

Final Report

Your Town Plains 2002



Your Town: Designing Its Future

Plains, Georgia • January 17-20, 2002



Final Report: Your Town/Plains

Plains High School (Visitor Center and Museum for the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site)

Plains, Georgia

January 17-20, 2002

Produced by the University of Georgia

School of Environmental Design

Workshop Coordinator: Pratt Cassity, Director

Public Service & Outreach

Introduction

This report summarizes and evaluates the preparation and presentation of the Your Town: Designing Its Future workshop in Plains, Georgia, January 17-20, 2002. The workshop was produced by the University of Georgia School of Environmental Design under contract with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Additional funds were provided by the Southern Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Georgia Humanities Council, and the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia.

The workshop was an overwhelming success. This report discusses the overall impression of the workshop and provides specific, constructive criticism in the interest of evaluating the project. The report addresses the following elements of the workshop production: Scheduling, Budgeting, Location and Facility, Participants Selection, Speakers, Faculty/ Group Leaders, Workshop Problems and Notebook, Graduation, Entertainment, Press Coverage, Workshop Evaluation Summary, Participant Evaluations and Recommendations.

Scheduling

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Planning for the workshop began in May, 2001 at a meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi between the National Trust, Mississippi State University, and the University of Georgia/ School of Environmental Design. The Following timetable outlines the planning process:

Task	To be Completed By:
1. Select Workshop Site.....	August 30
2. Develop workshop schedule based on the Your Town model.....	September 1
3. Develop list of potential Speakers.....	September 30
4. Invite Speakers.....	October 1-10
5. Develop list of potential Participants.....	October
6. Organize workshop logistics	November-December
7. Develop list of potential Group Leaders.....	November 1
8. Issue Participant applications.....	November 15
9. Order Workshop Supplies.....	January
10. Collect Speakers' material for notebook and revise notebook based..... on Your Town Manual	December
11. Participant application due.....	December 24
12. Selection of Participants.....	January 1
13. Participants invitations and workshop registration forms mailed.....	January 1
14. Notebook Submitted to Printers.....	January 1
15. Waiting List Participants contacted.....	January 3
16. Participant List sent to Plains.....	January 10
17. Participant groups determined and group names assigned.....	January 10
18. Registration packets and notebooks assembled.....	January 14-16
19. Hold workshop.....	January 17-20
20. Analyze evaluations and Prepare Final Report.....	January 24-31

Budget

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EXPENSES

PERSONNEL

	BUDGETED	ACTUAL
Workshop Coordinator- Two months salary -----	6,478.00	16,878.00
Two months benefits -----	2,137.00	
Donated staff time from SED -----	0	634.00

SPEAKERS' EXPENSES

Honoraria and Travel -----	3,000.00	3,755.00
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LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Van Rental -----	1,000.00	1,368.00
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LODGING

Windsor Hotel -----	3,000.00	4,790.00
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SUPPLIES/ WORKSHOP COSTS

Breaks -----	1,000.00	188.00
Misc -----		293.00
Workshop Notebooks -----		1,022.00

FACILITY RENTAL

-----	1,000.00	0
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FOOD

-----	1,385.00	0
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Total Expenses	\$19,000.00	\$ 29,481.00
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INCOME

National Trust for Historic Preservation- WDC (NEA)	18,000.00
National Trust for Historic Preservation- SRO (PSF)	1,000.00
Georgia Humanities Council	3,000.00
Alabama Black Heritage Council	2,000.00
SED Donated	5,481.00

TOTAL INCOME	\$29,481.00
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Location and Facility

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Rylander Theatre in Americus

Plains and Americus, Georgia were centrally located destinations for the participant pool. It was easily accessible by car from all directions via highway 280 and by air via the Columbus airport, located an hour's drive to the northwest.

Plains High School was an excellent location for the Your Town workshop. The rural setting and scenic qualities were appropriate for the subject matter of the workshop. Lodging separated from the workshop site provided the basis for solving one of the Your Town problems, a scenic corridor connecting Americus to Plains.

