

Building Inclusive Processes into Placemaking

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Urban Design, Perkins&Will

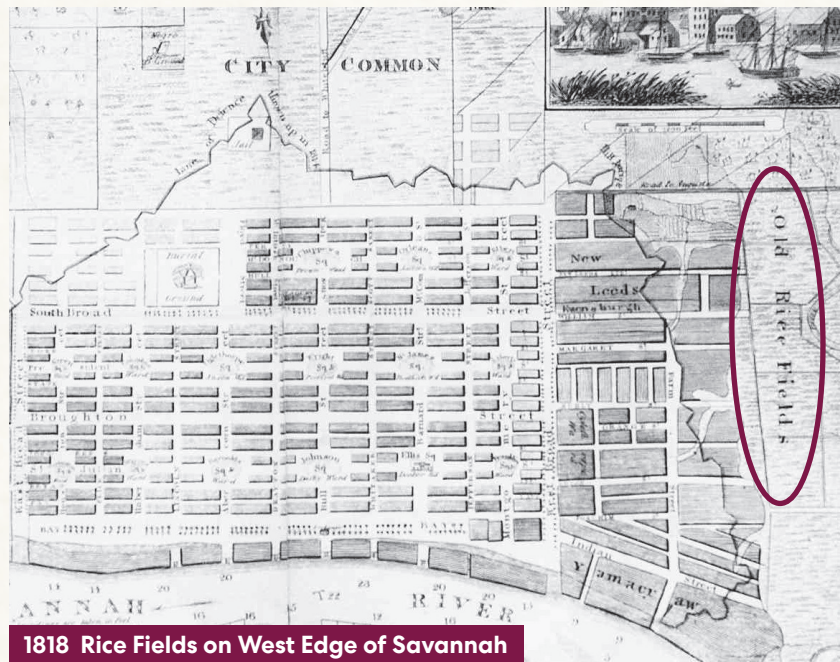
Project Case Study

The Canal District

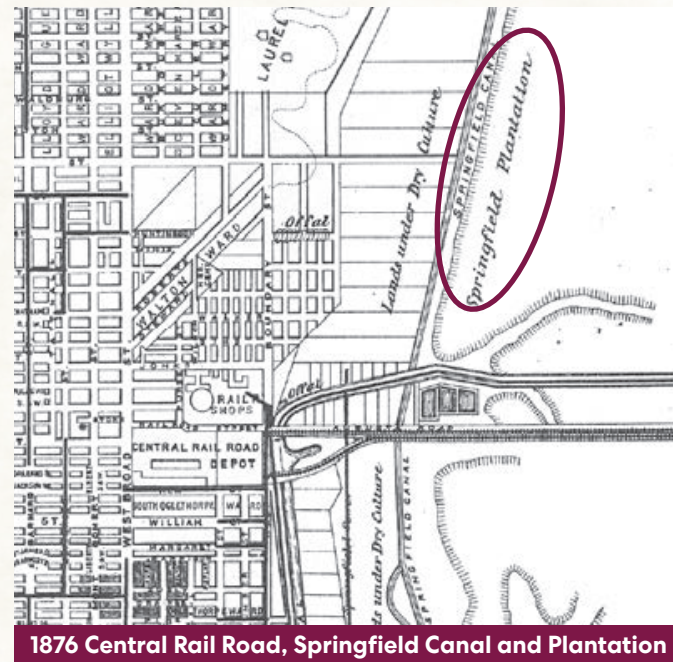
