



EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION > INNOVATIVE STRATEGY > RESULTS DRIVEN



forwardmacon.com



MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Before COVID-19 impacted our lives, our businesses, and our communities, the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce and OneMacon! had taken bold steps to create a more prosperous Macon-Bibb County. These two strong community organizations announced new strategic plans in 2019. Aligned in workforce and economic development, each of the plans were on track for implementation until COVID-19 struck. The pandemic challenged both organizations but also brought a unique opportunity.

The Greater Macon Chamber and OneMacon! have come together to implement innovative, results-driven strategies that will accelerate opportunity in our community and create prosperity for all. A new entity, Forward Macon, Inc., has taken the recommendations from the Greater Macon Chamber and OneMacon! and has outlined a specific plan on these aligned initiatives. Forward Macon, Inc. has now launched the Forward Macon campaign to make these initiatives happen.

As business and community leaders, we are proudly leading and investing in the Forward Macon campaign.

As community leaders, we ask you to consider investing in Forward Macon campaign. Together, we can bring prosperity across Macon-Bibb County.



"We are thrilled that two of Macon's key organizations are working together in a truly meaningful way and hope this sets the stage for more alliances of this type in the future. "

Deon Tucker, Forward Macon Campaign Co-Chair
Regional Director, Georgia Power Company

I know that this investment will deliver a better-prepared workforce, will bring talent to Macon, and jumpstart grass-roots revitalization in underserved neighborhoods.

Robert "Robbo" Hatcher, Jr.,
Forward Macon Campaign Co-chair, CEO, H2Capital, Inc.



ECONOMIC MEASURES

Macon-Bibb County is experiencing a renaissance. Like many metropolitan communities with economic decline in the 70s and 80s, prosperity has returned.

While Macon's economy is improving, it still falls short on key economic measures compared to its peer cities in Georgia. According to the University of Georgia's 2021 Economic Outlook, Macon had a population loss of nearly 2% over the last decade. The poverty rate almost doubles the state average. The median household income lags behind its peer cities.

Graduation rates and education attainment still present a challenge and are impacting the workforce and employment opportunity.

COVID's impact on Macon has been less severe than other Georgia cities.

Like other MSAs, Macon's economic growth has been limited by outmigration, and the population will not grow very much in 2021. It is especially worrisome that too many who are in their prime working years leave the area, probably because there are few high-tech jobs available. Then again, the MSA's relatively low levels of educational attainment make it very difficult to attract the types of companies that are likely to bring high-tech jobs.

*Economic Outlook 2021,
The Selig Center for Economic
Growth, Terry College of Business,
University of Georgia*

Macon Metrics Compared to Peer Cities and Georgia

Metric	Macon	Augusta	Columbus	Savannah	Georgia
Population growth since 2010	-1.7%	1.0%	2.7%	5.5%	9.6%
% of people in poverty	25.7%	23.5%	21.1%	22.9%	13.3%
Median Household Income	\$39,931	\$40,545	\$45,389	\$41,093	\$55,679
High school graduation rate	85.7%	83.5%	87.3%	87.0%	86.7%
% of people with college degrees	25.7%	21.5%	26.2%	28.1%	30.7%
Unemployment	6.6%	5.1%	6.8%	6.7%	6.3%
2020 job loss percentage	8.8%	10.2%	10.9%	14.3%	11.4%
Projected job growth in 2021	0.2%	1.6%	1.2%	3.6%	1.5%

Source for data, except unemployment rates: U.S. Census Bureau 2019 QuickFacts, reporting 2018 data

Source for unemployment rates: U.S. Department of Labor, September 2020

Source for job loss percentage and projected 2021 job growth: The Selig Center for Economic Growth, Terry College of Business, University of Georgia

A CLEAR CALL TO ACTION

Macon's population decline and uneven economic expansion did not occur overnight and will take a focused effort for a solid recovery. The Greater Macon Chamber has long worked on growing the economy with some success, but would have experienced better results if their efforts had been part of a holistic community development plan. OneMacon!, a coalition that started in 2013, created that holistic community plan focused on jobs, schools, and places. In addition to the Greater Macon Chamber, other entities focused on economic and job growth include NewTown Macon Inc., the Macon-Bibb Industrial Authority, Visit Macon, SparkMacon, and the Mercer Innovation Center.

