



# Q4 2023 INVESTOR REPORT

FORWARDMACON.COM



# AN INVESTMENT THAT DELIVERS RESULTS.

“I know that this investment will deliver a better prepared workforce, will bring talent to Macon, and jumpstart grassroots revitalization in underserved neighborhoods.”

Robert “Robbo” Hatcher, Jr.  
Forward Macon Campaign Co-Chair  
CEO, H2Capital, Inc.



**Forward Macon** initiatives continue to be successfully implemented into a collaborative strategy to create new jobs, recruit new residents, and develop new talent in Macon-Bibb. Our downtown is vibrant, neighborhoods are improving, and industries are choosing to expand operations and to consider relocation to **Georgia's sweet spot for jobs and good living**.

The **Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce** and **One Macon** have endorsed Forward Macon key initiatives that are accelerating our trajectory. The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce in partnership with **United Way**, the **Community Foundation of Central Georgia** and **SparkMacon** has already created an impressive impact in the current phase of the Forward Macon Plan's execution. The joint plan, called **Forward Macon**, focuses on **Workforce Development & Talent Attraction, Startup Success, and Community Revitalization**.

We anticipate that Forward Macon's plan will **directly impact job creation**. By 2025, we expect that an additional **2,400 to 3,100 jobs will be created**. These new jobs are expected to add an additional **\$56 million of consumer expenditures** annually by 2025.

We have seen **significant progress in the first three years** of implementation of the **Forward Macon Plan**. We are pleased to share some **highlights from our ongoing efforts**. This critical work would not be possible without the **commitment and vision of our investors and community partners**. Together, we can make a difference.

# \$56M

Additional Consumer Expenditures  
Projected in Five Years

# #1

Create Best Place for  
Business in Georgia

# 3,100

Create Direct and Indirect  
Jobs in Macon-Bibb

# PILLAR I: IMPROVE WORKFORCE

## META DIGITAL AD CAMPAIGN CREATIVE



The **Greater Career Works** website puts job seekers in the front of the employment line by featuring only **hyperlocal listings** with **thousands of vetted job opportunities** offered by respected **local employers** and national entities with a **regional presence** in the **Greater Macon Area**.

A **digital ad campaign aimed at prospective employers and employees**, conducted across **Facebook, Instagram** and **various digital display networks** was designed to **encourage traffic** to the **Greater Career Works** website for sign-up. The awareness campaign garnered **571,707 impressions** and resulted in **501 click-throughs**.

On November 17th, **United Way of Central Georgia** partnered with **Work Source Georgia** and the **Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce** to present a career fair at **LH Williams Recreation Center** in the **Pleasant Hill** neighborhood. A **digital ad campaign** for the **Career Fair** was created and implemented by the **Greater Macon Chamber** to **reach economically disadvantaged** neighborhoods. Creative content was shared with this specific audience via **Meta** using **geotargeting**. **Facebook** and **Instagram** ads achieved a **reach of 13,754** and generated **83,409 impressions** with a frequency of 6.06. Recruiters from **17 employers** shared opportunities with **56 job seekers**.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TACTICS

Ensure graduates are college/career-ready by **connecting business and education providers** at all levels.

Implement **GreaterCareerWorks.com**, a web-based hub that links recruitment, skill-building, and **career navigation** into one collaborative system.

Provide local businesses a **seamless venue** to post jobs, participate in **virtual job fairs**, and take advantage of hundreds of training modules.

Provide **educational institutions with analytics** to assess skills needed in the community, access to promote or host job fairs for students, usage of **training modules** as part of their curriculum, and a place to promote their **programs and training**.

Provide job seekers a **local resource** for **finding jobs** and **training** at no charge.

Recruit businesses to **provide apprenticeships** and **internships** for high school and post-secondary education students.

## GreaterCareerWorks.com Educational Engagement

**Students 7,204**

**Counselors/Teachers 531**

**Organizations 345**

**Job Postings 2,096**

**Applications 611**

**Completed Courses 129**

**Users on Site 13,340**

**Career Card Views 11,025**

**Three Public School Systems  
Bibb/Crawford/Twiggs**

Statistics Effective 12.31.23

# PILLAR II: ATTRACT & RETAIN TALENT



## ATTRACTION & RETENTION TACTICS

Proactively market **Choose Macon** as the place to live, work and play in the Southeast.

