



# Savannah Canal District

## Master Plan Update

April 23, 2020

# **A Master Plan is a**

Blueprint for the future that is  
aspiration and achievable.

Comprehensive,  
far-reaching plan of action.

# Documents

The Canal District Master Plan consists of two critical documents that should guide the future of the area.



## 01 The Master Plan

A document that focuses on the process, vision, and design recommendations for the Canal District



## 02 The Action Playbook

A document that focuses on the actions needed to implement the Master Plan in an equitable and inclusive way



# **Proposed Vision**

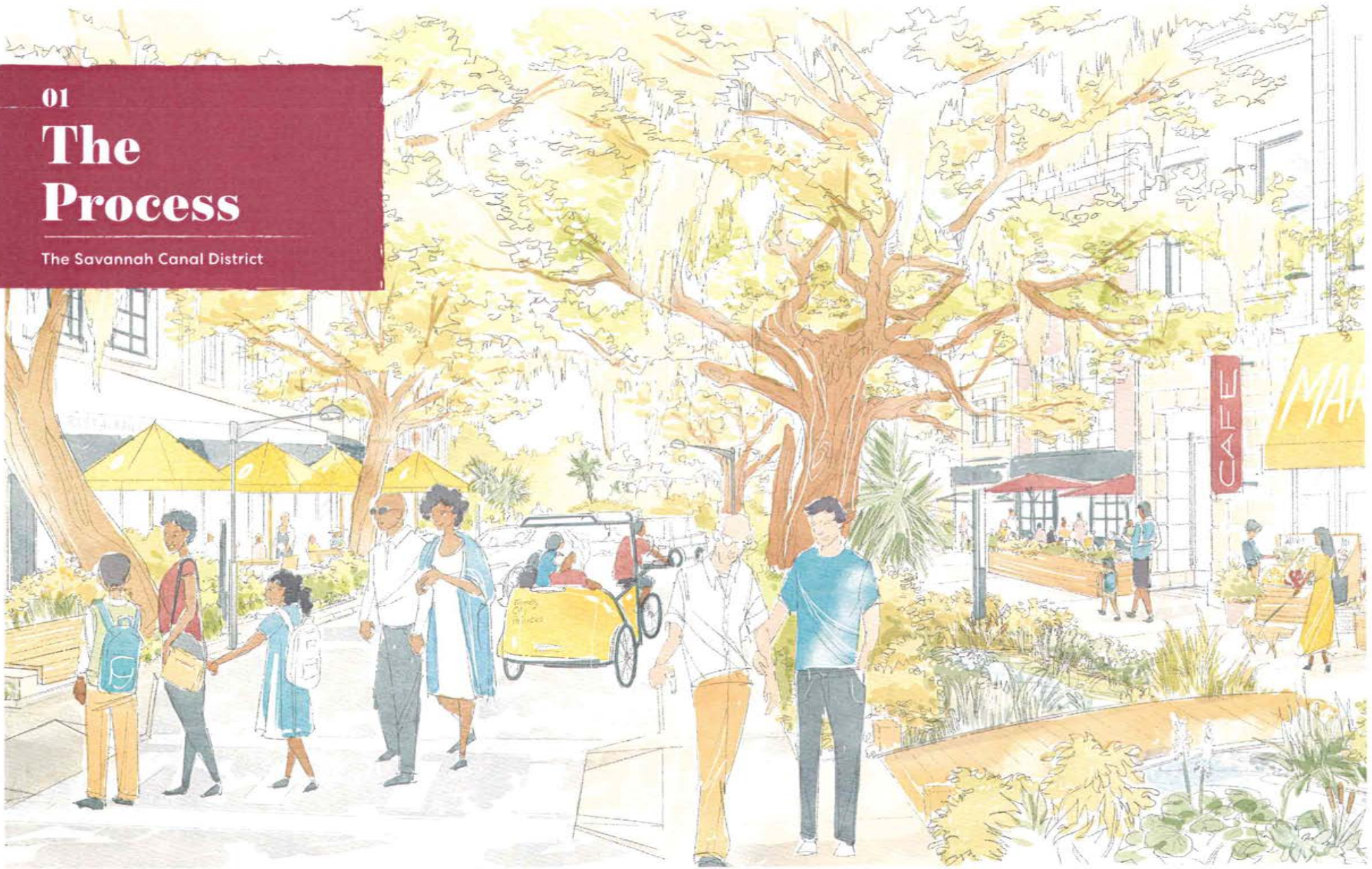
**The Canal District is new common ground in Savannah.  
It protects historic communities, rebuilds nature,  
elevates civic life, and allows the City to grow.**

**The Master Plan seeks to coordinate actions and  
communication into a shared perspective, empowering  
Savannah residents and leadership to work together  
to develop resilient places and a stronger City.**

01

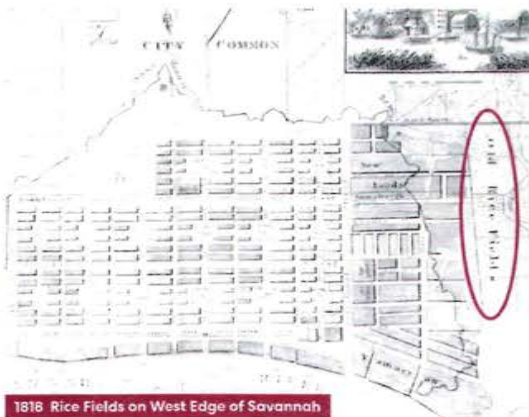
# The Process

The Savannah Canal District



# Built on History

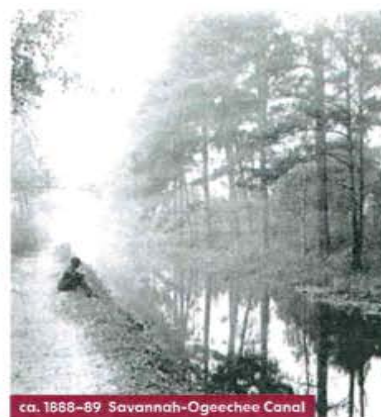
The Canal District Master Plan highlights and celebrates the many narratives running through the site.



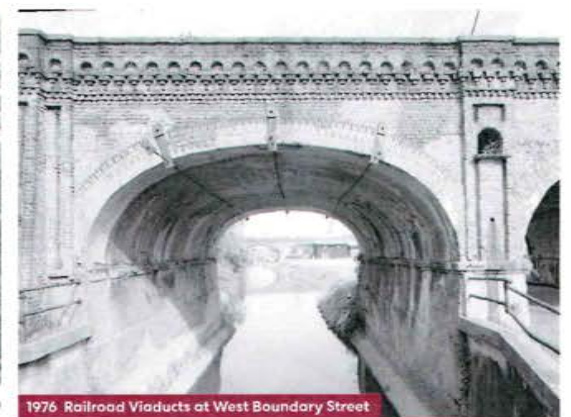
1816 Rice Fields on West Edge of Savannah



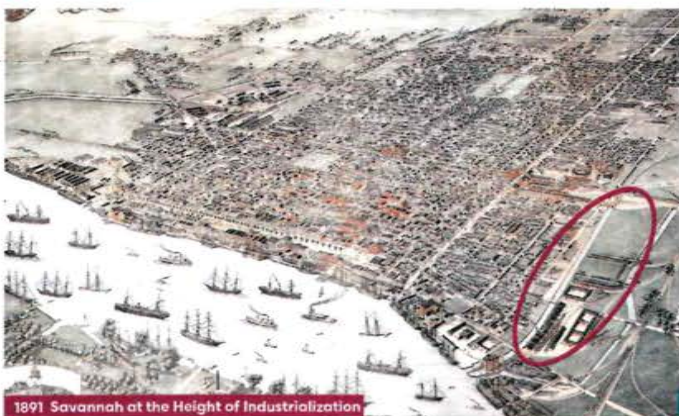
1876 Central Rail Road, Springfield Canal and Plantation



ca. 1888-89 Savannah-Ogeechee Canal



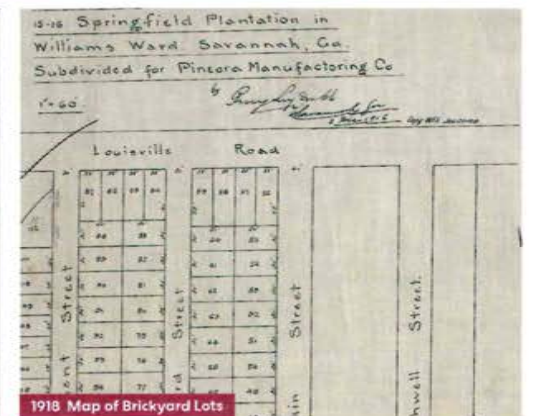
1976 Railroad Viaducts at West Boundary Street



1891 Savannah at the Height of Industrialization



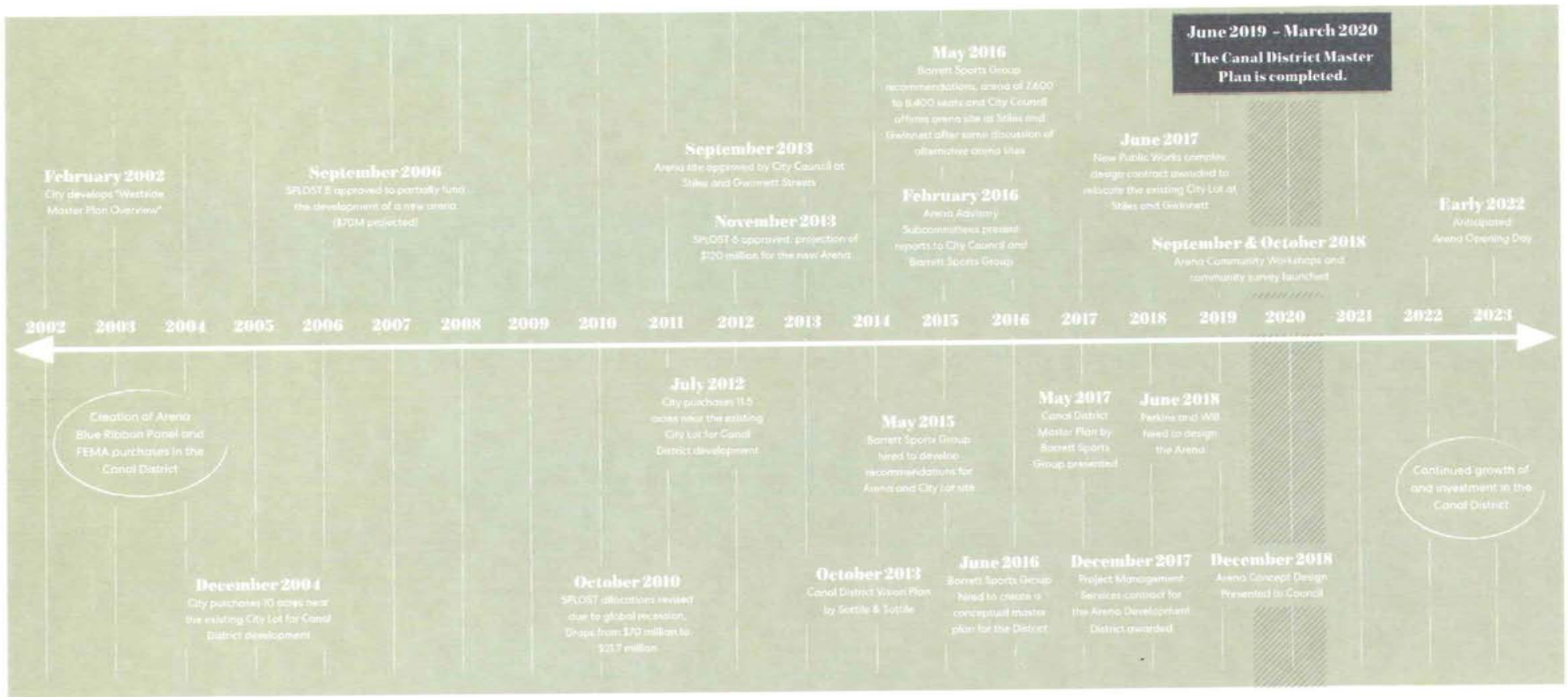
1949 Still from Promotional Short for Carver Village