Separate breakout rooms for each group also contributed to the success of the workshop. However, two groups had to meet in less than ideal spaces-- the lecture hall and the hallway.

The workshop would have benefited from a larger main meeting room. Specifically, the meeting room was large enough to handle all the participants, but not the extra "onlookers."

The Your Town staff was successful in keeping things fresh and new throughout the workshop by rearranging the chairs and tables between sessions. Taking into account the type of lecture being presented, we recommended that this practice be continued in future Your Town workshops.

Prior to the workshop a few participants expressed some reservations about sharing a room with a participant they did not know. The Your Town staff accommodated the participant who requested single rooms (they were asked to pay for half the room, which they did without complaint). Participants stayed at the Windsor Hotel in Americus, where they were

won over by the magnificently restored Victorian era Hotel. The Windsor Hotel is a treasure with all the comforts of an urban location in the rural black belt of Georgia.

The availability of food and drink throughout the workshop was effective in making the participants comfortable. Every effort that was made to accommodate the participants' comfort worked out exceedingly well and greatly enhanced the professionalism and effectiveness of the workshop. The staff and volunteers in Plains and Americus deserve credit for their role in making this possible.

The workshop would have been much less spectacular if President Carter had not been involved. His contribution does not show up in the budget or notebook contents; however, it was his generous contribution of time, his written work, the leads he provided to obtain meals, and other expenses donated that gave the workshop its special appeal. Our gratitude is immense for what Georgia's Mr. Jimmy did to make the Plains Your Town so memorable.

Location and Facility/Dedication

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Your Town Plains could not have happened without the donation of the Plains High School for meeting space and generous technical assistance from Habitat for Humanity International, the City of Americus, the City of Plains, the Georgia Welcome Center in Plains, the Archery community, Lebanon Baptist Church, the National Park Service, Wyndham Castings in Plains, the Heroines of Jericho, the Freedom Singers from Albany, the singing sisters from Plains, the Department of Natural Resources - Historic Preservation Division, the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network, the Alabama Historical Commission and the Alabama Black Heritage Council, Mississippi State University, and Auburn University.

Special thanks go to Shelley Mastran, Shannon Criss and Mark Robbins for spiritual guidance and support along the way.

UGA's School of Environmental Design Public Service and Outreach staff performed all the tasks that go unseen at the workshop. Eleonora

Machado, Jane Link, Danny Bivins, Megan Bellue, Christine Laughlin, Kevin Chastine, Amy Moore and Anne Riley all worked beyond the call of duty to make Plains happen.

Dedication

Samuel Mockbee • December 23, 1944
December 30, 2001
The spirit and grace of one man at one point in time.

The Your Town Workshop: Plains, Georgia is dedicated to the memory of Samuel Mockbee.

Sambo was a friend of Your Town, a mentor for rural designers and a Southern saint. His creativity, dedication, insight and spunk are inspirational for all community improvement programs.

We know that his light has not been extinguished; it is being passed on again and again each semester in Hale County, Alabama. His students and colleagues are now his voice. His design is forever. A higher quality of life for all of us is what he left.



Mr. Mockbee once told his students, defining the purpose of the Rural Studio, that it was "about being decent and trying to provide a decent community for all its citizens," adding, "It's about being democratic."



Participant Selection

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Boys and Girls Club in Plains: Dinner Site for Craig Barton's Lecture

Potential participants were identified by contacting various historic preservation, Main Street, Certified Local Government, and African-American historic preservation organizations in the southeast. A pool of 200 potential participants received a Your Town application from our office. Out of these applicants, 34 were invited to attend and five were placed on a waiting list. Numerous factors went into the selection process, including experience level, profession or office held, geographic region, and gender.