Savannah, GA



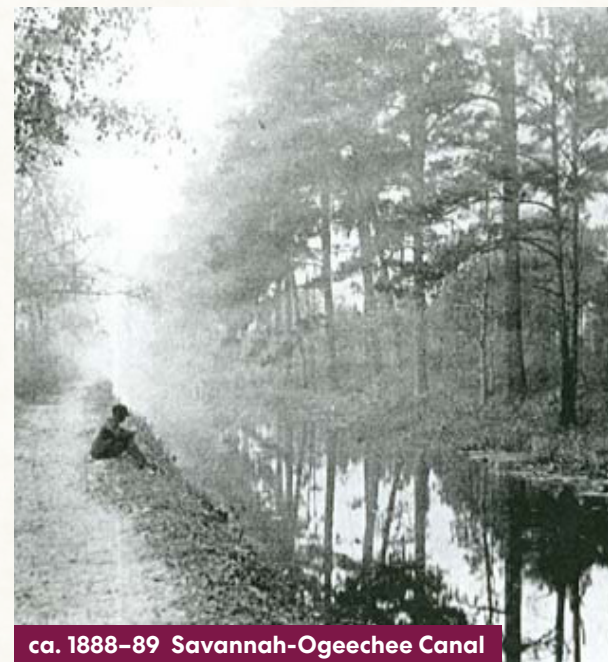
Some History & Context



1818 Rice Fields on West Edge of Savannah



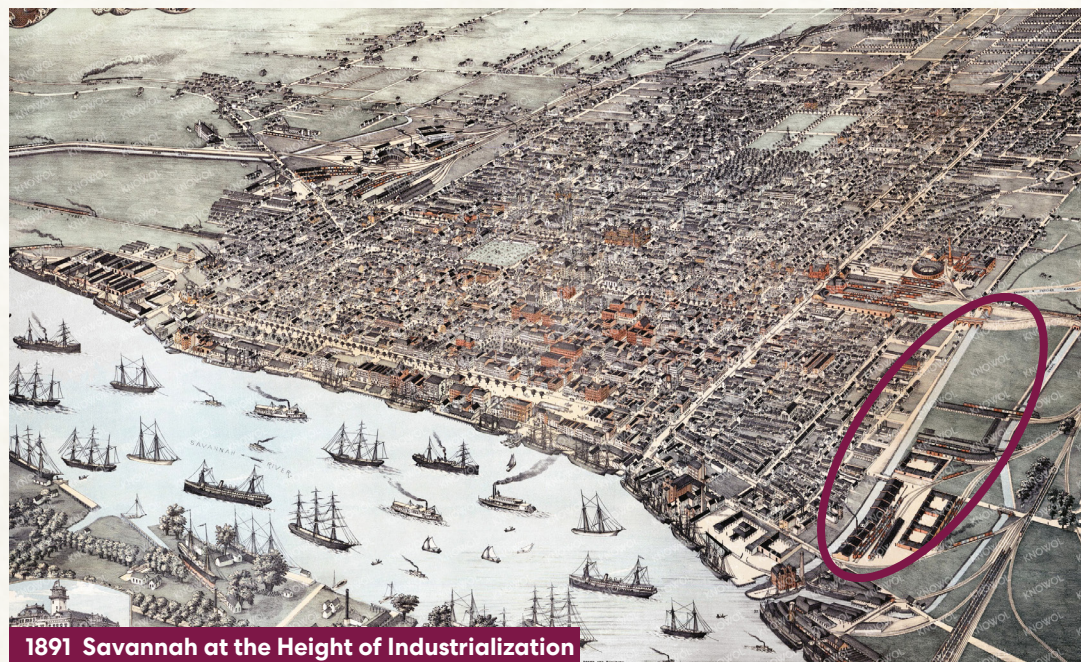
1876 Central Rail Road, Springfield Canal and Plantation



