Livable Communities in Smaller Cities, Towns and Rural America

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President and CEO
Reconnecting America

New Partners for Smart Growth
Charlotte, NC
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Transportation Opportunities for a Small Town/Rural Area

- Revitalize and promote existing rural towns
- Improve our roads and bridges
- Allow our local officials to participate in planning
- Shift movement of goods from highways to freight rail
- Provide rural connectivity through multi-modal solutions
Small Towns and Rural Areas

The Myths:
- Large cities and small towns have nothing in common.
- A city is only defined by its population.
- A rural population is totally self-sufficient. They lead a sole existence on their farms and ranches and are not reliant on city/county services.
- Due to their self-sufficiency, they have no need for transportation options.

The Facts:
- People who live in large cities, small towns and rural areas all have the same concerns.
- A city is defined less by its population and more by the services it renders.
- No matter where people live, they depend on nearby cities for jobs, healthcare, education and services.
- Transportation options are needed for everyone – including veterans, students, the elderly, the economically-challenged.
Creating Livable Communities Through Station Area Development: A Case Study

Union Station, Meridian, Mississippi
It’s All About Location…
Your Identity is Key

In any public project you need to know:

Who You Were in the Past

“Meridian, with its depots, store-houses, arsenal, hospitals, offices, hotels, and cantonments no longer exists.”

General William Tecumseh Sherman
February, 1864
Who You Are Now
Who You Aspire to Be
Making the ‘Impossible’ POSSIBLE
Restoring Public Confidence

Previous Meridian projects all faced challenges—both internally and externally:

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of creative financing
- Lack of partnerships
- Lack of design creativity

A “can’t do” mentality won’t succeed
Restoring Public Confidence

Archer Architecture, plc
& Dale and Associates
Transportation Center

Union Station

NAME - LOCATION - OWNER - CLIENT
UNION STATION
Meridian, Mississippi

SIZE
40,000 SF
new structure and renovation to existing structure

COST
$6,661,000

TIME
32 months

DESIGN AWARDS
1998 American Institute of Architects, Mississippi Chapter Honor Award
1998 International Downtown Association (IDA)
Honor Award for Economic Development

CONTACTS
Wade Jones
Executive Director of EMIDC
601-922-1989

CITY OF MERIDIAN
Don Farrar
Community Development Director
601-486-1989

Ed Slepner
Chief Financial Officer
601-486-1986

IDENTITY
A Multi-Modal Transportation Center occupying four city blocks encompassing the original site of the city’s twentieth century railroad station. This facility contains concourses, meeting rooms, waiting and queuing areas for Amtrak, Greyhound, Meridian Transit Authority, Northern southern Railroad Claims Agency, East Mississippi Business Development Center, Meridian Main Street, Railroad Museum, Visitor/Hospitality Center and support spaces. Completed 12/98

Reconnecting America
People • Places • Possibility
To Build a Station Takes Partners
Funding Union Station Development

**STATE/FEDERAL FUNDING**

- $2,544,960 ISTEA Enhancement Grant (MDOT)
- 971,040 Supplemental Grant (MDOT)
- 640,571 STIP Grant Transfer
- 290,281 STP-93
- + 700,000 Supplemental Grant (MDOT)
- $5,146,852 Federal/State Contribution

**LOCAL FUNDING**

- $1,046,140

**PREPAID LEASES**

- $431,000

**TOTAL PROJECT COST**

- $6,623,992
Play to Your Strengths

- Viable city core…save it
- Existing transportation hub…grow it
- Historic structures in place…preserve them
- Diverse population…house them
What Works Really Works

• Good community planning works on all levels
• Follow the guidance of the experts
• Smart design can tie everything together
Union Station at Completion

- Annually, Union Station hosts 250 events and 300,000 passengers
Union Station Development Resulted in:

- Private development of $135 million in surrounding area
- “Facelifts” for historic structures
Design of Union Station inspired:

**City Hall**
- Archer Architecture, p.l.l.c.
- City Hall

**City of Meridian**
- Central Fire Station

**Archer Architecture, p.l.l.c.**
- Fire Station

**Meridian City Hall**
- Meridian, Mississippi
- Size: 30,000 SF
- Cost: $15.3 million
- Period: 30 months

**Meridian Central Fire Station**
- Size: 25,000 SF
- Cost: $2,480,000
- Type: 2 stories

**Contacts**
- Ed Skipper
  - Chief Financial Officer
  - 601-345-0465

**Identity**
- 1915 Brass Arts City Hall
- Renovation was completed in 2007.
- Exterior Restoration occurred in 2008-2009
- Interior Restoration began in 2009-2011.

**Identity**
- Fire department has fire drives through the building.
- Houses fire fighters, maintenance offices, and support facilities.

**Contacts**
- John Roberts Smith
  - Mayor
  - 601-483-6580
A new Union Station helped bring about:

MSU Riley Center, a state-of-the-art performing and conference facility
Union Station also brought:

$17.3 million in HUD HOPE VI grants for development of attractive low to middle income duplex and single-family housing
Transportation Alternatives are Key
Recreational options are also key to livability, both for adults...
And children too.
Livability must include access to healthcare
Ultimately, Establish a Vision for the Future
Station Development Benefits All

- City wins
- Region wins
- Residents win
- Businesses win
- Travelers win

Connectivity = Livability

It’s All About Providing Choices
Thank you!

Reconnecting America
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