Create and implement a **talent attraction plan** that builds on the region's cultural and business narrative.

Identify Macon's **unique brand assets** and develop a brand proposition around those assets.

Identify **top talent markets** for Macon.

Create and **execute a marketing blueprint** to include, but not be limited to, website, social media, content development, ambassador & alumni outreach, media relations, and advertising.

Enhance **Macon Area Connections** and **Leadership Macon** to retain talent already here.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**Leadership Macon** recruited the 45th class of emerging leaders to join the **Greater Macon Chamber's signature program**. The group will participate and be recognized during **Macon Day** at the **State Capitol** in February.

The **Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce** engaged local creatives to capture images and to develop dynamic messaging to showcase local **events and community culture**. A comprehensive image library with critical brand messaging for the **Choose Macon website and marketing collateral** will be utilized to refresh campaign content. Community testimonial videos will inspire prospects to **Choose Macon**.

A recent niche digital campaign targeted **2, 427 local business and community leaders** to raise awareness for the **Choose Macon** website and **recruitment effort** featuring **new brand messaging** and web links.

# CHOOSEMACON.COM

# PILLAR III: ATTRACT STARTUPS



It has been busy recently for **Macon Entrepreneur Support Organizations (ESOs)** with several large events as well as regular programming occurring on a monthly basis. Catalyst Andrew Eck **supports the ESOs** and more importantly, makes sure that **entrepreneurs know all the opportunities** available.

**Innov8te GA** hosted their **semi-annual summit** at the **Mercer Innovation Center** to discuss what success looked like and how to achieve it. Innov8GA is a coalition of **15+ college & university entrepreneurship departments in Georgia**. The **SBDC** hosted their **4th Annual Women of Business Summit** in October with well over **100 small business owners** from the **Middle Georgia** area in attendance.

**Perry Startup Week** is coming soon. It's not just Macon anymore! The City of Perry, along with a group of entrepreneurs, is hosting a Startup Week in Perry. Andrew Eck is **encouraging business owners** in Macon to expand their network by attending the free event Feb 26th through March 1st.

## Wednesday

**Wednesday** is for entrepreneurs. **BANC (Business and Non-Profit Center)** hosts a **monthly class** for entrepreneurs on the **first Wednesday** of the month at 5 pm at the **Washington Memorial Library**.

**Startup-Macon** hosts a **networking meetup** the **third Wednesday** of the month at 5 pm at **Just Tap'd**.

**SparkMacon** hosts a **fireside chat** with local **business owners** on each **4th Wednesday** of the month at 6:30 pm.

The **second Wednesday** is still open. Any interest? Email Andrew Eck at **Andrew@Startup-Macon.com**.

# PILLAR IV: REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS



## REVITALIZATION TACTICS

The **community revitalization** pillar seeks to **increase prosperity in underserved communities**. The One Macon 2.0 plan identified that a Community Engagement Project Manager working within underserved communities could make a difference. Forward Macon helps fund the position currently housed with **United Way of Central Georgia**.