ca. 1888-89 Savannah-Ogeechee Canal



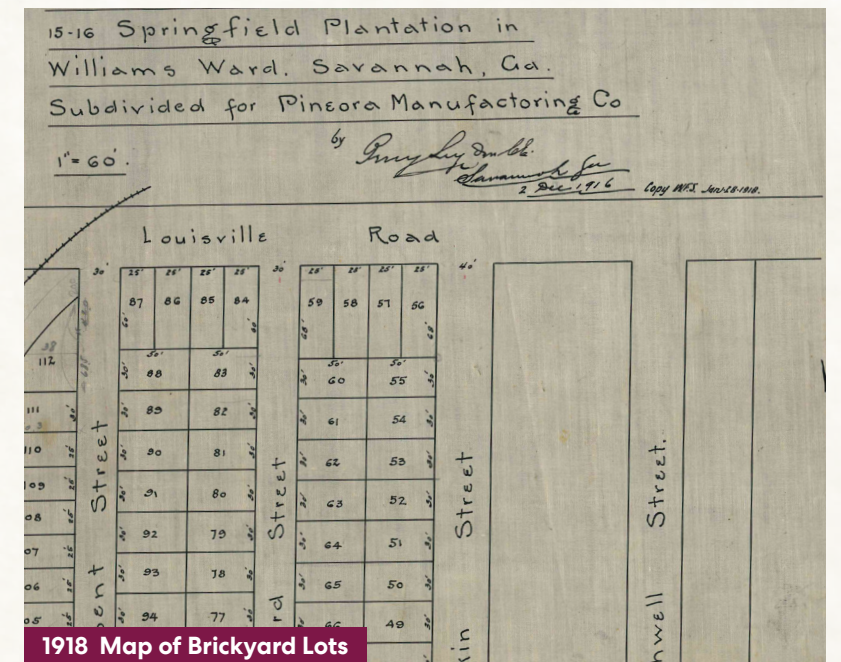
2017 Listed on the National Register



1891 Savannah at the Height of Industrialization



1949 Still from Promotional Short for Carver Village

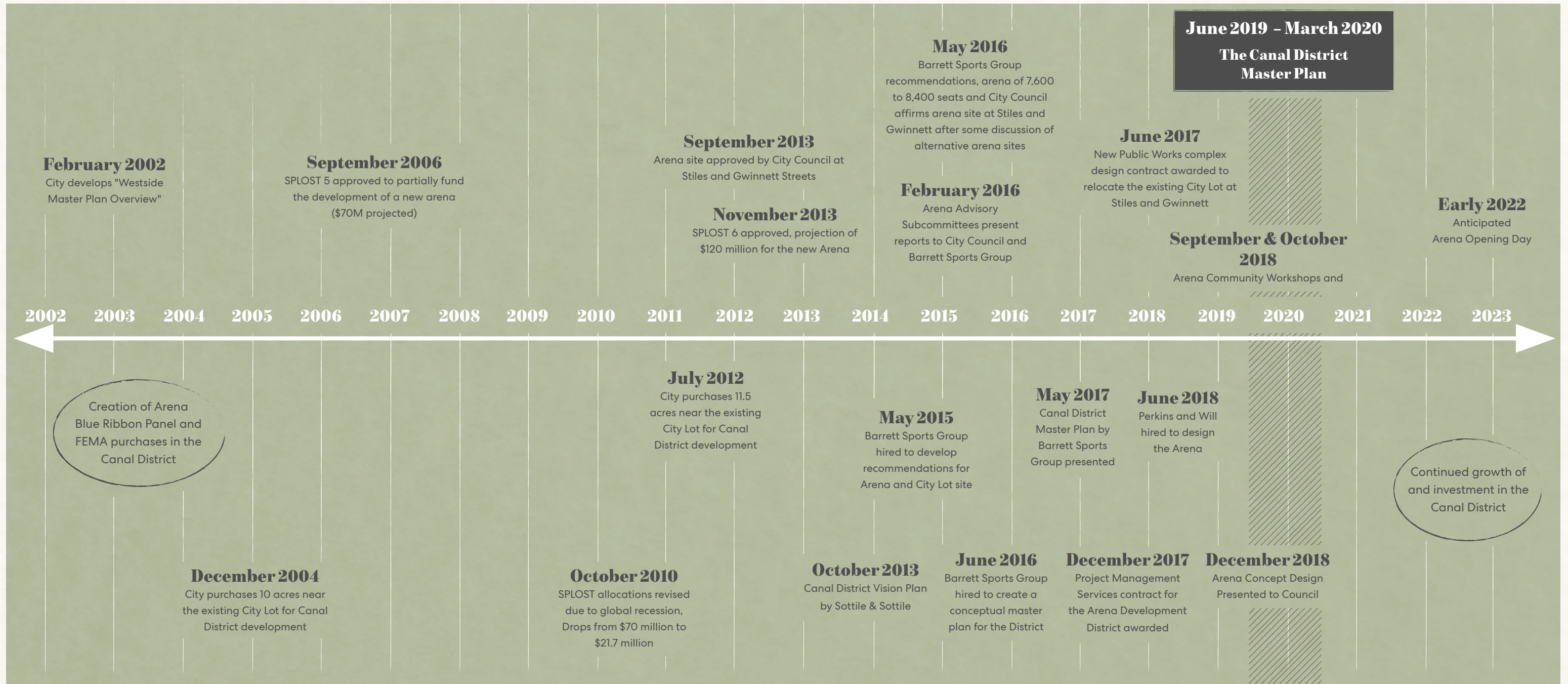


1918 Map of Brickyard Lots

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.