1918 Map of Brickyard Lots

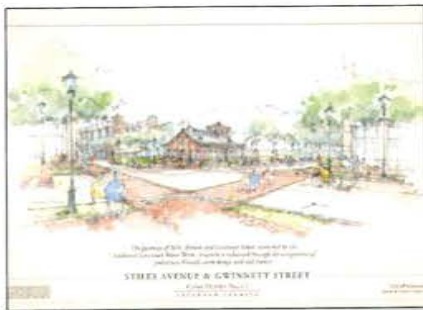
# Built on Previous Work

The Canal District Master Plan captures the decades of planning work that have been put into the Arena and the site.



# Built on Previous Plans

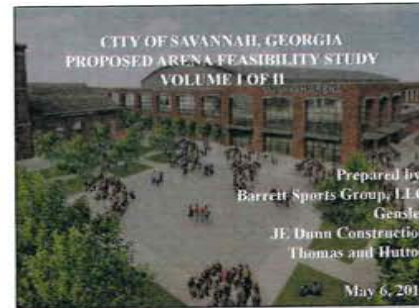
The Canal District Master Plan aligns with ongoing planning efforts to connect the District to the region.



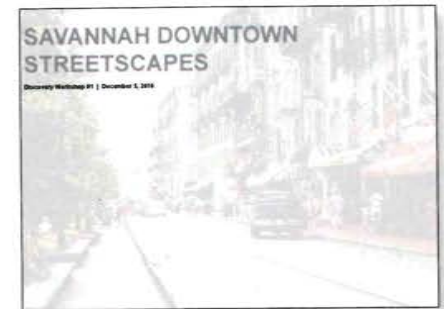
Canal District Vision Plan, 2013



Savannah Arena Subcommittee Reports, 2015



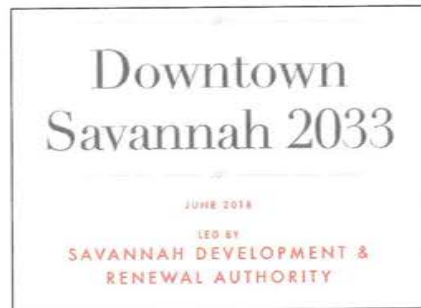
Savannah Arena Feasibility Study, 2016



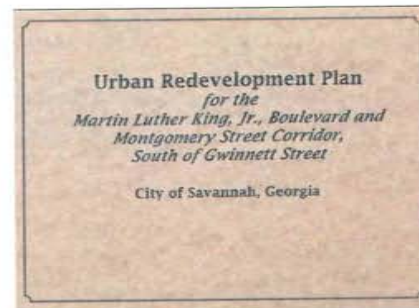
Downtown Streetscape Plan, 2016



Downtown Savannah Master Plan, 2011



Downtown Savannah Master Plan 2033, 2018



MLK-Montgomery Street Redevelopment Plan, 2001



Reclaiming Old West Broad Street with the Removal of the I-16 Flyover, 2015

## **Built on Recent Initiatives**

The Canal District Master Plan incorporates the City of Savannah's existing commitments for this area of town.

Coordination with local economic development organizations on business-retention programs for existing local businesses

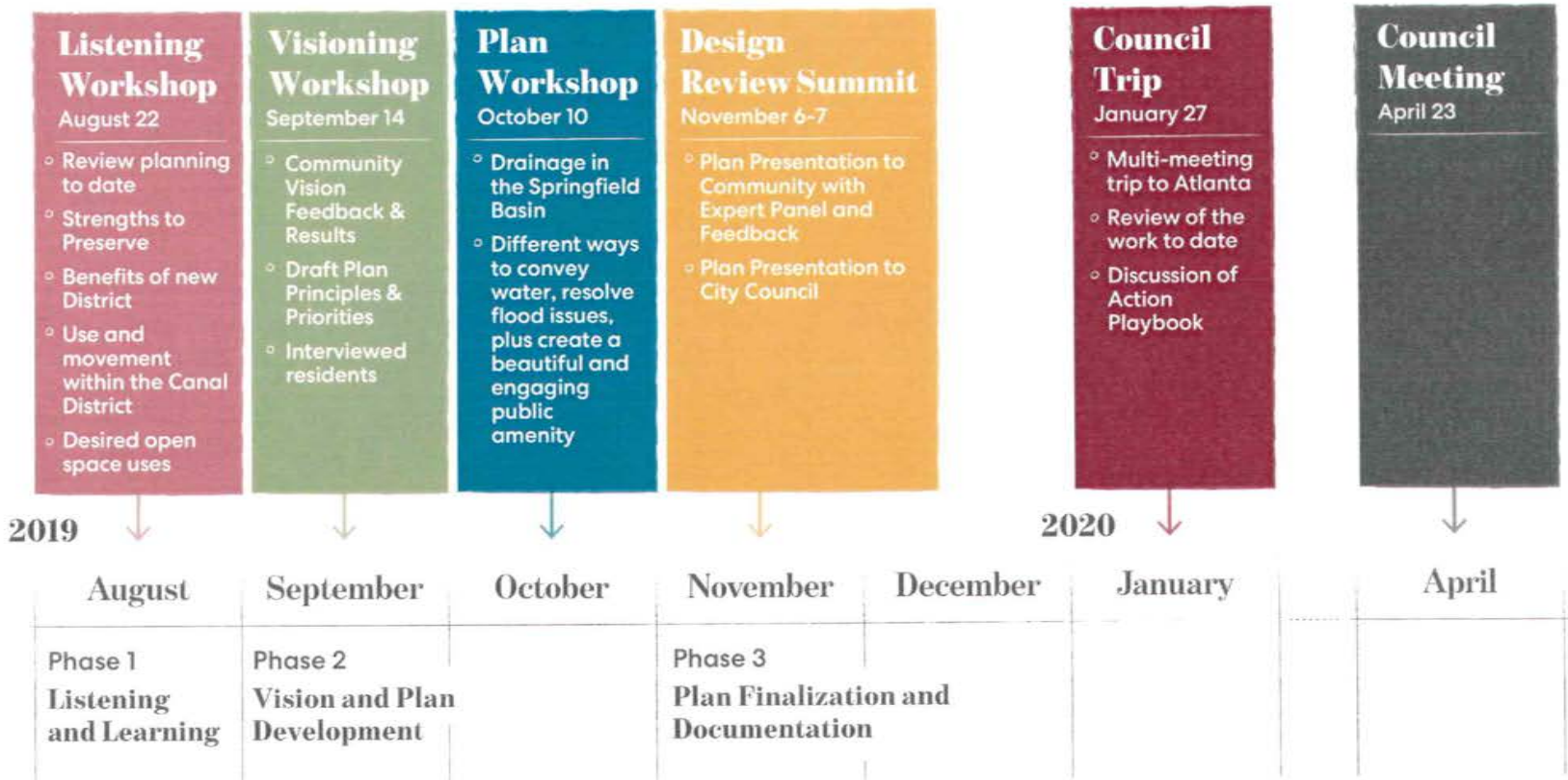
Development and construction of Tide to Town to enhance bike and pedestrian connectivity

Collaboration with neighborhood residents, artists and local historians to develop strategies for reflecting local history in new development as well as public art

Initiatives to promote health and community through the development of local food systems

# Built on Community Input

The Canal District Master Plan solicited the opinions of community members and leaders in a number of different ways.



# Built on Community Input

The Canal District Master Plan conveys the goals and priorities of the adjacent neighborhoods and greater Savannah.

A space where the community has the opportunity to be active and get out and walk in a more beautiful environment.

- Resident, Savannah

I would like to maintain that community spirit—the one that's already been there....I'd like to see that area not compete with other districts that are currently being redeveloped right now.

- Resident, Savannah

Inclusion, economic development for all, job creation. When I think about the Canal District, I also think about expanding the money that is being concentrated there, to my district.

- City Council, Savannah

This is a much bigger project than I realized.

- Resident, Kensington Park

Sometimes I feel like it really doesn't matter what I think about it cause I feel like they gonna do what they wanna do anyway.

- Resident, Springfield Terrace

Creating something other than just the Historic District... there's so much opportunity for active recreation with the park system above the railroad tracks and then a connection hopefully into some historically African-American neighborhoods that...have seen a barrier build over time...so building some continuity...and connection.

- Resident, Ardley Park

I think it needs to have some supporting interests too that are not just getting tourists in the area but actually getting people who live in the landmark district...to come to the Canal District and interact more and really link that area with the rest of the community.

- Resident, Savannah

It's important to bring communities together and have things available for them—not just for tourism, but also for them to enjoy without having to drive out of town four hours to enjoy certain events.

- Resident, Pooler

Those who will be coming from out of town, who will be coming from other counties, maybe they can find a way there could be a halfway point to minimize some of those traffic concerns.

- Former Resident, Cloverdale

Leafy vegetation, trees, kind of like little parks and... canals along them, linking different urban areas together so that you can bike or walk down them and then maybe sit down and have a picnic.

- Resident, Savannah

**The gathering place.**

- Childhood Resident

If this project is done right—if it's done correctly—it could make Savannah be a world-class city. If it's done wrong, you're gonna have more crime. You're gonna have more depressed people. And you're gonna have deeper depression in these already depressed neighborhoods.