Thirty-two of the selected applicants

accepted their invitation, two declined. Two were chosen from the waiting list and they accepted their invitations. However, two participants canceled the day before the workshop and two did not arrive. Alternates were not able to attend in their absence, thus the participants totaled 30. The extensive and thorough process in gathering nominations on the front end of the planning process was critical to ensuring the quality of the participants.

The six participants that declined their invitations listed a variety of reasons for not attending.

The participants were divided into four groups, each group was named for a rural subject: Farm, Home, Church, and School. The covers of the notebooks, compact disc, and the participants' name tags were color-coded to coincide with the color of their rural subject, and thus, team. For example, participants on the Farm team received nametags and notebooks with covers printed on green paper, the Church team received nametags and notebooks with covers printed on white paper, etc. These schemes were successful in organizing participants from the beginning of the workshop.

Another factor that contributed to the success of the workshop was the division of participants into their respective teams. With careful consideration given to profession or office held, geographic region, and gender of the participants, our staff was successful in creating balanced teams with diverse talents.



Participant List

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Participant Breakdown by State: Georgia-25, Alabama-5

Velmon Allen

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Participant List

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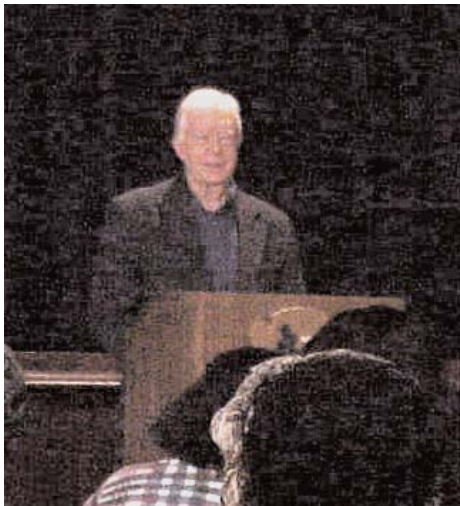


Participants Listening to Jorge Atilies' Lecture.



Speakers

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President Carter Addresses Your Town Participants

Speakers were selected based upon their professional expertise. Our office, advised by Sharon Criss and Shelley Mastran, compiled a list of at least three potential speakers for every speaking slot. Hence, if or when our first choice was unable to accept our invitation to lecture at the workshop, we were able to fill the speaking slot quickly with a highly qualified speaker. Also, the time period between when we began contacting potential speakers and the dates of the workshop (four months), provided us with more than enough time to compile a highly qualified group of speakers for the workshop.

Several of the speakers were paid honoraria and travel expenses. Many of the Georgia-based speakers waived their fees or covered their own expenses and all but the case study presenters were given the option of using the existing notebook material rather than creating their section anew. Comments on the speakers follow:

Speakers:

Jorge Atiles serves as the state contact for the Cooperative Extension, EPA, and HUD programs such as Healthy Indoor Air for America's Homes, Healthy Homes, and Healthy People-Healthy Communities. He presented economic solutions that are viable for affordable and workforce housing. His lecture was entertaining and well received by participants.

Craig Barton is an associate professor, urban designer and the Director of Programs in Urbanism at the University of Virginia. He utilized two slide carousels and screens to explain the importance of duality to define our memory and our future. As an evening speaker, after dinner and a long day, and at the Boys & Girls Club, Craig might have faced a difficult audience but that proved not to be a problem.

Jacqueline D. Bell attended public school in Monticello, and junior college in Atlanta. She is a city council person and consultant in Monticello, Georgia. Her presentation with Mayor Susan Holmes and Stone Workman was a HUGE crowd pleaser.

Fred Boyles is currently the Superintendent of the Andersonville and Jimmy Carter National Historic Sites near Americus, Georgia. He provided a good overview of Plains and the High School project.

Jimmy Carter, the 39th President and founder of the Carter Center gave an extremely moving talk on boyhood memories of growing up in rural Georgia to life as the president and after. President Carter emphasized the duality of Southern life for African Americans.

