Archway Partnership
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Newton County Archway Partnership Executive Committee
Friday, March 21, 2025, 8:00 AM – 9:30 AM
The Center for Community Preservation and Planning
2104 Washington Street SW, Covington, GA 30014

Following transition from Newton County Tomorrow Board Meeting

I. Work Groups, Priority Areas, & Projects ..... **Debbie Harper**

- **Community Health & Resilient Living Update** ..... Gregg Ellwanger & Lindsey Petrini
  Priority Areas: Active Living, Equal Opportunity Access, Mental Health, Protective Factors
  Fourth Friday each month from 2:00 – 3:30 PM

  - New Project Requests:
    - **Newton Trails Map Update**
      - **Overview:** Newton Trails is working to update its interactive web map and create a comprehensive county-wide trail map and brochure. The project aims to provide valuable resources for residents, tourists, and organizations promoting Newton County's trails and quality of life. The updated materials will highlight not only the trails but also key destinations and amenities, such as parking, restrooms, parks, schools, and businesses of interest to trail users. This initiative will deliver an accessible, user-friendly guide that showcases the county's outdoor assets, supports local businesses, and fosters sustainability and connectivity within the community.

  - Approved Projects:
    - **Best Practices for Implementing Wraparound Services (Summer 2025)**
      - **Overview**: This project aims to identify and recommend best practices for implementing wraparound services in Newton County to support individuals and families facing multiple challenges. The student will research successful wraparound models from other communities and analyze their applicability to Newton County. The student will develop a comprehensive report that outlines key strategies, identifies barriers, and suggests actionable steps to create a coordinated, holistic system of care. The outcome will inform decision-makers on how to improve support services for at-risk populations in the county.

    - **Parks and Recreation Passive Park Design (Fall 2025)**
      - **Overview**: Newton County Parks and Recreation seeks help in designing a park on 40 acres on the county's northern side, bordering Rockdale County. The envisioned park will be designed for low-impact, nature-oriented activities rather than sports or large-scale recreational facilities.

    - **Riverwalk Development for City of Porterdale**
      - **Overview**: The Riverwalk Development Project in Porterdale aims to create an inviting space that enhances the downtown area by leveraging the city's unique recreational opportunities and natural charm. This concept will focus on designing a pedestrian-friendly riverwalk that integrates with existing recreational amenities, encourages community engagement, and attracts visitors to the heart of Porterdale. By combining elements of outdoor recreation and economic development, the riverwalk will serve as an incentive for increased foot traffic, supporting local businesses and enriching the city's appeal as a regional destination.

- **Supporting Newton County Mental Health Co-Responder Model**
  - **Overview**: The Newton County Mental Health Co-Responder Program, currently in its first year of implementation, aims to improve responses to mental health crises by pairing mental health professionals with law enforcement officers. To support the program's success and long-term sustainability, we propose connecting the Newton County Sheriff's Department with the Carl Vinson Institute of Government to develop the framework for evaluating the program's effectiveness and ROI.

- **Park Design for City of Mansfield**
  - **Overview**: This project focuses on designing a new park in Mansfield, Georgia, located along the Cricket Frog Trail. In collaboration with local leaders, the Archway Partnership will work to create a functional and welcoming space for walkers, bikers, and other trail users, enhancing recreational opportunities for the community.

- Active Projects:
  - **City of Newborn Park Design**
    College of Environment and Design
    - **Overview**: This project aims to design a new park that will serve as the trailhead for the Cricket Frog Trail in Newborn, Georgia. The Archway Partnership is collaborating with local leaders in creating an inviting space for walkers, bikers, and other visitors to enjoy the trail and surrounding area.
    - **Update**: Graduate student Noah Dilday has completed the park design plans. A final community presentation will be scheduled, and all are invited to attend.

  - **Best Practices for Enhancing Mental Health Telehealth Services**
    Terry College of Business
    - **Overview**: This project aims to identify and recommend best practices for improving mental health telehealth services in Newton County, with a focus on addressing common concerns such as fear, unfamiliarity, and technological barriers. Many are hesitant to use telehealth due to a lack of experience with digital tools and apprehension about the effectiveness of remote care. The student will research telehealth models, focusing on methods that reduce fear and increase comfort with virtual healthcare. Additionally, the student will develop strategies that improve accessibility, build trust, and enhance the overall user experience. The findings will help inform approaches to making telehealth a more viable and effective option for mental health in the community.
    - **Update**: Project is on track to conclude by end of semester and will be scheduling a final presentation soon.