- Resident, West Savannah

I just want to make sure there's a community-benefits agreement in place, that we protect the people who live there, protect the businesses, protect the churches. And we can have a free-flowing walkway, waterway, and a good box in place so that we can drain the water off, so it's a win-win for everybody: the City, the community, and people ten years down the road.

- Candidate, Savannah

I would like to see vehicles excluded except for possibly bicycles and have it just open for people to come down to relax in.

- Resident, Ardley Park

**Expansive property with lots of opportunity.**

- City Official, Savannah

I don't know if it'd be big enough, if the water channel would be able to connect to the Savannah River and have small boats come up it?

- Resident, Savannah

We moved into Carver Village in 1955, so we've been in it and we're still there...even though we remodeled it and everything. But drainage is still an issue for us....It's only improved slightly.

- Resident, Carver Village

A blank slate that offers us an opportunity to re-create an entirely new neighborhood and a second downtown to Savannah.

- Resident, Downtown Savannah

I look forward to the time when we can all congregate in that one location with a large crowd and get the energy going that I think is gonna be there.

- City Official, Savannah

An opportunity to...make something happen on an open canvas with community feedback and input in order to ensure we're capturing what the future of Savannah should look like in that area.

- City Official, Savannah

# Built on Community Input

The Canal District Master Plan translates community feedback into Master Plan direction and policy strategies.

## The Community

Cultural Heritage  
Neighborhood Fabric  
Historic Features  
Homes and Jobs  
Natural Environment  
Built Environment  
Community  
Entertainment  
Economic Mobility  
Well-Being  
Connection and Movement

## The District

Be Family-Friendly  
Foster Community  
Be a Place to Relax  
Be for Daily Use  
Be a Platform for Culture  
Be a Recreation Hub  
Engage with Nature  
Be an Entertainment  
District  
Be Active at All Times  
Changes with the Seasons

## Connectivity

A Connected Place  
Within Reach  
Walkable  
Bikeable  
Transit Rich  
Car Independent  
Traffic Sensitive

## Open Spaces

Water and Flooding  
Environmental Quality  
Community Impact  
Historical Assets  
Buffers and Transitions  
Adjacencies  
Connectivity  
Parks and Open Space

# Built to Address Obstacles

The Canal District Master Plan recognizes the division created by infrastructure and circulation systems for these residents.

## Informal Growth and Hidden History

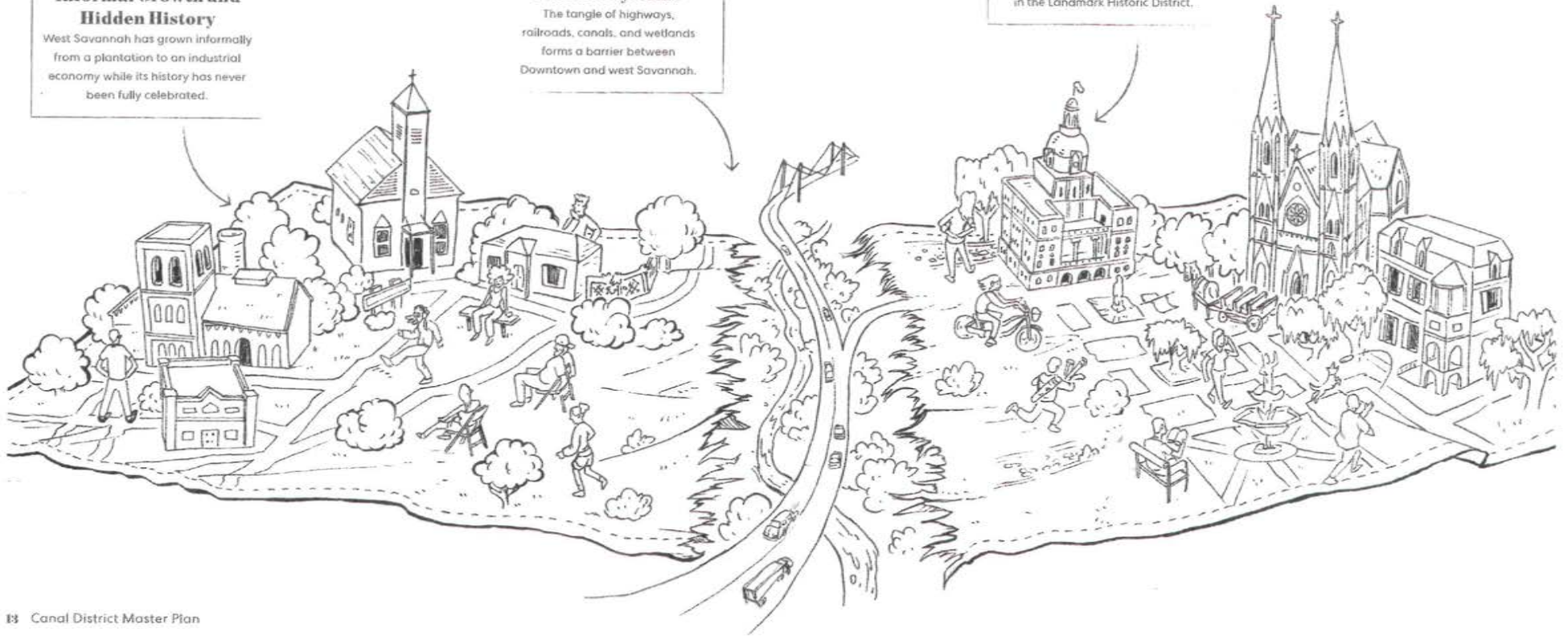
West Savannah has grown informally from a plantation to an industrial economy while its history has never been fully celebrated.

## Infrastructure and Natural Systems

The tangle of highways, railroads, canals, and wetlands forms a barrier between Downtown and west Savannah.

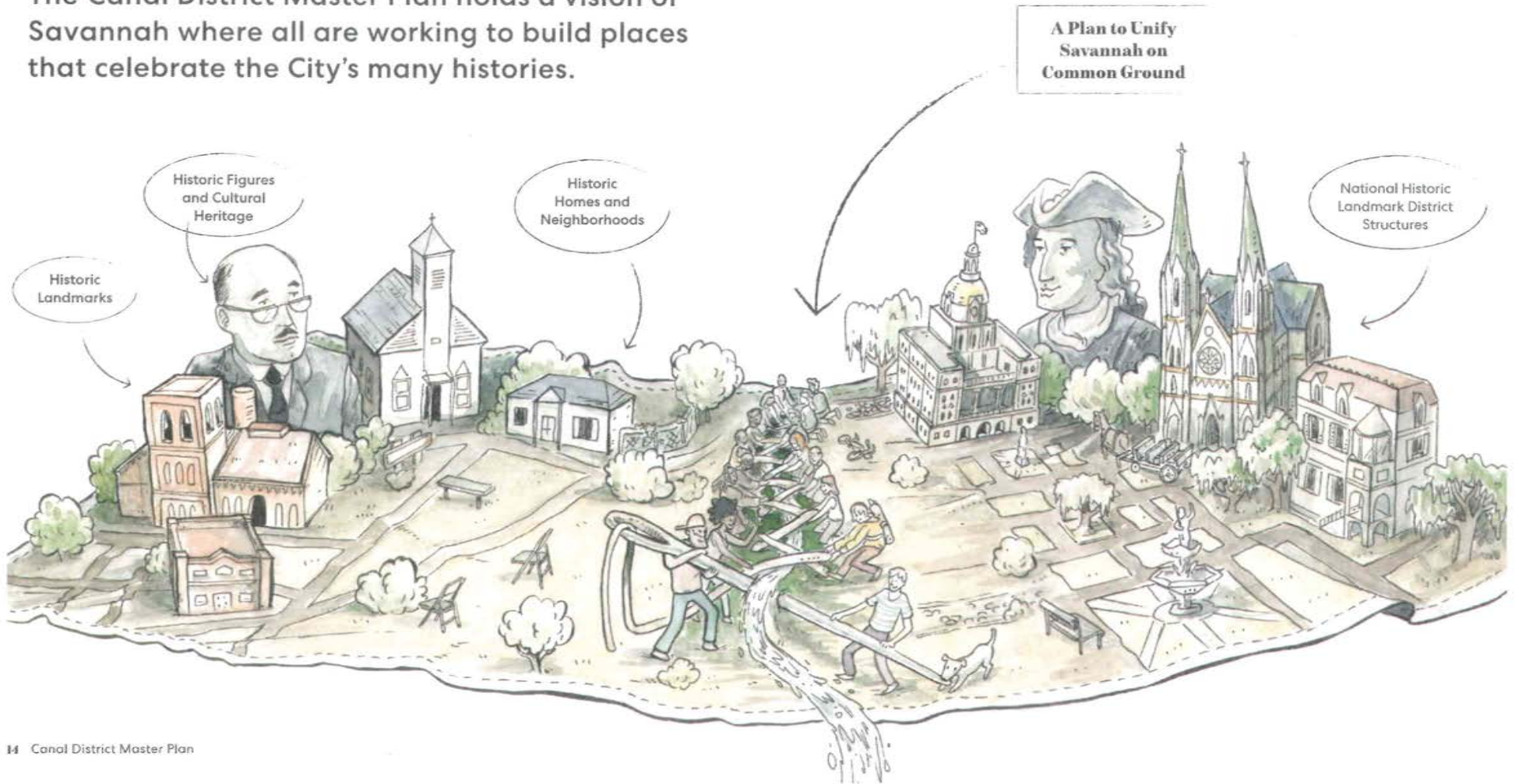
## Organized Growth and Public History

Savannah's public face is its celebrated system of civic squares and residential blocks in the Landmark Historic District.



# Built upon a Singular Vision

The Canal District Master Plan holds a vision of Savannah where all are working to build places that celebrate the City's many histories.



