Archway Partnership
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Newton County Archway Partnership Executive Committee
Friday, May 16, 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:

  - Approved Projects:
    - **Best Practices for Implementing Wraparound Services (June-July 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 (August-December 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.

- **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.

- Active Projects:
  - **Best Practices for Mobile Food Distribution (August-December 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**: Two members of the workgroup toured UGA's Campus Kitchen and UGArden to learn more about their process; met with ILA students to learn more about the project; project will resume in August.

- Completed 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.

  - **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.

  - **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.

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

  - New Project Requests:
    - **Porterdale Historic Train Depot Welcome Center Conversion**
      The Porterdale Historic Train Depot Welcome Center Conversion project will transform the town's iconic train depot into a vibrant hub for both locals and visitors. The renovation will preserve the depot's historic charm while adding modern amenities, including a tourism information area and local exhibits. This project will create a central location to engage with Porterdale's rich history, support local businesses, and serve as a welcoming point for visitors.

  - Approved Projects:

  - Active Projects:
    - **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**: Final edits in progress.

    - **Landscape Design for Porterdale Downtown Parking**
      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**: Revisions sent to Porterdale.

    - **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.

- Completed 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**: Aiming to conclude by end of semester.

- **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

    - New Project Requests:

    - Approved Projects:
        - **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:
        - **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**: Funding awarded; projects should be completed by end of school term and reported completed by end of July.

        - **One Pager for Connect Newton Implementation Initiative**
          Archway Partnership
            - **Overview:** A one-pager is needed to promote the Connect Newton Implementation Initiative to graduates of the Connect Newton program in June 2025.

- Completed 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.

- **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:
    - **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:
    - **Newton County Housing 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**: September 4, 2025, selected as date for Housing Summit.

  - Completed 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.

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

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

Projects Completed this Fiscal Year:

1. Porterdale Parking Lot Charrette
2. CyberArch: Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority
3. Exploring Chatbot Integration for Career Guidance on Connect Newton
4. City of Newborn Park Design
5. Newton County Tomorrow Digital Marketing Plan
6. Grant Application Materials Development for Willing Helpers Clinic
7. Best Practices for Enhancing Mental Health Telehealth Services
8. Guide to Active Living Options
9. Understanding the Support Needs of Today's Students
10. Community Apartment Inventory
11. Porterdale Sustainable Buildings Project

Future Projects for Funding:

Project	Partner	Estimated Cost
Newton County Tomorrow Retreat	Carl Vinson Institute of Government	~$3,000
Housing Summit	Carl Vinson Institute of Government	~$13,000
Elected Official Credentialling ✓	Carl Vinson Institute of Government	~$13,000
Youth Leadership Program	JW Fanning Institute for Leadership	~$16,000-$22,000
High Potential Leaders	JW Fanning Institute for Leadership	~$16,000-$22,000

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