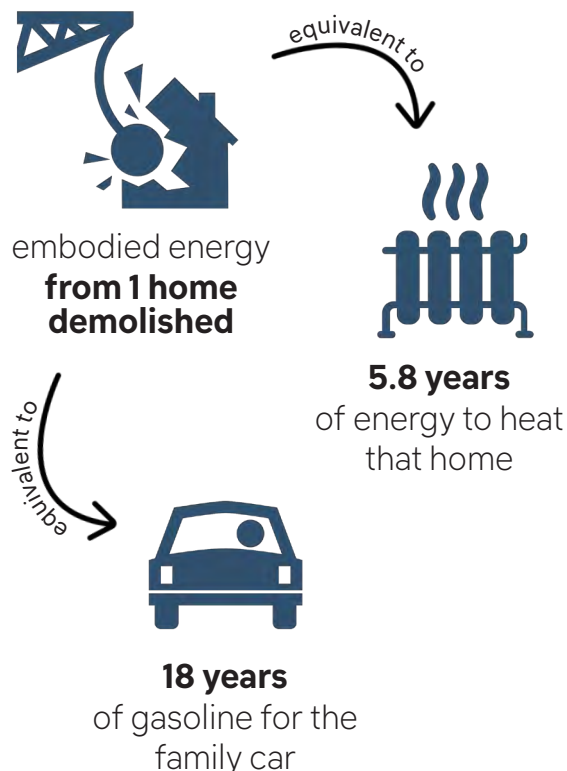
## GREENHOUSE GASES AVOIDED

To put this in perspective, that 437,000 board feet of lumber stores roughly 556 metric tonnes of carbon. By preserving and reusing these building materials, Historic Macon has helped avoid 1,181 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. This avoided carbon emission is equivalent to 367 cars off the road for a year, or enough energy to operate 183 homes for a year.<sup>9</sup>



## EMBODIED ENERGY

A parallel but somewhat different measurement of the potential impacts of demolition is embodied energy. Embodied energy is defined as the total energy required for the extraction of resources, the transportation of the raw materials to the processing facility, their manufacture, transportation to a building site, the incorporation of the materials into a building and ultimately the disassembly and disposal of the building material. If just one of the houses rehabilitated by HMF had been razed and taken to the landfill instead, the embodied energy thrown away would have been sufficient to heat that same house for 5.8 years or provided all of the gasoline for the family car for 18 years.<sup>10</sup>

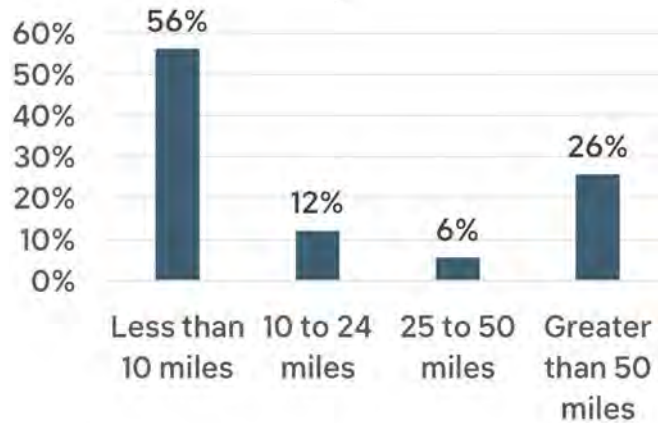


<sup>9</sup> Based on the carbon calculator from WoodWorks [www.cc.woodworks.org](http://www.cc.woodworks.org), based on 437,000 board feet of 2 x 4 lumber, using average density of most common species of wood.

<sup>10</sup> "Average of two institutional data bases and six individual scholarly studies of embodied energy by building material".

