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Georgia Town Poised to Become Green Trailblazer

Architecture

Town Planning

Residential Design

New Urbanism

Green Building

Ball Ground, GA: The picturesque and historic mountain town of Ball Ground is poised to become the first in the state of Georgia and one of the first in the U.S. to implement a system of Green Streets. The town is already famous as the site where the struggle for territory in the 1700s between Cherokee Indians and their Creek rivals was determined by a game of stickball, a sport not dissimilar to lacrosse.

On August 13-15, the City of Ball Ground, under the direction of Mayor Rick Roberts, hosted an intensive three-day charrette at the Public Library, where governmental leaders, stakeholders, and citizens as well as land planners, designers, and landscapers tackled some of the major challenges and opportunities facing the town. Headed by Lew Oliver, founder and CEO of Whole Town Solutions, the charrette focused on revitalizing Ball Ground's downtown with new restaurants and stronger amenities without destroying its historic character, diverting heavy truck traffic from the center of the town to the periphery, and connecting the entirety of the community to the school and park system with pedestrian paths, bike trails, and Green Streets.

Inspired by the writings of Christopher Alexander, Oliver has come up with a version of Green Streets that connects town centers, amenity areas, and parks and, in addition, enables and facilitates zero-emission transportation with a supporting infrastructure. The twelve-foot-wide green routes are designed especially with electric carts, scooters, bicycles, and pedestrians in mind. Owners of such vehicles are given special privileges such as right-of-way as well as preferential parking in commercial nodes. In addition, the award-winning designer has designed special houses to front the Green Streets, which feature conveniently located garages that are smaller than conventional models and more smoothly integrated with the rest of the house.

The designer is based in Roswell, Georgia, and grew up in the historic towns of southern Georgia and northern Florida. His work has won numerous national and international awards, including Designer of the New American Home for the National Association of Homebuilders, Designer of the Southern Accents Show House, and, most recently, three Best in American Living (BALA) Awards. His design for the Grand Bohemian won Westin's Best in Brand worldwide for five consecutive years, while the Mansion, another of his designs, is a five-

diamond hotel. For the past several years, his work has swept the gold and silver awards at the Professionalism Awards of the Atlanta Homebuilders Association, with one of the towns where he is Town Architect winning, in addition, Community of the Year. His work can be found in award-winning New Urbanist projects across the U.S., including Rosemary Beach, Celebration, Vickery, Lost Rabbit, and I'on. His latest projects are in Tornagrain, Scotland and Arcos de la Frontera, Spain.