# Built Around Two Geographies

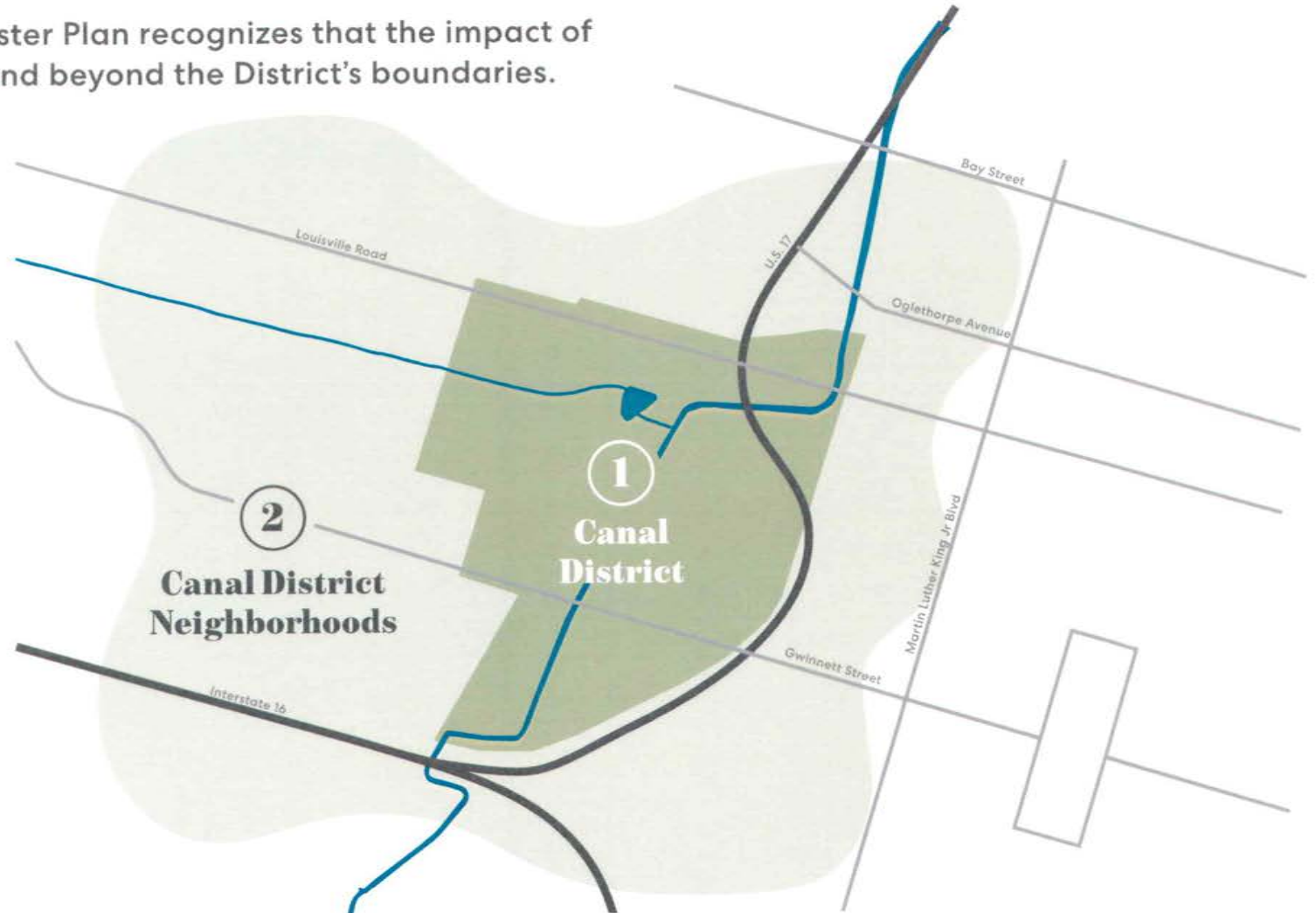
The Canal District Master Plan recognizes that the impact of future action will extend beyond the District's boundaries.

1

**A Master Plan for the Canal District**

2

**A Set of Policies and Actions for the Canal District Neighborhoods**



# Composed of 2 Documents

The Canal District Master Plan consists of two critical documents that should guide the future of the area.



## 01 The Master Plan

A document that focuses on the process, vision, and design recommendations for the Canal District



## 02 The Action Playbook

A document that focuses on the actions needed to implement the Master Plan in an equitable and inclusive way

02

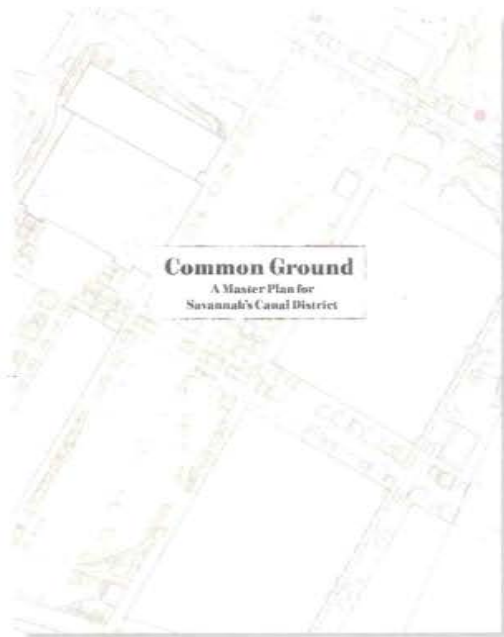
# The Master Plan

The Savannah Canal District



# Document Structure

The Canal District Master Plan conveys the physical site plan and the thoughtful rationale embedded within it.



## Introduction

- History of the Place
- The Master Plan Process

## The Master Plan

- Physical Plan
- Places that:
  - Protect Communities
  - Rebuild Nature and Elevate Civic Life
  - Grow the City

## Embedded Strategies

- Mobility
- Public Space
- Development
- Three-Year Arena Area Plan

# Provides Great Places

The Canal District Master Plan develops resilient places where people and nature thrive and the City can grow.

The Master Plan fosters places that:

01

**Protect Communities**

02

**Rebuild Nature,  
Elevate Civic Life**

03

**Grow the City**



# Protects Communities

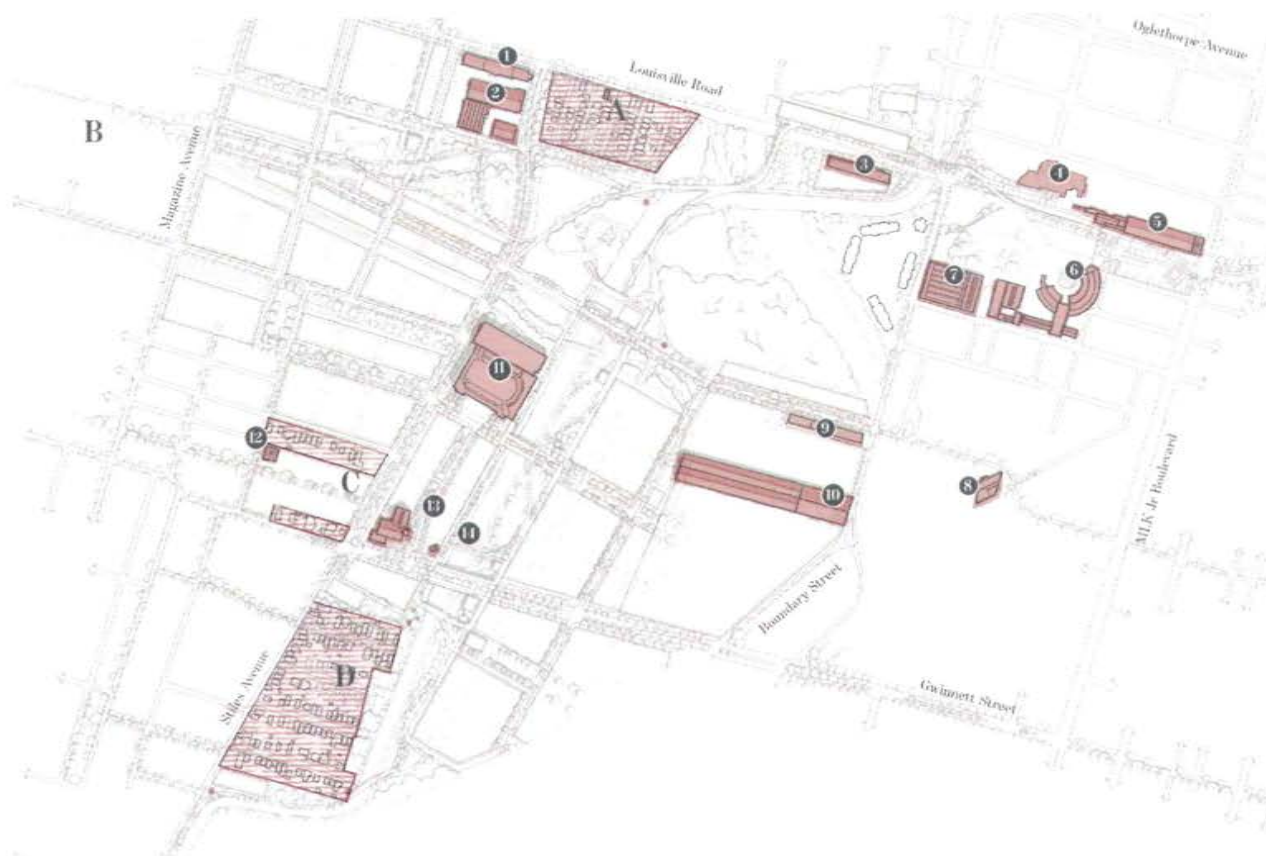
The Canal District Master Plan preserves historic features as pillars of social life along the Canal.

## Neighborhood Pockets

- A. Brickyard
- B. Collat's Quarters
- C. Springfield Terrace
- D. Waterworks

## Characteristic Structures

- 1. Louisville Trading Company
- 2. Industrial Buildings
- 3. 1929 Seaboard Freight Station
- 4. Coastal Georgia Center
- 5. Savannah Visitor Center
- 6. Georgia State Railroad Museum
- 7. Savannah Children's Museum
- 8. Savannah Station
- 9. 415 West Boundary Street
- 10. Chatham Steel
- 11. Savannah Arena
- 12. Pearl Smith School
- 13. Water Works Building
- 14. Water Works Pump House