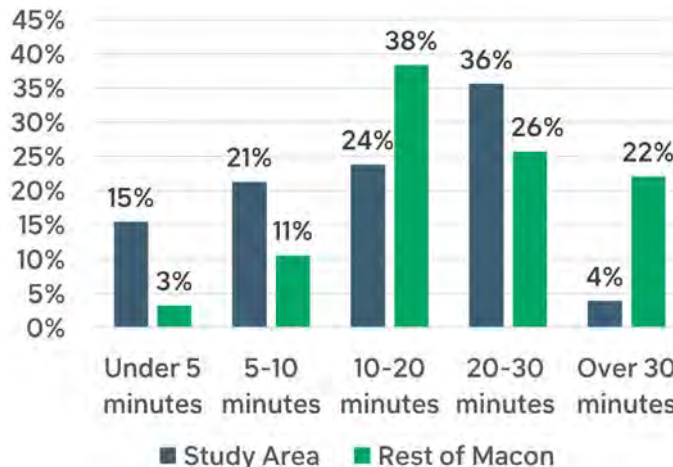
## DISTANCE TO JOBS FOR WORKERS IN STUDY AREA

The proximity of Huguenin Heights, Tattnell Square Heights, and Beall's Hill to downtown, Mercer University, and major medical centers make these neighborhoods ideal locations for a variety of workers. In fact, 56% of residents in these study areas live within 10 miles of their jobs. This translates to shorter commute times.



## COMMUTE TIMES

Workers in the study areas are far more likely to have a job within 10 minutes of their home than workers in the rest of the city. Thirty-six percent of study area residents have a short commute of under 10 minutes, compared to 14% of residents in the rest of Macon. At the other end of the spectrum, only 4% of households in the Study Neighborhoods commute longer than 30 minutes to work, while 22% of households in the rest of Macon do.



## AVERAGE ANNUAL VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED AND AUTOMOBILE OWNERSHIP COSTS

Shorter commutes add up to fewer vehicle miles traveled per annum. Residents living within 5 minutes of their place of employment often opt to walk to work. Some households may forego an additional car if a member of the household is able to take public transportation or walk to work. The proximity of these study areas to jobs, businesses, and other amenities also results in fewer and shorter car trips. On average, households in the study areas accumulate 19% fewer vehicle miles than households in the rest of the city. On average, this saves residents in the study areas about \$1,200 a year on automobile associated costs.



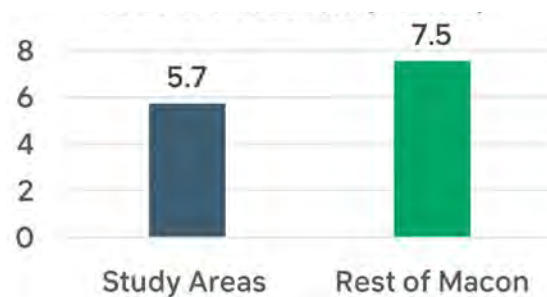




**Beall's Hill**

## CO<sub>2</sub> PER HOUSEHOLD (TONS)

Most importantly, traveling fewer miles in vehicles significantly reduces a household's carbon footprint. On average, households in the study neighborhoods produce 24% less CO<sub>2</sub> than households in the rest of Macon.



Often, metrics of CO<sub>2</sub> are not impressive on their own, in part because tons of gas are difficult to picture. However, these CO<sub>2</sub> savings are equivalent to:<sup>11</sup>



