



**ONE VALDOSTA-LOWNDES**  
**LOWNDES COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
WORK SESSION  
06.26.23

MARY BETH BROWNLEE  
DIRECTOR  
ONE VALDOSTA-LOWNDES



**WHAT IS ONE VALDOSTA-LOWNDES?**

# THE CONCEPT

- 2017-2021 – Planning & Community Engagement
  - Community-Driven, Public-Private Partnership
  - 629 Individual Survey Responses over Six Weeks
  - Targeted Interviews & Stakeholder Committees
  - 5-Year Community & Economic Development Plan
- 2021-2022 – Plan Addendum & Funding Support
  - CEcDev Plan adapted and prioritized on backend of COVID pause
  - Founding partners & Funding secured
    - Lowndes County Board of Commissioners
    - City of Valdosta
    - Valdosta- Lowndes County Development Authority
    - Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce
    - Valdosta State University
    - South Georgia Medical Center
    - Georgia Power Company
- 2023 – Director Hired; Implementation Launched
- Priorities
  - Engagement
  - Talent
  - Place
  - Opportunity

**this  
is your  
world.  
shape it or  
someone  
else will.** -gary  
lew

# OVL LEADERSHIP

- OVL Advisory Committee
  - Johnny Ball – South Georgia Medical Center
  - Clinton Beeland – CJB Industries
  - Thressea Boyd – Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce
  - Joe Brownlee – Georgia Power Company
  - Dr. Richard Carvajal – Valdosta State University
  - Paige Dukes – Lowndes County
  - Mayor Scott James Matheson – City of Valdosta
  - George Page – Valdosta-Lowndes County Parks & Recreation Authority
  - Andrea Schruijer – Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority
- Mary Beth Brownlee – Director
- Christie Moore – Chamber President; Liaison to OVL



# EARLY PRIORITIES — ENGAGEMENT

- Objective: *Citizens and leaders must be invested in the community's future and engaged in its success. It is critical to make decisions and direct growth for the benefit of ALL citizens.*
- Key Take-Aways:
  - The community is divided and there is a lack of trust.
  - Leaders are afraid to address race and socioeconomic tensions because it is uncomfortable, and no one has all the answers.
- Strategic Priorities:
  - The Longest Table
  - Community Heroes Program
  - Study at Home/South Georgia

*“We need to remove the imaginary lines and walls we have built between us.”*



# EARLY PRIORITIES — TALENT

- Objective: *Communities should look beyond the data. Align education and training to inspire workforce to pursue the path that best utilizes their talents and provides value to the community.*
- Key Take-Aways:
  - There are untapped resources and intellectual capital at VSU and WGTC that could allow the community to move to the next level in workforce and community development.
  - Low wages and higher-than-average poverty rates.
- Strategic Priorities:
  - Connect VSU/WGTC to the heart of the community—talent and assets
  - Youth and Workforce Development
  - Skills Development

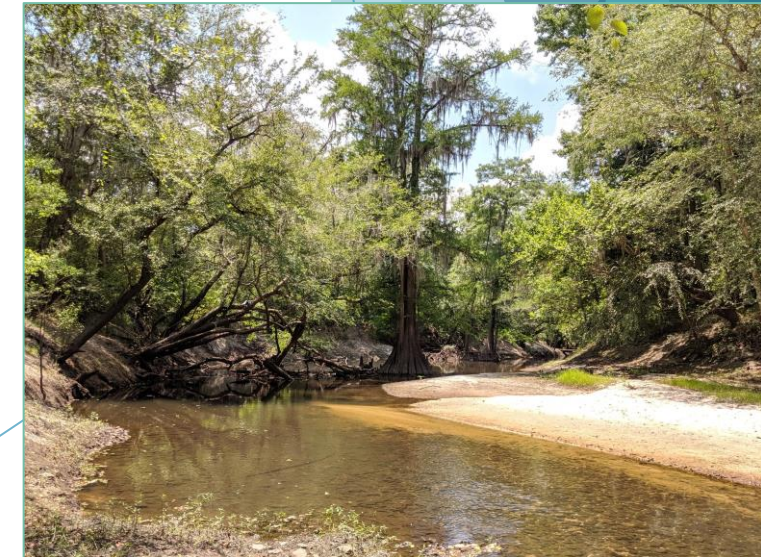
*“I’d like to see more industry built around the top five education programs at VSU and Wiregrass—that way, we can retain the talent we have already invested in.”*



# EARLY PRIORITIES — PLACE

- Objective: *Communities are living systems. Growth should be purposefully directed to empower people to help the community flourish, sustain its citizens and attract others.*
- Key Take-Aways:
  - The community can emerge as a regional leader.
  - In order to become a regional leader, the community must establish a sense of place that sets it apart and that residents can embrace and enjoy.
- Strategic Priorities:
  - River Camp/Land Between the Rivers Park Master Plan
  - Commercial Redevelopment Corridors—Georgia Beer to Downtown/Unity Park; Ashley Street, etc.

*“Want to keep young professionals from moving to Atlanta? Give them fun options like the Chastain Park series. Have Wine Down Wednesdays in the park...Look at what other cities are doing that are successful and model after them.”*



# EARLY PRIORITIES — OPPORTUNITY

- Objective: *Opportunity provides the foundation for a vibrant community. Leaders must create and sustain an ecosystem that provides job opportunities for people to enjoy a good quality of life and pursue their dreams.*
- Key Take-Aways:
  - Economic development is not well understood or appreciated in terms of the various aspects and benefits it can bring.
  - Leverage strategic assets—military community (Moody AFB), higher education (VSU, WGTC), quality healthcare (SGMC), and affordability compared to larger markets.
- Strategic Priorities:
  - Concierge Tourism
  - Lake Park Outlets/Redevelopment
  - Tourism and the Arts (Children’s Imagination Station, Public Art, etc.)
  - Priority Zones—targeted neighborhood/nodal redevelopment (Southside residential and commercial district, etc.); SGMC campus and surrounding residential/commercial corridors
  - Valdosta Regional Airport Development

*“Valdosta is large enough to support all jobs. We could be the capitol of South Georgia if people cared.”*

*“The community states they are all about growth but are not willing to grow with new ideas.”*





# NEXT STEPS

- Late Summer/Fall 2023 – Continued Community Engagement
  - Focus Groups, Listening Sessions and Interviews
- 2023-2024 – OVL Capital Campaign
  - Campaign Operations Committee
  - Leadership Council
  - Feasibility Assessment – Stakeholder Interviews
- 2023-2024 – Strategic Task Force(s) – To Be Developed
- Be a Brand Ambassador/Champion/Cheerleader for OVL and Lowndes County!



# CONTACT INFORMATION

“ *One Valdosta-Lowndes has the potential and expectation to be a game-changer for Lowndes County.*

*--Mary Beth Brownlee*



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