Jeanne Cyriaque is the African American Programs Coordinator for the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources. She served on the Getting Assistance Panel.

Speakers

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Kwesi DeGraft-Hanson is assistant professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Georgia School of Environmental Design. He delivered a lively and interactive lecture. He was successful in encouraging the participants to put pen to paper. He made them comfortable and unintimidated by graphic methods of communicating ideas.

Charlotte Frazier is currently the chair of GAAHPN's Chitlin Circuit project. She presented a hilarious account of the project. She is a political and civil rights activist in Columbia, Georgia.

Jack Hadley was instrumental in developing a Black Heritage Trail and a corresponding guidebook that covers thirty-eight sites of significance in Thomasville, Georgia's African-American history. His lengthy presentation on the 20th century plantation life was well received.

Susan Holmes is Mayor of the City of Monticello and serves as second vice-president of the Georgia Municipal Association. She is full of energy and wowed the crowd with talk and song.

John Jeffreys works for the University of Georgia J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership as a Leadership Development Associate. His lecture focused on understanding the role of leadership and the necessity of good leadership skills at the grassroots level.

Shelley Mastran is a preservation planning consultant. She is the former Director of the Rural Heritage Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, where she co-directed the Your Town: Designing Its Future program.

Milton Raven, Sr. was born in Sumter County, Georgia and graduated from Staley High School in Americus. He is currently the Director of Colam/Project SAVE INC. Job Training Center. He presented an overview of the Archery community and African American history in Sumter County.

Mark Robbins is the Director of the Design Arts Program at the National Endowment for the Arts. He presented a slide lecture during lunch with an overview of many NEA Design Arts initiatives.

Dennis K. Ruth is the Dean of the College of Architecture, Design, and Construction at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama and is co-director of the Rural Studio. D.K. Ruth was a substitute for the late Sam Mockbee. The entire workshop was dedicated to Sambo and his influence.

Kippy Tate is the Director of the Alabama Building Commission. His lecture broadly covered design quality, citizens participation and obtaining assistance. He is an architect and an active preservationists in Montgomery.

Linda Wilkes is the Manager of Training and Development Services at the Georgia Cities Foundation/Georgia Municipal Association. She served on the Getting Assistance Panel.

Stone Workman was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve as Georgia's State Director of Rural Development in the United States Department of Agriculture. He also has been a city council person, Economic Development Director, and preservation commissioner in Monticello, Georgia. He served on the Getting Assistance Panel and coordinated a skit and sing-along with the Monticello group.

Faculty/Group Leaders

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Jennifer Lewis, Better Home Town Design Specialist, directs her Farm Team



Nancy Tinker, Field Representative for the Southern Regional Office of the National Trust, directs the Home Team



Kwesi DeGraft-Hanson, University of Georgia Professor, directs his Church Team.



Shannon Criss, Architecture Professor at University of Kansas, directs her School Team

The four group leaders, Shannon Criss, Kwesi DeGraft-Hanson, Jennifer Martin Lewis, and Nancy Tinker, were excellent. Three of the four had experienced previous Your Town workshops. Their familiarity with the Your Town model contributed to their success. Each received positive and enthusiastic feedback from the participants.



Workshop Problems and Notebook

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Pratt Cassity at the Boys and Girls Club in Plains

Pratt Cassity, director of Public Service and Outreach at the School of Environmental Design, coordinated the workshop. Pratt made sure teams were moving along, logistics were okay, and a jovial atmosphere was maintained throughout the workshop.

Final editing of the notebook, maps, and creation of the four problems were his responsibility. Production was completed by his staff in Athens.

The Notebook

Each participant's notebook contained a compact disk, personalized notepads, and a welcome card. The invited speakers, other than the case study panelists, were given the option of simply adapting their notebook sections from previous Your Town notebooks, rather than writing new material.