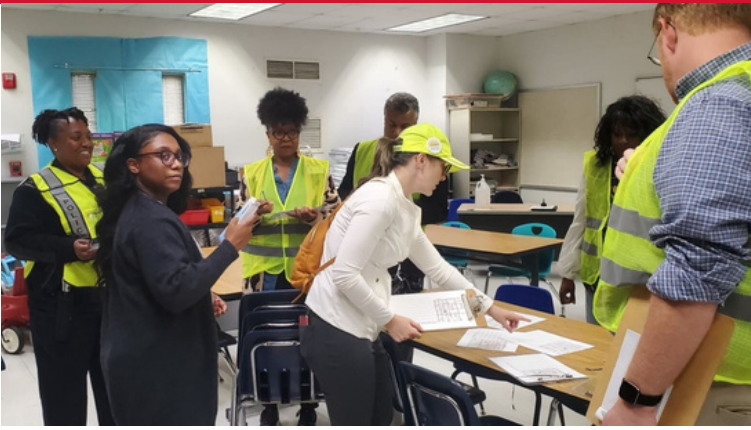
## REVITALIZATION HIGHLIGHTS

On November 17th, **United Way of Central Georgia** partnered with **Work Source Georgia** and the **Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce** to coordinate a **career fair** at **LH Williams Recreation Center** in the Pleasant Hill neighborhood. **Seventeen employer recruiters** shared opportunities with 56 job seekers. This super-sized career fair was also attended by **vendors offering legal, insurance, and basic needs services**. Employer recruiters were served lunch prepared by a **neighborhood caterer** and **free childcare** was offered to job seekers. The event also included a drawing for three \$50 gift cards.

A cleanup was held in the **Fort Hill neighborhood** to clear safe routes for walkers to **Burdell-Hunt Elementary** school on November 18th, following a walk audit and preceding the launch of a walking school bus. Almost one hundred (95) volunteers **collected 62 bags of trash** along the walking route that many kids take to school. **United Way of Central Georgia** is working with community partners including **Keep Macon Bibb Beautiful, Burdell-Hunt Elementary, Safe Routes to School GA, Middle GA Regional Commission, Macon-Bibb Planning and Zoning, and Bibb County School District Campus Safety**.

Three walking routes were identified by **Safe Routes to School GA** and the Middle Georgia Regional Commission. Volunteers **walked these routes and noted any hazards** that students may encounter while walking to and from schools in Pleasant Hill and Fort Hill. The **team reported 41 total issues** with 19 basic hazards, six areas with **overgrown vegetation/fallen trees**, nine incidents of **blight with illegal and large dumping**, five storm drain issues, and two hazards from **loose dogs and hanging wires**.

# PILLAR IV: REVITALIZE NEIGHBORHOODS



## REVITALIZATION COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT: WALKING SCHOOL BUS AUDITS

In celebration of **International Walk to School Day** on October 4, 2023, **United Way of Central Georgia's Community Schools United initiative** conducted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its inaugural Walking School Bus project at **L.H. Williams Elementary School**. This event aligned with the global initiative to encourage students to walk or bike to school, fostering a sense of community and promoting pedestrian safety.

Walking school bus programs involve a group of children walking to school together with an **adult leader**. On the trip to and from school, these adults provide **social support**, address potential traffic and **interpersonal safety**, and **serve as role models to the children** while children **increase their attendance** to school.

United Way of Central Georgia through its Community Schools United strategy partnered with **Bibb County School District, Safe Routes Georgia, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Cure Violence Macon, Bike Walk Macon, Keep Macon-Bibb Beautiful Commission, Saint Peter Claver Church, Beulahland Bible Church, Mercer University, U Create Macon, and Macon-Bibb County** to coordinate walking school buses for two Community Schools United high-need sites in the impoverished Pleasant Hill and Fort Hill neighborhoods. The **Path to Success Project** creates safe routes for children walking to school in their neighborhoods.

**Chronic absenteeism** has been identified by school administrators as a barrier to learning for their students. The absenteeism rate was reported at **42% at LH Williams Elementary** and **17% at Burdell-Hunt Elementary**. A trial walking school bus was coordinated. **School zone mascots, cartoon characters**, and other local engaging **animated characters** were invited. Macon-Bibb County provided a trash dumpster for the **cleanups** and addressed structural issues entered through the **SeeClickFix** digital communications.

The **walking school bus** also includes addressing personal **safety threats like bullying, robbery, sexual harassment, and gang activity**, as well as fear of violence and crime that can also pose a great barrier to walking, bicycling, and **being physically active outdoors**. Two safety audits were supported by **222 volunteers** which resulted in two neighborhood cleanups where **138 bags of trash were collected** covering 25 streets.

Students **walking to school with trusted, vetted adults** are guarded from **structural hazards** of the built environment and **criminals looking to recruit and prey** on them for nefarious activity.

# FORWARD INVESTORS MACON

## PLATINUM



KNIGHT  
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Georgia Pine Level Foundation, Inc.

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