  - **Best Practices for Mobile Food Distribution (Fall 2025)**
    Terry College of Business
    - **Overview**: This project explores best practices for creating mobile systems that provide fresh, nutritious food to communities. The project will focus on examining successful models and understanding the core components involved in launching and operating a mobile food service. The aim is to identify strategies that improve food access through mobile methods, ensuring the system is both efficient and sustainable while supporting local food systems.
    - **Update**: This project was selected for as an Institute of Leadership Advancement service-learning project in the Terry College of Business for Fall 2025.

  - **Guide to Active Living Options**
    Terry College of Business
    - **Overview**: Newton offers a wide range of parks and recreation options. The work group is seeking Archway students to create a guide to active living in the community, highlighting opportunities such as kayaking, dog parks, and playgrounds, to help residents fully explore and enjoy these amenities.
    - **Update**: Project is on track to conclude by end of semester and will be scheduling a final presentation soon.

- **Master Gardener Trail Garden Design**
  College of Environment and Design
  - **Overview**: Newton Trails and UGA Extension are collaborating to build raised beds for master gardeners. Archway students are being asked to assist in the landscaping design for this project.
  - **Update:** Project is on track to conclude by end of semester and will be scheduling a final presentation soon.

- **Grant Application Materials Development for Willing Helpers Clinic**
  College of Public Health
  - **Overview**: The final product for this project will be a thoroughly reviewed and professionally refined set of grant application materials for Willing Helpers Clinic, the free clinic for Newton County residents. Using the detailed materials provided, the focus will be on proofreading, organizing, and enhancing the program description to clearly and effectively communicate the organization's everyday work in a format tailored to grant funders. These polished materials will be designed as a reusable resource for future grant applications.
  - **Update**: First draft has been sent to Christine Boggs for review and will schedule a touchpoint with student upon completion.

- **Government Unity and Leadership Update** .....Serra Hall & Debbie Harper
  Priority Areas:
  Every other month following Newton County Tomorrow Board Meeting

  - New Project Requests:

  - Approved Projects:

  - Active Projects:
    - **Analysis of Newton County Strategic Plans**
      Terry College of Business
      - **Overview**: The primary intent of this project is to conduct a comprehensive crosswalk analysis for Newton County and its municipalities, aligning various local plans to identify common goals, gaps, and opportunities for collaboration and development.
      - **Update**: Plans have been gathered, and the analysis is progressing. Archway Coordinator Kendall Brantley is actively working through the data, continuing to explore opportunities for alignment and collaboration across the various local plans. The next steps will focus on refining the analysis and preparing a comprehensive report.

    - **Newton County Tomorrow Exhibit Graphic Design**
      Grady College of Journalism
      - **Overview:** To promote Newton County Tomorrow, a permanent display will be designed for The Center in Covington, GA. This display will highlight and promote the organization's work, highlighting its impact to the many visitors, including community groups and businesses, who frequently use The Center. Operated by Newton County Tomorrow, The Center serves as a hub for local engagement and collaboration.
      - **Update**: Text for exhibit has been sent to graphic design student. Project is on track to be finished by end of the semester.

- **Landscape Design for Porterdale Downtown Parking** (On Hold Until March/April)
  College of Environment and Design
  - **Overview:** The City of Porterdale is moving forward with the development of a new downtown parking lot. Following the completion of the parking lot, the next phase focuses on creating a landscape plan that enhances the functionality and aesthetic appeal of the space while reflecting the unique character of Porterdale. The landscape design will contribute to the overall revitalization of downtown Porterdale, creating a pleasant environment for residents and visitors alike.
  - **Update**: Awaiting revisions from City of Porterdale.

- **Newton County Tomorrow Digital Marketing Plan**
  School of Public and International Affairs
  - **Overview:** The digital marketing plan for Newton County Tomorrow will outline a strategic approach to enhance the organization's online presence. This includes general best practices for digital marketing and a broad content strategy to engage target audiences across various platforms.
  - **Update**: Making progress.

- **Leadership Retreat for Newton County Tomorrow**
  Carl Vinson Institute of Government
  - **Overview:** This retreat will bring together community leaders to foster stronger professional and informal relationships, enhancing collaboration and collective impact. Facilitated by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the retreat will offer interactive sessions and team-building activities tailored to the unique needs of Newton County. This initiative aims to strengthen trust, refine leadership skills, and create a unified network of leaders committed to addressing community challenges and opportunities.
  - **Update**: Planned for August 15, full day. Have requested the use of the Joachim Herz House.

- **Leadership Cohort for Newly Elected Officials in Newton County**
  Carl Vinson Institute of Government
  - **Overview:** This cohort will focus on building networks across municipalities and the county to foster trust, cooperation, and shared understanding among leaders. Facilitated by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, this program will provide tailored leadership development, collaborative problem-solving sessions, and opportunities to explore best practices in governance. By creating a foundation of strong relationships and effective communication, the cohort aims to enhance collective decision-making and support a unified approach to addressing county-wide priorities.
  - **Update**: Awaiting further planning.