**97 passenger vehicles**

removed from the road for one year



**18,981 trash bags recycled**

instead of thrown away



**81 homes' electricity**

eliminated for one year



carbon sequestered by **547 acres of US forest**

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>







# Conclusion

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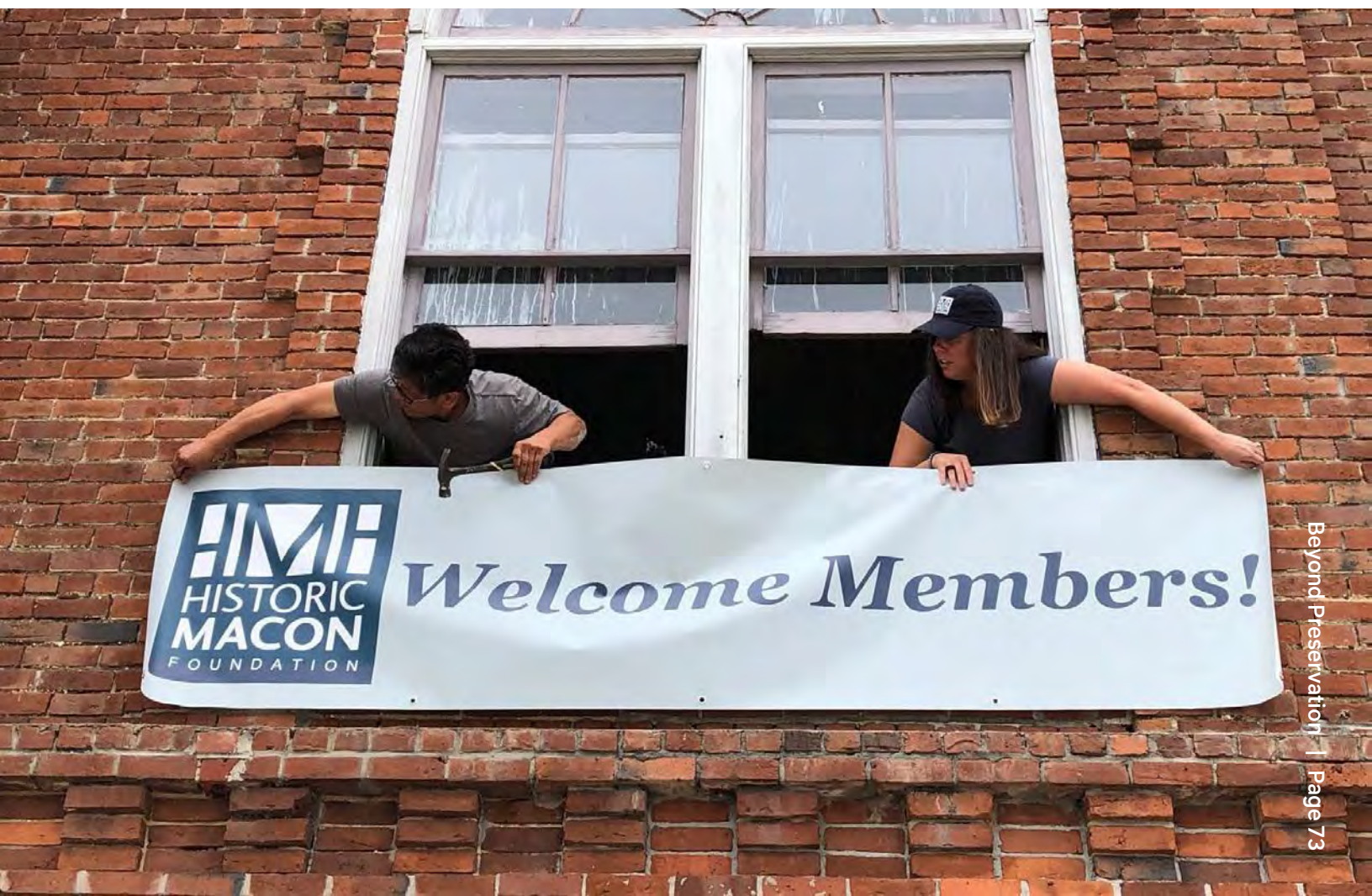
The preceding pages of this report reflect the impact of the work the Historic Macon Foundation has done over the last twenty-five years. But as was noted in the introduction, HMF stands out nationally for the breadth and depth of their activities and their movement beyond advocacy and education to hands-on real estate development.

The rest of this study reports on what has been done. The remaining question is why is the Historic Macon Foundation so different than most historic preservation non-profit organizations? Based on interviews with stakeholders in Macon, comments from preservationists elsewhere, and experience with hundreds of preservation organizations, we have identified what seem to be the ten variables that have led to HMF extraordinary successes.

1. The organization is entrepreneurial and takes a business-like approach to their activities.
2. The organization has been led by highly competent, creative, and committed executive directors over a long period of years, including Maryel Battin, Josh Rogers, and Ethiel Garlington.
3. The board of directors has consistently had both commitment to the organization and expertise in a wide range of areas.
4. Partnerships have been central to the organization including with foundations, departments of local government, financial institutions, Mercer University, and others.
5. Parallel with the concept of partnerships has been operating on a public/private/non-profit model, working effectively with organizations from all three sectors.
6. A willingness to take risks has been a prerequisite to the types of projects and programs HMF has undertaken. Not every one has been a success, but it is the willingness to take risks that puts the organization far ahead of the much more common risk-averse non-profit preservation group. At the same time HMF has been willing to be accountable for its activities.
7. Early money from the National Trust, and using those funds to establish a track record of accomplishments, laid the groundwork for future funding from others.
8. HMF has consistently had a strategic focus on what to do, where to do it, and creating a critical mass of activities to increase the likelihood of success. This strategic focus has included specific and measurable goals.
9. Community involvement has been critical, particularly involving residents as part of the decision making process. Given the neighborhoods in which HMF has been involved, concern for fairness and equity has been a central goal.
10. Finally, the Historic Macon Foundation has seen historic preservation as a means, not an end in itself – a means for neighborhood revitalization, affordable housing, community stabilization, and economic development.