Note this
March 2020 date



Three Geographies & Three Deliverables

①

Savannah Arena

Architecture

②

Canal District Master Plan

Urban Design

③

Action Plan for the Canal District Neighborhoods

City Planning



Public Realm as a Manifestation of Values

Historic District streets

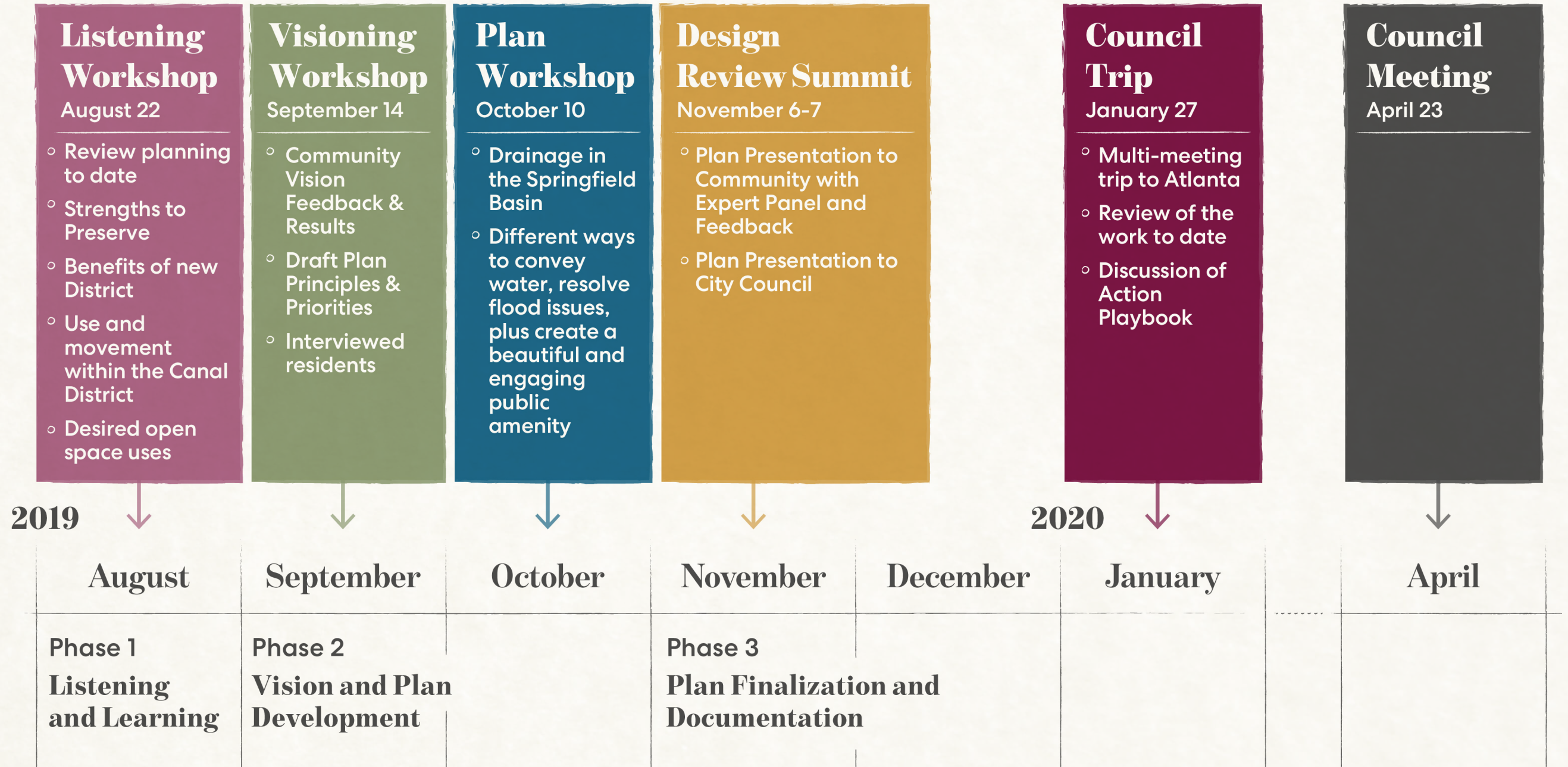


Canal District streets