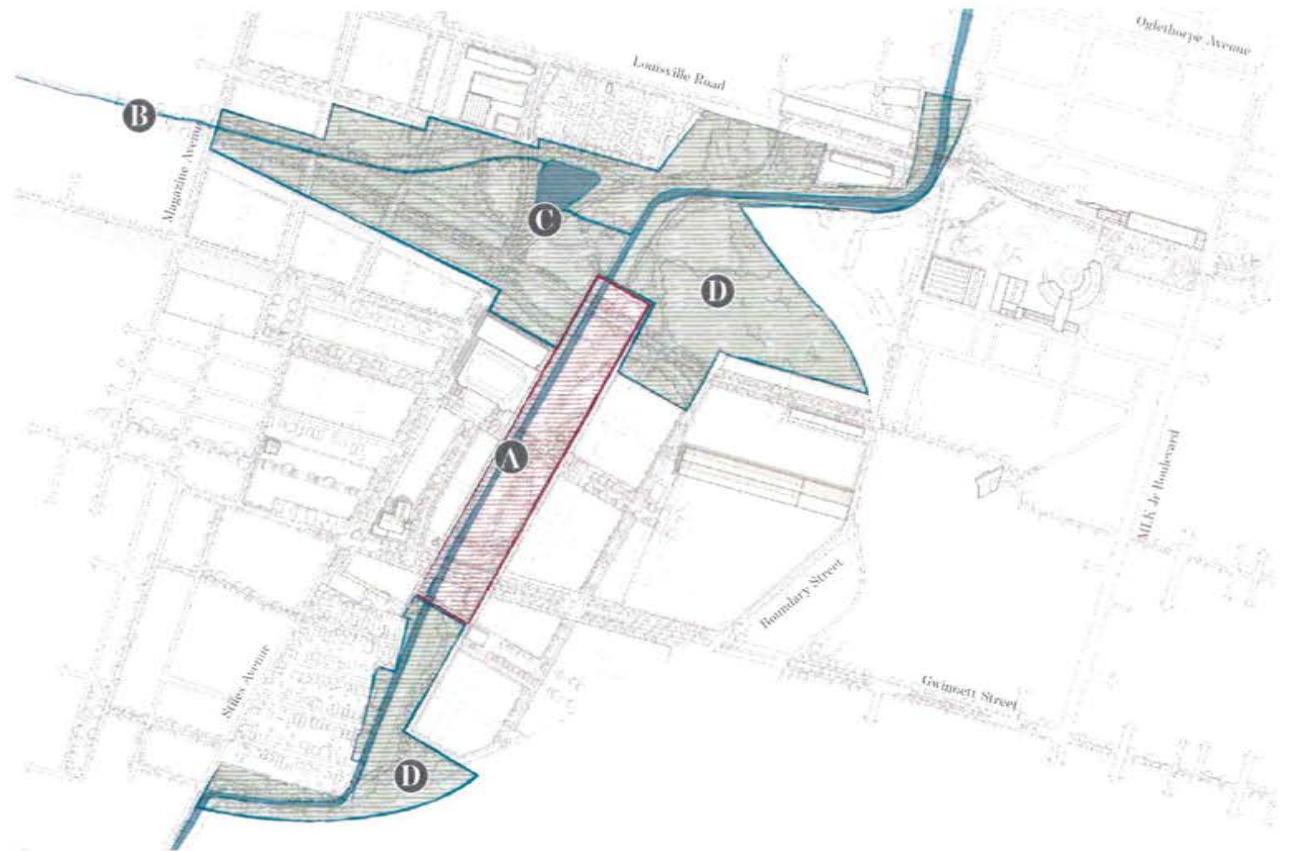


# Rebuilds Nature and Elevates Civic Life

The Canal District Master Plan returns the Springfield Basin's wetlands and canals to being a source of strength for the City and its activities.

## Ecological Anchors

- A. Springfield Canal
- B. Savannah-Ogeechee Canal
- C. Retention Pond
- D. Native Wetlands



# Grows the City

The Canal District Master Plan fills out reclaimed spaces with sustainable development organized around civic amenities.

## New Civic Space

- A. City Lot
- B. Canal Park
- C. Wetland Preserve Park

## Places to Grow

-  City-Owned Lots
-  Intentional Growth

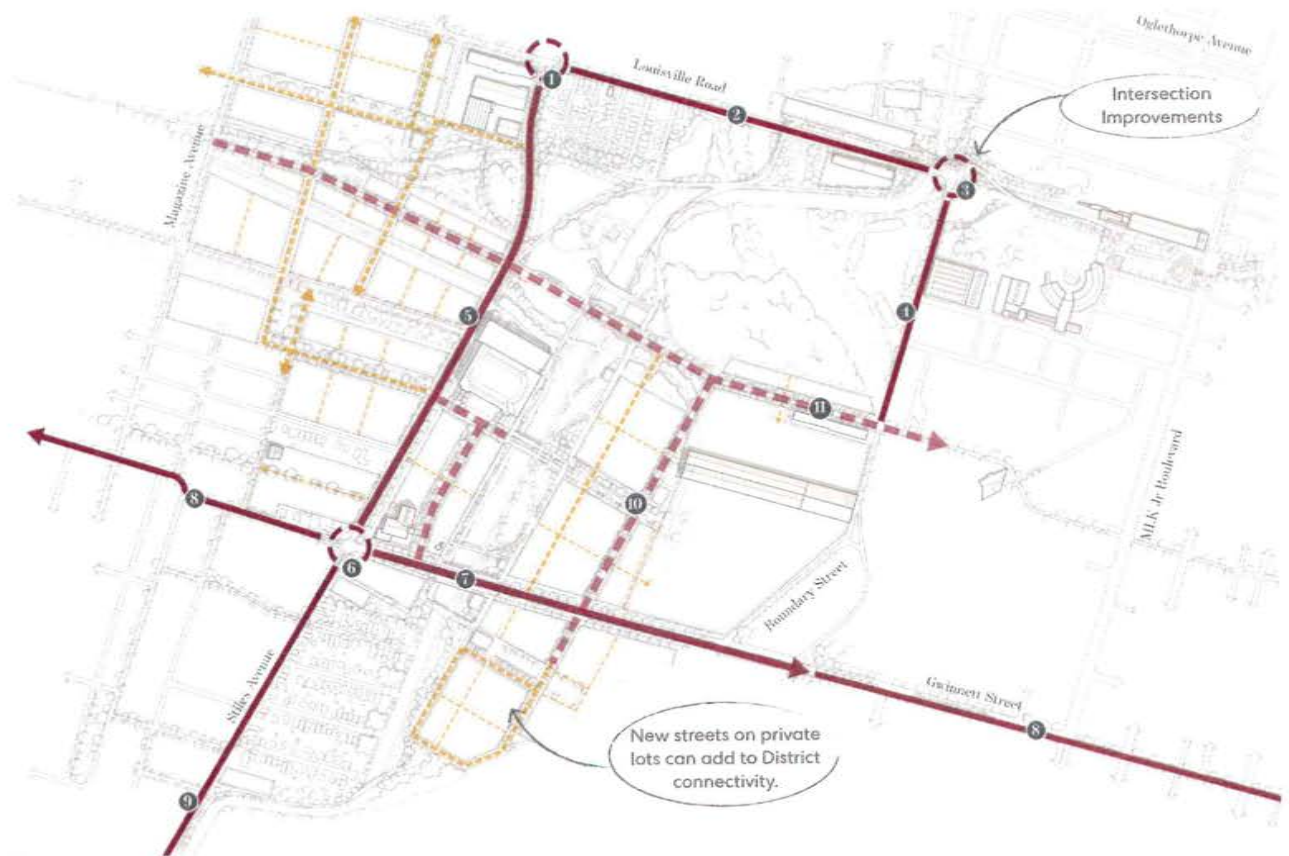


# Connects People

The Canal District Master Plan enhances and expands the City's famed street network, broadening opportunity for all.

## Planned Street Improvements

1. Stiles/Louisville Intersection
2. Louisville Streetscape
3. Louisville Boundary Intersection
4. Boundary Streetscape
5. Stiles Widening
6. Gwinnett/Stiles Intersection
7. Gwinnett Widening
8. Gwinnett Streetscape
9. Stiles Streetscape
10. Cohen to Gwinnett Connection
11. Cohen Extension to Magazine

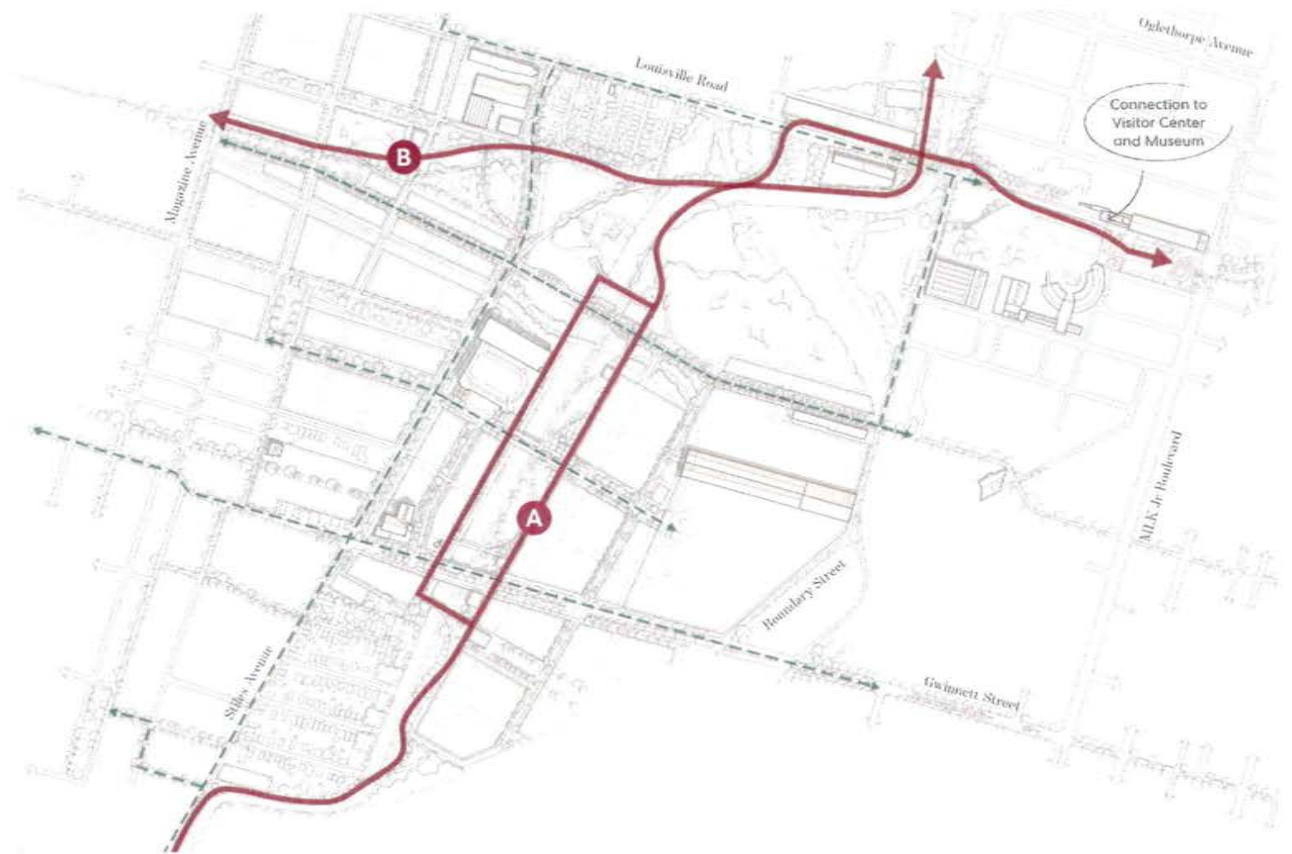


# Makes Places Accessible

The Canal District Master Plan provides new ways to reach vital destinations in the form of a dynamic path network.