Several sections of the notebook were reworked. The Graphics, Mapping & Communicating Design section was a synthesis of the best aspects of that section from past Your Town workshops. The Cultural Resources and Community Design section was updated and streamlined. The Suggested Readings list at the end of each section in the notebook was updated to reflect new publications and more recent copyright dates. Also, the Resource Guide was updated to reflect new zip codes, phone numbers, new programs, etc. Many selections were pertinent to the Plains Your Town lectures: African-American Cultural Tourism, Scenic By-Ways, Environmental Justice, Leadership, and Community Organizing. These sections came from a variety of sources and/or at the speakers suggestion.

Graduation

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Pratt Cassity and Shelly Mastran congratulate Mrs. Jack Hadley and award certificates during the graduation dinner.

An amazing barbeque dinner was served at the Wyndam Castings showroom in downtown Plains. The President and Mrs. Carter made an appearance. After dinner, graduation certificates and fried Carter Peanuts were handed out to all the participants. The evening ended with a surprise song from Veronica Haire, a participant that is a member of "The Swamp Gravy" cast from Colquitt, GA.





The Albany Civil Rights Movement Museum Freedom Singers

The spirit of the Civil Rights Movement came alive through the Albany Civil Rights Freedom Singers, at the Rylander Theatre in Americus. Directed by Miss Rutha Harris, the Singers continue the tradition of freedom songs from the African American struggle for freedom and equality. The Singers have appeared at many events both in the Southwest Georgia area and nationally.

Miss Harris was one of the original Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Freedom Singers that formed in 1962 in Albany, Georgia. The SNCC Freedom Singers traveled the country singing freedom songs to raise money for SNCC and to raise awareness about what was happening in the South.

Today, the Museum Freedom Singers provide a living history lesson through song, educating a new generation about segregation and the fight for equality with songs such as "I Woke Up This Morning With My Mind On Freedom," "If You Miss Me From the Back of the Bus," and "You Better Leave Segregation Alone."

Press Coverage

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Plains workshop puts spotlight on African-American community issues

By LISA LAW
lisa.law@gafnews.com

PLAINS— Inside the historic Plains High School Friday, former President Jimmy Carter mesmerized the audience with stories of his childhood in the Archery community. "I grew up in the isolated neighborhood of Archery; all my playmates were African-American."

According to Carter, often his father would be busy in the fields, his mother would be busy with her nursing and he would stay with his friend Rachael Clark. "Rachael would make a palette on the floor made with corn shucks and she would let me move over close to the fire," said Carter.

Along with warm memories, there were cold and bitter memories Carter spoke of a time when a friend of his wished to vote.

people of Plains. Black and white work together, side by side with respect."

Carter said many improvements have been made in Plains with the new Boys and Girls club, a new restaurant "Mom's Kitchen" and new industry, Windham Castings. He said the new program, "Georgia Your Home Town," is a public service and outreach administered through the University of Georgia that will increase the awareness of historic preservation and heritage of rural communities.

"Plains is a good town. We have a fairly good relationship among the people of Plains. Black and white work together, side by side with respect."

Jimmy Carter
Former U.S. President

This friend went to the county seat of Webster to vote. During this time blacks were asked 30 questions before they were allowed to vote. His friend returned to Carter informing him of the questions asked. "They were asked questions such as the names of all the members of the Superior Court and what is the meaning of habeas corpus. I couldn't answer these questions and most of the lawyers in

This program brings community design education to decision makers from rural communities. "This workshop will focus on African-American community issues" said Penny Smith, manager of Plains Visitor Center.

The workshop is a three-day "crash course." During the workshop, lectured topics will be discussed and pondered such as case studies on African-American issues and resources, presentations on the politics of African American historic preservation efforts,

Sumter County couldn't," Carter said. His friend returned to tell him of his second attempt to vote in which he was showed a .45-caliber (gun) and told, "Nigger, you better think twice before you come back to vote."