Built on Community Input

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

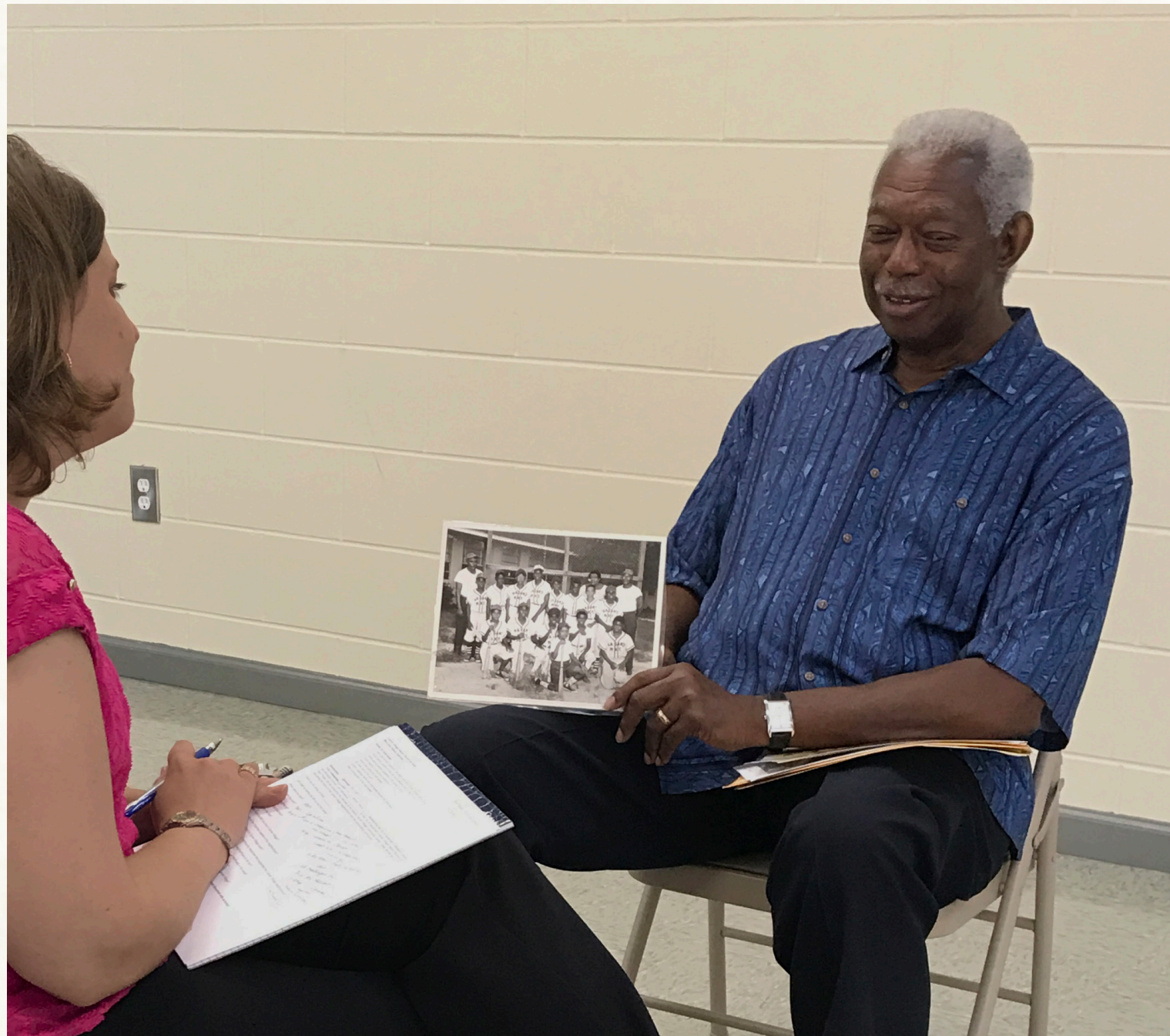


Phase 1
Listening and Learning

Phase 2
Vision and Plan Development

Phase 3
Plan Finalization and Documentation

Inclusive Engagement



Unearthing History & Culture



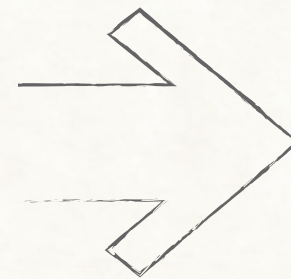
1858 "The Weeping Time"



