**What is a Downtown Development Authority (DDA)?**

The DDA board is like a “Subject Matter Expert,” the subject is revitalization and redevelopment.

A member of a statutory DDA has to have (and maintain at all times) one of these qualifications:

1. City resident – tax payers
2. Resident of City’s County and own or operate a business in the downtown development area
3. Member of City’s governing body
4. Resident of Georgia and own a business in the downtown development area (only one member)
5. At least four of the directors in the above categories must have an economic interest in the redevelopment and revitalization in the downtown development area.
6. Directors serve for 4 years.

The Downtown Development Authorities Law of 1981 created “in and for each

municipal corporation in the State a public body corporate and politic to be known as the

Downtown Development Authority of such municipal corporation…” This law authorizes a

DDA in every city in Georgia. It eliminated the need for individual local legislation to

establish such authorities, which had previously been the case. These DDAs must be activated

by city government before they can function. This is done by first designating the downtown

area boundaries with the city; appointing the initial directors of the authority; creating a

resolution which also declares that there is a need for such an Authority; pass the resolution

and file copies of the resolution with the Secretary of State and the Georgia Department of

Community Affairs.

Directors appointed after January 1, 1992 are required to attend and complete at

least eight hours of training on downtown development and redevelopment programs.

Each authority can undertake commercial, business, office, industrial, parking, or

public projects where these will have a benefit for the downtown. (Certain public projects such

as the construction of government buildings and streets are not permissible DDA projects.)

A 1988 amendment added hospitals, skilled nursing homes, and intermediate care

homes where such facilities are operated on a not-for-profit basis.

There are three primary reasons why some city centers are thriving

* First, the cities, that had accomplished the most in their downtowns have been those with DDA’s.
* Secondly, through the DDA, a city can offer tax-exempt financing for commercial building and revitalization projects in the downtown area.
* Thirdly, the DDA acts as a hybrid agency – neither wholly a public agency nor wholly a private corporation – enacted by the municipal government. Its purpose is to enable the city to focus special talents and resources on downtown development and redevelopment projects. For example, the authority concentrates its efforts on downtown revitalization while city officials and civic organizations focus their efforts on a much broader range of concerns. The DDA is also better able to handle the long-term nature of downtown revitalization and can provide centralized leadership to the community, acting as a focal point through which citizens, business owners, property owners, public officials, developers, civic groups and others may communicate. And, it provides a mechanism for the public sector and the private sector to jointly pursue creation of economic development benefits: creation of new & better jobs, new investment, and an enhanced quality of life for local citizens.

The Bowersville Town Council has rather specific projects it would like the DDA to start working on: the Fleming/Cheek building and the new park addition. Although we do not advocate industry inside the city limits, we believe that it would be good to have some type of retail space in the buildings that are currently in town. We would love for Bowersville to prosper rather than die.

(Information taken from The DDA Manual and Downtown Development Authority Board Member BASIC Training)