## Planned Street Improvements

- A. Tide to Town Urban Trail
- B. Savannah-Ogeechee Trail Connection

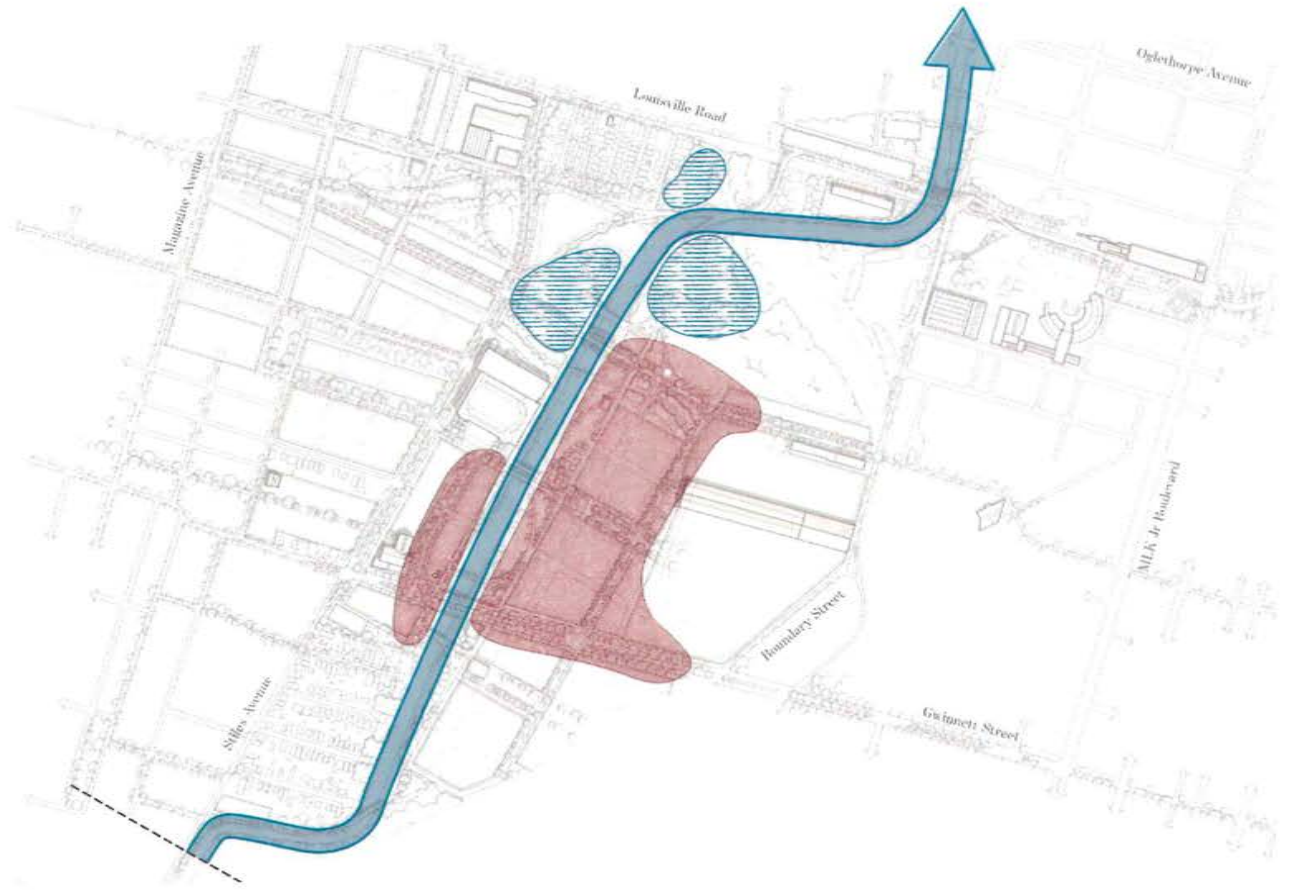


# Mitigates Flood Concerns

The Canal District Master Plan manage the rise and flow of water while bringing out the natural features of the landscape.

## Floodplain Mitigation

-  Cut Earth for Flood Plain Mitigation
-  Fill Areas for Infrastructure & Redevelopment
-  Widening to Convey 100-Year Flood



# Mitigates Flood Concerns

The Canal District Master Plan manage the rise and flow of water while bringing out the natural features of the landscape.





## Flood and Stormwater Mitigation Proposed Plan

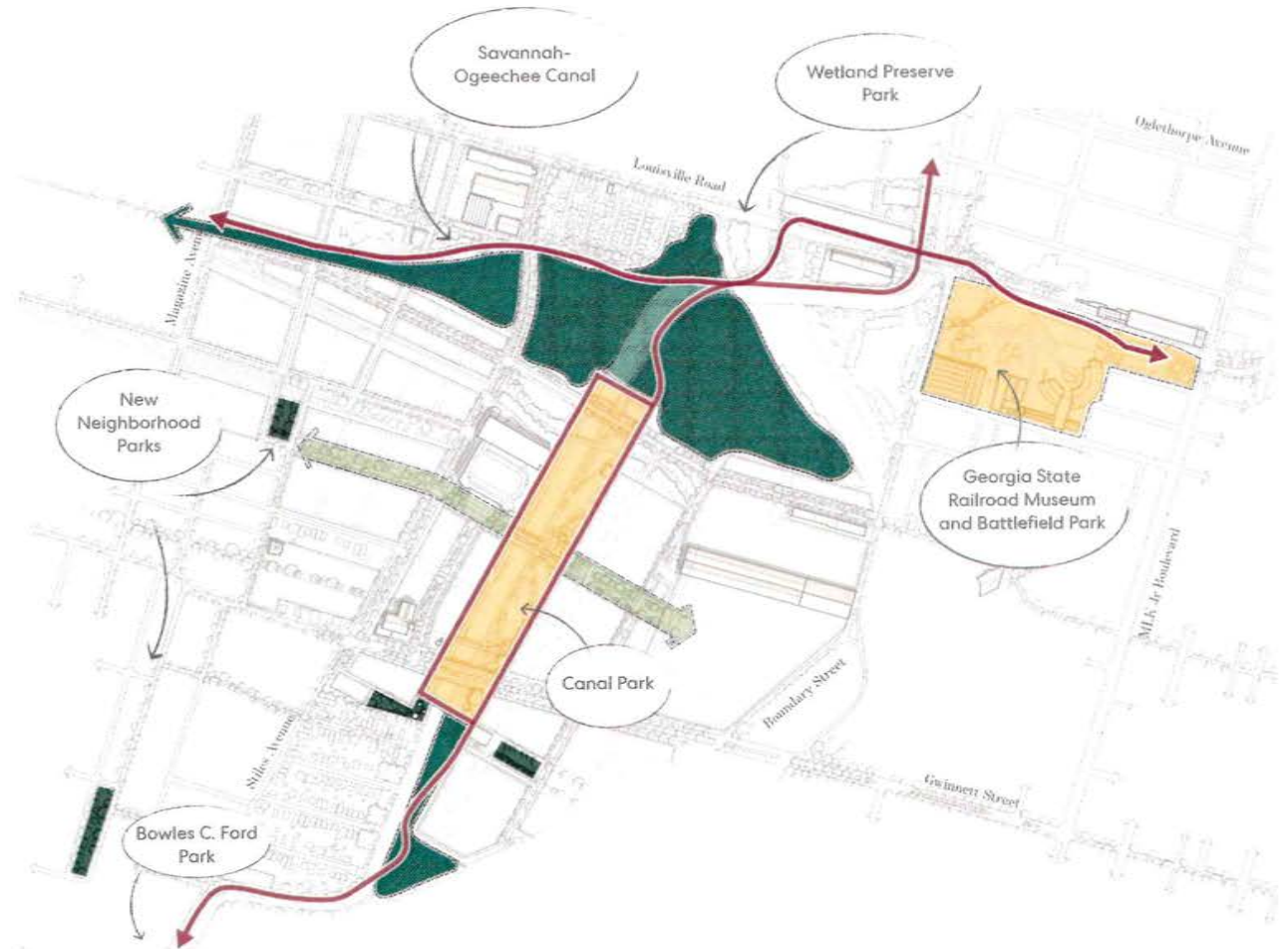
Phase	Proposed Tasks	Possible Funding Source	Estimated Cost
<b>Phase I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening Springfield Canal between I-16 and Louisville Road</li> <li>Excavating City properties south of Louisville Road and north of Arena to -1' elevation to assist with storage capacity</li> <li>Utility Relocations (estimated costs not included)</li> </ul>	SPLOST 7 and Water and Sewer Funds (utility relocation)	\$6M
<b>Phase IA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excavate City properties south of Louisville Road and north of Arena to -5' elevation to create Wetland Preserve Park</li> </ul>	Other Funding Source	\$8M
<b>Phase II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial Widening Springfield Canal north of Louisville Road</li> <li>Property acquisition</li> <li>Utility relocation</li> </ul>	SPLOST 7 and Water and Sewer Funds (utility relocation)	(Remaining SPLOST 7 Funds)
<b>Phase III</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete widening Springfield Canal north of Louisville Road to the Savannah River outfall</li> </ul>	SPLOST 8	
<b>Phase IV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add pump station to area north of Louisville Road</li> </ul>	SPLOST 8 and 9	

# Provides Grand Civic Spaces

The Canal District Master Plan offers a network of community-space amenities that support daily and seasonal activities.