1976 Railroad Viaducts at West Boundary Street

The Nature of Inclusive Placemaking

Designer
Creation



Facilitator
Empowerment

A Flexible Master Plan

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










A Network of 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

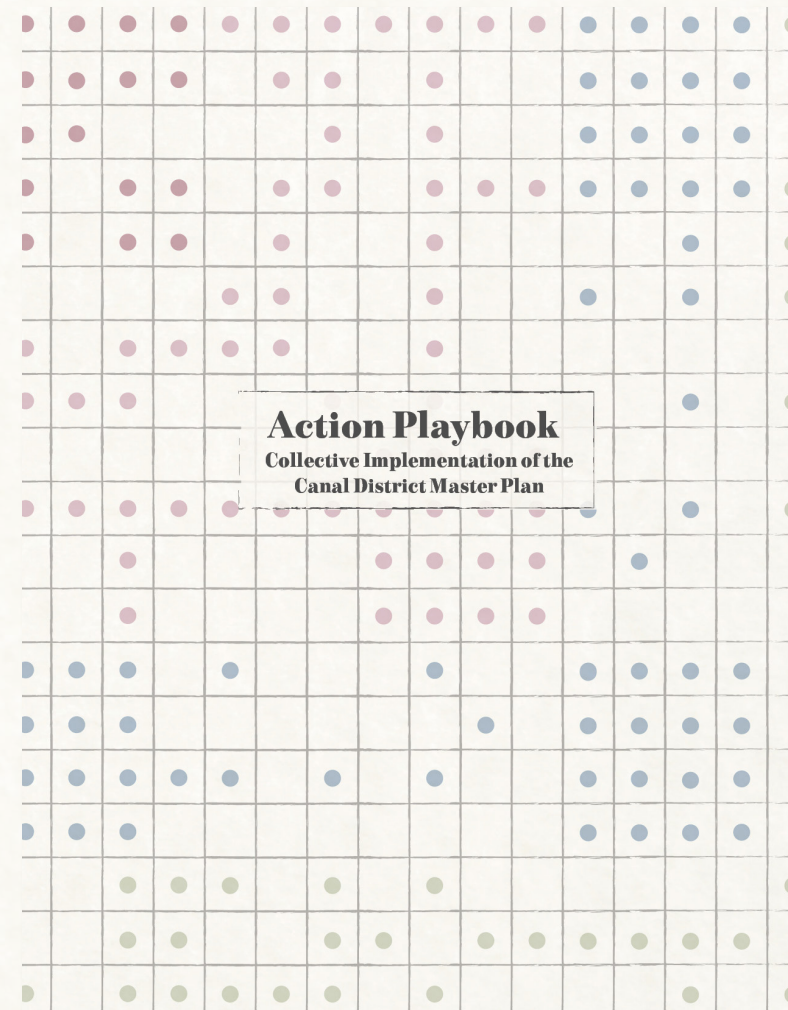


Two Different Documents



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

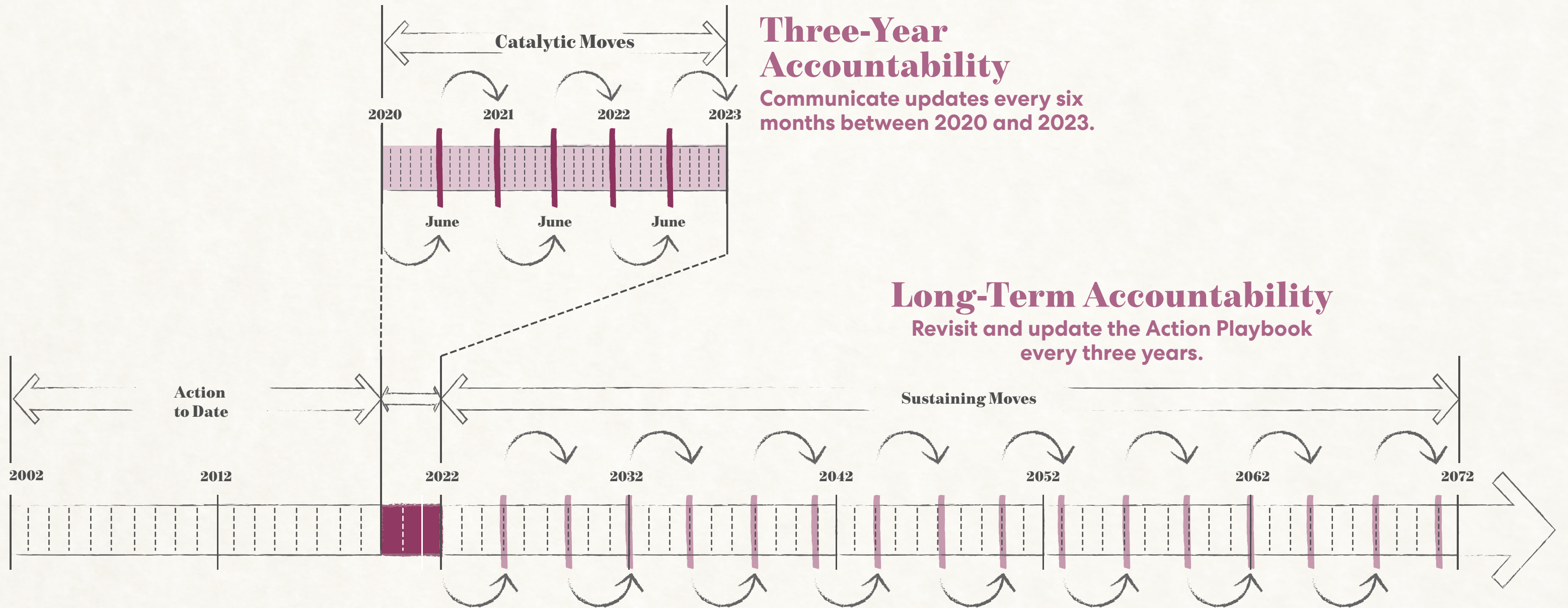
The Vision Expressed as 19 Actions



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
Nature	12 Develop Renter and Rental-Housing Affordability Initiatives
	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 and Overlay District
	19 Install a Neighborhood Wi-Fi Umbrella and Smart Lighting

Tracked Over Time

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



Making the Actions Work

Communication of Key Information

Accountability Expectations

Action

Baseline

Accountability

Moves: Catalytic & Sustaining

Anticipated Benefits

To Guide **01**
Establish a Three-Year Arena Area Plan

The milestones established by the Three-Year Arena Area Plan make explicit the City's coordinated effort to listen to and communicate with impacted communities and align critical urban relationships with Arena operations.

What is involved?

The City of Savannah needs an Arena Area Plan that establishes infrastructure and development milestones for ensuring basic operations of the Savannah Arena upon its opening as well as essential relationships between the Arena and surrounding neighborhoods. The plan is distinct from the ongoing design and construction of the Arena. It must reinforce communication and accountability for the Master Plan's implementation from its initial stages.

Why this Action?