When OneMacon! rolled out its 2.0 plan, The Greater Macon Chamber and OneMacon! saw an even greater opportunity to partner. In the summer of 2020, they joined forces to test the feasibility of raising private funds to implement workforce and community development components of the OneMacon!2.0 plan. The Greater Macon Chamber contracted with Convergent Nonprofit Solutions to conduct an Opportunity Analysis study. It was completed in September 2020 with sixty community leaders participating. The study found that:

- > The Chamber is considered the local leader on business issues and is a key influencer on significant community issues and initiatives.
- > Both the Chamber and OneMacon! are considered either "effective" or "highly effective" by nearly all respondents.
- > Building a better workforce and growing Macon's economy was of great concern to those interviewed. The OneMacon! 2.0 plan relies heavily on the Chamber for plan implementation in these two areas.
- > The consensus was that the Greater Macon Chamber and OneMacon! initiatives presented were a positive step in the right direction, and there was a willingness to fund their implementation.

Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce Focus Areas

- Connect members with the community at large.
- Advocate at the local, state and federal level.
- Educate with impactful programs and events.
- Accelerate economic growth through workforce development.

One Macon! 2.0 Focus Areas

- Economic Revitalization
- Talent and Education
- Quality of Life

FORWARD MACON

The Greater Macon Chamber and One Macon! leadership believed a new charitable organization would best manage accountability and execute the fundraising campaign joint effort. Instead of establishing a new charitable organization, they revived the Greater Macon Education Fund, a 501 (c) 3 affiliated with the Macon Chamber that had supported workforce and leadership initiatives. The organization was renamed Forward Macon, Inc., and its mission was expanded to include economic and community development.

To execute, Forward Macon Inc. will grant funds to the partnering organizations implementing the program of work outlined in the Forward Macon plan. Those entities are the Greater Macon Chamber, United Way of Central Georgia, Community Foundation of Central Georgia, and SparkMacon.

Community leaders welcome this partnership and see it as an agent for change. Investing in Forward Macon will positively change the community and provide economic opportunity for its citizens in the future.



Mayor Lester Miller on Workforce

"At the core of a thriving community is a workforce that meets the needs of the 21st century industries. To do so, we must use innovative programs, such as the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce's Macon Works, a digital technology platform that will better connect employers, our education system and our workforce."

MaconBibb Forward Mayoral Transition Team Report 2020 presentation, December 18, 2020



FORWARD MACON PLAN



Pillar I: Improve Workforce

Through Greater Macon Macon Works, ensure our graduates are college/career-ready by connecting business and education providers at all levels.

Implement GreaterMaconWorks.com, a web-based app 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 education providers 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 and institute Advance Macon to provide grants to facilitate organizations in need to hire interns.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Percent of high school students engaged with GreaterMaconWorks.com.

Current: 0 Annual #: > 90%
(reached in 2025)

Increase the number of certificates awarded through GreaterMaconWorks.com's training modules.

Current: 0 Annual #: 1,200
(reached in 2025)



"We are in the business of training students for jobs available today and preparing them for new career opportunities in the future. The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce knows that a skilled workforce is the most critical success factor for economic growth and has launched the Macon Works initiative. My colleagues in education and I are excited about GreaterMaconWorks.com, the star project in Macon Works. We believe this will be a game-changer for our community. "

– Ivan Allen, Central Georgia Technical College


Increase the number of internships and work-based learning opportunities.

Current: 120

Annual #: 300

(reached in 2025)





"Like many businesses across the country, Bluebird struggles to find the professional talent we need. We believe that a proactive talent attraction campaign showcasing Macon's quality of life, cultural narrative, and economic vitality will help our company recruit the right fit prospects. "

- Felix Lin, Vice President of Human Resources and External Affairs for the Blue Bird Corporation

Pillar II: Attract and Retain Talent

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

As part of Macon Works, the Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce will 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 Young Professionals and Leadership Macon to retain talent already here.