## Types of Parks

-  Wetland Preserve Park
-  Neighborhood Parks
-  Promenades
-  Civic Parks
-  Planned Trail Network

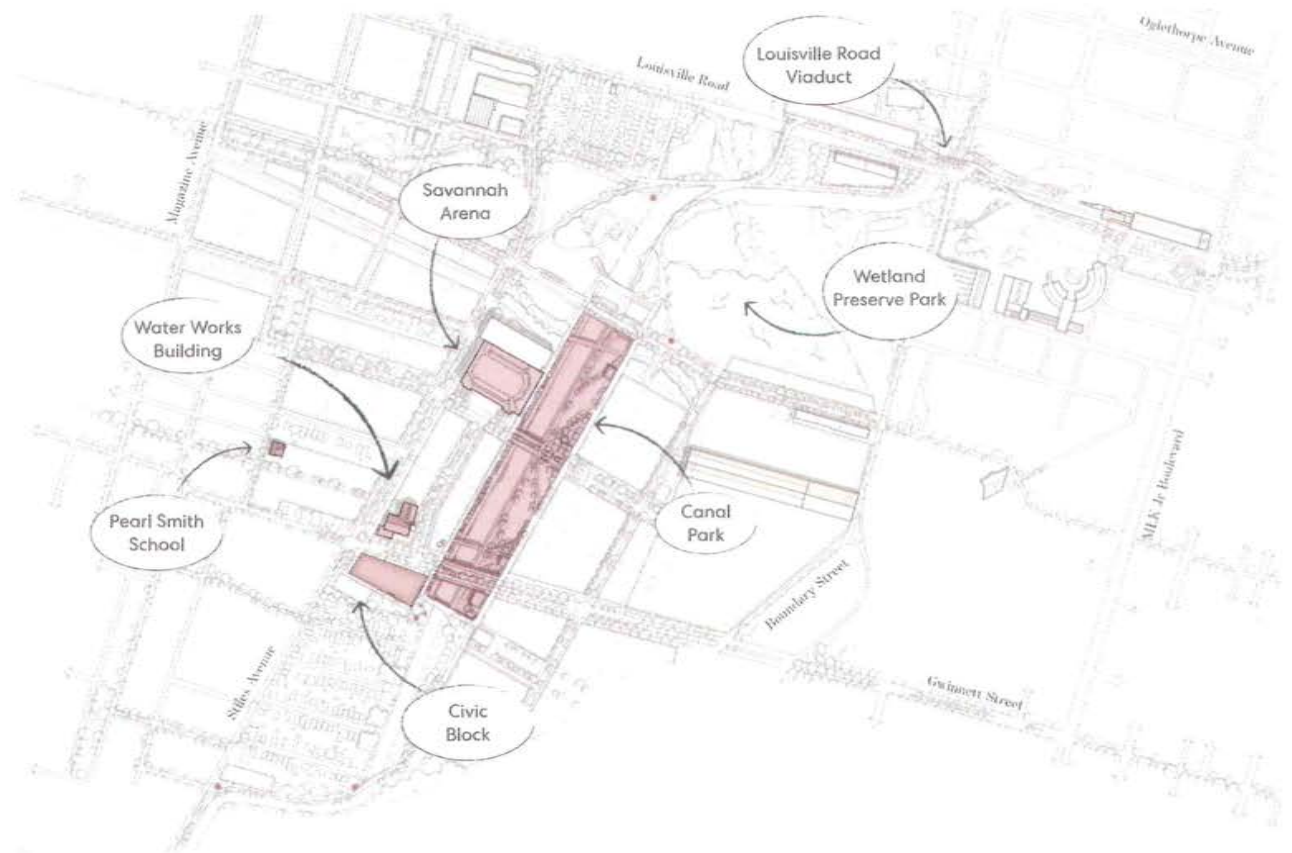


# Builds on Catalytic Projects

The Canal District Master Plan jump-starts development by focusing on key projects that unlock future growth potential.

These projects support the Savannah Arena with:

- Infrastructure
- Adaptive reuse
- Preservation



# Fosters Development Potential

The Canal District Master Plan considers zoning and land-use regulation as vital tools within its coordinated growth effort.

An Overlay District will establish:

- Design Standards
- Development Guidelines
- Land-Use Regulations

## Canal District Zoning

-  Transitional Zone
-  New Zoning

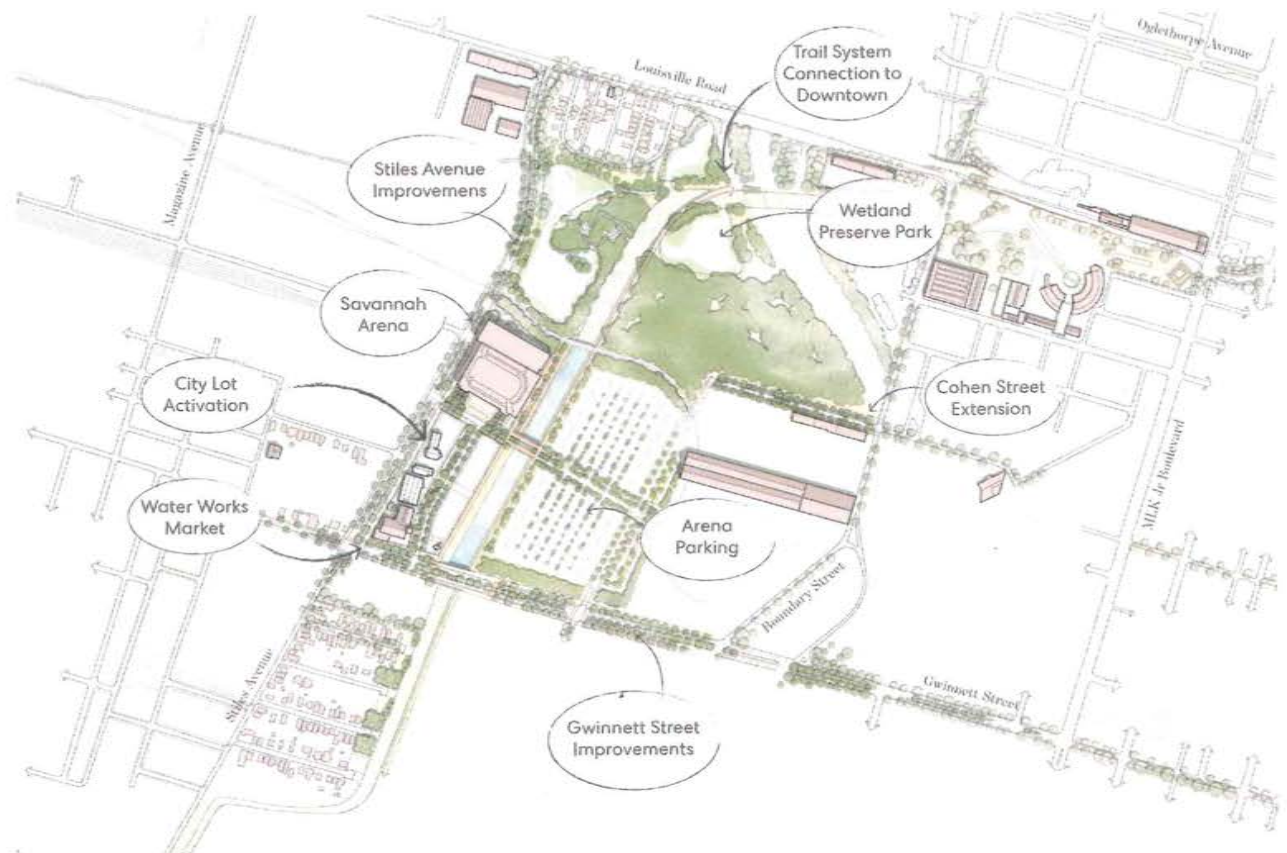


# Focuses on Short-Term Wins

The Canal District Master Plan galvanizes energy and resources around a series of projects to be opened in the next three years.

## Catalytic First Steps:

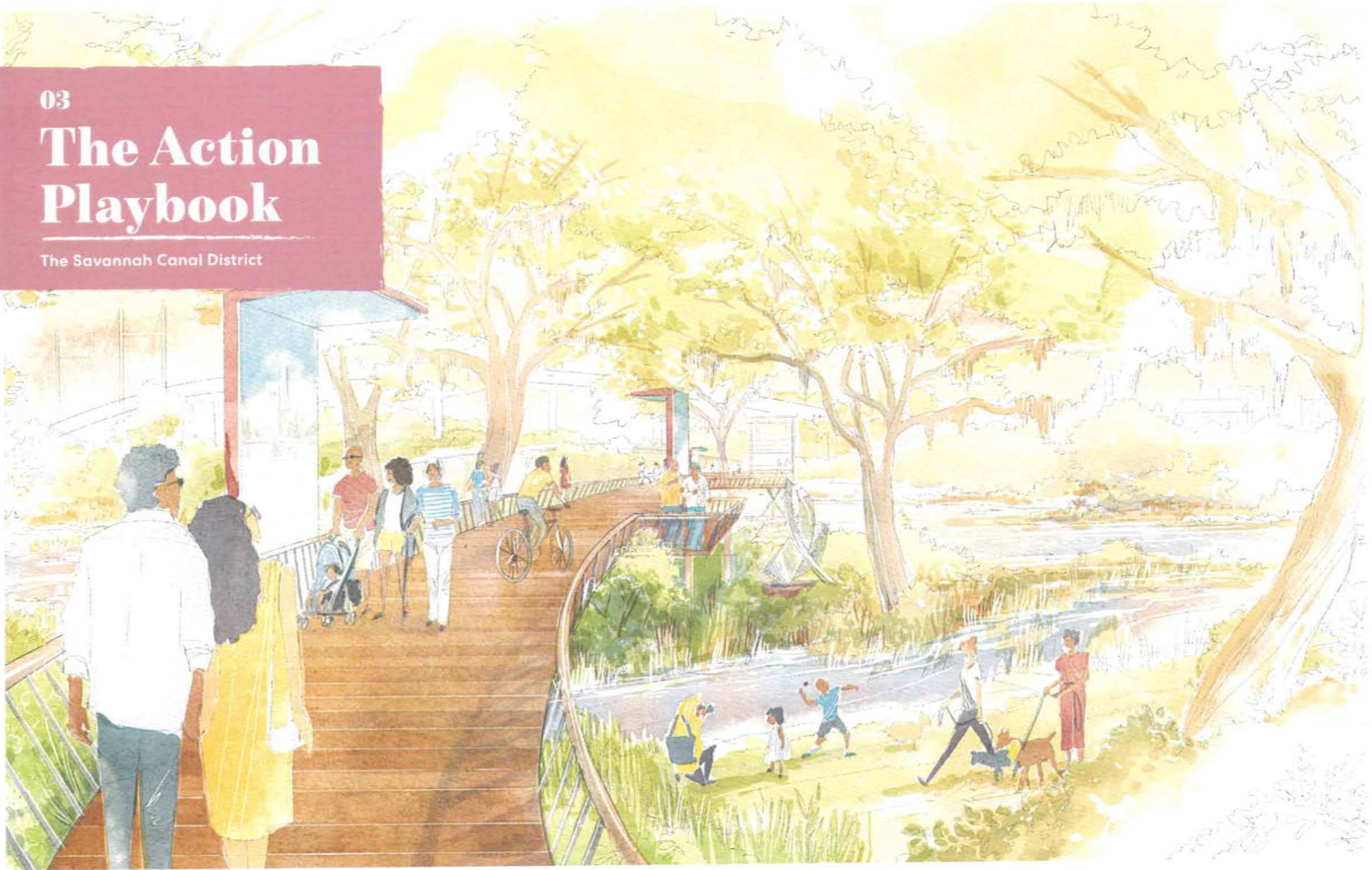
- A. Canal Widening
- B. Street Improvements
- C. Pedestrian Enhancements
- D. Repurposed Water Works



03

# The Action Playbook

The Savannah Canal District



# Document Structure

The Action Playbook lays out the Actions needed to implement the Master Plan in an equitable and inclusive way.