In short, the Historic Macon Foundation has moved beyond preservation and their efforts over the past quarter century has made an important, positive, and widespread impact on Macon and its residents.







# Acknowledgments

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We would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the individuals that made the work of the Historic Macon Foundation possible:

**Mayors C. Jack Ellis, Robert A.B. Reichert, and Lester M. Miller**

**Maryel Battin**, Former Executive Director of Macon Heritage Foundation

**Josh Rogers**, Former Executive Director of Historic Macon Foundation

**President William Underwood**, President of Mercer University and Vice-President of Historic Hills and Heights Development Corporation

**All Historic Macon Staff** who made this work possible.

**All Historic Macon Board of Trustees** who took chances over the years to show how preservation organizations should operate - especially in real estate.

**Lynn Murphey**, Knight Foundation Program Director

**Beverly Blake**, Former Program Director of Knight Foundation

**Kathryn Dennis**, President and CEO of Community Foundation of Central Georgia

**Karen Lambert**, President of Peyton Anderson Foundation

**Mary Anthony**, Executive Director of 1772 Foundation

**Everett Verner**, Executive Director of Macon-Bibb County Land Bank Authority

**Dr. R. Kirby Godsey**, former President of Mercer University

**Bette Lou Brown**, Former Executive Director of Historic Macon Foundation

**Alison Souther Goldey**, former Executive Director of Macon-Bibb County Land Bank Authority

**Peter Brown**, Former Professor of Philosophy, Mercer University

**Cass Hatcher**, River Edge Behavioral Health

**Leroy Thomas**, Beall's Hill advocate

**All the buyers of Historic Macon homes**

We also thank the people who contributed their time and expertise to this report:

**Laura Botts**, Director of Office Administration, Historic Macon Foundation

**Andrew Eck**, Georgia Artisan

**Wanzina Jackson**, Director of Macon-Bibb Community and Economic Development Department

**LaTanya Lester**, Neighborhood Revitalization Coordinator, Historic Macon Foundation

**Jill Moody Vanderhoek**, HMF Trustee and Beall's Hill resident

# Methodology

This analysis relied on data from online research platforms, newspaper and social media outlets, and in-person stakeholder interviews. We want to acknowledge the following data sources:

- Population and demographic data came from the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Employment data came from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics program, generated by the U.S. Census Bureau.
- The calculations of the economic impact of HMF projects and historic tax credit projects were made using IMPLAN, an econometric modeling software.
- Permit data was provided by Macon-Bibb County.
- Assessment data was provided by the Macon-Bibb County Tax Assessors' Office.

This analysis uses the pre-consolidation boundaries of the City of Macon, not the boundaries of Macon-Bibb County. This decision was made to create a more fair comparison between the three study neighborhoods—which are largely urban—with the rest of the County. For metrics such as population density and proximity, the comparison would be skewed to favor the study areas because of the rural nature of much of the County. Therefore, demographic figures will differ from that of the County.

All figures are current numbers, meaning the amount of dollars in the year spent, not inflation adjusted. Unless otherwise noted, all photos are credited to PlaceEconomics or the Historic Macon Foundation.

# About PlaceEconomics

PlaceEconomics is a private sector firm with over thirty years experience in the thorough and robust analysis of the economic impacts of historic preservation. We conduct studies, surveys, and workshops in cities and states across the country addressing issues of downtown, neighborhood, and commercial district revitalization and the reuse of historic buildings.

This report was prepared and written by Donovan Rypkema, Rodney Swink, Katlyn Cotton, Alyssa Frystak, and Starr Herr-Cardillo. Rypkema is principal and founder of PlaceEconomics. Frystak is the Director of Research and Data Analytics at PlaceEconomics and handled data collection, research methodologies, and analysis. Cotton is the Director of Communications and Design at PlaceEconomics and handled graphic design, as well as data analysis. Herr-Cardillo is a Content Writer and conducted writing and editing. Site visits were conducted by Rypkema, Cotton, and Swink, Senior Associate for Planning and Development.

# Funding Statement

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# Beyond Preservation

The 25 Year Impact of the Historic Macon Foundation



PlaceEconomics