His friend was told by Carter to return and he would go along with him if he needed him to go. "Tell them you have talked to me and tell them you have the legal right to vote," Carter told him. Tenaciously his friend returned to vote. "He was the first black voter to vote in Webster County," Carter said. It was during these years of injustice that shaped Carter's desire to make a difference in the nation and across the world.

Carter said, "Plains is a good town. We have a fairly good relationship among the

Please see **WORKSHOP** on Page 3A

housing in the Southeastern "Black Belt," preservation of African American cultural resources in the entertainment world of Georgia's documented "Chitlin Circuit," work done in historical black communities of the Mississippi Delta and retaining the historic character of traditional African American neighborhoods. The workshop is held in three locations, the Old Plains High School, Jimmy Carter National Historic Site the Windsor Hotel in Americus and the Rylander Theatre.

Evaluation Summary

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- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1. <i>Which workshop session was most helpful/informative for you?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing - 4 Leadership - 3 Advocacy for African American Resources - 2 Jimmy Carter - 1 Rural Studio Presentation - 1 John Jeffreys - 1 Group session and site visit - 1 Kippy Tate, John Jeffreys, Craig Barton - 1 | <p>5. <i>Was the workshop successful for you?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - 23 No - 0 <p>6. <i>What aspects made the workshop successful or unsuccessful for you?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speakers - 20 Content - 18 Format - 13 Setting - 12 Participants - 10 | <p>10. <i>Would you encourage others to attend a Your Town workshop?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - 23 No - 0 |
| <p>2. <i>Which session was least helpful or informative?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kippy Tate - 3 Individual workshop project was too rushed - 1 Housing - 1 Craig Barton on available resources - 1 | <p>7. <i>Did the workshop cover the material you expected to hear?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - 23 No - 0 | <p>11. <i>How would you rate the facilities chosen for this workshop?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old Plains School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent - 14 Good - 8 Fair - 2 Break-Our Rooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent - 9 Good - 11 Fair - 4 Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent - 12 Good - 9 Fair - 1 Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent - 15 Good - 9 Fair - 0 Meals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent - 12 Good - 11 Fair - 1 Breaks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent - 7 Good - 9 Fair - 6 Poor - 1 Accommodations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent - 19 Good - 3 Fair - 1 |
| <p>3. <i>Whether helpful or not, which session was the most enjoyable?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing - 3 Unity in the Community - 2 Design problems - 2 Monticello - 2 Group session - Hands on - 1 Jack Hadley's - 1 African American historic sites - 1 Leadership - 1 John Jeffreys - 1 Craig Barton - 1 Jimmy Carter - 1 | <p>8. <i>Please comment on the Your Town notebook. Will it serve as a reference for you?</i></p> <p>Great reference tool; try to make the notebook smaller; yes, reference; yes, reference; excellent content; very useful; useful; print on both sides to reduce size; glad to have information in writing; will help in developing tourism; yes, reference; yes, reference; informative and well organized; yes, reference; invaluable resource; yes, but too large and detailed; will be a great help; useful points of reference and contacts; handbook is great; very much; yes, very informative; yes, reference; well put together, top notch; yes, lots of information.</p> | |
| <p>4. <i>Which was the least enjoyable?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kippy Tate - 1 Housing - 1 Length of days and limited breaks - 1 | <p>9. <i>Would you pay to attend a Your Town workshop?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes - 20 No - 3 | |

Participant Evaluations and Recommendations

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Comments

"All the workshops were GREAT!"

"The Your Town conference provides many helpful points of reference as well as contacts and referrals."

"Well Organized."

"The group sessions and site visits were the most helpful."

"Enjoyed every session!!"

"The Your Town notebook is a wonderful reference tool."

"Great Workshop."

"Every speaker served to further educate me."

"I would highly recommend the Your Town workshop to my friends."

"I would pay more than \$200.00 out of my own pocket to attend this conference."

Recommendations

- Provide a tote bag for participants.
- Keep speakers to their allotted amount of speaking time.
- Provide a variety of meal options.
- Allow for more time for the participants to mingle.