## Introduction

- What is the Playbook?
- How Can It Create Change?
- Goal-Directed Actions
- Interrelated Actions
- Tracking Actions
- How to Use the Playbook

## Actions

- To Guide
- For People
- For Nature
- For Place

# Directed Toward Goals

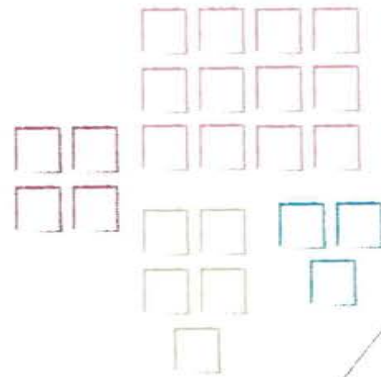
The Action Playbook captures the priorities expressed by Savannahians during the visioning process.

## Vision

The Canal District is new common ground in Savannah. It protects historic communities, rebuilds nature, elevates civic life, and allows the City to grow.

## Objectives

interim benchmarks that track progress



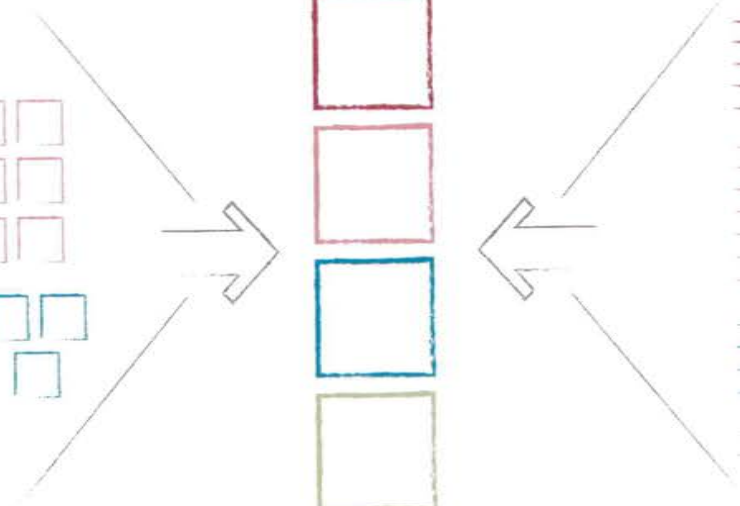
## Goals

priorities expressed by the community's vision



## Actions

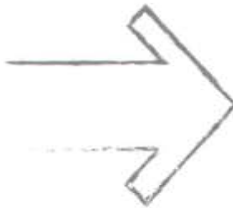
measurable tasks that reflect vision priorities



# Grouped into 4 Themes

The Action Playbook organizes all of the Actions and Supporting Objectives into four categories.

- To Guide**
- For People**
- For Nature**
- For Places**



**The Vision** The Canal District is new common ground in Savannah. It protects historic communities, rebuilds nature, elevates civic life, and allows the City to grow.

**Goals and Supporting Objectives of the Canal District Master Plan and Vision**



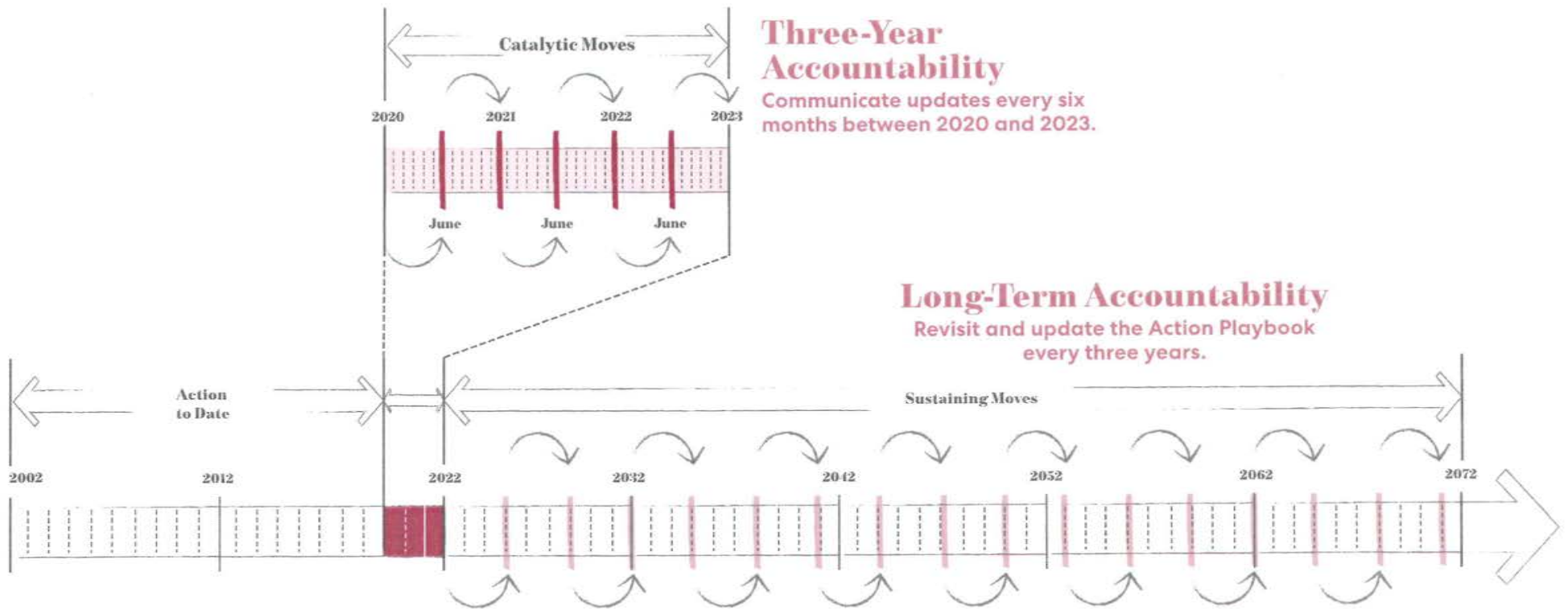
# Expressed as 19 Actions

The Action Playbook defines the Actions as nineteen strategic directives that will enable project implementation.

Guide	01	Establish a Three-Year Arena Area Plan
	02	Establish a Canal District Leader
	03	Build Nonprofit and Philanthropic Support for the Canal District's Open Spaces
	04	Designate a Tax Allocation District
	05	Establish a Community Improvement District
People	06	Support Local Employment and Businesses
	07	Repurpose the Water Works as a Community Market and Business Center
	08	Curate and Build a West Savannah Heritage Trail
	09	Strengthen Partnerships with the Land Bank Authority for Community Development
	10	Organize a Community Benefits Framework
	11	Expand Homeownership and Home-Buying Initiatives
	12	Develop Renter and Rental-Housing Affordability Initiatives
Nature	13	Institute a Neighborhood Stormwater Program
	14	Expand Green Infrastructure Programs to Include the Canal District
	15	Develop a Comprehensive Stormwater Strategy for the Springfield Basin
Place	16	Complete the Canal District Brownfield Assessment
	17	Institute a Community Street Improvements Program
	18	Revise Canal District Zoning and Establish an Overlay District
	19	Install a Neighborhood Wi-Fi Umbrella and Smart Lighting

# Tracked Overtime

The Action Playbook should be regularly updated to reflect project progress and create metrics for accountability.



# Playbook



**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Goals

These are Actions that:

- **Provide leadership**
- **Allocate resources**

# Playbook



## To Guide

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Objectives

Some of the Objectives:

- G.1 Create a Three-Year Action Plan**  
for infrastructure and services  
to support operations of the Arena
- G.2 Create a Communication System**  
for ongoing and open dialogue between  
the public and project leadership
- G.3 Create Funding Mechanisms**  
for infrastructure, environmental  
remediation, and community development

# Playbook



## To Guide

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Actions

Some of the Actions:

- 02 Establish a Canal District Leader**
- 03 Build Nonprofit and Philanthropic Support for the District's Open Spaces**
- 04 Designate a Tax Allocation District**

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Goals

These are Actions that:

- **Create jobs**
- **Advance culture**
- **Support communities**
- **Support housing**

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Objectives

Some of the Objectives:

- P.1 Preference Local Employment**  
from within the Canal District, the Canal District neighborhoods, and the Savannah community
- P.4 Celebrate Cultural Heritage**  
by uplifting and sharing stories of the past
- P.7 Ensure Safety Every Day**  
in the Canal District neighborhoods

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Actions

Some of the Actions:

- 07 Repurpose the Water Works as a Community Market and Business Center
- 10 Organize a Community Benefits Framework
- 11 Expand Homeownership and Home-Buying Initiatives

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Goals

These are Actions that:

- **Create infrastructure**
- **Build open space**
- **Clean the city**

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Objectives

Some of the Objectives:

**N.1 Decrease Long-Term Flood Risks**  
in the Canal District and the Canal District neighborhoods

**N.2 Fund Infrastructure**  
without placing additional tax burdens on economically vulnerable populations within the Canal District neighborhoods

**N.3 Remediate Environmentally Contaminated Areas**  
in the Canal District

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Actions

Some of the Actions:

- 14 **Expand Green Infrastructure Programs to Include the Canal District**
- 15 **Develop a Comprehensive Stormwater Strategy for the Springfield Basin**
- 16 **Complete the Canal District Brownfield Assessment**

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Goals

These are Actions that:

- Increase mobility
- Preserve and grow neighborhoods
- Build networks

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Objectives

Some of the Objectives:

**PI.3 Ensure Appropriate Transitions**

between new development and existing neighborhoods, such as appropriate height, density, and use

**PI.4 Protect the Existing Urban Fabric and Character**

of the Canal District and the Canal District neighborhoods

**PI.5 Develop a Complete Range of Housing Options**

in the Canal District and the Canal District neighborhoods

# Playbook

**To Guide**

**For People**

**For Nature**

**For Places**

## Actions

Some of the Actions:

- 17 Institute a Community Street Improvements Program
- 18 Revise Canal District Zoning and Establish and Overlay District
- 19 Install a Neighborhood Wi-Fi Umbrella and Smart Lighting



# **Next Steps**

**Accept feedback from City Council  
(today and throughout the process)**

**Plan Presentation to MPC  
(Metropolitan Planning Commission)**

**Accept feedback from Citizens / Public  
(May 20 - June 2)**

**Take Formal Vote on June 25**

**The Canal District is  
new common ground in  
Savannah. It protects  
historic communities,  
rebuilds nature, elevates  
civic life, and allows the  
City to grow.**

The Savannah Canal District