- **Living & Learning for Life Update** .....Michael Barr & Tavarez Holston
  Priority Areas: Opportunity Awareness, Positive Youth Development
  Third Wednesday each month from 3:00 – 4:30 PM

  - <u>New Project Requests</u>:

  - <u>Approved Projects</u>:
    - **Newton County Workforce/Career Mapping** (On Hold)
      - **Overview:** As an initial step to creating comprehensive career services resource, we will conduct career mapping to identify local career opportunities and align them with available programs at local colleges and high school credentials. This will help residents navigate pathways to employment more effectively and connect educational attainment with workforce needs.
      - **Update**: This project is on hold until the conclusion of a project with the Industrial Development Authority and the Carl Vinson Institute for Government to determine next steps.

- Active Projects:
  - **Understanding the Support Needs of Today's Students**
    Terry College of Business
    - **Overview:** This project seeks to identify the types of support that today's students in Newton County need to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally. By reviewing existing data and research on student well-being and success, the student will analyze key areas where additional support may be required, such as mental health services, academic resources, and community engagement. The project will also include a review of successful support models from similar communities and explore how Newton County can adapt these strategies to meet the needs of its students. The goal is to provide actionable recommendations to strengthen the student support system and enhance overall student well-being.
    - **Update**: Ready to schedule student presentation.

  - **Connect Newton Implementation Initiative (Funding Opportunity)**
    Archway Partnership Connected Resilient Communities, sponsored by Georgia Power
    - **Overview:** The Connect Newton Mini Grant Program is designed to empower graduates of the Connect Newton program to apply the skills and knowledge gained through their participation by developing innovative classroom lessons. These lessons will focus on integrating industry and workforce development concepts into the classroom, helping students better understand the connections between their education and real-world career opportunities. Funded through the UGA Archway Partnership, in collaboration with Newton County Industrial Development Authority (NCIDA) and Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE), this program aims to foster partnerships between educators and local industries, enriching student learning and supporting workforce readiness.
    - **Update**: The application has been extended until Monday, March 24. Plans to announce recipients on Friday, March 28.

- **Whole Community Housing Update** ..... Mike Hopkins & Shamica Tucker
  Priority Areas: Affordable Housing, Small Town Feel, Education and Communication
  Third Thursday each month from 9:00 – 10:30 AM

  - New Project Requests:

  - Approved Projects:
    - **Newton County Housing ~~Analysis~~ Summit**
      - **Overview**: This project analyzes housing data in Newton County to provide a clearer picture of local housing trends. It examines factors like the number of rooftops, owner-to-renter ratios, demographic shifts, and broader community housing patterns. The findings will be presented at a housing summit.
      - **Update**: The format of the project has been revised to now be a housing summit led by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

    - **Welcome to Newton Guide**
      - **Overview:** The "Welcome to Newton" guide is designed to help new residents seamlessly transition into the community by providing essential information and resources. This guide will connect individuals and families with services and community offerings, making it easier to settle in and feel at home. From utility setup and internet options to school registration and local insights, the packet serves as a friendly, one-stop resource for navigating life in Newton County. By fostering a sense of connection and preparedness, this project supports a welcoming and informed community experience.

- Active Projects:
    - **Sustainable Buildings Initiative: Enhancing Energy Efficiency and Sustainability**
      College of Engineering
        - **Overview**: This project brings together engineering undergraduates from UGA to assess and improve the sustainability of local buildings. By examining structural, mechanical, and electrical systems, the students will identify opportunities to enhance energy efficiency and reduce environmental impact. The initiative aims to create actionable recommendations for building owners and community leaders, promoting long-term sustainability in local infrastructure.
        - **Update**: The projects were submitted and graded in December 2024. The professor will be sharing all 26 projects but is first organizing them to highlight the most relevant recommendations.

    - **Community Apartment Inventory and Rental Cost Analysis**
      School of Public and International Affairs
        - **Overview**: This project involves conducting a comprehensive inventory of apartment properties in the community, gathering detailed data on vacancy rates and rental prices. The goal is to provide accurate, up-to-date information on the cost of renting, helping local stakeholders, residents, and policymakers better understand housing affordability and market trends in the area.
        - **Update**: Project is on schedule. Final presentation is scheduled for the April Whole Community Housing workgroup meeting on April 17, 2025. All are welcome.

II. Updates from Campus ..... **Sam Perren**

III. Adjourn ..... **Debbie Harper**