Whereas the development of the Canal District is a long-term endeavor for the City of Savannah, the Savannah Arena's construction and operations are a near-term priority. The project's initial stages will trigger infrastructure and development that must support the Arena's operations while establishing the foundation for long-term growth that reflects the integrity of Savannah's urban form and commitment to the residents of the Canal District neighborhoods.

Catalytic Moves

- 01** Identify a position within the City structure to manage the execution of the Arena Area Plan.
- 02** Prioritize critical paths and milestones for each element of the Three-Year Arena Area Plan, such as traffic improvements, temporary parking, and stormwater infrastructure.
- 03** Communicate status of Three-Year Arena Area Plan to the City's communities at regular intervals.

Sustaining Moves

- 01** Align infrastructure and redevelopment decisions with the values identified by residents in the Canal District neighborhoods.
- 02** Identify strategic partnerships that focus on the physical and social implementation of the Arena to generate widespread support from the Canal District neighborhoods.
- 03** Build trust and generate support through a communication campaign that highlights project milestones that have been met and directly benefit west Savannah communities and neighborhoods.

As of 2020 ...

the Savannah Arena has broken ground. District projects and programs need to be undertaken immediately.

Expect leadership and action.

Who should lead this effort?
 The Office of Planning and Urban Design should coordinate the execution of the Three-Year Arena Area Plan.

What should happen by 2022?
 A Three-Year Arena Area Plan should be completed.

- Who are potential partners?**
- Newly selected project manager
 - Mayor's Arena Advisory Group
 - Community leaders from the Canal District neighborhoods
 - City departments
 - Neighborhood Advisory Council for the Community Benefits Agreements

- What to ask leadership in 2022?**
- What do the mobility and parking, public-safety, and housing plans for the Canal District look like?
 - What is the progress on other long-term recommendations, such as the Water Works Community Market and Business Center, West Savannah Heritage Trail, Neighborhood Stormwater Program, Community Street Improvements Strategy, and Neighborhood Wi-Fi Umbrella and Smart Lighting System?

What are the anticipated benefits?

This Action should advance the Plan toward these Supporting Objectives:

- G.1 Create a Three-Year Action Plan**
- G.2 Create a Communication System**
- PI.2 Ensure Delivery of a Policy Framework**
- PI.3 Ensure Appropriate Transitions**

Curate and Build a West Savannah Heritage Trail

A West Savannah Heritage Trail, along the Springfield Canal and through the Canal District parks, can preserve and celebrate the legacies, identities, and landmarks that distinguish the African-American families and communities in the Canal District neighborhoods.

What is involved?

The City of Savannah's Municipal Archives should facilitate the creation of a public exhibit of west Savannah's history and culture throughout the Canal District's new trail network and along the Springfield Canal.

Why this Action?

The success of the Canal District depends on the documentation and elevation of west Savannah's histories into the mainstream history of the City. A public recognition and celebration of those histories along the new network of trails connects the Canal

District neighborhoods culturally and physically to the MLK corridor and helps complete the partial history highlighted in the City center.

Catalytic Moves

- 01** Complete a Canal District Historic Resources Survey to identify Heritage Trail landmarks, stories, and artifacts with the input of longtime residents and community leaders of the Canal District neighborhoods.
- 02** Approve the necessary legislation to protect the places and landmarks identified in the Canal District Historic Resources Survey.
- 03** Develop a set of design guidelines and a review process with neighborhood residents and community leaders for the physical design of the trail, access points, interpretive markers, and potential sculptural pieces.
- 04** Prioritize trail access points by foot or bike for neighborhoods west of the Canal District.

Sustaining Moves

- 01** Extend the Arena-site walking tour to the community landmarks that have informed the overarching vision of the Canal District.
- 02** Link the Heritage Trail to community anchors and historic anchors west of the Canal District and beyond the Canal District neighborhoods.
- 03** Coordinate with existing entities who are maintaining the Springfield Canal Basin and future Canal Park to identify sustainable funding mechanisms for Heritage Trail improvements.

As of 2020 ...

No initiative to design and curate a designated Heritage Trail is yet in place. However, a Heritage Trail curation and preservation process can build upon the artifacts already collected by the City of Savannah in its Municipal Archives, including the oral histories recorded during the Canal District Master Plan process.

Expect leadership and action.

Who should lead this effort?

The Office of Planning and Urban Design, in conjunction with the Municipal Archives, should facilitate and oversee the implementation of the Heritage Trail in partnership with community leaders.

What should happen by 2022?

Appropriate legislation or ordinance should be approved to protect the cultural places and landmarks that will compose the future West Savannah Heritage Trail.

Who are potential partners?