SparkMacon will hire an Entrepreneur Catalyst to support and grow Macon's startup community and attract new entrepreneurs to the area.



"Startups have unique challenges that traditional support systems may not be able to address. That is why Forward Macon's plan includes hiring a community catalyst for small business. It will mean more jobs, more creativity and more opportunity for the people of Macon and for those who want to move to our vibrant city."

- Rob Betzel, Grit Consulting

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Increase Macon's population growth rate

Current:	Annual #:
1.7% est. change	2.5%
2018-2019	(reached in 2025)

Assist startup businesses in bringing a concept to market

Current: 0
Annual #: 60
(reached in 2025)

FORWARD MACON PLAN



Pillar III: Revitalize Neighborhoods

Enhance Macon's quality of place through increased civic engagement and neighborhood revitalization.

Fund, in partnership with United Way, the Community Engagement Project Manager position, a neighborhood catalyst for implementing a systematic, comprehensive revitalization plan.

- > Establish a neighborhood profile.
- > Create a portal of neighborhood-specific data for upload to the OneMacon! website.
- > Identify, manage, and evaluate neighborhood-centric funding.
- > Serve as a conduit to community resources and information and convener of external stakeholders and target neighborhoods.

Support the Community Foundation of Central Georgia's micro-grant program that will fund initiatives in the underserved neighborhoods that comply with the Economic Revitalization section of the OneMacon! 2.0 plan.

MEASURE WHAT MATTERS

Provide at least four classes a year for community initiatives leadership training.

Current: 1
Annual #: 4
(reached in 2025)

Implement 85% of Strategy 1: Prepare Neighborhoods for Renewal & Investment and Strategy 3: Build Wealth for Low-Income Families as outlined in OneMacon! 2.0's Economic Revitalization plan.

Current: 15%

Annual #: 85%
(reached in 2025)

A woman with dark hair, wearing a bright pink sleeveless top and a long necklace with a chain and heart-shaped pendants, stands in front of a brick wall. Above her, a sign reads "L. H. WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 325". To the left of the sign is a black rectangular light fixture, and to the right is a square orange speaker. A small green tree branch is visible in the top right corner.

L. H. WILLIAMS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 325

"Macon is experiencing economic growth, but not all areas are benefiting from this positive change. To bring awareness and spur development, Forward Macon will fund focused community prosperity programs. By engaging, educating, and inspiring the residents, we can empower new leaders and revitalize Macon-Bibb's declining neighborhoods."

*- Sundra Woodford,
Community Engagement
Project Manager*

EXPANDING OUTCOMES-RETURN ON INVESTMENT



\$56,000,000

Additional consumer expenditures expected in Macon-Bibb County due to the programs outlined in the Forward Macon campaign.

Forward Macon plays a critical role in rebuilding the community, ensuring future growth, strengthening livability, and creating a sustainable and broadly beneficial economy for all citizens of the region. Forward Macon is now seeking investors and community leaders that share its vision of economic growth and prosperity, one where a "rising tide lifts all boats."

By the end of 2025, Forward Macon estimates the positive impact to be:

- > 2,400 to 3,100 more jobs in Macon-Bibb County above the average projected job growth.
- > Projected consumer expenditures to increase by \$56 million a year.

Data based on results from Convergent Nonprofit Solutions' Outcomes Lab done for Forward Macon, January 2021

FORWARD MACON BUDGET

Pillar

Improve Workforce

Attract and Retain Talent

Revitalize Neighborhoods

Total

Five-Year

\$2,039,000

\$943,000

\$618,000

\$3,600,000

FORWARD MACON'S COMMITMENT TO INVESTORS

An investment in Forward Macon provides the Greater Macon Chamber and OneMacon! the resources necessary to have a tremendous positive impact on local business and the community-at-large. Along with the investors' commitment to the plan, Forward Macon's leadership recognizes its responsibility to provide regular updates on the plan's performance.

To deliver effective investor relations, Forward Macon will:

- Measure progress and regularly report results to the Forward Macon governing board, partners, investors, and key stakeholders.
- Solicit and respond to investor feedback.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for investor involvement.
- Provide an annual scorecard that shows the progress made toward achieving the goals outlined in the plan.



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MACON!**

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