- Local residents and neighborhood associations
- Local historians
- Local libraries and archival repositories
- Tide to Town
- Coastal Heritage Society
- Savannah Ogeechee Canal Society
- Local colleges and universities (Savannah State University, Georgia Southern University/Armstrong Campus, Savannah College of Art and Design)
- City departments

What to ask leadership in 2022?

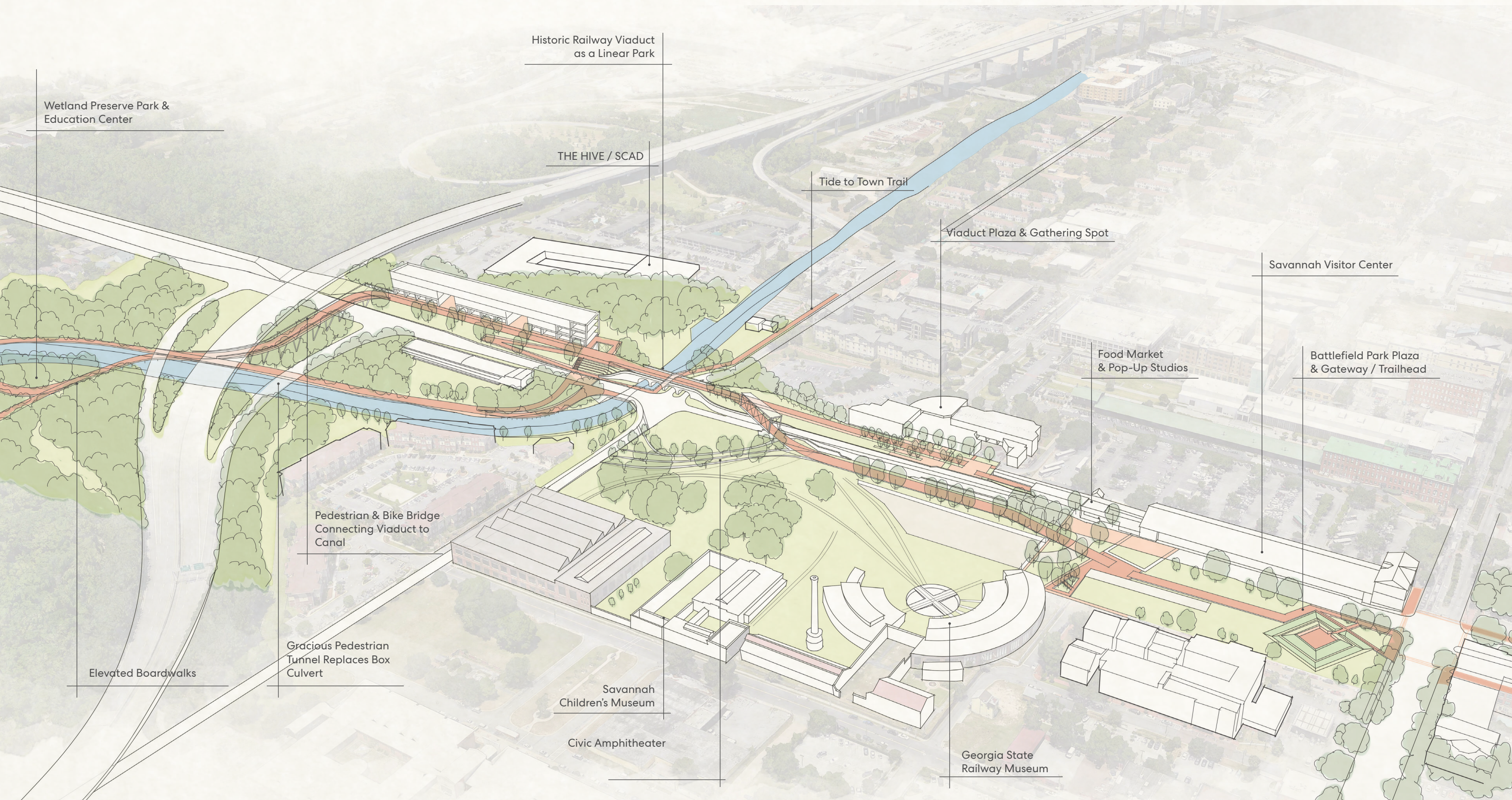
- Which landmarks and places were identified in the Historic Resources Survey?
- Where will trail access points be located?

What are the anticipated benefits?

This Action should advance the Plan toward these Supporting Objectives:

- P.3** Protect Cultural Legacies, Identities, and Landmarks
- P.4** Celebrate Cultural Heritage
- P.9** Protect Community Cohesion
- P.10** Ensure Lifelong, Multigenerational Communities
- P.12** Ensure Current Residents Are Not Displaced
- PI.1** Create a Place Aligned to Community Vision
- PI.4** Protect the Existing Urban Fabric and Character

Building Inclusive Processes into Placemaking



**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

